

The Cess utilization policy:

For development and welfare of Small Tea Growers in the State, a policy called "the Cess Utilization(Amendment) Policy, 2015" declared by the Government of Assam on 30th May, 2015. The Policy will remain valid commencing from 1st June, 2015 until further as notified by the State Government. To implement the scheme, a Cess [*Cess means a tax levied under the Assam Taxation (on specified land) Act, 1990 and amendment thereof, on specified land under cultivation of tea by Small Tea Growers*] is levied at the rate of 25 paise per Kg of green leaf purchased by the Bought Leaf Factories (BLF) and Estate factories . The fund so collected to be utilised for development of small and marginal tea growers, welfare of tea labourers in unorganised sector and improvement of quality of tea. The proceeds of cess levied shall be credited to the Consolidated Fund of Government of Assam and will be allotted to the State Level Society, constituted under the policy, for implementation of various schemes under the Cess Utilisation Policy.

The objective of the Policy are as follows:

- (i) to facilitate and induce growth of the Small Tea Growers (STGs).
- (ii) to help and take care of the welfare of the marginal tea workers employed in the small tea growers' and unorganized tea sector.
- (ii) to provide financial support to SHG/cooperatives/partners/companies formed by small tea growers' as equity holders.
- (iii) Setting up of tea factories by SHG/cooperatives/partners/companies of STGs.
- (iv) to upgrade STGs from unorganized to organized sector through quality enhancement and best practices in tea production.

The highlight of the schemes under the Policy are as follows :

(a) Subsidy :

(i) Subsidy @75% of actual cost of the vehicle for transportation of green leaf by partnership/cooperative/company of STG or SHG. Quantum of limit under the scheme is as follows:

(a)	The subsidy would be limited to Rs.2 lakh (Two lakh) only in case of partnership/SHG consisting of minimum 5 members.
(b)	Rs.3.50 lakh (Rs Three lakh Fifty thousand) only in case of 10 members or more.

(ii) Subject to maximum of Rs.10000 (ten thousand) per quarter, subsidy @50% against interest of Bank Loan for the development/expansion of small tea gardens taken by STGs on production of Bank documents.

(iii) In case of natural calamities like draught, epidemic, outbreak affecting plants and human lives- special subsidy will be given as may be determined by Government.

(b) Grants-in-aid:

(iv) Grants upto 75% of the actual cost providing common infrastructure for setting up of green leaf collection centres and facilities by SHG/Company/Cooperative or partnership of STG subject to a limit and guidelines prescribed by Director of Tea, Assam. Quantum of limit under the scheme is as follows:

(a)	Grant-in-aid @75% will be admissible if the cost of the project is below Rs.1 lakh (Rs One lakh) only.
(b)	Grant-in-aid will be admissible at the rate of 60% in case cost is above Rs.1 lakh (Rs. one lakh) but less than Rs.3 lakh (Rs three lakh)
(c)	Grant-in-aid @50% subject to a limit of Rs.5lakh (Rs five lakh) only will be admissible in case project cost is above Rs.3 lakh (Rs three lakh).

(c) Special Assistance:

(v) Special assistance to SHG or other eligible bodies of STGs to set up small Orthodox Bought Leaf Factory (Proto type) or Small CTC factory @30% of investment in plant and machinery and factory building. Quantum of limit under the scheme is as follows:

(a)	The subsidy will be admissible @30% of the eligible investment subject to maximum limit of Rs.10 lakh (Rs. Ten lakh) only.
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(vi) For collective drainage by SHG/Cooperative which benefits minimum of 5 (five) STG members as prescribed by Director Tea, Assam.

(vii) Assistance to STG for replacement of Tea Bushes through replanting/in filling/reframe formation to improve quality at the rate to be prescribed by Director Tea.

(viii) Assistance for procurement of inputs by various SHG/STG as per terms and scale prescribed by Director Tea.

(ix) Assistance for scientific facility at the factory to reduce Minimum Residual Level and ensuring good quality leaves prescribed by the Tea Board of India.

(d) Assistance eligible for Health Insurance Scheme:

(x) Providing of insurance cover to the workers involved in small gardens including health insurance through public sector insurance company.

(xi) Beneficiaries shall be eligible for in-patient health care insurance benefit upto Rs.30000.00 per family per annum.

(xii) Subject to guidelines by Director of Tea, Hospitalisation expenses to all covered ailment upto limit of Rs.20000.00

(e) Assistance for Education and Medicines:

(xiii) Education grants after class VII for purchase of books/note book/uniforms to the children of workers not exceeding Rs.1000 (one thousand) per child subject to a maximum of two children per worker per year on production of vouchers and APRs by STGs.

(xiv) Assistance for medicines to workers as per actual cost but not exceeding a limit prescribed on production of medical certificate, vouchers and APRs by STG.

(1) To know about the Cess Utilization Policy, pl click here.

(2) To know about the procedure for apply for grant of Green leaf carrying vehicle/ Setting up of bought leaf factories/setting up of green leaf collection centres under the policy, pl click here.

(3) To know about the procedure for availing Hospitalization expense/education grant, etc, pl click here.