

Indigenous Craft and the Women Potters: A Study in South Kamrup, Assam

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Abstract—Earthenware craft is an oldest art of the human civilization. It is a type of pottery ware. The potters of India are known as Kumar/ Kumor/ Kumbhakar/ Kumhar who habitual this traditional occupation in India. But in Assam, one of the Seven Sister states of North-East India there is one specific small potter community which is known as 'Hira'. They are the native people of Assam. Earthenware making is their traditional occupation. The earthen pot making among the Hiras are mainly a feminine activity. The women folk of the Hiras of Assam are manufacturing the earthenware by hand without using wheel like Kumars do since the ancient times as their traditional Occupation. This is the oldest type of earthen pot making. It is their hereditary occupation through female line, which has still prevalence because of its importance, unique technique and skill. Women are the main artisans here. Earthenware craft of Hira community mainly depends on their women. Status of women has an impact on demographic change, economic productivity and social inequality. Women empowerment and development is most important for a country's development. In India, women have improved their status in different fields over the past few decades. Government of India adopted various plans and schemes for girl child and women empowerment. But here a question arises what is the economic status of indigenous women potters in Assam. But very few studies have been done on the Hira women and their socio-economic development. This paper is an attempt to focus on the Hira women, role of indigenous craft on their socio-economic development in South Kamrup of Assam.

Keywords: Earthenware Craft, Hira Women, Indigenous occupation, Development.