

Causes for Non-compliance of Made Black Tea with the Main-Relevant-Grade

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Abstract

Sri Lankan tea delights connoisseurs worldwide with its exquisite taste and captivating aroma. On the international stage, Sri Lanka proudly stands as the fourth-largest tea exporter. Although the country's export-oriented tea processing facilities consistently strive for enhancement, in adopting cutting-edge technologies to meet and exceed stringent global quality standards, it was revealed that more than 75,000 main grade sample lots tend to be labelled as their secondary grades per annum, and it was evident that the trend of the percentage of sample lots labelled as the secondary grades of the relevant main grade is increasing. The economic loss caused by this for the last twelve months was calculated to be as US dollars 97.5million. The objective of this study is to disclose the causes for non-compliance of made black tea with the main relevant grade. The data were collected using the Simple Random Sampling technique and the sample size is 383. The dependent variable of the study is 'samples labelled as their secondary grades (SG)' while seven independent variables have been recognised: Bold leaf (BL), Ragged leaf (RL), Unstylish leaf (UL), Broken leaf (BL), Mixed leaf (ML), Flaky leaf (FL), and Stalk or Fibre (SF). The hypothesis was tested using correlation analysis. The regression results of measuring relationships between BL and SG, RL and SG, FL and SG, and SF and SG, signify valid regression models, which explain 67.5 percent , 59.7percent , 54.2percent , and 55.3 percent of the variance of the outcome variables, respectively. The analysis showed that BL (Broken Leaf), RL (Ragged Leaf), FL (Fannings Leaf), and SF (Small Leaf) are significant predictors of SG (Secondary Grades) since their beta coefficient values exceeded 0.7. This study aims to provide valuable insights to all stakeholders in the tea industry, guiding their efforts towards reducing secondary type grades. According to the findings, the primary contributors to secondary type grades are high levels of Ragged leaf and Bold leaf. Hence, it is essential to implement proper handling techniques for tea processing to address this issue effectively.

Keywords: *Bold leaf, Ragged leaf, Flakey leaf, Stalk or Fiber, and Secondary grades*