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Small growers to soon get help from app

By *Bikash Singh*, ET Bureau | 11 May, 2016, 08.40PM IST

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GUWAHATI: A mobile application is being developed to provide small tea growers with advice on good agricultural practices.

Bidyananda Barkakoty, vice-chairman of the Tea Board, said the app will link small tea growers with an expert on good practices through an online platform.

The app, being developed by Tata Global Beverages Ltd (TGBL) with help from Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), will also help ensure compliance with plant protection code (PPC) for pest and disease management. It will also warn tea growers about pest attacks and plant diseases.

According to Barkakoty, the app will help in digitisation of farm diaries and offer a method for self certification and traceability of the use of safe chemicals.

A workshop on the app was organised by North Eastern Tea Association (NETA), in association with TGBL on Wednesday in Golaghat in Upper Assam.

Barkakoty said the Android app is yet to overcome many challenges, such as mobile phone compatibility, lack of follow-up training and support for users, passive engagement of tea gardens and lack of proactive advisory. It will also need to overcome the inconsistent engagement with small growers and non-availability of reliable historical data on field



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There are over 80,000 small tea growers in Assam.

In 2014, India produced 1,207.31 million kg (mkg) of tea, out of which Assam's production was 610.97 million kg. In 2015, India accounted for 1,191mkg of tea production, of which Assam produced about 614.57mkg.

Small tea growers account for about 30% of Assam's total tea production.

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