

## Nagaland Tea growers highlight problems & prospects

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*Officials of Tea Board of India and Tea Research Association and members of All Nagaland Small Tea Growers Association at the seminar on "Tea growing in Nagaland: problems and prospects" in Dimapur, Saturday. (Morung Photo)*

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The All Nagaland Small Tea Growers Association (ANSTGA) has highlighted to the Tea Board of India and other stakeholders the various problems faced by small-time tea farmers in the State.

These include lack of technical knowledge, absence of processing facilities, hurdles in transportation of tea leaves, no Tea Board office in the state and non-posting or appointment of tea development officers in Nagaland.

Highlighting the problems at a seminar on "Tea growing in Nagaland: problems and prospects" organized by ANSTGA at Hotel Saramati on Saturday, the association president, Shami Angh, stressed on the urgency to set up processing units and tea factories in all the districts, providing marketing linkage, trainings to farmers on tea cultivation and processing and, giving opportunities to small tea farmers to participate in trade fairs and exhibitions.

ANSTGA also urged the Tea Board to provide assistance for setting up of new tea factories and existing tea factories in the State, assistance to new tea plantations, and subsidies to tea growers.

Executive director, Tea Board, NE Zonal office Guwahati, Sanjio Kumar, said the problems faced by small tea growers in Nagaland would be mitigated to a large extent through setting up of tea processing units in tea growing districts. He also said tea farmers should form self help groups to address their grievances collectively and effectively. Further, the Tea Board official encouraged the Naga tea farmers to go for organic farming and assured that the Tea Board would extend all possible assistance in this direction.

Deputy Director, Agriculture department Nagaland, SK Khemprai, the Agri department had discontinued state-sponsored schemes for tea farmers since 2001. Khemprai however said the department has still resource persons and technical expertise to help and train tea farmers in various aspects.

HoD Horticulture, School of Agriculture Science & Rural Development (SASRD) Medziphema, Dr. Pauline Alila, said though School has no direct involvement with tea growers, it can help tea farmers in research and other technical aspects through SASRD's extension works.

Officials from Tea Research Association, Toklai, Jorhat, and Tea Board Office, Jorhat, also attended the seminar.

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