Abstract

The present study is an attempt to provide a brief archaeological profile of the Copper-Bronze Age of Western Uttar Pradesh on the basis of explorations and excavations conducted so far in this region with special reference to the district of Muzaffarnagar. The district Muzaffarnagar is roughly rectangular in shape and lies between Lat. 29° 11' N and 29° 43' N and Long 77° 04' E and 78° 07' E. It is situated in the western part of the Uttar Pradesh in the doab of the Ganga and the Yamuna between the districts of Saharanpur on the north and Meerut on the south. Such studies may ultimately help in reconstructing the cultural personality of the area under study.

During 1980-89 a planned village to village exploration of district Muzaffarnagar was undertaken by the author. Besides the relics of the later cultural periods of the Iron Age, the pottery belonging to the Copper Bronze age found from different sites, can be divided basically into the following categories:

(A) Late Harappan
(B) Ochre Colour Pottery.

An attempt is being made here to discuss only the Late Harappan and OCP assemblage of the region. A large number of Late Harappan as well as OCP sites have been located during the last four decades. Our exploration has also revealed the cluster of late Harappan and OCP sites for the first time in this region.

During the course of exploration in the district Muzaffarnagar, 63 sites of Late Harappan and OCP were found (See the Appendix-I). Out of them 15 were already reported. The number of Late Harappan and OCP sites are 28 and 35, respectively, whereas 9 sites yielded mixed materials of both the cultures.

The Late Harappan and OCP settlements which are generally found located on all the river banks, of the region providing a picture of coexist-
ence of the two cultures. However, the Late Harappan site seems to be confined to western part of the district. The average of the sites' size is 200x200 sq. m. However, some sites like Alamgirpur (Muzaffamagar), Bhura, Kutubpur-Datana, Jhinjhana, Bhanti Khera 1&2, Jasala, Kailapur-Jasmor, etc. are considered bigger than average size. But almost all the sites are cut down due to rapid growth of agriculture.

Since the discovery and excavation of Late Harappan site of Alamgirpur in the district of Meerut nearly two hundred and fifty Late Harappan and OCP sites have been brought to light from Western Uttar Pradesh. A number of them were subjected to excavations also.

Some excavated sites like Alamgirpur, Hulas and Bargaon etc. have been categorised as Late Harappan while Ambkheri, Bahadarabad, Kaseri7 Allapur, Baheria, Jhinjhana and Hastinapur etc. have been categorised as OCP. The characteristic shapes of the Late Harappan and OCP as pointed out by Suraj Bhan are as follows:

**Late Harappan**

1. Vase with out-curved rim and ledged neck
2. Vase with flaring rim.
3. Vase with flanged rim.
4. Bowl with flaring rim.
5. Bowl with flanged rim.
6. Bowl with convex profile
8. Dish-on-stand with short drooping rim.
9. Dish-on-stand with long drooping rim.
10. Dish-on-stand with hooked rim.

**OCP**

1. Bowl-like lid with a central knob.
2. Bowl with convex profile and bluntea rim.
3. Squat stem of dish-on-stand
4. Loop handle vase
5. Channel spout
6. Tubular spout
7. Ring-footed bowl or vase

The common occurrence of the following pottery types in both the Late Harappan and OCP pottery assemblages are:
1. Jar with splayed out rim.
2. Storage jar with slightly beaded rim
4. Bowl with everted rim.
5. Bowl-like lid with central knob and
6. Dish-on-stand.

M.N. Deshpande has pointed out that the ceramic assemblage at Bargaon and Ambkheri shows a mixture of OCP, Late Harappan and cemetery H. The scholars like Gosh 1969; Mishra 1965; Handa 1968; Sharma 1979 are of opinion that OCP is nothing but a degenerate form of Harappan pottery. Another group of scholars like Lal 1954-55, 1968; Gupta 1963; Deshpande 1968; Dikshit 1969, 1971, etc., are of opinion that OCP represent an independent culture. It must also be added here that the OCP found from the excavations at Saipai & Atrakikhera in the central doab does not show any Harappan, Late harappan ceramic influence which is visible at Hulas, Alamgirpur, Bargaon, Ambkheri, Lal Qila and other sites.

Thus it appears that there are two separate cultural complexes existing in the region under discussion. They also seem to be contemporaneous due to occurrence of some common shapes.

Dikshit (1977-1980) has divided the Late Harappan complex into two phases. Phase I is characterised by typical Harappan pottery, carnelian, agate and faience beads, terracotta animal figurines, triangular, oval and round terracotta cakes, stone querns, pestles and burnt bricks. This phase is represented at sites like Alamgirpur in Meerut, Bhura, Kalhatti, Tatarpur Kalan and Hulas in Saharanpur district. Dikshit thinks that the presence of inscribed pottery at Alamgirpur suggest some temporal proximity to the urban phase of the Harappan culture. However, some sites in Muzaffarnagar district situated on Krishni, Hindon and Katha Nala like Bhanti Khera 1 and 2, Doongr, Jasala, Jandheri, Kamaruddin Nagar, Alamgirpur Samalkha, Thana Bhawan, Bhura, Hatchhoya 1 & 2, Rahatpur, Un etc. have yielded typically mature Harappan material such as, goblet, beaker, perforated jars, wheel (hub is visible) terracotta bangles, cakes etc. These sites are more or less akin to Alamgirpur and Hulas.

A Ghosh and Dikshit define the late Harappan culture as deurbanised mature Harappan culture. But in the light of aforesaid evidene will it not be proper to designate these sites as contemporary Mature Harappan vil-
lages rather than as 'Late Harappan'. Absence of any typical urban features like fortification, town planning and architecture need not necessarily be considered to be a criterion for Late assignment in chronology. Perhaps these above noted sites along with Hulas and Alamgirpur were contemporaneous to Harappan settlement due to occurrence of not only mature Harappan types but also continuity of some pre Harappan features.

Another important aspect is related with the chronology of these cultures are Carbon and Thermolumincent dates from OCP culture at sites like Jodhpura and Jhinjhana goes back to 2650 BC. Similarly 2 dates from Hulas as 2450 BC and 3000 BC suggest that a phase of these cultures did exist even prior to the mature Harappan phase.

To conclude it may be reasonable to observe that probably there existed three early, middle and late phases of the OCP cultural complex as has roughly been pointed out by Sahi (1994,68). Some of the Late Harappan sites may also be contemporaneous to the pre or mature Harappan cultures. Thus the Late Harappan terminology given to all the sites of the upper Gangetic doab need a chronological reconsideration.*

In the previous chapters we have seen that the comprehensive archaeological investigation and exploration in the district Muzaffarnagar, U.P., have led to reveal a rich repertoire of ancient material. This consist of stone artifacts, earthen wares, sculptures, coins, seals, terracotta and many others objects of great artistic value. The material has thrown a flood of light on the antiquity of this region. Moreover, these help us in understanding the early history of our region as well as country. It is, therefore, worthwhile to draw a concise picture of the ancient life of people inhabiting this region on the basis of these informations.

Preceeding and during my work some scholars like M.N. Deshpande former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India and his team have done some exploration work during the early sixtees. K.N. Dikshit, the Former Director in Archaeological Survey of India further undertook some work in the year 1979-80. R.C. Gaur and Makkhan Lal did some work in the later part of the eighties. However, their works have been duly

*Acknowledgement: I am sincerely thankful to Professor M.D.N. Sahi for the help and guidance in this work.
acknowledged wherever necessary.

During the course of my exploration in the area under study 171 sites have been discovered out of them 52 have already been explored. Some of them are of considerable importance having variety of potteries and a number of antiquities representing different cultures which flourished in the Ganga-Yamuna doab. In addition to antiquities viz coins (silver & copper) and inscriptions were also found. I have studied every site of the district carefully. Besides, these I have also tried to throw light on their significance. The reader will find these in the foregoing pages.

Archaeological Sites : District Muzaffarnagar U.P.

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<th>Culture</th>
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Not even a single site is, however, has been taken for excavation, so far, neither by Archaeological Survey of India nor by any other institution. Inspite of the fact that the several sites in the district Muzaffarnagar are promising. The fact is that excavations have been carried out in adjoining area viz. Hulas, Bargaon, Alamgirpur, Allahpur, Hastinapur, etc. They have encountered the material culture belonging to Late Harappan, OCP, PGW, NBPW, BS, Red wares of Historical periods. It is sufficient to confirm the continuity of the settlements in the region at least from the proto-Historic period. In order to assess the archaeological potentialities of the district Muzaffarnagar we took some exploration work. The result has been extremely encouraging. During the course of exploration conducted by the author in the region under study, the pottery found from different sites, can be divided into following categories:

a. Late Harappan
b. Ochre Colour Pottery
c. Painted & Plain Grey Ware
d. Northern Black Polished Ware
e. Early Historic
The Ganga-Yamuna doab occupies a very significant place in political, cultural and economic history of India. Therefore, it is worthwhile to review the results of the chronological sequence and geographical situation of the archaeological sites of the region under study right from the proto-historic times to the early historic period.

The district Muzaffarnagar is rich in its cultural heritage. As already said. However, the sequence of cultures from about the middle of the second millennium B.C. onwards is now known without any significant gap. The various cultures of the doab area, however, identified mainly with the help of distinctive ceramics and other associated cultural findings.

A large number of Late Harappan as well as Ochre Colour Pottery sites have been located during the last three decades. During the course of exploration the author has discovered 28 Late Harappan sites out of them 12 sites were already located as far as this district is concerned. Generally the Late Harappan site are confined to its western area along with Katha Nala, Krishni, Nadi, Hindon Nadi etc. all the tributaries of the Yamuna.

As regards the occurrence of the Ochre Colour Pottery it may be stated that it is found at fairly a good number of sites in this district of Muzaffarnagar. There are only 3 sites discovered so far in the area under study before the author could start the work. However, total 32 OCP sites have been located in the area. No copper hoards could be discovered during the course of my exploration.

The Painted Grey Ware culture occupies a very significant place in the archaeology of Ganga-Yamuna doab. It is one of the most important proto-historic culture of India not only because of its association with the Aryans and the early use of iron, but also because it brought the region on the threshold of urbanization. It brought about major changes in life and culture of the people.

The concentration of the Painted Grey Ware sites in the district Muzaffarnagar are along Hindon Nadi and Kali Nadi. Total 63 PGW sites have been explored so far in which 21 sites were already reported earlier as far as this district is concerned.

In comparison with the other cultures found in this district NBPW is
lees in number which is generally found along Budhi Ganga and occasion­ally on Kali Nadi and Saloni Nadi. Since this ware is found rarely, it is obvious that NBPW culture was not popular in this region particularly in the area under study. However, associated cultural material indicates that the area flourished during this period also. With the beginning of NBPW culture we come down to the period of well documented history. In the early historic and historic period the whole doab was well populated. In the Muzaffarnagar district as many as 71 sites of this period has been located. Out of them 17 sites were already reported.

The medieval period is generally represented by the red ware with many shapes. It is well documented period supported by the architectural remains and other literary sources. Apart from usual shapes in the red ware Glazed ware wader also found occasionnaiy. Total 143 Medieval sites have been explored by the researcher, out of them 35 sites have already reported.

As regards the contribution of this district to the repertoire of terracotta art it is quite remarkable. Probably, the tradition of ceramic art reached its culmination in the field of terracotta too. These includes several terracotta objects such as human figurines, toy objects beads and discs of various shapes and sizes animal figurines gamesman, cakes dabbers etc. which were collected from the different sites of the district during the course of exploration. From Rai a thick grey ware sherd with a graffiti in Brahmi script, a sealing bearing Brahmi ( ) 'm' and a coin mould were collected.

The site Niamu, Churawala, Kailapur Jasmor represents a rich cultural heritage. Apart from the different types of pottery these sites have yielded a good number of stone objects. From Niamu a beautiful image of Varahraj was unearthed while a local people was digging. A fine broken piece of door jamb was found from Kailapur-Jasmor. From Churawala a beautiful images of a lady holding her left leg, a lady drummer, image of Laxmi were collected. At present all these are housed in Govt. Museum, Mazaffarnagar. Some chert blades were also reported from the Kailapur-Jasmor.

Some coins were also collected, the most remarkable among are them two silver coins found from Niamu and Jaroda. The coin found from Niamu is of well known Sahi coins of Samantdeva. The date of the coins is C. 9th-10th century A.D. Another one belongs to Shah Alam bearing some
persina legend. Other coins found from the district are the fulus of Akbar’s period. Some other gold, silver and copper coins are reported from the district Muzaffamagar belonging to the Sri Samantadeva Shah Alam, Muhammad Sah, Tughalaq Shah, Sher Shah, Farrukhsiyar, Akbar Shahjahan etc.

The district consists many fine pieces of architecture in the form of temples, mosques, gateways, Havelies, forts, tanks, baolis, mostly belonging to medieval and pre-modern period. Among them Ghausgarh and Morna mosques are grand in design and refinement. Other remarkable architectural places are located at Majhera, Jansath, Mirapur, Kairana etc. Similarly, the mosques at Jhinjhana, Kairana and Thana Bhawan are splendid in scale. There are two ancient temples at Charthawal one dating back to Jahangir’s period and other about 500 years old.

It is worth noting that main cultural sites in the western part of Uttar Pradesh are on the banks of the tributaries of the Ganga and Yamuna. The important tributaries of this region are Kali Nadi, Hindon Nadi, Krishni Nadi Katha Nala, etc. While the cultural sites in the eastern region are mainly on the high banks of the main rivers that is the Ganga and the Yamuna. The main cause of this pattern of settlement seems that because the tributaries of western Uttar Pradesh are trouble free even in the rainy/flood season. They spread their water calmly in wide area on both sides leaving a rich alluvium deposite for cultivation, while in the eastern part of the Uttar Pradesh the tributaries viz. Gandak, Kosi, etc. are turbulent rivers. They play great havoc in region during their flood season. At the time of flood many villages on their banks are engulfed under water. Therefore, the settlers in that region decided to settle down on the high banks of the main rivers instead of their tributaries.

As appears from the evidence that this region was suitable for human occupation and it was a main centre of attraction for the early settlers. Here were all facilities viz. climate, food supply water and vegetation available for the early settlers. They had agriculture based economy and led a settled life. This fact is clearly attested by the presence of post-holes in the OCP level at Pariar in district Unnao and Lal Qila in district Bulandshahar.

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