

# PRECURSORS OF OCCUPATIONAL CHANGE AMONG THE KUMHARS OF KHOKHAR ZER, CHAKWAL

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**ABSTRACT:** Occupational change is a concurrent phenomenon all over the globe which has affected most of the indigenous professions. Non adaptability in technology related to pottery proved threatening to the very profession. It has been neglected for long which has questioned its future. The present study has been conducted in village Khokhar Zer, Chakwal through participant observation, interview guide and case studies. There were a total of 51 potter's households in the village. A saturated survey is conducted over a period of two months. Due to insignificance of this work in the modern era, majority potters have left their occupation. Lack of Education and resources are the major factors resulting in the occupational shift.

**Key words:** Occupational change, Pottery, Potters, Kumhar

## INTRODUCTION

Occupation is a collection of activities that people use to fill their time & give life meaning is organized around roles or in term of activities of daily living, it is the individualized unique combination of activities that comprises an individual's occupations [1]. Occupational change is a common phenomenon in modern economics and is often used as a strategic tool in career planning therefore it is often accompanied by wage growth, despite its association with high risks such as substantial loss of occupation specific human capital [2]. There is growing evidence that the accumulation of occupation-specific human capital plays an important role in the wage determination process [3]. A less amount of human capital may be destroyed upon switching occupation [4].

Pottery is a serial work. Pottery represents multiple natures of human kind and his condition including personal and social connections [5]. Social transformation which promoted the cultural integration manifested in the pottery evidence is in general sense. The urbanization of north India based on the interregional cultural interaction [6]. Pottery is a traditional occupation and it has helped in formulating connection within tribes. This exchange is a realistic & conventional activity among the society [7].

The current situation of traditional handicrafts in developing countries reveal that mass production of good supported by sophisticated marketing, there is no capacity to absorb them into modern industries [8]. Modern technology affected the old pottery. People are interested to buy a new form of pottery. The old potters loss their value and most of the potters has changed their occupation for the less importance of their work in society [9]. Potters are placed low in the society and are paid low wages to the potters [10].

Pottery clay, *Chikni matti* is commonly used for different purposes. This clay is used for making different decorative art pieces, household items. It has been used to express social and religious ideal [11]. The families' connection and societal customs are two major examples, which can be analyzed in this connection. Clay vessels are of great symbolic value [12]. Culture plays a vital role in reshaping the technical system of pottery. The potters traditions including finished products, trade techniques beliefs and attitudes toward actors and materials join elements of different origins represents

different histories of common societies [13]. The acceptance of the evolutionary theory that basketry is the necessary precursor of clay vessels has given rise to a general misunderstanding concerning the place of coiled were among the pottery types of southwest [14].

Art work on pots can be identified by mechanical imitation and this art represents newness and innovation. These unique art pieces are made with great skill and cannot be mechanically reshaped or reproduced [15]. Some potters are not very skilled and professional. They first do it by facts of circumstances. They are only part time potters. This job requires a lot of time, mental, emotional and physical involvement of the potters. The time is the first and foremost things that leads a potter's involvement to that particular art piece and also leads him to a professional craft person [16]. An artist faces many difficulties and hardships when he tries to professionalize it [17]. The word art can properly be defined by the invoking of emotions. Art is not only a trade but also an exchange of different networks [18].

A primary function of ceramic vessels is to change the structure of edible foods by boiling and roasting and for storing and serving particular types of food [19] Clay pots are used in daily life for domestic purposes [20]. Pots have been found in aboriginal mounds in Oregon within a few years past. The first vessel of pottery among the aborigines of the united states seem to have been made in baskets of rushes or willows used as moulds which were burned off after the vessel hardened [21]. Pottery was a hunter gather innovation that first emerged in East Asia. The first ceramic containers must have provided prehistoric hunter gathers with attractive new strategies for processing & consuming food stuffs but virtually nothing is known of how early pots were used [22]. Experts' potters can give different shapes to the clay. The motifs works are also done on the vessels of clay [23].

The change in pottery production that is to say the phenomenon of morphological and technological standardization could have been a material consequence of a new society [24]. The potter, whose work has been reduced, specialized in making certain wares not easy to get outside the village. Some potters have gone into the ceramic factories which have opened in the cities and have learned new techniques [25].

## METHODOLOGY

The qualitative study was exploratory, based on the potters' community (Kumhars) in *khokhar zer* village of *Chakwal*. The researcher surveyed the entire population targeted for the study which was based on 51 potters' households. Research tools used were participant observation, interviews based on interview guides and case studies. Potters community was studied through their life style, education, family structure, living pattern, marriages, income, death pattern, diet, tool and pottery work.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Researcher finds that the people associated with this profession are under occupational transition which is evident through a vast change of this professional and at the locale. Many potters left this work and started working in different roles and took different jobs such as masonry labor, driver, overseas workers in the last decade people engaged with this art have switched occupation. The main reason behind the decreasing trend in this art work was that people did not like this profession anymore because the profit margin was too small and people effort put in was much. Another reason behind the insignificance in pottery was lack of interest on part of workers. Earlier the very utility kitchen items were made of clay, but now a day's pottery products are only used for decorative purpose. As far as cities are concerned people are getting advanced and modern. They prefer to use glass and steel made products.

Occupation was a unique combination of activities [1] the potter changed their occupation due to the low revenue, because it did not even fulfill their basic needs. [3,4]Potters were not paid enough according to their hard slog. Declining incomes of artisans and influx of mass produced goods have led to declining caste based occupation among potters, wavers and other artisans who must now rely on manual labor for subsistence and increased requirement for education among modern professions have led to invasion of people from a verity of castes into modern occupation [26].

Many of the people even have changed their caste because they did not like to be called *Kumhars* anymore and even the elders did not want their next generation to be in the same profession. Technology has taken precedence over independents tools. In older time, tradition of using mud pots was very much and mud pots were used by everyone but in modern time, it has been changed. Everyone wants to use new technology because the time has changed and people like to use modern things. Now most of the people use it only for decoration pieces. Even the villagers did not use it any more; they use mud pots along steal. But villagers mostly use mud pots. It is a tradition and they maintain their tradition.

People devalue this work due to current trend of seeking education and joining other fields. Education was the main reason behind the changing occupation. Being called as Kumhars, they feel inferiority complexed when they are called potters therefore they forced to their parents that they left their occupation. They said that it was very irritating that when their fellows called them Kumhars. For having high status, they joined other progressive occupation. So education

was the main reason behind the change of potter's occupation.

### Income of The Respondents

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
4000-6000	7	13
6000-9000	14	37
9000-12000	30	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that income of the respondent is less. They earn less to make pots. Earning is less in comparison of working hours. 13% of the respondents' income was 4000-6000, 37% respondent income was 6000-9000 and 50% respondents' income was 9000-12000. It was a little amount to fulfill their needs.

### Case Study

Pervez was 41 year old and married. He faced an accident when he was a potter by slipping from the peak when he was bringing clay from there. After his paralysis for one year, he left that work and became a security guard. He said that his health started recovering due to the changed profession.

Pottery has lost its importance because the consumer trend has changed. The customer likes a new form of art, new design of pots but a traditional potter make old type of pottery. Since customers are interested to buy a new item glass or steal rather than having old fashioned pots. It is used as a decoration pieces. Therefore the potters have changed their occupation because of the less consumer trend about pottery.

The potters have changed their occupation because in modern times a customer wanted to bring new things like glass or steal. [9] The older potters lacked creativity and they made only traditional types of pots but the customer likes the new forms. The potters belong to low socio-economic class and they aspired to move in high class but are unaware of the new theologies. They are not well versed on new trends of pottery.

### Case Study

Saqib was 42 years old. He had potter's background. His forefather was also potters. His elder brother went to abroad and earns a lot of money to support their family. After completing education, Saqib selected the field of art and made sculpture clay. He was an intelligent and hardworking man and he gain progress in his field and now he was owner of his own factory. It was amazing that he did not change his profession and caste rather he excel this field and develop new techniques in this field because pottery was his passion and it was a heritage therefore he did not change their ancestral work.

As researcher observed that old people of *khokhar zer* practice pottery tradition work in their daily life and it was the part of their culture. It was more of their pastime. But with the passage of time these traditions were gradually decreasing since most of the new generation is not into it. The conduct is internalized in human beings as they grow up such cultural roles lead people to think and act in characterized way. [13] Tradition on the basis of behavior inmate plays important roles. Tradition plays important role in changing

the respondent/ villagers' life style and their culture. The very few respondent said that tradition do not play any role on the behavior inmate.

A lot of decline in this occupation is due to lack of progressive refinement in this art. Mostly potters said that there is not much progress in this field. They still use old wheel machinery and old way of making pots. The researcher got to know about the potters view that mostly potters were happy with their occupation but some of them said that if they got money they left that occupation and joined other better profession because it was very difficult work and they did not earn more in this work they did not fulfill their needs and it has been neglected because of other new form of technologies [9]. Advancement was also taking place in pottery. This art represents newness and innovations. This art work can be identified by mechanical imitation [15]. This context of primitive art was as sophisticated as is today's realm of modern art. Nonetheless in ceramics, the supremacy of modern visual art causes to assume that tradition. Various glazes used can relay who a culture traded with, depending on the color or ingredients. Different types of clay can show different influences on a society and advancement in technology. Forms of vessels and decoration shows art perspectives and styles. All of this differentiation in form and function reflect a culture's history.

Handwork is the key to this work which is now lacking in the new generation. Before that research researcher did not knew much about potter's life and what pottery really is, the researcher thought that pottery was an easy job and very enjoyable task and potter earns a lot. The researcher thought that pottery does not require hard work and everyone in village used these pottery products as their household materials such as plates, glass etc based on pottery. But when the researcher went for the field the researcher came to knew that she was wrong and the situation was totally different. The researcher came to knew that pottery was one difficult job and the trend of this work is vanishing with time as very few professional people are in pottery business as compare to old time. Potters were changing their professions in other different profession. The number of potters, who were belonged to this occupation, had decreased dramatically. The reason for this was that the demand for functional pottery had been diminished by an increased supply of mass-production and industry-made ceramics [8]. Handmade artesian pottery, however, was an important part of culture, and if this piece of history lost in the modern world, a thread that connects almost every society, from past to present, will cut off. If a potters adopted new techniques of pottery and make a new designs of pottery and changed their old method to a new methods then there is no need to change this occupation to other occupation. If the potters used the new technology for making pottery then their works was easy to execute and there was no need to change their occupation.

## CONCLUSION

Most of respondents believe that with the passage of time and happening around them , multiple reasons are being created for switching off their preference. The socio-economic status

of potters is very low which proved to be the major precursor. Another reason behind the decreasing trend of this art was low profit margin and lack of market demand as compared to the consumption, struggle and time invested. Main reason of decreasing trend of the pottery was the inadaptability with advancement of technology which has created different complexes. Seeking higher education, getting into different fields was also another reason of declining in pottery art. In short, because of lack of progressive refinement in pottery art work. Substandard of living due to low income returns is making them switch their professions. Kumhars have been placed in the scheduled class as per the Jati system that was once prevalent in this part of the world has positioned them to such a low level that even after seeking higher education, they are called by their occupational caste the Kumhars which is not liked by most of them.

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