

Archaeology:

An inter-disciplinary approach to the past

**By Prof. Vasant Shinde, Joint Director,
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Main Lecture Theatre, TIFR
Homi Bhabha Road, Colaba, Mumbai 400005



The history of human habitation in India goes back to more than 70,000 years for Homo Sapien and probably back to 2 million years for earlier species of Homo Erectus including the Neanderthals. However, the written history of the subcontinent does not go back more than 4000 years. Archaeology is therefore crucial to filling this huge gap that is vital to our understanding of ourselves and our past. This gap can be filled only by considering archaeological sources such as their settlements, structures, pottery, tools, ornaments, food remains, biological remains from the earliest periods, even before written history came into existence. Even in the period of written history, archaeological evidence has often provided insights and clarity to the understanding of our past.

Prof. Vasant Shinde did his Ph.D. in protohistoric archaeology from the University of Pune and is now Joint Director of Deccan College. He has participated in explorations and excavations in India and abroad. He has undertaken various research and antique studies, delivered lectures on different aspects of archaeology and history and guided several students. He has written several scholarly books, popular level articles and research papers. He is now directing an excavation team in Farmana, Haryana - a Harappan period archaeological site that is divided into two separate areas: a habitation site and a burial site, separated by a distance of 1 km which provide new insights.

