

The Socio-Economic Status of the Kummari Community in Telangana State: Findings of an Empirical Study



Laxman Rao Sankineni
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CENTRE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STUDIES
(Planning Dept, Govt. of Telangana & ICSSR – Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

BEGUMPET, HYDERABAD

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Foreword

The Centre for Economic and Social Studies (CESS) was founded in 1980 to undertake research in the field of economic and social development in India. The Centre recognizes that a comprehensive study of economic and social development issues requires an interdisciplinary approach that involves researchers from various disciplines. The focus of the Centre has been on policy-relevant research through empirical investigations with robust methodologies. Drawing on the domain specializations of the faculty, CESS has made significant contributions to social science research in several areas, viz., economic growth and equity, agriculture and livestock development, food security, poverty measurement, evaluation of poverty reduction programmes, environment, district planning, resettlement and rehabilitation, state finances, education, health, and demography. In recent times the research has expanded to vulnerable groups and inclusive development. The publications portfolio of CESS comprises books, journal articles, working papers, and monographs covering a broad range of domains and thematic areas. Monographs essentially contain the findings of research studies and projects carried out at the Centre. They provide an opportunity for CESS faculty, visiting scholars, and students to disseminate their research findings in an elaborate form.

This monograph titled *The Socio-Economic Status of the Kummari Community in Telangana State: Findings of An Empirical Study* embodies the results of an empirical study of the Kummari community in Telangana. This study -the first of its kind in the state of Telangana -comprehensively captures the status of the community through quantitative and qualitative methods. Pottery-making, the traditional occupation of the Kummari community, is in a transition. The present study has documented the importance of this activity as a livelihood option and the challenges encountered by the households pursuing it.

The holistic perspective employed by the study highlights evidence-based areas that require immediate policy interventions to enhance the livelihoods of the community. These include the imperatives of easing the relevant provisions of the regulatory policies related to inputs used by the community to make pottery, technology upgradation and its widespread deployment, product diversification that is in line with market demand and changing consumer tastes and lifestyles, marketing support to minimize the role of intermediaries to gain higher returns for the artisans, capacity-building of the artisans on a regular basis, and ensuring that welfare interventions are more inclusive - particularly those involving social security.

There is a compelling need to strengthen the co-operatives of the community so that the institutional network can be leveraged for advancing the livelihoods of the community. Enhanced financial commitments from the state government can go a

long way in enabling the community members to procure modern equipment so that their traditional pursuit can be upgraded into a viable enterprise that attracts not only the younger generation of the Kummari community but also members of other communities.

At the same time, policy initiatives are needed to enhance the educational levels of the community as well as to provide adequate political representation to empower the community members. In sum, the monograph offers evidence-based policy recommendations so that targeted interventions can be undertaken for raising the socio-economic status of the Kummari community. There is a need to undertake similar studies covering other occupational communities in the state (see the CESS monograph on the Vaddera community of Telangana state) so that targeted and nuanced policy initiatives can be designed and implemented.

Additionally, given the large number of Backward Castes in Telangana (130), such in-depth studies focusing on individual communities are the need of the hour to scientifically ascertain the relative socio economic status of each of them. I hope that the stakeholders, policy makers in particular, will find this study useful and will take forward the actionable recommendations it presents.

E. Revathi
Director, CESS

Acknowledgements

This monograph, "The Socio-Economic Status of the Kummari Community in Telangana State: Findings of an Empirical Study", is the outcome of a brainstorming session organized on the theme and the primary data collected from five representative undivided districts of Telangana. The study is an attempt to assess the socio-economic status of the Kummari (potter) community empirically and to capture the perspectives of all stakeholders. The core objective is to suggest evidence-based policy recommendations towards promoting the traditional craft and enhancing the livelihoods of the Kummari community in the state. As part of the study, we have benefited from the support and encouragement of several individuals and institutions without whose help the study would not have been possible.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

APWALTA	Andhra Pradesh Water, Land and Trees Act
APBCCFC	Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation
BC	Backward Class
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CESS	Centre for Economic and Social Studies
Cr	Crore
ESSs	Economic Support Schemes
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GOs	Government Orders
GWMC	Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation
HH	Household
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
HIV-AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ITI	Industrial Training Institute
LIC	Life Insurance Corporation
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MBC	Most Backward Classes
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBC	Other Backward Class
OU	Osmania University
PDS	Public Distribution System
PG	Post-graduate
PHC	Primary health centre
R&D	Research and Development
SC	Scheduled Caste
SHGs	Self-Help Groups
Sq. Yds	Square Yards
TS	Telangana state
TSBCCFC	Telangana State Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In the state of Telangana, the Kummari community is one of 130 Backward Castes classified under the BC-B category. The community is spread across the state with a population of about four lakhs, accounting for roughly 1.1% of the state's total population - with its distinctive rituals and customs. In relative terms, the community remains socially and economically backward and politically under-represented. The traditional and primary occupation of the Kummari community is pottery. A large proportion of Kummari households still relies on this as their primary livelihood source contributing, in the process, to the state economy by making a wide range of pottery. However, the returns have been moderate for most households, particularly over the past couple of decades. Pottery-making in the state is beset with a range of constraints such as scarcity of raw materials, low investments, obsolete technology, lack of product diversification, and poor marketing mechanisms, due to which potters end up having to depend on intermediaries such as resellers and retailers.

Methodology

Against this backdrop, this study empirically examines the socio-economic status of the Kummari community in Telangana and the challenges that they encounter. So far, there have been no studies focused exclusively on the livelihoods of the Kummari community in either Telangana or Andhra Pradesh. Based on the findings, the study suggests a way forward to enhance the livelihoods of the Kummari community in Telangana. The study covered 5 representative districts, 10 *mandals*, and 10 villages and urban wards, purposively selected based on the availability of the Kummari households. A total of 150 households were covered - 15 households from each location.

Core Objectives of the Study

- To map the basic demographics of the Kummari community and document their socio-economic status, including their access to government schemes.
- To assess the challenges of adopting new technologies and document issues related to pottery-making - covering pre-production, production, and post-production (marketing).

- To analyse the role of the Kummari co-operative societies and public institutions in promoting the livelihoods of the community and to suggest a way forward for their enhancement.

Demographics and Basic Amenities

The average family size of the community is 4 members and the sex ratio is 893. The majority (54.4%) of them fall under the most productive age category of 24-59 years. More than nine-tenths (92%) of the households live in their own houses and more than half (55%) of the houses are *pucca* in nature. Overall, 93% of the households have a drinking-water facility within the house premises and 63% of them have a separate kitchen. Most (83%) of the households have toilets within the premises, but only 48% of the households have running-water facilities in the toilets, and 67% of households are connected to the sewerage system. All the sample households are connected to the electric grid and 93% of the households use LPG as the main cooking fuel.

Education and Work Participation

The literacy level of the Kummari community stands at 67%. The largest segment of the population (22%) has studied up to 10th class; 17% of them have studied up to primary level; 11% of them are graduates; and only 2% of them are post-graduates. The school dropout rate is high among the community as 28% of household members dropped out before completing 10th standard. Findings related to work participation status (for the 15-65 age group) highlight that the traditional occupation is by far the most prevalent one. In terms of the secondary occupations of the workforce, only 11% of them are engaged in them, nearly 60% work as wage labourers and mostly in agriculture sector. A quarter reported that agriculture is a secondary activity. While three-fourths of Kummari households are landless, among the landed, the average landholding is less than 2 acres, and only a fifth of the landed households depend on borewells, which are often unreliable.

Household Income and Expenditure

The annual mean household income of the community from all sources is Rs 1,83,470 and the corresponding figures for urban and rural areas are Rs 2,17,990 and Rs 1,64,053, respectively. The household consumption expenditure of the community indicates that food is the most significant expenditure category, accounting for 35% of the total spending. In toto, food, health, and education together represent 70% of regular household spending among the Kummaries.

Access to Key Government Schemes

The findings related to social safety nets (mainly *Aasara* pensions) show mixed coverage; close to 60% of eligible households are left out of old-age pensions while the coverage is 100% under widow and single woman pensions. The coverage under food security (PDS) and health care (*Aarogyashri*) initiatives is very high. Coverage under Rythu Bandhu is 100% (all eligible landowners are covered) and Rythu Bima covers 69% of the eligible farmers. Regarding membership in women's self-help groups (SHGs), 30% of households are left out of these institutions. Only 15% of households participated in the MGNREGS.

Traditional Occupation: Emerging Trends and Issues

The study found that 92% of the Kummari households are willing to continue pottery-making despite the challenges associated with production and income levels. Three-fourths of households (75%) affirmatively stated that their children may have to continue pottery mainly due to a lack of alternatives.

In a majority of locations studied, clay - a primary raw material - is not available locally. They procure it from neighbouring villages and from locations that are 50-70 km away from the village. Clay is procured by paying Rs 2,000 per tractor-load in rural areas and around Rs 7,000 per lorry-load in urban areas. A majority of the Kummari households reported difficulties in procuring firewood. They source it from nearby sawmills by paying about Rs 3,000 per tractor load.

More than a half (60%) of Kummari households do not have adequate space for storing their products and raw materials, and a majority of the households (67%) have baking kilns in their homesteads. Close to 7% of the households, mostly in urban areas, reported that air pollution caused by *bhattis* (kilns) has emerged a major issue that needs to be urgently addressed. In some locations (such as Hyderabad and Hanamkonda), some locals have even lodged complaints and filed suits against the polluting kilns.

An overwhelming 74% of the Kummari households do not have any marketing arrangements as customers themselves come to their homes to buy the products. Close to 8% of the respondents said that they rely on agents to market their products in other places and nearly a tenth of them stated that they supply their products to intermediaries who in turn sell the wares at markets or in public places.

Traditional pottery is a labour-intensive family activity, but modern technologies have made the entire production process relatively easy and significantly more efficient. The community has been slow to adopt new technologies as the older generation is more comfortable with traditional equipment. The study found that potters from 42% of the households surveyed have attended training programmes conducted by government agencies. However, 92% of the training participants conveyed that the government did not provide them with modern machinery or financial assistance. Over a third (36%) of the sample households reported that they use modern equipment.

Caste Co-operatives and the Kummari Federation

Officially, there are 957 Kummari co-operative societies in the state, and 63% of the surveyed households reported that they were members of village associations. However, only half of them conveyed that they "benefited" from their association with the co-operative. Only 45% of the sample households are aware of the existence of the state-level Kummari Federation and none of them had received any assistance or benefits from the Federation. The Telangana Kummari/Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited, since its formation, has been allocated only Rs 56 crore for implementing subsidy-based schemes. There have been no allocations for the federation for the past three years, but the Federation data shows that over the past five years, it has released subsidies to 2,667 beneficiaries spread across the state and provided modern tool kits to 23 Kummari beneficiaries. The political representation of the community is extremely low on account of the small size of the population and lack of financial resources and cohesiveness in the community.

Key Recommendations

1. Existing regulatory policies such as the APWALTA 2002 need to be amended to enable the Kummari community to access locally available raw materials such as clay and firewood to which they had unrestricted access before the enactment of the law.
2. Mobile and gas-run *bhattis* (kilns) should be provided according to households' needs to address the issue of air pollution in urban areas.
3. Free power should be provided to households practising the traditional occupation.
4. Common processing, production, and storage centres or yards should be constructed in both rural and urban areas by the state government.

5. Government land or acquired land needs to be provided to store finished products.
6. Modern machinery and tools should be provided to the community to make pottery-making attractive to younger generations.
7. MoUs need to be signed with other states that have implemented innovative models for technology transfer, capacity building, and collaboration.
8. General insurance cover or financial assistance needs to be provided for damaged products.
9. The government needs to provide space at *rythu bazaars* and public markets for the sale of clay products.
10. Promotion and marketing of clay products through digital channels such as e-commerce sites needs to be explored.
11. The option of involving village-level caste co-operatives or associations and the state-level Kummari Federation in the procurement and marketing of finished products needs to be explored.
12. The government should regularly procure pottery items through the Kummari Co-operative Federation and local co-operatives for use in government institutions.
13. The role of intermediaries in the pottery supply chain should be regulated to ensure that the artisans receive a fair price for their products.
14. Social security pensions for all community members of the prescribed age should be provided.
15. Pottery workers should also be recognized by the Department of Labour so that they can be provided social security and insurance benefits through the issue of ID cards.
16. Under economic support schemes (ESSs), 100% subsidy (grant) can be considered without bank linkage and beneficiary contribution for the purchase of modern equipment.
17. New technical and vocational courses in designing and producing clay products with modern equipment should be introduced from Class 10 and in polytechnic colleges

18. Having been recognized as an under-represented community, the members of the Kummari community should be accorded priority through special drives for educational and employment opportunities.
19. Government initiatives (such as for the supply of machinery, financial assistance, and capacity building) need to treat women entrepreneurs on par with their male counterparts.
20. The Kummari Federation should be provided with the required functionaries and powers to play a leading role in procuring, storing, and marketing earthen ware. There is a clear case for making adequate budgetary allocations for the Federation.
21. There is a need to reach out to the community with information about government schemes and initiatives; the village co-operatives can play a key role in this regard.
22. Establishing a research and development (R&D) centre on earthenware and related products should also be treated as a priority. Capacity-building interventions with the required infrastructure to provide hands-on training should be integrated with R&D initiatives.
23. It is recommended that further research on the subject be carried out from a gender-sensitive perspective to bring out the differences in situations, experiences, challenges, and opportunities associated with the traditional activity.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Historically, Indian society has been organized according to an occupation-based hierarchical caste system. According to Andre Beteille (1965), the defining feature of caste is its hereditary nature. Pursuits related to traditional occupations and skills are placed in a hierarchical ranking. In India there are 2,479 communities listed under the Backward Classes, of which 39.4% are listed as Most Backward Communities (MBCs). Maharashtra has the highest number of Backward Castes (256), followed by Karnataka (199), Odisha (197), and Tamil Nadu (182). The state of Manipur has only four Backward Castes (Ministry of Social Justice, Government of India 2019).

Social groups with traditional occupations such as Mangali (barbers), Chakali (dhobis), Vaddera (stone-cutters), Mera (tailors), Medari (basket makers), Yadava (traditionally cowherds and small ruminant keepers), Padmashali (weavers), Gouda (toddy-tappers), Vishwabrahmins (group of occupational castes such as goldsmiths, blacksmiths and carpenters), Uppara (traditional salt-makers), and Kummari (potters) would perform certain “expected” functions and provide services to other communities in the countryside, and, in return, they were remunerated in-kind or cash payments. For generations, the caste system restricted individual freedom to choose occupations and livelihoods according to one’s talent, choice, or interest. Inevitably, one had to follow one’s caste occupation irrespective of its economic and social disadvantages. Consequently, caste occupations survived for centuries and continue to determine the relative status, role, and power of an individual according to their birth (known as ascribed status) and not merit, accomplishment, or talent (known as achieved status).

The nature of production activities and services led to cultural differentiation among castes, which determined their relative position in the social hierarchy. However, over centuries, these occupational castes have helped enhance the economic status of rural households and have contributed to the growth of the rural economy in general. The growth of agriculture and allied sectors depended, to a considerable extent, on these communities.

During the post-Independence period, there have been rapid changes in the occupational structure. The shifts in structure can be attributed to planned and targeted development strategies and programmes in different sectors, introduction of modern technology in agriculture and other traditional occupations, entry of private investment in occupational activities, and new livelihood avenues that have opened up with rising educational levels. Youth migration to urban locations in search of brighter opportunities has also contributed to the relegation of traditional occupations to a secondary status. Other communities, such as the “upper castes”, have ventured into traditional activities with large investments and modern technologies. Older workers, with traditional and mostly obsolete skills and meagre investments, are unable to compete with modern technologies, products, and services. As a result, they remain under-unemployed and poor. The resulting distress has forced some artisans to even end their lives.

1.1. The Pottery-making Community

Pottery is a small-scale cottage-based industry in India. Pottery is one of the oldest crafts of human civilization. The term “pottery” is derived from the French word *potteric* or Latin word *potrium*, which means “a drinking vessel” (Gupta 1988). As one of the service castes in the traditional caste structure, the potter community is spread across 212 districts in India, predominantly in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Odisha, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh. They are known by different names such as Kumhars or Kumbhars, Bhandes, Kulals, or Prajapatis.

In Telangana, the Kummari community is one of the Backward Classes, classified under the BC-B category. The community is spread across both rural and urban areas, accounting for a total population of around four lakhs. In relative terms, the community remains socially and economically backward and politically under-represented vis-à-vis other communities in the state. The map showing the spread of the potter community across India is presented in Figure 1.1.

According to a legend, Kumhars are offspring of Lord Brahma (Prajapati). This is the reason they go by the surname Prajapati or Prajapat in some states. Indian culture cannot be understood without acknowledging the Kumhar. They claim to be the first inventors of the wheel. Their name means “the makers of earthenware”. Kumhars are found throughout India. They speak the languages of the areas they live in. A Kumhar’s sources of livelihood include agriculture, animal husbandry, and making earthen pots

or wares. It is very difficult for an artisan to sustain themselves through the occupation of *kumbbkal* (potmaking). They are very honest people and make their livelihoods through hard work and are also highly spiritual. Typically, Kumhar farmers work on lands owned by higher castes for inputs such as clay and wood. They in turn supply pots, and other wares for the storage of grains and water, and other household needs such as cooking. They are given a certain portion or fixed quantity of crop output at the time of harvest. Kumhars are Hindus and typically worship Lord Shiva and Mother *Mata*.

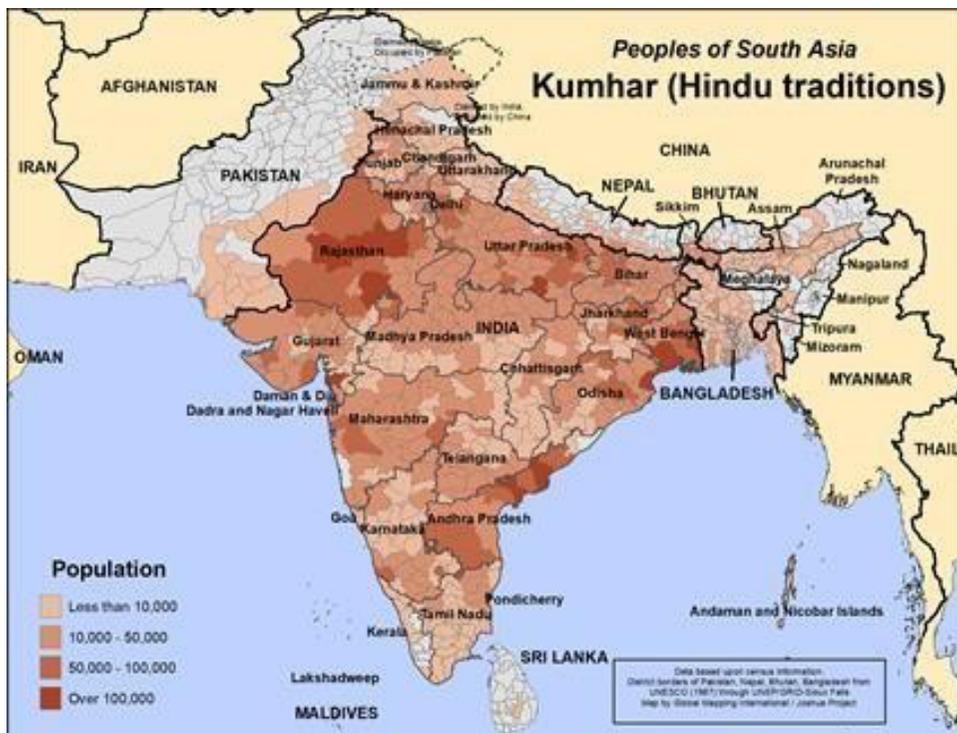


Figure 1.1: Map Showing the Spread of the Potter Community across the Country

Source: People Group Location: Omid. Other geography/data: GMI. Map Design: Joshua Project

Education is a challenge for the Kumhars since many of them lead nomadic lives. Children often drop out of school after a few years to help their parents earn a living. They frequently lack access to modern medicines and clean water (Hamilton 1982).

This caste potters is found across the country; almost every village has a potter community

or locality. Potters are further divided into sub-groups depending on the kind of pottery they make and the labour they contribute. They make a range of products ranging from utilitarian, decorative, and religious to playful toys and items for festivals, births, deaths, weddings, and large terracotta idols for votive purposes. Therefore, their skills are incredibly versatile. The quality of clay also varies across the sub-continent. Current Indian red clay pottery practices are age-old - production activities are carried out on a household basis and are characterized by low technology and low levels of output.

As scientific and technical knowledge is lacking due to illiteracy and poverty, production techniques remain inferior and the products lack standardization. The market for the products is mainly local and partly extends to urban areas. Additionally, intermediaries play a dominant role in marketing these indigenous products. They usually place orders with the artisan and collect the products at prices much lower than the market price. Competition from substitutes such as plastic and metal items pose a major challenge for the potter (Lakshman1966). The decline of this particular sector of employment poses a serious problem and sustainable solutions need to be devised to make the household industry viable (Rao and Suresh 2010). Younger potters prefer to work in factories or take up construction jobs to get away from the stigma attached to the craft.

1.2. History of Pottery as a Traditional Occupation

Pottery in the Indian subcontinent has a long history and is one of the most tangible and iconic elements of Indian art. Evidence of pottery has been found in the early settlements of Lahuradewa and later in the remains of the Indus Valley civilization. Today, it is a cultural art that is still practised extensively in the Indian subcontinent. Until recent times, all Indian pottery comprised earthenware, including terracotta. Hindu traditions historically discouraged the use of pottery because it is subject to erosion (due to its fragility), which explains the noticeable lack of traditions of fine or luxury pottery in South Asia in contrast to East Asia and other parts of Eurasia.

Large *matki* jars for the storage of water or other things, form the largest part of traditional Indian pottery, in addition to objects such as lamps. Small *kulhars* (cups) and *diyas* (oil lamps) that can be disposed after a single use, remain common (Pal 1978).

Today, pottery thrives as an art form in India. Various platforms, including potters' markets and online pottery boutiques, have contributed to this trend. Pottery in Indian villages presents a wonderful amalgamation of concept, design, and execution. Many

villages in India are famous for producing extraordinary pottery products. Since ancient days, Indians have been adept at the craftsmanship of moulding clay with their hands to form various objects of daily utility, toys, and deities of worship.

Pottery is among the most sensual of all arts. Being an agricultural country, India has a high requirement for pots for the storage of water and grains. Having begun with the Indus Valley civilization, the art of shaping and baking clay articles as pottery, earthenware, and porcelain has been in progress till now. Pottery and earthenware are used at homes as utilitarian and decorative products. Porcelain is used for art and studio pottery. Pottery, both handmade and wheel-made, can be seen all over India. In the Harappan civilization, the potter had an important place in society. Their crafts were advanced. For firing the product, they used a rectangular oven. The seeds, grains, and water containers from that age, displayed in museums, are in good condition to date. In terms of craft tradition, pottery occupies a unique position in India as it is home to millions of potters. The artisans were also traders and entrepreneurs (Saklani 2010).

1.3. Types of Pottery across India

Though it can be handmade and wheel-made, there are two main categories of pottery, unglazed and glazed. Major types of pottery are *karigari*, blue pottery, black pottery, and terracotta.

The villages of Jammu and Kashmir are famous for producing quality earthenware of ordinary clay with a glaze-like surface. The villages of Uttar Pradesh are well known for making some of the finest and most decorative black clay pottery items. The other important places for pottery in Uttar Pradesh include Meerut, Hapur, Chinhat, and Mansalia. The villages in these places are famous for making ordinary domestic articles and glazed items. Meerut and Jhajjar are famous for making slim-necked water containers called *surahis*. The potters in the Sundarbans region make *dakshinirai* pots, which are round with an edging running along the mouth signifying a crown. People also worship these pots as gods, who protect them from tigers.

The villages of Gujarat are famous for making items using a mixture of white and black pottery. The villagers create designs with the use of dots, zig-zag stripes, diagonals, and floral and animal patterns are occasionally used. The villages in Kutch and Saurashtra, Gujarat, are famous for their beautiful earthenware. Kutch is famous for pots, terracotta horses, and elephants. On the other hand, earthenware made in the villages of Goa has

a charm of its own. Vellore is famous for its black and red wares, and Usilampatti in Madurai district is also famous for its black pottery. However, the *karigari* pottery in south Arcot, Tamil Nadu, is the most famous form of pottery in south Indian villages. Khanapur in the Belgaum district, Karnataka, is popular for making large-sized containers and jars for storage and preservation. Rural areas of Tamil Nadu are also widely famous for their deity figures. The figures are huge and are found standing guard at the entrances of villages protecting the residents from evil spirits.

1.4. Brief Review of Literature

Although potters play a significant role in sacred rituals, agriculture-related operations, and household needs, it is difficult to find scholarly work on the community across India in general, and in Telangana in particular. On the contrary, some studies have been undertaken in West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, which identified the challenges and opportunities of the pottery-making occupation. The roots of the Indian pottery industry can be traced way back to the earliest civilization. Evidence of pottery has been found in the early settlement of Mehargarh from the Indus Valley civilization. States such as Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Karnataka are well known for pottery work (Kasemi 2014).

Lalithambika (2016) found that the potters belong to several sub-castes; Kumbharan, Kusava, Adi Andhra, Tamil-cultured Kumbharan, Munnudayan, Kaula, Anthur Nair, Andhra Nair, Velan, PandiVelan, Odan, and Oorali Kumbharan are the communities engaged in pottery work in Kerala. They are migrants from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The pottery industry is characterized by the small size of units, family-based operations, and skilled workers or artisans. Across India, there are more than 40 lakh people who depend on pottery work. They speak different languages but do not have a prescribed script. Potters, in general, are educationally and economically backward, irrespective of their place of residence.

Phukan (1987) in his book *Loka Kalpa Dristi* points out that owing to the impact of neo-Vaishnavism in Assam, most members of the potter community have lost their livelihoods due to a drastic reduction in crafts-related activities. Sarma and Sarma (1991) focused on the pottery-making process of the *Hira* and *Kumar* communities of Assam. They outlined the different stages that are involved in pottery-making in traditional practice. It is important to note that, in Assam, only women are engaged in pottery

work. Owing to the low educational level among the *Hira* potters in Assam, the community still uses traditional techniques. As a result, they are not able to meet the changing tastes of buyers (Duary 2008). The potters of Mornoi in Assam specifically make pitchers for *Garo* people which are high in demand and Hira potters make pottery for rituals and auspicious occasions (Sarmahand Hazarika 2018)

A majority of artisans in different districts of Tamil Nadu are still bound by the traditional ways of living and working and are slow to embrace modern technology. They accord a higher priority to increasing production and productivity rather than to quality and product range. The artisans are not aware of the emerging marketing channels and information and communication technologies (ICTs). The potter community makes reduced incomes because it heavily leans on intermediaries to market its products (Akilandeswari and Pitchai 2016). Bhattacharya (2008) examined the livelihoods of idol makers of West Bengal, particularly those of the potters engaged in religious idol making. The potters have emerged as an occupational group and rural potters tend to migrate to urban areas that offer them better earning opportunities. She also raises concerns about the effects of social transformation and changing lifestyles on the future of the traditional system of idol making, which is the lifeline of the community.

It is important to enhance the rural artisans' access to education and technology in Sivaganga, Dindigul, and Madurai districts of Tamil Nadu and help them advertise their products through digital displays in public places and market centres. NGOs can play a vital role in training these artisans by forming SHGs or clusters and creating web sites to promote the craft and its products. Institutions can promote pottery under their corporate social responsibility initiatives and help them in marketing, capacity building, and technology upgradation. ICTs have the potential to improve their standard of living (Akilandeswari and Pitchai 2016). The potter community in Majuli district of Assam encounters a range of challenges on account of irregular supply and scarcity of raw materials, lack of financial support from the government, outdated tools and equipment, competition from mass-produced household utensils, poor connectivity and communications, absence of product promotion and training opportunities, and financial incapacity. Additionally, the promotion of pottery industry is essential for economic development as well as cultural protection (Jyoti 2019).

Potters of Thrissur district of Kerala also experience several constraints related to their occupation. They are unable to translate the demand for their products into profits

successfully. They lag behind others both economically and educationally. In fact, the community finds itself in dire straits. Non-availability of raw materials is the biggest challenge they are confronted with. The technology and methods used by them for production are primitive and laborious. They are not able to diversify their product range. Many of the potters here are still unaware of the emerging technologies. For the revival of pottery, government intervention is the need of the hour. Production-related issues (concerning raw materials, technology, and marketing) adversely affect their ability to earn a decent livelihood (Deepak 2019).

In Chhattisgarh, the potter community is deprived of access to clay and firewood due to encroachment of their land by brick makers. An important factor is the state's Forest Department, whose discriminatory policies favour paper manufacturers over the traditional rights of potters. Due to this, the community members rely on the villages which are around 40–50 km away for procuring clay (Natrajan 2005).

The products that are made in Thoothukudo, Tamil Nadu, are mostly sold locally or transported to urban areas. The middlemen play a vital role in marketing these products and they typically place the orders with the artisan and procure the products at prices lower than the market price. The community is confronted with a variety of constraints such as unreliable supply of raw materials, lack of working capital, obsolete technology, absence of product diversification, competition from organized sectors, lack of marketing avenues, general management issues, and lack of R&D support (Rathi 2018). In Darjeeling, West Bengal, the potter community has substantially raised their production with the adoption of new technologies to meet the market demand for clay art forms and utilities of several urban centres of India (Ratna Sarkar 2017, Qureshi 1990).

Most of the ceramic products are exported through intermediaries and the producers are not able to gain full returns. That is why there is a need for training and capacity-building in the field of pottery export (Prakash Shrestha 2018). The artisans in Assam are faced with acute financial distress as they are unable to cope with the modern competitive environment due to which they remain poor (Kabin Sarma 2018). In Jaipur, blue pottery is acknowledged as an exceptional craft. It employs many people. It is labour-intensive and uses conventional techniques in the production process. The artisans mostly use traditional designs for products that are exported (Bhardwaj 2018). To sustain themselves through the traditional occupation and compete with global players, there is a need to adopt modern technology (Sodhi 2006). The foregoing literature review amply

demonstrates that there are no studies focusing on Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Hence, this study is an attempt to fill the gap.

1.5. Need for the Study

In Telangana, the Kummari community is one of the Backward Classes, classified under the BC-B category. The Kummari community is spread across rural and urban areas of the state, accounting for a total population of around four lakhs. In relative terms, the community, with its distinct rituals and customs, remains socially, economically, and politically backward vis-à-vis other communities in the state. This study is the first of its kind on the socio-economic status of the potter community in the state.

The study examines the current socio-economic status of the Kummari community in Telangana with a special focus on their traditional occupation and livelihoods and the challenges that they are confronted with. Based on the findings, the study suggests a way forward for enhancing the livelihoods of the Kummari community in the state.

1.6. Objectives of the Study

1. To map the basic demographics of the Kummari community in the state and document their socio-economic status, including their access to key government schemes.
2. To assess the challenges of adopting new technologies and to document issues related to pottery making – covering pre-production, production, and post-production (marketing).
3. To analyse the role of institutions such as Kummari cooperative societies and the Kummari Federation in promoting the livelihoods of the community.
4. To suggest a way forward for the enhancement of their livelihoods.

1.7. Methodology

The study covered five representative erstwhile districts (undivided) of Telangana, giving due weightage to the central, northern, and southern parts of the state. The study districts – Adilabad, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Rangareddy, and Warangal – were selected based on the availability of the Kummari households that are still pursuing the traditional craft. Two *mandals* from each sample district and one village/urban ward from each *mandal* were selected for a detailed study. The rationale behind the selection of the districts, *mandals*, and villages is the availability of the Kummari households in the

respective locations. The 10 locations are representative of both rural and urban areas with 4 of the locations being urban.

A purposive sampling technique was adopted in identifying and selecting the households involved in the traditional occupation in their respective villages and towns. From each village/location, a sample of 15 households were selected for an in-depth primary survey; thus, the total sample size from 10 villages was 150 households. From each district, 3 respondents from caste co-operatives or associations or elders were selected for strategic interviews; thus, the study covered 15 key informants. One focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted in each selected village/ward with key stakeholders such as the elders of the community, people engaged in pottery, women, and the youth. Primary data was collected by administering a structured questionnaire to the sampled households. Interactions were also held with members of caste co-operatives. The secondary data was gleaned from various sources such as census data, journals, books, and online resources.

1.8. Brainstorming Session

CESS organized a brainstorming session on the *Livelihoods and Socio-economic Conditions of the Kummari Community in Telangana: Issues, Challenges, and Way Forward*, prior to the launch of this study. The multi-stakeholder consultation was an attempt to identify the core issues and challenges confronting the Kummari community and devise policy recommendations for the development of the community (a separate report was prepared). The session focused on the following themes:

- Livelihoods and socio-economic conditions.
- Government policies, programmes, and new technologies.
- Role of caste cooperatives/associations and the federation in the development of the community.
- Recommendations for the enhancement of the livelihoods of the community.

The outcome of the multi-stakeholder deliberations was used to determine the scope and methodology of the study.

Table 1.1: Sample Locations and Sample Size of the Study

District	Mandal	Village/Ward	Location	Sample HHs
Adilabad	Adilabad	BangariGuda	Rural	15
	Utnur	Lakkaram	Rural	15
Warangal	Warangal	Ursu	Urban	15
	Warangal	Inavole	Rural	15
Rangareddy	Keesara	Nagaram	Rural	15
	Dundigal	Bowrampet	Urban	15
Nalgonda	Nalgonda	Nalgonda	Urban	15
	Choutuppal	Tangadpally	Rural	15
Mahabubnagar	Narayanpet	Narayanpet	Urban	15
	Kosgi	Kosgi	Rural	15
5 districts	10 <i>mandals</i>	10 sites	4 Urban 6 Rural	150 HHs

CHAPTER-2

DEMOGRAPHIC STATUS AND PROFILES OF SAMPLE LOCATIONS

2.1. Introduction

Demographic data of a community not only enables us to understand its relative status in society but also facilitates evidence-based policymaking. This chapter provides the context of the study by presenting the basic demographic characteristics of the selected locations such as the gender-wise breakdown of the population, age profile, and literacy levels of the sample villages. The profile of the community shows its position vis-à-vis others in the sample locations (results of the primary survey are presented in Chapter 3).

2.2. Kummari Population (1931–2020)

As per the 1931 Census, the population of the Kummari community in Hyderabad State was about 1.38 lakhs. The male population was 52.5% and the female population was 47.5%. The highest population was recorded in the Nalgonda district which accounts for 20.2% of the total population, followed by Karimnagar with 18.3%, Warangal and Adilabad with 11.9%, and 11.7% respectively. The lowest population was found in Hyderabad city with only 1.7%. The sex ratios were lower in the districts such as Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, Medak, Airaf-Balda, Nizamabad, and Warangal when compared to the State sex ratio of 955. The district-wise Kummari population in the sample locations is presented in tables 2.1 and 2.2.

The current population of the Kummari community in Telangana is about four lakhs; accounting for 1.1% of the state's total population (2020). The highest population is found in Nalgonda (14.8%), followed by Rangareddy (14.5%), and Medak (14%). Hyderabad and Khammam districts account for 3.3% and 5%, respectively, of the total population in the state (Table 2.1). Table 2.2 presents the study locations and populations of the selected villages respectively.

Table 2.1: District-wise Kummari Population in Hyderabad and Telangana States

Name of the district	1931 Total	Share (%)	1931 Population			2020 Population*	
			Male	Female	Sex ratio	Population	Share
Adilabad	10786	11.8	6688	4098	613	25000	6.3
Airaf-Balda	6154	6.7	3052	3102	464		0
Hyderabad	1563	1.7	789	774	116	13000	3.3
Karimnagar	16756	18.3	8659	8097	1211	47000	11.8
Khammam						20000	5
Mahabubnagar	12142	13.3	6857	5285	790	40000	10
Medak	8120	8.9	4321	3799	568	56000	14
Nalgonda	18506	20.2	9260	9246	1382	59000	14.8
Nizamabad	6499	7.1	3485	3014	451	29000	7.3
Ranga Reddy						58000	14.5
Warangal	10917	11.9	5761	5156	771	53000	13.3
Total	91443 (1.2%)	100	48872	42571	871	400000 (1.1%)	100
Hyderabad State Kummari Population	154148		80919	73229	905		
Total Telangana Population	7554598		3863576	3691022	955	35003674	

Source: Census 1931 and *Kummari community representatives in the state

Table 2.2: Population of Kummaries in the Sample Locations

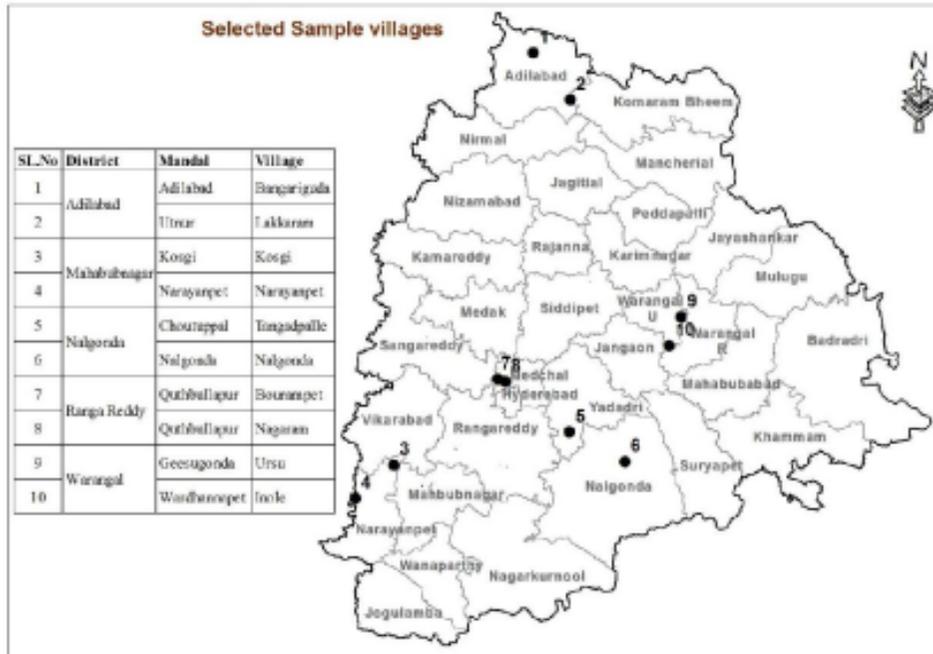
District	Village or town	Total HHs	Total population	Kummari population*	% to total population
Adilabad	Bangariguda	5,953	26,832	750	2.8
	Lakkaram	951	4,061	340	1.3
Warangal	Ursu (Ward 16)	16,425	66,943	650	2.4
	Inavole	1,840	7,441	180	0.7
Ranga Reddy	Nagaram	7,393	30,502	150	0.6
	Bowrampet	1,052	4,671	170	0.6
Nalgonda	Nalgonda (Ward 7)	3,463	14,348	600	2.2
	Tangadpally	1,719	6,940	450	1.7
Narayanpet	Narayanpet (Ward 4)	1,604	8,240	390	1.5
	Kosgi	4,366	21,215	160	0.6

Source: Census 2011; *Kummari community heads of the village

Table 2.3: Demographic Profiles of Sample Locations										
Particulars	Bangariguda	Lakkaram	Kosgi	Narayanpet	Tangadpally (Ward4)	Nalgonda	Bowrampet (Ward7)	Nagaram	Urus Ward (16)	Iloni
No of HHs	5953	951	4366	1604	1719	3463	1052	7393	16425	1840
Total population	26832	4061	21215	8240	6940	14348	4671	30502	66943	7441
TOT_M	13694	2011	10606	4136	3509	7141	2424	15504	33587	3797
% of Male	51.0	49.5	50.0	50.2	50.6	49.8	51.9	50.8	50.2	51.0
TOT_F	13138	2050	10609	4104	3431	7207	2247	14998	33356	3644
% of Female	49.0	50.5	50.0	49.8	49.4	50.2	48.1	49.2	49.8	49.0
P_06	2823	507	2829	952	835	1526	598	3680	6774	637
M_06	1447	249	1472	490	427	772	318	1862	3494	320
% of Male (0-6)	51.3	49.1	52.0	51.5	51.1	50.6	53.2	50.6	51.6	50.2
F_06	1376	258	1357	462	408	754	280	1818	3280	317
% of Female (0-6)	48.7	50.9	48.0	48.5	48.9	49.4	46.8	49.4	48.4	49.8
P_SC	3036	678	2949	289	1366	2592	597	2833	5281	1766
% of SC	11.3	16.7	13.9	3.5	19.7	18.1	12.8	9.3	7.9	23.7
P_ST	1006	2180	47	82	19	203	24	726	1825	126
% of ST	3.7	53.7	0.2	1.0	0.3	1.4	0.5	2.4	2.7	1.7
P_LIT	19259	2427	11249	5912	4058	9758	2646	22907	48051	4224
% of Literacy	71.8	59.8	53.0	71.7	58.5	68.0	56.6	75.1	71.8	56.8
M_LIT	10567	1380	6573	3257	2368	5474	1501	12279	26594	2535
%	77.9	68.5	61.9	78.7	67.4	76.6	61.9	79.1	79.3	66.7
F_LIT	8692	1047	4676	2655	1690	4284	1145	10628	21457	1689
%	66.1	51.0	44.0	64.5	49.2	59.3	50.9	70.6	64.3	46.3
Total work population	9589	1878	9910	3466	3073	5792	2008	10993	25572	4092
% of	35.7	46.2	46.7	42.1	44.3	40.4	43.0	36.0	38.2	55.0
Total Workers										
Total Work Male	7336	1063	5717	2269	1832	3770	1359	8543	17968	2007
%	76.5	56.6	57.7	65.5	59.6	65.1	67.7	77.7	70.3	49.0
Total Work Female	2253	815	4193	1197	1241	2022	649	2450	7604	2085
%	23.5	43.4	42.3	34.5	40.4	34.9	32.3	22.3	29.7	51.0

Source: Census 2011

Figure 2.1: Telangana Map Showing the Study Locations



2.3. Profiles of the Study Locations: Bangariguda

The village is 6 km away from, and well connected to, the district headquarters. It consists of 5,953 households with a total population of 26,832— of which the male population comprises 51% and the female population 49%, respectively. Besides, the population of persons aged 0–6 years is 2,823, of whom the percentage of male children is 51.3% and female children account for 48.7%. The village’s Scheduled Caste population is 11.3% and the Scheduled Tribes constitute 3.7%. The literacy rate of the village is 71.8%; the male literacy rate is 77.1% and the female literacy rate is 66.1%. Bangariguda was merged with the Adilabad Municipality in 2016. The Municipality consists of 36 wards.

According to the elders of the Kummari community, the caste population in the village is 750 which accounts for 2.8% of the total population of the village. Most of the members of the working-age group (90%) practice pottery-making and the rest are engaged in other occupations.

2.4. Lakkaram

Lakkaram village is part of the Utnoor *mandal* of Adilabad district. The village is 45 km away from the district headquarters but it is well connected by road. In the village, there are 951 households. The total population of the village is 4,061, of which the male population comprises 49.5% and the female population 50.5%. The population aged 0–6 years is 507, of which male children constitute 49.1% and female children account for 50.9%. In the village, 16.7% of the population belongs to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes make up 53.7%. The literacy rate of the village is 59.8%; male literacy stands at 68.6% and female literacy at 51%.

According to the elders of the Kummari community, the community population in the village is 340, which accounts for 1.3% of the total population of the village. A majority of members of the working-age group (60%) are practising pottery-making and the rest are engaged in other occupations.

2.5. Ursu

Ursu is a town in the Khila-Warangal *mandal* of Hanamkonda district. It is one of the divisions (wards) in the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation (GWMC). The town is 8 km away from the district headquarters and has excellent road connectivity. There are 16,425 households and the population of the town is 66,943. The male population is 50.2% and the female population is 49.8%. The population of children aged 0–6 years is 6,774, of which male children comprise 51.6% and female children, 48.4%. The population of Scheduled Castes is 23.7% and the Scheduled Tribes make up 1.7%. The literacy rate of the town is 71.8%; male literacy rate is 79.7% and female literacy rate is 64.3%.

According to the elders of the community, the Kummari population in the town is 650, which accounts for 2.4% of the total population of the town (ward). A majority of the members of the working age group (65%) are potters.

2.6. Inavole

Inavole is a village in Inavole *mandal* of Hanamkonda urban district. The village is 25 km away from the district headquarters but is connected well by road to different parts of the district. The village consists of 1,840 households with a population of 7,441, of whom the male population forms 51% and the female population is 49%. The population

of children aged 0–6 years is 637, of whom male children make up 50.2% and female children constitute 49.8%. The population of the Scheduled Castes is 23.7% and the Scheduled Tribes constitute just 1.7%. The literacy rate of the village is 56.8% but the male literacy rate is higher, at 66.7%, than the female literacy rate, which is 46.3%.

As reported by the elders of the community, the Kummari population in the village is 180, which accounts for only 0.7% of the total population of the village. A majority of the people of the working-age group (55%) are potters and the rest are engaged in other activities.

2.7. Nagaram

Nagaram is a Municipality in Keesara *mandal* of Medchal-Malkajgiri district. There are 20 wards in the Municipality. The town has dependable infrastructure with 7,393 households. The total population of the town is 30,502, of whom the male population makes up 50.8% and the female population, 49.2%. The population of children aged 0–6 years is 3,680, of whom, male children comprise 50.6% and female children make up 49.4%. The Scheduled Caste population of the town is 9.3% while the Scheduled Tribes make up 2.4%. The overall literacy rate of the town is 75.1%, of male literacy rate is 79.1% and the female literacy rate stands at 70.6%.

As per the estimates made by the community members, the Kummari population in the location is 150, which accounts for 0.6% of the total population of the town. A majority of the community members (60%) are engaged in pottery-making.

2.8. Bowrampet

Bowrampet is a semi-ward in the Dundigal Municipality of the Medchal district and has been a municipal ward since 2018. It is 18 km away from the district headquarters and is well connected. There are 1,052 households in the ward. The total population of the town is 4,671, of which, males make up 51.9% and females constitute 48.1%. The children's population is 598, of whom male children make up 53.2% and female children comprise 46.8%. The ward's Scheduled Caste population is 12.8% while that of the Scheduled Tribes is only 0.5%. The population's literacy rate is 56.6, male literacy being higher, at 61.9%, than female literacy which stands at 50.9%.

Community representatives reported that the Kummari population of the village is 170, accounting for 0.6% of the total population of the ward. Most of the community

members (80%) practice pottery-making and the rest are engaged in other activities.

2.9. Nalgonda

The Nalgonda Municipality has 14 wards with an area of 32 sqkm, of which ward 7 was selected for the study. Nalgonda ward has good connectivity with Hyderabad and Vijayawada. Ward 7 has 3,463 households. The total population of the ward is 14,348, of whom the male population makes up 49.8% and the female population comprises 50.2%. The population of children aged 0–6 years is 1,526, of whom male children constitute 50.6% while the rest are female children. The Scheduled Castes make up 18.1% of the ward and the population of the Scheduled Tribes is 1.4%. The general literacy rate of the ward is 68%; the male literacy rate is 76.3% while the female literacy rate is 59.3%.

Estimates reported by the community elders show that the Kummari population of the ward is 600, who account for 2.2% of the total population of the town. Three-fourth of the community members are engaged in pottery-making.

2.10. Tangadpally

Tangadpally village in Choutuppal *mandal* of Nalgonda district is 55 km away from the district headquarters. The village is well connected by road. There are 1,719 households and the population is 6,940, of whom the male population is 50.6% and that of the females is 49.4%. The population of children aged 0–6 years is 835, of whom male children constitute 51.1% and female children make up 48.9%. Almost 20% of the population of the village belongs to the Scheduled Castes; the Scheduled Tribes make up just 0.3%. The overall literacy rate of the village is 58.5%; male literacy rate is 67.4% and the corresponding figure for females is 49.2%.

As estimated by the community elders, the Kummari population in the village is 450, which accounts for 1.7% of the total population of the village. Pottery-making is practised by most of the working-age members of the community (85%) and the rest are engaged in other activities.

2.11. Narayanpet

The Narayanpet Municipality has 25 wards and Ward 4 was selected for the study. The town has good road connectivity with Hyderabad and Karnataka. There are 1,604 households in the fourth ward. The total population of the town is 8,240, consisting of a male population of 50.2% and a female population of 49.8%. The population of

children aged 0–6 years is 952, consisting of 51.5% male children and 48.5% female children. The population of the Scheduled Castes is 3.5% and that of the Scheduled Tribes is 1%. The literacy rate of the town is 71.7% but male literacy is higher (78.7%) than female literacy (64.5%).

The community elders estimate that the Kummari community population in the village is 390, which accounts for 1.5% of the total population of the ward. Almost two-thirds of working-age members are into pottery-making and the rest are engaged in other activities.

2.12. Kosgi

Kosgi is a village in Kosgi *mandal* of Narayanpet district. It is 45 km far from the district headquarters and has good road connectivity. There are 4,366 households in the study location, consisting of a population of 21,215. The male population accounts for 50% and the rest consists of females. The population of children aged 0–6 years is 2,829, of whom male children make up 52% and the rest are accounted for by female children. The Scheduled Castes constitute 13.9% of the population of the village and the Scheduled Tribes make up a mere 0.2%. Literacy rate of the village is 53% but the literacy rate is higher among males (61.9%) when compared to females (44%).

Community elders indicated that the Kummari population of the village is 160, which accounts for 0.6% of the total population of the village. Most members of working age (75%) are engaged in pottery-making while the rest have opted for other livelihood options.

2.13. Summing Up

The demographic features of the study sites reveal that the locations have a multi-caste system and practise a wide range of occupations and professions for livelihoods. The numerical strength of the community in a village is important to generate pressure on the authorities concerned and to claim rights over natural resources. However, the Kummari community, although relatively small, plays a vital social role by making a variety of pottery for other communities while sustaining their culture. As the findings of the study presented in the following chapters show, the sustainability of the craft of pottery-making is contingent on the availability and accessibility of natural resources such as clay and firewood. These factors, along with marketing support and favourable government policies, will shape the future of the traditional craft in the state.

CHAPTER-3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE KUMMARI COMMUNITY IN THE SELECTED LOCATIONS

3.1. Introduction

Historically, the Kummaris in Telangana are socially, economically, and politically backward, in comparison with other intermediate social groups. Similar to other small occupational castes, the Kummaris are also beset with a range of challenges and vulnerabilities that hold them back from entering a higher socio-economic trajectory. Therefore, it is pertinent to capture the socio-economic status of the Kummari community in the state with special reference to the role of pottery-making in their livelihoods and to identify the areas that need to be addressed, from a policy perspective.

An examination of the socio-economic conditions of the community would provide pointers to understanding their quality of life. An assessment of socio-economic metrics such as, age profile, education, housing, access to basic amenities, asset ownership, occupation, work participation, consumption, and household income, is presented in this chapter.

A sample of 150 households that are involved in pottery-making were covered by the survey. Of the total sample, 60 households (40%) are from urban areas and the remaining 90 (60%) are from rural areas. The findings show that a quarter of the households (26%) are joint families. An overwhelming percentage (91%) of the families reported that they are natives of the respective sample villages/towns. And the remaining households, representing Nagaram, Bangariguda, and Ursu, reported that they migrated from other districts and settled in their current locations around 30 years ago for better livelihoods. This indicates relatively low levels of spatial mobility among the Kummaris.

The sample households represent a total population of 640 household members, of whom 338 (53%) are males and 302 (47%) are females. The average family size is 4 and the sex ratio is 893, however, urban areas have better sex ratios than rural areas. Household sizes are larger in villages such as Tangadpally and Kosgi (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Profile of Sample Households (%)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Sample households	60 (40)	90 (60)	150 (100)
Total population (total HH members)	251 (39.2)	389 (60.8)	640 (100)
Family size	4	4	4
Males (sample households)	126 (50)	212 (54)	338 (53)
Females (sample households)	125 (50)	117 (46)	302 (47)
Sex ratio	992	835	893

Source: Primary data

3.2. Age Profile of the Kummari Community

Concerning the age profile of the community, the 54% of the population falls under the most productive age category of 24–59 years. The corresponding proportions for urban and rural areas are 52% and 56%, respectively. A tenth of the population is above 59 years of age but this proportion is higher in urban areas (12). Pre-school children aged 0–6 years make up less than a tenth of the household members. The number of people in the age group of 24–59 years is higher in the study locations of Narayanpet and Tangadpally whereas Narayanpet and Bangariguda represent a higher share of people in the age category of 15–23 years (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: The Age Profile of the Study Population (%)

Age range (years)	Urban	Rural	All
0–6	16 (6.4)	34 (8.7)	50 (7.8)
7–14	35 (13.9)	43 (11.1)	78 (12.2)
15–23	39 (15.5)	63 (16.2)	102 (15.9)
24–59	130 (51.8)	218 (56.0)	348 (54.4)
>59	31 (12.4)	31 (8.0)	62 (9.7)
Total	251 (100)	389 (100)	640 (100)

Source: Primary data

3.3. Educational Status

Educational levels of the Kummari community are laid out in Table 3.3 (pre-school children aged 0–6 years are not considered in the calculation of the educational figures). The results show that there are only marginal rural-urban differences in education. The literacy level of the Kummari community stands at 66% and there is no major variation

between rural and urban areas in this regard. Concerning the actual educational attainments among the literates, nearly 3% of them are just literates, meaning they can only read and write. The largest segment of the population (22%) have studied up to the 10th class – the proportion is slightly higher in urban areas – and less than a fifth of them (17%) studied up to the primary level. More than a tenth of them (11%) are graduates while only 2% of them are post-graduates.

Table 3.3: Educational Levels of the Kummaris (%)

Educational levels	Urban	Rural	All
Illiterate	34.5	33.5	33.9
Literate (read & write)	2.3	2.6	2.5
Primary (upto 5th class)	16.5	17.9	17.3
Secondary (up to 10th class)	23.4	20.6	21.7
Intermediate	10.7	7.9	9.1
Diploma/polytechnic	1.9	2.6	2.3
Graduate	8.8	12.9	11.3
Post-graduate	1.9	1.8	1.9
Total	100	100	100

Source: Primary data

It is evident that the community members have a very low representation in higher and technical education, indicating that it is imperative to design targeted interventions to ensure higher enrolments in higher education. Insights gained from the field suggest that educational levels of girls are also considerably low as they tend to drop out after intermediate rather than opting for higher studies. There is a need to improve the access girls have to government residential degree colleges and create a more favourable pathways to post-graduate education.

Field insights reveal that in places such as Kosgi, there is no government degree college and as a result, the students have no option but to travel to Narayanpet, which is about 45 km away, to access higher studies. Although the students are prepared to pay the tuition, they are unwilling to study in private colleges in Kosgi because of the low quality of education. In Bowrampet, one of the student respondents who had completed graduation discontinued his studies and is now engaged in pottery-making due to financial constraints in the family.

In Nalgonda, one of the female students who had completed her engineering course is currently supporting her father in pottery-making. It was also observed that although the students, in general, are interested in pursuing higher studies, they are constrained by the financial status of their families. In some instances, the students are either weaned away from their studies or encouraged by their parents to participate in or take up the family's trade. One of the student respondents from Narayanpet who had studied up to the 7th class had dropped out and started working full-time in pottery-making, owing to pressure from his parents.

3.3.1. Dropout Rate

The findings of the study show that 17.8% of all household members (excluding pre-school children aged 0–6 years) reported that they had dropped out of school before completing 10th class; the corresponding rate for urban areas is 17.1% and for rural areas, 18.2%. Interactions with respondent families suggest that, in the past, the parents did not encourage their children to study because the latter were expected to support their families in the line of traditional work. Some respondents are of the view that there is no employment guarantee even after the completion of higher studies. So, to avoid wastage of time and resources, parents encourage their children to take to their traditional occupation, which secures their livelihood. However, the context today is different. Most parents are aware of the importance of education and encourage and ensure that their children receive at least a basic level of education and even higher education in some cases.

3.4. Housing Status

Concerning the ownership status of housing, 92% of the Kummari families live in their own house and the rest live in rented houses. A higher number of families living in rented houses were reported in Nagaram, Rangareddy district. A majority of the families staying as tenants in Nagaram, have recently separated from joint families and started their new families in rented dwellings.

In terms of the type of house, overall, more than half (55%) of the houses are *pucca* in nature. However, in rural areas, less than half (44%) of the houses are *pucca* and by contrast, the corresponding proportion is 70% in urban locations, indicating that there is a need to improve access to decent housing in rural areas. Similarly, the percentage of households living in *kutcha* houses is higher in rural areas at 17% when compared to the

overall percentage of *kutcha* houses (15%) in rural and urban areas combined. A majority of households in Bowrampet and Tangadpally live in *pucca* houses. It was also observed that a majority of the families in Bangariguda, Lakkaram, and Inavole villages have semi-*pucca* houses. And regarding *kutcha* houses, the number is much higher in Nagaram and Bangariguda villages. Similarly, the prevalence of semi-*pucca* houses is higher in rural areas (Table 3.4). It can be inferred from the survey results that the quality of housing needs to be improved upon in rural areas.

Table 3.4: Housing Status of the Kummari Community (% rounded)

House Ownership Status	Urban	Rural	All
Owned	57 (95)	79 (88)	136 (91)
Rented/leased	3 (5)	11 (12)	14 (9)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)
House Structure			
Kutcha	8 (13)	15 (17)	23 (15)
Semi-pucca	10 (17)	35 (39)	45 (30)
Pucca	42 (70)	40 (44)	82 (55)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data

Figure 3.1: Examples of Housing Quality



Pucca House in Inavole

Kutcha House in Nagaram

In terms of the number of rooms in a residence, 35% of the households have 2–3 rooms, which is higher in Ursu and Narayanpet (urban). 23% of the respondent households have 1–2 rooms and 9% of them have only one room, which was the most

prevalent trend in Inavole and Lakkaram. Moreover, 16% of the respondents have 4–5 rooms and most of such households are from Bowrampet, Tangadpally, and Inavole. The average homestead area of Kummaries in urban areas is 186 sq yards (the premises are larger in urban Bowrampet), and in rural locations, it is 487 sq yards. The houses are particularly spacious in Lakkaram.

3.5. Access to Household Amenities

Basic household amenities are essential for a decent standard of living which also determine the quality of life of residents. Basic amenities typically include safe drinking water, sanitation, housing, all-weather roads, electricity, fuel, transport, healthcare, schools, and recreational facilities. The study found that, overall, 93% of the households have drinking-water facilities within the house premises. Some households in Nagaram, Ursu, and Inavole do not have drinking-water facilities within the premises. This is mainly due to the non-availability of space for a tap connection. However, they have access to water from neighbours within a 25-metre radius. A majority of the households have access to water supplied under the Mission Bhagiratha initiative and they are satisfied with the water supply (see Table 3.5).

Across the sample locations, 63% of the households have a separate kitchen, which is more so in Bowrampet and Nalgonda (urban locations). Similarly, most households of Tangadpally, Lakkaram, Narayanpet, Ursu, and Nagaram have kitchens in their houses.

Table 3.5: Access to Basic Amenities (% of households)

Amenity (% of households reporting Yes) (N=150)	Urban	Rural	All
Drinking water source within the premises	96.7	91.1	93.3
Toilet in the premises	83.3	80.0	83.3
Toilets with water facility	55.0	43.3	48.0
HHs connected to the sewerage system	75.0	62.2	67.3
Electricity connection to all rooms/places	63.3	68.9	66.6
HHs with separate kitchen	65.0	62.2	63.3
LPG as main cooking fuel	93.3	92.2	92.7
Firewood as main cooking fuel	5.0	7.8	6.7

Source: Primary data

Overall, 83% of the households reported having toilets within the house premises. The percentage of households with toilets in or near the house is marginally higher in urban

areas (83%) than in rural locations (80%). Close to all the households of Bowrampet, Tangadpally, and Ursu have access to toilets in their homes whereas a majority of the sample households in Narayanpet and Bangariguda do not have such facilities. In Narayanpet, due to the non-availability of space within the house premises, residents have purchased land and constructed toilets around 25–50 metres away from their houses. One of the respondents from Bangariguda said that open defecation is common in the village and women in particular face difficulties and indignities arising from open defecation (see Table 3.5).

Almost half (48%) of the sample households have running-water facilities in the toilets. In terms of location, access is better in urban households (55%) relative to rural households (43%). A higher proportion of households in Bowrampet, Kosgi, and Tangadpally have a water facility in their toilets. On the contrary, a majority of the households in Lakkaram, Inavole, and Ursu do not have such a facility, largely because their toilets are structurally incomplete (see Table 3.5).

When it comes to waste disposal, 67% of all sample households are connected to a sewerage/drainage system. Urban households are better off in this regard as 75% of them are connected to the drainage facility, while in rural areas, the corresponding rate is 62%. It was observed that in the sample locations of Kosgi, Narayanpet, Bowrampet, Tangadpally, and Ursu, a majority of the households are connected to the sewerage system (see Table 3.5).

In terms of electricity, all the sample households are connected to the electricity grid. However, when it comes to the level of access within the house, the survey found that, overall, 67% of the households have connections to all the rooms in their house. 29% of the respondent families have electric connectivity in one or two rooms in the house. In the sample locations of Bangariguda, Lakkaram, Kosgi, Narayanpet, and Tangadpally in particular, a majority of the households have power connections to all rooms. By contrast, in Nagaram and Inavole, electricity supply is available to one or two rooms (see Table 3.5).

Across the study locations, an overwhelming 93% of the households reported LPG as their main cooking fuel. There are no significant rural-urban differences regarding the use of LPG. Only 7% of the households still depend on firewood as the leading source of cooking fuel, which is found in the sample locations of Nagaram and Nalgonda (see Table 3.5).

3.6. Landholding Status

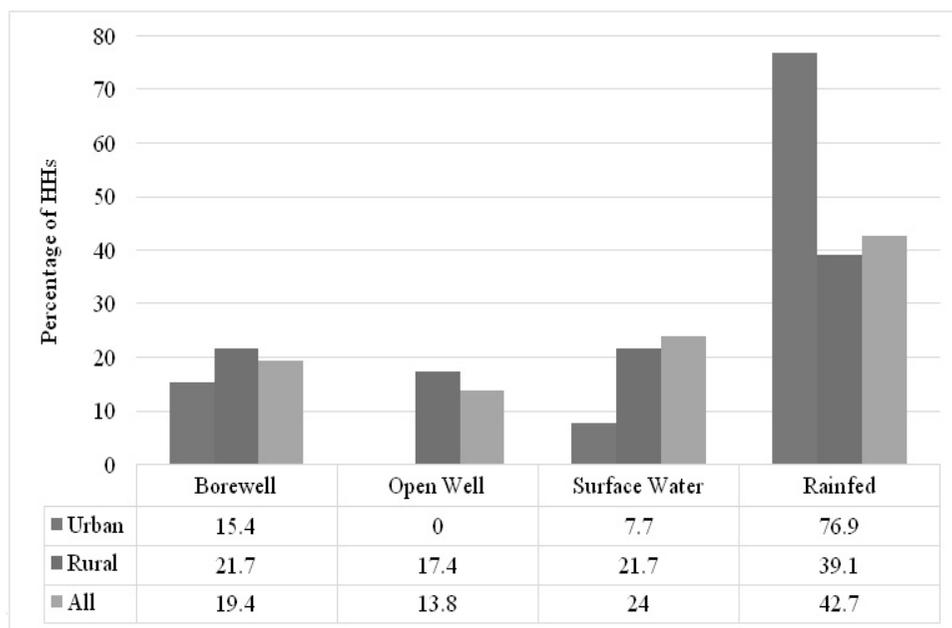
The study found that only 24% of all sample households own agricultural land. In urban areas, the proportion of land owning households is 21.7%, which is marginally lower than the corresponding figure for rural areas, which is 25.6% (see Table 3.6). The average agricultural landholding per household is 1.5 acres, which is marginally higher in rural areas. It was also found that the total land owned by the respondent households is *patta* land, with the owners possessing a passbook with a unique ID issued by the government. All the land owning households reported that their land is under cultivation. Regarding cropping intensity, 75% of the landed households cultivate one crop a year and the remaining 25% of the landholders cultivate two crops a year (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Status Regarding Ownership of Agricultural Land (% of households)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Owning land	13 (21.7)	23 (25.6)	36 (24.0)
Landless	47 (78.3)	67 (74.4)	114 (76.0)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data

Figure.3.2:Source of Irrigation (% of landed HHs reporting)



As evidenced by the results in figure 3.2, 53% of the landed households across the sample locations do not have an assured irrigation source as their holdings are essentially rainfed. In urban areas, the lands are predominantly rainfed, reported by nearly four-fifths of the households, while in rural areas only 40% of households reported rainfed parcels. Overall, close to a fifth of the households have a relatively dependable source of irrigation in the form of borewells; and a quarter of the households depend on surface water such as tanks, streams, and canals. Interestingly, a small fraction of the households (14% across the locations) still rely on open wells (see figure 3.2).

3.7. Work Participation Status

The work participation rate is relatively high among the Kummari as the workforce makes up 64% of the total population of 640. This proportion, however, excludes the student population (31%), non-working members due to old age (2%), and able but non-working members owing to various reasons (3%). The findings show that close to all able-bodied members (except students) are part of the labour force. Micro insights reveal that the working population in urban areas is higher in Narayanpet, and in the case of rural areas, it is high in Tangadpally village (see Table 3.7).

Table 3.7: Work Participation Status among the Kummari Population (%)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Working	166 (63.6)	242 (63.9)	408 (63.8)
Not working	4 (1.5)	14 (3.7)	18 (2.8)
Not working (students)	86 (33.0)	115 (30.3)	201 (31.4)
Not working (old age)	5 (1.9)	8 (2.1)	13 (2.0)
Total	261 (100)	379 (100)	640 (100)

Source: Primary data

3.7.1. Primacy of Pottery as a Livelihood Option

The study results concerning the primary occupation of the working members (aged 15–59 years) indicate that an overwhelming 60% of the population is engaged in the traditional occupation of pottery as their primary activity. In other words, 94% of the workforce is engaged in the traditional activity, which continues to be their main source of income. The workforce involved in the traditional occupation is marginally lower in rural areas on account of a relatively higher level of occupational diversification. In

addition to pottery making, important primary activities reported from the countryside include farm labour, salaried employment in the private sector, dairying, and small businesses (see Table 3.8).

It is interesting to note that none of the sample households reported cultivation as their primary occupation, clearly demonstrating the significance of pottery as their main source of livelihood. Interactions with the respondents reveal that some landed households lease out their land parcels so that they can devote all their time to the hereditary activity. Conversely, Kummari households in urban areas are less diversified.

Table 3.8: Primary Occupation Status of the Workforce (%)

Primary Activity (%) N=640	Urban	Rural	All
Traditional occupation (pottery)	165 (63.2)	219 (57.8)	384 (60)
Agriculture labour	0	2 (0.5)	2 (0.3)
Non-farm worker	1 (0.4)	3 (0.8)	4 (0.6)
Dairying	0	5 (1.3)	5 (0.8)
Salaried – Private	0	8 (2.1)	8 (1.3)
Trade, business, self-employment	0	3 (0.8)	3 (0.5)
Industry/manufacturing	0	2 (0.5)	2 (0.3)
Student	86 (33)	123 (32.5)	209 (32.7)
Not working-aged	5 (1.9)	8 (2.1)	13 (2.0)
Other	4 (1.5)	6 (1.6)	10 (1.6)
Total	261 (100)	379 (100)	640 (100)

Source: Primary data

Female members of the households in Bangariguda, Lakkaram, and Kosgi who are above 65 years of age, are also engaged in the traditional occupation. These women are actively engaged in making *ranjans* (barrel-shaped water pots). For instance, one of the female respondents from Lakkaram (a widow aged about 70 years) is engaged in pottery-making because it is the only monetizable skill she has.

3.7.2. Secondary Occupation

Study of secondary occupation shows that only 17% of the total workers reported it, with most of them hailing from rural areas (75%). This indicates that the primary occupation (predominantly pottery) is the only source of livelihood for most Kummari households. When it comes to secondary activity, rural-urban differences can be seen (see Table 3.9).

In rural areas, agriculture labour is the most important secondary activity reported by 55% of the secondary workforce. This is followed by own agriculture pursued by 23%; non-farm labour, private salaried employment, trade, and business are other minor secondary activities. On the other hand, in urban locations, agriculture accounts for a third of those who reported a secondary activity, followed by a quarter of them reporting non-farm work and for nearly a fifth of them, farm wage work is the secondary occupation. Other relatively minor supplementary activities reported by urban households include government employment and small businesses. It is clear from the findings that government employment is almost non-existent in the study locations. One of the respondents from Narayanpet said that he had completed post-graduation after a bachelor's degree in education but could not get a job as there had been no recruitment since he graduated.

Table 3.9: Participation in Secondary Occupation (% of workers)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Own cultivation/cropping	6 (35.3)	12 (22.6)	18 (25.7)
Cultivation on leased land	1 (5.9)	0	1 (1.4)
Agriculture labour	3 (17.6)	29 (54.7)	32 (45.7)
Non-farm worker	4 (23.5)	4 (7.5)	8 (11.4)
Shop/pretty business	1 (5.9)	1 (1.9)	2 (2.9)
Salaried (government)	1 (5.9)	0	1 (1.4)
Salaried (private)	0	3 (5.7)	3 (4.3)
Trade, business self-employment	1 (5.9)	2 (3.8)	3 (4.3)
Industry manufacturing	0	2 (3.8)	2 (2.9)
Total	17 (100)	53 (100)	70 (100)

Source: Primary data

3.8. Household Assets

Asset ownership of the households broadly indicates the standard of living of the community. For the sake of easy comprehension, the assets of respondent households have been grouped into six categories: 1) house, 2) household durables (dining table, refrigerator, sewing machine, cots, air cooler, AC unit, washing machine, grinder/mixer, water filter/purifier), 3) two-wheelers (scooter, motorcycle, moped), 4) four-wheelers (car, jeep, van), 5) machinery related to the traditional occupation (power wheel, blunger, plug mill and so on), and 6) mobile phones.

Table 3.10: Status of Household Asset Ownership (% of HHs reporting at least one asset in the group)

Asset	Urban			Rural			All		
	Owned	Not Owned	Total	Owned	Not Owned	Total	Owned	Not Owned	Total
House	57(95.0)	3(5.0)	60(100)	79(87.8)	11(12.2)	90(100)	136(92.7)	14(7.3)	150(100)
HH durables	50(92.6)	4(7.4)	54(100)	76(90.5)	8(9.5)	84(100)	126(91.3)	12(8.7)	138(100)
Two-wheelers	47(78.0)	13(22.0)	60(100)	52(57.7)	38(42.3)	90(100)	99(66.0)	51(34.0)	150(100)
Machinery	40(66.7)	20(33.3)	60(100)	35(38.9)	55(61.1)	90(100)	75(50.0)	75(50.0)	150(100)

Source: Primary data

Results show that 136 out of 150 households (93%) live in their own houses. As previously reported, home ownership is lower in rural areas at 88% when compared to urban locations (Table 3.10). In terms of the gender of the home owner, the study found that only 11% of the houses are registered in the names of female members. The study also collected data about the approximate monetary values of the assets as reported by the respondents to gauge the economic status of the sample households. The mean value of a house is Rs 7,52,889 across the sample locations; the reported value is higher in urban locations at Rs 9,74,576 than in rural areas at Rs 5,80,789. Regarding household durables, 91% of the households reported owning at least one asset. The average current value of household durables was reported at Rs 5,226 (Table 3.11).

Table 3.11: Average Values of Homes and Household Assets as Reported by Respondents (in Rs)

Assets	Urban	Rural	All
House	974577	580790	752889
Household durables	5108	5257	5226
Two-wheelers	56925	38405	46952
Machinery (related to traditional occupation)	21779	21290	21704
Mobile phone	10653	9932	10237

Source: Primary data

Two-thirds of all sample households have two-wheelers, but the level of ownership is considerably higher in urban locations where close to 80% of the households reported two-wheelers while the corresponding figure for rural areas is 42%. The reported average value of the two-wheeler is Rs 47,000, which is higher by Rs 10,000 in urban areas. Half of the sample households across the locations reported different types of machinery or equipment used in making pottery. The average household level cost of the equipment is Rs 21,704. Almost all – except one – sample households reported mobile phones.

The mean cost of a mobile phone is Rs 10,237, which is marginally higher in urban areas (Table 3.11).

3.9. Household Consumption Expenditure

The study collected data on the consumption expenditure of the sample households based on their regular household expenditure. The emerging pattern reveals that the highest amount is spent on food with a mean expenditure of Rs 52,044 per annum. The community members, particularly from urban areas, attribute the rising food expenditure to food inflation. By contrast, rural households with agricultural land incur less expenditure on food since their rice production can sustain the family for at least a few months in a year. When it comes to health, the mean annual spend works out to Rs 16,336 per annum, which is higher in urban areas. Most households reported regular or monthly expenses on medicines for conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and common ailments. Some families reported a monthly expenditure of around Rs 3,000 on medication. Many respondents conveyed that the traditional occupation requires regular hard labour leading to a host of health problems (Table 3.12).

Table 3.12: Mean Household Consumption Expenditure Per Annum (in Rs)

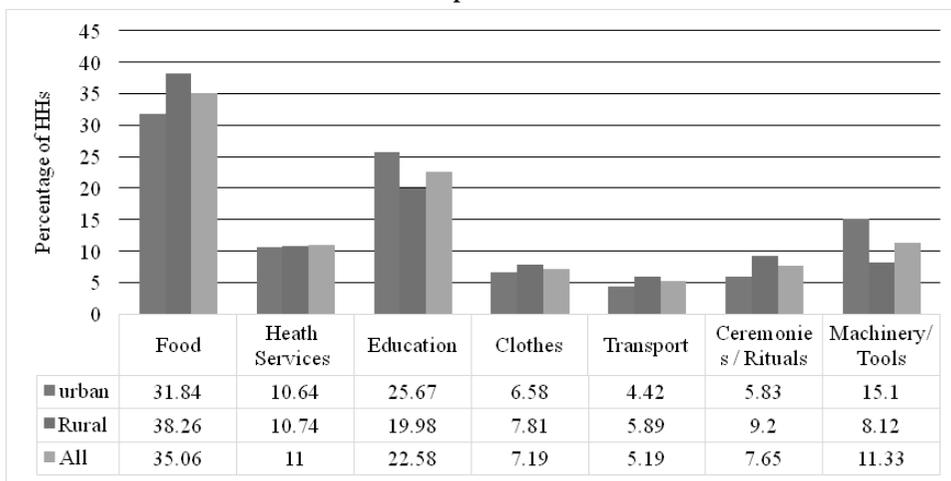
Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Food	52,934	51,488	52,044
Health	17,693	14,460	16,336
Education	42,676	26,893	33,518
Clothes	10,936	10,511	10,674
Transport	7,349	7,925	7,702
Ceremonies/rituals	9,700	12,386	11,353
Machinery/tools	24,955	10,927	16,827
Total	1,66,243	1,34,590	1,48,454

Source: Primary data

Education-related expenditure, that is, Rs 33,518 across the sample locations, represents the second-highest sum incurred by the households; urban households reported a far higher education spend of Rs 42,676. It was found that a majority of parents in urban areas send their children to private schools by paying a hefty fee. In rural areas too, parents prefer private schools, but the level of fees is much lower. Several households reported the purchase of smartphones for their children to attend online classes due to

the closure of educational institutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. Expenditure on clothes (Rs 10,674) also accounts for a relatively large share of household expenditure. Households reported high one-time expenditure on clothes on festive occasions such as *Deepavali* and *Dasara*. Regarding regular travel, households reported mounting financial burdens resulting from sharp hikes in petrol and diesel prices (Table 3.12).

Figure 3.3: Shares of Regular Spending in Total Household Expenditure Per Annum to Total Expenditure (%)



Source: Primary data

It was also reported that the community spends a mean sum of Rs 16,827 per annum on the acquisition and maintenance of modern equipment used in pottery work; the corresponding expenditure is considerably higher in urban areas at Rs 25,000 (Figure 3.3). This indicates that technology adoption is higher in urban areas. However, many households conveyed that they cannot afford the new equipment although it is useful to their occupation.

The pattern emerging from the household consumption expenditure of the community is illustrated through the chart above. Food is the most important item of expenditure, which accounts for 35% of the total household spending. This is followed by education, which receives nearly a quarter of household spending. Equipment and tools related to the traditional occupation account for over a tenth of the family expenditure. In other words, food, health, and education together represent 70% of the regular household spending among the Kummari.

3.10. Households Incomes

Household incomes of the community were computed based on incomes reported by all working members. Incomes were calculated separately for primary occupation¹, traditional occupation, secondary occupation, and the total household income from both. The household incomes from different sources presented in the table below highlight the critical importance of the traditional occupation for the community. On average, pottery-making contributes as much as 76% to the household incomes and this proportion is marginally higher in urban areas. The annual mean household income of the community is Rs 1,83,470, and the corresponding figures for urban and rural areas are Rs 2,17,990 and Rs 1,64,053, respectively. Other income-related findings are presented in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13: Household Annual Mean Incomes (in Rs)

Household annual mean income (Rs)	Urban	Rural	All
Primary occupation	171460	116239	135977
Secondary occupation	46529	47814	47493
Traditional occupation	173742	117926	140109
Share of traditional occupation income in total HH income	80%	72%	76%
Total HH income	217990	164053	183470

Source: Primary data

It is evident from the findings that the mean income from pottery-making is significantly higher in urban areas when compared to rural areas. It needs to be mentioned here that in urban areas the community depends on pottery-making for more days than their rural counterparts. The mean annual income from the secondary occupation is marginally higher in rural areas since people are engaged in agriculture and allied activities when they are not occupied with pottery.

3.11. Summing Up

The major challenges that emerge from the field survey are: (a) a gap in the sex ratio, (b) low educational levels and dropouts at the school level, (c) inadequate living space and low quality of housing, (d) toilets with no or inadequate running-water facility, (e)

¹ Primary occupation for this study refers to the activity that earns higher or highest income or returns than other activity or activities. Secondary occupation is secondary in importance in terms of earnings. Traditional occupation refers to pottery-making.

insufficient cultivable land and lack of assured irrigation facilities, (f) landlessness and dependence on wage income for supplementing household income, (g) heightened expenditure on food, education, health, and clothes, (h) high cost of occupation-related equipment, (i) low income and low levels of spatial mobility, and (j) migration of youth to urban areas. The cumulative impact of all these factors means that the Kummari community is unable to move into a higher-level socio-economic trajectory. However, the study also highlights the opportunities for the sustainability of the occupation as the most productive age group (24–59 years) still practices the traditional occupation².

²Some policy recommendations in this regard include: Targeted interventions to ensure higher enrolment in higher education; remedial classes for slow learners; enhancing the access of girls to government residential schools and colleges; free education up to graduation and beyond; access to finance and subsidy to purchase modern equipment for pottery making.

CHAPTER-4

KUMMARI COMMUNITY'S ACCESS TO KEY GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND INTERVENTIONS

4.1. Introduction

The Government of Telangana has been implementing a wide range of schemes for the social and economic upliftment of the people of the state, particularly those who are poor, vulnerable, and relatively excluded. The welfare schemes that are under implementation in the state consist of both centrally sponsored schemes and state schemes. This study identifies certain “core of the core schemes” and related interventions that are aimed at providing social protection and inclusion. It also attempts to assess the level of access the community has to these schemes, ascertain the impact they have had on the community until now, and understand the degree of exclusion so that corrective initiatives can be initiated.

In this chapter, schemes and initiatives such as Aasara pensions (old age, widow, single-woman, disability), private health and life insurance, the public distribution system (food security card), labour welfare schemes, economic support schemes (ESSs), membership in women's SHGs, Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Aarogyasri, and access to financial institutions (financial inclusion) are covered.

4.2. Social Safety Nets: Pensions

To provide social protection to poor and vulnerable households and to enable them to lead a life of dignity and independence, the Government of Telangana extends a range of pensions to eligible people in the state, known as Aasara pensions. The scheme is directed at different target groups including the elderly, people with HIV/AIDS, widows, single women, in capacitated weavers, and toddy tappers who have lost their means of livelihood with their growing age.

The study results are presented in two sections. The first section presents the coverage of the listed pensions for all sample households – not adjusted for eligible households– while

the second section lays out the extent of coverage considering only eligible households. When all households are considered, the findings are as follows: close to a fifth of households benefit from the old-age pension while the coverage under other pensions is less than 10%, since only a small fraction of households have eligible members, that is, widows, single women, and the disabled.

When only eligible households are considered, the coverage pattern presents a completely different picture, with only 36% of the eligible households reporting old-age pensions. This highlights the imperative to expand the coverage of old-age pensions among the Kummari. By contrast, all eligible households have been covered under widow, single-woman, and disability pay-outs. In an unadjusted scenario, 39% of all households are covered under different pension schemes. On the other hand, in an adjusted scenario, the proportion of beneficiary households increases to 58%. It needs to be highlighted here that there are rural-urban disparities in coverage under old-age pension, with urban locations reporting significantly higher coverage (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Households Receiving Pensions (%)

% of All Households Benefiting (not adjusted for eligible households)			
Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Oldage pension	17 (28.3)	11 (12.2)	28 (18.7)
Disability pension	2 (3.3)	7 (7.8)	9 (6.0)
Widow pension	4 (6.7)	9 (10.0)	13 (8.7)
Single woman pension	3 (5.0)	5 (15.6)	8 (5.3)
Total	26 (43.3)	32 (35.6)	58 (38.7)
% of Eligible Households Benefiting from Pensions			
Oldage pension	17 (44.7)	11 (27.5)	28 (35.9)
Disability pension	2 (100)	7 (100)	9 (100)
Widow pension	4 (100)	9 (100)	13 (100)
Single woman pension	3 (100)	5 (100)	8 (100)
Total	26 (57.3)	32 (59.2)	58 (58.5)

Source: Primary data

Several pensioners reported satisfaction with the scheme because their pension is credited to their bank accounts during the first week of every month. In this context, many respondents conveyed that the state government provides old-age pensions to the

members of Padmashali and Gowda communities if they are above 50 years of age. But the artisans of the Kummari community are not eligible for such pensions. A majority of them disclosed that the age of burnout tends to be well below 50, making them look much older, as they suffer from health hazards. They suggested that the government extend the old-age pension to for kummari is those from who are above 50 years of age only for the Kummari community.

The study also reveals that applications of members eligible for social security pensions have not been processed for the past one year. One respondent from Inavole conveyed that delays should be avoided in the approval and release of widow pensions. Concerning insurance schemes, people are aware of life insurance but they are incognizant of the benefits of health insurance. So, there is a need to educate people in this regard.

4.3. Private Health and Life Insurance

In the context of social protection, the study also gathered data about the extent to which Kummari households were covered by private health and life insurance. The results reveal that only 5 of the 150 sample households (3.3%) were able to access health insurance products offered by insurance companies. In contrast, more than a quarter (28%) of the households accessed life insurance on their own, mostly from the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India; this proportion is slightly higher in rural areas. The average premium paid per annum is Rs 20,000, while the mean sum assured is Rs 1,64,250 across the study locations.

4.4. Food Security through the Public Distribution System

Food security for the poor is ensured through the public distribution system (PDS). The front end of the PDS consists of a network of outlets (fair price shops) entrusted with the responsibility of distributing food grains to the identified poor households at highly subsidized prices. Rice, and sugar are the major commodities distributed through the PDS in the State. To be eligible for a white ration card (food security card), the household annual income must be below Rs 2,00,000 in urban areas and below Rs 1,50,000 in rural areas. The food security card also entitles the family to other government benefits such as health insurance, scholarships, and self-employment schemes.

The study ascertained the coverage of the Kummari households under the PDS. The results reveal that 93.3% of the households are eligible for PDS (Rs 1 for a kilogram of

rice) and all of them have been covered under it. The coverage is 92% of the households in urban areas and 94.4% of the households in rural areas.

Table 4.2: Status of Food Security Scheme (PDS) in the Study Locations (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
HHs eligible and accessing PDS(N=150)	55 (92)	85 (94.4)	140 (93.3)
Type of ration card (% in each category)			
BPL White	55 (100)	82 (96.4)	137 (97.9)
Anthyodaya	0	3 (3.6)	3 (2.1)
Total	55 (100)	85 (100)	140 (100)
Rice (kg) received in a month			
Mean	36	38	37
Minimum	20	20	20
Maximum	70	60	70
% of HHs consuming PDS rice	54 (98)	81 (95)	135 (96)
Rice sufficient for days in a month			
Mean days	20	23	22
Minimum days	10	10	10
Maximum days	30	30	30
How do HHs manage the remaining days if sufficient for less than 30 days (N=95)			
Own rice (self-produced)	4 (9.5)	5 (9.4)	9 (9.5)
Purchased rice	38 (90.5)	48 (90.6)	86 (90.5)
Total	42 (100)	53 (100)	95 (100)

Source: Primary data

Of the total beneficiary households, 98% of them hold white ration cards and the rest of the households are covered under Anthyodaya cards, which are found only in rural areas. On average, each beneficiary household receives 37 kg of rice per month and there are no significant rural-urban differences in this regard. The minimum and the maximum quantities received are 20 kg and 70 kg, respectively. Nearly all the sample households (96%) reported that they consume the rice received under the PDS, indicating that they cannot afford fine rice. The survey probed further to ascertain the adequacy of the PDS rations by asking them for how many days the rice could feed the family. On average, the rice feeds the beneficiary family for 22 days in a month. The lowest number

reported was 10 days and some households reported that the rice was sufficient for the entire month. Overall, 68% of all households reported that the food grains do not sustain them for the entire month; 90% of such households buy rice to meet their food requirements for the remaining days and the remaining 10% are able to complement their requirements with the rice produced on their farms (see Table 4.2).

Interactions with the beneficiary households reveal that some of the families used to sell the PDS rice to purchase better quality rice. However, after the formation of Telangana, the consumption of PDS rice has increased since the quality of rice has improved. Some families use the subsidized rice in the preparation of snacks or breakfast rather than the main course. Some urban households reported that the ration cards of BPL families have been revoked by the government. It was also conveyed that new ration cards have not been issued for the past two years; as a result, some eligible families are not able to access the food grains under the PDS.

4.5. Labour Welfare Schemes

The community remains uncovered by different labour welfare policies and schemes. In other words, the community members have not been registered with the labour welfare boards of the state government or the Government of India. The membership or registration card entitles the workers and their families to a range of social security benefits such as life insurance, accident insurance, and health insurance. The benefits also cover family members by extending financial assistance for daughters' marriages and pregnant women.

కేంద్ర ప్రభుత్వం ప్రకటించిన లేబర్ పాలసీ వధకం

తెల్ల రేషన్ కార్డు వున్న ప్రతి ఒక్కరికీ ఈ వధకం వర్తిస్తుంది.

- ★ 18 సంవత్సరాలు మొదలుకొని 55 సంవత్సరాల వరకు ఈ పాలసీ పొందవచ్చు.
ఈ పాలసీ : 1 సం||రానికి = 22 రూపాయలు చొప్పున
: 5 సం||రానికి=110/- రూపాయలు మాత్రమే చెల్లించవలెను.

- ★ మనిషిలోని ఆదాయాలు : ఏ ఒక్కటి కోట్లయిన : 1,30,000/- రూపాయలు పొందవచ్చు
: రెండు కోట్లయినట్లైతే : 6,00,000/- రూపాయలు పొందవచ్చు

- ★ ఈ విధంగా ఆరిగినట్లైతే ఇతనికి కూతుర్లు ఉన్నట్లైతే ఇద్దరికీ మాత్రము
: వివాహ సంబంధమై ఒక్కోవ్యక్తికి రూ. 30,000/-
: తడువరి వారి కాన్పులకు గాను రూ. 30,000/- చెల్లిస్తారు.

- ★ ఈ పాలసీ దారుడు : సహజ మరణం పొందినట్లైతే రూ. 1,30,000/-
: ఏదైన ప్రమాదం వల్ల మరణం పొందితే : రూ. 6,00,000/-
: చెల్లిస్తారు.

ఈ విధంగా కేంద్ర ప్రభుత్వ వధకాన్ని ప్రతి కూలీలు, డ్రైవర్లు, భవన నిర్మాణ కార్మికులు, దిన్న తరహా వ్యాపారులు మరియు మధ్య తరగతి వారు ఈ వధకాన్ని పొందవచ్చు.

కావలసినది :- తెల్లరేషన్ కార్డు, ఆధార్ కార్డు, ఫోటో, ఒకటి ఐడి కార్డు మరియు సంబంధిత ప్రత్రాబలు సమర్పించవలెను.

పై పాలసీతోపాటు / ఒక సంవత్సరానికి 12 రూపాయలు చెల్లించినట్లైతే 2,00,000/- పాలసీ కూడా అందుబాటులో వున్నది.

Even though the community members are engaged full-time in pottery making, they have not been officially recognized as workers by the government. The community representatives reported that they had represented the issue to the state government but their petition remains unaddressed. They are of the view that the community workers deserve to be registered and issued identity cards by the government, which is critical for the well-being of the community. However, the study found that the households, both in urban and rural areas, are not aware of the social security benefits extended by the Labour Department or other government agencies (the above image shows different schemes offered under the labour policy of the Central government).

4.6. Self-employment Schemes

Under the government schemes, the survey also included self-employment schemes or ESSs which typically involve a subsidy component. None of the respondent households have received financial assistance under self-employment schemes of the state government. A majority of the respondents said that they are not even aware of such schemes. One of the respondents from Ursu, Hanamkonda district, said that in 2014, he had applied for a self-employment scheme under the Backward Classes Welfare Department; however, he was unsuccessful in obtaining the benefit, which demotivated him from applying for such schemes again.

Nonetheless, it must be noted here that 10 households reported having received subsidized assistance before the formation of the Telangana state—five households from the Kummari Federation and five households from the BC Corporation.

4.7. Self-Help Groups

The self-help group movement in India has emerged as the world's largest and most successful network of women-managed community-based microfinance institutions. The origins of the SHG movement in the state can be traced to 1998. The groups have played a critical role in financially empowering their members. In addition to enhancing the livelihoods of the members, the SHGs also fostered leadership among women. In this context, the study assessed the status of SHGs among the Kummari community.

Table 4.3: Status of SHGs in the Sample Locations (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
Membership in SHGs (N=150)	44 (73.3)	60 (66.7)	104 (69.3)
HHs reporting SHGs active (N=104)	42 (95.5)	59 (98.3)	101 (97.1)
HHs borrowed money from SHGs (N=101)	40 (95.2)	53 (89.8)	93 (92.1)
HHs repaying regularly (N=93)	40 (100)	52 (98.1)	92 (99.0)

Source: Primary data

Women of any household can become members of the SHGs, but the study found that 69% of the Kummari households reported membership in SHGs of their location. Urban households reported higher levels of membership (73%) as against the rural households (67%). Almost all the SHGs (97%) representing the sample households are active with regular transactions. 92% of the households across the sample locations have taken a loan from SHGs. Almost all the borrowers are repaying the loan amount regularly (Table 4.3).

Concerning the amounts borrowed from SHGs, each household, on average, borrowed Rs 43,755. The average borrowed sum is lower than the overall mean in rural areas and higher in urban areas, and the minimum and the maximum amounts borrowed are Rs 5,000 and 1,00,000, respectively.

The member households spend the loans on a variety of needs, but the largest proportion of them (40%) spend the amount on household consumption. This is followed by close to 30% of the households which use the loan as an investment in agriculture. Other important purposes for which the households used the loans include health, education, and purchase of household assets and durables. It may be recalled here that schools remained closed in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and school-going children required smart phones to attend online classes. Some households purchased smartphones for their children with the sums borrowed from SHGs.

A majority of the respondent households reported that whenever they need funds urgently, they alert the group leader in advance and borrow a mutually accepted sum. One of the respondents from Nalgonda said that the amount she had borrowed from the SHG has been utilized for purchasing a power wheel that costed Rs 25,000. Another respondent from Inavole said that she borrowed Rs 30,000, which she spent on a wedding

in the family. Similarly, a sample household from Bangariguda invested the borrowed sum of Rs 25,000 in the construction of a new house (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Purposes for which the SHG Loan was Used (%)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Household consumption	14 (35.0)	23 (43.4)	37 (39.8)
Health	5 (12.5)	2 (3.8)	7 (7.5)
Education	2 (5.0)	2 (3.8)	4 (4.3)
Farm investment	14 (35.0)	12 (22.6)	26 (28.0)
Assets buying	1 (2.5)	2 (3.8)	3 (3.2)
Others	4 (10.0)	12 (22.6)	16 (17.2)
Total	40 (100)	53 (100)	93 (100)

Source: Primary data

4.8. Farmers' Support Schemes: *Rythu Bandhu* and *Rythu Bima*

Telangana was the first state in the country to launch two schemes to ensure the well-being of farmers and promote agriculture in the state. The *Rythu Bandhu* scheme (Farmers' Investment Support Scheme) was launched during 2018–19. In each of the two cropping seasons, each farmer (regardless of the extent of land owned) is provided with Rs 5,000 per acre, per season through a direct benefit transfer into their bank accounts. This study found that 36 of the total sample households (24%) reported landholdings. All the eligible (landed) Kummari households are receiving *Rythu Bandhu* transfers. All farmer respondents reported that they receive the *Rythu Bandhu* transfers for the entire land owned by them. All eligible farmers reported that they received the transfers for both (kharif and rabi) seasons (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Households Covered under *Rythu Bandhu* and *Rythu Bima* (%)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
Eligible households under <i>Rythu Bandhu</i> (N=150)	13 (21.7)	23 (25.6)	36 (24.0)
No. of households receiving <i>Rythu Bandhu</i>	13 (100)	23 (100)	36 (100)
No. of households eligible for <i>Rythu Bima</i>	13 (21.7)	23 (25.6)	36 (24.0)
No. of households registered under <i>Rythu Bima</i>	9 (69.2)	16 (69.6)	25 (69.4)

Source: Primary data

However, a few of the respondents reported difficulties in gaining access to these schemes. A member of the community from Lakkaram, Adilabad district, conveyed to the researchers that he has one acre of land, but he did not have a *pattadar* (title holder) passbook. He approached the revenue officials several times for the issuance of passbook, but his efforts were in vain. However, after the introduction of the *Rythu Bandhu* scheme, he received his passbook from the officials without much delay. He reckons that it is a good initiative on the part of the state government, and has benefited farmers.

To alleviate the financial crisis experienced by farming households following the death of the bread winner, the Telangana government introduced *Rythu Bima* (Farmers Group Life Insurance) to extend financial assistance of Rs 5,00,000 to the bereaved family of the farmers. The survey found that out of 36 eligible farmers, 25 farmers (70%) have been covered under *Rythu Bima*. It was found that some beneficiaries were not aware of the insurance scheme; hence, they have not registered themselves under *Rythu Bima*.

4.9. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

The MGNREGS was launched in 2005 and is aimed at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members volunteer to perform unskilled manual work. The study tried to assess the participation of the Kummari community in the MGNREGS. The findings show that only a quarter of all sample households reported having job cards under the MGNREGS. At least one member of all job-card-holding households reported having participated in the scheme. On average, two members of each participating household worked under the scheme.

Women from most of the registered households worked under the scheme. Although they have been working under the scheme since its inception, most households have been working under the scheme for the past 10 years. All those who worked under the scheme have received wages on time. During the last year, each household received a mean of 33 person-days. Nearly 60% of the participating households reported that the employment provided is inadequate. When it comes to the type of work provided under the scheme, the cardholders mostly performed work related to agriculture and tank rehabilitation. Three-fourths of the registered households conveyed their willingness to work under the scheme if adequate work is provided, particularly during the lean seasons (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Coverage of Rural Households Under the MGNREGS Across the Study Locations (%)

Description	
Households having a job card (N=90 HHs)	23 (25.5)
Average members worked in each HH	2
HHs from which at least 1 member worked under the scheme (N=23)	23 (100)
HHs from which at least 1 woman member worked under the scheme (N=23)	20 (87.0)
How long have they been working under the scheme?	
< 5 years	6 (26.1)
5–10 years	13 (56.5)
>10 years	4 (17.4)
All	23 (100)
Average person-days provided to each participating HH	
MGNREGS (during the last year)	33
Was the employment (number of days) provided adequate for your HH?	
Less than adequate	13 (56.5)
Adequate	10 (43.5)
Total	23 (100)
HHs who have received wages for their work	
Received	22 (96.0)
Not received	1 (4.0)
Total	23 (100)
Type of work provided under the scheme	
Agriculture-related	13 (56.5)
Tanks-related	10 (43.5)
HHs ready to work under the scheme – if more work is provided under it	17 (74.0)

Source: Primary data

The work under the MGNREGS attracted more people last year during the COVID-19 lockdown. One of the respondents from Lakkaram said that in 2020, during the lockdown (March–May), the livelihoods of the Kummari community were adversely affected as they were unable to sell their products.

A majority of the respondents are of the view that the government must provide job cards to more families that are willing to work under the MGNREGS. The workers

who worked under the scheme received a wage of Rs 129 per day. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, they were paid Rs 200 per day (see Table 4.6).

4.10. Aarogyasri Scheme

Towards achieving universal health coverage for below poverty line (BPL) families – in 2008, the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state unveiled the *Aarogyasri* Community Health Insurance Scheme, which has been continued by the Telangana government. The scheme is tied to the food security card issued under the PDS. Against this backdrop, the study tried to ascertain the extent of utilization of the scheme on the part of the Kummari community. The results show that 93% of all sample households reported holding *Aarogyasri* health cards.

Table 4.7: Coverage Under Aarogyasri in Study Locations (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
Households with Aarogyasri health cards (N=150)	55 (91.6)	85 (97.6)	140 (93.3)
Households utilized Aarogyasri card for treatment (N=140)	11 (20.7)	22 (25.8)	33 (23.5)
Amounts covered (reimbursed) by the scheme for treatment (in Rs)			
Mean	78, 409	61,819	67,348
Minimum	1,500	2,000	1,500
Maximum	3,50,000	3,00,000	3,50,000

Source: Primary data

All eligible households that fall under BPL have *Aarogyasri* health cards. Additionally, a third of the card-holding households have utilized the health insurance cover for medical treatment at least once, and the utilization level is even higher in rural areas. As the findings in Table 4.7 indicate, each of the households that used the insurance cover under the scheme has, on average, reported a coverage of Rs 67,348, which is higher in urban areas. The maximum and minimum coverage reported by the households are Rs 3,50,000 and Rs 1,500 respectively (Table 4.7).

4.11. Bank Accounts

Having a bank account is a prerequisite for accessing different financial services and making communities financially included. Of the total households across the study locations, only one household did not have a bank account. This essentially indicates that all households have bank accounts. However, 12% of the households reported only

one account and almost half of the households hold two bank accounts. A significantly higher proportion of urban households have two accounts when compared to rural households (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: Status of Bank Accounts in the Study Locations (%)

Particulars	Urban	Rural	All
No account	0	1 (1.1)	1 (0.7)
One account	9 (15.0)	10 (11.1)	18 (12.0)
Two accounts	24 (40.0)	49 (54.4)	73 (48.7)
More than two accounts	27 (45.0)	31 (34.4)	58 (38.7)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Women's access to bank accounts			
	Urban	Rural	Total
No account	5 (8.3)	13 (14.4)	18 (12.0)
One account	45 (75.0)	60 (66.7)	105 (70.0)
Two accounts	8 (13.3)	14 (15.6)	22 (14.7)
More than two accounts	2 (3.3)	3 (3.3)	5 (3.3)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data (N=150)

In terms of women's access to banking services, the study found that in 12% of all households, women do not have a bank account. However, 70% of the households reported that female members have at least one account, but this proportion is higher in urban locations (75%). In general, urban households have higher levels of financial inclusion through bank accounts. Only 3% of the households reported women having more than two accounts (Table 4.8). The results in this regard are broadly consistent with women's membership in SHGs. Therefore, there is a clear case for SHGs to take initiatives to include more women under the SHG fold.

4.12. Summing Up

The discussion on access to key government interventions reveals that, except for self-employment schemes, a majority of the respondents have access to the schemes launched by the government. However, none of the respondents has received financial assistance under self-employment schemes. This is partly due to the inadequate allocations made to the BC Welfare Department (BC Corporation) to reach out to more eligible members;

partly because the household members do not have the required skills and capital to take up any viable economic activity. Similarly, the employment opportunities under the MGNREGS are inadequate. The coverage of the community is higher under social security schemes but is largely excluded from the ESSs. The government should address the drawbacks and gaps highlighted in this monograph.

CHAPTER-5

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF POTTERY-MAKING CRAFT: EMERGING TRENDS

5.1. Introduction

Traditional occupational practices – including pottery-making – derive from indigenous and ancient cultural practices and are largely confined to home-based, small-scale production. Traditional crafts are based on customs, community ownership, status quo, and simple division of labour, while modern practices and processes mostly refer to industrial-scale mass production. Modern machinery and processes are based on science, rationality, and a belief in efficiency and constant innovation to survive market competition.

The Kummari community of Telangana (including erstwhile Hyderabad State) has been following traditional methods to produce pottery for centuries. However, there has been a shift in occupational practices from traditional methods to modern equipment in the recent past. Further, some Kummari community members either withdrew from practising the occupation or remained unemployed for various reasons (please see earlier chapters). Therefore, there is also a need to examine whether there is any space for co-existence between traditional and modern processes.

However, the present study infers that the Kummari community can adapt to modern technologies and withstand market competition, provided the craft is promoted by conducive policies (see recommendations).

5.2. The Respondents' Perceptions on Traditional and Modern Practices

The study found that 92% of households are willing to continue the traditional occupation. The respondents, particularly from urban areas, reported that they have had to carry on with the traditional craft since they have no other options. Hence, they emphasized the need to continue the community occupation as it is the primary source of household income and has been passed down from previous generations. Some of the older respondents reported that since their health status and age do not permit them to continue the occupation, they expect the younger generation to take over the

traditional work. Given the importance of pottery-making in sustaining their livelihoods, more than 70% of the households reported that they have members who are prepared to continue the activity (Table 5.1).

Pottery-making is a family activity involving at least three to four members engaged in different stages, almost every day. On average, three members are engaged in the preparation of clay items. Women play a crucial role in the preparation of pottery. First, they separate the clay brought from streams and tanks. Then, they dry and pound it to separate it from impurities. Next, they combine it with water until it becomes semi-solid. This mixture is kneaded with hands or feet to make it soft and pliable.

Figure 5.1: Women Engaged in the Preparatory Work in Nagaram and Narayanpet



Figure 5.2: A Girl Giving Finishing Touches to Pottery in Ursu



Every member of the family, including children, is engaged in the traditional craft and each one has a task to perform in the process of making products. The school-going children often chip in on holidays, making their contribution by helping their parents with tasks such as the arrangement and painting of clay items.

Some of the respondents also conveyed that they believe that it is an honour to serve people by supplying clay items for different festivals and rituals. They also

pointed out that there is societal recognition and appreciation for their craft. Regarding the continuation of pottery-making, the community members are of the view that every household head wishes to keep the activity alive and ensure that it is practised. Further disaggregation of data shows that most of the household heads reported that their sons are willing to continue the traditional work. They are, however, not showing the same spirit concerning their daughters and daughters-in-law’s participation in the occupation.

Table 5.1: Opinion on the Continuation of Pottery

Opinion	Urban	Rural	All
Willing to continue traditional occupation in future (% reporting yes)	93.3	90.0	92.0
Need to continue traditional occupation (% reporting yes)	91.7	96.7	95.0
Family members willing to continue traditional occupation (% reporting yes)	73.3	71.1	72.0
Expecting younger generation to continue traditional work (% reporting yes)	76.7	73.3	75.0

Source: Primary data (N=150)

Nonetheless, there are some exceptions to the norm. The younger daughter of a Kummari household head in Nalgonda is a B.Tech, graduate who wants to continue making pottery. She developed a passion for the traditional craft and even received training in making use of modern tools for continuing and sustaining the occupation. She is currently engaged full-time in the preparation of a range of novel clay items. On average, each household head possesses 28 years of experience in pottery-making. A majority of the respondents said that they took up the activity at the age of 20–21 and have been in the traditional occupation as full-time workers. They use both traditional and modern equipment in the preparation of clay items.

Those who do not expect their children to pursue the hereditary craft (25%) reported two major reasons: Their sons are already engaged in salaried private jobs and they want their children to pursue higher education. Some respondents also reckon that securing a government job is extremely difficult given the huge competition for a limited number of openings. They also pointed out that even a higher or professional qualification is no guarantee to obtain a government job. Therefore, to provide for their families, they end up working in the private sector for low wages. Moreover, migration to urban areas is a

prerequisite to taking up private-sector jobs. In the light of the above barriers, the traditional occupation seems to be the best bet for the younger generation.

The younger generation, in general, feels that pottery making is hard and risky and it requires almost all family members. Interaction with the youth of Inavole, Hanamkonda district, reveals that although a majority of them are willing to continue pottery, they discontinue the occupation as it affects their prospects of receiving marriage proposals due to the low status attached to it in the society. By contrast, youngsters from Nalgonda, Bowrampet, Bangariguda, and Narayanpet stated that they believe it is their responsibility to continue their traditional occupation.

5.3. Availability of Clay

Suitable clay is a basic requirement for the craft of pottery. The study found that an overwhelming 80% of the households reported that clay is unavailable in their native places. Although it is available in some locations, it is inadequate. Hence, the vast majority of households procure it from other places. It was found that the potters from Bowrampet and Nagaram, Rangareddy district, procure the clay from a distance of 50–70 km. In other study locations where clay is unavailable –Bangariguda, Lakkaram, Kosgi, Narayanpet, Nalgonda, and Ursu– they obtain the clay from a distance of 10–15 km. One of the respondents from Narayanpet said that the clay available in nearby villages is not suitable for making clay products. Therefore, they have to mix red clay with black clay. He added that because red clay is not available in the neighbouring villages, they have to obtain it from a distance of 20–25 km, by paying a high price of Rs 3,000 per tractor-load. For black clay, they pay Rs 1,500–2,000 per tractor-load in rural areas and Rs 7,000–8,000 is paid per lorry-load in urban areas.

Some of the respondents from Inavole and Thangadpally said that due to the tank rehabilitation activities carried out under Mission *Kakatiya* initiative, particularly the desiltation works, clay that is available in local tanks and lakes is excavated for improving the storage capacity of water bodies. Although Mission *Kakatiya* is a great initiative for restoring tanks, the layer of clay that is useful for making earthen products is forgone in the process. In this regard, the potter community is confronted with several challenges. Respondents from all the villages said that they used to have free access to the clay but now they pay a heavy price to obtain it.

5.3.1. Other Inputs: Firewood

Firewood is used for firing of raw pottery in a kiln (*bhatti*). All the respondent households reported that firewood is not available in their locations. In all the study villages, the potters travel 5–10 km to access firewood. In Inavole and Thangadpally, firewood is available but is grossly inadequate. In the villages of Bangariguda, Lakkaram, Kosgi, and Narayanpet, firewood is not available, therefore, they procure it from nearby villages. By contrast, in Nalgonda, Bowrampet, Nagaram, and Ursu, the potters purchase firewood in nearby markets or from sawmills. They pay Rs 2,000–4,000 per tractor-load for it. One tractor-load can fire two to three rounds of pottery in a *bhatti*, indicating that investments in inputs are high.

The respondents from Lakkaram reported that they used to have free access to firewood in the forest nearby. However, the forest officials do not allow them to enter the forest anymore, in the name of implementing forest conservation policies. There were some instances where cases were filed against the community members which they are still dealing with. The study team observed that in Bangariguda, Adilabad district, some Kummari households use plastic waste to fire their kilns due to the non-availability of firewood. This practice has become the source of air pollution, leading to a myriad of health issues among the people in the neighbourhood.

5.3.2. Availability of Space for Making Clay Products

Apart from the availability of raw materials, it is also important for the community to have suitable and adequate space to make clay products. According to the study, 91% of the respondents said that they have sufficient space for making products (of whom 86.7% are in urban and 93.3% in rural areas). While one of the respondents from Inavole pointed out that products are stored in the space available within their house premises, 59.3% of the respondents said that they do not have sufficient space for storage. The findings of the study show that 60% of the households conveyed that they do not have space for storing raw materials (the proportions are 48.3% in urban and 67.8% in rural areas; see table 5.2). It was observed in the field that in a majority of the study villages, the potters store clay items in open spaces inside their houses, leaving no open space for the members to move around.

One of the student respondents from Narayanpet reported that due to the non-availability of open space in the house premises, the products are stored in the rooms that are used

for other purposes, as a result, they face constraints during study hours. Regarding storage of raw materials, in Kosgi it was found that the people do not have sufficient space so they store raw materials on roads, which causes a great deal of inconvenience to road users. During the rainy season, the clay gets washed away by stormwater. They are of the view that the government should provide sheds for storing raw materials so that they can continue their work in the rainy season as well without interruptions.

Table 5.2: Availability of space for making and storing products (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
Making products (Yes)	52 (86.7)	84 (93.3)	136 (90.7)
Storing raw materials (Yes)	29 (48.3)	61 (67.8)	90 (60.0)
Storing products (Yes)	30 (50.0)	59 (65.6)	89 (59.3)

Source: Primary data

5.3.3. Access to Firing Kilns

Across the study locations, a majority (67%) of the respondents reported that they have own kilns within their premises; the corresponding proportions are 65% in urban, and 69% in rural areas. We found that 10.7% of the households depend on community or common kilns and the proportion is higher in rural areas at 13.3%. The study also found that 22% of the surveyed Kummari households depend on their relatives' firing kilns (see Table 5.3). The respondents from Bangariguda, Adilabad district, said that they have access to a community *bhatti* for which the government has provided financial support. The state government had allotted six acres of land to 160 families of Bangariguda in 1995. It was also found that Tangadpally has a community *bhatti* for every 10 households but they have been constructed without government support. A majority of the respondents from urban areas reported that there is a need to provide community *bhattis* with financial assistance from the government.

Table 5.3: Access to Kilns (*bhattis*) in the Study Locations (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
Having own kiln	39 (65.0)	62 (68.9)	101 (67.3)
Depending on community kiln	4 (6.7)	12 (13.3)	16 (10.7)
Depending on relatives' kiln	17 (28.3)	16 (17.8)	33 (22.0)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data

5.3.4. Pottery Exposed to the Elements

The clay items made by the community are prone to damage by extreme weather conditions. A majority of the respondent households from both rural and urban locations relayed that due to lack of adequate space and structures, the products get damaged, particularly, during the rainy season. Some of the respondents from Nagaram, Medchal *mandal*, Rangareddy district, reported that in August 2020, their clay items were damaged by heavy rains. Each household lost products worth approximately Rs 1,50,000. They even submitted a petition to the district collector but they have not received any support or compensation from the authorities. The community representatives also expressed their anguish by reporting that the office bearers of their caste associations have failed to represent their interests to the higher authorities (see Figure 5.3).

5.3.5. Intermediaries Gain at the Expense of the Artisan

The study team observed that agents or intermediaries from distant places come to the residences of the producers to purchase their stock. They pay 40–50% of the cost in advance and order clay products that are in demand in the market. One of the intermediaries said that twice a month, she places orders with the potter and purchases their products. She added that there is a high demand for clay products and they earn a decent amount from their investment.

The reseller states that for a medium-sized product, she pays Rs 20–Rs 30 to the potter and sells it for Rs 60–Rs 70. On average, she sells products worth Rs 3,000–Rs 4,000 and earns a net profit of Rs 1000 per day. The demand for the products peaks during festivals and rituals. By reselling the items with a high markup, the intermediaries can gain handsomely at the expense of the maker. It was also observed that she has regular customers to buy products and she runs a shop in the municipal complex in Warangal, by paying a monthly rent of Rs 10,000. This case study amply demonstrates that the community is not positioned to reap the full margins of their products due to the lack of marketing arrangements.

It was also found that some of the intermediaries sell the products by hawking them on the streets in urban locations and earning a decent profit from their activity (see Figure 5.4). This is typically done during summer or on festive occasions such as *Ugadi* (Telugu New Year). It is also convenient for the customer to buy the product as it is available close to them.

Figure 5.3: A Petition Submitted to the Collector of Medchal district by Nagaram Kummari Community (dated 20-10-2020)

20/10/2020
 అ నాగారం
 అ కృష్ణా

పేటర్
 కల్లెక్కర్ గారితో అయినది
 ఎమనగా

మేము నాగారం రంపల్లెగోడ అని కుప్పరి పని చెప్పిన
 శ్రీవనం నిగించుకుంటున్నాము బోడ క కుంబులు పని
 చెప్పిన శ్రీవనం నిగించుకుంటున్నాము కణన కరగాంగా
 పని తక అల్లకలాలం అయినను ఇది ఇట్లు పందగానో
 పరదలా ముంచే ఎల్లయి జిక్కుం లక్షలు అస్తే నష్టం
 ఒకరించి కుండలు, మట్టి కట్టలు నిమగ్ని మీటర్ లు
 అస్తే లిట్టుకొని వాయయి మేము తరణరలనా శ్రీవనం
 నిగించుకుంటున్నాము మకు వో అదరం లేదు
 మకు, దయచేచి నష్టపరీక్షం ఇచ్చగాల రని
 కోరుకుంటున్నాము

మీ వరద భవీలులు
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 మొట్ట 9951655740
 A సుజ్జయ్య 7730949108
 K. రామమ్మ 9177714889
 గోపాల్ కృష్ణ 6301385969
 నాలుగు, 9954685523

*Letter Represented
 for the Dist Collector
 Medchal*

5.4. Duration of the Pottery-making Cycle

The results of our study indicate that pottery-making engages the artisans for most of the year. On average, each household works for 290 days – almost 10 months – in a year. However, urban Kummari families work longer – almost round the year – as they reported mean days of 322. By contrast, their rural counterparts work for fewer days as the average works out to 268 days. Pottery-making activities are typically paused during the monsoon season. In rural areas, in particular, the landed households are occupied with agricultural operations during the rainy season. The minimum duration of pottery activities reported is three months in rural areas and six months in urban areas. The duration reported in months shows that most Kummari households are occupied with pottery-making for at least six months in a year (see Table 5.4)

One of the respondents from Kosgi, Narayanpet district, who is visually impaired, relayed that he is engaged in the traditional work almost throughout the year. Another respondent from Tangadpally, the wife of a disabled man (deaf), said that her husband works for the entire year and he is one of the specialists in making idols of different deities. During holidays and leisure time, school children also help their parents with the traditional work. According to some parents, the children receive hands-on training and gain experience by helping their parents so that their transition to full-time potters becomes easier in the future.

Table 5.4: Duration of Pottery-making Activities in a Year (%)

Days	Urban	Rural	All
<90	0	1 (1.1)	1 (0.7)
90–180	10 (16.7)	32(35.6)	42 (28.0)
180–270	13 (21.7)	27 (30.0)	40 (26.7)
>270	37 (61.7)	30 (33.3)	67 (44.7)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)
Mean days	322	268	290
Minimum days	180	90	90
Maximum days	365	365	365

Source: Primary data

When it comes to returns from the traditional craft, the mean net income per annum works out to Rs 75,000 across the sample locations. However, the mean net income in urban locations is higher at Rs 83,000. The maximum net income reported is Rs 3,00,000. However, interactions with community members in locations such as Bowrampet and Narayanpet reveal that their annual income

Figure 5.4: Selling Products in Urban Areas – Hanamkonda District



from the traditional activity is around Rs 1,75,000. They said that they regularly receive orders for clay products such as biryani pots. Incomes in rural areas are relatively low because a majority of potters sell their products to intermediaries who procure the products at very low prices and sell them at a high mark-up.

5.5. Availability of Skilled Persons in the Family

An overwhelming 82% of the respondents said that there are skilled members in their families; this proportion is marginally higher in rural areas (86%). Only 28% of the respondent households reported that they engage workers for making clay products when the demand is high – such as during festive seasons. Some of the respondents from Kosgi, Narayanpet, and Bowrampet said that they engage labour on daily wages whenever required and they are paid Rs 500 per day. However, a majority of the respondents from rural areas said that they do not usually face shortages of labour, and whenever they are in need, they inform the workers in advance. However, in urban areas, there is a shortage of skilled workers.

5.6. Types and Range of Clay Products

The findings of the study show that, on average, in rural areas, 80–90 types of clay products are made. In the case of urban locations, the number ranges from 50–60. The older generation reported that they can prepare around 40–45 types of earthen products. The majority of the respondents from the older generation said that due to health issues they are unable to work for long hours, due to which the range of products has decreased. They stated that when they were young, they would prepare around 90–100 clay items per day. The younger generation – with exposure to new technology – said that they can produce 20–25 types of products with the help of modern tools.

Regarding air pollution, across urban and rural areas, 7% of the respondents said that they face constraints in the neighbourhood. It is interesting to note that in Ursu, Warangal district, some neighbours have filed cases against the Kummari community for causing air pollution. Some of the respondents said that the high-density populations in urban areas are causing more pollution than the firewood used by potters. Some of the respondents said that electric and gas-run *bhattis* are also available in the market, which can drastically reduce pollution and do away with polluting firewood. The government needs to popularize the use of such technologies by supporting and motivating the Kummari community.

5.7. Application of Modern Technology

Traditionally, pottery is shaped manually using a wheel. In most villages of Telangana, the older generations of potters still use a manual wheel. Some of the respondents from the older generation are of the view that any sort of clay product can be moulded on the traditional wheel. Some respondents from Bangariguda, who mostly make large products such as *ranjans*, said that modern equipment is not very useful for preparing clay items. They added that the traditional wheel is more suitable for making large and medium sized products. Some of the respondents from the younger generation also are of the view that only a few types of small products can be prepared on the modern power wheel, which also entails high voltage power consumption.

Table 5.5: Types of Modern Equipment Used to Make Clay Products

No.	Type of Equipment	Application
1	Blunger	Used for processing clay
2	Plug mill	Used for mixing clay
3	Togal press	Used for shaping different types of decorative <i>diyas</i> (earthen lamps or <i>deepathalu</i>)
4	Electric potter's wheel	Used to make/shape different types of clay products
5	Clay power machine	Designing clay products

Source: Primary data

The younger generation involved in pottery-making has the required skills to handle modern pottery-making tools. The respondents opined that these new technologies have made the work less labour-intensive and more efficient. Artisans from younger generations use different types of equipment in the production of clay items. At the same time, women, who are engaged in the preparation of clay, suffer from a range of health conditions.

Most (76%) of the Kummari households deploying modern tools reported that they purchased them on their own; but in rural areas, the proportion is much lower at 46%. A quarter of the equipment-using households borrowed money from informal sources (private lenders) to purchase the equipment while paying an annual interest rate of 24% in urban locations and 36% in rural areas.

The study found that only 36% of the households are currently using modern equipment such as power wheels and iron wheels. Technology adoption is more widespread in urban areas, with nearly 50% of urban households reporting the use of modern equipment. The corresponding proportion is considerably lower in rural locations at 28%.



Figure 5.5: Traditional Manual Wheel in Inavole Figure 5.6: Modern Power Wheel in Ursu

Figure 5.7: Modern Equipment Used in Making Clay Products Blunger in Hanamkonda District



Consultations with the community members revealed that modern equipment is very expensive and ranges from Rs 5,00,000–Rs 10,00,000. Therefore, machinery is used only by economically better-off households. One of the respondents from Ursu said that he invested Rs 4,00,000 to make the work easier for his family members. One of the women respondents from Ursu said that their drudgery in making clay products has been eased by technology. She also added that in addition to raising output, the technology has also improved her health status.



Clay Preparation (left); Plug Mill (right) in Hanamkonda District

5.8. Capacity to Handle Modern Technology

The study tried to ascertain whether the artisans had undergone any training for skill upgradation. A considerable share of the respondents (42%) said that they had undergone training to handle modern methods/technology. Most of the respondents (81%) reported that they had participated in training programs conducted by government agencies in the state. An overwhelming 90.5% of the respondents reported having attended training sessions for fewer than 10 days. However, a mere 3.2% of the trainees have undergone training in neighbouring states. These respondents are from Bowrampet (urban) and Inavole (rural).

Of the total respondents who have undergone training, 92% said that the government did not supply modern tool kits. “Mere imparting training is not enough unless the government supplies modern tools and financial support to the trainees to pursue the occupation”, an engineering graduate remarked (see Table 5.6). It was found that around 320 people who underwent training in the past have deposited Rs 20,000 for obtaining modern equipment with subsidies. However, they have not yet received the machinery from the government nor the deposits. A respondent from Kosgi said that he had borrowed the amount from relatives and deposited it for subsidy-based support, hoping that the support would come through. The Kummari Association at the state level is also not helpful, according to respondents.

One of the respondents from Nalgonda said that the state government has imparted training to about 4,000 artisans from the community but they do not possess the required knowledge or skills in handling modern technologies. The results indicate that of the

total respondents who received modern tool kits, 70% are using them. Most (91%) of the respondents reported that they had not participated in any exposure visits and they make product innovations based on their own talent and experience.

Table 5.6: Training in Modern Technology in the Study Locations (%)

Agency	Urban	Rural	All
Government	21 (84.0)	30 (78.9)	51 (81.0)
Caste association	4 (16.0)	8 (21.1)	12 (19.0)
Total	25 (100)	38 (100)	63 (100)
Place of training			
Within state	24 (96.0)	37 (97.4)	61 (96.8)
Outside state	1 (4.0)	1 (2.6)	2 (3.2)
Total	25 (100)	38 (100)	63 (100)
Duration of the training (in days)			
<10	24 (96.0)	33 (86.8)	57 (90.5)
11–15	0	4 (10.5)	4 (6.3)
20–25	1 (4.0)	1 (2.6)	2 (3.2)
Total	25 (100)	38 (100)	63 (100)

Source: Primary data

The general secretary of the Kummari Federation of Telangana observed that the community members visited Gujarat to understand new technologies that were being used by the potter community in the state. The Gujarat government has introduced emerging technologies and the interventions have attracted youth to the traditional craft. The Government of Telangana initiated measures to enter MoUs with companies such as *Matikam Kalakari*, Rural Technology Sansthan, Gandhinagar, Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute at Naroda Industrial Park, Ahmadabad, and *Mitticool* Company, to introduce modern technology in the production of pottery in the state. However, follow-up interventions have not been initiated.

One of the respondents from Ursu, Warangal district said that, in 2015, the state government had taken initiatives for skill development and deployment of modern equipment to transform the traditional occupation and to financially empower the artisans. However, the adoption of modern technologies is yet to gather momentum. He also mentioned that under a central government scheme, around 450 people from

21 districts were trained for 45 days in making innovative clay items and some of them were provided with new technologies. The government has provided power wheels worth Rs 17,000 to each of these trained artisans.

5.9. Marketing Arrangements

Traditionally, members of the Kummari community used to carry and hawk their products in their villages. They would also carry their products to distant places, mostly to other districts, by vehicle; but things have changed. The study results show that three-fourths (74%) of the respondents, particularly from urban areas, said that their customers come to them to purchase the products. It is interesting to note that the respondents from Kosgi, Narayanpet, Bangariguda, Nagaram, and Bowrampet said that they supply clay items to various parts of Telangana; however, 16.7% of them stated that intermediaries come to them to purchase stock. Additionally, 9.3% of the respondents reported that they supply pottery to resellers, who in turn sell them to customers (see Table 5.7).

Table 5.7: Marketing Arrangements in the Study Locations (%)

	Urban	Rural	All
Customers come to potter's location to buy	39 (65)	72 (80)	111 (74)
Deliver the products to people (resellers) who sell in the market/roadside	9 (15)	5 (5.6)	14 (9.3)
Items/stock picked by an intermediary	12 (20)	13 (14.4)	25 (16.7)
Total	60 (100)	90 (100)	150 (100)

Source: Primary data

It is seen that the intermediaries play a key role in the pottery supply chain. A majority of the respondents said that due to lack of manpower, they depend on intermediaries for marketing the products. A respondent from Bowrampet said that the products made by the community are also procured by retailers who sell them with a high mark-up through their shops or outlets in Hyderabad. For instance, a clay product that is procured from the potter for Rs 300 is sold by the retailer for Rs 800, after making it more attractive through some decorations.

Close to all (97%) of the respondents said that they do not have shops or dedicated spaces for selling their products at *Rythu Bazars* located at mandal and district

headquarters. It was also reported that due to the lack of exclusive shops at public markets, their products are not recognized by the public as essential. One of the respondents from Nalgonda said that unlike factory-made products which have a fixed price in the market, there are no fixed prices for clay products. Clay products are made with hard work and high risk but the customers do not appreciate the hardships of the artisans and they bargain for the least price possible. Hence, there is a need for the government to declare minimum support prices for the products to ensure remunerative prices for the makers.

5.10. Impact of Modern Technology

Globalization and modern technology have made a great impact on all traditional occupations including pottery-making. Close to four-fifths (78%) of the respondents reported that the availability of mass-produced plastic and metal wares has affected the employment, income, and livelihood opportunities of the artisans, particularly in rural areas. Another factor that adversely affected the occupation is the sale of products produced from states such as Rajasthan and Gujarat, in the urban areas of Telangana. These “exotic” products that are made with an aesthetic sense, manufactured in a company using modern technology, are very attractive to urban customers (see Figure 5.8).

5.11. Prior Orders for Promoting the Craft

Some of the respondents from Kosgi conveyed that they receive bulk orders for making pots and bowls. They supply food pots and other items to the buyers from the hotel industry of Karnataka. Some of the respondents from Narayanpet said that they receive orders from restaurants and hotels. The respondents suggest that the government should promote the craft by placing prior bulk orders to purchase products, as is done in the case of weavers by Government of Telangana, i.e., placing orders for the distribution of *bathukamma sarees* and school uniforms.

Further, they opined that the government must make it mandatory for all government agencies to purchase eco-friendly products. They also suggested that the state Kummari Federation needs to put pressure on the government in this regard. However, 71% of the respondents said that they receive orders from private individuals or establishments. The potters customize these products based on provided specifications.

Figure 5.8: Rajasthan Vendors Selling Clay products in Hanamkonda District



5.12. Pottery Under Threat: Case of *Iloni Mallanna* Temple

The following case study of Inavole, Hanamkonda district, illustrates one of the ways through which pottery-making is threatened by the availability of company products. Inavole is famous for acenturies-old Lord Shiva temple, better known as the *Iloni Mallanna* temple (*Mallikarjuna Swamy* Temple). The temple attracts devotees around the year but the popular annual event —*Iloni Mallanna Jathara*— is held for three to four months between December and March. Each year, close to three lakh people congregate in Inavole for the annual fair. Traditionally, devotees offer *bonam* (cooked rice) to the deity – cooked in a locally bought clay pot (*matti bonam*). This has long created a huge demand for earthen pots, particularly during the *Jathara* period, providing steady incomes and sustaining the livelihoods of the Kummari community. At times, the demand for pots would outstrip the supply with the community not in a position to rise to the occasion.

The traditional craft of the Kummari community came under threat, particularly since 2016, with the availability of company products such as metal pots/utensils in the shops near the temple. Slowly but surely, devotees started switching over to offering *sarva bonam*— food cooked in metal pots or utensils (brass and aluminium). As a result, the demand for clay pots has drastically declined, adversely impacting the livelihoods of local potters. The local community leaders suggest that the temple management impose

a ban on the sale of metal products at the temple. Moreover, some respondents are also of the view that the state government must come up with a policy in the form of a GO, making the use of clay products mandatory in all temple rituals. This would not only safeguard the livelihoods of the Kummari community but also uphold our traditions and culture in general.

5.13. Summing Up

An examination of the perceptions of the respondents on the adoption of traditional and modern methods/tools reveals that the Kummari community is confronted with a range of challenges in practising the traditional methods and are unable to compete with company products. Additionally, it examines the major constraints staring at the community in terms of availability and accessibility to raw materials, works space, storage, marketing, and the exploitative nature of middlemen. The government has also initiated measures to impart training to the youth, both in the state and outside; and also, to enter MoUs with companies to transfer technologies to the Kummari community.

However, these initiatives have not been taken forward. The MoUs are yet to see the light of the day. The government, despite having organized training programmes, has not extended financial aid or supplied modern tools/kits/machinery to sustain the occupation. On the other hand, the continuity of the traditional occupation is under threat due to the sale of products from the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. These fancy products attract the urban middle class more than the traditional products produced in Telangana, particularly in rural areas.

Despite the afore mentioned factors, the younger generation is willing to adapt to changing technologies and continue the occupation. This trend suggests that the government needs to initiate supportive interventions towards making pottery a viable occupation. In this context, there is a need for the establishment of training and research units to disseminate modern technology/tools/methods among community. Supply of modern equipment, assured market for the products (including procurement by government agencies), regulating the movement of products from other states, and financial support are critical for sustaining the occupation in the state.

CHAPTER-6

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF KUMMARI COMMUNITY

6.1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to examine the role of public institutions, such as the Backward Classes Welfare Department, Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation Limited, and Co-operative Societies Federation, registered under the Societies Act, 1964. Among these, the Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited has a key role in mediating between the government agencies and members of the co-operative societies in the state and contributing to the socio-economic development of the community.

6.2. Backward Classes Welfare Department

The Backward Classes Bureau, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, has programmes for the welfare of the Backward Classes. Similarly, state governments also formulate programmes for the socio-economic development of the Backward Classes in their respective Departments.

The Backward Classes Welfare Department, Government of Telangana, formulates and implements various schemes to benefit 130 communities, which are listed as Backward Classes. These communities are grouped under Group A, B, C, D, and E to provide reservations in education, employment, and in other sectors, and also to allocate state resources and schemes. The Kummari community is one of these communities and falls under group BC-B.

The BCs Welfare Department implements a broad range of schemes for Backward Classes, including the Kummari community, to reduce poverty and social inequalities in the state. The schemes include fee reimbursement, pre-matric and post-matric scholarships, welfare hostels, BC residential schools, self-employment and individual loans, group loans, scholarships for overseas studies, Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, and incentives for inter-caste marriage couples. Financial support schemes are implemented with bank loans and subsidies extended by the BCs Co-operative Finance Corporation.

6.3. Telangana Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation Limited

Andhra Pradesh Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation Limited (APBCCFCL) was established in 1974 to provide economic support schemes/assistance to the OBCs who were below the poverty line. In 2014, a separate Backward Classes Co-operative Finance Corporation Limited was created for Telangana.

The body extends financial assistance to the target group members in the form of subsidies for the creation of income-generating assets. However, in the case of most Backward Classes, certain schemes are implemented under the non-bank sector.

The unit cost is fixed at Rs 30,00,000 per society (with 15 members), of which 50% is subsidy and the remainder is a bank loan. In contrast to the earlier practice, the government has removed the norm related to beneficiary contributions to avail the scheme (BC Welfare Department, Government of Telangana, 2015–16).

6.4. Co-operative Societies and Federations

For over a century, co-operative societies have provided a robust institutional framework for people, particularly for the poor, to overcome their economic deprivations and enhance their livelihoods. Under the Telangana Co-operative Societies Act, 1964, a group of 10–15 people can form a co-operative to collectively focus their efforts on common challenges and projects, in order to transform their lives. The institution can serve as a vibrant and viable economic alternative, particularly in the context of deregulation of markets and an increasingly competitive global economy. This contributes to the state economy as well. In Telangana, there are different types of co-operative societies covering different sectors and social groups such as dairy, fisheries, agriculture, weavers, artisans, Dalits, tribal people, and other Backward Classes practising traditional occupations. They extend credit to members at low-interest rates, protecting them from usurious debts from informal sources, reducing the occupational castes' over-dependence on agriculture, reducing migration, and providing a degree of economic security. In Telangana, there are 13 Backward Classes federations incorporating 7,740 registered societies whose members practice traditional occupations. The federations are placed under the overall guidance and support of the BC Welfare Department (see table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Details of Registered Federations/Societies in Telangana

S. No.	Name of the Federation/Corporation	Total Registered Societies	%
1	Most Backward Classes Development Corporation	3	0.0
2	DBCDO	6	0.1
3	Bhattraja Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd.	7	0.1
4	Medara Finance Corporation Ltd.	107	1.4
5	Sagara (Uppara) Co-operative Societies Federation	163	2.1
6	Krishna Balija / Poosala Co-operative Societies Federation	230	3.0
7	Valmiki / Boya Co-operative Societies Federation	241	3.1
8	Toddy Tappers Co-operative Finance Corporation Ltd.	469	6.1
9	Vaddera Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd.	671	8.7
10	Kummari/Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd.	957	12.4
11	Vishwabramhin Co-operative Societies Corporation Ltd.	1020	13.2
12	Nayee Brahmins Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd.	1422	18.4
13	Washermen Co-operative Societies Federation Ltd.	2444	31.6
	Total	7740	100

Source: BC Welfare Department, Government of Telangana website, data retrieved in May 2021

6.5. Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited

The Kummari Federation was formed in 2009 in undivided Andhra Pradesh and it was renamed Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited, Hyderabad. It was initially placed under the Industries Department vide GO Ms. No. 84 Industries and Commerce Department (C&EP) (dated: 03.08.2010) and subsequently transferred to the BC Welfare Department vide GO Ms. No. 143 Industries and Commerce Department (MSME) (dated:16.10.2012).

The Andhra Pradesh State Kummari Sangam was established in 1967 under the leadership of Shri Tupran Anjaiah in Andhra Pradesh and renamed Kummari Shalivahana Sangam in 2003. After the formation of Telangana, the association was registered as Telangana Kummari Association (Regd. No.87/2018). There are district and *mandal*-level associations as well. In addition to this association, two more Kummari associations are registered in the state under the Societies Act.

Following the formation of Telangana, the Federation was renamed as the Telangana Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited, Hyderabad, government vide GO Ms. No. 08 BC Welfare (B) Department (dated: 12.01.2015) and registered with TA No. 10/2015 by the Director, BC Welfare/Functional Registrar (dated: 31.03.2015).

The Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies Federation Limited accounts for 12.4% of the total societies in the state. The highest number is found among the Washermen Co-operative Societies Federation Limited (34.1%), followed by Nayee Brahmins Co-operative Societies Federation Limited (18.4%) and Vishwabrahmin Co-operative Societies Corporation Limited (13.2%).

In addition to the registered societies, there are associations such as employees' welfare associations, intellectuals' forums, and youth, women and political wings, which are working for the welfare of their respective constituents. The main aim of these associations is to represent the interests of the community to the state and central governments and promote their well-being.

While these three associations collectively work for the welfare of the Kummari community, support from the state and central governments (sufficient allocations in the budget) and providing forward and backward linkages are all the more important for the well-being of the Kummari community.

6.6. Budget Allocations and Beneficiaries during 2014–15 to 2020–21

The government has allocated Rs 56.79 crore to 957 Kummari Shalivahana societies towards the subsidy component, which works out as Rs 5,93,416 per society in seven years, during 2014–15 to 2020–21. However, the budget allocations do not seem to follow any scientific criteria; the allocation was highest in 2018–2019, followed by 2015–16, 2014–15, and 2017–18. There have been no budget allocations for 2019–20 and 2020–21 (see Table 6.2).

Of the total societies, according to the Kummari Shalivahana Federation, 2,641 beneficiaries have availed subsidies as of 2019. The highest number of beneficiaries were found in three districts viz, Janagoan (563), Medak (234), and Mahabubnagar (185) (see table 6.3).

Concerning the supply of tools, only 23 members have received modern tool kits since the inception of Telangana; the highest number of beneficiaries are from Adilabad and

Medchal districts with 10 beneficiaries. The lowest number of beneficiaries are found in Warangal (1), Mahabubnagar (1), and Mulugu (1).

**Table 6.2: Budget Allocations for Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Federation
(from 20014–15 to 2020–21)**

Year	Budget Allocations (Rs. in crores)
2014–15	10.5
2015–16	13.5
2016–17	0
2017–18	6.79
2018–19	25
2019–20	0
2020–21	0
Total	55.79

Source: Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Federation, Government of Telangana

6.7. Kummari Co-operative Societies/Associations in the Study Locations

6.7.1. Membership Status

The study reveals that a majority of the respondents (63%) are members of co-operative societies or associations, whereas 75% and 54% of respondents in urban and rural areas, respectively, are members. Thus, membership is higher in urban areas. However, most respondents have conveyed that it is a matter of pride to be a member of the association and to take part in its activities. They also said that it enables them to get financial assistance from the Kummari Federation and develop a network with community members.

Some of the respondents reported that they have played a key role in getting official approvals for house sites and other benefits. For instance, in the Bangariguda village, around 150 families received house sites from the government in 2006. Similarly, community halls were constructed in Ursu, Nalgonda, and Bowrampet. However, no such initiatives have been taken during the past six years.

Table 6.3: Details of Beneficiaries (Economic Support Scheme) from 2014–15 to 2019–20

No. of Beneficiaries							
S.No.	District	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2018–19	2019–20	Total
1.	Adilabad	0	0	0	0	53	53
2.	Bhadradri	71	0	0	0	53	124
3.	Hyderabad	0	15	0	0	10	25
4.	Jagtial	0	0	0	0	53	53
5.	Jangaon	526	14	0	0	53	593
6.	Jayashankar	0	14	0	0	28	42
7.	Jogulamba	0	59	0	0	43	102
8.	Kamareddy	0	50	0	0	20	70
9.	Karimnagar	0	0	0	0	21	21
10.	Khammam	0	68	0	0	53	121
11.	KumuramBheem	0	0	0	0	2	2
12.	Mahabubabad	45	42	0	0	43	130
13.	Mahabubnagar	94	41	0	0	50	185
14.	Mancherial	0	0	0	0	16	16
15.	Medak	169	12	0	0	53	234
16.	Medchal	0	14	0	0	14	28
17.	Mulugu	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Nagarkurnool	118	14	0	0	23	155
19.	Nalgonda	0	36	0	0	32	68
20.	Narayanpet	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Nirmal	0	0	0	0	30	30
22.	Nizamabad	0	57	0	0	21	78
23.	Peddapally	0	14	0	0	36	50
24.	RajannaSircilla	0	0	0	0	37	37
25.	Rangareddy	0	0	0	0	34	34
26.	Sangareddy	0	0	0	0	32	32
27.	Siddipet	28	95	0	0	41	164
28.	Suryapet	0	0	0	0	42	42
29.	Vikarabad	0	24	0	0	12	36
30.	Wanaparthy	12	0	0	0	7	19
31.	Warangal (R)	0	14	0	0	53	67
32.	Warangal (U)	0	0	0	0	14	14
33.	Yadadri	0	0	0	0	16	16
Total		1063	583	0	0	995	2641

Source: Kummari/Shalivahana Federation, Government of Telangana

6.8. Status of Kummari Shalivahana Co-operative Societies

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (64%) reported that the societies actively organize meetings and community activities and help lobby for the community's interests with the government. Their efforts are much stronger in urban areas. During the field study, it was observed that in Bowrampet, Nalgonda, Ursu, Bangariguda, Kosgi, Narayanpet, and Thangadpally, the societies/caste associations are working effectively in addressing community interests, compared to in other locations.

In some areas such as Nalgonda, Thangadpally, Ursu, Bangariguda, Bowrampet, Kosgi, and Narayanpet, community members have formed groups and organize private chit funds. Members are able to access loans of Rs 20,000–30,000 with an interest rate of 1% per month, which is mostly utilized to meet household needs. However, some of the respondents stated that political parties do not recognize or promote the community or the Federation, as the numerical strength of the Kummari community is low compared to other BC communities.

6.9. Awareness about State Kummari Shalivahana Association

The study ascertained the respondents' perceptions about the state-level Kummari Shalivahana Association and its office bearers. Only 43% of the respondents reported in the affirmative, while 57% of them reported that they did not interact with association members and other important members of the community. The association has not organized any district, *mandal*, or village-level meetings to educate the community members about the association's activities and government programmes devised for them. According to some respondents, such efforts would not only create confidence among the members but also demonstrate unity in the community. However, one of the office-bearers of the association (representing Kosgi) claimed that since the majority of the community members are either illiterate or have low educational qualifications, they are not aware of the association's activities.

6.10. Activities and Membership of Kummari Co-operative Societies

More than three-fourths (77.3%) of the sample households reported the presence of a Kummari co-operative society/association in their areas and almost two-thirds (63%) of them reported they had membership in the local society or association. Further, virtually all the respondents (99%) reported that they do not have membership cards to

avail the schemes from the state-level Federation and they conveyed the need to acquire ID cards to access government schemes. Only 7% of the respondent households reported to have received financial assistance from the state Federation (see table 6.4).

Table 6.4: Respondents’ Interface with Caste Associations and the Federation (%)

Description	Urban	Rural	All
Whether the village has co-operatives/associations (Yes)	78.3	76.7	77.3
Membership in the association (Yes)	75.0	54.4	63.0
Whether co-operatives/associations active in the village(Yes)	75.0	57	64.0
Aware of the Kummari Shalivahana Federation at the state-level (Yes)	41.7	43.3	43.0
Do you have a membership card for availing welfare schemes under Kummari Federation? (No)	98.3	99.0	99.0
Have you received financial assistance from the Federation? (Yes)	8.3	5.6	6.7

Source: Primary data

6.11. Awareness about the Government Welfare Schemes

When asked about the government welfare programmes for Backward Classes (including the Kummari), 43% of the respondents reported that they were aware of the schemes. The affirmative response rate is higher among urban households in this regard. One of the respondents from Ursu, in Warangal district, reported that, “the government is granting Rs 30,00,000 for undertaking any viable enterprise, of this 50% is subsidy and the remaining 50% is a beneficiary contribution or bank loan”. The respondents are of the view that the government schemes, especially a majority of the economic support schemes, are related to agriculture and animal husbandry, therefore, they are not beneficial to traditional crafts. They also stated that social security schemes, such as pensions which are provided to weavers and toddy-tapping communities, have not been extended to them.

6.12. Access to Schemes from the BC Corporation/Kummari Shalivahana Federation

A majority of the respondents said that they have not received any assistance either from the BC Finance Corporation or from the Kummari Shalivahana Federation, over the past five years. Some of the respondents from Bangariguda applied for subsidy-based schemes in 2016, but they have not received a response from the authorities concerned and have no clue about the status of their applications. A few respondents reported that they had managed to secure membership cards from the Federation.

Some respondents, particularly from Narayanpet and Kosgi villages, said that the formation of the Federation was a mere formality and it is of no actual benefit to the community. One of the respondents from Bowrampet said that their community member was the head of the Most Backward Classes (MBC Commission) between 2017–2020 but none of the community members had received financial support. Some of the respondents suggested that the government should issue labour cards to them on par with *beedi* workers and the Gouda community members.

The study endeavoured to ascertain whether the community members have economically benefited from the Kummari Shalivahana Federation. An insignificant proportion of respondents (7%) said that they have benefited from the government in undivided Andhra Pradesh. To sum up the findings, 3.3% of the respondents have benefited from the BC Corporation interventions and another 3.3% have benefited from the Kummari Shalivahana Federation.

In urban areas, out of a sample of 60 households, five of them have benefited, of which one is under the BC Corporation and four are under the Kummari Shalivahana Federation. In rural areas, out of a sample of 90 households, five households have received benefits as well, four under the BC Corporation schemes and one under the Kummari Shalivahana Federation. These beneficiaries are from Narayanpet, Kosgi, and Tangadpally.

6.13. Government Policies and the Traditional Occupation

Some state government policies such as the Andhra Pradesh Water, Land, and Trees Act, 2002 (APWALTA)³ (adopted by Telangana Government as well⁴) and GO No. 1076 (came into force in 1979) have become impediments for the continuation and sustainability of traditional occupation of the Kummari community. These policies impose restrictions on people regarding the collection of clay from the village water bodies (tanks/lakes/ponds), which are the main sources of this input.

The Federation members claim that these policies are undermining or contradicting GO No. 12 and GO No. 274. GO No. 12 recognizes the rights of the Kummari people

³The Andhra Pradesh Water, Land, and Trees Act, 2002 received the assent of the Governor on 18.04.2002.

⁴As of 02.06.2014, it has been adopted by the State of Telangana, under section 101 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014 (Central Act 6 of 2014) vide. The notification issued in GO Ms. No.18, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development (RD.II) Department, dated 31.01.2015.

to collect clay – popularly known as *bankamatti*– from tanks and ponds, while GO No. 274 allows them to collect firewood from the forest free of cost.

6.14. Awareness about the Existing GOs

Interestingly, more than nine-tenths (91.3%) of the respondents said that they are not aware of APWALTA and G.O. No. 1076, which adversely affect the livelihoods of the community. According to some FGD participants, this situation is more prevalent in rural areas where most of the members are illiterate or have low educational qualifications and do not have adequate knowledge about the provisions of the GOs and their implications for their livelihoods. However, community leaders and some respondents indicated that they are aware of the provisions of the Act/GOs and the role of the government officials in preventing the community from collecting clay and firewood. There have been some instances where the Forest Department has filed cases against those who entered the forest and collected firewood. However, community leaders and political representatives have rescued them from the legal wrangles, according to some respondents.

Some of the respondents reported that they purchase the raw material, i.e. clay and firewood, in the open market, incurring huge expenses on the inputs. Some of the respondents shared that the youth have migrated to urban areas in search of employment. They also agreed that these GOs create impediments to their activities. During the field visits, the team found that some members of the community from Nalgonda, Bowrampet, and Lakkaram villages had opted out of the traditional occupation and sought employment in private companies in urban areas or were working as wage labourers.

The office-bearers of the Federation stated that they had represented the matter to the state government and the Backward Classes Welfare Department to revoke provisions in the GOs that obstruct their activities and allow them to collect the inputs, but there has been no response from the government in this regard. The office bearers pointed out that the government has recognized the exclusive rights of the toddy-tapping community over palm trees and the fishing community over the tanks and lakes but ignored their request for recognizing similar rights of the Kummari people.

6.15. Access to Financial Institutions

The study reveals that only a small fraction of the respondents (12.7%) have access to institutional finance, such as commercial banks, for the purchase of clay, firewood, and other basic inputs. Of these, a majority of them are from rural areas. A few of them take out loans from the SHGs and informal sources such as moneylenders and friends who may charge exorbitant interest rates.

6.16. Representation of the Community in Political Institutions

Representation in political institutions, particularly in grassroots-level democratic institutions, would enable the community members to raise their voices and fight for their rights. It is pertinent to note that, except for two respondents (Municipal ward councillor in Adilabad and Narayanpet municipal bodies), none of them have shown interest in contesting in the elections partly due to their poor economic status and low population strength. According to some respondents, financial capacity and strength and unity among the community members are prerequisites for participating in the electoral process. Due to these factors, political leaders also do not accord much priority to them, such as by giving them party tickets, allocating public resources, or addressing their concerns.

6.17. Summing up

The study reveals that the state government has not paid adequate attention to the budget allocations to the BC co-operative Federations. This is evident from the fact that there have been no budget allocations for the past couple of years. Consequently, the role of co-operatives, particularly the Kummari Federation, is minimal in sustaining the occupation and protecting the rights of the community.

The development of the Kummari community depends on the proactive efforts of state-level political leadership, public institutions, and the community federation in taking necessary measures such as repealing provisions in GOs that impede occupational activities, extending economic and social support schemes, improving access to credit institutions, providing forward and backward linkages for marketing products, and improving representation in decision-making bodies. Most respondents either are not aware of or do not have access to government opportunities

CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

In Telangana, a large number of Kummari households still rely on the traditional activity of pottery for their livelihood, contributing to the economy by producing a wide range of pottery while upholding Indian culture and heritage. But the returns from the activity have been moderate for most households. Pottery-making in the state is beset with a range of constraints, such as scarcity of raw materials, low investment, obsolete technology, lack of product diversification, and poor marketing mechanisms – due to which potters depend on intermediaries.

7.2. Study Findings

The major challenges that emerge from the field survey are: (a) gap in the sex ratio, (b) low educational level and dropouts at the school level, (c) inadequate living space and low quality of housing, (d) toilets with no or inadequate running water, (e) inadequate cultivable land and lack of assured irrigation facilities, (f) landlessness and dependence on wage labour for supplementing household income, (g) high expenditure on food, education, health, and clothes, (h) prohibitively high cost of modern occupational equipment, (i) low income and low spatial mobility, and (j) migration of youth to urban areas. All these factors have cumulatively affected the dependability and sustainability of the community's traditional craft. However, the survey also highlights opportunities for the sustainability of the occupation. Potters are in the most productive age group (24–59 years) and are eager to embrace new technologies.

Most of the respondent households have access to basic social schemes launched by the government; however, none of them have received financial assistance under self-employment schemes. This is partly due to the inadequate reach of the BC Welfare Department among the eligible members and also because some members do not have the required skills and capital (in addition to the government assistance) to launch viable economic activities.

Similarly, wage employment opportunities under the MGNREGS are inadequate. Though the community received adequate coverage under social security schemes, it has largely been excluded from economic support schemes. The government needs to pay adequate attention to this discrepancy.

Adoption of new technologies is critical to any occupation to sustain the activity and create opportunities for inclusive and sustainable livelihoods. Our study shows that respondents encounter constraints in practising traditional methods and are unable to compete with the mass-produced products. Poor availability and accessibility to key raw materials; lack of space for making, storing, and marketing the products; and the exploitative nature of intermediaries constrain the community in sustaining the occupation.

The state government has also initiated measures to impart training to youth and to enter into MoUs with different companies to transfer technologies to the Kummari community. But these initiatives have not been realized fully. The government, though organized training programmes, has not extended financial assistance nor supplied modern tools and equipment to sustain the occupation. On the other hand, the dependability of the traditional occupation is under threat due to the sale of “exotic” products from Rajasthan and Gujarat in the state. These products attract urban customers over traditional products produced in Telangana. The challenge of the ubiquitous plastic and metal products also persists.

Despite these factors, the younger generation is willing to adapt to changing technologies and sustain the occupation. This trend suggests that the government needs to initiate complementary and supportive interventions to make pottery-making a viable activity. In this context, there is a need to establish training and research units to disseminate modern technologies/tools/methods among the community. Supply of modern equipment free of cost, an assured market for the products (including procurement by government agencies), financial support, and capacity-building are critical for sustaining the occupation in the state.

The study reveals that the state government needs to pay adequate attention to budget allocations to the BC Co-operatives Federation. Due to the lack of sufficient resources, the role of Federations, particularly the Kummari Federation, is minimal in sustaining the occupation and protecting the rights of the community. The development of the Kummari community depends on the proactive role of state-level political leadership,

public institutions, and the community federation in taking necessary initiatives such as the repeal of provisions in the GOs that undermine the occupation, expanding the coverage under social sector schemes, improving access to credit institutions, providing forward and backward linkages for the production and marketing of products, and ensuring adequate representation in the decision making bodies. A majority of the households are either not aware of or not able to access these opportunities. Low political participation is seen within the community owing to a low population and lack of financial resources and cohesiveness in the community.

7.3 Key Recommendations

Regulatory Policy Environment

The state government needs to evaluate and revise current laws, policies, and regulations that undermine or restrict pottery-making. Existing policies, such as APWALTA 2002, need to be amended to enable the Kummari community to access locally available raw materials, such as clay and firewood, to which they had unrestricted access prior to the enactment of the Act. Providing a conducive legal framework and supportive policy environment for sustaining the occupation is all the more important.

Promoting the Traditional Craft

- Mobile *bhattis* (kilns) should be provided in rural areas as per the requirement. To address the issue of air pollution in urban areas, production units or yards and electric or gas-fired mobile *bhattis* should be set up on the outskirts of villages or towns.
- Power subsidies, discounts, or free power up to the prescribed minimum consumption needs to be offered to Kummari households. This would accelerate technology adoption in pottery-making and reduce air pollution as well.
- Processing, production, and storage centres or yards should be established by the state government on the outskirts of urban locations.
- Government land or acquired land needs to be provided to store finished products at the village and *mandall*/town levels.
- Modern technologies in the form of equipment and tools should be provided to the community through appropriate schemes; this would also attract the younger generation to the traditional occupation.

- MoUs need to be signed with other states with innovative models, such as Gujarat and Rajasthan, for technology transfer, capacity-building, and collaboration.
- Because of the growing risk of damage to products and equipment and the resultant financial loss, the Kummari community should be covered under an appropriate general insurance product with the government subsidizing the premium, either partly or fully.

Marketing Support

- Dedicated space should be provided in *rythu bazaars* and public markets for selling clay products.
- Promotion and marketing of clay products through digital channels such as e-commerce sites need to be explored.
- The option of involving village-level caste co-operatives or associations and the state-level Kummari Federation in procuring and marketing finished products needs to be explored.
- The government should regularly procure pottery items through the Kummari Co-operative Federation and local co-operatives for use in government institutions, which can be made mandatory through appropriate policy initiatives. A case in point is the state government's initiative to procure sarees and other products made by the weaving community (*padmashalis*) for distribution among the poor, particularly women.
- The role of intermediaries in the pottery supply chain should be regulated to ensure that the artisans receive a more remunerative price for their products.

Welfare and Governance

- Social security pensions for all community members who have completed the prescribed age – on par with other Backward Castes pursuing traditional occupations, such as weavers and toddy-tappers.
- Pottery workers from the Kummari community should be recognized by the Labour Department and provided social security and insurance benefits through the issue of ID cards, on par with other occupational castes such as Goudas, *beedi* workers, and *padmashalis*.

- Coverage of the Kummari community under ESSs is very low; a 100% subsidy (grant) can be considered – subject to a cap on the assistance provided – doing away with bank linkages and beneficiary contributions. Purchase of modern equipment for pottery-making should be allowed under the ESSs.
- New technical or vocational courses should be introduced from Class 10 and in polytechnic colleges on designing and producing clay products with modern equipment. The Gujarat model can be considered in this regard.
- Concerning educational and employment opportunities, members of the Kummari community – since it is an under-represented community – should be accorded priority through special drives. Currently, the Kummari community is unable to compete with other numerically-dominant occupational castes.
- Since women play an important role in the entire pottery production cycle, to achieve gender equality and women empowerment, women engaged in this occupation should be treated on par with men when it comes to government initiatives related to supplying machinery, financial assistance, and capacity-building.
- There is a clear case for financially strengthening the Kummari Shalivahana Federation with adequate budgetary allocations. The Federation should be provided with the required functionaries and powers to play a leading role in procuring, storing, and marketing earthenware. Taking a cue from the Girijan Co-operative Corporation (GCC), the federation can perform the above functions, including managing exclusive outlets for earthen products.
- There is low awareness within the Kummari community about the government's socio-economic development schemes and interventions for the welfare of backward and occupational castes. There is a need to reach out to the community with information about government schemes and initiatives. Village co-operatives can play a key role in this regard.

Research, Development, and Capacity-Building

- There is a need to establish a research and development (R&D) centre on pottery, earthenware, and related products, such as ceramics. The R&D centre can study and follow up on emerging technologies, new product ranges, and innovative

models and initiatives across the globe and disseminate the technologies and process among the stakeholders.

- A follow-up initiative should institute a modern capacity-building centre with the required infrastructure to provide hands-on training, particularly to the youth. The recommended interventions would go a long way in turning the “artisanal activity” into a modern “enterprise” that can attract youth from other communities as well.
- It is recommended that further research on traditional pottery-making is done using a gender-sensitive perspective, to factor in the differences in situations, experiences, challenges, and opportunities for men and women.
- There is also a need to create a data base on all occupational communities in the

ANNEXURE – I : Case Studies

Case Study 1



Mr Kummari Naveen (25 years old) is a native of Narayanpet district. His elderly parents are illiterates. He studied up to 10th class at the local government school and discontinued studies to take up the hereditary occupation. Naveen used to help his parents in pottery-making since the age of 13 years. Now, he has acquired all the skills to make the venture a profitable activity. The problem is the lack of capital to invest in the occupation. He took a loan of Rs 20,000 from his relatives and purchased a power wheel which relieves him from physical labour.

Naveen said that his family is one of the poorest households among the Kummari community and they do not have any assets, including agricultural land. He has applied for financial assistance from the government, but his efforts have not been successful.

Despite these problems, Naveen is continuing his occupation and his wife supports him in the activity. He prepares 70–80 big-sized clay items per day and supplies them to nearby villages and also markets them in Hyderabad and Gajwel districts. The family makes the products on prior orders from the customers. His annual income from the occupation is about Rs 1,50,000. He urged the government to provide him with electric tools and machinery free of cost, which would benefit the youth and encourage them to become entrepreneurs. He stated that there is also a need to conduct training classes on new technologies for the youth, on regular basis.

state to monitor their socio-economic status through periodic surveys and a set of core indicators.



Case Study 2

Anil, aged 30 years, is a native of Inavole village, Hanamkonda district. He is the only male child in the family and an arts graduate. His wife Sunitha is also a graduate. He has appeared for police recruitment jobs but did not get selected. He has worked as a lorry driver for four years but quit the job due to heavy strain. He was compelled to take up the hereditary occupation for survival. Anil has two acres of agricultural land, which he leases out.

Anil and his wife prepare around 90–100 medium-sized clay items per day. The products are mostly marketed in nearby villages. He also sells the products within the village, during the Inavole *Jathara* which is celebrated for three months during January–March every year. He earns Rs 20,000–25,000 per month and is able to meet his family's needs. He opined that the biggest challenge to sustaining the occupation is high input costs.

He said that he received a 15-day training on preparing new models in Warangal, which has helped him in preparing new types of clay products. Still, the government has not supplied him with the required machinery or tools which were to be supplied after completion of the training. The government should provide modern tools which would attract the youth to take up the traditional occupation, he remarked.

Case Study 3



B. Jayalaxmi, aged 23 years, is a native of the Nalgonda district. She has three sisters. The elder sisters are postgraduates with B.Ed. and work as government teachers. Jayalaxmi studied engineering in the ECE branch. She helped her parents in pottery-making as a child and gained rich experience and ventured into this occupation.

This occupation is the only source of livelihood for the family now. They do not have agricultural land and other properties. Their family income is around Rs 18,000–20,000 rupees per month.

Jayalaxmi has a passion for practising the hereditary occupation and has received a 3-day training on skill upgradation to prepare clay *Ganapathi* and *diyas*, organized by the Backward Classes Development Department, Government of Telangana, Nalgonda. She said that the government officials appreciated her interest in participating in the training.



Jayalaxmi said that she got employment in a software company but declined it as she is not willing to work in the private sector. She has since joined her parents and prepares to continue the occupation even after marriage. Her ambition is to become a “women entrepreneur” and earn a name in society. Jayalaxmi said that if the government provides a loan of Rs 10,00,000, she can upgrade her family business. She

also pointed out that many girls/women would prefer to take up the occupation if the government supported them by imparting training on modern methods, financial support, and other facilities.

ANNEXURE – II:

Stakeholders' Perspectives on Kummari Community



“The existing GOs, such as GO No. 1076 of 1979 and GO No. 274 of 1996, adversely affect the livelihoods of the Kummari community. There is a need to revoke such GOs which impede the community in accessing the raw materials. There is a need to allocate an adequate budget for the Kummari Federation and provide subsidies and cash transfers for the community members engaged in the traditional activity.”

Mr Jayanth Rao, President, Telangana Kummari Association



“The Kummari community does not have enough knowledge to market their products. The government should develop marketing strategies, identify demand, and establish linkages with the communities. The government can also purchase the products with Minimum Support Price and sell them to the general public. This initiative will instil confidence among the people to sustain the occupation.”

Dr K Srinivas, Program Co-ordinator, Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies, Osmania University



“The state government has imparted training to 4320 community members on the use of modern technology and tools. But the majority of them have not received modern tools. This has resulted in the wastage of efforts, resources, and time. The government should be more proactive in this regard.”

Kummari Govardhan, Master Trainer and General Secretary, State Traditional Occupations Association



“Women also play an important role in traditional pottery work. The government should encourage the female members of the community by sanctioning exclusive loans to purchase modern tools. The government should recognize the importance of work that is being done by the Kummari community and provide labour cards and insurance for clay products.”

Mrs Arepalli Rajava, Representative of the Kummari community of Lakkaram village, Adilabad district.

Annexure – III

Major Types of Clay Products Produced by the Kummari Community

S.No.	Name of the Products	S.No.	Name of the Products
1.	Pots	17.	Water jugs
2.	Atikelu	18.	Taabeluburrulu
3.	Budlu	19.	Gallagurugulu
4.	Munthalu	20.	Peruguchippalu
5.	Gurugulu	21.	Kadu munthalu
6.	Peddamukullu	22.	Poolathotti
7.	Deepanthulu	23.	Rottepenkalu
8.	Koorakanchulu	24.	Uddanlu
9.	Ranjandlu	25.	Tea cups
10.	Koojalu	26.	Perugutavvalu
11.	Flower vase	27.	Kundedlu
12.	Biryani munthalu	28.	Matti ganeshlu
13.	Water bottles	29.	Thatipenkalu
14.	Water glasses	30.	Yellammalandulu
15.	Thatilotlu	31.	Kummari poyyilu
16.	Eethalotlu	32.	Alankaranakundalu

Source: Field data

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