

## Chapter 4

### Hira Community and Earthenware Culture

Earthenware is a type of non-vitreous pottery ware. Different types of earthenware are- terracotta, redware, lusterware, stoneware, yellow ware, etc. Earthenware making is Hira's cultural occupation. Hira community uses one special type of glutinous clay to manufacture earthenware. Hira community occupies a unique status in Assamese society. No one can deny the role of the Hira community in the Assamese culture. Hira artisans give life to an earthen pot with the touch of their hands. Though with the changing time earthenware making become an occupation for the Hira community and they started to make products for the market, originally earthenware making was their cultural identity. Where they made earthen products mainly for their domestic uses as their hobby or interest. Their specialty is that they manufacture and produce earthenware by hand without using the wheel as Kumar does. Hira artisans are practising the earthenware culture from generation to generation. This chapter deals with the details of Hira Earthenware Culture and its present status.

#### 4.1 Raw Materials:

For making an earthen product Hira artisan need different types of raw materials. Those raw materials are all naturally available. But now with all the changes in society due to modernity, many of those naturally available raw materials have become very costly and rare. Hira People need to spend lots of money to buy those materials. Hira uses raw materials like Hira clay, sand, gerumati, firewood, bamboo, husk, paddy straw, cow dung, etc. Table: 4.1 shows the sources of raw materials from which the Hira artisans collect those needed materials and also it shows the distance of the places and types of transportation they use to carry those materials.

Table: 4.1

## Sources of Raw Materials, Distance and Transportation

Sl. No.	Villages	Raw Materials	Sources	Distance	Transportation
1	Azara (Hirapara)	Clay	Deepar Beel, Sana Beel	1 k.m.	Pull Cart
		Sand	chakardeu	2 k.m.	Pull Cart
		Colouring Materials	–	–	–
		Firing Materials	Chakardeu, Gadhuli Bazar, Kewatpara	1-5 k.m.	Pull cart/ Self Carrying
2	Dhantola	Clay	Dhantola, Gajiana beel	2 k.m.	Pull cart
		Sand	Dhantola	-	Pull cart
		Colouring Materials	Komadhaba	1 k.m.	Self-Carrying
		Firing Materials	Palashbari, Jharobari, Dhantola	5-10 k.m.	Pull cart
3	Satpakhali	Clay	Tinikania, Dhantola	19 k.m.	Tractor/ Boat
		Sand	Balihara	1 k.m.	Pull Cart/ Boat
		Colouring Materials	Satpakhali	–	–
		Firing Materials	Rabha Village, Kukurmara	5-10 k.m.	Pull cart
4	Tarigaon	Clay	Rampur (Dhantola)	19 k.m.	Tractor/ truck
		Sand	Kalashi river	1 k.m.	Pull cart
		Colouring Materials	Gumi Hills	1 k.m.	Self-Carrying
		Firing Materials	Gumi Hills, Kharkhori Hills	1-7 k.m.	Pull Cart
5	Darisatra	Clay	Bogadaba	1 k.m.	Pull Cart
		Sand	Alakjari	2 k.m.	Pull Cart
		Colouring Materials	Alakjari	2 k.m.	Self-Carrying
		Firing Materials	Boko, Darisatra	10-15 k.m.	Pull Cart
6	Chamaria	Clay	Chaygaon, Makeli Pathar, Chamaria	3 k.m.	Pull cart

		Sand	Mara Kalashi River	1 k.m.	Pull cart/ Self Carrying
		Colouring Materials	Dhupdhara	34 k.m.	Truck
		Firing Materials	Chamaria	-	Self-carrying

#### 4.1.1 Hira Clay:

For making earthenware artisans need different types of raw materials and the quality clay is the most important among those. Without quality clay, it is impossible to manufacture any type of pottery. Clay is a major component of soil with various properties. Some of the common impurities present with the clay particles are- organic matters, carbonated lime, sulfide of iron, oxides, sands, etc. These impurities hindrance pottery making process by creating problems in shaping the products, in smoothness, and unbreakable durability. The colour and quality of the pottery clay are different from place to place based on its types of properties. Usually, artisans use clays having sticky, plasticity quality. Clay's stickiness and plasticity make every clay different from one another. Plasticity helps the clay to form a stickiness in it and get a proper shape when molded clay with mixing water. Earthenware clay has different minerals including organic matter and metal oxides like iron in different amounts which help the earthen products to reach their highest level of hardness at a temperature between 1745<sup>0</sup> F and 2012<sup>0</sup> F during the process of firing (Peterson, 2019).

There are many differences between the Hira clay and Kumar clay based on their quality. Hiras mainly use one type of sticky clay which is grey or blackish-grey in colour. This clay is called 'Hiramati' by the Hira artisans. And Kumars use one sticky type of blackish clay which is known as 'Kumar Mati' or 'Kumar clay'. It is also locally called 'Athaleita Mati' which means gum-like (in Assamese). But the Hira clay is inflexible in nature. The plasticity quality of the Kumar clay is higher than the Hira clay. Kumar clay can be used for different purposes, for example, making human statues, terracotta and even in many villages people use Kumar clay for moping the mud floor of their houses mixing with cow dung. But Hira clay can't be used for different purposes. It can be used for making earthenware only because of its sandy nature. Hira mati is sandy and Kumar

mati is silty. And because of this rigidness, Hira earthenware is better than Kumar's. But technologically Kumar's pottery is more developed than the Hira's. Kumar clay is easily available but Hira clay is rare. Hira clay is only found in Assam. And this is the reason that the price of Hira clay is higher than the Kumar clay. Medhi B (1992), said, "Hira clay contains 47.5% sand, 27% silt, and 25% clay. But Kumar's clay contains 21% sand, 49.5% silt, and 29.5% clay. Both clays contain minerals like calcium, magnesium, sodium, potassium, aluminum in different proportions."

Hiras don't use the clay in its raw or natural condition for making earthenware. Artisans collect the clay from the riverbank or the marshes. These places are known as 'Hira field' or 'Hira Gaat'. Artisans from different places of Assam come to these clay fields to collect the Hira clay. They mainly choose the winter and spring seasons to collect the clay. Because during these times the marshes of those areas become dry and it is less difficult for them to search the clay. Hira male members go deep into the ground by digging a pit of almost 2-3 meters to find this particular glutinous clay. When they find the Hira clay, they first cut the upper layer of soil by using a spade. The quality of clay differs from its location and proportion of minerals.

From the Field, it is found that in certain villages government already allotted some places for artisans to collect the clay. And Hiras from Azara and Darisatra can enjoy this opportunity. In Assam, the Kamrup district is famous for the good quality of Hira clay. Hira artisans from different places of Assam come to the South Kamrup for collecting the Hira clay. In south Kamrup each Hira villages collect the clay from different places based on their need, transportation, advantages, distance, etc.

The above table: 4.1 shows that Hiras of Azara (Hirapara) collect the clay from the deepar beel and sanabeel which is not very far from their place (1 k.m.). And they collect the sand from the chakardeu. The distance of which is 2 k.m. They hire a pull cart to bring the clay and sand to their houses. Hiras of Dhantola village doesn't have to face many problems in collecting the Hira clay and sand. Because they can find those materials in Dhantola only and they hire a pull cart to carry those materials to their

places. And might be it is also one of the reasons that the Hira people in Dhantola largely engaged in earthenware making as compared to the rest of the villages. Artisans from Satpakhali and Tarigaon face many problems in carrying the raw materials. Hira artisans of Satpakhali collect the clay from Tinikonja and Dhantola which is almost 19 k.m. far from their place. They carry those raw materials by tractor or boat and sand from Balihara (1 k.m.). Artisans of Tarigaon buy Hira clay from Rampur (Dhantola) which is approximately 19 k.m. far from Tarigaon. They have to carry those clay by hiring a tractor. But they can get sand from the river Kalashi free of cost which is nearby them (1 k.m.). The Hira people of Darisatra buy the Hira clay and sand from Bogadaba which distance is 1½ k.m. from their place and sand from Alakjari which is at 2 k.m. distance. They hire a pull cart to carry the raw materials. Hira from Chamaria collect the Hira clay from Chaygaon and Chamaria (Makeli Pathar) itself which is 2 k.m. far from their place and carry those by pull cart and sand from Mara Kalashi River (1 k.m.) by hiring a pull cart or by themselves.

For making Earthenware sand is also as important as Hira clay to the artisans of the Hira Community. Usually, raw Hira clay is not that flexible so artisans add more sand and water to make the clay pliable. But they need the sand in a purified state. Because other minerals like iron, small particles of stone, or some metallic minerals can affect the quality of the earthenware. So before using the sands Hira artisans use a strainer for purifying the sand. They can collect the sand free of cost from the river bank or different places. But during the field survey, it is found that Azara (Hirapara) and village Dhantola have to buy sand for Earthenware making. In table: 4.1 researchers have already shown the sources of sand collected by Hira for making Earthenware. Field survey reveals that Hiras of these six villages had to spend lots of money on transportation for carrying all these raw materials to their place.

#### ***4.1.2 Colouring Materials:***

As time is changing now there are different beautiful and cheap products are available in the market which are alternative to Hira Earthenware. So, Hiras also started

to decorate some of their earthen products to compete with the other ceramic alternative products. For decoration, Hiras use one type of natural reddish-brown clay. This is known as 'Gerumati'. Locally Hira people call it 'Ranga mati'. But now because of modernity potters from different places started to use some chemicals to colour or paint their potteries. But Hiras from the surveyed villages doesn't use any kind of chemicals to paint or decorate their products. They are still using the same clay as their ancestors used. This also has some advantages as the gerumati used by Hiras has many health benefits. People from ancient times also used gerumati as medicine for health, skin treatment, etc. Hiras add some amount of water with the gerumati and make one type of red paint to colour their earthen products. A small quantity of gerumati is enough to colour the product. They mainly draw some designs on the outer surface of the earthen product by applying this paint to make those products more attractive. This type of colouring the earthenware by using the red clay is followed by both Hiras and Kumars.

They can get this Gerumati free of cost from their neighbouring villages, especially from the hilly areas. Once they collect the Gerumati, they use it for one or two years. As shown in the table: 4.1 Artisans of Hirapara village of Azara don't use any type of colouring materials to decorate or paint their earthen products. Artisans of Dhantola collect the colouring materials or 'Gerumati' from the Komadhaha which is 1 k.m. far from their respective place. They carry those materials by bicycle, motorcycle, or pull cart. Hiras of Satpakhali collect the colouring materials from Satpakhali only. So, they don't encounter any problem in collecting those materials. The artisans of Tarigaon collect those materials from the Gumi Hills which is 1 k.m. distance from the artisans' place. They carry those materials by themselves. Hira artisans of Darisatra carry the colouring materials from the place called Alakjari which is 1 k.m. distance from their place. They also carry those materials by themselves because it is not very far from their house. As compared to the other five sample villages, the artisans in the village Chamaria have to carry the colouring materials from the place Dhupdhara which is 34 k.m. distance from the Chamaria. For collecting those materials artisans of this village hire tractors.

### **4.1.3 Firing Materials:**

For firing the earthen pots artisans need firing material like fire-woods, paddy straw, dry leaf, coconut husk, rice husk, bamboo, cow dung, ashes, etc. Earlier all those firing materials were available in their locality. But now it becomes very difficult to work for artisans to collect firewood, paddy straw, etc. As a consequence of modernity now they had to buy all those materials from other places or local markets. According to the local artisans of the surveyed villages, the price of firing materials mainly firewoods and paddy straw are increasing day by day. So, they had to spend lots of money to buy all those materials. The prices of these firing materials are different from place to place. Sometimes Hira people give their earthen products in exchange for firewoods.

As shown in the table: 4.1 Hira Artisans of Azara Hirapara collect the firing materials from the Chakardew, Gadhuli Bazar, and Kewat para which are 1-5 k.m. distance from the respective place of the artisans. They hire pull carts for carrying those materials or sometimes they carry those materials to their house by themselves. The artisans of Dhantola village collect the materials from Palash Bari, Jharobari, and Dhantola itself. Palash bari and Jharobari are 5-10 k.m. far away from their village. They hire a pull cart for carrying those materials. Artisans of Satpakhali collect those materials from Rabha village and Kukurmara which is 5-10 k.m. distance. They also hire a pull cart to carry firing materials. Gumi Hills and Kharkhori Hills are the places from which the artisans of Tarigaon collect the firing materials by pull cart. These are 1-7 k.m. far away from the respective village of the artisans. Artisans of Darisatra carry the firing materials from the Darisatra and Boko which is 10-15 k.m. far away from Darisatra by pull cart. And lastly, artisans of Chamaria collect the firing materials from Chamaria itself. They use a bicycle or a motorcycle to carry those materials.

### **4.2 Tools Used in Hira Earthenware Making:**

From ancient times Earthenware is playing an important role. In North-East India and Assam, earthen products are very famous. Artisans produced different types of Earthenwares with different designs. For making Earthen products Hiras use different

types of tools which are easily available in their areas. In the time of modernization and industrialization also Hiras don't use any scientific tools in Earthenware making. The tools they use for making the earthen product are very simple. These tools are used by every single Hira artisan during the time of manufacturing earthenware in Assam. Some of the main tools for producing Earthen products are-

**1. Kodal (Spade):**

It is a tool with a long wooden handle and a flat blade. Hiras use kodal for digging the clay from the riverbank during the collection of clay. It is also used for mixing the clay, sand, and water while preparing the clay for making Earthenware. All artisan families of the surveyed villages use this process.

**2. Gayen (wooden beater):**

Gayen is mainly a long wooden piece with different sizes and weights which is used as a beater while making the earthen pots. It is the main shaper and one of the most important tools for earthenware making. It is also called 'piteni' in the local language. Saraswati (1963) mentioned that there are three types of wooden beater used by Hiras to make earthen pots. One is used to give the clay shape or enlarging the earthen product, another one is used for smoothening the outside appearance of the pot and one is for giving a good impression to the earthen pots. For making these wooden beaters Hira uses wood-like, Gamari, Shegun, bansoom, etc. The upper part of the beater is called 'body' and the lower part of the beater is called 'handle'.

**3. Hil (Stone):**

In earthenware making, different-sized round natural stones are used with the wooden beater to support the Hira clay. These natural stones are collected from the riverbed. It is also called 'Hatisila'. They named the large stone 'dan hil', the medium-sized stone 'hat hil' and the small stone is known as 'piteni hil'. These stones have a soft surface. They use these stones from general to generation.



**4. Rukani (Scrapers):**

Rukani is made from thin bamboo. Sometimes Hiras use the surface of a broken earthen pot as a scrapper. This is used for removing the unwanted parts of clay from the body of earthenware. Sometimes they also use this scrapper as a tool for giving proper shape to the product.

**5. Kani or Lesi (old cotton cloth):**

Hira females use one piece of wet old cotton cloth to moist the earthen pot during the time of making the product and joining different parts of it. It is one of the important tools for making Hira earthenware. During the time of beating also artisan uses that piece of cloth to apply water. After completing the earthenware artisans use this cotton cloth to clean the vessel and make those products soft.

**6. Baira (earthen bucket or pot):**

It is used for storing the water which is used during the process of earthenware-making. Hiras usually use old or half-broken earthen baira to store the water.

**7. Bamboo Stick and Paint Brushes:**

Earlier Hira used to make simple earthen products but nowadays they are giving different designs and colour to their earthen products for an attractive style. Making earthenware attractive is very essential in present times. Because in the market many competitions are there nowadays. So Hiras use different types of brushes for colouring the products. Sometimes Hira uses their fingers as a paintbrush to colour the products. Locally this process is called 'rangoni kora' or 'bolowa' among the Hira community. For colouring, they use 'gerumati' or 'ranga mati'. And for making the design on the earthenware artisans use one light wooden or bamboo stick. This stick is locally known as 'Fulkota bari'. And with the help of this stick, they give different designs or layers on the earthenware when it is in a moisture stage.

**8. Pashi (Basket):**

Hiras use bamboo and cane-made baskets to carry the earthen products to the market for selling. In the local dialect, Hiras call it 'dukla' or 'pashi' also. Sometimes

they use a basket for storing or carrying the raw materials. Also, many artisan families who don't have a proper storeroom, store their small earthen products in baskets. And keep those baskets under the bed, tables, etc.

Although many changes occurred in the society in recent years, many people started to change their way of lifestyle due to modernization but the Hira community still attaches to their old and ancient traditions. With the advancement of science and technology artisans of all over the world modified and developed their old tools or infrastructure of manufacturing art and craft. In the field of pottery also, potters started to adopt some new and scientific tools which help them to manufacture products with less time and hard work. But Hira community people of the surveyed villages are still using those same old tools of making pottery. It brings disadvantages for the artisans. It makes the process of Hira earthenware making slow and lengthy.

### **4.3 Techniques of Making Earthenware:**

When we think about the pottery making techniques than it highlights three types of pottery making techniques. One is handmade, the second one is wheel-made and the third one is machine-made which is more popular in today's era. Hira community people use the first type of technique for making Earthenware. Earthenware-making technique among the Hiras is very simple, but it includes different techniques in every stage. It is impossible to make an Earthen pot in one day. It takes several days to complete one earthen product because of its lengthy process. Hira women make earthen pots every day in a year. In the night also some women make earthen pots under the light of Bulb or Chaki (Kerosene lamp).

#### ***4.3.1 Preparation of the Clay:***

After carrying the Hira clay and sand by a group of Male Hira members, their family stores it near the courtyard and covered it with an old cloth, plastic, leaf, or grass. Every Hira artisan's family has their own clay pit in their courtyard. Collected sand for

earthenware making is also stored in the courtyard in the same manner as Hira clay. Hiras store the collected clay for many years to preserve the stickiness of the Hira clay.

But the clay is only prepared by women Hira artisans. This stage of preparation of clay is common in every type of pottery making. Hira women prepare the clay very carefully. They become experts in this work by gradual practices. Hira women learn all those techniques of earthenware making from a very young age. They dug up some amount of Hira clay from the clay pit of their courtyard, with the help of a spade. Some artisans use a basket to keep the Hira clay and some of the artisans keep the clay on the floor, plastic or paper. The first step is kneading the raw clay with the piteni or gayen (wooden beater). In the time of kneading when artisans found unwanted parts of clay, parts of stones, or straw, they removed them. Impure clay is one of the major drawbacks for the artisan in the pot-making procedure. Then artisans pressed the clay with the help of their foot or hands and then mix the sand in the proportion of 4:1. According to Hiras, sand used in earthenware making should be in good quality. Because the quality of earthenware is mainly based on the quality of the sand. After mixing the clay and sand they add some amount of water to make a paste of clay as per measurement for the earthenware making. It increases the plasticity nature of the Hira clay. The process of preparing the clay is locally known as 'Mati mara' and the prepared clay is known as 'Mondo' among the Hiras of south Kamrup. This mondo should be very soft and sticky for good quality earthenware. In some places of India, artisans had to use cow dung to increase the stickiness of the prepared clay. This process is called 'Tempering'. But Hira clay is already enough glutinous to make earthenware without adding other materials.

### ***4.3.2 Pot making:***

Pot making also in Hira Earthenware culture is a feminine activity. The women artisans need to be very patient and concentrate on making an earthen pot. Hira women artisans make some small earthen discs by the prepared clay in a round or conical shape. In the earthenware-making process, Hira artisans use both hands to make it. They make this by pressing the clay between the palms. It is called 'dan' in their local language.

They put those dans on the bamboo mat. Different earthen products are made by the different shaped and designed dan. At one time they make almost 40 dan. They dry those dans in the shade for one day to make them slightly rigid. And then next day artisans use one wet cloth to moisture the dry dan. They try to make vessels from all the dan they made. Otherwise, all those dans would become inflexible and hard to bend. So usually, artisans make dan based on the number of earthen vessels they need. And the size of that dan is also made based on the intended size of the earthen vessel.

For making an earthen vessel Hira woman takes one dan and then gives this shape with the help of different sized round shaped stone and a wooden beater by beating technique. First, they placed the earthen dan or disc on a large round stone to give shape. So, this stone is known as 'dan hil' among the Hiras. The bottom part of the vessel is usually made on this type of stone. Then they methodically beat the vessel with the wooden beater anti-clockwise and press the vessel with the help of the round stone from the inside by the left hand. By beating techniques, they give the earthen vessel different sizes, shapes, and designs. In the meantime, they keep applying water with the help of old cotton cloth on the earthen vessel. It keeps the pot wet and helps the artisan to give a desired shape to the vessel. For the brim, they use another piece of clay and affix it on the earthen vessel. After that, they give the desired shape to the vessel by using fingers and left this vessel for one day. The next day they again beat the vessel with the help of a wooden beater and round stone. Thus, the other parts of the earthen vessel are also made with the help of fingers to give the earthen vessel a beautiful shape. After completing each part of a vessel, they leave it for drying. Artisans also use a scraper to remove the unwanted clay or to smoothening the earthen product.

First, they separately make the different parts of an earthen vessel, and after that join these separate parts to shape the vessel. During the time of joining, they keep applying water by wet cloth to keep the vessel moist. And the final design of the product is given. After completion of making the earthen vessel Hira women keep those products in the courtyard for a few days to dry under the sun. Hiras store those dried pots in a separate storeroom or on the side of the courtyard.

For small earthen pots like Saki (earthen light), chilim Hira artisans use only the pressing method. In this method artisans first, take one clay ball from already prepared Hira clay based on the intended pot. They take that clay ball on the left palm and press it down on the center of the clay ball with the thumb of the right hand. Then they make that depression widen slowly by pressing the fingers. It is necessary to apply water often during this pressing method. After giving the shape with the help of a finger artisans keep those products for drying under the sun. Hiras only apply this method to small earthen products. They can't apply this method on the big earthen vessels. Otherwise, they would be cracked during the firing. Before firing the products, in some villages, artisans use colour on some of the earthenware.

### ***4.3.3 Firing:***

After that, it comes to the most important stage of earthenware making, which is firing the pots. This is the final stage. After drying the vessels for a few days now these earthen products are ready for firing. And after firing the earthen vessels, they would be ready for marketing. Firing is important for making the earthenware durable and strong. Firing the earthen products in the proper temperature is the most important part of the Hira earthenware making for a better outcome. Typical colour of moist Hira clay is dark grey. After firing those Earthenwares the colour becomes orange or reddish-brown. In each type of pottery ware, the colour of products is different based on the mineral impurities of the clay. At present in different places, potters started to make glazed pottery which is more difficult to handle for firing than the Hira earthenware. They need to use different types of kiln for firing those glazed potteries with maturity.

In many places of India, potters use large electric or gas kilns for firing their products like the brick industry. This is a modernized process of firing with less hard work and money. But artisans of the Hira community still follow their old traditional and primitive method of firing the pots. Usually, Hiras don't fire a fewer number of pots. So, they wait for more than 100 earthen pots for firing. But in some exceptional cases, they had to fire 40/50 earthen pots also. The quality of the earthen products mainly

depends on the firing. If the mixer of clay and sand was perfect then the earthen vessel will come out with good quality and if in the time of mixing the Hira clay with the sand and water there was part of other clay also then in the time of firing the earthen vessel will blast, break or damage. One thing from the field, the researcher found only 12 sample households out of 60 have their own places for firing the Earthen pots. So, the rest of the 48 sample households don't have any particular place for Hira artisans for firing the earthen products in those surveyed villages. So, some Hira families come together and choose some open fields of the village or someone's courtyard for firing the earthen products. Some of the Hira families temporarily made some places in their courtyard for firing their products. This process of firing the products is commonly known as 'thupa dia' in South Kamrup. Usually, 2/3 of Hira families fire the pots together. Every family puts a mark on their pots. Generally, artisans choose the previous day of the sale of earthenware for firing the pots. Before firing the earthen pots artisan again keep the pots under the sun for drying. Because the water in the earthen pot could make that pot explode during the firing process.

For firing, artisans don't put the earthenware directly on the ground. First, they placed dry paddy straw and rice husk in a large round shape. Then on this layer, they put another layer of cow dung and firewood. And then they placed the earthenware those are ready for firing. Hiras first placed the large earthen vessels in some rows on the middle of the base. Medium earthen vessels are placed above the large ones. And on the top, they place all the small pots in a circular shape. And then they again cover all those earthenwares by firing materials like paddy straw, dry leaf, rice husk, cow dung, and ashes, etc. Bondopadhyay (1961) stated, "sometimes during the firing, the heap of the earthen pots goes to the height of 5 ft".

Then four men from the four sides of the heap set fire to the heap at the same time. Meanwhile, they keep adding the firing materials if needed. Artisans need to be more careful during the time of firing the pots. Because the rapid increase of high temperature may cause damaging their earthenware. It takes more than half of the day to finish the firing process. Mainly the temperature of firing earthenware based on the nature of clay

and its durability. Alumina, Silica, and water are the chemical formations of the pure clay which is used for earthenware making. During the firing process, different physical changes occur. Water evaporates and alumina and silica melt together in this process of firing. This process is known as 'Sintering'. And the firing at a proper temperature makes the moist earthenware partially melts and as a result, earthenware becomes tight and hard like stone. It gives the earthenware strength and harness. After this process, the earthenware can't go to its earlier moist state again. They left the earthen vessels for a night to cool down after completing the firing process. The next morning Hiras bring the vessels to their houses. And this is the unique process of firing the earthenware of the Hira community.

#### **4.3.4 Decoration:**

Hiras mainly used to decorate the large Earthenwares. They use fingers tips to decorate the Earthen vessels. They give design on the neck of the earthen vessels with the help of fingers. Sometimes they give different designs to the brims of the earthen products they made. All Hira artisans of Assam use reddish-brown or chocolate colour to decorate the pots. To design the small earthen pots sometimes Hiras use old pieces of cloth also. They prepare this colour from one special type of clay which is known as 'Gerumati' and the process of colouring the vessels is popularly known as 'dab' among the Hira artisans. They make a paste of the clay with water to colour the vessels. According to them, rainwater gives the clay a better and bright colour. Some artisans also add mango juice, soda for a brighter colour. There are many pieces of evidence of beautiful earthen potteries with different designs are found in the houses of artisans of the surveyed villages. When someone from outside comes to visit their villages, they show that earthenware having unique designs. But generally, Hira artisans don't prefer to colour their products. Only on the customer's demand they design their products with this paint.

In this scientific and technological era also, there are not any changes found in the stages of making earthenware among the Hiras. Hira artisans of the sample villages are still following the same process and techniques from generation to generation.

Modernity brings many changes to the life of the Hira people. But they have not left their ancestors' techniques and methods of earthenware making and adopt any modern scientific technology for making earthenware till now. But there is simple and natural science behind each stage of Hira earthenware making. In the field, it is observed that the artisans of the Hira community don't have any knowledge about the scientific theory behind their process of preparing the clay, pot making, firing, and colouring the pot, etc. But still, they are following this process of earthenware making successfully and they are experts in their field. During the collection of the clay, artisans can identify the quality clay for earthenware making without having any scientific knowledge, during the preparation clay they remove the impurities from the clay, regarding firing the pots also by looking at the products they can assume the height of temperature they need for firing the Earthenwares, they mixed different things with the red clay to enhance the colour without knowing the logic behind this, also the red clay they use for colouring the earthen pots have many health benefits. But the respondents of the sample villages are very simple. They are not aware of all those logic behind their process and techniques of making earthenware.

#### **4.4 Types of Hira Earthenware:**

Hira artisans are manufacturing different earthen products for a long back by using traditional techniques and methods. Hira earthen products are famous for their unique design. People use Hira products for different socio-cultural purposes. It is the pride of Assamese society. Hiras manufacture different types of earthen products on customers' demands. Some of the Hira earthen Products of present days are-

##### **1. Kalah (Earthen Pitcher):**

Hiras make different-sized kalah based on their needs. Kalah is a large earthen product with a long neck. Sometimes Hira artisans colour kalah with a special type of reddish clay which is known as 'gerumati'. Kalah is mainly used for storing or purifying water. According to some Hira villagers of the Dhantola village, the water storing in kalah is tastes better and sweet flavour. It is also used for making homemade rice beer



among the many tribal communities. Sometimes people use kalah to store rice cake, snacks, or other foods.

Another type of Kalah is also famous in some villages which are known as 'Aad-Kalah'. The size of this aad-kalah is half of the kalah. But people don't use this pitcher for storing water. Farmers use this pitcher for storing fruit juice in it. These types of pitchers are famous in the surveyed villages. In every village, Hira artisans make these earthen pitchers.

## **2. Choru (Frying Pan):**

There are different types of choru manufactured by Hiras. It is a flat earthen disc that is used for making pitha, rice cake, and different dishes. Choru is a famous earthen product among every Assamese family. In the time of the Assamese Bihu festival, the demand of different types of choru increased. From the surveyed villages it is found that every Hira family who follows earthenware culture makes choru. Hiras called it 'Khola choru' also.

Another type of Choru is called Japchoru (Steaming pot). It is like a steaming container. Jap choru is mainly used for making rice cake, pitha, etc. Hiras from Azara make this kind of earthen pot.

## **3. Tekeli (Miniature Vessel):**

'Tekeli' is the same as kalah. But it comes in a small size or shape. Artisans use gerumati to give different designs to a tekeli. It is mainly used for preserving or storing liquid foods. It is said that the food preserving in the earthen tekeli remains fresh for a long time. Also, tekeli has an important place in Assamese society. Assamese people use tekeli for making one type of special dish called 'Tekeli pitha'.

## **4. Marriage ghat (marriage vessel):**

Marriage ghat is the same as tekeli but with a narrower shape and round bottom. Usually, Hira products are not used in any type of religious ceremony. But from the field survey, the researcher found that the Hira artisans from the village Tarigaon

manufacture ghat for marriage ceremonies. It is used for storing water with mango leaves in marriages or other ceremonies.

**5. Baira (wide-mouthed small earthen pot):**

It is mainly a wide-mouthed earthen pot that is used to preserve curd. It is small in size. Hira families produce baira in a large number. And they supply those to different places. Artisans from the surveyed villages manufacture earthen baira of different sizes.

**6. Mola (Earthen cover):**

Mola is used as a cover on the small earthen baira. Some people also use mola as a plate. Earlier mola was used in different ceremonies to serve the people breakfast or lunch.

**7. Lurkha (wide-mouthed medium earthen pot):**

It is a round-shaped wide-mouthed medium-sized earthen pot. It is also used for preserving curd or making curd by Assamese people. Lurkha is quite popular among the Hira artisans.

**8. Kata (wide-mouthed large earthen pot):**

Kata is larger than Lurkha. And it is a round-shaped wide-mouthed large earthen pot. People use it to preserve or store food. Many people use kata as a container. Earlier people used kata to store their vegetables or foods.

**9. Ghai (large earthen vessel):**

Ghai is a large earthen vessel. In Ghai, people can store things from 1 to 8 kg. It is also used for preparing curd on a large scale. People usually use ghai for making curd in ceremonies or for commercial purposes.

**10. Dabar (short neck round earthen pot):**

It is a round-shaped large earthen pot with a short neck. It is used for various purposes. People use it for storing food, making wine, or storing other household things. Artisans in Tarigaon mainly make dabar or hari on customers' demand.

**11. Nagara (Musical Drum):**

Nagara is one of the musical instruments used in folk festivals. It is a large conical-shaped drum. The top of these drums is covered with animal leather. People play Nagara with two wooden sticks. At present days in many villages, Hira artisans don't make nagara. Even some of the Hiras don't know how to make nagara. But the village Dhantola is famous for making Nagaras. The women artisans from this village make nagaras in a large number.

**12. Kurkuri (Musical Instrument):**

Kurkuri is like small-sized Nagaras. It is used for performing some Hindu ritual prayers (nam), bhaona (drama), etc. Artisans of Dhantola village produce kurkuri and supply those to the different parts of the state.

**13. Daina (Musical Instrument):**

It is a musical instrument with a round shape. The top of this instrument is covered with animal leather. This type of musical instrument is famous all over India. Hiras of Dhantola village make daina based on its high demand. It is believed that daina made of Hira clay produces better sound.

**14. Khola (clay bread):**

It is a bread made of Hira clay. Hira women use their hands for making clay bread. It is popularly known as Khola among the Hira people. In some village areas, some people eat clay bread. According to them, it is good for health. In some areas, pregnant women consume clay bread. Hira artisans don't mix sand with Hira clay while making the Khola. Every Hira villages make khola. Sometimes they sell those and sometimes for their own use.

**15. Jonga (long earthen pot):**

It is a round long-neck earthen pot. Mainly people use jonga for making wine. It has its own demand. People from different places buy jonga from Hiras. Mainly tribal people use jonga for making wine.

**16. Guli (fishnet sinker):**

Guli is a small sinker of a fishnet of different sizes. It is made in a small drum-shaped. Some artisans colour also those gulis. The technique for making guli is very easy. Everyone can make this. By using a small slender bamboo stick artisan make guli. They rolled wet Hira clay around the stick and make a hole. But now most of the villages have left making gulis. Because they only make earthen products on customers' demand. Only artisans in village Tarigaon still make guli. The rest of the surveyed villages already left making guli.

The Hira Artisans of South Kamrup manufacture various beautiful earthen products. Since old ages, Assamese people are using all those products for different purposes. One thing is clear from the field survey that all Hira villages don't make every type of Earthen product. Every village has its own speciality. But if customers order they can supply every type of earthen product and utilitarian products to them. Hira earthenware is mainly utilitarian and used for domestic purposes particularly for cooking, preservation, or storing food items. But sometimes chaki, tekeli, ghat, dhupdani, dhunadani, etc. made by Hira artisans are used for religious ceremonies where Kumar's earthen products are not available. From the field survey, it is found that in some places Tekeli (miniature vessel) is used for the religious ceremony but Hiras called it 'Kumar tekeli' to sell them in the market. Customers also don't think twice before buying it because of the word "Kumar". But now many of those earthen products are already disappeared from our culture because of their low demand.

**4.5 Demand and Marketing:**

The development of earthenware culture mainly depends on its demand and marketing factors. Demands control of one product's promotion or demotion. The demand of Earthenware is based on different factors related to the need and importance of people. Some factors are — availability, durability, quality, price, technology, the population of the neighbouring villages, etc. It also depends on the communication, transportation, and marketing facilities of the product. Earthenware-making culture with unique styles is one of the important arts and crafts. In recent years, some of the

traditional handicrafts are getting popular in different places. But some artisans are still not getting a proper profit from it because of its low demand in some places. Hira community is the prime example of this type of artisan. Hira community is a small regional artisan group. Many people don't know about the Hira community. The demand of Hira earthenware is only limited to some parts of Assam. Earthenware making is one of this type of cultural occupations where demand matters the most. If the demand for earthenware decreased then production will also decrease. So, artisans manufacture earthenware based on their market value. But in Assam because of modernization and technological development, many people are already forgetting the traditional Hira earthenware. People started to use different types of plastic and metallic products in the name of modernity. People don't even think about the nature, environment, and even their own health for a minute before using those products. In the market, these products have more demand than the Hira earthenware, because Hira earthen products are now considered as outdated. Now people have more options in their hands. Also, earthen products are more delicate and a little difficult to maintain. During the cooking, it could be cracked because of temperature change or higher temperature. People need to be very careful in the time of cleaning those cookwares. Because those cookwares are not easy to wash compared to the other metallic products. Soap or dishwasher can soak into the clay during the cleaning and later it may drain some kind of unusual taste or smell in the next time cooking. These earthen products are also more pricey than the other metallic or plastic products. These are some of the reasons that the demand of Hira earthenware is decreasing with the passing time.

But still, no one can ignore the importance of Hira earthenware in Assamese society. Though there are some disadvantages of using earthen products as cookware, but it has lots of advantages also which can attract people towards it. Cooking in an earthen pot can help to circulate both water and heat through the cooked food and it also creates some types of delicious fragrances. Earthen cookware is healthier than other metallic cookware. Because the pH level of earthenware clay is more than 7 and when it comes to the touch of acidity of food, pH balance becomes inactive. Also, cooking in an earthen pot fills the different nutrition like calcium, phosphorous, iron, magnesium,

and sulphur which make our immune system strong (Rao, 2019). Arnold (1988) stated that ceramic products bring several advantages over metallic containers. And this is one of the reasons that still in some village areas Hira earthenware has a separate and unique place. The pottery making of a community represents the culture of that community. Das (2011) writes that even when Mahatma Gandhi came to Assam during the time of independence, he was surprised by the Assamese Hira earthenware craft.

In Assam, Hira artisans manufacture different types of earthenware. Earthenware has two types of demand- one is for ritualistic demand and another one is domestic demands. Hira earthen products are mainly utilitarian. People use Hira products for domestic use like cooking, storing, etc. Since ancient times people are using Hiras earthenware for different purposes when other metallic products were not there. Earlier people used to make rice on the earthen pot, but now people started to use a pressure cooker. But still in some rural areas in Assam people use those earthen pots for making rice. This type of earthen pot is called 'Bhator choru'.

In rural areas, people also use earthen products like choru, jap choru, pat choru for making pitha, rice cake, various types of snacks, etc. Some of the Assamese tribal people from different places come to buy Hira earthen pots. They use those pots for making different ethnic foods.

Apart from cooking, people also use earthen vessels for preserving or storing various things or food items in Assam. In most of the villages of Assam people use 'kalah' (earthen pitcher) for storing water. For storing and bringing water from one place to another people are using kalah from ancient times. In an earthen vessel, the elements of the earth contain with clay particle prevents the bacterial formation. Earthen kalah not only keeps the water cold, but it also brings many health benefits for the people. While storing water in earthen kalah, the alkaline nature of clay with the contact of water balances the p<sup>H</sup> level.

Assamese people make curd, ghee, butter in earthen vessels. In the Bihu festival, Doi (curd) is considered one of the important foods. People of Assam can't think of any feast without curd. For making and preserving the curd, people prefer a different size,

shape Hira earthen vessels. As per the high requirement of the customers, Hira artisans mostly preferred to make earthen pots like baira, ghai, kata which is used in making curd. Rice beer is one of the popular liquors among the Ahom people of Assam. For making and preserving rice beer, they need a good quality of the earthen vessel. People of the Mising tribe also make another type of traditional liquor which is popularly known as 'apong'. They use the earthen vessel to keep the rice beer in a good condition for a long time. For making all those rice beer Hira earthen vessel is the best. They don't use the Kumar vessel for making it. It is said that Hira earthenware makes the foods tastier.

People fear to use other metallic containers because of toxicity, food poisoning, loss of flavoring. Because there are many harmful chemicals are present in plastic or metallic container. Earthen vessels keep the food fresh for a long time because of their porous nature. In various festivals or ceremonies like marriage, Bihu, etc. Assamese people use earthen vessels for different purposes.

In Dhantola village of South Kamrup Hira artisans make earthen musical instruments like Nagara, kurkuri on customers' demand. In Dhantola village every artisans' family who is still practicing earthenware makes Nagara and Kurkuri. Artisans of the village like Dhantola, Tarigaon, and Satpakhali in South Kamrup are mostly full-time potters because of the higher demand for the earthen pots as compared to village Chamaria, Darisatra, and Azara (Hirapara). This is one of the reasons that those artisans still have not left their Earthenware culture and want to continue this culture in the future also. In the village Dhantola of South Kamrup, the sound of the beating clay is a common thing. In the time of Durga puja and Magh Bihu in every Hira village, women artisans manufacture earthen vessels on a large scale. All day and even at the midnight also they manufacture earthenware because of its high demand. But sometimes Hiras had to manufacture limited earthenware if the demand of their products decreases. According to some Hindu religious beliefs, people should throw away the earthen pots after using them once. So, customers also more prefer alternative ceramic products. But still, Hira earthenware has a special place in Assamese society because of its unique design and quality.

Besides other ceramic vessels, people like to use earthen products because of their eco-friendly nature. Hira earthenware consists of natural properties which are good for health. The glazed used in ceramic cookware can consist of different toxic materials like lead and also high fuel absorbing ceramic or metallic can harm the human body and the environment. Glazed pottery sometimes needs firing more than one time for the desired finishing. And mostly potters use fossil fuels in the kiln used for firing those potteries. This process badly affects the environment and leads to irremediable challenges like global warming. Hira artisans follow pure primitive and traditional firing processes which absorbed less energy than the other ceramic pottery ware. Nowadays in many festivals, ceremonies, or functions people from different places, different community, a different religion, started to use earthen products so that environment or nature don't get polluted. Recently in Diwali also people of India boycotted Chinese products so the demand of the earthen lamp has increased. Mainly, the earthen lamp is manufactured by Kumar, but Hira doesn't make an earthen lamp. But by seeing the high demand, Hiras also engaged in making earthen lamps to sell them in the market.

In Hira earthenware, both beating and watering give the earthen pot a very beautiful and unique style that is never found among the wheel-made Kumar potteries. This is one of the important characteristics of the Hira earthenware which attracts customers from different places. People who once use Hira earthenware become attached to it and whenever necessity comes, they buy Hira earthen products only. But this is not enough because it is also a reality that the Hira earthenware has demand more in rural areas and it is limited to Assam only. In urban areas, people already started to replace Hira products with other alternative products. Also, Hira is a small community residing in some particular areas of Assam, so the demand for Hira earthenware is very less as compared to the other potteries of all over the world. In present days, the Hira potters of Assam failed to improve their indigenous culture. Another reason for decreasing demand of Hira earthenware is some traditional beliefs. Hindus destroy the earthen pots made by Hiras after using them once. So, the demands of these earthen products are low even if the quality of the product is much more expensive and good. So, from a broader



context, we can say that Hira earthenware is losing its demand with the passing time. And this beautiful Assamese craft is dying a slow death.

#### **4.5.1 Marketing:**

Marketing is the essential stage in developing the earthenware culture. It mainly depends on attracting the customer by showing some special earthen products. It is the inter-relation between the customer and the seller. There should be a mutual understanding between the customer and seller for better marketing a product. A good strategy or organized marketing knowledge can help a seller to increase the demand or rate of his products. Some of the important points for marketing earthenware are-

##### **1. Target Population-**

It is the main important point for marketing. It gives artisans a proper idea of their customers which can help artisans to make marketing strategies.

##### **2. Taste of Customers-**

Some people want some unique designs or fashionable products. So, for this reason, artisans need to give importance to the choices of the customer and provide them the products they want.

##### **3. Considering Marketing strategies-**

There are different types of marketing strategies but in this pottery industry, artisans need to analyze the need and importance of the customers. And based on customers' needs and the importance they should make the production.

##### **4. Evaluate those Strategies-**

Practicing strategies is challenging. By introducing new, cheap, and better-quality earthen products than the other ceramic products would make it possible for artisans to sell those products on a large scale. This will also help to evaluate those strategies.

A good marketing strategy can help a Hira Artisan to earn more money by selling his earthen products. marketing the earthen products plays an important role in the life of Hira artisans whose full-time occupation is earthenware making and only

manufacture earthen products for market use. But for the artisans whose earthenware making is just a secondary occupation or hobby, marketing doesn't affect those people that much. Because they already have their other primary source of income.

In the surveyed villages of South Kamrup, most of the Hira artisans' socio-economic condition depends on the marketing the earthen products. This highly affects the socio-economic condition of the Hiras. But unfortunately, there are not many proper organized market systems for Hiras Community to sell their products.

**Table: 4.2**

**Transportation Facilities for the Marketing Earthenware**

<b>Proper Facility</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	51	85
<b>No</b>	9	15
<b>Total</b>	60	100

But from the field, it is found that (table: 4.2), the majority of Hira people don't face any problem regarding transportation or communication in marketing. Here data shows that 51 (85%) Hira families don't face any transportation or communication difficulties regarding marketing their earthen products. Only 9 (15%) families face some difficulties here.

Though the majority of Hira people don't face any problems with transportation, but in marketing, they had to face many difficulties. We know that the impact of modernization, globalization broadens the marketing facilities for artisans. But still in the South Kamrup Hira artisans are facing the problem of an unorganized market. Many times, Hira artisans are also exploited by the middlemen and traders. Because of them, they don't get the profit from their hard work. They had to sell their products at a very lower price.

Usually among the Hira community marketing the Earthen products is male members' duty. Women only manufacture earthen pots. But if some families don't have their husband, fathers-in-law, son, or other male members then Hira women carry those products to the market for selling. Hira people sell their products by a different type of marketing system. Some of those are-

1. Now in most of the Hira villages, buyers come to the Hira artisans' house to directly buy the earthen products. As in the present time, the transportation and communication system has been slightly developed in the surveyed Hira villages of South Kamrup as compared to earlier. So now it becomes easier for the buyer to come to the artisan's place. Here buyers can get bespoke earthen products. They can order any design they want. In this system, there are some advantages and disadvantages also. The advantage is artisans don't have to go to the remote market areas by carrying those earthen products. In many cases when Hira people reached the market, they found many of their earthen pots are already broken. And the disadvantage is when buyers directly come to their houses, they became unable to sell those products at a higher rate. They had to lower the price of earthen products, sometimes below their manufacturing cost.

It is seen in the surveyed villages that every artisan family follows this process for selling their products. But this process of selling earthenware is comparatively profitable for the artisans of village Tarigaon, Darisatra, Azara (Hirapara), and Chamaria. Because here buyer can come to artisan's residence to buy the earthen product easily as the condition of roads of these villages are better than the rest of the sample villages. The roads and communication system are not good in the village Dhantola and Satpakhali. So, sometimes it becomes difficult for the people outside the village to go to those villages for purchasing their earthen products.

2. Secondly, one of the most common types of market in sample villages is 'Bhar' system. In some areas, Hira males carry their earthen products on their shoulders to the neighbouring villages to sell those products directly to the people. In this process,

artisans don't go far. There is a change in this system in recent years that earlier artisans carried their products on the shoulder or head to the different places of Assam. But now Hira people don't have to go this far due to the advancement of the transportation system. Now they only carry their products to those villages which are within a walkable distance from artisan's residence. Usually, in every Hira village, artisans follow this type of marketing and go to the door to door of the customer. One advantage of this marketing process is that by carrying their handmade products on the shoulder can able to catch the attention of the many people of the different places.

Evidence found that in the surveyed villages out of 32 sample households whose primary or secondary occupation is earthenware making, 29 (90.63%) families follow this type of market system for selling their products. And one shocking thing is found that though selling the products is mainly male member's job, but in the field, there are two artisan families where their female member of the house goes for selling their products by bhar. These two families are from villages Dhantola and Satpakhali. They don't have their husbands, so for livelihood, they themselves carry the products on their heads and go to different places.

3. Thirdly, one of the best options for marketing the Hira products is to carry their products to the local market. Though these are not permanent marketplaces for the Hiras but still in South Kamrup most of the Hira people carry the earthen products to these local markets for selling. All artisan families from surveyed villages follow this process. For carrying those products to the market, they hire a pull cart, bullock cart, etc. These markets are weekly or bi-weekly. One of the common markets for the artisans of South Kamrup is Chaygaon Market. Hira Artisans from all over the south Kamrup come to this market for selling their own products. Here Hira and Kumar both exhibit their earthen products by making a temporary stall. Customers can choose their essential products from those varieties of earthen products.

Table: 4.3

## Details of Markets for selling the Earthen products

Sl. No.	Name of the Villages	Name of the Market Place	Distance (in k.m.) approx.	Type of Transportation	Types of Earthenware
1	<b>Azara (Hirapara)</b>	Guwahati, Chaygaon Market	21 k.m.	Small Van	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Jonga, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Khola
2	<b>Darisatra</b>	Goroimara Market, Boko Market	10. k.m.	Pull Cart	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Khola,
3	<b>Chamaria</b>	Chamaria Market	1 k.m.	Pull Cart	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Khola,
4	<b>Dhantola</b>	Bijay Nagar, Chaygaon Market	10/15 k.m.	Pull Cart	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Nagara, Kurkuri, Daina, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Khola,
5	<b>Satpakhali</b>	Bijay Nagar, Chaygaon Market	10/15 k.m.	Pull Cart	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Khola,
6	<b>Tarigaon</b>	Chaygaon Market	5 k.m.	Pull Cart/Boat/Bhar	Kalah, Choru, Jap choru, Tekeli, Marriage ghat, Baira, Lurkha, Kata, Ghai, Dabar, Guli, Khola,

Table: 4.3 shows the name of the markets to which Hira artisans come to sell their products. Artisans from Azara (Hira para) carry their earthen products to the different local markets of Guwahati city and also go to the Chaygaon market. The distance from the residence of Hiras to the market areas of Guwahati is approximately 21 k.m. They carry those products to the market by small Van. Hiras of Darisatra come to Boko and Goroimara market for marketing the earthen products. This is approximately 10 k.m. from the residence of artisans. They use a pull cart for carrying the earthen products.

Hira artisans of Chamaria carry the products to the Chamaria market by pull cart which is only 1 k.m. far from their area. Both Dhantola and Satpakhali artisans carry their products to Bijay Nagar and Chaygaon market by pull cart. The distance of these markets is approximately 10/15 k.m. And Tarigaon artisans also sell their products in Chaygaon Market. They carry the earthenware by bhar on the shoulder or by pull cart and sometimes by boat also. Chaygaon market is 5 k.m. far away from village Tarigaon. Table 4.3 also reveals the information about the products Hira people exhibit or display in the market for selling.

4. Hira artisans sometimes exhibit their earthen products in some fairs or melas. When the neighbouring villages of Hira people organize some functions or programmes like Bihu, Durga puja, mela, trade fair these artisans came to that place and temporarily made some tents or shop for the sale of their earthen products. There artisans can meet different people from different places. This helps the Hira artisans to earn more money. This also helps the Hiras to promote their handmade products and attract buyers. The respondents from the field said that this kind of environment helps them to have ideas about the demands and values of different products in the contemporary market. Because different artisan communities come to these types of fairs or melas to exhibit their products. Even Hira people also come to Guwahati to exhibit their products in different trade fairs. Every Hira village of South Kamrup follows this type of market system.
5. One type of marketing system among the Hira people is contract-based. In this process, the artisan makes a deal with the trader or contractor, or other dealers by mutual agreement, and they are paid according to their contract. And according to their demands or orders artisans try to manufacture different earthen products as per their specifications within a period. Those contractors or dealers also offer them some advanced money for collecting or buying raw materials. In Hira villages like Dhantola, Tarigaon Hira artisans manufacture earthen products on a contract basis. This provides the rural artisans of the sample villages employment.

6. Most of the time Hira Artisans sell their earthen products in a wholesale system. Here artisans make earthen products based on the specification of the middle man or traders. Then the middle man buys those products in a large quantity from artisan houses or sometimes artisans themselves carry those products to their places. One of the advantages of this wholesale system is that artisans can sell all earthen products at the same time. This provides artisan stability. They don't need to worry about marketing. But one disadvantage is that they got a relatively lower price of these products from this wholesale system. Many times, artisans from the sample villages sell their products in the wholesale system.

Apart from marketing one of the famous and traditional systems is the exchange of products. Sometimes Hira people exchange their earthen products with the different things of neighbouring people which are important for domestic use. It is based on Hira artisans' demand and necessity. In south Kamrup before it was very popular among the village people as the economic condition of the Hira people is very miserable. So, most of the time they exchanged earthen products for other important goods in return. This system was also present among the sample villages. And people generally exchanged their products with the people of their same village. Hira women exchanged earthen products with rice, vegetables, etc. Sometimes exchange with raw materials i.e. firewoods, paddy straw, husk, etc. They negotiated the value of the products with the other party. Sometimes, artisans exchange products with the products of other people for the long term. This is known as the 'Jaota System'. It is the same as the exchange system. Now with the changing time, these exchange systems are disappearing from the Hira villages. During the survey, it is found that only in Azara (Hirapara) and Darisatra Hira people are comparatively following this system. They exchange their earthen products with the earthen products of Kumar.

From the above discussion, we can get the idea of the marketing system among the Hira community at present. Still, they are practicing all those marketing systems for selling their earthen products in South Kamrup. As for most of the Hira people, earthenware making is the main source of income so there should be proper, permanent,

and organized market facilities for both Hira and Kumar for the sale of their earthen products. So that they can exhibit their earthen products and sell them at a proper price. This will also improve and uplift the socio-economic condition of Hira artisans. The Government or district Authorities should take some initiatives for this. But with the modern changing scenario, the market system for art and craft is also affected. So, for better marketing, proper market value and to make the sale of Hira earthenware profitable modern market linkage should be created.

#### **4.6 Modernity and Earthenware Culture of Hira Community:**

In the process of social change, 'Modernity' and 'Tradition' are used as two sides of a coin. Modernity is a widespread trend in our society that leads to various changes in the traditional occupation, culture, livelihood, etc. In the present study, modernity includes the changes that occur in the Hira earthenware culture due to westernization, industrialization, globalization, modernization, etc. Those changes result in occupational mobility among people over a period of time. Earlier people were dependent on natural resources for their livelihood. But now people have become more engaged in the industrial sector. Industrialization affects the social, economic, and cultural lives of the different classes of people. Society is dynamic. People adapt or adjust themselves to new values and norms and left some part of their old traditions. The impact of modernity could be both positive and negative.

At present Assam is also touched by the western and modern international market economy brought by British rule. Changes in traditional culture have touched the traditional occupation of people of rural areas. According to Eisenstadt (1966), "in a traditional system, people manage with the simple occupations where the natural resource is exploited for direct use of man, while with a twist towards modernization these are enormously supplemented and supported by occupations of manufacturing and skilled services". So, in this modern time, there is a big question that how far the indigenous earthenware culture of the Hira Community is not influenced by the changes in society that occurred due to modernity.



Hiras are practising Earthenware culture from ancient times by following primitive methods. It is their cultural occupation. The occupation of a society reflects their socio-economic status. Because the occupation is a part of the culture of Indian society. In Assam, Hira villages have their unique culture. And most of those Hira villages are still following their old and ancient customs. Hira artisans of the village Azara (Hirapara), Dhantola, Satpakhali, Tarigaon, Darisatra, and Chamaria are practising this culture from the time of their ancestors. But the changes in contemporary society deeply influenced this occupational culture of the Hira people. In ancient India, the Earthenware craft had a respected and protected place in society. But since the time of technological advancement, it began to lose its importance. So today, the socio-economic-cultural life of Hira artisans is influenced by the impact of modernity and as a result, it started to change gradually. Pande (1986) stated that a better standard of consciousness, new trends of nuclear families, educational awareness, the impact of urbanization in the rural settings, fair election system are the main reasons tending towards modernization from tradition. From the field, the researcher found some interesting facts about the impact of modernity on the earthenware culture. And Hira people are compelled to adopt different processes to negotiate with this new form of Earthenware. Some of the notable impacts of modernity on this beautiful culture are discussed below-

**a) Increasing Occupational Mobility:**

Because of all the changes that occur in the field of earthenware culture, people of the Hira community are forced to choose some different processes to negotiate with modernity. Occupational mobility is one of the important steps followed by the Hira people. When people are not satisfied with their traditional occupation then they always want to acquire a new job or engagement which can fulfill their expectations. Though earthenware making is Hira's ascriptive tradition, now they are gradually leaving this tradition and starting some other new occupations in the sample villages. Now only a few rural families are following this culture. The researcher found a different picture of occupational mobility from the traditional Hira society among the Hira community

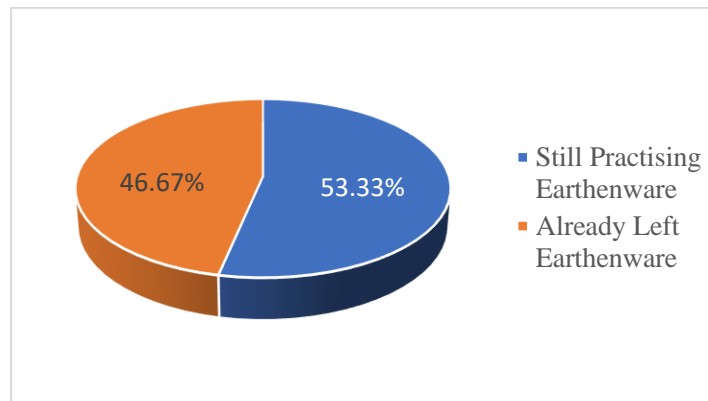
people of surveyed villages. Different aspects of modern society forced Hira people to shift their occupations from one to another. Mainly those aspects are educational and economic or financial. Many artisans from the field, already left earthenware-making culture. There are many root causes which forced this artisan community to change its tradition for a better lifestyle. The earthenware culture of the Hira community is one of the major handicrafts of Assamese society and the traditional occupation of the Hira community. Earlier older generation people of every Hira village followed this culture. Whereas, now gradually different types of other jobs and occupations started to replace this beautiful cultural occupation of the Hira community. Now people from the Hira community are more interested in the other white or blue-collar jobs. In most cases, only those families who don't have any other option, are still following this culture.

**Table: 4.4**

**Hira Artisans Practicing Earthenware culture in Present Time**

<b>Practicing Earthenware Culture</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Still Practicing</b>	32	53.33
<b>Already left</b>	28	46.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Table: 4.4 shows that in the surveyed villages 32 (53.33%) Hira families are still practicing Earthenware making, while 28 (46.67%) Hira families already left this ancient culture. The reason is that the challenges they are facing due to modernization and westernization. This table visualized the present scenario of the Hira earthenware in the surveyed villages. Already 46.67% of Hira artisans are compelled to start different new occupations. Although more than half of the Hira respondents are still practicing this culture; it is also thinkable that why many of them are leaving their cultural identity to deal with the new form of earthenware culture.

**Fig: 4.1 Hira Artisans Practicing Earthenware culture in this Modern Time**

In chapter 3, table: 3.4 already shows that the majority of the women artisan already left earthenware making. And also, they don't have any interest in restarting this cultural occupation. In the sample villages, the percentage of Hira people who are still practicing earthenware is comparatively higher in the villages Dhantola, Satpakhali, and Tarigaon than in the other three sample villages. These three villages are in a purely rural area. As these villages are also situated far from the city or urban areas, so the Hira people don't have a relation with the people from the city area. This is one of the reasons that even after facing many challenges, artisans of these villages are trying to adjust to this changing situation. But in the villages Azara (Hirapara), Darisatra and Chamaria we can see a slightly different picture from the earlier three villages. These villages are situated near some urban or developing areas. So, the percentage of occupational mobility of the Hira people in these three villages is higher (Table 4.4). Now people from the Hira community start to engage in agriculture, fishing, jobs in govt/private sector, business, and wage labour. Specially, the new generation of the Hira community doesn't want to follow this culture. But the older generation is only following their old age culture.

#### **b) Advancement of Education System:**

The modern and western form of the education system is one of the reasons for occupational mobility among the Hira community. In the field, the researcher observed that the new education system creates a great impact on Hira earthenware culture. The present education system is touched by the recent changes of the modern era. Now

people are more aware of education and interested in a western form of lifestyle. So, parents are also sending their children to school for proper education in the sample villages. Education is an important factor for the socio-economic development of an individual/family/society/ nation. There is no doubt about the contribution of education to the overall development of a community. So far, proper professional education has a much higher contribution to an individual's overall growth and development. This increases creativity, productivity, mobility, and choices.

But the notable fact of surveyed villages is that in this present situation, Hira people whose educational qualification is lower are only interested in practising earthenware culture.

**Fig: 4.2 Educational Qualification of the Hira Artisans**

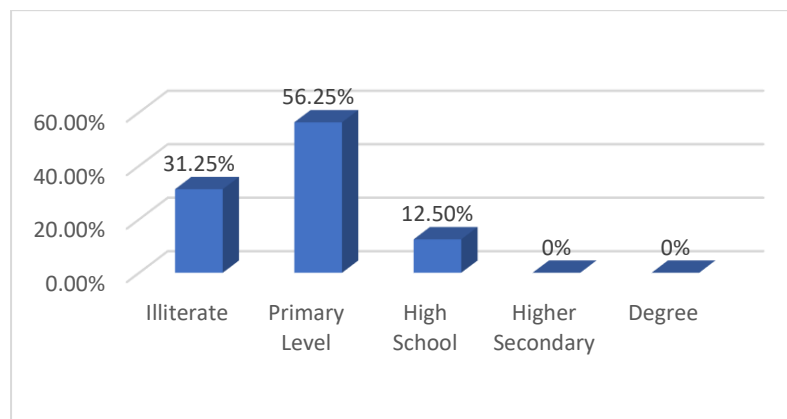


Fig: 4.2 shows the educational qualification of the headman of the sample artisan families. The number of Hira households who are still practising earthenware culture is 32 out of 60 (table:4.4) and out of those 32 Hira families, 10 (31.25%) respondents are illiterate, 18 (56.25%) respondents' educational level is primary, 4 (12.5%) respondents' education level is high school as shown in fig 4:2. This means only Hira people who don't have proper education practise earthenware at present. And the Hira people who have comparatively higher education, are not interested in practising their occupational culture. From the observation, the researcher found that the respondents whose educational level is comparatively lower, have their different reasons for following Earthenware culture. Mainly there are two categories of Hira people who choose to continue this culture at present. One category of people is those who don't have any

higher expectations. They prefer to follow their fore fatherly occupational culture with the help of old and outdated techniques and methods. Even they don't want to change anything in their culture to deal with the modern market economy also. They have adjusted their lives according to the earthenware-making culture. But the other category of people doesn't want to continue this culture in the first place, but they don't have any other choices except to follow this culture. According to them, Earthenware making has become non-profitable at present. So, it is very difficult to earn a proper income through making earthen products. But they are forced to do that as they don't have any qualifications or job experience. Also, they are not able to start any new business as they are facing financial hardship. On the other hand, the people with higher than the primary level education already started to earn money by engaging in other public or private sector jobs. Some of them also start a business for a better subsistence.

It is observed from the field that the older generation of Hira people is now started to realize the importance of education in the development of their indigenous craft. Because they are facing numerous problems as they are educationally and economically backward. So, some of the Hira parents started to send their children to schools and colleges as compared to earlier in the surveyed villages. There are many schools and colleges are also established near the Hira villages of South Kamrup and this is one of the reasons that some young generation people of the Hira community are now interested in formal education than earlier. Earlier Hira people were engaged in earthenware making from a very young age and their parents were also not aware of education. They believed that education is not important for their indigenous culture. But now the scenario has been slightly changed here. Young generation people of the Hira community start to enroll in school, colleges and some of them go to the university though the number is very few. But considering the nature of work and income-generating capacity of Earthenware culture, Hira people don't want to engage in earthenware-making activity after getting higher education. Education of Hira people is very important for the development of their culture, but higher and professional/vocational education create a negative impact on this indigenous culture. It is observed in the survey that almost all educated family members of the Hira

community are more mobile and disinterested in this culture. After getting higher education the new generation of the Hira community prefers to move away from their cultural occupation to some other occupations or jobs even in the private sector.

One young respondent from Azara (Hirapara) said that *"Earthenware making is messy and dirty work. So, I don't want to engage in such type of work. Better I will look for another job. And even if I don't get any other job, still will not prefer to engage in earthenware making"*.

This is one of the major causes that Hiras are leaving their indigenous culture at present. But for the development and continuation of this indigenous culture, it is very important to make engaged the young generation of the Hira community also in it. Because they are the future generation of our country. They have the potentialities to carry forward their ancestral earthenware culture and create a proper market value for the Hira earthenware. So, Innovativeness and entrepreneurial ability are almost absent in the Earthenware culture of the surveyed villages. This also creates the problem of unemployment among the young generation of the Hira community. Now people are more interested in the western lifestyle, so after completing their education, they want to engage in different white or blue-collar jobs. But nowadays it is very difficult to get a job easily. So, they had to stay at home but still, they don't want to participate in the earthenware-making culture because of its changing demands. At present, in many artisan families, only husband and wife are continuing this culture. Their children look for another occupation. So only the elder member and the uneducated people are still following this culture among the Hira community. This portrays a clear picture of the present changing scenario of traditional earthenware culture affected by modernization and westernization.

The researcher also found that though after getting higher education people of the Hira community don't want to continue their indigenous culture, it is also true that advancement of formal and vocational education is not the root cause for the degradation of this beautiful culture. The problem is seemed in the process of earthenware making, the amount of hard work and money they invest, and the profit they get in return.

**c) Problems of Raw Materials:**

Nowadays making earthenware is not easy work. As already mentioned in chapter 3 that Hira artisans often face the problems of unavailability of essential raw materials. Earlier raw materials for Earthenware making like Hira clay, sand, firing materials were available and easily accessible free of cost in the villages. At present to find high-quality Hira clay is tough work. And also, only experts can collect the Hira clay by digging in the riverbank. But now the majority of the Hira people don't have proper experiences or don't want to do this kind of tough and risky work. Every artisan's family of the surveyed villages said that earlier Hira clay was available in the river bank. But now it becomes the most difficult work for the Hira artisans to collect the Hira clay. Because of some natural and geographical degradation, the amount of Hira clay on the riverbank becomes more limited.

Now in modern times, a polluted environment also has a huge impact on the raw materials that are used in earthenware making. Hira clay is the primary raw material of this craft. They had to prepare the clay mixing with the white sand. Hira males collect those sand from the river or the other sand field. For making a quality earthen product they need to use good quality clay and soil. Local Hira artisans from the surveyed villages said that collecting and setting the good quality of clay and sand is very hard work for them. Because nowadays agricultural and industrial wastage pollutes the water, even the clay, and particles of soil. Soil is a natural body consisting of different minerals and organic matters. So, pollution changes the texture of the soil, its density, colour, or even the quality. A wide range of organic materials which contain pesticides used in agriculture dissolves with soil particles. And Industrial wastage having different toxic materials and heavy metals like sulphur, lead, cadmium, titanium, etc. dissolves into the water and mixed with the soil particles, and changes its  $p^H$  level. Pollution also changes the properties of clay, its thickness, and capacity of water holding which sometimes creates problems not only for the artisans of surveyed villages in particular but also the whole Hira community in general. So, the Hira people of the surveyed villages had to put more effort into collecting the quality Hira clay. Good quality clay is the key secret of a beautiful and classic earthen product.

As a result of modernity, now people want to adopt a new lifestyle, western norms, and values. So, artisans of the Hira community had to face the problem of the unavailability of raw materials in South Kamrup.

**Table: 4.5**

**Problems Faced by Artisans during the Collection of Raw Materials**

<b>Problems faced by Artisans during the Collection of Raw Materials</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	51	85%
<b>No</b>	9	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Evidence from the table: 4.5 found that in the surveyed villages 51 (85%) out of 60 families said that they face problems during the collection of raw materials. Only 9 families' (15%) responses are positive regarding the collection of raw materials. Because they get the firing materials from their relative's place. But they also admit that it is one of the main problems of the entire Hira community. Now people of the sample villages started to cut and destroy the forest to build concrete houses, offices, etc. As a consequence, Hira artisans had to face a challenging situation in the field of Earthenware culture. Because this creates difficulties for the Hira people in collecting the firewoods for firing the earthen products. So as a replacement they started to use cow dung for the firing process. But now it is also difficult to get cow dung easily. Earlier every Hira household had two or three cows in their houses. But now they sold those cows as they don't have time to look after them, and the young generation of the Hira community are also not interested in it. So now they had to collect cow dung from neighbours' places. Earlier they collected rice husk, paddy straw from the agricultural field. But now the number of people engaged in agriculture also decreases in those villages. They are also facing problems in collecting the rice husk. Earlier every people pounded rice in their houses with the help of Dheki (agricultural tool). So, it was easy for the Hira artisans to collect the husk from the people of their villages. But at present, people carry the rice



seed to the mills for pounding. And those mills don't supply the husk to anyone without cost.

The respondents from the surveyed villages said that the raw materials used in earthenware-making craft became very costly nowadays as a consequence of modernity and modernization. The lack of raw materials forced the Hira artisans to rely on some local traders who provide them all the necessary raw materials at high prices. Because of this reason their earthenware culture is going through a very hard time. They need to buy almost every raw material at a high price. Though all the firing materials they need are naturally available, nowadays Hiras need to purchase all those materials like firewoods, paddy straw, etc. from different places. And it is the most expensive among all the raw materials. The artisans from the sample villages also had to spend lots of money to buy the Hira clay. And because of the increasing price of fuel, they had to spend a high amount of money on transportation for carrying the raw materials to their places.

In the field, all 32 out of 60 Hira households who are still practising earthenware said that costly raw material is one of the reasons for their financial backwardness. And rest of the 28 sample households stated that one of the major reasons that they are compelled to leave their fore fatherly occupational culture is the constant increase of the raw materials cost over the past years. In the surveyed area high priced raw materials and the high transportation fare hit the Hira artisans badly. Because of all these reasons, the rate of occupational mobility among the Hira community is increasing in recent years. Now waiting for the government to take some steps to solve this problem of Hira artisans is the only option they have, stated by some of the respondents.

**d) Decreasing Demands of Hira Earthenware:**

In reality, it is seen that the improvement of Earthenware culture is very slow in Assam at present time. The Hira earthenware failed to fulfill the needs of modern society. Respondents of the surveyed villages said that in their ancestor's time their traditional earthen products were in great demand. Most of the people from all over Assam only purchased Hira earthenwares for their houses. And this was the reason that

their ancestors were full-time potters and even they did not have free time because of its high demand.

But in the present scenario, costly raw materials Hira uses for manufacturing earthenware make the production cost higher. But as compared to those investments in raw materials and the process of earthenware making, the profits have not increased. One of the main causes of increasing loss in the market is different alternative products of Hira earthenware is the demands of the Hira earthen products is still low as compared to the other ceramic alternative foreign products. So Hiras don't get proper profit in this earthenware-making business.

In the field survey, 49 sample households said that different alternative ceramic and metallic products are one of the important reasons that they had to face harsh competition in today's contemporary market. Now there many useful, budget-friendly, and imported foreign products are available in the market which is an alternative to Hira earthenware. Globalization opens the border of many countries and gives people opportunities to access foreign goods. It is very sad to see that those alternative machine-made products are gradually replacing the Hira traditional handmade earthen products. Those are more popular among the people. So, Hira earthenware is labeled as old-fashioned, outdated, etc. to the modern taste in modern society. Now people use different types of plastic, steel, brass, aluminum, iron, etc. metallic products for their domestic use. These products are easily available in the market and also durable as compared to earthenware. Now, most of the domestic used products of households are made of plastic. So, people are starting to use those products over the earthen products. Pressure cooker replaced the earthen Handi (rice maker), modern metallic frying pan replaced choru (Earthen frying pan), idli maker replaced the earthen steamer, metallic kadhai replaced earthen cooking pot, aqua guard and refrigerator replaced the earthen water filter which was earlier used in keeping the water cool, light plastic flower pot replaced earthen flower vases, and also earlier in many places people used small earthen cup for serving tea but now plastic disposable cups are slowly replacing those handmade products. There are also more examples that give the Hira artisans a tough time in this

modern era. It is very unfortunate that the manual authentic artistic culture of the Hira community is being taken over by new and western machinery innovations.

Some local handicraft industries also started to replace Hira Earthenware. According to 36 respondents of the sample villages, one of the reasons for the demand for their earthenware culture went down is because nowadays many tribal people also started to make earthen products and supply those from place to place. In south Kamrup also people prefer those products over Hira products. Only a few peoples mainly in rural areas and on some occasions use Hira earthen products. These products also weaken the power and skills of the local Hira artisans. Thus, So the Hira community is facing a huge loss in their earthenware trade. And as a result, many of them started to look for another job outside their occupational culture.

**e) Scientific Foreign Products in the Contemporary Market:**

The foreign alternative ceramic products are more attractive and fashionable. These products are manufactured with the help of advanced technology and different scientific methods which helps the producers to save much time and hard work. Many potters from all over the world use pottery-making wheel to manufacture pottery. Potters use both electric and non-electric wheels for this. It helps the potters to manufacture pottery with less time and energy as compared to Hira earthenware. They also use different aids to design the pottery. In modern times, potters make glazed pottery which has a high demand in the global market. Here potters manufacture different types of glazed pottery with the help of modern technology as per customers' choice. For the firing of those modern ceramic potteries, different modern furnaces are used. So, the application of scientific knowledge and advanced techniques in earthenware making is most needed for the improvement of this culture. Because a modern society refers to a belief in rationality, man's scientific control, and application of technology (Kautsky, 1972). But the knowledge of scientific techniques, methods, and tools among Hiras of surveyed villages is zero. From the field, it is found that there is not a single change happened regarding the tools and techniques of making earthenware in recent years. They still use a completely indigenous and outdated process of making earthenware by

using their hands and some simple tools like stones, wooden beaters, etc. in a traditional means.

**Table: 4.6**  
**Whether They Want to adopt any Modern Scientific Technique for Earthenware Making**

<b>Adoption of Modern Scientific Techniques</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Want to Adopt</b>	11	32.38%
<b>Happy with their Ancestral Techniques</b>	21	65.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table: 4.6 represents the data of the 32 Hira households who are still practising earthenware culture as their primary or secondary occupation. Here it is found that only 11 (32.38%) out of 32 households want to adopt modern techniques and methods for earthenware manufacturing. They want it but their economic condition is very bad so they had to depend on the ancient and rural techniques and methods of earthenware making. Also, they have not attended any training programmes for developing their culture. So, they don't know anything about the modern techniques and methods of pottery making. On the other hand, 21 (65.63%) sample households responded that they don't want to change their traditional techniques and methods of earthenware making as it is their cultural identity. They have their traditional beliefs and they want to carry them forward. But they want to negotiate with the modern changing nature of society. So, there is a clash between the indigenous norms and values and modern norms and values. These sample 32 households are still following their traditional and primitive techniques and methods for earthenware making. For firing also, they follow ancient and rural firing processes. Where they don't have any option to adjust the temperature from time to time. So, many times artisans had to face the problem of breakage of earthenwares. This creates a huge loss and low profit for the Hiras of sample villages. There is not a single change happened in the process and methods of Hira earthenware making in recent years in those surveyed villages. This process and methods are still the same as their ancestors.

So, in today's global markets Hira earthenware is sidelined and as a result, the demand for this local craft is gradually decreasing. So, the picture of typical rural Hira villages is changing in this modern era.

Other alternative Hira products have large varieties of designs. Now in the market, there are different ceramic wares available like cookware, plates, glasses, bowls, vases, pots, etc. Artisans give the potteries different attractive colours. The colour and design they use to enhance those products' look are eye-catching. Customers easily can get whatever design of pot they want. They also give different types of modern decoration to give those products a unique finishing look. People from all over the world prefer those products for modern interior design also. In modern society, these products have more demands. People use those ceramic products as wall decor also. These ceramic and alternative products are cheaper as compared to the Hira earthenware. Hira earthenwares are limited. There are no varieties of Hira Earthenwares available at present. Artisans only manufacture earthen products with a few designs. Also, Hira artisans usually don't use many decorations on their earthen products. They are still manufacturing those products with the same design from generation to generation. But from the fields, it is found that to increase the demand for their Earthenwares, some of them started to decorate some of their products. For example, except for Azara Hirapara, the rest of the surveyed villages started to use one reddish type of clay called 'Gerumati' to decorate their earthenware. And sometimes they create some designs on the earthenware with the help of their fingers or wooden stick. 20 respondents from the field said that they can design their Earthenwares as per customers' choices. But to compete in the international market with the other machine-made products these decorations are not enough. So, it is impossible for the Hira artisans to make earthen products of the same quality as those modern and stylish products which are made by using scientific techniques and methods. The cheap and imported machine-made products already started to replace the traditional handmade craft in today's market. So, the demand for this local Hira craft is reduced with time. With fewer customers, many Hira artisans are getting poor day by day. These things have a huge impact on their earthenware culture and as a result, they lost their means of livelihood.

#### f) Decreasing Monthly Income of the Hira Artisans:

Because of globalization imported products weaken the power and skills of the local Hira artisans of surveyed villages. Now they had to face strong competition from the foreign or western market. From the monthly income of the Hira artisan in the surveyed villages we can see a clear picture of the challenges they are facing in this modern or contemporary market.

**Fig: 4.3 Monthly Income of the Hira Artisans of the Surveyed Villages**

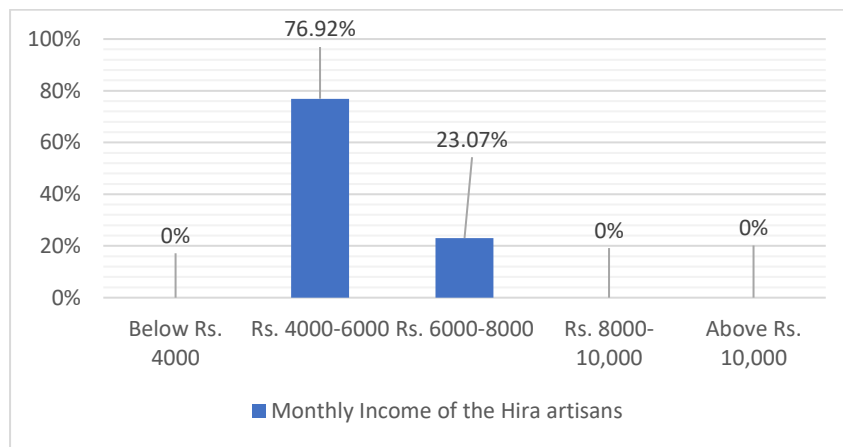


Fig: 4.3 shows the monthly income of the Hira artisans who are still practicing earthenware as their primary occupation. In chapter 3, table 3.6 already shown the monthly income of the total sample Hira households. But fig: 4.3 reveals the monthly income of all 26 Hira households who are still practising earthenware making as their primary occupation. It is very shocking that 76.92% (20) of Hira artisans only earn Rs. 4000-6000 and 23.07% (6) Hira household's income is Rs. 6000-8000 per month. Not a single Hira household's monthly income is above Rs. 8000. The respondents from the field said that only in the pottery season like Bihu, Durga puja, or Diwali, their monthly income increases a little bit. Because at that time the demand of the Hira Earthenwares rises in the market. But in the rest of the years, the Hira community is facing a huge loss in their earthenware trade. Hira respondents said that now in the market also people don't want to buy Hira earthenwares. Because the price of other alternative plastic products is less than the Hira products. Due to non-purchasing the earthenware Hira produced remain in stock for a long time. Even in their weekly or bi-weekly market,

many times Hira people are only able to sell few products after spending the whole day. So, at present, Hira people cannot afford any other occupation only those people practice earthenware in south Kamrup as their primary source of income.

**g) Unawareness of Hira Earthenware:**

In today's market, there are many types of pottery clays are available in ready-to-use form. People can easily buy the type of clay they want. But it is difficult to find Hira clay in the market. Many people don't know about the Hira clay and this is one of the reasons that the demand for Hira clay is less in the market as compared to other pottery clays. Now in all over the world people are more interested in pottery making. Many times, we saw people join the pottery-making studios and classes. In Assam also there are many pottery-making studios are available. But it is also observed that people are more interested in wheel-making ceramic pottery nowadays. Hira pottery is still not famous among the majority of people because of its outdated techniques and methods. Only the old generation people of Assamese society know about this unique and traditional Hira earthenware. In the surveyed villages 23 respondents (38.33%) stated that sometimes when people buy Hira Earthenwares, they don't know the difference between the Hira and Kumar products. Many times, people thought of Hira earthenware as Kumar products because Kumar pottery is more famous than the Hira pottery in the market. Even after all the development occurring in the society due to modernity still, the Hira community is not able to make their status stable and stronger in the society because of the challenges they faced in the present times. They are miserably failed to promote their traditional earthenware.

**h) Decreasing the Number of Hira Artisans:**

The researcher observed that the decreasing number of Hira artisans creates a huge negative impact on their craft. The number of Hira artisans is decreasing in the surveyed area because of the prevailing contemporary modern society. Though the number of Hira people who engaged in Earthenware making is higher in the south Kamrup as compared to the other part of Assam, but this is not enough for an artisan community to manufacture quality products on a large scale. Because collecting the raw materials,

preparing clay, making the earthenware needs enough time and hard works. So, to uplift and develop the earthenware culture they need more artisans. In surveyed villages, in many households who practice earthenware as their primary or secondary occupation, other members of the artisan's family already left practicing earthenware. So, in these villages, only husband and wife engage in the earthenware-making culture in most of the Hira households. And the rest of the family members don't want to follow their tradition. Hira Earthenware is an occupational culture that is only practised in the household. Participation of all members of the family would help the Hira community to manufacture a greater number of quality earthen products and compete in the modern market. In other ceramic industries, there are a greater number of people are engaging. It directly or indirectly gives many people employment. So, people are also joining those industries. It is an advantage of those industries. They can hire more talented and skilled artisans for the industry.

But regarding earthenware culture, the number of people engaging in this culture is decreasing day by day. So, among the Hira community, the occupational system is changing gradually. Particularly among the new and young generation people of the Hira community. This is because of the desire for a better lifestyle and a better white-collar job. They want an easy way of earning money. The number of Hira people engaging in earthenware making is decreasing in recent years in the surveyed villages. As Jha stated that Modernization deeply influences man's way of thinking and feeling, in their attitude, society, and universe (Jha, 1978).

**Table: 4.7**  
**Participation of Children in Earthenware Culture**

Participation in Earthenware Culture	No. of Households						Percentage (%)
	Azara (Hira para)	Dhantola	Satpakhali	Tari gaon	Darisatra	Chamaria	
Yes	-	6	4	3	2	-	15 (46.88%)
No	5	-	1	3	4	4	17 (53.13%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>32 (100%)</b>



Table: 4.7 reveals data related to the participation of the children of the Hira community in the Earthenware-making culture. As it is already mentioned in chapter 3 that the 26 out of 60 Hira household's primary occupation is earthenware making and 6 Hira households practice earthenware making as their secondary occupation (table 3.4. 3.5). This data from table 4.7 shows the participation in the earthenware culture of the children of only those 32 Hira artisan families in the surveyed villages. Data indicates that in more than half of the artisan families (53.13%) their children don't have any engagement in their indigenous culture and only 46.88% of children help their parents in earthenware making. This shows the disinterest of the young generation of the Hira community in their culture. In the village Azara (Hirapara) and Chamaria, only parents are continuing this earthen pot-making culture among the sample households. The researcher didn't find any artisan family in these two villages where their children also participate in their culture. But in Dhantola village a greater number of children of the Hira families participate in earthenware making as this village is famous for its occupational culture. From a very young age, people from this village engage in earthenware-making activities with their parents. To uplift the condition of the earthenware culture in this modern time Hira community needs more artisans in this culture. Because to compete with all those alternative foreign goods in the market, the Hira community needs a stable and strong earthenware industry. That can only fulfill all the needs of the customer. But for starting this type of industry they need lots of money and here financial hardship has emerged as the major barrier for them. So, these situations of the modern era compelled the Hira artisans of the surveyed area to rethink their occupational culture. As Ram Ahuja (1993) said that modernization of economic and political institutions may cause conflicts in the traditional life of human society. The same picture is found among the Hira people of surveyed villages at present time. Industrialization transformed the traditional Hira society into a new society full of challenges.

**i) Market Centered Hira Products:**

The changing modern society and the new form of Earthenware culture are giving a hard time to the Hira artisans of South Kamrup. The artisan families are facing multiple

financial issues as a result of modernity. So many of the artisan families started to produce earthen products for earning money. But Earthenware making is this type of occupation where the customer's interests matter the most. So, they had to keep in mind the requirements of the public. In the surveyed villages majority of the family among a total of 32 Artisans' families who are still practicing earthenware culture, manufacture earthenware for market use.

**Table: 4.8****Purpose of Producing Earthenware**

<b>Purpose of Producing Earthen products</b>	<b>No. of the Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Market use</b>	25	78.13
<b>Domestic use</b>	-	-
<b>Both</b>	7	21.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

Here the table: 4.8 shows that 78.13% of Hira households manufacture earthen products just to sell them in the market. Only 21.88% (7 households) manufacture earthenware for both market and domestic use. But one thing that is noticeable from the data is that not a single Hira household from the surveyed villages manufacture earthenware only for their domestic use. This highlighted the fact that for most of the artisans this culture becomes a way of earning money. But the earlier scenario was different. The respondents of the surveyed villages said that their older generation manufactured earthenware mostly for domestic use. They made all the necessary domestic used products by themselves. Only a few families sold their earthen products. As of now with the changing time, Hira people also started to manufacture earthenware for marketing purposes so they become more conscious about the customer's needs. Because the Hira artisans of the surveyed area are scared that if they would not get customers; their financial condition will dwindle and they would not be able to pay their loans. So, Hira artisans try their best to understand the changing requirements of the customers. And as a result, now artisan's families in the surveyed villages don't know

techniques and methods of making many ancient beautiful earthen products which were famous in Assamese society once. They only make a few limited types of Earthenwares based on their customers' demand and already give up making some of their unique earthen products. But earlier in every full-time potter's family, they made varieties of earthenware. Due to the urbanization and globalization of the craft market, some earthen products already lost their demand in this modern era. Earlier in the surveyed villages Hira people made different types of flower vase, earthen container, earthen glass, earthen xorai (a tray with cover and stand at the bottom), Khang (large earthen container), earthen cup, earthen lamp, earthen cooking pot, japa (large earthen pot), pan bota (earthen tray with a stand), gosa (earthen lampstand), tari (small earthen pitcher with a small neck), bhuruka (small container), earthen filter, jhari (small earthen pitcher with a handle), etc. But now all the artisans of the surveyed villages don't make those earthen products. Even some of the artisans don't know the techniques and methods of making those products. Those ancient earthen products are now losing market value with time. And different alternative products already replaced them in the market. So, unfortunately, now those Hira Earthenwares are disappearing from our culture gradually. These Hira products have lost their traditional functions and aesthetic values. And this is a real threat not only for Assam but for India also in terms of losing such beautiful traditional art and craft. But if those products had demand in the market, the artisans would try to manufacture them.

One Hira Respondent from the Azara Hirapara said, *"every Hira village only makes those products which have demand in today's present market. Last year we got an order to make the earthen cup and manufacture that and even we gave some rice seed design also on it."* In the museum of Sankardev Kalakshetra, Guwahati we can see the different examples of beautiful and unique earthen work which are already disappeared because of modernity. There is no problem in taking something new and modern, and in today's time, it is important to adapt to new and modern trends. But at the same time, it is also essential to preserve our traditional art and craft.

**j) Rise of Secondary Occupation among the Hira Community:**

All the above-mentioned situations Hira people are facing nowadays are the consequences of Modernity. In this science & Technological era, only earthenware making as a primary occupation for earning a livelihood is not enough. Earthenware-making occupation now becomes a hand-to-mouth existence for Hira community people. So, most of the Hira family whose primary occupation is earthenware making they started another secondary job like fishing, agriculture, business, etc. for livelihood in the surveyed villages of South Kamrup. Earlier every Hira household was full-time potters and earthenware making was their only source of income. But in the field, out of 26 full-time artisan households, 19 households already started other occupations as a secondary source of income. Mainly the female member of the Hira family manufactured earthenware and their husband and son engage in other occupations outside their earthenware culture. In most Indian caste-based societies, the occupation of a group is controlled by their caste status. Earlier the Hira community lived like a close society in the respective villages which are known as Hira para or Hira chupa. They didn't want any contact or connection with the people from outside their community. By following the traditional caste system of Indian society, they were only engaged in their traditional occupational culture. They inherited this indigenous occupation or culture from their ancestor. But now the caste system has become less strict and the people of these Hira villages are started different jobs and occupations not based on their caste system. Even in some cases of surveyed villages Hira people are doing fishing for livelihood. Earlier fishing was a taboo for the Hira community. Because it belongs to the Kaibarta community and Hiras should not practice fishing. But now because of economic hardship, many Hira people are compelled to adapt to the Kaibarta Community's occupation also. Not only the Kaibarta community, but they are also following different things from outside their tradition and culture. Now their young generation doesn't want to be bounded by their traditional caste system. They are more interested in the new, urban and modern lifestyle. Earlier the Hira community was labelled as untouchables but now the changing mindset of the people abolished the

concept of untouchability. And in the surveyed Hira villages also this progress was found. This helped the society to reform.

**k) Rapid Growth of Urbanization among the Hira Community:**

Hira, which is considered as one of the artisan communities with rich art and craft they are starting to leave their indigenous craft because of the increasing impacts of urbanization and industrialization. In the surveyed villages also many Hira couples already shifted to the urban areas for a better livelihood. Earlier Hira community was self-sufficient. They manufacture earthenware without the help of other sources from outside and every Hira family was full-time potters in the surveyed area. But in this modern era, the old scenario of earthenware culture of the villages has changed. Hira families who were self-sufficient artisans once now they started to move to the urban areas in search of other occupation and fulfill their needs. Because industrialization is dominating the local handmade handicrafts of the Hira community.

According to Rose (1961), "Occupational system forces many workers to move from locality to locality for work, their families must be able to move with them. Thus, the family form most suited to a mobile society is an isolated conjugal family". Modernity is the reason which leads to more nuclear families. Earlier Hira artisans were also living in joint families. But now most of the Hira families are nuclear. In the surveyed villages, 37 (61.67%) Hira families said that their son and daughter-in-law shifted to the urban areas in search of jobs or employment or a better livelihood. And these families are mainly from Azara (Hirapara) and Chamaria. This badly affects their indigenous occupational culture. Also migrating from one place to another forces Hira women to leave their culture. And it is very unfortunate that at present they are leaving their age-old traditional earthenware culture and adopt other occupations where the economical scope is more by which they can improve their socio-economic condition and standard of living. Their contact with other urban people and schools, colleges, govt. offices affect their way of life. People are migrating from rural to urban areas in search of occupation, better education, or a lifestyle. This changes the structure of the

traditional Hira villages in modern times. Because of migration Hira people left their traditional source of income.

**1) Provides Better Market, Communication, and Transportation System:**

But it is also noticeable in the field that though the impact of Modernity brings many challenges to the earthenware culture, it also broadens the scope of Earthenware culture, provides good market facilities, developed a better communication system between the Hira artisans and the customers, developed the transportation system in the Hira villages of South Kamrup as compared to earlier which help Hira artisans to carry their earthen products to the market. Earlier Hira people only had few choices for marketing their products. Hira male members of the sample villages had to carry the earthen products on their shoulders or head to the markets for selling. Hira people from different places followed this market system. Even people from remote areas also had to carry their products to the urban areas for selling. This was very difficult work. Most of the earthen products also got damaged in this process. Sometimes they supplied their products to the nearby markets. And in some Hira villages, people followed the barter system and exchanged their products with the other foods or other goods of the neighbouring people. This system had some drawbacks because it took so much patience, hard work, and time to manufacture one earthen product for an artisan, and when they exchanged their products with another thing it is difficult for them to measure the values of both products are same or not. But now in the time of modernization and globalization, there are some weekly or bi-weekly markets available. So, Hira people from sample villages have started to supply their products to those markets. There are also few exhibitions held from time to time to promote the Assamese handicraft. Although these markets and exhibitions are very few in number; still many artisans use these opportunities to attracts the customer and increase the sale of their products at a proper price.

The transportation system is also developing in the different parts of the South Kamrup so people from different places come to the house of Hira artisans for buying their products. Now there are many roads constructed in South Kamrup which replaced

the narrow and muddy lane of rural areas. Hira artisans can supply their earthen products to the different places of Assam. Earlier when Hira artisans got orders from the other parts of the state for supplying earthen products, they had to supply those by boats or bullock carts. This is one of the reasons that the Hira villages of Assam are usually located near the river or stream. But now with the changing time, Hiras use different vehicles like bikes, auto van for supplying earthen products to different places. For collecting raw materials also now they can hire a tractor, auto van or other vehicles as the condition of the roads is got better as compared to earlier. But still, in some sample Hira villages like Dhantola, Satpakhali, Tarigaon, and some parts of village Darisatra and Chamaria the condition of roads and small village lanes need to be more developed for a better Hira earthenware trade. Because in these Hira villages though the communication and transportation system has developed as compared to earlier; still it is not fully developed.

Now many artisans of the surveyed villages use the telephone as a medium to directly contact the customers. Sometimes they took an order by telephonic conversation or text message also. This helps artisans to create healthy and direct contact with their customers. But this was not possible in the time of their grandparents. One respondent from the village Dhantola said, *"After getting orders from the customer if there is any confusion created, we can directly solve those confusions with them by using a mobile phone, but earlier it was not possible for us"*.

Nowadays many people promote Hira earthenware through social media also. They post different pictures or videos of the Hira earthenware in their vlog, account, or page. This also able to grab the attention of different people. Sometimes people from the Hira community also post some earthenware-making videos. And this also does a good promotion of the Hira earthenware. After watching those visuals of this beautiful craft many people order those products through social media. As it is already mentioned that the Hira earthenware making is a seasonal activity so in the times of Bihu, Durga Puja, Diwali they got many orders from the customers. And at that time different television channels also telecast their process of making this traditional craft and

interview of the artisans the South Kamrup. This helps the general public to know much more about this beautiful and unique culture. Hira artisans also take those opportunities to promote or advertise their products.

But this is not enough for Hira earthenware to get proper market value. For this more promotion is needed to uplift and develop this beautiful culture. As a consequence of the harsh reality of modernity now many of the Hira households of the surveyed villages also want to adopt some new and modern norms and values. They don't want to continue their forefather's traditional occupation because of its poor condition. The challenges Hira community is facing in the Earthenware making due to Modernization and Industrialization is much bigger than its positive impacts.

**Table: 4.9**

**Continuation of Earthenware Culture in the Future**

<b>Do Hiras want to Continue Earthenware culture</b>	<b>No. of Households</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	26	43.33
<b>No</b>	34	56.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Table: 4.9 shows that whether the Hira households of the Surveyed villages want to continue their indigenous pot-making culture or not. And the data reveals that 56.67% (34) Hira households don't want to continue their Earthenware making culture if they will get a better income source. Only 43.33% (26) of Hira families want to continue this culture. Because they are habitual in this earthenware-making culture. But they also said that they want another secondary source of income for their livelihood. Because after investing so much hard work and money they only get very little in return. The money, they earn from selling earthen products is not enough for their livelihood nowadays. So, from the field survey, it is found that most of the Hira artisans are not happy with the present status and form of the Earthenware-making culture. Also, in the surveyed villages researcher asked every 60 Hira household that whether they want their children to continue their indigenous Earthenware culture and every single person's answer was



'No'. This indicates that the future of Hira earthenware is in danger because the majority of the Hira artisans don't want their children to practice earthenware and follow in their footsteps. So, they are encouraging their children to look for another occupation. The researcher observed the fact that the Hira household of the surveyed villages already saw all the difficulties over the recent years. And the money they earn from earthenware making is nothing as compared to the money and hard work they invest. So according to them, this culture doesn't have any future and that is why they want their children to continue their education and engaged in other occupations. Even the Hira people of village Dhantola and Satpakhali which are known as the potter's village and almost every household practises earthenware making, they also said 'no' for their children's future participation in their culture. Even though they are emotionally very much involved in this culture and don't want to see their ancestral craft dying, still they don't want their children to be engaged in this culture and living a miserable life. They said as long as the Hira parents are alive; their children will be engaged in earthenware making. And after that, they want them to start other occupations for livelihood. Because though they are full-time potters, they also know how difficult it is to earn livelihood in present days through this earthenware-making job. They said that the amount of money they earn from earthenware making is reducing day by day.

From the above discussion, it is clear that all those above-mentioned factors directly or indirectly affect the present status of the Earthenware culture of the Hira Community. Now different aspects of modernization touched the earthenware culture of the Hira community like other functions and structures of our traditional society. Because of the impact of modernization, the social and economic life of the Hira artisans is also affected by those changes. Modernity affects the earthenware culture of the Hira community in both positive and negative ways. Though there are some positive efforts done to develop and transform the traditional Hira society to a modern way, still it has to go a long way. All those positive changes are not enough for Hira artisans to compete with modern society. These changes brought development as compared to the earlier. Modernity slightly changes the position and status of the Hira community in society. It changes the traditional mindset of the people. But still, they are a backward community

and for the upliftment and development of this community more positive changes need to be done. Compared to the positive side, the negative impacts of modernity are stronger on the Hira earthenware culture in South Kamrup. In the present situation, Modernity badly affects the cultural side of the Hira community. Hira artisans cannot depend upon this occupational culture as their primary source of income at present. They have to engage in some other secondary source of income to remove their financial hardship. Modernization affects negatively the Earthenware culture of the Hira community. Traditional occupation is forced to change under the modern and technological impact. So, in this present time, Hira artisan also accepted the changes that are occurred by westernization, industrialization, and technological advancement. They are trying to negotiate with the new form of the earthenware culture. But though they started to adopt some methods to deal with modernity, but those efforts are not enough to revive their traditional culture. They need to modify their techniques and methods of earthenware making for adjusting in this contemporary society. Industrialization brings positive impacts also that now more people can engage in different employment for the source of income. This helps Hira people to earn more money. But it brings some challenges to the Hira earthenware culture. As now more people are moving towards different industrial sector jobs and started to leave their indigenous culture. But still, some Hira artisans want to keep alive their ancestor's culture. However, in these six villages of South Kamrup, some of the Hira artisans are keeping alive their indigenous culture of earthen pot making and they legitimately feel pride despite different economic and social hardships. This picture explains that both Indigenous and contemporary types of occupation are prevalent among the Hira community at present.

#### **4.7 Case Studies:**

As mentioned in chapter 1, to study and highlight the different nature of the Hira community altogether, the present study was conducted consisting of 60 selected Hira households using interview Scheduled. But 6 individual case studies out of 60 Hira households were also utilized to highlight the importance of the socio-economic status

of the Hira community and the impact of Modernity on the Earthenware culture of the Hira Community and support the fact-findings of the Research area. 3 case studies out of 6 were conducted to know the socio-economic status of the Hira community which is mentioned in chapter 3. And now another 3 case studies out of 6 conducted to focus on the impacts of the Modernity on the Earthenware culture and Hira community which is mentioned below-

- **Case Study 4**

**Mrs. D**, 35 years old lady from Azara (Hirapara) said that the techniques, methods, and beliefs among the Hiras towards earthenware making are the same as earlier. But there are some changes in terms of knowledge of pot making. Their ancestors were experts in making large earthen pots. But now many families don't know how to make large earthen pots. They make only small earthen pots (choru). And supply those to the hotels, local markets, etc. Earlier they also made the 'gulis' (a sinker) of fishing net. But in the present times, they don't make it because of its low demand.

Mixing water and soil in the Hira clay is also very tough work. Very carefully artisans need to add the amount of water and soil in the Hira clay. The quality of an earthen pot depends on the mixing amount of water and soil. If a small amount of other clay mixes with the Hira clay then the earthen pots will break or blast at the time of firing. That's why these artisans don't want their children to continue this indigenous culture.

She also said that if they will get opportunities, they will surely leave their traditional earthenware culture and would love to start a new occupation. But they don't have any other choices as their economic condition is not satisfactory and they have many financial issues. So, they must continue their old cultural occupation with old techniques and methods. According to them, there is not any development in their craft. They are not getting any help from outside also.

- **Case Study 5**

**Mrs. E**, 40 years old lady from Dhantola said that though she is from Hira Community after marriage only she started to make earthenware. As she is from sontola there Hiras already left this occupation many years ago. She also added that at present times there are not many changes in the making of earthenware products as they are following their indigenous culture. They sell all these earthen products in the Chaygaon market. They make earthen products for both market and household use. But they make kalah (large earthen pot) for their household to store water. But many of these products are made to be sold.

One important thing she mentioned that Earthenware making is their emotion. They can't live without practising Earthenware making. Because they are habitual to this. But nowadays girl children of the Hira community don't engage in all this earthenware culture. Their children work in other's houses for income. Their economic condition is not very satisfying. Their primary income comes from making earthen pots. According to them, they don't have many options so that they have to make earthen pots and sell them for income. They make few earthen products then sell them and by this process, they are earning their livelihood. Some Hira people in this village have agricultural products. But their family don't have agricultural land.

- **Case Study 6**

**Mr. F**, a 55 years old potter of Darisatra, explained that Nowadays it is very difficult to continue their indigenous occupational culture because of the problems they are facing during earthenware-making activity. They need a huge amount of clay to make earthen products. So, they need lots of money to buy those Hira clay. He feels that there is no option now to improve or develop this culture. So many of their neighbour already left this culture and shifted to the urban areas. New generation people of the Hira community are also not interested to do this type of earthen work. His sons are looking for a job to earn some money. And his daughters-in-law also left practising this culture. One of his brothers left this occupation because he married in Guwahati and

now his wife doesn't want to make earthen pots because she is from the city. So, this is also a reason for dying this beautiful indigenous culture.

He mentions the relationship between Hira and Kumars. He said that their relationship with Kumar is good. Sometimes Hiras buy some earthen products from Kumar and Kumar also buy some earthen products from Hira potters. Sometimes Kumar orders some earthen products from Hira artisans as Kumars don't make most of the Hira Earthenware. After buying those products from hiras they sell those earthen products to others or carry those to market for selling. Kumar also uses some Hira Earthen Products in their houses for making homemade wines or storing wine in those. Because they can't make wines in Kumar's pot. Like that Hira also doesn't know how to make some earthen products especially the earthen pots used in a religious ceremony. So, they buy those products from Kumars like ghat, tekeli (Water jar), etc. This relationship between Kumar and Hira is still the same as earlier.

#### ***4.7.1 Summary and Findings of the Case Studies:***

Above mentioned case studies reflect the impact of modernity on the earthenware culture of the Hira community. These three respondents for the case study are also selected from the sample Hira households. They saw all the changes made in the field of earthenware in recent years due to modernity. From those case studies, one thing is clear that the Hira artisans are still using the same ancient techniques and methods for making earthenware. They are not changing anything in it. In the field of pottery making, there are many changes are occurring due to technological advancement. But Hiras are still following their ancestral techniques and methods. But in the present scenario, we can find one change in the traditional Hira earthenware culture that many artisans don't know the techniques of making some of the unique and beautiful ancient earthenware. They only know how to make some basic earthen pots. Now artisans only make the earthen products that have demands in the market. So, the products that don't have proper market value, Hiras already left making those. And this is the reason that most of the artisans from the new generation don't have any idea about the techniques

and method of making those products. This shows that now they are not experts in making earthenware as their ancestors could make all types of Earthenwares. And also, many Hira families just manufacture limited types of earthen products to earn some money at present. Though earthenware making is an employment-oriented culture. But those Hira families whose primary occupation is earthenware making is suffering many financial crises. So, the Hira parents don't want their children to continue this culture as it is a very hard-working activity with less profit. At present in most cases, only economically backward people are making earthenware. From the field, many Hira artisans want to leave this culture if they would get another occupation. Now because of development in the field of education people are more aware of going to schools, colleges, universities to achieve higher education. So, after getting education people from the Hira community don't want to practice this type of earthen work. Also, people with a comparatively better economic condition like to engage in other occupations. And many of them already shifted to the urban areas. This is one of the main reasons that most of the Hira artisans left earthenware culture at present. And some of the artisans are practising it because they are habitual of this occupational culture. But there is one positive thing found that still in this present time in the village Darisatra the relationship between the two major communities of Assam- Hira, and Kumar is good as earlier. They exchange their earthen products and sell those in the market. Because both Hira and Kumar pottery has their own unique characteristics.

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