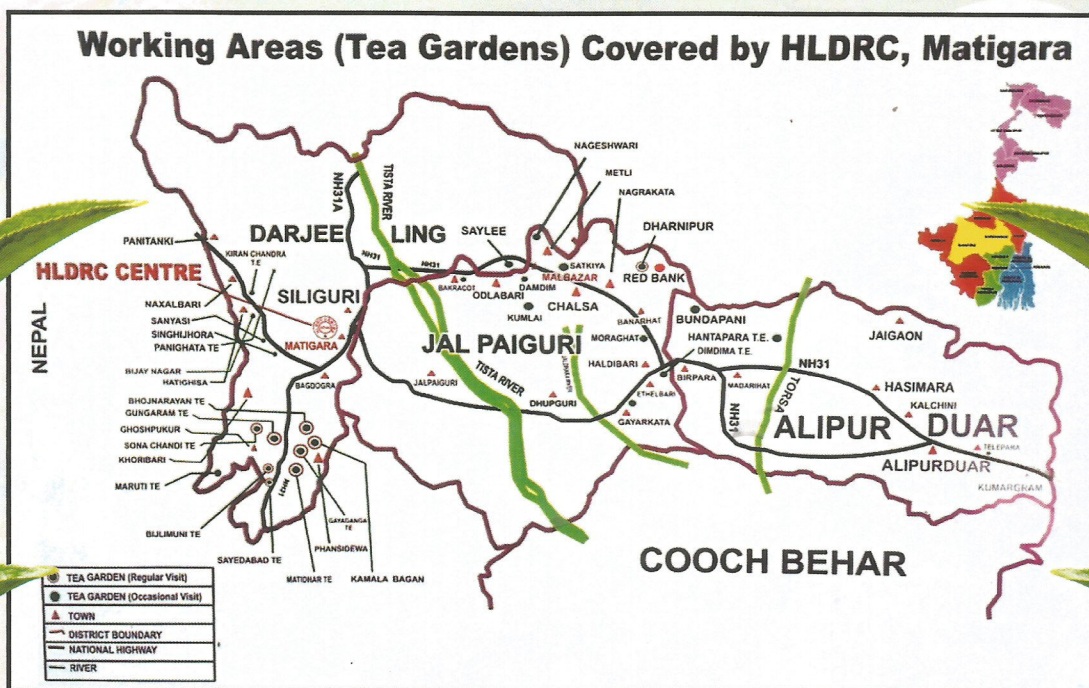


HLDRRC

SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES

Program Quarterly Report 01

JANUARY-MARCH 2022



Director's Message

I, on the behalf of Human Life Development & Research Centre (HLDRRC), would like to place my gratitude for taking initiatives in publishing HLDRRC-Social Action Initiatives a quarterly publication on the progress of the various programs in HLDRRC.

The initiatives intend to share the various programs and its outcome where the marginalized are on their process of being empowered. It also extends social, cultural, economic and educational impact that is envisioned through a concerted efforts made by all stakeholders in the journey of HLDRRC in North Bengal as an unique ministry of Darjeeling Jesuit province. We express our deepest gratitude to Canadian Jesuits International (CJI), Jesuit Missions UK, SOS-India and Hans Peter and all collaborators for their continuous support and encouragement.



Fr. Pascal Xalxo, S.J.

Livelihood Capacity building and skills training program for tea plantation workers in North Bengal

This program is supported by Canadian Jesuits International (CJI) from the birth of Human Life Development & Research centre (HLDRC) as an important role of its growth since 2013.

Programs review-

LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM THROUGH WOMEN SELF HELP GROUPS-



Tea garden workers families face a huge health, economic and educational crisis due to multiple negative impacts of low daily wages of Rs. 202/- in this high price rise of essential food commodities, the devastating impact of Covid 19 pandemic on tea workers increases more suffering to the families. On this background HLDRC has increased its livelihood program through pigs farm setting up by Women SHGs in Gayagunga Kochea line in Darjeeling district. About 20 piglets will be nurtured in this

farm unit. Mrs Nishita Lakra, the program Coordinator also provides training to SHGs.



JOB TRAINING (COMPUTER HARDWARE):-

A batch of 12 students in Computer Hardware have completed the course in the month of March 2022. The job interview & placement is on its progress. Six students are already placed in jobs around Siliguri town and the rest are still on the process of being placed. HLDRC has completed 4 batches since 2020. The job placement base line data record is about 70% success so far, however we plan to reach 100% in coming batches. Mr. Sundeep Lakra is the Computer Hardware teacher, Supported by Miss Chandni Baraik on Computer software classes.



PROVIDENT FUND, GRATUITY HELP DESK

All the employees of a plantation or a tea factory receiving monthly salaries and the daily wages workers are eligible to become member of the scheme and entitled to avail the provident benefits. The employees contributes @ 12% of their wages including dearness allowances, value of food concessions and amount received for plucking tea leaves. The employer contributes at the same rate. It is the duty of the employer to deduct the contributions from the employee and deposit the collected amount along with his own share of contribution into the Board's Account within 30 days. If any employer fails to deposit the said amount of P.F. contribution within the prescribed time limit, loss of interest @15% p.a. is charged on that employer for the defaulting period. The members Provident Fund deposits are credited with interest at the rate declared by the



board every year.

HLDRC works rigorously on PF, Gratuity and pension schemes as its social and economic outreach to the closed and sick tea gardens as priority works of HLDRC however it extend its support to running tea gardens as well. During

the last three months in Nagrakata project cluster unit about 500 PF cases were solved through HLDRC HELP DESK on PF, Pension schemes Coordinated by Mr. Bikash Barla and Team.

The approximate the total value of Rs. 8 Crores was credited in their bank account. In Terai region the same HELP DESK is carried out at HLDRC Matigara with Training of Volunteers Youth to work for these social schemes. Mr. Lazrus Ekka, the retired PF reinforcement officer continues to provide training program in HLDRC and he also takes up cases from his locality. Fr Pascal is exploring ways and means to push reforms to address this huge crisis among the tea workers.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY TRAINING TO ALL STAFF & VOLUNTEERS



It was realized that every institution, private or government must have Child safeguarding policy with its executive officers in order to address the safety of the children and vulnerable adults. HLDRC started its training to all staff, teachers, and volunteers in 2019 and renewed it in November, 2021 as well. HLDRC has its 30 study centers with about 60 volunteers' teachers who are engaged in running study centers as part of the community development program.

All staff, volunteer teachers have completed signing the child safeguarding policy agreement.



CHILDREN STUDY CENTRES

There has been a consistent progress in addressing the educational problems at tea gardens in plains of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts in North Bengal. There is a huge gap in quality education between tea garden students and others in tea producing region in North Bengal. HLDRC is having 30 study Centers in Terai and Dooars region with four cluster approach to manage the program. About 1000 students are in these educational programs with students from class I to class XII. There has been a concerted effort to develop a new ways of educating the poor Adivasi and marginalized students in and around tea gardens.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION

Last two years International Women's Day was celebrated in small scale due to Covid 19 pandemic. This year HLDRC took initiative to organize IWD at three locations. Rajdeep Hall, Bagdogra was selected for the public celebration in Terai unit.

Lecturer Dipti Priya Kujur from Kalipada Ghose Mahavidyalaya, Bagdogra was the chief guest on the occasion and Gairkata Hindupara Tea Garden location was selected for the celebration and in Bamandanga Tea Estate in Nagrakata was selected for the celebration. The overall impact was good where the theme of the year 2022 "Break the Bias" the strong views were expressed on education, employment, gender equality, social life, wages etc on the occasion.

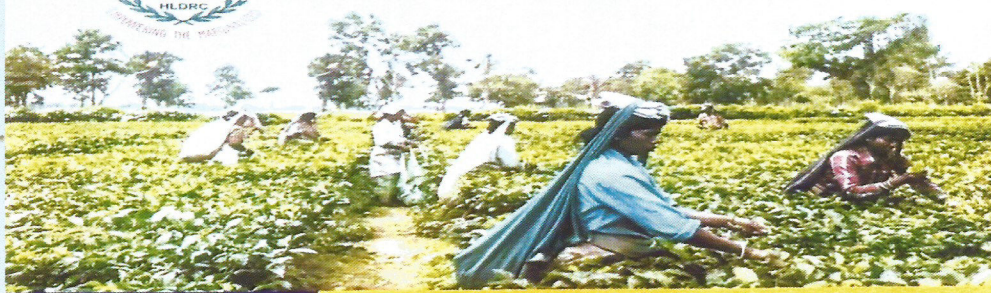


Labour Rights Quarterly Publication / 003

March 2022



चाय श्रमिकों की आवाज



भाग - पहला

चाय श्रमिकों का जमीनी मालिकाना हक

- प्रकाशक
फा. पार्स्कल खलखो ये.स.
- मुख्य संपादक
पौल लकड़ा
- सहायक संपादक
बासील एक्का
- सह संपादक
राज कुमार करयप
लियोस हासापूर्ति
फिरदियुस तिर्की

इतिहास बताता है कि 19वीं शताब्दी के प्रारंभ में 1815-1820 ई. के लगभग अंग्रेजों ने छोटानागपुर (वर्तमान झारखंड), संबल परगना, छत्तीसगढ़ और उड़ीसा के क्षेत्र से आदिवासीयों (डाय, मुंडा, हो, संबाल, बोक वडाईक आदि लोग) को पश्चिम बंगाल के दुबारी-तवाई और असम में लाये थे। सन 1815 ई. में ब्रिटिश सरकार का ध्यान चीन में चाय के बढ़ते व्यापार को देखते हुए भारत में भी चाय का उत्पादन करने की सोची, जिससे पश्चिमी देशों में चाय के व्यापार से आमदनी हो सके।

प्रारंभ में घने जंगल को साफ करना एक विकट समस्या थी, अतः सर्वप्रथम चीन से मजदूर लाये पर वे टिक न सके। स्थानीय मजदूर भी इस काम से पीछे हट गये; पर चाय की खेती के लिए जंगल साफ करना जरूरी था। अदिवारी इस कठिन काम को करने की क्षमता रखते थे। अनुमानतः जंगल साफ करने में 10 से 15 वर्ष लगे होंगे। उस वक्त हजारों की

LABOUR RIGHTS QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

Labour Rights Quarterly publication under HLDRC was started in 2020. However due to global health emergency in 2020-21 the regular publication was disturbed. HLDRC has renewed its programs along with publication of Labour Rights Quarterly Publication of March 2022 “ Land Rights for tea workers” Part-1 is the latest series is on publication..

SOS-INDIA initiatives in Non formal Educational and Community Development Program (CDP)

Since 2007 onwards SOS-India is in collaboration with Darjeeling Jesuits of North Bengal. The first Community Development project was started in Ramjhora tea garden in 2007. Mrs. Patrizia Bianconi, the president of SOS- India is the source of inspiration and great supporter of CDP in tea gardens with multiple programs namely educational program for children and youth, Nutrition program for children, skills training program for youth and Social Agriculture program under village community.

CHILDREN STUDY CENTRES AND NUTRITION PROGRAM

From month of January 2022 HLDRC has started 12 children study centres and one job Training centre under SOS-India Initiatives for Community Development Program. Two centers are upgraded for senior students coaching classes with skills training program



STUDY CENTRES TEACHERS TRAINING

On 24th March 20 teachers from Dooars unit had one day training program at HLDRC branch office unit, to enhance teaching skills by Mr. Basil Ekka as the trainer from HLDRC. The day program was well appreciated by the volunteer teachers. It was decided to have every month review of the program and an ongoing capacity building of the teachers. Fr. Pascal Xalxo himself takes very personal care on this program as a great hope for changes in the lives of the people.



SOCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT (SAP)

Social Agriculture Project is the latest initiatives of HLDRC and SOS-India. This program has evolved in the background of Covid 19 pandemic where there is food shortage due to several times lockdown that led to loss of jobs and works. The high price rise also forced the people to engage themselves in farming activities at their own small plot of land and also by obtaining government permission on vacant land around tea gardens. Now we have 10 village farm units with an average of 10 Acre each for agriculture works.

Thanks to SOS-India for making available of Power tractor that makes the field works easy and bigger area of agriculture program is possible.

Barogharia and Nowghat villages in Darjeeling district have started summer crops like Ladies fingers, beans, tomatoes, pumpkins etc. in 9 bighas and 4 bighas respectively. 6 Women SHGs are engaged in this agriculture programs.



VOCATIONAL & JOB TRAINING

15 Girls are doing Tailoring program in Ramjhora vocational Training centre and 10 students are doing Computer Hardware in Gairkata, HLDRC contact office unit. 24 students are also attending TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES (TCS) on line classes from month of March 2022. We are expecting a good training and job placement from this batch at Gairkata, Dooars unit.



DRINKING WATER PROJECT

During the year 2020 one water project at Ramjhora was installed successfully. The second one is on progress at Dharnipur Tea Estate, one of the closed tea gardens in Jalpaiguri district of W.B. The project site has been finalized and the all legal documents are obtained by the local authority. We hope to complete this project by end of May 2022. The total 60 household and one primary school children with about 200 students will be direct beneficiaries from this project. Work is on progress.



Anti Human Trafficking & Migration Issues

Siliguri town is known as chicken neck of North Bengal that connects seven small states of North East India namely Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Arunachal and Sikkim. It also connects international borders of China, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh. There are large numbers of human trafficking travel roots from Nepal to Siliguri town and from Bangladesh as well. Siliguri is well connected with Train services and road transport linking to all big cities of India. Air services from Bagdogra which is about 5 KM away from Siliguri town is



internationally connected that helps flesh traders easy to operate from the source to destination. This program is supported in collaboration by Jesuit Mission UK as a unique intervention in North Bengal.

HLDRC is well aware of the growing flesh trade and forced migration from tea gardens sources thousands of youth both boys and girls migrate in search of jobs that can give them livelihood. Educated youth do not like to work in tea gardens as the daily wages are extremely low. Tea gardens can no longer attract the present generation in North Bengal and Assam tea workers.

HLDRC has worked out four pronged approaches to address these crucial issues -

A CONTINUOUS SOCIAL AWARENESS

HLDRC has printed 5000 awareness posters to be used for the Anti Human Trafficking awareness. The awareness programs are also carried out through seminars and social media platforms.

Skills/employment Training & Job placement programs of young and vulnerable girls in nursing in Health sectors and other vocational training in Tailoring & Dress Designing, Retail Management. 12 girls have joined in Navajeewan Rural Health centre, Dondajhar for nursing training (March-May).



YOUNG GIRLS & BOYS ATTENDING COMPUTER & SPOKEN ENGLISH COURSES

During this 1st quarter of project 30 young girls are admitted in this skills enhancement/development program. Most of the candidates have joined this course after their class X board examination. It will help them to improve their English language skills and Computer skills for their higher studies.



ANTI TRAFFICKING NETWORKS (ATN)

In Siliguri there is a strong platform where about 10 NGOs have formed a network to work in collaboration. It is a good initiative. HLDRC is one of its active partners since 2019 onwards.



RESCUE WORKS

HLDRC has set up Anti Human Trafficking HELP DESK at its head office. Mrs. Nirmala Karjee is the coordinator for this task. Recently during the month of February 2022 a young girl from Dharnipur tea estate was rescued from Agra city closer to New Delhi. We are grateful to Miss Deepika Sarkee one of HLDRC animators, who led the village team to Agra for this rescue work..

Lok Manch (Peoples' Forum)

Lok Manch program has entered into 3rd phase in Darjeeling unit. All four project partners along with few non project organizations and community Based organizations are working together in collaboration and networking to address some of the important issues like tea garden wages, land rights for tea workers and searching for an alternative livelihood for youth are focused program of Lok Manch with HLDRC led collective social movement.

MINIMUM WAGES AND LAND RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



With a continuous campaigning on tea garden wages there has been some collective efforts in making wage increment from 168/- per day daily wage to 202/- daily wage for workers, however still far lower to Minimum wages which would be around Rs.490/- daily wage. Our struggle on land issue is ongoing to protect the existing land under the community and to initiate homestead land of all workers in their ownership...

LAND RIGHTS ADVOCACY FOR TEA WORKERS-

There is a growing social awareness on land rights for tea workers Assam as well. During last three months there has been quite good response from the tea garden leaders. A land rights committee is formed to take up land issues.

One day seminar on Right to Information (RTI) and Land Rights claim procedures were held at HLDRC, Matigara. About 95 key leaders along with 8 NGOs participated in this seminar. Advocate Nawin Kerketta was the resource person and he was selected as consultant and advisor for this Land Rights Forum (LRF)



LAND NEGOTIATION FOR COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE FARMING

Tea garden wage is unable to support the workers families in this rising price of food items. Lok Manch leaders have taken a concrete initiative to have access to vacant unutilized land around the tea gardens. Last year we managed to obtain government permission at 4 tea gardens an average of 15 Acre land was made available for the community farming purposes. In

January 2022, two more tea gardens namely Hindupara Division near Gairkata town and Basaline site 02 is on progress. Photo file is attached below.



Laxmir Bhandar 400 people benefitted. (2) Health Card 150 families benefitted. (3) Job card 50 persons benefitted, (4) ST/SC certificates 100 benefitted and in other schemes work is on progress. Miss Anima Baghwar, Lok Manch staff from HLDRC is spearheading and working in collaboration with GP Pradhan and at Block level as well.



DURE SARKAR (GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AT DOOR STEPS)

There are 24 villages in Hetmuri Gram Panchayet where Dure Sarkar camp was organized and forms on Laxmir Bhandar, Health Card, Krishik Bandhu Yojana, Jai Johar, Rupashree, Kanyashree, Job Cards, ST/SC caste certificate, students credit card, banking related problems, land recor problems, Bima Mulya Samajik Yozana, Khadya sathi etc. forms were filled up. There has been some good outcome where several people benefitted. (1)



Programs in collaboration with other NGOs Networks:

One billion rising awareness was organized at Hansqua Tea garden primary school ground on 13 February 2022 by Darjeeling Mary Ward Social Centre, Siliguri. HLDRC participated in the program

International Women's Day was organized at Gairkata, Bamandanga tea estates in



Right to Food Campaign in North Bengal



SOCIAL AGRICULTURE PROJECT with Women SHGs



International Women's Day celebration in Rajdeep Hall, Bagdogra

