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Title: Need to implement the Tea Act, 1953 and take necessary steps for take over of sick tea gardens in the country.

SHRI MAHENDRA KUMAR ROY (JALPAIGURI): Sir, I would like to raise a very important subject regarding the tea garden labourers and like to draw the attention of the Government towards them.

The Supreme Court directed the Government on 6th August, 2010 to take over the management of ailing tea gardens across the country within six months by invoking the Tea Act, 1953. In these six tea gardens, over 30,000 workers are living a pathetic condition. More than 100 tea garden workers had died and their dues such as gratuity and provident fund have not been cleared. The tea garden owners owe a hefty Rs. 300 crore to the workers.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.H. Kapadia passed the order directing the Government to deal with the problems according to the provisions of the Tea Act, 1953 under Section 16 (b), (c) and (e). The Act entitles it to investigate the affairs of tea gardens and even take it over in case it fails to pay workers' dues.

Hence, I urge upon the Government for implementation of Tea Act, 1953 within six months and also provide the benefit of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme to the workers of tea gardens who have not been paid the wages and gratuity for almost ten years and also extend the benefits under ICDS scheme and the Public Distribution System to the workers of sick tea gardens failing which the Government must take over the sick tea gardens.