

Seventeenth Loksabha

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**Title : Regarding grant of Parja Patta land rights to tea and cinchona garden workers.**

**SHRI RAJU BISTA (DARJEELING):** The 171<sup>st</sup> report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce, titled “Issues Affecting the Indian Tea Industry especially in the Darjeeling region” has found serious problems afflicting the tea industry in the Darjeeling hills, Terai and Dooars region major among them being the denial of Parja Patta land rights for the workers, who have toiled in these gardens for generations. I quote “The Committee is dismayed to note the plight and deprivation of the tea workers. It is deplorable to note the feudalistic set up in the region to alienate tea workers from their basic land rights despite seven decades of independence.” I further quote from the report, “the perpetual struggle of tea workers to seek rights for their own lands not only for living but even for burying their dead family members is unfortunate and saddening.”

The committee has therefore recommended that “a specific legislation needs to be enacted which recognizes the rights and ownership of small and marginalized tea workers to their ancestral lands and resources.”

I am, therefore, requesting the Union Govt. to enact a law which will guarantee Parja Patta on the lines of Forest Rights Act (2006) to ensure justice for tea and cinchona garden workers.