

A Study on Socio-economic Condition of Kumhar's (Pottery Makers) of Jasra District Prayagraj, U.P.

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ABSTRACT

“Pottery making is considered to be age old traditional occupation, of the human civilization and culture Kumhars of India. Potters were probably the first engineers in the history of human civilization.” The first group to be withdrawn from food production and to be engaged in a full time profession. Socio-Economic survey of the living and working conditions of the traditional potters objectives of identifying the traditional potter communities and their Socio-Economic status, and problems faced by them and helping them to improve their productivity and profitability through value addition of their finished products. Present research focused on the Socio-Economic problems of the *Kumhar's* (Pottery Makers) of Prayagraj district. The research is based on the survey done in Jasra block with the help of purposive sampling. The Potters associated with this profession are under occupational transition which is evident through a vast change of this professional and at the locale. Many potters left this work and started working in different roles and took different jobs such as masonry labor, driver, overseas workers in the last decade people engaged with this art have switched occupation. The main reason behind the decreasing trend in this art work was that people did not like this profession anymore because the profit margin was too small and people effort put in was much. Another reason behind the insignificance in pottery was lack of interest on part of workers. As far as cities are concerned people are getting advanced and modern. They prefer to use glass, disposal with and steel made products. Occupation was a unique combination of activities.

KEY WORD: *Kumhar, Socio-Economic, Tradition, Clay Pot, Occupation.*

INTRODUCTION

The Kumhars derive their name from the Sanskrit word *Kumbhakar* meaning earthen-pot maker. Dravidian languages conform to the same meaning of the term *Kumbhakar*. The term *Bhande*, used to designate the Kumbhar caste, also means pot. The term used in Yajurveda to denote the potter class. A section

of Hindu Kumhar's honorifically call themselves *Prajapati* after Vedic Prajapati, the Lord, who created the universe (**Baidyanath, 1979**).

Once Brahma divided sugarcane among his sons and each of them ate his share, but the Kumhara who was greatly absorbed in his work, forgot to eat. The piece which he had kept near his soil lump struck root and soon grew into a sugarcane plant. A few days later, when Brahma asked his sons for sugarcane, none of them could give it to him, excepting the Kumhara who offered a full plant. Brahma was pleased by the devotion of the potter to his work and awarded him the title Prajapati. There is an opinion that this is because of their traditional creative skills of pottery, they are regarded as Prajapati (**Mandal, 1998**).

There is an opinion that this is because of their traditional creative skills of pottery, they are regarded as *Prajapati*. Kumhar's were probably (**Versant, 2019**).

Economic reforms have also performed but on account of the defective economic and administrative systems and above all account of fallacious distribution of the benefits of development, the gap between the rich and the poor has been widened. They are now displaced and dispossessed from their land, occupation and culture. There is no rehabilitation plan and programmers for them. Their love, respect hospitality service and sacrifice have never been appreciated. The modern- society has forgotten their old symbiotic relationship and hence has no sense of reciprocity. Economic status of the potters must be revised. The life cycle of the potter of this region has linked with pottery making work. The potters are basically depended on the pottery production. From the early young age potters learn their crafts from their father or relative. Technically male potter has proficiency in their work. Potting work is hardship related to their basic skill of throwing, beating and firing.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted on Socio-economic conditions of Kumhar's (Pottery Makers) of Jasra District Prayagraj, U.P.. There are 114 villages in Jasra block out of these 5 villages i.e. Bhita, Chain purwa, Parsara, Sujauna, Tatarganj. were selected purposively based on maximum number of Kumhar. A total of 80 respondents were selected purposive sampling and pre-tested interview schedule was used for the collection of data. Appropriate statistical tools were used to interpret the data. The study was based on both primary and secondary method. Both quantitative as well as qualitative data has been used in this study. Descriptive research design has been used in the present study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No: 1 Age wise distribution of the respondents. (N=80)

S.No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage
1	5-15	12	15
2	16-20	10	12.5
3	21-35	22	27.5
4	36-55	23	28.75
5	56 And above	13	16.25
	Total	80	100.00

The above table.1 shows that 15 per cent respondents were 5-15 years old and 12.5 per cent respondents were 16-20 years old. And 27.5 per cent respondents were 21-35 years old and 28.75 per cent respondents 36-55 year old. 56 and above year respondents were 16.25 per cent.

Table No. 2 Education attainment of the respondent.

S.N.	Education Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	15	18.75
2.	Primary	20	25
3.	Secondary	19	23.75
4.	High school	14	17.5
5.	Intermediate	10	12.5
6.	Graduation	2	2.5
	Total	80	100

The above table 2 shows that result of the education status of the illiterate potters 18.75 per cent respondents were illiterate; 25 per cent respondents had primary school level of education. 23.75 per cent had secondary school of education,

17.5 per cent respondents had high School level of education, Intermediate potters are 12.5 per cent respondents were educated up to intermediate and rest 2.5 per cent respondents were graduate. Due to poverty they do not send their children to school and encourage their children to help them in their occupation. The similar findings reported by **Sarmah (2018)**.

Table. No.3. Yearly income of respondent.

S.N.	Yearly income	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below 50 thousand	5	6.25
2.	50 thousand-1 lakh	25	31.25
3.	1 Lakh-2 lakh	33	41.25
4.	2 Lakh & above	17	21.35
	Total	80	100

The above table 3 shows that early income of respondents. 6.25 respondents were Below 50 thousand and 50 thousand-1 lakh respondents were 31.25 per cent yearly income. And 1 Lakh-2 lakh respondents were 41.25 per cent in monthly income. And 2 Lakh & above monthly income respondents were 21.35 per cent early income.

Table No. 4 Occupation distributions of the respondents.

S.N.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage;
1.	Only making pot	8	10
2.	Pottery +Agriculturist	35	43.73
3.	Pottery + Business	4	5
4.	Pottery + Animal husbandry	20	25
5.	Pottery + labor work.	13	16.25
	Total	80	100

The above table 4 shows that 10 per cent respondents were mainly engaged in pottery making, 43.73 per cent respondents were pottery makes as well as agriculturist, 5 per cent respondents were making as pottery makers as well as they had small-scale business, 25 per cent respondents were engaged in pottery making and they also had reared animal whereas 16.25 per cent respondents were engaged in pottery making and they were also working as a wage labour to fulfill their basic needs. Because of the potter changed their occupation due to the low revenue. Many of the potters people are now wage laborers, business man, fisherman, farmer etc. but the socio-economic conditions of their people are not very satisfactory. plastic pots and vessels led to decrease in the demand for the pottery products. They would engage in pottery making only as a source of secondary income. The similar findings reported by Laal (2019).

Table No. 5 Categorized economic activities of respondents.

S.N.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Full time	9	11.25
2.	Potters with other income	40	50
3.	Change occupation.	31	38.75
	Total	80	100

The above table No 5 shows that 11.25 per cent respondents were Full time engaged in their traditional occupation i.e. pottery making, 50 per cent respondent had other source of income besides their traditional occupation, where as remaining 38.75 respondents had changed their occupation as they felt that their occupation in low in terms of income and respect. Because of people involved in this industry are facing different kinds of challenges or problems like shortage of raw materials, manpower, and lack of space to dry the formed pottery, firing pottery, to store the finished goods along with the different raw materials. This industry is being affected by the change in lifestyle and different substitute products. The intermediaries get

good profits but they face the problem of getting the products damaged, demand dependent on the festival, occasions, problem of transportation, etc. The old potters loss their value and most of the potters has changed their occupation for the less importance of their work in society The similar findings reported by **Zeeshan (2015)**.

Table No: 6 Religion-wise distributions of the respondents

S.NO.	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hindu	78	97.5
2.	Christian	2	2.5
	Total	80	100

The above table 6 shows that 97.5 per cent respondents were Hindu and 2.5 per cent respondents were Christian. Most of the Potters follow the unicorn under the Hindu fold. They participate in Hindu festivals and observe some rituals, culture and traditions. The similar findings reported by **Duary (2008)**.

Table No.7 House type distribution on the respondents.

S.NO.	House type	Frequency	Percentage
1.	mud house	15	18.75
2.	cemented house	15	18.75
3.	Semi-cemented	50	62.5
	Total	80	100

The above table 7 shows that 18.75 per cent respondents have the mud house and 18.75 of respondents have cemented house because of government Housing Scheme, while 62.5 respondents have the semi cemented. During field survey it was observed that 80% of the villagers have benefited by government Housing scheme.

Table No. 8 Food habits of respondents.

S.N.	Food habits	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Vegetarians	20	25
2.	Non-vegetarians	05	6.25
3.	Omnivorous	55	68.75
	Total	80	100

The above table 8 shows that 25 per cent respondents were vegetarian, 6.2 per cent respondents were non-vegetarian, and 68 per cent respondents were omnivorous. The maximum numbers of respondents were omnivorous because they had limited source of food so they eat all kind of food for surviving.

Table No. 9 Problems faced by production distribution of the respondent.

S.N.	Problems	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Lack of marketing facilities	40	50
2.	Lack of raw materials	20	25
3.	Unemployment	20	25
4.	Total	80	100

The above table 9 shows that 50 per cent respondents had lack of marketing facilities, 25 per cent respondents had lack of raw materials of raw materials and 25 per cent respondents had problems of unemployment. Faced problem by during production. On the demand side the main problems are Competition from plastic and metallic pots and vessels is the main problem on the demand side and market. Easy availability, comparatively low price, durability, convenience in handling etc are making people use these products and give up using pottery products. Potters face problem of collecting raw materials because un-authorized people of the neighboring areas have occupied the clay field by sowing seeds and they sometimes harass and even threaten the potters. Lack of shed facility, pot making process is not being continued in rainy season as a result the potters are facing unemployment in rainy season. Competition from metallic, plastic pots and vessels led to decrease in the demand for the pottery products. Potters are also facing lots of problems in modern period. Soil deficiency, unemployment, decreasing social status of pottery work, less demand of potteries etc. problems are facing by potters. In ancient and medieval period pottery making industry was much needed for human society. But now a days it's became useless. Plastic, Metal pots replacing bye potteries. The similar findings reported by Vasant (2019).

Table No.10 Status of modernization of pottery production.

S.N.	Status of pottery	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Traditional pottery	60	75
2.	Improved pottery	10	12.5
3.	Both pottery	10	12.5
	Total	80	100

The above table 10 shows that 75 per cent respondents were engaged in only traditional pottery, 12.5 per cent respondents were engaged in improved pottery and remaining 12.5 per cent respondents were

engaged in both traditional and improved pottery.

Table No. 11 Quality of water used by respondents.

S.N.	Quality of water	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hand pump	61	76.25
2.	Tube well	8	10
3.	Tap	8	10
4.	Well	3	3.75
	Total	80	100

The above table 11 shows that 76.25 per cent respondents use hand pump water, 10 per cent respondents use tube well water. 10 per cent respondents use tap water while 3.75 per cent respondents use well water for drinking and other purposes.

Table No. 12 Secondary occupation of respondents.

S.N.	Secondary occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Agriculture	30	37.5
2.	Labourers+ Industrial labours	15	18.75
3.	Daily wages labourers	20	25
4.	Animal husbandry	10	12.5
	Maid servant+Other	5	6.25
	Total	80	100

The above table 12 shows that occupation on the basis of survey 37.5 per cent respondents was Agriculturist and 18.75 per cent labor and industrial labor worker of respondents and the respondents were daily wages labors of 25 per cent. And respondents were engaged in animal husbandry 12.5 per cent and maid servant and other work respondents 6.25 per cent were engaged of respondents. Because of Thus, occupational change depends on multi-dimensional factors. In our field survey, number of push and pull factors are responsible for occupational changes of potters. Most of them have viewed pottery occupation as a dirty, low grade and low profit earning profession.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded from the present study that Potters have been facing lots of problems in modern period. Soil deficiency, unemployment, decreasing social status of pottery work, less demand of potteries etc. problems were faced by potters. It become ancient and became useless. So that pottery industry of rural part of Prayagraj was declined. The socio-economic conditions of the Potters were not very good.

The potter changed their occupation due to the low revenue, only 10 per cent of potters main occupation was only pottery making. Because it did not even fulfill their basic needs.

Pottery manufacture process may be part-time or full-time or based on economic strategy. However, there are very few Potters who are basically happy with their traditional ceramic production's Therefore; potteries are made as per the demand in different seasons and during the festival time. The intermediaries get good profits but they face the faced lots of problem getting the products damaged, demand dependent on the festival, occasions, problem of transportation, Because of poor literacy rate they didn't have proper knowledge about diseases and sanitation. The caste Kumhar (*Prajapati*) has been provided scheduled caste status in Uttar Pradesh.

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