

Abstract

‘Productivity’ has become a buzz word in the modern industrial era. It is one of the most important aspects and has become a deep matter of concern to the management of every industrial undertaking. Every organization is striving for profit maximization, which is again positively correlated with production. But, nowadays, need is not only to increase the production of goods and services but also to increase productivity through an increase in the capacity of each factor of production.

However, as productivity is strongly associated with the morale of the employees of an organization, employees, having high morality are expected to produce better output. On the other hand, high mortality among the employees can be generated only when the organization undertakes various measures for the wellbeing of the employees. Few measures viz. health, safety, and welfare measures are most relevant in this context. So, it should be the utmost drive of the management to increase the productivity of the employees to the maximum possible extent by promoting health, safety, and welfare measures in an appropriate manner in industrial establishments.

The tea industry is one of the highly labour-intensive industries in India. Every tea estate employs a huge number of workers for plantation and production purpose. In such highly labour-intensive industries, maintenance of the health of the workers, ensuring safety for them, and their wellbeing play gigantic roles to keep them productive. If these are not taken care of seriously, any tea estate will obviously experience low-profit margin, even may suffer from loss, in the worst case, due to low labour productivity. So, it is quite important to measure the relevancy of the existent health, safety, and welfare measures in the tea estates.

Safety and health of workers in tea estates are traditionally regarded as an extraneous obligation. Various welfare measures, provided by employers, have an immediate impact on the health, alertness, morale, and overall physical and mental efficiency of the workers and thereby contributing to higher productivity. But most of the workers of tea estates are deprived of these; so naturally, the productivity of the workers is decreasing consequently. Traditional safety, health, and welfare measurements that are practised in tea estates produce results with a high degree of uncertainty. Workers in the tea planting industry are exposed to a variety of occupational health and safety hazards. The safety of all workers, involved in the production, should be the top priority. On the other hand, welfare protects not just the employees but also their entire family by various benefit packages. Welfare schemes are very much required for the tea workers for the sustenance of their family members. On the other hand, close monitoring of health and safety conditions of the workers to identify and remediate risk is now of greater needs. Thus, with the help of adequate health, safety, and welfare measures, the oppressed class tea workers will be able to enrich themselves to a certain extent which will ultimately create a good impact on society.

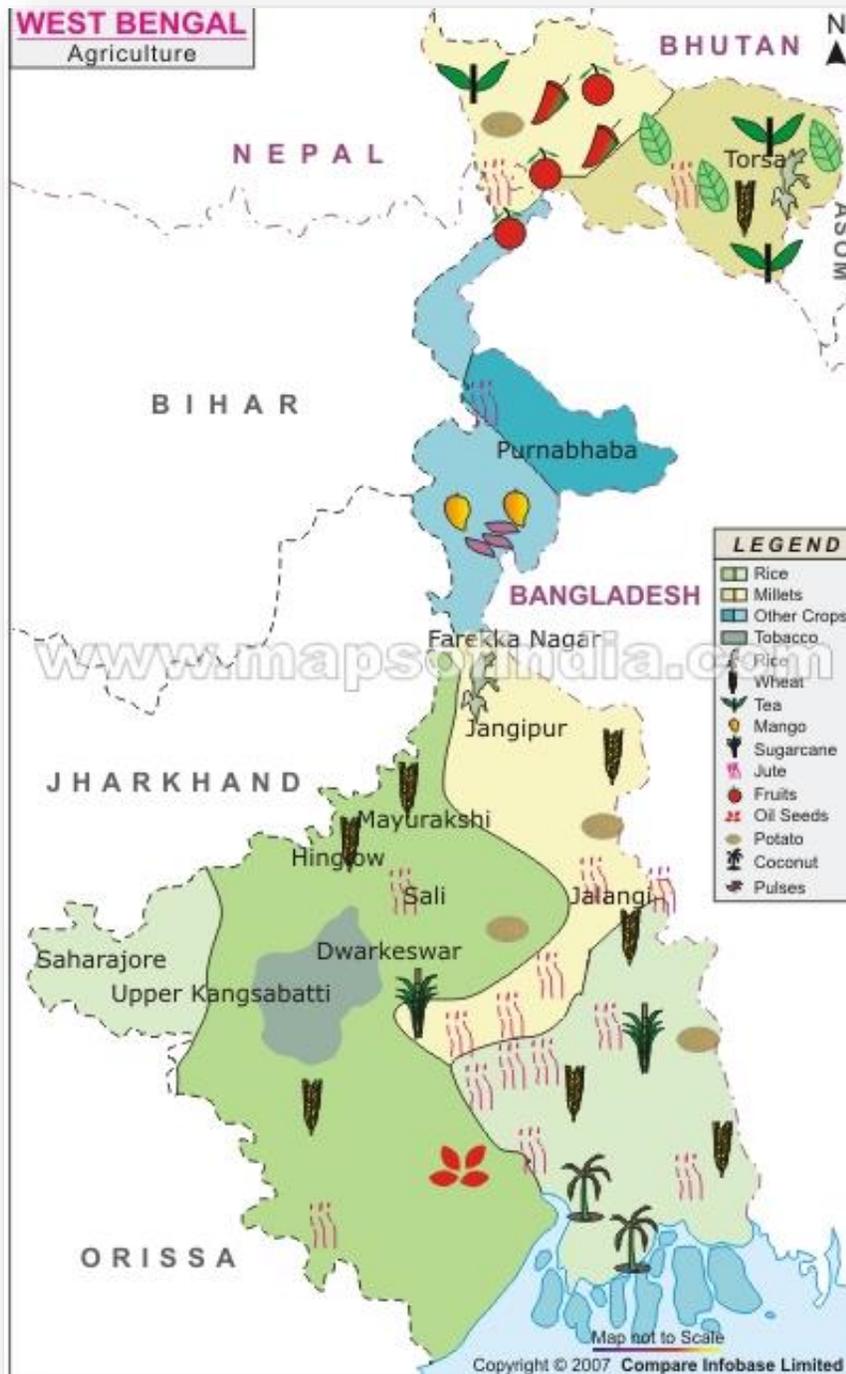
According to the latest report, published in 2017, by the Tea Board of India, India has become the world's second-largest tea producer after China. India's tea production in 2016-17 reached 1,250.49 million kilograms, which is an increase of 1.41 per cent over the corresponding year-ago figure, on account of higher production rate in Assam and West Bengal. But the workforce, to whom the credit should go to for this huge production, are still being severely afflicted by the master class even after 69 years of independence. Presently also, they are exposed to various social constraints. The daily wage of the labours is lower than the minimum daily wage fixed by the State Government. Starvation, malnutrition, untimely deaths, etc. have become regular issues among

the tea workers. The poorly paid Indian tea workers and their destitute families have become a major target for human traffickers who lure away, mainly women and children, with the promises of a new life but, ultimately they end up enslaved in factories and households. Deaths of workers because of various occupational diseases, snake bites, malaria, have become regular issues. In this juncture, there is a need to explore whether giving greater emphasis on health, safety, and welfare measures of the tea workers really lead to better labour productivity in the tea estates. So, the study has been carried out with the broad objectives of bringing out the exact scenario of health, safety, and welfare measures and examining the impact these measures on the productivity of tea workers with an additional intention of making a comparison of the tea estates which fall under different ownership patterns such as public, private, and proprietorship tea estates of Terai region in West Bengal.



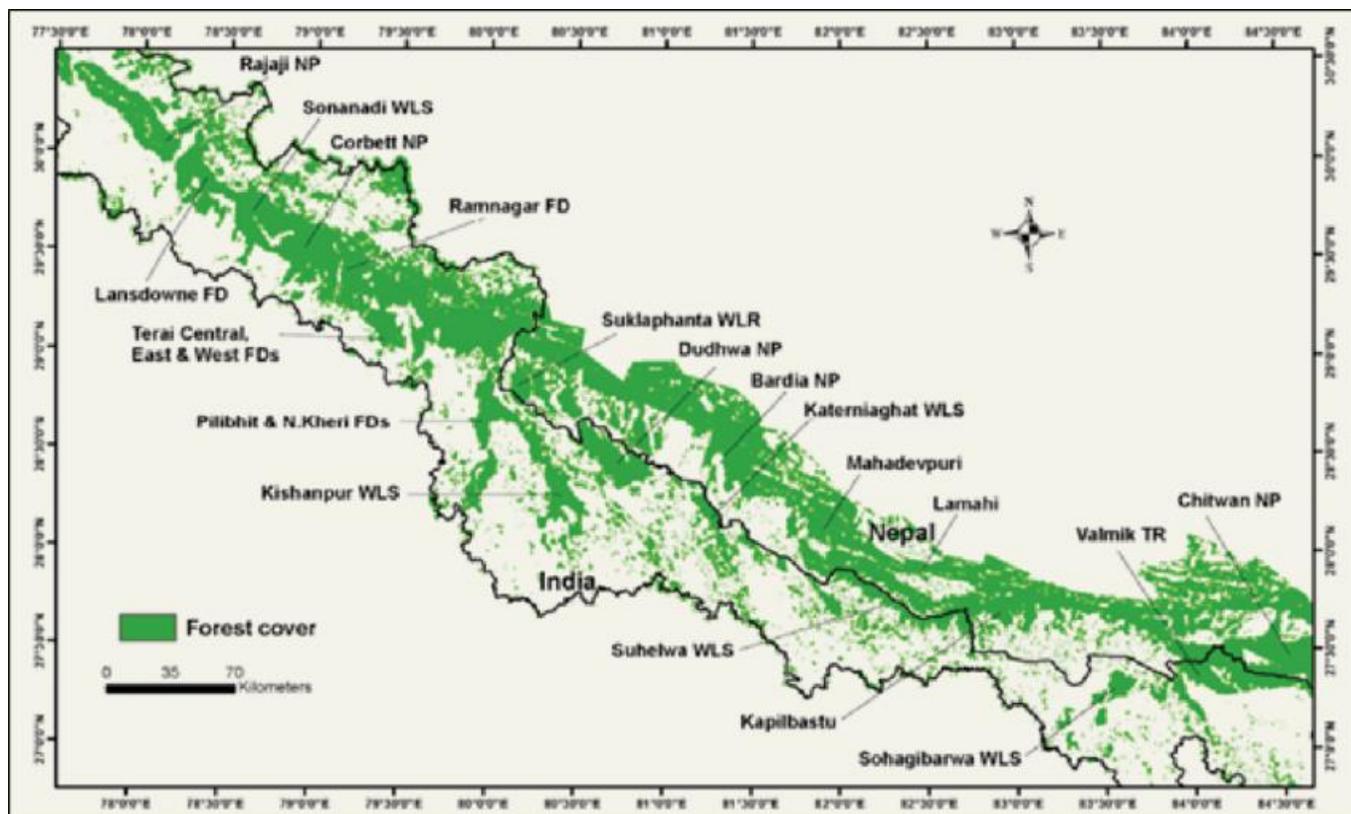
Source: <http://www.teaboard.gov.in/TEABOARDCSM/MTI2>

Agricultural Map of West Bengal



Source: mapsofindia.com

Terai Region : India



Source: mapsofindia.com