

# FIELD SURVEY REPORT

**Title: Socio economic condition of the potters: a  
study in the Jorhat District of Assam**

*Report prepared by –*

**B.A. 5<sup>th</sup> Semester**

**Department of Economics**

**Jhanji Hemnath Sarma College**

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## **CONTENT**

<b>S.L.No.</b>	<b>Particulars</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Data Source and Methodology</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Findings and Discussion</b> <b>4.1 Socio-Economic condition of the households</b> <b>4.2 Present status of pottery</b>	<b>2-4</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Summary of Findings and Conclusion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Appendix -A</b>	<b>5-6</b>

## **I. Introduction**

Pottery is one of the oldest handicraft industries of India. Since time immemorial, this industry has played a vital role in shaping and strengthening the backbone of rural areas of our country. There are many traditional potters in India. There are two potter communities in Assam. They are known as the Hiras and the Kumars. Hira community is mostly found in Goalpara, Kamrup, Nagaon, Darrang and Barpeta district of lower Brahmaputra valley of Assam. The Kumar potters are distributed in Sivasagar, Jorhat, Golaghat, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts of the upper Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. They are earning their livelihood by their traditional occupation and they are now also struggling for their better livelihood. Due to ideological changes and technological advancement wider social changes have taken place. The old culture and habits of occupation die fast and new ideas and dynamism has taken birth. Despite having enough potential of growing at a large scale, due to certain hurdles, it has been signified as a sick industry in the state. The real incomes of the workers associated with this profession have declined over the years instead of increasing in tandem with the growth of economy. The contribution made by the craft industry towards the national income particularly in the state of Assam is very small due to its being unorganized, with the additional constraints of lack of education, low capital, poor exposure to new technologies, absence of market intelligence, and a poor institutional framework. Moreover, availability abundant substitute products, competition from the other similar type of industries under global economic market and most importantly public attitude to its crafts and craftspeople are some of the root causes of deteriorating conditions of this industry. As such the study of socio-economic background of the potters is crucial to understand the well-being of these people and prospect of survival in the advent of competition.

## **II. Objective**

- a) To study the socio-economic conditions of the workers associated with the pottery industry
- b) To assess the present status of pottery

### **III. Data Source and Methodology**

This study is entirely based on primary data, where data were obtained by conducting interviews using interview schedule. The field survey was conducted using simple random sampling technique. The application of observation technique in the entire period of study was used.

To realize the aforementioned objective, the investigators have selected the Dagar Chowk Indira Adarsha village of the Jorhat district of Assam, where one special class of people belonging to the Kumar community resides. The village is situated at Jorhat East Development block of Jorhat district. The people of the village were originally from Majuli. They were resettled at Dagar Chowk by the State government in 2004 after their residential village in Majuli was destroyed by a massive flood. There are about 80 households in the village out of which 20 households were surveyed by the investigators.

### **IV. Findings and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Socio-Economic Condition of the Potters**

The term socio-economic refers to a wide range of interrelated and diverse aspects relating to or involving a combination of social and economic features. It can be a combination of variables such as occupation, education, income, wealth, housing, sanitation, participation in community life as well as other social and cultural attitude and values, etc. The study finds that the livelihood sources of the sample households are similar. Pottery making is their main occupation. Their women only engaged in pot making. The male members help them. It is mainly a feminine task.

#### ***Housing Condition***

It was observed that 50 percent of the sample households lived in mixed house types followed by rudimentary houses (30.0 percent). Proportion of households living in houses concrete houses was observed to be 20 percent. Electricity status of the households revealed that about 100 percent of the surveyed houses are electrified. An assessment of data on safe drinking water facility showed that 100 percent households use tube well water for drinking purpose. 100 percent surveyed household have kept separate space for cooking. Fuel consumption pattern revealed that 70 percent of the surveyed household use fire-wood as a fuel for cooking purpose while the rest 30 percent households depend utilises both LPG and fire-wood.



### ***Educational Qualification of the respondents***

It was found that 75 percent of the respondents are educated up to primary level and 10 percent up to secondary level of education. 15 percent have no formal education. Compared to male potters' female potters are more uneducated. In some families their daughters also engaged in pottery making activity.

### **Economic Condition of the Households**

It was found that 100 percent of households' primary occupation is pottery. However, 15 percent households have also adopted agriculture and labour work as their secondary occupation. 68 percent of the respondents produce 5000-6000 earthen products in every month. Only 32 percent respondents' total no. of monthly production of earthen pots is 3000-4000. All households responded that they make earthen product for both domestic and market use.

About income level, it was found that 43 percent household have income range from Rs 3001 to 5000, 39 percent household's monthly income is Rs 5001 to 7000, 11 percent have low family income of below Rs 3000. While only 7 percent household's average income is Rs 7001 to 9000 per month.

The Below Poverty Line family also known as BPL family is an economically backward family which needs government assistance and aid for survival. 100 percent of the respondent's types of ration card are BPL.

## **4.2 Present status of Pottery**

One of the striking features of modern society has been the tremendous changes taking place in recent years threatening the essence of socio-economic status. Some changes have been drastic while others have been more gradual that occurs daily. The techniques, methods and the beliefs among the households towards earthen pot making are same as earlier. But there are some changes in the case of knowledge of pot making. Some youth members of the village have got training outside of Assam regarding application of modern technique in earthen pot making. However, it was reported that those techniques are not cost-effective as per the economic status of the households in the village. But every household's (100%) answer is positive to marketing facility of earthen pots. They are not facing any problem in marketing the earthen pots. However recently due to the on-going Covid pandemic the demand for earthen pots has declined. Their products have immense demand in Jorhat, Sivasagar and Dibrugarh district. However, about 38 percent households have reported that they are facing some financial constraint. The families reported that they have

not encountered any problem regarding availability of raw material as well as manpower. However the traditional art of making pottery using some type of special clay from the river banks could lose soon because of the erosion also. Potters will be forced to leave their traditional craft as collecting the clay from the riverbank is main cause of erosion according the experts of Brahmaputra Board. And Government already banned collecting the clay in some places.

## **V. Conclusion**

From the above discussion we can conclude that the earthen pot making craft is playing an important role in boosting up the condition of the potters in the village. Because it is an employment oriented culture. Although, the villagers have reported that their situation got improved compared to what they have experienced while residing in Majuli before the flood, to sum up we can say that socio-economic status of the households was moderate. In this modern scientific era also economic life of majority of them is in bad shape. Educational awareness is yet to develop among the families. Besides, a gradual shift of attitude is taking place among the young generation towards pottery considering the deteriorating place of this cottage industry in Assam's overall rural economy. Only the engagement in pottery is not sufficient for livelihood in present times. They have to depend in other secondary sources also for earning their livelihood. So proper measures should be taken up for improvement and upliftment of the condition of pottery craft and make the people self-sufficient. There should be some workshop or programmes for the people to make them understand the scientific and modern techniques and methods to make earthen pots with less cost, time, and labour. Special attention needs to be given to improve educational attainment of the Community.







To  
The Principal  
Jhanji H.N.S. College  
Jhanji, Sivasagar

Date: 18/03/2021

Sub: Permission request letter for conducting field survey.

Sir,

With reference to the subject cited above, I have the honour to inform you that the Department of Economics, Jhanji H.N.S. College intends to conduct a socio-economic survey at the Dogachuk Indira Adarsha Village, Jorhat on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2021.

I, therefore, request you kindly to give the department permission for the same.

Yours sincerely

*Minati Gogoi*  
(Mrs. Minati Gogoi)

Head of Department

Department of Economics

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