

Training Program – Tea Sector

Objective

Electrical energy is a critical element in tea industry, because nearly all the machines which are used for tea processing are operated by electrical or mechanical power. During the time when tea was first introduced to Sri Lanka, there was not a minute crisis of energy. In some cases, up-country factory owners generated their own power from micro hydro resources available at their plantations. However the condition is different now. Electricity price has been increased rapidly during the past decade, making it comparatively higher than the electricity prices of neighboring countries as well as other tea export countries. Due to this reason unit cost of made tea has increased tremendously during the last few years. High prices due to the high production cost of made tea ultimately impedes its competitiveness in the world market, even in spite of the quality and undeniable flavor of Sri Lankan Tea. Therefore it is distinct that, to reduce the production cost of made tea, reducing the operational cost or energy cost is a must.

Yet most of the machines used in tea factories are those used during colonial times and the concern for energy efficiency of these machines is very little. Lot of uneducated and inexperienced employees is engaged in tea sector. Further, most of the employees of tea factories are non-technical people and energy conservation practices are very rarely being applied. Tendency of the factory owners to use better and energy efficient systems seems to be poor and the efforts put so far to change this situation have not achieved the expected results. Hence considerable effort has to be put on educating and convincing those people in the tea industry on energy conservation and energy efficiency. Therefore well organized and planned criteria should be adopted to train them.

Tea production associates with a number of machinery which is operated by electrical energy. Hence energy cost is a crucial factor in the production cost of made tea. Therefore unit cost of made tea can be brought down by reducing the specific energy (energy required to produce 1 kg of made tea) consumption of the production. For it to be achieved energy conservation and efficient practices should be exercised at plant level. Therefore building in-house expertise knowledge and capacity is essential.

Sri Lanka sustainable Energy Authority and Tea Research Institute, Talawakelle initiated Training Program on Building in House capacity of the technical staff of Tea sector on Energy Conservation and Management to enrich the above mentioned impact on tea sector.