

Trinayan STG Society Inaugurates Office Premises



Trinayan Small Tea Growers' Society of Madhya Mohanating in Jorhat, Assam, part of the EqualiTea project, inaugurated its office at a function organised on December 4, 2012.

The inauguration was done by senior citizen and active member of the society Phanidhar Kurmi.

Speaking on the occasion, Mrinal Das, Development Officer, Tea Board of India, assured the growers of full support and facilities as per the provisions and as soon as possible. He informed them about the methods and procedures of applying for the various schemes.

Abani Borah, President, Regional Committee of All-Assam Small Tea Growers' Association, inspired the growers by telling them that they could become a model for other STGs.

Others present on the occasion included Trailokya

Bora, Secretary, Regional Committee of All-Assam Small Tea Growers, Nirmal Beura, Traidcraft India liaison officer, and Sujit Hazarika, project officer, Centre for Education and Communication (CEC).

Trinayan STG Society was formed and promoted by CEC as part of the EqualiTea project supported by the European Union and implemented by CEC in India.

Biren Kurmi is the President and Rajen Ganju the Secretary, of the Society formed on May 20, 2012. At present the society has 58 members.

In a major step, the society started selling leaf directly to Assam Tea Industry of Cinamora, Jorhat, in July 2012. The Society entered into an annual (2012) agreement with the factory for a supply of 20,000 kg green leaf, whereas the supply of leaf was almost double at 40,000 kg.

STG Workshop in Tripura

A state-level workshop for small tea growers was held in Community Hall, Marachara, Kamalapur, Dhalai, Tripura, on October 11, 2012. About 300 small tea growers participated in the workshop, which was organised by All Tripura Small Tea Growers' Association (ATSTGA) and Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura.

Centre for Education and Communication (CEC) helped in organising the workshop. Small growers from three of the societies formed by CEC – Salema Small Tea Growers' Society, Dubbari Small Tea Growers' Society and Mayachari Small Tea Growers' Society – were present at the workshop.

Pabitra Kar (Chairperson TIDC, MLA, President ATSTGA), A K Baishya (Assistant Director, TBI Agartala), Subash Ch. Das (Joint Director, Department of Industries and Commerce, Government of Tripura), Sudhir Das (MLA), Harisankar Debnath (ECM CISTA), Shoba Sinha (ECM CISTA) and Dayananda Pashi (CEC) attended the meeting.

Baishya from Tea Board of India exhorted STGs to be registered with the TBI. Pabitra Kar said that tea saplings would be distributed through RD Block for STGs.

Concept & Design by
The Information and Feature Trust
Laxmi (Kayyadam)
Thondayad, Chevarambalam P.O.
Calicut - 673017
M: 9526577902 / 09868182420
E: edit@labourfile.org
W: www.labourfile.org

Printed at
Varma Printographics, New Delhi

"The actual change was visible when we started leaf trade through the society"

Raghu, Ankur STG Society, Assam

My name is Raghu Gowalla. I was born and brought up in a small village in Jorhat District of Assam, called Mohanating Baruahbari Gaon. Today I live with my wife and a two years old daughter. I have 1.5 acres of tea cultivation and it is my only source of livelihood.

Previously I had poor knowledge of technical aspects and selling green leaves. I used to sell my green leaves through an agent (middleman) and had to settle for a very low price. There was no way to know the price of green leaf being paid by the leaf procuring factories. I had to depend on the leaf agent for my income.

Fortunately I met a CEC project officer in April 2012. He had called for a meeting in our village wherein he would present ideas on increasing income by collective means. I arranged the meeting with a few small tea growers at my home.

The project officer explained to us that if we worked collectively, we would be able to negotiate with leaf procuring factories and get a fair price. We were inspired and decided to form a primary producer society among the STGs of our village.

Initially, we had only 20 members in the society and decided to keep the name as Ankur STG Society. All 20 members selected me as secretary and I felt very lucky that I was chosen to work towards the socioeconomic betterment of my people.

We did face some obstruction from the middlemen and bought leaf factories (BLFs).



BLFs were under the impression that they might not get quality leaves if they directly took it from the society and not the middleman.

The actual change was visible when we started leaf trade through the society in the month of June last year. We understood the domination of the agent when we got to know the difference between the price of green leaf being given to us by the BLFs and what the agent paid us. It was about three to five rupees per kilogram of green leaf. The number of members in our society started to increase, and soon all the STGs in our village joined the society. Presently we have 65 members in our society.

As a leader of this society, I became popular among the STGs of this area. So much so that when the government of Assam announced the sixth panchayat election in January 2013, the society members insisted that I stand in the election as a presidential candidate. I was a little nervous but I had the support of all the STGs, who looked upon me as their face in the governance system.

That made me confident – I was leading my community.

I was elected as president of Namchungi Gaon Panchayat. Now my mission is to work towards the development of the community as well as ensure consistent growth for Ankur STG Society. I convey heartfelt thanks to CEC for empowering all of us STGs.

Increasing Tea Price in India

Indians this year have finally evolved into true connoisseurs of tea, able and willing to pay good money for fine tea, believes Tea Board Chairman MGVK Bhanu.

Bhanu's statement on the sudden elevation of Indian tea drinkers from seekers of cheaper variety of CTC tea into aficionados of quality orthodox tea and willingness to pay it for is not a subjective assessment but based on analysis of recent facts.

"If you look at the average prices so far, from April to beginning of December, prices of all varieties of teas have gone up 22 per cent over the last year to Rs 129 a kg from Rs 105 a kg, while prices of orthodox teas have appreciated by as much as 40 per cent to Rs 161 from Rs 115," Bhanu told members of Indian Tea Association at its annual general meeting.

The steep appreciation in prices cannot be explained by crop shortage only, which is about six to seven per cent. "The rise in prices is not so much for teas that sell for Rs 50-Rs 60 a kg, as it is for better-quality teas that sell at prices above Rs 100 a kg. This means the quality teas are fetching more money. The teas that are not conforming to quality are not fetching good money. It gives indications that Indian consumers are becoming more and more quality-conscious and are no longer willing to touch low-quality teas."

The trend, Bhanu said, is also being witnessed in the export market.

"People who have exported to Pakistan have seen average prices going up from

\$1.52 a kg to just \$1.87, which is a growth of just 23 per cent. Demand for all low-quality teas being exported out of the country has dropped. The learning from this is that let's make good-quality teas if we want to make good money. People are willing to pay for good-quality teas and there is demand for it."

All this is good news for tea plantation companies, particularly the listed ones like McLeod Russel and Jaya Shree Tea, who are known as producers of quality tea. The ability of domestic and foreign consumers to pay disproportionately higher prices for better-quality teas means higher flexibility for these companies to raise prices.

But it also means that Tea Board, through which all central government schemes are administered, will be looking less at doling out subsidies to planters and will instead consider more market development initiatives.

"So, let us not limit our approach to expecting assistance (from the government). I strongly advise having a strong promotional wing in the association by bringing in professionals. Let us organise roadshows in all prospective export markets. Tea Board is willing to bear 50 per cent of the costs."

Source: 'Why are tea prices rising? Drinkers turning choosy', DNA, December 10, 2012 (Kolkata)

Small Tea Grower Collectives in Jorhat and Golaghat, Assam

The project 'Sustainable Livelihoods for Small Tea Growers' envisages formation of primary producers' societies (PPSSs) of growers who engage in collective leaf trade directly with bought leaf or estate factories. Some among them might graduate to the production of processed green or black tea. This column tracks the progress of these growers in Assam, West Bengal, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

The list given below pertains to the societies formed in Jorhat and Golaghat districts of Assam



The Team

J John
9868164009
jjohnedoor@mac.com
Pallavi Mansingh
9810393391
pallavimansingh@gmail.com
Kaustav Roy
9609761867
kaustav.roy998@gmail.com
Minto Goswami
9957309749
minto.goswami81@gmail.com
Pijush Goyari
8011008314
pijuscec@gmail.com
Lalhriatpuii
9612609131
lahhriatpuii87@gmail.com
Dayananda Pashi
9436923630
daya.pashi630@gmail.com
Sujit Hazarika
9435670378
sjt.haz@gmail.com
Shampa Das
9508760636
sampadas1988@rediffmail.com
Manoj Boruah
9957346526
monojboruah1234@gmail.com

Primary Producer Societies in Jorhat and Golaghat, Assam						
Name of the Society	Location	No. of Members	Area under Cultivation (acre)	Name of the President	Name of the Secretary	Date of Formation
Nabajyoti STG Society	Mohanting, Balijan	60	70	Uma Kanta Kurmi	Purna Kanta Kurmi	15-Apr-2012
Aukur STG Society	Baruah barigaon, Jorhat	65	55	Bolin Rajkhowa	Raghu Gowalla	30-Apr-2012
Trinayan STG Society	Kharkhowa, Balijan Jorhat	70	50	Biren Kurmi	Rajen Ganju	12-May-2012
Ratanpur STG Society	Puspaban, Ratanpur, Golaghat	125	301	Khagen Gogoi	Lakhidhar Sonowal	27-Jun-2012
Seuj Lakhimi STG Society	Kanugaon, Golaghat	45	60	Tulsi Dutta	Tankeswar Das	03-May-2012
Sonali STG Society	Kanugaon, Golaghat	25	20	Lokeshwar Bora	Mridual Bordoloi	13-Jun-2012
Dhoroni STG Society	Golaghat	70	200	Shisuram Sonowal	Prasen Bora	22-Sep-2012
Puspaban STG Society	Namchungi, Jorhat	50	150	Trailokya Saikia	Ananta Chutia	30-Sep-2012
Vasundhara STG Society	Folongani, Golaghat	50	230	Gautam Mahanta	Manash Sharmah	22-Dec-2012

Tea News

India's First Small Tea Growers' Tea Factory to Start

Panbari, 35 km from Jalpaiguri in the tea belt of northern part of West Bengal, is clearly showing the path with an SHG, Panbari Small Tea Growers' Society (PSTGS), developing a factory with a processing capacity of around 4 million kg of green leaf per annum to produce 0.8 million kg CTC tea.

"We 343 members in the group have around 670 acres plantation of our own that ensure full capacity utilisation of our factory," said Mr B Debnath, secretary of the society.

Labelling the Panbari initiative as the first STGs' SHG-owned factory in India, ITB Director Mr G Boriah said, "Tea Board has given a subsidy of Rs 1.2 crore, 40 per cent of the project cost, to the PSTGS factory. We are ready to extend all support to any similar initiative if the concerned SHG can ensure proper capacity utilisation of its factory with own green leaf production."

Mr BG Chakroborty, President, Confederation of Indian Small Tea Growers' Associations (CISTA), informed, "Encouraged by Panbari, 4 such factories in Assam and 2 more in Bengal are coming up. They are to start producing by the end of this year."

Source: The Economic Times, October 16, 2012

Industry Quotes

"We started on a very strong note with around Rs 20-25 higher prices. Prices have been low this season due to quality but this year it has been different because we had lower production. The price continues to be very strong. Prices have been high by Rs 25 throughout the year. Since we began the season with lower inventories we will continue to have further low inventories at the end of the season. We expect another 10 to 15 per cent increase in prices during the beginning of this season in 2013-2014. But the tea price trend which has been higher this year should continue at least for next couple of years." –Kamal Baheti, CFO, McLeod Russel

Source: www.moneycontrol.com, December 24, 2012

"A 25 mkg additional domestic demand created every year will have an upward pressure on prices of Indian Tea." –Managing Director CS Bedi, Rossel India Ltd

Source: Business Line, December 12, 2012.

"Assam Tea Industry will focus on increasing exports to ASEAN countries," –official at the North Eastern Tea Association.

Source: The Economic Times, December 16, 2012

Pest Management in Tea

Tea is a perennial crop and, as such, is infested by a number of insects and pests. In general, tea pests are seasonal; some attack tea only in dry season and a few others are abundant in wet season. A few are perennial pests. The major pests that attack tea foliage are described here.

1. Tea mosquito bug (*Helopeltis*)

It lays its eggs in growing shoots and buds at leaf axils. The nymphs and adults suck the cell sap of young leaves, buds and tender shoots making circular black spots. Peak season is June to September.

Control

- Thinning out of shade trees in heavily shaded areas
- Hard plucking or skiffing in heavily infested areas
- Follow barrier spray by spraying infested bushes along with some un-infested bushes in the surroundings
- Keep the tea fields clean of weeds
- Avoid water logging
- In case of mild to moderate infestation, spray Thiomethoxam 25WG @ 50 gm/200 litres of water, or Quinalphos 25 EC @ 500 ml/200 litres of water, or Bifenthrin @

Caterpillars eat young to mature leaves. In severe cases, complete defoliation occurs.

Control

- Light trapping of moths during February-March is very useful
- The caterpillars can be controlled by spraying Phosalone/Quinalphos @ 500 ml/200 litres of water, or Neem formulation @ 125-130 ml/200 litres of water. Spraying of shade tree bases is essential.
- In case of larger stages, Deltamethrin (10EC) @ 50 ml/litres can be sprayed
- Collection of pupas in October and December and in March-April is a must

4. Red slug and bunch caterpillar

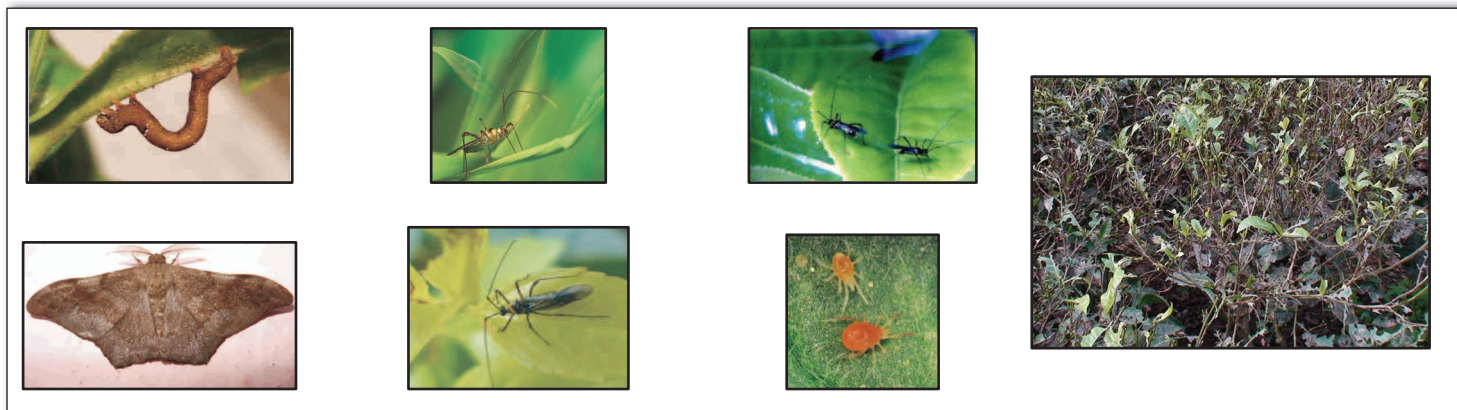
Red slugs first feed from the under surface of the leaves and they make holes and bite off edges. They even eat the bark of stems that are one year to two years old.

Bunch caterpillars aggregate on the branches during daytime and feed during the night. Branches are stripped of the leaves.

Control

- Light trapping of moths

Red slug: September-October and December-March



125 ml/200 litres of water

- In severe infestation, spray Deltamethrin 100 EC @ 50 ml/200 litres of water, followed by Thiomethoxam at seven days' interval

2. Red spider mite

It normally attacks the upper surface of the leaves, and in severe conditions, it spreads under the surface and young leaves. Peak time is the warm season.

Control

- Avoid unshaded condition
- Dusted condition of leaf surface is preferable for egg laying. Planting of barrier crop like Titaphool is suitable to resist dust
- Spray acaricides like Fenpyroximate 5EC/Hexithiozox 5.45EC/Spiromecifem 22.9SC/Bifenthrin 8SC/Fenazaquin 10EC/Fenprothrin 30EC
- Two rounds of spray at 15 days' interval: during December and January in young tea and unpruned tea, during February in skiffed tea, and during early March in pruned tea. In severe infestation, two rounds of spray at 7-10 days' interval is very essential
- Coverage of both surfaces of leaves is necessary during spraying. Thorough drenching of top, middle and bottom hamper of bushes with spray fluid is necessary

3. Looper caterpillar

Bunch caterpillar: October-November and March-May

- Other control measures are the same as for the looper caterpillar

5. Thrips and jassids

Tea fields with new shoots after pruning are mostly attacked by thrips. The leaf surface becomes uneven and curly and exhibits parallel lines of feeding on either side of the midrib. In severe infestation, the field sometimes acquires a bronze colour. Thrips are active from March to May.

Jassids suck the sap of the young leaves. The affected leaves become uneven and curl downward. Jassids are active during May-July.

Control

- Caustic washing of trunk of the bush after cleaning the mosses
- Spraying of insecticides on upper and lower surface of the leaves, buds and succulent stems. The important chemicals are Thiomethoxam (25WG) @ 50 gm/Quinalphos (35EC) @ 500 ml/Deltamethrin (10EC) @ 50 ml/Dimethoate (30EC0) @ 500 ml/Bifenthrin (8SC) @ 125 ml in 200 litres of water

Conclusion

Always practise cultural, mechanical and physical control along with chemical control for effective and longer control of a pest. Be sure to spray either in the morning or late afternoon for getting an efficient spray. Never spray in middle hours.

Nabadeep Saikia, Assistant Manager, Bazaloni Tea Estate, Tinsukia

Source: Tea Research Association [TRA] Publications



Centre for Education and Communication
173-A, Khirki Village, Malviya Nagar
New Delhi – 110017
T: 91 11 29541858 / 29541841
F: 91 11 29542464 E: cec@cec-india.org
W: www.cec-india.org