

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVE OF SMALL TEA GROWERS' ASSOCIATION.**

Date : 19<sup>th</sup> July'2022,  
 Time : 2.30 PM onwards,  
 Venue: Conference Hall of the Honourable Minister, Industries, Commerce & PE Department,

Members and Officials present as Annexure-I.

The meeting was chaired by Shri Bimal Bora, Hon'ble Minister, Industries, Commerce & PE Department and welcome all the members present in the meetings viz. All Assam Small Tea Growers' Association, Small Tea Growers' Council and All Bodoland Small Tea Growers Association.

1. At the outset Dr. Lakshmanan S, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Assam, Industries, Commerce & PE Department welcomed Hon'ble Minister of Industries, Commerce & PE Department, Officials and Small Tea Growers' Association members present in the meeting. He asked the Director Tea to brief about the Assam Tea Industry and the present activities of the Tea Directorate.
2. Director Tea gives a small presentation about the Tea Directorate, its function, organization strength & structure, Tea Scenario of Assam and India along with the existing Cess Utilization Policy. He also briefed about the major challenges of the industry also way forward for sustainability.
3. Small Tea Growers' Association members present in the meeting raised about the price of green leaf and MBP. (Minimum Bench Mark Price). **Actionable:** Tea Board may be requested to conduct DGL.PMC (regular District Green Leaf Price Monitoring Committee Meeting) in regular interval.
4. Dual economic structure with the wide variance in the cost of production and quality of the made tea between Small Tea Grower / Bought Leaf Tea Factory and Organized Tea sector affects the tea market was a point of discussion. It is concluded that deployment of field assistant by the tea factory sourcing green leaf from STGs for technical services may resolved the issues. Chairman desires to hold a discussion with the Tea factory owners sourcing green tea leaf. **Actionable:** - Director Tea will organise a meeting with the Tea factory owners and HMI.
5. Chairman of the meeting suggested for setting up of a MRL & FSSAI testing laboratory at Dibrugarh University. Director Tea apprised that matter and inform that it is already discussed with the register, DU based on the decision of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July'22 at DC Office, Dibrugarh. **Actionable:** Director Tea will further communicate with the Dibrugarh University for a project proposal.
6. Base line survey was conducted by Tea Directorate in 2010 and updated in 2014. There was no survey is done after 2014. It is decided to have a GIS mapped data base of Small Tea Growers and TF. This will also help labour department in compliance of plantation labour act. Further for development of any policy data base is always an important tool. **Actionable:** Director Tea is directed to come up with a proposal for Supplementary budget demand for the base line survey and also to include in the amended CUP.
7. Director Tea mentioned about the existing manpower & importance of strengthening of the existing Tea Directorate. All the members felt about the necessary of strengthening of the Tea Directorate. **Actionable:** Director Tea is directed to put up the file to HMI through the Sr. most Secretary.
8. Shri Prabin Hazarika, Adviser, AASTGA suggested for inclusion of other plantation / cash crops viz. Rubber, Coffee and Agar under the Tea Directorate since these three are also considered as a plantation crop and not covered by the Agriculture Department. He further suggested that in Central these are under Commerce Ministry hence in our State also these may be brought under Industries & Commerce Department. Dr. Lakshmanan S, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Assam, stated that Tea Directorate may be renamed as Directorate of Plantation Crop by inclusion of above mentioned cash crops including bamboo. **Actionable:** Industry department may come up with the proposal.



9. Association members present in the meeting requested for amendment of existing Cess Utilization Policy (CUP) and inclusion of the followings under CUP.
- (a) Mechanization (pruning machine, plucking machine and power sprayer) due to shortage of manpower and for maintenance of plucking rounds and for quality improvement and cost reduction.
  - (b) Uprooting & Replanting as well as rejuvenation pruning and consolidation for higher productivity, better quality and cost reduction.
  - (c) Irrigation subsidy and water harvesting is become essential due to change of climate.
  - (d) Incentive on the Tea Factory develop by the Small Tea Growers both mini and big factory.
  - (e) Subsidy on organic conversion to compensate the crop loss during conversion and reimbursement of cost involved on organic conversion.
  - (f) Training on GAP and GMP,
  - (g) Exposure visits of Small Tea Growers within the State or within the country or aboard.

**Actionable:** Director Tea is asked to submit the amended policy to SLC after consultation with the Sub-committee.

10. Chairman suggested for reintroduction of cess deduction @ Rs. 0.10 per kg of green leaf since these 10 paise for individual will not make any affect but in total it is become a gigantic amount which ultimately help the STG. Though, Small Tea Growers' Council agreed with the suggestion, other members present suggested that after opening of utilization of existing fund reintroduction deduction may be introduced but not at this moment. **Actionable:** - Small Tea Growers' Associations will discuss among themselves and will submit written communication.
11. Association suggested for allowing the educated Small Tea Growers or their children to participate in the five months training programme Offred by TRA by sponsoring from CUP. **Actionable:** - Director Tea will communicate with the TRA and AAU and will submit the proposal. Further provision will be made in the amended CUP.
12. Chairman suggested that all tea growing district there should be permanent small tea growers' training cum meeting hall. Further office bearer of the Association should ensure that grass root level small tea growers are also get proper training on GAP and GMP for better quality and higher productivity with MRL compliance. **Actionable:** Director Tea will make a provision in the amended policy after discussion in the Sub-Committee for development of such provision.
13. Chairman instructed Director Tea to form a Sub-committee in consultation with the Sr. most Secretary and prepare a draft for amended Cess Utilisation Policy by 16<sup>th</sup> August'22 along with the draft guidelines by incorporating all the discussed points and suggestions. **Actionable:** Director Tea will prepare the draft notification on Sub-Committee in consultation with the Sr. most Secretary.

The meeting ended with the vote of thanks from the chair.



(Bimal Bora)  
Minister,  
Industries, Commerce & PE, etc.  
Department.

Copy to: All concerned.

01/8/22