CHAPTER 3:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIALITY OF THE REGION

This chapter attempts to discuss all the explored sites in the river valley, thereby, focusing on the location and distribution of individual sites. Some of the sites have been reported earlier, due to the presence of medieval temples or due to sculptures, collected from the sites. But unfortunately the entire gamut of the archaeological record was never studied. Moreover, pottery which provides the most important clue to the understanding of sites has never been studied in details. This chapter aims to discuss the explored sites in the river valley, thereby highlighting the potentiality of the study area. For locating and identifying the sites, pottery has been selected as the main chronological marker. Nevertheless, sculptures and temples have helped in evaluating the chronology of the explored sites in the river valley. The geographical parameters governing the distribution of sites have been considered to be of prime importance in the present discussion.

3.a. Survey Methodology

The survey methodology has been highlighted here by the researcher. About one hundred twenty villages were surveyed in the river valley; of them sixty two have been identified as medieval, eighteen as early historic and three as black and red ware sites. The total surveyed area is 1,696 sq km. From most of these sites, potteries have been collected in the form of scatters from the mound areas, ploughed fields, river section areas and very rarely in an exposed context. In many sites, potteries were also found in a buried context in the form of mounds, which were mostly medieval and the peripheral areas of these mounds having exposed sections helped in understanding the cultural debris. The artefacts have been subject to the effects of both erosion and aggradation, due to which the original landscape has been altered and what we have is hence, a filtered view of the archaeological record.

Archaeological survey is a complex set of activities which function to increase the precision and accuracy with which, parameter of the regional archaeological record
are estimated (Schiffer et al. 1978). High density areas, usually called sites, have traditionally been the focus of surveys. Recently however, isolated artefacts and low density scatters have been shown to yield unique regional information. As a result, survey designs now include low density artefact distribution or ‘non-sites’ as an important part of the regional archaeological record (Schiffer et al. 1978). The major difference between regional site survey and non-site survey is that the latter utilizes space (a region) as the sampling unit, while the former uses previously defined artefact clusters (sites) as sampling units (Lewarch and O’Brien 1981).

The factors affecting discovery probability of archaeological materials have been placed into two categories by the scholars; the first entails the characteristics of the archaeological materials and the study area and the second is represented by the survey techniques and strategies (Schiffer et al. 1978). Scholars have further recommended a three-stage survey, each stage of which strives to secure the information needed for designing the subsequent stage. In the first stage the importance of background information of the study area has been stressed on, followed by reconnaissance surveys in the second stage and intensive surveys as the final stage of the survey program (Schiffer et al. 1978). But it has to be borne in mind that there is no substitute for thoughtful consideration of theoretical factors and relevant characteristics of the study area.

Following the above methodology, the researcher collected all the background information of the study area in the onset following which, a reconnaissance survey was conducted and local information went to a long way in discovering the sites. With the results of the reconnaissance survey, the sites along the river valley were extensively surveyed. Extensive village to village survey was the main methodology adopted in understanding the location and distribution of sites in the river valley. From most of the villages, potsherds were randomly collected as surface scatters. No sampling techniques could be adopted because the spread of artefacts in most of the villages were not uniform and were found obliterated by modern houses, excavated ponds as well as ploughed fields.

Surface survey of archaeological sites, which forms the prime focus in the present study, is now an accepted method in field archaeology. This approach is now
regularly employed in prehistoric, protohistoric as well as historical archaeology in India. At a regional scale, surface survey can be used for discovering new sites which aid in reconstruction of the settlement pattern or settlement system. The conclusions drawn from such surveys are employed to understand broader social, historical or economic processes beyond the realm of the individual site or the particular region. In the Indian context, surveys at the medieval site of Vijayanagara (Sinopoli 2004) in peninsular India deserve special mention. The survey conducted by Monica Smith (2001, 2002) at the early historical site of Kaundinyapur and Sisupalgarh is similarly very important. Surface surveys also take into account the local topography and the ‘setting’ of the site. Studying geomorphological variations, even at a very cursory level, many times provide crucial information on natural and cultural formation processes of the archaeological record. How far the survey is valid, reliable and accurate will depend on varying factors. Survey techniques also determine to what extent the data will be dependable for the purpose of any analysis. New survey techniques and strategies including sampling techniques, geophysical surveys and use of computer generated programs, have helped to a large extent in the advancement of such studies by generating a more representative database for the meaningful interpretation of human behavioural patterns. But unfortunately in the present instance, no sampling techniques could be adopted in locating the spread of the artefacts and also no trial trenches could be arranged for cross-checking the surface subsurface isomorphism. However, extensive surveys were undertaken to check each and every location within the individual sites and even small sites have also been recorded in the study.

Scholars who practice surface survey have, however, cautioned us against the simplistic use of the survey strategy (Redman and Watson 1970). According to them, surface materials suffer from post depositional, natural and cultural processes. There is lack of positive relationship between distribution of surface and subsurface materials. Scholars have observed that surface materials do not adequately reflect the complexity of archaeological phenomena and hence their analysis fails to produce positive results. Surface assemblages, moreover, suffer from bias due to amateur collection. The drawbacks are, no doubt, worthy of consideration but at the same time it has to be kept in mind that a researcher has very few options to choose in the field, of which surface survey appears to be the most convenient one. As a precautionary
measure, it is essential that during the course of survey, a representative sample of artefacts is collected and if situation permits, the surface data should be corroborated with further evidences and investigations.

However, incorporation of these specific designs in research projects, in a true sense, requires the employment of sampling and other intensive survey techniques, which was beyond the scope of the present researcher. Therefore it was decided to survey the area by undertaking extensive walking across the landscape using some form of judgemental sampling as the entire land surface could be surveyed. Surface survey was undertaken for four seasons in the summer and winter between 2006-2009 and in order to have a proper understanding of the landscape conditions of the river valley, surveys were undertaken during summer, monsoon and winter seasons. The topographic maps (prepared by the Survey of India) and the satellite imageries of the study area were utilized for the study\(^1\). The findings from some of the sites could be cross-checked with the help of the trial digs. Regarding the survey and selection of sites along the river valley, the already known sites like Dihar (73 M/8), Bahulara, Ekteswar (73M/4), and Patrasayer (73M/12) were first taken up for study. These nodal points were used later as references and the sites on the left bank and the right banks of the river were taken up for further study. In the next stage, the sites along the lesser order streams of Dwarakeswar were taken up. In the final stage, the sites lying under the forest cover were subsequently covered. The extent of the total study area is approximately 1, 696 sq km.

The excavated pottery from Dihar was studied in order to relate them with the explored ceramic assemblage. The exposed sections noted at few areas helped in evaluating the nature of the sites by allowing the researcher to understand the sequence of cultural debris. Some unpublished Geological monographs were consulted to note the morphostratigraphy of the study area. Geographical Information System has been used as a tool for Mapping (plotting the sites in geo-referenced maps, drawing site maps etc.) and performing some basic analysis on the study area. The relevant publications including excavation reports, inscriptions, medieval vernacular literature has been reviewed in order to corroborate and give additional inputs to the archaeological data.
Ethnographic survey was undertaken to gain insights in the current manufacturing techniques of pottery. The collection of various artifacts and archaeological materials housed at Bishnupur Acharya Jagdish Chandra Purakriti Bhavan (BAJCPB) helped to a large extent in forming a preliminary idea of the study area.

3.b. Description of the Explored sites.
3.b.1. Introduction

Following the above methodology the entire middle stretch (100 – 40 m above MSL) of the river was surveyed. Micro-regional variations were noted in the middle stretch of the river and it accordingly covers three topographic sheets (73M/4, 73M/8, 73M/12). Since geographical parameters have been considered to be primary in determining the distribution of sites in the river valley, for convenience, the researcher has divided the entire middle stretch into three micro-zones defined according to the variations in landscape. Morphostratigraphically, the sites in the study area fall into lateritic zone and alluvial upland zone (Ghosh and Majumdar 1991). The excavated site Dihar stands at the juncture of both. These micro-zones have been discussed individually in the following pages. The settlement pattern of the area has also been discussed in accordance to these micro-regional differences (see chapter 7).

The first micro-zone stands between 100 and 60 m above MSL starting from the confluence area of Gandheswari and Dwarakeswar. From this confluence, the river gradually descends to the south east. This area stands on continuous lateritic outcrops and hence a considerable part of the area is covered by the Bankura Protected Forests on the south and Dense Sal Forests of Sonamukhi on the north. The area is dotted with scattered undulating ridges. Near Bankura, the average height level is 100m and the landscape shows gradual departure from the gentler flood plains of the river lying in the east. The channel of the river is confined and from the width of the channel it can be understood that vertical downcutting is more prevalent in this part of the river valley. Erosional activities are more pronounced in these areas than aggradation. The rocky outcrops and hillocks noticed can be considered to be an extension of the plateau area lying further west. The ridges and the valleys in these areas also exhibit different grades of laterisation process in soil formation. Soils are well drained, susceptible to soil erosion due to rapid external drainage or run-off. A part of the
Gandheswari river valley falls within this zone. This area has already been reported as the concentration area of prehistoric sites. During the course of survey, some isolated scatters of microliths were noted in these undulating lands which probably belong to a secondary context. This zone does not have concentration of BRW sites; early historic sites lying in this zone are few and are mostly confined near the river channel. But medieval sites are found to be concentrated in a dispersed manner throughout the area.

The second micro zone (80 m - 40m above MSL) covers the slightly undulating flood plains of Dwarakeswar indicating a transition between the rocky outcrops of the west and the gentler flood plains in the east. The channel of the river gets wider indicating lateral downcutting. The river in this area exhibits numerous meanders, cut-off channels, back-swamps and levees. The left bank of the river has a continuous stretch of older alluvium. But occasional lateritic outcrops are not uncommon especially on the right bank of the river. This area exhibits dendritic drainage pattern and is largely inundated by the river during monsoons. Hence, most of the sites falling within this zone reveal a layer of sand especially in the locations near the river sections indicating inundation of the areas by flood waters. The modern flood plains of the river lying adjacent to the river bed are presently under cultivation. The erosion and aggradation activities occur in a cycle according to the concave and convex bends of the river. The channel pattern is controlled to a large extent by the lithostratigraphy of the area. Changes from meandering to braided patterns have been noticed in some parts of the river valley leading to the formation of point bars, cut-off channels and includes periods of rapid flood plain burial or incision. In such a more or less active valley system, much of the archaeological record is generally lost due to lateral bank erosion, whereas flood plain aggradation buries and therefore obscures archaeological features.

This zone also has the concentration of the dense Joypur and the Sonamukhi forests. The sites like Kushadwip, Bhara, Birisingha, Sahapur, Mulkari are situated within the dense forest coverage. In this area, the principal tributaries of Dwarakeswar are Birai and Amodar. The explored sites are mostly situated on the meander scrolls or the levee of the river and the modern people mostly like inhabiting in these higher lands to avoid the danger of floods. Dihar, the only excavated site of the river valley is situated in this area and stands at 60 m above MSL on a meander scroll of the river.
But near Kushadwip and Bhara, falling within the Sonamukhi jungle range, the average height above mean sea level (80m) is slightly higher.

The above mentioned sites standing on lateritic outcrops have been reported as the find-spots of chopper-chopping tools. These sites are reported as richest pre-historic sites in district Bankura after Sususnia (Datta et al. 1992). Rice cultivation is largely practiced in most of the villages of the area. Besides the reported prehistoric sites, black and red ware, early historic and medieval sites have also been discovered by the researcher in this zone. The black and red ware sites in the area including Dihar are found to be concentrated near the water sources. The early historic sites are strictly confined to the riverine flood plains and are distributed in a linear fashion along the river. The medieval sites in the zone are found to be uniformly distributed throughout the flood plains of the river. In some locations, they exhibit compact form of distribution.

In the third micro-zone (60m and 40m above MSL), the river retains more or less the same characteristics as mentioned in the previous one. Erosional and aggradational activities go hand in hand. The entire area is covered by older alluvium. The river valley is widest in these areas with lateral bars and point bars throughout. The lateral expansion of the river valley is highest in this area, indicating its sluggish flow. The average height of the area is 40 m above MSL and the river gradually descends towards the east and enters the district of Hugli through the village Ghantapara. The forest cover is very low and as a result the entire stretch could be surveyed extensively. No lateritic outcrops have been witnessed in the area. During survey, a part of the Damodar river and its tributary Sali was also covered for a comparative analysis of the sites. Large tracts of land in this area have been brought under cultivation. Rice cultivation is found to be practiced extensively in all the villages of this area.

A little south east of the above mentioned stretch (23°15’N, 87°30’E - 23°15’N, 87°45’E), bordering the lateritic upland of the Kotulpur block of Bankura district an impression of moisture saturated zone connecting the older meander scrolls of Damodar river in the north and Dwarkeswar river to the south has been identified in the satellite image (IRS-1B LISS-II). Existing literature reveals that this particular
zone is the impression of the *Dakshina Saraswati* river – the link between the Damodar and Dwarakeswar rivers. The river was present in the eighth century and was abandoned in the fourteenth century. The geologists believe that the *Dakshin Saraswati*, presently an abandoned channel, was a possible trade route from Damodar to Tamralipta port via Dwarakeswar and Rupnarayan rivers. According to them, the abandonment of the course of the *Dakshin Saraswati* during the fourteenth century may be the prime reason for the subsequent abandonment of the Tamralipta port (Chakrabarti and Nag 2005). However, such conjectures need further probing.


The tributaries of Dwarakeswar like Gandheswari, Berai, Amodar were also surveyed. As mentioned above, the area along the river Gandheswari shows mostly the concentration of prehistoric sites. The Berai joins the river near the site Deuli and the Amodar flows more on the south eastern part of the river. The *Haringmuri Nala*
passing through the villages of Ledarghat, Palasi, Dejhat and is quite significant because according to the local sources, this Nala was earlier a part of the Gandheswari (Singha 1991). But how far this can be corroborated through relevant data is a question. The channel of the Dwarakeswar river was confined more to the north, as understood from satellite imageries but due to lateral shifting, it has changed its course and is presently flowing more on the south. Hence, many dry beds of the river have been demarcated from the satellite imageries; some of these beds have turned into swampy areas and some have been converted into agricultural lands.

The term ‘site’ in the study area has been used in a broad sense covering the mound areas, cultivated fields, river sections of individual villages which revealed artefacts mostly in exposed contexts. The ancient sites with a few exceptions are covered by modern settlements. The mounds or archaeological sites in the study area are locally called as Danga, Dheep, Dheepi. In the description of sites or modern villages, local terms like Khal, Nala, Nadi, Bil, Pukur and Para have been used. Khal and Nala mean a canal and Bil denotes a large swampy tract. Pukur denotes a pond or a tank. The term Para more or less corresponds to a hamlet. A village generally consists of more than one Para. Some sites are found to be very closely spaced, making it difficult to separate one site from the other.

The artefacts have been found in the form of scatters, from the cultivated fields and in very few instances in exposed forms. Some of the sites have buried artefacts in the form of mounds which in most of the cases have yielded medieval deposits. The concept of ‘site’ has to be considered according to the varying depths of erosion and deposition by the river. As mentioned earlier, sampling techniques could not be applied since the spread of potteries in almost all the instances were interrupted by cart-tracks, ponds and modern houses within the sites. From the nature of scatters, it is difficult to determine whether they were exposed from the beginning or were in a buried context which was affected by surface runoff, deflation or tillage. It will be worthwhile mentioning here that the existing mounds in most of the sites, have been dug out for using the mound soil and hence a large part of archaeological record is already lost from the study area. Moreover, the present habitations are resting on the mound or the ancient sites, in which cases demarcating the extent of the sites were difficult. In such a situation, measurement of the mounds or deposits was not possible.
Map 5A. Explored sites in the river valley

Legend
- River
- River bed
- Dry channel
- Sand bars
- Tributary
- Distributary
- Forests
- Water bodies
- Canal
- Contour
- BRW Sites
- EH Sites
- Medieval sites

---

Northwestern Coop.
Map 5B. Explored sites in the river valley

Legend
- River
- River bed
- Sand bars
- Tributary
- Distributary
- Water Bodies
- Canal
- Forests
- Contour
- BRW Sites
- EH Sites
- Medieval sites

N.

87°22'0"E  87°24'0"E  87°26'0"E  87°28'0"E  87°30'0"E  87°32'0"E  87°34'0"E  87°36'0"E  87°38'0"E  87°40'0"E  87°42'0"E

87°22'0"E  87°24'0"E  87°26'0"E  87°28'0"E  87°30'0"E  87°32'0"E  87°34'0"E  87°36'0"E  87°38'0"E  87°40'0"E  87°42'0"E

Cambojet R.

Explored sites in the river valley

Map 5B.
and hence the concept of ‘site size’ or ‘site hierarchy’ is not applicable in the present study area. The walls of the modern houses were found to be packed with ancient potteries.

Some of the sites with exposed sections revealed a regular alignment of bricks and potteries. Unfortunately, complete bricks were not available in adequate numbers at most of the sites because the soil was compact and hard and it was not easy to extract bricks without damaging them. Exposures caused by artificial cutting or natural erosion were not available at each and every site to determine the thickness of the habitation deposit. Yet, another limitation was that artifacts of the older periods like black and red ware or early historic phase come from lower levels of a site, but exposed sections extending to the base of the habitation deposits were scarce. Hence, they had to be studied on typological basis in relation to the excavated pottery samples from Dihar. The exposed sections noted at a few sites revealed only medieval potsherds. The sites in the area are under massive threat due to the natural factors as well as the anthropogenic factors. There is a pressing need to document them at the earliest.

The description of the explored sites has been given in the following pages (see maps 5 A & 5 B):

3.b.2. Site Description

The following sites fall within the first micro-zone (100m -60 m above MSL) as discussed by the researcher.

1. Rajagram (73M/4) - 87°32'39"E, 23°12'57"N

Rajagram stands on the right bank of the river at 100 m MSL at a distance of 0.5 km from the river. It falls within Bankura I Block and is presently inhabited by the Tantis (weavers). A huge stony outcrop is seen on the river Dwarakeswar from this site. Rajagram can be approached through Dhalcianga and the landscape indicates a gradual departure from the gentler flood plains of river Dwarakeswar.
A few scattered mounds were located within the eastern part of the village, most of which have been destroyed due to digging of soils from the peripheral areas of the mounds. Hence, measurements of the actual mounds were not possible. The potsherds collected from the surface of these low scattered mounds as surface scatters were mostly medieval. They do not occur in a primary context. The sherdss show signs of abrasion and patination indicating that these might have been transported to the present location by surface run-off. Other than the mounds, no other location within the site revealed potsherds or archaeological artefacts. Since the modern village lies on the main road and many houses have come up in the last few years, preservation of the still earlier traces of habitation is quite unlikely.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware, grey ware and ill fired red ware potteries.

2. Banshi (73M/4) - 87°3’31”E, 23°13’11”N

The site Banshi lies next to Rajagarm on the right bank of the river Dwarakeswar. The modern village stands at 100 m MSL within Bankura I Block at a distance of 1km from the river.

The landscape shows undulating lands and small scattered hillocks here and there. Near the entrance of the village, on the eastern part, some microliths were noted. But these do not seem to occur in a primary context because they are not found from any exposed sections and were slightly rolled. This area can be taken up for further prehistoric studies. The scatter of microliths has also been observed to extend on the eastern part, beyond the village premises.

3. Bhadul (73M/4) - 87°5’48”E, 23°13’16”N

The site Bhadul is quite important since many antiquarian surveys were conducted in the village of which the ones by Sri Manick Lal Singha deserve special mention. Singha collected some sculptures from this village (Singha 1991). However, detailed list of those have not been provided in his writings. The modern village stands at the average height level of 80 m above MSL, near the confluence of Gandheswari and Dwarakeswar and next to the famous site Ekteswar. It falls within Onda Block, at a distance of 2 km from the river Dwarakeswar.
Some scatters of potsherds were noted in the Bhairabtala area, lying in the central part of the present village, where every year during ‘Chaitra Sankranti’ goat sacrifices are performed in order to satisfy the deity Bhairabi. These potsherds were found to occur in a primary context which can be placed in the medieval category. A huge tamarind tree stands in the vicinity and votive terracotta horses and elephants are dedicated regularly to ‘dharma thakur’ by the villagers. Besides this, throughout the site, medieval potsherds have been traced here and there but not confined to a particular location such as the Bhairabi tala. On the basis of the current findings, the site has been considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red Slipped ware, red ware and grey ware potteries.

4. Ekteswar (73M/4) - 87°5’8”E, 23°12’39”N

The modern village stands on the left bank of Dwarakeswar at about 80 m MSL within Bankura II block. The village lies near the confluence of Dwarakeswar and Gandheswari at a distance of 2 km from the river Dwarakeswar. Ekteswar is a large village and is famous for the Siva temple situated within the village. Annual festivals are held in the village regularly.

This site has been reported earlier by scholars and local enthusiasts due to the presence of the medieval Siva temple (Beglar 1872-73, Banerjee 1968, Singha 1991). The structure is a pidha-deul one and this particular style is encountered in Midnapur and Bankura specially. It resembles the medieval Orissan model which subsequently developed in three ways starting from the low pyramidal structure then taking the form of tall pyramidal structure and finally forming the tall curvilinear structure. The temple at Ekteswar belongs to the low pyramidal group (Cutchion 1972). Beglar reported ‘the mouldings of the basement are the boldest and finest of any’. There is a self formed phallic emblem of Siva. Other images are of Basudev, one of Lokeswar Vishnu with twelve hands, one of Ganesh and of Nandi. Siva’s subordinate associates and the ox are also present. All the images are placed on altar and are still worshipped (Beglar 1872-73).

In the present form, the temple consists of a bhadra tower. Near the entrance there are many modern panels depicting Krihsnalila etc. Though the tower is plain and...
decorated with the usual ghanta, the base mouldings and the tall sikhara motifs decorating the walls are note worthy. According to the reports, the site is medieval. Few medieval sherds were found as scatters throughout the village specially in the Bamunpukur area. Since the village lies very close to Bankura and has developed largely as a religious centre, it is very unlikely that archaeological artefacts can still be traced within the village.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, black ware and some sherds in ill fired ware.

5. Bahulara (73M/4) - 87°14'8"E, 23°9'55"N

Bahulara stands on the right bank of the river between 80 m and 60 m above MSL. It lies at a distance of 3 km from the river. Bahulara is a very famous tourist place because of the Siddhesvara temple, one of the most vital centres of the worship of Siva. It falls within Onda Block. The site has been reported earlier by many scholars due to the presence of the magnificent medieval temple (Pl VII C & D). It was first reported by Beglar due to the magnificent temple (Beglar 1872-73, Banerjee 1933, Banerjee 1968, Singha 1991).

Siva is worshipped here in the form of Siddhesvara. The temple is of Nagara style (rekha deul structure). It is considered by Beglar to be the finest brick temple in the district. R.D Banerjee observed, “It is made of brick and is situated on a low mound being originally surrounded by eight small subsidiary shrines and enclosed by a compound wall, all of which are now in ruins. The temple is of the single-celled type and the sanctum is approached by a vestibule in the thickness of the front wall with a triangular corbelled arch opening. It rests on a plinth which consists of several courses of elaborate mouldings and is of the ratha plan. The bada or the sanctum cube is divided into fine segments by three horizontal bands forming the bandhana and dividing the jangha into two halves. Several courses of projected mouldings separate the bada from the gandi. The later has a refined contour, the corners as well as the edges of the pagas being rounded off. The whole surface of the gandi is covered with intricate traceries of the Chaitya window patterns, scroll work and other designs. Of the last, the most intervening are the tiers of the miniature sikhara in the lower stages of the ratha pagas. This is a new interpretation of the logical theme of anga sikhara...
on the body of the main sikhara, not met with so far, common in Nagara temples of the region as at Jatar deul in Sundarbans” (Banerjee 1933).

Bahulara is considered by some scholars to be a Jain site which underwent transformation in the later stage (Cutchion 1972). The main deity of this temple is Siddhesvara Siva. Apart from this, inside the temple there is a naked Jain figure, a ten armed female deity and an image of Ganesha. Beglar has seen a Saivite association of the site but David Mc Cutchion considers it to be of Jain origin.

During exploration, eight subsidiary shrines were noted besides the main temple. There are some cultivated fields to the south of the temple and in these sections some potteries were noted. A single layer of cultural debris was noted within the section and the rest of the section was completely devoid of any archaeological artefacts. From the typological analysis of pottery, it was found that the potsherds belong to the medieval period and hence, based on these evidences the site can be considered to be medieval. Besides this section and the temple area, no other area within the site yielded potsherds either in scatters or in sections.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval: Red slipped ware, red ware sherds.

6. Elyati (73M/4) - 87°10'45"E, 23°12'56"N

Elyati stands on the left bank of the river between 100 and 80 m MSL and can be approached through Nikunjapur. It falls within Onda block and lies at a distance of 1 km from the river. The village has been reported earlier by scholars and local enthusiasts due to the presence of a medieval temple (Banerjee 1968).

Outside the modern village premises, stands the temple (deul) of Shyam Sundar which is exceptional in its form. Height of the temple is forty feet and breadth is sixteen feet six inches, east facing and the upper portion of the temple is pyramidal. The jagamohan portion of the temple has broken down and in the lower portion of the temple, there are beautiful terracotta panels depicting floral and geometric designs. The temple according to local sources is said to have been constructed around seventeenth century AD. Local people call this area as te-deuli since there were other two temples in the vicinity which have taken the form of architectural ruins. Some
believe that it was in all probability built by the *Malla* king *Raghunath Singha II* (Banerjee 1975).

There are also smaller shrines within the site but those are not so significant. Large tracts of the land within the modern village have been brought under cultivation and numerous potsherds were collected from these cultivated fields as scatters which belong to a primary context. According to the villagers, there are still remains of ancient potteries buried below the cultivable lands that are exposed after every subsequent dig. These fields were found to be concentrated in the southern part of the site near the river. The scatters were found to be uniformly spread throughout the fields and comprised both medieval and early historical pottery samples.

The explored specimens are both early historical as well as medieval. The medieval potsherds were found in more numbers. The site on the basis of the recent findings can be considered to be early historic as well as medieval.

**Ceramic assemblage:**

- **Medieval:** Red slipped ware, black ware and grey ware potteries.
- **Early historical:** Grey ware and red ware.

7. **Hariharpur (73M/4) - 87°9'38"E, 23°12'46"N**

Hariharpur is situated on the right bank of the river between 80 and 60 m above MSL and can be approached through Bheduasol. It falls within Onda Block and stands on the levee of the river Dwarakeswar at a distance of 0.5 km from the river.

The name of the modern village has been taken from the constituent deities of the medieval temples of Hari and Har i.e. Vishnu and Siva respectively. Beside these, one sculpture of Ganesha (76 cm) has been seen in the village which is currently being worshipped by the local people with dedicatory horses and elephants (Banerjee 1975). The village is essentially a potters’ village. An annual fair is held during *chaitra sankranti*.

The walls of the village houses are packed with ancient potsherds indicating the use of mound soil for construction purpose. Near the temples, there is a section exposing
mixed cultural debris. According to the local people, this was originally a mound which has been dug out and cleared for making cart tracks within the village. But the section is very disturbed and is mixed up with modern ceramics. Besides this section, in the northern part of the village, near the river, huge portions of land have been dug out for cultivation. From these fields, potsherds were collected as scatters; they were slightly abraded due to the effect of plough and water. The total cultivable area has yielded numerous potteries; many were fragmentary due to the use of plough. Of these, the specimens in red ware and black ware were found to be early historical. The rest of the explored assemblage is medieval. The exposed section noticed within the village did not reveal any early historical pottery. The site on the present evidence can be regarded as early historic as well as medieval.


8. Sonatopal (73M/4)  - 87°47′48″E, 23°13′09″N

The modern village is situated on the right bank of the river Dwarakeswar at 80 m MSL within Onda Block. It is situated at a distance of 1.5 km from the river and has been reported earlier due to the presence of a medieval temple (Banerjee 1968).

A local legend relates this site to be under the control of a local Raja Salibahan, whose ancestry could not be traced. He might have been a legendary king. The remains of his fort (as believed by the villagers) are seen in the form of few scattered mounds around the village. According to the local legends, the temple at Sonatopal is also said to have been built by Raja Salibahan (Banerjee 1968).

The temple at Sonatopal is fifty feet high, inside walls of the garbagriha (cella) is twelve feet in each. Some scholars consider it to be a Sun temple, some Buddhist and others Saivite. The reasons for considering it to be Sun temple are that the temple is east facing, an image of sun-deity had been recovered from a nearby village Birsingha and a community of people within the village is Sakdvipi Brahmans who still worship the Sun god. The temple stands on a high plinth (Beglar 1872-73).
Uniform scatters of potsherds were noted in and around the temple area in association with light greyish sandy soil. Adjacent to the temple area, some low scattered mounds were noted from where potsherds were collected from the surface. These were low mounds and in no way seemed to the ancient remains of a fort. The potsherds were found from the top of these mounds in a primary context. Whether these scatters can be considered to be contemporary with the temple is uncertain, but from their typology, they seem to be medieval. The site on the basis of the recent findings can be regarded as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and red ware.

9. Shuklai (73M/4) - 87°13'27"E, 23°10'0"N

Shuklai lies on the right bank of the river Dwarakeswar. The village lies close to Bahulara and can be approached through the same road. It falls within Onda Block. The modern village stands between 80 m and 60 m above MSL at a distance of 2.5 km from the river.

Near the entrance of the village there is an ancient dilapidated structure constructed probably during the British period. The structure stands on a small mound (Nildanga), the peripheral portions of which have been dug out for using the mound soil, thereby exposing the cultural debris. Potsherds have been collected both as surface scatters and also from the sections. It can be said with certainty that the ceramics revealed in the sections are mostly medieval. An alignment of the wall was also noted in this section with four courses of bricks which were probably a part of a late medieval structure. On the basis of the present evidences, the site can be considered to be medieval. Besides this mound area, no other area within the village revealed potteries. On the basis of present evidences, the site can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red Slipped ware, red ware.

10. Gamidya (73M/4) - 87°13'49"E, 23°10'48"N

Gamidya stands on the left bank of the river between 80m - 60 m above MSL within Onda Block. The village has a medieval temple within its premises and is situated at a distance of about 1 km from the river. The site has been reported earlier (Singha 1991).
In the *Biswas para* area (in the eastern part of the modern village) there are some cultivated fields, from where potsherds were collected as surface scatters. The potsherds were found to occur uniformly throughout the fields. Due to ploughing, the sherds have turned very fragmentary. Some have abraded surfaces causing difficulty in understanding the context. Some shapes were difficult to ascertain. From the evidences, the site can be considered to be medieval. From the local villagers, it was known that the site had an ancient mound in this part which has been dug out completely for constructing modern houses and forming cultivable lands; hence besides the *Biswas para* area, no other location yielded potteries or any other artefactual remains.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval: Red slipped ware, red ware and ill fired ware potteries.

11. **Radhamohanpur (73M/4)** - 87°14'37"E, 23°11'47"N

On the way to the modern village of Radhamohanpur from Gamidya (80 m above MSL), there are some cultivated fields locally called *Nildanga* which falls to the eastern part of the village. These lands were the spots of indigo plantation during British administration. This area lies at a distance of about 6 km from the river Dwarakeswar. These cultivated fields show pottery scatters.

In these fields, profuse scatters of potsherds were found. According to the villagers, after consecutive digs while ploughing, fresh potteries are revealed on the surface indicating the occurrence of potteries in the lower levels also. Some red ware and grey ware specimens in this collection seems to be early historical from their typological characteristics. The rest of the assemblage explored is medieval. Within the village Radhamohanpur, there is a late medieval temple of *Radha Madhab*, but no potsherds or other artefacts were collected from the village itself. The site has been identified as early historic as well as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval: Red slipped ware, ill fired ware potteries
Early historical: Red ware and grey ware and few vessels in sturdy red ware respectively.
12. Pingrui (73M/4) - 87°11'25"E, 23°11'56"N

Pingrui lies on the left bank of the river and stands between 80 m and 60 m above MSL. The site lies at a distance of 2 km from the river. From this medieval site, potteries were collected as scatters and also from the river sections. Since the exposed areas of the river sections were cleared and studied in details, this site has been discussed separately in a chapter (Chapter 5). The site has yielded medieval potteries in grey ware, red ware and coarse red ware.

13. Sirsara (73M/4) - 87°09'32"E, 23°13'45"N

Sirsara also stands on the left bank of the river between 80 and 60 m above MSL. The modern village lies at a distance of 2 km from the river. From this site, a fragmentary mother goddess figurine of iron was collected together with mixed assemblage of potteries. The exposed sections in the Aguri para area were cleared and studied and so hence, this village has been discussed separately in a chapter (Chapter 5).

14. Agra (73M/4) - 87°07'27"E, 23°14'11"N

Agra stands on the left bank of the river at 80 m above MSL within Bankura II Block. The site lies close to Bankura and is also known as Banki. It lies at a distance of 2 km from the river.

On the way to the modern village, there is a huge pond and the surrounding areas of the pond have taken the form of a mound; the soil is actually dumped from the pond. This entire area is strewn with potsherds. Though the context is disturbed, but both early historical as well as medieval potsherds were noted in this area (locally called Billadanga) indicating the rich concentration of ancient potteries. Red ware sherds are the most prominent variety and typologically these sherds appear to be early historical. The rest of the red slipped ware and grey ware sherds are medieval. Besides this area, the adjacent villages did not reveal any archaeological remains. It can be said with some certainty from the nature of their distribution, that this area surely bears traces of ancient habitation but unfortunately the potsherds could not be related to an exposed context. From the typological affinities of potteries with other early
historical sites of the area as well as Dihar, the site has been considered as being both of early historical and medieval periods.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval: Red slipped ware, coarse red ware.
Early historical: Red ware and coarse red ware

15. Bikrampur (73M/4) - 87°11'07"E, 23°13'11"N

Bikrampur stands on the left bank of the river and stands at 80 m above MSL. It falls within Onda Block. The site lies adjacent to Elyati and at a distance of about 2.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar. The site has been reported due to a medieval temple, constructed during the Malla Raja Bir Singh II (Banerjee 1975). This temple within the village is of chala type and is dedicated to Lord Vishnu with beautiful terracotta carvings on its walls. From its stylistic characteristics, it seems to be medieval.

Considerable number of medieval sherds has been collected from the agricultural fields which lie on the western part of the temple; the rest of the explored sherds are recent. The modern village area did not reveal any other location with medieval potteries but the cultivated area from where the medieval potteries were found, is quite large and was actually a mound, as told by the villagers. The site on the basis of these findings has been placed in the medieval category.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval - Red slipped ware and red ware.

16. Patpur (73M/4) - 87°14'43"E, 23°6'23"N

Patpur, a potter’s lies on the right bank but a little away from the river, at a distance of 15 km. There are a cluster of other sites in this area namely Puncha, Jamdoha, Damodarbat, Kurali and others (80m-60m above MSL). They fall within Onda Block and are basically potter’s villages. People practice this profession mainly during the dry season. For the rest of the year they are engaged in agriculture or some other activities.

Medieval potsherds in red slipped ware and grey ware have been collected from all the adjacent villages (not concentrated in a particular area), including some recent assemblages too. These scatters are mostly concentrated towards the modern shrines or banyan trees within the villages where regular offerings are dedicated to the local...
deities. These potsherds belong to a primary context and have typological similarities with the medieval potteries of other sites. The extent of the spread of these potsherds is not confined within a single location within the sites.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, ill fired ware, and black ware.

The following sites fall within the second micro-zone, as discussed before.

17. Ayodhya (73M/8) - 87°17'1"E, 23°8'45"N

Ayodhya is situated on the left bank of the river at 60 m above MSL and at a distance of about 1.5 km, very near to Bishnupur on the main road to Bankura. It falls within Bishnupur Block. Indigo plantation was practiced here during the British rule. This site has been reported earlier due to the medieval temples situated within the village premises (Banerjee 1968, Singha 1991).

The modern village has a huge courtyard having twelve pancharatna deul structures, each one of them being south facing. On the north eastern part of the village, the brick temple of Giri-Govardhan is also quite fascinating (all the temples are modern). The name of the village is quite unusual, the reason of which is traced back to the days of the Malla Rajas, since they were assumed to have close association with north India. Some scattered potsherds were noted within the village but these are mostly recent. Very few medieval red slipped ware specimens have been found from the modern village and on the basis of the current findings, this village cannot be regarded as an archaeological site. But the village has definite historical importance.

18. Dharapat (73M/8) - 87°17'49"E, 23°75'58"N

Dharapat is situated on the left bank of the river at a distance of 1 km and is an important village from archaeological point of view. It has been reported earlier by many scholars (Banerjee 1968, Chattopadhyay et al. 2009, Singha 1991). It falls within Bishnupur block and stands at 60 m above MSL. A dry channel of Dwarakeswar passes through the vicinity. According to the local sources, the village was actually inhabited by the Jains during which the temple (rekha deul structure) of Shyam-Chand Thakur was constructed (Pl. VI D).
The relief on the walls of the temple very well indicates the image of a Jain Tirthankar. The temple was originally of laterite and during the rule of the Mallas, it was renovated and transformed into a Vishnu temple. The shrine is neatly plastered laterite structure, about eighteen meter high and constructed, according to an inscription over the front arch, in 1616 or 1625 Saka era corresponding to AD 1694 or 1704. The discrepancy about the date is attributable to the mutilation of the third degree of the figure signifying the year of foundation which could be read either as 1 or 2. According to the well-known medieval text Madanmohan Bandana by Ratan Kaviraj, Raja Advesh of Dharapat appears to have been a vassal of the suzerain Malla Rajas of Bishnupur. Considering the date of the temple, it is most likely that this chieftain was converted to Vaishnavism faith which was the religion professed at the time, by his overlords. It was therefore, natural for him to set up a fine temple for the worship of the Vaishnava deity Krishna, one of whose various names is Shyam Chand. According to the local reports, several Jain and Hindu images have been found from the site. That Vishnu once held sway here is corroborated by the fact that an ancient four-armed Vishnu image holding the usual emblems in each hand is embedded intact on the east wall of the shrine. There is another image of the Jain pontiff Parsavanatha housed in a modern structure nearby, which has been converted into that of Vishnu by carving out of the black slab, two additional hands holding the traditional emblems (Banerjee 1968, Singha 1991). There are two more Jain images embedded on the northern and western faces of the present temple. These are Digambara Jain figures indicating that not only Jainism once entrenched here but that the followers also belonged to Digambara sect. This medieval site had few exposed sections revealing potsherds and in the Rauthpara area of the village, one such area having exposed section was taken up for study. The potsherds collected from the sites are all medieval. The details of the site have been given in a separate chapter (Chapter 5). The site has yielded medieval potteries in red slipped ware, grey ware and red ware.

19. Joykrishnapur (73M/8) - 87°19'1"E, 23°7,26,,N
Joykrishnapur lies very close to the above mentioned villages on the left bank of the river at a distance of 3 km and standing at 60 m above MSL. It falls within Bishnupur block. This site is quite significant because it has been surveyed by local enthusiasts,
and various archaeological artefacts and sculptures have been collected from the site (Singha 1991). Some of the materials collected are as follows:

- a. Sculpture of Surya (eleventh century AD) now housed at BAJCPB.
- b. Chamunda sculpture (tenth century AD) now housed at BAJCPB.
- c. One Garuda capital, housed at BAJCPB.
- d. Jain votive temple, housed at BAJCPB.

The site has been reported on the basis of these evidences as a historical site (Chattopadhyay et al. 2009). Ekratna and Pancharatna deul structures are noted within the village. According to local sources, most of these temples were constructed during the rule of the Mallas. During survey, in the Saldanga area of the village some small mounds were located, of which, few revealed potsherds in the sections (peripheral areas of the mounds) and also as scatters in the mound area. The exposed sections revealed two layers of cultural debris. The first layer was highly disturbed and mostly had recent potsherds which were in all probability dumped in the area. The layer was light grey in colour and slightly sandy. Without any break the next layer revealed medieval potsherds with maximum amount of red ware and red slipped ware sherds. They all occur in a primary context. Near the Gopinath Jiu temple also some scatters of medieval potsherds were noted. The site on the basis of the current findings can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Ill fired ware, red slipped ware and red ware.

20. Thakurpur (73M/8) - 87°19'33"E, 23°7'15"N

The modern village is situated on the left bank of river Dwarakeswar and stands between 60 m and 40 m above MSL at a distance of 2 km from the river. It falls within Bishnupur block. The former name of Dihar was Thakurpur and the present village Dihar formed a part of Thakurpur as observed by Sri Manick Lal Singha (Singha 1991). After the construction of the temples at Dihar, the name ‘Thakurpur’ was changed. At present Thakurpur and Dihar lie within the same Mauja.

This site was first reported by Sri Manick Lal Singha. He noted some fragmentary terracotta images and sculptures in this village with which he found a Buddhist affiliation. He found an alignment of old bricks within the village but the actual
location of these finds have not been mentioned (Singha 1991). The village has few houses and near the entrance there is an old banyan tree where Manasa (according to local information) is worshipped. But the sculpture is in all probability, not of Manasa. It is beyond recognition since it is fragmentary and vermillion and oil have been applied on the sculpture. In this area, some scatters of potsherds have been noted but it is difficult to assign them to a particular period since they have an abraded appearance and do not occur in primary context. There is a pond in the vicinity where some alignment of old bricks were noted during the survey but whether they are the original ones as mentioned by Sri Manick Lal Singha is doubtful. The rest of the village did not yield anything.

Near the De-Bhata area (brick factory) lying adjacent to the site, there is a Bhairabi than (a local term used to denote a place where the local deity Bhairabi is worshipped) where an unidentified sculpture is worshipped regularly by the local priests. According to the villagers, the sculpture was found during the removal of soil for construction of the factory. Adjacent to this area, along the agricultural fields, a section was noted revealing two layers of cultural debris. The first layer showed mixed ceramic assemblage which is probably dumped from the adjacent areas and the second layer had medieval potsherds. Samples were collected from the second layer. On the basis of the current finds, the site can be regarded as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and grey ware.

21. Rautara (73M/8) – 87°20'18"E, 23°7'57"N

Rautara is situated on the left bank at a distance of 4 km from the river next to Dhangara. It falls within Bishnupur block and stands at 60 m above MSL. The inhabitants of the modern village are mostly worshippers of Vishnu for some unknown reasons and this particular tradition is followed by the people since ages.

The site was formerly surveyed by the local enthusiasts and it also finds its mention in the writings of Sri Manick Lal Singha (Singha 1991). A late medieval Vishnu temple is situated within the site. Near the entrance of the site, the exposed sections in between the cultivated fields were checked which revealed potsherds belonging to the medieval period. Some of the lands between the fields have been left out from digging
because villagers offer regular *pujas* in these areas with votive terracotta horses and elephants. These sections, within the fields revealed medieval potteries. Specimens of black ware and grey ware were also found as scatters, which were typologically similar to the early historical specimens from Dihar. These specimens occur in a primary context as understood from their appearance. According to the villagers, potteries still lie in a buried context below the agricultural fields and are revealed on the surface after each consecutive digs.

According to the local villagers, during the construction of the pond near the primary school of the modern village, huge number of potsherds and fragmentary sculptural remnants were noted but unfortunately they were misplaced in some way. Hence, these could not be evidenced during the explorations conducted by the researcher. From the findings of the site, it can be considered to be early historical and medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, ill fired ware and black ware
Early historical- Grey ware, red ware and black ware

**22. Dhangara (73M/8) - 87°20'52"E, 23°7'46"N**

Dhangara is situated next to Rautara on the left bank of the river at a distance of 4 km and opposite to the village Janta within Bishnupur sub-division. Potteries (medieval and early historical) were collected in the form of scatters and also from the exposed sections near the entrance of the modern village. But unfortunately, the exposed sections noticed within the site revealed only medieval potteries. The early historical potteries were noticed as scatters within the village. The site has been discussed in details in the following chapters and on the basis of the present findings, the site has been considered to be early historic and medieval. Red ware potteries collected from the site are early historical. Medieval potteries in red slipped ware, grey ware and ill fired ware have been collected from the site.

**23. Bhatra (73M/8) - 87°19'12"E, 23°7'0"N**

Bhatra is situated on the left bank of the river adjacent to Joykrishnapur. It is situated on the levee of the river Dwarakeswar. During exploration few black and red ware and red ware potteries were collected from the village as surface scatters. These bear close resemblances with the ones found from the site Dihar from the chalcolithic
phase. Besides this, the site also revealed early historical potteries in the form of scatters. Some exposed sections along the river were located which revealed medieval potsherds. The early historical potteries were also observed in disturbed patches from the lower levels of the exposed sections, but it was confined within a very limited area. Comparatively, the medieval deposit within the section was undisturbed. These sections were cleared and studied and the details have been given in a separate chapter (Chapter 5). Early historical potteries in red ware have been noted from the site. Medieval potteries in red slipped ware have been collected from the site.

24. Dejhat (73M/8) - 87°22'19"E, 23°8'0"N

Dejhat is situated on the left bank of the river at 60 m above MSL and can be approached from Beliara. It falls within Bishnupur block. The Haringmuri khal (‘khal’ denoted ‘canal’) passes through the vicinity and as a result the modern village gets inundated every year during the monsoons. The site near its entrance has a late medieval temple of Siva. Just next to this temple, there is a pond, on the sides of which, huge scatters of potsherds were noted. The sherds are mostly medieval but the context is undoubtedly disturbed.

On the western part of the site, in the Chillur Gore area, locally known as Sivatala, some cultivated fields were noted and in one of the exposed sections amidst these fields, profuse potsherds were found in an exposed context and also as scatters. But the context was slightly disturbed (mixed with recent potteries). However, the presence of medieval sherds is quite clear and hence at this stage, the site can be considered at best to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red ware and ill fired ware respectively.

25. Palasi (73M/8) - 87°22'42"E, 23°7'53"N

Palasi is situated on the left bank of the river at a distance of 5 km, next to Dejhat, at 60 m above MSL and can be approached from Beliara. The modern village falls within Bishnupur block. The Haringmuri khal passes through its vicinity. The village has very few houses because majority of the people have shifted to Dejhat.
In the eastern part (Sarkaridanga area) of the site, a few low scattered mounds are present. The top of these mounds was found to have been covered with a greyish soil associated with sand. Some scatters have been noted on these mounds but the village did not reveal any exposed sections from where the context of the finds could be studied. The sherds seem to occur in a primary context from their appearance. Few specimens of black and red ware sherds of chalcolithic period were collected from the Sarkaridanga area. These sherds seemed to be typologically similar to the black and red ware sherds of Dihar (chalcolithic period). The rest of the specimens in grey ware, buff ware and red ware can be considered as early historical and medieval. The entire area of Sarkaridanga is strewn with potsherds and according to the villagers this area was actually a mound which has been leveled in the recent past for establishment of houses in Palasi and Dejhat. The best way to understand the occurrence of these sherds is by taking a small trial trench and then further investigating the cultural debris.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware, ill fired ware potteries
Some grey ware and buff ware sherds seems to be early historical
Some black and red ware potteries of the chalcolithic period were also found from the site.

26. Prakash (73M/8) - 87°22'19"E, 23°5'54"N

Prakash lies on the left bank of the river at a distance of 1 km and can be approached from the site Dihar. It falls within Bishnupur block and stands at 60 m above MSL.

The river sections of this village and the occurrence of the artefacts show that erosional activities of the river are much pronounced. The village actually stands on the levee of the river Dwarakeswar. During the present survey, potsherds were mostly collected from the Bamanpukur area, where they occur as surface scatters with potsherds strewn over the entire surface. In the Palta para area, some rain gullies were noted which also revealed some pottery scatters. The materials revealed in the Paltapara area are mostly washed down materials from the higher lands and so it is difficult to denote the actual context of these finds.
However, black and red ware and red ware sherds of the chalcolithic period were mostly found from the Bamun pukur area. This explored assemblage has early historical and medieval potteries as well. No exposed sections were noted within the village which would help to ascertain their context. Some potteries were noticed in the river sections, but in occasional disturbed patches. The black and red ware sherds surely belong to the chalcolithic period as understood from their typological characteristics. The village can be considered surely to be a black and red ware, early historic as well as a medieval site.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and grey ware.
Early historical - Red ware, grey ware
Black and red ware and red ware potteries of the chalcolithic period were also found from the site.

27. Patlapur (73M/8) - 87°24'29"E, 23°7'7"N

Patlapur stands on the left bank, on the levee of the river Dwarakeswar at 40 m above MSL. It falls within Bishnupur block. It is situated only at a distance of 1 km from the river.

The potsherds collected from the Nimura pukur area were collected as scatters but the context is disturbed due to the construction of the pond. Potsherds were also collected from the sections of the river and their remains were found in the adjacent cultivated fields too. During the monsoons, many archaeological artefacts in the form of potteries, terracotta objects are usually revealed but unfortunately these are discarded by the villagers. Exposed alignment of bricks was also noted within the village at specific locations over which modern houses have been constructed. From the rain gullies in the villages, some rolled specimens of potteries were noted with abraded and patinated surface, indicating that these might have been washed out and deposited from the interior parts of the village. The potsherds mostly comprise of red ware and red slipped ware varieties. The site on the basis of the recent findings can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware, red ware and coarse red ware.
28. Naricha (73M/8) - 87°26'04"E, 23°06'59"N

The village is situated on the left bank of the river and is a very prominent village for an annual fair which is held every year in honor of Sarbamangala (a form of Durga). It stands at 40 m above MSL and falls within Patrasayer block at a distance of 1 km from the river. It has been reported as an early medieval site (Chattopadhyay et al. 2009).

Some sections have been noted along the Dwarakeswar river near the Sarbamangala temple which revealed potsherds both in sections and in scatters. These scatters showed the occurrence of medieval potsherds. The river sections have also revealed medieval potsherds, but some specimens in red ware with an ochrous wash were typologically similar to the ones found from the Pre-Malla (Early medieval) phase of Dihar. Since in the present stage, it is very difficult to differentiate between early medieval and medieval potsherds, the present assemblage has been considered to be medieval.

Some sculptures of the early medieval period have been reported from the site (Singha 1991). The sculptures are identified as follows (Pl. VI C).

a. A sculpture of Manasa (54 x 20 cm).

b. A sculpture of eight armed Mahisuramardini (86 x 54 cm) and considered to be one of the finest sculptural representations.

c. The sculpture that is worshipped as Sarbamangala and is similar to the former one (eight armed) (81 x 33 cm). The head portion is broken and has been replaced by a new one.

d. A sculpture is of Ganesh (68 x 38 cm) and a sculpture of Basudeb (10 cm).

e. Within the village, near Bamunpara, beneath an old banyan tree a dilapidated sculpture of Mahisuramardini has been found which is currently worshipped as Khenda-sarbamangala.

The site has been reported as early medieval (Chattopadhyaya et al. 2009) on the basis of the sculptures housed within the Sarbamangala temple; but on the basis of the present evidences, the investigator had to place it within the medieval category.
The current temple in which these sculptures are housed was constructed by the Chowdhury family, who claims their inheritance from the time of the Malla Rajas under whom they had served. Both the temples were constructed in eighteenth century by them. In the time of poushsankranti, an annual festival is held for three days consecutively during which Sarbamangala is worshipped with great grandeur and opulence. The sculptures have been identified (Singha 1991) as being of the Sena period on the basis of their characteristics. There is also a dilapidated pancharatna temple within the village premises. The site on the basis of the current findings can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and grey ware.

29. Bagdahar (73M/8) - 87°26'45"E, 23°7'23"N

The modern village is situated on the left bank of the river next to Naricha within Patrasayer block at 40 m above MSL. The village stands at a distance of 1 km on the levee of the river and a large portion of the village has been dug out for cultivation purpose.

The river section is almost straight due to intensive erosive action of the river. The section could not be studied in details as it was very steep, but from the cultivated fields adjacent to the river, a sizeable amount of potsherds has been collected. Some medieval potsherds could be collected from the upper levels of the section. The potsherds collected from the adjacent cultivated fields are typologically similar to the ones collected from the river section. The collected specimens were all medieval. From the explored pottery samples of the village, the site can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and red ware.

30. Mukundapur (73M/8) - 87°26'5"E, 23°7'33"N

The modern village stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL at a distance of 2 km, adjacent to Bagdahar. It falls within Patrasayer block. The Haringmuri Nala (Haringmuri canal) passes through the village.
Potsherds have been collected from the peripheral sections of a mound near the Bamunpukur area. From this area, scatters of potsherds were found in association with a fine layer of sand. This mound has been dug out to a large extent for making the area cultivable. Some grey sherds and buff ware sherds with a fine texture were early historical but, the rest of the sherds were mostly medieval. From some of the rain gullies, potteries were noted in a secondary context, bearing signs of abrasion. No other location within the village has yielded potteries or any other artefacts. But the Bamunpukur area is worthwhile for archaeological investigations.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware and ill fired red ware. Early historical- Grey ware, buff ware and some specimens in red ware

31. Shalkota (73M/8) - 87°27’43", 23°7’35”N

The site stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL. It falls within Patrasayer block. Some surface scatters with medieval potteries were noted in the Nildanga area of the modern village. These are fresh potteries, but some specimens have also been noted in the rain gullies on the western part of the village. These samples have an abraded surface and in most of the cases, the slip has disappeared which indicates them to belong to a secondary context. Typologically, all the specimens fall within the medieval period. From the available evidences, the site has been considered as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, grey ware and ill fired sherds.

32. Balarampur (73M/8) - 87°27’25”, 23°7’53”N

The site stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL. It falls within Patrasayer block. Potteries have been noted from the Dakshin para area as scatters which belong to a primary context as understood from their appearance. Besides this area, potsherds have also been noted in few scatters from different locations of the village. The present village also has a late medieval temple dedicated to Vishnu. From these evidences, the site has been considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware.
33. Baikunthapur (73M/8) - 87°23'37"E, 23°7'0"N

This modern village stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL at a distance of 1 km from the river. The site lies adjacent to the site of Patlapur. Some potsherds were collected from the exposed sections of the mounds (Purano Bakul area) standing in the southern part of the village (Pl. IV C). From these areas, medieval sherds were collected from the sections and also as surface scatters from the top and the peripheral areas of the mound. A large part of the record lies in a buried context (in the form of a medieval mound) which needs to be assessed through trial digs. Besides these mounds, medieval sherds were collected from the Bamunpara area of the modern village. The site has been identified as medieval. Some exposed sections of the mound were cleared and studied and hence have been discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter 5). Medieval potteries in red ware, grey ware and red slipped ware have been collected from the site.

34. Gosainpur (73M/8) - 87°23'11"E, 23°5'4"N

This modern village stands on the right bank of the river at 60 m above MSL and falls within the forested zone which exhibits a different topography. It is on the opposite bank of the site Prakash and at a distance of 0.5 km from the river.

This site stands on local lateritic outcrops. Constant leaching of the underlying rock structure has resulted in the formation of lateritic pellets. Near the entrance of the site, on the western part, some scattered mounds were seen from where potsherds were noticed on the surface in the form of scatters. The peripheral areas of the mounds have been eroded mostly by the river Dwarakeswar thereby exposing the potteries in the sections. One of these exposed sections revealing potsherds was cleared and taken up for further survey. This medieval site has been discussed separately in a chapter (Chapter 5). Medieval potteries in red ware, red slipped ware and black ware have been collected from the site.

35. Mulkari (73M/8) - 87°22'56"E, 23°4'9"N

Mulkari is also situated within the forest area of Joypur on a local lateritic outcrop and can be approached from Gosainpur. It stands on the right bank of the river at 60 m MSL at a distance of 6-7 km from the river. Being located in the forested area, it does
not have good communication with the rest of the villages in the vicinity. Mostly tribal people inhabit this village.

The village stands on a local lateritic outcrop and is characterised by a completely different landscape. Mulkari has been reported as a site by the earlier scholars (Singha 1991). Sculptures (early medieval) collected from the village are now housed at BAJCPB. The potsherds in the site have been found in the form of surface scatters. They mostly occur in a primary context as understood from their appearance, though some washed down specimens bearing an abraded surface have been noted specially in the rain gullies noticed in the western part of the village. The potsherds have less typological resemblance with the potteries collected from the other explored sites except the Kushadwip and the Gosainpur area. However the forms are similar as noticed in the other medieval sites. From these evidences, the site has also been identified as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Red slipped ware, red ware.

36. Beltha (73M/8) - 87°18'56",E, 23°6'25"N

This modern village stands on the right bank of the river at 60 m above MSL at a distance of 2 km from the river. This village lies adjacent to Deuli. It falls within Bishnupur block. A dry channel of the river Dwarakeswar lies adjacent to the village. The village has a late medieval temple (Radha Mohan temple) embellished with very beautiful terracotta panels.

On the opposite of this temple there are a few scattered mounds (entrance of the village) where the soil is light greyish associated with sand. The entire area is strewn with potsherds. The potsherds collected from the site are mostly in the form of scatters which belong to a primary context. The buff ware and red ware sherds are early historical which resembles the ones found from the excavated context at Dihar. The rest of the assemblage is medieval. In all probability, the site was occupied from the early historical period till medieval. Whether the habitation was continuous or not, needs to be determined through test digging or through study of some exposed sections. Unfortunately these mounds are presently being dug out and the soil is being transferred to a nearby brick factory.
Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and red ware.
Early historical- Buff ware and red ware respectively.

37. Abantika (73M/8) - 87°18'41"E, 23°5'44"N

Abantika lies on the right bank of the river next to Beltha. It falls within Bishnupur block. It stands at 60 m above MSL at a distance of 1.5 km from the river. The village has been reported as medieval by scholars (Singha 1991).

A Navaratna Rashmancha is located within the village. Some medieval potsherds have been collected from this temple area. The potteries were found in the form of scatters but the concentration of potteries was low in comparison to the rest of the sites in the vicinity. This might be due to the reason that the site has taken a new form with the coming up of modern buildings. Besides these, many late medieval temples have also been recorded within the village. The site is medieval and from the historical records of the Malla kings it is known that during their rule, there was good communication between Bishnupur and Abantika.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red Slippped ware only.

38. Rautkhnda (73M/8) - 87°28'12"E, 23°4'39"N

The modern village is situated on the right bank of the river at 40 m above MSL near the sites of Saida and Gokulnagar. It falls within Joypur block at a distance of 8-9 km from the river Dwarakeswar.

The villagers worship a sculpture of Manasa (41x19cm) as Jagatgauri within the village premises. There are two late medieval temples within the village. In one of them, Jagatgauri is worshipped and the other one is pancharatha sikhara temple with the period of creation inscribed on the temple wall which shows its construction in the eighteenth century (1056 mallabda i.e 1752). There is also a pancharatna temple in the Napit para area of the village. This temple is embellished with terracotta panels. On both sides of the entrance of the Garbagriha, fresco paintings are noted. This temple seems to be of an earlier period than the former ones. These temples have helped to some extent in understanding the chronology of the site. The potteries collected from the site were not confined within a single location and have been
observed in association with a fine layer of sand. The collected specimens all fall within the medieval category.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red Slipped ware, grey ware potteries mostly.

39. **Saida (73M/8)** - 87°27'44"E, 23°3'8"N

Saida is situated on the right bank of the river at a distance of 8 km from the river Dwarakeswar. It falls within Joypur block. Salda-Gokulnagar-Padumpur forms a complex from the time when Padumpur was the capital of the Malla kings. The site has been reported earlier by the scholars due to the findings of early-medieval sculptures from these sites (Singha 1991, Chattopadhyay et al. 2009). This complex of sites is also dotted with numerous canals and tanks constructed probably during the Malla times for better management of water.

The dom dighi area is very important from archaeological point of view. Architectural remnants and potteries have been collected from this area. The sherds were mostly found in the form of surface scatters. The sherds occur in a primary context as understood from their appearance. Though the sculptures have been identified as early medieval, but in the present situation, early medieval and medieval potteries could not be segregated and hence the entire ceramic assemblage has been recorded as medieval.

Sculptures collected from the village are now housed at BAJCPB. The first is of Mahalkal Bhairab of eleventh century AD (106 cm x 18 cm x 71 cm). A sculpture of Siva (23cm x 20cm), a sculpture of Ananatasayanavishnu of tenth century AD (45 cm x 17 cm x 91.5 cm), sculpture of Skanda kartik (74 x 33 cm), sculpture of Indrani of tenth century AD (28.1 cm x 16.5 cm x 49.5 cm) have been collected from the village which are presently housed at BAJCPB. Besides the above mentioned ones, some other unidentified sculptures were recorded by the scholars (Singha 1991). On the basis of these findings the site has been identified as early medieval by scholars. Near the entrance of the village there is a small shrine where Basuli Devi (?) is presently worshipped. This piece of sculpture also was quite fragmentary and was beyond recognition. According to Singha (Singha 1991), Basuli is a Buddhist goddess.
This complex of sites, standing on local lateritic outcrop show agglomerated form of settlements with huge number of tanks and canals amidst the forested area. Since Padumpur was the capital of the Mallas before Bishnupur, it seems that this complex of sites gained prominence during the rule of the Mallas. Scholars have seen an Orissan influence in the form of sculptures (Chattopadhayay et al. 2009). But unfortunately, from archaeological evidences (mostly potteries), the site at the present stage can, at best, be considered as medieval. Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red ware and some ill fired ware potteries.

40. Gokulnagar (73M/8) - 87°27′43″E, 23°2′21″N

The Gokulnagar village stands also on the left bank of the river and can be approached through the village Saida. It falls within Joypur block. This site has been recorded earlier by the scholars due to early medieval sculptures and medieval temples found from the site (Banerjee 1968, Chattopadhyay 2009, Singha 1991). A dilapidated saptaratha temple of Gandhesavra Siva is situated within the village. Within the garbagriha of the temple, a Mahisuramardini sculpture (46cm) is present which could be assigned to the early medieval time period. An east facing laterite temple of Gokulchand (pancharatha in plan, Pl. V B) is also situated within the village. From the inscribed slabs on the walls of this temple, it is known that the temple was constructed during the rule of the Malla king Raghunath Singha I (949 Mallabda, i.e. AD 1643). Many sculptures have been collected from this village of which the Anantasayan Vishnu currently housed at BAJCPB deserves special mention. The findings of Jain sculptures (tirthankaras) were also reported from the village. A Varahi sculpture collected from the village during the construction of a pond is now worshipped at a recently constructed shrine (Pl. VI A). All these evidences, no doubt, point towards the medieval chronology of the site, if not earlier. As far as the ceramic assemblage is concerned, some stray occurrence of medieval sherds has been noted within the village which is not properly confined to a particular place. These potteries do not allow us to place the site before the medieval period. Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware.
41. Dumduma (73M/8) - 87°21'27"E, 23°5'8"N

Dumduma is situated on the right bank of the river at 60 m above MSL at a distance of 1 km from the Dwarakeswar river. It falls within Bishnupur block. The village stands on the levee of the river.

The modern flood plains within the river have largely been used for the purpose of cultivation. From the adjacent areas of the cultivated fields (*lohar para*), potsherds have been collected as surface scatters. These explored specimens are both early historical and medieval. The specimens collected from the sections of the river are medieval. But some sherds in black slipped ware and grey ware, noted from the sections seem to be earlier. On the basis of the current findings, the site can be assigned to the early historical as well as the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and black ware.
Early historical - Grey ware, Black slipped ware, red ware respectively.

42. Madhuban (73M/8) - 87°20'20"E, 23°5'23"N

Madhuban is situated on the right bank of Dwarakeswar at 60 m above MSL and near the confluence of Berai and Dwarakeswar. It falls within Bishnupur block at a distance of 1.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar. Besides these two rivers, a channel of the river Dwarakeswar passes through the southern part of the modern village. The village is inundated due to these channels during the monsoons. Otherwise the channels are dry with a trickle of water.

Potsherds were noted along the channel as surface scatters. But from the abraded appearance of the sherds, it can be said with some certainty that these might have been washed out from the interior areas of the village. The potteries can be placed in the medieval category according to their typological characteristics. The modern village has yielded few medieval potteries belonging to a primary context unlike the ones found near the channels.

Ceramic assemblage: Red slipped ware only.
43. Gopalnagar (73M/8) - 87°25'59"E, 23°5'41"N

Gopalnagar stands on the right bank on the river near the sites of Salda and Gokulnagar at 60 m above MSL. It falls within Joypur block. It lies at a distance of 8-10 km from the river Dwarakeswar. This site has been reported earlier due to a medieval temple within the modern village (Banerjee 1975).

This site has a late medieval temple with beautiful terracotta panel embellishments. Medieval potsherds were collected from the temple area in the form of scatters and according to the villagers these areas have been occupied by the potters since ages. Hence, these areas are completely strewn with medieval potteries.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware, grey ware sherds.

44. Deuli (73M/8) - 87°19'26"E, 23°6'19"N

Deuli stands on the right bank of the river on the opposite bank of Madhuban. It falls within Bishnupur block. This village stands at 60 m above MSL. It has the Dwarakeswar river on its north and the Berai river on its south. Within the village, three localities were noted from where potsherds were collected.

The Kumardanga area lying on the north western part of the present village has largely been converted into agricultural fields from where potsherds were collected. According to the local people, Sri Manick Lal Singha in the course of surveying collected some terracotta figurines from this area.

The second area noted for potsherds within the village is Benepukur which stands on the south eastern part of the village at a distance of about 0.5 km from Kumardanga. This part of the village has some scattered mounds and hence, is slightly elevated in comparison to the surrounding land mass. The potsherds were mostly recovered from the peripheral areas of the mounds which have been eroded due to the action of the river Berai. The soil is light greyish with good quantity of sand. Some black ware and red ware sherds of early historical category have been collected from this area. The rest of the assemblage is medieval. This area might have been occupied earlier than the Kumardanga area from where only medieval potsherds have been collected.
The third area is Padmardanga which lies close to Kumardanga area, from where potsherds have been collected as surface scatters. According to the local people, all these areas were mounds and were at the same height with the Benepukur mounds. But all these mounds have been dug out for cultivation purpose. So the potsherds in this area (Padmardanga) were fragmentary due to the use of plough. Proper exposed sections were not found in any of these areas. The site on the basis of the current finds could be assigned to the early historical and the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and grey ware. Early historical-Red ware, grey ware, buff ware potteries and some sherds in sturdy red ware respectively.

45. Kushadwip area (73M/8) - 87°26'4"E, 23°9'13"N

The villages in Kushadwip area are situated within the Sonamukhi jungle range and are on the left bank of the river between 80 and 60 m MSL. It falls within Patrasayer block. These villages can be approached through Pandua. These sites (Kushadwip, Bhara, Shahapur) have been reported as find-spots of chopper-chopping tools (Datta et al. 1992). The materials collected from different villages in and around Kushadwip have been kept with Mr. Duari, a local enthusiast and researcher (Pl. VII B, III C).

All these villages are located on local lateritic outcrops and they fall within the Sonamukhi jungle range. During the present survey, potsherds have been collected as surface scatters from the villages Kushadwip, Shahapur and Bhara. Similar potsherds have also been noted from the site Shahapur, lying adjacent to Kushadwip. But typologically, the surface treatment of the wares is entirely different from the ceramic assemblage of the other explored sites. These ceramic wares are similar to the ones found from Gosainpur and Mulkari, both of them falling in the lateritic zone. The Shahapur area is densely covered with jungle and according to the local history, there is an old fort within the jungle called ‘Dumnigarh’ fort. The potsherds collected from the villages are manufactured from the local soil, as indicated by the minute granular lateritic particles used as inclusions and which indicates that the clay used for manufacture that have been gathered from local sources and not from the villages situated near the river. On the basis of all these evidences and the studied collection of Mr. Duari, these sites can be considered to be medieval. The intermediary stages of
the site, needs to be assessed through further probing. Presently the site has been considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red ware (with ochrous slip) and buff ware, ill fired ware specimens.

46. Birsingha (73M/8) - 87°27'21"E, 23°12'1"N

The modern village is situated within the Sonamukhi jungle range, on the left bank of the river at 80 m above MSL. It falls within Sonamukhi block. It is situated at a distance of 15 km from the river Dwarakeswar.

The village Birsingha is quite big and has a Brindaban Chandra temple which was originally constructed by the Mallah king Bir Singha (AD 1638, pancharatna in plan) who is believed to have ruled here. The temple faces the south. The temple also a bhogamandapa attached to it. Birsingha also has two other late temples (Radha Damodar) within its premise. By taking into consideration the ceramic assemblage of the site, it can be said that some fragmentary potsherds were collected from Brindaban Chandra temple area of the present village. Some fragmentary terracotta animal figures were found which are still used as dedicatory objects by the local people. These figures are quite old (Pl. X A). Some sculpted laterite blocks were also noted in the village. On the basis of all these evidences, the site can be placed in the medieval time period. The potsherds collected from the village have uniformity with the ones collected from Kushadwip area since they are situated in the same topographical zone. The site has been considered as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Buff ware, red ware and coarse red ware.

47. Basantapur (73M/8) - 87°21'1"E, 23°6'18"N

The village stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL. It falls within Bishnupur block and Uliara Gram Panchayat. It is adjacent to Dihar. While talking about this site, the adjacent village of Tilabani also has to be considered because they lie just next to each other and the concentration of artefacts were found in a continuous manner in both the villages. The site lies at a distance of 1 km from the river Dwarakeswar. Potsherds were collected as scatters and from the river sections of the modern village. Some exposed sections were noted within the village (Goswamir
Ding area) which were cleared and studied and hence has been discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter 5). The site has revealed both medieval as well as early historical potteries. Early historical potsherds are very few. The site has also been reported as a findspot of Puri-Kushan coins (Mukherjee 1991). Early historical potteries in red ware, fragmentary black slipped ware and buff ware potteries have also been found. Medieval potteries in red slipped ware, black ware and red ware have been collected from the site.

The following sites fall within the third micro-zone (40 m above MSL) as discussed by the researcher.

**48. Banshi (73M/12) – 87°31'31"E, 23°5'46"N**

The site is situated on the right bank of the river at 40m above MSL at a distance of 3 km from the river Dwarakeswar. It falls within Joypur block. A dry channel of the river Dwarakeswar passes in the vicinity of the village. This modern village can be approached through Gelia. During the monsoon this dry channel gets substantial amount of water. This village is essentially a potter’s village. The vessels are generally manufactured during the dry season.

As far as archaeological remains are concerned, some scatters have been noted throughout the village but are not confined to a single locality. These potsherds were mostly medieval. The extent of the spread of the artefacts is difficult to ascertain because the spread is continuous till the village Chandipur. On the basis of the typological similarities in the pottery assemblage, the site can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and black ware.

**49. Chandipur (73M/12) – 87°31'12"E, 23°6'1"N**

Chandipur also lies on the right bank of the river next to Banshi at a distance of about 2.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar. It falls within Joypur block and can be approached through Gelia. Chandipur stands at 40m above MSL. This is also a potter’s village.
The modern village actually stands on the levee of the river and large portions of land within the village have been dug out for the construction of houses and agricultural fields. Fairly good scatters of medieval sherds were noted near the Kumor Para area. The river sections reveal the remains of some large vessels (late medieval?) mostly in red ware. The river sections show a disturbed patch (about 26 cm) of light grey coloured soil with embedded potsherds. The layers below and above this patch are devoid of any archaeological materials (sterile). The exposed section of the river revealing the potteries can be assigned to the medieval period since the pottery samples are all medieval. Preceding and following the medieval deposit, sterile layers have been noted in the river sections. No other exposed sections were noted within the village to corroborate this data. The site has been considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware, grey ware and black ware.

50. Basubati (Pratappur) (73M/12) - 87°33'45"E, 23°4'25"N

The village is known by both the names and it stands on the right bank of the river. It can be approached through Brahmanari. It falls within Kotulpur block. The village stands at 40 m above MSL. Potsherds have been collected from the modern village both as scatters and from an exposed section of the mound in the Vaishnav danga area of Pratappur. There is also a medieval Vishnu temple within the village with beautiful terracotta panels. Since the exposed sections were cleared and studied, this site has been discussed separately in a chapter (Chapter 5). Medieval potteries in red slipped ware, red ware, ill fired ware, some porcelain base sherds and fragmentary glass bangles have been collected from the site.

51. Malakarpota (73M/12) - 87°39'14"E, 23°3'21"N

Malakarpota stands on the right bank of the river and can be approached through Brahmanari. It falls within Kotulpur block at a distance of 2 km from the river Dwarakeswar. The modern village stands at 40 m above MSL on the opposite bank of another site Parikshapara.

The village stands on the levee of the river. The river section is very steep which did not reveal any archaeological material and is subject to regular erosion. Potsherds
have been collected from two areas within the village. The first area is near the modern *Siva* temple where in the vicinity, stands a huge banyan tree. From this area, mostly early historical potsherds were collected in the form of scatters, strewn all over the surface. The second important area within the village is the *Taldanga* area where some sections were noted in the cultivated fields. These sections revealed cultural debris as indicated by the presence of mixed assemblage of potsherds. From this area, the potsherds collected are medieval as well as recent. But from the potteries of the *Siva Tala* area, it seems that the site was occupied before the medieval period. An annual fair is also held in the village during *Chaitra Sankranti*. The site can be considered to be both early historic and medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware, black ware and grey ware
Early historical- Red ware, buff ware and black ware.

52. Hati (73M/12)  - 87°38′31″E, 23°3′10″N

Hati also stands on the right bank of the river and can be approached through Brahmanari. It falls within Kotulpur block and is situated at a distance of 4 km from the river. It stands next to the village Malakarpota, at 40 m MSL. The modern village is quite big and mostly inhabited by Muslims.

In the *Pir Para* area there are a few mounds from where the potsherds have been collected as scatters. According to the villagers, these areas were parts of mounds which were dug out for the use of the soil for construction purpose. No other spot within the village has revealed potsherds. But the modern houses near the *Pir Para* area were packed with ancient potsherds indicating the use of mound soil for construction. On typological basis, the potteries can be assigned to the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and grey ware.

53. Ranahat (Senpara) (73M/12)  - 87°34′49″E, 23°4′34″N

The village is situated on the right bank of the river at 40 m above MSL. It falls within Ranahat block. The village lies close to the river (2 km) and hence is inundated almost every year due to the recurrent floods. The village can be approached through Brahmanari.
Potsherds have been collected from the Noukaghat area near the modern Dayal temple. Some scattered mounds noted in this area have yielded mostly medieval potsherds from the surface. The potsherds were noted in scatters and not in exposed context. But these sherds have typological similarities with those from the other medieval sites. On this basis, the site has been assigned to the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Ill fired ware and red ware respectively.

54. Balarampur (73M/12) - 87°38'38"E, 23°2'14"N

Balarampur stands on the right bank of the river at 40m above MSL at a distance of 5 km from the Dwarakeswar river. It falls within Kotulpur block and is a potter’s village. The village can be approached through Brahmanari and Hati.

Potsherds of both the recent and the medieval period are seen scattered throughout the village and not confined within a particular location. In the Bamunpukur area which is presently unoccupied, potsherds in fairly large numbers were collected. These potsherds occur in a primary context as understood from their fresh appearance. The entire assemblage can be assigned to the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and ill fired red ware sherds.

55. Laugram (73M/12) - 87°40'26"E, 23°0'35"N

The village is very important from historical point of view since it is presumed to be the first capital of the Malla Kings (Adi Malla) (O’Malley 1995). The modern village is situated near Hugli border at a distance of 6-7 km from the river Dwarakeswar within the Kotulpur block. The village can be approached through Kotulpur. During the establishment of this capital and the rule of Adi Malla, it is mentioned that the region was under dense forest cover which was subsequently cleared and brought under habitation (O’Malley 1995). The area is dotted with tanks and canals, as evidenced in the other Malla capitals like Padumpur and Bishnupur.

Some potsherds have been collected as surface scatters from the village near the medieval temples of Durga and Siva. The potsherds were mostly medieval according to typology. But unfortunately, no exposed sections were noticed near the temples to
corroborate the data. According to the local villagers, there were some ancient architectural remnants within the village, but unfortunately nothing could be traced during the survey because they were already cleared for habitation. The *Pairag dighi* (a large lake) is believed to have been constructed during the same time, when the *Malla* capital at Laugram was established. But unfortunately, no specific legend about its construction could be traced. Laugram is evidently a medieval site.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red ware, red slipped ware and black ware.

56. **Panna (73N/9) - 87°41'14"E, 23°0'5"N**

Panna (73 N/9) lies far away from the main river and the information about the village was gathered from the local villagers. Panna lies close to Laugram and can be approached through Kotulpur. The modern village stands at 40 m above MSL at a distance of about 10-12 km from the river.

The *Jokar Hat* area within the village has some isolated mounds and the potsherds have been collected as scatters from the top as well as the peripheral areas of the mounds. The potsherds were mostly medieval, though very few sherds in black ware seemed to be early historical. Since these were few and very fragmentary, it cannot be considered to be a convincing evidence for the site to be early historical. On the basis of the current findings, the site can be placed in the medieval period.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, red ware and grey ware.

57. **Parikshapara (73M/12) - 87°39',50"E, 23°3'50"N**

It lies on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL at a distance of 1-1.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar. It falls within Indas block.

The site has a rampart and a moat, probably constructed during the medieval period (Pl. V A) as understood from the embedded medieval potteries. The site on the basis of the findings has been placed in the medieval period. An exposed section of the mound in the *Pir Babar Dhibi* area was cleared and studied, details of which has been discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter 5). The site is medieval. Medieval potteries in red slipped ware, red ware, grey ware and black ware have been collected from the site.
58. Pantrai (73M/12) - 87°34'30"E, 23°5'4"N

The modern village stands on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL at a distance of 1.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar. It falls within Indas block and can be approached through Balsi.

The site has a huge mound, the peripheral portions of which have been dug out for taking the soil for construction (Pl. IV D). The site stands on the levee of the river Dwarakeswar. A dilapidated temple of Damodar (Vishnu) stands on the mound. The site is inundated every year by the flood waters. The exposed section of the Kala Pukur mound area was studied in details and hence has been discussed separately in a chapter (Chapter 5). The site has been considered as medieval. Medieval potteries in red slipped ware, red ware, grey ware and black ware have been collected from the site.

59. Balsi (73M/12) - 87°32'18"E, 23°9'34"N

The modern village is situated on the left bank of the river and can be approached through the main road from Bishnupur to Patrasayer. It falls within Patrasayer block. This site lies on the traced earlier channel of Dakshin Saraswati, which according to geologists, linked the Damodar and Dwarakeswar rivers (Chakraborty and Nag 2005). It is a large village and has developed to a great extent like the modern town of Bishnupur. The village has been reported by the scholars as a medieval site because of the presence of medieval temples (Banerjee 1968).

In the southern part of the site, there is a medieval lateritic temple. The temple (aathchala) is dedicated to Lakshmi Narayan and was constructed during the rule of the Mallas when they ruled over the Jamkuri area (Jamkuri being very near to Balsi). The year of construction as given in the inscribed slab is 958 Mallabda i.e. AD 1652. Festivals and fairs are held within the village during Makar Sankranti, Ratha-Yatra and Makri-saptami. There are also other late medieval temples within the premises of the modern village.

Few potsherds were collected from the areas around the Lakshmi Narayan temple which were typologically similar to the medieval potsherds. No other artefacts were
collected from this village. The site can be assigned to the medieval period on the basis of the temple inscription and the medieval potsherds.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red Slipped ware and ill fired red ware.

60. **Andra (73M/12)** - 87°34'33"E, 23°13'11"N

Andra stands on the left bank of the river Dwarakeswar and on the right bank of Sali within Patrasayer block at 60 m above MSL. The landscape of the modern village has largely been modified by the river. The village has been reported as a black and red ware site (Chattopadhayay *et al.* 2009) but during survey, no black and red ware potsherds were found from the site.

The site has a large undisturbed mound near the entrance and on the top (north eastern part) of the mound a sculpture of *Vishnu* (measurements) in chlorite was found lying beneath a tree which is currently being worshipped by the villagers (Pl. IV B, Pl. VI B). From stylistic characteristics, it seems to belong to the early medieval period. Early historical potteries were collected from the peripheral areas of the mound in an exposed context and as surface scatters from the top of the mound. Medieval sherds have also been collected from this mound area which indicates the continuous occupation of the site. All the potsherds have been found in association with a fine layer of sand. Since the mound is largely undisturbed and has yielded early historical ceramic wares, it will be extremely informative if the site is excavated. The site on the basis of the findings can be placed in the early historical time period. Andra gives us the only evidence of an existing mound, from where early historical potteries have been found. Besides this mound, no other area within the village was noted with scatters of potsherds.

Ceramic assemblage: Early historical- Red ware, buff ware, black slipped ware and grey ware.

Medieval: Red slipped ware, Grey ware, ill fired ware potteries.

61. **Krishnanagar (73M/12)** - 87°33'8"E, 23°13'19"N

The modern village lies on the left bank of Dwarakeswar and on the right bank of Sali within Patrasayer block at 60 m above MSL. This is mainly a potter’s village where
vessel manufacturing is practiced on a large scale. Some of the older vessels are reused by the potters after renewed firing.

During survey, in the Kantaban area of the village, some scatters of potsherds were noted mostly comprising red ware and buff ware. This area lies close to the river and is subject to recurrent floods, due to which it is presently uninhabited. According to the local villagers, this area was occupied in the past by the potters but due to the recurrent floods of the river, this place has been deserted. The proper chronology of the site could not be denoted on the basis of such scatters but quite a few samples seemed to be medieval from their typological characteristics.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware and red ware.

62. Dayalpur/ Balarmpur(73M/12) - 87°34'5"E, 23°13'27"N

These modern villages stand on the left bank of the river Dwarakeswar and on the right bank of Sali within Patrasayer block at 60 m above MSL. The villages can be approached through Patrasayer and Andra. These villages have been reported as black and red ware sites (Chattopadhyay et al. 2009).

The Sali River just passes through the adjacent areas of these sites and an exposed section was noted along the river at Balarampur (Pl. V D). The above mentioned sites have been described together since they lie adjacent to each other and it was difficult to assess the extent of the artefact spread. The exposed section (1.5m) at Balarampur revealed two layers of cultural deposits with a sterile layer in between. The study of the section show that the site was probably occupied from the early historical time period and after a brief desertion (indicated by a sterile layer), it was reoccupied during the medieval times. The early historical deposit measured about 68-80 cm. The lower part of this section was not exposed and hence could not be studied. The section was exposed due to the erosional effect of the river Sali (Pl V D). Besides this, throughout the village Dayalpur, scatters of potsherds were noted.

The ceramic assemblage revealed early historical red ware, grey ware and medieval red slipped ware varieties. But no black and red ware sherds were found during the exploration. These sites can be considered to be early historical on the basis of the
finds. Another site named Belut lying in the vicinity can also be considered to be of the same period because potsherds of similar character have been collected from Gader Danga area at Belut.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, black ware.
Early historical - Red ware, black slipped and grey ware.

63. Patraganti (73M/12) - 87°32'48"E, 23°5'30"N

The modern village lies on the left bank of the river at 40 m above MSL and can be approached through Balsi. It falls within Indas block adjacent to the site Pantrai at a distance of 1.5 km from the river Dwarakeswar.

The sections along the Dwarakeswar river revealed good amount of potsherds but the adjacent areas seemed to be very much disturbed due to the large scale agricultural activities. The site stands on a levee and has good quality soil conducive to agriculture. As a result, large tracts of lands in the southern part have been reduced for cultivation. The potsherds were mostly medieval and were mostly specimens of red slipped ware. The understanding of the section was insufficient, since the cultural materials were observed in patches. Within the village premises, some scatters were noted here and there, but not confined to a single location. The site at the present stage can be considered to be medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval- Red slipped ware and red ware.

64. Chaltakonda (73M/8-73M/12) - 87°29'29"E, 23°6'47"N

The village Chaltakonda is situated on the right bank of the river at 40 m above MSL within Joypur block at a distance of 1 km from the river. The village is quite extensive and has some mounds in the Simultala area facing the river (Pl. IV A). The village falls within Joypur Block. The village on the opposite bank of Chaltakonda is Ankhrasol.

The erosional activities of the river are more intense in this village in comparison to Ankhrasol. The flood waters cover almost all the mounds during the monsoons. The peripheral areas of the mounds have been exposed due to surface run-off revealing potsherds in exposed context, belonging to the early historical and medieval time
period. Potsherds could be also traced in a scattered context from the re-entrant slopes, noted in the southern part of the site close to the river. These sherds bear an abraded appearance and have been transported from the interior locations of the site. No exposed section was noted within the village. Leaving out this area, the village on the eastern part, opposite to the Kumor Danga area has many agricultural fields from where many fragmentary terracotta lamps in red ware and grey ware were collected during the course of exploration. On the basis of the current findings, the site can be considered to be early historic as well as medieval.

Ceramic assemblage: Medieval-Red slipped ware, grey ware and black ware.
Early historical: Red ware, grey ware, sturdy red ware.

As mentioned earlier around one hundred twenty villages were surveyed in the entire middle reach of the river. Of them, sixty three villages have been identified as ‘sites’. Besides these, there are many villages which were recorded earlier by the scholars as ‘sites’ either due to a temple or a sculpture collected from the respective villages. Villages like Nayer, Janta and Kankabati have been reported as sites due to the findings of sculptures from the sites. From Nayer, an alignment of old bricks was also traced by Singha (Singha 1991). But, during the course of the present survey, only some recent potsherds were found from these villages. On the basis of present evidences, the investigator prefers not to consider them as ‘sites’. Some of the villages like Sanbandha, Bikna and Uliara were also found to be interesting because we find the age old traditions of pottery making, brass metal working, manufacturing of horses and elephants being practiced in these villages. All these villages are quite significant from ethnographic point of view and finds mention in the medieval records as important centres of handicrafts manufacturing (Sanyal 1987).

3. c. Observations

In the absence of any previous systematic archaeological investigations in the area, the present work should be seen as a preliminary endeavour. The location and distribution of sites in the Dwarakeswar river valley were never studied in an integrated manner. The study area depicts an interesting picture of the distribution of archaeological sites ranging from prehistoric times till medieval. Since prehistoric investigations are beyond the scope of the present study, it has not been dealt in
The distribution of sites is primarily governed by the ecological factors. The early historic and the black and red ware sites are strictly confined near the water sources. The medieval sites are found to be evenly distributed throughout the study area. During the course of survey, entire gamut of archaeological record has been taken into consideration. The chronology of the sites has been assessed mainly on the basis of the explored potteries. The temples, sculptures and the rest of the artefacts have additionally helped in determining the chronology of the sites. But it has to be mentioned that, a site designated as medieval may always have an early historical or chalcolithic level underneath. Many sites being disturbed due to natural and anthropogenic reasons could not be placed into a chronological period with certainty.

Functionally, most of the explored sites are habitational. Structural sites are rare in the study area. The designated medieval sites generally have numerous temples and religious edifices. A number of patterns emerge in the location of the sites in the area. The settlement pattern shows three types of distribution arrangement viz. linear pattern along the river, compact and semi-compact pattern and dispersed type, mostly away from the river in the forested zones (see chapter 7 for details). The role of ecology and other related factors have been considered to understand their tentative functions in a broad sense. The settlement pattern of the study area has been discussed in details in a separate chapter (Chapter 7).

It is really unfortunate that the black and red ware and the early historical potteries were all collected from the surface or the cultivated fields. In very few sites, they were observed in river sections. Again, some of the exposed river sections revealed early historical pottery samples but the sections being disturbed, artefacts were observed in occasional patches. The only existing mound which yielded early historical potteries is the site Anda. However medieval potteries have also been found from this site. Many sites have been traced in the form of mounds having medieval potteries on the surface as well as in exposed context, in the peripheral areas. Since the entire habitation deposit was not exposed in any of the mounds, it is really difficult to trace whether there are early historical or chalcolithic levels buried below. In the case of the explored sites, besides pottery, no other artefacts of the black and red ware or the early historical period were recovered. For these two cultural phases, the researcher had to take the excavated artefacts of Dihar into consideration.
Typological similarity was noticed between the potteries of the explored black and red ware sites and that of Dihar. The same applies for the early historic sites in the river valley.

As the location of these BRW and early historic sites reflect their distribution closer to the alluvium, it is quite plausible that the early inhabitants exploited the resource for agricultural production. Besides agricultural products, aquatic resources of water bodies like rivers, bilis, and numerous tanks might have been important sources of food. The recovery of a number of terracotta net sinkers from the site Dihar leads us to infer that nets were used for catching fish. Although the paucity of data does not allow us to provide any definite conclusion regarding the animal resources exploited in the area, the sedentary life, agrarian land and existence of jungles suggest the exploitation of domestic and wild animals by early settlers thereby indicating a mixed subsistence pattern. However such conjectures necessitates further probing through the analysis of the faunal data from the site, which will surely help in understanding whether a mixed subsistence strategy was being practiced by these people.

It has to be borne in mind that the region is devoid of resources like stone, iron and copper. But the remains of exotic objects like semi-precious stone beads, copper antimony rods from the site Dihar show that they might have been obtained from far-off regions providing the raw materials. The profuse number of cast copper coins, punched mark coins found from the site in the early historical level, speaks of an exchange system that probably governed the economy of these early settlers. It can be presumed from the typological affinities noted in the ceramic assemblage that all these sites must have interacted with one another and played a certain role in communicating with one another. Hence, besides providing water for irrigation and domestic needs, the Dwarakeswar river might have played a crucial role in shaping the exchange network of the economy. The river was navigable up to Bankura for part of the year until 1880, although from the present condition of the river it is hard to imagine that this could have been so (Banerjee 1968). In the Mauryan era, there was a possible route extending from the northwest frontier of India to the imperial capital at Pataliputra. It is generally supposed, that an extension of this route from Pataliputra reached Bengal and went up to the mouth of the Ganges (passing through Bishnupur) where the large ancient port of Tamralipta was situated (Beglar 1872-73). Beglar has
mentioned the names of sites like Bahulara, Bishnupur, Elyati, Sonatopal and Ekteswar and also commented that one has to cross the Dwarakeswar river at Ekteswar in order to proceed further towards north. It is also important to emphasise on the observation of the geologists regarding the *Dakshin Saraswati* channel which provided a possible water-route from Damodar to Dwarakeswar. The abandonment of the Tamralipta port has also been attributed to the drying up of this channel. However, all these conjectures need to be established through further research.

In this context, it is also necessary to mention that the explored early historic sites in the Sali (tributary of Damodar) river valley, in fact, revealed more refined form of potteries as understood from the fabric and surface treatment of the specimens. Black slipped ware potteries were found in considerable amount from these sites. The early historic sites in the Dwarakeswar river valley revealed early historical potteries with a cruder fabric. This might be due to the nature of the locally available soil. Black slipped varieties were noted in the sites of the Dwarakeswar river valley but in lesser quantity and the ceramic assemblage was mostly confined within specific varieties of red ware. The sculptures recorded from the sites like Andra, Hodolnarayanpur in the Sali river valley were stylistically more refined than the ones found from the sites like Salda, Gokulnagar area in the Dwarakeswar river valley. The sculptures from the later area bear an Orissan influence (Chattopadhyay *et al.* 2009). Hence there are minor differences in the archaeological record of the early historic sites in the Damodar and the Dwarakeswar river valley. But these minor differences were found to be absent when the medieval record is taken into consideration. The differences in the ceramic assemblage were also found to be sorted.

It is known from the epigraphic data that around sixth century AD, after the downfall of the Guptas, there were some local independent rulers who established their dominance over a large part of eastern and southern part of western Bengal. Of them, *Gopachandra, Samacharadeva* and *Dharmaditya* deserve special mention. The sixth century inscription found from the village Mallasarul near Galsi of district Bardhaman deserves special mention which records land-grant of the adjoining villages. One of the important provinces ruled by these rulers was *Vardhamanabhukti*. The sites Andra, Dayalpur located in the flood plains of Damodar and very close to Bardhaman district might have received an indirect influence from this process of development.
On the other hand, the sites like Saida, Gokulnagar in the Dwarakeswar river valley revealing an Orissan influence in the form of early medieval sculptures, might have received the required growth impetus from the adjoining areas of Dandabhukti, comprising a large part of adjacent areas of Midnapur district. The early medieval prosperity of the Dandabhukti area in terms of polity and culture is unquestionable in the light of consistent discoveries of epigraphic and archaeological remains from time to time (Datta et al. 2008). These areas were probably an extension of the geographical orbit of the trading port of Tamralipta. Before the medieval period, we have only indirect references of the area. But from the coming of the Malla Rajas, we find a definite historical outline of the area. In this regard, more intensive regional surveys and published excavation data are obligatory.

The number of medieval sites in the study area is more than fifty. The cause behind the sudden emergence of many sites in the medieval period needs a different methodological interpretation. It can be conjectured at this stage that there was a steady increase in population with an overall development in the economy and society which enabled the people to settle in any location throughout the study area. The antecedent stages needs to be analysed in order to understand the entire process of development. In all probability, with the coming of the Mallas in the medieval period, the area underwent complete makeover with simultaneous upheaval in the political, social and religious domain. Large portions of the present districts of Bankura, Midnapur and Hugli were brought under the control of these kings which was locally known as Mallabhum. The proliferation of sites during this period has to be understood in this backdrop and this long enduring process of development led to the emergence of bigger settlements like Bishnupur.

From the present evidences, it is not possible to talk of the actual sizes or the extent of the sites, but it is possible to construct a rough picture of the bigger and the smaller sites in the area according to the extent of the explored artefacts. The site Dihar was undoubtedly the most important one which probably helped the adjacent sites like Basantapur, Bhatra, Thakurpur, Deuli and Dharapat to develop. All these sites are found to be situated very close to each other. Dharapat, Basantapur, Bhatra, Deuli and Thakurpur can be considered to be bigger sites in this area, after Dihar. All these are situated in and around the main meander loop of the river, on which Dihar is situated.
Palasi, Dejhat, Madhuban in this area, on the other hand, have revealed flimsy evidences of habitation where the concentration of artefacts was confined within one or two locations within the sites. A little upstream of this area, within the first micro-zone (100m - 80m above MSL), Hariharpur, Elyati, Bahulara, Bhadul, Pantrai can be considered to be bigger sites in comparison to the rest. Of them, Hariharpur and Elyati are early historic sites. In all these villages, the artefacts in the form of potteries were found to be concentrated throughout a large part of the modern villages. Medieval temples have also been recorded in some of these sites. In this area, Agra, Gamidya and Rajagram were evidently smaller sites in comparison to the above mentioned ones. A little downstream of the river Dwarakeswar, within the second micro-zone (60m - 40 m above MSL) and adjacent to the Dihar area, some other sites have been noted revealing substantial evidences of past habitations. Of them, Baikuntahpur, Naricha, Salda and Gokulnagar are undoubtedly big sites. The mound at Baikunthapur still occupies a large part of the modern village and artefacts still lie in a buried context in this area. Besides pottery, innumerable sculptures have also been recorded from these sites. Again in this area, Mukundapur, Salkota and Balarampur yielded feeble evidences of past habitation. Coming to the third micro-zone (below 40 m), sites like Parikshapara, Pantrai, Malakarpota and Chaltakonda, are evidently bigger sites in comparison to Hati, Chandipur Banshi or Ranahat situated in the same area. Of these, Malakarpota and Chaltakonda are early historic sites but unfortunately, having no exposed sections, the potteries had to be studied from the surface. Medieval temples have also been recorded from some of these sites. It has to be kept in mind that all these observations have been made on the basis of the explored artefacts, found largely from the surface. The limitations of surface survey have to be considered and in this regard, trial digs are highly necessary to corroborate the present understanding. The exposed sections revealing medieval deposits in the sites Parikshapara, Pantrai, Dharapat, Baikunthapur, Bhatra and Basantapur are quite substantial and have helped in understanding the nature of the sites and the past landscape through the subsequent phases of occupation and abandonment (Chapter 5).

3.d. Limitations

Identification of sites on the basis of surface surveys has its own limitations and restricts in a way complete understanding of the sites. In the present study, pottery has
helped the researcher in determining the relative chronologies of the sites. Surface surveys need to be followed by trial digging or section scraping at selected sites to obtain the culture sequence and the antiquity of human settlement. Detailed geomorphological work for a sampled area using satellite imagery and field studies is desirable in order to ascertain the nature of the landscape in this fluvially dynamic zone. The researcher had no scope to carry out such detailed analysis and hence had to consider the only excavated site Dihar to be a significant marker in understanding the explored sites of the river valley. Hence, to further ascertain the chronology of the sites, data from excavated context is highly essential. The present work is not without limitations, but it has been possible to bring the archaeological sites in the river valley into limelight by extensively surveying the entire middle stretch of the river which was hitherto unexplored.

The following chapter focuses completely on the excavated site Dihar where the researcher has discussed the explorations and excavations conducted at the site as well as the ceramic assemblage of the site. This study has enabled the investigator to place the rest of the explored sites in proper chronological phases. Since it is the only excavated site of the river valley, it has been considered to be a significant marker in understanding the archaeological record of the area.
Notes

1. Topographic sheets helped in the preliminary survey of the area. All these topographical maps (73M/4, 73M/3, 73M/8, 73M/12) were georeferenced in a GIS environment through Erdas Imagine software. The explored sites were then placed on these georeferenced maps which enabled to get the precise coordinates and also aided in the interpretation of the settlement pattern in this area. The plotting part has been done through ArcGIS Software. The satellite imageries, analysed through both the softwares, helped in demarcating the dry channels of the river and the extent of the flood plain of the river.

2. The concept of ‘site-size’ and ‘site-hierarchy’ is generally applied in studies on settlement pattern. But it is true that in dynamic fluvial regime, it is difficult to judge these aspects. Moreover due to modern anthropogenic factors, the sites are more or less occupied by present habitations; in the present study area it was found that many houses have been constructed on the top of the ancient mounds. Moreover the spread of artefacts is also obliterated in many instances by modern roads, ponds and houses. As a result, individual site sizes could not be calculated and the sampling techniques could not be applied in the present study. This is one of the major limitations of the present study.

3. From the early literary sources it can be surmised that the area in and around Dantan (West Midnapur) formed part of either Suhma territory or an extension of the geographical orbit of the trading port of Tamralipta. However, since seventh century, it came to be known as Dandabhukti, a major provincial administrative division under the rule of Sasanka. However epigraphic evidences suggest that by about eleventh century AD, the area formed a part of the Dandabhukti mandala under the rule of Kamboja king Nayapala. The territory around Dantan has been often taken to have constituted a part of the early medieval geopolitical unit called Dakshina Radha and Dantan has been equated with seventh century Dandabhukti. The early medieval prosperity of this region in terms of polity and culture is unquestionable in the light of consistent discoveries of epigraphic and archaeological remains from time to time (Datta et al. 2008).