

Concept Note

Our archaeological knowledge has expanded rapidly over the past several decades, but most of our interpretations are still under the influence of inherited mind set and indeed requires paradigm shift.

Changes in human life – social, economic and or cultural initiated primarily because of technological innovations and changes in spatial and temporal dimensions, and in turn economic, social and cultural urges of a cognitive ecosystem challenges the technology for further progress. There is always some meaning behind normal human action and to understand rationale behind his/ her action one should understand the process of cultural constructs through contextual archaeological evidence in time and space. The development of human behavior is not unilateral rather multi-structural, multilateral and spiral in time and space. At a more pragmatic level, it implies that there is some complex structural thinking process which links the possible visual patterns.

Will we simply count tool types, potsherds and or bone fragments, or try to estimate the number of pots or animals and or make attempt to understand mind or cognitive map of their creators? An increasingly complex mixture of interdisciplinary knowledge, primarily analytical strategies focused on archaeological sciences, is required to keep pace, such as archaeobotany, archaeo-zoology, archaeo-chemistry, genomes analysis, geo-physics, geo-morphology, micro-wear analysis, sedimentology, thin-section analysis, province study, *chaineopratoire*, etc. besides traditional analytical tools like typo-technology, metrical analysis, ethno-archaeology, etc. Unless and until we understand the symbolism of archaeological cultural material / artifacts in archaeological context it would be hard to reveal dynamics of artifacts and the systematic context of the sites or cognitive ecosystem. Away from the Siwaliks as one move towards the middle Ganga plain one realizes that while reviewing the Prehistory of Ganga, one cannot exclude the Vindhya as there are several tributaries of Ganga originating in the Vindhya.

As a discipline History has evolved from the simple narratives of Great peoples to a very complex multidisciplinary subject overlapping and intersecting several social science disciplines such as Psychology, Political science, Sociology, Anthropology, Environment, Gender studies etc. Issues like ‘why history at all’ or ‘does history’ has become irrelevant in the present scenario and sphere of scientific progress and development; indeed, the quest for the roots of human culture and society not only justify the present but such studies with open mind may provide answers to its multilayered trials and challenges. Historical methodology and approaches have reached a kind of plateau where searching new horizons itself has become a challenge. The fact that History is inescapable to human knowledge has become indisputable.

What new areas have emerged recently in history to enrich our knowledge? How this knowledge has engaged itself with the socio-political dynamics of the present time? These are some of the objectives of the present seminar. Truly, the issue entails a long list of subfields which have become an integral part of history as a discipline. For example ‘*Periodization*’ has become a burning issue both in the history and archaeology. How long we should follow compartmental approach to periodization? Did periodization help in understanding India’s past or the time has come to revisit it from different perspectives. History of science and technology, feminism, interplay of religion and politics, interrelationship between agriculture and trade – all these study areas have now occupied central position and their centrality has deeply affected the nature, scope and method of history.

Science has contributed a lot to the understanding of history. Historical methods are now classified as traditional and scientific methods – the latter having a serious interface with computer technology. In the study of archaeology, art and architecture it is playing a vital role. Likewise questions posed by the present global scenario have given impetus to several new areas of inquiry in the realm of history. Hence, this seminar is being organized to piece together archaeological and historical evidence contextualizing them in the present state of human culture, knowledge and needs.

Sessions: In the background of the concept note -

Archaeology:

- ***Primitive Hunter-gathers to Advanced Hunter-gathers: Retrospect & Prospects***
- ***Incipient Cultivators to Beginning of Agriculture: Progress and Implications (With special reference to the Middle Ganga Plain)***
- ***Transformation from Rural to Urban Life: Role of Science and Technology***

History:

- ***Problem of Periodization in History***
- ***Interplay of Religion and State in Indian History***
- ***New Trends in the study of Indian Culture, Society and Economy***
- ***Symbolism and Technical Aspects of Indian Art & Architecture***
- ***Sociology of Indian Art: Social Function of art; the status of Artisans***
- ***Impact of Religion and Philosophy on Indian Society***
- ***Gender Studies and Indian Institutions***