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Exploration of Bilaspur Block, Yamunanagar, Haryana

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Abstract

The present research paper is based on recent archaeological explorations in Bilaspur Block of District Yamunanagar, Haryana, Author conducted village to village field investigations under his the Ph.D., Programme. During the above-said investigation, several new archaeological sites came into light in the catchment area of Saraswati, Darishadvati and Boli Rivers, apart from this many already discovered sites were also revisited to obtain the accurate information about site like Geo-Coordinates, Cultural Sequence, Size of Sites and digital Photography, these all aspects are described in the paper. Reported sites belong to various cultural phases like Mature Harappan, Late Harappan/Bara, OCP, PGW, NBP, Historical, Early medieval, medieval, and Later Medieval, so the cultural study is also described in this paper. The author tried to testify on the ground of archaeological and literary evidence that which places have the Puranic legends in the context Saraswati; those place had their existence during that time, like Adi-Badri, Pritupur, Bilaspur, Uttamwala, and Kapalmochan.

Keywords: Archaeology and Culture

Introduction

Location

The Present study area falls under the jurisdiction of Bilaspur block, District Yamunanagar, Haryana. This is one of five blocks of District Yamunanagar, Haryana. It lies between $30^{\circ} 27.02'38''$ N and $77^{\circ}19' 17''$ E and $30^{\circ} 14' 49''$ N $77^{\circ} 21' 37''$ E in north-eastern region of Haryana. In the north, Block Bilaspur is bounded by Siwalik foothills of Sirmaur District of Himachal Pradesh and Eastern boundary touches with block Chhachhrauli, southern side is enclosed by block Jgadhri. The western boundary of study region is surrounded by block Sadhaura and block Mustfabad is situated in south-west side.

Physiography,

The study area occupies the north-eastern part of Haryana, it comes into the province of Indo-Gangetic plains and locally it falls in the Yamuna floodplains. In the ancient period, this region was engaged by Saraswati and Darishadvati rivers, now it is covered by Yamuna, Somb and Boli rivers which are seasonal rivers. The study area is divided into the three parts i.e. north zone covered by the Siwalik foothills. The middle part of the area is much undulated and, it is the initial stage of Siwalik foothills. The southern part of study region is generally plain and it is recently covered by alluvial deposits of Yamuna, Saraswati and Darishadvati rivers. The entire area is in the sloping appearance from northern to southern edge. Elevation of the study region ranges between 900 to 1250 feet from MSL.

Ecological features

Climate

Present study region falls under the north-eastern Haryana. It has the semi-humid and semi-arid climate. Mainly the study is facing varied climate i.e. hot, dry and cold. This area falls under Indian monsoon system. In the northern Haryana, temperature increases swiftly during the month of March-April and go to increase day by up to the June, it rises up to 47° c.

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During this spell, several thunderstorms come in this province but mild wind also blows. Annual south-western monsoon reaches after mid-June to mid-September which gives the relief from hot summer season but humidity is very oppressive in this period. July and August are heavy rainy months, Monsoon withdraws during the latter half of the month of September, The period of post-monsoon (mid-September to Mid-November) is a transitional season. Temperature decreases after mid-September; night is cooler as compared to the days. From mid-November mild cold starts, December January and half February are coldest months of winter season with heavy western cool breeze, the temperature downfalls up to 10°C and hilly part of the study area is more cool than plain. Visibility is very low due to heavy fog in the above said season. Light rain also falls in this session.

Flora

On the bases of geomorphology, Study area can divide into two portions, Hilly and Plain. Hilly parts of the region which known as Siwalik foothills are occupied by tropical dry deciduous forest. Such type of forests is found in the Adi-Badri and surrounding area. These forests are prospered from the large number hardwood species include Chhall (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Khir (*Acacia catechu*) Jhingan (*Lannea coromandel*), Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*) Bahera (*Terminalia bellirica*) and Dhak (*Butea monosperma*) Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Other trees found are Semul, Amla, Kachir (*Bauhinia purpurea*), Papdi (*Holoptelea integrifolia*) etc. Many species of small trees and shrubs are found like *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis*, *Limonia acidissima*, *Randia*, *Carissa opaca*, *Adhatoda vasica* etc. are very general in the region. Apart of these several kinds of grasses are found in this region like *Abber* (*Eulaliopsis binata*) which is used for manufacturing of paper, *Dub* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Bansh* (Bamboo) and *Palwan* (*Dichanthium annulatum*) are other important grasses. Many plants of medicine are found i.e. *Baheda* (*Terminalia bellirica*), *Harad* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Amla* (*Emablica officinalis*), *Amaltas* (*Cassia fistula*), etc. occur in the forest area. Alluvial plains contains various type of fruit full and unfruitful trees like *Mango* (*Mangifera indica*), *Amrud* (*Gwava*), *Jamun* (*Syzygium cumini*), *Samal* (*Bombax cibeia*), *Pipal* (*Ficus religiosa*), *Bad* (*Ficus bengalensis*) *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Mulberry* (*Morus alba*), *Siris* (*Albizia procera*) *Kela*, *Shisham* (*Dalbergia sissoo*), (*Accasia milotica*), *Safeda* (*Eucalyptus hybrid*), *Beri* etc. in the study region. Includable plant of medicine like *Aakha*, *Gulbansa*, *Unga*, *Kandai*, *Hins*, *Bhang*, etc are found with *Dub* and *Dab* also occurs in this region.

Fauna

According to the diversity of Physiographic features, the fauna of study region can be separated into two parts like hilly wildlife and plain area's fauna. A large no. of mammals are found i.e. *Monkey*, *Langoor*, *leopard*, *Chital*, *Jungle Billi*, *Bluebull*, *Wild Pig*, *small Indian Civet*, *Jackles Hare*, *deer*, *Fox*, *Mongoose*, *Bat*, *Gilheri*, *Sehi*, *Rat* etc., *House Buffalo*, *Cow*, *Hours*, *Goat*, *Sheep* and *Donkey* etc. are found in the plain area. Beside birds species like *Indian robin*, *Saxicoloides fulicatus*, *Black-necked stork*, *Eastern lag Goose*, *Eurasian*, *Tree duck*, *Great egret*, *Comb duck* (in winter), *Cotton Teal*, *Whistling Teal*, *Spotbill*

duck, *wigeons*, *house Crow*, *wild Crow*, *House Sparrow*, *Parakeets*, *Indian Maynaetc* are take place in the study region. Describable reptiles like various kinds of *Snake*, *Python*, *Lizard*, *Girgit*, and *tortoise* etc, some amphibians also occur like *frog* and *toads*.

Geology

The northern edge of our study region is comprised of Siwalik Foothills. These hills are made of the tertiary rocks like Sedimentary rocks, shale, and boulder conglomerate. Eastern, southern and western parts of the block is in the alluvium plain having sand, silt and clay which were stratified by ancient *Saraswati*, *Darishadvati*, *Yamuna*, and *Somb*, etc. it is very fertile land, River courses are full of pebbles.

Water bodies

At present the *Yamuna*, *Boli*, *Phatrala*, and *Somb* rivers are existing water source but, in the past mighty river, *Saraswati* and *Drishadvati* were also the major foundation of the water source. All of the rivers are described in the ancient literature. Old *Drishadvati* River has often been identified with the modern *Chautang Nala*. According to the major religious work *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the *Drishadvati* is one of the many transcendental rivers in India. The *Drishadvati* River is already mentioned in the *Rig Veda* together with *Saraswati* and *Apaya*. In the *Manu-Smriti*, this river and the *Saraswati* River define the boundary of *Brahmavart*. According to *Mahabharata* and *Vamanpurana*, the land, which lies between *Saraswati* and *Drishadvati* rivers, is called *Kurukshetra*.

Previous Work

A. Cunningham was the first scholar of archaeology in India. He explored Haryana in 1872-73 during the tour of Punjab subsequently he explored those sites which mentioned in Brahmanical and Buddha's literature i.e. *Kurukshetra*, *Karnal*, *Pehowa* and *Nissing* (*Karnal*) *Kapalmochan*, etc. B.B. Lal began the methodical exploration and could find out the PGW sites which were mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, and then he explored Haryana. In the year 1967 Professor *Suraj Bhan* did the large-scale exploration in Haryana. He explored the *Chautang* (old *Darishadvati* River) valley and discovered a number of archaeological sites, many sites were found in Upper *Chautang* Valley. Thereafter *Manmohan Kumar* conducted the exploration of district *Ambala* and *Kurukshetra* during his Ph.D. research work that time he explored this region. *Brahm Dutt* did his Ph.D. on PGW culture and explored Haryana during this work, and discovered the good number of P.G.W. Culture. Archaeological Survey of India also conducted explorations in the study area. *Yogesawar Joshi* did his Ph.D. on "Archaeo-Historical Study in Northeastern Haryana (from Earliest Times to 12th Century A.D.)", *Kurukshetra* University, *Kurukshetra*, Haryana, during his work and explored the upper part of present area.

Historical Outline

Bilaspur is the part of Haryana state, its name derived from Great epic creator *Vedvyash*. According to the legend *Maharishi Vedvyas* lived here in his *Aasram* which was situated on the bank of sacred river *Saraswati* and this place known as *Vyaspur*, and with the passage of time, the name

corrupted to Bilaspur. It is believed that Vedvyas created the great epic Mahabharata at this place with the help of Ganesha. Land of Haryana is the mother of civilization since time immemorial. Haryana yielded the evidence of prehistoric human activities. Above described previous research presents the proto-historic settlements in Saraswati and Drishadvati valley in Haryana. A lot of Harappan, Aryan and historical colonies were found all over Haryana. The ancient text described the History of this region. The Vedic literature explained that Aryan occupied Saraswati, Darishadvati, and Yamuna Valley. Before the Aryans this land was occupied by the Naga culture, those people did the worship of Naga Deities. During the Great War Mahabharata, this region was the part of Kuru state, several Mahabharata associated places exist in this region like Bilaspur and Kapalamochan. Through Mahajanapada period the study area was the part of major Mahajanapada which was called Kuru Janapada in Jambudvip. Taittiriya Aranyaka mentioned that Trughana was the northern bordering region of Kuru Mahajanapada which identified with Sugh near Jagadhri, Yamunanagar. In the 6th Century, B.C. Lord Buddha visited this area and delivered the discourses in the region, after that, this region was occupied by Nandas. Topra edict and Chanetistupa confirmed the rule of Great Ashoka in this region after the end of Nandas. Excavation at Sugh and various explorations of the study area yielded evidence of Sunga hold on Haryana. Indo-Greeks coins referred to political influence on study region they were defeated by Kushana and established the stronghold on north India, during 1st to 3rd century AD. The Yaudheyas came in the power for the second time after the decline of Kushana. However, the Inscription of Kaplmochna shows the jurisdiction of Gupta Empire on this region, the decline of the Guptas and Hunas, in the 6th century A.D. Guptas provincial governor Pushpabhuti, establish a new state as Srikantha Janpad, the capital was Sthaneswar (Thansar). During the Early Medieval period, Haryana ruled by Gurjar Partihars, Tomars and Chahmans, thereafter present area came under the Muslim rule of Delhi seat.

Research methodology

Several techniques and methodologies are available for gathering the archaeological data. Mainly Explorations and excavations are used for archaeological investigations in India. The author used the exploration method for collecting the physical remains of human activity and find out new sites in this region. The investigator conducted village-to-village exploration and keeps in mind, previous work which done by earlier scholars, as well as used the ancient literary sources to find out those legendary places which are mentioned in the ancient text. Old river courses like Saraswati and Drishadvati were also kept in the mind during the exploration because water bodies used to attract human for habitation in the vicinity. This extensive exploration was carried out from May to July which was a very hot and rainy spell. Rainy season is very helpful period for exploration because; it exposes relics of the mound in the rain gullies. The explorer collected the sample from the surface, rain gullies and tube-well drains (Khal) of the sites. During the exploration, to record the accurate geo-coordinates of each site the explorer made use of Polaris Navigation GPS application on digital device, a digital high-resolution camera was used for photography of

sites and remains. The author used the Arc-GIS Software for mapping and generating the The present points of settlements on the basis of geo-coordination in the block map. In context of ceramics, industry author applied the typology method and the correlated to ceramics of associated region. To get the approximate dating of cultural remains, the researcher has exercised the typology method. Size of site was defined on the basis of dispersal of physical remains.

Exploration

To collect the archaeological data of Study area (Bilaspur Block in Yamunanagar District), authors conducted village to village field investigations under the built heritage project of Department of Archaeology and Museums, Haryana in 2015, this exploration work was led by the first author. Report of exploration (Unpublished) has been submitted to Department of Archaeology and Museums, Haryana. All new discovered are mentioned in that report. Most sites are under the cultivation and few sites have been destroyed completely for the agriculture purpose. Some site extensively going toward the end, due to the new habitation and agriculture. Some scholars have already explored this area, those have been described in previous works, that work was conducted so far back since 1967 to 2003. A long gap in research work after 2003 attracts for exploration in this region. During present exploration work, researcher explored the total 40 archaeological sites in this block, 20 of these came into light first time on the archaeological map and 20 sites were revisited by explorer. On the basis of data, as the result of preliminary examination, it appears that these explored sites belong to the Harappan to later-medieval period.

- Harappan = 2,,,,,,,,,,
- Late Harappan(Bara) =10,,
- PGW =8,,,,,,,,,,,,,
- Early Historical & Historical =21
- Early Medieval =8
- Medieval =2

Discussion

On the basis of primary analysis of exploration data and cultural material, it seems that earlier this region was occupied by the Harappan people. They had a little population because during the exploration work in this region only 2 Mature Harappan settlements were reported. Pottery motifs of this phase have the similarity with Hulas Harappan pottery. After that, this area was inhabited by the Late Harappan and Bara people. Their settlements were in large amount, rather than Harappan. The sudden increase of the Late Harappan sites in this region, precise the theory that Harappan people were migrated from lower Gaghhar-Hakra valley to Upper Saraswati and Drishdvati reaches during the late Harappan period. Because only two Harappan Sites were found in this region which is very little amount to produce the 10 Late Harappan sites. Other sites may be established by refugees who came from the Cholistan. Next settler in the region was the PGW holder people, which were associated with Aryan culture. The total amount of PGW Sites are 8, which are nearly equal to Late Harappan culture. Next phase is NBPW in the area, only single site came to light. Subsequently, the region was comprised of early historical and historical cultural deposit. This phase revealed a larger no of Sites (21sites), which

shows the growth of population, development in economy and massive structure remains of burnt bricks. Two early medieval sites were also recovered. Overall, author noticed the growth in Late Harappan culture sites which has the Bara impact on pottery, the whole region may be occupied by Bara people also. Both Late Harappan and Bara people lived together, such kinds of evidence have been found at Bhagwanpura which is situated near the present study region. Some PGW sites were found on the late Harappan Deposit and some were found on natural soil, it may be possible that those Aryan came into early wave, they settled on late Harappan sites. And who reached in later wave they adopted the virgin soil for living, During the historical and early medieval period, the region was under influence of the Brahmanism and Buddhism. Some examples of Buddhism like Buddha sculptures and other antiquity were found and many Brahminical sculptures also found. At last, it can be assumed that Saraswati and Darishadvati were the perennial rivers which provided water, food and fertile land for agriculture during the proto-historic phase, so those people adopted this region for living. Sunga, Kushan and Gupta culture were also flourished in this region. So this block is very important for the archaeological point of view.

Further research is required in the region with more developed parameters to find out the more evidence to clear the present picture of the origin of culture, development, and decline of above civilizations in the present study area

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