AMBAGAHAWEWA - A POTTERY VILLAGE STUDY

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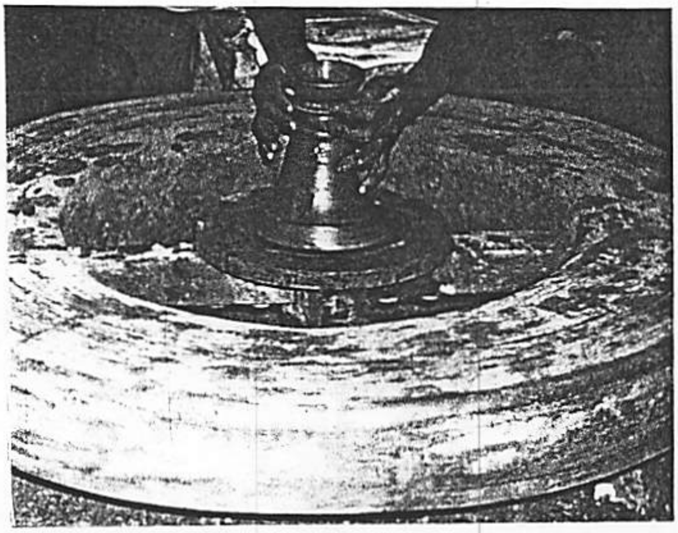

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CONTENTS

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I. BACKGROUND

The pottery village of Ambagahawewa, near Pannduwas Nuwara in Kurunegale District was discovered by the project in early 1992 and was seen to be one where a combination of factors led to it being a "research setting" for producer training and related activity. These factors were;

- the lack of interest of potters to be trained in stove making techniques (5 of 108 villagers)
- a village that was predominantly potter families
- village where a pottery Cooperative was operational
- direct contact with Minuwangoda distribution network
- contacts with a local NGO in the area which would facilitate any further action necessary in the future

In addition to the above location specific reasons, the study was also rationalised on the grounds of a lack of research on possible community based training approaches and also, on the economic benefits to potters from stove production, the optimum conditions and constraints to achieving maximum benefits.
Lastly, the study also hoped to assist in enhancing IDEA's exposure to producer studies of this nature and a staff member assisted in part of the field work. (Refer Terms of Reference in the Annex).

II. METHODOLOGY

The exercise at Ambagahawewa was aimed to increase our knowledge of the potters and the industry in general with a view to enhancing our stove making training capacity. The main methodological focus was to use Participatory Rural Appraisal methods with a general informal survey guided by a checklist of issues. Ultimately, PRA methods like wealth ranking etc. proved to be a failure due mainly to the solitary and unceasing nature of pottery production. The main limitation felt in information collection and research was the inability of potters to spend time away from their work and so informal chatting and interviews were often conducted while work was in progress. Informal groups would gather occasionally and could be used for discussions but this was sporadic and unplanned and for short time periods.

2.1 SOURCES / INFORMANTS

Informants or sources of information were of the following kinds:
Village level:

- village elders
- early families of the village
- young women potters
- cooperative officials
- potters under stove making training
- most villager and specific random sample of households

External to village:

- local NGO (WGSP)
- researcher of pottery village in the area (Deborah Winslow)
- reports on pottery industry eg.Emma Crewe, Minuwangoda study, etc.

2.2 SELECTION OF SAMPLE

Initially the whole village was covered in varying stages to get a "feel" for the socio-economic differences and informal indicators that could be used. Later, households were randomly selected with care that there was roughly proportionate representation from both sides of the village tank (21 + 33 = 55 households). The significance of this arose as land holdings were relatively larger on one side of the village.

A overall sample of 55 (104 potter households out of approx. 120 households) households were selected. Of these 55 randomly chosen, 2 households were potter families who were non-producers. A smaller sample number was chosen to delve into specific production economics related issues. This was more opportunity driven as not all potters had an understanding or ability to quantify or think in terms of costs.

2.3 CHECKLIST AND INTERVIEWS

The checklist covered the following areas (refer Appendix for full details):

- a general overview of the village
- analysis of pottery production (raw materials, labour, etc.) and classification of producers
- analysis of marketing links
- socio-economic dynamics of the village
- women potters and any particular patterns

2.4 POTTER GROUP CLASSIFICATIONS

Potter households were classified generally under the following:
a) by income indicators
b) by labour units - family or hired labour for main

activities
c) by goods produced - sizes of pots, stoves, and flower pots
d) by type of marketing links - predominant buyer

Income indicators were based on housing condition and status. The use of only this was due to the lack of other reliable indicators and the tendency of all families to make house improvements a priority. This only differed in those households where male members drank excessively or if there were expenses incurred in medical treatment. The criteria for grouping was the following:

Good - cement wall & floor, tiled roof
Fair - cement/mud floor, the other for walls, tiled roof
Poor - mud walls & floor, thatched roof

III. VILLAGE OVERVIEW

3.1 GENERAL

The village is in 2 parts separated from each other by a tank. The majority of the village inhabitants are in the first portion of the village with about a third of the households in the second. The total number of houses is approximately 120 (104 potter families with the rest being non-potters who have bought land in the village and are perceived as outsiders by the potter community). Almost all families in the village are involved in pottery production, although a few are also engaged in other activities such as paddy cultivation on a supplementary basis. A few individuals in a small number of households engage in alternative full time work - these tend to be young and male.

The rainy season said to be in November-December with sporadic rains also in January. This seasonality affects income generating activity, particularly pottery production.

The village is linked with other pottery villages mostly through marriage and kinship ties. Such networks are extensive and information sharing is through occasional visits for social occasions (weddings & funerals).

3.2 VILLAGE HISTORY

The village is known to have played a part in the ancient story of Pandukaabaya in the times of the Panaduwas Nuwara kingdom. According to several elderly villagers, the village was formerly engaged in predominantly paddy cultivation surrounded by jungle. A gradual change from a village which was predominantly agricultural with only part time pottery activities to that of predominantly pottery production with minor involvement in agriculture seems to have taken place. This seemed to have taken place due to several inter-related factors such as expansion of the village, government infringement into surrounding area of the village and perhaps the ease (due to mechanisation) of clay procurement, and relative accessability to markets.

Increasing population growth coupled with inward mobility through marriage contributed to the phenomena of division of land holdings - both homestead and paddy land. As a result, there are land holdings with 4/5 families and individuals with small fragmented paddy land holdings (the average extent seems to be 1 bushel). The resulting sub-division of land is the main reason for the lack of extensive animal husbandry in the village (with only about 10 cases where bullocks are kept for cart drawing and 3 where it is for non-draught purposes) due to lack of space. Households involved in paddy cultivation are in the minority, with about 30% of those cultivating doing so on ande arrangements. Large holdings are few and are about 4-5 bushels (just under 2.5 acres). Attam labour arrangements exist between neighbour and related households in groups of about 10. Since paddy cultivation activity is seasonal preference is given to this at relevant times of the seasonal calendar.

3.3 PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY

As discussed, gradual shift in productive activity has occurred over time in response to population and land pressure and also due to decreasing rains. Pottery making was formerly a minor, side activity with villagers physically bringing only clay from outside. This became an increasingly important activity (land ownership of either/both paddy and coconut land is 41.8% of the sample, and would involve season labour inputs) over time. The increasing cost of paddy production with the introduction of HYV's may also have contributed to this during the last 2 decades.

Presently, only a minority of (potter) households pursue non-pottery work (2 of the 55 sample households or 3.6%). Members of sample households engaged in non-pottery activities are 38.2% of the sample. Such activity would range from coconut trading, carpentry, car workshop and painting to being a government employee of the Archaeology Department in the nearby ruins.

3.4 EDUCATION LEVELS

Levels have not been high in past due to lack of importance attached to education. Female children more likely to have discontinued schooling on attainment of age. On average, children usually attend school up to Grade 6. According to one village informant, this had been attributed to the lack of understanding of the value of education and thoughts of short term financial gain by parents and the preference to earn money by children. Only a few households are keen on educating their children, so that they may have an alternative life and are willing to make sacrifices to do so.

3.5 VILLAGE STRATIFICATION

An overview of the village revealed the following range of asset ownership and income sources:

- paddy and/or coconut land (41.8% of sample)
- other non-pottery income sources (38.2% of sample)
- Middle east employment (1 female returnee in the sample)
- casual employment (agricultural, other and hired pottery work)
- several pottery workers in household (7.5% of sample potter households)
- external marketing of produce eg.at temple, pola, "palli",etc.
- Land masters (2 households in sample and village)
- bullock cart (roughly 18% of sample)
- permanent tiled house (32.7% of sample classed under "good"; also used as an income measure)

While paddy land is largely inheritable, the ownership of the others (like coconut, other agricultural land, leasable land,etc.) is possible through employment in or out of the pottery industry, pooling together of extended family funds (as is the case of the Land Masters owned), or borrowing from the Society.

Refer Appendix 3.5 for detailed tables.

3.6 ACCESSABILITY OF VILLAGE TO RAW MATERIALS

Raw materials have become increasingly dependent from outside the village, thereby increasing the cost of production. Everyone appears familiar with the current rates and means of supply of the raw materials. The 2 village Landmasters are also hired for transport. Accessability of raw materials appears reasonably equal, although potter households with relatively larger labour resources are advantaged as procurement is time intensive. For eg. a household with only husband and wife have to forgo production a days' production to dig, "paganne" and knead the clay into balls. Also, as women are unable to go alone FHH's are particularly disadvantaged.

The Department of Small Industries donated a clay field (3-4 acres of land along the Kurunegala - Pannduwas Nuwara road about 2 miles away) in the 1960's. This was part of the government led support to the clay based industry. Although clay is free, costs are incurred by households who individually hire vehicles to transport the clay.

3.7 WOMEN POTTERS

The number of female potters who are main potters (i.e.those who predominantly throw with 1 or both hands) in their respective pottery units are relatively high (41.8% of sample potter units). Women potters are more significantly represented among the category of single producers (71.4% of such units are female).

Most women potters are seen to be disproportionately found in the lower income categories; 47.8% of women potters fall into the "Poor" category. Of the women classifiable in the "Good" income category, most are seen to have household members who have other income opportunities (2 of the 3 households); and therefore, pottery is largely a income supplementing activity for these (relatively) high income women.

Female potters are likely to be more prone to producing small pots and other items. This is largely due to skill (in throwing with 2 hands and experience), phycological conditioning (as women are assumed to be weak and incapable of throwing larger pots) and choice. Women potters are often marginalised by various such factors into production of small pots, flower pots and other items (47.8% of women potter sample). Single women potters are confined to lower income product selection (small pots, flower pots and small items) and are therefore likely to be of the low income category in their communities. On the other hand, a surprising number of female potters were stove producers (not all full time) in conjunction with producing other products (21.7% of women potters). Although less women produce stoves at present there is a willingness to learn stove making skills with proportionately more women potters giving positive responses to probes in this area. There seem to be a number of constraints that affect women producers more than other mixed sex household producers (where men are main potters with women assisting in related activities). These are seen to be time constraints (35.3%), feelings of inadequacy (5.9%), lack of labour (41.2%), physical inability (11.8%), and the preference for production that they are familiar with (5.9%).

Given the product mix of female potters, it is not surprising that almost half of such potters spread the sale of their produce among both wholesale lorry networks and the retail temple pola outlets. Most non-pot items such as flower pots and stoves are sold on a retail basis. Thus, production and marketing risks are diversified. Additional seasonal sales (of exchange and sale for paddy at harvest times) are seen to occur in the majority of cases where women are main potters (4 of the 7 cases occur in female pottery units). As seen in Appendix 3.7 d, there is a predictable preference for the wholesale distribution network (91.8% of total women potters sample), yet over half also sell to on a retail basis to the pola (56.5%). Self sale to pola or other wise is a minor market outlet (4.3% and 8.7% respectively).

Refer Appendix 4.6 for tables containing detailed information.

IV. POTTERY PRODUCTION & AND MARKETING LINKS

4.1 PRODUCTION

Potters produce a variety of items but this still tends to be largely traditional in nature with little intrusion of new product development. Often potters state that they are content to keep producing what they are accustomed to. Basic items produced are cooking pots of all sizes, water vessels and other kitchen vessels. Flower pots (often small), 1 and 2 pot stoves are also produced. Large pots for toddy brewing ("vadi mutti" and "kaadi kale") is a specialised skill carried out by only a few potters.

Generally, categories of product mix chosen by potter appear to be the following:

	No.	%
1) small pots and other small items	6	11.3
2) all sizes of pots	25	47.2
3) all(or only small)pots and flower pots	7(3)	13.2(6)
4) all (or only small) pots and stov	5(1)	9.4(1.9)
5) all pots, flower pots and stove	3	5.7
6) large pots only	2	3.8
7) extra large pots and all pot	1	1.9
Total	53	100

Factors that seem to come into play in falling into these categories are:
- parents skill and community background
- exposure to skill and knowledge
- experience of any training
- individual innovative ability
- labour resources available

4.11 DIVISION OF LABOUR

The production process appears relatively free of division of labour according to sex, age, etc. and is often a matter which is resolved among the household members according to ability, strength, other activities etc. A list of such activities is seen below:

- digging, trampling & balling clay at site (1 day; both sexes)
- transporting clay and husks (1/2 day, both but mainly male)
- trampling & cleaning clay, general preparation (at different intervals of several hours each; both sexes)
- throwing (1/2 day at a time, usually early a.m.;both sexes)
- beating of pots (1/2 day, usually p.m.; both sexes)
- joining (stoves; more female but also male)

Clay is often brought by the household members of a potter family who are usually predominantly male. Female members usually accompany male members but due to the distance involved and associated cultural norms do not go alone. At times a group of women may go together to ball clay. Only a few potters hire labour to procure their clay requirements and this is seen as increasing their costs of production substantially. Clay is often stocked up and covered in plastic sheets (to retain moisture) and freshly trampled by either sex for up to 2-3 hours at a time as and when required. Throwing usually takes place in the first half of the day and is left to dry (pots dry in the sun and stoves in the shade), while beating is towards the end of the day and also when required. Stove assembling or joining is done in the day after being thrown in the afternoon and left to dry overnight.

4.12 CATEGORIES OF PRODUCERS

Given the survey data collected on various aspects of pottery production a variety of factors appear to lead to categorisation of potter households. eg. labour inputs, use of hired labour, skill of potters, product mix, etc.

The importance of household labour inputs (defined here as the number of main potters per potter household, which underestimates labour involvement of others who may assist in time intensive work like clay preparation) is seen in the correlation of household labour to socio-economic status. Although the correlation does not reveal sharp distinctions, it is clear that proportionately those with optimum labour units i.e.2 members are more likely to be in the good and fair economic groups. This does not hold conclusively for households with 3 or more members suggesting that there are other contributing factors. The table below illustrates this:

ECONOMIC GROUPS	L = 1	L = 2	L = 3 or more	
good	3 (21.4)	13 (37.1)	2 (50)	
fair	5 (35.7)	11 (31.4)	0	
poor	6 (42.9)	11 (31.4)	2 (50)	
total	14	35	4	= 53

N.B. percentages of total households with specific labour inputs is given in brackets.

This suggests that certain households with specific labour resources are more likely to be a relatively advantageous economic position.

Further analysis of potter households which either hire labour or have exchange/non-cash labour arrangements in addition to own labour resources is interesting. Again, households with 2 labour units featured strongly (20% of such households in the sample) as informal users of external labour i.e.kinship and mutual arrangements. Surprisingly, the opposite pattern is noted in households with only a single labour unit where labour is predominantly hired (21.4% of sample) and only a minority engage in other non-monetarized labour exchange mechanisms. In households with 3 and more labour units, no additional labour appears to be sought. Refer table in Annex 4.22 for details.

If potter households are analyzed in terms of labour resources and product mix, it is apparent that **labour quantity and skill is a strong determinant of product mix.** With single producers (who are predominantly female as seen above), strengths are clearly in producing small pots and items. This is in keeping with the general skills of female potters who largely produce smaller pots. For households with 2 labour units, production of all pots is favoured strongly (54.3%) as usually members (usually couples) divide their resources and into areas of comparative advantage where the male and female potter usually specialise in production of large and smaller pots respectively. In such a situation potters are able to diversify into other products such as stoves, flower pots, and extra large pots to a lesser degree. The comparative strengths of such households are increasingly marked with 3 or more labour units who specialise to a greater degree in all pots making and also in stove and flower pot production. The difference here is that often such households tend to withdraw out of the other product mixes. However, given the small sample size of this particular category this should not be emphasised. Refer Annex table 2.2b) for more details.

Thus it can be concluded that **single potter households are a relatively defined group of producers who are subject to specific constraints. Single producer households appear to have greater likelihood in being grouped in the fair and poor economic groups,** are so placed as to have to hire labour and thus suffer from greater cost of production figures, and are limited to producing certain product mixes.

4.13 LABOUR INPUTS

Labour resources and constraints are seen to be important to potters and their production economics. The symptom of hired labour is largely casual, informal and through known parties. Often those engaging in hire of their labour are young males particularly in digging and balling clay, turning the potters wheel, and beating. A few women who engage in this form of employment does so for specific known persons (usually female potter) and for beating only. Wages for such hired activity are usually on a piece rate basis and examples are as follows;

- clay balling at Rs.3/ball
- beating size 1 pot unit at Rs.6/pot
- wheel turning at Rs.3-5/ball

Although, waged labour can be reasonably profitable (earning about Rs.100/day), it is also perceived by potters as an undesirable occupation and those engaged in it as a group of people forming an underclass within the pottery industry. This is due to many of those working for cash tend to do so to finance their daily liquor needs. This is true only for the majority of male workers. It is due to this social stigma that many young men act supposedly "economically irrationally" by preferring to remain often under-utilized at home (eg. due to inability to throw) and hence either have to rely on some mutual labour arrangement or be content with earning less or no income.

Non-monetarised, informal and mutual labour arrangements are seen to be significant in both single and 2 unit producer households where 7.1% and 20% engage in such arrangements respectively. Arrangements vary between parties and are based on mutual need, kinship and friendship ties. Forms may range from the alternate turning and throwing done by the 2 parties on different days to clay preparation and beating being performed by relatives for a % of proceeds from sales and/or meals. It is often practised widely and informally eg. among extended family members and is not recognised formally as such except as being under the usual kinship and associated obligations undertaken. Child labour (as most children stop schooling at about Grade 6) within households is also prevalent and household specific and is viewed within this context of obligations and household duties and is not regarded as productive work as such.

4.14 PRODUCT MIX

Product mix of potters is in response to 3 types of demand determined in 2 distinct markets each having its own characteristics. These are briefly sketched out below and will be referred to later in depth with respect to marketing networks.

1. Fluctuating demand yet constant product demand - small pots, flower pots, assorted clay items and 1 & 2 pot stoves.

2. Fairly constant and secure demand with seasonality of product demand - all pots, stoves on small scale.

3 Random and irregular demand - small items and extra large pots on specific order basis.

4.15 COST OF PRODUCTION FACTORS

Cost of production and profitability estimates vary due to several factors such as;

- general lack of financial records and any accounting methods or even the need to specifically account for items in monetary terms (only 1 person, a female potter, in the sample and for the whole village also kept income records for the number of pots sold and to which outlet from the commencement of production in 1984).

- perceptions of profitability differ widely due to various other reasons like skill, experience, exposure to new products and ideas, etc. Yet what is common and surprising is that profit is NOT the single dominant factor in product determination. i.e.potters do not behave as economically "rational" decision makers in the normal market sense. Other factors that are important are; the ease of production, flexibility and ease of incorporation into other activities, habit, etc.

- potters do not think in terms of costs incurred when producing, such as time spent on producing a specific number of pots as having a value, etc. Yet all potters

  know raw material costs which are fairly uniform. Production figures therefore differ widely even for a given raw material input. eg. 25-30 balls of clay leading to various equations of produce and time;
  25 balls = 125 pots (2L, 1 week) / 100 pots (2L, 2 weeks) / 75 pots (2L, 2 weeks) .....

Therefore given the variability of production figures the process of computing cost of production and profitability is further complicated. Potter perceptions of profitability also differ with a minority stating that if work is done methodically and with high labour inputs then profit is possible. The majority however, feel that there is little remaining real "profit", particularly if labour inputs are accounted for. Most potters feel that their way of earning a living is only just enough to survive on and only with judicious management of income and the presence of assets which enable cutting of consumption costs (eg.paddy and coconut lands) can any savings be made.

A few approximate potter estimates are attached in Annex 4.25 for an indication of the wide range in such perceived costs.

4.2 STOVE PRODUCTION - PATTERNS & ATTITUDES

At present, those possessing the knowledge to produce stoves are in the minority (7 or 13% approx.) and are not only those trained by the project (about 4 in the entire village at this time) but who either are self-taught or trained in producing the Sarvodaya stove model.

4.21 Attitudes to stove making are on the whole **more negative than positive** (77 negative reactions versus 26 positive ones from replies from the entire sample). The proportion of women main potter households for both types of responses were more or less the same (about 45-46% of the total responses of the sample). Among the negative responses, more weight was given to the difficulty to produce stoves due to production problems(eg.no shade facilities, high breakage, and levels of handling & time needed etc), whereas others were unwilling/unable to learn (19.5%). Surprisingly, relatively less importance was attached to unprofitability (6.5%), risk (2.6%), and lack of market (10.4%) which would seem to be standard items by which decisions are made by economic actors in a market. Among the positive responses profitability predominates (38.5% of such responses), with others being existing knowledge of stove making (27%), liking to learn (19.2%), and perception of being physically easier (15.4%). Only about 7 households were unable to respond on the subject of stove making.

If viewed in a positive light most of the negative attitudes to stove making are due to producers constraints and the inability to take on a new product which would require time for training and proficiency, a new marketing avenue and orientation, etc. and not so much an adverse reaction to introduction to product development itself. Given the relative recent exposure to stoves as a product, its gradual market take of, and training opportunities offered, it is not unreasonable to expect attitudes to become more positive as time goes on.

4.22 CONSTRAINTS FOR FEMALE MAIN POTTER HOUSEHOLDS

Particular constraints for female potter households appear to exist which are linked to their role and activities as discussed in Section 3.7. A more major problem is seen to be the inadequacy of labour (for throwing, turning is often required) which is perhaps made more acute when more handling (joining has to be done at specific times according to how dry the clay has become) with greater labour use planning perhaps being required by stove making. Lack of time (35.3%) is another significant constraint which is also possibly underestimated by inclusion into responses like unwillingness/inability to make stoves, lack of knowledge (a standard "neutral" answer often given!), etc. Of lesser importance in quantitative terms are the responses indicating the belief that as women producers they are unable to produce stoves and the continuation of present tasks in acceptable (11.8% feel physically unable, while 5.9% feel a sense of inadequacy).
Refer table in Annex 4.3 for details.

4.3 MARKETING CHANNELS

4.31 THE DIFFERENT OUTLETS

As indicated earlier pottery production is geared to 3 types of demand in mainly 2 distinct markets. As referred to previously;

1. Temple pola - with fluctuating demand yet constant product demand (small pts, flower pots, assorted clay items and various stoves).

2. Lorry traders - with fairly constant and secure demand with seasonality of product demand (all pots, stoves on small scale).

The temple pola is a relatively recent development which has been significant due to the influx of pilgrims in the area with the attraction to a temple in the region. However, this is seen to be unstable and unsustainable (as this is largely dependent on the presence and well being of a particular priest in the temple). Since April 1992, with the ill health of the priest, the temple pola is declining with a slight recovery within the last month. It was responsible however during its peak period, for a great deal of prosperity in the village which gave way to a visible spurt of house construction.

Incomes earned from the pola were far in excess of that earned through the lorry trader system and realisation of this led many potters to sever their links with their respective traders. An example cited by one potter (among others) was that income from 15 pots sold weekly was over twice as much if sold at the pola i.e. Rs.500 as opposed to Rs.150-200 to the trader. Many potters express bitterness as to how "the profits of their hard labour" have been absorbed by the Minnuwangoda traders who have prospered instead. With the loss of income from the commissions from sale of potter produce to traders, the Coop has begun charging a fixed amount of Rs.60 for each potter selling produce on a Sunday irrespective of the number of days they have been trading.

The lorry trading system appears to have been in operation for generations and is built on strong personal ties. Potters relate that they grew up with the sons of their fathers' trader and that their sons will maintain these links in the future. Lorry traders are all external and a virtual monopoly exists by the Polwatte, Minuwangoda (10-15 different traders) group and to a lesser extent the Kirimattiyanne (5 approx.) group. Each major trader "holds" about 5-6 potter households and trades with them exclusively as well as with other households who sell to any lorry. In addition to these, there are a few small miscellaneous traders particularly active at the peak pre-April season. It is with potter - particular trader relationships that there is the greater financial advantages of loans and other benefits such as employment information/assistance for sons etc. Loans are given on demand with no collateral, interest and procedures within the usual traditional system of obligation. The potter is then under obligation to repay the debt in kind i.e.in pots seasonally required according to the future cash needs of the potter. Thus a debt can take up to several months to be cancelled. According to many potters, almost every potter lives on loans (from various sources) during the slack production period of the year from April to June-July.

At the beginning of the Coop, regulation and standardisation of pricing and pot size was carried out by this body. This system sought to ensure a fair and uniform price structure to potters by traders. The standard formula is that 100 pot units (size 1) is sold for Rs.1760 with the Rs.60 as a commission to the Coop. Earlier money was paid direct to the Coop with the potter being reimbursed soon after the transaction on presentation of a chit. Later, with delays in payments to potters by the Coop, potters were paid directly. A distinctive feature of this marketing system is the seasonality of demand which all potters who sell either wholly/partly to traders follow implicitly. Every potter is familiar with these patterns and changes product mix accordingly. Where there is a specific trader-potter relationship the potters product mix is determined exclusively by the trader who leaves instructions as to his next requirements. Seasonal product pattern is generally:

Dec.- Jan.:	mutti, naebili, small pots
Feb.- April:	all pots,
end April - June:	slack period, size 8, extra large vessels (vadi), attale (water vessels)
July - Dec.(palli):	big pots,

Generally, both large and small water vessels are always made in drought periods and not produced at all in the rainy season. In addition to this, often, size 3 and 4 pots are made fairly constantly.

4.32 THE SHIFT TO ALTERNATIVE/SUPPLEMENTARY OUTLETS

The creation of this alternative marketing link (from the traditional lorry system) led to the following effects in the village:

(1) a general rise in incomes and profits from pottery production seen in new/improved houses.

(2) a weakening of the lorry trader monopoly over village production. On an individual level, some potters who found the alternative far more profitable, were tempted away from producing for traders (despite being indebted) and began selling all produce at the temple.

(3) contributed to a further weakening in the Coop

and the system of selling through this institution. It also helped to de-legitimise the hold it had over production.

(4) led to an anti-trader feeling among potters who felt they had been cheated out of profits that were rightfully theirs for years (and which the Coop was unable to control!).

(5) led to the purchase of miscellaneous small clay items to sell at the temple stalls as an added attraction.

(6) perhaps led to growth of small time stove production (both Anagi and LAS) and small flower pots in addition to pots (as a variety of goods is more attractive to customers). √

4.33 OTHER INFORMAL OUTLETS

In addition to the 2 main markets for potters produce there are other random (more seasonal), irregular forms of demand; barter trade for paddy at harvest time, "palli" season sales at coastal towns, and orders for specific items eg. vadi, oil lamps,etc.

Most potters (particularly those with no/little paddy land), engage in barter trade at harvest time in exchange for paddy. This is normally carried out in the Maha season (harvests are less in Yala due to lack of water) in surrounding farming villages. Most potters hire a cart/Land Master for a day or two for this specific purpose. Many continue to go to the same places every year. There is some indication that although the terms were very favourable to potters in the past, it has become increasingly commercial and money value based (as opposed to barter exchange) and hence not as favourable as in the past while still being more economical than purchasing rice commercially. √

The "palli" season is associated with the Catholic festivals in the coastal areas. Although all lorry traders stock up for this and determine potter product mix, few individual potters transport their own produce for sale (2 potters in the village for now). Indications are that given a reasonably large quantity of pots (and stoves to a lesser extent), low expenses and judicious use of income while resident in that area, reasonably high profit levels are reported.

Individual orders received by potters take several forms. The most basic is receipt of orders by individuals for small items such as oil lamps etc. This is particularly undertaken by lone producers (mainly female potters). FHH potters are particularly keen on this arrangement due to its risk minimal nature. On the other extreme, there are orders for extra large pots (for toddy brewing) which are given by miscellaneous traders through personal contacts. Some of these orders are collected by the traders themselves while others hire lorries to deposit their pots. Production of these large pots are profitable due to the specific skills involved and its relative scarcity.

In the sample the following marketing patterns appear. There are potters who are risk averse and/or with established personal links with traders and so produce for them only. Other potters are able to diversify their production between the pola and traders according to cash needs, obligations and priorities. Those potters who produce solely for the temple pola are those who are interested in immediate cash needs, those who can afford to produce small amounts for irregular sale, etc.

A notable absence is the sale of produce by potters themselves, (only 1 in the sample who sells both pots and stoves at Hettipola pola). This is in sharp contrast to the situation in Galwewa, Katupota a neighbouring pottery village where potters have diversified into marketing activities. A few potters market their own produce in specific villagers/shops on an irregular basis every few months.

V. ISSUES, LESSONS & FUTURE WORK

* Seasonality of production and product mix means that potters are subject to relative swings in income with periods of long hours of work and relatively more cash and others where they are relatively idle and most are indebted to their respective lorry traders.
  Stoves would be an item by which they could **diversify their product base, and thereby incomes and risks.** For potters interests however, **stoves should not be the only new product introduced.**

* The pottery industry is not seen to be in a state of decline in this village as generally believed as potters report the ability to sell all that they produce (in keeping with the seasonal demand) except in the annual "down" season.

* In village level pottery production there appears to be **relatively low levels of investment.** This is due either to:
  a) low household savings ratio
  b) little supporting services to be able to invest in improved technologies
  c) high incidence of expenditure on items like liquor

  There is therefore the **need to increase productivity of the industry in addition to perhaps introducing stoves** as a more profitable product (eg. as part of a NGO's other integrated activity)..

* Income is confined largely to the production of pottery items and not from their direct sales (unlike in neighbouring Katupota, Galewewa). **Relatively greater value could be added if potters were able to market their own products to the region.**

* There appears to be a set of "optimal" conditions for stove production such as those potters possessing more innovative skills, time, labour resources, drying space, etc. which favour only some potters. It is these conditions in addition to which others like proximity to road, ability to influence outsiders, etc. that lead to any training being more likely to go to these potters.

  Those **potters excluded are those who are generally marginalised in some way or another.** The ability to reach such potters is constrained by the situation of such potters. The **most marginal of groups were seen to be FHH's which were unable to afford to take the time and the associated risks involved to be trained.** This implies that **the project either admits its inability to work with the**

most marginal of groups in a community or reorients a part of its resources into developing a special "support package" to function as a safety net for such producers. Given the institutional constraints that exist and the limitations on trainers the exact capacity to do this needs to be carefully assessed.

* **Attitudes to stove making are more negative than positive and are a reflection of producers** constraints i.e.lack of time and losses incurred in training and period to attain proficiency, specific to production facilities & process, etc. than an unwillingness/disinterest to learn such a skill, or a perception of its unprofitability / non-marketability.

IMPLICATIONS

* Training methodology has been generally individualistic with 1 to 1 training. Given the nature of pottery production (individual and home centred), should be hardly surprising. However due the need to be more cost and time efficient community based approaches were envisaged as a possible alternative, but is **largely idealistic given the social dynamics of the village** (and most pottery villages!). However, it is possible to train particular interest groups within a village given that all such groups are seen not to be excluded from such training if they so desire it.

  [In discussions with trainers subsequently, there appears to be an undocumented & informal system of multi-potter training when appropriate and easy to manage, which is trainer determined.]

* More **analysis of the exact quantitative benefits from stove vis a vis pot production is desirable** and is difficult to gather due to the difficulties mentioned in 3.2. The projects **impact on stove producing** potters could then be more accurately determined. It would be particularly interesting to determine the exact factors or set of conditions that make some stove producers more profitable and successful than others.

VI. A N N E X E

Annexure are according to their corresponding areas of relevance to the main text.

ANNEX 3.3 VILLAGE HISTORY

The earliest knowledge of one elderly villager is of the village being inhabited by predominantly 3 families (about roughly 90 years ago) whose original houses still remain. At this time, there were about 8 acres of rainfed paddy land and surrounding chena land (known as the "Miris henna"). The surrounding forests (known as the "Nuwara kale") provided for fuel needs. The village clearly grew slowly to begin with through marriage from other villages. According to one elderly woman, marriages in the past were relatively late in life; about 28 for women and mid 30's for men. Thus, population growth was realised to be relatively slower unlike at present.

ANNEX 3.4 EXAMPLES OF COST OF PRODUCTION FOR DIFFERENT POTTERS

EG.1

Single female producer with part-time help of husband (works elsewhere) and hires female to assist in beating of pots. ✓
Production: S3-8 pots, 25 pots/week with 1LM/1 week

C.O.P.:for 1 week with hired L at Rs.6/pot for beating

clay	=	50
husks	=	150
straw	=	10
L	=	150
		360

Profitability:
Income from 25 pots = 425
Profit = 65/week

EG.2

L=2, 250 pots/month, 1 LM/week
C.O.P : for 1 week with 1 LM of clay (gives 65 pots approx.)

clay	=	50
husk	=	150
straw	=	10
		210

Profitability:
Income from sales = 1105
Profit pre-own L = 895
Profit post-own L = 55

EG.3

L=1 (female potter, with beating performed by husband part-time)
1 cart of clay/week, 40 pots/week

C.O.P.: for 1 week with cart of clay

clay = 25
husks = 150
straw = 10

185

Profitability:
Income from sale = 680
Profit pre-own L = 495/wk
Profit post-own L= -30

EG.4

L=1 (female), hires 2 for raw material supply, 1 relative for pot making.
100 balls of clay/month, 125 pots/week

C.O.P.: per week

clay = 125
husks = 300
straw = 20

445
relatives L 250

645

Profitability: = 2,125
profit/month = 1,480/week

EG.5

L=1 & with hired L to turn, S1 & 2 pots only, 1LM of clay /month, 100 pots/month.

C.O.P.: per month

clay = 50
husks = 150
hired L = 125
straw = 10

335

Profitability = 1,700
profit/month = 1.365

EG.6

L=2 & hired L to turn, produces stoves, all pots and flower pots.
1 LM/9 days, a firing on the 10th day.

C.O.P.: with 25 balls of clay in 9days

clay = 50
husks = 375 / 400
hired L= 75

500 / 525

Here, since the potter feels unable to estimate numbers of product mix and prices of flower pots and stoves sold through own efforts it is not possible to calculate profit levels.

EG.7

L=2 (elderly couple with the female being the main potter) 1LM/month, 50-60 pots/month with 15 pot units (smaller sized) produced and sold per week for weekly needs.

C.O.P.: per week, per 15 pots produced

clay	=	15
husks	=	50
coc.fuel	=	25
		70

Profitability:
Income from sales;
a)temple - Rs.500 with 410 profit
b)lorry - Rs.150-200 with 80 "
= 580 - 630/week

EG.8

L=2 (couple yet mostly male as female is recent Middle East returnee). Mutual L arrangements for turning when required. 1LM/ 2 weeks, 25 "vadi mutti" or 100 pots

C.O.P.:2 week

clay	=	50
husks	=	375

Profitability ("vadi"):
Income if sells himself = 3750
Profit = 3375

EG.9

L=1 (male potter with only clay preparation work & turning by wife), S1-4 pots made.
1 LM/month, 90-100 pots
Firing costs estimated as Rs300
C.O.P.: per month

clay	=	50
husks	=	300
straw	=	10
		360

Income/month = 1530 or 1700
Profit/month = 1170 or 1340

EG.10

L=2, 2 tractor loads of clay /month, 180 pots/month
Production period is about 20 days (given off days etc).

C.O.P.: per 20 day period

clay	=	100
husks	=	300
pithi	=	100
		500

Profitability:
Income from sale = 3060
Profit = 2560

EG.11

L=2
1 LM/ 2 weeks, 150 pots/2 weeks & 10 -15 stoves /2 weeks

C.O.P.: per 2 weeks, 150 pots

clay	=	100
husks	=	250
paddy husk	=	05
pithi	=	30
		385

ANNEX 3.5

3.5.a) ECONOMIC GROUPS

	L = 1	L = 2	L = 3 or more	Total
Good	3 (21.4)	13 (37.1)	2 (50)	18
Fair	5 (35.7)	11 (31.4)	0	16
Poor	6 (42.9)	11 (31.4)	2 (50)	19
	14	35	4	53

N.B. (..) are %s'

3.5.b) HOUSEHOLD INCOME CATEGORISED AND ASSETS AND ALTERNATIVE (NON POTTER) INCOME SOURCES

	With land	Without land	Other sources
Good	10	8	11
Fair	9	8	4
Poor	4	16	8
Total	23	32	21

3.5.c) ASSETS OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS

	Poultry	Cattle	Without Transport (Cart/Land Master/Lorry)
Fair		1	4
Poor			1
Good		2	6
Total			

NB. (Double counting included - i.e. those with cows & a Land Master but does not include bull & cart.

ANNEX 3.7 WOMEN POTTERS - AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE CASE OF A FHH POTTER

Rani was widowed a few years ago (3 1/2) and 7 months ago she left her husbands village of Pillasa, Kegalle due to the low levels of earnings (due to low pot prices) she made due to the low quality of clay there. She has 4 years of formal schooling. She wanted to return to her own village where she has relatives as she wanted the support of her family. She lives next door to another FHH who is a relative and is also very poor. She has 3 young children (school going with the eldest being a 13 year old girl) and also 2 grown up sons who work as casual labour (mostly paddy work). She is the sole potter in the household as her 2 sons are said to not have an aptitude for pottery work.

Her skills in throwing are limited to size 5 and therefore she is only able to produce small pots and flower pots. She is usually able to make 25 pots/week maximum with about 10-15 minimum. Her sons bring raw materials like clay, according to her needs and their time. She sees little profitability in her pot production but does it as she feels there is little alternative.

There is little investment in her pottery making. There is no potters wheel as it is not affordable (Rs.300 charged by a mason) so she currently borrows one from a relative who is not using it. She fires her pots in a brothers kiln. She is not a member of the Coop as yet, although she feels there are advantages in joining. She feels she may not be able to raise the membership fee.

The problems for her in possible training in stove making are there being no one else to turn the wheel, no male, and that it may be more of a problem. She also fears it will difficult to market these stoves and so will waste the little clay she has. She is reassured that at present, even the faulty pots can be sold (to those visitors who come into the village). She stated she fears taking on <u>both</u> marketing and producing. Risk plays an important part in her decision-making. She hence prefers the security of producing for orders (even if it means accepting at slightly lower rates from known persons).

Her hopes for her younger 3 children are to continue their schooling as hers had been curtailed after only 4 years. She is disappointed that her sons discontinued school after only 2 years ,but is proud that her eldest daughter is a keen student. She would like them to be educated so as to get a job.

In a discussion with 2 other neighbouring women about their children Rani and the others agreed that in their time they were made to work hard in the pottery business from a very young age (11-12 years old) and did not find this held true now. All 3 women said they were tired of working and therefore, think of the future and how they could develop was a large burden which they felt they were unable to take on.

3.7.a) **Women Potter Households by Labour Resources**

Pottery Producing House holds	L = 1	L = 2	L = 3 or more
Total	14	35	4 = 53
of which women main potter	10	13	0
Total Women Potters		23	(41.8%)

3.7.b) **Income categories of women potters who are main potters in households**

Women Potters	Good	Fair	Poor
L = 1	3	2	4
L = 2	4	3	5
L = 3		1	1
Total	7	6	10

3.7.c) **Product mix of main women potters**

Product	No.	%	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
Small pots & items	7	30.9	5	1	2	8
All pots	5	21.7	1	1	2	4
All pots & Flower pots	2	8.7		3		3
Small pots & Fl. pots	4	17.4		1		4
All pots & Stoves	2	8.7			2	2
All & Flower pots, Stoves	1	4.3		1		1
Small pots & Stoves	2	8.7	1			1
Big pots only	-	-				
Total	23	99.9				
			7	7	9	23

3.7.d. CHOICE OF MARTET LINKAGES OF FEMALE POTTERS

Market Link	No. of Potters	No. of Total Female Sample
Any .... trader	10	)
Specific trader	11	) 91.3
Temple pola only	01	4.3
Both (trades + pola)	13	56.5
Other seasonal sales (for paddy)	4	17.4
Self sale	2	8.7
*Total	41	

* Figure Exceeds 23 due to multiple links.

ANNEX 4.22 LINKS BETWEEN HOUSEHOLD LABOUR AND ADDITIONAL LABOUR USE

HOUSEHOLDS	L=1	L=2	L=3 or more
No. of households	14 (26.4)	35 (66)	4 (7.5) = 53
Of which use of attam/kinship labour arrangements	1 (1.9)	7 (13.2)	0
Of which use of hired labour	3 (5.7)	4 (7.5)	0
Of which woman is main potter	10	13	0

N.B. figures in brackets indicates the percentages for the total number with a specific labour input.

(ANNEX 4.22b) LINKS BETWEEN POTTER PRODUCT MIX AND LABOUR RESOURCS

PRODUCT MIX	L=1	L=2	L>3	total
Small pots & items	3 (21.4)	3 (8.6)	0	6
All pots	4 (28.6)	19 (54.3)	2 (50)	25
All pots & f pots	2 (14.3)	5 (14.3)	0	7
Small pots & f pots	3 (21.4)	0	0	3
All pots & stoves	0	5 (14.3)	0	5
All & f pots, stoves	0	1 (2.9)	2 (50)	3
Small pots & stoves	0	1 (2.9)	0	1
Big pots only	2 (14.3)	0	0	2
Extra big & all pots	0	1	0	1
Totals	14	35	4	= 53

N.B. 1).% figures are given in brackets as that of number in labour unit
2) production of flower pots likely to be underestimated and can be more accurately guessed by those engaged in temple pola marketing outlet.
3) stove production recorded tends to be those who currently produce and are likely to underestimate those with the knowledge to produce. Many are part-time produces of small quantities who produce sporadically.

ANNEX 4.25 COST OF PRODUCTION

Cost of production figures for different potters in the sample have been compiled with their assistance. Some potters were more able than others to assist in calculating their costs, average production levels etc. In order to reach such estimated figures (given the many problems encountered) such numbers should always be treated cautiously!). Assumptions underlying the compilation of these figures are;

1) Only average maximum production figures have been taken for each potter.
2) Potter labour units (L) are defined as main full time potters - yet undervalues importance of casual assistance (by household members) in clay preparation activities which are often time intensive.

3) Although monetary value of hired labour is incorporated into cost of production figures household labour is not valued in the same way. It appears that if it is valued at going market rates then there is no/little profit from pottery production!

4) Income from sales is taken as that to lorry traders which is based on the standard rate of 100 pots (size 1 unit) = Rs.1700 (Rs.1760 before with Rs.60 to the Coop).

5) Raw material prices are fairly uniform and are as follows;
Land Master (LM) of clay (25-30 balls) = Rs.50
Cart of clay (12 balls) = Rs.25
Tractor of clay = Rs.275
Husks(/100) = Rs.25
Tractor of husks (1900-2000) = Rs.300
Paddy husks is free
Straw costs are taken as Rs.10-20 per firing except if potter has a paddy field.
Own labour where calculated is at rate of Rs.75/day
100 pithi = Rs.30

6) Standard quantitative measurements taken are;
firing in small average kiln = 75 pots
1 tractor of husks = 2 firings

Time related opportunity costs in stove making;
S1 pot x 2 = 1 stove
S4 pot x 4 = 1 stove

ANNEX 4.3 MARKETING LINKS OF POTTERS IN GENERAL

MARKET LINK	NO. OF POTTERS
ANY LORRY TRADER	13
SPECIFIC TRADER	13
TEMPLE POLA ONLY	07
BOTH	19
OTHER SEASONAL FORMS	7
SELF-SALE	2

ANNEX 4.3.1a POSITIVE ATTITUDES TO STOVES

Positive Response	Male & Both	Female Main Potter	Total
1) More profitable / advantageous	5	5	10 (38.5%)
2) Likes to learn	1	4	5 (19.2%)
3) Eases on body	3	1	4 (15.4%)
4) Produces Stoves/Knows	5	2	7 (27.0%)
Total	14	12	26

ANNEX 4.3.1b NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO STOVES AS A PRODUCT

Negative Response	Male & Both	Female Main Potter	Total
1) No habit / not used to	3	4	7 (9.1)
2) Unprofitable / not advantageous	5		5 (6.5)
3) Risky	1	1	2 (2.6)
4) No knowledge	5	7	12 (15.6)
5) Difficult due to production problems	12	8	20 (46.0)
6) Constraints due to low labour inputs		5	5 (6.5)
7) Low prices	1	1	2 (2.6)
8) Unwilling / unable to learn	10	5	15 (19.5)
9) No market (market problems / constraints	5	3	8 (10.4)
10) Lack of time	1		0
11) Can make but prefers not to	1		1 (1.3)
Total	42	35	77

ANNEX 4.3.2 CONSTRAINTS FELT BY FEMALE MAIN POTTERS TO PRODUCE STOVES

Constraints		
Inadequacy of labour	7	(41.2)
Inadequacy - feels unable	1	(5.9)
Physically cannot	2	(11.8)
Lack of time	6	(35.3)
Prefers for used to activity	1	(5.9)
TOTAL	17	