
An Ethnoarchaeological Perspective on Archaeologies of Social Life from the Mature Harappan Period in Haryana

Sutapa Lahiri¹ and Vasant Shinde¹

¹. Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune 411006, Maharashtra, India (Email: lahiri.sutapa@gmail.com, vshinde.dc@gmail.com)

Received: 27 September 2013; Accepted: 14 October 2013; Revised: 30 October 2013
Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology 1 (2013): 383-401

Abstract: *Archaeologies of social life are an intriguing new perspective on everyday life of ancient people. It is a multi facet study in delineating the survival of the cultural process and traits of a particular culture. The present paper is a preliminary report on the methods and results as well as its future prospects on how to reconstruct the social life. For this perspective the Mature Harappan period from the region of Haryana has been chosen. In addition to this, it also covers how the relevance of ethnoarchaeological perspective in archaeology forms a vantage point in describing the survival of the Harappan traits in the present day life ways of Haryana.*

Keywords: Household Archaeology, Social Life, Mature Harappan, Cultural Anthropology, Material Culture, Ethnography, Ethnoarchaeology

Introduction

Archaeology provides us with one of the most important sources of evidence of how continuities in material form are maintained over long periods of time, sometimes in spite of other changes in language, religion, and political economy. Continuities in forms of land use, in technologies of building and materials, in the composition of household space, can be the basis for understanding processes of cultural reproduction. Concepts such as archaeological cultures or culture areas may be conceptually blunt tools for recognizing the outcomes of these material practices, yet there can be no denial that the recognition of long-term continuities of cultural form has been and remains perhaps the most significant independent contribution of archaeology towards the understanding of human social identity. Duration, in which time is literally inscribed as age, preserves both personal and collective memories by the form of buildings and monuments or the patina on antique objects (Rowlands 2006). Thus, it could rightly be said “*Archaeology without human beings is mere antiquarianism, whatever other theoretical views one subscribes to*” (Johnson 2006). Therefore, it becomes important in archaeology to understand social context of human past. It is with this regard social organization of the complex societies and the cultural process forms an

important facet in archaeological studies. However, it is indeed one of the neglected aspects of Indian archaeological studies.

The most positive and lasting contribution of New Archaeology was in this realm of social theory as it is said in New Archaeology which stressed that as students of human culture we must be anthropological. Different things were meant by the use of this phrase by different writers, but part of its meaning lay in the recognition that other cultural systems, both past and present, had to be studied explicitly, analytically, and in their own right. Other cultures were not simply collections of norms or meaningless stylistic traits or, indeed, to be judged on ethnocentric criteria. Archaeology thus is all about those tangible and intangible heritages which manifest about the cultural process from one generation up to sometimes across millennium.

The above mentioned problem of continuities of ancient culture or culture process could be accomplished when the application of other social sciences are also taken into consideration. As Kroeber suggests, process is the element common to all events in a historical tradition. Process according to anthropologist is a thread of continuity through time which is essential for the understanding of cultural traditions as well as to explain culture change and development. Thus, process in historical sense is particularizing and in anthropological sense is generalizing (Possehl 1980). And by combining such historical and anthropological perspective a generalized view of a particular event of ancient culture could be comprehend. This leads to the question of what is culture and how is it perceived in social sciences.

What is Culture?

Culture to put it in simple terms includes those abilities, notions and forms of behaviour which are acquainted by persons as members of society. Culture is complex phenomenon. In sociological and anthropological perspective culture is a product of society and it is nothing but a carried way of thinking, feeling and acting. Edward B Taylor gives the classical definition of culture. As Taylor says:

“Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”

Thus Taylor’s classical definition about culture could be reduced to a trait list which in most refined sophisticated form was sufficient for perfect definition (Possehl 1980). However, Ralph Hinten gives a short and clear-cut definition which says, *“Culture is social heredity”*. In traditional terms, such as in biological perspective, heredity implies the characteristics of a set of genes to the coming generalization. In the case of culture, heredity is the social characteristics which are acquired i.e. from the preceding generation to present generation.

One quintessential feature of characteristics of culture is that it is related to society. Thus, it can be said if there is no culture there is no society and vice versa. Culture has

certain basic characteristics i.e. culture is a process, is a social heritage, is an abstraction, it is integral, it has traditions, it is acquired and learnt, it is shared, two faceted, symbolic, adaptive, cumulative, has a distinctness, possess standard in society and it is ideal. In short, *the openness is one of the general characteristics of culture*. The continuity of culture largely depends on how it is received from yesterday. The continuity is an inherent part of any culture. The survival of a particular culture depends on its continuity. As well as receptivity of a culture makes the totality of a culture a continuum. To be acquainted more with culture in anthropological perspective, an anthropologist uses the ethnographic observation to identify the cultural continuum. The same methodology is also applicable in archaeology since it also studies an ancient culture through the tangible sources. And therefore, the question arises how anthropology, ethnography and ethnoarchaeology could be useful in finding the ancient cultural continuum.

Why We Need Anthropology

Anthropology is a chief division in social science. The importance of social science bases from the fact that it is the study of a human. In anthropological perspective culture is perceived as being inextricably linked. And anthropologists regard man, society and culture as a part of nature. The origin of the culture is a mystery but man's adaptation through culture becomes more and more complex. Anthropology teaches that all man and animal share a common biological determinant required for survival. In case of man, he meets his needs through some seven determinants such as technology, economic organization, social organization, political organization, ideology, arts and language. These components bind together a man to form a society they reside in. To identify these problems an anthropologist uses ethnographic study to discern the culture. The main lacuna between the two sub aspects of anthropology, *ethnography and ethnoarchaeology* is that an ethnographer is more interested in socio-cultural aspects of present day living groups than in house types, settlements and material culture, so much so that the information retrieved by him is not directly represented in archaeological remains (Lahiri 2010). This leads to two important questions in the present paper as what is ethnography and why we need ethnoarchaeology for understanding and for reconstruction of social life.

So What is Ethnography?

Ethnography in anthropological perspective is an *Emic* approach to the description of a culture. This approach became popular in 1960's as a part of the movement towards cultural relativism. The use of ethnography is the description of the social and cultural systems of a particular group. The method used by them is the direct observation of the customary behaviour of a particular society. Therefore, the main concern of an ethnographic research is to produce cultural description. While ethnographers have the advantage of observing human behaviour and material possession, through present day field studies and nature informants, the archaeologist thus uses this data to

corroborate archaeological evidence (Lahiri 2010). Ethnographic observation being a part of anthropological studies is gaining popularity today in archaeological perspective as well. Since, in archaeology we are largely concerned with the study of ancient culture and life ways. It is to some extent difficult to reconstruct the life ways of ancient man just through its material culture. Therefore, a detailed discussion of the role of 'ethnoarchaeology' which is designed to meet this synthesis of ethnography and archaeology has been described in the following.

The Role of Ethnoarchaeology

The role of ethnoarchaeology in many ways converged with developments in the anthropology of art, in stressing that objects could also be treated as meaningful systems of communication. The question was perhaps more about what kind of communication takes place through things in contrast to language. The fact that artefacts; do not necessarily communicate and certainly not in the same way as language, developed as part of the critique of excessive formalism of structuralist methods in anthropology. For Berger and Pinney, this meant the rediscovery of the work of art historians such as Panofsky and Langer, whose work on iconology emphasized the difference between language and image (Rowlands 2006). Objects have value because of their visibility as images, or their materiality as things, and not necessarily because they mean something or communicate a message. The argument that materiality gives access to a different sort of knowledge, now generally repressed in Western social science, can be seen as one of those "*voices of silence*" that characterize alternative discourses in Western twentieth-century thought (Ginzburg 1983; Jay 1988; in Rowlands 2006). But the present trend is to emphasize a more forceful distinction between objects and texts and to elaborate the importance of the former in a world increasingly dominated by theories of materiality. Therefore, ethnoarchaeological investigation forms a useful tool for identifying the cultural process through intangible heritage present in the society which would in turn help in interpretation of the archaeological contextual remains.

Lewis Binford's, theory of 'new archaeology' was followed by many new paradigms of various disciplines, which were elevated to the different scientific level. Among these several branches of learning was anthropology from which evolved ethnoarchaeology. Today this discipline in its own right, ethnoarchaeology in its formative years was gradually gaining more importance, that according to some archaeologists, "it is in the field of Ethnoarchaeology that we may see some of the most interesting work of archaeology in the near decades" (Stanislawsky 1974:16; in Dhavalikar 1983). This statement, made nearly decades ago, seems almost like a prediction for Ethnographic parallels to archaeological studies have now been accepted as an integral part of Archaeology.

Even before the term 'Ethnoarchaeology' was coined by Fawkesin in 1900, ethnographic analogies were commonly used by many prehistoric archaeologists based

solely on the parallels used and form between present day tribal artifacts with those of the prehistoric period. In precise terms, within archaeology is, therefore, a study of the material cultures of contemporary tribal and village folks (Dhavlikar 1983). A more comprehensive definition by Stanilawsky (Stanilawsky 1974:8;in Dhavalikar 1983) states Ethnoarchaeology as “the direct observation in the field study of the form, manufacture, distribution, meaning and use of artifacts and their institutional setting and social unit correlated among living, non – industrial people for the purpose of constructing better explanatory models to aid archaeological analogy and inference”. Thus, living archaeology as Gould refers to it.

The term ‘living archaeology’ is true in Indian context. To elucidate, in India ‘*General Comparative Analogy*’ it is possible to a great extent mainly because traditional life ways continue to exist ...’by seeking refuge in remote areas uncongenial to civilizations based on advanced agricultural economy (Chang 1972). Therefore a review of the earlier contributions is absolutely relevant to the considerate and studies of the present research thesis and so as to define its objectives.

Archaeological studies in India have been typology based and chronology oriented. If archaeology is defined as a subject concerned with the cultural reconstruction and cultural processes based on material remains, it can present a structure of the total cultural system of any society. This is a contribution to Anthropology. Explanations of differences and similarities between the classes of material culture of any region or regions can be made with the aid of anthropology.

In India the application of ethnoarchaeological study is rather very useful. It is due to the fact that the traditional societies in India are still prevalent. These societies are having complex formal hierarchies along with various levels of interactions with the contemporary state structures. Thus such type of studies can provide deep insight into the modern society, the manufacturing process, use and discard of tools and other objects, and on the basis of such analogy, an archaeologist can meaningfully reconstruct ancient lifestyles and even the genesis of many cultural elements. Ethnoarchaeological study is thus relevant to understand the complex proto historic societies. In India there has been certain amount of ethnoarchaeological work done but most of the ethnoarchaeological studies are of general nature while some use ‘analogy’ and rarely models are built (Ameen & Reddy 1998). In India many ethnoarchaeological works have been done by Dr. M. Nagar, Dr. Reddy, Dr Dhavalikar and Dr. Murthy and many more. No such kind of study had been undertaken on the Harappan archaeology.

The Contribution of Household Archaeology towards Social Life

Household archaeology as it arose within processual traditions in the 1970s and 1980s was prompted largely by interest in socio-economic and ecological issues, leading to the development of themes such as household composition and organization,

subsistence and ecological relationships, and household-level specialization (e.g., Flannery 1976; Wilk and Rathje 1982; Wilk and Ashmore 1988; cf. Allison 1999: 1–2, 8–9). One of the attractions of the household for issues such as these is that it can relatively easily be modelled as a building block of larger social and economic systems. As Wilk and Rathje (1982) state, households are social groups that articulate directly with economic and ecological processes and therefore provide a level of analysis between individual artefacts and grand narratives. Their behavior can be archaeologically delineated and monitored as a result of the domestic, architectural setting of many of the household's activities of production and consumption.

Archaeology has picked up on this rethinking of social groups, but to different extents regarding different social collectives. Many archaeologists have abandoned the normative understanding of archaeological cultures as bounded, cohesive entities based on shared material culture, customs, and beliefs. Recent approaches to ethnicity in archaeology emphasize its situational meaning and the importance of origin myths. The concept of ethnogenesis is used to study ethnicity as a historical process (Jones 1997; Derks and Roymans, in press). When it comes to smaller social formations (i.e., households and local communities), there is a remarkable divergence in the way in which archaeologists have incorporated ideas from the social sciences. Household archaeology has developed new ways of thinking about the constitution and social relationships of the domestic group. Archaeologists studying local communities and the settlement spaces they inhabit are just now beginning to engage in debates regarding the theoretical underpinnings of their field (Gerittsen 2006).

More recently, alternative approaches to the study of small social formations have been developed. The household is felt to be a salient context of analysis because it offers possibilities to provide a theoretically informed counterweight against an archaeology focusing on processes, systems, and social evolution. “Big stories” about social and cultural change almost by definition refer to temporal and spatial scales that would have been meaningless to the people involved in those changes.

What It Includes?

The study of social life includes a variety of aspects which are either directly or indirectly associated with individual's life. For instance, social life of plant economy, animal economy, objects of use in daily life such as pottery, ornamental objects, toys, objects of kitchen utility, domestic and defence objects etc. It also emanates the gender archaeological paradigms. Basically it includes the study of individuals and its social relations with respect to the examining of ordinary life in any archaeological period.

Why It is Important in Archaeology?

Archaeology of everyday life allows the archaeologist to narrate smaller stories. While the study and analysis of household provides an obvious context of research from this point of view, since the majority of a (prehistoric agricultural) society's population

would have spent most of their time being part of a household. Such narratives are thus presumably closer to the experiences of life of people in the past than an archaeologist's reconstruction of long-term change can ever be. Yaeger identifies house orientation and spatial proximity, similarities in food production and processing equipment, and the shared use of a nearby quarry site as the main elements fostering a local sense of community (in Gerittsen 2006).

Archaeologies of Social Life of Mature Harappan Period: An Appraisal

From the above mentioned theories and notions of different views of how the varied avenues in archaeology are giving an impetus of social life reconstruction. As a result, the application of anthropological perspective specifically cultural anthropology becomes an integral part in archaeological interpretation. By taking into consideration the above mentioned theoretical perspectives and methodology it proves that reconstruction of social life and cultural process can be delineated in any archaeological period. It is with this regard, an attempt for the reconstruction of social life of Mature Harappan period has been undertaken as a case study with special reference to the region of Haryana. The state of Haryana, in India has remarkably exhibits an existence of Harappan life styles in present day village life. Thus, this provides us with an opportunity to conduct an ethnographic study to identify the social organization. So what is social organization and how is it related to the nature of these ancient complex societies? Social organization has been defined by many scholars differently. Well social organization differs according to the nature of society from simple to complex. This is also observed in material culture, technological adaptation, availability in raw materials etc.

Since, the discovery of the Harappan site in early nineteen twenties today as many as more than 2000 sites have been discovered in India. As a result, there has been a huge accelerated interest towards the study and understanding of the Harappan civilization. And various scholars from different background have meticulously studied different aspects of Harappan civilisation including pottery, origin and decline of the civilization, settlement patterns, identifying possible trade routes, isotopic analysis on various materials, and identification of different raw material sources used by Harappans. Nevertheless the importance towards the cultural process has been largely ignored in the study of Harappan civilization.

The earliest attempt to find the Harappan sites in Haryana was done by Dr. Suraj Bhan in 1970's. After him there has been continuous exploration and excavations conducted by different scholars such as R.C. Thakran, Amar Singh, L.S Rao, Manmohan Kumar, Vasant Shinde and Vivek Dangi, who have done some remarkable work in this region. The recent excavations done in Haryana are at Farmana (Shinde et al. 2010; 2011a), Girawad (Shinde et al. 2011b), Bedwa, Mitathal, Puthi Seman (2006-2010), Bhirrana (2003-2004) and Badali (2008). The reconnaissance surveys done by Vivek Dangi in

Meham Block (2006), Vinay Kumar Dangi in Gohana Tehsil (2009) are also notable. But all these studies fail to concentrate on understanding the cultural processes behind the evolution of Harappan civilisation. In order to bridge this gap in knowledge, it is essential to conduct a study and record the continuity of Harappan cultural traits and attributes which has survived in the present society.

The reconstruction of the life has been well achieved in the countries of the Near East. Particularly in Egypt it has been possible to reconstruct the life of the ancient inhabitants lived thousands of years ago from the abundant material left in the tombs (eg Meskell 1999). In ancient Egypt the claims of the dead were considered stronger than those of the living, and careful provision was made in the tombs for not only ordinary means of subsistence, but also luxuries. In the land of the Nile, the tombs, Mustabas and Pyramids have yielded far more material for the reconstruction of life as it was lived in Egypt than elsewhere. As Dixit (1938) says, in India, however, the line between life and death must have been very great indeed, in as much as of all contemporary people; the Indus people alone have left the least trace of their dead. Judging from the paintings and the tombs of Egypt the life lived by the common people was very different from that of the king and the rich people and officials, who surrounded him. In India, however, the average citizen of the great Indus cities appears to have enjoyed a greater measure of personal freedom and an equitable share of the amenities of life than his contemporaries in other countries.

A limited and restricted research has been conducted on the ethnographic and experimental studies such as on bead making and shell manufacture (Vidale, Kenoyer and Bhan 1993). It is with this regard an ethnographic investigation was applied to study the utility of space by taking into consideration both from present day structures and from the structures found from excavation (Lahiri 2010). Similarly, another study focusing on the comparative analysis on the architecture and engineering skills of the Harappan structures were undertaken between the Haryana and Gujarat (Kachchh) (Lahiri 2013). These studies proved continuity in certain Harappan traits in the regions where Harappan sites were discovered.

Some of the question which needs to be solved primarily is the continuation of the Harappan traits in the present society and how far the ecological and economic contrivances are responsible for this. Also what is the role of material culture and the intangibilities and finally how all these together can help in answering the social organization of the Mature Harappan period. If we look into the previous studies and the opinion of Redford regarding the cultural process, it might help in identifying the causes of this continuation. But with the absence of any major architectural remains, religious practices, written evidence and burial tombs, the problem in reconstructing the continuation becomes even more problematic.

The objectives of the study can be summarized as; to recognize the role of culture that

it never disappears but continues by taking a different shape, modifies with time and adapts with new culture. To understand how different artefacts determine the very nature of the site. Similarly, to understand how culture, ritual and other behavioural patterns influence the archaeological record and site formation process. To identify the types of objects of daily use those were prevalent in the period. To, create a record in the form of database as ethnographically, archaeologically and scientifically as possible and also an attempt in seeing how ethnoarchaeology could help in reconstructing the cultural process and filling up the gaps which is hitherto impossible only by looking through the archaeological record. In the present paper let us focus from the structural point of view and how it can help in reconstructing the social organization of the Mature Harappan period in Haryana.

Structural Perspective

From the archaeological point of view it's the structural remains that are usually best preserved. Dwelling structures are found in almost in every periods of human history. The earliest structural evidence denotes it was used for meagre shelter purpose. With the complexity in human settlement took place the nature of living structures took different shape and size. It is through these structural remains one can identify the type of settlement, social complexity, economic condition, political status, social hierarchy etc. The earliest form of shelters were either cave or rock shelters protecting man from the vagaries of nature. With the advent of sedentism man now gave importance in the type of shelters which would serve the varieties of purpose. He now started to build houses of sun dried mud brick rectangular shape houses found in the earliest settlements such as Mehrgarh. It was during the Neolithic period such structural evolution and complexity was observed. In different parts of the world during early settlement periods we find structures according to their built environment. We have today evidence of early living structures such as pit dwelling to rectangular double storey households in the ancient sites such as Mehrgarh, Burzohm etc. The structural complexity could be finely classified during the early Harappan to the Harappan phase wherein many sites have revealed the evolution of architectural edifice.

For the present context let us take the example of the Harappan architecture and try to have a closer look to identify if there exists a social complexity from the structural point of view, and is there a possibility to reconstruct the social organization and the social life of the mature Harappan people from the region of Ghaggar basin in Haryana. Also how far they have similarities with respect to the major towns such as Harappa, Mohenjo Daro and other local or rural chalcolithic cultures in India? As we have already discussed earlier how ethnography could be helpful in identifying the cultural process and thus, an ethnographic appraisal has been applied in the current perspective.

A Concise Overview on the Genesis of Harappan Architecture

As we have already discussed earlier about the evolution of the dwelling architecture.

Let us now specifically look into the Harappan problem. Today, there has been around more than 2000 Harappan sites discovered and most of them are excavated as well. It is through these excavations that has revealed the Harappan architecture and its complexity. It is thus important for us to know how Pre Harappan or Early Harappan was transformed into Harappan period or precisely the Mature Harappan period. If we take into account the view of Gupta *if 'village' was the contribution of the Hakra culture, the 'fortified' township was the contribution of the Kot Diji culture and writing and weights and measures were the contributions of the transition phase located at the end of the Kot Diji period* (Gupta 1993; in Joshi 2008). If this is to be taken as a true statement it suggests how the Harappan civilization beginning from a least complex society turns out to be a complex social organization by around 2000 BC.

Taking into consideration the Early or Pre Harappan sites found in Pakistan such as Kili Ghul Mohammad, Damb Sadaat, Amri, Nal, Balakot, Kot Diji, Mehargarh, Nausharo, Rehman Dheri, Gumla and Ghazishah; some extraordinary elements observed in this region i.e. monumental mud brick platform standing over 12 feet in height at Damb Sadaat. Whereas, Kot Diji has a citadel and lower town having a defence wall associated with it (Joshi 2008). To put it in short these early village settlements in Pakistan showed the genesis of early structural evidence of the Harappan civilization. On the contrary the sites in India especially in the Ghaggar basin the Early Harappan period from structural point of view manifest with pit dwellings as the earliest form of structural evidence such as from the sites of Kunal, Girawad, Farmana and Rakhigarhi. Nevertheless this feature is again absent in the Saurashtra region of India. As a result, the Harappan architecture and its engineering have a manifold role in its genesis with respect to its regional variation.

Ethnoarchaeology of Domestic Architecture

Turning to domestic architecture, one is currently confronted with a smaller depth of research, but one which in no way argues for any less contrast with Mesopotamian domestic architecture. The most influential study so far has been that of Sarcina (1979a; 1979b), who found there to be little variation in house sizes at Mohenjo Daro (Sarcina 1979b), a clear contrast to the apparent situation in Mesopotamia (Henrickson 1981, 1982; in Cork). She has also proposed, as has Ratnagar, that the vast majority of houses were occupied by nuclear family units (Ratnagar 2004a; in Cork, Sarcina 1979a). This is in contrast to the commonly perceived heterogeneous populations resided in Mesopotamian cities, with both textual and archaeological evidence for the presence of co-resident extended family groups (Henrickson 1981; Stone 1981; in Cork) and for the presence of neighbourhoods roughly organised according to status (Henrickson 1981, 1982; contra Stone 1995; in Cork). Sarcina's typology for houses at Mohenjo Daro (which emphasises the repetitive appearance of a limited number of layouts) and her statements concerning the similarity of size arguably fit within the abandoned view that the Indus was heavily standardised (Fig. 1). However, it is also clear that Sarcina's work has been influenced by (and has in turn influenced) the most influential of all

interpretations regarding Indus civilisation: *that it was a society with very low levels of social stratification, and hierarchical organisation in general.*

To test Sarcina's view an ethnographic appraisal has been undertaken in the region of Haryana. It is so in order to find the cultural continuity and the kind of social organization prevailing in the present day village. Let us, focus on the general layout of the village house (Fig. 2). What has been identified that generally the village layout plan is very simple in nature. The basic shape and style found in most of the houses is either 'C' or 'L' shaped. These houses mostly consist of a courtyard followed by an animal corral (shelter) and few rooms utilized for both as storage and living purpose. A courtyard which is called as '*Ghera*' is found in every houses. It is built as per the convenience or space availability in a particular house. As a result a courtyard does not have any basic shape or size. Generally a big joint family owns a large courtyard. Apart from this a few numbers of rooms are constructed along the courtyard for both living purpose and storage. A bathroom is generally found along the road side since it is connected with the outside main drainage system. The concept of drainage as such does not exist so well in a village. The drainage system that is usually followed is a kind of small water channels which empties towards the field. However, in a house the main drainage can be defined as the one found in centre of the courtyard.

The villagers usually construct a few rooms for living purposes. The rooms are devoid of windows on certain occasion. However, '*Roshandan*'(s) i.e. ventilators for the passage of light and air are found in every household. The doors and windows of the houses are always facing towards the courtyard none of them faces towards the road. It's very typical feature of the houses found in the villages similar to the Harappan towns. And most surprisingly no separate worshipping areas are found from the representative houses. Mostly they have two or three rooms. The rooms found in these village household has dual purpose such as it can be either used as bedroom, living room (hall) or storage room. A separate hall room called as '*Baithak*' which could be termed as the hall room is found in most of the houses. A terrace and courtyard also plays the role of Baithak. Apart from this a storage room is also found in most of the houses. The traditional houses contain small storage areas as a double storey rooms (Fig. 3) for storing grains. However due to the availability of the huge metal containers (Fig. 4) they have now abandoned the use of storage rooms.

Kitchen and Hearths: The construction of kitchen is of lesser importance since most of the cooking activity is done outside in the courtyard. Since cooking forms an important domestic activity there are two types of hearths found in village such as *Chulah* and *Hara* (Figs. 5-7). However hearths are generally found in the courtyard. The basic principle behind constructing the hearths outside the living rooms because, an open air area would help in escaping the large amount of smoke that the hearths emit. Most of these hearths are constructed in the direction of wind. As discussed earlier Haryana villages have an admixture and adaptation of tradition as well as the urban living

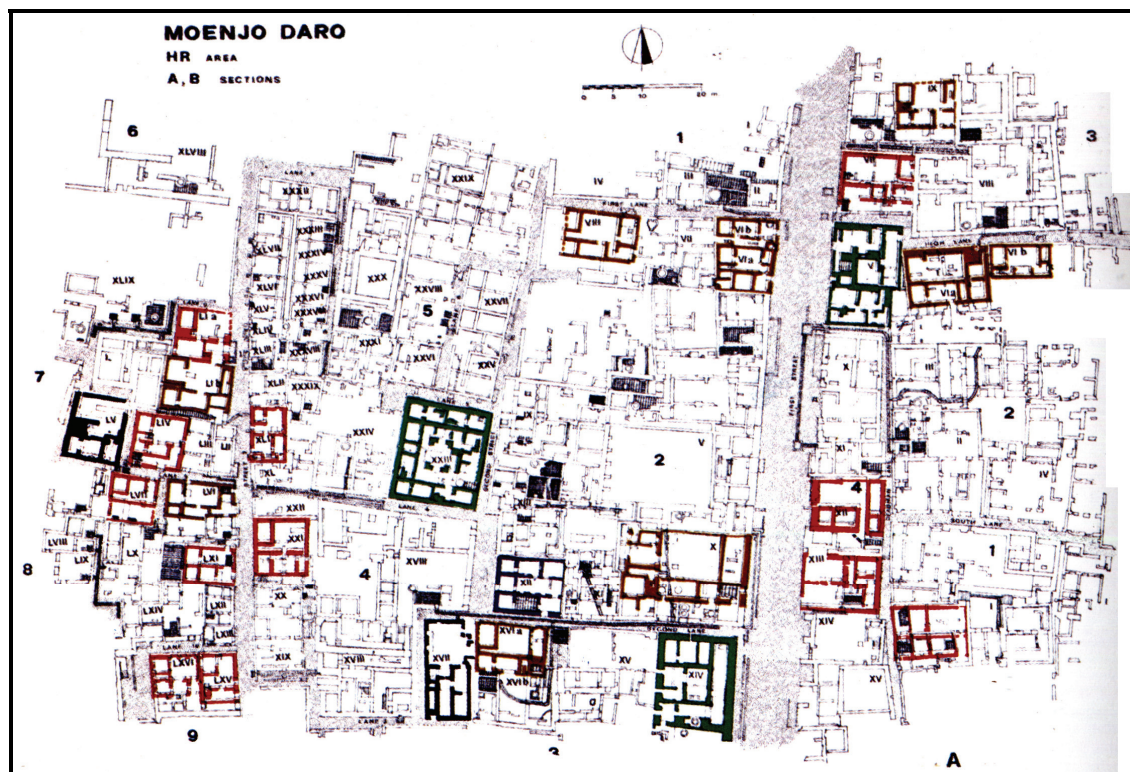


Figure 1: Mohenjo daro: House Model (After Anna Sarina)

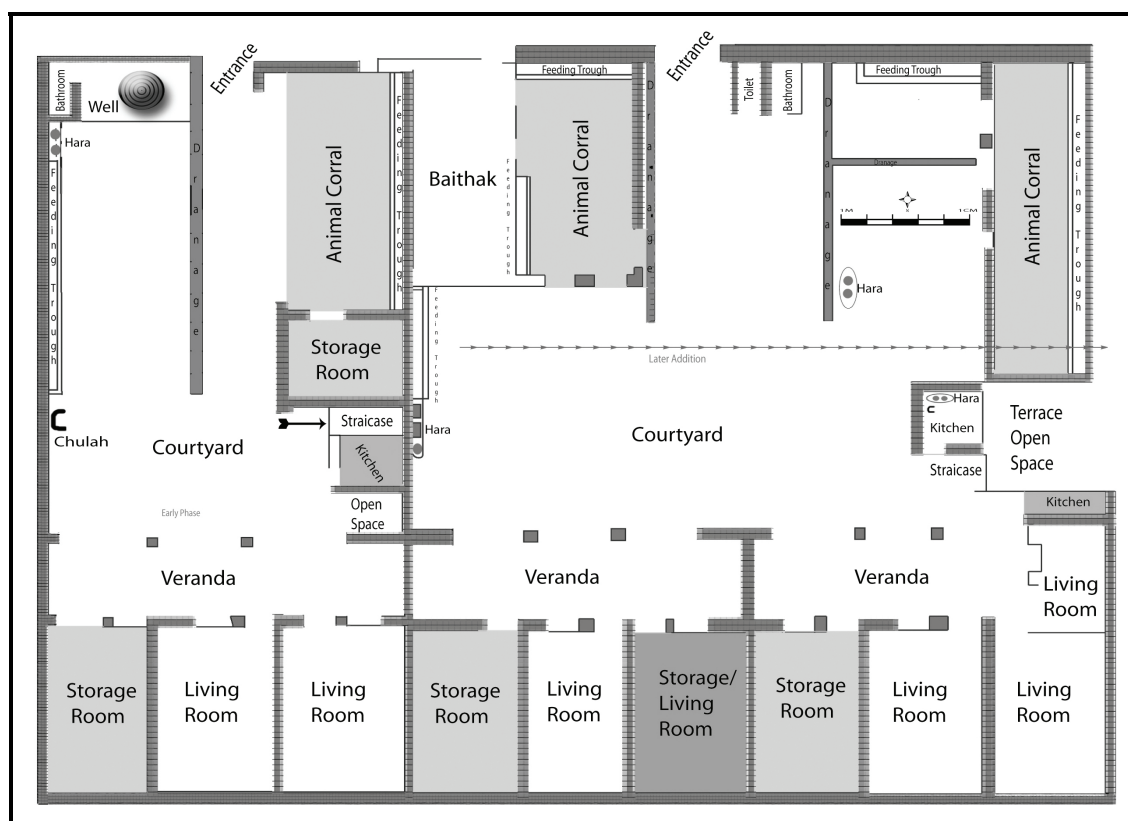


Figure 2: Village House in Farmana



Figure 3: Present Day Double Storey Storage Room



Figure 4: Present Day Metal Bins



Figure 5: Hara (Fire Pit)



Figure 6: Mobile Hara



Figure 7: Modern Day Pendi



Figure 8: Harappan Hearth

styles such the presence of kitchen within the household usually used for storing utensils and for cooking during the monsoon period. The traditional hearths are made up of mud and sometimes bricks are also used. Today people do construct the hearths

by using the burnt bricks and cement. They have a standardized shape and size which is normally followed.

The other types of fire pits found in most of the houses are 'Hara'. A Hara is generally oval or rectangular in shape. It is used for heating water, boiling milk and cooking the animal fodder. Haras are mostly found in those houses who own a buffalo or a cow. The second type of the hearth is a 'Chulah' basically used for making rotis (Indian bread) and other food items. These hearths are made up of mud. A Hara can be round or square. Round ones are made of pure mud but the square ones are shaped by the use of bricks.

'Hari' is another type of movable hearth generally having inscribed design. It contains a lid to cover during the cooking or heating. These lids have a perforation for air passage. Another interesting type of hearth is known as 'Pendi'. It is also a hearth which consists of a Chulah and is followed by an elevated area for storing water in jars. It is the most traditional type of hearth which is rarely found in the village households presently. All these hearths use the fuel called 'Gosa' which is nothing but cow dung. The Haras and Haris are generally round in shape and cannot accommodate the wood within it.

Taking the ethnographic observation into account from the villages of Haryana and comparing the village household system with the Harappan sites such as Mohenjo Daro (Sarcina 1977) and Farmana (Figs. 8-10) to mention a few. This is due to the completeness of the structural evidence found in these sites helps us for comparative study. In the case of the ancient site of Farmana there is a clear evidence of development in the site from Early Harappan to Late Harappan with respect to the architectural perspective i.e. the occupation of the site began as early as with pit dwellings and later on having complex housing system and the town planning (Fig. 11) (Shinde 2011, Lahiri 2010, 2013).

Thus from the above observation and Kent's view on social complexity suggest that when a society becomes more socio-politically complex its culture, behaviour, use of space, its cultural material and architecture become more segmented. Thus, a society which is highly segmented and complex will tend to use more segmented cultural material or portioned architecture, functionally discrete objects and gender restricted items (Kent 1993). For instance Kent says least complex societies such as the Pygmies do not have gender specific nor do they have any religious structures. Basically they have a hut and hearths outside the hut where varieties of activities are conducted (Kent; Turnbull 1965; Fisher 1986). Similarly, when we compare it with the present village life in Haryana it has been observed that the present socio-political conditions aren't very complex either and least gender specific. Even it is reflected in their economy. Such as observed in the house plan and their day to day requirements are very simple. It could be compared with the Pygmies societies discussed by Kent.

Though gender segregation is there in occupational practice but such segmentation is least observed within the use of space within the houses. However, the society wasn't very complex either it was rather very simple as what we find in their structural remains at Farmana (Lahiri 2013).

In short it can be said that the Harappan society wasn't complex either as compared to the Mesopotamia and Egypt. This is still a preliminary observation about how the structural remains are manifesting the social complexity of the early civilization. Such studies must be corroborated with the other tangible materials from archaeological record and to test it with the ethnographic analogical studies on the present day tangible and intangible material culture and heritages. Since, if structural perspective suggests the cultural continuity and gives us an implication about the social organization it is necessary to look into the other areas of daily life as well.

Conclusion

Archaeological evidence suggests that many Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age societies, despite being complex and stratified, were not politically centralized. Even though those societies occupy an evolutionary place between the autonomous village and the state, they do not seem, however, to possess important traits typical of chiefdoms. It is indeed interesting to find such a similarity in the present day village life of Haryana right from the Harappan times. Today, if we look at the village planning most specifically about the house planning there is a lot of similarity found in them. The similarity is found in the overall shape of the household, the types of utility of the rooms, the hearths, and roads and by lanes. As Michel Danino (2010) also suggests that the Harappan traits lived and continued in the later periods of Indian archaeology and culture. This suggests that the elements of the settled life which began as early as 3rd millennium BC did not go through a drastic change even today. The basic or the core of the living style is still the same only some aspects of life went into modification or change in material use or at some point have went into adoption of new systems in living standards. It also suggests from the various theoretical perspective from economics, sociology and anthropology that all the Harappan settlements do not portray a state or city but a combination of agro pastoral communities which helped in building the city states or towns like Harappa, Mohenjo Daro, Rakhigarhi, Lothal and Dholavira. The early settlements such as Girawad, Kunal, and Farmana which have the elements of early Harappan pit dwelling structures suggest that the social life of these early cultures are least complex in the stages of its development (Kent 1984, 1990). These data can be further corroborated with the material culture found in the excavation and also looking into the social hierarchy if exist from the burials from the region of Ghaggar basin in Haryana. Apart from structural perspective the social life can also be looked from the material culture such as from the archaeozoological, paleobotanical and minor antiquities found from the excavations which can strengthen the final efficiency of the study of cultural process not only from Harappan period but also in later periods of human history.

References

- Ameer, N. and T. Reddy. 1998. *Settlement Archaeology*, New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House.
- Bhan, S. 1969. Excavations at Mitathal (Hissar) 1968. *Journal of Harayana Studies*, Vol. I (i).
- Binford, L. 1980. *Bones: Ancient Men and Modern Myths*. Academic Press, New York.
- Banning, E. B. 2010. Houses, Households and Changing Society in the Late Neolithic and Chalcolithic of the Southern Levant. In *Paleorient: Pluridisciplinary Journal of Prehistory and Protohistory of Southwestern and Central Asia*, Vol: 36.1: 49-81.
- Blanton, R. E. 1994. *Houses and Households: A Comparative Study*, Plenum Press. New York and London.
- Chang, K. C. 1972. *Settlement Pattern in Archaeology, Module in Anthropology*. (A. Wesley, Editor). pp. 1-26. New York: Addison Wesley Publishing co.
- Chang, K. C. 1968. *Settlement Archaeology*, Yale University: National Press Books.
- Cork, E. 2006. *Rethinking On The Indus Myths: A Comparative Revaluation Of The Indus Civilization As An Alternative Paradigm In The Organization And Structure Of The Early Complex Societies*, PhD Thesis, Durham University.
- Dhavlikar, M. K. 1983. Ethnoarchaeology in India (sp. lecture delivered at the Indian Science Congress, Anthropology – Archaeology section, Mysore). *Bulletin Deccan College Research Institute*, Pune. 20(1-4): 49-67.
- Danino, M. 2010. *On the Trail of Lost River Sarasvati*, Penguin Publisher, New Delhi.
- Dangi, V. 2006. *Settlement Pattern of Meham Block (Rohtak)*, published MPhil thesis, University of Kurukshetra, Kurukshetra.
- Dangi V. K. 2009. Newly discovered sites in Tehsil Gohana, district Sonipat (Haryana), *Puratattva*, Vol 39. pp 195.
- Dixit, K. N. 1938. *Lectures on the Prehistoric Civilization of the Indus Valley Civilization*. G S Press. Mount Road, Madras.
- Flannery, K. V. (ed). 1976. *The Early Mesoamerican Village*. New York: Plentum.
- Grittsen, F. 2006. Archaeological Perspectives on Local Communities. In J. Blintoff (edited) *A Companion to Archaeology*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Johnson, M. 2006. Archaeology and Theory. In J. Blintoff (edited) *A Companion to Archaeology*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Joshi, J. P. 2008. *Harappan Architecture and Civil Engineering*, Rupa & Co, In Association with Infinity Foundation, New Delhi.
- Joglekar, P. P., M. Kumar and V. Shinde. 2008. A preliminary report of faunal remains from Madina, Rohtak district, Haryana, *Puratattva*, Vol 38. pp 222.
- Kent, S. 1984. *Analyzing Activity Areas: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Use of Space*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press: 1-3.
- Kent, S. 1990. Activity Areas and Architecture: An Interdisciplinary View of the Relationship between Use of Space and Domestic Built Environment. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross*

- Cultural Study*, Edited by S. Kent, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 1-8.
- Kent, S. 1990. A Cross Cultural Study of Segmentation, Architecture and the Use of Space. In *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross Cultural Study*, Edited by Susan Kent, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge: 127-152.
- Vidale, M, J. M. Kenoyer and K. K. Bhan. 1993. Ethnoarchaeological Excavations of the Bead Making Workshop at Khambhat: A View From Beneath the Floors. In *South Asian Archaeology* 1991.
- Lahiri. S. 2010. *An Ethnoarchaeological Study Of The Space Utilization During The Mature Harappan Period With Special Reference To Farmana, Rohtak District, (Haryana)*, Unpublished MA Dissertation, Department Of Archaeology, Deccan College Post Graduate And Research Institute, Pune.
- Lahiri. S. 2013. *Mature Harappan Architecture In Haryana: An Archaeological And Ethnographic Perspective*, Unpublished Report Submitted to Nehru Trust for Indian Collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum, New Delhi.
- Meskel. L. 1999. *Archaeologies of Social Life*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK: 1-8.
- Possehl, G. L. 1980. Culture and Process. *Puratattva*: No (9).
- Rogersdotter, E. 2006. *The Forgotten: an Approach on Harappan Toy Artefacts*, Department of Archaeology and Sami studies, University of UMEÅ, Sweden.
- Rowlands, M. 2006. Relating Anthropology and Archaeology, In J. Blintoff (edited) *A Companion to Archaeology*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Sarcina. A. 1978. *A Statistical Assessment of House Patterns at Mohenjo-Daro. Mesopotamia*.
- Sarcina. A. 1979. The Private House at Mohenjo-daro. In *South Asian Archaeology*. 1977, Edited by M. Taddei. Instituto Universitario Orientale, Seminario Di Studi Asiatici, Series Minor 6, Naples: 71-108.
- Shinde, V. 2008. Explorations in the Ghaggar Basin and Excavation at Girawad, Farmana (Rohtak district) and Mitathal (Bhiwani district), Haryana, India. In T. Osada and A. Uesugi (eds), *Occasional Paper 3: Linguistics, Archaeology and the Human Past*, pp 77-158. Indus Project, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), Kyoto, Japan.
- Shinde,V, T. Osada, A. Uesugi and M. Kumar. 2008. A Report on Excavations at Farmana 2007 – 08. *Occasional Paper 6: Linguistics, Archaeology and the Human Past*, pp 1-63. Indus Project, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), Kyoto, Japan.
- Shinde,V, T. Osada, A. Uesugi and M. Kumar (eds.). 2011. Excavations at Farmana Indus Project, Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), Kyoto, Japan.
- Singh K. S. and R. S. Mann. 1993. Ethnography of Haryana: A Preliminary Study, In *Journal Of Anthropological Survey Of India*, Vol: 42, No: 1, Calcutta: 18-29.

- Wilk, R and W. Ashmore. 1988. *Household and Community in the Mesoamerican Past*. Albuquerque. University Of New Mexico Press.
- Wilk, R. and W Rathje. 1982. Household Archaeology: Building A Prehistory of Domestic Life. In R. Wilk and W. Rathje (Eds.). *Archaeology of the Household*, American Behavioural Scientist 25.