CHAPTER VII

Conclusion
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The evidences presented in the preceding chapters confirm to the movement of the Early Harappan community in north Gujarat region during the first half of the third millennium BC. Though no absolute dates for this phase are available at present, an attempt has been made in the later part of this chapter to relatively date the Early Harappan occupation in this region. The artifacts recovered from Surkotada, Nagwada, Moti Pipli, Mathutra, Datrana etc. do indicate that the Early Harappans ventured into the region of Kutch and north Gujarat. The reasons for this adventure are ambiguous but one of the important reasons might be the need of fresh pastures for their growing number of herds.

The region of north Gujarat during the early third millennium BC was not altogether a wild habitat, exploited by the Mesolithic hunter-gatherers. Settled Chalcolithic communities were properly entrenched in this region at the time of penetration of the Early Harappans. These were the regional pre/non-Harappan communities, the Anarta and the pre-Prabhas people. The Early Harappans at their arrival in north Gujarat came in contact with the Anarta or the Gritty Red ware using people. Their coexistence is seen at many settlements.

Even the Anarta people, from the very beginning, before they came in contact
with the Early Harappans in north Gujarat, exhibited lineage with the pre-Early Harappans, atleast in pottery. The use of white pigment for decoration and use of bi-chrome and polychrome decorations on pottery does show an Amri-Sothi influence. There are certain features of the Hakra ware as well. It is, at times, even difficult to distinguish the Anarta pottery from the Early Harappan ceramic assemblage. The influence might not be because of the interaction with the Early Harappans in north Gujarat, rather, it is possible that they might share the same ancestry.

The above evidence shows that the Early Harappans were properly entrenched into north Gujarat and got accustomed with the local environmental conditions. The association of local ceramic cultures like the Anarta ware and pre-Prabhas ware with the Early Harappan pottery suggests some kind of interaction mechanism existing between these communities in Gujarat.

**CHARACTERISTIC OF THE EARLY HARAPPANS IN NORTH GUJARAT**

The Early Harappan assemblage in north Gujarat is mainly represented by ceramics, along with a few other artifacts. The ceramic assemblage exhibits an amalgamation of Early Harappan cultural traits of various region. As seen in the previous chapter, the ceramic features from north Gujarat are analogous to the Kot Dijian and Sothi pottery. The vessel shapes, broad band at the neck, loops at the shoulder etc. all show the Kot Dijian feature, while the bowls with everted rim and the use of white pigment for decoration show an Sothi influence.

Apart from this, some features of Amri, Nal and Balakotian pottery are also seen
here. This indicates that the Early Harappan accumulated various traits within their strand by the time they arrived in the region of north Gujarat. It is possible that the movement of the Early Harappans into this region was during later part of the Early Harappans phase, at the time, when different traits were beginning to conglomerate and emerge as a single/uniform culture. It might also be possible that the people before moving into this region came in contact with different groups and adopted a few traits from each of these groups.

**COURSE OF EARLY HARAPPAN MOVEMENT**

Now the question arises as to which route did the Harappans pursued to reach north Gujarat and from where did they migrate. Towards the west of north Gujarat, the furthermost settlement with Early Harappan assemblage is Surkotada. However, the Early Harappan ceramics have been found mainly from the burials and only a few from the habitation level. Dholavira gives evidence of Early Harappan ceramic, but in a very insignificant amount, and is predominated by an indigenous pre/non-Harappan pottery. Towards north, the Early Harappan settlement in north Gujarat extends upto Suneth, bordering the Great Rann of Kutch. Sites on the southeastern Sind have been located upto Gharo Biro and Kot Khori (Khan 1981). These sites have an Early Harappan/Kot Dijian occupational deposit. Possibilities are that the Early Harappans might have travelled southeastwards from Sind crossing the Rann into north Gujarat.

Recently, Dr. Vasant Shinde of the Deccan College, Pune, explored the area south of Kalibangan along the dried bed of River Saraswati. He located a few sites yielding ceramic assemblage similar to those found from north Gujarat.
(Shinde: personal communication). Therefore, another probability is that the people from Rajasthan moved further southward towards north Gujarat. Both the possibilities have their own merit and cannot be discounted till further exploration is carried out in these areas.

The next logical question that arises is the motive of the Early Harappans to travel to a rather hostile territory. The reasons might be either because of the population pressure they had to move out of the core region and spread out into a new, hitherto unexplored territory or in the quest for raw materials for their ever-growing industries. The Early Harappans arrived in the region of north Gujarat which has a few sources of raw materials as mentioned in the third chapter. The picture can be more clear if one glances at the settlement pattern and subsistence economy of the Early Harappan community of north Gujarat.

**SETTLEMENT AND SUBSISTANCE PATTERN**

If one glances at the pattern of settlements of the Early Harappan community of north Gujarat, it does not differ much from the pattern of settlements adopted by the Chalcolithic communities who continued to thrive in this region even during the subsequent centuries. Almost all the Chalcolithic settlements in north Gujarat are situated on top of the fossilized sand dunes. These dunes are invariably associated with small a depression that accumulates monsoon run-off and carries water for at least seven to eight months.

The present study shows that the sites belonging to the Early Harappan phase are very rare in the southwestern part of north Gujarat - in the Rupen estuary. Only two sites, Nagwada and Panchasar, were so far located in this part of north
Gujarat. The number increases to nine as one moves further northwards in the estuary of Banas and further north. No such sites are reported from the estuary of Saraswati.

Of the eleven sites belonging to Early Harappan phase, six have been excavated till now. It was observed that the Early Harappan pottery occurred only in the burial context at two sites where as the other four yielded the same from the habitation levels. It is interesting to note that so far, there are no evidence of burials in the latter sites. As the information available for the rest of the sites are from surface survey, it is difficult to ascertain the context of this pottery. But the amount of pottery recovered from these explored sites and their distribution on the mound\(^1\), along with the presence of this group from the habitation at few excavated sites, suggest that they belonged to the habitation level.

The settlements belonging to the Early Harappan phase are very small, the smallest being .01 hectare. The artifacts scattered on the mound are found in small clusters and the habitation deposits are also very superficial, with the exception at Moti Pipli. No structural remains were encountered at any of the sites, though a few post-holes were found from the same levels of the burials at Nagwada. The important aspect in the settlement pattern of this community is that the settlements are situated within the radius of about 20km. from Moti Pipli (Figure 7.1).

Moti Pipli, measuring about 3 hectare with a deposit of 50cm., is comparatively a large site. This is the only site, which gave evidence of a few artifacts of this

\(^1\) Though the Early Harappan pottery is found in small clusters from most of the explored sites, it does not indicate that the ceramic had come from some disturbed burials.
Figure 7.1 Distance of Early Harappan Settlements of North Gujarat from Moti Pipili
culture other than pottery. Because of the badly disturbed nature of the mound, no structural remains could be unearthed. Small-scale craft activity of shell and stone was carried out at the site, evidence of which can be seen from the industrial waste and debitage. Few copper implements have also been found from the same context.

Industrial debitage and finished products of stone, shell and terracotta suggests that some kind of manufacturing activity was carried out at Moti Pipili and local resources were exploited for acquiring raw materials. Metal was not unknown to the inhabitants of Moti Pipili as quite a number of copper artifacts were recovered from the site.

It is possible that the Early Harappans were attracted to the region to extract these raw materials. Gastropods like *Chicoreus ramosus*, *Fasiolaria trapezium*, *Turbinella pyrum*, *Lambis truncata sebae* etc. are found along the southern shore of Gulf of Kutch while Ratan Timba in Banaskantha District and Mardek Bet in Little Rann of Kutch are known for rich deposit of semi-precious stones. Similar evidence is seen at Datrana where the lithic industry might have attracted the Early Harappans whose presence is seen at the later phase of the occupation at the site.

Another cause that might have attracted the Early Harappans into this region is the vast and rich pasturelands. The sites in the region of north Gujarat are found in clusters, located close to each other on the margins of the eastward extension of the depression which connects the Great and the Little Rann of Kutch. Clustering of sites could also be seen around Korda and Jhandada, on either side of a very large depression, locally known as *Sandher* (Ajithprasad and
Sonawane 1993). These low-lying, flat wastelands generally remain marshy throughout the year and are designated as salty waste. Although they are unsuitable for agriculture, contiguous land around such depression forms good pastureland for cattle and sheep/goat, as they support many types of grass. Fodder like bokana (Cressa critica), kharidhar (Aeluropus logopaides), soma (Echinochloa colonum), jinko soma (Panicum flavidum), zinzvo (Chlaris barbats), jejur (Crotalaria medicuginea), dhaman (Cenchrus ciliaris), ukarel (Heliotropium ovalifolium), mancho (Ductyloctenium aegyptium), kantari (Oligochaeta ramosa), dabhdo (Desmostachia bipinna), sangatara (Crotalaria baurhea), dhaman (Cenchrus setigerus), mansu (Chlaris montana), sukali (Heteropogeon contortus), garadu (Polytoca barbata), bhatdu (Themeda ciliate) and lapdi (Arijtida redacts) (Chokshi 1991: 61) have an excellent growth here and help enhance higher milk production due to higher protein content which induces lactation in cattle.

The spread of the artifacts, thin habitation deposits and close clustering of the sites with very few permanent structural remains indicate that these were temporary settlements or pastoral camps, occupied seasonally. A large number of cattle and sheep bones collected from the sites indicate that they formed an important part in the economy of the Chalcolithic settlements.

Even today pastoralism plays an important role in the subsistence economy of the people in north Gujarat and looking at the evidences gathered from the settlements, it can be postulated that pastoral activity was prevalent even during the Harappan times in this region. Agriculture, if at all practised, might have been on a small scale.
From the evidences gathered from the region of north Gujarat, it could be inferred that their adaptive responses to the ecological situations might have included agro-pastoralism. The Early Harappans are known to have utilized different ecological niches within the Greater Indus Valley, including different responses in the form of subsistence practices and cultural articulation as seen in southeastern Sind, the Gomal Valley, Bannu Basin and Cholistan (Mughal 1990: 187).

It is known that certain kind of exchange system exists between the migratory hunter-gatherers and pastoralists with the settled communities. At present also such exchange systems are seen where the pastoralists and hunter-gatherers sell young stocks, dairy products, woolen textiles etc. or honey, animal skins, baskets and other products of the wild and buy cereals, cloth, tobacco, and iron axes and knives (Allchin 1977). They also act as carriers of all sorts of goods and sometimes as labourers.

The interaction of the sedentary and non-sedentary population during the Harappan times has been demonstrated at Lothal and Langnaj (Possehl 1980: 67-77). A similar trade network might have been prevalent in north Gujarat where the Early Harappan pastoralists procured and traded raw materials to the settled population.

A complex interaction system might have been prevalent in north Gujarat where the pastoralists carried out dual activity of herding their animals as well as procuring raw materials.

The site of Moti Pipli might have commanded a special place in the Early
Harappan occupation in north Gujarat. The location of other settlements of the Early Harappan community within a radius of 20 km. from Moti Pipli also proves the strategic importance of the site among the Early Harappan settlements.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLY HARAPPANS IN NORTH GUJARAT

The time bracket for the movement of the Early Harappans into the region of north Gujarat is still surrounded with uncertainty. At present, there are no radiocarbon dates available for the Early Harappan phase from any of the excavated sites in north Gujarat. However, at most of the sites, this group of ceramic is associated with Anarta pottery. The Anarta tradition is dated to as early as second half of the fourth millennium BC from Loteshwar (Sonawane and Ajithprasad 1994: 136, Table-5)² (Table 1.1). Moti Pipli gave evidence of Early Harappan pottery in association with Anarta pottery and a few artifacts of Urban Harappan phase which might have just started appearing. It can, thus, be said that the site of Moti Pipli and the existence of Early Harappan ceramic can be dated just before the transformation of Harappa culture into a Mature/Urban phase or the transition phase between the Early and the Mature Harappan phase.

At Nagwada, the burials with Early Harappan pottery have been found within the habitation area dug into the natural soil and probably belonged to layer 5 occupation. No habitation deposit of the Early Harappans have been found from the site. The lowest level of occupation is dominated by Anarta pottery, though Harappan ceramic is also present at this level. While at Datrana IV, this group

² This tradition however has a long life span continuing up to the Post-Urban Harappan phase.
of ceramic has been found at the fag end of the Chalcolithic occupation, which is dominated by pre-Prabhas ceramic (Ajithprasad 1998). The pre-Prabhas culture at Prabhas Patan (Somnath) has been dated to circa 3000-2800 BC (Dhavalikar and Possehl 1992: 72-73).

Reviewing the burials from Surkotada, Possehl (1997: 84) states that "... the remains indicate that they (the burials) are probably a part of the Early Harappan, or the Early/Mature Harappan Transition of Kutch". In the same review, however, Possehl remarks that "... while the pottery from Surkotada cemetery is Early Harappan in style, it does not necessarily follow that it dates to the time prior to the advent of the Mature Harappan phase". The burials have been designated to Surkotada IA, though they have not been stratigraphically correlated. Though a few sherds of Early Harappan ceramics were reported from the early levels of the habitation at Surkotada, the context were not properly described. It is possible that the earliest phase may fall within the time-bracket of the Early-Mature Transitional phase to which these burials belonged. The present evidences from Nagwada, Moti Pipli, Datrana and Surkotada suggest a time bracket of 2800 BC to 2550 BC for the penetration of Early Harappans into Kutch and north Gujarat.

SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- The Early Harappan occupation in north Gujarat have been found associated with the regional pre/non-Harappan occupation at most of the sites. Most of these have been found from the same stratified levels and no specific areas for these different cultures have been demarcated. It is certain that these
varied groups of people had a peaceful coexistence in this region but the kind of interacting mechanism existed between them is still uncertain. The evidence at present is very limited and as a result there has been too much emphasis on pottery. This hinders in reconstructing the total picture of the material culture of these associated pre/non-Harappan traditions and their relation with the Early Harappans.

Moti Pipli seems to be an important settlement of this phase and most of the settlements are located within a radius of 20km. But towards south there is a larger void of Early Harappan occupation between Moti Pipli and Panchasar. More than 50km. separates these two settlements and though this area was intensively explored, no evidence of Early Harappan occupation have been unearthed. It is possible that because of the ephemeral nature of these settlements, few sites could have been missed, although there might have been other reasons too and only future work in this regard will clear the maze.

Dholavira has shown an antecedent phase of the Harappan occupation of a considerably longer duration. But the presence of Early Harappans at the site is not yet clear. Future publication concerning the early phase occupation will definitely enhance and clear our understanding about the presence of the Early Harappan phase in Kutch and north Gujarat.

The presence of Early Harappan ceramics in the burials context from Nagwada and Surkotada is still not clearly understood. Both the sites does not give evidence of an exclusive or predominant Early Harappan habitation deposit. Though at Surkotada, the presence of a few Early Harappan
ceramics from the lowest level of habitation deposit have been reported while at Nagwada, the burials belong to the deposit predominated by the Anarta pottery and their coexistence in this region has been discussed earlier. The picture is still uncertain and has to be attended in future.

Present evidence indicates that the Early Harappan did not move further south of north Gujarat. Nagwada is the southern most settlement of this phase from where the evidence of Early Harappan cultural markers have been found. However, recent exploration in Junagadh District of Saurashtra has yielded a few sherds definitely belonging to the Early Harappan phase from one of the sites (Kalini Khandwalla: personal communication). This is a fair beginning and future research in this line will definitely bring forth interesting results. The presence of the Early Harappans in Saurashtra, if established, will show that they penetrated as extensive an area, atleast in Gujarat, as their illustrious successors, the Mature Urban Harappans.