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## Research Article

### Health Affliction and Medical Service of Tea Plantation Women Workers in Sri Lanka: An Anthropological Study Based on Alton Estate-2021

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#### ABSTRACT

This research Studies “*Health affliction and medical service of tea plantation women workers in Sri Lanka: An anthropological study based on Alton – 2021*” This study focused on women workers in the tea plantation. This study problem highlights general health conditions of the women workers. The plantation management provides not quality of the medical specialties for the tea estate. Thereby most of the women workers are facing challenges to get proper medical services. Women workers more contributed for the economic sector in the Sri Lanka. Therefore the government should protect them. According to this study use primary and secondary data collection method, in short time; to selected sample size 12 from tea estate of Alton in Horana plantation. Women workers and health issues research relating women workers are suffering from fever, cough, cold, stomach pain, weakness, eye pain, headache, skin diseases, chest pain, asthma, breathing trouble, Hand pain , leg pain and Pregnancy. This study argues why they cannot get in correct way of the government medical service in the tea plantation. According to this issues, what are the problem are overcome. And provide good medical service and treatment for women worker in the tea plantation. Manage the situation to develop the hill country community. This is the way to research in this area. As well as I suggested some of the idea and commons in this problem. 12 samples were selected from a simple resource among the people belonging to 660 families living in study area and numerical and characteristic data on the conditions of the study area were read. This study concern research place situation to choice to use qualitative research method and used sample random sampling method to observed and read to get many idea and knowledge relevant the research problem to done this research. This research mainly focused what are different between nation and plantation medical service system. This research should be given the important for hill country community people. They are structurally different for other Sri Lankan community people. They are not receiving Sri Lanka welfare

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schemes in equally. According to this study provides a critical analysis and suggestions.

**Keywords:** Upcountry, women workers, tea plantation, health problems, medical services

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## Background of Study

Today's world has experienced incredible strides forward in combating hunger, ensuring, good health, providing access to drinking water and sanitation, offering education and establishing human rights and dignity. The world has become small and at the same time has grown in way unimaginable even in the recent past. As the recent outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic increased the gap in economic sector for developing countries. According to this background most of the people are facing poverty. This research paper mainly concern women workers and health care specialties in upcountry community. Women in Sri Lanka have engaged themselves in different economic activities among labour types. Women in the tea plantation sector is one of the most marginalized and exploited group of workers in Sri Lanka. Plantation sector shows that the working conditions for men and women are vastly different due to the type of work done by men and women. Men workers normally finish their work day's work early. But women workers worked eight hours per day. When they finished plantation works they should work at home. Normally women workers are always contribute homework and outside work. Tea plucking women workers are working outside. They couldn't concern heavy rain or hot. They must pluck 20kg tea leaves only management provide full wage per day. However most of the workers cannot pluck 20kg tea leaves per day. Thereby plantation workers are facing much more economic problems and challenges. According to this background this research focused on tea plantation community women workers health issues and challenges.

Health status is a universal concept that is determined by more than the presence or absence of any disease. Health is defined as the ability to adopt and self – manage physical, mental and social challenges throughout life. According to world health organization, health

is finding as a state of complete physical, mental and social well- being and no merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Physical is about body. Mental is about how people think and feel. To understand the occupational aspects of health, it is necessary to have a detailed examination of women workers in terms of the actual work involved: the number of hours allotted, the remuneration if any, inadequate wages, work environment and the effects of all these on their physical and mental health. It is necessary to analyze the types of physical stress experienced.

Class discrimination in Sri Lanka is the virtual exclusion of the estate workers from the nation health service workers. As in colonial period the plantation companies continue to employ substandard medical practioners without proper qualification to provide either preventive or curative health care These practitioners are entrusted with community medicine, family planning, maternal, child health , immunization, ante – natal and post natal care. In the rest of the country, only doctors trained in the university- level state medical college or university. Who have passed the apothecaries examination and undergone a long apprenticeship in state hospitals, are allowed to practice medicine. But on estates, health care is in the hand of estate medical assistants (EMA), who have passed only the pharmacist's examination and a special test, devised for the plantations by the Sri Lanka medical council.

Medical supplies are provided to the state hospitals by the government medical supplies department, but the plantation dispensaries are supplies by the plantation housing and social welfare trust (PHSWT) its head office in Colombo with regional offices in the main plantation centers. Plantation management dominates the PHSWT WITH 50% of the representative – government officials comprise 30% and plantation workers unions have the remaining 20%. One of the few standard items are

provided for the dispensaries: paracetamol, iron tablets, mebendazole, ergometrine, injections, penicillin tablets, tetracycline capsule, Cot rim-oxazole tablets, vitamin A & D capsules and jeevanee. The quality and quantity is inadequate and many essential medicines are not provided at all.

Plantation workers are among the most economically deprived and therefore the most vulnerable to disease and ill – health. Malnutrition produced by insufficient and low quality food. Thereby widespread that the average physical height of plantation workers is discernibly much less than that of the better fed sections of the population. Especially women and is invariably aggravated by pregnancy. The estate workers the affiliations were identified among the sample workers. They are continuous cough, low blood pressure, high blood pressure, and neck pain, and shoulder pain, respiratory and skin problems. According to this background the present study is an attempt to explore the health afflictions and availability of medical services of the tea plantation women workers, in the Alton tea estate.

These research paper often different perspectives embedded in the idea of women workers health problems and health care services in the tea plantation. In attempt to obtain more information about tea plantation community, method of health services and strategies were considered. Furthermore, the chapter covered those women workers medical issues, challenges and lack of medical services. Overall, the nature of this study was rooted in this research study. As understanding the medical service, women workers health problems and tea estates dispensary structure, function and services. According to that, utilized and guides to address the women workers health problem and medical challenges.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The plantation workers produced the good quality of tea. Despite they are not get good quality of water, food, health care service and houses. There is no any medical access to get health care. Especially there are no hospitals and doctors. Social and health indicators of the estate sector are very poor compare the na-

tional level. Female and poor conditions in estate affected their lives negatively in every aspect of social, economic and educational achievement, child care and rear, nutrition and health. The women workers medical needs cannot currently be satisfied in tea plantation community.

Majority women are death without medical specialties in this research place. Especially we concern government provide low level medical services for this community people with only few qualified medical officers to give the medical treatment for the plantation people. Therefore working women of the population has exacerbated the shortage of medical services. According to this background female workers are facing more health issues and challenges without proper medical services in the tea estate. This research focused these issues to highlight plantation female workers health problems and challenges.

### **Research Objectives**

This study understands of the health problems and medical challenges of the tea plantation women workers in upcountry. This study explores identify of “*upcountry women workers health issues and medical challenges in the Alton estate*”.

This main objective is achieved through the following sub objectives:

#### **Sub objectives**

1. To identify plantation women workers living and working background.
2. To identify the quality to the dispensaries’ medical treatments.
3. To identify plantation (Estate) medical services.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Data Collocation of the Research**

This research used social research method in this research. As well as this research should followed sample system. In order to do the research data collection is very important part. Without data we have not analysis the research to give the solution or suggestion. Therefore every research based on data collection. This research also based on primary and secondary

data collection method and used interview, discussion, participation observation method to collected the data for this research.

### ***Sampling method***

This research used simple random sampling method. the sample section followed a particular set of conditions and is generally used in studies where sample needs to collected based on specific characteristic of the population. According to this research used simple random sample to collected 12 samples in the research place.

### ***Sample size***

This refers to the number of item to select from the universe to constitute a sample. This is a very important part for every research. This study concern acceptable confidence level for the estimate and also concern covid-19 pandemic situation. Firstly concern about size of population in the research area. There are 420 women workers. According to that this study objectives select 12 samples to use the research.

### ***Source of data***

The two main sources of data in social research are “people” and “paper”. Data can be defined as the quantitative or qualitative values of a variable. Plural datum said which literally means to “give or something given”. According to that this study used numbers, images, words, figures and ideas. As used two type of data source in this research. There are primary data and secondary data. Primary data collection used questionnaire, observation and field work. Secondary data collection used research article, web sides, newspapers, annual reports and statistical records.

### ***Limitation of the study***

In spite of detailed analysis made in the present study, this study is not free from limitation the following are the important limitation:

1. The study is purely based on the view of 12 respondents only and hence the results may not be universally applicable.
2. The geographical area of this study is confined only Alton estate.

3. This study is period specific.
4. The questionnaire is collected from four division and women workers selected using simple random sampling method.
5. The limitations of this method are applicable to this study.

### ***Analysis of the Research***

The research place situated Alton estate in Nuwereliya district. As well as in the research tea plantation estate has four divisions. Mainly tea plantation workers are living in line houses. In this research I used 12 sampling in this research. And also I interviewed women workers, welfare officer, medical officer and estate manager to get the data to analyze this research paper.

### ***Living Condition***

According to the sampling firstly we have to concern living condition. Mostly tea plantation workers are living in line house. There are two rooms only. Its links a train who are the living in line rooms they cannot fulfill the basic needs. Even they cannot get food, water and shelter in the good way. 100 % people have not land rights in the research place. This study area Give the low payments prevailing on the tea estate. One is salary. Another on is advanced. 82% percent women workers are facing health care problem, 62% percent women workers are facing food items, 35% percent of the people facing education problem. According to the data collection, the women workers couldn't spend more money to buy the nutrition foods. But they must work at tea plantation within eight hours. Without good health, they must working at the plantation. Thereby most of the women workers are getting health problems in the tea plantation.

### ***Infrastructure***

Tea plantation workers are facing many problems and challenges in line houses. They always depend in the tea plantation infrastructure. Line house system is very difficult for that people. Line houses have not good roofing, patio, stone, floor and environment. Rainwater directly affected the dwelling as the hole in the roof tin due to roof irregularity falls. There is no proper place to dispose of waste things there is

not front yard for those who living in a rhythmic house and there is no door and place even for performing funeral rites. In the situation the people of the study area affected by the river floods due to irregularities in the infrastructure facilities. According to the data provide by the

research, the problem of the drainage in the study area is 25% Disposal problem is 12% accommodation problem is 15% and unsafe infrastructure problem is 48%. Following this figure to understand the line house people's infrastructure problems.

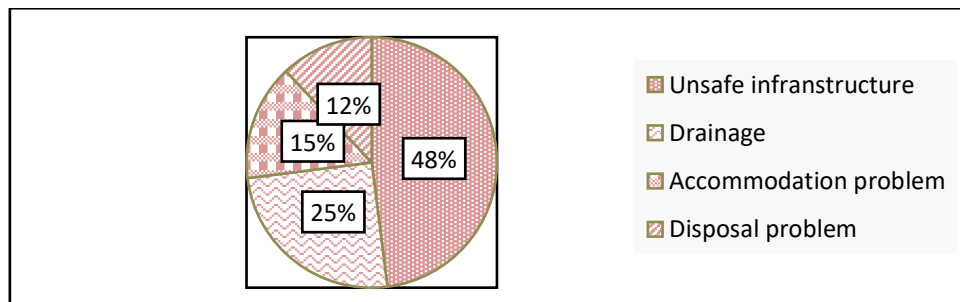


Figure 1. Problem of the infrastructure 2021

Source: Field Research 2021

### Toilet

Tea estate hasn't proper toilet facilities for women workers. The condition of the toilets is not good. However, there is no toilet and sanitary specialties. The time to emergency, women workers need to travel quite a distance from

their area of work. According to the data collection, women workers from tea plantation reported,

"A" (32 age) "take leave or become absent during the motion and period time, because of the reason is there is no toilets specialties".

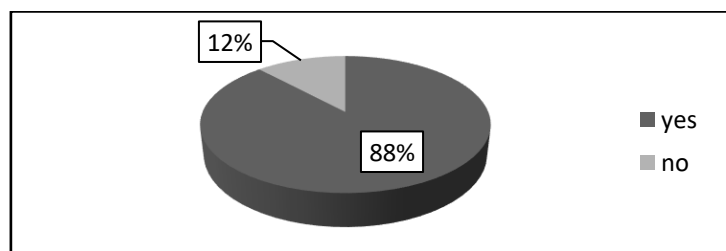


Figure 2. Toilet specialties 2021

Source: Field Research 2021

Figure 2. Above show that 88% present of the respondents haven't toilet specialties in the study area. This shows that the majority of the women workers are facing toilet and sanitary problem of the tea plantation in the study area. According to the data collection, this result is there is no toilet and sanitary specialties in the tea estate. It's created more health problems for women workers.

### Low Wage

Cash payment is not uniform across the estates. Payment is based monthly salary and advanced salary. The binary mode of payment

builds power relations and source of dignity. Per day wage 1000/= however workers not get full wage for one day. If workers takes 20kg tea leafs, than only received 1000/= per day. Workers couldn't take 20kg for every day. Thereby they receive up salary per day. According to that, workers cannot go private hospital to spend the money for the medical treatment. 98% present of the respondents get low wage. Without economic power they cannot eat nutrition meals and caring health. Majority women workers are facing low wage problem in the research area.

### Poverty

The tea estate people main occupation is tea plucking. They all depend on plantation management. Without tea plucking the occupation they cannot fulfill the basic needs. As the tea estate there is facing many poverty problems. According to the work company expect only economic benefit for the employee. Always tea plantation workers are working in the tea estate without quality of medical and social welfare specificities to living in the line house. When overcome the poverty in the line house

people life. They have not anyway to balance the life. The tea state management most of the time dismissed and suspend the workers. Giving up salary for them, these are the problems making absolute poverty and relative poverty. According to the research Figure 3 above show that, 75% people facing absolute poverty in the research place as well as 25% people are facing relative poverty in the line houses. Following this figure described poverty of plantation workers in the research area.

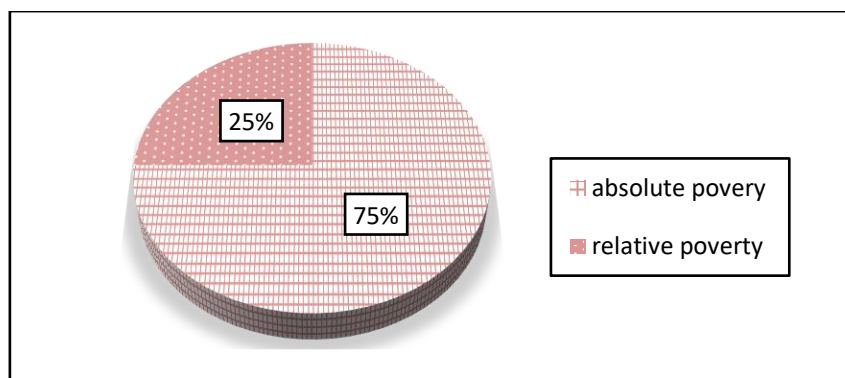


Figure 3. Poverty 2021  
Source: Field Research 2021

### Health issues

They had suffered from illnesses or injury during the year preceding the study. According to the data collection, 75% percent of women workers get pain in neck, shoulder and other body part. A female women workers representative on a certified estate made this comparison." According to the data collection,

X (46 age) said, "Y (38 age) said, "We used to carry the heave leaf bags on our shoulder and walked a long distance".

Z (48 age) said, "this estate not provide proper infrastructure, most of the time bee bite us. But there is no doctor, there is no medical officers, no ambulance, we wait to get medical services from other town hospital and provide hospital".

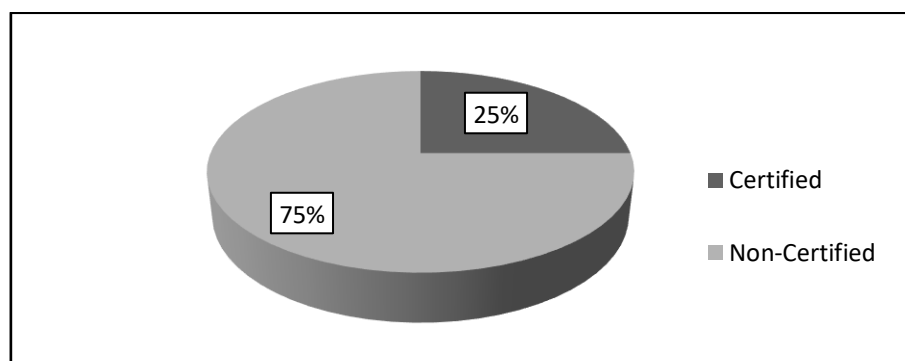


Figure 4. Challenges of medical services 2021  
Source: Field Research 2021

Figure 4 above show that 75% present of the respondents none certified the medical services. According to the data collection, the result is there is no good medical service. There is no doctor, medical officers and ward. 25% present of the respondents said they provide first aid only. But it's not provide in a proper way. Thereby women workers are facing illness and disease in long time in the study area.

#### Ambulance

Ambulance Service estate road condition is poor almost in the research place. And also there is no ambulance service. The workers are using Larry to go outside the hospitals. Poor vehicle service makes worker lives difficult. Women workers reported that difficult them during the pregnancy to visit hospital at regular check up with Larry. According to the data collection, 98% present said, "this *estate hasn't ambulance service. Usually medical women are travel by plantation tack tar or lorry to go to the regional hospitals*".

#### Risk at the Work Place

Tea plantation is not always safety and good place. There is a mostly woman workers plucking the tea leafs. Women workers are facing more difficulties in the tea garden. Leech bites and suck the workers blood. Women workers are not wearing boot shoes, gloves to working, they didn't use the umbrella in the work place, and they have to stay in the tea garden for eight hours at a stretch. The tea estate don't have toilet. Another side danger animals attack the workers. According to the data collection, I collected some of the animal and percentage of the attacks. Table 3.1 shows that 70% present of the respondents effect by leech, 15% present of the respondents effect by bee, 8% present of the respondents effect by leopard and 2% present of the respondents effect by snake. According to the analysis, majority workers are facing challenges to working in the research place. Therefore proper medical service is must important in the research place.

Table 1. Danger animals at work place 2021

No	Animals	Percentage
01	Leech	70%
02	Pig	5%
03	Bee	15%
04	Snake	2%
05	Leopards	8%

Source: Field Research 2021

#### Alcohol consumption

Alcohol consumption was most prevalent among men and women in the tea plantation. Women workers said, "Drink alcohol to reduce her body pain after a day's hard work".

According to the data collection 74% percentage of women workers are drinking alcohol in the tea plantation. As there is no counseling to controlling the drinking habits

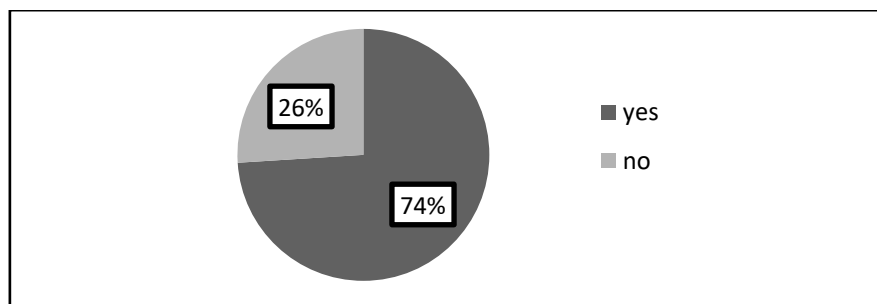


Figure 5. Alcohol Consumption 2021

Source: Field Research 2021

### Type of Diseases

Our field visits and survey results reveal that there are a number of hazards that affect workers' productivity quite adversely. Among these, hazards that affect workers' productivity quite adversely. Among these, hazards arising from scorching sun, rain, leech, bee, snake, pig and other insect bites frequent. Hazards arising from spraying insecticides and using

chemical fertilizer in the tea plantation are also widespread. As women workers are getting diseases from hazards, climate changing, and psychical health pain. According to the data collection, I displayed diseases from the work place. Table 2 shows that type of diseases and percentage of the diseases. According to the data analysis, majority workers are facing fever, skin diseases in the research place.

Table 2. Type of Diseases for Female workers 2021

No	Type of diseases	Percentage
1	Fever	40%
2	Cough /cold	20%
3	Stomach plain	7%
4	Weakness	10%
5	Eye pain/ headache	3%
6	Skin diseases	20%
7	Chest pain/asthma/ breathing trouble	10%
8	Hand/ leg pain	5%
9	Pregnancy	5%

Source: Field Research 2021

### Stress

Every plantation visit had dispensaries. Yet women were not satisfied with the health services provide by them. However one visiting medical officer in dispensaries was not available round the clock and workers were mostly referred to the dispensaries.in one of the challenge of medicines was raised: "we don't get all the medicines from dispensaries. We get prenatal only. According to the observed, a sense of sadness and desperation in the tea plantation women workers. Stress in the work place can be divided into two,

#### 1. Psychological Stress

Too different tasks and too easy task are qua stress for women workers in the research place. as work load, low wage, poverty, lack of food , sanitary facilities make feeling sad and fear. According to the data collection 96% of the women workers are getting psychological stress. Workers couldn't take the counseling from plantation medical officer. Because of the reason doctor is not available this place and there is no qualified medical officer in the research place.

#### 2. Physical Stress

Physical factors like noise, vibration, hear, radiation, improper, ventilation are contributing factors for stress of work.

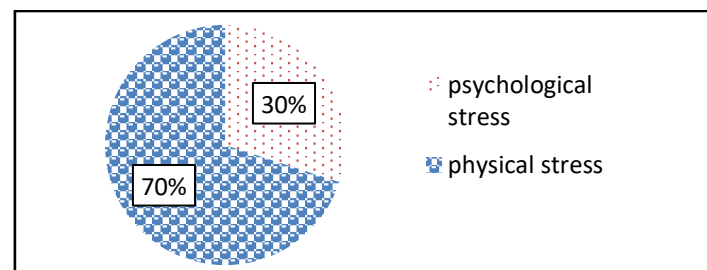


Figure 6. Details of Stress 2021

Source: field research 2021



Figure 6 shows that 70% present of the women workers are facing physical stress and 30% present workers are facing psychological stress. According to the data analysis, there is no counseling service in the plantation dispensary. Employees don't know to reduce the stress; mostly they use drinks to reduce the stress in the research place.

### **Medical Specialties of Plantation**

This study area is one of the remote areas. There is no filter water and structure of sanitary specialties. It's created more disease for the plantation people. Mostly women workers are affected for the water and sanitary problems. According to the data collection,

A (age 43) said, *"We haven't to use toilet in the tea plantation. After work we come to the houses and use the toilets"*.

B (age 44) said, *"We haven't good water specialties, when we open the tap of the water pump, leech come into the water, as many dust also come inside the water pump"*. According to that, the data collection and observation 87% of the women workers straggle to use the water in the research place. Mostly women workers get illness and disease for the water in the tea estate.

### **Infrastructure of Dispensaries**

This study tries to find the issues for lack of health services in the tea plantation. There is not large hospital and there is no doctor. Without doctor people didn't care about the health problems. However other estates medical officer visits one hour to work at Alton estate's dispensary. For the research area in however workers must go to the work at 7.30 am to finished the work in 4.30pm. Until that, they not allowed to go outside in the plantation women workers.

### **Findings**

Tea plantation workers are living in line house. There are two rooms only. Its links a train who are the living in line rooms they cannot fulfill the basic needs. Even they cannot get food, water and shelter in the good way. According to the data analysis, women workers haven't good living condition. There are 82% percent women workers are facing health care

problem. As 98% present of the respondents get low wage. Without economic power they cannot eat nutrition meals and caring health. Majority women workers are facing low wage problem in the research area. 75% present of the respondents none certified the medical services. According to the data collection, the result is there is no good medical service. There is no doctor, medical officers and ward. 25% present of the respondents said they provide first aid only. But it's not providing in a proper way. Thereby women workers are facing illness and disease in long time in the study area.

Our field visits and survey results reveal that there are a number of hazards that affect workers' productivity quite adversely. Among these, hazards that affect workers' productivity quite adversely. Among these, hazards arising from scorching sun, rain, leech, bee, snake, pig and other insect bites frequent. Hazards arising from spraying insecticides and using chemical fertilizer in the tea plantation are also widespread. As women workers are getting diseases from hazards. However there is no doctor, no medical officers and no ambulance. Thereby Alton estate workers couldn't take the medical treatment in the estate. They haven't time and money to go outside hospital to take care about them health. Even they couldn't first aid from the estate dispensary. There are living some danger animals. It's mostly attack and killed the workers inside the tea garden.

According to the data analysis mostly plantation women workers drink alcohol. It's also created disease for women workers. 74% present women workers are drinking alcohol Because of the body pain and stress. This study finding, these are the health issues and medical services problem and challenges in the research place.

### **Recommendation**

1. The Sri Lankan government should be appointed the entire tea plantation in upcountry.
2. Give the awareness to women workers for how to receive the free medical services and social welfare scheme.
3. Appointed nurse and counselor for the research place.
4. Develop the estate dispensaries.

5. To develop and implement policy instruments on workers' health.
6. To organize first aid and emergency treatment in the estates.
7. Develop the medical transport specialties for the line house people.
8. Organized medical camp to provide free medical services for all the people.
9. Identify the line house people economic and social problem and making the right solution.
10. Arrange the toilets inside the tea gardens.
11. Arrange the pure water specialties in the tea garden.
12. Renew the dispensary infrastructure.
13. Give the support to improve the line house gardening.
14. to provide to drink the water after filtering
15. Arrange the awareness programme for women health care services.
16. Directly government should be implement the social welfare scheme for line house people.
17. Organize the social welfare scheme based on women workers in the tea plantation. .
18. Government will be control the tea plantation management in legally.
19. Improve the public participation for the medical services.
20. Arrange the direct connection between Sri Lanka government and upcountry plantation people.
21. To provide the rules, doctor should be work at the hospital in 6 days per week.
22. To provide the ambulance specialties for the research place.
23. When they people straggle to get the social welfare scheme. who are they engage the welfare scheme they will give the instruction for the people how to get the social welfare scheme guide the people
24. Clean to the tea garden very month to work in the research place.
25. More facilities should be provided to poor estate women workers land and livestock extension services.
26. Priority must be given to women tea plantation workers.
27. Always clean the tea garden to working.

## **Conclusion**

This research based on tea plantation women workers. Upcountry society is depending tea plantation companies. As well as upcountry society build by tea plucking occupation. Up to now this community people facing social, economic, education, political and health problems. In this community people always works in hard. However they received little income only. It's not enough to run them families and fulfill the basic needs. According to this study, I used objective , research methodology, sampling, purpose to collected the data and analysis the data to I provide the results is the plantation women workers cannot receive the good health care services in the research place. Because of the reason they have not resource, locality and collective responsibility to get the social welfare program. As well as the government not provide suitable medical specialties for the estate sector. Women workers very contribute for economic sector in the country. We should protract them.

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- Nkhfd;uh[.f> 1984> ",Ugjhk; Ehw;whz;bd; etPd mbikj;jdk;," (kiyaf kf;fs; tuyhW)> ypNah khh;fh M];uk;> gz;lhtis. (gf; 1 - 38).
- re;jpuNgh];V. v];. >rptgpurfhrk;gp.gp> 2012> "Njapiyapd; epwk; rptg;G"> kdpjmgptpUj;jp jhgdk;> fz;b. (gf; 20 – 56 )
- %f;ifah. kh. nr.1994> "Fbj;njhifAk; epiyj;J epw;f \$bamgptpUj;jpAk;"> nghUspay; Nehf;F> kf;fs; tq;fp ntspaPL. (gf; 18 – 20).