

Chapter I: Introduction

Over the past half a century, the archaeological research on the outer plains of Jammu has mainly been based on excavations and explorations by the Archaeological Survey of India. These investigations majorly increased the dataset of the archaeological sites in the area, laying the groundwork for future research. Despite providing a temporal foundation, this approach makes only a little contribution to the reconstruction of complicated human-environment processes. This was undoubtedly also the case in Jammu's surrounding southerly plains and northerly uplands.

However, in recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in the ways to study the past man-land relationship in the areas around Jammu. A number of scholars have investigated the rich archaeological heritage of the southern plains drained by several river systems, and the Northern Himalayan mountains using various methodological frameworks. The erstwhile Punjab, with the Beas and the Ravi River systems, have been studied by a few scholars (see Dales & Kenoyer, 1986; Bala, 1992; Schuldenrein et al., 2004; Meadow & Kenoyer, 2005; Wright et al., 2008; Wright & Hritz, 2013). More focus, however, has been directed to the Ghaggar-Saraswati system, leading to better understanding of the region (Bhan, 1975; Joshi, 1993; Nath, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2014; Rao et al., 2004, 2005, 2006; Dangi, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Shinde et al., 2008a, 2008b; Kumar et al., 2009, Petrie et al., 2017; Orengo & Petrie, 2017; Green & Petrie, 2018; Durcan et al., 2019; Petrie, 2019; Green et al., 2019). The valley of Kashmir has also been a subject of investigations by various scholars (Kak, 1933; Pande, 1970, 1971; Sankalia, 1971; Pant, 1979; Kaw, 1979; Pant et al., 1982; Sharma, 1982, 1992, 1998; Saar, 1992; Buth & Kaw, 1985; Shali, 1993, 2001; Lone et al., 1993, 2000; Agrawal 1998; Mani, 2000, 2008; Khazanchi, 2004; Lone, 2005; Yattoo, 2012). These approaches helped in giving the

aforementioned landscapes a new dimension from an interdisciplinary perspective.

In this regard, the assessment of the region of Jammu is inadequate. The region of Jammu, drained by the river Chenab and its tributary the Tawi, is located strategically as a bridge between the mainland India and the upper reaches of the Himalayas. The archaeological investigation of the area has been insufficient hitherto. Lying between the Neolithic cultural complex on the north and Harappan dominion on the south (Fig. I.1), the research area act as a corridor between them.

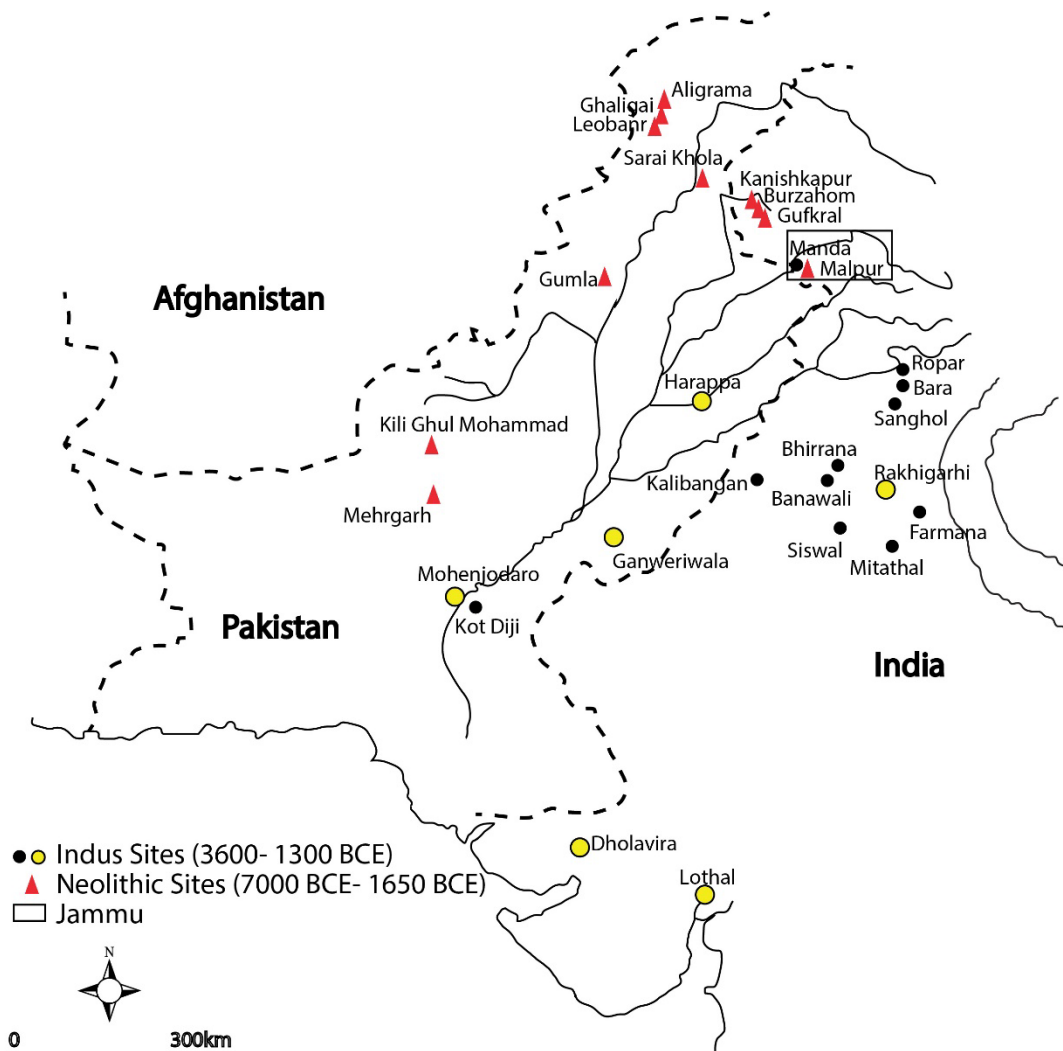


Figure I.1: Jammu (in rectangle) and the surrounding Neolithic and Indus sites mentioned in the text-
modified after Shinde et al., 2018

The cultural development in the above mentioned two entities happened much faster, and the research area seems to have contributed meagrely to the cultural development of the overall region. This vacuum persisted till the commencement of Early Historic period, following which a spurt in the number of settlements is witnessed in the outer plains of Jammu. A thorough survey with a specified set of objectives was required to fully comprehend this fascinating phenomenon. The current study is being conducted primarily in the context of this rationale. The paucity of comprehensive studies focusing on unravelling the archaeological significance of the area has given an impetus to the current research.

1.1 Previous Work

The exploration and excavations undertaken by the Archaeological survey of India from 1961 onwards have given a firm foundation to the current research. Although these surveys provided the basic dataset, they did not provide systematic and extensive investigations into the region's history.

Of late, the archaeological remains and the historical background of the Jammu region have been studied by researchers from the Jammu University (see Monica, 2011; Singh, 2012; Hans, 2013). These studies employed an approach that focused on documenting cultural developments rather than systematic exploratory surveys or re-examination of excavated artefacts. There was no attempt in these works to incorporate the environment and ecological settings for the reconstruction of the region's cultural history. A few studies have also looked at the region's geographical features and the development of settlements in terms of resource consumption (Drew, 1875; Qazi, 2012). They do not, however, address the dynamic nature of the historical man-land connection.

The current research therefore targets to provide a different perspective of the land use pattern through various time periods. It focuses on the systematic study involving intensive exploratory surveys for locating new sites and understanding their environmental setting for settlement pattern studies.

Studies on the same line have been undertaken in the Indian context by several scholars. For example, Sankalia (1960) traced the settlement pattern on Pan Indian level from prehistoric to early historic period based on material evidence. Lal (1984) explains the settlement process in the form of distribution of settlements at the site of Kanpur, their spacing patterns, nearest neighbour analysis and the development of hierarchy. An attempt to determine the population estimation is also done at the site. Erdosy (1985), in his work on settlement archaeology of Kausambi region talks about the changing nature of settlement system from Mesolithic till Early Historic periods. Raju (1990), based on Zonal pattern proposed by Trigger (1968), explained the settlement pattern of Neolithic cultures of Lower Krishna Valley. The author further discussed a variety of factors which were taken into consideration by the Neolithic settlers to choose a site for occupation e.g., from the choice of nalas and small tributaries over major river Krishna, to the selection of black cotton soil for the establishment of settlements etc. Shinde (1990), talking about the settlement preferences of Malwa people down into the Deccan, refers to the ecological factors responsible for the movement, and how Tapi basin acted as a buffer zone for the movement of people from north to south and vice versa. Interestingly, the settlements around Tapi basin were found to be away from the river Tapi due to reoccurring floods, but the Pravara Godavari and Bhima Valleys had evidence of settlements along the major rivers. This peculiarity, as the author explains is because the Malwa people were not eager to colonize the region south of Tapi valley.

The methodological framework for investigating man-land relationship in cultural evolution continued to be the subject of discussion by many other scholars (see Chitalwala, 1977; Dhavalikar, 1978; Possehl, 1979; Sonawane & Mehta, 1985; Murty, 1989; Ray, 1989; Raghubans, 2007; Yatoo, 2012; Vaidya, 2014; Pandey, 2015; Kamble, 2016; Arjun, 2017; Shukla, 2018).

When considering a region like Jammu, where little research on the man-land relationship has been done, these approaches to study land use patterns become critical.

1.2 Objectives of the Research

The research majorly revolves around the role of landscape in shaping and developing the cultures of the area. It is indeed an aim which encompasses various aspects for its fulfilment.

1. The identification of ecological niches which were preferred by the people in the past. The choices of these zones depend on environmental factors which are accessed through this research.
2. The dependence of man on the land i.e., man-land relationship, and its role in exploitation of natural resources are among the important objectives of the study. The ecological niches as explained above have different degrees of resource availability that would ultimately attract or force people to choose different localities for occupation. This is studied through the current research.
3. The factors responsible for the settlements to localise, integrate and then to decline in Jammu are considered. All the settlements are considered together as a unit and then the factors are assessed.
4. Considering the development of the neighbouring regions of Kashmir and Punjab, especially the latter, the history of Jammu is re-analysed. The area of Punjab is given emphasis, as the region of Jammu –

geographically and culturally – identifies itself with Punjab, a phenomenon which must have been prominent in the past as well. The networking of these areas along with the historically significant communication routes must have strengthened the concept of migration and diffusion and are focused upon through this study.

5. The role of the two major rivers – the Chenab and the Tawi – in the development of the settlements in Jammu is examined. In addition, the part which the water bodies, in the form of small streams/*nalas*, play in making an area fit for occupation is also probed into. The role of rainfall in replenishing the underground water source, which has remained an important source of water for domestic use till date, is also analysed. During the monsoon and post-monsoon period, the two major rivers, the Chenab and the Tawi, swell up, destructing their banks and eroding landmass around them. The strategies therefore adopted by the people in the past to establish settlements around these water bodies are addressed.
6. Based on the size recorded during the exploration, functional categorisation of the sites is considered, in order to classify them into different units of settlement e.g., trading centres, villages, satellite sites etc. The availability of raw material in and around the area of Jammu is kept in record, so that the role of Jammu in the transportation of these materials from one geographical unit (e.g., mountainous area of Kashmir and its adjoining regions) to another (e.g., Plains of Punjab and rest of Indian mainland) is highlighted. The objective, therefore, is to understand the importance of the plains of Jammu in being the central area of networking mainly owing to its strategic location, an aspect hitherto undetermined.

In this pursuit, an understanding of the cultural, geographical, and spatial complexities of the research area therefore becomes important to comprehend the man-land relationship. The approach is important to explain the intricacies of cultural development to better understand the region.

I. 3 Spatial Importance of Jammu Plains: Trade and Trade Routes

The location and the ecological settings, where the region of Jammu is placed, give it a unique identity. As described by Drew (1875:3), it is the “last strip of the plain on the north of Punjab”. As several routes to Kashmir and the plains to the west and south pass-through Jammu, it becomes a vital crossroads for cultural and material interchange. For example, because of its low elevation, the Banihal road (in the hills of Jammu division), connects Kashmir (through the Chenab Valley) and Jammu to the rest of India and has traditionally been a convenient route to the Upper Chenab Valley and eastern hills of Punjab (Bamzai, 1994).

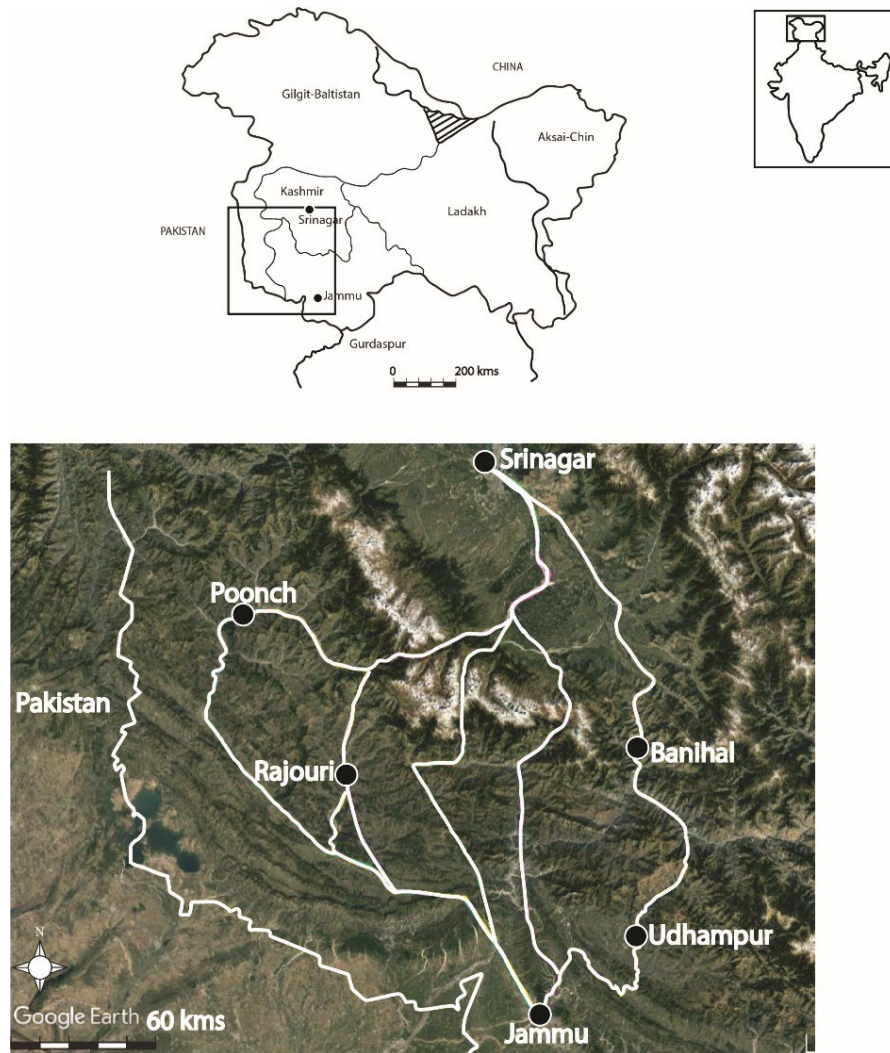


Figure I.2: Routes from Jammu to Kashmir via Banihal and Rajouri- Poonch

Dani (1999), emphasizing on the statement of Marshall, believes that one of the three ways to Taxila, was via the Srinagar Valley (through Baramulla to Manshera to further down to Haripur valley, the latter being close to Taxila). In other words, Taxila and Kashmir had a well communicated route. As shown in Fig. I.2, this route farther south of Kashmir is connected to the rest of India via Jammu through the Jammu-Banihal Pass and the Rajouri-Poonch Route, highlighting the significance of Jammu's geographic location in this context of commuting networks.

The full description of late-eighteenth-century routes (Bourbel, 1897) (Fig. I.3) provides an idea of the commuting route via Jammu to several nearby areas. Stein (1900) also mentions about the importance of some of these routes. Even

though the above information is very recent, the routes can provide a good picture of the earlier patterns. Hiuen Tsang is thought to have stopped in the town of Jayapura for a day before heading to the town of Sakala on his way from Punch or Poonch. Beal identifies Jayapura as small town of Jammu (Footnotes Beal, 1884:165) whereas Cunningham identifies this place as Hafizabad (city in Pakistan Punjab) (Cunningham, 1871:181).

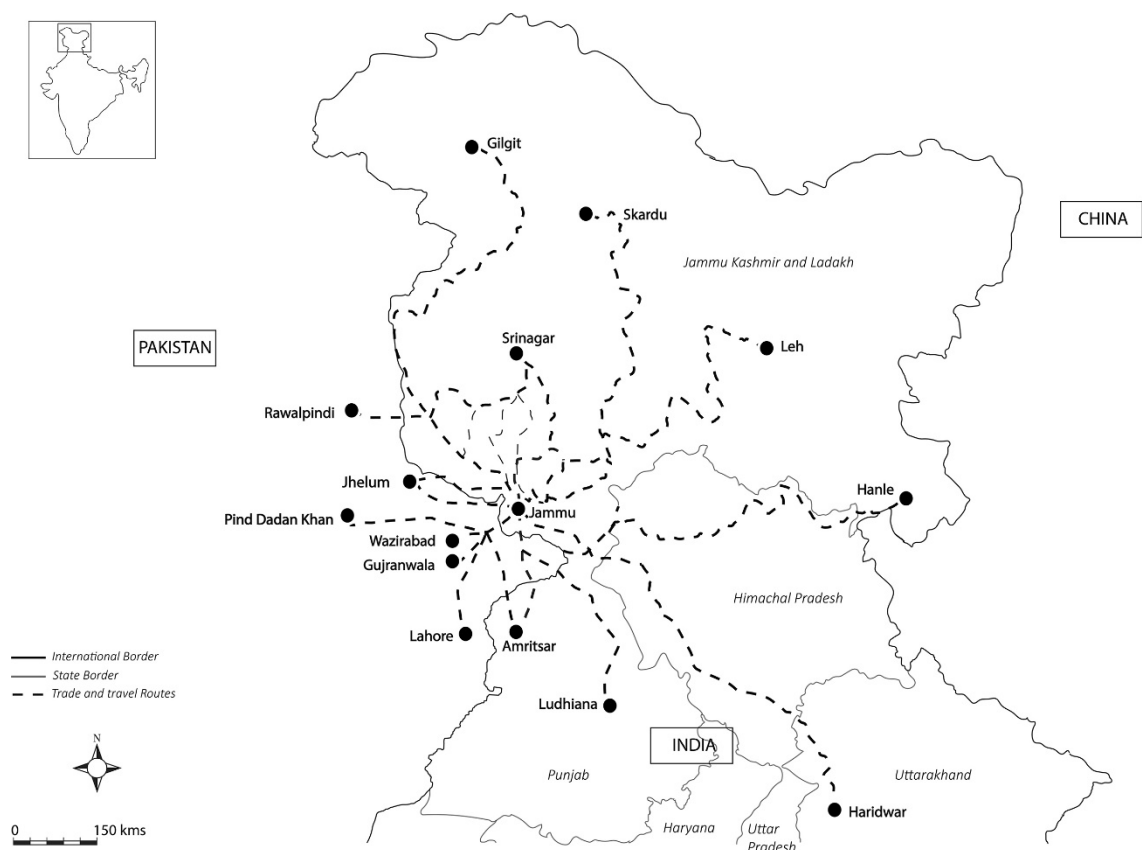


Figure I.3: Important routes going via Jammu in the late 18th century CE

Considering the location of Jammu at a strategic point, the spatial placement of Jammu, therefore, appears to be helpful in terms of the commuting of men and material. The area of Akhnoor, for example, was used as a depot for collecting timber cut from the upper reaches of Kishtwar until the 19th century CE (Drew 1875: 128,133,148). Chenab was employed as a means of transportation of timber to the Punjab area when the water level rose due to the melting of the snow (Drew 1875: 150, 151). However, the opinion of Jamwal (1994) that

Akhnoor served as a wood store during Harappan periods needs to be reconsidered ¹.

When it comes to the routes traversed in the research area, they largely serve as a connecting unit between Jammu and its surrounding regions. The Pir Panjal road connects Kashmir to other Indian provinces, whereas Babore (in Jammu district's north-east) connected the valley to Chamba (Jamwal, 1994). Kannauj was connected to Kashmir via Balor (south-east of Jammu district) (Sachau, 1964), while a commercial route from Kashmir to Sialkot passed through Akhnoor (Bates, 1873:185).

The northern route (Uttarapatha) travelled during the Early Historic period is critical while looking at Jammu's spatial position. Several feeder roads served Uttarapatha's two primary sectors (Lahiri, 1992: 369), one of which was Sialkot-Jammu (Chandra, 1977:13), and as the map supplied by Neelis (2011) indicates Jammu in Uttarapatha's course (Fig. I.4).

¹ The entire statement needs reconsideration especially for two points. First that trading was prevalent during Harappan times. Although the contact of Neolithic Kashmir with Harappan civilization cannot be denied, the point of trading of specific item i.e., timber between these two areas has to be taken very cautiously essentially because of the lack of archaeological evidence. The second point of Akhnoor being the depot for collection of the wood involves the major role of River Chenab. The advantage of downstream channel of Chenab is used for transporting these logs. However, Chenab does not flow from Kashmir. It originates in Himachal Pradesh and passing via Jammu (Kishtwar), goes to Pakistan. Bates (1873:165) considers Kishtwar as part of Kashmir. But archaeologically Kishtwar being part of Neolithic Kashmir is questionable because of the paucity of Kashmir Neolithic material culture in Kishtwar. The conjecture therefore that wood was coming from Kashmir and received in Akhnoor during Harappan times needs retrospection.



Figure I.4: Routes of the Uttarapatha – map courtesy Neelis 2011

This route through Sialkot, which is located on the outskirts of Jammu, makes it strategically important. For example, on his way from Taxila to Mathura, 'Jivakakumarabhritya,' a distinguished physician and a contemporary of Buddha, travelled through Bhadramkara (identified as Sialkot by Przyluski), Udumbara (Pathankot), and Rohitaka (Rohtak) (Chandra 1977: 15). This route was also heavily used at the end of the first millennium BCE. and in the early decades of the Christian era. Chandra (1977: 140) mentions the flourishing horse traffic between Taxila and Varanasi, quoting Mahavastu and Divyavadana.

Mathura was a major horse-trading centre (Chandra 1977: 140), and it's likely that the above-mentioned route was used for this commerce from Taxila to Mathura, making it a busy trade route. Chandra (1977: 182) also mentions Fa-hien, a Buddhist traveller who travelled this road from Bannu to Mathura in the 5th century CE.

1.4 Question of Identity Affiliation: Political or Geographical

The Jammu division, which serves as a gateway to the mainland, is physiographically distinct from Kashmir's sheltered valley. The geographical boundaries (mountain ranges) of Kashmir, as observed by Ray (1970), makes the valley impregnable and inaccessible, resulting in the cultural segregation of the division of Jammu from Kashmir.

Although the regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh were integrated into one state in 1846 CE, they are separated from each other by snow-bound mountain ranges and have therefore evolved their distinct political and cultural systems in the past (Charak, 1985).

Jammu's outer plains, in every sense of the word, trend culturally and geographically toward Punjab, and can thus be reasonably referred to as the Punjab plains' northern extension. This section is referred to as the "strip of plain on the south-west, which is contiguous with the immense level plain of the Punjab" by Drew (1875: 3). This is reinforced when cultural factors such as language and eating habits are considered. The current researcher's ethnographic study of Jammu pottery (see Appendix II) also provides substantial corroborative evidence of the parallels of tangible and intangible material (similar terminologies for pottery vessels is used in both locations) between the two areas.

Furthermore, Jammu is acknowledged as a part of Madradesa (Agarwal, 2001: 21), one of the non-monarchical states of North India that at present primarily

forms part of Punjab. However, Cunningham's assumption (1871: 90), that the absence of any mention of Kashmir's eastern and south-eastern hill kingdoms in Hieun Tsang's itinerary, as well as the likelihood of these areas being tributaries of Kashmir at the time, cannot be ruled out.

There are two points that need to be clarified here. One that the researcher's hypotheses for the resemblance of Punjab and Jammu is based on the physical qualities shared by the two regions, which has a domino effect on other cultural factors as already discussed.

Second, political and cultural domination are always kept separate. The areas of Jammu and Kashmir, for example, have long had distinct cultural identities despite being part of the same state. Therefore, when Cunningham (1871: 90) writes, "By the end of the ninth century, the sovereign sovereignty of Kashmir had been extended over the entire alpine Punjab from the Indus to the Satlej", the presence of smaller cultural zones within this vast dominion, sharing similar cultural characteristics, is unavoidable.

Thus, Jammu's physical and cultural resemblance to Punjab, rather than Kashmir, is noteworthy. The entire process of cultural formation of the outer plains of Jammu is therefore seen in this background.

1.5 Limitation of Historical Accounts in Reconstructing the Past

The early history of the area is clouded with doubts. As Hutchison and Vogel (1933) put in "...the material for the history of an ancient state like Jammu is scanty and unreliable. Every available source of information has been drawn upon, but with indifferent results...". They advise for taking Vansavalis of the royal family as the most important source for the history of the state with a pinch of salt, mostly due to the mythological context and lack of corroborative evidence for the early portion. They however cite Ferishta's account of Raja Ram Dev Rathor of Kanauj overrunning the territory of Jammu in first century

CE. The time frame associated with this episode sounds dubious because of the usage of word Rathor². In the words of Fredrick Drew (1875: 8), “the natives say for 5000 years- Jummoo has been the seat of the rule of a Hindu dynasty, of a family of Rajputs”. This statement however seems to be made by the natives because of the upkeeping with their elated legacy, and therefore is a historical fallacy.

According to Charak (2008) ‘The historiography of Jammu is a relatively recent development and may be regarded to have begun with the publication of G.C Smyth’s “History of the Reigning Family of Lahore” in 1847’. In the same year, Ganeshdas Badehri compiled the Persian work "Rajadarshani," which also deals with the region's recent history. Prior to the medieval period, literary evidence is sparse, the important works being those of Kalhana and Muhammad Qasim Ferishta (Charak 2008). Hiuen Tsang's records also contain references to the adjoining areas of Jammu like Punch and Rajauri which he referred to as Pun-nu-tso and Ho-lo-she-pu-lo, respectively (Beal 1884: 163-64) but does not make a mention of Jammu. In fact, the eleventh century Kulait Copper Plate inscription of Somavarman and Chamba copper plate inscription of Maharajadhiraja Somavarman and Asata (Agarwal, 2001) include the first historical mention of "Durgara", a source of derivation for the later words Dugar and Dogra associated to Jammu. (Hutchison and Vogel, 1933: 516).

Hence, reconstruction the past of Jammu using historical sources is difficult. In the absence of written records, archaeological methodologies act as a major tool in reconstructing past societies.

With this background, this research focuses on to study the outer plains of Jammu with a fresh approach. The existing patchy archaeological data and the scanty literary documentation of the past necessitated the need of the current

² The history of the *Rathaur* sept (Crooke, 1896) is as late as 1050 CE after they expelled the Tomars from Kannauj.

research. The need for a specific methodological framework for achieving the objectives of the research therefore became important. These methodologies are a part of discussion of the next chapter.