

# **A SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDY OF TERRACOTTA ARTISAN COMMUNITY IN BANKURA, WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

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## **Introduction**

Terracotta craft is indigenous and traditional art forms in all over world. In India, Bankura district of West Bengal shows a distinct and definite technique in terracotta art forms (Biswas 1981). Different types of terracotta art forms are found in different parts of Bankura District and mainly practiced by the artisans of Kumbhakar caste (Risley 1891). Many of their products are famous in urban people for its original grass root aesthetic senses. Traditionally these are mainly used for ritualistic purpose in Rarh Bengal. Many terracotta products like utensils, dolls, deities figures like Lskhmi (Wealth Goddess), Manasa (snake Goddes), Bara (tiger God), Sasti (Children care Goddes) etc, vase, ornaments, Animal figure like Horse, elephant, bull etc are made by these people. Among this terracotta horse of Bankura is famous for its beautiful decoration, Color, distinct form. The distinctiveness has attracted people from all Over the World. The present study has been done in a village Panchmura in Bankura district. This papers mainly emphasise on the traditional indigenous technology and the socio-economic condition of the people attached with the craft.

## **Objectives**

The aim of the present study is to know the method of making terracotta objects and the terracotta objects produced by them Study will be made on the manufacturing techniques of terracotta objects such as, with hand or with the use of mould. The distribution of tools and technique of manufacture will be helpful in locating the major technological tradition of terracotta making in West Bengal. There will be an attempt at tracing any generation wise continuity of tradition in the present day community. There is an approach to observe the particular social situation of the people in which the craft is continuing.

## **Material and Methods**

The village Pachmura is famous craft centre of terracotta horse and other ritual and decorative items. Out of 72 kumbhakar families 70 families are engaged with the craft in the village. The knowledge of technology and process of manufacture transmitted through generation to generation. Earlier there were 300-400 craftsmen, but now many have shifted to other occupations. Both primary and secondary data will be used for the work. However, the work will be

primarily based on empirical data collected from the field. Interviews with the help of both structured and unstructured schedules, multiple questionnaires, whichever applicable; free listening will be used for collecting basic information about the communities, and about different aspects of the craft. The latter may include data on collection of raw materials, process of manufacturing, finishing of product and marketing network. Observation method (both participant and non-participant) will be followed for collecting data on the different stages of the techniques of manufacture. Census survey may be made on the basis of age, sex, gender, occupation and generation of the Community. Review of existing literature, books, journals, government records etc will provide with secondary data.

### Result

Manufacturing of the terracotta crafts follows a long term process that is follows as, collection of clay, preparation of clay, wheelwork, drying, hand work, fixing parts, detail motif work, final drying, colouring, firing, testing or sorting, packing, transporting and marketing. All these work done by all family members. Generally male members are engaged in collection of clay, preparation of clay, processing and firing. Female members are engaged to help them, besides their domestic work. Their economic condition is not much

appreciable. They also have low literacy rate. Unavailability of clay, Lack of space, lack of storage area are the main problems of the craft. Naturally shortage of space is quite responsible for lesser production of this craft. So they are migrated to different occupation to cope up with the situation.

### Conclusion

Clay craft is very old in origin in West Bengal. The river alluvium attracted people from the past to this craft. They are practicing craft by indigenous technology. There are so many problems regarding the craft but still continuing for demand of local people for ritualistic purposes. At present Department of Micro & Small Scale Enterprises have created new opportunities for developing crafts and increased income opportunities to the artisan communities in West Bengal with UNESCO. Different fares arranged by the Central and State Government has been given new opportunity to sale their products.

### References

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