

SOME HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRIAL CLAYS (KAOLIN) IN SRI LANKA

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The first evidence of the existence of white firing Kaolin was recorded in 1907 by the Government Mineral Surveyor of Sri Lanka in his effort to find out details about moonstone mining at Meetiya-goda (Galle District). Subsequently, Dr. Edmond Spensur in 1930 had indicated that the Kaolin Deposit at Meetiya-goda (Galle District) was a large deposit having a wide variety of industrial applications. In mid 1930's two lawyers had actually mined the china clay at Meetiya-goda, refined it by sedimentation and exported to India until 1947, when it was banned by the Government of Ceylon.

In 1940, Government Mineralogist, Mr. D.N. Wadia has conducted an extensive bore hole survey in Nugegoda - Borelesgamuwa (Colombo-District) area. He got this clay chemically analysed and found that it had a very low iron content. He also found out that this deposit was a very large one.

In early 1950's, fresh bore hole surveys were conducted by the Government Mineralogists and subsequently, a number of surveys were conducted by the Department of Geological Survey in Borelesgamuwa area. Based on the said findings the Borelesgamuwa Kaolin Refinery was established in 1963 by the Ceylon Ceramics Corporation.

Geological Survey conducted clay surveys in Meetiya-goda Area in 1957. By mid 1970's the Ceylon Ceramics Corporation has expanded tremendously and the demand for Kaolin had thus increased. A second survey of the Meetiya-goda Deposit was conducted by the

Geological Survey in 1974. Based on the findings of this, a second Kaolin Refinery was established by the Ceylon Ceramics Corporation at Meetiya goda in 1977.

Since then a number of surveys had been done in Borelesgamuwa and Meetiya goda areas. With the help of this surveys, attempts are now being made to do selective mining and to quantify the deposit according to various grades.