



#BehindTheCup



Meet Neeta Tiwari, Mom, trustea Coordinator and Asst. Manager at Dalmia Tea Plantation

"I entered the industry in 2002, joining the Bateli Tea Estate of the MLD group. I graduated in agriculture and animal husbandry specialising in rural extension and communication, which made the tea industry appear an obvious choice for me. However, even in 2002, there were few women working in the offices in this industry. It was a male-dominated world. Naturally, the working conditions were not as they are now. For us to enter the industry was considered a bold step.

At the MLD group, I found an employer who was open minded. I was treated equitably; no special privileges were given neither were my rights curtailed. I worked in the lab and in the nursery. I was taught manufacturing processes and introduced to tea tasting and quality control.

When I became a mother, I was offered support with a helper through my pregnancy and even after delivery. As a mother, I value how we support mothers in the company. We have so many women working as pluckers and

maternity leave and a creche to enable them to return to work is provided for. Our garden hospitals monitor nutrition of mothers along with their well being. Some mothers have a support group which I think is very helpful is creating awareness and being a support system against domestic violence and abuse.

Today, our industry is more suitable and accessible for women. The rights of workers, in particular women, have been addressed. I have raised a son while working here for the past 20 years. I hope more women look towards working in the tea industry and rid themselves of pre-conceived stereotypes about it. That's the only way we can make it more inclusive for women and even become a truly gender-neutral sector."

MLD group has been one of the early adopters of trustea, in 2014, for their gardens and factories in the Terai region. The group has adopted the various trustea initiatives, especially in the areas of worker's rights, plant protection and food safety.