



REVISITING INDIGENOUS CRAFT OF WEST BENGAL, TERRACOTTA OF PANCHMURA: A REVIEW OF SOCIO ECONOMIC STUDY

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Abstract

The folk craft and art making sector is an innovative and emerging cottage industry in terms of its unique design, structure, lustrous finishing and a cord of communicating and transferring culture of the concern region. It provides a competitive advantage situation to occupy the local market for its quality, easy availability and affordable price structure. Although it has some of its lucrative and beneficial sites, this art and craft sector needs to invent some new horizons, opportunities and can able to combat against all challenging issues in this handicraft sector. Most of the cases the craftsman of this Terracotta pottery craft making family turns into economically needy and deprived. The lack of proper training and education, lack of financial aids, lack of proper marketing strategy remains them in the shadow of society. The over dependence on traditional primitive technology, high production cost due to sky hiking price of raw materials, less demand of the craft product due to easy availability of substitute like artificial and fiber products are the major cause of crumbling up artisans rural and peripheral market. Moreover, this research article focuses on the socio-economic, demographic and cultural profile of artisan community (Kumbhakar Community) in Panchmura village located in Bankura district of West Bengal. This article also emphasizes on major challenges and difficulties of this craft hub and their possible recommendations.

Keywords: Terracotta, Pottery, Kumbhakar, Socio-Economic, Review.

Introduction: In Indian sub-continent a wide range of cultural variety in forms of tangible cultural component (craft and souvenir) and intangible cultural component (folk songs, dance, folk rituals etc) are found abundantly. This folk craft or handmade craft are the second largest sector after agriculture in terms of employment generation after liberalization in India (Sharma and Sezhiyan, 2013). This folk craft and handicraft article are made by various simple and natural raw materials in a very traditional matter (Yojona, 2006). This handicraft and arts are famous and popular in India since a long historical period and the technology that may uses in this craft making purposes are readopted at present era for various ethnic production and even engineering activities. So, a revolutionary mobility and dynamicity is essential to employ for up gradation modern folk craft or handmade craft. Besides technical assistance a hard-core financial investment also becomes an important agenda for its further propagations. This handicraft sector remains overlooked through various faults of developmental strategy and planning of India in various decades. Availability of ample funding, technological assistance, awareness among the craftsman community, modern marketing policies make this craft promotion and prosperity to alive. Handicrafts of a particular society convey the cultural ethos, creative thinking, ritual thoughts and decorative attitude in a best representative way. In the present era of globalization this craft sector needs to be modified with the help of traditionalism, for instance modern development might adopt the old skills, adoption of traditional technology and mechanism by the new generation of craftsmen, adoption of older raw materials and skills by concurrent artisans. So, a well blend and balanced development is needed where handmade and machine made both are given priority. An artisan engaged in handicraft sector must be well trained by the traditional knowledge and skills of craft making and it's designing. They are worked individually or through a small group of artisan member's collaboration in cottage production mode. In Terracotta craft making sector very often family members or in some cases hired workers (in a very nominal cases) are engaged in making craft items who are not so much skilled by modern technical support. In some cases, modern western technology are become responsible to ruin the age old primitive traditional techniques. In Panchmura village the fire spot (agni-kunda) is replaced by modern electric furnace. In this research article focuses given on socio-cultural, demographic and economic status of the Terracotta craft making artisan community.

Artisan, most of the cases saturated within a community and it's very hard to distinct them as a separate caste or class. Rather they may be defined by their ability to express their cultural traits and traditional feelings through various handmade art and crafts. As per the record of Indian tradition an artist may be defined as an innovative personality who may assemble various natural elements to produce their craft item like terracotta, stone lime, ivory, clay, brass metal, painting and drawing etc. So, the craftsmanship may be defined popularly as a hand skilled work by using naturally available materials through using traditional techniques made by their own hands. Artisanal crafts are the articles, which are handmade and less dependent upon the modern electrified technology which is treated to be a craft of common people. In Panchmura Village of Bankura district the kumbhakar community is producing majestic Terracotta craft which acts as the symbolization of culture. They can best express their cultural traits, traditional way of life, ritual



components through various craft items. Through this craft practice (shilpa karma) they can retain their age-old pottery craft practice along with a sustainable economic growth. This artisan stands in an important and prestigious position in Indian history and culture. They are the communities who always play a significant role in transmission of materialistic and non-materialistic culture and its evolution through this craft items. This community will lead the formation of trade union especially right after immigration of this artisan in town or metropolitan region for securing their future and economy.

Panchmura in Bankura district is popular as the Terracotta craft heaven of West Bengal. Despite of its charm and increasing fame the craftsman needs to be trained through various soft skills, managerial skills and aptitude, production technique and marketing strategy along with proper communication in major languages for betterment of their craft business. At present Govt. of India introduced various developmental schemes to improve their financial and socio-cultural status, like Supply of Improved Toolkits of Rural Artisans (SITRA) which is a part of IRDP in July, 1992. It has its noble objective to improve the economic situation, earning standard of the artisan living below the poverty level. At present this developmental programme attached with self-developmental and self-employment programme like Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY).

This pottery craft hub of Panchmura has its enormous potentiality to achieve the best platform in earning revenue, employment generation and sustain the eco-friendly development. It can motivate the young generation of pottery craft making family to engage in this occupation and enhance self-dependency, which is a positive sign for the employment sector in countryside regions. The semi-skilled women and the unemployed people (unskilled) should be trained by hand to maximize the standardization of economic growth and restorative of strength in this pottery sector.

General history and significance of handicraft in Indian economy: This Handicraft sector has its a glorious historical past. The Indian artisans in the historic age were popular worldwide for their craftsmanship and creative artistic expression. In the period of 15th and 16th centuries the Patola fabric art of Surat in Gujarat were exported in the countries of Middle East (Baghdad) for its popularity. During the Mughal period the demand of handicraft also raised from the feudal lord and Nawabs (Kings). British East India Company also exported a huge amount of craft to various other countries for huge commercial demand. The prosperity of this handicraft and folk art in India continued till the emergence of British kingdom. The British attorney were reduced the power of Nawabs which was responsible for effective fall down of demand of handicrafts. (Reddy et al. 2018).

Handicrafts are the items that is simply made by the own hand of the artisan or with the help of some basic tools. It is emphasizing on manual operation rather than dependence upon machinery assistance. The craft work showing the skill and expertise of the artisan not in terms of money but their mental strength, creativity, willingness to retain the traditional cultures etc. the artisan focuses their own hand skills to fulfillment the formation of final product from raw materials without any machinery help. This art form invented in historical past and sustains its flow from generation after generation till now. These products having cultural, societal, religious, aesthetic, traditional and symbolic values that are significant in conservation of culture. Each and every handicraft in different geographical region having its own distinct color, shade, shape, texture and geometry.

Various schools of thoughts advocate the significance of this craft items for its cultural heritage and conservational values. Some faculty members of Ross School of Business, University of Michigan, Prof. C.K. Prahalad, Paul & Ruth McCracken said, "India needs to focus on the flowering of arts, science, and literature. The goal is to see India become the world's benchmark on how to cope with diversity. It can become a benchmark for the practice of universality and inclusiveness. Inclusive growth is not about subsidies. It is about creating sustainable opportunities." (Singh and Fatima, 2015). So, the government should focus on the unorganized economic sector besides the organized sector as it incorporates various cottage industry including handicraft sector where the craft workers are continuously struggle to achieve a dignified platform according to their need.

This handicraft sector has a significant contribution in nation's economical, socio-cultural and regional development. This handicraft sector may strengthen the local and national level economy by earning foreign exchange and create potential employment, which are narrated below.

Field of achievement of handicraft sector in India: The folk craft sector played a major in countries economy by creation of job, earning security, training and skill enhancement. It is an unorganized economic sector that runs as a cottage industry in India. Most of the craft industry flourishes due to its glorious past tradition and fame, availability of skilled and semi-skilled worker, elongated market, wider demand, affordable price and its eco-friendliness. In India the market of traditional craft is still prevails like Brass metal work, Terracotta ornament, stone and bamboo craft and decorative article and jute items etc. In spite of absence of huge authoritarian support, loyalty, large financial investments the handicraft sector are still keeping its propagation. Some handicraft sector flourishes in a full-scale large industry like Jewellery, Baluchari sari etc.



Objectives of the study

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To evaluate and analyze the socio-economic status of the Terracotta craft workers at Panchmura village in Bankura District.
2. To find out the major challenges of this Terracotta hub and their probable solutions.

Location of the study area: West Bengal is one of the leading in production of majestic 'Terracotta' craft among India. This Pottery craft is not a newer edition in India rather it has a long historical background of itself. Various archeological evidences prove that it was prevalent in the era of Indus valley civilization. Although it is still mystical when and how this Terracotta craft introduced in the craft land of Bengal, but the fertile alluvial soil and ample clay availability in this region surely helps to spread it rapidly. West Bengal is a popular destination for the tourists to buy the Terracotta craft item as it is the largest producer of this creative and decorative craft item till now. Panchmura village is come under Khatra subdivision of Bankura District are the largest production unit of this terracotta work, which is taken as the study area. Panchmura is located between 22°58'00"N- 22°66'67"N and 87°10'00"E 87°16'67"E. It has an average elevation of 68m from mean sea level. The total village population is 719 (as per 2011 population census data), among which maximum population is based on Terracotta crafts. The long neck horses are the basic symbol of this craft which represents the Bankura district. This long neck shows the royalty of the Malla kingdom in Bishnupur, which not only concentrated this craft article only in religious or spiritual appeal but it adorns the guest houses, luxurious hotels for its majestic decorative values.

Handicraft of Bankura district in west Bengal: The Department of micro small and medium enterprises and textiles, Govt. of West Bengal recently launched various schemes to patronise the craft art along with its sustainable growth in future. Govt. of West Bengal also admires the up gradation and modification of this craft regarding its quality, shape, style and ergonomics keeping pace with the demand of present consumers both in national and international level. This craft items also available in its museums, emporiums and other various showroom (Biswabangla, Manjusha, Bangasree etc.) which is spreading over the various part of this state and outside. Now a days Govt. took initiative to organize district level craft fairs and festivals for its enhancement of publicity, popularity and betterment in craftsman-buyer relationship in the state capital Kolkata every year during winter. Government also initiates and motivates the artisans for participation in various craft fair or craft market at national as well as international level. The major beneficial and promotional programmes that are taken by Directorate of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises, Govt. of West Bengal are as follows.

- I. The District Level Fairs and Festivals.
- II. Reimbursement of TA, DA and Carrying Cost to the craft workers and artisans.
- III. Celebrating the handicraft week and village-based cottage industries artisans.
- IV. Old age pension to handicraft, folk craft and village industries artisans.
- V. Artisans Credit Card (ACC). (Source: handicraft, MSME, Govt. of West Bengal, Web Portal).

The district Bankura is enriched by its wide range of eye catching, innovative craft work like Terracotta, Dokra & Brass Metal work, Baluchari Sari, Bamboo craft, Stone carving, Conch shell art, 'Dos Abotar' cards showing innovative and artistic paintings, Wonderful Lantern, Wood Carving etc.

Panchmura at a Glance: Panchmura village is situated in Bankura district, where nearly 300 artists are engaged in Terracotta craft making activities. The craft is famous for production of long neck horses and elephants, manosha chali, various dolls and idols of hindu mythology, tearracotta sankha, and other article that adorns the rooms for decorative purposes. Among this all-craft item long neck horses are the most important one. Terracotta resembles baked clay. The artisans often colour their finished products with baked clay and burn it through fire in a kiln with the wood fuel or most often with the help of Eucalyptus leaves. This Terracotta craft is simple artistic forms that may have a wide range of the commodity starting from human or animal statue to household decorative elements and ornamental figure. It was believed that this Terracotta craft was started during 'Malla' dynasty which was at the end of 7th century AD. After this artistic invention the craftsman started to project this craftwork in the wall of temples in Bishnupur. It is now Internationally famous and received GI index for its art & heritage value. There is a Mritshilpi Samabay Samity, situated in Panchmura as an assistance centre and united forum made by the artist's cluster for their betterment in production and prosperity. During the month of November to December, a three to five days village craft fair along with a festival are organized where lots of visitors and tourists come from various sides to purchase and promote this craft work. It is very convenient to reach in Panchmura. The nearest railway station is Bankura and Bishnupur. It is 4 hours' drive from the state's capital Kolkata.

The identical techniques of Terracotta art and craft making: 'Terracotta' is a hard, semi consistent, moisture free clay usually burnt for making Pottery. (Pal and Pal, 2015) The traditional long necked, Bankura horses showing the royalty of Malla kingdom are the most popular craft in terms of customer demand in this area. It has both physical (tangible) and cultural (intangible) significance by its creation and artistic values. Beside its spiritual and religious significance (in forms of goddess idol making), now this Terracotta crafts adorns the guest rooms, hotels and dining rooms symbolizing traditional folk art of India for its decorative values. The



'Terracotta' art and craft is completely based upon its main raw material that is clay which is treated as the base of the Terracotta craft items. This work begins only after receiving this lateritic clay (Mati). The time duration of its making may elongate from some days to some months. Usually, the old aged potters used the traditional wheel or chak. It is a rotating wooden dial in which various parts and compositions of the pottery item are constructed separately. Then all these parts are scraped to impart it smooth looks. After completion of all this steps the fragmented parts are joined by the precise hand of these craftsmen. After this basic formation it doesn't left open in the direct heating of sun, because minute fractures may lead to easily breakable of these craft products. So, it left in an open huge place containing shadow for number of days to evaporate the moisture remains in it. Then finally the baking process is done. The 'Bhati' (Furnace) is made very carefully by digging the land lining with bricks. It is filled with coal, cow-dung, dry leaf of eucalyptus tree as a fuel of it. Recently Electric furnace is launched by 'Panchmura Mritsilpi Samity', which reduces labour cost, saving times, and prevents pollutions and can uses repeatedly. Once the craft items are entered in the furnace it is sealed, and light up the fire in the wood fuel. It takes overnight process (8-9 hours). After the baking process getting over, it remains for cooling up to 5-6 hours. Finally, it got its art form and color usually we find as the dark brown or orange color in it. After that it becomes popular saleable items.

The overall process of making the product from the initial stage to the finishing stage is given below:

1. Preparation of the materials: The clay has been refined and adding other raw materials like Khar (dried paddy palnt), sand and water.
 2. Mixing the Clay properly: Mixing the clay with other raw material with the help of water by the own hand or leg of the artisan.
 3. Wheel work: It is done basically to produce cone or cylinder shape parts of the craft.
 4. Drying: Drying in the sun for one to two days duration at the house corridor.
 5. Hand work: Joining of the parts made on the wheel and assembles them together to impart a complete shape.
 6. Detailed Motifs work: It is done after getting the basic shape for its decoration by using simple tools (chirari) made from the common bamboo.
 7. Final Drying: It is done after little drying in sun. Basically, it takes place in a sealed room for 6-7days duration.
 8. Coloring: Before firing operation, women artisan makes final coloring and color coats.
 9. Firing: Firing takes place for 10-15days in a traditional kilns enclosed up all sides with one single stoke holes.
 10. Testing/Sorting. Finally, the good products are kept for display and damaged are taken for repaired or sold at a lesser price.
- **Market:** Mostly they have displayed their craft article at their own house corridor (Varandah) or else inside of the home. According to size from smaller to bigger horse are arranged in their home. Generally, tail and ear piece of the horse are kept separately later it should be put in after sold the craft item.
 - **Final completion and export:** locally newspaper is taken as a packaging material and it packs in carton of fruit or other easily available card board box etc. later it is transported to Bankura or Bishnupur market for selling purpose by three-wheeler rickshaw or some mini trucks.
 - The craft item are displays in the local market of Bishnupur and Bankura. The horse price varies from 20 to 2000 Rupees having sizes of 4 to 6 feet height.
 - In every December during winter season annual fairs are organized oyto better display and publicity of this craft items. Charak Mela during Chaitra month in Bengali calendar are the festival where the craft items get opportunity to sold.
 - **Engagement:** The Craft Council of West Bengal is highly attached with the craftsman of Panchmura. This institution helps this craftsman for their acquisition of better training and management, financial and technical assistance and marketing help. (Shaw, 2008)

In this present globalisation era, the Terracotta craft of Bankura district is globally popular. It is now accepted thought that the Terracotta craft first invented in this Panchmura region. After its successful invention the artisans are inscribed this craft work in temple wall at Bishnupur. Various traditional home-based decorative article, flower vase, sankha, utensils, ornaments are the major craft articles in this region. The local artisans are famous as Kumbhakar community, who engages to produce daily home-based utility products to decorative and spiritual symbolic items. The artisans recently produce daily need-based products like lamp, tiles etc. which has an optimal demand in urban areas.

Literature review: A wide range of scholarly publications, articles, books are extensively studied for this research purpose. Besides the Indian author some international publications on Handicrafts and folk-art issues also taken under consideration for literature review. Most of the research articles focused on nature and dynamism of Terracotta craft, the unique and traditional techniques of craft making, evaluation of cost and profit earning, role of the financial institution, participation status of women workers in Terracotta craft etc. Some important literature on this Terracotta craft issues are appended below.



Dr. Milan Kanti Satpathi (2011), in his research article focused on the major crisis of Terracotta craft and suggested further recommendation to sustain its potentiality in India. The tiresome techniques of Terracotta craft making and the impact of financial organizations and technical assistance are also analyzed in this article in a scientific way.

Syed Khalid (2012) in his research article analyzed the holistic role of handicraft sector for constructing countries share of employment opportunity, rises in regional development rate and prosperity creation.

Mansoor Ahmad Dar and Aubid Hussain Parrey (2013) in their research article focused on the identical factors for handicraft market which are responsible for potential regional development and socio-economic progression in craft hub of the state Jammu and Kashmir. Beside its role in employment opportunity and rising standard of living the author also tried to focus the major challenges of this craft sector which need to be sort out as early as possible through SWOT analysis model.

Bikash Sharma and T. Sezhiyan, (2013) in their scholarly research publication focused on the traditional heritage and cultural significance of folk art & craft as well as handicraft. They analyzed the role of handicraft in regional development of rural craft hub in particular reference of the state Sikkim, in India. They suggested some efficient global marketing strategies for achieving the global platform of handicraft sectors.

Anwita Dutta (2013), in her research synopsis analyzed the cultural and symbolic significance and ethnological purport. She also evaluated the relationship between folk art and traditional culture in India along with its archeological significance of Terracotta crafts in India economy.

Towseef Mohi Uddin (2014) in his scholarly publication focused on the role of Indian traditional handicraft sector in employment generation, skill enhancement and regional development. He also defined the simplistic procedure of production of various handicrafts by using paper, wood, clay, tree bark, stone, bamboo, metals in a sustainable and eco-friendly manner.

Dr. Bikash Kumar Ghosh (2014), in his research article focused the impact of intermediary person and analyzed how they manipulated the price of this terracotta craft article. He showed in his research paper how the rural artisans are deprived due to sell of their commodity at a very least price where it is sold in the market at a high price so a high margin of profit are gained by these middle man but due to unconsciousness the original artisans can't get the expected profit after a hard struggle of craft making. So the socio economic situations of these craftsmen are remained in a zone of shadow and deprivation.

Dr. Anoop Kumar Singh and Ms. Sumbul Fatima (2015) in their research article defined the innovative role of handicraft sector in regional development and employment generation along with earning security round the year in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. They also given thrust on the Governmental policy of forming Special Economic Zone (SEZ) for boost up the potentiality of this handicraft sector in Foreign Exchange Earning (FEE's) and enhancing quality of living of the craft hub regions in UP.

Bhaswsati Pal and Mrinmoy Pal (2015), in their collaborative research study they depicted the present scenario of Terracotta craft sector in light of contemporary socio-economic perspective. They also demarcated some factors, which are responsible for gradual downfall of this 'Terracotta' cottage hub. They also suggested some valuable recommendation to overcome this problems and hindrances.

Pinaki Mandal Sahoo, (2016) in his research paper described the magnificent role of Terracotta cottage industry for accelerating the regional development in these rural craft hubs in a very sustainable manner. He also identified the role of this pottery craft in women engagement and women participation in this regard.

Pranab Maji and Dr. Dilip Kumar Das (2016) in their research article focused on the criteria, features, production techniques and cultural significance of various handicraft of Bankura district. They also suggested the tourism activities and its promotion as a developmental strategy of the traditional craft like Terracotta, Dokra, Baluchari sari etc.

Reddy, Vekateshwarlu and Rao (2018), in their research paper focused the trend of growth and development of Handicraft in India and its general historical evolution along with its role in enhancing export rate, accelerating GDP and employment opportunity in India. They made an extensive case study on developmental pattern of Crochet Lace Industry in the state Andhra Pradesh.

Research Methodology: The present research study is based on exploratory and survey research schedule in the selected study area of Panchmura village in Bankura district. The male and female both types of artisans are taken under interview schedule through random sampling method in this study area. In this article it studies the general history and evolution of handicraft but mainly it focuses the Terracotta craft and related artisans' socio-economic status in an intensive manner. The principle intention behind of this study is to invent the socio-economic dimension and scenario of terracotta artisans (Kumbhakar) community and delineate its role in regional development through employment creation and earning revenue. Primary and secondary, both kinds of data are entertained for this research study. For the primary data, it has been collected through questionnaire survey and field interview method. The secondary database is taken from various books, journal, published and unpublished articles, statistical data and census data. This study is based on the workers engaged in the terracotta craft in Panchmura village and its scope is concentrated to determine the socio-cultural and economic status of the craftsman, their major identical problems and their possible solutions. A structured questioner is prepared for the craftsmen who are the respondent of this research study. A total number of 50 respondents are selected for this interview schedule randomly from Panchmura terracotta hub.



Result and Analysis: From the general observation and field visits it can be primarily said that the working ambience in this Panchmura village is very peaceful and a collaborative as well as coordination attitude can be found in this craft hub. This village is not so much developed by all infrastructural composition although they run their productive function in a very sustainable manner. This region is famous for Kumbhakar para, where maximum pottery making craftsman are resides. At the centre of the village there is a common sitting place is situated which is popularly known as 'Baithak, where the artisans are assembles for their general meeting and conversation regarding pottery business. In this village there is another community formation which is known as 'Panchmura Mritshilpi Samabhai Samity' that works as a guild made by the workers to analyze the growth and development pattern of this craft article. (Shaw, 2011)

The present field study aims to analyze the socio-cultural and economic analysis of the craftsman community who playing a pivotal role in cultural retention and mobility in this region. From this survey it can be said that the socio- economic situation of Kumbhakar community are gradually declining due to absence of proper developmental strategy, financial and technological support and other hindrances. The technological innovation and progress rate also very slow so that it cannot able to compete in the market with its full strength. Various socio-cultural and demographic factors are taken for consideration for this research study. Age of the respondents, literacy status, income level, class and caste status, religious groups, housing conditions are some basic parameters that are taken into consideration for this research study. The parameter wise analysis of the survey results are given below.

1. Distribution of Age-Group among respondents.

Interpretation: From the survey, it is said maximum workers are belongs from productive age group (26-35), which shares highest percentage (50%). The respondents belong from 36-45 age group shares 20% and 15-25 age groups respondents share 12% among total respondents. Age group determination is important not only to determine their age or maturity but to know their life experiences about this craft.(Sharma and Sezhiyan,2013).

2. Distribution of Educational qualification:

Interpretation: From the survey, it can be said that maximum artisan respondents are belongs from literacy level of primary to upper primary contains 34%. Secondary and H.S. level literate respondents share 20 and 18 percent respectively. Whereas the graduate or technical educated respondents are 16%. Education is an important parameter for assessing socio-cultural and economic life of the community as educated person are able to take rational decision and can opt various technical skills easily that enhances their production efficacy.

3. Distribution of marital status

Interpretation: from the survey, it is found that maximum respondents are married (92%) where the unmarried respondents are shares an ignorable percentage (8%).

4. Status of Migration among artisan workers

Interpretation: Around 88% respondents are the permanent residents and non-migratory who lives in this village since a long day and 12% respondent artisans are belongs from migrated section. They mainly arrived here for securing their employment and earning money for their livelihood in attachment with this Terracotta work.

5. Nature of house of the respondents

Interpretation: houses are generally two types Kacha and Paka. In our field survey, 26% respondents are lives in paka house with cemented roof to, where 74% respondents are lives in kacha house, with tin/asbestos/thatches covered roof top. So, this survey scenario depicts that economic development is still needed for the region.

6. Family types of the respondents

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents belongs from joint family (84%) as they work in a united way in this terracotta craft making sector. The earning, employment opportunity, skill enhancement becomes easier to access in these joint family respondents. Whereas a nominal amount of respondents are lives in a nucleated family (16%).

7. Economic status of the respondents

Interpretation: It is the important parameter to determine the socio-economic status of the respondents. As pivotal portion of the respondent artisans are belonging an income group of 5000-10000, which shares 58%. Whereas only 22% respondents having the monthly income of 10000-15000 Rs. Below 5000 income group occupy 14% which is very alarming. Only 6% of artisans who have large production fields with sound market connection belong from above 15000 Rs. Monthly income level. So, the income status of the respondents are not much sound in this respect. So, a proper financial assistance, tax exemption policy, technological support with



a sound marketing policy needs to be employed in this respect. So, Government and other private organizations along with NGO's should work jointly to operate these activities by which the artisans can get proper support and achieve their expected goals.

From this above survey report it can be said that the economic and socio-cultural status is remained stagnant and, in some cases, it depletes due to interplay of some negative factors. This terracotta craft produced various daily based commodity, religious idols and decorative elements. It is a home-based cottage sector that doesn't need much skills, supersonic technology and he capital investment for its establishment. The natural raw materials (clay soil, wood fuel etc) can easily access at a very low cost in this forest-based region. This terracotta craft is the only major source of income among the craftsman. The state Government also provides various financial supports in respect of artisans' demand. Although the Kumbhakar community (artisans) still faces various problems like lack of proper monitory assistance, lack of technological innovation, lack of proper skill development programme, unorganized production system and lack of proper coordination which need to be solved immediately.

Major Problems: In spite of various developmental strategies adopted by the Govt. and other agencies in sake of the development of Terracotta craft in this region but still it has been suffering some major problems, which resists its further progress, these difficulties are given below,

- i. Lack of interest in Terracotta craft making techniques among the family members specially the young generations in Kumbhakar community, because of the minimal income earning can possible from this craft work. So, they give up all their efforts in this craft practice.
- ii. The financial status of the artisans is not very sound. In general, the artisans earned 100 Rs. in average per day, where comparatively wealthier artisans earned 400Rs. in average per day, which is not sufficient to hold the present need of a family.
- iii. The artisans are using the primitive techniques which can able to produce a nominal amount of craft product as well as they doesn't have adequate space for its drying or preserving.
- iv. The availability of raw materials like chemical agent, color, clay soil is now not easily available at nearby places, they depend on importing the raw materials in a high cost which becomes problematic to them.
- v. The lack of proper financial assistance, technological support becomes the acute problem for their further acceleration.
- vi. Lack of proper marketing strategy becomes a major hindrance of its growth. As most of the cases it focuses on local and regional market so the national or international level market remains neglected.
- vii. The Terracotta potters need to employ modern design article or craft items instead of monotonous traditional design to cope up with the preference of the consumers.
- viii. Although it's a craft tourism centre but still adequate accommodation and infrastructure for tourist's attraction still lacks in this region.

Suggested recommendations: As every production sector possesses some of its own difficulties, likewise 'Panchmura'- the Bengal's Terracotta hub also faced some of its own distinct problems. Although Artisans should work in a proper coordinated way for securing their family income. The educated young generation should take initiative to sustain and preserve this age-old traditional craft. Govt. and Non-Govt. organizations must work hand in hand to recover and retain this craft production alive. Some suggestible recommendations are given below.

- i. Various promotional strategies including tourism development need to be employed in this region for better marketing and popularity.
- ii. Various facilities need to be provided to the artisans like providing them beak loan for strong financial assistance, health insurance, children educational assistance, house building loan, craft preservation and marketing assistance etc.
- iii. Besides regional marketing and promotional activities (in Kolkata, Durgapur, Bishnupur, Medinipur), the artisans of terracotta craft article should attend some national and international craft fairs and cultural festivals.
- iv. Modern training and entrepreneurial management skills must be organized by Govt. and other organizations in Panchmura for more quality up gradation and prosperous achievement.
- v. Proper financial assistance and marketing assistance need to be provided to each artisan for their motivation in this craft.
- vi. Modern technology and uses of electric energy rather than wood fuel must be adopted for betterment in their productions.(IIT-KGP takes an initiative to establish electric furnace for burning clay materials and minimization in fuel cost).
- vii. For better promotional activities Media participation, internet and e-business policy must be accepted in this regard.
- viii. More research and development (R & D) operation is needed regarding accommodation, infrastructure, financial assistance, customer satisfaction in this region.

The final conclusion should be made and analyzed by the SWOT analysis of Panchmura village terracotta craft art as under:

1. Strengths

- Potential market.



- Flexible production system.
- Cheap labor cost.
- Eco-friendly.
- Favorable physical climate.
- Increasing popularity in traditional craft.
- Ample employment opportunity.

2. Weakness

- Lack of proper infrastructure.
- Mainly village based production system.
- Primitive techniques of production.
- Unorganized sector.
- Low income generation and low wages.
- Less interest among youth artisan.
- Less global exposure and marketing opportunity.
- Low level research on up gradation and customer feedback analysis.

3. Opportunity

- For decoration, spiritual and other purposes this terracotta craft items having an increasing demand in its trend.
- Its unique design, long necked horses, lateritic color remains at the pivotal position of attraction.
- Tourism industry and other craft fairs & festivals increasing its popularity and publicity.
- E- Commerce, web business and media engagement increase its popularity in an optimal rate.

4. Threats

- It remains in back foot during a stiff competition with other decorative articles like artificial fiber made agents.
- The demand of this craft items is not sufficient according its supply or production dimension.
- Lack of modernize skills and updated technology.
- Increasing cost of raw materials.

Conclusion: The Terracotta craft has its own symbolic values and obviously it is a matter of pride in West Bengals craft industries. It has its own cultural, spiritual, aesthetic, historical as well as heritage values which need to be preserve and sustain in a well managerial way. The growth and development of this craft sector must be retaining in terms of its export and marketing values. Recently the demand of handicraft and folk craft are promising marketing and business. It needs to be attached with other various small and cottage industry for its further growth and acceleration. It requires engaging the local artisan in this terracotta craft art round the year for securing their employment and earning opportunity. This terracotta craft art must be incorporated in organized sector for its further betterment and prosperity. Proper information supply, financial assistance, technological up-gradation, skill enhancement programme, proper marketing techniques is needed for its convenient development.

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