

AN OUTLINE OF TEA BOARD OF INDIA SCHEME AND POLICIES FOR SMALL TEA GROWERS (STGs): A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY IN SIVASAGAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM

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Abstract: This article focus on the scheme and policies which is prescribed by the Tea Board of India regarding the utility of small tea growers. The applicability of scheme and policies is significant in the study area. The planning and schemes are applying for quality tea production, identified the tea growers, security, subsidy and highly benefit from tea cultivation. Tea Board of India is given facilities to those growers which lands are registered under this institute. Therefore, this study conducted on the registered as well as unregistered small tea growers within the area of Sivasagar district of Assam. Assam is popular for tea cultivation. Assam tea habit, tea quality, productivity are unique from the other state of India. The Government of Assam identified the tea growers as small tea growers, which cultivating land are minimum of 30 bighas.

Keyword: Tea Board of India, Small Tea Growers, planning, schemes

Regarding the policies and scheme of Tea Board of India, it is important for changing the tea production and basic structure of small tea cultivation. The policies and schemes are implemented due to better quality tea production, subsidy for a tea garden, the unique identity of small tea growers, highly benefit from tea cultivation and secure of tea garden.

This study conducted on Sivasagar district of Assam which is known as Miniature of Assam. The purposive sampling is using to collecting primary data and the secondary data are used from books, journal and other official materials. This research work explains an outline regarding the schemes and policies undertaken for small tea growers.

The basic structure of small tea cultivation is mainly lead by small tea growers. The small tea growers are centric point who is involved generally in plucking tea leaves, caring for the small tea garden, labourers using, owner of small tea production and help in utilizing unused land. The economic empowerment concept is related to small tea cultivation.

The basic objective of the study conducted on the importance of Tea Board schemes and policies for small tea growers. The small tea growers of Sivasagar district are taken a role in tea cultivation process of Assam. The big tea garden of Assam is too much depending on small tea growers for good quality leaves, better production, better economic condition and so on. Therefore, the Tea Board of India has conducted mutually different scheme and policies with Small Tea Growers Development Directorate. The Small Tea Growers Development Directorate is a body to provide quality enhancement and improvement of tea production.

The terms and condition for providing planning and policies for small tea growers, there had found that the small tea growers are followed the procedure of registration under Tea Board of India. The Tea Board of India recognizes the small tea grower as a tea grower under the cultivating land is around 75 bighas. The 'Biomatic card' is provided to small tea growers as a basic identity in the tea cultivation process. The tea growers are interested in 'Biomatic card' to identify them as a small tea grower.

The Government of India, as well as Government of Assam, are initially tacking various scheme and policies jointly with Tea Board of India and Small Tea Growers Development Directorate. The major schemes of Tea Board are implementing from the direction of Five-year plan, yearly planning, State Bank of India support and so on. The basic motive of the scheme is the improvement of quality tea, a motive to the scientific way of cultivation, modern agriculture practice, modern equipment using and protect tea growers. The inclusive growth of small tea growers is one of the important motives of the schemes and policies. The concept of a self-help group, co-operative group construction within registered tea growers is related to planning and policies. The financial support is found in the tea cultivation process.

The 'Tea Plantation and Development Scheme: Tenth plan Period (1.4.2002 to 31.3.2007)' includes the basic motive for improvement of tea sector, productivity, subsidy, marketing, irrigation facilities and so on. The uprooting, replanting, replacement planting processes are included in this scheme. The self-help group formation within the registered tea growers is the objective of this scheme. It is found that the maximum members of tea growers are not concerned with this scheme due to lack of awareness, lack of interest, lacks support from Tea Board and so on other reasons.

The 'Centre Plan Crop Insurance Scheme' for small tea growers are taken initiative for protects the small tea growers, interest in domestic prices, increasing international price and improvement of small tea growers as a whole. It reveals that the awareness level of the respondents is less found in the scheme because of lack of awareness about scientific method of cultivation, lack of interest in quality production, lack of interest in market price and so on.

The 'Group Personal Accident Insurance scheme' is taken for STGs and workers to provide insurance facilities and protect from insured, accident, violent, death and so on. It is found that the tea growers are less benefited from this scheme due to lack of awareness, unaware of the facilities, insurance scheme and another benefit of this scheme.

The 'Tea Development and Promotion Scheme during the XII Five-Year plan (2012-2017)' has approved especially for the area of Northeastern states tea growers. The basic subcomponent includes in this scheme are new planting, replanting, factories setting and Self- help group formation. Lacks of awareness to implementing the scheme from Tea Board, the respondents are unaware of utilizing this scheme.

The Government of Assam taken steps for STGs from the different scheme, such as- Tea Cess Utilization (Amendment) Policy, 2015, Tea Cess Utilization Policy, 2017 (Amendment), state budget, educational scheme, land allotment policy and so on. The 'Tea Cess Amendment policy-2015' declared for levied sale tax with a rate of 25 paisa per kg green leaf, inclusive growth of STGs, financial support to SHG, co-operative group and so on. Regarding the respondent opinion, it is answered that the agenda of sale tax is not satisfactory because the sale tax price with the rate of 25 paisa for per kg green leaf is too

much high for them. Sometimes, the respondents are not getting the refund from factories, tea agent, SHG and other organized sectors.

The 'Tea Cess utilization Policy 2017' is taken steps to empowered the small tea growers from financial support as well as other incentives. The applicability of this scheme is not proper for them.

The small tea growers are the key source to rebuild tea cultivation. The socio-economic structure of tea growers is constructed from the encouragement of tea estate or big tea growers. The opinion of small tea growers in Sivasagar district is found that the scheme and policies of the Tea Board are important for community development of tea growers. The scheme and policies is not properly implementing in all sides of the Sivasagar district. The respondents of Sivasagar district are somewhere lack of awareness about this implementation. The small tea growers in this district do not properly use the schemes and policies. The comparative analysis between awareness about the scheme as well as unaware about the scheme, it is responsive that maximum small tea growers are lack of awareness about this particular development scheme. The study data provides the level of tea cultivation process of small tea growers in Assam. Regarding the discussion, it is found that the properly implementing these schemes and policy is too much benefited for tea growers. The scientific way of cultivation, quality production, quality tea leaves, facilities like-irrigation, replanting, modern agriculture practice and better prospects are related to the scheme and policies.

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