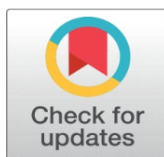
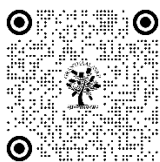


POTTERY IS A TRADITIONAL ART FORM OF THE BARAK VALLEY IN ASSAM, INDIA: A STUDY

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Received 01 July 2022
Accepted 09 August 2022
Published 24 August 2022

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DOI
[10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.46](https://doi.org/10.29121/shodhkosh.v3.i2.2022.46)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

Assam and Northeast, and Barak Valley, are known for their potteries, which are versatile and integral to their lifestyles and economies. My study was mainly based on historical background of pottery making in Barak Valley, in which people of Assam are credited with creating distinctive pottery products with distinctive styles. With an analysis and comparative appraisal of pottery making in Barak valley, as done by local people, I intend to evaluate pottery making in those districts. Throughout the Barak Valley, pottery manufacturing has become an integral part of the local culture. If we date back to history, we discover that Pottery forms tremendous tradition from Vedic, Indus Valley Civilization and one of man's earliest inventions. People utilized it when the civilization began. It created by combining grass with grass and interlocking leaves with the minimal equipment. Some facts may be stated from the manners of the commencing age of human civilization. It is thought that the people before civilization living in the forest used to utilize a cane in different manners to meet their necessities.

Keywords: Pottery, Folk Art, Local Identity and North-East

1. INTRODUCTION

Assam is situated in the North-Eastern region of India. Geographically Assam is the land of hills, plains, and rivers. She is surrounded by Bhutan, Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and Bangladesh. The river Brahmaputra crosses through the state from North-East to the South-West. The state is divided into two river valleys- Brahmaputra valley and Barak valley. [Bareh \(2001\)](#)

It is located in the southern portion of the Indian state of Assam, in a valley known as Barak Valley. The Barak River serves as the inspiration for the name of the location. The Barak valley is divided into three districts, which are Cachar,

Karimganj, and Hailakandi, respectively. Silchar is the largest and most significant town in the area. It is bounded by the North Cachar Hills (Dima Hasao District) in the north, by Mizoram in the east, and by Bangladesh in the south. It has a boundary with Bangladesh on its western boundaries. The Barak plain is home to several tributaries of the Barak River, including the *Jiri*, *Jatinga*, *Sonai*, *Rupai*, and *Katakhal*, among others.

2. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study is based on pottery making of the three prominent places of Barak Valley and a comparative analysis. For that, the researcher has undertaken a critical evaluation with the help of both the primary and secondary data. The sources of preliminary data are personal interviews of the potters specifically. The secondary data includes government or private aided commissions, journals, magazines, souvenirs and different newspapers and information from the Internet.

3. FOLK ART

During the 20th century, folk art in India emerged in response to British concepts imposed on art in the country. In addition, folk and traditional art are gaining increasing interest worldwide as well as being rapidly and enthusiastically adapted by modern and postmodern artists. The early 20th century saw the discovery of folk art in Bengal, and it was collected by Tagore, Ajit Ghosh, and other artists and connoisseurs. [Tyagi \(2008\)](#)

Among India's best-known cultural symbols is pottery, which dates back thousands of years. Pottery from the Indus Valley Civilization has been found in the early villages of Mehrgarh. The art form is still widely practiced both within and outside of India to this day as a cultural art. The ceramics of Indian pottery were previously made of earthenware, which included terracotta as well. [Mago \(2017\)](#)

Every state in India has its own variant of folk art, which takes a variety of forms. This collection includes pottery, wooden and clay toys, puppets, dolls and pictures, paintings, pith and canes, rags, leather, needlework, metal objects, and other a variety of materials, all requiring some form of artistry and demonstrating a vibrant imagination and a lack of culture. Understanding the impact of folk art on contemporary Indian art may help us better understand it. For many Indian painters, folk art is a great source of inspiration. [Jahan \(2008\)](#)

A number of forms of Indian folk art have been developed, including Sholapith paintings from Assam, Pata paintings from Vishnupur, Midnapur, and Kalighat in West Bengal, and rural decorations and reliefs on mud walls in Uttar Pradesh (Sanjhi, Ahoi, Diwali, etc.), Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana, as well as Mithila folk painting from Orissa. There are also painted clay figurines from Orissa and West Bengal, terracotta idols, votive figures, and floor decorations on ceremonial occasions throughout the country, as well as terracotta idols and votive figures from Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh (especially Bastar). [Bindloss \(2009\)](#)

4. POTTERY

The Indus Valley Civilization pottery has been found in the early villages of Mehrgarh, one of India's most famous cultural symbols. Pottery is one of the region's most famous cultural symbols. Until recently, all Indian pottery was made of earthenware, including terracotta as well. The art form continues to be widely

practiced both inside and outside India as a cultural art. An important art form in the valley is pottery, one of the indigenous art schools. Bengali life is full of festivals, especially religious festivals, and the clay artisans are known for carving different gods and goddesses on burned clay pots. These deft clay artisans also create clay pots and utensils, flower vases, and other essential items. The clay used to make these items is of a very high quality for which the Pottery works of this region is highly extolled everywhere in and around. Panibhora Bekirpar, located in southwestern Cachar, Katlicherra located in Hailakandi, and Anipur located in Karimganj are some places particularly famous for pottery and other clay works. In this valley, potters make a variety of percussion instruments, including the left part of the tabla, the mridangam, the khol, and Manipuri mridangas. Bengali Hindus adopt this profession as *rudrapauls* and *kumbhakars*. [Ranjan et al. \(1986\)](#) But then some members among the teagarden labourers who hailed from Uttarpradesh have attached themselves to this profession particularly in Nayabil, a place adjacent to Barjalenga tea estate in Cachar. But most of these clay-potters are not introduced to the modern techniques of pot-making. They live in places far away from the boon of electricity and there is nobody to make them acquainted to electric wheel or such other modern devices. There is no infrastructure for them to find an ever-widening market which is why many artisans are disentangling themselves from this family trade for the sake of bare livelihood. Lack of adequate infrastructure and patronage is thus pushing the immensely potential pottery art of Barak Valley to its death bed. [Nandi \(2010\)](#)

Some prominent potteries of Barak Valley are:

- 1) **Kalsi (Motka):** used to preserve drinking water. Kalsi is generally used for household purposes as well as used in many rituals and is usually made 2-3 sizes of Kalsi.
- 2) **Hadri (Bowl for cooking):** Hadri is used to holding liquids as well as a rice maker. Hadri is one of the most familiar pottery items of Barak Valley.
- 3) **ChayerBhar (Teacup):** made by wheel and freehand. The potters have made various sizes of the cup.
- 4) **Tub (Flower vase):** Tub is very popular because it is used for the flower garden. There are various sizes of the tub made y the potters.
- 5) **Fooldani (Flower vase):** Fooldani is popular for beautification. There are various sizes and shapes are available in fooldani.
- 6) **Putul (Toy):** There are various types of dolls made by the artisans of panibhora. Decorative clay dolls and terracotta dolls are available in panibhora.
- 7) **Patil (Bowl):** There are various sizes of Patil, the object of ritual purposes. Curd is mostly preserved in Patil.
- 8) **Tandoor Pot:** A tandoori pot or tandoori stove is a clay pot that is traditionally used in fire. Made of terracotta, this tandoori pot can be heated to the highest temperature.
- 9) **Incense burner (Dhupdani):** Extraordinary charcoal/incense burner completely handmade from natural red clay. They have made 2-3 varieties of the incense burner.
- 10) **Sara:** Sara issued for covering the upper part of the Patil, which is an important part of this item, and which is also made of clay.

11) Diya: Deepak is an oil lamp which is usually made of clay, dipped in ghee or oil with cotton. Diyas are native to the Indian subcontinent and are often used in religious festivals such as Diwali.

5. CONCLUSION

It has been observed that in the state there has been a clear development in the marketing of pottery in the present era. Various measures have been taken by the government and non-government in order to take the craft to a new level. Today, unlike in the past, the market is open, and the craft is available everywhere. South Assam constituting of three major districts viz Cachar, Karimganj & Hailakandi is not seen to be lacking behind. The urban people who had to visit the production place before to purchase the same now days can avail the same at their doorstep. It is found to be a profitable business and a way of earning livelihood justifying that many unemployed youths of today have engaged themselves in propagation & promotion of the craft. Due to the demands and multiple usages in a cheap price for the consumers it is today a good bet to purchase on. The products made in south Assam are also now days supplied to adjoining states of the region like Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Tripura. Some of the lucrative items even exported to foreign countries where lots of demands are existing in the process of urbanization the bamboo also played a vital role.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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