Demand For Regulation by Small Tea Growers

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance

Why in news?

Recently, the North East Confederation of Small Tea Growers' Association (NECSTGA) submitted a memorandum to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce regarding their demand for regulation and support measures.

> *North East Confederation of Small Tea Growers' Association (NECSTGA) is established in June 2024 in Golaghat, Assam.*

- **Regulation of Leaf Agents –** It advocates the Tea Board of India to regulate leaf-dealing agents to ensure transparency and fair pricing.
- It also addresses concerns over **quality deterioration** due to unscrupulous blending practices.
- **Weather-based crop insurance –** It calls for the implementation of **weather-based crop insurance** to mitigate risks from climate change-induced challenges like droughts and heavy rainfall.
- **Minimum support price (MSP)** – It urges the government to establish an **MSP** for tea, akin to other crops like paddy and wheat, to ensure sustainable income for growers.
- **Extension of Tea Board Schemes** – It seeks for the expansion of **Tea Board of India's schemes** to all north-eastern states beyond Assam, including Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur.
- It stresses the need for streamlined financial assistance procedures and direct payment systems to benefit small growers.
- **Addressing import concerns** – It alarms over the recent surge in tea imports from countries like Kenya and Nepal, which undermines local production and pricing.
- Reports a 288% increase in Kenyan tea exports to India between January and October 2024.
- **Language and Communication Barriers** – It emphasizes the need for Tea Board officers proficient in regional languages to enhance communication and training effectiveness.
- **Land documentation challenges** – It advocates for the acceptance of **village council-issued land documents** in states like Nagaland, where traditional land ownership structures exist, to facilitate access to Tea Board benefits.

> *Small tea growers under NECSTGA contribute approximately **54%** of the region's tea production*

Reference

[The Hindu| Small tea growers seek regulation]