CHAPTER-IV

CONCLUSION
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Thus pottery, an integral part of ceramics, constitutes an important cultural material of men right from the Neolithic times and like any archaeological material it throws a good deal of light on different aspects of human activity - be it social, cultural, economic, religious or political. It is a common household article used by one and all - from the king to the pauper. However, potteries are not the same everywhere. Their making, use and morphology vary from culture to culture. Often regional and cultural variations are so discernible that certain cultures are identified and named after their diagnostic potteries in the absence of any other archaeological objects or cultural traits.

Though the origin of pottery making is shrouded in obscurity its antiquity can safely be assigned to the Neolithic period on the basis of archaeological evidences. Its prevalence synchronised with an economic stage when the subsistence economy of the man was characterized by food producing (agriculture), domestication of animals and use of sharp, polished and ground stone tools and implements. Pottery making as such had an evolutionary process. In the beginning it was hand-made and sundried and later on in the neolithic and early chalcolithic contexts it was wheel-made and fired. Once it is fired its use and antiquity gain in significance.
Pottery, because of its indestructible quality serves as an important indicator for identifying cultures and classification of archaeological objects and evidences. It often throws fresh light on historical questions of the social habits and the technical skills of the time when it was made. Since potteries are not affected by any of the agents which attack metal, wood or textiles, they remain virtually unchanged after being buried even for thousand years while other artefacts of the same period get destroyed completely or partially. For this reason pottery gains importance in archaeological studies and is being used extensively for reconstructing the life style of its authors whether of the Pre and Proto-historic or Early historic period. Other archaeological datas supplemented by pottery provide tangible, three-dimensional facts to the material remains discovered through surveys and excavations. These facts not only corroborate literary evidences and provide statistical data but they also fill the gaps, particularly in the Proto-historic period.

The study of pottery in Orissan archaeology remains indispensable as most of the excavated reports so far have no absolute datings nor have yielded any datable objects for establishing chronology and determination of dates.
Hence the study of pottery in Orissan context is of utmost importance. Though it does not help in establishing an absolute chronology or calendar dating of the associated archaeological evidences it remains as the only other alternative for establishing the relative chronology and culture sequence of the archaeological evidences of Orissa right from the proto-historic period onwards.

The earliest evidence of pottery in Orissa came from the Neolithic site of Golabai dating back to C. 3rd millenium B.C. The other excavated Neolithic sites which yielded potteries are Kuchai and Baidyapur. While in Golabai the neolithic pottery is associated with bone and stone tools in Kuchai the neolithic horizon associated with stone tools are found overlying a microlithic layer of the late Mesolithic period.

The neolithic ceramic industry of Orissa broadly comprised (i) coarse grit tempered red ware, (ii) coarse dull red ware, (iii) red slipped ware, (iv) buff ware, (v) blackish grey ware and (vi) cord impressed ware and (vii) tortoise shell impressed ware. Out of these six wares Kuchai and Baidyapur represented (i) and (ii), while Golabai (Period I) is represented by (ii) to (vii). In addition to these some burnished and slipped wares are found in upper levels of Golabai.
Potteries are hand-made as well as wheel-made. The clay employed for manufacturing of pot is not levigated. Sand, mica, husk, grits are tempered with the clay. The potteries are medium to thick and medium to thin fabric. Most of the wares are fired under reducing condition of the kiln as a result of which most of the wares have undergone illfiring.

The cord impressed ware and the tortoise shell impressed ware are diagnostic Neolithic potteries in Orissa. The surface colour of the pot is dull red and the colour of the core varies from blackish, ashy grey to dull red. Tempering materials like grit and straw are used. Cord impressions and tortoise shell impressions are found on the exterior surface of the pots. The cording strokes are vertical, horizontal, oblique or slanting. Incised and applique decorations are also noticed. The sherds are decorated with incised and fingertip designs. Appliqué decorations are noticed at the waist portion of the pot.

Post-firing paintings are found in the form of red ochre bands. The paintings are executed on the exterior surface of the pots, mostly on the rim and neck portions and rarely on the body portion of the pot. Ochre is the medium of painting.

The neolithic ceramic assemblage of Orissa represented mainly by Golabai can be compared with the potteries of Daojali Hading,
Sarutaru and Chirand. The surface treatment of Daojali Hading had affinity with the cord impressed wares of Orissa. It has also resemblance with the potteries of Chirand but Chirand potteries are mostly hand-made while most of the neolithic potteries in Orissa are wheel-made.

The excavated Chalcolithic sites in Orissa are Sankerjang, Golabai (Period II), and Khambeswaripalli. Out of these three sites Sankerjang yielded no pottery at all. The cultural materials associated with the potteries of the Chalcolithic horizon at Golabai and Khambeswaripalli are bone tools, stone tools, terracotta objects, copper and beads of semi-precious stones.

The Chalcolithic ceramic assemblage in Orissa include wares like (i) Burnished red slipped ware, (ii) Burnished black slipped ware, (iii) Burnished chocolate slipped ware, (iv) Burnished black-and-red ware, (v) Dull red ware, (vi) Buff ware, (vii) Red slipped ware, (viii) Plain black-and-red ware, (ix) White painted black-and red ware, (x) Red slipped ware, (xi) White painted red slipped ware, (xii) Plain red ware and (xiii) Cord impressed ware. The wares from (i) to (vii) are noticed in Golabai (Period II) and wares from (vii) to (xiii) are found in Khambeswaripalli. However, burnished wares, black and red slipped wares are common in both sites. Besides it is evident from the
excavations that degeneration of potteries are noticed towards the end of this period.

Wares are mostly wheel-made though some slow wheel turned potteries are also found during the excavations. The Chalcolithic potteries are distinguished by highly developed pottery of rare texture and fabric. The potteries are made of well levigated clay, well fired and fast wheel turned. The burnished wares are characterized by lustrous shining. The shapes are mostly bowl, Katora (bowl with a featureless rim, flaring sides, mild carination at the waist and with a ring base), vase, basin, miniature pots, spheroid bowl, etc.

Paintings, both pre-firing and post-firing are found. Paintings are noticed in red slipped, black slipped potteries as well as in burnished black-and-red ware. The paintings are executed in white and ochre pigments. White paintings are executed only in burnished black-and-red wares. The painted designs are straight horizontal lines, concentric bands, triangles, criss-cross and 'W' patterns.

Interestingly Chalcolithic painted potteries are also reported from a few other explored sites as well. The sites are on Mahanadi valley and also on the confluence of Tel and Mahanadi. From Nehna white painted black-and-red ware is reported. In one case the innerside of the sherd is painted in white in the form of concentric circles. A
The ceramic assemblage of the early iron age comprised, (i) Dull red ware, (ii) Black slipped ware, (iii) Red slipped ware, (iv) Buff ware, (v) Grey ware, (vi) Burnished black-and-red slipped ware, (vii) Burnished black polished ware, (ix) Rouletted ware, (x) Knobbed ware, (xi) Plain red ware and (xii) Northern Black Polished ware. Burnished wares are found in all the sites except Golabai (Period III). Burnishing and polishing are characteristic of early historic ceramics in Orissa. Paintings are totally absent. However, post-firing paintings in the form of red ochre bands are found in Golabai alone. Out of these wares Buff ware, Grey ware and black slipped wares are found in Golabai (Period III) and in the lowest levels of Sisupalgarh.

The potteries discussed above are supplemented by the findings from the explored sites in the middle Mahanadi valley and
Nehna. Potteries from the explored sites are similar to the excavated potteries of the early iron age site ceramics.

Thus, the study of ceramics conclusively helps in preparing a cultural profile of Orissa in terms of culture-sequence and chronology right from the neolithic period upto the early historic period over a time span of three thousand four hundred years.
REFERENCES