



Implemented by:

**SASI** Sustainable  
Agricultural  
Supply Chains  
Initiative

# LUNCHBREAK



Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

7 March 2025, 12 – 1 pm

# About Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP)



A thriving,  
socially just, and  
environmentally  
sustainable tea  
sector

- Our vision

To catalyse long-term, systemic-change, to benefit everybody who works in tea – especially in tea-producing regions

**India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda**

Our mission



# Three Thematic Pillars

## Economics

Living wages for workers  
Living Income for small holder farmers

## Environment

Low carbon tea  
Climate Resilient practices  
Zero deforestation

## Equality

Safe spaces for women and girls  
Free from GBV





- **P**rogrammes/Projects
- Business **P**ilots
- **P**olicy



## India//Assam Tea Sector context...

India second largest Producer and Consumer of Tea in the World

12% of Global Tea exports are from India

Total production 1,374 mn kgs in 2023-24  
50 % production by organized sector Producer

Companies owning Tea Plantations; 50 % Small Tea Growers (STGs)

Responsible Business Initiatives by Government of India



Aspect	Tea Supply Chain (Assam)
Percentage of Women in Workforce	Women make up around <b>50%-60%</b> of the total workforce in Assam's tea plantations <b>with approx. 80% in plucking jobs</b>
Primary Role of Women Workers	Predominantly engaged in <b>tea plucking</b> (a highly labor-intensive task), with some involvement in processing.
Wage Gap	Women are paid <b>30-40% less</b> than men for similar work.
Work Hours	Women typically work <b>8-10 hours per day</b> , often without adequate breaks or time for household responsibilities.
Access to Formal Contracts	<b>Concept of permanent and temporary labour</b> ; permanent labour is under Plantation Labour Act (PLA)
Health Risks	<b>High exposure</b> to pesticides, lack of sanitation, inadequate access to health care services (especially reproductive health).
Representation in Leadership	<b>Less than 5% of leadership or supervisory roles</b> in the tea sector are held by women; lack of representation in trade unions;
Social Protections	Most women lack access to <b>various government schemes</b>





# ETP's Transformative Women's Leadership

## **Empowering Women in Tea Communities**

Focuses on empowering women in tea-producing regions by providing them with leadership training, skills development, and economic opportunities.

## **Addressing Gender Inequality**

It seeks to challenge and overcome deeply rooted gender inequalities in tea supply chains by advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities for women workers.

## **Fostering Collective Action**

Encourages women to organize, collaborate, and build networks to support each other, share resources, and advocate for improved labor rights and social justice within the tea industry.

## **Creating Sustainable Impact**

Investing in women's leadership and promoting gender equity, the initiative aims to create lasting change that enhances the well-being of entire communities, making the tea sector more resilient and sustainable.

# Plantation Community Empowerment Programme (PCEP)

Assam (in partnership with 5 Producer Companies; 20 Tea Estates)

- Establish Community Development Forums (CDF) in tea estates.
- Break down traditional employer-employee relation through a multistakeholder platform where tea estate and worker issues can be raised and resolved together
- Coverage-23 Tea Estates; CDF members 1,500; Indirect reach 1,50,000
- **Women Empowerment Committees within CDFs addressing gender issues (mainly alcoholism, absenteeism, education)**





# Women Leadership within PCEP

More than 50 % CDF members are women

20 Women Empowerment Committees for specifically looking into women issues—150 members

Trained on Government Schemes related to Women Empowerment Schemes; Gender and WASH; Child Protection; Income Generation (Sericulture, Weaving);

## Leadership on:

- *Celebration of special days/events*
- *Promoting and raising awareness on the importance of girl's education, against child marriages, campaigns against alcoholism; on health, hygiene and nutrition;*
- *Undertaking income generating activities*







Women in Leadership (Udayini) in partnership with Mcleod Russel in 2 Tea Estates

Encouraging women to assume leadership positions in the tea sector.

- Implement comprehensive gender and leadership training
- Develop leadership networks
- Financial literacy and management skills building
- Gender Resources for the Community Development Forum (CDF)



## Women in Leadership (Udayini)

### Cascading training model

Intensive training of 50 primary women cohort on gender, leadership, financial inclusion, social protection and digital training

50 Primary Cohort will train  $50 \times 20 = 1,000$  secondary cohort (comprehensive module developed by them)

1,000 Secondary Cohort will reach out to 20,000 community women (awareness)

- Seasonal Industry
- Intensive trainings can be done from November to March (post-harvest period)



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# McLEOD RUSSEL

*Believe in tea*

Our widespread plantations, meticulous processes, art and science of blending, sustainable environmental practices and community initiatives have enabled us to strengthen our leadership in the global tea industry.



# COMPANY PROFILE

**McLeod Russel** began planting tea in Assam in 1869 and today is among the largest tea producing companies in the world.

- The Company has **Thirty-one** tea estates in the Assam Valley
- **Two** estates in the Dooars region of West Bengal
- **Six** estates (Nine marks) in Uganda

Annually, our estates produce more than **64 million kilograms** globally of quality Black tea which reaches millions of tea lovers worldwide.

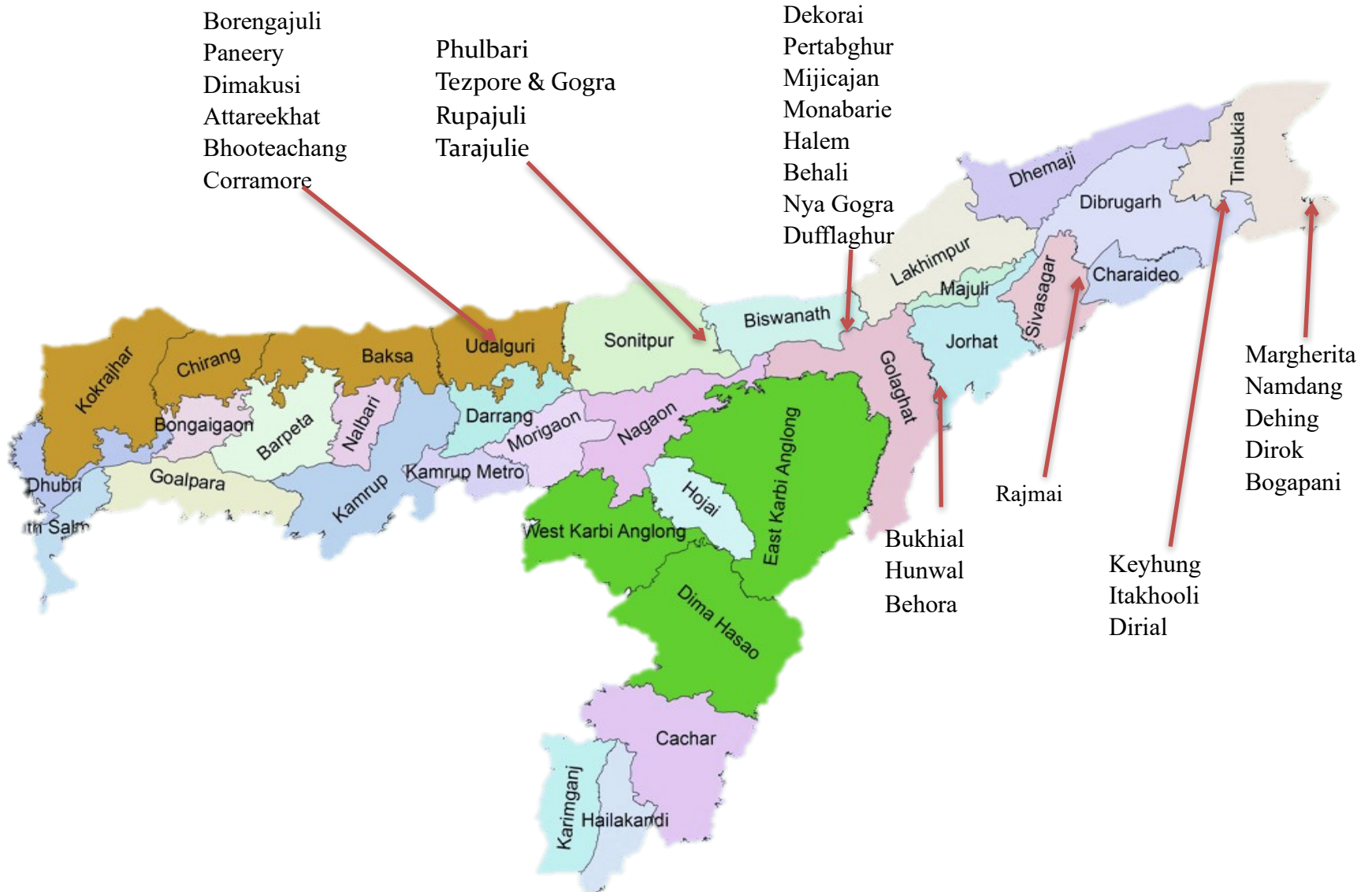




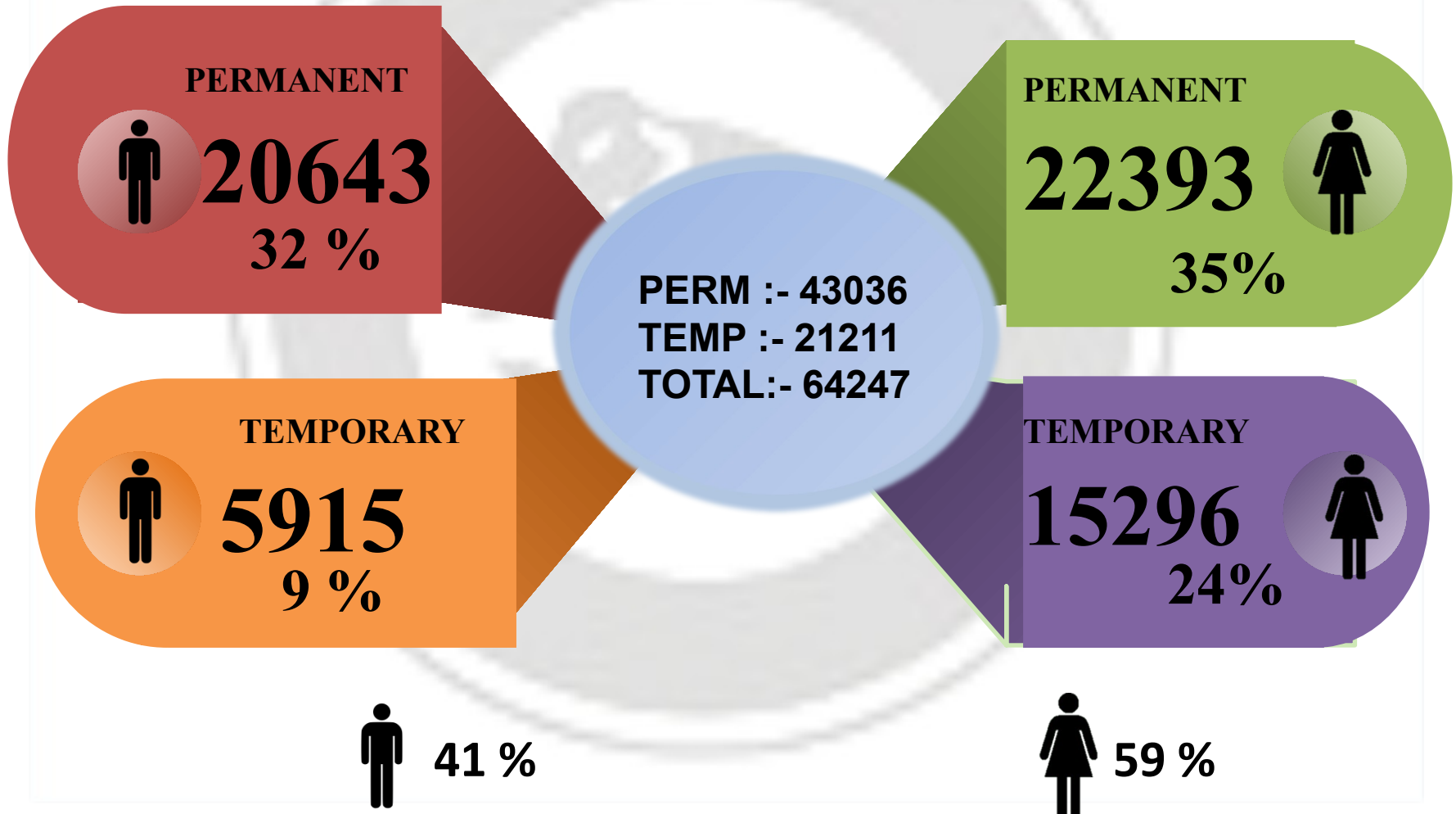


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# WORKERS INFOGRAFIX



# Women Empowerment in the Tea Estates of Assam

Women form the backbone of Assam's tea industry, constituting nearly **50% of the workforce** in tea estates. They play a crucial role in plucking, processing, and maintaining tea plantations. Women empowerment in Assam's tea estates is essential for improving their livelihoods, ensuring gender equality, and enhancing the overall productivity of the industry.





**Self Worth**

**Determine Choice**

**Access to Opportunity**

**Control of their own Life**

**Influence Social Change**

# Five Pillars of



# Women Empowerment

**Definition:** A woman's sense of dignity, confidence, and belief in her own abilities.

Providing **education and awareness programs** to boost self-esteem and self-confidence.

- Encouraging **financial literacy training** to help women understand wages, savings, and investments.
- Recognizing and valuing the contributions of women in the tea industry through **equal pay and fair treatment**.
- Addressing **gender-based violence** and discrimination through workplace policies and support systems.



## Determine Choice

**Definition:** The ability to make independent decisions regarding personal and professional matters.

- Ensuring young girls to have the right to **choose their work roles** rather than being confined to traditional tasks.
- Encouraging **women's participation in unions and leadership positions** within the estate.
- Providing access to **family planning and healthcare services**, allowing women to make informed reproductive choices.
- Offering **skill development programs**, so women can choose careers beyond tea picking, such as managerial or entrepreneurial roles.





## Access to Opportunity

**Definition:** The availability of education, employment, and resources that enable women to improve their lives

- Establishing **education programs** for women workers and their children, breaking the cycle of poverty.
- Creating **training programs in leadership, finance, and entrepreneurship** to help women advance beyond low-paying positions.
- Ensuring equal access to **better wages, promotions, and employment benefits** such as maternity leave.
- Partnering with **CDF and government programs** to provide scholarships and skill-building initiatives.



## Control of their own Life

**Definition:** The ability to make choices and decisions that shape one's personal and professional future.

- Establishing **women-led self-help groups (SHGs)** that provide financial independence through savings and loans.
- Providing **legal awareness programs** so women understand their rights related to wages, land ownership, and workplace safety.
- Implementing **grievance redressal systems** where women can report exploitation or unfair treatment without fear.
- Promoting **alternate income avenues** where women collectively can grow and sell vegetables and rear poultry. Local Handloom is new avenues which is being seriously looked upon.



**Definition:** The power to challenge societal norms and drive progress in gender equality and community welfare.

- Supporting **women-led community initiatives** that address health, education, and social welfare.
- Encouraging female workers to take on **leadership roles in estate management and labor unions**.
- Running **awareness campaigns** on gender equality, domestic violence prevention, and legal rights.
- Involving men in **gender sensitization programs** to build an inclusive and supportive environment.







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## Conclusion

Empowering women in Assam's tea estates is **not just a social necessity but also an economic opportunity**. By addressing gender inequalities and providing better facilities, education, and leadership opportunities, the tea industry can ensure a **sustainable and progressive future** for its women workers. Government policies, estate management, and community participation must work together to make empowerment a reality.





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**THANK YOU**

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Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

Implemented by



Deutsche Gesellschaft  
für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

# Thank you for joining !

See you at our next Lunchbreak in April.  
The topic will be shared soon.