Synopsis
SYNOPSIS

One of the important aspects of the Harappa culture is its apparent mobility and proliferation over a large area consisting of a number of ecozones with diverse environmental variables and economic incentives. 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. This is apparent from the recent researches carried out in Gujarat focussing on various facets of this culture. Gujarat has thus emerged as one of the densely populated regions in the entire Harappan domain. Extensive studies since 1930’s have not only led to the discovery of more than five hundred sites showing different degrees of Harappan affiliation, but also in substantial increase in our understanding of the Harappa culture in Gujarat. As a result, many old concepts about its beginning, development and survival have either been expanded or replaced by fresh hypotheses.

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 2550-2000 BC). Though Rao and Sankalia proposed the existence of a pre-Harappan occupation in Gujarat before the arrival of the Harappans, no serious thoughts were given to this proposition. However, excavations carried out at Loteshwar (north Gujarat) and Padri (Saurashtra) and the re-analysis of archaeological data from previously excavated site at Prabhas Patan and Lothal (both in Saurashtra) have suggested that prior to the incoming of the Harappans,
Gujarat was already inhabited by several regional non-Harappan Chalcolithic communities. Calibrated radiocarbon dates for this cultural phase from the stratified levels at Loteshwar, Padri and Prabhas Patan go back to the second half of the fourth to the first half of the third millennium BC, making them more than half a millennium earlier than the Urban/Mature Harappans.

However, an interesting dimension of the penetration of the Early Harappan elements from Sind, further south into north Gujarat has is indicated from the extended inhumation and pot burials unearthed from Nagwada in Surendranagar District. 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 Early Harappan levels at Kot Diji, Amri and Balakot, except for an Urn burial which belong to the Anarta ware. Analogous pottery types have also been reported from secondary fractional and pot burials from the cemetery at Surkotada, in Kutch. These too are comparable with Early Harappan pottery of Sind and Baluchistan. Stratigraphic precedence of the burials at Nagwada below the Urban/Mature Harappan 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 has been termed earlier as 'Burial pottery'. Excavation at Santhli, in Banaskantha District, about 70 km. north of Nagwada, also yielded similar pottery from the burials. Although a few pot sherds of similar character have been found from the surface of the mound, they were thought to have come from some disturbed burials. However, subsequent excavations at Moti Pipli and Mathutra, both in Banaskantha District,
yielded these ceramic types from the habitation level. These new discoveries question the earlier notion that the pottery was exclusively associated with Chalcolithic burials. Hence, in the present state of understanding, it would be more appropriate to associate these ceramic types with Early Harappan phase.

Pottery enjoys a lot of importance due to its ubiquity in the archaeological sites and it has been universally used as an important chronological and cultural marker. Though pottery has its own inherent limitations, because of its sensitive nature to any change in the cultural norms, it can be used as a relative index for a preliminary correlation. Ceramic, in this study, forms a major data for correlation due to its abundance and sometimes, the only form of antiquity recovered from the Chalcolithic sites in north Gujarat.

An extensive exploration in the region of north Gujarat has revealed eleven sites whose ceramic assemblage can be associated with the type of pottery recovered from the burials at Nagwada. Though the size of these settlements are small and the amount of pottery very meagre, it can still give a fairly good picture about the extent of Pre/Early Harappan occupation in this part of the region. The data from these sites can also be of help in determining the economic variability and adaptive capability of the Pre/Early Harappan community.

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the sites from the region of north Gujarat, which 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.

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.

The outline of the thesis is as follows:

**CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

The introductory section summarizes the present state of Harappan studies in Gujarat. Following this, the basic idea about the study is discussed by explaining the issues, which led to the initiation of this study. It also outlines previous work carried out in this field, basic objectives and the various sources used.
CHAPTER II: MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter confers various methods adapted in this study. This includes the method of exploration, procedure adopted for comparative analysis of pottery found in association with the burials and habitation levels from the region of north Gujarat. Besides, this also describes how the ethno-archaeological data is formulized in this study.

CHAPTER III: ENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING

A discussion of the present environmental condition incorporating the environment of Gujarat in general followed by a detailed account of the physiography, drainage pattern, rainfall, climate, soils, mineral resources, flora and fauna particularly of north Gujarat is presented here. This is followed by a survey through various investigations pertaining to palaeoenvironmental reconstruction to gain an idea about the environmental setting prevalent during the Harappan time.

Subsequently, the archaeological background of the Chalcolithic settlements in north Gujarat is discussed. Here, the potentiality of the region of north Gujarat is put forth emphasizing on the factors that have attracted the Harappans or other Chalcolithic communities to settle down in this part. The aforesaid data thus forms the basis for discussing the cultural affiliation and settlement pattern of the
Chalcolithic communities in north Gujarat.

CHAPTER IV: EARLY HARAPPAN CHRONOLOGY

This chapter presents the nature of Early Harappan settlements in the Indian sub-continent. Here the nature of these settlements, their ceramic repertoire and other related technological know-how and their contribution in the making-up of Urban phase of the Harappan Civilization have been discussed. This has been included in the present study so as to highlight the nature of Early Harappan culture in general, different types of pottery groups found from these levels and their distribution pattern. With this as a background, it will be easier to understand the process of Early Harappan movement in this region.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS OF THE EARLY HARAPPAN POTTERY FROM GUJARAT

This chapter discusses the nature of the Early Harappan pottery from north Gujarat. A comparative analyses of these ceramics with that of Sind and Baluchistan is then presented.

CHAPTER VI: EARLY HARAPPAN SITES FROM NORTH GUJARAT AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION PATTERN

In this chapter the sites yielding the Early Harappan pottery are discussed with a view to understand their cultural affiliation and distribution pattern. This will help
in highlighting the character of the settlements of Early Harappan community in north Gujarat.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

This chapter draws together the findings of the present study and explores the further scope of this study.
STATEMENT - I

(Statement showing the particulars on which the work is based, the discovery of new facts and of new relationship between facts observed by others and how the work tends to help the general advancement of knowledge).

An attempt has been made here to systematically evaluate the group of pottery, which was recovered, from the burials at Nagwada. These vessels show certain features, which do not resemble with the habitation pottery, consisting of Anarta and Urban/Mature Harappan ceramics. A preliminary work had been carried out by the author earlier in 1994 and termed this group of ceramics as ‘Burial pottery’ because of its context of occurrence. Similar types of pottery were also reported from the burials at Surkotada. A comparative study showed that this group of pottery resembles the pottery from the Early Harappan levels of Kot Diji, Amri and Balakot. Subsequent explorations and excavations revealed a few more sites with ‘Burial pottery’. At Santhli, this ceramic type was associated with the burials but a few sherds were found even from the habitation deposits. Excavation at Moti Pipli yielded substantial amount of this pottery from the habitation levels.

Thus, this study was taken up to clarify the status of this pottery group within the ceramic assemblage of north Gujarat. The main aim was to review the ‘ritualistic status’ bestowed earlier to this group and to understand the nature of its existence. Following are the findings of the present work, which would help in the general enhancement of knowledge regarding the cultural processes during the Chalcolithic period in north Gujarat.
1) Eleven sites have been identified in the region of north Gujarat, which shows ‘Burial pottery’ as a part of the ceramic assemblage.

2) Six of these sites have been excavated. It was observed that this pottery occurred only in the burial context at two sites whereas the other three yielded the same from the habitation levels. It is also observed that so far there is no evidence of burials in the latter sites.

3) As the information available for the rest of the five sites are from exploration, it is difficult to ascertain the context of this pottery.

4) This ceramic is generally associated with Anarta pottery datable to the second half of the fourth millennium BC.

5) This group of pottery which had been termed earlier as ‘Burial pottery’ is now identified as Early Harappan pottery for the following reasons.

   (a) It has close affinity with the Early Harappan pottery found from Kot Diji, Amri and Balakot.

   (b) Stratigraphically, it precedes Urban/Mature Harappan phase at Nagwada.

   (c) Its association with the Anarta pottery at many sites and with pre-Prabhas ware from atleast one site, without Urban/Mature Harappan affiliation.
6) The penetration of Early Harappans into north Gujarat can be recognized through the identification of this group of pottery as Early Harappan and its presence from a number of sites in this region.

7) At Moti Pipli, apart from the shapes found from the burials of Nagwada, Surkotada and Santhli, few new shapes were encountered which also belonged to the Early Harappan ceramic group of Amri, Kot Diji and Balakot.

8) The use of white pigment for decorating the pottery, a typical feature of the Early Harappans, has been identified at Moti Pipli.

9) Early Harappan pottery has been found independently from Mathutra and is bereft of any other associated ceramic types confirming the independent existence of the Early Harappans in this region.

10) Pottery is the only form of artifact recovered from these sites. Except for Moti Pipli, no other site in this region gave evidence of any associated antiquities.

11) Few of the artifacts from Moti Pipli have been identified showing similarities with those from the Early Harappan levels of Kot Diji.

12) The early levels at Surkotada have yielded certain pottery types identified as similar to the Early Harappan pottery found from north Gujarat and the burials of Surkotada.
13) Certain degree of similarity is observed between the pottery from early levels of Dholavira with those from north Gujarat.

14) The nature and distribution of some of these sites suggest that these were temporary settlements of pastoral communities.

15) The size and artifact assemblage of the Early Harappan occupation at Moti Pipli suggest that it was a semi-permanent/base camp site of the Early Harappans.

16) The extent of the Early Harappan penetration have been stretched up to Nagwada, situated in the southern part of the north Gujarat region.

17) So far no site has been reported from Saurashtra with this type of pottery. This probably indicates that Early Harappans restricted themselves up to north Gujarat.
STATEMENT - II

(Statement showing the sources of information, the extent to which the thesis is based on the works of others and the original portion of the thesis).

The Early Harappan material collected from the region of north Gujarat forms the main source of information for the present study. This data have been collected through extensive exploration and excavations carried out in north Gujarat. For understanding the Early Harappan culture in general and also the nature of the Chalcolithic cultures in Gujarat, relevant publications have been referred. This has helped in putting forward proposition regarding the Early Harappan movement in Gujarat and understanding their co-existence with other Chalcolithic cultures of this region. Following are the list of select references.


The portion of the thesis claimed as original is the re-analysis of the pottery termed earlier as 'Burial pottery' and denoting it as Early Harappan Ceramics. Identification of the Early Harappan sites, their penetration in the region of north Gujarat, the settlement pattern of these sites and their interaction with the regional Chalcolithic cultures are also to be considered as the original contribution of the work.