

# PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF SMALL TEA GROWERS OF NILGIRIS DISTRICT

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**Abstract:** Nilgiri tea is well known for its rich taste and colour. Being an agricultural plantation crop and a major revenue generator, tea cultivation has become a lucrative profession in the Nilgiris that has very few business opportunities and plays a vital role in improving the socio-economic condition of the region. This study aims at identifying the constraints faced by the small tea growers in Nilgiri district. The study is focused on factors that influence the tea growers to involve in tea cultivation, problems faced by small tea growers and satisfaction level of small tea growers.

**Key Words:** Nilgiri tea, tea plantation, tea growers,

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Tea, the most ancient beverage mankind has been enjoying, is still the most popular drink in the world. In India, it is grown in an area of 5.10 lakh hectares. Today the major tea growing states are Assam, West Bengal, Tripur, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. It may be observed that about 48% of the country's total area under plantation is located in Nilgiris. Along with large tea estates, cultivation of tea on small scale basis is also gaining momentum since last two decades in the region. 'Small tea growing' has been defined by the Tea Board of India as a person who is having tea plantation area upto 10.12 hectares.

Alone in Nilgiris there are 400 registered small tea growers whereas the actual number is estimated to be above 50,000. According to the All Nilgiris Small Tea Growers' Association, the small tea growers are co-producing over 65 million Kgs of green leaf which translates to nearly 14 millions Kgs of made tea out of a total Nilgiris production of over 345 million Kgs. These Small tea planters account for 29 percent of the states's overall production and 14 percent of the country's overall production.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Small Tea Growing Industry in Nilgiri has immense penitential from the points of both providing employment as well as generating revenue. It can be a lucrative profession and can play a vital role in improving the socio-economic condition of the economically backward state. But the small tea growers are facing many problems related to availability of finance processing of tea leaves etc. They are forced to sell their tea leaves to big tea gardens at through away prices due to absence of tea factories of their own. Hence, this study aims at identifying the constraints and factors that influence the small tea growers.

## 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To know the socio-economic background of tea growers in Nilgiri district.
- To study about the factors that influences the tea growers to involve in tea cultivation.
- To know the satisfaction level of tea growers in Nilgiri district.
- To identify the problems faced by tea growers in Nilgiri district.

## 4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Kakali Hazarika and Kaberi borah (2013)** states that the tea industry of India has had a long trip since the 18th century. In spite of having a strong base as manufactured product, it allows a bigger gain for the country as agricultural output. Among the tea producing states of India, Assam is well known internationally since a long time ago. The state dominates the country's tea map by producing almost half (50 per cent) of the total tea production. It is estimated that there are nearly 90,000 Small Tea Growers (STGs) in Assam creating employment for around 1.5 lakh people apart from producing innumerable rural entrepreneurs with the potentiality of transforming the socio economic condition of rural Assam. This paper highlights the prospects of small tea cultivation as a source of self- employment in Assam.

**Prarthana Barua (2015)** in the study says that the small tea plantation sector now occupies an important space in the economy of Assam and contributes to the generation of rural employment. However, the sector is not free from problems. These are largely because of infrastructure deficiency and absence or implementation of certain regulatory measures. This paper provides a brief account of the problems faced by the small tea growers in the state drawing insights from the fields.

**Srinivasan (2016)** in his study states that the cultivation of tea is mainly based on the tea plantation workers and analyzes about the problems of tea plantation workers in Nilgiris District. The miserable living conditions and the wages of the tea plantation workers are identified. The importance of considering these factors is analyzed and suggested as per the results inferred from several tea estates and unions resides in Nilgiris District.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The primary data was collected from the respondents through questionnaire. The sample size consists of 150 small tea growers of Nilgiris district. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting the sample.

## 6. TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS :

- Weighted Average Method and Chi-Square

## 7. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION :

**TABLE 1.1 REASON TO CHOOSE TEA CULTIVATION**

REASON	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	AVG	RANK
Requires less water	120	244	39	98	3	504	3.36	4
Ancestral practice	385	108	66	18	15	592	3.95	1
Less cost of cultivation	170	220	123	22	9	544	3.63	3
Less pest and disease	80	88	225	54	10	457	3.05	5
Sufficient profit	315	132	66	24	20	557	3.71	2

The above table reveals that, ancestral practice has scored rank first and was primary reason for choosing tea cultivation, sufficient profit has ranked second. Less cost of cultivation has ranked third, requires less water has ranked fourth, and less pest and disease scored last for choosing this tea cultivation. Majority of the respondents has ranked ancestral cultivation as first for choosing tea cultivation.

**TABLE 1.2 FINANCIAL PROBLEM FACED BY TEA GROWERS**

FACTORS	1	2	3	TOTAL	AVG	RANK
Lack of finance for tea cultivation	150	88	56	294	1.96	3
Unavailability of loans	183	106	36	325	2.17	1
High interest rates	171	100	43	314	2.09	2

From the analysis through weighed average method on financial problems faced by tea growers showed that unavailability of loans is the first problem, high interest rate is second problem faced and lack of finance is third problem faced by tea growers in Nilgiri. Majority of the respondents have ranked unavailability of loans is the first financial problem faced by tea growers.

**TABLE 1.3(a) EDUCATION AND MARKETING FACILITIES OF TEA**

$H_0$  - There is no significant relationship between education and satisfaction with marketing facilities of tea

Satisfaction with marketing facilities							
Education	Illiterate	School Level	Higher Secondary	Under Graduate	Profes sional	Others	Total
Highly satisfied	2	5	3	2	1	0	13
Satisfied	1	18	37	2	0	3	61
Neutral	0	4	1	9	7	3	24
Dissatisfied	0	2	12	35	0	0	49
Highly dissatisfied	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>150</b>

TABLE 1.3(b) CHI-SQUARE TEST

Calculate Values	Table Values	Df	Significance
157.8403	31.4	20	Ns

Chi-square test is applied to find weather there is significant relationship between educations of the respondents with satisfaction with marketing facilities of tea. The calculated value of chi-square is 157.8403 which is greater than the table value of 31.4 at 5% level of significant. Since calculated value is greater than the table value it is inferred that there is relationship between education and satisfaction with marketing facilities of tea, hence the hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 1.4 OCCUPATION AND UNAVAILABILITY OF LOANS

H<sub>0</sub> - There is no significant relationship between occupations unavailability of loans for tea growers

Calculated value	Table value	df	significance
69.34	15.5	8	NS

Chi-square test is applied to find weather there is significant relationship between occupation and unavailability of loans for tea growers. The calculated value of chi-square 69.34 is which is greater than the table value of 15.5 at 5% level of significance. Since calculated value is greater than the table value it is inferred that there is no relationship between occupation and unavailability on loans for tea growers, hence the hypothesis is accepted.

#### 8. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The marketing related aspects are not at par with international standard. The best way of marketing tea is through auction system. Auction centre acts as a single window where the quality, quantity and prices are regulated. However the government of India should see to the auction system should further be strengthened.
- It is suggested that the tea growers can be given more transportation facilities for marketing of tea.
- It is suggested that loan facilities can be availed to tea growers which is the major problem faced by tea growers.

#### 9. CONCLUSION:

Tea is the most widely consumed drink in the world .3.5 billions cups of tea is consumed daily, across the world. The medicinal use of tea was known long before it was used as a beverage. Tea is one of the most important non alcoholic drinks and is popular due to its stimulating property. In India tea is the main beverage for each and every household. The study on problems prospect of small tea growers at nilgiri helps to identify the reasons of choosing tea cultivation at nilgiri district. The various problems faced by tea growers such as lack of co-operation, unavailability of loans, lack of transportation facilities. The study also brought out some suggestions as to how the production of tea cost production and improving the workers productivity through various reforms. It is suggested to introduce some promotional campaigns so as to make people aware of the quality of Indian tea aboard and values added products can also be marketed in international markets

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