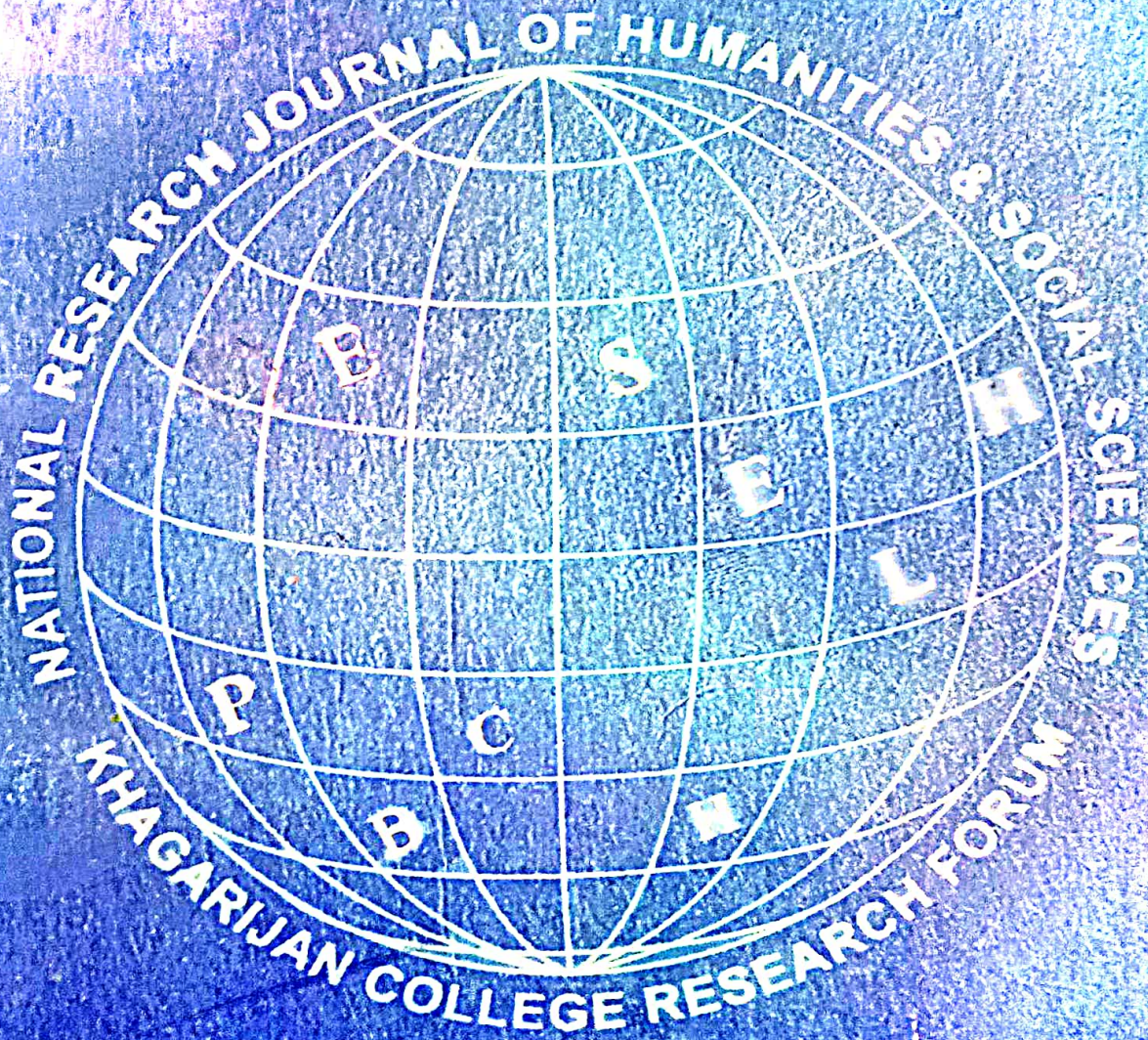


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Retail and wholesale markets in September.

5. It is a river based industry which needs comparatively least amount of money and capital. Completely run manually with traditional instruments made mainly of bamboo and timber. All the members of a Pottery making family keep themselves engaged in making and marketing potteries. The times of marketing are locally known as Khep Ahu Khep (from May to August), Sali Khep (from November to March) and Besa Khep (from March to April). In the Ahu and Sali Kheps the products are exchange for Ahu and Sali paddy. In the Besa khep, thee potteries arte marketed for money. The Social fabric of Kumar Community is primarily dependent on the various stages of production and marketing of this industry. Female are engaged in the process of production while males are engaged in the marketing.

Among the traditional crafts still practiced in Majuli, Pottery is the most significant. People expert in the vocation of making pottery called 'kumer' is aclass of the old residents of the Salmora and Chinatoli villages of the Island. They inhabit the south-eastern part of the Majuli on the bank of Brahmaputra where soil suitable for marking pottery is available about 20ft. below the surface of the river bank. Both man and women even the children, are engaged in the craft. During field indestigation it was found that children instead of go to school, were engaged in the process of making pottery.

PROBLEMS:

It was started that the craft had fallen to disrepute and very small margin of profit was derived now-a-days as there certain factors which had decreased its importance in the society. Discovery and use of various systems of preservation of milk for which pots of different shapes and sizes were once used, use of electricity replacing oil-lamps in both religious and domestic estab-

tracts people from all walks of life and from every of the world. When one visit the Island it is impossible to imagine that one is on and island completely isolated from the mainland.

Besides these the Satra Institutions, Majuli is also rich on its diverse tribal art and culture. Majuli, thus may be considered as a living archaeological Museum in its own right. Unfortunately the devastation caused by recurring floods and erosion, Majuli is facing serious threat. Arts and crafts of pottery and boat-making are also in danger. Most of the Satras of Majuli are compelled to shift to safer places.

Along the rest of the sites within the Majuli District, Assam, the riverine area with the oldest arts and Crafts of pottery and Boat-Making has great significance in eco-tourism.

POTTERY:

It primarily confined to the MOBC community in Salmora and Chinatali villages. There are almost 600 families, providing live hood at 6000 peoples. The Salmara village was once the second largest village next to Sualkuchi in Assam. The average annual income is around 25,000/Rs. Among the different items of these products Koloh, Tekeli, Mola, Dunori, Caki, Ndia, Bhabuki, Bonti-Gosa, Tuber have demand in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Apart from roadways the main means of transport of these products are the country boat carrying different items from Pasighat to Tezpur along with the Catchments areas of the Bramaputra. Barter System still prevails for marketing alternative mode of retail and wholesale marketing is done four times in a year.

1. Rice and cereal are exchanged for in November.
2. Retail and wholesale market in January/ February.
3. Rich is exchange for in June.
4. Retail market in June.

Role of Pottery and Boat-Making Industries of Majuli Eco-Tourism

Arun Borah

Majuli is the largest fresh water riverine island in the world, which is formed by the Khekatiya Canal of the Brahmaputra flowing on its north and the main stream of the great river on the south. The Government of India has recommended to the UNESCO that Majuli be considered a World Heritage site.

Majuli has very rich heritage and has been the abode of Assamese Vaishnavite Culture. Besides the Ahoms, the Brahmins, the Kalitas, the Kaibartas, the Nathas, the Bonias, the Kochs. The Keots the population of the Island comprises a wide mix of tribal communities like the Misings, the Deories, and the Snowal-Kacharis, who inhabit upper Majuli.

Besides being the hot spot for bio-density having a rich ecology with rare breeds of flora and fauna of the Island people. Especially the Kumer community is gifted with the oldest arts of Pottery Making as well as Boat-Making. A great deal of pain is taken to shape the pots and boats by hand. According to archeologists, Majuli appears to be a missing link between the Mohenjodaro and Harappa Civilizations. The Potter's wheel reigns supreme and Majuli retains its link with the long dead past. The finished products are carried up and down stream on country boats for barter trade throughout the state. A beautiful site, Majuli at-

fishments and above all, its unprofitable nature have lessened the importance of pottery as a craft of rural Majuli. Besides, the continuous erosion of the banks on the south-eastern side of the island and making of the potters responsible for that is one of the major causes of its decline.

BOAT-MAKING:

Since water transport is the most viable and economic means of transportation in Majuli, some people are actively engaged in making country boats. This boat making cottage industry is mainly carried out by the people of *Salmara, Anuiani and Naman Kamalabari Satra and Borgoya Mising gaon*. More or less all the families of Majuli maintains a country boat, there is a large demand for such boats in the local markets. Majuli also supplies boats to other districts of Assam.

Boat-making industry has been playing a very important role in Inland water transport as well as domestic communication in Majuli. The Assam Inland water transport Department mostly use country boats made by the expert craftsmen of *Salmara and Chinatoli* village. For Example all Ferry Ghats like *Phulani-Naman Ghat, Dakinpat Ghat, Aphalamukh Ghat, Kamalabari, Sumoimari, Salmara, Chikari* etc. Are use in large numbers the boats made by the kumars of *Salmara*. The country boats are also used by each and every families of Majuli during flood, for fishing etc.

But due to un-availability of quality timbers now a day, the occupation is declining. At present the boat-makers utilized the driftwood collected from the *Brahmaputra River* for making boats. In earlier times the timber for boat collect forest or from their own backyards. Around 2% of the people of this sub-division are engage in this profession.

Majuli was full of forests with valuable timbers, cane and

Wood are popular in the island like bamboo and cane. There are timbers like Koroi, Gamaeri, Simolu, Ajar, Uriam, Munga, Maj etc. These woods are used for some of the very specific purposes such as building of house, making boats, furniture and also so on. Especially the wood called "Ajar" is used for making boats. There were several factories for boat-making called "Sasals" in Majuli of which those of Selmera and Aunirai Sara are very famous. A section of people in Selmera and Aunirai Sara earn their bread by making boats selling them.

It is culture of the people in the Island to have one boat in each family for a family without a boat is sure to be in trouble at the time of flood. There are records that all the Saradhikar of Majuli have their special boats made for the purpose of travel, built by the expert's craftsmen of the Sara with unique design and craftsmanship. If the proper scientific method is used in this industry the productivity and quality of product is sure to improve.

TOURISM VIABILITY:

Overseas tourist, who came to Majuli to spend a day or two usually extend their stay to enjoy her idyllic atmosphere, to breathe its pure air, which is free from pollution of any kind. In spite of the poor communication and transportation and inadequate lodging and fooding facilities come to Majuli. They get relaxed and feel something different here. Apart from the captivating natural environment, Majuli displays the saras, varied culture of different tribes, migratory birds, arts and crafts of pottery and boat-making, mask-making etc. have made it a place of attraction of the tourist (domestic and foreign). There are tremendous prospects in Majuli.

Considering the available of multi-colour sources of attrac-

tion it can be concluded that there is immense hope for the development of tourism in Majuli. The Government of India, Government of Assam the Department of Tourism and leading personalities of the region should pay more attention to preserve this island from the undated erosion of the mighty Brahmaputra and to make Majuli as an important place of tourist attraction in Assam. The Government should urgently pursue the following agenda-

*Active role in promoting eco-tourism in Majuli along with the rest of the tourist sites of Assam.

*Providing support for basic infrastructure development centers, thereby paving for increased inflow of tourist to this centers.

*Encouraging the private sector to make large investment on creation of facilities at established tourist centers.

Recognizing the potential of tourism, the Government of India has been attempting to provide stimulus to the development of the tourism industry. With its vastness of expanse and its immense wealth of flora and fauna combined with its rich culture heritage Majuli can become one of the most important tourist destinations of the world.

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