Chembakolli: Fairtrade

How is Fairtrade tea grown in Chembakolli?

Aims

- To know how Pure Nilgiri tea is produced
- To understand what 'fair trade' means and how Pure Nilgiri tea is traded fairly

Chembakolli, ActionAid and tea – a brief history

Adivasi people have lived in the forests of the Indian Nilgiri Hills or 'blue mountains' for thousands of years. However over the last 100 years their land has been threatened. Some of the threats they have faced include being forced off their land by the government or by big companies who want to sell the trees for timber or cut them down to grow tea or coffee.

In 1986 a local group called ACCORD was set up to protect Adivasi land and help the Adivasi take control of decisions that affect them and their home. Within 15 years most of the Adivasi had gained small pieces of land. Today, the Adivasi make all major decisions about the forest themselves, with ACCORD helping them.

A few years ago, the Adivasi decided to start growing and selling tea. They now grow tea all year round to generate an income and show everyone that the land belongs to them.

Slide 2

The Nilgiri Hills in Chembakolli, south India. This is where the Adivasi people live and where they grow Pure Nilgiri tea.

Question: Does anyone know what 'Adivasi' means? Can you guess?
Answer: Adivasi means 'first people'. This is because they were the first people to live in the forest.

Adivasis are among India's poorest people and have been badly treated, often having their land taken away from them. Adivasi communities in the area have joined together to make sure that they keep their land.

Slide 3

Question: What is tea?
Question: How do you make it?
Question: Where does it come from?
Answers: This presentation will help us to find out.

NB: You can return to the question of where tea comes from at the end of the PowerPoint to gauge pupils' learning.

Slide 4

Question: What kind of plant do you think this is?
Answer: A tea plant

Tea is very important to the Adivasis in Chembakolli. When they came to Chembakolli they planted tea in the land around their houses. This was to show that they owned the land.

Slide 5

This is Madhuvana tea estate in Devala, near Chembakolli.

Question: Why do you think there are rows separating the tea bushes?

Answer: So that farmers can pick tea easily by walking between the rows

During the 1990s more and more Adivasis were planting tea in their villages, but they were paid low prices by traders, who acted as ‘middle men’ between tea growers and sellers. In 1998 the Adivasis bought a whole tea estate, that sells its own tea directly to people that drink it. Now the Adivasis can weigh their own crops and have more control of how they trade their tea.

Slide 6

Question: What animals are these?
Answer: Elephants

These two elephants were spotted walking through the forest on their way to Madhuvana tea estate. They love the green grass so much that they often damage the tea bushes. Sometimes they chase tea pickers away, just so they can eat as much juicy grass as they want.

Slide 7

Here is an Adivasi woman picking tea leaves in the Madhuvana tea estate.

Question: Where do you think she puts the leaves she has picked?
Answer: In the bag tied to her back

Today, more than 1,000 Adivasi farmers are tea growers, both in their gardens and in tea estates. It gets them money every month, because tea grows all year round.

Slide 8

Meghana is the daughter of the manager of the tea estate. She is seven-years-old.

Question: What do you think she is doing?
Answer: She’s picking tea leaves

Slide 9

Question: What do you think is happening here?
Answer: They are weighing the tea and putting the information into an app.

The Adivasi created the app in 2013 for uploading information about the amount of tea picked by the farmers. The entire project was designed, tested and made by the Adivasi themselves. They won an award for the app!

Slide 10

The Adivasi Tea Leaf Marketing Company (ATLM) truck.

Question: What do you think this truck is used for?
Answer: To collect tea
Question: Where do you think it takes the tea?
Answer: To the factory

Every day the ATLM truck collects tea leaves from Adivasi villages and Madhuvana tea estate to take them to the factory. The ATLM workers weigh the tea and pay the Adivasis an agreed fee for it when they collect it.

Slide 11

This is Lakshmi and her husband Maran. They are Adivasi people who live in one of the villages in Chembakolli.
Question: What do you think they are drinking?
Answer: Tea

Slide 12
Question: What do you think is happening to the leaves here?
Answer: The tea leaves are drying out.

At the factory the tea leaves are dried and then chopped and crushed.

Slide 13
Question: Where do you think this powder came from?
Answer: Chopping and crushing the leaves turns them into a dark coloured powder. Now the leaves are looking more like the tea we're used to drinking.

Slide 14
Questions: What is this man doing? Why? Who do you think he is?
Answer: Before it leaves the factory a sample of the tea is tasted by the factory manager to check it's good enough to sell.

Slide 15
The Pure Nilgiri tea is put in bags and put in this truck to be driven to a city by the sea called Cochin. It is then taken to the UK in a big ship.

Slide 16
From Cochin the tea is shipped to England and driven to a warehouse in the northern town of Chesterfield. Here it is put into tea bags and packaged. It is then sent out to communities and schools around the UK.

Slide 17
Pure Niligiri tea is traded fairly by Just Change.

Question: How can we tell if other products are traded fairly?
Answer: The FairTrade Foundation and the FAIRTRADE Mark

The Fairtrade Foundation awards the FAIRTRADE Mark to products that meet certain fair trade standards. If you spot this on a product you know it is being traded fairly.

Extra information for teachers

Although Just Change is part of the wider fair trade movement, Pure Nilgiri tea does not carry the FAIRTRADE Mark. This is because its founders are keen to differentiate its approach from conventional fair trade models that focus on negotiations around price. Just change focuses on redefining how communities work together – making a more equal relationship between producers, consumers and investors. It's not just about money.