

**STUDY ON POSTHARVEST DAMAGES TO THE TEA
CROP AT DIFFERENT STAGES OF HANDLING AT
ST.COOMBS ESTATE**

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By
**BAMUNU MUDIYANSELAGE GAYANGA KALPANI
GODAVITA**

**Tea Technology and Value Addition Degree Programme
Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture
Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka**

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ABSTRACT

The research was conducted in order to find out the ways in which postharvest damage occur in tea and also to find out the magnitude of those ways. Because the amount of postharvest damage significantly impact on the quality of made tea. The study was focused on three main stages of tea production; namely, field stage, during harvesting and transportation stage. St. Coombs estate was selected for the study and a representative sample was selected using multi stage sampling and simple random sampling. Primary data was collected from the sample during each above mentioned stage. Postharvest damage was taken as the dependent variable while independent variables were pruning year of field, fertilizer application to the field, plucking round, age of the harvester, experience of the plucking, trainee or untrained, education level of the harvester, gender, method of the transport, time duration to the transport and distance to the factory. Data was analyzed using multiple linear regressions and correlation. The study results reveal that pruning year and plucking round effect to the damage of green leaves at field stage. Gender of the harvester is the major factor that impact on postharvest damage. Study further reveals that postharvest damage to green leaf is high when males do plucking. In addition to that experience, trainee level also accounted. From factors related to transportation only time duration taken to transport effect on postharvest damage. Harvesting stage is the main post harvesting damage occurring place and that is account 21.17 %. Transportation stage is the lowest percentage of damage occurring place and that is about 5.41 %. At weighing point and factory level damage percentages are consequently 6.04 % and 11.75 %. All in all it could be concluded that majority of damage are occurred during harvesting.

Key words - Tea, Post-harvest damage, Amount