

Luxmi Tea's response to alleged labour rights abuses at the Lepetkatta Tea Estate

Ref your mail dt 8th Sept relating to the below article , The Sentinel

Assam: <https://www.sentinelassam.com/north-east-india-news/assam-news/tea-plantation-workers-staged-protest-in-dibrugarh-district-627770>, we note the contents with concern as the news-article does not give a complete factual background and in the process, portrays a very incorrect picture of apathy & insensitivity towards workers by the management.

Please find below the facts & details, which shall put things in the right perspective and for what it actually is.

1. Land of Lepetkatta Tea Garden was earlier allocated for National Highway Road widening and for 'Brahmaputra Cracker & Polymer Ltd' (BCPL) factory as per development initiatives by the Central & State Governments. Land was bequeathed to the Govt projects, but there was no retrenchment of workers due to the said government development projects. On the contrary, it generated huge employment opportunities for the educated youth of the region boosting ancillary businesses in close vicinity.
2. Regarding the issue of workers protest against orders to uproot tea bushes for construction of an "industrial estate", is incorrect information. The said tea-plants on this land were ageing, the growth was slow & unproductive for which 37ha was uprooted as a part of garden general practice. Some area from here will shall go for replanting after adequate rehabilitation of the soil With the recent Govt of Assam initiatives to develop Eco Tourism, portions of the said land along with adjoining vacant land is being considered partly for Eco-Tourism project. No retrenchment of workforce shall take place as they are productively employed in the rest of the tea estate operations. In fact the proposed development of Eco-tourism project shall generate far higher employment opportunities for the local populace besides encouraging many entrepreneur business growth in the region.

Trust the above was helpful to you in order to give you a correct perspective that Luxmi Tea was not uprooting tea bushes for building an "industrial unit", and neither it is creating job-losses for workers and nor it has apathy and indifference towards the welfare of its workers.

Luxmi group is sensitive to concerns of its worker and always strives on activities focussed on Occupational Safety, Health and Hygiene, Education, Eye-care and Sustainability projects on Women-Empowerment. This family-owned business has been in tea production since 1912 and produces 20m kgs tea in its 16 tea estates in Assam.

Regular Safety & Health Awareness training workshops & programmes are being instituted at all estates, which is conducted by international certification agencies like COTECNA and IRQS.