

## KAOLIN INDUSTRY IN MALAYSIA

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Although kaolin is a high-bulk low-value commodity, it is a useful industrial mineral. As an important raw material in a number of industries, it can attract foreign capital and expertise in setting up joint-venture projects in Malaysia. It also has an export market for the high grade product.

Kaolin industry in Malaysia can be said to be in the developing stage. Although kaolin had been exploited since the early 1930s, the industry did not progress beyond the cottage level. Most of the producers used simple methods producing low grade kaolin for local consumption. It was only in the early 1970s that modern machinery was used to produce high grade kaolin for export. Total production of kaolin in 1979 was about 45,000 tonnes, and about 30 percent of this was exported.

There is good demand for high grade kaolin in the export market. With the availability of kaolin resources and technical know-how, Malaysia is in a position to capture some of the foreign market. However, in order to achieve this, there are a number of problems to overcome, one of which is that both the private and public sectors should make kaolin deposits available to the bonafide producers.