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Kilns for baking clay griddles set for upgrade in Rajasthan

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Heavy demand for the earthenware in U.P. and Haryana





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The nondescript Punchari village in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district, which is generating an annual turnover of ₹70 lakh with the production of clay griddles, expects to scale up its work with the technical upgradation of kilns in which the earthenwares are baked before they are supplied to big towns. These griddles are in a heavy demand in the neighbouring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh as well.

IIT Delhi's Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) will join hands with a Bharatpur-based foundation to provide technical assistance to the members of the Kumhar community, comprising traditional potters, for upgrading their kilns to bake more griddles with lesser quantity of mustard stubble used as fuel.

About 35 households of Kumhars in Punchari produce 300 to 350 griddles of black clay each everyday in all seasons of the year, except during rains and the intense cold wave creating a frost. The earthy scent of black soil, procured mostly from the village's pond, is maintained in the griddles even after they are baked.

Prahlad Prajapat, 30, a leading griddle maker in Punchari, said the demand for clay griddles had soared among the "health-conscious" people residing in cities, who believed that the chapati's nutrients were protected when cooked on an earthen plate. The clay griddles are supplied as far as Agra and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh and Faridabad and Gurugram in Haryana.



Modified design

Mr. Prajapat said the clay pottery was taken up in the village both as a traditional occupation and the only livelihood option before the community. “Over a period of two decades, we have understood the demand in the market. We have modified the design and thickness of griddles to suit the requirement of gas stove and heater in the cities,” he said.



About 25% of the clay griddles break during baking in furnaces. Bharatpur-based Lupin Foundation is working with RuTAG to find solution to the issue.

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