Chapter V
Excavations
EXCAVATIONS AT UTAWAD AND PIPRI

As a part of salvage archaeological operation, exploration in the area under submergence of Sardar Sarovar Dam Project has revealed several Chalcolithic sites confined to the districts of West Nimar and Dhar of Madhya Pradesh. Since hardly anything was known before about the Chalcolithic remains of the area, it became imperative to understand first the nature of such sites and their contextual occurrence; so that it would help in identifying the various archaeological remains in a proper prospective in future investigations. Hence two such small Chalcolithic sites (Fig. 9 and Pl. 18) were tapped for excavation at village Utawad and Pipri that are close to each other.

Figure 9 : Location Map of Utawad and Pipri Chalcolithic Site
(Courtesy Survey of India)
Plate 18: Location of Utawad and Pipri Chalcolithic Site
(After Google earth)
EXCAVATIONS AT UTAWAD

Location:

The Chalcolithic site (22° 4’ 25 “N; 75° 0’ 7”E) at Utawad (IAR 1994-95: 48-50) lies about 14 km from the tehsil headquarter at Barwani, district West Nimar, Madhya Pradesh. The site is located 400 m away from the right bank of Sosar nallah, a tributary of river Narmada, and about 800 m north of village settlement at Utawad. It can be approached by a kachha road from Borlai via Pipri.

Surrounding Environment:

River Narmada flows at a distance of about a kilometer north of the site. The Sosar nallah which flows close to the site (Fig. 10) is at present seasonal in nature, which otherwise was a perennial nallah some two decades back. The surrounding area of the site which is filled with yellowish kankary silt (i.e. older alluvium of Narmada), has undergone lot of surface erosion resulting an undulating surface forming a bad-land topography. Due to introduction of lift irrigation in recent years the area has been leveled and brought under cultivation. Otherwise, it was a barren arable land. Beyond this undulating surface towards the north of the site the surface maintains a height of 143 m from M.S. L., the area where black sediment overlies the older alluvium which is very fertile for cultivation. The area between the site and Sosar nallah maintains a constant height of 138 m from M.S.L., which is represented by a 2m thick deposit of high level gravel. The site stands as a hillock in the middle of the erosional landscape. Probably the thick deposit of high level gravel on the southern side of the site served as a barrier and prevented rapid erosion of older alluvium. As a result the portion of older alluvium where the site lies remained in the form of raised land.
The Site:
The crescent-shaped mound (Fig. 11) in the middle of the erosional topography (Pl. 19) lies at a height of 144 m from M.S.L. and 6 m from the surrounding ground level. The site covers an area of about 1500 sq.m with 0.5 m thick cultural debris. The cultural debris lies on black sediment of 0.8 m thick, which overlies the older alluvium. The site is partially disturbed at the surface due to cultivation. Further erosion from the surface and periphery of the mound has been noticed in patches surrounding the mound.

Figure 11
Plate 19: Utawad – General Landscape

**Cuttings and Stratigraphy:**

Two independent cuttings were taken up on both eastern and western end of the crescent-shaped mound, named as cuttings 1 and 2 respectively (Pl. 20). The space between these two cuttings where maximum surface erosion has taken place, a trial trench measuring $5 \times 3$ m was taken up.

Trenches measuring $10 \times 10$ m each were laid at cuttings 1 area with a view to have a longitudinal cross-section of the area where maximum cultural deposit was expected. Since there was very little area available for excavation, wherever possible quadrants were laid and sizes of the quadrants were determined depending on the available surface for excavation.

Three trenches measuring $5 \times 5$ m each were laid in cuttings 2 area oriented along the deposits on the mound with a view to obtain maximum possible information from the excavation.

The excavation has revealed a maximum cultural deposit of about 0.5 m, of which top 15 cm is disturbed due to ploughing activity. The thickness of debris varies from one trench to the other depending on the location of the trench. The trench which is
laid towards the periphery of the mound has yielded comparatively less deposit than the middle of the mound.

Underlying the cultural deposit is the layer 2 which is black sediment, maximum deposit of which is 0.8 m. Underlying layer 2 is the layer 3 which is yellowish kankary silt. Both layer 2 and 3 are alluvium and virgin soil.

The excavations carried out have revealed the evidence of Chalcolithic culture divisible into two phases – Phase-I and II on the basis of structural evidences and other associated cultural materials.

**Cultural Phases:**

Phase-I is mainly characterized by the occurrence of dwelling pits, whereas phase-II has yielded the structural remains which include sunken floor with fire place, sunken floor without fire place and floor at the surface level. Dwelling pits are completely absent in phase-II, which in fact is the characteristic feature of phase-I. The ceramic industry of phase-I comprise mainly white painted black-and-red ware, black on
red ware and associated red ware which also continue in phase-II. However, the frequency of painted sherds in phase-I is more than in the subsequent phase-II. Further, certain painted designs on red ware found in phase-I are similar to that of Pipri (Pipri, another Chalcolithic site lies about 1.5 km southwest of Utawad which was also excavated. The cultural evidence as revealed at Pipri is similar to that of phase-I at Utawad), which is uncommon in phase-II. Moreover, the ceramic varieties which characterizes phase-II include mostly chocolate slipped red ware jars with splayed out rounded rim and ring base which is completely absent in phase-I. Besides, other cultural material such as microliths, large stone artifacts of quartzite, varieties of beads mostly micro-beads of paste and steatite etc. remain same in both the phases.

**Cultural Remains:**

(i) **Houses:**

The evidence of house has come in the form of four different types of floors (1) dwelling pit (Pl. 23), (2) sunken floor with fire-place, (3) sunken floor without fire-place (Pl. 21), and (4) floor at the surface level (Pl. 22).

The evidence of dwelling pit has come from the earliest level. The average diameter and depth of these pits are 1.70 m and 1.20 m respectively. The floors of these pits are either plastered with lime or clay. One of the dwelling pits has yielded the evidence of repeated occupation in the form repeated floor activity. These dwelling pits are cut deep into the yellowish kankary silt.

The second category of house remains is in the form of sunken floors with fire-places. These floors are mostly oval in shape and sometimes circular. The third category of floor remains is in the form of sunken floors but without fire-place on the floor. These floors are sometimes lime plastered. Both these categories of floors are cut into yellowish kankary silt.

The fourth category of floor remains has been encountered, which are circular in shape and are lime plastered. These floor types occur in the later phase of occupation at the site and most of these are badly disturbed due to ploughing activity.
Plate 21: Utawad – Sunken Floor without Fire Place

Plate 22: Utawad – Floor at the Surface Level

Plate 23: Utawad – Dwelling Pit
(ii) Fire-places:

Two types of fire-places have been encountered in the excavations. One has been termed as “individual fire-place”, whereas the other is “community fire-place” (Pl. 24). The former type occur both inside the hut on the floor and also outside, whereas the later variety is a huge one occur inside a large pit, probably served for a large group of individuals. Both the varieties of fire-places are associated with large amount of faunal remains.

![Plate 24: Utawad – Community Fire Place](image)

(iii) Storage Bins:

A number of storage bins have been encountered in cutting-I area, which are clustered at a particular portion of the mound. The Storage bins occur in the form of circular pit, the bottom and wall of which is plastered with clay and sometimes lime. These pits are filled with pure ash. Since the portions where these storage bins are concentrated lie on the slope of the mound, these are badly disturbed due to ploughing and surface erosion. These pits are cut straight into the yellowish kankary silt. One of these pits was exposed with a storage jar (Pl. 25 and Pl. 26) which was filled with some grain remains.
(iv) Animal Butchering-cum-Roasting spot:

An animal butchering-cum-roasting spot has been identified in cuttings 2 area. Here a huge hearth prepared out of rubbles has been encountered along side large amount of both charred and uncharred bones. This spot was repeatedly used for butchering and roasting of animals. Interestingly from this activity loci a large number of quartzite artifacts have been collected, which were probably used for butchering animals.
Burials:

The most noteworthy evidence from the site is the non-sepulchral Pot-burials which lie within the habitational area. These burial pots are of coarse and thick fabric red ware with burnishing on the exterior surface. These are ill-fired and fragile. The bottom of these pots contains impression of palash leaf (*Butea monosperma* (Lamk) or *Butea frondosa*).

A detail study has been carried out to understand the meaning of such traditions which is as below -

One of the significant features uncovered from the excavation at Utawad is the non-sepulchral symbolic pot burials which come from phase-II. These burials lie within the habitational area as in other Chalcolithic sites. The unique feature which differentiates these burials from other symbolic pot burials commonly found in most of the Chalcolithic sites, is *palas* leaf impressions on the base of the burial pots. Keeping this unique feature in mind, an attempt has been made here to understand the probable symbolic meaning of *palas* leaf in the burial customs during the Chalcolithic period. As the site is badly disturbed, only two such complete pot burials could be recovered from the excavations. Besides this, a total number of 26 fragments of base portion of burial jars with *palas* leaf impression have been collected both from surface and excavations.

The burial No.1 (Pl. 27) was found towards north of a sunken floor in Tr. A2, Qd. 4 of cutting –I area at a depth of 34 cm. The burial pit was oval in shape and oriented north-south measuring 60 x 35 cm, which contained two inverted pots. The main burial pot is a burnished red ware jar of thick fabric, coarse texture and is ill fired. This jar was badly crushed due to the sediment load from the top. However, the other inverted pot lying 8 cm north of the main jar is comparatively better preserved, and is found intact. It is a *lota* (vase) shaped medium sized pot of same fabric and texture like that of the main jar. This *lota* shaped pot bears the *palas* leaf impression at its base. While putting the leaf impression the leaf got folded, as a result of which this pot bears the folded leaf impression. Both the pots contained little ash inside.
The burial No. 2 (Pl. 28) was found in Tr. XA1, Qd. 3 of cutting – I area between two sunken floors at a depth of 65 cm. The burial pit was circular in shape, measuring 75 cm in diameter. This pit contained a medium sized red ware jar of thick fabric, coarse texture and is ill fired. It is burnished on the upper half of the exterior surface. It was also badly crushed due to the overhead sediment load. After burying the jar in the pit, the burial was marked by putting a river worn quartzite cobble of 22 x 18 x 5.5 cm in dimension, oriented east-west and was placed almost in erect position inclined about 35º towards south. The jar contained a little charcoal over which a basalt stone of 26 x 22 x 13 cm in dimension was placed. The base of the jar bears *palas* leaf impression.
The leaf impressions (Pl. 30) found on the bases of the burial urns (Pl. 29) are exactly similar to those found in the central leaflet of the *palas* leaf. The minute details of the vein pattern and deep impression of the leaf on the pots suggest that when the pots were leather hard, the pots were pressed intentionally against the lower surface of the leaf. Further, the vein pattern noticed on all the pot bases suggest that only the central leaflet of the *palas* leaf was used. On one of the pot bases, the impression of the central leaflet rises towards the body portion which supports the view of *palas* leaf impression on these pots being intentional. Further, the detailed impression of the vein patterns and sharpness of the vein impressions on the pots also suggest that the leaf impression was deliberate. All these burial pot bases with leaf impressions were treated with lime wash.
Palas which is considered as sacred finds mention in various ancient literature in connection with funeral rites. The Rg Veda (Mandala 10, Sukta 27, Sloka 14) while glorifying the greatness of the God mentions Him as apalasah denotes ‘Beyond Death’ (Saraswati 1974: 386). Here palas means ‘death’ and was considered / associated with death or death rites. The Atharva Veda (Mandala 3, Sukta 5, Sloka 2) mentions palas as parna, a symbol of royalty and considers the central leaflet of palas leaf as sacred (Mandala 18, Sukta 4, Sloka 53) and is used in rituals (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 221). Further the same text also considers palas wood as sacred which is used for making amulets ensuring victory over rivals (probably victory over evil spirit) and the attainment of wealth and longevity, etc. (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 221).

The Satpatha Brahmana (Kanda 13, Adhyaya 4, Brahmana Kandika 4 & 5) mentions that parna or palas wood comprise six out of the twenty one sacrificial stakes or yupa (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 221). The same text (Kanda 2, Adhyaya 6, Brahmana Kandika 2 & 8) also mentions that the sacrificial oblation is offered on the central leaflet of palas leaf as it is considered truly the ‘Brahmana’ or the ‘priesthood’ (Stutley and Stutley 1977: 221). Further the Satpatha Brahmana and the Srauta work of Katyayana mention that palas tree is offered in pitrimedha or post cremation burial (Shastri 1966: 30-37). In case of a person who dies in a foreign country or whose bones could not be found to represent the dead, a figure is made with 360 leaves of kusagrás or with the same number of palas leaf or equal number of twigs of udumbara which represent the different parts of the human body and is burnt which is known as kusaputtalikadaha (Shastri 1966:36).

The Asvalayana Grhya Sutra (Adhyaya 1, Khanda 12, Solka 1 & 4) which mentions about Chaitya Yajna describes that the sacrificer should make the Chaitya an offering prior to the svistakrt offering. If the Chaitya is at a distance the offering is sent through palasaduta means a messenger (Dange 1985: 78-79). Here palas denotes the medium for carrying a sacred message, and the person who carries the sacred message is called palasaduta.

Coming to the present day significance of palas in various rituals, mention may be made of the death-rites noticed in Orissa. Here on the 10th day of the death ceremony the deceased is offered panda on the half torn leaflet of palas considering palas as
messenger which carries panda to the departed soul. In Pola festival observed in Maharashtra, palas is used to drive away the evil spirits and purifies by whisking the house with the palas branch.

The ancient literature and the present day traditions clearly indicate that the palas is considered as sacred and plays a significant role in various rituals particularly in death rites since ancient times. In the light of this the significance of palas leaf impression as evidenced from Utawad can be understood. Further it is one such archaeological evidence which corroborates the literary evidences and pushes back the tradition to Chalcolithic times.

**Ceramic Industry:**

The major ceramic industry consists of black-on-red ware, black-and-red, white painted black-and red, red ware, red slipped, etc. Black-on red ware comprise innumerable varieties of paintings mostly of geometric pattern. Besides this, varieties of incised designs, both geometric patterns and leaf motifs have also been noticed. Both wheel made and hand-made pots have been recovered. Mostly the surfaces are either burnished or red slipped.

**Other Objects:**

(i) **Copper Objects:**

The copper objects include a fish-hook, an antimony rod, a broken needle, a ring, and fragment of a bangle.

(ii) **Beads:**

Large numbers of beads have been recovered from the excavation. Of these steatite and paste beads forms the largest collections, which are mostly micro-beads. Besides this, carnelian, other stone (material to be identified) and terracotta beads have also been collected in good quantities. A solitary piece of lapis lazuli has also been collected.

(iii) **Shell objects:**

The shell objects (Pl. 31) comprise pendants, scrapers and bangle pieces.
(iv) **Terracotta and Pottery Objects:**

The pottery objects (Pl. 32) comprise hop-scotches, skin rubber, pendant, wheels, etc., whereas the terracotta objects (Pl. 33) include cakes, lamp and some unidentified objects.
(v) **Stone Objects:**

The stone objects as recovered from the excavation and surface collection include saddle quern (Pl. 35), pestles, balls and ring-stones (Pl. 34) both finished and unfinished.

Plate 34 : Unfinished Ring Stone (in-situ) Plate 35 : Saddle Quern

(vi) **Microliths:**

The excavation has yielded a large quantity of microliths mostly fabricated on chalcedony. Large amount ofdebitages recovered from the site suggest that microliths were manufactured at the site. The crested-guided ridge technique used for obtaining blades has been noticed on the artifacts. The finished artefacts comprise both geometric and non-geometric variety, which includes lunates, triangles, backed blades, points etc.

(vii) **Heavy-duty Stone Artefacts:**

The most striking feature of the material culture evidence is the occurrence of heavy-duty stone artefacts. A large number of quartzite flakes and cores have been collected from the excavations. Apart from utilized flakes, varieties of scrapers and choppers have also been picked up. It may be mentioned here that the evidence of heavy-duty stone artefacts in association with Chalcolithic cultural remains is unique as it is evident for the first time from any Chalcolithic site in India.

(viii) **Faunal remains:**

The excavation at this site has yielded a large amount of faunal remains which are heavily incrusted with calcium carbonate. Besides these, some suspected bone
tools have been collected, which can only be confirmed after removal of thick surface incrustations.

LIST OF ANTIQUITIES FROM UTAWAD

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<td>2. Lapis Lazuli bead</td>
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<td>3. Stone beads</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Jasper bead</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Needle</td>
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<td>3. Knife (broken)?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Antimony Rod</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Finger ring</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bangle fragment</td>
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<td>7. Unidentified object</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Scrapers</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Bangle pieces</td>
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TERRACOTTA / POTTERY OBJECTS

1. Hopscotches 16
2. Skin rubber 1
3. Pendant 1
4. Wheels 3
5. Terracotta cake 1
6. Lamp 1
7. Unidentified Objects 5

STONE OBJECTS

1. Saddle quern 2
2. Pestles 14
3. Balls 7
4. Finished Ring stones (broken) 2
5. Ring stones (unfinished) 2

Besides the above mentioned antiquities, a large number of microliths and heavy-duty stone artefacts on quartzite have also been collected.
PREHISTORIC INVESTIGATION AROUND UTAWAD

Besides the excavation of the Chalcolithic site at Utawad (IAR 1994-95), the surrounding area on both the banks of Sosar nallah was investigated with a view to understand the Quaternary formations in the area and the associated cultural remains. The exploration has brought to light a long stretch of gravel mostly confined to the right bank of Sosar nallah. This gravel is of about 2.0 m thick and maintains a uniform surface level of 138 m from M.S.L. It is divided into two units with a disconformity. The bottom unit which is of 25 to 30 cm in thickness, is composed of basalt gravels and are highly weathered. It is associated with Acheulian artefacts fabricated on basalt and dolerite. This Acheulian gravel bed (Pl. 36) underlies a deposit of clayey silt with bedded kankars. Overlying the Acheulian gravel horizon, is the top unit gravel deposit, which is associated with Middle Palaeolithic artefacts (Pl. 37). The composition of this high-level gravel unit is mostly of crypto-crystalline and quartzite pebbles with pockets of coarse sand. Further the Middle Palaeolithic gravels is smaller in size than the Acheulian gravels. However, it is comparatively much less weathered than the Acheulian gravels, probably because of material composition of the gravels. The Middle Palaeolithic artefacts collected from this gravel horizon is mostly rolled which suggests its secondary context of occurrence.

The Narmada older alluvium (i.e. yellowish kankary silt) Stratigraphically overlies the Middle Palaeolithic gravel and underlies the black sediment. The older alluvium maintains a level of 143 m, whereas black sediment maintains 144.5 m from M.S.L. in the area.
Plate 36: Utawad - Trench where Middle Palaeolithic Gravel level was Excavated

Plate 37: Utawad - High Level Gravel with Acheulian Artefacts
EXCAVATIONS AT PIPRI

Location:

The Chalcolithic site (22° 4’ 2” N : 74° 59’ 25” E) at Pipri (IAR 1994-95: 46-48) lies about 14 km from the tehsil headquarter at Barwani, district West Nimar, Madhya Pradesh. It is located on the left bank of Sosar nallah at a distance of about 300 m and about 1.25 km north of village settlement at Pipri. The site can be approached by a kachha road from Borlai via Pipri, and further from Pipri about 2 km on a bullock cart track which leads to Piplod village on the bank of Narmada.

Surrounding Environment:

The surrounding environment is almost similar with that of the site at Utawad. Narmada flows at a distance of about 1.5 km north of the site. The site lies in the middle of the confluence zone of two nallahs, namely Sosar and Dhawadiya (Fig. 12). Both the nallahs though seasonal at present; these were in fact perennial some two decades back. The surrounding area of the site which is filled with older alluvium of Narmada (i.e. yellowish kankary silt) forms bad-land topography due to surface erosion (Pl. 38). This undulating landscape supports only few stunted growth trees and patches of grass, thus forming a pasture land. On southern side of the site the older alluvium is seen capped by black sediment, the area which is plain maintaining a height of 142 m from M.S.L. Since soil erosion has not affected this area badly, it is presently brought under cultivation.
The Site: The site is almost circular in shape (Pl. 39 and Pl. 40), covers an area of about 300 sq. m (Fig. 13). It stands in the form of a hillock in the middle of the erosional landscape. Since the area forms a good pasture land, the shepherds come with their cattle heard for grazing in the area. As the site lie at a higher level, shepherds watch the movement of their cattle from the top of the mound from where one gets a commanding
view of the surrounding area. Because of constant visit of shepherds to this spot, the mound is popularly known as “Gualberi” among the nearby villagers.

The surface height of the mound is 142 m from M.S.L. and 5 m from the surrounding ground level. The cultural deposit as noticed on the surface is very thin of about 6cm rests on the black sediment which overlies older alluvium. In fact the cultural material is encountered from various pits which are cut into the older alluvium through black sediment. Therefore the surface deposit is almost negligible. The site is slightly disturbed on the surface due to soil erosion; otherwise it is almost in a very good state of preservation.

Plate 39 : Pipri – General View of the Site from a distance

Plate 40 : Pipri – Close-up View of the Site
Cuttings and Stratigraphy:
With a view to ascertain the nature and context of cultural remains of flimsy nature (as it appears on the surface), a trench measuring $10 \times 10$ m was taken up in the middle of the Chalcolithic hamlet (Pl. 41). The excavation has revealed a thin deposit of 6 cm cultural debris on the surface which in fact disturbed due to sediment movement on the surface. The natural soil starts with black sediment underlying the thin cultural debris. The maximum thickness of black sediment at the site is about 40 cm which overlies older alluvium. All the undisturbed cultural activity have been noticed on the black sediment as the Chalcolithic working surface.

Plate 41 : Pipri – General View of the Excavated area

**Cultural Remains:**

(i) **Houses:**

The most noteworthy evidence is the dwelling pits, which are circular on plan and cut into the yellowish kankary silt. The average diameter of these pits is about 1.65 m, whereas the average depth is 1.50 m. Some of the dwelling pits go up to a depth of 2.30 m and 1.80 m (Pl. 45). The floors of these pits are either plastered with lime or
yellowish silt (Pl. 44). The most elaborate dwelling pit (Pl. 42 and 46) encountered in the excavation has two steps to descend into the pit. Moreover, the floor of this dwelling pit is painted with a thick band of lime running around the order of the floor, probably to decorate the floor. None of these dwelling pits contain hearths inside, with one exception in which case the dwelling pit is used subsequently after filling up the pit and the step portion is utilized as antechamber for laying the hearth. One of the dwelling pits (Pl. 43) has been exposed with in-situ saddle-quern, mullers, pestles and bones on the floor. Some dwelling pits have yielded the evidence of a small pit at the centre of the floor. One of these has yielded an animal bone, probably represents a secondary fractional animal burial.

Besides the evidence of dwelling pits, sunken floors (Pl. 47) have also been unearthed with average diameter of about 1.8 m. The floor is plastered with lime or yellowish silt.

Plate 42 : Pipri – Dwelling Pit with Steps

Plate 43 : Pipri – Dwelling Pit
Plate 44: Pipri – Dwelling Pit

Plate 45: Pipri – Dwelling Pit
(ii) **Hearths:**

Excavation has also yielded the evidence of large size hearths in circular pits cut into the yellowish kankary silt. Probably the hearths were prepared inside the pit to avoid outside wind, so that fire in the hearth can continue for a longer time. The size of the hearths suggests that these might have served as a community hearth (Pl. 48).
These hearths are associated with a large amount of faunal remains and potsherds. Besides this, repeated use of these hearths has also been noticed. Below two of the community hearths the evidence of dwelling pits have been noticed. These in fact were originally dwelling pits which were subsequently filled up to a certain depth and used as hearth.

(iii) Animal Burial:

Besides the evidence of dwelling structures, the excavation has also unearthed a unique type of animal burial (Pl. 49). This burial pit is cut through the dwelling pit which contains lime painted circular band on its floor. The burial pit measures about 2.20 m and 0.72 m in length and breadth respectively which is cut straight into the yellowish kanlary silt upto a depth of about 2.0 m. After arranging rubbles in a circular fashion on the pit floor, the Secondary bone remains (articulated) of an animal (Boś sp. as identified by G.S.I.) (Pl. 51) was placed on this rubble bed and covered with sediment. Above this, towards west of the pit another rodent (Lepus sp. (as identified by G.S. I.) was probably sacrificed (Pl. 50), the bones of which have been recovered in articulated position. After covering this rodent once again with earth,
rubble was arranged in a circular fashion, probably some ritual was performed. This huge burial pit is filled only with habitational debris.

Plate 49: Pipri – General View of Animal Burial

Plate 50: Pipri – Lepus sp. Burial

Plate 51: Pipri – Bos sp. Burial
(iv) Symbolic Human Burial:

Excavation has yielded the evidence of a symbolic human burial which is tapped close to the animal burial. This pit is of 1.16 m in diameter cut straight into the yellowish kankary sediment up to a depth of more than 2 m. The burial goods comprise two painted red ware jars kept mouth-to-mouth position inside a huge red ware jar, covered with a black ware jar in up-side down position (Pl. 52 – 55). Besides this, other burial goods consist of three painted red ware jars and a bowl (Pl. 56).

Plate 52 : Pipri – Symbolic Human Burial

Plate 53 : Pipri – Burial Pot
Plate 54: Pipri – Burial Pot

Plate 55: Pipri – Burial Pot

Plate 56: Pipri – Burial Pot
(v) Ceramics:

The main ceramic type is the black-on-red ware with a variety of designs which include human figure, fish designs and geometric patterns. Besides this other ceramic types (Pl. 57, 58, 59, 60) comprise white painted black-and-red, black-on–red, red slipped, plain red ware, etc. The ceramics in general are prepared out of levigated clay and are well fired Potteries are mostly hand-made and some are prepared on slow-wheel.

Plate  57 : Pipri – Black Paintings on Red ware

Plate  58 : Pipri – Painted and Incised Designs
(vi) **Copper objects:**

The copper objects (Pl. 61 and 62) recovered from the site include one fish hook, a bangle prepared out of copper wire and an unidentified piece.
Plate 61: Pipri – Copper Objects

Plate 62: Pipri – Copper Objects
(vii) Beads:

Good number of beads (Pl. 63) has been collected from the site of which paste micro-beads form the largest chunk. Other materials used for manufacturing beads comprise carnelian, Chalcedony, Steatite, jasper and stone (exact material is yet to be identified). The shapes include microbeads, oblate, cylinder, etc.

(viii) Shell Objects:

The shell objects (Pl. 64) comprise one pendant and a scraper on a bivalve.
(ix) **Terracotta and Pottery objects:**

The terracotta (Pl. 66) and pottery (Pl. 65) objects collected from the site comprise hop-scotches, sling ball and some unidentified irregular shape objects having finger impressions.

Plate 65: Pipri – Pottery Objects

Plate 66: Pipri – Terracotta Objects
(x) **Bone objects:**

One excellent piece of spatula (Pl. 67) prepared on a rib bone has been collected.

Plate 67 : Pipri – Bone Spatula

(xi) **Stone Objects:**

The stone objects comprise of a broken ring-stone, a saddle quern (Pl. 69) and mullers (Pl. 68).

Plate 68 : Pipri – Stone Objects
(xii) Microliths:

Microliths (Pl. 70 and 71) have been collected in large quantity from the site. These are mostly fabricated on chalcedony. Large amount of debitage suggest that these were manufactured at the site. The microlithic assemblage comprises both finished and unfinished variety. The finished variety includes both geometric and non-geometric type.
(xiii) Heavy-duty Stone Artefacts:

Like that of Utawad, heavy-duty stone artefacts (Pl. 72 and 73) have also been collected at Pipri. These are all fabricated on quartzite. Besides simple artefacts, varieties of scrapers, steep-edged scraper, etc form part of the assemblage. Here at Pipri clusters of stone artefacts have been noticed on the northern side of the mound. Probably artefacts were manufactured away from the habitational area as the available area for occupation was less on the mound.
(xiv) **Faunal Remains:**

A large amount of faunal remains have also been collected from the excavation, which are yet to be studied. The preliminary observation on these faunal remains has shown some indication of the presence of bone tools in the collection. However, these can be confirmed only after cleaning of calcium carbonate incrustations from the surface.

A detail study of the faunal remains recovered from Pipri has been carried out and the observations are as below –

The faunal assemblage in spite of the high rate of fragmentation showed fairly good preservation. A total of 30 animal species were identified which comprised - mammals (19), birds (2), reptiles (2), fish (1) and mollusks (6) (Table 1).
Table 1. List of Animal taxon identified at Pipri

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAMMALS</th>
<th>BIRDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cow/Ox (<em>Bos indicus</em>)</td>
<td>Peacock (<em>Pavo cristatus</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Bos indicus/Bubalus bubalis</em></td>
<td>Domestic fowl (<em>Gallus domesticus</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo (<em>Bubalus bubalis</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat/sheep (<em>Capra hircus/Ovis aries</em>)</td>
<td>soft shelled turtle (<em>Lissemys punctata</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goat (<em>Capra hircus</em>)</td>
<td>Monitor lizard (<em>Varanus</em>) sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheep (<em>Ovis aries</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic cat (<em>Felis domesticus</em>)</td>
<td>Unidentified freshwater species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaur (<em>Bos gaurus</em>)/ wild buffalo (<em>Bubalus arnee</em>)</td>
<td><em>Lamellidens</em> sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilgai (<em>Boselaphus tragocamelus</em>)</td>
<td><em>Corbcula</em> sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer (<em>Cervus sp.</em>)</td>
<td><em>Bellamya bengalensis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chital (<em>Axis axis</em>)</td>
<td><em>Zootecus insularis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hog deer (<em>Axis porcinus</em>)</td>
<td><em>Melania striatella</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackbuck (<em>Antelope cervicapra</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chowsingha (<em>Tetracerus quadricornis</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinkara (<em>Gazella bennie</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fox (<em>Vulpus bengalensis</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porcupine (<em>Hystrix indica</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongoose (<em>Herpestes edwardsi</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At Pipri in the entire bone assemblage (n=5398) majority of the bones belonged to cattle (*Bos indicus/Bubalus bubalis*). Due to their fragmentary condition it was difficult to identify them specifically as Cow/Ox (*Bos indicus*) or Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) (Pl. 74). The presence of humped cattle *Bos indicus* (Pl. 75) is indicated by the bifid thorasic spine. A few bones belonging to the domestic buffalo were also recorded. Traces of charring, cut/chop marks on many of the bones suggest butchering and other meat processing activities.

Besides cattle, goat and sheep had also served as a significant meat source which is evident from their fragmented bones with cut marks (Pl. 76). This strongly suggests the herding of goat and sheep along with cattle by the site inhabitants.
Bones of large wild mammals such as wild cattle (Gaur) (Pl. 77 and 78), nilgai (*Bos elaphus tragocamelus*), chital (*Axis axis*), sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), hog deer (*Axis porcinus*), black buck (*Antelope cervicapra*), four horned antelope (*Tetarterus quadricornis*) and chinkara (*Gazella benneti*) were identified. However their numbers were much less as compared to those of the domestic animals. Their dietary use is indicated by charring and cut marks visible on their surface.
Smaller mammals such as hare, porcupine and mongoose were observed in the collection but due their isolated occurrence it is difficult to determine their dietary role. The bones of two animals considered as common household pests the house rat and bandicoot were fairly common and might have been also incorporated due to their burrowing habits. Interestingly one complete upper jaw (maxilla) of the monitor lizard (*Varanus* sp.) was identified. A limited occurrence of carnivore bones is observed except for a scapula of a fox (*Vulpes bengalensis*) and an isolated canine of the domestic cat (*Felis domesticus*).

Avian remains comprising mostly long bone shaft fragments were found hence species identification was difficult. The proximal portion of a humerus belonging to domestic fowl was identified. Bones of the peacock (*Pavo cristatus*) are well represented especially by fragments from the metatarsal, metacarpal, first phalanx, ulna, radius and few vertebrae. All these bones belong to a single individual.

Bones of freshwater fish were also recovered, however due to their small size, exact species identification was not carried out but will be attempted in the near future. The freshwater turtle *Lissemys punctata* is represented by a few fragments from the carapace and a humerus.

Shells of 4 freshwater and 2 terristrial molluscan species occur as mostly complete to fragmented ones at Pipri. The freshwater shells of *Lamellidens* sp. and *Bellamya bengalensis* could have been brought to the site for food purposes. Some like the *Lamellidens* sp. was probably used for making simple objects like the shell pendant which was found. Smaller shells like those of *Melania striatella* and *Corbicula* sp. are found along river banks and shores of lakes. These might have been accidentally brought to the site along with river sand and clay. All these species commonly inhabit most Indian rivers, streams, ponds and lakes. Occurrence of the tiny shells of the land snail *Zootecus insularis* and another land snail which could not be identified had probably inhabited the site at the time of its occupation.

In the overall bone assemblage an appreciable number of modified bones (Pl. 79) were also observed. The splintered bones mostly long bone fragments, ribs, were in stages of conversion into bone tools such as points, borers etc. Some had their tips fire hardened. Of interest is a bone object made from the rib of a small ruminant (Pl. 80).
Plate 79
Modified Bones

Plate 80
Bone Object
## LIST OF ANTIQUITIES FROM PIPRI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Antiquities</th>
<th>Total Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEADS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Carnelian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Chalcedony</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Steatite</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Paste</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Stone</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Jasper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPPER OBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Fish hook</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bangle?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unidentified Object</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHELL OBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pendant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scraper</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TERRACOTTA OBJECTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Hopscotches</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clay sling ball</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unidentified objects</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BONE OBJECT

1. Spatula 1

STONE OBJECTS

1. Ring stone 1
2. Saddle quern 1
3. Mullers 6

Besides the above mentioned antiquities, a large number of microliths and heavy-duty stone artefacts on quartzite have also been collected.