ABSTRACT of Ph.D Thesis

SETTLEMENTS, RESOURCE USE AND PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION
IN EARLY INDIA C. 200 B.C. -750 A.D.

by

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This dissertation examines the resource-use and resource-access of settlements in early India so as to outline patterns of communication from the 2nd c. BC till about the 8th c. AD. It does this by mapping a range of raw materials – including precious and common metals, varieties of semi-precious and ordinary stone, shell and ivory – that were used at different sites. The evidence is mainly in the form of manufactured objects and, occasionally, evidence of manufacture of such objects there. Additionally, the sites have been analyzed in terms of their structural remains and have been categorized into urban, religious and other kinds of settlements. All this evidence is then interwoven to understand the pattern of communication in historical India.

Therefore the focus of this study is on the following:

a. Nature of resource use in a region

b. Patterns of exchange among different regions

c. Survey of sites in the three periods (C. 200 BC to 300 AD; 300-500 AD and 500-750 AD) to understand their continuity and nature

d. Analysis of the nature of resource use and pattern of exchange which indicate the prevailing patterns of communication during the three periods i.e. between c. 200 BC - 300 AD; 300-500 AD and 500-750 AD.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The sources I have used for this purpose are mainly excavation reports and explorations. Various archaeological publications have been studied to understand the use of different resources in manufactured form and also the evidence of manufacture there. The types of raw materials I am looking at are mainly metal and stone artifacts. This in turn is linked up with a simultaneous exploration of the natural sources of these raw materials whether local or non-local on the basis of Geological Survey of India publications and district gazetteers. It has helped to establish definite links between different regions especially outside the different geographical zones.

The correlation of the possible sources for the raw materials that were used, apart from the presence of the raw material, has been mainly established on the basis of inscriptional, numismatic and literary data. Such evidences found outside the specified geographical limits have been considered to substantiate the connections between different regions. Such links are helpful in determining the pattern of communication that developed in different periods of Indian history. The raw material distribution is graphically represented by a large number of charts and maps.
CHAPTERIZATION

The total number of chapters in the thesis is six. The chapterization is as follows:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Here, I elaborate on the scope and methodology of the study. Also I provide an overview of the historiography and the previous work done on the subject of raw material usage and patterns of communication and settlements.

Chapter 2- Early India from Northwest till Orissa (c. 200 BC to 300 AD)

I begin the discussion with the northwest province till Orissa for the post-Mauryan period. The areas of study broadly cover the hilly regions of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal- Uttarakhand, Indo-Gangetic divide and Punjab plains, the Upper, middle and lower Gangetic plains, the northeastern hills and Orissa.

Chapter 3- Early India from Central India till Kerala (c. 200 BC to 300 AD)

As a continuation of chapter 2, this chapter covers the regions of central India, and Peninsular India consisting of the Deccan region and the southern states till Kerala for the post-Mauryan period.

Chapter 4- Period of the Guptas and other contemporary rulers (c. 300 to 500 AD)

In this chapter, I look at all the archaeological sites in the Indian sub-continent in a region-wise pattern that belong to the period between c.300 and 500 AD corresponding to the time of the Gupta rulers and their contemporaries in different parts.

Chapter 5- The post-Gupta period (c. 500-750 AD)

This chapter studies the archaeological sites all over the sub-continent in a region-wise manner and focus on the data that is dated to the post-Gupta period between the c. 500 and 750 AD.

Chapter-6- Summary and Conclusion

This chapter outlines the parameters on which the conclusions have been drawn. First, it gives a comparative summary of all the three periods on resource use and procurement pattern and the nature of settlements in each period for each region. This is followed by the conclusions drawn on the basis of the comparison on grounds of resource use, procurement pattern and nature of sites and settlements in each period.