

# Problems and Prospects of Pottery Industry in Majuli

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**Abstract:** Pottery is an eco-friendly small scale cottage base industry of India. Pottery Industry became well known research area among young generation for its distinctiveness character. This study was conducted at Majuli, newly form district of Assam. The broad aim of the study was explore the various problems facing by the artisans and future prospect of pottery industry. Both qualitative and quantitative method was adopted for primary data collection. The primary data were collected through interview schedule, participant observation and focus group discussion. In this paper various problems and prospects are discuss in detail. The paper contributes to the existing body of knowledge in social sciences by bringing a different perspective of analysis. There is a greater chance to expansion of pottery industry. In order to optimal exploration of this industry government should provide assistant and create conducive environment to promote globally. This paper will help to understand among readers, government and policy maker about Pottery industry.

**Keywords:** Pottery, Eco-Friendly, Industry, Problems, Prospects.

## 1. Introduction

India is known for its rich culture which includes many arts forms. The Indian handicraft sub-sector is considered as the second largest sector of rural employment after agriculture. Pitchai, (2016-8) refers that "Handicrafts industry has help the artisans to uplift economically so as to reduce poverty. Artisan can work in all season and they can produce crafts in leisure time. Cost incurred for production is less as resources are available in local area. Because of these industries classified as small scale industry or household industry and even call as women focus crafts. The women can add on to the family income by working from home. They can balanced their home responsibilities and work". Pottery is a small scale cottage based women predominated industry of Assam. Pottery is one of the oldest crafts of human civilization. Pottery object made of clay that have been make into desire shape dried and fire them to high temperature in a Kiln which removes all the water from clay and fix their form. The term "Pottery" derived from French word potteric or Latin word Potrium which means a drinking vessel. Kasemi (2014-239) in his article refers that the roots of Indian pottery industry can be trace back to the earliest time of civilization. Evidence of pottery has been found in the early settlement of Mehrgarh from the Indus Valley civilization. Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal,

Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka states are well known for pottery work. There are more than 40,00,000 people depend on pottery work in India. Assam has also long history of pottery making tradition. Choudhury, P.C(1959-337) "It has been possible to gather that the use of pottery wares was prevalent as far back as the 5th and 6th century A.D. The temple of Sualkuchi grant of Ratnapal, Nidhanpur grant of Kumbhakaragatra are ample evidence of pottery making in Assam. The potters are flourished, Goalpara, Barpeta, Rangia, Bongaigaon, Darang, Nagaon, jorhat, Sivsagar, Majuli, Dhuburi, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and other parts of Assam. According to Khadi and village Industries of Assam, the total employee of potters workers is 25,737 in 2002-03 and value of production is 186, 29 lakh. There are two potter groups of Assam namely Kumar and Hira. The 'Kumar' are mostly concentrated eastern part of Assam. The "Kumar" are potters who make earthen vessels, water pots, decorative home wares, toys and idols of god and goddesses. According to Etymology Kumar derived their name from Sanskrit word "Kumbhakar" meaning earthen pot maker.

## 2. Review

In order to gain background of knowledge and identify appropriate methodology a brief review of literature relating to field under study has been presented. An attempt has been made to high light the main issue related to the topic.

Akhilandeswari, S.V. and C. Pitchai, (2006) in his study found that majority of artisans are still bounded to traditional way of living. So they are not enjoying modern benefits. The artisans are give importance on production space only. Artisans are not aware in marketing and information communication technology. Due to dependent on middlemen in the marketing activities the profits goes to entrepreneur. He mention that upgrade for new technology, empower in knowledge become even more significant and strategic for survival of pottery artisan.

Duuary. N.K. (2007) who made study on traditional Hira potter of lower Assam, has observed that due to lack of education among Hira potters, the traditional occupation of the female is still unchanged due to rigidity of their society. It is essential to implement the functional Literacy progamme to bring awareness and community base special welfare programme for overall development of pottery artisans.

Kasemi (2014) in her study focused on necessity of scientific technical knowledge among the pottery artisans. Due to outdated pottery making process of West Bengal, the technique of production became inferior and products became lack of standardization to compete with global market.

Kola, Blerim (2011) In his study reveals that the Chinese market is dominating the Albanian market due to low cost of purchase and out dating product design. The Chinese products are not genuine products as well as inherited folk crafts but their updating design and beautiful color eye catching among the customers.

Sarma, D.C. & Sarma, H.C. (1991) study carried on pottery making process of Hira and Kumar community of Assam. In his study mentioned various stage of pottery making. He found that Hira and Kumar community of Assam practices only handmade Pottery making process. But the Kumar like other potters in India manufacture pottery with the help of wheel. Another significant is that in Assam the women are only practicing pottery making.

### 3. Research question

A research question is a statement that identifies the phenomenon to be studies. Through the secondary sources and pilot study following research question are drawn for further study.

1. How the pottery industries survive with various problems?
2. What are the possibility and chances of pottery artisan?
3. Whether support from government or non-government organization to promote pottery industry?

#### A. Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the present study are:

- To trace the social and economic background of the respondents.
- To find out the major problems of pottery industry.
- To identify future, prosper of this industry.

### 4. Significance of study

Pottery is an old age crafts of human civilization. Pottery industry is important for both cultural and economic perspectives. As a parts of small scale industry its helps to create employment generation, promoting inter sector linkage, raising export and reducing regional imbalances. In Assam there are only two community involved in pottery making process. It is important to study how this particular community provides economic support as well as cultural preservation.

### 5. Study area

This study was conducted in Majuli, newly form district of Assam. Majuli is a largest river Island of India. The Island is form by the Brahmaputra River in the South and Kherkutia suti, an ana branch of Brahmaputra, join by the Subansiri River in

the North. According to 2014, the total Land area of Majuli is 352 Sq Km (approx). As per as census 2011, Majuli had Population of 16,7,304 of which male and female were 85,325 and 81,978 respectively. Among the four Mouza's of Majuli, Salmora Mouza was selected as a field of study. The Dakhinpat, salmora, Chinatoli, Borbuka village are selected as a field of study where artist is concentrated, Mostly southern part of Majuli.

### 6. Methodology

It is not possible to restrict to a particular technique for collecting required information, fact, data and opinion. Both primary and secondary sources are adopted for data collection. For primary data collection specially focused on interview schedule, participant observation, focus group discussion and case study method were adopted. For secondary data collection book, Journal articles and government report are adopted. Purposive sampling method was adopted for selection of the respondent. Among the 1135 households of pottery artisan 100 household was selected as a respondent. For in-depth study 10 respondents were taken from NGO personal and another 10 respondents from Senior citizen. Total respondent was 120.

### 7. Character of pottery industry in Majuli

- Pottery is an inherited family based industry.
- Only Kumar community people are practices pottery making process in Majuli.
- It is totally based on traditional handmade product.
- The women are engage in production process and male members help them in the marketing.
- Average 81% artisans working as a full time worker.
- Average 89% respondent have 0-2 workers in their family.
- Pottery products are selling through boat way and road way.

### 8. Major Problems of pottery industry in Majuli

The present study is devoted to the detailed study of the problems of pottery industry in Majuli. The pottery industry in Majuli is going to decay day by day due to numerous problems. The major problems are discussed below.

### 9. Problems of raw materials

Clay is the first and foremost essential raw materials for the pottery making process. Non availability of raw materials is the major problems for pottery artisans of Majuli. The glutinous clay required is found dig a 60-70 feet deep pit in the riverbank, which is more difficult and risky work for the workers. Only experience male worker may be able to collect required clay. In 2004, due to high land erosion in Majuli, the Brahmaputra Board (Government organization) involved in anti erosion project, where they totally restricted the digging of pits for clay in the river. After restricted the digging clay in the river 58% of

the respondent faced the non-availability of raw materials in the pottery making process. 27% respondent mention that due to restriction in digging clay in local area, the collecting and purchasing of the raw materials is became highly costly in comparison to the profits from the products. 15 % of respondent mention that due to restriction of digging clay in the river, they have to use low quality clay which is less output and low demand in the market. In Dakhinpat Kumargaon, 95% of Kumar community people dropped to pottery making practices due to lack of raw materials.

#### 10. Infrastructure problem

The infrastructure is the major problem for pottery Artisans of Majuli. They are working in the very negligible condition. Among the 100 respondent 95% are seasonal worker. Due to lack of specific working place, store house the artisans can't working during the flood season. Due to flood affected area they feel the necessity of high land. 93% respondent mention that during the flood season they dropped pottery making between 3-5 month due to lack of proper working place. The methods of production followed by artisans are old and efficient.

#### 11. Economic problem

The economic problems are the major problems for pottery artisans of Majuli. Among the 100 respondents of pottery artisans, 67% of respondents income below 80,000 per year. Pottery is only their main source of income. Due to land erosion in Majuli, there is not permanent land for agriculture and animal husbandry. They are not financially sound to invest money for developing pottery industry. The artisans have neither general education nor technical certificate holder to get financial assistance from other agencies like banks and finance corporation.

There is a credit problems among the pottery artisans of Majuli. It is interesting to note that the bank are not provide loan them because they have no permanent land and property to give Security of loan. Friends, family, money lenders are only source of their investment.

#### 12. Marketing Problem

The finished products made by the artisans have to get a sound market. Marketing involves several activities like pricing, advertising, personnel selling, products development, market research products style and design etc.

The market depends on consumer needs and satisfaction. Pottery industry is mostly run by individuals with sole proprietary. The women are involved in pottery making and male member go for marketing. Due to unorganized sector the marketing system is not systematic. There is not specific market place for selling pottery products. The male member go for marketing various parts of Assam through boat way around 25-35 days. The pottery products are not manufacturing either

order nor contract basis. Most of the pottery products are selling during festive season. Due to lack of raw materials they can't produce in the adequate time. Among the 100 respondents, 67% respondents mention that they are not getting well price in the market due to delay in production. Due to lack of customer's, in adequate market place most of the product selling outside the district through roadway and waterway. Only 13% respondents selling their product at various village and 60% respondents selling at other district. Due to lack of specific market place, they are searching customer's door's to door's with a every new day.

The marketing aspect is very costly for pottery artisans. 58% respondents sell their products through family members, 38% selling through middle men or trader and 12% selling through other agencies. The artisans of Majuli sells their product though road way and water way which is more economic and time costly. In flood season they sells their product through boat way, which take 25-30 days to get one district to another district. Due to time costly the income and cost of production is not equivalent. In the post flood season they sells their products through road way. In the time of selling they rented a truck on tractor for 5 to 7 days. Among the 100respondents 53% respondents mention that there is 15000-20000 rupees cost per year for rented a truck or tractor.

#### 13. Socio-psychological problems

Although the Kumar community of Majuli assimilated with culture of Majuli but still they are in remarkable position. The people of society give importance only the value of pottery products not the artisans. The people of the society think them as a separate part of the society due their professional artistic work. Although there is a greater change to self-employment through pottery work, but no other member of the society excepted pottery making as a profession due to fear of lost their status in the society. Artisans, whatever they expect from the society, as like as they don't gets respect, attributes, rewards from the society.

#### 14. Respondents view on prospects of pottery Industry in Majuli

The future prospect of pottery industry of Majuli depends on responsibility of Society, government and non-government organization. The people must be need to understand importance, value, respect of the traditional handmade pottery industry. In the name of modern technology, the people are accepted high use of plastic accessories and avoid indigenious craft in day to day life without thinking single minute how plastic product may be affect on human body and ecosystem. For future prospects of this industry researcher was discussed with artisans, senior citizen and NGO personnel.

2004 was the darkest year of the pottery artisans of Majuli. After restricted digging clay in the river Brahmaputra, the pottery artist of Majuli lost the means of livelihood due to lack of raw materials. Most of the artisans avoid pottery making

profession due to lack of raw materials. There is a divergent view on future prospects of pottery industry. Among the 120 respondent 60.83% respondents view that they intended to stop pottery making on account of unavailability of raw materials. 26.67% of respondents view that the traditional handmade pottery industry did not having future on account of scarcity of raw materials and competition from modern machinery products. Against these view 12% respondents expressed that the pottery industry would have greater opportunity if they may able to reduce basic problems.

### 15. Future prospect of pottery industries are

The pottery industry is practices in Assam among two communities only due to their traditional occupation. Through the skill development and updated training programme large number of unemployment may be involved in pottery making process for self sustain as well as a create pottery making culture in Assam. which may help GDP and foreign export of a country. By developing pottery industry we may reduce rural and urban migration among the workers. Many rural area people go to urban area for searching work place. Through the development of pottery industry the basic employment opportunities may be provide in the local village.

Pottery is eco-friendly industry. For future prospect of this craft artisans need to better education and training, credit provide for high investment, modern technology, changing design, proper workplace, research work and society gives importance them.

### 16. Conclusion

The study was undertaken in Majuli with the prime objective of examining various problems and prospects of pottery industry. Pottery industry of Majuli is characterized by small size of units, family based operation, use traditional tools equipments, landless people and illiteracy among the artist. The study reveals that the pottery industry in Majuli suffered lots of problems due to irregular supply and absence of raw materials,

financial support, out dated tools and equipment, competition from the large scale sector, poor transport and communication lack of advertisement, absence of training workshop and lack of resource and development efforts. Promotion of pottery industry is essential for development of economic as well cultural preservation. In order to optimal exploration of this handmade pottery industry, government should provide both incentives and assistance and create conducive environment to promote globally. For the future prospects of the pottery artisans, we must need to create awareness about value of pottery industry among the young generation.

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