

# A Study on Issues and Challenges faced by the people involved in the Terracotta Industry in Gorakhpur

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## ABSTRACT

Terracotta art is a ceramic craft based on glazed or unglazed clay. It is characterized by ornamentation, natural dyes and includes experimenting with innovative shapes. The Aurangabad village in the Bhathat block of Gorakhpur district is the area which is famous around the world for its terracotta products. This area is rich in a type of clay known as “Kabis Clay” that is very useful in making terracotta products. But due to lack of resources and adequate incentives, the manufacturers have to face numerous hardships. This study examines the problems confronted by the potters’ community of Aurangabad village and recommends appropriate suggestions.

**Keywords:** Terracotta, Clay, Problems, Suggestions.

## 1. INTRODUCTION-

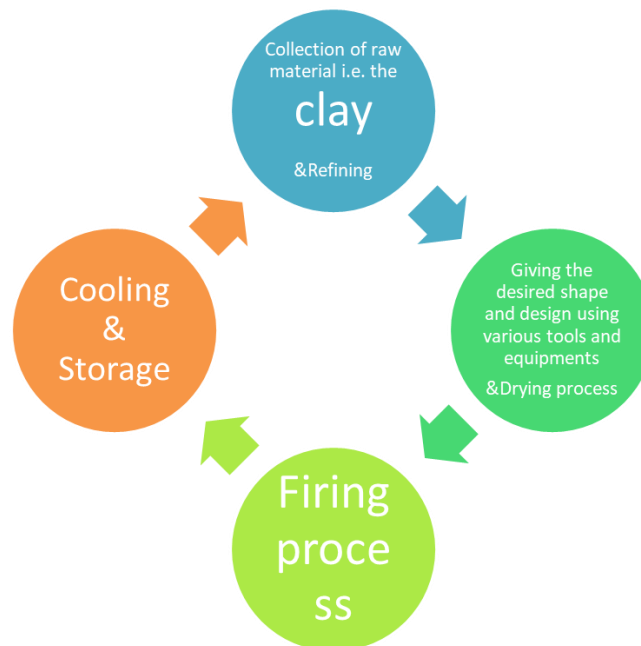
Terracotta art is an integral part of Indian culture and heritage. What’s more the art form has not been lost as many others have, rather it is flourishing and getting richer even now. Though art of creating glazed pottery has been in existence for thousands of years in India, the unglazed pottery items are the ones India is world famous for. Terracotta items are common in Indian homes in one form or the other and artisans have kept the art alive from one generation to the other. Today India exports exquisite terracotta items like statues, vases, decorative hangings and bells, Diwali oil lamps etc..., making the art form a rewarding one for the artisans. Though it would be impossible to find an Indian village without potters and other artisans, some states and cities are well known for their distinct terracotta craft work.





**Fig. 1. Terracotta items made by the workers of Aurangabad village in Gorakhpur**

In Gorakhpur, the craftsmen are mainly spread in the village of Aurangabad in Bhathat block. Around 200 households are engaged in this work. The main products are- idols of Gods and Goddesses, bells, diyas, vases, earthen lamps, figurines of elephants, horses etc.,. Despite of the richness of the art and numerous laurels, the artisans live in penury because they are not able to get the right price of their products. A very simple process comprising of four steps is involved in the process of making terracotta products (as shown in Fig. 2). What makes the end result unique from region to region is the difference in clay type and color as well as the sensibilities of the artists, the varied culture, religious practices and traditions. The firing process gives the products a distinctive orange, red, yellow or brown color. In order to promote this art form, the Uttar Pradesh Government has included Aurangabad- in ‘One District One Product’ scheme from Gorakhpur.



**Fig. 1. Process involved in creating Terracotta Products**

**2. OBJECTIVES-**

- To examine the problems and challenges faced by the potters’ community in Aurangabad village.
- To recommend solutions for the problems and give suggestions for development and modernization of the Terracotta Industry in Aurangabad village.

**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY-**

The primary data has been collected through field survey. Some secondary sources and various websites have also been used.

**4. SWOT ANALYSIS OF TERRACOTTA INDUSTRY**

| <b>STRENGTHS</b>  | <b>WEAKNESSES</b>   | <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>  | <b>THREATS</b>  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>ENLISTMENT IN “ODOP SCHEME” IN 2018.</b>                     | <b>LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATION FACILITIES.</b> | <b>RISING DEMAND FOR HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SUCH AS USA, CANADA, BRITAIN, FRANCE, GERMANY, ITALY.</b> | <b>COMPETITION IN DOMESTIC MARKET.</b>                              |
| <b>PROCUREMENT OF “GI TAG” ON 20th APRIL 2020.</b>              | <b>LESS INTEREST OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CRAFT INDUSTRY.</b>     | <b>DEVELOPMENT OF DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL TOURISM SECTOR.</b>  | <b>QUALITY PRODUCTS PRODUCED BY COMPETING COUNTRIES LIKE CHINA.</b> |
| <b>LOW CAPITAL INVESTMENT</b>                                   | <b>INADEQUATE INFORMATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY.</b>            | <b>E-COMMERCE AND INTERNET HAVE EMERGED AS PROMISSORY DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS TO MARKET AND SELL.</b>                       |   |
| <b>LARGE PRODUCT VARIETY &amp; RANGE BECAUSE OF DIVERSIFIED</b> | <b>INADEQUATE INFORMATION OF CURRENT MARKET TRENDS.</b>     |   |   |

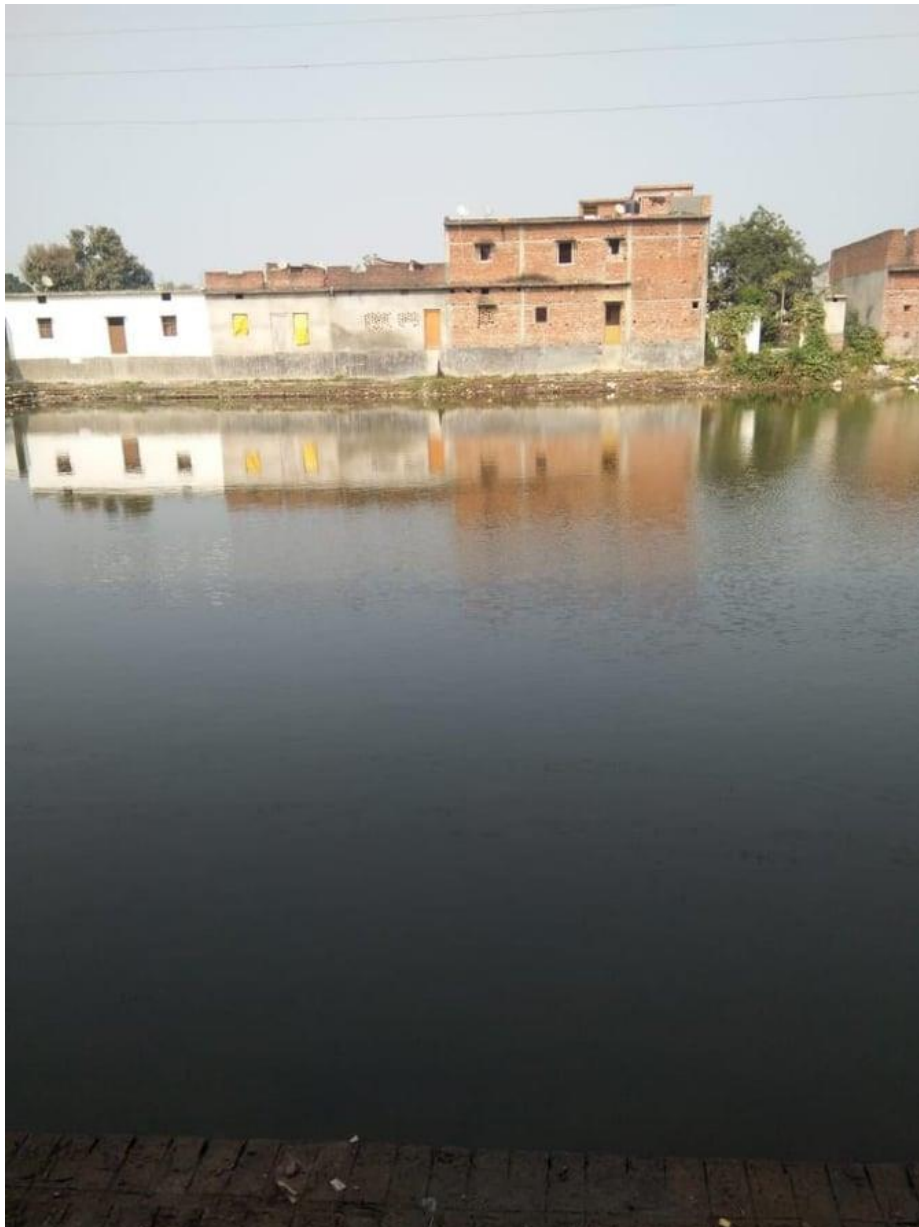
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## 5. CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS-

### 1. Non availability of raw material (Clay)-

- The clay used in the terracotta products is of two types porous clay and kabis clay. These clay types are found in the ponds of Aurangabad, Bharwalia and Budhadih areas. The pond which is in the Aurangabad village is being polluted as the dirty water from the homes nearby is drained out in that pond as a result of which the quality of the clay, the main raw material is degrading.
- The clay used is available only in the months of May and June and for the rest of the year, the ponds are filled with water.
- In order to dig out clay and bring it to their workplace the potters have to pay Rs.

2500/- trolley.



**Fig.2. Source of raw material**

## 2. Lack of Storage Facilities –

A majority of the artisans do not have adequate working sheds or storage facilities. There is a Terracotta Bhavan in Aurangabad village established by the govt. in 2001 under the ‘Swarna Jyanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana’ but its constructions has not been completed. There are 12 rooms but they are very small in size and many rooms lack doors. The probability of breakage and spoilage is very high due to non adaptation of scientific storing methods. The packing and labeling of the products is non existing. Illiteracy is the cause for non-use of labeling practices.



**Fig.3. Storage houses in Aurangabad village**

## 3. Obsolete Technology-

The methods of production followed by the artisans is old and inefficient. The potters in Aurangabad village are not aware about the new techniques of production as a result they use traditional techniques. Suitable training and modern tools and techniques of the art is not provided to them.



**Fig.4. Workers using traditional techniques**



#### 4. Shortage of tools and machinery-

The artisans of Aurangabad village do not possess adequate modernize tools and machinery. 80 workers are employed there but only 2 machines (which is used for refining the clay) has been provided by the government. Not only this the number of electric wheels (which is used for shaping the products) provided by the govt. is also very less.



**Fig.5. Machine used in refining clay**

#### 5. Non-Availability of energy efficient low cost kilns-

Due to non-availability of modernize kiln (In the kiln the semi-finished goods are put into fire) the potters use traditional kiln. In traditional kilns there is no provision to control the temperature and percentage of breakage is around 10% to 40% which increases the cost of finished product and reduces profit margin. The fuel efficiency of these kilns is very poor. Only one modernize kiln has been installed near the terracotta Bhavan and that too is not in operating condition.



**Fig.6. Kiln**

#### **6. Non availability of fuel-**

Previously cow dung cakes were easily available free of cost at village site. But now adays the situation has changed. Due to non-availability of appropriate quantity of fuel in the village the artisans have to purchase it.

#### **7. Problems associated with marketing mechanism-**

A good market for terracotta products is important to promote this art. But marketing in this field has certain limitations. Firstly, most of the artisans sell their products through local market or middlemen. Secondly, the demand for various terracotta products is mostly seasonal. Thirdly, such products have to face tough competition from the organized sector.

### **8. Lack of Advertising and Sales Promotions Practices–**

Advertising and sales promotion practices are the neglected areas of marketing activities of terracotta product in Aurangabad village. There are various reasons for this. The products lack standardization and no packaging and labeling is done by artisans.

### **9. Too much Documentation –**

The artisans are not able to avail the various financial assistance provided by the government because such schemes involve too much documentation and the artisans being illiterate are not able to understand the process and mechanism.

### **10. Lack of adequate training facilities-**

Though training is provided by government but that is not sufficient. The training facilities provided by the government gives help to young people in the community to learn their art. But there is no proper Training Institute in the village. Many potters are not able to attend the training programmes held in far cities because if they will go there they have to shut down their production facilities for that much time.

## **6. SUGGESTIONS-**

### **1. Formation of a separate regulatory body-**

There is need to establish a separate regulatory body to guide and control the work of various Government and non-Government agencies involved in this art. The Government should also take measures to set a minimum fixed price for terracotta products.

### **2. Formation of specialized R&D Institute on Terracotta art -** There is an urgent need to establish an institute to conduct R&D on Terracotta art especially in the following areas-

- Identification of eco-friendly fuel and energy efficient kiln
- Research on product diversification- New products should be developed as per the demands of market. A market trend analysis should be done on regular basis to identify present and potential changes in customers' needs and wants. This will help in developing innovative products.

### **3. Construction of shed houses and storage houses-**

There is need to construct shed houses and storage houses because due to lack of these many products get destroyed. In rainy season the situation gets worsened. The Terracotta Bhavan in the village comprises of only 12 small rooms which the potters use for both production & storage. Some potters have no option but to use the limited space available in their houses for both production and storage.

### **4. Establishment of Training Centers-**

Though Training is provided by the government but no special training center has been established in the village. Due to lack of availability of modernize tools and machinery the potters used the traditional methods of productions which is responsible for low productivity. The artisans should be provided modernize tools and machinery and they should be trained on how to use such tools. Such centers should also create awareness among the artisans regarding the various government schemes and assistance. Specialized knowledge should be imparted on packaging and labeling of products which will be of great help in marketing and advertising of product.

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