



Report on the Possibilities of Pottery Manufacture in the Province of Bombay

BY

C. P. SHAH

Government of India Technical Scholar in Pottery

*Diplomate in Pottery and Porcelain from Pottery School,
Stoke-on-Trent, England*

Research Student of County Pottery Laboratory (Stoke-on-Trent)

Late Superintendent of Pottery, Sir J. J. School of Art, Bombay

Late Ceramic Expert, Baroda State etc. etc.

BOMBAY

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FOREWORD.

Pottery manufacture is one of the important rural industries of the Province of Bombay.

The village potter carries out his craft in a primitive manner and limits his manufacture principally to unglazed utility articles, such as, containers for cereals and liquids, and kitchen-ware. It is estimated that over 58 thousand persons are engaged in the village pottery industry as potters and makers of earthenware. There is also a substantial number of dependents who solely depend on these workers.

2. Although the import of household glazed wares into Bombay is large, there is, however, no factory in this Province which manufactures such articles as cups, saucers, plates, etc. In recent years there has come into existence a factory in the city of Bombay for the manufacture of sanitary glazed ware and tiles, etc. ; and similarly there are one or two other factories which make stone ware pipes and pickle jars. It will be correct to say that pottery industry on a factory scale practically does not exist in the Province.

3. Although no systematic survey had been made, yet it was known that most of the raw materials required for the industry were available in the Province. The requisite skilled labour can easily be trained from amongst the hereditary village potters. There is a good demand for the finished products both in the rural and urban areas. The three most important conditions for the successful establishment of the industry seemed thus to be fulfilled. A scheme was, therefore, prepared by this Department for investigating the prospects and possibilities of the manufacture of up-to-date pottery ware. The broad outlines of the scheme as sanctioned by Government in May 1938 are as under :—

(1) Survey of the areas in which suitable clays occur ; the sampling of clays for tests, and investigations of the approximate quantity available ;

(2) Manufacture of glazed and unglazed ware from collected samples of clay—

(a) Cheap household wares used in the Province which can be made by local potters,

(b) Cups and saucers, plates, etc., in a power factory located nearby in an urban area like the city of Bombay,

(c) The estimates for the commercial manufacture of (a) and (b) above and costings of manufacture.

(3) Experimental work in connection with the construction of a wood fired glazing furnace for the use of village potters,

(4) Preparation of detailed estimates for—

(a) Small central factory for mixing and grinding frits and glaze mixes for use by the village potters for the manufacture of the cheaper classes of glazed pottery ware,

(b) A factory in an urban area like the city of Bombay for the manufacture of glazed ware, e.g., cups, saucers, plates, etc.

4. In order to carry out the investigations and entertainment of some duly qualified temporary staff and provision of adequate workshop facilities were essential. The part-time services of Mr. C. P. Shah, Ceramic Expert of Bombay Potteries and Tiles Ltd., were secured on a suitable honorarium. Mr. P. M. Shah, B.Sc., with some experience in such work was appointed Assistant Chemist to assist the Pottery Expert in the analysis and tests of clays, etc. Mr. D. N. Mukerji, a graduate of the Calcutta University in Geology, was engaged to carry out a geological survey of clay beds in the different districts, under the guidance of Mr. C. P. Shah. It should be mentioned here that Mr. G. P. Ogale of the Ogale Glass Works, Ltd., voluntarily accompanied the geologist in certain investigations and rendered very useful service in the course of the survey for which the sincere thanks of this Department are due to him.

So far as the practical side of the scheme is concerned, the Bombay Potteries and Tiles Ltd. kindly agreed to co-operate with this Department by allowing their Mr. C. P. Shah to undertake the survey work and to conduct in their factory tests on clays and experiments for the manufacture of different types of glazed and unglazed wares. A wood fired furnace intended for village potters and designed by the Industrial Engineer of this Department, was also allowed to be put up in the factory and tested. A small grant was sanctioned by

Government to the Company for these facilities. It is gratifying to note that the Board of Directors of the Company co-operated fully with this Department and provided all the necessary facilities for the work. The very sincere thanks of the Department are due to the Company.

5. The report furnished by Mr. C. P. Shah, Pottery Expert, and the survey notes prepared by Mr. Mukerji (*vide* Appendix I to the Report) are both interesting and informative on the question of (1) the availability in adequate quantities of suitable raw materials in this Province, and (2) the possibility of the manufacture of glazed and unglazed wares from same, both on the village industry and factory scale. The report with detailed estimates for manufacturing units, photographs of articles made, places where raw materials are available, etc., is published in its original form. The views expressed are those of the Pottery Expert and the geologist. Both of these gentlemen have worked hard and put in their best in the production of the present report. It is hoped that the detailed information given by them will lead to the growth of the pottery industry—both village industry and factory scale—in this Province.

P. B. ADVANI,
Director of Industries.

Old Custom House Yard,
Bombay, 27th March 1940.

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