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Technical training to give a boost to Rajasthan potters

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Prajapat youths attend camp in making earthen pots and terracotta decorative items







The traditional potters belonging to the Prajapat community in Rajasthan's Bharatpur district are being given technical training which is expected to help them hone their skills in their occupation.

An ongoing tech-aided camp in Pahari town is training the youths in making earthen pots as well as terracotta decorative items which are in heavy demand in the southern States.

The camp, being attended by two dozen Prajapat youths, will enable them make rapid strides in manufacturing cups, cutlery, mugs, pans, clay griddles, dishes, bowls and cookers.

Master trainer Moti Lal, who learnt the technical applications at IIT Delhi's Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG), told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that the use of electric motors for the spinning of the potter's wheel, innovative design interventions and new baking techniques would facilitate bulk production of earthenware quickly.



Bharatpur-based Lupin Foundation has joined hands with RuTAG to provide technical assistance to the potters.

Mr. Lal, 52, said the Prajapat community hoped that the government bodies, such as the Khadi & Village Industries Commission, would provide mechanised potter's wheels in remote villages.

Lupin Foundation's executive director Sita Ram Gupta said that while the training would help promote pottery industry, the earthenware produced in the district would be sent to various fairs and exhibitions across the country and also sold online with the help of web portals operating from Jaipur. "The training will connect traditional artisans with modern technology and help increase their income," he said.

The RuTAG had earlier provided technical assistance for upgradation of kilns in which clay griddles are baked and modified the product's design and thickness to suit the requirement of gas stoves and heaters in the cities. The earthy scent of the black soil, procured mostly from ponds in Bharatpur district, is maintained in the griddles after they are baked.

Clay pottery is both a traditional occupation and the only livelihood option for the Prajapat community, also known as Kumhars, in the region. The demand for earthenware has soared among the health-conscious people residing in cities, who believe that the nutrients of food items are protected when cooked in earthen utensils.

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