

**Kumbhars of Goa: A Study on the Historical Developments of the Craft
Tradition**

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I hereby declare that the data presented in this Dissertation report entitled, “Kumbhars of Goa: A Study on the Historical Developments of the Craft Tradition” is based on the results of investigations carried out by me in the name of History Discipline at the D.D. Kosambi School of Social Sciences and Behavioural Studies, Goa University under the Supervision of Dr. Nalini Naik and the same has not been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or diploma by me. Further, I understand that Goa University or its authorities will not be responsible for the correctness of observations / experimental or other findings given the dissertation.

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PREFACE

Pottery has been a fascination for me for a long time. My grandmother would cook the coconut fish curry in the *matiechem kunnem* on the firewood, which always had a unique smoky flavor, and served with *ukdem* rice is hard to forget. My mother too cooks fish and meat curries in the *kunnem*, wherein her cooking has her unique touch. The meat dishes would cook slowly on firewood which would get softer as the moisture would remain inside the pot. After the pot breaks, they were replaced by another. We had a *gurguret*, maintained by my grandmother, in which the water remained cooler in all seasons. The clay *miller* was given to me as a child which I used to peak into where my money was stored. The clay *miller* had to be broken to take out the money collected, and was replaced with a new one after that, usually during the church feast fairs. Today, this trend has changed as young children are not introduced to these clay *millers*.

We were given an assignment in our M.A History Semester 2, on Museums in Goa as part of the course “ Doing History”- An Introduction to Historical Method by Prof. Dr. Pratima Kamat, and the Goa Chitra Museum in Benaolim-Goa was an eye opener to me, here I saw all the traditional Goan pottery displayed at the museum. This indicates that traditional pottery is slowly vanishing in Goa and so are the *Kumbhars*, who are the traditional potters of Goa.

We were asked to discuss our topics to our research supervisor. I had in my mind to work on Goan pottery and the other was handicrafts of Goa. My research supervisor Ma'am Dr. Nalini Naik, suggested me to work on the *Kumbhars* of Goa as I wanted to work on Goan pottery. I am extremely grateful to my research supervisor for giving me valuable suggestions for my research. The present research will be an in-depth study on the *Kumbhars* of Goa and the Historical developments of their traditional craft.

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I would like to express my gratitude to the interviewees who gave me their time out of their busy schedules. The primary data provided by them was necessary, without which my research wouldn't have been successful. I am extremely grateful to my parents for their help and assistance and especially my father Mr. Claudio Fernandes who accompanied me to the field work places, and also my friends.

I am sincerely thankful to Mr. Victor Hugo Gomes, curator of the Goa Chitra Museum, Benaulim, Goa, for giving me inputs on the museum collection and other information related to my topic. My thanks go to the Librarian of the Goa University Library, the Librarian of the Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central Library in Panjim for helping us look for the books, periodicals, etc during our frequent visits to the Library. I am thankful to the Librarian of the Directorate of Archives and Archaeology Library for helping to find the sources. My thanks go the Librarian of Xavier's Centre of Historical Research in Porvorim, for extending help to find books on my topic. The outcome of my research required assistance from many people and I am grateful to have received it during the course of my research work.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Barazan</i>	The twelve classes were required to perform certain hereditary duties.
<i>Bebinca</i>	Goan multi-layered cake
<i>Bhakri</i>	A round flat bread made out of jowar or bajra
<i>Bhan</i>	Big clay pot for storing rice
<i>Bhatti</i>	Furnace
<i>Bindul</i>	Clay vessels for drawing water
<i>Bolinhos</i>	Goan Semolina Coconut Cookies
<i>Bolos</i>	Goan Coconut Jaggery Cake
<i>Buiiao</i>	Ceramic jars
<i>Cabidela</i>	Goan pork meat dish
<i>Canjee</i>	Soup of soft boiled rice
<i>Chaak</i>	Potter's wheel
<i>Chak</i>	Potter's wheel meaning in Hindi language
<i>Chakra</i>	Wheel
<i>Codem</i>	Clay vessel with wide mouth
<i>Combo</i>	Rooster
<i>Damonnem</i>	Clay vessel to collect toddy from the coconutshoots
<i>Dekhni</i>	Goan dance associated with life of a Devdasi girl or servant of God
<i>Dhond</i>	Clay vessel for storage purpose
<i>Dhumpel</i>	Clay incense burner
<i>Divas</i>	Small oil lamps
<i>Divaj</i>	Group of five small terracotta lamps which have wicks placed in them
<i>Dulpod</i>	Dance song with fast rhythm drawn from everyday life in Goa
<i>Feni</i>	A liquor made out of coconut or cashew juice

<i>Ghanis</i>	Mills
<i>Ghumot</i>	Earthen musical percussion
<i>Giran</i>	Grinding machine
<i>Gurgurret</i>	Clay drinking water pot
<i>Hando</i>	Big clay vessel
<i>Kalash</i>	The sacred pot
<i>Kameri</i>	Women workers
<i>Kanso</i>	Clay cups
<i>Kar</i>	Making
<i>Kashti</i>	Traditional Goan dress of a loincloth
<i>Kaushe</i>	Clay vessels used to draw water from the well
<i>Khon</i>	Huge clay pans
<i>Kumbhakara</i>	The pot maker
<i>Kumbh</i>	Clay pot
<i>Kunnem</i>	Clay vessel
<i>Kumsam</i>	Shirt
<i>Kunto</i>	Wooden stick
<i>Launi</i>	Wine making clay vessel
<i>Maat</i>	Rooster
<i>Mahajans</i>	The members of the temple association
<i>Maitul</i>	Small clay bowl
<i>Malti</i>	Clay bowls
<i>Mando</i>	Slow love song sung by the Goan Catholics
<i>Mathi</i>	Mud
<i>Mela</i>	Fair

<i>Mhadelem</i>	Clay musical instrument
<i>Miller</i>	Earthen piggy bank
<i>Modki</i>	Clay pot for cooking rice, tea, etc
<i>Namasy</i>	Land given to the village servants for their service
<i>Pakle</i>	Portuguese military men
<i>Panshula</i>	Club
<i>Samaj</i>	Association
<i>Soldados</i>	Soldier
<i>Soldar</i>	Soldier
<i>Sarapatel</i>	Goan pork meat curry
<i>Sudarshan chakra</i>	Sacred discus
<i>Sur</i>	Toddy
<i>Tambio</i>	A small clay container
<i>Thalo</i>	Clay plate
<i>Tizal</i>	Large and shallow clay vessel
<i>Touli</i>	Smallest clay vessel
<i>Tovo</i>	Clay frying pan
<i>Trishul</i>	Trident
<i>Tulsi Vrindavan</i>	Clay container fixed to ground with the sacred basil planted in it
<i>Ukdem</i>	Goan parboiled rice
<i>Vindalho</i>	Goan pork meat curry
<i>Zatras</i>	Festivals of the deity
<i>Zotir</i>	Potter's wheel meaning in Konkani
<i>Zontor</i>	Potter's wheel
<i>Shigmo</i>	Spring festival celebrated by the Hindus of Goa

ABSTRACT

The present study deals with the Kumbhars of Goa which is a study on the Historical developments of the traditional craft. In terms of the Kumbhars of Goa, the study has dealt with their position in the Goan society, and the importance of their services that they rendered to the villages of Goa. It has traced the etymology of the word Kumbhar, it has also spoken in brief about pottery-making in India, and in brief introduction is provided on the pottery-making in Goa. It firstly speaks about the position of the kumbhars in Goan society during the Portuguese period, and their influence on the craft. The study has spoken about the villages where the Kumbhars were found in Goa, and their lifestyle and traditions. Thereafter it focuses on the techniques used, process involved, and specializations in the craft of the Kumbhars. It also deals with the Post-Liberation developments like the initiatives of the government for uplifting the Kumbhars, role of tourism, museums, then about the problems and challenges faced by the Kumbhars, and lastly about the significance of the craft. I have had great fascination towards Goan pottery since my childhood days, and about the Kumbhars and how they practice this craft is not known much by us, and also because this rich traditional craft of Goa is slowly declining in Goa, and many of us are not aware about this change taking place in Goa. Interviews were conducted personally with the Kumbhars. Observation method was helpful, wherein I could describe and analyze and write down. Other fieldwork places like museums, Handicraft department, weekly markets, fairs, were visited. Secondary source data was obtained from the Library. Through my study I have found out that Goan pottery is to some extent influenced by the Portuguese Colonial presence in Goa. The Kumbhars practicing this traditional craft have declined drastically in Goa.

Keywords: Goa, Kumbhars, Pottery-making, Portuguese period, Post- Liberation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The traditional occupations of Goa are a depiction of our rich culture and traditions. The people of Goa, since time immemorial, have been practicing traditional occupations and catering to the needs of society. The traditional occupations were handed down from one generation to the next generation, which were continued as a traditional practice. Some people have discontinued and opted for more lucrative businesses or gone abroad for the same. The villages of Goa were self-sufficient and autonomous institutions, with agriculture as the main occupation and oil-*ghanis*, cotton weaving, pottery-making, etc. as subsidiary occupations.¹ There were castes based on the occupations in the ancient and medieval social setup of Goa, like the barbers, washermen, oilmen, tailors, potters, and cobblers.² They all provide services to people, which may seem basic in our day-to-day lives, but are very important for us.

Etymology

The Kumbhars are the potters. The origin of the name Kumbhar comes from the Sanskrit words *kumbh* which means jug of water and *kar* means the one who creates it.³ The word Kumbhar comes from the Sanskrit word *Kumbhak*, which means those who make earthen

¹ V. T. Gune, *Gazetteer of the Union Territory: Goa, Daman, and Diu District Gazetteer, Pt. 1*, (Goa. Panaji: The Government Printing Press, 1979), 367.

² V. R. Mitragotri, *A Socio-Cultural History of Goa from the Bhojas to the Vijayanagara*. (Panjim: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999), 71.

³ A. B. de. Bragança Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu*. Trans. Maria Aurora Couto. (New Delhi: Penguin group, 2008), 42.

vessels.⁴ The word Kumar is in konkani and Kumbhar is in Marathi comes from the Sanskrit word *kumbh* which means clay pot.⁵

Pottery-making in India

Since the Neolithic period, the wheel-turned pottery has been in use.⁶ The working with the clay is one of the earliest skills that was developed by men. This development became an essential part of the lives of the people. The soft alluvial clay was pounded and toys, deities, animals, trees, flowers, lamps, carts, etc, were created out of it. During the train journey, in the clay cups tea, sweets, or water was served. Once they were utilized they were thrown out. Clay vessels, some fertility symbols of mother goddess, were used by the people in the states of India. 5,000 years ago, these were worshipped by the people. The clay carts that were made were being used by the children while playing since the pre-historic times.⁷

In India, the ones who craft the clay items and then do the firing belong to a specific caste called Kumbhars, or potters. They hold monopoly of this clay craft in India. In traditional Indian societies, that is the working on the potter's wheel or firing of the clay items was restricted to the Kumbhars.⁸

In Hindu mythology, during the marriage of God Shiva and Goddess Parvati, they required the earthen pots, which are kept in the four corners around a groom and bride, to bless their marriage. The pots were needed so Shiva asked Prajapati, the Lord of Creativity to create these pots, and required tools to make them. Thus Shiva gave his *Sudarshan chakra* to be the wheel, and the *trishul* as the turning stick, and clay was provided by rubbing some of the skin

⁴ K. S. Singh, *People of India- Goa, Vol XXI*. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1993),132.

⁵ Heta Pandit, *Hidden Hands: Masterbuilders of Goa*. (Porvorim: Heta Pandit and The Heritage Network, 2003), 134.

⁶ Mitragotr, *A Socio-Cultural History of Goa*, 61.

⁷ i, *A Socio-Cultural History of Goa from the Bhojas to the Vijayanagara*, 61.

⁸ Pandurang Phaldessai, "A Culture in Clay." *The Navhind Times*. October 25, 1999.

⁸ Nora Fisher, *Mud, Mirror and Thread: Folk Traditions of Rural India*. (Ahmedabad: Mapin Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 1996), 205.

from his body, and he plucked one hair from his head, which was to act as a string to cut off the clay pots from the wheel after they were ready, and his *panshula* which was for beating demons acted as the mallet meant for giving shape to the clay pots. Goddess Parvati provided some of her blood which was to decorate the pots red. Thus Prajapati created the clay pots and Shiva and Parvati were married. God Shiva was so satisfied with this act that he ordered that the descendants of Prajapati would be the makers of earthen utensils, and thus the creators of *kumbha* are called Kumbhara.⁹

Women were forbidden to touch the wheel, because the wheel was used by the male, as the symbol of the male principal and the clay as the symbol of a shrine.¹⁰ The women would perform the tasks of decorating the clay vessels and sculptures, through painting, polishing, slipping, and the knowledge of which is passed down from generation to generation.¹¹ In the 11th century glazes, were introduced by the Muslim invaders and later by the British in India.¹²

The earthenware of Goa is well known for its rich red color, having a charm and style of its own. The utility items like attractive water and flower pots is what it is known for, Yet here is a wide range of figures like that of sculpture, such as an old man or woman with a child, two children playing, and a variety of other such themes. Then there are panels that portray religious and historical stories. In Goa, this kind are of artistic pottery is specially found in Bordem in Bicholim, who are amongst the well known for this art form.¹³

⁹ Stephen. P Huyler, *Gifts of Earth: Terracotta and Clay Sculptures of India*. U.S.A: Grantha Corporation, 1996.

¹⁰ Phaldessai, "A Culture in Clay."

¹¹ Huyler, *Gifts of Earth*, 42

¹² Huyler, *Gifts of Earth*, 44

¹³ Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. *The Glory of Indian Handicrafts*. New Delhi: Clarion Books, 1985.

Pottery-Making in Goa

The Kumbhar community of Goa is engaged in pottery-making, and the entire family contributes one way or another in the process of making pottery. In Goa, there are Hindu Kumbhars and Catholic Kumbhars.¹⁴ The traditional knowledge and skills of this art form are handed down from one generation of the Kumbhar to the next generation. The Portuguese colonial influences can be seen in the pottery items in Goa. The elements from the Portuguese period are incorporated into the craft. The process involved in pottery-making is challenging and requires a lot of handwork and patience. The wheels of the potters molded clay vessels, some of which are *budkulo*, *kunnem*, *tizal*, *malti*, *codem*, *gurgurret*, *launi*, *dhond*, *dhumpel*, *miller*, and *ghumot*.¹⁵

The Kumbhars use the clay from the earth and return it to the earth itself, so their craft is eco-friendly. Our ancestors stayed close to the environment with sustainable practices. Clay, water, and wood, are the essential elements required for pottery-making. The techniques for pottery-making are moulding clay on the potter's wheel, hand-building, and preparing using moulds. There is a long process involved in pottery-making, like the preparation of clay, the making of pottery items, the firing of the pottery, and at the end marketing of the finished products.

Pottery is a living link to the distant past and one of our rich craft traditions. It helps us to trace the lifestyle of our ancestors. The staple diet of Goa that is fish, curry, rice is traditionally cooked in clay pots. Thus, pottery is part of Goa's rich culture. It is therefore important to preserve and promote these traditional skills and knowledge for posterity. The Kumbhar makes clay vessels on the potter's wheel and his creations revolve around our lives. We all have at some point or another in our lives encountered pottery items, felt the touch of

¹⁴ Singh, *People of India- Goa*, Vol XXI, 132.

¹⁵ Pantaleao Fernandes, *Outdoor Museums of Goa*. (Benaolim: The Word Publications, 2021), 114.

earthenware, heard the sound of the *ghumot*, collected money in the clay *miller* or piggy bank as part of our childhood memories, seen a terracotta rooster on the rooftops, had food from a clay pot, or seen at a museum. It is always a fascinating sight to watch an array of pottery items lined up at a market place and the Kumbhars spelling their wares. We are connected to or have a relationship with pottery items made by the Kumbhars because they are part of our lived experiences.

The services of the village servants like carpenter, blacksmith, potter, mahar, and others were closely associated with the agricultural needs of the village.¹⁶ The utensils and equipment of a traditional Goan kitchen were made of clay, brass, copper, wood, bamboo, or stone.¹⁷ The food cooked in clay vessels had a unique flavor, which was cooked on firewood, and it has health benefits, as compared to the aluminum ones. This trend of cooking on the firewood has also witnessed a change. In recent times, we have seen that clay vessels have been replaced by steel, aluminum, and others, and thus the face of the Goan kitchen has transformed. As there is less demand, the Kumbhars practicing this craft have declined in Goa. Through this study, an attempt will be made to research on this area of study, document the craft, and raise awareness about how, at a rapid pace, pottery-making is declining in Goa. The Kumbhars practicing this craft are found in places like Bicholim, Vddem-Socorro in Porvorim in Bardez Taluka, Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka, Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, Advai in Sattari Taluka.

The Kumbhars face various problems and challenges during the process of pottery-making, like the procuring of the raw material, which includes clay, wood, labor requirements, transportation, etc. Also, the demand for their pottery has declined, due to alternatives available for clay vessels in the market. There are initiatives taken up by the government to

¹⁶ Sheela Srinivasan, *Goa: A Social History (1640-1750)*. (Panaji: RajhaunsVitaran, 2012), 156.

¹⁷ Fatima Da Silva Gracias, *Cozinha de Goa: History and Tradition of Goan Food*. (Goa: Goa 1556 & Broadway Publishing House, 2012), 140.

empower artisans with certain schemes. Goa is a tourism destination and receives both international and domestic tourists. The tourists are very interested in Goan pottery items. The hotels in Goa are investing in clay items made by the Kumbhars, The museums like the Goa Chitra Museum in Benaulim in Salcete Taluka, and the Ancestral Goa Museum in Loutolim in Salcete, have kept on display pottery items that showcase our rich ancestral heritage. Through this study attempt will be made to preserve by documenting the traditional craftsmanship of the Kumbhars of Goa, and help us understand the current status of pottery-making in Goa.

Identification of Research Problem

The present research will focus in detail on the documentation of the craft practiced by the Kumbhars in different villages in Goa, on aspects like the significance of the Kumbhars in Goan society, the unique features of the craft, emphasizing both utilitarian and decorative items, the different techniques used by the Kumbhars, which has not been studied extensively. This study will also look into the post-liberation developments in preserving the craft and the problems and challenges faced currently by the Kumbhars of Goa.

Objectives

- To trace the etymology and history of the Kumbhars of Goa.
- To analyze the position of the Kumbhars in Goan society during the Portuguese period.
- To document the process involved, techniques used, and specializations in the craft of the Kumbhars of Goa.
- To highlight the post-liberation developments and their role in preserving and promoting the craft of the Kumbhars of Goa.
- To investigate the problems and challenges faced by the Kumbhars of Goa.

Literature Review

In *Ethnography of Goa, Daman, and Diu* by A. B. de Bragança Pereira, it talks about the Hindu jatis, or the castes of Goa, which includes the Kumbhar. The author has discussed about the etymology of the word Kumbhar. It speaks about the customs that each caste group followed, such as the taking of meals in the homes of the caste groups. The author has spoken about how the Kumbhars would make the clay pots on the wheel.¹⁸

Teotonio R. de Souza's work, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History 2nd edition*, gives information on the village servants. It mentions the services of the artisans, which includes, the Kumbhar, who supplied clay vessels to the villages, and catered to their needs. Other aspects related to the artisans are discussed, such as the *namasy* land assigned to the village artisans. This is an important work as it provides insights into the services of the artisans in the Goan villages.¹⁹

Goa: Gaunkari (The Old Village Associations) by Rui Gomes Pereira speaks about the artisans and the payment to the communities for their services in the villages. It emphasizes the caste and classes of Goa. And that the wards were named after the professions of the communities. This work helps gain better understanding on the artisans in the villages of Goa.²⁰

Faces of Goa: A Journey through the History and Cultural Evolution of Goa and Other Communities Influenced by the Portuguese by Karin Larsen provides information on the Kumbhar community in Rivona-Goa. It speaks about their lifestyle, traditions, the process of pottery-making, and the marketing of the pottery. It can be noticed that, the author is

¹⁸ Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu*.

¹⁹ Teotonio. R. De Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History*. (Saligao: Broadway book centre, 1979).

²⁰ Rui Gomes Pereira, *Goa: Gaunkari (The Old Village Associations)*, ed. A. Gomes Pereira, trans. Angelo das Neves Souza, vol. 2. (Panaji: A. Gomes Pereira, 1981).

speaking about the decline of pottery-making in Goa at the end of the twentieth century. The author has noted that the younger generations of the Kumbhars crave a modern lifestyle.²¹

The PhD thesis titled *Craftsmen and Artisans in Goa (A.D. 1000 to 1700)* by Christopher. H. De Souza serves as an important source as it gives reference to the Kumbhar during the pre-Portuguese and Portuguese periods. It speaks about the caste system and the caste divisions based on occupations, which includes the Kumbhar. The author has spoken about the village community system of Goa, the village artisans who served the villages, and the wards which were sometimes based on particular professional groups. The author has discussed some craft practices of Goa, which includes pottery made by the Kumbhars of Goa. This is an in-depth study on craftsmen and artisans of Goa, during the pre-Portuguese and Portuguese periods, it gives insights on aspects of Goan villages like the caste-system, village artisans, payment of the artisans, ward names, craft practices, etc.²²

Saryu Doshi's work, *Goa- Cultural Patterns*, contains a chapter on the Kumbhar community, talks about the Kumbhars during the Portuguese period. The author speaks about the ceremonial privileges of the Kumbhars, and that they made clay idols, pots, etc. which they sold at the fairs. The author discusses about the Hindu and Christian Kumbhars during the Portuguese period. The other chapter in the book is about the turning point in the making of clay items. The author speaks about tourism, its importance, and the efforts of Goa Handicrafts and Rural Small-scale Industries Development Corporation. It also speaks about the terracotta work of the potters of Bicholim. There are illustrations provided, such as a lady

²¹ Karin Larsen, *Faces of Goa: A Journey through the History and Cultural Evolution of Goa and other Communities influenced by the Portuguese*. (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 1998).

²² Christopher. H. De Souza, "Craftsmen and Artisans in Goa (A.D. 1000 to 1700)." PhD thesis, (Goa University, 2020).

carrying clay pots in the basket on her head, the Kumbhars working on the potter's wheel, women selling the earthenware utensils, etc.²³

Pantaleao Fernandes's book titled *Traditional Occupations of Goa* is an important work on the various traditional occupations of Goa. The author has made an important contribution through this work, highlighting Goa's traditional occupations. The work includes documentation of the Kumbhar, Jose Caitan Sequeira, from Succor Vaddo, Porvorim, making pottery on the traditional wheel. The author has described the various pottery items that the Kumbhar makes. It speaks about the process involved in pottery-making from the procuring of the clay to the baking of the pots. The problems faced by the Kumbhar in this traditional occupation are discussed. The book also gives reference to the earthenware utensils required by different occupational groups like the toddy-tapper who needs the *damonnem*, the *launni* required to prepare cashew *feni* of Goa.²⁴

Vinayak Vishnu Khedekar's work, titled *Goa: Land, Life, and Legacy*, speaks about the castes or the social structure that existed in Goa, which included Kumbhar. The author has discussed that the Goans maintained their caste even after conversion, and among Christians there are also Kumbhars. The author provides information on the Kumbhar community, the community deity, the clay items that they make, and about the settlement of the Kumbhars in the olden days.²⁵

The book entitled *Hidden Hands: Masterbuilders of Goa* by Heta Pandit, contains a chapter titled clay craft. It provides information about the etymology of the word Kumbhar, and the meaning of the word Kumbhar by different scholars. The author speaks about the status of the Kumbhars in Goan society through proverbs and folklore. The author has provided the

²³ Saryu Doshi, *Goa- Cultural Patterns*. (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983).

²⁴ Pantaleao Fernandes, *Traditional Occupations of Goa*. (Benaulim: The Word Publications, 2015).

²⁵ Vishnu Vinayak Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy*. (Panaji: Directorate of Art & Culture, 2016).

Konkani proverbs associated to the Kumbhars and has mentioned that the proverbs were an attack on the lower classes of Goan society. The process involved in the production of pottery is documented by the author through personal interviews with the Kumbhars, Jose Vales and his wife, Tereza Maria Vales. The tasks carried out by women in pottery-making are also discussed.²⁶

Pandurang Phaldessai, in his work *Kaleidoscopic Goa: A Cultural Atlas*, speaks about the rich handicraft traditions of Goa. The crafts created by the artisans in Goa, which include pottery and terracotta, are an important aspect of Goan homes. There is reference given to the clay modeling work of potters from Bicholim, and to the religious figurines that are created by them. The author also speaks about the folk musical instruments of Goa, like the *ghumot*, which is in the form of an earthen pot, and about its significance in the folk festivals of Goa.²⁷

One of the important studies on this topic was conducted by Reyna Sequeira in her research work titled *Sociological Study of Kumbhar community in Goa*. It gives information on the places where the Kumbhars are located in Goa. The author speaks about social, economic, and cultural life of the Kumbhar community of Goa, and differentiates between the Hindu Kumbhars, and Catholic Kumbhars of Goa. It speaks in terms of the family system, education, food habits, dress, language, marriage, customs, festivals, etc. It speaks about the causes of the decline of the Kumbhars community in Goa. Also, suggestions for the revival of the Kumbhar community in Goa are provided. It contains documentation of the process involved in pottery-making through illustrations. This study is focused on the community study of the Kumbhars community of Goa and the social, economic, and cultural aspects of the Kumbhar community of Goa.²⁸

²⁶ Pandit, *Hidden Hands: Masterbuilders of Goa*.

²⁷ Pandurang Phaldessai, *Kaleidoscopic Goa: A Cultural Atlas*. (Panjim: Vasantrao Dempo Education and Research Foundation, 2004).

²⁸ Reyna Sequeira, *Sociological Study of Kumbhar community in Goa*. (Goa, 2013).

“Soil that speaks”- Art of clay idol making by Prashanti Ajgaonkar is a detailed work on the art of clay idol making in Goa. It speaks about the Kumbhar, the etymology, and the five elements that are important in the making of clay items. Information is provided on the different types of clay art, that is, pottery, terracotta, sculptures, and seals. It also speaks in brief about Goan pottery. The author has spoken about the origins of the art of clay, the Kumbhar community of Goa, the origin of the word Kumbhar, and their clay ware production.²⁹

People of India- Goa, Vol XXI by K. S. Singh, contains a chapter titled Kumbhar, which provides information on the Kumbhar community in Goa. It first speaks about the origin of the word Kumbhar. It speaks about the places where the Kumbhars are found in Goa, Information about the traditions of the Kumbhars in terms of dress, food, marriage, deity, certain customs when it comes to sharing food with other castes, delivery, naming ceremony, and death rituals. The book also discusses in brief the process of making pottery and the clay items made by the Kumbhars. It also talks about the facilities available for the Kumbhars, like electricity, roads, banking facilities, postal facilities, and the public distribution system.³⁰

The Goan Village Communes by Olivinho J. F. Gomes speaks about the importance of the services of the artisans to the needs of society. It mentions that the Kumbhar, or the potter, provided services to the villages for agricultural and domestic needs.³¹

Goa and its Future by Sarto Esteves speaks about the arts and crafts of Goa. The author has discussed that, certain villages since times immemorial, have specialized in certain crafts. The author has spoken about Bicholim, where certain families make figures of clay. The author has mentioned how the tasks are carried out in the family. The author also mentions at

²⁹ Prashanti Ajgaonkar, *“Soil that speaks”- Art of clay idol making*. (Panjim: Directorate of Art and Culture, 2011).

³⁰ Singh, *People of India- Goa, Vol XXI*.

³¹ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *The Goan Village Communes*. (Goa: Vasantrao Dempo Education and Research Foundation, 2005).

the end of the topic that the artisans work in primitive conditions and that the government should take steps to promote these traditional professions.³²

Research Design and Methodology

The Personal observation method is applied at the field work sites for data collection on the topic of study. The steps involved and the techniques used in making pottery by the Kumbhars are observed and documented accordingly. The personal observation method helps to distinguish between the techniques used by the Kumbhars and the different types of pottery items made by Kumbhars from different places. The objects displayed at the museums are observed to understand the past and draw an understanding on the present scenario. This method is very useful as it allows us to describe our own experiences during the fieldwork. The description provided is unique, as it allows us to give our own perspectives based on our observation of the subject of study.

The interviewing method is used to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic of study. The interview method is a qualitative research method that is helpful and allows us to ask both closed-ended and open-ended questions about the subject of study. The subject of the study is free to express their experiences and feelings on the topic. The Kumbhars from Bicholim, Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim in Bardez Taluka, Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka, Advoi in Sattari Taluka, Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, are interviewed. This method is of great help when it comes to understanding the problems and challenges faced by the Kumbhars of Goa. Interviews were scheduled with the Kumbhars, and accordingly, discussion was undertaken.

Photography and video documentation was undertaken at the field work sites during the assigned period of time. Photos and videos are taken of Kumbhars making the pottery, and

³² Sarto Esteves, *Goa and its Future*. (Bombay: Manaktalas, 1966)

the different types of pottery items made by the Kumbhars. The photos were taken personally, at the field work places, and are incorporated into the dissertation.

Museum like the Goa Chitra museum in Benaulim, in Salcete Taluka, has pottery items displayed for the public. Ancestral Goa museum, Loutolim in Salcete Taluka, also displays our ancestral heritage, which includes the Kumbhar making pottery. The museums are preserving the pottery for posterity, and providing knowledge to the public. These museums were visited during the assigned time period, and data was obtained. The objects displayed at the museum were studied, to gain a better understanding on the topic of study. Photographs were taken of the pottery displayed at the museums.

We find the pottery in some Goan homes, which are studied. Also, the terracotta statues on the rooftops can be seen even today in the old Indo-Portuguese houses of Goa. As part of the colonial influence of the Portuguese, they are kept the same way as they were during the Portuguese period in Goa. These terracotta statues of roosters, soldiers, and lions are a depiction of our rich culture, made by the Kumbhars.

The Goa Handicraft and Rural Small-scale Industries Corporation limited in Panjim is helpful to gain data on the schemes and subsidies provided for the pottery artisans and the process involved in availing of the schemes. Also, a list of pottery artisans who are registered with the corporation was utilized. It helps to find out the artisans practicing this craft in Goa.

The Gazetteer of the Union Territory of Goa, Daman, and Diu is utilized to gain data on the topic. In order to gain an in-depth study on the topic and to substantiate the primary source data, secondary sources like the books, e-books, PhD thesis, journal articles, research papers, newspaper articles, and websites are utilized.

The data for this study was obtained from, Goa Chitra Museum, Benaolim- Goa, Ancestral Goa Museum, Loutolim- Goa, Goa handicraft and Rural Small-scale Industries Corporation limited, Panjim- Goa. The sources like books, thesis, newspaper articles are obtained from Goa University Library, Taleigao Plateau, Krishnadas Shama Goa State Central library, Panjim-Goa, Xavier's Centre of Historical Research, Porvorim-Goa, Directorate of Archives and Archaeology, Panjim- Goa.

Scheme of Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

The chapter one gives an introduction to the topic of study, followed by the identification of research problem, hypothesis, objectives, literature review, research design and methodology, scheme of chapters, scope and relevance. The introductory chapter also includes the historical background of the topic, and in brief about the pottery-making in India by the Kumbhars followed by pottery making in Goa..

Chapter 2: Kumbhars: Portuguese Period

The chapter two speaks on the origin and history of the Kumbhars in Goa, and the position of the Kumbhars during the Portuguese period, wherein the services of the Kumbhars to the Goan villages will be studied. The elements of the Portuguese colonial rule in Goa incorporated in the pottery are discussed. Places where pottery making is practiced in Goa by the Kumbhars, and their Lifestyle and traditions are documented.

Chapter 3: Kumbhars at Work: The Process, Techniques, and Specializations

The third chapter focuses on the unique features of the craft. It deals with the process involved from preparing the clay to making the pottery and finally firing of the pottery items in the kiln. The first step is the procuring of the raw materials for pottery-making which

includes the sourcing of clay, wood, which requires labor, transportation, etc. The techniques used by the Kumbhars such as hand-building, wheel-throwing, and pottery prepared by using molds are documented. Their specialization in the craft in terms of the types of pottery items made by the Kumbhars, they also give shapes to the pots in the desired way. The marketing of the finished products at the weekly markets, church fairs, wholesale, etc. is discussed.

Chapter 4: Post-Liberation Developments and Changing Trends

The fourth chapter contains the state Initiatives for handicraft development, which includes the schemes and subsidies that are available for the pottery artisans and how they benefit them. The tourists as the buyers of the pottery items will be discussed. The role of museums is to display the pottery to the public to make them aware of their heritage, and preserve the pottery of the past for posterity. The problems and challenges faced by the Kumbhars are analyzed, in terms of procuring the raw material, preparing the pottery, loss faced by the Kumbhars, and also to market pottery items, when the demand for their pottery is declining in Goa. The significance of the craft is the importance of the craft in terms of culture, economy, religion, and environmental sustainability, in terms of how pottery is created by the Kumbhars using resources such as clay, wood, water that are sustainable in nature. Cultural value in terms of pottery is a very important aspect of Goan homes. Also, the craft fulfils the economic needs of the Kumbhars.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The fifth chapter is the last chapter, which concludes with analysis of the entire study. It addresses the main points of the findings of the research problem. It further discusses the scope for future studies on this topic.

Scope and Relevance

The present study is important because pottery is part of Goa's vibrant culture and traditions. It is one of the oldest crafts, practiced by the Kumbhars of Goa. The knowledge and skills of this craft were handed down to them by their ancestors. In the olden times, clay vessels were in everyday use. The *ghumot* and the *gurgurret*, showcase our rich culture, are made by the Kumbhars of Goa. It helps us understand the social, cultural, religious, and economic aspects of the history of Goa. Today, the craft is declining in Goa, and it will continue to decline if pottery-making is not preserved and promoted, and the traditional knowledge and skills of this craft are not passed on to the next generations of Kumbhars. The Kumbhars of Goa have kept alive this traditional craft, even after facing many hardships.

There are very few studies undertaken on this topic in a larger context. The documentation of the craft will help to preserve this dying art form of the Kumbhars of Goa. There is scope on this topic for research, as the Kumbhars are practicing pottery in different places in Goa, like Bicholim, Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim in Bardez Taluka, Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka, Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, Advoi in Sattari Taluka. The Kumbhars were interviewed, and the craft practiced is documented from these places. The documentation of the craft was undertaken as part of the fieldwork.

Through this study, an attempt is made to document the unique features of the craft tradition of the Kumbhars of Goa. The origin and history of the Kumbhar will be traced. The position of the Kumbhars during the Portuguese period is important to analyze to understand the importance of the Kumbhar in Goan society, and the Portuguese colonial influence on the craft is discussed. The places where pottery making is practiced and their lifestyle and traditions are studied.

The Goan pottery depicts our rich culture and heritage and how we lived in the past; thus, its significance is studied. The process involved, the techniques used, and specializations of the Kumbhars of Goa are studied. The initiatives of the government for the empowering of the pottery artisans are discussed. Goa is known as a tourist hotspot worldwide and they show interest in the pottery items prepared by the Goan Kumbhars, so the role of tourism is studied. The museums like Goa Chitra, Ancestral Goa Museum are preserving the Pottery of Goa for posterity, and thus their role is studied. The problems and challenges faced currently by the Kumbhars are also discussed.

CHAPTER 2

KUMBHARS: PORTUGUESE PERIOD

The Kumbhars have been practicing pottery for centuries, and because of which it is considered as the oldest professions. The Kumbhars have served the Goan villages since time immemorial. They provide the clay items which are utilitarian, ritualistic, and decorative in nature. They had an important status, as they were serving for the requirements of the villages and temples. Today they are declining in Goa, because of the decrease in the demand for their earthenware. The Portuguese colonial influence can be seen in some of the Goan pottery produced by the Kumbhars of Goa, wherein they drew elements from the Portuguese Colonial presence in Goa.

Social Structure

The social structure of the Goan society was determined by the caste system as is the case in majority of the Indian states. In the social hierarchy the Brahmins were at the top, after them were the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, the Shudras, and finally the untouchables. The first three classes had special status in society. Following the Vaishyas in the social hierarchy came the Shudras, who included the toddy-tappers, milkmen, fishermen, carpenters, washermen, potters, blacksmiths, and other artisans. This social structure also included the agricultural labourers, and they provided services to the upper class people of Goa.³³

The Kumbhars in Goa is one of the sub-castes. In the traditional Goan society there were castes which were based on the occupation they were involved in, and eventually communities developed which was based on common profession that they were practicing.³⁴

The Kumbhar community in Goa is small in number, and they are predominant in the

³³ Larsen, *Faces of Goa*, 91.

³⁴ Ajgaonkar, "Soil that speaks"- *Art of clay idol making*, 12

neighboring state of Maharashtra.³⁵ The origin of the Goan Kumbhar is not known, however their present techniques show a kinship with that of the potters of Maharashtrian state.³⁶ In Goa there are wards in some villages in Goa where the kumbhars families live.

The Konkani proverbs in Goa like “*Kumbharak modki dhod na*” or a potter does not have a usable pot in his own house, reflect their status in Goan society who are pictured as lazy, incompetent and greedy.³⁷ The Goan Kumbhar was portrayed as having low status in Goan society, as earlier there was not much value given to them and their craft.

There were a specific number of servants in the Goan villages, who provided services which hugely determined the economic self-sufficiency of a village. The Kumbhar, was responsible to provide clay vessels for the village needs, for household needs, as well as clay vessels meant for watering of the fields by the people. The servants were supposed to obtain the payment for their services from *namasy* lands, which were rent free lands given to the village servants for the service they rendered.³⁸ The land grants were irreversible, and the servant and the grant were hereditary.³⁹

The system of Gaunkari existed in the villages of Goa. The Gaunkari or village communities were managed by Gaunkars who looked after the governance of society in Goa. The *barazan* were the twelve classes, were supposed to render the hereditary duties which they had inherited from their ancestors. The services provided were according to the social hierarchy, wherein the Lohar or blacksmith, Sutar or carpenter, Kumbhar or potter, and Sonar or goldsmith, were the important craftsmen. They had privileges and were responsible for catering to the needs of the society by providing vessels and ornaments. There were also

³⁵ P. P. Shirodkar, *Goa Cultural Trends (Seminar papers)*. (Panaji: P. P. Shirodkar, Director, Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museum, Government of Goa, 1998), 38

³⁶ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patters*. 116

³⁷ Pandit, *Hidden Hands*. 134.

³⁸ De Souza, *Medieval Goa: A Socio-Economic History*, 55-56.

³⁹ B. H. Baden-Powell, “The Villages of Goa in The early Sixteenth Century,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. (April 1900): 268.

other traditional occupations like washerman, the shoemaker, and others. The Kumbhars played an important role in providing services to the people in Goa, in terms of clay utensils and figurines.⁴⁰ The temples in Goa were rendered services by the priests, carpenters, washermen, ironsmiths, potters, barbers, dancers, and others, who were given the *namasy* lands, which were provided to them by the *Mahajans* for their services.⁴¹

Portuguese Elements in the Craft

The various artisans in Goa like the goldsmiths, potters, washermen, leather workers, met the daily needs of the people of Goa. During the Portuguese period, the religious orders in Goa utilized the services of the craftsmen,⁴² The Christian Kumbhars of Goa, had provided services to the Franciscan friars in Bardez in North Goa, and the Jesuits in Salcete in South Goa, and these Christian Kumbhars would usually decorate the ridges of their clay pots with floral designs. The majority of the Christian Kumbhars were found in Bardez and Salcette, as these were the old conquest regions of the Portuguese in Goa. The Portuguese in Goa did not encourage and seemed not concerned about the development and the status of pottery and ceramics in Goa. The Hindu Kumbhars from Bicholim, were skilled in crafting clay idols, who are the traditional clay idol makers of Goa.⁴³

Vishnu Kunkolienkar was a brilliant sculptor and had been well known as the patriarch among the potters of Goa. He had brought in a revolution of pottery-making in Goa and made figurines and bibelots, which were depictions of everyday life in Goa, rural realities, and pastoral scenes. Themes that were depicted include a man husking coconut, a peasant with his plough, mother and child, a man smoking a hookah, a child sucking his thumb. It was

⁴⁰ Pandurang Phaldessai. *Goa: Folklore Studies*. (Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2011), 131-132.

⁴¹ Paul Axelrod and Fuerch.A Michelle. "Portuguese Orientalism and the Making of the Village Communities of Goa," 446.

⁴² De Souza, "Craftsmen and Artisans in Goa (A.D. 1000 to 1700), 325.

⁴³ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patters*. 116.

because of these efforts that in the 1940's, the Portuguese understood the capability of the Hindu Kumbhars of Goa.⁴⁴ It transformed the simple earthenware of Goa with some artistic elements in the craft, to becoming more decorative in nature.

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim says that “Goan Pottery is slightly influenced by the Portuguese, example the *gurgurret*, which has the *combo* is a Portuguese element, then the *soldar*, *combo* on the rooftops, lions on gate posts, which the old Portuguese houses have, are all Portuguese (Fig. 2.1).”⁴⁵

The *gurgurret* is a clay water cooler, artistically crafted by the Goan Kumbhars, which is unique to Goa. The rooster is the National bird of Portugal, who colonized Goa for 450 years. *Combo*, *gurgurret*, or *maat* are the names by which the rooster is known in Goa.⁴⁶ The water from the *gurgurret* is poured out through the beak. In the old days, people used to cover long journey during the summer months, and so these *gurgurrets* with water were kept outside the houses, with a glass for the people to drink from them.⁴⁷ One can find these rooster head *gurgurrets* on sale at the Mapusa Market crafted by the Kumbhars (Fig. 2.2).

The country tiles made by the Goan potters were held as better than the Mangalore tiles, they would allow fresh cool air to flow in the inside of the house. They were preferred by the people in terms of the amount of their construction, yet they were not durable and also it was difficult to maintain them, as they would break easily and would require to be replaced annually. In the 1920's, many houses in the Salcete District replaced these clay country-tiled roofs with that of the Mangalore tiled-roofs, as they proved not favorable for them.⁴⁸ The potters from Bicholim seemed favorable in making these country tiles, because of the suitable

⁴⁴ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patters*. 116

⁴⁵ Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Interviewed by Crisma Seny Fernandes, October 30, 2023.

⁴⁶ Avril Antao, "The Gurguret and its roosting tales." *Herald Goa*. October 26, 2022. <https://www.heralldgoa.in/Cafe/The-Gurguret-and-its-roosting-ales/195711>

⁴⁷ Tony Fernandes. The Gurgurret- Clay water dispenser, Goa. India. August 27, 2012. https://tonferns.blogspot.com/2012/08/blog-post_6326.html?m=1

⁴⁸ Pandit, *Hidden Hands*. 140.

clay available there. They procured the clay from the banks of the nearby river, which was then mixed with water, then the clay was thrown on the wheel, cylinder shape was formed, which were cut into two with a string and kept to dry.⁴⁹

The clay statues or finials of roosters, soldiers, and lions, are typically found on the rooftops or on gateposts of the Indo-Portuguese styled houses of Goa, which became a significant aspect of the architecture of the Goan houses. They provide a glimpse into the family which lives in that house. The statues of a soldier known as *soldados*, would mean that the family member was in the army services or was a soldier. Some years later after the Liberation of Goa, the families of the freedom fighters too started putting these terracotta statues in their homes. The clay statues of roosters are commonly seen in most of the Indo-Portuguese styled houses of Goa. The rooster of Barcelos is a common depiction in Portugal (Fig. 2.3).⁵⁰

The terracotta finials on the rooftops were in the form of a soldier boy, a child in uniform blowing a trumpet, and a rooster, wherein the rooster symbolizes the ones that used to be seen, usually crowing from the rooftops of the Goan houses, yet they could be artistic in nature. These terracotta roosters are displayed at the Goa Chitra museum in Benaulim in South Goa (Fig. 3.4).⁵¹ As there was increasing demand for fanciful clay items like the finials for rooftops, the demand for earthen utensils did not diminish. The demand for clay vessels, *tulsi vrindavans*, and finials for rooftops in the middle of the 20th century was the same level, as it did for the pottery items in the middle of the 18th century.⁵² Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim says, “The Portuguese helped a lot, what is helpful that is important.”

⁴⁹ Pandit, *Hidden Hands*, 64.

⁵⁰ Venita Gomes. "You will never guess the story behind these architectural elements in Goan homes." September 20, 2022. <https://www.gomantaktimes.com/my-goa/art-culture/you-will-never-guess-the-story-behind-these-architectural-elements-in-goan-homes>

⁵¹ Pandit, *Hidden Hands*, 64

⁵² Pandit, *Hidden Hands*, 64.

Kumbhar Villages in Goa

The Kumbhar community is found among both Hindus and Catholics, where they live in particular wards in some villages found across the state of Goa.⁵³ There were wards in the villages which were named after the occupational groups of the servants of the communities like the Kumbhar *vaddo* which was of the potters, where the potters were found, mesta *vaddo* of the carpenters, mahar *vaddo* of the harijans, and this was based on the old system of settlement of the servants who rendered services in the villages of Goa.⁵⁴

Mapusa has a rich history way prior to the Portuguese Colonizers and other settlers and rulers who invaded Goa. It was managed by the Gaunkari or the community farming system of the villages of Goa. Places in Mapusa were named after the occupations which were in large numbers in that particular area, and the castes. Hence, there was the Kumbhar *vaddo* which is meant for making of clay pots.⁵⁵

The Kumbhars are concentrated in specific areas where the clay is available for them in abundance. The clay utensils were in use before the metal utensils, the Kumbhars might have been the earliest of the artisans to have settled in Goa.⁵⁶ The Kumbhars are found in different villages in Goa, and they are not found in each and every village. The places where the Kumbhars can be found are widely known as Kumbhar *vaddos*, which are in Bordem, Mayem, Zambaulim, Keri, Harmal, Mandrem, Canacona, Shivoli and Mapusa, and few houses in some other villages in Goa. The surnames of the Kumbhars are mostly after the names of the villages that they belong to, like Kunkalienkar, Shetkar, Patkar, Harmalkar,

⁵³ Larsen, *Faces of Goa*. 194

⁵⁴ Pereira, *Goa: Gaunkari (The Old Village Associations)*, 123

⁵⁵ Fernandes, Domnic. P. F. *Mapusa, Yesterday, and Today: A Reminiscent Tour*. (Saligao: 1556, 2012), 11-13.

⁵⁶ Inderjit, Bhadwar. *Discovering Goa*. (New Delhi: Xavier Collaco, 2001), 77.

Kudeskar, Shirgaonkar, Mandrekar.⁵⁷ Once they move to some other village, that surname indicates the original place that they were from. Kumbharkhan, a village in Pissurlem, in Sattari Taluka, was once known for the Kumbhars who would use of the locally available clay for making pots, Today, the art of pottery, has vanished from Kumbharkhan.⁵⁸ Until recently, it can be noted that the number of Kumbhars practicing pottery-making in Goa have declined drastically.

In the villages of Goa, the Gaonkars usually lived in the most important *vaddo* referred to as the gaonkar *vaddo*, while the *vaddos* of the occupational groups who provided services were located as per the needs of that particular occupation and also by their social status in the village.⁵⁹ The Kumbhars of Goa from places like Advoi, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Sattari taluka, is located quite interior from the main road. The entire ward is of the kumbhars who seem isolated in the forest area.

Sirvoi, Kumbhar *vaddo*, in Quepem Taluka, was the ward of the Kumbhars, but today there are only three Kumbhars practicing pottery-making there. Their surnames are Shetkar. Cumbarjua, was also known as the village of Kumbhars, which is indicated from cumber or potter and the word jua means island, which is the island of potters, today there are no Kumbhars there. They Kumbhar families were found in Vasco, Margao, Ponda, Shiroda, Dabal Nirankal, Sakorda, Usgao Tisk, Kundai Marcel, Panjim, Maus Pernem, Shirolí-Keri, Rivonan, Mapusa, Harmal.⁶⁰ Earlier, there were Christian Kumbhars at Verna in a ward named Cumborda. Today, however there is no one making pottery there. The name Cumborda could have come from Kumbhar or the potter. They were also found in Sarzora,

⁵⁷ Singh, *People of India*. 132.

⁵⁸ Rajendra Kerkar, *Natural Heritage of Goa*. (Panjim: Broadway Publishing House, 2016), 29.

⁵⁹ Heta Pandit, *Houses of Goa*. (India: Gerard Da Cunha and Architecture Autonomous, 1999), 115.

⁶⁰ Sequiera, *Sociological Study of the Kumbhar Community in Goa*, 24-26.

Raia, Curtorim, Mastimol and Ponsulem in Canacona. In Mastimol, Canacona there is only one Kumbhar making pottery there.

There were certain places which have expertise in the particular crafts, for instance the pottery works are found and encouraged in Bicholim.⁶¹ Since times immemorial, there are certain villages in Goa which have well experience in the particular crafts and are known for those art pieces.⁶²

John Paul Vales, Kumbhar from Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim in Bardez Taluka says, “Earlier there were Kumbhars in Sao Jose de Areal in South Goa, are not practicing now, then in Quepem. Earlier there were Kumbhars making pottery in Vaddem-Socorro, Duller-Xelpem, Anjuna, Santa Cruz, Verna, now there is no one.”⁶³ Vinayak shetkar says, “Christian Kumbhars were found in places like Mapusa, Verna, Guddi, Xeldem, Govlar, and now after the older generations, there is no one to make pottery there.”⁶⁴

Bicholim in North Goa is widely known for its terracotta items and ceramic glaze. The potter community of Bicholim is involved in clay modelling work, as they artistically create highly ornate designs. They make large size vases, *tulsi vrindavan*, household items, figines, dolls, etc. In Mandrem, Pernem they are doing clay work but not on a large scale.⁶⁵

Lifestyle and Traditions

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, a Kumbhar from Bicholim, at the age of 77, is practicing pottery-making in the Clay factory in Bicholim Industrial Estate. He went on to become the first student of Goa College of Arts. He has also taught for two years at the Goa College of Arts.

⁶¹ Olivinho J. F. Gomes, *Goa: India, the land and the people*. (India: National Book Trust India, 2004), 115.

⁶² Esteves, *Goa and its Future*, 53-54.

⁶³ John Paul Vales, Interviewed by Crisma Seny Fernandes, Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim, Goa, October 27, 2023.

⁶⁴ Vinayak Victor Shetkar, Interviewed by Crisma Seny Fernandes, Sirvoi, Quepem, Goa, December 6, 2023.

⁶⁵ Phaldessai, *Kalaidoscopic Goa: A Cultural Atlas*, 153-154.

At the Baroda University he had completed his Master of Fine Arts. He has written on the ‘Terracotta Art of Molela’. This work is on the terracotta art of the Kumbharwada in Rajasthan, wherein the clay is moulded into plaques or tiles, which are done of up till 4-5 feet high. The sculptures carved on these clay plaques are depictions of the stories of the kings, village stories, etc.⁶⁶

Zillu Dattaram Harmalkar specializes in making terracotta pottery like figurines, idols, huge pots, vases, etc. In terms of dress the Kumbhars earlier would wear the *kumsam*. In terms of language influence he says, “North Goa, we have most influence from Maharashtra, our language of Bicholim is near to Marathi language and South Goa language is near to Kannada Language.” They are non-vegetarian and eat fish, curry, and rice. Their family deity is Shri Bhoomika, Harmal. They were originally from Harmal, and his ancestors came and settled in Bicholim. One of his ancestors had served as police under the Portuguese in Goa. They have their house in Harmal. Their traditions are *Divja*. They also celebrate the the Dasro. They are not part of any Kumbhar *Samaj*. In terms of occupation, the Kumbhars of Harmal don’t make *modkeo* or clay utensils, while their main occupation is agriculture. So it is not that the Kumbhars will practice only pottery, some have opted for other occupations. In terms of migration from Harmal they came and settled in Bordem, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Bicholim.⁶⁷

Among the Christian Kumbhars of Goa, John Paul Vales from Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim in Bardez Taluka, at the age of 60 is involved in the traditional occupation of pottery-making passed down to him by his ancestors. He is the third generation into pottery-making. Both his father and mother were doing pottery together before him.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁶⁷ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁶⁸ Vales, Interview.

Vinayak Victor Shetkar, at the age of 64 is a Kumbhar from Sirvoi, in Quepem Taluka, who learnt as a child from his father. He says, “Earlier their elders used to wear *kashti*, which now no one wears.” Their family deity is Shri Bhoomika, Harmal, They celebrate the Gulal of Zambaulim in Quepem taluka of South Goa. His wife is from a Kumbhar family from Dodamarg in Maharashtra. There is the Kumbhar *Samaj* in Margao in Salcete Taluka, which they are part of.⁶⁹

Baban Kushali Bhagat at the age of 37 is a Kumbhar from Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, continuing the traditional occupation of pottery-making. Their old house is in Shristhal village in Canacona. He says, “Earlier in their old house, *pakle* would come and sit and watch them making pottery, which was the time before Goa was Liberated from the Portuguese rule. Their family deity is Lord Mallikarjun in Shristhal, Canacona. His mother is from a Kumbhar family of Sirvoi, Quepem. The clay horses that he creates are to be offered to Lord Mallikarjun in Shristhal, for the *zatra* which takes place on 29th March every year. The Mallikarjun Temple in Shristhal, Canacona, is dedicated to Lord Mallikarjun, an incarnation of Lord Shiva, which was built in the 16th century and renovated in the year 1778.⁷⁰ Season wise the clay items are crafted. *Divaj* is an old tradition. Traditionally clay items are first offered to the God.⁷¹ Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar at the age of 60 is a Kumbhar from Advoi in Sattari Taluka. They were originally from Cuncolien in Ponda, from where his father came to Advoi in Sattari. Their family deity is Shri Shantadurga, Cuncolien. He does the *divja* which are required for the Cuncolien *zatra*, and many other places like Khandepar. They eat vegetables, and sometimes fish, and meat.⁷²

⁶⁹ Shetkar, Interview.

⁷⁰ Tony Martin and F. M. Nadaf. *Goa as Goa was Canacona the last frontier*. Panjim: Directorate of official Language, Government of Goa, 39.

⁷¹ Baban Kushali Bhagat, Interviewed by Crisma Seny Fernandes, Mastimol, Canacona, Goa, February 7, 2024.

⁷² Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, Interviewed by Crisma Seny Fernandes, Advoi. Sattari, Goa, February 12, 2024.



2.1 Terracotta roosters and soldiers at The Clay Factory, Bicholim Industrial Estate

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 2.2 Terracotta roosters, soldiers, and *gurgurret* at Mapusa Market

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 2.3 Terracotta roosters on the rooftops of Indo-Portuguese styled house, Margao, Goa

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig 2.4 Terracotta rooster and other clay items, Goa Chitra Museum, Benaulim, Goa

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes

CHAPTER 3

KUMBHARS AT WORK: THE PROCESS, TECHNIQUES, AND SPECIALIZATIONS

The Kumbhars of Goa are the traditional makers of pottery. The traditional knowledge and skills were passed on to them by their ancestors. They artistically craft both utilitarian and decorative items using traditional techniques of hand-building and wheel-throwing. The process involved is very lengthy. The Kumbhars currently practicing this craft in places like Bicholim, Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim in Bardez Taluka, Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka, Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, and Advoi in Sattari Taluka are interviewed, and also personal observation is done of the process involved in pottery making.

Raw materials

There were some crafts which were found in those places where the required resources were available for that particular craft.⁷³ The Kumbhars mostly live in places where the clay is available for them in abundance.⁷⁴ The Kumbhars require a special kind of mud which is found only in some parts of Goa and in these places the settlements of the Kumbhars are found.⁷⁵ In India, the potters work in their houses, like the other traditional craftsmen.⁷⁶ The Kumbhars of Goa work in their houses, where specific places are reserved for the performing of the tasks of pottery-making.

Earlier the Kumbhars from Vaddem-Socorro would get the mud for their pottery from the fields in their village itself, now they get the mud from Mandrem and Bicholim in North Goa.

⁷³ Teotonio. R De Souza, *Goa through the Ages: An Economic History*, Volume 2. (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1990), 87.

⁷⁴ Doshi, *Goa- Cultural Patterns*. (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1983), 116.

⁷⁵ Khedekar, *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy*, 109.

⁷⁶ Huyler, *Gifts of Earth: Terracotta and Clay Sculptures of India*, 29.

The mud is got from the field for which laborers are required, who are paid Rs. 800 per day. Top layer of the mud is of no use, a deep hole is dug like a well. The laborers dig out the mud, fill it in the truck, which is then got to their home, after which it is dried and stored for monsoon times (Fig. 3.1).⁷⁷ The type of mud used by Baban Kushali Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona gets the mud from the fields of Padi in South Goa.⁷⁸

Transportation is essential throughout the process. Transport is needed to get the laterite stone that is to be added to the clay is procured from Tuem in Pernem to their house.⁷⁹ They also need huge quantities of coconut husk. Also hay and wood is required for firing of the clay items, all of which they have to buy (Fig. 3.2).

The terracotta pottery crafted in Bicholim, has achieved glory for Goa and which is why the clay of Bicholim is widely referred to as the ‘Gold of Bicholim,’⁸⁰ Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar says “In Bordem, Bicholim there is a field, and earlier before 18th Century CE, our elders knew that this Bicholim mud is workable.” The difference of the mud is that Bicholim mud is sedimentary clay, which after firing turns red as there is iron content in it, whereas Mapusa mud has sand mixed in it as it is close to the coast or sea. Bicholim mud can’t be used to make pots like for example *modki*, not possible to make with this mud.”⁸¹

Vinayak Victor Shetkar, a Kumbhar from Sirvoi, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Quepem Taluka, uses the Kumbhar *mathi* which he gets from their field in the village, or from Canacona, or Gudi in South Goa. He says, “There is a lot of work that goes into pottery making, while wood, hay, and mud are main in this occupation.”⁸² Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, a Kumbhar from

⁷⁷ Vales, Interview.

⁷⁸ Bhagat, Interview.

⁷⁹ Vales, Interview.

⁸⁰ Arnold Pinto “Handicrafts of Goa.” *Herald Goa*. August 2, 1992.

⁸¹ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁸² Shetkar, Interview.

Advoi, in Sattari Taluka, earlier would get the mud from Advoi itself, now he gets it from Maharashtra. The mud he gets is called Kumbhar *mathi*.⁸³

The hay that is required for firing of the clay items in the *bhatti* is stored for using throughout the year and especially for monsoon times when it is difficult to procure it. Vinayak Shetkar says, “People put fire for the hay, so there is shortage, so I don’t get it that time.”⁸⁴

Techniques

Pottery is made by using techniques like hand building, the earliest, wheel-throwing, and pressing clay in the moulds, by using moulds. Before 1950’s, the potter’s wheel was turned by hands and after that there was the electrical one used for the production of pottery items.⁸⁵ The traditional wooden wheel used by the Kumbhar is called as *chaak*.⁸⁶ The potter’s wheel in Hindi means *chak*.⁸⁷ In Konkani it is called as *zotir*.⁸⁸ It is also referred to as *chakra*.⁸⁹ In the book *Ethnography of Goa Daman and Diu*, the author A. B de Braganca Pereira, has mentioned that the wheel on which the potter worked was called *zontor*.⁹⁰

The traditional wheel was prepared out of bamboo and then it was thickened after applying wet mud paste.⁹¹ Vinayak Shetkar says, “There was a wooden plate, which was tied with rope, and mud paste was put to it. In 2001 he got the electric wheel.”⁹² John Paul Vales from Veddem, Socorro employs both hand-building and wheel-throwing techniques for making pottery. He has his traditional wheel which was made out of wood. He says “now no one uses these, now they are antique pieces.” (Fig. 3.3). He had learnt from his father’s wheel, now

⁸³ Kunkolkar, Interview.

⁸⁴ Shetkar, Interview.

⁸⁵ Pandit, *Hidden Hands: Masterbuilders of Goa*, 138.

⁸⁶ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁸⁷ “Potter’s wheel meaning in Hindi.” <https://dict.hinkhoj.com/potters%20wheel-meaning-in-hindi.words>

⁸⁸ Vales, Interview.

⁸⁹ Kunkolkar, Interview.

⁹⁰ Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Daman and Diu*, 193

⁹¹ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁹² Shetkar, Interview.

this electricity wheel is convenient, so using this. The traditional wheel was difficult to handle.⁹³

Earlier Kumbhars would work on the *chakra*, which was tied with jute rope, he says, the more the weight of the wheel, it turns faster. The earlier wooden plate had a hole underneath and then this plate was placed on top of it, which used to turn on it, which was turned by using hand. The earlier wooden wheel had no stand, once it would get slow, it would bend on one side, as it had no support, then the later one had a bearing and a stand, which could be easily balanced (Fig. 3.4).⁹⁴

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar uses hand building technique for making pottery. They use mould of pots, in the case if one needs 10 pots then the same pot have to be repeated in the mould.⁹⁵

Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, used to work on the *chakra*, now he stopped, and uses the electric wheel which is easy to handle.⁹⁶ Earlier the wheel which was non-motorized, which was mounted onto a ball bearing, and was thus efficient, the wheel which his father worked on rotated about a spindle and required much more energy to keep it spinning.⁹⁷

The Process in Pottery-making

The ordinary clay whenever it is to be used for creating idols or household utensils, at first it is held as impure, so it has to be filtered or sterilized and mostly mixed with cow-dung, The ready clay was then moulded into desired shape.⁹⁸ Vinayak Shetkar uses a mallet and stone to pound the mud into powder (Fig. 3.5).

⁹³ Vales, Interview.

⁹⁴ Bhagat, Interview.

⁹⁵ Harmalkar, Interview.

⁹⁶ Kunkolkar, Interview.

⁹⁷ Fernandes. *Traditional Occupations of Goa*, 37.

⁹⁸ Phaladesai. "A Culture in Clay."

The *giran* is used in which the mud is grinded into powder, then it is filtered in a strainer, then it is mixed in water and strained and put in the tank. After it has dried and become turns into a thick paste, it is mixed into laterite powder. In the process of making pottery they require *kameri* or women workers for filtering of the mud in the process of preparation of the clay. Vinayak Shetkar says, “*Kam kup, fudem karpak kon nam* meaning lot of work goes into pottery-making, and after him no one is there to do it.”⁹⁹

In the process of making pottery, the clay was powdered and mixed with water, and after the clay was thickened, it was thrown on the wheel by the potter. The wheel was manually turned, a stick and a stone was used by which the pot was given shape, after which they are fired.¹⁰⁰

Baban Kushali Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol in Canacona Taluka, learnt pottery-making from his father Kushali Bhagat who was doing pottery before him. His grandfather was also into pottery-making. He had done a four month course at the Central Village Pottery Institute in Khanapur in Karnataka. He makes both traditional and modern items. He gets the mud which has to be dried, then it is filtered, then it is beaten into powder, which is then added in water. This wet clay and water mixture is put in the tank. This tank is built by placing the mud bricks in a rectangular shape on the sides, and a cloth is placed at the bottom and on top of the cloth the wet mud is poured (Fig. 3.6).¹⁰¹

The clay is prepared in huge quantity by kneading it with feet, and using it when needed, which is a traditional method of preparation of clay. If it is needed in small quantity it is prepared by hand. With this mud to make it strong, laterite powder is added to the clay mixed with water. The wet clay needs to be kneaded like the dough before it is thrown on the wheel

⁹⁹ Shetkar, Interview.

¹⁰⁰ Pereira, *Ethnography of Goa, Dam and Diu*, 193-194.

¹⁰¹ Bhagat, Interview.

(Fig. 3.7).¹⁰² In the process of making pottery, the main ingredients required are clay, temper, and color and not all types of clay are workable for making of pottery. In this case two or more kinds are mixed together. The adding of temper is helpful in such cases like ash, sand or cow dung, to protect the pots from breakage during firing or drying in the sun.¹⁰³ in Goa, the Kumbhars from Vaddem-Socorro and Quepem mix the leterite powder during the preparation of clay to make it strong.

The throwing process is the key in pottery-making, and these skills of working on the wheel are learnt by the potter as a child.¹⁰⁴ John Paul Vales, Kumbhars from Vaddem, Socorro, learnt this craft from his parents, and was helping his father as a child. He is the third generation into pottery making. His mother is alive, father died, but he is now continuing this family profession.¹⁰⁵

The Kumbhar, John Paul Vales, uses the hand-building technique wherein he rolls the clay using his hands into coils and builds the walls of the pot with his hand (Fig. 3.8). Then the walls of the outside of the pot are beaten with a wooden paddle to give it a definite shape (Fig. 3.9). Also a smooth stone is hit at the bottom of the inside of the pot to give it the shape. In the wheel-throwing technique, the Kumbhar begins by throwing a lump of clay on the wheel at the center point, raises the clay in a conical form using both the hands, and presses down using his fingers, giving it shape of a pot. After an item is ready, it needs to be dried outside in the shade, and not to be exposed to direct sunlight, which will form cracks in the pots.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Vales, Interview.

¹⁰³ Baidyanath Saraswati, *Pottery-making Cultures and Indian Civilization*. (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1978), 4

¹⁰⁴ Chattopadhyay. *The Glory of Indian Handicrafts*, 171.

¹⁰⁵ Vales, Interview.

¹⁰⁶ Vales, Interview.

In Bicholim, Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar uses hand building technique for making huge pots and terracotta items. He can be seen adding paint to the handcrafted clay wall hangings of starfish (Fig. 3.10). There are a large number of moulds in the clay factory. The women working in the clay factory can be seen pressing the clay with her hands into the mould, while the other woman can be seen giving designs to them, with the help of a clay carving knife, while another women can be seen doing the task of painting the pots.

Baban Kushali Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona is busy making flower pots, and other traditional items like *divaj*, *divas*, and clay horses on his electric wheel (Fig.3.11). Vinayak Ladu Shetkar, Kumbhar from Sirvoi. Quepem, continuously makes the pots on his electric wheel, which can be understood from the huge lump of clay on the wheel for turning the pots (Fig. 3.12).

Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar at the age of 60 is the only Kumbhar practicing pottery-making in Advoi, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Sattari taluka of North Goa district, who also learnt from his father. He had also done a course at Central Village Pottery Institute in Khanapur in Karnataka. He has an electric wheel, while earlier he used to do with hand. In the process, all the family members help one way or another, he says, “one person can’t do this, many hands are required.” The mud is powdered and then mixed in water and then it is filtered, which is a task performed by his wife (Fig. 3.13) ¹⁰⁷

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, a Kumbhars from Bicholim, has been practicing pottery since a child, learnt from his father Dattaram Harmalkar and mother Bagerathi Harmalkar. His family helps in the process of making pottery. Earlier they were working at their home in Bordem, Kumbhar *vaddo*, then because of lack of space, and no proper transport, so they

¹⁰⁷ Kunkolkar, Interview.

came in Bicholim Industrial area. The clay factory in which they are working was started in the year 1990.¹⁰⁸

Role of Women in Pottery-Making

Pottery-making is one of the craft that involves equal contribution of men and women in the performing of the tasks.¹⁰⁹ The Kumbhars of Goa, like in other places, work together in the family, wherein the women and children would get the clay. The digging was done by men the tradition had been that the men turned the pots on the wheel, while the women used the oil process for preparing the clay.¹¹⁰

Earlier both husband and wife were doing pottery together. The wife of the Kumbhar from Vaddem-Socorro is also from a Kumbhar family, from Vaddem, Socorro, and after her parents stopped, so she did not get to learn.¹¹¹ It was the task of the women to go to the weekly markets and church fairs to market the clay items, as these were the times when people would buy locally made clay items by the Kumbhars for their houses. The women would get the special stones required for the preparation of clay from the field during the morning time, which are then pounded into powder, and then mixed in water.¹¹² Women of the Kumbhar families help in the preparation of clay.¹¹³

Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar's wife helps in pounding the mud into powder, and filtering of the clay mixed in water to remove unwanted particles (Fig. 3.14). She also does marketing of the clay items in the bazaar.¹¹⁴ The role of women extended beyond merely marketing of the clay items, they would supervise the *kameri* to carry the soil to the workshop. Women would also

¹⁰⁸ Harmalkar, Interview.

¹⁰⁹ Pandit. *Hidden Hands*, 137.

¹¹⁰ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patterns*, 116.

¹¹¹ Vales, Interview.

¹¹² Larsen. *Faces of Goa*, 198.

¹¹³ Shetkar, Interview.

¹¹⁴ Kunkalkar, Interview.

make 3-4 trips in a day to the Mapusa market.¹¹⁵ Women in the Kumbhar families of Goa gave a helping hand to their husbands, who traditionally worked on the wheel.

Zilu Harmalkar says “Majority in the clay factory is women, who are from their locality, who are widow or facing problems and challenges are most welcome.” There are around 10 women working in the factory. When they come to work in the factory according to their ability or skills they are given the tasks.¹¹⁶ The women in the clay factory do moulding work, carving designs, and painting of the clay items, while some also do cement casting (Fig. 3.15). Women did not use the wheel, but must be using their hands to craft these clay items.¹¹⁷

Specializations

The Kumbhars of Goa are experts in making household items, like *tulsi vrindavan*, musical instruments like *ghumot* and *mhadelem*, also objects for ritualistic purposes like , clay horses, etc.¹¹⁸ John Paul Vales, Kumbhar from Vaddem-Socorro, specializes in making all the traditional items like the *launi*, vinegar *kaushe*, *bhana*, *ghumot*, *damonnem* for *sur*. The monitor lizard skin required for the *ghumot* is not used now because it is banned, so now they use goat skin instead.¹¹⁹ The monitor lizard skin that is required for the *ghumot*, was removed by killing the monitor lizard which is a reptile, is in danger of extinction, and is being listed in the schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, as a result of increasing selling of its skin.¹²⁰ John Paul Vales also makes tandoor *bhat*is, which are taken by the hotels, also he makes fanciful items now, like wall hangings because they are in demand now. He gets hotel and restaurant orders, and is doing all on his own. They have their pottery store at their house,

¹¹⁵ Pandit, *Hidden Hands*, 136.

¹¹⁶ Harmalkar, Interview.

¹¹⁷ Prava Rai, *Parmal (Vol 7)*, (Goa: Goa Heritage Action Group, 2008), 118-119.

¹¹⁸ Khedekar. *Goa: Land, Life and Legacy*, 109.

¹¹⁹ Vales, Interview.

¹²⁰ Kerkar, *Natural Heritage of Goa*, 95.

where they have kept on sale pottery items crafted by him (Fig. 3.16).¹²¹ It can be noted that the Kumbhars have adapted and evolved to the changing needs of the society, to keep alive this traditional craft.

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim says, “We make huge pots, while on the wheel pots can be made of only 10 inches, we make by hand, we have made 10-12 feet high pots also.” He says “we make only figurative elements.” *Amche fakat figurative elements asta*. “Zilu says, earlier in Goa I would do figurative items.”¹²² Vinayak shetkar specializes in making all the traditional pottery, now he makes according to the demand, he also makes the *ghumot*.

The Kumbhar community of Bicholim crafts big artistic pots and some also make idols of Lord Ganesh for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in the month of August.¹²³ The Kumbhars of Bicholim are busy making clay idols of lord Ganesh, adding a realistic touch to them. They are the traditional makers of these idols (Fig.3.117). Many houses in Mayem, Bicholim in North Goa district, are engaged in making idols of Lord Ganesh, the work of which is started few months prior to the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. Everyone in the family work together in preparing them, which is done by procuring the clay, kneading it, creating the idols, drying, and painting them. Once ready the idols are carried to the urban areas for sale, while the price of the idols depends on their size. The Ganesh idol making is not restricted or not practiced by Kumbhars alone; various other communities make them who have the skills of crafting them.¹²⁴

Baban Kushali Bhagat makes both traditional and modern clay items like the *gadde* or clay horses, which has to be offered to Lord Malikarjun, for the *zatra*, *divaj*, Ganesh idols, and

¹²¹ Vales, Interview.

¹²² Harmalkar, Interview.

¹²³ Larsen. *Faces of Goa*, 198

¹²⁴ Singh. *People of India- Goa*, Vol XXI, 134.

modern art like flower pots. He says “*budkule* I don’t do, it has almost stopped.” Vasudev Kunkalkar crafts *budkules*, *ghumot*, *dhumpel*, *miller*, etc (Fig. 3.15).

Simple and traditional clay items are preferred by the pottery artisans in Goa, which can be found out through their earthenware creations, like cooking pots, storing vessels, and display vases.¹²⁵ The pottery items crafted in Bicholim include attractive vases, pots, water jugs, table ware, ashtrays and masks. Terracotta statuettes like artistic anatomical detail are crafted by the artisans like that of the cobblers, potters, tree cutters, and devine beings.¹²⁶ These terracotta figurines in the vibrant reddish color look realistic in nature, like depictions of ordinary people working, then a woman with her child, a men and women sailing together on a boat, etc, is what Bicholim is known for.

Firing of the Pottery items

The Kumbhars have a space reserved for manually building the *bhatti* for firing of the clay items. When clay items are only fired, without adding any shining or glaze to the clay item they are called as terracotta.¹²⁷

John Paul Vales, Kumbhar from Vaddem, Socorro says, “*Aho galtat* or *bhatti galtat*”, which means preparing of the *bhatti*. A tempo fully loaded with pottery items can be fired at one time in the *bhatti*. All the small and big items after drying are fired in the *bhati*. The items need to be piled properly in the *bhatti* before the firing starts. At the bottom the broken pots are placed. It takes two days itself to do this placement of the pots in the *bhatti*, and on the second day slowly fire is started. For two nights the *bhatti* is kept on slow fire. “It’s a slow,

¹²⁵ “The Terracotta People.” XXI (11). *Goa Today*. June, 1987.

¹²⁶ Pinto “Handicrafts of Goa.” *Herald Goa*.

¹²⁷ Phaldessai. “A Culture in Clay.” *The Navhind Times*.

gradual process”, says John Paul Vales. On the third night firing, and fourth night they are ready to be taken to the market. They do firing after every three months.¹²⁸

The *bhatti* of Zillu Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim is a modernized one. The *bhatti* is built underground to avoid pollution caused by firing of the pottery. He says, “Our *bhatti* is the largest in India, and in that *bhatti* a 10 feet long pot can fit (Fig. 3.19).” Earlier he would do firing on electricity, after filling the *bharti* with items worth 5 lakhs, and if current goes then loss, so they stopped electric, now they do wood firing as wood is easily available. They have two *bhattis*, a small one and a bigger one. It takes 24 hours for firing of the pottery.¹²⁹

Baban Bhagat, Kumbhar from Canacona says, “For firing he doesn’t have *bhatti*, he builds it, like a small round circle, on the bottom wood is placed, on top of it clay items are placed, then on top of it hay is put, then cow dung cakes are put, then they have to pack the *bhatti* by applying mud paste”.¹³⁰ Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, Kumbhar from Advoi in Sattari says, “We do the *bhatti* in about 15-30 days, and it usually depends on the quantity of pots that are to be fired.” If less items the *bhatti* is manually built accordingly, if more items then the size of the *bhatti* can be increased. Charcoal is needed to put in the *bhatti* and a lot of wood is needed.¹³¹

Vinayak Shetkar, Kumbhar from Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka does the firing of the pottery in the traditional way. After the pottery items are ready and dried they are ready for firing. He gathers the wood, dry hay, and coconut husk required for firing at the spot where the *bhatti* is prepared. Firstly he starts by placing the small clay items like *divas* are kept inside the big pots, to ensure that they don’t get lost in the *bhatti* and break during the firing due to high temperature (Fig. 3.20). Sheets are formed of the dry hay and used for piling of the pots layer after layer (Fig. 3.21). Thereafter the Kumbhar prepares the wet mud paste by kneading it

¹²⁸ Vales, Interview.

¹²⁹ Harmalkar, Interview.

¹³⁰ Bhagat, Interview.

¹³¹ Kunkolkar, Interview.

with his feet, until a smooth paste is formed (Fig. 3.22). The prepared wet mud paste is applied to cover the *bhatti* (Fig. 3.23). Also wood is placed at the sides of the *bhatti*. Then the firing of the *bhatti* starts (Fig. 3.24). On the next day the pots are removed carefully by the Kumbhar, and are ready to be taken to the market (Fig. 3.25).

Vinayak Shetkar says “*bhatti uzo sarko zavpa zai*,” meaning the fire has to be handled properly in the *bhatti*, because the temperature has to be maintained. Loss is there in pottery-making. He says, “If I made fifty items and put in the *bhatti* for baking, there is no guarantee as to all the fifty items will remain in good state in the *bhatti*, once the pots gets cracks, it is of no use, nothing happens even if you put m-seal.” The broken pots are placed at the bottom of the *bhatti*, while firing. Huge quantity of hay is required for firing, which is stored and kept by the Kumbhar.¹³²

Marketing

As in the rest of India, the Goan villages were independent self-sufficient units. The different occupational groups depended on each other for the services they provided. The Kumbhar provided clay vessels to the villages and the temples. The *damonnem* was required by the toddy tapper, while the *launi* for distilling cashew *feni*. The temples required *divas*, *divaj*, clay idols on the annual *zattras*.

There were mass meals which were cooked and served at the temple complexes, thus clay vessels were required, which were provided by the Kumbhar.¹³³ Thus, the Goan Kumbhar had these means as his main source of income. The main source of the income of the Kumbhars depends on the production of clay utensils, which they occasionally sell in the local markets, especially the weekly markets taking place across the state of Goa. The feasts and festivals of the churches and the temples of Goa have fairs, where the Kumbhars come to

¹³² Shetkar, Interview.

¹³³ Sequeira. *Sociological Study of Kumbhar community in Goa*, 20-21.

sell the pottery items. In the olden times the Kumbhars from Mapusa in North Goa would transport the clay items on a boat through the river Zuari, entering Salcete in South Goa to sell the clay items in the markets and fairs, as earlier this was the mode of transportation of goods across the rivers.¹³⁴ Mapusa was the most important commercial capital of North Goa, which was the time before the construction of the Mandovi Bridge in the 1970's. At Mapusa, the weekly *Sukraracho bazaar* or Friday market takes place, where goods were brought to market from the nearby places.¹³⁵

The weekly market at Mapusa which takes place on Fridays, where people flock to buy spices, fruits, vegetables, clothes, clay vessels, etc. At the *matiechea moddkeancho bazar* or clay pot bazaar, of Mapusa, the potters would come to sell their clay wares from places like St. Sebastian Ward, Anjuna, Xelpem-Duler, and Vaddem-Sucorro.¹³⁶ The weekly market at Pernem in North Goa takes place on Thursday where pottery items are marketed.

Today the Mapusa market is as vibrant as it was in the olden times, where one can find all of the traditional items like *budkule*, *kunnem*, *tizal*, *dhumpel*, *ghumot*, *gurgurret*, terracotta statues of roosters, soldiers, etc, crafted by the Kumbhars from places like Vaddem-Socorro and Bicholim (Fig. 3.26). The Margao market was once known for the *modkea* bazaar or clay pot bazaar, where the Kumbhars from the nearby places would sit with their clay wares, but today the sad reality is that there is not a single Kumbhar selling clay items here, however, that area is widely referred by the locals as *modkea* bazaar. In Vaddem, Socorro, Porvorim, John Paul Vales has his pottery store at their residence, where they have pottery items for sale. Here both locals as well as tourists come to buy their pottery items. There are at least 4-5 customers in a day (Fig. 3.27). They also market the pottery items at the church feast fairs of Goa, like, on 3rd December they go to Old Goa fair, 8th December Margao fair, 18th

¹³⁴ Vales, Interview.

¹³⁵ Fernandes, *Mapusa, Yesterday, and Today*, 11-13.

¹³⁶ Fernandes, *Mapusa, Yesterday, and Today*, 158.

December Curtorim fair, 6th January Cansaulim fair, which is a traditional practice followed by their ancestors which they have continued (Fig. 3.28). During the monsoon times there is demand for the vases as people grow plants, and during December month there is demand for decorative items.¹³⁷ The Kumbhars market the pottery items at the annual feast fairs of the Churches of Goa, like the feast of the Immaculate Conception in Panjim.

The demand for pottery items is mostly seasonal in nature. Traditional items like clay horses, Ganesh idols are seasonal items. Bicholim is known as the hub of terracotta pottery. In the clay factory in Bicholim Industrial estate, they continuously make idols or figurines, during the time of Ganesh Chaturti, Ganesh idols are made, Nag Panchami time they make Nagoba idols, and during Christmas time they make the Christmas crib set, which they are doing since the time of the Portuguese in Goa. They keep changing the style, and designs of the types of clay items that they make.¹³⁸

In the factory clay items like huge as well as small pots painted as well as glazed which are decorative in nature, wall hangings, terracotta lamps, statues of soldiers and roosters. Also there can be seen a terracotta statue of Alfonso de Albuquerque. This indicates that Goan pottery has changed and evolved over time, from traditional utility items to becoming more ornate in nature, based according to the present demand in the market.

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim, makes clay items for all the hotels from North Goa and South Go and also outside Goa. In their clay factory in Bicholim Industrial estate, tourist come daily to buy clay items, He says, “There is no demand for glazing, people want terracotta items not glazed, as in abroad they are advanced in glazing, terracotta items they don’t get there, tourists say.”¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Vales, Interview.

¹³⁸ Harmalkar, Interview.

¹³⁹ Harmalkar, Interview.

Vinayak Shetkar, Kumbhar from Sirvoi, Quepem, gives his pottery items to market in wholesale. People come to buy clay items like *damonnem* at his house. Earlier he would go to Quepem, Sanvordem, and Sanguem weekly markets for selling the clay items, but now he doesn't go.¹⁴⁰ Baban Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona, markets the clay items in the Canacona bazaar, and also people come to his house to buy¹⁴¹ Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, the Kumbhar of Advoi markets the clay items at the bazaar of Valpoi. He doesn't take these items to the zatras as they don't sell there, they takes it to the feasts fairs of Margao, Vasco, and Old Goa.¹⁴² The continuation of pottery making by the Kumbhars largely depends on the demand that is there for their pottery items, and it also determines the income that the Kumbhar earns.

¹⁴⁰ Shetkar, Interview.

¹⁴¹ Bhagat, Interview.

¹⁴² Kunkolkar, Interview.



Fig. 3.1 Stock of mud Vaddem Socorro

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.2 Stock of wood, Sirvoi, Quepem

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.3 Zotir or potter's wheel Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.4 Potter's wheel tied with jute rope and mud paste, Mastimol, Canacona

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.5 Mallet and stone to pound the mud,
Sirvoi, Quepem

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3. 6 Tank used to filter the mud,
Mastimol, Canacona

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.7 Prepared clay, Vaddem-
Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.8 Coiling technique
Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.9 Wooden paddle for giving shape,
Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.10 Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar painting
the clay items, Bicholim Industrial Estate

Photo credit: Sybel Dias



Fig. 3.11 Baban Kushali Bhagat on his
wheel, Mastimol, Canacona.

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.12 Vinayak Shetkar on his wheel
Sirvoi, Quepem

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.13 Vasudev Ladu kunkolkar on his wheel, Advoi, Sattari

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.14 Women filtering the wet clay
Advoi, Sattari

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.15 Women working in the Clay
Factory Bicholim Industrial estate

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.16 Tandoor *bhattis* crafted by John
Paul Vales, Vaddem-Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.17 Clay Ganesh Idols, Mayem,
Bicholim

Photo credit: Richa Mayenkar



Fig. 3.18 *Budkule* crafted by Vasudev
Laudu Kunkolkar

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.19 Modernized *bhatti*, The Clay Factory
Bicholim Industrial Estate

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.20 Small clay items placed in big pots

Photo credit; Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.21 Piling of the pots for firing.

Photo credit; Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.22 Mixing of mud with feet

Photo credit; Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.23 Wet mud pate for the *bhatti*

Photo credit; Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.24 Firing of the pottery items

Photo credit: Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.25 Post firing of the pottery

Photo credit: Vishal Shetkar



Fig. 3.26 Pottery items at Mapusa Market

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.27 Pottery store of John Paul Vales,
Vaddem, Socorro, Porvorim

Photo credit: Crisma seny Fernandes



Fig. 3.28 St. Alex Church feast fair,
Curtorim, Salcette, Goa

Photo credit: Crisma seny Fernandes

CHAPTER 4

POST-LIBERATION DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGING TRENDS

Goa is known for its colorful handicrafts created artistically by the traditional craftsmen. The crafts of Goa include pottery-making, lacquerware, wood-carving, bamboo craft, cane craft, coconut craft, brass ware, crochet and embroidery, jute craft, Kunbi saree weaving, sea shell craft. The traditional handicrafts of Goa are the testimonies of the past, the knowledge of which is passed down to us by our ancestors. The handicraft sector generates employment opportunities to the rural population of Goa, more importantly empowering the women who can earn some amount of livelihood for their families. Handcrafting is a time consuming activity and requires a lot of handwork and patience, yet the fruits received are a gift to the eyes. Tourism has played an important role in uplifting the handicraft sector. The tourists when they visit to Goa look for handmade items, their preference has boosted the handicraft industry of Goa.

State Initiatives

In India, the cottage industries, since centuries, had been supporting the village economy. In Goa, the development of these cottage industries, like cotton weaving, pottery making, etc, do not require great skill or knowledge, or machines or huge capital, which provided employment opportunities to the people. These traditional occupations were entirely neglected by the Portuguese rulers.¹⁴³

Before the Liberation of Goa, to a large extent, the traditional handicrafts of Goa, remained neglected, and for the reviving of these dying crafts, the protection, encouragement, and government patronage was essential.

¹⁴³ Gune, Gazetteer of Goa, Daman and Diu, 367.

After the Liberation of Goa, the Government of Goa, Daman and Diu, established the Goa Handicrafts Rural and Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Limited in the year 1980. It was working as subsidiary of the Economic Development Corporation of Goa, Daman and Diu. After 1985, the Company has been operating as a wholly Government owned Company, to work towards the development of handicrafts in the territory.¹⁴⁴

The Handicraft Corporation began its work at Panaji where the Head office was and Branches at Margao and Daman. It also had a Pottery Production Centre at Bicholim Industrial Estate. It acquired the management of the Government Handicrafts Emporium at Panaji, and the Counters at Calangute and Airport, Dabolim. Later with its expansion, there were new Emporia that were opened at Vasco in the year 1982, then at Mapusa and Inter State Bus Terminal. Panaji in the year 1984 and thereafter in Margao in the year 1985. The Corporation works towards marketing different kinds of items made out of materials like brass, clay, wood, plaster of paris. Bamboo, sea-shells, fibre, wax, paper mache, pottery, ceramics, garments, lacquerware, crochet and embroidery.¹⁴⁵ The Handicraft Emporiums serves as a market for handicraft items crafted in Goa, here the handicrafts produced in the other parts of the country are also displayed for sale.¹⁴⁶

The Pottery Production Centre at Bicholim, has employed artisans, master-craftsmen, skilled potters, artist-cum-designers who artistically craft clay and ceramic items, which include vases, pots, etc. These clay and ceramic items are marketed by the Emporia and also at exhibitions. The Production Centre in Bicholim is also provided with modern equipment to benefit production.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Goa, Daman and Diu: Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1961-1986, Commemorative Volume.* (Panaji-Goa: Directorate of Planning Statistics and Evaluation), 45.

¹⁴⁵ *Goa, Daman and Diu: Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1961-1986, Commemorative Volume*, 46.

¹⁴⁶ *Gune, Gazetteer of Goa, Daman and Diu*, 367, 370, 371.

¹⁴⁷ *Goa, Daman and Diu: Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1961-1986, Commemorative Volume*, 46.

To promote the traditional art form of pottery and clay idol making in Goa, the Goa Handicrafts, Rural and Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd, provides scheme for the clay idol makers who create clay idols of Lord Ganesh, statues for Christmas crib, and idols of other religious worship by the people of Goa. This scheme is to promote traditional clay idol makers, who face competition from the plaster of paris and others. The artisans who are registered under the Goa Handicrafts, Rural and Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd, are given Rs.100 per idol, and it depends on the size of the idol which should be minimum 1 ft. of height.¹⁴⁸

The Department of Handicrafts, Textile, and Coir, Government of Goa, conducts training under ‘The Vishwakarma kavshalya Yojna’ which is a Training-cum-Production Centres, like Pottery and Ceramic works are encouraged in Bicholim. They work towards providing basic training, advanced training, designs of Handicraft items, and the sales of Handicraft items.¹⁴⁹

On 17th September 2023, the ‘PM Vishwakarma’ is a central sector scheme. It was launched by the Prime Minister of India, for the craftsmen and artisans who work manually with their hands and tools, and the scheme covers 18 crafts, it includes the potter. It provides the craftsperson and artisans with recognition which is by providing of PM Vishwakarma certificate and identity cards, skill up gradation in the form of training with stipend, toolkit incentive, credit support, incentive for digital transaction, and marketing support.¹⁵⁰

The ‘Kumbhar Sashaktikaran Programme’, was launched by KVIC or Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, during the year 2018-19, with the aim to provide skill development training, and new innovative pottery

¹⁴⁸ “Official Gazette, Government of Goa, Series 1, No. 17”. Panaji: Government Printing Press. July 24, 2008. <https://goaprintingpress.gov.in/downloads/0809/0809-17-SI-OG.pdf>

¹⁴⁹ “Schemes, Department of Handicrafts, Textile, and Coir.” *Government of Goa, official portal*. <https://www.dhtc.goa.gov.in/schemes>

¹⁵⁰ “Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Scheme,” October 5, 2023. <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pradhan-mantri-vishwakarma-scheme>

making equipments to traditional pottery artisans or the Kumbhars, which is to enhance their income and production of pottery items. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission has provided the Kumbhars with skill up-gradation training, and distributed energy efficient Potters Wheel, energy efficient Blunger, Pug mill machine, Toggle press with Dies, Jigger-jolly.¹⁵¹

Vinayak Shetkar, Kumbhar from Sirvoi in Quepem Taluka has got the energy efficient Clay Blunger at his house, given by KVIC or Khadi and Village Industries Commission, which is used for the preparation of clay (Fig. 4.1). Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar from Advai, Sattari has got the Pug Mill machine, which is used for the preparation of clay (Fig. 4.2). John Paul Vales, Kumbhar from Vaddem, Socorro have not availed for any government schemes. Baban Kushali Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona have not applied for any government schemes.

The Goa Handicrafts Rural and Small Scale Industries Development Corporation under Ms. F. Faria as the Chairperson and N. N. Phadte as Managing Director, had worked towards placing pottery of Bicholim on the Handicrafts map of Goa, which is taking the lead in pottery making in Goa. A new boom was witnessed among the potters of Bicholim under the mentorship of painter Anandmohan Naik, who felt great experiencing and working with them.¹⁵²

The potters of Bicholim are experts in terracotta works like depicting traditional mythological motifs, and also they do ceramic glaze. The potters of Bicholim like Jhilu Harmalkar, Vishwanath Harmalkar, Shrikant Naik and K. D. Pandit worked under Anandmohan Naiks guidance. Clay crafting work exists widely in Bicholim, and the clay used is got from the

¹⁵¹ "Pottery," *Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium enterprises*.
<https://msme.gov.in/sites/default/files/Pottery.pdf>

¹⁵² Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patterns*, 117-120.

nearby area. They make small figurines, dolls and items for household needs, at the same time the potters now make decorative items like large-sized vases. The Goa Handicrafts Corporation has been making efforts for their training in this craft and also working towards a better way to market their products. Bicholim pottery was expected to be seen taking the lead towards the growth of Goan handicrafts.¹⁵³ The pottery artisans that are registered under the Handicraft department, who are involved in clay craft are from places like Mandrem and Palyem in Pernem Taluka, Arpora and Calangute in Bardez Taluka, Mayem and Muslim Wada in Bicholim, and Mangeshi in Ponda Taluka.

In Bicholim, the Harmalkars are part of the long hereditary tradition of pottery-making that was passed on from generation to generation in this art form. Dattaram Harmalkar, from Bicholim crafted beautiful clay figures and figurines. Dattaram Harmalkar, had achieved fame in the handicraft world of Goa. He suffered a paralytic stroke after which his wife Bhagirathi took ahead the pottery work. Her sons took the lead by developing their skills in this traditional art form.¹⁵⁴

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, son of Dattaram Harmalkar and Bhagirathi, had earlier got financial support from the Khadi Village, for their Clay Factory in Bicholim Industrial Estate. The Clay Factory Started in the year 1990. Earlier they were working at their home in Bordem, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Bicholim, later due to lack of space and no proper transportation they came to the Bicholim Industrial Estate. He was getting several orders from the hotels from North to South Goa, for big artistic pots, vases, etc. It can be noted that the hotel Industry boosted the pottery production in Goa, and especially for brilliant artiste like Zillu Dattaram Harmalkar.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patterns*, 120.

¹⁵⁴ Doshi, *Goa: Cultural Patterns*, 120.

¹⁵⁵ Harmalkar, Interview

The ancient art of pottery has evolved from being utilitarian to becoming more ornate. Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar's craft has evolved over time, he makes vases, flower pots, show pieces, fountains, ashtrays, etc.¹⁵⁶ In the clay Factory, Goan pottery can be seen changing to becoming more decorative in nature, which is a result of the changing demand in the market. The modern choices like masks, wall hangings, vases, decorative pots, terracotta statues, etc, can be seen at the Clay Factory in Bicholim Industrial Estate (Fig. 4.3) .

Role of Tourism

The Goan arts and crafts fashioned by the local artisans showcase a blend of Indian and Portuguese cultural influences. Their creations have attracted both locals and tourists alike. The continuous inflow of the tourists in Goa determines the marketing of its locally made handicraft items.¹⁵⁷

Goa is widely known as a tourist hotspot. Most of the tourist, both local as well as foreign, on their visits, wish to take back with them souvenirs of Goa, in the form of locally made handicrafts. There were large numbers of hotels which came up in Goa after its Liberation, who have taken keen interest to highlight the local cultural aspects of Goa. And because of which there has been a growing demand for these locally produced handicrafts by the craftsmen, there was growing demand for the earthen utensils.¹⁵⁸

John Paul Vales from Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim have their pottery studio at their residence, where they have pottery items crafted by him on display for sale. Here both locals as well as tourists come to buy the pottery. There are at least 4-5 customers in a day. They also have the figurines on sale made by the Kumbhars of Bicholim, like the Kumbhar on his wheel, a lady these terracotta is what Bicholim is known for, give an insight on a completed

¹⁵⁶ Padma Prabhu, "The Wheel of Fortune." *Times of India*. September 23, 2008.

¹⁵⁷ Phaldessai, *Kaleidoscopic Goa: A Cultural Atlas*, 151.

¹⁵⁸ *Goa, Daman and Diu: Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1961-1986, Commemorative Volume*, 45.

picture of the uniqueness of Goan pottery. Baban Kushali Bhagat says, “In Canacona tourists come to buy the pottery items, and mostly decorative items, which they get only in Goa.”¹⁵⁹

Role of Museums

Museums are places which preserve the objects of the past for posterity, like tools, pottery, coins, sculptures, religious objects, furniture, musical instruments, dress, modes of transportation like carts and carriages, and much more. These objects that are no longer being used by us are preserved by the museums for the benefit of the future generations. Museums provide us a sense of identity of our vibrant culture and traditions. Through museum collection we can touch the distant past, and gain knowledge on the various objects used by our ancestors. The objects of the museum become an important source for writing about the lesser known people and their traditions.

The Goa Chitra Museum is an ethnographical museum located in Benaulim in South Goa District. It was set up in the year 2009 by Victor Hugo Gomes.¹⁶⁰ The Goa Chitra Museum’s collection reminds us of the objects that were driven by men power or animal power and not by machine power. It also reminds us that our ancestors toiled hard for a day’s living. The tasks they performed manually using these objects, gives us a sense of their lifestyle in the past. The Goa Chitra Museum has in its collection ancient tools, implements, clay items, carts, carriages, objects pertaining to religion, etc. It has on its display all the clay items crafted by the Goan Kumbhars and utilized by the Goan people. They have tourist continuously visiting the museum, who get a glimpse of the popular culture and traditions of Goa through the collection of the museum. It helps them find similarities and differences in the cultural influences and traditions of Goa and theirs.

¹⁵⁹ Bhagat, Interview.

¹⁶⁰ Supriya Aggarwal, “A quick tour of Goa’s heritage through 4,000 artefacts.” August 15, 2018. <https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/goa-chitra-museum-benaulim/>

The Goa Chitra Museum has all the traditional pottery of Goa on display, like the *budkulo*, *kunnem*, *touli*, *tizal*, *gurgurret*, *dhumpel*, *codem*, *dhond*, *launi*, *tulsi vrindavan*, *gurgurret*, *divja*, etc. The traditional wooden wheel, on which the Kumbhar manually worked on, is also on display. It indicates that this traditional wooden wheel is no longer used by the Kumbhar, as now they are using the electrical wheel for making pottery. The curator of the Goa Chitra Museum, Victor Hugo Gomes has been collecting these objects from all over Goa for more than 30 years. These objects need to be taken care of everyday says Victor Hugo Gomes (Fig. 4.4).

The Ancestral Goa Museum is located in Loutolim in the Salcette taluka of South Goa District. The museum was founded by Maendra Jocelino Araujo Alvares in the year 1995.¹⁶¹ The Ancestral Goa museum narrates the stories of our ancestral past, and educating the public on the various cultural aspects of Goa. The museum's display has audio narrative fitted, in Hindi and English language, which the visitors can choose.

At the museum one can get glimpses on the way of life of Goans and the traditional occupations, like the cashew *feni* distillation process, pottery-making process, which are handed down to us by our ancestors, and continued by subsequent generations.

In one of the displays, the Kumbhars or the potters can be seen in the various stages involved in the process of making pottery. In the first place the women can be seen in a sitting posture filtering the mud for preparing the clay, with a strainer, removing the unwanted stones. In another instance the Kumbhar can be seen crafting a pot on the tradition wooden wheel, dug in the ground, which was rotated manually.

¹⁶¹ "Ancestral Goa (Big Foot Museum), South Goa Tourism, History." *Travelsetu*.
<https://travelsetu.com/guide/ancestralgoabigfootmuseumtourism/ancestralgoabigfootmuseumtourismhistory#:~:text=The%20museum%20was%20created%20by,becoming%20a%20prominent%20tourist%20attraction.>

In another instance, the Kumbhar can be seen giving shape to a pot using a small wooden paddle held in his hand, while a women can be seen looking after the fire in the *bhati*, when the clay items are in the stage of firing. The final stage in this occupation is the marketing of the finished clay vessels, which is a task done by the women of the Kumbhar families. The traditional pottery of Goa like the *gurgurret*, *damonnem*, *kunnem*, *budkule*, *ghumot*, *codem*, *dhond*, etc, are kept on the wooden racks and some are hung on a rope (Fig. 4.5). The display of the Kumbhars working helps to gain insights on how and the kind of tasks that were carried out by men and women of the Kumbhars families in Goa. Through this display one can witness the process of pottery making in Goa.

The museums are working toward preserving the culture and traditions of Goa, through their collections for posterity. They are educating the public, more importantly the students, to learn their culture and traditions and draw lessons in the present time. Museums are places where our past is stored and preserved for the benefit of the generations to come.

Problems and Challenges

In the earlier times the people of Goa required earthen vessels in huge quantities for various purposes, and in recent times the demand for these clay vessels have declined drastically due to several reasons.

John Paul Vales, Kumbhar from Vaddem-Socorro, faces problems to procure mud for making pottery. There is a lot of breakage of the pots in the process of making pottery, it is not in their hands, that the items will come as they were put in the *bhattu* for firing, It is done out of experience. There are other potters who use electric kilns for firing, so temperature they can maintain. The broken garden pots, you can put m-seal and give it at half rate, but not in the

case of cooking pots, once broken they are of no use.¹⁶² The *bhatti* is manually constructed by the Kumbhar occasionally, depending on the quantity of the items that are to be baked.

Vinayak shetkar says, “people put fire to the dry hay so there is shortage and I don’t get when I need it for firing of the clay items.” and when it comes to sourcing of wood for firing they are not allowed to go to the forest to get wood, so he had cut his mango tree, jackfruit tree from his place to stock the wood for firing of the pottery.

The Kumbhars face problems, when it comes to firing of the pottery items in the *bhatti*, there is a lot of breakage of the pots, which the Kumbhar finds out after the items are fired, these broken pots results in loss for the Kumbhar (Fig. 4.6). There needs to be some initiative taken in this direction. The Kumbhars need to be provided with raw materials like mud, wood, hay, coconut husk, which are essential in this profession.

Baban Kushali Bhagat from Mastimol, Canacona, which is located in extreme south, faces problems and challenges, when it comes to marketing of the clay items.¹⁶³ There needs to be efforts made to help support the craftsmen in terms of marketing, as it is the main factor that determines the continuation of this traditional craft by the Kumbhars of Goa.

Today, the changing trend is that the Kumbhars are crafting clay items as per the demand in the market, and it largely determines the income the Kumbhar earns, when his principal source of income is pottery-making. It ultimately also determines the living conditions of the Kumbhar. The children did not learn now, earlier no value for Kumbhars, and after Mr. Potter no one is there to make traditional items in the North, in Bicholim they do mould works and fanciful items.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² Vales, Interview.

¹⁶³ Bhagat, Interview.

¹⁶⁴ Vales, Interview.

Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim says, “there are no Kumbhars now, they have taken other occupations, and they are educated, and are became teachers, have government jobs, etc. In Bordem, Kumbharvado in Bicholim, there are only 10-12 Kumbhars, who don’t practice pottery-making now, and majority of Mapusa are in abroad. In Mayem, Bicholim they make clay idols of Lord Ganesh.”¹⁶⁵

“Pottery-making is not an easy work, what the older people did, the children won’t be able to do,” says Vinayak Shetkar, Kumbhar from Sirvoi in Quepem. Baban Kushali Bhagat is the only Kumbhar practicing pottery in Canacona, earlier there were, who went on ship.¹⁶⁶ Today, it can be noted that, with many well-paid jobs, going to abroad for seeking employment, have resulted in the declining of traditional craftsmanship in Goa.

Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, Kumbhar from Advoi in Sattari says that “wood and mud they have to buy, so there is a lot of work, and that is why children get irritated.” He says, “We are used to It, they have to get used to it. Earlier the *zantele* or elders were doing it, now the children don’t take interest in it, and they study and go to work.” During the monsoon times we don’t make clay vessels, we make Ganesh idols for the Ganesh Chaturti festival in the month of August.¹⁶⁷ During the monsoon times pottery production faces challenges, as firing of the clay vessels in the *bhatti* becomes difficult.

After the elders of the Kumbhar families have died, this occupation is stopped in that family. After the introduction of gas for cooking, clay vessels were gradually replaced with vessels made of stainless steel, aluminum, and other metals.¹⁶⁸

After metal utensils started to replace the clay pots, because of which its demand fell, as a result the ancient art of pottery has and changed from being utilitarian to becoming more

¹⁶⁵ Harmalkar, Interview.

¹⁶⁶ Bhagat, Interview.

¹⁶⁷ Kunkolkar, Interview.

¹⁶⁸ Gracias, *Cozina de Goa*, 229-230

ornate.¹⁶⁹ They face difficulty sourcing mud, wood, and hay. They need transportation and workers for sourcing the raw materials for making pottery, who have to be paid. They mostly market the clay products in the local markets and fairs. In the markets their clay products face competition from other utensils made of steel, aluminum, etc. There is however demand for mostly decorative items like flowerpots, wall hangings, etc. The traditional items like *budkule*, *Kunnem*, *tizal*, *dhond*, etc, which were used for cooking and storing purposes are vanishing.

Today, with technological advancements, the Kumbhars are utilizing the electric wheel, which is convenient for them to work on, as compared to the traditional one, which employed a lot of energy. They have done away with these traditional wheels, but the Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona, also uses the traditional wheel, when there is a power shutdown. They do firing using traditional methods, where the temperature is difficult to maintain, so that the pots don't break due to high temperatures. The Kumbhars have got the pug mill machines and blunger for preparing the clay, while some are still using the traditional method of preparing the clay, such as kneading with feet and hand, also the filtering of the mud is done with hands.

Significance of the Craft

1. Cultural Significance

The clay vessels crafted by the Kumbhars are required by different occupational groups. The toddy tapper covers the cutting of the coconut shoots with a clay pot called the *damonem*, in

¹⁶⁹ Prabhu, "The Wheel of Fortune." *Times of India*.

which the *sur* gets collected.¹⁷⁰ The terracotta tiles were also in great demand in Goa, crafted by the Kumbhars.¹⁷¹

Every Goan kitchen had the clay *kunnem* to prepare the coconut fish curry, vegetables, and meat dishes. The traditional Goan kitchen contained clay vessels like the *buddkulo* or *modki*, which were used for making of tea, *canjee* and main dish was rice. The clay *tovo* was used to fry *bhakri*, chapattis, and fish. The *maittul* was a small clay bowl used to cover rice vessel. The *maittul* was also used to wash meat and vegetables. The *codem* was a clay vessel in which the leftover food was put in. It was often given to the pigs. It was kept in the corner of the kitchen or placed outside the kitchen.¹⁷²

The *hando* was a big clay pot meant for storing water. *Tambio* was a small clay container for removing water from bigger vessels for use. *Bindul* were clay vessels of various sizes meant for drawing water.¹⁷³ Ambil is a porridge made out of the millet flour and rice was mixed in it, which gave great energy to the tribals who toiled hard in the fields, and elsewhere. It was cooked in an earthen pot, and was served in a clay *maitu*.¹⁷⁴

The *buiao* of various sizes small and big were used by the people of Goa in which tamarind, pulses, dry red chillies, peppercorns and raw stuffed mango pickle were stored. These pickle jars were placed on a rack attached to the walls. The *tizals* which were large in size were brought out on during festivals and celebrations. These were used to cook pork curry dishes like *sarapatel*, *cabidela*, *vindalho*, and also roast. They were also used to bake sweets like *bebinca*, *bolinhos*, and *bolos*. The earthenware *dhond* was used to store rice. The *coddem* was also used for washing clothes. As most of the vessels in the traditional kitchen of Goa were made of red clay or other breakable material, there was additional clay vessels brought to

¹⁷⁰ Gracias, *Cozinha de Goa: History and Tradition of Goan Food*, 13.

¹⁷¹ Inderjit Bhadwar, *Discovering Goa*. (New Delhi: Xavier Collaco, 2001), 76-77

¹⁷² Gracias, *Cozinha de Goa*. 141-142.

¹⁷³ Gracias, *Cozinha de Goa*. 142-143.

¹⁷⁴ Pantaleao Fernandes, *Goa: Rare Portraits*. (Benaolim- Goa: The Word Publications, 2018), 7.

replace the broken pots.¹⁷⁵ The middle class and the poorer sections of the Goan Society were mainly dependant on the clay utensils for cooking and other purposes like lifting and storing of water, which were provided to them by the Kumbhar families of Goa.¹⁷⁶

Big clay vessels were brought out on special occasions like weddings, when food had to be cooked in huge quantities, which was cooked on firewood. In the *budkulo*, rice was cooked, and in the *kunnem*, the fish curry was cooked, which was done on the firewood.

Clay vessels were hygienic and safer, they enhanced the taste of the food cooked in them. Goan cuisine has vinegar in most of its dishes, and it was safe to cook and keep in these clay pots for many days without any harm, as in those days there was no refrigerator. Also clay vessels are better when it comes to food getting burnt, which happens in the case of metal utensils.¹⁷⁷

The *ghumot* is a popular folk musical instrument of Goa. It is skillfully crafted by the Kumbhars of Goa. It was the only musical instruments that can be found, if one digs into Goa's past. The traditional songs of Goa like the *Mandos*, *Dulpods*, and *Dekhnis* require the *ghumot*.¹⁷⁸ It is widely used by the Hindus and Christians during their festivals, like for *Shigmo*, Ganesh Chaturti, *Zatra*, *Mando*, *Dulpod*, etc.¹⁷⁹ The beats of the *ghumot* brings enthusiasm to the performers and their performances. The Christian Gauddi women are skilled at dancing and singing, at the same time the men are skilled at playing the *ghumot*

¹⁷⁵ Gracias, *Cozinha de Goa*. 170-171.

¹⁷⁶ Vishnu, Vinayak. Khedekar, *Eco-culture Goa Paradigm*. (Panaji- Goa: Broadway Publishing House), 2013.

¹⁷⁷ Angelo Pereira, *Goa Remembered- Vignettes of Fading Traditions*, (Bombay: Michael Lobo, 1995), 74

¹⁷⁸ Domnic Fernandes, *Domnic's Goa: A nostalgic romp through a bygone era*. (Panjim: Abbe Faria Productions, 2007), 170.

¹⁷⁹ Phaldessai, *Kaleidoscopic Goa: A Cultural Atlas*, 10.

with their hands, which is in the form of a clay pot which has the monitor lizard skin attached to it to provide the beating surface to the musicians.¹⁸⁰

The *ghumot* holds a prime place for the people of Goa, because it is locally made by the Goan potters. It is crafted like a pot which is attached with the monitor lizard's skin. The trained dogs caught the monitor lizards found on the hills, and were trained not to damage the skin. The skin was removed, and was dried properly. The skin was sold to the local buyers to attach it to the clay *ghummot* and the *mhadelem*. The monitor lizard skin was removed from them and hung usually over a fire place in the kitchen area, as the smoke would preserve the skin, during the monsoon time, for these to be used in the future on the *ghumot* and *mhadelem*.¹⁸¹

The houses used to have roofs, made out of palm fronds, which might have not been favorable to face the harsh monsoons in Goa. The handcrafted clay country tiles, were made later by the Goan Kumbhars, which were crafted in large numbers. The clay found in Bicholim district was held as most suitable for crafting these clay country tiles.¹⁸²

Religious Significance

The *dhumpel* is an incense burner made out of clay, it is a ritualistic item used during the performing of rituals in Goan homes. It was used in Goan Catholic homes when the Mother Mary goes from house to house. The temples of Goa needed clay vessels for cooking and serving of mass meals to the devotees. It added to the important status of the Goan Kumbhar, who is making these clay items. The worshipping of *tulsi vrindavan* and *tulsi kalash* by the

¹⁸⁰ Fernandes, Goa: *Rare Portraits*, 19.

¹⁸¹ Fernandes, *Domnic's Goa*, 171.

¹⁸² Pandit, *Hidden Hands: Masterbuilders of Goa*, 63.

Goan people, gave the Kumbhars of Goa more importance in the society, who provided these to the people of Goa.¹⁸³

The Kumbhars of Goa specialized in the making of clay idols and it led them from being mere artisans to artists and specializing in making these clay idols.¹⁸⁴ The Kumbhar are an integral part of the villages, because they not only make simple household vessels, but also clay figurines of worship required during seasonal festivals, by the different community households, as these traditional terracotta figurines were to be replaced during the festivals.¹⁸⁵

The Kumbhar from the village crafts the *divaj*, is a traditional item. It is a group of five terracotta lamps, which are shaped in such a way, so that they can be placed on the head, and can be held in the hand as well. The lamps are small cups in which oil is poured and cotton wicks placed in them. The Kumbhar was paid in cash or kind.¹⁸⁶ Baban Kushali Bhagat, Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona, crafts the clay *divaj*, firstly, he moulds it on the wheel giving it a shape of a lamp, and adds designs to them with hand. The women take their *divaj*, the newly wedded with no sleepers in their feet during the *zatra*. There are also clay horses crafted by him for offering to their deity Lord Mallikarjun on the day of the *zatra* (Fig. 4.7). There is the place of the God, where every year clay horses are offered.¹⁸⁷

The Kumbhar has been one of the important craftsmen in the villages of Goa. They create the terracotta figurines, which is an old tradition of offering these to the village deities and also worshipping them, which is still followed in Goa. There are a number of shrines and temples where this practice is evident, while some of them are known chiefly for this particular tradition of offering to the deities. Some of the folk communities get these terracotta objects from the Kumbhar to offer to the deities at the time of their annual festivals. For instance the

¹⁸³ Sequeira, *Kumbhar Community of Goa*, 21.

¹⁸⁴ Sequeira, *A Sociological Study of the Kumbhar Community of Goa*, 21.

¹⁸⁵ Phaldesai, "The Call of Clay."

¹⁸⁶ Phaldesai, *Goa: Folklore Studies*, 64.

¹⁸⁷ Bhagat, Interview.

shrine called as Ghodyam-Vhol or Rivulet of horses in the regions of Quepem and Canacona, where many horse figurines can be seen all round the year. Another instance, where these horse figurines are offered is at a spot at the temple of Shri Mallikarjun in Shristhal in Canacona, where there is a small shrine known as the Ghodyam Paik. The horse figurines range from the size of eight centimeters to fifty centimeters. Apart from these ritualistic objects, the Kumbhar would make decorative terracotta figurines and plaques for the people of the urban areas.¹⁸⁸

2. Economy

The family-run traditional professions in the villages such as the carpenters, potters, basket weavers, toddy tappers, etc, through their skills, earned their livelihood by providing goods.¹⁸⁹ The Kumbhars depend mainly on the income that they earn through the production of pottery. The income that they earn also determines their living conditions.

The Kumbhars have been traditionally marketing their items at the temple *melas*, and *zattras*, and also at the church fairs, when the annual feasts takes place in the churches all over Goa. They look for these marketing opportunities, where locals, as well as tourists flock to buy the clay vessels, today however the demand has decreased to a great extent for the utility products, and there is more demand for the decorative items like lamps, masks, figurines, flower pots and vases. The Kumbhars also look for opportunities to market their clay items at the weekly markets taking place across the state of Goa. The clay ware production is the main economic source for the Kumbhars who dwell in the rural areas.

¹⁸⁸ Phaldeassai, Pandurang, "Role of Kumbhar in Goan Society", *The Navhind Times*, December 4, 1998.

¹⁸⁹ Themistocles D'Silva, *Beyond the Beach: The Village of Arossim Goa, in Historical Perspective*. (Saligao-Goa: Goa 1556, 2011) 16-17.

3. Environmental Sustainability

The Kumbhars make the clay items using products which are environment friendly and sustainable in nature, like clay, wood, hay, cow dung cakes, coconut husk, and water. These are the main raw materials required by the Kumbhars which they source from their locality. Some of these raw materials are easily available for the Kumbhars, while some they have to purchase. The tools that they use are also environment friendly like the flat wooden paddle, soft pebble stone, wooden mallet, thread, etc. The wheel used earlier was made out of wood, and jute rope, but as there is technological advancements taking place, the electric wheel is found more convenient by the Kumbhar, and which can be operated with limited men power. These machines that are used like the clay Blunger, pug mill machine are also energy efficient. The clay Ganesh idols created by the kumnbhars are environment friendly which dissolve in water after immersion as compared to plaster of paris idols which do not dissolve in the water, so they are harmful for the environment.



Fig. 4.1 Pottery Clay Blunger, Sirvoi, Quepem

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.2 Pug mill Machine, Advoi, Sattari

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.3 Pottery items at the Clay Factory,
Bicholim Industrial Estate

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.4 Pottery displayed at Goa Chitra
Museum, Benaulim, Goa

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes

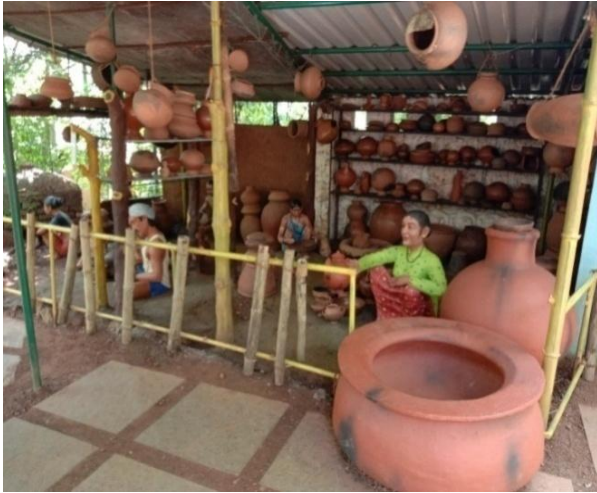


Fig. 4.5 Display of Kumbhars, Ancestral Goa Museum, Loutolim, Goa

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.6 Vinayak Victor Shetkar showing broken pot in Sirvoi, Quepem

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.7 Clay horses and *Divaj*, Mastimol Canacona

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes



Fig. 4.8 Pottery at Old Goa Church fair

Photo credit: Crisma Seny Fernandes

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The traditional crafts of Goa have history embedded in them, created by the craftsmen, who practice the knowledge and skills passed down from generation to generation within different communities. Through the crafts we can get glimpses of the past, the utensils, tools, ornaments, dress, that were used, the process of making pottery, distilling cashew *feni*, preparing toddy, jaggery, salt-making, etc. We also get a glimpse on the community that is involved in that particular craft.

The Kumbhar community of Goa is engaged in the traditional occupation of pottery-making. As a result of the historical developments in Goa, the Portuguese spread of Christianity, we can find both Hindu Kumbhars as well as Christian Kumbhars, as the Christian Kumbhars retained the traditional occupation of their ancestors. In Konkani, the locals refer to the potters as Kumars. The very same traditional techniques, tools, exist among both Hindu Kumbhars and Christian Kumbhars. For instance, the traditional wheel made out of wood, tools, like the wooden paddle, smooth stone, etc. The *bhatti* is also manually built with the same tradition of firing the clay vessels, followed among the Kumbhars of Goa.

The pottery-making process gives us a glimpse on the times before electricity came up in Goa. This occupation was entirely driven by human power, using the very easily available resources like mud, wood, hay, coconut husks, and water. The traditional knowledge passed on of the techniques and the process involved in pottery making is mostly the same that is followed today by the Kumbhars of Goa, yet slightly modern machines like the electric wheel, pug mill machine, clay blunger are used. Through the electrical wheel they now can make many pots within minutes, which is easy to handle as compared to the traditional one.

Despite these modern developments, which also includes internet, through which they can market their pottery items, there is very less demand for earthenware utensils.

In Goa, the Kumbhars were found in villages like Mastimol and Ponsulem in Canacona, Margao, Ponda, Sirvoi and Xeldem in Quepue, Gudi, Sao Jose De Areal, Sarzora, Raia, Cumborda in Verna, Usgao, Advoi in Sattari, Mandrem and Harmal in Pernem, Bordem and Mayem in Bicholim, Mapusa, Xelpem-Duller, Anjuna, Vaddem-Socorro in Porvorim, Mapusa, Shiroda, Curtorim, Ponda, Rivona, Marcel, Mandrem in Pernem, Panjim, Shirolim-Keri, Sakorda. Dabal, Vasco, Nirankal, Today, the number has declined drastically. The Kumbhars practicing this traditional art form are found in places like Bicholim, Quepue, Canacona, Porvorim, Sattari. There are pottery studios coming up in Goa, where they are involved in making clay craft more in terms of modern choices.

The traditional craftsmanship has declined drastically among the Kumbhars of Goa. After the elders have passed away, the younger generations have not taken up this traditional occupation. They are gone abroad for employment opportunities, and also on ship. They have taken up other lucrative occupations. Pottery-making involves a lot of hard work, from procuring the raw materials, preparing the clay, making pottery, drying them, firing in the *bhatti*, and finally marketing of the finished products, which require learning these skills.

The Portuguese in Goa may not have taken initiatives to boost the traditional craft of pottery, but the Kumbhars have definitely incorporated elements from their colonial presence in Goa. It was informed by the interviewee Zillu Dattaram Harmalkar, Kumbhar from Bicholim, that “the Goan pottery is slightly influenced by the Portuguese, in terms of the *combo* or rooster on the *gurgurret*, then the clay statues of soldiers and roosters on the rooftops of Portuguese styled houses”.¹⁹⁰ It could be seen from the traditional *gurgurret* or clay water dispenser of

¹⁹⁰ Zillu, Interview.

Goa crafted by the Kumbhars, which has a rooster head, from where the water is poured out, rooster being the national bird of Portugal. The terracotta statues of soldiers which can be seen on the gateposts is also an element of the Portuguese. These elements drawn from the Portuguese rule in Goa are an indication of the development of Goan pottery, wherein these artistic element were added into the craft.

The Kumbhars of Goa inhabited in the villages, from where they could procure the mud from, the Kumbhars who were interacted during the present research, all of them procured the clay from their village fields, eventually after they started facing problems in getting it, they looked for other sources of mud. They have to purchase the mud from other places, so they are facing challenges to obtain this essential raw material for their craft.

The Kumbhars of Goa employ hand building techniques of pottery making, like coiling, handcrafting terracotta items, wheel-throwing technique, and also using moulds. It was noted that all the Kumbhars use the electric wheel for making pottery, except for the Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona who has maintained his father's traditional wheel, and uses it when there is no current to operate the electric one. They manually built the *bhattis* for firing of the clay items. They are provided with pug mill machines, and clay blunger for the preparation of clay by the government.

There are the Kumbhars from Vaddem-Socorto in Porvorim, who has started a pottery store at his residence where tourists as well as locals flock to buy the clay items. He has also started to make fanciful items, as there is demand for them, he is widely known as Mr. Potter, easily located through the Google maps. The Kumbhar from Bicholim, has his Clay Factory where he and his family and other working people are continuously making clay items, and also glazed items, where tourist come occasionally. They make huge decorative pots, wall hangings, masks, terracotta figurines etc. He gets continuous hotel orders. In these instances

it can be noted that Goan pottery has evolved to becoming more decorative in nature, as there is great demand for these items. These Kumbhars have a lot of marketing opportunities, and they have developed their craft with changing demands, and also making the traditional items as per demand.

The Kumbhar from Advoi, Kumbhar *vaddo* in Sattari stays quite interior from the main road, so there will be difficulties to market the pottery items and obtaining the raw materials. He is the only Kumbhar practicing pottery-making in the Kumbhar *vaddo*. In Sirvoi, Quepem, the Kumbhar also faces difficulties in terms of marketing the items. The Kumbhar from Mastimol, Canacona is also facing difficulties of marketing the clay items. These craftsmen who stay in the extreme North and extreme South of Goa needs to be reached out, and required steps should be taken to uplift their position, as there are very few practicing this traditional craft in these villages in Goa.

Today there is very less demand for utility products among the people of Goa, like the *budkulo*, *modki*, *kunnem*, *tizal*, *touli*, *codem*, etc. as there are alternatives available like aluminum and steel. They are breakable, so people prefer other alternatives now. There is demand for the religious clay items, still intact in Goa, like the *divaj*, religious figurines, *dhumpel*, etc, as clay items are considered pure, and they were traditionally used by the people of Goa.

There are surnames in Goa, which are after the villages they lived in. The Kumbhars of Goa like Zilu Dattaram Harmalkar was originally from Harmal, who came to Bicholim. The same is the case with Vasudev Ladu Kunkolkar, who was originally from Cuncollem in Ponda, and later his father came to Advoi in Sattari. Through the surnames one can trace the places of their origin.

John Paul Vales specializes in making tandoor *bhatís*, which are taken by the hotels. The hotels are also patronizing the traditional crafts of Goa. He makes decorative items now, like wall hangings. It can be noted that the Kumbhars have adapted to the changing needs of the society and according to the demand of the society. The craft of the Kumbhars of Goa has evolved and is thriving.

Goan pottery becomes unique because of the added elements drawn from the Portuguese colonial presence in Goa, like the roosters, soldiers, statues of Jesus and Mary, saints and holy men. The terracotta pottery of Bicholim gets a rich red color after firing. Vishnu Kunkolienkar who had brought in a revolution in Goan pottery adding to the craft elements drawn from everyday life of the Goans.

Bicholim has achieved fame for itself as the hub of terracotta pottery in Goa, where this art form is valued for, the same way as their ancestors did, and developed by bringing in new designs, where the Kumbhars get highly artistic in creating forms of clay, which attract the fancies of everyone who gazes at their rich red clay creations. They are experts and have mastered in this art form. The hubs of traditional pottery in Bicholim are Mayem, Kumbhar *vaddo* and Bordem Kumbhar *vaddo*.

It is very important to bring awareness about the changing trends in Goan Society. Until recently, it can be observed that all of the earthen wares were discarded from the Goan kitchens. If each one of us buys at least one Clay vessel for our kitchen, it will create a huge difference, it will preserve this dying art form of the Kumbhars of Goa. If pottery-making by the Kumbhars is not preserved, promoted, and passed on to their subsequent generations, this traditional art form will diminish in Goa. It can be noted that the traditional craft of the Kumbhars of Goa is utilitarian, ritualistic, and decorative in natures.

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Appendix I

List of the pottery artisans registered under the Department of Handicrafts, Textile, & Coir, Panjim, Goa

1	Akshata. A Mandrekar	Deulwada-Mandrem, Pernem, Goa	Clay and Sea shell items
2	Samiksha Dinesh Simepurskar	Arpora, Bardez-Goa	Clay items
3	Shaik Roshnar	Muslim Wada, Bicholim, Goa	Clay items
4	Preeti Govekar	Clangute, Bardez, Goa	Clay items
5	Malikumi Ladu Shet	Mayem Bicholim, Goa	Clay items
6	Vinanti Vengurlekar	Mangeshi, Goa	Clay items
7	Shaila Naik	Palyem, Pernem, Goa	Pottery items
8	Umesh Pandit	Bicholim-Goa	Pottery items

Source: Department of Handicrafts, Textile & Coir, Panjim, Goa.