

Design Resource

Pottery Town - Bengaluru

Making of the Clay Items

by

Prof. Bibhudutta Baral, Divyadarshan C. S. and

Lija M. G.

NID Campus, Bengaluru

Source:

<http://www.dsource.in/resource/pottery-town-bengaluru>



1. Introduction
2. Tools and Raw Materials
3. Making Process
4. Products
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Introduction

Twenty years back walking through the streets in Bengaluru was refreshing especially in the early mornings. It was surrounded with plants around with flower pots and Love birds' nests in front of each house with earthen pots. Most of the places were surrounded by plants and around regions of the cantonment and other places of the Bengaluru city therefore it is generally referred to as the Garden city of India. It was very pleasant to see the dew of water on the plants in the early morning which would keep a person fresh throughout the day. Along with the birds singing and the pleasant weather, most of the houses had the love birds hanging in front of them. It was beautiful to walk through most of the houses with chirping, singing of the birds along with its blessed climate that anybody who lived in Bengaluru long years ago will treasure these experiences in within themselves. One of the common things that your eyes will trace through is the earthen pots, earthen nests in and around each house that were generally bought from the potter's town.

There were many places the potter's shifted as per the requirement of the work to be done, but there is colonies of potter's were the skill of pottery is handed down to their younger generations and relatives. Pottery Town is one of the area located in Bengaluru which is about three km away from Bangalore Cantonment and situated to the Bangalore East station near the Frazer town, and Cox Town areas of Bengaluru. Potter's of the Pottery town generally hails from the Kumbara caste known as the people who work with clay or pots. The craftsmen usually found are from the Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh regions of India who settled here around 200- 300 years before. The third or fourth generation lives here and has carried their tradition of their forefathers till this day.

It is believed that these people used to shift from place to place in search of clay near to the lake side areas and tent along its sides in making of the vessels and pots. Earlier the earthen pots or vessels where the only source on which people used to depend on for their daily cooking and basic needs. As per the craftsmen, their ancestor's settled here in search of clay and the British settlements in the surroundings located them gave a portion of the land to them which was usually allotted for their chariots. Later they settled here making pots/ vessels collecting from the pottery town, previously that was a lake long years ago. This lake was refilled to closed down the several small lakes around this region, Pottery town is surrounded by most of the previous British colonies like Frazer town, William's town, Cox town, Richards town, Thomas town, Cooke Town, Cleveland town, Benson town etc.

There are about few families which are settled down in this area making pottery as their hereditary tradition and transferring the same to their younger generation. At present they face the difficulty in getting the clay of the right condition in making of the pots/ vessels. Items are made as per the seasons like Diya's / lamps in the Diwali seasons, Ganesh is particularly made by the experienced hand skilled people of this place during the Ganesh Chaturthi season. Other time the craftsmen is found making the ice cream mud cups, pots, birds nest, piggy bank etc.

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As per the artisan the good quality clay are scarce in finding and as the water bodies are more polluted and the clay materials collected from these surroundings are not suitable for the making of good clay materials. Therefore it is transported from Tamil Nadu on a load bases for a year from where the craftsmen collect it from them. During the rainy season the work gets stopped as the required amount of sunlight is not obtained for perfectly drying the clay materials.



Pottery making is a most common livelihood of Potter's town residents.

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An artisan carrying his commissioned work for drying.



An organization for potters, in pottery town, Bengaluru.

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Clay Pot made for birds nesting.



Varieties of clay products including Diya, pots etc.

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Tools and Raw Materials

Some of the tools and raw materials used at the Pottery town are mentioned below:

- **Electric Potter's Wheel:** It is where clay thrown is shaped as per requirement.
- **Clay:** Clay free from chemicals is generally collected from the neighboring lake side areas.
- **Bamboo Stick with Pointed Needle:** It is used for finishing, molding with lines of any design.
- **Stone (Granite stone):** It is used for smoothening the edges, bottoms of the lamps.
- **Water:** It is used for moisturizing the dried clay material.
- **Mesh:** It is to refine/ sieve the clay from brick and solid particles.
- **Sand of Red, Black and Grey:** It is used to strengthen the clay material as per the item to be made.
- **Bhatti (kiln):** Its used for heating the prepared clay items.
- **Fire Wood:** Its used to impart heat in the Bhatti (kiln) during heating process.
- **Plank of Wood:** To arrange the prepared clay items as per it is made.
- **Enamel Colors and Water Colors:** To impart color on the surface of the clay items.
- **Paint Brush:** To apply the required colors on the surface of clay items.
- **Plastic Bags:** To store the clay collected from various locations.
- **Gunny Bags:** Its used for kneading the clay well into a good mixture.
- **Putti Blade:** To remove the extra clay on the potter's wheel.

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Clay is the main material used to make the objects.

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Electric Potter's Wheel used to shape the pots and lamps.



Wooden tool with a sharp iron needle used in cutting and shaping the clay while rotating.



Dried clay products are baked in the kiln to improve strength of the metal.

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Making Process

Varieties of clay items made at this place fascinates as how it is made. The craftsmen goes in search of the water bodies and collects the clay in the surroundings which are more suitable for the making of the clay items as per the form it is to be made. Each craftsman stores the required amount with them in plastic bags (covers) to maintain the moisture conditions of the soil. As per the requirement for the making of the clay material, the quantities are separated and knead with the help of gunny bag for uniform kneading process.

Just before the kneading the sand is sieved to the fine form to remove the stones, bricks etc. As per the size of the material to be made the measures are taken. Small pots of two measures, one clay other sand. To make the clay material of small size generally the measure of red, black and two measure of clay are taken for the kneading process. For larger clay materials generally red, black, grey, raw rice (stalk) with sand for kneading process. If the soil of clay dries up it is immersed in little amount of water to gain back its properties. Previously the potter's wheel was used for making of the clay items, nowadays the mechanical potter's wheel is preferred for making of the clay materials.

Clay is arranged randomly on to the electric wheel, then the potter with the fingers scraps out the extra clay materials to the top surface by slowly rotating with the hand on one side and other hand rotating from the top side. Place the clay dough over it on the top surface, this is done repeatedly by hand with minimum of two times. Then with the putti blade the unwanted parts are removed and placed on the top surface and is shaped by continuously rotating. It is the experience of the craftsmen that his/ her skill of cutting down to the required positions of shapes with the help of bamboo stick, and separated from the tough of clay with the help of the needle attached to the bamboo stick generally made by them.

The items are arranged on the plank of wood from one side to in order and dried within the room. The outer attachments are to be made to the lamps, it is done by fixing the clay immersed in water into the required shapes. In uneven bottom layers, they are smoothened by pasting a light mixture of the clay to it and rubbing on to the smooth granite stone surface. After the prepared clay materials are completely dried reached to the quantity of customer's request it is dried under direct sunlight and taken for the Bhatti (kiln) process.

After the clay materials are neatly arranged in the Kiln, firewood is placed to provide heat to the Bhatti for about 7-8 hours at 800-12000 C. After the heating process the clay items are left over night for cooling completely. As per the customer's requirement the clay items goes for sale or goes for colouring. Colouring is generally done with enamel, fabric or water colors.

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Clay is mixed thoroughly to ensure uniform consistency.



A big lump of clay is then centered on the Electric Potter's Wheel.



While turning process clay is lifted up to make a pointed shape from which the craftsmen can start shaping.



Initial process of shaping.

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A flat base is made first, to further give the required shape.



The flat base is shaped into a hollow base.



Walls are pulled upwards from the base for depth.



Upper side of the object is shaped and rounded.

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A sharp wooden tool is used to create the accurate shape.



After shaping the upper body artisan then shapes the lower end.



Using the sharp side of the tool the prepared piece is separated from the clay lump.



The complete shape of the oil lamp is obtained.

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After getting the shape of the oil lamp (Diya), it is removed from the rotating wheel.



The products are kept under direct sunlight to dry.



Dried products are placed carefully inside the kiln (furnace).



The products are covered with terracotta pieces and are fired up to eight hours in the Kiln.

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Products

Below mentioned are few of the products that are available at Pottery town.

1. Lamps (Diya) from small simple lamps to big plain, intricate designs, and also of different sizes are available.
2. Bird's nest.
3. Flower pots.
4. Mud vessels
5. Jugs.
6. Showcase items.
7. Piggy bank.
8. Tandoor furnace.
9. Kulfi pots.
10. Ice cream pots

The smallest Diya (lamp) with simple design costs around two rupees per item, with the bigger sized lamps of special designs varies from 150- 200 Rs. per item.



Tandoor Vessel, a popular product of pottery town mostly purchased by Hotels and restaurants.

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Water Pot, one of the most common product of a Potter's Town.



Small vessels and toys made of clay.

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Plantation Pots, are usually made in large numbers.



Decorative Oil Lamps for occasions, a new approach towards a new demand.

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You can get in touch with

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