

**IDENTIFICATION OF REASONS FOR HIGHER
PERCENTAGE OF TEA OFF GRADES IN TEA
PROCESSING**

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka is one of the major tea exporting countries in the world. Tea is the oldest, most popular and non-alcoholic caffeine-containing beverage. Sri Lankan tea grades have a high demand in the global market. Grading is a methodically classified presentation of a produce helps in its marketing. Off grades have lower price than main grades. But, its cost of production is higher than main grades. Off grade teas reduce the quality of the end product. This research was conducted in Wewessa tea factory, of Balangoda Plantations PLC. This research was focused on the tea manufacturing sector and analysis the tea off grade percentage in terms of good leaf percentage, withering percentage, big bulk percentage and moisture content of fired tea. Both primary and recorded data were collected. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple linear regressions. Findings revealed that there was a negative relationship between tea off grade percentage with the good leaf percentage and withering percentage. Results showed that there was a positive relationship between tea off grade percentage and big bulk percentage and moisture content of fired tea.

Key words: Tea grading, Off grades