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SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC WELFARE AND INITIATIVES

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SOCIO - ECONOMIC STATUS OF KUMMARI (THE POTTER) IN TELUGU STATES – A STUDY



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Introduction

Social phenomena have never been static. It goes on transforming itself based on the 'happenings' in history. Catching these 'happening' and explaining the casual relations for the same has been the primary responsibility of a social scientist in his research. The present study is an attempt undertaken on a moderate scale to study the issues relating to select OBC Artisans Groups in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh States.

During analysis, it has been found in the whole range of studies on the socio-economic history and development, the dominant concern of Historians, Sociologists Social Anthropologists and other Social Scientists has been with the study of agrarian social structure. They have focused particularly on the landlords, peasant proprietors, tenants, and moneylenders that were undergoing rearrangements and readjustments under the changing conditions. However, the artisans or the handicraftsmen also constitute a major segment of the population involved in production and distribution and had much to do with these 'agrarian actors' in their day-to-day operations and occupational activity. These artisan groups specializing in their inherited skills and working in family groups or as individuals in villages and towns and cities forming almost half of the society have been the last to receive serious attention from historians and other social scientists.

In the traditional socio-economic set-up, the artisans were an integral part of the village society. Their manufacturing activity and agricultural production were complementary to each other. They manufactured agricultural implements, clothes,

household utensils, furniture, housing material and various other Products used by the people in their daily life and provided services and in return received a certain share of crops under the arrangement synonymous with the traditional system 'Jajmani' or some other kind of informal socio-economic arrangement of a dominant-dependent mode.

Both in the Pre-Independence and during Post-Independence Periods for long, the manufacturing activity of the artisans was important for the sustenance of both rural and urban economies as well. The artisans were identified by their castes corresponding to their inherited skills. In the changed socio-economic conditions the complimentary between the manufacturing activity in villages and processes of agricultural production was disrupted and new 'forces' entered the system to displace the traditional 'artisans' who were later not much involved in the production and distribution of services and goods. This was followed by forced occupational mobility and changes in the social and economic conditions among the artisan castes which lead to the emergence of a new pattern of social relations among the artisan castes themselves mostly not to their advantage.

Studies so far undertaken, especially on artisans were piecemeal and cover micro-level situations depicting dispersed phenomena. Regional variations are plenty and precisely due to this whatever information is available may not be able to provide a national perspective. Gaps persist but, on some count, especially in the absence of studies, the available studies still constitute a rich source of information. These studies as found do not wholly analyze the impact of various developments that have taken place affecting different sections of Indian society and noted the response of the people. Nor do these studies present an integrated picture of social and economic change being promoted under different regimes in the past and present. They are, however, useful in presenting an overview of the general social and economic conditions of society and the changing pattern of the socio-cultural life of various sections of society.

In the absence of studies undertaken by academics, the census reports however remain the most important source of information on the artisan castes and professions. Village surveys conducted as part of Census Studies also throw some light on the physical and occupational mobility among the artisans. Further, by putting together the information provided in the gazetteers, it is possible to get a fair picture of the economic conditions of the artisans in the traditional set-up, especially in the case of the Pre-Independence Period. Census studies in the post-independent period however could not go deep as it was done earlier. There have been several methodological problems as well as the non-comparability of the data, which is a serious difficulty that we face while using the Census returns. 'Even where it is possible to reconcile all definitional differences between the 'Census' periods it is almost impossible to compare the data provided in one census report with that given in another. The discrepancies in figures and the lack of uniform criteria for classification notwithstanding, the variety of information provided by the Census and other official reports on the artisans is

invaluable. Based on this information, supplemented by non-government sources, fieldwork, and oral evidence, it has been considered possible to identify the trends and arrive at some broad generalizations about the changing social relationships consequent upon the changes in the socio-economic condition of the artisans in Southern India.

In the traditional socio-economic setup artisans was an integral part of the village society. They were all identified by their castes corresponding to their inherited skills. Most of the artisans for centuries were concentrated in the countryside of the well-cultivated and more populous areas including towns. The concentration of the artisans in the agriculturally well-developed areas was obviously due to their usefulness and external support in all sorts of agriculture operations from sowing to reaping and selling of the crop. The artisans provided the services and furnished agricultural implements to the village society according to their specialized skills under some sort of social-contract arrangement and shared with the land owners' mutual obligations for work and payment. Alongside they had fixed duties assigned by tradition.

The remuneration of artisans was determined by local customs and they were paid in kind by a fixed share of the produce from the land. The blacksmiths, Carpenters and potters were paid at almost the same rates. They were also allowed to have the last pickings of agricultural products.

On social occasions, like marriages and births, the artisans made ritual accessories for their patrons for which they were entitled to a fixed fee. Clothes and ornaments were furnished by the weavers and goldsmiths. The artisans, barring the goldsmiths perhaps, were employed during the sowing and reaping seasons of the harvest as field labourers. They were paid separately for serving in their non-professional capacity for the weeding, reaping, threshing, sifting, and stacking of the crop.

The artisans barely subsisted on the meagre payments received for performing various professional and non-professional services. They were the first victims of any failure in crops caused by famines. Floods, Droughts, or Epidemics. Being the poorest and living a hand-to-mouth existence they did not have the means to tide over the difficult phases. The chances of an average artisan to supplement his income by working outside the village or by supplying goods to the neighbouring towns and villages too were not many. The artisans, thus, depended upon the agriculturists who invariably belong to Upper Caste and had an upper hand in the traditional economic and social relationships in the village.

The artisans, particularly in large villages and in towns and cities, were expected to live within their separate residential enclosures which were Known according to their castes, such as Chakaliwada, Mangaliwada, Kurmawada, Kummariwada etc., Even when the artisans understood their low economic level and corresponding social status was because they occupy a lower position in the caste hierarchy of the Upper Castes and the nature of their occupational dependency, they continued to work in the

same capacities because the system guaranteed them a living. Perhaps because the landowning castes also would not easily allow them to move outside of their rule, there had been very few openings for the artisans outside the traditional relationships.

Considerable inroads into the traditional socio-economic set-up were made within a few decades of British rule. With the extension of agriculture and its increasing commercialization—supported by the development of the means of communications—the villages were more effectively integrated with markets within and outside their place of work. Under new conditions, the agriculturists produced for sale in the cash market. By the 1920s, market purposes dominated the nature of cultivation in all the well-developed agriculture regions. At the same time, greater interactions between the urban and rural areas facilitated the infiltration of factory-made goods and mill-made cloth into villages hitting directly the income of village artisans.

The unity and complementarity between agricultural production and artisanal production in villages was thus disrupted and changes in social and professional relationships between the artisans and agriculturists became its natural corollary. The slackening of the age-old economic relations, however, was slow. From the regular exchange of services paid at each harvest, it gradually moved towards the curtailment of their traditional support followed by its payment in cash and finally by the isolated exchange without any other obligation. With the decline in their regular income, the artisans were pushed out of their traditional socio-economic order to find 'new opportunities' outside. The new opportunities ——educational, economic and political——which were supposed to be caste—free, at least in theory, helped to some extent some of the enterprising individuals and Kingroups among the artisan's castes to pull out of their state of uncertainty and traditional bondage. But this has been confined to certain limited groups of people. Various developments like the colonization of land in areas under the canal system, extension of cultivation, development of the means of communications, commercialization of agriculture, growth of industry and service sector and the spread of literacy etc., were supposed to provide them with new avenues of employment. Those artisan castes of some of the better-off families who could get their children educated and shift to other avenues like business and industry could reap the benefits of change in the early stages. By the turn of the 20th century, the percentage of the 'actually working' artisans who had abandoned their traditional occupations became rather significant. And the situation during the later period continues to aggravate. There was not much change during the post-independence period as there was little support they could get from government agencies as they were left to their fate of the hanging circumstances which led to further deterioration of their conditions. The policies that evolved from time to time made a negative impact on their lives. During the LPG (the 1990s) era, the situation is further worsened as multinational companies entered every field of social life while destroying the traditional artisan production and service structures.

The change of occupations by the artisans in the early stages was thus largely towards agriculture and later towards an industry where they could employ their skills and energies more effectively and advantageously. These changes, however, did not appreciably help them to improve their social situation. They continued to be evaluated concerning their caste, which remained the source of frustration and discontent. The increasing educational opportunities however provided a section of the artisans another avenue for change to the disoriented and discontented artisans.

Occupational mobility among the artisan's castes brought them face-to-face with new situations in their social relationships with other castes as well as within their castes, the mobile artisans wanted to get out of the rut of social disabilities imposed on them for centuries. However, their level of mobility is limited except in the case of Padmashalis who moved to Gujarat, Maharashtra and other places and joined cotton mills. Those who shifted totally from their occupation in search of new avenues went too far off places including Gulf Countries while depending on physical labour. Those who had improved their socio-economic position through regular income tried to achieve a higher social status for themselves by borrowing customs, manners and eating habits of the groups traditionally superior to themselves. In the process, they tended to move out of the localities they earlier lived in and to even disassociate themselves from the parent exogamous or kin group. Their success, however, depended on the response of the higher-evaluated caste groups. The attitudes of the upper castes particularly the landowning castes in villages were generally repulsive. They discouraged the movement of the lower castes enter their occupational sanctuary.

Of those who changed their professions through education and other training a couple of them become land owners, teachers, lawyers, clerks, and officers who were however, unable to get recognition commensurate with their new occupations and improved economic conditions. This situation obliged the lower castes in general and the artisan castes, to seek to transform the existing norms of social interaction through collective mobilization.

Some of these developments that have taken place are found in 'case studies' especially collected for this purpose as part of the study. Case Studies presented herein are detailed perceptions of connected processes in individual as well as collective experiences of select kin-based groups of artisans chosen for the study.

They contain cases, and instances of theoretical principles. Not every case needsto be typical, but 'ideal-typical' cases sometimes provide particularly 'apt illustrations. They discuss particularities; including individuals rather than merely the abstracted roles of, for example, spouses. They carefully follow events such as those proceeding events, particular strikes or particular development schemes before generalizing about incompatible roles, causes of conflict or achievable policies, data transcend analysis, and inviting alternative interpretation. They are frequently socially problem oriented.

Disputes are analyzed long before they come to court-if they ever do. Case studies unearth processes that lead to some activities being labelled as social problems but of little public interest. Case studies demonstrate the principle that issues alter as different groups adopt them.

The present volume focuses its attention on Case Studies and Profiles of select Artisan Communities and Individuals. The objective of presenting Case Studies and Profiles is to narrate 'exclusive phenomena' of the environment of artisans where they live and make their living, the interpersonal relationship, the changes that are taking place affecting their lives and the actual problems they are met with and the suggestions offered by them for their readdressed.

Keeping in view the several deficiencies that exist in the available data and with all limitations, the present study attempts to collect field-level data on Kummari artisan groups found in both rural and urban areas. The main purpose was to analyze the socio-economic and work situation of the select artisans and present the 'statuses of these groups based on field information.

This artisan group chosen for field studies were drawn from both rural and urban areas, covering a sample selected from six Mandals and two Districts of Telangana State and four Mandals and two Districts of Andhra Pradesh State. The sample includes both male and female respondents chosen conveniently on a random basis.

Demographic Profile of the Kummari Community

The Kummara or Kumhar are potters who make earthen vessels, water pots, decorative homewares, toys and idols of gods and goddesses. The name Kumhar denotes a maker of pots and pitchers or someone who creates. They are an integral part of Indian society because their creations are an integral part of an Indian's daily life rituals.

They make idols, statues of famous people and folk deities and animals. They can be found at local markets selling their wares on most days. They have started using terracotta instead of red clay as it can be painted and is less fragile.

One of the largest castes, they are reportedly spread across 212 districts of India, predominantly in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, parts of Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. They are known by different names in each state. In Madhya Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh, they are listed as a scheduled caste (previously called untouchables.) They do not consider themselves as such.

The Kummara are a landless community that continues in their traditional occupation as potters, with some engaged in animal husbandry and crop farming on a share-cropping basis. Some work as masons and manual labour for a daily wage.

When we compare the accounts of 19th and early 20th-century ethnographers, we can see that Kummara's traditional occupation has diversified considerably. In addition, there has been a devolving of subgroups and an increasing identity consciousness across states.

The literacy rate is very low and child labour is common. Response to developmental aid is mixed – they are encouraged to educate their children, but boys are favoured over girls and the dropout rate is high due to social and economic reasons.

The Kumaris are predominantly Hindu. Although quite low in the Hindu caste hierarchy, they have access to all the sacred shrines of pilgrimage for Hindus. Families may choose to give importance to a deity. All Hindu workmen, including the Kummara, regard the tools of their trade as the cause of their prosperity and worship them as such.

India was home to some of the earliest knowledge of pot-making in the world. Pot making was well-advanced by the time of the Indus Valley Civilization, which existed much before the Aryans invaded India. Who developed that knowledge of pot making? As of now, there are castes and communities which possess very advanced knowledge of pot making in the Indian villages. Such possessors of pot-making technology are known as the Kumaris in the Telugu region. Similar castes exist in all other states.

The pot-making process on the wheel involves several stages. The first stage is of converting the soil into clay by mixing in proper ratios of soft soil, ash or sawdust and soft sand. This mixture is worked out by adding the necessary amount of water as the mixture is crushed under human feet. Once the clay is ready, the pot maker places it on the wheel specifically constructed with the combined knowledge system of the potter, the ironsmith and the carpenter. This wheel stands on a wooden (in the Telugu region they use Sandra wood to make the support of the wheel) rotator fixed on a marble stone which has a round hole. The potter keeps on applying greasy oil on the wooden support that keeps the movement of the wheel smooth.

The clay placed on such a fast-running wheel gets pressed with the fingertips into an initial shape called the niluvu. At this stage, the artful operation of the fingers and nails of the potter plays a crucial role. The potter also uses a wet cloth as an instrument to work out a well-designed mouth of the pot. Even to carve out the curls and chains at the mouth of the pot, the potter only uses his nails.

This handwork involves skilful handling of the wooden slate, a round stone and dry ash. From this stage, women to enter the process of shaping the pot. Many women are experts in this operation. Depending on the size of the pot that a given niluvu can produce, the potter uses slate, stone, and ash to blow up its middle part and shape up its base.

The third stage is that of burning all the dry pots in a specific place called the Kummariyaamu (in the Telugu region), which accommodates hundreds of pots. After the pots are arranged, the yaamu is covered with mud so that the heat generated by creating a huge fire in the hearth at the bottom of the yaamu is absorbed into the pots.

After the pots get burnt to a particular level of heat, the vaamu is allowed to cool down gradually so that the pot becomes stronger and more stable and can be used for all kinds of purposes-cooking, preserving water, oil, grain, and so on.

Thus, the products produced by the potter have always been near and dear to the daily life of the rural as well as urban people. To examine more details the present study attempts to conduct a field study to collect information relating to the socio-economic and work situation of the potters and analyze the process of their transformation over the years.

Sample and Size of Family of Respondents

The data indicates that out of 189 respondents chosen for the study, 65% (123) belong to urban areas, and 34.9% (66) belong to rural areas. The age-group details of urban area respondents indicate that 23.8% belong to the 46-55 age group, while 19% belong to the 56-65 age group, 14.2% belong to the 36-45 age group, 4.7% belong to the 26-35 age group and 1.5% belong to the age group upto 25 years. The data shows that most of the respondents belong to the middle and above middle-aged category.

Regard to the rural background, 15.8% of the respondents belong to the 56-65 age group and was followed by the age group '66 and above' with 7.9%, 6.3% belong to the 46.55 age group, 4.7% were of 26-35 age group and 1.5% each belong to 26 and above and 36-45 age groups respectively.

It may be found in rural and urban areas that the size of 30.1% of family members of the respondents comes to four members each, while 20.6% were of two-member families, and 19% of respondents had six and above family members. 12.7% of families were of three members each and 1.58% is found to be single-member families. Thus, predominantly the sample constitutes the middle and above middle-aged, drawn from both rural and urban areas.

Education of the Family Members

Out of the total 552 members in the families of 189 respondents, 35.8% were illiterates, 20.8% of members of the families had education between 6th and 10th classes, 10.8% had studied upto 5th class, 7.6% had intermediate, 9.7% of family members of respondents had degree qualification to their credit, while 7% were graduates.

Out of the total respondents, 35.8% were illiterates, 28.8% with 6th to 10th class 10.8% studied upto 5th class, 9.7% had degree level education and 7% of respondents had been educated upto post-graduation level.

It may be found that several of the respondents and their parents were illiterates but it may be observed that the respondents are found encouraging the girls' education with equal spirit as well as their male children. They wish to give top priority to the education of their children.

Occupation of the Family Members

It may be found that except for the generation of the respondent's son, all his older generation had adopted the same traditional occupation of the family. Only in the present generation, means (sons of the respondents) 13.9% were found to have adopted the community-based traditional occupation, while 81.4% are found to have shifted their occupation from their traditional occupation towards other or modern occupations which are available to them and 2.3% of the sons of the respondents are found to be working as employees in Government sector.

Further examination found that all the family members of the respondents irrespective of whether they adopted the (87.45%) same profession or not, they have learnt the skills of the trade at an early age from the elders of the family

Length of Occupation

Out of the total of 189, 28.5% of the respondents had 31 and above years of experience, 25.4% with 41-50 years of experience, 22.2% with 21 to 30 years of service, 12.7% with 11 to 20 years of experience, 6.3% with 51 and above years of experience, while 3.1% had only 1 to 5 years of experience.

Regarding education and the length of occupation, 34.1% were illiterates and they were doing their traditional based occupation for 26 and above years. 41.6% of respondents with education between the 6th to 10th classes had 11 to 20 years of experience. 40% with an education upto intermediate level are also found working in the profession and put up more than 31 years of experience. Even those respondents who passed Intermediate (7.9% and graduates (1.5%) are also found doing the occupation and put-up long years of experience in the profession and continue to do the same.

Thus, the data shows that education is not a criterion to determine their lives. Whether they are educated or not they must depend on their traditional-based occupation for their livelihood as they find no other alternative.

Stated occupation of respondents' children

According to the data, out of the total sample, 6.9% of respondents' sons are stated to be in the same traditional occupation following the footsteps of elders, while 6.9% preferred other traditional occupation other than their own. 81.4% of respondents are found preferring modern occupations, while 2.3% are found already working as government employees and another 2.3% of them are found pursuing their education.

Educational Dropouts children of the respondents

There has been widespread dropout earlier from education in families but in recent years especially from the parent's generation, the importance of education has been seriously recognized and families began to educate their children. As a result of it unlike in the past there have been only 39.6% of children as found dropouts and 44.4% are found pursuing education.

Occupation of Women in the Family of the Respondents

It may be found that all the women in the families of the respondents share the work and 91% are found to share the work of their traditional occupation. Both men and women share the work in the family. It may be found that the age background of the women sharing the work 56.4% is of young, 27.1% are middle-aged belonging to the 46-55 age group, 17.2% are above middle-aged, and 2.4% belong to 66 and above age group who are all found to be involved in their traditional occupational work. While some women in the family have been found doing some other work, especially those belonging to the age group of below 35 years, all women irrespective of their age and education are found doing the work.

Occupational Training

It may be observed that almost all respondents had taken informal training from their family members by observation and while doing the work. Significantly even those who are pursuing education also participate in 'production activities' during their off-school and college time. Even though in future they may or may not go for their ancestral occupation but as a 'tradition' they learn the skills and share the family works.

Landholding particulars

It may be found that 76.2% of the respondents do not own any agricultural land and the remaining 23.8% seem to own some cultivable land that they cultivate during the rainy season as a secondary occupation.

Other Assets position

The study indicates a large majority of respondents 'own' their own house and amongst them, 46% own RCC buildings two or three rooms and 41.2% own Katcha houses. Out of the remaining (12.7%), 7.1% live in RCC-rented houses. Only 14.2% own some cattle, 1.5% Fowl and 28.5% own vehicles such as Bicycle or Motorcycle or Moped. Only 57.1% had a drinking water facility at home and others need to procure it every day from outside sources. 95.2% had a Bathroom facility, 90.4% had Latrine facilities at home, while others had to depend upon 'open sources. Significantly, every household had electricity at home, 84.1% had a cooking gas connection, and 79.3% had a 'cable TV connection'. 4.7% had Radios, 3.1% had sewing machines, and 1.5% had Rice-Cookers. It indicates that many Kummari families had below-average assets with not-so-good housing and workshop conditions.

Occupational Priorities

The primary work relating to their occupation mainly revolves around pot making as 98.4% of respondents focus on their traditional occupation. As far as secondary occupation is concerned, 38% preferred agriculture labour work or other

work. The data indicate that apart from primary or traditional work the respondents have given priority to secondary work for supplementing their income. Since the use of 'pots' is fast disappearing, the Kummari occupation is also fast disappearing.

Place of Production

Most of the Kummari families set up their enterprises beside their homes. Most of the homes are found in one or the other corners of the village, where they get some open space to 'dry' their products. They also get sometimes the required quantities of 'mud' outside the village or nearby tanks. Those who own the houses inside the village with no sufficient open space, setup separate 'work shed' outside the village and do the work.

Investment Details

Concerning the investment in the objects by the respondents, 49.8% seem to have invested in Shed/Hut/House and Shop, while 24.7% in raw materials and 23% in tools and machines etc., About the investment amount, 47% of the respondents invested between Rs. 1000 to 10,000 and it was followed by 30% of respondents who spent 1 lakh and above, Rs. 25,000 to 50,000 about 14.9% and 10.1% of the respondents between Rs. 50,000 to 1 lakh. This indicates that a large number, through need higher, could not spend more due to non-availability of funds and only a few families could manage some reasonable amount for investment and most of the investments is incurred on construction of 'shed or shop floor'.

Source Investment

It has been found that 96.8% of respondents had their sources of investment, while the remaining 3.1% had to depend on a bank. Referring to urban areas a large majority of the respondents (97.8%) had used their sources while the remaining 2.1% had taken loans from the banks. While in rural areas 94.1% used their savings and 5.8% relied on banks. It is significant to observe those who used their savings/sources of money. 73.7% were drawn from urban areas and 26.2% from rural areas. It may be observed that most respondents made investments by using their sources while only a small percentage could get loans from Banks. In this context, they are completely deprived of Government help.

Source of Raw Materials

It may be seen from the available data that a large majority of the respondents got the raw materials from sources nearby their residence (73.4%), while 6% found collecting from government places, 20% from a broker agency and the remaining 0.46% from other sources. Among the nearby living place category, the majority of the respondents had raw materials such as Grass, Wood, Dust and Dusk and Colours from nearby places. The earthen material however was secured by many respondents from government sources (41.2%), 39.6% from a broker agency and 3.1% from other sources. As far as the sand is also concerned, 70.9% have relied on a broker agency.

Production of Plan

The data indicate the details of how the respondents had planned their regular production activity. Out of the total respondents, 51.2% had produced the material on their orders, 31% by themselves without obtaining from outside on local orders, and 17.6% from outside orders respectively.

Family Participation in Production

The study indicates that among the family members of the respondents, most of them are found participating in production with 48.39% cases by spouses, followed by children (41.1%), and (3.2%) parents respectively. Out of the total respondents, 52.4% are participating in production on a full-time basis and it was followed by 37.1% of family members, especially women occasionally participating, while 9.6% are found not participating. Among the parents, most of them are found participating, while 25% are found not participating, concerning children majority of them are participating only occasionally. In general, most of the members of the family participate in production wherever and whenever is required.

Unseasonal activity

As far as the unseasonal activities of the respondents in rural and urban areas the majority of the respondents (80.9%) said that they depend on agricultural labour work, or any whatever labour work (15.8%) available. Those who live in urban areas also found going to rural areas to participate in agricultural activity for a wage.

Sale of Products

The study also explores the nature of the sale of products by the respondents in rural and urban areas. Out of the total sample, about 86.3% of the respondents are found to be selling the products from their homes and it was followed by the sales at the local market i.e., 7.5%. 4.5% of respondents had supplied to other shopkeepers, while 1.5% found selling their products at their workshop.

Ceremonial Jobs

The data indicate that the majority (96.8%) of the respondents in rural areas were able to find ceremonial jobs such as marriages, festivals, special occasions, deaths, and births. The remaining 3.1% could not get it. Whereas regarding the availability of ceremonial jobs in urban areas, there was an occasional opportunity, unlike in rural areas. In most of the ceremonies, the potters need to supply pots, lamp posts and other products made with earthen materials and these rituals provide them with a good amount of money and other gifts.

Government Schemes

Concerning the ailment of the Government schemes by the respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e. 96.4% said that they could not get the benefit of any

government scheme while only 3.5% said that they could benefit from the Government scheme. It was found that 14.2% who benefitted seem to have secured some tools under Aadarana Scheme.

It may be noticed that Government has not recognized the need for initiating any policy measures to help these communities to continue in the trade and modernize it so that it will be beneficial to them. So far successive Governments had failed to propose any specific policy towards resolving the problems of these backwards-class groups of people. Governments seem to have adopted a general welfare policy or an anti-poverty programme to cover these sections also. Some of the schemes like the Aadharana schemes did not cover most members of the Kummari community. No other schemes have any role to play in extending any sort of development support to these people and simply they were left to their fate.

Impact of Government schemes

It is shocking to observe that all the respondents had expressed that Government schemes are shown a negative impact on their lives. Even some of the respondents who got benefitted to some extent also had no satisfaction with the Government welfare measures.

Role of the Associations

Out of the total, a large majority of the respondents (96.8%), felt that the role of the associations, in general, is not positive. 1.5% felt it was positive and the remaining 1.5% did not give a response. It is generally expected that Community Association plays a positive role in representing the problems of their respective communities and getting their things done at the governmental level. But it may be observed that the Community Associations are not playing any positive role to solve the problems of their respective communities as expected of them.

General Occupational Problems

Out of the total sample, 34.9% of the respondents found facing the problem of non-availability of raw material, and it was followed by non-availability of capital (46.9%), 8.4% had worried about the non-modernization of products, 4.8% found quality problems and 3.62% posed the problem of market competition respectively.

Concerning urban areas, 38.4% of the respondents are found to facing the problem of non-availability of raw materials and non-availability of capital and it was followed by non-modernization of products (10.7%) 6.1% found the problem of quality assurance, while the remaining found a serious problem of growing market competition.

With regards to rural areas, a large majority of the respondents are found to be facing the problem of non-availability of capital (77.7%), while the remaining 22.2% with non-availability of raw material.

The data also indicates the general occupational problems faced by the Kummari Community. Some of the problems identified are almost relevant to both rural and urban Kummari community people. The general problems as said by the respondents include non-availability of raw materials, lack of investment capital, growing family financial problems, lack of market, lack of proper business and competition from private shops etc. As a result of many problems, there was a feeling among the Kummari people, that the profession has become a liability for them. Over the years it may be found many Kummari families left the profession and migrated to urban areas for want of work.

Suggestions

The respondents also made certain suggestions that are helpful to resolve their problems. The most respondent suggested that Government should

1. Provide loans, subsidies, and margin money to set up pot-making units.
2. Government should allot specific areas for collecting the required raw materials used for the preparation of earthen products.
3. Government should allot a place to set up a workshop shed and production area.
4. Government should facilitate the marketing of products.
5. Government should help modernization of the trade and provide training facilities for this purpose.
6. Other suggestions include Allotment of weaker section housing, Artisan Credit Cards, Supply of tools and instruments, Provision for Family Health cards, old age pension etc.,

All this above may go a long way to help resolve some of the problems of the Kummari community and initiate the process of their development.

Case Studies

Rajaneekar

My name is Peddapally Rajaneekar, aged 27 years. Native Village Gatla Kanaparthi, Mandal Shayampet of Warangal District of Telangana State. I have studied upto the 10th class in Gatla Kaniparthi and Intermediate in Shayampet. Due to financial problems, I could not study further and started helping my father in his professional work. I could not do any other job although I tried for it. After my marriage, my responsibilities have increased. Later my father also died then all the family burden and pain fell on me. At present in my family my mother 56 years, my wife 24 years and my twin children 4 months old son and daughter staying with me. My mother is illiterate; my wife has studied upto fifth class. I have learnt our professional work of making pots from my father. I have been in this work to earn my livelihood and my

wife helps me in my profession. Apart from this, she also does tailor work. I also do agriculture as I have 30 guntas of agricultural land. We do cultivate our land and we get around 30,000/- income per annum on this land.

In our village, I also work as a school van driver from 7:30 am to 9:00 pm and from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm. I get a monthly payment of Rs. 3500 for this.

I built my own RCC house. I have a drinking water facility but I do not have a sanitation facility. We have a sewing machine. All the neighbours are our caste people as we live on Kummari Street. We have good relations with them. We have also good friendships with other caste people.

We bring 'soil' from ponds and small pits available in a nearby place. For this purpose, we spend transport charges Rs 500 to 800. The government allotted a place to collect the required mud 8 years back in the neighbouring village but not much good material is available there. We prepare pots with filtered dung. We mix all these materials by pressing with legs. We need a 'Kummari wheel' and saare to prepare pots. Salpa, Saarekore etc also needed to prepare pots. Kummari wheel costs nearly 3000 to 4000 rupees. For soil and to keep dry pots, we need an open place and a shed is also necessary for our profession. We prepare pot in winter and summer. We do not prepare pots in the rainy season. All my family members help with my work. Sometimes I take the support of outside workers. We spend nearly 3000/- rupees for raw materials Rs. 3000/- and for firewood, wood cutting waste, dry grass to dry the wet pots and other materials. To dry the wet material, we put a "Vaamu" a kind of big furnace to dry the wet materials. Every house has this facility of "vaamu".

We prepare pots, pramidas, small pots for marriage purposes, water drums, thulasi and flower pots, stores, small chips, and white-water pots. We prepare several other shaped articles in the village. We do not have regular timings of work. We work for more hours when needed. We sell the materials at home. Earlier in "Santas" we used to sell our material once a week, but there are no such Santas in our village now. Customers purchase our material in March, April, May and seasonally during festivals like Deepavali, Sankranti and Pothamma Talli, Bonas. After this season, now and then customers ask for our material especially to be used for family ceremonies. We do agriculture in the Gap period. I do my caste profession as per the season. In our village, there was not much competition for us in our profession. My family gets altogether around Rs. 1.00 lakh per annum towards all work. Our materials have demand in marriage seasons, Deepavali and ugadi festivals. People use the 'pots' for bad and good occasions and various other family ceremonies and festivals and during those, we get good profit. I want to give education to my children.

Over the years there has been a lot of competition from various factory-based products using metal and plastics and due to this, the demand for our products has been reduced over the years. I have not taken any loan from a bank or Private Finance. We are adjusting to what we are earning.

Despite all whatever we earn which is not sufficient. Hence, we need government in extending not only financial assistance towards the purchase of tools, and raw materials, but also need marketing assistance and support. Government should provide free residential education to our children, housing accommodation, a shed for workshops and others. As our community people are poor, less, or not educated we cannot afford modern jobs. Hence government should evolve a suitable policy to look after our welfare.

Laxmi

I am Chelpuri Laxmi, aged 45 years resident of Pochamma Kunta, Hanamkonda, Warangal District of Telangana. I am illiterate, as my parents had not sent me to school. I have been involved in our hereditary occupational work and household work at home since my childhood. At the age of 15, I got married and later joined my husband in the traditional occupation of pottery. My husband's age now is 50 years. I have two daughters and one son. The eldest daughter 28 years, studied 10th class and married. Younger daughter aged 23 years studied 8th class then married. My youngest only son aged 21 years studying degree final year and helps us do our profession to support the family. My husband is being sick for 6 years and cannot work anymore. I had to lead the family and carry on the profession of making pots and other earthen bowls. My son is assisting me. We had a hut in the Pochamma Kunta area as the caste society had given us 150 square yards of plots, but unable to construct a building, satisfied with a hut. We do not have facilities for drinking water, sanitation, etc., as we have been living for thirty years in pochammakunta, the neighbourhood has become friendly. In the surrounding house people belonging to Padmashali, Rajakas, Besta, Kamsali, SC and STs make a living, we had good relations with them, but over the years there has been some friction among the neighbourhood as their work is produced a lot of smoke in the surroundings and polluting the atmosphere. For the making of earthen bowls, we purchased a Wheel, Sulfa, sarakolakatta etc., and we had to spend nearly Rs.10,000/- for these tools. We collect clay from Government allotted land at Pochammakunta, Komatipally and Bhimaram. We bring it on a cart engaged for this purpose. As the clay is collected from a longer distance the transportation expenditure is too high. To make earthen bowls, such as Ranjans and Water Pots, Flower pots, Flower vases and other traditional items we use clay and for this purpose, we need to prepare clay as soft. We had to do the work by ourselves nobody as knows the work. I had taken Rs.15,000=00 as a loan from the DWAKRA group and built a workshop in 50 square yards. I had also applied for a bank loan, separately but could not get it because of the lack of registration with the firm. I spent about Rs. 4000=00 on firewood every year. Because of the lack of space in the shed area for storage products are damaged and protecting them from stray animals has become a great problem for us. When the products are placed outside in an open area in the adjacent place of our house. The products die unprotected and get damaged and we have no other alternative as it has become a regular problem. I

had to work harder in summer and winter than rainy season. They supply the mud bowls both for wholesale and retail sales are done at home. For all the work gets on an average an income of Rs.6000=00 per month. Presumably, the income I get is insufficient to meet the minimum needs of the family. As I have been doing the work for a long time I do not know other work this has made me depend exclusively upon my profession which doesn't fetch income all the time and that has become a serious problem. The only alternative left to me is for outside labour work which is also not guaranteed. I also prepare artistic or decorative articles made of mud and this requires recognition from Government or other agencies. I had submitted representatives to the government, especially for the supply of 'power-run-wheels' and other equipment on subsidy for provision for Bank loans but there was hardly any response. Though I had developed skills in my profession.

All the products, produced by me are sold from the home by myself. But over the years people are not using them plenty. People are using earthen pots only to limited extent options for factory-made plastic, steel, aluminiumetc., have resulted in a fall in my income as I have also witnessed a lack of sales many a time. I feel that unless recognize our profession as 'fast disappearing' and come to their rescue it is difficult for us to survive.

Padma

My name is Rudraksha Padma aged 40 years. I learnt pot making from my mother and father. My native place is shivanagar of Warangal District in Telangana State. I studied upto the 10th class and married at the age of 16 years. I am living with my family members at Hanamkonda near the pegadapalli crossroad area for 24 years after marriage.

My husband aged 48 years studied upto 5th class and we have two daughters and one son. My elder daughter aged 17 years studying intermediate 1st year and my youngest daughter aged 16 years studying 10th class. My son is blind and admitted to a Blind school at Elkathurthi village and studying. We tried our best to get his eyesight improved but failed in our attempts.

We have one RCC building constructed by us in 150 yards of land and a shed in an open place with 50 yards. We have minimum facilities like water, toilet and other including electricity.

We prepare Pots and for that suitable mud is required. For that purpose, we need a suitable tank bed or water pond. Presently we are collecting the required mud from PochammaKunta nearby our house. The government allotted some land, especially for this purpose. We need to prepare the mud while making it smooth and then mix it with ash and other material in it. We spend nearly 5000/- to 6000/- to get the (sare) revolving 'wheel' on which we develop pots.

We need an amount of Rs. 6000-7000 to get the tools required and we prepare different types of pots, including flower pots and other daily-use materials in the house. We also prepare tiles that are useful for roofing the house.

While preparing the pots and other materials some of them will be spoiled and damaged. We get loss towards it. All our family members will work daily for more than 10 hours to preparation of the material we sell in the open market. There has been a lot of competition these days from outside designatory materials and plastic products. People prefer them. Nowadays most of the public prefer our material only for ceremonial functions and due to this we are not able to earn much. It is becoming difficult to lead a reasonable life to survive. We did not get any help from the government so far not even from cooperative societies. We earn nearly 2000 to 3000 per month. My husband works as an Auto trolley driver and his income is also meagre. My son studying in 6th class and is in Blind school we must perform the marriage of our two daughters and it is becoming very difficult to lead the family.

It may be suggested that Government should provide our bank loan and material on a subsidy basis and help us under different schemes. Otherwise, we remain the same.

Sammaiah

My name is KanugulaSammaiah aged 65 years. Due to the poverty and illiteracy of my parents, I had not gone to school. My native place is Shayampet Village in Warangal District. My parents are illiterate and doing the traditional pot-making occupation for 50 years.

We are 7 members in my family. My wife aged 61 years is illiterate, doing Beedi work and assisting in my pot-making work. My son 31 years, discontinued education after intermediate and doing the same work and work in the agriculture field. My daughter-in-law aged 28 years studied upto 7th class and assist in our work along with Beedi making work. My four grandchildren are going to school and staying with me.

I have my own RCC building constructed by me 20 years ago. It has only minimum facilities. There is a problem of scarcity of water. We do not have any pet animals like cows, hens etc. Since my birth, I am living in this place and our street is known as Kummariwada. Before constructing our present house, we used to live in a small hut, in which we survived.

The tools required for the preparation of pots and other materials cost about 5 thousand rupees and we need mud for the preparation of articles and we get it from village pallipaka. To prepare for the mud a lot of hardship we must face. We prepare pots, flower vases and some other storage pots and all our family members work together. The mud we use is not good. We must get it far off places. It cost about 4000/- per tractor and the grass we require costs about 5000/- per tractor and some sand kind

of ash costs about 1500/-. Every year we take a loan to get all these things and after selling the products we repay the loan. Sometimes all the articles produced are not sold and then the repayment will become difficult. This has been the 'case' for the last ten years.

We work from 8:00am to 5:00pm and beyond. It has become compulsory for me to take a loan from money lenders at the rate of 3-5% interest. We work together daily for 10 hours per day in preparing and selling the material from home and every Saturday. I go to a weekly market and put a stall there for sales. We need assistance from the government to purchase the mud required from a distant place but we are not getting any assistance from the government or any other organization. I get an amount of Rs. 4000 to 5000/- per month out of pot making which is a very meagre amount for the labour we invest in the occupation.

I am having one Acre of agricultural land in my village and all the family members are also involved in agricultural work during the seasonal time. We get an amount of Rs. 20000/- per year from agriculture. My wife and my daughters-in-law do the Beedi's work through which they get an amount of Rs. 1000 to 1500/- per month. In this process, all our family members work hard but even then, the earnings we get are not sufficient to meet the expenditure. During the festival season of Sankranti and Pochamma Bonalu and Dussehra, we get additional income as there will be a lot of sales during the days. Nowadays people are using our products mostly for ceremonies and family rituals. I need a lot of amounts towards the studies of my grandson and granddaughter as I send them to private English medium schools. We want them to get a good education and find suitable jobs.

The main issues are:

1. No bank loans are provided to our community workers and it is suggested to arrange a bank loan.
2. It is suggested to provide 'open' land to acquire needed mud.
3. It is suggested to sanction pensions to the senior citizen of our caste.
4. Government should provide free medical checkups and medicines
5. Free education to the children's and Hostel facility.
6. Training facilities on the new technologies developed so that we may produce modern mud wear.

Our lives are routine and we have witnessed not much change in our life during the past ten years except facing further deterioration in our conditions. The Government and civil society do not bother whether we survive or not. Whatever development has taken place over the years in society, the benefits never reached us. The so-called modernization process has only ruined our lives by encouraging only high capital, high technology-based production processes. We are not sure whether to lead a peaceful life in future and now our survival itself has become a big question.

Table 1: Size of the Family

Sl. No	Age	Place	Single	Two Members	Three Members	Four Members	Five Members	Six Members & Above	Total
1	Up to 25	Urban	3 (100) (100)	0	0	0	0	0	3 (1.58) (100)
		Rural	0-	0	0	0	0	0	-
2	26-35	Urban	0	0	0	9 (100) (15.79)	0	0	9 (4.76) (100)
		Rural	0	3 (33.33) (7.70)	0	6 (66.67) (10.52)	0	0	9 (4.76) (100)
3	36-45	Urban	0	0	3 (11.11) (12.5)	15 (55.56) (26.32)	6 (22.22) (20)	3 (11.11) (8.33)	30 (100) (14.29)
		Rural	0	0	0	3 (100) (5.26)	0	0	3 (100) (1.58)
4	46-55	Urban	0	0	9 (20) (37.5)	12 (26.67) (21.06)	6 (13.33) (20)	18 (40) (50)	45 (100) (23.81)
		Rural	0	6 (50) (15.39)	0	3 (25) (5.26)	3 (25) (10)	-	12 (100) (6.35)
5	56-65	Urban	0	9 (25) (23.07)	6 (16.67) (25)	3 (8.33) (5.26)	12 (33.33) (40)	6 (16.67) (16.67)	36 (100) (19.05)
		Rural	0	9 (30) (23.07)	3 (10) (12.5)	6 (20) (10.53)	3 (10) (10)	9 (30) (25)	30 (100) (15.88)
6	66 & above	Urban	0	0	0	0	0	0	-
		Rural	0	12 (80) (30.77)	3 (20) (12.5)	0	0	0	15 (100) (7.94)
Total			3 (1.58) (100)	39 (20.64) (100)	24 (12.70) (100)	57 (30.16) (100)	30 (15.87) (100)	36 (19.05) (100)	189 (100%) (100%)

Table 2: Education of Family Members (Cumulative)

Sl. No	Relationship with the Respondent	Illiterate	0-5 Classes	6-10 Classes	Inter	Degree	ITI/P.G	Total
1	Respondent	3 (50) (1.52)	0	0	3 (50) (7.14)	0	0	6 (100) (1.08)
2	Father	3 (100) (1.52)	0	0	0	0	0	3 (100) (0.54)
3	Mother	9 (100) (4.55)	0	0	0	0	0	9 (100) (1.64)
4	Sons	6 (2.85) (3.03)	15 (7.14) (25)	99 (47.15) (22.64)	36 (17.15) (85.72)	24 (11.43) (44.45)	30 (14.28) (76.92)	210 (100) (38.05)
5	Daughter	0	24 (25) (40)	36 (37.55) (22.64)	3 (3.15) (7.14)	24 (25) (44.45)	9 (9.3) (23.08)	96 (100) (17.40)
6	Wife/Husband	156 (88.14) (78.78)	0	18 (10.17) (11.33)	0	3 (1.69) (5.55)	0	177 (100) (32.06)
7	Others	21 (41.17) (10.60)	21 (41.17) (35)	6 (11.77) (3.77)	0	3 (5.89) (5.55)	0	51 (100) (9.23)

Table 3: Occupation (Cumulative)

Sl. No		Caste Occupation	Other Traditional Occupation	Modern Occupation	Government Job	Others	Total
1	Respondent	189 (100) (24.71)	0	0	0	0	189 (100) (21.36)
2	Respondent's Father	189 (100) (24.71)	0	0	0	0	189 (100) (21.36)
3	Respondent's Grand Father	189 (100) (24.71)	0	0	0	0	189 (100) (21.36)
4	Respondent's Grand Father's Father	189 (100) (24.70)	0	0	0	0	189 (100) (21.36)
5	Respondent's Son	9 (6.98) (1.17)	9 (6.98) (100)	105 (81.40) (100)	3 (2.32) (100)	3 (2.32) (100)	129 (100) (14.56)

Table 4: Education and Length of Occupation

Sl. No	Education	1-5 years	6-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51 & above	Total
1	Illiterate	0	0	6 (4.88) (25)	30 (24.39) (71.42)	36 (29.26) (66.66)	42 (34.15) (87.5)	9 (7.32) (75)	123 (100) (65.08)
2	1-5 Classes	0	0	0	0	6 (50) (11.11)	3 (25) (6.25)	3 (25) (25)	12 (100) (6.35)
3	6-10 Classes	0	0	15 (41.66) (62.5)	12 (33.34) (28.58)	6 (16.66) (11.11)	3 (8.34) (6.25)	0	36 (100) (19.05)
4	Inter	6 (40) (100)	0	3 (20) (12.5)	0	6 (40) (11.12)	0	0	15 (100) (7.94)
5	Degree	0	3 (100) (100)	0	0	0	0	0	3 (100) (1.58)
Total		6 (3.17) (100)	3 (1.58) (100)	24 (12.70) (100)	42 (22.23) (100)	54 (28.58) (100)	48 (25.40) (100)	12 (6.34) (100)	189 (100%) (100%)

Table 5: Assets of Facilities

Sl. No	Particulars	Yes				No	Total
		Own					
1	House	RCC 87 (46.04) (6.97)	Kacha 78 (41.26) (6.25)	RCC Rent 15 (7.14) (1.20)	Kacha Rent 9 (4.76) (0.56)		189 (100) (6.66)
2	Cattle	27 (14.28) (2.16)				162 (85.72) (10.20)	189 (100) (6.66)
3	Fowls	3 (1.58) (0.24)				186 (98.41) (11.73)	189 (100) (6.66)
4	Vehicle	54 (28.57) (2.32)				135 (100%) (6.66)	189 (100)
5	Drinking Water	108 (57.14) (7.86)				189 (100%) (6.66)	189 (100)
6	Bathroom	180 (95.23) (14.43)				9 (4.77) (0.56)	189 (100) (6.67)
7	Latrine	159 (90.47) (13.70)				18 (9.53) (1.13)	189 (100) (6.67)
8	Electricity	189 (100) (15.15)					189 (100) (6.67)
9	Gas	159 (84.13) (12.74)				30 (15.87) (1.89)	189 (100) (6.67)
10	T.V	150 (79.36) (12.02)				39 (20.63) (2.45)	189 (100) (6.67)
11	Radio	9 (4.76) (0.72)				180 (95.14) (11.34)	189 (100) (6.67)
12	Sewing Machine	6 (3.17) (0.48)				183 (96.83) (11.54)	189 (100) (6.67)
13	Rice Cookers	3 (1.58) (0.24)				186 (98.42) (11.73)	189 (100) (6.67)
14	Refrigerator	3 (1.58) (0.24)				186 (98.42) (11.73)	189 (100) (6.67)
15	News Paper	6 (3.17) (0.48)				183 (96.83) (11.54)	189 (100) (6.67)
Total		1248 (44.02) (100)				1587 (55.98) (100)	2835 (100%) (100%)

Table.6: Source of Investment

SI. No	Source	Urban	Rural	Total
1	Own	135 (73.77) (97.82)	48 (26.23) (94.12)	183 (100) (96.82)
2	Bank	3 (50) (2.18)	3 (50) (5.88)	6 (100) (3.18)
Total		138 (73.01) (100)	51 (26.99) (100)	189 (100%) (100%)

Table 7: Occupational Problems (Cumulative)

SI. No	Problems	Urban	Rural	Total
1	Non-Availability of Raw Material	75 (86.20)	12 (13.80)	87 (100)
2	Non-Availability of Capital	75 (64.10)	42 (35.90)	117 (100)
3	Market Competition	9 (100)		9 (100) (3.62)
4	Non-Modernization of Products	21 (100)		21 (100) (8.43)
5	Quality Problem	12 (100)		12 (100) (4.82)
6	Others	3 (100)		3 (100) (1.20)

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