



Analysis of Marketing Strategies in Heeleakah Tea Estate, Jorhat District

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Abstract

There are five pillars in self-reliant as said by Indian PM Modi, the 1st one is Economy, 2nd one is Infrastructure 3rd is System that depend on technology driven, next is Demography and the last one is Demand. The present paper attempt to discuss the marketing strategies in the local area at Jorhat district in Assam which includes the eight P's to look into some key aspects on trend of the tea industries, different parameters such as production, prices, exports, new technologies competitive advantage for the sector are considered through correlation matrix. This paper also tries to give a picture of recent changes in the tea sector accepted and manage by the organization. The study found that the tea industry in addition to this number of commercial enterprises such as supply of fertilizer, pesticide, weedicide and other inputs, and ancillary industries related to tea like transportation, plywood and different packing materials and to some extent construction materials are able to prosper in Assam because of tea. The study conducted to outline tea plantation and processing is subjected to magnify Economy.

Keywords: Economic development, innovation, leadership, strategies, management.

Introduction

Tea is one of the most popular brews in the world. Tea is acclaimed as a divine remedy for various elements since the initiation of tea drinking and Taoists called it "elixir of immortality" (Pradip Baruah, 2011). The tea industry is one of the oldest industry in India, a large organised sector and has been in integral part of the economic development of the country. India has the second largest area under the tea after China and is also the largest producer, consumer and third highest exporter of tea in the world at present. The name 'Assam' is synonymous to the best liquoring eminence black tea in the globe. The popular beverage, tea is extensively called as "Tea-the green gold" and "Pride of Assam" (Pradip Baruah, 2011).

Tea is one of the chiefs cultivated in addition to industrialised product, recently Assam tea industry has completed 200 years of journey (1823-2023). The total area under tea cultivation in Assam is roughly 3, 12, 210 hectares. Assam contributes around 13% of the global tea production and 55% of India's tea production. Tea production in the state stood at 654.63 million Kg. in 2023, while in the year 2022 which was 668 million Kg. In the financial year 2021, the total tea exports from Assam accounted for US\$ 217.89 million, which was 64% of the total export.

There are around 2500 small tea gardens and about 17% of the workers of Assam engage in tea industries. In assam 'Manohari Gold' from Manohari tea estate and 'Golden Pearl' tea from Dibrugarh district was sold at Rs. 99, 999 per kg at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre in 2021-22.

The Heeleakah Tea Estate located at Jorhat district in Assam covered area under tea 950 hectares. The company Heeleakah tea estate The Scottish Assam (India) Ltd. was incorporated in the year 1977 with a garden named 'Heeleakah Tea Estate' and the tea brand name is 'HEELEAKAH' which is popular brand among the upper Assam teas. Around 2, 183 human resources engage in tea production in daily basis. From 2012 company started manufacturing tea from bought leaf marked as 'Dhopatbari', which is also doing well since then. Company's shares are listed at Kolkata stock exchange. The company is running by the experience management, dedicated staffs to fulfil the goal of maintaining the quality as to build customer satisfaction and to create new customers.

History of Indian Tea Industry: The story of tea twitches in China in 2737 BC. According to the legend, the Chinese emperor Shen Nung, was sitting under a tree at that time his servant was boiling drinking water at the same time accidentally few leaves from the tree blew into it. The emperor was attracted by the pleasant fragrance from the steaming infusion, that brew from the tree Camellia Sinensis create the tea beverage and was named as "ch'a". Local tribes in Assam had been drinking brew made of local tea plant for a long time when Robert Bruce, a Scottish botanist and adventure, came to the region in 1832. He managed to get samples of it which were sent for testing in Kolkata and officially identified as a new variety of tea (camellia sinensis var, assamical), different from the original Chinese variety which Bruce had managed to smuggle into West Bengal.

The first experimental tea state established in Chabua (Assam) the first tea company in 1837, The Assam Tea

Company was set up in 1839 which monopolized tea planning cultivating and processing until 1860. Mr. Maniram Dewan was the first Indian tea planter who established the first ever commercial plantation as today we know as the Assam tea. The Cinnamora Tea Estate at Jorhat district in Assam is the first tea garden of assam which was set up by Maniram Dewan and the tea estate functioning from the year 1850. The Asia's largest tea estate Monabarie Tea Estate located at Biswanath district in Assam owned by McLeod Russel India Ltd.

Review of Literature

The various authors highlight the emergence of tea plantation in Assam and the method of recruitment that prevailed during the colonial period.

Goutam K. Sarkar's work on world tea economy (1972) is focussed on production and consumption of tea world-wide and its demand and supply in the market, price fluctuation, income from tea industry, and review of world tea trade.

KBK Rao, Augus Hone (1974), present a critical analysis of the strategy failures in the tea sector during 1960s and 1970s and suggest in expanding its output for domestic and international markets while pursuing the possibility of an international tea agreement to regulate export availability of tea and to raise the market price. The authors agree that such an agreement would have to cover policies relating to expansion of estate, replanting, replacement and domestic consumption, on the one hand, and to market sharing and quotas, on the other. At the same time, any tea agreement would have to make provision for a well-planned and heavily financed endorsement plan designed to expand tea usages.

Ravi Raman's book, Global Capital and peripheral Labour: political economy of tea plantation in Southern India (1997) focus on the capital labour relationship. Tharian George's work, the Economics of Tea Plantation in Southern India (1982) delves into the economic aspects of plantation industry and has little to say on management practices.

Islam, M. Iqbal, K.G. Quddus and M. Y. Ali (2005), examine the various problems faced by the tea industry in Bangladesh. According to them, the major problems faced by the tea estates of Bangladesh are security cover for the executives, natural calamities, deteriorating law and order situation in the tea estates, theft for example log stealing, political interference and outside control on the internal planning, illegal occupation of land, lack of basic medical care, unhealthy and unhygienic conditions in the labour lines, excessive consumption of liquor by the labourers, poor infrastructure (road, quarter water supply, network, etc.), insufficient capital and modern machineries, lower market value of final product in comparison to increasing production cost, low yield per hectare vis-a-vis increasing domestic need, improper use of Govt. loans by some of the tea garden owners, lack of adequate water supply for irrigation during dry season and also in prolonged drought, lack of educational institutions and malnutrition among the children of the tea garden workers.

Rabindra Kr. Choudhury (2006), presents a very comprehensive and meticulous picture of small tea sector particularly after the latter half of 1990's. According to him jobless youths took small tea production as their profession, which has enhanced the area under tea (around three lakh hectares) by increasing the number of tea gardens (around 2500) in Assam. The author advocated that small tea growers often discouraged the big tea growers since they cannot go for

factory manufacturing and have to depend on the big growers to sell out their green leaves.

K.C. Talukdar (2008), discusses the important role of the tea industry in the national economy which contributes more than Rs 1200 crores per annum to the Gross National Products creating employment to three million people directly or indirectly. The paper finds that in the recent years due to stiff global competition, Indian tea industry is losing its prime position in the world market which is being overtaken by Sri Lanka, China and Indonesia.

Michael Groomsmen (2011), highlights the problem of oversupply of tea in the past few years which has kept the tea price down in the market. He expresses that even though falling prices might sound good for the consumers but in the long-run economically it might affect the industry.

"Understanding Wage Issues in the Tea Industry", a report from a multi-stakeholder project (2013), presents a critical analysis of wage levels across the globe. How wages are paid to workers especially tea workers. Few of the civil society organizations have highlighted the issue of low wages and excessive working hours. The study finds that statutory minimum wages are fixed in 90% of countries, though in many cases wages paid to workers fail to comply with this, as a result minimum wages do not meet the basic needs of workers and their families who spend more than 50 percent of their income on food. The present study is systematic research conducted by Ergon Associates in 2011, to understand wages in general. The study focuses on three areas: Malawi, West Java (Indonesia) and Assam (India) focusing purely on wages paid to tea pickers. The researchers also developed a wage ladder tool for each country which is a visual demonstration of actual wages being paid and how these relate to a range of internationally and nationally recognised standards. The study team reflected its limitations in the process as the team was unable to recruit a suitable researcher for the research in Assam, so, in this case, their research was supplemented by the interviews of various stakeholders.

Statement of Research Problem

This study is being conducted to analyse the recent changes in different sector of tea production and manage by the organisation in different period of time in Assam. Assam tea is not able to achieve the fair market rate at the level of national and international stage. The intermediaries or third party, broker employed the producer or growers of Assam. There are many financial as well as mental crisis confronted by the workers in tea gardens.

Research Question

- i). What are the organisational changes in the recent period in different tea sector with reference to Heeleakah Tea Estate?
- ii). What are the managerial performance of Heeleakah Tea Estate in recent years?

Objective of the Study

- i). To analysis the recent organisational changes in different tea sector with reference to Heeleakah Tea Estate.
- ii). To evaluate the managerial performance of the Heeleakah Tea Estate in recent years.

Significance of the Study

The tea industry of Assam is the dominant industrial sector of the state playing very important role in the economy of Assam. It has been contributing substantially to the state

income as well as to the national income in the shape of foreign exchange earnings through its exports. The tea industry is pebbledash some complications resulting into intensification in the cost of production, reduction in the prices, incompetent management, weakening in the tea eminence etc. This study has been conducted to analyse the various perspective leading to these impediments.

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the perception of a particular tea estate, which is running in Assam. The scope of the study is confined within Jorhat district in Assam. The study is conducted in selected tea area in Jorhat district the research area focuses on organisational changes like adoption of marketing strategies and the various factors influencing the management system and benefit to the society. The study may be useful to policy makers, government and those who are interested in studying about the tea industries. The study analysis, findings, suggestions and conclusion proposed, would be immense use for future research in the tea sector.

Research Methodology

In this research both quantitative and qualitative research method has been used. To conduct the study both qualitative and quantitative data have been collected from various sources which are primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected from the people directly through interview by using questionnaire consisting 20 questions and 9 sections as research tool. To collect the primary data survey has been conducted on samples of 28 different demographic factors; samples have been picked randomly by using simple random technique. Interviews have been conducted structured, in person and over phone calls as well.

Limitation of the Study

The social obligation of the tea industry, is sensitive issue for the people of Assam was not studied. Some of the data on export of Assam tea except for sale at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre since and foreign exchange earning etc. were not studied.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data were collected from the employees of the tea estate, operating in Jorhat district in Assam using structured and unstructured interviews forbearing.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.931	.951	6

The table 1 represents the overall internal consistency of the scale with the help of Cronbach's alpha, the values ranging from 0-1. The high values for both Cronbach's Alpha and the standardized version suggest that the items in the scale are highly consistent and reliable in measuring the same construct. (0.70 and above: acceptable reliability, 0.80 and above: considered as good reliability) A value of 0.931 is considered very high and indicates excellent reliability. With 6 items, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.931 and the Cronbach's Alpha based on Standardized Items is 0.951, indicating very high internal consistency and reliability of the scale.

Table 2: Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
The tea grown by the tea estate consistently meets the desired quality standards	3.93	.262	28
We have regular quality control measures in place to ensure high-quality tea production	3.93	.262	28
We regularly conduct market research to identify consumer preferences and market trends	3.93	.262	28
We actively monitor and analyse competitors marketing strategies	3.93	.262	28
Our company consistently introduces innovative ideas to meet market demands	3.82	.390	28
We are quick to adapt to changes in market conditions and customer preferences	3.86	.356	28

The table. 2 presents an item statistics table from a study on Heeleakah tea estate. It includes six statements related to the tea estate's operations, along with their mean, standard deviation, and sample size (N). All items were measured using a sample size of 28. The mean values range from 3.82 to 3.93, indicating generally positive responses to the statements. The standard deviations range from 0.262 to 0.390, are relatively small, indicating that responses are fairly consistent across participants.

Table 3: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	The tea grown by the tea estate consistently meets the desired quality standards	We have regular quality control measures in place to ensure high-quality tea production	We regularly conduct market research to identify consumer preferences and market trends	We actively monitor and analyse competitors marketing strategies	Our company consistently introduces innovative ideas to meet market demands	We are quick to adapt to changes in market conditions and customer preferences
The tea grown by the tea estate consistently meets the desired quality standards	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.595	.679
We have regular quality control measures in place to ensure high-quality tea production	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.595	.679
We regularly	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.595	.679

conduct market research to identify consumer preferences and market trends						
We actively monitor and analyse competitors marketing strategies	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	.595	.679
Our company consistently introduces innovative ideas to meet market demands	.595	.595	.595	.595	1.000	.343
We are quick to adapt to changes in market conditions and customer preferences	.679	.679	.679	.679	.343	1.000

The table 3. shows an inter-item correlation matrix, it assesses the relationships between different statements or items related to tea product, using correlation coefficients.

Variables: The rows and columns represent different statements or factors: The tea grown by the tea estate consistently meets the desired quality standards. Regular quality control measures are in place to ensure high-quality tea production. Regular market research is conducted to identify consumer preferences and market trends. Actively monitor and analyse competitors' marketing strategies. The company consistently introduces innovative ideas to meet market demands. Quickly adapt to changes in market conditions and customer preferences. **Correlation Coefficients:** The numbers within the matrix represent correlation coefficients, ranging from 0 to 1. 1.000 indicates a perfect positive correlation (the factor is correlated with itself). Values like 0.679 and 0.595 indicate positive correlations between different factors. There are no negative correlations shown in this matrix. **Analysis:** There's a strong correlation between the tea meeting quality standards and having quality control measures (1.000). This suggests that the quality control measures are effective. There are moderate

positive correlations between most other factors, suggesting they are somewhat related. For instance, there is a 0.679 correlation between the tea meeting quality standards and the company adapting to market changes. The lowest correlation (0.595) is between actively monitoring competitors and introducing innovative ideas. This could suggest that these two activities are relatively independent. **Interpretation:** The tea estate appears to have a strong focus on maintaining quality and adapting to the market. The consistent quality of the tea is closely tied to the quality control measures in place. While the factors are generally positively correlated, there's area to explore the relationship between monitoring competitors and innovation.

The following are the 8 P's taken into consideration for analysis of marketing strategies in Heeleakah Tea Estate.

i). Product

Tea is one of the most popular beverages in the world as well as popular drinks in the world, second only to water. Around the domain, about 3.7 billion cups of tea are disbursed on a day-to-day basis, according to Euromonitor International, a market-research provider.



Source: Recorded data from the Heeleakah Tea Estate

Fig 1: Total Tea Made

The above fig. depicts that the tea estate produce highest total tea in the year 2014 i.e. 17, 39, 930 Kg. the average total tea produce in the period of twelve years from own leaf was 12, 52, 508 and from bought leaf it was 2, 67, 027 Kg. The study

found that the tea estate avail more profit while purchase bought leaf from tea growers, because they need to pay only per Kg. amount which is vary from Rs. 25-35 depend on season. In case of Tea produce from own leaf the tea estate

has to look after from plantation to plucking while consider about only tea leaf, in this period the tea estate has to pay wages to daily workers, employees, have to bear cost of acaricide, insecticide, termiticide, fungicide to maintain quality of green leaf, have to maintain records of green leaf production, and many more. The reason behind focus on own leaf production of the tea estate is that, it is very difficult for tea growers (small, medium, large from where bought leaf were collected) to produce in bulk tea leaf with required quality within required period of time regularly also adequate finance, transportation availability etc. creates barriers for sound production process. As the tea estate has its own garden, experienced manpower, equipment, advisory committee, who work behind a cup of tea, utilising effective and efficient way. The contribution of tea growers in the economy is highly appreciable.

ii). Price

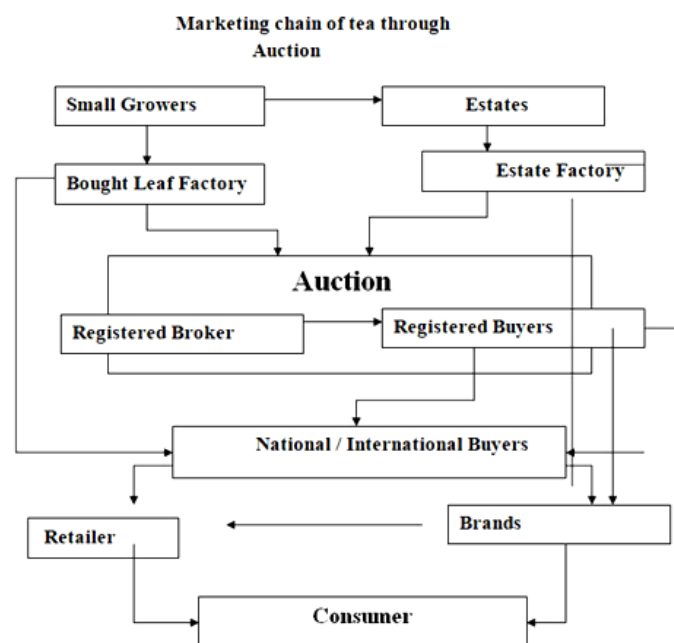
Price is the consequence that is placed to a product or service as the result of a multifaceted set of scheming, exploration, consideration and risk-taking aptitude. A pricing strategy takes into account segments, ability to pay, market circumstances, competitor movements, trade borders and input expenses, amongst others. Price is targeted at the expressed customers plus against competitors.

Prices vary greatly, depending on the grade of tea and region of production: Assam CTC tea is only valued at around Rs 150 per kg while Orthodox tea from Assam can on an average fetch at Rs 500 per kg, and prime Darjeeling orthodox commands prices that can reach three times higher, Rs. 1500 per kg and above.

iii). Place

Place is the component of marketing mix, which certifies that the product is disseminated and made accessibly obtainable for the users-at the right place in exact time. It is imperative that, when the consumer comes to the store to purchase a

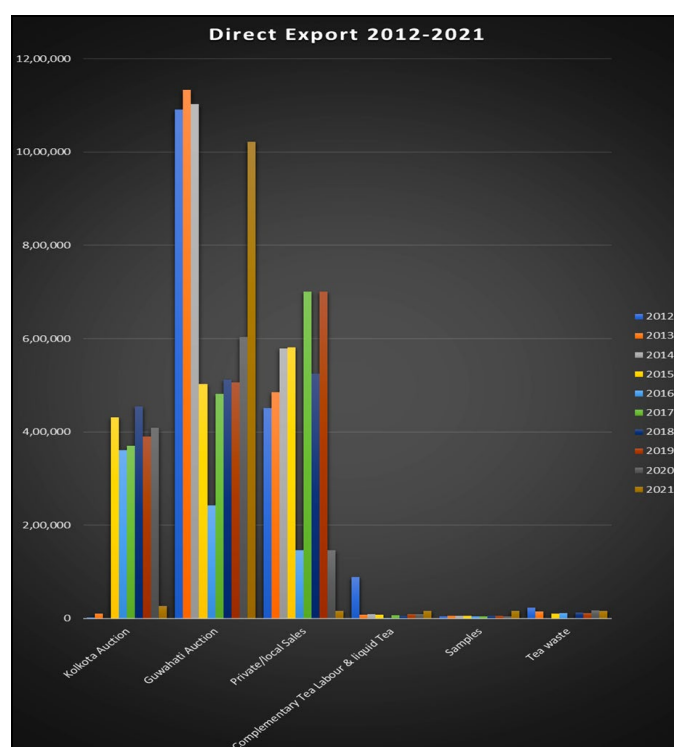
product, that product is readily available without any issue. Whenever consumers are faced with issues involving the availability of a product, it's almost certain that they will take the business in undesirable circumstances.



Source: <http://images.app.goo.gl/Qmd9puViclmHQn37>

Fig 2: Marketing chain of tea through Auction

It needs proper marketing channel for disposal. In case of marketing in Assam there are two types of marketing i.e. primary market and secondary market the primary marketing channel help in moving tea from grower to bulk buyers, national or international auction centres also secondary market channel include movement of bulk tea through trading to wholesalers, commission agents, blenders, packers and retailers last to consumers.



Source: Compile by the researcher

Fig 3: Total Tea Clearance up-to date in (kg)

From the above fig. 3 it has been observed that the highest sale done in the year 2018 i.e. 4, 54, 196 kg. from Kolkata tea auction centre. From Guwahati auction centre the highest sale was in the year 2013 i.e. 11, 33, 942 kg. The Heeleakah Tea Estate drive for private/local sales the highest record in the year 2019 i.e. 7, 00, 285 kg. The tea estate keeps the tea for complementary tea and labour and liquid tea as well as samples. The waste tea used in different activities.

iv). Promotion

The buyers of Guwahati auction center are-Brook Bond India Private Ltd, Lipton India Pvt. Ltd., Tata Tea Ltd. Kesaria & Com., Harry & Com., Hindustan Lever Ltd., Eastern Agency etc.

Major Phases of Tea Auction

Pre-auction sale stage

Stage of tea auction sale Post auction sale activities System of Price-Realization Promotion involves to aware the customers about the particular product, such actions referred as marketing tactics and are design to deliver on marketing strategies. The most effective tool to influence the customers are website, search marketing, social media marketing etc.

v). Process

Most of the processing are 'orthodox' and 'CTC' (crushed-torn-curved), where the leaves are cut and rolled in several special ways, processing the tea leaves should begin within 7-5 hours after harvesting, to avoid the deteriorations in quality. Both types come in different grades or qualities, based on size of the processed and dried leaves.

For the production purpose various machines are also use to minimise the efforts of workers. Some of the machines use by the tea estate are-Withering trough, Rotorvane, rolling table, CTC, CFM, Dryer machine, Shorting machine, Fibre machine, Gapping dryer, Packing machine, Stitching machine, Stencilling etc. In the recent five years the tea estate introduces the following newly machines-Easy way for weighment of green leaf, Plucking machines, Grass cutter, Pruning machines, Digging machines, Spraying Tractor etc. With the help of the different machine the work force able to produce more quantity and quality base tea. Every day the tea estate dispatch tea samples to the head office Kolkata (in pick season).

vi). People

People refer to the target audience (consumers) who is interested in the product and the most responsible internal team who manage and lead the organisation to success.

Major Stake Holders in Auction: In an auction there are five major stake holders. They are as follows:

Tea producers cum sellers, who are either estate factories or BLFs or cooperative factories who manufacture tea from tea leaves. These producers are considered as sellers in tea auctions. Auction organizers, who are designated as Tea Auction Committees or Tea Trading Associations. Tea brokers, who are auctioneers of tea, and sell tea on behalf of sellers at the auction centres. Tea buyers, who are purchasers of tea in the auction centres. They could be packers/blenders who buy for their own brands or packets. Buyers are also agents who buy tea at auctions on behalf of other tea dealers. Warehouse keepers are those who store tea to be sold in the auction in warehouses. Producers-cum sellers can also store their teas for auctioning in their own warehouses. There are

no restrictions on the location of such warehouses for storing teas at present.

vii). Package

Medium-size, Independent tea plantations who have historically been excluded from compulsory sale through the auction system and allowed to trade their tea under the garden name directly to the buyers' blending and packing factories in consuming countries.

The tea estate recently introduced the paper sacks package for the orthodox quality of tea, and use the woven bags for CTC quality of tea to maintain its freshness and quality. In the auction centres tea package as sample for 20 gm aluminium coated pouches were kept for the distribution to the interested buyers.

viii). Physical Environment

India produces some of the world's finest teas due to the diversity of its microclimate. As a result of topsoil also climatical necessities, tea cultivation is restricted to convinced portions of the country. The Jorhat district situated between 26°20N to 27°10N latitudes and 93°57E to 94°37E longitudes and lies in the eastern part of the state of Assam. The mean annual soil temperature (MAST) is 24°C, mean summer soil temperature (MSST) is 26.3°C, mean winter soil temperature (MWST) is 19.5°C. Numbers of days with rainfall (1.0mm≤) 66.44 days (18.2%). The climate is quite helpful for tea production in the area.

Findings of the Study

The Heeleakah Tea Estate collects leaves from its own production as well as from the small and medium tea growers, and promote their quality production. The Heeleakah Tea Estate produce the black tea from the CTC, Orthodox manufacturing, the traditional afforestation derive of this estate had got a further trust by planting much more fuel trees spreading over the estate during the last few years. The Tocklai experimental station at Jorhat district, development centre manages and operated under the guidance of Tea Research Association (TRA) research on all aspect of the cultivation and processing. The functions like soil analysis, testing of agrochemical, identification of pests and disease samples, supply of planting materials etc. and also publication of Research Journal, Annual Scientific Reports, Occasional Scientific Papers, Bulletins, etc. are managed. In the local area CTC quality of tea is more preferred due to its flavours and economic prices affordable for most of the buyers. The tea estate recently introduced the paper sacks package for the orthodox quality of tea, and use the woven bags for CTC quality of tea to maintain its freshness and quality. There might be opportunities to strengthen the link between innovation and market adaptation to improve the tea estate's responsiveness to market dynamics. The introduction of innovative ideas and the ability to adapt to market changes are somewhat related to the core operational and research activities, but to a lesser extent.

Recommendation

Many of the marketing department of the tea estate derive low level of satisfaction on marketing condition because of unfair cost, hence it has been suggested that the management should take care of consumers need and should try to improve the level of tea quality.

Assam tea is not yet officially recognised as a brand or variety of tea by the government due to bureaucratic red tape,

depending the beverage of an exclusive level. As such this Heeleakah tea estate suffers from an identity crisis in the world market in the absence of official recognition as unique variety moreover, a considerable number of tea gardens of the estate have gone sick over the period due to age old gardens, scanty rainfall, increasing trend in the cost of production, general fall in the price of tea, lack of infrastructure, modernization, attitude of the tea planters to the workers and inefficient management. For overcoming this type of problems, the management should look after to the welfare officer, store manager, sales officer, sales representative etc.

Conclusion

The tea estate's brand is generally well-regarded for its quality and taste. There is a strong emphasis on maintaining high-quality standards and a premium taste profile. The brand also appears to be proactive in monitoring the market and competitors. The other benefit of the tea estate from social point of view, the tea estate improves the lifestyle of the local people and leads the economy in productive and innovative way. The tea estate makes easy participation of local people as well as the small tea growers in this area. The women in this area are not only limited to their family but they contribute their effort in tea production. The tea estate also helps the poor families by providing educational facilities, motivate by organising social and cultural events, for health and safety also provide medical facilities and awareness programs. The illiterate but industrious people also get chance to create their separate identity. Many families sheltered by the tea estate due to generating employment opportunities.

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