

AASAA carries out protest rally



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Hantigiri Narzary 8 July 2014 10713 views

Hundreds of students activist and tea garden workers with festoon, banner and placards participated in a [protest](#) rally against the exploitation, colonial hangover and negligible wage payment towards tea estate labourers at Magurmari [today](#) in [Kokrajhar](#).

It was organised by the All Adivasi Student's Association [Assam](#) (AASAA) demanding hike of daily wage of tea garden workers and the rallyists shouted slogans which was begun from Daloabari [Tea](#) Estate.

The students association has expressed their deep [concern](#) on the issue of low wage payment which is a negligible amount of Rs. 94/- less than the statutory minimum wage. The tea garden workers are the victim of lowest paid in the country's organised sector. The protestors voiced against the state government and the tea estate owners and demanded justice of their cries and sorrow.

Stephen Lakra, vice-president of the association while participating the rally said that according to the provision of [Assam](#) unskilled labourers daily wage should be Rs. 169 per day but the workers have been receiving only Rs. 94 per day which is very unsatisfactory and negligible. He mentioned that the labourers working in the tea estate were skilled and not unskilled as because the Adivasi's are engaged in tea business for ages since the British rule. Lakra further added that their counterparts in Kerala were enjoying a better share of payment and other facilities in the estates. Comparing state's labour position with that of the Kerala, he pointed out that the minimum wage in [Assam](#) is Rs. 169 but the labourers receive only Rs. 94 as daily wage whereas in Kerala it is Rs. 224 and they have been collecting Rs. 254 as daily wage. He also alleged that the workers in [Assam](#) are not the beneficial of overtime dues but their counterparts in South receive two times the wage as overtime duty and moreover here in [Assam](#) the tea estate worker are paid for six days a week while in Kerala they are paid for seven days a week plus the holidays. It is to be mentioned here that the tea garden workers receive far less (Rs. 94/day) than the said minimum wage (Rs. 169). The association have stated that in the upcoming month of September-October a [meeting](#) between ACMS ([Assam](#) Cha Mazdoor sangha) and CCPA (Co-ordination Committee for plantation Association), a tea industry associations will take place to discuss the important issues of [Assam](#) tea garden workers and other various vital issues and that the industry comply with the constitution and laws of [Plantation](#) Labour Act 1951 and the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The Association further have demanded that the tea garden workers daily wage be raised to Rs. 330 per day, to stop including housing, medical, water, electricity, pension, PF, gratuity and bonus cost as part of wage, to reject tea industry justification for halving the wage of tea garden workers, to make [Sunday](#)'s paid holidays, overtime payment and to adhere to the constitution and all laws related to wage and benefits (PLA, MWA).

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Reporting from Kokrajhar

BY HANTIGIRI NARZARY

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