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## **Free-Historic Period Mesolithic Culture in India**

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### **Abstract:-**

*The credit for the rediscovery of Indian Pre-History goes to Dr. Primrose similarly Robert Bruce foote who discovered a large number of pre – historic sites in south India and collected stone age Artifacts in 1853. Since then, the exploration and excavation done have resulted in the identification of culture sequence more firmly. Sum stone artefacts reported from bori in Maharastra as early as 1.4 million ears ago. The calcification early human cultures is thus based on the type of tools they made and used. The tools produced during this phace are generally known of microlithic at one site a copper, fish-hook was also found. Burials associated with all three face have been found. Phace first dated to 5000-2000 BC.*

*There are a number of larger factory sites suggested external trade. Adamgarh rock shelters include ring stone, dog, bones, cattle, goat, Sheep etc. in the coastal Konkana Mesolithic sites like jalgarh yielded microlithic. The microlithic tools as they are known are small size range from 1 to 8 cm. Blade, core, pint, triangle are the main Mesolithic tools. Sum Mesolithic sites like mirizapur, bhimbepka are famous for there rich art and painting animals are the most frequent subjects of all these paintings. drawings of dears are found on the Morhana fahor.*

### **I. The Initials :-**

The credit for the rediscovery of Indian Pre-history goes to Dr. Primrose. An English man, who was the first person to discover Pre-history implements (Stone Knives and arrow) in 1842. At a place called Lingasur in the Raichur district of Karnataka. Secondary another person who enriched our knowledge about Indian Pre-history was Robert Bruce foote who discovered a large number of Pre-historic sites in south India and collected Stone Age artefacts in 1853. In 1930 M.C. Burkitt published an account of collection from the Krishna basin. Similarly T.T. Paterson studied the glacial sequence of Kashmir, and Punjab related their findings to the Pre-historic stone industries of Punjab, the Narmada Valley and Tamilnadu.

These early efforts could not place India on the Pre-historic map of the world. It was Sir Mortimer Wheeler whose efforts resulted in our knowledge of the entire FHC\* of India, putting India firmly on the world map of Pre-history. The efforts of the 1940s resulted in the publication of stuart piggott's prehistoric India in 1950. Since then, the exploration and excavations done have resulted in the identification and establishment of culture sequences more firmly.

### **II. Early Man and Classification :-**

The earliest evidence regarding the development of man in India is found in Pliocene deposits in the Siwaliks. This is known as Ramapithecus which is a type of early hominid. However, no fossils of early man have been found in the entire subcontinent, but their presence is indicated by stone tools dated around 250,000 BC. Some stone artefacts reported from Bori in Maharashtra are said to belong to a period as early as 1.4 million years ago. In 1983 at Riwat near Rawalpindi a group of artifacts was found in a Siwalik deposit which was subsequently dated by the Pale magnetic method 1.9 million years.

In archaeological terms the ability to create a out here differentiates nab from early hominids and the ability to make stone tools is a cultural act. And this is the reason why stone artefacts form the basis of earl evolution this is also

\* Pre – Historic Culture because all reorganization stone artefacts are the product of highly developed craft traditions with far ranging socio-economic implications. The classification of early human cultures is thus based on the types of tools they made and used. This is also because all recognizable stone artifacts are the product of highly developed craft traditions with far ranging socio-economic implications. The classification of early human cultures is thus based on the tools making (types) traditions, the entire SAC\* has been divided into three main stages i.e. Paleolithic Mesolithic and Neolithic. Know among this we are studied the Mesolithic culture in India.

### **III. Mesolithic Culture in India :-**

Sometime around 8000 BC the Pleistocene ended and there was change in the environment. As a result of these changes the climatic conditions became much like the present i.e. warmer and more humid. This was so particularly in western, northern and central India. Consequently new resources were available and population expanded. Flora and fauna also changed, so much so that the one-horned rhinoceros reached inner parts of Assam whereas it was found only upto Gujarat in the Pleistocene. All these changes resulted in change in the technology of producing tools. The tools produced during this phase are generally known as microliths. “From the traditional archeological point of view a decrease in the size of stone artifacts and the presence of a higher proportion of ‘geometric’ microliths are regarded as the hallmark of the Mesolithic. The changes that accrued in the Mesolithic phase are supposed to have laid the foundations for the more fundamental changes in the Neolithic phase. That is why the Mesolithic phase in known as the transitional phase between the Paleolithic and Neolithic phases.

#### **1) Some important Sites :-**

A) In the Pachpadra basin and the Sojat area of Rajasthan many microliths have been found and at Tilwara a very important habitation site has been discovered. Near the fresh water lake at Budha Pushkar there are many sites with microlithic industries. There sites were primarily living or camping sites. Potteries show some affinities with the Chalcolithic sites of Ahar and Bagor. At one site a copper fish-hook was also found. These show an overlap in time. B. and R. Allchin (1982, 1997) suggest that the subsequent religious importance of this place may go back to pre-historic time or as far back as the Middle Paleolithic.

Bagor, another Mesolithic site in Rajasthan on the river Kothari, is the largest Mesolithic site in India. This also is the most completely investigated.

#### **\* Stone Age Cultures**

And best-documented Mesolithic site in the whole subcontinent. Excavated by V.N. Misra, it comprises there cultural phases. Charred bones of both wild and domestic animals were found throughout. Burials associated with all three phase have been found. Phase I dated to c. 5000-2000 BC on C<sub>14</sub> basis yielded evidence of huts with paved floors. The industry here is predominantly based on blades. The stone objects include ring stones.

B) Tapti, Narmada, Mahi and Sabarmati river basins in Gujarat have yielded many Mesolithic sites. Akhaj, Valasana, Hirpur and Langhnaj are some of the important sites. Out of these, Langhnaj excavated by H.D. Sankalia, “has the distinction of being the first site discovered in the Arid Zone to demonstrate the development of a Mesolithic culture...” Here, more than a hundred sites have been found on the consolidated sand dunes.

C) Langhnaj has reveled three cultural phases. Phase I has yielded microliths, burials and animal bones. The microliths are mainly blades, triangles, crescents, scrapers and burins.



**D)** The hill region of central India is rich in Mesolithic sites. A survey revealed that they were the camping sites or temporary living sites. There are a number of larger factory sites suggesting external trade. Barasimla, Barkaccha and Sidhpur had large factories. At Barkaccha a butt of a ground stone axe was found. Both the latter sites are located at the point where Ganga plains meet the hills of Central India suggesting some contact between the plains and the Mesolithic hunters of the hills.

**E)** In Allahabad-Pratapgarh area Sarai-Nahar-Rai is an extensively excavated and studied site. It appears to be a more permanent living site. It was excavated by G.R. Sharma, who considered it to be a small settlement or semi-permanent camping place. Here we have a number of small hearths, one large communal hearth or hut floor and several burials.

**F)** At Mahadaha, a Mesolithic campsite, bone artefacts were produced. These include arrowheads and bone ornaments. Stone querns and mullers are also found here. Remains of bos, buffalo, elephant, rhinoceros, stag, pig, turtle and birds are recorded. A number of burials were also recorded and these include some double burials.

**G)** At Birbhanpur on the Damodar River in WB\*, a number of holes interpreted as post-holes were noticed. This site was identified as a combined factory and living site upon which huts were erected.

**H)** Adamgarh group of rock shelters in Hoshangabad district of M.P. have yielded 25,000 microliths. Main finds at these shelters include broken mace heads, ring stones, bones of dog, cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, pig, sambhar, barasingha, spotted deer, hare, porcupine, monitor lizard etc. Shells have been dated by radiocarbon to 5500 BC. Stone industry was based solely on parallel-sided blades.

#### \* West Bengal

**I)** At Morhana Pahar in UP\*, similar rock-shelters with rock-paintings have been found. Rock-shelters with rock-paintings have been found. Rock-paintings here show two chariots, one drawn by four horses and another by two, being way laid by group of men on foot armed with bows and arrows and spears. This shows the association of bows and arrows with microlithic artefacts.

**J)** Two Mesolithic age rock-shelters have also been found near Pachmari. These are Jambudip and Dorothy Deep. Here, an a-ceramic microlithic phase was followed by a ceramic phase. Lekhania in Mirzapur (UP) has yielded another group of Mesolithic rock-shelters. In Bhimbetka in central India layer 3 yielded a microlithic industry without pottery and layers 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> microlithic industry with pottery.

**K)** The site of Chopani Mando in Allahabad provides a continuous sequence from late upper Paleolithic to late Mesolithic with crude handmade pottery, decorated with cord-impressed patterns. Here round hut floors were found. One hut floor in the later phase was paved with stone. In this phase lumps of brunt clay with reed and bamboo impressions, indicative of wattle and clay walls, were found. Other remains include hammer stones, anvil stones, stone sling ball, ring stones etc.

**L)** K.R.V. Todd described a group of coastal microlithic sites around Mumbai in 1950. The people probably has boats of some kind and fish formed a staple part of their diet. Possibly these sites were the temporary or permanent habitation sites of coastal fishing communities. In the coastal Konkan, Mesolithic sites like Kasushoal, Janyire, Babhalgo, Jalgarh etc. have yielded microliths. Dhulia and Poona districts of Maharashtra have also yielded similar microliths.

**M)** In the Peninsular India the Mesolithic Industry is based on milky quartz. A group of sites at Jalalahalli (Bangalore) produced a distinctive quartz industry. A new feature in the tool industry is the appearance of 'D' shaped, transverse arrowhead. Similarly Kibbanhalli, Giddalur, (Eastern Ghats) Calicut, Goa, Nagarjungkonda, Belgaum, Berapedi cave, Sanganakadlu etc. have yielded quartz microliths.

**N)** In Tamilnadu, a distinctive group of coastal sites known as Teri group has come to light. Quartz and light brown chert are the predominant material. The flake tradition is strong and small discoidal

cores and flakes, lunates, transverse arrowheads and points are the main tools. A very small proportion of blades and blade cores are found. Scrapers. Bruins are also represented. The dunes provided a sheltered camping place near the sea, lagoons and estuaries suitable for fishing and fowling. This industry is of a coastal Mesolithic fishing community.

**\* Uttarpradesh**

**2) Tools :-**

Microliths, as they are known, are very small in size and their lengths range from 1 to 8 cm. backed blade, core, point, triangle, lunate and trapeze are the main Mesolithic tools. However, some tools used earlier, like scraper, burin and choppers, continue.

**Microlithic Tools used by the Microlithic peoples**  
**Pointer Tools and parallel Blades**



**3) Life Styles :-**

The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic ages represent the hunting-gathering nomadic pastoral stages of human social evolution. However, while the evidence of the Palaeolithic age does not yield any information regarding their religious practices, with the Mesolithic, the first archaeological information about them becomes available. Anthropological theories based on ethnographic evidence sometimes help to interpret them. Floral and faunal remains give us ideas about the subsistence

pattern whereas the burials and rock-paintings give us ideas about the development of religious practices.

The early Mesolithic sites have yielded the bones (sometimes charred and with cut marks) of cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo, pig, dog, bison, elephant, hippopotamus, jackal, wolf, cheetah, sambhar, barasingha, black-buck, chinkara, deer, hare, porcupine, mongoose, monitor lizard, tortoise, turtle and fish. Due to climatic changes some of these are absent in the late Mesolithic age. Apart from these the Mesolithic people also collected many varieties of wild roots, tubers, honey etc.

Some Mesolithic sites like Bhimbetka, Adamgarh, Pratapgarh, and Mirzapur are famous for their rich art and painting. B. & R. Allchin prefer to call them crayoning rather than painting because the drawings are basically single figures or scenes, such as rhinoceros hunt from Adamgarh.

Animals are the most frequent subjects of all these paintings. Drawings of deer are found on the walls of the Morhana Pahar. The animals most frequently represented are deer or antelope whereas paintings of tigers and monkeys are rare. People are shown with bows, arrows and spears. Animal-headed human figures also appear. Purple, crimson, vermilion, light orange and brown colours were used. Some of the paintings and engravings depict activities like sexual union, childbirth, rearing of child and burial ceremony. This is also a period when we find evidence of carefully burying the dead, which shows the beginning of belief in life after death.

#### 4) Conclusion:-

Rabert Bruce Foote was discovered a larger no of pre-historic site in south India (Tamilnadu State) and collected stone age artifacts in 1853. Since then the exploration and excavation done have resulted in the study of microlithic culture. Some stone tools reported from Bori in Maharashtra are suggested to belong to a period as early as 1.4 million years ago. The classification of this culture on account of types of tools they made and used. At one site a copper fish-hook was also found. It indicates that they knew the fish-hunting there are a number of larger factory sites suggesting external trade.

At Mahadav site some artifacts are produced like arrow heads. Bone ornaments remain of bones, buffalo, goat, pig and birds are recorded. These all are stated that this culture goes towards evolution. Similarly Kibbanahalli, Culkatt, Goa, Sanganakallu, etc. have yielded quartz microlithic cores. Point triangles, lunate blades are main microlithic tools and their lengths range from 1 to 8 cm. Similarly mesolithic sites like Adamgarh, Mirzapur are famous for their rich art and painting. These all indicate that the palaeolithic and mesolithic ages representing the hunting-gathering and nomadic pastoral stages of human social evolution.

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