
Factors influencing industrial relations in the Indian tea industry: study in the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars regions

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Abstract: Since the end of the last century, the Indian tea industry has been going through a major crisis. Poor industrial relations are one of the major causes of this crisis. Keeping this backdrop in mind, the study aims to explore the factors for poor industrial relations and examine the impact of various factors on industrial relations. In the study, opinions from 306 workers have been considered. Factor analysis and multiple regression analyses have been done. The result of factor analysis brought out five prominent factors of industrial relations. These are the 'management aspect', 'employment issue', 'welfare aspect', 'parental care aspect' and 'maintenance aspect'. Further, multiple regression analysis has been performed to assess the impact of the identified factors on industrial relations. The result shows that the 'management aspect' has the highest positive impact on industrial relations. However, 'parental care aspect' and 'maintenance aspect' have a negative impact on industrial relations.

Keywords: tea industry; Dooars; Terai; Darjeeling; industrial relations; factors affecting industrial relation.

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1 Introduction

Tea is the cheapest and widely consumed beverage across the globe (Roy and Biswas, 2018). The history of tea industry in India can be traced back to the discovery of homespun tea plant by Robert Bush in Assam in 1823 (Banerjee and Banerjee, 2009). In India, the tea industry has been playing a momentous role in the country's GDP and earns huge exchange from the international markets. In terms of production, the Indian tea industry occupies the second position with a share of about 22.70% of the world's total tea production, after China in 2018. In terms of export, the Indian tea industry occupies the fourth position. India exported 256.06 million kg tea which is about 13.77% of the world's tea export in 2018. During 2018–2019, India earned tea revenue of about 830.90 million US dollars from its international markets (Tea Board of India, 2019).

Based on the location, the Indian tea industry is divided into two parts; the North Indian tea industry and the South Indian tea industry. The North Indian tea industry plays a key role in the Indian tea industry. During 2018–2019, the North Indian tea industry produced 1,093.10 million kilograms of tea out of the aggregate tea production in India. West Bengal plays an important role in the North Indian tea industry. The whole production of the tea industry of West Bengal, which comprises of Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars tea producing regions, were 385.87 million kilograms. The production of Dooars was 222.63 million kilograms, in Terai, the production was 155.52 million kilograms, and in Darjeeling the production was 7.72 million kilograms. However, in the Indian tea industry, contributions of the small tea holders are also remarkable. Out of the entire tea production in India, the contribution of small tea growers was 47.89% which is undoubtedly significant (Tea Board of India, 2019).

The Indian tea plantation industry was considerably initiated and formed by European entrepreneurs (Sarkar, 2008). Basically, the seed capital to setup the tea industry in India was taken up in the UK. Thus, the management and ownership of the Indian tea industry were under the domination of the colonials. However, World War-II brought about momentous changes in the industry in terms of management system and ownership patterns. The war provoked the Indian entrepreneurs to start a new business enterprise as they had to manufacture huge range of goods that were essential for the war efforts. This was the benchmark for Indian entrepreneurs to expand their business activities. The encouraged and experienced Indian entrepreneurs then initiated to venture into tea business. There was one more aspect behind it during the war for the purpose of construction of roads, bridges, airfields, and also for supporting the armed force; a huge number of staff and workers were shifted from the tea industry. Thus, the tea industry faced an enormous deficiency of labour and staff to produce tea. All tea companies to sustain their tea plantation. Thus, during this time, a number of foreign tea companies changed their ownership to Indian companies (Roy, 2020).

Over the last few decades, the Indian tea industry has been going through major crises. Its export has reduced and at the same time import of low quality of tea has increased. As tea estates are being closed down and labour is being economised to cut down costs, tea garden labourers are facing a crisis of livelihood (Gupta and Sangeeta, 2017). Their families are also worse sufferer (Sarkar and Reji, 2019). The workers are increasingly losing their faith on the plantation management (Roy, 2017) and thus they are backed by unions. As a result, the cases of gheraos, strikes, and violence in tea gardens have enlarged significantly (Saikia and Kaur, 2018).

1.1 Profile of tea industry in Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars

Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars tea producing regions are located in Himalayan foothills of West Bengal. West Bengal is one of the states of India and famous for Darjeeling and Dooars variety of tea in the world. The tea produced from Darjeeling and Dooars are popular across the globe for its superiority and reputation based on its brightness, aroma, and unique test (Biswas and Roy, 2013). In West Bengal, tea is grown in the foothills of the Himalayas covering the district of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Alipurduar, North Dinajpur, and a few parts of the Cooch Behar (Roy and Dey, 2019). All these districts come under the territories of northern part of Bengal which is popularly known as North Bengal. Technically, the entire tea growing areas of North Bengal are broadly classified into three: Darjeeling Hills, Terai and Dooars.

However, tea cultivation on commercial form started in 1856 in Darjeeling. The first tea garden was setup in 1856 by the 'Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea' company. Three years later, another tea garden named 'Dhutardia Tea Garden' was setup by Dr. Brougham. Meanwhile, tea cultivation started in the Terai region. The first ever tea garden 'Chamta Tea Garden' was established in 1862 by Mr. J. White. In the following years, in the Dooars areas, tea cultivation was initiated by the British entrepreneurs. The first tea garden in Dooars was setup by Mr. R. Haughtoat Gazaldoba in 1876 (Roy, 2020). Thus, tea cultivation increased in West Bengal.

As of now, total of 276 organised tea estates of North Bengal play a mammoth role in the economy of this region. The industry offers 262,426 employments directly (Government of West Bengal, 2013) and several million indirectly. There are seven employers' associations and 22 trade unions registered under the banners of different political parties.

2 Background of the study

Due to the removal of the tariff barrier on export the situation has become worse. Since the cheaper and low quality of tea imports from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh for blending and re-export purposes by the marketers have deficiently affected the market share (Bhowmik, 2002), few tea importing countries of Indian tea have denied importing tea from India due to the quality issue (Roy and Biswas, 2018). However, the fall of tea price was noticed in many countries where tea was produced during that time (Kumar et al., 2008). Further, since the end of the last century, the domestic tea consumption pattern in India has been observed a steady increasing trend. The steady rise in domestic requirements did not match its balanced production and thus export of tea has been affected badly. Ultimately, the export share of Indian tea in the international market has declined significantly (Roy, 2020).

However, due to the fall of price in the auction market, tea-producing companies of northern India have been forced on reducing various costs, especially the labour cost (Duara, 2015). Due to the cost reduction policy, tea producing companies in this region were not in a position to fulfil their responsibilities like health, safety, welfare, working conditions, regular payment of wages, bonus, etc. to the workers in accordance with the Plantation Labour Act (PLA) 1951 (Patil, 1998). All these have lead to the labour unrest in the forms of strikes, gheraos, lockout, etc. and the industrial relations of the industry have become vulnerable (Mitra, 2010). As a result, workers who are engaged in the tea

industry to sustain themselves and their families have been adversely affected (Srivasthava, 2004). Numerous contemporary researchers have found an increasing trend of turbulences between the worker and management relating to the working conditions and other issues of tea workers (Khawas, 2006). Many of the studies suggested that aged tea-bushes, insufficient replanting of tea plant, not enough investments in the machinery rejuvenation, passive attitude of management on labour welfare measures, and prevailing of conventional management in tea plantations led to the decreasing trend of the yield of tea (Sivaram, 2000). The reason for such deteriorating condition in terms of industrial relations in the tea industry of Bengal region is the lower profitability of the industry (Misra, 2002).

In this backdrop, the present study has been designed to provide some light on the existing industrial relations scenario in the tea industry of Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars regions of Indian.

3 Literature review

There are two separate classes of people in the industrial workplaces; they are the employer and employees (Gosavi, 2017). In the industrial workplace, generally, the relationships include between the individual workers, workers and their employer, the relationship between employers (Armstrong, 1987). This also includes the process by which such relations are expressed such as participation of workers in decision making, collective bargaining, disputes and grievance settlement, managing conflicts, etc. (Duara and Mallick, 2019). Industrial relations have been of enormous significance since its beginning. Its significance lays in the reality that superior industrial relations consequence in the utmost competence of the workers and the manufacturing facility, least or zero divergences between staff and administration, job satisfaction among workers, the highest contribution to the economy, and maximisation of company's returns (Gupta, 2018). To have excellent relationships between employer and employees in an organisation, there must be a development in managing activities as compared to productive activities (Ullal et al., 2019).

Darjeeling, around 90 years later of the first tea garden, found the trade union movement. On 15th September 1945, the first union 'Darjeeling Tea Garden Worker's Union' was established under the leadership of Ratanlal Brahmin, Sushil Chatterjee, and B.B. Chettri (Roy and Biswas, 2019). Ironically, the trade union movement was started around the independence of our nation. The reason behind the late inception of the trade union movement in West Bengal was the non-existence of proper condition for the growth of trade unions. The tea workers were not united and hence lacked the bargaining power since they were illiterate and too poor (Saikia and Kaur, 2018).

Industrial relations in the Indian tea plantation industry have unique characteristics. Prior to 1951, there was no comprehensive regulatory legislation for the labour. In 1951, the PLA was initiated and was applied in coffee, rubber, cinchona and tea plantations. According to this act, the workers were entitled to receive reasonable amenities such as drinking water facilities, medical facilities, well-constructed urinals and latrines for male and female workers, educational facilities for the child of workers, etc. Besides these, the state government has authorised to look after the hours of work, rest intervals, canteen facilities, payment of sickness benefits, maternity benefits, and age limit of workers (Roy and Biswas, 2018). The provisions of the act have not been abided by the planters. The

planters have failed to supply even the minimum requirements to the workers which ultimately affect the harmonious industrial relations of the industry. There are several instances of workers' violent behaviour across the tea-producing belt of India. In the case of West Bengal, the state government also failed to implement the PLA in tea plantations. Management of tea plantation always argued that the industry is passing through a period of crisis, but all through the tea boom phase of the 1990s, not a single tea plantation management shared their part of the profit with workers (Dey and Roy, 2019). Workers are now taking the path of the strike on the matter of wages hike and other benefits which is mentioned in the PLA. However, compliance of labour laws is very crucial not only to meet the requirement of the legislation but also to win worker support (Prakash et al., 2020).

In most of the tea estates, workers are not in a position to protest against the malpractices of the garden management. Taking this opportunity, plantation management has been depriving workers for various reasonable facilities. Moreover, nearly all workers are economically feeble. Therefore, they are not in a position to stand against the malpractice of management by the help of legislative measures. Accordingly, the labour community measurably fails to establish a good industrial relation. Lack of cooperation and coordination among labours within the tea plantation and with other tea plantation has made them vulnerable (Saikia and Kaur, 2018). There also exists an inequality of class and gender in the Indian tea industry which also influences the industrial relations. There are effects of glass ceiling for women (GCW) on the career progression of women working (Sharma and Kaur, 2020) on the industrial relations in the tea plantations. Passive role of the authority and low level of social welfare are the major causes of pitiable work conditions, particularly of the health hazards of women workers (Duara and Mallick, 2019). However, in these days, tea planters in the North Bengal region are taking subtle strategy which is deployment of casual work forces to avoid huge responsibilities (Wenner, 2020). From 1972 to 2004, casual worker percentage increased from 9% to 18% in some selected tea plantations in Darjeeling (Thapa, 2012). In 2012, informal workers made up 25.7% of the total workers of tea plantations in North Bengal (Wenner, 2020). As a result, companies that were earlier held responsible for the health, safety and welfare (Iyer et al., 2020) of their workers have abandoned them, leaving them in highly vulnerable positions (Roy, 2020) which has ultimately affected the relationship between management and worker in the tea plantations.

4 Hypotheses of the study

- H₀ There will be no significant prediction of industrial relations by the management aspect, employment issue, welfare aspect, parental care aspect and maintenance aspect.
- H₁ There will be significant prediction of industrial relations by the management aspect, employment issue, welfare aspect, parental care aspect and maintenance aspect.

5 Objectives of the study

From the existing review of the literature, following objectives of the study has been framed. The central objectives are listed under:

- 1 To find out the factors responsible for the industrial relations in the tea plantation industry in the Darjeeling, Terai, and Dooars regions of India.
- 2 To determine the extent of impact of those factors in shaping the present deteriorated industrial relations scenarios of the tea industry of Darjeeling, Terai, and Dooars regions of India.

6 Methodology of the study

6.1 Sources of data

The study is mainly based on the primary data. The primary data collection has been done through the questionnaire. The primary data has been obtained from the workers. At the time of collection of the primary data, the questions were translated into the local language so as to make them understand.

6.2 Sampling method

Stratified random sampling method has been used to collect the data in the study. In the study, the stratum has been selected on the basis of locations of tea plantations. Darjeeling Hills, Terai, and Dooars are the strata of the study. Finally, the sample has been selected randomly from each stratum.

6.3 Sample size

In the study, only labour class of workforces has been considered since they are the heart and soul of tea plantations. Hence, they are the sample respondents of this study. However, initially, 500 respondents were approached to have their opinion for the purpose of the study but only 306 respondents were provided their feedback. Hence, said 306 respondents are the sample for the study. Thus, the response rate is about 61%. Finally, analysis has done on the basis of the responses from the 306 respondents.

6.4 Identification of the variables

From the available literature, 22 variables have been found out to be strongly associated with the industrial relations of the tea plantation industry. Out of these 22 variables, 19 variables (recruitment system, promotion of workers, wage rate and mode of payment, payment of bonus and its rate, incentives system, payment of gratuity and gratuity dues, retrenchments system of labourers, unionism, grievance handling procedure, drinking water facilities, latrine facilities, availability of medical care, canteen facilities, crèches facilities, education for the children, arrangement of house accommodation, the quantity of ration and its frequency, availability of non-statutory benefits, management activities) were identified by Goowalla (2012) and Medok and Goowalla (2015) in their study. In

the subsequent year, Roy (2017) studied with 17 variables out of which 14 variables were the same variables which were identified by Goowalla (2012) and Medok and Goowalla (2015). However, three new variables have been identified by Roy (2017) in his study and these are political inference, participative the scheme, and selection of tea workers. Thus, including all, 22 variables have been used in the study. Further, these variables have been measured by using the Likert five-point scales.

6.5 Scale selection

The survey includes ‘measurement of attitude’ of the tea labourers by using five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where, 1 implies ‘strongly disagree’, 2 implies ‘disagree’, 3 implies ‘not agree nor disagree’, 4 implies ‘agree’ and 5 implies ‘strongly agree’.

7 Data analysis and discussions

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 22 was applied to conduct factor and multiple regression analysis. Factor analysis result explores five distinct factors of industrial relations and multiple regression analysis highlights the relationship between five different factors of industrial relations with industrial relations.

According to Table 1, the value of alpha is .823 since the rule of thumb is that the value of alpha should be somewhere between 0 and 1. If the calculated alpha value is nearer to 1.00, this implies that the superior of internal uniformity of the items is evaluated. Hence, our calculated alpha value (.823) is significantly desirable.

Table 1 Reliability test for the items related to factors affecting to industrial relations

<i>Reliability statistics</i>	
<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>N of items</i>
0.823	22

In the study, 22 variables identified affect the industrial relations. In fact, this is difficult to deal with 22 numbers of variables. Hence, factor analysis has been chosen for the purpose of clubbing said variables into a few groups which will be convenient to use. For this purpose, KMO statistics have been considered to decide the appropriateness of the dataset for factor analysis. If KMO is 0.60 or higher, factor analysis can be done.

From Table 2, it has noticed that the KMO value is .714. It implies that the sample size is adequate. Further, it has noticed that the significant value is .000 which is less than 0.05. Hence, Bartlett's test is satisfactory and finally factor analysis can be done.

Table 2 KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO measure of sample adequacy		.714
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate χ^2	5,547.397
	DoF	231
	Significance	0.000

Table 3 Total variance explained

Components	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent	Total	Percent of variance	Cumulative percent
1	5.585	27.934	27.934	6.585	27.934	29.934	5.062	23.010	23.010
2	4.860	19.543	47.477	3.860	19.543	47.477	3.693	16.787	39.796
3	2.377	10.803	58.280	2.377	10.803	58.280	2.816	12.798	52.594
4	1.916	8.709	66.989	1.916	8.709	66.989	2.267	10.304	62.898
5	1.288	5.856	72.845	1.288	5.856	72.845	2.188	9.947	72.845

Table 3 has disclosed that five factors can explain 72.845% of the cumulative variance. Therefore, the majority of the characteristic of the collected data can be expressed through said five factors. Here, in the present study, the principle component analysis for extraction and varimax with Kaiser normalisation for rotation method. Table 4 shows the variables which have been clubbed together and take the form of factors.

Table 4 Rotated component matrix

	<i>Component</i>				
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
Q15	.859				
Q11	.855				
Q14	.813				
Q16	.765				
Q21	.746				
Q12	.734				
Q22					
Q23		.808			
Q25		.791			
Q13		.781			
Q10		.658			
Q20			.790		
Q29			.676		
Q30			.671		
Q19					
Q31					
Q26				.886	
Q27				.604	
Q34					.678
Q18					.621
Q18					
Q17					

Table 4 has explained that the first factor of industrial relations clubbed with the variables of incentives rate, promotion opportunity, recruitment system, wages rates, gratuity payment and grievances handling procedure. This is named as 'management aspect'. The second factor clubbed with unionism, bonus payment and rate of bonus, retrenchment of workers, latrine, and urinals facilities at work. This factor is named as 'employment issue'. The third factor clubbed with medical facilities, crèches facilities, and education facilities of children is named as 'welfare aspect'. The fourth factor is clubbed with drinking water facilities and medical care. This factor is labelled as 'parental care aspect'. The fifth factor clubbed with canteen facilities, the quantity of rations and its frequency, and housing facilities. This factor is named as 'maintenance aspect'.

7.1 Degree of influence of the factors on industrial relations

In this segment, an attempt has been made to appraise the impact of the identified factors on industrial relations in the tea industry with the help of multiple regression analysis.

Here, the dependent variable is industrial relations and all the identified factors from the factor analysis are the independent variables which are management aspects, employment issue, welfare aspect, parental care aspect and maintenance aspect.

7.2 Multiple regression analysis

The result of multiple regression analysis is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Model summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Change statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R square change	F change	df1	df2	Sig. F change	
1	.686	.471	.462	2.75801	.471	53.456	5	300	.000	1.753

Notes: Predictors: (constant), F5, F4, F2, F3, F1.
Dependent variable: IR.

Table 5 has provided multiple regression between the factors of industrial relations and industrial relations shows that factors of industrial relations contribute significantly to the model ($F = 53.456$, $p < .010$) account for 46.2% variance in industrial relations. As a predictive analysis, multiple regressions are used in the study to show the relations between one dependent variable and five independent variables. In the study, independent variables explain 46.2% fluctuation of the dependent variable. However, the model is fit since the value of *sig. F change* is .000, *ANOVA sig. value* is .000 (Table 6), and finally, the value of *Durbin-Watson* is 1.753 which is close to 2 (Field, 2009).

Table 6 ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2033.099	5	406.620	53.456	.000 ^b
	Residual	2281.986	300	7.607		
	Total	4315.085	305			

Notes: ^aDependent variable: IR.

^bPredictors: (constant), F5, F4, F2, F3, F1.

From Table 6, it is observed that the significance level is 0.000 ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$). This confirms that the regression model has a probability of less than 0.001% of giving the wrong prediction. Hence, the regression model is a suitable prediction model for explaining the independent variables.

However, Table 7 reveals that one unit changes in 'management aspect' lead to .519 units of positive changes in industrial relations. One unit changes in 'employment issues' lead to .366 units of positive changes in industrial relations. One unit changes in the 'welfare aspect' lead to .363 units of positive changes in industrial relations. One unit change in 'parental care aspect' leads to .257 units of negative changes in industrial relations. One unit change in 'maintenance aspect' leads to .266 units of negative changes in industrial relations. In other words, from the coefficients table, we have found that

management aspects are having the highest unstandardised coefficient of .519. So, 'management aspect' is having the highest positive impact on industrial relations followed by the 'employment issue' and the 'welfare aspect'.

Table 7 Coefficients^a

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardised coefficients</i>		<i>Standardised coefficients</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
1 (Constant)	22.495	1.412		15.931	.000
F1	.519	.045	.599	11.622	.000
F2	.366	.053	.304	6.954	.000
F3	.363	.119	.135	3.047	.003
F4	-.257	.095	-.121	-2.713	.007
F5	-.266	.124	-.109	-2.150	.032

Note: ^aDependent variable: IR.

Table 7 reveals that all the p values are significant ($p \leq 0.05$). Hence, the stated hypothesis, there will be no significant prediction of industrial relations by the management aspect, employment issue, welfare aspect, parental care aspect and maintenance aspect, is rejected.

Hence, the multiple regression equation can be expressed as:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{IR} = & 22.495 + 0.519 (\text{Management aspect}) + 0.366 (\text{Employment issue}) \\ & + 0.363 (\text{Welfare aspect}) - 0.257 (\text{Parental care aspect}) \\ & - 0.266 (\text{Maintenance aspect}). \end{aligned}$$

8 Findings of the study

Though the tea industry provides the second largest employment opportunity in India, the existing literature does not provide a lucid scenario about the industrial relations in the tea plantation industry in the Darjeeling, Terai, and Dooars regions in particular. This study provides illumination on the possible influences of industrial relations in the Indian tea industry.

However, this empirical study has explored five crucial factors which have a profound impact on the industrial relations in the tea plantation industry in the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars regions, India. These factors are 'management aspect', 'employment issue', 'welfare aspect', 'parental care aspect' and 'maintenance aspect'. The study has revealed that 'management aspect', 'employment issues' and 'welfare aspect' have positive influence on the industrial relations. The 'management aspect' has the highest potential to explain industrial relations, followed by the 'employment issue' and 'welfare aspect'. Further, the study has found that the 'parental care aspect' and 'maintenance aspect' negatively influence the industrial relations in the tea plantation industry in the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars regions, India.

The study has found that the 'management aspect' has composed of the variables such as incentives rate, promotion opportunity, recruitment system, wages rates, gratuity payment, and grievances handling procedure. In regression analysis, it also found that

this factor have the highest influencing power to predict the dependent variable, i.e., industrial relations. The result is in line with the findings of the study conducted in some selected tea estates of Assam (e.g., Goowalla, 2012). The second influencing factor named as ‘employment issue’ which has clubbed unionism, bonus payment and rate of bonus, retrenchment of workers, latrine, and urinals facilities at work. This factor has the positive influencing power on the independent variable. Such results are in line with recent contributions (e.g., Roy, 2020; Roy and Biswas, 2018) in the literature of industrial relations in Indian tea Industry.

The study further validates that ‘management aspect’, ‘employment issue’, and ‘welfare aspects’ are the profound factors which determine the relationships among workers, government, and employers in the tea plantation industry in the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars of Indian.

9 Conclusions and implications

The Indian tea industry is passing through one of the toughest phases. The financial health of the industry has been severely affected due to a set of issues; erratic industrial relations is one of them. In this viewpoint, the present study on industrial relations is perhaps able to provide some oxygen to the Indian tea industry. However, as per the study, there are five prime factors of industrial relations in the Indian tea industry of Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars. All these five factors have no equal impact in shaping the industrial relations. This is imperative for the policy-makers in the tea industry of Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars to stress on the most influencing factors that have been established in this study in order to let the industry survive in the long run.

Hence, to maintain amicable relations between the management of tea plantations and worker, this is advisable that the policy-makers in tea plantation industry as well as the management of tea plantations should give priority of these three factors. As the ‘management aspect’ has the height impact on shaping industrial relations in the tea plantation industry, the appropriate authority should consider it first. The wage rate is the prime issue in the tea industry of the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars. The prevailing daily rate of wage is abysmally low (around Rs.170) in the tea industry of the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars compared to the South Indian tea industry. Determination of the wage rate in these two regions is different. In Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars, through collective bargaining wage rate is determined, while in South India, it is notified as per the provisions of the Minimum Wage Act. So, in Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars, the wage rate should be determined as per the provision of law. Talking about the recruitment system of labour, the colonial system of labour recruitment is still present. Under this system, no fresh recruitment is done. When someone retires from job or dies, in that position their dependents get job. Since the number of job position for permanent workers remain the same over the years, no new position is created. Promotions of labour to the next position are rare in the tea plantations in this region. There is no uniform rate of incentives of the tea labours in Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars. In addition to these, the other identified burning issues are bonus rate, unionism, medical facilities, crèches, education facilities of children, etc. Thus, due care should be given by the policy-makers as well as the plantation management on these identified burning issues. Finally, the present turbulence of the tea industry in the Darjeeling, Terai and Dooars may be overcome by handling or managing properly the identified issues in the study.

However, the same model of the study may be conducted on the whole tea plantation industry in India. Further, the other plantations where the PLA, 1951 are applied, the same model of study may be conducted.

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