

Social Sustainability of Tea Industries: Measuring Through Subjective Happiness of Tea Garden Workers of Dibrugarh District, Assam

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[Abstract] The present study investigated the subjective happiness of tea garden workers of Dibrugarh district, Assam, concerning gender (male and female) and income group (middle and lower-income groups). The sample comprised 100 (50 male, 50 female) tea garden workers aged 21 to 60 years. A survey research design was implemented in this study, while the purposive sampling technique was used for selecting participants. A socio-demographic sheet and subjective happiness scale was used to collect data. Mean, standard deviation, percentage (%), and t-test were computed for statistical analysis of the responses. The findings reveal that the subjective happiness of male and female tea garden workers is significantly different at the 0.01 level. Male workers perceive more pleasure than their female counterparts; further, it was found that lower- and middle-income group workers perceive an equal level of satisfaction in their lives; no significant difference was found between them.

[Keywords] gender, middle-income group, subjective happiness, social sustainability, tea garden workers

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Introduction

Sustainability and sustainable development are essential in making industry or business more profitable in other fields. Although some people use the words “sustainability and sustainable development” interchangeably, they both talk about the possible danger of excessive consumption of natural resources without refilling them. However, there are some subtle differences between the two: sustainability focuses more on present status, while sustainable development focuses more on future outcomes.

Moreover, the term sustainable is broad, as it includes both environmental and social and economic sustainability, which are called three pillars of sustainability (Kaur & Kumar, 2022). These are also represented as a planet, people, and profit. That means an industry can be sustainable only when it saves its natural resources, has a healthy workforce, and remains financially stronger by generating long-term revenue. Sustainable means something that is to be sustained continually to a certain level. In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission (United Nations, 2022) defined sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

On the other hand, sustainable development describes the processes to be sustained continually by achieving some goals called sustainable development goals, such as improving long-term economic

conditions and the quality of life of future generations without compromising their ability to meet their goals and needs.

In 2015, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (United Nations, 2015) interlinked goals to bring peace and prosperity among the people on this planet at present and in the future. These goals are called Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Global Goals. These goals are mainly “No poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, life on land, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, Partnerships for the Goals.” (UNDP, 2022). Most of these goals are expected to be achieved by 2030. Therefore, organizations, especially industries, can become sustainable if they try to complete most of the above SDGs.

We have already found that an organization cannot be sustained without the well-being of its employees because they are an integral part of an organization. Therefore, in this present study, the researcher attempted to focus on “good health and well-being of workers of tea industries,” which is one of the 17 SDGs and one of the pillars of sustainability, i.e., social sustainability.

Tea Industries of Assam and its Workers

Assam is the largest state in Northeast India, covering 78,438 sq. km. Assam is bordered by seven sister states, namely Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and West Bengal and two other countries, Bangladesh and Bhutan (which is shown clearly in Figure 1 below). Assam is well known for “Assam Tea” all over the globe. Indeed, its contribution to the tea industry has enabled India to dominate the global market.

The tea industry is one of the significant foreign exchange-earning industries in India. India’s dominance in this global tea market involves the hard work of tea laborers. Tea laborers are descendants of people who migrated and were brought by the British during the 1860s-1890s from different parts of the country, namely from states like Andhra Pradesh, Chattishgarh, West Bengal, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

Figure 1

Map of Assam



(Red mark indicates the Dibrugarh district, the place of data collection in the present study)

Source: Mozumdar, T.H. (2020). <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/310204>

Those tea garden workers belong to a diverse multi-ethnic group of different religions, languages, castes, and cultures. Despite this diversity, they are collectively referred to as the “Tea Tribe” community

in Assam and are estimated to constitute about 20% of Assam's total population. During the period of colonial rule by the British, the tea garden laborers were called "Coolies," but now this term is considered disrespectful by the Tea Tribe community. During the colonial period, tea garden workers faced inhumane treatment such as flogging, physical abuse, imprisonment, etc., and the Chief Commissioner of Assam during that period commented, "they were deprived of all their freedom, and their derogatory conditions and atrocities remind one of the slaves running in Africa and the global slave trade."

Today, not only Government has implemented many plans, policies, and programs, namely the Plantations Labor Act (PLA, 1951), Mahila Samakhy (1989), District Primary Education Program (1994), Mid-day Meal Scheme (1995), Sarba Siksha Abhijan (2000), National Program for the education of Girls at Elementary level (2003-04) and Mezenga Female Labor Welfare Training Centre situated at Mezenga in Upper Assam (Bosumatari & Goyari, 2013) but also different trade unions, such as Assam Chah Mazdoor Sangha, Assam Sangrami Chah Shramik Sangha, Assam Tea Labor Union, Namoni Assam Cha Mazdoor Sangha, Cachar Chah Sramik Union, etc., are working together to improve the conditions of the lives of tea garden workers. However, still, their situation has not improved much. Their poor lifestyle, low education rate, poverty, male workers' addiction to country beer, population growth, and inadequate health facilities make them a socially and economically backward group of society today.

As tea workers are an integral part of the tea industry, taking care of their physical and mental health is essential. However, we are often concerned only about physical health by ignoring mental health (Sowers et al., 2009). Studies show that psychological and physical health are closely intertwined (Sowers et al. 2009; Ohrnberger et al. 2017). According to WHO (2001), "Mental health is characterized by subjective well-being or happiness, perceived self-efficacy autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others." According to the famous Hawthorne study, if an organization's employees are happy, they become more productive at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 2007), have better social relationships, live longer and healthier lives, and ultimately increase organizational productivity (Diener & Tay, 2012 as cited in Diener, E.).

Subjective Happiness

The scientific term for happiness is "subjective well-being" (Allen, 2020). Over the past thirty years, the field of psychology has become more interested in studying positive experiences, events, and states of human life like happiness, joy, gratitude, resilience, love, etc.

Happiness is something subjective, an internal feeling which is from inside. Happiness is emotional because different people perceive happiness differently. People with everything in life may feel empty inside; they perceive themselves as unhappy beings, while Buddhist monks with no materialistic and luxurious life may experience themselves as contented, happy, and peaceful.

According to Sonja Lyubomirsky (2007), "Happiness is the experience of joy, contentment and well-being and combination of these three factors lead to the sense that one's life is good and meaningful." Genes determine fifty percent of an individual's happiness. In contrast, forty percent of happiness is set by one's conscious choice, and the rest ten percent of happiness is related to the person's life situation, like socioeconomic status, quality of social relationships and relationships with a romantic partner, educational level, work environment, etc. Therefore, we can also say that being happy is mostly a choice (Lyubomirsky, 2007), mainly depending on the individuals themselves. They can follow some strategies to increase their level of happiness. According to Martin Seligman, "Happiness is made up of positive

emotion, engagement and meaning” (Wikipedia, 2022). The concept of happiness and well-being can be understood clearly by the models below:

Diener’s Tripartite Model

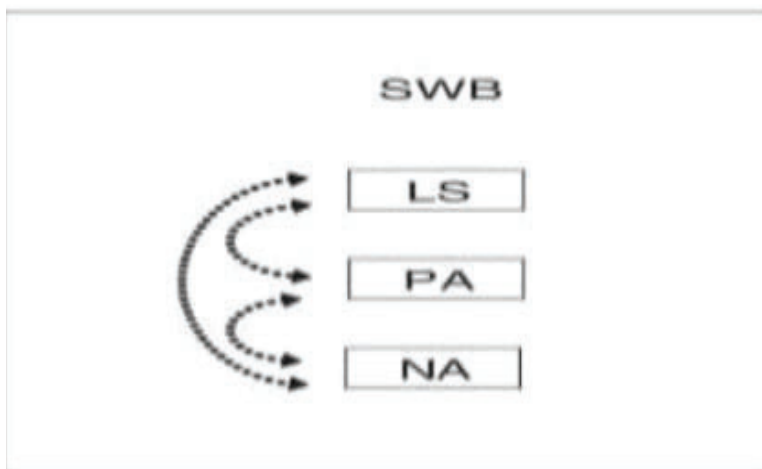
Edward Francis Diener developed a Subjective Well-being Model in 1984. This model is called the “Tripartite Model of Subjective Wellbeing.” According to this Tripartite Model, subjective well-being is determined by the following three components:

- i. Cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction: One’s life satisfaction is judged based on the balance between positive and negative emotions.
- ii. Frequent positive affect (pleasant, happy feelings)
- iii. Infrequent negative affect (feeling of distress, pain)

These three components are shown clearly in the diagram below, where LS indicates Life Satisfaction, and PA and NA mean Positive Affect and Negative Affect, respectively.

Figure 2

Diener’s Tripartite Model of Subjective Wellbeing



Source: Busseri & Sadava, 2011, p. 292 as cited in Moore, C. (2019). Subjective Well-being in Positive Psychology. <https://positivepsychology.com/subjective-well-being/>

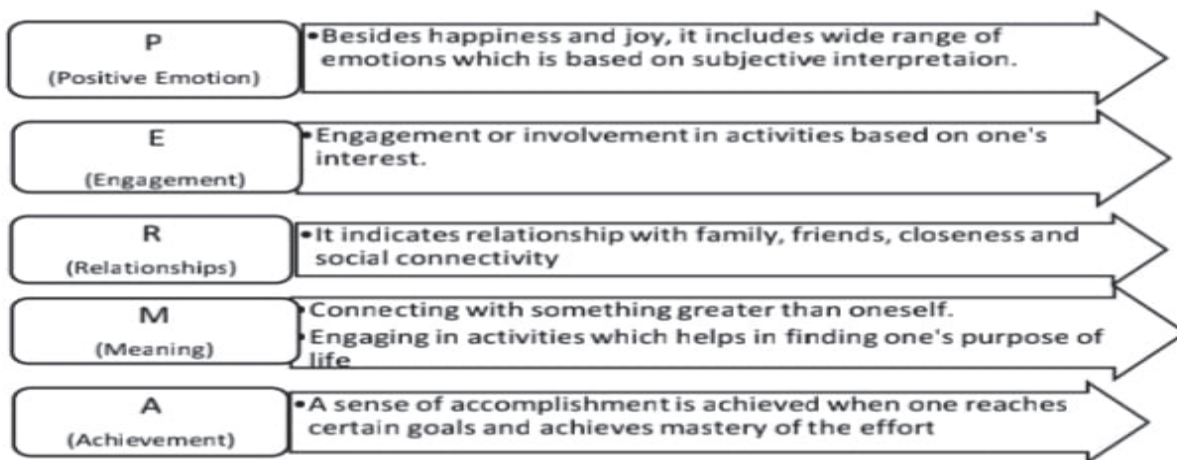
Although the components mentioned above are distinct, all of them are interconnected with each other. A person evaluates his life satisfaction based on his experience of positive and negative emotions. It means frequent Positive Affect and infrequent Negative Affect determine an individual’s Life Satisfaction.

Seligman's PERMA Wellbeing Model

Martin Seligman is one of the pioneers of Positive Psychology. His extensive research on happiness led to developing the "PERMA Wellbeing Model" tool in 2011 for measuring satisfaction. This model identifies five elements which determine happiness or well-being; these are mentioned below:

Figure 3

Seligman's PERMA Wellbeing Model



It is imperative to be happy and satisfied in life. Happiness always leads to better and satisfying social relationships, better health and self-control, increased pro-social behavior, increased creative and divergent thinking, increased ability to persist in non-enjoyable tasks, being a multi-tasker, methodical and sincere worker and, also, increased longevity (Boniwell, 2008).

Review of Literature

Studies on Happiness

Lakshmanasamy (2021) studied the influence of socioeconomic status and demographic factors on the subjective well-being of Indian people. Data from twenty-four years (1990-2014) was collected from the World Values Survey of India and interpreted using the chi-square test. It has been found that there are significant differences in the subjective well-being of Indian people concerning their socioeconomic status and different demographic factors, such as education, income, religion, age, marital status, and health. Further, subjective well-being between male and female participants is found to be equal; there is no statistically significant difference between them. The happiness, life satisfaction and financial satisfaction determined subjective well-being here.

Maseide (2021) studied whether income is related to happiness in different age groups. In this study, samples were taken from three age groups as follows: the young group (18-30 years of age), the middle age group (31-64 years), and the older age group (65 and more). European social survey data was used in this study, and the Generalized Ordered Logit Model was used for data analysis and interpretation. Findings show that income and happiness positively and significantly correlate in all three age groups. It indicates that the more the income rises, the more significant the satisfaction will be.

Zaremohzzabieh et.al. (2019) explored different factors responsible for happiness among youth (n=400) residing in the urban areas of Malaysia. Data were analyzed with the help of a structural equation model. Results indicate that social and family environment and educational level play an essential role in the case of happiness among youth. On the contrary, a negative correlation was found between economic opportunities and satisfaction among youths.

Yue et al. (2017) investigated the influence of gender on happiness and depression among Chinese students. The study was conducted on 5648 students within the age range of 17 to 29 years. The result revealed that females are happier than males. Surprisingly, the depression level was also higher in females than males. Results also show that extroverted women experience more happiness; on the other hand, women with neuroticism experience more depression.

Dutta & Blangayil (2016) conducted a study to assess the relationship between subjective happiness and student life satisfaction. It also examined the effect of gender on subjective happiness and life satisfaction. The sample consisted of 60 students, and data was collected by administering Sonja Lyubomirsky's Subjective Happiness scale (1997) and Life Diener's Satisfaction scale (1984). This study revealed that life satisfaction and subjective happiness are significantly correlated among students. It was also found that personal happiness and life satisfaction were higher among males than females.

Demir (2010) investigated the influence of close relationships on happiness in emerging adults (18–25 years). There were two groups of adults, i.e., one group having romantic partners (n=152) and another group without romantic partners (n=152). Findings indicate that a close relationship with the mother and best friend plays a more significant role in the happiness of adults without a romantic partner. On the other hand, in the case of adults with romantic partners, three factors are associated with their joy, namely (i) relationship quality between mother and child, (ii) quality relationship with a romantic partner, and (iii) conflict with a romantic partner.

Studies on Tea Garden Workers

Roy (2021) conducted analytical research to assess the problems of tea garden workers' children studying in secondary education. The study was conducted on secondary-level students of tea garden workers in Dibrugarh and Biswanath districts, Assam. A descriptive survey method was used for data collection. Data were collected by administering a Problem Questionnaire, an Interview schedule and an Attitude Scale. Findings revealed that girl students do not continue studying because of the lack of basic facilities in schools. It shows that 53.33% of students cannot continue their studies due to financial constraints, and 14.67% are due to a lack of parental support. It also found that the Tea Tribe community has a negative attitude toward girls' education; therefore, early marriage practices are most common in this community. The study also revealed that the consumption of alcohol is most common among tea garden workers, hampering the sound home environment. Most of the tea garden worker's family income and resources are very low.

Thadathil (2021) conducted a study to assess substance abuse among tea workers in East Nepal. The study was carried out in rural areas of Nepal. The sample comprised 152 tea garden workers (18-70 years); the males were 54, and the females were 98. Data was collected through the interview method. The result shows that 43.42% of workers regularly drink alcohol, whereas 28.95% are not alcoholic, and no response was obtained from the rest, 27.63% of participants. A history of substance abuse was reported by 68.42% of workers, while 28.95% had no such history.

Sarkar et al. (2016) conducted a case study among tea plantation laborers residing in Sub-Himalayan, West Bengal. They found that female laborers confront issues, such as inadequate health facilities, lack of

pure drinking water, marriage at a tender age, maternal mortality, child labor, alcoholism, lower literacy rate, etc. Women are also deprived of their rights.

Bosumatari & Goyari (2013) examined the educational qualification of female laborers in the Udalguri district, Assam. Participants of this study comprised 120 female workers. The interview method was used, and data were analyzed through a chi-square test. Findings revealed that the female workers' educational status is much lower than the male workers. This study also indicates that the possible reason for this poor academic level among female laborers is a parental negative attitude toward education of daughters, marriage at tender age, and lack of proper school infrastructure.

After reviewing the previous studies of tea garden workers, it has been found that no research was conducted on mental health-related issues, especially on the subjective happiness of tea garden workers in Assam, to the best of researchers' knowledge. Therefore, looking into the scarcity of research in these areas and also to fulfil this gap, the present study was planned to conduct on "Subjective Happiness among male and female tea garden workers of Dibrugarh district, Assam."

The Rationale of the Study

The tea industry is one of the most important foreign exchange earnings and profitable industries, contributing significantly to the country's economy. Workers are part and parcel of the tea industry; without their well-being, the progress of the tea industry is impossible. However, despite their devotion and hard work behind the revenue generation of the tea industries, they are still deprived and unaware of their rights and privileges, mainly because of their lower literacy rate. Although the government has developed many plans and programs, their livelihood and living conditions are still poor, and they have not been improved much yet.

Happiness of the workers of tea garden is utmost important, as research studies have shown that happier people tend to be healthier, more social, have more longevity and self-control, increase pro-social behavior, increase creative and divergent thinking, increase the ability to persist in non-enjoyable tasks, being a multi-tasker, methodical, sincere and productive at their workplace (Boniwell, 2008). Therefore, looking at the importance of tea industries in our country, we should take care of the tea workers' physical and mental health. However, very little research has been conducted on this area of mental health, especially on the subjective happiness of tea workers of Assam. Thereby, looking into the lack of research in this area, especially in Assam, the present study was undertaken on the topic "Subjective Happiness among male and female tea garden workers of Dibrugarh district, Assam."

Objective

To compare the subjective happiness of male and female tea garden workers from lower-income and middle-income groups.

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference regarding the subjective happiness of male and female tea garden workers.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the case of subjective happiness of tea garden workers belonging to lower-income and middle-income groups.

Methodology

A survey research design was implemented in this present research. The sample comprised 100 (50 male and 50 female) Tea Garden workers within the age range of 21 to 60 years, which was selected through purposive sampling. The samples were taken from the Durgapur and Borboruah Tea Estate of Dibrugarh district, Assam. The Dibrugarh district was chosen for data collection, as it is one of Assam's highest tea-producing districts (Roy, 2011).

Inclusion Criteria

- All married participants.
- Presently working in the tea garden.
- Residents of Dibrugarh district.
- Age should be within the range of 21 to 60 years.
- Male and female participants were only included.
- Participants who belong to lower- and middle-income groups.

Exclusion Criteria

- Widow and divorcee.
- Those who did not give voluntary consent for participation.
- Physically and mentally unwell individual.

Variables

Independent variable:

- i) Gender (male and female)
- ii) Income groups (Lower- and middle-income groups)

Dependent variable: i) Subjective Happiness

Measures

The following measures were used for the collection of data:

- 1) Socio-demographic sheet: A socio-demographic sheet was developed by the researchers, which was constructed in the Assamese language. It contains socio-demographic information and information related to relationships with family, spouse, and friends.
- 2) Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS): Lyubomirsky and Lepper developed this Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) in 1999. In this scale, Cronbach's alpha was found to be within the ranges from 0.85 to 0.95, indicating good internal consistency reliability. The test-retest reliability score was found within the range from 0.55 to 0.90 ($M = 0.72$), and in the case of convergent validity, the correlation was found within the range from 0.52 to 0.72 ($M = 0.62$). This scale consists of four items measuring the individual's subjective happiness. This scale uses a seven-point Likert Scale, where respondents have to rate themselves from 1 (not a very happy person) to 7 (delighted person). Here, in two items, respondents are asked about how happy they are by using absolute ratings and ratings by comparing themselves with peers. The rest two things, three and four, assess the extent to which an individual is very happy or very unhappy, respectively. The scoring procedure of the SHS is straightforward, where all the values of the first three items are scored as marked by the participants, but item 4 is scored reversely (i.e., seven is scored as 1, 6 as 2, 5 as 3, 3 as 5, 2 as 6 and 1 as 7).

After that, the scores of all four items are summed and then have to compute mean to get the final score. The higher scores indicate greater happiness (Lyubomirsky, 1999).

Before the administration of the Subjective Happiness Scale, it was translated from the original English version to the Assamese language, as it is the native language of the participants of this present research. After that, the Assamese translation was re-examined by experts in the psychology field. To ascertain the face validity of the questionnaire, it was translated back from Assamese to English again by two other experts. It was found to be valid, and no discrepancy was found between the original and back-translated versions of English. After that, the translated Subjective Happiness Scale was used in the current study.

Statistics

Data were analyzed by calculating mean, standard deviation, percentage (%), Chi-square and test.

Procedure

First, rapport was built with the participants, and consent for participation in the present research was taken from each of them. They were given assurance of maintaining confidentiality, and it was explained that their identity would not be disclosed; instead, they would be identified by assigning numbers to each person. Hence, they were requested to give honest responses. The researcher went door to door to collect data and used face to face interview method in this present study, as most of the respondents were illiterate and had low education levels. After completing the interview, the respondents were provided some refreshments as a token of thanks by the researcher for their cooperation. After data collection, the responses in the socio-demographic sheet were scrutinized. It found that all the participants belonged to the Hindu religion, and no participants were from the higher income group. Instead, they belonged to the lower- and middle-income groups. These two income groups were taken as the independent variable of the present study. Then the responses to the Subjective Happiness Scale were scored, calculated, and analyzed.

Result and Discussion

Statistical Analysis of Responses to Socio-demographic Sheet

Under this section, the socio-demographic information was analyzed through the application of frequency, percentage and Chi-square test, and these are presented in the tables below.

Table 1 shows frequency (f) and percentage (%) of responses of tea garden workers in terms Socio-demographic variables.

Table 1

Distribution of Responses of Tea Garden Workers Concerning Socio-demographic Variables

Socio-demographic Variables		f	%	
Age Range	20-30	49	49	
	30-40	23	23	
	40-50	17	17	
	50-60	11	11	
	Total	100	100	
		f	%	
Religion	Hindu	100	100	
	Islam	0	0	
	Christian	0	0	
	Others	0	0	
		f	%	
Caste	OBC	100	100	
	SC	0	0	
	ST	0	0	
	Others	0	0	
		f	%	
Family Types	Joint	23	23	
	Nuclear	77	77	
	Total	100	100	
		f	%	
Income Groups	Lower	16	16	
	Middle	84	84	
	Higher	0	0	
	Total	100	100	
		Gender	f	%
Level of Education	High School	Male	11	22
		Female	2	4
	Middle School	Male	19	38
		Female	5	10
	Primary School	Male	9	18
		Female	2	4
	Illiterate	Male	11	22
		Female	41	82
Total		100	100	

Table 1 shows that the majority, 49% of workers in this present study, lie within the age range of 20 to 30 years, followed by 23% (30-40 years), 17% (40-50 years) and 11% (50-60 years) respectively.

Table 1 shows clearly that all the participants belong to the Hindu religion and Other Backward Castes (OBC). It can be seen in Table 1 that the majority, 77% of workers, were from the nuclear family type, and only 23% were from the joint family. It has been found that more significant percentages (84%) of workers belong to a middle-income group, and the rest, 16%, belong to a lower-income group. But no workers were from the higher income group.

In the educational qualification of male tea garden workers, it can be seen in Table 1 that greater numbers of male workers, i.e., 38% have academic qualifications up to middle school, followed by 22% have an educational level up to high school, and 18% have up to primary level, respectively. The rest, 22% of male workers, were found to be illiterate. On the other hand, it has been found that a greater percentage

of female workers, i.e., 82%, are illiterate, followed by 10% who have an educational level up to middle school level, 4% have education upto high school level, and the rest 4% have upto primary level, respectively.

Table 2

Distribution of Responses to the Statement Related to Spouse, Family and Friends by Gender

Statement	Gender	Positive Response		Negative Response		Total		Chi-square value	df	Critical Value	Level of Significance
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
“Having good relation with spouse.”	Male	40	80	10	20	50	50	31.41	1	6.635	The significant level is at 0.01
	Female	12	24	38	76	50	50				
	Total	52	52	48	28	100	100				
“Going out with the family”	Male	40	80	10	20	50	50	0.174	1	3.841	Non-significant
	Female	39	78	11	22	50	50				
	Total	79	79	21	21	100	100				
“Interaction with friends”	Male	44	88	6	12	50	50	23.25	1	6.635	Significant level is at 0.01
	Female	21	42	29	58	50	50				
	Total	65	65	35	35	100	100				
“Going out with the friends”	Male	42	84	8	16	50	50	31.818	1	6.635	Significant level is at 0.01
	Female	14	28	36	72	50	50				
	Total	56	56	44	44	100	100				

From Table 2, it can be seen in the case of the statement “*Having good relation with spouse*” that the majority, 76% of female workers, felt that they do not have a good relationship with their husbands. In contrast, 80% of male workers perceived that they have a good relationship with their spouses. The Chi-square value, i.e. 31.41, is significant at 0.01 level, indicating that male and female workers significantly differ in their relationship with their spouse.

In the case of the statement “*Going out with the family*,” it can be noted in Table 2 that the majority of male (80%) and female (78%) workers most often go out with their families. The Chi-square value, i.e., 0.174, is also not significant. It points out that male and female workers are significantly different regarding their responses to the statement “going out with the family.”

Concerning the statement “*Interaction with friends*” (in Table 2), a large number of female workers (58%) responded that neither they have any friends, nor do they have interactions with any friends. On the other hand, a more significant percentage of male workers, i.e., 88%, responded that they do interact with their friends most often. The Chi-square value, i.e., 23.25, is found to be significant at 0.01 level (shown in Table 2), indicating that the difference between the responses of male and female workers regarding the statement “interaction with friends” is significant.

Regarding the statement “*Going out with friends*” in Table 2, the majority, 84% of male workers, said they most often go out with their friends. Only 28% of female participants responded positively to this statement. The Chi-square value, i.e., 31.818 in Table 2 is found to be significant at the 0.01 level, pointing out that male and female workers are significantly different regarding their responses to the statement “Going out with friends.”

Statistical Analysis of Responses to Subjective Happiness

In this section, the responses of male and female tea garden workers who belong to lower- and middle-income groups regarding subjective happiness are analyzed through descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test.

Table 3

Mean, SD and t-test of Subjective Happiness among Male and Female Workers

Gender	Mean	SD	t -value	df	Critical Value	Level of Significance
Male	6.09	0.39	3.707	39	2.707	Significant at 0.01 Level
Female	5.75	0.18				

In Table 3, the mean scores of male (6.09) and female (5.75) workers show that males perceive more happiness than female workers. The t value, i.e., 3.707, indicates that the mean difference between male and female workers regarding their subjective happiness is significant at 0.01 level, as shown in Figure 4 below. It means Hypothesis 1, stating “There is no significant difference regarding Subjective Happiness of male and female tea garden workers,” is rejected in this present study.

Figure 4

Graphical Representation of Subjective Happiness Among Male and Female Workers

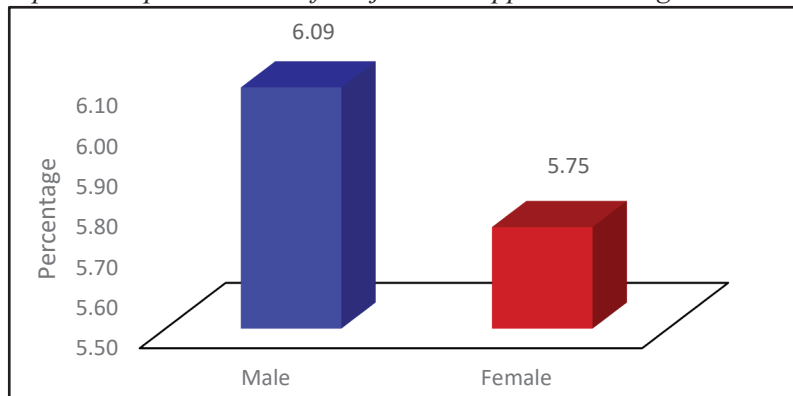


Table 4

Mean, SD and t-test of Subjective Happiness among Workers Belonging to Different Income Groups

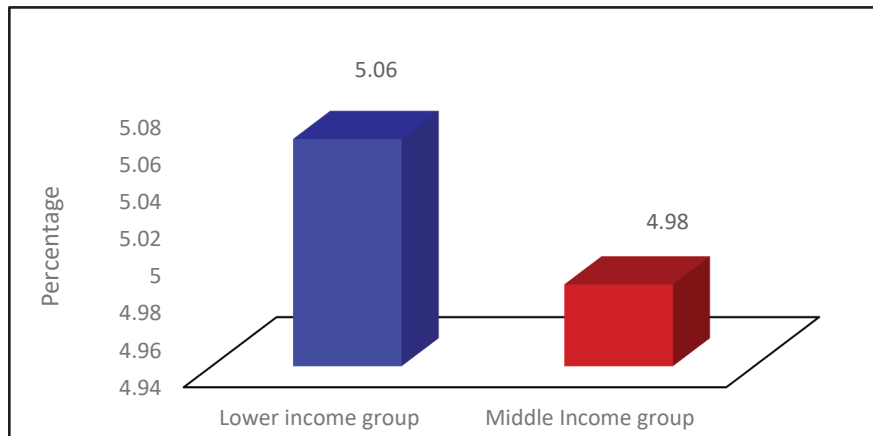
Income Group	Mean	SD	t -value	df	Critical Value	Level of Significance
Lower income group	5.062	1.3	1.451	23	2.80734	Non-significant
Middle-Income group	4.984	1.6				

In Table 4, although the mean difference was found between the lower-income group (5.062) and middle-income group (4.98) in their subjective happiness, the calculated t value, i.e. 1.451, was not significant. It indicates that lower-income and middle-income group workers perceive an equal level of happiness; there is no difference between them. Therefore, Hypothesis 2, stating, “There is no significant

difference in the case of subjective happiness of tea garden workers belonging to lower-income and middle-income groups,” is accepted in this current study.

Figure 5

Graphical Representation of Subjective Happiness Among Workers Belonging to Different Income Groups



The discussion has been provided below based on the hypotheses: **H₀₁: There is no significant difference regarding the Subjective Happiness of male and female tea garden workers.** Table 3 shows that the mean scores regarding subjective happiness of male and female tea garden workers are significantly different, indicating that males perceived more satisfaction than female tea garden workers in this study. The present finding may be due to the overburdening of female workers, as they must manage their workplace and home, namely looking after their children, husband, and other family responsibilities, like cooking, carrying firewood from garden to home, etc.

The tea tribe is a patriarchal community; females are also expected to be submissive. That is why they silently carry all the burdens without any arguments. They have to work in the garden and at home, even during their pregnancy and the post-natal period, which affects their physical and mental health. Because of this, they do not get time for recreational activities (Saha et al., 2019) and cannot go outside to spend time with their friends. They don't have time to take care of themselves; therefore, female workers usually suffer more from psychological stress (Saha et al., 2019). Table 2 also shows that the majority, 58% of females, responded that neither do they have any friends, nor do they interact with their friends.

On the other hand, a more significant percentage of male workers, i.e., 88%, responded that they do interact with their friends most often, and this difference between male and female workers is found to be significant at the 0.01 level. In Table 2, it can be observed that the majority, 76% of female workers, felt that they did not have a good relationship with their husbands. In contrast, 80% of male workers perceived that they have a good relationship with their spouse, and the difference is significant at the 0.01 level. Thereby, lack of connectivity with friends and close relationships with a spouse might be the possible reason for the unhappiness of most female tea garden workers in this current study. Our happiness is also measured by our relationship with friends, romantic partners, and social connectivity (Lyumbomirsky, 2007; Seligman, 2011).

Education is the key to happiness (Nayak & Rroy, 2022). Early marriage and low literacy rates (Bosumatari & Goyari, 2013; Deb Nath & Nath, 2014) among female workers might also be the reason for

greater unhappiness in this study. Table 1 also shows that the majority, 82% of females, are illiterate, whereas only 22% of males are illiterate. Because of this lower literacy rate, female workers are unaware of their rights and privileges (Banagiri et al., 2022). They constantly become victims of domestic violence, which many female workers expressed to the researchers during the informal interview session. One of them said, “My husband always beat me after consumption of country beer which is called “haria” (locally prepared alcohol), and he just grabbed all my income, whatever I earn; he never tries to understand my problems and also never support.” This fact is also supported by previous studies that there is a high intake of alcohol and tobacco among male tea garden workers (Sahoo et al., 2011; Roy, 2021; Sahu & Bhuyan, 2022).

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the case of subjective happiness of tea garden workers belonging to lower-income and middle-income groups. A fascinating result has been found in Table 4 above, which shows that there is no significant difference between tea garden workers belonging to lower- and middle-income groups in their subjective happiness. It indicates that both the lower- and middle-income groups perceive equal happiness levels. Here, in this study also it can be seen that although the lower income group workers face harsher life situations in comparison to middle income group workers, such as financial crises, poor living conditions, poor health, etc., but they perceive an equal level of happiness as the middle-income group workers, which is a positive indication about lower income group that they might have found the meaning and purpose of their life, and in spite of the external situation, they experience contented, happy, and peaceful life. These findings prove Sonja Lyumbomirsky’s (2007) view that happiness is primarily an individual choice, no matter how adverse the situation is. According to Lyumbomirsky, 40% of our happiness is determined by our selection.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that male tea garden workers in the Dibrugarh district feel greater happiness than female workers. It has been observed that a lower literacy rate, poor relationships with spouses, domestic violence, male workers’ excessive alcohol consumption, and lower social connectivity might be the possible reason for the lower level of happiness among female tea garden workers in the Dibrugarh district.

Another more interesting finding is that both lower- and middle-income group workers feel a similar level of happiness. This indicates that happiness is not determined by external situations. like financial crises, wealth, etc. These findings strongly support Sonja Lumbomirsky’s dictum, “Happiness is mostly a matter of individual choice.”

The present research findings can be considered guidelines for government, policy makers, researchers, counsellors, and NGOs. Based on these current findings, they will be able to gain more insight into tea industry workers, and, consequently, they can formulate and implement various plans and policies to improve the mental health conditions of tea plantation workers. Government and various non-governmental organizations can come forward to organize different training programs among tea garden workers, especially female workers, regarding learning different strategies to increase happiness in one’s life.

Future Research

The tea plantation workers can consider these present results as an assessment of their level of happiness, and, accordingly, they can take preventive measures to boost their happiness level. These current findings would also help the government realize the importance of the appointment of male and female counsellors, as well as career counsellors, in every tea garden’s hospital and school who can provide career counselling,

family counselling, and couple counselling to students, teachers, and parents. The present study's findings also have opened many unexplored avenues for future research.

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