



## PROBLEM, PROSPECTS AND POLICY INITIATIVES OF POTTERY INDUSTRY: A CASE STUDY OF JHAJJAR AND ROHTAK DISTRICTS OF HARYANA

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**Abstract:** Despite being a historical part of India, the pottery industry has lost its glory in the present times. The present study examines the major problems faced by pottery industry and its prospects in Rohtak and Jhajjar districts in Haryana. The responses of 81 artisans in the survey revealed that supply of raw material, paucity of working capital, lack of credit facilities, high production cost and the competition from the other industries are the major problems being faced by the majority of artisans in these two districts. However, most of the pottery artisans agrees to the fact that pottery industry helps in generation of income as well as is an eco-friendly and labour intensive industry. It has been suggested that adequate financial support of banks and financial institutions is essential for the artisans. Government and non-government organisations should provide training facilities in production and marketing to the artisans in the remote areas in Haryana. Different research and developmental activities be initiated by the government and non-government organisations in this direction which will create new dimensions in pottery industry. The exhibitions of pottery products should be arranged in different parts of the country which can contribute to the promotion of market and increasing the demand for such products everywhere. Export Promotion Bureau should develop policies for promoting the local pottery products abroad. The diversification of the pottery products is needed for the expansion of the market which includes decorative, terracotta, artistic, ceramics and other products which are demanded by the customers. The suitable and time-oriented action to the pottery industry can turn into gainful occupation to large number of people in Haryana.

**Keywords:** Pottery, Rural-Development, Self-Employment, Income-Generation, Haryana.

## INTRODUCTION

The earlier dualism characterised by agriculture and industry or traditional and modern sector (Lewis, 1954) is replaced with the emerging scenario of deeper dualism or formal and informal economies in the developing countries (Deepa, 2019). This informal economy represents the socially disadvantaged groups as well as the new dualism in India. The handicraft industry contributes to the process of development because of its

labour-intensive nature which absorbs the labour productively that would otherwise remain unemployed or under-employed. Moreover, the pottery industry creates employment during the slack periods of the agriculture sector and offers the employment in remote areas where no other income-generating employment is available.

Different handmade objects are produced by the tribal groups throughout India which includes the programmes to make the craft production profitable, provide employment to the individual producers and make use of the scarce natural resources. In the midst of different programmes for the promotion of handicrafts, the debates are ongoing with very little information on pottery industry but filled with generalisations and preconceptions due to lack of empirical data. There is lack of interest in researching the pottery industry as such informal activity in the developing country has high cost of collecting and compiling data from entrepreneurs which are scattered as compared to the benefits which will accrue to the country. However, the debates have two side arguments- one is that this industry is financially viable and provides employment to people (Pal, 2021); the other side states that it has narrow projects and the artisans are exploited and potential to increase their income is very limited. There is huge availability of decorative products made of plastic, metals and nylon which has led to decline in the demand of pottery products made with old technology (Sen & Bhattacharjee, 2021). To bring material to the arguments, there is need to evaluate properly the problems faced by the pottery artisans at ground level and different prospects for them. Research is needed to encourage better planning for the future prospects of the pottery industry otherwise this industry will continue in a haphazard manner.

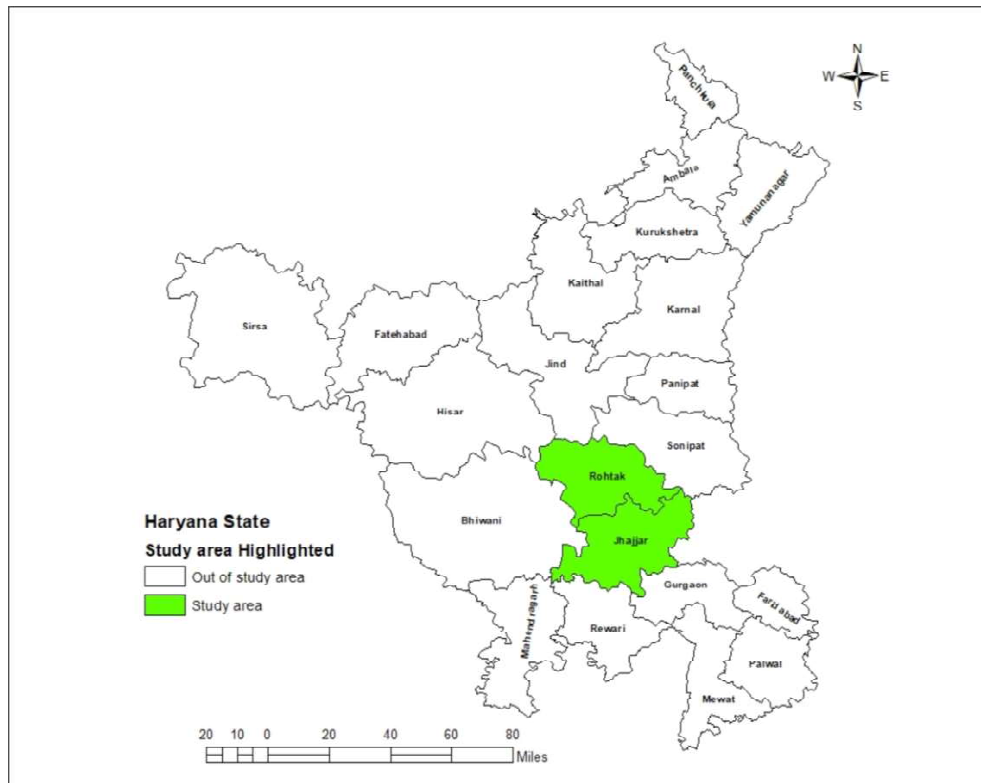
Haryana is traditionally an agrarian economy and has important contribution to GDP. The rural sector is enriched with pottery art in Haryana (Saraswati & Behura, 1966). The clay artisans manufacture the earthen pots, surahi, clay hukkas in Haryana. The pottery industry has contributed in the production of traditional and cultural products. Despite being a historical part of India, the pottery industry has lost its glory in the present times. The substituting products, change in lifestyle and other problems have threatened this industry. Pottery industry has a setback due to modernization which brought iron and aluminium products used for the chores in the households. The development of this industry can provide an important source of income to the artisans living in the rural areas and assist in diversifying the economic structures. Moreover, investment in the human capital of the poor is crucial part of pro-poor strategy (Ravallion, 2004) which includes employment opportunities, improving knowledge and infrastructure. Some studies have been conducted on studying the problems of the pottery industry in India (Varshnei, 1983; Gupta, 1988; Kasemi, 2014; Akilandeswari & Pitchai, 2016; Haloi, 2017; Shrestha, 2018) and it is however important to study this aspect in Haryana which has not been done at the ground level.

The significance and beauty of this study lies in the fact that pottery is considered as means of occupation since time immemorial but it is disappearing from the society. The present study examines the major problems faced by pottery industry in Rohtak and Jhajjar districts in Haryana. The study further identifies the prospects of pottery industry and suggests policy initiatives in the selected districts of Haryana.

**DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

The present study involves the survey from local artisans of pottery families of Rohtak and Jhajjar districts in Haryana. The responses were collected by convenient sampling method with a sample of 81 respondents through interview method with pre-structured questionnaire. Five points Likert scale was used in the analysis having strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, neutral = 3, disagree = 4, strongly disagree = 5. The analysis has been conducted on the responses collected from the artisans by using percentages and the comparison is done using bar charts for different segments of collected information.

The highlighted area in the below picture depicts the area of study for this particular research. The selected districts of the state are located in the south-eastern part, and one of them connected with Uttar Pradesh state.



Handicraft activity is predominantly carried out in the unorganized household sector. Handicraft artisans/ manufacturers are household members practicing handicrafts activity jointly at their residence, who if need arises employ other handicraft artisans for work. I

## FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Pottery activity is predominantly carried out in households in an unorganized manner. The artisans are the household members who practice pottery activity jointly at their home and employs other artisans if the need arises for work. Table 1 depicts the distribution of producers of pottery across the gender, age, skill and literacy of different respondents in the selected districts of Haryana. It is discernible that the males dominate this occupation and constitute 65 per cent of the total artisans as compared to lesser number of females (35 per cent). The survey clearly shows majority of the pottery artisans belong to the age group of 30-40 i.e., 39 per cent followed by the age group of 40-50 i.e., 26 per cent and merely 7 per cent and 5 per cent artisans still work in the age group of 50-60 and 60 & above as pottery artisans. However, among the selected respondents, most of producers were found to be skilled (69 per cent) as compared to the semi-skilled (17 per cent) and unskilled (14 per cent). This is an indication of the positive prospects for the pottery artisans. But it is also important to note that most of these respondent artisans were found to be illiterate i.e., 67 per cent and quite less were found to be literate (33 per cent). This is a clear indication of prevalence of illiteracy in this community.

**Table 1: Distribution of Pottery Producer Respondent among Gender, Age, Skill and Literacy Wise**

<i>Distribution Type</i>	<i>Particular</i>	<i>No. of Producers</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender wise	Male	53	65
	Female	28	35
Age wise	Less than 30	18	23
	30-40	32	39
	40-50	21	26
	50-60	6	7
	60 & above	4	5
Skill wise	Skilled	56	69
	Semi-skilled	14	17
	Unskilled	11	14
Literacy wise	Literate	27	33
	illiterate	54	67

*Source:* Author's calculation

The above discussion points to the status of the pottery producers in the districts of Haryana and indicates that the young people are not more inclined towards this occupation and most of the producers are illiterate. This becomes the reason to further explore the problems faced by the pottery artisans which has hindered their growth and why young people do not want to continue with their family business of pottery.

### PROBLEMS FACED BY POTTERY INDUSTRY IN JHAJJAR AND ROHTAK DISTRICTS

The pottery industry is small scale, informal and unorganized which has to undergo many hardships which hinders the growth of the artisans working in this industry. The survey with the respondents of the artisans has come up with the problems faced by them. Table 2 points to the responses of the artisans on various problems faced by them in Haryana.

**Table 2: Percentage of Artisans Facing the Various Problems in Pottery Industry**

<i>Problems</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>	<i>No. of Respondent</i>
Problem of raw material	86.4	12.3	1.2	0.0	0.0	81
Paucity of working capital	66.3	21.3	12.5	0.0	0.0	80
Lack of credit facilities	80.2	18.5	1.2	0.0	0.0	81
Socio-psychological problems	44.4	8.6	27.2	13.6	6.2	81
High production cost	88.9	9.9	1.2	0.0	0.0	81
Lack of encouragement	37.0	39.5	9.9	12.3	1.2	81
Stiff competition with other products	93.8	6.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	81
Absence of market facilities	77.8	11.1	0.0	8.6	2.5	81
Obsolete technology	57.5	17.5	15.0	8.8	1.3	80
Lack of research and development	60.5	18.5	13.6	3.7	3.7	81

*Source:* Author's calculation

The problem of raw material is the major hindrance in this industry as the supply of raw material directly affects the quality and quantity of the products and it further worsens when high margin goes to the middlemen for the supply (Regon, 2019). It has been found that majority of the respondents i.e., 98.7 per cent (86.4 per cent strongly agree and 12.3 per cent agree) have to suffer due to lack of raw material. However, the remaining 1.2 per cent respondents were found neutral. Moreover, 66.3 per cent of the total pottery artisans in these districts strongly agree that paucity of capital is an important problem being faced by them as the inadequate working capital leads to low production and sometimes they have to opt for low paid jobs or even daily wage earning. Due to

lack of ownership of land and fixed assets, the banks do not provide credit facilities which is a crucial hindrance as they have to depend on money lenders for investment. It has been found that not even a single respondent in the area believes that there is proper credit facility by the banks in providing loans for their work. The young people do not want to enter into this occupation as they fear (53.0 per cent artisans) that they would lose status in the society. Almost 90% of pottery artisans suffer the problem of high production cost due to which their actual earning in pottery industry is quite low. The reasons which lead to high production cost are non-availability of raw material, lack of proper transportation, inadequate technology etc. Their earnings remain very low despite the participation of the entire family in the family occupation. Almost every artisan faced the problem of stiff competition from the other industry like Chinese products as they are cheaper due to the low cost of production (Sen & Bhattacharjee, 2021). Chinese products seemed to be more attractive and have more demand by the customers. Moreover, there is absence of proper market channels due to which the products remained unsold for long duration and are not able to fetch reasonable price for the artisans.

Therefore, even after working hard in this occupation, the artisans earn very low. Another problem which the artisans have to face in this occupation is the use of old and inefficient methods in production that affects their productivity and quality of output. Artisans are still working on wheels for couple of hours which affects their physical health. Old technology is very important reason behind their poor-quality products and lower productivity which increases the cost of production and ultimately increases

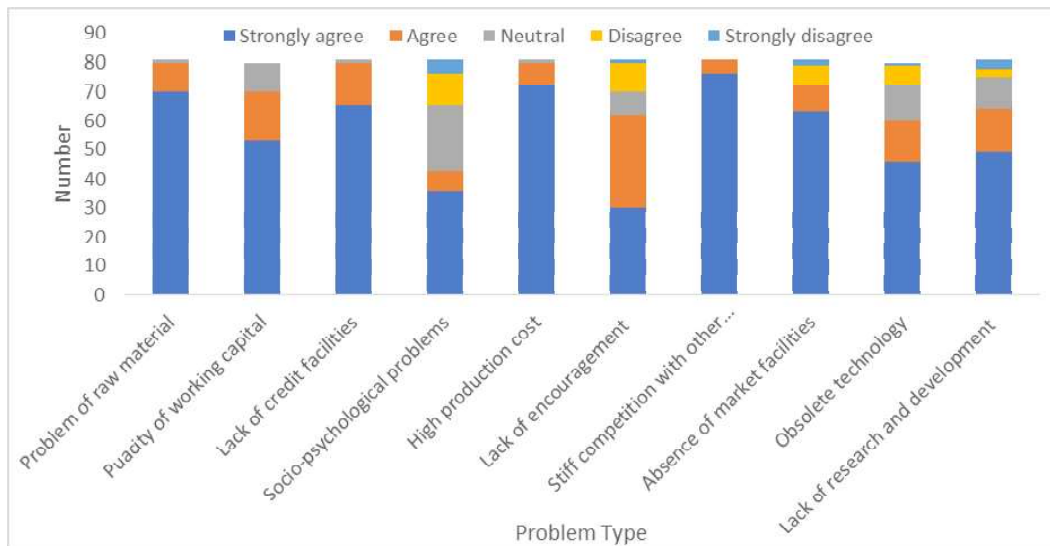


Diagram 1: Number of Artisans Facing the Various Problem in Pottery Industry

the price of the products. However, 8.8% of pottery artisans are still comfortable with the old technology as they do not have sufficient knowledge of use of new technology. The survey reveals that 79.0 per cent of the artisans believes that quality products can be produced with the efforts made in the form of adequate research and development (Mishra & Mansuri, 2016). Therefore, looking into the responses of the artisans in the survey, the picture reveals that the pottery industry is not reaping its complete potentiality due to lack of research.

Figure 1 indicates that people believe the pottery industry faces a stiff competition from the other industries like plastic, melamine etc. Less than half of the people do not face the socio-psychological problem being engaged in this profession. There are very less number of people who agrees to the fact that there is lack of encouragement in this particular industry. By looking at the above figure it is clear that supply of raw material, high production cost and the competition from the other industries are the major problems being faced by the majority of artisans in these two districts. Therefore, the discussion gives the insights of how the pottery industry is losing its charm and getting faded due to different problems faced by the artisans. Therefore, there is slow threat of disappearance of this industry.

### PROSPECTS OF POTTERY INDUSTRY

The demand for the pottery products has been increasing outside India. Despite having number of problems faced by this industry as discussed above, there is still a brighter scope of this industry which cannot be neglected. The responses of the pottery artisans have been highlighted on this issue in table 3.

**Table 3: Various Prospects of Pottery Industry**

<i>Prospects</i>	<i>Generating income</i>	<i>Eco-friendly products</i>	<i>Employment opportunities</i>	<i>Entrepreneurship in the state</i>
Strongly agree	88.9	86.3	69.1	16.0
Agree	9.9	13.8	12.3	14.8
Neutral	1.2	0.0	1.2	64.2
Disagree	0.0	0.0	8.6	3.7
Strongly disagree	0.0	0.0	8.6	1.2
Total Respondent	81	80	81	81

*Source:* Author's calculation

Despite the various problems, this industry has the potential to grow and come up for the growth of the economy (Pegu, 2019). Majority of the respondents believe (98.8 per cent) that pottery industry produces income generating products and requires low

capital and is more labour intensive absorbing the labour. This industry provides subsidiary income to the rural people associated with agriculture during the off season. Therefore, it has huge potential for the upliftment of the income of artisans thus raising their standard of living. None of the artisans contradict on this fact. Sustainability is an important factor which helps in better development and environment preservation. The utensils or other pottery products are eco-friendly. From the above table, it can be observed that 86.3 per cent of total pottery artisans strongly agree that pottery industry plays a vital role in preserving the economy. Moreover, artisans use the resources wisely which did not disturb the bio-diversity of the economy. Nearly 80 per cent of total pottery artisans stated that pottery industry provides employment to both skilled and semi-skilled labors. The pottery industry uses labor intensive technology thus providing more employment to the people of the concerned regions which leads to improvement in their standard of living and ultimately growth in the economy. Some pottery artisans maintained that the development of pottery industry in a particular region will lead to development of entrepreneurship in that region. Development and growth of the state is majorly affected by the level of entrepreneurship. More than half of pottery artisans are neutral about this fact.

The above chart (diagram 2) makes clear that pottery industry has an eminent scope in the future. Out of 81 pottery artisans, 72 pottery artisans believe that pottery industry help in generation of the income. Most of the pottery artisans agrees to the fact that pottery is the eco-friendly industry and does not lead deplete the environment. The analysis reveals that pottery industry uses labor intensive technique and thus increases the employment opportunities in the economy. Most of the pottery artisans are neutral

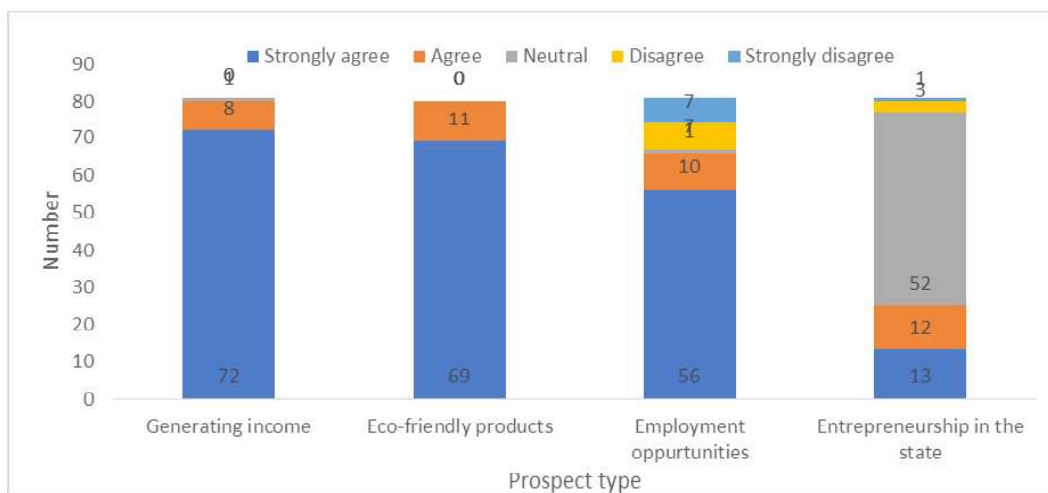


Diagram 2: Prospects of Pottery Industry



about the fact that setting up the pottery industry will lead to increase in entrepreneurship in the state. Different artisan related policy initiatives have been taken by the government such as Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Artisan Credit Cards, Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana, Marketing Support & Services Scheme and Infrastructure and Technology Development Scheme for the growth of artisans in handicraft industry (GOI, 2012; Das, 2017).

## **CONCLUSION AND POLICY INITIATIVES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

In the midst of different programmes for the promotion of handicrafts, the debates are ongoing with very little information on pottery industry but filled with generalisations and preconceptions due to lack of empirical data. The present study examines the major problems faced by pottery industry in Rohtak and Jhajjar districts in Haryana. The study further identifies the prospects of pottery industry in the selected districts of Haryana. The present study involves the survey from 81 local artisans of pottery families of Rohtak and Jhajjar districts in Haryana. It has been found that the young people are not more inclined towards this occupation and most of the producers are illiterate. Moreover, supply of raw material, paucity of working capital, lack of credit facilities, high production cost and the competition from the other industries are the major problems being faced by the majority of artisans in these two districts. Despite having number of problems faced by this industry, there is still a brighter scope of this industry which cannot be neglected. Most of the pottery artisans agrees to the fact that pottery industry helps in generation of income as well as it is eco-friendly industry and does not lead deplete the environment. The analysis reveals that pottery industry uses labor intensive technique and thus increases the employment opportunities in the economy. Different artisan related policy initiatives have been taken by the government such as Babasaheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, Artisan Credit Cards, Rajiv Gandhi Shilpi Swasthya Bima Yojana, Aam Admi Bima Yojana, Marketing Support & Services Scheme and Infrastructure and Technology Development Scheme for the growth of artisans in handicraft industry

Therefore, the study gives the insights of how the pottery industry is losing its charm and getting faded due to different problems faced by the artisans. There is slow threat of disappearance of this industry. Adequate financial support of banks and financial institutions is essential for the artisans. The loans can be disbursed at low interest rates and easy conditions with micro-finance as the prime option to them. Government and non-government organisations should provide training facilities in production and marketing to the artisans in the remote areas in Haryana. Co-operative societies should be established among the pottery artisans which can prove to be a remarkable initiative.

Inclusion of education regarding pottery art should be enhanced at school level which shall be helpful for expanding the knowledge of students about this industry. Different research and developmental activities be initiated by the government and non-government organisations in this direction which will create new dimensions in pottery industry. The exhibitions of pottery products should be arranged in different parts of the country which can contribute to the promotion of market and increasing the demand for such products everywhere. As pottery is historical part of the state, therefore, government should take necessary steps for keeping this industry. The product quality be improved with the production procedures and raw material should be provided adequately at subsidized rates to this industry. This shall encourage the artisans to enter and remain in this industry. Export Promotion Bureau should develop policies for promoting the local pottery products abroad. The diversification of the pottery products is needed for the expansion of the market which includes decorative, terracotta, artistic, ceramics and other products which are demanded by the customers. As this industry has huge potential, there is need to create and spread awareness about the importance of pottery industry among the younger generation. The suitable and time-oriented action to the pottery industry can turn into gainful occupation to large number of people.

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