



Some Indus Pottery Types from Nari Khushab: A Study of Selected Sherds Collected from the Surface

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Abstract: Pottery data is largest found scattered on the sites of Indus Valley Civilization. This data helps us to understand the period and nature of site even before conducting any type of diagnostic excavation. This research is based on the archaeological survey of District Khushab, Punjab, Pakistan, carried out by the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad during 2018-2020. Recent attempts for investigating Khushab archaeology opens new phase of explorations in this area, under which a team documented number of archaeological sites. This paper is a part of this comprehensive survey and is dedicated to the studies of the archaeological site dated contemporary to other sites of this Civilization, known as Nari. This study is primarily focusing on its pottery and types based on structural design. We can explore more about the dominant cultural phase by examining the structural design, the paper provides a preliminary understanding of the cultural significance of Nari pottery. Generally, in this study we tentatively explored six types of pottery sherds, on these types we can classify the set of pottery of data so far found of the surface of the site, which relate this site to the Kot Dijji phase of regionalization era beside the existence of integrated phases are also visible.

Key words: archaeological site, Mound, Flanged, Lugged Pot, structural design.

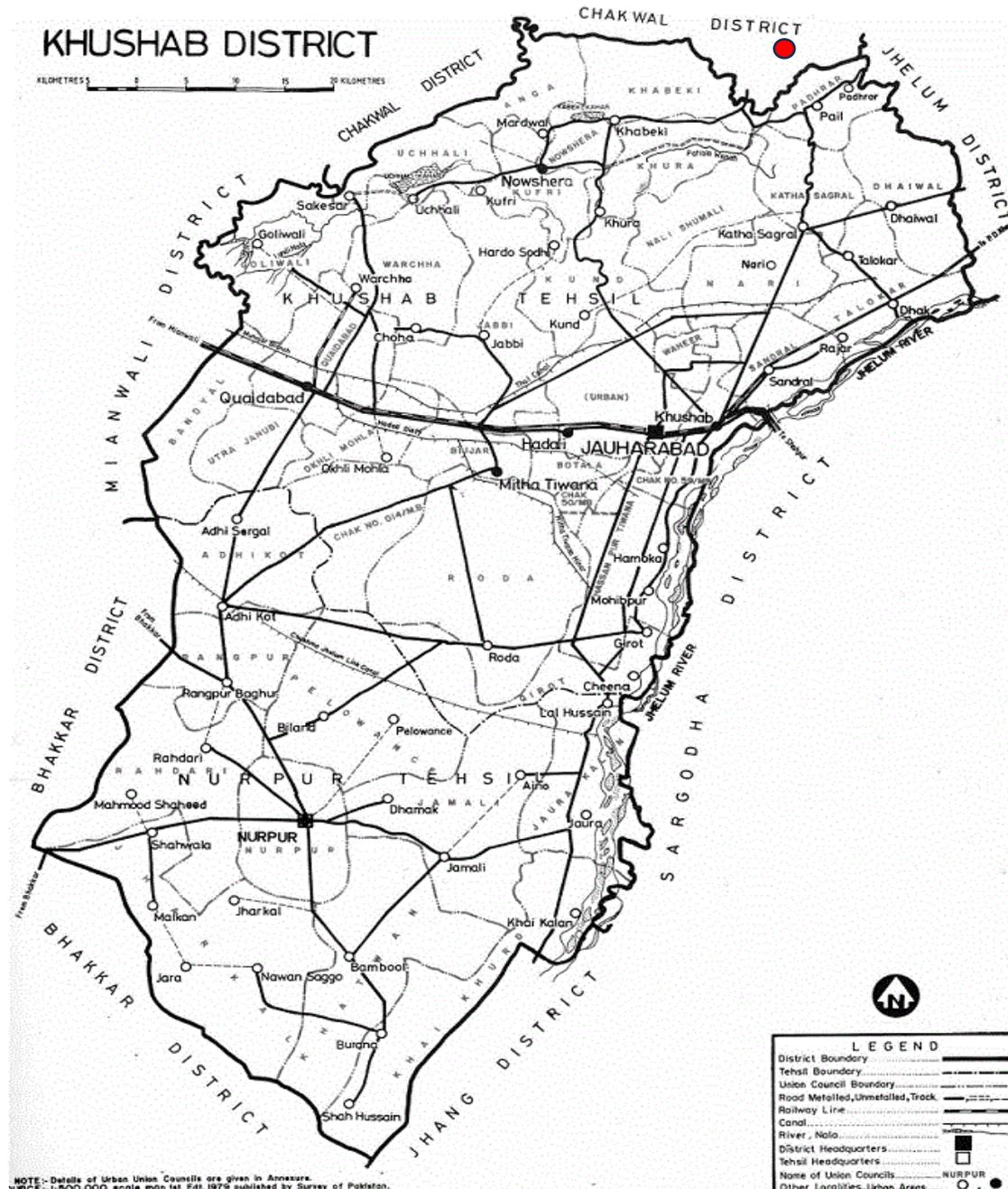
1. Introduction

Nari¹ is a very rich archaeological site of the Indus age located in district Khushab² (Dar 2003) which yielded a huge amount of pottery and other associated cultural artefacts. The whole site is divided into three mounds namely Mound A, B, and C. The potsherds collected from the mounds belong to the different periods of the Indus ranges

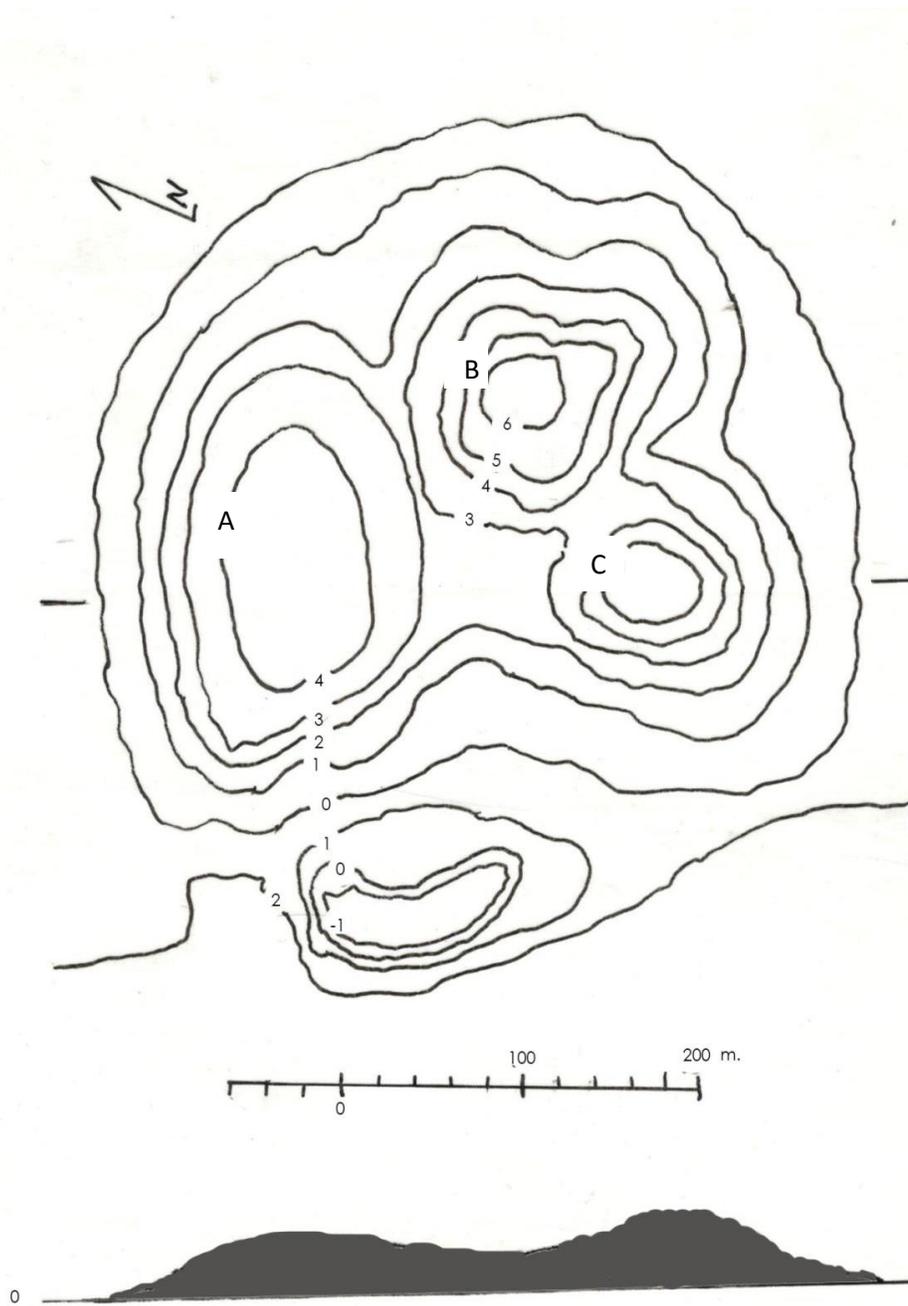
¹ Nari is a village and some 21 kilometers from Khushab to the southeast, called *Pind wali Nari*. The eastern end of the massive Salt Range is few kilometers away from the site. The site is for the first time mentioned by Saifur Rahman Dar.

² Khushab district is situated on the bank of river Jhelum in the north-western part of Punjab province of Pakistan. It is surrounded by districts Chakwal on the north and Jhelum on the northeast while on southern side district Bhakkar and Jhang are located. The administrative capital of is at 'Jauharabad', located in tehsil Khushab. Its average length from east to west is about 96 miles and its breadth from north to south averages about 50 miles but varies from 27 miles near the middle to 72 miles near the west boundary. This district varies a lot from one place to another from 615 feet above sea level at Jauharabad to around 4,992 feet at Sakesar peak with an area of 6546 square kilometers, length of 160 Km from north to south, and 56 Km from east to west. It is present at 32.2955° N, 72.3489° E. Word khushab is combination of two words Khush mean sweet and aab mean water. This name is given by Sher Shah Suri (Founder of the Suri dynasty) who visited the area and after drinking water from river Jhelum named it khushab (Dar 2003)

from Early Indus, and Mature Indus. Most of the surface collection came from Mound A, it's further divided into A1, A2, A3, A4, and A5 along the western edge of the mound A, section A1, the traces of the kiln, as there is a trough-like structure extending east-west which appears to have served as furnaces around them are heaps of ashes, scrap and divided the area into 5 layers namely 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B and 5. The pottery from Nari shows a significant variety through structural design showcases great diversity in fabric, clay, firing technology, designs, vessel shapes. The study reveals a variety of plain vessels with no decoration.



Pl. 1 - District Khushab map.
(Google)



Pl. 2 – Mound of Nari, Khoshab. (After Hakal 2021)

2. Typology of the Collected Pottery from the Site Surface

From surface collection, covered with graves of recent burials, we can classify the pottery sherds into following six types, this classification is purely based on the structure designs ignoring other approaches of classification.

Types	Structural design
Type I	Flanged pottery
Type II	Ledge pots
Type III	Grooved jars/ pots
Type IV	Plain and large globular jar/ pot
Type V	Perforated pots
Type VI	Cord impression

Pl. 3 – Table of Types.

Type I: Flanged Pottery

Flanged pottery, a distinctive type of ceramic vessel from the Early Harappan period, is characterized by its spherical or slightly elongated body shape and a flange on the shoulder that varies in height, width, and shape. The flange and rim combination creates a unique flanged rim feature, whose shape is defined by the cavity between the ring and rim and the ring's height in relation to the rim. While most rims are straight and perpendicular, some are curved inward or outward. The rim lips are typically rounded or flat, and the rings usually curve outward with rounded tips. The current sample is reported from early Harappan period sites of Indus and Baluchistan Tradition. In Pothohar region, these are reported from Sarai Khola, Jhang, Pindi Nauseri, Khanda and Musal Khal (Butt 2022)

Sample Description

Sample no 01

Sample No	NR-2020-C-22 ³
Sherd Type	Rim Sherd
Vessel form	Flanged-Globular pot
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped/ Plain
Morphological variation	Concave to the conical space between ledge and orifice, flattened ledge, and inverted to the vertical flattened rim



Sample No	NR-2020-A-61
Sherd Type	Rim Sherd
Vessel form	Flanged
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped/plain
Decoration Variation	Incised lines create intricate designs on the main body of the pot, below the flange

³ NR: The name of the site Nari, 2020: year of Survey, C: the name of the Mound and 22: Registration number of the pot sherds

Morphological variation	. Semi-circular space between ledge and orifice inverted to the vertically flattened rim with heavy section.
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Fig No. 01

Sample no 02

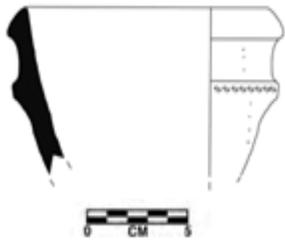


Fig No. 02

Type 2: Ledge Pot

The current type is characterized by a globular body, round base, and a ledge of different height between the neck and main body. The ledge on the pots may have served a functional purpose, such as supporting a lid. The presence of this type across the civilization shows its significance. The variations in rim and ledges shapes indicate the regional or cultural differences within the civilization. The current type has been reported from various Harappan period sites i-e Musa Khel (Butt, 2022), Gandi Umar Khan, Mahra Dheri (Ali & Jan, 2003), Jhande Wala (Mughal, 1997), Mohenjo Dero (Dale & Kenoyer, 1986), Farmana (Shinde et al., 2011), and other sites in India.

Sample no 03

Sample No	NR-2020-C-47
Sherd Type	Body Sherd
Vessel form	Ledge-Globular pot
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped/plain
Morphological variation	Concave cavity between ledge and orifice rounded ledge and inverted to the vertically flattened rim.

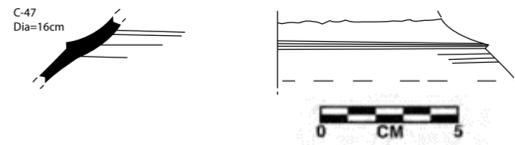


Fig No. 03

Sample no 04

Sample No	NR-2020-A-35
Sherd Type	Rim Sherd
Vessel form	Ledge-Globular
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped/plain
Morphological variation	Red slip above the ledge, and the body below the ledge is scrapped with rotation

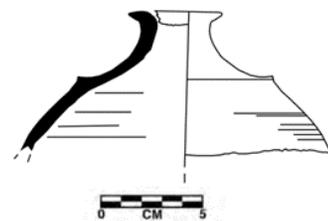


Fig No. 04

Type 3: Perforated

The current type characterized by perforations on the main body below the shoulder is a trademark of the Harappan period (2600-1900 BCE). The perforated jar with its unique features suggest that it was used for various purposes, such as: making beverages (straining liquids or fermenting drinks) and draining food (sieving grains or separating solids from liquids). The widespread presence of this pottery type across the Indus Valley Civilization highlights its

significance and utility in the daily lives of the people. Comparative studies have shown that this type of pottery typically has a flat base (Dales & Kenoyer, 1986). This type of pottery has been reported from several sites, Gandi Umar Khan (Ali & Jan 2009); Gumla-IV (Dani 1971) Maru II (Khan et al 2000) Burhanewala Ther, Cholistan (Mughal 1997), Mohenjo Dero (Dales & Kenoyer 1986).

Sample no 05

Sample No	NR-2020-A-18
Sherd Type	Body Sherd
Vessel form	Perforated
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped

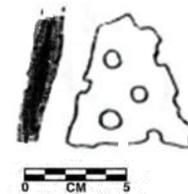


Fig No. 05

Sample no 06:

Sample No	NR-2020-A-13
Sherd Type	Rim Sherd
Vessel form	Ledge-Globular
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped



Fig No. 06

Type 4: Grooved Jars/ Pots

In this type of pottery is the presence of horizontal groove patterns situated below the shoulder or on the main body. Notably, both straight and wavy parallel grooving sample have documented. A significant aspect of the collection from the research site is the large number of body shards discovered, which exhibit a variety of groove patterns and styles. However, the rims of these shards are not preserved, making it challenging to understand the complete morphology of these vessels.

The Comparative studies have shown that such type of vessels flat bases (Mughal 1972).

This type of pottery is reported from Musa Khel (Butt 2022) Sarai khola, Gumla II to IV , Tochi gomal phase (Dani 1971), Rahman dhari. Jalilpur II (Mughal 1972) and Kot diji phase site in Thal desert, Mahiwala (Ghauri 2018).

Sample no 07

Sample No	NR-2020-B-24
Sherd Type	Body Sherd
Vessel form	Grooved jar
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped
Decorative variation	Deeply incised horizontal lines



Fig No. 07

Sample no 08

Sample No	NR-2020-A-6
Sherd Type	Body Sherd
Vessel form	Grooved
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped

Decorative pattern	Incised lines which are shallow & rendered in comb pattern
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Fig No. 08

Type 5: Plain and Globular Jars

The current sample have versatile size, globular body forms and preserved rims. Two types of rims are there in the collected pot sherds, one is simple external projected, and the other one is an external projected beaked rim. All the sample are plain and medium thick size. Comparative studies show that the large size vessels have concave and flat bases while medium vessels have contiguous flat bases (Dales & Kenoyer 1986). The current type is one of the main pottery types of Harappan pottery assemblages and the spatial extent is as wide as the Indus Civilization. It is mainly reported at Mohenjo Dero (Mackay 1934 Dale & Kenoyer 1986). The comparable rim morphology may be seen during the Harappan phase at Kot Diji site

Sample no 09

Sample No	NR-2020-B-24
Sherd Type	Rim sherd
Vessel form	Globular Jar
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped/plain/ smoothing with rotation

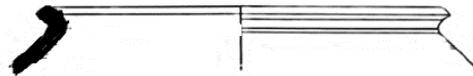


Fig No. 09

Sample no 10

Sample No	NR-2020-
Sherd Type	Rim sherd
Vessel form	Globular Jar
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped

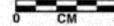


Fig No. 10

Type 6: Cord Impression bowls

This current type is well-known by the presence of a horizontal cord impression on the exterior side of the main body, and simple everted thick and flattened rims. This type of pottery offers valuable insights into the cultural and technological practices of the potters during the Kot Diji phase, and its characteristic features make it a significant addition to the pottery typology of the Nari Site and also reported from other sites such as Musa Khel (Butt 2022).and Sarai Khola, and is found to be comparable with pottery type XII, which emerged during the middle levels of SK-II, the Early to Late Kot Diji phase (Mughal 1972).

This type of pottery is also found from the Thal Desert, District Laiyya, specifically from the site of Musa Wala-3, which is a Kot Diji phase site (Ghauri 2018). This distribution highlights its importance in understanding the cultural and technological dynamics of the region during the Kot Diji phase.

Sample no 11

Sample No	NR-2020-C-78
Sherd Type	Rim Sherd
Vessel form	Rope impression convex bowl
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped
Decoration variation	Exterior main body with preserved Horizontal code impression.

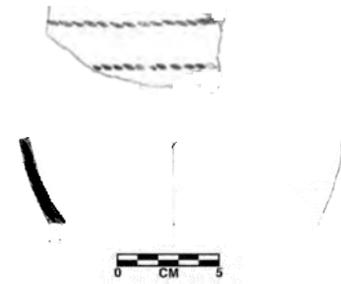


Fig No. 11

Sample no 12

Sample No	NR-2020-C-89
Sherd Type	Rim sherd
Vessel form	Rope impression convex bowl
Finishing technique	Wheel-finishing
Surface Treatment	Red-slipped
Decorative variation	horizontal cord impression on the main body

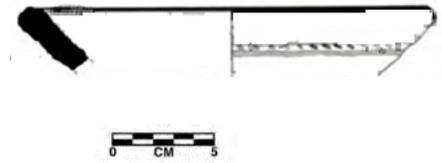


Fig No. 12

3. Discussion and Conclusions

The comprehensive analysis of the structural design of the pot sherds collected during the survey. This study has highlighted the cultural significance of the site. The diverse range of the collection shows the creativity and skill of the potters. It has contributed to our understanding of the Indus Valley Civilization's traditions and cultural evolution, emphasizing the importance of Nari as an important archaeological site in the region. Furthermore, the site has revealed distinct cultural phases, including the Kot Diji and Harappan phases. The chronology at Nari is comparable to sites such as Gandi Umar Khan and Rehman Dheri in the Gomal Valley, Musa Khel across the Salt Range, and Harappa along the River Ravi. These six types of pottery include flanged rim and grooved pottery is very specific to Early Harappan period, particularly to Kot Diji types. Ledged Pot having globular body shape with a round base, Plain and globular jars and perforated type is very much specific to the Harappan period. However, the pottery with cord impression also supports the site mainly related to Kot Diji phase.

This research provides valuable insights into the cultural and artistic developments of the Indus Valley Civilization, solidifying Nari's position as an important archaeological site in the region.

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