

“POST-INDEPENDENCE TRADITIONAL POTTERY MAKING INDUSTRY IN RURAL PART OF KOLHAPUR DISTRICT: CHANGES, DEVELOPMENT AND DECLINE”

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Abstract :

The art of pottery making is very ancient one. Also pottery making industry is as old as pottery making art. In ancient and medieval period pottery making industry was much needed for human society. In that period pottery had been used for many purposes, such as storage of water, grain etc. Also pottery had been used as cooking vassals and religious purpose. In this research paper described about pottery industry of rural area in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. Also in this paper focused about changes, development of pottery industry. After independence of India, pottery industry collapsed in Kolhapur district.

Pottery making work has been doing in rural part of Kolhapur district. In 20th century there are lots of changes undertaking in pottery making industry of rural part of Kolhapur district. Modern technology and new technics has been using in pottery industry. Potters of rural part of Kolhapur district are using wheel which is running on electrical power. In the 20th century, pottery making has been commercialized. Aforetime there were barter system. Potters are also facing lots of problems in modern period. Soil deficiency, unemployment, decreasing social status of pottery work, less demand of potteries etc. problems are facing by potters. In ancient and medieval period pottery making industry was much needed for human society. But now a days it's became useless. So that pottery industry of rural part of Kolhapur district is begin decline.

Keywords: Kolhapur district is one of the leading districts of Maharashtra State, in India.

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Introduction :

The art of pottery making is very ancient one. Also pottery making industry is as old as pottery making art. In ancient and medieval period pottery making industry was much needed for human society. In that period pottery had been used for many purposes, such as storage of water, grain etc. Also pottery had been used as cooking vassals and religious purpose. After the modernization, pottery industry became useless for society. In this research paper described about pottery industry of rural area in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra. Also in this paper focused about changes, development of pottery industry. After independence of India, pottery industry collapsed in Kolhapur district.

- **Historical Background of Pottery Making Industry :**

The pottery making industry has an ancient origin. There is lot of archeological evidences found about origin of pottery making industry in India. Also mythological stories found about origin of pottery art. As per the *Hindu Purana* first pottery was made from *Lord Brahma (Viswakarma)*. At the time of *Samudra Manthana* there was no pot to store *Amrita* (Nectar), in that time *Lord Brahma* made pot of mud, this was the first pottery¹. As Per the archeological origin of pottery making art, man begun pottery making in Neolithic age. There were lots of pottery remains found in excavation of various parts of India. In Maharashtra, pottery and their remains have been found in various places in excavation. Hand-made pottery found in excavations at *Nevassa, Dayamabad* in *Ahmednagar* district are in the Chalcolithic tradition. And colored pottery has been found in the excavation at *Inamgaon* in *Pune* district. The period of Neolithic age of Maharashtra is generally considered to be 2000 BC. In essence, the art of making pottery in Maharashtra goes back to 2000 BC².

The Pottery art was also important part in Harappa or Indus valley culture. Sir Johan Marshall has dated Harappa culture as 3500 BC. This means that the art of Pottery in India is about 3500 BC³. As per the concern of ancient *Kolhapur*, there were lots of Pottery and Pottery remains found in the excavation taken at *Brahmapuri*, on the bank of *Panchmangar* river. These potteries dated as 2000 BC. This means art of pottery in *Kolhapur* is 2000 BC old⁴.

- **Pottery Making Process in Rural Part of Kolhapur District :**

Potters of Kolhapur district makes pottery using traditional method, in British period. For that most important tool they used a wheel. Also they used small wooden hammer (Called *Chopane or Thapatane*) and smooth stones (Called *Gundda*) to fix thickness of pottery. They use beetles, mussels or bamboo pieces to bring the dazzle to the glitter and design it⁵.

1. **Potter's Wheel :**

Potter's main tool is wheel. Potter's wheel was wooden made. Diameter of that wheel was 30 to 38 cm. and 10 to 12 saws. The potter is speed up the wheel with a wooden stick. The loudly rotated wheel keeps moving for 5 to 10 minutes. The saws of wheel need to be replaced after the year, but the other parts will last 15 to 20 years⁶.

2. **Process of making raw material :**

Soil is main raw material of pottery making. Potter carries useful soil from the bank of river. Then he dried it on sun fire and after that well dried soil grinded by wooden tool. After that, dung of horse or donkey or other animal, ash, sand and other material mixed in well grinded soil with appropriate water. Then all this mixture stored for some time. When well mixed it, potter makes balls of proper sizes⁷.

3. **Method of pottery making :**

The Potter makes perfect mixture of mud, after that he takes some dry soil and put it on wheel. Then he takes proper sized ball of mud and put it on wheel. After that he runs wheel by using wooden stick. Then he started to give proper shape to ball of mud using his finger and thumb. After that he takes off incomplete pottery on wheel and put it at shadow for drying. After the half of drying it potter gives proper size to pottery by using two important tools that is small wooden hammer (called *Chopane or Thapatane*) and smooth stones (called *Gundda*). Finally potter dries pottery shadow and sunlight. That process called as pre heating. After that totally dried pottery put at oven / firing pit (called in Marathi - *Aava*) for fired it⁸.

4. **Potter's Oven / Firing pit (*Aava*) :**

The potter creates the furnace by decaying the edges of the mountain or digging a hole in a flat ground. After that firing material that is potteries and woods, spinach etc. systematically arranged in firing pit. Generally, the pottery kiln burns during noon and continues till midnight. There is no system or no mechanism to control temperature of kiln. Also the temperature of the furnace cannot be measured⁹.



**Potter giving Primary Shape to Pottery of Primary Stage
Mud on Wheel**



Potter giving proper shape to Pottery by Using Wooden Hammer and Smooth Stones



Potter Arranging Potteries in Firing Pit Firing Pit of Potter

Method of Pottery Making in Rural Part of Kolhapur District

- **Changes in Pottery Industry of Rural Part of Kolhapur District :**

In the Kolhapur district, there have been major changes under taken in the pottery making industry in the twentieth century. Potters of Kolhapur district starting to use modern technology to pottery making from mid-20th century. Modern technology helps potters for their pottery making works. Pottery making became more comfortable and fast by using modern technology. In the 20th Century modern technology has undergone many changes in the potter's wheel. He had been using completely wooden wheel before 20th century. In the mid-20th century there has been first big change undergone in the potter's wheel. He started to use ball bearing in the wheel. With this ball bearing wheel, the potter's work became faster. This ball-bearing wheel could take 200 rounds and could easily carry 100 pounds of weight¹⁰.

After that in the latter 20th century, two major changes undergone in the 20th Kolhapur district pottery making. At the end of the 20th century, potters of Kolhapur district have been using electrical wheel called '*Shaila*'. These wheels are running on electrical power, because of that potter's work became fast, easier and more comfortable¹¹. Potters of rural part of Kolhapur district are also using breadstuff shaker machine for mud mixing. Aforetime they mixing mud using their foot.

In the 20th century, pottery making has been commercialized. Now a day's soil, dung of horse or donkey or other animal, ash, sand, woods etc. raw material potter has to be bought. Aforetime all these things he had been got free of cost from various places. Today only water got free of cost; expect water all raw materials have to be bought by giving money. There has been thousand to one and half thousand rupees will pay for one bras soil. Aforetime there had been barter system; potter bought his vessels by exchanging other things. But in 20th century potter bought his vessels in only currency mode¹².



Potter's Wheel Running by Using Stick



Potter's Wheel Running on Electric Power

- **Problems Facing by Potters in Rural Part of Kolhapur District :**

There have been lots of problems facing by potters of rural part of Kolhapur district. First and very big problem is soil deficiency. Aforetime there had been easily available useful soil from bank of river or from any other places in free of cost to pottery making. But now a day's there has been a big increase in sugarcane cultivation area of Kolhapur district. So that soil is not easily available in large¹³. That means changing crop system is one of the reason to decline of pottery industry in rural part of Kolhapur district.

Second problem is unemployment. The Pottery making work has been done in summer season. That means in other seasons potters are unemployed. Another problem facing by Potters are less of demand of pottery. Plastic, Metal pots replacing bye potteries. Potters of Kolhapur district also facing social problems. Aforetime there were lot of social reputation to potters. But now a day pottery making became lower status work. That's way potters facing marriage problems also¹⁴.

- **Causes of Decline of Pottery Industry in Rural Part of Kolhapur District :**

There are several reasons responsible for decline of pottery industry in rural part of Kolhapur district.

1. First reason is lack of governmental support to pottery industry. Aforetime there were Monarchies supports to pottery industry. They have been given lands, prizes to potters for their service. But after the independence all princely states have been merged, after that all Monarchial support end¹⁵.

2. Lack of unity and cooperation are important reasons to decline of pottery industry. Nature of Pottery industry is individual. So that problems of this industry is not solving by collectively¹⁶.
3. Most important reason to decline of pottery industry is Industrialization. After the industrialization pottery replaced by plastic, steel and aluminum vassals. Also refrigerator badly affected on demand of pottery for purpose of cold water¹⁷.
4. Lack of innovative attitude is one of the important reasons for decline of pottery industry. Potters of Kolhapur district didn't changed production as per demand and changing condition. They only change equipment. They didn't made brand of their pottery productions like Shoemakers of Kolhapur. Shoemaker of Kolhapur made Slippers / Footwear called '*Kolhapuri Chappal*', which is world famous brand of Footwear¹⁸.
5. Another reason of decline of Pottery industry is Competition. Potters of Kolhapur district didn't successfully faced heavy competition from outside state's pottery productions¹⁹.
6. Some Potters are leaving their traditional pottery work because of decreasing Social Status of Pottery work. In ancient and medieval period pottery work was very prestigious business. But now days this business become un-prestigious. This is one of the important reasons for decline of Pottery industry²⁰.
7. Globalization is most important reason to decline of Pottery industry in rural part of Kolhapur District. Now days various pottery productions coming from not only outside the states but also outside the country. Mostly pottery productions came from China²¹.

- **Conclusion :**

Pottery making work has been doing in rural part of Kolhapur district. In 20th century there are lots of changes undertaking in pottery making industry of rural part of Kolhapur district. Modern technology and new technics has been using in pottery industry. Potters of rural part of Kolhapur district are using wheel which is running on electrical power. In the 20th century, pottery making has been commercialized. Aforetime there were barter system. Potters are also facing lots of problems in modern period. Soil deficiency, unemployment, decreasing social status of pottery work, less demand of potteries etc. problems are facing by potters. In ancient and medieval period pottery making industry was much needed for human society. But

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