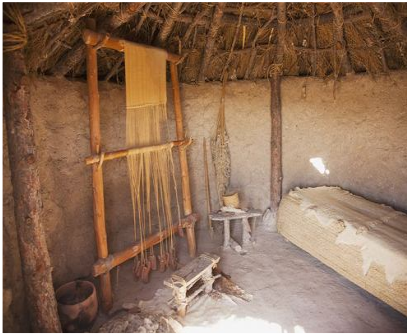

**A STUDY OF THE FORT ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA DURING THE CHALCOLITHIC AND NEOLITHIC PERIOD
(With special reference of Eran, Nagda, Rangpur sites)**

Prof. Jayashree Ramesh Kulkarni
Head of Dept. History , V.M. College, Osmanabad.



INTRODUCTION :-

From earliest stage, man is conscious about his safety. This consciousness gave birth to biggest & strongest defensive work in the world. At the stage of economical and social stability man needed personal safety, economic security and community safety also. To protect these things he took shelter behind wooden, mud or stone ramparts. That is known as fortification. The fort architecture developed during the period of urban civilization in India.

Structure of fort :-

Fortification means any defensive work intended to ward off any un-wanted intrusion which may be a wild animals incursions or neighbouring wild tribes, but in the Neolithic period setting of fortification was wooden, mud or stone walls, or ramparts having one or more gates. There are instances in the known history where even a wagan made line of defense has temporarily secured as fortification.

Types of forts :-

Fort was one of the most important elements for the security of the city in all times. The fortifications were of two types. Natural and Artificial. Among the natural fortifications the river and the mountains were most important. That explains why the cities in ancient India, wherever possible, were on the banks of the rivers or sea shores.¹ The mountains were another natural security for the cities. The cities surrounded by a chain of mountains were considered most secure.²

The Vishnu-Dharmottara, Matsya & the Agnipuran & the Samarangan Sutradhara mentioned 6 types of forts.³

1) Jal-durga 2) Pank-Durga 3) Van-Durga 4) Airin Durga 5) Parvatiya Durga 6) Maha-Durga. Parvatiya durga was called as the best, but Manasollasa refers nine kinds of forts and Jaldurga and Giridurga considered as best.⁴ In the Neolithic period art of fortification was not so developed.

Chalcolithic & Neolithic Fortifications :-

Large number of sites in western and central India and northern parts of Deccan are the evidence of these cultural phases. Western part belong to the Chalcolithic culture and south Deccan part belong to the Neolithic culture. Archaeological relics from these sites proves that Chalcolithic-Neolithic inhabitants had a settled economic, social, cultural life. Various excavations have given evidences of surrounding walls or protective ramparts. Eran (Dist. Sagar) & Nagda (Dist. Ujjain) from Madhya Pradesh and Rangpur from Gujarat are Chalcolithic sites. Tekkalkota, Mysore is Neolithic site.⁵

Eran is situated on the left bank of Bina river and surrounded by it on three sides (east, west and north). It consisted of three mounds rising from 6.5 m. to 11.00 m. above the surface. This site was first visited by Gen.Cunningham in 1874-75 and excavated by Prof. Bajpai K.D.⁶ It was observed in 4 period- 2000 B.C. to 700 B.C., 700 B.C. to 200 B.C., first century B.C. to 6th Century A.D. and late medieval period up to 1800 A.D. In 1st period (Chalcolithic period) of excavation a mud-defense wall on a moat was discovered. Built of black and yellow clay the rampart was found to be 6.40 m. in extant high and 47m. in basal width two layers

of Chalcolithic occupation were found underlying the rampart. The entrance to the fortified settlement was coincide with the present entrance. A small trench was dug here and mud rampart was existed.

Nagda – This Chalcolithic site is situated on the eastern bank of the Chambal, the mound rises to a height of 27.43 m. from surface, of which occupational deposits were found to be only 9.75 m. in depth the rest being natural soil.⁷ That shows the native of the place selected a natural mound for their abode. The excavation of Nagda belongs to three periods. The structure of mud and mudbricks from the 1st layer represents Chalcolithic period. Most of the structures were used for residential purpose, but one of them should be a bastion of a rampart. That proves that the first period of Nagda (about 1000 B.C.) remains partakes the Chalcolithic cultures of central-western India and Deccan.⁸

Rangpur is situated in Kathiwad-Gujarat. The excavation in 1953-54 proved that this site was an Indus site. The earliest settlement of this site was protected by a mud-brick fortification wall (1.9 m thick). The same culture were found drains and mud-brick structures in three different levels. The occupation of the site was continuous from the latter half of the second millennium B.C. to the period of N.B.P. with hardly any break. The characteristics of fortification of these sites are also seen in Indus regions such as Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

We cant make generalization or common statement about the above mentioned three sites. But we can compare the features of these sites with Harappan sites. Firstly a typical Harappan feature, the burnt brick ravement for the ramparts is absent even in the portion of the rampart very close to the river. Secondly the moat surrounding the rampart is an additional feature never met with in any of the Harrappan fortified sites.

The Neolithic site of Tekkalkota possess a peculiar types of natural defense. Hence the castellated granite hills are situated to the west-south-west of the place. On & around these hills known as Hydeda-gudda found various Neolithic sites. There are 19 Neolithic settlements located at different heights and of different dimensions.⁹ The habitations at the foot are surrounded by the hill on three sides. Thus the hills are isolated and enclosed by castellated granite boulders. So that they are more secure.¹⁰

CONCLUSION :-

In the early Chalcolithic period, the defense was not man-made or man-selected. But in the Neolithic period man realised the importance of the hills in the viewpoint of defense and accordingly established their habitants. After relisation of more safety the settlers of this period created an art of fortification. Though it was not so developed, but is layed a foundation of fortification in India. The necessity for defense and condition of strife was common in those period. The archaeology excavation during last 60-70 years have focused on these things.

REFERENCES :-

1. M.K. Dhar – Royal Life in Ancient India (1991).
Durga Publications, Delhi, First Edition – Page No. 75-76.
2. Ibid – Page No. 76.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. D.V. Prakash – A History of Fortification In India (C. 3000 B.C. to 1000 A.C.) – A Thesis for Ph.D., University of Pune 1978. Page No. 243.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid – page no. 246
8. Indian Archaeology – A review 1955-56 – Page no. 11-19.
9. D.V. Prakash – A History of fortification in India (C. 3000 B.C. to 1000 A.C.) – A thesis for Ph.D., University of Pune, 1978 – Page No. 249.
10. M.S.N. Rao & K.C. Malhotra – The Stone Age Hill – Dwellers of Tekkalakota – Bulleting of Deccan College, Pune – Page no. 7-9.