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Title: Need to take steps to alleviate the suffering of tea garden workers in West Bengal.

SHRIMATI PRATIMA MONDAL (JAYANAGAR): The closure of privately owned tea gardens in Darjeeling, West Bengal has left the plantation workers in a pitiable condition.

The State has decided to pay FAWLOT (Financial Assistance to the Workers in Locked Out Industrial Units) to jobless tea workers. The state has identified tea estates and plantations which are 'sick' and will provide food grains to 1.03 lakh workers and their families at Rs. 2 per kg under the *Antodaya Yojana*. Rs. 1,080 crore is being spent under this scheme and a total of 3.28 lakh people will be benefitted from it.

The State Food Department has set up six ration shops outside the gates of the five closed tea gardens, so that the workers, along with the people living in those areas, can get the benefit of procuring ration from those shops. The Central Government is responsible for securing better working conditions for the workers and for investigating companies which have defaulted on the payment of wages. It has the authority to take over the management of a tea company which fails to comply with the Tea Act, 1953. The Centre has turned a blind eye towards the hardships and distress faced by the workers and their families. I would urge the Government to take the necessary steps to alleviate the suffering of the workers and to extend a revival package for the tea gardens in the State.