

Ailing healthcare in Uldalguri



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Robertson Tanti 7 March 2017 Updated 7 Mar 6350 views

Healthcare facilities are not adequately available in most of the tea estate (TE) hospitals of [Udalguri](#) district. Almost a similar scenario is prevailing in most of the TE hospitals of the [state](#). Moreover, there is a serious lack of awareness among the TE [workers](#) on issues concerning [health](#) and hygiene.

The Assam Mahila Samata Society (AMSS) has been implementing the [National](#) Mahila Samkhya programme and the 1992 Programme of Action. These programmes are envisaged respectively by the [National](#) Policy on [Education](#) 1986 and by the Union Ministry of Human Resources [Development](#) (MHRD).

Talking to Assam Times, Ranjit Tanti said the TE [workers](#) are not provided with proper sanitation facilities and hygienic atmospheres.

There is a prevalence of child [marriage](#) among the TE communities and this may be attributed to lack of education. Their living conditions also result in several compulsions, which rob them of the capacity to think about anything beyond [marriage](#).

Maternal and infant mortality rates among the TE communities are also high. This may be attributed to early [marriage](#), excessive physical labour, use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and a slipshod attitude among their men folk.

Referring to a survey based report prepared which assessed the healthcare scenario in 26 TEs of various sizes of [Udalguri](#) district, the TE women are deprived of proper maternity care. The situation has come to such a [state](#) that the TE [community](#) women have accepted the prevailing condition of their life [as](#) a fait accompli.

What is more worrisome is that they are not conscious about the expected delivery dates of their babies. They do not go for institutional

deliveries and are not granted maternity leave.

Cases are there when the TE women deliver their babies while on plucking duties, said the AMSS official.

Significantly, the TE [community](#) women are entirely working women and they are made to shoulder the responsibilities of running their families. However, they are very often subjected to violence, maltreatment, discrimination, sexual harassment by lucrative offers from garden mangers and are often being used slang words by the managerial staffs.

The [trade](#) unions dealing with the TE labourers' issues are not seen raising any demand concerning the TE women. The government also have been playing a kind of drama on the TE [workers](#), using them [as](#) a vote bank.

The atmosphere in the TE [workers](#)' life is such that they cannot opt for extending financial or physical support to any of the on-duty pregnant women.

The worst sufferers of this situation are the woman casual labourers. There are also cases of discrimination [against](#) the woman labourers, both regular and casual, in matters of wages.

The growth in the small tea gardens' number has also kept alive the bane of school dropouts among these people all [over](#) the State. This is also encouraging the child labour system in the tea industry.

Robertson Tanti

Borengajuli Tea Estate Dimakuchi, Udalguri, Assam

BY ROBERTSON TANTI

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