

Study of LARNAI Black Pottery



Institute of Livelihood
Research and Training

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Executive Summary

Pottery has been the socio-cultural livelihood of two hamlets of West Jaintia Hills District namely Lyrnai. The village derived its name as 'kchu Lyrnai' or 'khiew ranei'. The activity was first started in Larnai then progressed to Trychang.

Larnai have been practicing the art of making pots- (skill of making the earthen pots) from their ancestors and they continue with the tradition till today. Lyrnai pots or khiew ranei (Black Clay Pots) are imperative because of its traditional value (inherited which need to be protected and promoted) and cultural value which have been using for generations for performing rituals by the Daloi of Nartiang. Both the villages have organized themselves in terms of At present there are 14 households in Larnai who are involved in this activity. The Larnai Seng Kynthei Pyrtuh SHG has more than 14 members which registered itself under the Society Registration Act 1986.

Pottery in Larnai is in a dying stage as the artisans have to go through many hardships in the activity, since they are still practicing their trade in a traditional way, they have to apply lots of physical energy from the beginning of the making of the pottery, hence it is also one of the reasons why the youths are not getting encouraged in taking up the activity.

Findings from the study reveal that though at the moment only 14 HH are engaged in the activity this activity has high prospects and potentials to make it into a full-fledged livelihood activity but due to a primitive type of work culture it takes lots of physical energy, the men have a very limited role in the activity, whereas women play a major role in the activity due to which they have to face all the hardships in the trade, the women suffer from acute back pain, shoulder, chest and head. Due to strenuous work the productivity and the quality of the product are affected. The artisans are not able to diversify their product due to limited access to technology, some members did undergo some training but it did not help them much since they were not able to get access to the kind of materials and technology, but still they are able to use some training techniques they have learned but were not able to produce much improvement in the quality of the product, hence despite of having good potentiality the popularity of the trade is dwindling, though the effect on health has not been found due to burning of wood but other physical difficulties have been cited.

Though the product is in high demand from the traditional snack maker, but it is limiting to only one or two items, whereas other products are not in demand on a regular basis since there is a mechanism to test the quality of the product. The potters have been quoting the price of the material by adjustment and they have no standardized system of putting the price on the item which again creates doubt whether they are able to make any genuine profit or not.

One of the major hurdles which are encountered by these potters are rain and wind, since they do not have any working shed and storage facility thus they are not able to continue their work during rainy season and windy season.

Seasonal mapping exercise it has been found that winter season is the most favourable season for this art work. Rainy season seems to be their biggest problem as they do not have a proper working shed.

There is an acceptance for the use of modern technology where they want to blend the modern technology and old style which retain the unique practice of hand pottery and would not be diluted the traditional identity of the product. It was under such dire circumstances that few individuals and artisans from Shillong, NGOs working in Jowai called Society of Urban and Rural Empowerment together with

Basin Development Unit and 2other Government department realised the need to promote and conserve this art from dying and extinct.

Study Objectives

The objective of the study is to identify the potentiality of Pottery in Larnai and Trychang village. The specific objectives are: -

- To explore the current status and dynamics of Potters in Trychang and Larnai.
- To identify the general and specific constraints faced by the potters.
- To explore the potentiality of scaling up by engaging more household into the activity from among the local population
- To identify scope for further value addition in the activity and moving up the producer further upwards in the value chain

Scope of the study

The study needs to perform three types of scans. A) Scan of the households engaged in Pottery in the two study villages, b) scan of other value chain players such as middlemen procuring the pots, retailers selling the pots, transporters engaged in transferring pots to locations, credit players offering credit to potters, retailers selling the pots and consumers buying the pot; c) scan of other stakeholders would involve interaction with agencies such as MBDA, EFC, KVIC, DIC, ITI, Local Artisans, association of pot makers if any etc. People engaged in this activity will be interviewed to determine the current status, constraints of the potters in Larnai and Trychang. Scan of the value chain players will involve understanding the role played by each of the players in the value chain and identify potential for scaling up this activity in the long run. Scope for new households taking up the activity and existing households taking up value addition in the activity will be explored. Scan of other stakeholders would involve the support that can be provided by other stakeholders for making pottery a sustainable livelihood activity.

Methodology

An exploratory research design would be adopted. As mentioned, three types of scans would be done. Hence different types of data collection tools would be utilized.

Type of Scan	Tools to be used	Research Team
Scan of the households engaged in Pottery	Interview Schedule	Ms Wanda M Lamare <i>Assistant Manager, ILRT</i>
Scan of the value chain players	Key informant interviews, Sight observations	Mr. Ananda Baruah <i>Research Associate, ILRT</i>
Scan of Stakeholders	Key informant interviews	Mr Wilhemos Shylla <i>Programme Associate, ILRT</i> Ms Muhor Ksiar <i>Programme Associate, MBDA</i> Mr. T. Navin <i>Research Head, ILRT</i>

Limitation of the study

For conducting the study the Research team have encountered few limitations.

- As the study was planned during sowing season, Non availability of the people during the data collection as most of the people was engaging in cultivation
- Casualities and deaths of villagers during the study process which led to delays in completions of survey.
- Non-cooperation and hesitant from the people in providing information.

Background

Potters art in India is as ancient as the country itself. According to archaeological evidence, it was prevalent even during the Indus Valley Civilization. The art of shaping and baking clay articles as pottery, earthenware and porcelain has evolved and endured through centuries to the modern times. The exact time period of its existence in Meghalaya is unknown but it is believed that pottery in Meghalaya can be dated back to the ancient period of the powerful King of Jaintiapur. This art despite being an old trade practice by a few household but still in practice due to the available of the fertile soil in sung valley.

The finest pottery in India is of the unglazed variety, and this is practically produced all over India in a variety of forms. Kangra and Andreta in Himachal Pradesh, Pokhran in Rajasthan, Meerut and Harpur in Uttar Pradesh, Kanpur in Maharastra, Kutch in Gujarat, Jahjjar in Haryana, Birbhum in Bengal and Manipur are famous for their special styles in pottery. Each region has its own specialty. Very fine paper-thin pottery is produced in Kachchh, Kanpur and Alwar, the Alwar variety being called kagzi. .Kangra is noted for black pottery, which resembles the Harappan pottery style. Pokhran has stylised forms with incised decorative patterns. Kanpur makes thin pottery with incised designs. Meerut and Jhajjar make slim-necked water containers called surahis. Kachchh is famous for pots, terracotta horses and elephants. The pots are made for different occasions like marriages, death, etc. Nizamabad in Uttar Pradesh is noted for black pottery with silver patterns worked in it.¹

Utilizing the clay and water in order to give definite shapes for different purposes can be identified as the oldest craft known to human culture. The evidences of this pottery making can be traced from the Neolithic Era with the involvement of various types of traditional knowledge. After the discovery of pottery there was a series of revolutionary changes found to occur at various period of time. The changes were found in terms of the technique of production and also in the art forms. For example, Indus Valley Civilization has also shown a revolutionary change in the field of pottery making. In some particular communities in India this traditional knowledge is inherited from generation to generation though their traditional occupation.²

Context of pottery making in Meghalaya

Larnai (also spelt Lyrnai) is a small village approximately seven kilometres from Ummulong on the Highway No. 44 connecting shilling with Jowai, the headquarters of the Jaintia Hills district. Larnai falls

¹Indian Streams Research Journal, International Recognized Multidisciplinary Research Journal, ISSN No : 2230-7850 Impact Factor : 4.1625 (UIF) [Yr. 2014

²Pottery making tradition among the Prajapati community of Gujarat, India- Mithun Sikdar*, Pritish Chaudhuri Anthropological Survey of India, Western Regional Centre, Udaipur, Rajasthan, India

under the Ummulong Police station and the Thadlaskein Community Development Block³. Larnai village located about 10 KM from the district headquarters in Jowai. It is around 33 KM from Shillong. Larnai is surrounded by Jowai to the south, Mawkynew Blocks towards the west, Mawryngkneng Block towards the west and Laskein Block towards the East. The People of Larnai are mostly cultivators. Agriculture is their main occupation. Paddy and maize are the main staple crops. They undertake paddy cultivation from March to August, while maize is grown in May- June. Potato is the main root cultivated and Tomato, Mustard leaves are the main vegetable produced. In Larnai every household has its orchard where they grow Orange. The families in Larnai were also specialised in making bamboo craft like baskey “shang”

Larnai is a medium size village with 142 household with a total population 1200 of which 650 are females and 550 are males. As per 2011 census, Larnai village population of children with age 0-6 is 190 which make up 24.58 % of total population of village. Average Sex Ratio of Larnai village is 1003 which is higher than Meghalaya state average of 989. Child Sex Ratio for the Larnai as per census is 727, lower than Meghalaya average of 970. Larnai village has lower literacy rate compared to Meghalaya. In 2011, literacy rate of Larnai village was 60.03 % compared to 74.43 % of Meghalaya. In Larnai Male literacy stands at 47.46 % while female literacy rate was 71.34 %.

As per constitution of India and Panchayati Raj Act, Larnai village is administrated by Sarpanch (Head of Village) who is elected representative of village.

Livelihoods in Larnai

In Larnai 73% of the populations are mostly engaged in daily labour 20% of the household were engaged in agriculture and 7% in service sector. Their major livelihood activities are mostly Agriculture and Daily labour. The people mostly went the neighbouring villages-Wahiajer, Ummulong, and Jowai for earning. Similarly from the study it also reveal that majority of the workforce who went out from the villages for their livelihood are men who are Truck Driver and Mason.

Since Larnai is located near a vast stretch of fertile land called “sung” therefore almost every household are involve in cultivation either in small scale for self-consumption to large scale for commercializing. The number of household engaged in agriculture as compared to 2011 has increased drastically with the banning of coal mining. Many household have now started turning back to agriculture as their source of livelihood.

Infrastructure

Larnai Village is accessible by road on all side; it is connected to the state Electricity grid. In Larnai all BPL household are connected to the Rural Grameen Electricity Yojna. The village has one primary school. In the village there is no financial institution, villagers travel about 7 km to Ummulong for credit facilities. The nearest Health centre is in Ummulong which is 7 Km from Larnai Village. While these were the facilities available, like many other rural areas in the country, Larnai village is also facing a serious water scarcity problem which aggravates more during winter. The drainage system in the village is very poor and most of the household does not have any proper drainage facilities. From the sample population about 80% of the households do not have proper sanitation (toilets) and about 10% of who were having a toilets were mostly soak-pit. And only 10% are having a proper sanitation.

³Larnai: A study of the Jaintia Pottery-Abhijit Choudhury.

Pottery in Larnai

The Larnai potters are hereditarily engaged in their craft. They make pottery round the year except when involved in sowing and harvesting. However, they supplement their income from pottery by selling orange, Tomato and maize in the market. The story of Larnai potters was very interesting as some believe that initially People could communicate with God, and that God was very impressed with hard work and sincerity of the people and the art of making pottery for which God asked them who taught the art, the people replied almighty God and the God kept asking them every time he descends the earth for which people got very irritated for asking them the same question over and over again and with irritation they answered that we made our selves hence from that day onward God never ask them this question and these people have gained the trust and blessing of the God and from that day onward they have received the blessing of owning the art of making black pottery.

The study also reveals a very interesting fact that Potters in Larnai were organised themselves in the form of a group. The group was formed in the year 1983 with only nine members, and their sole objective was to conserve and popularise the art of pottery. The group has been running smoothly with regular meetings between members and a monthly contribution Rs 5 initially and currently it has been revised up to Rs 20/-. Currently the group now has 14 members and their main activity was to facilitate training programs sponsored from the government department. The members of the Group have received training sponsored from DCIC, Meghalaya, in collaboration with NID, Shillong. Besides they also receive training from freelance sculpture artist and individual enthusiasts for promoting this activity. They also received clay moulds to help reduce their work load in shaping and designing their product but have been put to very limited use as they were not apt with the knowledge of using the tools properly. In Larnai there were also other households engaged into this trade but were not organised in any form of organisation and currently these households have stopped undertaking this trade completely and were no longer involved in pottery.

Larnai pottery initially used to be supplied to all parts of the Khasi Jaintia Hills, the main markets being Jowai and Shillong, but nowadays the organisation is restricting its production for exhibition purposes. Initially the demand for pottery items was round the year but nowadays except for its 'curio' value the urban based people do not seem to be interested in their products. The preference for modern crockeries has restricted their market. The Sein Kynthei Pyrtuh sells their products in the local market. Sometimes they receive orders for their wares from the government. At the State level it is marketed through the Meghalaya Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation.

Current status of Pottery in Larnai

a. Profile of potters

From the Study it was found that the potters in Larnai received education mostly upto Primary level of which 50% (Figure 1) of them and only 7% completed their secondary and Graduate. Another interesting finding was about 28% of them are illiterate. The data reveals that there is a high scope for imparting technology knowledge for improving their activity, similarly there is a potential scope of imparting financial education for them for accounting purposes.

Though the percentage of illiterate is upto 28% this could in fact turn into their strength by imparting them the basic functional and financial literacy.

Based on the figure 2 it was found that the 70% of the potters aged between 40-70 and only 30% aged between 20-40. The figure reveals a very worrying picture as most of the potters are likely to

falls under the non productive age. The data could also reflect that since this activity in Larnai is being taken as a secondary option and possibly for cultural and historical perspectives therefore it was found that only the elderly were keen in continuing this activity till date.

From the study it has been found that Pottery in Larnai is currently function under the name of Seng Kynthei Pyrtuh pottery Society which they formed in 1983 with seven members which grew to 9 member and eventually to 14 members.

Socio-Economic Status: From the study, it was found that Potters in Larnai are mostly engaged in agriculture for their livelihood. Table 3 shows that family income of Potters ranges from 10,000-1, 20,000 annually. The data also reveals that about 42% of the Household are 30,000 to 60,000 and about 14% of the Potters were earning 10,000-30,000 of their annual income.

From the study it has reveals that this art of making pots and other clay items initially was their livelihood activity but recently they limit themselves as part time part time and mostly concentrate on participating in exhibition and fairs and making pottery when given orders by the buyers. Therefore pottery remains their secondary activity whereas Agriculture and Daily Labour are their main primary livelihood.

Figure 1: Educational Qualification

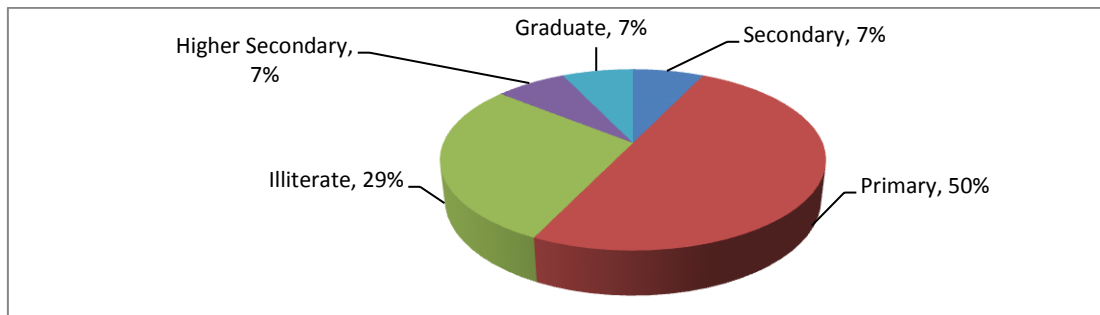


Figure 2: Age wise of Potters

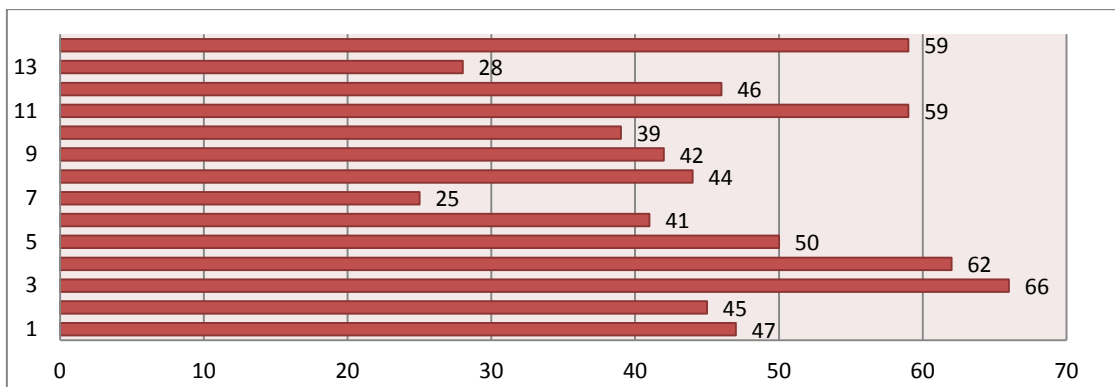
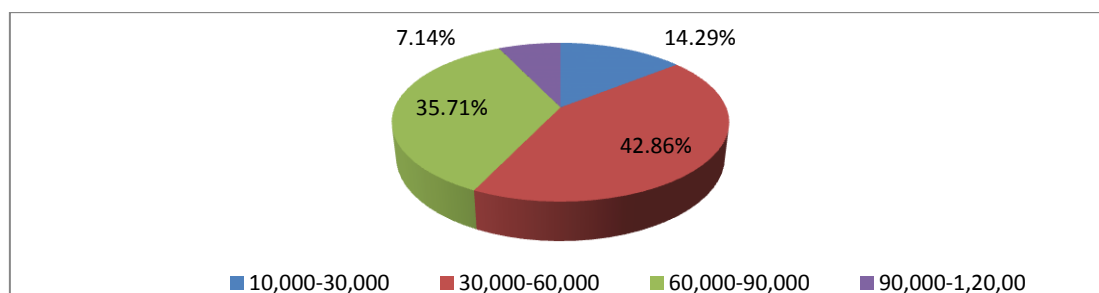


Figure 3: Annual Income of Potters



b. Manufacturing Process

The pottery making process in Larnai is divided into into six stages:

- 1) Clay procurement/ acquisition
- 2) Clay preparation
- 3) Pot making
- 4) Drying and surface finishing
- 5) Firing
- 6) Colouring

The most important raw material for pottery is clay. They use two types of clay from the sung valley known as *dewiong* and *dewkhluit*. Clay is procured once a year by involving a labour. The process of acquiring clay is very tedious job. For 1 truck load of Clay its takes about 3-4 week to collect. The raw materials has been sourced out from the Sung valley, Sung valley which falls within the borders of Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills is considered highly fertile area and it is believed that the black soil collected from the area is highly suitable for black pottery at same time culturally and religiously as well it has a great significance. The potters has the privilege from the ancient times to collect the black soil without paying any cost for the soil provided that during religious ceremonies whatever items are required for religious purposes by priest head(Doloi) of Nartiang village , the potters will have to made the items for him. From the findings, in Larnai soil are normally collected once a year and are carried by trucks and stored in their backyard.

The method of collecting black soil is very cumbersome it is very similar to the process of extracting mineral coal, the soil are normally need to be dug 4 to 5 feet deep than only the black soil would be visible hence the diggers normally dug up to 10 to 12 feet for bringing out the soil, apart from black soil the potters also collect a different kind of sand which are very important ingredients required during soil mixing , this black sand normally gives the stickiness to the mixture and also enhance durability of the lay items when fired. Other raw materials required are of 20 ton of fire wood per year.

Once the clay is received, the actual work begins. It is a long process, taking up days to complete.

Process 1: The raw material (i) the dew iong is mixed with dewkhluit and this mixture are pounded on a leather or wooden boar which is done by using heavy log known as synrei dungkhyndew in order to knead them in to clay duff. The purpose of mixing dewkhluit with dewbyrtha is minimising the brittleness of the materials. In the ratio of 1:1/4 i.e. approx. in 1 kg of black soil 1 quarter of black sand are mixed to get the desired composition for shaping the pots. This stage is the most difficult stages in the entire production stage.

Process 2: After pounding they separated pebbles and un-wanted materials from the soil and then are pounded again to get maximum lustre and silkiness once the dough is ready it again sorted by hand to get rid of small pebbles. The pounded clay is then roll in long cylindrical shape for half a meter each. ⁴

⁴ The fact about this process was given by Smt. Roilin Pyrtuh, Hilda Shadap and Pelina Pyrtuh.

Process 3: After preparing the clay duff it is Mawshohdiep by one hand and is mildly beaten, according to the shape required by using Siangda or the Siang. The neck and the belly part of the pot are made separately. The technique that is followed is to hold the Mawshohdap towards the interior to the outer wall which is then beaten by the *Siangda*, it is done to give secure hold for the potter. The half-finished parts of the pot are kept on a small wooden board for one day one night.

Process 4: In this step, wherever required the separate parts are put together and re-treated for the final shape. In this process, water is regularly used for wetting the *Mawshohdap* apart from that cloth pieces are frequently used for wetting the Siang. The process takes only 10-20 mins for one pot depending on the complexity of pots.

Process 5: The tedious procedure does not get over here. After the basic products are made, they have to be dried. But not under direct sun, as it may lead to minute fractures and result in easily breakable forms. They are left in an open space for days for the moisture to completely evaporate. In winter it takes three days and four-five days in summer. After the moisture content recede a piece of iron called the *Narkhut* which is used for polishing the product. The products were again sun dried/traditional fireplace for cooking for another 3-4 days.⁵

Process 6: The dried products are fired in a bonfire/open fire for 1-2 hrs. In winters for firing 40-50 pots its requires 60-70 number of fire-woods at a length of for 1 hours and in summer for the same amount of pots it take 2-3 hours for firing. The firing process adopted by the potters is very unique. A piece is ready to be fired after it has dried for several days, been burnished to a smooth red and dried for several more days. Like clay mixing, the firing process seems fairly imprecise to the untrained eye. Because the potters are so intimately connected with the craft, they can accurately sense the temperature of the fire and readiness of the clay at different steps of the process. The firing process can be broken down into a few different steps. During the first step, dried pots are placed in a circular arrangement like a pyramid. At this point, the pots are not in direct contact with the fire and are rather given a chance to warm up before the fire becomes more intense. This is an important step of the process because it allows the moisture of the items (unfired clay) to fully evaporate before the temperature increases; without this gradual increase in temperature, the clay items could more easily crack during the firing process. The second and third steps are most characteristic of the firing process. The second step fire wood is built up to completely cover the pots. Long logs are arranged around the pots and the fire is put on. After the pot is perfectly fired, pots are then immediately dipped into liquid sap made out of *myrica* or *sohlia bark*. The purpose of dipping in to the sap is to bring varnish hue and at the same time it has cementing capacity and finally the product is left to cool and is stored in dry place or ready to be sale.

c. Economics of Pottery:

Potters purchase around three tonnes of soil or a tractor full of earth for Rs 1000 per year. This lasts for one year. The economy runs well on its peak during winter season, on receiving order they work for around 6-7 hours a day. From the above table we can see that in a year the profit earns by the potters is Rs 44,000. However the profits earn by the potters is not at all very minimal. As pointed above, the artisan work in group therefore from this amount the annual income the potters earn

⁵Facts about this process were given by the potters of Larnai-Hilda Shadap, Pelina Pyrtuh, Roilin Shadap.

from this activity is as low as Rs. 3,200. All expenditure is taken from the group saving and on getting the money they put back in their saving. Only the members who went for the particular fair received the money at a very nominal amount. None of the potters were able to get any income from the art and only those who want to do it on their own are able to earn a livelihood. Except during training were they were give stipend that is the only time they are getting income directly from this art.

Table 1: Showing the average economics of Pottery

PARTICULARS	QUANTITY	UNIT PRICE (RS.)	TOTAL (RS.)
INCOME			
Sale of Wein	200	350	70,000
Sale of Pots for cooking (big)	20	500	10,000
Sale of Pots for cooking (small)	30	150	4,500
Sale of Cup and saucers	60	50	3,000
Sale of rituals Pots	10	1000	10,000
Sale of Other Decoratives pieces	30	200	6,000
Total Income			1,03,500
EXPENDITURE			
Fixed Cost			
Clay-Dewiong	1 Truck		Free of Cost
Clay Dewkhluit	10 bags of 50 kg		Free of Cost
Transpotation cost for Clay	LS		10,000
Myrica Barks			1500
Firewood			13,000
Planks for Tools			1,000
Cow hide	5	1000	5,000
Labour charge for one person for two months	60	400	24,000
Transportation cost for Products	LS		5,000
Total Expenditure			59,500
Profit ability: Profit/(Loss) = Revenue – Expenditure			
Revenue			1,03,500
Expenditure			59,500
Profit/(Loss) = Revenue – Expenditure			44,000

d. Markets and Value Chain:

The local names of the pots are *Kshu um*, *Kshu Vein*, *Kshu Maloi* *Tapmoh Kshu*. Apart from these they also produce lids and other small sized pots for ritual purposes. They use to sell these products to the nearby market either directly or through local trader. Sometimes the villagers directly buy the potteries form them. The prices of the potteries are fixed by the potters However prices of different product have been shown in the following Table 1 (Prices are recorded as of April 2016).

Larnai products consist of various types of pots and useable products. Initially they only produce few selective items, but with continuous training and exposure the artists began the production of other

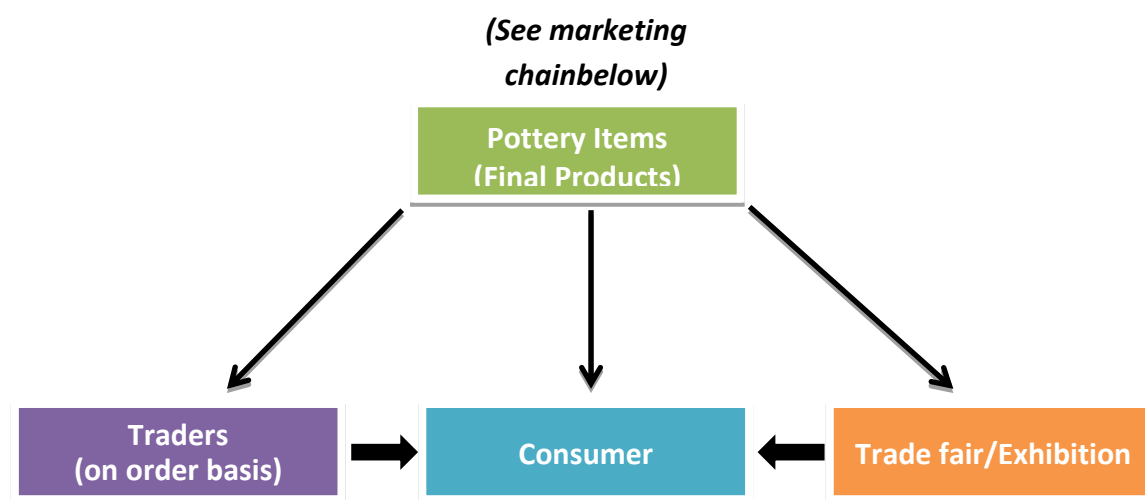
shapes which were decorative in nature. The products of Larnai is no longer restricted to Jowai but have penetrated other districts of Meghalaya and even to Mumbai. The characteristic feature of this art in Larnai is that all products were handmade without the use of a wheel. Though this art originate from Larnai but nowadays potters were undertaking this activity only as a part time activity and mostly for exhibitions and on order basis.

Table 2: Price list of Black clay items

S. No.	Item	Uses	Price sold by Potters
1	Wein	Preparing pu-tharo, pu-maloi	350/-
2	Cups and plate's	Tea serving	50/-
3	Jug	Water serving	250/-
4	Water heating utensils	Bathing new born babies, and lactating mothers	1000/-
5	Decorative item	Show case	80-100/-
6	Cooking Pots (Small & Big)	Cooking Purposes	150 Small 500 Big

The pottery artisans of Larnai market their product from their own houses and since its being undertaking as a part time activity therefore there is no scope for selling their products in weekly market. They make their products on order basis or in any exhibit held in the state.

Figure 4: The marketing chain of the pottery in Larnai is limited to consumer and few traders



In Larnai, the potters do put their effort in designing their items in whichever knowledge and instinct they feel will match with the product. This crude method value addition of the products gives an impression that the Potters realise the important of design which will further enhance the face value and appearances of the products.

Similarly it was also found that the society does not have any proper packaging material, except they simple used a newspaper or paddy straw for ensuring zero damage during transportation.

Potentiality of scaling up

- From the discussion with the youth it has been found that many youth have expressed potentiality of the activity both traditionally and culturally, but they are not able to take up this activity due to the following reasons.

- The activity demand high physical work
- Not sure about the sustainability of the activity in terms of competition from others finished products.
- Better job opportunities in the market.
- Not getting the recognition or respect as compared to other profession.

Though some youth are perplexing of taking up pottery activity as one of their profession there are other sections of the youth in Larnai who are excited about taking up Black pottery and currently they have undergoing training at the village level to learn the trade in spite the fact that they do not have any clear vision on how to convert it into a major livelihood activity but with a hope that through this trade it can act as additional income for the family in the future.

- From the discussion with other villagers it has been found that majority of the household surveyed expressed their eagerness to learn and start this activity. They realise the potential of this trade both economically and culturally. Many women through the interview have express that they want to learn art of making pots. It has also been found that initially many household are involved into this activity earlier but now they have currently stop undertaking this activity because it's a strenuous job and the which cost involved for procurement of raw materials. Therefore there is a high scope of scaling up this activity but accordingly it has to see the various factors before up-scaling it.

Constraints

Pottery is an art of making different objects by carefully moulding clay. The sheer hard work they put and the skills through which they design those very pots are magnificent. But their fate seems to be sailing in choppy waters as most of the industries are shut and most of the craftsmen are either unemployed or paid too little. It feels perplexing to see their plight today as they used to be a major revenue generator in the country and as the modernization of the nation began they started losing their sheen. As the modern ways of plastic made crafts forayed into our household people living in urban areas started relying on them and the traditional handicrafts lost their cluster. People don't recognize the haphazard of these artificial products all they care is about wealth.⁶

Though the Black pottery originates from Larnai but the current situation of the activity has become stagnant over the years. Some of the major constraint s the potters are facing are as follows:-

General constraints of Groups/Society:

Finding from the survey reveals that the society has not progress despite its 33 years of its journey. Though as pointed above the objective of the society was formed solely for Black pottery but in reality the society remain stagnant and non-progressive due to the following.

- **Regulation and organisational system**:-System of functioning of the society is very rigid. The free entry of any residence of Larnai to this society is very selective. From the interaction with the villagers it has been found that their entry into the society is not welcoming and some have expressed that the system of functioning of the society have restrict many interested women from the village to join the society.

⁶International Recognized Multidisciplinary Research Journal ISSN No : 2230-7850 Impact Factor : 4.1625 (UIF) [Yr. 2014

- **Lack of financial transparency:** As discussed with individual potters it has been found that many has expressed their concern over the issues of transparency with regards to inflow and outflow of money. When probe further about the amount of saving the groups have in their bank account, none of the members were able to reveal the total saving of the group so far. Though during the discussion some express that they could not recall but majority were alien to the amount collected so far. Only few selected members were able to get the exact knowledge about financial transaction.
- **Sharing of benefits:-** As pointed in the earlier section that the groups were undertaking this activity for exhibitions and order basis only here a very interesting findings is found that though for the expenses for entire production process till transportation and marketing al the groups is pooled and whereby all members of the group have to come and be involved in the manufacturing process, the profit received after selling the products is put into the groups saving and a nominal amount is given to those who went market the product. Though the practice of putting the money into the group saving is a good exercise but as expressed by the potters the sharing of profits is not followed. Therefore this art to them becomes a part time they were not able to get any income from the time and energy they put together in bring the clay into a wonderful products.
- **Leadership role:** The Pyrtuh clan was told to have formed this group and they have been into this for decades. Thus it has been found that leadership is circulating only among the Pyrtuh. Other member does not have any chance of taking a leadership position. From the study it has been found that since its inception there is a practice for changing of Office bearer but as pointed earlier it has been restricted to Pyrtuh clan only. Those not belong to the Pyrtuh clan express their concern that they were look as subordinates and they have no say in the decision making process. Their role is limited to just making the pottery items, attending meetings and trainings.
- **Accounting and inventory:** The accounting system of the groups is very poor. There is no proper records maintain regarding the inflow and outflow of money. It has been found that when people came to purchase the items from their doorstep the money was in fact kept into their pockets. Those types of earnings were not accounted and the profit is gone to a few members only as they do maintain any inventory of their products.
- **Title:-** The title of the society was given based on the believed that they were the clan who first started this society but from the discussion with the villagers it has been found that in Larnai initially many household were involved in pottery making in their own individual household level. It is Pyrtuh clan who realised the need for conserving and take this forward to the mainstream for promotion. Therefore this led to the formation of the society and therefore they have titled it in a way to showcase the clan initiatives. This is also another setback for the society from expanding its members. From the focus group discussion it has been found that many women wants to join the group but what restricts them is the title of the society which reflects only the work done by the particular clan. Could it be in the formed of a general name many household would have joined the society.

Other Constraints faced by potters

- **Constraints at procurement level**
 - Availability of Clay- Clay as inputs is the main ingredient of pottery. Clay normally sits beneath the earth up-to a minimum of 10 ft. to 20 ft. maximum. From the survey it had

been observed that for obtaining one truck load of Black clay 300-400 Basket (*Khoh*) it takes about one two-three weeks. Since the clay sit in patches and layers, therefore they have to keep shifting from one area to the other, therefore it becomes very difficult to extract the clay. As the area is under the *Doloi* using of JCB or modern extracting machines is strictly prohibited as it may impact the nearby land of private individuals.

- High Cost of procuring Black Clay: The cost of procuring the Clay and firewood had been perceived as the major constraint in pottery activity. As mentioned above potters had to hire a daily labour for procuring the clay and firewood. Since for procuring of these raw materials it takes days and weeks, therefore per day labour charges will also increase accordingly. Due to high transportation cost coupled with labour charge has restricted many interested individual from undertaking this activity.
 - Though the valley falls under the lookout of the *Doloi*, there are certain areas which are paddy field and they belong to the private individual. Therefore chances of encroachment by default are very high.
- **Constraints At production level**
 - Non- availability of a proper work station has been perceived by the potters as a constraint especially during rainy season. The direct impacts of it affect the production of pottery items which decline as there is no work place. This problem magnifies more during rainy season. As the pottery making is very sensitive a small piece of stone get accumulated to the clay there is a high tendency that the items will cracks when fired. The situation is worse during windy season since they have to work in the open and the possibility of dust and stone to get accumulated into the clay during the pounding process and making process is very high.
 - Lack of drying facilities: The potters were facing a crucial problem with regards to drying the items. Since pottery items requires more days for drying the moisture content therefore many days were involved in drying as they don't have any drying facilities and this impact the total production. The situation aggravates more during raining season.
 - Lack of storage facilities: Another constraint faced by the pottery is the lack of storage facilities for the finished products. About 3% of the products are damage either due to storage facilities.
 - Firing Process: The firing process adopted by the potters is very primitive and unsustainable. Huge quantity of woods is required for firing a dozens of pottery items. As it is being fired in the open air the heat is not trapped properly and in the process the pots are required to fire for long hours. Similarly this method of firing increases the probable of causalities to happen. The firing method is also not eco-friendly and lots of smoke is released out to the atmosphere. There is no technology used for shifting the products from the fire. They only used the traditional tools called "nap" which is very risky and prone to burnt
- Strenuous and labour intensive and health Issues: This art work requires lots of physical of energy, the men have very limited role in the activity, whereas women plays a major role in the activity due to which they have to face all the hardship in the trade. Since the pots are shaped by hands, therefore women had to stand to shape the pots. It is found that women were complaining of suffering from acute back pain, shoulder and headache. The women

were also complaining of having a breathing problem since they have to stand for hours around the fire during the firing process.

Due to its strenuous work the productivity and the quality of the product are affected.

- **Constraints Markets and transportation:**

A good market for the products of pottery industry is important to promote the well-being of the artisans or small entrepreneurs. But marketing in this field has certain limitations. Firstly, due to the absence of any co-operative marketing organisations or government agency in sufficiently large numbers in most of the unit, selling of the finished products through middlemen has been a dominant feature. Secondly, the demand for the various products of these industries is largely seasonal and limited to the locality as majority of their products are substandard and do not conform to the required specifications. Thirdly, the artisan are not able to diversify their product, but it is limiting to only one or two items, where as other product are not in demand on the regular basis since there is mechanism to test the quality of the product. The potters have been quoting the price of the material by adjustment and they have no standardized system of putting the price on the item which again creates doubt whether they are able make any genuine profit or not.

- **Constraints Current technology**

Modern technology: Access to technology to ease of their work load is not available. some members did undergo some training but it did not help them much since they were not able to get excess to the kind of materials and technology, but still they are able to use some training technique they have learned but were not able to produce much improvement in the quality of the product, hence despite of having good potentiality the popularity of the trade is dwindling. From the study it has reveal that in Larnai throughout the whole process of pottery making there is no division of labour between male and female potters. Only during soil collection male folks take active part and that through on wages.

The art of making pottery has lost its place in modern times, due to lack of basic technology and the amount of energy that needs to put in makes the activity cumbersome and discourages others to take up the art actively.

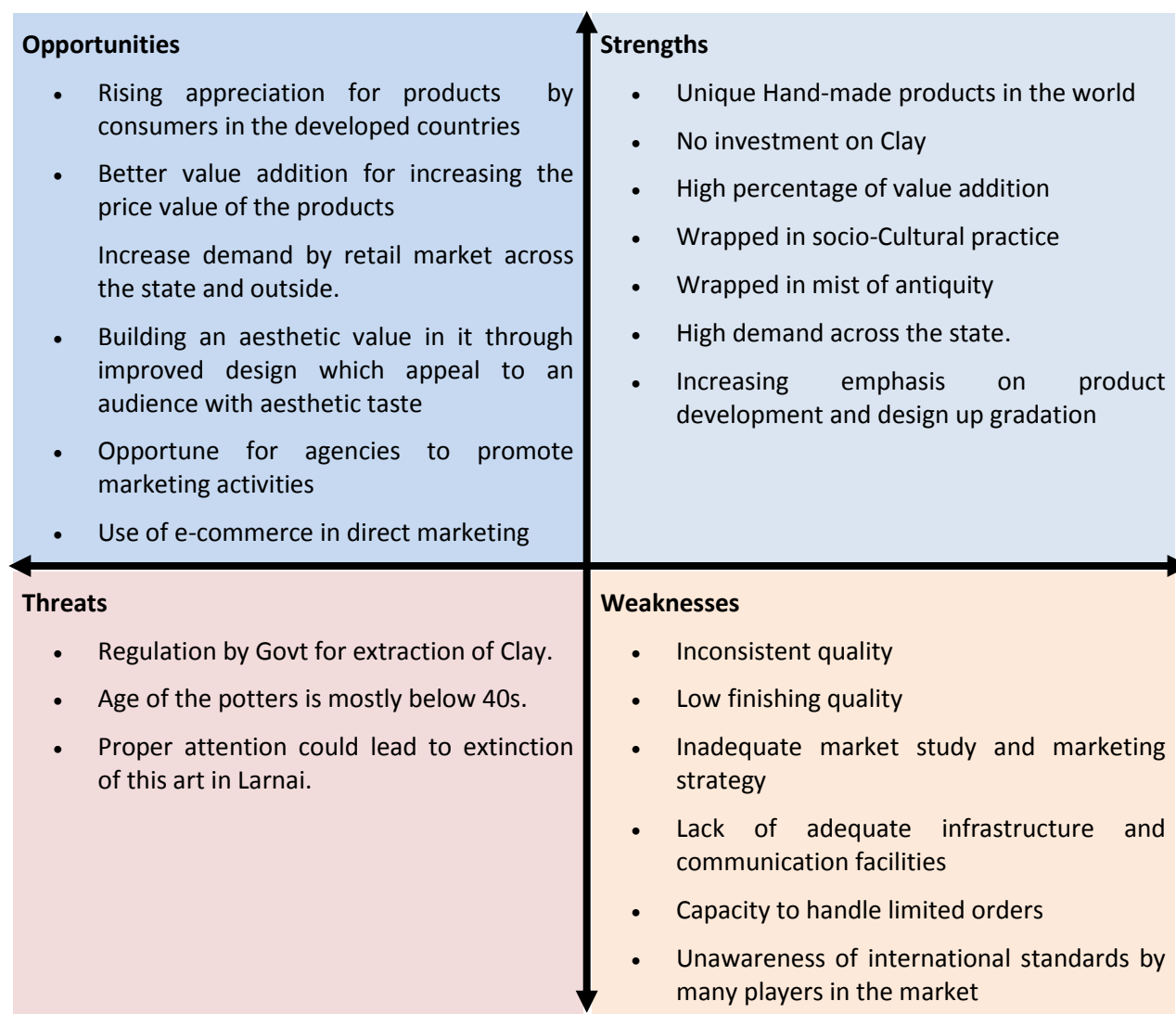
Stakeholders involves: Potters have received numerous trainings and exposure visits outside the state for promoting this activity for still up-gradation, technology know how improve production. These training institutes have been conducting training from time to time to improve their production, Shillong design.

Besides training they were also exposed to exposure visit in Bangalore and Himachal in turn of education the modern art of Black pottery. These agencies home help building their skills and have also revived back the flame of this art which was seen to have ignited start extinguish. Such agencies should keep on handholding there from time to time.

Training were conducted mostly on field and in a stuck of 1 week – 4 week to one month.

The training institution have also provided the potters claim mould to help them in designing new product and also help in reducing the timing for shaping the clay items.

SWOT Analysis of Pottery in Larnai



Recommendation

The recommendations below are as per their immediate attention required.

Immediate point of intervention for the group:

1. Strengthening the existing groups. The group need to be strengthened on all sides in order improve their functioning system. They need constant follow up and training about the functioning of groups need to be trained. There is a good prospects if the group id changed it to a general name say “Larnai Potters” this will attract more membership in the group and potential for converting it into a cooperatives societies. The group also needs to be flexible in term of opening its membership to male member of the village. A brainstorming session for including male members in the groups to understand the possibility and the role a male member will played in the procurement of raw materials. This will help the group from hiring a labour from outside which is very expensive. In this way the division of labour is also divided effectively. Secondly the management system needs to be reorganised- all members should be allowed to play the role of an office bearer. Leadership responsibility should be shared among all the members other than the clan itself. Regular training and capacity building on

understanding group dynamics should be conducted from time to time to further strengthened the groups.

2. **Transparency in Financial management:** and Better inventory management Trainings on financial management is the utmost requirement for the groups. Trainings on inventory of the each product is crucial to ensure transparency among the members. The Profits sharing system among the members needs to change, as they are involved in collectives for production therefore profits after sales should be shared equally among the member for the collective time and labour put forth in making any products. This will also act as an additional source of livelihood for potters. On realising the income received from it, this will slowly encourage the potters to start taking it more seriously as a major source of income.

Constant follow-up and linking them with various government programmes is imperative for availing financial assistance or credit facilities in the long run.

Immediate point of intervention for promoting Black Pottery in Larnai:

- a. **Technological innovation for removing drudgery:** This should be the first point of intervention. In this stage innovative technology can be developed which will focus on removing the hard labour, amount of time and amount of labour spend for production stage and also ensuring economies of scale. There is a lot of scope for technological development in this activity. But the technology developed should not hamper the uniqueness of this activity. In fact innovative technology should focus on reducing the time efforts and labour used for pounding the clay. A similar low cost technology could be developed for taking into account the proportion of clay components required for making a quantity of products. This not only ensure the authenticity of the products but also the to reduce the percentage of loss due to cracks when fired which is caused due to unequal proportion of mixing the clay. Another joint technology could also be developed for detecting and separation of pebble and unwanted particles from the missed clay. This will reduce the time and strain on women potters.

An innovative technology for Firing and Drying of Clay products is the crucial need of the hour. This can be designed in collaborations with Technical research institute for drying cum firing purposes. There is also an urgent need improving their primitive tools for getting in a fine finished pottery products. Constant research on how the firing process can be modernised as done in Ukhrl district of Manipur whereby a low cost techniques was adopted by the Tangkhul potters in Manipur who mould an attractive range of kitchenware as well as décor items. The all-black Lori Ham, a centuries-old utilitarian craft, appears minimalist, quite in sync with new age urban demands and lends a timeless quality to it. The addition of cane to the earthenware has given it a further designer look.

A thorough research work needs to be carried on for technology development. For this to happen a strong collaboration and exchange of ideas among the Technical institute both within and outside the state and like- minded people deem essential for this innovation to happen.

However these technologies developed should be easily applicable and accessible to the potters.

- a. **Work station/Shed:** Proper working station to reduce the long standing hours for shaping the pots which have adversely affect their health conditions of the potters. This will reduce the drudgery on women who are facing currently in this activity. Moreover a common working station is the urgent requirement of the potters. Convergence efforts from the village council and NREGA schemes with a 10% share from the potters to construct a scientific working place

for the potters with collaboration for ideas and suggestions from Institute within and outside the state.

- b. Skill formation and training:** With the development of technology, skill formation and training cannot be ignored. Potters need to be provided with skill enhancement training on designed for increasing the price vale of the products. Collaboration with Department of Design with various well known technical institutes in the country as being done on Handicraft products under a brand name *Skhen* by the Department of Design, IIT Guwahati. Similar initiatives can be opted for promoting of design which will add more value to the products. Skills enhancement is another the need of the hour for taking this activity to another level for marketing
- c. Value addition:** Value addition is one of the crucial components that could be promoted. Value addition in terms of Packaging, a special logo- which imprints their uniqueness could be promoted. This will not only add more economic value to their products but also attract better market opportunities both at the local and national Level.
- d. Marketing and support:** Government should play a leading role in extending marketing support for their products. The support provided need to be more aggressive and regular. A Marketing channel needs to be developed by Established a link with local retailer, Established an E-commerce, Home decorators agency.

This stagnant art work in Larnai needs to be revived back and made it attractive to younger generation. One example is the Angretta Pottery which is in Palampur in Himachal Pradesh. It was too facing a similar situation but was revived. Now large number of members from the village is also taking up this activity. Similarly NGOs like the popular Lori Ham Entrepreneur Foundation of Nungbi Khullen village has helped in promoting Black Pottery in Manipur with smart marketing as well as a dash of creativity has provided the products a considerably worthy plank.

Future Prospect of Black Pottery in LARNAI.

1. Awareness among the youth for taking up this activity.
2. Converting Larnai into a Pottery Village for promoting Tourism.
3. Export to newer market
4. Establishment of attractive show rooms
5. Government initiatives for promoting this activity.
6. Eco-friendly alternative Technology development

Conclusion

Pottery is Larnai has good potential for growing. As suggested by one of the Famous artist of the state despite the uniqueness of this art there is a need to promote and encouraging youths to become entrepreneur and supporting them in developing design and quality, which would be one of the livelihood opportunities for the youth.

There is also a good scope of converting Larnai as pottery village where every artisans house would have a private working shed cum exhibition corner which could be linked to tourism activity where tourist from far and wide could visit the place experience the unique art .

It can also be promoted as a festival like mass cooking of pots which can be promoted as a “THANG KHCHU” festival, since oranges grow very well in the Larnai village it can also be promoted as an orange festival during mass harvesting.

However, it is important to address all their constraints to be able to sustain Black Pottery in Meghalaya. Appropriate development policy using experiments and new technologies for pottery production can help to preserve and conserve biodiversity and to improve economic conditions of traditional potters. This can lead to evolution and overall development of the potters and their craft.

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