

Two Centuries of Assam Tea Discovery: Indian Tea Industry's Growth and Present State

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Abstract:

*The discovery of Assam Tea *Camellia Assamica* by Major Robert William Bruce in the untamed jungle of the upper Brahmaputra valley by the end of January 1823 was momentous for the rest of the world. The Indian tea industry started at a humble beginning and grew into a multimillion-dollar global enterprise leading tea production and trade. In India, tea has not only economic significance but also cultural significance and plays a very important role in the lives of the people in the country. Thus this paper is an attempt to research empirically in context to commemorate the two hundred years of Assam Tea discovery from 1823 to 2023, which revolutionised the Indian tea sector with tea trade and business, affecting millions of people throughout the world and also highlights the present state of the Indian tea industry.*

Key Words: *Assam Tea, Indian Tea Industry, Economic, Maniram, Singpho.*

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I. Introduction:

The indigenous tea plant *Camellia Assamica*, discovered in the forests of Upper Assam in 1823, founded the Indian tea industry. With the accession of Assam and the entire North East with the company-ruled mainland of India in 1826, the British colonial authorities confiscated Assam's natural tea forests to establish *Emperor tea estates*. In anticipation of profitable large-scale commercial tea plantations, the Assam Company was created in 1839, and it took over the experimental tea plantations in Assam for large-scale tea production. Following that, many young European and Indian tea entrepreneurs established tea plantations in Assam and elsewhere in colonial India, and other British territories across the globe. From 1852 to 1867, commercial tea plantations were established in Darjeeling, Chittagong, Chotta Nagpur, South India, Panjab, Himachal, and other regions with excellent geo-climatic conditions for tea plantations. In the following decades, India and Sri Lanka shattered the Chinese tea monopoly and controlled the international tea trade and export. Over the previous 180 years, the Indian tea industry has become the most developed and well-organized in the world. The substantial tea industry infrastructure in India includes experienced workers, executives and specialised tea research institutions. The multiple features of the Indian tea industry like an export commodity, job creator, generator of State and Central revenue, and as a popular beverage make tea the most significant crop in the country's economy. The Indian government recognises the potential of tea as an export commodity due to its positive advantages on the economy, rural employment generators, and environmental protection.

II. Literature Review:

Following the relevance of the study, a brief review of the literature is presented.

Mann, Harold H, (1918)¹ has done creditable works on the early development of the Indian tea industry. He had travelled to interiors in the tea-growing regions in northeast India primarily and gave a detailed account of the discovery of native tea plants in Assam. The foundations of one of the greatest Indian agricultural industries

¹ Mann, Harold H. (1918). The Early History of the Tea Industry in North-East India. *Bengal Economic Journal*, Govt. Printing, Kolkata. pp.17-23.

had been well laid by 1856, and tea cultivation and manufacture had been placed on the track which had led a century next to the position's success.

Harler, C. R. (1933)² narrated that scientific research, spurred on by sheer economic necessity, has wholly revolutionised all aspects of tea production in the last century or so. The future of the tea industry in a country like India, where land hunger is acute, is becoming more and more dependent on increasing the yield potential of new planting materials since many of the older tea bushes are now worn out and uneconomic. The vegetative reproduction of selected high-yielding bushes, high-yielding seeds, and the classification of tea bushes into agro-types have evolved as a basis for the long-term breeding program at Tocklai Tea Research Institute. The author dealt with information on factory techniques and the biochemical processes involved in tea manufacture.

Griffiths, P. (1967)³ stated that the plantation sector emerged in India in the early 1830s when the British East India Company sought alternative sources for procuring tea for Europe. For the most part, the book deals with plantations in North India with particular reference to Assam. The author justified his position on tea production, marketing, expansion of tea export to Europe, transportation and communication in India. However, there is no attempt to investigate the development of scientific research on tea and its contribution to the tea industry.

North East Enquirer (2002)⁴ published the article 'Assam Tea Industry In Search of Lost Glory' by Chirasmrita Devi on June 7-21, 2002 issue observed that the Indian tea industry needs to 'rejuvenate' itself to find its old glory. Unfavourable weather conditions led to drastic production cuts. Due to the high cost of production, Assam is losing exports due to the wrong production mix and inability to compete with the other tea-producing countries. The quality of Assam tea has also deteriorated in the past couple of years as planters are paying more stress on quantity over quality. Militancy activities in the northeast states created a negative impact on the tea industry. Tea is the pride and heritage of Assam, tea and Assam are synonymous with each other. The tea industry needs to turn a new leaf to revive the old glory.

Goddard, S. (2005)⁵ observed that a few major global tea companies such as Unilever and Tata Tea are reaping enormous profits but are failing to take sufficient responsibility to safeguard the rights and livelihoods of the millions of tea growers and workers who contribute to their earnings. The report assesses the conditions on India's tea plantations, which are characterised by poverty, hunger, and denial of workers' rights. The report highlights that since the late 1990s, at least 60,000 workers have lost their jobs as tea prices have fallen and plantations have closed down. Tens of thousands of workers are threatened by further closures.

Baruah, D. N. (2005)⁶ gave a detailed account of the discovery of tea, its origin, and the scientific process of agricultural practices for manufacturing a cup of tea. The cultivation of tea plants is a natural hybrid of the three important varieties of *jat*, China, Assam, and Cambod (from Cambodia) based on their morphological characteristics. Initially, the Chinese were the first to use tea as a medicinal beverage, around 5000 years ago, primarily consumed as fermented herbal tea. In modern times, tea is the most preferred non-alcoholic beverage next to water taken as black tea (fully fermented), green tea (non-fermented), and oolong tea (semi-fermented) are consumed in many countries.

Behal, Rana P. (2006)⁷ observed that the earliest commercial enterprise was established by a private British capital venture in the Assam Valley, which had been the major employer of wage labour in the tea plantations during colonial rule. He explored a world where more than two million migrant labourers worked under conditions of indentured servitude in these tea plantations, producing tea for an increasingly profitable global market. It traced the genesis and early development of the tea industry in Assam from 1840. It examined the links between the colonial state and private British capital in fostering plantations in Assam.

² Harler, C. R. (1933). *The Culture and Marketing of Tea*. Published by Humphrey Milford. Oxford University Press, London.

³ Griffiths, P. (1967). *The History of the Indian Tea Industry*. Published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London. pp. 8-19

⁴ Devi, Chirasmrita (2002). *Assam Tea Industry in Search of Lost Glory*. The article published in *North East Enquirer*, 1(13), June 7-21, 2002.

⁵ Goddard, S. (2005). *Tea Break: A crisis brewing in India*. Institute of Development Studies. University of Sussex, Brighton, UK.

⁶ Barua, D. N. (2008). *Science and Practice in Tea Culture*. Published by the Tea Research Association, 113 Park Street, Kolkata 700016, India.

⁷ Behal, R. P. (2006). *Power Structure, Discipline, and Labour in Assam Tea Plantations under Colonial Rule*. *International Review of Social History Supplements, Serial No. 1*. Coolies, Capital, and Colonialism: Studies in Indian Labour History. Cambridge University Press. Vol. 51, (2006): 143-172. DOI:10.1017/S002085900600264.

Asopa, V. N (2007)⁸ observed that Indian tea has lost all global markets since it continues to be traded as a commodity, and the value addition is limited. Thus, the industry needs to be competitive in production, marketing, logistics and product forms. Despite being one of the largest producers of CTC tea, India lacks properly organised production systems where small tea producers could manage to find a respectable place in the value system. The industry desperately needs capital at globally competitive rates and not subsidies in any form from the Tea Board of India. The Indian tea industry needs to face the international market realities, redefine its business strategies and reposition its products to gain a competitive edge over its competitors in the global market, mainly from China, Kenya, and Sri Lanka.

Roy, S. (2011)⁹ observed that the most encouraging development of the tea plantation sector is the participation of unemployed youths as small tea growers thereby helping to increase tea production in India with substantial growth and increase of tea production in the state of Assam. The sustainability of tea depends on different factors like improvement in quality, cost-effectiveness, non-chemical control of diseases and pest attacks, increase in domestic consumption of tea, identification of newer export market, etc.

Arya, N. (2013)¹⁰ in her research study "Indian Tea Scenario" observed that the tea industry of India is going through a challenging phase. The industry has seen many structural changes over the last two decades (1990-2010). Price and quality play an important role in determining the export of tea. India is still the largest consumer of black tea in the world. Growing domestic demand in India enhanced the relative profitability of domestic sales against exports. The major factors responsible for the poor performance of the Indian tea industry are the high cost of production, the old age of tea bushes, lack of infrastructure, low price realisation, low labour productivity, high labour cost, etc. India has lost its position in the global tea market due to its high cost of production and poor quality of tea.

Borthakur, A. and Singh, Pradeep (2013)¹¹ narrated the historical development of modern agricultural research in India under the initiative of the British colonial government. Indian agriculture is a various and extensive sector involving a large number of stakeholders. India has one of the largest and institutionally most complex agricultural research systems in the world. In the present agricultural research system, the government is aiding, promoting and coordinating research and education activities across the country. The authors traced the development of the agricultural research system in India since the colonial era. However, the scientific investigations on tea and its properties started with the functioning of the Tea Committee established way back in 1834 by the British colonial government.

Dzüvichü, Lipokmar (2014)¹² observed that in the nineteenth-century colonial development of large-scale tea plantations in Assam first, other parts of India and other British colonies broke the Chinese monopolies in tea production. In tea plantations in Assam, the colonial officials relied heavily upon recruiting "coolie" or labour for work in tea gardens, and public works and to provide various support services in the northeast frontier of British India. Along with the development of tea industries and allied services, forced labour was provided by colonial officials with a steady supply of coolies to work on the roads as well as carriers for military expeditions. The author gave an account of the early development of the tea plantation industry in Assam in particular.

III. Objective of the Study:

To study the significant elements of the two hundred years of Assam Tea discovery and to access and analyse the present state of the Indian tea industry.

IV. Methodology:

The study is descriptive and data gathered from a variety of appropriate sources, including both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data sourced for the study include tea company websites, annual reports and official statements of tea companies, annual reports of the Indian Tea Association and Tea Board of India, government documents, and media articles. To capture multiple viewpoints from stakeholders in the Indian tea sector, primary data were obtained using various sampling methods utilising pre-tested Schedules

⁸Asopa, V. N (2007). Tea Industry of India: The cup that cheers has tears. *IIMA Working Papers* WP2007-07-02, Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad, Research and Publication Department. IIM Ahmedabad.

⁹Roy, S. (2011). Historical review of Growth of Tea Industries in India: A study of Assam Tea. *International Conference on Social Science and Humanity*. IPEDR vol.5 (2011), IACSIT Press, Singapore.

¹⁰Arya, Nizara (2013). "Indian Tea Scenario". *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Paris. Vol. 3, Issue 7. July 2013, pp. 1-10.

¹¹Borthakur, A and Singh, Pradeep (2013). History of agricultural research in India. *The Current Science*, Vol. 105, No. 5, 10 September 2013.

¹²Dzüvichü, Lipokmar (2014). *Empire on their Backs: Coolies in the Eastern Borderlands of the British Raj*. Published online by Cambridge University Press. 59(S22), 89-112. DOI:10.1017/S0020859014000170

cum Questionnaires and Personal Interviews. To get a conclusion, data collected were organised, and tabulated and simple analytical methods were applied.

V. Discovery of Assam Tea:

The discovery of Assam Tea *Camellia Assamica* by Major Robert William Bruce in the untamed jungle of the upper Brahmaputra valley by the end of January 1823 was momentous for the rest of the world. Chinese legends describe the use of the entire tea plant as a medicinal herb for human well-being since the wild tea plant was first discovered in China nearly 5,000 years ago (in 2737 B.C.). Even though tea was widely used in China, Japan, and the Korean peninsula, it did not spread to the rest of the Western world until the middle of the seventeenth century. Interestingly, a few Arabian traders introduced Chinese tea in the Persian regions between 1100 AD to 1400 AD.¹³ The voyages to India and the Orient East by the Portuguese in 1497 marked the beginning of the lucrative tea trade between Europe and China. In 1610, the Portuguese bought tea from China and transhipped it to Europe. Within a few years, tea firmly established itself in the wealthier kingdoms of Europe and the British colonies in America, Africa, Asia, Australia, and New Zealand. In 1780, the British authorities attempted tea cultivation in India for the first time using tea seedlings smuggled out of China by Robert Kyd, which was unsuccessful.¹⁴

The northeastern region of India is distinguished by its great geographical and climatic diversity. The peculiar geographical position and location of the hills isolated the region and its indigenous ethnic communities for thousands of years. A few travellers noted that a few of the region's ethnic communities consumed a miraculous beverage, fermented pickles and boiled leaves of wild tea plants. For centuries, the **Singphos**, a prominent ethnic tribe of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, have preserved traditional knowledge of the medicinal use of tea plants for their well-being and their habit of drinking *Phalap- a herbal tea*. It is believed that the **Singphos were India's earliest tea consumers**¹⁵ and played a crucial role in the discovery of tea plants in Assam by the Europeans.

Assam remained an independent kingdom until 1826 under the Ahom Kingdom. In the early 1800s, the social and political turmoil caused by the Moamoria rebellions and three successive Burmese military invasions devastated the whole social, political, and economic structure of Assam. Dethroned Assam King Purnananda Singha and Chandrakanta Singha solicited Major Robert William Bruce's assistance in forming a military force, supplying weapons and ammunition to fight against Burmese invaders. Robert William Bruce was a major in the Bengal Artillery who established an opium processing facility in Jogighopa and a salt trading business in Goalpara of Assam in the early 1820s. During that time, Robert Bruce met Maniram Dutta Borbandar Baruah, a young and intelligent Assamese aristocrat at Rangpur of present Bangladesh. Maniram Baruah informed Robert Bruce that Singpho of Assam drank the traditional tea *Phalap*. He escorted Robert Bruce to Singpho Chief Bissa Gaum by the end of January 1823.¹⁶ Singpho Chief Bissa Gaum introduced Robert Bruce to the wild tea plants in the forest and gave him a few tea saplings to commemorate the discovery of indigenous tea plants in Assam.

Major Bruce planted an experimental tea nursery at Sadia, but he expired untimely in 1824 due to vector-borne disease. Then his brother Charles Alexander Bruce successfully grew tea plants in the experimental plots at Sadia and nearby areas. Further, Charles Bruce located 80 tracts of natural tea forests in the Muttak country, 12 tracts in the Singphos, and 28 tracts in the west of the river Buri Dihing at Namsang, Tipam, Jaipur and in the neighbourhoods of the Sivasagar and Gabharuparbat. In the meantime, British surveyors and explorers discovered natural deposits of coal and oil spillage, and rubber plants at various places in upper Assam from 1825 to 1828. The newfound discovery of a natural deposit of coal, oil, rubber and tea plants in Assam opened new vistas for British private investments in the establishment of large-scale commercial tea plantations in Assam to break the Chinese monopoly on tea production and trade.¹⁷

VI. The Early Growth of Tea Plantations in Assam:

The '**Tea Committee**' was formed by the imperial British administration in January 1834, and the '**Scientific Deputation**' sent to Assam in the early months of 1835 reported on the possibility of large-scale commercial tea cultivation in Assam. In May 1838, for the first time, tea made from the experimental plots in

¹³ Antrobus, H. A. (1957), *A History of the Assam Company, 1839-1953*. T. and A Publisher. Constable, London.

¹⁴ Chakravarty, B. (2021). *Tea – An Elixir to Human Health and Preservation of Eco-Systems. Indian Traditional Wisdom: Revisiting the Relevance*. School of Management Sciences, Banaras Hindu University. First Edition: 2021, pp: 463-471. Bharati Prakashan, Varanasi 221010, UP. ISBN-978-93-88019-86-6.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Mann, Harold H. (1918). *The Early History of the Tea Industry in North-East India*. Bengal Economic Journal, Kolkata.

Assam was shipped to England for sale. In 1839 the Assam Company was founded with private capital investments, marking the beginning of the Indian tea industry which expanded into a global enterprise that dominated tea production, commerce, and business worldwide in the next few decades. The renewal of the 1833 Charter of the British East India Company created another opportunity for Europeans to enter the tea sector directly with the formation of joint-stock companies registered in London. Various scientific studies on tea soils, chemistry, pests and diseases, and other topics were carried out in the early years, as well as the establishment of the Scientific Department of the Indian Tea Association in 1898 in Kolkata and the Tocklai Tea Research Institute in September 1911 near Jorhat, Assam with the initiative of the colonial government of India contributed enormously to the growth of the Indian tea industry with scientific and technological breakthroughs. In the early 1800s, Assam was a socially and politically ravaged state with dense, impenetrable tropical forests, there were no methods of transportation or communication, and the population was extremely small. European tea planters were granted favourable terms and conditions by the British colonial government, including leasing land at a nominal rent, availability of cheap workers, and introduction of scientific research for improved methods of tea cultivation and production etc. But a handful of Assam's native entrepreneurs braved all challenges for the establishment of tea plantations. Notably, Maniram Dutta Barbhandar Baruah or Dewan established Cinnamara T.E. near Jorhat and Singlo T.E. near Nazira as **the first Indian**. Maniram Dewan, an able rival to the British tea planters, sent sample tea packages from his gardens to the famous London Exhibition in 1851.¹⁸ He was arrested for an alleged conspiracy against colonial rule and hung at Jorhat on February 26, 1858.

After the tragic end of Maniram Dewan, in competition with the European-dominated huge corporate, local industrious tea entrepreneurs established a vast tea plantation industry in Assam. Notably, Rosheswar Barooah, Bisturam Barooah, Kaliprasad Chaliha, Jagannath Barooah, Krishnakanta Barooah, Sarbananda Borkakati, Siba Prasad Barooah, Debi Charan Barooah, Ganga Gobinda Phukan, Malbhog Barooah, Narayan Bezbarua, Ghanashyam Barooah, Radhakanta Handique, Haribilash Agarwal, Narayan Bedia, Hanuman Bux Kanoi, Snehiram Lohia, and a few others braved immense hardships to build the tea industry and economy of Assam. It is worth mentioning that Janaki Devi Barthakur was the **first Indian woman tea planter**, she established Tipam T.E. near Digboi.

VII. The Expansion of Tea Plantations with the Assam Model:

In the mid-1850s, the Assam model of industrial-scale tea plantations with the factory and resident migrated workers inside the boundary of garden premises spread to Cachar, Chittagong, Darjeeling, Terai, and Dooars regions, and many locations in south India and Sri Lanka. In 1860, the British established a tea plantation in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh. From 1862 to 1867, commercial tea cultivation started in Chotta Nagpur, Punjab, Pakistan and other locations in British India where favourable geo-climatic conditions existed for tea cultivation. Within a few decades, China's dominance of tea production faded, and India and Sri Lanka dominated the global tea trade and export. The discovery of Assam Tea (*Camellia Assamica*) in 1823 revolutionised the world tea trade and business with a significant impact on millions of lives in the world.¹⁹ The Assam model of large-scale industrial tea cultivation, with the guaranteed flow of private capital investments, allotment of large tracts of tea cultivation lands and other infrastructure facilities, and the favourable policy with the initiative of early scientific research on tea agricultural practises and manufacturing process of the colonial British governments in India proved to be a huge success in establishing the Indian tea industry as a global leader. Table 1 presents the early growth of the Indian tea industry with the rapid growth of quality tea production from 1838 to 1880. In 1838, for the first time, 1,914 kgs of tea were produced in Assam and sailed to London for auction. By the end of 1880, tea production in colonial British India increased to 1,54,384 kgs with an average annual growth rate of 11.2% during the period.

Table 1: Tea Production in India: Period 1838-1880

Year of Tea Production	Total Tea Production (in Kgs)
1838	1,914
1839	2,392
1840	4,859
1845	88,360
1850	1,14,139

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Tea Industry (2019), Report of Capacity Building Program on International Trade Towards Enhancement of Competitiveness of Indian Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, New Delhi.

1855	1,18,992
1860	1,22,403
1865	1,23,124
1870	1,27,147
1875	1,40,864
1880	1,54,384

Source: General Committee Reports of Indian Tea Association:1890-1905

Similarly, Table 2 presents the profile of tea production in India from the year 1950 to 2010. By the end of 1950, tea production in India increased to 2,78 million kgs in a total tea cultivation area of 3,15,656 hectares with a yield per hectare was 881 kgs. Tea production in India increased to 9,66 million kgs in 2010 in a total tea cultivation area of 5,79,353 hectares with a yield per hectare increase of 1,668 kgs. The average annual growth rate of tea production in India was 2.10%, the area increased at 1.02% and the tea yield increased to 1.07% for the period of 60 years from the year 1950 to 2010. The significant growth in tea production, productivity, and areas of tea cultivation was observed during the decades due to consistent efforts with suitable policy and promotions by the Govt. of India, tea research and technological support by the tea research institutes of India, primarily by the Tocklai Tea Research Institute, Jorhat, Assam.

Table 2: Profile of Production in India: Period 1950-2010

Year	Tea Area (in Ha)	Tea Production (in Million Kgs)	Yield Per Ha (in Kgs)
1950	3,15,656	2,78	881
1955	3,20,238	3,07	961
1960	3,30,738	3,21	971
1965	3,41,762	3,66	1,072
1970	3,54,133	4,18	1,182
1975	3,63,303	4,87	1,641
1980	3,81,086	5,69	1,494
1985	3,99,966	6,56	1,641
1990	4,16,269	7,20	1,730
1995	4,27,065	7,56	1,770
2000	5,04,366	8,46	1,679
2005	5,55,611	9,45	1,703
2010	5,79,353	9,66	1,668

Source: Tea Statistics, Tea Board of India, 2022.

VIII. Present State of the Indian Tea Industry:

The tea industry is important and is regarded as a vital asset to India. India is the second-largest producer of the finest quality tea globally with a considerable presence in the domestic and international markets, and one of the largest tea consumers. India produces approximately 22 per cent of the world's tea. Tea is grown over 6,19,773 hectares (ha) in India, accounting for 16 per cent of the world's total tea-growing areas.²⁰ The Indian tea industry is the single largest industry that supports the nation's economy. The labour-intensive tea industry directly employs over 11.65 Lakhs workers in remote rural areas and additionally creates over 10 Lakhs job opportunities in tea auctions, warehousing, packaging, transportation, retailing, ancillary industries, and suppliers. Women constitute 51 per cent of the total workforce in the Indian tea plantations sector. The total business turnover of the Indian tea industry is around Rs.35,000 Crores.²¹

In India, tea is grown mainly in Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, and a few other states. The major tea-growing states Assam, West

²⁰ Chakravarty, B. (2022). *A Critical Review of the Tea Board's Tea Research Management in India. International Journal of Advances in Engineering and Management (IJAEM)* Volume 4, Issue 2 Feb 2022, pp: 1487-1498. ISSN: 2395-5252. DOI: 10.35629/5252-040214871498.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala contribute 97.48 per cent of the total tea production and Assam alone produces 52 per cent. The big organised sector consists of 1569 tea estates and 923 manufacturing units in 2021. The organized sector's share of production is 48.76 per cent, whereas small growers' share of production is 51.24 per cent during the year 2021.²² Small growers' tea production is increasing year after year. India produces a variety of finest quality Orthodox tea, CTC Black tea and Green tea. The aromatic and flavorful Darjeeling tea, the strong Assam CTC and Orthodox tea, and the Nilgiri tea are all unique in the world. Since independence tea production has grown over 250 per cent, while the land area has just grown by 40 per cent. The total net foreign exchange earned in 2019 was around Rs.2,947 Crore.²³

Indian tea market is huge with a large number of local and regional players. India dominates the world's tea trade having the largest tea producers like McLeod Russell India Ltd, Amalgamated Plantations, Goodricke Group, Assam Co Ltd., Jay Shree Tea & Industries Ltd, and others. The major tea exporters of India include Hindustan Unilever Ltd, McLeod Russell India, Ginar Food & Beverages Pvt Ltd, J V Gokal & Co, Tata Global Beverages Ltd, JFK International Ltd, and Assam Co Ltd. The critical elements of India's competitiveness in the tea sector include strong geographical indications, considerable investments in tea plantations and manufacturing units, continuous technological innovations and research, augmented product mix, and strategic expansion.

Table 3 shows the profile of Indian tea from the year 2011 to 2022. Out of the total production of 1343 million kgs of tea in 2021, North India produced over 1170 million kgs (87%) and South India produced around 170 million kgs (13%). By the end of 2011, total tea production increased to 1,116 million kgs in a total tea cultivation area of 5,79,353 hectares with a yield per hectare was 1,925 kgs. The total export of tea was 215 million kgs with an average price of Rs.152.82 per kg. The total tea sold in auctions was 534 million kgs with an average price of Rs.106.07 per kg, total import of tea was 19 million kgs. Total internal consumption of tea was recorded at 887 million kgs, whereas only 732 gms per head of tea consumption per annum in India. The total number of workers employed directly in tea plantations in India was recorded at 12,59,950 nos in 2011. By the end of 2022, total tea production in India was estimated to be 1,345 million kgs in a total tea cultivation area of 6,19,773 hectares with a yield per hectare be 2,115 kgs. The expected total export of tea is 230 million kgs with a price of Rs.300.00 per kg, and the total auction sale of tea is expected at 550 million kgs with an average price of Rs.200.00 per kg in 2022. It is expected the total import of tea will be 30 million kgs, total internal consumption of tea is expected 1,200 million kgs with 900 gms per head of tea consumption per annum in India in the year 2022.

Table 3: Profile of Indian Tea from 2011 to 2022

Year	Tea Areas in Ha	Production in Million Kgs	Yield in Kgs/ Ha	Export		Sold in Auction		Consumption in Million Kgs	Import in Million Kgs	Per Capita Consumption in gms/per head/annum	No of Total Workers
				Qty. (M. Kgs)	Price in Rs/Kg	Qty. (M. Kgs)	Avg. Price (Rs./Kg)				
2011	5,79,353	1,116	1,925	215	152.82	534	106.07	887	19	732	12,59,950
2012	5,63,979	1,126	1,997	208	180.12	548	125.25	895	19	740	12,59,950
2013	5,63,979	1,200	2,127	219	198.81	573	132.23	910	20	745	12,59,950
2014	5,63,979	1,207	2,141	207	195.43	569	130.91	927	21	752	12,59,950
2015	5,63,980	1,209	2,133	229	190.47	590	128.6	948	19	765	12,59,950
2016	5,66,660	1,267	2,236	222	200.86	520	134.26	965	21	771	12,59,950
2017	5,66,660	1,322	2,332	252	197.99	604	133.11	1,059	21	786	12,59,950
2018	6,36,557	1,339	2,103	256	208.36	596	134.57	1,084	25	793	11,65,815
2019	6,36,557	1,390	2,183	252	227.55	582	140.85	1,109	16	819	11,65,815

²² Tea Statistics (2021), Tea Board of India. Available at <http://www.teaboard.gov.in/TEABOARDPAGE/MjA=>, accessed on 24/01/2023.

²³ *Ibid.*

2020	6,36,557	1,258	1,976	210	249.63	597	190.96	1,135	24	840	11,65,815
2021	6,19,773	1,343	2,109	197	270.23	547	173.64	1,161	27	865	11,65,815
2022*	6,19,773	1,345	2,115	230	300.00	550	200.00	1,200	30	900	11,65,815

Source: Tea Board of India, Figures shown in the year 2022 are projected on statistical analysis.

Although tea production in India has gradually increased from 1,116 million kgs in 2011 expected to 1,345 million kgs in 2022²⁴, the profitability of the Indian tea industry has not increased much. In recent years, the Indian tea sector has been in a state of turmoil. Rising input costs, a declining export market, rising wages, a lack of adequate market support, the failure of top tea companies, a lack of adequate R&D support, the ineffective role of the Tea Board of India, and inadequate policy and support from the government of India, among other factors, are reasons for concern for the Indian tea industry's long-term viability.

IX. Conclusion:

In 1823, the discovery of Assam tea plants *Camellia Assamica* in Assam's untamed forests triggered the founding of extensive tea plantations on an industrial scale. During that time, Britain's trade-commerce relationship with China deteriorated, and the British investigated the prospect of large-scale tea cultivation in Assam to free Britain from the Chinese monopoly on tea trade and production. The Assam model of industrial-scale tea plantations was successful in producing fine-quality tea with increased production and creating a significant market globally. With new tea plantations, trade, and business, the Indian tea industry grew exponentially, with an increase in production, productivity, quality improvement, revenue creation, and employment prospects in remote rural areas of tea-growing regions. The current review delves into the relevance of two centuries of Assam tea discovery, as well as the current situation of the Indian tea industry.

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