

## Iron: from Antiquity to Culture

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### Introduction

The paper encompasses the social and cultural changes that have been encountered with the development of iron technology. The study of iron in early India, in its technical manifestations, suffers from a series of limitations. A technological innovation is the product of a social system and, in turn, it becomes viable only when the society gets ready for it. The social readiness depends upon a variety of factors the form of the existing mode of production, the operational dynamics of the class formation, the nature of the ecological compulsions, etc. The shifting equations amongst these variables explain the variant role of a technology in differing historical periods. A greater exploitation of iron mines fulfilled the growing demands for the metals. The process admitted of two distinct patterns-diffusion of iron-based agrarian technology in those areas and helping the organization of the local elements of material culture by assimilating these into the mainstream on one side and subsequent technological advancement on the other side (Thakur 2001). The date and origin of the introduction of iron artefacts and iron working into India has remained a much debated research problem, not unconnected with the equally debatable question of its association with the supposed arrival, in the second millennium BC, of immigrants from the west, as often suggested on the basis of the Rigveda (Tiwari 2003 ).

The early history of Iron in India may be studied of different regional context and leaving aside the problems whether or not Indian Iron technology was the result of some diffusion from the west, attention may be focused on the various Iron bearing sites (Niharranjan 2000 ). Several unsolved questions are appearing while do we have trace the beginning of the Iron Age culture or Vedic period like what were the leading factors to urbanisation? If urbanisation has taken place with the invention of iron or paddy transplantation, what could be the boundary of Iron Age or Vedic Age, how do we conceptualise the forth coming social formation and how do we distinguish between antiquity of Iron and Iron Age Culture. The history of India begins with a number of territorial units, each of them politically centralised, an extensive craft specialisation and trade, and a social scene which is generally well stratified. It may not be logical to attribute all these to the advent of Iron. This new technological element no doubt strengthened the base - basically laid down by the Neolithic and Chalcolithic settlers. But it's doubtful if this led by itself to the civilization of early historic India (Chakrabarthy 2006). Some scholars argue that if iron has crucial role to frame urbanised society why this much gap between Iron Age Culture and second urbanisation, around 400 years. The answer is simple urbanisation need several factors to obtain their maximum. It will not possible to emerge quickly. It has been argued that there is no significant time gap or cultural break between Bronze and Iron Age culture even NBPW culture. They should be re-examined whether the Chalcolithic culture continued (Inamgaon) for few more centuries or Iron Age had really an early beginnings.

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