

Crafting Survival: Cultural Continuity and Economic Adaptation among Potters of Kumhar Gram, Delhi

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ABSTRACT

India's cultural heritage is closely connected with its traditional artisan communities, whose skills have been passed down through generations. Pottery continues to provide livelihoods for many families while also preserving an important part of India's cultural identity. However, rapid urbanization, changing consumer preferences, and modern economic conditions have created new challenges for traditional pottery communities. This study explores how the potters of Kumhar Gram, Delhi, preserve their traditional craft while adapting to these changing circumstances.

The research is based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in Kumhar Gram using semi-structured interviews, direct observation, field notes, and photographic documentation. The study examines changes in market demand, the role of women in pottery production, the adoption of digital payment methods, and the willingness of younger generations to continue the profession.

The findings reveal that demand for pottery has remained strong and has increased during festive seasons, particularly for products such as *diyas*, planters, and decorative items.

However, many artisans expressed concern that younger family members are unwilling to continue pottery because of uncertain income and better career opportunities elsewhere. The study also found that women actively participate in every stage of pottery production and contribute to managing household finances. In addition, many artisans have adopted digital payment methods to meet changing customer preferences.

The research concludes that the greatest challenge facing Kumhar Gram is not declining demand but the decreasing interest of younger generations in continuing the craft.

Preserving this traditional heritage therefore requires support not only for artisan livelihoods but also for encouraging future generations to value and continue these traditional skills.

Keywords: Traditional Pottery, Kumhar Gram, Delhi, Artisan Communities, Cultural Heritage, Urbanisation

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Handicrafts are an integral part of India's cultural heritage and reflect the country's rich history, traditions, and regional diversity. They provide employment to millions of artisans while preserving skills and knowledge that have been passed down through generations. Among India's oldest traditional crafts is pottery, which has been practised since the Indus Valley Civilization. Archaeological discoveries of earthen pots and clay artefacts demonstrate the long-standing importance of pottery in

everyday life.

Even today, clay products such as *diyas*, water pots, idols, cooking vessels, storage containers, and decorative items continue to be used in homes and during festivals across the country. Beyond their practical use, these products represent traditions that connect communities with their cultural roots.

However, traditional artisan communities are experiencing significant changes. Rapid urbanisation, industrial production, changing consumer preferences, and the availability of machine-made products have affected the way traditional crafts are produced and sold. At the same time, there has been growing interest in handmade and eco-friendly products, creating new opportunities for artisans. Understanding how these communities balance tradition with modern economic realities is therefore important for preserving both cultural heritage and sustainable livelihoods.

About Kumhar Gram

Kumhar Gram, located in Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, is one of Delhi's best-known pottery settlements. The community is home to families who have practised pottery for several generations, making it an important centre for traditional clay craftsmanship. For many residents, pottery is not only their occupation but also an important part of their identity, family tradition, and cultural heritage.

Artisans in Kumhar Gram produce a wide range of products, including *diyas*, planters, flower pots, water vessels, idols, decorative items, and sculptures. Production usually increases during festivals such as Diwali and Navratri, when the demand for clay products is at its highest. The work is generally carried out within family workshops, where different members contribute by preparing clay, shaping products, firing them in kilns, painting, decorating, and selling the finished products.

Like many traditional artisan settlements, Kumhar Gram has adapted to changing times. During the fieldwork, several artisans shared that digital payment methods such as UPI have become common because customers increasingly prefer cashless transactions. Many artisans have also introduced new designs to attract a wider range of buyers while continuing to use traditional pottery-making techniques. Despite these adaptations, the community continues to face challenges such as rising production costs, limited workspace, and uncertainty about whether younger generations will continue the craft.

These changing circumstances make Kumhar Gram an ideal case study for understanding how traditional artisan communities preserve their cultural heritage while adapting to modern economic conditions.

Rationale of the Study

Traditional crafts are often described as declining because of industrialization and changing lifestyles. However, many of these assumptions are based on older studies or secondary sources and may not accurately represent the current experiences of artisans. There is limited recent field-based research that explores how pottery communities themselves view the opportunities and challenges affecting their livelihoods.

This study was undertaken to understand the present-day realities of Kumhar Gram through direct interaction with artisans. Instead of relying only on published information, the research focuses on the experiences, opinions, and observations gathered during fieldwork. By doing so, it aims to provide a more accurate understanding of how this traditional community is adapting to a rapidly changing urban environment.

Aim of the Study

The aim of this research is to examine how the potter community of Kumhar Gram preserves its

traditional craft while adapting to changing social and economic conditions in an urban environment.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

- To understand the present socio-economic conditions of potter families in Kumhar Gram.
- To examine how pottery skills are passed from one generation to the next.
- To explore the impact of urbanisation on traditional pottery.
- To understand the career aspirations of younger members of artisan families.
- To study the role of women in pottery production and household management.
- To examine how artisans have adapted to changing market practices, including the use of digital payment methods.

Working Hypothesis

Before conducting the fieldwork, it was expected that demand for traditional pottery had declined because of machine-made alternatives, urbanization, and changing consumer preferences. The research was conducted to examine whether this assumption reflected the present experiences of artisans in Kumhar Gram.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional craftsmanship has long been recognized as an essential component of cultural heritage because it preserves skills, knowledge, and practices transmitted across generations. Unlike tangible heritage, which focuses on physical artefacts, traditional craftsmanship safeguards the techniques, cultural meanings, and social practices associated with their creation. The **UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)** identifies traditional craftsmanship as one of the principal domains of intangible cultural heritage, emphasizing that preserving artisanal knowledge is essential for maintaining cultural diversity and community identity (**UNESCO, 2003**).

Pottery represents one of the earliest forms of human craftsmanship and has occupied a central position in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. Archaeological excavations at sites belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization have revealed sophisticated pottery traditions used for storage, cooking, trade, and ritual purposes, demonstrating that pottery has been closely connected with everyday life for thousands of years (**Possehl, 2002**). Even today, clay products such as diyas, water pots, idols, planters, decorative artefacts, and cooking vessels remain culturally significant, particularly during religious festivals and traditional ceremonies.

Existing research suggests that traditional artisan communities face increasing socio-economic pressures because of industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, and changing consumer behaviour. **Scrase (2003)** argues that the expansion of industrial manufacturing has altered traditional craft markets by increasing competition from mass-produced goods while simultaneously reducing the economic security of many artisan households. Similarly, the **Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Ministry of Textiles, Government of India (2022)** notes that artisans frequently encounter rising production costs, irregular income, limited access to organized markets, and competition from cheaper factory-manufactured alternatives. These structural challenges often reduce profitability despite the high level of skill

required for handcrafted production.

Another recurring concern in the literature is the weakening intergenerational transmission of traditional occupations. **Sennett (2008)** observes that artisanal knowledge depends upon long-term practical learning within families and communities. However, rapid social and economic change has reduced younger generations' willingness to continue hereditary occupations, particularly where employment opportunities offer greater financial security and social mobility. Similar observations have been made in studies of Indian handicraft communities, where younger family members increasingly seek education and alternative careers outside traditional occupations (**Ministry of Textiles, 2022**).

At the same time, recent scholarship demonstrates that traditional crafts are adapting rather than disappearing. Growing international interest in sustainability, environmentally friendly products, and handmade goods has generated new opportunities for artisan communities. According to the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022)**, creative industries and traditional crafts have benefited from increasing consumer demand for authentic, locally produced, and sustainable products. Researchers have also observed that artisans are incorporating modern product designs, participating in exhibitions, adopting digital payment systems, and using online platforms to expand their customer base while preserving traditional production techniques (**UNCTAD, 2022**).

Women's contribution to traditional crafts has likewise received increasing scholarly attention. Although women often participate extensively in production processes, finishing work, marketing, and household financial management, their labour frequently remains under-recognized within both academic literature and public discourse. Studies by **UNESCO (2003)** and the **Ministry of Textiles (2022)** emphasize that recognizing women's contribution is essential for understanding the social organization and economic sustainability of artisan households.

The findings of the present study both support and extend existing scholarship. Similar to previous research, artisans interviewed in Kumhar Gram identified rising production costs, uncertain annual income, and declining interest among younger generations as significant challenges affecting the continuity of pottery. However, the fieldwork produced one important finding that differs from much of the earlier literature. Rather than reporting declining consumer demand, **all eight participants consistently stated that demand for pottery has increased over time**, particularly during Diwali, Navratri, and other festive periods.

Participants also described growing demand for eco-friendly products, decorative planters, customized clay items, and home decor, reflecting changing urban consumer preferences.

These findings suggest that the principal challenge confronting Kumhar Gram is not the disappearance of consumer demand but the sustainability of artisan livelihoods. Although the market for handmade pottery appears to be expanding, uncertain income throughout the year continues to discourage younger generations from pursuing pottery as a long-term occupation. Consequently, this study contributes recent field-based evidence indicating that preserving traditional pottery requires not only protecting cultural heritage but also improving the economic viability of artisan livelihoods. By documenting contemporary experiences directly from practising artisans, this research provides an updated perspective that complements and, in some respects, challenges earlier assumptions regarding the decline of traditional pottery communities.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore how the potter community of Kumhar Gram preserves its traditional craft while adapting to contemporary social and economic changes. A qualitative approach was selected because the research sought to understand artisans lived experiences, perceptions, and everyday practices rather than quantify patterns through numerical data. The case study approach enabled an in-depth examination of a single artisan settlement, allowing the researcher to investigate cultural continuity, livelihood strategies, and community perspectives within their real-life context (Yin, 2018).

Study Area

The research was conducted in **Kumhar Gram, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi**, one of Delhi's best-known pottery settlements where numerous families have practised pottery for several generations. The settlement was selected because it represents an important centre of traditional clay craftsmanship while simultaneously experiencing the effects of rapid urbanization and changing consumer markets. Its long history of pottery production and continued adaptation to modern economic conditions made it an appropriate site for examining the relationship between cultural preservation and economic adaptation.

Sampling Method

A **purposive sampling** method was employed to identify participants who possessed first-hand experience of pottery production and were willing to share their perspectives. This sampling strategy was considered appropriate because the study aimed to obtain detailed qualitative insights rather than achieve statistical representation. Participants included both male and female artisans from different age groups, allowing the research to capture a range of experiences relating to production practices, market demand, family traditions, and future aspirations.

Data Collection

Primary data were collected during a field visit to Kumhar Gram through multiple qualitative research techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the community.

The principal method of data collection consisted of **semi-structured interviews** with eight artisans actively involved in pottery production. Interviews typically lasted between **10 and 20 minutes**, depending upon participants' availability and work schedules. The flexible interview format encouraged participants to describe their experiences in their own words while ensuring that all major research questions were addressed. Fieldwork was conducted on **5 JULY 2025**. Throughout the visit, direct observations were recorded concerning pottery-making techniques, division of labour, workshop organization, customer interactions, and the working environment. Detailed field notes were maintained immediately after each interview to preserve contextual information and participant responses.

Photographic documentation of workshops, tools, products, production processes, and working conditions was also undertaken to supplement interview findings and observational data.

Interviews were conducted primarily in **Hindi**, with occasional use of English words commonly used in everyday conversation. Participant responses were subsequently translated into English during transcription while maintaining the original meaning as accurately as possible.

Secondary information was collected from scholarly journal articles, books, UNESCO publications, Ministry of Textiles reports, and other reliable academic sources relating to traditional crafts, cultural heritage, and artisan livelihoods.

Participants

The study included interviews with **eight artisans** representing different age groups and occupational roles within Kumhar Gram. Participants included both male and female artisans directly involved in pottery production. Including artisans with varying levels of experience enabled the study to capture diverse perspectives regarding market demand, family traditions, economic challenges, women's participation, and the future of pottery.

Table 1. Profile of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Role
P1	41	Male	Potter
P2	30	Male	Potter
P3	34	Female	Pottery Production
P4	31	Female	Pottery Production
P5	57	Male	Potter
P6	48	Male	Potter
P7	43	Female	Pottery Production
P8	46	Male	Potter

Ethical Considerations

Before beginning each interview, participants were informed about the purpose of the research, how the information would be used, and that participation was entirely voluntary. Verbal informed consent was obtained from every participant before interviews commenced or photographs were taken.

Participants were assured that the study was being conducted solely for academic purposes and that their personal identities would remain confidential. Throughout the research process, respect was maintained for participants' privacy, cultural practices, and individual viewpoints.

Data Analysis

The information collected through interviews, observations, photographs, and field notes was analysed using **thematic analysis**. After the field visit, the responses were carefully reviewed and grouped according to recurring ideas and patterns. Five major themes emerged from the analysis:

1. Market Demand
2. Youth Aspirations
3. Women's Participation
4. Digital Adaptation
5. Economic Challenges

This method helped organise the findings and identify the key issues affecting the potter community of Kumhar Gram.

Table 2. Themes Identified During Analysis

Theme	Evidence Collected
Market Demand	Interviews, Observation
Youth Aspirations	Interviews
Women's Participation	Interviews, Observation
Digital Adaptation	Interviews, Observation
Economic Challenges	Interviews

Limitations of the Methodology

The study was conducted within a single artisan settlement and therefore reflects the experiences of potters from Kumhar Gram rather than pottery communities across India. The relatively small sample size of eight participants is appropriate for qualitative case study research but limits broader generalisation of the findings.

Fieldwork was conducted over a limited period, restricting opportunities for repeated observations across different seasons. In addition, interview responses represent participants' personal experiences and perceptions, which may differ across households and other pottery communities. Nevertheless, combining interviews, direct observation, field notes, and photographic documentation enhanced the credibility and richness of the data collected.

RESULTS

The findings presented below are based on semi-structured interviews with eight artisans, direct field observations, photographic documentation, and field notes collected during the visit to Kumhar Gram. The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis, resulting in five major themes that reflect the experiences and perspectives of the participants.

Theme 1: Increasing Demand for Pottery

One of the most significant findings of this study was that the demand for traditional pottery has **not declined** as initially expected. Instead, most artisans stated that demand has remained steady and has gradually increased over the years, particularly during festivals such as Diwali and Navratri. Decorative pottery, planters, and handmade clay products have also become increasingly popular among urban customers.

During the field visit, artisans explained that although consumer preferences have changed, there is growing appreciation for handmade and eco-friendly products. As a result, pottery continues to hold both cultural and commercial value.

Representative Statement

"Sales increase every year, especially during the festive season. We have much more work during Diwali than before." — Participant 1 (41 years)

This finding suggests that the primary challenge faced by the community is not declining demand but other social and economic factors affecting the continuity of the craft.

Theme 2: Declining Interest Among Younger Generations

Although demand for pottery remains strong, nearly every artisan expressed concern about the future of the profession. Older artisans wished to pass their knowledge and skills on to their children, but many explained that younger family members preferred to pursue other careers offering more stable incomes and better opportunities.

One artisan stated that he wanted his children to continue the family tradition, but they were unwilling to do so. Another artisan explained that he himself encouraged his children to choose different professions because pottery no longer provides sufficient financial security.

Representative Statements

"I wanted my children to continue this work, but they have different career goals." —

Participant 1

"I don't want my children to become potters because they should have a better future." — Participant 2 (30 years)

Other participants expressed similar concerns, explaining that irregular annual income, physically demanding work, and greater educational opportunities have encouraged younger family members to seek employment outside the traditional craft.

These responses indicate that the greatest challenge facing Kumhar Gram is not declining consumer demand but the decreasing willingness of younger generations to continue pottery as a long-term livelihood. The findings suggest that economic uncertainty, rather than lack of customers, is the principal factor affecting the continuity of the craft.

Theme 3: Women's Participation in Pottery Production

The fieldwork highlighted the important contribution of women to pottery production. Women were actively involved in almost every stage of the process, including preparing clay, decorating products, painting, finishing, packaging, and assisting with sales. In several households, women also played an important role in managing household finances and supporting business decisions.

Although their contribution was equal to that of male artisans in many activities, it often received less public recognition.

Representative Statement

"Women work throughout the process and also help manage the family's finances." — Female Artisan

The findings suggest that pottery in Kumhar Gram is a family-based occupation in which both men and women contribute significantly to the success of the household enterprise.

Theme 4: Adaptation to Modern Market Practices

Another important finding was the willingness of artisans to adopt new market practices while preserving traditional production techniques. Participants reported widespread acceptance of digital payment systems, particularly UPI and QR-code transactions, because customers increasingly preferred cashless payments.

Several artisans also explained that they had diversified their product range by introducing decorative pottery, modern planters, customised products, and home décor items in response to changing customer preferences.

Field observations confirmed the presence of QR codes displayed at workshops and stalls, illustrating how digital technology has become integrated into everyday business practices. These adaptations demonstrate that artisans are actively responding to changing market conditions without abandoning traditional methods of pottery production.

Theme 5: Economic Challenges

Despite increasing demand, artisans reported that pottery continues to involve several economic challenges. Rising prices of raw materials, transportation costs, and limited workspace reduce overall profits. Since pottery requires considerable time, labour, and skill, artisans often find it difficult to compete with cheaper factory-made products.

Several participants explained that while sales have increased during festivals, income remains uncertain during the rest of the year. This uncertainty is one of the main reasons why many younger family members choose alternative careers.

Overall, the findings indicate that Kumhar Gram continues to adapt successfully to changing markets. However, ensuring the long-term survival of this traditional craft will require addressing both economic challenges and the declining interest of younger generations.

Table 3. Summary of Major Findings

Theme	Key Finding
Market Demand	Demand for pottery has increased, especially during festivals.
Youth Aspirations	Younger generations are reluctant to continue pottery as a profession.
Women's Participation	Women contribute equally to production and household finances.
Digital Adaptation	Most artisans have adopted UPI and digital payment methods.
Economic Challenges	Rising costs and uncertain income continue to affect artisans.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature examining how traditional artisan communities negotiate cultural preservation while adapting to changing economic conditions. Previous research has frequently argued that industrialisation, urbanisation, and the expansion of machine-manufactured goods have reduced the economic viability of traditional crafts (Scrase, 2003; Ministry of Textiles, 2022). While these structural challenges remain relevant, the fieldwork conducted in Kumhar Gram presents a more nuanced picture of the contemporary pottery sector.

One of the most significant findings of this study is that **all eight participants reported increasing demand for pottery**, particularly during festivals such as Diwali and Navratri and for decorative clay products, planters, and eco-friendly household items. This finding differs from much of the earlier literature, which often portrays traditional pottery as experiencing declining consumer demand because of industrial competition (Scrase, 2003). The difference may be explained by changing urban consumer preferences. Increasing environmental awareness, interest in sustainable lifestyles, and appreciation for handmade products have expanded market opportunities for traditional artisans, particularly in metropolitan areas such as Delhi. Rather than replacing traditional pottery, contemporary consumers appear to be redefining its uses by purchasing clay products for home decoration, gardening, and environmentally friendly living in addition to religious purposes.

The findings also support recent international research suggesting that traditional crafts are adapting to

modern markets rather than disappearing. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2022) argues that creative industries increasingly benefit from consumer demand for authentic, locally produced, and sustainable products. The experiences described by artisans in Kumhar Gram reflect this broader trend. Participants explained that demand has diversified beyond conventional products and now includes decorative items and customised pottery, demonstrating how traditional skills can remain economically relevant when combined with changing consumer preferences.

Despite increasing demand, the research confirms observations made in previous studies regarding the declining willingness of younger generations to continue traditional occupations. Studies by Sennett (2008) and the Ministry of Textiles (2022) suggest that younger people increasingly seek occupations offering stable income, improved working conditions, and greater opportunities for social mobility. Similar patterns emerged throughout the present study. Every participant expressed concern that younger family members were reluctant to continue pottery because they perceived it as economically uncertain despite growing consumer demand. This suggests that **market demand alone is insufficient to ensure the long-term survival of traditional crafts if livelihoods remain financially insecure.**

Another important finding concerns the contribution of women to pottery production. UNESCO (2003) emphasises that traditional craftsmanship depends upon the transmission of knowledge within families and communities. Field observations in Kumhar Gram demonstrated that women participate extensively in preparing clay, decorating products, packaging finished items, managing sales, and contributing to household finances. Although these responsibilities are essential to pottery production, participants indicated that women's labour often receives less public recognition than that of male artisans. The findings therefore reinforce existing scholarship highlighting the need to recognise women's economic and cultural contributions within artisan households.

The study also illustrates how artisan communities successfully integrate modern technologies without abandoning traditional practices. Previous research has identified digital technologies as an important mechanism for improving market access among small-scale producers (UNCTAD, 2022). Similarly, most participants reported adopting UPI and QR-code payment systems because customers increasingly preferred cashless transactions. Field observations confirmed that digital payment systems had become integrated into everyday commercial activities. Rather than threatening traditional craftsmanship, these technologies appear to complement existing production systems by making transactions more convenient and expanding access to urban consumers.

Overall, the findings suggest that the future of Kumhar Gram depends less on maintaining consumer demand which participants consistently reported as increasing and more on improving the long-term economic sustainability of artisan livelihoods. While the community has successfully adapted to changing markets through product diversification and digital payment systems, financial uncertainty continues to discourage younger generations from continuing the profession. By documenting contemporary experiences directly from practising artisans, this study contributes recent field-based evidence that complements and in some respects, challenges earlier assumptions regarding the decline of traditional pottery communities.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the potter community of Kumhar Gram balances the preservation of

traditional pottery with the demands of a rapidly changing urban environment. Through semi-structured interviews, field observations, photographic documentation, and thematic analysis, the research explored how artisans perceive contemporary opportunities and challenges affecting their livelihoods.

The findings demonstrate that the initial working hypothesis was not fully supported. While the study initially assumed that demand for traditional pottery had declined because of industrialisation and machine-made alternatives, fieldwork revealed a different reality. All eight participants consistently reported that demand has increased over the years, particularly during festive seasons and for decorative, customised, and eco-friendly clay products. These findings highlight the importance of field-based qualitative research in testing assumptions derived from earlier literature and secondary sources.

Despite increasing consumer demand, the study found that the greatest challenge facing Kumhar Gram is the declining willingness of younger generations to continue pottery as a profession. Participants repeatedly explained that irregular income, seasonal earnings, and economic uncertainty discourage younger family members from pursuing pottery despite the community's strong cultural attachment to the craft. This suggests that preserving traditional craftsmanship requires improving the long-term economic sustainability of artisan livelihoods rather than focusing exclusively on increasing consumer demand.

The research also demonstrated the significant contribution of women to pottery production and household management. Women actively participated in preparing clay, decorating products, packaging finished items, assisting with sales, and managing family finances, illustrating that pottery production functions as a collaborative household enterprise.

Furthermore, the widespread adoption of digital payment systems and product diversification illustrates that artisans are successfully adapting to contemporary market conditions while preserving traditional production techniques.

Overall, the findings indicate that Kumhar Gram is not merely preserving an inherited tradition but actively reshaping it to meet changing social and economic realities. The study contributes recent qualitative evidence showing that traditional crafts remain culturally and economically relevant when supported by innovation, adaptive marketing strategies, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

In conclusion, safeguarding traditional pottery requires a balanced approach that recognises both its cultural significance and its economic realities. Policies that strengthen artisan incomes, expand market access, encourage youth participation, recognise women's contributions, and promote traditional crafts through education and heritage initiatives will be essential for ensuring the long-term continuity of communities such as Kumhar Gram.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like all qualitative case studies, this research has certain limitations. The study was conducted exclusively within Kumhar Gram, Uttam Nagar, and therefore reflects the experiences of artisans from a single pottery settlement rather than pottery communities across India. Although interviews with eight participants provided rich qualitative insights, the relatively small sample size limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised to other regions.

The fieldwork was conducted during a single visit, which restricted opportunities to observe seasonal

variations in production, sales, and household activities. Additionally, interview findings represent participants' personal experiences and perceptions, which may differ across individual households and artisan communities.

Despite these limitations, the use of multiple qualitative methods—including semi-structured interviews, direct observation, field notes, and photographic documentation—strengthened the credibility of the findings through data triangulation. The study therefore provides valuable contemporary evidence regarding the relationship between cultural preservation and economic adaptation among traditional artisan communities.

FUTURE SCOPE

Future research can expand this study by comparing Kumhar Gram with pottery communities in other parts of India. A larger sample size and longer period of fieldwork would provide a broader understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by artisan communities. Further research could also explore the impact of e-commerce, social media marketing, government support schemes, and heritage tourism on the economic sustainability of traditional pottery.

Methods Appendix

Sample Size

A total of **eight artisans** participated in this study, including both male and female potters representing different age groups and levels of experience within the Kumhar Gram community. Participants were selected because they were actively engaged in pottery production and were willing to share their experiences regarding traditional craftsmanship, livelihood challenges, and changing market conditions.

Participant Selection

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to identify participants possessing direct experience of pottery production. The sampling approach prioritised individuals who could provide detailed information regarding market demand, family traditions, women's participation, youth aspirations, digital adaptation, and economic challenges affecting the pottery community.

Interview Questions

The semi-structured interviews explored the following topics:

1. How long have you been practising pottery?
2. How has the demand for pottery changed over the years?
3. What are the major challenges affecting pottery today?
4. Do you want the next generation of your family to continue this profession? Why or why not?
5. What role do women play in pottery production and household management?
6. Have digital payment methods changed the way you conduct business?
7. What changes would improve the livelihoods of traditional artisans?

Additional follow-up questions were asked whenever participants introduced new themes requiring further clarification.

Transcription Process

Interviews were conducted primarily in Hindi and recorded through detailed field notes during the field visit. Immediately after the completion of fieldwork, responses were reviewed, organised, and translated into English while preserving participants' intended meanings.

Contextual observations recorded during the interviews were incorporated into the final transcripts to support interpretation during data analysis.

Analysis Process

The interview transcripts, observational notes, and photographic documentation were analysed using thematic analysis following the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The researcher first familiarised herself with the data through repeated reading of field notes. Initial codes were then assigned to recurring ideas expressed by participants. Similar codes were subsequently organised into broader themes representing common patterns across interviews.

Five principal themes emerged:

- Market Demand
- Youth Aspirations
- Women's Participation
- Digital Adaptation
- Economic Challenges

The emerging themes were continuously compared with field observations and photographic documentation to strengthen the credibility of the analysis and ensure that interpretations accurately reflected participants' experiences.

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