Adapting Eha-Ndiagu Pottery for Contemporary Usages

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is centered on adapting Eha-Ndiagu pottery for contemporary usages and as a means of documenting the traditional pottery processes of production for posterity and future references. In order to accomplish this, primary and secondary sources of collection data were adopted; these gave room for direct interaction and exchange of ideas by the researcher and the potters. Being historical research information was based on observation and descriptive method of research. In the course of doing this, the researcher carefully observed the processes and techniques of pottery production by Eha-Ndiagu potters. These processes were noted photographically and in writing. Data collected were carefully examined using historical and functional approach. From the result, it was observed that tools and materials used by Eha-Ndiagu potters could be adapted in modern studio for ceramic production. The result also showed that some of the pottery forms could be adapted for contemporary usages with some modifications and alterations. Also, the decorative patterns could as well be adapted and used for modern pots with the introduction of other decorative materials to achieve the same purpose.

Key words: Pottery, Adaptation, Eha-Ndiagu

Introduction

Eha-Ndiagu is one of the eighteen communities located in Nsukka Local Government Area in Enugu North Senatorial Zone of Enugu State. It is bounded in the North by Ezimo in Udenu Local Government Area, in the South by Mbu in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, in the East by Eha-Alumona in Nsukka Local Government Area and in the West by Ogbodu-Aba in Udenu Local Government Area. Other neighbouring towns are Orba, Neke, and so on. Eha-Ndiagu is one of the most populous autonomous communities and it is made up of ten villages. Okwor, an indigene of Eha-Ndiagu listed the villages as Amanato, Igboro, Odobido, Okpuhoku, Onuiga, Nchora, Ugwuefi, Umueze, Umuogiri and Umuomaga. In this area, pottery making is a major occupation that is predominately practiced by women.

Traditional pottery has been in practice in Eha-Ndiagu for a long time. Though, none of the potters there was able to give information on when and how it started in Eha-Ndiagu. The greater part of the history of pottery in this area mainly depended on oral narration. Fatunsin (1992) attests to the fact that, excavations in many parts of the world have shown clearly that pottery making began since pre-historic era. He added that, it is one of the oldest and most valuable crafts, which has survived for a very long time and is still being practiced today. Some of the Eha-Ndiagu potters - Eze, Maria and Ugwu, Evelyn said they like every other potter were born into pottery making in their area and that they inherited the art from their mothers who also inherited it from their own mothers. It is a lineage issue. Therefore, the development of pottery at Eha-Ndiagu is an art inherited from older generation among the women folk. It is passed from generation to generation, from mother to daughter. The sustenance of pottery making in

this area is adjudged to the great quantity of clay deposits and that the quality of its clay has been found to be suitable for its production.

Among other traditional crafts practiced in Eha-Ndiagu, pottery is the most popular because of its important roles in the society. One of the traditional potters Ogbonne Nnadi (77years old) stated that in the past, pottery making was depended upon as means of livelihood, because of its economic and socio-cultural values. This however has changed as a result of the influx of technologically advanced pottery products, which have to a large extent threatened the survival of Eha-Ndiagu pottery. This is evident in the availability of modern potteries, such as glazed utilitarian products, enamel, plastics and so on. These days, very insignificant number of traditional pots are being produced because according to Lolo Angelina Okworja (65 year old) – a potter during an interview, local pottery now play minimal role in this modern time. For instance Okunlola (2012) cited the advent of Christianity which has now drastically reduced the number of the traditional religionists/worshippers who used to be the major users of the traditional ritual pots for ritual and herbal purposes. Today local potteries are no longer in large scales as it used to be so many years back; they are rarely sighted even in the rural areas. As a result, the production of Eha-Ndiagu pottery is fast declining, because the local potters have not embraced the new technology in pottery production to enhance their products. They are still practicing the old method, which is today considered primitive and numerous individuals have turned away from, making patronage difficult to come by. Thus, there is need for its revival and documentation for posterity and enhancing on it to meet with today`s demand. This reason calls for adapting Eha-Ndiagu pottery for contemporary usages, which forms the theme of this study.

Before the introduction of western technology and education that resulted in the influx of modern and advanced pottery in the market, Eha-Ndiagu pottery had reached an enviable height. It flourished so well within Eha-Ndiagu and the neighboring towns because of the fundamental roles it played in providing for domestic, socio-cultural and religious activities. This was possible because it was the only available product in the market no contender no other product to compete or compare with. As such, Eha-Ndiagu potters were indispensable group within the town and its neighbouring communities.

Today, the continuity of pottery production in Eha-Ndiagu is being threatened by the modern wares that have flooded the market. These new products have given way for loss of patronage for the traditional pottery. This is because; the influence of these new/modern products and the rush for them has also rendered the local/traditional pottery primitive and less attractive. Moreover, the traditional potters in Eha-Ndiagu have dwell on the primitive method of production and have not improved upon them to meet up with the modern standard.

Giving to this situation, it has become imperative for an in-depth research to be carried out to find out the qualities of Eha-Ndiagu's traditional pottery that could be integrated into the modern form of pottery making. In that way the culture will be retained and made relevant in the present day technological driven society.

Objectives of the study

- Identify and describe the tools and material used by the traditional Eha-Ndiagu potters and the alternative functions of some of them for modern/studio use.
- Describe the production processes of Eha-Ndiagu pottery and the modern/studio methods.
- To describe the Eha-Ndiagu pottery forms and their functions.
- Identify alternative functions of some of the Eha-Ndiagu pottery forms in modern society by re-designing and reproducing some of the forms using modern/studio production techniques.
- To adapt some of their decorative patterns in embellishing modern forms.

Conceptual Framework:

Pottery according to Ogunsina (1992) is one of the longest arts in human existence, because the Stone Age man or pre-historic man practiced it by firing clay into terracotta. According to Johnson (1988) Neolithic man made crude artifacts out of clay and burnt them in bonfire to make them hard. At the commencement of pottery the prehistoric man created objects that served utilitarian and religious purposes. As such, the first use of functional pottery vessels for storing water and food was around 9000 – 10,000 BC (Okonkwo, 2011)

For the origin of pottery, Wangboje (1982) claimed that, the discovery of pottery was accidental and not designed. Giving credence to this, Okunlola (2012) opined that pottery originated when agriculture was developed by the pre-historic man as a means of livelihood, and as a result, there was need for containers to store their farm products. That means that, before the origin of pottery, man must have tried their hands on so many things. Laurie (1974) cited some examples of the trials such as, making bags from animal skin, weaving of baskets and sealing some of them with mud to prevent leakage but when they came in contact with water the mud will slake. He added that, accidentally one of the baskets fell into fire and it was discovered that the basket burnt off but the clay did not burn instead it became strengthened. Suffice it to say that, the origin of pottery was hinged on the development of agriculture and was not planned for.

From that period, man began to think of better and more effective way of improving on this new discovery, hence, it became an essential part of domestic life. Since the objects produced were household utensils, man saw it then as a reason for women occupation (Laurie, 1974). As such, women were the potters in the early times as they are still at Eha-Ndiagu and many other communities where traditional pottery is practiced. Presently, it is no longer left for the women folk alone as men are also involved in the production of modern pottery or ceramics. As a course of study in the higher institution, both male and female specialize in it and at the end, become professionals. Some of them work at ceramic factories or studios as private business, while others teach ceramics in the institutions of higher learning.

In Nigeria, pottery is one of the ancient crafts that are still being practiced in most part of the country. According to Chukwuma (2007), the origin of pottery in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial period, before the white man came with his western education. Consequently, it became difficult to document the time, how and where it began.

It is evident from the result gotten from objects excavated from different sites that the origin of pottery is associated with the early man. Fatunsin (1992) named the excavations made by a renowned archeologist- Thurstan Shaw (a Briton) in Iwo-Eleru in Oyo state in Yoruba land, Rop in Plateau state, Kagoro in Kaduna State and ritual pots and other items in Igbo-Ukwu in Anambra State. Pre-historic examples of pottery making were also found in Afikpo. Fatunsin also made reference to excavation made in Dutsen Konga rock shelter near Jos. All these findings also proved that during the late Stone Age, the occupation of these areas was already the making of pottery objects. The works of the colonial archeologists in excavating most of the material evidence of pre-historic times have proven that pottery attained a high level of development in Nigeria several hundreds of years ago, and had been in existence in most part of Nigeria. The fragment remains are the sole record of ancient civilizations (Vanguard, 2011)

On this note, it is affirmed that, the fire incidence which brought striking surprise to the early man because it changed clay used in patching the burnt basket to a hard and permanent object, ranks as one of the highest discoveries made. This then resulted in a serious desire for creation of valuables with clay and to improve upon the discovery from that period. According to Egbeji (2000), the art of pottery started spreading and progressing through the ages, modifying in styles and techniques to catch up with the trend of the time. This has resulted in relegating the culture from where it originated. It is clear that, the great and rapid development of pottery production is linked with the universal advancement in science and technology that has become the current trend. Egbeji added that, the research development on techniques, tools, materials and equipment has given way to the making of different wares that satisfy both the utilitarian anticipation and modern taste. That means that, modern pottery (Ceramics) is an off shoot from local pottery, but Eha-Ndiagu potters are still living in the past. The techniques being used in pottery production are primitive and out of touch with modern civilization thereby rending the pots old fashioned, less aesthetic and unattractive.

Theoretical Framework:

The term ceramics is a Greek word meaning burnt clay or pottery (Okonkwo, 2011). Billington, (1978) further explained ceramics as an art that covers all objects made of clay with or without the addition of other materials, firstly shaped, dried and then made durable by firing. It is one of the most age long industries in the world which began as primitive pottery. It started immediately when it was discovered that clay mixed with water can be shaped to objects and then fired. As for the development of pottery, Chukwuma (2015) explained that what we have today as ceramics is as old as human history which existed as traditional pottery. It has been in use since the beginning of civilization. This handicraft formed the foundation of the present day ceramics (Chinedu, 2005). Since the discovery of pottery, the rate of its development in various places differs remarkably. The fast rate of pottery development is attributed to science and technological advancement that characterize the contemporary world.

Ceramics is the process of producing inorganic and non- metallic objects from clay, glaze and other chemical materials that are shaped and heated to high temperature to make them hard and durable (sciencelearning.org.ng). Okunlola (2012) described ceramics as an art which has to do with the production of objects with clay through industrial or manual process. This industrial process brought about the new development

in production techniques, using more advanced technological application and the influx of the modern products. This has attracted a considerable attention and patronage, which on the other hand has relegated Eha-Ndiagu pottery and that of other communities to the background.

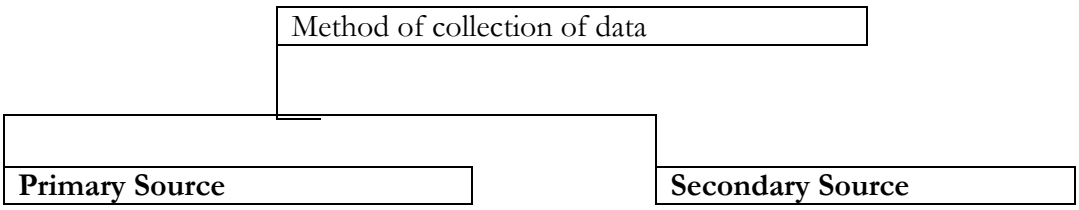
Moreover, ceramics implies every product made of clay that has successfully been fired. Newman (2000) and Alasa (2011) highlighted that ceramics is a term that stands all pottery products. Ogumor (2007) also adds that, ceramic is a product used to depict utensils or related products that are not metal or plastic which are made from clay whether as primitive or modern pottery or ceramics. It is observed that, clay is the basic material used for production with or without the addition of other materials except for glass which is produced from sand.

In Nigeria, ceramics emerged in 1952, and was launched by a Briton named Michael Cardew, a potter. He established a pottery training centre at Abuja, and named it "Abuja Pottery Training Centre", for the training of women traditional potters. The aim according to Okunlola (2010) was to train the local potters in modern trends of ceramic production which include the use of modern equipment, tools, techniques, processes, use of chemical such as glaze and compounding of clay bodies and so on. Late Dr. Ladi Kwali, a famous traditional potter was the first trainee whom Cardew encouraged to join the center because he admired her styles and techniques of production. Many programmes such as testing of clay, glazing, throwing on the wheel, and other modern processes were taught at the centre. However, this programme did not make much serious impact on Nigerian potters generally, because the concentration was on Abuja Pottery Training Centre (which was later changed to Ladi Kwali Pottery Centre.

Research Design

The research design was based on historical research. It was used to trace the development and practice of pottery in Eha-Ndiagu.

Method of Collection of Data



The collection of data was based on Primary and secondary sources.

Primary source of collection of data

In this research, people were interviewed especially Eha-Ndiagu potters. As a result, several visits were made to the potters in their working sites to collect first-hand information from them. Interviews were conducted and real life observations were carried out, while the potters were operating. Watching potters as they do their work provided opportunity for researcher to observe their techniques of production and the function of the pots. Information was also sought from other person(s) who had direct connection with the business of producing pottery.

Secondary Source of collection of data

The secondary source such as journal articles, newspapers, edited books, magazines, conference papers, oral history, biographies, digital camera, libraries and online materials were used for collect data for this study. These secondary sources of data collection have provided vital background information to allow for enriching the study with more knowledge.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of twenty (20) potters at Eha-Ndiagu. Two potters were selected from each village because Eha-Ndiagu is made up of ten (10) villages (which are Amanato, Igboro, Odobido, Okpuhoku, Onuiga, Nchora, Ugwuefi, Umueze, Umuogiri and Umuomaga).

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Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample is made up of 20 potters. This number of potters was randomly selected, since Eha-Ndiagu is made of 10 communities two (2) potters were selected to represent each community.

Materials

Tools are handheld instruments which help to execute or perfect a piece of work. They are pieces of object fashioned for special purposes. In this regard, tools are instruments needed by both modern and traditional potters to produce pottery objects. In as much as these tools are essential, they alone do not make designs. But according to Egbeji (2000), these tools are very helpful because potters use them as extender for their fingers. Fingers are the most basic tools of the potters because they hold the tools and control them.

In modern pottery production, most them are specifically designed to serve particular purposed. These are calipers, spatulas, turning tools, harp and so many others. Other modern equipment are potter's wheel, wheeler, kiln (electric or gas), pyrometer to mention but a few.

Adapting Some Eha-Ndiagu Pottery Tools and Materials

The tools and materials to be adapted include *Igu Urua, Ndere Urua, Ikwe Ngba, Okposhi and Anyaka*/Singlet. These tools and materials were used for pottery production and decoration in Eha-Ndiagu. They have been found as alternative materials and tools for modern production.

Igu Urua; *Igu urua* is a wooden flat plank with rough surfaces on which clay is beaten as a process of clay preparation. It is 4 ½ feet in length, 2 ½ feet wide and 4 inches thick. *Igu urua* has been found to be useful as a slab board in this modern time when the flat sides are fashioned into plain, even and smooth surfaces.

Ndere Urua; *Ndere Urua* is an average long stick of used to beat moistened clay on *igu urua* into finer particle. It does not have the same length but it is about 2-2 ½ feet. This, when made into straight and smooth stick can be used as rolling pin for preparation of slab and impressing of designs/patterns as decoration on the slab.

Olu Eju (neck of pot); *Olu Eju* is the neck of a broken pot. It serves as a modeling stand or wheeler on which the base of a pot is placed so as to continue building. With some modifications in its finishing, it can still be used for the same purpose today because of the shape.

Okposhi; A shallow mortar used to hold a net on which a pot is placed for impressing patterns (Fig. 55). Today, it can be used as stand for pot especially the one with round base during and after production.

***Ikwe Ngba*;** this is a mortar where fired balls of clay called ngba were placed ready to be pounded and used as grog. In this modern time, *ikwe ngba* can be used for pounding fired clay to be used as grog. It can also be used to pound unfired processed and unprocessed clay that has become dried and that will be sieved in dry state.

***Odu Ngba;* t**his is the pestle used for pounding of *ngba* clay inside *ikwe ngba* (Fig. 27). Today, it can also be used to pound fired clay which is used as grog as well as unfired processed and unprocessed clay that will be sieved in dry state.

***Mkpokoro*:** *A* piece of calabash fashioned into a tool used for scrapping and smoothening. This can be fashioned into kidney-like or other shapes that are handy tool and use for smoothing and scrapping during production in this contemporary age. It can also be made into pointed edge to be used for incising patterns on pots.

***Eju*;** Pieces of broken fired pot called eju can be pounded, sieved with appropriate sieve mesh and used as grog in this modern time.

Procedure for Studio Production

Studio processes in this regard are the use of modern facilities in producing certain basic shapes of wares observed from the traditional pottery types. In this case the clay from Eha-Ndiagu deposit was used to serve as a major link between tradition and modernity. It therefore conforms to the opinion of Fowowe (2004) that the modern day ceramics is only an off-shoot of the traditional pottery. Much as the traditional potters would not allow the artist to produce a piece of work in their locality due to speculations and belief, the artist carries out the traditional process within modern setting.

Stage 1: Clay Processing

After excavating the raw clay from the site, the clay lumps were crushed in a big mortar and soaked in water over a period of about 3 to 4days. It was later sieved in wet state and poured out for drying on cement floor to harden to a workable state. Due to the malleability of the clay, the plasticity was enhanced through kneading after which it was kept ready for use.

Plate 1: Modern /Studio method of sieving clay

Stage 2: Sketches and Drawings

Drawings of pottery forms were made based on the observed forms from Eha-Ndiagu. These drawings show some enhancements in forms that could be achieved with the local pottery in the studio. They were made at different times as fast sketches to capture the potter's varied impression of beauty in Eha-Ndiagu pottery forms. These sketches were depictions of some concepts with Eha-Ndiagu for domestic/utilitarian and decorative/aesthetic use. In working through the drawings and sketches, few alteration and modifications were made in pottery forms. This was necessary and needed to enable them fit into modern usages.

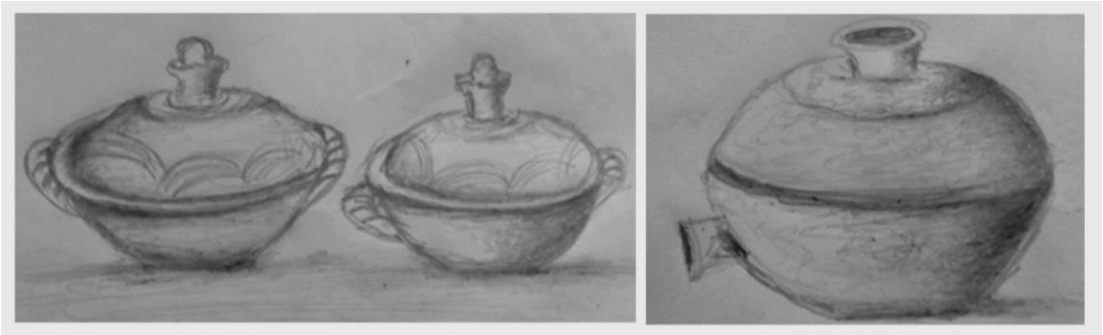

Fig. 1: Sketches of assorted Casseroles, Perforated Flower Vase, tea pot, Courtesy: The researcher.

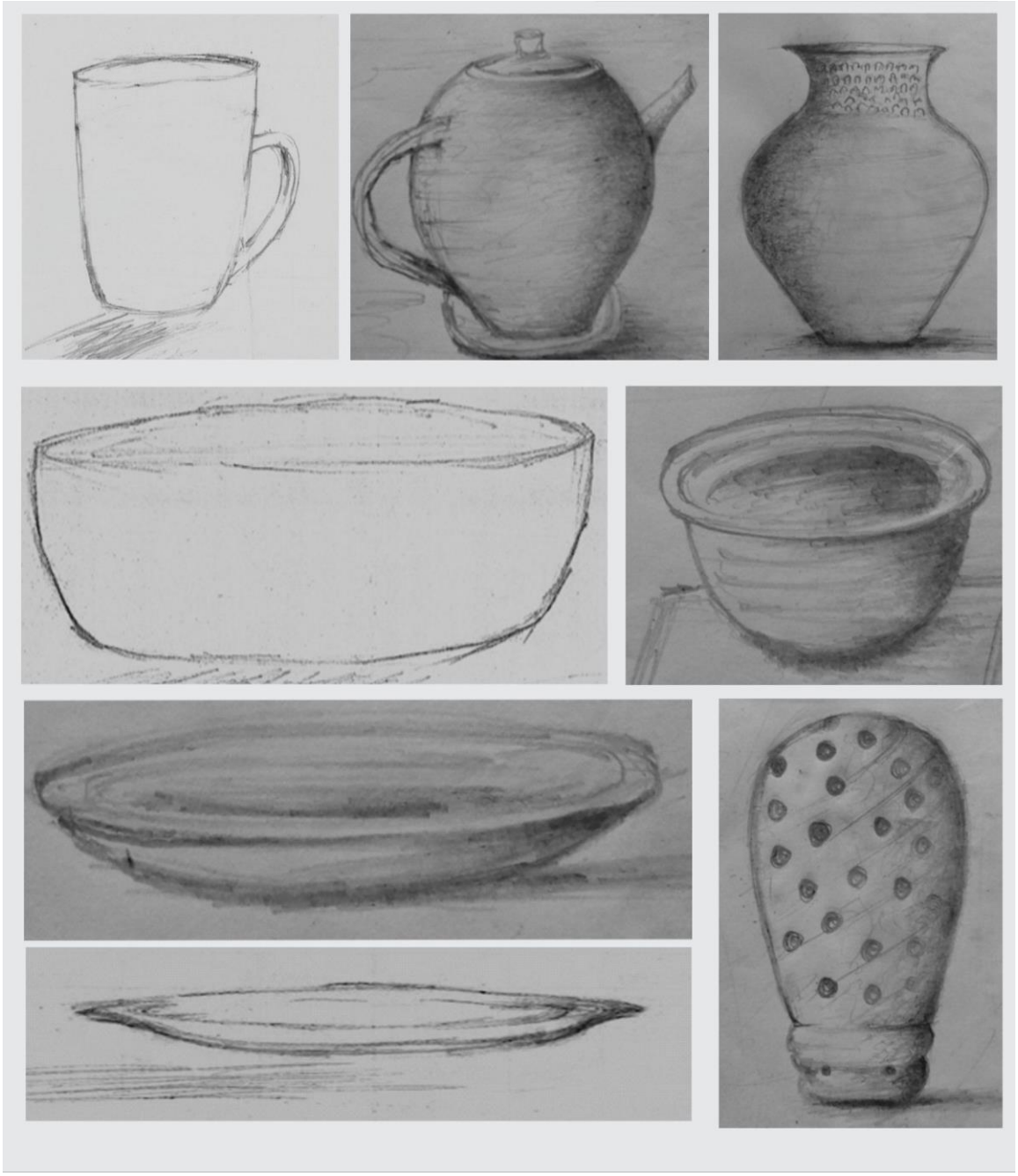

Fig. 2: Sketches of flat plate, Soup Plate, multi-functional Bowl, Serving Tray, mug, and flower pot. Couurtesy: The researcher.

Stage 3: Production Processes

In working through the sketches, few alterations and modifications were made in the pottery forms of Eha-Ndiagu. This was necessary and needed to enable their adaptation

into modern usages. Having made the sketches, the researcher engaged in the main work creation, making use of her already processed clay for the production of the wares. Method employed were throwing, casting, slabbing, coiling and a combination of two or more methods in few cases was put to use. In pottery production, clay is the chief material needed and it is not put to use immediately it is procured. It is processed to remove all impurities that may be found in the clay before it can be used. And before using the processed clay for production, it is usually wedged and kneaded to bring it to a homogenous consistency form, free of air bubbles and streaks.

Throwing Method

Plate 2: Centering of Clay

Throwing method was employed for the production of flower vase, casseroles, flat plates and soup bowl. These forms were executed with the aid of potter's wheel. To start the throwing of any form, a lump of clay is wedged and kneaded as described earlier. The preliminary steps are, firstly is dropping the lump of the wedged and kneaded clay at centre of the wheel head and secondly centering it. This is done by spinning of the disc either by electric wheel which automatically starts spinning the moment it is switched on. Another type is the kick wheel which is manually operated by pedaling it. The essence of centering is to ensure stability and symmetrical form. The next step is to bore it by creating a hole on the centered clay. In doing this care is taken not to open it

up to the wheel head because it forms the base of the pot. Then, the clay is systematically pulled up to form the wall which is shaped into a desired form

Plate 3: Pulling of the Centered Clay

Casting Method

The method of casting used here is known as solid casting, where slab is used in casting perforated flower vase. It is also used in producing serving tray. A slab board and rolling pin is needed for rolling out sheet of slab.

Plate 4: Rolling of slab

In casting the tray, the lid of fairly big warmer was used as a mould polythene sheet was spread on the inside of the cover to act as separator.

Plate 5 : Making of tray using casting method of production

Coiling Method

Coiling method is the process by which coils of clay are used in building up the wall of a form. For the flower planter, the base was carved out of a slab. So, it is a combination of slab and coiling, though coiling is the major method as it is used to form the body.

Plate 6 : Building the wall of the planter with clay coils

At this stage the work is left to harden a little so that it will be able to carry the weight of the subsequent coils otherwise it will sag and collapse.

The work is left at this stage to dry again for a while before building the neck.

Plate 7: Forming the neck of the planter

Stage 5: Decoration

Application of surface textures that are usually found on Eha-Ndiagu pots was generally achieved mainly by stamping impressing *anyaka* or perforated singlet on the works. By this the decoration becomes monotonous and boring for modern use. Today other materials like laces of different designs, nets and other materials with tactile surface can be used to achieve the same purpose and creates variety.

Impressed Decoration

Each work was allowed to dry to leather-hard before decoration of various patterns were applied using incised and impressed techniques. Different lace patterns were used to impress on their designs on pottery forms.

Plate 8: Pressing zigzag lace pattern on the slab

Plate 9: Pressing floral lace pattern on the slab

Incised Decoration

Fig 10: Applying incised decoration on the dish

Drying and Firing

The works were partially covered-up and kept aside for a gradual drying, thereby avoiding the possibilities of uneven drying and cracking. Dried works at green ware stage were loaded into the electric kiln for firing which started off with the pre-heating level culminated to a temperature of $1080^{o}_{c}$for bisque firing. A successful firing of either the bisque or the gloss depends much on the availability of constant energy supply for about four to six hours respectively. The even spread of the temperature and its control is achievable here due to the closed firing chamber of the kiln and control switches. It is not so in the local Eha-Ndiagu firing system which is much more difficult to handle because of the open firing system.

The second firing which normally takes a longer time and move skillful approach is the Gloss firing. The wet glaze is gently, properly stirred to avoid lumps and air bubbles in it, after which, the already bisque fired wares were coated with the raw glaze for Gloss firing at a temperature of about 1180^{o}_{c} inside the electric kiln. The condition here is a lot more different from that of the local potter's out-door firing where the temperature cannot be effectively manage and gloss firing cannot be achieved by that means. After the firing, the pottery products were off-loaded and finishing touches for each of the works carefully made. Extra efforts were made to present some of the works in artistic appearances that are suitable for their titles and functions, through the incorporation of some non-pottery materials fabricated and carved by the artist, like electrical fittings, wood carvings and iron suspensions, into the pottery forms. At the end of the processes, some of the works were depicted purely as glazed studio ceramics, while others were presented as some artistic enhancements on the local pots and sheds as pottery installations also serves as out-door ceramic sculptures and this shows that purpose could be extended beyond cooking storage.

Adapting Eha-Ndiagu Pottery Forms

Eha-Ndiagu potters created traditional wares of varying sizes, which were predominantly roundish. A good number of them are no longer in use currently and there possible continued existence now depends on their adaptation to modern trends and styles. Below are some of the adapted works**.**

Casseroles

Casseroles are big lidded dishes achieved by modifying *Ite Ofe* – Soup pot (Fig.57). *Ite ofe* is a medium sizes with pot with specially made for cooking soup; it is made wide mouthed for free stirring and serving of soup. The use of this pot is no longer in vogue because of people's shift to the use of tower pots. But can now be used as casseroles. These are made by throwing method technique, biscuit fired and glazed fired. Both are fairly big, but the slightly bigger one is 11cm high and 27cm diameter while the second one is 9cm high and 25cm diameter. Giving the modern way of dishing food, they are built big so as to contain big quantity of food and soup, stew and so on. From these dishes the food can be served into smaller plates. This is to avoid wastage because the individuals pick as much as they can eat and the remaining can be taking back.

Health wise, no one is interested in eating remnants any longer and the communal life style of the old has been over taken by modernization brought about by western civilization.

Plate 11: *Ite ofe* as shown on the left was adapted to make assorted casserole)s

Perforated flower vase

Perforated flower vase was redesigned from *Nguga* (Fig. 75). *Nguga* is a pot perforated from the base up to around the neck used for preserving and smoking of fish and meat).Today, with the introduction of technology, people use electric/gas oven or wire gauze made for that purpose. To ensure continuity of this pot in modern time, it is produced with throwing techniques and modified in shape and size. It can be used as flower vase for interior decoration, in case of office use it can serve double function as flower vase and pen holder. Flowers can be inserted in the holes from the middle to the top and kept at the centre tables or shelves in the house. While the pens, painting brushes and pencils can be inserted in the lower holes and it can be kept on top of the office tables, shelves etc.

Plate 12: *Nguga* on the left is adapted for Perforated flower vase

Serving Tray

Serving tray is adapted from *agbada*; it is a wide mouthed shallow pot with lined rim. It is used for frying seedlings, nuts, cassava flour (*garri*) as earlier described. Today, because of its fragility, women and teenage girls have resorted to the use of tinker made type of pan. For its continuity, the base is flattened for stability and used as serving tray and other purposes. It is made by casting process.

Plate 13: *Agbada* – Frying pan above as adapted for Serving tray below

Flower Planter and tea pot

Flower planter is redesigned from *ite iyi*. Ite iyi is a range of small pots used for fetching water. Today nobody uses it again because of availability of modern materials such as rubber containers and iron buckets and other containers which are considered more durable and light weighted. Tea Pot is also redesigned from *ite iyi*. It was produced by coiling method with modifications; it is tapered in around the base with extended shoulder as it is. But the neck is shortened and a lid is provided, handle and spout are attached for easy lifting and pouring out the liquid content so easy respectively, to serve as tea pot.

Plate 14: *Ite iyi* as shown in the left adapted for Flower planter, and tea pot

Flat Plates

These are flat plates adapted from *Oku Nri*. *Oku Nri* is a smaller dish used in serving out food and soup. In the face of development, the traditional ones are outdated and crude. Today, they are produced by throwing method and also glazed. They measure 20cm diameter and 2cm high, they can be made into different sizes. They were meant to serve food to individuals from the big casseroles. Today, modernization has brought life of individualism, things are no longer shared. Therefore, food is served and eaten individually unlike the olden days where the whole family members eat from the same dish. Flat plates can also be used to serve kola-nuts, groundnut etc. in the house or present same to visitors.

Plate 15: *Oku Nri* as shown on the left was adapted to make flat plates on the right

Soup Plates

These are plates redesigned from *Oku Orji* and it is used to serve kola nut. Here, it is modified in size and form, by using throwing method to produce it and it is glazed. It measures 5½ cm high and 14cm diameter; it is made to serve as soup plate. The depth will allow it to hold soup because they are always liquid and also help in dabbing it with balls of swallow foods – pounded yam, *akpu* (cassava) etc. as the wall of the plate retains it. It can also be used to serve even solid foods such as rice and so on.

Plate 16: *Oku Orji* as shown on the left was adapted for Soup plates on the right

Flared rim serving plates

Oku Orji was also adapted to make Flared serving plates. However, this unique shape was arrived at by pressing in on two sides of the rim of *Oku Orji* on the opposite direction

Plate 17: Flared rim serving plates

Multi-functional Bowl:

Multifunctional bowl is recreated from *Ite Nri* which is a deep and wide mouthed pot with curved rim used for cooking. As a result, it can function in so many areas such as pepper soup bowl, wash hand bowl, fruit bowl and so on. This was produced with the help of throwing wheel, and the base flattened for stability. It is measuring 20cm high and 20cm diameter.

Plate 18: *Ite Nri* on the left was adapted for Multi-functional bowl

Drinking Mug

Mug is a big drinking cup measuring 15cm high and 10cm diameter. It is adapted from *Oku Owueshi* produced by the Eha-Ndiagu potters used for bathing and washing of clothes. Even native doctors mix medicine herbs into liquid for bathing for the sick for curing of ailments. Today, the presence of assorted buckets (metal and plastics), improved medical facilities – hospitals and medical

centres etc. have drastically reduced reliance and patronage on medicinal herb. Therefore the size and form of *oku owueshi* was drastically reduced to the size of a mug and the base flattened for stability. A handle is also attached for easy lifting and it can now serve as mug.

Plate 19: *Oku Owueshi* as shown on the left was adapted for drinking mugs

Ite Odo - water storage pot, ***Ite Mmanu –*** palm oil pot, ***Ite Enwu –*** honey pot are bigger pots with short and fairly wide mouth used for one type of preservation of edibles or other items. But with the invention of different sizes of drums and other containers (metal and rubber) and refrigerators, these pots are no longer in use because of its fragility. With little modification, they can now function as plastics or natural flower planter for exterior decoration of bigger environments or compounds such as big hotels, parks etc. A smaller pot might not be noticed, because of the size of the space.

Adapting Eha-Ndiagu Pottery Decorative Patterns

Decoration is the final embellishment of a work of art. In Eha-Ndiagu, impressed and stamped decorative techniques are the major types used by the potters. This is achieved by stamping gently from the inside of a pot placed on the perforated singlet that is spread on *Okposhi* to take up the impression or texture of the perforated singlet. That is, stamping the textured surface of materials on the exterior wall of the leather hard pot to take up the impression. Therefore, other designed materials with perforations or raised designs such as assorted lace patterns were used in impressing decorative patterns on potteries.

Plate 20: Perforated singlet, laced patterns, were adapted and used for impressed decorations as shown on flat plates and tea set below.

Plate 21: Serving plates impressed with lace designs

Plate 22: Tea Set impressed with lace patterns

In this research, fashioned calabash - *mpkokoro* as shown in plate 23 is still been used for making burnished decorations.

Plate 23: Burnished bowl

Some other decorative techniques like incision is also used to achieve some well decorative surfaces that will fit into use in this modern time.

Plate 24: Soup plates with incised decoration.

Plate 25: Tea Cups with incised decoration.

Summary

Pottery as an age long crafts has been most valuable to human existence. It has been used by man for longer than any other material. Among other traditional crafts practiced in Eha-Ndiagu, pottery is the most popular because of its important role in the society. The products were mostly meant to serve utilitarian purposes. Such as domestic, socio-cultural, religious and economic functions and they were not in any meant for decoration. Pottery had been a major occupation for all the Eha-Ndiagu women. As a self-reliant vocation, its activities empowered the potters and traders economically, thus enhancing their standard of living and making them useful members of the society. As a result, it flourished so well and attained an enviable height in Eha-Ndiagu and its environs.

It is quite unfortunate that, the products of the individualized world have to a great extent dominated the traditional pottery wares of Eha-Ndiagu potters. Its value has continually been on decline and rarely do people patronize the practitioners these days. Technological advancement has helped to make the industrial products more convenient for usage, far more attractive than the Eha-Ndiagu traditional pottery and incomparably more durable than the local pots and other traditionally made household objects by Eha-Ndiagu potters.

It is based on this insignificant value that Eha-Ndiagu pottery has now, that this research has delved into the possible modification of some of the forms, methods, styles and functionalities of their pottery production, in order to align them to the present day standard, acceptable in the society. The obtainable traditional practices were ascertained from the native potters and vividly show-cased in this research.

Besides, the traditional wares of the Eha-Ndiagu were studied and its forms, styles and functions meticulously modified to suit the current trend of ceramic production. These processes and results were properly documented and shown in this research as evident in the figures herein.

Conclusion

It is hoped that, the adoption of the outcome of these research as a way of pottery practice by Eha-Ndiagu potters would greatly revitalize the value of their pottery products. It would no doubt make them very relevant in today's modernized society and by so doing induce commendable patronage as witnessed in the olden days. With this, the future generation will be to learn and appreciate the role of traditional pottery in Eha-Ndiagu.

Recommendation

In order to ensure continuity and the improvement of pottery making in Eha-Ndiagu to enable it meet with modern taste, the following recommendation is made:

- Establishing a Pottery Centre: The government and private sectors are encouraged to set up a pottery centre in Eha-Ndiagu, grasping the benefit of the availability of desirable quality of the clay there which is the basic raw material. The centre when established should be adequately financed and equipped with modern facilities such as kiln for firing, potter's wheel for production, glaze for decoration and other tools. This gesture will definitely reduce rural and urban shift that is very common among the youth

and some school drop outs. Such centre will also enjoy patronage from their immediate environment and beyond.

A well-equipped pottery training centre will help to train and expose local potters to the new methods of production and modern facilities. It will also go a long way to creating job opportunity to the unemployed, especially these days when unemployment is biting harder. This will give opportunity to those who are preparing to enter into pottery as an occupation. Such pottery training centres will have the capacities for the development of economy and production of trained workforce in business of pottery. And also, when pottery is in large scale production, can help the country sustain her economy and reduce importation of similar items.

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