

A Study on the Problems Faced by Small Tea Growers (STG) with reference to Wayanad District of Kerala

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ABSTRACT

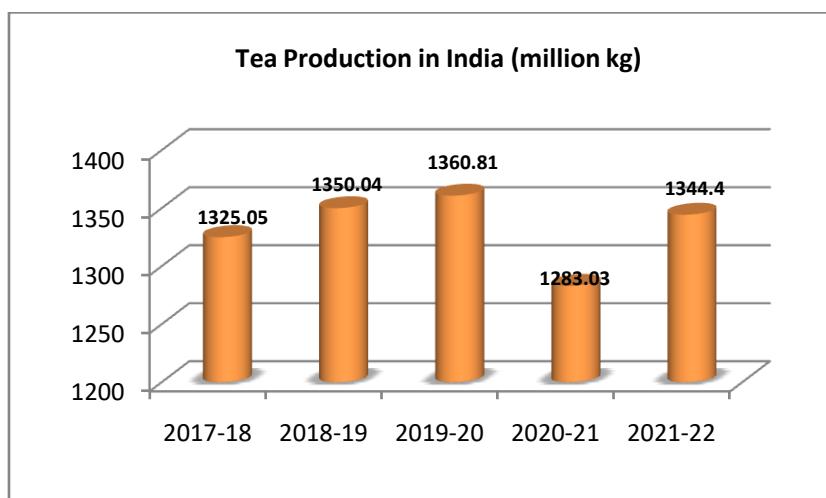
India is the second largest tea producer in the world after China. The tea industry in India was developed in 18th century by Britishers. Tea plantation industry is one of the important industries of our country. It plays a crucial role in generating income and providing large number of job opportunities. India is one among the world's top tea consuming countries, with 80% of the tea produced in the country consumed by the domestic population. India's total tea production for the calendar year 2021 was 1329.04million kg and for the financial year 2021-22 was 1344.4 million kg. The northern part of India produces about 83% of the annual tea production and the southern part produces about 17% of the country's total production. However, to develop the tea industry in India the government of India set up Tea Board of India in the year 1953 and started functioning in 1954. In November 2021, Tea Board of India introduced Tea Development and Promotion Scheme (TDPS) to enhance the productivity and quality of tea production in India and also to help plantation development for small tea growers holding a land owing up to 10.12 hectare. The large numbers of producers in South India are small tea growers. The Wayanad district of Kerala resides in south west part of India and is popular for its agricultural products and tea. The climate of Wayanad district is best suitable for growth of tea. There are large numbers of small tea producers in the district. And the study is to analyze the problems faced by small tea growers of Wayanad district of Kerala.

Key words: Tea Growers, STG, Tea Board, Tea Development and Promotion Scheme, Productivity, Problems.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tea is one of the major commodities of India. Over the past few decades the growth of tea industry was quiet amazing. According to IBEF, India is the second largest producer of tea. As of 2018 survey, a total of 6.37 lakh hectares of area was cultivated in India for tea production. India's total tea production for the year 2021-22 was about 1344.4 million kilograms.

The northern part of India produces about 83% of total tea production in which majority of the production comes from Assam and West Bengal. The Assam Valley and Cachar are the two tea producing regions in Assam. Dooars, Terai and Darjeeling are the three major tea producing regions in West Bengal. The southern part of India produces about 17% of India's tea production with the major producing states being Karnataka, Kerala and Tamilnadu.



Source: Tea Board of India

1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the problems faced by Small Tea Growers in Wayanad district.
2. To study the factors that influences the tea growers in cultivation of tea.
3. To study the measures taken by the Tea board of India on small tea growers.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Small tea growers industry is one of the crucial industries in Wayanad district in providing job opportunities and in generating income. Tea exports in India are one among the top 5 tea exporters in the world. However, the overall performance of the industry in South India (especially Wayanad) is unimpressive. The small tea growers of Wayanad district is facing so many problems related to the availability of the laborers, finance, processing of tea leaves, etc. the processing units in Wayanad district is too low and most of them are with large tea producers. Therefore, the small tea growers are forced to sell their products at low price. The study aims at identifying the constraints faced by the small tea growers in the district. The study is focused on factors that influence the tea growers to involve in tea cultivation. To analyze measures taken by the Tea Board of India on small tea growers.

1.3 Methodology of Study

For attaining the objectives of the study primary and secondary data were used. The primary data is collected from 100 respondents of various parts of Wayanad district. Primary data is collected by scheduled interview method and secondary data is collected from various websites, newspapers, articles, government reports and journals. The test used for the study is percentage method.

1.4 Limitations of the study

- The study is based on the views of 100 respondents of Wayanad district of Kerala.
- The findings and conclusion is based on the knowledge and experience of those particular respondents.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ganguli p (2014) a thesis entitled on “small tea growers of Assam: Theories, Practices and Challenges of an Indigenous Entrepreneurship” mentioned about the challenges faced by the small tea growers namely financial problems, land related problems, labor supply, lack of training, etc.

Baruah P (2015)in the thesis entitled on “Problems of Small tea growers: a case study on Sonitpur District, Assam” highlights that the small tea plantation sector plays an important role in economy of Assam and also contributes towards employment generation. However, the sector is not free from problems.

Dr. A. Jaganathan, “a study on small tea growers’ satisfaction level and problems with special reference to Nilgiris District of Tamilnadu” highlights that the problems STGs in cultivation of green tea leaves and the satisfaction level of tea growers of the district.

Tea growers in Kerala

Kerala is known for its greenery. It is mostly associated with Western Ghats. This helps the growth of tea leaves in Kerala. Kerala is one of tea producing state in India. Idukki and Wayanad are the two major districts in producing tea. 87% of the tea garden is from the major two districts. 13% of the tea comes from Kottayam, Thrissur, Malappuram and Palakkad districts. Idukki is the most important district with 72% of the total acreage of Kerala under tea plantations. The main tea growing areas of Idukki are in Munnar, vandiperiyar and Peermade regions. Wayanad accounts for about 14% of tea production of the state.

Small tea growers in Wayanad

According to the available data, there are 16000 small tea growers in Kerala out of which 10000 in Idukki and 6000 in Wayanad. The small tea growers (STG) mostly depend on the tea industry for their livelihood. Most of them are holding 50 cents to 5 acres of land. Nearly 80000 kgs of green tea leaves are produced in Wayanad district alone. And there are 11 tea factories functioning in the district.

Tea Board of India

Tea board in India dates back in 1903 when the Indian tea Cess Bill was passed. The Bill provided for levying a Cess on tea exports – the proceeds of which were to be used for the promotion of Indian tea both within and outside India. The present tea board was set up under section 4 of the Tea Act 1953 was constituted on 1st April 1954. The

headquarters of the board was situated in Kolkata and has two zonal offices – one in North Eastern Region at Jorhat in Assam and the other in Southern Region at Conoor in Tamilnadu. The tea board also has 18 regional offices spread over all the major tea growing states.

The main functions of tea board are as follows:

- Increasing production and productivity
- Improving the quality of tea
- Market promotion
- Welfare measures for plantation workers
- Supporting Research and Development

Being the regulatory body, the board exerts control over the producers, manufacturers, exporters, tea brokers, auction organizers and warehouse keepers through various control orders notified under Tea Act.

Tea Development and Promotion Scheme (TDPS)

In order to offer financial assistance and improve the competence of the tea industry, the tea board of India launched Tea Development and Promotion Scheme (TDPS) in the year November 2021. There are seven supporting schemes under TDPS and are listed below:

1. Plantation Development for big growers and small growers
2. Quality Up gradation and Product Diversification
3. Domestic and International Market Promotion
4. Research and Development
5. Human Resource Development
6. National Programme for Tea Regulation
7. Establishment Expenses

Problems faced by STGs

Most of the small tea growers in Wayanad district have landholdings of 50 cents to 5 acres. The average production of green leaves from an acre is 450 kgs a month. The price of tea leaves for the month of June 2022 was ₹ 10 which was ₹ 17 per kg last year. The growers will get ₹ 4500 approximately from an acre per month according to the latest data published by Wayanad Small Tea Growers Association (WSSTGA).

Nearly 80000 kgs of green leaves are produced daily in Wayanad along and still there are only 11 tea factories functioning in the district which belongs to private sector. And these tea factories could procure only 50000 kgs of green tea leaves daily. The remaining quantity was being procured by the agents from nearby states at low price. The growers are forced to sale their green tea leaves at low price.

According to the data published by the WSSTGA, the average production from an acre is 450 kgs a month and a farmer would get ₹ 4500 (450 *10) from it. But, he has to spend ₹ 3200 as Plucking charge and around ₹ 1500 to ₹ 2000 for fertilizer and other inputs. Most of the growers will get nothing on cultivation of tea.

The government and Tea Board should take initiative to increase the price of the tea so that they can earn to survive. According to the survey, most of them are saying that they should get at least ₹20 per kg for the survival in tea industry. The other problems of STG are shortage of workers, dearth of tea processing factories in public sector, high cost for workers, high rate for fertilizers, etc.

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1.1 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Age

SI.NO	AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Up to 21 years	4	4
2	21 – 30 years	9	9
3	31 – 40 Years	41	41
4	Above 40 Years	46	46
	TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

- 4% of the respondents are the age group up to 21 years
- 9% of the respondents are at the age group between 21 to 31 years
- 41% of the respondents are at the age between 31 to 40 years
- 46% of the respondents are at the age group above 41 years.

Table 1.2: Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Educational Status

SI.NO	Educational Status	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Illiterate	28	28
2	Below SSLC	31	31
3	SSLC	35	35
4	Degree	6	6
	TOTAL	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

- 28% of the respondents are illiterate
- 31 % of the respondents have education below SSLC as their education
- 35% of the respondents have SSLC as their education
- 6% of the respondents have degree as their education.

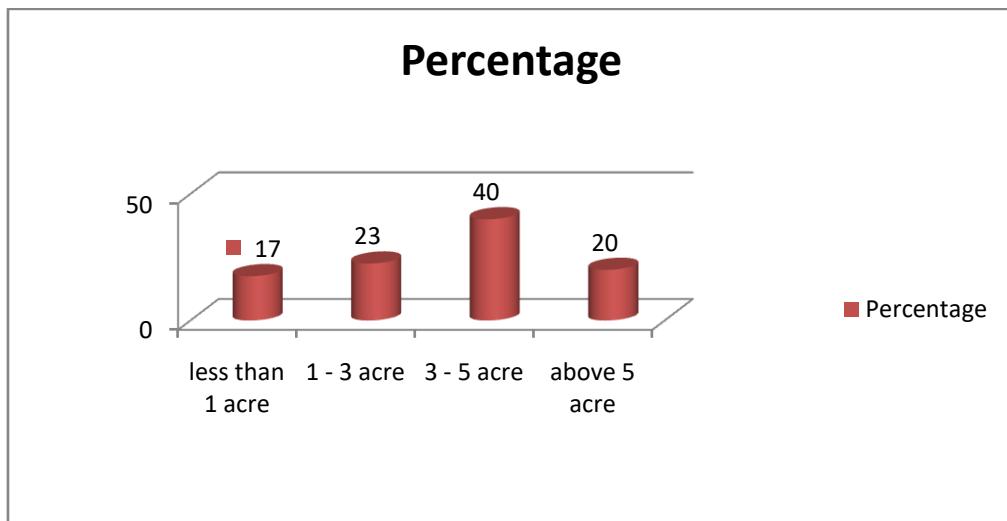
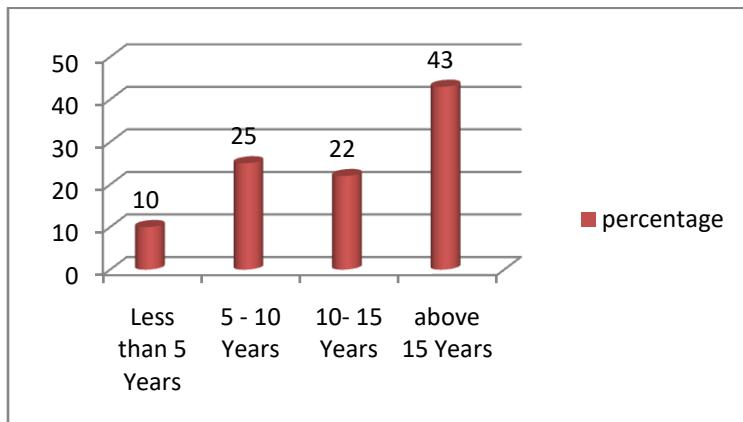


Chart 1.2 Classification of the Respondents on the Basis Of Area of Plantation

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

- 17% of the respondents have less than 1 acre of land
- 23 % of the respondents have 1 – 3 acre of land
- 40% of the respondents have 3-5 acre of land
- 20% of the respondents have above 5 acre of land.



Source: Primary Data

Chart 1.3 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Experience in the Field of Plantation

Inference:

10% of the respondents have less than 5 years of experience in the field of plantation

25% of the respondents have 5 – 10 years of experience in the field of plantation

22% of the respondents have 10 -15 years of experience in the field of plantation

43% of the respondents have above 15 years of experience in the field of plantation

Table 1.3 Classification of Respondents on the Basis Of Production from Plantation

Si.No	Production (per kg) (per year)	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Upto 5000	10	10
2	5000 – 10000	16	16
3	10000 – 15000	42	42
4	Above 15000	32	32
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

10% of the respondents have less than 5000 kgs of production from plantation per year.

16 % of the respondents have 5000 – 10000 kgs of production from plantation per year.

42% of the respondents have 10000-15000 kgs of production from plantation per year.

32 % of the respondents have above 15000kgs of production from plantation per year.

Table 1.4: Classification of Respondents on the Basis Of Income earned per year

Si.No	Income Earned per year	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 100000	21	21
2	100000- 200000	45	45
3	200000-300000	28	28
4	Above 300000	6	6
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

21% of the respondents earn income less than 100000

45 % of the respondents earn income in between 100000 - 200000

28% of the respondents earn income in between 200000 - 300000

6 % of the respondents earn income above 300000.

Table 1.5 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Cost of Labor incurred by STG on Plucking

Si.No	Cost of Labor	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Up to 50000	2	2
2	50000 – 75000	16	16
3	75000-100000	47	47
4	Above 100000	35	35
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

2% of the respondents said the cost of labor incurred by STGs is below 50000

16 % of the respondents said the cost of labor incurred by STGs is between 50000-75000

47% of the respondents said the cost of labor incurred by STGs is in between 75000-100000

35% of the respondents said the cost of labor incurred by STGs is above 100000

Table 1.6 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of problems faced by the Growers

Si.No	Cost of Labor	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	High Cost of Manure & Pesticide	38	38
2	Lack of co-operation from workers	16	16
3	Poor saplings	12	12
4	Others	34	34
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

38% of the respondents said the problem of high cost of labor and pesticide

16 % of the respondents said there is a lack of co-operation between workers

12% of the respondents said about poor saplings

34% of the respondents said about other problems.

Table 1.7 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Sale of Green Tea Leaves by STGs

Si.No	Sale By STGs	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Intermediaries	25	25
2	Government Tea Factories	12	12
3	Private Factories	60	60
4	Others	3	3
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

25% of the respondents have said that the green tea leaves are sold to intermediaries

12 % of the respondents have said that the green tea leaves are sold to government tea factories

60% of the respondents have said that the green tea leaves are sold to private factories

3% of the respondents have said that the green tea leaves are sold to other tea institutions

Table 1.8 Classification of Respondents on the Basis of Financial help from Tea Board

Si.No	Financial Help	No. Of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Yes	34	34
2	No	66	66
	Total	100	100

Source: Primary Data

Inference:

34% of the respondents have said that they get financial help from tea board of India.

66 % of the respondents have said that they did not get financial help from tea board of India.

FINDINGS

- STGs are facing problems of financial help from Tea Board of India.
- The Price of Tea is relatively low when compared to cost of production.
- The major part of green tea leaves are sold to private factories and the factories operating in nearby states.
- The cost of labor is relatively high when the income earned is very low.
- Most of the STGs earn income between 1 lakhs to 2 lakhs
- The cost of increase in fertilizers and other inputs is another problem faced by STGs.
- Tea Board of India is implementing many schemes for the tea growers in India.
- Small tea growers (STG) mostly depend on the tea industry for their livelihood.

Suggestions

- The price of tea should be fixed for a period so that the STGs can plan the cost for the tea leaves.
- Most of the problems of the STGs can be solved by increase in price to Rs.20 per kg.
- The Tea Board of India should also focus on STGs to get the benefit implemented by the Tea board.
- The measures taken by the board should reach the STGs.

CONCLUSION

The study has given the researcher an opportunity to interact with STGs of Wayanad District and know the problems faced by the industry. The survey is conducted on 100 small tea growers in Wayanad district. Small tea growers are the major industry providing large number of job opportunities and in generating revenue from the district. There are many problems faced by the industry. For solving the problems the government and the growers should take necessary steps. Most of the financial aid provided by the tea board of India is not known to the growers. This should be reached to the knowledge of growers. Another important problem faced by the growers is the cost of fertilizers and manure. This adversely affects the cultivation. The lack of labor, high cost of labor, etc are the problems faced by the industry.

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