

Addressing the education and training needs of the tea sector in Kenya: The case of the School of Agriculture and Biotechnology at Karatina University

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, personnel working in the tea sector are drawn from various fields of specialization such as general agriculture, horticulture, engineering and economics. There are no special training programmes to train personnel at degree, diploma and certificate levels on tea in the country. The training needs assessment carried out by Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa in 2010, observed that there are training needs for each segment along the tea value chain. It is against this background that the School of Agriculture and Biotechnology, Karatina University recognized the training gap in tea value chain and decided to design and mount specialized programmes in tea. The paper was informed by the *Training Needs Report of 2010* by the Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa and other secondary data from published articles on tea. From the documentary analysis, it was established that training of personnel for tea sector was long overdue. Karatina University has taken the right direction towards this crucial aspect of human resource capacity building. It is recommended that Karatina University be a centre of excellence for tea information resource and develop more tea academic programmes for manpower training at bachelors, master and doctorate degree levels.

Key words: Education, Kenya, Tea sector, Training needs.

TEA INDUSTRY IN KENYA

Tea growing in Kenya dates back to 1903 (www.ask.com/history+of+tea+in+kenya) when white settlers planted a few *Camellia sinensis* tea seedlings at Limuru, in the then Kiambu District, for experimental purposes. Today, Kenya is famous world over for its production of high quality tea. Tea is grown in the highlands where there is adequate rainfall and low temperatures. The Tea Industry is divided between small farms and large estates. The small-scale sector, with more than 500,000 farmers, is controlled by the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA). The first legal instrument to govern the production of tea in Kenya was enacted as the Tea Ordinance, 1934 (No. 46 of 1934) (www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000059358). This ordinance was revised by the Tea Ordinance, 1948 (No. 52 of 1948) which became effective on 25th August 1948 (books.google.co.ke/books?id=imt7MBsIl24C). The objective of the Tea Ordinance, 1948, was to provide for the control of the production of tea in the colony.

The institution of the Directorate of Agriculture was responsible for controlling the production of tea by issuing licenses and permits to farmers until 1950 when the Tea Board of Kenya was established to regulate the industry (www.teaboard.or.ke/industry/key_industry_institutions.html). To promote the cultivation of cash crops, the Special Crops Development Authority (SCDA) was formed under the Agriculture Act in 1960 (siteresources.worldbank.org/intafrica/..//ccaa_Colonial.pdf). This body was replaced by the Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) in 1964 when the Kenya Tea Development Order 1964 was promulgated (*www*.

proudlyafrican.info/..Kenya/..Tea../Kenya-Tea-Development-Ag.). The Tea Ordinance, 1948 was repealed by the Tea Act of 1960 (No. 61 of 1960). Since then, the legal framework has been used without major amendments (Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa, 2010). While great strides have been made in the development of the Tea Industry, especially under the smallholder sub-sector within the KTDA, the relevant institutions and the policy and legal framework have not been reviewed (Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa, 2010). The Tea Industry requires serious considerations in order to move it from the present position to the next level in the global tea business, especially with regard to human capacity development (Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa, 2010).

INSTITUTIONS IN THE TEA INDUSTRY IN KENYA

The Tea Directorate

The Tea Directorate (formerly the Tea Board of Kenya, TBK) was established in 1950 under the Tea Act (Cap 343) of the laws of Kenya and is mandated to regulate the Tea Industry in all aspects of tea growing, research, manufacture, trade and promotion in both the local and the international markets. The Directorate also disseminates information relating to tea and advises the Government on all policy matters regarding the tea industry through the Ministry of Agriculture (www.teaboard.or.ke/industry/tea).

Tea Research Institute

The Tea Research Institute (TRI) (formerly, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, TRFK) is located in the lush green tea carpet of Kericho, and is the technical arm of the Tea Board of Kenya. It is mandated to carry out research on tea and advice growers on the control of pests and diseases, improvement of planting material, general husbandry, yields and quality. The foundation has so far developed and released to growers over 45 well adapted clones (www.tearesearch.or.ke).

Kenya Tea Development Agency

Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) Ltd., previously a state corporation was incorporated as a private company in June 2000. KTDA currently manages 65 tea factories in the smallholder sub-sector serving over 500,000 growers (www.proudlyafrican.info/..kenya/..tea../kenya-tea-development-ag..).

Kenya Tea Growers Association

Kenya Tea Growers Association (KTGA) was established by large-scale tea producers to promote the common interests of the members in the cultivation and manufacture of tea and to promote good industrial relations and sound wage policies for the workers. The plantation/estates sub-sector maintains 39 tea factories (softkenya.com/agriculture/kenya-tea-growers-association/).

Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation

Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation (NTZDC) is a state corporation established to manage the tea belts around the forest zones planted to create buffer zones meant to protect the natural forests from human encroachment (softkenya.com/agriculture/nyayo-tea-zones-corporation/).

East African Tea Traders Association

East African Tea Traders Association (EATTA) brings together tea producers, brokers, buyers and packers, and is the auspices under which the Mombasa Tea Auction is conducted (www.eatta.com/).

TRAINING NEEDS IN THE TEA SECTOR

According to Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa (2010) training needs in tea sector are both short term and long term. After analyzing documentary data, Karatina University identified the following short term training needs: Tea Value Addition, Branding and Auctioning, Tea Total Quality Assurance and Certification, Soil Fertility and Nutrition in Tea Production, and Tea Propagation Methods and Management. Long term training needs are Certificates, Ordinary Diploma and Post-graduate Diploma Programmes. These include: Certificate in Tea Husbandry and Management, Certificate in Tea Post-Harvest Handling and Quality Assurance, Certificate in Tea Processing Operations, Diploma in Tea Husbandry and Management, Diploma in Tea Trade and Economics, Diploma in Tea Processing and Quality Assurance and Post-graduate Diploma in Tea Science and Management.

TEA TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN KENYA

In Kenya, personnel working in the tea sector are drawn from various fields of specialization such as general agriculture, horticulture, engineering and economics. The TRI has been conducting short courses in tea. However, there are no special training programmes for training personnel at degree, diploma and certificate levels on tea in Kenya. The training needs assessment carried out by Tetralink Taylor and Associates East Africa in 2010 observed that there is training needs for each segment along the tea value chain. It is against this background that the School of Agriculture and Biotechnology at Karatina University, recognized the training gap in tea value chain and decided to design and mount specialized programmes in tea, not only for Kenyan market but also for the region and international markets.

Tea training programmes at Karatina University

Karatina University is strategically placed to offer courses in tea because it is located in the neighbourhood of a tea factory and owns a tea farm that would be needed during practicum sessions. The school has designed programmes that have already been approved by the University senate and have been advertised for participants and students' registration. These include short courses, certificates, diploma and post-graduate diploma.

Short courses in tea science

Module 1: Tea Value Addition, Branding and Auctioning

The aim of the course is to train learners in tea value addition, blending, branding and marketing. The target groups are personnel involved in tea marketing and other persons who may be interested in tea value addition, branding and auctioning. Course duration is one week.

Module 2: Tea Total Quality Assurance and Certification

The aim of the course is to impart knowledge and skills to participants in the Tea Industry on the significance of quality and ISO certification in the tea sector. The target groups are factory unit managers, production managers and their assistants, tea tasters and other persons interested in these aspects of work. Course duration is one week.

Module 3: Soil Fertility and Nutrition in Tea Production

The purpose of the course is to impart knowledge and skills to learners on nutrient cycling, soil and water conservation and soil-plant relationships in tea production. Target groups are tea extension staff, employees of agro-chemical companies, instructors of agricultural institutes and farmers. Course duration is one week.

Module 4: Tea Propagation Methods and Management

The aim of the course is to impart knowledge and skills to learners on tea propagation and nursery management. Target groups are tea extension staff, tea research support staff, tea factory nursery staff and farmers. Course duration is one week.

Certificate courses

Certificate in Tea Husbandry and Management

The aim of the course is to train learners on good agricultural practices in tea production. Target groups are tea extension staff, employees of agrochemical companies, field foremen in tea estates and farmers. Duration of the course is eight months.

Certificate in Tea Post Harvest Handling and Quality Assurance

The purpose of the course is to train learners on post-harvest handling and quality assurance. Target groups are farmers, staff of tea buying centres, leaf transporters, leaf processing staff, tea packers, tea tasters and tea exporters. The duration of the course is eight months.

Tea Processing Operations

The aim of the course is to train learners on tea processing operations. Target group is tea processing support staff. The duration of the course is eight months.

Diploma courses

Diploma in Tea Husbandry and Management

The purpose of the course is to impart knowledge and skills to learners on tea husbandry and management. Target group is personnel working in the Tea Industry and have a certificate in agriculture and holders of KCSE certificate. The course duration is four semesters plus a two-month industrial attachment.

Diploma in Tea Trade and Economics

The purpose of the course is to impart knowledge and skills to learners on tea trade and economics. Target groups are factory sales staff, tea tasters, tea auctioneers, staff of government export promotion agencies, tea exporters, clearing and forwarding agents. The course normally runs for four semesters plus a two-month industrial attachment.

Diploma in Tea Processing and Quality Assurance

The aim of the course is to impart knowledge to learners on tea processing and quality assurance. Target groups are technical staff in tea processing and quality assurance and tea tasters. The course normally runs for four semesters plus a two-month industrial attachment.

Post-graduate Diploma in Tea Science and Management

The purpose of the course is to disseminate knowledge to learners on tea science and management. The course shall normally run for two teaching/course work semesters plus an eight-week industrial attachment. The programme shall be taught in full time or part time mode. The Post-Graduate Diploma course targets the personnel working in the Tea Industry and any interested person who meets required qualifications.

CONCLUSION

Based on the reviewed information above, it was established that for the Kenyan tea sector to maintain global competitiveness edge in tea business, there is need to develop a competitive

human resource capacity through implementation of effective training curricula. Karatina University, has in effect taken the lead in training personnel for the tea industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Karatina University to be a key player in the tea sector, the university must take urgent steps in the following areas: establish a centre of excellence in tea information resource in the region; take the noble role of popularizing modern tea production in the Eastern African region (Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Ethiopia); develop collaboration with other stakeholders in tea sector, regionally and internationally; and, benchmark with other universities that are offering tea training programmes such as Assam Agricultural University in India.

Karatina University should develop relevant academic programmes at bachelors, master and doctorate levels in order to meet the management, consultancy, research and development needs of the tea sector.

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