The present trend in the study of history and culture is not familiar with the ‘when and where’ but ‘how and why’ of the actual reasons behind the events. Understanding the past that is unlike present is a complex process. To be aware of that there can be different ways of knowing the past may be difficult for Archaeologists who are intensely focused on knowing the past through material remains and their context. Those material remains can be brought to light only when extensive explorations and excavations are done, which is unfortunately not happening to large extent. The present thesis “Archaeological Settlement Pattern of Hanumangarh District (Rajasthan)” aims at collection and study of all available archaeological as well as literary data for the reconstruction of the settlement pattern of this region from the earliest times to c. 1200 AD to provide a comprehensive but brief and updated account of the protohistoric, historic and medieval cultures of Hanumangarh district.

In this address I intend to somewhat deviate from the traditional methods of study and review the trends that have emerged during the last few decades in the application of the scientific methodology to various areas of archaeological research. As everyone knows, in the early 19th century archaeological researches included excavations, the techniques of which gradually became refined with the passage of time. However, all these studies were of the classical type and this was then the only method to study them, of course with gradual refinement of skills. Subsequently, the emphasis shifted to detailed stratigraphic studies, geographical ranges and logical associations. With the passage of time, areas of ecology, bio-geography and evolution in technology received more attention.

It should be the goal of each area of research in archaeology to address larger problems and to seek conclusions which advance our knowledge of the cultural process which are involved in the formation of sites. Another problem in dealing with the site formation process is that most of the sites are fastly disappearing due to expansion of land for agricultural purposes and urbanization. So there is an urgent need for documenting all the available evidences about these sites in association to their context. This can be done in more precise manner only through regional study.
Aims and Objectives of the Research

- Though there is lack of large-scale systematic archaeological work in the study area, a few scholars have carried out commendable work on various aspects of archaeology, ranging from Early Harappan to the Medieval times. However, these works have not provided a proper cultural sequence for this region as a whole. Efforts are made here to review all the possible studies that have been carried out so far in this region and build a complete cultural sequence of the research area.
- To carry out village-to-village exploratory survey of entire Hanumangarh district.
- To understand the origin, development and expansion of the early farming cultures in the region and to understand the expansion, dispersal, diffusion and migration of the Harappans in this area.
- To know about site catchment analysis of some important proto-historic centers and individual catchment of each site, besides identifying different centers of craft production, industrial activities, commercial centers, source of raw materials and major function of individual center.
- To find out the route of migration of P.G.W. culture and its dispersal in Ghaggar basin.
- To know about the settlement pattern of ancient cultures from earliest to medieval times and its nature of continuation.
- To find out the reasons, why during the Historical and Medieval period, the area under present study was thickly populated in spite of arid conditions.
- To know about the change in settlement pattern of various cultures.
- To give special emphasis on the ceramic studies of the Harappan culture for the reconstruction of the chronological sequence and to date the sites discovered in course of exploration in the region.
- To make an effort to study the subsistence pattern of the people with the help of the location of the site and artefacts found at the site.

Research Methodology

Archaeological studies carried out so far in the study area have not addressed the problem of settlement pattern of the cultures from a holistic perspective. In the light of new evidences from Kalibangan, Baror, Sothi, Dabdi and Dabliwas Chugta,
we need to understand the function of certain important sites like Kalibangan and the
distribution pattern in general. How certain sites i.e. Dabdi, Dabliwas Chugta,
Kalibangan and Sothi contributed to emergence of Urban Centers. Regarding
Historical and Medieval period an attempt has been made to search for numismatic
and epigraphic evidence to reconstruct not only the political history but also the
cultural history of the region.

❖ A GPS handset (Garmin, GPS map 60CSx) was used to record accurate co-
ordinates of the sites and proper camerawork of the sites was done with the
help of digital camera (Canon Power shot 555, 7.1 mega pixel). Proper
sampling of pottery and other remains from the surface was done.

❖ Visited also some of the known sites of adjoining area and studied their
environmental and locational aspects. Besides, the surface survey and
systematic collection of archaeological material formed an important part of
the research strategy.

❖ Village to village survey was conducted in the entire study area. Also
participated in the excavation at Dabliwas Chugta to develop a better
understanding.

❖ Cultural material obtained from explorations and excavations by other
agencies housed in different museums and elsewhere studied and analyzed.

❖ Apart from field work a thorough study of available published and unpublished
literature was made.

❖ Within the constraints of the available evidence this study attempts to
construct a model of settlement pattern in Hanumangarh district including site
distribution, production and exchange organization.

❖ Analyzed the material remains whether their raw material was procured locally
or outside places.

❖ Consulted various publications, including research articles, unpublished Ph.D.
theses, M.A./M.Phil dissertations and books for obtaining relevant information
for the purpose.

For the fulfillment of the above mentioned aims, the researcher conducted
a village to village survey of the study region and as a result of it 574 sites of
different cultures were brought to light. These sites have been described with
different aspects of studies. On the basis of available source material, an attempt
has been made to reconstruct the history of the study region in the present work. Incorporating main aspects of our objectives, the thesis has been divided into following six chapters supported with relevant tables, charts, photographs, drawings, maps etc. for the batter understanding of the subject.

Chapter I- Introduction: This chapter deals with an introduction of the proposed study area with the Geographical features, ecological features, contemporary setting, flora, fauna and places of interest.

Chapter II- Explorations: This chapter is devoted to the results of explorations conducted by the present researcher. Each site is described with special reference to its location with longitude and latitude, size, culture sequence, local name and distance from the nearby village/town. Summary of pervious work has also been given here.

Chapter III- Settlement Pattern: The main focus of this chapter is to discuss the site settlement pattern during the different cultural periods with size, distribution, demography, rank-size and with palæo-channel study as a main motive.

Chapter IV- Study of Pottery: This chapter describes about the ceramics of different cultures of the study region. Mainly the pottery collected during the course of explorations has been studied with special reference to the fabric, shape, manufacturing technique and decoration.

Chapter V- Study of Miscellaneous objects: This chapter deals with a brief description of miscellaneous finds collected during the field work. The study of artifacts found in the excavations conducted so far in the study region has also been included. A comparative study of the available data like Coins, inscriptions, Art and Architectural remains, beside other antiquities from the present exploration has also been made here.

Chapter VI- History of the Region: This chapter deals with the historical reconstruction of the present region in the light of the available archaeological as well as literary data.

Conclusion: The conclusions drawn by the researcher on the basis of his studies and finds are described here.

The Conclusion is followed by a selected bibliography and illustrations of pottery and other Miscellaneous finds collected during explorations in the study region.