

**ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTIVENES OF THE
PRESENT CATEGORIZATION METHOD OF LOW
COUNTRY PREMIUM TEA GRADES**

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ABSTRACT

The Sri Lanka is the world's fourth largest producer of tea and the industry is one of the country's main sources of foreign exchange and a significant source of income for workers. Tea is accounting for 12% of the GDP, generating roughly \$700 million annually. Presently, unique and different tea grades are produced by categorizing those into Select Best, Best, Secondary and Poor, mainly considering the appearance and the experience of the tea brokers. But, there are British standards for the categorization of tea. If, these tea grades are categorized by the brokers show deviations from the standard tea grades, there will be problems, especially at foreign markets. Therefore, a research was conducted to compare the commercially available low grown premium tea grades with the standard tea grades produced by Tea Research Institute by using the sieve analysis technique. Commonly available six tea grades (FBOP, FF1, BOP1, OP, Pekoe, Pekoe 1) under Select Best category obtained from Asia Siyaka (Pvt) Ltd were tested against TRI producing same six tea grades with the help of the mechanical shaker. The experimental design was Complete Randomized Design with three replicates. An Endecott sieve and a complete set of 17 B.S. test sieves (BS 410) supplemented with further 3 sieves having apertures larger than No: 4 B.S. test sieve corresponding to aperture sizes of $4(4\sqrt{2})$, $4(4\sqrt{2})^2$, and $4(4\sqrt{2})^3$ mm were used in sieve analysis. The obtained results reveal that, there is a considerable difference between the standard grades and the commonly available tea grades. So, it can be recommended that, the tea categorization should be done scientifically using sieve analysis method rather than practicing experience based method.

Key words: Categorization, British Standards, tea grades, sieve analysis