



ISSN: 2582-9513

PRANAV JOURNAL OF FINE ARTS

POTTERY OF ANCIENT BENGAL: A BRIEF REVIEW

Mst. Tania Afroz

Lecturer

Fine Arts, Islamic University.

Abstract: Since the dawn of civilization, pottery has been utilized. Similarly, the majority of the unique significance of art in Bengali cultural heritage has been encapsulated in pottery. Therefore, disparaging ceramics is not acceptable. Today, the art that developed via the use of the wheel has essentially come to a standstill. Pottery is currently in danger of going extinct because it cannot keep up with technology. But we should be proud of the glory that pottery once possessed. Since discussing a complex and age-old art like pottery in the limited length of this essay is nearly impossible, an effort is made to touch on a few of its facets.

Keyword: Pottery, ancient, civilization, Bengali culture, creativity.

Introduction:

Among the various elements behind the beginning and development of human civilization are rich land, flowing rivers, food crops, communication systems, intellectual life, and creative activities. In no sense was our country backwards. We do, however, draw a line when Bengali culture is thousands of years old while archeological digs have shown evidence of a two and a half thousand year old civilization. Human habitation in this region is said to be older than that in Java. Regarding this, Haraprasad Shastri wrote in the Boishakh issue of Manosi in 1321 Bengal, 'I believe that Bengalis are a self-sufficient nation. The history of Bengal is not yet clear enough for anyone to say with certainty whether Bengali is older or newer than Ninav and Babylon to ancient or new China or China or new.' Although we lack sufficient evidence to support his claims, we are interested in learning about the aesthetics and taste of our ancestors as well as the social structure and culture of that era. We must rely on archaeological data, the majority of which is focused on pottery, one of Bengal's ancient handicrafts, as there is no written record of these responses. The flexibility of the sticky alluvial soil and the deficiency of alluvial minerals and stones are to blame for this.

'Pottery in this subcontinent dates back to the Neolithic period.' Hand-pressed pottery was produced for storing grain and sun-baked bricks for building at that period; the wheel and the technique of firing had not yet been developed. Later on, firing was developed as a technique to boost its lifetime. 'Essays made of terracotta have been discovered in the village culture that developed in Mehrgarh in northern Balochistan about 6,000 years ago. Later, about 4,000 years ago, pottery was found in the Kulli culture of Quetta in Pakistan and the Shrop culture of Baluchistan. Seals, beads, and mother goddesses made of terracotta are found in the Harappan civilization.' The pottery artifacts discovered during the excavation of sites like Chandraketugarh, Bangarh, Mahasthangarh, Paharpur, Mainamati, Savar, and more recently, Wari-Bateshwar, have been shown by carbon-14 tests to be approximately three hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, demonstrating that Bengal was not isolated from all of these ancient traditions of the Indian subcontinent.



'It was during this time that the use of black smooth pottery began in North Bengal. Its fame spread to the countries of the Middle East as well. Kings used these vessels as their drinking vessels. In addition, vessels of red, gold, silver, gray, purple and blue colors were found. Some vessels were bicolored.' The surface of the pots was devoid of any decoration, as demonstrated by the Indus Valley Civilization's pottery. Rather, there are a few pots with little designs and lines. Despite the lack of design, the pots' size and form compensate for it. There are water pots, plates, bowls, lamps, offering pots, big grain pots, and pots and jars of all shapes. Rods and handles were used for some pots. Even now, pottery is still popular. Its use might have been restricted throughout time, and its shape and form might have changed. It is true, nonetheless, that pottery was the primary focus of the early days of pottery.

Stone and metal materials in the medium of sculpture. In his account, the names of two famous sculptors of that time, Dhiman and his son Veetapala, are known. The skill they acquired in sculpture is legendary. with fervour(sic). It details the extensive dissemination of pottery, as well as the Tibetan historian Lama Taranath This book has lauded the pottery of Bengal see it was of more colors and glorious. A little insight into this glory lies in the book History of Buddhism in India by was the utilitarian side of pottery. If we see its artistic form, we 'This' They may have created the terracotta sculptures and paintings that can be found in a number of Buddhist monasteries, such as Paharpur and Vasubihar. 'The terracotta sculptures and paintings were different from the stone sculptures in terms of their style of construction. This is because the all-Indian grammar that was accepted in the construction of stone statues was not followed in pottery sculptures.' The availability of materials and the influence of local folk art are responsible for this. 'The influence of folk art was especially noticeable in the paintings. The ongoing flow of daily life has emerged through folk tales and stories.' Contemporary animals, birds, fish, flowers, and plants are not left out either. They aren't just decorative items; they give us a glimpse into the social, economic, religious, and cultural life of ancient Bengal.

Even though dolls may not seem practical, they've been a part of pottery since the very beginning. Their small, delicate shapes have turned them into a form of art all on their own. If you look at dolls from the Indus Valley Civilization and the ones made today, you'll notice that they aren't all that different. This raises some interesting questions: have dolls just been children's toys for over a thousand years, or is there more to them? Why have they maintained such a similar style throughout history? While it's tough to tackle all these questions in just a few sentences, we can say that dolls have served purposes beyond being toys. In the early days of human civilization, they represented fertility—a pretty fitting concept for an agricultural society. They also carry a sense of magic and religious significance. Now, about their design—its simplicity makes it universally appealing. Unlike other pottery items, almost everyone has tried their hand at doll-making. Whether it's a child, an elder, a young woman, or a housewife, many people have shaped a doll from clay. The ease of molding clay with just our hands brings these figures to life. This is why it's hard to pick out specific body parts; to create a human likeness, crafters usually just add a nose, mouth, and sometimes little bits of clay for eyes or a chest. Despite the simple style, the variety in shapes and sizes is really remarkable. They depict so much of everyday life from elephants, horses, cows, dogs, and cats, to peacocks, roosters, and fish. You'll find scenes of babies in their mothers' laps, fish in pots, harvesting rice, tying straw,



riding bicycles, plowing fields with cows and plows, playing drums, boating, and so many other activities. However, the doll shared between a mother and child is truly something special.

This pottery has been around since the dawn of human civilization and continues to be so today. Dhaka has accelerated this lengthy voyage by accompanying it across the complexities of time and space. In the past, using molds allowed the artist to create with comfort and ability. However, it was not readily embraced by the city's Babu-Bibi. Based on village culture, this art form has ceased to exist in the communities. Today's Dhaka pottery scene remains stagnating. It appears weary of the thousand-year trek. The wheels of its artists' lives have also stopped turning as a result of this. Many are leaving their traditional occupation and moving to the city since they can no longer keep up with the mechanical culture. Even the necessities of existence are now denied to those who manage to stay up. Their lives are devoted to providing two handfuls of salty rice, and they lack access to quality medical care and education. Pottery is currently losing its former splendor. However, its magnificence once extended to the ancient Bengali royal court.

Conclusion:

The chance to use modern technology, as the case allows. Give them insufficiency as the primary reason for the impediments but one of the art to be done is to draw-up this list of artists who can or will engage in this art and give them financial groundings and long-term loans by identifying the challenges. The artists have cited financial neglected industry that is our root needs protection. The government and private sector should take steps to rescue the industry Hence this ignored sector that has provided us our foundation. glory in the foreseeable future. Hence is it essential to defend this in this country, whereby universities will teach pottery. This can be said to restore this industry to its early role of the government's small and cottage industry organizations in developing the marketing system and marketing these products should be made further more effective. One would hope some arrangement has been made in the context of the wearying higher education setup In this context, the cottage industry organizations can play a significant role in developing marketing system. modern technology. In this respect, the government's small and needs. Introduce them to has proved to be financial. This art should be registered and the artists doing this should be assisted financially and long-term loans made available to them according to their and removed. The root cause of the artists' struggles through government and private initiatives, the problems of this industry should be identified hopefully, in the current higher education system; arrangements have been made to provide education on pottery in various universities in this country. It seems that this will restore this art to its past glory in the near future.

References:

1. Sufi Mostafizur Rahman and Md. Habibullah Pathan, wari Bateshwar: In search of roots, (Dhaka, First Edition, July 2012),Page 11.
2. Preceding, p.189
3. Preceding, p.189
4. Sufi Mostafizur Rahman and Md. Habibullah Pathan, Wari Bateshwar : In search of roots, (Dhaka, First Edition, July 2012),Page 111.



5. Shamsuzzaman Khan (ed.) Folklore of Bangladesh, Bangla Academy, Dhaka 1000, June 2008, p.190
6. Mainul Ahsan Saber (ed.), Weekly 2007, Media World Limited, 52 Motijheel B/A, Dhaka-1000, Eid Issue 2010, p.247
7. Shamsuzzaman Khan (ed.) Folklore of Bangladesh, Preceding, p.190
8. "Bangladesh's first archeological museum, Wari Bateswar Durg Nagar opened, Kaler Kantho, 24 February 2018". Archived from the original on 24 October 2020. Retrieved 16 August 2020.
9. "The Second Urban Civilization of the Subcontinent: Wari-Bateswar, Ittefaq, 24 November 2018". Archived from the original on 27 April 2021. Retrieved 27 April 2021.

Bibliography:

1. Wari Bateswar: In search of roots, Sufi Mostafizur Rahman and Md. Habibullah Pathan ,1st edition,2017
2. Folklore of Bangladesh, Shamsuzzaman Khan (ed.)
3. Banglapedia,Wari Bateswar.
4. Pottery-Making in Bengal, Author: George M. Foster, Southwestern Journal of Anthropology Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter, 1956), pp. 395-405 (15 pages) Published By: The University of Chicago Press.
5. Traditional Clay-Arts of Bengal: A Comprehensive Museological & Folkloric Study, Arpita Basu, ISBN 13: 9788195554522
6. Terracotta Art of Bengal, S.S Biswas, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi,2023