

## **Labour force and tractors: Contributing towards growth of tea industries in north east India**

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**ABSTRACT:** A study with an objective to determine contributions of labourers and tractors towards growth of tea industries was carried out during 2008-2013. While establishing tea industries and even after that, all labour intensive and power consuming field practices were performed by male and female workers. Leaf plucking was found precision intensive, performed by women, having skill and know-how inherited from their parents and therefore, plucking machine could not be adopted so far. However, productivity of women could be enhanced by improving their occupational environment and proper match with height of tea bushes. A ratio of 0.62 between height of tea bushes and women was found comfortable. Area under young tea could be increased by use of higher size (45 hp) tractor and winch for uprooting old bushes and digging pits by tractor and digger and thereby productivity of plantation could be increased to tune of 17.24 to 37.95 per cent. Economy of colony workers could be improved through purchase of manure, etc from them, required by increased area under replanting. Also, opportunities of selfemployment etc, could be generated by vermicompositing, etc. Tractor hiring centre was found a boon for small tea growers.

**Key Words:** Appropriate mechanization, entrepreneurship and occupational environment.