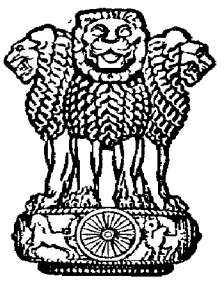
CENSUS OF INDIA 1981



PART-XD
SERIES II

MADHYA PRADESH
HANDICRAFT SURVEY REPORT

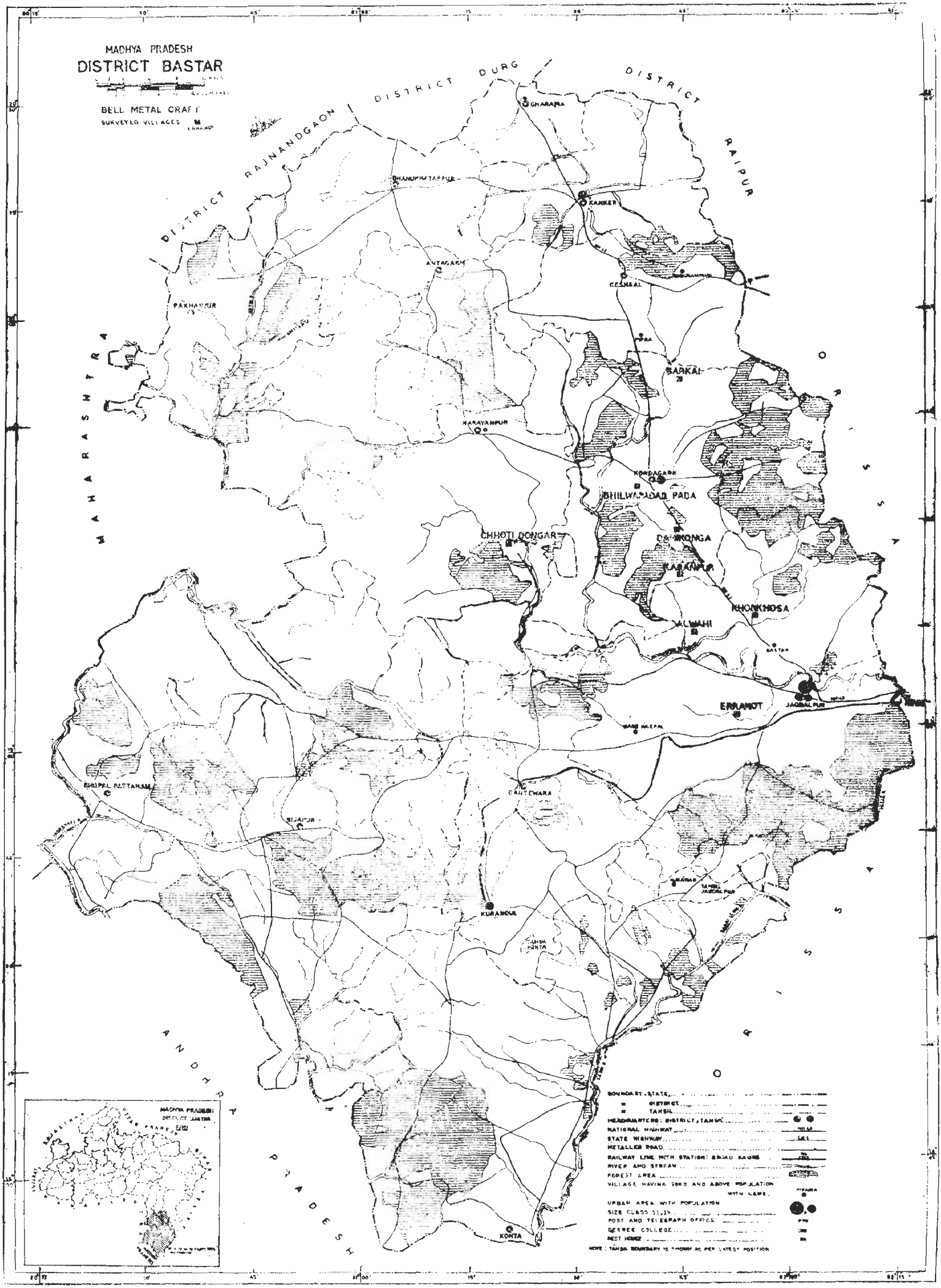
BELL-METAL CRAFT

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MADHYA PRADESH
DISTRICT BASTAR
BELL METAL CRAFT
SURVEYED VILLAGES
DISTRICT RAJNANDGAON
DISTRICT DURG
DISTRICT RAIPUR
MAHARASHTRA
ORISSA
ANDHRA PRADESH
GHARAPA
KANKER
DHANORA TAPPUR
ANTAGARH
PAKHANJUR
KESKAL
BARKAI
NARAYANPUR
KONDAGAON
BHILWADADA PADA
CHHOTI DONGAR
DARBHONGA
KHOKHOSA
ALWAHI
JAGDALPUR
ERRAMOT
BHOPAL PATTANAM
BIJAPUR
DANTEWARA
KUAKONDA
KONTA
BOUNDARY - STATE
DISTRICT
TAHSIL
HEADQUARTERS: DISTRICT, TAHSIL
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
METALLED ROAD
RAILWAY LINE WITH STATION: BRAOD GAUGE
RIVER AND STREAM
FOREST AREA
VILLAGE HAVING 5000 AND ABOVE POPULATION WITH NAME
URBAN AREA WITH POPULATION
SIZE CLASS II, IV
POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE
DEGREE COLLEGE
REST HOUSE
NOTE : TAHSIL BOUNDARY IS SHOWN AS PER LATEST POSITION

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FOREWORD

The Indian handicrafts are known the world over for their rich variety, grace, elegance and skilled craftmanship. Nevertheless, a number of handicrafts because of their stiff competition with factory made products, non-availability of raw materials, exhorbitant increase in the manufacturing cost, lack of proper marketing facilities for finished products or due to a variety of other reasons have either become extinct or have reached the moribund stage. After independence, however, a number of schemes were introduced by different government agencies for their growth and development but still this sudden impetus have helped only a few crafts to flourish and thereby become spinners of foreign exchange for the country.

Despite the unique position being enjoyed by the handicrafts especially in the realm of national economy, the general awareness among the people in the country about our crafts and craftsmen had been deplorably poor. Nothing was practically known about the commodities produced, techniques employed for the manufacture of different objects, raw materials used, their availability, methods adopted for the sale of finished products etc. An attempt was therefore made in connection with the 1961 Census to study about 150 crafts from different parts of the country with a view to provide basic information on those crafts which were selected for the study.

At the 1971 Census, the study on handicrafts was not taken up but this was again revived in connection with the 1981 Census. There has been, however, some difference between the studies taken up in connection with the Censuses of 1961 and 1981. While the 1961 studies have covered both rural and urban crafts, the 1981 studies have focussed their attention only on traditional rural based crafts. That apart, the 1981 studies besides touching upon those aspects which were covered under the 1961 series, have laid emphasis on matters that are vital for the revival of rural crafts and thereby for the rejuvenation of the economy of the region particularly the villages. This is in consonance with the policy of the government to give due importance to the rural sector with focus on employment intensive strategy of development in which next to agriculture, the small scale industries and handicrafts play a significant role.

The formats required for undertaking the study were formulated by Dr. K. P. Ittaman under the able guidance of Dr. N. G. Nag, the then Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies Division.

Dr. Ittaman who succeeded Dr. Nag as Deputy Registrar General, Social Studies Division co-ordinated the study undertaken in different States/Union Territories by the Directorates of Census Operations. The reports received from the Directorates were examined by Shri M. K. Jain, Senior Research Officer with the help of Smt. Suman Parashar, Assistant Director of Census Operations and Shyam Singh, Junior Investigator. I am grateful to all of them for organising this study.

The present report is the outcome of a study undertaken on Bell Metal Craft by the Directorate of Census Operations, Madhya Pradesh. I have Immense pleasure in acknowledging the services rendered by Shri M. L. Sharma, Deputy Director, and his colleagues in the Census Directorate for bringing out this publication.

New Delhi,
the 1st June, 1988

V. S. VERMA
Registrar General, India

PREFACE

The importance of rural handicrafts in the rural economy was visualised since the First Five Year Plan. Six boards were established for the promotion of handicrafts, village and small industries. One of these boards, the All India Handicrafts Board, was thus set up to concentrate not only on production and techniques, but also on organisation, extension, credit, marketing and export; in order to promote the rural handicraft as an effective economic means for the rural masses. It was, at this juncture, felt necessary to have an understanding of the rural handicraft in relation to the craftsmen, consumers, village economy, marketing and other aspects of social and cultural significance. The 1961 Census, thus initiated the survey of handicrafts in different states to make an assessment of the status of the craft in relation to socio-economic lives of the people, more particularly to that of the artisans. Subsequent studies have been undertaken by the Census Organisation in different states.

In Madhya Pradesh, two studies (1) Marble craft and (2) Bell-Metal craft were undertaken as ancillary to 1981 Census. The present report pertains to the Bell-Metal craft surveyed in the tribal dominated Bastar district. Keeping in view the importance of the Bell-Metal craft in the rural and interior areas, an intensive field survey followed by compilation and tabulation work was done by S/Shri R. P. Verma, Statistical Assistant, V. K. Jain, Statistical Assistant and N. P. Gautam, Statistical Assistant, under the supervision of Shri G. B. Panda, Assistant Director. Special assistance for compilation and tabulation was rendered by Shri C. K. Mishra, Statistical Assistant. The report has been ably typed by Shri V. R. Nagwani, Operator.

Drafting and editing of this report have been done by me and Shri G. B. Panda, Assistant Director. The entire work was done under my overall supervision.

Dr. K. P. Ittaman, Deputy Registrar General, Shri M. K. Jain, Senior Research Officer and Smt. Suman Parashar, Assistant Director of Social Studies Division of Registrar General's Office provided valuable comments and suggestions from time to time. I am very much thankful to all of them.

I am grateful to all my colleagues mentioned earlier for their painstaking efforts in conducting the survey and completing the tabulation work. I am thankful to Shri G. B. Panda, Assistant Director,

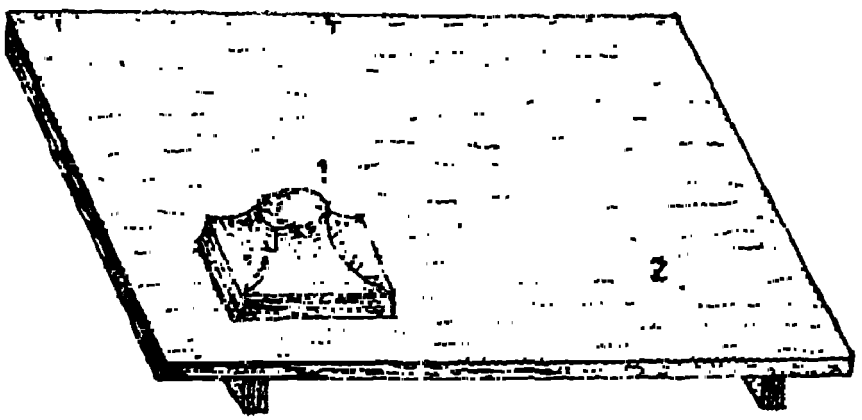
for his valuable assistance in completing this report. I am also thankful to the people of Bastar and the Dhokra craftsmen in particular who extended all cooperation in conducting the survey.

I am extremely grateful to Shri V. S. Verma, IAS, the Registrar General and the Census Commissioner of India for his valuable guidance and constant encouragement which I received in completing this project.

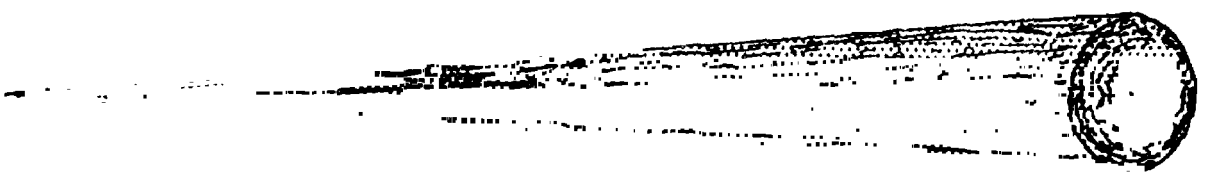
I am also thankful to Shri B. P. Jain, Deputy Director (Printing), Office of the Registrar General, India for excellent arrangement for the printing of this volume.

Bhopal.
Dated: 15th May, 1988

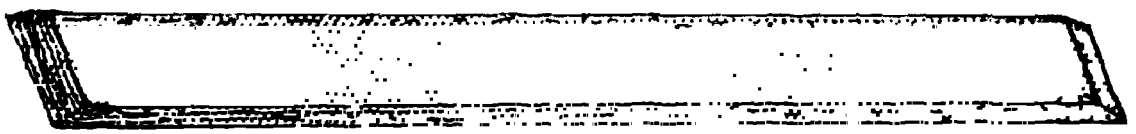
M. L. SHARMA
Deputy Director of Census Operations,
Madhya Pradesh.



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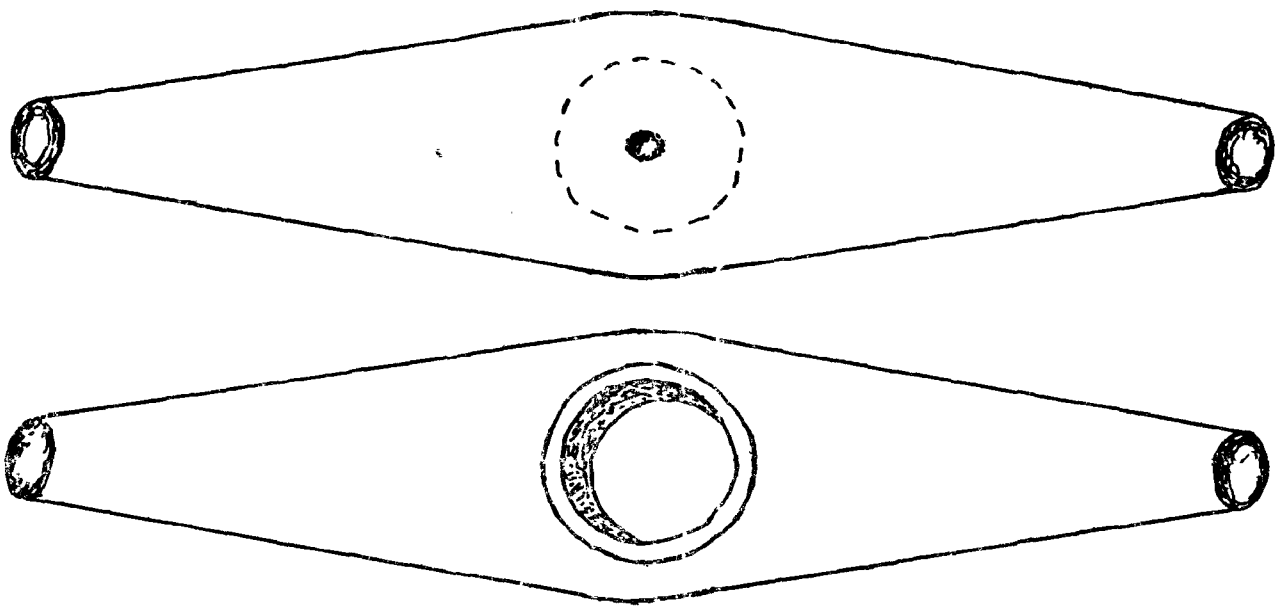


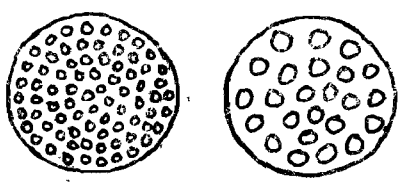
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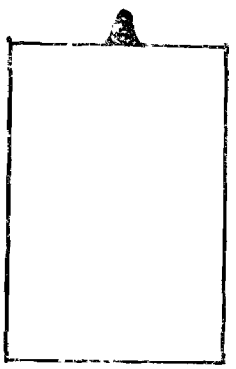
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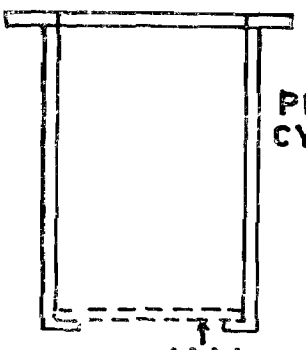




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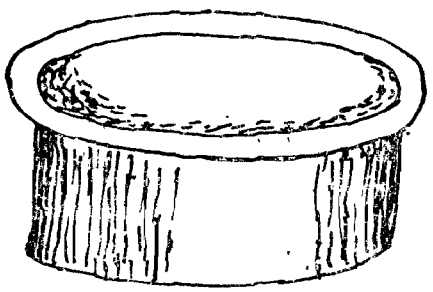


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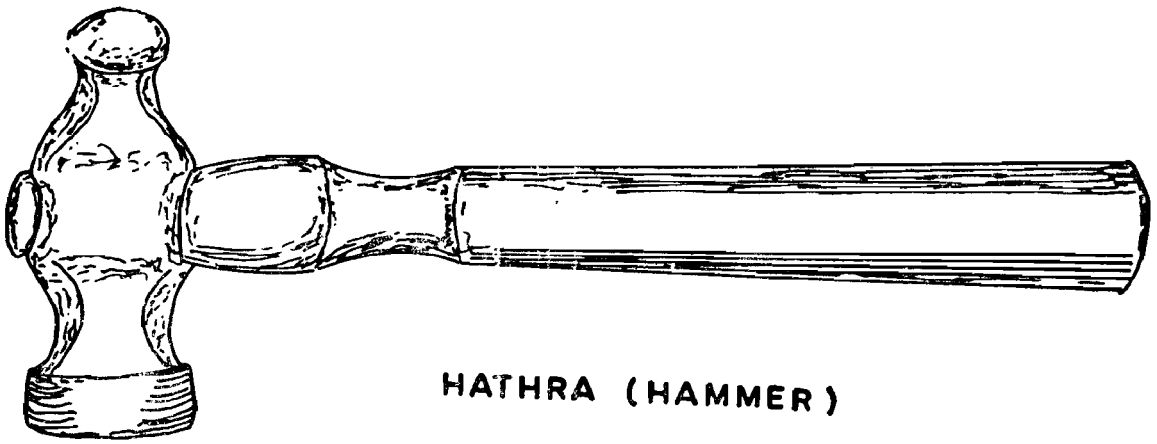
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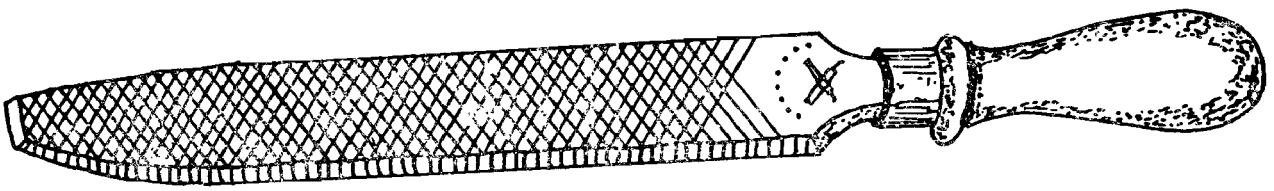


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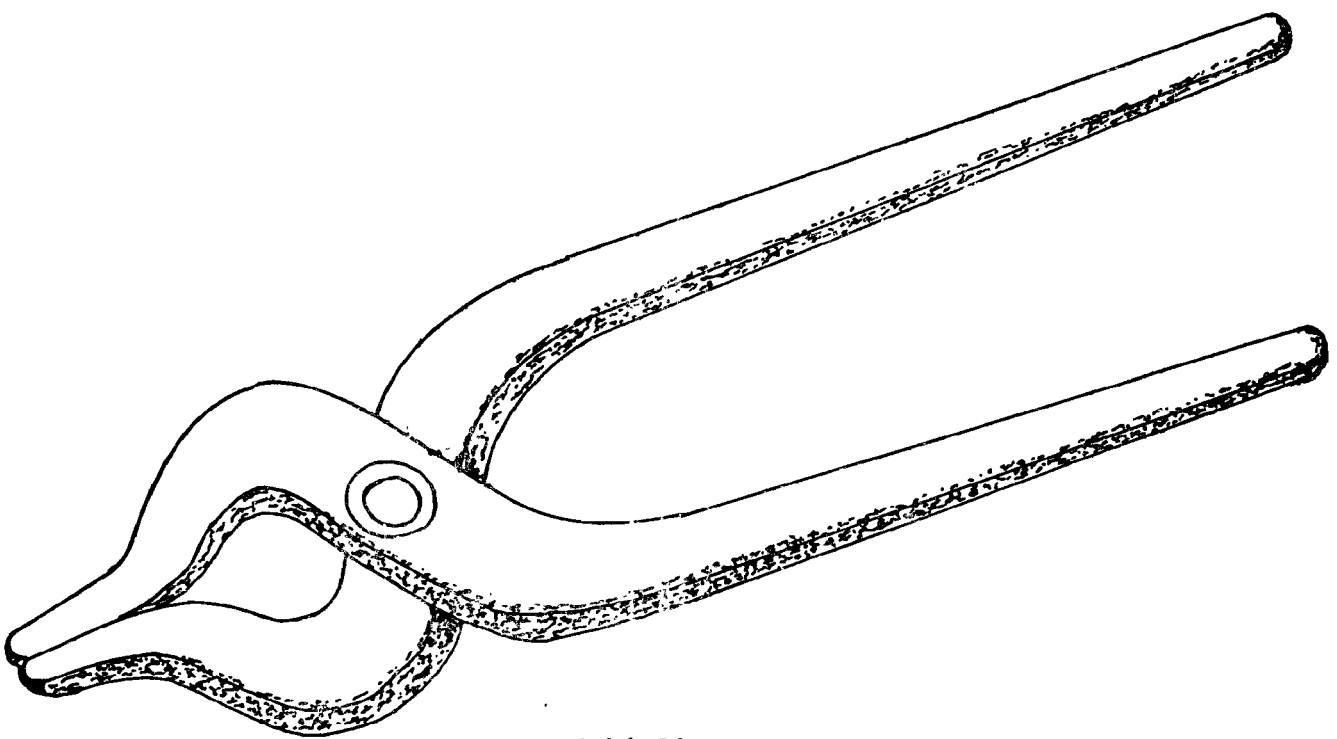
DHOKNI



HATHRA (HAMMER)



RETADI (FILE)



SANSI

CHAPTER I

HISTORY OF ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CRAFT

In rural economy handicrafts have had great significance not only because of its role and contribution to the total economy, but also due to its association with the rural masses and their socio-cultural way of life. Handicraft has been one of the vital instruments of traditional art and household industry. However, since the advent of British Raj, handicrafts and their utility had been side tracked due to imposition of modern aesthetic sense induced by the growing urbanisation and industrialisation through westernisation. This had led the household industry of Handicraft suffer a decline. The craftsmen as they were discouraged to continue their traditional occupation which resulted into rural unemployment and economic degradation. The overall impact of such depressing and declining trend in the practise of rural handicraft had created concern among the planners and policy makers, for it had multifaceted impact on the socio-economic life, culture and traditional of the people, particularly so among the craftsmen, in the rural India. Therefore, the First Five Year Plan established the All-India Handicrafts Board not only to prevent the declining trend of rural Handicraft but also for the promotion of the same at the village level. It is in this context, that a study on Handicraft was felt imperative to set first hand understanding of the rural handicraft as a household industry various dimensions and problems thereof.

Further more, the study of bell-metal craft is of vital significance for it is basically a tribal craft and the All India Handicraft Board had given due importance towards the understanding and developing the craft in tribal areas. It is therefore, felt necessary to have complete knowledge of technology as well as the socio-cultural background of the craft so that in the process of development, the cultural base of the craft may be strengthened, tradition of the craft is maintained and at the same time changes are introduced without losing the authenticity. It is this view point, the study of handicraft was conducted in selected areas. The purpose of the survey was to obtain understanding of rural based bell-metal craft and gain perspective of the artisan and his craft in his social and economic setting in the rural areas.

The art of metalware work in India flourished since ages. "Copper or Bronze (an alloy of copper and tin) was the earliest metal known..... ..."[1] in the sub-continent. Bronze-casting dates back to the Mohanjodaro period (about 3000 B.C.) and the earliest image that has been excavated at Harappa is a rather graceful and striking depiction of a dancing girl. In peninsular India, the earliest find is that of a bronze figurine representing the Mother Goddess, ascribed to the Iron age (1100 BC). Manufacturing of metal sculptures is known to the craftsmen in India since proto-historic times. Indian craftsmen prepared artistic wares of brass, bronze, copper and bell-metal or domestic use and vessels and images of different shrines and pantheons for religious and ritual purposes and other functional and decoratvie articles viz., jewel box, flower vases, lamps, bells etc.

It was during the reign of the Chola dynasty i.e., from the end of the 10th century to the 13th century AD, greater encouragement and impetus was given to the literature, art, music and more particularly to the craft. Thus during the Cholas' reign the metal craft flourished in south-India and accomplished greater excellence. Several thousand bronze images were made and consecrated in the temples and other sacred places for performing worship and religious processions. Apparently, this tradition is still maintained in this region.

In the Chhatisgarh region (Bilaspur, Raigarh, Durg, Rajanandgaon districts) of Madhya Pradesh the practice of bell-metal was once very common for manufacturing religious figurines and household utensils in the recent times. However, the use of aluminium and stainless steel utensils are in vougue. The utensils made of aluminium and stainless-steel are fast replacing the traditional bell-metal vessels, as the former are available comparatively at a cheaper price. Nevertheless the reminiscences of traditional use of brass and bellmetal vessels are still found in the village of the Chhatisgarh tract.

The bell-metal craft of Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh, popularly known as the 'Dhokra Craft' (on which this study is based upon) is mainly found to be practised in some 50-60 villages of Kondagaon, Narayanpur and Jagadalpur tahsils. The Dhokra craft although practised by non-tribal in the region, is essentially a tribal craft for traditionally it occupies a significant place in the local religion and culture. Essentially, the manufacturing process of Dhokra craft is 'CIRE PER DUE' or the lost wax casing of an alloy comprising Copper, Zinc and Lead.

Although the Dhokra craft of Bastar is claimed to be age-old craft being transmitted from generation to generation, its history of the origin is shrouded with mystery. However, a legendary account was revealed by the craftsmen belonging to Ghadwa community. The legend not only narrates the events that led to the discovery of manufacturing processes of bell-metal, but also establishes a historical account of origin of the first Dhokra craft item and its religious sanctity. The legend is that during the prehistoric time when the mankind was living in caves subsisted upon hunting and gathering. Once, there was a devastating fire in the jungle, some metallic substance in molten form drained down a hill and got

1 Majumdar, R.C. Ancient India. 12, 1952.

stuck on the attic of an ant-hill, when the fire was put-off the metallic substance became hard on becoming cold. One of the primitive men, while out in the jungle for hunting, came across this shining material and was amazed to find it in a shape of an attic of an ant-hill. He carried a piece of metallic substance with him to the cave, where he was dwelling. He cleaned this metallic piece and gave more shining to it, and kept it in a corner. All of a sudden he felt in him some divine power. Such extraordinary experience made him realise the existence of some super-natural power the God. After having experienced the spiritual feeling, he considered the metal object as a devine one, and hence cleaned the place in order to keep the abode sacred. When the changes in him was noticed by his fellow-beings, they were curious to know about it. In order to explain the sacred object he found no word to utter. However the word 'Maa' meaning the mother or the mother Goddess came to him first. Thereafter he started visualising it as the image of the mother Goddess then slowly he started to give shape to it so that it looked like a female representing the mother Goddess. Every one was inspired and started worshipping the mother Goddess. Since then the figurines of different gods and goddess are being made to worship.

Yet, another version of a legend in regard to the history of the origin of the Dhokra craft, narrated by the craftsmen, establishes a link with royal family of the erst-while princely state of Baster[2]. It is said that Prince Annam Deo some time back in 1424 AD brought craftsmen from adjoining Orissa state for making bell-metal images of goddess Danteshwari, the principal deity of the state; and the ruler was then the head priest. In another version it was told that an ancestor of the Kakatiya dynasty was a devotee of the deity Danteshwari. Once, while he was meditating at Badedongar village, the deity appeared in front of him. The goddess then commanded him to hold her *vastra* (cloth) and to follow her, without looking behind. The path thus covered by him by abiding the given condition shall become his territory to reign. From Bade Dongar, they walked till they reached Dantewara and suddenly a voice from behind was heard by the Kakatiya ancestor as if some body had called him. On looking back, he found no one. Incidentally, the Goddess who was leading him had disappeared. Realising upon his folly of looking back and to overcome the repentence he built a magnificent temple in honour of the goddess Danteshwari. Since then, it has been the custom to worship the goddess by offering images of deity cast in bell-metal. Because of the religious and ritual significance the bell-metal craft flourished in the Bastar region since generations.

Important Craft Centres

As has been mentioned earlier the bell-metal craft in Madhya Pradesh is practised in Chhatisgarh region. The main concentration of the Dhokra craftsmen, however, is in the Bastar District. Although, it is practised in many villages of tribal areas of Bastar region, quantitively the proportion of the families involved in the said craft in a village reduced to one or two. Thus, these villages wherein a few negligible representation of the craftsmen are found do not qualify to be called as centres. The craftsmen of these villages during the ceremonial and festival times of the local tribals intensify the production of some specialised and much needed items of bell-metal while in other times they depend upon agriculture and other casual labour as the means of subsidiary source of income. Jagadalpur and Kondagaon of Bastar district, however, may be called as the main centres of bell-metal craft for proportionally a large number of items are manufactured in these two towns. Besides, these are the main centres wherein the collection, disposal and other transactions are done in respect of bell-metal products by shopkeepers, cooperative society and the government agencies. Outside Madhya Pradesh, the bell-metal craft is practised in the adjoining areas of Orissa from where it is told, to have been borrowed. The bell-metal craft being an age old craft is found practised in many parts of the country. The states where the bell-metal craft is mainly practised include Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Tripura.

Particulars of community/caste associated with the craft

The bell-metal or Dhokra craft of Bastar is practised by craftsmen, known as 'Ghadwas'. The Ghadwas, are the traditional artisan caste of Dhokra craftsmen settled in Bastar from time immemorial. The term Ghadwa seems of recent adoption by the community, who are originally referred to as Ghasia. Elwin (mentioned) Ghasia, as a degraded community subjected to various kinds of social dissabilities. The people including the craftsmen, contacted in various villages of Bastar agreed that the term Ghadwa and Ghasia are synonymous. Russel and Hiralal (111:28) referred to Ghasias a community traditionally engaged in supplying fodder and rearing horses. Crooke (1896:408) reported that they are extended as far as Bastar, where they are described as an inferior caste who serve as horse keepers. The term Ghasia is in fact contended to have been derived from a Hindustani word *'ghas'* meaning grass or fodder; meaning grass cutter. The name Gharwa also reported to have been derived from the local word *'Ghara'* meaning pitcher, which they reported of making traditionally. In another version it was mentioned that the word 'Gharwa' might have been derived from *'Ghari'* meaning, the bell, which they manufacture traditionally and used for religious and ceremonial occasions. Yet, another contention is that they being the traditional artisan community whose job is to do *'Ghadan'* or moulding and shaping different bell-metal objects they are functionally appalled as the Ghadwa.

2 The name of the region Basar is claimed to have derived from vastra.

The Ghasia or Ghadwa are also found in the neighbouring areas of Orissa state. Hitherto, they are treated as the low caste menials. The local tribals of Bastar traditionally used to consider them as untouchables and would not accept water or cooked food from the hands of Ghadwa. Besides, rearing horses and supplying fodder, making bell-metal artifacts are also considered as low occupation. The local contention in this regard is that the burning, moulding and shaping of various sacred objects including the figurines of the deities are considerd as an act of pollution. Since the Ghadwa's traditional occupation is bell-metal craft they are considered as menial caste. Further the Ghadwa do recasting by moulding the old figurines of the deities to new ones. This process of burning and recasting of sacred objects considered not only as degrading but also a polluting job. Thus in Bastar the very nature of their traditional occupation of bell-metal craft has accorded them the low status, in the local social hierarchy.

The traditional custom of worshiping Danteshwari the prominent deity in the Bastar region is being propitiated by offering images made of bell-metal. Only at a later stage that the range of objects being produced has widened as to make artifacts like horse, bull, deer, elephant, bear, pots, ornaments and a number of other functional and decorative items.

Number of households engaged in the craft

As mentioned earlier the present bell-metal craft study is confined to Bastar district, and the total number of households engaged in this craft is found to be 180, spread over in 45 villages (Appendix-I). However, this list is not exhaustive. Ghadwa, is the only community who are engaged in the bell-metal craft and they hold monopoly on it traditionally. There is no other community or caste who are engaged in the bell-metal craft traditionally or otherwise. Although a great deal of incentives through training and stipend to encourage the practise of the craft among other communities are being provided by the government agencies, there is not a single non-Gharwa person who has adopted bell-metal craft so far.

In the process of manufacturing of bell-metal craft items the contribution of all the family members irrespective of age and sex is required at different stages of manufacturing. The children below the age of 14 are the ones who while giving a helping hand to elders, learn various techniques and skills involved in the bell-metal craft. Although it is not feasible to provide the exact number of children and women engaged in the craft in the state, it may be said that in every household where the craft is in practice, they are involved in it one way or the other and at one stage or the other in the process of manufacturing. The details in respect of the children of age below 14 and women engaged in the craft as per the sample studied, are furnished elsewhere in the following Chapter.

Different Handicraft Items Produced

Traditionally the bell-metal craft items have been used for religious purposes by the local tribal communities of Bastar. The use of bell-metal vessels and utensils and some other functional items for the household use were also in vogue, traditionally. There has been considerable decline in the use of Dhokra items by the local population due to uprising price of the bell-metal supplemented by the deteriorating economic conditions of the locals. Traditionally, the bell-metal items that are produced may be divided into three categories viz., (1) those that are meant for religious use, (2) the others that are used for domestic or household purpose and the other (3) ornaments that are used by the local people. Presently, since the craft after having gained popularity among the people outside the district, state and the country, a great number of items that are produced are of decorative nature. For the locals these artifacts have categorical usage, while for the others any object of bell-metal can be used as a decoration piece. The essence of the bell-metal artifacts is that despite the innovative steps taken in emposing and devising new items as per the demand, the touch of ethnic art and design of Bastar region is invariably embodied in each and every item manufactured—traditional or modern. Different handicraft items produced are classified into the following categories:

Classification of Bell-metal artifacts produced and their approximate value per month, 1988

Sl. No.	Category of the	Handicraft objects produced	Approximate value (in rupees)
1	2	3	4
1.	Religious/Ritual	Danteshwari, Shitla Mata, Khanda, Mankali Mata, Rao Deo, Burbi Mata, Kutugudin Mata, Dokra Deo, Dhawami Deo, Burha Deo, Pardeshi Mata, Kari Telanga Mata, Dulari Deo-Mata, Bhairo Deo, Laxmi, Ganesh, Durga, Ox, Horse, Cow, Sulphitree, Todi, Elephant, Deer, Lamp etc.	25,000
2.	Household items for domestic use	Lota, Jhori, Lamp, Ash-tray, Beja (spoon), bowls etc.	10,000
3.	Ornamental	Ludki (ear rings), Kada (Bracelet), Suta (Necklace) etc.	5,000
4.	Decorative*	Lamps, Ash-tray, Pen-stand, Agarbatti-stand, Knife Handles, Wall panels etc.	30,000

*Any item produced may be used for decoration purpose.

All objects mentioned may vary in size and accordingly their cost also fluctuate as the raw material used could largely determine the price of an artifact. Therefore, the figures in regard to the value of the items produced is an approximate estimation not the absolute. Similarly it was difficult for the craftsmen being illiterate to maintain any record of purchase or sale of goods. However, a rough estimation has been made as per the information given by the respondents; nearly 5,000 to 7,000 big-items and 10,000 to 15,000 small items are produced annually valuing about Rs. 6,00,000 to Rs. 10,00,000.

Originally the craftsmen used to make ornaments made of bell-metal, and that was very much in vogue then. But in the recent times change in attitude among the local people is noticed so far as the use of bell-metal ornaments are concerned. It has become out of fashion to use bell-metal ornaments as per the present trend. The tribals in this part of the country are very superstitious and believe in witch-craft and sorcery. In order to ward-off the evil spirits and to protect the family members from any decease, epidemic or mishap they appease the local deities by making animal sacrifices. In the recent times owing to their poor economic conditions they are unable to make such animal sacrifices, instead they make the offerings of the bell-metal models or replica of the animals, as substitutes.

Subsequent to the development of Bastar region in terms of transport and communication, visitors from outside learned about the Dhokra craft and developed fancy towards the products which manifest unique ethnic characteristics. This led to further demand of the Dhokra art and accordingly the craftsmen widened the range of their products as per the taste of the visitors by introducing some new items viz. vases, knife, wall panels, images of animals and birds etc., without distroying the ethnic characteristics of the artifacts. In the recent times the bell-metal artifacts are exhibited in various places including in shops and special exhibitions within the country and outside to promote the sales. These efforts begeted fruitful results, for the Dhokra artifacts not only noticed and fancied but also purchased by many including the foreigners.

Disposal of finished products

Traditionally, the disposal of the bell-metal craft products used to depend upon the local weekly markets, that provided venue for all the marketable goods in the region for the local consumption. In the course of time, the petty shop keepers of urban centres in the area such as Jagadalpur and Kondagaon, after realising the growing market potentialities of the craft started operating as the middlemen. These middlemen used to take advantage of the poor financial conditions of the needy craftsmen and were procuring finished products at a cheaper rate. But, since the establishment of cooperative societies at Jagadalpur and Kondagaon the role of middlemen has been reduced to minimum. There was no terms and conditions involved in purchasing the artifacts from the craftsmen by the middlemen as the purchasing was done on cash payment. The cooperative societies extended a great help to the craftsmen by purchasing the artifacts giving a greater margin of profit. But due to lack of adequate funds these societies are unable to purchase the entire products from the craftsmen, only 40 to 50 per cent of the total products are being purchased by the said societies directly from the craftsmen and in turn sell to state Government Emporia and Handicraft Development Corporation. The rest of the products had to be sold in weekly markets. The margin of profit is very high (100%) in case the products are sold in the weekly markets or sold by the craftsmen as hawkers. But the disposal of the goods is not guaranteed and it is time consuming. Hence the craftsmen get discouraged to take them to weekly markets. Local production of handicraft artifacts exceeds the demand. It is found that a great deal of stock of the craft products is piled-up in the local emporium for want of buyers in the state. Outside, the bell-metal products of Bastar have to compete with similar products of Orissa, Tamilnadu, Assam and many other states in the markets for disposal. In fact the production potentiality of the craftsmen exceed the demand for the craft artifacts both inside and outside the state, with the result the craftsmen are discouraged and opt for other occupations for livelihood. There is no record available in regard to the sale of different craft products within and outside the state, and as well outside the country.

Madhya Pradesh Handicraft Development Corporation

Since the establishment of the Madhya Pradesh Handicrafts Development Corporation in 1981 under the Companies Act, 1956, the assistance provided to the craftsmen through their nodal agencies in Bastar, the Dhokra craft has received a boost and thereafter the Dokra industry has been flourishing. There is a Branch Office of the Handicraft Board functioning at Jagadalpur since 1-7-1982 which works for the development of various handicrafts in Baster district. The activities of this branch office are (i) Procurement of Handicrafts (ii) Distribution of raw material (iii) Providing financial aids and other facilities to the craftsmen. Obviously the source of finance is by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.

As far as the amount spent by this agency for the development of Dhokra craft is concerned, the information is not available with them since craftwise details are not maintained separately. However, the total amount spent by this agency for the purchase of finished goods of all the handicrafts in this State during the last one year is Rs. 2,05,122/-. On raw material a sum of Rs. 26,965/- has been spent while for providing training to craftsmen the expenditure has been Rs. 13,232/-.

Cooperative Society

The only society catering to the needs of Dhokra craftsmen is located at Kondgaon which was orga-

nised in the year 1981 and has a membership of 120 persons. Eligibility criteria for the membership of this society are that the member should be a craftsman and that the village in which he is practising the craft should not be beyond 50 km from its headquarters. This society has one Director, one Manager and one Chowkidar of which the incumbents holding the post of Director and Manager have attained the level of education upto Middle School while the Chowkidar is simply a literate. The Director is a honorary worker, while the other two are paid employees getting meagre salary.

The Manager's duties are to look after the mnagement of the society, arrange for exhibition of handicraft items and to encourage the craft and the craftsmen by providing facilities and incentives. The Manager's duties are to purchase finished goods from the craftsmen, provide them raw material and to make them aware of the various facilities extended by the Government agencies for the development of the craft. The society has received a loan of Rs. 1,50,000/- from local Branch of Bank of India on interest rate of 4.33%. The society has not earned any profit so far. There is another cooperative society located at Jagdalpur is called Kosa Cooperative Society. The main interest of the Kosa Cooperative Society is to promote the silk-handloom in Bastar district. However, it also helps occasionally all other craftsmen including the bell-metal craftsmen by making arrangements for purchase and sales of their products.

Although the government agencies are working for the development of Dhokra craft but the craftsmen do not feel that they are getting the real benefit from them. None of the craftsmen surveyed has received any assistance from these agencies even for the construction of workshed, although State Handicraft Board has made a provision to give a grant to the extent of Rs. 6,000/- to each craftsman for constructing workshed and also for the purchase of new tools and equipments. There is a provision for granting Rs. 2,000/- for other purposes but none of these craftsmen have ever availed of this facilities. The training facility is also there but no one has received any training. The reason for this sorry situation is not solely due to the slackness of the government agencies but the craftsmen could not afford to devote time on training as they have to earn their daily-wages for living every day.

A training-cum-production centre is located at Kondagaon which is run under the stewardship of Mr. Jaideo Baghel, the master craftsman. The training programme for Dhokra craft is for one year duration which consists to two months training each on the following processes involved in the production of Dhokra craft. The training imparted in the process of manufacturing bell-metal craft artifacts include—

(1) Treatment of clay used for preparing core—model.

(2) Preparation of core—model of clay.

(3) Designing by wax thread/strings.

(4) Putting clay layer on the wax model.

(5) Casting.

(6) General.

At a time only 10 trainees can attend the course and the training programme. Each trainee gets a stipend of Rs. 240/- per month.

The terms and conditions under which the training is imparted are that the trainee should be a member of Gharwa caste and that the art pieces produced by them during the course of training will have to be sold to the centre.

In most of the craftsmen households, younger generation has not expressed any urge for receiving training as they feel that the experience gained by being associated with the craft with their senior members is sufficient to practise the craft. The experienced craftsmen do not have any desire for taking any training even for the sake of the new designs that are being introduced. The contention is that the experience gained is sufficient to produce any object how-so ever complicated it may be, as it depends upon the will of the craftsmen to produce a particular item because it is not difficult for him to observe and create.

CHAPTER II

CRAFTSMEN IN THEIR RURAL SETTING

Before starting the description of the villages selected for the study, it would be appropriate at this juncture to introduce the Bastar district as a cultural setting i.e., a district in the culural tapestry of the region. The way of life of the people living in Bastar until today bound by traditional, religious and socio-economic patterns. Modern technology and the modern way of life still remain outside the periphery of the social cultural boundaries of the people living in Bastar region. The great-tradition of Hindu culture and values over the centuries of contact and interaction could influence a little so far as the tribals and their societies are concerned. Although, the communities living in the Bastar district are scattered in the forests, there is strong bond of unity among them generated by the shared myths, customs and social patterns.

Although, agriculture is the main source of livelihood for the local tribals, the improved techniques and modern ways of agriculture are unknown to them. Moreover, the whole of Bastar region practice shifting cultivation or slash-and-burn cultivation which is by all standard primitive. Although a number of prohibitary measures have been imposed upon the practice of shifting cultivation due to its devastating effect on the soil and the environment; this practice is still prevalent in the remote areas. Their, secondary source of livelihood is derived from the collection of forest produce which are still found in abundance. The recent upcoming industrial growth specially by the establishment of various industries involving ironore extraction, provided a good avenue for employment generation for the sake of the local tribals. However, irrespective of hazards and uncertainties involved in the agriculture sector it still remains the main economic activity and is being adhered to by the tribals of Bastar. In fact, their whole life, culture, religion and economy revolves around this activity. There seems no scope for developing the practice of Handicraft as a household industry primarily because it is taboo to practise the craft and is looked down upon as low-caste profession. Secondly, the type of agricultural practice and the inhospitable terrain do not appear to let them have with sufficient leisure for development of arts and crafts, except for minor basketry, mat weaving and woodwork. The crafts like brass and bell-metal casting, imitation jewels, wood carving, stone caning, pottery etc. found in Bastar are practised by non-tribals, mostly settled from adjoining areas who have through course of time and acculturation adopted the way of life, customs and language of the locals.

The above said characteristics manifest the general pattern of socio-economic life of the people in Bastar region. All the villagers (even the urban centres) are the representative units bearing all the said cultural features of the Bastar region. The village and the urban unit selected for study are of no exception, either.

In order to gain an understanding of the various aspects of the bell-metal craft and the craftsmen, seven villages were selected, so as to get a comparative assessment of the said craft in different scenarios. Although, the study is aimed at deriving an understanding of the rural handi-craft, an urban unit Bhelwa Padar Pada, in fact a locality of Kondagaon municipality in 1981 which was a hamlet of Kondagaon village in 1971 has also been selected for a good number of craftsmen are engaged in the craft and a training centre is also located in association with the cooperative society. Many of the craftsmen studied in the said urban centre are infact the recent immigrants from the neighbouring villages either settled permanently or trying to settle down in the vicinity of the town and some are temporarily settled and make frequent visits to their native places. Moreover, the Kondagaon town forms a part and parcel of the total cultural and social set-up of the region manifesting all the rural characteristics. It seems that except for the given status-recognition of a town, it is for all practical reasons is just a grown up village with hardly any urban characteristics in the real sense of the term. Here only 10 out of the total 65 households of the bell-metal craftsmen and only 2 out of 19 non-practising households were studied. The rest of 55 households of craftsmen who are practising the craft and 14 who are not practising the craft were studied in 7 villages of Bastar district. the details of these have been discussed in the following chapters.

As has been already mentioned there are about 50 villages in different parts of Bastar district where the bell-metal craft is practised. The seven villages that are selected for the study are from three tahsils-Khorkhosa, Alwahi and Errakot villages of Jagdalpur tahsil, Karanpur, Barkai and Dahikonga of Kondagaon tahsil, and the village Chhote Dongar of Narayanpur tahsil. Brief description about the said villages are furnished below:

1. Barkai village

This village is situated at a distance of 37 km. from the tahsil headquarters, Kondagaon. The village is approachable by foot-path 7 km. in the south-east direction from Farasgaon, well established and developed village situated on Raipur-Jagdalpur National Highway No. 43, 70 km. from Kanker and 15 km. from Kondagaon. In order to reach the village one has to cross a nallah by foot in dry season but in rainy season when it is in stream one has to swim across the nallah. The village is surrounded by hills and forests. According to 1981 Census there were 210 households with a population of 1,106 persons.

2. Dahikonga village

This village is situated on the road side, 15 km down south of Kondagaon. Being on the highway (Raipur-Jagdalpur Road), communication facility is amply good. As per 1981 Census the population of the village was 1,595. A small rivulet passes near the village which apparently is the main source of drinking water.

3. Chhote Dongar Village

This is a well developed village and was having a population of 2,288 as per 1981 Census. It is situated at a distance of 43 kms from Narayanpur, the tahsil headquarters and 93 kms from Kondagaon which is connected with the national highway. The houses in the village are mostly Kachcha type with an exception of a few pucca government buildings.

4. Errakot village

Spread over in an area of 1039.53 hectares with a population of 1,688, (1981 Census) Errakot village is situated 20 kms south-west of Jagdalpur town. This village is not on the main road but it can be reached on foot 5 km from a place known as Tohkapal located on the Jagdalpur-Bailadilla highway, 20 km. from Jagdalpur. It lies on the Jagdalpur plains and therefore it is devoid of forests.

5. Karanpur village

Predominently a tribal village spread over an area of 535.00 hectares. In order to reach the village one has to go by foot for 15 km in the forest road connected to nearest pucca road at Dahikonga, a village located at a distance of 15 km from its tahsil headquarter, Kondagaon en route to Jagdalpur. Agriculture is the primary source of livelihood and the other economic sources include collection and selling of forest products and casual labour.

6. Alwahi Village

It is spread over relatively a small area i.e., in 153.92 hectares. It is located at a distance of 45 km from the district head-quarters Jagdalpur. Alwahi is not connected with pucca road, however, from Jagdalpur one can reach by bus upto Lohandi Guda, the nearest bus stop. From Lohandi Guda where one has to cover 6 kms by foot and cross the river Indrawati by boat. The population of this village has a predominence of Bhattra (S.T.) community.

7. Khorkhosa Village

This is predominently a tribal village which is inhabited by Bhattra and Gond (S.T.) communities. It is spread over an area of 772.69 hectares. More than 76 per cent of its land is cultivable, that establishes the fact that agriculture is the prime source of economy. Khorkhosa is not connected by pucca road, hence is deprived of bus service. However, in order to reach the village one may cover 30 kms by bus i.e., from Jagdalpur to Balenga and from there it is only 4 kms which can be covered by foot.

The whole Bastar district was once very rich with flora and fauna and was covered under a thick canopy of forest. Despite the continuous deforestation caused by men, over the years, Baster still bostes of having a large cover of forests as, according to latest data about 55 per cent of the total geographical area of the district is covered with forests. Thus, except for Errakot, rest of the villages surveyed and even the present urban centre are having some forest land in the territorial boundaries. A major portion of village land, however, is under cultivation. Although, agriculture forms the basis of the village economy it is depressing to note that negligible proportion of cultivable land is irrigated, most of it is rain fed. The details in regard to village land are furnished in the following table:

Table II.1

Particulars of Land use in Villages (in hectares) as per 1981 Census (Percentages are given in brackets)

Sl. No.	Village	Total area	Forest	Culttivable		Cultivable Waste	Area not available for Cultivation
				Irrigated	Unirrigated		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Barkai	839.00 (100.00)	306.00 (36.47)	1.00 (0.12)	474.00 (56.50)	31.00 (3.69)	27.00 (3.22)
2	Dahikonga	845.00 (100.00)	325.00 (38.46)	13.00 (1.42)	406.00 (48.05)	60.00 (7.10)	42.00 (4.97)
3	Chhote-Donger	2063.73 (100.00)	712.17 (34.51)	20.68 (1.00)	967.47 (46.88)	257.87 (12.50)	105.54 (5.11)
4	Errakot	1039.53 (100.00)	.. ..	3.38 (0.33)	722.20 (69.74)	295.55 (28.43)	18.40 (1.77)
5	Karanpur	535.00 (100.00)	334.00 (62.43)	.. ..	184.00 (34.39)	17.00 (3.18)	.. ..
6	Khorkhosa	772.73 (100.00)	89.51 (11.58)	24.70 (3.20)	564.99 (73.12)	64.65 (8.36)	28.88 (3.74)
7	Alwahi	153.92 (100.00)	.. ..	.. ..	81.29 (52.81)	55.13 (35.82)	17.50 (11.37)
8	Bhelwa padar Para* (Urban)	7558.40 (100.00)	3024.47 (40.01)	26.67 (0.35)	2980.73 (38.44)	1028.76 (13.61)	497.77 (6.59)

*Figures furnished are as per the 1971 Census data since Bhelwapadar Para was market of Kondagaon village then and is now a part of Kondagaon municipality as per 1981 Census.

Bastar is considered one of the most backward districts of Madhya Pradesh so far as availability of basic amenitics in the villages is concerned. Greater importance has been given by the government through various departments, policies and schemes to bring about improvement in the provision of facilities that are considered as the basic to human life. Of the seven villages surveyed except one (Alwahi) all have at least a primary and one middle school. However, the village which is deprived of even one primary school, has one at a distance of 5 kms. So far as medical facilities are concerned only two villages namely Dahikonga and Chhote Dongar are privileged with a Dispensary and Primary Health Centre respectively. While in rest of the villages, people have to cover a distance of 5 to 10 kms to avail medical aid. Majority of the villages surveyed for drinking water either depend upon tanks or nullah, only three villages are installed with hand pumps. Thus in respect of availability of drinking water the region remains very backward. Only people of three villages have Post Office within the village, while others even to avail a post-card have to cover 5 to 10 kms distance similarly only two out of seven villages namely Dahikonga and Chhote Dongar are fortunate to have regular bus-service for they only are benefited with bus-stops and pucca roads; others not only two villages namely Dahikonga and Khorkhosa are electrified. The main staple food of the villagers in the seven surveyed villages include Kodo, Kutki, Jowar, Maize and Rice. The details in regard to the availability of infrastructural facilities in the villages surveyed and the village-wise staple food consumed are furnished in the table below:

Table II. 2

Details of the distribution of Amenities in the village and the staple food taken, (1981 Census.)

Sl. No.	Name of village	Population			Amenities (availability with		
		Person	Male	Female	Educational	Medical	Drinking water
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Chhote Dongar	2,836	1,486	1,352	P(1) M(1), PUC(1)	PH(1) —(5-10)	W, TK, N N, R
2	Karanpur	941	503	483	P (1)		
3	Barkai	1,106	577	529	P (1) M(1)	—(5-10)	W, HP
4	Dahikonga	1737	907	830	P (1) M(1)	D (1)	W, R
5	Bhelwapadar (Kondagaon Town)	17,279	8,769	8,510	P (1), M(1) A(1), PUC (2)	H (1), PHC (1)	TW, W
6	Alwahi	439	236	203	(-5)	—(10+)	TK
7	Errakot	2,385	1,197	1,188	P (1) M(1)	(-5)	HP, N
8	Khorkhosa	2,245	1,106	1,139	P (1) M (1)	—(10+)	W, HP, TK

Table II.2

Details of the distribution of Amenities in the village and the staple food taken (1981 Census)

distance in Km.)

Post & Telegraph	Day of Market/ Hat	Communi-cation	Approach to village	Power supply	Staple Food	Name of village	Sl No.
9	10	11	12	13	14	2	1
PO	-(-5)	BS	PR	..	Kodo, Rice	Chhote Dongar	1
-(5-10)	-(5-10)	-(5-10)	KR	..	Jowar, Maize	Karanpur	2
PO	-(5-10)	-(5-10)	KR	..	Kodo, Kutki	Barkai	3
PO	Friday	BS	PR	EA	Jowar, Maize	Dahikonga	4
Post & Telegraph	Sunday	BS	PR	EA	Jowar, Maize	Bhelwapadar (Kondagaon Town)	5
-(5-10)	-(5-10)	-(10+)	KR	..	Rice, Maize	Alwahi	6
-(-5)	-(-5)	-(-5)	KR	..	Rice, Maize	Errakot	7
-(-5)	-(5-10)	-(-5)	KR	ED, EAg	Rice, Maize	Khorkhosa	8

Note –Abbreviations for—

Column—6—

P—Primary School
M—Middle School

PUC —Higher Secondary, Intermediate
A —Arts College, Junior-College (10+2)

Column-7

PHC—Primary Health Centre
D —Dispensary
H —Hospital

Column 8—

W—Well, TW—Tubewell
TK—Tank, N—Nullha
R—River, HP—Handpump

Column-9—

PO—Post Office

Column-11—

BS—Bus stand

Column-12—

PR—Pucca Road
KR—Kucha Road

Column-13

EA—Electricity for all purpose
ED—Electricity for Domestic purpose
EAg—Electricity for Irrigation purpose

—(-5)indicates availability of the facility within a distance of 5 Km from the village;—(5—10) indicats availability within a distance range of 5 to 10 Km from the village, and (10+)means more than 10 Km away.

Tribes, Castes and Communities

Bastar, one of the biggest districts in the country which is even bigger than Kerala state needs no introduction about its rich tribal heritage. This region is bestowed with colourful mosaic of ethnic diversities and traditions. The villages that are selected for the study of bell-metal craft are of no exception for residents of these villages belong to Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and caste Hindus. So far as the religion of the people is concerned, Hinduism is followed by the majority, while the followers of other religions are very small in number—appears appreciable only in urban centres. Although there are numerous languages and dialects spoken in the district, Halbi may be said to be the 'Lingua-Franca'. However, the other popular languages spoken in the area include Gondi, Chattisgarhi, Bhattri, Hindi etc. All the communities who have been living in this region have not only adopted local culture and values but also adopted the local language as the mother tongue. Thus, there are caste Hindus who are traditionally living in this area, share the common way of life and socio-economic system(s) of the region. The names of the castes, tribes and communities found in the villages studied, and the language spoken are as furnished below:

Table II.3

Details of Caste/Tribe/Community in the selected villages classified by Language and Religion

Sl. No.	Name of the Caste/Tribe/ Community	Language	Religion
1	Gharva	Halbi	Hinduism
2	Bhattra (ST)	Halbi	,,
3	Brahmin	Halbi-Hindi	,,
4	Dhakad	Halbi	,,
5	Raut	Halbi	,,
6	(i) Gond (ST)	Halbi, Gondi	,,
	(ii) Muria (ST)	Halbi-Gondi	,,
	(iii) Madiya (ST)	Halbi-Gondi	,,
7	Lohar	Halbi	,,
8	Ganda (SC)	Halbi	,,
9	Kumhar	Halbi	,,
10	Kalar	,,	,,
11	Daura	,,	,,
12	Malba	,,	,,
13	Gavan	,,	,,
14	Dhobi	,,	,,
15	Panara	,,	,,
16	Teli	,,	,,
17	Jain	Halbi-Hindi	Jainism
18	Muslim	Halbi-Hindi, Urdu	Islam
19	Christian	Halbi, Hindi	Christianity
20	Mahar (SC)	Halbi	Hinduism
21	Bairagi	Halbi	,,
22	Mehara (SC)	Halbi	,,
23	Baisan	,,	,,
24	Gujar	,,	,,
25	Nai	,,	,,
26	Dhobhi	,,	,,
27	Chhatri	,,	,,
28	Ghasia (SC)	,,	Hinduism

(SC)—Scheduled Caste. (ST)-Scheduled Tribe.

Scheduled Tribe population constitute more than 59 per cent of the total population of the selected seven villages studied, while its proportion in Bhelwa Padar Pada-urban unit is more than 24 per cent. Scheduled Tribe population essentially constitutes of Gond, Muria, Madia and Bhattra Communities. The Gond, Muria, Madia are grouped under Gond as per the list of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Order (Amendment) Act, 1976. Although they share a great deal of common cultural features, the distinction in terms of ethnicity is maintained through geographical divisions and other differences. Murias are well known for their social institution of 'Ghotul'. The *Ghotul* is a common hut in a Muria village where unmarried children of above the age of 6-7 years spend their nights. It is the institution wherein, traditionally, the knowledge and the world-view are transmitted. It is the place where the novices are taught the ways of corporate living, cooperative feeling, means of unity and brotherhood. Murias are claimed to be the original inhabitants of the Bastar region. The Bhattra is also numerically an important tribe in the villages studied. The Bhattras traditionally work as village priests and household servants. They are reported to have migrated with the first Raja of Bastar from Warangal. They are mostly Hinduised.

The Ghasia, a Scheduled Caste community, as has been reported earlier, is a synonym of Gharwa. Many of them pursue the bell-metal craft and hesitant to identify themselves as Ghasia, as it denotes a low status untouchable community. The Gandas are also a low status caste who suffer from various social disabilities. Their traditional occupation reported to have been weaving coarse-cloth. The Mehra are a low status caste, who traditionally serve as village musicians and village watchmen. Some of the Mehras also do weaving.

Demographic Particulars

All the seven selected villages and the urban unit has a sizeable proportion of Scheduled Tribes population and the population of Scheduled Castes found in every village and the urban unit studied. In fact only 28.63 per cent of the total population in the seven villages studied belong to communities of general category, rest 71.37 per cent of them belong to Scheduled communities (ST & SC). As it is expected the Scheduled communities specially the proportion of ST population is less in urban areas when compared to that of rural and interior areas. Thus in the urban unit (Bhelwa Padar Pada), 68.96 per cent of the total population belongs to general category and remaining 31.04 per cent of the population belongs to ST & SC communities. The following Table-II. 4 provides the particulars of population by sex, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribes and literates in the 7 villages and one urban unit under study according to 1981 Census.

Table II. 4

Particulars of population by sex, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and literates in the villages and the urban unit studied as per 1981 Census data

Sl. No.	Name of village/urban unit	No. of Census		Population		
		Houses	Households	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Barkai	210	210	1,106	577	529
2	Dahikonga	276	279	1,595	801	794
3	Chhote Dongar	425	441	2,288	1,185	1,103
4	Errakot	339	339	1,688	846	842
5	Karanpur	141	142	871	463	408
6	Khorkhosa	325	326	1,883	904	979
7	Alwali	50	51	282	150	132
8	Bhelwa Podar Para (Kondagaon town)	3,457	3,518	17,279	8,769	8,510

Table II.4

Particulars of population by sex, Scheduled Tribe, Scheduled Caste and literates in the villages and the urban unit studied as per 1981 Census data

Sl. No.	Name of village/urban unit	Scheduled Castes			Scheduled Tribes			Literates	
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Males	Females
1	2	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1	Barkai	177	93	84	458	241	217	130	25
2	Dahiko	104	47	57	1,024	521	503	164	44
3	Chhote Dongar	264	136	128	1,536	780	756	388	77
4	Errakot	236	119	117	1,313	651	662	27	2
5	Karanpur	92	46	46	538	293	245	21	2
6	Khorkhosa	246	116	130	731	189	542	118	15
7	Alwali	46	27	19	168	83	85	23	4
8	Bhelwa Podar Para (Kondagaon town)	1,183	348	835	4,180	2,117	2,063	4,405	2,501

The villages in north Bastar are not uniclan as are found in south Bastar. The surveyed villages are mostly in northern part of the district and as such they have a mixed population comprising higher proportion of Scheduled Castes population living in these villages Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. The percentage of Scheduled Castes population living in these villages vary between 6.52 in Dahikonga to 16.00 in Barkai village, while the Scheduled Tribes population ranges between 41.41 per cent in Barkai village to 77.78 per cent in Errakot village. It is evident that the villages in three tahsils of Narayanpur, Kondagaon and Jagdalpur are characterised by predominently tribal population. An interesting feature in this State is that areas which are characterised with low proportion of Scheduled Castes population have correspondingly high proportion of Scheduled Tribes population and viceversa. Thus Bastar district is predominantly a tribal tract.

Literacy in some of these selected villages and urban unit has shown a steady progress indicating a promising trend of growth among tribals of Jagdalpur. Barkai village has registered an increase from 10.09 per cent in 1971 to 14.01 per cent in 1981. Similarly in Dahikonga it has gone up from 8.23 per cent in 1971 to 13.04 per cent in 1981 and in Chhote Dongar from 17.28 per cent in 1971 to 20.32 in 1981. It is slightly more than the average of Narayanpur tahsil (Rural) which is 19.87 per cent. However, on the other hand, Errakot village which is down south of Jagdalpur has a very low literacy rate of 1.72 per cent. It was 1.66 per cent in 1971. Similar negative trend in the growth among literates in Karanpur and Khorkhosa was noticed during the same decade (1971-81) i.e., in 1971 it was 8.27 per cent and 8.58% that had decreased to nearly 2.64 per cent and 7.06 per cent in 1981, respectively. However, Alwahi village had shown an increase in the number of literates to the tune of 7.11 per cent in 1971 to 11.35 per cent in 1981. Bhelwa Padar Pada, the only urban unit selected for study has shown impressive literacy rate to the tune of 39.97 per cent in 1981, even in 1971 as a rural unit it had 33.71 per cent literates.

The 1981 Census data on proportion of workers to the total population in the selected villages and the urban unit indicate that Dahikonga had the maximum proportion of population i.e., 50.22% as workers followed by Chhote Dongar (47.86%). Khorkhosa (41.21) Karanpur (35.71%), Barkai (33.54%), Alwahi (33.33%) and Errakot with 32.88%. Bhelwa Padar Pada (urban) had 32.96% of its total population as workers. The following table furnishes the details of the workers in the selected villages and the urban unit.

Table II. 5

Industrial Classification (broad economic categories) of the workers per 1981 Census

(Figures in brackets are **percentages**)

Main workers classified by broad economic categories 1981

Sl. No.	Name of the Surveyed Villages	Total workers			Cultivators		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Barkai	371 (100.00)	332 (100.00)	39 (100.00)	301 (81.13)	276 (83.13)	25 (64.16)
2	Dahikonga	801 (100.00)	495 (100.00)	306 (100.00)	577 (72.03)	358 (73.32)	219 (71.57)
3	Chhote Dongar	1,095 (100.00)	677 (100.00)	418 (100.00)	670 (61.19)	437 (64.55)	233 (55.74)
4	Errakot	555 (100.00)	533 (100.00)	22 (100.00)	341 (61.44)	334 (62.66)	7 (31.82)
5	Karanpur	311 (100.00)	295 (100.00)	16 (100.00)	244 (78.46)	233 (78.98)	11 (68.75)
6	Khorkhosa	776 (100.00)	584 (100.00)	192 (100.00)	624 (80.41)	495 (84.76)	129 (67.19)
7	Alwahi	94 (100.00)	81 (100.00)	13 (100.00)	45 (47.88)	43 (53.09)	2 (15.38)
8	Bhelwa Padar Para (Kondagaon Town)	5,696 (100.00)	4,574 (100.00)	1,122 (100.00)	1,470 (25.81)	1,136 (24.83)	334 (29.77)

Table II. 5

Industrial Classification (broad economic categories) of the workers per 1981 Census

(Figures in brackets are percentage)

Main workers classified by broad economic categories 1981

Sl. No.	Name of the Surveyed villages	Agricultural Labourers			Household Industry			Other Workers		
		Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females	Persons	Males	Females
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Barkai	56 (15.09)	42 (12.65)	14 (35.90)	4 (1.08)	4 (1.21)	.. ..	10 (2.70)	10 (3.01)	.. ..
2	Dahikonga	79 (9.86)	40 (8.08)	39 (12.75)	99 (12.36)	63 (12.73)	36 (11.76)	46 (5.74)	34 (6.87)	12 (3.92)
3	Chhote Dongar	259 (23.65)	97 (14.33)	162 (38.76)	8 (0.73)	6 (0.89)	2 (0.48)	158 (14.43)	137 (20.24)	21 (5.02)
4	Errakot	189 (34.05)	176 (33.02)	13 (59.09)	23 (4.14)	22 (4.13)	1 (4.55)	2 (0.36)	1 (0.19)	1 (4.55)
5	Karanpur	37 (11.90)	32 (10.85)	5 (31.25)	28 (9.00)	28 (9.49)	.. ..	2 (0.64)	2 (0.68)	.. ..
6	Khorkhosa	123 (15.85)	63 (10.79)	60 (31.25)	14 (1.81)	14 (2.40)	.. ..	15 (1.93)	12 (2.05)	3 (1.56)
7	Alwahi	37 (39.36)	26 (32.10)	11 (84.62)	11 (11.70)	11 (13.58)	.. ..	1 (1.06)	1 (1.23)	.. ..
8	Bhelwar PadarPara (Kondagaon Town)	807 (14.17)	509 (11.43)	298 (25.56)	311 (5.46)	278 (6.08)	33 2.94)	3,018 (54.56)	2,651 (57.96)	457 (40.73)

From the above table it is noted that the primary sector of economy-agriculture is the main source of livelihood, accommodating the workers as either cultivators or agricultural labourers. There are infact more cultivators than agricultural labourers. This, however, gives an impression that the majority of the population engaged in agriculture are land-owners. But, the observations made indicate that the so called cultivators are infact engaged in shifting cultivation—wherein patches of forest land are cleaned periodically and often repeated after a considerable time interval; and do not have any ownership right. The numerically important economic category of workers were found engaged in "Household Industry". The above figures do not exactly reveal the number of workers engaged in Household Industry categorically as to identify as the Dhokra craft, weaving, pottery, basketry etc. However, it may be said that a sizeable proportion of people in the selected villages are engaged in the bell-metal craft. The following table gives the number of households practising Dhokra Craft classified by both workers engaged in the craft and in work other than the craft and non-workers.

Table II. 6

Distribution of Workers classified by Traditional and Present Occupation, Sex and Broad Age-group

Traditional Occupation	Sex	Total No. of workers	0-14 years where present occupation is			15-34 years where present occupation is			35-59 years where present occupation is			60+ years where present occupation is		
			Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of Occupation)		Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of occupation)		Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of occupation)		Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of occupation)	
				Agriculture	Casual Labour		Agriculture	Casual Labour		Agriculture	Casual Labour		Agriculture	Casual Labour
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Traditional	M	99	..	1	1	51	2	1	35	..	1	7	..	..
Occupation	F	73	..	2	1	40	3	2	19	1	1	4	..	..

In the 7 selected villages and one urban unit selected for the study a total number of 65 households of craftsmen practising the craft have been surveyed. All the craftsmen belong to Gharwa caste. The mother-tongue of the Gharwa is Halbi, which is the language spoken in the region. As has been already mentioned in the preceding discussion that the Gharwa, the artisan community of low social status also suffer from economic backwardness. The bell-metal craft which once was very popular among the local tribals was a flourishing household industry in the region in accordance with local economic conditions. Bell-metal products were used for different purposes by the tribals and that which formed essential component of their material culture and religious life. Traditionally, the tribals used to barter, the essential bell-metal items against food grains, pulses and cattle and other livestock. Presently, too as a majority of the tribals are devoid of monitary economy or cash in hand, they in their desperate needs barter with goat, cow, bull that which the craftsmen sell in the local weekly market to gain the price for their product. Such instances getting rarer for even to afford a cattle or a goat by a tribal in exchange to a Dhokra-craft product is a high stake in view of the apparent deterioration in the economic conditions of the locals. Slowly, with the decrease in the demand of Dhokra items among the local people and the increasing cost of the raw material discouraged the craftsmen to rely upon the craft and forced them to look for alternatives. Thus, quite a few of them who have given-up the practise of the craft have opted for various economic activities, more so in brick-laying industry. However, only in the recent years that the government agencies and cooperative societies are extending possible and needed help to the craftsmen for their economic upliftment through their traditional occupation.

Profile of the households practising the craft

The villages studied are characterised by multiethnic compositions. Generally, the village dwellings are found in having mud-built and thatched houses. These villages cover very large areas some times including six to twelve small hamlets often each of which represents the group of a family of a common ascendence. There is no uniform pattern of settlements of different castes and tribes in these villages as to ascribe them any pattern. The location of houses of the craftsmen does not specifically indicate any plan but, it obviously manifests that their houses are located away from the others to maintain social distance and expressing their low social status in local social hierarchy. Craftsmen are either found living together or in isolation in respective fields (land) with fence around it. Such dwelling pattern establishes not only the social distance but also their low social status. Some times the houses of the craftsmen are found widely scattered to suit the life of the land and the dimensions of the gardens and a narrow path connecting with one another.

The following Table-II. 7 provides the particulars of the distributon of population by sex and marital status of the 65 craftsmen households practising the craft.

Table II. 7

Distribution of Population Classified by Age, Sex and Marital Status

Sl. No.	Age Group	Total Population			Never Married			Married			Divorced or Separated			Widow		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	0—14	134	72	62	134	72	62	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2	15—54	178	92	86	22	15	7	153	75	78	3	2	1	..	..	..
3	55—69	16	7	9	..	..	..	12	6	6	..	..	..	4	1	3
4	70+	3	2	1	..	..	..	2	2	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
	Total	**331**	**173**	**158**	**156**	**87**	**69**	**167**	**83**	**84**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**5**	**1**	**4**

Of the total population of the craftsmen households studied, more than half (53.78%) of them are in the age-group of 15-54 years of which 85.96 per cent are ever married persons. 12.36 per cent are unmarried and rest 1.69 per cent are either divorced or separated. The second largest populated (40.48%) age-group include 0-14 years, of which none of them is married. This indicates that child marriage does not seem to be popular in this region. As the age increases the proportion of population in the given age groups decreases, thus the 55-69 age group comprises only 4.83 per cent of the total population. Only 3 persons out of 331 have their age above 70. Ever married population constitutes more than half of the total population (50.45%) followed by never married (47.13%) and a negligible proportion of divorced or separated or widowed population. It is indicated that neither the widows nor the widowers are below the age of 55 years. This is due to the fact that widow or widower or widower-remarriages are permissible and more so if the affected are young. Therefore, there is not a single individual reported to be widow/widower in the 15-54 years age group.

Table II 8

Distribution of Population Classified by Age, Sex and Educational level

Sl. No.	Age Group	Total Population			Illiterate		Literate without educational level		Educational Level: Primary or Junior Basic	
		P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	0—4	58	33	25	33	25	..	..	..	..
2	5—9	51	25	26	14	25	11	1	..	..
	10—14	25	14	11	6	8	5	3	3	..
4	15—19	28	15	13	9	10	3	1	2	2
5	20—24	38	14	24	6	24	2	..	3	..
6	25—34	55	28	27	25	25	1	..	1	2
7	35+	76	44	32	32	32	5	..	4	..
	Allages	**331**	**173**	**158**	**125**	**149**	**27**	**5**	**13**	**4**

Table II. 8—Contd.

Sl. No.	Age group	Educational Level: Middle		Matriculation or Higher secondary		Non technical diploma or Certificate not equal to degree		Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree		Graduate and above	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1	2	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
1	0—4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2	5—9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
3	10—14	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
4	15—19	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
5	20—24	2	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
6	25—34	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
7	35+	3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
	All ages	**7**	..	**1**	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

The literacy rate among the craftsmen of Gharwa community studied in 65 households practising the craft is 17.22 per cent, a figure considering in the tribal area is impressive. On the other hand, the above table indicates possible large drop outs among the students after attaining Primary or Junior schooling for their proportion in Middle School is reduced by less than half i.e., from 17 to 7 and there could be only one person who had ever gone to high school to do matriculation. In fact, more persons (32) gained literacy through informal means when compared to those who availed through formal schooling.

As it is expected among the patrilineal society all the craftsmen households practising the craft surveyed have the male as the head. The average size of household of a craftman is 5.1. However, of the 65 households the maximum number of households (18) have 6-7 members, followed by the households with 3 and

4 members each (14 households) and two membered, household (6). There were two households each having respectively 8-9 and 10-12 members among the craftsmen surveyed. The age wise particulars of head of the household and the number of household members are furnished in the following table:

Table II. 9

Distribution of Households Classified by Age and Sex of Head of the household and Number of Members

Sl. No.	Age of Head of the household	Number of household by sex of head of the household	Number of Households having members						
			2	3	4	5	6—7	8—9	10—12
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	20—29	16	3	6	3	2	2	..	..
2	30—39	21	2	4	4	4	6	1	..
3	40—49	14	..	2	4	3	3	1	1
4	50—59	8	1	2	1	..	4	..	..
5	60 and above	6	..	..	2	..	3	..	1
	Total	**65**	**6**	**14**	**14**	**9**	**18**	**2**	**2**

A majority of the head of the households are illiterate for 51 out of 65 do not know how to read and write. Among literate minority of 14 heads of the households only 4 could go up to Middle School, 5 of them reported of having attained Primary or Junior basic education and the rest of 5 are literates without having obtained any formal education. All these heads of the households follow Hindu way of life and their respective families adhere to the same.

Although, none of these 65 head of the craftsmen households have reported to have born outside the Bastar district, but 19 of them born outside the village, of which 16 reported to be in villages and 3 in town. Of these 19 migrants 8 have claimed to have been staying at the present place for more than 21 years, 2 for 11 to 20 years, 4 for 6 to 10 years and 5 claimed to be recent migrants between 1 to 5 years. A majority (12) of the migrant heads of the households have reported that the reason for migration is employment while the remaining (7) simply moved with their families and fail to give any particular reason. It may be worth mentioning here that out of the 10 households surveyed at Bhelwa Padar Pada (urban unit) 6 of them have migrated to this place from the rural areas; and the main reason for migration submitted was employment. That is to say, of the 12 households that had migrated due to employment, half of them are in the Bhelwa Padar Pada. There are, however, 46 households whose heads of the households claimed to be the original inhabitants of their respective villages.

Out of the 65 households of craftsmen surveyed a majority of them i.e., 43 of them have nuclear families, while 16 of them are having extended families and rest 6 are characterised by incomplete families for they do not fulfil the requisite domestic kin-composition. The existence of nuclear families in dominant number indicates that after marriage the sons establish their families neolocally—after having detached from their natal families. Of the 16 joint extended families, 12 are linear extended, 3 are collateral and only 1 linear-collateral extended family.

It may be seen from Table-II.10 that the percentage of workers to total population in the surveyed villages works-out to 51.96 which is less than the corresponding average of 52.98 per cent for Bastar district (rural). The relatively low proportion of workers among craftsmen indicates that the children in the school going age (0-14) are attending school more in number than those who attend to work. 90.70 per cent of the total workers are in the working age-group of 15-49 years.

Table II.10

Age-groupwise population of craftsmen households.

Age-group	Total Population			Workers			Non-workers		
	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
All ages	331	173	158	172	99	73	159	74	85
0—14	135	72	63	5	2	3	130	70	60
15—34	120	56	64	98	53	45	22	3	19
35—59	63	37	26	58	37	21	5	..	5
60+	13	8	5	11	7	4	2	1	1

The backwardness of workers among the population of the craftsmen households is reflected in their literacy rate, i.e., there are more literates among the total population of craftsmen households (17.22%) when compared to that of workers (15.70%). In other words, the literates among non-workers are far more (18.87%) than that of the workers (15.70%). However, deducting the school going children among the non-workers the literates among workers and non-workers, by and large are balanced. The proportion of illiterates among the workers accounts for 84.30 per cent while the same among the non-workers is 81.13 per cent. The following Table-II.11 gives the distribution of workers and non-workers classified by sex and educational level.

Tanble II.11

Distribution of Workers and Non-workers classified by sex and educational level.

Sl. No.	Educational Level	Number of								
		Total Population			Workers			Non-workers		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Illiterate	274	125	149	145	74	71	129	51	78
2	Literate without educational level.	32	27	6	10	9	1	22	18	4
3	Primary or Junior Basic	17	13	4	11	10	1	6	3	3
4	Middle	7	7	..	5	5	..	2	2	..
5	Matriculation or Higher Secondary	1	1	..	1	1	..	..	..	..
	Total	**331**	**173**	**158**	**17**	**99**	**73**	**159**	**74**	**85**

Table II.12

Distribution of workers classified by traditional occupation, present occupation, sex and broad age-groups

Sl. No.	Age-group (in years)	Sex	Tradition Total	Occupation: Bell-metal craft.	Cultivation	Present Occupation Agricultural & casual Labour
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	0—14	M	2	..	1	1
		F	3	..	2	1
2	15—34	M	54	51	2	1
		F	45	40	3	2
3	35—59	M	36	35	..	1
		F	21	19	1	1
4	60+years	M	7	7	..	..
		F	4	4	..	..
	Total		**172**	**156**	**9**	**7**

TABLE II.12

Of the total 172 workers 156 (90.70%) workers are engaged in Dhokra craft and only 16 (9.30%) workers are engaged as cultivators, agricultural and casual labourers. Of the total 16 workers who are not adhering to their traditional occupation, 5 of them are in the school going age (0-14). This indicates a trend among the children to deviate from their traditional occupation and to opt for new avenues; as against the same number of children (5) who are engaged in the craft. Women form fairly a good proportion of workers to the tune of 40.38 per cent as against their man counter-parts who account for 59.62 per cent of those engaged in the traditional occupation. The above situation indicates that the bell-metal craft no doubt provides main source of their livelihood, but is also supplemented by the agricultural sector; which is quite normal in the rural-economy. There are a few who go for casual labour, but this is also restricted to dull seasons in respect of craft prospects. The trend in recent times is that the Gharwa Community has developed special inclination in participating in the bricklaying industry as labourers. On the whole as there are only a few who are engaged themselves as workers on fulltime basis in agricultural sector and other industry make a small proportion.

Dhokra Craftsmen do not seem to be dependent on the practise of craft alone for earning their livelihood as quite a few of them are found to be engaged in subsidiary occupations as per the details furnished below:

Table II.13

Households classified by sex, broad age-group of the head of the household and subsidiary occupation in relation to Head of Household

Age-group	Number of households	Number of households having no subsidiary occupation	Number of households having subsidiary occupation		
			Subsidiary Occupation-1 Cultivation	Subsidiary Occupation-2 Agricultural labour	Subsidiary Occupation-3 Casual labour
1	2	3	4	5	6
15—34 . .	25	2	5	5	13
35—39 . .	34	10	16	2	6
60+ . . .	6	..	2	..	4
Total . .	**65**	**12**	**23**	**7**	**23**

TABLE II.13

Of the total 65 households studied only 12 reported as exclusively dependent upon bell-metal craft, accounting for only 18.45 per cent of the total number of households; while the rest 53 of them have claimed their dependency upon subsidiary occupation viz., cultivation (23), casual labour (23) and agricultural labour (7). This situation manifests the fact that the bell-metal which is the traditional occupation of the Gharwa community does not sustain the worker and their families fully and therefore the workers have to depend upon alternative subsidiary sources of livelihood. Although, such economic alternative arrangements are of a common feature among the artisan communities in the rural set-up, it is, however, significant to note that not even one fourth of the craftsmen households can boast of having the craft as their only economic-source.

While the participation rate among the population of Dhokra craftsmen is very high, the dependency ratio in contrast is low. The high participation is by no means, as has been seen from above, is an indication of better economic conditions. In case of agrarian/rural economy it is otherwise. The economic condition of these households is very depressing. It has, however, to be contended that the number of non-working population is proportionally low. The following table gives the particulars of the non-workers:

Table II.14

Distribution of Non-workers by Sex, Age and Type of activity

S. No.	Age-group	Total Number of Non-workers			Number of non-workers by type of activity and sex									
					Infant		Full time student		Household duties		Disabled		Any other (specify dependant)	
		P	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1.	0—14 . .	129	70	59	53	51	17	6	..	2	..	..	..	
2.	15—19 . .	10	4	6	..	..	4	..	..	3	..	.	..	3
3.	20—24 . .	8	..	8	..	..	..	..	..	8	..	.	..	.
4.	25—29 . .	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	2		.	..	
5.	30—39 . .	6	..	6	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	1	..	
6.	40—49 . .	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	2	..	..	..	
7.	50—59 . .	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	.	..	
8.	60+ . .	2	..	2	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..
	Total . .	**159**	**74**	**85**	**53**	**51**	**21**	**6**	..	**23**	..	**1**	.	**4**

Infants and the children in the 0-14 years age group who do not attend school form the main bulk i.e., 65.41 per cent of the total non-working population. There are 27 full-time students who make the next higher group comprising 16.98% of the total non-workers. Of these, 23 are in the 0-14 years age group. The next important category of non-workers include the women who are engaged in household duties, they number 23 i.e., 14.47 per cent of these, 20 are in the working age-group of 15 to 49 years.

Non-Practising Craftsmen Households

During the survey of 16 households of those craftsmen who are not practising the craft were studied. These non-practising craftsmen households earlier used to practise bell-metal craft but have discontinued it mainly because the raw-material used has become costly and they did not have the capital to invest. Moreover, the cost of products had to rise as per the input, and was beyond the means of the local tribals, to whom the craft products were traditionally sold. The poor economic conditions of the Gharwa caste restricted them to take risk of producing craft items that had no certainty of disposal/sale. The result being, many of the craftsmen had to give-up the practise of the craft and adopted alternative economic means. The demographic details of these non-practising craftsmen are furnished in the following Table:

Table II. 15

Distribution of population classified by Age, Sex and Marital Status

Sl. No.	Age-group	Total Population			Never married			Married			Divorced or separated			Unspecified		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1.	0–4	3	1	2	3	1	2	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2.	5—14	14	6	8	14	6	8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
3.	15—54	35	17	18	4	4	..	30	13	17	..	..	..	1	..	1
4.	55 and above	10	6	4	..	..	..	9	6	3	1	..	1	..	..	..
	Total	**62**	**30**	**32**	**21**	**11**	**10**	**39**	**19**	**20**	**1**	**..**	**1**	**1**	**..**	**1**

A majority of the population of the non-practising households i.e., 56.45 per cent belong to the working age-group of 15-54 years. 62.90 per cent of the total non-pratising craftsmen households were ever-married. 33.87 per cent are never-married and 1.61 per cent each divorced/separated and unspecified. The school going children in the 5 to 14 years age group constitute 22.58 per cent of the total population of the craftsmen households who are not practising the craft while; 16.13 per cent of them are above the age of 55 years.

Of the 16 households who are not practising the craft a majority of them have small number of members. The details of these households are: 2 membered households 5, 3 membered 5, 5 membered households 2 and there are one household each with 4, 6, 7 and 8 members. Of these 16 households, 12 constitute nuclear families and the rest 4 are joint families.

The details of distribution of workers and non-workers among the households not practising the craft are furnished in the following table:

Table II. 16

Distribution of Workers and Non-workers classified by Sex, Caste/Tribes/Community and broad age-group

Name of the Caste/ Tribe	Age-group	Total Population			Workers			Non-workers		
		P	M	F	P	M	F	P	M	F
Gharva	0–14	17	7	10	7	2	5	10	5	5
	15–34	19	11	8	18	10	8	1	1	..
	35–39	18	7	11	18	7	11	..	..	..
	60+	8	5	3	8	5	3	..	..	..
	All ages	**62**	**30**	**32**	**51**	**24**	**27**	**11**	**6**	**5**

A large proportion (82.26%) of the non-practising household population are workers. Of the total workers 70.59 per cent belong to the age group of 15 to 59 years. It is heartening to note that 11.29 per cent and 12.90 per cent of workers are children below the age of 14 years and old persons above the age of 60 years respectively. In fact, all the old men above the age of 60 years in all the 16 households of the non-practising craftsmen household are workers, while 58.82 per cent of the total children below the age of 14 years are also reported as workers. Interestingly, among workers the proportion of women is higher than their male counterpart i.e., 52.94 per cent of the total workers are females and 47.06 per cent are males. Such high ratio of workers among the non-practising craftsmen, particularly among children of school going age, old persons and females, reflect the poor economic conditions of the non-practising households.

The unanimous reason submitted by the 16 households surveyed for not able to continue the practise of the traditional occupation is due to lack of capital to invest upon the industry. Of these households 11 have left the practise of the craft for last 10 to 19 years, 3 in the recent times i.e., since less than 5 years and 2 since last 5 to 9 years. A majority i.e., 21 out of the 51 workers among the non-practising households are labourers. 19 of them are engaged in the brick-laying industry, which is getting popular among the Gharwa Community as alimative to Dhokra craft, 7 of them who possess land are cultivators and 4 of them involved in manufacturing combs used for hair dressing. Details of the distribution of workers among the non-practising craftsmen households are furnished in the table given below:

Table II.17

Distribution of workers classified by traditional and present occupations and broad age group

Traditional occupation of the head of the household	Total number of workers	Number of workers by age-group							
		0–14 years where present occupation is		15–34 yrs. where present occupation is		35–59 yrs. where present occupation is		60+ yrs where present occupation is	
		Same in col.1	If different (Name of occupation)	Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of occupation)	Same as in col. 1	If different (Name of occupation)	Same as in col.1	If different (Name of occupation)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Bell-metal Craft .	51	..	1. Labourer 3 2. Brick laying 4	..	1. Making comb 1 2. Brick-laying 3 3. Labourer 14	..	1. Making comb 2 2. Brick-laying 13 3. Cultivation 4	..	1. Making comb 1 2. Labourer 4 3. Cultivation 3
Total . .	**51**		**7**		**18**		**18**		**8**

Although none of the 16 households mentioned above practise their traditional occupation of Dhokra craft, yet at least one member in each family knows the skills and techniques of the craft. Of these 16 households 15 of them are willing to take-up the Dhokra craft once again, provided help in terms of provision of inputs are given to them. However, only one households had declined to start the practise of the craft once again even if the needed help is extended to him.

History of Growth and Development of the craft in the villages

A detailed account of the history of growth and origin of craft has been furnished in the preceding chapter-I. Essentially, the bell-metal craft has been one of the main aspects of Bastar-culture, because it has utilitarian, aesthetic and religious importance. The functional value of the craft products rendered them the high significance in the material culture of the people of Bastar. The ritual and functional significance of the bell-metal articrafts have been the main driving force for the evolution of the craft in the region. With the changing situations and the market conditions, the bell-metal craft and the range of bell-metal products have crossed the boundaries of traditional categories, and have developed new products without losing the ethnic characteristics.

Although nothing certain, known to the villagers, a conjunctural version was given to credit, into the history and growth of the craft. In Barkai village the bell-metal craft is said to have originated by a Gharwa man by name Arjun, some 100 years back. Sukru is said to have initiated the Dhokra-craft nearly a century back in Chotte-Dongar village. In the village Errakot the craft was originated by Paklu, father of Sukman. It was Sukman who taught the art and technique of craft to rest of the Gharwas in the region. The period ascribed to this event claimed to be 200 years back.

Owing to the notion of pollution and impurity associated with craft the Gharwa craftsmen, who even otherwise as synonymous to 'Ghasia' are considered as a low status community in local social hierarchy, it could be either way i.e., the craft by its own nature is a polluting one which degraded the Gharwa community as they practise it as their traditional occupation or because of the fact Gharwa or Ghasia, are a low status menial caste in the region, and since they started practising the craft, the craft got polluted. In any case, the social value for bell-metal craft remains traditional and dogmatic. Therefore, no other community would like to take the craft as the occupation and hence the Gharwa community invariably has the monopoly on the Dhokra craft.

CHAPTER III

Process of learning

The Gharwas who are the hereditary caste of traditional bell-metal craftsmen have successfully established their monopoly on the craft in Bastar region. As this is the traditional occupation of the said community the learning of the skills and techniques are restricted within the caste boundaries while other castes, tribes, and communities have been deprived of the privilege practising the bell-metal craft. Moreover, traditionally the Dhokra craft or the casting work is considered as a low profession hence none of the local communities would opt for it. These are some of the factors responsible for Dhokra craft to have remained confined to a particular community *i.e.* Gharwa.

Learning of the bell-metal craft techniques and skills is more a domestic affair of a household, for traditionally there is no provision of any formal Institutional facility or schooling for the children who are destined to be craftsmen as the successors to their parent craftsmen. The learning process of the craft is not initiated through any planned programme or curriculum that could have organised the stages of learning with time-period and acquisition of knowledge and skills of the craft. All that one acquires as knowledge, techniques and skills of the Dhokra craft is from the very domestic group or family that maintains the continuity and the basic social network of relationships. The said-economic relations in a domestic group are channelised through economic activities including the traditional occupation of Dhokra craft. A child, in an artisan family who practises the bell-metal craft, goes through the enculturation process in which he not only learns the basic social and cultural behaviours and values, he is also exposed to the very base of the household industry that stand uniquely in the total set-up of socio-economic existence of the domestic group. Traditionally, a child, being a novice knows about the craft as the traditional occupation and as well understands that he will eventually be mastering the skills and techniques of the bell-metal craft. The idea of being a future craftsman so clearly and conveniently established in the processes of the craftsmen children, that they are socially and congnitively conditioned to develop a personality, to establish their roles in the bell-metal craft, industry. Children, thus, in their young age play games initiating their parents (the craftsmen) while making different items. While aping their elders through games and observations they register the designs and shapes of the images and artifacts made of bell-metal in the mind and this lays foundation for the orientation that one gets. Such orientation are often received without any formal instructions from the elders and is often not viewed seriously. There is no need to teach the children that they have to be craftsmen to continue the traditional occupation. In fact, during the process of enculturation and subsequently through the socialisation they tend to learn by themselves that the bell-metal craft is the basis of their way of life. After a child attains the age of 4-5 years, he is slowly pushed into the industry of the Dhokra-craft.

The Dhokra-craft being a traditional industry never had class-rooms or any other formal institutional facilities for providing training to the entrants. As the craft is passed on from one generation to the other, the novices learn and gain the skills only by doing. Thus, it is the seniors who only impart necessary knowledge, training and orientation through their directions while the novices are the apprentices.

The process of manufacturing of Dhokra craft may broadly be classified into the following stages and the details of which have been discussed at the appropriate place elsewhere.

Stage-I :

(1) Collection of right type of clay and primary treatment thereof.

(2) Preparation of core model of clay.

(3) Preparation of Bee-wax the reads/strips and fixing them on the clay model as per the pre-conceived designs.

Stage-II :

(1) Covering of wax model with paste of fine clay.

(2) Actual casting.

(3) Final finishing.

As far the Dhokra craft is concerned, the first two steps mentioned above are attended to by the member of the household, generally by the housewives and children. This is how the children by lending their helping hand start learning the art. The subsequent steps require skill and technique to which the children or the new entrants keep observing and lending help when the master craftsmen are actually on the job. Rendering help or assistance by the children of the new entrants involves sundry job which in course of time may turn into assistance in performing the actual job. Thus when the artisan feels sure then gradually the new entrants are tought various processes by doing sundry jobs, and then the actual job under the guidance of the seniors. No organised training class is held by the artisans for training the new entrants. It is the experience gained, gradually, that makes the new entrans perfect to handle the job of manufacturing Dhokra craft artifacts independently. It takes normally 2 to 3 years for the new entrants to acquire adequate skill for handling the job independently. For the youngsters the period may stretch up to 4 to 5 years. Actual casting is generally done by the male artisans. Females abstain themselves from doing the actual job of casting, probably because of the complicated nature of job and the risk of handling molten metal.

With the establishment of the State Handicrafts Board during the recent past and the developmental activities undertaken by this organisation, training-cum-production centres are now functioning where organised training classes are held for the trainees of Dhokra craft. One such training centre is functioning in Kondagaon of Bastar district where training is imparted to 10 participants at a time. The training period is one year during which a stipend of Rs. 100/- per month is given to the trainees. The terms and conditions for acquiring training are that the trainees should belong to Gharwa caste and the item manufactured by them during the course of training are the property of the centre. However, as discussed earlier, except for negligible number of craftsmen, generally all the craftsmen availed the necessary training from the close-kins in traditional ways. The training in the bell-meal craft includes all the stage of manufacturing, there is no such particular stage of manufacturing that is specially trained by any particular instructor, rather training imparted involves all the stages i.e. from the collection of soil or clay to the polishing of the finished product. The following Table III. 1 furnishes the details in respect of craftsmen classified by relationship with the head of the household, the person imparted training and period engaged in the craft.

Table III. 1

Distribution of persons classified by relationsip with the head, the person imparted training and the period engaged in the craft

Sl. No.	Period engaged in the craft	Number of persons engaged in the craft	Number of persons egnaged in the craft who are related to head as							
			Self (head of the household) who received training from		Wife, who received training from		Son, who received training from		Son's wife who received training from	
			Kin 1 Father	Other (specify)	Kin-1 Father	Kin 2 Husband	Kin 2 Father	Other	Kin 1 Father	Kin 2 Husband
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1.	Less than 5 yrs.	24	..	..	..	7	..	1	5	..
2.	5– 9 yrs.	30	2	4	4	4	7	2	1	4
3.	10– 19 yrs.	49	14	8	14	6	5	..	..	..
4.	20+ yrs.	53	34	2	..	14	..	..	..	..
	Total	**156**	**51**	**14**	**18**	**31**	**12**	**3**	**6**	**4**

Number of persons engaged in the craft who are related to head as											Period engaged in the craft	
Brother who received training from		Son's son who received training from	Daughter, who received training from		Father who received training from		Other males (specify) who received training from		Other Female (specify) who received training from			
Kin 1 Father	Other	Kin 1 Father	Kin 1 Father	Other	Kin 1 Father	Other	Kin 1 Fathter	Other	Kin 1 Father	Kin 2 husband		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	1	2
..	4	1	..	1	..	..	1	1	..	2	1.	Less than 5 yrs
1	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2.	5–9 yrs.
..	..	..	1	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	3.	10–19 yrs.
..	..	..	..	..	2	1	..	..	..	..	4.	20+ yrs.
1	**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**		**Total**

Majority of the craftsmen i.e. 83.97 per cent are old enough to have more than 20 years work experience in the bell-metal craft, 31.42 per cent are engaged in the craft for 10 to 19 years, the proportion of craftsmen with 5 to 9 years experience in the craft works out to 19.23 per cent and 15.38 per cent of them have been engaged in the craft for less than 5 years. These figures indicate that proportionally the number of craftsmen increase as the age of the craftsmen in accordance with the period of work experience. The negative trend or decrease in the number in the proportion of craftsmen is observed as the time period engaged in the craft is lessened. This indicates that in the recent years the trend is that proportionally the number of persons practising the craft is not increasing. This suggests the deviation from the traditional occupation among the Gharwa younger generation. More than two-third of the total head of the households i.e., 51 (78.46%) out of 65 received training from father only 14 (21.54%) had been trained by other including sister's husband, wife's brother, mother's brother, brother and by the instructor in the centre. Of the total 65 housewives of the head of the household a majority (31) of them were trained only after marriage by their spouses while 18 of them in any case were trained by the father before marriage. The continuation of the practice of the Dhokra-craft from generation to generation shows a distressing trend so far as a patrineal succession pattern of traditional occupation of Dhokra craft is concerned for a single individual. There are a total of only 10 sons who reported to have been trained by father. In fact in the preceding generation their mother's proportionally out number (18) their sons for having been benefitted by the training given by the father. However in the case of daughters (before marriage) who had been trained by the father is further reduced to a single individual. There are a total or only 10 daughters-in-law who are presently practising the craft, of these 4 of them never knew the techniques and skills of the craft till they were married i.e. only after marriage were they trained by their respective husbands, the rest 6 however received training from father. In the older generation it seems that generally it is the father who used to train the son. There are 2 such fathers of the heads of the households practising the craft have reported to have received training from their respective fathers. The details in respect of duration of training and terms and condition and remunerations received thereof are furnished in the following table.

Table III.2

Distribution of persons engaged in craft classified by relationship with the head, the person imparted training, period of training and terms and conditions of training

S. No.	Relationship with the head	Number of persons engaged in the craft	Number of persons engaged in the craft received training from			No. of persons in the craft who received tarining from			No. of persons engaged in the craft received training from			
			Kin 1 Father	Kin 2 Husband	Others*	Father 2+yrs. on obligatory	Husband 2+yrs. on obligatory	Others* obligatory	Father 2+yrs. on No terms & conditions	Husband 2+yrs. on No terms & conditions	Others* on No terms & conditions	2+yrs. on Terms & conditions
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1.	Self (Head)	65	51	..	14	51	..	14	51	..	13	1
2.	Wife	49	18	31	..	18	31	..	18	31	..	..
3.	Son	15	12	..	3	12	..	3	12	..	3	..
4.	Son's wife	10	6	4	..	6	4	..	6	4	..	..
5.	Daughter	2	1	..	1	1	..	1	1	..	1	..
6.	Daughter's Husband	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..
7.	Brother	5	1	..	4	1	..	4	1	..	4	..
8.	Brother's wife	1	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..
9.	Brother's son	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..
10.	Brother's son's wife	1	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..
11.	Son's son	2	2	..	..	2	..	..	2	..	..	..
12.	Mother	1	1	..	..	1	..	..	1	..	..	..
13.	Father	3	2	..	1	2	..	1	2	..	1	..
	Total	***156***	***95***	***37***	***24***	***95***	***37***	***24***	***95***	***37***	***23***	***1***

*Brother, Sister's husband, Wife's brother, Mother's brother & training centre.

Of the total craftsmen (156) 60.90 per cent had received training from their fathers, 23.72 per cent from husband and rest 15.38 per cent are trained by other close kins mentioned above and by the instructor in the centre. A majority 51 (78.46%) of the craftsmen who are the heads of household received training from the father, while only 21.54 per cent of them received training from brother, sister's husband, wife's brother, mother's brother and instructor. More than two years time period is required for training in the craft and all the craftsmen have been trained for the needed duration. All the trained craftsmen had to pay no remuneration at all as the persons including the kin and the instructors at the training centre imparted training have done on obligatory grounds. Since it is obligatory on the part of the kin like, father, husband and any other close relation to give training to their juniors, there is no terms and conditions involved in training the novices. However, the only condition that is observed is that the trainee should be member of Gharwa community. At the training centre located at Jagdalpur, the artifacts manufactured by the trainees during the training period are the property of the centre and the trainees have no right on them. Except for 6 (3.85%) craftsmen who are engaged is the craft rest 150 (96.15%) of them are contented with the training received and consider it adequate. Those who expressed that training received was inadequate gave the reason that the technology is very old and primitive and hence desire to have modern machinery to accelerate the production rate and bring out better finished products as per the market requirements. All these craftsmen (6) who seek better training consider that the training that is being imparted in the craft-centre in respect of using modern technology, developing new concepts and applications of new skills in manufacturing bell-metal articrafts is good enough, and they shall be continued if the said training facilities are made available to them. However, the majority *i.e.*, 150 out of 156 craftsmen who are satisfied with the training received obviously not in favour of getting any further training in the craft.

Biographical sketches

The Dhokra craft has been the traditional occupation of the Gharwa community. Until today there are many Gharwa families who exclusively depend upon the bell-metal craft for livelihood. As this craft has been closely associated with the lives of the craftsmen who depend upon it, a few brief biographical accounts of these will focus more light (as the individual of craftsmen) in understanding the development of the bell-metal craft. Following are the few biographical accounts of the craftsmen who have mastered the art of bell-metal craft:

Biography	(Master craftsman)
Name	Mr. Jaidew Baghel. Age : 60 Year
Caste	Gharwa
Religion	Hindu.

Mr. Jaidev Bakhal is born and brought-up in Kondagaon located about 225 km. south of Raipur (Madhya Pradesh). His parents, however, were originally the residents of the village Kokamita in Narayanpur Tahsil. His father, 75 years back had migrated to Bhilwa Padar Pada (Kondagaon). Jaidev's father was one of the pioneer craftsmen who had spent all his life in propagating and extension of the bell-metal craft. It is claimed that his father was one of the very few craftsmen who took the initiative in popularising the craft in the outside world and claimed to have brought recognition.

Jaidev was mainly inspired by his father. He acknowledges the problems of those days when his father first came to Kondagaon and started the craft. The images made by his father and other ancestors stand testimony to their creativity and traditional heritage. Being trained by his father and following his foot-steps, Jaidev has retained the traditionalism and ethnic characteristics of the bell-metal craft artifacts and at the same time has adopted new concepts and items as to make the craft suitable to the popular choice and demand in the market.

It was not all that easy for a craftsman to establish with the help of craft alone. Jaidev, had to work as 'Chowkidar' (watchman) (1967-68) in the Forest Department for two years and was paid Rs. 75 per month. Despite the meagre income, he could save Rs. 300 which he invested in establishing a work-shop to practise bell-metal craft in 1969. In 1971, with his pioneering efforts and initiate a co-operative society was started functioning at Kondagaon. In fact he was the founder and leading member of the co-operative society called Hastashilpa Udyog Cooperative Society. Subsequently in 1981 he also initiated an organisation for the cause of extension of the craft, by the name "Paramparic Bastar Silpi Parivar," or "Organisation of the Traditional Craftsmen of Bastar."

Jaidev conducted apprentice training scheme organised by All India Handicraft Board and Madhya Pradesh Handicrafts Board. Now he is imparting training to even training Master craftsmen of bell-metal craft at Kondagaon. His contention is that the training imparted earlier was non-conventional and lacked procedural-methods; presently those who are being trained are comparatively getting better exposure methodelogically.

Although, he has the best equipped workshop he feels the same is not with any of the fellow-craftsmen. The existing economic conditions of the Gharwa craftsmen do not permit them to depend upon the craft also due to its uncertain market prospects of the products. As most of the craftsmen are poverty striken, they are not in a position to invest on inputs mainly the raw material which is evidently very expensive. Thus the main problems of the craft lie in raising funds for buying raw-material and selling finished products. Although the existing cooperative societies do help the craftsmen but yet, Jaidev feels that there should be better means for providing raw-material and ensure the sales of the finished products by creating better market.

Jaidev is a celebrity so far as the bell-metal craft in concerned. Different awards received by him stand as testimony to his workmanship. Following are the awards won by him.

(1) Best Gharwa Bronze (Bell-Metal) Art Master of Madhya Pradesh.

(2) National Master Crafasman in Brass-Bronze (Bell Metal) by All India Handicrafts Board—1977.

(3) Gold Plaque, All India Art Exhibition (M.P.) Maha Koshal Kala Parishad, Raipur-1980.

(4) Shikhar Samman by M.P. Government.

He has organised solo exhibitions in almost all the important galleries in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi and Pune. He has participated in innumerable group exhibitions in the countries abroad. Moreover he had been to all the festival of India extravagangas abroad as a participant. Presently he is imparting training to the craftsmen.

Biography 2 : (Master crftsman)

Name	:	Gabdu Rame
Age	:	36 Years
Cast	:	Gharwa
Religion	:	Hind.

Gabdu Ram's parents originally were the resident of Kamapur village Kondagaon tahsil. 70 years back he had migrated from Kamapur in the village Alwahi. Gabdu Ram studied upto third standard and had discontinued studies to join bell-metal craft. As in the tradition, Gabdu Ram obtained the training from his father in the art and techniques of bell-metal craft. He has been married for last 15 years and blessed with two sons. There are six members in his family, that includes self, wife, sons and younger brother. It was told that due to poor economic conditions Gabdu Ram had to join his father to give him a helping hand in the bell-metal craft and simultaneously learned the art and techniques of bell-metal craft.

The training in respect of Dhokra craft imparted by Gabdu Ram's father is claimed to be sufficient. And even if there is better training available elsewhere he is not willing to avail for it would not help him any way so far as disposal of the products are concerned. Just like any other craftsmen in the region his main problem lies in raising funds for the raw material Some time back he had received financial assistance from the local cooperative society for purchasing raw-material. But he could not obtain much out of it as the finished product could not be sold at a good price to gain a impressive profit margin. The other problem of Gabadu Ram in particular and the craftsmen in general in the region include the problem with disposal of the products with good price, and the lack of proper work-shop to ensure production, throughout the year. Although, his prime occupation is bell-metal craft, but it does not sustain his family fully. Hence, he and his brother frequently go far casual labour which provide them subsidiary source of income. That is why he does not want his children to entirely depend upon craft rather wants them to be well educated to get government jobs, that which ensures guaranteed income.

Biography 3 : (Master craftsman)

Name	:	Manglu
Age	:	40 Years
Caste	:	Ghara
Religion	:	Hindu

Manglu lives in the village Errakot where his birth took place. His father had migrated to Errakot from Marenga, a village in Jagdalpur tahsil. The prime source of family income is derived from the bell-metal craft, which has been their traditional occupation. Manglu could study upto first standard only. Basically, he was a cultivator but meagre agricultural out put was not sufficient, hence after marriage he learned the craft from his in-laws i.e., from wife's father and wife's brother. After having obtained proper training he established his own production centre. Now he has four members (self, wife, son and son's wife) of his family looking in the work shop manufacturing bell-metal artifacts. He has family of seven members.

They still depend upon agriculture as a subsidiary source of income the problems that were opined by Manglu are the ones that are common to craftsmen in general viz., disposal of finished products, funds, lack of proper workshop and non-availibility of raw material.

Biography 4 : (Master craftsman)

Name	:	Manku Ram
Age	:	39 Years
Caste	:	Gharwa
Religion	:	Hindu

Manku Ram's family originally migrated from the village Basla located in Narayanpur Tahsil and presently settled down in Koram village of Kondagaon tahsil. Because of poor economic condition of his family he could not attend school, for had to, from his early childhood, give a helping hand to his parents, in craft and other household cores.

Manku Ram's father had imparted all the necessary training in respect of bell-metal craft. He has a family of 8 members of which 2 only are involved in the craft they, by and large, depend upon selling the bell-metal craft products and claim that with occasional income derived from casual labour they are managing the family consumption. Although the exact amount of income was not revealed it was told that they have sold some 60 finished products last years.

As Manku Ram's family does not possess any agricultural land, their main efforts are to make sufficient livelihood from the craft alone. However, the problems with the practise of bell-metal craft lies in availing raw material, capital and proper market facilities. Manku Ram claims that the rainy season is the dull season so far as practise of craft is concerned as they do not have a proper work shop they had to abandon it in peak-rainy season. Thus they aspire to have separate work shop where the work and production of bell-metal craft continues all seasons.

CHAPTER IV

MANUFACTURING PROCESSES

Place of Work

In all the villages and the urban unit surveyed, the Dhokra craft is being practised by a single community called Gharwa. The bell-metal craft is not only their traditional occupation but also for some it is the only source of income. The craft of bell-metal casting is essentially a domestic one i.e., to say all the activities related to manufacturing processes are confined to the premises of the dwelling unit. Their exact place of work is generally located in the courtyard. In majority of the cases the place of work does not have any independent structure with roof or walls, rather it is the open. The place of work is generally identified with a hearth like small furnace that is meant for melting and casting of the raw material. Otherwise, there is no distinct or different set-up for the place of work. However, a few households do have a separate place of work adjoining the dwelling house. All these places of work are so small that they are not fit for large scale production. Of the total 65 households of the crafsmen studied, only one owns a work-shop while the rest 64 households do not possess any work-shop. Except for one worker practising the craft belonging to the lone household that owns a work-shop located within a distance of one kilometer, rest 155 craftsmen of 64 households practising the craft need not cover any distance to reach the place of work as it is attached to their respective residences. The following Table-IV.1 gives the details of workers classified by place of work and area occupied.

Table IV.1

Place of work of persons engaged in the craft by Area occupied and number of persons working therein

Place of work	Number of households and persons engaged in the craft	Occupied area of the place of work					
		Less than 3 sq. mts. and number of persons working at the place of work noted in col. 1			3—5 sq. mts. and number of persons working at the place of work noted in col. 1		
		Single	2—5	Total	Single	2—5	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Part of dwelling house	Household 64	1	5	6	1	5	6
	Workers-155	..	..	10	..	..	15
2. Workshop owned by the household	Household 1	..	..	..	..	..	..
	Worker-1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Total	**Household-65**	**1**	**5**	**6**	**1**	**5**	**6**
	Workers-156	..	..	**10**	..	..	**15**

Table IV.1—*Contd.*

Place of work		Occupied area of the place of work									
		6—10 sq. mts. and number of persons working at the place of work noted in col.			11—16 sq. mts. and number of persons working at the place of work noted in col. 1				25+ sq. mts. and number of persons wokring at the place of work noted in col.1		
		Single	2-5	Total	Single	2-5	6-10	Total	Single	2-5	Total
1	2	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1. Part of dwelling house	Households 64	3	23	26	6	17	1	24	..	2	2
	Workers-155	..	..	62	..	..	..	62	..	..	6
2. Workshop owned by the household	Households 1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1	..	1
	Worker-1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1
Total	**Household-65**	**3**	**23**	**26**	**6**	**17**	**1**	**24**	**1**	**2**	**3**
	Workers-156	..	..	**62**	..	**70**	..	**62**	..	..	**7**

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All the workers engaged (155) except one, have their place of work as the part of their dwelling units. The craftsmen are required to work in a clumsy surroundings with whatever little space they have within the premises of the house. On an average each household of the craftsmen studied has 2.40 craftsmen engaged in the craft. A majority of the craftsmen (39.74%) utilise the space of either 6 to 10 sq. mtrs. or 11 to 16 sq. mtrs., 9.62 per cent of the craftsmen practising the bell-metal craft have the place of work as big as 3 to 5 sq. mtrs., 6.41 per cent are working in the space of less than 3 sq. mtrs. Only 7 (4.49%) out 156 workers, in 3 households out of the total 65 households are privileged to have the place of work spread over an area of more than 25 sq. mtrs.

A majority of the households have the place of work adjacent to the dwelling house and hence the members of the households find it easy to extend a helping hand any time. Moreover, one can work any time of the day and can look after the house at the same time. The women folk particularly claimed the place of work attached to the house more convinient to attend as they can simultaneously do the work associated with the craft and look after the domestic cores. In fact, in many instances, the very dwelling house is often used as the place of work, which causes problems of space. Some of the heads of the households expressed that the number of family members are increasing while the space remains the same. Although all-most all the houses possess sufficient open space in the front or in the backyard where a work-shed having adequate space could be constructed, no-one would execute such a project for the common reason submitted "the lack of funds." Although, their present economic condition do not permit them to aspire a full-fledged work-shed yet some space with the help of locally available material like wood and hay could have facilitated them to have an independent place of work. This also was not taken into consideration by the craftsmen for they hope for government loan or subsidy that would help them to have a proper work-shed. The real problem with the practise of bell-metal craft is faced in the rainy season for one cannot work in the open. It becomes problem for earthern moulds, for these are required to be dried under some roof and so does the fire-place needs protection from the rain. Thus the rainy season restricts the craftsmen, without proper work-shed, to function normal. This situation in rainy season discourages the craftsmen to depend upon the bell-metal craft. Therefore, they divert themselves to work as agricultural labour during the rainy season.

Work-shop Grant

The Handicraft Board of the Madhya Pradesh Government has made necessary provision to grant a subsidy of Rs. 5000 to craftsmen engaged in the bell-metal craft for the construction of workshed or work-shop. It has been noted that in none of the units the space utilised as the place for work is adequate yet none of the craftsmen has ever thought of availing the government assistance to construct a proper work-shed or work-shop. A majority of the craftsmen are in fact unaware of any assistance provided by the government agencies for the construction of workshop. While a few those who are aware are not willing to avail the opportunity due to the fear of probable ordeal that one has to go through after having availed any loan offered by the government. Illiteracy among the craftsmen has been the prime reason to develop skeptical views towards the government extended facilities particularly in respect of financial assistance. Further more, they fail to understand the rules and regulations involved in availing loan; and fear that their ignorance may make them vulnerable and they shall be the loosers in the bargain. This seems reasonable feeling for a simple, illiterate and needy craftsmen as it is difficult in his part to comprehend the cumbersome procedures involved in sanctioning of any government subsidy or loan. His ignorance, therefore, generates apparent apprehensions towards any government assistance. Even, in case of any craftsmen who wants to avail any loan towards the construction of a workshed he will not be paid directly by the government agency. When the craftsman produces the vouchers bills etc., partaining to the purchase of construction materials like bricks, tiles, lime, sand, stone etc., that are supplied by the businessmen, the amount instead of being paid to the craftsmen is paid to the businessmen. To this effect, the All India Handicrafts Board has been issuing instructions to the concerned State Government departments from time to time to follow liberal policy in granting subsidies and providing other facilities to craftsmen, but there seems some difficulties involved in implementing and executing the directed policies. The facts remain that these facilities are not easily available to the craftsmen.

It has already been discussed in the preceding chapters that the Dhokra or bell-metal craft is the traditional occupation of the Gharwa caste. Gharwa is in fact synonymous to Ghasi, a low caste community spread widely in and around Bastar. Their social status is placed in the lower stratum of the local social hierarchy and they are subjected to various social disabilities found in the region. There are, in fact, two ways to visualise the pollution associated to the craft. In one perspective, it is the Gharwa caste's low status that forbids them to be associated with purity and that which reflected in their occupation which has been subjected to pollution being exclusively and traditionally associated with status of the said community. The contention embodied in this point of view is that, had the status of the caste associated with the craft been high, accordingly this craft could have been ascribed the notion of purity. The Ghasia, the synonym of Gharwa who were traditionally engaged in the profession of sending horses and weaving coarse clothes. The Gharwas claim a social status, in the local social hierarchy, that is superior to Chamar and Mehtar or Ganda castes, while they fall below the status of the local community viz., Muria, Bhattra and Raut, Lohar etc., the Gharwas are in any case a menial community in the region, but their social status has been further degraded due to the fact that they were once used to live on begging

the left over food in households of the local tribals and other castes. As they used to eat *'baasi'* or stale food which is *'Jhoota'* or contaminated due to the touch of saliva, they are not only considered inferior but also considered as a polluted community. And since they are subjected to pollution whatever occupation. They pursue, be in Dhokra craft, it becomes impure

The other point of view in respect of the notion of pollution associated with the bell-metal craft is due to the very nature of manufacturing and the implements that are used in casting. The most vehemently expressed reason for impurity ascribed to this craft is because of the *'Dhokni'* or blower that is made of hide of buffalo or cow. In the ritual local value and attitude, leather is one of the most polluting material. The other opinion in this regard is associated with casting or burning of scrap raw material that are mostly warm out or disposed of utensils, to make different images: is also considered as an impure act. It is also said that the locals make offerings of bell-metal figurines of deities by keeping them in secluded mangroves and these figurines are often stolen and recasted to new ones. The sacred figures that are stolen and burnt to recast is also opined as an act of pollution in the local exigency. The above said reasons are responsible for characterising, the practice of bell-metal craft as an impure occupation.

Although the practice of bell-metal craft normatively coined as an impure one, its economic status reasoned out by the craftsmen with mixed feelings i.e. some favoured it as a rewarding one, while others submitted a contrary view. In fact, the dichotomised views in regard to the households practising the craft expressing to have improved the economic status and non-improved are more or less balanced. Out of the 65 households of craftsmen studied, 32 of them have submitted the opinion that they have improved their economic status while the 33 of them claimed to have not improved their economic condition. The prime reasons submitted by the 32 households who admitted to have improved their economic status include:

(1) Goods produced are promptly purchased by the cooperative society.

(2) Sale of products at remunerative price.

(3) Improved market facilities and sales prospects have generated employment sources for the members of the household that enhanced family income.

Nevertheless, there are reasons submitted by 33 households of the craftsmen practising bell-metal craft which justify their claim that by practising the bell-metal craft they have not improved their economic status in any way. The prime reasons that are denoted in favour of the above verdict include:

(1) Non-availability of raw materials.

(2) Raw materials being costly.

(3) Lack of capital for investment.

(4) Lack of proper market facilities and sales prospects in the remote areas.

(5) The cost of production often balances out with the sales price, having no margin for profit or gain.

(6) Lack of proper workshop or workshed to ensure production in all seasons specially in the rainy season.

(7) Unable to modernise the concepts, designs of the artifacts produced to suit the present trend.

(8) There is a lag between the consistent growth in the number of craftsmen and the market and sales prospects, as the former proportionally consistently increasing than the latter.

(9) Illiteracy among the craftsmen restricts them to handle the market and sales procedures independently. Ignorance and unawareness of market economy and transaction methods.

The above view points that are discussed above which establishes the notion that the practice of the bell-metal craft is not helping the craftsmen to improve upon their economic status, nor is it accomplishing any high social status rather it is subjugated them to low status and pollution. The recent exposure to the market and media-knowledge has caused the craftsmen to rethink about the traditional normative values. The younger generation of craftsmen even started rationalising the practice of craft as a non-polluting one. Rather, the stand in recent times is that it is a pure one for it involves in the manufacturing of various sacred figurines and objects. Such rethinking is generally manifested among the craftsmen either living in the urban centre are in its close vicinity. The rural craftsmen in the interior have hardly changed their out-look so far as the status of the craft is concerned. Majority of the households who have expressed a positive view in regard to the prospects of the bell-metal craft live either in Bhelwa Padar Pada (Kondagaon town) or in the villages in proximity viz., Barkai and Dahikonga. Kondagaon town where the Cooperative society is located is easily approachable and has good communication facilities. The cooperative society and the local market at Kondagaon provide better facilities for sale of the craft products and also provide a reasonably remunerative price. Following are the various types of Bell-metal items produced, for different purposes.

I. Religious objects

Budha Dev, Bhairav Dev, Bhima Dev, Sandhya Rao Dev, Phool Kuber Devi, Sem Kuber Devi, Dokra Dev, Danteswari Mata, Mabali, Budhi Mata, Paradesan Mata, Telangin Mata, Banjarin Mata, Khanda Kankalin Mata, Aingalajin Mata, Godin Mata, Nehar Diya (Lamp), Todi (Musical instrument horn) etc.

II. Domestic utensils

'Katori' or bowl, *Thali* or plate, *'Lota'* or water container (pitcher), *'bela'* or spoon, *'Orki'*, *'Pharsi'*

or plier, *'tangia'* or angulars that are fixed on the walls for hanging clothes, *'Padari'* or container, *'Mooth'* or serving spoon, *'Kalash'* or pitcher, *'Gopli'*, *'tari'* or frying pan, *'Dhuti'* or purse, *'Peti'* or box, *'Kadri'* or knife, ash-tray, Lamp etc.

III. Ornaments

Male:—*'Kamar patta'* or waist chain, *'Kaan Mungi'* or ear rings, *'Ludki'* or twin-rings used as ear-rings.

Female:—*'Pedi'* or anklets, *'Khadu'* or bracelets, *'bahata'*, *'Suta'* or strap around the neck, *'Kardhan'* or waist chain, *'mala'* or necklace, *'nahanu'* an ornament used around neck, *'sirbandh'* or an ornament which is used to decorate fore-head, *'mundi'* or rings used for decorating fingers, *'Paon Chutki'* or toe rings, etc.

IV. Decorative Items

'Salphi' or sago palm tree (caryatra urens), *'Mahua'* (Madhuka latifolia), Dear, Elephant, peacock, Ox, tiger, tortoise, flower vase, frog, crocodile, scorpion, snake, *'Pandan'* or beat-nut container, candle-stand etc.

Each of these items embodied with folk style and ethnic characteristics. They are mostly prototypes of the natural objects and are more symbolic in their manifestation with forceful expression. Every item is unique and no two items could be identical in bell-metal craft.

The figurines of gods and godesses are made mainly to meet the needs of tribals in the region. The way of life and the religious/ritual activities of the local tribal communities are centred around the offerings of various images of the deities and animals, to appease the concerned deity. Infact, the offerings of bell-metal artifacts of animals in honour of the deity is the substitute to actual sacrifice of the live animals which is too expensive to perform.

All the domestic utensils made of bell-metal were traditionally produced by the Gharwa community. Every household in the Bastar region was using the said utensils for cooking, serving, preserving and storing. But in the recent times their use has been minimised as the bell-metal items, because these are expensive as per the existing economic standards of the local communities. A few of the craftsmen, therefore, have opted for cheaper metal like aluminium utensils for domestic use. However, such substitute metal wares made of aluminium are losing popularity in view of the facsination developed for the more shining stainless-steel utensils available on a marginally higher cost.

With the improvement of communication and transportation in the region the number of visitors to the area has increased. The unique and distinct characteristics of the Dhokra craft items have attracted the attention of the visitors. This has accentuated the demand of Dhokra art in the domestic market and as well as outside. With the increase in demand in the market, the artisans engaged in Dhokra craft have become conscious and have started producing varied items as per the taste of the customers. The following table gives the number of items manufactured and the reasons for seasonal variation therein.

Table IV.2

Distribution of Households manufacturing handicraft objects by number of items manufactured in a month and seasonal variation in the production of the items as related to educational level of the head of the household

Educational level	Number of households manufacturing handicraft items	Number reporting number of items manufactured in a month				Reasons for seasonal variation in the production of the items
		Less than 10	10--25	26--50	51--100	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Illiterate	51	..	32	14	5	1. Production rate goes down in rainy season due to lack of workshed.
2. Literate without educational level.	5	..	3	2	..	2. Low demand of manufactured items in non-festive seasons.
3. Primary or Junior Basic .	5	..	2	2	1	3. Delayed order from society.
4. Middle	4	2	2	..	..	4. Lack of capital for purchasing raw materials.
						5. Poor sales prospects of the produced items.
Total	**65**	**2**	**39**	**18**	**6**	

It is difficult to ascertain the types of artifacts manufactured for the craftsmen do not keep any record nor could they able to recall. However, they all claim that they have produced all the objects mentioned earlier, at one time or the other. From the above table it is observed that a majority of the households (39) reported to have manufactured 10 to 25 items in a month followed by 18 households who could able to produce 26 to 50 items and 6 households have claimed to have manufactured as many as 51 to 100 items. Only 2 households of the craftsmen admitted that they are unable to manufacture more than 10 items of bell-metal in a month. The reasons submitted for seasonal variation in the quantum of production are the same as the problems that are faced by the craftsmen in general.

The various bell-metal items produced are of varying size and weight ranging from 50 grams to 5 kg. The range of items produced does not vary from village to village. Similar items are produced in all the places and by different craftsmen. There is no such distinction that a particular village or centre is producing a particular item. It is, however, possible that the craftsmen may produce a particular item, if he gets an order to do so. By and large, the same items of varying size are produced at different craft centres. Of the 65 households found engaged in this craft surveyed, the heads of the households in respect of 51 illiterate, 5 are literate without attaining any educational level, 5 have attained primary level education and remaining 4 have studied up to middle school. The Dhokra craft has not reached a stage which may reflect any distinction in the range of items being produced according to educational status. Most of the craftsmen are still practising the craft according to their traditional methods.

The important materials used in the Dhokra craft are brass scraps, bee-wax, fuel wood and charcoal for casting the metal and clay for preparing the moulds.

1. Brass Scraps

Brass scraps used in the manufacturing of Dhokra craft items are found in the form of broken utensils of '*Kansa*' or brass and scraps of brass sheets. The latter material is a recent introduction, but the craftsmen are not in favour of using it because of its being very costly. Moreover, the scraps of brass sheets are required to be imported from far flung areas and the transportation cost involved in it increases the cost of the material. The craftsmen, therefore, continue to follow their traditional method of using broken utensils of brass that are locally available to them at a cheaper rate. Although the scraps of brass sheets, (technically a superior raw material) for casting which may enhance the quality of the product, the craftsmen are often discouraged to adopt this material as they fear input expenses may exceed the sale price of products. It is reported by the artisans that in case the scraps of brass sheets are made available to them by the government agency at a cheaper rate their production may improve both qualitatively and quantitatively but no such facilities are forthcoming. As the brass scraps in the form of broken utensils are easily available in "*hat*" or weekly market and in shops at Kondagaon and Jagdalpur, the craftsmen prefer to adhere to the traditional method.

2. Bee-Wax

Bastar district is endowed with rich forests and the availability of bee-wax is no problem. The age-old practice of using bee-wax is still very much in vogue, though of late with the opening of this tract with other areas due to improvement in communications facilities, the paraffin wax is also easily available. But because of less maleability in the paraffin wax, exclusive use of this type of wax is not suitable. A few craftsmen have, however, started using the paraffin wax by mixing it with the bee-wax in a very small proportion to maintain proper strength in the wax thread used in the process of manufacturing Dhokra crafts. The bee-wax has the speciality of its being very soft, smooth, maleable and most suited for the Dhokra craft, because of its softness and elasticity the bee-wax is used by the craftsmen of Dhokra craft extensively.

Bee-wax is available in plentiful because of the extensive forests in and around the Dhokra craft centres. In fact quite a few tribals earn their livelihood by collecting honey and wax from the bee-hives in the jungles. As such they sell this item in the weekly markets and also in shops at Kondagaon, Jagdalpur and other big villages. The craftsmen get this raw material some times through barter system in exchange of their Dhokra products in the weekly markets and also from the shops in nearby places where it is available.

The other material used for the manufacture of Dhokra craft is rice bran or husk is used to prepare moulds by mixing it with clay and is available within the village. In case the craftsman's household depends upon cultivation the availability of rice bran is no problem for him, as part of the requirement is easily met within the house.

3. Fuel wood and Charcoal

Fuel wood was once available in abundance in the region for there was no restriction in collecting wood from the surrounding forests. In the recent times, however, restrictions on the collection of fire wood and on the felling of trees have been imposed by the forest department. This has caused a great deal of inconvinence to the craftsmen. The fuel wood used in the furnace for the manufacture of Dhokra craft is of a special variety locally called as *Dhawda wood*, found in the form of log which can last longer in the furnace and generates intense heat. The forest department has opened sale depots at Kondagaon, Farasgaon, Chotte Dongar, Tohkapal etc. The craftsmen are therefore required to purchase their forest requirements from these sale depots which was once acquired freely from the forest. Purchase of fuel wood has be come additional investment in the production. Charcoal is also used for the furnace. The

charcoal is generally collected either from the cooking-hearth or from the wood used in the furnace.

4. Clay

The clay used for preparing the moulds is usually collected from the river bank or nearby streams and from ant hills.

So far as the role of government agencies in providing the raw materials like brass scraps and bee-wax is concerned, it is not very encouraging as the raw materials are supplied from the fixed centres which are not easily accessible to the craftsmen. Moreover the rates at which the raw materials are supplied are somewhat costlier. The craftsmen are required to commute quite often and cover longer distance for the purchase of raw materials as they cannot purchase in bulk for want of finance.

The following table gives the average monthly consumption of raw material classified by educational level of the head of households:

Table IV.3

Details of raw materials used for the manufacture of different items, Average monthly concumption of Raw-materils by seasonal variations for manufacturing different items of Handicraft classified by educational level of the household

Educational level of head of household	No. of households manufacturing handicraft items	Avearge monthly consumption of each raw materials		
		Raw material Brass metal-1 (in Kg.)	Raw material Wax-2 (in Kg.)	Raw material Fuel wood-3 (in Kgs.)
1	2	3	4	5
1. Illiterate	51	1,197	119	350
2. Literate without educational level . .	5	78	8	45
3. Primary or Junior Basic . . .	5	100	11	60
4. Middle	4	125	15	75
Total	**65**	**1,510**	**153**	**530**

As has been mentioned earlier, to purchase raw material one has to visit different towns or villages where they are made available. Depending upon the distance and the availability of raw-material one adopts the convenient means of transportation. Both the town Kondagaon and Jagdalpur, are reported to have been visited in connection with purchasing raw material by all the 65 households of craftsmen studied, by bus, cycle and on foot. It is also reported that sometimes in order to get brass scraps, the craftsmen even visit Raipur which is located at a distance of 200 to 250 kms. from the Bastar villages, where the Dhokra craft establishment are located.

Technique of Production

Since Dhokra craft is run on household industry within the premises of the house, generally, the members of the craftsmen household viz., housewife, children and other family members lend their helping hand in various manufacturing processes. Following are techniques adopted for Dhokra craft manufacturing:

1. Preparation of core-model

It is in fact the preparation of core-model and not the mould which is made of clay. The family members of Gharwa craftsmen usually collect the clay from the river bank or stream, or the clay of the ant hills (commonly found around the village or in nearby forests). The latter type of clay is more suitable for preparing the core-model because it is soft and free from pebbles. The clay so collected is cleaned off from pebbles and gravels and other hard substance. The clay is then grounded and made into paste and the core-model of the object is prepared. It comprises of three layer. For the second layer the clay is mixed with straw or rice bran or husk for strength and hardness and the third layer consists of smooth clay. The shape, size and posture of the object are according to the will and imagination of the craftsmen and no mould is required for this. The core-model made of clay is dried in the Sun. The drying process normally takes 2-7 days depending upon the size of the artifacts and the brightness of the sun. When it gets dried up, the members of the household, generally the housewife or children polish the clay model with the leaves of '*Sem*' or Kedney-bean plant so that the outer surface of the core becomes smooth. (Kedney bean is a vegetable plant which is very commonly grown by majority of the households in the villages). Polishing of the surface of the core-model makes it ideal for the wax threads to get properly stuck on it.

2. Preparation of wax-threads

This part of the job is generally done by the male members of the family, may be the craftsmen himself. Bee-wax is melted in a pot, taking care that it does

not catch fire and then with the help of "*pichki pharni*" or hand press as shown in the diagram on page VII, threads/strips of molten wax are prepared. Threads/strips of the desired thickness can be obtained by using Jali of Varying Sizes. Thus threads/strips in desired quantity are made and kept ready for fixing these on the clay model according to predetermined design.

3. Fixing of wax threads/strips on the model

This is by far the most important part of the entire process of manufacturing Dhokra craft. This is done with great skill and labour to bring out the best effect and expression on the finished product. The design of the object to be produced is made by wax threads or strips on the clay model with the help of an equipment known as *Muttani*. There are other equipments like the '*Sahikanta*' or quill chipna, wooden hammer, small wooden plank, knife etc. These implements help in enabling the artisans to give best finish on the smaller details of the design. For example in showing the eyes, hair nails, fingers, ornaments and the like depending upon the object. Care is however taken that no part or surface of the clay model remains uncovered with wax threads or strips.

4. Covering the wax model with paste of fine clay

The fine clay referred to here is the clay collected from river bank or ant hill treated to remove harder substance, if any. A thin paste of fine clay is now covered over the wax model. Before the paste of clay is covered over the wax model, it is again ensured that no part of the model is without wax covering. This process of covering clay over the wax model is repeated 4 to 5 times till the thickness of the layer is between 1 to 2 cms., depending upon the desired thickness of the finished product. It is then left to be dried while covering the layer of clay over the wax model. A small hole, known as "runner" is made at the bottom of the model, through which the molten wax spills out in the form of fumes during the actual process of casting and consequently the molten metal covers the space occupied by wax threads or strips. When this part of the job is over a clay crucible containing metal scraps in desired quantity is attached to the bottom hole or "runner" and sealed with clay. The sealing is done in such a way that there is no leakage any where and remains intact during the process of actual casting. The metal used for casting is generally 8 times the proportion of wax. That is to say that wax and metal used are in the proportion of 1:8. This may vary from craftsman to craftsman depending upon the quality of metal used and on the desired quality of finished products.

5. Process of casting

(i) Dhokra craftsmen are still economically very poor and none has a proper workshed to do the process of casting. The furnace is prepared generally in the open varandah open space outside the house. A rectangular pit measuring nearly 20 × 20 cms. or 30×30 cms. having a depth of nearly 10 cms. is dug. On one side of this pit a slanting drain is made so that the pipe of the blower is fixed through it to blow air in the pit. It is then covered with the paste of clay and an encircling band of earth-work is made on the four sides of that pit in order to provide protection to it. The pit is allowed to get dried for further use.

(ii) **Actual Casting**

The furnace is made ready by putting fire using Dhawda wood or Charcoal. The different items (models) so prepared are placed in the furnace as many as could be accommodated. With the help of blower the intensity of heat is raised to the extent that blue and yellow flames and fumes start coming out of the pieces which is an indication that wax has melted and spilled out of the "runner" and the furnace has attained the desired level of temperature sufficient to melt the brass-scraps. Then with the help of '*Chimta*' or tong the craftsman holds the pieces turn and makes them upside down. The molten metal thus occupies the place covered by wax threads and takes the actual shape of the object with design. As soon as the artisan feels sure that the molten metal has spread all over the vacant space, that is after the wax has burnt, he takes out the pieces to cool down. This process is done item by item.

After completing the above process, when the different items get cooled, the artisan will take the items one by one and with the help of a knife and hammer, he removes the unwanted material stuck to the metallic object. Thereafter with the help of a brush (made of metallic hair fitted in a wooden handle) further cleaning is done. Clear expressions of each object are then visible. With tamerind water they further clean the artifacts. Thus the shining bell-metal artifact is ready for sale.

Tools and Equipments

The tools and equipments used by the artisans in the Dhokra craft are as listed below:

1. *Pichki-Farni* (Hand-press for Jhara-Thasa Extracting wax threads/strings).
2. *Muttani*
3. *Sahikanta* or Quill
4. *Tong* (large and small)
5. Poker
6. Knife
7. *Dhonkni* or Blow-pipe
8. Wood plank or wooden bench
9. Wooden anvil
10. Hammer
11. Hard Brush with metallic hair
12. File
13. Scale

Most of these tools and implements are used by the artisans since ages. The local agarias who do smelting of iron for it is their traditional job to provide the desired metallic tools to the artisans. None of the craftsmen household surveyed has been found to be using improved variety of *'pichki'* now available in the market. For example the *'pichki'* or hand press for extracting wax threads could be got manufactured in a sophisticated manner suited for the artisans as similar product is very commonly available in utensil shops for the preparation of saltish food items like, *Chakoli, Sev* etc. It is also observed that the government agencies functioning for the development of handi-craft have not thought of providing improved varieties of tools and equipments required for the Dhokra craft. The poor economic conditions of the artisans seem to be the important factor which has not made them to think of departing from their traditional methods of manufacturing. Information in regard to different designs that are used by the craftsmen traditionally and as well new ones introduced in the recent times are furnished in the following table:

Table IV.4

Design used in the manufacture of Dhokra items classified by persons who prepared the design, his relationship with head of household, period when introduced

Name of the design (Floral, scenery, animal-motif, motif of gods and goddesses, hunting-scene, domestic items etc.	No. of house-holds making use of the design	No. of households reporting design in use since 20 + years prepared by
1	2	3
1. Motif of gods and goddesses		
(a) Danteshwari Mata, Shitla mata, Kotgudin mata, Khanda Kankalin mata, Marimata, Rao Deo, Bhurha Deo, Telgudon mata, Hingiajin mata etc.	65	Hereditary : father to son
(b) Shankaji, Krishnanji, Durga, Laxmi, Ganesn etc.	16	Father
2. Animals Motifs		
Horse with or without rider, elephant with or without rider, deer, bull, ox, crocodile, sambhar etc.	65	Hereditary : father to son
3. Hunting Scene		
Running deer chased by dog, tribal with bow and arrow etc.	65	Hereditary : from father to son
4. Tribal life style		
Folk song group of tribals, Dancing group of tribals, marriage function of tribals etc.	65	Hereditary : from father to son
5. Floral design		
Sulphi tree, Trapping toddy, Pipal tree, Bargad, Genda flower plant etc. . . .	65	Hereditary : from father to son
6. Domestic Utensils		
Bowls, pots, pitch etc.	9	Hereditary : from father to son
7. Other items		
Flower, Ash-tray, Wall panel, candle wax stand, Pendants, paper weight, lamp etc. .	65	Father/self

Many of the designs of the manufactured items mentioned in the above table are considered as traditional ones, although they do not represent the tribal culture or characteristics. However, since several generation new designs have been incorporated into the Dhokra craft as per the demand and choice of the people particularly as per choice of the caste-Hindus who had migrated to Bastar region, some of the new designs like the images of Shankarji, Krishaji, Durga; Laxmi, flower pot, ashtray, wall panel, wax candle-stand, pendants, paper weight, lamp, genda flower tree etc., are of recent origin after the developmental activities having undertaken by the Handicraft Board, and the initiative taken by Shri Jaidev Baghel through cooperative society. While selective items like the images of gods and goddesses viz., Shankarji, Krishnaji, Durga and Laxmi do not seem to have been adopted by all the craftsmen. All the households have reported of manufacturing all the items mentioned above at one time or the other, depending upon the demand in the market. The villages that are close to the urban centres have been manufacturing new items as they have better market facilities.

CHAPTER V

MARKETING

Any industry to flourish requires an effective and guaranteed market. The Dhokra craft which has evolved through various stages, essentially was dependent upon the local consumption. Traditionally, in the past when the monetary or cash economy had little role to play in the local economic set-up, the disposal of the manufactured Dhokra craft items was largely depended upon barter system. The local arrrangement for exchange of goods against bell-metal craft items include cows, goats, buffaloes, paddy, millet, pulses of various kinds etc. Payment in cash by the local tribals against the purchasing of Dhokra items was seldom done. Most of the bell-metal products were sold in the weekly market or *'hats'*. The weekly markets or *'hats'* in the Bastar region play a key role in the local economy not only in terms disposal and exchange of goods, but also as the place where all the required material and essential commodities are made available. Thus economic exchange/ transactions that make the very basis of the economic dealings, take place in *'hats'*. The villagers in the Bastar region depend upon these *hats* for procuring and disposing the essential commodities and other products.

The Dhokra craft being a household industry of a small group of artisans has acquired no prominence in the market. Traditionally, in the past, its production and disposal were confined to the areas mainly concentrated by the tribal communities. In the recent times i.e., since last 15 to 20 years when the communication and transportation facilities have improved to facilitate the outsiders to reach different places of the Bastar region and appreciate the significance of the Dhokra craft. After having physically encountering the whole nature and characteristics of the Dhokra craft being practised in the region the visitors have developed fancy towards the bell-metal items. This has accentuated the market value and demand of the bell-metal products both within Bastar and outside.

The weekly market or *'hat* which is the centre for sales and purchases for all the commodities in the region are held weekly once on different days at different places. Every village has its own *hat(s)* within a walkable distance. To these *hats* that the craftsmen take their products to sell and in return buy the things that are required in the household. Some times the craftsmen also take the opportunity to use the markets available at the urban centres viz., at Kondagaon and Jagdalpur. In these towns, either they sell to common people or to the shop-keepers. To sell the craft products to the shop-keeper no terms and conditions are imposed and is sold on cash payment in a similar way as they are sold to customers. However, the margin gained by selling to a shop-keeper is less than that gained by selling them to public directly.

The *Melas* or fairs also provide a good market avenues for the craft items. In Bastar district in different places *melas* are organised in honour of the local deities. During these *Melas* people from distant villages gather in thousands to worship the deity concerned. The *Melas* are invariably associated with different entertainment activities viz., plays, dances, acrobatics, magic performances etc., and a market similar to that of a *"hat"* with much more variety of goods brought from distant places for the local people's consumption. The Dhokra craftsmen also manage to find a niche in the market to sell their products to the numerous crowd attending the festivals. Some of the *Melas* or fairs that are held in Bastar district are as given below:

Details of Melas or Fairs of Bastar district

Sl. No.	Tahsil	Name of the place where Mela is held	Month	Duration (in days)
1	2	3	4	5
	Bhannupratappur tahsil	Salegaon	January	2
		Hatkara	January	2
		Bondiya	January	1
		Sambalpur	February	2
		Hatkowela	February	1
		Bhanupratappur	February	2
		Barheli	February	1
		Kodekura	February	2
		Buzugukondal	February	2
		Asulkhar	February	2
	Kanker tahsil	Kanker	January	4
		Govindpur	January	2
		Kurana	January	2

1	2	3	4	5
		Halba	January	2
		Chrama	January	2
		Haradul	January	2
		Dokla	January	2
		Poori	January	2
		Pategaon	January	2
		Salhetola	January	1
		Umaidah	February	1
		Devari	February	2
		Peethapal	February	1
		Kanker	February	1
		Sarona	February	2
		Patod	February	1
		Sarwandi	December	1
		Naharpur	December	2
		Devi Nawagaon	December	1
		Lakhanpuri	December	2
	Narayanpur tahsil	Antagarh	January	4
		Narayanpur	February	5
		Partapur	March	1
	Kondagaon tahsil	Kondagaon	March	6
		Farasgaon	March	3
		Keskal	March	4
		Vishrampuri	March	4
		Dhanora	April	4
	Bijapur tahsil	Maded	March	3
	Dantewara tahsil	Dantewada	March	2
	Jagdalpur tahsil	Kamcharwand	January	1
		Chitrakot	January	4
		Bastar	February	2
		Chapka	February	12
		Deoda	February	2
		Jagadapur	September/October	11

Of the total 65 households of craftsmen surveyed 64 of them have been taking their products for sale in the *'hats'* or weekly markets, *'melas'* or fairs and daily markets in towns. One household of Mr. Jaidev Baghel, the master craftsman, has reported to be previleged in selling the products in various European countries, like England, France, USSR, West Germany etc., through exhibitions either sponsored by the Government of India or by personal arrangements. However, Mr. Baghel's success in disposing of the bell-metal products lies in exceptional circumstances generated through his remarkable personal endeavours for the cause of promotion of the bell-metal craft. The details in regard to the households manufacturing the handicraft items, their numbers and purpose for which produced are furnished in the following table:

Table V. 1

Number of households manufacturing handicraft items classified by quantity produced, purpose for which produced

Number of households manufacturing the items	Number of households (given in brackets) reported having produced											
	Big items — quantity (per annum)						Small items— quantity (per annum)					
	Entirely for the use of carftsmen communities for		Entirely for the use of other communities and sold against				Entirely for the use of craftsmen communities for		Entirely for the use of other communities and sold against			
	Domestic purpose	Ceremonial purpose	Cash	Kind	Cash & kind	Total	Domestic purpose	Ceremonial purpose	Cash	Kind	Cash & kind	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
65	70	75	2900	875	100	4020	250	230	16980	1890	575	19,925
	(64)	(64)	(52)	(4)	(9)		(64)	(64)	(52)	(4)	(9)	

It may be recalled that the practise of Dhokra craft is confined to a Hindu caste called Gharwa. All the four types of items produced (viz., religious, domestic, utensils, ornamental and decorative) were reported to have been manufactured at one time or the other, and there is no record available with any craftsman as to mention the exact details of these items. However, an approximate number of items produced, to the best possible accuracy as per the knowledge of the craftsmen shows that of the total of 23,945 Dhokra items produced 83.21 per cent are of small size weighing less than 500 gms., while 16.79 per cent of them are bigger items weighing more than half a kg. The proportion of craft items of bigger size produced for self-use of the Dhokra community either for domestic or ceremonial purpose is very small i.e., 3.60 per cent while 96.40 per cent are disposed of for the use of other communities. The bigger items sold to other communities mainly against cash (72.14%) while a small number (21.77%) of them are sold for kind viz., against goat, fowl, paddy, millet, pulses and other forest products; and 2.49 per cent of bigger items are purchased on both cash and kind. The bulk (97.60%) small items of Dhokra craft produced are sold to other communities, while a small proportion (2.40%) is used by the craftsmen communities itself for ceremonial and domestic purpose. Cash payment in purceasing craft item is in vogue presently. 85.22 per cent were sold against kind and 2.89 per cent of the total small items produced sold to other communities were against cash while only 9.49 per cent were sold against kind and 2.89 per cent were disposed of against both cash and kind. The above details indicate that the transaction of craft items is mainly against cash, which is a recent development in the tribal dominated areas of Bastar district. Traditional practise, as has been indicated elsewhere, has been to dispose of the craft items on barter against goat, sheep, cow, fowl, paddy or rice, millet, pulses etc. The reminiscences of the barter system is still witnessed in the method of disposal of the Dhokra craft products. However, the barter system is a transaction restricted to local tribal communities. As and when the market of Dhokra craft expands, not only the cash payment becomes prominent but cash-down purchase is also found to be the convenient method.

The following table gives the details of the number of households who disposed of their finished products through different channels and locations of market/*melas* and distance from the village.

Table V.2

No. of households disposed of finished products through different channels, location of markets/*Hats*

Sl. No.	Name of Village/ urban centre	No. of House-holds	No. of items	Disposed of through		Name of nearest town and distance from village	Place of weekly merket and distance from village	Place of Mela, when held and distance from village	Place of co-operative Society and distance from village
				Directly to consumers	Cooperative Society				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Barkai . .	9	4500	8.00	92.00	Kondagaon (15 k.m.)	1 Farasgaon 2 Randhana 3 Bhandar Seoni 4 Bnanpuri 5 Ador	1 Farasgaon (March, 7 km) 2 Keskal (March, 40 km.) 3 Kondagaon (March, 37 km.)	Kondagaon (15 km)
2.	Dahikonga .	4	1805	6.00	94.00	Kondagaon (15 km.)	1 Dahikonga(0) 2 Badekanera 3 Golabond	1 Kondagaon (March 15, km.) 2 Jagdalpur (Sept-Oct., 55km) 3 Bastar (Feb., 37 km.)	Kondagaon (15 km.)
3.	Chhote Dongar	5	1590	90.00	10.00	Kondagaon (95 km.)	1 Narayanpur (43 km.) 2 Dhandai (14 km.)	1 Narayanpur (Feb) 2 Antagarh. (Jan.) 3 Pratappur (March)	Kondagaon (95 km.)
4.	Errakot .	9	3610	5.00	95.00	Jagdalpur	1 Tohkapal (5 km.) 2 Dilmili 3 Kukaner (30 km.)	1 Jagdalpur (Jan 20 km.) 2 Bastar (Feb-38 km.)	Jagdalpur (20 km.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5.	Karanpur .	13	4010	20.00	80.00	Kondagaon (30 km)	.	Kondagaon (30 km.)	Kondagaon (30 km.)
6.	Alwahi . .	7	2090	25.00	75.00	Jagdalpur (40 km.)	..	Jagdalpur (40 km.)	Jagdalpur (40 km.)
7.	Khorkhosa .	8	1905	20.00	80.00	Jagdalpur (40 km.)	..	Bastar (25 km.)	Jagdalpur (40 km.)
8.	Bhelwa Padar Para (Kondagaon)	10	4435	5.00	95.00	Kondagaon (1 km)	Kondagaon	Kondagaon (1 km.)	Kondagaon (1 km.)

Proximity of the village where the Dhokra craft is practised from the place where the produce can be disposed of is an important factor. Sales prospects of the Dhokra craft items within the village where they are produced is negligible. Hence for the craftsmen to dispose of their products generally depend upon the *hat* or the weekly markets available nearby. Kondagaon is the nearest town for four villages namely Barkai (15 km.), Dahikonga (15 km.), Karanpur (20 km.), Chhote Dongar (85 km.) and the urban unit Bhilwa Padar Pada (1 km.). The other urban centre which provides sales facilities for the Dhokra craft is Jagdalpur, the district head-quarters; the villages surveyed that are nearer to it include Alwahi (40 km.), Khorkhosa (40 km.) and Errakot (20 km.). Chhote Dongar is the only village which is located at a distance of 95 km. from Kondagaon and it is in this village 90 per cent of its total handicraft items produced are reported to have been sold directly to the local consumers, while the 10 per cent of the products are sold to the cooperative society located at Kondagaon. The above table indicates that the Dhokra craftsmen mainly sell their products to the cooperative society i.e., 75 to 95 per cent of the bell-metal items produced in other villages and the urban unit are sold to the cooperative societies located at Kondagaon and Jagdalpur. The remaining small portion of their products, are sold in the weekly markets and *melas* held in different places. It is easy to sell the items to the cooperative societies for they not only pay reasonable price for the craft products but also pay in cash without any terms and conditions. Unlike in the market, one can take the craft products to cooperative society and be sure of selling them then and there.

There are important festivals as mentioned earlier observed by the people of Bastar during which *melas* or fairs that are held at selected places, which attract masses from near and far flung places. Apart from this there are annual *bazars* or markets locally known as *Madai* at various places provided venue to dispose of the craft products.

It is during such occasion the craftsmen are able to dispose of their produce directly to the consumers to a considerable extent. But the total quantum of sale through this channel is very limited as compared to their total production. The reason being such fairs and *melas* are held once a year. Whatever small quantity of goods the craftsmen are able to produce before such occasion, the dispose of at a remunerative price. The items disposed of in fairs and *melas* are only limited to the images of gods and goddesses and images of animals and a few lamps which again is limited to the local demand. Further, due to the raw materials being costly the cost of production has gone up and thus the quantum of goods sold in fairs and *melas* is also shrinking gradually because of purchasing power of the local people is deteriorating at a faster rate. Thus the local demand has also become limited.

Since bulk of the purchase is done by cooperative societies who in turn depend upon the State Handicraft Board. The State Handicraft Board in turn disposes of the Dhokra craft through its various Emporia within the State and outside and through these agencies the Central Cottage Industries Emporium and the Handicrafts & Handlooms Export Corporation purchase the goods for re-sale within the country and outside. There is no authentic information available as to workout the proportion of the total produce being sold in foreign markets.

As far the local demand for Dhokra products is concerned it is fully met since the demand is very limited. With the improvement in communication, the Bastar region has been visited by a large number of outsiders, who developed fancy for Dhokra products. It is the cooperative societies who make purchases nearly to the extent of 90 per cent of the total produce of the craft in order to meet the demand from outside. Owing to financial constraints the cooperative societies are also finding themselves handicapped in furthering the sale and purchase of Dhokra goods which in turn may generate further demand.

The following table gives the margin of profit to the craftsmen in disposing of their products through different channels.

Table V.3

Margin of profit by disposal through different channels

Name of Dhokra items	Nature of Product Solid/Hollow	Range of percentage of profit in disposing off Dhokra product through different channels	
		Directly to consumers	Cooperative societies
1	2	3	4
1. Motif of gods and goddesses	Solid	80%—100%	50%—60%
	Hollow	80%—100%	40%—50%
2. Animal motifs	Solid	80%—90%	50%—60%
	Hollow	90%—100%	40%—50%
3. Hunting Scene	Solid	40%—50%	50%—60%
	Hollow	50%—60%	50%—50%
4. Tribal life style	Solid	60%—70%	60%—70%
	Hollow	70%—80%	50%—60%
5. Other items	Solid	80%—90%	50%—60%
	Hollow	90%—100%	40%—50%

The range of Dhokra products is very wide. The ultimate sale price of the product depends upon the excellence in the design. But the sale of the products through cooperative societies is generally done according to the weight which depends whether the item is solid or hollow. The solid items are purchased by the societies @ Rs. 80/- per kg. while those which are hollow @ Rs. 60/- per kg. There is, however, arbitrariness in deciding as to how much quantity of impurities in the form of burnt clay is stuck inside the hollow items. The person in charge of purchase through co-operative societies has the sole authority to decide this aspect and accordingly he deducts the cost of the weight of metal ranging from 10 gm. to 100 gm. depending upon the size of the item from its purchase price. There is no such inbuilt method to deduct a certain percentage of weight for such waste. The craftsmen are reported to be always at a loss on this account.

The societies sell the products to different agencies like the Handicraft Board, various Emporia etc., by adding a profit margin ranging from 40 to 50 per cent depending upon the quality of product.

It has already been discussed that those craftsmen who are residing in remote areas are finding it difficult to dispose off their finished products through co-operative societies. Such craftsmen are mainly from Chhote Dongar village. There is no cooperative society nearby as the one established earlier at Narayanpur has closed down and thus the only channel for sale is directly to the consumers either by hawking or in weekly markets.

The range of product has widened as per the preference of consumers from outside. So far as the local demand is concerned, no element of consumers preference is operating because the local demand for these product is closely linked with social and religion customs of the local people. The demand of the same very items still persists though the magnitude has come down considerably because of the extreme poverty.

CHAPTER VI

CRAFT AND EMPLOYMENT

Period of origin of the craft in the villages

It has been mentioned in Chapter-I, that Dhokra or bell-metal craft is an ancient one, and had entered into the Bastar region in the early 15th Century. The community or the caste who adopted this craft as their traditional occupation had migrated to Bastar region from neighbouring Orissa state. They are originally referred to as Ghasia and are parrallel as Gharwa as well after having assumed as the artisans of the Dhokra craft. Although none of the craftsmen contacted in the villages surveyed have the knowledge about the period of origin of the craft but the general belief is that the craft in the region as such is four to five hundred years old. For Gharwa caste, the practise of bell-metal craft is the traditional occupation.

Since the advent of bell-metal craft in the Bastar region it did not only get closely associated with the people of Gharwa community, but also the craft products were inducted into the material culture of the various tribal communities living in the area. The craft and its products have become prominent functionally, aesthetically and ritually in the lives of the people in the region. In the past every village including the villages surveyed have had a good number of craftsmen who usually ensured to meet the requirement of utensils, ornaments and ritual objects of the local people in time. Earlier the payment in these villages were made in kind, for cash or monitary payment had played little role in the transactions, then. The Dhokra craft has been practised in the villages from the time that it had made its way into the Bastar region. The art of making of bell-metal artifacts has been the hereditary job inherited from generation to generation among the Gharwa community; and till today it persists in the same way. Despite, the prominence acquired by Dhokra craft in the way of life of the people in the region. the industry of bell-metal craft could not progress as much as it is expected. The deteriorating economic conditions of the tribals, the increasing price of the raw material and lack of proper market facilities have been the prime factors responsible for discouraging the craftsmen to devote much of their attention on craft or abandoning it altogether. Nevertheless, there are some families who still continue to practise the bell-metal craft inspite of its adverse prospects. Although, the efforts made by various government agencies and co-operative societies extend much needed help to the craftsmen, the benefits given are claimed to be neither adequate nor are they made available to all the craftsmen.

The number of persons engaged in Dhokra craft at present is estimated to be around 500 in Bastar district. In the absence of any record, it is not, however, possible to say what was the exact employment position during the last 3 or 4 decades but it can certainly be said that the number of units or craftsmen households may have been more than the number found now, though the employment position may not have been very high. The reason being that in the past the demand for Dhokra craft products was very limited. A large number of units might have been functioning with limited production, sufficient to meet the demand of local people specially the tribals in the villages. Employment position in earlier decades cannot be taken to be high, because of the limited scope as each unit may not be having more than 2-3 persons and secondly, the total population of Ghasia or Gharwa was not appreciably high then as according to 1981 Census, their population in Bastar district was only 2,596 persons.

The number of units that are functioning presently are getting government patronage and running with relatively better employment position, such units are those who are able to sell their products through cooperative societies and government agencies because of their easy accessibility to these agencies. Thus on the one hand, some of the units are dying out while on the other hand, some are surviving being in an advantageous position. However, as per the survey conducted the position emerged as under:

Table VI.1

Distribution of Households reported about starting of the craft in the village classified by broad age-group of the Head of the Household

Broad age-group of the head of the household	Number of households engaged in the craft	Number of households reported about the starting of the craft in the village		
		Between 1915- 1900	Before 1900	Period not known
1	2	3	4	5
0—14 . . .	..	..	..	..
15—34 . . .	25	7	18	..
35—39 . . .	34	..	20	14
60+	6	..	5	1
Age not satated .	.. . .	..	..	..
Total .	**65**	**7**	**43**	**15**

Being an age-old craft bell-metal craft emerged, as per the knowledge of the informants in the villages long back. Among 65 households surveyed, it may be seen from the above table, that majority i.e., 58 of them have admitted that the Dhokra craft started before 1900 of which 15 expressed that they do not know the time period. However, only 7 of them could say the craft of bell-metal casting emerged in their villages between 1900-1915; and all these seven respondents are in the 15-34 years age-group. 40 out of the 58, who expressed that the craft emerged in their villages before 1900 are above 35 years of age. It is noticed that 53 out of 62 persons among the non-practising craftsmen are illiterates which rates to 85.48 per cent of illiteracy: of the rest 9 persons (14.52%) who are literates, 6 are reported to be literates without attaining any educational level and 3 have studied upto Primary or Junior basic. Although there is an increase in the number of craftsmen practising the craft, but the growth rate among the craftsmen practising the craft does not keep pace with the growth rate of population of Gharwa or Ghasia community. The following table furnishes the details in regard to the increase in number of households and persons practising the Dhokra craft.

Table VI.2

Number of households reporting about the number of households and persons engaged in craft in the villages during different Period classified by broad age-group of the Heads of the household

Number of households and persons engaged in the craft	Number of households reported about the number of households engaged in the craft in the village during the period					
	Before 1940	1940–1950	1951-1960	1961–1970	1971–1980	At present
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Households . . .	27	33	41	53	57	65
Persons	55	79	105	133	134	156

From the above table it is discerned that despite the problems reasoned out for discouragement inflicted in the practice of the bell-metal craft among the craftsmen there is, however, a steady increase in both number of households and the craftsmen practising the craft. The maximum increase in the persons engaged in the craft is noticed during the period 1941-1950 to 1951-1960 i.e., from 79 to 105, while there was only 1 more craftsmen added during the subsequent decade i.e., during 1961-70 there were 133 craftsmen reported to be engaged in the craft, and during 1971-1981 their number had increased to 134 only. The increase in the number of households so far as the practise of the Dhokra craft is concerned, 12 households had been added to the existing number (41) during the decade 1951-60 to 1961-70. It may be said here that the practise of bell-metal craft on its own has been on a decline due to various reasons submitted earlier, but the increase in number of households and craftsmen is due to various incentives provided by the cooperative societies and other government agencies in the form of advances and loans, purchasing the products in time from the craftsmen, providing raw material etc. The breaking up of joint family system is also one of the reasons for the increase in the number of households of craftsmen practising the craft. Besides, the demand for craft articles and the lucrative prices offered in recent times have been responsible for attracting more households. However, the assistance provided by the said agencies neither felt to be adequate nor is claimed to be reaching craftsmen living in the interiors. Moreover, the practise of Dhokra craft being the traditional occupation, the artisans despite the problems faced by them like to continue, for there seems to be not much scope for alternative employment source.

The Dhokra craft industry has been the source of income and employment to the Gharwa community traditionally. Thus all the 65 households reported that the bell-metal craft in their respective villages is being practised for more than 86 years. A majority i.e., 36 out of the 65 households have claimed that they have been practising the craft for more than 20 years. 19 of them reported that they are engaged in the craft for last 10 to 19 years, 7 households for 5 to 9 year and only one household reported to have been practising the craft for less than 5 years.

The following table-VI. 3 furnishes the villagewise information of the number of households that engaged in the craft and the number of persons working during different period.

Table VI.3

Details of number of households and number of persons working during different decades -Villagewise

Sl. No.	Name of village	Before 1940		1941 -50		1951- 60		1961- -70		1971- 80		At present	
		House-holds	Persons	House-holds	Persons	House-holds	Persons	House-holds	Persons	House-holds	Persons	House-holds	Persons
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1	Barkai . . .	5	15	5	20	7	25	9	28	9	30	9	33
2	Dahikonga . . .	2	5	5	20	5	20	7	20	4	10	4	10
3	Chhote Dongar . .	8	9	8	9	8	17	8	17	4	9	5	11
4	Errakot . . .	2	5	3	6	5	10	7	15	9	21	9	25
5	Bhelwapadar para (Kondagaon) .	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	8	7	14	10	21
6	Alwahi . . .	2	4	3	6	4	9	5	13	6	15	7	17
7	Karanpur . . .	3	9	3	9	5	13	7	20	11	13	13	26
8	Khorkhosa . .	2	5	3	6	4	8	6	12	7	12	8	13
	Total . .	**27**	**55**	**33**	**79**	**41**	**105**	**54**	**133**	**57**	**124**	**65**	**156**

From the above table it may be noticed that on the whole there is a consistent increase in both number of households and persons engaged in the practise of Dhokra craft. The increase in the number of households is not due to any new additions but due to break-up of joint households into nuclear families, neolocally. Similarly, the increase in number of persons engaged in the craft over the time span is due to natural growth in the craftsmen population and not due to any new recruits. Of all the units studied only Dahikonga and Chhote-Dongar have recorded a decrease in the number of households and as also in the number of persons practising craft during the decade 1961-70 to 1971-80. The maximum increase of households proportionally since 1941-50 to present field survey is recorded in Karanpur followed by Bhelwa Padar Pada. Proportionately the increase in the number of households and craftsmen engaged in the craft has been highest since 1940 in Bhelwa Padar Pada followed by Errakot. The village Chhote Donger has however, registered a decrease in both the number of households and craftsman for the present figures indicate a considerable decrease when compared with the same recorded during 1941-51.

All the 65 households practising craft surveyed do not manifest any economic development. They are continuing the practise of Dhokra craft: Because it is the traditional occupation and they want to continue their hereditary job so long as they can and expect that the Dhokra products of these craftsmen should be purchased through co-operatives from the nodal points on remunerative price.

Because of the fact that the craftsmen are mostly illiterate and their economic condition is very poor they are not in a position to avail the facilities provided by government agencies. Such agencies should not only be liberal in granting loans and advances without going into the intricacies in sanctioning but the craftsmen should be motivated and educated to the extent that they avail the facilities without hesitation. Construction of proper workshed, providing tools and equipments, training to the new entrants those who desire to take up this craft.

Because of the uniqueness of Dhokra products, a fancy has been developed within and outside the state. This aspect needs to be properly tapped through publicity to generate more demand outside. This will create a multiplier effect more demand, more sale, more production, more employment, betterment of the craftsmen and ultimately saving the traditional craft from extinction.

There are a maiority of the craftsmen who want to continue this traditional occupation to keep alive the memories of their forefathers. Some of the units which have flourished, though not to a considerable extent, are enjoying this situation mainly because of their advantageous locations and better communication facilities available to derive the small benefit of disposing off their products through cooperative societies and purchasing raw materials available within easy reach.

Views of craftsmen

During the course of the survey 16 households have been identified who were practising this traditional crafts but have discontinued during the recent past. Besides the individual problems of ill-health all those who have discontinued the practise of the craft express that the lack of capital to invest is the main problem. There are other problems like less profit margin of products and no proper market facilities to dispose off their products which have been expressed as common problems of the craftsmen in many instances.

Table VI.4

Number of non-practising households

Sl. No.	Name of village	Number of house-holds	Number of persons engaged before discontinuation	Since when discontinued	Reasons for discontinuation
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Barkai	1	2	1978	For want of capital to purchase raw material and tools etc.
2.	Dahikonga	3	9	1976	Health not permitting in a single member household. In others for want of capital.
3.	Chhote-dongar	4	9	1978	Weak eyesight of Head in 2 households, want of capital and adequate sale of product.
4.	Errakot	1	4	1980	Health not permitting and want of capital also.
5.	Karanpur	2	2	1984	Want of capital.
6.	Khorkhosa	3	6	1978	One household for want of capital and health not permitting.
				1983	Two households for want of capital.
7.	Kondagaon	2	8	1980	Want of capital.

The discontinuation of the traditional craft has not however resulted in unemployment as most of them are illiterate and are able to earn their livelihood by working as agricultural labourer or casual labourer in road construction, forests etc.

The process of disintegration of the Dhokra craft is on in certain places mainly because of the location of craftsmen in remote areas where facilities are non-existent or are insufficient. All the same, the discontinuation is not going to create the problem of unemployment but the only fear is that the traditional craft may not become extinct.

The opinions gathered from the 65 practising households in regard to Dhokra household industry as a source of gainful employment it is revealed that the reasons submitted by the craftsmen are more in support rather than against it. The principal reasons that are accounted in favour of the bell-metal craft as the source of the gainful employment is shared by a majority (51) of the 65 households surveyed and the same reasons are attributed not only to motivate the children of the craftsmen to learn the craft but to adopt it as their prime occupation. The reasons that are submitted by the craftsmen of 51 households surveyed are as follows:—

(1) The Dhokra craft practised is the traditional occupation of the Gharwa community and hence it is expected to be inherited by the next generation. The craft has close relationship with the community which is not only characterised by socio-economic ties, but also blended with emotional attachment.

(2) The craft is a household industry with the workshops generally attached to the dwellings. Therefore, the family members find it convenient to work craft any time.

(3) One need not go out for seeking employment. Even if one does, except for daily-wage labour no other job opportunity is available in the region.

(4) It is the only source of livelihood for the artisans and hence a majority of them still depend upon it.

(5) The craftsmen express satisfaction in pursuing the craft for they acclaim great virtue in inheriting the occupation from fore-fathers.

(6) Recent welfare measures and other necessary help provided by the cooperative societies and other government agencies, attracted the younger generation specially the youth to pursue the craft, as a promising job.

On the other hand, there are 14 households of practising craftsmen who have expressed obstinate view point which are by and large universel problems associated with the practice of the craft. And the reasons submitted are good enough to discourage their children not to pursue the craft. The reasons being: (1) Lack of capital in hand to invest on the production, (2) the margin of profit gained by the sales of products are not adequate or on the whole it is not lucrative job and hence, (3) they would like their children to have guaranteed and ensured source of income i.e., through government jobs.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The study conducted on the bell-metal craft in Bastar region has thrown light on various aspects of the craft and the craftsmen. The practice of bell-metal or Dhokra craft in Bastar region from the very beginning has been the traditional occupation of a community called Gharwa. The Gharwas are claimed to be the synonym of Ghasia which is notified Scheduled Caste community in the state. However, the name Gharwa is not enlisted in the list of the Presidential Order Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Amendment Act), 1976. The said community people are eager to be considered as Scheduled Caste and would like to avail the benefits extended to them since they decline to be identified as Ghasia, being a menial caste.

Popularly the Dhokra craft is characterised as tribal craft, but so far as the production is concerned the craft is in the hands of the people of said Gharwa caste. However, the craft items are mainly used by tribals in the region. In fact, all the life-cycle rituals performed by the tribals in the region require the bell-metal products one way or the other. Even for the domestic use items like utensils the local tribals used to depend upon the Gharwa community. Traditionally, in the past, the bell-metal artifacts were acquired on barter or purchased against kind. The barter system of exchange was fast replaced by the monetary, or cash transaction. The 'hats' or the weekly markets in the Bastar region had been the only viable avenues to dispose off the bell-metal products. Presently, there is a little significance of these 'hats' for the cooperative socities and other government agencies provide better avenues for sale and purchase of Dhokra craft products.

As the practice of Dhokra is the traditional occupation of the Gharwas, and being passed one generation to another on hereditary basis; it had been a tough and difficult decision to deviate from the line. However, due to conditions that are not conducive to practise the craft there is a great deal of pessimism developed in the attitude of the craftsmen. The details of the reasons that forced the craftsmen to get discouraged, have been discussed in latter part of this chapter. In brief, however, it may be said that traditionally in the past, there was no problem for capital investment, for the crafts used to get a good margin of profit by selling the artifacts. They had an ensured and regular flow of customers to purchase the products, and the customers were economically well-off to purchase the bell-metal products. Morover the customers were confined to the purchase of bell-metal products for there was no other alternative of cheaper items being available then. There used to be constant demand for bell-metal products for they are required by the local tribals for more than one purpose. Such situation in the past was favourable for the craftsmen for they could easily derive their livelihood from the practice of the Dhokra croft.

The Dhokra craft could not last long as a viable source of livelihood for the craftsmen who were solely dependent on it. Although, it is difficult to ascribe a definite time period in respect of the decline of bell-metal craft in the region, it may be said that during the British rule the advent of new industrial products particularly aluminium utensils had replaced the bell-metal ones which formed the major bulk of the Dhokra production. Besides, the policies administered by the then colonial government had caused economic degradation in the region. The tribals owing to their poor economic condition could no longer afford to use the bell-metal artifacts, for these have become very expensive. The craftsmen too faced difficulties in acquiring expensive raw material; problems in ensuring timely sales of products; stagnation of sales due to fall in number of customers etc. Owing to all these problems associated with the craft a few craftsmen have already started having the idea of discontinuing the craft, and they did not even want their children to pursue the craft. In fact, some have already given-up the practice of bell-metal craft. However, the proportion of such craftsmen is smaller than that of the one's who not only practise the craft but also would like their children to inherit it, as the traditional occupation. Ever since the government agencies and cooperative societies have taken special interest in extending the needed help to craftsmen with the aim to develop the bell-metal craft as an effective household industry interest among the craftsmen is re-generated to intensify their efforts in the cause of developing the craft as viable source of livelihood.

The traditional notion of ritual pollution associated with the craft is fast diminishing. However, the low social status of the Gharwa community is still responsible for making the craft as low-status economic activity. As has been mentioned earlier, Dhokra craft was confined to making of bell-metal utensils and more particularly manufacturing images of various local deities. In the recent times, however due to the advent of cheaper varieties of aluminium utensils and subsequently the arrival of stainless steel utensils, the use of bell-metal utensils which are costly have become completely out of fashion. This has resulted in negligible demand for the bell-metal utensils. Consequently its production had completely diminished. Lately, however, with the improvement in the communication facilities, visitors from outside started developing fancy for the Dhokra products. This led to further demand of Dhokra craft artifacts. The increase in demand widened the range of items produced earlier. Beside the images of gods and goddesses, the range of products widened to such an extent that various decorative and household utility items like flower-pot, ash tray, wall panel, candlestand, pendents, paper weight, lamp, knife handle, bangles etc. are now produced.

The increase in demand of Dhokra items has certainly given a boost to the industry which in certain locations is found to be flourishing but in certain locations the position is otherwise. This is mainly due to the dispersed situation of the various establishments engaged in this metal craft. Proximity of a particular establishment from the cooperative society or any governmental agency working for the development of the Dhokra craft has been the most important factor for its economic viability.

The craftsmen are very keen to maintain the tradition to continue practising of Dhokra craft so long as it is remunerative to them even to some extent, if not it remains the main source of livelihood. This sentiment is deep rooted. There are cases of craftsmen households who had been practising this craft from generations but have discontinued it because of the raw materials becoming costlier and problems in disposal of their produce. It is under the compelling situation that these craftsmen had to discontinue their traditional occupation. None of such Dhokra craftsmen have adopted any other traditional occupation, like the terracota craft, bamboo work, wood work etc. Instead the members of such households are earning their livelihood by engaging themselves either as agricultural labourers or casual labourers, particularly in brick-laying industry.

The Dhokra craft as an industry may be said to be in a stage that is economically viable but because of the dispersed situation of the units, the craftsmen are not in a position to avail of the facilities available to them through the agencies engaged in the development of this handicraft.

By the very nature of Dhokra craft which is practised by the craftsmen generally confined to the premises of the dwelling house. It may be noted that the craftsmen have wasted their time, energy and money for procuring the raw materials and on marketing their products. Brass metal scraps, bee-wax are the important ingredients required for the production of Dhokra items which are not available to the craftsmen locally. He has to depend on the weekly markets or shops or cooperative societies at Jagdalpur, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Farasgaon etc. With their poor purchasing power the craftsmen are not in a position to make a bulk purchase of raw material. Even after the improvement in communication facilities majority of the craftsmen have to cover longer distances on foot or bicycle to catch a bus for reaching the desired destination. Similarly for the disposal of their finished products they are required to face the same ordeal.

Inspite of the fact that the State Handicrafts Board has been doing yeoman service for the development of handicrafts in Bastar district and elsewhere but there has been practically no change in the various processes of manufacturing and the techniques of production of Dhokra craft. The craftsmen are still dependent mostly on brass metal scraps in the form of scraps of untensils of brass which they procure from weekly markets and shops at Jagdalpur, Narayanpur, Kondagaon and Farasgaon. The cooperative societies located at Jagdalpur and Kondagaon do provide them brass metal scraps but not of fine variety and that too not at a cheaper rate. The other raw material required for manufacturing is the bee-wax which is not very difficult for the craftsmen to procure since this is a forest product and is available locally. There has been no change in the use of quality raw materials and the techniques of production. The most distressing situation is that none of the craftsmen has so far been able to construct an ideal workshop or workshed for practising this craft which would make it commercially viable. The craftsmen are not satisfied with the provision of the government loans and advances for constructing workshed and for purchasing raw materials, as it is not done forthright. On the other hand, the craftsmen themselves are often found so ignorant about making use of credit facilities offered to them. This is mainly because they are not only illiterate and lack entrepreneurship competence but are reluctant to take any monetary assistance owing to the deep rooted belief that taking loan is a sin. As regards use of improved varieties of tools and equipments used in the manufacture of Dhokra products, no change is visible. The State Handicraft Board gives an impression that it has not taken interest on this aspect. For example, the conventional hand press is still in vogue for extracting wax threads. Instead, a better variety of lever press could have been introduced. Similarly the sahikantas, tong, poker, wire brush etc. used are the age-old implements which could also be replaced by better ones. There is thus ample scope for development on this account. It has to be noted that the craftsmen on their own would not opt for any change so far as the conventional tools and equipments are concerned. Therefore, the Handicrafts Board may take initiative in bringing about a change in the techniques of production of Dhokra products by providing improved varieties of tools and equipments.

In regard to pollution effect during the process of manufacturing Dhokra products, the craftsmen do not admit that there is any such thing. But it seems likely that the fumes, smoke etc., coming out of the furnace may be harmful to the eyes, if constantly working for hours together in front of the furnace. As a safety measure, the Handicraft Board may popularise the use of zero power safety glasses among the Dhokra craftsmen similar to those used by the welders.

Regarding cost analysis, no proper record is being maintained by the craftsmen but roughly it may be said that the profit margin varies between 15 and 50 per cent provided the craftsmen are able to dispose off their goods easily in time. Because of the dispersal of various units, the craftsmen who are at an advantageous position enjoy better margin of profit than those who are in remote areas. It is transportation cost which consumes away a portion of their profit.

Marketing is an important aspect for the disposal of Dhokra products. In the past when the Dhokra products were not popular outside the district or State, the sale of these products were confined to the

weekly *hats* and periodical fares. Then demand was very limited and so also was the production. With the improvement of communication facilities. the district got opened up and the people from outside developed interest in acquiring the Dhokra items. Middleman started operating and the major portion of the profit used to be enjoyed by them. It is after receiving government patronage through Handicrafts Board, the craftsmen could dispose of bulk of their products through cooperative societies. With the result the role of middlemen got reduced to a considerable extent. The exploitation by the middlemen has therefore come down to a minimum. Even with the cooperative societies, the craftsmen get exploited at times by the officials dealing with the transaction of sale and purchase of Dhokra products. The deduction on account of the impurities in the form of clay having stuck in hollow items is being made on an arbitrary basis which needs to be done with some rationale. It is suggested that the finished items brought by the craftsmen may be kept dipped in water for sometime so that impurities are removed and there the items are purchased at the rate fixed by the society.

The craftsmen retain negligible proportion of their products for their domestic consumption while most of it disposed off to others through different channels. The margin of profit is very high (50% to 100%) in case the products are sold by the craftsmen themselves either by hawking or in weekly markets but this is a tedious process and moreover the disposal through this channels is very limited and involves uncertainty. Through cooperative society the margin of profit gained is 40 to 50 per cent and in some items it is 60 per cent. It is under rare compulsive situation the craftsmen sell their products to the middlemen where the profit margin is very low. It is suggested that the Handicrafts Board use mobile units and fix particular days and place which may be nearest to the craftsmen so that they make full use of various facilities offered by the Board, otherwise they find it very taxing financially and otherwise to reach the cooperative societies located at far away places.

The survey data reveal a grim picture so far the involvement or participation of younger generation in the traditional occupation is concerned. Their participation is found to be very low which would ultimately result in the decline of the craft further. There is a training centre at Kondagaon where the seats are very limited (only 10 trainees) and the duration of training is of one year. Since this is a traditional occupation, the duration of training seems to be quite long. It is suggested that six months duration for training on this art would be quite sufficient so that double the number can avail the facility.

There are a number of craftsmen households who have abandoned practising this craft because of raw materials being costly and non-disposal of their finished products. There is no doubt that the Dhokra industry as such has received a boost during the recent past, because the outsiders have developed fancy for the Dhokra items and thereby there has been an increase in demand.

The craftsmen supplement their needs through agricultural or other casual labour. The religious and social convention had kept alive the Dhokra craft till the recent past. Though the State Handicrafts Board has been doing a lot towards the development of various handicrafts including the bell-metal craft in the State, but still Dhokra craft has not reached the stage to run on a commercially viable footing. Instead, the stage is of spoonfeeding which has to be taken care of immediately. The craftsmen need to be motivated to develop entrepreneurship among them. A technical committee is suggested to be set up by the government agencies to go into the details of various processes of manufacturing to introduce modifications in the technique without, of course, tempering the traditional aspect of the craft so that it will not only help in the development of the Dhokra craft but will help uplifting the craftsmen households to better economic setting.

It is felt that the traditional skills that are imparted are very primitive and the tools used are few and rudimentary. The techniques of production are cumbersome, less productive and archaic. The artisan do not have any conception of economics of materials, labour and time. Therefore, government policies may be directed through the local cooperative societies that are already functioning well, to modernise the method of production by improvising the existing tools and enhance their productivity. Care should be taken that the programme of introducing modifications should be gradual in order to overcome initial suspicion of craftsmen.

MGIPCBE– S3– 22 RGI/ND/90– 13-5-91—300



Master Craftsman Jaidev Baghel at work, Preparation of core model of clay.



Master Craftsman Jaidev Baghel at work: Preparation of core model of clay.



Core model of clay being dried.



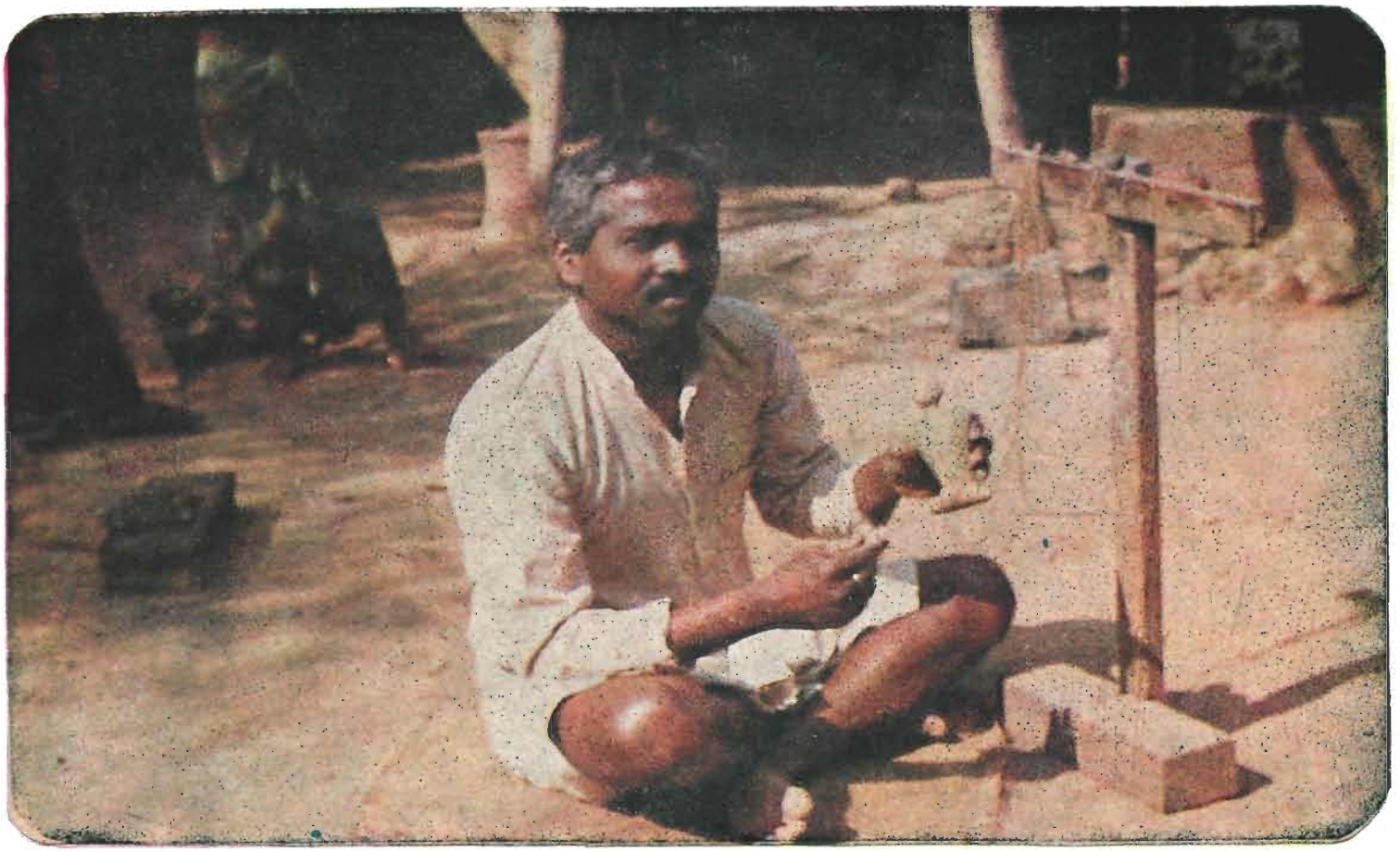
Preparing bee-wax threads.



Fixing the bee-wax threads on the clay model.



Fixing the bee-wax threads on the clay model.



Polishing the clay model before fixing bee-wax threads.



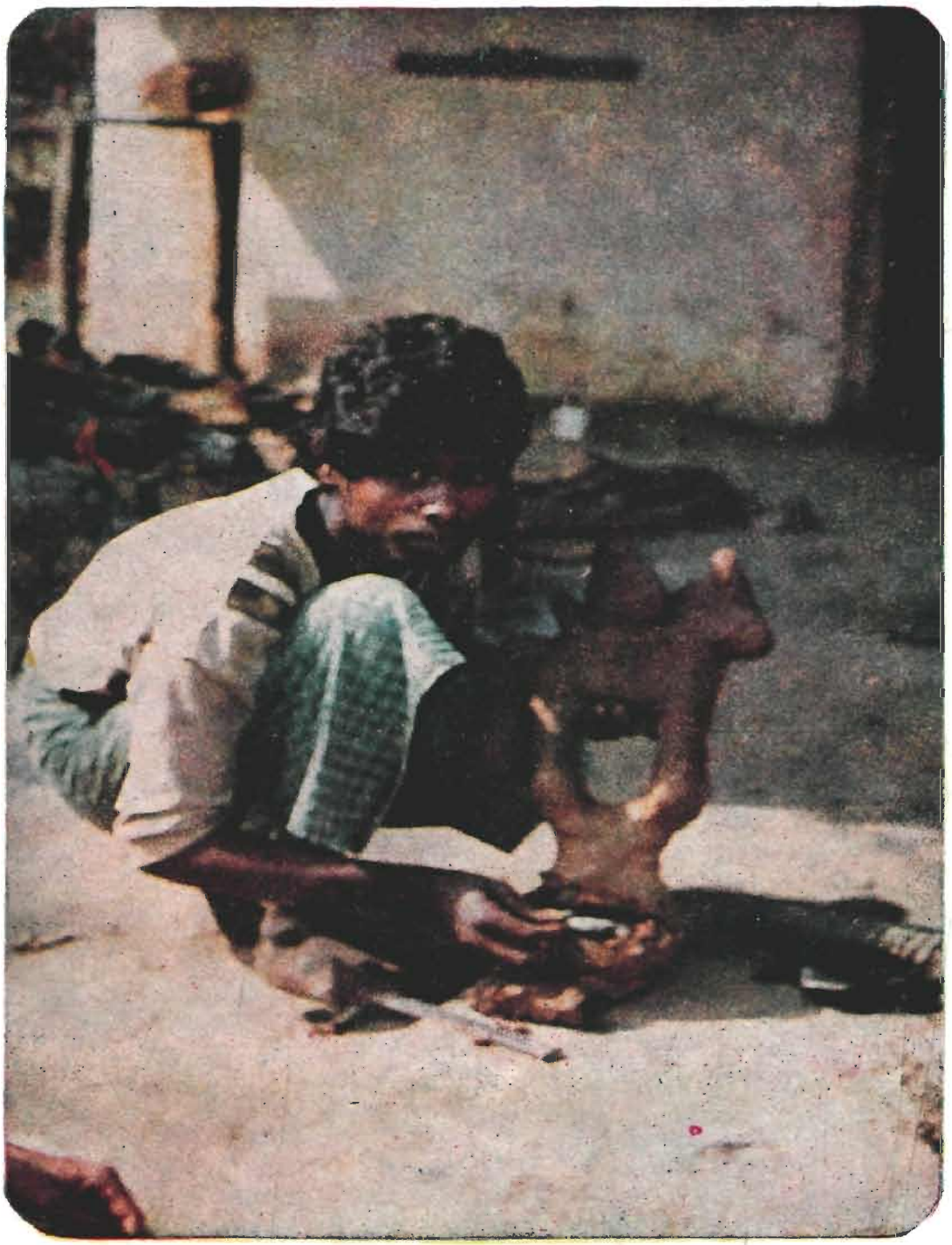
Covering the bee-wax model with paste of fine clay.



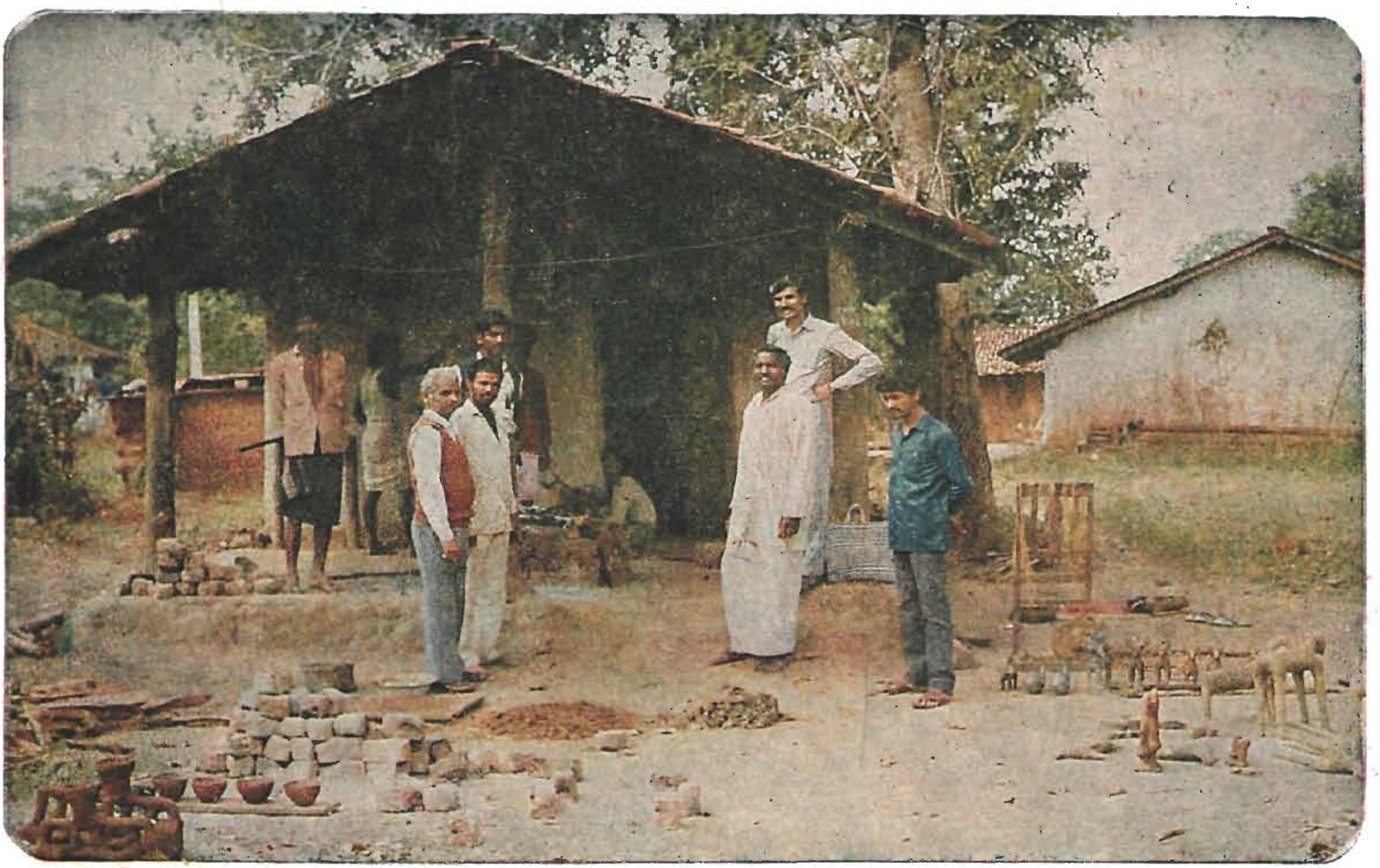
Preparing bee-wax threads.



Filling the metal before casting.



Filling the metal before casting.



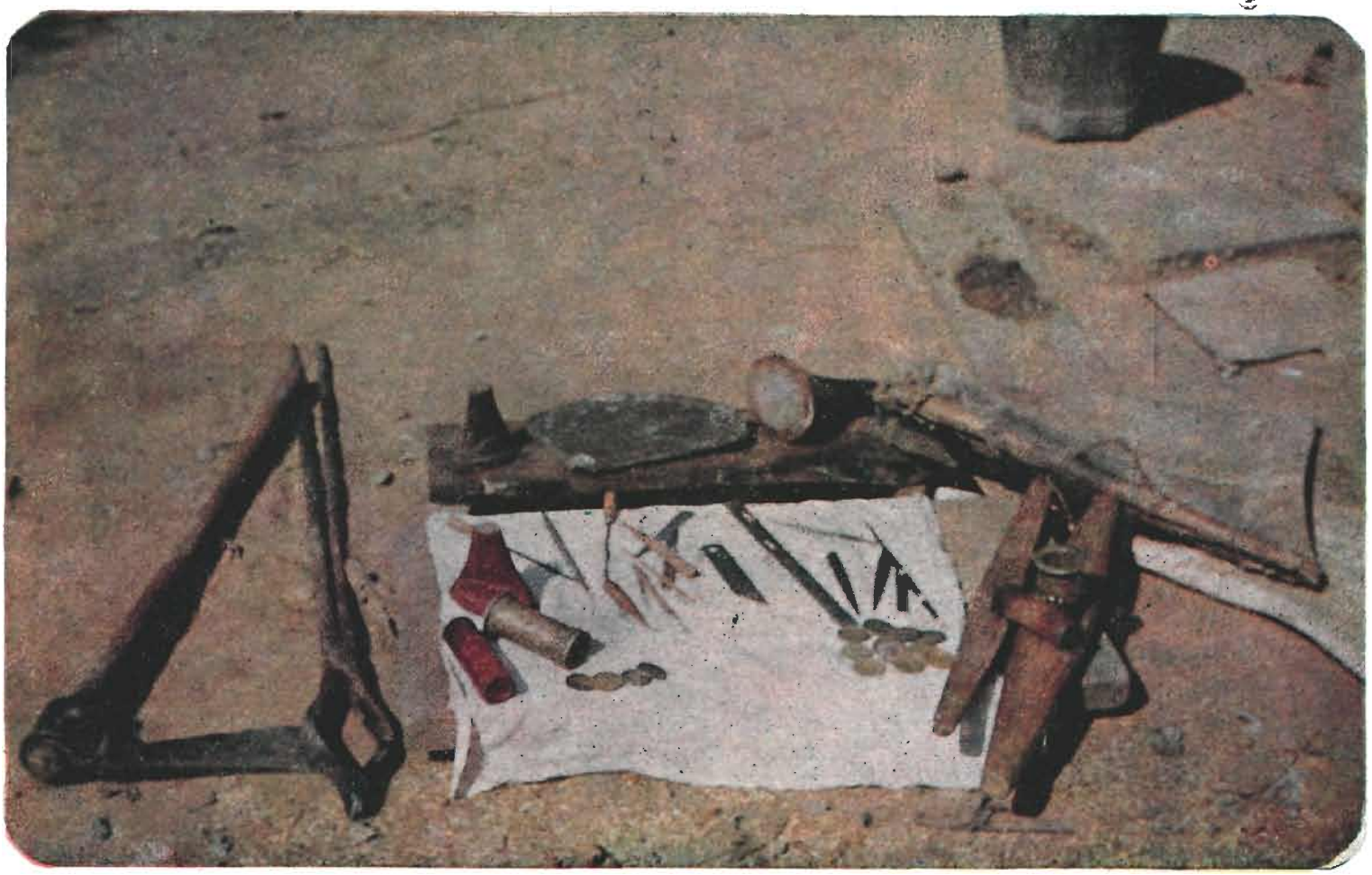
Actual casting in a Dhokra work-Shed.



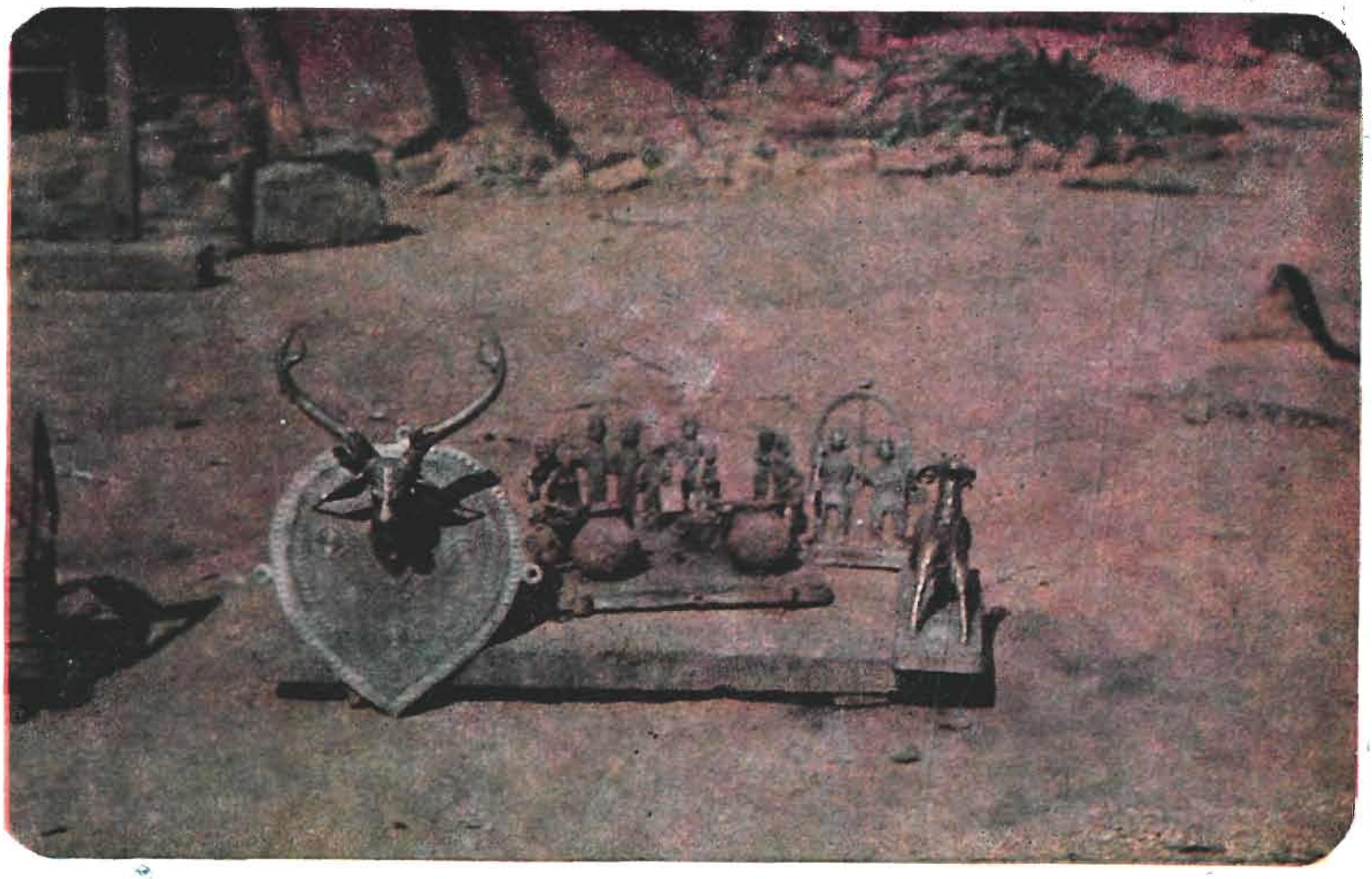
Cleaning of the product after casting.



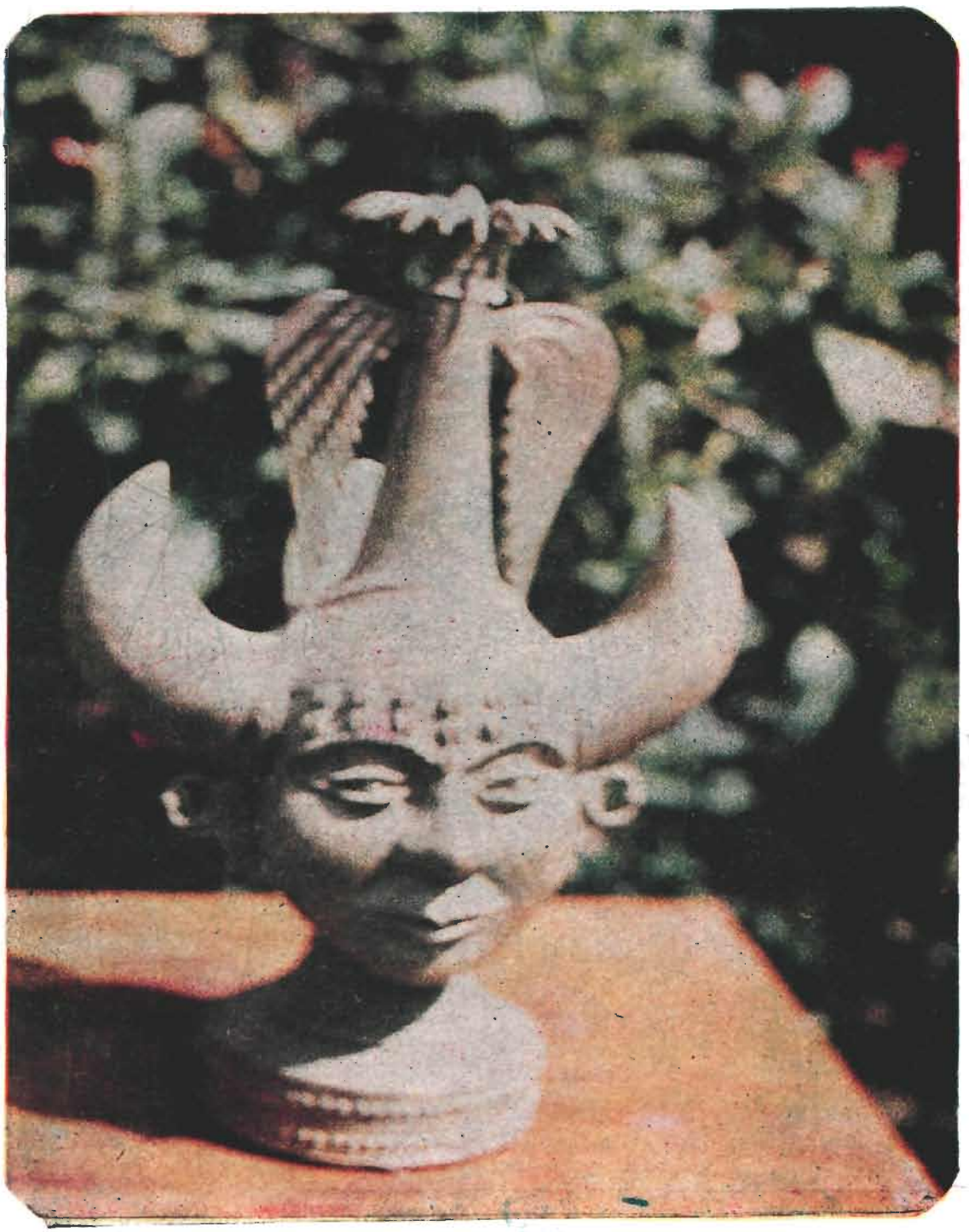
Dhokra Craft after cleaning.



Tools and Implements used in the manufacture of Dhokra Craft.



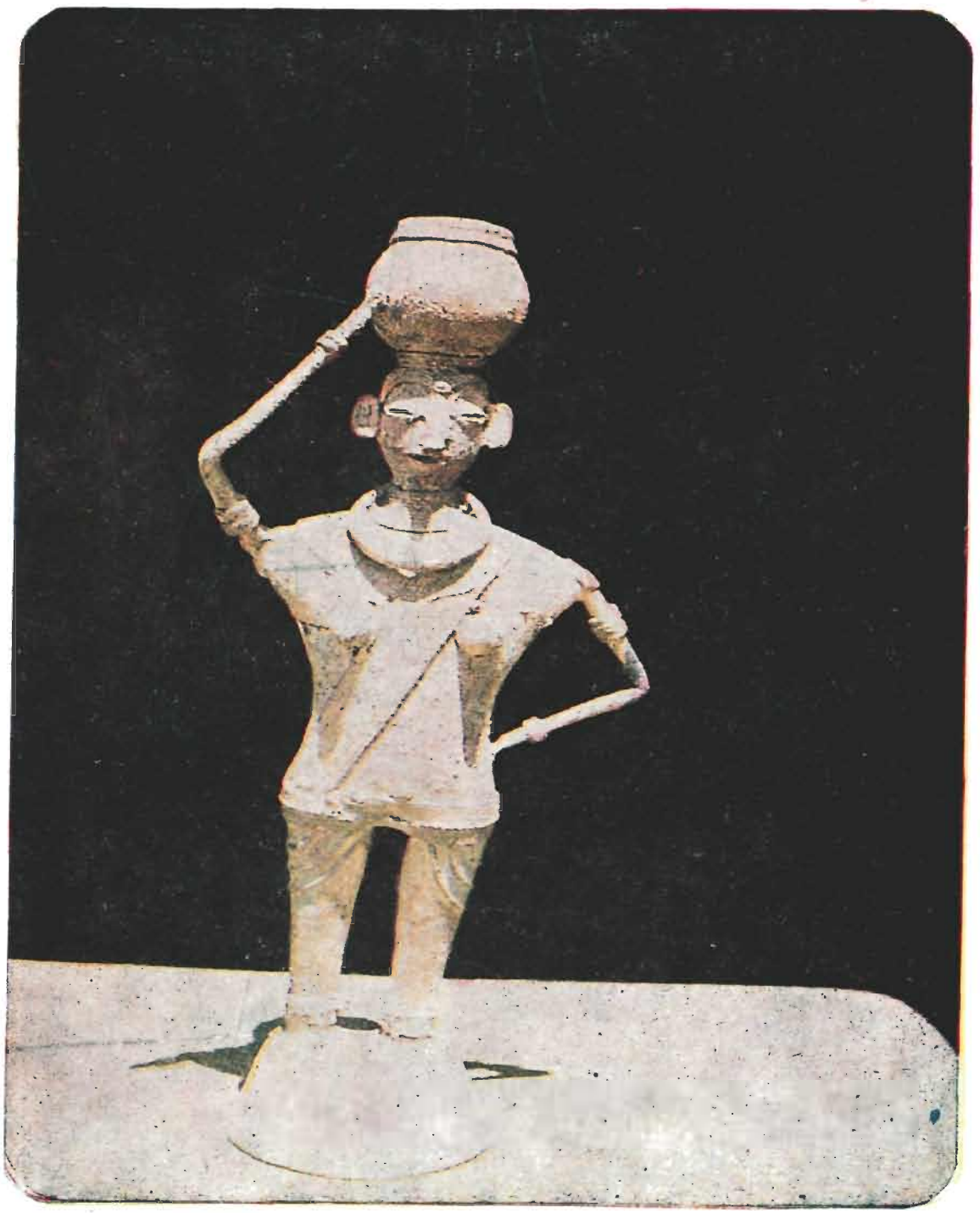
Different Dhokra Craft products.



Dhokra Craft: A Religious product.



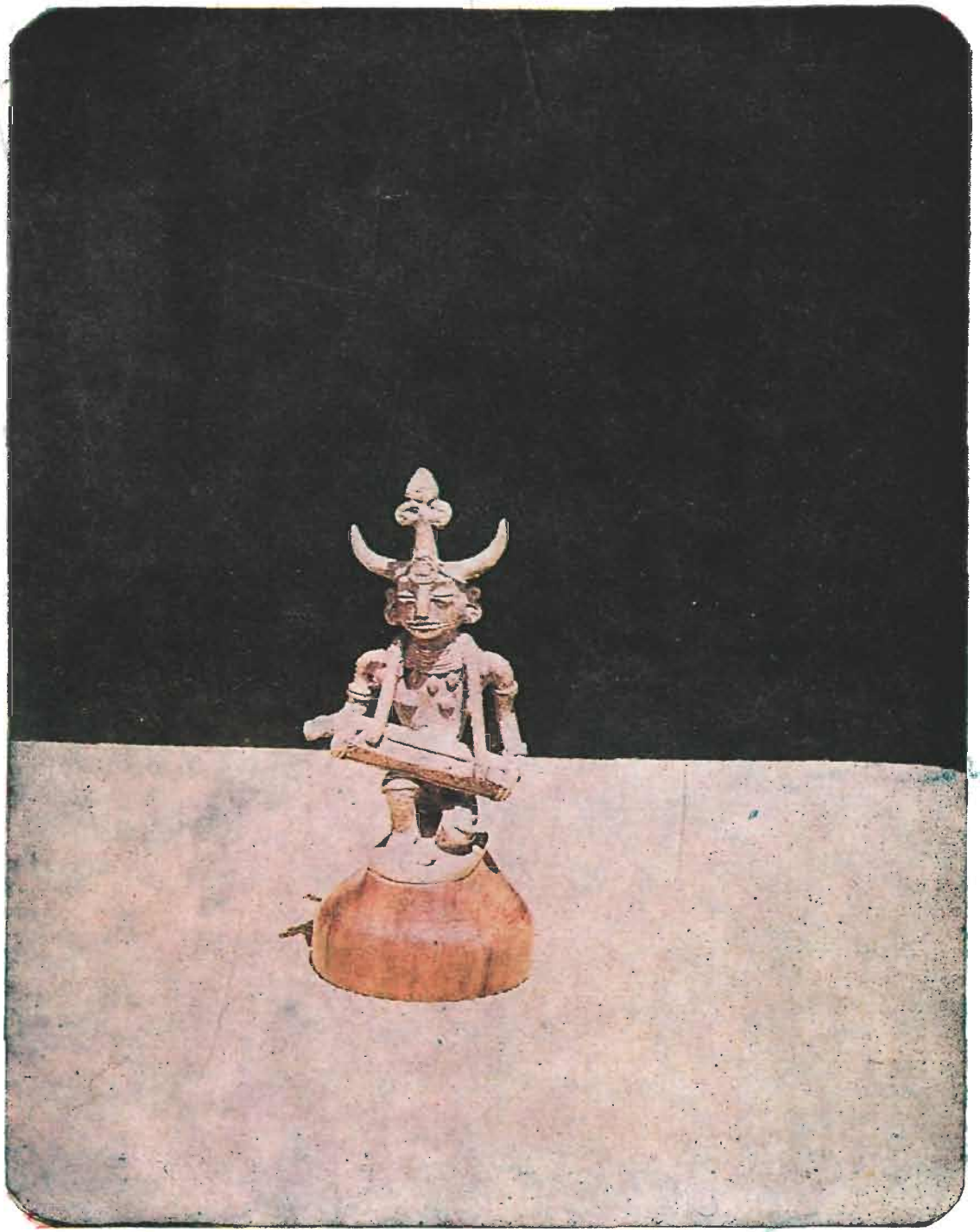
Dhokra Craft : A Sulphitree.



Dhokra Craft : A Tribal Lady.



Dhokra Craft: Bison-Horn Maria beating drum.



Dhokra Craft: Bison-Horn Maria beating drum.



Dhokra Craft Bison-Horn Maria beating drum.



Dhokra Craft: Male-Female Pair.



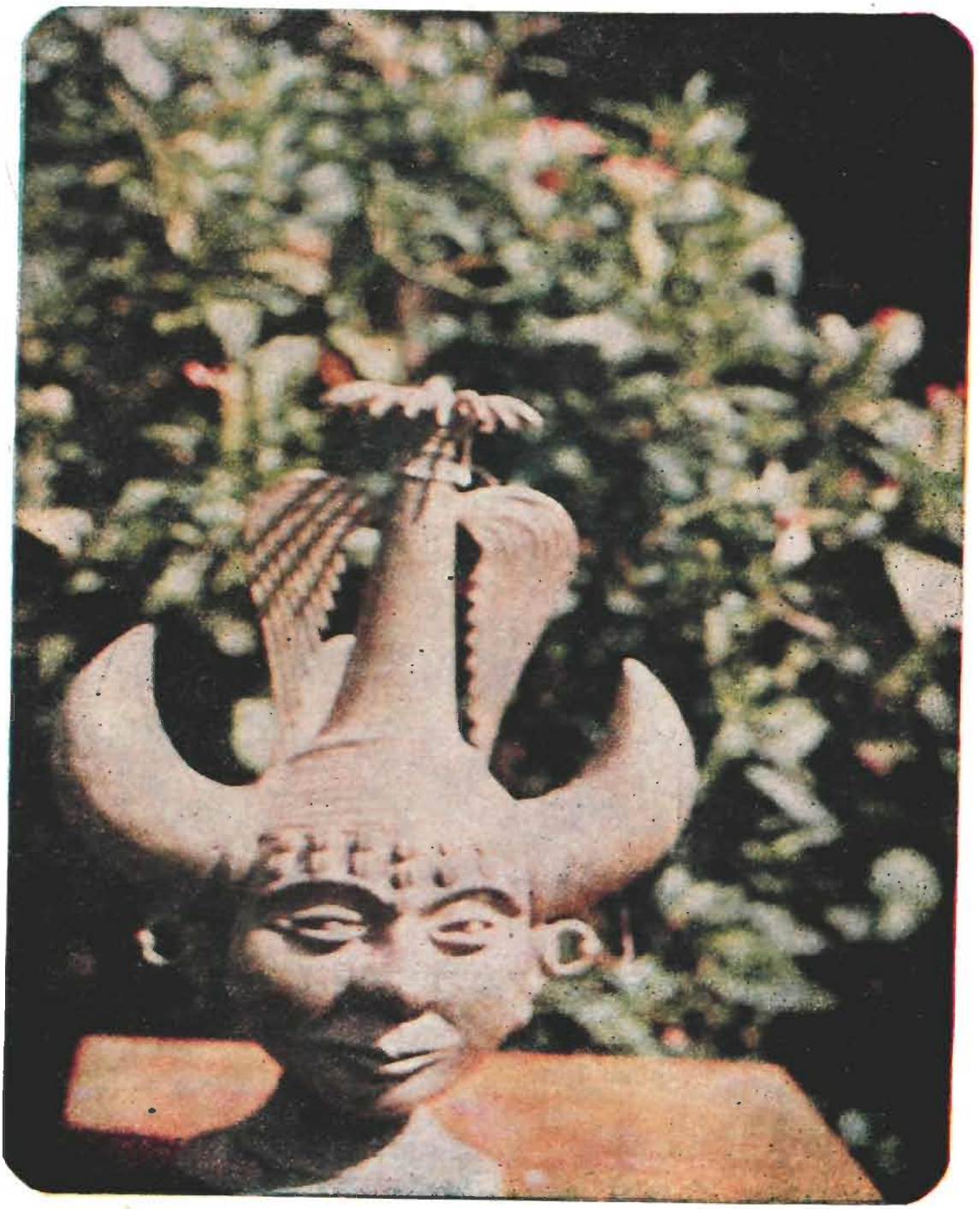
Dhokra Craft: Male-Femal Pair



Dhokra Craft: Female Head with Hair Style.



Dhokra Craft : Elephant.



Dhokra Craft : Femal Head.



Dhokra Craft : Male-Female Pair