

3. Chalcolithic Villages in India

3.1 Chalcolithic Period in India

3.2 Chalcolithic Maharashtra

3.3 Megalithic Period in India

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When the Mature (urban) Harappan civilisation collapsed completely, the people of Late Harappan cultures who had settled on the ruins of Mature Harappan cities had to migrate elsewhere. The urban Harappans and the Late Harappans dispersed. Wherever these people reached, new rural cultures came into being.

The discipline of architecture, town planning of the Mature Harappan period was absent in the Late Harappan settlements, established on the ruins of the Harappan cities. The designs found on the burial pots in 'Cemetery H' at Harappa were different. These designs include motifs like sun, moon, fish, deer and peacock, which do not occur



Design on Harappan Jar - Cemetery 'H'

on the Mature Harappan pottery. On one of the cemetery 'H' pots dead humans are seen carried by peacocks in their stomach. In brief the characteristics of the Late Harappan culture were different.

Some archaeologists are of the opinion that the Late Harappans were perhaps Vedic Aryans. However, more research is required to know whether the Late Harappans were the successors of the Mature Harappan people or whether they were the Vedic Aryans.

Rajasthan

(1) 'Ahar' or 'Banās' Culture : The chalcolithic cultures in India generally belong

Revision in Brief : There were Neolithic villages before the rise of the Harappan cities. Neolithic people had the technology of making copper objects. They were also skilled potters. Eventually, their technology improved and the progress led to the origin of the Harappan cities.

People of the Mature Harappan and the Late Harappan culture had the knowledge of wheel-made pottery, cultivation of wheat and barley, making of copper objects. They must have taught

these things to the local people wherever they went. Thus, new rural cultures with regional variations came into being. These cultures are known as Chalcolithic culture. Chalcolithic cultures belonged to people who used tools of copper as well as stone. However copper was used sparingly by chalcolithic people.

A number of Chalcolithic sites have been found in Rajasthan, the Ganga valley, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

to the post-Harappan period. However, the 'Ahar' or 'Banas' culture in the Mewad region of Rajasthan was contemporary to the Harappan civilisation. Balathal and Gilund near Udaipur are the important sites of Ahar culture. 'Ahar' culture at Balathal is dated to 4000 B.C.E.

It was first discovered at Ahar near Udaipur, so it was named as 'Ahar' culture. Ahar is located on the banks of Ahar, a tributary of the river Banas, So it is also known as 'Banas' culture.

The archaeological evidence shows that Balathal was a centre of mass production of pottery. The pottery made at Balathal was supplied to other settlements of Ahar culture. Along with pottery, terracotta bull figurines, objects made of chank shell, stone blades, chisels, arrowheads, copper tools, etc. were found here, in large quantities. The houses at Balathal were built of baked bricks, by placing two headers and two stretchers alternatingly (English bond method). Balathal

By the way : An archaeological culture is usually named after the site where it was discovered first. Every culture has its characteristic pottery. The pottery is the main clue to identify a particular culture.

Among the types of pottery of the Ahar culture Black-and-Red type pottery is important. It is made on wheel. The inner side and the outer portion near the neck is red and rest of the pot is black. If the pot is kept in a reverted position while baking its inner side turns black and the outer surface turns red. Or else, the portion, which is covered by husk or hay becomes black and the uncovered portion becomes red.

was surrounded by a fortification wall. These characteristics confirm that Balathal people were in close contact with the Harappans.

The Balathal people obtained copper from the Khetri mines in Rajasthan. They knew the technology of smelting copper. It seems Balathal was the source for the Harappans to obtain copper and copper objects.

(2) Ganeshwar-Jodhpura Culture :

Many sites of the culture known as 'Ganeshwar-Jodhpura' culture have been found in the vicinity of the copper mines at Khetri. The settlements there are earlier than the Harappan civilisation. During the excavations at Ganeshwar copper artefacts like arrowheads, spearheads, harpoons, bangles, chisels and also pottery was found. The people of Ganeshwar-Jodhpura culture supplied copper objects to the Harappans.

The Ganga Valley

Ochre Coloured Pottery and Copper

Hoards : Initially the Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) was mostly found in river beds. Generally the potsherds of OCP are found in worn out, rounded and brittle conditions as they remained in flowing water for a long time. Now, a number of sites of the OCP culture are found in Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and the Western region of Uttar Pradesh.



Copper Hoard - Harpoon, axe head, ring etc.

House floors of these people were made by ramming. On the house floors were found traces of hearths, terracotta male figurines and bull figurines. Remains of cattle bones, rice and barley were also found. This

evidence indicates that people of this culture stayed in settled villages and practiced agriculture.

The OCP culture in Rajasthan is dated to about 3000 B.C.E. The same culture existed in Ganga-Yamuna Doab around 2000 B.C.E.

The Copper Hoards found in India come from various regions, such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh. The copper objects found in these hoards indicate that the artisans who fashioned them were very highly skilled. The archaeological sites of OCP and the find-spots of the copper hoards are often seem to be situated in the same vicinity, not very distant from each other. Hence, OCP and copper hoards are supposed to belong to one and the same culture.

Some archaeologists are of the opinion that this culture belonged to the Harappan people who migrated after the decline of the Harappan civilisation. Some scholars linked the copper hoards to the Vedic Aryans. However, some other scholars reasoning on the basis of the proximity of OCP and copper hoards, believe that it must have been an independent culture.

Bihar, Bengal, Odisha

Copper hoards have been found in Bihar, Bengal, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. However, OCP is not found in these regions.

Chalcolithic sites have been discovered in these regions. The excavations at sites like Chirand, Sonpur, etc. yielded earthen pots of black-and-red ware. Shapes of these pots are similar to those of Harappan culture. It seems that the Harappan people had gone as far as Bihar and the local cultures were influenced by them. In Bengal and Odisha also some chalcolithic sites have yielded pottery that shows Harappan influence as far their shapes are concerned. They include, bowls and

troughs of various sizes.

Madhya Pradesh

(1) Kayatha Culture : Kayatha is a site situated on the banks of the river known as Chhoti Kali Sindh, at a distance of 25 kilometres from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.

Kayatha culture was contemporary to the Harappan civilisation. The people of Kayatha culture subsisted on agriculture and animal husbandry. They mainly used handmade pots and microliths. Artefacts like copper axes and bangles, necklaces made of beads of semi-precious stones and small disc beads of steatite were found in the Kayatha houses. People of Kayatha culture and Harappan culture seem to have been in contact much before the rise of the Harappan cities.

After the Kayatha culture people of Ahar culture arrived in Madhya Pradesh from Rajasthan. It is quite possible that both the cultures co-existed in Madhya Pradesh for a short time. Remains of Malwa culture are found in Madhya Pradesh in the times after Ahar culture.

(2) Malwa Culture : The name 'Malwa' obviously tells us that this culture originated and spread first in the Malwa region. It

existed in Madhya Pradesh during 1800-1200 B.C.E.

'Navadatoli' situated on the river Narmada, on the opposite bank of Maheshwar, is an important site of Malwa culture. The other important sites are Eran (District Sagar) and Nagda



A chalice of Malwa culture - Navadatoli

(District Ujjain). They were surrounded by protective walls.

Gujarat : The chalcolithic settlements in Gujarat coincide with the following phases of the Harappan culture :

- (1) Early Harappan phase (3950-2600 B.C.E.)
- (2) Mature (urban) phase (2600-1900 B.C.E.)
- (3) Post-Harappan phase (1900-900 B.C.E.)

There are ample sources of semi-precious stones in Gujarat. Making beads of these stones was a big industry during Harappan times. The neolithic settlements in Gujarat played a major role in procuring these stones. People residing in the neolithic settlements of Gujarat were mainly pastoral, that is people whose primary occupation was animal husbandry. Probably, some of these pastoral people were semi-nomadic.

There are regional variations in the characteristics of chalcolithic cultures of Gujarat. The chalcolithic pottery of Kutch-Saurashtra and Northern Gujarat are distinct from each other. The chalcolithic villages in Kutch-Saurashtra were abandoned by 1900 B.C.E.

In the post-Harappan period there were two chalcolithic cultures in Gujarat. The culture in south Gujarat was known as 'Prabhas' culture and the one in northeastern Gujarat was known as 'Rangpur' culture. The pottery of these chalcolithic cultures was akin to Late Harappan pottery with regards to the colour, shapes and designs. These cultures existed till 1800-1200 B.C.E.

3.2 Chalcolithic Maharashtra

The evidence for the Late Harappans in Maharashtra is found at Daimabad. The chalcolithic culture before the arrival of the Late Harappans at Daimabad is known as 'Savalda' culture. The cultures in the succeeding period of the Late Harappan were respectively known as 'Malwa' and 'Jorwe' cultures.

For a video on Daimabad, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzHb1n954fo>

(1) Savalda Culture : Savalda is in Dhule district. It is situated on the banks of the river Tapi. Savalda culture is dated to 2000-1800 B.C.E. This culture seem to have arisen by the cultural contact between the Mesolithic people in northern Maharashtra and the Harappan people in Saurashtra.

People of Savalda culture at Daimabad used wheel-made pottery. The designs on their earthen pots included arrow heads, harpoons and figures of various animals. People of this culture also used copper objects, beads of siliceous stones, arrow heads made of bones, mortar and pestle stones, etc. Their village at Daimabad was protected by a surrounding wall. They built mud houses and they made the floors by ramming mud and alluvium together.

There was a cultural contact between the Savalda people and the Harappans in Saurashtra. Its evidence has been found at the site of Kaothe in Dhule district. The artefacts made of chank shells found at Kaothe confirm that the Savalda people and The Harappans in Saurashtra had trade relations.

(2) Malwa and Jorwe Cultures : The First Farmers of Maharashtra

The people of Malwa culture reached Maharashtra around 1600 B.C.E. Permanent villages of farmers were first established in Maharashtra by the Malwa people. They were the first farmers of Maharashtra. After arriving in Maharashtra they came into



Earthen Jar-Daimabad

contact with the neolithic people in Karnataka. It resulted into a few changes in the pot making technology of Malwa people as far as shapes of the pots and designs are concerned. This was

the beginning of a new culture known as 'Jorwe' culture. Traces of Jorwe culture were first found at Jorwe in Ahmednagar district.

The chalcolithic cultures in Maharashtra had spread in Tapi, Godavari and Bhima basins. Daimabad, Prakash, (District Nandurbar) and Inamgaon were the large villages and the main centres in the respective river basins. Other smaller settlements and farmsteads were linked to the large centre in their vicinity. For example Nevase, Nasik were the large centres. Songaon and Chandoli in the Pune district, Pimpalgar in the Nasik district were smaller settlements. Walki near Inamgaon was a farmstead. Pimpalgar in the Bagalan ghats was situated at a vantage point between Tapi and Godavari basins. Hence, it held an important position in the trade, though it was smaller in extent. Walki was situated at the confluence of river Ghod and Mula. It was a very small site. It was a farmstead.

Inamgaon (Taluk Shirur, District Pune) was subjected to extensive, horizontal excavations. Therefore, indepth cultural information of the site is available. The cultural chronology at Inamgaon :

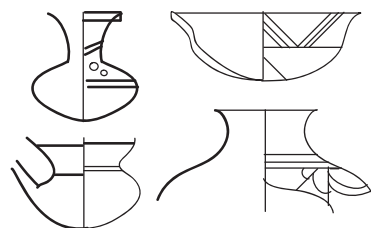
- (1) Malwa Culture-1600-1400 B.C.E.
- (2) Early Jorwe Culture-1400-1000 B.C.E.
- (3) Late Jorwe Culture-1000-700 B.C.E.

'Early Jorwe' was the flourishing phase of the Jorwe culture that succeeded the Malwa culture. 'Late Jorwe' is the phase when the Jorwe culture declined. The excavations at Inamgaon has unfolded the material culture and the day-to-day life of the Jorwe people in great details.

During the Malwa phase people at Inamgaon lived in spacious, rectangular houses. The house walls were wattle-and-daub type. Houses were partitioned into two rooms by a half wall. The evidence of storage facilities in the houses came in the

form of round platforms made for storage bins, four flat stones used for resting four legged storage jars and underground silos plastered with lime. People sometimes stayed in pit dwellings, though its use was rare.

Malwa pottery is mostly of buff (yellowish) colour. Designs on these pots are painted in brown. Jorwe pots are well baked giving a metallic sound. They are red in



Jorwe Pottery

colour with designs painted in black. Jorwe pottery includes shapes like spouted pots, carinated

bowls and troughs (carination is the central ridge on the pot), lota, globular jars, etc. The Late Jorwe people made pots of the same shapes, but without any decoration. Potter's kilns were found in both Malwa and Early Jorwe period. They were round in shape. The kiln of Early Jorwe period was larger and of greater capacity. In the Late Jorwe period potters did not have a specially built kiln. They baked their pots by directly arranging them on the ground. Inamgaon was the centre of pottery production, which supplied pottery to surrounding villages.

A house, quadrangular in shape, spacious, having multiple rooms, or just a round shaped pit dwelling is the indicator of the economic condition of the family staying in it. The number of round pit dwellings was negligible. However, the number of quadrangular spacious houses diminished in the Late Jorwe period and the number of round huts increased considerably. These round huts were different than the round pit dwellings. These were erected by tying a number of sticks at the upper end and then pegging the lower ends on the ground by fanning them out. Such

huts are usually erected by nomadic people. The climate in the Late Jorwe period increasingly became arid. The round huts is the evidence of climatic change that forced the Jorwe people to take up nomadic life.

The Early Jorwe people at Inamgaon dug a canal for storing flood water of the river. It is obvious that this was done for irrigation purpose. Distribution of this water was controlled by the chief of the village. The chief stayed in a five roomed house built at the central part of the chalcolithic Inamgaon. There were many underground silos, inside the house and in the courtyard, built for storing food-grains. Inamgaon farmers cultivated wheat, barley, Sorghum, lentil, horse gram (*Macrotyloma uniflorum*), etc. meat and fish were also part of their diet. Like other chalcolithic sites Inamgaon also yielded colourful stone beads, microliths and copper objects.

The rank of the 'Chief' of Inamgaon was an inherited one. The burials found near the chief's house confirm this fact. These burials were completely different from other burials found at Inamgaon. Generally, a dead person was buried in a pit in an extended position. However, in one of the burials found near the chief's house the dead body was seated in a four legged, bulging jar.

There was an earlier burial of the same type without the skeletal remains. It was a symbolic burial. The Early Jorwe people used globular jars for burying a dead child. In this type of burial the dead child was placed in two jars, joined mouth to mouth.

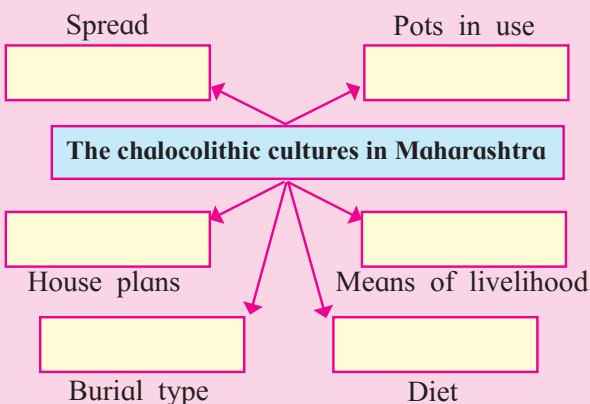
3.3 Megalithic Period in India

At about 700 B.C.E. Inamgaon was completely abandoned by the Jorwe people. Thereafter it was never occupied till the historic period. This situation prevailed in most of the Maharashtra. However, a nomadic people of this period erected stone circles by using huge slabs of rock. The space within these circles was used to bury dead people. Because of the huge stone slabs used in their erection, these circles are known as megaliths. The period of these megaliths is known as 'Megalithic Age'. They were used for various purposes, but mainly they contain the remains of the dead. They were the memorials of the dead.



Megalithic Burial

Try to complete the following activity : With the help of clues provided below prepare a flow-chart.



Such megalithic circles are in many parts of the world. Its tradition was prevalent since prehistoric times. A few tribes practice it even today. For instance, the Bodos in Odisha, Todas and Kurumbas in South India, Nagas and Khasis in Northeast India. Most of the megalithic circles in India are dated to 1500-500 B.C.E. Some of the megalithic circles in north India are as old as the neolithic period. The people who erected the megalithic circles in Maharashtra are supposed to have come from south India. The megalithic

circles in Maharashtra belong to the Iron Age. They are dated to 1000-400 B.C.E.

In the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra Megalithic burials are found in large numbers, especially in the districts of Nagpur, Chandrapur, and Bhandara. Excavations of megalithic burials were conducted at various sites like Takalghat, Mahurzari, Khapa, Naikund, etc. It is notable that most of these sites were situated on the ancient trade routes. However, settlements of artisans of megalithic culture are rarely found. People of Megalithic

culture were nomadic artisans. They were skilled in making iron objects. A furnace of smelting iron of megalithic period was discovered at Naikund near Nagpur. Megalithic people used horse for transport and travel. Skeletal remains and copper ornaments of horses were found buried in the megalithic circles. Megalithic people used Black-and-Red pottery.

Megalithic people were certainly instrumental to a great extent in introducing the 'Iron Age' in ancient India.

Exercise

Q.1 (A) Choose the correct alternative and complete the sentence.

- (1) On one of the cemetery H pots dead humans are seen carried by in their stomach.
(a) deer (b) peacock
(c) fish (d) bull
- (2) The archaeological evidence shows that Balathal was a centre of mass production of
(a) stone pots (b) copper pots
(c) earthen pots (d) glassware
- (3) Permanent villages of farmers were first established in Maharashtra by people.
(a) Savalda (b) Malwa (c) Harappa
(d) Kayatha

(B) Find the incorrect pair, write the correct ones.

- (1) Savalda Culture – Daimabad
- (2) Malwa Culture – Navadatoli
- (3) Ahar Culture – Sonpur
- (4) Jorwe Culture - Inamgaon

Q.2 (A) Explain the statements with reasons.

- (1) Harappan people had to migrate.
- (2) People of 'Malwa' culture were the first farmers of Maharashtra.

Q.3 State your opinion.

It seems that the Harappan people had gone as far as Bihar.

Q.4 Write short notes.

- (1) Banas Culture
- (2) Malwa Culture
- (3) Kayatha Culture

Q.5 Write about the chalcolithic cultures in Gujarat with the help of the given points.

- (a) Period
- (b) Means of livelihood
- (c) Geographical spread
- (d) Evidence of cultural contact with other people

Activity

With the help of Internet, reference books, field trips, newspaper articles, etc. obtain pictures of excavated artefacts and architectural remains and arrange an exhibition under the guidance of your teachers.

