

Perception of Labourers’ of the Tea Estates towards the Implementation of Welfare Facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

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ABSTRACT: The paper draws a conclusion on the perception of labourers’ of the Tea Estates of Barak Valley towards the level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. Hypothesis is used to test whether the perception among the labourers’ differ. Reliability test is done to test the reliability of the data and further mean and standard deviation is used to know the extent in which the labourers’ are satisfied. The test concludes unto moderate level of implementation of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and every labour has their own perception towards the facilities received.

KEYWORDS: *Labours, Welfare, Perception, Plantation Labour Act, 1951*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Plantation Labour Act 1951 was handed on 15th October 1951. The Act is relevant in the whole nation except Jammu & Kashmir in all plantations like tea, coffee, rubber and cinchona having 25 acres or more land underneath plantation (Plantation Labour Act, 1951).

The Act used to be amended in 1960 as a way to make the Act more potent notably in regard to (a) wellness and welfare (b) hours of work, rest, intervals and many others (c) depart with pay and (d) restrictions on employment of women workers and kids in hazardous works and at night time.

As regards wellbeing and welfare the employers has to provide pure consuming water to all workers and furnish latrines and urinals of prescribed necessities separately for men and women employees. The scientific amenities ought to be offered to all employees free of fee housing lodgings have to be supplied to all everlasting workers. Additionally different essential substances like umbrella, rain coat, blankets, sandals, hearth, timber ration at subsidized rates and so on, have got to be provided under the Act (Plantation Labour Act, 1951).

The concept and perception of “Labour welfare” is dynamic and resilient (Ali, 2002). It changes most effectively with times, regions, country, enterprise, social values, the extent of industrialization, the huge-ranging socio-economic progress of population and political ideologies based at meticulous moments. The term “labour welfare” is a very important element for promoting the labourers as they occupy one of the most important parts and parcel of factors of production (Ali, 2002).

II. IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES ON LABOURERS’ PERCEPTION

A study taking into consideration the social economic and other factors towards the society expansion is observed differently by men and women (Essendi & Madise, 2014). A study done in a steel plant in India proves among various demographic variable like age, experience, designation, location; location as an important demographic variable affecting job risk perception and work injury in the plant (Basha & Maiti, 2013). Thus demographic variable needs to be considered in studies as they have an important role to play.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Labour welfare is an extension to the word welfare, which mainly aims at the well being of the labours. These welfare acts as an additional component in industrialization that provides a sense of relief and contentment to the labours. Welfare may be in terms of monetary or non-monetary. This component is very important as it increases efficiency of labours giving a rise in production. Welfare enhances the performance of

labours that in turn improves their competitiveness in global market. Labours are hired, trained and compensated, but their retention in an organisation depends mainly upon how well they are treated in an organisation, i.e., their well being. The government comes up with some statutory legislation from time to time to bring about uniformity in the basic amenities available to labours. Ignorance among the labours leads to exploitation on the part of employer. The welfare approach is necessary as industrialization influenced humans causing social and psychological distress (Ganapathy, 2014).

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“Welfare is another expression of well-being” (Kaur, 2017). The opposing element in the implementation of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is the social cost, which affects its practicability (Joseph & Viswanathan, 2017).

Women workers are less aware than the male workers; steps should be taken to make the females aware about the benefits available for them so that they are equally in good care as men (Garg & Jain, 2013).

The main two issues faced by the tea plantation worker is the terrific state in which they are breathing and the amount they are being paid for the work rendered (Srinivasan, 2016).

A study done in the Dooars region made us aware that tea estates being under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 still live in close quarters and not bad conditions which disposes them off to countless diseases (Shaktan, 2016).

Women have shown positivity towards quality of work life as compared to men (K.D. & Anand, 2015).

V. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this chapter is to analyze labourers' perception on the adoption of the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 in Tea Estates of Barak Valley.

VI. HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis is tested in this chapter

- There is no significant difference in perception among the labourers' in connection with the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 adopted in the tea estates.

VII. RESEARCH QUESTION

The answer to following research question is sought in this chapter.

- What is the labourers' perception on the welfare scheme the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 adopted in Tea Estates of Barak Valley?

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Redman and Mory research is a “systematized effort to gain a new knowledge”. “Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem” (Kothari, 2004).

a. Nature of the study: The present study is **empirical** in nature considering the tea estates of Barak Valley.

b. Sources of Data- The study relies both on primary and secondary sources of information. Secondary data would be collected from various journals, articles, magazines, newspapers, newsletters, periodicals, reports, websites, etc. The primary data will be collected from the labourers to be considered in the sample with the help of structured questionnaire.

c. Identification of research population- The study considers 13773 labourers of 9 tea estates considering 3 each from Cachar, Karimganj and Hailakandi districts of Barak Valley as study area.

Table 1: The population of the study

Districts	Name of tea estate having production more than 10 lakh kilograms (in 2013)	Production in 2013 (kg)	Total Workers
Cachar	Dewan	1913865	1833
	Burtoll	1767875	1590
	Koomber	1655865	1213
Hailakandi	Aenakhall	1617156	1197
	Dholai	1454298	1143
	Lallamokh	1180398	690
Karimganj	DullabCherra	1614113	2489
	SephiljuriBheel	1586349	1568
	Hattikhera	1084827	2050
TOTAL			13773

Source: Personally collected from the Tea Board of India

- d. **Population of the study-** For the purpose of the study total 13773 labourers from 9 tea estates (3 tea estates from 3 districts of Barak Valley) are considered as the population of the study.
- e. **Determining the sample size-** At 95% confidence level and 5% confidence interval, if the population size is 13773, then the sample size would be 374. This sample size has been determined using the sample size calculator.

Table 2: Determining sample size

At Confidence Level	95%
At Confidence Interval	5%
Population Size	13773
Sample Size	374

Source: calculated using the sample size calculator (<http://www.calculator.net/sample-size-calculator.html>)

- f. **Sampling process-** Multi-stage sampling method has been adopted in the study. Selection of tea estates constitutes the first stage; selection of labourers in the second stage. Selection of the tea estates has been done on the basis of production of tea (more than 10 lakh kilograms for the year 2013). Out of 58 tea estates in 3 districts of Barak Valley, only 16 tea estates produced more than 10 lakh kilograms of tea for the year 2013 in which Cachar district having 10, Hailakandi having 3 and karimganj having 3. Now to make uniformity from each district 3 tea estates are considered. From Cachar district, out of 10 tea estates best 3 would be considered (based on the production).
- g. **Selection of ultimate sample units (i.e., stage two) -** After determining the sample size using the sample size calculator, the selection of labourers is done on the basis of Simple Random Sampling (SRS). As the sample size is 374 and there are 9 tea estates to be considered, so from each tea estate, minimum 41 and maximum 42 (as $374/9=41.56$) labourers are interviewed with the help of the structured questionnaire. Further, 9 managers of those tea estates (1 from each tea estate) are also interviewed with the help of the structured questionnaire. So, in the present study managers of select 9 tea estates and 374 labourers of those tea estates is considered as samples. The Simple Random Sampling method is adopted for data collection from the labourers.
- h. **Development of primary data collection tool (questionnaire)-** A set of questionnaire is developed with the view to collect primary data, which is administered the perception of the labourers of those tea estates regarding the actual implementation of the welfare schemes.
- i. **Pilot survey-** After conducting the pilot survey among the labourers the questionnaire is finalized. Suitable Reliability tested is performed.
- j. **Data analysis techniques-** Collected data would be analyzed with the help of suitable techniques particularly using basic statistical techniques and descriptive statistic. For testing the hypotheses, mean and standard deviation is performed according to the requirement of the study.

IX. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

9.1 Measuring the Perception of labourers' towards the level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

A. Reliability of the tool

Table 3: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Based on	N of Items
.888	.900		9

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

The reliability of the scale is performed and coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha was found to be .888 for 9 items considered for the study. The items considered fall under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 like housing from section 15, creches from section 12, medical care from section 10, canteen from section 11, drinking water from section 8, education from section 14, protective clothing from section 17, recreational facilities from section 13, conservancy from section 9. A very high value of Cronbach's Alpha (0.888) is indicative of very high degree of reliability of scale and it also shows that the items are highly correlated. Cronbach's Alpha of more than .70 is considered to be good measure of reliability of scale (Nunnally, 1978). A high value of Cronbach's Alpha also indicates that the items considered for measuring the latent variable are actually measuring the latent variable.

B. Mean and Standard Deviation

The two basic statistics (i.e. mean and standard deviation) for measuring the perception of labourers' towards the level of implementation of welfare facilities under the plantation labour act for the study are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Item Statistics

Item Statistics		
Particulars	Mean	Std. Deviation
Housing	2.3942	0.69149
Crèche	2.5026	0.69576
Medical Care	2.5053	0.69954
Canteen	2.6032	0.85946
Drinking Water	2.6323	0.49369
Education	2.7328	0.4549
Protective Clothing	2.8122	0.81051
Recreational facility	2.8571	0.63556
Conservancy	3.1323	0.89707

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are various facilities available for the labourers' under The Plantation Labour Act. Out of the various facilities housing, crèche and medical care is considered to be implemented relatively more as perceived by the labourers' and facilities like protective clothing, recreational and conservancy is considered to be implemented relatively less as perceived by the labourers'.

C. Scale Statistics

Table 5: Scale Statistics

Scale Statistics			
Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
24.1720	21.363	4.62200	9

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are total 9 numbers of items and each item is noted down based on the responses from the respondent using Likert scale. The responses were from very high to not at all. For the response of very high, a score of 1 was assigned. Similarly for the response of high, moderate, low and not at all a score 2, 3, 4 and 5 were assigned respectively. Thus, for a scale consisting of 9 items the maximum possible score is 45 (9x5) and minimum possible score is 9 (9x1). The range is 36[45(max)-9(min)]. Now if, 36 is divided by 5, 7.2 is obtained. This 7.2 is added to 9(lowest possible score), then the range of 9 – 16.2 is obtained. Similarly, other intervals are obtained and several layers of managers' perception are obtained which is given in table 6 and its interpretation is also given as follows:

Table 6: Interpretation table

Interpretation table	
9 - 16.2	Very High
16.2 – 23.4	High
23.4 – 30.6	Moderate
30.6 – 37.8	Low
37.8 – 45	Not at all

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

By looking at the scale statistics the mean score is 24.17, the mean score falls under the moderate level of perception towards the welfare schemes and facilities available for them under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951.

Thus, it can be inferred that there is moderate level of implementation as perceived by the labourers' towards the welfare schemes and facilities available for them under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951.

9.2 Impact of Demographic Variables on Labours Perception towards implementation of welfare provisions of Factories Act, 1948

Table 7: Gender and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

			GENDER		Total
			MALE	FEMALE	
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	2	42	44
		% of Total	0.5%	11.1%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	60	22	82
		% of Total	15.9%	5.8%	21.7%
	MODERATE	Count	140	108	248
		% of Total	37.0%	28.6%	65.6%
	LOW	Count	0	4	4
		% of Total	0.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Total		Count	202	176	378
		% of Total	53.4%	46.6%	100.0%

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 11.1% of females saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 1.1% of females saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between gender and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that gender has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the above findings are also traceable in the population.

Table 8: Age and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

			AGE				Total
			14-25	26-35	36-45	46 AND ABOVE	
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	0	0	26	18	44
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	4.8%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	0	18	30	34	82
		% of Total	0.0%	4.8%	7.9%	9.0%	21.7%
	MODERATE	Count	8	89	132	19	248
		% of Total	2.1%	23.5%	34.9%	5.0%	65.6%
	LOW	Count	0	3	1	0	4
		% of Total	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Total		Count	8	110	189	71	378
		% of Total	2.1%	29.1%	50.0%	18.8%	100.0%

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 6.9% of labourers' of age 36-45 years saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 0.8% of labourers' of age 26-35 years saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between age and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that age has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the above findings are also traceable in the population.

Table 9: Income and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

			INCOME			Total
			1001-5000	5001-10000	10001 AND ABOVE	
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	43	0	1	44
		% of Total	11.4%	0.0%	0.3%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	75	3	4	82
		% of Total	19.8%	0.8%	1.1%	21.7%
	MODERATE	Count	239	8	1	248
		% of Total	63.2%	2.1%	0.3%	65.6%
	LOW	Count	3	1	0	4
		% of Total	0.8%	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%
Total		Count	360	12	6	378

	% of Total	95.2%	3.2%	1.6%	100.0%
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Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 11.4% of labourers' of income between INR 1001-5000 saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 0.8% of labourers' of income between INR 1001-5000 saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between income and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is not significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.015 which is more than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that income has no influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951.

Table 10: Experience and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

		EXPERIENCE					Total
		LESS THAN 1 YEAR	1-5 YEAR	6-10 YEAR	10 YEAR AND ABOVE		
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	0	0	0	44	44
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	11.6%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	0	3	23	56	82
		% of Total	0.0%	0.8%	6.1%	14.8%	21.7%
	MODERATE	Count	1	50	95	102	248
		% of Total	0.3%	13.2%	25.1%	27.0%	65.6%
	LOW	Count	0	0	2	2	4
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.5%	1.1%
Total	Count	1	53	120	204	378	
	% of Total	0.3%	14.0%	31.7%	54.0%	100.0%	

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 11.6% of labourers' having experience of 10 years and above saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 0.5% of labourers' having experience of both 6-10 years and 10 years and above saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between experience and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that experience has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the above findings are also traceable in the population.

Table 11: District and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

		DISTRICT			Total	
		KARIMGANJ	HAILAKAN	CACHAR		
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	0	0	44	44
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	11.6%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	0	23	59	82
		% of Total	0.0%	6.1%	15.6%	21.7%
	MODERATE	Count	122	103	23	248
		% of Total	32.3%	27.2%	6.1%	65.6%
	LOW	Count	4	0	0	4
		% of Total	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	Count	126	126	126	378	
	% of Total	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0%	

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 11.6% of labourers' of district Cachar saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 1.1% of labourers' of district Karimganj saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between district and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that district has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the above findings are also traceable in the population.

Table 12: Tea Estate and Labourers' perception towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

			TEAESTATE									Total
			SEPHINJURI BHEEL	DULLABC HERA	HATH IKHIR A	AENA KHAL	DHOLAI	LALAM UKH	BURT OLL	KOOM BER	DEWA N	
Level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951	VERY HIGH	Count	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	42	0	44
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	11.1%	0.0%	11.6%
	HIGH	Count	0	0	0	23	0	0	18	0	41	82
		% of Total	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	10.8%	21.7%
	MODE	Count	41	42	39	19	42	42	22	0	1	248
		% of Total	10.8%	11.1%	10.3%	5.0%	11.1%	11.1%	5.8%	0.0%	0.3%	65.6%
	RATE	Count	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
		% of Total	0.3%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
Total	Count	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	378	
	% of Total	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%	100.0%	

Source: Compiled from questionnaire

There are 11.1% of labourers' of Koomber Tea Estate saying towards very high level of implementation of the welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 whereas 0.8% of labourers' of Hathikhira Tea Estate saying towards low level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. The association between Tea Estate and level of implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 is tested using Cramer's V test and it is found that the association between these two variables is significant since the p-value of Cramer's V test is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 (5% level of significance).

Therefore, it can be inferred that Tea Estate has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951 and since the p-value is less than 0.05, it can be concluded that the above findings are also traceable in the population.

X. CONCLUSION

The Plantation Labour Act, 1951, has moderate level of implementation towards the welfare schemes and facilities as perceived by the labour. Under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951, it's seen that demographic variables like gender, age, experience, district, tea estates has an influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of welfare facilities. Whereas, income has no influence on the perception of labourers' towards implementation of the act.

With the change of demographic variables needs and wants also change of the people and thus even their performance in the organisation differs. As no two people are same, thus, their necessity and willingness is also not the same.

The various factors for the retention of employees are supervisor support, employee communication, compensation, recognition and rewards, work environment and career development opportunities. All these factors indirectly aim at the welfare of the employee and the study reveals there is a positive correlation between the factors of retention and the demographic variables (Agyeman & Ponnaiah, 2014).

Demographic variable impacts the perceived risk. People with different age, gender, social class have different perceptions (Mitchell & Boustani, 2014). Monetary benefit is not the source of happiness, non monetary benefit such as improved health conditions, non financial goals contributes to the happiness of a person, income does not explain the perception of welfare to great extent (Easterlin, 1974).

Reforming welfare brings change in the rights and duties of the beneficiaries. It affects the emotions of the labours and gives them a reason for encouragement (Tokens, Grootegood, & Duyvendak, 2013). When employees are treated as assets organizational performance in high and when the company is aiming as controlling the cost performance will be poor (Nishii, Lepak, & Schneider, 2011). Employees are highly delicate which need constant welfare measures for their progress and performance in the field (Rajkuar, 2014). There is strong correlation between labour welfare and job satisfaction (Souza, 2009).

One can buy a man's time, buy a man's physical presence at a given place but you can't buy his enthusiasm, initiative and loyalty, which come from his willingness to work. A person is willing to work when his need are satisfied (Bhardwaj S. D., 2011).

The give and take policy is very much followed here. Employers giving proper welfare facilities to employees will lead to employees giving equal attention, honesty towards employers work.

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