ROLE OF SRI LANKA CERAMIC AND GLASS COUNCIL ON VALUE ADDITION TO SRI LANKAN MINERALS

Sanjay Tiwari

Sri Lanka Ceramics and Glass Council
Sanjay.tiwari@piramal.com

The Sri Lanka Ceramics & Glass Council (SLCGC) was formed in the year 2003 to support and develop the local ceramics and glass industries.

The membership of the Council comprises of Piramal Glass Ceylon, Lanka Tiles, Lanka Wall Tile, Rocell Group, Mackson's Group, Noritake, Midaya, Dankotuwa Porcelain, Samson Rajarata Tiles, Art Decoration, Ceylon Ceramic Corporation owned eight large brick and tile factories and twenty medium scale roof tile manufacturers..

Quartz, Silica Sand, Ball Clay, Kaolin, Calcite, Dolomite, Feldspar & Red Clay are the main raw materials used for the industry. Glass bottles, floor tiles, wall tiles, porcelain tableware, hotel-ware, red clay roofing tiles & bricks, ornamental ware, sanitary and bath wares are the products manufactured.

The direct employment in the sector is over 22,000 and indirect employment is about 30,000. Annual turnover exceeds LKR 43 billion, 25% of that is from exports. Investment for capacity & technology enhancement in last 5 years was LKR 7 billion & for next 2 years plan is LKR 7 billion.

At the inauguration ceremony of Ceramic and Glass Symposium held in 2015, His Excellency Maithripala Sirisena, President of our country announced the banning of asbestos with effect from 01 January 2018. Following this promulgation, the council is working hard towards developing red clay roof tile industry to fulfill the vacuum which will be created.

In addition Council is actively engaged in upgrading Sri Lanka Standard for clay roof tiles which was revised after about forty years. In this task, the Industrial Technology Institute, Sri Lanka Standards Institute and SLCGC closely worked together. I am very happy to inform that under the guidance of the Council, twenty of the red clay roof tile members of the Council have been working towards obtaining the SLS Standard so that their products could meet the relevant export criteria. I wish to convey our appreciation to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce for their immense contribution in supporting this standard revision.

The Council organized with the support of Ministry of Industry and Commerce a visit to European red clay industry in Netherland and Belgium for SLCGC member red clay roof

tile brick and tile manufacturers. Twenty-three members participated in these exposure visits and got first-hand information about European brick and tile industry and clearly understood the correct direction needed for Sri Lanka.

Here I would also like to give my appreciation to Sri Lanka Export Development Board (EDB) for their continuous support to develop the industry.

Beside the red-clay roof tile production, there are many more environment friendly red clay products which can be locally produced towards reducing the cost in the prevailing construction industry boom. The locally built environment friendly products are hollow bricks, covering tiles, Terra Cotta floor tiles, Clay paving blocks which could also be introduced to both the local & export markets. .

Here, in Sri Lanka, there is vast amount of red clay, slit clay & silica sand that is available in abandoned tanks especially in the Northern, North Central and Eastern provinces, all of which can be converted to value added products if there is a proper direction from government.

I would like to draw the attention of the Government authorities that there are many local and overseas investors interested in investing in the development of the Sri Lankan Ceramic and Glass industry and for this I strongly urge the Government to create a proper mechanism to attract the investors.

I would also highlight that the local ceramics and glass industry is not limited to those products manufactured that I mentioned before, but if the opportunity and support be given, the local ceramics and glass industry could diversify into new products such as vitrified clay pipes (VPC) and ceramic hand formers which are currently imported, that can be easily produced by using local minerals such as quartz, feldspar, kaolin, ball and red clay.

Before I conclude I would like to draw your attention that according to the Sri Lankan Department of Customs statistics for 2016, Sri Lanka has exported ceramics and glass products to the value of Rs. 10 billion while the value imported into the country was a staggering Rs. 163 billion. I strongly feel that this deficit can be reduced drastically if the local Ceramics and Glass industry could be promoted by the authorities.