

## Early History of Maharashtra

Historically, Maharashtra, a region consisting of Vidarbha, Aparanta, Assaka, Mulak, and Kuntala. Maharashtri Prakrit and its dialects, such as Apabhramsas, were the dominant languages of the region until the 4th century BCE. The Marathi language evolved from Maharashtri Prakrit and is the common language from the 9th century. Presently it is the official language of the State.

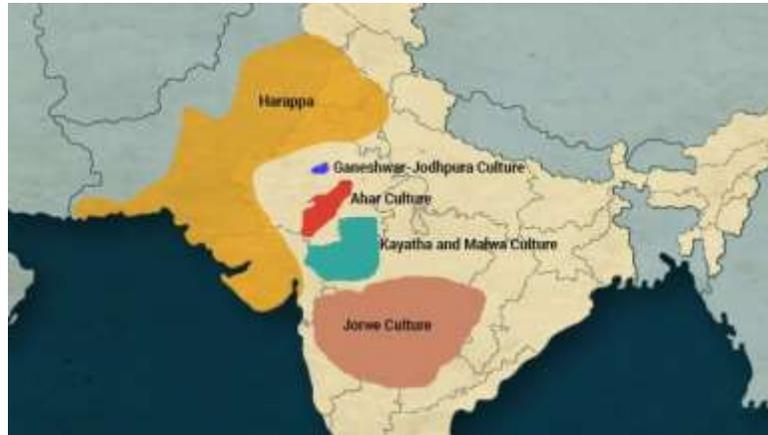
**Note:** the oldest stone inscription in the Marathi language dates back to 975 AD and is seen at Shravanabelgola in Karnataka at the foot of the Bahubali statue.



In ancient times, the Maharashtra region was inhabited by the Bhil communities and the region was also known as Dandakaranya. The region's name appeared as "Maharashtra" for the first time in the 7th century in the account of a contemporary Chinese traveller, Hueng Tsang. The early History of Maharashtra depicted by the Chalcolithic sites belonging to the Jorwe culture. The Jorwe culture (1300-700 BCE) have been discovered throughout the state.

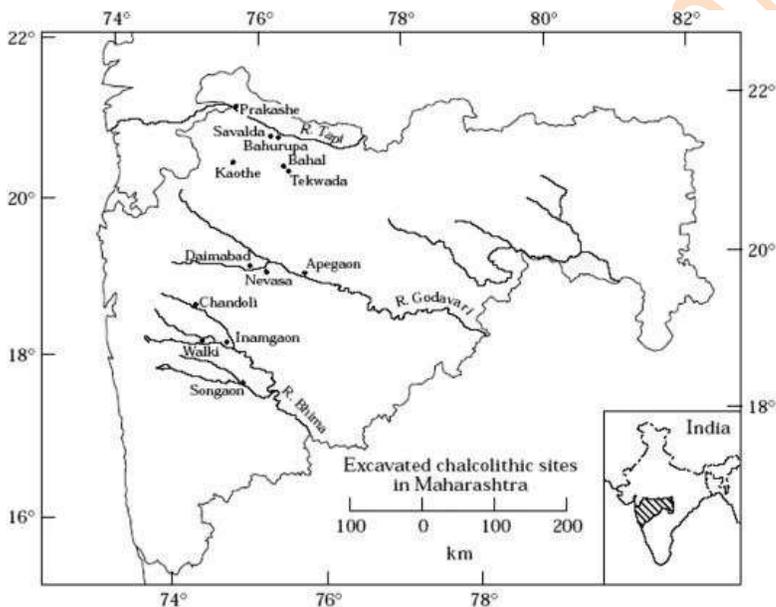
The Jorwe culture was a Chalcolithic archaeological culture that existed in large areas of what is now Maharashtra state in Western India. It also reached north into the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. It is named after the type of site of Jorwe. It is named after the culture is dated to 1400-1000 BCE, and its later phase is dated to 1000-700 BCE.

At Diamabad largest settlement discovered of the Jorwe culture was discovered. It is also a late Harappan site, which has a mud fortification during this period. It also has an elliptical temple with fire pits. There is evidence concerning planning in these settlements as the layout is of rectangular houses or streets or lanes. The excavations and studies related to this highlights that in the late Harappan period, there was a large migration of people from Gujarat to northern Maharashtra.



### Chalcolithic Site in Maharashtra

- Inamagaon, Walki, Songaon and Khed are the major sites
- The Chalcolithic Culture is divided into three phases based primarily on pottery types:
  - a. Malwa (c.1600-1400)
  - b. Early Jorwe (c.1400-1000)
  - c. Late Jorwe (c.1000-700)



Major features include structures, most likely mud huts, numbering approximately 134, that have survived only in the form of floors, which were destroyed by later pits. The houses were both rectangular and circular, with the latter dominating in the later phases. Kiln, an embankment, and an irrigation channel were also identified by the excavators. The cultural material recovered includes pottery, copper, terracotta, stone objects, chalcedony, other lithics, beads, and bone objects.

- The site of Inamgaon is located in a village in Shirur taluk, Pune District, Maharashtra.
- The chalcolithic sites of Inamgaon, Walki and Songaon form a triangle.
- The region falls in the middle Bhima Valley, an area characterized by horizontal basaltic formations; therefore, the phenomenon of lateral erosion of rivers is common, with meanders and banks of deposition developing along their course.
- The Khed site yielded a cultural deposit of pottery similar to the site of Inamgaon.
- All these sites are present at the banks of rivers.

Site	River
Inamgaon	Ghod
Walki	Bhima
Khed	Bhima
Songaon	Karha

**Note:** All these sites have black soil sediment or alluvium deposits. Also, Late Jorwe culture was found at three of the sites - Inamgaon, Songaon, and Khed.





Maharashtra was inhabited by Dravidian speakers during the Rigvedic period, as believed by some historians, linguists, and archaeologists. Eventually, the Maharashtra region became part of the Maurya Empire with edicts of the emperor. The edicts and the inscriptions confirm the regime of the Mauryan empire. The emperor Ashoka found the regime. During this period, Buddhism flourished in this region. International trade with Greeks and later with the Roman empire also flourished with traders. Indo-Scythian Western Satraps ruled part of this region.