

**LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES OF
TRADITIONAL POTTERS IN KANYAKUMARI
DISTRICT**

MSW DISASTER MANAGEMENT

2024-2026

LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL POTTERS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

COURSE CODE SWDM 547

MSW DISASTER MANAGEMENT

2024-2026

ABSTRACT

The study titled "Livelihood Challenges of Traditional Potters in Kanyakumari District" examines the multifaceted threats to the sustainability of traditional pottery, one of India's oldest indigenous livelihoods, in the face of rapid socio-economic change. Guided by four objectives to analyse the economic challenges encountered by traditional potters, to assess occupational health risks associated with pottery work, to examine the decline in generational participation in the occupation, and to suggest strategies for sustaining and reviving traditional pottery, the study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional design and collected primary data from 80 traditional potters in Kanyakumari District using a structured interview schedule and simple random sampling. Data were analysed with SPSS using frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation techniques. Findings indicate that potters confront multiple economic constraints, including low and irregular incomes, rising production costs, limited market opportunities, and inadequate financial support; prevalent occupational health issues such as back pain, joint pain, skin problems, and reduced productivity were attributed to the physically demanding nature of pottery work and limited access to healthcare; moreover, the study documents a significant decline in younger generations' interest in continuing the craft, driven by low remuneration, lack of social recognition, migration, and preference for alternative livelihoods. Respondents highlighted the need for financial assistance, improved market access, skill development programmes, technological support, and stronger engagement by government agencies and non-governmental organisations to bolster the sector. The study concludes that the challenges confronting traditional potters are multidimensional economic, occupational, and social and collectively jeopardise the continuity of this cultural livelihood; it emphasises the necessity of integrated interventions involving government bodies, NGOs, local communities, and social work professionals to enhance livelihood security, promote occupational well-being, and preserve the cultural and economic significance of traditional pottery in Kanyakumari District.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE	PAGE NO
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	2-12
1.2 Statement of the problem	12-13
1.3 Background of the study	13-15
1.4 Significance of study	15-17
1.5 Chapterisation	17
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE	18
2.2 Literatures	19-34
2.3 Research gap analysis	34-35
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	36
3.1 Introduction	37
3.2 Title of the Study	37
3.3 Objectives of the study	37
3.4 Definition of important topics	38-39
3.5 Pilot Study	39
3.6 Research Approach	40
3.7 Research design	40-41
3.8 Universe of the Study	41
3.9 Unit of the Study	41
3.10 Sampling Design	42
3.11 Data Collection	42-43
3.12 Method of Data Collection	43
3.13 Tools for Data Collection	44
3.14 Pretest	44-45
3.15 Data Analysis	45
3.16 Ethical Considerations	45
3.17 Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope	45-47
CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	48

4.1 Introduction	49
4.2 Analysis of each Objective	50-87
CHAPTER FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION	89
5.1 Introduction	90
5.2 Finding	90-92
5.3 Discussion	92-100
5.4 Suggestions	100-102
5.5 Conclusion	102-103
CHAPTER 6 REFERENCES AND ANNEXURES	104-122

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.	Title	Page no
4.1.1	Demographic profile of the respondents	50
4.1.2	Distribution of respondents by age figure	50-51
4.1.3	Gender distribution of respondents	51-52
4.1.4	Educational qualification of respondents	52-53
4.1.5	Average monthly income from pottery	54-54
4.1.6	Years of experience in pottery work	55-56
4.2.7	Main economic challenges faced by traditional potters	63-64
4.3.13	Support required to improve livelihood	79-80
4.4.6	Role of government and NGOs in pottery Revival	86-87

LIST OF TABLES

Table No	Title	Page no
4.2.1	Cross-tabulation between Gender and economic challenges level	57
4.2.4	Cross-tabulation between age group and economic challenges level	57-58
4.2.3	Cross-tabulation between educational qualification and economic challenges level	59-60
4.2.4	Cross-tabulation between years engaged in pottery and economic challenges level	60-61
4.2.5	Cross-tabulation between average monthly income and economic challenges	61-62
4.2.6	Cross-tabulation between primary occupation and economic challenges level	62
4.3.1	Distribution of respond in experience in physical pain	65
4.3.2	Health Problems commonly faced	65-66
4.3.3	Cross-tabulation between Gender and occupational health level	67
4.3.4	Cross-tabulation between age group and occupational health level	68

4.3.5	Cross-tabulation between education qualification and occupational health level	69-70
4.3.6	Cross-tabulation between working hours affecting and occupational health level	70-71
4.3.7	Cross-tabulation between health condition reducing productivity and occupational health level	71-72
4.3.8	Cross-tabulation between access to regular health care and occupational health level	73-74
4.3.9	Frequency table	74-75
4.3.10	Shifted to other occupations	75-76
4.3.11	Changes in younger generation regarding pottery work	76-77
4.3.12	Is migration affecting the pottery work	77-78
4.4.1	Frequency table	80-81
4.4.2	Support to improve your livelihood	81-82
4.4.3	Skill development interest	82-83
4.4.4	Role of government and NGOs	84-85
4.4.5	Difficulty in adapting traditional skills	85-86

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditional occupations have played a significant role in the socio-economic and cultural development of human civilisation since ancient times. Among the various traditional occupations, pottery is regarded as one of the oldest and most important crafts practised by humankind. Archaeological evidence indicates that pottery has existed since the Neolithic period and has served as an essential component of human life by providing utensils for cooking, storing water and food, religious ceremonies, agricultural activities, and domestic purposes. Throughout history, pottery has represented not only an occupation but also the artistic expression, cultural identity, indigenous knowledge, and traditional wisdom of different communities. The craft reflects the relationship between human beings and nature, as it depends primarily on readily available natural resources such as clay, water, and fire, as well as manual skill. Even today, pottery continues to play an important role in rural societies, supporting the livelihoods of thousands of artisan families and helping preserve cultural heritage (Singh, 2015).

India possesses one of the richest traditions of pottery and handicrafts in the world. The diversity of Indian pottery reflects the country's geographical, cultural, and social diversity. From ancient civilisations such as the Indus Valley Civilisation to the present day, pottery has continued to evolve while retaining its traditional significance. Earthen pots, lamps, cooking vessels, storage containers, idols, decorative articles, flower pots, and ritual objects remain an inseparable part of Indian culture. Pottery products are extensively used during religious ceremonies, temple festivals, cultural celebrations, marriages, and various traditional rituals. The pottery sector therefore contributes not only to rural employment but also to the preservation of India's cultural identity and traditional craftsmanship (Kumar & Sharma, 2020).

Traditional pottery in India is generally practised as a hereditary family occupation. Skills associated with pottery making are usually transferred from one generation to another through observation, participation, and practical experience rather than through formal education or institutional training. Children learn the craft from their parents and grandparents from an early age, thereby preserving traditional production techniques and indigenous knowledge systems. The continuity of pottery as a hereditary occupation has enabled several artisan communities to maintain their traditional identity despite changing economic conditions. However, modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, and technological advancement have significantly influenced the sustainability of this occupation during recent decades.

The rapid expansion of industrial production and technological innovation has transformed consumer preferences and purchasing behaviour throughout the country. Modern products manufactured from plastic, aluminium, stainless steel, fibre, ceramic materials, and glass have gradually replaced traditional earthen products in everyday life. These products are comparatively cheaper, more durable, lightweight, easily

available, and require less maintenance than traditional clay products. Consequently, the demand for earthen products has declined considerably, thereby reducing the income and employment opportunities available to traditional potters. The increasing competition from factory-produced goods has adversely affected the economic sustainability of pottery and has forced many artisan families to seek alternative occupations (Kumar & Sharma, 2020).

Traditional pottery belongs to the unorganised sector of the Indian economy. According to the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), the unorganised sector consists of all unincorporated private enterprises owned by individuals or households engaged in the production and sale of goods and services and employing fewer than ten workers (NCEUS, 2007). The terms *unorganised sector* and *informal sector* are often used interchangeably because both refer to employment characterised by the absence of formal contracts, inadequate legal protection, irregular wages, poor working conditions, and limited social security. Workers engaged in this sector generally depend upon self-employment or family labour and experience considerable economic insecurity.

The unorganised sector occupies a dominant position in the Indian labour market. According to the Economic Survey (2018–19), nearly 90 to 93 per cent of India's total workforce is employed in the unorganised sector. The sector includes agricultural labourers, construction workers, street vendors, domestic workers, artisans, handloom weavers, fishermen, beedi workers, pottery workers, self-employed individuals, migrant labourers, and numerous other occupational groups. Although these workers contribute significantly to the country's economy and employment generation, they continue to experience poverty, low income, inadequate working conditions, absence of social protection, and limited access to institutional support (Economic Survey, 2018–19).

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) also recognises that workers in the informal economy remain among the most economically vulnerable groups because they generally lack employment security, occupational safety, health protection, and access to social security benefits (ILO, 2018). Their livelihood is highly dependent upon market fluctuations, seasonal employment, and availability of work. In many developing countries, traditional artisans continue to experience livelihood insecurity due to inadequate institutional support, poor access to finance, declining markets, and limited technological development.

Traditional potters constitute one of the most vulnerable occupational groups within the unorganised sector. Unlike organised industries that possess mechanised production systems and formal employment structures, pottery production is usually carried out within households where every family member contributes to the manufacturing process. Pottery production requires continuous physical labour, specialised skills, patience, creativity, and years of practical experience. Most pottery units operate with limited financial resources and depend entirely upon family labour without employing permanent workers. Consequently, their production capacity remains comparatively low, making it difficult to compete with large-scale industries.

The production of pottery involves several labour-intensive stages. Initially, suitable clay is collected from ponds, lakes, riverbeds, or agricultural fields. The clay is then cleaned, mixed with water, kneaded thoroughly, and prepared for shaping. Potters use either traditional hand-operated wheels or motorised wheels to mould the clay into different forms according to market demand. The shaped products are subsequently dried under sunlight before being fired in kilns at high temperatures. Finally, the finished products are cleaned, decorated, transported, and marketed for sale. Every stage requires manual effort and considerable skill, making pottery one of the most physically demanding traditional occupations.

In Tamil Nadu, pottery has historically occupied an important place among rural occupations. The state possesses a rich tradition of producing earthen cooking vessels, water storage pots, temple lamps, decorative items, idols, roof tiles, flower pots, and agricultural products. Pottery production is concentrated in several districts where artisan communities have preserved the craft for centuries. Kanyakumari District represents one such region where pottery continues to provide livelihood opportunities for traditional artisan families despite numerous socio-economic challenges.

In Kanyakumari District, pottery is predominantly practised by the Kulala community. The occupation is hereditary as well as caste-based, with traditional knowledge being transmitted from parents to children over successive generations. Pottery is therefore not merely an economic activity but an integral part of the community's cultural identity, social organisation, and traditional way of life. The Kulala community has preserved indigenous techniques of pottery making for generations despite facing numerous economic and occupational difficulties. The continuity of pottery within this community demonstrates the strong relationship between traditional occupations, caste, culture, and livelihood in rural India.

Most pottery production units in Kanyakumari District continue to function as household enterprises. Family members collectively participate in clay preparation, shaping, drying, firing, transportation, and marketing activities. Women frequently contribute to cleaning clay, decorating products, drying pottery, and assisting in marketing, while men generally undertake clay collection, wheel operation, kiln firing, and transportation. Thus, pottery represents a family-based occupation where each member contributes according to age, experience, and physical capacity. The dependence upon family labour reduces production costs but simultaneously limits opportunities for expansion and technological advancement.

The livelihood of traditional potters in Kanyakumari District depends largely upon seasonal demand. Earthen products are widely used during religious festivals, temple rituals, cultural celebrations, and ceremonial occasions. The demand for pottery products increases considerably during festivals such as Kumbakalakam and Attukal Pongala, particularly in neighbouring Kerala, where earthen pots continue to possess religious and cultural significance. Consequently, many potters in Kanyakumari produce pottery primarily for markets in Kerala. Although festival seasons provide temporary employment and income, the remaining months often

witness very low demand, resulting in seasonal unemployment and financial instability among potter households.

The seasonal nature of pottery production creates significant livelihood insecurity among traditional potters. During festival seasons, potters work continuously to meet market demand, whereas during the off-season they often remain unemployed or underemployed for several months. Since pottery is the principal occupation for most artisan families, fluctuations in market demand directly affect their household income and living conditions. The irregular nature of employment prevents many families from maintaining financial stability and limits their ability to meet basic household needs such as food, education, healthcare, housing, and other essential expenses. Consequently, poverty and indebtedness continue to remain major concerns among traditional potter households.

One of the most significant economic challenges faced by traditional potters is the increasing cost of production. The prices of fuel, transportation, tools, electricity, and other production inputs have increased considerably over the years, while the market value of pottery products has not increased proportionately. This imbalance between production cost and selling price considerably reduces the profit earned by artisans. Furthermore, many potters depend on middlemen for marketing their products. Since middlemen often purchase pottery at comparatively lower prices and sell it at higher prices in urban markets, artisans receive only a small share of the final market value. This dependence on intermediaries weakens their bargaining power and further reduces their earnings (Kumar & Sharma, 2020).

Another serious challenge affecting pottery production is the scarcity of raw materials, particularly clay. Clay is the primary raw material required for the manufacture of earthen products, and uninterrupted access to good-quality clay is essential for sustaining pottery production. In Kanyakumari District, potters generally obtain clay from ponds, lakes, and other natural water bodies. However, due to environmental regulations and administrative procedures, potters are required to obtain official permission from the concerned authorities before collecting clay. Delays in obtaining permits, restrictions on clay extraction, depletion of natural clay deposits, and seasonal climatic conditions frequently interrupt production activities. These challenges increase production costs and reduce productivity, thereby affecting the livelihood of potter families.

The educational status of traditional potters also influences their socio-economic development. Many potters possess only primary education, while some have had no formal education. Low educational attainment restricts their ability to understand government procedures, access institutional credit, maintain financial records, utilise digital marketing platforms, and adopt improved production technologies. Limited literacy also reduces awareness regarding government welfare schemes, artisan development programmes, entrepreneurship opportunities, and financial assistance available for traditional craftsmen. Consequently, potter families continue to remain economically vulnerable and socially disadvantaged.

The traditional methods of pottery production further contribute to the occupational difficulties experienced by artisans. Although mechanised pottery production has become increasingly common in certain parts of the country, most traditional potters in Kanyakumari District continue to depend upon conventional production techniques using manually operated equipment and indigenous methods. These methods require considerable physical labour and consume substantial time. Limited access to improved technology affects production efficiency, product quality, and competitiveness in modern markets. The inability to modernise production systems therefore remains one of the major barriers to the sustainability of traditional pottery.

Occupational health constitutes another important aspect of the livelihood of traditional potters. Pottery making is a physically demanding occupation requiring continuous bending, lifting, kneading, shaping, carrying heavy loads, and prolonged sitting or standing. Potters are regularly exposed to clay dust, smoke generated during kiln firing, high temperatures, ash, and repetitive physical movements. Such working conditions expose artisans to various occupational health hazards, including musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, joint pain, back pain, muscle strain, eye irritation, fatigue, and skin-related problems (Patel et al., 2019). The absence of adequate occupational safety measures and limited awareness regarding preventive healthcare further aggravates these health problems.

Occupational health hazards not only affect the physical well-being of potters but also influence their economic productivity. Health-related problems often reduce work efficiency, increase medical expenditure, and limit the ability of artisans to continue pottery production throughout the year. Since most potter families depend exclusively on pottery for their livelihood, illness or physical disability directly affects household income and financial stability. Despite these occupational risks, access to healthcare facilities, health insurance, and occupational safety equipment remains limited among traditional pottery workers.

The livelihood challenges experienced by traditional potters extend beyond economic and physical dimensions. Continuous financial insecurity, uncertainty of employment, declining market demand, increasing production costs, and limited institutional support create considerable psychological stress among artisan families. Many potters experience anxiety regarding their future livelihood because they remain uncertain about the sustainability of their occupation. Similar observations have been reported among workers in other unorganised occupations, where livelihood insecurity and poor working conditions contribute to increased stress and reduced psychological well-being (NCEUS, 2007).

According to Chambers and Conway (1992), livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required for securing a means of living. A livelihood is considered sustainable when it can cope with and recover from various shocks and stresses while maintaining or enhancing its capabilities and assets without degrading the natural resource base. Livelihood therefore extends beyond income generation and includes access to education, health, employment opportunities, financial resources, natural resources, social support, and institutional assistance. The sustainable livelihood approach emphasises that households require a

combination of human, natural, physical, financial, and social assets to maintain their well-being (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

The livelihood of traditional potters depends upon several interrelated factors such as availability of raw materials, traditional knowledge, family labour, financial capital, market demand, infrastructure, institutional support, and government policies. Any disruption in these factors directly affects production, income, and household welfare. Scarcity of clay, declining demand for earthen products, low literacy, inadequate financial resources, poor market access, and occupational health problems collectively reduce the livelihood security of potter families. Therefore, understanding the livelihood challenges of traditional potters requires a comprehensive analysis of economic, social, cultural, environmental, and occupational factors. The unorganised sector is characterised by several features that distinguish it from the organised sector.

These characteristics are also applicable to traditional pottery workers. The important features of the unorganised sector include:

- Small-scale household enterprises.
- Family-based production system.
- Limited capital investment.
- Dependence on manual labour.
- Traditional production techniques.
- Lack of formal employer–employee relationships.
- Absence of written employment contracts.
- Seasonal employment opportunities.
- Low wages and irregular income.
- Limited access to institutional finance.
- Inadequate social security benefits.
- Poor working conditions.
- Occupational health hazards.
- Limited technological advancement.

- Low educational attainment.
- High economic vulnerability (NCEUS, 2007).

Because of these characteristics, workers in the unorganised sector continue to experience multiple forms of deprivation. They often lack employment security, pension benefits, health insurance, maternity benefits, paid leave, accident compensation, and retirement benefits that are generally available in the organised sector. Their earnings are usually insufficient to improve their standard of living, making them highly vulnerable to economic shocks and market fluctuations. Traditional potters share these characteristics and continue to face similar livelihood insecurities.

Government intervention plays a crucial role in improving the socio-economic condition of artisan communities. Both the Central and State Governments have introduced several welfare programmes, financial assistance schemes, artisan identity cards, skill development initiatives, entrepreneurship programmes, and subsidy schemes to support traditional craftsmen. These initiatives aim to improve production, marketing, income generation, and social security among artisan communities. However, studies indicate that many traditional artisans remain unaware of these schemes or experience procedural difficulties in accessing institutional benefits due to low literacy, inadequate dissemination of information, and bureaucratic complexities (Kumar & Sharma, 2020).

In Kanyakumari District, similar challenges are observed among traditional potters. Although government assistance is available through various departments and welfare programmes, many potter families have limited awareness regarding these schemes. Consequently, several eligible artisans remain excluded from institutional support, financial assistance, and development programmes. Lack of awareness, inadequate documentation, and procedural barriers continue to prevent many potters from fully utilising government welfare measures. These limitations further contribute to livelihood insecurity and economic vulnerability among traditional pottery workers.

In addition to government initiatives, community-based organisations and voluntary agencies also contribute to the welfare and development of traditional potters. In Kanyakumari District, two organisations play an important role in supporting pottery workers. One is **Ponmali Thirunali Manapana Tholilazigal Sangam**, an organisation primarily representing the traditional Kulala potter community and working towards protecting their occupational interests, promoting unity among artisans, and facilitating access to welfare measures. The other is the **Centre for Social Development (CSD)**, a social service organisation that promotes community development, entrepreneurship, capacity building, and livelihood enhancement among artisan communities. Although these organisations have made valuable contributions, their resources and outreach remain limited when compared with the wide range of socio-economic problems faced by traditional potters.

One of the emerging concerns in the pottery sector is the gradual decline in the traditional workforce. For several generations, pottery has survived because knowledge and skills were transferred within families from parents to children. However, changing socio-economic conditions have disrupted this pattern. Many younger members of potter families are no longer willing to continue the occupation due to low and irregular income, physically demanding work, uncertain employment, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Instead, they prefer employment in private companies, industries, construction work, service sectors, and other occupations that provide regular salaries, improved working conditions, and greater social security. This occupational shift has resulted in a gradual reduction in the number of skilled artisans engaged in traditional pottery.

Migration has further accelerated the decline in the pottery workforce. In search of better employment opportunities and higher income, many members of potter families migrate to urban centres and neighbouring states. Such migration reduces the availability of skilled labour within traditional pottery households and interrupts the intergenerational transfer of knowledge and craftsmanship. As fewer young people participate in pottery production, valuable traditional skills and indigenous techniques are at risk of disappearing. The decline in workforce therefore represents not only an economic challenge but also a serious threat to the preservation of traditional cultural heritage.

The decline of traditional pottery has broader implications for rural development and cultural sustainability. Pottery is closely associated with religious practices, temple festivals, traditional ceremonies, and the everyday life of rural communities. Earthen lamps, ritual pots, cooking vessels, storage jars, idols, and decorative products continue to occupy an important place in Indian cultural traditions. The disappearance of pottery would therefore result in the loss of an important component of India's intangible cultural heritage. Preserving pottery is essential not only for protecting the livelihoods of artisan families but also for safeguarding traditional knowledge, cultural identity, and indigenous craftsmanship for future generations (Singh, 2015).

The livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters are multidimensional and interconnected. Economic insecurity, declining market demand, scarcity of raw materials, increasing production costs, occupational health hazards, low literacy, inadequate institutional support, limited awareness of government welfare schemes, workforce decline, and migration collectively create a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. These challenges reduce the ability of potter households to achieve sustainable livelihoods and limit opportunities for socio-economic advancement.

The major issues and challenges faced by traditional potters may be summarised as follows:

Scarcity of Raw Materials

Clay is the principal raw material required for pottery production. Restrictions on clay extraction, environmental regulations, procedural delays in obtaining permits, and the depletion of natural clay sources significantly affect production and income.

Low Income and Economic Insecurity

The earnings of traditional potters are generally low, irregular, and seasonal. Fluctuations in market demand, increasing production costs, and dependence on intermediaries contribute to financial instability and poverty.

Limited Government Support

Although various welfare schemes are available for artisans, many potters remain unaware of these programmes or experience difficulties in accessing them due to inadequate information, low literacy, and administrative barriers.

Low Literacy and Educational Attainment

Limited formal education restricts access to government services, institutional finance, technological innovation, entrepreneurship opportunities, and modern marketing systems.

Occupational Health Hazards

Continuous exposure to dust, smoke, heat, repetitive movements, and heavy physical labour contributes to musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, fatigue, and other occupational health problems.

Traditional Methods of Production

Dependence on conventional production techniques and limited technological development reduces productivity and makes it difficult for potters to compete with mechanised industries.

Decline in Workforce

The younger generation increasingly prefers alternative occupations offering stable income and improved working conditions, resulting in a gradual decline in the number of traditional potters.

Migration

Migration to urban areas and other sectors for employment opportunities has reduced the availability of skilled artisans and weakened the continuity of traditional pottery.

Competition from Modern Products

Plastic, steel, aluminium, ceramic, and other factory-produced goods have substantially reduced consumer demand for traditional earthen products.

The major characteristics of traditional potters as workers in the unorganised sector include:

- Dependence on family labour.
- Small-scale household enterprises.
- Low and irregular income.
- Seasonal employment.
- Lack of formal employer–employee relationships.
- Absence of social security benefits.
- Limited institutional and financial support.
- Low educational attainment.
- Exposure to occupational health hazards.
- Vulnerability to economic exploitation.
- Dependence on traditional technology.
- Limited bargaining power in markets.

These characteristics demonstrate that traditional potters experience many of the problems commonly associated with the unorganised sector in India. Their livelihood remains highly vulnerable due to inadequate institutional support, limited economic opportunities, and changing market conditions.

The sustainability of traditional pottery requires coordinated efforts from government departments, local self-government institutions, financial institutions, non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations, and the artisan community itself. Measures such as improving awareness regarding welfare schemes, simplifying procedures for accessing government benefits, ensuring easier availability of quality clay, promoting skill development programmes, strengthening marketing facilities, encouraging entrepreneurship, introducing appropriate technology, facilitating institutional credit, and providing financial assistance can significantly improve the socio-economic condition of traditional potters. Equally important is the need to encourage younger generations to participate in pottery through livelihood promotion initiatives, market incentives, and improved income opportunities.

From a social work perspective, traditional potters represent a vulnerable community requiring integrated development interventions. Social work emphasises empowerment, community participation, social justice, and sustainable development. Professional social workers can facilitate access to welfare schemes, organise awareness programmes, strengthen community organisations, promote self-help initiatives, improve access to institutional services, advocate for policy reforms, and support livelihood development among artisan communities. Through community organisation, social action, social welfare administration, and advocacy, social workers can contribute significantly to improving the quality of life and livelihood security of traditional potters.

The present study entitled "**Livelihood Challenges of Traditional Potters in Kanyakumari District**" has been undertaken to examine the socio-economic conditions of traditional potters and analyse the major challenges affecting their livelihood. The study focuses on the economic difficulties experienced by potter households, occupational health risks associated with pottery work, the decline in workforce due to decreasing participation of younger generations, and the extent of awareness and accessibility of government and institutional support. The study also seeks to understand the factors affecting the sustainability of traditional pottery and to identify suitable measures for its revival and long-term development. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on traditional occupations and provide useful insights for policymakers, social workers, researchers, and development practitioners in designing appropriate interventions for improving the livelihood and well-being of traditional potters in Kanyakumari District.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Traditional pottery is one of the oldest indigenous occupations in India and forms an integral part of the country's cultural heritage and rural economy. For generations, pottery has provided employment, income, and social identity to artisan communities. Besides producing essential household utensils, decorative items, and religious artefacts, traditional potters contribute significantly to preserving indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship. However, the occupation has experienced a steady decline over recent decades due to rapid socio-economic transformations, industrialisation, changing consumer preferences, and increased competition from factory-manufactured and plastic products (Chambers & Conway, 1992; UNESCO, 2003).

Traditional potters today encounter numerous economic challenges that threaten their livelihood security. Low and unstable income, increasing production costs, inadequate access to credit, limited marketing opportunities, and dependence on middlemen have reduced the profitability of pottery as a primary occupation. The availability of cheaper industrial substitutes has further diminished consumer demand for handmade pottery, making it increasingly difficult for artisan families to sustain their occupation (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2019).

In addition to economic constraints, pottery work exposes artisans to various occupational health hazards. Continuous bending, prolonged sitting, repetitive hand movements, lifting heavy loads, and exposure to dust and smoke during clay preparation and firing contribute to musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, skin diseases, and eye-related problems. Despite these occupational risks, many potters have limited access to healthcare services, occupational safety measures, and social protection schemes, resulting in reduced work productivity and poor quality of life (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2021).

Another major concern is the declining participation of younger generations in traditional pottery. Younger family members increasingly prefer alternative occupations that provide better income, social recognition, and employment security. Migration to urban areas, educational aspirations, changing lifestyles, and the perceived low status of pottery have accelerated the decline of skilled artisans, thereby threatening the continuity of this traditional occupation (UNESCO, 2003).

Although several studies have examined individual aspects such as occupational health, economic hardship, artisan livelihoods, and traditional crafts, limited research has comprehensively examined the interconnected economic, occupational, and social challenges faced by traditional potters within a single analytical framework, particularly in **Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu**. Understanding these multidimensional challenges is essential for developing effective interventions that support livelihood enhancement, occupational well-being, and the long-term sustainability of traditional pottery.

Therefore, the present study seeks to examine the challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District by analysing their economic conditions, occupational health risks, decline in generational participation, and potential strategies for sustaining and revitalising the traditional pottery occupation. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to social work practice, policy formulation, and community-based interventions aimed at improving the livelihoods and overall well-being of traditional pottery communities.

1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Traditional pottery is one of the oldest forms of craftsmanship and represents an important component of India's cultural heritage and rural economy. Since ancient times, pottery has served both functional and cultural purposes by providing essential household utensils, storage containers, religious artefacts, and decorative items. The pottery tradition has been passed down through generations, preserving indigenous knowledge, artistic skills, and community identity. In many rural areas, pottery continues to provide employment and livelihood opportunities for artisan families, making it an integral part of the informal economy and rural development (UNESCO, 2003).

India possesses a rich tradition of pottery that varies across regions in terms of techniques, designs, and cultural significance. Pottery production is largely undertaken by traditional artisan communities who rely on locally available natural resources such as clay, water, and fuel. Despite its cultural and economic importance, the traditional pottery sector has experienced a gradual decline due to industrialisation, urbanisation, globalisation, and changing consumer preferences. The increasing use of plastic, metal, and machine-manufactured products has significantly reduced the demand for handmade earthenware, thereby affecting the livelihood security of traditional potters (Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), 2022).

The livelihood of traditional potters is influenced by multiple socio-economic factors. Many artisan families depend solely on pottery for their income, yet they often experience low and irregular earnings due to seasonal demand, limited market access, rising production costs, inadequate financial resources, and dependence on intermediaries. Furthermore, restricted access to institutional credit, modern technology, and organised marketing systems has limited their ability to compete in contemporary markets. These challenges have contributed to increasing economic vulnerability among pottery communities, particularly in rural areas (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

Pottery production also involves several occupational health risks. The nature of pottery work requires prolonged sitting, repetitive movements, continuous bending, lifting heavy loads, and exposure to clay dust, smoke, and high temperatures during kiln firing. These working conditions increase the likelihood of musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, skin problems, eye irritation, and physical fatigue. In addition, limited awareness regarding occupational safety and inadequate access to healthcare services further affect the health and productivity of traditional potters (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2021).

Another emerging concern is the declining interest of younger generations in continuing the pottery occupation. Due to low income, limited employment opportunities, changing aspirations, educational advancement, migration, and the perception of pottery as a low-status occupation, many young people prefer alternative sources of employment. As a result, the intergenerational transfer of traditional skills is gradually diminishing, posing a serious threat to the continuity and sustainability of this indigenous craft (UNESCO, 2003).

Kanyakumari District has a long-standing tradition of pottery, with several communities continuing to practice this occupation as their primary source of livelihood. However, these communities face numerous challenges related to economic insecurity, occupational health, declining workforce participation, and limited institutional support. Although government welfare schemes and developmental initiatives exist, their accessibility and effectiveness among traditional potters remain limited. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing appropriate interventions that promote sustainable livelihoods, occupational well-being, and the preservation of traditional craftsmanship.

Social work plays a significant role in addressing the issues faced by marginalised artisan communities by facilitating access to government welfare schemes, promoting community organisation, strengthening livelihood opportunities, advocating for occupational health and safety, and supporting sustainable development initiatives. Therefore, the present study focuses on examining the **livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District**, with particular emphasis on their economic conditions, occupational health risks, decline in generational participation, and strategies for sustaining and revitalising the traditional pottery sector. The findings of the study are expected to contribute to policy formulation, community development programmes, and professional social work interventions aimed at improving the quality of life of traditional pottery communities.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Traditional pottery is one of the oldest indigenous occupations in India, representing a rich legacy of cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, craftsmanship, and rural identity. For centuries, pottery has served not only as a means of producing utilitarian and ritualistic objects but also as a dependable source of livelihood for numerous artisan families. The knowledge and skills associated with pottery have been transmitted across generations, preserving a unique cultural tradition that reflects the history and identity of local communities. Despite its historical and cultural significance, the occupation has undergone a steady decline due to rapid industrialisation, urbanisation, technological advancement, changing consumer preferences, and the widespread availability of factory-produced and plastic alternatives. As a result, traditional potters are increasingly finding it difficult to sustain their occupation and secure a stable livelihood.

The pottery sector largely belongs to the unorganised economy, where artisans often work without formal employment security, regular income, social protection, health insurance, pension benefits, or adequate institutional support. Their livelihood depends primarily on seasonal demand, local markets, and traditional production practices that require considerable physical labour and time. Potters frequently encounter multiple challenges, including the rising cost of raw materials, scarcity of quality clay, increasing transportation expenses, inadequate access to credit facilities, poor marketing infrastructure, limited technological advancement, and competition from inexpensive machine-made products. These factors have significantly reduced the profitability of pottery, making it increasingly difficult for artisan families to maintain their traditional occupation as a viable source of income. Consequently, many younger generations are reluctant to continue the family profession and instead seek alternative employment opportunities, leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional pottery skills and indigenous knowledge.

The livelihood of traditional potters extends beyond economic survival and encompasses social, cultural, and community dimensions. Pottery production contributes to the preservation of indigenous art forms, religious

traditions, festivals, and local customs while supporting rural economies through self-employment and household-based enterprises. However, the declining recognition of handmade products, inadequate policy implementation, limited access to government welfare schemes, insufficient market exposure, and the absence of organised institutional support have further marginalised potter communities. These conditions not only affect their economic well-being but also influence their social status, occupational dignity, health, educational opportunities, and overall quality of life.

The present study is therefore significant as it seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in the contemporary socio-economic context. It examines the various dimensions that influence the sustainability of pottery as an occupation, including income generation, employment opportunities, production practices, access to raw materials, marketing channels, financial resources, technological adaptation, government assistance, and the socio-cultural importance of the craft. The study also attempts to understand how changing economic conditions and market forces have affected the occupational security and livelihood resilience of traditional potter communities.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute significantly to the existing literature on traditional occupations, rural livelihoods, informal labour, and artisan welfare. The study will provide empirical evidence that may assist policymakers, government departments, rural development agencies, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, and other stakeholders in designing effective programmes and policies for the socio-economic development of potter communities. It is expected to highlight the need for improved implementation of welfare schemes, easier access to institutional credit, technological support, skill development programmes, design innovation, entrepreneurship development, market linkages, digital marketing initiatives, and infrastructure development for pottery clusters. Such interventions can enhance the income-generating capacity of artisans while ensuring the long-term sustainability of their occupation.

Furthermore, this study holds considerable academic significance as it enriches the field of social work by examining the livelihood concerns of a vulnerable occupational group from a developmental perspective. It provides valuable insights into the relationship between poverty, occupational vulnerability, social exclusion, traditional knowledge systems, and sustainable livelihood strategies. The findings may serve as a useful reference for future researchers, students, academicians, and practitioners interested in rural development, community development, livelihood promotion, cultural preservation, and artisan welfare. The study also reinforces the importance of adopting a rights-based and participatory approach in addressing the problems of traditional occupational communities and promoting inclusive development.

Finally, the significance of the study lies in its potential to draw attention to the urgent need for preserving traditional pottery as both a cultural heritage and a sustainable livelihood. Strengthening the economic conditions of potter communities not only contributes to poverty reduction and rural development but also safeguards an invaluable traditional craft that forms an integral part of India's cultural identity. By identifying

the existing challenges and opportunities within the pottery sector, the study aims to provide meaningful recommendations that can support the empowerment, resilience, and sustainable development of traditional potters while ensuring that this centuries-old occupation continues to thrive for future generations.

1.5 CHAPTERIZATION

This dissertation is presented in six chapters:

- **Chapter-1:** Introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study and Chapterization
- **Chapter-2:** Review of literature, Research gap analysis
- **Chapter-3:** Methodology of the Study Includes Title of the Study, Research Objectives, Definition of Concepts, Pilot Study, Research Design, Sampling Strategy, Research approach, universe of the study, unit of the study, pretest, Sources of Data, Data Collection, Tools for Data Collection, Data Analysis, Ethical Considerations, Assumptions, Limitations and Scope.
- **Chapter-4:** Data analysis and interpretation, analysis of each objective
- **Chapter – 5:** Findings, discussions, Suggestions and Conclusions
- **Chapter -6:** References and Annexures

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

A review of literature is both a summary and explanation of the complete and current knowledge, including substantive findings as well as methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are secondary sources and do not report new or experimental work. Most often associated with academic literature, such reviews are found in academic journals and should not be confused with book reviews. It may consist of simply a summary of key sources. Still, in the social sciences, a literature review usually has an organised pattern and combines both summary and synthesis, often within specific conceptual categories. A summary is a recap of important information of the source, but a synthesis is a reorganisation, reshuffling of that information. It might give a new interpretation of old material or combine new interpretations. Or it might trace the intellectual progression of the field, including major debates. And depending on the situation, the literature review may evaluate the sources and advise the reader on the most pertinent.

2.2 LITERATURES

1.Wuryanie, A. H., Martiana, T., Paskarini, I., & Widarjanto. (2025). *Ergonomic risks in pottery crafting: Impact on work-related fatigue and musculoskeletal disorders.*

Wuryanie et al. (2025) conducted a study in Karanganyar Village, analysing the ergonomic conditions under which pottery artisans work, and revealed a strong link between their daily physical tasks and the incidence of musculoskeletal disorders and fatigue. Pottery production requires prolonged sitting on low stools, repeated hand movements, and continuous engagement with manually rotated wheels, all of which place sustained strain on the neck, shoulders, lower back, and limbs. The ergonomic assessment based on the SNI 9011:2021 framework further shows that inadequate workstation design and repetitive motion contribute to chronic discomfort and reduced physical resilience. Fatigue measurements indicate that workers often operate beyond healthy thresholds due to extended working hours and limited opportunities for rest. As pottery largely functions within the informal sector, the absence of regulated safety practices intensifies these health risks. The findings illustrate how the physical environment, combined with traditional work techniques, shapes the health vulnerabilities of artisans and affects their productivity and economic stability. For livelihood studies, this contributes an important understanding of how occupational strain becomes a structural barrier to sustaining pottery as a viable income source.

2. Arora, D., De, N., Sau, S. K., & Mahata, H. (2020). *An assessment of the physiological health and occupational health hazards among pottery workers.*

Arora et al. (2020) conducted research in Paschim Medinipur to examine the physiological health status and occupational risks experienced by potters engaged in traditional clay work. The assessment using WHO-recommended measures demonstrates that despite appearing physically active, a considerable proportion of artisans are overweight and some exhibit blood pressure variations, particularly among women. Musculoskeletal discomfort is widespread, affecting the neck, shoulders, back, hips, and knees, largely due to long working hours, monotonous motions, and low, floor-based work postures. The study also locates pottery workers within lower socio-economic strata, reflecting limited access to medical care, occupational safety measures, or technological upgrades. The repetitive nature of clay preparation, shaping, and firing reinforces the burden on the body, often resulting in cumulative physiological stress. Although workers maintain cultural continuity through their craft, the health challenges they face gradually diminish work capacity and income stability. This contributes important insight into how bodily strain, socio-economic disadvantage, and lack of institutional attention converge to affect the long-term viability of pottery livelihoods, particularly in rural settings where artisans depend heavily on traditional techniques.

3. Lefrancq, C., & Hawkes, J. D. (2020). *Accepting variation and embracing uncertainty: Creating a regional pottery typology in South Asian Archaeology.*

LeFranc & Hawkes (2020). The typological study of ceramics from Vidarbha adopts a perspective, offering a detailed understanding of how pottery is shaped by a sequence of technical decisions, skill levels, and material availability. Rather than relying solely on surface colour or texture, the analysis examines clay selection, preparation, forming techniques, surface treatment, and firing conditions. This approach captures the complexity of pottery as a craft deeply rooted in local knowledge systems and environmental conditions. By reconstructing production sequences, the study demonstrates the diversity that exists within ceramic traditions and the skill sets required for each stage. Although archaeological in nature, the findings illuminate the broader socio-cultural and economic significance of pottery production across regions. The discussion of manufacturing traces further reveals how artisans adapt to resource constraints, technological changes, and cultural demands. Such perspectives enrich contemporary livelihood research by showing that pottery involves accumulated expertise, labour intensity, and region-specific materials—factors that remain relevant when

examining the challenges faced by present-day potters whose practices continue to be shaped by tradition, environment, and evolving market expectations.

4. Haloi, R. (2017). *Potters, profession and their livelihood opportunity under rural industrialisation: A quantitative analysis.*

Haloi (2017). The study on the Hira potter community in Nalbari district presents a detailed assessment of their socio-economic circumstances and the gradual decline of pottery as a primary occupation. The findings indicate persistent poverty, low educational attainment, and minimal access to financial or institutional support. Traditional pottery is increasingly unable to compete with mass-produced and plastic alternatives, resulting in reduced demand and irregular income for artisans. As returns remain low, younger individuals often migrate or shift to wage-based jobs, weakening the continuity of the craft. Limited exposure to new technologies, lack of market intelligence, and inadequate rural industrialisation also restrict opportunities for improving production and income levels. Despite these constraints, the study identifies potential areas where livelihoods could be strengthened through targeted interventions such as infrastructure support, market development, and skill enhancement. The analysis illustrates how structural disadvantages and market-driven challenges interact to shape livelihood insecurity, making the Hira community's situation reflective of broader issues confronting traditional potters across India.

5. Shrestha, P. (2018). *Challenges and scopes of the pottery industry.*

Shrestha (2018) research on pottery in Nepal provides an account of the multiple constraints faced by artisans and the simultaneous opportunities emerging in national and international markets. Shortages of suitable clay, limited drying space, difficulties in storing finished products, and scarcity of trained manpower create persistent challenges in the production cycle. Changes in consumer lifestyle and the availability of industrial substitutes further reduce the domestic demand for traditional pottery. Transportation problems and high rates of product damage during distribution add financial strain to producers operating within small cottage industries. Nevertheless, increasing global appreciation for handmade ceramics and the willingness of international buyers to pay premium prices reflect growing market potential. The study suggests that with structured training, technological improvements, and institutional support, pottery can evolve into a more sustainable livelihood. This dual situation of constraints and possibilities is valuable for understanding how artisans navigate economic hardships while seeking to integrate their craft into newer, more rewarding markets.

6. Tripathy, S., & Bardhan, J. (2019). *An in-depth study of pottery as a livelihood through a discussion of its process, shocks, seasonality, trends and economics.*

Tripathy & Bardhan (2019) examined pottery as a livelihood, providing an integrated understanding of the production process, seasonal variations, and the shocks that influence the economic stability of potter households. The craft is shown to rely on labour-intensive practices that vary with climatic conditions, particularly the monsoon season, which disrupts drying and slows production. Income patterns fluctuate accordingly, compelling many families to diversify their livelihood sources to manage uncertainty. Rising costs of clay, fuel, and other inputs, combined with shrinking markets and competition from factory-made goods, further strain the sustainability of pottery-based incomes. The study also notes an intergenerational shift, as younger members increasingly seek employment outside the craft due to limited economic returns. Despite these challenges, pottery remains an occupation tied to community identity, skill heritage, and cultural value. The analysis underscores the need for improved market access, innovation in product design, and enhanced institutional support to strengthen the resilience of pottery livelihoods in changing socio-economic environments.

7. Bhavanishankar, P., & Singhe, M. S. (2013). *Occupational transition and Kulal women in service sector: Problems and challenges.*

Bhavani Shankar and Singhe (2013) analyse the socio-economic effects of occupational transition on Kulal women in Karnataka, tracing their shift from traditional pottery roles to employment within the service sector following the decline of the craft due to globalisation and industrial pressures. Traditionally, women were integral to the production process, performing crucial, skilled subsidiary tasks such as turning the wheel for men, clearing clay impurities (an intricate job requiring patience), tapping pots after sun drying, and marketing finished products. However, the introduction of advanced wheel technology, such as the double-bar bearing wheel and the modern electrically operated wheel, reduced the need for dual manpower, thereby displacing or eliminating this indispensable female assistance role in the production stage. The study reveals that this mandatory shift, often driven by the imperative to maintain household livelihood amidst the non-remunerative nature of pottery, imposes significant problems and challenges. Women now face the stressful duality of external service work combined with the full burden of domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, cultural resistance, such as restrictive attitudes towards female education and employment after puberty, hinders their ability to thrive and gain higher status in these new occupational spheres.

8. Sodhi, G. J. (2006). *Traditional potters and technological change in a North Indian town.*

Sodhi (2006) offers a critical re-examination of the widely held notion that traditional potters are inherently conservative and averse to technological innovation, arguing that their response is nuanced and context-dependent. Focusing on the successful adoption of modern white-ware ceramics in Khurja, Uttar Pradesh, the study demonstrates that success hinged upon a confluence of specific factors, primarily economic desperation (acting as a necessary 'push' factor) and technological predisposition (e.g., the Muslim 'chinigaar' potters' prior skill in making glazed pottery and association with china clay). State intervention was also instrumental, providing gradual and participative innovations, coupled with essential financial aid and infrastructure, such as the Government Pottery Development Centre (GPDC). In contrast, native Hindu potters ('kumhar'), lacking this initial technical advantage and facing fewer immediate economic pressures, were deterred by early failures in firing. This research confirms that conservatism is not an inherent trait but a rational economic response to risk, which can be overcome when technological transitions are strategically supported and align with existing group capabilities.

9. Mamminivan, S. (2016). *Challenges of livelihood security of craftsmen: A case study.*

Sini (2016) investigates the structural barriers to livelihood security confronting traditional craftsmen, focusing on the AnthurNairs potters in Kerala, recognising the craft as a vanishing tradition threatened by technical obsolescence. Despite the crucial role of these communities in the village economy, they struggle for sustenance due to critical impediments: reliance on outdated production methods (such as the traditional wheel requiring dual manpower), the scarcity of quality raw materials, and deficient market linkages necessary to capitalise on invisible urban demand. This situation is compounded by a profound lack of skill upgradation and capacity building, preventing the community from absorbing necessary modern innovations. Technological evolution, specifically the introduction of the modern electrically operated wheel, increased production output but simultaneously eliminated the subsidiary roles traditionally reserved for women, fundamentally altering the production structure. To ensure the revitalisation and sustainable development of this cultural heritage, the study strongly advocates for the integration of traditional knowledge with modern technology, emphasising value addition, design upgradation, and the establishment of robust institutional and market linkages.

10. Gupta, C. S. (2008). *Clay: Traditional material for making handicrafts.*

Gupta's (2008) analysis of clay handicrafts underscores the profound technological and cultural continuity of Indian pottery, positing it as a practice that remains fundamentally consistent from the prehistoric Indus Valley Civilisation onwards. The study details the rigorous traditional process, beginning with the meticulous preparation of raw clay sourced from riverbeds and fallow land, emphasising the necessity of cleaning and enhancing the material through sieving and the removal of impurities. Crucially, tempers such as ash, sand, and cattle dung (e.g., donkey dung in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh) are added in precise proportions to mitigate material deficiencies like excessive shrinkage, warping, or splitting during drying or firing. This additive process illustrates sophisticated traditional material science. Production methods rely on two enduring techniques: diverse forms of hand moulding (including pressing, using clay sheets on moulds, the strip or coil method, and smearing) and various iterations of wheel throwing (using primitive sun-baked clay or wooden wheels). This continuity demonstrates the enduring cultural capital and intrinsic knowledge base of the potters, defining the technical baseline against which contemporary livelihood challenges must be measured, particularly regarding the tension between enduring traditional methods and demands for modern efficiency.

11. Manoharan, C., Sutharsan, P., Dhanapandian, S., & Venkatachalapathy, R. (2012). *Characteristics of some clay materials from Tamil Nadu, India, and their possible ceramic uses.*

Manoharan, Sutharsan, et al. (2012): A technical investigation characterised alluvial and red clays from four different deposits in Tamil Nadu, assessing their potential for structural ceramic fabrication through physicochemical and mineralogical analyses, including X-ray fluorescence and thermal analysis. Mineralogical profiling demonstrated that alluvial clays (G1, G2) comprised quartz, illite, kaolinite, and plagioclase, while red clays (R1, R2) were characterised by well-ordered kaolinite and abundant iron-bearing minerals such as hematite and goethite. Chemical analysis indicated that alluvial clays possessed high SiO₂ content and low loss on ignition, whereas red clays contained moderate SiO₂ and high Fe₂O₃. Practical plasticity assessments correlated directly with particle size distribution, demonstrating that alluvial deposits possessed adequate characteristics for common brick manufacture, while the more plastic red clays were suited for roofing tiles and lightweight bricks. The necessity for modification, such as adding flux materials to certain red clays, was emphasised to improve the quality of ceramic outputs, confirming that the intrinsic properties of raw materials impose functional limitations on traditional production.

12. Raja Annamalai, G., Ravisankar, R., & Chandrasekaran, A. (2020). *Analytical investigation of archaeological pottery fragments excavated from Porunthal, Tamil Nadu, India.*

Raja Annamalai, Ravisankar, & Chandrasekaran (2020): An archaeometry investigation utilised a combination of spectroscopic and thermal techniques (FTIR, XRD, TGA-DTG, and SEM-EDS) to characterise seven archaeological pottery fragments from the 5th-century BC Porunthal site in Tamil Nadu. Analysis confirmed that all diverse wares, including Redware and Black Polished ware, were locally manufactured using a consistent material base. Mineralogical and thermal data demonstrated that the artefacts were fired at temperatures exceeding. Critically, the presence of specific iron oxides, magnetite (indicative of a reducing kiln atmosphere) and hematite (signalling oxidising conditions) provided evidence that ancient artisans possessed the technical ability to manipulate firing conditions to achieve distinct ceramic outcomes. Elemental analysis revealed that the pottery was made of non-calcareous clay, containing high amounts of quartz and small amounts of feldspar inclusions. This suggests that alkalis may have been intentionally introduced via potassium- or sodium-rich plant ashes to facilitate vitrification.

13. Santacreu, D. A. (2017). *Interpreting long-term use of raw materials in pottery production: A holistic perspective.*

Santacreu (2017) A comprehensive framework explored the rationale for the persistent, long-term exploitation of specific raw materials in pottery production, exemplified by the 900-year use of Tertiary Palaeogene clay in Mallorca, Spain. The approach integrated three theoretical perspectives: *ceramic ecology*, *functionalism*, and *socio-culturalism*. From an ecological perspective, resource selection was often dictated by the "law of least effort," favouring highly accessible sources located near the production centre. Functional analysis highlighted that the clay's superior intrinsic physical qualities, specifically its fine texture and high plasticity, optimised subsequent labour-intensive processes, thereby conditioning key technological choices such as the necessary addition of temper. The socio-cultural dimension argued that continuous procurement transforms the quarry site into a "persistent place" within the "clay's cape," reinforcing intergenerational identity, shared memory, and a strong symbolic relation with the landscape and ancestors. The resulting integrated model suggests that both material constraints and socially constructed meanings symmetrically influence long-term technological stability.

14. Chaouali, N., Nouioui, A., Aouard, M., Amira, D., & Hedhili, A. (2018). *Occupational lead toxicity in craft potters.*

Chaouali, Nouioui, et al. (2018) A public health assessment quantified the severe occupational risks associated with lead toxicity among traditional ceramic folk art workers in Nabeul, Tunisia, whose production relied on low-temperature lead-glazed ware. Exposure resulted primarily from the high-concentration lead-oxide glaze (80% lead oxide), contaminating workers via inhalation, ingestion, and direct skin contact during mixing, glazing, and kiln baking. Blood Lead Levels (BLLs) confirmed severe contamination, with a mean of $220.3\ \mu\text{g/L}$, and 13% of potters exceeded the $400\ \mu\text{g/L}$ WHO threshold for mandatory removal from exposure. Workers engaged in enamelling, glazing, and firing exhibited the highest exposure metrics. Endemic poor working conditions, such as lack of ventilation, minimal use of personal protective equipment, and the practice of eating within the workshop, were identified as critical exposure vectors. Potters commonly reported neurological disorders (58%), including memory loss and headaches, alongside physical clinical signs such as the Burton line (35%) and lead colic (22%).

15. Akilandeewari, S. V., & Pitchai, C. (2016). *Pottery industry and its development by effective marketing through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).*

Akilandeewari and Pitchai (2016) explored the capacity of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to address structural economic exploitation and marketing deficits within India's unorganised pottery and handicraft sector. Artisans predominantly focus on mass production and depend on middlemen for marketing, which severely limits their profitability and perpetuates economic exploitation. A fundamental challenge is the low educational attainment and lack of technological awareness among artisans, preventing them from adopting modern marketing methods like advertising, e-commerce, and direct web presence. Findings revealed that women contribute significantly to production, while men typically control marketing and finance. The research proposes that a strategic integration of ICT, along with targeted training in marketing and design, and robust institutional support, is essential to bridge the technological gap, establish direct market linkages, and ensure the craft's financial viability and long-term sustainability.

16. Ravisankar, R., Chandrasekaran, A., Rajalakshmi, A., & Kanagasabapathy, K. V. (2014). *The analytical investigations of ancient pottery from Kaveripakkam, Vellore dist, Tamil Nadu by spectroscopic techniques.*

R. Ravisankar, S. Kiruba, et al. (2010) A spectroscopic investigation characterised ancient Tamil Nadu potteries, combining FT-IR, XRD, and EDXRF techniques to determine their mineral composition and elemental properties. The ubiquitous presence of quartz, alongside minerals like feldspar, kaolinite, and montmorillonite, was confirmed through FT-IR and XRD, providing insights into the common origin and nature of the raw clay used. The detection of calcite (calcium carbonate) bands allowed researchers to infer that the firing temperature was maintained below the decomposition point of calcite, estimated to be between 800°C and 900°C. Furthermore, the identification of iron oxides—specifically magnetite (black colour, indicating reducing conditions) and hematite (reddish colour, indicating oxidising conditions)—confirmed that ancient potters controlled the kiln atmosphere to achieve diverse aesthetic finishes. EDXRF analysis of major, minor, and trace elements, including silicon, aluminium, and iron, provided additional data useful for geochemical "fingerprinting" and determining the source of the clay materials.

17. Wayessa, B. S. (2023). *My meals are in the pots: Making pots and meals in Wollega, Southwest Ethiopia.*

Wayessa (2023). An ethnoarchaeological study explored the pottery tradition of Oromo women in Wollega, Ethiopia, a craft frequently associated with marginalised social groups with limited access to farmland. The transmission of skills occurs intergenerationally through hands-on learning and includes culturally relevant instruction through proverbial wisdom. Potters exhibit practical knowledge of soil science, discerning *suphee qulqulluu* (pure clay) from deeper deposits, and utilise techniques like fermentation (*bukaa'uu*) and grog tempering (crushed potsherds) to enhance clay quality and the thermal resistance of cooking vessels. Livelihoods are challenged by competition from cheaper plastic and enamel alternatives, prompting potters to innovate and focus on speciality products where alternatives are lacking, such as coffee pots and baking griddles. Policy changes that commodify communal land and limit free access to clay-mining sites present a critical external challenge to sustaining the livelihood of these female artisans.

18. Das, S. K., Ghosh, S., Gangopadhyay, K., Ghosh, S., & Hazra, M. (2017). *Provenance study of ancient potteries from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu: Application of major element oxides and trace element geochemistry.*

Das et al. (2017) A geochemical provenance analysis investigated ancient fine wares, including 'Rouletted ware,' from Arikamedu (Tamil Nadu), Chandraketugarh, and Tamluk (West Bengal), utilising wavelength-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy. The analysis revealed a uniform geochemical signature across geographically separated sites and consistently pointed to clay derived from the weathering of felsic to intermediate rocks, which are abundant in Tamil Nadu but absent in West Bengal. The uniformity suggests that a single type of clay was used for manufacturing the fine wares, enabling the conclusion that the ceramics were likely manufactured at or near Arikamedu and subsequently exported through trade networks to sites in West Bengal. The precise geochemical evidence challenges earlier theories that posited the Ganga Plains as the primary provenance for these specific fine ware categories, highlighting the power of material science in reconstructing ancient trade routes.

19. Odelli, E., Selvaraj, T., Perumal, J., Palleschi, V., Legnaioli, S., & Raneri, S. (2020). *Pottery production and trades in the Tamil Nadu region: New insights from Alagankulam and Keeladi excavation sites.*

Odelli et al. (2020): A scientific investigation characterised ceramics from the ancient Tamil Nadu sites of Alagankulam (a major harbour) and Keeladi (an inland centre), to reconstruct ancient trade connectivity. Mineral-petrographic and chemical analysis identified two distinct compositional groups. Fine wares and luxury repertoire from the Alagankulam harbour exhibited compositional homogeneity, suggesting they were imports, likely from Northern Indian regions, and not local manufacture. In contrast, common wares found at the Keeladi inland site, such as Black-and-red ware, possessed mineral assemblages (pyroxene granulites and charnockite gneiss) compatible with local geological outcrops, confirming them as indigenous Tamil Nadu production. This evidence confirms the existence of exchange routes between the coastal trade hub and inland local workshops specialised in common ware, while suggesting that fine luxury ceramics were imported into the region from distant sources.

20. John, S. S. (2010). *Traditional knowledge of folk crafts in Tamil Nadu.*

S. Simon John (2010). The craft of earthenware production by the Kullalar community in Tamil Nadu is deeply embedded within the socio-cultural life of the region, serving critical roles beyond mere utility. Earthenware holds significant religious importance, specifically through the use of sacred objects like the *Theechati* (firepot) and the *Ayeram kan paanai* (pot with 1,000 holes) for fulfilling vows in folk religious practices. The production of these sacred objects demands that the potter (Kullalar) observe ritual fasting, highlighting the spiritual value invested in the craft. Additionally, potters possess the expertise to create terracotta images of Gods and Goddesses, which are consecrated by incorporating sacred sand (*pidimun*) from origin temples into the clay mixture. This traditional livelihood is facing decline due to modernisation and urbanisation, with cheap plastic and metal products replacing traditional materials, forcing artisans into competition with modern industries for survival and challenging the preservation of this cultural heritage.

21. Khan, D., & Banerjee, S. (2020). *Revitalising ancient Indian clay utensils and their impact on health.*

Debdip Khan and Sudatta Banerjee (2020): Arguments propose the reintroduction of ancient clay utensils, citing that modern cooking materials, such as Teflon-coated or plastic wares, introduce toxic hazards and fail to preserve the nutritional integrity of food. Earthenware vessels are confirmed to preserve almost all micronutrients present in food, distinguishing them as a naturally superior and healthier cooking medium. The growing consumer focus on health and taste creates an opportunity to revive the local employment of traditional potters, whose craft is becoming obsolete. However, revival efforts must address the technical challenge that terracotta clay pots require mastery to prevent breakage from sudden temperature changes during cooking. Promoting these vessels, including clay cups as an alternative to harmful plastic and paper cups in tea stalls, is positioned as a strategy to foster economic regeneration, improve public health, and stimulate niche tourism focused on traditional Indian cuisine and craftsmanship.

22. Yirgu, T., Govindu, V., & Yihunie, Y. (2021). *Land use/cover dynamics and its impact on the rural livelihood of potter communities.*

Yirgu, Yihunie, Alemu, & Wogayehu (2020) and Yirgu & Govindu (2021) examined the profound impacts of Land Use/Cover (LUC) dynamics on the rural livelihood of potter communities in the Domba Watershed of Southwestern Ethiopia. The research, which utilised Landsat imagery from 1976, 1995, and 2018 alongside

primary field data, revealed a dramatic transformation of the landscape. Over the study period, land previously dominated by woodland and grassland (49.4% in 1976) underwent significant conversion, resulting in the massive expansion of croplands and settlements, which ultimately covered 67.57% of the total area by 2018. The primary drivers of this accelerating LUC change were identified as overpopulation and overstocking, which place severe pressure on natural resources. The authors conclude that these environmental changes, characterised by increased degradation, are compounded by deep-rooted social segregation. This segregation restricts the livelihood options and economic potential of the marginalised potter communities, particularly women, making them more vulnerable to the negative consequences of the dynamic landscape.

23. Bell, M. G. (2017). *Pottery, livelihoods, and landscapes: A case study from the Peruvian Andes*.

Bell (2017) examined the role of pottery production and exchange as a critical livelihood activity in the rural highland community of San Bartolomé de los Olleros in the Peruvian Andes. The study critiques a failed 2004 UNDP-sponsored development project that aimed to transition local women from their long tradition of making utilitarian vessels to producing decorative ceramics for the national tourist economy. The project failed because it ignored the traditional function of pottery: the production of utilitarian vessels primarily for barter (product-for-product exchange). This nonmonetary exchange occurs within a peasant economy, distinct from the conventional market. Drawing on the theoretical lenses of Andean Studies (ecological complementarity and exchange) and Development Studies (livelihood diversification), Bell (2017) provides a potter-centric analysis of how artisans negotiate a complex social and economic landscape. Pots are mainly traded for food crops with rural farmers, linking the practice directly to the geography of agriculture and seasonal cycles. This persistent reliance on nonmonetary exchange offers stability and security against the fluctuating values and uncertainties of the cash market, demonstrating why barter continues to be useful and critical for rural household livelihood strategies and the acquisition of everyday goods.

24. Paskarini, I., Dwiyantri, E., Mahmudah, M., Widarjanto, W., Nugroho, S. A., & Syaiful, D. A. (2025). *The interplay of ergonomic risk factors and lifestyle factors on Potter's well-being and work fatigue in Magelang's tourism village*.

Paskarini, Daiyanti, Mahmudah, Widarjanto, Nugroho, & Saiful (2025) conducted a quantitative study using SmartPLS-SEM on 95 pottery craftsmen in Karanganyar Village, Magelang, Indonesia, to examine the influence of ergonomic risk factors and lifestyle factors on work fatigue and well-being. The research focused on informal sector workers engaged in monotonous, repetitive activities that often involve non-ergonomic postures like prolonged sitting and bending. The study employed both objective (Reaction Timer) and subjective (IFRC questionnaire, Ryff Scale) methods for data collection. The analysis found that lifestyle factors significantly influenced both work fatigue ($p=0.000$) and well-being ($p=0.005$), indicating a strong relationship. Conversely, the ergonomic risk factor relating to non-ergonomic work posture was found to be non-significant in affecting either work fatigue ($p=0.165$) or well-being ($p=0.604$). The majority of respondents reported moderate well-being (64.2%). The authors concluded that it was the potters' lifestyle choices, particularly sleep quality and eating habits, that primarily determined their levels of fatigue and overall well-being. This highlights that interventions to improve occupational health for these artisans should prioritise supporting positive changes in diet and sleep hygiene.

25. Cherry, N. M., Burgess, G. L., Turner, S., & McDonald, J. C. (1998). *Crystalline silica and risk of lung cancer in the potteries.*

Cherry, Burgess, Turner, and McDonald (1998) conducted a cohort study to evaluate crystalline silica as a human carcinogen, focusing on workers in the pottery, refractory, and sandstone industries of Stoke-on-Trent. The study analysed a cohort of 5,115 men, utilising detailed occupational and smoking histories, along with medical records, including radiographic evidence of small parenchymal opacities. The researchers derived an exposure matrix for respirable crystalline silica, which was tested against the presence of opacities in a sub-cohort. The findings indicated an association between radiographic opacities (a sign of silicosis) and an increased risk of lung cancer (relative risk of 2.5), suggesting that lung cancer risk is likely a consequence of silica-induced fibrotic lung damage rather than a direct carcinogenic effect of the silica itself. The study concluded that exposure to respirable crystalline silica in the pottery industry is strongly associated with an increased risk of lung cancer, but only among workers who have developed silicosis. This highlights the critical need for continued vigilance and preventative measures against silica dust in these occupational settings.

26. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). (2008). *Health Hazard Evaluation Report: Evaluation of Exposures at a Pottery Shop, Cincinnati, OH (NIOSH HETA No. 2007-0127-3068).*

NIOSH (2008) conducted a Health Hazard Evaluation at FUNKe Fired Arts (formerly Annie's Mud Pie Shop), a pottery shop in Cincinnati, Ohio, to evaluate potential occupational exposures to crystalline silica, lead, glazes, solvents, and heavy metals. The primary finding was that excessive exposure to respirable crystalline silica occurred during three specific activities: sweeping, sanding/shaving dry greenware (unfired clay), and cleaning up dry clay and glaze spills. Samples taken for respirable crystalline silica were found to be above the NIOSH Recommended Exposure Limit (REL) of $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for these tasks, with one area sample during sweeping exceeding the REL by over twentyfold. Other substances, including lead, total dust, and other heavy metals, were found to be below the respective occupational exposure limits. The report concluded that a health hazard existed due to the overexposure to crystalline silica and recommended control measures, including prohibiting dry sweeping, using wet cleaning or HEPA-filtered vacuuming, ensuring the local exhaust ventilation system is functional, and implementing a comprehensive respiratory protection program for tasks where engineering controls are insufficient.

27. Laohasiriwong, W., Srathonghon, W., Phajan, T., Assana, S., & Intamat, S. (2017). *Dust exposure and lung function of workers in the brick and clay pottery factories in the Northeast of Thailand*

Wongsa Laohasiriwong, Srathonghon, Phajan, Assana, and Intamat (2017) investigated the critical occupational health issue of dust exposure and its effect on the lung function of workers in brick and clay pottery factories across Northeast Thailand. The study, published in the *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, aimed to quantify the prevalent health hazards in this traditional, often informal, industry. The authors utilised a cross-sectional approach to evaluate the extent of dust exposure in the working environment and concurrently performed lung function tests on the factory workers. While the full findings are not in the provided snippet, the core focus is the clear association between occupational exposure to dust (likely containing crystalline silica) and subsequent negative impacts on the workers' pulmonary health. This research is essential for highlighting the need for stricter industrial hygiene standards, improved working conditions, and effective respiratory protection programs to mitigate the long-term health consequences, such as chronic respiratory diseases, faced by individuals engaged in clay-based manufacturing processes.

28. Mteti, S. (2022). *Pottery production potentials for rural livelihood and empowerment of Kisi female potters in Tanzania, 1970–2010*.

Shakila Mteti (2022) investigates the long-term potential of pottery production for promoting rural livelihood and empowerment among the Kisi female potters in Tanzania spanning the period from 1970 to 2010. The study aims to understand the socio-economic significance of this traditional craft within the Kisi community and its role as a critical, non-farm economic activity. By examining four decades, the research likely provides a longitudinal perspective on how global, national, and local factors, such as economic shifts and policy changes, have influenced the sustainability of the pottery trade. A key focus is on the concept of empowerment, which suggests an analysis of how pottery contributes to the women's financial independence, control over household resources, and enhanced decision-making power both at home and within the community structure. The findings offer valuable insights for development

practitioners and policymakers on supporting traditional artisan livelihoods and crafting effective strategies for poverty alleviation and gender empowerment in rural East Africa.

29. Nortey, S., & Asiamoaso, E. (2019). *The effect of the decline on pottery in Ghana and the socio-economic implications on potters.*

S. Nortey and E. Asiamoaso (2019) investigated the detrimental socio-economic implications on Ghanaian potters due to the declining demand for pottery in Ghana. Utilising both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study sampled 500 practising potters from four centres in the Ashanti and Bono regions. The research confirmed a significant decline in pottery activities and found that the economic condition of potters was highly dependent on whether they relied solely on pottery or combined it with other jobs, with a considerable socio-economic variance observed between these groups. Furthermore, the geographical location was found to be a highly influential factor in determining the potters' economic stability. The study stresses that the decline threatens the perpetuation of the potter's trade and the preservation of cultural heritage, underscoring the necessity of policy intervention to address the challenges of retention and support the livelihood of the artisans.

30. Mteti, S. H. (2025). *The resilience of the Pare traditional pottery industry in Tanzania during the colonial and post-colonial eras, 1900s–2020.*

Shakila Halifan Mteti (2025) presents an in-depth study titled *The Resilience of the Pare Traditional Pottery Industry in Tanzania During the Colonial and Post-colonial Eras, 1900s-2020*. This article investigates how the traditional pottery industry of the Pare community in Tanzania managed to endure significant socio-economic and political challenges over a span of more than a century. The research provides a historical and analytical account detailing the industry's ability to sustain itself throughout both the colonial and post-colonial periods. It examines the complex pressures that threatened the craft, which likely included colonial policies, subsequent governmental changes, evolving market demands, and competition from new or imported products. The central theme is the resilience and adaptability of the Pare potters, highlighting the various strategies—such as preserving essential traditional techniques, selectively adopting innovations, and securing market niches—that allowed their craft to remain a viable source of livelihood from the early 1900s to 2020. The analysis offers valuable insight into the long-term durability of traditional crafts when faced with forces of modernisation and political transition.

2.3 RESEARCH GAP ANALYSIS

A comprehensive review of the available literature indicates that although several researchers have examined various aspects of traditional pottery and the lives of potter communities, the existing studies remain fragmented in their scope. Most of the research has focused on specific dimensions such as occupational health hazards, ergonomic risks, livelihood security, technological change, marketing constraints, availability of raw materials, pottery production techniques, cultural significance, or the socio-economic status of potters. While these studies have made valuable contributions to understanding particular issues, they do not provide a comprehensive assessment of the multiple and interrelated factors that collectively influence the livelihoods of traditional potters.

The existing literature also reveals that limited attention has been given to understanding the combined effects of economic instability, occupational challenges, declining workforce participation, market competition, environmental issues, occupational health risks, access to government welfare schemes, technological adaptation, and changing consumer preferences within a single research framework. Most studies have examined these factors independently rather than exploring how they interact to influence the sustainability of traditional pottery as a livelihood. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding the holistic livelihood realities of traditional potter communities.

Furthermore, a review of previous studies reveals a scarcity of empirical research conducted at the district level in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu. The socio-cultural context, availability of natural resources, local market conditions, occupational practices, and government support mechanisms in Kanyakumari differ from those in many other regions of India. These regional variations necessitate a context-specific investigation to

understand the unique livelihood challenges experienced by traditional potters in the district. The absence of such localised studies limits the availability of evidence required for planning appropriate interventions and policy measures aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of potter communities.

Therefore, the present study seeks to address this research gap by undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District. Unlike earlier studies that focused on isolated dimensions, the present research integrates socio-economic conditions, occupational practices, income and employment patterns, marketing challenges, occupational health risks, access to government welfare schemes, technological changes, environmental constraints, and workforce decline within a single analytical framework. The study is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing district-specific empirical evidence and generating insights that may assist policymakers, development practitioners, social workers, and other stakeholders in formulating sustainable livelihood strategies and welfare interventions for traditional potter communities.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Methods describe the various steps of the plan of attack to be adopted in solving a research problem. In short, by method we mean a systematic approach towards a particular phenomenon. Research is a careful and exhaustive investigation of a phenomenon to advance knowledge. According to Theordoson and Theordoson (1969). “It is a systematic and objective attempt to study a problem for the purpose of deriving general principles”. This investigation is guided by previously collected information. Activity undertaken for personal learning or enlightenment or any causal investigation is not research. The method of the research study is done through different stages. This chapter presents different steps that are followed by the researcher in conducting the study. This chapter includes title, significance of the study, objectives of the study, conceptual and operational definitions of variables: the dependent and independent and intervening variables, pilot study, research design, universe of the study, unit of the study, sampling design, tools for data collection, pretest, data collection, data analysis, chapterization, limitations of the study, and ethical considerations.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

“LIVELIHOOD CHALLENGES OF TRADITIONAL POTTERS IN KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT”

3.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

- I. To study the socio-economic, cultural, and occupational challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District.

Specific Objectives

- I. To analyse the economic challenges faced by potters
- II. To identify occupational health risks among potters
- III. To examine generational participation and workforce decline
- IV. To suggest strategies for the sustainability and revival of the pottery industry in Kanyakumari District

3.4 DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

I. Traditional Potters

Conceptual Definition

Traditional potters are artisans who produce household, ritual, and decorative ceramic products from clay and other natural materials using indigenous techniques passed down through generations. They rely on traditional skills such as hand-moulding, coiling, and wheel throwing, often using locally available resources and culturally inherited knowledge. Pottery represents not only an economic activity but also an important expression of cultural identity, craftsmanship, and intangible heritage within rural communities.

Operational Definition

For this study, traditional potters are defined as individuals residing in Kanyakumari District who actively produce pottery using traditional methods as their primary or supplementary source of livelihood.

II. Livelihood Challenges

Conceptual Definition

Livelihood challenges refer to the economic, social, occupational, institutional, environmental, and technological constraints that limit an individual's or household's ability to secure sustainable income, meet basic needs, and improve overall well-being. These challenges may arise from inadequate access to productive resources, unstable markets, limited employment opportunities, poor institutional support, environmental changes, and socio-economic vulnerabilities, thereby affecting livelihood security and resilience.

Operational Definition

In this study, livelihood challenges refer to the specific economic, occupational, social, institutional, technological, and environmental difficulties experienced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District, including inadequate income, scarcity of clay, marketing problems, limited access to government welfare schemes, financial constraints, declining workforce participation, and challenges in sustaining pottery as a viable occupation.

III. Occupational Health Risks

Conceptual Definition

Occupational health risks are the physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, and psychosocial hazards present in the workplace that may adversely affect the health, safety, and well-being of workers. Continuous exposure to these hazards can result in occupational injuries, diseases, musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory illnesses, and other work-related health conditions.

Operational Definition

For the present study, occupational health risks refer to the work-related health problems experienced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District due to prolonged exposure to clay dust, kiln smoke, repetitive hand movements, awkward working postures, heavy lifting, prolonged sitting or standing, heat exposure, and other physical demands associated with pottery production.

IV. Workforce Decline

Conceptual Definition

Workforce decline refers to the gradual reduction in the number of individuals actively engaged in a particular occupation due to factors such as low economic returns, migration, occupational transition, ageing workers, changing aspirations, and lack of generational succession.

Operational Definition

In the present study, workforce decline refers to the decreasing participation of younger generations in traditional pottery in Kanyakumari District, resulting in an ageing artisan population and reduced continuity of the occupation.

3.5 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to assess the feasibility of the present research and to gain a preliminary understanding of the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District. The pilot study enabled the researcher to become familiar with the study setting, establish rapport with the respondents, and obtain initial information relevant to the research objectives. During this process, the researcher approached a

small number of traditional potters and collected preliminary data regarding their socio-economic conditions, occupational practices, livelihood challenges, occupational health risks, and access to government support. The pilot study also helped identify the need for modifications in the research instrument by refining the wording, sequence, and relevance of the questionnaire items. Based on the responses obtained, necessary changes were made to improve the clarity, validity, and effectiveness of the questionnaire before conducting the final data collection.

3.6 RESEARCH APPROACH

The present study adopted a **Quantitative research approach** to examine the challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to collect measurable data from a large number of respondents and analyse it statistically. The approach facilitated the systematic collection of numerical information on the economic challenges, occupational health risks, generational participation, and sustainability of traditional pottery.

Data were collected from 80 traditional potters using a structured interview schedule. The collected data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation were employed to describe and interpret the findings. The quantitative approach enabled the researcher to objectively examine the patterns, relationships, and distribution of responses, thereby ensuring reliability and consistency in the analysis. This approach was found to be appropriate for achieving the objectives of the study and drawing meaningful conclusions regarding the challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District.

3.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is the overall framework that guides the process of collecting, measuring, and analysing data to address the research problem effectively. It provides a systematic plan that enables the researcher to select appropriate methods and procedures for achieving the objectives of the study. A well-designed research framework ensures scientific rigour, minimises bias, enhances the reliability and validity of the findings, and facilitates accurate interpretation of the data.

The present study adopts a cross-sectional research design. A cross-sectional design involves collecting data from the selected respondents at a single point in time, allowing the researcher to examine the existing conditions without manipulating any variables. The descriptive nature of the study focuses on obtaining detailed information regarding the livelihood challenges experienced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari

District. It seeks to describe their socio-economic characteristics, occupational conditions, income and employment patterns, access to government welfare schemes, marketing constraints, occupational health risks, and other factors affecting the sustainability of their livelihoods. The study follows a quantitative approach, and data are collected using a structured interview schedule from the selected respondents. The information obtained is analysed using appropriate statistical techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the present livelihood conditions of traditional potters. Therefore, a cross-sectional research design is considered most appropriate for achieving the objectives of the study.

3.8 UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

The universe of the study refers to the entire population that possesses the characteristics relevant to the research and from which the sample is selected. It represents the complete group of individuals to whom the findings of the study are intended to be generalised.

For the present study, the universe comprises all traditional potters residing in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, who are actively engaged in pottery as their primary or supplementary occupation. These potters are involved in the production of traditional clay products using indigenous skills and techniques that have been passed down through generations. The universe includes both male and female traditional potters working in different villages of Kanyakumari District, irrespective of their age, educational background, income level, or years of occupational experience. The respondents selected for the study were drawn from this universe to examine the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in the district.

3.9 UNIT OF THE STUDY

The unit of the study refers to the individual element or respondent from whom data are collected for the research. It represents the basic unit of analysis on which observations and measurements are made.

In the present study, the unit of the study comprises individual traditional potters residing in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu, who are actively engaged in pottery as their primary or supplementary occupation. Each traditional potter selected for the study served as a respondent and provided information regarding their socio-economic characteristics, occupational practices, livelihood challenges, occupational health risks, access to government welfare schemes, and other factors influencing the sustainability of their livelihood. Thus, each traditional potter constituted the unit of analysis for the present study.

3.10 SAMPLING DESIGN

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative subset from the target population for the purpose of conducting a research study. It enables the researcher to collect reliable and valid data from a manageable number of respondents while ensuring that the findings can be generalised to the entire population. An appropriate sampling design minimises bias, enhances the representativeness of the sample, and contributes to the overall accuracy and credibility of the research findings.

The present study adopted, specifically the simple random sampling for selecting the respondents. Simple random sampling was considered appropriate for the present study because it provides every traditional potter in the study area with an equal opportunity of being included in the sample. The respondents were selected randomly from the identified population of traditional potters, ensuring that the sample adequately represented the characteristics of the population. Since each member had an equal chance of selection, the sample was free from systematic bias and reflected the diversity of the study population. The use of simple random sampling also enhanced the reliability and validity of the data collected, making it suitable for examining the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District. Therefore, the simple random sampling technique was considered appropriate for achieving the objectives of the present study.

3.11 DATA COLLECTION

The present study was undertaken during the academic year 2024–2026 as the Fourth Semester dissertation for the Master of Social Work (MSW) in Disaster Management. The study was conducted among traditional potters in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu. The study was conducted among traditional potters in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu. Primary data were collected directly from the selected respondents using a self-structured questionnaire. Before data collection, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and obtained their informed consent. The questionnaire was administered through personal visits, enabling the researcher to establish rapport with the respondents and obtain reliable information regarding their socio-demographic characteristics, occupational practices, livelihood challenges, occupational health risks, access to government welfare schemes, and other factors influencing the sustainability of their livelihoods.

Sources of Data Collection

The study utilised both primary and secondary sources of data to achieve the research objectives.

Primary Data

Primary data were collected directly from 80 traditional potters in Kanyakumari District using a structured interview schedule. The data included information on the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, economic conditions, occupational health problems, generational participation in pottery, and perceptions regarding the sustainability of the occupation. The primary data provided first-hand information that was directly relevant to the objectives of the study.

Secondary Data

Secondary data were collected from a variety of published and unpublished sources to provide theoretical and contextual support for the study. These sources included:

- Books related to social work, rural livelihoods, and traditional occupations.
- National and international journals.
- Research articles, dissertations, and theses.
- Government reports and publications.
- Reports published by the Ministry of Textiles and the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts).
- Publications of international organisations such as UNESCO, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- Relevant websites, policy documents, and online databases.

The secondary data were used to develop the background of the study, review the existing literature, identify the research gap, and support the interpretation of the findings.

3.12 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The present study employed a **structured interview schedule** as the primary method of data collection. The interview schedule was developed based on the objectives of the study and a review of relevant literature. It consisted of closed-ended questions designed to collect information on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, economic challenges, occupational health risks, generational participation in pottery, and strategies for the sustainability and revival of traditional pottery.

The researcher personally visited the selected respondents in the study area and conducted face-to-face interviews. This method was adopted because many respondents had varying levels of literacy, making personal interviews more effective than self-administered questionnaires. The researcher explained the purpose of the study to each respondent and obtained their informed consent before conducting the interview. Every effort was made to ensure that the responses were recorded accurately and confidentially. The collected data were subsequently coded, classified, and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

3.13 TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The primary data for the present study were collected using a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study and an extensive review of relevant literature. The questionnaire was designed to obtain comprehensive information regarding the livelihood challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District. It consisted of both closed-ended and multiple-choice questions to facilitate systematic data collection and quantitative analysis.

The questionnaire was divided into different sections to collect information on the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, including age, gender, educational qualification, marital status, occupation, monthly income, and years of experience in pottery. In addition, the questionnaire included items related to various aspects of the respondents' livelihoods, such as occupational practices, income and employment patterns, access to raw materials, marketing challenges, financial constraints, occupational health risks, access to government welfare schemes, technological adaptation, and other factors influencing the sustainability of traditional pottery as a livelihood.

The questionnaire was prepared in simple and understandable language to ensure that the respondents could comprehend each question without difficulty. Before the final data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot study, and necessary modifications were made to improve its clarity, relevance, and sequence. The finalised questionnaire served as the primary tool for collecting reliable and relevant data from the selected respondents, enabling the researcher to achieve the objectives of the study.

3.14 PRE-TEST

A pre-test was conducted to assess the effectiveness, clarity, and feasibility of the self-structured questionnaire developed for the present study. The purpose of the pre-test was to determine whether the questionnaire was appropriate for collecting the required information and to identify any ambiguities or difficulties in

understanding the questions. The pre-test also helped the researcher evaluate the sequence, wording, and relevance of the questionnaire items in relation to the objectives of the study.

The pre-test was conducted among five traditional potters who possessed characteristics similar to those of the respondents included in the final study. Based on the feedback received during the pre-test, necessary modifications were made to improve the clarity, wording, and arrangement of the questions. These revisions enhanced the reliability and suitability of the questionnaire for the main data collection and ensured that it effectively addressed the objectives of the study.

3.15 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through the questionnaire were systematically processed through editing, coding, classification, and tabulation. The completed questionnaires were carefully checked for completeness and accuracy before coding. The coded data were entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. Appropriate statistical tools, including frequency, percentage, cross-tabulation, and other relevant descriptive statistical techniques, were used to analyse the data in accordance with the objectives of the study. The findings were presented using tables, charts, and graphs wherever necessary to facilitate clear interpretation and meaningful discussion.

3.16 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researcher adhered to the ethical principles of social work research throughout the study to ensure the protection of the rights and dignity of the respondents. Before data collection, the purpose and objectives of the study were clearly explained, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided were strictly maintained, and the data collected were used solely for academic purposes. The researcher respected the privacy, beliefs, customs, and cultural values of the respondents throughout the data collection process. Interviews were conducted at a date, time, and place convenient to the respondents to ensure their comfort and cooperation.

3.17 ASSUMPTIONS, LIMITATIONS & SCOPE

ASSUMPTIONS

Every research study is based on certain assumptions that guide the researcher during the investigation. The present study was conducted with the following assumptions:

- I. It was assumed that the respondents provided accurate, honest, and reliable information regarding their livelihood, occupational health, and challenges associated with pottery work.
- II. It was assumed that the structured interview schedule was an appropriate tool for collecting relevant information from traditional potters.
- III. It was assumed that the selected sample of traditional potters adequately represented the characteristics and challenges of the pottery community in the study area.
- IV. It was assumed that the responses collected from the respondents reflected their actual experiences and perceptions regarding economic conditions, occupational health, generational participation, and sustainability of pottery.
- V. It was assumed that the statistical techniques employed for data analysis, including frequency, percentage, and cross-tabulation, were appropriate for achieving the objectives of the study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focused on examining the challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District, Tamil Nadu. It primarily investigated the economic challenges affecting the livelihood of traditional potters, the occupational health risks associated with pottery work, the declining participation of younger generations in the occupation, and the strategies required for the sustainability and revival of traditional pottery.

The study was confined to 80 traditional potters selected through simple random sampling. The research adopted a quantitative approach and a cross-sectional research design. Primary data were collected using a structured interview schedule, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, government reports, research articles, and other relevant sources.

The findings of the study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the livelihood conditions of traditional potters and provide useful information for social workers, policymakers, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, researchers, and community development practitioners in planning appropriate interventions for the welfare and sustainable development of pottery communities

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Every research study has certain limitations, and the present study is no exception. The limitations identified are as follows:

- I. The study was confined to traditional potters in Kanyakumari District, which may limit the generalisation of the findings to other regions.
- II. The findings are based on the responses provided by the respondents and therefore depend on their willingness and accuracy in sharing information.
- III. Financial and logistical constraints limited extensive field coverage.
- IV. The study focused only on selected aspects of the livelihood challenges of traditional potters and did not examine every dimension of the pottery sector.
- V. The study was conducted with a sample size of 80 respondents, which may not represent the entire population of traditional potters.
- VI. Constraints related to time, financial resources, and accessibility to some respondents limited the scope of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Data analysis and interpretation constitute one of the most important phases of the research process, as they provide the foundation for understanding and explaining the information collected during the study. The process of data analysis involves organising, classifying, coding, tabulating, and summarising the collected data into a systematic and meaningful form. It enables the researcher to examine the data objectively, identify patterns and relationships, and derive meaningful insights that address the research objectives. Through careful analysis, raw data are transformed into useful information that facilitates informed decision-making and contributes to the overall validity and reliability of the research findings.

Data interpretation is the process of explaining the analysed data by assigning meaning to the statistical results obtained through various analytical techniques. It goes beyond the presentation of numerical values by providing logical explanations and drawing inferences based on the observed trends and patterns. Interpretation helps in understanding the significance of the findings, comparing the results with existing knowledge, and assessing how effectively the research objectives have been achieved. Thus, data interpretation plays a crucial role in converting statistical findings into meaningful conclusions.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysed data in a clear, systematic, and logical manner. The findings are organised and presented through appropriate tables and graphical representations to facilitate easy understanding and comparison. Each table and figure is followed by a detailed interpretation that highlights the major observations and explains their significance. Such a systematic presentation enables the reader to understand the distribution of responses, identify important trends, and appreciate the relationships among the variables included in the study.

Furthermore, this chapter serves as the empirical foundation of the research by presenting factual evidence derived from the collected data. The analysis and interpretation not only provide answers to the research objectives but also establish the basis for the discussion, findings, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the subsequent chapter. A systematic and objective analysis of data enhances the credibility of the study and ensures that the conclusions drawn are supported by evidence generated through the research process.

4.1.1 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents provides essential background information that helps in understanding the characteristics of the study population and serves as a foundation for interpreting the research findings. It includes details such as age, gender, educational qualification, average monthly income from pottery, and years of experience in pottery work. These demographic characteristics are important in understanding the social and economic background of the respondents, as they influence their livelihood conditions, occupational experiences, and perspectives on the challenges associated with traditional pottery. The data were collected from traditional potters in Kanyakumari District who have been actively engaged in pottery as their primary source of livelihood. The analysis presents the distribution of respondents across different demographic categories, providing a clear picture of their personal and occupational characteristics. The findings indicate variations in age groups, educational attainment, income levels, and years of experience, reflecting the diverse composition of the pottery community. Understanding these demographic characteristics is essential for analysing the economic challenges, occupational health issues, generational participation, and sustainability concerns discussed in the subsequent sections of the study.

FIGURE 4.1.2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

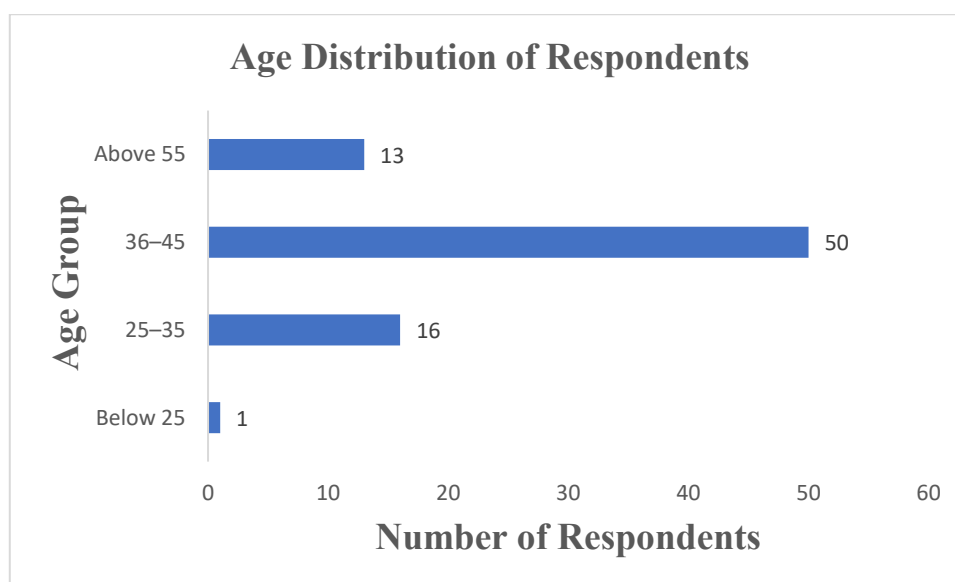


Fig 4.1.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Figure 4.1.2 presents the age-wise distribution of the respondents selected for the study. Age is an important demographic variable as it provides an understanding of the composition of the study population and helps in analysing the relationship between age and the livelihood conditions of traditional potters. The findings reveal

that the majority of the respondents, 50 (62.5%), belong to the 36–45 years age group, indicating that individuals in the middle-age category constitute the largest proportion of those engaged in traditional pottery. This suggests that pottery continues to be predominantly practised by individuals who have acquired considerable experience and skills over the years and who remain actively involved in the occupation.

The study further shows that 16 respondents (20.0%) belong to the 25–35 years age group, while 13 respondents (16.3%) are above 55 years of age. The representation of respondents above 55 years indicates that a considerable number of elderly artisans continue to depend on pottery as their primary livelihood despite the physical demands associated with the occupation. In contrast, only 1 respondent (1.3%) belongs to the below 25 years age group, reflecting very limited participation of younger individuals in traditional pottery.

The low representation of younger respondents may indicate a declining interest among the younger generation in continuing pottery as a traditional occupation. Factors such as limited income, changing career aspirations, higher educational opportunities, migration, and preference for alternative employment may contribute to this trend. The predominance of middle-aged and older respondents highlights the ageing workforce within the pottery community and raises concerns regarding the long-term sustainability and continuity of this traditional occupation. The findings emphasise the need for appropriate interventions aimed at encouraging youth participation, improving livelihood opportunities, and preserving the traditional pottery sector for future generations.

FIGURE 4.1.3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

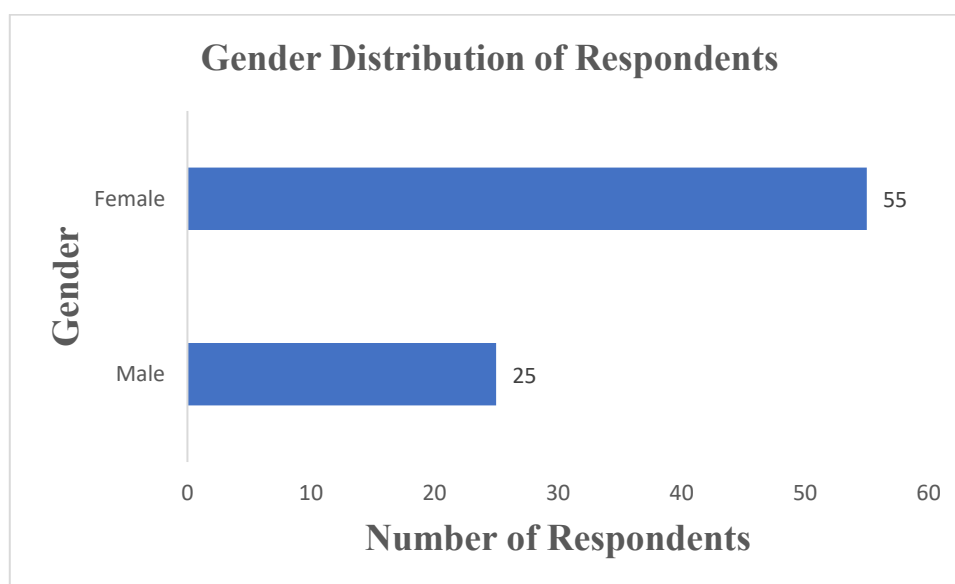


Fig 4.1.3: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Figure 4.1.3 illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents included in the study. The findings indicate that 55 respondents (68.8%) were female, while 25 respondents (31.3%) were male. This shows that female respondents constitute the majority of the study population.

The higher representation of female respondents suggests that women play a vital role in the traditional pottery occupation within the study area. Their active participation reflects their involvement in various stages of pottery production, such as clay preparation, moulding, finishing, drying, decorating, and marketing of pottery products. The presence of male respondents also indicates that pottery continues to be a family-based occupation in which both men and women contribute to different aspects of the production process according to their skills and responsibilities.

The gender composition of the respondents provides valuable insight into the workforce engaged in traditional pottery and highlights the significant contribution of women to sustaining this occupation. Understanding the gender distribution is important as it provides a demographic foundation for analysing the livelihood challenges, occupational health issues, and sustainability concerns experienced by traditional potters. The findings further suggest that any developmental interventions, welfare programmes, or policy initiatives aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of pottery communities should ensure the active participation and inclusion of both men and women, with particular attention to the substantial role played by female artisans in preserving and continuing the traditional pottery craft.

FIGURE 4.1.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

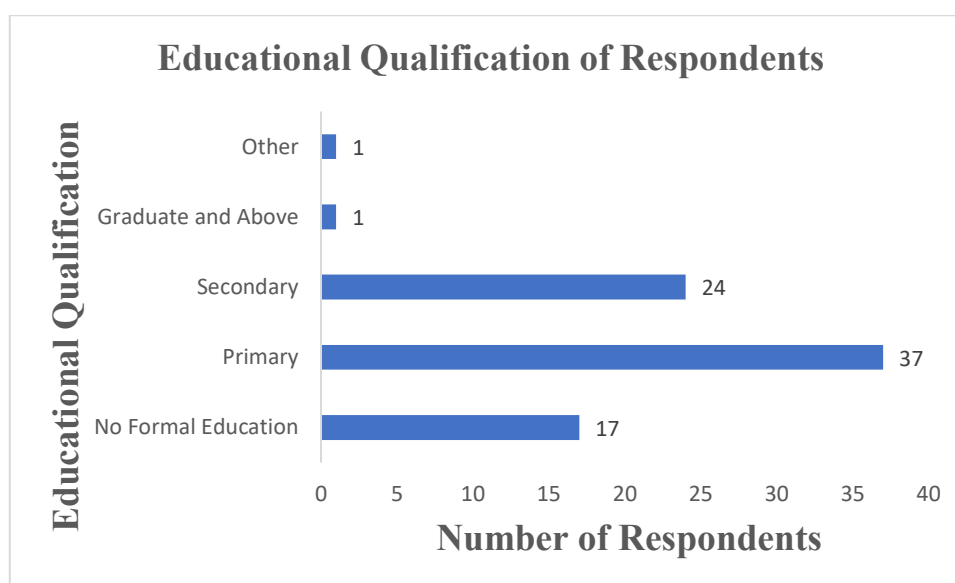


Fig. 4 .1.4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Figure 4.1.4 illustrates the educational qualification of the respondents included in the study. Educational attainment is an important socio-demographic characteristic as it influences an individual's knowledge, awareness, decision-making ability, adoption of new technologies, and access to alternative livelihood opportunities. It also plays a significant role in shaping occupational choices and the capacity to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions.

The findings reveal that 37 respondents (46.3%) had completed primary education, constituting the largest proportion of the study population. This was followed by 24 respondents (30.0%) who had attained secondary education, while 17 respondents (21.3%) had no formal education. Only 1 respondent (1.3%) had completed graduation or above, and another 1 respondent (1.3%) belonged to the other category.

The predominance of respondents with primary and secondary education indicates that the majority of traditional potters possess only basic levels of formal education. The relatively high proportion of respondents without formal education further suggests that educational opportunities may have been limited for many members of the pottery community. The very low number of respondents with higher educational qualifications reflects the limited educational advancement within the study population.

These findings suggest that while most respondents possess basic literacy and educational skills, higher education remains uncommon among traditional potters. Limited educational attainment may influence their access to diversified employment opportunities, modern production techniques, digital marketing platforms, government welfare schemes, and entrepreneurial initiatives. Consequently, the educational profile of the respondents highlights the importance of educational support, vocational training, skill development programmes, and awareness initiatives to strengthen the socio-economic well-being of the pottery community and enhance their capacity to adapt to the changing demands of the contemporary market.

FIGURE 4.1.5: Average Monthly Income from Pottery

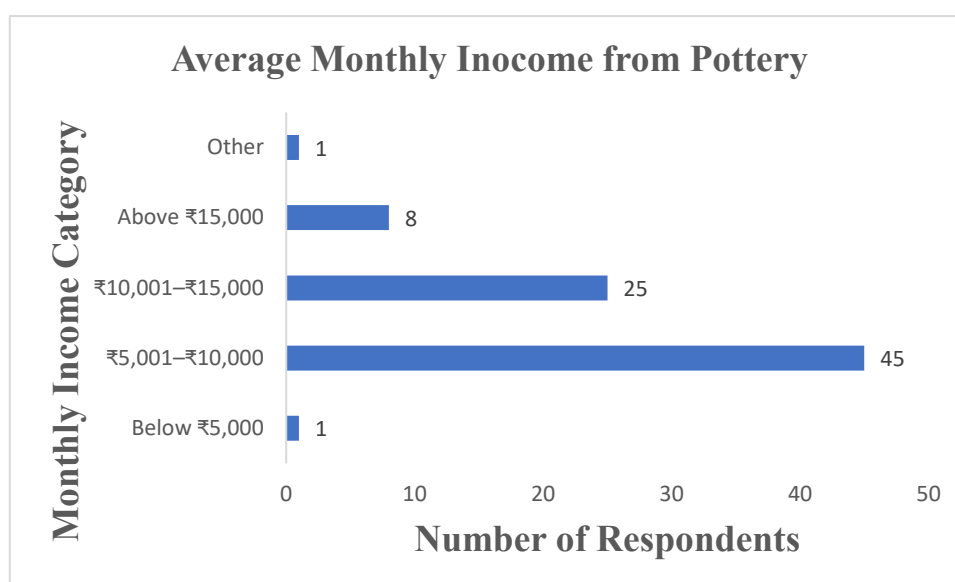


Fig. 4.1.5: Average Monthly Income from Pottery

Figure 4.1.5 presents the distribution of respondents based on their average monthly income from pottery. Income is an important socio-economic indicator that reflects the financial condition of the respondents and their dependence on pottery as a source of livelihood.

The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents, 45 (56.3%), reported an average monthly income between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000, making it the largest income category among the study population. This was followed by 25 respondents (31.3%) who earned between ₹10,001 and ₹15,000 per month. Only 8 respondents (10.0%) reported earnings above ₹15,000, while 1 respondent (1.3%) earned below ₹5,000 per month.

The predominance of respondents in the lower- and middle-income categories indicates that traditional pottery provides only a modest source of income for most artisan families. The relatively small proportion of respondents earning above ₹15,000 suggests that only a few potters are able to generate comparatively higher earnings from their occupation. These findings highlight the economic vulnerability of traditional potters and suggest that many continue to face financial constraints despite their long-term involvement in the craft. The income distribution underscores the need for improved market access, financial assistance, skill enhancement, and livelihood support initiatives to strengthen the economic well-being and sustainability of the pottery community.

FIGURE 4.1.6: Years of Experience in Pottery Work

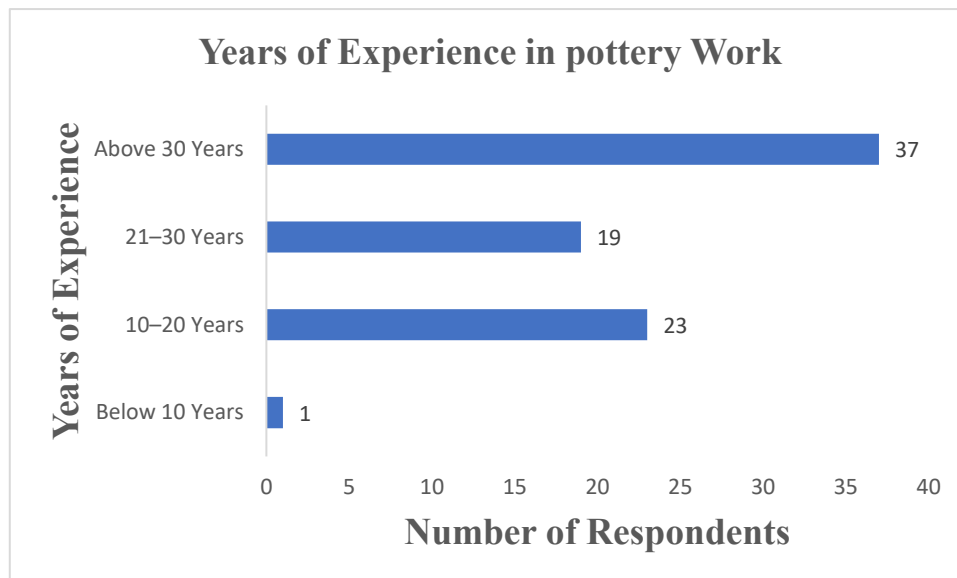


Fig. 4.1.6: Years of Experience in Pottery Work

Figure 4.1.6 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their years of experience in pottery work. Years of experience is an important demographic variable as it reflects the respondents' level of expertise, familiarity with traditional pottery techniques, and long-term involvement in the occupation. It also provides an understanding of the extent to which respondents have depended on pottery as a source of livelihood over the years.

The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents, 37 (46.3%), have been engaged in pottery work for more than 30 years, indicating that nearly half of the respondents possess extensive experience in the occupation. This is followed by 23 respondents (28.7%) who have 10–20 years of experience, while 19 respondents (23.8%) have been involved in pottery work for 21–30 years. Only 1 respondent (1.3%) reported having less than 10 years of experience in pottery.

The predominance of respondents with more than three decades of experience suggests that traditional pottery continues to be practised mainly by individuals who have devoted a significant portion of their lives to the craft. Their long years of involvement reflect the preservation of traditional knowledge, skills, and techniques that have often been passed down through generations. Conversely, the very small proportion of respondents with less than ten years of experience indicates limited entry of younger or new individuals into the occupation. This pattern points towards an ageing workforce and highlights the declining interest of the younger generation in pursuing pottery as a livelihood.

Overall, the findings suggest that traditional pottery in the study area is largely sustained by experienced artisans, while the participation of new entrants remains considerably low. This raises concerns regarding the

future continuity of the occupation and underscores the need for measures such as skill development programmes, financial support, market promotion, and initiatives to encourage younger generations to engage in and preserve the traditional pottery craft.

OBJECTIVE 1: To analyse the economic challenges faced by potters

Cross-Tabulation Between Gender and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.1

	ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL			
GENDER		LOW	HIGH	TOTAL
	MALE	41.4%	25.5%	31.3%
	FEMALE	58.6%	74.5%	68.8%

The cross-tabulation between gender and economic challenges level reveals variations in the distribution of economic challenges among male and female respondents. The findings show that female respondents constituted the majority of the study population, accounting for 68.8% of the total respondents, while males represented 31.3%.

Among respondents classified under the low economic level, females accounted for 58.6%, whereas males constituted 41.4%. A more pronounced difference was observed in the high economic level category, where nearly three-fourths (74.5%) of the respondents were females, compared to only 25.5% males. This indicates that female respondents were more prominently represented among those experiencing higher levels of economic challenges.

Overall, the distribution suggests that economic challenges were experienced across both genders; however, female respondents formed a substantially larger proportion of those in the high economic level category. This may reflect the greater economic vulnerability of women engaged in traditional pottery activities, where limited income opportunities, irregular employment, and financial constraints could contribute to higher economic challenges. The findings highlight the need for greater attention to the economic conditions of female potters, as they represent a considerable proportion of those experiencing higher economic difficulties.

Cross-Tabulation Between Age Group and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.2

		ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL		
AGE GROUP		LOW	HIGH	TOTAL
	BELOW 25	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%
	25-35	10.3%	25.5%	20.0%
	35-45	86.2%	49.0%	62.5%
	ABOVE 55	3.4%	23.5%	16.3%

The cross-tabulation between age group and economic level illustrates the distribution of respondents across different age categories according to their economic level. The majority of the respondents belonged to the 35–45 years age group (62.5%), followed by those above 55 years (16.3%), 25–35 years (20.0%), and below 25 years (1.3%).

Among respondents with a low economic level, the largest proportion (86.2%) belonged to the 35–45 years age group, followed by those aged 25–35 years (10.3%) and above 55 years (3.4%), while no respondents below 25 years were classified under the low economic level. In contrast, among respondents with a high economic level, nearly half (49.0%) belonged to the 35–45 years age group, followed by respondents above 55 years (23.5%), those aged 25–35 years (25.5%), and a very small proportion below 25 years (2.0%).

The findings indicate that respondents aged 35–45 years constituted the largest proportion in both the low and high economic level categories, reflecting the predominance of this age group in the study population. A comparatively higher proportion of respondents aged above 55 years and 25–35 years were represented in the high economic level category than in the low economic level category. Overall, the results suggest that economic challenges were experienced across all age groups, with the greatest concentration observed among respondents aged 35–45 years, who form the major workforce engaged in traditional pottery.

Cross-Tabulation Between Educational Qualification and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.3

		ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL		
EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION		LOW	HIGH	TOTAL
	NO FORMAL EDUCATION	6.9%	29.4%	21.3%
	PRIMARY	41.4%	49.0%	46.3%
	SECONDARY	48.3%	19.6%	30.0%
	GRADUATE AND ABOVE	3.4%	0.0%	1.3%
	OTHER	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%

The cross-tabulation between educational qualification and economic level presents the distribution of respondents with different educational backgrounds across low and high economic levels. Overall, respondents with primary education constituted the largest proportion of the study population (46.3%), followed by those with secondary education (30.0%), no formal education (21.3%), while only a small proportion had graduate and above qualifications (1.3%) or belonged to the other category (1.3%).

Among respondents with a low economic level, the highest proportion had secondary education (48.3%), followed by those with primary education (41.4%), no formal education (6.9%), and graduate and above (3.4%). No respondents in the other category were classified under the low economic level. In contrast, among respondents with a high economic level, nearly half (49.0%) had primary education, followed by respondents with no formal education (29.4%), secondary education (19.6%), and other educational qualifications (2.0%), whereas none of the respondents with graduate and above qualifications were classified under the high economic level.

The findings indicate that respondents with primary education constituted the largest proportion in the high economic level category, while those with secondary education were more prominently represented in the low economic level category. Furthermore, respondents with no formal education accounted for a considerable

proportion of those with a high economic level, suggesting that lower educational attainment may be associated with greater economic challenges among traditional potters. Overall, the results reflect variations in economic level across different educational groups, with the majority of respondents having only primary or secondary education

Cross-Tabulation Between Years Engaged in Pottery and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.4

YEARS BEEN ENGAGED IN POTTERY WORK		ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
	BELOW 10	3.4%	0.0%	1.3%
	10-20	27.6%	29.4%	28.7%
	21-30	55.2%	41.2%	46.3%
	ABOVE 30	13.8%	29.4%	23.8%

The cross-tabulation between years of engagement in pottery work and economic level shows the distribution of respondents according to their work experience and economic level. Overall, the majority of respondents (46.3%) had been engaged in pottery work for 21–30 years, followed by those with more than 30 years of experience (23.8%), 10–20 years (28.7%), and below 10 years (1.3%).

Among respondents with a low economic level, the highest proportion (55.2%) had 21–30 years of experience in pottery, followed by those with 10–20 years of experience (27.6%), more than 30 years (13.8%), and below 10 years (3.4%). In contrast, among respondents with a high economic level, the largest proportion (41.2%) had 21–30 years of experience, while respondents with 10–20 years and above 30 years of experience each accounted for 29.4%. None of the respondents with below 10 years of experience were classified under the high economic level.

The findings indicate that respondents with 21–30 years of experience constituted the largest proportion in both the low and high economic level categories, reflecting the dominance of this experience group among traditional potters. A comparatively higher proportion of respondents with more than 30 years of experience were represented in the high economic level category than in the low economic level category. Overall, the results suggest that economic challenges are experienced irrespective of years of engagement in pottery work. Although respondents with 21–30 years of experience formed the largest share of those facing economic challenges due to their greater representation in the study population.

Cross-Tabulation Between Average Monthly Income and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.5

		ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME FROM POTTERY				
	BELOW 5000	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%
	5001-10000	75.9%	45.1%	56.3%
	10001-15000	20.7%	37.3%	31.3%
	ABOVE 15000	0.0%	2.0%	1.3%

The cross-tabulation between average monthly income from pottery and economic level illustrates the distribution of respondents according to their monthly earnings and economic level. Overall, the majority of respondents (56.3%) earned between ₹5,001–₹10,000 per month from pottery, followed by 31.3% who earned ₹10,001–₹15,000. Only a small proportion of respondents earned below ₹5,000 (1.3%) or above ₹15,000 (1.3%) per month.

Among respondents with a low economic level, the majority (75.9%) earned ₹5,001–₹10,000 per month, while 20.7% earned ₹10,001–₹15,000. No respondents earning below ₹5,000 or above ₹15,000 were classified under the low economic level. In contrast, among respondents with a high economic level, 45.1% earned ₹5,001–₹10,000, followed by 37.3% earning ₹10,001–₹15,000. A small proportion of respondents earning below ₹5,000 (2.0%) and above ₹15,000 (2.0%) were also classified under the high economic level.

The findings indicate that respondents earning ₹5,001–₹10,000 per month constituted the largest proportion in both the low and high economic level categories, reflecting the predominance of this income group among traditional potters. Although respondents earning ₹10,001–₹15,000 represented a relatively higher proportion in the high economic level category than in the low economic level category, the majority of respondents in the study earned less than ₹10,000 per month from pottery. This suggests that pottery provides only a modest source of income for most respondents, highlighting the economic constraints faced by traditional pottery households.

Cross-Tabulation Between Primary Occupation and Economic Challenges Level

Table 4.2.6

		ECONOMIC CHALLENGES LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
POTTERY PRIMARY OCCUPATION				
	YES	89.7%	98.0%	95.0%
	NO	10.3%	2.0%	5.0%

The cross-tabulation between pottery as the primary occupation and economic level presents the distribution of respondents based on whether pottery was their main occupation. Overall, the vast majority of respondents (95.0%) reported that pottery was their primary occupation, while only 5.0% indicated that they were engaged in other primary occupations.

Among respondents with a low economic level, 89.7% reported pottery as their primary occupation, whereas 10.3% stated that pottery was not their primary occupation. In comparison, among respondents with a high economic level, an overwhelming majority (98.0%) identified pottery as their primary occupation, while only 2.0% reported otherwise.

The findings indicate that pottery serves as the principal source of livelihood for almost all respondents, regardless of their economic level. A notably higher proportion of respondents in the high economic level category depended primarily on pottery for their livelihood compared to those in the low economic level category. This suggests that respondents who rely exclusively on pottery as their main occupation may be more exposed to economic challenges, possibly due to fluctuations in demand, limited income opportunities, rising production costs, and the seasonal nature of traditional pottery work. Overall, the results highlight the heavy dependence of the study population on pottery as their primary occupation and emphasize its significant influence on their economic conditions.

FIGURE 4.2.7: Main Economic Challenges Faced by Traditional Potters

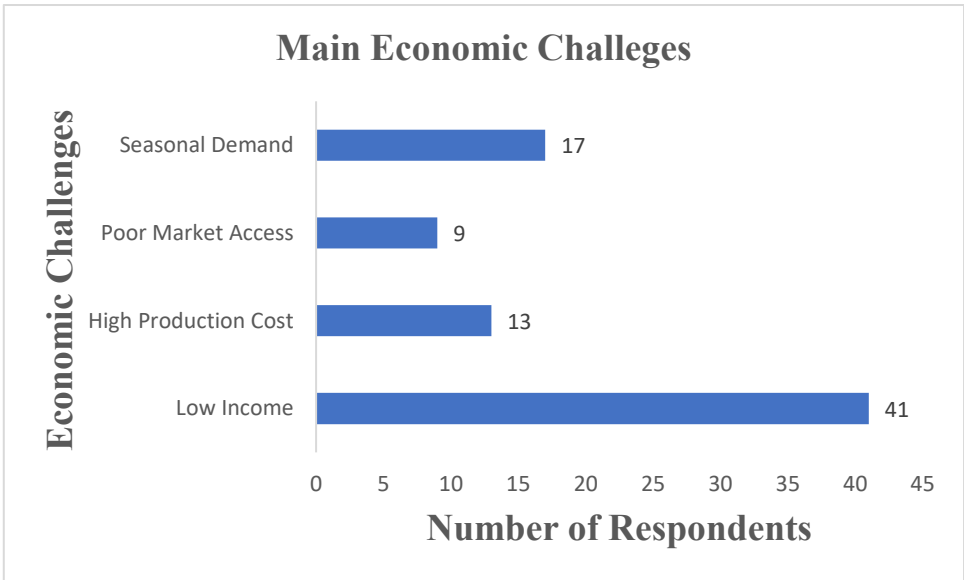


FIG 4.2.7: Main Economic Challenges Faced by Traditional Potters

The above figure presents the main economic challenges faced by the respondents engaged in traditional pottery. Economic challenges significantly influence the sustainability of pottery as a livelihood by affecting the income, productivity, and overall financial stability of artisan households. Understanding these challenges is essential for identifying appropriate measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of traditional potters.

The findings reveal that 41 respondents (51.2%) identified low income as the primary economic challenge, making it the most frequently reported issue among the respondents. This was followed by 17 respondents (21.3%) who reported seasonal demand as their major challenge. Additionally, 13 respondents (16.3%)

indicated high production costs as a significant concern, while 9 respondents (11.3%) identified poor market access as the main economic challenge affecting their livelihood.

The predominance of low income indicates that traditional pottery does not generate sufficient earnings to meet the daily needs and financial obligations of many artisan families. Limited income may result from low product prices, reduced sales, increasing competition from factory-made products, and irregular market demand. The considerable proportion of respondents identifying seasonal demand as a challenge suggests that the sale of pottery products fluctuates throughout the year, resulting in unstable and unpredictable income. Similarly, high production costs, including the expenses associated with raw materials, fuel, transportation, and labour, further reduce the profitability of pottery production. Poor market access also remains a concern, as many potters have limited opportunities to reach wider markets, secure better prices, or promote their products effectively. Overall, the findings indicate that traditional potters face multiple interconnected economic challenges, with low income emerging as the most critical issue.

OBJECTIVE 2: To identify occupational health risks among potters

Table 4.3.1

Distribution of Respondents Experiencing Physical Pain Due to Pottery Work		Frequency	Percentage
	Yes	80	100.0
	Total	80	100.0

The above table presents the distribution of respondents based on whether they experience physical pain due to pottery work. The findings reveal that all the respondents (80; 100.0%) reported experiencing physical pain as a result of their pottery-related activities. None of the respondents indicated that they were free from physical pain. This suggests that physical pain is a universal occupational health issue among the potters included in the study. The finding highlights the physically demanding nature of pottery work and indicates that prolonged manual labour, repetitive movements, and continuous exposure to strenuous working conditions may contribute to occupational health problems among traditional potters.

Table 4.3.2

Health problems commonly face		Frequency	Percentage
	Back pain	40	50.0
	Joint pain	23	28.7
	Respiratory issues	1	1.3
	Eye problems	2	2.5
	Skin issues	14	17.5
	total	80	100.0

The above table presents the distribution of respondents according to the common occupational health problems experienced as a result of pottery work. The findings indicate that back pain is the most prevalent

occupational health problem, reported by 40 respondents (50.0%), accounting for half of the total respondents. This suggests that the physical demands of pottery work, including prolonged sitting or bending, repetitive body movements, lifting heavy clay, and continuous manual labour, place considerable strain on the back, making it the most common health complaint among traditional potters.

The second most commonly reported health problem was joint pain, experienced by 23 respondents (28.7%). This indicates that nearly one-third of the respondents suffer from pain in their joints, which may result from repetitive hand and arm movements involved in moulding, shaping, and handling clay over long periods. Such repetitive occupational activities can contribute to musculoskeletal disorders and reduce the workers' physical efficiency over time.

In addition, skin issues were reported by 14 respondents (17.5%), suggesting that regular contact with clay, dust, water, and other materials used in pottery production may contribute to skin irritation or related dermatological problems. Comparatively fewer respondents reported eye problems (2 respondents; 2.5%) and respiratory issues (1 respondent; 1.3%), indicating that these health conditions were less common among the study participants.

Overall, the findings reveal that musculoskeletal problems, particularly back pain and joint pain, constitute the major occupational health risks faced by traditional potters in the study area. The physically demanding nature of pottery work, combined with prolonged working hours, repetitive manual tasks, and limited ergonomic support, appears to significantly affect the health and well-being of the respondents. These findings highlight the importance of introducing occupational health awareness programmes, ergonomic interventions, regular health check-ups, and appropriate safety measures to improve the working conditions and overall health status of traditional potters.

Cross-Tabulation Between Gender and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.3

		OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL		
GENDER		LOW	HIGH	TOTAL
	MALE	28.8%	57.1%	31.3%
	FEMALE	71.2%	42.9%	68.8%

The

above table presents the cross-tabulation between gender and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings indicate that among respondents with a low occupational health level, 71.2% were females, while 28.8% were males. This distribution reflects the larger representation of female respondents in the study and indicates that a greater proportion of women were classified under the low occupational health category.

On the other hand, among respondents with a high occupational health level, 57.1% were males, whereas 42.9% were females. Although females constituted the majority of the overall sample, the proportion of males in the high occupational health category was comparatively higher. This suggests that male respondents were more likely than female respondents to fall within the high occupational health level group.

Overall, females accounted for 68.8% of the total respondents, while males represented 31.3%. The predominance of female respondents reflects the active involvement of women in traditional pottery activities within the study area. However, the observed variation in occupational health levels between male and female respondents may be associated with differences in the type of work performed, duration of daily work, physical workload, ergonomic practices, and exposure to occupational hazards. Female potters often participate in multiple stages of pottery production while simultaneously managing household responsibilities, which may increase their physical workload and contribute to poorer occupational health outcomes. Conversely, the relatively higher proportion of males in the high occupational health category may be influenced by differences in work allocation, physical endurance, or access to health-related resources. The findings indicate a noticeable variation in occupational health levels between male and female respondents.

Cross-Tabulation Between Age Group and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.4

		OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL		
AGE GROUP		LOW	HIGH	TOTAL
	BELOW 25	0.0%	14.3%	1.3%
	25-35	21.9%	0.0%	20.0%
	36-45	64.4%	42.9%	62.5%
	ABOVE 55	13.7%	42.9%	16.3%

The above table presents the cross-tabulation between age group and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings reveal variations in occupational health levels across different age groups of traditional potters.

Among respondents with a low occupational health level, the majority (64.4%) belonged to the 36–45 years age group, followed by 25–35 years (21.9%) and above 55 years (13.7%). None of the respondents below 25 years were classified under the low occupational health category. The predominance of respondents aged 36–45 years in this category may be attributed to the fact that this age group represents the largest proportion of the study population and is actively engaged in pottery work, exposing them to continuous physical strain and occupational hazards.

In contrast, among respondents with a high occupational health level, 42.9% belonged to the 36–45 years age group, and an equal proportion (42.9%) belonged to the above 55 years age group. Respondents below 25 years accounted for 14.3%, while there were no respondents in the 25–35 years age group classified under the high occupational health category. This distribution suggests that respondents in the older age groups were more represented in the high occupational health category than younger adults.

Overall, the 36–45 years age group constituted the largest share of the study population (62.5%), followed by respondents aged 25–35 years (20.0%), above 55 years (16.3%), and below 25 years (1.3%). The findings indicate that occupational health conditions vary across age groups and may be influenced by factors such as the duration of occupational exposure, years of work experience, cumulative physical workload, and age-related health changes. Individuals who have been engaged in pottery work for many years may experience the cumulative effects of repetitive manual labour, prolonged bending, lifting heavy materials, and continuous use of pottery tools, all of which can affect their occupational health.

Cross-Tabulation Between Educational Qualification and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.5

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL			TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
	NO FORMAL EDUCATION	23.3%	0.0%	21.3%
	PRIMARY	46.6%	42.9%	46.3%
	SECONDARY	27.4%	57.1%	30.0%
	GRADUATE AND ABOVE	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%
	OTHER	1.4%	0.0%	1.3%

The above table presents the cross-tabulation between educational qualification and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings indicate that occupational health levels vary across different educational backgrounds of traditional potters.

Among respondents with a low occupational health level, the largest proportion (46.6%) had completed primary education, followed by 27.4% who had secondary education and 23.3% who had no formal education. Only 1.4% of respondents each belonged to the graduate and above category and the other educational category. This distribution suggests that respondents with lower educational attainment constituted the majority of those experiencing lower occupational health levels.

In contrast, among respondents with a high occupational health level, the majority (57.1%) had completed secondary education, while 42.9% had primary education. None of the respondents with no formal education, graduate and above, or other educational qualifications were classified under the high occupational health level category. This indicates that respondents with secondary education were comparatively more represented in the high occupational health level group than those with lower or higher educational qualifications.

Overall, respondents with primary education formed the largest proportion of the study population (46.3%), followed by those with secondary education (30.0%) and no formal education (21.3%). Only a very small

proportion of respondents had attained graduate and above education (1.3%) or belonged to the other educational category (1.3%). The predominance of respondents with primary and secondary education reflects the educational profile of traditional pottery workers in the study area, where formal education beyond the school level is relatively uncommon.

The observed differences in occupational health levels across educational categories may be associated with variations in health awareness, knowledge of occupational safety practices, access to healthcare information, and the ability to adopt preventive measures while performing pottery-related activities. Respondents with comparatively higher educational attainment may possess greater awareness of workplace safety, ergonomic practices, and health-seeking behaviour, which could contribute to better occupational health outcomes. However, since pottery work is physically demanding irrespective of educational status, occupational health problems may still occur across all educational groups.

Cross-Tabulation Between Working Hours Affecting and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.6

		OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
LONG WORKING HOURS AFFECTING THE POTTERS				
	YES	94.5%	42.9%	90.0%
	NO	5.5%	42.9%	8.8%
	OTHER	0.0%	14.3%	1.3%

The above table presents the cross-tabulation between the effect of long working hours on potters and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents

perceived long working hours as having an adverse effect on their health, regardless of their occupational health level.

Among respondents with a low occupational health level, an overwhelming majority (94.5%) reported that long working hours affected their health, while only 5.5% stated that long working hours did not affect them. None of the respondents in this category selected the "Other" response. This suggests that prolonged working hours are a common concern among respondents experiencing poorer occupational health and may contribute to increased physical strain and work-related health problems.

Among respondents with a high occupational health level, 42.9% reported that long working hours affected their health, while an equal proportion (42.9%) stated that they were not affected by long working hours. Additionally, 14.3% of respondents selected the "Other" response, indicating alternative opinions or experiences regarding the impact of working hours on their health. Although respondents in the high occupational health category appeared to have more varied responses, a considerable proportion still acknowledged the negative effects of extended working hours.

Overall, 90.0% of the respondents reported that long working hours adversely affected their health, whereas 8.8% indicated that they were not affected, and only 1.3% selected another response. These findings clearly demonstrate that prolonged working hours are perceived as a major occupational challenge among traditional potters. Pottery work often involves continuous manual labour, repetitive body movements, prolonged sitting or bending, lifting heavy materials, and extended periods of concentration, all of which can contribute to fatigue, musculoskeletal disorders, and reduced physical well-being.

The results suggest that excessive working hours may be an important factor influencing the occupational health of traditional potters. Continuous exposure to physically demanding tasks without adequate rest may increase the risk of back pain, joint pain, muscle fatigue, and other occupational health problems.

Cross-Tabulation Between Health Condition Reduces Productivity and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.7

HEALTH CONDITION REDUCES WORK PRODUCTIVITY		OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
	YES	95.9%	0.0%	87.5%
	NO	4.1%	100.0%	12.5%

The above table presents the cross-tabulation between health condition reducing work productivity and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings reveal a clear variation in occupational health levels based on whether respondents reported that their health condition affected their work productivity.

Among respondents with a low occupational health level, an overwhelming majority (95.9%) reported that their health condition reduced their work productivity, while only 4.1% stated that their health condition did not affect their productivity. This indicates that respondents experiencing poorer occupational health were considerably more likely to perceive a decline in their work performance due to work-related health problems. The physically demanding nature of pottery work, combined with persistent musculoskeletal pain and other occupational health issues, may limit the respondents' ability to work efficiently and maintain consistent productivity.

In contrast, among respondents with a high occupational health level, 100.0% reported that their health condition did not reduce their work productivity, while none (0.0%) indicated that health problems affected their productivity. This suggests that respondents with comparatively better occupational health were able to continue their work without experiencing significant reductions in productivity caused by health-related issues.

Overall, 87.5% of the respondents reported that their health condition had reduced their work productivity, whereas only 12.5% indicated that their productivity was not affected. These findings demonstrate that occupational health problems have a substantial impact on the working capacity of traditional potters. Health

conditions such as back pain, joint pain, muscle fatigue, and other work-related ailments may reduce physical endurance, slow the pace of work, increase discomfort during production, and ultimately affect the quantity and quality of pottery produced.

The results highlight the close relationship between occupational health and work productivity among traditional potters. As pottery production primarily depends on manual labour and continuous physical effort, any deterioration in health can directly influence an individual's ability to perform daily occupational activities effectively.

Cross-Tabulation Between Access to Regular Healthcare and Occupational Health Level

Table 4.3.8

		OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH LEVEL		TOTAL
		LOW	HIGH	
ACCESS TO REGULAR HEALTHCARE SERVICES				
	YES	9.6%	0.0%	8.8%
	NO	90.4%	100.0%	91.3%

The above table presents the cross-tabulation between access to regular healthcare services and occupational health level among the respondents. The findings indicate that the majority of traditional potters have limited access to regular healthcare services, irrespective of their occupational health level.

Among respondents with a low occupational health level, 90.4% reported that they did not have access to regular healthcare services, while only 9.6% stated that they had access to such services. This finding suggests that respondents experiencing poorer occupational health also face considerable barriers in obtaining regular

medical care. The lack of access to healthcare may delay the diagnosis and treatment of work-related illnesses, resulting in prolonged pain, untreated health conditions, and a gradual decline in overall health status.

Similarly, among respondents with a high occupational health level, 100.0% reported that they did not have access to regular healthcare services, and none of the respondents indicated that they had regular access to healthcare. Although these respondents were classified under the high occupational health level category, the complete absence of regular healthcare access highlights a significant gap in the availability and utilisation of health services among traditional potters.

Overall, 91.3% of the respondents reported not having access to regular healthcare services, whereas only 8.8% indicated that they had such access. These findings reveal that inadequate healthcare access is a widespread issue among the pottery community in the study area. Factors such as financial constraints, limited healthcare facilities, lack of occupational health services, time limitations due to continuous work, and low awareness of preventive healthcare may contribute to this situation.

The lack of regular healthcare services can have serious implications for the occupational health and well-being of traditional potters. Since pottery work involves continuous physical labour and prolonged exposure to occupational hazards, timely medical consultation and preventive healthcare are essential to reduce the severity of work-related health problems and maintain productivity. Without adequate healthcare support, minor health issues may progress into chronic conditions, affecting both the quality of life and livelihood of the workers.

OBJECTIVE 3: To examine generational participation and workforce decline

Table 4.3.9

Are younger family members interested in continuing pottery work?		Frequency	percent
	yes	8	10.0
	no	72	90.0
If no, what is the main reason?			
	Low income	35	43.8
	Health risk	4	5.0
	Lack of social status	23	28.7
	Preference for other jobs	17	21.3
	migration	1	1.2

The above two tables present the respondents' views regarding the interest of younger family members in continuing traditional pottery work and the primary reasons for their lack of interest. The findings reveal that a substantial majority of the respondents (72; 90.0%) stated that the younger generation is not interested in continuing pottery as an occupation, while only 8 respondents (10.0%) reported that younger family members are willing to continue the profession. This clearly indicates a significant decline in generational participation in traditional pottery and suggests that the occupation is gradually losing its appeal among younger individuals. The findings reflect a growing shift away from traditional family occupations towards alternative livelihood opportunities that are perceived to offer better economic security, social recognition, and career prospects.

With regard to the reasons for this lack of interest, low income emerged as the most important factor, reported by 35 respondents (43.8%). This indicates that the earnings generated through pottery are considered insufficient to meet the increasing financial needs and aspirations of younger generations. The second major reason identified was lack of social status, cited by 23 respondents (28.7%), suggesting that many young people perceive pottery as a less prestigious occupation compared to other employment opportunities. In addition, 17 respondents (21.3%) reported that younger family members prefer alternative occupations,

reflecting changing career aspirations and the availability of better employment opportunities in other sectors. Only 4 respondents (5.0%) considered occupational health risks as the primary reason for the declining interest, while 1 respondent (1.2%) identified migration as the major factor contributing to workforce decline.

Overall, the findings indicate that economic challenges, social perceptions, and changing occupational preferences are the principal factors contributing to the declining participation of younger generations in traditional pottery work. The decreasing willingness of young family members to continue the occupation poses a serious challenge to the sustainability of the pottery industry in Kanyakumari District. As traditional pottery largely depends on the transfer of skills and knowledge from one generation to the next, the absence of younger participants threatens the continuity of this indigenous craft and the preservation of its cultural heritage. If this trend continues, the pottery industry may face a shortage of skilled artisans, leading to a gradual decline in production and the possible disappearance of traditional pottery practices in the region.

Table 4.3.10

Have any family members shifted to other occupations		frequency	percent
	yes	75	93.8
	no	5	6.3

The above table presents the distribution of respondents based on whether any of their family members have shifted from traditional pottery to other occupations. The findings reveal that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (75; 93.8%) reported that one or more of their family members had shifted to other occupations, whereas only 5 respondents (6.3%) stated that their family members had continued in the traditional pottery profession. These findings clearly indicate a substantial occupational shift among pottery families and reflect the gradual decline of traditional pottery as a primary source of livelihood.

The movement of family members to alternative occupations suggests that pottery is no longer viewed as a stable or economically rewarding profession by many households. This occupational transition may be influenced by several interconnected factors, including inadequate and irregular income, limited market opportunities, increasing production costs, physically demanding working conditions, occupational health problems, lack of government support, and changing career aspirations among younger generations. The availability of employment opportunities in other sectors that offer better wages, improved job security, and greater social recognition has likely encouraged many individuals to leave the traditional pottery profession.

The findings further indicate that the continuity of pottery as a hereditary occupation is gradually weakening. Traditionally, pottery skills and knowledge have been transferred from one generation to another within families. However, the large proportion of respondents reporting occupational shifts among family members suggests that this intergenerational transmission is declining. As more individuals leave the occupation, the number of skilled artisans decreases, posing a significant threat to the preservation of traditional pottery techniques, indigenous knowledge, and the cultural heritage associated with the craft.

Overall, the findings highlight a serious challenge to the sustainability of the traditional pottery industry in Kanyakumari District. The widespread movement of family members towards alternative occupations reflects the growing socio-economic pressures faced by pottery households and underscores the urgent need for effective interventions.

Table 4.3.11

What changes do you observe in younger generations regarding pottery work?		frequency	percent
	Reduced interest in pottery work	39	48.8
	Preference for alternative occupations	19	23.8
	Migration to urban areas	6	7.5
	Increased interest in modern/innovative designs	2	2.5
	Better education leading to different careers	14	17.5

The above table presents the respondents' observations regarding the changes occurring among the younger generation in relation to traditional pottery work. The findings reveal that reduced interest in pottery work is the most commonly observed change, reported by 39 respondents (48.8%). Nearly half of the respondents perceived that younger family members are gradually losing interest in continuing the traditional occupation, indicating a significant decline in generational participation. This lack of interest may be attributed to the physically demanding nature of pottery work, low financial returns, limited employment security, and changing aspirations among younger individuals.

The second most frequently reported change was the preference for alternative occupations, identified by 19 respondents (23.8%). This suggests that many young people are increasingly choosing occupations that provide better income, stable employment, improved working conditions, and greater opportunities for career growth. In addition, 14 respondents (17.5%) stated that better education has enabled younger generations to pursue different careers, reflecting the positive impact of education in expanding employment opportunities beyond traditional occupations. As educational attainment increases, younger individuals are more likely to seek professional and skilled employment rather than continue hereditary occupations such as pottery.

A smaller proportion of respondents (6; 7.5%) reported that migration to urban areas has contributed to the declining involvement of younger generations in pottery work. Urban migration often exposes young people to diverse employment opportunities, leading them to settle in cities rather than remain engaged in traditional village-based occupations. Interestingly, only 2 respondents (2.5%) observed an increased interest in modern or innovative pottery designs, suggesting that only a limited number of young people are attempting to modernise the craft or adapt it to changing market demands.

Overall, the findings indicate that traditional pottery is experiencing a gradual decline in generational continuity, primarily due to reduced interest, changing career aspirations, and the pursuit of alternative livelihood opportunities. The influence of education, occupational diversification, and urban migration has further accelerated this shift, reducing the willingness of younger generations to inherit the traditional profession. While a small proportion of respondents recognised an emerging interest in innovative pottery designs, this alone is insufficient to counterbalance the overall decline in participation.

Table 4.3.12

Is migration affecting the pottery workforce in your community		Frequency	percentage
	yes	57	71.3
	no	23	28.7

The above table presents the respondents' opinions regarding whether migration is affecting the pottery workforce in their community. The findings reveal that a majority of the respondents (57; 71.3%) believed that migration has a significant impact on the pottery workforce, whereas 23 respondents (28.7%) stated that migration does not affect the pottery workforce in their community. These findings indicate that migration is widely perceived as one of the factors contributing to the decline of traditional pottery as a livelihood.

The high proportion of respondents acknowledging the impact of migration suggests that many individuals, particularly younger members of pottery families, are leaving their native communities in search of better educational opportunities, stable employment, and improved living conditions in urban areas. The migration of skilled and productive members of pottery households reduces the availability of labour required for pottery production and weakens the continuity of traditional pottery practices. As younger generations relocate to towns and cities, the transfer of pottery skills, knowledge, and craftsmanship from one generation to the next becomes increasingly limited, resulting in a gradual decline in the number of active artisans.

Conversely, 28.7% of the respondents believed that migration does not significantly affect the pottery workforce. This may indicate that, in some families or localities, pottery continues to be practised despite migration, or that other factors such as low income, lack of market opportunities, occupational health problems, and changing career aspirations are considered more influential in the decline of the occupation than migration alone.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that migration is perceived as an important challenge to the sustainability of the traditional pottery industry in Kanyakumari District. The movement of younger generations towards urban centres for better employment and educational opportunities has contributed to a reduction in the available workforce and has affected the intergenerational transfer of traditional pottery skills. If this trend continues, the pottery industry may face a shortage of skilled artisans, threatening both the livelihoods of pottery families and the preservation of this culturally significant craft.

FIGURE 4.3.13: Support Required to Improve Livelihood

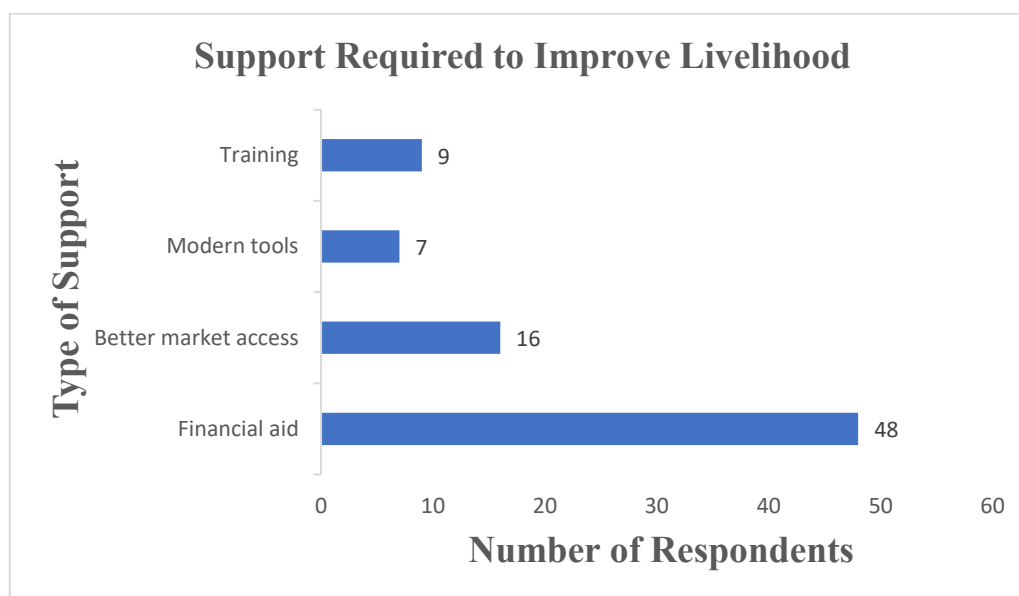


Fig 4.3.13 Support Required to Improve Livelihood

Figure 4.3.13 illustrates the type of support that respondents believe would help improve their livelihood as traditional potters. Identifying the support required by the respondents is essential for understanding their priorities and for developing appropriate interventions to strengthen the sustainability of the pottery sector. The findings provide valuable insights into the specific areas where assistance is most needed to enhance the economic well-being and livelihood security of the pottery community.

The findings reveal that the majority of the respondents, 48 (60.0%), identified financial aid as the most important form of support required to improve their livelihood. This was followed by 16 respondents (20.0%) who expressed the need for better market access, while 9 respondents (11.3%) preferred training programmes, and 7 respondents (8.8%) highlighted the need for modern tools to improve pottery production.

The predominance of financial aid as the most preferred form of support indicates that inadequate financial resources remain one of the major challenges faced by traditional potters. Financial assistance could enable artisans to purchase quality raw materials, adopt improved production methods, invest in equipment, and meet their day-to-day livelihood needs. The demand for better market access further suggests that respondents face difficulties in reaching wider markets and obtaining fair prices for their products, thereby limiting their income and economic growth.

Although comparatively fewer respondents preferred training programmes and modern tools, these findings still highlight the importance of enhancing technical skills, encouraging innovation, and introducing improved

production techniques to increase productivity and competitiveness. Overall, the results indicate that strengthening financial support, improving marketing opportunities, promoting skill development, and facilitating access to modern equipment are essential measures for improving the livelihood conditions of traditional potters. These findings emphasise the need for coordinated efforts by the government, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders to implement sustainable livelihood support programmes that preserve the traditional pottery craft while enhancing the socio-economic well-being of the artisan community.

OBJECTIVE 4: To suggest strategies for the sustainability and revival of the pottery industry in Kanyakumari District

Table 4.4.1

Do you think pottery can be sustained as a livelihood in the future		frequency	percent
	Yes	38	47.5
	no	42	52.5

The above table presents the respondents' opinions regarding whether traditional pottery can be sustained as a livelihood in the future. The findings reveal that 42 respondents (52.5%) believed that pottery cannot be sustained as a livelihood in the future, whereas 38 respondents (47.5%) expressed the opinion that pottery can continue to provide a sustainable means of livelihood. Although the difference between the two responses is relatively small, the results indicate that a slightly higher proportion of respondents hold a pessimistic outlook regarding the future of the pottery profession.

The perception that pottery may not be sustainable reflects the numerous challenges currently experienced by traditional potters. Factors such as declining income, rising production costs, scarcity of raw materials, competition from factory-made and plastic products, limited market opportunities, inadequate government assistance, occupational health issues, and decreasing interest among younger generations have reduced the attractiveness and profitability of pottery as a full-time occupation. These challenges may have influenced

respondents to believe that continuing pottery as a long-term livelihood has become increasingly difficult under present conditions.

At the same time, nearly half of the respondents (47.5%) believed that pottery can still be sustained as a livelihood in the future. This finding indicates that a considerable proportion of traditional potters remain hopeful about the future of their occupation. Their optimism may stem from the cultural significance of pottery, the increasing demand for environmentally friendly and handmade products, and the belief that with appropriate institutional support, technological improvements, better marketing opportunities, and financial assistance, the industry can continue to survive and develop. These respondents may also believe that modernisation, innovation in product design, and improved access to wider markets can enhance the economic viability of pottery.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that respondents hold mixed perceptions regarding the future sustainability of traditional pottery, with a slight majority expressing concern about its long-term survival. The results highlight that while traditional pottery continues to possess cultural, artistic, and economic value, its sustainability depends largely on addressing the challenges faced by the pottery community.

Table 4.4.2

What support would help improve your livelihood?		Frequency	percent
	Financial aid	48	60.0
	Better market access	16	20.0
	Modern tools	7	8.8
	Training	9	11.3

The above table presents the respondents' opinions regarding the type of support that would help improve their livelihood as traditional potters. The findings reveal that financial aid was the most frequently suggested form of support, identified by 48 respondents (60.0%). This indicates that a majority of the respondents consider financial assistance to be the most essential requirement for improving their livelihood. The need for financial aid may arise from increasing production costs, limited income, lack of capital for purchasing raw materials and equipment, and the overall economic insecurity faced by pottery households. Access to financial assistance

through government schemes, subsidies, low-interest loans, or grants could enable potters to expand production, improve product quality, and strengthen their economic stability.

The second most commonly reported need was better market access, suggested by 16 respondents (20.0%). This finding highlights the challenges faced by traditional potters in marketing and selling their products. Limited access to markets, competition from factory-made products, inadequate promotional opportunities, and the absence of organised marketing channels may reduce the profitability of pottery work. Respondents believed that improving market access through exhibitions, handicraft fairs, cooperative societies, online marketing platforms, and stronger market linkages would enhance product visibility and increase income opportunities.

Furthermore, 9 respondents (11.3%) identified training as the support needed to improve their livelihood. This suggests that some potters recognise the importance of acquiring new skills, improving product design, learning modern production techniques, and developing entrepreneurial abilities to meet changing consumer preferences. Skill development and capacity-building programmes can help artisans diversify their products, improve quality, and remain competitive in the evolving market.

A comparatively smaller proportion of respondents (7; 8.8%) emphasised the need for modern tools. Although this was the least frequently reported form of support, the findings indicate that access to improved tools and equipment could reduce physical labour, enhance production efficiency, improve product quality, and increase overall productivity. The relatively lower percentage may suggest that respondents consider financial assistance and marketing support to be more immediate priorities than technological improvements.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that economic support remains the greatest need of traditional potters, with financial assistance emerging as the most important requirement for improving their livelihood. While respondents also recognised the importance of better market access, training opportunities, and modern equipment, these needs were secondary to financial security.

Table 4.4.3

Are you interested in skill development or design training programs?		frequency	Percent
	yes	46	57.5
	no	34	42.5

The above table presents the respondents' interest in participating in skill development or design training programmes related to pottery work. The findings reveal that 46 respondents (57.5%) expressed an interest in participating in such programmes, whereas 34 respondents (42.5%) reported that they were not interested. The results indicate that more than half of the respondents recognise the importance of acquiring new skills and knowledge to improve their pottery-related activities.

The relatively high level of interest in skill development and design training suggests that many traditional potters are willing to enhance their existing skills and adapt to changing market demands. Training programmes can provide opportunities to learn modern pottery techniques, innovative product designs, improved finishing methods, quality enhancement, business management, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship skills. Such knowledge can help artisans diversify their products, increase their competitiveness, attract a wider customer base, and improve their overall income. The willingness of a majority of respondents to participate in these programmes reflects their positive attitude towards learning and their readiness to adopt new approaches that could strengthen their livelihoods.

At the same time, 42.5% of the respondents indicated that they were not interested in participating in skill development or design training programmes. This lack of interest may be influenced by several factors, including advanced age, long years of experience in traditional pottery, limited awareness about the benefits of training, time constraints due to continuous work, financial difficulties, or a preference for maintaining traditional production methods rather than adopting new techniques. Some respondents may also feel that their existing skills are sufficient for their current level of production or may lack confidence in adapting to modern methods.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that a majority of traditional potters are willing to participate in skill development and design training programmes, highlighting the potential for capacity-building initiatives within the pottery community. The positive response indicates that training programmes could play a significant role in improving product quality, encouraging innovation, increasing market competitiveness, and enhancing the income and livelihood of pottery workers.

Table 4.4.4

Should the government and NGOs play a stronger role in pottery revival?		Frequency	percent
	yes	71	88.8
	no	9	11.3

The above table presents the respondents' opinions regarding whether the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should play a stronger role in the revival of the traditional pottery industry. The findings reveal that a vast majority of the respondents (71; 88.8%) believed that the government and NGOs should take a more active role in supporting and reviving the pottery sector, while only 9 respondents (11.3%) felt that such additional intervention was not necessary. This overwhelming response reflects the strong expectation among traditional potters for greater institutional support to address the numerous challenges affecting their livelihood.

The high percentage of respondents favouring increased involvement from government and NGOs indicates that the pottery community recognises the importance of external support in ensuring the sustainability of their occupation. Traditional potters often face multiple challenges, including low and unstable income, rising production costs, limited access to markets, scarcity of raw materials, inadequate financial assistance, occupational health problems, and declining interest among younger generations. These issues have reduced the profitability and attractiveness of pottery as a livelihood, making institutional support essential for the survival and development of the industry.

Respondents may expect the government and NGOs to provide financial assistance through subsidies, low-interest loans, welfare schemes, and grants, as well as to facilitate access to modern equipment, improved infrastructure, and quality raw materials. In addition, training programmes focusing on skill development, product innovation, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and design improvement can help artisans enhance the quality and marketability of their products. Respondents may also expect support in organizing exhibitions, handicraft fairs, online marketing platforms, and cooperative initiatives that would expand market access and improve income opportunities.

The comparatively smaller proportion of respondents (11.3%) who did not consider greater government and NGO involvement necessary may believe that the existing level of support is adequate or may feel that individual efforts and market forces are more important than institutional assistance. However, this represents only a small minority of the respondents.

Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that the pottery community strongly supports greater government and NGO intervention for the revival of the traditional pottery industry. The overwhelming demand for institutional support highlights the urgent need for comprehensive policies and programmes aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of pottery workers.

Table 4.4.5

Do you face difficulty in adapting traditional skills to current market trends?		Frequency	Percent
	High difficulty	28	35.0
	Moderate difficulty	36	45.0
	No difficulty	16	20.0

The above table presents the respondents' level of difficulty in adapting traditional pottery skills to current market trends. The ability to adapt to changing consumer preferences, modern production techniques, and evolving market demands is essential for ensuring the sustainability and competitiveness of the traditional pottery sector. The findings provide an understanding of the extent to which potters are able to cope with these changing market conditions.

The results reveal that 36 respondents (45.0%) reported experiencing moderate difficulty in adapting their traditional skills to current market trends, constituting the largest proportion of the study population. This was followed by 28 respondents (35.0%) who indicated that they faced great difficulty, while 16 respondents (20.0%) stated that they experienced no difficulty in adapting to market changes.

The predominance of respondents experiencing moderate to high levels of difficulty suggests that a significant proportion of traditional potters encounter challenges in meeting contemporary market demands. These

difficulties may arise from limited exposure to modern product designs, inadequate technical training, insufficient access to market information, changing consumer preferences, and financial constraints that restrict the adoption of innovative production methods. As a result, many artisans may find it difficult to compete with mass-produced or machine-made products available in the market.

Although one-fifth of the respondents reported no difficulty in adapting to current market trends, the overall findings indicate that the majority of traditional potters require additional support to improve their adaptability and competitiveness. These results highlight the need for regular skill development programmes, design innovation workshops, entrepreneurship training, market linkage initiatives, and technological assistance to help artisans respond effectively to changing market conditions. Strengthening these areas would contribute to improving the economic sustainability of traditional pottery while preserving the cultural heritage and craftsmanship associated with the occupation.

FIGURE 4.4.6: Role of Government and NGOs in Pottery Revival

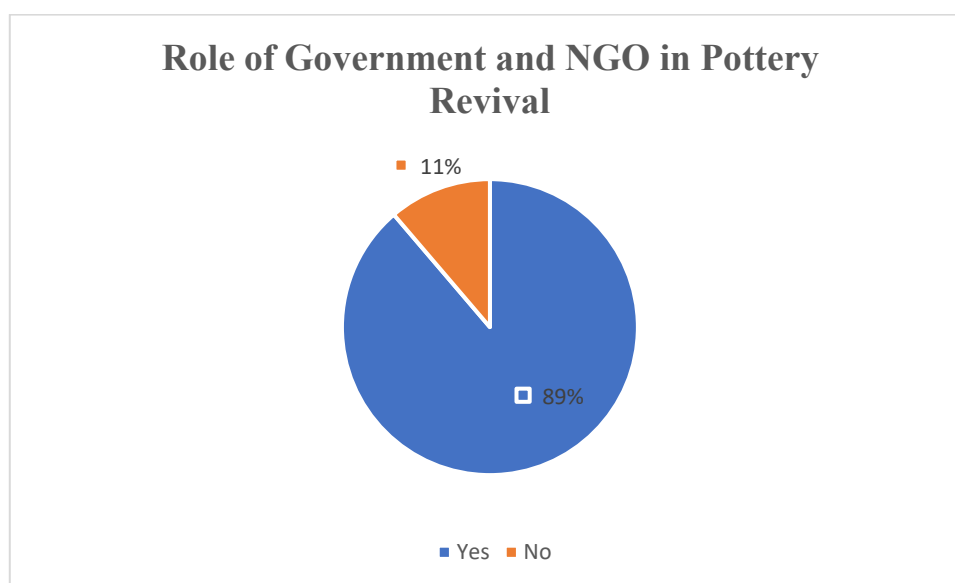


FIG4.4.6: Role of Government and NGOs in Pottery Revival

The above figure illustrates the respondents' opinion regarding whether the government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should play a stronger role in the revival of traditional pottery. Institutional support is crucial for preserving traditional occupations by providing financial assistance, skill development opportunities, infrastructure, market linkages, and policy interventions that enhance the livelihood of artisan communities.

The findings reveal that a vast majority of the respondents, 71 (88.8%), believe that the government and NGOs should play a stronger role in pottery revival, while only 9 respondents (11.3%) expressed the opinion that such additional support is not necessary. This indicates a strong consensus among traditional potters regarding the need for greater institutional involvement in addressing the challenges faced by the pottery sector.

The overwhelming support for increased government and NGO intervention suggests that respondents perceive existing assistance as insufficient to meet their livelihood needs. Traditional potters continue to face numerous challenges, including limited financial resources, inadequate market access, declining demand for traditional products, competition from factory-made goods, shortage of raw materials, and limited opportunities for skill development. Respondents believe that stronger support through financial aid, training programmes, design innovation, marketing assistance, welfare schemes, infrastructure development, and awareness initiatives would contribute significantly to improving their socio-economic conditions and ensuring the sustainability of the occupation. Overall, the findings highlight the important role that government agencies and non-governmental organisations can play in revitalising the traditional pottery sector.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the major findings of the study, followed by practical suggestions and the overall conclusion. The findings are derived from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the respondents and are organised according to the objectives of the study. They provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-demographic profile of the respondents, the economic challenges encountered by traditional potters, the occupational health risks associated with pottery work, the declining participation of younger generations in the occupation, and the strategies required to ensure the sustainability of traditional pottery.

Based on the findings, appropriate suggestions have been proposed to address the challenges identified during the study and to improve the livelihood conditions of the traditional pottery community. These recommendations are intended to support policymakers, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders in designing effective interventions for the preservation and development of the traditional pottery sector. The chapter concludes by summarising the overall outcomes of the study and highlighting the significance of strengthening traditional pottery as a sustainable source of livelihood while preserving its cultural and economic importance.

5.2 FINDINGS

- I. The majority of the respondents (68.8%) were female, indicating the active participation of women in the traditional pottery occupation.
- II. Most respondents belonged to the middle-aged and older age groups, suggesting that pottery is predominantly practised by experienced adults rather than younger individuals.
- III. Nearly half of the respondents (46.3%) had only primary education, while only a very small proportion (1.3%) had completed graduation or higher education, reflecting low educational attainment among traditional potters.
- IV. More than half of the respondents (56.3%) earned a monthly income between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000, indicating relatively low-income levels from pottery.
- V. Nearly half of the respondents (46.3%) had more than 30 years of experience in pottery work, demonstrating that the occupation is sustained largely by highly experienced artisans.

Objective: 1: To analyse the economic challenges faced by traditional potters

- I. Low income emerged as the most significant economic challenge, reported by 51.2% of the respondents.
- II. Seasonal demand was identified as the second major economic challenge by 21.3% of the respondents.
- III. High production costs affected 16.3% of the respondents, reducing the profitability of pottery work.
- IV. Poor market access was reported by 11.3% of the respondents, limiting opportunities to sell their products at profitable prices.
- V. The majority of respondents relied on pottery as their primary source of livelihood, making them highly dependent on the occupation despite economic challenges.
- VI. Cross-tabulation analysis indicated that economic challenges were experienced across different demographic groups, irrespective of gender and educational qualification.

Objective2: To identify the occupational health risks associated with pottery work

- I. The majority of respondents experienced occupational health problems due to prolonged involvement in pottery work.
- II. Long working hours were reported by 90.0% of the respondents as a factor affecting their health.
- III. A significant majority (87.5%) stated that health conditions reduced their work productivity.
- IV. Most respondents (91.3%) reported having no regular access to healthcare services.
- V. Occupational health risks were found to affect both male and female respondents, although female respondents constituted a larger proportion of the workforce.
- VI. Cross-tabulation analysis indicated variations in occupational health levels based on age, educational qualification, and access to healthcare services.

Objective: 3: To analyse the decline in generational participation in pottery work

- I. Only 10.0% of the respondents stated that younger family members were interested in continuing pottery work.
- II. A large majority (90.0%) reported that younger family members were not interested in pursuing pottery as a livelihood.
- III. Low income was identified as the primary reason (43.8%) for the younger generation's lack of interest in pottery.
- IV. Lack of social status (28.7%) and preference for alternative occupations (21.3%) were also important reasons for occupational decline.
- V. Nearly all respondents (93.8%) reported that family members had shifted to other occupations.

- VI. Almost half of the respondents (48.8%) observed reduced interest in pottery among younger generations.
- VII. Migration to urban areas was perceived as affecting the pottery workforce by 71.3% of the respondents.
- VIII. More than half of the respondents (52.5%) believed that pottery may not remain a sustainable livelihood in the future.

Objective 4: To suggest strategies for improving the sustainability of traditional pottery

- I. Financial aid was identified by 60.0% of the respondents as the most important support required for improving their livelihood.
- II. Better market access was suggested by 20.0% of the respondents as an important intervention.
- III. More than half (57.5%) expressed interest in participating in skill development and design training programmes.
- IV. A large majority (88.8%) believed that the government and NGOs should play a stronger role in the revival of traditional pottery.
- V. Nearly half of the respondents (45.0%) experienced moderate difficulty in adapting traditional pottery skills to current market trends.
- VI. More than one-third (35.0%) experienced great difficulty in adapting to changing consumer preferences and market demands.
- VII. The findings indicate a strong demand for financial assistance, market support, capacity building, technological improvements, and institutional intervention to ensure the sustainability of traditional pottery.

5.3 DISCUSSIONS

Objective 1: To analyse the economic challenges faced by traditional potters in Kanyakumari District

The findings of the present study indicate that traditional potters in Kanyakumari District experience multiple economic challenges that significantly affect their livelihood and the sustainability of the occupation. Among the various challenges identified, low income emerged as the most serious problem, with more than half of the respondents (51.2%) identifying it as their primary economic challenge. This was followed by seasonal demand (21.3%), high production costs (16.3%), and poor market access (11.3%). These findings demonstrate that the economic difficulties experienced by traditional potters are multidimensional and interconnected, affecting both production and income generation.

The predominance of low income indicates that pottery is no longer capable of providing sufficient and stable earnings to meet the basic needs of artisan families. Respondents reported that the income generated from pottery is often inadequate because of declining consumer demand, increasing competition from factory-made and plastic products, fluctuating sales, and limited opportunities to market their products beyond the local community. The low profitability of pottery has made it increasingly difficult for artisans to depend solely on the occupation for their livelihood, forcing many families to seek supplementary sources of income. These findings are consistent with previous studies that identify declining profitability, market competition, and inadequate earnings as major threats to the sustainability of traditional pottery occupations (Anbarasan & Sreelatha, 2017; Chandran, 2018).

Another important finding of the study is the effect of seasonal demand on the pottery industry. A considerable proportion of respondents indicated that pottery products are sold mainly during festivals, religious ceremonies, and specific cultural occasions, while demand remains relatively low during the rest of the year. Such seasonal fluctuations create instability in income and reduce financial security for pottery households. The irregular nature of market demand also discourages continuous production and limits opportunities for expanding the occupation. Similar observations have been reported by Saha (2019), who found that fluctuations in consumer demand significantly influence the livelihood security of traditional artisans.

The study also revealed that high production costs remain a major economic burden for traditional potters. Rising prices of raw materials, fuel, transportation, and labour have increased the cost of pottery production without a corresponding increase in selling prices. Consequently, profit margins remain low, making it difficult for artisans to invest in improved technology or expand their business. In addition, poor market access further limits their economic opportunities, as many respondents depend primarily on local markets and have limited exposure to wider commercial platforms. The absence of organised marketing systems, branding initiatives, and digital marketing opportunities further restricts their ability to compete effectively in contemporary markets. Similar findings have been reported by Mishra and Mohanty (2020), who emphasised that inadequate marketing infrastructure and rising production costs adversely affect the economic sustainability of traditional craft industries.

These findings are consistent with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework proposed by Chambers and Conway (1992), which emphasises that sustainable livelihoods depend upon adequate financial assets, physical resources, institutional support, and access to markets. The economic challenges identified in the present study demonstrate that deficiencies in these livelihood assets reduce the resilience of traditional pottery communities and increase their vulnerability to poverty and occupational decline (Chambers & Conway, 1992).

The findings also support previous studies that have highlighted the declining economic viability of traditional pottery due to modernisation, changing consumer preferences, rising production costs, and limited marketing

opportunities (UNESCO, 2003; Anbarasan & Sreelatha, 2017). Similar studies have reported that inadequate income and weak institutional support discourage artisans from continuing pottery as a full-time occupation, ultimately threatening the survival of this traditional craft (Mishra & Mohanty, 2020). The present study therefore reinforces the existing body of literature by demonstrating that economic constraints remain one of the principal factors contributing to the gradual decline of traditional pottery in rural communities.

Overall, the findings suggest that improving the economic conditions of traditional potters requires comprehensive interventions such as financial assistance, access to affordable credit, subsidised raw materials, improved marketing facilities, participation in exhibitions and trade fairs, digital marketing opportunities, and stronger government and NGO support. Such measures would not only enhance the income and livelihood security of traditional potters but would also contribute to the preservation of an important cultural heritage and promote the long-term sustainability of the pottery sector (Chambers & Conway, 1992; UNESCO, 2003).

Objective 2: To identify the occupational health risks associated with traditional pottery work in Kanyakumari District

The findings of the present study reveal that traditional pottery is associated with several occupational health risks that adversely affect the physical well-being, work efficiency, and overall quality of life of the respondents. Pottery work involves continuous exposure to dust, prolonged sitting or bending postures, repetitive hand movements, heavy manual labour, and long working hours, all of which contribute to various health-related problems. The study indicates that occupational health issues are common among traditional potters and continue to remain an overlooked aspect of the occupation (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2019).

One of the major findings of the study is that a large majority of the respondents reported that long working hours negatively affect their health. Most respondents spend several hours each day engaged in physically demanding activities such as clay preparation, shaping, drying, and firing pottery products. Continuous engagement in these repetitive tasks places considerable strain on the body, leading to fatigue, musculoskeletal disorders, and reduced physical endurance. The physically intensive nature of pottery work increases the likelihood of occupational injuries and chronic health conditions over time. Similar findings have been reported by Mohapatra and Sahoo (2018), who observed that traditional pottery workers frequently experience musculoskeletal pain and physical exhaustion due to repetitive manual work.

The study further revealed that most respondents believed that their health condition reduced their work productivity. Poor physical health not only affects the ability of potters to perform daily work efficiently but also results in reduced production capacity and lower income. Since pottery is primarily a labour-intensive occupation, any decline in physical fitness directly influences the economic well-being of artisan households. Frequent health problems may also increase medical expenses, thereby adding to the financial burden already experienced by traditional potters (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2021).

Another significant finding is the limited access to regular healthcare services among the respondents. The majority reported that they do not receive regular medical check-ups or occupational health support. Lack of awareness regarding occupational diseases, inadequate healthcare facilities, financial constraints, and limited access to preventive healthcare contribute to the neglect of health problems until they become severe. This situation increases the vulnerability of potters to long-term health complications and reduces their overall quality of life. These observations are consistent with the findings of the International Labour Organisation (2019), which reported that workers in the informal sector often lack adequate occupational health services and social protection.

The cross-tabulation analysis further indicates that occupational health risks are experienced across different demographic groups, although the severity varies according to age, gender, educational qualification, and healthcare accessibility. Older respondents and those with many years of experience in pottery reported greater health-related difficulties, suggesting that prolonged exposure to occupational hazards increases the risk of chronic health conditions. Female respondents also reported considerable health challenges, reflecting the dual burden of occupational work and household responsibilities. Similar patterns have been identified by Rajashekar and Raju (2020), who found that age and years of occupational exposure significantly influence the prevalence of work-related health problems among traditional artisans.

These findings are consistent with the International Labour Organisation (2019), which emphasises that workers engaged in informal and traditional occupations often face unsafe working environments, inadequate occupational safety measures, and limited access to health protection. Similarly, the World Health Organisation (2021) highlights that healthy working environments are essential for protecting workers from occupational diseases and promoting sustainable livelihoods. Previous research has likewise identified respiratory illnesses, musculoskeletal disorders, joint pain, back pain, and physical exhaustion as common occupational hazards among pottery workers (Mohapatra & Sahoo, 2018; Rajashekar & Raju, 2020).

The results of the present study clearly demonstrate that occupational health is closely linked with the sustainability of the pottery profession. Without adequate health protection, potters are likely to experience declining productivity, reduced income, and a diminished capacity to continue practising the occupation.

Therefore, improving occupational health should be considered a priority for ensuring the long-term well-being of artisan communities (WHO, 2021).

Overall, the findings suggest that there is an urgent need for occupational health awareness programmes, regular medical camps, ergonomic workplace improvements, access to affordable healthcare services, protective equipment, and government-supported health insurance schemes specifically designed for traditional artisans. Such interventions would help reduce occupational health risks, improve productivity, and enhance the overall livelihood security of traditional potters while preserving this valuable traditional occupation (ILO, 2019; WHO, 2021).

Objective 3: To analyse the decline in generational participation in traditional pottery work in Kanyakumari District

The findings of the present study reveal a significant decline in the participation of younger generations in traditional pottery, indicating a major challenge to the continuity and sustainability of this indigenous occupation. Pottery has historically been a family-based occupation where knowledge, skills, and techniques were transmitted from one generation to the next. However, the findings suggest that this traditional pattern is gradually weakening, with fewer young people showing interest in continuing the occupation. This trend poses a serious threat to the preservation of traditional pottery as both a cultural heritage and a sustainable livelihood (UNESCO, 2003).

One of the most significant findings of the study is that 90.0% of the respondents reported that younger family members are not interested in continuing pottery work, while only a small proportion (10.0%) expressed interest in carrying forward the family occupation. This clearly indicates a substantial decline in generational participation and reflects changing aspirations among younger people. The younger generation increasingly prefers occupations that provide greater financial stability, social recognition, and better career opportunities compared to traditional pottery. Similar observations have been reported by Meher (2019), who found that younger artisans are increasingly abandoning traditional occupations in favour of modern employment opportunities.

The study further identified low income as the primary reason for the declining interest among younger family members. A considerable proportion of respondents believed that pottery does not generate sufficient income to meet present-day economic needs, making it an unattractive career option for younger generations. Other important reasons included lack of social status, preference for alternative occupations, health risks associated with pottery work, and migration. These findings indicate that the decision to leave pottery is influenced by a combination of economic, social, and occupational factors rather than a single reason. Similar findings have

been reported by Anbarasan and Sreelatha (2017), who observed that inadequate income and poor social recognition discourage younger generations from continuing traditional pottery.

Another important finding is that 93.8% of the respondents stated that family members had already shifted to other occupations. This demonstrates that occupational diversification has become a common survival strategy among pottery households. Many younger family members seek employment in government services, private companies, construction work, trade, or other sectors that offer more regular income, better working conditions, and greater social mobility. As a result, the transfer of traditional pottery skills within families is gradually declining. Chambers and Conway (1992) explain that livelihood diversification is a common strategy adopted by rural households when traditional occupations become economically unsustainable.

The study also revealed that 48.8% of the respondents observed reduced interest in pottery among younger generations, while others reported increasing preference for alternative occupations, migration to urban areas, and better educational opportunities leading to different career choices. These findings indicate that education and urbanisation have significantly influenced occupational aspirations. While education has opened new employment opportunities, it has simultaneously reduced dependence on traditional occupations such as pottery. Similar trends have been documented by UNESCO (2003), which highlights that modernisation and changing socio-economic conditions have contributed to the decline of traditional crafts worldwide.

Migration was also identified as an important contributing factor to workforce decline. A majority of respondents (71.3%) believed that migration has adversely affected the availability of skilled workers in the pottery sector. Younger individuals often migrate to urban areas in search of stable employment, improved living standards, and better educational and economic opportunities. Consequently, the traditional pottery industry experiences a shortage of skilled labour, making it increasingly difficult to sustain production and preserve traditional craftsmanship. Previous studies have similarly reported that rural-to-urban migration significantly contributes to the decline of traditional artisan occupations (Meher, 2019).

The findings further reveal that 52.5% of the respondents believe that pottery may not remain a sustainable livelihood in the future. This reflects widespread concern regarding the long-term survival of the occupation. Continuous decline in generational participation, combined with economic hardships and changing occupational preferences, has created uncertainty about the future of traditional pottery. Unless effective measures are implemented to improve the economic viability and social recognition of the occupation, the traditional knowledge and cultural heritage associated with pottery may gradually disappear.

These findings are consistent with the UNESCO (2003) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which emphasises that traditional knowledge and cultural practices can only survive through continuous transmission across generations. The declining participation of younger generations threatens not only the livelihood of pottery communities but also the preservation of valuable indigenous knowledge and

craftsmanship. The findings also support the Sustainable Livelihood Framework proposed by Chambers and Conway (1992), which highlights that sustainable livelihoods depend upon secure economic opportunities, institutional support, and the ability to adapt to changing socio-economic conditions.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the decline in generational participation is driven by economic insecurity, occupational health concerns, changing social aspirations, migration, and limited institutional support. Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive interventions such as improving the income potential of pottery, promoting design innovation, enhancing market opportunities, providing entrepreneurship and skill development programmes, creating awareness about the cultural significance of pottery, and encouraging youth participation through government incentives and community-based initiatives. Such measures would contribute significantly to preserving traditional pottery while ensuring its sustainability as a viable livelihood for future generations (Chambers & Conway, 1992; UNESCO, 2003).

Objective 4: To suggest strategies for improving the sustainability of traditional pottery in Kanyakumari District

The findings of the present study highlight several measures that respondents believe are essential for improving the livelihood of traditional potters and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the pottery sector. Traditional pottery is not only an important source of livelihood but also represents a valuable cultural heritage that has been preserved over generations. However, the occupation is currently facing numerous economic, technological, and social challenges that threaten its continuity. The respondents emphasised that the sustainability of pottery depends upon stronger institutional support, financial assistance, improved market opportunities, and capacity-building initiatives (Chambers & Conway, 1992; UNESCO, 2003).

One of the major findings of the study is that financial aid was identified by 60.0% of the respondents as the most important support required to improve their livelihood. This indicates that inadequate financial resources remain one of the primary barriers affecting the growth and sustainability of traditional pottery. Limited income, increasing production costs, and lack of access to affordable credit make it difficult for potters to purchase quality raw materials, invest in improved equipment, or expand their production activities. Financial assistance through subsidies, low-interest loans, and welfare schemes would therefore play a significant role in strengthening the economic condition of pottery households. Similar recommendations have been made by the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) (2022), which emphasises financial assistance and credit support for traditional artisans.

The study further revealed that 20.0% of the respondents considered better market access as the next most important requirement. Although traditional pottery products continue to possess cultural and artistic value,

many artisans experience difficulty in reaching larger markets and obtaining fair prices for their products. Dependence on local markets, the absence of organised marketing channels, and competition from factory-made products restrict their earning potential. Respondents expressed the need for government-supported exhibitions, handicraft fairs, digital marketing platforms, cooperative marketing societies, and e-commerce opportunities to increase product visibility and improve sales. These findings are consistent with the Ministry of Textiles' initiatives promoting market development assistance for handicraft artisans (Development Commissioner [Handicrafts], 2022).

Another encouraging finding is that 57.5% of the respondents expressed willingness to participate in skill development and design training programmes. This demonstrates that many traditional potters recognise the importance of acquiring new skills and adapting their products to meet changing consumer preferences. Skill development programmes focusing on modern designs, product diversification, packaging, entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and business management can enhance the competitiveness of traditional pottery without compromising its cultural identity. Such training programmes would enable artisans to combine traditional craftsmanship with contemporary market demands. UNESCO (2003) similarly emphasises that safeguarding traditional crafts requires continuous transmission of skills while adapting to changing socio-economic contexts.

The study also found that 88.8% of the respondents believed that the government and non-governmental organisations should play a stronger role in the revival of traditional pottery. This overwhelming support reflects the respondents' expectation that institutional intervention is necessary to address the multiple challenges faced by the pottery community. Government agencies and NGOs can contribute by providing financial assistance, technical training, infrastructure development, healthcare facilities, marketing support, and social security schemes specifically designed for traditional artisans. Institutional collaboration would also help preserve the cultural significance of pottery while promoting sustainable livelihood opportunities (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Development Commissioner [Handicrafts], 2022).

Another important finding is that 45.0% of the respondents experienced moderate difficulty and 35.0% experienced great difficulty in adapting their traditional skills to current market trends. This indicates that a large majority of traditional potters struggle to respond effectively to changing consumer demands, technological developments, and increasing market competition. Limited exposure to design innovation, inadequate technical knowledge, and financial constraints reduce their ability to modernise production methods and diversify their products. These findings emphasise the importance of continuous training, technology transfer, design development, and exposure visits that can help artisans improve their adaptability and competitiveness (Development Commissioner [Handicrafts], 2022).

The findings of the present study are consistent with the Sustainable Livelihood Framework developed by Chambers and Conway (1992), which emphasises that sustainable livelihoods require access to financial, physical, human, social, and institutional resources. Similarly, the UNESCO (2003) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage recognises the importance of preserving traditional crafts through community participation, policy support, and intergenerational transmission of knowledge. The results also support the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) Annual Report (2022), which emphasises financial assistance, market development, skill enhancement, and institutional support as essential strategies for strengthening India's traditional handicraft sector.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that ensuring the sustainability of traditional pottery requires a comprehensive and integrated approach involving financial empowerment, market expansion, technological innovation, skill development, and stronger institutional support. Collaborative efforts by the government, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, educational institutions, and local communities are essential for addressing the existing challenges faced by traditional potters. Such interventions will not only improve the socio-economic conditions of artisan families but will also contribute to preserving the cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and craftsmanship associated with pottery for future generations (Chambers & Conway, 1992; UNESCO, 2003).

5.4 SUGGESTIONS

I. Provision of Financial Assistance

The Government should provide adequate financial assistance, low-interest loans, and subsidies to traditional potters to reduce their financial burden. Easy access to institutional credit would enable artisans to purchase quality raw materials, modern equipment, and improve their production capacity without depending on private moneylenders.

II. Strengthening Market Access

Efforts should be made to improve market access for pottery products through handicraft exhibitions, trade fairs, permanent sales outlets, cooperative marketing societies, and digital marketing platforms. Government agencies and NGOs can assist potters in promoting their products through e-commerce websites and social media, thereby expanding their customer base and increasing their income.

III. Skill Development and Design Innovation

Regular skill development programmes should be organised to enhance the technical knowledge of traditional potters. Training in contemporary product design, packaging, entrepreneurship, branding, digital marketing, and customer preferences would help artisans adapt their traditional skills to changing market trends while preserving the uniqueness of their craft.

IV. Promotion of Youth Participation

Special initiatives should be introduced to encourage younger generations to participate in pottery work. Awareness programmes highlighting the cultural significance of pottery, entrepreneurship opportunities, financial incentives, and vocational training can motivate youth to consider pottery as a viable livelihood option. Educational institutions may also collaborate with artisan communities to promote traditional crafts among students.

V. Occupational Health and Safety Measures

Regular health camps, occupational health awareness programmes, and medical screening should be organised for traditional potters. The provision of personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, and ergonomic seating arrangements can reduce occupational health risks. Government health insurance schemes should also be extended to artisan communities to improve healthcare accessibility.

VI. Raw Material Availability

The Government should ensure uninterrupted and affordable access to quality clay and other essential raw materials required for pottery production. Measures should be taken to simplify regulations related to clay extraction while ensuring sustainable environmental practices. Establishing designated clay supply centres would reduce production delays and costs.

VII. Modernisation of Production Techniques

Traditional potters should be encouraged to adopt appropriate modern technologies that improve productivity without compromising traditional craftsmanship. Access to improved pottery wheels, energy-efficient kilns, and modern production tools can reduce physical strain, improve product quality, and increase production efficiency.

VIII. Formation and Strengthening of Potters' Cooperatives

Potters should be encouraged to form or strengthen cooperative societies and self-help groups. Collective action would improve bargaining power, facilitate bulk purchase of raw materials, enhance access to government schemes, and promote collective marketing of pottery products.

IX. Increased Government and NGO Support

Government departments, NGOs, and development agencies should collaborate to implement comprehensive livelihood development programmes for traditional potters. These programmes should include financial assistance, skill development, infrastructure support, market linkage, social security, and awareness regarding various welfare schemes available to artisans.

X. Preservation and Promotion of Traditional Pottery

Traditional pottery should be recognised and promoted as an important component of India's cultural heritage. Cultural festivals, tourism initiatives, school awareness programmes, handicraft museums, and artisan demonstration centres can increase public appreciation of pottery while creating new market opportunities for traditional artisans.

XI. Social Security and Welfare Measures

Traditional potters should be provided with adequate social security benefits, including pension schemes, accident insurance, life insurance, and educational assistance for their children. Strengthening welfare measures would improve the overall quality of life of artisan families and reduce livelihood insecurity.

XII. Continuous Monitoring and Policy Support

Government authorities should regularly assess the socio-economic conditions of traditional potters and formulate policies based on their changing needs. Periodic surveys, research studies, and stakeholder consultations can help evaluate the effectiveness of existing programmes and ensure that policy interventions remain relevant and responsive to the challenges faced by pottery communities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The present study, "**Livelihood Challenges of Traditional Potters in Kanyakumari District,**" was undertaken to examine the socio-economic conditions of traditional potters, identify the major economic and occupational health challenges they encounter, analyse the declining participation of younger generations in pottery work, and suggest suitable measures for improving the sustainability of the occupation. The findings reveal that although pottery continues to serve as an important source of livelihood for many families, the occupation is facing numerous challenges that threaten its long-term survival.

The study found that traditional potters experience significant economic difficulties, with low income, seasonal demand, high production costs, and poor market access emerging as the major barriers to livelihood sustainability. These challenges reduce the profitability of pottery and discourage artisans from continuing the occupation as their primary source of income. In addition, the physically demanding nature of pottery work exposes artisans to various occupational health risks, including fatigue, musculoskeletal problems, and reduced work productivity. Limited access to healthcare services further aggravates these health-related concerns and affects the overall well-being of the pottery community.

The findings also highlight a noticeable decline in generational participation in traditional pottery. Most respondents reported that younger family members are reluctant to continue the occupation due to inadequate income, limited social recognition, better educational opportunities, migration, and preference for alternative employment. This declining interest among the younger generation poses a serious challenge to the preservation of traditional pottery knowledge and skills that have been transmitted across generations. If this trend continues, there is a considerable risk that the occupation may gradually disappear, resulting in the loss of an important element of cultural heritage.

Despite these challenges, the study also demonstrates that respondents remain optimistic about the possibility of revitalising the pottery sector through appropriate support mechanisms. Financial assistance, improved market access, skill development and design training, technological support, and stronger involvement of government agencies and non-governmental organisations were identified as key strategies for strengthening the livelihood of traditional potters. The willingness of many respondents to participate in training programmes further indicates their readiness to adopt new ideas while preserving the traditional identity of the craft.

Overall, the study concludes that the sustainability of traditional pottery requires a comprehensive and collaborative approach involving government departments, non-governmental organisations, financial institutions, educational organisations, local communities, and the artisans themselves. Policy interventions should focus not only on improving the economic conditions of potters but also on promoting occupational health, encouraging youth participation, preserving traditional knowledge, and expanding market opportunities. Such integrated efforts will contribute to enhancing the socio-economic well-being of traditional potters while safeguarding the rich cultural heritage associated with pottery for future generations.

In conclusion, traditional pottery represents far more than an occupation; it embodies generations of indigenous knowledge, craftsmanship, and cultural identity. Protecting and promoting this valuable heritage through sustainable livelihood initiatives will not only improve the quality of life of artisan communities but also ensure that this traditional craft continues to thrive and contribute to the cultural and economic development of society.

CHAPTER 6

REFERENCES AND ANNEXURES

REFERENCES

1. Chambers, R., & Conway, G. R. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. Institute of Development Studies.
2. Government of India. (2019). *Economic Survey 2018–19*. Ministry of Finance.
3. International Labour Organisation. (2018). *Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture* (3rd ed.). International Labour Office.
4. Kumar, R., & Sharma, P. (2020). Challenges faced by traditional artisans in India. *Journal of Rural Development*, 39(2), 145–160.
5. National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector. (2007). *Report on conditions of work and promotion of livelihoods in the unorganised sector*. Government of India.
6. Patel, S., Mehta, K., & Desai, R. (2019). Occupational health hazards among pottery workers. *Indian Journal of Occupational Health*, 63(1), 22–28.
7. Singh, A. (2015). Role of handicrafts in rural development. *Journal of Economic Studies*, 12(4), 55–67.
8. Arora, D., De, N., Sau, S. K., & Mahata, H. (2020). An assessment of the physiological health and occupational health hazards among pottery workers. *Indian Journal of Biological Sciences*, 26.
9. Bhavanishankar, P., & Singhe, M. S. (2013). Occupational transition and Kulal women in service sector: Problems and challenges. In *Proceedings of the National Seminar NSWSSCOC-2013*.
10. Gupta, C. S. (2008). Clay: Traditional material for making handicrafts. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, 7(1), 116–124.
11. Haloi, R. (2017). Potters, profession and their livelihood opportunity under rural industrialisation: A quantitative analysis. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*, 3(5), 139–150.
12. Lefrancq, C., & Hawkes, J. D. (2020). Accepting variation and embracing uncertainty: Creating a regional pottery typology in South Asian archaeology. *Open Archaeology*, 6, 269–328.
13. Mamminivan, S. (2016). Challenges of livelihood security of craftsmen: A case study. *Arts & Education International Research Journal*, 3(1).

14. Shrestha, P. (2018). Challenges and scopes of the pottery industry. *Pravaha Journal*, 24(1), 147–158.
15. Sodhi, G. J. (2006). Traditional potters and technological change in a North Indian town. *Sociological Bulletin*, 55(3), 367–382.
16. Tripathy, S., & Bardhan, J. (2019). An in-depth study of pottery as a livelihood through a discussion of its process, shocks, seasonality, trends and economics. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 4(1).
17. Wuryanie, A. H., Martiana, T., Paskarini, I., & Widarjanto. (2025). Ergonomic risks in pottery crafting: Impact on work-related fatigue and musculoskeletal disorders. *Gema Lingkungan Kesehatan*, 23(1), 1–5.
18. Manoharan, C., Sutharsan, P., Dhanapandian, S., & Venkatachalapathy, R. (2012). Characteristics of some clay materials from Tamil Nadu, India, and their possible ceramic uses. *Cerâmica*, 58(347), 412–418.
19. Raja Annamalai, G., Ravisankar, R., & Chandrasekaran, A. (2020). Analytical investigation of archaeological pottery fragments excavated from Porunthal, Tamil Nadu, India. *Cerâmica*, 66, 347–353.
20. Santacreu, D. A. (2017). Interpreting long-term use of raw materials in pottery production: A holistic perspective. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 16, 505–512.
21. Yirgu, T., Govindu, V., & Yihunie, Y. (2021). Land use/cover dynamics and its impact on the rural livelihood of potter communities. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*.
22. Chaouali, N., Nouioui, A., Aouard, M., Amira, D., & Hedhili, A. (2018). Occupational lead toxicity in craft potters. *Lebanese Science Journal*, 19(1), 105–111.
23. Akilandeewari, S. V., & Pitchai, C. (2016). Pottery industry and its development by effective marketing through information and communication technologies (ICT). *International Journal of Research – GRANTHAALAYAH*, 4(4: SE).
24. Bell, M. G. (2017). *Pottery, livelihoods, and landscapes: A case study from the Peruvian Andes*. Springer.
25. Das, S. K., Ghosh, S., Gangopadhyay, K., Ghosh, S., & Hazra, M. (2017). Provenance study of ancient potteries from West Bengal and Tamil Nadu: Application of major element oxides and trace element geochemistry. *Man and Environment*, 42(2), 11–20.
26. Wayessa, B. S. (2023). My meals are in the pots: Making pots and meals in Wollega, Southwest Ethiopia. *African Archaeological Review*, 40, 519–529.

27. Paskarini, I., Dwiyantri, E., Mahmudah, M., Widarjanto, W., Nugroho, S. A., & Syaiful, D. A. (2025). The interplay of ergonomic risk factors and lifestyle factors on potter's well-being and work fatigue in Magelang's tourism village. *BMC Public Health*, 25, Article 1550.
28. Cherry, N. M., Burgess, G. L., Turner, S., & McDonald, J. C. (1998). Crystalline silica and risk of lung cancer in the potteries. *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 55, 779–785.
29. John, S. S. (2010). Traditional knowledge of folk crafts in Tamil Nadu. *Indian Journal of Traditional Knowledge*, 9(3), 443–447.
30. Khan, D., & Banerjee, S. (2020). Revitalising ancient Indian clay utensils and their impact on health. *International Journal of All Research Education and Scientific Methods*, 8(7).
31. Odelli, E., Selvaraj, T., Perumal, J., Palleschi, V., Legnaioli, S., & Raneri, S. (2020). Pottery production and trades in the Tamil Nadu region: New insights from Alagankulam and Keeladi excavation sites. *Heritage Science*, 8, Article 56.
32. Ravisankar, R., Chandrasekaran, A., Rajalakshmi, A., & Kanagasabapathy, K. V. (2014). The analytical investigations of ancient pottery from Kaveripakkam, Vellore District, Tamil Nadu, by spectroscopic techniques. *Spectrochimica Acta Part A: Molecular and Biomolecular Spectroscopy*, 121, 457–463.
33. National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. (2008). *Health hazard evaluation report: Evaluation of exposures at a pottery shop, Cincinnati, OH (HETA No. 2007-0127-3068)*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
34. Laohasiriwong, W., Srathonghon, W., Phajan, T., Assana, S., & Intamat, S. (2017). Dust exposure and lung function of workers in the brick and clay pottery factories in the northeast of Thailand. *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 74(6), 1001–1012.
35. Mteti, S. (2022). Pottery production potentials for rural livelihood and empowerment of Kisi female potters in Tanzania, 1970–2010. *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 17(4), 1–25.
36. Nortey, S., & Asiamoaso, E. (2019). The effect of the decline of pottery in Ghana and the socio-economic implications on potters. *Ghana Journal of Science*, 60(2), 42–54.
37. Mteti, S. H. (2025). The resilience of the Pare traditional pottery industry in Tanzania during the colonial and post-colonial eras, 1900s–2020. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 14(1), 147–170.
38. Chambers, R., & Conway, G. R. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century*. Institute of Development Studies.

39. Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). (2022). *Annual report 2021–2022*. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
40. International Labour Organisation. (2019). *Safety and health at the heart of the future of work: Building on 100 years of experience*. International Labour Office.
41. UNESCO. (2003). *Convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage*.
42. World Health Organisation. (2021). *WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change: The transformation needed to improve lives and well-being sustainably through healthy environments*. World Health Organisation.
43. Chambers, R., & Conway, G. R. (1992). *Sustainable rural livelihoods: Practical concepts for the 21st century* (IDS Discussion Paper No. 296). Institute of Development Studies.
44. International Labour Organisation. (2019). *Safety and health at the heart of the future of work: Building on 100 years of experience*. International Labour Office.
45. World Health Organisation. (2021). *WHO global strategy on health, environment and climate change: The transformation needed to improve lives and well-being sustainably through healthy environments*. World Health Organisation.
46. UNESCO. (2003). *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. UNESCO.
47. Development Commissioner (Handicrafts). (2022). *Annual Report 2021–2022*. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
48. Arora, D., De, N., Sau, S. K., & Mahata, H. (2020). *An assessment of the physiological health and occupational health hazards among pottery workers*. *Indian Journal of Biological Sciences*, 26, 150–171.

ANNEXURE

1.Name

2. Age group

- a) Below 25
- b) 26-35
- c) 36-45
- d) Above 55

3. Gender

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Others

4. Educational qualification

- a) No formal education
- b) Primary
- c) Secondary
- d) Higher secondary
- e) Graduate and above
- f) Other:

5. How many years have you been engaged in pottery work?

- a) below 10
- b) 10-20
- c) 21-30
- d) above 30

6. Is pottery your primary occupation?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) Other:

7. Does pottery provide sufficient income to meet your family's basic needs?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) Other:

8. What is your average monthly income from pottery?

- a) below 5000
 - b) 5001-10000
 - c) 10001-15000
 - d) above 15000
 - e) Other:
9. Do you face difficulty in purchasing raw materials (clay, fuel, tools)?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
10. What is the main economic challenge you face?
- a) low income
 - b) high production cost
 - c) poor market access
 - d) Middlemen exploitation
 - e) Seasonal demand
 - f) Other:
11. Has inflation affected your pottery livelihood?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
12. Do you have access to loans or credit facilities?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
13. If yes, source of credit:
- a) bank
 - b) cooperative society
 - c) SHG
 - d) private
 - e) Other:
14. Are you aware of government schemes for potters?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
15. Have you benefited from any government support?
- a) yes

- b) No
- c) Other:

16. Please explain the major financial difficulties you face in continuing pottery work

- a) Low income/profit
- b) Irregular income
- c) High cost of raw materials
- d) Lack of access to loans/credit
- e) High interest rates on loans
- f) Debt burden
- g) Lack of savings
- h) Dependence on middlemen
- i) High transportation costs
- j) Lack of financial support/subsidies

17. Do you experience physical pain due to pottery work?

- a) yes
- b) No
- c) Other:

18. Which health problems do you commonly face?

- a) back pain
- b) joint pain
- c) respiratory issues
- d) eye problem
- e) skin issues
- f) Other:

19. Have you ever taken medical leave due to work-related health problems?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) Other:

20. Do you use any safety measures while working (gloves, masks, proper posture)?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) Other:

21. Do long working hours affect your health?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) Other:

22. Do you have access to regular healthcare services?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
23. Has your health condition reduced your work productivity?
- a) yes
 - b) No
 - c) Other:
24. Describe how pottery work affects your physical and mental health.
- a) Very negative impact
 - b) Negative impact
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Positive impact
 - e) Very positive impact
25. Is pottery a hereditary occupation in your family?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
26. Are younger family members interested in continuing pottery work?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
27. If no, what is the main reason?
- a) low income
 - b) health risks
 - c) lack of social status
 - d) preference for other jobs
 - e) migration
 - f) Other:
28. Have any family members shifted to other occupations?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
29. Do you feel traditional pottery skills are declining?
- a) yes
 - b) no

- c) Other:
30. Is migration affecting the pottery workforce in your community?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
31. What changes do you observe in younger generations regarding pottery work?
- a) Reduced interest in pottery work
 - b) Preference for alternative occupations
 - c) Migration to urban areas
 - d) Lack of skill transfer from elders
 - e) Increased interest in modern/innovative designs
 - f) Better education leading to different careers
 - g) Continued involvement in pottery
32. Do you believe pottery is an important part of local culture and tradition?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
33. Has social respect for potters declined over time?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
34. Do festivals or rituals increase demand for pottery products?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
35. Are handmade pottery products valued compared to machine-made products?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
36. Explain the cultural importance of pottery in your community.
- a) Religious rituals/temple use
 - b) Festivals and ceremonies
 - c) Traditional household use
 - d) Marriage or life-cycle events
 - e) Community identity/tradition
 - f) Decorative/artistic purposes

- g) No significant cultural role
37. Do you think pottery can be sustained as a livelihood in the future?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
38. What support would help improve your livelihood?
- a) Financial aid
 - b) Training
 - c) Better market access
 - d) Modern tools
 - e) Other:
39. Are you interested in skill development or design training programs?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
40. Should the government and NGOs play a stronger role in pottery revival?
- a) yes
 - b) no
 - c) Other:
41. What suggestions would you give for sustaining and reviving the pottery industry in Kanyakumari District?
- a) Government financial support/subsidies
 - b) Training in modern designs and techniques
 - c) Better market access
 - d) Promotion through exhibitions/fairs
 - e) Online marketing support
 - f) Access to modern tools and technology
 - g) Raw material availability support
 - h) Formation of cooperatives
42. Income lost due to middlemen or commission agents?
- a) No loss
 - b) Low loss (less than 10%)
 - c) Moderate loss (10–25%)
 - d) High loss (25–50%)
 - e) Very high loss (above 50%)
43. Competition from plastic, metal, or machine-made alternatives
- a) Very high competition

- b) High competition
 - c) Moderate competition
 - d) Low competition
 - e) No competition
44. Are you able to fix the price of your products independently?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Sometimes
45. Have online or digital marketplaces ever been used to sell your products?
- a) ☐ Yes
 - b) ☐ No
46. Received any formal training in pottery techniques or product design?
- a) Government training
 - b) NGO training
 - c) Private training
 - d) Family/Informal training
47. Are modern tools or kilns available and affordable for your work?
- a) Easily available and affordable
 - b) Available but not affordable
 - c) Difficult to access
 - d) Not available
 - e) Not needed
48. Do you feel a lack of exposure to new designs limits your market demand?
- a) Strongly agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Neutral
 - d) Disagree
 - e) Strongly disagree
49. Would you be willing to adopt eco-friendly or innovative pottery products if support is provided?
- a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Maybe
50. Do you face difficulty in adapting traditional skills to current market trends?
- a) Very high difficulty
 - b) High difficulty
 - c) Moderate difficulty

- d) Low difficulty
 - e) No difficulty
51. Do women potters face additional challenges compared to men?
- a) Limited mobility
 - b) Household responsibilities
 - c) Lack of financial access
 - d) Social restrictions
 - e) Wage inequality
52. How effective are cooperative societies or artisan groups in supporting potters?
- a) Very effective
 - b) Effective
 - c) Moderately effective
 - d) Slightly effective
 - e) Not effective
53. Has climate change (rainfall changes, clay availability, fuel scarcity) affected pottery production?
- a) Irregular rainfall affecting drying
 - b) Reduced clay availability
 - c) Increased fuel costs/scarcity
 - d) Seasonal production disruptions
54. Do environmental regulations or land-use changes affect access to clay or workspace?
- a) Very high impact
 - b) High impact
 - c) Moderate impact
 - d) Low impact
 - e) No impact
55. Can you describe your daily routine involved in pottery work?
56. What are the major challenges you face in continuing pottery as a livelihood?
- a) Low income
 - b) Lack of market demand
 - c) High competition
 - d) Limited access to raw materials
 - e) Financial constraints
 - f) Lack of government support
 - g) Physical strain

57. Can you explain your experience with government schemes or assistance programs?
- a) Not aware of any schemes
 - b) Applied but not received benefits
 - c) Received partial benefits
 - d) Received full benefits
58. In your opinion, what are the root causes behind the decline of traditional pottery as a livelihood?
- a) Competition from industrial products
 - b) Declining demand
 - c) Lack of innovation
 - d) Low profitability
 - e) Youth disinterest
 - f) Lack of institutional support
59. How do market forces and modernisation influence the economic stability of potters in your community?
- a) ☐ Very strong influence
 - b) ☐ High influence
 - c) ☐ Moderate influence
 - d) ☐ Low influence
 - e) ☐ No influence
60. How do caste, community identity, or social background influence pottery as an occupation?
- a) Determines entry into occupation
 - b) Limits alternative job opportunities
 - c) Affects social status
 - d) Influences customer perception
 - e) No significant effect
61. What cultural traditions related to pottery are at risk of disappearing?
- a) Traditional designs/patterns
 - b) Handmade techniques
 - c) Use of natural materials
 - d) Ritual/ceremonial pottery
 - e) Community-based production practices
 - f) None
62. What gaps do you observe in government policies meant to support traditional artisans?
- a) Lack of awareness about schemes
 - b) Insufficient financial support

- c) Poor implementation
 - d) Lack of training programs
 - e) Complex application procedures
 - f) Lack of market linkage support
 - g) No major gaps
63. What barriers prevent potters from accessing government schemes or financial assistance?
- a) Lack of information
 - b) Complex paperwork
 - c) Corruption or middlemen
 - d) Lack of documentation
 - e) Distance to government offices
 - f) Low literacy levels
 - g) No barriers
64. How do livelihood uncertainties affect your mental well-being and stress levels?
- a) Very high stress
 - b) High stress
 - c) Moderate stress
 - d) Low stress
 - e) No stress
65. What emotional challenges do you experience when facing low income or reduced demand?
- a) Anxiety
 - b) Depression/sadness
 - c) Frustration
 - d) Loss of motivation
 - e) Feeling of insecurity
 - f) No major emotional impact
66. How do unexpected financial crises affect your ability to continue pottery work?
- a) Need to take loans
 - b) Shift to other jobs
 - c) Reduce production
 - d) Sell assets
67. What changes have you noticed in customer preferences over the years?
- a) Increased preference for modern designs

- b) Reduced demand for traditional items
 - c) Higher demand for decorative products
 - d) Preference for cheaper alternatives
 - e) Increased demand for eco-friendly products
 - f) No significant change
68. How does competition from factory-made products affect your confidence and income?
- a) Decrease in income
 - b) Loss of customers
 - c) Reduced confidence
 - d) Shift in occupation
69. What marketing strategies do you think would help increase demand for pottery?
- a) Social media marketing
 - b) Online selling platforms
 - c) Exhibitions/fairs
 - d) Government-supported marketing
 - e) Branding and packaging
 - f) Direct selling to customers
 - g) Collaboration with designers
70. What changes or innovations would help pottery become more profitable?
- a) Introduction of modern tools/machinery
 - b) Access to better kilns (electric/gas)
 - c) Training in new designs/styles
 - d) Online marketing and e-commerce
 - e) Direct selling without middlemen
 - f) Financial support/subsidies
 - g) Improved raw material availability
 - h) Branding and packaging support
71. How open are potters in your community to learning new techniques or business methods? Why?
- a) Lack of awareness
 - b) Fear of losing tradition
 - c) Financial constraints
 - d) Lack of training opportunities
 - e) Age-related resistance
 - f) Interest in improving income

72. How does climate variability (rainfall, monsoon) affect production cycles and income stability?

- a) Delays drying process
- b) Damages products
- c) Reduces production days
- d) Affects income stability
- e) No major effect

73. In your opinion, what structural barriers prevent pottery from becoming economically competitive with modern products?

- a) Competition from plastic/metal products
- b) Lack of market access
- c) Low pricing power
- d) Middlemen exploitation
- e) Lack of financial support
- f) Poor infrastructure
- g) Limited technology use
- h) Low consumer demand

74. How do government policies related to natural resource extraction affect your occupation?

- a) Difficulty in accessing clay
- b) Increased cost of raw materials
- c) Legal restrictions
- d) Improved regulation/support
- e) No effect

75. What role can technology play in preserving traditional pottery without losing cultural authenticity?

- a) Improving production efficiency
- b) Enhancing design innovation
- c) Online marketing/promotion
- d) Digital training/skill development
- e) Documentation of traditional methods
- f) No role

76. How do market trends and consumer preferences influence your production decisions?
- a) Change in product design
 - b) Change in quantity produced
 - c) Shift to decorative items
 - d) Price adjustments
 - e) No change
77. How does occupational insecurity influence your life decisions and aspirations?
- a) Shift to alternative jobs
 - b) Hesitation in investments
 - c) Reduced future planning
 - d) Migration considerations
78. In what ways does uncertainty in income influence your long-term life planning (education of children, housing, savings, etc.)?
- a) Difficulty in children's education planning
 - b) Inability to save money
 - c) Delay in housing construction
 - d) Increased debt
 - e) Reduced healthcare spending
 - f) No significant effect
79. How do you negotiate or manage conflicts between traditional methods and the need for modernisation in your work?
- a) Use only traditional methods
 - b) Fully adopt modern methods
 - c) Combine both methods
 - d) Depends on market demand
 - e) Avoid change
80. What challenges do you face in maintaining quality standards while trying to increase production for better income?
- a) Lack of skilled labour
 - b) Time constraints
 - c) Poor quality raw materials
 - d) Limited tools/equipment
 - e) Financial constraints
 - f) Weather conditions

- g) Increased defects in products
- h) No major challenges