CHAPTER I

Introduction
A great deal of research has been carried out on different aspects of the Harappan Civilization since the discovery of the two important sites; Harappa and Mohenjodaro in Indus Valley, more than seven decades ago. In spite of all these efforts, the Harappan culture still remains an enigma, as precious little has been understood about this dynamic culture. With every new site discovered, a new facet of the culture come into fore. However, in recent years, with the input of new scientific and methodological approaches, the understanding about this enigmatic culture has increased many folds. As a result, many old concepts about its beginning, development and survival have either been expanded or replaced by fresh hypotheses.

With their innovative ideas and stupendous adaptive skills, the Harappans survived for a long period of time spanning about four millennia showing stages of development, maturity and decline. One of the important aspects of the Harappans that kept them in good stead and surviving for such a long time was their apparent mobility and proliferation over a large area consisting of a number of eco-zones with diverse environmental variables and economic incentives (Chitalwala 1989). The enterprising Harappans demonstrated their skill in selecting suitable environmental niches during their multi-directional expansion. These factors and accessibility to natural resources were largely
responsible for the growth, expansion and long survival of the Harappa culture. Every region, it seems, have been occupied by the Harappans for a specific purpose, for procuring raw material, availability of suitable agriculture land or excellent pastures for there animal folks.

The gradual development of the Harappan community from the Neolithic phase has been traced within the Indian Sub-Continent. The developmental phases of the Harappa culture has been termed differently by various scholars. Traditionally, the Harappan Civilization was understood by the material culture recovered from the sites of Mohenjodaro, Harappa and other major Urban centers. This phase came to be known as the Mature Phase of the Harappa culture or 'Mature Harappan culture'. Anything that stratigraphically proceeded this phase was identified as 'pre-Harappan culture' or 'proto-Harappan culture'. The phase succeeding the Mature Harappan occupation was termed as 'Late Harappan culture'. However, the significance of these terms were not clearly defined and have been used in different contexts. Mughal (1970: 359-378) developed and defined the term 'Pre-Early Harappan' and 'Early Harappan' for the incipient phase of the Harappa culture. Early Harappan for him is the assemblage that stratigraphically precedes the Mature Harappan occupation and contains a number of cultural traits that are characteristic of the subsequent mature phase. The Pre-Early Harappan occupation falls between the pre-pottery Neolithic and the Early Harappan phase.

Possehl developed an alternative scheme describing the Harappan occupation as Pre-Urban, Urban and Post-Urban phases (Possehl 1977, 1990). The Pre-Urban phase goes back to the initial development of food production in the Indus Valley and encompasses the Pre-Early and Early Harappan phases of
Mughal. He, however, clearly defines the little understood Post-Urban phase of the Harappa culture.

For the present study I have followed Mughal's terminology, Early Harappan, to designate the phase immediately prior to the Mature Phase as the term has some merit and is very clearly defined by Mughal (Mughal 1970: 6).

Gujarat seems to have possessed remarkable potentials during the Harappan times, as it has proved to be one of the densely populated regions in the entire Harappan domain. Extensive studies since 1930's has not only led to the discovery of more than five hundred sites, showing different degrees of Harappan affiliation, but also substantially increased our understanding of the Harappa culture in Gujarat.

Until recently, it was assumed that the earliest settled Chalcolithic communities in Gujarat were associated with the Urban/Mature phase of the Harappa culture (circa 2500-2000 BC). Rao (1979) during his Lothal (Figure 1.1) excavation found at the earliest levels a set of ceramics showing some characteristic features different from the Harappan pottery. He termed the pottery as Micaceous Red ware and assigned them to a regional ceramic group with a possible early origin. Even Sankalia hypothesized an early origin of the

1 Due to higher level of sub-soil water at Lothal the natural soil could not be reached during the excavation. Therefore, the early appearance of the Micaceous Red ware using people has not been clearly determined, though the earliest excavated level have yielded an increasing quantity of Micaceous Red ware with a corresponding decrease in the Harappan wares. Rao postulated that 'Lothal was not a cultural vacuum when the Harappans arrived here. It was a small village standing on a river bank and occupied by an indigenous Chalcolithic folk who used a distinct ceramic ware....' (Rao 1979: 24).
GUJARAT: Pre-/Non-Harappan Sites

- Bunias Pre-Harappan Sindh related pottery
- Mature/Classical Harappan
- Sorath Harappan

Approx. Area of Distribution

Modern Cities
Regional Chalcolithic
Bunias Pre-Harappan Sindh related pottery
Mature/Classical Harappan
Sorath Harappan

Pre-Harappan
Bunias and Early Harappan Sindh
Heated pottery
Anara Pottery Pre-Non-Harappan
Pre-Prothas and Prophas: Pre-Harappan and non-Harappan?
Patan Ware: Pre-Non-Harappan
Micaceous Red Ware: Non-Harappan

GUJARAT: Pre-/Non-Harappan Sites

Figure 1.1 Map Showing Chalcolithic Sites in Gujarat (After Sonawane & Sjöström 1996).
Micaceous Red ware at Lothal and Rangpur (1974: 369 & 379). However, no serious consideration was given to these findings, as they were not found from any secured independent context².

Prabhas Patan (Figure 1.1), a site on the southern coast of Saurashtra, was re-excavated during early 70's by the Deccan College and the Gujarat State Archaeology Department. Here, resting on the natural soil was deposited a characteristic ceramic industry represented by a Burnished Red or Grey ware, Black-and-Red ware, Incised Red ware and fine Grey ware along with a few small finds like segmented faience beads and a flake-blade industry of chalcedony. This period has been termed as Pre-Prabhas culture and underlies the Period II - Early Prabhas culture. Two radiocarbon dates for Pre-Prabhas phase give a time bracket of 3000-2800 BC (Dhavalikar and Possehl 1992)³ (Table 1.1). This occupation, thus, provides the evidence of a settled Chalcolithic community in Gujarat at least half a millennium prior to the incoming of the Harappans.

Explorations and excavations in north Gujarat during the last two decades demonstrated that the region was occupied by a regional Chalcolithic culture termed later as ‘Anarta Tradition’ (Ajithprasad and Sonawane 1993). This Chalcolithic culture have a ceramic repertoire consisting of Gritty Red ware, Fine Red ware, Burnished Red ware and Burnished Grey ware. Their independent existence and early origin was proved from the excavation at

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² However, an analysis of the Micaceous Red ware and its early origin has been attempted by Herman and Krishnan (1994: 225-243).

³ These two samples are from different sources, one comes from shell and other from charcoal. These two sources give a very consistent date and enhance the credibility of the samples.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>SITE</th>
<th>STRATIGRAPHIC CONTEXT</th>
<th>PHASE</th>
<th>LAB NO.</th>
<th>HALF LIFE</th>
<th>CALIBRATED</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
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<td>2640-2150 BC</td>
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<td>5050±110</td>
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Loteshwar, situated in Sami Taluka of Mehsana District (Figure 1.1). The Chalcolithic occupation at the site had an existence during the second half of the fourth millennium BC as seen from the two radiocarbon dates (Sonawane and Ajithprasad 1994: 136) (Table 1.1).

Padri, another site in the southern coast of Saurashtra in Bhavnagar District (Figure 1.1), gave evidence of an early origin of another ceramic tradition named after the type site as Padri ware. An independent existence of this ware has been seen at the lowest level of the mound having a deposit of 60cm. designated by the excavator as Period III. Other than pottery, a large number of steatite micro beads, a globular bead of carnelian and a few short blades of chert have been found from this level (Shinde 1998: 177). Period II is found immediately above Period III and belongs to the mature phase of the Harappa culture. Two radiocarbon dates for Period III-Padri culture gives a time bracket of 3500-2900 BC (Shinde 1998: 173) (Table 1.1).

Another ceramic tradition, which is the most predominant ceramic type in the whole of Saurashtra, belongs to the so-called Sorath ‘Harappan’. It has been identified as the regional manifestation of the Harappa culture in Gujarat and is found associated with the earliest phase of the Mature/Urban Harappan culture upto the Post-Urban Harappan phase, atleast in Saurashtra. At Lothal, the Sorath ‘Harappan’ pottery group has been associated with the first occupation of the Harappans at the site, which is dated to about 2500 BC. At Bagasra, a Mature/Urban Harappan site situated on northern part of Saurashtra and being excavated by M.S. University of Baroda, the appearance of the Sorath ‘Harappan’ is seen from the middle phase of the Mature Harappan occupation, which can be tentatively date to 2200-2100 BC. Rojdi, a site in central Saurashtra, is an exclusively Sorath ‘Harappan’ site and is devoid of
any Sindhi Harappan artifacts. The earliest phase, Rojdi A, gives a large number of radiocarbon dates and at least five of them show a date as early as 2650 BC (Possehl and Raval 1989: 12) (Table 1.1).

There are other sites in Saurashtra, like Nageswar (Figure 1.1), which is a pure ‘Sindhi Harappan’ site, devoid of any Sorath ‘Harappan’ materials. This indicates that the Sorath ‘Harappan’ was not always necessarily associated with the Mature/Urban Harappans in Gujarat or vice-versa. Even the association of the Sorath ‘Harappans’ with the ‘Sindhi Harappans’ was at different stages of occupation at various settlements. The Sorath ‘Harappan’ ceramic, it seems, belongs to a group of people who were the indigenous people of Saurashtra, having an early origin and later came in contact with the Mature/Urban Harappan community. The antecedent phase of the Sorath ‘Harappan’ is still not clearly known and only future work in this direction would further clear the picture. The above evidence notwithstanding, it will be unjustifiable to call them as regional manifestation of the Harappans. It will, thus, be more realistic to regard the Sorath ‘Harappans’ as another regional Chalcolithic culture of Gujarat, which co-existed with the Harappans in Saurashtra, and Gujarat.

Dholavira (Figure 1.1) is another site in Gujarat, which revealed the pre-Harappan occupation at the earliest level. It gave evidence of a well-developed fortified settlement from the very first phase of occupation. However, the evidences indicate that the first settlers of Dholavira came with a prior knowledge of a planned settlement, metallurgy and developed ceramic type. As very little has been published about Dholavira, other than the town planning, nothing much is known about the early inhabitants of the site (Bisht 1989-90, 1997).
It has, therefore, been proved beyond doubt that Gujarat was already inhabited by a few settled Chalcolithic communities at the time of the penetration of the Mature/Urban Harappans into this region. These were the pre/non-Harappan indigenous Chalcolithic communities of Gujarat.

The author classifies these Chalcolithic cultures as the regional pre/non-Harappan Chalcolithic communities. These were the population that developed independently and though later came in contact with the Harappans, maintained their own identity. But when a settlement is denoted as Early Harappan, to the author, it means the early phase of the Harappa culture or what Mughal describes as ‘Early Harappans’ (Mughal 1970: 6). Early Harappan is the phase when the Harappa culture was in the process of developing into a Mature/Urban culture. There is a clear distinction between these two pre-Mature Harappan cultures. Early Mature/Urban Harappan is a mosaic of different pre-urban cultures like Amri, Kot Diji and Sothi, which one way or the other helped in the making of Mature/Urban Harappan culture. But how much the regional Chalcolithic cultures of Gujarat, such as the Micaceous Red ware, Anarta ware, Pre-Prabhas and the Padri ware cultures contributed to the development of the Harappa culture is still uncertain. Therefore, as the present evidence stands, it is appropriate to designate separate identity and nomenclature to these two cultural groups.

The notion that the Mature/Urban Harappans were the first to have moved into the region of Gujarat is now proved otherwise with the recent research in north Gujarat. The present work deals with the movement of the Early Harappan elements from Sind, further south into north Gujarat. This was first evidenced from the extended inhumation and pot burials unearthed from Nagwada, a site in Surendranagar District of north Gujarat (Figure 1.1). The pottery found
from these burials as grave goods do not show similarities with the classical Mature Harappan pottery, rather it shows affiliation with the vessel forms recovered from the Early Harappan levels at Kot Diji, Amri, Balakot and Nal (Hegde et.al. 1988). Analogous pottery types have also been reported from secondary fractional burials from the cemetery at Surkotada (Rao 1990), in Kutch (Figure 1.1). These too are comparable with the Early Harappan pottery of Sind and Baluchistan. The presence of the Early Harappan ceramic from the burials at Nagwada from the lowest levels and the recent findings of Pre/Early Harappan levels at Dholavira has accentuated the need for evaluating the Early Harappan occupation in Gujarat.

The pottery associated with the burials at Nagwada since then has been termed as ‘Burial Pottery’, because of its context of occurrence as seen from Surkotada and Santhli (Figure 1.1). The latter site, situated in Banaskantha District of north Gujarat, yielded two extended burials with ceramic similar to the one found from the burials at Nagwada. However, the discovery of this ceramic from the regular habitation levels at Moti Pipli and Mathutra (Figure 1.1) indicated that this group of pottery was not confined to the burials only. Thus, an attempt is made here to systematically evaluate this ceramic group and clarify its status within the ceramic assemblage of north Gujarat. The main aim here is to review the ‘ritualistic status’ bestowed earlier to this ceramic group and to understand the nature of its existence.

Therefore, the present study was initiated with the following objectives:

1) To identify the sites from the region of north Gujarat that shows similar ceramics found along with the burials at Nagwada and Surkotada.
2) To investigate the significance of this group of pottery in the overall cultural assemblage of north Gujarat and its place in the Harappan cultural milieu.

3) To correlate these ceramics with the Early Harappan pottery in general and to check the extent of semblance between these two ceramic groups.

4) To see the nature and distribution of the sites yielding Burial/Early Harappan type of pottery in north Gujarat.

5) To establish the chronological position of these sites in north Gujarat.

6) To verify the proposition regarding the existence of the Early Harappan stratum in Gujarat.

Since the discovery of this ceramic from the burials at Nagwada, ten more sites have been discovered within the region of north Gujarat. These new discoveries question the earlier notion that the pottery was exclusively associated with the Chalcolithic burials. Hence, in the present state of understanding, it would be more appropriate to associate these ceramic types with the Early Harappan phase.

Most of the sites in north Gujarat show the Early Harappan ceramic in association with Anarta pottery, which can be dated to the second half of the fourth millennium BC. Excavations at Datrana (Figure 1.1), in Banaskantha District, revealed the Early Harappan pottery along with the Pre-Prabhas ware. These evidences along with the similarity of the pottery with the Pre/Early Harappan ceramics from Sind and Baluchistan substantiate the notion that this
group of pottery from north Gujarat belong to the Early Harappan phase.

Most of the settlements belonging to the Early Harappan phase in north Gujarat, as will be seen later, are small in size and yield very meagre amount of habitation deposit. However, they are still useful in estimating the extent of Early Harappan occupation in this part of Gujarat. The data from these settlements can also be helpful in determining the economic variability and adaptive capability of the Early Harappan community.