



PPS Assembly: A Celebration of Innovation

Small Tea Growers (STGs) from West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and other North Eastern States press for policy changes that help them to move up the value chain

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Centre for Education and Communication (CEC)



PPS Assembly: A Celebration of Innovation

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Abbreviations

AASTGA	:	All Assam Small Tea Growers' Association
ABSTGA	:	All Bodoland Small Tea Growers' Association
ATSTGA	:	All Tripura Small Tea Growers' Association
BLF	:	Bought Leaf Factory
CDS	:	Centre for Development Studies
CEC	:	Centre for Education and Communication
CISTA	:	Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations
FAO	:	Food and Agricultural Organisation
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
MoRD	:	Ministry of Rural Development
NABARD	:	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NRLM	:	National Rural Livelihood Mission
PPC	:	Plant Protection Code
PPS	:	Primary Producer Society
SHG	:	Self Help Group
STG	:	Small Tea Grower
TBI	:	Tea Board of India
TPC	:	Tea Producer Company
TX	:	Traidcraft



Preface

Tea is the second most widely consumed beverage in the world and among the healthiest too. India happens to be the second largest producer of tea in the world. The small tea growers (STG) segment has emerged over the last two to three decades, following serious structural shifts in the Indian tea industry, which was otherwise dominated by large tea estates. With less than 0.5 to 5 acres of land, approximately 450,000 STGs contribute 36 per cent of India's annual tea production. However, despite their market share, STGs remain at the bottom of the tea value chain, isolated in the remotest and most backward parts of the country, specifically in Assam, Tripura, North Bengal, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland and the hills of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. A large number belong to Dalit and Adivasi communities. Low education, skill and asset levels as well as isolation and marginalisation have blocked STGs from accessing fair opportunities in the tea industry. Their livelihood depends on exploitative leaf agents and other middlemen.

STGs are unable to influence the tea value chain beyond the production of green leaves. Growers experience great fluctuation in the price that they receive from bought leaf factories (BLF). For per kilogram of green leaf, the price ranges from Rs 22 to Rs 4 in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, and from Rs 22 to Rs 7 in Assam (2015 season). No such variations were reported in the auction price during the year. Moreover, there is lack of transparency in the actual price realised since, among other things, under The Tea Marketing Control Order (TMCO) only 50 per cent of tea goes to auction.

Tea Board of India (TBI) has announced a price-sharing formula that stipulates the share that BLFs must give to STGs from the price realised for processed tea at the auctions. TBI has also instructed the setting up of District Price Monitoring Committees to ensure implementation of the scheme. Nevertheless, STGs have not been experiencing transparent sharing of the realised price. Moreover, though at the retail level the value of per kg goes up 3 to 10 times or more, there is no mechanism for distribution of the price realised to farmers.

Since BLFs usually produce made-tea for mass consumption, without restrictions on chemicals and pesticides use, they disincentives STGs from moving towards production of quality, chemical-free, or organic tea. STGs lack critical technical inputs that can allow them to move from cultivation to ethical manufacturing and marketing of high-quality tea. They have nominal access to finance, technology and industry information. Consequently, the gap between farmers and consumers widens, denying farmers opportunities for vertical mobility.

To reduce the vulnerability of STGs and empower them, Centre for Education and Communication (CEC) has worked among them since 2009. CEC has played a catalyst's role in building collectives in Kerala and Tamil Nadu under a NABARD-supported project. Scaling up this intervention, CEC, with the support of European Commission (Contract No. DCI-NSAPVD/2011/260-631 – Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers in India and Bangladesh) and in collaboration with Traidcraft, extended its work among STGs in

West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Tripura. CEC recognised STGs as a producer in the overall value chain, and believed that STGs themselves must recognise this and bargain for a fairer share of the value accrued.

CEC has, in these states, formed around 590 PPSs with 50 to 100 STGs in each unit, overall reaching about 50,000 STGs. PPSs, registered under Society Registration Act, 1860 (as required by the TBI), have given STGs a functional framework to aggregate their resources, remove middlemen from the supply chain, increase their bargaining capacities with BLFs, and report increased household income. STGs have realised an increase of Rs 2 to Rs 9 in price per kg of green leaf by collectively trading through the PPSs. The PPSs have also acted as an institutional mechanism through which TBI extends its various schemes to the STGs.

It is envisaged that even after CEC withdraws from the project areas, the PPSs will continue to engage in sustainable collective leaf trade and related activities. Affiliation to district, state and national associations of small tea growers, functional linkages with bought leaf factories based on transparent contracts, linkages with the institutional processes initiated by the Tea Board of India, etc., are steps toward sustainability of PPSs.

To celebrate this movement of STGs and to encourage them towards sustainability, CEC has convened the National Assembly of STGs who are members of the PPSs from Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and West Bengal.

The assembly felicitated the most active and innovative PPSs, chosen through an objective and meticulous process, by offering them computers and soil analysis kits.

Inaugural Session

Chief Guest: Santosh Kumar Sarangi, chairman, Tea Board of India,
Ministry of Commerce, Government of India

Main Speaker: Johann Hesse, head of cooperation, Delegation of
the European Union in India

Speaker: J John, executive director, CEC

Speaker: PV Ramachandran, consultant

Film: Prabin Hazarika, film director

Welcome Speech

J John, Executive Director, CEC

What is the central message of this assembly? It is an assembly of innovators. This time, the innovators are tea farmers. Small tea growers contribute about 40 per cent of tea produced in India. How can tea farmers be innovative? Innovation means coming up with new ways of doing things. Are those who assembled here doing things in new ways?

Is there anyone here who is not a member of a primary producer society? None. Therefore, this assembly is different from an assembly of farmers. Being a member of a PPS is an innovation because tea farmers have shown that they can do things differently. Where? In the tea value chain.

The tea value chain can be looked at from two perspectives. One is from the perspective of the global leaders in trade. Here, the concern will be how to integrate small producers with the global value chains to maximise commercial benefits to the parent company.

The tea value chain can also be looked at from the perspective of small producers. Here, they will ask the question, where are we in the tea value chain? Are we getting fair price for our produce? Why are we not getting fair price? Are there internal and external factors? How to overcome the factors that constrain them? It is this self-realisation that will be the first step in being innovative. A primary producer society is, therefore, a collective of conscious tea farmers. Innovative PPS farmers will slowly gain self-worth, acquire the courage to talk to factory managers, learn the tricks of doing business, and improve the quality of the product. Innovative PPS farmers gain Rs 2 to Rs 9 per kg of green leaf while doing direct collective leaf trade.

A win-win situation is when the industry recognises these innovators and forges sustainable business partnerships with them. More and more BLFs and estate factories must come forward to purchase leaf from the societies giving them fair price for the green leaves.

PPS innovators are going a step further. They are saying that they manufacture tea and market it, not necessarily in competition with global leaders, but adding depth and value to the product and quality range. The PPS farmers are setting up systems and processes for putting into practice these ideas. They are also seeking an institutional framework that will not inhibit these ideas.

This is the context of this PPS Assembly – a celebration of innovation.

Let me extend my heartfelt welcome to the tea farmers here who are members of primary producer societies in West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. Let me also thank you for making this event possible.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us give a big welcome to Mr Santosh Kumar Sarangi, chairman of Tea Board of India. In a gesture of great significance, he has come to meet you, the small tea growers who are members of PPSs. Sir, we seek from you and the Tea Board of India

proactive measures that will facilitate the blossoming of fresh ideas and processes that empower PPSs and tea growers.

Let us also welcome Mr Johann Hesse, head of cooperation, Delegation of the European Union to India. The project EqualiTea, or ‘Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers’, under which CEC’s team has been working with you, has been financed by the European Union. He is a great friend of the Indian people and has expressed desire to visit small tea growers.

Mr PV Ramachandran, a former NABARD manager, is an independent consultant who evaluated the EqualiTea project and its implementation. We thought it useful to hear his observations on the outcome and impact of the project and future challenges. We welcome you, sir.

We must also welcome Mr Prabin Hazarika, renowned Assamese filmmaker, who has made a short film based on his extensive visits to PPS areas. His film will talk on his behalf – so let us see the film.

Today’s programme has two technical sessions. The first one, ‘Tea Farm, the Product and Market’, has three speakers. NABARD is the most important banking institution for farmers. Let us welcome Dr Khan, who has come from the head office, Mumbai, to attend this meeting. Sir, we consider your presence as an assurance of NABARD’s keenness to be with the tea farmers in their efforts in self-assertion.

FAO has set up an Intergovernmental Group on tea and it has a sub-group on small tea growers. We are privileged to have Mr Koppa, assistant representative in India, FAO, in this meeting. We welcome you and look forward to your observations on global challenges that small tea growers are facing.

Mr Mukesh Tiwari represents Traidcraft, UK, a partner in the EqualiTea project. In response to the demands of PPS farmers to move up the value chain, Traidcraft initiated a study on market trends in the United Kingdom and Europe. Mr Mukesh will present the gist of the study. We welcome you, Mukesh.

The chair for the technical session I is Prof. KJ Joseph, representing the ministry of commerce chair at CDS, Thiruvananthapuram. He has done a number of studies and publications on plantation. It is our pleasure to welcome you to the assembly.

We have a technical session exclusively on sustainability. As a facilitating organisation, CEC firmly believes that until and unless PPSs get organically linked to the state-level and national associations of small tea growers, they will not survive for long. Since PPSs engage in collective leaf trade, they must contribute to the financial sustainability of the association. PPSs must also improve the accountability of associations. This mutuality is evidently integral and non-negotiable. There are also other issues with regard to sustainability including their relationships with Tea Board of India and processing factories. In the session on sustainability, we intend to sensitise the STGs from PPSs on these realities. In this session, we have important state- and national-level leaders of small tea growers in India, including Mr Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, president, CISTA; Mr Pronoy Basumatari, BSTGA; Mr Pabitra Kar, ATSTGA; Mr Vanalal Hmuaka, All-Mizoram STG Association; and Mr Dinesh Sarmah, advisor, AASTGA. We appreciate your willingness to be a part of this event and this

session, and welcome you all to the assembly.

A unique aspect of this assembly is that it intends to recognise the best performing PPSs. Dr Soumen Palit, IIT, Kharagpur, represents the selection panel that decided the list of PPSs. Dr Palit, we welcome you to the assembly. The awards will be distributed by Mr Pattabiraman Subramanian, programme manager, Delegation of the European Union to India; Mr Subhash Das, director, Plantations, Tripura; and Ms Maveen Pereira, Traidcraft, India. We warmly welcome you to the assembly.

Let me welcome the press who have come to cover the event.

Mrs. Suhita Roychowdhury represents NRLM and there are many friends and well wishers of CEC attending this assembly. Let me offer you a warm welcome.

Outcome and Impact of the EqualiTea Project

P V Ramachandran, Ex-GM, NABARD (Consultant)

Ramachandran had evaluated the project EqualiTea and shared his findings with participants of the assembly. The objective of the project was to collectivise the STGs and to help them find an identity, strength and ways to improve their agricultural practices as well as to give them a place in the value chain. The strategy was to organise them by forming societies and giving training on best agricultural practices, on how to manage societies, and on how they should interact with other stakeholders. The other objective was to encourage societies to function as a democratic institution and to eliminate middlemen.

Ramachandran pointed out that farmers were earlier getting only Rs 5 to Rs 10/ kg when the average rate was Rs 9/kg, and they were not even aware of the actual market price. None of them knew that leaf agents were getting away with a 10 per cent cut on the wage by citing moisture loss. Linking farmers with the Tea Board of India helped them to get subsidies for transport vehicles, biometric cards and photo ID cards. These were great achievements under the project. In the words of Ramachandran, farmers were now aspiring towards greater achievements, as societies would like to enter into tea processing and enter the value chain to compete with big industries, be it TATA or Lipton.

Of the 598 PPSs, one-third were able to get an incremental income as they were getting Rs 20/kg compared to an earlier average price of Rs 9/kg. Apparently, the price had increased five times and the rate offered by agents had also simultaneously gone up; there was only a marginal difference of Rs 3/kg and in Bodoland the difference was less than Rs 2/kg. Now that the agents had to think of their survival, this trend helped even the non-members in getting a good price.

Technical training was provided in the area of harvesting methods and on production and supply of good-quality leaves. Capacity building on managing collectives helped them to move into marketing and setting up of industry. Training offered by TBI was utilised by the members of PPSs. Gender balance was not evident as land was not owned by women. As an exception, in Assam exclusive women STGs were formed and a women's society was also established.

Ramachandran pointed out that the major issue was how to organise all STGs in India in order to gain the benefits that the 50,000 STGs were able to reap under the EqualiTea project; they were all smallholders having less than two acres of land. The other issue was finance for establishing factories, particularly because institutional financing was weak in the northeastern part of the country. To get a loan of three to five crore rupees, one had to deposit two crore rupees. Clearly there was a need to think about the creation of a credit guarantee fund by the Government of India to help farmers to access institutional finance.

Inaugural Speech

Santosh Kumar Sarangi, Chairman, Tea Board of India

Santosh Kumar Sarangi reiterated that STGs were emerging as an important segment of the tea industry and said that the film by Prabin Hazarika had lucidly explained the problems and opportunities foreseen ahead.

He pointed out that somebody had rightly said that in any trade value chain there were multiple layers and the profit had to be shared by each of these layers. He said, “If we are in a position to eliminate some of the layers, maybe that much of portion will get apportioned to the remaining players.” He emphasised that “our effort should be to eliminate some of the players who may be redundant and to enable those who are at the production stage to get into processing and marketing value chain.” To that extent, he expressed his belief that the efforts of CEC combined with the synergy they made with TBI was a very good initiative.

From the point of view of TBI, he said, everyone present must concentrate their energies towards a few important steps, with the main goal of converting SHGs/PPSs into producer companies and empowering them to be involved in processing and marketing of tea as active agents in the value chain. This would be TBI's big effort for the future and would require commensurate efforts from everyone.

Simultaneously, he assured that as chairman of TBI he was taking efforts to finalise guidelines for setting up mini and micro factories. He said, “The guidelines for mini and micro factories have more or less been prepared. These will need to be fine-tuned and an order will be released from the Tea Marketing Control, ministry of commerce, within a month's time.” This will facilitate SHGs, who are our future tea-producing companies, in establishing mini or micro processing factories.

At the same time, the TBI chairman emphasised that there would be no compromise on quality. For that, TBI had already announced Plant Protection Code (PPC) and a number of trainings would be provided on the observation of the PPC through NGOs like CEC, or even directly by the TBI, so that farmers would know which type of pesticide should or should not be used, how plucking should be done and at what intervals it should be done, what value could be expected for which type of leaves, etc. A number of trainings would be carried out and the required funds would also be earmarked for this purpose. He said, “Funds had been released on the lesser side all these years and we would like to apportion more funds for training and capacity building in the future.”

Sarangi informed that Tea Board would like to work on this with NABARD to draw some innovative schemes for funding SHGs/producer companies. Now, banks give loans and TBI gives subsidy to farmers; however, “if we are able to bring a synergy between the Tea Board and the banks and work out some innovative funding mechanism, a lot of STGs can be reached out to.” He acknowledged the presence of NABARD in the PPS Assembly and expressed his desire to coordinate with NABARD on how the two agencies could draw better

schemes and reach a greater number of STGs in the future.

Sarangi further said that the Tea Board would like to focus on converting more and more farmers into organic farming. Recently a FAO-IGC conference was held in Kenya where some of the research scientists from India had talked about climate change and its impact on India. The scientists showed that if the present level of global warming and erratic rainfall patterns continued, then Assam and West Bengal's areas would not remain suitable for tea production. Sarangi said it was time to decide what measures needed to be taken and the same would have to be done immediately. That may require soil conservation and water conservation measures even in small fields, steps to be taken for groundwater recharging, and arrangements for giving adequate tree shades for tea. He stressed that all these had to be started immediately. Hence, there was a need for sensitisation of tea farmers, soil and water conservation measures to be increased, and organic tea to be produced for sustainability. These would be among the priorities of the Tea Board.

The chairman expressed happiness that the subsidy schemes of the Tea Board were reaching many of the SHGs. He informed that the TBI would like to expand the subsidy so as to reach out to a larger number of STGs. There would be an increase in the allocation for storage sheds, transportation vehicles, etc.

The TBI had taken cognisance of the risk involved due to erratic rainfall and weather structure. Chairman Sarangi said, "TBI is preparing an insurance scheme for tea farmers. It is at an advanced stage and views of state governments are being taken." The scheme is such that 10 per cent contribution has to be made by the small farmers, around 15 per cent by the state government, and the remainder 75 per cent by the central government. In order to operationalise this scheme, all the boards including Tea Board, Spices Board and Coffee Board will have to come together.

Felicitation Speech

Johann Hesse, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union in India

Johann Hesse said that he was happy to be in the midst of small tea growers and dignitaries including representatives from Tea Board of India, NABARD and FAO. He thanked Prabin Hazarika for an enlightening film on the impact of CEC's work and the challenges it poses for the future.

Hesse recalled that he came from a small part of Germany where people drank tea five times a day and each time it was not less than three cups. He expressed his happiness that the EU was a part of the project for five years and that an impressive number of STGs had been benefited.

There were a few things that made this intervention unique and impressive. One, tea growers had actually managed to obtain a better price for their tea. Two, there had been an improvement in the quality of tea the farmers were producing as a result of increased awareness of timing and plucking standards, which in turn had contributed to getting better prices. Three, the collective vision and common identity of smallholder tea growers had put them on the way to achieving sustainability. Four, there were no big offices and no big bureaucracy in the project locations, which in fact set an example of how to execute project work in an efficient manner. Five, the project team received cooperation of other stakeholders like Tea Board of India, other tea-related research institutes and Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations.

Hesse expressed hope that the primary producer societies and tea producer companies would be resilient and continue to function in an effective manner even after the project ended. He appreciated the concrete steps announced by the chairman of Tea Board of India in support of small tea growers. He thanked CEC for organising the assembly and expressed his desire to visit the farmers' areas in the near future.

STG Farm, the Product and the Market

Chairperson: Prof. KJ Joseph, Centre for Development Studies
(CDS), Thiruvananthapuram

Panelists: Dr Khan – NABARD, Mumbai; Dr GG Koppa – FAO; Mr
Mukesh Tiwari – Traidcraft

STG Farm, the Product and the Market: Where the Opportunities Lie and the Way Forward – A NABARD Perspective

Dr. Khan, NABARD, Mumbai

Dr Khan wondered why one should use the term ‘small tea growers’; after all, they contributed 35 per cent of the produce and were therefore very big contributors to the economy. The primary producer societies were formed to supply tea leaf but were not yet active partners in the tea chain, so further innovation was required to overcome these lacunae. At the same time, small producers must also be looked at as farmers and as human beings; consequently, their requirements are larger and diverse and have to be looked at from various points including their health, education, children’s education, etc. The objective of collectivisation must be to address the problems of farmers and not approach them merely as leaf suppliers.

Dr Khan further said that if the farmers were to be part of the collective, then awareness and capacity building measures would have to target not only production but also facilitate their moving up the value chain, such as branding and marketing. He pointed out that “institutional mechanism has to be defined very cautiously and carefully.” There was a need to look at collectivisation comprehensively before moving upwards. It would not be practical to expect any one collective to get involved in all the activities; some might look at processing, some into branding, and others into marketing. Hence institutional mechanism was needed to demarcate who would do what.

NABARD has been supporting various states and various commodities and experience shows that the producer has to be strengthened for augmenting productivity and enhancing the quality of the produce. The focus should be on how to enhance production. Because the small tea growers have not been organised, the technology support has been very minimal and productivity remained low. As for quality, there has not been much concern about this aspect at the bought leaf factory level, but the world is moving towards health consciousness. Hence, quality has to be taken care of and it is the right time to focus on it. Shifting towards organic produce needs to be looked at. As the inputs are not available and are expensive, indigenous production of organic inputs and schemes is required.

Dr Khan emphasised the need to check whether farmers were insulated from external shocks, and that pointed to the importance of diversifying farmers’ activities. NABARD has always been at the forefront on farmers’ issues; the concern is how the efforts can be self-sustaining.

Dr Khan wondered how long the sector could move on with others’ support and subsidies. The farming sector has to be self-sustaining and that is possible when the roles and processes are defined. Dr Khan assured that NABARD was willing to work with TBI and see whether

a risk fund could be developed for tea farmers.

NABARD supports farmers being collectivised into societies and they in turn getting federated into farmer producer companies. The government has already established a guarantee fund that is administered by Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC) and covers a guarantee fund to cover loans of up to one crore rupees. The requirement, though, is that the institution should be a farmer producer company and minimum membership be 500.

Dr Khan said NABARD would discuss with TBI the possibility of developing a scheme to support STG companies.

There is a need to look into the role of state governments.

Land ownership is a barrier and one has to work with the state to remove the hurdles faced by small growers.

Dr Khan concluded by saying that if STGs moved up the value chain and participated actively in the tea sector, NABARD would support them within the policy framework.

STG Farm, the Product and the Market: Global Challenges and Opportunities – An FAO Perspective

Dr. G G Koppa, Assistant Representative in India, FAO

Dr Koppa congratulated CEC for bringing STGs to the assembly and Ramachandran for his presentation on the impact of CEC's work among tea growers and the challenges it posed.

At the same time, he pointed out that two important stakeholders were left out of the assembly – one, the non-member farmers, for whom it would have been a big learning and an incentive to join the societies; and the processors, whose perspective needed to be understood for the larger benefit of the societies.

Dr Koppa articulated that from the point of FAO there were some challenges, the first being the question of how to scale up. Only 50 per cent of the growers were members and how to bring the remaining 50 per cent into the institutionalisation process remained a challenge to be tackled.

Another area of concern was that the societies of farmers were, with the exception of a few like Amul, by and large were not successful in institutionalising in a sustainable manner.

So, why is the Amul model a success and the others are not? Studies have pointed out that strong local leadership made all the difference.

There is thus an imperative to take a relook at the societies formed by small tea growers. A society must become a common platform to address issues, be it consolidation or climate change.

Training and capacity building should be continuous and repeatedly given to the same members of the society.

Dr Koppa reiterated that the power of the smallholders could not be underestimated and that the formation of societies was the first step towards sustainability.

He thanked CEC for creating the opportunity to engage with small tea farmers in India.

STG Farm, the Product and the Market: Market Trends in UK & Europe

Mukesh Tiwari, Traidcraft, UK

Mukesh Tiwari referred to a study that was carried out by a colleague during November-December 2015 to understand the tea market of Europe. The study looked at four things: a) market size in Europe, b) entry issues, c) different branding approaches by companies, and d) marketing competition.

The total European tea market value in 2014 was over 13 billion dollars, of which 55 per cent was in Western Europe and 45 per cent in Eastern Europe. Certain standards were applied in terms of quality, safety and production. Of course, the same considerations could not be applied to all countries.

There are different definitions for tea, such as herbal, fruit, green and black, and different consumption levels and cultural connections as well as different industry concentrations and varying attitudes to ethical issues, and therefore it is important to look at different markets rather than taking a single approach for 'Europe'.

Tiwari informed that the Dutch CBI had listed challenges and opportunities for those seeking entry into the EU markets.

Certification has a big role to play and there are different levels of certifications; also, the rate of certification is high as it gives assurance to consumers. Tiwari pointed out that there was a niche market for organic and fair-trade tea.

Regarding supply chain, he said that it was well established and there was no room for bargaining, and that companies controlled it. Unilever and Lipton had captured the market and if one wanted to enter the EU market, one should be able to develop a brand and tell a story about it.

He concluded by asserting that one had to study what could the entry point be, for which country, and how to enter.

Open Discussion

The floor was opened for discussion:

“Even in Mahila Kisan Shashakthikargan Yojana of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) everyone was asking what next and here too it has been raised. The community should drive the programme by the best practitioners and here it must be the leaders with tea farmers.”

“When we approach banks for loan, there is lack of clarity on how the unit costs are determined. Has NABARD set a unit cost or will the banks who may extend credit decide on the unit cost? Lack of clarity is an irritant and delays delivery of benefits to farmers.”

“The presentation by the Traidcraft representative has indicated that there is scope for marketing organic tea in Europe. In India, we in Bihar are not great tea drinkers. We must encourage Indians to drink more tea. Moreover, we tea farmers must encourage organic tea cultivation and orthodox manufacture.”

“Our tea is grown in non-patta land, and we do not receive financial assistance from the government. Can anyone say whether there is any initiative by the government to regularise our land and provide financial assistance for plantation and setting up processing units?”

“When the production of tea increases, the cost is likely to come down and it is anticipated that the cost of tea will come down to \$2 in 2025. It will affect the production as well as the survival of STGs. How are we going to protect the STGs? Has NABARD or CEC any plan to protect the STGs?”

Dr Khan (NABARD) responded: “Unit costs are decided by the individual banks as it is a rule of the RBI. The problem of fixation of unit cost in Tripura will be looked into and resolved.

If a farmer depends only on a single crop, he/she might not have control over the market. Farmer needs to diversify activities. There is a need to look at farmer producer companies from a farmer’s perspective rather than from a purely company perspective, so that the farmer is protected. NABARD intends to initiate a discussion with the TBI so that finances to innovative farmers and groups of farmers will not be a problem.”

Dr Koppa (FAO) responded: “We must not go on a project mode; when the project comes to an end or funding is stopped, activity stops, negatively affecting sustainability. Societies are registered under Societies Act and Producer Companies are registered under Companies Act. Both have their respective procedural compulsions and those must be adhered to. Application of information technology in agriculture and running of collectives are necessary now. Another factor that could contribute to sustainability is conscious steps to ensure

women's involvement in the management of the collectives.”

Mukesh (Traidcraft) responded: “It is true that in many states of India people have not developed the habit of consuming tea. My presentation was meant to inform you about the market trends. The study was done to understand the European Union market and how to enter that market. The market study has emphasised one point: if tea farmers intend to enter the market, one should have all the information about it.”

STG Farm, the Product and the Market: Concluding Remarks

Prof. KJ Joseph, Ministry of Commerce Chair, Centre for Development Studies (CDS)

Prof. KJ Joseph expressed happiness about being in the midst of innovators and informed that he had been associated with CEC for some time as they were organising the small farmers in South India and now in the North.

He pointed out that 21 per cent of tea was exported from the plantation sector earlier and was a key area; at the present it was around 1 per cent.

It was a key sector in the sustainable strategy of India because of its high labour intensity, higher participation of women, dominance of backward communities, and dominance of marginal holdings in the plantations sector.

In his view, the numerous exclusions and weaknesses could be overcome only through innovations.

KJ Joseph, said that STGs had to reach a level where they could be on their own, like a satellite reaching its orbit.

Innovation would be a must for sustainability. Institutional innovation and technological innovation should be balanced.

At the farm level, STGs needed technology but institutes were reluctant to accommodate that need.

The intervention that CEC has made has enabled STGs to renegotiate their terms with intermediaries. If one looks at the share of the value accrued to farmers in dollars, it is not even 20 per cent. Earlier, producers were playing a sub-optimal role in the value chain and MNCs were taking the bulk of the profit.

Only information and communication technology (ICT) will enable farmers to harness information and capabilities. China uses 90 per cent ICT domestically and is able to flood the global market with their products. Effective utilisation of ICT has the potential to stabilise STGs in another five years or so.

On this optimistic note, the chair thanked the presenters and the audience for their active participation.

Better Integration and Sustainability

Facilitator: Joy Chakraborty, Project Manager, CEC

Panelists - STG Associations: Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, president – CISTA; Pronoy Basumatari, ABSTGA, Bodoland; Pabitra Kar, ATSTGA, Tripura; Dinesh Sarmah, AASTGA, Assam

Panelists - Farmer Representatives: Ajit Giri, Rangagora Society, Tinsukia, Assam; Thomas Rongfar, Jirsong Society, Karbi Anglong, Assam; Prafulla Debbarma, Panchamnagar Society, Unakkoti, Tripura; Tarak Bose, Loknath Society, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal

Farmer Perspectives

Ajit Giri

Ajit Giri, Rangagora STG Society, asked the panellists, the association leaders, to share their views on some interesting points.

For example, if CEC is not there, what next? When a producer company is developed, in what ways the panellists will help the farmers? How to make a federation of all the STGs?

Thomas Rongfar

Thomas Rongfar of Jirsong STG Society said that at district level association was needed for sustainability. How could Tea Board lessen the documentation process to obtain benefits?

Prafulla Debbarma

Prafulla Debbarma, Panchamnagar STG Society, said that there was a need for STG societies to be formed, particularly in a state like Tripura. Earlier, the tea farmers in Tripura did not know about tea production; they used to pluck tea leaf and make tea. Now 95 per cent of them were STGs and had learnt to make green tea, orthodox tea, etc. However, if they were not able to understand their mistakes, they would not be able to learn. Good tea could be sold anywhere. Debbarma said that in order to start a mini or micro factory an amount of Rs 20 lakhs was needed; if all members came together, it was manageable.

Tarak Bose

Tarak Bose of Loknath STG Society thanked CEC for helping them to form SHGs and thanked all members, who he said were like guardians. He lamented that despite working with tea growers since 1998, the society was yet to get a no-objection certificate (NOC) for the lands. Neither the government nor any bank or financial institution gave them loans. The Tea Board had given smart cards to tea growers but these did not serve the purpose of identity cards and could not be used to get loans from any bank. There was no insurance for tea, though it was available for other crops. In a year of insufficient rains and production deficit, an insurance cover would have given them protection. January to March were particularly difficult months as they did not have water for irrigation.

Small Tea Growers' Association Perspectives

Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty

Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, president, CISTA, appreciated CEC for their work with STGs and for bringing them under one umbrella. He exhorted tea growers to continue using the expertise of CEC and build on their achievements so far. He assured that CISTA would be a conscious partner to such efforts.

Bijoy Gopal expressed concern that some tea growers had formed SHGs to get benefits from Tea Board of India and were driven by vested interests. He exhorted small farmers to be cautious about such people and to stop such activities. He lamented that some of the officials of Tea Board were also involved in spoiling the work of SHGs. He requested farmers to volunteer information when they came across such vested interests. He hoped that societies would have good and honest members, instead of members who went and sold good leaf outside and the bad ones to the SHGs.

The CISTA president highlighted the success story of the small tea growers' association in Jalpaiguri district. There, such PPSs as those formed by CEC are the backbones. The societies are financially contributing to the association and there is a mutually enriching relationship. He said that the association had constructed its own building and set up a training facility and a soil-testing laboratory. The association was also working towards an institutional setup that would be an ideal example for the future sustainability of STGs.

Dinesh Kumar Sarmah

Dinesh Kumar Sarmah, advisor to All-Assam Small Tea Growers' Association and its former president, said that though the idea of SHG formation among small tea growers was mooted by the Tea Board of India, it was CEC that made it a reality at the ground level and scaled it up to a phenomenal level. Now the question was: after CEC, what next?

Individual- or state-level associations must hold workshops for association leaders to make them understand what SHGs and PPSs are and what can be done to strengthen the relationship. Sarmah had observed that in many PPSs the leaders were not aware of their roles and responsibilities. He recalled how the chairman of Tea Board had highlighted the negative impact of climate change on Assam and West Bengal tea cultivation. He said there was a need to build preparedness and self-confidence to face calamities. There was a need for association leaders to reach out to small growers and to understand their problems.

Pronoy Basumatari

Pronoy Basumatari, president, All-Bodoland Small Tea Growers' Association, said that in Bodoland there were small growers who did not know how to make tea as there were big tea farmers and industries around them. Now small tea growers have been organised by CEC

and due to their interventions they were able to produce and sell green tea leaves.

Basumatari said that PPSs and associations needed to work towards better integration and sustainability. After the formation of association, PPSs and members of the association had started to interact with the administration and officials of Tea Board regarding the fall in price.

Basumatari informed that they had formed 49 PPSs in four districts and had started to produce tea. In 2005, they entered into a tripartite agreement for funding and got a loan of Rs 145,350 per hectare from NABARD.

As a next step, based on the collective strength and belief of the PPSs, they have taken a decision to start a micro factory. Basumatari informed that a majority of the small farmers were tribal people and their mentality was that if they had given money it had to be returned at the end of the year. This approach has to change and the farmers who are investing in a factory must understand that they have invested in a factory and the returns will be obtainable as dividends only after three years, after deducting all the expenses. He said they were shifting from producing green tea to black tea and preparing everyone for it. Overall, there was a need to change mindsets and embrace new ways and technologies where justified.

Pabitra Kar

Pabitra Kar, president, All-Tripura Small Tea Growers' Association, said that 32 per cent of the total production was by STGs and Tea Board had to take initiatives to support them. Particularly, the northeastern states had to be taken care of by the TBI. The Department of Industries and Tribal Welfare Department should come forward to help with the plantation and marketing. PPSs developed by CEC are the backbone of tea and all PPSs and cooperatives must form district-level federations. In Tripura, the government is proactive and considers tea and rubber as crops of permanent farming. However, BLFs and private factories are cheating the farmers and there is a need to eradicate the middlemen.

India being the second largest producer of tea and 80 per cent of it being consumed domestically, there is a need to develop local markets and link the smallholders with mini and micro factories to market their products. There lies the key to sustainability.

The Tea Board has to play a big role and state governments must address the land problems. One lakh tribals were given land in Tripura with titles, and there they can grow rubber and tea. Banks came forth with loans. More support is needed, though. Kar requested CEC to stay with STGs in their journey towards sustainability.

Discussion

Responding to the presentations by association leaders, it was raised from the floor that “the main issue of Assam is that most of the small tea growers are cultivating tea in government land. Fuji land means it is purely government land and it is border land as well. We have requested the government of Assam to give us the land; we can also be the watchmen of the border. Because it is government land, we cannot approach any bank or any financial institution for financial help. Banks ask for pasta land. That is the main issue we are facing in Assam.”

Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty responded that small tea growers in West Bengal too faced land-

related issues. The previous government had brought out a notification stating that those small tea farmers who had tea gardens before 30 June 2001 could get the entitlement from the land department. The current government held discussions with the growers and as per a survey conducted in December 2010, there were 24,000 tea growers in North Bengal. There are four types of land – deed land, government land, pasta land and lease land. However, no further action has been taken by the current government.

Bijoy Gopal pointed out that the ID cards issued by the Tea Board did not offer any recognition to the land on which tea was cultivated; for the tea growers, there was no value attached to the ID card. When the farmers sought clarification from the Tea Board officials, the answer was that when a driving license was issued there was no need that one had to own a vehicle, and that the Tea Board-issued ID cards served a similar purpose. In West Bengal, the association has taken a decision to tell the Tea Board to recognise the land or to not issue the ID card at all.

Bijoy Gopal further exhorted tea growers to remain updated about the various schemes offered by the government, including the one promoting organic tea cultivation. There are separate schemes from Tea Board for Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Tripura, and he asked everyone to utilise these by approaching the Board.

Bijoy Gopal emphasised that small growers must know who the association leader was, just as the association must know each and every society and the respective leaders. This mutuality is what we must aspire for.

Award Distribution

Selection Panel: Prof. Soumen Palit, Director, ECO-YES Technologies, IIT, Kharagpur; Mr PV Ramachandran, former GM, NABARD; Ms Arati Pandya, Independent Consultant

Award Distribution: Pattabiraman Subramanian, programme manager, Delegation of EU of India; Subhash Das, director, Plantations, Tripura; Maveen Pereira, manager, South Asia, Traidcraft UK

Soumen Palit

Soumen Palit, panellist of the selection committee, said that the selections were made from 145 societies who had applied for the awards. These societies were from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and West Bengal.

The three-member award committee consisted of Mr PV Ramachandran, retired general manager, NABARD; Dr Soumen Palit, Director, ECO-YES Technologies, IIT, Kharagpur; and Ms Arati Pandya, independent development sector consultant.

The selection committee evaluated the applicants' performances based on the information provided by them. Weightage were assigned to individual parameters based on their relative relevance to project objectives. The total mark for all parameters was fixed at 200.

The 10 best PPSs were given a computer with printer and a soil-testing kit. The next best 40 PPSs were given a soil-testing kit each.

Felicitation and award distribution was done by Pattabiraman Subramaniam, programme manager, Delegation of EU to India; Subhash Das, director, Plantations, Tripura & Maveen Pereira, manager, South Asia Programmes, Traidcraft, UK

Pattabiraman Subramanian

Ram said that it was the best way to recognise good work. It was a beginning and should be seen as not a form of competition but an example of own assessment of the work that had been done. In the end, what mattered was sustainability. He congratulated all societies for their good work and wished them greater capacities to continue the work.

Maveen Pereira

Maveen congratulated CEC for coming up with the bright idea of recognising the PPSs for their best work. In her view, what CEC has done is looking at the situation from a perspective of sustainability and innovation, and rewarding it. She said she wanted to congratulate not only the top ten but also the others who had applied for the prize.

Subhash Das

Subhash Das thanked CEC for organising the meeting in Delhi and commended CEC for the impact they have created at the STG level. He hoped CEC work would continue their work even after the project by Traidcraft was over.

Valedictory Function

Main Speaker: Pabitra Kar, Deputy Speaker, Government of Tripura
& President, All Tripura Small Tea Growers' Association

Vote of Thanks: Kukhol Bora, Rwdmsha STG Society, Udalguri,
Assam; Kaustav Roy, senior project officer, CEC, Jalpaiguri, West
Bengal

Valedictory Speech

Pabitra Kar, Deputy Speaker, Government of Tripura & President, All Tripura Small Tea Growers' Association

Pabitra Kar acknowledged CEC's efforts and J. John as the key person linking with growers across India. He reminded that STGs would be the backbone of the industry in the future. As a first step, STGs must organise themselves into PPPs at the local level and then get federated at the district level.

Kar thanked all the growers for coming from various remote places of the country. He stated that the tea growers who had assembled in Delhi represented the more than 50,000 growers who CEC had reached out to during the project period.

Tripura is a case that exemplifies how tea can change the fortunes of people. Just about twenty to thirty years ago there was poverty, begging, etc., everywhere in the hill tracks of Tripura; now the people are settled and are living in pukka houses, children are going to school, and health status is improving. These are all due to people taking up tea cultivation.

The PPS Assembly has shown the identity and power of collectives of small tea growers; it has also shown that small tea growers have a long way to go if they have to have full involvement in the tea value chain.

Let us go home with the hope that we will together build our tea industry, Kar said on a positive note.

Annexure

Programme Schedule

Recommendation of Award Committee and List of Awardees

Press Release

Press Coverage

Press Release

Small Tea Growers (STGs) from West Bengal, Assam and other North Eastern States press for better implementation of Price Sharing Formula by Tea Board of India and policy changes that help them to move up the value chain

Centre for Education and Communication (CEC) organises a national assembly for Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers from West Bengal, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Mizoram

New Delhi, 7th June 2016- Emphasising their rights in the tea industry and highlighting a better transparency in Tea Board's price sharing formula, small tea growers from Assam, Arunachal, Tripura, Mizoram and West Bengal have gathered in Delhi. They have gathered as part of an innovative event - "PPS Assembly Celebration of Innovation" - organised by Centre for Education and Communication, New Delhi, for celebrating the initiatives of primary producer societies and encouraging them for better sustainability. More than 200 STG representatives who participated in the event, demanded concrete supportive measures from the government to set up their own manufacturing units. Many of these societies are formed by tribal communities and women from these regions.

“Within a month, Tea Board of India, through Ministry of Commerce, will come up with notification on guidelines for setting up mini and micro factories for small tea growers,” announced Sri Santhosh Kumar Sarangi, Chairman, Tea Board of India, while addressing the PPS Assembly. “Tea Board will allocate more funds for small tea growers. More subsidies will be given for maintaining their water sheds and transportation”, he adds. According to him, Small Tea Growers will have to grow up the value chain, become producers and participate in auction on their own. Tea Board will give them training in quality control and make sure the tea produced is of good quality. “Considering the global warming and erratic rains, more and more tea growers will have to encourage into organic farming”, he emphasised.

“A win-win situation will come when tea industry recognises small tea growers and forge sustainable business partnerships with them. More and more BLFs and Estate factories must come forward to purchase leaf from the societies giving them fairer price”, says J John, Executive Director, Centre for Education and Communication. He further added, “CEC has been working towards reducing poverty and improving income of the STGs. The present project of “Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers”, supported by the European Union, addresses some of the key issues confronting the small tea growers. Organising Primary Producer Society (PPS) for direct collective leaf trade and improvement in agricultural practices are at the heart of the activities. Over 590 PPS have been formed till date reaching out to about 50,000 growers. To reduce the vulnerability of STGs, since 2009, CEC worked among the STGs in building collectives in Kerala and Tamilnadu under a NABARD supported project. Now, CEC is determined to help those PPSs who are empowered and want to move up the tea value chain, taking definite steps to manufacture and market tea of

small tea growers.”

Sharing his happiness of being a part to the betterment of Small Tea Grower (STG), Johan Hesse, Head of Cooperation, European Union, said that “better trade and better bargaining process should be assured for the tea growers in India”. With tea board cooperation and the stakeholders support, he trusted a positive growth in the life of small tea growers.

“Small tea growers contribute 35 to 40 percent of the tea production in India and why do we still address them as STGs” asks Dr. Khan, NABARD, Mumbai. According to him, farmer must be at the centre and not one commodity. He emphasised that awareness creation and capacity building will help them go up the value chain.

India is the second largest producer of tea in the world. The Small Tea Growers segment has emerged over the last two to three decades following the serious structural shifts in the Indian tea industry, otherwise dominated by large tea estates. With less than 0.5 to 5 acres of land, approximately 450,000 STGs contribute 36% of the India’s annual tea production. But, despite their high share, STGs remain at the bottom of the tea value chain as they remain isolated in the remotest and most backward regions like Assam, Tripura, North Bengal, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Nagaland and the hills of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In the event, 10 best performing Primary Producer Societies were awarded ‘desk-top computers’ and next 40 PPSs were awarded ‘soil analysis kits’. Mr. Pattabiraman Subramanian, Programme Manager, Delegation of the European Union to India said, “Desktop will enable STGs to keep accurate digitised accounts and records.

Soil analysis kit will equip growers to obtain fertility and health status of soil and will help them to increase productivity per unit area by narrowing the cost-benefit ratio.”

Recommendation: Award Selection Committee

Shortlisting Primary Producer Societies Awards

Centre for Education and Education, New Delhi (CEC) requested that an independent evaluation of the performance of the Primary Producer Societies organised under the EqualTea Project be done for the purpose of giving away awards to the best performing societies in June 2016. At the request of CEC, the undersigned agreed to do the evaluation of the performance of the Societies.

For compiling the performance parameters of the societies, a questionnaire was designed to be filled in by each society interested to the considered for the ward. A copy of the questionnaire designed is appended. The parameters were identified to judge the performance of the societies in terms of their operational management - including growth in membership over the year, decision taking process in societies, maintaining the books of accounts, growth in production and trading in leaves, their linkage with bans and the financial services offered by the societies to their members, their relationship with other stakeholders like the Tea Board. The questionnaire also contained questions on the sustainability of the society and their perspective for future plans for the society and their ability to carry on with the society management even after the project gets over.

In total, 145 applications from the Societies spread over PPS in West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh were received. We, the undersigned sat together on 4 and 5 June, 2016 at New Delhi and evaluated the performance based on the information provided by the societies. Weightage were assigned to individual parameters based on their relative relevance to project objectives and accordingly evaluation was done jointly by us. Total marks for all parameters was fixed at 200.

The list of Societies whose applications were considered and the marks awarded by us are shown in Appendix-2. In view of the large No. of societies who have shown their interest in competing for the wards and geographical dispersion of the societies, we recommend that the award may be given under two categories - First 10 Societies be given the Best "10" awards comprising of a Computer and a printer to improve digitalisation of society operations along with one soil analysis kit each to help them improve their productivity and the second category to consist of the next best 40 Societies who may be given one soil analysis kit each in recognition of their merits. The names of the best 50 (10+40) societies based on the market awarded to them, who could be considered for the awards is appended as Annex-3.

It is further suggest that since the purchase and computer and printer is best done through locally as the societies are located far and wide and purchase and after sales services will be easier through local dealers of these items. In order to ensure that the costs of acquisition of these items do not overshoot, a uniform value of Rs.43000 be fixed as the upper ceiling (this is based on the local enquiries at New Delhi for the same) and the Societies may identity and

place orders with local dealers within the upper ceiling (any additional payments, if any, will have to be made by the Societies themselves) and the payment will be direct to the vendors based on the certificates issues by the Societies concerned regarding successful installation of the same. Since the EquaiTea project is ending on 30 June, 2016, the entire process be completed within this period, as no payments can be done beyond this date. The Soil Analysis Kits can, however, be supplied directly the Societies by CEC.

(sd)	(sd)	(sd)
(P.V. Ramachandran)	(Soumen Palit)	(Arati Pandya)
Consultant	Consultant	Consultant

New Delhi, 6 June, 2016

Selection Committee:

Mr. P. V. Ramachandran, former General Manager, NABARD

Dr. Soumen Palit, Director, ECO-YES Technologies under STEP IIT Kharagpur

Ms. Arati Pandya, Independent Development Sector Consultant

Press Coverage

 THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Print

Govt to issue guidelines for mini, micro tea factories

India is the second largest producer of tea in the world and has about 4.5 lakh small tea growers with less than 0.5 to 5 acres of land. (Reuters)

Government will issue guidelines for establishing mini and micro tea factories which will be beneficial for small growers, a top Tea board official today said.

Tea Board will allocate more funds and subsidies for small tea growers to maintain their water sheds and transport their produce, Tea Board Chairman Santosh Kumar Sarangi said in a statement.

"Within a month, Tea Board of India, through Ministry of Commerce, will come up with notification on guidelines for setting up mini and micro factories for small tea growers," Sarangi said.

He was speaking at the conference of small tea growers organised by the Centre for Education and Communication.

Small tea growers will have to grow up the value chain, become producers and participate in auction on their own.

The board will give them training in quality control and make sure the tea produced is of good quality, Sarangi added.

Speaking at the same event, Centre for Education and Communication Executive Director J John said that a win-win situation will come when tea industry recognises small tea growers and forge sustainable business partnerships with them.

The tea estate factories should also come forward to purchase tea leaf from the small tea growers' societies giving them fairer price, John added.

India is the second largest producer of tea in the world and has about 4.5 lakh small tea growers with less than 0.5 to 5 acres of land.

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Business Standard

'Govt to issue guidelines for mini, micro tea factories'

Press Trust of India | New Delhi June 07, 2016 Last Updated at 18:07 IST

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Portal : <http://ibn7.in>

Date : 10 June 2016

Link : <http://ibn7.in/india-news-hindi/item/109035-news>

छोटे चाय उत्पादकों के लिए दिशानिर्देश शीघ्र : चाय बोर्ड

नई दिल्ली: छोटे चाय उत्पादकों के लिए मिनि और माइक्रो फैक्टरियां स्थापित करने के लिए एक महीने के भीतर दिशानिर्देश की अधिसूचना जारी कर दी जाएगी। यह बात यहां टी बोर्ड भारत के अध्यक्ष संतोष कुमार सारंगी ने छोटे चाय उत्पादकों के एक सम्मेलन में कही, जिसमें असम, अरुणाचल प्रदेश, त्रिपुरा, मिजोरम और पश्चिम बंगाल के छोटे चाय उत्पादक शामिल हुए थे। यहां जारी हुए एक बयान के मुताबिक राजधानी में हुए सम्मेलन में शरीक हुए 200 से अधिक छोटे चाय उत्पादक प्रतिनिधियों ने अपनी विनिर्माण इकाइयों की स्थापना में सरकार से ठोस सहयोग की मांग की।

छोटे चाय उत्पादकों का मंगलवार को हुआ यह सम्मेलन 'प्राथमिक उत्पादक समाज (पीपीएस) एसेंबली सेलेब्रेशन ऑफ इन्वोवेशन' कार्यक्रम के तहत हुआ, जिसका आयोजन सेंटर फॉर एजुकेशन एंड कम्प्यूनिकेशन (सीईसी) ने किया था। कार्यक्रम का आयोजन पीपीएस की पहल को रेखांकित करने और उन्हें टिकाऊपन की तरफ बढ़ने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए किया गया था।

पीपीएस एसेंबली को संबोधित करते हुए टी बोर्ड भारत के अध्यक्ष संतोष कुमार सारंगी ने कहा, "टी बोर्ड भारत वाणिज्य मंत्रालय के जरिए एक महीने के भीतर छोटे चाय उत्पादकों के लिए मिनि और माइक्रो फैक्टरियां स्थापित करने के लिए दिशानिर्देश की अधिसूचना जारी कर देगा।"

सारंगी ने कहा कि छोटे चाय उत्पादकों को मूल्य श्रंखला में ऊपर बढ़ना होगा, उत्पादक बनना होगा और खुद ही नीलामी में भाग लेना होगा। बोर्ड उन्हें गुणवत्ता नियंत्रण में प्रशिक्षण देगा और सुनिश्चित करेगा कि उत्पादित चाय बेहतरीन गुणवत्ता का हो।

सेंटर फॉर एजुकेशन एंड कम्प्यूनिकेशन (सीईसी) के कार्यकारी निदेशक जे. जॉन ने कहा, "सीईसी छोटे चाय उत्पादकों की गरीबी दूर करने और आय बढ़ाने के लिए काम कर रहा है। वर्तमान 'सस्टेनेबल लाइवलीहुड्स फॉर स्मॉल टी ग्रोअर्स' परियोजना में छोटे चाय उत्पादकों के सामने मुंह बाए कुछ महत्वपूर्ण समस्याओं के निदान की कोशिश की जा रही है।"

राष्ट्रीय कृषि और ग्रामीण विकास बैंक (नाबार्ड), मुंबई के डॉ. खान ने कहा, "छोटे चाय उत्पादक देश के कुल चाय उत्पादन में 35-40 फीसदी योगदान करते हैं। उन्हें छोटा उत्पादक कहना उचित नहीं है।" उन्होंने कहा कि जागरूकता और क्षमता बढ़ाने से छोटे चाय उत्पादक मूल्य श्रंखला में ऊपर बढ़ सकेंगे।

कार्यक्रम में 10 सर्वाधिक बेहतर प्रदर्शन करने वाले पीपीएस को डेस्क-टॉप कंप्यूटर से पुरस्कृत किया गया और उनके बाद 40 बेहतरीन प्रदर्शन करने वाले पीपीएस को सॉयल एनालिसिस किट प्रदान किया गया।

--आईएनएस

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Small tea growers seek better price

Spl Correspondent

NEW DELHI, June 8 - The small tea growers (STGs) of Assam, along with other northeastern States, have called for better implementation of price sharing formula by the Tea Board of India and policy changes that would help them to move up the value chain.

At a day-long event organised by the Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), titled National Assembly for Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Mizoram, besides West Bengal held on Tuesday, the STGs asserted their rights in the tea industry and pressed for better transparency in the Tea Board's price-sharing formula.

The small tea growers demanded concrete supportive measures from the government to set up their own manufacturing units as many of these societies are formed by tribal communities and women from these regions.

Later, addressing the small tea growers, Tea Board Chairman Santhosh Kumar Sarangi announced that within a month, the Board, through the Ministry of Commerce, will come up with a notification on guidelines for setting up mini and micro factories for small tea growers. "The Tea Board will allocate more funds for small tea growers. More subsidies will be given for maintaining their water sheds and transportation," he added.

According to him, the small tea growers will have to grow up the value chain, become producers and participate in auction on their own.

He further assured that the Tea Board will give them training in quality control and make sure the tea produced is of good quality. "Considering the global warming and erratic rains, more and more tea growers will have to be encouraged into organic farming," he emphasized.

Sharing his happiness of being a part to the betterment of the small tea growers, Head of Cooperation, European Union, Johan Hesse said that "better trade and better bargaining process should be assured for the tea growers in India". With the Tea Board's cooperation and the stakeholders' support, he trusted a positive growth in the life of small tea growers.

"The small tea growers contribute 35 to 40 per cent of the tea produced in India and why do we still address them as STGs," asked Dr Khan, who represented the NABARD, Mumbai. According to him, farmer must be at the centre and not one commodity.

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अपनी यूनिट लगाने में सरकार से मदद चाहते हैं चाय किसान

जागरण संवाददाता, कोलकाता : पश्चिम बंगाल, असम, अरुणाचल, त्रिपुरा व मिजोरम से छोटे चाय किसान चाय उद्योग में अपने अधिकारों पर जोर देने और टी बोर्ड के मूल्य शेयरिंग फॉर्मूले में अच्छी पारदर्शिता लाने पर प्रकाश डाला है। वे एक नवपरिवर्तन कार्यक्रम 'पीपीएस असेम्बली सेलीब्रेशन ऑफ इन्वोवेशन' के एक भाग के बतौर जमा हुए थे, जिसका आयोजन सेंटर फार एजुकेशन ऐंड कम्यूनिकेशन द्वारा किया गया था। इस कार्यक्रम में भाग लेने वाले 200 से अधिक एसटीजी प्रतिनिधियों ने सरकार से ठोस सकारात्मक उपायों की मांग की, ताकि उनकी निजी उत्पादन इकाई लग सके। इनमें से अधिकांश सोसाइटीज का गठन जनजातीय समुदायों और इन क्षेत्रों से महिलाओं द्वारा किया गया है। पीपीएस सभा को संबोधित करते हुए टी बोर्ड ऑफ इंडिया के चेयरमैन संतोष कुमार सारंगी ने घोषणा की कि एक महीने के भीतर वाणिज्य मंत्रालय

के माध्यम से टी बोर्ड ऑफ इंडिया चाय के छोटे किसानों के लिए लघु और सूक्ष्म फैक्टरियां लगाने के लिए मार्गदर्शिका पर अधिसूचना लाएगा।

टी बोर्ड चाय के छोटे किसानों के लिए और फंड आबंटित करेगा, उनके वाटर शेडों और परिवहन के रखरखाव के लिए और सब्सिडी दी जाएगी। सभा के दौरान पंचमनगर टी प्रोड्यूसर कंपनी त्रिपुरा के प्रफुल्ल देब्रामा ने कहा कि छोटे किसान टी ब्रांड बनाने के लिए हम टी बोर्ड ऑफ इंडिया और वाणिज्य मंत्रालय का सक्रिय सहयोग चाहते हैं। कन्फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन स्माल टी ग्रोवर्स एसोसिएशन (सीआइएसटीए) के अध्यक्ष बिजॉय गोपाल चक्रवर्ती ने कहा कि अभी भी एसटीजी उनके ग्रीन लीफ का उचित मूल्य नहीं मिलता है। बोडोलैंड असम के प्रोनोंय बासूमंत्री ने कहा कि हम सरकार से अनुरोध करते हैं कि ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में मैनुफैक्चरिंग यूनिटों को शुरू करने में बाधा को दूर करे।

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এবার ছোট চা-কারখানা?

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: ছোট চা-বাগানের মালিকরা যাতে ক্ষুদ্র চা-কারখানা গড়ে তুলতে পারেন সেজন্য আর এক মাসের মধ্যেই ভারতের টি বোর্ড নির্দেশিকা জারি করবে। সেন্টার ফর এডুকেশন অ্যান্ড কমার্স (সি ই সি)-র উদ্যোগে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, অসম, অরুণাচল প্রদেশ, ত্রিপুরা এবং মিজোরামের ছোট চা-বাগানের মালিকদের এক সম্মেলনে মঙ্গলবার জানালেন টি বোর্ডের চেয়ারম্যান সন্তোষকুমার সারঙ্গি। তিনি বললেন, তবে ছোট চা-বাগানগুলিকে গুণমানের দিকে আরও নজর দিতে হবে। চা নিলামে অংশ নিতে হবে। টি বোর্ড সেজন্য তাঁদের কোয়ালিটি কন্ট্রোলে প্রশিক্ষণও দেবে। ছোট চা-বাগানগুলি ক্ষুদ্র জমিতে চা উৎপাদন করে। কিন্তু নিজস্ব কারখানা না থাকার জন্য সেই চা বিক্রি করতে বাধ্য হয় বট লিফ ফ্যাক্টরিগুলিকে। এতে ছোট বাগানের বিক্রি করা চা পাতার দামের ভয়ঙ্কর ওঠানামা হয়, ক্ষতি হয় তাদের। এই ক্ষতি এড়াতে সি ই সি ৫০ থেকে ১০০ করে ছোট চা-বাগানকে নিয়ে তৈরি করেছে প্রাইমারি প্রোডিউসার সোসাইটি (পি পি এস)। এই পি পি এস-দের সম্মেলনেই বক্তব্য পেশ করছিলেন টি বোর্ডের চেয়ারম্যান। কনফেডারেশন অফ ইন্ডিয়ান স্মল টি প্রোডায়ারস অ্যাসোসিয়েশনের প্রেসিডেন্ট বিজয়গোপাল চক্রবর্তী সম্মেলনে জানান, আমরা চা পাতার মূল্য পাচ্ছি না। অসমের প্রণয় বসুমাতারি বললেন, কর্মসংস্থানের স্বার্থে সরকারের কাছে অর্জি জানাচ্ছি, কারখানা তৈরির অনুমতি দেওয়া হোক।

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Tea Board to come up with guidelines for tea processors for small tea growers

By [Sutanuka Ghosal](#), ET Bureau | 7 Jun, 2016, 04:41PM IST

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Tea Board will come up with guidelines for mini and micro tea processing factories for small tea growers within a month's time. This was indicated by [Santosh Kumar Sarangi](#), chairman, Tea Board in Kolkata on Tuesday.

"Tea Board will allocate more funds for small tea growers. More subsidies will be given for maintaining their water sheds and transportation", Tea Board chairman said. "Small tea growers will have to grow up the value chain, become producers and participate in auction on their own. Tea Board will give them training in quality control and make sure the tea produced is of good quality. Considering the global warming and erratic rains, more and more tea growers will have to be encouraged into [organic farming](#)", he emphasized.



More than 200 STG representatives demanded concrete supportive measures from the government to set up their own manufacturing units.

Tea Board chairman was addressing "PPS Assembly Celebration of Innovation" - organised by Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), for celebrating the initiatives of primary producer societies and encouraging them for better sustainability.

Small tea growers from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Mizoram and West Bengal took part in the event. More than 200 STG representatives who participated in the event, demanded concrete supportive measures from the government to set up their own manufacturing units. Many of these societies are formed by tribal communities and women from these regions.

During the assembly Mr. Prafulla Debbarma of Panchamnagar Tea Producer Company, Tripura said, "CEC has helped us so far. But we are determined to set up our own manufacturing unit to produce organic orthodox and green tea. We seek active support from the Tea Board of India and Ministry of Commerce to build small grower tea brand".

These Small Tea Growers grow tea on small patches of land, but are dependent on the Bought Leaf Factories (BLF) as they have no processing facilities. The BLF in turn buy the green leaf and sell it to the big companies in the organized industry after processing the tea.

Earlier in year 2015, Tea Board amended the Tea Control Order making it mandatory for BLF units to sell not less than 70 per cent of the processed tea bought from STG, through public auction. It was felt that this would help the monitoring of the price of end-produce. But due to the lack of transparency the growers are suffering and have not got fairer share in the tea value chain. Most of these growers have no access to institutional finance.

Bijoy Gopal Chakraborty, President of Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Association (CISTA) said, "We appreciate the Price sharing formula (PSF). But STGs are still unable to get fair price for their green leaf. Growers experience great fluctuations in the price that they receive from the Bought Leaf Factories (BLF), for per kg of green leaf, ranging from Rs 22 to Rs 4 in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu; and Rs 22 to Rs 7 in Assam (2015 season). No such variations were reported in the Auction price during the year. Moreover, there is lack of transparency in the actual price realised since, among other things, under The Tea Marketing Control Order (TMCO) only 50 per cent of tea goes to auction."

Pronoy Basumatari, Bodoland, Assam said, "We are 'innovators' and 'startups' in the most back ward rural areas in India. Small tea growers are providing employment to thousands of people and are agents of development. We urge government to remove road blocks in starting manufacturing units in the rural areas. We are meeting Minister of Commerce to discuss the issue."

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