

**Preparation for Diwali is at its peak at South Huruwa, Dharmanagar  
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In the time of darkness, a glimpse of light brings us hope. This Diwali will be a bit different because of the COVID-19 situations under our houses maintaining social distancing but it will not stop us from celebrating the festival of light and new hopes, Diwali. Preparations for Diwali is at its peak at South Huruwa, Dharmanagar. Soon after Durga Puja, the mud artisans of Dharmanagar are busy making mud diyas. Women and men are busy making diyas day and night to make most of their income in this festive season. These potters are now even more inspired after PM Modi's call to go 'Vocal for Local' and after Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb urged the people of the state to buy locally made things to uplift the local artisans and make Tripura 'Swanirbhar'.

On a quest to know about the present condition of the local artisans Debanjan Datta, Officer, Information and Cultural Affairs Department went to Shyamal Rudra Pal, a potter's house in South Huruwa village of Kalachara block in Dharmanagar. Mr. Shyamal left his studies after studying till standard 6. He learned pottery from his father and has been into this business since then. He has a 22 years son and two daughters who have indulged themselves in pottery including his wife. They own now a shop in Dharmanagar which they could buy from the profit they made in this business. Mr. Shyamal said, 'After the new government came into power, emphasis has been given on maintaining the traditional heritage of the state. The value of mud diyas has increased a lot from before.' He said more than 1 lakh diyas get sold during festival season each diya costing Rs.2, selling at Rs. 1.50 paisa in wholesale. Apart from mud diyas they also sell various kinds of earthen wares. This way they earn 25-30 thousand monthly and yearly around 3 lakhs which also increases sometimes when their sales goes very well. Mr. Shyamal also said that the new government gave many potters the potter's wheel for their business to run well, he hopes that his income will increase if he got one. He believes that if the young generation gets involved in such craftwork, it will not only make them self-sufficient but also spread this Indian culture of using earthen lamps.

Rangesh Rudra Pal, a neighbour to Mr. Shyamal also expressed the same thing who lives in a joint family. All of them have been potters for generations. The young generation of the family after graduating took up the family business. They earn 35-40 thousand per month. They even earn more than 50 thousand in the festive season. They also have now a shop in the main market of Dharmanagar set up with the profits they made in this business. The village has 8 families who are doing well through this business and are running their families well. Earlier this village had only 4 families, however in last 2 years more 4 families involved themselves in this business. Everyone in these families are busy making mud diyas day and night. The potters now only hope and wish for the corona virus to pass away from the country and the world.

We all can do our bit by buying local made things, promoting our local artisans and go Vocal for Local. In this way we all can together help uplift our state's economy and support our local artisans become self-sufficient and hence building a self-reliant Tripura.