CHAPTER - VII
Material Culture reflect the interaction between needs and its fulfillment (Technologically) under a given environment (Cultural and Physical) in tangible and visual form or rather say that it is a expression of behavioral pattern in visual form. There are many such objects; but of all, it is betterly reflected on the plastic object like pottery. Being a plastic material, it captures the patterns of behavioral variations and uniformity over the time and space. It emerged as an unavoidable component of human culture, when the culture entered into food production economy. It reflects the cultural dynamics of a society. It got interwoven with the socio-economic fabrics of food producing cultures, may it be simple or complex. This, what we had seen in this part of India. It made its beginning during Neolithic cultures; technologically it was simple. In course of time, when the peasant economy flourished and showed the different phases of transformation in their form and content, pottery traditions we encounter over the varied geographical space of Assam responded, and it does so qualitatively and quantitatively got attuned with the local situation and its configuration exhibits variations.

I have tried to visualize the pottery of South Kamrup through some pottery producing centers. That helped me to develop an over all vision of the pottery of South Kamrup. To be more precise, I have studied Rajapukhuri, a homogenous village of the Kumar pottery, which is located in between both the rural and urban centers, it serves the cultural need for the both. For being so, the industry
developed in this village serves as a reflector of the changing direction of the needs and their continuity, if there be any.

It is taken for granted that the modern economy displaces or replaces the tradition of socio economic system drastically. The data based on the pottery from the village say something else. Why it is so? If we look into peasant cultures of Assam (specially the Indo-European speaking cultures) seen that the socio-economic base of their culture are underpinned by Brahminical codes. It may not be in a rigid form, but it works in silent and this in a potent manner. The extant belief; the mores, customs which are thought to be on wane in a given situation even in the so called modern way of life.

It may be seen discordant at a first glance; but some time the discordant rhythms becomes a necessary. This is the cultural idioms. Pottery becomes a connecting link between the so called extant tradition and modernity. This is reflected from the pottery types and the Kumar potter of the village under study.

The Kumar potter knows the requirement of client, because both of them participate in the common or same religious institution from their relative positions. The relative position is maintained by evolving a number of inter dependent occupational units. The symbols in the form of codes gourd their relative occupational position. For this one does not encroached others technological spheres. This comes in many forms, sometimes as the concept like purity and pollution or other opposing notions or sacred attribution to ones production. These are the means to keep the pottery of the Kumar to maintains its typo-technological
distinctiveness of their pottery from that of the Hira. Not only that by evolving the
different positions between the Kumar and the Hira, an economic balance is
maintained.

The ritualistic calendars are ordered in such a way which is quite attuned
with needs of the religious institution. Almost majority of the types receives
symbolic attributions, which are linked up mostly with the fertility cults and receives
sacred attributions. The Kumar are a part of the sacred institution; the religious
institution bestowed him with higher hierarchical position in caste structure; while
keeping the Hiras hierarchically lower. But both have to work within ambit of caste
system. What is seen here that matter matters much here. The same concept of
purity and impurity passed to the respective groups, who are involved in making
two types of pottery charged with two opposite concepts. This is evident from the
relative location of the stalls of two groups, in the markets near by the village under
study. The reflection of the same is seen in the location of homogeneous village or
in clusters. Change has pitched in but same socio-religious codes, values, norms
still vibrate in the life of the people, in both rural and urban centers. So long the
traditional idioms, codes exist, the Kumar pottery will continue to survive. Change
may take place in its production pattern; but types and its cultural content remain
unaltered.