



**“Tea Soils of North East India”** published by Purple Peacock Books & Arts Private Limited, 119 Lake Terrace, Kolkata, on behalf of Toklai Experimental Station, Tea Research Association and dedicated to one of the illustrious soil scientist Dr S.K.Dey. **Pages : 117, Price : Rs. 350/-** This book is the first in the proposed centenary volumes from the Tea Research Association. The thirty two chapters are based mostly on the previous reports from the Tea Research Association and the Toklai Experimental Station. They deal with the survey and analysis of the different soil types of the North East Region suitable for Tea plantation and production. Such reports emanate from the investigations carried out by a

number of Tea Research Association and Toklai Experimental Station scientists and accumulated over a large number of years (> 95 years !), published mostly in the Annual Reports or presented in TRA conferences. On this account this is a fair attempt on the part of this old Institution of the country in its centenary year and is certainly praiseworthy.

While the book attempts to document the several aspects of the North East soil type and its suitability for tea plantation, it fails to serve either as a document recommending good soil-health for tea plantation to ensure sustained productivity or as a protocol for ideal agricultural practices to achieve such goals which was expected from the experts in this field. The thirty two chapters (many of them being even less than a page in length !) seems not to be thoughtfully arranged thematically to offer an interesting reading to the uninitiated. Majority of the information provided could have been better presented item-wise through detailed maps of the region (e.g. soil types and texture, element content and density etc). Overall, the book remained as a compilation of survey documents previously published by TRA over long years presumably without considering the changes in the edaphic factors due to current geological interventions along with climatic changes in the North East region. The latter has reportedly changed even the biodiversity pattern to a considerable extent. We can only hope that future proposed volumes will be more carefully written and edited keeping in mind the tremendous importance of this crop in Indian culture and economy. □

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