

An analysis of Laxmi Self Help Group

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Abstract

This paper is based on analysis of Laxmi Self Help Group from a village Aurangabad of Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh. It analyses life of artisans' and their work from different dimensions. It analyses the funds required by artisans' and utilized during the production process, supply chain management and central & state government policies which helped SHG members to establish their business.

Key Words: Self Help Group (SHG), One District One Product (ODOP), Porous,

Introduction

India is a very rich country in terms of cultural heritages many traditional art forms exist here from generations. Terracotta is a traditional clay craft from a village Aurangabad, Gorakhpur , Uttar Pradesh; it is a handy craft product which could be easily seen in all parts of India. It is an art form found in eastern part of Uttar Pradesh especially in villages of Gorakhpur reason.

Terracotta craft is earthenware made of porous clay which is unglazed. The word terracotta emerges from Italian word "Terra- Cotta" which means "baked earth" it is a brownish-red clay baked and used for making figurine, pots, tiles, jewellery and many other things. . It is a low cost product made by special clay found in the beds of rivers and ponds. The colour of such potteries is based on the type of clay and temperature of fire. Porous means having very small holes from where air and water can flow. The porous type of clay for terracotta is found in the beds of water bodies, which contains small quantity of shining content which makes terracotta as it looks. The art even lies in the temperature of heating for the desired colour as while baking iron content reacts with oxygen and provides the desired brownish- red shade or Orange.

Literature Review

No paper was found on Laxmi Self Help Group, this paper studies the history of presence of terracotta product around the world. Samples of terracotta were found from Indus Valley Civilisation where usage of stones and metal was rare. Figurines and utensils for pooja and household were found of clay. Samples of clay art figurines which mostly used to be carved as animals, god, ladies etc. were found. References of clay toys are available since 5000 BC to 2000BC. From Mohenjo-daro and Harappa detailed figurines of anatomy in terracotta is found. The samples of terracotta are found from the era of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa 3000-1500 BC. It is a clay art which mostly carves animals, figurine of god and ladies etc. on it. Figurines of girls in dancing pose depicting some dance form, figurines of animals like dogs, cow, horses, bears, monkeys etc. were found, animals were even found on the seals in this era. Its references are given in King Shudraka's play as "Mrichhakatika" a toy craft made of clay, references of this art is also found near Nile River, Mesopotamian art and Egyptian art. Indian terracotta figures are found from the period of Gupta Dynasty, which is famous for its art and cultural heritage, many samples were found like "Bankura Horses". It is even found in the Greek pottery and architecture, Roman architecture, Italian Renaissance. "Lady in Blue" figurine is a great example of Tangara figurines from Greek terracotta, molded and glazed terracotta. The **Chinese terracotta Army**, China from 246-208 BCE is a great example of terracotta. The first Emperor of Qin Dynasty, Qin Shi Huangdi made it in order to serve him after death, it consists of 8000 figurines of warriors and horses, it took around 40 years to make. It was found in Shaanxi province, China in the year 1974. **Venus of Dolni Vestonice**, from c.26000 BCE, is the oldest terracotta sculpture found in the year 1925 from Moravian Basin South of Brno, in the Czech Republic. It is a Venus Figurine measuring 4.4 inch height and 1.7 inch width made of clay and powdered bone and baked found in two pieces. **Virgin Mary**, c.1390-95, is a figurine made of terracotta and polychromy. Ancient Greek's **Tangara figurines**. Architecture of terracotta is also a famous art form for example Town Buildings of Victorian Birmingham, England shows great amount of usage of terracotta. Terracotta temples from West Bengal, India is famous for its terracotta architecture like Nandlal Temple and Kalachand Temple of Bishnupur, West Bengal, Anant Basudeba Temple of Mithapukur More, West Bengal etc.

Aurangabad is a small village in Gorakhpur city which produces terracotta figurines. It has many internationally renowned artisans' who had showcased this art form on many

international platforms and bagged many national and international awards. The artesian from this village had formed a self help group in year 2000 to promote the art form and with the help of central and state government policies they had tried to keep the art form alive and attractive for the coming generations. Self Help Group is a small group from of people from similar socio and economic background who come together voluntarily and collectively save money, for micro financing of group members. Every family of this village earns its livings from this art form; from elders to younger's all are into this profession.

Physical and Financial progress since inception				
	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	Total
Financial progress (in crores)				
Total Government allocation	1472.33	1332.50	774.50	3579.33
Total funds available	1907.68	1518.40	1054.77	4480.85
Total funds utilized	959.86	1116.27	499.96	2576.09
Physical progress				
Self-help groups formed	292,426	492,664	742,354	742,354
Individual Beneficiaries	585,956	687,602	300,700	1,574,258
Members of SHGs benefitted	347,912	342,871	179,251	870,034
Total swarozgaris assisted	933,868	1,030,473	479,951	2,444,292

Source: wikipedia.org

Earlier Artisans' used to make figurines of horses and elephant as haujdaar for pooja and for temples as main item if this art form. After 1966 changes started when Bharat sarkar took initiatives and recognized this local art by opened training center and designing assistance was provided. This persuaded the craftsmen to sharp their talent and become dexterous in the art form and take it to the next level of business. Where the products could be sold nationally and internationally.

Reognitions:

In the year 1966 postal stamp was issued with picture of Terracotta product as an recognition to this art form by Postal Department. Shri Sukhraj Dev also got National Level award in

1966 for excellence in her work. Then in 1979 artisan Shri Gulab Chand got Presidents award for his work in terracotta, he visited many places outside India to showcase this art form. While going to Britain for Bharat Mahotsava he carried nine sacks of special clay to exhibit the art there. Then in 1980 Shri Shayam Dev Prajapati got ‘National Siddhastashilpi’ award. Many more such awardees are living in this village who brought fame to the art form. Shri Laxmi Chand Prajapati the President of Laxmi SHG, received National Merit in 1973 and State award in 2013. Many state awards were given to artisans from this village 2012-Shri Panne laal Prajapati, 2017- Shri Akhilesh Kumar Prajapati, 2018 – Shri Deep Narayan Prajapati.

Raw materials required is the clay which is found in the beds of ponds of the village and nearby villages, which is collected in summers mainly in the month of May and June when the ponds are dry and clay is easily accessible to use throughout the year. This clay costs them around Rs. 1800 to Rs. 2000 per truck and this village requires minimum of 50-60 truck for each year, minimum of Rs.1,00,000 required for collection of clay. This is special variety clay which is porous in nature. It is brought and kept in grounds near the work sheds of these artisans’ for the entire year, this clay can be kept in open as during rainy season it never dilutes with water.

Second raw material required upla/canda/chipri/kanda as local names which are called cow dung cake in English. The carved raw figurines of terracotta are baked in upla furnace, to give its colour. This raw material is bought in bulk at the rate of Rs 6-7 per piece, minimum requirement of 100 kgs which accumulates to of Rs. 3,600. Along with Upla, charcoal is required to bake the figurines.



Third raw material is Puaal or Hay, Hay is required to put fire in furnace, to cover the furnace, for packing of products to supply. Which costs Rs 3000 to Rs. 4000 per kg trolley.

Which is procured from the farmers during the katai period of dhaan(rice) and stored for the entire year for packaging. Each truck requires minimum of 10 to 15 quintals for packing of raw material which costs an expense of Rs. 5000 per truck. Earlier this product was sold in different boxes to safeguard the product n lot of hay was used to cover the figurine with time this self help group had changed the packing procedure n they pack the product in an entire truck by making bases from all sides of puaal n covering each article by hay puaal individually. This makes possible to send more number of units in one truck then earlier, which had increased the sales and reduced the transportation cost which finally increases the profit margin of retailer. Final product is sold to retailers across the country, buyers come to Aurangabad choose the products or give new orders as per market requirements and carry the product at their own cost of transportation.

Artisans' of Aurangabad are into this business from many generation as an unorganized format, in the year 2000 people of this village came together and made a Self Help Group to support the artisans' under SGSY Yojna (Swarna Jayanti Gram swarojgaar Yojna) of central government. SGSY aimed to provide assistance to people below poverty line by making SHGs and providing credit from bank and government subsidies. People from Aurangabad village took benefits of this yojna and made an SGHs of terracotta artisans'.

Laxmi self Help Group

Address: Aurangabad Village
Near Gulariah Police Station
Medical College Road
Gorakhpur, UP

Total number of members: 12

President: Shri Laxmi Chand Prajapati

Secretary: Shri Mohan Lal Prajapati

Each member has minimum 5-6 people in their family who work. Minimum sales of Rs. 50-60 thousand is done in month keeping 50% as profit margin.

After being an authorized SGHs under SGSY scheme they availed many benefits, under this scheme in the year 2001-02 the government sanctioned Rs. 10,41,000 for providing work

shed to the artisans' , where they can work and store their raw material like mud, upla, puual etc. and finished products. It gave the opportunity to artisan's to work under same roof.



Around Rs. 56,00,00 was sanctioned to build roads to connect the village from city and Rs. 10,50,000 was issued for maintenance and beautification of pond in the village, it was used to dig the pond deeper, to make staircase around the pond and plantation around it. This gave immediate benefits to the villagers. Financial aid was given in form of easy loans , artisan's were provided Id Card and on the basis of that loan of max. Rs10 lakh is sanctioned by any bank very easily. In the year 2006 government sanctioned funds for terracotta research center, which was made and was not successful. Artisans' are looking forward towards state governments scheme of 'One district one product' and 'Mudra Yojna'. The state governments scheme of 'One district one product' is expected to give boost to this art form of Aurangabad. Launched in 2018 by UP government ODOP aims to prmote local craftsmanship and traditional art forms, this concept is taken from Japan, it is a Japanese business development concept and was very successful in 1979. In UP 75 districts are identified as traditional artistic hubs and planned to be promoted.



ODOP have aimed at giving a major push to traditional industries synonymous with the respective districts of the Uttar Pradesh.

www.odop.in/pages/odop-policies

ODOP will be connecting buyers and sellers, which will help in easily connecting and brand imaging of product. Traditional art forms of the state will be promoted in national as well as

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international markets. Gorakhpur falls into this scheme for terracotta products. This will surely give benefits to the craftsman's of this region.

ODOP of state government and Mudra Yojna of central government will work together for growth of craftmans. Mudra is Micro Unit Development and Refinance Agency Ltd. These intendeds to provide loan to nonfarm and non corporate sector who needs less then Rs. 10 lakh. It will work under three schemes:

1. Shishu: covering loan upto Rs. 50,000
2. Kishore: covering loan above Rs. 50,000 and upto Rs. 5,00,000
3. Tarun: covering loans above Rs. 5,00,000 and upto Rs. 10,00,000

Under Mudra loan commercial vehicle loan, loan for working capital, plant and machinery, overdraft facilities.

Vikas Ayog Hast shilp, Varanasi keeps informing this self help group via letters the new plans and policies of government awareness among the artisans' in regard of government policies is better. Craftsman are Having full support from government for financing, artisans personal savings give base to their financial needs, loan which is easily available up to 10 lakhs fulfills the other requirement requirements they apply for loan. They get loan till 10 lakhs easily from bank. Customers make payments mostly by cheque or bank account.

Government had provided pension to craftsman who had represented India with this traditional craft internationally and bagged state, national and international awards and recognitions. Craftsman use Designing Bearing machines to give basic shape of terracotta products which is electronic potter's wheel, runs with electricity costing between Rs. 8000 to Rs. 25000/ pur unit. They give all minute shapes and designs to the products by hand. They still require machineries like Pug Mill in order to mix and nead clay to make it costing around Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 35,000 pur unit. New Bhatti which is though smaller in size but can be a benefit to the artisans are required. Electricity is required to use electronic chaak which earlier used to be a tuff task as the supply of electricity was very bad, as per the artisans' electricity supply was in shifts either during day or night. So they had to work during that time period and other carving was done in left out time. It used to be a hectic and tuff schedule which hampered the units of production. Currently the state government (BJP) had provided 24 hour power supply which has helped to grow a lot.

Terracotta Products:

Classic products are Figurines of ladies dancing or carrying water pots, statue of lord Ganesha, animals like Horse, elephant, lamps, toys, flower pots and decorative tables. During Diwali they make figurines of Goddess Lakshmi n Lord Ganesha along with variety of diyas, hanging jhoomars and other pooja items which are beautifully handcrafted. Water pipes and Roofing tiles made of terracotta used in architecture.

New products are terracotta Chinese bells, humans / elephants displayed using various vadya yantras are specialty of this art form. Hanging lamps and statues of god like shiva, chariot of Krishna from the story of Mahabharata, hanging lamps where bulbs can be put are new arenas where they are experimenting to attract customers.

As per the head of self help group earlier they used to make limited variety of products, now they have around 100 to 150 varieties as per the changing demand of market. Terracotta tea cups are the new experiment which they are doing.

Raw Material	Cost	Quantity in each truck	Quantity Required for a year	Collection Month	Total Cost Of Raw Material
Clay	Rs. 2000 per truck	12 tons	5 trucks	May - June	Rs. 10,000
Cow dung cake	Rs.7 per pcs.	1000 pc. monthly	20,000 pcs.	May- June (small amounts throughout the year)	Rs. 1,40,000
Hay	Rs. 5000 per truck	5 quintal	20 *12 quintals	“Aghan” Nov. – Dec.	Rs. 2, 40,000
Charcoal	Rs. 5000	12 tons	12 tons	Throughout the year	Rs. 5,000

TOTAL	Rs. 3,95,000
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	Monthly	Yearly
Total Income per month	Rs. 1,00,000 approx.	Rs. 6,00,000
Total Expenses	-	Rs. 3,95,000
Profit	-	Rs. 2,05,000 approx.

Manufacturing process:

Raw materials like porous special type clay, cow dung cake, and hay are collected during the month of May and June (summers) for the entire year and stored by the artisans'.

The first step for making terracotta figurines is to knead the clay very smoothly this consumes a lot of energy and time, in absence of pug mills artisans' do it by themselves.

Second step is to dry the pottery in sunlight for giving design.

Third step is to give basic shapes to the figurines with the help of electronic chaak. Then main work of giving designs and carving is hand crafted by the artisans'.

Fourth step is to bake the figurines in bhattis at a fix temperature to give it a proper color to it.

Making of Terracotta is a very hard and labour intensive process, it consumes a lot of time to work on each figurines and finishing as desired and demanded.



New initiatives:

Many new initiatives are taken by the artisans of their own or by help of government. Like state government is planning to open an emporium in Lucknow and Varanasi to showcase terracotta as traditional art form.

Many training camps are organized by the senior artisans in Aurangabad and other places to attract the new generation towards this art form . As a benefit of it many nearbyvillages had opted it as basic source of earning.

Earlier **Packaging** of products used to be a cumbersome and expensive process. They needed gatta/dabba/boxes to pack which they used to buy from local shops of Bata, VIP at the rate of Rs. 30 each, then they needed rope which costed Rs.6-7 pur meter along with puaal , along with labour cost packing use to take around Rs. 100 each box that to only loaded 12 to 14 items at time and 1 day was wasted in packing of products. While loading in trucks artisans' were able to make sale max. of Rs 2,50,000. Now they had changed their packing pattern is changed where they pack products directly in trucks by covering trucks with layer of puaal and then loading the products directly in it, rapping each in puaal. This helped them in reducing the cost of packaging and number of units sold also increased as earlier in one truck they use to load goods of 2.5 lakh now the same truck carries goods of 4.5 to 5.0 lakhs. Which has increased the sale for craftsman and reduced the transportation cost of customers.

NABARD is offering them to make form a company, which is offering all to take care of all basic requirement under that company for examples providing machinery, financing raw material, supply chain management, Advertising etc., talks are in process with artisans' of Aurangabad.

Problems Faced by Terracotta Industries in Gorakhpur

Terracotta art form in Gorakhpur is been sold all over country and in international markets. The main problem of this art form is advertising. This product is being made by many generations of these artisans' but product has not got the recognition in common people. People using these products are not aware of its origin, in the way they connect products of chinimitti from Khurja and brass products from Moradabad that kind of brand recognition among common people is required. Government is providing financial aids to the crafts man but along with that they should emphasise on promoting and branding the product.

Absence of cottage emporium in the city of Gorakhpur, to showcase the art form is a big requirement where the variety of products can be displayed. Along with that local display of product and advertising is lacking. A small showroom is in Gorakhpur which is least known by the people it needs to be a better one.

The product is sold directly by the artisans' as the customer needs to travel till the village to buy and select the product then book a truck, load the product and take it to their destinations for example one truck loaded with goods from Aurangabad to Ahmadabad cost Rs. 32,000 of transportation to the customer (retailer) which makes the product expensive. Resulting in low profit margin to be availed by the customer (retailer). The village Aurangabad is a remote area reaching their again is a time taking and tuff job, this accumulates to loss of time and excess money spent.

Suggestions:

Terracotta is an art where villagers of Aurnagabad had excelled they make handmade figurine unlike the others using molds to give shape and looks to the figurine. This heritage art comes in its traditional look of red colour.

First suggestion would be to get an patent on Ganesha figurine set of five with musical instrument.

A cottage emporium is required in the main city of Gorakhpur, to connect people in city with their own product. Awareness among the people is very low that this product belongs to their own city, first benefit this emporium will provide is associating pride of city with terracotta, secondly it will provide ease to the customers so that they can choose product of their own choice from emporium and give orders which will reduce their travelling cost and time. Along with cottage emporium a stall for it should be made on airport, railway station and bus stand for display and sales. UP tourism should have reference of terracotta on their banners.

Although a good initiative taken by state government under ODOP scheme is considering Gorakhpur for Terracotta. Connecting and advertising through new channels of communication would help the industry to boost and place it in the market. Aurangabad is a remote village in the vicinity of Gorakhpur city which needs to be a landmark of that area which is only possible if the state government arranges proper roads connecting to the village, electricity, boards and milestones displaying the route from city till the village. They can announce it as heritage village.

The website of this self help group should have details of artisans' including their mobile number, the awards which they had received, their exposure and recognition in international market should be highlighted. Many craft men from this SHG had gone to Australia, Hungary, Belgium, London and they were invited to BBC office for interview. The website should have a fresh and attractive look, currently available website is an very old and monotonous one, which may not attract new customers.

Introduction of supply chain management is very much required to face the completion which is increasing day by day. This will help in expanding the market.

The research center for terracotta which is not active inspite of huge investment made by the government needs to be rejuvenated. A designing and marketing center should be launched in order to give recognition to the village, to help artists and motivate them for new experiments in order to cope up with the competition.

Conclusion:

Terracotta is a well-known art form which is searching for its identity among common people as a product from Uttar Pradesh, Gorakhpur. Many government policies since 1966 had helped the artisans of terracotta to grow. But still many basic requirements are pending many of them state government can address under their plan of "One District One Product" and

“Mudra Yojna” artisans are looking forward towards the government policies of supporting this traditional art form. Getting Patent on some of the figurines would help the art form and make the artisans’ secure and competitive. Keeping their tradition of Handcrafted and earthen look as USP.

Reference:

1. **Primary Data:** Most of the data is compiled from personal Interview of artisan’s and Head of Self Help Group.

President: Shri Laxmi Chand Prajapati

Awardee: Shri Gulab Chand Prajapati

And other Artisans’ of the village.



Laxmi self Help Group

Address: Aurangabad Village
Near Gulariah Police
Station
Medical College Road
Gorakhpur, UP

Interviewing SHG, President, Shri Laxmi Chand Prajapati

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