

Shaping the Future of Pottery Industry in Bangladesh: Market Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

Pottery is the mainstay of the rural economy of the country along with a testimony of the creative and traditional wealth of Bangladesh. The study analyses the situation, market potential and main challenges of the sector, as well as the respondents' demographic characteristics, production capacity, product demand, use of technology, environmental awareness and institutional support. It seeks to pinpoint the barriers and opportunities to sustainable development. Qualitative approach was adopted in the research in a potter's village. 70 people (50 community members and 20 pottery workers) responded directly to the face-to-face interviews and observations conducted. The study revealed that there is a strong market potential, but there is a problem of limited technology use, lack of institutional support, financial needs and market constraints. A return of this loss can be encouraged and accelerated by guaranteed and facilitated access to raw materials, new product designs, fresh production processes, skill training and a well-thought out marketing campaign. It is recommended a comprehensive development plan is put in place, with creative design, capacity building, and a website to reach more people and boost production, which will help to protect and promote this important heritage restoration. Overall, the findings suggest that financial assistance, technology adoption, better market access, and institutional support are important for the sustainable development of the sector.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Local Economy, Pottery Industry, Rural Empowerment, Traditional Crafts.

1. Introduction

In Bangladesh, pottery work is one of the primary sources of economic activities, employment and cultural heritages in rural areas (Priyantha & Maheswaran, 2024). Pottery has close relationship with the rural life in Bangladesh. It has been recognised as one of the cultural and creative industries, which are the primary supporters of innovative and sustainable traditional crafts. The sector embodies not only the artistic abilities of the local communities and their values, work ethics, and historical philosophies, but it also reflects the local communities.

In the past, pottery making has been a traditional family-based enterprise in Bangladesh and has limited production capacity and low level of technology. The majorities of artisans work independently and rely on the funds and skills that have been bequeathed to them by their families for their work. The lack of education and skills, which is mostly due to poverty and illiteracy, has prevented these products from being standardised and of good quality (Kasemi, 2014).

There are several issues that affect the sector namely low interest of the youth and high production costs (particularly the costs of raw materials and energy) as well as the presence of



cheaper mass-produced alternatives like plastic products. The cultural elements of traditional crafts have been inevitably lost because of mechanisation. Apart from this, the market is responsible for this also. Traditional pottery market remains limited to the local and semi-urban market and the mediators are mainly in control of the distribution process (Lakshman, 1966). The revenue from crafts is often inappropriately retained by the distribution agents, making the craft less economically viable.

Even so, economic difficulties and increasing energy cost and the price of modern equipment, such as electric kilns and materials such as firewood, have also constrained the output of the small-scale potters (Siriwardena et al., 2024). In this context, the pottery industry is a very weak sector of Bangladesh's ICH as it is declining in the country.

The main purpose of this investigation is to find out the present condition of pottery industry in Bangladesh especially in Bijoypur pottery industry in the Cumilla district. This craft is explored through its present, past and future, particularly in terms of fieldwork, where key pottery villages are explored.

People living in rural areas used to be the main producers of pottery and had to work on it as well. During the 1980s, it became the most important economic activity of many communities, including the Kisi people. Female potters carried on with their craft and made money, which supported their families (Mteti, 2022). Female potters, notably, have been the agents carrying out transformation as they not only get financial independence and make considerable contributions to the household incomes but also dismantle the patriarchal norms and empower women in their communities.

Pottery is one of the oldest art forms and pottery art is a bearer of cultural and economic value in Bangladesh today. It is a centre of revival in Bijoypur, and it is the same centre which produces different items like pots, jugs, containers, toys and religious idols using the raw material of the red clay available in the locality and the creativity of the skilled artists. These are the products which reflect the fertile soil of Cumilla and the past life of people, their traditions and culture, which can be understood by archaeological research and the discovery of more than 1000 years old artefacts. Traditional pottery is not only directly has a connection with foreign exchange earnings by exporting, it is also the cultural ambassador of Bangladesh. It is crucial to recognise the circumstances that surround the Bijoypur pottery sector, both in terms of problems and their potentialities, in order to develop policies that support rural communities and at the same time will facilitate the preservation of cultural traditions.

Past studies on the subject have identified and confirmed the important role of non-farm activities in rural development. For instance, Asfaw et al. (2019) have suggested that livelihood diversification can be beneficial to the wealthier groups, but poor groups can derive the primary source of livelihood support from livelihood diversifications as well. Kayamba and Kwesiga (2016) for example have demonstrated that pottery production in Nigeria is motivated by the struggle to meet basic needs and with low income levels, the family manages to save for future needs. For Mbaiwa and Stronza (2010) livelihood is defined as the sum of all human and natural, physical, financial and social capital that is mobilized via community networks and institutions. On the other hand, the occupation of pottery becomes the main source of food security for people, as it is part of the culture's tradition; hence, economic resilience.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Traditional Pottery, Livelihood and Culture

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework is an account of how households rely on human, natural, physical, financial and social resources in order to sustain livelihoods (DFID, 1999). The following framework is applicable to pottery, as the skills, raw materials, workforce, machinery, capital and markets are essential to the pottery artisans. There are also problems pertaining to equipment, productivity, raw materials, finance and marketing for small-scale industries (Lakshman, 1966). Similar constraints have been found in other pottery industries, such as access to finance, technology, raw materials and pottery markets (Kasemi, 2014; Shrestha, 2018). The challenges encountered by pottery makers in Bangladesh are income, finance, competition, production, raw materials, demand and marketing (Akter, 2022; Sharmin & Ahmed, 2019). Pottery is also a symbol of cultural identity and traditional knowledge. UNESCO regards traditional craftsmanship as one of the intangible cultural heritages and sees the protection of knowledge and skills related to traditional craftsmanship as one of the major issues for this intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2003). Reis (2022) work also underscores the cultural, institutional and economic significance of traditional craftsmanship.

2.2. Technology and Product Innovation

Traditional pottery is limited by technology and the changing preferences of the consumers. Product innovation can enable artisans to diversify their products and cater to new markets (Priyantha & Maheswaran, 2024). Technological capacity, business conditions, resources and markets are also factors that affect sustainability (Siriwardena et al., 2024).

2.3. Women and Pottery Production:

Women have an important role in pottery production and rural livelihoods. In Uganda, traditional pottery making was largely considered a women's craft, but at the same time, there were rising trends of men engaging in commercial production and innovation of pottery (Kayamba & Kwesiga, 2016). In addition, the production of pottery has been a means of livelihood and empowerment for women in Tanzania (Mteti, 2022) and India (Ram & Rao, 2024). The findings from these studies suggest that women's access to finance, training, technology and markets is crucial to bolster their engagement.

2.4. Market Role in Pottery Sustainability

According to Bangladeshi studies, there are some important constraints that are identified as weak marketing, limited capital, changing demand and competition among substitute products (Akter, 2022; Sharmin & Ahmed, 2019). Other research also focuses on market, technology, production and policy-related issues (Kasemi, 2014; Shrestha, 2018). Digital marketing and product diversification can offer chances to tap into new markets, and financial, technical, and institutional assistance can bolster small-scale producers.

2.5. Environmental Sustainability and Knowledge Transmission

The production of pottery requires the use of natural resources and can lead to environmental pressures through the extraction of resources and production processes (Kayamba & Kwesiga, 2016). There is also a need for the transmission of skills and knowledge across generations to continue the tradition of pottery. The Chăm pottery tradition is an example of the linkage between pottery, women, cultural identity and knowledge transmission (UNESCO, 2022). Economics is thus a factor in keeping traditional pottery alive.

2.6. Research gaps

Previous studies have focused on pottery and livelihoods, culture, technology, innovation, participation of women, markets and environmental sustainability. But there is not much at the community level about the present situation of the pottery industry in Bijoypur, Cumilla. The previous studies on pottery in Bangladesh are largely confined to other pottery communities and lack focus on the combined study of production, raw materials, technology, production diversification, market demand, income, environmental concerns, women's involvement and institutional support.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

The socio-economic, production, marketing, technological and environmental status of pottery industry, Bijoypur village of Cumilla district in Bangladesh was measured by descriptive survey design. The study relied heavily on quantitative data obtained from pottery workers and members of the local community; and secondary sources and field observation to give some background information.

3.2. Study Area and Sampling

The study was carried out in Bijoypur of Cumilla district, where traditional pottery making is the major occupation in the past. It was chosen deliberately due to its pottery tradition and the ongoing local participation in pottery activities. In total, 70 people participated in the study, consisting of 50 local community members and 20 pottery workers directly engaged in pottery production and other related activities. Participants were purposively selected for their knowledge or involvement and/or connection with the industry.

3.3. Data Collection

Face-to-face interviews with a structured questionnaire were used to collect primary data, which were gathered from January to May 2025. The questionnaire included a number of questions related to demographic characteristics, work experience, type and quality of products, capacity of production, sales channels, market demand, prices, use of technology, awareness of environment, institutional support, needed support and main challenges. Field observations were carried out to analyse the production practices, traditional tools, gender involvement and working conditions. The secondary information was gathered from academic studies and published sources on traditional craft, rural livelihoods, cultural heritage and pottery.

3.4. Data Analysis

Data were tabulated and analysed in MS Excel. Responses were summarised in terms of frequencies and percentages, and presented using tables, figures and charts. Key conditions, challenges and opportunities in the study area were analysed.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

The results in this section are based on responses to the survey questions. The results are analysed in terms of demographic characteristics, production practices, product quality, market conditions, technology use, environmental awareness, institutional support and major challenges. Results from each study are reported in tabular and graphical form and compared with the literature and the aims of the study. Table 1 below shows the demographic profiles.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=70)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 years	19	27.14%
	26–35 years	39	55.71%
	36–50 years	12	17.14%
	Above 50 years	0	0%
Gender	Male	45	64.29%
	Female	25	35.71%
Education	Primary	37	52.86%
	Secondary	19	27.14%
	Higher Secondary	8	11.43%
	Graduate or above	6	8.57%
Work Experience	1–5 years	34	48.57%
	6–10 years	27	38.57%
	11–15 years	7	10%
	16 years or more	2	2.86%
	Total	70	100%

Source: Field survey, 2025

Table 1 shows that survey respondents' age, gender, educational qualifications, and professional experience were the subject of study. The research found that the potters of these locations are mainly middle aged men who have not received a high level of formal schooling, but have a wide range of work experience, but are not highly skilled in many of the skills. This structure is both a source of potential and a source of several serious problems in the survival and development of this traditional industry, particularly under strong competition with the modern alternatives. The survey gives an overall picture of the Potters community, marking a significant rupture in this craft industry. The demographic analysis and context of the pottery sector in Bangladesh is useful to guide the socio-economic reality and future of this sector.

The age distribution of the respondents reveals that 55.71% of the potters belong to the age group of 26-35 years which is considered as the semi experienced potters and they are the most active and dominant in the profession. The next generation of potters, aged between 18 to 25 years, makes up the next 27.14%, and they are going to take up the craft in the future but are still in the initial phase of skill development. The age group of potters in the range of 36 to 50 years is relatively experienced and skilled, with 17.14% of them falling within this age group. But the most important fact of this survey is that none of the potters were over 50 years was found. The study revealed that older pottery practitioners' participation in the surveyed sample was low, suggesting there is a need to explore the intergenerational knowledge transfer in the pottery sector further. The finding can be interpreted only in the context of the purposive sample and the number of respondents (70), and the findings cannot be extrapolated to the broader pottery community and considered a regional crisis. This is a very alarming indicator of the interruption of the passing on of knowledge and skills in pottery from one generation to the next. The lack of these skilled and experienced craftsmen here could be due to their

retirement from this profession, which may be because of the economic conditions or due to switching to other professions.

In the Kumar profession, the percentage of male and female population in Bijoypur is 64.29% and 35.71% respectively in terms of Gender. Pottery is a cultural activity that involves men and women, but the respective roles are different in different cultures. Men are considered as primary artisans in Bijoypur. Although the participation of women is also significant, it ranks second in terms of numbers. It is necessary to have a more detailed understanding of women's involvement in soil preparation, decoration or marketing and about the obstacles to women's engagement.

In terms of Educational Qualification, the educational qualification of the Potters is also of concern. 52.86% of Kumar did only primary school education. This is followed by 27.14% secondary, 11.43% higher secondary and only 8.57% graduate or above. An inadequate education level is a significant constraint on the uptake of new technologies, and the modernization of business practices and financial gains. The study rightly points out that special initiatives are needed to improve the skills and awareness of potters.

In the case of Work Experience, 48.57 % of the workers in Kumar's sample had 1-5 years of work experience, which reflects the high proportion of youth in the sample. 38.57 % of potters have 6-10 years experience. Only 2.86% potters are over 16 years old, and 10% of potters are 11-15 years of age. The abundance of people with less experience indicates the formation of interest in such a profession on the one hand, while the decrease in the number of long-term veterans is a big signal. This number represents that after a period of years, many have left the profession, for whatever reason, perhaps economic or to a higher-paying career.

Such a demographic view of the Potters of Bijoypur is not only a reflection of the reality of the village or profession, but also of the overall problems of traditional art in Bangladesh. This industry's market is "largely local and somewhat urban-oriented," and is very reliant on middlemen. Thus, potters are not paid a fair wage for their work, and their income is not sufficient to enable them to invest in their craft. The largest competitor is the inexpensive, long-lasting and readily available plastic materials, leaving less market for clay products produced by potters. Plus, there are some educational constraints as well as a shortage of qualified artisans, making the career prospects of this profession even shakier.

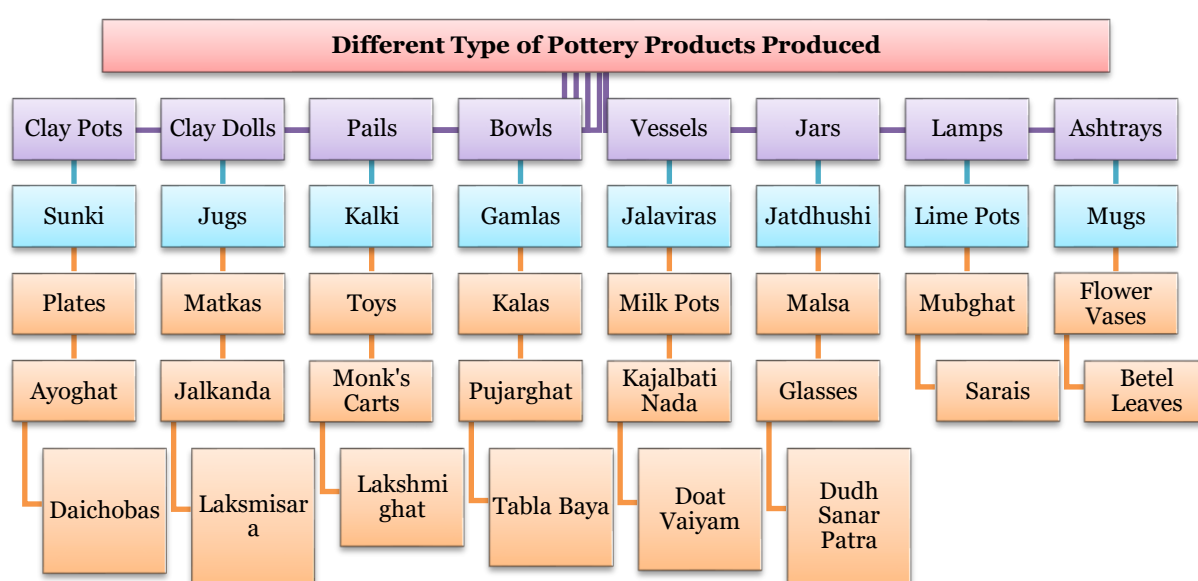


Figure 1. Different Type of Pottery Products Produced
Source: Field survey, 2025

The various categories of pottery products produced are shown in figure 1. Portraits created by the potters are aesthetic and have been able to give a tremendous response to modern home decoration. The potters of are spinning the potter's wheel and shaping art form out of clay. They make pottery from a lump of clay. They delicately impress designs on the pot with their fingers and make various dazzling crafts. These products consist of traditional household implements, decorative articles, cultural articles, religious articles, toys and other clay products. They are doing their utmost to preserve this ancient profession in their minds.



Figure 2. Aesthetic Items

Source: Field survey, 2025

Aesthetic items, as illustrated in Figure 2, show how potters have moved beyond traditional kitchenware. It was found that pottery industry workers began to expand and diversify their goods, i.e., ceramics products and products were developed in addition to typical ceramic industry kitchenware items, such as esthetic ceramics, etc. Pottery has recently gained popularity and is now an essential home item for use as utensils. Cookware items are based on the need for kitchenware products, and they are manufactured using ceramic products from rural regions. The number of pottery workers is now on the decline because cultural changes and our desire for glass and metal utensils have changed.



Figure 3. The clay is being shaping pots by the male potters

Source: Field survey, 2025

In the workshop scene captured in Figure 3, male potters can be seen shaping clay by hand and on the wheel. Male potters here are active in softening clay, the major livelihood of the hamlet, and in selling and manufacture of pottery. The Pal community is introducing their family into this field because they care about the preservation of their skill. Clay is used to make a variation of a variety. The images from the image search clearly show that this is a simple pottery wheel or various techniques for creating pottery, such as coil construction and pinching. In order to provide the pots which might be anything the proper shape and form, the clay is being processed.



Figure 4. Cultural Products

Source: Field survey, 2025

Beyond everyday utensils, potters also produce ceremonial and religious items (Figure 4). These researchers also identified that the potters are producing diversifying products and decorative objects and cultural products. The primary objectives in pottery making. As technology develops, processes of casting shape unique designs, while processes of casting shape uniform items. Various kinds of clay are used to make cultural pottery reflecting the cultural changes. A wide range of cultural products, as well as utilitarian ones, is made in the pottery business. The items are a part of cultural history and hold great significance in the arts, values and traditions of several countries. Clay pots, pitchers, plates and cooking vessels are not only practical everyday items, but have symbolic meaning as well. For instance, the earthen pots are still in use for Hindu marriage ceremonies, religious functions and festivals in Bangladesh because they are traditional. Pottery is a living tradition, a means of communication and a way to preserve a culture and convey an expression from past to present.



Figure 5. A female manager can be seen among the potters, while another woman shapes pots, melts clay, and organizes clay

Source: Field survey, 2025

Women's participation, from management to shaping and finishing, is documented in Figure 5. Researchers found that women have worked in the pottery business at all levels, from management to laborer, without any official schooling or training. Despite this, they engage in a variety of operations, including raw material acquisition, clay preparation, shaping, embellishing, and fire final product. In many traditional communities, the art of pottery-making is passed down from mother to daughter. It serves both utilitarian and artistic objectives. The women have not only been making the practical pots, plates and cooking vessels, but the beautiful ceremonial ones as well. Women have been involved in the development of new method, design and glazes, merging and preserving the cultural heritage with creative innovation. In the past few decades, increased numbers of women have been working as leaders of pottery cooperatives, small businesses, and art studios. They have kept their old techniques and at the same time modernized and made it accessible. They have played a vital role both economically and culturally in the survival of the Ceramic industry. They have shown the effect of gender, art and commerce on the development of pottery in history.

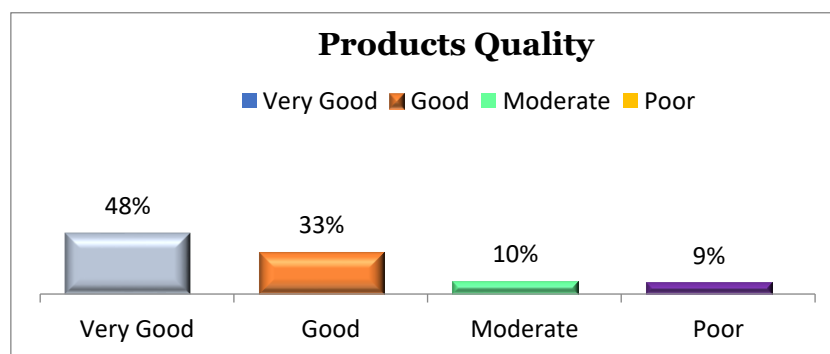


Figure 6. Quality of Pottery Products

Source: Field survey, 2025

Based on Figure 6, respondents were generally positive about their output. The majority of those surveyed graded the pottery maker's clay items as "very good" in the sense of quality. According to 48% of the survey respondents, the goods they sell are of extremely excellent quality and are frequently marketed. These clients are confident that the product's resilience, elegance, and design satisfy their needs. Following these, 33% of participants stated that the good's quality is "good" and also that it is marketable. These goods can satisfy clients and are "fairly good" as opposed to "very good". However, 10% of potters claim that their products are of "mediocre" quality. They claim that these products have adverse impacts, such as incomplete combustion, color breaking, or structural weakening.

It is rather difficult to do well in the marketplace because of this. Even worse, 9% claimed that their goods were "poor." They feel that their goods are not of the highest caliber in order to compete in the marketplace, which could lower the standard and acceptance of the sector. In general, Bijoypur's pottery sector is doing fairly well. It is encouraging that 81% of the products are rated as "very good" or "good" quality. If the 19% of medium-quality and low-quality items are not addressed, the sector may continue to incur losses due to low-quality products in the future. Therefore, maintaining product standards and ongoing product innovation are essential to the survival of ceramics.

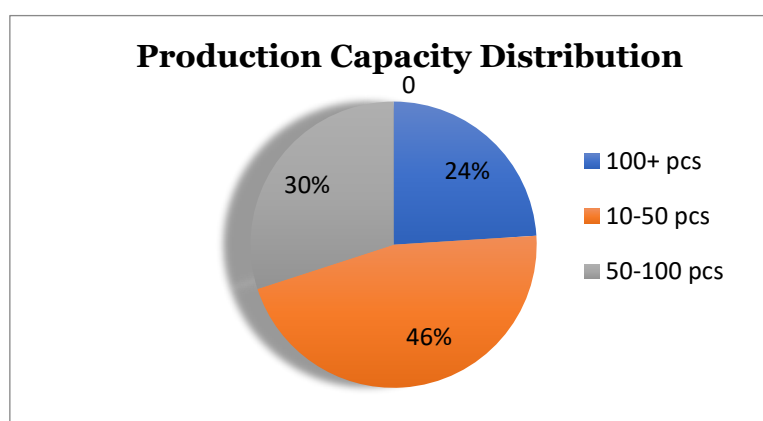


Figure 7. Daily Production Capacity
Source: Field survey, 2025

Figure 7 shows that daily output varies widely among potters. Regarding the day-to-day activities of the pottery workers, there are clear variations in the production of commodities. 46% produce between 10 and 50 items every day. It shows that this restriction has the greatest number of craftspeople, usually seen in inexperienced or intermediate potters with comparatively poor skill and quickness. 30% of potters produce 50 to one 100 items per day. The figure denotes moderate production capacity, and these artisans possess slightly greater technical and time administration proficiency. Their production rate suggests that they may have honed their talents and been doing this work on a regular basis for some time. 24% of the pottery workers rank among the most competent and seasoned artisans, creating more than 100 items every day. Their extensive experience, productivity, and consistency are the primary causes of their great production capacity. At their speed, they probably outperform others in terms of both speed and quality. Even though Bijoypur's daily pottery production varies, the majority of potters still produce at a low to medium level. Nonetheless, these variations imply that there is a significant disparity in output depending on knowledge and skills, which is crucial for the growth of the sector.

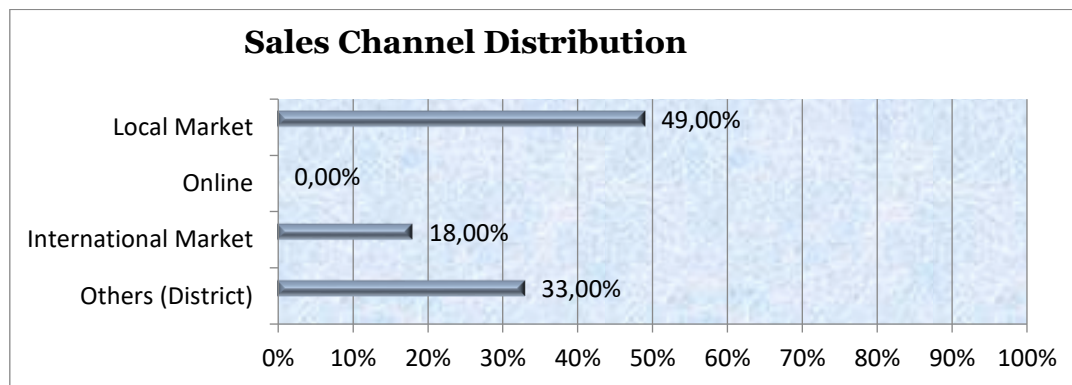


Figure 8. Sales Channel
Source: Field survey, 2025

According to the survey results in Figure 8, 49% of potters market their goods locally. To put it another way, they mainly sell their goods to shops, local markets, or well-known clients. These local sales have a low risk of failure and a tiny profit margin and potential market expansion, but they are comparatively challenging to achieve. Furthermore, 33% of these potters export or sell their goods to other regions of the nation, such as stores, fairs, or urban wholesale markets. Despite the fact that this market is somewhat extended, middlemen play a significant role, depriving the potters of the appropriate price. Additionally, 18% of potters sell their creations overseas. Although this is a minor figure, it is undeniable that Bijoypur pottery has enormous potential on a global scale. However, if they had been given assistance and access to the market, a lot more potters may have benefited from this chance.

The most significant is that no potter is using the Internet to sell his goods. These days, digital marketing and e-commerce are the main ways to sell and distribute goods internationally. This channel has enormous potential to be accessed, as seen by its total lack of use. By selling their goods online, potters may be able to reach customers directly, reduce their need on middlemen, and boost their earnings. Bijoypur's potters are confined to outdated and inadequate sales methods. Online or digital platforms can be used in creative ways to support the expansion of this traditional sector. This will entail training, technical assistance, and a well-thought-out marketing strategy.

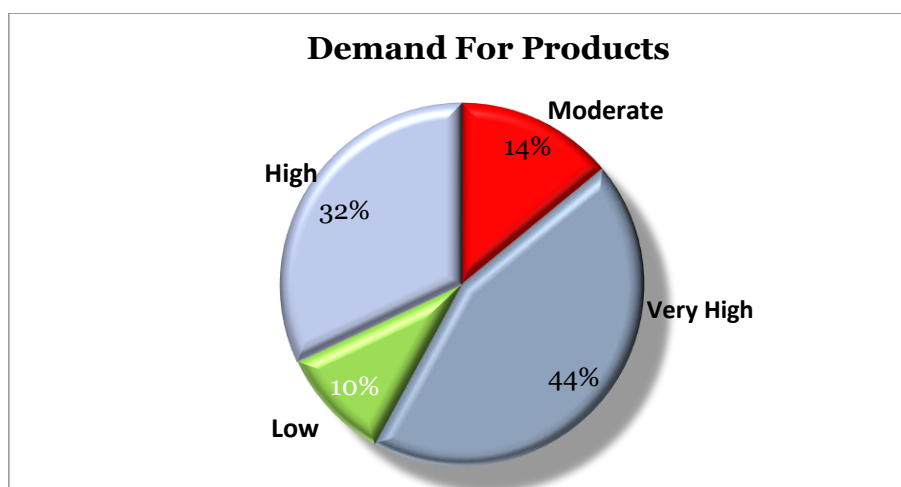


Figure 9. Demand for Products
Source: Field survey, 2025

The demand for pottery among potters is reflected in the Figure 9, which has demonstrated an upward trend. According to 44% of respondents, there is “very high” demand for their items. This evidence shows that many people still prefer, use, and trust the pottery made here in Bijoypur. This shows that the industry is still competitive and appealing. However, at the same time, 32% of participants gave a “high” response to the demand, indicating that their products are selling rather well and they receive regular orders. Although this is not “very high,” it does point to a solid and long-lasting market system.

However, just 14% of the potter respondents stated that the level of demand is “moderate,” meaning that demand fluctuates, leading to uncertainty. Ten percent of respondents stated that there is “low” demand for their items, which is concerning. This could be due to market competition, substitutes for contemporary goods, or inadequate advertising. However, altogether, there is still a strong market for Bijoypur’s ceramics. There is still demand for these goods, and most potters are able to sell on a regular basis. This demand could potentially be raised even more by adding marketing, internet advertising, and design modernization.

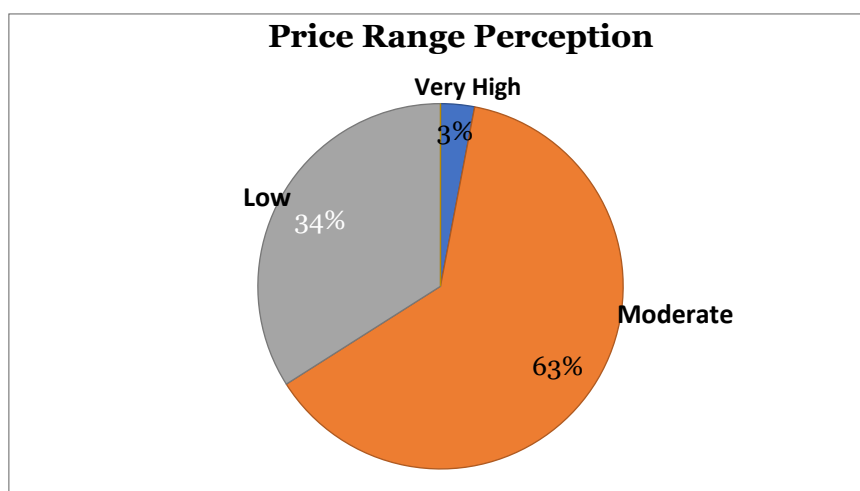


Figure 10. Product Value
Source: Field survey, 2025

The survey depicted in Figure 10 revealed that 63% of the respondents were saying that the pottery produced by potters of Bijoypur is moderate/high enough that the common man can obtain it. This price is considered to be an appropriate price, taking into account the quality of the product and market demand. Apart from this, 34% felt the “price” of the products is “relatively low”, that is, it is more interesting to the buyers.

However, this low price reduces the amount of profit that potters can earn and this can cause problems if the potter wishes to continue working. It can be concluded that the market is delighted with the product pricing because only 3% of respondents thought the costs were “very high.” The aforementioned findings show that Bijoypur pottery is still accessible to the general public, which expands the market for the pottery sector. On the contrary, the potters and the cost of the goods can be substantially stabilized to secure the potters’ financial stability.

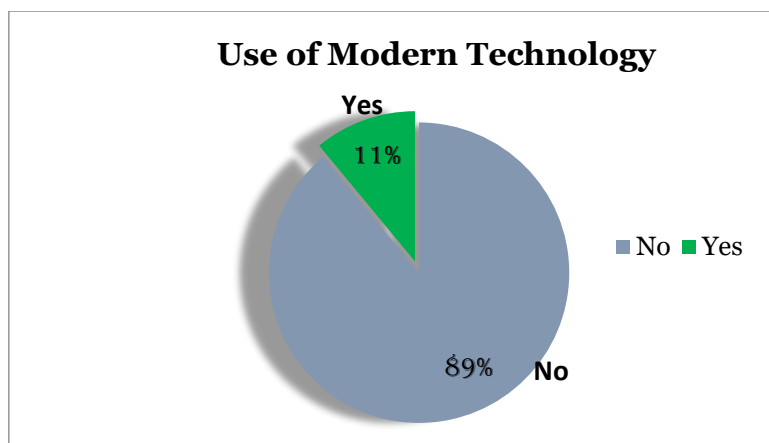


Figure 11. Use of modern technology
Source: Field survey, 2025

In Bijoypur, just 11% of potters employ modern technology; the remaining 89% still use antiquated, traditional methods as shown in Figure 11. This kind of assessment is essential since it shows the sector's boosting productivity and development potential in an indirect manner. Electric wheels, improved furnaces, or molds which offer benefits like increased production speed, regulated quality, and lower labor requirements are more likely to be used by anybody who employs technology in their organization. Pottery artisans who are reluctant to switch to the more modern manual method will, nevertheless, manufacture their vessels more laboriously, in lesser quantities, and with varying quality.

Despite yet, the sector continues to struggle with a lack of technology to advance it. The problem is that the industry has a labor-intensive and time-consuming work scheme that is inefficient and unable to meet market needs. Furthermore, without current technologies, it is difficult to uphold design, sustainability, and standards of excellence. Some people are very skilled at using technology, yet due to a lack of funding and the slow speed of skill development, they still lack the necessary equipment. The sector will fall behind in the competition if contemporary technological training, government support, and simple loans are not made available.

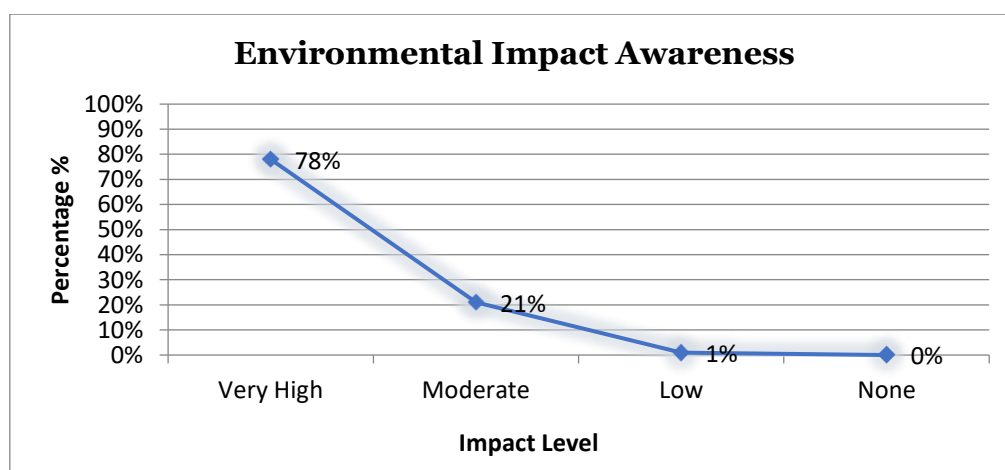


Figure 12. Environmental awareness
Source: Field survey, 2025

A very positive indication is that 78% of the potters working at Bijoypur are “highly aware” of the surroundings, according to the report summarised in Figure 12. These individuals exhibit awareness of and accountability for the environmentally friendly, sustainable creation of the necessary items in their profession. An additional 21% of potters were “moderately aware” about their environmental state and understood the value of nature, but they were not completely aware of the circumstances. By providing appropriate direction and training, the public’s level of knowledge can be elevated to the next level. Just 1% of those who responded are “low aware,” meaning they may not yet completely comprehend the need of safeguarding the environment or lack the ability to make changes because of ingrained habits. These findings show that most artists have learned to appreciate the environment, and among them, the eco-friendly aspect of the pottery industry is becoming more significant. The secret to this way of thinking is to boost their motivation and focus so they can carry on with their duties in a more sustainable and eco-friendly way.

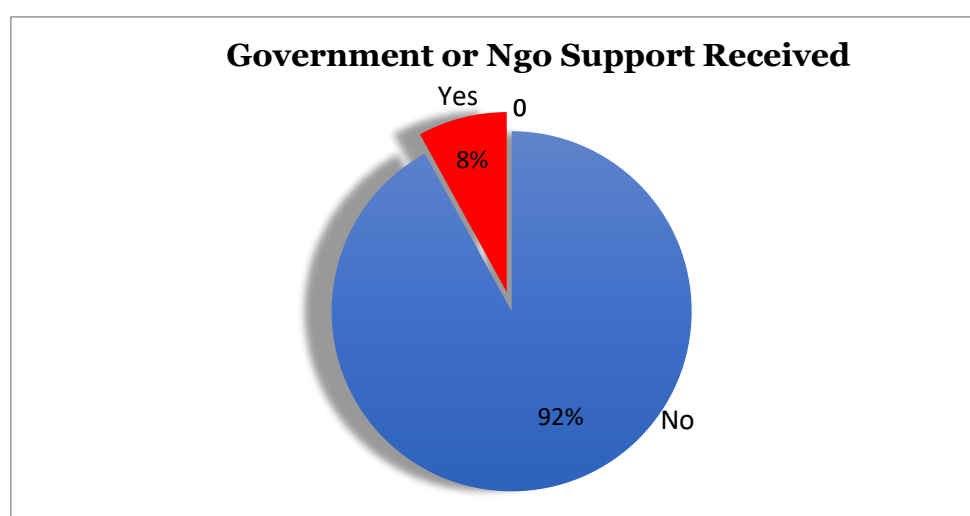


Figure 13. Assistance from government or NGOs

Source: Field survey, 2025

The study results (Figure 13) revealed that 92% of potters stated that they had never visited the government or non-governmental (NGO) sectors just to the maximum extent for getting any help. Many of them were not able to get help from the sector for a long time, and this has turned out to be a big problem for the development of the sector. The lack of supply to the sector is financial as well as to training, technology, marketing, or market expansion. Only 8 percent of the interviewed people indicated they were one of those who got a help of some kind. Therefore, the fact that the majority do not have their own support means that the measures of support might not have been fully or adequately. Such a lack of measures has had very serious effects on artist skills training, the integration of technologies and fixing prices right for the product. Without direct and planned support from government and NGOs, it is unlikely that this industry will develop in the right direction.

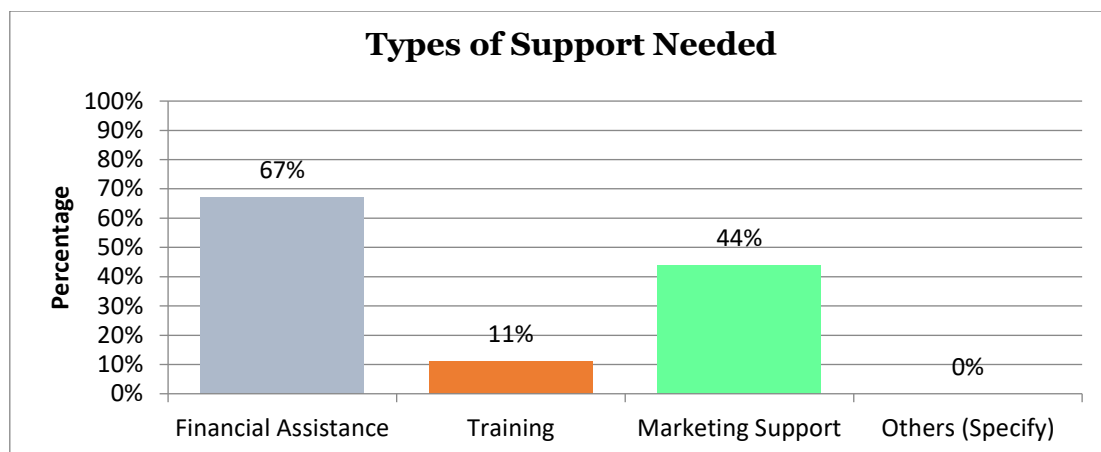


Figure 14. Type of assistance needed
Source: Field survey, 2025

Based on the survey shown in Figure 14, around 67% of the Bijoypur's potters believed they needed financial support. They believed that cash or basic loans became the most crucial for maintaining the profession and increasing productivity as well as purchasing new equipment. Additionally, 11% of the potter respondents stated that they would feel appreciative of training since it would allow them to hone their abilities, become proficient in the latest designs, and make use of contemporary technologies. 44% of the respondents, however, wish to have marketing support. By using the right publicity of their products and direct sell to the market they feel that they will be able to reach its customers as well as reach them without the help of the third party. This information reflects the need of the potters to assist them in the sale of their products and market management as well as in the production.

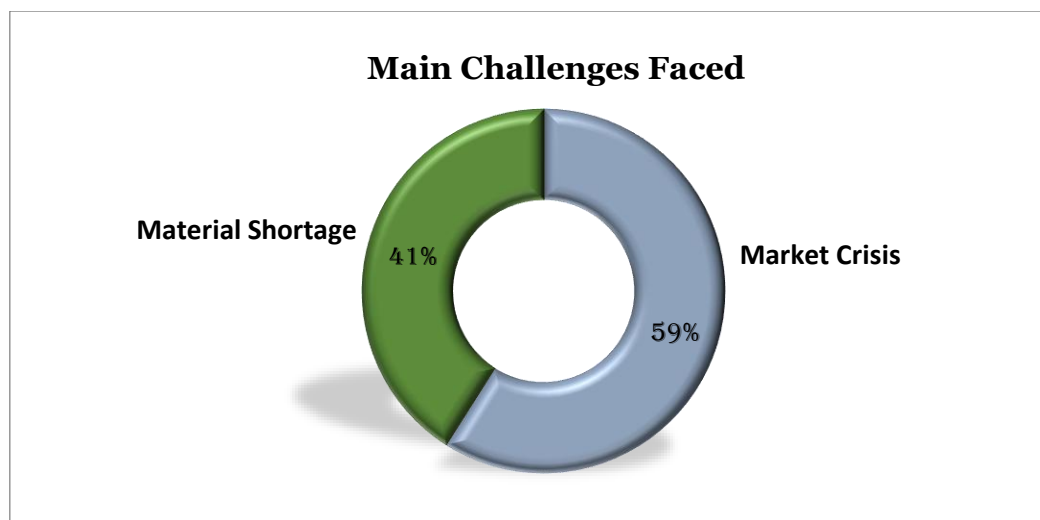


Figure 15. Main challenges faced
Source: Field survey, 2025

Figure 15 shows that the potters' work is indeed difficult. These difficulties are drastically transforming their profession's working environment, as well as their means of livelihood. There are a couple of key issues that potters frequently discuss. The primary problem mentioned by 41% of the potters was the shortage of raw materials. They typically have to stop manufacturing because clay, paint, and fuel (wood, gas, etc.) such type of raw materials quality and availability are not guaranteed. Suitable clay might not be accessible on occasion, but

sometimes the expenses become so expensive that it is difficult for them to afford it. This will also impact the production both in terms of quantity and quality. 59% of the potters saw this as the key challenge due to a drop in market demand and price of their products. Their view is that the new market for plastics or modern products is stealing the business of clay products, because the new products exist in the market and their prices are low.

As a result either they are not paid adequately for their produce or they end up with a lot of stock. Figure 11 highlights two major problems that are facing the industry, that is scarcity of raw materials and low market demand and prices. Obviously, working together with the NGOs, government, and also with business partners through planned and joint strategies is essential to tackle these challenges or otherwise the traditional industry will slowly get disappear. co-ordinated and concerted action is needed between the government, NGOs and business partners to address these challenges or else this traditional industry will gradually disappear.

4.2. Discussion

The results of the study give a clear idea of the current situation of the respondents and their business. The sector is well represented by the working age population with most of the respondents being young adults aged 26-35 yrs. But the small proportion of people who only have a primary level of education might restrict their capacity to utilize modern business methods and technologies. The study also reveals that the respondents have 1-5 years of experience and create 10-50 items per day. While 44% said very high demand, the small business end of the market is still occurring. This indicates that there is potential for additional production, given the support and resources available. The low and moderate price levels reported by most respondents may also be a reflection of low profit opportunities.

Islam et al. (2020) pointed out that the significant obstacles to the development of pottery sector include technological constraints, lack of financial support, etc. Likewise, the current study revealed very low utilization of modern technology (89%) and limited external support (92% of the respondents reported that they had received no support from NGOs or the government). The similarities indicate that technology and institutional problems are still significant factors for pottery businessmen in Bangladesh. The results are also in agreement with Rana et al. (2024) who pointed out financial constraints, lack of market access, insufficient training, and lack of institutional support as major challenges of the pottery sector in Bangladesh.

Financial assistance was declared as the primary need by 67% and market related issues were reported by 59% of the respondents in the present study. But the present study also revealed the relatively high demand and high environmental awareness (44% indicated very high demand and 78% indicated high environmental awareness) in the sector as a potential for development. The study suggests that demand and development potential are good in the sector but the development is constrained due to inadequate financial support, low technology utilisation, and inadequate institutional support and market challenges. Solving these problems might be necessary for better production, income and sustainability of the businesses in the long run.

5. Conclusion

A rich cultural art in Bangladesh is Pottery, in rural life where it has been closely linked. It represents the economy, history and culture of the country. The study aimed to discover the present situation of the pottery industry, its major problems and future prospects in the Bijoypur area of Bangladesh. The results show that pottery still now acting a vital role in the livelihoods and cultural heritage of the local community, offering economic opportunities for people, including women from rural areas and people with low formal education. But the industry has to overcome many difficulties such as limited capital availability, obsolete technology, poor marketing infrastructure, product specialisation, lack of training and rising competition from aluminium, plastic and imported products.

The study suggests that there is a need to enhance the availability of low-cost loans and grants, technical training, modern production technologies, modern product designs and digital marketing. The training programs should enable artisans to create new products, but with respect to traditional craftsmanship. Market access and participation in trade fairs and exhibitions need to be strengthened through cooperation between government, financial institutions, NGOs and the private sector. Women artisans should also be accorded special attention with better access to finance, training, technology and business development. Thus, the results may not fully reflect the pottery community in the country of Bangladesh as a whole. The sample size is relatively small, and the geographic extent is limited, which limits generalisations to a larger extent. Furthermore, the small number of older artisans in the study makes it difficult to conclude about the regional trends of intergenerational transmission of pottery skills.

Pottery communities need to be studied in other areas in the country in larger and more representative samples in the future. Research needs include more in-depth analysis of the economic empowerment of women, the intergenerational transfer of skills, the adoption of technology, access to markets, and the impact of financial, training, and digital-marketing interventions.

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5.2. Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors report no financial or personal relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest in relation to this publication.

5.3. Author Contributions

R.C.D.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Formal Analysis, Data Curation, Visualization, Writing – Original Draft, Project Administration.

M.R.H.R.: Investigation, Data Curation, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing.

M.A.C.: Investigation, Resources, Visualization, Writing – Review & Editing.

5.4. Funding Statement

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5.5. Informed Consent

All respondents were briefed on the aims of the study and participated voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained verbally prior to each interview, and respondents were assured that their identities would remain confidential and that the information provided would be used exclusively for academic purposes.

5.6. Ethical Approval

The study was carried out in line with generally accepted ethical standards for research involving human participants, namely voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, and responsible handling of data. Because the study relied on non-invasive interviews and field observation within a community setting, no formal review by a medical or biomedical ethics committee was required; ethical clearance was granted through the authors' institutional research approval process.

5.7. Data Availability

The dataset generated and analysed during this study, including the tabulated survey responses underlying the figures and tables, can be obtained from the corresponding author [R.C.D.] on reasonable request.

5.8. Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors utilized Grammarly for language editing and grammatical improvement. Every output produced with the assistance of this tool was carefully reviewed and revised by the authors to verify factual accuracy, ensure clarity of expression, and confirm compliance with academic writing standards. The authors accept full responsibility for the integrity and content of this manuscript.

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