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Quality Work Life of Tea Workers

by Juman Hussan¹

Abstract

Quality of work life is an concept that not only include work-based factor such as job satisfaction, satisfaction with enough wages and better relationship with work coworkers, but factors that broadly reflect life satisfaction and general feelings of the people. The main purpose of this study is to find out the tea worker's quality work life by analyzing their demographic and work related information. The research was conducted by surveying 100 tea workers form Sylhet and Moulvibazar (Srimongol) that is the largest tea producing zone in Bangladesh. The Questionnaire was designed into two parts. First parts include demographic information such as age, education, gender and wage level. The second parts of the questionnaire comprises some factors which is related with quality work life such as food facilities, wage, health care facilities, accommodation facilities, education facilities etc. .To quantify those factor related gathered data a five point Likert scale is used by the researchers. The Researchers conducted various types of test those includes demographic analysis, descriptive analysis, hypothesis analysis (Z-test) and ANOVA test to draw up a better decision about quality work life of tea workers. Finally the researchers try to explore the problem that faced by the tea workers in workplace and provides some suggestion that can helps to improve the present condition.

Key Words: Quality Work Life, Tea Workers, Tea Garden, Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction.

Introduction

In the modern era, globalization and economic liberalization have been accelerated the growth of tea plantation industries around the world. It has been found from the past literature, that the first experimental tea garden was established in Chittagong in 1840 and the first commercial-scale tea garden in Bangladesh was established in 1854. The rank of Bangladesh is ten among the largest tea producing and exporting countries in the world. There are 163 tea estates in Banladesh, most of them are located in the north-eastern region in Bangladesh- Moulvibazar, Hobigonj, Sylhet, Brahmanbaria districts. Tea, one of the most popular drinks among the people all over the world. All of we just go to the market, buy the packet of tea and come back home, make it and drink it simple. But we have never wondered about the tea plantation workers and the lives that they lead. In the discussion on tea, its production, consumption and trade those who remain least attended are the tea plantation workers. The labor force that keep companies alive, brought from Bihar, Madras, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, West bangle, Uttar Pradesh and other places in India to work in the tea garden in Sylhet region. The misfortune of this indentured laborers started with their journey to the tea gardens. According to one account, in the early years, a third of the tea plantation workers died during their long journey to the tea garden and due to the tough work and poor living situation. When the tea workers arrival into the gardens they got a new identity, They are said to be "Coolie" and turned into property of the tea garden. These tea workers fitting to survive by planted and tended tea seedlings, planted shade trees, built luxurious bungalows for tea planter, but they had tied to their hunts in the "labor lines" that they built themselves. The half or four generations have passed by the tea plantation workers in

the tea garden. Their lives and livelihoods remain tied to the labor lines ever since. They are people without choice and entitlement to property. In addition to fringe benefits, the houses in the labor lines are given by the employer that comes first on the list of fringe benefits. The each of the worker gets only one small house that is provided by the employer. Cattle and human being are often seen living together in the same house or room. Finally, it is clear that the life of tea workers is very difficult to survive.

Objectives of Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the present condition of the quality work life of tea workers and provides some suggestion to improve this situation. In order to achieve this objective, the following particular objectives are followed.

1. To find out the problems of tea workers.
2. To provides some suggestion for QWL.

Limitations Faced By Researchers

The researchers faced some problems in time of conducting this research paper. Those includes

1. Most of the tea worker afraid to provides information against their superior.
2. There was not enough previous research in this field.

Methodology of Study

Sample size and Location

The research was conducted on 100 respondents from the various tea estates of Sylhet and Moulvibazar District by direct interviews.

Questionnaire

The researchers used a highly structured questionnaire in both Bangla and English languages to collect the data. The Questionnaire was designed into two major categories. The Questionnaire was designed into two parts. First parts include demographic information such as age (57-above, 44-57, 31-43, 18-30 years), education (Primary, Illiterate, Secondary and Higher Secondary Level), gender(Male and Female) and wage level(0-50,51-100,101-150,151-200). The second parts of the questionnaire include some factors which is related with quality work life and those are gathered by a five point Likert scale in which 1 is for strongly disagree,2 is for disagree,3 is for neutral, 4 is for agree and 5 is for strongly agree.

Statistical Analysis

The researchers conducted demographic analysis, descriptive analysis and ANOVA by using MS excel 2010.The hypotheses analysis also is conducted by using the formula of Z-test.

Hypothesis-1: Job related factors have no impact on quality work life of tea workers'

Hypothesis-2: The tea workers enjoy the quality work life.

Literature review:

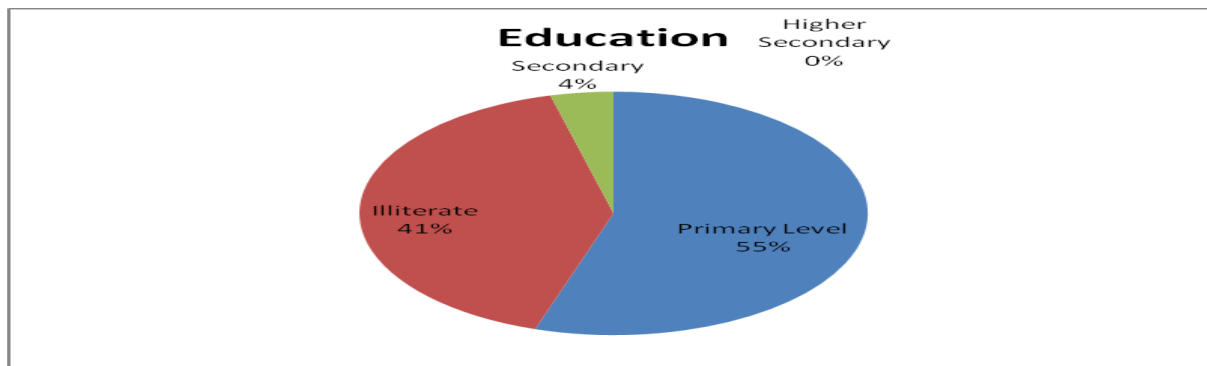
Quality of work life is the level of happiness or dissatisfaction with one's career. Those who enjoy their careers are said to have a high quality of work life, while those who are unhappy or whose needs are otherwise unfilled are said to have a low quality of work life. [1]B. L. Sairam Subramaniam and R. Saravanan found that in their analysis quality of work life can be disturbed because of several reasons and several occasions with several persons. An employee has to face many problems in the work place or adjust several criticisms in their day by day work. Their grievances are classified into personal and non-personal nature. Personal anticipatory is the important expectation of the employees, if the organization failed to meet their expectations can cause for poor quality of work life. It mainly depends on wages facilities, compensation facilities, perquisites, gratuity, pension facilities, allowances facilities, bonus, and provident fund facilities; leave encashment, increment, and medical services. Motivational insights deals with work-life balance, promotion, insurance protection, training, awards, recognition and so on" [2] Mirvis and Lawler (1984) found in their study that quality of working life was related with satisfaction with wages, hours and working conditions, describing the " essentials of a good quality of work life" as; safe work environment, equitable wages, equal employment opportunities and opportunities for advancement Bangladesh is known for its high quality tea that it exports to destinations around the world but the work life of tea worker are very poor. [3] They still find themselves illiterate. Their poor housing conditions, low wages long working hours, social discrimination, and de facto restriction on face movement deprive them of many basic human needs and rights that every human being must have for own and general progress. These situations make sure that the offspring of the coolies can do nothing else but become tea workers. Deprived, exploited and alienated the coolies live an inhumane life. [4] Philip Gain identify that if compared with wages of the Indian tea workers, the wages of Bangladeshi tea plantation workers is much lower ((US\$22/tk48). In Darjeeling, Terai and Doars of West Bengal in India the daily wages of tea plantation workers was Rs. 53.90 in 2008. [5] Atiqul Kabir Tuhin found that "How can you live when you get only Tk. 45 for a days work and you have to pay Tk. 37 for one kilo rice?". He also found that "back breaking tasks of eight hours a day don't payoff enough to fight hunger and disease." [6] Salman Saeed found that the coolies are so much concerned that they mostly depend solely on the companies for their food, treatment, housings, schooling, etc. They do not have any choices about their life and facilities. That is because they do not have a good social standing in this reagon. The actual relationship that exists between the coolies and the owner of tea gerden is one of business. [7] Philip Gain identify that "Education, an important ladder for transformation of a community or society for betterment is at the root of the social exclusion of the tea workers. The government schools in the tea gardens are just a few. An overwhelming majority of the children of the tea plantation workers drop out from school before they can use education to step into other professions and thus they have to enter the tea gardens as laborers. [8] Salman Saeed found that "We live in place worse then that of the officers' pets (at the estates). Many of us have only a thin jute mattress to sleep on," describes a tea worker about her living condition. Living conditions provided to tea workers are generally

outrageous and clear infringement of the Bangladesh constitution. One commitment that the SAARC Social Charter sets for the South Asian States is to enable its citizens. [9] Francis Rolt found that “satisfy basic human needs and to realize his/her personal dignity, safety and creativity.” “The tea gardens are managed like an extreme hierarchy: the managers incomprehensible. Some even begin to believe that they are gods that they can do exactly what they like.” [10] Managers have anything up to a dozen laborers as their personal, domestic servants. They are made to tie the managers shoe lace, to remind them that they are under managerial control and that they are bound to do whatever they are asked,” writes another British human rights activist, Dan Jones”. [11] Shalini Sheel et al; Quality of work life is being used these days by organizations as a strategic tool to attract and retain the talent. QWL policies are increasingly becoming part of the business strategies and focus is on the potential of these policies to influence employees, quality of working life and more importantly to help them maintain work-life balance with equal attention on performance and commitment at work. [12] Mrs. J. Arthi and Dr. P. Chitramani said that “organizations are required to adopt a strategy to improve the employees quality of work life(QWL) to satisfy both the organizational objectives and employee needs.

Demographic Analysis

Education

Level of Education	Primary Level	Illiterate	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Percentage of people	55%	41%	4%	0%



Education is very important parts among all of the people. It transforms an individual to live a better life and more importantly in a work place and society. Table 1 and figure 1 shows the current education condition of tea worker of Bangladesh. Here from 100 respondents 55% entered into the primary level, 4% entered into the secondary level and 41% people can not able to read and write for this reason they cannot know well about their rights and duties.

Marital Status

Marital Status	Percentage of people
Married	89%
Unmarried	11%

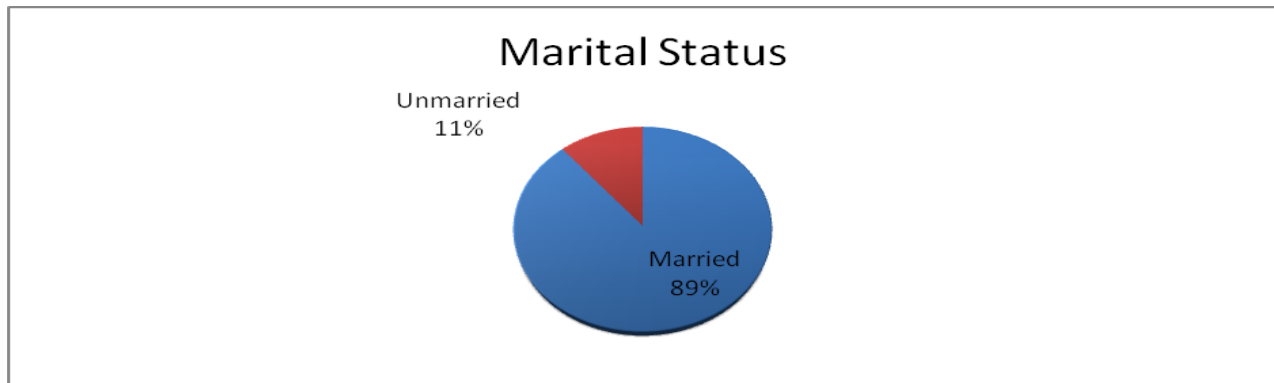


Table 2 and figure 2 represents that, from 100 respondents 89% respondents are married and 11% of respondents are unmarried. Most of the tea worker gets married at early age that may be in 15 years for male and 12 years for female that means child marriage is very common affairs in their society.

Gender

Gender	Percentage of people
Male	70
Female	30

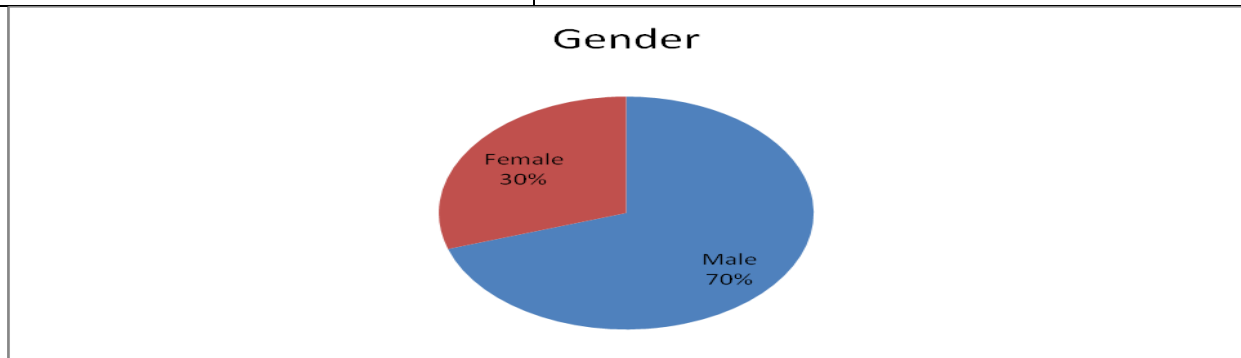


Table 3 and figure3 illustrates that, from 100 respondents 70% respondents are male and 30% respondents are female but almost same percentages of male and female work in tea garden

Age

Age	Percentage of people
57-above	18%
44-57	19%
31-43	34%
18-30	29%

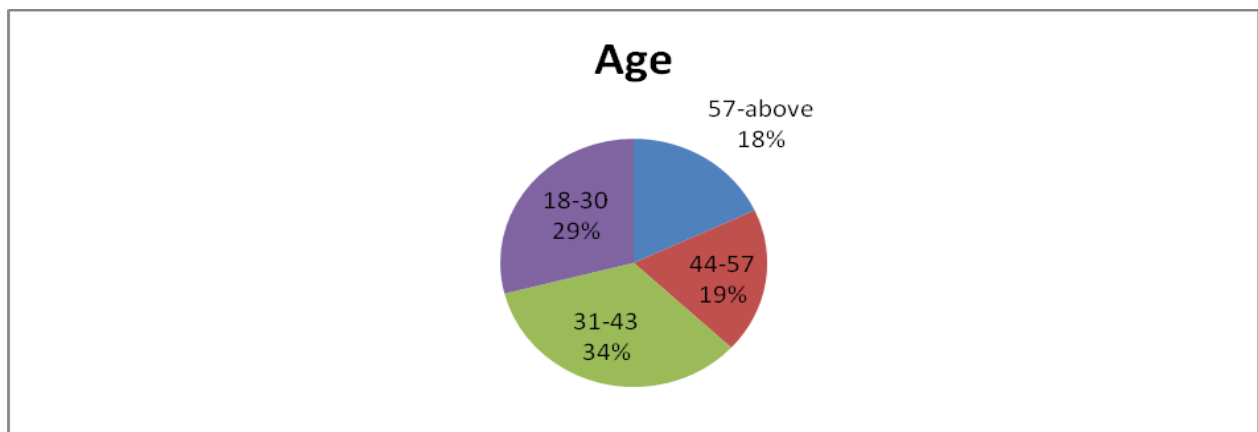
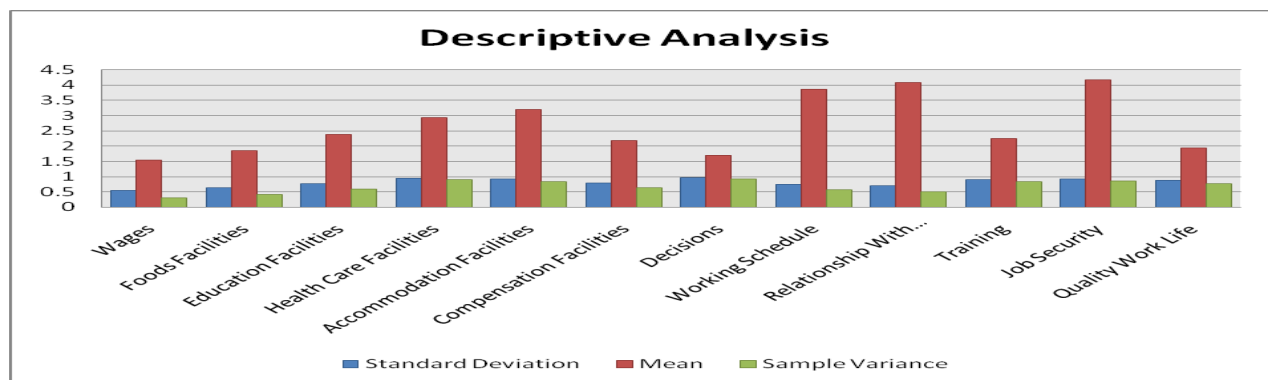


Table 4 and figure 4 shows that, from 100 respondents there are 34% people at the age level of 31-34 years, 29% people at the age level of 18-30 years, 19% of people at the age level of 44-57 years and only 18% of people at the age of 57-above years because their retirement period is 60 years.

Descriptive Analysis												
	Wages	Foods Facilities	Education Facilities	Health Care Facilities	Accommodation Facilities	Compensation Facilities	Decisions	Working Schedule	Relationship With Supervisors	Training	Job Security	Quality Work Life
Mean	1.540	1.850	2.380	2.930	3.190	2.180	1.690	3.870	4.090	2.250	4.160	1.940
Standard Deviation	0.558	0.642	0.776	0.956	0.918	0.796	0.961	0.761	0.712	0.914	0.929	0.874
Sample Variance	0.312	0.412	0.602	0.914	0.842	0.634	0.923	0.579	0.507	0.836	0.863	0.764



Wage Facility

The people who earn high wages can afford better life than those who earn a lower wage. Minimum wage ensures that all workers earn enough to pay for the basic needs such as food, health care, education etc. The main purpose of a good wages is to attract, retain, and motivate good people to the organization. The table and figure indicates that the mean wage level is 1.540 that means the wage of tea workers are very low and they are dissatisfied about their current wage. The Standard Deviation and Sample Variance of wage is very low that indicates almost every tea workers are dissatisfied about their jobs. The tea workers only gets taka 48 per day that is not enough to fulfill their basic need for survival. So they are struggling for themselves and their family.

Food Facilities

Food is a key element in maintaining our overall physical well being. It is the basic need of human life a human or any living thing can live without any luxury of life but they can not survive without food. Enough Food plays very vital role in maintaining proper health and also helps in prevention and cure of diseases that is essential for better performance. The table and figure represents that the mean of Food Facility is 1.850 which indicates that the tea workers can not get enough food facility to pass their comfortable life. The Standard Deviation and Sample Variance is also shows that almost every workers are dissatisfied about the food facility provided by the employers. They only get 3kg rice as a ration which is not sufficient for themselves and their family to survive in this globe.

Education Facility

Education is the knowledge of putting one's potentials to maximum use and no human beings are able to survive properly without it. One can safely say that a human being is not in the proper sense till he or she is educated. It makes human being a right thinker and tells them how to think and how to make decision. The table and figure shows that the mean of Education facility is 1.850 that signify the Education facility provided for the tea workers is not sufficient. The Standard Deviation and Sample Variance of Education facility is actually very low that shows almost every tea workers are dissatisfied about their education facility. There is a primary school in every garden but they have not any high school in tea garden. So most of the tea workers get the primary education and enter into the job without getting higher education.

Health care Facility

Health care is an important and necessary part of the people's life. It is vital for all, young and old, rich and poor, employees and employers. The health care includes a wide range of facilities and services delivered through institutions such as hospitals, nursing homes. These facilities and services are provided by governments as well as their organizations. The table and figure shows that the mean of Health care facility is 2.930 that is near about neutral position that means they gets basic treatment from the hospital but they can not get better treatment in time of serious problem. Most of the workers said that the quality of medicine provided by the hospital is very poor and maximum time it doesn't work against diseases. The Standard Deviation and Sample Variance of Health care facility is relatively high that means the tea workers who dominates others gets better health care facility but they get poor facility.

Accommodation Facility

An accommodation facility is an essential part in our life. Better accommodation facility can creates better satisfaction of the people. Every people try to pass their life where thy get relax and comfort that may be possible when they get better accommodation facility. The table and figure illustrate that the mean of accommodation facility is 3.190 which indicate the tea workers are little bit satisfied about their accommodation facility because they get a free shed to pass their life but the condition of the house is very poor. The standard deviation and sample variance of accommodation facility is relatively high that indicates the tea workers are not equally threatened in times of providing accommodation facility.

Compensation Facility

Compensation is an important factor that creates motivation and job satisfaction to the employees, although it is not the only factor but many employees feel better compensation systems positively impact a large percentage of workers' performances. The table and figure represents that the mean of compensation facility is 2.180 that indicate the organization can not provide compensation facility but they only provides the medical facility. The standard deviation and sample variance of compensation facility shows that all of employees are providing same opinion in this particular issue.

Decision Making

The employers connecting the employees in the decision-making process is not only empowers them to contribute to the attainment the goal of the organization, but also saves the organization's time and money, in increased productivity and reduced cost. The table and figure shows that the mean of decision-making is 1.690 and as well as the standard deviation and sample variance indicates that the tea workers are not get the opportunity in participation to make decision.

Working Schedule

Working Schedule is vital elements that create job satisfaction of the employees. Each people try to pass their life where thy get relax and comfort that may be possible when they get better Working Schedule. The table and figure shows that the mean of working schedule is 3.870 which illustrate that the tea workers are satisfied about their working schedule. From The standard deviation and sample variance it is clear that almost all employees enjoy eight hours working schedules.

The Relationship with Supervisors

A strong employee relationship with employers is essential for the employees to find their work interesting and perform their level best. It is significant for everyone to realize that one goes to his organization to work and they must be comfortable with each other and work in unity towards a corporate goal. The table and figure shows that the mean of relationship with supervisor is 4.090 which represent that almost all workers are satisfied about their supervisor because the supervisor said "we are employee like you and we have no power to help you".

Training Facility

Training helps in optimizing the utilization of human resource that further helps the employee to achieve the organizational goals as well as their individual goals. It helps in increasing the job knowledge and skills of employees at each level. The table and figure shows that the mean of training facility is 2.250 which represents the coolies are dissatisfied about their training facilities. Some of the coolies said that "we have get only one training facility when we entered into the tea garden". There are also some tea workers' who said that "we are belongs in the tea garden so we can able to teach the employers".

The Job security

Job security is an employee's assurance or confidence that they will keep their current job. It is also affected by a worker's performance, success of the business. The table and figure illustrate that the mean of job security is 4.160 which indicated the job security of the coolies are more secured than other. They beliefs that enter into the job means they remains in the tea garden until they goes to retairement.

ANOVA Analysis

H₀: These factors have no impact on quality work life of tea workers'

<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F -crit</i>
Between Groups	937.2291	10	93.72291	138.8837	1.4E-186	1.839381
Within Groups	734.89	1089	0.67483			
Total	1672.119	1099				

Here, from these analysis we see that, the calculated value of F is (138.8837) which is greater than table value of F (1.839381).

Overall Decision: These factors (food facilities, wage, health care facilities, accommodation facilities, education facilities etc) have the impact on quality work life of tea workers'.

SO the researchers reject out null hypothesis (H₀) and accept the alternative hypothesis: That is- "These factors have impact on quality work life of tea workers"

Hypothesis Analysis

The question Relating to hypothesis was: Do you think that you have enjoyed quality work life?

Nature of responses	Number of responses	Percentages
Strongly Agree and Agree(Agree)	9	9%
Natural, Disagree and Strongly Disagree(Disagree)	91	91%
Total Collected Data	100	100%

H₀: The tea workers have enjoyed quality work life.

H₁: The tea workers have not enjoyed quality work life.

The level of significance for test is 95% these means tabulated z to be ± 1.64 .

Table 7 represents that from 100 tea workers' 91disagreed that the tea workers have enjoyed quality work life and only 9 tea workers' agree that The tea workers have not enjoyed quality work life. Thus 91 tea workers' not supporting null hypothesis.

The researchers formulated the null hypothesis that the no of success sample.

X is equal to 23: $H_0 = 9$ $H_1 \neq 9$

The calculated value of Z is -8.2

Decision: The calculated value of Z is |-8.2| and tabulated value is |-1.64|. Here calculated value of Z is greater than tabulated value. So we must reject null hypothesis and accept alternative hypothesis that means the tea workers have not enjoyed quality work life.

Findings

Tea workers are the most vulnerable people in our society. They have no other options open to them, whatever management thought they have to accept it. So that proper wage, food facility, satisfied, education facility, etc. that characterize quality of work life is totally absent in their work life. From the eve of independence, the tea workers leading such type of quality of work life.

The problem that found by these researches is as follows:

- The work of a tea worker is very much hard, they have to work under the sun. The wage that tea worker gets for such manual work for such a long period of time is not sufficient the wage of Bangladeshi tea worker is very much low then other country.
- The tea workers get rations but it is not sufficient for all the family members of tea worker. A family of tea worker can hardly have decent food items on their plate. They get very poor quality and protein deficient meals. The physical appearances of a tea worker tell their malnourishment.
- There is no secondary school in any tea garden. So the tea worker do not get secondary education. The quality of education in primary school is not so good.
- The tea workers only get basic treatment but they do not get any treatment in serious disease. They do not get proper medicine facility. Government is not concern about the health care facility of tea workers.
- The tea workers face discrimination in house facility. The dominated workers get better house then other workers. The house that a worker gets is not sufficient for all the family members.
- Compensation is a word which is totally unknown to them. The coolies do not get any compensation.
- They never get any opportunity to give their opinion in decision making.
- Training facilities are not sufficient.

Recommendation:

- The wage of tea worker should increase.
- The management should provide sufficient rations and protein-deficient meals.
- Management should establish secondary school in tea garden. Government should come forward for establishing more government school in tea garden.
- Health care facilities should improve. They are also a part of our society. So the government should concern about the health care facility of tea worker.
- All the worker should treat equally in term of house facility. All the workers should get some house.
- Management should compensation for all the tea worker.
- Management should take the workers opinion in decision making.
- Training facility should increase.

Conclusion

Tea is a major export oriented product in Bangladesh. By exporting tea we earned huge amount of foreign currency every year. But the true heroes behind earning this foreign currency are the “tea workers” who are always deprived of all the facilities that they deserve. We are getting huge amount of tea and export it only from their golden hand. Even they do not get the basic need like- education, shelter, medical facilities, food etc. to prove this we have conducted a survey on quality work life of tea workers by taking 100 tea workers. We found the following important problems. First of all they only get taka 48 per day which is much lower than the minimum wage of industrial workers fixed by Bangladesh Labor Act. Secondly, they do not get sufficient rations. They get very poor quality and protein deficient meals. Thirdly, they do not have any secondary school in any tea garden. They only get primary education so they cannot use this education to step into other professions. Finally, they do not get proper medical facilities. From the above research we get a conclusion about the tea workers that they are not enjoying a quality work life and lead an inhuman life.

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