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VILLAGE POTTERY

Field Investigation, First & Final Draft by

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FOREWORD

ONE OF THE first steps to be taken in the First Five Year Plan was the establishment of six Boards for the promotion of handicrafts, village and small industries : (1) The Khadi and Village Industries Board; (2) The All-India Handicrafts Board; (3) The All India Handloom Board; (4) The Central Silk Board; (5) The Coir Board; and (6) The Small Industries Board.

The rapid expansion of the activities of these Boards which concentrated not only on production and techniques, but also on organisation, extension, credit, marketing and export, consolidated and enlarged the position that the household industries sector had so long enjoyed in the nation's economic life. It was this fact that forced itself upon the preparations for the 1961 Census and demanded that household industry should be separately investigated for a proper accounting of the nation's manpower, resources and its specific contribution to the national income. The 1961 Census therefore asked a special series of questions on household industry, input of family and hired labour, and the periods over which household industry is conducted. It was felt, however, that an enumeration of the total number of establishments and their industrial classification would be incomplete without a proper description of what they produce and how they produce. It was important to make an assessment of the limits of rigidity within which traditional skill operates. This could be obtained by studying the caste, occupational, social and economic stratifications, the limitations of credit and marketing facilities, the dominance of custom over contract, the persistence of traditional tools and design forms, the physical limitations of transport, communication and mobility, the inability to adopt new lines or adapt to changing circumstances. It was important also to make an assessment of the limits of flexibility that traditional skill is capable of, because the transformation of traditional skills to modern skills is easier said than done and a thorough study may well reveal that it is perhaps cheaper from the social point of view to develop industrial skills from scratch than to try to graft traditional skill on alien soil. A rather tragic case of failure to make what would

on the face of it seem a minor adjustment cast its heavy shadow on the nation when it was discovered that goldsmiths used to working on 22-carat gold all their lives felt sadly helpless when asked to work on 14-carat, so narrow and unadaptable were the limits of their skill and proficiency and so rudimentary the tools and equipment with which they and their forefathers had worked. This fiscal accident revealed that tools are even more important than skills.

An early opportunity was therefore taken in February 1960 to suggest to State Census Superintendents, that the Census provided a unique opportunity for conducting and documenting a survey of this kind. As such a survey was quite outside the usual terms of reference of Census work it was thought prudent cautiously to feel one's way with the thin end of the wedge of what would, it was hoped, prove to be an exciting pursuit. It was therefore considered the wiser course to wait until the State Census Offices felt so interested that they would no longer take the inquiry as an imposition but rather want to do it on their own and ask for the necessary staff and equipment. This office too, in its turn, could make use of the interval to organise and elaborate the design of inquiry in order to feed the appetite that work in progress would serve to whet. Because it was a labour of love, sought to be unobtrusively thrust on one's colleagues and because the inquiry itself was so vast that normally it would demand in any country as big a set-up, if separately established, as the Census organisation itself and that over a much longer period, and because it was almost a pioneer venture, nothing like it having been undertaken since the 1880's, it was decided to move towards a build-up by stages, to let the inquiry unfold itself only as fast as my colleagues chose to ask for more.

Thus, in the first circular of 18 February 1960, it was suggested that the inquiry might be conducted through the agency of the Development Department, the State Director of Industries, the Director of Tribal Welfare, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies, and other organisations concerned with the promotion of household industry. A draft questionnaire containing 30 questions in three parts was recommended for canvassing. It was suggested that information on this questionnaire, village by village and area by area, might either be obtained through the regular departmental channels of the State Government or through the newly set up Census organisation, or through the hierarchy of the newly-created Panchayats. Stress was laid on the need of photographic documentation and illustration of designs, shapes and forms not only by photographs but with the help of line drawings or sketches together with a full description of the materials used.

Almost the whole of 1960 and the first half of 1961 were spent in organising and taking the census count, although several States even during this period had not allowed the grass to grow under their feet but made exploratory studies and decided in their minds how the inquiry should be organised. A series of regional

conferences held in Trivendrum, Darjeeling and Srinagar in May and June 1967 revealed much enthusiasm among State Superintendents to proceed with the survey, but the need of separate staff and equipment was felt at the same time as the realization dawned that this was much too serious an inquiry to be treated casually and left to be achieved through the usual administrative channels and State Census Superintendents proceeded to augment their staff with qualified research and investigating officers, technical persons, photographers, artists, draughtsmen and other trained personnel.

This was followed by rapid progress in coordination between the Central and State Census offices in the matter of exchange and processing of information, documentation and investigation, of assisting each other with trained investigators and in editing and finalizing drafts, layouts, presentations.

Mention has been made of a questionnaire in three parts and thirty questions. The idea was to make a beginning with empirical, analytical studies based on a structured questionnaire which would replace general descriptive accounts that had obtained so far. The primary aim was to obtain a picture as much of the artisan himself as of his craft, to obtain a perspective of the artisan and his craft in his social and economic setting, the extent to which tradition bound him and the winds of change ruffled him, the extent of his mobility and immobility, the conditions of market, credit, new contacts and designs in which he operated, the frame of new as well as traditional producer-customer relationships in which he still worked, and how far he was ready to pierce his own caste-tribe socio-economic cocoon and make a break through to new opportunities promised by the Five Year Plans. The aim was to hold up the mirror to hereditary skills struggling with the dialectics of tradition and change.

Thus the first part of the questionnaire, purporting to be a village schedule, sought to take account of the size and population of the village, its remoteness from or proximity to centres of trade and commerce, in short, the degree of isolation in which the artisan worked, and the relative strengths of various communities in the village which would afford clues to social interdependence and the prevalence of the *jajmani* system. The second part was devoted to artisan communities in the village: the several castes of artisans, the number of families in each, the total number of workers, males and females, the extent of cooperative activity among them, the extent of dependence upon employers and of wage or contract labour. There were questions on the raw materials used, the means of their procurement, the possible extent of dependence on others for raw materials, the extent of the material that artisans can handle within the limits of their skill. There were other questions on the exchange and flow of designs, the use of colours, the ancientness of the craft and legends associated, the colonization of the craftsman, on patrons

and customers and on social and economic contact with the world inside and outside the village. There were specific questions on the workshop itself and particularly the tools and the source of supply of these tools, because it was felt that tools decide everything and are the surest index of inertness or flexibility. Separate blocks of questions were designed to bring out the ramifications of artisan castes throughout the country and the ways they sustained themselves, the type of clientele they catered for, the extent to which they operated on money or barter or service, how specialized their craft was, how wide the market, how dependent they were on their socially preordained clientele and how restricted the latter was by the seemingly unalterable laws of social custom; the extent to which they could operate in the open market, the range of their wares and the sizes to which these were ordinarily restricted either by the limits of their own skill or the length of their customers' pursestrings. Inquiries were to be made about the operation of middlemen and of cooperative societies, the people who gave new designs and demanded new products. Finally the several stages of production of the articles themselves were to be fully described including the final and finishing stage and a list of very skilled craftsmen of each community was to be furnished. The third part was devoted specially to tribal communities and designed to find out how self-sufficient or dependent they were on the production and supply of manufactured goods, the extent to which they produced themselves or depended on others, their contacts with other communities and the specific forms of production and commerce through which these contacts were maintained.

Particular emphasis was laid on the need of obtaining as full an account as possible of unique regional design differentiations as they reflect not only the very culture patterns of the country but the persistent inventive faculties of the craftsmen. The importance was emphasised of giving full attention to articles of domestic use as it is in their shapes, designs and forms that the culture patterns and traditional skills persist most tenaciously.

Simultaneously with the investigation of specific crafts, State Superintendents proceeded to compile a comprehensive list of all types of handicrafts obtaining in their State. As for the specific crafts to be investigated several tables were devised from the structured questionnaire in order to guide investigators toward pointed observation and analysis, to enable them to write, not just general descriptions, but with their eye on the object and on facts.

Investigations conducted between September 1961 and May 1962, including a study group of all States and the Social Studies Division in December 1961 at Delhi, stimulated many of the States into going in for a much enlarged schedule. The revised village schedule itself, the counterpart of the first part of the February 1960 schedule, contained 19 large sections containing elaborate and probing ques-

tions. The Family Schedule for practising artisan families similarly contained 19 main questions each subdivided into many questions. The Family Schedule for non-practising artisan families contained 21 questions. There were schedules for the study of cooperative societies, of production-*cum*-training centres, and of consumer's preference. This enlarged schedule of investigation, in the formulation of which the State themselves actively assisted, was greatly welcomed. The surveys that will appear in this series will therefore consist of two main types : (a) those based on the original short schedule and (b) those based on the much enlarged schedule. In some cases Census Superintendents felt enthused enough to scrap the work based on the original short schedule and do it over again on the enlarged schedule. In the meantime much experience was gained on the analysis of facts and figures to clothe each observation with plenty of authentic information so that the reader could make his own judgement instead of being expected to see all the time through another pair of eyes.

This programme of survey of handicrafts and household industries has been fortified by several ancillary surveys, each one of which would deserve major attention. Along with the survey a compilation has been made of all handicraft centres in each State and an inventory prepared of skilled craftsmen. Photographic and other documentation has been built up to constitute what may now be regarded as the most considerable repository in the country. Elaborate and accurate maps of craft centres in taluks, tehsils and districts are either ready or under preparation. A full census of all fairs and festivals, weekly hats and markets, throughout India has been taken and is being published for the first time. Andhra Pradesh has embarked upon a project of chronicling the social and religious antiquity and uniqueness of every fair and festival. A separate volume will be devoted to each district which promises to be of the utmost value to sociologists and orientalists. A full and complete inventory, replete with sketches and measurements of every object, has been prepared of exhibits in museums of tribal crafts in India. There has been fairly satisfactory survey of houses and buildings, indigenous architectural designs and use of local building material of the whole country. All this has been entirely a labour of love, patiently organised and executed under great strain and in disregard of health and comfort, for which I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation and grateful thanks to my colleagues.

ASOK MITRA,
Registrar General, India.

NEW DELHI,
July 30, 1964.

PREFACE

POTTERY MAKING in the country is one of the most ancient and simple crafts. Amongst the Indian arts and crafts, it occupied for centuries together a unique place as being a sacred and pure craft and as such it enjoined upon the Kumhar to observe strict principles of cleanliness and pious life. The art of modelling the clay would call for neat and tidy operations all along. The clay objects thus produced were used strictly to meet the utility-*cum*-votive urge of the people. The articles manufactured were used chiefly for storing water for drinking purposes, for offering it to the deities; for keeping fruits and eatables for direct consumption or for serving them to gods and goddesses; for lighting homes or illuminating temples and sacred places of their Ishtas etc. In fact the place of potter in the society was as high as that of Brahmin. There are several popular couplets ascribing a high place to Kumhar in the society. Figuratively he is mentioned as having descended from Lord Brahma, the creator of Universe. Like Lord Brahma he can model anything, even though he cannot infuse life in his models. No wonder then that the ancient Indian literature has paid glowing tributes to the potters and his tools as also his associates (*i.e.* his wife and children) who help him in modelling the wares.

The study of 'Pottery in Delhi' was undertaken at the suggestion of Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, Officer on Special Duty and Mrs. Ruth Reeves, Honorary Advisor in the office of the Registrar General, India. As in the case of 'Brass and Copper Artwares of Delhi', Mrs. Ruth Reeves wished very much to take a keen interest in this study, but circumstances prevented this. She first met with an accident, and later fell ill and had to leave for the States. However, Dr. Burman was good enough to go through the Draft-Report and make useful suggestions for improvement and we have incorporated those suggestions and improvements in the final report which is now being placed before the public.

The report deals with village pottery in general—the process of manufacture of earthen wares as practised today and the economic and social structure of potters

as obtaining in village Chhatarpur. Efforts were made to enlist the cooperation of specialists manufacturing blue or black pottery, but much success was not achieved, as the specialists thought that if they gave us details about their manufacture, their trade secrets will be out and they may have some competition in their respective fields (at present they are having a near monopoly).

Pottery making in the village continues to be a strictly household industry. It exists in its primitive form. The tools and appliances are as old as they were a century back. The articles produced are the same as they were manufactured several decades ago. In the village there is no cooperative society, no production-*cum*-training centre and no joint marketing facility centre. The potters generally meet the villager's demand on more or less barter system or to be more precise on Jajmani system. The Jajmani relationship as prevalent in the village and the changes that are taking place are explained at length in the sixth chapter of the report.

The craft apparently calls for reorientation if it is to survive and meet the challenge of time. There is however no reason that given the government patronage and assistance, the industry should not become as good a foreign exchange earner as the 'Brass and Copper Artware Industry' of Delhi. The craftsmen must be induced to combine their rich tradition with the latest technology and excel in their craft.

The report is the result of the joint efforts of Sarvashri P. K. Kainth and K. C. Nautiyal. The former carried out the field investigation and wrote the report which was revised and edited by the latter. The work was done throughout under my direct supervision. The photographs were taken by Shri H. P. Sarin, photographer of this office.

Our heartfelt thanks are due to Sri Asok Mitra, Registrar General, India, Dr. B. K. Roy Burman, O.S.D., and Mrs. Ruth Reeves, but for whose encouragement and guidance, nothing could have been achieved.

BALDEV RAJ

DELHI
1*st Nov.*, 1965.

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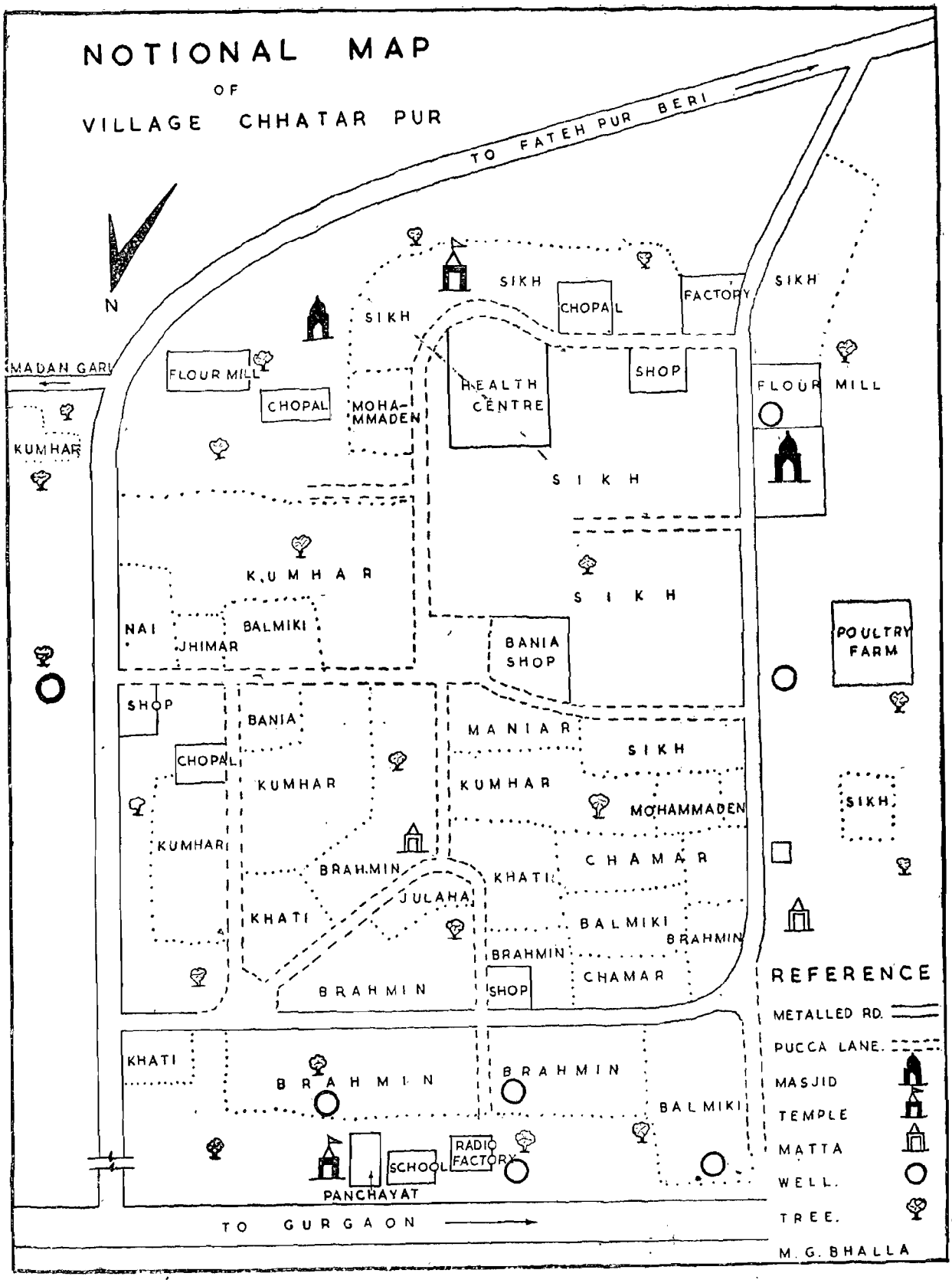
NOTIONAL MAP
OF
VILLAGE CHHATAR PUR
TO FATEH PUR BERI
N
MADAN GARI
KUMHAR
FLOUR MILL
CHOPAL
MOHA-MMADEN
SIKH
CHOPAL
FACTORY
SIKH
HEALTH CENTRE
SHOP
FLOUR MILL
SIKH
KUMHAR
SIKH
NAI
JHIMAR
BALMIKI
BANIA SHOP
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REFERENCE
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TREE.
KHATI
BRAHMIN
BRAHMIN
BALMIKI
SCHOOL
RADIO FACTORY
PANCHAYAT
TO GURGAON
M. G. BHALLA

Chapter I

THE CRAFT AND THE ARTISANS

Location

VILLAGE Chhattar Pur is situated near the historic Qutab Minar at a distance of about 13 miles towards the south of Delhi city. The village is located on the right side of the main metalled road, connecting Delhi city with village Fateh Pur Beri, which is about 1 mile further away from Village Chhattar Pur. A Delhi Transport Undertaking Bus service runs between the village and the city after every 2 hours. The village is neat and clean with pucca streets and a good drainage system. It may be mentioned that this village has been awarded second prize for cleanliness.

According to 1961 Census, the village has a total population of 1777 comprising of 281 families. A characteristic feature of the caste composition of the families living in the village is that a large number of families of Kumhars are living here. Out of a total of 281 families in the village, 14 are reported to belong to the caste of Kumhars. There has not been a single case of a Kumhar family migrating to this village from outside. All the 14 families of Kumhars are living in the village ever since the settlement of the village took place. The following table gives an idea about the number of families belonging to various castes in the village and their traditional occupations :

Caste	*No. of families*	*Traditional Occupation.*
Brahmin	90	Cultivation
Baniya	33	Trade (Shop-keepers)
Chamar	25	Leather tanning
Balmiki	25	Sweepers
Kumhar	14	Pot-making
Khatis	9	Carpenters (wood-work)
Julaha	5	Weaving
Nai	17	Hair-cutting
Lohar	1	Iron-smiths
Jhimar	2	Supplying water
Maniar	3	Bangle selling
Total :	224*	

The total number of families living in the village and their occupational composition underwent a significant change during the past 20 years. Before partition the total number of cultivating families in the village was approximately 500 out of which nearly 400 families belonged to the Mohammadan community. The partition of the country resulted in the out-migration of the majority of these families. On the other hand, com-

*Besides these there are 45 families of Sikhs and 12 families of Mohammadans living in the village. The mohammadan families are living in the village for the last many years, whereas the Sikhs have migrated to this village at one time or other after partition.

munities like Sikhs migrated to this village during and after the partition and took to cultivation as their occupation. Besides, since partition there has been a growing tendency on the part of the people to leave their traditional occupations and shift over to some non-traditional occupations. Thus, though the number of cultivating families in the village has diminished heavily, the primary occupation being followed in the village continues to be agriculture. Over 50 per cent of the total families in the village are directly engaged in cultivation.

The traditional economic organisation of rural society is known to be based on a strict foundation of caste division. As stated above the impact of modern age has been rather rapid in destroying the fabric of traditional relationship between caste and occupation. Significantly enough, this impact has been important in the case of caste of Kumhars who continue to adhere to their traditional occupation. This can be explained partly in terms of lack of work opportunities outside the village and partly because no special training is required in order to be proficient in the craft.

In the social hierarchy of different castes of craftsmen, the caste of Kumhars ranks as superior to the castes of craftsmen engaged in the various crafts in the village such as carpentry, metal-smiths etc. Strictly speaking, pottery constitutes one of the most ancient and traditional crafts with which the caste of Kumhars is associated. It refers to the manufacture of all objects of clay or any earthen material made strong and durable with the use of heat. The Kumhars in this village are engaged in the manufacture of all types of household earthen wares used in daily life.

Nomenclature : There is a myth associated with the origin of word Kumhar which refers to the group of people engaged in the craft of pot-making. The word *kumhar* is a derivation from Hindi word *kumbh* which means an earthen pot or vessel. Thus a *kumhar* is a person who is directly associated with the manufacture of earthern pots. The mythical story regarding the origin of the word *kumhar* runs as follows :

The incident is supposed to have happened on the occasion of Lord Shiva's marriage with Parvati. Certain religious rites and ceremonies have to be performed on wedding ceremony. For the successful completion of these ceremonies and rites Lord Shiva required an earthen pot to store the ceremonial water in it. Lord Shiva was perplexed on finding that there was no pot which could be utilized to serve this purpose on this occasion, so he created a man out of a bead and assigned him the task of making the pot. The man promised Lord Shiva that he would provide him the *kumbh* (an earthen vessel) but he demanded certain personal possessions of Lord Shiva to be used as tools necessary for the making of the kumbh. To this Lord Shiva agreed. The man demanded the following of Lord Shiva's possessions one by one.

(i) First of all the man demanded the *peetha* a circular stone upon which Shiva was sitting, to be used as a pot making wheel (*chak*).

(ii) To rotate the wheel he asked for the wooden rod (*sota*) of Shiva which used to be employed for grinding *bhang*, an intoxicating favourite drink of Shiva. Thus the *sota* was used as *chakroti*.

(iii) *Koonda*, (stone mortar) which Lord Shiva used as a vessel while grinding *bhang* was used as *chakoonda* for storing water.

(iv) Finally to separate the modelled pot from the wheel (*chak*) a piece of thread from Shiva's *janayu* or sacred cotton thread, which is hung around the neck and waist.

Putting the above articles to their respective uses and by combining his skill, the man produced the *kumbh* required by Lord Shiva. Even today the above mentioned tools of the Kumhar constitute the important part of his entire tools and implements used in the craft. Ever since, the man who produced the kumbh came to be called as 'Kumhar'. This also explains why all the Kumhars in the village profess to owe their allegiance to Lord Shiva and hold him high in their religious beliefs. Lord Shiva is worshipped every day before the Kumhar gets down to work on his *chak*. Before any articles is modelled on the *chak*, all the Kumhars make a small earthen vessel of the shape of an ordinary *diya* (oil lamp) as a mark of worship to their creator.

All the families of kumhars in the village call themselves as Prajapati (*i.e.* protector of subjects) Kumhars. Even the word Prajapati is being used as interchangeable with the word kumhar. As to their being called as Prajapati, there is a myth which runs as follows :

Once, in olden times, a king sowed a vast field of sugarcane. Till then, sugarcane was not known to anybody in the kingdom and the king took a great deal of pride in introducing this innovation. In due course of time, the entire field bloomed with full-grown sugarcanes.

Curious and excited crowds of people from all over the kingdom came to see this interesting and strange field of sugarcane. The entire scene looked to be a huge fair. At this moment, the king felt disposed to be generous to his subjects and offered the people to taste this new and unknown eatable. Small pieces of sugarcane were distributed to each and every one present at the fair. People rejoiced and sang hymns in praise of the sweet and pleasant taste of the sugarcane. Everybody except the Kumhar ate his share of the sugarcane while the Kumhar happened not to have eaten it. The Kumhar was at the time working on his chak and he planted the sugarcane piece in the *chakoonda* (water container) full of water lying near him.

Next day, the Kumhar observed to his surprise that the piece of sugarcane had overnight developed some rudimentary signs of further growth. The Kumhar was left amazed by this phenomena of the growth of sugarcane and took interest in growing it still further. Accordingly the Kumhar cut the sugarcane piece into small pieces and sowed it in the field nearby. Thus by this process of multiplication the Kumhar happened to grow up a large field of fully grown sugarcanes of his own.

At this stage, a very interesting event took place. The king wanted to test the capacities of his people to do any service to him. He wanted to ascertain as to whether his people will come to his help in some unforseen emergent situation. Therefore, with this idea in mind, the king proclaimed an order to his people to return to him all the pieces of sugarcane that they had taken from him and eaten. The king also announced that anybody failing to return him the sugarcane will be immediately subjected to death penalty.

Such a proclamation on the part of the king resulted in a complete panic among the people and they ran from place to place in search of sugarcane. All the search for the sugarcane ended in utter disappointment, till somebody came to know that a particular Kumhar was in possession of large number of sugarcane pieces and that he had grown a full field of his own.

The people approached the Kumhar and requested him to give the sugarcane pieces to him so that they could return them to the king and thus save their lives. In the first instance the Kumhar was reluctant to part with the sugarcane and did not accede to the request of the people. Later some of the people prevailed on the Kumhar and told him that if he did not part with the sugarcane pieces, everybody in the kingdom will be dead and that he will not have anybody left to make use of his wares. Thus, the Kumhar agreed to give a piece of sugarcane to everybody.

After thus acquiring the pieces of sugarcane, they went back happily to the king with the sugarcane pieces in their hands. On finding them with a sugarcane piece, the king was surprised, nay happy. The king, therefore, came to have his sugarcane pieces back and the people succeeded in fulfilling his demand.

It was after this happening that the Kumhar came to be called as 'Prajapati'. 'Prajapati' is a Hindi word. *Praja* means the subject and *pati* means the protector. It was the Kumhar who helped the people to keep up their respect and status in such a dangerous situation. From then onwards, the Kumhar was given the title of Prajapati.

The Kumhars enjoy a fairly respected social status in the village. They consider themselves to be the direct descendents of Lord Brahma and therefore have as superior a caste as that of Lord Brahma, the creator. In support of this belief, the Kumhars cite a familiar couplet which is being reproduced below :

राम जात का रॉंगडा
और कृष्ण जात आहीर
ब्रह्मा जात कुम्हार की
और शिव जी जात फ़कीर

The above couplet goes to emphasise the association of Ragaras with Lord Rama, as Ragars are believed to have had direct contacts and meetings with Lord Rama, during the period of his exile. Similarly Ahirs profess to be the close associates and playmates of Lord Krishna. Next falls the caste of Kumhars who owe their life and creation to Lord Brahma. Lastly Faqirs as a caste, rank themselves at par with the caste of Lord Shiva.

The belief prevailing among the Kumhars regarding their social position has been beautifully summed up and supported in the above couplet. As the direct descents of Lord Brahma, the Kumars do not consider themselves inferior to other castes like Ahir, Ragars etc.

Kumhar & the Village Economy: The Kumhars in the village serve the important function of supplying earthenwares to the people belonging to other castes in the village. The precise manner in which the Kumhars used to meet the various needs of the villagers has undergone many changes. But the primary function of supplying the wares to the other residents in the village is still being undertaken by the Kumhars. The change in functioning of the Kumhar in the village economy has come automatically with the general development of the village, like the spread of education among the people, closer contacts with the urban sector and various other social and economic changes brought about by the development of rural areas.

The Kumhars of this village have always been catering to the entire demand of earthenwares of the village. At no time was the village dependent upon a regular supply of earthenwares from sources outside the village. In exceptional cases, some of the villagers do happen to purchase a few of the articles like chilims or surahis etc., from urban areas, but such purchases are very few in number. Such articles are purchased from the urban areas either because they are qualitatively superior than the articles being produced in the village or because the Kumhars in the village are not skilled enough to undertake their manufacture.

A few words about the nature of the economy of the village may be said here. As the Kumhars form an integral part of the village economy, their prosperity as a class depends to a large extent on the general prosperity of the village economy. Before partition, there were as many as 500 families of cultivators in the village. With these families of cultivators, the total number of Kumhar families actively engaged in the manufacture of wares was only ten. On the average each family of Kumhar used to supply wares to about 50 to 70 cultivating families in addition to the wares supplied to the families belonging to other castes in the village. The disposal of wares used to be entirely against the receipt of a certain amount of grains from the cultivating families and it was very rare that the wares were sold against cash. The amount of grains received by the Kumhars in turn was enough for the entire family to run for the whole year.

Again, four families of Kumhars used to follow the occupation of cultivation as a subsidiary occupation. The terms of tenure used to be either fixed rent or share cropping (*batai*). Agriculture as a subsidiary occupation with the Kumhars helped them not only in supplementing their income, but it also used to keep them profitably engaged in winter and rainy season during which period they cannot engage themselves in their craft. But ever since the implementation of the Land Reforms Act, the Kumhars were forced to give up cultivation. Land owners took the land back from the Kumhars as they had a fear that the land may be retained by the Kumhars as permanent tenants.

Besides catering to the entire needs of the earthenwares of the community, the Kumhars were also supplying wares to their Jajmans living in the neighbouring villages like Medan, Asola, Gatorni, Fateh Pur Beri etc. It has also been common for the people from other villages to come to this village and take their supply of earthenwares either against kind or on cash payment.

The position for the last 9 years has changed in various respects. Firstly, the number of Mohammadan cultivating families has drastically decreased since partition. Secondly, during the recent years many of the cultivating families found it advantageous to sell off their land, in view of the rising land prices and settle in the urban areas. Thus, owing to the reduction in the number of

cultivating families in the village the secure position which the Kumhars were enjoying in the village economy is no more there today. The Kumhars have to face a number of difficulties relating to the actual working of their craft. For one thing, the demand for various types of wares as already mentioned has been severely cut short. As an immediate effect of this change in the nature of economy of the village, about four families of Kumhars are reported to have migrated to the urban sector at one time or the other after partition. These families are now settled in the Subzimandi area of Delhi City and are carrying on their craft there. This also resulted in some of the Kumhars steadily taking over to other type of non-traditional occupations like that of masons, casual labourers, gardeners etc., In addition, the spread of urbanisation and the consequent process of gradual disintegration of the joint family system has also influenced the migration of Kumhars to urban areas. Three persons from Kumhar families are educated up to higher secondary stage, two of whom are now School Teachers and one is a Bus Conductor. Besides some of the Kumhars have taken over to other occupations but continue pottery as a subsidiary occupation. The net result of all these changes has been that only three families in the village are engaged in the craft on a full-time basis. Again the manner in which these three families are carrying on their craft has undergone a striking change. The volume of demand for different types of wares in the village is not sufficient to keep them engaged for the entire season with the result that even these families are carrying on the craft in a rather half hearted manner and are always on the look-out for any type of casual work inside or outside the village such as brick-laying, casual labour etc. Besides, the craft being a seasonal occupation it does not ensure a regular income for the Kumhar. In this connection it may be mentioned that the craft today is as much seasonal in its character as it used to be at any time before. But earlier the seasonal character of the craft did not affect the economic stability of the Kumhar's family. As already stated, the Kumhars used to sell a very insignificant part of their produce in exchange for money and their entire produce was exchanged against kind. The cultivating families to whom the Kumhar used to supply wares had assumed a near responsibility for feeding the Kumhar's family for the entire year, unless of course, the crop of the year failed to yield adequate return. But now this kind of economic security is not ensured to Kumhars.

The Kumhars are becoming increasingly aware about the general disagreeable nature of the craft particularly when the returns for the labour spent in the craft are not always secure. Cases are very frequent when the entire lot of wares put up for firing in the kiln turns out to be defective in some way or the other thus resulting in a total wastage of both the labour and the money spent on their production. Such risks are involved at various stages in the manufacture of the wares. Again the craft by its very nature is highly labour intensive and can be normally run on efficient lines by a family of large size. Besides the craftsman, the labour of all the other members of the family including the females and the children is required in the production of the wares. Factors of rather recent development like the spread of education in the village and in the families of the Kumhars particularly, disintegration of joint families, and increasing contacts with the city are additional factors influencing the decision of the Kumhars to introduce their children to other types of non-traditional occupations. There exists a strong desire among the Kumhars to educate their sons so as to enable them to take to white-collar jobs.

This type of attitude on the part of the Kumhars is also occasioned by their general desire to move up in the social ladder in the village and give up the occupation which is considered to be unclean and obnoxious. Thus nearly 50 per cent of the Kumhar families have taken over exclusively to other occupations. Broadly speaking, this tendency can be more realistically explained due to economic hardship which compels them to seek employment outside the village. Again since the entry of fresh entrants in the craft is limited to the extent that the craft requires a hereditary skill on the part of the artisan, there has not been a single case of any non-Kumhar taking over to the craft of pottery. In fact there is legitimate reason to fear that if such a tendency grows stronger, the craft in its present form may eventually wither away.

Chapter 2

EMPLOYMENT & WORKING CONDITIONS

THE total population of Kumhars in the village is 94 (56 males and 38 females), *i.e.* 5.3 per cent of the total population of the village. The Kumhar households account for 5.6 per cent of the total households in the village. Out of 14 Kumhar households in the village only 10 per cent reported to be actually skilled in the craft while the rest of them are completely unskilled. Out of 10 who are actually skilled in the craft, only 7 are engaged in its practice while the other 3 do not practise the craft at all. Even among these 7 who are skilled in the craft and also practise it only three are engaged in the craft on a full time basis, while the rest of them carry on the craft only as a subsidiary occupation. Out of the three skilled but non-practising, who are in regular service, one is engaged as a casual labourer like brick layer, mason etc. Among the four who are engaged in the craft as a subsidiary occupation, three are regularly employed on a full-time basis while the fourth one is primarily working as a casual labourer in the village.

Evidently, service is the most preferred occupation with those who do not practise the craft at all. Even among those who are skilled in the craft and practise it only as a subsidiary occupation service continues to be the primary occupation for them. Thus, a majority of the Kumhars are eager to leave the craft at least as a main occupation and take over to other occupation which ensures a regular and secure income for them. It is significant to note that five adult male members of different families of Kumhars are regularly employed as gardeners. Others are working either as school teachers or a Bus conductor.

Normally, all the Kumhars who are engaged in the craft as a subsidiary occupation do it only in order to fulfil their old and established Jajmani relationships with some families and generally do not produce more than what is required for this purpose. Those who are regularly employed in the craft on a full-time basis supply the wares not only to their Jajmans but also sell them either in the village or outside in the city. While the Kumhars in the former group are following the craft only in order to supplement their income from the primary source, the latter have to mainly depend upon the craft throughout the year.

Seasonal unemployment and the Potters : The craft of pottery is a seasonal occupation in so far as there are some months during which the artisan is reduced to a sheer state of forced idleness. During winter severe cold weather is not at all suitable for the working of the craft. There is practically no activity between mid November and

January due to extreme cold, and scarcity of demand for earthenwares. During rainy season the work is carried on only during intermittent periods of fair weather, subject, of course, to the availability of stock of clay with the artisan. The clay cannot be dug out during rains as the fields remain full of water and become muddy. Even if some of the Kumhars arrange to maintain a sufficient stock of clay for the rainy season, it is not possible to execute the drying up process of the modelled wares and firing the kiln.

The demand for most of the wares during winter is practically negligible. Peak periods of activity are the pre-summer and summer seasons and the harvesting periods. During summer, the demand for articles like Matkas, pitchers, surahis etc. is very high as they are used for storing cold water. Besides producing these articles for storing and transporting the water from the well to the houses, Kumhars also manufacture large earthen bins used for storing grains for a longer period. Periods preceding the festivals and marriages also keep the artisan family occupied in his craft. During period of marriages the Kumhar is engaged in manufacture of artilces like Kulhars, Pyalas (cups), Tastri (plates) etc. The period of peak activity is between summer months of April to August.

For these reasons, the Kumhars are generally occupied in their traditional occupation only for a period of 6 months in a year. One of the significant features of the craft is its regular employment of women. During the peak period of activity even the children have to associate themselves at the various stages involved in the manufacture of wares. Normally, the artisan is required to work on the wheel for modelling the wares and the rest of the processes like those of breaking, grinding and preparing the clay, *chitai* (design) work on the surface of the articles like matkas, pitchers etc., turning the cowdung into cakes etc., are carried on by the female members of the family. In fact, these are the operations which can be conveniently handled by the women.

It may be mentioned here that since the craft is carried on exclusively by the caste of 'Kumhars' no outside labour is employed at any stage in the process of manufacture even during the busy season. Again, unlike other crafts, there are no formal trainees in the craft. This is so because no specific training is imparted to the women and children in the family. Whatever skill they achieve in the craft, they acquire it out of their continuous association with the other members of the family. Very casually, the artisan trains the child in the techniques of modelling the clay. As the skill required for modelling the clay involves hard and arduous labour, the question of training the women in the technique does not arise. Given a fairly good aptitude on the part of the trainee, he normally takes about 2 years to learn the craft. However, professional excellence in the craft is developed by gaining a long and varied experience. In this connexion, it may be interesting to note that a few non-practising Kumhars have achieved a surprisingly high degree of proficiency in the craft even though the training in their case was never intended to be specific.

On account of the organisation of the activity on a family scale, there exists a class of workers who can be classified as unpaid family workers. All the women and children engaged in the craft as a secondary occupation fall under this category.

Due to the seasonal character of the craft, the males, females and even the children go out to seek casual work in the village or in a nearby village. Such work is mostly sought during off season when the craft does not permit of their employment. Normally, the females and children have a preference to accept casual labour like harvesting and threshing of grains and pulses etc. Except such types of casual labour, the females do not undertake to accept any other work in the village or outside. This is so not only because there are limitations of traditional and customary nature on their working on some other types of labour but also because of their pre-occupation with the household affairs. The male members not only accept such work but also take to working as labourers, brick layers, mason or undertaking a contract to supply clay required for construction and repairs of houses in the village.

The payment made to the Kumhar for these types of casual work depends on the nature of the work. Wages are generally paid in cash for working as mason or brick layer etc. The pre-

vailing rate of wages is anything between Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 a day depending upon the volume of construction activity being undertaken in the village. Normally the mode of payment for the work done in the field such as harvesting or threshing of the grains is in kind. The prevailing rate of wages for harvesting is 5 piles of grains of uniform weight for every 100 piles harvested. Alternatively, a fixed amount of grains may be agreed upon for harvesting a certain part of the field. Wages paid in kind show little variation from place to place. Females go for harvesting not only in this village but also in surrounding villages in the neighbourhood. Cultivators from other villages come to the Kumhar's houses in order to call them for work. The mode of payment for work like threshing of grains and pulses is entirely different. Only 1/4th of the hay and straws obtained after separating the pulses or grains is retained by the casual workers and the rest are kept by the cultivators. Kumhar utilizes hay and straw as a domestic fuel or as a subsidiary fuel for firing the kiln. As has been said earlier, the male members who work as masons or brick-layers in the village are generally paid in cash, but sometimes if the construction work is going on at some of the cultivator's house he may be paid in terms of grains also. The money value of the amount of grains given to the Kumhar is equated with the money wages to be paid to him. Kumhar may also accept the payment partly in cash and partly in kind.

The grains which the Kumhars get for rendering their services during harvesting period are generally in unthreshed form. It is a mixture of wheat, barley and grams. The threshing and grinding of the grains is undertaken by the Kumhar himself. Threshing is done either by beating the grains with a thick wooden rod or by getting a donkey to grind them with his feet. Earlier, when the Kumhar family used to be attached to a number of cultivating families as their 'Kameens' (dependents), it was a customary obligation on the part of the cultivating Jajman family to lend his oxen to the Kumhar for this purpose. This practice has now stopped though in rare cases a Kumhar can still borrow the oxen from his cultivating Jajman family for this purpose. One of the reasons why this practice has fallen into disuse is that the amount of grains received by the Kumhar these days is far less than he used to receive in earlier times *i.e.*, before partition. Thus, the quantity of grains is also not large enough to require the services of oxen and threshing can be conveniently undertaken either with the aid of donkeys or by beating the grains with the help of a thick wooden rod.

The supply of clay to the villagers for construction and repair of the houses is another subsidiary occupation undertaken by a few of the Kumhars in the village. But this occupation is confined only among those of the Kumhars who maintain their own donkeys. The demand for clay for these purposes is quite considerable after rainy season when a number of houses in the village stand in need of either repairs or reconstruction. Sometimes a Kumhar may not charge at all for one or two donkey loads or clay from families with whom he is otherwise maintaining good and cordial relations. Kumhars are paid for their services either in cash at the rate of 0.50 Paise per donkey load or partly in cash and partly in terms of fodder for his donkey. The payment may also be made entirely in terms of grains. In this case the amount of the grains given is equated with the money price of the clay calculated at the rate of 0.50 Paise per donkey load.

Except one, all the Kumhars in the village are maintaning at least two donkeys for the purpose of transportation of clay and finished products. In earlier days, as the work was carreid on a large scale, they used to maintain larger number of donkeys. Besides utilizing these animals at various stages in the actual working of the craft, their maintenance used to provide additional employment to the Kumhar and thus yield a further income. Normally, the Kumhar used to employ the donkeys for the purpose of transporting the grains to the market on behalf of the cultivator. The Kumhar in turn was to get either cash payment or a fixed amount of grains. The rate of payment was either 0.50 Paise or a seer of grain after every maund of grains transported to the market. But ever since the introduction of better and quicker means of transportation and an easy road link from the village to the town, the Kumhar has been deprived of this additional source of earning. The cultivators normally transport their produce either in their own bullock carts or in trucks, a mode of transportation which proves not

only quicker but cheaper also. Thus while the income of the Kumhar is directly reduced from this source, the cost involved in maintaining the donkeys remains nearly the same.

Besides, as the harvesting season coincides with the busy season for the craft, the Kumhar and the other members of his family do not find it possible to make full use of the opportunity to take up harvesting as a casual work. Further during summer season a few of the Kumhars go to the city regularly for the sale of their wares and hence cannot engage themselves in any type of casual work in the village. But in spite of these limitations, the harvesting of crops occupies an important place among the various subsidiary occupations being pursued by the Kumhar and his family.

Working Hours: As to the hours of work, the craft depicts certain highly interesting features. The hours of work are strictly related to the nature and type of the article being produced as well as the nature and type of the particular stage in the process of manufacture of the article. Very frequently, the limitation on the hours of work arise directly out of the peculiar nature of the craft.

Ordinarily, the working hours are concentrated in the late evenings and early mornings in the case of manufacture of articles which involve the beating operations. As will be made clear in the chapter on "The Process of Manufacturing", there are certain articles like Matkas and Matkias which have to be initially modelled and shaped on the wheel, and later beaten into their respective shapes and sizes. In the case of manufacture of such articles, the work of necessity has to be carried on in the late evening and early morning hours. The work of modelling the pots on the wheel is carried on in the evening between 5 P.M. to 11 P.M. and their beating operation is undertaken from 4 A.M. to 11 A.M. These timings for working are arranged in this manner in order to avoid the excessive drying up of the modelled pots during the time left between the modelling and the beating of the articles. It is important that the modelled article retains its plasticity till it is completely beaten into its shape. In case the article is modelled on the wheel during day time, there is a risk of its getting dried up due to its exposure to the sun or due to high temperature. All the working units, therefore, undertake the modelling work in the late evening and the beating operation in the early hours of the morning. This time schedule of working is very strictly adhered to particularly during the summer months as the sun during the day time is very severe.

In the case of the manufacture of some other type of articles (particularly those which do not involve the beating operation), the working hours cannot be very rigidly defined. The Kumhar can undertake their manufacture at any time during the day as and when it is convenient to his routine work. In fact, in the case of the manufacture of certain articles like Pyala, Pali Karva, Sakora etc., the Kumhar finds it convenient to undertake the modelling process during day time. This is so because such articles need to be immediately dried up after they are modelled, otherwise they suffer from the risk of deformity that may come into their shape during their handling stage. The bright sun during the day helps to quicken their drying up process. Thus such articles are generally modelled on the wheel from 5 A.M. to 4 P.M. with two or three short breaks each lasting for about 1/2 hour. This however does not mean that it is not feasible to undertake the manufacture of such articles during early morning or late evening. During busy season of marriages, the Kumhar often manufactures articles like Sakoras, Kulhars, Payalis, etc. from 5 A.M. to 8 P.M.

Generally speaking, all members of the Kumhar's family are simultaneously engaged in some operation or the other. But yet the working hours for the females and the children in the family are different from those of the men. Usually, the females are occupied with their household work till about 11 A.M. and therefore cannot assist the artisan in his craft. It is only after 11 A.M. and till about 5 P.M. that the females are engaged whole-time in the various stages involved in the manufacture of wares. Females have to disengage themselves from the craft in the evening in order to discharge their household duties. Thus, unless it is a matter of absolute necessity the females do not work for the craft before 11 A.M. and after 5 P.M. With the single

exception of working on the chak, the women undertake all the operations relating to the actual working of the craft.

Regarding the working hours for the children nothing can be laid down in a definite way. The school going children when they are free help in the family craft. Usually, they are engaged in a highly casual type of work relating to the craft like that of carrying the wares to the place of the kiln and back to the place of their storing, placing the modelled articles in the sun, breaking the clods of clay etc.

Again, there is an important stage in the working of the craft which requires to be undertaken only during the specified hours and also necessitates the working of all the members of the family as a group. This stage is the firing of the wares in the kiln. Being a highly elaborate process it requires the joint efforts of all the members of the Kumhar's family. It is a time-consuming and labour-intensive operation.

Ordinarily, on the day of firing the wares in the kiln, the Kumhar along with other members of the family gets down to work at 5 in the morning. On this day, no other work is undertaken and the entire process of charging the kiln keeps the whole family occupied till about 1 P.M. Children and females perform the operations like carrying the dried up wares to the place of kiln, arranging the articles in the kiln, carrying cowdung cakes from their place of storage to the place of kiln, spreading of the hay, dry leaves, straws, ash etc. on the kiln. During this process the women are ordinarily engaged in breaking the cowdung cakes into small pieces, arranging the articles in the kiln, gathering the ash, breaking the broken pieces of matkas into the size and shape required for use in the kiln. After the kiln is finally laid and fired, the artisan is required to keep a round the clock watch on the kiln. It takes about 5 to 6 hours before the fire spreads on to all the sides of the kiln. After the whole of the kiln has caught fire, the artisan is again required to look after the kiln for the next 12 hours. The artisan brings his cot near the kiln and spends the whole night watching the temperature of fire in the kiln. Though the artisan may occasionally go to sleep during night he has to be highly alert and cautious during the whole night. A moment's neglect on his part may lead to a defective firing of all the wares in the kiln.

The following day after the fire has cooled down, the artisan has to spend the whole day in the process of unlaying the kiln. At this stage also, the artisan works in a group comprising of all the women and children in the family. The artisan and the women members engaged themselves in carefully taking out the wares out of the kiln, while the children keep carrying them one by one to the place of their storage.

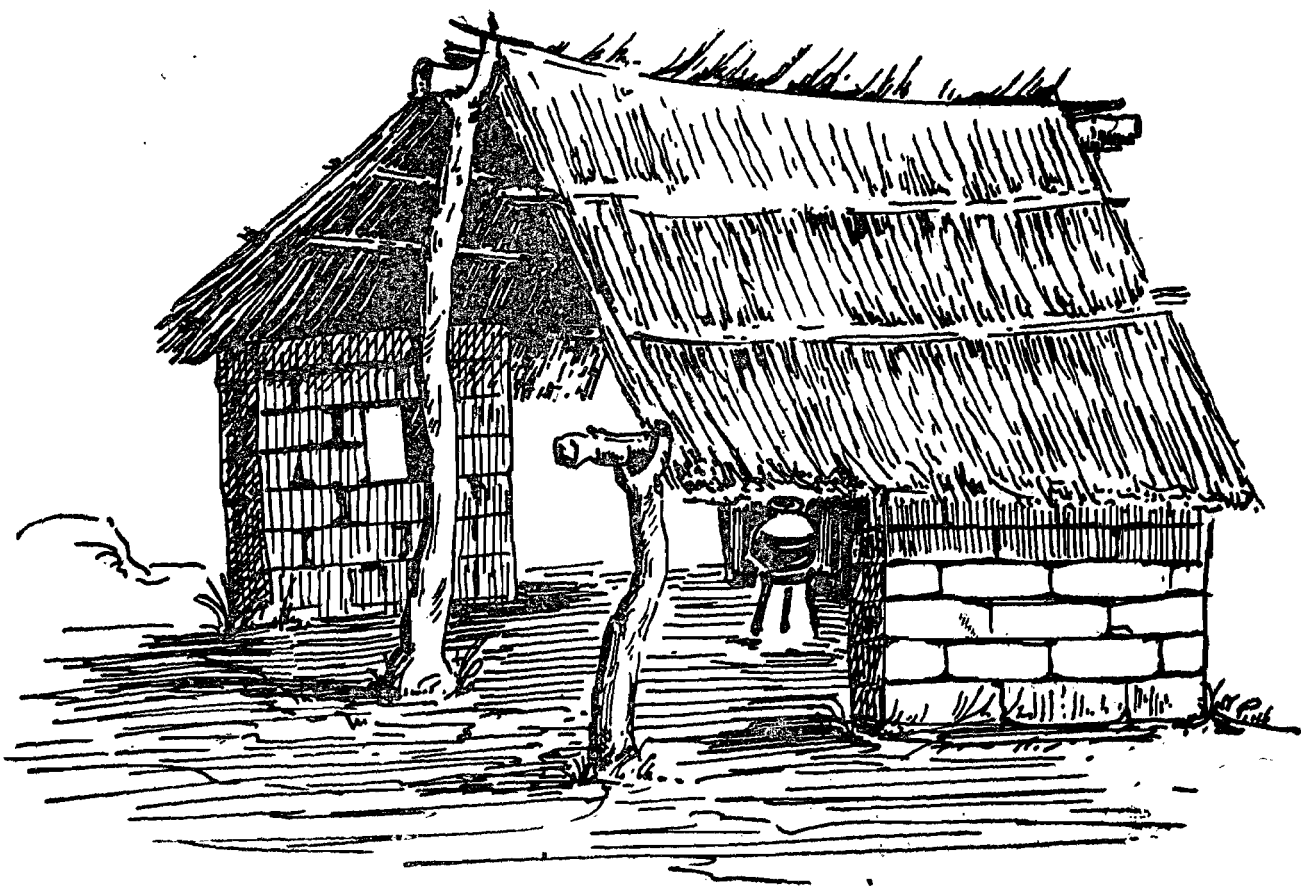
Hours of work in the craft also vary from one season to another. During rainy and winter season the hours of work are highly curtailed not only because the nature of the craft does not permit its working during these seasons, but also because there is an overall slackening of the demand for earthenwares. During rainy season, the work is carried on only during the short periods of fair weather. In winter the working hours are normally from late morning to early evening. A bright sun in winter during the day time is advantageous for the working of the craft. Also too cold weather in the early morning and the late evening prevents the artisan from working on the chak. Thus, during cold weather, most of the work is concentrated between 10 A.M. to 4 P.M.

A noticable feature of the craft is that most of the processes of manufacture can be carried on only in the open space. The space requirements for the craft are rather high. It is important for the efficiency of the craft that the whole space is compact in so far as there should not be much difference between the places of modelling the article, their firing and their storing etc. The following estimate gives an idea about the normal land requirements of a single Kumhar's establishment :

Kiln	200 sq. ft.
Processing of clay	40 sq. ft.
The artisan's wheel	15 sq. ft.
Drying the wares in the sun	300 sq. ft.
Storing the clay and other raw-materials like cowdung cakes.	200 sq. ft.
Storing the finished products	150 sq. ft.
	900 sq. ft.

Working Site and Dwellings: All the practising families of the Kumhars except one carry on the craft in their own open premises in front of their houses. The only one Kumhar who does not work at his house has established his workshop at a distance of about one furlong from his house. All the Kumhars have ample space with them in order to carry on their craft. Though the storage facilities for raw material and finished wares are not very upto-date but still they are adequately protected during rains and bad weather. While some of them have raised temporary sheds made of bricks and mud, the others use their living rooms for storage purposes. Normally, clay structures thatched with mud are erected for the purposes of storing clay and cowdung cakes. An adequate provision for storing the raw materials and the finished wares is very important for the efficiency of the craft. Stocks of raw material like clay and cowdung have to be carried from one period to another.

The housing situation of the Kumhars is conspicuous by the existence of highly insanitary conditions and extreme congestion. The thick smoke emitted from the kiln causes extremely insanitary atmosphere. All the Kumhars are living in their present dwellings ever since the habitation in the village took place. Regarding the structure of the houses occupied by Kumhars, the conditions prevailing are not very satisfactory. Most of the tenements occupied are made of mixed material like mud, hay, bricks, etc. The houses are characterized by the lack of proper windows, ventilators, electricity and other amenities. There are only three houses made with bricks and cement and have pucca roofs. Most of the houses are not satisfactorily protected against rains, sun and cold weather. During rains, the kuccha roofs generally leak heavily and thus create a problem for the Kumhar to properly preserve his stock of clay, cowdung and finished wares. A few of the houses are in a bad state of repairs. All the Kumhars own their houses.



Chapter 3

ARTICLES PRODUCED

THE analysis of demand for different types of earthenwares reveals that there does not exist an extensive demand for such articles. This is evident from the extremely limited number of households engaged in the craft. Whatever limited demand exists for these articles is extremely erratic and shows wide variations between the seasons. Thus there is a record volume of production during the period preceding summer and extremely low level of production during rainy season and cold weather. The low level of production during these periods is not always due to a low level of demand, but also because the rains and the cold weather interfere with the process of manufacture of these articles. Besides, the supply conditions of raw material do not favour the production on an adequate scale.

Demand : The demand for earthenwares during the past 25 years in the village and outside presents a very interesting study. Some major changes have taken place in the volume and composition of demand. Before partition there used to be as many as 500 Mohammadan families consuming about 70 per cent of the total production of earthenwares in the village. Again, the system of disposal of wares was much more convenient and easier. Nearly every cultivating family was attached to some Kumhar or the other as its *jajman* and procured its regular requirements of earthenwares from him. Further the whole of the demand used to come from within the village or the neighbouring villages and no Kumhar ever used to dispose of his wares in the market. To meet the total requirements of earthenwares in the village, there were in total 10 families of Kumhars primarily engaged in the craft. Again the variety of articles produced used to be fairly large on account of their use in the Mohammadan families.

It is customary for the Mohammadan families to use earthenwares for cooking and eating purposes. Among the articles required for cooking and eating purposes, *handias* (a broad mouthed vessel meant for cooking) and Koondas (a flat shaped type of vessel) used to be in great demand. Similarly lootia (an article specifically required for the performance of certain Mohammadan religious ceremonies) used to be in great demand. With the migration of Mohammadan cultivating families, the range of varieties of earthenwares produced was steadily reduced. The out-migration of the Muslims from the village also had an adverse effect on the quality of the wares produced. This was so partly on account of the nature of the use of these articles, and partly because the Mohamma-

dans particularly insisted upon a very high standard of quality. The use of earthenwares in Mohammadan families is a striking feature of their way of life. Even at this time, when the other communities in the village are reported to have taken over to glass or metal wares, the muslim families continue to stick to the use of the traditional types of earthenwares. There are in some cases even sanctions of religious and traditional nature behind the use of certain types of earthenwares. For instance, the use of *lootia* during the course of performing prayers is an important part of Mohammadan religion. Again the use of Handias as a cooking vessel has a strong traditional sanction behind it. Earthen vessels are considered favourable for the cooking of meat and other types of vegetables. Thus the migration of the Mohammadan community from the village had not only had the effect of reducing the total volume of demand; it has also resulted in a lesser average turnover of production for the year. This is so on account of the change brought about in the nature of the use of articles produced. Articles like *koondas, handis, lootias,* which earlier used to be in popular demand were also subjected to constant and frequent breakings. With the migration of bulk of the Mohammadan families, the production of these articles like *Handis, Lotas, koondas,* etc., had to be stopped.

A decline in the volume of demand has also been caused by the substitution of glass and metalwares in place of earthenwares. Among the cultivating and even among the low caste families, the use of metal and glass wares is not uncommon. The use of such wares is now considered to be an indicator of a high standard of living. There has been a substitution even between types of earthenwares. For instances more well-to-do families in the village prefer to purchase *chilims* (चिलम) from the city due to their superior quality. Again *surahis* are being widely substituted in place of matkas. As *surahis* are not at all being produced in the village they have to be purchased from the city. But this substitution is mainly confined to a few well-to-do families belonging to high castes.

Even the demand for an article like Diya (earthen lamp) which is an article of conventional use during the festival of Dewali has shown a significant decline during the past 17 years. Rising price of mustard oil (the fuel used for lighting the Diyas) had led to their wholesale substitution by candle sticks. At last among the higher castes in the village the use of candle sticks during this festival is considered to be more fashionable and unconventional. The same factors work in the urban market also resulting in an over all decline in the demand for Diyas.

Presently, the demand for earthenwares has gone to as much as about 70 per cent of its previous level, the percentage decline in the number of families engaged in the craft is only 25 per cent. A major change has taken place in the mode of disposal of the articles. Supply is also sent to other places partly in fulfilment of Jajmani obligation and partly against cash. The bulk of the demand for the articles is essentially local in character. This is so because the elaborate process of transportation renders the articles liable to be either broken or otherwise damaged. But in spite of the hazards involved in the process of transportation some Kumhar families go to the urban areas regularly for the sale of wares. The transportation is undertaken by the Kumhar on his own donkeys. The charges of transportation and damages suffered during the course of transportation are covered in the final price of the ware. The sale is confined only to the nearest urban areas like Hauz Khas, Vinay Nagar, Yusaf Sarai, Mehrauli etc. Their sale price is normally 25 per cent higher than the sale price in the village. Matka is the only article most frequently sold in the urban side, and the sales are concentrated only during summer months from May to August.

There does not exist any specialization in the manufacture of different items of articles. Some of the families do specialize in the manufacture of superior quality of wares, but as all the Kumhars are capable of producing almost all types of earthenwares used in the village, they undertake to manufacture wares of any type as and when there is a demand for them.

The Kumhar in the village, in conformity with the old traditions and in spite of the advent of the modern age, continues to produce old but beautiful articles by making use of his primitive tools and inherited skill which has passed on from generation to generation. A collection of different types of wares is significant in form and consists of

a wide range of domestic and ritual articles. The articles display a great inventiveness of form and design. This is so in spite of the fact that the village kumhars lack any technical or coherent knowledge as to how to clean and purify the clay. They display a magnificent skill in the modelling of different articles. Thus the ancient traditions in spite of the highly mechanised nature of the modern industrial age live even today. The following is the list of the different type of earthenwares produced in the village at present.

Earthenwares—a description: (a) *Matkia* (मटकिया): A round-shaped vessel with a narrow neck mostly used for bringing water from the well. It is about 12 in. long with a diameter of about the same measurement at the middle. The mouth of the matkia is about 3 in. to 5 in. in diameter. The price of article is Rs. 25 per hundred.

MATKIA

(b) *Matka* (मटका): A vessel bigger than the *matkia* with a comparatively broad neck. Matka can be used both for storing water as well as grains. Generally, the Matkas which do not keep the water cool are used for storing grains. The mouth of the matka contains an outwardly bent circular rim having more thickness than the normal thickness of matka, is between 14 in. to 20 in. long provides a brake in the slanting slope of matka and thus the rim helps one in holding or lifting up the matka conveniently. Matka sells @ Rs. 30 per hundred.

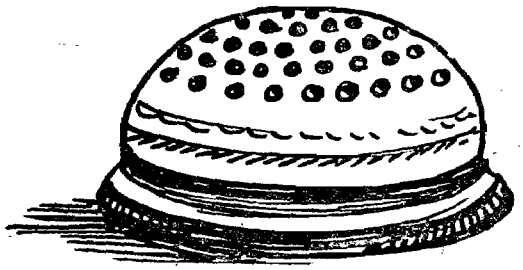
MATKA

(c) *Chapatia* (चौपटिया) : A small vessel of the shape and size resembling the matka, but made stronger than matka by baking it more in the kiln. It is used for churning curd. The article sells for Rs. 20 to 25 per hundred depending upon its size.

(d) *Handla or Handli* (हंडला या हंडली) is used for carrying water or lassi (butter-milk) to the fields. Both handla and handli have identical shapes except that the former refers to a large size vessel and the latter to a vessel of small size. The article is similar to the shape of Chapatia, outwardly bent except that no rim is provided on the mouth of the Handla or Handli. The measurements of this article approximate to the measurements of Chapatia. The price of the article is Rs. 20 per hundred.

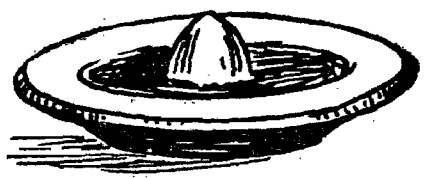
(e) *Jhanwala* (झांवला) A vessel of a semi-spherical shape with small holes made on the entire outer surface. Before milk is boiled in the Chapatia, *Jhanwala* is placed on its mouth in an inverted manner. The use of Jhanwala in the process of boiling the milk serves two purposes. Firstly, the holes made on the outer surface of Jhanwala provide an outlet for the vapours, while the milk keeps boiling, and prevent the milk from spilling over. Secondly, it shields the mouth of chapatia securely enough to protect the milk against dogs or cats.

The diameter of the mouth of the Jhanwala measures between 10 in. to 14 in. It is about 8 in. to 10 in. long from the bottom to the mouth. The holes made on the surface of the article measure about ¼ in. in diameter. The article is sold at the rate of Rs. 15 per hundred.



JHANWALA

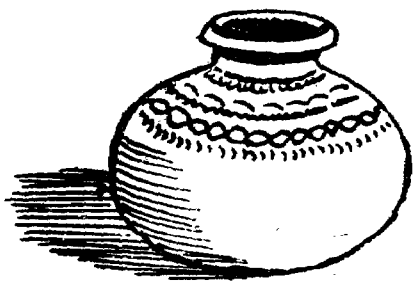
(f) *Pali* (पाली) : A flat-shaped type of lid used for covering the earthen vessel during the course of cooking, conforms to the shape of an ordinary saucer of a little bigger size. On its reverse side a round-shaped handle is provided in the centre. The diameter of the round-shaped handle in the centre of Pali measures about ½ in. to ¾ in. The article measures about 6 in. to 10 in. in diameter, and sells at a price of Rs. 1.25 Paise per hundred.



PALI

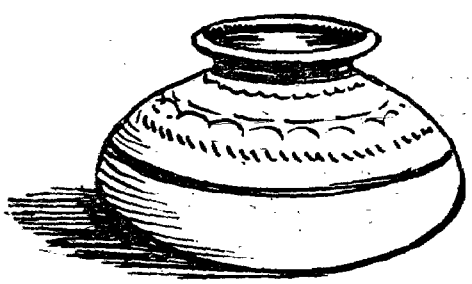
(g) *Handi* : A round-shaped vessel used for boiling pulses and vegetables etc. The vessel is placed on the fire for cooking or boiling various types of eatables. The diameter of the mouth of the Handi measures about 4 in. to 8 in. and the diameter from the middle point measures anything between 10 in. to 15 in. depending upon the size of the Handi. The article is about 9 in. to 10 in. long. The price of the article is Rs. 10 per hundred.

HANDI



HANDI

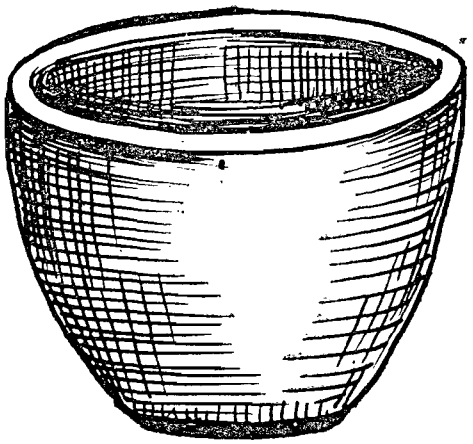
(h) *Bilovani* (बिलोवनी): A big round-shaped bin with a fairly large mouth mostly used for storing *Ghee*, curd or *Lassi*. The article is also used for churning milk or curd. The upper mouth of the article measures about 6 in. to 10 in. in diameter. The article is about 10 in. to 12 in. long and its diameter from the middle point measures about 16 in. to 20 in. The article sells for Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 per hundred depending upon the size.



BILOVANI

(i) *Pyala* (प्याला): A flat-shaped article of the type of an ordinary bowl used for preserving eatables of sour taste, which cannot be safely preserved in metal wares.

Mohammandans generally used the plate for serving cooked vegetables. The outer mouth of the pyala measures about 6 in. to 7 in. in diameter. The article is about 5 in. long. Pyalas are sold at the rate of Rs. 2 per hundred.



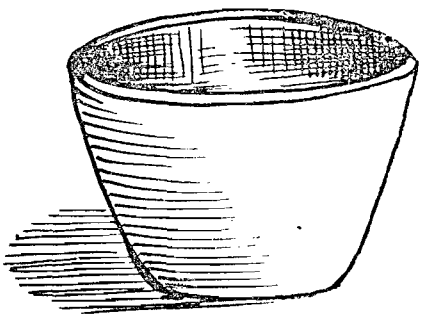
PYALA

(j) *Taula* (तोला) : A semi-circle shaped bowl used for temporarily storing the grains at the time of their grinding with a quern. The shape of the article conforms to the shape of a Jhanwala, except that unlike Jhanwala no holes are made on the outer surface. The sides of the Taula are also in general thicker than those of a Jhanwala. It is about 6 in. long and its outer surface measures anything between 10 in. to 14 in. depending upon its size. Taulas sell at the rate of Rs. 10 per hundred.

TAULA

(k) *Koondi* (कूंडी) : A large size shallow earthen pot required for ceremonial uses during marriage. It is used as a reservoir of water at the time the bridegroom takes his bath. It can also be used for storing grains or sweets during marriages.

The article has a diameter of about 20 in. to 25 in. from its mouth and is about 10 in. to 15 in. long depending upon its size. The sale price of the article is Rs. 50 per hundred.



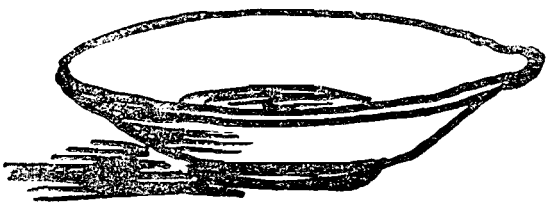
KOONDI

(l) *Karva* (करवा): A small round-shaped vessel with a spout. It is used as a glass for giving bath to the bridegroom before the marriage ceremonies begin. It is also used by married women for offering worships to the moon on the day of *Karva Chauth* (करवा चौथ). The article is also used on a couple of other ceremonial occasions like child birth etc.

The round mouth of the Karva measures about 4 in. to 6 in. The article is about 5 in. to 8 in. long and is 7 into 10 in. in diameter at its middle point. The spout is about ¼ in. in diameter. Karvas sell at the rate of Rs. 10 per hundred.

KARVA

(m) *Diya* (दिया) : It is a small earthen enclosure with a small spout provided on one point on its circumference. The spout serves the purpose of supporting the cotton wick which burns with mustard oil. The outer diameter of Diya measures about 2 in. to 4 in. The article sells at the rate of Re. 1 to Rs. 1.50 per hundred.



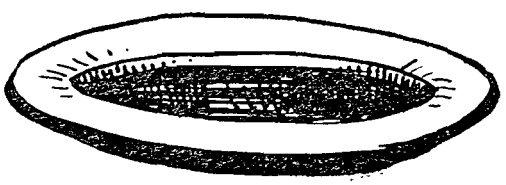
DIYA

(n) *Sakora* (सकोरा) : A small vessel with a deep base of size little bigger than an ordinary cup used for drinking purposes. Sakoras are widely used during marriages. The vessel is destroyed immediately after its use.

The mouth of the article measures between 3 in. to 5 in. in diameter depending upon its size. The height of the Sakora is about 3 in. to 8 in. The lower base measures about 2 in. to 3 in. Sakoras sell at the rate of Rs. 2 per hundred.

(o) *Tastri* (तस्तरी) : A tray like plate of the shape of an ordinary salver used for serving sweets etc. during marriages is locally known as Tastri.

The edges of the article are spread out in a highly flat manner. The diameter of the mouth of the article is about 3 in. to 5 in. with a base measurement of about 2 in. Tastris are sold at the rate of Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per hundred.



TASTARI

(p) *Chilim* (चिलम) : A funnel-shaped vessel forming a part of hubble-bubble (locally called hookah) which contains fire and tobacco placed on it.

The upper mouth of the chilim measures about 3 in. to 5 in. depending upon its size. The lower side of the chilim measures about 1 in. in diameter. The article is about 6 in. in height and sells for Rs. 10 per hundred.

(q) *Kutla* (कुटला) : A large earthen bin of a rectangular form used for storing grains is locally known as *Kutla.*

The article is about 5 ft. to 8 ft. in height with a breadth measuring about 1 ft. to 1½ ft. A rectangular hole of the size of 8 in. to 12 in. is provided in the centre of the article in order to take out the grains out of it. The hole is kept covered with a lid. The article sells for Rs. 4 per unit.

(r) *Gole* (गोल): A round-shaped vessel with a comparatively narrow circular mouth used for storing grains etc., is locally known as Gole. The vessel assumes the globular shape immediately from its mouth and is hereby named as Gole (globular). Cultivating families put this article to varied uses like storing grains, pulses or even water.

The diameter of the mouth of the pot measures about 6 in. to 7 in. The diameter from the middle point in the vessel is about 18 in. to 22 in., and the length from the bottom to the top measures between 20 in. to 25 in. The clay all around is gathered, to the thickness of about ½ in. The article has a sale price of Re. 1 per unit.

The manufacture of the above mentioned articles in the village is as old as the craft itself, and no substantial change has been noted in the variety of wares produced in the past and in the present. But a striking difference has to be observed in the nature of the practice of craft in the village and in the city. Only a few articles like matkas, sakoras etc., figure in common in the list of articles being produced in the village and the city.

Almost all the articles being manufactured in the village have a specific use in the context of a primarily agricultural economy and are manufactured in order to meet the domestic requirements of earthenware for the families living in the

village only. Articles like *surahis* and *gamlas* (flower-pot) which constitute the bulk of the production of Kumhars in the city are not at all being produced in the village. The demand for *surahis* has of course grown in the village in the recent years, but it is not substantial enough to induce the Kumhar in the village to undertake their manufacture.

The quality of wares being produced in the village is poorer than the quality produced in the city. This can be accounted for by various reasons. Firstly, it has been found that kumhars working in the village are not as much skilled in their craft as their counter-part in the city. For instance none of them is skilled enough to undertake the manufacture of an earthen base required for storing water for *hookah*. Further, as the Kumhars in the village supply the wares to their jajmans in fulfilment of their jajmani relationship with them, they lay little stress on the quality of the wares produced. Quality of the wares manufactured in the city is bound to be better since they are regularly sold in the market against cash payment. An important reason accounting for the difference in the quality of the wares produced is also because the process of kneading and processing the clay being followed in the city is more elaborate and labour intensive. For instance, the process of kneading the clay with feet is not at all being undertaken in the village, whereas this process forms an important stage in the manufacture of wares in the city. More intensive and thorough kneading of the clay helps to a great extent in the manufacture of superior quality of wares.

Besides, the quality of the clay utilized in the village is far more inferior than the quality being used by the Kumhars in the city. Many a time, the clay being used by the Kumhar in the city comes from as distant places as Meerut, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, etc. As the Kumhar in the village has limited means it is not possible for him to bring the clay from distant places.

A further difference in the technique of production obtaining in the places occurs at the important stage of firing the wares. Firing of the wares is a scientific technique, and if applied in a careful manner, helps to produce wares of quality and durability. Most of the kumhars in the city use a different type of kiln which helps to produce wares of superior quality. The better uses of this type of kiln have been discussed under the chapter "Raw Materials, Tools & Implements."

Chapter 4

RAW MATERIALS, TOOLS & IMPLEMENTS

Raw Materials

THE requirements of raw material for the craft are most simple and modest in their nature. The basic and the most important raw materials used in the craft are the following :

(i) Clay

(ii) Cowdung cakes and other subsidiary fuels like hay, straws, dry leaves, ash etc.

(iii) Rogan (colours).

Since the above mentioned raw materials are by far the most important for the craft, it is desirable to discuss their conditions and terms of availability.

Clay :—Though clay is locally available in the village itself, it does not come up to specified standards of quality of clay required for modelling the wares. A certain degree of plasticity in the clay is essential before it can be utilized for this purpose. The main defect in the clay found in this village is that it is often found to be mixed with sand. The presence of particles of sand in the clay interferes with the smooth process of modelling the wares. The clay is transported from places outside the village, normally from nearly places which are all situated within a distance of 8 miles from this village. These places have been a source of supply of clay for the past about 50 years. Clay to be found at the following places is reported to be good in quality.

Village Shaurpur situated at a distance of about 2 miles from this village is an important source of supply of clay. Dantri is yet another village for obtaining a reasonably good quality clay. Village Mehadoodi which is situated at a distance of about 1½ mile from the village serves as a secondary source of procuring the clay. Though the clay from this place can also be utilized for modelling the wares, its quality is reported to be far less superior than the clay found in Shaurpur or Dantri. Since the clay from Shaurpur is dug out from the places around a pond, it is found to be more plastic than any other clay to be found in the neighbouring areas.

The clay required for the modelling of bigger articles like Matka, Matkias, Aathras (an earthen tool used in the manufacture of Matkas) etc. has to be of a reasonably good quality and is mainly procured from Dantri and Shaurpur. The clay from other places like Mehadoodi and Medan is invariably used for the manufacture of lighter articles like

Tastries, Pyalas, Diyas, etc. as this clay is comparatively coarser in quality.

Occasionally, the Kumhars find it suitable to mix up the clay procured from various places in order to obtain the requisite quality of clay. A constant association and familiarity with the craft guides the craftsman in mixing different types of clay in such a manner as to obtain a requisite plasticity of clay. Usually, the quality of clay is judged by the Kumhar by its colour as also by feeling it with the hands. But what makes the clay to be more qualitative is its capacity to undergo the process of modelling and firing.

Normally, the Kumhar does not have to pay any price for the clay and the only cost involved is that of digging out the clay and its transportation to the village. A donkey is the usual mode of transporting the clay from the village. Usually the Kumhars themselves go to the place and transport the clay on the donkeys maintained by them. But since all the Kumhars in the village do not maintain their own donkeys, a few have to procure clay through the people who deal in the supply of clay. One of the Kumhars in the village takes a donkey from a brick manufacturer for transporting the clay and gives him some wares in exchange. He utilizes this donkey not only to transport the clay for his own requirements but also for selling it to others in the village. People from outside come to the village with their donkeys loaded with clay and sell it to the Kumhars against cash or kind. A donkey load of clay sells for 50 Paise, or alternatively against wares worth 50 Paise. These people sell clay not only to the Kumhar families in the village but also to other families who require it for construction and repair of houses in the village. But this class of people does not deal in supplying the clay throughout the year. Since their primary occupation is agriculture they do not sell clay during the busy sowing and harvesting seasons.

In the recent past, the Kumhars of this village are finding some difficulty in the way of getting the clay from Shaurpur. Till now this place was the common property (Shamilat) of the people of village Chhatarpur. But now since this land has been acquired by a private individual, he does not allow the Kumhars to dig out the clay from this place. On account of this restriction imposed on digging out the clay, individual Kumhars have made their own separate arrangements for procuring their requirements of clay.

Village Devri situated at a distance of about 2 miles from the village has also been at one time a singularly important source for procuring the clay for the manufacture of superior quality articles. As has been indicated earlier, the clay to be found at this place is known to be exceptionally suitable for the manufacture of bigger articles like Matkas, Matkias, Aathras etc. Matkas modelled in this clay keep the water cool, attain better finish and shine and are also in general more durable than the Matkas made with other clay. Further, the Matkas made with this clay suffer far less damage during the firing stage. According to the Kumhars in the village, this clay is extremely indispensable for the manufacture of quality Matkas.

For a long period, there has been absolutely no restriction of any nature upon the digging of the clay from this source. Of late, the conditions of availability of clay from this place have changed. The owner of this particular place has imposed rigid restrictions on the digging out of clay from this place, as he intends bringing this land under cultivation. Some Kumhars from this village and a few others from surrounding villages (Fatehpur Beri, Jonapur, Gadaipur, Nav Sarai, Lado Sarai and Devri) have recently made arrangements with the owner of the place regarding the supply of clay. Kumhars have jointly paid Rs. 200 to the owner of this place at Devri by raising the sum through voluntary contribution.

Some of the Kumhars in the village also bring the clay from village Sultanpur which is situated at a distance of about 2 kilometres from the village. Though this clay is far inferior than the clay to be found at Devri or Shaurpur, still some of the Kumhars use it for the manufacture of bigger articles like Matkas, Chapatias etc. Increasing restrictions are being put on the digging out of clay even from this place.

A few of the Kumhars even pay for digging out the clay in terms of wares of different kinds.

Some of the Kumhars dig out the clay from the fields of their cultivating Jajman families without paying anything for it. But as most of the Kumhars do not have their Jajmans in any other village where clay of quality can be found, it is not possible to procure clay from this source. Kumhars can dig out the clay from the fields of their Jajmans in the village, but this is possible only if the clay from these fields meets their qualitative requirements. On the whole it can be said that the conditions of availability of clay at present are not as liberal as they used to be prior to the land in Shaurpur and Devri becoming private property. The unfavourable supply conditions of clay are, therefore, causing an increasing concern to the Kumhars in this village.

Cowdung :—Cowdung as a raw material for this craft is as much important as clay. The process of firing the wares after they have been modelled can be undertaken only with the use of cowdung cakes. Further, with the prevailing technique of firing the wares, cowdung cakes as a fuel for firing the wares do not have any other substitute. Thus, an assured supply of cowdung cakes is very important for the smooth working of the craft.

The entire requirements of cowdung cakes for this craft are procured from the village itself. But the conditions and the sources of availability of cowdung have undergone a great deal of change during the past 15 to 20 years.

It is, therefore, desirable to examine such conditions as they used to obtain before this period and as they exist at present.

At the time when the Kumhar families in the village were attached to a large number of cultivating families as their *Kamins* (dependents) they used to procure their entire requirements of cowdung from their Jajmans. Again, since cultivation was being carried on in the village on a wide scale, the number of livestock maintained by the cultivating families was large enough to meet the requirements of cowdung for various purposes. A part of the available supply of cowdung was, of course, retained by the cultivators as manure for their fields but still the Kumhars used to get sufficient supply of cowdung from their Jajmans. The only labour involved was that of transporting the cowdung from the fields and that of preparing it into cakes and the Kumhar did not have to pay any price for it. The process of preparing the cowdung into cakes was undertaken by the female members of the Kumhar families.

The conditions after the partition have entirely changed. In the first place, due to a sudden decline in the number of cultivating families in the village and hence in the number of livestock maintained by them, the supply of cowdung has been drastically cut short. The number of livestock maintained in the village at present is far less than it was before partition. Again whatever remaining cultivating families there are in the village, they are not always bound with the Kumhars as their Jajmans. Hence they are under no obligation to supply the Kumhars with cowdung. Further whatever little supply of cowdung is in the village, the cultivating families in the village retain the entire supply of cowdung partly for its use as a domestic fuel and partly as manure for their fields. Accordingly, this source of supply of cowdung from the cultivating families is now completely closed to the Kumhars.

The next source of obtaining cowdung is from the grazing fields. With the decline in the number of livestock in the village the supply from this source has also greatly diminished. Earlier, there were no hard and fast rules regarding the disposal of cowdung from the grazing fields. Any Kumhar or for that matter anybody from the village would go to the grazing field and bring the cowdung to his house. But in view of the scarce supply of cowdung in the village a disposal system has come to stay regarding the disposal of cowdung from the grazing fields. A *gawala* (herdsman) of the village is engaged by the cultivators and other families for the purposes of grazing their animals. While he charges one rupee from the cultivators for every one animal he takes for grazing, he is also entitled to retain the cowdung got from the animals during their stay in the fields. Cowdung got from the animals during the course of transit from the village to the grazing fields does not of course belong to the *gawala* and anybody is at liberty to remove it from the passage. Female members from a few of the Kumhar families do in fact gather the cow-

dung from this source, but it is not enough to meet even a fraction of their total requirements of cowdung. Further during rainy reason this source of procuring cowdung is also closed as the cowdung is washed away by rains. The village *gawala* (herdsman) is reported to have entered into an agreement with a Kumhar in the village to whom he hands over the whole of the cowdung from the grazing field. The female members of this particular Kumhar's family later go to the fields and turn it into cakes. The Kumhar retains ½ of the cowdung cakes thus obtained and the other half is handed over to the village *gawala*. The *gawala* then sells the cowdung cakes to the Kumhars in the village at the rate of one rupee per maund. This particular Kumhar after meeting his requirements for cowdung cakes both for domestic purposes and for the craft, sells the remaining cakes to other Kumhars in the village at the same rate. Transportation of the cakes is undertaken by the purchasers either on their own donkeys or in baskets made of bamboo sticks. Whatever little dung is obtained by the Kumhars out of the donkeys maintained by them, is just sufficient to meet requirements as a domestic fuel. Accordingly, the Kumhar has to pay in terms of cash in order to procure his requirements of cowdung cakes.

Sometimes the female members of the Kumhar's family may also purchase the cowdung from the cultivators and prepare the cakes themselves. But this type of practice is not very common among the families of Kumhars as the female members do not find it possible to disengage themselves from their regular work of assisting the head of the family in his work.

During rainy seasons, the supply of cowdung cakes is completely stopped as it is not possible to carry on their drying up process during rains. All the Kumhars are, therefore, required to stock their requirements of cowdung cakes for the rainy season. Those who are prepared to sell the cakes out of their stock charge 50 Paise more for a maund than its normal price. However the rise in the price of cowdung cakes does not affect the Kumhar very much since the short supply of cowdung cakes is matched with their short demand. The Kumhar usually stops his work during rains. The price of cowdung cakes shoots up during summer months when their demands shows an abnormal rise as the Kumhar is working to his capacity. During summer, the supply of cowdung cakes also increase as it becomes easier to convert cowdung into cakes. But as the supply of cowdung is rather inelastic, it is not possible to avoid a certain increase in their price. Hence the price of cowdung cakes during summer goes up. Thus the irregular and the seasonal nature of the supply of this fuel is strongly resented by the Kumhars.

Besides cowdung cakes, the fuel comprises of dry leaves, waste, hay, stalks etc. These subsidiary fuels help in the process of burning of the cowdung cakes. Ordinarily, the Kumhar does not have to pay anything for these subsidiary fuels and the women members and children of the family go round in the fields and gather enough for their use. Those of the families who are attached to the cultivating Jajman families get these fuels free from their Jajmans.

Rogan (*colour*) :—Two types of colours are used for the manufacture of almost all the varieties of wares *i.e.*, red and black. Both these colours are locally known as *rogan*. Red colour is locally known as *bani* (बानी). The colour, in its raw form, is formed to be mixed with small pieces of shining red stones of the size of an ordinary grain. Such pieces of stone are found from the slopes of the red hilly regions at a distance of about 3 miles from the village. As the village is surrounded from all sides by small red rocks and hills, the procurement of this form of *rogan* does not pose serious problem for the Kumhar. Often, the male members of the Kumhar family go to these places and gather enough *rogan* for their day to day use in the manufacture of wares. All the Kumhars families keep a sufficient stock of this type of rogan. Though the rogan can be had from any of the red hills, the quality of the rogan differs from place to place. Some pieces of stones are found to be more rich in colour than the others and the colour obtained out of them is, therefore, more intense and fast.

White colour which is used only in the case of manufacture of *matkas* is locally known as *kharia*. Kharia is used for drawing different types of white patterns on the outer surface of

the *matka*. Ordinarily, it is obtained by the Kumhar from the village Baniya (shopkeeper) at the rate of one anna per seer.

Black colour is locally known as *kala kankar* and is obtained from hilly regions and jungles. Another type of black colour which is used more often than *kala kankar* is locally known as *kaloni*. *Kaloni* is found in Distt. Alwar in Rajasthan, and sells for one rupee per 2 seers. But *kaloni* is not available in this village and the Kumhars go to the city and purchase it from the Kumhars who maintain its stock for their own use.

Tools & Implements :—The requirements of tools and other implements used in the craft are very simple. In fact, all the tools used are as old as the craft itself. At no stage, an attempt has been made to introduce better technique of production with the result that even now the techniques of production are highly primitive and traditional. The following is the list of the important tools and implements utilized by the Kumhar in the village.

Chak (wheel) :—Of all the tools used the *chak* (wheel) is the most important. It is a principal tool used in the process of modelling the article. It is a thick, circular wheel used for modelling the clay into various articles.

No standard measurements of the tools can be given as the *chak* used by different Kumhars and even by one Kumhar vary in size, weight, form of material etc. The measurements can, therefore, be best illustrated by specifying their range. A *chak* can have a thickness of anything between 3″ to 5″, with a diameter measuring anywhere between 20″ to 30″. The circular hole made in the surface of the *chak* however, has a uniform diameter of about ¾″. This hole measures to a depth of about ¾″. The small hole provided in the centre of the reverse side surface of the *chak* measures about 1/5″ in diameter and about the same in depth. These measurements of the hole are more or less uniform in the case of all the *chaks*. It is in this hole that the upper top of the *keela* (pivot) is connected with the wheel (*chak*). Since it is the centre upon which the *chak* revolves, care is always taken to see that the central part of the wheel is made of strong material like stone. Thus, in the case of a wheel made of cement its central part is always replaced by fixing in a flat piece of stone.

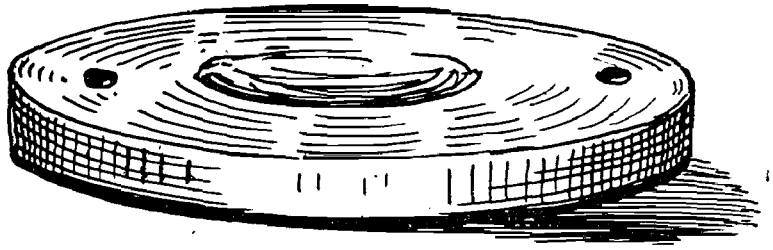
All the artisans in the village use either a stone or a cement *chak*. A *chak* must come upto a certain volume of weight before it can be used for modelling the articles. Hence for the proper modelling of the articles which are manufactured in the village, a *chak* must be made of any of the following materials :

1. Stone
2. Cement
3. Iron

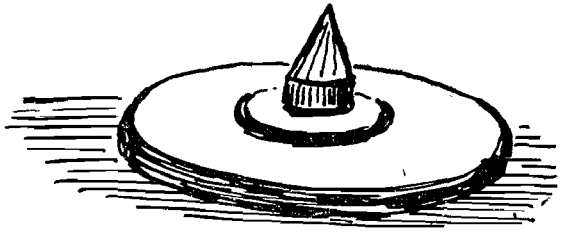
The total number of *chaks* with the 7 working units is 9. Out of these, six are made of stone and three are made of cement. Only two units have got two *chaks* each while the rest of them have got one *chak* each. Both the units have got one *chak* made of stone and one of cement. But of the five who work with only one *chak*, four have stone wheels and one has got only a cement wheel.

The stone wheel is manufactured by a separate class of people known as "Stone Carvers" (or Sant Raj as they are locally called). Such wheels are available in Delhi also, but most of the artisans are reported to have purchased the wheel from places like Aligarh or Agra. These places are known for producing stone wheels of quality. With the exception of one artisan who has purchased the stone wheel in his life-time, all the artisans have inherited them from their ancestors. All these wheels have been purchased within a price range of Rs. 15 to Rs. 25 depending upon the size of the *chak*. *Chaks* which are more thick and have a larger diameter, as a rule are more expensive than the others. Since then the price of the stone wheel has considerably gone up. There is a large variety of stone wheels available in the market within the price range of Rs. 75 to Rs. 150. At one time, there used to exist a regular market for stone wheels in Lal Kuan, Delhi. Stone wheels could be purchased ready made depending upon the quality of the wheel. At present, there doesn't exist any regular market dealing in the sale of ready made wheels. A wheel can be had from the stone

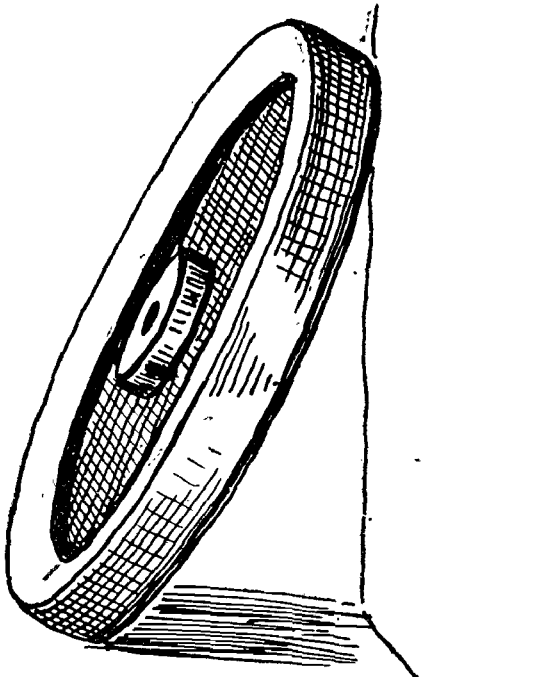
CHAKLE'TA



CHAK



KILA OR PAI



CHAK

CHAUKANDA

carvers only by placing an order for a specified quality of wheel in advance. A wheel once purchased lasts for a period of about 50 to 70 years in the normal course of use.

Ordinarily, a cement wheel can be made to order from any mason in the village for a price ranging from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30 only. One unit engaged in the craft is exclusively dependent upon the use of cement wheel. It is interesting to note that there is one Kumhar in the village who undertakes to manufacture a cement wheel. He charges Rs. 5 for the manufacture of the wheel excluding the cost of raw material (cement and concrete), required for its manufacture. The cost of cement and concrete for the manufacture of a wheel of an average size and weight (with a thickness measuring about 4" and diameter of about 25") comes to about Rs. 15.

A *chak* made of stone has distinct advantages over the *chak* made of cement or for that matter any other *chak* made of light material. This is the reason why a majority of the Kumhars in the village use wheels made of stone. In the first instance, while the cement wheel is found to be lacking in weight, a stone wheel does not suffer from this disadvantage. A stone wheel is more durable and serves for a longer period, since it is free from the risk of easy breaking. Further a stone wheel rotates for a much longer period than the wheel made of cement. A cement wheel suffers from another serious disadvantage in so far as its revolutions do not tend to run at a level parallel to the ground. Due to the modelling defects in the cement wheel it is bound to lean more heavily on one side. Once the revolutions of the wheel, run at a level unparallel to the ground, they are certain to cause defect in the modelling process of the article. On the contrary the stone wheel does not suffer from this defect and ensures smooth and parallel revolutions to the ground.

Ordinarily, an iron *chak* proves to be too heavy to be operated upon with the help of a wooden stick. This wheel is, therefore, fixed in the centre of the table with the help of a thick iron rod and is made to rotate with the help of an ordinary cycle chain attached with a paddle. The introduction of this wheel is a distinct advantage made in the technique of production, in so far as the artisan saves on account of the energy otherwise wasted on operating the wheel with hand. Though the artisans in the village are aware of the better uses of this type of wheel, none is reported to be using an iron wheel. Lack of finance is the only reason which has prevented the artisans from taking over to its use. The total cost of installing an iron wheel works out to be roughly Rs. 300.

Keela or *Khoontia* (pivot) : A samll, solid wooden piece of a dome-like shape on which the *chak* is made to rotate is locally known as *Keela* or *Khoontia*. This tool serves as a pivot which ultimately bears the entire weight of the *chak*.

The tool is about 4" to 5" in length from the bottom till the point from where it tapers off to the thickness of about 1/5". The circumference of the lower side of the tool measures about 1½". As both the sides converge towards the top, the circumference of the top end and of the tool is reduced only to about 1/5".

A flat piece of stone of the thickness of about 1" is fixed securely on the ground and the lower part of the tool passes through this stone and is dug deep in the ground, to the depth of about 2½". It is with the help of this stone that the upper top of the tool supports the movements of the *chak*. The upper end of the tool connects a small depression provided in the centre of the *chak*. Occasionally, a coating of mustard oil is given both on the top end of the *keela* as well as on the centre of the wheel. Mustard oil is applied in order that the revolutions of the wheel are more swift and responsive to the movements given to the wheel. Mustard oil thus serves as a lubricant.

This tool is invariably made of any strong and durable wood. Generally *sheesham* wood is utilised for making this tool. It can be ordinarily manufactured by any carpenter in the village and can be had for a nominal price of 12 or 15 Paise. More often, the artisan may himself manufacture the *keela* by appropriately mending a peace of wood by any sharp iron tool.

Chākreti : A long solid wood stick used for giving circular movements to the wheel (*chak*) is

locally known as *chakreti*. It measures about 3 feet in length. The tool lacks uniformity in thickness because the lower end of the tool is much less in thickness than the rest of the tool. The rod is about 1" thick from one end and is only ¾" thick from the other end. This is so because the thickness of the thinner end of the tool (¾") has to be identical with the diameter of the round hole made on one side of the surface of the *chak*. The tool is ordinarily designed by the artisan himself.

Aathra (A mould for giving definite shape to hand modelled earthen vessels) :—It is a semi-circle shaped vessel with a broad mouth used for placing the *matkas* immediately after they have been beaten into their regular shapes.

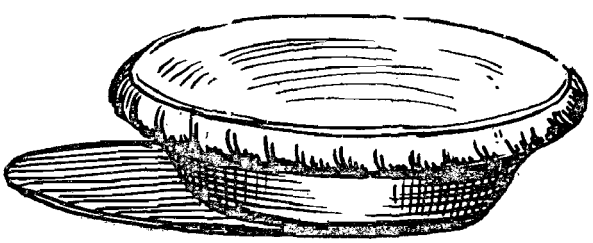
The circular base of the average size *Aathra* measures about 12" in diameter and 2" in thickness of 1 feet in divergent manner. The round shape broad mouth of the tool measures about 2½' in diameter. The sides of the tool have a uniform thickness of 2". The inner sides of the *Aathra* are highly smooth and even. This is necessary in order to ensure the smoothness of the outer surface of the *matkas*.

On the average, each Kumhar in the village maintains approximately 15 *aathras* of different sizes. The size of the aathra to be used varies with the size of the *matka* to be manufactured. As the *matkas* are being manufactured in various sizes it is necessary for the Kumhars to maintain an adequate number of *aathras* of appropriate size.

An *aathra* can be made of either clay or cement. A cement *Aathra* is more durable in use and helps to produce better quality of *matkas*. A cement *Aathra* is ordinarily made by the artisan himself. The total cost of cement required for manufacture of *aathra* comes to about Re. 1. Alternatively, it can be got made from any mason in the village at a cost of Rs. 4.

Though the *aathras* made of clay are invariably manufactured by the class of Kumhars yet every Kumhar in the village is not proficient enough to undertake the manufacture of *aathras*. Thus *aathras* made of clay are rarely manufactured by the Kumhars in the village. The clay required for the manufacture of *aathra* is supposed to be of very high quality, since it has to be gathered up to the thickness of about 2". Again, as the modelling process of the *aathra* is highly intricate the clay used is required to contain more plastic contents. Even after the clay has been modelled into the shape of an *aathra*, the defective quality of clay is bound to cause defect in its firing process. The clay has to be strong enough to stand the process of firing. A defective quality of clay might result in cracks appearing on the outer surface of the *aathra*. All these limitations on the manufacture of the *aathra* prevent the Kumhars in the village to undertake their manufacture.

Aathras of good quality are known to be manufactured at Jhar Santli in Distt. Gurgoan. This place is situated at a distance of about 15 miles from this village. Sihi is another place where *aathras* of good quality are manufactured. A few of the Kumhars are reported to have brought *aathras* from these places from their relatives or friends.



AATHRA

The following, in short, are the main stages in the process of manufacture of *aathras*.

A thick loam of clay is prepared by adding water into clay. The loam is made still thicker by adding flax (locally known as 'sun') into it. Before the flax is mixed with the loam of clay, it is reduced into small pieces with the help of any sharp iron implement. The use of flax helps the clay to stay firm during the course of modelling the *aathras*.

A circular hole (about 2" deep and 12" in diameter) is dug in the ground. The size of this

hole approximates the measurements of the lower base of the tool.

The thick loam of clay is then filled into the circular hole dug in the ground. The loam is pressed hard into the hole with the help of hands. The compact sides of the *aathra* are gathered up to a thickness of about 2″ by beating the clay loam with hands. The sides thus formed are joined together with the circumference of the base of the *aathra* laid in the hole.

The joints are carefully sealed by inserting appropriate quantity of clay loam in the joints. After the sides of the *aathra* attain a solid surface, it is taken out of the cavity and is thoroughly dried by placing it in the sun. This is followed by firing the Aathra in the kiln in the ordinary course.

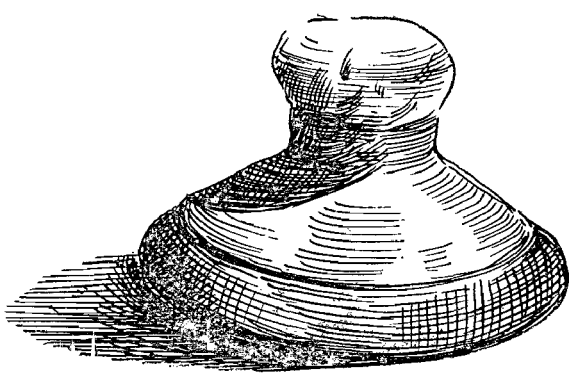
Peendi : It is a tool made of burnt clay with a curve shaped base and provided with a handle at the top. *Peendi* is used for giving shapes to the inner sides of the *matka.* Normally *peendi* is modelled by the Kumhar himself on the wheel and is later fired in the kiln like any other article. The tool measures about 5″ long from the bottom to the top. The diameter at the lower end measures about 5″ and the upper end about 2″. The lower end is made smooth and even. The round handle measures about $1\frac{1}{2}$″ long and $2\frac{1}{2}$″ in diameter.

Peend : Peend or large peendi is a thick mass of burnt clay of a dome-like shape. It is rounded up from the top so as to provide for a grip in order to hold it during its use. The use and functions of this tool are very much similar to those of a *peendi.* While the *peendi* is used for giving circular shape to the upper part of the *matka,* the *peend* is used for shaping the bottom of the *matka.*

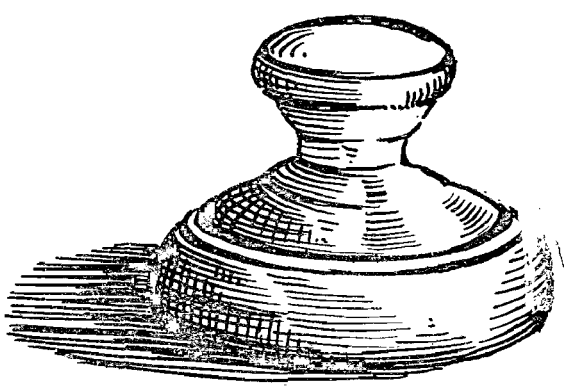
An important difference between the *peendi* and the *peend* is that the bottom surface of the former has a more sharp curve than the latter. It is this difference in the slope of their bottom surface curves which makes the two tools distinctively suited for the two different operations. *Peend* is about 4″ long from the bottom to its handle. The diameter of the circle formed at the bottom measures about 6″. As with *peendi,* the *peend* is also modelled by the Kumhar on the wheel and is later fired in the kiln along with other articles.

Jharna (Sieve): *Jharna* is the local name of an ordinary sieve with big holes. It is used for separating the big pieces of clay and gravels.

The size and shape of *jharnas* used by different Kumhars in the village differ from one to another. The iron sheet in which the holes are made can measure anything between 18″ to 24″ in length and 12″ to 18″ in breadth. The size of the holes, however, is the same in the case of all the *jharnas.* The rectangular holes in the iron sheets measure 2/3″ in length and 1/5″ in breadth.



LARGE PEENDI



SMALL PEENDI

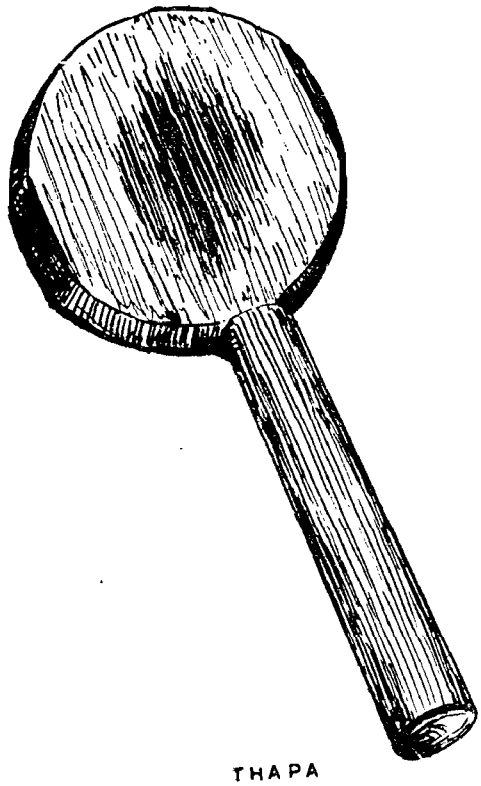
Jharna is available from the city in the price ranging from 0.50 Paise to 0.75 Paise, depending upon the size and quality of the sieve. The Kumhar may also get it made to order from the Lohar (iron-smith) of the village. Sometimes, a separate class of people known as Bhovelive, reported to have migrated from Chitorgarh, come to the village and undertake to manufacture the *jharnas*. This class of people move from one village to another in search for this type of casual work. Besides the cost of the iron sheet, they charge from Re. 0.50 to 0.75 Paise for the manufacture of two *jharnas*. Normally, the Kumhar gets it made out of the sheet of worn out cannister. Many a time, the Kumhar may manufacture the iron sieve himself by making holes in the iron sheet with the help of an iron implement called *chheni* (chisel). But its quality is not going to be as good as the sieve manufactured by an iron-smith.

Thapa (wooden tapper) : It is a rounded shape wooden implement provided with a wooden handle. Both the sides of the *thapa* have small depressions. It is with the help of this implement that the *matka* is beaten into its shape.

The round part of the wooden tool has a diameter measuring about 8″ and a thickness of about 1½″. The round shaped wooden handle which joins the flat circular shaped part of the *Thapa* is about 1¼″ thick and 6″ long. The tool is invariably made of teak wood, which is known to be more durable and strong in use.

Ordinarily, the tool is manufactured by the carpenter in the village and can be made to order for a payment of Re. 1 only. The payment of the carpenter may also be made in terms of wares. In such cases, the money price of the wares given to the carpenter is equated with the cost of the tool.

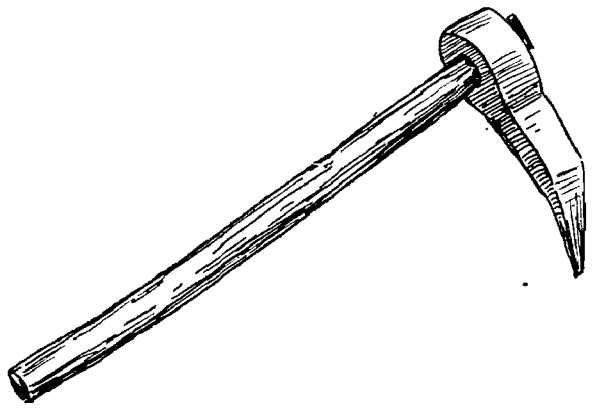
Koodal (कुदाल): It is a sharp iron implement fixed into a thick wooden rod. The iron part of the tool has a uniform thickness of about 3″, with a sharp pointed top. The projecting part of the tool is about another 3″ long. There is a circular hole made in the upper top part of the tool which measures to a diameter of about 1½″. This circular hole is provided as a



THAPA

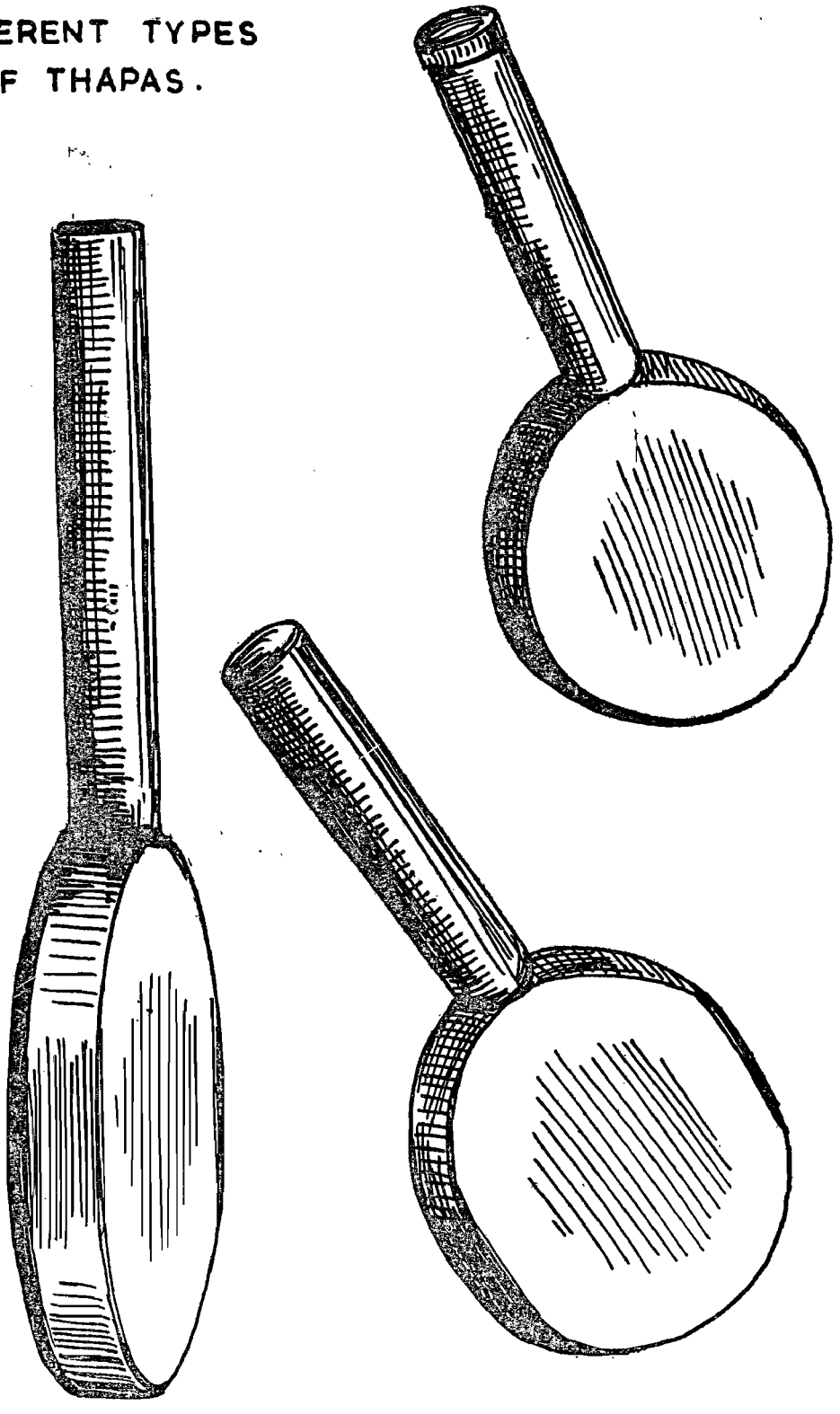
cavity for the rod-shaped wooden handle of the tool. The wooden handle of the Koodal measures 1½″ in diameter and is about 38″ long.

Koodal can be got manufactured from any black-smith or it can be purchased from a junk seller in the city. The tool is always made of hard iron. The price of the tool varies from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 depending upon the size and quality of the iron used. The tool is required only by those Kumhars who dig up the clay themselves, as it is only used for digging out the clay.



KOODAL

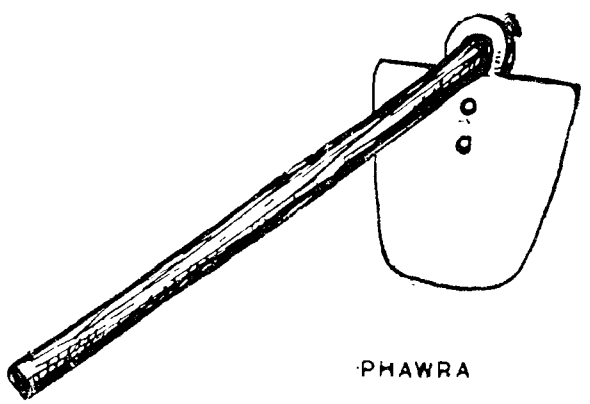
DIFFERENT TYPES
OF THAPAS.



Phawra (Hoe): A familiar tool of the agriculturists, it is a sharp-edged flat piece of thick iron sheet attached to a long solid wooden rod (handle). *Phawra* is used for putting the clay on the donkey after it has been dug out of the ground.

The thick iron blade of the *Phawra* measures 12″ in breadth on its one side and a length of about the same measurement. The side facing the ground measures about 12″ only. In the middle of the broader side (upper side) having 12″ width a semi-circle shaped iron piece having a diameter of about 1½″ is attached to provide a cavity for fixing up the wooden handle. The handle measures about 1¾″ in thickness and 36″ in length.

Phawra is ordinarily manufactured by an iron-smith. The price of the tool varies from Rs. 4 to Rs. 10 depending upon the quality of the iron used.

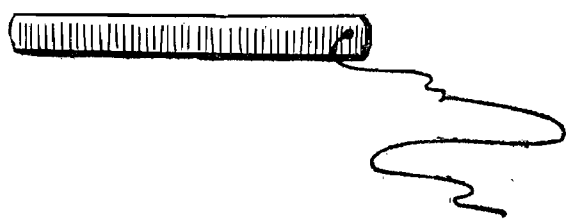


PHAWRA

Fans (फांस): It is an iron implement of the shape of an Aathra and serves the same functions as Aathra. The measurements of the tool are the same as those of an Aathra. Fans is manufactured by the iron smith and is available within a price of Rs. 3 to 4.

Ghera (घेरा) :A curve-shaped piece of iron sheet with moderately sharp edges, used for separating clay paste from its heap is locally called as 'Ghera'. The Kumhar obtains this tool from the black-smith without paying any price for it. The edges of the piece are sharpened by the Kumhar himself with the help of an ordinary file.

Kheeman (खीमन) : A piece of ordinary cotton thread tied to a small piece of wood and used for separating the article from the wheel is locally known as Kheeman. The cotton thread is about 2 feet long and the wooden piece to which it is tied is about 3″ long and ¼″ thick. Being a very simple tool it is made by the artisan himself.



KHEEMAN

Koonchi (Brush) : It is a brush used for drawing designs and descriptions on the outer surface of the various articles. An ideal koonchi is composed of the hair of a pig's tail which are gathered up to the thickness of about ¼″ and are then tied firmly from one side with the help of a thick cotton thread. The hair are about 3″ long. The other ends of the hair are appropriately trimmed down with the help of an ordinary scissor so as to give them a thin and sharp shape. It is from this side of the tool that design and other descriptions are drawn on the outer surface of the matkas.

Ordinarily, the Kumhar manufactures the tool himself. The tail of the pig is available from the butcher's shop on a nominal price of about 12 Paise. Very often, the Kumhar has to go to Mehrauli (a place about 3 miles away from the village) in order to purchase the tail of a pig. In case the pig's tail is not easily available the hair of the tail of a he-goat may also be utilized for the purpose of the manufacture of Koonchi. But the quality of these hair does not prove to be as good in use as the pig's hair.

Danda (Wooden rod) : A thick wooden rod about 1½ feet long and 3″ thick is locally known as Danda. As the Danda is used for breaking the clods of clay it is desirable that it is made

of strong and hard wood. Danda can be ordinarily made to order from the village carpenter for a nominal price of about 25 Paise.

DANDA

Bhatti (Kiln) : Bhatti is a highly primitive and traditional tool used in the process of firing the wares. It is a hollow ditch dug out in the ground in order to bury the wares in the fire. Different types of wares are systematically dumped in this ditch before they are set to fire. The ditch has a circular shape with a diameter of about 15 to 20 feet. The depth of the ditch measures about 6 to 8 feet. The sides of the ditch fall down in a slanting manner. Unlike the ordinary ground surface, the sides and the bottom of the ditch are rendered highly smooth and hard due to the constant effect of fire. The ditch is dug out by the artisan himself with the help of an ordinary Phawra. The technique of firing the wares in this type of ditch is as old as the craft itself.

Though every Kumhar is aware of the better uses of the new type of kiln still none of them is eager to take over to its use. Along with discussing the reasons which prevent the Kumhar from taking over to the use of the new type of kiln, it is worthwhile on list the special advantages which the new type of kiln assures to the Kumhars.

The primary benefit of the new type kiln (made of mud and bricks and rising 8 to 10 feet above the ground) which has motivated the Kumhar in the city to take over to its use is its relatively lesser space requirements. The space available with the Kumhar in the city is too inadequate to run the craft on efficient lines. But as the Kumhars in the village have in general ample space available with them, they have never thought in terms of economising in the use of space.

Further the change to the new type of kiln by the Kumhars in the city has been influenced to a great extent by the general shortage of dung-cakes in the city. While the primary fuel required for charging the old type kiln is dung cakes, the only fuel used for the working of the new type kiln is saw-dust. Saw-dust is not only conveniently available in the city, but also works out to be cheaper than dung cakes. On the contrary, while the Kumhars in the village can procure the dung-cakes on cheap and easy terms, saw-dust is not at all available in the village. The only way is to procure the saw-dust from the city which involves additional expense on account of transportation resulting in an increased cost involved in charging the new-type kiln.

Another reason which has influenced the dicision of Kumhars in the city to take over to the use of new-type kiln arises out of hygienic consideration. The smoke released out of the new type of kiln is not only not very intense, but it passes out very steadily through the circular hole provided on the top of the kiln. The smoke released by the old type of kiln gets very intense at some stages and spreads around in a haphazard manner. But with an ample open space available with the Kumhar in the village, this consideration does not weigh with him and all the kilns in the village are found to be dug out in the ground.

Another reason why the Kumhars in the village have not installed the new-type of kiln arises out of cost considerations. The initial cost of bricks etc. required to erect this new-type kiln comes to be approximately Rs. 200. As the Kumhars in the village are carrying on their work on a rather modest scale, they do not find it worthwhile to undertake an investment of this magnitude.

Again, the new-type of kiln does not very efficiently suit the requirements of the village Kumhar. As the manufacture of wares is carried on a small scale, the quantity of wares fired in the kiln at a time is not very large. The new type of kiln, unless it is fully loaded cannot be charged.

Another reason why the Kumhars in the village have not taken over to the use of new type

of kiln is their lack of knowledge regarding its operation. The temperature of the new type of kiln needs to be constantly watched and regulated and requires a high degree of observation on the part of the Kumhar. Temperature of this kiln, unless it is carefully regulated at various stage is bound to cause excessive damage to the wares. For this purpose, one man has to maintain a continuous guard on the kiln while the wares are being fired.

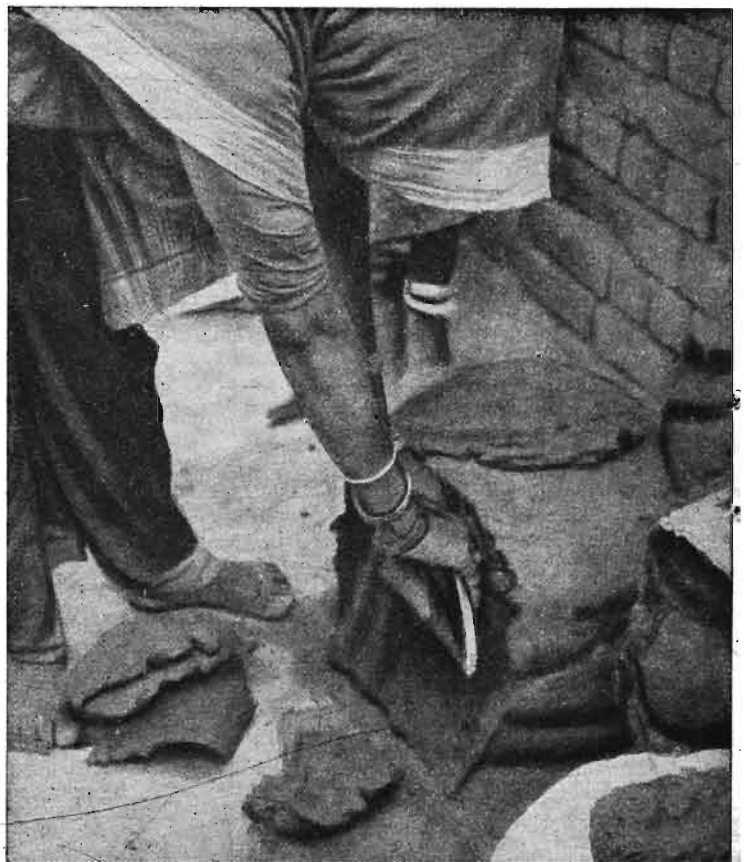
Though most of the uses of the new-type of kiln are not relevent to the functioning of the craft in the village, it has got distinct advantages over the old type of kiln in so far as it helps to turn out a better quality of wares. The old type of kiln is given to the risk of bad weather like storms, or rains, which can cause heavy damage to the wares in the old type kiln. In the new type of kiln, the wares are very safely protected against rains or storm. During the rains the kiln is simply covered with thick iron sheets and during storms the brick walls round the kiln provide an adequate protection to the wares and do not allow the wind to affect the temperature in the kiln.

Clods of clay being broken with the help of a wooden rod (*Danda*). (1)

(2) A female sitting on the base floor sieving the clay.

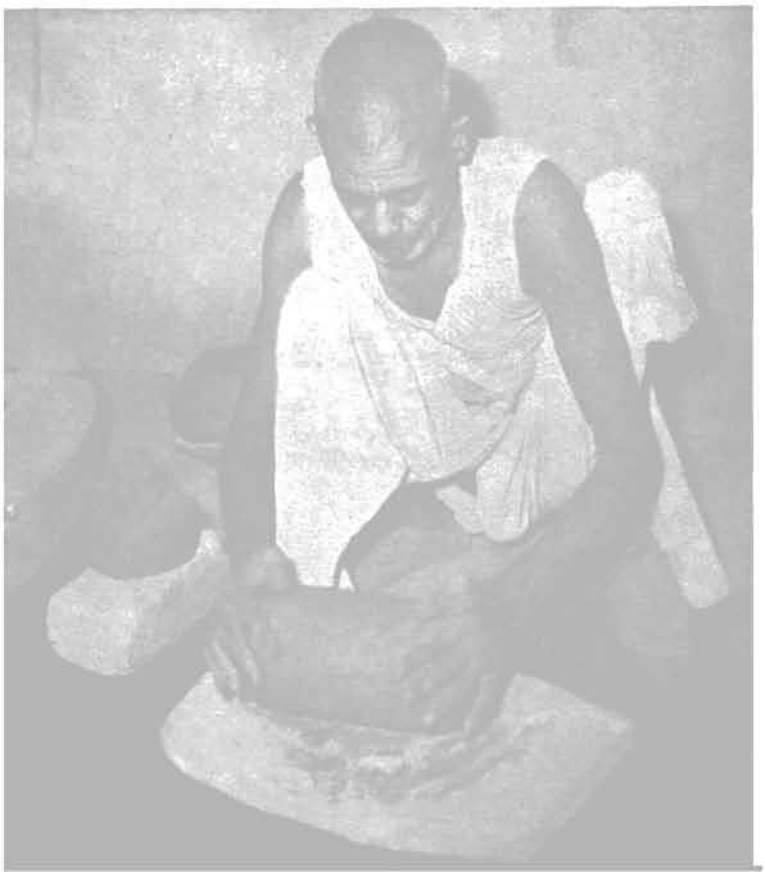
The clay being kneaded into a thick paste. (3)

(4) **The clay loam being taken out of the heap for the further process of kneading.**



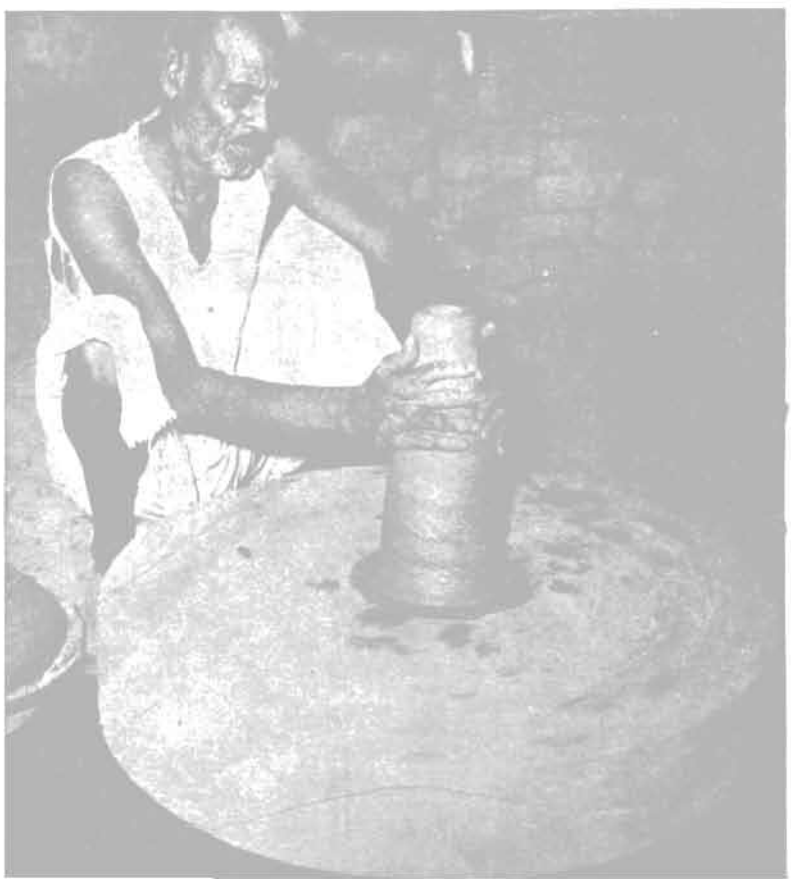
(5) The clay loam being ground with palms of hand.

The clay loam is being rolled into a compact roll before it is placed on the wheel. (6)



The artisan is giving rotatory motions to the wheel with the help of *Chakr.ti*. (7)

(8) The initial stage of modelling the clay into a matka.



Chapter 5

PRODUCTION PROCESS

THE process of making pots is simple. With the simple and primitive tools, all that is required is skilful manipulation by the artisan in a manner suited for the manufacture of a particular ware. A certain degree of proficiency in the craft is essential at each stage. Given that the clay lends itself to a most easy and direct expression. The basic approach in the manufacture of various articles is inherently the same. The only difference occurs at the stage of modelling of an article involving different movements of thumb and fingers. Therefore, it is proposed to take up one article for a detailed listing of the various stages involved in its manufacture. Matka, being the most widely manufactured article in the village, has been selected for a detailed study. Before getting down to the study of the process of manufacture of matka, it may not be out of place to say a few words regarding the place where the various stages in the manufacture of matkas are carried on.

As has been stated before, pottery is a typically household and indigenous craft and is being practised in a highly unorganized form. As the craft lacks an organized character, it is not surprising that the various practising units do not have any organizational relationship between them. Each of the households carries on its operations independently in their own house premises right from the stage of processing of the raw material to the turning out of the finished products. Most of the operations are carried out in open space. During summer or periods of extreme cold, all the households have made their own arrangement for fixing the chak either in a room or under a protected and covered shed. The women often carry on the operations like preparation of Rogan, applying the Rogan on the wares, doing *chitai* work on Matkas etc., either in some room or under some thatched hut. The kiln has to be invariably dug out in open space. With the exception of one unit which has a kiln at a distance of about 200 yards from its house, all the households have dug out the kiln in one side of the open space in front of their houses.

Broadly speaking, the different processes of manufacture can be classified under the following categories :—

1. *The cleaning and preparation of clay.*
2. *Modelling the Matka.*
3. *Drying up stage.*
4. *Drawing of the design.*
5. *Firing in the kiln.*

Cleaning & Preparation of Clay.—First, the clay as it is dug out from the fields is scattered on the ground and remains exposed to the sun for a few hours, till it dries up. While the clay is being dried up in this manner, it is occasionally turned over so that no part remains undried. This is done in order to improve the quality of the clay and to ensure that it assimilates its plastic contents. Further, dry clay is more easily soluble in water than damp of wet clay. The process normally takes about 2 to 3 hours.

The big pieces and other clods of clay are crushed with the help of a thick wooden rod called Danda. But before this is done, the pacca floor is thoroughly cleaned in order to prevent the population of the clay by any extra matter. Even the mixing of the ordinary clay with kuccha floor is likely to cause defect in the quality of the clay. Normally, females do this job. (Pic. 1).

Next stage in the processing of the clay is to pass it through a sieve with fairly large holes. In this way, the bigger pieces of clay are separated from the smaller pieces. The process of passing the clay through the sieve also helps to separate small pieces of grass or hay often found mixed with the clay. The presence of such elements in the clay prevents the article from assuming a smooth and clean surface. In order to avoid defect in the process of modelling, it is important that such foreign elements are carefully excluded from the clay. (Pic. 2).

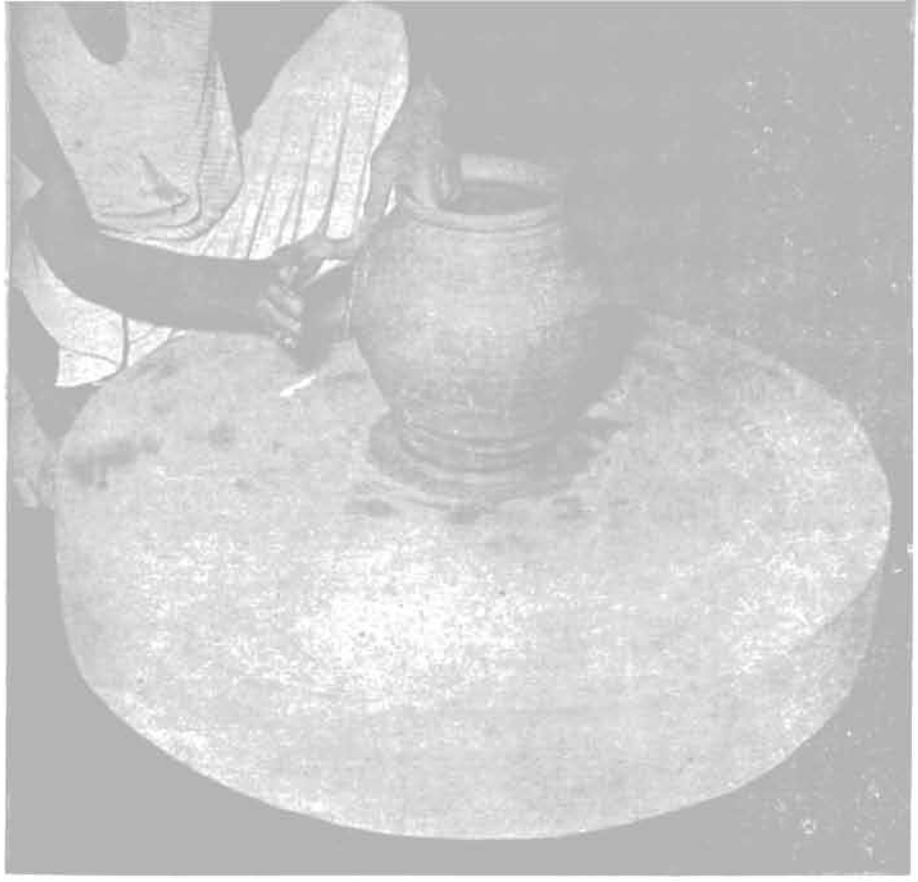
The clay paste is obtained by putting the bigger pieces of clay into a square shaped mound made of bricks and mud, and adding water in equal proportion. (Pic. 3). The solution of water and clay is now allowed to remain undisturbed in this state for a period of about 12 hours. In its initial stages, the artisan breaks the clods of clay with his hands so that it gets thoroughly mixed up in water. During breaking, he takes out any stone or other foreign particles detected by his hands. During this period the big pieces of clay melt away and a thin paste-like solution is taken out of this enclosure after the expiry of this period.

In order to reduce the thinness of the clay to a requisite degree, the clay solution obtained in the above manner is hardened by adding small but dry pieces of clay. (Pic. 4). These pieces of clay are about the size of a grain. As the dry pieces of clay are being added to the clay solution, it is thoroughly rubbed and kneaded with the help of both hands, so that these pieces get completely mixed with the clay solution. The process is ordinarily carried on by the females.

Though the process of preparing clay paste is seemingly simple it requires a very keen sense of observation on the part of the artisan. A slight variation in the proportion of water to clay and a careless kneading of clay is likely to cause defect in the quality of the loam.

Next the lumps of clay paste are stored on clean floor. (Pic. 5). This heap is now covered with a thick piece of wet cloth. Water is frequently sprinkled upon the cloth, so that the clay paste does not get dried up. By keeping the cloth wet in this manner, the clay paste is taken out of the heap in small quantity. In case the clay is found to be too soft, it is left covered by a dry piece of cloth for a few hours, so that it gets stiffened. It is not convenient to work upon the clay in its soft form, as the shape of the article is liable to become irregular and defective. Before kneading, the clay paste is taken out of the heap in small quantity. It is then placed on the flat surface of a stone piece which is ordinarily fixed in the ground. The flat piece of stone fixed in the ground is locally known as *Sil* (सिल). The surface of the stone is thoroughly cleaned before the clay paste is placed on it.

After having thus placed the clay paste on the *Sil* (सिल) the kneading operation is undertaken by a female member of the Kumhar's family. The female sits immediately near the clay paste on the ground, with her one leg spread straight along. While sitting in this position, the female finds it more convenient to send down the movement of her hands with full energy. The clay paste is gathered up to the shape of a dome-like heap. With her left hand resting on the heap of clay, the female starts the operations with her right hand. The upper part of the palm is softly placed on the heap of clay and is repeatedly pressed downwards on the heap of the clay paste.



The artisan shaping the matka.

(9)

(10) The outer surface of the matka is being smoothed with thumbs.

The matka being removed from the centre of the wheel. (11)

The semi finished matka being kept under a shadowy Place for its drying up.

(12)

(13) Above : The outer surface of the matka is being rubbed with a wet piece of cloth.

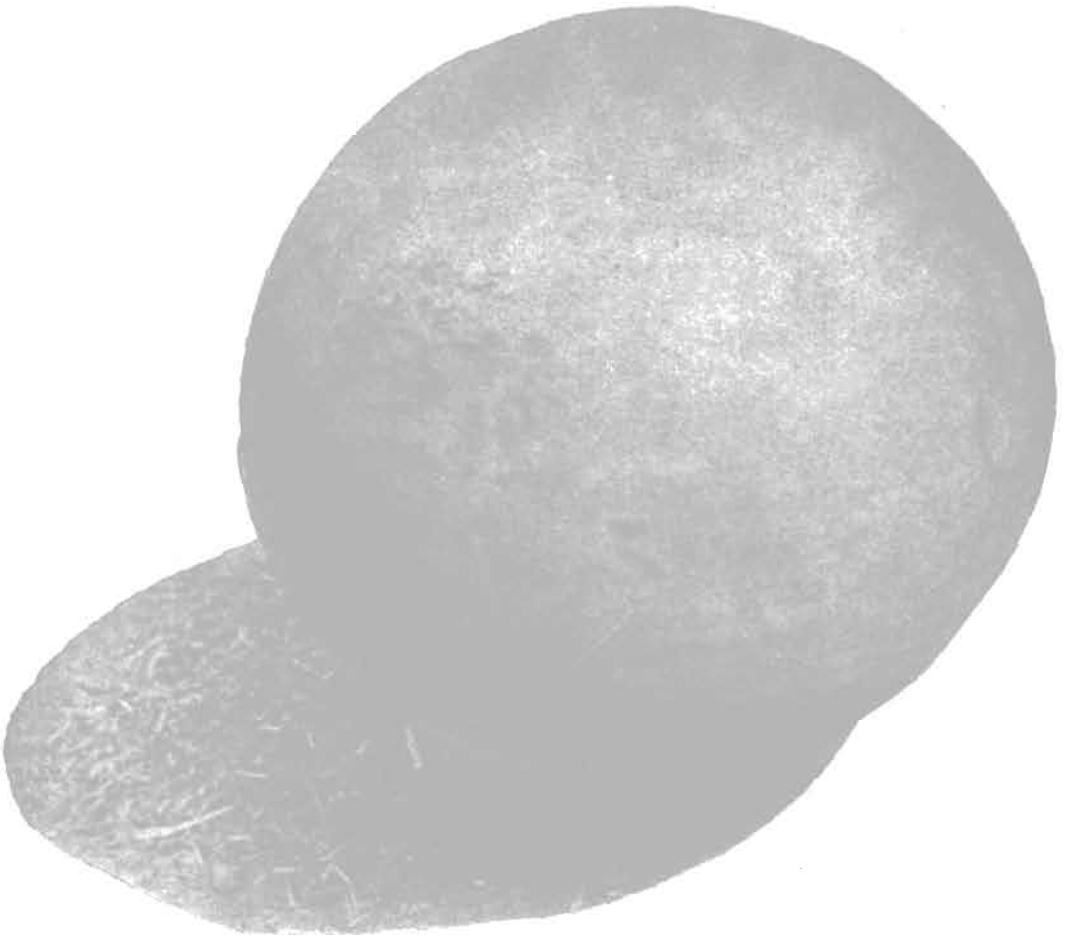
Below : The matka being beaten into its Shape by the *thaṇa*. (14)

Above : The matka is placed in an *Aathra* so as to give shape to its bottom. (15)

Below : Ash being sprinkled on the inner surface of the matka. (16)

The matka being further beaten into its shape from outside. (17)

(18) Inside of the matka being beaten with 'Peendi'.



The matka being dried in the Sun. (19)

Red colour is being applied on the outer surface of the matka. (20)

The operation is carried on for a period of about 1/2 hour.

The kneading of the clay in this manner adds uniformity to the plasticity of the clay. Even plasticity of the clay not only aids the process of modelling the article, but also helps the article to stand the subsequent process of firing without suffering breakage of any kind. If the clay is found mixed up with foreign elements they are all taken out during the course of kneading.

Modelling: Next follows the important process of modelling the matka. But before this is done the clay is taken out of the heap in small quantity and is once again kneaded into the requisite degree of plasticity and thickness. This is done by repeatedly rubbing and rolling the clay with hands. (Pic. 6). The clay is now gathered into a compact cylindrical shape and is placed in the centre of the wheel. The centre of the wheel is properly cleaned and washed so as to avoid the mixing of any other foreign element with the clay. The water applied on the centre of the wheel also helps to place the clay roll in a desired position on the wheel. Care is taken to place as much of clay on the wheel as can be modelled within a reasonably short time, otherwise the clay gets dried up on the wheel itself.

Next, the craftsman proceeds with the process of giving circular revolutions to the wheel. This is done with the help of a long wooden stick called *chakreti*. The thinner end of this stick is fixed very securely in one of the two holes made on the surface of the wheel. The other end of *chakreti* is held by the craftsman with both his hands. In this position, the artisan gives the circular revolutions to the wheel with as much force as possible. Such movements are given repeatedly so that the revolutions of the wheel gather momentum and the wheel keeps revolving automatically for a time depending upon the force with which the movements have been given. (Pic. 7).

After having thus made the wheel to revolve, the artisan regulates the wheel with his palms in such a way that the revolutions of the wheel run at a level parallel to the ground. This is done with a view to ensure the geometrical proportions and proper shape of the article. A slight disparity in the level of the wheel is likely to result in a defective shape of the article.

The craftsman now begins with the actual modelling of the article. Modelling is done only with the skilful movements of thumbs and fingers. While modelling the article, the craftsman keeps applying water on the clay paste so as to keep it soft. Water for this purpose is kept stored in a vessel lying nearby called *chakoondi*. The clay assumes various shapes before it is finally modelled in an article of desired shape and form. (Pics. 8, 9 and 10). But as the process of thus modelling the article proceeds on, the revolutions of the wheel slow down and the artisan has to repeat the process of giving circular revolutions to the wheel once again. After the article has been modelled in the above manner, the next step is to separate it from the wheel. This is done with the help of long ordinary thread (Kheeman) which always remains tied to one of the fingers of the artisan. Though the process separating the article from the wheel is carried on in an almost mechanical order, it requires utmost care on the part of the artisan. The thread is placed horizontally and is punched in the base of the article, thus separating it from the wheel. The article is now carefully removed from the wheel with both the hands so as to maintain a balance of force while it is being placed on the ground. (Pic. 11).

Drying up: Next follows the stage of drying up the article. At this stage, care is taken to keep the article in a shadowy place. Further, the article needs to be handled carefully so that it does not lose its shape and form till the time it gets solid enough. The process might take about 8 to 12 hours. (Pic. 12). It is imperative that the article be placed on a shadowy place because of the following reasons:

(a) In case the article is exposed to sun its outer surface is likely to develop sudden cracks on account of excessive heat. (b) The entire surface of the article may not get dried up at the same time. The sun may fall on different sides of the article with varying intensity. The side facing the sun is bound to get dried up rather quickly. (c) The surface of the article may

get completely solid with the result that it may not be possible to undertake the further process of beating it into the shape of *matka.*

After having thus obtained the requisite degree of hardness on the surface of the article, it is placed in an *aathra,* a mould presenting one half (lower half) of matka. In the Aathra, the outer surface of matka is rubbed with the help of a wet piece of cloth. The craftsman holds the cloth with one hand and keeps rotating the matka with the other hand. The process is essential in order that the surface of the matka is rendered soft enough to expand with the beatings of the *Thapa* (Pic. 13).

The craftsman having thus softened the outer surface of the matka, proceeds with the process of giving slow but uniform beatings on its surface with the help of *thapa.* Each stroke is administered in a highly skilful manner because it is only at this stage that the article assumes the regular shape of a matka. Such beatings are given on all the sides, so as to bring about a uniformity in its shape. The craftsman holds the *thapa* in his right hand and keeps revolving the matka by putting his left hand in the mouth of the matka. In his left hand, the craftsman holds another tool called *Peendi,* for providing solid background to the strokes of thapa. The *peendi* placed at the back of the surface also helps to lend the requisite shape to the matka (Pic. 14).

Next, after the matka has been shaped in this form, it is again placed in Aathra with its bottom shape approximating to that of a *matka.* It is placed in order to give regular shape to the bottom of the matka. The lower part of the matka cannot obviously be beaten into shape with the help of the *thapa.* Matka is now allowed to remain in this position for a period of about 3 to 4 hours. During this period, the lower part of the Matka develops its regular shape. (Pic. 15).

The process of beating the matka is once again undertaken so as to give it its final shape. At this stage of beating, the idea behind is to produce a more clean and smooth surface. Before starting the beating, some ash is sprinkled both in the outer and the inner surface of the matka. (Pic. 16). The coating of the ash in this manner helps not only to produce a shine on the surface of the article, but also makes the surface strong enough to stand strokes of *thapa.* It is now given mild beatings with the help of *thapa.* (Pic. 17). Inner sides of the matka are also levelled by giving slow beating with *peendi.* (Pic. 18).

After the completion of this process, the matka assumes its regular and exact shape. If any hole or other crack is discovered on the surface of matka, it is filled in by inserting appropriate quantity of clay and beating it in with the *thapa* at that place only.

Next stage in the process of manufacture of *matka* is its drying up. Matka in the shape as obtained in the above manner is placed on the ground upside down. (Pic. 19). It is important to place it in this position so that the bottom of the matka does not loose its shape due to its own weight. At this stage also, the matka is placed in a shadowy place on account of the very reasons mentioned earlier. It is now allowed to remain in this position till the time it is completely dried up and has assumed solid surface.

Next step in the process of manufacture is to give a coating of red colour on the surface of the matka. But before this process is undertaken a liquid solution of red colour is prepared. The red colour in its raw form is found to be mixed with small pieces of stone. These pieces of stone are placed on a stoney surface and are pounded with the help of a thick wooden rod. While pounding, water is being gradually added so as to produce a thick paste of colour. More thorough pounding helps to take out a larger quantity of colour out of the stones. Adding the water in this manner not only helps in the process of pounding the stones, but also helps the stones to give out colour more rapidly. After the beating process is completed, a thick paste-like solution of colour (mixed with small pieces of stones) is obtained which is later put into a clean earthen vessel. Water is then added in the solution and is left alone for a period of about 24 hours. During this period the colour gets thoroughly mixed with water. After the expiry of this period, the stones settle down at

A matka with a complete design. (21)

(22) Gaps left are being filled in with appropriate pieces of dung cakes.

Matkas being covered with pieces of burnt clay (23)

Kiln after it has been completely covered with pieces of burnt clay. (24)

(25) Surface of the kiln is being covered with hay & straws.

Smouldering pieces of dung cakes being pushed down into the hole. (26)

Kiln being covered with ash. (27)

Layer of ash being evened by a stick. (28)

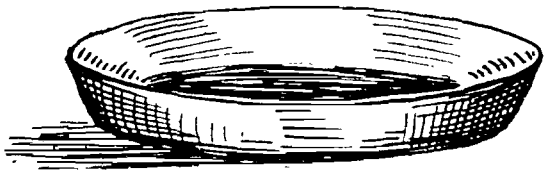
A complete kiln. (29)

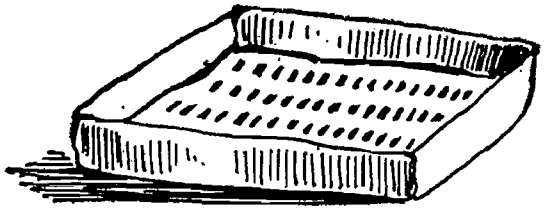
An stage in the process of firing. (30)

The kiln after it has cooled down. (31)

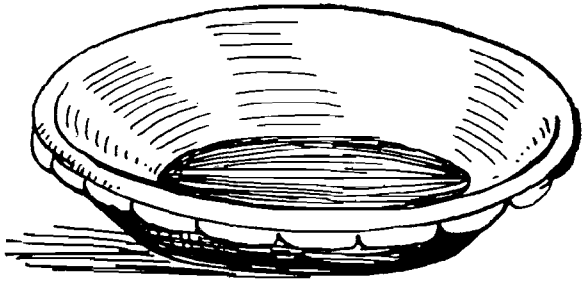
A Kumhar woman going to supply matkas to her Jajmans. (32)

DIFFERENT KINDS OF KUNDAS

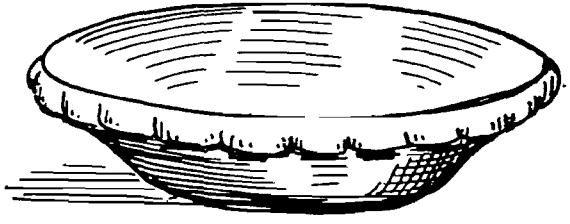


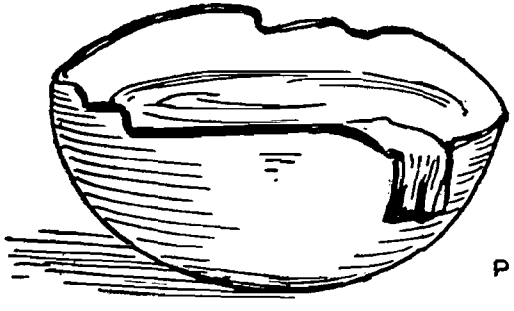


JHARA



PYALA





PYALA

the bottom of the vessel, and the liquid colour is carefully separated and stored in another clean vessel.

The colour is applied to the matka, with the help of a soft piece of cloth. The cloth is occasionally dipped into the liquid colour and is rubbed against the surface of the matka for about three times, so that the colour sticks to the surface of matka more securely (Pic. 20). After the colour has been coated on the surface of the *matka,* it is placed in the sun so that it gets thoroughly dried up.

Drawing of the Designs : Designs are often made on the neck and the surface immediately below the neck of the Matka. No designs are made on the lower part of the matka or for that matter on any other article. The process requires a great degree of precision in its handling and can be carried on only with a certain degree of skill and dexterity. The process of drawing the designs is invariably performed by the female members only. The designs are generally made in two colours *i.e.,* black and white. The solution of these two colours is obtained in the following manner.

First of all, *Kala kankar* or *Kaloni,* the raw material out of which black colour is obtained is beaten with the help of a thick wooden rod. While beating, water is being added little by little. The beating is continued till a thick pasty solution is obtained. This paste is then dissolved in water contained in a large earthen vessel. The solution is allowed to remain undisturbed for a period of about 24 hours. After the expiry of this period, the colour in its liquid form is separated, and other refuse and stoney elements settle down at the bottom of the vessel. The same is the process applied for obtaining white colour except that the *Kharia* (the raw material out of which white colour is obtained), is not beaten intensively as it does not contain any stoney element. Soon after reducing it into small pieces with the help of a wooden rod, it is dissolved in water so as to obtain a liquid solution of white colour in a rather thin form.

After having thus prepared the solution of two colours, the matka on which the design is to be drawn is placed on a piece of burnt clay or stone with a round top. It is placed in such a manner that the bottom of the matka touches the top of the piece of stone at one point only. This is the point on which the matka revolves as the design is being drawn on it. Next another matka is placed on the top of this matka. The design is drawn with the right hand with the help of *koonchi.* The artisan keeps rotating carefully the upper matka with the left hand so as to ensure every geometric proportion in the drawing of the design. The koonchi is occasionally dipped into liquid colour contained in a small earthen vessel (Pic. 21).

In the case of some designs where two parallel lines are required to be drawn, the Kumhar finds it convenient to use koonchies simultaneously. Two ends of both the koonchies are held firmly between the thumb and the fingers with a desirable difference kept between the other ends, so as to draw the two lines at a certain distance from each other. The process of manipulating the two *koonchies,* simultaneously is very much similar to the process of manipulating one *koonchi.*

The design on matka is drawn with the sole view to add to the outward appearance of the article and thus make it more attractive. All the designs are invariably drawn on the red background of the outer surface of the matka. The entire description starts from the mouth of the matka and ends in the middle of it. The only noteworthy feature of the description is the remarkable geometrical proportions maintained in the drawing of the lines. The woman drawing the design bears a particular description in her mind and proceeds to impart the same on the surface of the matka. Thus the design is subconsciously devised yet it is in every way geometric, superbly organized and beautifully related to the shape of the matka. The detailed description of one of the most common design is given below :

A thick line of the black colour is drawn in the middle of the matka. The line is about 1/4″ thick, and an absolute uniformity is maintained in the thickness of this line all around the matka. Another white line of the same thickness is drawn at a gap of about 1/4″ from the black line towards the mouth of the matka. This

line is again followed up by another black line which again leads up to another white line. These lines are drawn in an intermittent way for four times leaving between them a gap of red background of the matka. These lines end at the lower part of the neck of the matka. Another line in black colour is superimposed which is composed of small brackets facing the bottom of the matka and running all around in a continuous manner. The two corners of each bracket minutely touch the black line which falls immediately below it. Another line of the same shape but composed of slightly bigger brackets is superimposed at a distance of about 1" towards the mouth of matka. The colour used in the line is white. In this case instead of the brackets facing towards the bottom, their direction is towards the mouth of the matka. This line runs in a highly systematic and regular order. Another line is then drawn in the middle of the neck of the matka so as to connect all the corners of the brackets in the lower line. Thus gap left in the brackets and the line is filled in with thick black colour.

An interesting fact about the practice of drawing designs on the matkas may be mentioned here. No designs whatsoever used to be drawn on the matkas used by the Mohammadan community in the village. Even outside the village, no Mohammadan would buy a matka with a design drawn on it. Since the bulk of the produce of matkas used to be consumed by the Mohammadan families in the village, the process of drawing the designs on the matkas used to be rarely undertaken. This type of avoidance on the part of Mohammadans was because the designs on the matkas are drawn with the help of hair of the tail of a pig, which is considered to be a fone animal by the Mohammadans.

Firing of the kiln : Next stage in the process of manufacture of matkas is that of firing them in the kiln. Matkas alone cannot be fired in the kiln. Small articles like *Kulhars, chillims* etc., have to be fired simultaneously as they serve the purpose of filling up the gaps left between the matkas arranged for firing. The firing is a most crucial stage in the entire manufacturing process of matkas. The process is highly elaborate and insists upon a very high degree of care and supervision on the part of the artisan.

The kiln is, first of all, thoroughly cleaned and all the ash is taken out of it. However a very thin layer of ash is spread on the bottom and the sides of the kiln in order to provide a soft background. Next, dung-cakes are arranged both at the bed and the sides of the kiln. The dung-cakes are arranged one upon the other in a slanting manner in the form of a layer. Before the dung cakes are used, it is important to ensure that they are thoroughly dry as damp of wet cakes are not likely to catch fire.

In the kiln matkas are arranged systematically one upon the other in an inverted manner, with the bottom of the lower matka supporting the upper matka from its mouth. The vertical position of the matkas is not always strictly adhered to, and there is always possibility of their coming up in line with a slight inclination towards either of the sides. Care is taken to arrange the articles in such a manner that there is no risk of their breaking during the course of firing. It is seen that no gap is left between the matkas arranged. The gap is filled in by placing small articles of appropriate size like Pyala, Pali. Karvas, Sakoras etc.

After having thus arranged the articles, the gaps, if any, are carefully filled in by inserting small pieces of cowdung cakes of appropriate size (Pic. 22) and the entire layer of articles is covered with cowdung cakes and no article remains uncovered. Next, another layer of broken pieces of burnt clay is arranged over the cowdung cakes (Pics. 23 & 24). These pieces of burnt clay are arranged in a highly systematic and orderly manner so that except the top of the kiln no part remains either uncovered or overcovered by these pieces. The idea behind the use of these pieces is to prevent the temperature of kiln from leaking out. Thereafter the entire surface of the kiln is covered with hay and straw. (Pic. 25). Hay and straw is spread to a thickness of about 1 inch so as to prevent the heat from passing out.

Fire is initiated with the help of a few pieces of smouldering cowdung cakes. The artisan sits on the top of the kiln and with the help of iron tongs places these smouldering pieces on the hole left open for this purpose. With the help of long wooden stick the artisan pushes down these pieces of smouldering dung cakes into the bottom of the kiln, so that the fire is initiated at the bottom where dry dung cakes have already been spread (Pic. 26). Next, the entire surface of the kiln is covered with a thick layer of ash. Ash thus spread is thatched and secured from all the sides, so that it tends to stay on the surface (Pics. 27 and 28). This is done so that the hay and straw spread on the kiln stick on the surface when it gets thoroughly fired. In the absence of ash, there is a possibility of hay leaves turning into ash and thus spreading out and leaving holes on the surface of the kiln. All the holes are covered with the help of ash so as to prevent the air coming out or passing into the kiln, and thus keep the temperature of the heat at a stable level. In the case of a hole left on one side of the surface the air is bound to rush inside the kiln, and thus flare up the temperature at the other side. A part of the article might turn out to be black due to the effect of excessive smoke. Thus appropriate care is always taken to see that no hole is left present on the surface of the kiln. Ash is spread with the help of a long wooden stick.

The kiln is now ready and is left as it is for a period of at least 24 hours (Pics. 29 and 30). It takes about 6 hours before the fire gradually spreads around to the entire kiln. During this period, the artisan has to keep a regular watch on the kiln, so that the temperature is contained within the desired degree.

After the expiry of this period, the next process of unlaying the kiln is undertaken. But before this is done, the artisan makes sure that the temperature of the kiln has sufficiently cooled down. In case the wares are suddenly exposed to air there is every danger of their developing cracks on the surface and sometimes their shapes may also get deformed. (Pic. 31).

Process of unlaying the kiln is very simple but it has to be performed with great care. Ash, burnt clay, and straw are first of all removed one by one. Then the wares are taken out one by one rather gently and are transported to the place of storing (Pic. 32).

Chapter 6

JAJMANI SYSTEM OF EXCHANGE

CASTE division in the village is based by and large on the basis of occupations followed. In the village under study there are as many as twelve different castes which were at one time associated with their traditional occupation. It is within this scheme of division of occupation among the various castes that the Jajmani system (system of exchanging goods and services without money coming into the transaction) has evolved and developed.

Jajman and Jajmani Villages : Jajmani system is a system of economic interdependence of various families under which the families of one occupational caste attach themselves with the families of various other castes. Such an attachment implies the obligations on the part of both the parties to perform certain definite economic and ceremonial functions for each other. Low-group castes are found to be more often in Jajmani relationship with the high-caste families like Baniyas, Brahmins etc. A cultivating Brahmin family which comes from a high ranking caste has always about six to seven families as their Kameens (the families who perform various types of functional services for their Jajmans) Thus a cultivating Brahmin family has a Kumhar, Nai, Julaha, Bhangi and a Khati as its Kameens.

Today, in this village, the various castes do not always follow their traditional callings with the result that people coming from various castes are found to be following some of the occupations which are non-traditional to their caste. Even if a particular caste is following its traditional occupation, it does not do it to the exclusion of other castes. The Kumhars in the village have also taken to a number of occupation other than their traditional occupation. Remarkably enough, there has not been a single case in the village when a non-Kumhar has taken over to the craft of making pots. The reason for this is that the craft insists upon a high degree of hereditary skill. Otherwise, among occupations where no hereditary or special skill is required the movement of other people from other castes is very frequent.

Before partition, about 800 Jajman families were attached to different Kumhars in the village, of which nearly 550 families belonged to this village alone and the rest were living in the neighbouring villages like Asola, Sultanpur, Fatehpur Deri, Channanhola etc. At present, the total number of Jajman families attached to various Kumhar families in the village is approximately 144. The distribution of these Jajman families among the different practising Kumhar families

is highly uneven. Four out of the total of eight practising Kumhar families do not have Jajmani relationship with any family whatsoever. The families who procure their requirements of earthenwares from this village and are maintaining Jajmani ties with the Kumhars in the village come from the following neighbouring villages :

(i) *Fatehpur Beri* :—This village is situated at a distance of about 1½ mile from the village and has a population of about 2,000. One of the Kumhars of village Chhattarpur is attached to 4 cultivating Jajman families in the village Fatehpur Beri and caters to their entire need for earthenwares. There is only one working family of Kumhar in this village.

(ii) *Asola* :—Asola, situated at a distance of about 2 miles from village Chhattarpur has a maximum number of Jajman families (50) attached with the Kumhars in village Chhattarpur. The village has no working family of Kumhar. Majority of these 50 Jajman families come from the traditional caste of Gujars, now engaged as cultivators.

(iii) *Chanan Hola* :—This village is situated at a distance of about 1 mile from village Chhattarpur. The village has a total population of about 1500 and does not have a single practising Kumhar family. There are about 15 families in the village which are regularly meeting their requirements of earthenwares from the Kumhars of village Chhattarpur.

(iv) *Sultanpur* :—This village is situated at a distance of about 1 mile from village Chhattarpur and has a total poulation of 1,200. There are only 3 cultivating families in the village which are maintaining Jajmani relationship with the Kumhars of village Chhattarpur. The village itself has got no working family of Kumhar.

Kumhar and Cultivating Families :—A family engaged in agriculture is the most preferred family for a Kumhar as a Jajman. This is not only because such families in the village usually occupy a superior social position in the village, but also because the returns to the Kumhar for his services are both substantial and generous. Further the Kumhar cares more for an assured supply of foodgrain of his family since it is an important item in his family budget. The preference for exchange of wares with foodgrains is even more strong in view of the rising prices of the foodgrains in the market. Besides, by supplying the wares to the cultivating families, the Kumhar has other small benefits like getting a certain amount of fodder for his donkey or other animals, obtaining some hay or straw for his use in the craft etc.

The amount of grains and other benefits which the Kumhar usually gets in return is generally prescribed by custom and tradition. Similarly the Kumhar is also obliged by custom and tradition to supply his Jajman with a certain quantity of wares for his ordinary use. The Kumhar and a cultivating family may sometimes come to an agreement regarding the terms and conditions of exchange, but such cases are very rare.

Normally the requirements of earthenwares of a cultivating family consist of articles like Matkas, Pitchers, Taulas (meant for storing the grains at the time of grinding), Jhanwalas, Handis etc. Though the Kumhar seldom keeps a record of the wares supplied to the Jajman throughout the year, he does form an idea about them in case the supply exceeds the normal limit. Generally, the supply of wares to large families is found to be high but in that case the return to the Kumhar in the shape of grains etc., is also made liberal though it is often at the discretion of the Jajman.

A cultivating Jajman family supplies the Kumhar with 20 seers of grains at each harvesting season. Thus, in a year the Kumhar gets 40 seers of grains from his Jajman. This amount is considered to be minimum according to custom and tradition. If there is failure of crops, the Kumhar may get less quantity of grains, but he continues to supply the wares in the hope of being adequately compensated at the next harvest. In years of exceptionally good harvest the Kumhar may even get 50 seers of grains. Generally the Jajmans with age-old dealings with the Kumhar family do not want to keep him unhappy and discontended and are more liberal in supplying him foodgrains. A similar consideration works with the Kumhar as well in so far as he tries to cater to the requirements of his Jajman in the most efficient manner.

The amount of grains and other benefits received by the Kumhar in return for his services to his Jajman have a definite relationship with the number of working ploughs maintained by the cultivating Jajman family. In case a Jajman family is maintaining two ploughs (but they must be in operation simultaneously), the amount of grains received by Kumhar is proportionately doubled. A working plough is considered to be determining the size and the scale of agricultural operations. There is an implicit notion that the greater the scale of agricultural operation, the larger the requirements of earthenwares of the family engaged in cultivation. It is difficult to discuss the rationale and the logic involved in this supposed relationship. But it can be said that while the requirements of earthenwares of a particular cultivating family do increase to some extent with the increase in the size and the scale of agricultural activity, they do not increase proportionately.

Generally, the practice is that the female members from the Kumhar's family go to the Jajman's house for getting the orders for wares. In exceptional cases the female members from the Jajman's family may also casually come to the Kumhar's house and place orders. Normally, the Kumhar always maintains a certain stock of all the articles commonly used. But in case there is a shortage of some articles he immediately starts with the execution of the orders. The pots are delivered at the house of the Jajman by one of the female members of Kumhar's family. Usually, the female members carry the pots on their head but in case the quantity of wares is large they are put in baskets made of bamboo sticks. A big basket can accommodate 200 to 250 Kulhars.

In case of Jajman's family living in the village, the mode of transportation utilised is not very pertinent. But as has been said earlier, a few of the Kumhars have attached themselves with the Jajman families living in surrounding villages. On the average, the distance of these villages is about 2 miles from this village. Wares are loaded on a donkey or a mare and are taken to the place of the Jajman. Occasionally, somebody from the Jajman's family may also carry one or two articles in case he comes towards the village. If a Kumhar delivers the wares at the Jajman's house the latter is customarily obliged to give him $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers worth of fodder for his donkey. Sometime, the Kumhar may also take his one meal at the house of his Jajman when he comes to deliver the wares.

Thus, the analysis of the disposal arrangement of wares reveals that there is no intermediary between the manufacturer, and the consumer, except in very rare cases when dealers come from the urban side and place bulk orders with the Kumhars.

Besides catering to the normal requirements of his Jajman, the Kumhar also supplies him with wares like Kulhars, plates, Sakoras etc. during occasions like marriage etc. The following are the quantities of the various items normally supplied on the occasion of marriage of a girl in the Jajman's family :—

Sakoras	Approximately	5,000
Tastaries (Plates)	,,	5,000
Sakories	,,	5,000
Matkas		30 to 40
Taulas		15 to 20
Karvas		One

(It is a type of round shaped vessel usually required for giving bath to the bridegroom. Since this vessel is supplied for ceremonial uses the Kumhar gets a fixed amount of Rs. 1.25 for it).

The number of different articles supplied may be even larger in the case of some of the well-to-do Jajman families depending upon the number of guests invited on the occasion.

The Jajman has to place orders for his requirements at least a month before the marriage, in case the marriage falls during the period when the wares can be manufactured. In the case of marriage falling during rainy season he has to place his orders much earlier, so that the Kumhar can execute the order before the onset of rainy season. Kumhar receives the return for his services rendered during marriage both in kind and cash. Earlier the practice was that the Kumhar used to receive between Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 in cash on the occasions of the marriage of a girl in the Jajman's family. The prevailing practice is

to pay the Kumhar Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 on such occasions. Some of the well-to-do Jajman families may pay even more. Besides, on the marriage of a girl every member of the Kumhar's family is served with meals for all the days that the wedding party stays at the bride's place. Male members usually go to the Jajman's place for their meals whereas the meals for female members are delivered at the Kumhar's place by a Nai of the village. The marriage of a boy in the Jajman's house yields lesser returns to the Kumhar in exchange for his services. This is so because the Kumhar supplies far less wares on the marriage of the boy than on marriage of a girl. On the marriage of a boy the Kumhar gets a cash sum of Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 only and all the members of his family are served with only one time meal.

There are a number of ceremonial services performed by a Kumhar's family in the village in the case of any marriage in the village irrespective of the caste of the family and the Jajmani relations with the family. These services are rendered by the Kumhar in the following manner :

The mother of the boy or the girl to be married comes to the place of the Kumhar to offer ceremonial prayers on the day of the marriage. The prayers are offered to the wheel on which the Kumhar models the wares. First of all, the mother of the boy or girl washes the surface of the wheel with a wet piece of cloth. After having thus washed the surface of the wheel, she draws a Swastika (卐) mark locally called as *satia* on all the sides of the wheel with the help of a thread (*sootia*) dipped in turmeric colour solution. About five to seven marks are drawn round the wheel. The mark has a past tradition of being a symbol for the worship of Lord Ganesha and is therefore considered to be sacred and auspicious.

After having thus drawn the Swastika mark, the following eatables are placed on the wheel :

Mustard oil	(about 2 Chtks)
Flour	(Nearly one seer)
Gur (Jaggary)	(about 2 Chtks)
Barley or any other grain	(2 to 3 seers)

Besides a few items of puries (fried pan cakes) and sweet-meats **(ladoos)** are also placed on the wheel. A rupee or two in cash are also placed along with these offerings. After the prayers are over, the Kumhar retains, all these things with him for his use in the family. In the case of families coming from high castes, the Kumhar consumes all the articles thus offered to him. But in the case of certain other low castes like Bhangis, Chamars, Julahas and Dhobis, he does not retain all the items except the grains offered. The rest of the eatables are either thrown away or served to the donkeys or other animals.

This practice of offering ceremonial prayers at the wheel of the Kumhar is associated with a myth. Wheel is considered to be one of the important tools of Kumhars which has been inherited from the possessions of Lord Shiva. The stone wheel of the Kumhar symbolises the **chakkar** (destructive wheel) of Lord Shiva. Again a tool called **suthia** (thread) which is used by the Kumhar for separating the article from the wheel after it has been modelled and is used for drawing Swastika mark on the wheel during the course of the prayers, is supposed to signify the sacred thread (Janayu) which Lord Shiva wears round his neck and arm. For these reasons a belief prevails among the villages that by offering prayers to the tools of the Kumhar, they worship Lord Shiva.

On festivals like Deepawali, Dussehra etc. Kumhars have to supply their Jajmans with articles specifically required for the performance of certain ceremonies connected with the celebration of the particular festival. On Deepawali (festival of lights) Kumhar is required to supply his Jajman with as many **divas** (earthen lamps) as required by him for the purposes of illumination on this occasion. The Jajman is not bound to pay anything to the Kumhar, but it is customary for the Jajman to give about 3 to 5 seers of grains and fodder to the Kumhar on such occasion. On the day of Dussehra festival, Kumhar supply his Jajman with **Koolia** required in the course of performing a ceremony connected with celebration of the festival. The Jajman is customarily obliged to give him about 2 seers of grain. Each **koolia** (a vessel of the shape of a **sakora,** but much smaller in size) is filled up with parched

rice and some pieces of a semi-spherical cake prepared of sugar (batase) and presented to every family among its close neighbours. On the average, every family in the village is supplied with about 15 **koolias.**

Karva is another article which the Kumhar supplies to every Hindu family on the day of **Karva Chauth.** It is a day when all the married women in Hindu families observe a ceremonial fast for the whole of the day. Karva fillel with water is used by married women for offering worship to the moon before breaking the fast. The number of Karvas supplied to Hindu Jajman families depends upon the number of married women in that particular family. Though the Kumhar does not get any cash return for the articles supplied to his Jajman he is usually paid about 2 seers of grains.

Kumhar and Non-cultivating families :— There are no hard and fast rules regarding the terms and conditions of supply of wares to low castes in the village. In the case of Bhangis, though every family of Kumhar in the village is attached to some family of Bhangi or other as its Jajman, they are under no obligation to supply him with wares for his regular use. For services rendered to the Kumhar family a Bhangi is given one Chapati every day and on occasions like marriages and other ceremonies he gets the left-overs of meals plus 2 to 3 rupees. Bhangis are, therefore, in normal course required to pay for their requirements of earthenwares. Sometimes, the wares which have either a distorted shape or have not been properly fired are given to a Bhangi without any charges. Nais, Julahas and Chamars in the village have also to pay the Kumhar for their requirements of earthenwares. Payment has to be made either in cash or in terms of services rendered. No payment in terms of grains is accepted from these castes as they belong to low castes. It may, of course, happen that a Nai accepts pots against his professional services to a Kumhar. Similarly, a Chamar or a Julaha may also exchange his services in return for the wares received from the Kumhar.

In such cases, the terms and conditions of exchange are very simple. It should be clear that it is not at all obligatory on the part of the functionary to accept the wares from the Kumhar in return for the services rendered to him. The Bhangi or the Chamar or Nai or whosoever has rendered his functional services to the Kumhar retains an absolute choice in the matter of demanding the returns either in cash or in kind. Generally, the money is paid by the Kumhar at the prevailing rates for such services. In case the returns are made in terms of wares, the actual price of the wares given is equated with the money price of the services rendered to the Kumhar. The following example of a Chamar exchanging his services with that of Kumhar will better illustrate the terms and conditions.

A Chamar manufactures a pair of footwear for the Kumhar which is valued at Rs. 3.50. The Chamar can demand this amount either in cash or in kind or partly in cash and partly in kind. In case the entire payment is made in kind, the total price of the wares given is equal to the price of the footwear. The Kumhar may give the following articles in kind :

	Price per unit	Total price
2 Matkas	0·50 nP	1·00 nP
3 Chaptias	0·40 nP	1·20 nP
4 Jhanwalas	0·30 nP	1·20 nP
1 Karva	0·10 nP	0·10 nP

In case the payment is made partly in kind and partly in cash, the Chamar has to forego the amount equivalent to the price of the wares received and the rest of the price of footwear is paid in cash.

On the occasion of a marriage in a Kumhar's family, the Nai is asked to perform various services during the marriage. He goes to the houses of people in the village to extend them invitations on behalf of the Kumhar. He is also required to shave the head and beards of the guests who come to the Kumhar's place. He is paid by the Kumhar separately on such occasions. He is paid a cash sum of Rs. 10 to 15 plus his meals for all the days that marriage party stays at the Kumhar's place. In addition, he can also take any number of pots required by him for his domestic use. Similarly, a Brahmin has also to perform various functions during the marriage at the Kumhar's place. He performs the Phera ceremony during marriage, writes invitation

letters on behalf of the Kumhar and reads letters received by the Kumhar. For all these services rendered a Brahmin gets a cash sum of Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 plus the meals for the number of days that the marriage party stays at the Kumhar's place. On this occasion, he is also entitled to take a free delivery of any number of pots required by him. Except on such occasions, the Brahmin has to pay for the wares required by him for his day-to-day use

Retarding of Jajmani Relations :—As the Kumhar get grains from their Jajmans only after supplying them with the earthenwares, there is no possibility of a default arising in their case. In case a Kumhar somehow fails to supply the earthenwares to his Jajman, he forefeits every right to claim grains from him at the end of harvest. But cases of this type do happen when the Jajmans after having received the supply of earthenwares do not give grains to the Kumhar at the end of the harvest. In such cases, the remedy sought is often through persuasion failing which the matter is referred to the village panchayat which tries to arrive at a solution agreeable to both the parties. When even this remedy fails, the relations are ultimately severed off. Before partition, the breaking of the relations with the Jajman used to act a strong sanction with the Kumhar. This was due to the existence of a high degree of unity among the Kumhars. No Kumhar would come forward to supply wares to a Jajman whose relations were known to be cut off in this manner. Besides, the Kumhars then used to be in generally prosperous state. But such cases were very rare, as the cultivating Jajman families were economically in a flourishing state and would not, ordinarily, default the payment of grains. "Attached" to Jajman would mean that the Kumhar would get regular and assured supply of foodgrains. Further to be attached with a Jajman of a good social and economic standing in the village used to be considered a social virtue.

Conditions have now changed completely. The cases of default on the part of Jajmans occur more often than ever before, not only because the cultivating families are not as much well-to-do as they used to be, but also because in view of rising prices of grains, the temptation of incurring the default increases. Again, breaking relations with the Jajman is no longer as strong a sanction with the Kumhar as it used to be. If one particular family of Kumhar breaks relations with a Jajman, the other family is too ready to supply him with the wares. The position of the Kumhar is thus rendered weaker not only due to a lack of unity among them, but also because of increasing degree of competition among them. Further, the Kumhar today does not depend upon his Jajman as heavily as he used to do in earlier times and thus shows a tendency to deal with the Jajman at an equal social footing. As against the old system of exchanging the wares against grains or in terms of any other kind, the Kumhars these days give preference to the exchange of wares against cash.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSIONS

STRICTLY speaking the craft of pottery is essentially an ancient village craft mostly undertaken by the community of Kumhars. At one time the village pottery craft is known to have achieved a high level of development. In order to put the craft on a sound footing, it is imperative that the craft should serve to inspire and stimulate the interest in its development. In this connection it is important that the craft should attain at least the stage of development where the younger generation is inclined to stick to their hereditary occupation.

The above observation has a great practical importance for the craft because once the tendency on the part of the younger generation to disassociate themselves from the craft grows stronger, the craft in its present form may eventually wither away. Once the decay sets in, it will be difficult to revive the craft which has for hundreds of years been an integral part of the culture and tradition of rural India. It is heartening to note that at many places in India, where the craft still shows, definite signs of survival, the pottery craft exists and the village potter continues to produce old but beautifully designed articles with the use of the primitive wheel and kiln.

The continued practice of the craft is also possible if it can assure sufficient returns to the potter by way of profits. This is possible only by carefully ascertaining the magnitude of the problems of this craft, and a practical attempt is made to find a workable solution for such problems.

Today the practising potter is faced with several problems. The most important of these is the problem of procuring specific type of clay from convenient distances. The village potter still depends for transportation on old and primitive means of transportation like donkey or mare. A more practical approach will be to discover and exploit certain other places in the close vicinity to the potter for the procurement of good quality of clay. Such places should be earmarked for the purpose, and should not be brought under cultivation. In this connection, it may be noted that many places which have hitherto been the source for the procurement of good quality clay are now being brought under cultivation. This tendency may be arrested.

The Kumhars living in this as well as other surrounding villages have their Panchayat organisation. Such organisation can prove instrumental towards the formation of some or other form

of co-operative scheme and working for their mutual interests. It is gratifying to note that the Kumhars of this village and the neighbouring villages are combining their efforts and resources to face the difficulties involved in procuring the clay individually. Such efforts have met with quite a high degree of sources. The provision of common facility services such as supply of other raw material like Rogan etc., may help to reduce the cost of production of wares. Again, in view of the prevailing shortage of storing facilities the need to arrange for common storage facilities hardly needs to be emphasized. Such services can be conveniently and usefully rendered under some scheme of co-operative endeavour.

The highly improvised technique of production prevailing at present needs to be completely overhauled in gradual stages. Intensified efforts need to be made in order to improve upon the prevailing technique or production. An improved technique of production may also incidentally reduce the hazards involved in the craft. Co-operative approach should be made towards the problem of evolving a cheap, labour-saving and improved technique of production.

It is also important that the artisan maintains frequent contacts with the retail dealers in the urban market. Such contacts will prove useful in so far as the volume of production is intimately linked with the conditions of demand during a particular season. The market for wares in the village is in highly unorganised form, in so far as the different Kumhars have their separate Jajmani relationships with the different families in the village or outside the village. It is observed that in such agreements, the Kumhar is always in an inferior position and suffers from economic exploitation at the hands of the Jajman families who happen to wield a greater influence on the social and economic life of the village. About 20 years before, cases of economic exploitation of Kumhars were very common. The customs and traditions of the village would sometimes require a Kumhar to perform services without getting any return for them. This was a system known as **begar** under which the Kumhar used to supply earthenwares to the Tehsildar, Police Posts, Post office etc. free of charge. This form of economic exploitation no more prevails in the village at present. It is desirable that the Kumhars should join together, at least in their dealings with their Jajmans.

The demand for traditional pottery wares has shown a substantial decline during the past 20 years. Besides making efforts to reinvoke the demand for such articles, great possibilities exist for the introduction of new and non-traditional shape and form of articles of common use like Surahis, flower pots etc. For instance, in urban areas, vast potentialities of the use of pottery goods exist in different fields such as home, gardening, architecture etc. An organized attempt should be made in order to popularise the use of such products in these fields. Such an attempt would also include the necessity to revive and develop traditional and artistic pottery craft. Useful services can be rendered by the craft by producing new products appropriate to the need of the present modern age. Since the modern requirements are radically different from the past it is necessary to put sustained efforts to bring about speedy and revolutionary developments in the craft. It is important that the articles should embody in them a combination of beauty with utility in order to keep pace with the changing times. Besides, the pottery craft has to satisfy the present age aesthetic needs of art and architecture. In this connection the craftsmen need to be given the suitable design guidance so that he is in a position to express the modern requirements in his traditional and familiar medium of clay. A constant watch will have to be kept on the various stages of development of the craft so as to bring it in harmony with the present day requirements

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