



Branding Terracotta Art of Jammu and Kashmir for Sustainable Livelihoods: An Empirical Study of Artisan Communities

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Abstract Terracotta art represents one of the oldest forms of traditional craftsmanship in India and continues to play an important role in preserving cultural heritage while supporting rural livelihoods. Despite its historical significance, the terracotta sector in Jammu and Kashmir faces multiple challenges, including declining market demand, inadequate institutional support, technological constraints, limited branding, and low financial returns. This study examines the socio-economic conditions of terracotta artisans and explores the potential of branding as a strategy for strengthening artisan livelihoods and promoting sustainable development. Primary data were collected through structured field surveys involving 501 artisans across the Jammu and Kashmir regions, supplemented by secondary data from government reports, books, journal articles, and official publications. The findings indicate considerable regional differences in artisan participation, income patterns, institutional support, and occupational dependence. While Kashmir retains a relatively stronger continuity of traditional craftsmanship, artisans in Jammu experience higher occupational diversification and abandonment of the profession due to economic pressures. The study further reveals that inadequate marketing, weak brand identity, technological limitations, and restricted access to organized markets remain major obstacles to the growth of the terracotta sector. The paper argues that branding, digital marketing, tourism integration, skill development, financial inclusion, and institutional strengthening can significantly enhance the competitiveness of terracotta enterprises. The study contributes to the literature on traditional crafts by providing empirical evidence from Jammu and Kashmir and offers policy recommendations aligned with the national objectives of **Swavlambi Bharat**, **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, and **Viksit Bharat**.

Keywords: Terracotta, Jammu and Kashmir, Handicrafts, Branding, Artisan Livelihoods, Rural Development, Cultural Heritage, Swavlambi Bharat.

Introduction

Terracotta is among the earliest artistic traditions developed by human societies and continues to occupy an important position within India's rich cultural heritage. Derived from the Italian words *terra* (earth) and *cotta* (baked), terracotta refers to objects made from natural clay that are shaped, dried, and fired at relatively low temperatures. Across civilizations, terracotta has been used for domestic utensils, ritual objects, architectural decorations, sculptures, toys, and artistic creations. Archaeological discoveries from the Indus Valley Civilization demonstrate that terracotta has formed an integral part of the Indian subcontinent's material culture for more than four thousand years.

India possesses one of the world's richest traditions of terracotta craftsmanship, with every region developing distinctive techniques, forms, and artistic styles. In the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, terracotta production has historically been associated with traditional potter communities whose skills have been transmitted across generations. The craft reflects the region's cultural diversity, environmental resources, and local traditions while providing employment opportunities for rural households. Pottery products produced in Jammu and Kashmir include household utensils, ritual objects, decorative artefacts, garden products, architectural elements, and contemporary artistic creations that continue to serve both functional and aesthetic purposes. Despite its



cultural importance, the terracotta sector faces increasing challenges arising from globalization, industrialization, changing consumer preferences, competition from factory-made products, and declining profitability. Traditional artisan families often struggle with low incomes, inadequate market access, limited institutional support, obsolete production technology, and insufficient opportunities for product diversification. These challenges have reduced the attractiveness of pottery as a sustainable occupation, particularly among younger generations, thereby increasing concerns regarding the long-term survival of this traditional craft.

Branding has emerged as an important strategy for enhancing the economic value of traditional handicrafts. By creating a distinct market identity, strengthening consumer recognition, improving product presentation, and expanding access to domestic and international markets, branding enables traditional crafts to compete more effectively in contemporary economies. When supported by quality certification, digital marketing, tourism promotion, and institutional assistance, branding can significantly improve artisan incomes while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage.

The Government of India has increasingly emphasized the promotion of traditional industries through initiatives such as **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, **Vocal for Local**, **One District One Product (ODOP)**, **PM Vishwakarma**, and **National Handicrafts Development Programme**. These initiatives seek to strengthen local enterprises, enhance skill development, improve market access, encourage entrepreneurship, and generate sustainable employment opportunities. The objectives of these programmes closely align with the broader vision of **Swavlambi Bharat** and **Viksit Bharat**, which emphasize inclusive economic growth, rural industrialization, self-reliance, and preservation of India's cultural assets.

Against this background, the present study examines the socio-economic profile of terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir and evaluates the role of branding in improving the sustainability of the craft. Based on field data collected from **501 artisans**, the study analyses occupational characteristics, income patterns, institutional support, production practices, market challenges, and future prospects. The paper seeks to demonstrate that effective branding, combined with technological innovation, policy support, tourism integration, and digital marketing, can transform terracotta from a vulnerable traditional occupation into a competitive creative industry capable of contributing to employment generation, cultural preservation, and sustainable regional development.

Literature Review

Terracotta represents one of the oldest artistic traditions in human civilization and occupies a prominent position in India's cultural heritage. The term "terracotta," derived from the Italian words *terra* (earth) and *cotta* (baked), refers to clay products hardened through firing at relatively low temperatures. Archaeological discoveries from the Indus Valley Civilization demonstrate that terracotta objects such as figurines, toys, ornaments, seals, ritual objects, and domestic utensils have been produced on the Indian subcontinent for more than four thousand years (Marshall, 1931). Over time, terracotta evolved beyond functional pottery into an artistic medium reflecting regional identities, religious traditions, and social practices.

India possesses one of the world's richest traditions of terracotta craftsmanship. Every region has developed distinctive styles influenced by local geography, natural resources, cultural practices, and historical developments. Traditional pottery continues to serve both utilitarian and decorative purposes while providing employment opportunities for thousands of artisan families. According to the Ministry of Textiles (2022), handicrafts contribute significantly to rural employment, cultural preservation, and export earnings, making them an important component of India's creative economy.

Several scholars have documented the historical development of Indian handicrafts and emphasized their cultural significance. Archer (1997) described handicrafts as living expressions of traditional knowledge that preserve indigenous artistic techniques across generations. Chattopadhyay (1995) argued that Indian handicrafts represent



a unique combination of artistic creativity, local resource utilization, and community-based production systems. Similarly, Varadarajan (1987) observed that pottery remains one of the most enduring traditional occupations because of its close relationship with everyday life and cultural practices.

Terracotta occupies a particularly important position within India's traditional pottery traditions because it combines artistic expression with practical utility. Sharma (2004) noted that terracotta products continue to be widely used in rural households despite increasing competition from industrial alternatives. Decorative sculptures, architectural ornaments, garden products, ceremonial objects, lamps, and household utensils demonstrate the versatility of terracotta as both a cultural and commercial product. However, modernization, industrialization, and changing consumer preferences have significantly altered the demand for handmade pottery.

Within Jammu and Kashmir, terracotta production reflects centuries of cultural interaction and regional diversity. Traditional pottery communities have historically supplied domestic utensils, storage vessels, ritual objects, decorative items, and architectural components to local populations. Ahmad (2024) documented the historical evolution of terracotta art in Jammu and Kashmir and highlighted its cultural significance within rural communities. The study emphasized that pottery continues to preserve local traditions while providing employment opportunities to artisan families despite numerous socio-economic challenges.

Research on handicrafts consistently demonstrates that artisan livelihoods remain vulnerable due to low incomes, inadequate market access, technological limitations, and changing consumer behaviour. Singh (2000) observed that rural artisans frequently experience irregular employment and unstable earnings because traditional products often struggle to compete with inexpensive factory-made alternatives. Similar findings have been reported by Srinivasan (2004), who argued that globalization has increased market competition while simultaneously creating opportunities for high-quality handmade products capable of serving niche markets.

The relationship between handicrafts and rural livelihoods has received increasing academic attention during the past two decades. Traditional crafts not only generate employment but also contribute to poverty reduction, women's participation, community development, and preservation of indigenous knowledge. Sharma (2010) argued that handicraft-based enterprises possess considerable potential for promoting rural industrialization because they require relatively low levels of capital investment while utilizing locally available resources and traditional skills.

Branding has emerged as an important strategy for improving the competitiveness of traditional handicrafts. Kotler and Keller (2022) define branding as the process of creating a unique identity that differentiates products within competitive markets. Strong brands increase consumer confidence, enhance perceived value, and strengthen customer loyalty. For traditional handicrafts, branding extends beyond product identification by communicating authenticity, cultural heritage, craftsmanship, and regional identity.

Aaker (1996) emphasized that successful brands generate both economic and emotional value by creating distinctive associations in the minds of consumers. Kapferer (2012) further argued that branding enables traditional products to compete effectively within global markets by emphasizing uniqueness rather than price competition. These theoretical perspectives are particularly relevant for terracotta products from Jammu and Kashmir, which possess distinctive artistic characteristics capable of supporting premium market positioning.

Geographical identity also plays a crucial role in strengthening traditional handicrafts. Products associated with specific cultural regions often achieve greater consumer recognition because their authenticity becomes closely linked with place-based heritage. Previous studies examining Indian handicrafts suggest that geographical indication (GI) protection, regional branding, and quality certification contribute significantly to improving market visibility, protecting traditional knowledge, and increasing artisan incomes. Although several handicrafts



from Jammu and Kashmir have already received geographical indication recognition, terracotta remains comparatively underrepresented within branding initiatives.

Marketing remains one of the principal challenges confronting traditional artisans. Most pottery producers continue to depend upon local markets and intermediaries, limiting both profitability and market expansion. Modern retail systems increasingly require standardized quality, attractive packaging, branding, digital visibility, and efficient supply chains. Without these capabilities, many artisan enterprises experience declining competitiveness despite producing culturally valuable products.

Digital technology has transformed the marketing environment for handicrafts. E-commerce platforms, social media marketing, online exhibitions, and digital payment systems now enable artisans to reach consumers directly without relying exclusively on intermediaries. Recent studies indicate that digital marketing improves product visibility, expands customer networks, and increases profit margins for rural producers. Nevertheless, limited digital literacy, inadequate internet access, and insufficient institutional support continue to restrict technology adoption among many traditional artisan communities.

Tourism has also emerged as an important driver of handicraft development. Heritage tourism encourages visitors to purchase locally produced handicrafts as cultural souvenirs while simultaneously increasing appreciation for traditional craftsmanship. Craft villages, live demonstrations, museum exhibitions, cultural festivals, and experiential tourism strengthen interactions between artisans and consumers. Such initiatives generate supplementary income while preserving traditional skills. Given the rich cultural and natural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir, tourism offers considerable opportunities for expanding demand for terracotta products.

Government policy has increasingly recognized the importance of traditional crafts for inclusive economic development. The Ministry of Textiles, the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), the National Handicrafts Development Programme, PM Vishwakarma, One District One Product (ODOP), and Vocal for Local initiatives aim to strengthen artisan livelihoods through skill development, infrastructure, financial assistance, marketing support, and entrepreneurship promotion. These programmes align closely with the broader objectives of Atmanirbhar Bharat, Swavlambi Bharat, and Viksit Bharat by promoting self-employment and local production.

Despite these initiatives, several studies report persistent implementation challenges. Limited awareness, administrative barriers, inadequate institutional coordination, and unequal regional coverage frequently reduce programme effectiveness. Previous research also indicates that many artisan communities remain excluded from formal financial systems, organized markets, and structured training opportunities. Such findings suggest that policy interventions require stronger local implementation and continuous monitoring.

The preservation of traditional crafts is increasingly viewed within the broader framework of sustainable development. UNESCO (2003) recognizes traditional craftsmanship as an important component of intangible cultural heritage requiring safeguarding through documentation, education, transmission, and community participation. Preserving traditional pottery therefore contributes not only to cultural continuity but also to social inclusion, employment generation, environmental sustainability, and local economic development.

Although existing literature provides valuable insights into Indian handicrafts, branding, and rural livelihoods, research focusing specifically on terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir remains limited. Most available studies emphasize historical descriptions, cultural significance, or general handicraft development without providing detailed empirical evidence regarding artisan livelihoods, production systems, institutional support, income patterns, branding potential, and regional differences. Comparative studies integrating both Jammu and Kashmir within a single analytical framework are particularly scarce.

The present study addresses this gap by undertaking a comprehensive field investigation covering 501 artisans across the Jammu and Kashmir regions. By integrating socio-economic analysis with branding, livelihood



development, tourism, and policy perspectives, the study contributes to both academic knowledge and practical policy formulation. It demonstrates that strengthening branding, technological modernization, market linkages, digital marketing, and institutional support can significantly enhance the sustainability of terracotta art while preserving an important component of India's cultural heritage.

Research Gap

The existing body of literature demonstrates that considerable attention has been devoted to the historical development, artistic significance, and cultural value of traditional handicrafts in India. Researchers have examined pottery traditions from archaeological, anthropological, historical, and cultural perspectives, while government reports have highlighted the contribution of handicrafts to employment generation and rural development. Similarly, studies on branding, geographical indication (GI), cultural tourism, and digital marketing have emphasized their potential in improving the competitiveness of traditional artisan products. However, despite this growing body of knowledge, several important research gaps remain, particularly in relation to the terracotta artisans of Jammu and Kashmir.

First, most existing studies focus on the historical and artistic aspects of terracotta rather than examining the present socio-economic realities of artisan communities. There is limited empirical evidence regarding the current livelihood conditions, income levels, occupational dependence, production practices, and marketing challenges faced by terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir. As a result, policymakers often lack updated information required for designing effective development interventions.

Second, available literature generally examines handicrafts at a national or state level without undertaking comparative regional analysis. Very few studies compare the distinct socio-economic conditions of artisans in both the Jammu and Kashmir regions. Differences in production techniques, market access, institutional support, government outreach, and occupational continuity remain largely unexplored. A comparative assessment is necessary because the two regions differ in terms of geography, resource availability, cultural traditions, tourism potential, and economic opportunities.

Third, the role of branding as a development strategy for terracotta artisans has received inadequate scholarly attention. While branding has been extensively discussed in relation to industrial products and commercial enterprises, its application to traditional handicrafts remains relatively underdeveloped. Existing studies rarely examine how regional branding, product identity, quality certification, storytelling, packaging, digital marketing, and geographical reputation can improve the market value of terracotta products. This represents a significant gap because branding has the potential to transform traditional crafts into competitive cultural products.

Fourth, previous research has paid limited attention to the integration of terracotta crafts with tourism, digital commerce, and the creative economy. Although Jammu and Kashmir possess considerable tourism potential, few studies have investigated how heritage tourism, craft villages, museum exhibitions, cultural festivals, and experiential tourism can contribute to artisan livelihoods. Similarly, the impact of e-commerce platforms, social media marketing, and digital entrepreneurship on the terracotta sector remains insufficiently explored.

Fifth, there is limited research evaluating the effectiveness of government initiatives from the perspective of artisans themselves. Existing reports generally describe policy provisions and programme objectives without systematically examining awareness levels, accessibility, institutional barriers, and the actual benefits received by artisan communities. Understanding artisans' experiences is essential for improving the implementation of welfare and development schemes.

Sixth, studies focusing on youth participation and generational continuity in the terracotta sector are scarce. With increasing educational opportunities and changing employment aspirations, younger generations are gradually moving away from traditional occupations. However, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the factors

influencing occupational choices, entrepreneurial interests, and the willingness of youth to continue family-based pottery traditions. Addressing this issue is essential for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the craft.

Finally, there is a need for interdisciplinary research that combines perspectives from economics, history, sociology, rural development, tourism, cultural studies, and business management. Traditional handicrafts should not only be viewed as cultural artefacts but also as economic enterprises capable of generating employment, promoting entrepreneurship, preserving heritage, and contributing to sustainable regional development.

The present study attempts to bridge these gaps by conducting an extensive field survey covering 501 terracotta artisans across Jammu and Kashmir. It integrates socio-economic analysis with branding, livelihood development, policy evaluation, and market opportunities to provide a comprehensive understanding of the terracotta sector. The study therefore contributes both to academic scholarship and to evidence-based policymaking.

Objectives of the Study

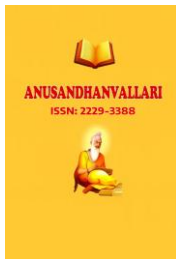
The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To examine the socio-economic profile of terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To analyse the traditional production practices, raw materials, tools, and firing techniques adopted by artisan communities.
3. To assess the contribution of terracotta art to household income and rural livelihoods.
4. To examine the level of dependence of artisans on terracotta as their primary occupation.
5. To evaluate the effectiveness of government initiatives, institutional support, and artisan welfare programmes.
6. To identify the major challenges affecting the sustainability of terracotta art, including marketing constraints, technological limitations, and declining demand.
7. To analyse the potential of branding, product diversification, digital marketing, and tourism for strengthening the terracotta sector.
8. To compare the socio-economic and occupational conditions of terracotta artisans in the Jammu and Kashmir regions.
9. To develop policy recommendations for promoting sustainable livelihoods through terracotta art.
10. To propose a strategic roadmap for strengthening terracotta-based enterprises in alignment with the objectives of **Swavlambi Bharat** and **Viksit Bharat**.

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the socio-economic characteristics of terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir?
2. What factors influence the income and livelihood security of artisan households?
3. How dependent are artisans on terracotta as their principal source of livelihood?
4. What production techniques and traditional knowledge systems are currently practiced?
5. What challenges limit the growth and sustainability of terracotta enterprises?
6. How effective are existing government schemes in supporting artisan communities?



7. What role can branding play in enhancing the commercial value of terracotta products?
8. How can tourism, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship contribute to improving artisan livelihoods?
9. What regional differences exist between Jammu and Kashmir regarding production, income, institutional support, and occupational continuity?
10. What policy measures can ensure the long-term sustainability of terracotta art in Jammu and Kashmir?

Research Hypotheses

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

H1: Branding of terracotta products has a significant positive relationship with market demand and artisan income.

H2: Government support and institutional assistance significantly influence the socio-economic conditions of terracotta artisans.

H3: Adoption of digital marketing practices positively affects the market reach of terracotta products.

H4: Product diversification and design innovation significantly improve the commercial viability of terracotta enterprises.

H5: Tourism development has a positive impact on the sustainability of terracotta art and artisan livelihoods.

H6: There are significant socio-economic differences between terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir.

Conceptual Framework

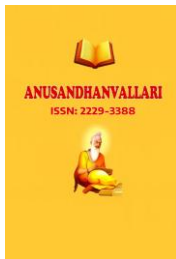
The conceptual framework of the present study is based on the relationship between traditional craftsmanship, branding, institutional support, market development, and sustainable livelihoods. The framework assumes that artisan income and enterprise sustainability are influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including traditional skills, access to raw materials, technology, government support, training, branding, tourism, digital marketing, and consumer demand.

Branding functions as the central mediating factor by improving product identity, market visibility, customer confidence, and perceived value. Effective branding, supported by quality improvement, digital commerce, and tourism promotion, enhances market competitiveness, increases artisan income, and encourages occupational continuity. Government policies, financial assistance, and institutional support strengthen this process by providing the necessary infrastructure, training, and market linkages.

Ultimately, these relationships contribute to sustainable rural livelihoods, preservation of cultural heritage, employment generation, and inclusive economic development, thereby supporting the national vision of **Swavlambi Bharat, Atmanirbhar Bharat, and Viksit Bharat**.

Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the socio-economic conditions, production practices, livelihood patterns, and branding potential of terracotta artisans in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The study is empirical in nature and is based primarily on field data collected from artisan communities engaged in terracotta production. A mixed-method approach was adopted by combining quantitative survey data with qualitative observations obtained during field visits and interactions with artisans. This approach enabled the researcher to develop a comprehensive understanding of both measurable socio-economic indicators and the lived experiences of artisan households. The descriptive component of the study focuses on documenting demographic characteristics, occupational patterns, production methods, income levels, institutional support, and market conditions of terracotta artisans. The analytical component evaluates the challenges faced by artisans and



explores the potential of branding, market development, tourism, and policy interventions in promoting sustainable livelihoods. The research also compares the conditions of artisans in the Jammu and Kashmir regions to identify regional similarities and differences.

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which possesses a rich tradition of terracotta craftsmanship and pottery making. Field investigations were carried out in selected artisan clusters across both the Jammu and Kashmir regions during the period **2024–2026**. These regions were selected because they represent the major centres of traditional pottery production and exhibit diverse cultural, economic, and geographical characteristics.

The Jammu region is characterized by a long history of pottery production associated with traditional Kumhar communities. Similarly, the Kashmir region possesses a distinctive pottery tradition that reflects centuries of cultural development and local artistic practices. Studying both regions provides a comprehensive understanding of regional variations in production techniques, occupational dependence, market access, institutional support, and livelihood conditions.

Nature and Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information.

Primary Data

Primary data constitute the principal source of information for this study. Data were collected through extensive field surveys using a structured questionnaire administered directly to terracotta artisans. Personal interviews, field observations, informal discussions, and interactions with artisan families supplemented the questionnaire survey. These methods enabled the researcher to obtain detailed information regarding socio-economic conditions, occupational history, production practices, income patterns, government support, branding awareness, and future aspirations.

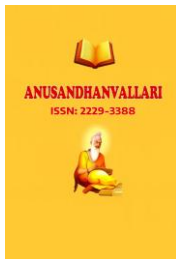
Secondary Data

Secondary information was collected from books, research articles, government publications, reports of the Ministry of Textiles, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Census publications, Economic Surveys of Jammu and Kashmir, policy documents, doctoral theses, conference proceedings, and other relevant academic sources. These sources provided historical background, theoretical perspectives, policy information, and comparative evidence for interpreting the field findings.

Sampling Technique

The study employed the **Snowball Sampling Technique**, a non-probability sampling method particularly suitable for identifying members of specialized occupational communities. Since terracotta artisans are concentrated within specific villages and traditional artisan settlements, initial respondents were identified through local community leaders, master artisans, and artisan associations. These respondents subsequently referred the researcher to other practicing artisans within their social and occupational networks.

The snowball sampling approach proved highly effective because many artisan households are interconnected through family relationships, hereditary occupations, and community organizations. The method facilitated access to experienced artisans who might otherwise have remained difficult to identify through conventional sampling techniques. It also ensured adequate representation of practicing terracotta artisans across different production centres in Jammu and Kashmir.



Sample Size

A total of **501 terracotta artisans** participated in the study. Of these, **214 artisans** belonged to the Jammu region and **287 artisans** belonged to the Kashmir region.

The sample included both full-time and part-time artisans representing different age groups, experience levels, income categories, educational backgrounds, and occupational characteristics. The relatively large sample size enhances the reliability and representativeness of the findings and allows meaningful comparative analysis between the two regions.

Research Instrument

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of approximately **62 questions**. The questionnaire was carefully designed after reviewing relevant literature, government reports, and previous studies on handicrafts and artisan livelihoods.

The questionnaire included both closed-ended and a limited number of open-ended questions and covered the following themes:

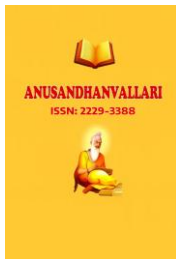
- Demographic profile of artisans
- Family background
- Occupational experience
- Educational status
- Income and livelihood sources
- Production practices
- Types of clay and pottery
- Tools and firing techniques
- Marketing channels
- Government schemes and institutional support
- Branding awareness
- Digital marketing practices
- Tourism potential
- Challenges faced by artisans
- Future prospects and policy suggestions

The questionnaire was administered personally during field visits, allowing respondents to clarify questions whenever required and improving the accuracy of responses.

Field Survey

Extensive field visits were conducted between **2024 and 2026** across selected artisan settlements in Jammu and Kashmir.

During these visits, direct observations of production processes, pottery workshops, kiln operations, storage facilities, marketing practices, and interactions among artisan families were recorded.



Field observations provided valuable qualitative insights that complemented the quantitative survey findings. Discussions with artisan families, local community members, government officials, and representatives of artisan organizations further strengthened the interpretation of survey results.

Data Processing and Analysis

After completion of the field survey, the collected data were systematically coded, classified, and entered into **Microsoft Excel** for analysis.

The study primarily employed descriptive statistical techniques for summarizing the collected information. Frequency distributions and percentage analysis were used to describe demographic characteristics, occupational patterns, income distribution, production practices, institutional support, and perceptions of artisans.

To improve interpretation and presentation, graphical methods including **bar graphs** and **pie charts** were used extensively. These visual representations facilitated comparison between categories and enhanced the readability of empirical findings.

Comparative analysis between the Jammu and Kashmir regions was also undertaken to identify differences in socio-economic conditions, production practices, government support, and livelihood dependence.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure reliability and validity, the questionnaire was developed after an extensive review of literature and consultation with experts in history, handicrafts, rural development, and social science research. Questions were designed in simple language to ensure clarity and consistency.

Personal administration of the questionnaire minimized errors arising from misunderstanding and non-response. Cross-verification of responses through field observations and informal discussions further enhanced the credibility of the collected data.

The relatively large sample size, extensive field visits, and inclusion of artisans from both Jammu and Kashmir strengthen the overall reliability of the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

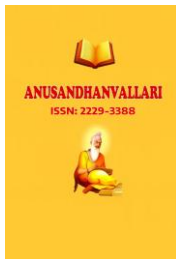
The study adhered to accepted ethical standards throughout the research process. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study before the interviews commenced.

Confidentiality of personal information was maintained, and no individual respondent was identified in the analysis or reporting of results. The information collected was used solely for academic research and policy analysis. Care was taken to respect the cultural values, traditions, and occupational practices of artisan communities during field investigations.

Limitations of the Study

Like all field-based investigations, the present study has certain limitations. The research was confined to selected terracotta artisan clusters within the Jammu and Kashmir regions and therefore may not fully represent every pottery-producing locality in the Union Territory.

The use of snowball sampling, while appropriate for locating specialized artisan communities, limits the generalization of findings to the entire artisan population. Some information relating to income, production, and marketing was based on respondents' self-reports and may therefore contain minor reporting variations. The study primarily employed descriptive statistical analysis using Microsoft Excel. Future investigations may apply



advanced statistical techniques such as regression analysis, factor analysis, structural equation modelling, and multivariate analysis to examine causal relationships among variables.

Despite these limitations, the study provides one of the most comprehensive empirical investigations of terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir. The large sample size, extensive fieldwork, comparative regional analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative evidence provide a robust foundation for understanding the socio-economic conditions of artisan communities and for developing policy recommendations aimed at promoting sustainable livelihoods through branding, entrepreneurship, and cultural heritage preservation.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic Profile of Terracotta Artisans

Understanding the socio-economic characteristics of artisan households is essential for evaluating the sustainability of traditional crafts. The present study surveyed **501 terracotta artisans**, comprising **214 respondents from the Jammu region** and **287 respondents from the Kashmir region**. The analysis reveals considerable differences between the two regions in terms of occupational continuity, experience, income, and dependence on terracotta as a livelihood. These findings provide valuable insights into the current status of the terracotta sector and its future prospects.

Performing and Non-Performing Artisans

The survey revealed significant regional differences in occupational continuity. In the Kashmir region, **all 287 respondents (100%)** were actively engaged in terracotta production at the time of the survey. This indicates that pottery continues to function as a living traditional occupation and remains an important source of livelihood for artisan families. The absence of non-performing artisans demonstrates a relatively stronger continuity of traditional craftsmanship in Kashmir.

In contrast, the Jammu region recorded **183 performing artisans (85.5%)**, while **31 artisans (14.5%)** had discontinued terracotta production. The presence of non-performing artisans indicates increasing occupational instability and reflects the economic pressures faced by traditional pottery communities. During field interactions, many artisans reported that declining profitability, irregular market demand, rising production costs, and limited institutional support had compelled them to seek alternative occupations.

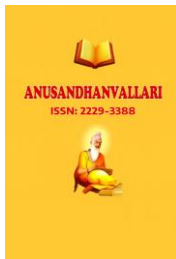
The continuation of traditional pottery among all surveyed artisans in Kashmir suggests stronger occupational commitment, whereas the occupational shift observed in Jammu reflects the growing vulnerability of traditional artisan livelihoods. This regional difference highlights the need for targeted policy interventions that address local challenges while encouraging occupational sustainability.

Experience of Artisans

Experience plays an important role in determining the quality of craftsmanship, preservation of traditional knowledge, and continuity of artisanal skills. The survey indicates that the majority of respondents in both regions possess substantial occupational experience.

In Jammu, **86 artisans (40.2%)** reported more than forty years of experience, while **61 artisans (28.5%)** had between twenty and thirty years of experience. Only **47 artisans (22.0%)** possessed less than ten years of experience, and **20 artisans (9.3%)** had between ten and twenty years of experience.

Similarly, in Kashmir, the largest proportion of respondents belonged to the higher experience categories. **103 artisans (35.9%)** had between twenty and thirty years of experience, while another **103 artisans (35.9%)** reported more than forty years of experience. The remaining respondents included **48 artisans (16.7%)** with ten to twenty years of experience and **33 artisans (11.5%)** with less than ten years of experience.



The predominance of highly experienced artisans reflects the hereditary nature of terracotta craftsmanship. Traditional pottery skills continue to be transferred through family-based learning systems rather than formal vocational institutions. However, the comparatively smaller proportion of younger artisans also raises concerns regarding generational replacement and the future continuity of the craft.

Family Background of Artisans

One of the most significant findings of the study relates to the hereditary character of terracotta production. All **214 respondents in Jammu** and all **287 respondents in Kashmir** belonged to traditional artisan families. None of the respondents identified themselves as first-generation or non-traditional artisans.

This finding demonstrates that terracotta production in Jammu and Kashmir remains almost entirely dependent upon hereditary occupational communities. Knowledge regarding clay preparation, shaping, firing, decoration, and marketing continues to be transmitted from one generation to another through practical family-based apprenticeship rather than institutional training.

While hereditary transmission has contributed significantly to preserving traditional craftsmanship, it also creates vulnerability. If younger generations gradually abandon the occupation because of low incomes and limited opportunities, the continuity of traditional knowledge may be seriously threatened. This underscores the importance of developing policies that make pottery economically attractive to future generations.

Income of Performing Artisans

The income profile of artisans illustrates the limited economic returns generated by traditional pottery.

Among the performing artisans in Jammu, the largest proportion (**97 artisans; 53.0%**) earned between ₹0 and ₹10,000 per month from all sources. Another **67 artisans (36.6%)** earned between ₹11,000 and ₹20,000. Only a very small number reported monthly incomes above ₹50,000.

The income distribution in Kashmir presents a somewhat better picture. Among the 287 performing artisans, **230 respondents (80.1%)** earned between ₹11,000 and ₹20,000 per month, while **49 artisans (17.1%)** reported incomes between ₹21,000 and ₹30,000. Very few respondents belonged to higher income categories.

These findings indicate that although Kashmir artisans generally earn higher household incomes than their counterparts in Jammu, the majority of artisan households in both regions remain within relatively modest income groups. Such income levels often limit opportunities for business expansion, technological modernization, and investment in product diversification.

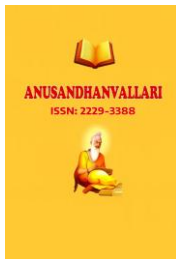
Income Derived Specifically from Terracotta

A more critical finding emerges when only income generated directly from terracotta production is considered.

Among the performing artisans in Jammu, **151 respondents (82.5%)** earned less than ₹10,000 per month from terracotta alone. Only a handful earned more than ₹20,000.

The situation in Kashmir is even more striking. **286 out of 287 artisans (99.7%)** reported earning less than ₹10,000 per month directly from terracotta products, while only one respondent earned between ₹11,000 and ₹20,000.

These findings demonstrate that although many artisan households report moderate total family incomes, terracotta itself contributes only a limited share of household earnings. Income from agriculture, wage labour, seasonal employment, livestock, and other supplementary occupations often supports artisan families. This clearly indicates that terracotta production alone is insufficient to ensure sustainable household livelihoods under current market conditions.



Discussion

The socio-economic profile presented above highlights both the strengths and vulnerabilities of the terracotta sector in Jammu and Kashmir. The existence of highly experienced artisan communities and the continuation of hereditary craftsmanship demonstrate the remarkable resilience of this traditional occupation. However, the predominance of low-income households, dependence on supplementary occupations, and declining participation in Jammu indicate that the economic sustainability of terracotta remains uncertain.

The findings suggest that preserving traditional craftsmanship requires more than cultural recognition. Long-term sustainability depends upon improving market opportunities, increasing product value through branding, introducing technological innovations, expanding tourism linkages, strengthening institutional support, and promoting digital marketing. Without these interventions, the economic pressures experienced by artisan households may gradually weaken occupational continuity despite the strong cultural significance of terracotta art.

Overall, the socio-economic analysis confirms that terracotta continues to serve as an important cultural occupation in Jammu and Kashmir, but its future viability will largely depend on policies capable of transforming traditional craftsmanship into a competitive and financially rewarding rural enterprise.

Production Practices of Terracotta Artisans

Production practices constitute the foundation of traditional terracotta craftsmanship because they determine product quality, production efficiency, artistic identity, and market competitiveness. The field survey reveals that although artisans in both Jammu and Kashmir continue to preserve traditional pottery-making techniques, considerable regional differences exist in the choice of raw materials, product diversification, production tools, and firing technologies. These variations reflect differences in local traditions, resource availability, market demand, and technological adaptation.

Type of Clay Used

The selection of clay is one of the most critical stages in terracotta production because it directly influences the strength, texture, colour, durability, and finish of the final product.

The survey indicates that **all 287 artisans (100%) in Kashmir** exclusively use **earthenware clay** for preparing terracotta products. None of the respondents reported using stoneware or porcelain clay. This demonstrates the continued reliance on locally available natural clay and the preservation of traditional production techniques. Artisans explained during field visits that locally sourced clay possesses the required plasticity and firing characteristics for producing traditional household utensils and decorative items.

The situation in Jammu shows slightly greater diversity. **176 artisans (82.2%)** reported using earthenware clay, while **38 artisans (17.8%)** indicated that they occasionally combine different clay materials depending on the product and market requirements. None of the respondents used porcelain clay, reflecting the traditional orientation of pottery production in the region.

The overwhelming dependence on earthenware demonstrates that terracotta production in Jammu and Kashmir continues to remain closely associated with indigenous natural resources rather than industrial ceramic technologies. While this strengthens the authenticity of handmade products, dependence on local clay also exposes artisans to challenges related to raw material availability and environmental regulations governing clay extraction.

Types of Pottery Produced

The study demonstrates considerable regional variation in product diversification.

In **Jammu**, artisans manufacture a wide variety of products. Out of 214 respondents:

- **115 artisans (53.7%)** produce traditional terracotta pottery.
- **52 artisans (24.3%)** produce Black-on-Red Ware pottery.
- **20 artisans (9.3%)** manufacture other locally demanded products.
- Small numbers produce ceramics or glazed pottery.
- Several artisans combine multiple production techniques to meet market demand.

These findings indicate that Jammu possesses relatively greater product diversity. Field observations revealed that artisans increasingly produce decorative items, flower pots, ritual objects, architectural ornaments, souvenirs, and utility products in response to changing consumer preferences.

In contrast, the **Kashmir region** exhibits a more specialized production pattern. Among the surveyed artisans:

- **250 artisans (87.1%)** produce terracotta along with glazed pottery and related traditional products.
- **37 artisans (12.9%)** focus exclusively on terracotta pottery.

The dominance of traditional terracotta production in Kashmir indicates a stronger continuity of regional artistic traditions. However, limited diversification may reduce artisans' ability to respond to changing market demands and emerging consumer preferences.

Overall, the findings suggest that product diversification has become increasingly important for improving market competitiveness. Artisans producing multiple product categories generally reported better opportunities for income generation than those specializing in only one type of pottery.

Tools Used in Pottery Production

Production tools significantly influence productivity, product quality, and production efficiency. The survey reveals notable regional differences in the use of traditional and modern equipment.

In **Jammu**, pottery production employs a combination of traditional and modern tools.

- **90 artisans (42.1%)** use pottery wheels.
- **36 artisans (16.8%)** use wire clay cutters.
- **5 artisans (2.3%)** reported regular use of sponges for finishing.
- **83 artisans (38.8%)** use a combination of multiple tools during production.

This indicates gradual technological adaptation among Jammu artisans while retaining traditional craftsmanship.

The pattern in **Kashmir** differs considerably. All **287 respondents (100%)** reported using a complete set of production tools, including pottery wheels, wire cutters, sponges, and metal scrapers. Field observations confirmed that Kashmir artisans generally employ standardized production processes where different tools are used sequentially during clay preparation, shaping, trimming, finishing, and decoration. This comprehensive tool utilization contributes to greater uniformity in product quality.

Despite these differences, most production activities remain labour-intensive. Mechanization is minimal, and artisans continue to rely heavily on manual skills acquired through hereditary learning.

Firing Techniques

Firing is one of the most crucial stages in terracotta production because it determines the durability, colour, texture, and overall quality of finished products.

The survey demonstrates that **traditional firing methods continue to dominate** in both regions.

In **Jammu**:

- **197 artisans (92.1%)** use wood-burning kilns.
- **13 artisans (6.1%)** employ locally developed traditional firing methods.
- **4 artisans (1.8%)** use gas-fired kilns.
- None reported using electric kilns.

The overwhelming dependence on wood-fired kilns reflects limited access to modern firing technology. Although traditional kilns preserve the characteristic appearance of handmade terracotta, they require higher fuel consumption, longer firing periods, and greater manual supervision.

The situation differs slightly in **Kashmir**:

- **266 artisans (92.7%)** reported using traditional indigenous firing methods.
- **21 artisans (7.3%)** continue to use wood-burning kilns.
- None reported using electric or gas kilns.

Many Kashmir artisans employ locally evolved firing techniques that have been refined over generations. These methods are adapted to locally available fuels and climatic conditions while producing distinctive surface finishes associated with regional pottery traditions.

However, dependence on traditional firing methods also creates several challenges, including inconsistent firing temperatures, higher product breakage, environmental concerns, and lower production efficiency.

Discussion

The analysis of production practices demonstrates that terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir continue to preserve centuries-old manufacturing traditions despite changing economic conditions. The continued use of earthenware clay, manual production techniques, and traditional firing methods reflects the remarkable continuity of indigenous craftsmanship.

Nevertheless, the study also highlights important regional differences. Jammu artisans exhibit greater product diversification and partial adoption of improved tools, whereas Kashmir artisans demonstrate stronger occupational specialization and standardized production practices. Both regions, however, remain heavily dependent upon traditional firing technologies and labour-intensive production methods.

From a livelihood perspective, modernization should not replace traditional craftsmanship but rather strengthen it. Introducing energy-efficient kilns, improved pottery wheels, better finishing equipment, quality testing facilities, and environmentally sustainable production technologies could significantly improve productivity while preserving the authenticity of handmade terracotta.

Product diversification also emerges as an important strategy for increasing artisan income. Decorative home décor products, architectural ceramics, garden accessories, designer tableware, eco-friendly household items, souvenirs, religious artefacts, and customized gift products offer considerable opportunities for expanding domestic and international markets. Collaboration with professional designers, design institutes, and tourism agencies can further enhance product innovation without compromising cultural identity.

Overall, the production practices documented in this study demonstrate that the terracotta sector possesses a strong traditional knowledge base. However, ensuring its long-term sustainability requires combining indigenous

craftsmanship with technological innovation, improved product design, efficient production systems, and market-oriented development strategies. Such an integrated approach can strengthen the competitiveness of terracotta enterprises while preserving the rich cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Institutional Support and Government Initiatives

Institutional support plays a vital role in ensuring the sustainability of traditional handicrafts by providing artisans with opportunities for skill development, financial assistance, social security, market access, and technological advancement. Government agencies, handicraft development organizations, cooperatives, and non-governmental institutions collectively contribute to strengthening artisan livelihoods. The present study examines the extent of institutional support available to terracotta artisans in Jammu and Kashmir by analysing formal training, registration with government organizations, possession of artisan identity cards, awareness of government initiatives, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of existing programmes.

Formal Training of Artisans

Training is one of the most important factors influencing productivity, innovation, product quality, and entrepreneurial capacity. The field survey reveals considerable regional differences in access to formal training programmes.

In the **Kashmir region**, **124 artisans (43.2%)** reported receiving formal training related to pottery production, design development, or skill enhancement, while **163 artisans (56.8%)** had never participated in any structured training programme. Although the proportion of trained artisans is relatively higher than in Jammu, more than half of the respondents continue to rely exclusively on traditional family-based learning.

The situation is considerably different in **Jammu**, where only **8 artisans (3.7%)** had received formal training, whereas **206 artisans (96.3%)** had never participated in any organized skill development programme. This finding indicates a substantial gap in institutional outreach and capacity-building initiatives.

Field interactions revealed that most artisans acquired their skills through hereditary learning, observing parents and grandparents during childhood. While this traditional system has successfully preserved indigenous knowledge, it provides limited exposure to contemporary design trends, quality standards, digital marketing, entrepreneurship, and modern production technologies.

The findings suggest that expanding structured training programmes should be a priority for government agencies. Regular workshops on product innovation, design diversification, glazing techniques, business management, packaging, branding, and e-commerce would significantly enhance the competitiveness of terracotta enterprises.

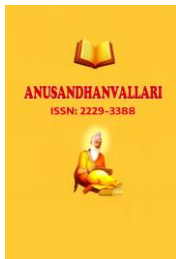
Registration with Government or Artisan Organizations

Registration with recognized artisan organizations enables craftspeople to access government welfare schemes, financial assistance, exhibitions, insurance programmes, subsidized loans, and marketing opportunities.

The survey indicates substantial regional variation in registration levels.

In **Kashmir**, **258 artisans (89.9%)** were registered with government departments or recognized artisan organizations, while only **29 respondents (10.1%)** remained unregistered. This high registration rate reflects relatively stronger institutional connectivity and awareness among artisan communities.

Conversely, in **Jammu**, only **71 artisans (33.2%)** were registered, whereas **143 respondents (66.8%)** had no formal registration. Many artisans reported that they were either unaware of the registration process or had experienced administrative difficulties in obtaining registration.



The large disparity between the two regions highlights uneven implementation of institutional programmes. Registration serves as the foundation for accessing government support; therefore, low registration rates inevitably reduce the effectiveness of welfare initiatives among artisan communities.

Possession of Artisan Identity Cards

Identity cards provide official recognition to artisans and often function as essential documents for participation in exhibitions, government procurement programmes, financial assistance schemes, and training initiatives.

The survey demonstrates another significant regional difference.

In **Kashmir**, **276 artisans (96.2%)** possessed official artisan identity cards, while only **11 respondents (3.8%)** did not. This indicates extensive institutional recognition and stronger administrative coverage.

The situation in **Jammu** contrasts sharply. Only **40 artisans (18.7%)** possessed identity cards, whereas **174 respondents (81.3%)** lacked official recognition.

During field visits, several Jammu artisans reported that the absence of identity cards prevented them from accessing government exhibitions, financial assistance programmes, and other institutional benefits. Many respondents also expressed uncertainty regarding the procedures required for obtaining official certification.

These findings indicate that simplifying registration procedures and conducting awareness campaigns could substantially improve institutional inclusion.

Awareness of Government Initiatives

Government support for traditional artisans has expanded considerably through programmes relating to skill development, entrepreneurship, marketing assistance, and financial inclusion. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives depends largely upon artisan awareness and accessibility.

The survey reveals contrasting perceptions between the two regions.

In **Kashmir**, **250 respondents (87.1%)** believed that the government had introduced initiatives for artisan welfare, while **37 respondents (12.9%)** believed that adequate initiatives were absent.

In **Jammu**, only **54 artisans (25.2%)** expressed awareness of government initiatives, whereas **160 respondents (74.8%)** believed that little or no effective support existed.

These findings suggest that government programmes are either more visible in Kashmir or are implemented more effectively. Alternatively, the lower awareness levels in Jammu may reflect inadequate dissemination of information or limited outreach by implementing agencies.

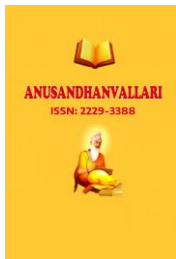
Greater transparency, improved communication, and community-level awareness campaigns are therefore essential for increasing programme participation.

Effectiveness of Government Support

Beyond awareness, the survey also examined artisans' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of existing government programmes.

Among respondents from **Jammu**:

- **56 artisans (26.2%)** considered government support effective.
- **94 artisans (43.9%)** remained neutral.
- **13 artisans (6.1%)** considered the programmes less effective.



- **51 artisans (23.8%)** believed government initiatives were not effective.

The findings indicate that opinions remain divided, although a substantial proportion expressed dissatisfaction regarding implementation.

The perceptions of artisans in **Kashmir** were somewhat different:

- **29 respondents (10.1%)** considered government support effective.
- **229 respondents (79.8%)** adopted a neutral position.
- **29 respondents (10.1%)** viewed existing programmes as less effective.

The predominance of neutral responses suggests that although government schemes are widely recognized, many artisans have not experienced significant improvements in their livelihoods. This indicates a gap between policy formulation and actual socio-economic outcomes.

Financial Security and Household Support

An important indicator of institutional effectiveness is whether artisans are able to support their families through terracotta production.

The findings present a concerning picture.

In **Jammu**, only **20 artisans (9.3%)** reported that terracotta income was sufficient to support household expenses, whereas **194 respondents (90.7%)** stated that it was inadequate.

The situation in **Kashmir** is even more severe. None of the **287 respondents** reported being able to fully support their families through terracotta work alone. Every artisan indicated that additional income sources were necessary to meet household needs.

This finding reinforces the conclusion that traditional pottery currently functions as a low-income occupation despite its cultural significance.

Discussion

The institutional analysis demonstrates that substantial differences exist between Jammu and Kashmir regarding access to government support, formal recognition, and skill development opportunities.

Kashmir exhibits considerably higher levels of artisan registration, possession of identity cards, participation in training programmes, and awareness of government initiatives. These indicators suggest comparatively stronger institutional engagement with artisan communities.

Jammu, on the other hand, displays significant institutional gaps. Low registration rates, limited formal training, inadequate identity card coverage, and weak awareness of government schemes collectively reduce artisans' ability to benefit from public welfare programmes.

However, the findings also indicate that institutional recognition alone does not guarantee improved livelihoods. Even in Kashmir, where institutional coverage is relatively strong, artisans continue to report low incomes and financial insecurity. This suggests that future policy should move beyond registration and focus on measurable livelihood outcomes such as income enhancement, enterprise development, market expansion, and business sustainability. The study therefore recommends strengthening institutional coordination through integrated artisan support systems that combine registration, training, financial assistance, design innovation, digital marketing, tourism promotion, and entrepreneurship development. Establishing Common Facility Centres (CFCs), expanding cluster development programmes, simplifying administrative procedures, and introducing mobile outreach services in remote artisan villages would significantly improve institutional effectiveness.



Furthermore, collaboration among government departments, universities, design institutes, financial institutions, and artisan cooperatives can create a comprehensive ecosystem for terracotta development. Such an approach would not only preserve traditional craftsmanship but also transform terracotta into a viable rural enterprise capable of contributing to employment generation, cultural heritage preservation, and the broader objectives of **Swavlambi Bharat** and **Viksit Bharat**.

Livelihood Dependence, Market Challenges, and Future Sustainability of Terracotta Art

The sustainability of traditional handicrafts depends not only on cultural continuity but also on their ability to generate stable livelihoods for artisan communities. The present study examined the economic dependence of artisans on terracotta, their primary sources of income, perceptions regarding the future of the craft, and the major factors contributing to its gradual decline. The findings reveal that while terracotta continues to hold cultural significance in both Jammu and Kashmir, its economic viability has weakened considerably because of declining demand, technological competition, inadequate marketing, and limited financial returns.

Primary Source of Income

Although all respondents possess traditional pottery skills, the survey indicates that many artisan households rely on multiple occupations to maintain their livelihoods.

In the **Jammu region**, only **86 respondents (40.2%)** identified the sale of terracotta products as their primary source of income. A larger proportion (**102 artisans; 47.7%**) depended mainly on wage labour, while the remaining respondents reported income from teaching or other occupations. This occupational diversification demonstrates that terracotta alone is no longer capable of meeting household financial needs for a substantial number of artisans.

The situation in **Kashmir** differs in terms of occupational composition. Only **15 artisans (5.2%)** depended exclusively on the sale of terracotta products. Most respondents (**241 artisans; 84.0%**) reported earning income through a combination of terracotta production, wage labour, agriculture, small businesses, or other seasonal occupations, while **31 artisans (10.8%)** combined art sales with labour activities.

These findings indicate that terracotta has increasingly become part of a diversified livelihood strategy rather than functioning as a single source of household income. Such diversification reduces financial risk but also reflects the declining economic strength of traditional pottery.

7.4.2 Dependence on Terracotta as a Livelihood

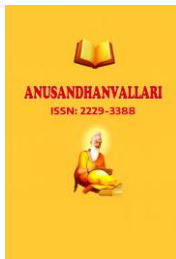
The study further examined the extent to which artisan households depend upon terracotta for their economic survival.

In **Jammu**, **85 respondents (39.7%)** described themselves as fully dependent on terracotta, whereas **84 artisans (39.3%)** indicated partial dependence. Smaller proportions reported being mostly dependent, rarely dependent, or not dependent on the craft.

The pattern in **Kashmir** is more concentrated. **245 artisans (85.4%)** considered themselves fully dependent on terracotta, while **42 respondents (14.6%)** reported being mostly dependent. None of the respondents selected the categories of partially dependent, rarely dependent, or not dependent.

These findings suggest an apparent contradiction. Although Kashmir artisans derive relatively low direct income from terracotta, they continue to identify the craft as their principal occupation because it forms the centre of their household economic activities and cultural identity. Jammu artisans, in contrast, have increasingly diversified into alternative occupations because of declining profitability.

Financial Support to Families



A particularly significant finding concerns the ability of terracotta artisans to support their households financially.

In **Jammu**, only **20 respondents (9.3%)** stated that their earnings from pottery-related activities were sufficient to provide adequate financial support for their families. The remaining **194 artisans (90.7%)** reported that current income levels were inadequate.

The findings from **Kashmir** are even more striking. **None of the 287 respondents** reported that terracotta alone enabled them to provide sufficient financial support to their households. Every artisan indicated that income generated through pottery was inadequate to meet essential family expenses.

This result clearly demonstrates that despite its cultural significance, terracotta production has not yet evolved into a financially sustainable occupation. Rising production costs, fluctuating demand, competition from factory-made products, and limited market access continue to constrain artisan incomes.

Perceived Risk of Extinction

The sustainability of traditional crafts depends upon both economic viability and intergenerational continuity. The survey therefore assessed artisans' perceptions regarding the future survival of terracotta.

The responses reveal widespread concern in both regions.

In **Jammu**, **133 artisans (62.1%)** considered the risk of extinction to be high, while **52 respondents (24.3%)** believed it to be very high. Only **28 artisans (13.1%)** viewed the risk as moderate, and just one respondent considered it low.

Similarly, in **Kashmir**, **245 artisans (85.4%)** perceived the risk of extinction as high, whereas **42 respondents (14.6%)** regarded it as very high. None of the respondents selected the categories of moderate or low risk.

These findings indicate a strong consensus that traditional terracotta craftsmanship is facing a serious threat. Such perceptions reflect not only economic insecurity but also growing concerns regarding occupational continuity and declining participation by younger generations.

Reasons for the Decline of Terracotta Art

The survey investigated the principal factors responsible for the declining condition of the terracotta sector.

In **Jammu**, an overwhelming **206 respondents (96.3%)** identified a combination of declining market demand, globalization, technological competition, and related economic factors as the primary causes of decline. Only a few respondents identified individual factors separately.

The findings from **Kashmir** are remarkably similar. **238 artisans (82.9%)** selected the combined influence of market demand, globalization, and technology as the principal reason for the declining condition of terracotta. Small numbers of respondents identified market demand, globalization, or technology individually.

These results indicate that artisans perceive the challenges as interconnected rather than isolated. Factory-produced alternatives, changing consumer preferences, mass production, rising production costs, inadequate marketing, and limited innovation collectively reduce the competitiveness of handmade terracotta products.

Current Status of Artisans

The respondents were also asked to evaluate the present condition of terracotta artisans.

In **Jammu**, **95 respondents (44.4%)** described the present condition of artisans as poor. Only **18 respondents (8.4%)** considered it good, while **74 respondents (34.6%)** viewed it as very good. The remaining respondents were uncertain. In **Kashmir**, perceptions were considerably more pessimistic. **250 respondents (87.1%)**



described the present condition of artisans as poor, only **10 respondents (3.5%)** considered it good, and **27 respondents (9.4%)** were unable to express a definite opinion.

These findings indicate that although pottery remains culturally significant, artisans themselves perceive their socio-economic condition as unsatisfactory.

Interest of the Younger Generation

The continuity of traditional crafts depends heavily upon the willingness of younger generations to continue hereditary occupations.

The survey reveals contrasting regional patterns.

In **Jammu**, only **12 respondents (5.6%)** reported that their children were interested in continuing the profession, whereas **201 artisans (93.9%)** stated that their children preferred alternative occupations.

The situation in **Kashmir** appears relatively more encouraging. **230 artisans (80.1%)** reported that their children remained interested in continuing pottery, while **57 respondents (19.9%)** indicated a lack of interest.

Although youth participation remains stronger in Kashmir, continued economic insecurity may gradually reduce occupational continuity unless substantial improvements occur in income generation and market opportunities.

Discussion

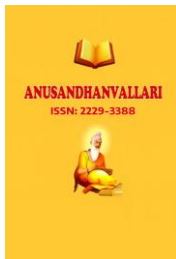
The findings clearly demonstrate that the principal challenge confronting terracotta artisans is not the disappearance of traditional skills but the declining economic viability of the occupation. Most artisans continue to possess remarkable craftsmanship and remain committed to preserving their cultural heritage. However, low incomes, irregular markets, technological competition, limited branding, and inadequate commercialization have significantly weakened the financial sustainability of the craft.

The results strongly support the need for a comprehensive branding strategy. Branding has the potential to transform terracotta products from low-value utilitarian items into premium cultural products by emphasizing authenticity, craftsmanship, heritage, environmental sustainability, and regional identity. Such an approach should include quality certification, attractive packaging, digital storytelling, geographical identity, participation in exhibitions, tourism integration, and expanded e-commerce platforms.

Furthermore, strengthening design innovation through collaboration with universities, design institutes, architects, and creative entrepreneurs would enable artisans to diversify their products while preserving traditional techniques. Modern consumers increasingly demand decorative home décor, eco-friendly lifestyle products, designer tableware, customized souvenirs, and architectural accessories, all of which present significant opportunities for terracotta artisans.

Financial assistance, entrepreneurship development, Common Facility Centres, improved kiln technologies, digital marketing training, and institutional collaboration should complement branding initiatives. Together, these interventions can improve artisan incomes, attract younger generations to the profession, and ensure the long-term sustainability of terracotta art.

The findings therefore support the central argument of this study that branding is not merely a marketing tool but a comprehensive development strategy capable of enhancing livelihoods, preserving cultural heritage, strengthening rural entrepreneurship, and contributing to the national objectives of **Swavlambi Bharat**, **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, and **Viksit Bharat**.



Policy Implications

The findings of the present study demonstrate that terracotta art in Jammu and Kashmir represents far more than a traditional craft. It embodies the cultural identity, historical continuity, indigenous knowledge systems, and livelihood security of hundreds of artisan families. However, despite its rich heritage and artistic value, the terracotta sector continues to face multiple socio-economic challenges, including low income, declining market demand, limited product diversification, inadequate institutional support, technological constraints, and reduced participation of younger generations. These challenges require a comprehensive policy framework that integrates cultural preservation with economic development. The following policy implications emerge from the empirical findings of the study.

Development of a Regional Terracotta Brand

One of the most significant findings of the study is that terracotta products from Jammu and Kashmir possess considerable artistic value but lack a distinct regional market identity. A comprehensive branding strategy should therefore be developed that highlights the uniqueness of the region's terracotta traditions, craftsmanship, and cultural heritage.

A common regional brand, supported by quality certification, standardized packaging, product labeling, and promotional campaigns, would enhance consumer confidence and increase the visibility of terracotta products in national and international markets. Branding should communicate authenticity, handmade quality, environmental sustainability, and the cultural history associated with the craft. Such initiatives can help artisans obtain better prices while distinguishing handmade products from machine-made alternatives.

Strengthening Skill Development and Design Innovation

The survey indicates that a large proportion of artisans, particularly in Jammu, have never received formal training. Government agencies should organize regular skill development programmes covering modern design techniques, glazing methods, product diversification, packaging, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and digital marketing.

Collaborations with design institutions, universities, and professional designers can introduce innovative product lines while preserving traditional craftsmanship. Design intervention should focus on creating products that appeal to contemporary consumers without compromising the cultural authenticity of terracotta art.

Modernization of Production Infrastructure

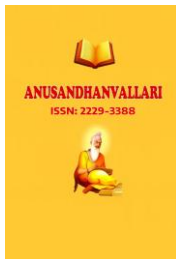
Traditional production methods remain an important part of terracotta craftsmanship; however, they often limit productivity and increase production costs. Government support should therefore encourage the gradual modernization of production infrastructure.

Energy-efficient kilns, improved pottery wheels, clay processing equipment, drying facilities, and Common Facility Centres (CFCs) can significantly improve production efficiency while maintaining traditional artistic techniques. Shared infrastructure would particularly benefit small artisans who lack sufficient financial resources for individual investment.

Expansion of Digital Marketing and E-commerce

Digital commerce offers unprecedented opportunities for traditional artisans to reach wider markets. However, the study reveals that digital marketing remains underutilized among terracotta producers.

Training programmes should focus on online marketing, product photography, social media promotion, digital catalogues, customer engagement, and participation in e-commerce platforms. Government agencies and artisan cooperatives may also establish dedicated online marketplaces showcasing authentic terracotta products from Jammu and Kashmir.



Digital marketing reduces dependence on intermediaries, increases profit margins, and enables artisans to establish direct relationships with consumers across India and abroad.

Integration with Tourism Development

Jammu and Kashmir possess immense tourism potential that remains insufficiently connected with traditional handicrafts. Terracotta art should become an integral component of heritage tourism and cultural tourism initiatives.

Craft villages, pottery demonstration centres, artisan workshops, museum exhibitions, cultural festivals, heritage trails, and experiential tourism programmes can significantly increase consumer awareness while generating additional income for artisan families. Visitors increasingly seek authentic cultural experiences, making live pottery demonstrations and artisan interactions valuable tourism attractions.

Tourism departments, handicraft agencies, and local administrations should jointly develop integrated tourism strategies promoting terracotta alongside other traditional crafts.

Improving Institutional Accessibility

Although many artisans, particularly in Kashmir, are registered with government organizations, the study demonstrates that institutional support has not translated into substantial improvements in income or livelihood security.

Administrative procedures for registration, identity cards, financial assistance, and participation in government schemes should be simplified. Mobile registration camps, village-level awareness programmes, and digital application systems can improve accessibility, especially for artisans residing in remote areas.

Periodic monitoring and evaluation of government programmes should also be undertaken to ensure that policy benefits effectively reach intended beneficiaries.

Financial Inclusion and Enterprise Development

Limited financial resources remain one of the principal constraints affecting artisan entrepreneurship. Access to affordable credit, working capital, insurance, and enterprise development support should therefore be strengthened.

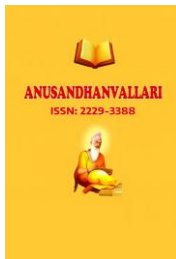
Special credit schemes with low interest rates, microfinance programmes, artisan cooperatives, and producer companies can facilitate business expansion. Financial institutions should recognize terracotta enterprises as viable rural industries capable of generating employment and contributing to regional economic development.

Business incubation programmes may also encourage artisans to establish small-scale enterprises focusing on product diversification, branding, packaging, and export-oriented production.

Encouraging Youth Participation

The sustainability of terracotta art ultimately depends on the willingness of younger generations to continue traditional occupations. The study indicates declining interest among youth, particularly in the Jammu region, largely because of limited income opportunities. Educational institutions, vocational training centres, and entrepreneurship programmes should actively promote terracotta as a creative industry rather than merely a traditional occupation. Scholarships, apprenticeships, innovation competitions, start-up grants, and design fellowships can encourage young artisans to establish modern terracotta enterprises.

The integration of digital technology, contemporary design, and entrepreneurial skills will make the profession more attractive to educated youth while preserving traditional craftsmanship.



Promotion of Research and Documentation

Traditional pottery techniques, indigenous knowledge, oral histories, and local design traditions should be systematically documented before they disappear. Universities, museums, cultural institutions, and research organizations should undertake collaborative projects focusing on documentation, digital archiving, and publication of traditional knowledge.

Further interdisciplinary research involving historians, economists, anthropologists, designers, tourism experts, and marketing professionals would strengthen evidence-based policymaking and contribute to the long-term preservation of terracotta heritage.

Alignment with National Development Initiatives

The promotion of terracotta art directly supports several national development priorities, including **Swavlambi Bharat**, **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, **Vocal for Local**, **Skill India**, **Digital India**, **Startup India**, and the vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047**. Strengthening terracotta enterprises contributes to employment generation, rural industrialization, women's participation, cultural preservation, sustainable entrepreneurship, and inclusive economic growth.

Rather than viewing terracotta solely as a cultural artifact, policymakers should recognize it as a strategic component of the rural creative economy. A coordinated approach involving government departments, academic institutions, financial organizations, tourism agencies, and artisan communities can transform terracotta into a sustainable livelihood sector while preserving one of the oldest traditions of Indian craftsmanship.

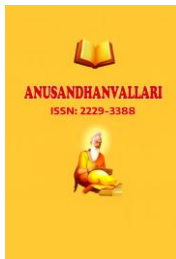
Overall, the policy implications of this study emphasize that the future of terracotta art depends on integrating traditional knowledge with modern business practices. Through effective branding, technological support, market development, skill enhancement, tourism integration, and institutional collaboration, terracotta artisans can achieve improved livelihoods while safeguarding the rich cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir for future generations.

Conclusion

Terracotta art represents one of the oldest and most enduring expressions of India's cultural heritage. Beyond its artistic significance, it embodies centuries of indigenous knowledge, traditional craftsmanship, and community identity that have been preserved through hereditary transmission across generations. The present study, entitled *Promoting Swavlambi Bharat by Branding Terracotta Art of Jammu and Kashmir: A Roadmap to Viksit Bharat*, examined the socio-economic conditions, production practices, institutional support, livelihood dependence, and branding potential of terracotta artisans in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Based on a comprehensive field survey of **501 artisans**, comprising **214 respondents from Jammu** and **287 respondents from Kashmir**, the study provides important empirical insights into the opportunities and challenges facing the terracotta sector.

The findings reveal that terracotta continues to occupy an important place in the cultural and economic lives of artisan communities. Almost all respondents belonged to traditional artisan families, demonstrating that pottery remains a hereditary occupation rooted in local customs and social traditions. The presence of highly experienced artisans in both regions indicates that valuable indigenous knowledge continues to survive despite changing economic conditions. However, the relatively limited participation of younger artisans raises concerns regarding the long-term continuity of traditional craftsmanship.

The comparative analysis highlights significant regional variations. In the Kashmir region, all surveyed artisans were actively engaged in terracotta production, indicating stronger occupational continuity. In contrast, a noticeable proportion of artisans in Jammu had abandoned pottery because of declining profitability and limited



livelihood opportunities. These regional differences underline the need for location-specific policy interventions rather than a uniform development strategy.

Income analysis demonstrates that although many artisan households remain economically dependent on terracotta, earnings generated directly from pottery are generally insufficient to support household expenditures. The majority of respondents reported low monthly incomes from terracotta production and relied on supplementary occupations such as wage labour, agriculture, or small businesses to maintain their livelihoods. This finding indicates that the principal challenge confronting the sector is not the absence of traditional skills but the limited economic returns associated with handcrafted pottery.

The study further reveals that production techniques remain predominantly traditional. Artisans continue to depend upon locally available earthenware clay, manual production methods, and conventional firing techniques. While these practices preserve the authenticity and cultural identity of terracotta products, they also constrain productivity, quality consistency, and production efficiency. Limited adoption of improved technologies restricts the ability of artisans to compete effectively in increasingly competitive markets.

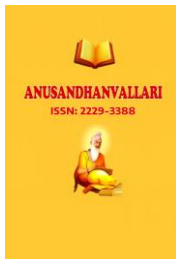
Institutional analysis indicates considerable differences between Jammu and Kashmir. Artisans in Kashmir reported comparatively higher levels of registration with government organizations, possession of identity cards, and participation in formal training programmes. Nevertheless, improved institutional coverage has not necessarily translated into substantially better livelihoods, as many respondents continued to report financial insecurity and limited market opportunities. In Jammu, lower registration rates and inadequate institutional outreach further reduced access to government support schemes. These findings suggest that policy interventions should focus not only on institutional coverage but also on measurable improvements in income, enterprise development, and market access.

One of the most significant findings of the study concerns the widespread perception that terracotta art is facing a serious risk of decline. Respondents in both regions identified multiple interconnected factors contributing to this situation, including declining market demand, competition from factory-made products, technological change, globalization, rising production costs, limited product diversification, and inadequate marketing infrastructure. These challenges collectively threaten the long-term sustainability of traditional pottery despite its rich cultural heritage.

The study also demonstrates that branding offers a promising pathway for revitalizing the terracotta sector. At present, most products are marketed as ordinary handicrafts without a distinct regional identity. Developing a comprehensive branding strategy emphasizing authenticity, craftsmanship, cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and regional uniqueness would significantly improve product visibility and consumer recognition. Branding, supported by attractive packaging, quality certification, digital marketing, storytelling, and geographical identity, has the potential to transform terracotta from a low-value traditional craft into a premium cultural product capable of competing in national and international markets.

Tourism emerges as another important opportunity for sectoral development. Jammu and Kashmir possess exceptional cultural and natural heritage, creating favourable conditions for integrating terracotta into heritage tourism, craft tourism, museum exhibitions, cultural festivals, and experiential tourism initiatives. Such integration would generate additional market opportunities while promoting public appreciation of traditional craftsmanship.

The research further emphasizes the importance of digital transformation. E-commerce platforms, social media marketing, online exhibitions, and digital payment systems provide artisans with opportunities to reach consumers beyond local markets. However, realizing these opportunities requires investment in digital literacy, entrepreneurship training, product photography, online branding, and logistical support.



The findings of this study contribute significantly to both academic scholarship and public policy. From an academic perspective, the research fills an important gap by providing one of the first comprehensive comparative analyses of terracotta artisans in both Jammu and Kashmir based on extensive primary field data. It integrates perspectives from history, rural development, cultural studies, marketing, entrepreneurship, and public policy to develop an interdisciplinary understanding of traditional craftsmanship.

From a policy perspective, the study demonstrates that sustainable development of the terracotta sector requires coordinated interventions involving government agencies, academic institutions, financial organizations, tourism departments, design professionals, and artisan communities. Skill development, technological modernization, infrastructure improvement, digital marketing, financial inclusion, product diversification, institutional strengthening, and branding should function as complementary components of a comprehensive development strategy.

The study strongly supports the broader objectives of **Swavlambi Bharat, Atmanirbhar Bharat, Vocal for Local, and Viksit Bharat 2047** by illustrating how traditional handicrafts can contribute to employment generation, rural industrialization, entrepreneurship, cultural preservation, and inclusive economic development. Promoting terracotta art should therefore be viewed not merely as an exercise in preserving heritage but as an investment in sustainable livelihoods and the creative economy.

In conclusion, the future of terracotta art in Jammu and Kashmir depends upon successfully balancing tradition with innovation. Traditional knowledge and cultural identity must be preserved while simultaneously embracing branding, design innovation, digital technologies, tourism integration, and modern business practices. Such an integrated approach will enable artisan communities to achieve improved economic security while safeguarding one of India's oldest and most valuable artistic traditions for future generations. Terracotta art possesses immense potential to become a symbol of sustainable rural entrepreneurship and cultural resilience, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the vision of a self-reliant and developed India.

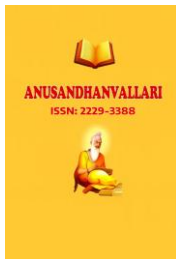
Acknowledgement

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support received from the **Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi**, under the Research Project entitled "**Promoting Swavlambi Bharat by Branding Terracotta Art of Jammu and Kashmir: A Roadmap to Viksit Bharat.**" This study would not have been possible without the generous assistance and encouragement provided by ICSSR in promoting high-quality social science research.

The author expresses sincere gratitude to the Director and officials of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi, for their guidance, encouragement, and administrative support throughout the duration of the project. The Council's commitment to advancing research in the social sciences has significantly contributed to the successful completion of this study.

The author is deeply indebted to the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Dean, Head of the Department, and colleagues of the Central University of Jammu, Rahya Suchani, Samba, J&K for providing the necessary academic environment, encouragement, and institutional support during the course of the research. Special thanks are extended to the officers of the Directorate of Handicrafts and Handloom, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, KVIC, KVIB, local administrative authorities, artisan associations, master craftsmen, and community leaders who extended valuable cooperation during the field survey.

The author records heartfelt appreciation to all **501 terracotta artisans** from the Jammu and Kashmir regions who generously shared their time, experiences, knowledge, and insights. Their participation forms the foundation of this research.



The author also acknowledges the contributions of scholars, researchers, librarians, and institutions whose published works, reports, and archival resources provided valuable guidance for the study.

Finally, the author expresses sincere gratitude to family members, friends, and well-wishers for their constant encouragement, patience, and moral support throughout the research journey.

Disclaimer: The views and conclusions expressed in this research paper are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), New Delhi.

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