

FAIRTRADE PREMIUM IMPACT



PRODUCER NAME: THE UNITED NILGIRIS TEA ESTATES CO LTD

FLO ID : 508

COUNTRY: INDIA

PRODUCT: TEA

FAIRTRADE CERTIFIED SINCE: 1994

SALES AND PRODUCTION

PRODUCT VARIETY: Orthodox, Organic and Green Teas.

ANNUAL PRODUCTION CAPACITY: 3 Million Kgs

MAJOR COUNTRY OF EXPORT: USA, UK, Europe, Australia, Japan

ABOUT THE PRODUCER ORGANIZATION:

Nestled 6000 to 8000 feet up in the pristine blue mountains of Southern India (Nilgiris) are Allada, Korakundah, Devabetta, and Chamraj tea estates of the United Nilgiri Tea Estates & Company Limited, producing the finest of teas to invigorate discerning tea drinkers around the world since 1922. Fairtrade certified Chamraj is the largest, extending across 1,500ha (3,700 acres) with an elevation ranging from 2,000 metres (6,600 ft) to 2,414 metres (8,000 ft) and employing 930 workers. Its modern tea factory processes tea grown on all four of the company's estates.

In the 1980s and 1990s tea growers in south India largely switched from producing Orthodox leaf tea to producing lower quality CTC (Crush, Tear and Curl) tea for the growing quick brew and tea bag markets. In recent years many growers have struggled to survive or have abandoned production because of low auction prices and lack of demand for their tea as traditional buyers turned to better value Kenyan tea while domestic demand failed to expand as predicted. Chamraj took the commercial decision to continue producing its distinctive black, green and oolong Orthodox teas and is now a leading ethical tea producer certified by eight bodies, including organic and Fairtrade.

UNITEA has the rare distinction of exporting teas since 1984 onwards. They have grown from strength to strength from regular teas to value added teas and now onto organic teas – of which they are the pioneers in India. Unique teas like the Frost tea and Golden tips are very much part of their repertoire.

UNTE and Chamraj Tea Estate were Fairtrade certified in 1994, making them one of the first Fairtrade producers in India

EXALTATION OF BLUE MOUNTAIN

PREMIUM IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

YEAR OF THE PROJECT: 2015- 2018



Figure 1 View of Chamraj Tea Plantation

The aroma from the processing tea leaves scatter around the picturesque Nilgiri slopes to inform you that you have arrived at the destination, the withering lavender verbena welcomes you with charm to the Chamraj Tea Plantation. Tea estates in India are legally obliged to provide basic primary education, healthcare, housing, and other welfare facilities to their workforce. The Fairtrade premium has funded many projects that have brought real benefits to the workers and their communities: Some of the current on-going projects are: Education, Health care & Housing.

• SOCIAL IMPACTS:

Right to Quality Education: UNITEA offers the best education in the district to all the children of its employees and the 23 surrounding villages. The very first school was started in the year 1979 followed by the Higher secondary school in 1983. The education program was aimed at providing affordable best in class education to the children of the workers. However, the school lacked modern day additions such as computer lab, audio visual facility, modern furniture, transport facility, and housing for teachers within the campus.

“We provide affordable education to the 1200 students out of which only 30% are the children of employees, 60% of the students are Girls, my daughter studied at this school, we produce 100% pass percentage in the board exams and our girl’s hockey team is the best in the district”- TGB Pinto- Director of UNITEA.

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Figure 2 Chamraj Higher Secondary School



Figure 3 School buses purchased with premium money

08 Class-rooms and an Audio Visual Facility Room with a total area of 7650 Sqft have been added where english communication, public speaking and life skills are taught with NIIT softwares, which gives an edge to the twelfth standard students who are about to leave the school and enroll into colleges for their graduation. Prior to the setup, students from Nilgiris would find it difficult to compete with students from elite schools in the cities, who had greater exposure which eventually makes them confident.

25 computers were brought with 50% concession provided for students to study computer science. About 900 students from Standard 1 to 12 are benefitted from it.

School Laboratories (Biology, Chemistry and Physics), with a plinth area of 2558 sqft were constructed for pre-university level children at the Higher Secondary School.

Hostel facilities with a plinth area of 2400 sqft are provided for children coming from faraway places.

"I personally know students who have quit studies to return back to their villages, because of the lack of exposure and good English vocabulary, but today students don't limit themselves, they are ready to compete with anyone"- says Anand- a teacher at the Higher Secondary School, for the past four years.

Two school buses were brought from the premium fund to ensure safe transportation means for students. New housing blocks are being constructed for the residence of teachers. Additionally, the government provides free uniforms for the students enrolled in local language medium students while the Fairtrade premium provides free uniforms for the English medium students as decided by upon by the Fairtrade premium committee. Since there is an increasing number of migrant workers from North India, therefore teachers well versed in National language are being employed to bridge the language gap.

Scholarship of Euros 385 for Polytechnic, Graduation and Post-Graduation students and Euros 770 for Engineering, Medicine and Nursing students were provided.

The salary of the English medium teachers was raised. Buses for transportation and modern desk and benches were brought along with Solar water heater to provide hot water to the hostel children.

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Right to medical and health care benefits: The Garden Hospital at Rockland set up by the estate is one of the most advanced medical facility in the vicinity. Apart from the resident female doctor and a visiting male doctor (employed on the request of the male workers of the estate), the hospital has got a range of visiting specialists, a Dialectologist, Orthopaedic, Ophthalmologist, Surgeon (when required), Cardiologist and a Dentist. The hospital has treated 13,340 patients for the year 2018-2019.

A brand-new dental unit, semi-auto biochemistry analyser and a haematology analyser used for various blood and other medical tests were brought from the Fairtrade Premium fund. These saves time and energy for the workers who otherwise need to travel all the way to Ooty (main town) for their laboratory tests.



Figure 4 Semi-auto biochemistry analyser and a haematology analyser

Ultrasound Scan: As 80% of the workforce are women an ultrasound scanner was purchased on request

Vaccinations: All the workers, their spouses and children were vaccinated against Typhoid vaccine and Hepatitis B virus.



“Fairtrade did an enormous help by providing scholarship to my children. I could not complete my schooling, but today both of my sons have become first-generation graduates, which is a great moment for me!” - Raghumani, who works at the estate as Supervisor for the past twenty-three years.

Figure 5 Raghumani- Supervisor at Chamraj Estate

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The salary of the male doctor Mr. Omprakash who visits the hospital on all working days is paid from the Fairtrade premium fund. He has been serving the patients at the hospital since 2005.



Figure 6 Dr. Om Prakash has been working at the Estate Hospital since 2005

On asked about his experience, he says-
“The workers should have belief on conventional medical treatments, their ignorance have to be eradicated as optimal health is very important to work in the fields. Therefore, we provide regular counselling on health care and health awareness. I insist them to give up on any ill habits such as smoking and liquor consumption. It’s important that we work at the grass root level and motivate the workers to have a wholesome life”.

Alamelu, a tea picker for the past 30 years, also a member of the Fairtrade Premium Committee, recalls her experience of representing the Hired Labourers at the NAPP Annual General Meeting in Thailand in 2018, as one of her proud moment in life.



Figure 7 Alamelu, a tea picker for the past 30 years

“The estate administration provides us with social security and job security which reduces our worries for the future. I, request all the buyers to purchase more tea, so that our happiness prevails”- says Alamelu rushing through the tea rows.

Her children Karthick, a B.Com graduate, and Kowsalya, a post-graduate in Information Technology are both beneficiaries of the Fairtrade scholarship. She calls the Medical facility at the estate a boon for the workers, which is accessible 24/7 throughout the year, along with weekly visits from speciality doctors.

Selvam, a senior tea picker with forty years of experience, took us through her daily life- “I leave my home at 7:30 am to reach the fields by 8:00 am. We work till 11:30 am and break for lunch. Post lunch work starts at 01:00 pm and we windup by 4:30 pm.”



Figure 8 Selvam- A tea picker at the Estate

On being asked about whether she gets tired of the work, she says (sipping tea from her mug) - “The tea keeps us going! The entire tea picking workforce are women, who have nothing much to worry about when they know, that their child is safe either at the crèche or in the school”.

Selvam is also a proud mother of two children- Vimal and Sathya. Vimal works as an engineer and Sathya is studying MBA. She recalls the happiest moment in her career, when the estate management took them on trip to 02 cities in neighbouring states:- Chennai and Bangalore in flight, bearing all the expenses, which was an example of the treatment they get from the management.

Right to decent standard of living: On talking about the latest developments on the Employee Welfare Schemes, she talks about the newly constructed toilets at several locations in the estate, which is a first in the history of tea estates in the Nilgiris, “It is a great relief for the women working in the field who had to rush home which is kilometres away from the estate”- *Selvam exhales with relief.*



Figure 9 Newly constructed toilets and resting shed in the Tea Garden

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A Crèche is also set up at the estate which brings in lot of relief for the women working at the fields. There are about forty kids, which is taken care of by well trained and dedicated caretakers- Leelavathi and Sujatha with the assistance from a helper




DAYS	TIME			
	8:30 AM	10:30 AM	LUNCH 12:30 PM	3:30 PM
MONDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	RICE, SAMBAR, GREENS	MILK, GROUND NUT
TUESDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	TOMATO RICE, EGG	MILK, BISCUITS
WEDNESDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	VEGETABLE BHAJIYAM	MILK, BATHAM GRAM
THURSDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	RICE, VEGETABLE SAMBAR, EGG	MILK, BISCUITS
FRIDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	TOMATO RICE, GREENS	MILK, GREEN GRAM
SATURDAY	HIGH PROTEIN PORRIDGE	MILK	SAMBAR, RICE	MILK, BISCUITS

Figure 10 Crèche set up and Diet Plan for Kids

“Here, the kids are allowed to play indoor as well as outdoor games. They are taught personal hygiene, alphabets and rhymes. Our main concern is on their diet which consists of millet, milk and pulses, high protein porridge and vegetables. The positive comments from the mothers on the improving health and activities of their child give the satisfaction that we need”- says **Leelavathi**.

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