

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE DYING INDIGENOUS POTTERY  
INDUSTRY IN THE ASHANTI REGION**

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## **DEDICATION**

Dedicated to my wife, Mrs Theresa Acheampong and all my children who offered me the moral support and urged me on when things got very hard.

## ABSTRACT

The indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region has served for many decades as a source of employment to the indigenous people, especially women. Its significant contribution to the tourism sector of the nation also cannot be overemphasised. For several reasons, the indigenous pottery industry, which significantly demonstrates the traditional manufacturing techniques through the use of appropriate indigenous technologies, and also upholds the cultural values of the people may soon get lost as the years come by. It has been observed that the industry is retrogressing. The trade has been left in the hands of very few older women; many towns which were popularly identified with the pot making business have lost that fame. This research therefore focused on finding the causes that have led to the near collapse of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region and to find ways to avert the situation. The researcher visited five of the popular pottery towns namely Afari, Adankwame, Mfensi, Apiadu and Pankrono. Respondents were selected for interview and discussions to gather data for the study. Findings from the research revealed that, the trade was still being practiced by women, clay was still available, but the industry in most of the towns has collapsed. However, there was high patronage for the products. The researcher discovered that the current generation (youth) were found not to be interested in the trade. It was also realised that urbanization and expansion of towns has negatively affected the industry. These were clear evidence that the industry is confronted with challenges. The following are some of the recommendations proposed by the researcher; that authorities concerned should do well to preserve clay sites to avoid being taken over by estate developers; that attempt should be made to transfer the skills from the old women to the youth; that traditional pottery should be introduced to the Junior High School curriculum and also an idea about pottery centre system has also been suggested.

10<sup>th</sup> June, 2015

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AGI    | Association of Ghana Industries                     |
| BAC    | Business Advisory Centre                            |
| CID    | Cottage Industry Development                        |
| EDAIF  | Export Development and Agricultural Investment Fund |
| EU     | European Union                                      |
| GPRS I | Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy                    |
| IFAD   | International Fund for Agricultural Development     |
| IPI    | Indigenous Pottery Industry                         |
| MSME   | Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise                  |
| MSEs   | Micro and Small Scale Enterprises                   |
| NBSSI  | National Board for Small Scale Enterprise           |
| NGOs   | Non-Governmental Organizations                      |
| SSIIP  | Small-Scale Industrialisation Initiative Programme  |
| SMEs   | Small and Medium Scale Enterprises                  |
| REP    | Rural Enterprise Project                            |
| SSI    | Small Scale Industries                              |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development  |

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The introduction discusses the background to the research. It highlights on the indigenous trades practiced in the Ashanti region and narrow the discussion down to the indigenous pottery industry which is now almost fading off the system. The research was carried with discussions on the following; the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, the delimitations of the study, and the organisation of the text.

### **1.1 Background to the study**

Ghana can boast of numerous indigenous industries; among them are the Textile, Wood carving, Pottery, Basketry, Bead making, and many more. These industries over the years have contributed immensely towards the nation's development by offering employment to many, especially the rural dwellers; these industries have also helped in meeting some of our social challenges considering the useful purposes they serve. The products of these industries have also made a significant impact in the tourism sector of the national economy over the years. In spite of all these, not many of such rural industries can boast of their previous vibrancy and the attention accorded to them. Some of them, especially the pottery industry is almost collapsed. The indigenous Pottery industry has helped many women to earn a living; their whole lives depended on the gains they make out of the production of pots. However, despite the availability of the raw material, the number of people engaged in the production of these local pots is gradually reducing an indication that this important industry is seeing a decline. Data captured from the profile of the Ashanti Region revealed that 'the region abounds in large deposits of clay at Afari, Mfensi, Pankrono, Apiadu, Adankwame, and many other places enough to support the ceramic industry. Unfortunately, the sector is not well developed. For example, in Afari only about 3.3% of the industry in the district

belongs to the sector. ([www.atwima-nwabiagya.ghanadistrict.gov.gh/](http://www.atwima-nwabiagya.ghanadistrict.gov.gh/)) Retrieved 11th March, 2014

These were clear indications that the industry was at the verge of imminent collapse. The researcher collected data from possible sources, especially among the people of local potters at Ntensere, Afari, Adankwame, Apiadu, Pankrono and Afari and any available data from previous research works on the same topic or on similar works to uncover the cause of the decline of the industry in the Ashanti region and to make proposals to avert the situation.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The Ashanti region is recognized as one of the centres for skilful indigenous potters in Ghana. Typically indigenous pottery in the Ashanti region has been the preserve of women. The Ashanti region could boast of as many as twelve pottery centres, unfortunately much cannot be said about the existence of the activities of these women potters.

The pottery industry, we know, solely depends on the clay as its basic raw material. Investigations have shown that clay still abounds in large quantities in the region. Pot production in the Ashanti region is a specialized skill practiced by mainly women who use manual techniques in producing their wares (the hand building method) and fired by the open firing method. These do not require any expensive equipment.

The Indigenous Pottery Industry over the years has engaged the hands of women, mostly illiterates, who acquired the skills by learning from their parents. This is known to have been the practice for many years.

Several research works have been done on the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region. So much literature has been written about clay deposits, mining and preparation of clay, methods of production and firing indigenous pottery wares,

improving on the pottery industry; training of traditional potters in the studio pottery technology and many more. All these underscore the great importance attached to the industry and the attempt made by several people to work towards the sustainability and improvement on the quality of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region and in Ghana as a whole.

However, it has become a common knowledge that the much envisaged improvement in the industry has never seen the light of the day; rather it is seeing retrogression, especially in the Ashanti Region. This research was carried out with the view of identifying the challenges leading to the decline of the fortunes of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region.

- Studies have shown that the industry is gradually becoming extinct, in some towns for example Apiadu, Adankwame and Pankrono, the industry has died completely.
- Not many women are interested in the industry as it used to be. The number of women currently engaged in the industry at Afari and other parts of the Ashanti Region has reduced drastically.
- The research revealed that the current generation of youth, especially the girls, who traditionally are supposed to understudy the old ones and to take over from them, are not interested in the trade. They have completely abandoned the industry, not a single young lady is seen among the current group of women left in the industry. The women found in the industry range between the ages of fifty and sixty five years.(field survey,2015)
- There is also the fact that the presence of the pottery products, which were quite invaluable for almost all domestic activities, traditional ceremonies and medicinal uses; is missing out in the markets nowadays. It has become evident

from the findings of the research that these days most of the indigenous pottery products displayed in Kumasi are ‘imported’ from Kwahu and other places.

The researcher is of the view that the situation as it stands, must not be allowed to persist till the total collapse of the industry. However, the researcher is of the view that if data collected from various sources on the challenges facing the industry, will appeal to the various stakeholders to give attention to the industry.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate into the dying indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region. The researcher did critical study of the state of the Indigenous Pottery Industry in Asante region to find out what has influenced the abandoning of this industry by many people and the diminishing or almost vanishing of its products from the local markets. The research aimed at finding possible means to sustain the industry.

#### **Objectives**

- i. To identify the indigenous pottery industries in the Ashanti Region and their operational methods.
- ii. To investigate into the factors influencing the dying of indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region.
- iii. To suggest alternative measures for alleviating the identified challenges.

### **1.4 Significance of the study**

The researcher was carried out to bring out the challenges confronting the industry and a further step to create the awareness of the potential danger of losing such an economically and socially viable industry.

The much talk about poverty alleviation among women and female empowerment will be of very little significance to the nation if the decline in the indigenous pottery industry continues to persist without any serious attention being paid to it.

This research is therefore important for the following reasons.

1. The research tries to give an overview of the situation of the Indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region and compile useful data about the state of the industry.
2. The researcher also believed that by these revelations of the causes that have led to the dying of the industry, it will help the various stakeholders to appreciate the problem and take proactive measures to salvage the situation.
3. The study would serve as a useful study or reference material to anyone who will want to collect data on the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region.

### **1.5 Research questions**

Following from the above background, the following are the research questions;

- I. What is the current state of the indigenous pottery industry in Ashanti Region and their operational methods?
- II. What factors are influencing the dying of indigenous pottery industry in Ashanti Region?
- III. What alternative measures can be evolved to overcome the challenges confronting the industry?

### **1.6 Delimitation of the study**

The study was conducted within five Indigenous Pottery Industry locations in the Ashanti region. Afari was the only location among these five localities selected for the research where some women were still active in the indigenous pottery industry business. The research limited itself to a selected number of women in Afari, these were visited, studied and interviewed to find out how they procure their raw material, the

processes they go through in producing their pots, the challenges they face and how they sell their products.

### **1.7 Limitations of the study.**

There are many other towns in the Ashanti Region where the indigenous pottery industry exists or has existed before apart from the five locations selected by the researcher (Mfensi, Pankrono, Apiadu, Adankwame and Afari). Possibly, there could be potters (women) in other parts of the Ashanti Region and even in some parts of the entire country facing similar challenges. However, time constraints and inadequate financial resources could not allow investigations into every spot where such industries were. Despite this, the researcher was convinced that, the success of this research could serve as an evidential platform to inform the various stakeholders to take action.

### **1.8 Organization of the text**

The study is structured into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one consists of the introduction to the study, which includes the background of the study, the objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study and the methodology.

Chapter two presents the review of related literature, reviewing key concepts about the history of the pottery industry in the Ashanti region., the culture and traditional practices associated with the indigenous pottery industry, clay the raw material for the industry, processes in making pottery, the history of indigenous pottery in the Ashanti Region, issues concerning poverty among women and women empowerment, problems associated with industrial establishment.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used for the study, an explanation of the sampling methods and the procedures used to gather the data. The researcher employed qualitative study approach. The method of data collection and thesis organization focused on the engaging individuals, groups, organizations concerned and the entire

society, to share their experiences on the study. Data collection procedure adopted were interviews, participation and observation of the pottery making processes in the locality. Interviews and discussions with the local people, information from the District Assembly and the NBSSI led to the discovery of a lot about the history of the people. Information collected was then analysed and discussed.

Chapter four focuses on the presentation of data and analysis of data gathered from the field.

Chapter five is the concluding part of the study which seeks to summarize the study of the study and the necessary recommendation

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Overview**

This chapter deals with the related materials consistent with this research for the study into the causes leading to the retrogression of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region and appropriate means to resuscitate it.

The review is organized to dilate on issues such as:

- a) Looking into the causes of the downturn of the industry.
- b) Identifying the challenges facing the people in the industry.
- c) Measures to solve challenges of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region.

Possible areas of study the researcher considered relevant to review were further categorized under the following topics;

- Indigenous Industry as Small Scale Industry
- The involvement of women in traditional pottery
- Indigenous method of pottery making
- Taboos in traditional pottery
- Poverty and unemployment among rural women

#### **2.1 Indigenous, Small- Scale, Rural Industries**

The indigenous pottery industry can be placed or classified under terminologies such as Small Scale industry; Cottage industry, or Rural industry. Under this discussion the researcher tried to link the indigenous pottery industry to these classified terminologies, a look into their characteristics, their impact or contribution in the society, the engagement of women in particular in such industries, the challenges likely to confront these industries and how they could be assisted to make their full contribution toward the development of the nation.

### **2.3 Definition of Industry**

Industry is defined as the production side of business activity. It is business activity related to the raising, producing, processing or manufacturing of products.

Wikipedia encyclopaedia; defines industry as ‘the production of a good or service within an economy. The definition identified the categories of industries as follows; primary or extractive industry; secondary or manufacturing industries and tertiary or service industries’. Since the indigenous pottery industry falls under the manufacturing category it is considered as a secondary industry.

Industries can be further be classified as Large Scale Industries, Medium Scale Industries and Small Scale Industries depending on several factors. However, industries can be broken down into types of manufacturing based on what they produce, how they produce them, and the level of engineering required to produce them.

### **2. 4 Indigenous pottery industries as Small Scale Industry**

A small scale industry could be consider as that with labour force consists of family units or individuals working at home with their own equipment: is usually small and often informally organized, examples are weaving, pottery, and other *cottage industries*.(Britannica.com: Encyclopaedia article about "cottage industry") retrieved March 2014

A small-scale industry is a project or firm created on a small budget or for a small group of people. A small-scale industry produces its goods using small machines, less power and hired labour. It is located within a single place and produces goods meant for a few people.

Small-scale industries are easy to start and manage given the minimal scale of production. They are set up to cater for the basic needs of the people within their locality. An example of a small-scale industry is a laundry or small kiosk created to cater to the individual needs of the people in the area in which it is located. These

businesses require little starting and operating capital. They require cheap labour that is easily found and their target market is the host community. Such companies also realize a small annual turnover and, as a result, pay fewer taxes. The classification of the industry as large or small scale depends on the rate of production and the number of employees. [economywatch.com](http://economywatch.com); [managementparadise.com](http://managementparadise.com) (Ask.com) Retrieved on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014

Ankomah Kofi (2012) stated that the concept of small scale enterprises relates, generally, to small manufacturing activities including primary products processing, handicrafts, and construction and repair services. He explains that in Ghana, two major definitions are being used to describe small scale industry: one based on capital requirements and the other based on employment size. The National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) defines small-scale industry as ‘one whose capital requirements for plant and equipment do not exceed the cedi equivalent of 100,000 United States dollars’.

## **2.5 The Impact of Small Scale Industries on the National Economy**

Ankomah (2012) remarked that, “The small scale industries are engine of economic growth and for promoting equitable development”.

He listed the following as some of the importance of the small scale industries.

- A small-scale industry is a project or firm created on a small budget or for a small group of people.
- A small-scale industry produces its goods using small machines, less power and hired labour.
- It is located within a single place and produces goods meant for a few people.
- Small-scale industries are easy to start and manage given the minimal scale of production.
- They are set up to cater for the basic needs of the people within their locality.

The indigenous pottery industry is particular importance to women who usually own and manage these industries themselves. The activities involved in the production processes of pots takes place just within the house or very close to the house; they are close to the raw material, less expensive in management, the fact that the industry is carried out with simple inexpensive tools and less complex technology.

As stated in the Best report (19),’ the economic importance of these activities to the rural economy as a whole, and to women in particular, is enormous. For the women, these activities must be compatible with the household duties and needs, child care and other responsibilities which the women bear’. The women are also able to undertake other income generating activities for example farming and trading, besides the pot making business. With these income generating activities, the women raised some reasonable money to supplement the income generated from the pottery businesses. The indigenous pottery industry sometimes may be operated by an individual or a group of people, who usually employ other people.

## **2.6 Challenges of the Small Scale Industry**

Ghanaian indigenous pottery it might be worth noting, as a first remark, that even though the indigenous pottery plays significant role in the development of this country now has a low influence on the daily life of people, due to many changes that are occurring in response to different challenges. Large numbers of people are engaged in the traditional pottery in many other parts of the country and are producing pots and continue to use the indigenous methods, however, the rich Ghanaian heritage of pottery techniques is gradually being relegated to the background as the country becomes more industrialised and with the emergence of plastic and metal factories their products are taking over the market of the indigenous pottery. According to (UNCTAD, 2011), Micro and Small Scale Enterprises in least developing countries face the following problems; “unfriendly legal and regulatory environment; ineffective Business

development services; inadequate access to finance; inadequate public-private sector dialogue; competition brought about by trade liberalization; constraints on women to develop their entrepreneurial potentials”.

Knowledge is required in any form of enterprise; the traditional potters are not any exception. Lack of knowledge about innovations and the market trends may deny them the opportunity to compete with other players. Entrepreneurs need to master design, have extensive knowledge of markets and technology, and become innovative.

Another area of concern that poses a great challenge to these small scale entrepreneurs is the easy accessibility to credit to resource and expand their businesses.

‘Lack of access to the medium or long-term credit is a major constraint for those enterprises that wish to expand their activities’. (UNCTAD, 2011)

## **2.7 Government Assistance to Small Scale Industries**

The indigenous pottery industry under the category of small scale industry thrives on many factors including assistance from the government to develop. Such assistance as may be require by such industries may include providing adequate financial support; empowering the operators in the industry with the requisite knowledge and technical assistance to improve on their mode of production; they are also to be protected and from unnecessary competition.

Business News of Friday, 10 May 2013 (Daily Graphic), titled, ‘Small-Scale Industries to Receive Government Help, issued the following statement in anticipation for the government’s intervention to bring help to the small scale industry players. “Selected small-scale industries are to benefit from a major stimulus package from next year to make their businesses internationally competitive”.

The information further explained that details of the package were being created by the government to be outlined in the 2014 Budget.

The intended purpose of the proposed package was to resuscitate the ailing

manufacturing sector and create employment.

The following are also attributed to Mr Haruna Iddrisu, during his visit to the Export Development and Agricultural Investment Fund (EDAIF), in that news item, the then Minister of Trade and Industry, had this to say:

About the NBSSI, Mr Iddrisu continued that the government would empower the board with adequate funding for it to effectively discharge its objectives.

He said the government would engage stakeholders for the development of an SME policy to guide the activities of small and medium enterprises in the country.

He added that it was the intention of the government that the NBSSI was positioned and given the capacity to lead the government's new Small-Scale Industrialisation Initiative Programme (SSIIP) which would take off in 2014.

The SSIIP, according to the minister, was intended to provide one viable industrial activity in each district of the country.

Mr. Iddrisu, therefore, tasked the NBSSI to create additional offices in all the 10 regions of the country for businesses to access its services.

With the growing unemployment rate in the country, he said, the government had no excuse but strengthen the NBSSI to provide sustainable jobs for the youth. These were laudable political policies geared towards the revamping of small scale industries.

The National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) is mandated, "To improve the competitiveness of micro and small enterprises by facilitating the provision of business development programmes and integrated support services". This is in line with our vision to "create a more vibrant entrepreneurial society by fostering the growth of micro and small enterprises". (NBSSI, 2015)

The government in acknowledgement to the immense contributions the Micro and Small Enterprises offer towards the economic development the country established the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI) by Act 434 of 1981. The act

mandates the NBSSI to promote the growth and development of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs).

According to NBSSI, their activities fall into two broad categories: these are financial and non-financial services. 'Financial services include extending credit through its loan schemes to entrepreneurs for both working capital and the acquisition of fixed asset'.

The NBSSI collaborates with donor agencies in implementing activities to address the needs of the MSE sector. Some of these agencies are the Business Advisory Centre (BAC) and the Rural Enterprise Project (REP).

NBSSI, through the BACs in the districts, offers business development services to MSEs under the REP. Some of the services offered include literacy and numeracy training, small business management training and acquisition of rural enterprise skills. ([www.nbssi.org](http://www.nbssi.org)) retrieved on January, 2014

It is not unlikely these agencies have given the indigenous pottery industry the attention it deserves. Some questions demanding answers may be; has one industry in every District project seen the light? Is the NSSBI well-resourced as the Minister promised in his address? And has the NBSSI carried out its mandate as it is required of it?

## **2.8 The Involvement of Women in traditional Pottery**

The indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region is mostly women affair. From the towns visited all the discussions held indicated that pottery is a woman's business. At Afari a woman stated that any man who attempts to make pots will develop swollen testes (hernia)

Michael (2013), "through my curiosity and the desire to know something about the history of pottery, I got to know that Tafo-Adompom a suburb of Kumasi in the Ashanti region is one of the indigenous places known for the emergence and genesis of pottery making.

An old lady of about 87 years called Eno Abena Akyea (also called Nana Akyea) who had spent almost all her life in Tafo-Adompom exclaimed that, pottery production in the community was an entirely female affair carried out on a household basis as part of the daily domestic routine”(field survey)

No one could tell why the traditional pottery in most areas is practiced by only women. The practice therefore was that daughters learnt the trade from their mothers at no cost. The potter's skills are passed down from mother to daughter and therefore do not attract any apprenticeship fee.

Omari (1972) “ discussing on Pottery Designs and Decorations in the Central and Ashanti Regions of Ghana stated ‘The craft is found exclusively in the hands of women and is passed on from mother to daughter. The indigenous pottery industry is practiced by mostly women. Eric, et al (2013) stated in their research that ‘The findings of their research indicated that traditional pottery production in Kpando was strictly women’s art’. Angela(1980) also states in her article ‘In other words, the potters are women in their middle years, without formal education or literacy, for whom pottery making has been a way of life-as well as a means of earning a living-over a period of some years’. Some people have given some other reasons why they felt the trade has become all women affair.In ancient times making of pots lied in the hands of women because’ He further stated these three reasons to buttress his point as to why women are the chief makers of pottery (Rattray, 1927).

- a. Women produce pots because they have the patience and finesse to do it
- b. Women make pots because they customarily use and trade in them.
- c. That in some societies and cultures, it was compulsory for all girls to learn pottery.
- d. Mothers pass on the art to their daughters.

## **2.9 Indigenous methods of pot making**

The indigenous potters in the Ashanti have stuck to their simple methods of producing pots handed over to them by their ancestors up to date. The stages of working comprise the preparation of the clay after it has been delivered from the clay pit. The preparation takes different forms depending on the nature of the clay. The clay can just be soaked (seasoned) for a while and could be pounded or just kneaded to homogenous constancy and made ready for work.

Simple tools handed over to the contemporary potters have been the same as used by their grandparents many years ago. Similarly, potters have maintained the shapes and styles with very little or no change. The indigenous potters have avoided the adoption of any type of mechanical equipment for their pot production.

Traditional pottery in the Ashanti region almost assumes the same shapes and style across the region with some little peculiarities as a result of the functions of the wares to the local communities. The pots produced are relevant for their domestic, ritual, religious or medicinal functions; and these dictate the shape, size and style. However the method of production and the tools used are almost the same across the region.

Pottery in Ashanti generally is still hand-built with the application of methods such as; pinch, coil and mold. In some pottery centers, potters use combination of these methods to produce a pot.

Angela W. Browne states, “All traditional pottery made in Ghana is made without the wheel, is open-fired at low temperatures and is never glazed”.

Kwafo S. J. (1966); tells the history behind this terminology ‘nyonkukuo’ which is translated weaving a pot is that the early man in his attempt to get the shape or form of a basket in clay to use as a container, took a medium size basket and plastered the walls of it from inside and when it was dried, it was baked. The basket automatically burnt down

and the pot came out successfully. This method was adopted at when the craft was at its embryonic stage but now the modelling is done without the basket.

Kwafo went ahead to assert that “the earliest wares were probably produced by women; they were fashioned by hand, copying the forms of baskets, leather bags, and gourds and were baked in the sun or in fire.”

Women at Afari soak their clay for a while for it to season. At the start of her work, the potter picks a sizable ball of clay appropriate for a particular ware and according to its size; it is marvellous to observe how these women could judge the size of a ball of clay to make equal size of pots in particular series. The clay is kneaded for a while and work begins. The pot is built directly from the ground (plates 12-13); bigger pots are however done in two halves. The pot is first hollowed out and pulled upwards from a lump of clay, the potter moves round the pot as she shapes the pot with her two hands, at this stage the fingers are the major tools. The pot are allowed to dry to the leather hard stage and later attended to with assorted tools at the various stages. The tools used are common items which could easily be procured from the environment. Tools used by potters within the region are the same, these consists of some simple items such as a thin curved metal for scrapping; smooth stones for burnishing, corn cobs for making designs; piece of rugs, calabash, and pieces of shaped wood for smoothing. These are all used with some simple technology and very little effort.

As early as the 1960 and 1970, researchers in their studies saw the need for the improvement of the indigenous pottery forms in terms of their shapes and quality.

Studies and available data have shown that indigenous potters are comfortable with their own way of going about their work and may not readily accept any form of innovative ideas introduced to them. Many researchers over the years as early as in the 1960 and 1970 have found the need to bring about some reforms in the indigenous

pottery industry in the Ashanti region. Mention can be made of Nyarko E. C. (1972), Edward Sakyi (1995), Osei S. K. (1971) and many others.

Kissiedu (1966) says, 'If pottery in Akwupim and pottery in Ghana in general is to stand on its own against the competition on the open market, then certain improvement must be made to the old fashioned methods of pottery in Ghana'. Nineteen years after the prediction of Kissiedu, the situation seemed not to have received any attention. Nyarko (1972) writes; 'The design of Ashanti pottery has remained static for many centuries without much significant evolution in its shape and decoration. Generally there is little incentive or opportunities to improve on the techniques the younger potters learnt from their mothers or older potters'.

The study revealed that the local clay used by the women for hand-made pots, could not be used successfully on the wheel. Apiadu clay has high quartz gravel content. The women found it cumbersome to spent time wash the clay in order to use it on the potter's wheel. Johnson (1976) 'The wheel calls for clay which has been mixed with water and allowed to age so that the coarser particles can fall out before the fine clay settles. The resulting fine clay makes excellent water coolers, but lacks the fire-resistant properties of the traditional local pots'

The advantage of introducing the potter's wheel to the traditional potters was therefore questionable. In any case, the women themselves did not complain that their work was laborious. When asked about this as a possible innovation, it was evident that the women were already aware of this method and of the fact that it was employed in Afari and elsewhere, but they were sceptical of its value to them. 'The present apparently cumbersome and arduous method of manufacture is not perceived as a major problem'. (Angela W. Browne 1980)

The traditional way of going about pot making may not see any change due to the potter's desire to adhere to tradition. All the above notwithstanding, were ample

indications that the traditional potters wanted their methods of production and style of pots to remain indigenous.

The following captured from Sakyi confirm the contention that it is not easy to transform the indigenous potter into a contemporary studio potter,

- a. One manual and two electric potters wheels had been supplied to them (Afari).
- b. According to the leadership of the Afari potters, some white man came to introduce the use of the potter's wheel to the older potters but they could not master the throwing skills very well.
- c. A national service person was posted to the place to help the Afari potters learn how to use the potter's wheel but they could not benefit fully from his service. The older potters were reluctant to change from the conservative way of producing their indigenous pots'.

The researcher's investigation revealed that the women have completely disengaged themselves from the use of any of such equipment introduced to them and reverted back to their simple method of working. One of the reasons was that their type of clay was not readily suitable for throwing on the potter's wheel.

### **2.9.1 Uses of Indigenous Pottery Products**

Kwafo (1966), "Before the introduction of iron pot, enamel pans, aluminium pans, coal pots, electric stoves, buckets and cups; for cooking, drinking, washing, and bathing purposes by the European traders, all these had their substitutes produced in clay locally to serve the same purposes". The main objective of the Ashanti potter is to produce pots mostly for its usefulness but not for aesthetics purposes, products are used widely for domestic, commercial and medicinal purposes.

"However it was discovered that, the development of ceramics certainly changed the domestic life of women wherever it occurred, undoubtedly changing the way food was

prepared, making it possible to utilize food that were not edible unless cooked at length in liquid. Ceramics containers also made better storage of food” (Speight& Toki, 1999)

Brown (1980) “The particular specialities of this village are a large water container, a palm-wine container and various cooking and eating bowls”.

Brown listed the types of pots under three categories; pots used for cooking and eating; pots used as water containers and cups; pots used for washing and bathing.

- a. Pots for cooking and eating: ɔsɛne – cooking; kukuo – cooking medicine; apɔɔyewa – grinding and serving food; nkwansɛn – cooking soup
- b. Pots used as containers (water and wine): ahina – holding drinking water; ɔpɔɔɔ – a large form of ahina; akotokyiwa- keeping palm wine and pito.
- c. Pots for washing, bathing and containing pomade; dwaresɛn – for bathing; sradeyewa- keeping pomade;

Rattray (1927) gave more detailed account of uses of some pots and utensils in the Asante language. These include; “*Anane*, for melting shear butter; *Kuruwa*, a proverb pot meant for holding drinking water; *Ahina*, a large pot used for carrying water from the stream; *Osene*, a cooking pot; *Tasenaba*, soup pot; *Akotokyewa*, palm wine pot; *Nkyeryeresa*, literally; three steps pot and *mogyemogyey*, a jaw bone pot, both used for religious or ceremonial purposes; *Abusuakuruwa*, family pot; *Ayowa*, pot for washing the soul; *Abammo* and *kunakukuo*”.

Kwafo (1966) said, ‘To keep in constant close touch with the ancestors, on every fortieth day, a kind of sacrifice is offered to the spirit of the departed ones these things are made possible through the use of ceremonial, and traditional pots, because the departed ancestors would never accept anything offered in pots and dishes which are exotic’. Kwafo added, that culturally, imported plates and dishes are not used to serve the departed ancestors. The traditional pot befitting their status are used, for example

‘ayewakesee’ and ‘esenkesee’ which can be found at the Centre for National Culture-Kumasi.

### **2.9.2 Taboos associated to traditional pottery**

The people of the Ashanti kingdom are well noted for their rich culture which goes without certain restrictions or taboos. A taboo is an inhibition or a restriction that result from a tradition or social custom, something considered detestable to do or use because it is sacred. It could also be considered as something excluded or forbidding from use, approach or mention.

The Wikipedia encyclopaedia defines a taboo as “a vehement prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred or too accursed for ordinary individual to undertake, under threat of supernatural punishment”.

(<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>) retrieved January 2015. Breaking a taboo is extremely objectionable in the society as a whole.

Sarpong, (1974) states, “The word *taboo* is derived from the Polynesian term *tabu*, which simply means forbidden and can be applied to any sort of prohibition”.

A taboo precludes an individual or a group of persons from certain behaviour or activities considered to be prohibited in order to preserve the cultural values of the people; to maintain their believes in their deities; to protect the people and the environment and as well to guard against the occurrence of any misfortunes on the society.

It is worth to mention that the indigenous pottery has survived it values over centuries due to the respect and regards the people attached to some simple regulations associated to the trade. These restrictions span from the digging of clay, the preparation of clay, production processes, handling of wares, and uses of certain items.

Kwafu listed some of the beliefs and taboos associated with pottery as follows:

1. If a woman in her menstrual period visits a clay pit to collect clay, she will fall ill. She will develop a swollen belly.
2. Men do not dig clay for their wives, for there is belief that the plastic clay will turn into mixture of quartz and clay, which is of no use to the potter. It is uncertain whether this was only restricted to husbands because currently at Afari it is men who dig the clay for the women to buy.
3. At Afari in the Ashanti, when a new clay pit is found, eggs are sacrificed to the god of the river Ankoma, by throwing them into it.
4. An unbaked pot must not be taken away from the village or town to another village or town.
5. Pots before baking must not be counted.
6. A pot is not to be broken intentionally, this is regarded as a serious offence. This requires a sacrifice of a sheep at the place where it was broken.

### **2.9.3 Poverty and unemployment among rural women**

Poverty is the state of being extremely poor, or the state of being considered as inferior in quality or insufficient financially to make ends meet.

Wikipedia explains poverty as “general scarcity or dearth, or state of one who lacks a certain amount of material possessions or money. It is multifaceted concept, which includes social, economic and political elements”. (<https://en.m.wikipedia.org>) retrieved, March, 2014

The Government of Ghana has since independence in 1957 undertaken number of development interventions to reduce poverty among its citizens, for example, Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), School Feeding Programme, Economic Recovery Programme (ERP), Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and Women in Development Fund (WDF). According to the Ghana Statistical Service 2007 as cited in African Development Fund, Human Development Department (OSHD,

2008) on Ghana Country Gender Profile, the level of poverty fell from 51.7% in 1991/92 to 39.5% in 1998/99 and further to 28.5% in 2005/06

Poverty and social exclusion can affect all age groups and among all genders. However, it is clear that poverty is paramount among women and most especially rural women. People may be considered poor if they have inadequate income or material and social resources that deny them the opportunity to meet the social standards of living.

In Ghana women are known to be within the extremely poor people bracket due to several reasons. However, the contribution of the women entrepreneurship is quiet enormous to the growth of the national economy; in spite of this, they represent potential human resources inadequately utilized. Only few rural women have the potential and capacity to take entrepreneurship, quite often this is done on part time basis since they have inadequate resources to fully engage themselves as such, secondly rural women will have to combine production activities with other domestic rolls.

“The Ghana poverty Reductioin Strategy (GPRS) is the Gorvernment of Ghana’s development strategy for reducing poverty in the country. Studies have shown that women experience greater poverty, have heavier time burdings, lower rate of utilisation of productive resources and lower literacy rate. The lack of capital resources for any kind of income generating enterprice and lack of labour in small household relegates women to a vicious cycle of poverty”(http:www.unu.edu/keyword/Economic-Development retrieved March 2014).

In Ghana poverty is mostly common among the rural folks. Majority of the impoverished people in Ghana are known to be living in the countryside areas, where accessibility to certain social amenities such as, safe water, health care, good educational facilities, motor able roads, and electricity are not available.

Women in the rural areas have very little to do to earn a living. Very few jobs exist for these women, the opportunities available to them, sometimes is petty trading and

subsistence farming. Cottage industries therefore play a formidable role in eliminating rural poverty since its availability provides employment for many of such women.

Countries worldwide including Ghana are seeking ways to fully integrate women in the national productivity agenda where women's potential abilities could be utilized to enable them to contribute their quota towards nation building. This certainly calls for several Programmes and interventions.

#### **2.9.4 The millennium Development Goals**

The millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set at the Millennium Summit have also become a major instrument for bolstering the global development agenda the MDGs synthesise eight major goals and target on poverty, hunger, education, gender, child mortality, maternal health HIV/AIDS and other diseases, environment and global partnership for countries to achieve by 2015.

The inclusion and the high priority accorded Goal 3, Promote gender equality and empowerment of women.

“Women are increasingly seen as an important part of the international development agenda. Empowering women and promoting gender equality are enshrined as global development objectives within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agreed to in 2000. Despite the empowerment of women widely being viewed as a “good thing”, the question of how development interventions can contribute to making progress along the long and winding road of female empowerment, and so enable women to make more choices about their own lives, is a contentious and debated area”.

#### **2.9.5 Strategies to Resource Women entrepreneurs financially**

Traditionally people mobilize capital for small scale industries from their own savings, by assessing loans from friends and relatives and as well as via profits from other activities like farm work. Providing the rural poor with access to financial services is one of many ways to help increase their incomes and productivity.

“In many countries, however, traditional financial institutions have failed to provide this service (Braverman & Guasch 1986). Microcredit and cooperative programs have been developed to fill this gap. Their purpose is to help the poor become self-employed and thus escape poverty. Many of these programs provide credit using social mechanisms, such as group based lending, to reach the poor and other clients, including women, who lack access to formal financial institutions (Huppi & Feder, 1990). With increasing assistance from the World Bank and other donors, microfinance is emerging as an instrument for reducing poverty and improving the poor's access to financial services in low-income countries” (World Bank, 1990).

The question now is how can microcredit reduce poverty?

Financial services contribution towards poverty reduction will largely depend on accessibility of the poor to these services. Microfinance and microcredit facilities are potential services that would create avenues for individuals to invest into their businesses and also offer opportunities for expansion. Currently, with the absence of commercial banks in the rural areas, the operation of the microfinance company is the only hope for rural entrepreneur to enhance their business activities.

Obeng (2011), “Providing the poor with access to financial services is one of many ways to help increase their incomes and productivity”.

The purpose providing microcredit is to help the poor become self-employed and thus escape poverty. An appropriate function of microcredit serves as an effective tool for reducing poverty. Any attempt to provide opportunities for people to engage themselves in any meaningful trade that will provide them with substantial income, is an attempt to remove or reduce poverty.

The most evidential factors of poverty are unemployment and the low productivity of the poor. Therefore eliminating poverty means offering employment or creating jobs; it also requires capital investment in the people to boost productivity.

### **2.9.6 The role of Microfinance and microcredit in SMEs.**

To the Ghanaians the concept of microfinance is not new; it is a common practice for people to do small savings with individuals and similarly take small loans from friends and relatives. Microfinance activities started as Susu collection in Ghana. The word Susu was coined from Nigerian word esusu meaning small amount of money in naira. In the absence of banking facilities and other formal financial sources, the Susu has been a major source of fund mobilization for the unbanked in Ghana, most especially rural Ghana. (Addai J. K, 2010) Microcredit is small loan basically providing small amount of money to the poor to better their lives. Microfinance on the other hand comprises a wide range of financial and non-financial services that are offered to the poor. Micro Credit is the lending side of microfinance. It includes advancing small loans to the poor people usually without collateral. Micro Finance on the other hand is defined to include the entire spectrum of financial services for broad sectors of the population but particularly for the poor. It refers not only to small and micro loans, but also savings products, insurance, leasing and other money transfer services. (Rallens & Ghazenfa, 2005)

Micro and small enterprises offer a number of particular advantages for rural women: flexible hours, location in or near women's homes, ease of entry, and links with local markets. However, rural female entrepreneurs also face particular challenges entering new and lucrative markets and expanding their businesses.

On the issue of addressing the needs of women, it appears the MFIs focus more on the women's practical needs as a way of promoting their effective agency rather than giving equal attention to women's strategic needs that would eventually strengthen women's transformative agency. When the women transformative agencies are strengthened, they are able to challenge socio-cultural values or factors that hinder the opportunities and freedoms of the women; the ultimate aim of women's empowerment.

Globally, microfinance programmes target the poor; nonetheless, women are the most preferred. According to Armendariz and Roome (2008) seven out of ten microfinance clients are women. In Ghana, 67% clients of MFIs are women (GHAMFIN 2009)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Overview**

This chapter consists of discussions of the approach used in undertaking the study. It discusses the methods, tools and steps employed to gather and analyse information relevant to the research project. The researcher discusses the methods and research design used for the study. It indicates that a qualitative research method was used.

The chapter also undertakes to validate, through discussion, the research design used to collect data which include interviews, and participant observation. The details of the processes and procedure for the data collection are discussed. Other tools such as tape recorder used to record all interviews and a digital camera were used in taking still pictures of sites, scenes and activities. Data collection mostly concentrated on the state of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region, the situation as they exist in the various localities. The study also looked into the reasons why Afari one of the pottery production towns has survived over the perceived decline of the industry in the region.

#### **Research Design**

The study employed a research approach that is qualitative.

However, qualitative technique used was precisely descriptive. This combined approach utilizes personal contact and insight and focuses on individual experiences as well as human interaction as the central elements of study. In this kind of research, Leedy (2005, 504) asserts that, 'Qualitative researchers operate under the assumption that reality is not easily divided into discrete memorable variables'. Qualitative researchers are often described as being the research instruments because the bulk of their data collection depends on their personal involvement (interviews, observations) in the

setting... Both verbal (interview comments, documents, field notes) and non-verbal data (drawings, photographs, and video tapes) may be collected.

### **3.1 Research methodology**

The design used in this research is the qualitative type. “It involves small groups with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from participants’ perspective. (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

The research methodologies adopted include descriptive and explanatory. These methods yielded data that cannot be measured quantitatively. The data gathering tools include interview, observation, documents and audio visual materials.

#### **Descriptive**

A descriptive research method attempts to describe the setting of the research. Descriptive research is concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, on-going processes, etc. “The purpose is not just the description of what is, but the discovery of meaning.”(Ndagi, 1984). The Wikipedia, free Encyclopaedia (2010) explains descriptive research as one that answers the questions of who, what, where, when and how.

The descriptive method was used by the researcher to ascertain for himself the situation of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region with regards to its strength, progress and sustainability. The researcher was also concerned with the type of tools, materials and methods and how they are used among the existing local pottery industries. Data gathered on situations of the industry in the region, tools, materials and working processes are all presented in chapters three and four.

#### **Explanatory**

Explanatory research does not only describe the features of the research but goes further to analyse and explain why or how something is happening. Blurtit (2010) also indicates

that, the focal point in using this type of research method is to seek and provide an explanation between two phenomena. As indicated by both, the focus is not the description of observable facts but the clarification for a deeper understanding. To all intents and purposes, Blurtit says “the explanatory research method seeks to look for causes and reasons”. The researcher sought information from interviewees who gave explanations to certain details of situations and events. These informed the researcher to gather the require data that could lead to the discovery of the causes and reasons leading to the decline in the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region.

### **Library Research**

Some of the relevant information to the project were collected and reviewed from documentary sources such as books, journals publications and the internet. Libraries played a major role in sourcing for secondary data for the study. Literature searches were made from the following libraries: KNUST Main library, Art Education Department and College of Art.

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

### **3.3 Population for the study**

Best (1981), defines population as “any group of individuals with one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. The population may be all the individuals of a particular type or a more restricted part of a group”.

In simple terms, population is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. For the purpose of this research, the target population covers indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region. Some few towns were selected to represent the entire industry in the region to undertake the study.

The criteria for inclusion was based on the history of the location and how it affects the making of pots; availability of clay as the main material in the area; the category of

people engaged in the pottery activities and reasons leading to the decline of the industry in the region.

The researcher aimed at target population that would be accessible. People known to be in the production of pots, families of popular potters and those engaged in the sale of the products wares, were the primary objective. The researcher visited five localities where interviews were conducted with sixteen respondents and informants in the case of the four of the towns. However, eight women out of the thirty working at the Afari pottery industry also granted interview and discussions with the researcher. These helped the research to have detail information about the activities of the women potters at Afari. Among some of the interviewees were twenty young girls selected from the Afari town who were used to solicit the views and perception of the youth about the pottery industry.

### **Sampling**

William M.K.Trocham, (2006) sampling is the process of selecting units from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalize the results back to the population. According to Mugo (2010), “sampling involves the selection of a suitable representative part of a population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. To make it easier for a researcher to obtain data from a population too large to cover, the researcher obtains a part (sample) of rather than a total population. Based on this, purposive and random samplings were used to select the respondents.

### **Sampling Technique**

Sampling is used to identify the population in the study. It also states the size of the population, if size can be determined, and the means of identifying the individuals in the population. Since this was a qualitative research, the researcher purposefully selected

sites and individuals for the study so that it could enable him to understand the problem and the research question.

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). According to Mugo, when applied to human beings, it can be defined as a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of a survey. It entails part of a whole to show what the rest is like. Usually, it is only a fraction of the population which is selected for the study.

### **3.4 Data Collecting Procedures**

The most essential aspect of any research is about the researcher's ability to collect relevant data. The gathering of data is an attempt to find answers to the research questions and also a lead to reach to the objective of the research. It therefore requires using of the appropriate tools or instruments in collecting, describing and quantifying the data. Research tools or instruments are therefore employed to describe and quantify the data. In brief, research tools are a data-gathering procedure that enables a research to investigate problems.

“There are two very important facts to note about research tools; their validity and reliability. Validity is a data-gathering tool intended to determine whether the research measures the specific concept that the researcher is attempting to measure while reliability is the extent to which an instrument measures the same data over time and shows an accurate representation under the same conditions with the same subjects” (Best, 1981).

### **Research Instruments**

This involves the forms of data collection, analysis and interpretation. With this study, interview, discussions, observation, documents and audio visual materials were considered.

## **Interview**

Oral questions in the form of discussions were conducted among respondents.” It permits the researcher to elicit direct information from respondents and to classify it on the spot” (Best, 1981). The researcher conducted face-to-face discussion with participants in the form of questionnaire and interviews.

In this instance interviews served as part of the multiple method that ensured that data collection and analysis achieved a high level of validity and reliability. Secondly, interviews allowed the researcher to check the accuracy of data, verify or refute the impressions that a researcher gathers through other methods of data collection such as participant observation.

Since most of the indigenous potters were illiterates and were not able to read or write, the oral interview and the discussions in their own language became very appropriate. In order to have first-hand information about the situation on the ground, these interviews and discussions took place in homes and at the pottery centre and sometimes on the telephone. In most cases, individual interviews and participants’ observation were employed except in Afari where the researcher had the opportunity to interact with a group.

For this research, the intention was to investigate into the state of affairs in all the indigenous pottery locations in the entire Ashanti region, however sample studies were limited to five towns in the region. These are Afari, Apiadu, Mfensi, Pankrono, and Adankwame.

Purposive sampling approach was applied in selecting respondents in every town for interviews. The sample studied was limited to people who had an idea about pottery in the area, were potters themselves or have lived with potters before.

The approach for data collection was based on the goals of the study, which included the believe that the indigenous pottery in these towns were gradually fading out from

the system and that not many people are engaged in it as it has been some time ago. The research evaluated the situation of the industry currently, how serious the situation was and the impact it will impose on the society should the situation persist. The investigation was also to find out whether some women were still working as potters in the various towns; was the raw material (clay) for the productions of pots still available; whether their products still attracted market. Another question the study explored was whether there were good plans for the sustainability, growth and expansion of the industry in the areas?

The simple random and cluster sampling methods were used to interview people within the various towns visited and eight out of about thirty women known to be currently engaged in the pottery industry in Afari. Among the towns visited, it was observed that Afari was the only location where women were seen actively producing pots in commercial basis.

As stated before, the research was necessitated based on the belief that the indigenous pottery industry is collapsing, a visit to the selected town associated with the pottery industry in the Ashanti Region, namely Afari, Apiadu, Adankwame, Mfensi, and Pankrono proved this to be right. These towns were sampled out to represent the true reflection of the state of the industry currently in the Ashanti region. A questionnaire was developed basically for the current operational situations of the industry in the various locations. This was aimed at finding out exactly whether the potters were still producing their wares, the source of the raw material clay was still available; the pottery business was still economically viable; the trade still have adequate patronage to sustain the industry; were there any hopes for continuity or young women ready to take up the trade; and could there be some peculiar challenges confronting the industry in the locality? In most cases the interaction took the form of interviews and discussions.

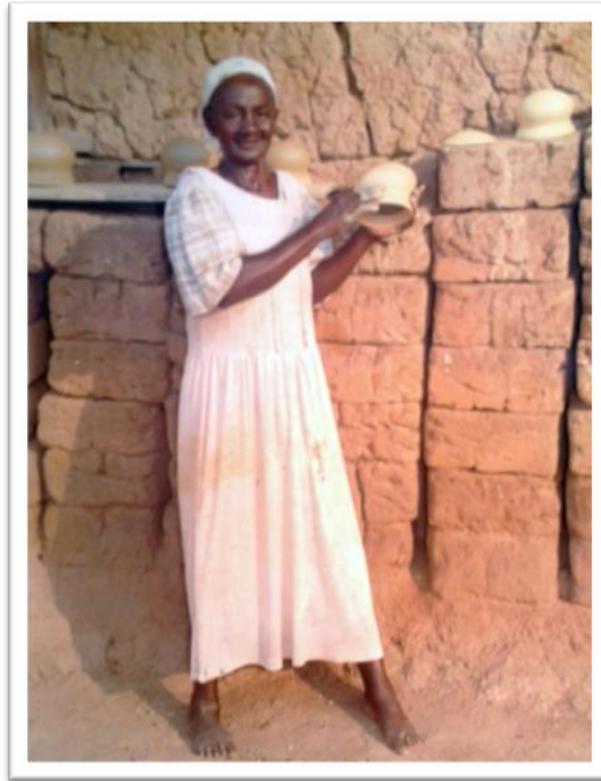
Audio recordings were made while pictures were also taken where necessary. The responses of the discussions were treated according to the towns visited in chapter four.

### **3.5 Visits to Apiadu**

Apiadu is a small town about 10 km east of Kumasi, a branch road from the Boadi junction along the Kumasi- Accra highway. The maiden visit to Apiadu took the researcher to the family of Mad. Abena Nkrumah, deceased, (Plate 1) who was noted to be one of the popular pot makers in town but died ten years ago. Mad. Abena Tawiaa a forty eight year old woman and a daughter of Mad, Abena Nkrumah granted the interview with the researcher.

A visit to Maame Abena Nsiah at Apiadu,

The researcher was led to the house of Mad. Abena Nsiah, who until recently was producing pots by Mad. Abena Tawiah. Maame Abena Nsiah gave her age as eighty (80) years. She said she had been in the pottery production since her youthful age. She lamented. 'I wish I could continue to do pots, but it is not possible'. She went and brought out all her tools which she had been using recently, they were intact and looking good. The Picture of Mad. Abena Nsiah and her tools can be seen in a pose in Plate 3.



**Plate 1: (Picture of Mad. Abena Nkrumah –Deceased)**



**Plate 2: (Some unfinished works of Mad Abena Nkrumah- Deceased)**



**Plate 3: (Mad Abena Nsia with her tools)**



**Plate 4: (The latest pot made by Mad Abena Nsia)**

### **3.6 Visits to Pankrono**

The industry in Pankrono has died down completely. It was rarely possible to find someone who was seriously engaged in the indigenous pottery industry. The town has been completely urbanized such that it had become hardly possible to trace the indigenous potters.

The only condolence was that the market for the indigenous pottery products was still in place at Pankrono. A woman, the researcher saw selling some pots by the roadside, was consulted as a primary source of information. According to Madam Beatrice Agyei, the dealer in pottery wares (Plate 5), pottery making at Pankrono was no more because the lands have been sold and buildings have been erected on the clay deposits (Plate 7). She mentioned the scarcity of firewood (fuel for firing wares) and space for the potters as some of the challenges which the potters had complained about. She further intimated that, sales were not a problem but it was unfortunately the clay site was no more. Due to that, she and other sellers in the products wares import them from Somanya, Kwahu and other pottery centres outside Ashanti regions. Madam Beatrice Agyei however, directed me to the house of Maame Abena Nkrumah (Plate 11) coincidentally bears the same name as the late potter at Apiadu who was supposed to be in her late eighties. She has been in the pottery business since her childhood; she had learnt the trade from her mother. She stated that she has not been very active in business recently because of ill health. She explained that the indigenous pottery business in the town has waned due to several factors. She mentioned some as lack of raw material, lack of space to keep wares and the challenge of procuring firewood for firing wears. She complained bitterly about the clay deposit site which has been taken over for development.

The researcher took the opportunity to visit the clay site.

The clay site is at the banks of the Aworo stream formerly at the outskirts of Pankrono but do to expansion and urbanization of the town, the river and the clay site have become part of the town and have several houses erected on (Plate 6).

The researcher had the opportunity to speak with Nana Kofi Asafo Adjei (Plate 8) a retired officer from the BNI who also has his house exactly on the clay site. He said he was not aware the place was a clay site when he was allocated the plot. He continued that he realized this when he was digging a man-whole for his septic tank. He explained that a lot of clay was dug out by the diggers and he sent for the potters who were then in operation to collect them. He said this happened about ten years ago.



**Plate 5: (pottery wares displayed at Pankrono)**



**Plate 6: (The clay site now occupied by buildings)**



**Plate 7: (The researcher and a house owner at Pankrono)**



**Plate 8: (Maame Abena Nkrumah)**



**Plate 9: (Pottery dealer at Mfensi)**

### **3.7 Visits to Mfensi**

Mfensi can be found on the Kumasi Sunyani road, about 64 Kilometers and about an hour drive from Kumasi. Mfensi until recently has been one of the prospective centres of the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region. The researcher came in contact with Madam Comfort Mambo, pottery products dealer at Mfensi (Plate 9). She indicated that the pottery products she and other women sold at Mfensi were mostly imported from Kwahu and other areas.

Ask why they have to 'import' pots from far Kwahu to sell at Mfensi?

Her answer was that 'the business for the local pots thrives very well when the women were producing but the women were not producing any longer. But since people have noted the place as a marketing centre for the pots they were doing everything possible to keep the market in place. Mfensi has wide publicity for indigenous pottery, she added. The researcher observed that the indigenous pottery industry has given way to the studio potters. Clay which was first taken free is now sold to the studio potters that are widespread in Mfensi. The traditional women potters were compelled to go into stiff competition with these studio potters, a competition which obviously has disadvantaged them. The reasons being that the women lacked the capital and adequate space for their operations.

### **3.8 Visits to Adankwame**

A woman, Mad. Adwoa Abrafi, who the researcher contacted, indicated that the trade had died out a long time ago and could not remember the last time she heard of someone producing indigenous pot. She added that nobody has any idea about it nowadays. She explained that she felt the main cause for the disappearance of the indigenous pottery business might be due to the fact that at a certain point the youth did not show any interest in it and almost all the old women who practiced it have all died. She however took consolation in the fact that the potter's wheel operators (studio

potters) have taken over and making good use of the clay deposit at the place and keeping some people in business.

### **3. 9. Visits to Afari**

The Atwima Nwabiagya District is one of the largest districts in the Ashanti Region. It is situated in the western part of the region and shares common boundary with Ahafoano South and Atwima Mponua districts to the west, Offinso municipal district to the north, Amansee West and Bosomtwi AtwimaKwanwoma district to the south, Kumasi metropolis and Kwabre districts to the east. The district covers an estimated area of 294.84 sq. km. The district which has Nkawie as its capital also has some big towns such as Toase, Abuakwa, Akropong, Buakwa, Barekese and Afari. The AtwimaNwabiagya District lies approximately on latitude 6o 75’N and between longitude 1o 45’ and 2o 00’ West. It is situated in the western part of the region and shares common boundaries with Ahafoano South and Atwima Mponua Districts (to the West), Offinso District (to the North), Amansie–West and Bosomtwe- Atwima Kwanwoma Districts (to the South), Kumasi Metropolis and Kwabre Districts (to the East). It covers an estimated area of 294.84 sq. km.

The total population of the District, according to 2009 population censuses was 166,449 with an annual growth rate of 3% ([www.atwima-nwabiagya.ghanadistrict.gov.gh](http://www.atwima-nwabiagya.ghanadistrict.gov.gh)) Retrieved on 11th March 2014).

Afari has a history of being one of the traditional pottery towns in the Ashanti Region. The interviewees were not able to tell the exact history of the industry in the town, however, one of the respondents indicated that she saw her grandmother doing it, her mother who has passed on also did it and she has taken over from where her mother left off.

Sakyi (1995) had indicated in his thesis that ‘it is not well known when the pottery industry started at Afari and who started it, but it was believed to have started some 200

years ago'. Mad. Philomena Appiah, one of the potters remarked that about twenty years ago almost every woman in the town participated in the pottery business one way or the other but over the years the number has dwindled to very few people.

Afari is well noted for its indigenous pottery production, with almost every household engaged in it. The trade is women preserve, handed down from mother to daughter (Sakyi, 1995)

Baidoo again has it on record that in 1994 about 12 years ago, he was able to interact with 40 women in the town. Considerably, the number has not reduced drastically in Afari as observed in the other four towns. Currently there are about 30 women engaged in pottery, 15 out of the number have formed a group and are working together. These women have a workshop built for them by the former First Lady Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings in 1992, Mad. Philomena added. The group leader Mad. Mary Asumadu told the researcher that in 1993 the UNDP (ILO) under the auspices of the Cottage Industry Development (CID) provided them with a kiln to facilitate firing and to reduce the incidence of heat hazard to the women and also to reduce the use of firewood. Baidoo (1989) stated that; "Firing techniques are usually the same in all pottery centres in Ashanti it is usually open firing, since the potters have never dreamt of anything else, for example kilns, wood is the only source of fuel, because it is plentiful and inexpensive. However, now wood had become scarce and expensive".

Osei (1971), indicated that wares burn for about three hours until it leaves a mass of red-hot pot and glowing wood ash. And the women will have to attend to it while on fire, sometimes turning them with long sticks. When pots are well fired, the women will have to take them out of the fire with long sticks. These descriptions highlighted by these two writers explained how cumbersome and hazardous the open air firing poses to the indigenous potters, it therefore became a great relieve to the women at Afari when

they had these kilns. There were indications also that the adoption of the kiln method of firing made the work easier and safer than previously.

They also had assistance from the Social Investment Fund (SIF) in 1994, their contribution to the group was a showroom where they could pack or display their wares. Some other women not part of the group, working privately at home, but come to the workshop to fire their wares in the kiln. This was convenient to them for the fact that they could now have a space to fire the wares openly.

These potters went about their work using the same simple tools and the old methods handed over to them by their predecessors. The shapes and styles of pots produced had not seen any change over the years. They have kept the old style of producing their pots till date.

This is what Sakyi (1994) has to say “The older indigenous potters are very conservative and not susceptible to change. There are signs on the wall that the indigenous pottery industry at Afari is also gradually seeing a decline”.

The following statement captured from the internet on the profile of Atwima Nwabiagya District of the Ashanti Region attests to this fact; it is stated that the district can boast of large deposits of quartzite (clay) at Afari and Mfensi that can support the ceramics industry. Unfortunately, the sector is not well developed and as such only about 3.3% of industries in the District belong to the sector. They are concentrated at Mfensi and Afari. There is only one group-based enterprise that is engaged in pottery. Additional investment is needed by the sector to develop into a major industrial activity in the District ([www.ghananation.com](http://www.ghananation.com)) Nov, 2013.

The researcher had anticipated that the scarcity of the raw material (clay) could be one of the overriding causes for the collapse of the industry. One of the objectives for the visit to the various towns therefore was to ascertain for the fact that clay was still available and was accessible to the women potters. Among the places visited, apart from

Pankrono where the clay site has been taken over by estate developers, the rest have the raw material well preserved for the industry.

### 3.9.1 Qualitative Documents:

These are public documents such as newspapers, minutes of meetings, journals, existing theses related to the study. The University library, the Collage of Art library and the Art Education Department library were at the convenience of the researcher. A lot of data was sourced from people who have written about pottery in the Ashanti region



**Plate 10: (The potter's tools)**



**Plate 11: (Product of Afari potters)**



**Plate 12: (Working stages of a potter at Afari)**



**Plate 13: (Working stages of a potter at Afari)**



**Plate 14: (Woman finishing pot)**



**Plate 15: (Woman loading pots into the)**



**Plate 16: (woman burnishing pot)**



**Plate 17: (colouring pot)**



**Plate 18: (Wares in the drying stage)**



**Plate 19: (Kilns at Afari)**



**Plate 20: (Workshop at Afari)**

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS OFFINDINGS

#### 4.0 Overview

This chapter comprises the compilation, description and interpretation of data gathered from the various pottery centres in the Ashanti Region. The data gathered were mainly done through interview and observation and the findings discussed. To facilitate clearer understanding, pictures, charts and tables were also presented. The findings were of two categories. The first aspect treats the findings gathered from visitations conducted within the five pottery centres envisaged for the study while the second part deals with the situation pertaining in Afari the centre which is actively in operation. Structured questionnaire was prepared for respondents who were initially briefed on what was expected of them. A structured interview was conducted among some young girls to seek their views on the pottery industry. The facts gathered were well organized, analysed and synthesized for easy understanding. Most of the findings are converted into percentages to make easier understanding of relations and pattern exhibited by the data for orderly and systematic presentation.

#### 4.1 Data collection

The researcher in an attempt to collect data for the study visited all the five towns and interacted with people. The maiden visit at Apiadu took the researcher to the family of Mad. Abena Nkrumah, deceased, (Plates 1 ) who was noted to be one of the potential pot makers in town but died ten years ago. Mad. Abena Tawiaa a forty eight year old woman and a daughter of Mad, Abena Nkrumah granted the interview with the researcher.

*Questioned about the state of the indigenous pottery industry in the town at the moment,* Mad. Abena Tawiah answered simply ‘it has collapsed. She added Apiadu used to have three groups of potters in town these were the Asawase, Tetretem, and Asakyi each

group she said consisted of several women. Some of the younger women believed pottery was a work for the uneducated or illiterate and not for those who have been to school. Pottery making is undeniably dirty, manual work, requiring physical strength, but not academic qualifications. It is therefore possible that many of the younger, more educated, women will not become potters even when they reach their middle years. According to the research of Baidoo (1994), he was able to interact with thirty four (34) women potters at Apiadu, and now none of them is found in town.

*Asked why she did not learn the trade from the mother before she died?*

This was her response; ‘I was not interested so no matter how much my mother taught me I could not do it.

*Asked whether she considered the trade as economically lucrative,*

She answered in affirmation and added she had regretted not learning it because she has no job and now highly impoverished as a result.

*What do you think has been the cause of the collapse of the industry?*

This was what Mad. Abena Tawiah had to say, ‘The youth in the town are not ready to learn from their predecessors because of the modern style of living and schooling, all the women have died and some too old to continue in the industry. Another challenging factor to the dying of the indigenous traditional pottery is that the youth consider it to be dirty work. She said the dying of the traditional pottery was not a financial problem and there was a good market for the pottery products they produced, but because the youth didn’t learn from their predecessors, that has led to the dying of the tradition of pottery making. She again said that, the fuel to do the firing was a challenge as well since firewood was their main source of fuel for firing’. She further lamented that, the pottery making was for only women even till date.

She mentioned one woman, Maame Abena Nsiah whom she said until recently, was the only woman making pots in town. She has also stopped because of old age and ill health.

*Is the clay deposit still available and do the women in Apiadu still having access to it?*

The interview revealed that the raw material clay was still abundant in the area and well preserved for the indigenous pottery industry and could last a little longer to sustain the industry, at least for the next twenty years. A visit to the site revealed that there was some encroachment by estate developers, however, the main site where the women dug from was still available.

*Do you think poor patronage for the products was one of the causes of the collapse?*

Madam Abena Tawia revealed that people went every day in search of pots to buy from Apiadu. This goes to confirm the assertion of Brown (1980), that “a third aspect of the future of the pottery industry relates to the demand for the product and whether the production methods can continue to meet that demand. The use of earthenware has already declined relatively in recent years owing to competition with the more durable aluminium, enamel and plastic wares. But earthenware remains the preferred material for certain specialized containers, and the specialities of Apiadu reflect this continued demand. For example, earthenware containers for cooking and eating are preferred by many women, since the food is said to taste better, is less likely to burn and will stay hot longer. Water and other liquids stay cooler in clay containers. Furthermore, pottery articles are cheaper than metal goods. It seems likely, then, that the demand for those items produced in Apiadu will continue to be maintained at a steady or at worst a slowly declining rate.”

#### **Visit to Maame Abena Nsiah.**

The researcher was led to the house of Mad. Abena Nsiah by Mad. Abena Tawiah.

Maame Abena Nsiah gave her age as eighty (80) years. She said she had been in the

pottery production since her youthful age. She lamented. 'I wish I could continue to do pots, but it is not possible'. She went and brought out all her tools which she had been using recently, they were intact and in good shape (Plate 3).

*Asked why she could not produce pots anymore?*

She explained that she had no strength to go and carry clay. She also attributed pains in her eyes to the effect of heat as a result of open air firing. She demonstrated how they used long sticks to turn the pots while burning in the fire; she said they felt the heat directly.

This goes to confirm the observation of Edward Sakyi (1994) he wrote, 'Firing in the outskirts of the village might cause bush fire if great care is not taking. The potters are exposed to health hazards as they are in direct contact with the heat, especially during the unpacking while the pots are still hot.

Firing of pottery wares takes a lot of time; Osei S.K. (1971) cited in Sakyi, indicates that wares burn for about three hours until it leaves the mass of red hot-pots and the glowing wood ash. And the women will have to attend to them, while on fire sometimes turning them with long sticks. When pots are well fired women will have to take them out of the fire with long sticks.

*Asked whether she was ready to teach some girls to take up the production of pots from her?*

She expressed great pleasure if she could be giving the opportunity so that the trade does not die completely. She recommended that, indigenous pottery should be part of the syllabus from primary school to the secondary or tertiary so that some of them can be employed to teach and impart the skills into the youth. She continued by saying that, their living conditions are now very poor because pottery making is no more in their town and that, finding a means to earn income to survive is a major challenge.

## 4.2 Interviews and Discussions at Pankrono

Pankrono had been one of the potential pot producing towns in the Ashanti Region. The town lies on the Kumasi – Mampong trunk road. At Pankrono the researcher came in contact with Mad. Beatrice Agyei a pot seller by the road side. Similar discussions as treated above in Apiadu were carried out with her and bellow was her responses.

According to Madam Beatrice Agyei a dealer in pottery wares (Plate 5), she said pottery making at Pankrono was no more because the lands have been sold and buildings have been erected on the clay sites. She also said that fuel for firing wares was another major challenge since it became difficult for the few women who were in production to procure firewood for the firing. She added that as at the time we were having the discussions, only few old ladies around were engaged in the pottery production, but due to their weaknesses in strength, they were unable to produce to meet their demand. She explained that the demand for the products was great and the business very profitable, she added, patronage was not a problem at all.

The researcher had the chance to hold discussions with Maame Abena Nkrumah about ninety years old lady at her house.

*How long have you been in the pottery business?*

She answered she started it as young girl and learnt it from the mother.

*Do you still produce pots on commercial basis?*

I can produce the pots, but not on the larger scale as I used to do previously because I am not as strong as I used to be; she answered.

*Where do you get clay for your works?*

The clay site has been taking over by buildings; we only get clay when people dig their wells and man-holes.

*Do they sell it to you when it happens that way?*

No we take them for free.

*What other challenges did you face in the cause of producing pots?*

She listed the following as some other challenges which militated against the production of indigenous pottery in the area; lack of space to dry and pack wares; the problems of getting firewood for firing, the place to fire wares was also a problem.

*Did you get people to buy your wares readily?*

According to Maama Abena Nkrumah, the pottery wares were always in high demand.

*Asked whether the youth in town will be interested to learn the trade?*

She was of the view that the young girls will be interested learning since it could serve as a good employment for them, but unfortunately, the clay site was no more available.

*Did you teach any of your daughters to learn the trade?*

Yes, one of my daughters Margaret Acheampong knows how to do everything but could not produce because of the same reasons given to you beforehand.

#### **4.3 Interviews and Discussions at Mfensi**

At first sight a woman was seen by the roadside selling some pots she was considered as a primary source of information.

According to Madam Comfort Mambo, pottery products dealer at Mfensis, (Plate 10) she said the main occupation of the people is brick making and earthenware pots making. She indicated that the traditional pottery in town has given way to the studio potters as a result the indigenous pots she sells at Mfensi were products imported from Kwahu and other areas.

*Ask why she has to 'import' pots from far Kwahu to sell at Mfensi?*

Her answer was that the business thrives very well when the women were producing but they were no longer producing them. But since people have noted the place as a marketing centre for the pots they were doing well to keep the market. Mfensi has wide publicity for indigenous pottery, she added. This was an indication that indigenous pottery still has good patronage among the people. It appears people still prefer using

the traditional pots for various domestic activities rather than the metal pans made in factories.

#### **4.4 Interviews and Discussion at Adankwame**

A woman, Mad. Adwoa Abrafi, who the researcher contacted, indicated that the trade had died out a long time ago and could not remember the last time she heard of someone producing indigenous pot. She added that nobody has any idea about it nowadays. She explained that she felt the main cause for the disappearance of the indigenous pottery business might be due to the fact that at a certain point the youth did not show any interest in it and almost all the old ladies who practiced it have all died. She, however, took consolation in the fact that the potter's wheel operators (studio potters) have taken over and making good use of the clay deposit at the place.

#### **4.5 Discussions with Indigenous Potters at Afari**

The researcher visited Afari several times to interact with the women there. As it has already been said, Afari was the only town among the five selected towns which had some women fully engaged in the mass productions of local pots.

It was an opportunity to find out the conditions prevailing in the industry at Afari, to observe the ways they go about their production, working processes, the type of tools they use, type of products they produce, the nature of the facilities available, availability of raw materials, the prospects of the industry, and the challenges confronting them.

Eight out of about thirty women in the town who were actively engaged in the industry were interviewed by the researcher. These women use simple tools and simple technology to produce the pots.

The following were the findings;

- *What is the history of the pottery industry in this town?*

None of the women could tell the exact history, but indicated that their mothers learnt from their grandmothers and they also have learned from their mothers. It

was added that the indigenous pottery was the trade for almost every woman in the town many years ago, but now the number has reduced to only a few women about thirty of them. Even with the thirty only about fifteen of them were very active in the business.

- *Are your daughters ready to learn from you?*

The answers were all negative.

The women explained that the trade has been abandoned by the youth. The children refused to learn the trade because they felt it could disturb their education. Some other children consider it as a dirty work, the women lamented. The ages of the women were between 41 and 65 years and have been in the business since childhood where they claimed to have learnt from their parents. (Philomena Appiah started at age twelve).

It had already been noted that the women potters were in the older age groups and this might suggest that pottery is a dying art in the village. However, some of the younger women, when questioned about their attitude to taking up the trade, spoke of it as work for older women and something that they might consider once they themselves were older: i.e. when they were 35 to 40 years old.

- *Do you think this work is lucrative and sustainable?*

Almost all the women answered in affirmative. They explained it is well paying job and has helped them to make a decent living and capable of caring for their children in school.

- *Are there any challenges associated with the procurement of the raw material (clay)?* They explained that the clay site is well preserved for the industry, the challenge they faced was the money to buy the clay from the young men who dig the clay from the pit. They were buying a tricycle load (locally known as ‘Aboboyaa’) at the cost of one hundred Ghana Cedis GH¢ 100.00. At Afari,

unlike Apiadu, where men are not allowed to the site, nor do the digging, men do the digging and sell it to the women at Afari.

- *Is there any hope for a reliable and sustainable market and whether the industry has any future?*

There is a great market for the product such that we are unable to meet the demands of our customers of whom some came as far as from the neighbouring countries, Mad. Mary Asumadu answered.

- *How many pots could be produced in a day by an individual?*

A woman could produce about eighty pots in a day but will have to take several other days to shape, burnish, dry and fire them, the researcher was told.

- *Would you like to introduce some new products apart from the local pots?*

The answer was emphatic no. Madam Asumadu indicated that they were ones introduced to the production of hatcheries and flower pots by some students from the KNUST but it obstructed their main work and also did not receive any serious patronage so they stopped producing them.

- *Are there any taboos observed in the processes of making pots?*

Yes a lot of them, she answered. But gave some few examples: men are not allowed to make pots, they will develop hernia; when someone dies no one should produce pots, pot making resumes after a fowl has been sacrificed; again in Afari women were restricted from digging the clay from the pit.

- *Do you find firing in the kiln more convenient than the open firing and why?*

Yes, very convenient, does not consume more firewood and very safe as compared to the open air firing.

- *Have you ever had the potter's wheel experience?*

Yes, but it was not suitable for our clay. It is the clay at Mfensi that is suitable for the potter's wheel.

- *What are the major challenges you are confronted with within the industry?*
  - a) The women complained about inadequate space for the keeping of the products, they wished to have a bigger structure. Currently the structure they worked in was provided by the 31<sup>st</sup> December Movement, courtesy Nana Konadu Agyemang Rawlings (former first lady), during the NDC government's time.

The women at Afari were no more using the open-air firing method since they considered that as cumbersome and hazardous. At the moment they fire their wares in kilns built for them by UNDP (Cottage Industry Development). (Plate 20)

- b) The women complained that they used to fire their wares in turns because even though the kilns were very helpful their sizes were too small; this they said delayed the speed of production and would have wished to have bigger kilns built for them. They had a show room built for them by the SIF (The Social Investment fund). (Plate 21)
- c) They complained about the difficulty in sourcing for financial assistance from the banks.

**Table 1: Ages of respondents**

Table of ages of eight sampled women engaged in the pottery industry in Afari range between ages 41 to 65. These women stated they were determined to continue in the trade till they feel incapable or they die.

| Age range    | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 40-49        | 2         | 25%        |
| 50-59        | 3         | 37.5%      |
| 60 and above | 3         | 37.5%      |
| Total        | 8         | 100%       |

Table 1 show that two out of the eight women were between the ages 40 – 49years, representing 25% of the total number. Three of them were between 50 and 59 years presenting 37.5%; while another three were also above 60 years representing 37.5%.

The result on the table is an indication that younger women are not interested in the pottery business for it has become the preserve of only older women who will soon become incapacitated as result of poor health they were likely to face as they advance in age. This is detrimental to the growth and sustainability of the industry here in Afari as it has occurred in other places.

**Table 2: Towns still doing pottery**

| Situation                | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Towns still in operation | 1         | 20%        |
| Towns not in operation   | 4         | 80%        |
| Total                    | 5         | 100%       |

Table 2 shows the situation of the pottery industry in the Ashanti Region. Among the five towns visited by the researcher for the purpose of the study, only one of them representing 20% was seriously doing pottery and the rest, four of them representing 80% were without any physical activities as far as indigenous pottery was concerned. These were the indications that a higher percentage of the indigenous pottery industries in the Ashanti region are no more in operation. This proved the point that the industry is almost at the dying state.

**Table 3: Town where clay was still available to potters.**

| Situation of clay deposits       | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Towns with clay still available  | 4         | 80%        |
| Towns where clay site taken over | 1         | 20%        |
| Total                            | 5         | 100%       |

The researcher had an idea that the scarcity of the raw material (clay) could be one of the overriding causes for the collapse of the industry. One of the objectives for the visit to the various towns therefore was to ascertain for the fact that clay was still available and was accessible to the women potters. Among the places visited, apart from Pankrono where the clay site has been taken over by estate developers, the rest have the raw material well preserved for the industry.

**Table 4: Towns in which the market for indigenous pottery wares are still available.**

| Market situation        | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Towns with patronage    | 5         | 100%       |
| Towns without patronage | 0         | 0%         |
| Total                   | 5         | 100%       |

Another area of concern to this study was the fear that the demand or patronage of the indigenous pottery products have given way to factory and imported products. However the researcher came to realized that there was still great demand for the indigenous pottery wares. Out of the five towns visited representing 100%; there was demand for the products.

#### 4.6 The Perception of the current generation of girls about indigenous pottery

Twenty young girls were selected for the interview as to what job they wish to pursue in the near future. These selection consisted of ten school going girl and the other ten non-school going. They were given the option to select between some specific trades including pot making. This was to find out about their interest in the indigenous pottery industry and whether given the opportunity they will do pottery. Almost all the young girls have negative attitude towards the indigenous pottery. The result shows that none of the young ladies was ready to go into the pot making industry.

Angela (1980),“Even if clay deposits are available, it has already been noted that the women potters are in the older age groups and this might suggest that pottery is a dying art in the village”.

However, some of the younger women, when questioned about their attitude towards the pottery business, assumed that it as work for older women.

**Table 5: The status of the girls**

| Status of girls  | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------|-----------|------------|
| School going     | 10        | 50%        |
| Finished school  | 5         | 25%        |
| School drop outs | 5         | 25%        |
| Total            | 20        | 100%       |

Table 10 describes the category of girls selected for the interview. In all twenty (20) young girls were selected for an interview to determine their perception about the indigenous pottery industry. Ten of them representing 50% were girls still in school. Five of them representing 25% had finished Junior High School. Another five who were school drop-outs constituted 25%.

**Table 6: The ages of the girls in three categories.**

| Age range       | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| 10 and 11years  | 3         | 15%        |
| 12 and 13 years | 8         | 40%        |
| 14 and 15 years | 9         | 45%        |
| Total           | 20        | 100%       |

The researcher was concerned about the ages of these young girls; they were the category of ages possible to understudying the older women to take up the indigenous pottery business. Most the women involved in the business indicated they started learning the trade from their mothers when they were between 11 to 15 years old. Out of the twenty (20), three (3) of them representing 15% were between the ages 10 to 11, eight (8) were between 12 to 13 years, these represented 40%, and nine (9) of them representing 45% were around 14 to 15 years.

The researcher interviewed twenty (20) selected girls to solicit for their views on whether giving the chance they may want to learn and do indigenous pottery.

Question: Would you like to learn how to do the traditional pottery and make it your business in future?

**Table 7: Responses from girls**

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes       | 0         | 0%         |
| No        | 20        | 100%       |
| Total     | 20        | 100%       |

Table 7 indicated that none of the girls was interested to learn how to do pots. Twenty representing 100% of the girls preferred doing something else but not pottery.

The girls preferred taken up trades such as Nursing, Teaching, Hairdressing, Trading, seamstress and others. Probing further to know their reasons for lack of interest in pottery; these were the responses they ascribed to their decision.

1. That the pot making was meant for older women.
2. That the learning of pottery will interfere with their schooling.
3. Some said they don't think they can make enough money out of that.
4. Some also thought it so cumbersome and a dirty work.
5. Some even remarked they will be ridiculed by their friends.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARIES OF MAJOR FINDINGS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is the concluding aspect of the study into the topic ‘The dying indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti region. The study was based on the belief that the indigenous pottery industry in the Ashanti Region is gradually dying out. Investigations were carried out in five major pottery towns in the region. The major features of the chapter are that it gives the summary of the main findings of the study, states the conclusions and provides the general recommendations.

#### **5.1. Summary of the Study**

The summary of the findings were based on the objectives of the study. The main intention of the researcher was to find out the state of the indigenous industry in the Ashanti region and what has caused its fortunes to dwindle. The summaries of the findings are based on the three main research questions which are.

- i. What is the current state of the indigenous pottery industry in Ashanti Region and their operational methods?
- ii. What factors are influencing the dying of indigenous pottery industry in Ashanti Region?
- iii. What alternative measures can be evolved to overcome the challenges confronting the industry?

The study was conducted by collecting information from selected towns in the Ashanti region which have been major operators in the indigenous pottery industry in the region. Further studies were conducted at Afari where some women currently are in full operation in the industry.

With regards to the research question one, which sought to find out the conditions of the pottery industry in the Ashanti region, visits were conducted in five pottery center and the following data were gathered:

- i. Clay was still available in all the places visited except in Pankrono. In all the places visited the clay deposits were still available to the potters. In some places like Afari and Apiadu, the clay sites were preserved and are under the surveillance of the traditional authorities
- ii. Only few older women were at the time engaged in the trade. It was well noted that people who had or even were then involved in the pottery industry were only older women with ages between 49 and above. The younger generation of girls did not show interest in the industry. It is fact to be noted that the women potters were in their older ages and may not be able to function very well in the industry and ultimately, may also not live forever. This might suggest that as they all die away, the indigenous pottery trade might also die completely in the region. However, some of the younger women, when questioned about their intention of taking up the vocation, spoke of it as work for older women.
- iii. Production in majority of the places has ceased. Among the five towns selected for the study, it was only at Afari where active pot making was taking place.
- iv. At Afari some women had formed a group and were working together. This caused them to catch the eye of public institutions such as the National Board for Small Scale Industry (NBSSI), 31<sup>st</sup> December Women's Movement and the Business Advisory Center (BAC) who offered them some assistance. Even though working as a group, each woman produced her

wares privately and it was known that a single woman could produce between sixty to eighty pots within a week.

- v. Even though production of pots had stopped in most places, the demand for local pots was very great. For example, earthenware containers for cooking and eating are preferred by many women, since the food is said to taste better and food served in them will stay hot longer. Water and other liquids stay cooler in clay containers. Furthermore, pottery articles are considered cheaper as compared to metal goods. Indigenous pot production had completely ceased at Mfensi and Pankrono but there was great market available for the products.
- vi. Women not ready to take up any new technology. Some researchers have made attempts to introduce studio pottery technology to the women but they did not feel comfortable mingling the two; (indigenous and mechanical methods). According to Sakyi, (1995), the Afari women potters were introduced to and supplied with potter's wheel before but they have abandoned them. The women appeared to be comfortable with their own methods of doing things. They also wished that the traditions of pot making which goes along with certain philosophies of the people be maintained.

The research question two looked into the factors that have contributed to the dying of the indigenous pottery industry in Ashanti Region:

- i. Lack of interest by the current generation. The young girls who were to take up the industry from their mothers have completely dissociated themselves from the industry for various reasons listed in page 71.

- ii. Some clay sites have been taken over by estate developers hence depriving the traditional potters the raw material for their work. Typical example of this situation is pertaining at Pankrono. (Plate 6)
- iii. With the current spate of expansion and urbanization of most towns, the potters lack space to work, dry and store their products and most importantly where to fire their wares. Madam Abena Nkrumah of Pankrono stated that she used to go to the school compound of the JHS in town on permission to fire her wares on the weekends when school was not in session. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons why the Afari indigenous pottery industry has survived was the fact that they had a kiln to fire their wares and facilities to store their products.
- iv. The women have financial constrains as one of their major challenges. They complained they do not have easy access to loan facilities.
- v. There was also the challenge of procuring firewood these days within the close environs of the potters. The women complained about the scarcity of firewood as a great threat to the sustenance of the industry. Open air firing was also perceived to be hazardous to the health of the potters and the environment.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The main objective of this research was to find out whether the indigenous pottery industry was truly at the verge of collapsing. The study has revealed this to be true. The factors leading to this situation were not about adding value or change of style as some researchers had earlier on suggested. One strong factor was that the local clay, used by the women for hand-made pots in many of the places, could not be thrown successfully on the wheel. The clay in most places contain grit (coarse material) which could not

easily be used on the potter's wheel unless it has gone through some other processes (washing and aging) to make it work well on the potter's wheel. The idea to introduce the traditional potters to studio pottery was going to pose an unbearable burden to the women potters.

The potters were comfortable with the traditional ways of making pots and capable of using the same method to meet the demand of the market.

The dwindling fortunes of the industry were not as result of poor patronage. There were proves that the market of the products was readily available. At Afari the women stated they attracted customers from all over the country and sometimes as far as from Ivory Coast. People demanded local pots for various reasons. In most home earthenware products still remain the preferred utensils for certain domestic activities such as cooking, and serving certain foods. Some women proclaimed food taste better and stay hot for a long time when served in earthenware pots. Furthermore, pottery articles are cheaper as compared to enamel bowl and silver pans which serve the same purposes.

We are however more likely to lose the industry if frantic efforts are not made to entice the youth into the industry. There are few of the older women around and it is recommended that their skills and experience in the pottery industry should be preserved as early as possible before we lose them and the trade entirely.

Providing space and structures to the potters in the various towns to serve as pottery centres will also help to salvage the industry from an eminent collapse it is likely to face. It is expected that all stakeholders will make it a great concern to do whatever possible to save the industry which could serve as a great source of employment especially to the rural women.

### 5.3 Recommendations

Research question three sought to find some solutions to the challenges emerged out of the study. These are presented as the recommendation or intervention required to sustain and develop the indigenous pottery industry.

- i. Some of the younger women believed that pottery is a work for the uneducated and illiterate and not for those who have been to school. Pottery making is undeniably dirty, manual work, requiring physical strength, but not academic qualifications. It is recommended that now that few of these older women are around, the Ghana Education Service (GES) should make the possible arrangements to integrate traditional pot making into the curriculum of the JHS so that these women could be used as facilitators to teach the children before they all die. The researcher recommends that the pottery as craft should be introduced to the schools of prospective communities engaged in pottery activities. It is expected that this will encourage the youth to develop interest and take up the industry.
- ii. As a means to eradicate the disaffection of the younger generation to the traditional pottery, the researcher recommends that the government and non-governmental organizations team up to set up of pottery centres at the various pottery towns; an example in the area of 'kente' weaving centres at Bonwire, Ntonso, Adawomase and other places has succeeded in keeping hundreds of youth and adults in that industry and has seen a tremendous growth. If similar centres are developed for the pottery industry it will make the trade popular; provide a favourable working environment for all who wish to be potters especially the youth and create marketing opportunities for the products as well. These centres certainly will have to make provision for

ample apace, structures for keeping wares and kilns for firing at the convenience of the potters

- iii. Even though the indigenous pottery is not so much capital intensive, it is noted through the study that Pottery production entails some amount of direct financial cost. Despite the fact that clay is freely available, the women at Afari for example will have to pay for the diggers and the cost of transportation from the pit to the house. Gone were the days also where firewood was cheaply available at the outskirts of the village; this time women complained they will have to travel to far distances to procure firewood. Finance ultimately becomes one of the challenges of the rural potters who do not have easy access to bank loans. It is recommended that these women should be assisted to have easy access to financial assistance to fund their operations. Microfinance operators should go close to the women and educate them on their facilities.
- iv. The government should strengthen the activities of the public intuitions such as the NBSSI, BAC, and REP and encourage NGOs to provide some support services and incentive packages for the women potters to motivate them. Afari the only viable surviving indigenous pottery industry in the region has thrived due to such assistance they received from NGOs and some governmental institutions. Small-Scale Industrialisation Initiative Programme (SSIIP), an initiative to assist rural industries which was pledged by the government to take off in 2014 by the then trade minister Mr. Haruna Idrisu should be given serious attention.
- v. One particular challenge common with the women in the indigenous pottery industry is illiteracy, low levels of education and lack of training and business education. The studies revealed that almost all the women in the

indigenous pottery industry have very little or no education at all and this is a handicap since it will hinder their ability to learn about modern entrepreneurial skills and technical issues related to their activities. The government, NGOs and women's advocacy groups should take it up to train the women to acquire basic education.

- vi. It was noted in the study that almost all the clay sites were well preserved, however the situation was different at Pankrono. At Pankrono, the clay deposit has been taken over by buildings. It is recommended that traditional leaders and Metropolitan and District Assemblies, the Lands Commission and the Town and Country Planning should do well to preserve the clay deposit for the industry and never again should they allocate such lands to estate developers.
- vii. It is also about time some institutions take pragmatic steps to acquire some of the clay sites in the various towns and manage them. The researcher wishes to recommend to the Ceramics Department of the KNUST in particular taking possession of the Apiadu clay site as quickly as possible. The institution can adopt Apiadu as indigenous pottery centres and attach to it a museum. Without even much activity, Apiadu is still recognised as a tourist centre as a result of its popularity in the indigenous pottery industry. A museum that will showcase the works of the indigenous potters will continue to attract tourist. Such a move will also go a long way to revive and sustain the industry.

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Maame Abena Nsiah- Apiadu

All Family Members of the late Mad. Abena Nkrumah -Apiadu

Mad. Beatrice Adjei- Pankrono

Mad Abena Nkrumah- Pankrono

Miss. Margeret Acheampong -Pankrono

Nana Kofi Asafo Adjei- Pankrono

Mad Comfort Mambo- Mfensi

Mad Philomena Appiah- Afari

Mad Mar Asumadu- Afari

All Women potters - Afari

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 'A'

#### GENERAL QUESTIONNAIR FOR POTTERY CENTERS

- What is the state of the indigenous pottery industry in the town at the moment?
- Do you considered the trade as economically lucrative?
- Is the clay deposit still available and do the women in Apiadu still having access to it?
- Do you think poor patronage for the products was one of the causes of the collapse?
- Do you still produce pots on commercial basis?
- Why are you not in the capacity to produce pots at this age anymore?
- Are you ready to teach some girls to take up the production of pots from her?
- How long have you been in the pottery business?
- Where did you get clay for your works?
- Do they sell it to you when it happens that way?
- What other challenges did you face in the cause of producing pots?
- Did you get people to buy your wares readily?
- Are the youth in town interested to learn the trade?
- Did you teach any of your daughters to learn the trade?
- Why do 'import' pots from far Kwahu to sell at Mfensi?
- Why are you not producing pots after learning from your mother?

## APPENDIX 'B'

### QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED AT AFARI

- What is the history of the pottery industry in this town?
- Are your daughters ready to learn from you?
- Do you think this work is lucrative and sustainable?
- Are there any challenges associated with the procurement of the raw material (clay)?
- Is there any hope for a reliable and sustainable market and whether the industry has any future?
- How many pots could be produced in a day by an individual?
- Would you like to introduce some new products apart from the local pots?
- What are the major challenges you are confronting within the industry
- Where do you dig clay?
- Which group of people dig clay in your locality and why?
- On what days do you normally dig your clay and why?
- Are there any taboos associated with the clay digging process?
- Do you perform any rites at the clay pit?
- After digging clay how do you prepare it for pottery?
- How many types of clay do you use? Why?
- How and where do you dry your pots?
- What type of firing method do you use in firing pottery?
- How long do you fire the pots?
- Why do you apply the red clay on the pot before firing?
- What types of pot do you produce?
- What are the main uses of the pots you produce?

- What are the historical facts associated with the emergence of pots making in this area?
- Are there any taboos observed in the processes, making pots?
- Who built these structures for you and when were they built?
- Do you find firing in the kiln more convenient than the open firing and why?
- Have you ever had the potter's wheel experience?
- How did you compare the use of the potter's wheel to your indigenous method?