Provisions for Workers

Interviewer: From 1955 till now, it has been more than 53 years….

Man: It has been around 54…we just celebrated 50 years….

Interviewer: So how do you measure…..has there been improvement or what….

Man: Radical change.

Interviewer: Radical change?

Man: Hmm...Compared to what used to happen before, we are having an increased production here due to the introduction of new manufacturing techniques… and after five more years, we would, *Inshallah,* increase further by 8kg.

Interviewer: Do you know how many workers are employed in the tea estate?

Man: Hmm….

Interviewer: … estimate?

Man: …596, perhaps.

Interviewer: That means close to 600.

Man: Yes... There is this type of labor.

Interviewer: What facilities do you offer to the 596 workers?

Man: Basically, the tea garden was set up in the mountainous regions by the British. The facilities that were offered during the initial stages have improved considerably over the years....

Interviewer: Like what?

Man: … Like the employees are given houses and rations. No matter at what price we buy the ration, for instance, Tk 1.30, it was much less back then. Now what is happening in the present … we buy rice for Tk 29 per kg… we get from the government… The government allots that to us through the Bangladesh Tea Board.

Interviewer: And that is Tk1.30?

Man: Tk1.30 per kg… we have to distribute [it] among them.

Interviewer: How much does each person get?

Man: Someone, for instance, will get a certain ration for seven days; he will receive a card or token and get around three kg for example. If he has a dependant, it will be split and distributed among them; for instance they may get 10 kg, 12 kg or 15 kg in total.

Interviewer: And then you have Provident Fund, Pension Fund, etc.?

Man: Yes. Everything is included in that package. They have associations, unions and everything. We have to cut the TF; then we have to double that amount.

Interviewer: That means whatever they earn, you match that amount.

Man: Yes. And the company also bears and compensates the administrative staff.

Interviewer: And there are labor unions I suppose?

Man: Yes, there are labor unions, staff unions, and everything.

Interviewer: Your ….

Man: And there is also an organization within the tea estate that meets with the members of the Bangladesh Tea Board under the Bangladesh government. They have meetings at which are present the members of the tea estate, members of the Bangladesh Tea Board, union members … and jointly they make decisions. For example, the staff decides the cost of units of electricity that the company bears and they bear.

Interviewer: And you have medical leave, maternity leave?

Man: Yes, we have everything. Everything! In the case of medical, we even have a hospital, a small hospital; we have doctors, and we have treatment for the patients. We have everything.

Interviewer: And...

Man: We have schools.

Interviewer: You provide education.

Man: Yes, we provide education.

Interviewer: Maternity leave?

Man: Yes, we have maternity leave.

Interviewer: You have many….

Man: And they are getting leave for maternity. Everything.