

CHAPTER - II

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF TEA PLANTATION : A HISTORICAL SURVEY

Tea which is made from the tender leaf , called shoots , and bud of the tea plant, member of *Cammelia* genus , is christened as *Cammelia sinensis* and *Cammelia assamica* in botanical terminology. Green tea produced in China and Japan is made from the variety *C.sinensis* while the black tea is produced from the variety *C. assamica*.

Although tea has been the chief joys of life in the modern world and without it life becomes dull to many , its history is hidden in antiquity and mythological obscurity as to where and from when the infusion of dried leaf is used as beverage. However, in spite of the controversy regarding the origin of tea, China is supposed to be the classic country where both the practice of tea drinking and tea cultivation was introduced first¹. It is believed that the word 'tea' has come from the Chinese dialects t'e , *Chia or cha* . Even if one disregards all these legends , the antiquity of tea in China is justified from a Chinese dictionary which mentioned its medicinal use in the fourth century. In the eighth century , a Chinese scholar , Lu Yu, wrote a remarkable book , the *Ch'a Ching or the Tea Book*² which provided a detail account of how tea was prepared in China . After China , Japan is regarded as a country where tea was introduced by Buddhist Priests for medicinal purpose between sixth and eighth century A.D.³ But the habit of tea drinking was firmly implanted in the Japanese social life from the very beginning of the thirteenth century A.D. After China and Japan the tea drinking habit did not spread in the other countries untill the middle of the 17th century. The habit of tea-drinking spread from China to Persia by the 17th century and to the Central Asia as early as the beginning of the 18th century, if not earlier⁴. The opening up of trade relation of the Portugese to the other different countries of Orient and Europe acted as a catalyst to spread the tea-drinking in the different countries.

1. Barua , D.N., *Science and Practice in Tea Culture* , Tea Research Association , Jorhat , 1989 , p. 18.
2. *ibid*, p.4
3. Griffith , P, *The History of Indian Tea* , London , 1967 , p.7
4. *ibid* , p. 10.

Despite the fact that India had close ties with China and Far East from the very early date of Christian era it is strange enough that no mention regarding the habit of tea drinking among Indians was found in the writings of the famous travellers of that time. Use of tea in India is relatively a recent one though the exact time is not known. However, in the writings of Mandelso , a member of embassy from the Duke of Holstein to Persis , and of Ovington , Chaplain in the East India Company's ship Benjamin , the use of tea among the Indians was traced during the 17th century . But because of their contradictory views it had become difficult to reconcile the two. Sir Percival Griffith had expressed the best guess that it was used occasionally , but not commonly by the well-to-do Indians with whom writers such as Ovington and Mandelso would naturally come into contact. ⁵

Tea was known in Europe in the middle of the 16th century and the Dutch began importing it in the early ^{part} of the 17th century . There are differences in opinion regarding the introduction of tea in England. In spite of these differences it is regarded that tea was known in England around 1657 as in this year first public sale of tea was conducted . From 1669 import of tea into England by the East India Company became a regular practice. Tea-drinking was introduced into America in the 17th century probably from Holland.

This brief overview traces the growth of tea-drinking habit originating from China more than 1600 years ago. Simultaneously with the growth of tea-drinking , production of tea was also introduced in many countries and the tea Industry from its very modest beginning has now become a major plantation industry of the world, which is highly organised in every respect . Tea from its immemorial place of origin China where it was a village industry, has now spread over more than 45 countries in an organised form . A brief outline of expansion of tea industry in major tea producing countries are furnished in the following .

CHINA : China , despite being a matter of speculation , is still regarded as a country where tea was originated first in an unrecorded past. The place where it was actually originated is not certain till now. To some it was Bohea hills of the Fukien Province where the plants were discovered first, again to some others it was the Singlo-hills of Sze-chuan Province. At present , tea is grown in 900 places of 19 provinces mostly located in the Central and Southern China. Out of the total volume of tea produced in China about 60 % are produced by the four provinces namely , Zhejiang , Hunan, Sichuan and Anhui .

5. *ibid* , p. 13.

Although China had started export of tea more than thousand years ago and established trade relation with over 30 countries in the world, tea growing in China is still a village industry⁶. Bushes are often grown on steep hill slopes unsuited for other crops. The leaf is plucked three to four times a year in the Northern and Central Provinces . In the warmer areas of South plucking is extended up to eight times a year .

Basically six types of tea are produced in China. These are green tea, black tea , oolong tea , white tea , yellow tea and black-black tea . This basic categorisation is done on the basis of methods followed during the manufacturing process⁷. Out of these six categories green tea occupies the major share contributing 66% of the tea produced in China .

Despite the fact that most of the holdings are small , China was the sole supplier of tea to the whole world until the mid-nineteenth century . In 1855 while India's production was 40,000 kg, China exported 90 million kg. of tea. The period 1840-1886 witnessed prosperous growth both in respect of production and export ⁸. The volume of export which was 19000 tons in 1840 raised to 134,100 tons in 1886 . The share of Chinese export declined gradually after 1886 with the entry of India , Sri Lanka and Indonesia in the world tea export. The period of recession lasted upto 1949. After 1950 tea industry began to recover following the formation of Republic of China in 1950 . Area under and production of tea in 1991 was recorded 7 times and 12 times respectively than the corresponding figures in 1950. The share of China's tea export also registered rising trend accounting for 6.5 % in 1950 to 17.20 % in 1991. The domestic consumption also recorded tremendous rise in this period from 4.50 gm/year/capita to 340 gm/year/capita.

JAPAN : Like China history of tea culture in Japan is also old dating back to the early part of eighth century . It was introduced in Japan by the Buddhist monks from China and it was restricted only to medicine for the first 500 years. In the course of time when it penetrated the Japanese social life as a popular drink , tea industry grew vigorously producing mainly green tea along with some black tea⁹. Except in some places tea is not a major crop in Japan. Cultivation of tea is concentrated principally in the two Southern islands Kynshu and Shikoku and in the

6. Barua , D.N., *Science and Practice in Tea Culture* , Tea Research Association , Jorhat , 1989, p.18.

7. Chen and Lu Zhenhui , " Tea Industry in China " *Tea Science And Human Health (ed)*, Tea Research Association, Jorhat , 1993 . p.26.

8. *ibid* , p. 22.

9. Griffith , P, *The History of Indian Tea* , London , 1967 , pp. 7 - 8 .

Southern part of the main island Honsu. Other areas where tea is grown are Kyoto , Shiga , Nara and Mia. Japan being a mountaneous country most of the tea areas are located in the hilly places where other crops are difficult to grow . In Japan the size of holding is small like that of China , the average size is less than one hectare. Green leaves are processed in the Co-operative factories which are run by the growers . Leaf is harvested thrice in a year .

So far as method of propagation is concerned both the seedling and clone are cultivated in Japan . Clones were introduced from 1930. China bushes are cultivated in such places where temperature is very low. Several frost tolerant clones have also been developed to cultivate in such areas¹⁰.

Tea became an important exportable item in Japan after liberalised its trade policy in 1859. The expansion of the industry experienced a set back during the period of World War II. But it recovered its position as soon as the war was over. During 1950-55 production of tea was about 100 million kg. as against 24 million kg. at the closing years of the 19th century . The production of green tea gradually dwindled since 1980 and in 1991 it came down to 90 m.kg. while, on the other hand , with rapid growth of consumption demand , Japan had to import black tea to the tune of 13345 tons in 1991 . During last two decades taste and preference of tea drink also noted a dramatic change from green tea to oolong and black tea as well as the shifting of beverage habit from tea to coffee¹¹.

SRI LANKA : Tea was first introduced in Sri Lanka in the year 1824 by bringing seeds from China. But the efforts failed. Cultivation of tea seriously began from the decade 1870 when the Sri Lankan flourished coffee industry was collapsed by the attack of coffee rust fungus¹². Area under tea plantation recorded 400 ha in 1875 rose to 162000 ha in 1920 and 242,000 ha in 1960 . At present , Sri Lanka is one of the major tea producing and tea exporting countries in the World. A little over 90% of total production of tea is exposed to the international market . This spectacular expansion of the tea industry have been made possible by individual efforts of the entrepreneurs with constant encouragement and support from the Government . Tea industry

10. Barua , D.N, *Science and Practice in Tea Culture* , Tea Research Association , Jorhat , 1989, p.27.

11. Okano , K, " Tea Industry in Japan ." *Tea Science and Human Health* (ed.) , Tea Research Association , Jorhat, 1993, p. 53.

12. Eden , T, *Tea*, Longman , Green and Co. , 1958 , p. 2.

though flourished by the private entrepreneurs a little over 50 % of Tea area was brought under Government control following the redistribution of land in the Land Reform Act of 1972 and 1975. Most of the tea areas in the country is concentrated in South-Western part of the hilly islands on diverse ecological regimes which are broadly classified into three on the basis of elevation as low (below 600 meters), medium (600-1200 meters) and high (above 1200 meters) each having distinctive character of its own in the context of international demand. The Sri Lankan tea of high elevational areas which was once recognised as the best quality tea in the world market had been regrettably passing through the dismal phases over the last three decades¹³. Next to India, Sri Lanka is the second biggest exporter of tea in the world to-day. In the face of stiff price competition with newly emerging quality CTC teas from Africa, the high elevational orthodox teas being confined to the old market revealed a static production trend over the period. The middle elevational teas in view of its international prices has got a catastrophic effect on production trend during the said period. The tea of the low elevational areas having good demand from the Gulf countries since early 1970 registered an upward trend in production and productivity during the same period. In consequential to the above noted production scenario of tea in different regimes national average productivity of tea in Sri Lanka was remarkably reduced during the said period.

INDONESIA : Tea plantation in Indonesia was first tried in 1824 with the China seeds. But this was not successful. Many attempts were also made in the later period, which also proved to be a failure. In fact tea industry in Indonesia did not thrive well until Assam seeds were introduced in 1878. Contrary to the Chinese and Japanese seeds the Assamese seeds suited well in Indonesia¹⁴. Indonesia is a country which constitute hundreds of islands out of which Sumatra and Java are the islands where tea cultivation is principally confined. In recent times the Southern part of Sulawesi island, however, started tea planting. Plantation was started first in Java island and by the end of the last Century tea industry was firmly consolidated. The second world war severely shattered the industry uprooting thousands of hectares of land under plantation. The situation of the industry, however, started tea planting. Plantation was started first in Java island and by the end of the last century tea industry was firmly consolidated. The area expanded rapidly and the volume of export jumped from 7.5m. kg. in 1901 to 32.5m.kg. in 1914. The foundation of tea cultivation in Sumatra started in 1911 with the seeds from both

13. Sivapalam,P, "Tea Industry In Sri Lanka," *Tea Science and Human Health(ed)*, Tea Research Association, Jorhat, 1993, P.82.

14. Barua, D. N., *Science and Practice In Tea Culture*, Tea Research Association, 1989, PP 35-37.

Assam and Sri Lanka. The Second World war Severely shattered the industry uprooting thousands of hectares of land under plantation. The situation of the industry, however, began improving from the mid-sixties of the present century when the Govt. took over the estates from the Dutch firms. About 30% of the plantations now belong to the Govt. are in Java. Cultivation from seedlings is the usual practice of propagation. But scientists have developed many clonal varieties which are recently utilised there. Plucking in Indonesia is done throughout the year.

Three types of teas are produced in Indonesia. These are black, green and Jasmine scented. Out of the three, black tea is mostly exported while the remaining two primarily meet the domestic demand. The domestic market absorbs 25-30 per cent of black tea.

KENYA : Kenya is relatively a new comer in the world map of tea. In spite of this, it has occupied an important place in the world production and trade. Commercial production of tea in Kenya got momentum after World War II . From available records it is evident that tea was introduced in Kenya in 1903 and from 1920 it was grown commercially¹⁵. The trial of the colonial Government went on in the mid-fifties to cultivate tea with indigenous plants in the non-European settled Kenya high lands. After it being proved successful and with growing popularity of tea the Government established Kenya Tea Development Authority in 1964 with an objective of assisting specially the small growers. As a result starting with only 56 ha area of tea in 1955 it was magnified to 57693 ha in 1990 . In the production front the position of small holders are commendable. The contribution of small holders to total production shows a spectacular growth from 4 per cent in 1965 to 55 per cent in 1990¹⁶. The black C.T.C. is the only type of tea produced in Kenya . Out of the total tea produced only 8-15 per cent are consumed in the domestic market and the rest is exported .

Cultivation of tea is concentrated to the both sides of the Rist Valley at an altitude ranging around 5500 ft to 6000 ft above the sea level. The major production is, however, carried out in the west side . Crops are generally plucked from April to September.

U.S.S.R : The tea-drinking habit in U.S.S.R, instead of being established tea gardens, was observed in the early part of the 17th century. Cultivation of tea in the country started towards the end of the 19th century and within a short period it occupied a prominent place in the national economy. During the World War I the industry was shattered and began to recover a

15. Caleb, O, Ohieno, " Tea Industry in Kenya", *Tea Science and Human Health(ed.)*, Tea Research Association, Jorhat, 1993 , P 60.

16. *ibid*, P 63.

gain from 1920's . The total area increased from 34,000 ha in 1933 to 82,000 ha in 1986. The main area of tea plantation is located on the Eastern shore of Black Sea in Georgia accounting for 87% of the total area. Besides Georgia other places where plantations started are Azerbaizon and Krasnodar. Tea regions in erstwhile USSR were very cold and frost trodden and bushes were covered with snow in winter. In such places of low temperature only China type of bushes were found successful. In recent years a few clonal varieties are being recommended for cultivation.

In USSR, the tea is grown either by collective farm or by State initiative but manufacturing is done under the Government control only. Here both black and green teas are manufactured.

TURKEY : Like U.S.S.R habit of tea-drinking was prevalent in Turkey long before plantation took root there. Tea cultivation was started in Turkey in the year of 1924 in Rize and later it was spread to many more places of the Eastern Black Sea like Artvin, Giresum, Ora and Tralzon. The bulk of culture, however, is concentrated in the Rize region, border of the Black Sea and 125 km Vakfikebir to Ordu. Tea is cultivated here on the flat lands and on the hill sides upto an elevation of 500 metres from the sea level. Tea bushes are grown here mainly from hybrid seeds dominated by Chinese variety. The holdings are small, not more than 4 ha. Production is carried on by both the private and public sectors. During the last three decades the production grew in a rapid rate. The volume of green leaf rose from 5000 tons in 1955 to 800,000 tons in 1991 . After satisfactory development in tea production the country has been able to restrict its import to a very low level. The entire tea produced in the country is directed towards the domestic consumption.

INDIA : It is surprising that in stead of the existence of indigenous plants growing wildly in some hilly places of Assam , the development of tea industry in India is relatively a recent one. No body knows how much time it would take to develop had there not been the colonial interest. Warren Hastings, the Governor General of India was very much alert from the very beginning in diversifying the production of commodities in order to make prosperous the East India Company. Sir Joseph Bank, a naturalist when was asked to prepare a note on the feasibility of production of crops in India, advocated first in 1778 for cultivation of tea along with some other crops considering the advantageous soil, climate and population of the country ¹⁷. But his enthusiastic note was not given paid heed to and a few years had passed without any result. In

17. Griffith, P, *A History of Indian Tea Industry*, London, 1967, PP 33-35.

1819 David Scott, the Governor-General in Assam tried at his own to cultivate to the East of Brahmaputra of Assam with Chinese seeds and plants which he had brought from the East India Company's Botanical Garden in Calcutta¹⁸. But the plants were died on transit. Before his next trial in 1824 was commenced, the Bruce brothers came into the scene. Major Robert Bruce, an adventurer and trader claimed in 1823 that he had heard of the existence of tea plants in Sibsagar of Assam from a Singpho Chief and had promised to collect some specimens from that chief. In the following year before he received the supply, his brother C.A. Bruce, who was in charge of a gunboat near Sadya in Assam, later interviewed the Singpho Chief and collected some plants and seeds from him. A few specimens of these were sent to Capt. David Scott who again forwarded them to Dr. Wallich, the botanist of East India Company for identification. But Wallich, refused to accept it as the same species from which Chinese manufacture tea though he identified the leaves as of *camelia* family.

A few years later Lord William Bentinck, the Governor - General of India, received a memorandum from a very intelligent gentleman named Walker in 1828. In that memorandum Walker apprehended that in the event of uncertainty in trade relation with China, the only source of supply of tea to England, and with the growing habit of tea drinking of the people, the company should accord utmost importance to the tea cultivation in its own territory. And if the company failed to do it, it would be their own fault. Lord Bentinck was convinced and supported the proposal. He formed a Tea Committee in 1834 with G.J. Gordon, as secretary to explore the possibility of tea cultivation in the country¹⁹. The committee in its first meeting on February, 1834 expressed doubt about the success of tea cultivation within the territories of the company. In spite of their apprehension the committee issued a circular on March 1834 inviting supply of information regarding the indigenous tea plants from all concerns. Having learnt about the circular Lt. Charlton, on service at Sadya under Capt. F.Jenkins, the Governor-General for the North-East frontier, sent some seeds and leaves of the tea tree of Assam to Capt. Jenkins stating that these trees are indigenous to Sadya as well as Beesa and grows wild everywhere around Sadya and Beesa and extended to China province Younen, a month's journey from Sadya. When these seeds and leaves are put before the Tea Committee in November 1834 Dr. Wallich identified it with certainty as the same species as the China tea plant. In this way the credit of discovering indigenous tea plants went in favour of Lt. Charlton and the Bruce brothers who put their claim a few years earlier was dishonoured. After the indigenous plants were discovered a scientific committee was formed to look into possibilities of tea cultivation in Assam.

18. *ibid*, P 36.

19. *Ibid*, p.38.

The commission under the leadership of Dr. Wallich reached Sadya of Assam in 1836. C.A. Bruce acting as a guide took them to the several tracts of the vally including Kutchu, Negrigram, Nadua, Tingri, Gabru-Parbat, Muttack and Borhat besides the hills between Assam and Burma, where the indigenous tea plants were growing in clump²⁰. The commission came to the conclusion that Assam and the Northern frontier would provide the most suitable field for tea-cultivations of every variety. The commission was very much satisfied with their venture and hopes began to gallore that time was not very far when India could export tea. In the meantime local progress had been considerable. Tea was discovered in Manipur Hills, and in the new locations of Assam. C.A. Bruce, the central figure of local development of tea culture by his extraordinary talent and untiring zeal explored many places with indigenous plants day by day. He also tried with China seeds in his nurseries. Most of the places he discovered were under the possession of the Singpho Chiefs who were sometimes non cooperative in divulging the places where tea grows. But Bruce by his wit made some presents, mainly opium, to them and by using some soft words he was able to induce the chief to make disclosures of the existence of tea plants in many places like Koojee and its neighbourhood; Ningrew, on the Burra Dehing river; Jagundoo, further down the Burra Dehing; Phakial and Big Phakial and many other places.

After a lot of tea tracts being discovered in Assam an attempt was made to establish tea plantation under the Government control. Wallich recommended to the Government that all the tea tracts discovered by them in the forest areas might be considered for tea plantations either by purchasing the land or taking on lease from the Singpho Chief. In partial consideration of the proposal when the Government selected two or three areas for tea plantation, differences cropped up among the members of the scientific commission regarding the seeds to be used for plantation. While Wallich was in favour of the Assam seeds, the other members like Griffith and M'clelland advocate for China seeds. Ultimately the later opinion triumphed. The scientific committee again divided as regards the suitability of area for growing tea. There were three distinct opinions. These are: (a) the Sub-Himalayan regions, indicating Mussourie, Dehradun, Kumaon (b) the Eastern frontier indicating Assam and (c) the Nilgiris and mountains of Central and South India. Confronted with these diversified views the Government of India decided to try in all the areas. The experiment met with different results — the South India plantations proved a failure, the Sub-Himalayan regions were reasonably successful and the most successful results was obtained in Assam even though it failed in Sadya.

20. *ibid.*, pp. 44-46.

Simultaneously with the discovery of indigenous tea plants area along with the establishment of new plantation, the method of manufacturing was also improved following the Chinese method . The first experimental samples of manufactured tea from the indigenous plants of Sadya in Assam made by the Chinese planters reached Calcutta in 1836 and received favourable comments . In 1837 a large sample of Muttock tea made from the Assam jat was sent to the Government of India . The Governor-General expressed hope that the quality of the tea was sufficient enough to capture the market in Europe . In 1838 the first commercial sample of twelve boxes of Assam tea was sent to London . It also received recommendation from the respectable brokers, tea dealers and several dignified individuals in London . Indian tea made a history on 10th January, 1839 when it was sold first in the auction of London and fetched a fancy price.

Meanwhile in India a considerable progress took place in the discovery of new tracts having indigenous tea plants . By 1839 the China seeds proved successful at Chhabua , 18 miles away from Dibrugarh , and was spread over Deohall , Chhoto Jaipur and Hakanpukri , all in Assam by the active initiative of C.A. Bruce^{who} also raised nurseries of indigenous tea plants besides his experiment with the China seeds. Moreover , he actively engaged himself in exploring indigenous plants which were progressively discovered in the Manipur Hills and in many parts of the Assam valley . A report by Bruce published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society on 10 June , 1839 claimed that one hundred and twenty tracts of indigenous plants had been discovered in various parts of Assam and also in Naga Hills . He also expressed in the report the limitation of tea production in view of the non-availability of the tea manufacturing experts as well as the labourers. He had only two Chinese black tea makers and two green tea makers . With these limited number no good amount and good quality tea could be expected . He was not satisfied with the opium addicted Assamese labour . He , therefore , urged the need for sufficient number of experts and labourers to be available to each garden . In spite of these difficulties the tea industry , however, progressed steadily . According to Bruce , the production of tea from his own experiment was 4220 lbs in 1838, 5274 lbs in 1839 and in 1840 it was expected to be 11, 160 lbs.

The foregoing progress made many capitalists to believe that tea could be produced in Assam on commercial basis . This belief led to the formation of a first private owned tea Company , the Bengal Tea company , in Calcutta in 1839 and it was followed by the formation of another company , the Assam Tea Company in London . These two companies , within a short while were merged to a single company , the Assam Tea Company.

The East India Company handed over its tea holdings to the newly formed company in 1840 excepting Chhabua , Dinjoy and two other small gardens . Chhabua was later handed over to a private man . The tea company also took leases of the jungle lands containing tea bushes from the Government for the purpose of tea cultivation . But their enthusiasm in producing tea was constrained from the very beginning when they faced the trouble of severe labour crisis. The locally available labour was not sufficient and their quality was also poor. In view of this problem the Chinese men were brought first hoping that they would be efficient in producing tea. But they were also proved unsatisfactory and described as “turbulent, obstinate and rapacious.” The Chinese men , however, became accustomed to work in the later period. The Englishmen brought from England were obedient but seemed entirely ignorant of the local language and the nature of the work and hence proved useless.

In spite of all these difficulties the company produced 10202 lbs of tea from 2638 acres of land in 1840 and this was sent to London . In 1842 the production was recorded as high as 29000 lbs but with enormous expenditure incurred in the course of opening new ventures the company could not earn any profit . The company earned profit first in the year 1848 and in 1852 it was possible to pay dividend first . By this time a good number of gardens grew up in the hands of the private individuals . Williamson brothers were the oldest pioneers among them. By 1859 there were fifty one privately owned gardens in Assam - ten in Lakhimpur , fifteen in Sibsagar , three in Darrang and the remaining were in Kamrup and Nowgaon. So far the competitors of the Assam Tea Company were the private individuals . But in 1859 , the second Joint Stock Company , the Jorhat Tea Company was formed with a capital of £ 60,000. The new company was very careful from the very beginning in every respect of production. As a result within the first five years of its establishment it prospered tremendously and paid handsome dividends right from its inception. After the formation of the second company a large number of private individuals as well as the public limited companies came forward to establish new tea plantations in Assam . In 1862 five tea companies namely, the Assam Tea company, the Jorehat Tea Company , the East India Company, the Lower Assam Tea Company, and the Central Assam Tea Company came into existence with 167 gardens under their control . During this time the number of gardens under the individual private ownership were 57.

In the meantime indigenous plants were found in Cachar and Sylhet in 1855. Later on, it was found wild along the Khasia and Jaintia Hill where they were bordered by Surma valley. With the discovery of the tea plants many tea gardens were established in Cachar district of Assam in the valley of river Barak in the south Barail mountain . The teelas were planted next.

At that period tea plantation in Darjeeling District of West Bengal was started . In 1856 tea was planted at Takvar on the Kurseong flats as well as on the hill slopes between Kurseong and Pankhabari, at Canning and Hope town. From 1856 onward several other gardens were established and in 1874 the number of gardens rose to 113 covering an area of 18,888 acres with production of 3,928,000 lbs. Once the plantation in the Darjeeling district was established as a commercial enterprise , attention was turned towards the foot hills of the Himalayas — first to Terai and then to Dooars . The first tea garden established in Terai was Champta in the year 1862.

The tea industry encountered a severe crisis from 1862. Tea gardens established upto 1861 were prospered well and earned profit to a considerable amount . This allured many people to come forward to open new gardens . People began scramble wildly for tea shares and tea lands. Tea companies , with or without any knowledge about plantation , sprang up overnight . The price paid for the purchase of land was exceedingly higher than what it could deserve . This madness in speculation threatened the existence of the industry. The growing up of large number of gardens raised the production which in turn reduced the price of tea causing financial embarrassment of those who spent huge amount of money in establishing the gardens. Many concerns collapsed completely as they could not bear the burden . Soon many people realised their ill-concerned speculation and withdrew themselves from the business by selling their estates at a price far below what it was incurred at the time of opening . Apart from the depression in price there were also many other factors responsible for the crash in the tea industry. The crisis however, did not last long and the judiciously established gardens began to recover from 1869.

After the crisis was over , the prudent entrepreneur directed their attention to explore the east of the Teesta river and the tea was first planted in Gajaldoba garden in 1874 followed by Phulbari (Lees River) and Bagracote. Planting was extended further towards east of the river Sankos of Assam border. The narrow strip of land between the Teesta and the Sankos is known as Dooars . This region constitute one of the major tea area in the North-East India . There were 13 gardens at Dooars in 1876 . By 1881 the number of gardens rose to 55. After 1881 the cultivation of tea extended rapidly in the tract inbetween the Teesta and the Daina river. The area under tea in 1892 was recorded more than six times than that of in 1881. Towards the end of the last century 76,000 acres were under tea and the corresponding production was nearly 32,000,000 lbs.

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In the year 1879 the first Indian tea company , the Jalpaiguri Tea Company was formed . Shortly after this , two more companies namely the North Bengal Tea Company and the Gurjunghora Tea Company were formed . China types of bushes were initially planted in Darjeeling , Terai and Western part of Dooars . But as plantation extended eastward , more and more of Assam plants were used in the later period.

Like Assam no indigenous plants were discovered in the Sub-Himalayan region . But experiments were carried on in different nurseries with the China seeds to see their potentialities in this region . After the successful experiments the Government encouraged the private individuals to undertake tea cultivation for commercial purpose and in 1856 a number of Indians along with three Europeans established four gardens . By 1863 , 78 plantations were established in this region — 18 in the Kumaon , 25 in Dehradun , 3 in Grawal , 3 in Simla , 26 in Kangra valley and 3 in Kulu . The tea industry in this region had a good start but due to some external factors , especially the earthquake in 1905 , it could not thrive well.

Tea , in South India , was regarded as a supplementary crop in the early days when coffee had been the major plantation crop. In spite of this , cultivation of tea with China seeds started on experimental basis almost simultaneously with that in Assam and the Sub-Himalayan region on recommendation of the Tea Committee . But the endeavour to grow tea in South India was more or less unsuccessful because of the non-survival of most of the seedlings sent there. However, in the Nilgiris there was effective use of seedlings . But it was until the early fifties of the last century when plantation on small commercial scale started in the Nilgiris . Expansion of the plantation started vigorously after 1865. In 1893 the area under tea was estimated to be 1200 ha in the Nilgiris. At about the same time Wynaad embarked with tea cultivation and in 1896 it had 100 acres under tea . Next to the Nilgiris and Wynaad came three regions of Kerala — the Kanan Deval Hills , central and south Travancore where plantation established at an altitude ranging between two thousand and eight thousand feet. Tea cultivation in Travancore started when the coffee industry witnessed a severe set back . In 1864 tea had been planted first as on an experimental basis. But it was in 1895 when plantation started on the commercial basis . In 1906 eight thousand acres were under tea in Travancore.

Most of the tea growing areas in South India are located in the two states - Tamil Nadu and Kerala . All the gardens are situated in the hills with varying altitude . Unlike in North India, a large number of gardens are found in South India with very small size ranging from a fraction of a hectare to a few hectares.

Tea Industry in India from its very inception , during 1838-39 to the end of the last century had witnessed a continuous progress and was able to outcompete China from England . In 1889 the U.K.'s imports of Indian tea was 50 per cent of the total import whereas the corresponding share of China was only 31 per cent.

The Indian tea industry had to encounter difficulties in the course of its expansion . Apart from the problem relating to the availability of labour and communication , the pioneers were very much concerned about the culture and manufacture of tea in order to get better quality as well as increased quantity to penetrate the world market . To look after these problems in North India the Tocklai Experimental Station was established at Jorhat of Assam in 1990 by the Indian Tea association. The United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) located in the Coimbatore district also run a similar research station to meet the need of South India . These two research stations has been providing necessary R & D guidance which has contributed the industry to increase tea production by 133 per cent during the last 40 years . Considerable progress was made in the field of plant breeding . Since the initiation in late thirties of the present century , the Tocklai Experimental Station had released 163 clonal cultivars of which 128 were released between 1980 and 1990²¹. The technique of tissue culture developed by the station has opened up a new vista for creating genetic variabilities to supplement the conventional breeding method in evolving superior cultivars²².

With these scientific researches Indian tea industry has made enviable growth in respect of production , productivity and area. The rate of growth of production during the period 1961-1990 was recorded 2.64 per cent while the corresponding figure for yield and area were 1.81 per cent and 0.83 per cent respectively²³. There was an all time record production of 742m.kg. in 1991 achieved from 42 thousand hectares of area under tea. The areas which were once abandoned for unsuitability of tea production have become now viable for production of tea.

Three types of tea are generally produced in India . These are C.T.C., Orthodox and Green tea, Out of these three C.T.C. constitute the major position accounting around 70 per cent while the Orthodox constitute 28 per cent . The green tea along with a very insignificant type legg-cut tea constitutes the rest. India's picture in the field of export is not encouraging . It has

21. Singh, I.D.; "A Decade of Tea Breeding in North East India". Challenges of the Nineties : Proceedings of the 31st Tocklai Conference , 1992. Tea Research Association, Jorehat , p.15.

22. *ibid* , p.23.

23. Table 3.5 of Chapter III of this thesis.

remained static around 200 m.kg. during the last three decades ending 1990. The share of India's export to the total world export has dwindled from 45 per cent to 18 per cent during this period. One of the reasons for this dwindling share is the tremendous growth of domestic consumption. In 1991 the domestic consumption was 530 m.kg. which is more than four times than that during the time of independence.
