

# ANALYSIS OF MINERAL INDUSTRY IN SRI LANKA ALONG WITH GLOBAL TRENDS

*Premasiri H.M.R.*

*Department of Earth Resources Engineering, University of Moratuwa, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka  
ranjith@uom.lk*

Sri Lanka is rich in industrial minerals and varieties of precious gem minerals. Sri Lanka exports few minerals some in raw form and some in semi-processed forms. Others are used in few local industries; cement, ceramic, brick and tiles, glass and fertilizer. The contribution of mineral industry to the national economy and impact on the environment are needed to be assessed with the view of future of mineral industry in the country. This paper is a critical review of past and present status of the mineral industry in Sri Lanka along with global trends. Production trends, global demand, science and technology development and applications of three major local minerals; graphite, vein quartz and mineral sands are analyzed from 1995 to 2015.

Graphite production shows uneven production pattern until 2009 and then gradual decrease. Global graphite demand increases continually due to recently developed wider application of graphene and carbon nanotube and seemingly positioned be the future material of the modern world. Sri Lankan vein quartz production pattern shows gradual increasing trend, but it is insufficient compared to global demand and trend. In recent years, quartz shows wider applications as precipitated silica, colloidal silica, fused silica, silica gel, and fumed silica which are the major materials in most advanced and high-tech industries. Mineral sands considered here are ilmenite, rutile and zircon. In Sri Lanka, mineral sand production does not show a steady pattern, though global demand shows a firm upward trend especially for titanium metal. The analysis on three major exporting minerals reveals that it is necessary to analyze their sustainability and contribution to the national economy for policy decisions. And therefore, policies of mineral industry in Sri Lanka should be formulated in accordance with issues of local mineral industry and global changes and scenarios which are the governing factors of global mineral demands and trends.

**Keywords:** *mineral demand, global trend, mineral economy*