

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2430
TO BE ANSWERED ON 6TH AUGUST, 2024

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN ASSAM

2430: SHRI GAURAV GOGOI:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE कृषि और किसान कल्याण मंत्री be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has undertaken any initiatives to promote sustainable agricultural practices in Assam's tea estates;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government is taking any measures to ensure fair competition and protect the interests of domestic tea producers from cheap imports;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details regarding the specific financial assistance schemes or market access initiatives designed to support Assam's tea estates during the last five years, year and district-wise?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

कृषि और किसान कल्याण राज्य मंत्री (SHRI RAMNATH THAKUR)

(a) & (b): Yes, the following initiatives have been taken to promote sustainable agricultural practices in Assam's tea estates: -

- The government of Assam has amended the Assam Fixation of Ceiling Land Holding Act 1956 in the year 2022, allowing 5% of total land of tea garden to be inter alia used for eco-friendly tea tourism, cultivation of agricultural crops, green power, horticulture and animal husbandry.
- Emphasis is given on the use of Nano Urea fertilizers which offer benefits in nutrition management through their strong potential to increase nutrient use efficiency. For sustainable tea leaves production, Nano Urea has gained important place among the Small Tea Growers and Big Tea Gardens in Upper Assam Region. In the Tea Growing year 2023, Nano Urea has been used significantly in Tea Leaves production in Assam.

- Drone based Nano Urea (Liquid) Fertilizer application was conducted at Bamgaon T.E, Sonabheel Tea Ltd. Balipara on demonstration basis. Its objective was Demonstration of Drone Based application of Nano Urea (Liquid) Fertilizers for showcasing the judicious use of Chemicals and Fertilizers in commercial plantations. It has been seen that the Drone based foliar application of Nano Urea (Liquid) Fertilizer containing 4.0 % total nitrogen (w/v) diluted with 9.5 ML water had a positive incremental effect on shoot growth with increased pluck able shoot density and higher apical growth.
- Preference is being given for cultivation of Geographical Indicator (GI) tagged crops in the Tea Garden areas of Assam due to fair market share in National and International markets of Geographical Indicator (GI) tagged crops such as Tezpur Litchi, Kaji Nemu.
- Unused land of Tea Garden areas of Assam have been opted for eco-tourism of Tea Gardens.

(c) & (d): The Finance Department, Government of Assam has introduced "Assam Tea Industries Special Incentive Scheme 2020, ((ATISIS)" to ensure long term financial sustainability of the tea industry of the state of Assam. As per report received from Finance Department, Govt. of Assam, the cost of production of orthodox and specialty tea in India is substantially higher than other tea producing countries which makes our orthodox tea unviable in international market. Hence, Assam Government has introduced the "ATISIS, 2020" Scheme to incentivize the manufacturers and to move towards orthodox tea. The scheme comprises of the following four components:

- I. Component I: Interest subvention of 39% per annum on working capital loan. The eligible tea gardens can receive maximum of Rs.20 Lacs per annum for interest on working capital loan.
- II. Component II: An industrial unit manufacturing Orthodox tea and Specialty tea is eligible for a subsidy of Rs.7 per Kg against such tea manufactured in a financial year which was further increased to RS.10 per Kg for tea production from 2023-24 to 2027-28.
- III. Component III: A subsidy of 25% of the cost of Plant & Machinery of orthodox or any other Specialty tea is provided. The subsidy under this head is restricted to 25% of the actual cost of plant & machinery or Rs.30 Lakh, whichever is less.
- IV. Component IV: Three-year Agricultural Income Tax holiday applicable for the financial year 2019-20 to 2021-22 is further extended for another 3 years i.e. till FY 2024-25.

Besides, import duty is applicable to the extent of 100% on teas imported into India. Further, total Tea imports at 22.97 million kg during the Financial Year 2023-24 is only 1.66% of total tea production of 1382.03 million kg in the country.

(e) The details of financial assistance provided by Tea Board to Tea estates in the state of Assam during last five years is given below. Tea Board under its Tea Development and Promotion scheme also provides support for promotion of Indian origin Teas including Assam Tea in International & Domestic markets. Further, in order to boost tea trade from Assam. Tea Board organized various events which inter alia included Buyer Seller meets, exporters conclave and events to celebrate 200 years of Assam tea. The details of financial assistance provided by Tea Board to Tea estates in the state of Assam during last five years as under:

Year	Financial Assistance to Tea estates in Assam (Amount in Rs Lakhs)
2019-20	3166.96
2020-21	5130.98
2021-22	2434.12
2022-23	271.63
2023-24	475.53
