

ABSTRACT

The research on North Gujarat's ceramic industry offers a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted dynamics of ancient societies. It begins with contextualizing the significance of pottery within archaeology, portraying it as an alphabet that sheds insight into the socio-economic, religious and manufacturing narratives of the past. The geographical diversity of Gujarat, characterized by marshy regions, fertile plains and hilly terrains suggests a substantial influence on shaping the cultural and historical aspect of the region.

The major aspect of the study aims to understand the relationship between environmental factors and pottery production. The geological composition varies across regions which impacts the characteristics of pottery unearthed from archaeological sites. This interdependency between environmental conditions and pottery production underlines the importance of considering local context in archaeological analysis.

The study focuses on three prominent archaeological excavated sites in North Gujarat namely Vadnagar, Devnimori and Shamalaji spanning from the Early Historic to Medieval periods. Vadnagar has been taken as the index reference site owing to its continuous cultural occupations, providing a rich source of pottery specimens for analysis. By meticulously examining ceramics from these sites, the study aims to bridge gaps left by previous research scholars and establish a ceramic chronology chart for North Gujarat.

The research incorporated primary and secondary sources like literary reference and field surveys to analyse potteries from various archaeological cultural sequences. The combination of typological and quantitative analysis which includes not only special pottery specimens but also regular ones aided in understanding the evolution of pottery shapes, colours, decorations and fire techniques over time. Descriptive analysis, drawings and photographic documentation complemented the findings. Additionally, comparing the established data of Vadnagar with other sites in North Gujarat provided insights into regional variations. Through this approach, establishing a ceramic chronology chart for North Gujarat could be achieved.

The diversity of pottery shapes identified in the study ranges from utilitarian vessels such as globular pots, storage jars and basins to more specialized shapes like bowls and associated lids. The pottery fabric exhibits a range of textures, from coarse to medium, with the incorporation of tempering materials such as husk, mica, and sand particles.

Moreover, the research examines the morphological intricacies of ceramics, highlighting variations in neck sizes, rim shapes, and decorative techniques. The range of decoration techniques applied to these ceramics is equally diverse consisting of incising, applique, stamping and painting with designs in geometrical patterns, natural motifs and floral compositions.

Categorically, the ceramic assemblage is classified into 17 types based on clay, shapes, surface treatment, manufacturing techniques, firing methods and decorative styles. This classification provides a systematic framework for understanding the diversity of pottery traditions in North Gujarat and facilitates comparisons between different archaeological contexts.

While the observations primarily focus on Vadnagar, comparisons with Devnimori and Shamalaji sites enhance the analysis by highlighting similarities and differences in pottery shapes and wares. However, it's important to acknowledge the challenges faced during the collection of data from the excavation sites and the accessibility of data. The findings focus on showcasing a preliminary ceramic chart within the cultural sequence and regional stratigraphy of North Gujarat. Nevertheless, the findings suggest scope for future interdisciplinary research and further research or input from tertiary educators and researchers regarding these findings is encouraged and could lead to a more profound understanding.