

IN THE LAP OF TEA: INDIA'S BOUNTIFUL PLANTATION

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Email: dikshitaborah97@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

Tea production and its export play a significant role in India's economy and global trade. This paper provides an overview of India's tea industry, highlighting its growth, challenges, and contributions to the international market. India is one of the largest tea producers in the world, cultivating diverse varieties of tea across several regions. The industry traces its roots back to the British colonial era, and since then, it has evolved into a key agricultural sector. Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala are prominent tea-producing states in the country. The tea production process involves plucking, processing, and packaging, with both smallholder farmers and large estates contributing to the supply chain. With the advent of modern techniques and sustainable practices, the industry has witnessed continuous growth over the years. The export of Indian tea is a crucial aspect of the industry's success, with a significant portion of the produce finding its way to various international markets. India exports tea to countries such as the United Kingdom, Russia, the United States, Iran, and Egypt, among others. However, the Indian tea industry faces several challenges, including unpredictable weather patterns, pests, and labor issues. The need for sustainable plantation practices and mechanization to address these challenges remains a priority. Additionally, the competition in the global tea market is fierce, with other tea-producing nations vying for market share. To stay competitive, India must focus on maintaining the quality of its tea, diversifying its product range, and exploring new markets. With a rich heritage and a growing global demand for quality tea, India continues to play a vital role in shaping the world's tea industry. Nevertheless, sustained efforts to address challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities are essential to maintain India's position as a dominant player in the global tea market.

Keywords: tea, export, growth, demand

1. INTRODUCTION:

Tea holds significant importance in India's economic growth. As one of the largest tea producers globally, the tea industry contributes significantly to the country's economy. It generates employment opportunities for millions of people, particularly in rural areas where tea plantations are located. Tea exports also play a crucial role in earning foreign exchange for India. Several countries import Indian tea, making it a vital revenue source for the country. Moreover, the growth of the tea industry has stimulated investments in infrastructure and transportation in tea-

growing regions, further contributing to economic development. The domestic market for tea is substantial as well, with India being one of the largest consumers of tea in the world. The demand for tea products fuels various ancillary industries, such as packaging, retail, and tea processing machinery. Furthermore, tea cultivation supports biodiversity and environmental conservation efforts as it requires maintaining large areas of tea estates. This aspect aligns with sustainable practices and ecotourism, promoting the responsible use of natural resources. The tea industry's economic impact in India is multi-faceted, ranging from employment generation to foreign exchange earnings and promoting sustainable practices. As such, the growth and success of the tea sector have a direct bearing on the nation's economic progress.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Sarkar (1971) studied the size-structure and productivity correlation in tea industry and observed a positive correlation of yields with the size of tea holdings throughout black tea economy of India. He observed a positive correlation between the size of estates and the yield per acre in North India. Similar correlation was observed for estates up to 400 hectares in South India but the relationship was reversed above this. He was of the view that the most satisfactory index of productivity efficiency was unit cost of production of an estate.

Hainsworth (1976) identified nutrition, replanting, rehabilitation, weed control etc. as factors of the productivity. He outlined better tea varieties, a weed free medium, undisturbed soil, and a better understanding of plant responses and symptomatology for re-examining the prospects for rebuilding the industry in the field.

Misra (1985) in his study on nature of relationship between tea production and price found low elasticity of yield to price changes in short and long runs in nature of production.

Borah and Chiranjeevi (1991) studied the supply response behaviour of Indian tea in terms of area and yield responses. Expected prices and risk due to prices were found to have significant impact on area newly planted. Yield per hectare revealed higher responses to expected prices and risk due to price, as compared to 'total area'.

Mitra (1993) attempted to explain the observed trend in Indian tea production, domestic consumption, export and prices of Indian tea in both domestic and international markets during the period 1960 to 1980. According to her, the observed behaviour of production apparently suggested the insensitivity of the supply of Indian tea to changes in demand condition.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a. Research Approach:

This study adopts a qualitative and quantitative research approach to analyze the data on production and export of tea in India.

b. Data Collection:

All data used in this research is secondary, sourced from reliable and publicly available databases, which include publications on Bureau of Labor Statistics, data from the Tea Board of

India (TBI), website of Indian Tea Association (ITA), economic survey and other relevant scholarly articles.

c. Data Period:

The data used in the analysis spans a specific period to ensure consistency and comparability, from 2016 to 2022.

d. Data Analysis:

The study involves conducting descriptive statistics to provide an overview of the production and export of tea trends in India over the selected period. Graphs, charts, and tables have been utilized to present the data visually.

e. Data Limitations:

As this research relies solely on secondary data, it is subject to the limitations of the data sources used. There may be potential discrepancies, missing data points, or variations in data across different sources.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the trend of tea production in India from 2016-2022
2. To analyze the area and the per hectare yield of tea in India from 2016-17 to 2021-22
3. To determine the export of tea in India from 2016-2022

OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF TEA AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA

Tea has played a significant role in the economic development of India, dating back to the early 19th century. The commercial cultivation of tea began in the early 1820s when the British East India Company established tea plantations in Assam. Prior to this, tea was only found in the wild and was consumed locally. The British saw potential in India's climate and soil for cultivating tea, and over time, tea plantations expanded to other regions like Darjeeling and Nilgiri hills. This expansion boosted India's economy through various channels. The tea industry quickly became a major export commodity for India. The British started exporting Indian tea to Europe, primarily to Britain, creating a valuable trade commodity that contributed to the growth of the Indian economy. The establishment of tea plantations created job opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labor. This led to the migration of people from various regions to work in the tea estates, thus contributing to population movements and regional integration. The development of tea plantations required significant investments in infrastructure, such as roads, railways, and ports. This infrastructure development not only facilitated the transportation of tea but also contributed to the overall development of these regions. The tea industry also became an essential source of tax revenue for the British colonial administration. The revenue generated from the tea trade was used to finance various colonial projects. India's tea industry faced competition from China in the global market. However, the quality and taste of Indian tea gradually gained popularity, leading to an increase in global demand and further boosting the Indian economy. Tea remains a crucial aspect of India's economy even today. The country is one

of the largest tea producers and consumers globally, with tea plantations providing employment and contributing significantly to India's agricultural sector and export revenues.

TEA PLANTATION IN INDIA

Choosing suitable terrain with proper elevation, climate, and soil conditions for tea cultivation is very necessary. Clearing the land, plowing, and ensuring proper drainage to create a favorable environment for tea bushes is important to increase the production of tea in India. Planting young tea saplings or cuttings in prepared beds or directly in the field is to be done in a proper way. Regularly trimming and shaping the tea bushes to promote new growth and improve yield is another important step that must be followed for better plantations. Applying fertilizers to enhance soil fertility and ensure healthy plant growth is also necessary. Implementing measures to control pests and diseases that can affect the tea bushes is very necessary so that it can provide as much yield as possible. Providing adequate water supply during dry periods is necessary to maintain optimal plant health so that it does not get degraded. Plucking the young, tender tea leaves and buds at regular intervals should be done carefully and cautiously. Packing the graded tea for distribution and sale should be done in a hygienic manner. However tea cultivation methods may vary slightly depending on the region and type of tea produced.

TYPES OF TEA IN INDIA

India is known for its rich variety of teas. Some popular types of tea in India include:

- Assam Tea: It is grown in the northeastern state of Assam, it's known for its robust and malty flavor.
- Darjeeling Tea: It is grown in the Darjeeling region of West Bengal, it's a delicate and floral tea often referred to as the "champagne of teas."
- Nilgiri Tea: It is grown in the Nilgiri Hills of southern India, it has a smooth and fruity flavor.
- Kangra Tea: It is cultivated in the Kangra Valley of Himachal Pradesh, it has a unique character and delicate taste.
- Green Tea: Available in various regions, it offers a more grassy and vegetal flavor profile.
- Oolong Tea: Less common but still found in some regions, it's a partially oxidized tea with a unique taste between green and black tea.
- White Tea: A delicate and minimally processed tea made from young tea leaves and buds.
- CTC Tea: Crush, Tear, Curl (CTC) is a type of tea processing that produces strong, granular tea often used in tea bags.

There are many more regional and specialty teas found throughout India.

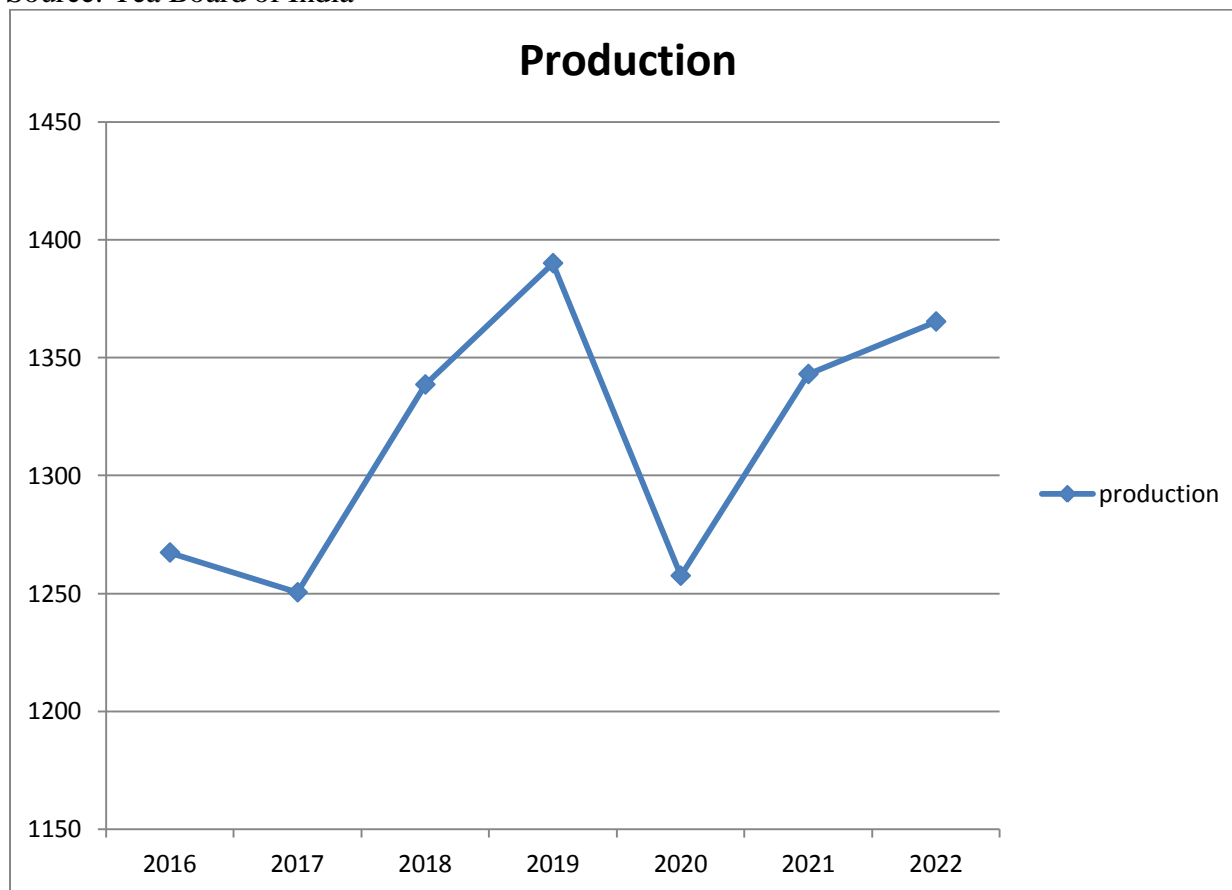
TRENDS OF PRODUCTION OF TEA IN INDIA

TABLE 1: TEA PRODUCTION IN INDIA FROM 2016 TO 2022 (IN MILLION KG)

2016	1267.36
2017	1250.49
2018	1338.63

2019	1390.08
2020	1257.52
2021	1343.06
2022	1365.34

Source: Tea Board of India



From 2016 to 2021, the tea in India experienced a steady and positive trend. During this period, the country witnessed a consistent growth in tea production, contributing to its status as one of the largest tea producers globally. But in the year 2020 due to the global pandemic of Covid 19 the production of tea has been affected to some extent. Indian tea estates, particularly in regions like Assam, Darjeeling, and Nilgiris, continued to expand and adopt modern agricultural practices to enhance productivity and maintain quality standards. Additionally, the tea production opens up increased investments in research and development, leading to the development of new tea varieties and innovative processing techniques. Moreover, the rising popularity of specialty teas, including green tea and herbal infusions, contributed to a broader range of products in the market. With sustained efforts towards sustainability and ethical practices, India's tea cultivation sector remained robust and adaptive during this period, catering to both domestic and international demands for its renowned and flavorful brews.

TABLE 2: EXPORT OF TEA FROM INDIA FROM 2016 TO 2021 (IN MILLION KG)

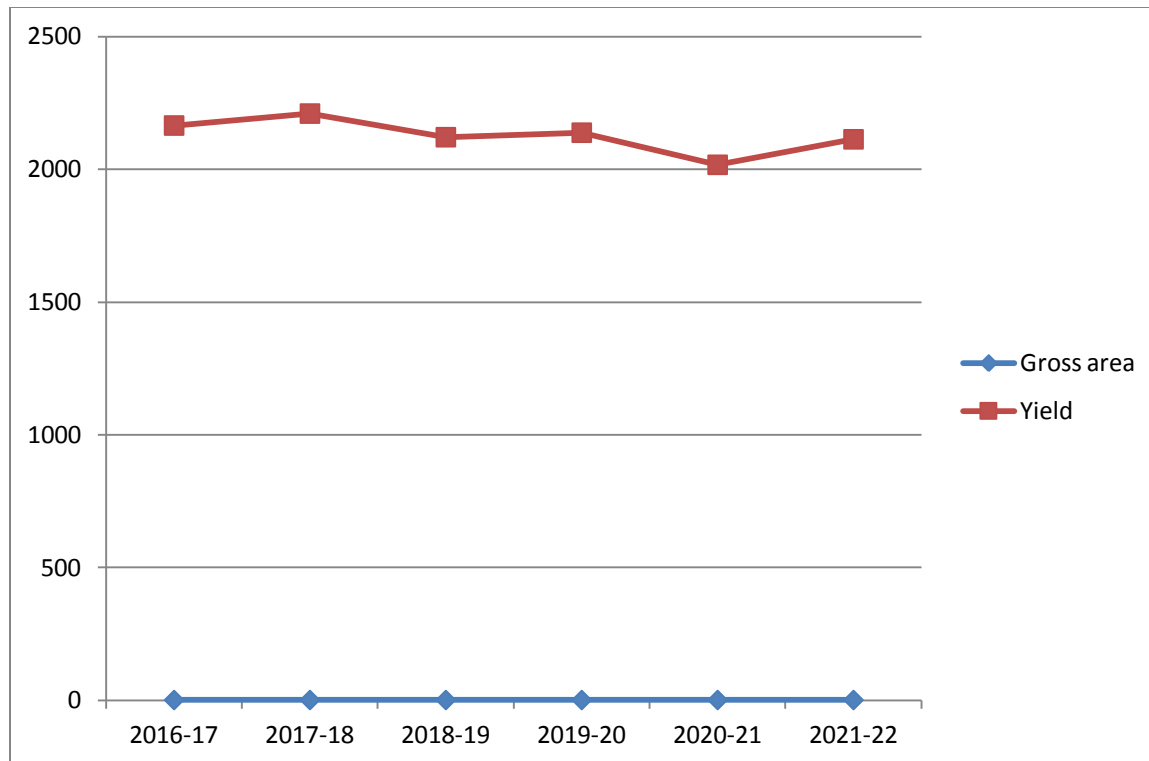
Year	Export million kg
2016	233
2017	251.91
2018	256.06
2019	256
2020	207.58
2021	201

Source: Tea board of India

TABLE 3: GROSS AREA AND YIELD UNDER TEA FROM 2016-17 TO 2021-22

year	Gross area(million hectares)	Yield per hectare
2016-17	0.6	2165
2017-18	0.6	2210
2018-19	0.6	2121
2019-20	0.6	2138
2020-21	0.6	2017
2021-22	0.6	2113

Source: Economic survey 2022-23 Statistical Appendix



Tea has been a significant agricultural commodity and export for India. It plays a crucial role in the country's economy, especially in the northeastern states and some southern regions where tea cultivation is prominent. According to data from the Tea Board of India, the tea industry contributed around 1.7% to 2% of India's GDP. The tea sector provides employment to millions of people, both directly and indirectly, making it an essential source of livelihood for many in rural areas. Covid-19 had various effects on tea production and export in India. During the initial phases of the pandemic, lockdowns and restrictions have disrupted the tea plucking and processing activities. Labor shortages and transportation disruptions have also impacted production and distribution. As for export, international travel restrictions and logistical challenges could have affected the shipment and distribution of Indian tea to global markets. Demand fluctuations due to changes in consumption patterns worldwide during the pandemic might have influenced the export volumes and revenue. It can be seen that though the area under tea has remained the same over the years its yield has been dynamic over all the years.

CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges faced by Indian tea plantations include:

Labor: The tea industry heavily relies on manual labor for activities like plucking and processing. Ensuring fair wages, proper working conditions, and managing labor shortages can be challenging.

Climate: Changing weather patterns, erratic rainfall, and rising temperatures can impact tea cultivation, affecting the quality and yield of the tea leaves.

Pests and Diseases: Tea plantations are susceptible to various pests and diseases that can damage crops and lead to reduced yields.

Competition: India faces stiff competition from other tea-producing countries, making it crucial to maintain high-quality products and competitive pricing.

Land Constraints: As demand for other crops and urbanization increase, availability of suitable land for tea cultivation becomes limited.

Sustainability and Environmental Concerns: Ensuring sustainable practices, managing waste, and reducing the environmental impact of tea plantations are important challenges to address.

Infrastructure: In some regions, inadequate infrastructure, such as roads and transportation, can hinder the timely and efficient transportation of tea leaves to processing facilities.

Government Policies: Evolving government policies and regulations can influence the tea industry, affecting taxation, export-import norms, and other aspects of business operations.

Addressing these challenges requires collaboration between the government, industry stakeholders, and communities to ensure the sustainability and growth of the Indian tea industry.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, tea has been a significant contributor to economic development in many regions around the world. Its cultivation, processing, and trade have created employment opportunities, stimulated local economies, and fostered international trade relationships. Additionally, the tea industry has served as a vehicle for social and environmental development, promoting sustainable practices and community empowerment. As consumer demand for tea continues to rise globally, its economic impact is likely to persist and evolve, benefiting both tea-producing nations and consumers alike. With its rich history and cultural significance, tea remains not only a source of economic growth but also a symbol of unity and tradition in the modern world.

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