

# Problems and Prospects of Pottery Industry in Assam, A Comparative Study of three District viz, Dhubri, Majuli and Sivasagar.

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**Abstract :** Pottery making is an age- old traditional occupation of the human civilization. Pottery is important for both economic as well as cultural aspect. It is a labour intensive and eco-friendly industry with huge Potential of employment generation. Few of traditional communities in the world practice this tradition as a occupation. In Assam 'Hira' and 'Kumar' community only involve in pottery making tradition due to their traditionally hereditary pursuit occupation. It is women predominant industry. The pottery industry provides full and part time employment opportunities among the large marginalized section of the society. This research proposed to examine the various problems related to pottery industry and its prospects. The research is based on both qualitative and quantitative method. The study covers three district of Assam namely Majuli, Sivasagar and Dhuburi.

**IndexTerms - Pottery, Traditional, Employment, Marginalized, Civilization, Community.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Pottery is one of the oldest crafts of human civilization. Through the ages the pottery industry in India is popular around the world for its Creativity, aesthetics and exquisite Craftsmanship. Sarkar, R. (2017-625) define the term 'Pottery' which is derived from French word poteric or the Latin word Potrium which means drinking vessel. It is applied to all objects fashioned from clay and then harden by fire. The term pottery includes drinking vessels of prehistoric time to the most beautifully decorated porcelains, stone and earthen wares etc. The art of Pottery making is one of the earliest crafts practice by men. It originated from the days of the invention of the pottery wheel flowered in to the marvelous China celain and Procelain product during the days of the Tanga dynasty of China (A.D.618-907). Gupta, K.C (1998:206) In India, the earliest discoveries of the potters art can be found in the archaeological excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. The art received great patronage during the reign of the magnificent Moghal emperors. Because of the racial and geographical characteristics and rich cultural heritage of the people of the region different schools of pottery and ceramics were developed.

The art of making pottery was known to the people of Assam from early times. As regards the history and origin of pottery industry in Assam, it has been possible to gather that the use of pottery wares was prevalent as far back as the 5th and 6 century, A.D. Sing, P. (2015:117) analyse that for pottery study of Assam , three pottery sample from different periods are use for scientific analysis. One potsherd is from Daojali Hoding (Neolithic Period) and others from historical period out of which one is from Ambari (dated 7th to 12 century A.D) and second from Sri Sri Suryapahar (tentative, 12th century A.D). The oldest crafts practiced by Kumars and Hira community of Assam. The Kumar are Scattered all over the Brahmaputra and Borak Valley of Assam . The name Kumar is derived from the word of Kumbhakar which derived from two words Kumva and Kar. The words "Kumva" means earthen pot and "Kar" means maker pottery is a small scale home based cottage industry. Sahu, P.A. (2017:306) 'In most of the developing countries the small scale industries constitutes an important and crucial segment of industrial sector. They play an important role in employment creation, resource utilization and income generation and helping promote change in a gradual and phased manner'.

Mishra, S.P (2016:13) mentioned that "The pottery industrial activities carried on household basis and characterize by low technology and low level of production . The artisans himself is the proprietor and works on his own in initiative and with his own capital. Handique , K.J. (2014:132) 'Pottery industry is one which carried on primarily with the help of family members. This oldest crafts hereditary practiced by Hira and Kumar community of Assam.

In Assam Hira and Kumar used traditional handmade instrument in the pottery making process. Duary, N.K (2008:99) mention that Hira potters use traditional type of instrument in pottery making profession, namely Kodal or Spade, which is used mainly for cutting the clay and making the trench where they store the clay for some period. Gayen or wooden beater, a cylindrical piece of sal wood with a rounded head is used for threshing the clay during storing and preparing clay for making potteries. Baira or half broken earthen bucket is used to keep water and piece of cotton cloth, called kani is kept for applying the water during the final shape. Pitani or small round shaped wooden beater is used for making final shape'.

Artisans make a range of objects ranging from utilitarian, votive, decorative and religious to playful toys and items for festivals. Haloi (2012:68) mention that in Assamese Society Earthen pots like "Kalah", "Charu", "Ghot", "Tekeli", "Nagra", "Madali" etc are still considered as a important from religious and cultural point of view and still occupy and important place in auspicious occasion like celebration of marriage, religious occasion like "Puja", performance of "Preta Karma" of deceased.

Although, pottery is a women predominated industry there is a division of labour on the basis of age, gender and skill. Due to traditional hereditary pursuit occupation the girl child are learn to pottery making from her mother or senior female member of the family. The girl child are regularly assists her mother in every stage of pottery making . The male member of the family select the fine quality of sand , suitable clay and carry it from source to residence , collect fuel arrange the potteries in bhati and put the fire. Lastly the male member goes for selling pottery products in local market or hat.

## II. CLASSIFICATION OF POTTERY

Pottery wares have different types from various time . The pottery products are classified on the basis of clay products in to groups having same character. Several authority, accordingly have laid down different classification based on different viewpoints.

Bourry classified pottery in to two group namely permeable and impermeable wares. Later he developed five distinctive types of pottery according to the nature of the body and glaze.

### 2.1 Terra Cotta Wares

The term means ‘backed clay’ and denotes all pottery wares made from common clays which are not fired to sufficiently high temperature to allow the body of wares to vitrify. The wares are not glazed. Common bricks, tiles and hollow wares made by ‘Kumar’ fall under this group.

### 2.2 China Wares

China wares mean pottery wares made from white china clay, painted and glazed. This types of wares are fired in high temperature and can further classified as follows:

#### 2.2.1 Earthen wares

This group includes all permeable or porous pottery made either of red clay or white clay, but the wares are always coated with a glossy coating or glazed so that any liquid can be sorted in them. These wares are fired at temperature ranging between 900-11000 C

#### 2.2.2 Stone wares

These are vitrified and opaque pottery wares either made of white or colored clay. These wares are made into such a way that the body of wares gets vitrified during firing and becomes impermeable to liquids. They are often glazed with a salt glaze. Wares of this group are fired at temperature ranging between 1200-1300OC. Jars, Kundis, Sanitary wares are fallen under this group.

#### 2.2.2 Procelain wares

This is the best type of pottery. These are always made from the purest white burning clays or China clay. The composition of the body is made such that when properly fixed it becomes completely vitrified and translucent to light when sufficiently thin. This body is coated with beautiful glaze consistent with the nature of body. This type of wares are fired at a high temperature ranging between 1300-14500 C.

#### 2.2.2 Refractory

This is made either from fire clays or from various high heat resisting materials. They are fired at high temperature of 1450o C above.

## III. RESEARCH QUESTION

To fulfill above mention objectives, the researcher had number of research question. The major research questions are given below-

- What is the present Scenario of the artisan?
- Whether their income Solely come from their practiced pottery or indulge in other activities?
- Is their any training programme for further development of their pottery industry?
- What are the major hindrance for development of pottery work?
- Whether support from government or non government organization to promote pottery industry?
- Whether appropriate action taken by concerned authorities to counter their problem?

## IV. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Traditional pottery industry in Assam has been studied by scholars that includes Medhi, B.(1992), Sarmah, P.R. (2001), Sarma, H.C.(1991) Das, M. (2004), Haloi. R. (2012), Handique, K.J. (2014). Sing, P. (2015). They Studies their research through historical, Archeological, Anthropological and developmental perspective. The current research therefore focused on sociological understanding of pottery industry . Maximum of the study conducted by further studied are based on area or community wise. So, in this study both Hira and Kumar community are includes for better understanding of their problems. In this study selected three district of Assam counterparts different zone for comparative study of pottery industry.

## V. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Pottery industry sector is becoming well known attractive field of research area for present day context in rural Indian Scenario. The Indigenous pottery industry is important for both economic and cultural aspect. There are so many problems associate with pottery industry. Although, there are so many study conducted on pottery industry till now but due to Socio economic inequalities, geographical variance, demographic Structure, regional variation, the conclusion arrive of the research may not be applicable all parts of the pottery workers. For the further study researcher draw the major objectives through review of literature and prominent person related to the pottery work.

- To analyze the Socio economic back ground of the respondents of the study.
- To examine the problems of pottery industry related to production, marketing, labor, Sociological etc.
- To examine benefits of society through pottery industry.
- To examine the important change brought by the society to improve the standard of living for pottery artisan.
- To identify present position of employment opportunity.
- To identify social and government co-operation for the promotion of pottery industry.
- To identify future prosper of this industry.

## VI. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Pottery is an old age crafts of human civilization. Pottery is a home base small scale industry. In India, the small Scale sector has exhibited tremendous capacity for employment generation, greater resources use efficiency, promoting inter sector linkage, raising export and reducing regional imbalances. The pottery industry is important for both economic and cultural aspect. In Assam, there are two community practices pottery making culture. It is important to study how particular community provides economic support as well as cultural preservation for the society. There are so many problems like, outdated pottery making process, under development infrastructure, unorganized sector, absence of global exposure, lack of economic support still exist with pottery artisans. It is important to study how pottery industry will overcome various problems and how it can be established as a attractive sector for rural unemployment youth . Pottery is an eco friendly industry. In the name of modern technology the people are accepted high use of plastic accessories and avoid indigenous crafts in day to day life without thinking a single minute how plastic accessories may be bring adverse effect on human body and ecosystem. Through this study we may inculcate the people of society how we may avoid plastic accessories. Through this study people from rural area can also benefited by getting information and knowledge related to set up of new enterprises. This study will also help to understand the various government schemes for development of small scale industries. The research would enable to identify strength and weakness of pottery industry for implement of future programs.

## VII. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the present study is the pottery industry in Assam. The study is proposed to carry out three important districts viz- Majuli, Dhuburi and Sivasagar, where pottery artisans are mostly Concentrate. In this study covers with both Kumars and Hiras community those who are involved in pottery making tradition. All the pottery artisan whatever their caste group, age, gender they have equal change for further study. The present study covers with all the problems related to pottery artisans and for their prospects. For better understanding of their problems both qualitative and quantitative method is propose to apply. For the sake of convenience the entire work has been divided into six chapter.

## VIII. REVIEW

In order to gain background of knowledge of problems and to identify appropriate methodology, research design and technique of analysis or to be able to formulate the problem Precisely a review of literature relating to the field under study has been presented. An attempt has been made to high light the main issue related to the topic.

- **Adebimpe, O. (2015)** in his study find that pottery is the cheapest and heavily women dominated industry of Nigeria. He mentioned that the artisans are demand in hotels and indigenous restaurant for cooking and service of indigenous dishes. He suggested that to compete fairly well in the domestic and international market, indigenous potters need to set appropriate production and marketing strategies through knowing the needs and requirement of customers.
- **Akilan, S.V. , & Pitchai, C. (2016)** in his study find that pottery industry face problem every stage of operation. Most of the artisans don't have their own marketing network. They find it difficult to sell their output at remunerative price due to higher cost of production and non standardized quality of products. They also face problems to stiff competition from machinery products. He suggest government should need to encourage and support for better development of pottery industry.
- **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. He suggest that it is essential to implement of functional literacy programme to bring awareness and community based special welfare training programme to bring awareness and community based special welfare and training programme for over all development of pottery industry.

- **Ghosh, B.K. (2014)** have analysed the structure and co-ordination among the family member in the pottery making process.
- **Gupta, A.S. (2013)** in her study made on the significance of cottage and small scale industries in Socio-Economic Development of Abhaypuri of Bongaigaon District. Cottage and small scale industry suffered in Abhaypuri District of Assam due to non receipt of adequate financial support from bank, non receipt of timely payment from wholesaler and retailer, lack of organized marketing, high production cost and absence of training and workshop. In his study find that 70% of respondents operate their business at rented house and 88.07 percent operate business in terms of sole proprietorship.
- **Gupta, K.C. (1988)** in his book “progress and prospects of pottery Industry in India” cited that the pottery artisans of UP still facing numerous problems like outdated production technique, lack of general technical education and training, wagon shortage, shortage of coal, heavy taxation, high cost production, lack of government financial assistance and lack of proper marketing. He suggested to establishment central marketing organization, establish worker training school and bring improvement of labor condition.
- **Handique, K.J. (2014)** in his study reported that Kumar and Hira Community practices pottery making in Assam. There is distinctive difference in technique, use of raw material and also shape of various earthen wares made by these two groups. Though his study it can be understood that these potters are emerging as occupational groups and rural potters have tendency to move towards urban areas as urban areas provide better earning opportunities. Due to skill development of artisans some of them engage in doll making practices. He suggested that appropriate government policy and entrepreneurial motivation towards young men will help to development of pottery artisans.
- **Hutson, S.R. & Markens, R. (2002)** in his study “Rethinking Emic pottery Classification” classified the emic pottery through the work of ethno archaeological and cognitive anthropological perspective. He cited that groups within the community may portion material culture differently on the basis of their knowledge of the class of material. Social dimension affecting classification includes producer Vs consumer, status, gender and age grade. The emic classification depends on roles and status of the society.
- **Haloi, R. (2012)** he made study on Craft Industry of a Marginalized community & its prospects for Rural Employment under Globalization. In his study reveals that the pottery artisans still exist at Karimganja due to absence of their own agricultural land and other means of occupation. In his study find that most of the boys and girls are not interested to becoming a potter due to lack of dignity of this work. They think that workers of this profession do not have high social status in the eyes of society. Due to outdated pottery making practices and absence of organized marketing system maximum profits goes to middlemen. A failure to modernize the rural industrialization programs are responsible for pathetic some rural crafts in India.
- **Lakshmi, S.P. (2008)** in his article “The performance of small scale industries in India” found that due to unorganized marketing system of small scale industries, their products compare unfavorable in comparison of large scale industries. The small scale industries fail to get adequate information about customer choice, taste and preference types of products.
- **Mishra, S.P. & Mansure, A.J. (2016)** in their in depth work they examine the features of Indian red clay pottery industry. They cited that problems of managements, non availability of clay, obsolete technology, lack of research and development efforts and marketing problems stand as a major hindrance of pottery industry.
- **Mteti S.H. : 2016:** In this study he examined the interaction between men and women in the pottery making and distribution process. He cited that no potters has daimeed to teach her son how to make traditional pottery industry. Majority of potter mostly, women learn potting skills informally at home. He observed that there are three groups involved in pottery making process. It is the division of labor between women, Children and hired labor.
- **Sarma, K. (2018)** in his study A study on Economic prospects and problems of terracotta and pottery craft of Assam with Special reference to Asharkandi village of Dhuburi District. He studied in detail the important aspects of problems and prospects of pottery industry. He examined that 76% of respondents are not still cover under any loan scheme of any organization. He recommended government should recognize exhibitions inside and outside the state which enables better publicity and it will help in improvement tourism.
- **Sarby, J. (1985)** in her study sexual segregation in the pottery industry focused on gender perspectives. She analyses the historical background of the stereotyping of men’s and women work. She mentioned that although pottery industry is predominate industry of women but still it is almost monopoly job of men. Women’s earnings are still on average markedly lower than men’s.

- **Shrestha, P. (2018)** in his study he mentioned that pottery has been adopted as a main occupation especially by the Prajapati community in Nepal. In his study find that all the family members of the family are not involve in the pottery making due to changes of life style and disregards of the youngsters. Most of the artist face the problems of raw materials, Problems of man power and marketing problem due to internal competition and potters urgency to sell the profit margin is low.
- **Thakuria, G. (2017)** in her work discussed about the various pottery making tradition of Kumar Community of Assam. She find the Kumar potters involves the technique of throwing a lump of clay on to a moving wheel or chaak. She mentioned that people acquiring inherited information related to pottery making transmitted through the mechanism of social learning process.
- **Qureshi, M.A. (1990)** in his study he reported that the condition of artisan's status was negligible and worsening rapidly during the colonial rule. He examined the factor responsible for the undermining of the social position of the artisans, with reference to the cause of transformation of the traditional crafts into a development economic segment of a society.

## IX. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

The study of the topic is “Problems and Prospects of Pottery Industry, A Comparative study of three District of Assam viz, Majuli, Dhuburi and Sivasagar.

- **Problem:** Problem is a matter of situation regarded as unwelcome or harmful and needing to be dealt with and overcome.
- **Prospect:** Prospect is the possibility of being successful in the future.
- **Pottery:** Pottery is the activity or skill of making clay objects by hand. The definition of pottery used by the American Society for testing and Material is “all fired ceramic wares that contain clay when formed, except technical, structural and refractory products.
- **Industry:** Industry is the economic activity concerned with the processing of raw materials and manufacture of goods in factories.
- **According to Gisbert:** Define Industry as “The application of complex and sophisticated method to the production of economic goods and services. These complex method, which imply the use of machines, have been devised in order to improve the quality and quantity of production.”

## X. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Selection of the Universe:** Selection of Universe is an important part of Social Research. The fruitfulness of any research is always based on universe of the study. Proper selection of the universe is a pre-requisite for proper investigation and preparing report. The universe of the study is entire Assam. It consists of all group of pottery artisans of Assam. Assam is purposively selected as universe of study due to rich handicrafts practicing all over the world. According to the Khadi and village industries Board of Assam, total employment of pottery industry was 25,369 in the year 1992-93 against 25,737 in 2002-2003. As per information made by statistical hand book of Assam 2014, total 2184 working centres were in the Pottery industry of the State 2002-05. The universe of study consist of all pottery artisan whatever their caste, class, gender, income.

## XI. SELECTION OF THE FIELD

The study is propose to conduct three major district of Assam viz-Dhuburi, Majuli and Sivsagar. Assam is a state in Northeast India, situated South of the Eastern Himalayas along the Brahmaputra and Barak valleys, Assam covers a area of 78,433 Km<sup>2</sup>. The state is boarded by Bhutan and the state of Arunachal Pradesh to the North Nagaland and Manipur to the east. Meghalaya , Mizoram , Tripura , Bangladesh to the south. According to 2011 census , total population of Assam is 31,205,576. Among the 33rd districts of Assam three district are propose to select as a field study for comparative study. This three district are counterpart from three Major region of Assam where Pottery artisan are mostly concentrated.

A brief introduction on under the study districts mention bellow -

### 10.1 Majuli :

Majuli is a largest river island in India. It is a newly form district. This island is form by the river Brahmaputra 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 of Majuli is 352 sq Km. According to 2011 cencus total population of Majuli is 1,67,304 out of which 85,325 are male and 81,917 are female.

Among the four Mouza's of Majuli, the pottery industry are mostly concentrated at salmora Mouza. Pottery is a river centric industry. In Majuli Kumar community only involving pottery making practice. The Kumars are

mostly concentrated at Salmora , Chinatoli and Dakhinpat i.e mostly in the south eastern part of Majuli. They use a different technique of pottery making where the potters not used pottery wheel.

Nearly 5165 people depend on traditional style of pot making in Majuli for their live hood Pottery is hereditary profession for them. It is practiced by the successive generations of the Kumar Community members, irrespective of their caste.

### 10.2 Dhuburi District:

Dhuburi District situated about 277.4 Kilometers west from Dispur, The state capital of Assam. As per census 2011, the total population of Dhuburi district is 1,949,258. The district has a population density of 1,171 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Dhuburi district is proposed to select as a field of study due to his distinctive character of pottery making process of lower Assam. The Asharkandi village of Dhuburi district is mostly popular for pottery making. The Asharkandi village comes under the Debitola Block of Dhuburi District. The Asharkandi is located 14 Km away from Dhuburi, 3 km from Gauripur and 1 Km from NH-31. It comprise of five village i.e Madaikali, Palpara , Bangpara, Bogurpara,, and sikasipara.

The pottery is only practices in the Madaikhali village which comprise of 129 house hold units covering 500 artisans of which 195 are male and 305 are female. Asharkandi Village is considering the tourism potential of this pottery making. The government of Assam declared the village as a model village and brought under its rural tourism project. NECARDO (North East craft and Rural Development organization), an NGO has been working for revival of crafts and socio economic development of craftsperson .

### 10.3 Sivasagar District:

Sivasagar is a historic place, well known for its rich biodiversity. The District covers an area of 2668 square Kilometers. According to 2011 census there are 1,150,253 population inhabited at Sivasagar districts. Sivasagar is one of the district of Assam where pottery industry is spread all over the rural areas in the districts. In Sivasagar districts pottery artists mostly concentrated Amguri, demow, Nazira, Nimonagarh, Santak, Sapekhati, Simaluguri and Sonari.

## XII. SELECTION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The fruitfulness of research based on selection of the respondent. For collecting proper information and data, researcher propose to collect data from four type of respondent. The first respondent are the artisans those who are directly involve in production process, second respondent are those persons who are involve in marketing or the selling of their finish products.

Third respondents are proposed to select from senior citizen those are careful for development of pottery industry. Fourth respondents would propose to select from NGO personnel who are involving for uplift of pottery industry.

## XIII. SAMPLING

For the further study it is propose to select at least 200 pottery artisans, 50 senior citizens and 50 respondent from NGO personnel for primary data collection. Respondents would propose select purposively for obtaining required information, opinion and view on different aspects of life.

## XIV. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The present study is about problems and prospects of pottery industry a comparative study of Assam viz Majuli, Dhuhri and Sivasagar. It is not possible to restrict to a particular technique for collecting required information, fact, data and opinion. For in dept study researcher propose to apply both quantitative and qualitative method. For primary data collection interview schedule, participant observation, focus group discussion and case study methods are propose to adopt and for the secondary data book, journal, articles and various government report will adopt. Especially four type of interview schedule would be propose to be prepare due to heterogeneous quality of the respondents. The first schedule will deal with artisan, second schedule deals with seller. Third schedule deal with NGO personnel and 4th schedule will prepare for the senior citizen.

The focus group discussion method would propose to apply among all the four types respondent combined among the target groups.

## XV. CHAPTER SCHEME

This study is propose to divide into six chapter, each chapter distinctively highlight on various points.

### 15.1 Chapter I- Introduction

This chapter deals with definition, history of pottery industry. In this chapter Micro, small and Medium scale enterprises are also propose to discuss. various entrepreneurship theories and government scheme for MSME would be propose to include.

A brief profile of Assam, Majuli, Dhuburi, Sivasagar would be propose to include for better understanding of the region. Review of literature, scope, significance and objective of the study and Methodology also propose to include here.

## 15.2 Chapter II Social Background of Respondents

In this chapter propose to include with a family composition, sex, age, education, occupation, economic background, migration, language, caste, tribe, religion, experience and length of working.

## 15.3 Chapter III

In this chapter deals with problems like, raw materials, infrastructure problem, financial problem, marketing problem, Transportation problem and socio-psychological problems.

## 15.4 Chapter IV

Promotional scheme and future prospects of pottery Industry . This chapter deals with the various institutional support to the pottery industry. This chapter covers the government and private promotion scheme for development of pottery industry. In this chapter future prospects of this industry will be also include.

## 15.5 Chapter V Data Analysis

In this chapter the description overview of the collected data will analyse. Comparative analysis of the economical aspect based on primary data with the help of various statistical tools is discuss in this chapter. The personal information, capital formation, employment generation, investment, infrastructure, marketing all other related information would be analyse.

## 15.6 Chapter VI Summery of findings and suggestion

The summery of finding and suggestion are would discuss in this chapter. The overall conclusion of the study , the problems related suggestion and respective scope for future study will cited in this chapter.

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