

for their traditional type of glazing on red clay pottery. The famous black pottery of Azamgarh and Nizamabad in Uttar Pradesh is a matter of pride for this country. Even today they are famous for the delicate exquisite articles with indigenous type of polish which gives an admirable glaze colour after firing. Silver white colour is filled in the crevices of the designs drawn before fire on the ware and rubbed, which gives a charming silver white colour against a glistening black background.

It is presumed that the reason for not adopting the glazing technique of Muslim craftsmen is religious; the orthodox Hindu potter did not have the idea of learning the new technique from those who eat hog. In fact, near Delhi there are still a few Muslim potters, descendants of the British settlers, who still use this technique of glazing.

At the end of the 18th century, the British occupied India after ousting the Moghul rulers. At that time, science and technological advancement were in full swing; pottery and porcelain were produced in imitation of the Chinese who had developed it to perfection. The British had brought with them tea-sets of porcelain. Indians because of religious prejudices did not like these, as they thought that bones were used in clay for whitening the wares. Even to this day, in rural parts, people call white wares as 'Tare' (an abbreviation for foreigners). Therefore, nobody even tried to adopt these techniques. Another reason why India did not advance in the technique of pottery is because of the British policy of keeping Indians ignorant of the science and technology for about two centuries. While the western countries by that time had already developed their technology tremendously.

There is no recorded evidence to show that in ancient India white wares or chinawares were produced, except for a few references about the manufacture of glass. The first attempt to produce chinaware using Bihar china clay was made by the East India Company in the year 1839. After several experiments conducted by the European and Indian scientists, good quality earthenware (glazed) was produced in 1860.

Refractory bricks were also developed as far back as 1859 in Bihar and Bengal as they were required for boilers in the factories as well as in the railways. The famous company named Blair & Co. started its factories in Raniganj and Jabalpur.

Calcutta and Gwalior had the privilege of having porcelain factories in the first decade of this century. Today hundreds of big and small factories have sprung up in the country, producing all types of pottery wares and thus making the country self-sufficient in these items.

But there are in India more than a million traditional potters who ply