The thesis entitled "Material life of Northern India, c 600-320 B.C.", is an attempt to make a micro study mainly because it is comparatively rich in materials available, both in archaeology and literature. Dymond, a proponent of full co-ordination, says "We have a moral duty to find out as much of truth as possible and should therefore be prepared to use whatever evidence survives. If it is of different kinds, we must see it in all of its variety to co-ordinate it."

From the geographical point of view, as well, the region of northern India had been the hub of political, economic and cultural activities.

Archaeological materials from the excavations in the northern India had been taken into account by earlier scholars, such as Vibha Tripathi, T.N., Roy and others, but such earlier attempts had their own drawbacks, particularly in two respects. First, earlier works generally present an overview in relation to time and space. Secondly, since the time of earlier works more materials have come to light. Though literature, relevant to the period has been exploited to bring out the life and conditions of the people with the occasional support from archaeological finds, but complete synthesis is still a need.
The microscopic study undertaken in this research is to have a better understanding of the material life of the people in its various facets. Detailed analysis of pottery of this period is made in order to arrive at the nature of food habits, the likes and dislikes and the social status of the people. The method of agriculture is an important area of investigation to be made from the available data, direct or indirect. House plans, permanent or temporary, and fortifications and moats needs are analyzed to understand the preferences in the style of living and the level of urbanization of the period and the region. The analytical study of arts, crafts and industry has been done mainly on the basis of terracotta, bone, ivory and stone objects. Metals, viz. copper and iron, and other materials used in making various tools and artifacts, as well as, objects of daily use has been given due cognizance from the point of view of the technological knowledge and its application and the skill of the craftsman at work. Closer study of punch marked coins in situ from the region in this period has been taken into account to understand the level of economy and as an aide to trade and commerce.

This research work is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter introductory in nature deals with all previous work done on this topic, archaeology of Northern Black Polished
Ware and nature of existing texts Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. It also deals with the drawbacks of archaeology and literature as a source of history writing. A comparative analysis of both these sources at length is thus the *sumnum bonum* of this chapter.

Chapter second titled as *‘Physical Features and Political History of Northern India’*. From our point of view northern India is economically valuable and culturally most significant in comparison to all the other parts of India, it is therefore divided into seven regions i.e., Rajasthan plain, Punjab plain, Upper Ganga plain, Middle Ganga plain, Bundelkhand region, Malwa region and Udaipur – Gwalior region. This leads us to appreciate the possible interaction between these regions on the basis of the archaeological finds so far available.

Literature gives us to understand that with the 6th century B.C. northern India constituted of several great states viz., Anga, Kasi, Kosala, Vajji, Malla, Chedi, Vatsa, Kuru, Panchala, Matsya, Sursena, Avanti, Magadha, while, Asmaka, Gandhara and Kambhoja are beyond the sphere of my research. Some of these states were extensive and powerful. Their political role has been discussed in the light of the studies already made by earlier authorities.

Chapter three constitutes discussion on ‘*Food and Food Production*’. Here the food and food habits of the people are brought
to the fore as revealed by archaeo-literary evidences. This chapter also deals with the method of production of grains such as ploughing, sowing, reaping, and threshing Focus on sources of irrigation, as an essential ingredient of agriculture, is given its due place.

Chapter four deals with ‘Architecture’. It this wall, roof, floor of the houses, types of hearth and oven and various forms of sanitary arrangement such as privies, soak-pits, ring-wells, drain, street/road forms the aspects of our enquiry. Discussion on moats and fortifications of cities of the period for which archaeological informations are available is given due consideration.

The ‘Use of Various Objects in Daily Life and their Technology’ forms the fifth chapter. In this we have taken into consideration the several materials in metals, copper and iron, ivory, bone, stone and terracotta to analyze their uses and understand the technical attainment of the skill with which the producers of the objects had at their command with in the limitations they had to work. Here we have also attempted to understand the likes and dislikes of the people of the time from their possible aesthetic approach

Pottery, in their varied nature and types has been studies to realize the possible preferences in the food habits of the people
The diversifications of similar potteries have been studied from point of their commercialization.

This chapter also includes particular attention on punch-marked coins from the standpoint of their composition and technique of making. An attempt to establish the relation of these coins with the *karshapana* mentioned in literature, which records prices of certain articles of trade and commerce of the time, has been made.

The sixth and the last chapter concludes our study with discussions on the shortcomings of archaeological reports and literary records, and a reconstruction of the life of the people during the period under study. A broad picture as gleaned from the archaeo-literary evidences and the proper interpretation of various material remains has been given. Although we do not claim to have presented a complete picture of this period yet it is a modest effort in this direction. A summary of this is as follows:

Our study reveals that during the period under study there were effective changes in the life of the people. Progressive development in agriculture, metallurgical and industrial technology in comparison to the preceding period becomes evident. This change lead to the use of baked brick structures, planned pattern of habitation with high sense of sanitation, moats and fortifications, buildings of public utility, system of coinage and standardization in
the production of consumer goods from the point of view of arts and crafts, evidently these were the result of economic prosperity. During this period of urbanization the people had an organized social structure, diversity of occupation and were specialized in different arts and crafts. They were producing several items of high order such as NBP ware. The small village settlements of the preceding period were converted into towns with well defined boundaries. But at the same time the glamour of these new urban centres could not change the predominantly rural character of north Indian society.