

Siji's story

For Siji Jose, selling her tea on Fairtrade terms through the Sahyadri Farmers Consortium helps her to get a good price for the tea, which means she can send her children to school and put food on the family table.

"I've been growing tea for 10 years," she said. "The main benefit now is that I am getting a good price – before it was very poor."

Like women all over the world, Siji is an expert at multi-tasking! Having her fields close to her home helps her to fit farming, household work and looking after her family into her working day.

But she also plays an important role in helping other women farmers to have a voice – and make sure that the Fairtrade premium on the tea is well-spent.

Siji is unit secretary of the Women's Development Wing, which meets regularly and gives women tea farmers an opportunity to exchange knowledge and express their views. They also administer the Fairtrade premium in their area.

"Being fair trade means that we have got a small development fund for our unit," Siji said, "and with that we are making use of some organic processes that will promote our cultivation."

On Sundays, Siji and her family attend St Sebastian's RC Church, where many of her neighbouring tea farmers also worship.

"My church life is important to me," she said. "I am a Sunday School teacher and I am teaching Standard 1."

News that Traidcraft's Indian Ocean tea includes tea from Sahyadri has been welcomed by Siji.

"You can take our tea without hesitation. It is very nicely blended," she said. "I am proud that people are enjoying our tea."

