CHAPTER III

THE POTTERY MAKERS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of civilization, the human beings were much influenced from his natural surroundings and that influence inspired their craft activity. Natural resources and the movement of nature had provided them the sense of beauty and sensitivity. Instantaneously provides them the sense of imagination and that capability of imagination had nurtured their creative desire. Since the emergence of the Pre-historic and Stone Age and till the expansion of modern age, man had been much influenced by the nature. Man with his unlimited search and impulse of aesthetic imagination continued his search around the surroundings where he lives. All such activities concluded into a new creativity and beauty consciousness in him. Along with utilitarian activities for the progress of his life, he tried to preserve his aesthetic aspiration in them as far as possible. It was in this methodology of activities he extended his arts and crafts for the existence of his life through centuries (Sathyapal, 2011). Man creates his artifacts by evolving technology and by using the material available to him, because physical restrictions that encourage man to evolve technology and material culture. When a particular material trait transcends its own cultural edge and enters into another and proliferates, it means that such idea is accepted by the new culture (Roy, 1994). And these acceptances were always happened in India since the inception of its civilization, because India is a diverse subcontinent resulting from a history of migrations of diverse people and the establishment of new dialect and new social presence. The newcomer, frequently arriving as invaders, carrying their cultural baggage with them and share with the natives. That exchange method made novel discourse for the country, which make India alive with its diversity and culture (Mitter, 2001).

The creation of clay objects may have traveled from India to Egypt, Mesopotamia and Babylon (Jaitly, 1990). The craft of the potter dates back to antiquity in India, as excavations of pottery found in Mohenjo-Daro (Bhavnani, 1993). The pottery had first innovated by the prehistoric people in Neolithic age. Potteries are almost as old as civilization itself, many decorated potteries were found

with floral and geometrical designs from Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro sites. Even today, craftsmen are making the potteries on wheel for socio-religious and domestic purposes (Duary, 2008). Pottery from the Neolithic to the modern era, here the medium is plastic in nature at the initial stage of its manufacture, once it is fired it becomes solid and rigid and its ingredients never refund back to its original state. What more is that it stores the socio-cultural evidence related to it in a concrete form (Roy, 1994). Since the thousands of years, potters are consistently followed the pattern of the seasons and festivals, to create clay objects for house hold requirements and objects for ceremonies and festivals. Commonly pottery is created by molding articles by hand or on the wheel and firing them, the temperature varies between six and eight hundred degrees Celsius. A smoother finish, when required is obtained by rubbing and polishing the surface, while it is wet. Potter's jars, cooking pots, water pitchers, plates, bowls and innumerable other objects of daily use have exists in our country. In fact, all over India, everywhere one can see the potters at their jobs, spinning their wheels giving forms and magnificence to the objects, through their skill. Excavated clay objects found from the different places demonstrate the high excellence of skill and proficiency of the Indian potters.

The laws of Manu, dating back to the sixth and ninth century BC and the *Rig Veda,* the eldest of the *Vedas*, refer to the use of pottery. In the religious mythology of Hinduism, it is said that Brahma the originator of the world made the image of man out of clay and then breathed life into it. This creator of man was also called *Prajapati*, which till today is the caste name of the artisan community of potters in many places of India (Jaitly, 1990). *Bengali* literatures are the biggest treasure, which also discussed about the pottery and potters (Ghosh, 2002). Hindu mythology also provides the source of existing *Kumar*. When the God *Shiva* came to wed with *Sati,* then God *Shiva* knows that an earthen pot is essential for wedding ritual, *Shiva* thus took two beads from his necklace and made from them a man and woman, the first moulders of *kumbha* (water pots). Potters are therefore also commonly known as *Kumbhar*, *Kumhar* or *Kumar* (Cooper and Gillow, 1996). The name *Kumar* is derived from the Sanskrit *Kumbhakar* (Das Gupta, 1982). In Barak Valley potters are acknowledged as *kumar,* although the reference of castes also specifically clarified the occupation of *Kumar,* which found in the great epics. The *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* codified caste positions and listed the nine craft castes, for instance, *Swarnakar-*

Goldsmith, *Kansakar*-Coppersmith, *Karmakar*-Blacksmith, *Sutradhar*-Holder of the measuring tape, architect, carpenter, carver, *Tantubay*-Weaver, *Kumbhakar*-Potter, *Sankhakar*-Maker of shell articles, *Malakar*-Gardener and *Chitrakar*-Painter (Sen, 1994). The early high craftsmanship of the potter is attested by the *Pre-Harappen* and *Harappen* pottery. The effort of the potters is stated in the Vedic texts and its connection is attested by the literary and archaeological sources. *Vajasaneyi Samhita* signifies to the professions of the potters. *Patanjali* mentions that potters made different kinds of pots out of lumps of clay. There were known as *Kumbhakaras* or in the case of having a higher establishment, *Mahakumbhakaras* (Thind, 2009).

Pottery is the simplest and the most different of all arts. It is the simplest because it is the most elemental and it is the most difficult because it is the most abstract. Historically it is among the first of the arts, the earliest vessels were shaped by hand from unpolished clay dug out of the earth and such vessels were dried in the sun and wind. Even at that stage, before man could write, before he had a literature or even a religion, he had this art and the vessels then made can still move us by their expressive form and beauty. When fire was discovered and man learned to make his pots hard and durable; and when the wheel was invented and the potter could and rhythm and uprising movement to his concepts of form (Read, 1981). Since time immemorial, pots are made all over Bangladesh (Haque, 2007) and it is true that earlier the parts of existing Barak Valley were attached to Bangladesh. But, due to reset-up of Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, it made major disruption into these lands. The clay works which are now becoming an important part of village life as well as urban life of Barak Valley, which is the reflection of thousand years of undivided Bengal's social discipline (Chatterji, 2005). There are nearly seven hundred villages in Bangladesh known for manufacturing pottery. The most common pots are *hari or patil* (bowls for cooking), *kalshi* (water jug) and *sahki* (plate) when the *hari* is painted, it is called *shakher hari*. The *kalshi* is also decorated with floral vegetable motifs. The *mangalghat* (ceremonial pitcher) and the *Manasaghat* (pitcher symbolize Goddess Manasa) are used in rituals. The *Lakshmi-sara* represents the Goddess of fortune and has their surface painted with yellow, red, black and green. These above stated objects are also common in the existing traditions of pottery making in Barak Valley. The clay of Barak region not only intended for the construction of architecture and building, but also used to preserve the ancient belief and rituals of this place. The

process of clay items still have existed continuously without any disruption of the traditional knowledge system of this region (Haque, 2007).

From the archaeological ruins, it is originated the terracotta wheels which are used by the potters of different parts of India, are being influenced or came from the Indus Valley Civilization. After the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization, several of its inhabitants have travelled to different parts of India and continued their practices of pottery making for different purposes with their traditional tools and techniques. And their method of production and knowledge system has continued as a heritage in the next-generations (Sathyapal, 2011). The *Harappan* and Post *Harrappan* periods display the significant features of a long traditional development. The art and craft objects passing from those phases are necessarily functional in form and content. But when they are viewed from the aesthetic expression of the modern context, they may be considered as the early aesthetic forms that evolved into high art (Nandagopal, 2006). Different engagements produce different art forms and their aesthetics, potter act by lumping clay on the potter's wheel and produce pots and pans are the reflection of that engagement (Tagore, 2006). Pottery has its own beauty; pottery of any region has its distinct beauty, because of its topography, geography, ethnicity and many other things. Beauty is not a fixed notion; beauty can be experienced with different manner. The characteristic of beauty cannot be determined in particular objects, in some cases beauty required logical, psychological and metaphysical notion. These experienced mainly happened through profound knowledge and experience. Beauty cannot be shown, and it has to be realized by the spectator. One has to feel it. A work of art and craft is a testimonial informed by sentiment *(rasa).* The origin of *rasa* is form *bhava*. *Bhava* (emotion) is a concrete situation and condition for a period of time of some occurrence and *rasa* is the artistic experience of that happening or condition. Potter making is such type of action which offers all aesthetical essence to the potters as well as to the utilizers (Sinha and Dwivedi, 2005).

The presence of potters in Barak Valley does not depend on any overview but formally their instinct art trend should be announced in front of the people. From the ancient age, potters of Barak Valley have great relevance in the uplift of North East art works (Bhattacherjee, 2014). The settlement of pot makers in Barak Valley are the migrated people from Bangladesh, the traditional potters of Barak region are mostly

Hindu by religion. The *Kumars* hold an honorable position in the village community and are much respected, that is usually seen in pottery making tradition of Barak Valley as well (Watts and Brown, 1904). Potter community is more or less always respected in the tradition of Indian culture (Chowdhury, 2006).

In Barak Valley, the pot makers have been residing in all districts more or less. But exclusively in Cachar, Panibhora is well known for pot makers (Plate 3.1). The potter's families settled in Panibhora, when this Valley was under British Control. The existing potters came from Faridpur district of Bangladesh and some other members of this community came to this valley after independent. Presently Panibhora is the leading hub of pottery making traditions of Barak region. Potters transmitted their skills which are orally and practically from one generation to another; the children in between ten to fifteen do some light works it is basically their first lesson in this field. The preparation of clay is the second lesson of potter's child. Their third lesson is how to make the lamp *(Prodeep).* Beating of pot is the fourth lesson of their child. Basically, Girl children learn preparation of clay, moulding of pots, and how to paint the pot before and after firing. So, these are the basic lesson all the potters are traditionally learning from their fathers and fore fathers. In Barak Valley potters are highly skilled and very much committed about their profession (Nath, 2012). Most of the female pot-makers of Barak Valley do the decorative works related to pot. The number, size and the shape of pottery are determined by the nature and character of the rituals. The items which are required for wedding may not be utilized in mortuary rites (Roy, 1994). Besides Panibhora of Cachar district, Barak Valley has different important places of pot making. The places which are known for pot makers, mostly the tea garden areas and are related to the tea garden labors. The pottery making profession is important from the economic as well as cultural point of view. The clay items are much in demand for both religious and secular purposes.

There are some NGO's (Non-Government Organization) and government organization's now actively trying to motivate the economic situation of potters of this valley. For example, *Srijan*, a self-help group launched their terracotta pot used for serving tea as the name of *kullar* as well as Regional Design and Technical Centre, Guwahati also providing their helping hands for the advancement of the potter tradition of this region (Bhattacharjee, 2013). Along with if some other organizations, for instance, The Pottery Craft Centre, Bombay and Indian Cooperative Union, helps

to promote the pottery tradition of this region, that will be more effective for the existing tradition of pottery making (Bhavnani,1993). The libraries are the inseparable parts of educational system. Most schools, colleges, universities, research institutes and newspaper offices have their own libraries. In Barak Valley for the development of existing pottery the public libraries need to be established in all the villages. The craft, especially the pottery books based on all over world must be kept there with proper maintenance with the other languages; books on regional languages are more important and effective (Bhargava, 2008).

3.2 METHODS AND MATERIALS OF POTTER'S CRAFTS

Manifestation of a craft or expression of an art was included by subsistence's or survival activities and strategies. Objects of arts and crafts give the viewers a unique pleasure, a response from the deeper mind, an unidentified revelation. This is the pleasure of miracle and the passion of wonder. The collective unconscious experienced it as magic. Handicraft has been regarded as timeless and dateless, clay and terracotta figures have been continuously from pre-historic times. The range of imagination which a potter displays in his work is so vast and varied that the simple craft becomes converted into an aesthetic art. It is therefore, difficult to decide whether pottery-making should be considered a craft or a fine art (Gupta, 2008).

The pottery made in Barak Valley is not the craft made by male alone; the contribution of female is also abundant (Plate 3.2). According to the physical capability, the works are divided in the men and women. Basically men and women are one the soul in both is the same, the two live the same life, have the same feelings and each is a complement of the other. One cannot live without the others active help (Pruthi and Chaturvedi, 2009). Men are physically stronger than women; thus besides this pot making man also provides their contribution to the paddy field. Simultaneously, women also giving their contribution to the activity of pot making besides their family duty. Regarding clay work, Binoy Ghosh has mentioned that, it is mainly female work. Therefore, the involvements of women artisans in the clay works are equally significant like male (Nayak, 2010).

All of us have seen with attraction the potter working on his wheel. The simple wheel turned around with a stick and with the sure movement of his hands. The potter's pours water over the cone of clay placed in the middle of the wheel and

pull it up. The circular momentum of the movement helps him to create a circular pot. Often with one movement he is able to build the pot. Slowly he shapes it with his hands. Then with a thread potter separates it from the clay cone, lifts it softly as a child and places it on a plank in the shade to dry. Small pottery pieces, for instance, tea cups, small and medium sized bowls and jars with flat bottoms are made through the potter's wheel. Those pots have round bottoms, however, only the upper part and the neck are thrown on the wheel (Dhamija, 1970).

Some necessary equipment and materials which are used by the potters of this region:

***Bool*:** This is made by cement or wood, it is used for the batter shape of any objects, and basically it is used along with *pitna.*

***Pitna*:** *Pitna* is made by wood, it is used as bitter to give the accurate shape to the objects, but it is normally used when clay object is in wet condition.

***Suta* (Thread):** *Suta* is used to cut the object, which is made on wheel. After completion of an object it is difficult to remove from wheel, therefore thread is used as the medium of cutter.

***Lathi* (stick):** It is made out of bamboo and the *lathi* is used to give the motion into the wheel. According to comfort the size of the *lathi* depends (Plate 3.3).

***Mati* (Clay):** Clay is the basic material for any kind of objects. Therefore, collection of clay is the primary work in pottery making. Clay is one of the cheapest materials, which requires very few unsophisticated tools and easy to handle, the imagination skills of the artisans transform this simple material into an aesthetic art (Plate 3.4) (Gupta, 2008).

***Balu* (Sand):** Clay is not self-sufficient to make any object; therefore, sand is used with clay for more plasticity. In Barak Valley two types of sands are preferable to mixed with clay. One is collected from river as well as other is collected from hilly areas.

***Rong* (Colour):** Colour is normally used before firing, after properly dried by sun shine. For Terracotta colour, potters of this region used *khoyer as well as* earth colours are also preferred, but in recent times they are using synthetic colours on pots after firing.

***Jol* (Water):** Water is very necessary for pottery making. Potters of this valley normally collect the essential water from ponds. In pottery making, water is a basic medium for almost all the purposes.

To prepare any kind of pottery hand building or wheel-based technique, the first step of potter is clay preparation which involves physically wheedling the clay. There are three types of clay which are available in Barak valley, these are-*ethel mati, duash mati* and *bele mati*. Out of these, Bele *mati* is not considered appropriate for clay works. Therefore, *ethel mati* is ideal for all kind of objects which are made by the potters. Clay is a wonderful material for picking up texture and can be treated in a number of ways to achieve a range of textural qualities and surfaces. There are many techniques which are raised and applied to texture or to decorate into clay. While working with clay, the wall or slab must be thick enough to manage the depth of the imprint or tool (Warshaw, 2007).

There are three standard methods of processing clay, e.g., Cleaning, Mixing and Kneading.

Cleaning:

Cleaning is such an essential activity of pottery making, it includes the method of removing pebbles, fine small stones and roots, otherwise these all destroy a pot during production.

Mixing:

Clay of different areas is always not suitable for pottery making; therefore, various types of clay sometimes need to be mixed together in certain proportions. With the uses of ash, sand and cow dung, the quality of any clay should be improved.

Kneading:

This is the final stage of processing of clay. After mixing the whole mass of clay is parceled into chunks and accurately kneaded by both hands and foot. Kneading is done mostly by the male potter, because it requires the physical strengths.

Throwing:

Throwing is another creative ability of pottery makers, in throwing; a lump of processed clay is placed on the wheel-head. When the wheel is rotated, the potters' softly manipulates his all the fingers and provides the proper form, which actually

required. Regarding full shape of any object, the eleven rapidly successive stages are need. For instance, centering, coning, raising up, plunging, drawing up, thinning the wall, forming, collaring, smoothing, cutting off and removing.

These above mentioned stages are applicable in the existing pottery making traditions of Barak Valley (Plates 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7).

Beating:

Beating is another sophisticated work done by the potters of this region. Wheel-turned pots usually remain incomplete unless they are successively beaten and enlarged. The purpose of beating is obviously to expand the size of a wheel-turned pot and also to give further hardness to its clay wall. The beating is suitable when a pot is leather hard. Simultaneous, the potters are always conscious, because beating is not usually done at a stretch; it is carried out in three to four stages (Plate 3.8).

Beating Base:

Some common beating bases are used by the potters of Barak region, a baked clay or wooden base which provides a solid and strong seat for the pots. Pots are beaten bare on the lap or on a mat, or even on a skin supported by the legs of the potter, in other words no base as such is used. Usually beaters made out of wood (Plate 3.9).

Hand-Modeling:

In Barak Valley, the technique of hand-modeling co-exists with the technique of throwing on a wheel. So many pottery works has been done with the help of hand-modeling. For instance, some critical works are not possible to make on wheel. Therefore, the slow wheel or hand-modeling process is more appropriate. Beating is the part and parcel of this method. The various techniques of hand-modeling may be classified into three major types: Pressing, Moulding and The strip method. Out of these processes of modeling, first two are the part and parcel of pottery making practises of Barak Valley.

Pressing:

A lump of clay is pressed in the hand between the thumb and the fingers. It is further treated by various tools to give the desired shape. It is believed that pressing method is the earliest method (Plate 3.10).

Moulding:

Pots are built by skillful pressing of clay in a mould, the technique of moulding which appears to have originated from pressing. Offers many complex shapes which cannot be normally formed on the wheel (Saraswati, 1979).

Application of colours:

There are two method of applying colours, which are done before or after firing. But that is also depends on the type of colours used. The colours are used after firing is now widespread and is almost everywhere used for ceremonial purposes (Plates 3.11 and 3.12). Painting designs appear to be mainly geometric and naturalistic. The painted pots which are used for ritual purposes, hence these designs must also have ritualistic approval. Besides pot making practice, pot decoration of Barak Valley is also known for its unique features. The people who are not directly connected with pot making, but they are beautifying and selling ritual clay items are equally valuable in the context pottery making. Some motifs are commonly seen in Barak Valley, these are**,** leaf, closely resembles with mango leaf. Some kind of leaves, flowers and creepers are very difficult to find out in nature. Leaves and trees have significant value in Hindus rituals as well as different types of lines has its own meaning. Some ritual symbols are commonly seen and *swastika* is common out of them (Nath, 2012).

Yellow, red and blue these are primary colours and the mixture of these colours creates some other colours (Basu, 2008). The colours which mainly used by theme are, Indian red, yellow, cobalt blue, chrome, burnt sienna, mauve and yellowish-brown. The pot designers have good sense of composition of colour application. Regular involvements with the works have given them these senses of aesthetical knowledge. Besides colours application, engraved and relief methods are also used on pots for decoration.

Engraved pottery:

Engraved decorative patterns are made by various types of sharp and pointed engraving tools which are used when the pots are all most hard through sun shine. Potters mostly engraved trees, leafs, flowers, animals, some linear motives, dots and some ritual symbols, but this engraved technique is now very rare in Barak Valley (Plates 3.13 and 3.14).

Relief pottery:

Relief designs are made by affixing additional clay on the exterior surface of the pots, this process is also rare in the existing tradition of pottery making of Barak Valley (Saraswati, 1979).

Potter's Wheel:

The earliest man's creations, clay crafts stretch back into history giving superb evidence of the degree of skill that civilizations possessed. The potter's wheel is perhaps the first machine man invented, using the force of motion to a productive, creative purpose (Plate 3.15) (Ahmed). Around three thousand four hundred years before Christ, the pottery wheel was exist or invented for the purpose of pottery making (Ghosh, 2002). As well as it is thought that the potter's wheel made in Elam. It was a round piece of wood with pivot-holes (Thind, 2009). The potter's wheel; perhaps a Sumerian invention was familiar to the Indus people. Today, in certain places (such as khanapur in karnataka); it is raised on a plinth so that the potter stands to work, which is unusual for Indian craftsmen. In Tamil Nadu, where the European-style treadle wheel is gaining acceptance, potter may sit at a bench to work. The potters of Punjab and Haryana sometimes use a kick-operated type familiar in the Middle East (Cooper and Gillow, 1996). The above mentioned areas and their pottery practices are shown the uses of different types of wheels. But, the potters of this valley use their traditional wheel. The wheel is worked by hand as well as by means of a bamboo stick (lathi), and revolves horizontally (Mehta, 1960).

The potter's wheel of India may be categorized into two major groups, the Single wheel and the Double wheel. The single wheel has two sub-groups: the socketed wheel and the pivoted wheel. These sub-groups can be further classified into two sections: block wheel and spoked wheel. Thus, all the varieties of the single wheel may be grouped under the following four major types: Socketed block wheel, Socketed spoked wheel, Pivoted spoked wheel and Pivoted block wheel.

Socketed block wheel:

This wheel is made out of either baked or unbaked clay or stone. The socket is fixed at the Centre of the under part of the wheel and the wheel rests and revolves on a pivot fixed distinctly in the ground or on a slab made of stone, wood or clay.

Socketed spoked wheel:

This kind of wheel has three major parts: nave, jelly and connecting spokes. The stone socked is embedded at the Centre in the undersurface of the nave, and the pivot is fixed separately in the ground. The common numbers of spokes are four.

Pivoted spoked wheel:

The structure of the turned spoke wheel which has a wooden, have a jelly and the connecting spokes are accurately the same as that of the socketed spoke wheel, excepting that the pivot in attached at the Centre of the nave underneath. The pivot in a separate piece of wood curved in the shape of a top or a bulb whose tapering point looks like a nipple.

Pivoted block wheel:

This is a solid disc of wood or clay-both baked and unbaked. In the undersurface of it is the pivot attached, while the socket is provided separately in the ground. So far as the preparation of the pivot and to socket is concerned, it is just the reverse of the socketed block-wheel and similar to the pivoted spoked wheel (Saraswati, 1979).

Working on the Wheel:

The making of pots on the wheel without long internship is quite impossible. The young generation of potters of Barak Valley, take the lesson from their seniors before by going to throw a pot. Even after several months of continuous exercise, the young potter is still a raw beginner. Working on the wheel that needs some kind of skill, the potters of Barak region spun their wheel by a stick that engages in a notch provided in the wheel for this purpose. The motion of the wheel depends upon the strength and practice of the thrower as well as upon the weight of the wheel. Once fully accelerated, the wheel maintains its motion for about eight to ten minutes so as to comprehensive a pot, if the motion solves down before the completion of the pot, the potter uses his twig again. A heavy wheel rotates for a longer time than a light wheel. Motion and gesture of the potter are like the performance art.

System of Production:

Pottery making is the house-hold industry in Barak Valley. There is no such unit which maintains the production. In this craft profession the family of potter is the

main resourceful unit. The extra labor is not required for this craft work, which is not possible for anyone to work with them suddenly. This craft is a collective effort of the family members of potters' community. Men detected the major part of the manufacture, for instance, carrying of clay, kneading, throwing, beating, moulding, polishing, burnishing, making tools, piling and firing, dismantling of pile, transporting and selling the artifacts. In compare to men, women are given light works; for instance, drying, piling, take away pots from the oven, marketing and support men in various methods. There is very minute work for the children. They learn pottery making through the assisting of their parents.

Firing:

Clay is soft and flexible, but when it undergoes the ordeal of fire, it becomes hard, resistant and permanent as hard as stone or metal. Thus clay, after its rebirth through fire, becomes known as terracotta, which means backed earth or fired clay. In spite of the hard competition with new materials in different ages and serious threats, terracotta art has survived from the prehistoric period to the present day (Sinha and Dwivedi, 2005). There are so many local variations of firings which are available in almost every region of India. Which are more or less similar to each other, but besides all the techniques and methods, firing fall into three broad types, Open-firing, Oven-firing and Kiln-firing. In each main type, there are number of local differences which may be called as sub-types (Plate 3.16).

Open-firing:

In this technique, pots are loaded up on a flat piece of ground, on a raised platform, or in a dug-out hallowed ground. The fuel is placed below, among and above the pots. This process has three sub-types: a) open-firing with optical fire-channel b) open-firing with horizontal fire-channel and c) open-firing without any fire-channel.

a) **Open-firing with optical fire-channel:** Pots are stacked with their mouths inverted in circular fashion in three to four layers and so that the pile finally takes the form of a dome. But while loading thus, a hollow is left in the Centre which forms the vertical channel that opens at the top of the dome, the fuel placed among and in-between the layers of pots is related with this apical channel. The entire stack is then secured by straw and finally plastered with mud, but leaving the top-hole open

through which fire is sparked. The duration of firing and cooling varies between three and ten days.

b) **Open-firing with horizontal fire-channel:** Pots are loaded up in circular rows of the bottom within a circular base allowing for a narrow channel in between every two rows which functions as a fire-channel. On both sides of the fire-channel stoke-holes are prepared, using old and work-out pots. The arrangement of fuel is same like optical fire-channel. The complete process takes twelve to twenty-four hours.

c) **Open-firing without any fire-channel:** In the simplest form of open-firing without any fire-channel, pots are burnt on a flat or dug-out hallowed ground. The bottom is evenly filled with dry cow-dung or straw upon which the pots are systematized in a circular fashion. The stack is then covered by split bamboo, withered saplings, pot shards, mud paste or any other thick cover in order to prevent draughts of cool air and to conserve heat accurately. The heap is kindled from all sides at once, so that as the sets in, it is continuously fed by adding more fuel until the process is complete. Fire is kept burning for one to three hours. Generally, a rapid-burning fuel such as cow-dung, straw, dry leaves or firewood is used, but charcoal is never used.

Oven-firing:

In this technique, pots are fired in either a temporary or permanent oven made of bricks, clay or stone. Pots are piled up close in the oven which is with or without an enclosure. The piling up of well-dried pots, with their mouths inverted, starts from around the stoke-hole towards the rear in rows.Arround nine to twelve clay supports are fixed temporarily at equal distance near the stoke-hole in order to prevent heat from striking directly on the pots. Fuel is also put in the gaps left in between the pots before the pile is finally protected. Oven-firing usually takes five to ten hours; in this method the potter has no control over the fire once it is start burning.

Kiln-firing:

In a kiln, pots are loaded up in a chamber formed by a circular wall and fired normally on a perforated floor which protects them from direct connection with the flame. Kiln-firing is common and is much better than open-and oven-firing because heat can be well-preserved better and a higher temperature attained. But, in it there are

certain disadvantages as well. For instance, during firing the potter has to sit nearby the channel and feed fuel at certain regular breaks. Kiln-firing also needs more wood and money investment in contrast with the open or open-firing (Saraswati, 1979).

The fuel used for firing are usually quick-growing twigs, dry branches, leaves and some firewood collected locally at little cost by the potters.

3.3 DOMESTIC POTTERIES

The necessity of a pot was felt even in the very vague stage at the world, when the Gods and Demons combined to churn the ocean for its wealth. That churning produced many valuable belongings and among which was the nectar to make the Gods immortal. The nectar needed to be hold, therefore *Vishwakarma,* the celestial God, pondered and took out from each of the assembled Gods a bit of *kala* or spirit and moulded a pot, perhaps the first of its kind in the world. From *kala* came the Sanskrit word *kalasa* or water pot (Mehta, 1960). The works with clay could be the initial instance of human skill. The lump of clay moulded with one's own hands gave him the experience about the handling a flexible material. The invention of wheel could be one of the great jumps of human beings had in the process of progress. The flexibility of clay exploded the imagination of the people and realized them the phenomenon of life, death and rebirth, because they realized clay as a metaphor. As well as they recognized pot became symbol of female fertility, and the fragile quality of the clay objects provides them the chance to think that nothing in this world is permanent (Sathyapal, 2011). The potter creates not only pottery vessels but also images for worship during seasonal festivals in the different parts of India. But, in Barak Valley the circumstance is vary than the other places, here the pottery makers only involved with the pottery making occupation. Pottery is a basic craft of very ancient origin and the ancient civilizations are judged by the degree of skills and beauties that are contained in their pottery. The potters' wheel was the first instruments that used man's resourcefulness (Chattopadhyaya, 1963). The pottery of Barak Valley is characterized by the wide range of shapes and designs and these are widely used in daily life. These potteries are equally noted for beautiful balanced shapes.

Some prominent domestic potteries are:

a) ***Hadri* (Bowl for cooking):**

Hadri is much well-known pottery items of this valley, there are many sizes accessible in this *hadri*. The upper portion of this object is little bit wide and open. This is mainly used to holding liquids as well as a rice maker. But in contemporary days it is very rare to use as a rice maker. The upper part of this article should be close by *sara*, which is important part of this item and which is also made by clay (Plate 3.17).

b) ***Chayer Bhar* (Tea cup):**

It is a very small tea cup, made by wheel. Any potters of this region used to prepare approximately two hundred cups in a day. More interesting fact is that it is only used as a onetime object. In the existing traditions of pottery making, the uses of this article are reviving as the medium of ecofriendly (Plate 3.18).

c) ***Patil* (Bowl):**

There are various sizes which are available in *patil*, used as an object of ritual purposes as well as in daily purposes. Curd is normally well-preserved in *patil*, because it keeps the curd cool during summer (Plates 3.19 and 3.20).

d) ***Kalsi* (Pitcher):**

Usually *kalsi* is used to preserve drinking water. The *kalsi* is very much useful in summer season, because it keeps water cool. The lower part of *kalsi* is almost round shaped. *Kalsi* is also popularly known as *kalas* in this valley. *Kalsi* is widely used in domestic purposes as well as used in many rituals and festivals (Plate 3.21).

e) **Tub (Flower vase):**

Tub is very popular among everyone, because it is used for the purpose of flower garden as well as vegetable garden. Its upper portion is broader than the lower portion. Some designs are also made in the upper portion of this container (Plate 3.22).

f) ***Fooldani* (Flower vase):**

Fooldani is a popular artifact for the purpose of beautification. There are variety of shapes are available in *fooldani*. It is commonly used to beautify the

internal of the houses. This is completely made with by wheel. Mostly the designs are not used on *fooldani* of this region, because these designs need more time for manufacture (Plate 3.23).

g) ***Putul* (Toy)*:***

There are two types of dolls made by the artisans of this valley. Firstly, sun dried clay dolls and secondly the dolls made by terracotta. Casting dolls are also made by the potters of this region. Toys and dolls have been in existence since the beginning of time when early man first shaped objects from clay and other materials, as playthings for his children or as the gifts. Dolls mimic real life; they are also souvenirs of the cultural expression of various peoples and societies (Saraf, 1982). As far India is concerned, the most ancient toys belong to the period of the Indus Valley Civilization.

The concept behind the utility of toys in ancient time was related with study and knowledge. They provided the children the models of almost all the domestic and the important wild animals and the deities, so that while playing with these toys they might unconsciously widen their knowledge and interest about an animal life and imbibe the traditional culture of the country. The noble causes behind the manufacturing of toys have been maintaining by the potters of every region. The concepts behind the toys are very much philosophical and educational in India as well as in Barak Valley. Therefore, every toy is based on education and functioning as educational tools (Mehta, 1960). Most of the dolls of Barak Valley represent different Gods and Goddess as well as different types of fruits, vegetables, animals and human beings (Plate 3.24). Now-a-days, toys are mostly seen in the *mela's.* The concept of using of toys as an object of play has been finishing today in Barak Valley. People are purchasing these toys as a show piece to keep as a showcase item. Female potters have given more intention to produce dolls. The similarities in doll from one place to another, happens due to the theory of Migration (Ghosh, 2004).

h) ***Chilim* (Somking pipe):**

This article is used as smoking channel by the villagers of this region as well as its utility is also seen in the rituals. Besides terracotta colour sometime black colour is also used (Plate 3.25).

Even it seen that farmers of this land preserved their grains and seed materials into the pots. Therefore, they use pots of different capacity and sizes made by the local potters. This practice is seen almost in every places of India (Karthikeyan et al., 2009).

3.4 POTTER'S CRAFTS RELATED TO RITUALS

Barak Valley is a land famous for its ritual beliefs, customs and cultures. Culture is a formation of many artistic activities and human behaviors, traditions, customs, traits and social life. Culture also means cultivation, a training including a discipline by which man's moral or intellectual nature is moulded. The result of such training is enlightenment which may build a rich civilization (Prasad, 2005). Such type of cultural training is happing in the existing traditions of pottery making practices of this region. Due to socio-economic changes the ritual craft culture of Barak has synthesized its traditional aspects with the contemporary attitudes. Craftsmen of this valley have become proud of their traditional heritage and they are continuing their craft tradition by passing to the younger generation. As it is noticed, ritual crafts occupied a prominent place in the life of Barak Valley. Numerous festivals are celebrated by the people of this region and which are profoundly connected with their traditional principles as well as connected with the ritual crafts. The terracotta objects of Barak Valley have to be observed in terms of different forms, functions (ritual and non-ritual) and its different cultural contexts. After firing, some pots are brightly painted for ceremonial uses, particularly for wedding; in many parts of India (Cooper and Gillow, 1996). This practice is also usually seen in the pottery making traditions of this valley.

Crafts related to different rituals signify non-verbal communications, which have many auspicious touches with the beliefs of the people of Barak Valley. This non-verbal communication has four broad categories, for instance- Physical; this is a personal type of communication which includes sense of touch, sense of body motions and many others. Aesthetic, this type of communication takes place through creative expressions. Signs, this is the mechanical type of communication which includes the use of insignia. Symbolic, this type makes use of religious status. Non-verbal communication plays a vital role in everyday communication, sometimes more than the verbal communication (Chakraborty, 2010). And therefore it is more viable

for craft culture and especially with the decorated and painted crafts related to the rituals.

a) ***Ghat* (Small Vessel):**

During religious occasions, the painted *ghats* are the prominent features of those events. There are wide local dissimilarities of names and motifs which are used in Barak region. It is almost like *kalsi* but it is small in size, the utility of *ghat* is mostly used in different rituals. These are used in the marriage rituals in Hindu *Bengalis* of this region. For example, in post wedding rituals, *ghats* are must be used. These vessels are ornamented by numerous themes in different colours. In marriage, *ghat* symbolizes the auspicious *mangolic*. Generally the pots are filled with water, paddy or rice up to the edge. In a marriage, there are different sizes of *ghats* used for special occasions. Specially, *ghat* symbolizes the women womb and it is also the symbol of fertility. All *ghats* are painted with *swastika* sign and same are painted just with *sidur tika* (vermillion mark) which indicates the good wishes and blessings. As the *ghats* are always filled up which means the womb of the bride after marriage will be filled.

Different motives are drawn on the ghat, for example, *Projaapotee* means butterfly, regarded as heavenly opportunities as well as highlights the faith towards the God *Projaapotee* who will send the good fortune to the newly married couple. Butterflies of various attractive colours and species used to fly from flower to flower to collect the nectar from the flowers to survive. Here in rituals rites, *projaapotee* focus the diversification of various colours related with the various lightening in the marriage function. Generally, butterfly moves flower to flower in propagation of pollination for breeding. This is also an important fact to use the symbol of butterfly. The vivid colour mixes the adorable blessing to the Bride for her colourful and attractive new family as well as society. Fish is used as motifs in marriage which is become an important part. The reproduction capacity of fish is much higher, so fish is regarded as a sign of fertility (Bhattacherjee, 2014).

There are various shapes that are made by the potters of this region and the names are depends on the basis of their utility, e.g., *Darghat, Mangalghat, Debighat, Noboghat, Manasaghat, Shitlaghat, Kartiker ghat* and *Lakheghat*. *Darghat* are used in front of the door, *Debighat* is used in front of the Gods and Goddesses, *Manasaghat* is

worshiped as Goddesses *Manasa,* on the basis of tradition the snakes on *Manasaghat* are depends, e.g., one, four, five, eight, nine, thirteen and forty two. Regarding painted *ghat, Manosaghat* is most attractive. All over the Barak Valley, Manasa is very popular as folk deity as well as *Lakhighat* is used as Goddess Lakshmi (Ghosh, 2004). There are many types of painted *ghats* which are required for various occasions, for instance, *Ghat* is always has its significant meaning; *ghat* has been compared to the female womb. Water filled *ghat* during ceremonial worship or festivals, represents life (Plates 3.26 and 3.27).

b) ***Prodeep*** **(Lamp):**

Prodeep is an important clay items, mostly used as the lamp in front of the God and Goddesses. During Kali puja this object is used in the very houses of this valley (Plate 3.28). *Prodeep* is made by wheel as well as by hand. *Diwali* (or *Dipawali*, often written *Deepavali*) is an important festival in *Hinduism, Sikhims, Buddhism* and *Jainism* and an official holiday in India. Adherents of these religious celebrate *Diwali* as the festival of lights. Many religious have their own belief and history regarding *Diwali*. Suppose in *Hinduism* across many parts of India and Nepal, it is the concept behind that, when *Rama* returned from the forest after fourteen years after the victory over *Ravana*, then the people welcomed him with light and that is known as *Diwali*. In *Sikhism*, people believed that the *Guru Har Gobind Ji* (1595-1644) got prisoned at fort Gualior by Emperor *Jahangir*. So, when he was released, he comes to Amritsar at *Darbar Sahib* (Golden temple). The people of Amritsar honored him with lighted candles. Besides these religious the *Buddhists* in Nepal also celebrate this festival. The govt. of India and Nepal has declared *Diwali* as a national holiday. *Dipavali* means a row of lamps (Sanskrit dipa=lamp and awali = row, line) in many modern languages, the popular name has shortened to Diwali.

Diwali is a surreal concept it is not only lighting the physical world as well as it is luminous the inner side. It is believed by the natives of Barak region that, through these lights they recall their ancestors. *Diwali* is celebrated in different parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Suriname, Canada, Guyana, Kenya, Mauritius, Fiji, Japan, Indonesia, Malyasia, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tanzania, Trinidad, and Tabago, Jamica, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Australia, much of Africa, and the United States.

Indians and Sri Lankans now migrating to various parts of the world, the number of countries where *Divali* is celebrated has been gradually increasing (Aggarwal, 2010).

c) ***Gaasa* (Pedestal):**

It is a lamp stand and the height of *gaasa* is normally 10/12 inches and the upper portion of *gaasa* is smaller than the lower part. The top area is around flat, where the *prodeep* is securely fixed for light. It is mostly seen with lamp in front of the God and Goddess during prayers (Plate 3.29) (Das Gupta, 1982).

d) ***Sara* (Earthen plate):**

The circular disc made with clay and painted with figures or motifs is popularly known as *sara*. One important character is that the paintings of *sara* are similar to the style of the *pata chitras*. Line played a very important role in this from of paintings. Generally *sara* is made to cover the earthen jars or water pitchers. Besides this purpose, it is decorated with images of different deities, which are used in many ritual occasions. *Saras* are similarly prevalent in some parts of Tripura, West Bengal as well as in Bangladesh. Painted *sara* is an excellent example of craft traditions of this land. In Barak Valley, at the end of autumn during the fool moon, *Lakshmi Puja* is celebrated in every houses of this region. *Lakshmi Sara* is originated from that festival. Besides *Lakshmi*, the image of Goddess *Durga* is also depicts on *sara* and it is used for puja in modest homes where a real *pratima* (idol), is beyond the purpose .The image of *Radha Krishna* is depicts by the artists on *sara* (Plates 3.30 and 3.31).

Like idol making, clay is most useful material for *sara*. The *sara* artisans create round balls with clay, called *khadi* and make a flat round shape with it. The circular slab is kept in sunlight for drying which is called *chara*. Before complete drying, the border of *sara* is done by using thumb pressure throughout its edge with the help of a wet cloth. It is then kept in a convex surface of a plate, called *vit* and left in sunlight for drying. After completely drying, *sara* is ready for firing. Fired *sara* is than rubbed clearly by coin. After the firing is over *sara* is then ready for painting. For painting, the first step taken by the artists is to give white coating on the surface of the *sara* and then started doing composition with colour. Craftsmen used tamarind seed paste as a gum. Through the colour, they divide the circle into a number of compartments with horizontal and vertical lines. Characteristic feature of *sara*

painting is two dimensional. Costumes which are shown only by patch of colours without any definite outline but two or three vertical lines suggests the folds of cloth, figures are absolutely suggestive. The mounts of Goddesses are depicts in abstract form (Tagore, 2013).

e) ***Lakshmi Bhar*** **(Pot):**

This is made on wheel and the main purpose of this pot is too use as a bank to save money. It is mostly seen as terracotta colour, but sometimes, it is also painted by the potters with variety of colous and motifs to provide the aesthetical view on it. Painted Goddess *Lakshmi* is very common theme along with flora and fauna (Plate 3.32).

f) ***Dhup Dhani*** **(Kind of container):**

There are two kind of *dhup dhani* which are available in this region. One is made with handle and another is without handle. The shape and size of these two *dhup dhani* are also different from each other. It is generally used in the purpose of prayer to Gods and Goddesses and this is popularly used in the villages as well as widely used in the various festivals like *Durga puja, Lakshmi puja, Kali puja* and many other *pujas* of this region (Plate 3.33).

g) ***Sara Patil*** **(Earthen dish and bowl):**

Sara Patil is earthen materials .The *sara patils* are used in marriage purpose. Especially used in the *Biyaa* (Day of marriage) and *Basibiyaa* (Next day of marriage). These are regarded as the good will and kindness. The ritual motifs on *sara patil* of Barak Valley are similar to other *Bengali* communities present in Bengal, Tripura and many other areas of Bangladesh (Plates 3.34 and 3.35) (Bhattacherjee , 2014).

3.5 TERRACOTTA CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN OF MRIDANGA AND TABLA

Terracotta is a flexible medium in pottery making practices of Barak Valley. Burnt clay has thus served as an early and useful plastic material from time immemorial. This terracotta material is rich of high quality and covering a wide range of subjects. This material is actually an important and unavoidable source of Indian history. This medium is fundamentally more interesting than other medium. Latin meaning of terracotta is called fired clay. The earliest terracotta objects are found in

Indus Valley, Egypt and Mesopotamia, considered the cradle of civilization (Sengupta, 2005). The most important center of terracotta art of the Mauryan period was Patna, in the area which is now a suburb known as Bulandi Bagh. Sunga period was also famous for its terracotta practices as well as Kusana artists were also experts in terracotta art (Bhadouria, 1995).

Many evidences were found in the remains of Paharpur and Moinamoti, which bears the glory of terracotta practices of undivided Bengal (Ghosh, 2002). Terracotta musical instrument and musical cultural, including the use of musical instruments in various forms has been a very old practice amongst the people (Barthakur, 2003). *Mridanga* and *Tabla* of Barak Valley have its relation to the society are closely associated with the seasons, rituals, ceremonial practices or the occupational operations and leisurely occasions. Musical instruments act sometimes as a medium by which one can recognize the material culture of a particular indigenous group (Bhattacharya, 1999). In this region potters mainly makes very simple musical instrument without decoration. But, some minor decorations are done by the women. The tools used by them are self-made, it is made of bamboo. In the arena of pot making, and especially about the terracotta musical instrument, Barak Valley has given equal contribution like any other parts of India and potters are continuing the ancient traditional cultural heritage of this region (Nath, 2012).

a) ***Mridanga* (Percussion Drum):**

In Barak Valley, *mridanga* is commonly used by the *Vaishnavas* for *kirtan* as well as it is used by the villagers to entertain during leisure time. *Mridanga* is one of the most highly advanced ancient percussion drum of India. Body of this instrument is barrel-shaped. The body of the ancient *mridanga* was earthen (Barthakur, 2003). This earthen *mridanga* is exists in many places of India as well as in Barak Valley. *Mridanga* is played at both ends with the hands and finger tips. The early literature makes abundant references to women playing on *mridanga*, which is also existing in this valley. The resonance and softness of the sound of the *mridanga* comes from the use of permanent plaster, which is prepared from cooked rice of a sticky variety and fine iron contents. The plaster is usually placed in a circular form at the center and is sometimes coloured black for the sake of attraction. The left hand drum is larger than the tight hand (Sharma, 2008).

Mridangam is a percussion instrument which provides rhythm in a classical music concert and it is considered to be the most pleasant and auspicious percussion instrument. Since the Vedic period, percussion instruments were highly honored. The references regarding *mridanga* are also presented in our epic poems, Ramayana and Mahabharata (Gopal, 2004). Regarding *mridanga* many sources are stated in Upanishad as well as in Puran (Roy, 1981). And references are also available in *Srimad Bhagavath*, *Natyashastra of Bharata*, in the classical dramas of Kalidasa, in the Mauryan and Buddhist times and in the Jain text. Even in the golden age, percussion instruments enjoyed high status. The representations of *mridanga* in the sculptures to the 1st century B.C., the post Gupta period, pre-medieval period, up to the early medieval period are smaller in size. But 11th century onwards, the size of the instrument depicted appears bigger and spindle shaped. The term '*Mridanga*' is derived from the Sanskrit word *Mrit+Angam,* meaning body of clay, Mrit refers to mother earth and Angam means body. Besides, literary and other evidences, there are many sculptural representations of *mridanga* depicted on the walls of the famous temples in India and these temples are all of great archaeological importance (Gopal, 2004). Apart from Barak valley of south Assam, the *mridanga* is equally popular in some other parts of Assam as well as in Manipur. *Mridanga* is the part and parcel of these two states of North-East India. Along with the potters of Phinibhora and Katlicherra the *Badyakar* of Barak valley are similarly important for *mridanga*, because they provides the proper shape to the *mridanga* to play it (Plates 3.36, 3.37 and 3.38).

b) ***Tabla* (Percussion Drum):**

Tabla is a paired percussion drum consisting of *Daina* and *Bama.* The left hand part is widely known as *baya or bama* in Barak valley. The *tabla* is frequently used in Hindustani classical music as well as in traditional music of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The origins of *tabla* invention are found in India. In ancient India women were the good players of *tabla*, for instance, the carving in Bhaja caves in the state of Maharashtra, shows a woman playing *tabla* and another woman performing a dance dating back to 200 BC. *Tabla* was most likely a product of experiments with existing drums such as *pakhawaj, mridanga, dholak* and *nagggara*.

There are so many references are also available in *Ved* as well as in *Puran* that demonstrates the history of *tabla* is very ancient. Many indications regarding *tabla* and its function were seen in Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, Ajanta, Elora and Konark. *Natyashastra has* also mentioned about the *tabla* (Roy, 1981). The pottery makers of Barak Valley especially the potters of Panibhora and Katlicherra, are able to build the frame of *bama,* which is a terracotta body. *Tabla* is an important percussion musical instrument of every musical event of this region and music is the life of Barak valley. *Badyakar* of this region has providing equal contribution to provide the appropriate character of *tabla* (Plates 3.39, 3.40 and 3.41).

3.6 CONCLUSION

Man with his limitless search and impulse of aesthetic imagination continued his search around the environment where he lives. Man produces his artifacts by evolving technology and by using the material available to him, because physical limitations motivate man to evolve technology and material culture. Potteries are almost as old as civilization itself, many ornamented potteries were found with floral and geometrical designs from *Harappa* and *Mohenjo-Daro* sites. Since the thousands of years, potters are habitually followed the pattern of the seasons and festivals, to create pots and pans for house hold needs and objects for rituals and festivals. *Hindu* mythology speaks about the many aspects connected to potters and provides the source of existing *Kumar*. Pottery is the simplest and the most different of all arts. It is the simplest because it is the most elemental, difficult because of its abstract. In Barak Valley potters are known as *Kumar* and the clay works, which are now becoming an important part of village life as well as urban life of Barak Valley, which is the reflection of thousand years of undivided Bengal's social discipline. This clay is not only intended for the construction of architecture and building in this valley, but also used to preserve the ancient belief and rituals of this place. From the archaeological ruins, it is originated that the terracotta wheels which are used by the potters of different parts of India, are being influenced or came from the Indus Valley Civilization. Pottery has its own beauty; pottery of any region has its distinct beauty, because of its topography, geography, ethnicity and many other things.

The existence of potters in Barak Valley does not depend on any overview but formally their instinct art trend should be announced in front of the people. From the ancient age, potters have great relevance in the uplift of North East art works .The

settlement of pot makers in Barak Valley are the migrated peoples from Bangladesh. In Barak Valley, good numbers of potters have been staying in all the districts. But especially in Cachar, Panibhora is well known for pot makers. Pottery making is the traditional occupation for a group of people and their skills which are orally and practically transmitted from one generation to another. Besides Panibhora of Cachar district, Barak valley has different important places of pottery making. The places which are known for pot makers are mostly the tea garden areas and are related to the tea garden labors. The pottery making profession is important from the economic as well as cultural point of view, for quite number of people have earned their living by making and selling them. The clay items are much in demand for both religious and secular purposes. The pottery makers of Barak Valley is not the craft made by male alone, the involvement of female is also abundant. According to the physical capability, the works are divided into the men and women. Men are physically stronger than women; therefore besides this pot making men also provides their contribution to the paddy field. Simultaneously, women also giving their contribution to the activity of pot making besides their family duty.

Art in handicraft has been observed as timeless and dateless, clay and terracotta figures have continuously existed from pre-historic times. Manifestation of a craft or expression of an art was included by subsistence's or survival activities and strategies. Objects of arts and crafts give the viewers a distinctive pleasure, a response from the deeper mind, an unidentified revelation. This is the pleasure of miracle and the passion of wonder. The collective unconscious experienced it as magic. There are three standard methods of processing clay in this region, e.g., a) Cleaning b) Mixing c) Kneading. Throwing is another artistic skill of pottery makers as well as beating is another sophisticated work done by the potters. Some common beating bases are used by the potters of Barak region are, baked clay or wooden base which provides a solid and strong seat for the pot. The technique of hand-modeling co-exists with the technique of throwing on a wheel. The various techniques of hand-modeling may be classified into three major types: a) Pressing b) Molding and c) The strip method. There are two methods of applying colours, which are done before and after firing. The tradition of painting after firing is extensive and it is almost everywhere used for ritual purposes. The pot designers have good sense of composition of colour application. The earliest man's creations, clay crafts stretch back into history giving

splendid evidence of the degree of skills that civilizations possessed. The potters of this valley use their traditional wheel, which is traditionally made out of clay and cow-dung, built up on a wooden hub and frame set at a ground level. Motion and gesture of the potter are like the performance art. The young generation of potters of Barak Valley, take the lesson from their elders at least some months before by going to throw a pot. Clay is soft and malleable, but when it undergoes the ordeal of fire, it becomes hard, resistant and permanent as hard as stone or metal. There are so many local variations in firing which are available in almost every region in India.

Pottery is a basic craft of very ancient origin. Since the earliest times, the pots are made either by molding by hands or thrown as the potter's wheel which is remained as a symbol of man's first craftsmanship and the ancient civilizations. These are judged by the degree of skills and beauties that are contained in their pottery. Pottery making is the house-hold industry in Barak Valley. There is no such unit which maintains the production. In this craft profession, the family of potter is the main creative unit. The necessity for such thing was felt even in the very vague stage at the world, when the Gods and demons combined to churn the ocean for its wealth. Pottery is a basic craft of very ancient origin. The pottery of Barak Valley is characterized by the wide range of shapes and designs and these are widely used in many purposes in this region. Clay is one of the earliest materials in the world, to visualize one's expressions deeply. The dolls made out of clay are as old as in our history. Most of the dolls of Barak Valley represent different Gods and Goddesses as well as different types of fruits, vegetables, animals and human beings. The terracotta objects of Barak Valley have to be viewed in terms of different forms, functions (ritual and non-ritual) and different cultural contexts. After firing, some pots are brightly painted for ceremonial uses, particularly for marriages and ornamented by numerous themes in different colours. The most common motifs are fish, bird and paddy stock, as well as the abstract drawings, which do not resemble with the natural elements. Musical cultural, including the use of musical instruments in various forms have been a very old tradition amongst the people. *Mridanga* and *Tabla* of Barak Valley have its relation to the society which is closely associated with the seasons, rituals, ceremonial practices or the occupational operations and leisurely occasions. In this region potters mainly make very simple musical instruments without decoration. But, some decorations are also shown by them on the instruments and these are very

simple and normally done by the women. In the arena of pot making, Barak Valley has given equal contribution like the other parts of India and potters are maintaining the ancient traditional cultural heritage of India.

There are basic distinctions between pottery-making and pottery using cultures. The pottery making craft covers the techniques and organization of production, whereas pottery-using shows the relationship between the pottery and its utility in social, ritual and ceremonial aspects of life. In the arena of globalization, no such changes are going to happen in the life of people who are attached with pottery making. Therefore, some diversifications are happening in their traditional practices.

Plate 3.1: Potter's works in Panibhora, Cachar

Plate 3.2: Female potter's of Panibhora, Cachar

Plate 3.3: Potter's working with stick

Plate 3.4: *Mati* (Clay)

Plate 3.5: Throwing (I)

Plate 3.6: Throwing (II)

Plate 3.7: Throwing (III)

Plate 3.8: Potter's woman demonstrating the beating tools called *bool* and *pitna*

Plate 3.9: Beating Base

Plate 3.10: Hand-Modeling

Plate 3.11: Colour used before firing

Plate 3.12: Artist busy with decoration

Plate 3.13: Engraved pottery

Plate 3.14: Engraved pottery

Plate 3.15: Potter's wheel

Plate 3.16: Traditional process of firing

Plate 3.17: *Hadri* (Bowl for cooking)

Plate 3.18: *Chayer Bhar* (Tea cup)

Plate 3.19: *Patil* (Bowl), before firing

Plate 3.20: *Patil* (Bowl), after firing

Plate 3.21: *Kalsi* (Pitcher)

Plate 3.22: Tub (Flower vase)

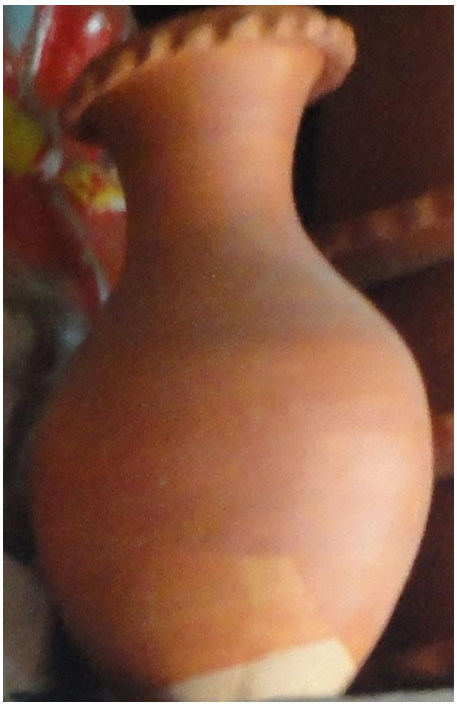

Plate 3.23: *Fooldani* (Flower vase)

Plate 3.24: *Putul* (Toy)

Plate 3.25: *Chilim* (Somking pipe)

Plate 3.26: *Ghat* (Small Vessel)

Plate 3.27: *Ghat* (Small Vessel)

Plate 3.28: *Prodeep* (Lamp)

Plate 3.29: *Gaasa* (Pedestal)

Plate 3.30: *Lakshmi Sara*

Plate 3.31: ***Durga Sara***

Plate 3.32: ***Lakshmi Bhar*** **(Pot)**

Plate 3.33: *Dhup Dhani* (Kind of container)

Plate 3.34: *Sara* (Earthen dish)

Plate 3.35: *Sara Patil* (Earthen dish and bowl)

Plate 3.36: Basic clay structure of *mridanga*

Plate 3.37: Terracotta structure of *mridanga*

Plate 3.38: Complete *mridanga*

Plate 3.39: Basic clay structure of *bama*

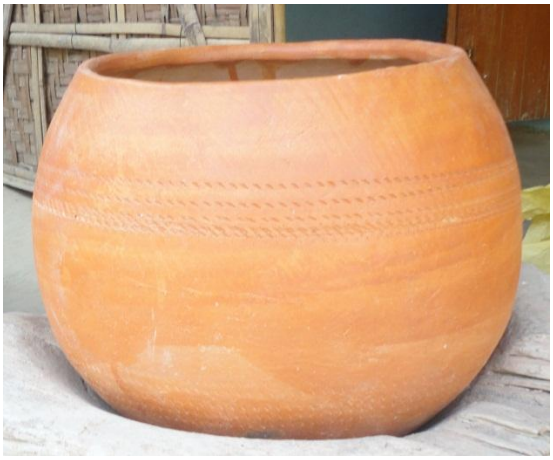

Plate 3.40: Terracotta structure of *bama*

Plate 3.41: Complete *bama*