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## **Investigation of Archaeological Sites Eastern Thar Desert from Cholistan to the Thar of Sindh, Pakistan**

### ***Abstract:***

*Thar Desert is located at east of Pakistan from Cholistan (Punjab) to the province of Sindh. It spread at the distance of 500 Kilometers north – South and 200 Kilometers in east – west. Northern Thar of Cholistan (Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Bahawalnagar Districts) in 1997 reported 450 discoveries put in the map of region. Upper Thar of district Ghotki and Sukkur districts are explored along the Raini River (dried) ancient Hakra course. Archaeologists have ignored remaining Lower Thar of Sindh including Tharparkar Umerkot and Sanghar Districts. This paper attempts to provide extensive details of exploration and documentation of archaeological sites from different seasons from 2004-2009 the researcher explored the remote and sensitive area of lower Thar Desert, recorded 120 fresh archaeological discoveries of different pre-proto and historical period sites. The methodologies for the recording of archaeological sites were based on three important aspects as data acquisition, analyzing or processing and interpretation. When, the site was experienced its aspects and geological not set in stone. The site- level overview gave data on the presence or nonappearance of any unmistakable elements and action regions like assembling garbage dissipated type relics, nature of the site, absolute region involved assortment of intriguing things and locational setting. The outcome of this research is: previously the area was not explored scientifically. Now documented in detail and exact location of each site is kept on the regional Map.*

**Key words:** History, Archaeology, Geography, Chronology.

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## **Introduction:**

Desert is derived from Sanskrit, which means arid land or land without any river. In historic books Thal and are used Jal means water (Advani 1924). However Thar comes from Thal, The general term for the sand ridges appears in the region (Encyclopedia Britannica). Thar is also known as Registan (Reg+astan)- the Persian combination of Reg which means dry and astan means place / region hence region of sand (Harijan 1988). It is located at the southeast corner of Pakistan and also connected with Jaisalmer and Rajistan of India. Its long axes are in north south and extended in Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. The people of Bahawalpur and Rahimyar khan (Punjab) called this region as Cholistan and people of Sindh call it Thar. The Thar of Sindh is located to the eastern edge of Sindh province spread over Ghotki, Sukkur, Khairpur, Nawabshah, Sanghar, Umerkot and Tharparkar Districts.

The Thar of Sindh: its boundaries are from western side to the eastern Nara or Dhoru Puran/ ancient Hakra, to the northern side is the desert of Cholistan Bahawalpur and Rahimyarkhan districts of Punjab, eastern side is the Rajputana, Jaisalmer and Rajistan of India and the southern side is the Rann of Katch and Arabian Sea (Pithawalla 1976). Tarikh-e-Tahri mentions below the town of Aror ruin followed the river of Punjab which was indefinitely called by the three names Hakra, Wahind and Raini and whose water fertilizing the land and fell into the ocean (Elliot & Dawson 1985). Major Raverty in his book Mehran of Sindh, in one of the old maps, it is mentioned that Ghaghar, Nara and Hakra are also the names of one and the same river in which Hakra, rising from the Himalaya the east of Satluj would flow down to the town of Umerkot into the Rann of Katch/ Arabian sea (Raverty 1892).

Physiographic ally the area is divided into different parts; each part has similar physiographic nature, climatic divisions, ethnographic significance and language spoken. The main divisions are Kaerr Thar, Kantio Thar, Parkar Thar, Samroti Thar, Wango Thar, wat Thar, Muhrano Thar, Dhat Thar, and Achrro Thar. Achrro thar is located in Khipro Taluka of Sanghar district. Muhrano, Dfat, Kaerr are also located in Umerkot district. Wango Samroti, wat, Kantho and Parker are located in Tharparkar district. Previously no scholar visited the

area but Federal department of Archaeology has reported the existence of some religious monuments in the region.

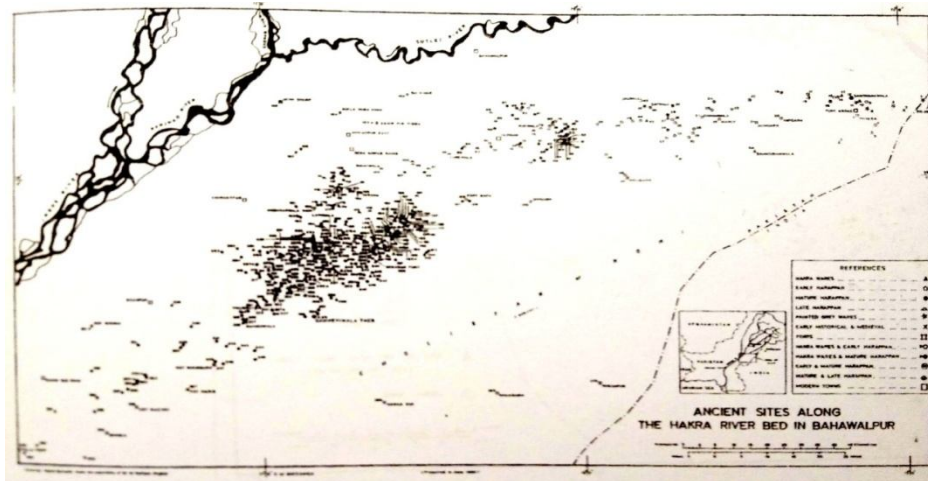
The field work started in the month of May 2004 under the supervision of Dr. Asma Ibrahim ex Director of National Museum Karachi. The team visited Naukot, Kaloi, Rahim ki Bazar, Nangarparkar, Gadro, Islamkot, Mithi, Diplo, Chachro and Chelhar and reported 90 Archaeological discoveries and were put in the map of the region. Nauhoto/Gharo Bhiri is reported in the western edge of sand dune and left bank of Nara Hakra course. The site consists 3-5 big mounds with the height of 10-15 meters from ground level (Mangi 1993). Mr Jami Chandio, an executive of CPCS Center of Peace for Civil Society gave second opportunity to the researcher to explore the archaeological sites in the desert area of Umerkot and Khipro Taluka of district Sanghar. Field work started in June-July 2009. The visits were made of Thar of Umerkot from Khejrari, Ramsar, Ak Wadho, Hadakar, Khokhrapar, Zeropoint, Mugtor, and Ghulam Nabi Shah and 26 sites were reported. Only Moomal ji Mari is mounded site others are surface sites scattered in various historic periods. Continuously fieldwork started from Bhit Bhaiti, Hathongo, Saeedahu, Bhararau, Malahu, and Ramsar where of the researcher reported 06 archaeological sites. Accepting Ratokot is early historic period, the remaining are historic period sites belonging to 17th-19th century AD.

During the survey Global Position System (GPS) and topographic maps were used for exact location and co-ordinates. The total area of the site is measured in meter system. Cultural material was collected from the surface of the site and brought to the departmental laboratory for analysis as washing, proper conservation, and classification, numbering of each artifact. For chronology only relative dating method and absolute dating was applied to date the site.

### **Cholistan Archaeological Survey**

This area of desert spread three districts as Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar and Rahimyar Khan where the sand dunes are located. The field work started in Bahawalpur district from the international of India and extended towards southwest across three districts covering 483 Kilometers wide strip on both sides of Hakra bed the area was first examined by Aurel Stein in 1941 reported 50 Indus period sites. Then, under the supervision of Dr. M.R Mughal examined the area in 1975,

1976 and 1977 reported 424 sites (Plan#1&Table#1) of different associated periods (Mughal M.R 1997).



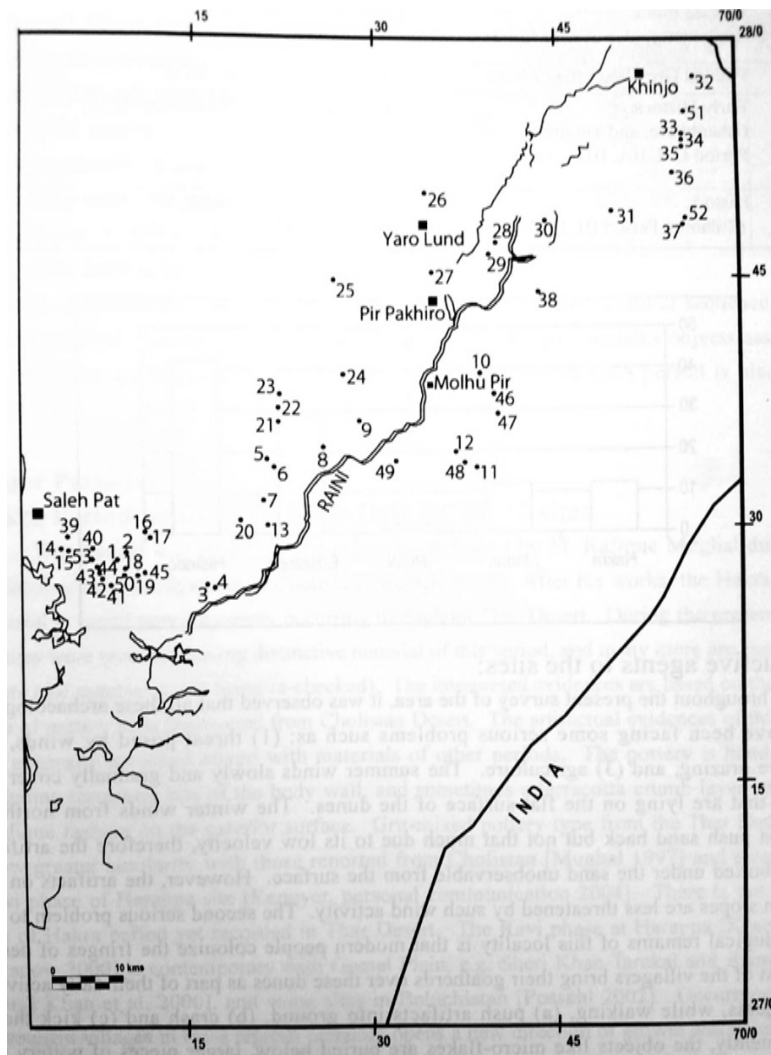
Plan # Distribution of archaeological sites

Cultural Affiliation	Time period	No of Sites
Hakra ware	4000 – 3200 BC	99
Early Indus	3200 – 2500 BC	40
Indus	2500 – 1800 BC	174
Late Indus	1800 -1400 BC	50
Painted Grey ware	1300 – 000 BC	14
Early Historic	Ist to 18 <sup>th</sup> century AD	37
Unidentified		10
<b>Total Sites</b>		<b>424</b>

Table#1 Number of sites with cultural affiliation

### Thar of Ghotki and Sukkur Districts

The eastern sides of these districts are deserted from Khanju to the Saled Pat towns. Along the beds of Raini River Dr Q.H. Mallah and present researcher explore the archaeological sites reported 49 sites of different cultures from Hakra to historic period (Mallah 2008)



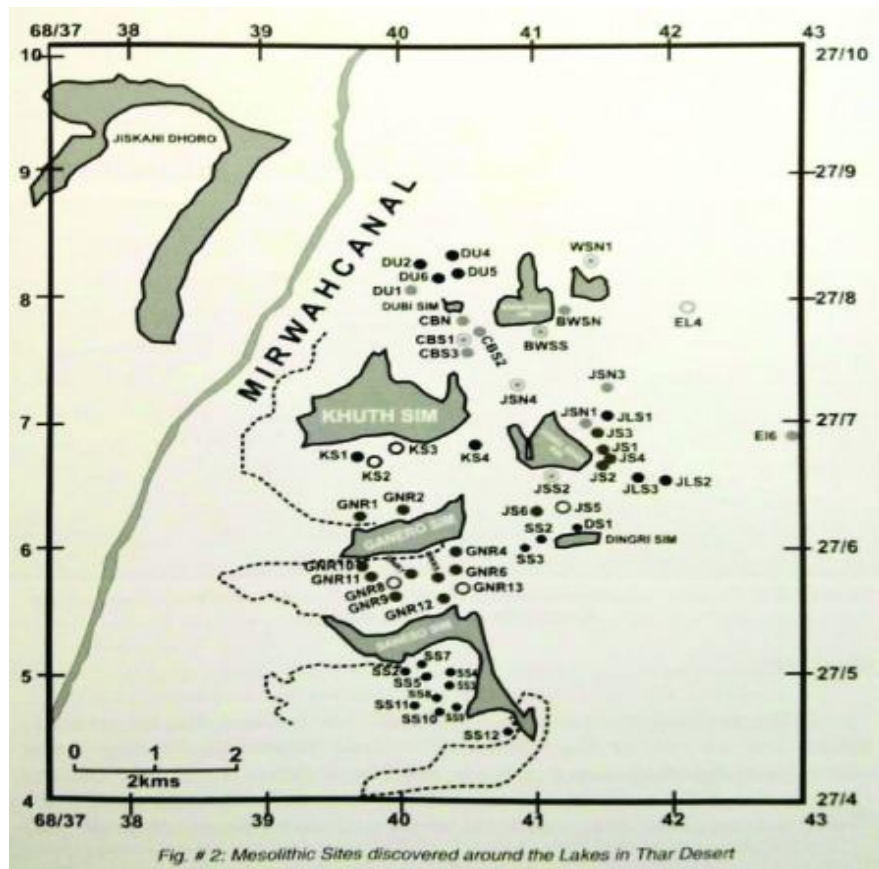
Plan#2 # Distribution of Archaeological sites of Hakra Basin

Cultural Affiliation	No of Sites
Hakra	12
Indus	12
Painted Grey ware	02
Early Historic	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>

Table # 2 Number of sites with cultural affiliation

## Khairpur District

The preliminary archaeological survey carried out by the team of the Department of Archaeology, Shah Abdul Latif University Khairpur from the southern part of district. And explore the surrounding the area of sand dunes of Taluka Thari Mirwah around the natural lakes (Biagi and Veesar 1998-99 and Mallah 2002, 2005. Reported Mesolithic culture around the lake (Plan#2)



Plan#3 distributions of Mesolithic sites around the lakes





**Fig #3 Mesolithic geometric tools around the lake**



**Fig#4 Mesolithic found around the lake tools**

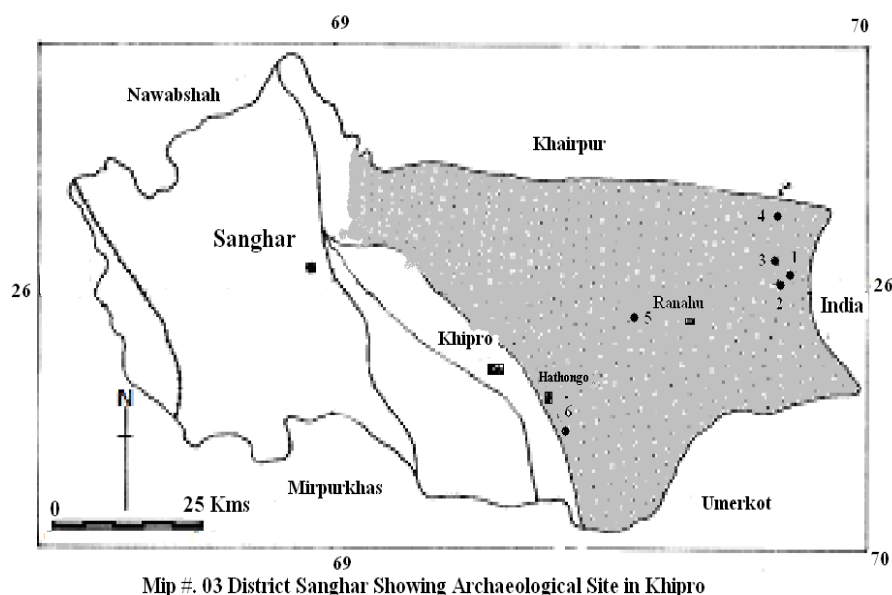
## **Nawabshah District**

The sand dunes of District Nawabshah was archaeologically survey by Dr Mallah, he investigate the dunes of the district reported five sites on the top and slopes of the dune. He located / recorded the site with the (GPS) (Mallah, A.W Khan and Tooba 2012-13)

## **District Sanghar**

Sanghar district was named after a davout fisher-lady Mai Singhar; for more than a century, it stayed a little town with a populace of two or three hundreds. After the 1853 AD intrusion by Charles Napier, Sindh was Partitioned into provinces and was doled out Zamindars, otherwise called "Wadera", to gather charges for British rulers. Sindh was subsequently made piece of British under Bombay Presidency, and turned in to a different territory in 1935. During this period Sanghar acquired the situation with Taluka, a regulatory development and was on the other hand remembered for locale of Nawabshah and Tharparkar. In 1954 it was given the situation with District-Headquarter. Individuals of the district specially the Hurs, assumed an imperative part in the freedom of Pakista. The Hurs were a coordinated military dissident gathering drove by Pir Syed Sabghatullah Shah Rashidi prevalently known as Pir Pagara. They battled a Guerrilla Warfare against the British military, and were always a thorn in the side of British Raj. It has been said that this fighting was one of the significant nails in the casket of British Raj in India (**District Censes report 1998**). As per the legend the collection of Sohni Mahiwal, the nominal legend of one of the four famous heartbreaking sentiments of Sindh, were recuperated from the Indus River close to Shahdadpur city and were covered there. Presently the District covers 06 Talukas as Sanghar, Khipro, Shahdadpur, Sinjhor, Jam Nawaz Ali Shahpur Chakar. The Thar Desert is only spread in Taluka Khipro. The dunes are quite different from other parts high dune run north south in long, when monsoon wind blows, the air makes rotation and small particles of sand which move like a bowl locally known as Draien, which is too difficult to cross over. People keep animal herds. (**Mangi 1993**).





**List of Archaeological Sites Thar of Khipro, District Sanghar**

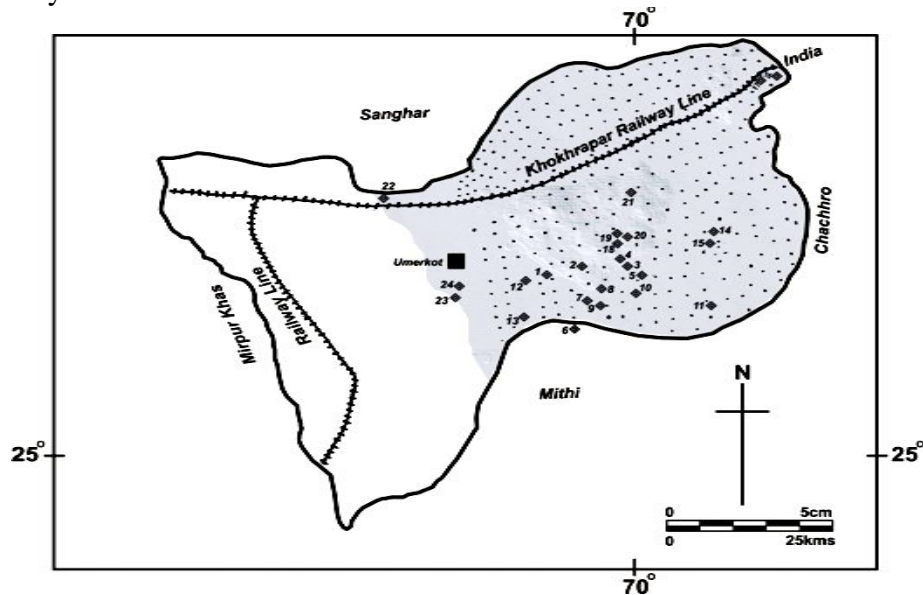
S. No.	Name of Site	S. No.	Name of Site
1.	Bhararoi Goth (A)	4.	Sargilo
2.	Bharaoi Goth (B)	5.	Kak Goth
3.	Saeedahao	6.	Ratokot

Table # shows archaeological sites

#### **District Umerkot**

Umerkot/ Amarkot, a town called subsequently to ruler Umer of Soomro dynasty, who worked there a stronghold fort. Umerkot was the capital of Greater Sindh Province, including a few pieces of the present Rajasthan state of India. It likewise became conspicuous during the hours of Mughals and during the British Raj (1783-1843 AD). The Mughal lord Akbar was brought into the world in Umerkot, when his dad Humayun escaped from military loss on account of Sher Shah Suri. Rana Prasad, a Hindu Sodha Rajput ruler of Amarkot, gave shelter to Humayun. Later the Mughal Emperor Akbar turned into the Shahenshah of Hind and was a famous figure with both the Hindus and the Muslims. Umerkot has many destinations of authentic importance for example Mughal ruler Akbar's born at Umarkot Fort on 14 October

1542 AD. Rana Chandra Singh Sodha (1931–2009) was the Rana, and remained a member of National assembly of Pakistan. The district consists 05 Talukas / Tehsils as Kunri, Pithoro, Samaro and Umerkot. Umerkot is the one of Taluka of District which is totally deserted and other Talukas are plain and irrigated by riverine water. In this research only Taluka Umerkot is focused.



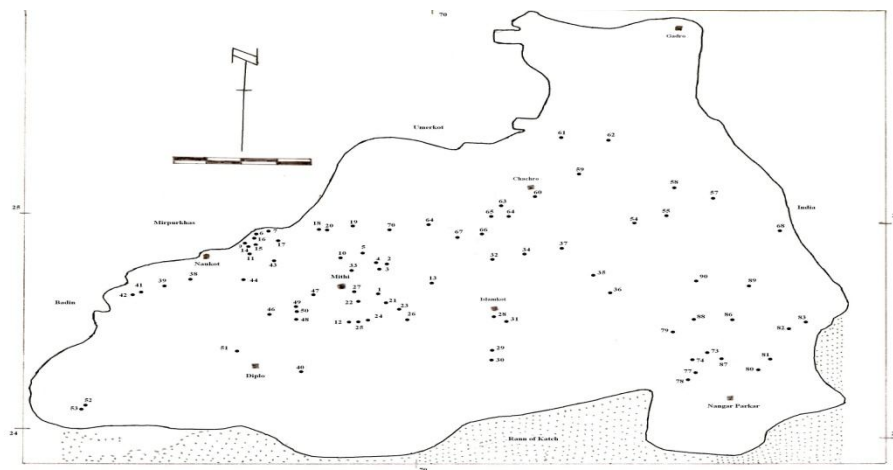
Plan # Distribution of Archaeological sites

S. No.	Name of Site	S. No	Name of List
1.	Goth Katar	13.	Hyder Shah Bhointio
2.	East of Nangror	14.	Soomar Sameji Jee Dhani
3.	Goth Diatri	15.	Siddiqui Ji Dhani
4.	Goth Meghar	16.	Goth Alah Rakhio Jo Par
5.	Sadamani	17.	East of Wahar
6.	Ahmed Tar	18.	Bhojrajio
7.	Dhalu Jo Tar	19.	Arisar Goth near Bhojrajio
8.	Tripio Tar	20.	Beelsoni
9.	Jaitrar	21.	Warri Sukkur Nohri
10.	Seeta bah	22.	Khunhar
11.	Hada Kar	23.	Khejrari
12.	Khari Bah	24.	Momal Ji Mari

Table # shows the archaeological sites

## District Tharparkar

Tharparkar gets its names from Thar and Parker. The name Thar is from Thul, the general term for sand locale or sand ridges and parker in a real sense signifies to get over it prior known as Tar and Parkar, later on it became a single word Tharparkar. In 1843 AD when Sir Charles Napier became victory of Sindh and this part was converted into Katchh which was a political organization in Hyderabad collectorate. The whole region area turned out to be essential for Hyderabad. Hence, in 1860 AD, it was renamed as “Eastern Sindh frontier” with its Head Quarter in Umerkot, controlled by Political Superintendent. In 1882 it was renamed locale its managerial head was Deputy Commissioner. Ultimately in 1906 AD the Head Quarter of the region was moved from Umerkot to Mirpurkhas. Until 1990 the current locale of Tharparkar, Umerkot and Mirpurkhas was remembered for one region i.e. Tharparker yet in 1990. Mirpurkhas was made a different area and the head quarter of Thar was layedout in Mithi, while Umerkot was bifurcated on 17 April 1993 (District census report 1998) Presently District Tharparker comprises 05 Talukas/Tahsils as Chachro, Diplo, Mithi, Islamkot and Nangarparkar..There is no stream of fresh water in the region. There are a few sloping tracks called called Parkar. The Granite Marble has been found there. “Karoobjhar Mountain” is situated in Nagarparkar. Most part of the district abandoned the region and comprises infertile lot of sand ridges covered with prickly shrubs.



Map #. Showing Archaeological Sites in District Tharparkar

## List of Archaeological Sites of District Tharparkar

S. No.	Name of Site	S. No.	Name of Site	S. No.	Name of Site
1.	Malron Venna	31.	Nabisar Tikratho	61.	Sako par
2.	Bughiar	32.	Seengario	62.	Panji jo par
3.	Bughiar (A)	33.	Mithi fort	63.	Phangario
4.	Bughiar (B)	34.	Sonalbo	64.	Kalasar
5.	Khairio	35.	Jiendo Dras	65.	Tighatio
6.	Nahutu (Gharo Bhiro)	36.	Gurro	66.	Padhar jo Marho
7.	Talhi Memon	37.	Methe ji Wandh	67.	Lakhmor
8.	Botha Goth	38.	Garhiar ji bhit	68.	Khorabyoon
9.	Haido Goth	39.	Teka Mari	69.	Mithrio
10.	Sainsar	40.	Arneeh ji bhit	70.	Chelhar fort
11.	Devo tar	41.	Talpur Tomb (A)	71.	Waori dora
12.	Padrio soomar	42.	Talpur Tomb (B)	72.	Gori
13.	Depiar	43.	Himra Bai	73.	Old Bhodesar
14.	Bandho	44.	Patel Ali Muhammad Sahar	74.	Jhuno Mudero
15.	Gogasar	45.	Misri jo pad	75.	Kharirio
16.	Bhore jo goth	46.	Kharoro	76.	Purano Kasbo
17.	Haji ji Dhani	47.	Malhiar Bajeer	77.	Purano Sabosan
18.	Khario Junejo	48.	Motatio	78.	Purano Adhigam
19.	Harpar	49.	Karihar	79.	Buran jo Wandhio
20.	Kaloi ji bhit	50.	Saro mound	80.	Padhro
21.	Kerti	51.	Dabhi	81.	Moular tar
22.	Kerti (A)	52.	Kanjoo fort	82.	Chetrasar
23.	Narir vero	53.	Rahim Ki Bazar	83.	Ranpur
24.	Vee Hingorja	54.	Sawai kolhi tar	84.	Padhror Bhodesar
25.	Bhakuo	55.	Khuddi Site	85.	Churrio
26.	Kirirr ji Bhit	56.	Khuddi fort	86.	Parri nangar
27.	Sangrasi Hingorja tar	57.	Samejo tar	87.	Veeravah
28.	Sringho	58.	Bangal jo tar	88.	Charan jo Pad
29.	Dabho Ninjar	59.	Juna khuhano habib	89.	Suklyoon (Sukpur)
30.	Godhio	60.	Guran jo goth	90.	Pelu

### **Lakes of Khipro District Sanghar**

During the Archaeological Survey of the area, a cluster of 46 natural lakes was observed. Some of them feed through canals connected with Nara River system. Some lakes were investigated all around no archaeological remains were noticed. The list of lakes is given below:

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name of Lake</b>	<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Name of Lake</b>
1.	Jurio Rajar Dhandh	24.	Darwari Dhandh
2.	Dasario Dhandh	25.	Sunheri Dhandh
3.	Kharor dhandh	26.	Moral Dhandh
4.	Modakar Dhandh	27.	Tamachi Rajar Dhandh
5.	Kalankar Dhandh	28.	Badhu Dhandh
6.	Burthi Dhandh	29.	Jhgraun Dhandh
7.	Sirohi Dhandh	30.	Katoki Dhandh
8.	Bhonar Dhandh	31.	Akhtali Dhandh
9.	Danod Dhandh	32.	Mohammad Ismail Dhand
10.	Palharo Dhandh	33.	Khaskheli Dhand
11.	Narkoli Dhandh	34.	Marahdi Dhand
12.	Kodasar Dhandh	35.	Jona Gadam Dhand
13.	Dhamun wair Dhandh	36.	Ali Muhammad Chanhio D
14.	Mathun Dhandh	37.	Malkan Wari Dhand
15.	Mankik Pir Dhandh	38.	Pani Wari Dhand
16.	Bangerio Dhandh	39.	Diman Wari Dhand
17.	Kunri Dhandh	40.	Kumb Dhand
18.	Antiyo Dhandh	41.	Kaharocho Wari Dhand
19.	Shinhari Dhandh	42.	Kan Wari Dhand
20.	Lanti Dhandh	43.	Kallar Wari Dhand
21.	Bandri Dhandh	44.	Landi Dhand
22.	Gajri Dhandh	45.	Nakori Wari Dhand
23.	Akro Dhandh	46.	Churathar Dhand

#### **Conclusion**

The discoveries of archaeological sites of Thar documented during the surveys undertaken by various scholars in different time are grouped under various cultural or chronological brackets. The distinctive types of pottery and artifacts material provided indication of approximate time-range of the sites. The entire data now relates to the following chronological frame

Mesolithic and Neolithic	20,000 to 8000 BC
Early Indus (Regionalization era)	3300 -2500 BC
Indus Valley Civilization (Centralization era)	2500-1800 BC
Late Indus (Localization era)	1800-1400 BC
Hindu- Buddhist	5Th Cen: = 7 Cen; AD
Early Muslim	8 <sup>Th</sup> Cen: AD
Soomras	1058-1349 AD
Sammas	1349-1520 AD
Arghuns	1520-1555 AD
Turkhans	1555-1592 AD
Mughals	1592-1700 AD
Kalhoras	1700-1783 AD
Talpurs	1783-1843 AD
Britishers	1843-1947 AD

### Recommendations

Geographically land of Pakistan is divided in to three major zones as Western hilly area central alluvial area where rivers and forestry is and third is Desert area where drought is. The research focused only the archaeological explorations in various seasons by researcher. This area is previously not explored by archaeologists researcher explore the area district wise document the sites in scientific way measure the site and analysis the cultural material accordance the manuals of archaeology with details and make chronology. This research is benefited to those who are interested in Archaeology of eastern Thar of Sindh, Pakistan.

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