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A study on existing harvesting and processing methods on the quality of coffee beans

Sri Lankan share of coffee in the export market is less than 1%. In order to remain as an exporter it has to compete with other coffee producing countries like Brazil, India and

Indonesia. To face this challenge production of quality coffee beans is a necessity. The objective of the study was to investigate methods of harvesting and processing of coffee beans by farmers in major coffee growing districts: *Kandy* and *Nuware Eliya* and to observe how these methods affect on the quality of coffee beans.

A stratified proportional random sampling procedure was used to select 140 farmers at randomly selected divisional secretariat divisions, six from *Kandy* and two from *Nuware Eliya*. Direct observation method and in -depth interviews were used to collect data.

Imperfections occurred both at harvesting and processing stages. Harvesting of immature berries and over -matured berries, fail to sort out berries fo different varieties and drying of coffee on the high -way roads have led to inferior coffee. Only five farmers of the sample sorted out their coffee. Selling of raw coffee and leasing out of cultivations for harvesting resulted in low quality coffee.

Though coffee beans resulted from wet method of processing is superior to dry method only 13% of the farmers adhered to wetprocess. Dry processing seems to prefer by sample farmers due to its convenience, low labor involvement, long-term storability, and easy milling. Delayed pulping over-fermentation and insufficient washing caused poor coffee by wet method.

Maintenance of coffee plant at a convenient height (about 1.5 meter facilitates easy harvesting. Cultivation of single variety in a block prevents mixing of different varieties Dry method of coffee processing should be discouraged and wet method should be promoted as which gives quality coffee.