

# NECESSITY TO NURISH THE EARTHEN CRAFT INDUSTRY FOR EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY:

*A study of earthen doll industry of Krishnagar, Nadia district, West Bengal.*

Kandarpa kanti Hazra  
Research Scholar,  
Department of Business Administration,  
Assam University, Silchar( India)

Prof. (Dr) Arup Barman  
Associate Professor  
Department of Business Administration,  
Assam University, Silchar, Assam (India)-788011

## Abstract:

Pottery is considered as one of the earliest creative craft of Bengalis. Earthen craft emerged through the artistic insight of craftsmen well-versed in the color scheme and their imagination, realistic style and most importantly from the religious narrations and a deep observation of social practices considering demographic dividend. However if we observe carefully we can see that the art of the soil is not only meant to fulfill the domestic decoration today's high class aesthetic values. High quality modern and tasteful utensils and other materials are also being made by pottery artists. In many cases, the industry of the earthen doll has become a tool of modern small-scale machinery in the field of cottage industries. Made of machine-handled fine-grained earthen pot, it easily attracts the attention of modern customers. In addition to the employment of some people, the industry is significantly contributed to the GDP of the country. There are currently several hundred thousand people working in this pottery industry. Those contributions are also of special importance in the national economy.

**Keywords:** Craft, clay doll, heritage, prospect, art, market

**Introduction:** The most ancient industry in our country is the industry of the soil. The main ingredient in this industry is the soil but that the soil was not the only ingredient. In this process, clean clay soil is required. As clay soil act as glue. Loose soil is not as gluey. However the artesian strengthen the clay soil by amalgamating things like cotton, rice husk, saw dust or sandy soil. People during the early ages made all their artwork with skill. Pottery in artwork is much more interesting. It is noticed in the timeline of ancient history that the artwork of that time period was ceramic art, which is our ancient tradition of rural Bengal. Many years ago, people created this occupation as a means of livelihood. Of all the ancient artwork of the people, pottery is one of the oldest. The continuous flow of mixture of soil and water elements has inspired people to create the first pottery. Later on, the use of fire made it more suitable for the use of pottery made by it. As the artist's paint these potteries aesthetically it gives aesthetic look to the scene. The 'Kumar' also prepares the soil with his hand.

**Contemporary craft and age old traditional background:** The Earthen doll making process begins simultaneously of human civilization flourished on pre-historic era . As the civilizations flourished so also the clay or pottery industry developed gradually between 400 to 100 BCE. At this level emerged the red-ware

potteries in the form of large rounded cups are developed. It also developed black, golden and violet colors of North Indian clay potteries and gray-colored ordinary potteries. The contemporary enriched form pottery emerged in the Kusana era and the level is quite rich. Black or incomparable red color Beautiful red clay colored design, Gray ware, were found in perfect shape during this era. Clay pottery achieved the glory in the golden historical period of identified as the Gupta and Gupta era. Significant patterns of this level include various seals, burnt material, painted wrought-iron and molded pottery. One of the most important signs of this level is the huge temple built by clay bricks of more than 14 feet. Through some archaeological evidence it is assumed that the clay industry was well nourished in Pala era also. It is evident from the fact that from the Maurya till the Gupta era, the main art medium designed by clay materials. In overall consideration, the industry seems to be involved in the art of artistic architecture from 350 BCE to 500 AD. Diversity is one of the incredible feature of the artisan involved in doll industry. Here are the religious and ceremonial proofs found in which the primordial goddess Yakshini, Nag devta, man or woman statue. A in-depth observation surely establish that, there is also a deep socio-religious relation prevalent with this craft.

**Remarkable feature of Krishnanagar doll in west Bengal:** Pottery folk art inspired the clay artisans represent things, from their mythical believe and the tradition of the gods as well as the symbols of social practices. Generally, dolls are made from clay, wood, shola, cloth, cane, paper pulp, tree leaves, jute and porcelain. However, soil and wooden dolls are the most popular. It is difficult to get the correct idea about when doll-making have begun. Archaeological evidence suggests that evidence of pottery were made in different places in the Indian subcontinent, including Mohenjodaro. Statues of gods and goddesses in the works, lion, buffalo, tiger, deer, foxes, elephants, bears, monkeys, fish and poultry doll realistic figures are made in various style in in different demographic area representing its local folk culture. The Kumars also created dolls of various deities along with various materials mixing differently with clay. The makers of dolls in Bangladesh are mainly made of wool. But now men, wood and wax etc. However the picture undergoes a sea-change from the decade of nineties. Then there are various plastic puppets from China that spread from India. The 'Barbi Doll', Teddy and foreign dolls came in the hand of our consumer and the our tradition clay doll started fading its glory helplessly in absence of no patronage and savior.

Name	Status	Population Census 1991-03-01	Population Census 2001-03-01	Population Census 2011-03-01
Nadia	District	3,852,097	4,604,827	5,167,600
Area: 3,927 km <sup>2</sup> – Density: 1,315.9 inh./km <sup>2</sup> [2011] – Change: +1.16%/year [2001 → 2011]				
Nadia district: district of West Bengal, India – Official Website				

Bengal pottery which is one of the unique in the its style and presentation of earthen doll industry and its glorious memory gradually fades away. For example we cannot resist to mention the doll of Krishnanagar of Nadia district, specifically of Ghurni doll. Krishnanagar of West Bengal is famous for clay dolls. The demand for of Krishnanagar doll is universal. These dolls are exported to different parts of India. Craftsmen are exported mainly to Europe and North America outside of the country. However, there is little publicity from the

government. As a result the marketing is being reduced. New generation of artisan are disappointed without getting financial support from probable administrative deserving help and publicity. Today the scenario is quite gloomy at Krishnagar's Kumarpara.

During the reign of Raja Krishna Chandra Roy, hired the artists from Natore of Bangladesh came to Krishnanagar as he was great enthusiast of art and music. Someone made idols. Somebody made clay dolls. Slowly this became the main occupation of this place and doll became almost the identity of this place. At Krishnanagar there are more than four hundred potter's families. But now the demand is so for doll that it's hard to survive through this profession. In order to survive in present scenario artisan are making a conscious departure from their traditional craftsmanship and adopting new technique, like statues made of fiberglass, stone dust, plaster of paris, sometimes unwillingly being made. Frustrated artists complain, the next generation is not enthusiastic to learn to create dolls. The development of the tourism industry is being spread across the city of Navadvipa, the city of Mayapur, Bethuadahri Deer Park, and Phulia weaving along with the granaries of Krishnanagar. But what will happen to them? Krishnagar Plaster of Paris molded dolls are now more demanding. It takes five days to make a clay doll by hand. And 100 dolls can be made in the through new ingredients with almost same time and lesser effort. The cost is nominal. There is also a noticeable ambiguity of demand and price. Hopefully once again the new generation will look back to this industry.

Various items of burnt soil, household utensils, dolls, toys, idols, portraits, are still being made in the 'kumarsala' to meet the needs of the buyers. Once the pottery of Ganesh statue was made, the artist would have been given the same amount of rice as its price. Yet the countrymen have retained their own tradition. The art of this extinct artistry has gradually returned to life after realizing the demand in global market of ceramic art by the administrative authorities, and a keen interest of scholars and academicians. Today, with the help of Government help, the rural craft hub has been made to promote those craft and in Kolkata 'Biswa Bangal' talking a remarkable initiative to exhibit and promote globally this craft with permanent uninterrupted intention. Different types of domestic utensils and works of potters were being sold. Considering the hobby of the children, the kumars have been creating various spectacular terracotta toys. These are clay flaming, platazar, crowning, jewelery sets, memorials, candles etc. These different types of art are attracted to young generation. It is possible to revive lost art once it gets fair value and worthy honor. The possibility that will create new ideas and many young entrepreneurs will be interested in this profession.



**Fig1.**A group of 19 Indian, painted clay doll and cotton dress **.fig2.**clay jewelery sold in Olx

**Enthusiastic technique and adoptability of the craft:** Our next point of concern is to shift our attention to another aspect of art that is how to make molding dolls. Artisans in West Bengal as well as Bangladesh started to apply their own talents and skills in hand-made dolls. The organs of these dolls are formed with the help of hands. Drawing on a clay bundle or with a wooden line, the decoration of the doll with ornaments and dresses enhanced its beauty. Hand made dolls are first dried in the sun and then burnt in a small fire. The style of the peculiar formation of dolls finished by the kumars have been used by their own families for generations. According to the needs of the era, new styles of mold are now being made. The molded dolls made of rosewood were first burnt in the sun and burnt in the fire. Later, dresses and costumes of dolls were highlighted through different colors. White, blue, yellow, pink, green and black in color. Previously, herbal colors were made by mixing eighteen pieces of turmeric with the collection of pastel colors. Currently the different type of chemical color of the market is used. Another genre of clay artistry is the Sholara dolls. The craftsmen make various shaped dolls by cutting or pairing the shawl. After making dolls they are made attractive with color. They are less used because these dolls are not long lasting.

Dolls are usually made and sold on the occasion of various village mela including Boishakhi Melas. Cloth dolls are more popular for children. Such dolls are made in hand Various organizations are now preparing various kinds of cloth dolls for furnishing. Due to diversity in costumes and ornaments, these dolls are not only honored in the country but also abroad. Among them, the bride, tribal and Manipuri dance dolls are notable. The jute made doll is now popularized as house decoration even in interestingly in elite class households.. They are available in almost every district. Earthen dolls are also made with paper pulp. Various vocational institutions are currently making ceramic dolls. These dolls are mainly used for furnishing. Different types of dolls and deities are being made Krishnagar, Bankura, Birbhum with metal. At one time, their main artisans were Hindus, now many Muslim artisans are making such metal dolls. Currently, the demand for clay and wooden dolls has increased in the country and abroad, If there is a fair market regime, fair price, necessary training and government sponsorship, then this industry is likely to earn a lot of foreign currency.

**Previous achievements and present initiatives:** The Bengal clay doll has concurred the global recognition and reputation since 1851, the famous artist Sriram Pal's artwork was exhibited in London. But that is not the only achievement of the art. Many artists of this fraternity received the President Award. Raja Krishnachandra's city has not brought prosperity in such a huge label, perhaps without such national and global recognition and the fame of its artisan. The implacability of presentation of figurative body of the artists in Krishnagar has repeatedly been established and with conviction. But it is also true that though all these good reputation, presently the art is suffering a miserable dying situation. One of the reasons is that local artists blamed the geographical position of the unorganized and lack of promotion. Earthen art work of Nadia district of West Bengal is not easily accessible to the world as a result of distance with Kolkata. If you want to buy famous clay doll here, customers have to travel long way and have to come to Krishnanagar. Nadia district administration now earnestly fighting this difficult situation for positive outcome and to overcome the situation. In Rajarhat, the state government is building the world of Bangal Haat, where there will be a stall on the ground floor doll, Sarwaza of Krishnanagar and Sarapuriya and Shantipur and Floria 'tant'(cotton) weaving sari. District President PB Salim said, "We are trying to highlight three areas of our district in the stall, which has a familiarity in the world market. That's the reason for the well-known material that people can easily get. According to the district administration sources, two stalls have been allocated for Nadia and Bardhaman

district in World Bangal area of Echopark in Rajarhat, Kolkata, West Bengal. Even though the Bengal Government has applauded the initiative of Ghurni artisan.

Location	District	Heritage	Village Folk Festival Date
Dariyapur	Bardhaman	Dokra	Sep 23 - 25, 2016
Bikna	Bankura		Sep 30 - Oct 2, 2016
Nanoor	Birbhum	Kantha	Oct 14 - 16, 2016
Kushmandi	Dakshin Dinajpur	Wooden Mask	Oct 21 - 23, 2016
Panchmura	Bankura	Terracotta	Nov 4 - 6, 2016
Pingla	Paschim Medinipur	Patachitra	Nov 11 - 13, 2016
Charida	Purulia	Chau Mask	Dec 16 - 18, 2016
Ghughumari	Cooch Behar	Sitalpati	Jan 20 - 22, 2017
Natungram	Bardhaman	Wooden Doll	Jan 20 - 22, 2017

table 1.,rural craft hub of west bengal

In West Bengal as we can find there was no shortage of talented artists. Such are Subir Pal. So was the artist like Kartik Pal who made Rabindranath Tagore standing in front of him, made his statue and handed it to the world. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated the soil on 17th September, 2013 to promote and encourage this clay doll business business. Even Michelle Obama, who was impressed with the earthen creations of our country. On the other hand in Nadia district itself also talking measures to keep this domestic art alive.

### Concern is to examine the reasons behind the downfall of pottery business in today's world:

1. Unawareness of adequate demand in the market.
2. Inflexibility of adopting new technique.
3. The lack of innovation in the structure and design of the industry.
4. Use of color.
5. Lack of publicity.
6. Lack of adequate training

Unlike Pottery, aluminum, melamine and steel accessories made of sophisticated technology are being manufactured in the market. Because of the downside of this business, the people involved in this industry are suffering badly. Many of them are leaving the job of hereditary pottery business and are struggling with different occupations. Because of lack of marketing and lack of proper value compared to the cost of production, leaving the occupation in the other profession, there is a lot of livelihood. Many of them are leaving the profession and engaged in various occupations, including farming, fishery farming, rickshaws, van construction and running their families. Many of those who are still in this profession of their family pottery

business are undergoing through tough time. Now our next focuss will be to discuss the various steps taken by government and non-government organizations are to bring back the lost glory of pottery:

**Marching steps to rejuvenation of lost glory:** For the betterment of handicraft sector west Bengal MSME signed a partnership with UNESCO on September 2013. In this program they targeted 10 rural craft hub in state and covered 3000 families in Bengal

1. Like other industries, pottery should be provided and help to create a market demand.
2. Various designer products should be supplied in the market to arrest the attention of customers.
3. Work with different colors without working in one color.
4. Pottery industry cluster can be built in every district.
5. It is very important to arrange adequate training considering global ceramic art.
6. Bank loans can be arranged for those interested in this industry

**Conclusion:** The use of this industry in our country is from ancient times. Various items, including daily burnt work, household goods, dolls, toys, fetish, portraiture, tops, Shops etc. are still being made in the Kumarasalaya and meet the needs of the buyers. Thousands of earthen materials are being produced by the age-old tradition of artists' devotion and hands like pots, utensils, bowls, bowls, toys, dolls, vases, tubes, tea cups, flower tubs. In the era of globalization, the demand for this earthen industry has decreased greatly due to the change in the taste of the customers. Now the number of these preferences is increasing by the initiatives of some corporate and online shopping companies.

Today, the demand of pottery is increasing day by day, there is a significant increase of clay jewelry of female customers, which they want to buy from online shopping. It is a great opportunity for improvise and reorganized the clay industry with contemporary significance.

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