

Speciality Tea production by Small Tea Growers of Kotagiri

Production of handmade tea requires tireless effort, technical skill and above all is the passion and constant efforts. This story tells about the success of a group of small tea growers who are diligently working in hand made tea production and marketing. Most of the times the price of tea leaves paid to the small tea growers is not sustainable for their livelihood, hence the concept of hand crafted tea by the small producers have been formulated. Small tea growers of the Nilgiris, have united to form an association under the name "Small Tea Producers Association of Nilgiris" (SPANI) at Kotagiri. The group is a role model to many small tea growers in the district now. The core concept was developed by a small tea grower Mr. C. Manogaran hailing from a small hamlet named Batalada in Kotagiri Taluk of the Nilgiris District. The green leaves harvested (plucked) by the small growers would be processed by their own which is based on the model of cottage industry. A small tea grower individually can produce upto 5 kilos of hand-made tea per day, who can fetch a maximum of rupees 2000 per day.

The domestic market is promising as the younger generations are moving towards health drinks including Orthodox, Green and Speciality Teas. Nowadays the Supermarkets and other shops are selling different varieties of tea which attracts health conscious consumers.

Improvement in the maintenance of quality standard in tea plucking, production of specialized tea by the small tea growers etc would lead to a better price fetching mechanism and also better product demand. The small growers are trained to handcraft the tea plucked from their own tea garden which makes this a cottage industry and thereby making them small entrepreneurs. The focus now is to bring in as many small growers which includes both tribal and the inhabitant small tea growers of Nilgiris into this network, teach them the knowhow of manufacturing specialty hand crafted tea, and thereby improve their livelihood. With the guidance from Tea Board the group is rendering training programmes to the small tea growers of Nilgiris.



Natural Black Tea produced by the members



Natural Green Tea produced by the members



Finest Oolong Tea produced by the members



Tea infusion of Green, Oolong and Black Teas



Training at Banagudi tribal village



Exposure visit by the tribal STGs from Gudalur



Training given to Tribal STGs of Gudalur
Billicombai Village



Training programme at



Training programme at Havoor village





Visit of Nilgiri District collector Ms Innocent Divya, IAS to one of the speciality tea producers' unit

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