Chapter 5

Rèsumè

The Vidarbha region in Maharashtra has a very important place as far as archaeological remains beginning with prehistoric period to the late medieval period are concerned. It is one of the regions where considerable work pertaining to the megalithic research has been carried out. This Early Iron age Megalithic culture had different representations at different sites, some having burial cum habitation, some only have burial and some sites are only represented with settlement remains. There are several Early Historical sites, where the settlement began as early as the megalithic culture in this region. The excavation on some of these types of sites had provided a kind of data which did not give a clear picture of the linear growth that culminated in an urban condition. During the Early Historic period, there emerged a number of urban centres in this region such as Adam, Kholapur, Pauni, Paunar, Mansar, Kaundanyapur and Bhon. There was a strong bias that these two periods had separate processes of development and had very little affinity though co-existed simultaneously at some stage. The aim of the present research was to look for data coming from the earlier researches and from fresh intensive field investigations to see how far and how much they had relations with each other or otherwise.

This objective of looking it as a continuous growth was initially hypothesised taking into consideration the models and synthesis proposed by various scholars working in this field in different parts of the world. During the Early Historic period the region achieved an urban status ruled by local dynasties (known from literary texts such as Mahabharata). It subsequently came under the suzerainty of Magadha and Satavahanas. This present research brings out several significant facts suggesting the urbanism during the Early Historic period had its roots in the preceding Early Iron Age.

The fresh explorations conducted and settlement pattern analysis carried out again substantiates the concept that it was regional growth. In the third chapter the discussion reveals that the Early Iron Age people were permanent settlers in most of
the localities having preconceived notion of agricultural-pastoral-craft specialisation economy. Their settlements were following a pattern leading to complex society. This criterion is also seen in the non-megalithic associated settlements, those which began during Early Iron as period and continued till they emerged as urban centres.

With this scenario there was an urge to look for evidences that could bridge the gap between the Early Iron Age and Early Historic period. Ceramic analysis from Bhagimohari helped to establish that the period between the decline of Megalithism and emergence of urbanism was a phase of cultural transition (in chapter three). The ceramics from Bhagimohari was rigorously analysed as this is one of the sites in the region that has a long duration of occupation beginning with the early phase of Iron Age to early historic period. Here the ceramics and the available $^{14}C$ dates suggest that it continued till one find the proper urbanised phase in Vidarbha. The data along with other artefacts were undertaken to compare the finding from all the excavated available rural and urban centres belonging to both the periods.

This study was supplemented from the findings of subsistence system, its effect on social structure, craft production system and moreover the social distinctions were considered from the analysis of burials excavated. The data was analysed to make sure the nature of complex society during the Early Iron Age period (in chapter four). The analysis gives a clear picture of the people, their economy and the social and economic balance between different groups of people/community, thus forming the background of the later complex society seen during Early Historic period.

Some of the findings are enumerated below.

1) Explorations helped in finding a considerable number of settlement sites which was eluding the previous researches. The paucity of settlement versus Megalithic site was the cause of this misconception that Early Iron Age people were to great extent pastoral-monads. The finding of new basically settlement sites not only reversed the concept, but added a new dimension to the study. Now there are more independent habitation sites, bereft of megalithic monuments. In other words people living in this region during this period need not always bury their dead in the process seen in erecting monuments (such as
urn-burials found at Tharsa and Adam). In this survey the total number of 
settlements of the Early Iron Age period increased from 13 to 25 thereby 
suggesting a much wider and permanent occupation of the Nagpur and 
Wardha region in the period (discussed in chapter three).

2) Again these newly discovered sites/the settlements were based in considerable 
vast tract of rich fertile alluvium zone and near to river banks. Thus, 
suggesting a strong agrarian economy and its expansion over the landscape. 
All these sites were confined to a resource zone conducive to agriculture and 
pastoralism. Quite often burial building raw material was not visible in the 
near vicinity.

3) While the sites occupied by Megalithic monuments and associated settlement 
sites (habitation-cum-burial) had different environment. These sites were 
surrounded by raw material resource zones which were exploited and were 
necessary for the kind of economy the inhabitants practiced (like Naikund and 
Shirkanda near iron ore zone, Mahurjhari near raw material for beads). This 
suggests the symbiotic relationship of various groups especially of craftsmen. 
This probably separated the nature of settlement between agriculturist, those 
who depended on the assistance of craftsmen and their product in various 
ways and the craftsmen supported the economy with their expertise.

4) At the beginning it seems the technology and the exploitation of technology 
based service begot considerable wealth, which was manifested in ritual 
expenditure, for example in ancestor worship in elaborate burial building with 
rich grave goods. This technology based economy made this group remained 
tied to the activity through the year since they required marginal agricultural 
effort and support. This much assured economy had self satisfying society 
with the kind of social projection they had. Whereas the non-technocrat 
agriculturalists must have had a fluctuating economy with the vagaries of 
climate and environment. In this situation, assured and non assured economy 
makes a difference in social organisation. The agriculturalists were probably 
getting more organised to face the ups and downs of the economy, maintaining 
socio-political objective. This is evident when the analysis of data was carried 
out belonging to both types of the sites. The agricultural based sites continue 
to grow and some of them even got enlarged to emerge as regional or urban 
centres; whereas these megalithic craftsmen people gradually faded way and
lost identity. They probably moved into urban centres breaking their craft oriented manufacturing and distributing centres, inter dependent community economy to fragmented city dwellers. They probably lost community based activities like burial monument building. Such loss of identity in craftsmen is bound to happen when they migrate to bigger centres (Childe 1950). Same can be seen in Vidarbha, where craftsmen were involved in burials to retain kinship since there might have been the migrations to bigger settlements. This faded away in due course of time. Those who remained as warrior/saviour/fighter in a large settlement later were often accorded a memorial by way of erecting a hero stone in their valour.

5) Again it is observed that the sites had a hierarchy amongst them in the Early Iron Age suggesting the higher and lesser production centres. Sites with habitation-cum-burial (HCB) like Naikund Bhagimohari and Mahurjhari became important due to long duration important craft production along with agriculture whereas the sites with only habitation (H) (Adam, Pauni, Kaundinyapur, etc.) became important due to a strong agricultural base.

6) Here the sites with agriculture base supported the craftsmen production, hence their wealth accumulation represented in burial. Within this craft-specialist group there was economic disparity as observed in chapter four. In this case, it is viewed that the producer only did not consume their product. In such a case the economy does not become affluent, if there is not strong buyer and seller relationship. The craftsmen were also in a way sustained by the agricultural production from the regular habitation-cum-burial sites as well as the smaller agrarian sites. Moreover, the agricultural base enhanced the craftsmen and their skill, innovations and vice versa. Craftsmen were probably serving and supporting the bigger centres by exchanging their products and the bigger sites with their increasing agricultural base were providing opportunity and scope for the craftsmen.

7) Thus an economy evolved where craftsmen equipped with good iron technology, lapidary and wood-working and other supporting activities were providing services to agrarian base. They too were probably supporting during aggression and warfare as seen from their accompanying burial goods.

8) The overlap and gradual transition towards Early Historic period observed in the ceramic analysis from Bhagimohari and its comparison with other
excavated sites suggest a local and regional development of the cultural period from the Early Iron Age period.

9) This transition also supports the observation that the Early Iron Age predominately agriculturist were expanding their agrarian based economy and not abandoning their settlements.

10) The evidences about the prelude (Chalcolithic) to the Early Iron Age suggest a much earlier cultural background and development in the region.

11) The study of subsistence strategies also suggests the importance of agriculture, both Rabi and Kharif. It suggests that the various technological and crafts development occurred due to the support of agrarian based economy.

12) The importance of the agricultural group however kept on increasing evinced from the increasing settlements and evidence emerging from study of burial remains.

13) The study of burials (in chapter four) through cluster and PCA analyses suggests the importance of different types of people involved in warfare/ hunting and pastoralism besides craft production and relevant service. It also reflects the growth of separate group involved in transport, exchange, horse related activities and horse training probably. Above all there also was a class of very few local chiefs at rural level, who gathered maximum social prestige and was from the higher agricultural-animal keeping groups.

14) The society was already a class based society having regular agriculturists, warriors/ involved in offensive work, craftsmen involved in minor woodwork, oil-crushing, lapidary, cart and carriage makers, stone workers, leather workers, smithery (involving making tools for agriculture, hunting, warfare and other crafts as well as ornaments) and also to some extent a labour class.

15) This class based society revolved on status, place and position according to strength of the craft they practiced. Some groups besides other activities were involved in warfare/offensive and defensive activities (cluster 1 and 4, see Plates 4.10- 4.11 and Table 4.9 and discussion in chapter 4) and seem to be more powerful. The cluster analysis suggests that the craftsmen buried with horse, horse ornaments and or with offensive and defensive weapons were belonging to high order as far as the amount of wealth was expended in their burial construction in total (cluster 3 and 7, see Plate 4.10- 4.11 and Table 4.9 and discussion in chapter 4). They do not seem to be free from other required
sustainable economy but most probably headed by some higher authority outside the community they lived. The weapons found do not seem to have been used for self or else it will appear that there were several mini autonomous groups or a kind of chieftain group operating in a small area as some of the sites are in close proximity to each other. Or else fighting/protecting each other in the neighbourhood a fear perception of an uncertain reason and threat. All this suggests that the weapons used were for protection of both agro-pastoral and craft activities from any unknown danger. This higher group was belonging to the better socio-politically organised agro-pastoral group (known from cluster 6 and 8, see Plate 4.10-4.11 and Table 4.9 and discussion in chapter 4).

All these observations help in understanding the process of development of a complex and structured society. The interaction of bigger agricultural settlements with the smaller sites practising both agriculture and crafts specialisation led to a functional complementarity. This was seen in the economic, social and later also in political sphere. It can be said that in the Early Iron Age itself there was a well distinctive settlement system extending to major three types: smaller agricultural settlements, marginal agricultural settlements with crafts specialisation and large principally agricultural based societies (having agricultural base, concentrating surplus and influencing the exchange). Thus an urban-rural continuum developed indigenously and was not initiated by any external aggression.

The presence of ramparts at Adam and Pauni suggest that agriculturists were concentrating surplus both on economic and central authoritative power position. The bead production which had its origin during Early Iron Age (since new locality of Early Iron Age period is found by the present researcher at Mahurjhari) culminating later to being a centrally controlled production system. Different phases of production, the nature of raw material used, and the kind of finished goods with their apparatus found in segregated localities in Early Historic period at Mahurjhari are the evidence of such a society (Mohanty 2008). In this multi-faceted economy the advantage surplus probably kept on fluctuating, status and positing changing as can be seen from the analysis of grave goods described in chapter four. Moreover the location of several cemeteries in a site, and several cluster in them further suggest a differentiation in social behaviour depending upon their craft production and
economic status. This was a prelude to a caste based society which becomes prominent when it reaches the Early Historic period.

This wealth and status is reflected in burials of craftsmen (as analysis of clusters 2, 3, 7 seen in chapter four). The presence of primary burials in cluster 7 and 3 also suggests a higher order stratification though materially not well represented, because of their instant investment of resources in burial construction. The large, secondary burials with several human remains and considerable investment both in construction and incorporation of grave goods may have been act of accumulated wealth for several decades or more. The offensive/defensive people (warrior) were seen mainly in cluster 1 and 4 and formed a good chunk of the population. While, in cluster 6 and 8 a group had quite a better representation of offensive tools, distinctive in their appearance suggesting a strong position among the craft specialists/agriculturist group might have extended other socio-economic activities. They were like small local/rural chiefs and were probably having stronger agricultural affinities as association of agricultural tools are concerned. The presence of a primary burial in cluster 6 and its enlarged/extended social identity suggests the importance of such a higher agricultural community which might be the land-owners and also important person along with being involved in protection. These social and economic divisions are clearly visible leading to complex and structured society.

The literature tells that Rajan encourages agriculture and tills the land before any sacrifice. Thus the importance of agriculture in formation and consolidation of the authority can be seen even from the textual references. It is also worthy to note here that Apastamba had recorded the use of labour for agriculture and other purposes in this period in the region south of the Narmada (Kane 1941 Vol I). Thus there were two-fold agricultural group viz. land-owners and actual cultivators. The group known as Kshatriya in India was responsible for protecting such land-owning. Such Kshatriyas were always a part of the higher-agricultural communities since it was the backbone of the growing different modes of subsistence. Therefore by the Sutra period (7th-6th century BC) itself the Rajan was regarded as Bhupati from the earlier Gopati (Kane 1941 Vol III, Apte 1971). But it suggests that they already comprised of pastoral elements. Thus the Kshatriyas were forming a distinct group now, yet they were giving much importance to agriculture and animal husbandry though having strong bias for agriculture. This can also be seen in the Mahabharata where the Lord
Krishna and Lord Balarama are representing these two basic modes of production. But probably Kshatriya community started taking to direct production like agriculture and animal based products through their kinship or extended families. The story of Virata-Kaurava war also helps to understand that kings were still maintaining huge cattle-wealth apart from having authority over land. The Kshatriya community might have taken to affairs such as controlling agricultural and animal based production to gain control over the society in due course of time. The description of Gramani (village chief/troop leader) as Vaisya in the later Vedic texts (Apte 1971) also points towards the development of authority at a local level which controlled both agriculture and animal keeping. There is the mention of Rathi (warrior) and Senani (warrior-leader). This suggests of lower power groups. There is also a mention of purohita (priest) along with the various other craftsmen like rathakara (chariot/cart maker), suta (horse rider/ chariot rider/ horse trainer), kulal (potter), karmara (metal workers), takshna (carpenter). Such elements to some extent were emerging in Vidarbha by this period.

Out of the characteristics mentioned by Classen and Skalnik (1978), some like a common ideology, surplus, social stratification, territory and population can be seen through the burial practices, settlement and agrarian expansion, craft specialisation and the results of the analysis (suggesting social structure) carried out on the mortuary remains in chapter 4. Various aspects such as surplus guided attitude, different modes of production, variations in disposal of dead, expanding agricultural base and restricted access to all resources could be seen. These are again some distinct characteristics of Chiefdoms mentioned earlier. But it can be said that a hierarchy between the emerging larger centres and small productive settlements was evident in Vidarbha where a large market already had emerged seen in the recently discovered settlement sites. This was some kind of a developed chieftain or an inchoate statehood. In Early Iron Age in Vidarbha, some elements of Kautilya’s State (though not all) can be identified. Tertiary groups of authority like chiefs, local/village chiefs, warriors/landowners (swami, amatya, danda), wealth in the form of crafts specialisation and elaborate burial construction (kosa/dhana), claim over territory through settlements and burials (janapada) were the early antecedents to the full-fledged state. It can be said that the society was progressing towards a full time state.
The State in Vidarbha was not a result of any external aggression. It was the result of the many such economic and social processes which were themselves a result of iron technology and agricultural production. The gradual transition to the Early Historic period suggests the role of the local rural base in the development of the complex society.

**Limitations and Further Scope**
The present research had certain limitations such as non-availability of all the cultural material from all sites excavated. The area of investigation proposed was limited. It will be prudent to observe this phenomenon in a larger area with different kind of evidence. Moreover, fresh excavations keeping this problem would have provided better understanding. These situations have brought some limitations to the analysis. More study of artefacts such as the morpho-metric and chemical analysis of tools may help to understand the production, distribution and exchange aspects as well as the ritual aspects of tools and artefacts. This aspect did not form the research problem with be taken up subsequently. The attempt to check the well settled prelude to Early Iron Age will be expanded to other parts in the Wainganga basin and thus trying to investigate a much larger cultural zone to substantiate the views proposed above.

**Epilogue**
State needs complex society and the complex society and urban centres grow simultaneously. This is because the complex society is unequal society and having groups such as tertiary groups present who thrive on other people’s produce. Such communities characterise urban centres. Thus the complex society leads to a State and Urbanism simultaneously. Same can be observed in Vidarbha in the form of craft centres, agricultural settlements, and warfare groups. All these suggest inter-dependence and the growth of complex society. Surplus craft production does not lead to surplus economy unless otherwise they are consumed. The consumers are the non production group. Thus the urban- rural continuum or tertiary developments could be seen. The gradual transition towards the Early Historic period in Vidarbha suggests that all these elements which were in some form present in Early Iron Age period were passed down and later got modified during the Early Historic period. The development of the Early Iron Age in to the Early Historic culture suggests that the development of a complex society was a regional development. Urbanisation
expanding outside the Ganga valley and culminating in the Early Historic urban phase does not seem the main factor. It cannot be denied that by the time cities were emerging across the country, there was an exchange of goods and cultural contact well established. This exchange and contact can be seen through the use of semi-precious stone beads, glass objects, toiletry, weights and measures as well as the fortification, use of bricks, brick-well, storage pits, tc figurines and appearance of coinage by 5th-4th century BC. The appearance of these even in Vidarbha during the Early Historic period, suggests that the society was aware and ready about the artefacts, their purpose, utility, economy to absorb them and above all a concept of acceptance about such a type of lifestyle. The ideological and conceptual contact from an early period can also be seen through the Brahmanical and Buddhist ideologies getting easily represented (by mortuary remains, stupas at Adam and Pauni).

Moreover, it is suggested here this State formation and urbanisation was not a result of any class struggle. To a certain extent it was the result of many social processes. Thus, a Synthetic process of State formation can be seen (as referred by Renfrew and Service quite often, Renfrew 1973a; Service 1975). Indian philosophers were always concerned about the harmony and survival with co-existence. Hence in Indian political thought, one finds reference to the protection of all classes as being a prime responsibility of the monarch. Thus the thought is to avoid class struggle and class conflict (Kane 1941 Vol III, also see Bheeshma to Yudhishthira adhyaya 67, Shanti Parva). The analysis and study carried out in this work suggests that in Vidarbha such complex social and economic environment was becoming prominent. This complexity necessitated the authority to become prominent and safeguard the rights of all. In this kind of environment, a chief with personal qualities of selflessness and righteousness can take care of interests of all classes and their survival. He essentially is supported by a larger agricultural base as agriculture forms the basic subsistence. Hence it can be said that the major agricultural settlements (Pauni, Adam, and Kaundinyapur, etc.) became centres of authority and moved towards urbanism.