



RESEARCH ARTICLE

CLAY MODELLING INDUSTRY OF GHURNI, KRISHNAGAR, NADIA, WEST BENGAL – AN APPRAISAL

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ABSTRACT

Handicraft is creative features of human life. Through the ancient time, handicraft has been related to generation to generation. This lifestyle gives to man occupation, employment, money and heritage of a place. Among the crafts, clay doll making industry of Krishnagar has a rich history and heritage. During the late 18th Century, the making of conventional clay dolls, clad in the provincial attire, gained momentum by the patronage of Maharaja Krishnachandra. Krishnagar clay - dolls are unique in their reality and the quality of their fabrication. The handicraft creations of these artists are exhibited in most of the museums of the world. Exhibitions of Krishnagar dolls have been held in London, Paris and Boston. Ghurni (Ward no-2) is a very important center for the production of clay dolls and idols which are popularly known as Krishnagar clay dolls. Ghurni clay - models have won medals and certificates at international level. It spreads over the area of Kalipur, Bhatjangla, Pal Para, Halder Para, Sandhya Para and the surroundings. The Jalangi River, local ponds, wells, tube wells etc. act as important water resource while the raw material alluvial soil is available from the riverside. But in spite of so many advantages the scenario is becoming disheartening for so many reasons. Gone are the days of Jamindari patronage. So problems have arisen in the infrastructure, transport and marketing facilities. The flourishing market abroad of fiberglass models, have forced some artisans to change the base material of their products. The government should be taken some good policy for survival famous clay doll industry of Krishnagar.

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INTRODUCTION

Indian Handicrafts have been a traditional craft and the skill of making handicraft has been passed in families from generation to generation. Millions of Indians still depend on indigenous modes of production, traditional skills and techniques to make a living based on handmade products. They are unique expressions of a particular culture or community through local craftsmanship and materials. With increased globalization, however, products are becoming more and more commoditized and artisans find their products competing with goods from all over the world. Handicraft production is a labour intensive industry which can actually support skilled and unskilled people who are involved in this profession. Handicrafts are a labour intensive sector with high potential of employment for poorer section of the society in rural and urban areas. It is economically important because of low capital investment, high value addition and negligible import content and high potential for export earnings. Handicraft sector is an important source of employment for both the urban and the rural poor

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which encourages the final goals of job creation and poverty reduction in the respective areas. It is always observed that when poor communities receives tangible benefits from handicraft sales in areas where livelihoods of the local community is dependent on natural resources, they may be more likely to support and value protected areas. The emergence of handicrafts sector, as one of the sources of foreign exchange earnings for the country, is 280388.70 million (In \$ dollars) in 2014-2015(April- Jan) of exports of all India's handicrafts from India [Development Commissioner (Handicrafts), INDIA]. Handicrafts of West Bengal have a unique characteristics and beauty from the ancient time to till date. Bengal is famous for its art form and handicraft, is one of the prominent arts of such artistic forms. In the time of British rule handicrafts of west Bengal had a huge demand over the European market as the manufacturing cost is less but the value is more. Even the East India Company also involved them into that trade. According to Om Prakash-"The commodity exports by the company were substantially and chronologically in excess of its commodity imports into Bengal..... This put the Indian producers, with their considerably lower labour costs and a much longer history of sophisticated skills in handicrafts of various kinds, in a

position of advantage over their European counterparts in the production of a variety of manufactured goods” [The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal/ Prakash / Om]. Clay doll making industry of Krishnagar has a rich history and heritage. During the late 18th Century, the making of conventional clay dolls, gained momentum by the patronage of *Maharaja Krishnachandra*. At present the art has gained immense expertise in portraying Indian social scenes via pottery. Krishnagar pottery has gained international recognition and is regularly displayed in international exhibitions. In fact, this sector provides employment to more than 3 lakhs mostly from rural areas. *Ghurni* is a very important center for the production of clay dolls and idols which are popularly known as Krishnagar clay dolls.

Study area

Krishnagar (*Fig. 1*) is the historical place, district headquarters situated on the bank of river Jalangi in Nadia District. Krishnagar is named after Raja Krishna Chandra

Rai (1728-1782). The Rajbari built here during the reign of Raja Krishna Chandra Rai is a prominent place of tourist attraction. Krishnagar was the birth place of the noted Poet, Composer and Playwright Shri Dwijendra Lal Roy (1863-1913). The Christian Missionaries attached much importance to Krishnagar. The origin of famous clay models of Krishnagar is Ghurni. The clay model artists of Ghurni have won international repute and fame for their excellence in clay modeling. Ghurni is situated on ward no-2 in Krishnagar Municipality (*Fig-Location map*) on bank of Jalangi river, Latitude and longitude of study area-88° 31'E and 23° 25'N. *Ghurni* is a very important center for the production of clay dolls and idols which are popularly known as Krishnagar clay dolls. It spreads over the area of Kalipur, Bhatjangla, Pal Para, Halder Para, Sandhya Para and the surroundings. The Jalangi river, local ponds, well, tube well etc. act as important water resource while the raw material alluvial soil is available from the riverside.

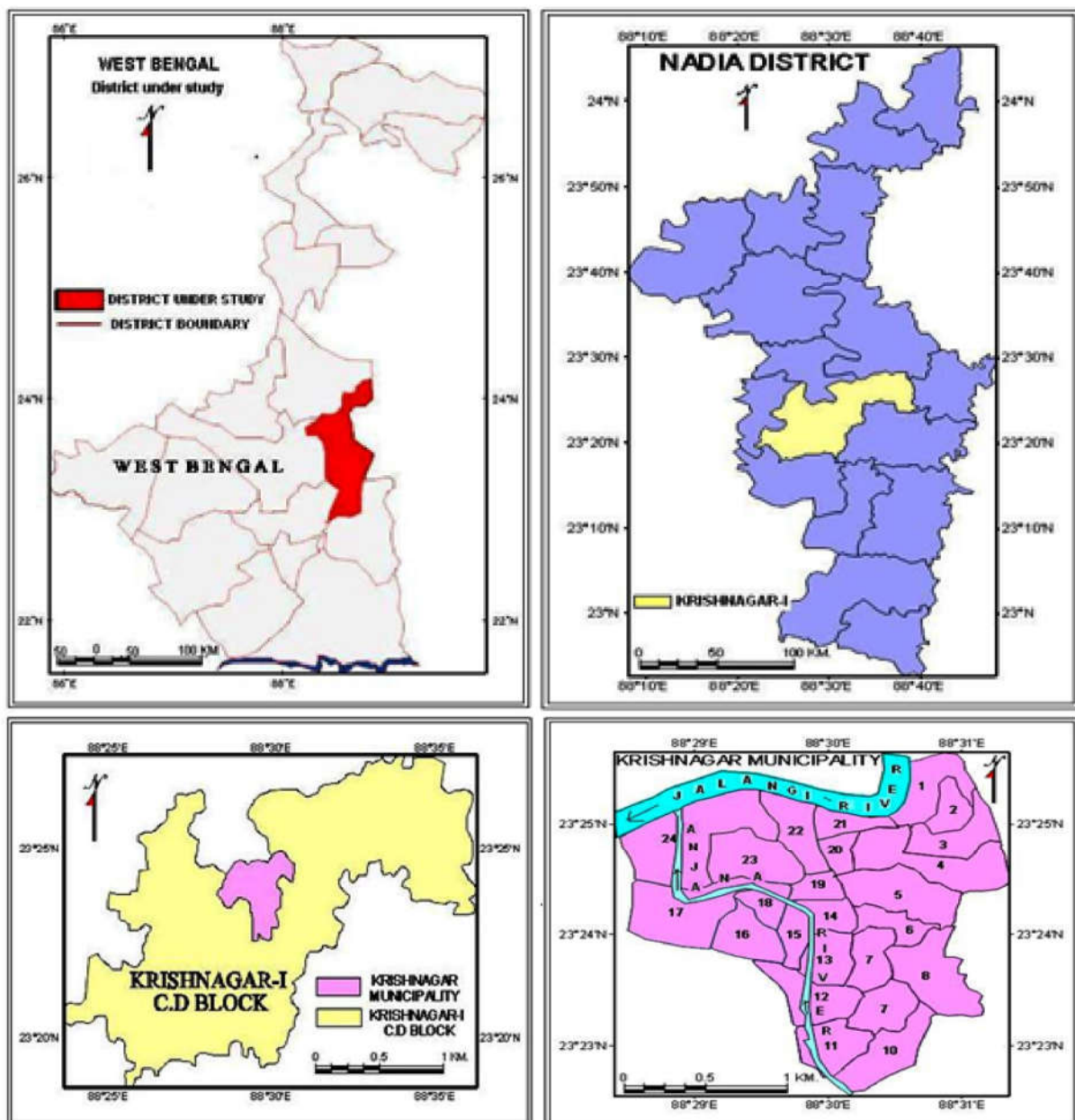


Fig.1. Location of the Study Area

Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To highlight the present status of clay doll making industry of Ghurni, Krishnagar
2. To identify the causes of the problems and to suggest integrated measures for it.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data Base

The data base which is used to analyses this study are as follows –

- Marketing clay doll industry for the year 2014, 2015.
- Clay-doll workers, monthly wages, Profit of Art Gallery owner.

Methodology

The methodology that has been use to prepare this paper from its start to end are as follows:

Data Collection

All the required data which have been used to give a structure to this paper are being collected from Art Gallery House, Cultural department of Nadia District and Census Handbooks.

Collection of Maps

Study area map collected from Krishnagar Municipality of Nadia district.

Perception Study

A perception study being done from Art Gallery House of Clay-Doll industry of Ghurni. Present status of clay doll from view of clay workers.

Data Analysis and Presentation: To analyze the data in this paper some general software and GIS software have been used. Location map has been prepared by help of the TNT Mips and all other calculation has been done by the help of Microsoft Excel software. There are some simple and general statistics have been applied to analyze the data throughout the entire paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History of the craft in the locality

The old name of Krishnagar was Rewe. In the early 17th century Bhabananda Majumdar founded the royal family of Nadia. Later, Maharaja Rudra changed the name to Krishnagar. In 1757, Maharaja Krishna Chandra (1710–1783) helped the British East India Company against Siraj-ud-Daulah in the Battle of Plassey. He was a patron of the arts, including literature and music and supported the production of clay dolls. In 1728 he brought families of potters from Dhaka and Natore and settled them in Ghurni, then a village. This pottery is very popular and in most of the international exhibitions held since

1851 in London, Paris and Boston. Krishnagar clay dolls have won medals and certificates and also great admiration from the Europeans. The exquisite craftsmanship of these artisans have earned them laurels and accolades from the British royalty like Queen Victoria as well as other important people of the British Raj and Catholic Popes in recent times. The first rewarded artist was Sri Ram Paul (1819-1885). Presently the eminent artists are Sri Biren Paul, Goutam Paul, and Ganesh Paul etc. Many artists of this region went abroad and engaged as an engraver to create temple images, mosques, monuments etc. As late as 1990, when the Government of Russia wanted a bronze figure of Rabindranath Tagore for display in one of their national parks, they sought the help of master craftsman Kartick Chandra Pal to give them a clay model. Paul provided it and later converted it into a bronze sculpture. The Pal families are inseparable from the history of the clay dolls. (Chakrobati, Sudhir, 1985)



Plate 1: Lenin and By artist of Ghurni

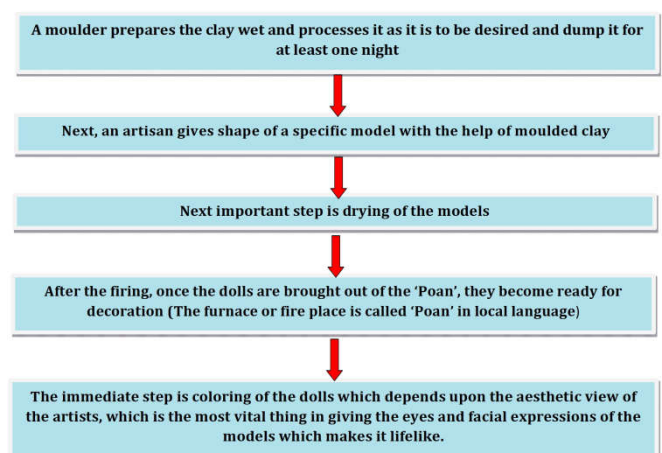


Fig.2. Preparation of clay and Moulding

Making of marvelous clay doll with use different raw materials

Accompanying Diagram (Fig 3 and 4) showing, there are different type production of marvelous clay doll with use different raw materials by Ghurni's artistic. Makers of clay doll are used not only clay (58 percent) but also they are used different materials such as Stone dust (10 percent), Bronze (20percent), cement (5%), Fiber glass (20%), and wax doll (2%).

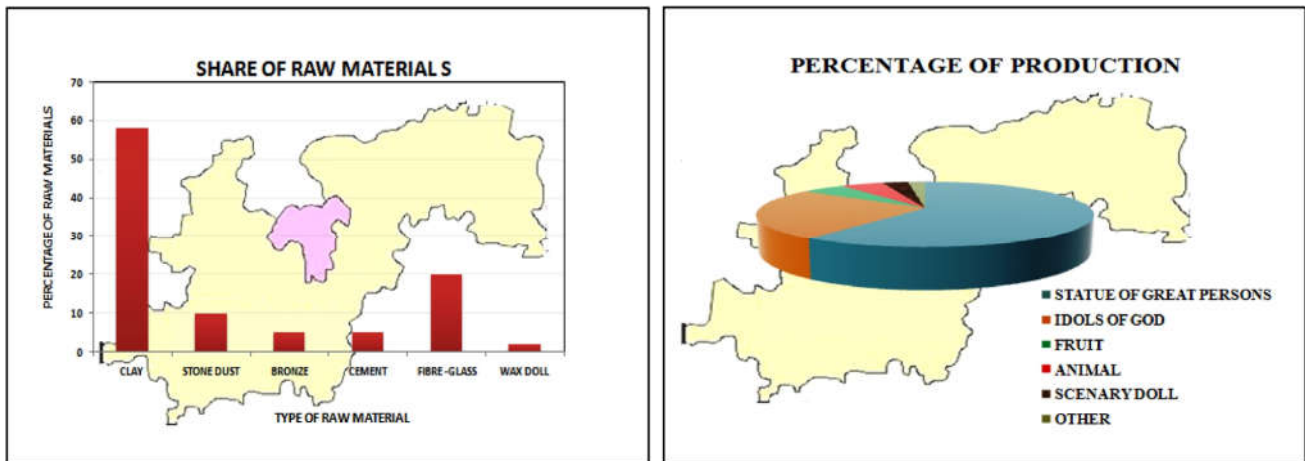


Figure 3 and 4. Data Source: Clay workers art Gallery at Ghurni

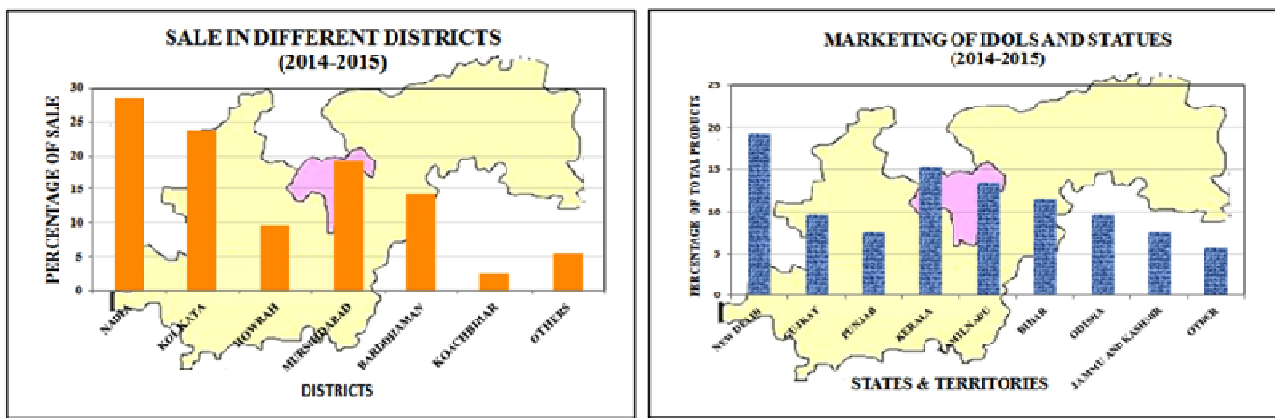


Figure 5 and 6. Data Source: Clay workers art Gallery at Ghurni

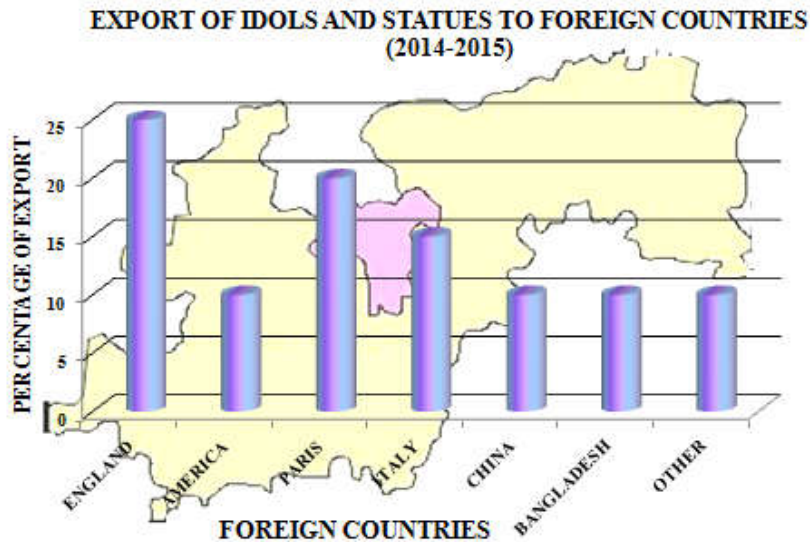


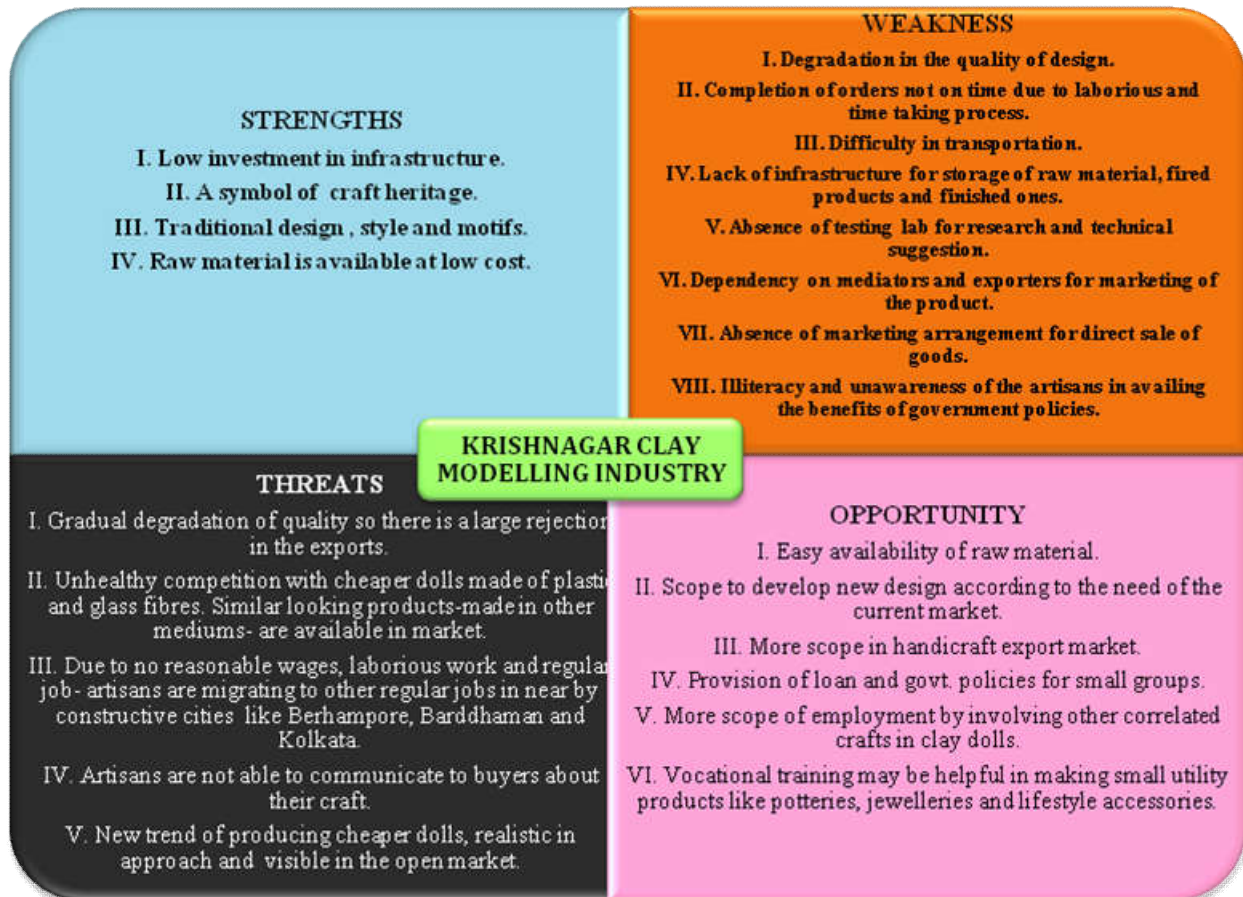
Figure 7. Data source: Clay Worker’s art gallery at Ghurni

There are making of different type clay doll for local sell and export different district, state and also foreign country. God’s statue or idol such as Radha –Krishna, Durga, Kali, Shib so on (25 percent), Great man’s statue such as Netaji, Ghandhiji, Indira Gandhi, Vivekananda so on (60 percent) and others clay doll such as Fruit(5percent),fish. Insect, animals (5percent), Birds so on are making By Ghurni’s Artistic respectively.

Marketing dolls and Idolls within states

Diagram 5 and 6 showing the marketing pattern of clay doll. Krishnagar’s clay idol has demand not only within states but also all over world. According to data (2014-2015), maximum sales of clay-idol within district Nadia (28 percent), Kolkata (25 percent) and also others district has demand. Within India,

SWOT Analysis



Delhi (20 percent), Kerala (15 percent), Tamilnadu (13percent) has increased market of krishanag's clay idol in 2014. Trough the perception of survey, many great personality like idol of Mahatma Gandhi, idol of Rabindranath Tagore, Marxist Lenin, Swami Vivekananda and idol of others leader has demand all over world. From The information of art gallery house, Krishnagar's statues of Mahatma Gandhi are imported in Parliament of America, Swizerland and China. Maximum Foreign currencies has earned from U.K, Paris, Itally, and America.

Major Findings

1. These Ghurni clay workers are associated with the work from ancient time (1700 decade). Directly 30,000 and indirectly 20,000 people involved in this work. Big art gallery earns monthly more than Rs-50,000 and even earns foreign currency by exporting idols and statues.
2. Incomes of labours are very low. Maximum profit goes to owner.
3. Presently demand of clay doll and idols have decreased but demand increase for bronze, cement dust stone idols and statues.
4. Small workers and labors use to work for some months of the year (October, November, December, and January). Winter seasons provide most suitable condition for making of clay doll.
5. Artists of Ghurni win famous award from exhibition in India and all over the world. (State level award, presidential award, international award from Paris, London, and Boston).

Conclusion

The analysis shows clay modeling industry of Ghurni famous all over world. But modern day has been changed quality of clay doll for others modern longevity materials substitute of clay. Government should be taken good policy for survival famous clay doll of Ghurni, Krishnagar. Ghurni will be flourished for a big clay doll industry through proper strategies of government.

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Annexure

Table 1. Percentage of raw materials use in doll production

Types of raw material	Clay	Stone dust	Bronze	Cement	Fibre-glass	Wax doll
Percentage of raw materials	58	10	5	5	20	2

Table 2. Percentage of different types of clay doll production

Type of dolls and statue	Statue of great persons	Idols of god	Fruit	Animal	Scenary doll	Other
Percentage of production	60	25	5	5	3	2

Table 3. Percentage of sales of idols in different districts

Districts	Nadia	Kolkata	Howrah	Murshi-dabad	Bardd-haman	Koach-bihar	Other
Percentage of sales	28.57	23.8	9.52	19.04	14.28	2.25	5.45

Table 4. Percentage of sales of idols in different states

States	New delhi	Gujrat	Punjab	Kerala	Tamil-nadu	Bihar	Odisha	Jammu & Kashmir	Other
% of products	19.23	9.61	7.6	15.38	13.46	11.53	9.61	7.69	5.76

Table 5. Percentage of sales of idols in foreign countries

Foreign countries	England	America	Paris	Italy	China	Bangladesh	Other
% Of export	25	10	20	15	10	10	10
