



DIVISION OF LABOUR AND SOCIO-CULTURAL USES OF POTTERY PRODUCT IN ASSAMESE SOCIETY

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Abstract:

Pottery industry play as a role of production unit in Indian rural economy. This cottage based industry is important for both economic and cultural perspective. This study was conducted at Majuli district of Assam. Through this paper, researcher try to draw the social and economic aspect instead of technical aspect of pottery production. The board aim of study was explore the division of labour and social uses of pottery products in Assamese society. Mixed methodology was adopted for primary data collection. 100 respondent were selected for primary data collection through purposive sampling method. The primary data were collected with the help of interview schedule, participant observation and case study method. Secondary data were collected through book, journal and government report. This paper will help us to insight understanding and built new knowledge on division of labour in small scale industries.

Key Words: Pottery Industry, Production, Economy, Rural & Labour

Introduction:

Pottery is one of the oldest small scale Cottage based industry of human civilization. Pottery object made of clay that have been make into desire shape dried and fire them to high temperature in a kiln which removes all the water from clay and fixed their form. Pottery industry is so important that it can be study from various perspective like Sociological, economical, historical, environmental, physical science according to its origin, growth, design and uses. Pottery is considered as a woman pre-dominated industry in all over the world. Young, K.E.(2002- 25) "The tradition of pottery making have been traditionally passed down to the succeeding generation of females, whether they be blood born relation, female visitor or female in law". Although, pottery making is a woman predominated industry but as production of small scale unit there is division of labour among the family member. All the manufacture system is procreate by the men, women and children. Mteti, S.H.(2016-140) pottery production and distribution process shared between men and women among the Kisi Pare Potters. The division dominates both traditional and modern technologies. For instant, Although traditional pottery making and clay extraction are in the hand of women, children both boys and girls carried clay from clay site back home. Although modern pot making is done by men and women, the Kisi transporting pots from home to the lake shore is done by every able-bodied member of the household. Pottery industry is not only important for economic and cultural aspect. It's also help us to create work culture as well as bring co-ordination and unity among the family members.

Pottery is important for understanding culture and civilization of a particular society. The religious and custom, food habit, technological attainment, economic condition and all other elements reflects through pottery. The pottery stands as medium of expression. Handique, K.J. (2015-134) "The pottery products are part and parcel of the life of Assamese people. The manufacturing of most of the product is meant for commercial purpose small part of the products is for domestic use". The pottery industry is stand as a economic supporter as well cultural symbol of Assamese society. From the domestic use to religious uses pottery can't be ignored in Assamese society .Two distinctive community of Assam namely "Kumar" and "Hira" still maintained their traditionally occupied occupation.

Review:

In order to gain background of knowledge of problem and to identify appropriate methodology, research design and technique of analysis or to be able to formulate the problem precisely, a brief review of literature relating to the field and the study has been presented.

Mteti, S.H (2016) In his study cited that pottery Making process involved the interaction between men and women, although the participation of women is more toxing. The production process are undertaken by women and marketing aspect is undertaken by the man responsibility. The division of labour dominates in both traditional and modern technologies.

Geedh, S. & Nadgauda,T.(2013) He tried to study Socio-Cultural importance of pottery industry through historical and Archaeological perspectives. In his study reveals that although pottery industry is women predominated industry but due to some socially transmitted taboo, there is seen gender wise division of labour among artisans. The artisans have peaceful co-operation from beginning of pottery making to selling.

Young K. E (2002) in his study observed that pottery industry is correlated which sexuality, spirituality and social custom of the particular society. He tried to establish pottery as a matriarchal heritage industry, because women preserve, practice and implemented largely intact from ancient time to present. He tried to

examine how the matriarchal tradition of pottery making among tribal societies have created as a sense of autonomy for women in that culture.

Sikdar, M. & Chauduri, P. (2015) in his article “pottery making tradition among the Prajapati community of Gujarat” mention that the pottery making tradition of Prajapati community not only depict the indigenous knowledge of the community but also their cast identity. Although in their study they established pottery as a woman dominated crafts but acknowledge the role of man in the soil collection and marketing to take part as an active role.

Sarbay, J (1985) in this article “sexual segregation in the pottery industry” justify that male and female in the workforce has changed over time and has masked and considerable reorganisation of work into men’s and women’s work at different time, but women earning is still on average markedly lower than men. He tried to investigate occupational segregation according to gender wise.

Callen, A (1980) in his study examined how to all members of family units were actively engaged in production and transmitted their labour to family economy during post industrial revolution. Women income will help as supplementary income for the family and artistic work stand as a supporter of single women and widow.

Objectives of the Study:

Small scale industry play pivotal role in the development of rural economy. Pottery is important for both economic and cultural perspective. Through this paper researcher try to study two dimension of pottery industry. Division of labour is try to study through economic perspectives and ritual uses of pottery product is studied through social and cultural perspectives. So, further study is conducted to find out division of labour, ritual and daily uses of pottery products in Assamese society. The major objectives of present study are-

- To trace the social and economic background of the respondent.
- To find out the division of labour in pottery industry.
- To identify the ritual and daily uses of pottery products.

Study Area:

This study was conducted at Majuli, which is world famous as a largest river Island and cultural heritage place. The island is composed by the Brahmaputra river in the south and KherkutiaSuti, an ana branch of Brahmaputra, join by Subansiririver in the North. According to 2014 the land area of Majuli was 352sqkm(approx.). As per Census 2011, Majuli had total population of 167, 304 of which 85,325 were male and 81, 978 were female. The study area was Salmora Mouza, south eastern part of Majuli, where the artisans are mostly concentrate. Salmora Mouza is composition by Salmora, Sinatoli and Borboka village. A brief introduction on under the study village mentioned below-

Salmora Gaon:

Salmora is reputed area for pottery production in Majuli. The Salmora village is situated at the Eastern part of Majuli. Salmora village is composition of Borboka, Kamjan and Besamorigaon. There are more than 800 household and 3,320 people inhabitant at Salmora. Majority of them are belongs to Kumar community and less member of family belongs to ‘Kaibortta’ and Brahmin community. Pottery making is the major occupation for the people of Salmora. Some of them are engaged with boat making and home decorative furniture. Due to high land erosion in Majuli they have no permanent land for agriculture and animal husbandry.

Sinatoli Gaon:

Sinatoli village is located at 8 kilometre distance from Bongaon police chair under Ratanpur Gaonpanchayat. There are 85 household and 436 people inhabitants at Sinatoli. Out of 436 people 44.03% are male and 56.97% are female.

Dakhinpat Kumargaon:

DakhinpatKumargaon is located at near the DakhinpatSatra. Now a day’s only less number of people practice pottery making at DakhinpatKumargaon due to lack of essential clay. Only 5% people of them involved in pottery making. Nearly there are 250 household and 1,220 people live at the DakhinpatKumargaon.

Methodology:

The present study is about “Division of Labour” in village pottery industry. Both qualitative and quantitative method was adopted for collecting required information, fact, data and opinion. Among the 1,135 household of pottery artisans 100 artisan were selected as a sampling through purposive Sampling method. For primary data collection specially focused on interview schedule, focus group discussion, participant observation and case study method. Specially a unique interview schedule was prepared for all the respondents. Focus group discussion are conducted on the basis of some special character of target groups. To fulfill the objectives of the research, the required secondary data were collected through book, journal and government reported data.

Social Background of Respondents:

The background of an individual reflect cultural norms, value, tradition, custom, belief and practices of particular society. Due to cultural variation, changing structure of the society the individuals thought, believes, experiences are different to each other. To make the study more scientific, a brief analysis of social background of respondents is very essential. It is important part of research. Through the social background of the

respondents researcher may arrive at the notion of future findings of the research. In this research work social background of the respondents includes - sex, education, caste, family status, period of learning pottery making, nature of employment and numbers of workers in the family.

Age is very important component of an individual to develop rational thinking, comprehensive mindset and capable of thinking right decision in right time through experience. Among the 100 respondents of the pottery artisans 30% of respondent counterparts from age group of 31- 35 years and lowest number of respondents belongs to the age group of under 20 years, which was only 2% in number.

Majority of artisans were female. 64% of artisans were female and 36% of respondent were male. There was educational variation among the respondents. 18% of the respondent were illiterates. 50% of them finished primary education and only 3% of them finished secondary level. Majority of family composition was 4-6 number of which was 55%. Most of the artisan was live in nuclear family. The study portrait that 67% of respondent income is monthly below 5,000 and 11% of artisans income between 10,000 to 15,000 rupees. Majority of artisan involve in full time basis. 81% respondents working full time and size of worker was 0-2 number in a family, which was 89%. Majority of artisans working at the age of adulthood, due to economic commitment.

Division of Labour in Pottery Industry:

There is peaceful co-operation among pottery artisan of Majuli. In this chapter researcher try to examine social implication and impacts of pottery industry through division of labour. The division of labour is differ from industry to industry. No doubt, pottery is a women predominant industry, but if we examine through economical and cultural perspective, there is simple and unique division of labour in pottery industry. The division of labour of pottery industry may be differ from each other according tradition and cultural value of the society. The division of labour is not only help to development of organisation but it also helps among the worker to bring intimacy, unity and reduce gender gap. There is simple and sexual division of labour among the pottery artisan of Majuli. Pottery is a small scale household cottage based industry. Due to cottage base industry in nature the division of work distributed among men women and children. As a small scale industry there is so many steps like collecting raw material, transform the raw materials to finish product, marketing aspect associated with pottery industry. The division of labour in every stage of production among the artisan discuss below:

Division of Labour in Collecting Raw Materials:

Clay is the first and foremost essential raw materials in the pottery making process. The glutinous clay required is found dig a 50 - 60 feet on the river bank which is more difficult and risky work. To collect required clay, it takes more than 5 workers and above 7 days. Only experience male member may be able to collect required clay. Those women who have no male member in the family they are buying required raw materials. After collecting required clay from the river they store the clay in a small pond for a particular period to maintaining the stickiness of the clay. After storing, the women are carry the clay to their house and mixed with water and keep for one day. Women plough the clay with their feet and mixed with sand for correct texture.

Division of Labour in Production Process:

Although, most of the activities of production process performed by women but we can't ignore the role of men and children in this stage. The artisan of Majuli does not use 'Chaak' or wheel in the production process. The instrument used in the pottery making production like kodol or spade, Gayen or wodden beater, Baira or bucket, Kani or cloth, pitani and all other instruments are collecting and making by the male member of the family. In this stage the women are applying new shape in the clay through their artistic work. The entire process for making a batch of 40-60 vases takes about 4- 5 days for single women. The children are also help in the drying and firing process of the products. The artisan are generally produce items like - Saaki(earthen lamp), Gosa (earthen lamp with stand), Dhunadani, Kalah (vassel), KataaPatil (pitcher), Ghat (small pot), Tekeli (small pot), Gilas (glass), Baati(bowl). The artisans are mostly products vessel and small pot which have high used in everyday life. The ritual items are products only seasonally. The firing activities are undertaken by the male member of the family. Children are also helps them to collecting and arrangement of the logs of bamboo and other fuels. The artisan are generally produce item like-saaki(earthen lamp), gosa(earthen lamp with stand, Dhuna dani, Kalah(vessel), Katta patil (pitcher), Ghat (small pot) Tekeli, Gilas, (glass), Bati(bowl). The artisans are mostly products vessel and small pot which have high use in every day life. The ritual item are produce only seasonally. The firing activities of pottery product is under taken by male member of the family. The children are help them to collecting and arrangement of the logs of bamboo and other fuels.

Division of Labour in Marketing Process:

Most of the marketing activities in the pottery industry run by the male member of the family. The women are involving in production activities and male member go for marketing. Due unorganised sector, there is not specific market place for pottery selling. The male member selling their products with the help of bicycle, boat, or tractor. The male member go for marketing through boat way around 25-30 days. In that process the women are help them to keep ready their food, cloth and all other essential equipment.

Ritual and Household uses of Pottery Products:

Like other part of the world, pottery products play an important role in the ritual aspect as well as daily household uses in the Assamese society. Where there is ritual activities there is pottery. According to the Hindu ideal and tradition, a single ritual activities can't be able to perform with out uses of pottery product. From Gharbadharan sanskar to Antyesti sanskar, pottery play as an important role in Assamese society. Except ritual activities various festival like Bihu, Dipawali, Lakshmi puja, Palnam and all other festival uses pottery product due to its sacred qualities. The pottery products use in ritual and festive item are Saki (lamp), Gosa (lamp with stand), Maala Saki (disk with a hole), Ghat (small pot), Dhuna, Dhuppati, etc. The items are use as worshiped of God according to Hindu tradition.

Pottery product can be use for number of purposes according to their shape and size. Maximum of the pottery product use at kitchen and home decoration purposes. Kalah (pitcher) is use for storing water. Maximum of the pitcher use among the tribal people of Assam. The tribal people use the pitcher as major rice bear preparing equipment. No other equipment is suitable as well as pitcher. Tekeli (small pot) is use for storing milk and preparing curd. There are so many items like cooking bowl, drinking jar, dishes and glasses are use in day to day life. Now a days some Hotel and Restaurants are also introduce earthen glass and dishes to reduce plastic accessories.

Conclusions:

The study was under taken at Majuli District with prime objectives of examining division of labour social uses of pottery product in Assamese society. In conclusion researcher draw that traditional pottery making of Majuli has distinctive of labour in pottery production spaces. From pre production to post production all the activities are peacefully perform by men, women and with the help of children. Most of the products are market orient as well as domestic and ritual. As a production of units, pottery industry able to create employment generation as well cultural preservation. Government should need to provide special training to the artisan to establish the industry as attractive sector among young generation.

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