

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2454

ANSWERED ON:27.08.2012

ACTIVITIES OF TEA BOARD

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Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Tea Board has been indicated for its failure to revive the ailing tea industry and effectively discharge its basis regulatory functions;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the production of conventional tea has also been reduced over the years despite the existence of subsidy scheme and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether development activities undertaken by the Tea Board during the last three years had made little impact on improving the quality of tea;
- (e) if so, the details of the action taken by the Tea Board to effectively deal with the issues like productivity, improving quality and cost reduction in the tea sector; and
- (f) whether a number of small tea growers are still outside the ambit of the regulation of the Tea Board and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA)

(a) & (b): Tea Board is required to register the growers in order to effectively discharge its regulatory role. However, it has not been possible for all small growers, numbering almost 1,62,000, to be registered due to lack of land ownership documents. Keeping in view this difficulty, Tea Board has started accepting Revenue Authorities certificates and holding camps. This has helped to get larger number of growers on the record.

(c) & (d): As would be seen from the decadal growth from 1950 to 2011 shown in the table below, production of tea has increased over the years:

Year	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2011
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Production	Million Kg	278	312	419	589	720	847	966	988
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Both the quantity and quality of tea has improved due to development support extended by Tea Board. The measure of improvement in quality of tea in India could be judged from the improvement in tea prices during the last three years as compared to the prices that prevailed during the corresponding period of previous three years as indicated below.

Tea prices at public auctions in India in Rs per kg of made tea

Block	Year	North India	South India	All India
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A	2006	71.62	50.79	66.01
	2007	73.37	49.70	67.27
	2008	95.27	66.27	86.99

B	2009	114.86	81.03	105.60
	2010	119.51	67.69	104.66
	2011	117.19	70.17	104.06

(e): Several steps have been taken to address problems of the tea industry towards boosting production and quality of tea. A Special Purpose Tea Fund was set up for extending financial support for undertaking replanting, replacement planting and rejuvenation of old aged tea bushes. To manage the shortage of labour in plantations in South India, the Tea Board is extending financial support for using mechanical harvesters, pruning machines etc. Tie-up has also been made with IIT, Kharagpur to develop new machines. To

improve production and productivity, all the development schemes of XI Plan have been continued by the Tea Board. These include R&D for developing stronger clones and support for irrigation.

Acute shortage of labour has increased the cost of production. Innovative mechanization could be the answer to this problem. Several innovations have been made in harvesting technology and new harvesting machines have been put to use in South Indian plantations. Tea Board is extending subsidy @25% of the cost for harvesting machines deployed in bigger tea gardens and @50% for the small tea holdings.

In order to develop mechanical aids and mechanization both in the field and factory operations, the Tea Board has taken up several R&D projects to develop mechanical aids and mechanization both in the field and factory operations.

(f): About 32,000 small growers are registered with Tea Board out of an estimated number of 1,62,000. The reasons have been explained in parts (a) & (b) of the answer above. The Tea Board is working with State Governments of West Bengal, Assam, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh to have a survey undertaken of all the growers.