



Issues of Pottery Industries of Raiganj Block: A Study

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Abstract:

Pottery is one of the most ancient and popular forms of Indian village craft. The potters usually live at village areas. As pottery includes small and cottage industries, it provides a very low income and it is very hard to fulfill the everyday needs of a family with that small income source. Nowadays as the pottery industry has improved itself a lot, the demand for earthen products is increasing in our country. It has given a means of livelihood to rural people. Involving themselves into such an industry the potters are being benefited from social, cultural, and economic sides. A huge number of potters do live in the district Uttar Dinajpur of West Bengal, so the pottery industry of the district is well developed in comparison to the other districts. The potters live in different villages of Raiganj block – Kanchanpalli, Subhasganj, Maraikur and Kasba Mahosa, etc. Potters and the pottery industry are present in Kasba Mahosa (Mirual), Kanchanpalli, Subhasganj, Palpara Debinagar, and Maraikura village. More than 20 families are doing this job here as a potter. Potters are facing the problems of raw materials especially mud soil and clay soil due to climate crisis and the mati-mafias. And the price of the soil has increased due to this middle man. The age-old potters are doing their pottery works till now but the young generations are not interested to do it in the future. Recently the women of the pottery industries are enjoying the Lakshmir Bhandar policy of the West Bengal Government and it is helpful for their business because women can invest this money in their business. During the last two years (2020-2021), economically potters are affected adversely due to the corona covid-19 pandemic situation. Women are enjoyed proper rights in the family and participate in the works of pottery activities. Potters are dependent on seasonal business because they earn money after constructing the idols which are connected to worshipping. Mud-made items are perishable so the chance of losses is huge here. Recently potters are improving their economy due to increasing the aesthetic environmental sense of modern people. Because nowadays the earthen pots are used for indoor plantations and lots of marriage ceremonies are following no-plastic vision. The rice-ceremony, birthday party, and the marriage anniversaries of the town are accepting the earthen plates, cups, glasses, bowls, etc. on their occasions. Recently due to the improvement of online business and the amazon parcel sending facility the earthen materials are transported long distances. In this way, economic improvement is happening for the potters. The potters are conscious about education and that's why their children are going to school properly.

Keywords: Potters, Lakshmir Bhandar, amazon parcel.

Introduction: Pottery is an age-old handicraft in India. The roots of the Indian pottery industry can be traced back to the earliest times of civilization. The beginning of pottery-making trails back to the Neolithic era. During the time of the Indus Valley Civilization, this effective art form improved with technology. In the present day, the pottery industry in India has been put forward as a major cottage industry in both small and big pottery concerns. In a predominantly rural country with a very low income and simple needs, pottery plays an important role (Meena et. al., 2005). Besides providing employment to artisans, the sector offers job opportunities to non-partisans during slack seasons of agriculture and to other tertiary sector employees. An overwhelming majority of the pottery industrial units are found in Raiganj C.D Block of Uttar Dinajpur district, in the state of West Bengal. These are mostly concentrated in rural areas. Traditional in nature, industrial activities are carried out on a household basis and are characterized by low technology and low levels of production. The artisan himself is the proprietor and works on his own initiative and with his own capital. As scientific and technical knowledge is lacking due to illiteracy and poverty, the techniques of production remain inferior and the products lack standardization. At present many kinds of earthenware, ceramics, and porcelains are used for daily use, scientific experiments, and electrical apparatus. The pottery industry today is not very large scale but is working efficiently under small-scale cottage industrial groups. The artists in the small-scale industries of pottery are generally from rural locations. Pottery is the term derived from the French word 'Poetic' or Latin word 'Potium'. The literary meaning of it is the drinking vessel. All the objects made from clay and hardened by fire are termed pottery. It is a unique art of making artifacts from clay. It has been an indispensable part of human life from the beginning of human history. The market of the products is mainly local and partly extended to urban areas. Besides, middlemen play a

powerful role in marketing these indigenous products. They usually place orders with the artisan and collect materials at less than the market price. The competition from the substitutes like plastic items is a major problem for its development. Under such a situation the decay of this particular sector of employment poses a serious problem and obviously the rational solution seems to develop and make viable the household industries.

Objectives of the study: To identify the Pottery industries of Raiganj Block and to find out the issues associated with the pottery industries of Raiganj Block.

About The Study Area: Raiganj is a municipal town in the district of Uttar Dinajpur in West Bengal in India located at 25°62 N; 88°12 E. It has almost a flat topography and slopes gently from north to south. The total area of Raiganj is 36.51 sq. km and according to the area, its rank is 15 in West Bengal. Its elevation is approximately 40 meters from sea level. Raiganj CD Block is bounded by Haripur Upazila in Thakurgaon District of Bangladesh on the north, Hemtabad and Kaliaganj CD Blocks on the east, Itahar CD Block on the south and Barsoi CD Block in Katihar district of Bihar on the west. Uttar Dinajpur district has a flat topography and slopes gently from north to south. The soil is composed of different varieties of alluvium. Kulik River flows along the western boundary eastern boundary with Hemtabad CD Block and then through the Raiganj CD Block. The rivers have little water in the dry season but heavy rains, during the monsoon, overflow the banks. Raiganj has a humid subtropical climate. The average high temperature in July, the warmest month, is 39°C (102°F) and in January, the coldest month, 26°C (76°F). The average annual temperature is 24.9°C (76.8°F). On average 1430 mm of rain falls per year, with most of it falling in the wet season months of June through September. The wettest month is July, with 348 mm of precipitation on average; the driest month is December, with only 5 mm. As per the 2011 Census of India, Raiganj CD Block had a total population of 430,221, of which 414,143 were rural and 16,078 were urban. There were 221,738 (52%) males and 208,483 (48%) females. Population below 6 years was 61,515. Scheduled Castes numbered 163,662 (38.04%) and Scheduled Tribes numbered 27,785 (6.46%). Raiganj block registered a population growth of 30.71 percent during the 1991-2001 decade. The decadal growth of population in Raiganj CD Block in 2001-2011 was 18.83%. As per the 2011 census, the total number of literates in Raiganj CD Block was 234,192 (63.52% of the population over 6 years) out of which males numbered 133,461 (70.23% of the male population over 6 years) and females numbered 100,731 (56.37% of the female population over 6 years). The gender disparity (the difference between female and male literacy rates) was 13.86%.

Methodology and Data Sources: It is mainly a qualitative researcher where field study, and observation study both had done here. All the pottery industries of Raiganj Block are the population here. But only four sample pottery settlements were selected here; Subhashganj, Kanchanpalli, Maraikura, Kasba Mahasho (Mirual). Here the observation technique was used to get the data. Parallel to the interview technique to gather the data, and the geo-tagged photography technique were used to record the data. The proper questions were applied during the time of the interview and these questions were followed the proper validity and reliability test to validate the questions researcher got the opinion of an expert. Again to test the reliability of the questions researcher test and retest method. The ArcGIS pro was used to prepare the location map. From 25th January 2022 to 26th January 2022, the researchers visited four field-based study areas; like Subhashganj, Kanchanpalli, Maraikura, Kasba Mahasho (Mirual). The researcher visited the three study areas to get the primary data with help of observation, geo-tagged photography, and interview. The primary data is connected to the contents of pottery items, economy, environmental issues, etc. Relevant Books, Journals, Magazines, and Websites were used to prepare the report. The descriptive statistic was used here. The proper graphical method is used here to represent the data.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The pottery industry of Kasba Mahosa (Mirual): The village Kasba Mahosa is enriched with the pottery industry. The potters of this place are more skilled regarding their activity. They make various kinds of designer pots, dinner plates, drinking glasses, seed pots, red wares, plates, earthenware, etc. Currently, working potters of the place are Goutam Paul, Haripada Paul, Laxmi Paul, and Jyotsna Paul. They use clay, loam, and black soil (especially collected from Itahar) to make a quality product. They collect a huge amount of soil at a time and store it for future use so that they don't have to face any kind of problem related to the soil. The price of one tractor soil is 1500 - 1600 rupees approximate. They started this business almost 20 years ago and still continuing successfully. Their children also happily help them in their work besides their education. The market demand for pottery items depends on a seasonal basis. Few potters sell their products as wholesalers and others as market retailers at nearby markets (Raiganj market and Hemtabad market). They also know about the internet facility but do not sell products online. Everyone has non-governmental toilets at home and the women of the families are benefited from Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme. Before the worldwide pandemic situation, their business was going pretty well but during this period their marketing quality is going downwards slowly. They are hoping for the best as the pandemic situation goes over. The potters are very much interested in their profession and satisfied with the money they make in this business.

The pottery industry of Maraikura village: Maraikura is one of the pottery industrial villages under the Raiganj block. The potters currently working there are - Ratna Paul, Khukirani Paul, Tulsirani Paul, Lalita Paul, and Urmila Paul. In this village, mainly women and some men are working as potters. They sell their products from home and local market mainly and they work on as per people's order also. They use a mixture of clay and loam soil to make the products. Clay soil is the most important ingredient of their work. Everyone has non-governmental toilets at their home. They mainly make ollas, pitchers, bowls, wedding vases, etc.

The pottery industry of Kanchanpalli village: The Kanchanpalli village is one of the pottery industrial villages under the Raiganj block. In several parts of the village, existed many pottery industries. Potters are Narayan Paul, Sanjay Paul, Arpita Paul, etc. They are directly and indirectly the pottery industry. They also suggest that clay soil and loamy soil is best too manufacturing the soil pots. Their making pottery activity is so distinctive. They make various God and Goddess idols, including Lord Shiva, Biswakarma, Maa Kali, Maa Laxmi, Maa Saraswati, etc. They also imported the manufacturing soil from the outer place by the soil and the price of one truck is 1200-1500 rupees approximately. They are selling this product in local and outer markets as the wholesalers and the retailers. 68-year-old Bhanu Pal with 6 members in his family and he is a potter by profession Kanchanpalli is hereditary and is associated with this work from the age of 10 to 12 years Her predecessors worked in terracotta At the beginning of his career, he used to go to the fair to sell pottery Now he works as an idol and at other times he does sculpture statues without any worship. Soil collection is to be done between January and April He said that the current market price of soil has increased He worked on the statue for three months and the rest of the time he worked on the statue Rainy season drying is a problem Chalk wood powder rice husk is used It is not possible to burn

mechanically Everyone in the family has to do this The next generation is reluctant to enter this profession Business is better now than it was 10 years ago All works of art are sold from home.

The pottery industry of Subhashganj village: The Subhashganj village is situated on the Northwestern side of Raiganj city. On 24th January, we surveyed Subhashganj and the existing pottery industry. There have been some potters by whom we have done our objective through, some brief on about their pottery activity. They are Chittaranjan Paul, Bhasa Paul, Avil Paul, who serve as the pottery in this place. By the conversation, with them, we know that they are also involved in this pottery too long years ago. Besides this profession, someone served another carrier such as aluminum pots hawkers. They are mostly used clay soil, sandy soil, and loamy soil for manufacturing the pots. They are marked various kinds of dolls of God by the soil. They are the person on about their pottery activity as well as better. And at present their economic status is so good. In earlier the Covid- 19 pandemic, the business quality was good. But due to Covid – 19 pandemic, their pottery market is now going to a down position. They are making various idols such as Lord Shiva, Goddess Durga, Maa Kali, Maa Laxmi, Maa Saraswati idols, etc. Their business also depends on seasonal times. Goblets, vases, and plates. The book gives detailed information about different varieties of potteries with their images too.

Map 1: Location map of pottery industries of Raiganj Block.

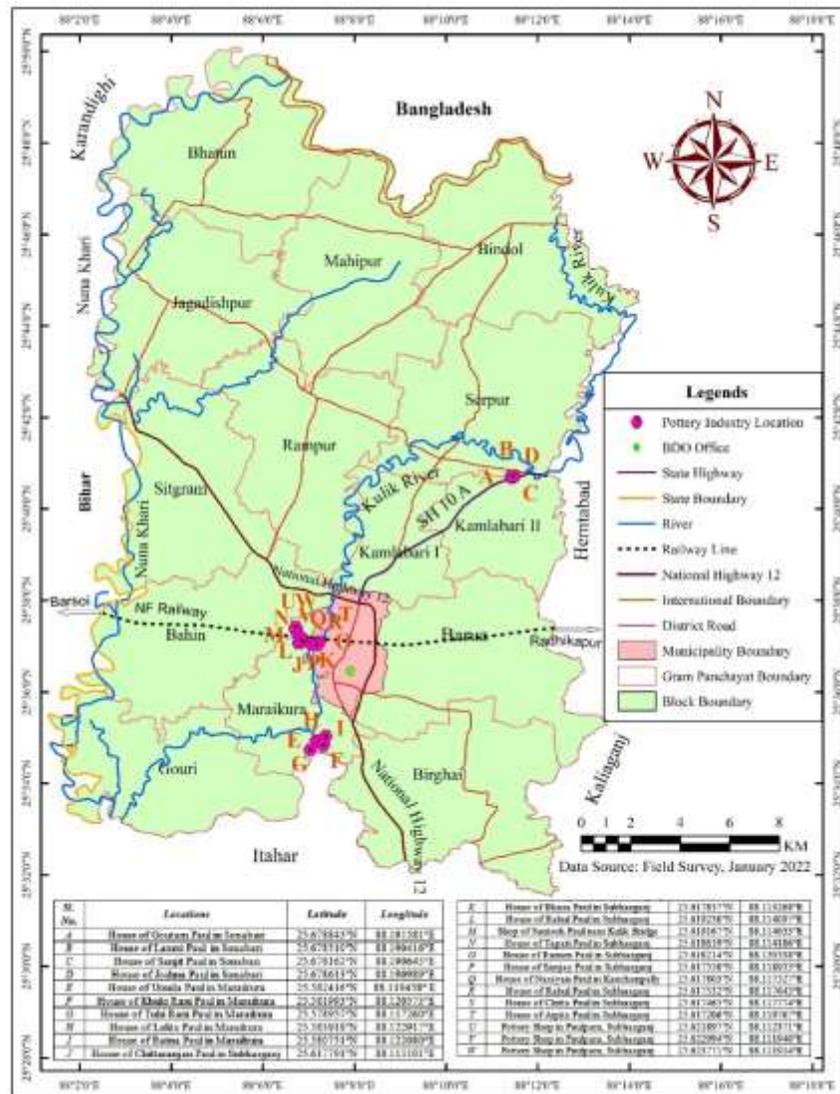


Table 1: List of the potters of the selected study area of Raiganj block.

Sl no	Name	Age	Village	Selling place	Using soil types	Age of occupation	Write type of idol in prepared	Migrated (Yes/no)	Internet Using	Wholesale /Retailers
1	Goutam Paul	50	Kasba, Mahasho	Mirual	Loam soil	20	Saraswati Devi	No	Yes	Retailers
2	Sanjit Paul	55	Kasba Dangapar,	Dangapara	Clay soil	15	Saraswati Devi	No	Yes	Retailers
3	Santosh Paul	45	Kasba, Mahasho	Dangapara	Loam soil, clay soil	25	Ollas, bowls, Pitchers	No	No	Retailers
4	Tapati Paul	50	Kasba, Mahasho	Dangapara	Clay soil, Sand soil	30	Durga Devi, Pots, pitchers	No	No	Retailers

5	Arpita Paul	56	Kanchanpolli	Kanchonpolli	Loam soil, river soil	30	Saraswati Devi, ollas, Bowls	No	(Yes/no)	Retailers
6	Romen Paul	54	Kanchanpolli	Kanchonpolli	Clay soil	25	Saraswati Devi	No	Yes	Wholesale
7	Sanjoy Paul	28	Kanchanpolle	Kanchanpolli	Loam soil	22	Redweures Bowls		Yes	Retailers
8	Narayan Paul	62	Kanchanpolle	Kanchanpolli , Mohonbate	Sand soil, clay soil	30	Saraswati Devi, wadding vases	No	Yes	Retailers
9	Chitto Paul	55	Kanchanpolli	Kanchanpolli	Clay soil	35	Durga Devi	No	Yes	Wholesale
10	Rahul Paul	18	Kanchanpolli	Kanchanpolli	Clay soil	18	Saraswati Devi	No	No	Retailers
11	Akhil Paul	40	Palpara, Shbhasganj	Mohanbate, line bazar	Loam soil, clay soil	19	Saraswati Devi	No	Yes	Retailers
12	Bhasa Paul	45	Palpara, Shbhasganj	Mohonbate, Raiganj	Loam soil	34	Saraswati Devi	No	Yes	Retailers
13	Chittoran gon Paul	54	Palpara Shbhasganj	Mohonbate, shbhasganj,	Loam soil	26	Manosha Devi	No	Yes	Wholesale
14	Ratna Paul	35	Maraikura	Maraikura , devinagar bazzar	Loam soil	25	Pitchers, effigy pots, Ollas	No	Yes	Retailers
15	Khukura ni Paul	60	Maraikura	Devinagar bazzar	Loam soil	30	Bowls, ollas	No	No	Retailers
16	Lolita Paul	35	Maraikura	Goalpara	Clay soil	26	Pitchers	No	Yes	Retailers
17	Urmila Paul	55	Maraikura	Maraikura	Loam soil	20	Ollas, Bowls	No	No	Retailers
18	Laxmi Paul	32	Maraikura	Devinagar bazzar	Clay soil	25	Wadding vases	No	Yes	Wholesale
19	Bhanu Pul	75	Kanchanpalli		Mud soil	60	Idols	No	Yes	Wholesale



Plate 1: Shortage of Raw materials to carry the pottery industry is the basic problem as per the statement of one of the potters of Kanchanpalli.



Plate 2: The manufacturing area of mud pots in Maraikura Paulpara.



Plate 3: A woman potter makes earthen pots and using clay. In the families of potters gender biasness is very minimum. Both the men and women do participate in the pottery



Plate 4 : The age-old father of Chitta Pal of Kanchanpalli is busy to prepare the Saraswati idols before the season of Devi Saraswati worshipping.



Plate 5: The traditional wheel to make mud cup and mud glass in the house of Lakhhi Pal of Kasba Mahaso



Plate 6: Sandip Paul of KLasba Mahaso produce this mud made glasses for marriage parties.



Plate 7: Ratna Paul of Palpara of Maraikura prepared these mud plates for merraiage ceremonies.



Plate 19: The famous potter Bhanu Paul of Kanchanpalli.

Issues of Pottery Industry: The pottery industry is the most historical industry in the rural villages of the Raiganj block. It also provides a good economic status for the involving family. Now with an increasing number of modern people in this block, the demand for the pottery industry slowly decreasing. The pottery industry of the Raiganj block is suffering from numerous problems. The problems are not only numerous but also diverse in characters. Though some of the problems are very crucial and unless they are solved with appropriate measures, the industry is bound to limp. Problems faced by the pottery industry of the study area are as follows: Irregular supply of raw material is one of the major constraints for the development of the pottery industry. Irregular supply of certain raw materials adversely affects their production schedules and delays in delivery. The problems are the increase in price, scarcity of raw materials, low quality of product, and differ in quality.

Table 2: Percentage of people said about the types of problems related to raw materials of the pottery industry.

	Increased of price	Scarcity of raw materials	Low quality raw materials	Differ in quality
Percentage (%)	50	12.5	25	12.5

The pottery industry today is heavily influenced by soil mafias. The reason is that potters cannot sustain their art without their soil, in most cases they cannot provide accurate information about the specific type of soil they use to make their materials. Because they buy land from the owner of the tractor. At present, due to frequent climate change, floods are likely to occur, and due to sudden and recurrent floods, pottery is not always properly supplied by the potters. As a result, their business is in short supply at this time. Due to irregular and untimely rains, often due to lack of sun, the earthenware does not dry on time and they cannot deliver the goods to the customer. In other words, climate change has a significant impact on the livelihood of potters. Due to lack of money, potters are not able to buy the necessary modern machines. They continue to use that "traditional potter wheel". As a result, production and sales are declining. "Automatic pot-making machine" potters can't buy. So the total production rate cannot be increased. Society and civilization are now covered with plastic from all sides. From paper glass plates to plastic cups, glasses, thermocols, the use of pottery has become so widespread in recent times that potters are losing their familiarity. At the same time, the use of "stainless steel" instead of clay statues, idols, utensils, and the use of fancy glassware has increased, as a result of which the economy of potters is going to be endangered today. Due to the lockdown that was created for the pandemic situation of Kovid-19 till the beginning of 2020-2022, almost all the puja ceremonies were stopped on the soil of Bengal. As a result, potters were forced to abandon their core business and move on to other businesses. The method of production followed by the artisans is old and inefficient. Obsolete technology has a very important bearing on the productivity and cost aspects. Due to the lack of this, the pottery industry of the study area could not develop in spite of

its potential. Sales-related problems in the study areas are found like the main problem of selling products is the shortage of product. Then other problems are the availability of substitute products and transportation problem are as follows.

	Shortage of products	Availability of substitute products	Transportation problem
Percentage	38.46	30.77	30.77

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

This is the basic problem of this industry because pots and idols are perishable.

	Less than 10%	10% - 20%	20% - 30%	More than 30%
Percentage	0.00	28.57	57.14	14.29

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Education is important to progress any industry. Though potters are used their hand-made technical resources as well as human resources modern education is important to run the business for a long time.

	Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Graduation	Post-Graduation
Percentage	0.00	11.11	11.11	22.22	55.56	0

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 6: Literacy status of the potters' families of Raiganj block.

Place	Literacy rate of women (%)	Literacy rate of men (%)
Shubashganj	60%	70%
Kanchanpalli	65%	75%
Maraikura	50%	60%
Koshba Mohosa(Mirual)	45%	60%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 7: Income scenario of potters of Raiganj block.

Place name	Yearly income
Subhashganj	Rs- 70,000
Kanchanpalli	Rs- 1,00,000
Maraikura	Rs- 40,000
Koshba Mohosa	Rs- 60,000

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Table 8: Participation of men and women potters in pottery industry.

Place	Women potters (%)	Men potters (%)	Both men and women potters (%)
Shubashganj	60%	80%	0
Kanchanpalli	45%	80%	0
Maraikura	80%	30%	0
Koshba Mohosa	0	0	65%

Source: Field Survey, 2022.

Raiganj block is the most important block of Uttar Dinajpur. It has some distinctive features which make it more important than others. As Raiganj is a developing block, besides all the other sectors pottery industry is also emerging very quickly here. The main villages under Raiganj block where the pottery works are done are - Subhashganj (Palpara), Kanchan Palli, Maraikura, and Kasba Mahosa . Firstly we know that the Raiganj block is a developing block besides its developing power is so high. Especially the pottery industry also developing gradually due to various kinds of privileges. The privileges are sufficient sources of raw materials, proper money investment presence of workers, and demand of pottery products in local and outer of the near state. The demand for the pottery product in the nearby market, such as Mohanbati market, Line bazaar and far away market such as the market of Bihar also rising certainly of this places economic status. Due to the existence of the facility Raiganj Pottery Industry is developing. The pottery industry also shows off himself as so beautifully decorated. Being all the facilities or the privileges in this block area and nearby area the well-being method or approach must be approved. It is a good theme for this area to approve the well-being method of the pottery industry. Pottery, one of the early inventions by human beings is now a developed occupation. There has not been any drastic increment but it seems to develop slowly. With a lot of effort, time, and patience the potters turn the heap of soil into some beautiful creations. The soil they use to make the pots is not the common soil we see everywhere. They have to collect it from some significant places far from their working place. The price of that particular soil is very high in comparison to their financial status. The price increases day by day and even fluctuates seasonally. During winters and rainy season, the potters face unavailability of that particular soil and in such seasons they find it difficult to dry the wet earthen pots. For people working on a small scale only one or two people

carry out the work process. Whereas in large scale making of pots workers are appointed. Potters usually work throughout the year. Their work depends on the intensity of the sun's heat. Therefore the winters and rainy seasons are the months of less employment. Few people Pottery is their only way of survival. For the rest, they do some other work besides Pottery. Some have small grocery shops, a few have rickshaws, some make paper bags, etc. Particular products depend on the type of shop potters deal with. Some of them sell their products only in local markets and some deliver their items outside as per orders they receive. Some get orders from sweet shops and tea stalls and sometimes from various catering companies also. They even sell their products from home and during festivals or fairs, they move to the crowded areas temporarily for selling their creations.

Conclusion and Findings: Potters and the pottery industry are present in Kasba Mahosa (Mirual), Kanchanpalli, Subhasganj, Palpara Debinagar, and Maraikura village. More than 20 families are doing this job here as a potter. Potters are facing the problems of raw materials especially mud soil and clay soil due to climate crisis and the mati-mafias. And the price of the soil has increased due to this middle man. The age-old potters are doing their pottery works till now but the young generations are not interested to do it in the future. Recently the women of the pottery industries are enjoying the Lakshmir Bhandar policy of the West Bengal Government and it is helpful for their business because women can invest this money in their business. During the last two years (2020-2021), economically potters are affected adversely due to the corona covid-19 pandemic situation. Women are enjoyed proper rights in the family and participate in the works of pottery activities. Potters are dependent on seasonal business because they earn money after constructing the idols which are connected to worshipping. Mud-made items are perishable so the chance of losses is huge here. Recently potters are improving their economy due to increasing the aesthetic environmental sense of modern people. Because nowadays the earthen pots are used for indoor plantations and lots of marriage ceremonies are following no-plastic vision. The rice-ceremony, birthday party, and the marriage anniversaries of the town are accepting the earthen plates, cups, glasses, bowls, etc. on their occasions. Recently due to the improvement of online business and the amazon parcel sending facility the earthen materials are transported long distances. In this way, economic improvement is happening for the potters. The potters are conscious about education and that's why their children are going to school properly.

Recommendation and future implication: Pottery is the process and the products of forming vessels and other objects with clay and other ceramic materials, which are fired at high temperatures to give them a hard, durable form. Pottery is not only used in modern times, it is very popular from ancient times. In a historical era, when people did not have any idea of aluminum, a huge number of the population took pottery as an occupation. Humans were completely dependent on earthen objects then. Today we have many choices like steel, aluminum, iron, etc. but still, pottery has its own importance. The pottery industry of Raiganj Block is characterized by the small size of the units, family-based operation, and the predominance of skilled workers, the use of primitive tools, and the wide prevalence of illiteracy among the workers. The value of the soil should be within the range of the potters' economic condition. The present study shows that the pottery industry in the study area is suffering from the irregular supply of raw materials, lack of working capital, obsolete technology, and lack of diversification of products, Competition from the organized sector, good marketing facilities, management problems, and Lack of Research and Development Efforts, etc. The artisans are often exploited by the middlemen who always squeeze the profit. The need for capital for increased productivity of the sector is clearly recognized from Cobb-Douglas production analysis. The Government and non-government initiatives can solve the problem and develop the industries at their best level. It goes without saying that realization of policies will need very efficient and committed functionaries. Since the artisans are in the hands of stereo-type machinery it may be necessary that the entire program for the development may be marshaled through various governmental institutions.

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