CHAPTER 4
HISTORY OF TEA

“I say let the world go to hell, but I should always have my tea.”
— Fyodor Dostoyevsky

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Tea is an aromatic beverage commonly prepared by pouring hot or boiling water over cured leaves of the tea plant, Camellia Sinensis. After water, tea is the most widely consumed beverage in the world. It has a cooling, slightly bitter, astringent flavour that many people enjoy. Tea has been promoted for having a variety of positive health benefits, though generally these benefits have not been adequately demonstrated in humans. Tea has originated in Yunnan, China during the Shang Dynasty (1500 BC–1046 BC) as a medicinal drink. The plant was introduced to more than fifty two countries, from this ‘centre of origin’. Yunnan Province has also been identified as ‘the birthplace of tea’ where human beings figured out that eating tea leaves or brewing a cup could be pleasant.

Tea was first introduced to Portuguese priests and merchants in China during the sixteenth century. The knowledge of tea travelled slowly from East to West. The Dutch Merchants established a trading base at Benton by 1596. The first consignment of tea from China was transported to Benton in 1606 and from there it was shipped to non-tea-conscious Europe. By the middle of 1650, a quick brisk trade in tea was made with Holland. In France, the future of tea was linked with the Sterling Company. Drinking tea became popular in Britain during the seventeenth century. The British introduced tea to India, in order to compete with the Chinese monopoly on tea.
In England, tea received royal patronage when King Charles II married the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza, who was an inveterate tea-drinker. Britain was engaged in a war with France between 1756 and 1763, and obliged to levy several taxes to maintain its standing army in America. Following protests by the colonists, the British government withdrew all the taxes except that on tea. This did not appease the colonists, who boarded a ship in Boston harbour loaded with chests of tea, and threw them overboard into the sea as a protest to proclaim that there could be no taxation without representation in the British parliament. This event was described then and ever after as the Boston Tea Party. The Boston Tea Party fracas led to the American Revolution and the declaration of American Independence in 1773. Thus it was that tea played a key role in altering the course of history. Through the centuries, tea has also symbolized warmth, friendship, mutual respect, and caring. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in the eighteenth century as 'There is a great deal of poetry and fine sentiments in a chest of tea'.

Today tea is the reigning beverage in over 45 countries and is consumed in over 115 Countries around the globe. The Irish are the world's largest consumers of tea, each person on an average consuming eight cups of tea per day. However, the largest producer and overall the greatest consumer is India, where, at anytime and anywhere, chai is an essential part of daily life. Majority of the tea producing countries are located in the continent of Asia where China, India and Sri Lanka are the major producers. African tea growing countries are located mostly around the tropical regions where Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda are major producers. Apart from these regions, some quantities of tea are also being produced in South
America (Argentina, Brazil and others), the Near East (Iran and Turkey) and the CIS (Russia and Georgia).

4.2 HISTORY OF TEA

The history of tea is long and complex, spreading across multiple cultures over the span of thousands of years. The earliest credible record of tea drinking dates to the 3rd century AD, in a medical text written by Hua To. Drinking tea became popular in Britain during the seventeenth century.

China

In a popular Chinese legend, Shennong, the legendary Emperor of China and inventor of agriculture and Chinese medicine was drinking a bowl of boiled water due to a decree that his subjects must boil water before drinking it sometime around 2737 BC when a few leaves were blown from a nearby tree into his water, changing the colour. The emperor took a sip of the brew and was pleasantly surprised by its flavor and restorative properties. A variant of the legend tells that the emperor tested the medical properties of various herbs on self, some of them poisonous, and found tea to work as an antidote.

A similar Chinese legend goes that the God of agriculture would chew the leaves, stems, and roots of various plants to discover medicinal herbs. If he consumed a poisonous plant, he would chew tea leaves to counteract the poison. A rather gruesome legend dates back to the Tang Dynasty. In the legend, Bodhidharma, the founder of Chan Buddhism, accidentally fell asleep after meditating in front of a wall for nine years. He woke up in such disgust at his weakness that he cut off his own eyelids.
They fell to the ground and took root, growing into tea bushes. Sometimes, another version of the story is told with Gautama Buddha in place of Bodhidharma. Whether or not these legends have any basis in fact, tea has played a significant role in Asian culture for centuries as a staple beverage, a curative, and a status symbol. It is not surprising, therefore, that theories of its origin are often religious or royal in nature.

The Chinese have consumed tea for thousands of years. People of the Han Dynasty used tea as medicine. China is considered to have the earliest records of tea consumption, with records dating back to the 10th century BC. The earliest credible record of tea drinking dates back to the 3rd century AD, in a medical text by Hua T'o, who stated that "to drink bitter tea constantly makes one think better." Laozi (600-517 BC), the classical Chinese philosopher, described tea as "the froth of the liquid jade" and named it an indispensable ingredient to the elixir of life.

In 59 BC, Wang Bao wrote the first known book with instructions on buying and preparing tea. In 220 AD, a famed physician and surgeon Hua Tuo wrote 'Shin Lun' in which he describes tea's ability to improve mental functions. During the Sui Dynasty (589-618 AD) tea was introduced to Japan by Buddhist monks. The Tang Dynasty writer Lu Yu's, Cha Jing is an early work on the subject. The book describes how tea plants were grown, leaves processed, and tea was prepared as a beverage. It also describes how tea was evaluated. The book also discusses where the best tea leaves were produced. Tea produced in this period was mainly tea bricks which were often used as currency, especially from the center of the empire where coins lost their value.
During the Song Dynasty (960-1279), production and preparation of tea changed. The tea of Song Dynasty included many loose-leaf styles, but a new powdered form of tea emerged. Steaming tea leaves was the primary process used for centuries in the preparation of tea. After the transition from compressed tea to the powdered form, the production of tea for trade and distribution changed once again. The Chinese learned to process tea in a different way in the mid thirteenth century. Tea leaves were roasted and then crumbled rather than steamed. This is the origin of today's loose tea and the practice of brewed tea.

Hong Kong

In Hong Kong, apart from the yum cha culture of southern China, a localized version of English tea was developed - the Hong Kong-style milk tea. Tea use spread to Japan in the sixth century. Tea became a drink of the religious classes in Japan when Japanese priests and envoys were sent to China to learn about its culture. Ancient recordings indicate the first batch of tea seeds were brought by a priest named Saicho in 805 and then by another named Kukai in 806. It became a drink of the royal classes when Emperor Saga, a Japanese emperor, encouraged the growth of tea plants. Seeds were imported from China and cultivation in Japan began.

In 1191, the famous Zen priest Eisai brought back tea seeds to Kyoto. Some of the tea seeds were given to the priest Myoe Shonin, and became the basis for Uji tea. The oldest tea specialty book in Japan, ‘Kissa Yojoki’ was written by Eisai. The two-volume book was written in 1211 after his second and last visit to China. The first sentence states, "Tea is the ultimate mental and medical remedy and has the ability to make one's life more full and complete." Eisai was also instrumental in introducing tea
consumption to the warrior class, which rose to political prominence after the Heian Period.

Green tea became a staple among cultured people in Japan—a brew for the gentry and the Buddhist priesthood alike. Production grew and tea became increasingly accessible, though still a privilege enjoyed mostly by the upper classes. The tea ceremony of Japan was introduced from China in the 15th century by Buddhists as a semi-religious social custom. The modern tea ceremony developed over several centuries by Zen Buddhist monks under the original guidance of the monk Sen no Rikyu (1522-1591). In fact, both the beverage and the ceremony surrounding it played a prominent role in feudal diplomacy. In 1738, Soen Nagatani developed Japanese ‘Sencha’, literally roasted tea, which is an unfermented form of green tea. It is the most popular form of tea in Japan today. In 1835, Kahei Yamamoto developed ‘gyokuro’, by shading tea trees during the weeks leading up to harvesting. At the end of the Meiji period (1868–1912), machine manufacturing of green tea was introduced and began replacing handmade tea.

Tibet

The traditional way of preparing tea in the mountains of Tibet is to churn it. Green brick tea is ground, boiled in water and strained. This strained infusion is then churned with yak's milk, butter, and salt. Tea-churning is a daily ritual. When prepared, the tea is transferred to a kettle to be kept warm over the fire.
Zimbabwe

The first Zimbabwean tea plantation was known as New Year's Gift. Tea-growing did not really take off in Zimbabwe till the 1960s. Since then, production has increased steadily - although buyers tend to feel that the country may well have passed its peak. Tea production has largely been unaffected by the current turmoil in the Zimbabwean farming industry. However, there is a shortage of skilled labour which is forcing many growers to look at mechanical harvesting methods.11

The two main tea-growing regions in the east of Zimbabwe, are the Honde Valley and Chipinge which is situated in the south east. Winters are too cold for tea bushes to grow throughout the year, and therefore are pruned back to wait the first flushing in the following spring. Zimbabwean tea estates tend to be large and mechanised. Most tea is sold privately, and reaches the international market through the South African port of Durban. Zimbabwe produces youthful blending teas that give a full flavoured brew. They are rarely used in their own right: the majority is sold to the tea bag market of United Kingdom.

Korea

The first historical record documenting the offering of tea to an ancestral God describes a rite in the year 661 in which a tea offering was made to the spirit of King Suro, the founder of the Geumgwan Gaya Kingdom (42-562). Records from the Goryeo Dynasty (918-1392) show that tea offerings were made in Buddhist temples to the spirits of revered monks. During the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), the royal ‘Yi’ family and the aristocracy used tea for simple rites. The "Day Tea Rite" was a
common daytime ceremony, whereas the "Special Tea Rite" was reserved for specific occasions. Toward the end of the Joseon Dynasty, commoners joined the trend and used tea for ancestral rites. The earliest kinds of tea used in tea ceremonies were heavily pressed cakes of black tea, the equivalent of aged pu-erh tea still popular in China. However, importation of tea plants by Buddhist monks brought a more delicate series of teas into Korea.

**Vietnam**

Vietnam green teas have been largely unknown outside of mainland Asia until the present day. Recent free-enterprise initiatives are introducing these green teas to foreign countries through new export activities. Some specialty teas of Vietnam include Lotus tea and Jasmine tea. Vietnam also produces black and oolong teas in lesser quantities. Vietnamese teas are produced in many areas that have been known for tea-house "retreats." For example, some are located amidst immense tea forests of the Lamdong highlands, where there is a community of ancient Ruong houses built at the end of the eighteenth century.

**India**

Long before the commercial production of tea started in India in the late 1830s, the tea plant was growing wild in the jungles of north east Assam. In 1598, a Dutch traveller, Jan Huyghen Van Linschoten, noted in a book about his adventures that the Indians ate the tea leaves as a vegetable with garlic and oil and boiled the leaves to make a brew. The first discovery of tea in Assam is generally ascribed to Robert Bruce, who commanded a division of gunboats in Upper Assam during the first Burmese war, and who appears to have brought down with him some shrubs and seeds.
of the indigenous plant in 1826. Hunter (1990) throws light on the tea varieties and the area under tea cultivation. Gangopadhyay (1990) deals with the land settlement for tea cultivation in Assam. However, the Calcutta Agricultural Society differs from the above opinion. It has consistently held that in the early 1700's, the ships of the East India Company frequently brought the tea plants in the country by way of curiosity. Colonel Kyd, a resident of Calcutta and a famous Botanist, saw tea plants growing in his garden in 1780. This information was sent to Sir Joseph Bank and in 1782 his garden was handed over to Botanical Garden of Calcutta. In 1788, Sir Joseph Bank recorded the existence of indigenous tea growing wild in Coochbehar and Rangpur districts of Bengal and suggested the cultivation of this plant. The wild teas of Coochbehar confirmed the first discovery of indigenous tea in India.

In South India, Dr. Christie was the first to experiment with the growing of tea plants in the Nilgiris in 1832 and some of his plants were distributed to various parts of the Nilgiris hills for trial. In 1834, a few plants grown from the seeds brought from China were again planted in these hills. The earliest record of commercial planting in Kerala was in Peermade during 1875. The development of Kannan Devan Hills by James Finlay & Co in 1878 with tea as an exclusive crop, is a landmark in the history of tea planting in this part of the country.

The cultivation and brewing of tea in India has a long history. Tea was first introduced into India by the British, in an attempt to break the Chinese monopoly on tea. The British, using Chinese seeds, plus Chinese planting and cultivating techniques, launched a tea industry by offering land in Assam to any European who agreed to cultivate tea for export. Commercial production of tea in India started with
the arrival of the British East India Company, at which point large tracts of land were converted for mass tea production.

In the early 1820s, the British East India Company began large-scale production of tea in Assam. In 1826, the British East India Company took over the region from the Ahom Kings through the Yandaboo Treaty. In the year 1834 Government of India formed a tea committee consisting of twelve members of whom ten were Europeans and two Indians to explore possibilities of profitable tea cultivation in Assam and in the following year an experimental government plantation was tried in Lakhimpur. In December, 1837, twelve boxes of tea were shipped to London and this was followed in the next year by another lot of 95 chests. On examination tea was found equally good with that of China. However, the experiment failed and the plants were shifted to Jaipur, where a garden was established which was sold to Assam Company in 1840. The Assam Tea Company began the commercial production of tea in the region, run by indentured servitude of the local inhabitants. Beginning in the 1850s, the tea industry rapidly expanded, consuming vast tracts of land for tea plantations. By the turn of the century, Assam became the leading tea producing region in the world.

The widespread popularity of tea as a recreational drink started in the 1950s, after a successful advertising campaign by the India Tea Board. Today, India is one of the largest tea producers in the world, though over seventy percent of the tea is consumed within India itself. A number of renowned teas, such as Assam and Darjeeling, also grow exclusively in India. The Indian tea industry has grown to own many global tea brands, and has evolved to one of the most technologically equipped tea industries in
the world. Tea production, certification, exportation, and all other facets of the tea trade in India is controlled by the Tea Board of India.

**Taiwan**

Immigrants from the Chinese province of Fujian were the first to introduce tea-production in Taiwan. The growing methods they had learnt on the Chinese mainland stood them in good stead. They found the climate and terrain of Taiwan perfect for the growing of tea bushes. For a time, black teas were also produced on Taiwan, but the bulk of current tea-production is oolong. Black and green teas are still produced but the bulk is an amazing variety of oolong teas. Most tea is grown in the north of the island, around Taipei. The estates in this area are all below 350 metres. Taiwanese tea bushes produce five flushes in a year. Tea pickers work from April through to December, with the best quality teas being produced in the period from May to August. Taiwan's speciality teas fetch a high price in the international market. The oolong teas are the most sought after by Japanese, American, and Moroccan buyers. The lightly-fermented Taiwanese pouchongs are used to make Jasmine-scented teas.

**Thailand**

Thai tea or "cha-yen" in Thailand is a drink made from strongly brewed black tea. Other ingredients may include added orange blossom water, star anise, crushed tamarind seed or red and yellow food colouring and sometimes other spices as well. This tea is sweetened with sugar and condensed milk.
Great Britain

In 1658 the first advertisement for tea appeared in an English paper and only six years later the East India Company gave Charles II a present of tea. And a year later, the company began to import tea directly from China. It was in the early eighteenth century that the East India Company was given a monopoly on the British Tea Trade. British had found the stronger teas from India much more to their liking and by 1900 only 5 percent of imports were from China. Despite the fact that tea drinking is considered quintessentially English, coffee drinking was originally much more popular. Tea first arrived in Britain in 1662 when King Charles II married the Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza. Catherine brought tea chests to England as a part of her wedding dowry and soon popularized the custom of taking tea at court. And 50 years later, tea drinking became still more popular, once again, thanks to the Royal Family, when Queen Anne started drinking tea with her breakfast rather than the customary beer.

When tea first arrived in Britain it was brought from China in huge, tall ships called Tea Clippers. It would take the ships over a year to make the long crossing from China to England. Indeed the pressure to get tea to Britain that led to the glorious age of sail and Clipper ships were some of the most beautiful and fastest sailing ships ever built. They had wonderful names like 'Ariel', "The Flying Dutchman &apos", "The Fiery Cross &apos" and "The Stornoway &apos", which used to race against each other to see who would get home and unload first. These great epic voyages ended with the invention of steam-powered boats at the end of the nineteenth century and with the opening of the Suez Canal.
United States

While coffee is by far more popular, hot brewed black tea is enjoyed both with meals and as refreshment by much of the population. Similarly, iced tea is consumed throughout. In the Southern states, sweet tea, sweetened with large amounts of sugar or an artificial sweetener and chilled, is a fashion. Outside the South, sweet tea is sometimes found, but primarily because of cultural migration and commercialization.

Tea also played a pivotal role in the American Revolution. The colonists lived very much as the British did and consumed large quantities of Tea, and when the crown put a tax on the transportation and sale of tea, it was a factor in the revolution. It proved a major tipping point in the form of the Boston Tea Party. The American specialty tea market has quadrupled in the years from 1993–2008, now being worth $6.8 billion a year.21 Similar to the trend of better coffee and better wines, this tremendous increase was partly due to consumers who choose to trade up. Specialty tea houses and retailers also started to pop up during this period.

Tea consumption decreased in America sharply after the American Revolution, as the Americans love it very much, but they had resolved to drink it no longer, as the famous duty on the tea had occasioned the war. The Boston Tea Party was an act of protest by American colonists against the British Government in which they destroyed many crates of tea from the British East India Company ships in Boston Harbour. The incident, which took place on Thursday, December 16, 1773, has been seen as the breaking point of the disapproval of the British and helping to spark the American Revolution. 22
Australia

Through colonization by the British, tea was introduced to Australia. In fact, tea was aboard the First Fleet in 1788. Tea is a large part of modern Australian culture due to its British origins. Australians drink tea and have afternoon tea and morning tea, much the way the British do. Additionally, due to Australia's climate, tea is able to be grown and produced in northern Australia. In 2000, Australia consumed 14,000 tonnes of tea annually. Tea production in Australia remains very small and is primarily in northern New South Wales and Queensland. Most tea produced in Australia is black tea, although there are small quantities of green tea produced in the Alpine Valleys region of Victoria.

In 1884, the Cutten brothers established the first commercial tea plantation in Australia in Bingil Bay in northern Queensland. In 1883, Alfred Bushell opened the first tea shop in Australia in present-day Queensland. In 1899, Bushell's sons moved the enterprise to Sydney and began selling tea commercially, founding Australia's first commercial tea seller Bushell's Company.

Sri Lanka

Until the mid-1800s, Sri Lanka's main crop was coffee, but the coffee rust fungus devastated plantations in 1869, and this was the point when Sri Lankan industry turned to tea. Tea-growing trials had already started to take place on the island. With the loss of the coffee crop, the pressure was on to expand tea production to replace it. The driving force behind the rapid development of the Sri Lankan tea industry was a Scotsman called James Taylor. His early successes have been built upon spectacularly
by the Sri Lankans. The country may be small geographically, yet it ranks third in terms of world’s tea production. Tea from Sri Lanka is still known by the country's former name of Ceylon. The Sri Lankans wisely chose to retain a name that was synonymous with fine quality tea.

Tea is grown in the southern half of the teardrop-shaped island. The estates roughly encircle the central mountainous area at elevations between 100 and 2,500 metres. All Sri Lankan tea is picked by hand. Teas which grow on the western slopes are broadly classified as Dimbula teas. These receive Monsoon rains during August and September, and produce their best quality teas during the dry months of January and February. Teas on the eastern slopes are classified as Uva teas. These receive their Monsoon between January and March with fine flavour teas being produced during the dry period of August and September. Only about 10 percent of Sri Lankan tea may be sold privately. The rest is sold through the auctions in Colombo held every Tuesday and Wednesday throughout the year. Ceylon Breakfast is often characterised by the districts in which the bushes grow, on the sides of the central hill areas and also by the elevation of the gardens i.e. low, medium or high grown.

In Sri Lanka, orthodox teas from low-grown estates are known as roller teas. The leaves are rolled around and twisted. Some countries, such as Russia, select these Ceylon teas on the appearance of the dry leaf rather than the colour and flavour of the liquor, which medium and high grown teas are typically selected on.

**Argentina**

Cultivation and processing of tea developed in the 1950s as an extension of the mate industry. Tea is grown in the extreme north-eastern tip of the country in
Misiones. Almost all of Argentina's tea-production comes from this area. Harvesting is completely mechanised. The harvesters straddle the tea bushes and mow the tips as they advance down the rows. Teas from Argentina tend to be plainer. Their neutral flavours lend themselves to blending. The majority of the harvest finds its way into the iced teas of North America. Argentinean tea has the unusual property of retaining its clarity when poured over ice.

**South Africa**

Tea was first grown in Durban Botanical Gardens in 1850, using plants imported from London's Kew Gardens. Commercial production began 27 years later using seeds from Assam. Production in Natal grew, then faltered by the middle of the twentieth century, and was revived during the 1960s. When apartheid ended, South African tea became available to the world market. Twinings was one of the first companies to buy tea from the new multiracial South Africa. South Africa's tea-growing region maps out a crescent-shaped curve down the eastern side of the country. It roughly follows the line of the Drakensberg mountain from Venda in the north, through Natal, and down to Transkei. Harvesting takes place between October and April, before the winter chill sets in. All South African tea is sold privately. South Africa has not been exporting for long. During the days of apartheid, all tea was produced for home consumption. The South Africans drink approximately ten billion cups of tea per year. International buyers mainly go to South Africa for its bright tea, which is suitable for tea bag varieties. But there is plenty of scope within this 'rising star' of tea-growing nations to introduce further varieties with an international appeal.
**Russia**

The Russians were early converts to tea. It came to them overland by camel. Nowadays they drink it all day long - hot, strong, black, and with honey, sugar, or jam. The Russian desire for tea at any time of the day is satisfied by the ‘Samovar’, a continuous source of hot tea. A ‘Samovar’ is a metal urn containing water, topped by a cradle that holds a teapot, and is heated by a charcoal burning pipe.

The tea in the teapot is extremely strong. A little is poured out at a time and diluted with hot water supplied by a tap in the urn. The dispensing of tea from a ‘Samovar’ is part of the Russian culture. They can be found in homes, offices, and restaurants, as well as on street corners and on board trains. The first imported ‘Samovars’ were plain. When the Russians started making their own in Tula in 1820, they began to decorate them. Their centrality to Russian life was reflected in fantastically ornate designs. Modern ‘Samovars’ are heated electrically.

**Malaysia**

Malaysian tea is brewed longer than most teas to give a stronger taste. It's often drunk with thick, condensed milk - but always with plenty of sugar. Iced tea is also popular. A glass of hot, strong tea containing generous amounts of condensed milk is topped with crushed ice. This is served with a straw, along with a long spoon for stirring the mixture. A popular breakfast time favourite is ‘tea terbang’ or 'flying tea', which is normally served at a ‘kedai kopi’ (coffee shop). The starting point is a jug of hot, strong tea with condensed milk. This is poured back and forth,
from jug to jug, as high as the pourer's arm can reach, until the tea has developed a wonderful, frothy head.

**Indonesia**

The Indonesian islands have a long historical connection with tea. As far back as the seventeenth century, the island of Java was used as a staging post by the Dutch East India Company for the onward transportation of Chinese tea. By the early eighteenth-century, Dutch settlers were already establishing tea plantations on the island. Production soon followed on Sumatra and, latterly, on the island of Sulawesi. The devastation of World War II effectively destroyed the Indonesian tea industry and it took many years before the plantations recovered. It was not until 1984, backed by the newly-formed Tea Board of Indonesia that a program for the introduction of improved clonal tea varieties was started. The bulk of Indonesian tea comes from the island of Java. Picking is typically done manually, with the main growing area to the west of the island around Bandung. Tea is picked all year round in Indonesia, but the best quality comes during the dry season of August and September. Tea estates are either privately owned or government run companies that are called PTPN’s (Perseroan Terbatas Perkebunan Nusantara), each of which has a number of tea estates under its control. The majority of Indonesian tea, is sold through auctions held every Wednesday in Jakarta. This is the only tea auction in the world that is not conducted in English. Green tea production was introduced in the late 1980’s, and accounts for nearly 60 percent of Indonesian tea production, much of which goes to meet domestic demand for Jasmine scented tea, a tea produced by scenting green tea with the aroma of Jasmine flowers. Current black tea production is based on tea plants originally
imported from Assam, and are mostly exported for blending. There is no specific variation in flavour between black teas from the different islands, although the best quality does tend to come from the government-owned estates.

**Tanzania**

German settlers planted tea in Tanzania in 1905, although commercial production did not begin until 1926. Before independence in 1961, production was mainly in the hands of large-scale growers. Since then, the balance has shifted in favour of independent smallholders. The Tanzanian Tea Authority was set up to buy tea from the independent growers who account for a significant proportion of the annual tea production. Lack of infrastructure and unpredictable rainfall has traditionally hampered the Tanzanian tea industry. In recent years, increased investment has been reflected in rising output. There are two main growing areas. In the north, the region around Usambara in the Masai Steppe rises up towards Kilimanjaro. In the south, the region around Njombe and Mufindi, rises up to the mountains that border the Great Rift Valley and Lake Malawi. Strong and fruity flavours characterise Tanzanian teas, which are produced by the CTC (Cut, Tear, and Curl) method.

**Malawi**

In 1878, tea seeds from the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh were planted in Malawi. Subsequent plantings in the lowlands of Malanje and Thyolo were based on seeds from Natal in South Africa. The unpredictable weather in southern Malawi make tea-growing difficult. In recent years, Malawian tea-growers have partially overcome growing difficulties through fresh plantings of cloning varieties better suited to the climate. Landlocked Malawi sits astride a plateau bordering Lake Malawi. The main
picking season is from October to April, which occurs during the Malawian summer. So long as there is plentiful rain, the tea bushes will flush well throughout the season. Auctions are held once a week in Blantyre during the season, and only once a fortnight during off season. Much of the country's tea is sold privately. Tea from Malawi gives reddish colour liquor. Much of it is produced by the Laurie Tea Processing method (the Laurie Tea Processor was a former tobacco-processing machine adapted for the tea trade). Cloning varieties are useful for teabag blends, to which they provide colour and the seedling types are basic blending types.

Kenya

The first Kenyan teas were planted in 1903, although the industry made little impact on the world market until 1950s. Tea production is split between privately owned estates and small holdings. In 1964, the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) was set up to assist the smallholders. It operates its own tea factories and buys leaf from the smallholders. Approximately, 277,000 independent growers are affiliated to the KTDA, and collectively they raise more than 60 percent of the Kenyan tea crop. Equatorial location provides the country with the capacity to produce large amounts of tea. Seasonal variations are small, so the tea bushes flush all year round, with the best teas picked in February and March. The tea estates straddle the equator, roughly in a band that runs westwards from Mount Kenya across beautiful hill country. Most are found in remote areas where coffee is also an important crop. The best teas are found in the east of Regati region. However the older estates of Nandi and Kericho, situated in the Great Rift Valley, lie in the west. Tea is sold either through the Mombasa Auctions or privately. Kenya is the second largest supplier of tea to United Kingdom. Kenyan tea, is coloury and brisk, and is an excellent blending
compliment to Assam. The majority of tea is processed through the CTC (Cut, Tear, and Curl) method and comes in three main grades (Broken Pekoe, Pekoe Fannings, and Pekoe Dusts). This is largely destined for use in tea bags, where it contributes a strong flavour and reddish colour. 

4.3 THE TEA STORY - TIME LINE

2737 B.C - The second emperor of China, Shen Nung, discovers tea when tea leaves blow into his cup of hot water or so the story goes.

350 A.D - A Chinese dictionary cites tea for the first time as ‘Erh Ya’.

400-600 - Demand for tea as a medicinal beverage rises in China and cultivation processes are developed. Many tea drinkers add onion, ginger, spices, or orange to their teas.

400 – Tea is called as ‘Kuang Ya’ in the Chinese dictionary, tea and the detailed infusion and preparation steps are defined.

479 - Turkish traders bargain for tea on the border of Mongolia.

593 - Buddhism and tea, journey from China to Japan. Japanese priests studying in China carried tea seeds and leaves back.

618-907 - Tea becomes a popular drink in the T’ang dynasty in China, for both its flavour and medicinal qualities.

648-749 - Japanese monk Gyoki plants the tea bushes in 49 Buddhist temple gardens. Tea in Japan is rare and expensive, enjoyed mostly by high priests and the aristocracy.

725 - The Chinese give tea its own character ‘cha’.

729 - The Japanese emperor serves powdered tea to Buddhist priests.

780 - First tea tax imposed in China. Chinese poet and scholar Lu Yu writes the first book of tea titled ‘Ch’a Ching’ (The Classic of Tea) in timely alignment with the

805 - Buddhism and tea devotion spreads further. The Japanese Buddhist Saint and priest Saicho and monk Kobo Daishi bring tea seeds and cultivation and manufacturing tips back from China and plant gardens in the Japanese temples.

960-1280 – (i) Chinese tea drinking is on the rise, as are elegant teahouses and teacups carefully crafted from porcelain and pottery. Drinking powdered and frothed tea or tea scented with flowers is widespread in China. (ii) Zen Buddhism catches on in Japan through China and along come tea-drinking temple rituals.

1101-1125 - Chinese Emperor Hui Tsung becomes tea obsessed and writes about the best tea-whisking methods and holds tea-tasting tournaments in the court. While “tea minded,” he does not notice the Mongol take-over of his empire. Teahouses in garden settings pop up around China.

1191 - Japanese Buddhist abbot Eisai, who introduced Zen Buddhism to Japan, brings tea seeds from China and plants them around his Kyoto temple.

1206-1368 - During the Mongol take-over of China, tea becomes a common place beverage buy never regains its high social status.

1211 - Japanese Buddhist Abbot Eisai writes the first Japanese tea book ‘Kitcha-Yojoki’

1280 - Mongolia takes over of China and since the Emperor of Mongol is not a “tea guy,” tea drinking dies down in the courts and among the aristocracy. The masses continue to indulge.

1368-1644 - At the fall of the Mongol take-over, all teas - green, black, and oolong - is easily found in China. The process of steeping whole tea leaves in cups or teapots becomes popular.
1422-1502 - The Japanese tea ceremony emerges on to the scene. First created by a Zen priest named Murata Shuko, the ceremony is called ‘Cha-no-yu’, literally meaning "hot water tea" and celebrates the mundane aspects of everyday life. Tea’s status elevates to an art form and almost a religion.

1484 - Japan's Shogun Yoshimasa encourages tea ceremonies, painting, and drama.

1589 - Europeans learn about tea when a Venetian author credits the lengthy lives of Asians to their tea drinking.

1597 - Tea is mentioned for the first time in an English translation of Dutch navigator Jan Hugo Van Linschooten's travels, in which he refers to tea as ‘chaa’.

End of 1500s - Japanese tea master Sen-No Rikyu opens the first independent teahouse and evolves the tea ceremony into its current simple and aesthetic ritual. During this ceremony, one takes a garden path into a portico, enters upon hearing the host’s gong, washes in a special room, and then enters a small tearoom that holds a painting or flower arrangement to gaze upon. The tea master uses special utensils to whisk the intense powdered tea. Tea drinkers enjoy the art or flowers and then smell and slurp from a shared tea bowl. Europeans hear about tea again when Portuguese priests spreading Roman Catholicism through China taste tea and write about its medicinal and taste benefits.

1610 - The Dutch East India Company market tea as an exotic medicinal drink, but it is so expensive and only the aristocracy can afford the tea.

1618 - Chinese ambassadors present the Russian Czar Alexis with many chests of tea, which are refused as useless.

1635 - Tea catches on in the Dutch court. A German physician touts a warning about the dangers of tea drinking.

1637 - Wealthy Dutch merchants’ wives serve tea at parties.
1650-1700 - Tea parties become quite trendy among women across the social classes.

1650 - The Dutch introduce several teas and tea traditions to New Amsterdam, which later becomes New York.

1657 - The first tea is sold as a health beverage in London, England at Garway's Coffee House.

1661 - The debate over tea’s health benefits versus detriments heightens when a Dutch doctor praises its curative side while French and German doctors call out its harmful side.

1662 - When Charles II takes a tea-drinking bride (Catherine Braganza of Portugal), tea becomes so chic that alcohol consumption declines.

1664 - English East India Company brings the gift of tea to the British King and Queen. The British take over New Amsterdam, name it New York, and a British tea tradition ensues.

1666 - Holland tea prices drop to $80-$100 per pound.

1669 - English East India Company monopolizes British tea imports after convincing British government to ban Dutch imports of tea.

1670 - The Massachusetts colony is known to drink black tea.

1680s - Tea with milk is mentioned in Madam De Sévigné’s letters. The Duchess of York introduces tea to Scotland.

1690 - The first tea is sold publicly in Massachusetts.

1697 - The first known Taiwanese cultivation and export of domestic tea takes place.

Late 1600s - Russia and China sign a treaty that brings the tea trade across Mongolia and Siberia.
18th Century - The controversy over tea continues in England and Scotland where opponents claim that it is overpriced, harmful to health, and may even lead to moral decay.

1702-14 - During Queen Anne’s reign, tea drinking thrives in British coffee-houses.

1705 - Annual tea importation to England tops 800,000 pounds.

1706 - Thomas Twining serves up tea at Tom’s Coffee House in London.

1717 - Tom’s Coffee House evolves into the first teashop called the Golden Lyon. Both men and women patronize the shop.

1723 - British Prime Minister Robert Walpole reduces British import taxes on tea.

1735 - The Russian Empress extends tea as a regulated trade. In order to fill Russia’s tea demand, traders and three hundred camels travel 11,000 miles to and from China, which takes sixteen months. Russian tea-drinking customs emerge, which entail using tea concentrate, adding hot water, topping it with a lemon, and drinking it through a lump of sugar held between the teeth.

1765 - Tea easily ranks as the most popular beverage in the American colonies.

1767 - The Townshend Revenue Act passes British Parliament, imposing duty on tea and other goods imported into the British American colonies. A town meeting is held in Boston to protest the Townshend Revenue Act, which leads to an American boycott of British imports and a smuggling in of Dutch teas.

1770 - Parliament rescinds the Townshend Revenue Act, eliminating all import taxes except those on teas.

1773 - In protest of British tea taxes and in what becomes known as the Boston Tea Party, colonists disguised as Native Americans board East India Company ships and unload hundreds of chests of tea into the harbour.
1774 - A furious British Parliament passes the Coercive Acts in response to the American “tea party” rebellions. King George III agrees to the Boston Port Bill, which closes the Boston Harbor until the East India Company is reimbursed for its tea.

1775 - After several British attempts to end the taxation protests, the American Revolution begins.

1778 - Before the indigenous Assam tea plants is identified, British naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, hired by the East India Company, suggests that India grow plant and cultivate imported Chinese tea. For 50 years, India is unsuccessful.

1784 - Parliament further reduces the British import taxes on tea in an effort to end the smuggling that accounts for the majority of the nation's tea imports.

1785 - 11 million pounds of tea are brought into England.

1797 - English tea drinking hits a rate of two pounds per capita annually, a rate that increases by five times over the next ten years.

1815-1831 - Samples of indigenous Indian tea plants are sent to an East India Company Botanist who is slowly convinced that they are bonafide tea plants.

1826 - English Quaker John Horniman introduces the first retail tea in sealed, lead-lined packages.

1830 - Congress reduces U.S. duties on coffee and tea and other imports.

1833 - By an act of the British Prime Minister Charles Grey, the East India Company loses its monopoly in the trade with China, mostly in tea.

1835 - The East India Company starts the first tea plantations in Assam, India.

1837 - The first American consul at Canton, Major Samuel Shaw, trades cargo for tea and silk, earning investors a great return on their capital and encouraging more Americans to trade with China.
1838 - The first tea from Indian soil and imported Chinese tea plants is sold. A small amount is sent to England and quickly purchased due to its uniqueness.

1840 - American clipper ships speed up tea transports to America and Europe.

1840s and 50s - The first tea plants, imports from China and India, are cultivated on a trial basis in Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

1840 - Anna the Duchess of Bedford introduces afternoon tea, which becomes a lasting English ritual.

1849 – (i) Parliament ends the Britain's Navigation Acts, and U.S. clipper ships are allowed to transport tea from China to British ports. (ii) Tea wholesaler Henry Charles Harrod takes over a London grocery store and grows it into one of the world's largest department stores.

1850 – (i) Londoners get their first peak at a U.S. clipper ship when one arrives from Hong Kong full of China tea.(ii) U.S. clipper ships soon desert China trade for the more profitable work of taking gold seekers to California.

1856 - Tea is planted in and about Darjeeling, India.

1859 - Local New York merchant George Huntington Hartford and his employer George P. Gilman give the A&P retail chain its start as the Great American Tea Company Store. Hartford and Gilman buy whole clipper shipments from the New York harbor and sell the tea three times cheaper than other merchants.

1866 - Over ninety percent of Britain's tea is still imported from China.

1869 – (i) The Suez Canal opens and the trip to China was shortened, making steamships more economical. (ii) In a marketing effort to capitalize on the transcontinental rail link fervor, the Great American Tea Company is renamed the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. (iii) A plant fungus ruins the coffee crop in Ceylon and spreads throughout the Orient and Pacific, giving a hefty boost to tea drinking.
1870 - Twinings of England begins to blend tea for uniformity.

1872 - The Adulteration of Food, Drink, and Drugs Act deems the sale of adulterated drugs or other unlabeled mixtures with foreign additives that increase weight as punishable offenses.

1875 - A new British Sale of Food and Drugs Law calls adulteration hazardous to personal health and increases its legal consequences to a heavy fine or imprisonment.

1876 - Thomas Johnstone Lipton opens his first shop in Glasgow, using American merchandising methods that he learned while working in the grocery section of a New York department store.

1890 - Thomas Lipton buys tea estates in Ceylon, in order to sell tea at a reasonable price at his growing chain of 300 grocery stores.

Late 1800s – (i) Assam tea plants take over imported Chinese plants in India and its tea market booms. (ii) Ceylon’s successful coffee market turns into a successful tea market.

1904 - Englishman Richard Blechynden creates iced tea during a heat wave at the St. Louis World Fair.

1904 - Green tea and Formosan (Taiwanese) tea outsells black tea by five times in the United States of America.

1908 - New York tea importer Thomas Sullivan inadvertently invents tea bags when he sends tea to clients in small silk bags, and they mistakenly steep the bags whole.

1909 - Thomas Lipton begins blending and packaging of tea in New York.

1910 – Sumatra and Indonesia becomes a cultivator and exporter of tea followed by Kenya and parts of Africa.
4.4 TEA BOARD OF INDIA

Tea is one of the industries, which by an Act of Parliament came under the control of the Union Government. The genesis of the Tea Board India dates back to 1903 when the Indian Tea Cess Bill was passed. The Bill provided for levying a cess on tea exports - the proceeds of which were to be used for the promotion of Indian tea both within and outside India. The present Tea Board set up under section 4 of the Tea Act 1953 was constituted on 1st April 1954. It has succeeded the Central Tea Board and the Indian Tea Licensing Committee which functioned respectively under the Central Tea Board Act, 1949 and the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938 which were repealed. The activities of the two previous bodies had been confined largely to regulation of tea cultivation and export of tea as required by the International Tea agreement then in force, and promotion of tea consumption.

4.4.1 Constitution of the Board

The Tea Board, set up under section 4 of the Tea Act, 1953, was constituted on 1st April 1954. It succeeded the Central Tea Board and the Indian Tea Licensing Committee that were functioned respectively under the Central Tea Board Act, 1949 and the Indian Tea Control Act, 1938. The activities of the two previous bodies confined largely to regulation of tea cultivation and export of tea as required by the International Tea Agreement then in force, and promotion of tea Consumption. The present Tea Board is charged with the overall development of the tea industry in India.
4.4.2 Organization of the Board

The Board is headed by a Chairman and consists of thirty members appointed by Government of India representing the different segments of the industry. The tenure of the Board is three years and it is reconstituted every three years.

The Board is assisted by the following standing committees:

(i) Executive Committee

This committee comprising nine members including a Chairman and it deals with the administrative matters of the Board.

(ii) Export Promotion Committee

This committee comprises seven members including a Chairman and it advice the Board on export promotion issues and monitors various promotional schemes being implemented by the Board.

(iii) Labour Welfare Committee

This committee comprises nine members including Chairman and it deals with issues relating to labour welfare measures which are not covered under the Plantation Labour Act, 1951. This committee also guides the Board on implementation of various welfare schemes for the benefit of the plantation workers and their wards.

(iv) Development Committee

This Committee comprising of seven members including Chairman and it deals with issues relating to tea production, productivity and quality improvement and is responsible for overseeing the various developmental schemes being implemented by the Board.
4.4.3 Functions of Tea Board

The primary functions of the Tea Board are briefly as under:

a) Rendering financial and technical assistance for cultivation, manufacture and marketing and Export Promotion of tea.

b) Extending financial support for Research and Development activities for augmentation of tea production and improvement of tea quality

c) Extending financial assistance to the plantation workers and their wards through labour welfare schemes

d) Assistance to the un-organized small growers sector both financially and technically

e) Collection and dissemination of Statistical information

f) Such other activities as are assigned from time to time by the Central Government

4.4.4 Source of Funds

Funds are made available to the Board by the Government through Plan and Non-Plan Budgetary allocations. The Non-Plan funds are being used exclusively for the administrative and establishment charges of the Board and Plan funds are used for all other activities

4.4.5 Administrative Set-up

The head office of the Board is located in Kolkata (West Bengal) and it is headed by Chairman and being assisted by Deputy Chairman and two Executive Directors who are stationed at Guwahati and Coonoor. The Board has sixteen Offices within India and three Offices abroad.
4.5 KEY PLAYERS IN INDIAN TEA MARKET

In India, a significant amount of retail sales of tea is unorganized. In organized sector Tata and Hindustan Unilever dominate the market. List of key players are:

- Tata Global Beverages (market leader)
- Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (market leader)
- Duncan’s Industries
- Wagh Bakri
- Goodricke Group.
- Twinings

Indian tea market has hundreds of tea brands. Some of the popular ones are:

- Tata Tea
- Brooke Bond
- Duncans
- Lipton
- Wagh Bakri
- Goodricke

**Tata Tea**

Tata Global Beverages Limited (formerly Tata Tea Limited) is an Indian multinational non-alcoholic beverages Company headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal (India) and a subsidiary of the Tata Group. It is the world's second-largest manufacturer and distributor of tea and a major producer of coffee. Tata Global Beverages markets tea under the major brands Tata Tea, Tetley, Good Earth Teas and JEMČA. Tata Tea is the biggest-selling tea brand in India, Tetley is the largest-selling tea brand in the United Kingdom and Canada and the second largest-selling in the United States and JEMČA is the largest-selling tea brand in the Czech Republic. Tata Tea is India’s best and most widely consumed Tea. Tata Tea has launched a social campaign named ‘Jaago Re’, to awaken the youth against corruption. Tata Tea owns
five brands in India: Tata Tea, Tetley, Kanan Devan, Chakra Gold, and Gemini. It has subsidiaries in Australia, Great Britain, United States, Czech Republic and India.

**Red Label Tea**

Red Label with the tag line ‘Chuskiyaan Zindagi ki’ is for the housewife who seeks to bring her family together over a cup of great Red Label with its perfect strength, taste and colour. It is the second largest tea brand in the country. Red Label is a 107 year old brand and has tremendous equity and heritage in the Indian market. Red Label holds the Guinness Record for the world’s largest tea party. It is now proven that regular consumption of three cups of Red Label Natural Care every day can enhance one’s immunity and help one fall ill less often.

Brooke Bond Red Label Tea is a Hindustan Unilever (HUL) Product. HUL is one of the popular names among the Indian companies that deal in fast moving consumer goods. The company has been operating for more than 75 years. Following are the different variations in this brand:

**Red Label:** Has the goodness of natural flavonoids that helps improve blood circulation and keeps the body healthy.

**Red Label Natural Care:** Has a mix of five Ayurvedic ingredients like Tulsi, Ashwagandha, Mulethi, Ginger and Cardamom that are proven to improve immunity and help you fall ill less often.

**Red Label Dust:** Has strength, taste and comes with the Red Label promise of great quality.

**Red Label Special:** Has 15 percent extra long leaves to give great taste, colour and superior aroma.
Taj Mahal Tea

Taj Mahal was launched in 1966 by Brooke Bond. For over four decades, Taj Mahal has been the gold standard of tea in India. It has been a pioneer of innovations in the Indian tea market. It was the first brand to launch tea bags and is the only tea brand in India to be sold in Vacuum sealed packs. Taj Mahal is special because it is made from the rarest and the best tea leaves. Brooke Bond experts go through a lot of rigour to ensure that only the best, freshest and juiciest tea leaves from a thousand go into every Taj Mahal pack. Even the brand ambassadors personify the true essence of Taj Mahal Tea. Taj Mahal’s first brand ambassador, Ustaad Zakir Hussain, is a symbol of excellence in the field of music. Ustaad through his rigour, perfection and talent exemplifies the greatness of Taj Mahal. The brand’s current ambassador, Saif Ali Khan, with his sophistication, modernity and refinement compliments the world of Taj Mahal. Taj Mahal is not merely a cup of tea but a superlative experience that demonstrates connoisseurship. At present, Taj Mahal Tea is also a Hindustan Unilever product. Following are the various products available in this segment:

- Taj Mahal Tea
- Taj Lemon Flavored Tea Bags
- Taj Ginger Flavored Tea Bags
- Taj Cardamom Flavoured Tea Bags

Lipton Tea

Lipton Company was named Thomas J Lipton Co at its inception during 1893. Its factory and head offices are at Hoboken in New Jersey. Lipton is a very famous brand of Tea in India, currently owned by Hindustan Unilever. Lipton teas are a blend selected from many different plantations around the world, from well-known producing countries like India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and China. Lipton Yellow Label is
blended from as many as twenty different teas. Available in over 110 countries, Lipton is particularly popular in Europe, North America and the Middle East, parts of Asia and Australia. Lipton’s main pillar brands are Lipton Yellow Label and Lipton Iced Tea. Other product lines exist as well, like the Lipton pyramid range in Europe and North America, and Lipton Milk Tea in East Asia. Now the company’s products are available in at least 150 countries across the world. Following are its major products:

- Lipton Iced Tea
- Lipton Green Tea
- Lipton Fresh Brew Iced Teas
- Lipton Tea & Honey
- Lipton Iced Tea Mixes
- Lipton Flavoured Black Teas
- Lipton Black Teas
- Lipton Herbal Teas
- Lipton White and Red Teas

Society Tea

Society Tea is owned by Hasmukhrai & Co. established 75 years ago. They are the key tea manufacturers in India since 1933, and today, Society Tea is known for its consistent taste and richness of quality. Society is synonymous to a fragrant aroma and is known nationally as well as internationally for it. Society has an innovative advertising campaign and strong distribution network.

Wagh Bakri Tea Group

Waghbakri tea house is a premium tea house in inception since the year 1892. The tea baron, Sir Narandas Desai started the company in Ahmadabad being experienced in the art of blending and tea growing which he learned while owning a tea estate in South Africa. Sir Narandas Desai was praised by Mahatma Gandhi for his commendable work. The generations that followed gave boost to his pioneering efforts.
and developed the business to its present status of being one of the largest tea houses in India.

**Duncan’s Double Diamond Tea**

A premium CTC leaf brand, Double Diamond represents strength – that of character, achievement and elegance. Just a spoonful of this tea brews a rejuvenating cup, where strong flavour and aroma co-exist in fine balance. Packaged in the Duncans home colours and iconized diamonds, this flagship brand is the chosen cup of the educated, young and forward-looking couples of today, who believe in the ‘right quality at the right price’. A trendsetter in the jar segment, Double Diamond maintains an attractive inventory of jars and is also available in small packs.

4.6 INDIAN TEA INDUSTRY: A SWOT ANALYSIS

With tea prices rising, the tea industry is on the upswing again after several years and the expectation is that the trend will persist. But the industry is not without its challenges. The following is the SWOT analysis:

**Strengths**

- The diverse agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the tea growing areas of India lend themselves to the production of a wide range of teas – black, (CTC, orthodox), green teas and organic teas.
- A one-stop-shop for high quality specialty teas. For example, Darjeeling, Assam, orthodox and high range Nilgiris.
- Strong production base with 75 per cent of the production being accounted for by organised sector covering 1,600 gardens owned by nearly 1,100 entities.
- Competent managerial manpower.
• Strong research backing from well established research institutions.

• Availability of modernised and upgraded manufacturing facilities.

• Labour welfare laws protecting workmen.

• Emerging small grower sector with young plantation profiles.

• Availability of training facilities for plantation managers, supervisory staff and workers for continuous up gradation of their skills.

• Strong domestic market accounting for nearly 80 per cent of production offering demand cushion for the tea industry.

Weaknesses

• Old age of the tea bushes – nearly 38 per cent have crossed the economic threshold age limit of 50 years and another 10 per cent on the verge of crossing this limit shortly. High cost of production mainly due to low productivity, high energy cost and high social cost burden.

• Diminishing availability of workforce particularly in South India. Remote location of the plantations and transportation of teas over long distances from tea gardens to sale points. Poor infrastructure – approach roads to gardens, inadequate warehousing at ports, constrained availability of containers, placements of vessels and high ocean freight charges.

• Difficulties in introduction of mechanisation of field operations due to topographical and quality limitations.

• Unorganised nature of small growers with fragmented small and scattered holdings leading to production of poor quality teas mainly due to non-availability of technical know-how at the doorstep – weak extension service.

• Lack of quality monitoring mechanism for teas particularly sold through private sales.
Opportunities

- Good awareness level world over as to the health attributes of tea leading to growing demand for good quality teas and specialty teas such as organic teas, green teas.

- Narrowing down of the gap between supply and demand due to increased growth rate of consumption in the major producing countries. Producing countries reaching an agreement for forming an exclusive forum for resolving their differences over common issues.

- Positive response by the tea industry responding to the Government towards renovation of fields and processing factories. (Special purpose tea fund and quality upgradation initiative)

- Increasing strength of small growers and showing good response to the suggestion of Tea Board for collective approach towards adopting GAP and GMP.

Threats

- Round-the-year production in countries such as Sri Lanka, Vietnam. Low cost of production of teas from Kenya, Vietnam and Indonesia etc.

- Younger age of bushes (better quality of tea) of other producing countries.

- Consistency in quality commitment and high service quality perception of exporters of other countries.

- Better developed packaging and bagging capacity of Sri Lanka.
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