
UNIT 1 ORIGIN AND SCOPE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY*

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Learning Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to:

- Define anthropology and its branches;
- Discuss the development of prehistoric archaeology; and
- Understand different cultural periods.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Anthropology is the study of Humans. Etymologically the term 'Anthropology' is derived from two different Greek words, 'Anthropos' meaning man and 'logos' refers to study. Hence Anthropology can be defined as the holistic study of human beings. Accordingly Anthropology could be described as the science of Human cultural and biological variation and evolution. Anthropology could be broadly divided into four branches: Social-cultural anthropology, Physical/Biological anthropology, Archaeological anthropology and Linguistic anthropology. Definitions for the four branches are as follows:

Social-cultural Anthropology: This branch deals primarily with variations in the cultures

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of populations in the present or recent past. Its subjects include social, political, economic and ideological aspects of human cultures.

Physical/Biological Anthropology: It is the study of the mechanism of biological variation, genetic inheritance, human adaptability and variation, primatology, primate morphology and the fossil research of human evolution.

Archeological Anthropology: Archeological Anthropology is the study of socio-cultural behaviour in the protohistoric and pre-historic past. The archaeologist deals with such remains from the past societies such as tools, shelters, remains of plants and animals eaten as food, and other objects that have survived. These remains are termed artefacts and are used to reconstruct past behaviour. At the same time evolution of prehistoric culture in respect to biological evolution of early human being are studied. In other words, it is anthropology of the past.

Linguistic Anthropology: Linguistic Anthropology is the study of languages. Spoken language is a behaviour that appears to be uniquely human. This subfield of Anthropology deals with the analysis of languages usually in non-literate societies and with general trend in the evolution.

Check Your Progress

1) What are the different branches of Anthropology?

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After having studied the definitions of different branches of Anthropology, let us comprehend in-depth about the branch Archaeological Anthropology.

Before going further on Archaeological Anthropology, it is essential to understand the terms History, Protohistory and Prehistory.

The period for which written records are available and used as a chief source in understanding the past is historical period. This period is from approximately 1000 BCE to present. The settled life of human past, which led to the development of civilizations, and urban centres for which written records are available, but have not been deciphered is called as protohistory. In India the Harappan civilization falls under this category. This period began around 3000 BCE. However, the period preceding protohistory falls under prehistory. It is dated back approximately to 3.0 million years to 3000 BC. Prehistory is also called as Archaeological Anthropology.

1.1 PREHISTORY/ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The term—prehistory was first used, in 1851, by Daniel Wilson, in his work “*The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*”. Then it was popularised by Sir John Lubbock in his book *Prehistoric Times* published in 1865. Archaeological

Anthropology deals with the origin and development of humankind prior to the invention of script. The content and the methodology of the subject until recent times is called as Prehistory or Prehistoric Archaeology, and has been part of the disciplines of Anthropology and Archaeology, with an emphasis of bio-cultural evolution in the former and description of ancient objects in the latter. During recent years the Prehistoric Archaeology gained strength in terms of theory and methods by borrowing techniques from various scientific disciplines, and transformed into Archaeological Anthropology. At present this sub discipline is formulating its own body of theory and methodology. Archaeological anthropology is now gaining much importance in anthropological studies, as it has become integral in providing scientific information for the holistic nature of anthropology. It is also known as anthropological archaeology or simply archaeology in America and as archaeological anthropology in the Europe and in India. Some scholars view anthropology and archaeology as separate disciplines with independent history of development and heritage. But many agree that both are interdependent, interrelated, interconnected subjects like double helix of DNA which are inseparable as both study about humankind, one deals with study of living cultures and the other deals with extinct or past cultures.

1.2 DEFINITION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Archaeological Anthropology is variously defined as “anthropology of the dead”, “the ethnography of extinct societies (palaeo-ethnography)”, “study of extinct cultures”, “past tense of cultural anthropology” or simply the study of human past based on past material objects recovered by systematic explorations and excavations which are classified, analyzed, described and interpreted based on various scientific methods and theories. Archaeology has been defined by Brian Fagon (2016) as “a special form of anthropology that uses material remains to study extinct human societies”. However Oxford English Dictionary defined Archaeology as the “study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and analysis of physical remains.” Major goals of this specialization is timeless and space less, the final aim is to generalize about all human beings in all times and all places. Very specifically three major goals are there: (i) the construction of cultural chronologies, (ii) the reconstruction of extinct life ways and (iii) the search for bio-cultural processes.

We understand from the above definition that *Prehistoric Archaeology/Archaeological Anthropology is studied through material remains.*

Check Your Progress

2) What is Archaeological Anthropology?

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Now let us briefly discuss about the origin and development of the Discipline of Prehistoric Archaeology.

1.3 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

In European countries, the beginning of archaeology can be traced back to the time of the Renaissance in Italy, when there was a new curiosity in the past and in the recovery of information about ancient Greece and Rome. This curiosity rapidly extended from Italy to other European countries. At the end of the 16th century and during the 17th century there were many antiquarians, and collection of classical statuary had become a hobby of the rich. Wealthy men built up private collections, some of which ultimately became museums. One such example was the Ashmolean Museum of Oxford, built in 1683, which contained not only objects of classical art but also ethnological curios brought back from foreign countries. Then in nineteenth-century the development of Darwin's theory of Natural Selection was one of the most important achievements of science. The nineteenth century was the period when archaeology emerged as a clearly defined discipline. One of the major achievements of nineteenth-century archaeologists were the creation of the Three-Age system.

1.3.1 Three Age System

During the nineteenth century, prehistoric artefacts and other collections poured into museums. During this time it was the work of Danish Antiquarian Christian Jurgensen Thomsen (Fig. 1) who was given the job of cataloguing collections for the newly founded National Museum of Antiquity in Copenhagen. He systematically classified the collections into three periods; the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age-based on the material on which the artifacts were manufactured. Thomsen had arranged these periods chronologically, with the Stone Age being the earliest and the Iron Age the latest. This Three Age system (Fig. 2) formed the basis for all the Old World Archaeology. His guidebook to the National Museum was published in 1836, which introduced the idea of three age system to the academic world. However, the three age system was already accepted and used by the leading Scandinavian archaeologists by the time it was published. Thomsen divided Stone Age into Old and New Stone Age. Lubbock replaced the terms by Palaeolithic for Old Stone Age and Neolithic for New Stone Age. Later on a cultural stage was found chronologically lying between Palaeolithic on the one hand and Neolithic on the other. This culture is known as Mesolithic culture because it lies in between the two cultures.

Check Your Progress

3) Define Three Age system?

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Fig. 1: Christian Jürgensen Thomsen (1788-1865)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_J%C3%BCrgensen_Thomsen

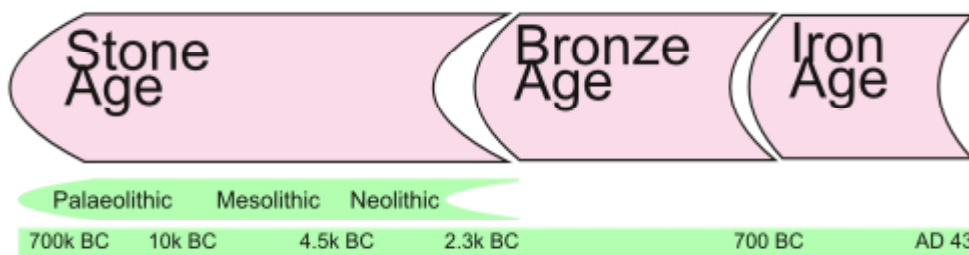


Fig. 2: Three Age System

Source: <https://www.schoolsprehistory.co.uk/tag/prehistory/>

The dates in the figure are based on dates available in Europe. The date of the Palaeolithic culture goes farther back in rest of the old world.

The entire prehistoric past has been divided into the following cultural periods:

Iron Age or Early Historic Period

Chalcolithic or Copper Age

Neolithic

Mesolithic

Palaeolithic

Of the above five chrono-cultural stages the earliest three stages (Stone Age) of our civilizational history span a period of nearly 3 million years, because metal was first discovered only around 4000BCE. In other words, it states that 99 percent of our past cultural history is covered by only Stone Age.

1.4 HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT OF PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN INDIA

Many scholars have contributed to the development of Prehistory in India through the discovery of prehistoric sites. Some of the studies are discussed below.

Colonel Meadows Taylor of the early nineteenth century was one of the earliest to show interest in archaeology of India. His interest, however, remained more concentrated on the south Indian Megaliths. Alexander Cunningham in 1861 and Robert Bruce Foote in 1863 began their explorations and recording of prehistoric antiquities in the subsequent period. Alexander Cunningham concentrated on the historic period, but Robert Bruce Foote was more inclusive in his interest which was extended to even the earliest Stone Age period.

Robert Bruce Foote (Fig. 3) discovered the first Palaeolithic stone tool, a handaxe at the site called Pallavaram near Chennai in India. Hence Robert Bruce Foote has been called as the “Father of Indian Prehistory”. Later A. C. Carlleyle discovered microliths in the rock shelters of Mirzapur along with Mesolithic cave paintings during 1863 - 1865.

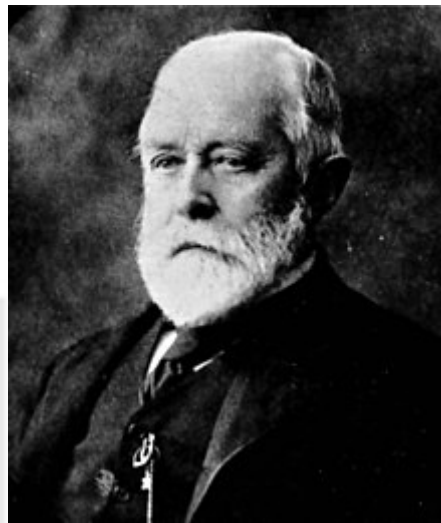


Fig. 3: Robert Bruce Foote (1834-1912)

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Bruce_Foote

A brief account of the Stone Age cultures in India is given below.

The Stone Age cultures have been divided into three periods:

Palaeolithic culture

Mesolithic culture

Neolithic culture

1.5 PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

The term “Palaeolithic” refers to the entire range of prehistoric cultures that occur within the Pleistocene epoch (Please refer Geological Time Scale (unit 6). A conservative estimation of this period in terms of absolute dating will be anywhere between 2.8 million to 160,000 years. Again on the same method Lower Palaeolithic in India is taken to have existed as early as 1.5 million. Today we have a number of absolute dates from Lower Palaeolithic sites which push the date of arrival of man back to a date which is almost ten times more than what was earlier decided on geo-chronology. For instance, at Attirampakkam near Chennai, Lower Palaeolithic is dated to 1.5 million years; at Isampur in Karnataka date for the same culture is estimated to be 1.2 million years. In Maharashtra, Bori and Moregaon are two lower Palaeolithic sites which have dates beyond 600,000 years.

The Palaeolithic culture is further divided into three periods namely, Lower Palaeolithic, Middle Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic .

1.5.1 Lower Palaeolithic Culture

The Lower Palaeolithic culture in India is dated back to 2.5 million years to 1,00,000 years. This period is characterized by pebble and core tools, such as, choppers and chopping tools, handaxes, cleavers and scrapers. The culture is broadly assigned to Acheulian culture.

India had experienced alternating glacial and interglacial phase in the Himalayan region. In the Peninsular region climate fluctuated between pluvial and interpluvial periods. This means that there was alternation of wet and dry climate. Lower Palaeolithic culture is widely distributed in India. Sites are found from all the states in India excepting for Indo-Gangetic plain. This area was not yet suitable for human habitation. Several of the works are mentioned here.

De Terra and Patterson came to India and published their discovery along terraces on the Sohan River near Rawalpindi in a book in 1939. Along Sohan river valley five terraces were formed due to climatic phases of glacial and Interglacial of the Himalayas during Pleistocene period. During second glacial period boulders were deposited by the glacier. Subsequently terraces were formed during second interglacial to last glacial periods. The context of the terraces was traced by the presence of a distinct early Pleistocene fauna – *Elephas hysudricus* which is also found in direct association with the Himalayan loess called Karewa I. Large number of tools were found and dated as belonging to inter glacial and glacial phases. The earliest of them found from boulder conglomerate is called pre Sohan and those found from the subsequent terrace are called Early Sohan, the tools from next deposit are called Late Sohan and finally the tools from the last terrace were called Evolved Sohan. Although both early Sohan and late Sohan have been divided into several chronological schemes, the tool types in the entire Sohan valley show an overwhelming variety of chopper and chopping tools. However, though early Sohan definitely belongs to Lower Palaeolithic, Sankalia considered that late Sohan belonged to Middle Palaeolithic culture.

Beyond Himalayan region work had been carried out in various states. Kortalaiyar river valley near Chennai yielded important lower palaeolithic sites. These are Pallavaram, Vadamadurai and Attirampakkam. In January 1980 Prof. V. N. Misra had organized a multidisciplinary investigation of a very rich Acheulian site called Singi Talav near the town of Didwana in Nagaur district of Rajasthan. Misra felt that the tools show enough evidence of being in primary context. The excavation shows three distinct depositional phases. These are termed Jayal, Amarpura and Didwana formations. Of these the Jayal group seems to have been laid down during late Tertiary and Lower Pleistocene period. These show an extremely powerful drainage force. Huge deposit of boulders in concrete form measuring 20 m to 60 m in thickness have been found lying over a stretch of nearly 16 km. apparently human occupation secured immediately after this period during the Amarpura stage. Acheulian tools are found from middle part of Amarpura and Middle Palaeolithic tools have been found to occur during the upper part of same phase. Date is taken to be anywhere between middle to upper Middle Pleistocene. Comparing with alluvial geo-chronology this should correspond to a period extending from Boulder Conglomerate or First Gravel to Cemented Gravel or Second Gravel of Himalayan region.

Subsequently five primary sites were discovered. These are: Bhimbetka in Raisen district and Alampur from Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh; Chirkhi Nevasa from Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra; Paisra from Jamui district of Bihar and Hunsgi from Bellary district of Karnataka. All these sites were meticulously excavated but Lower Palaeolithic in none of them is seen to occur in more than one layer. Further,

almost all these sites show extremely rich upper Acheulian tools occurring in association with fairly good number of chopper and chopping tools. Bhimbetka, at least in the cave III F-23, does not show any chopper but this may be because of the non-availability of pebbles on the top of the mountains. It is also evident that a non-Acheulian or Mode I assemblage and an early Acheulian stage preceding a developed Acheulian is not demonstrable in any stratified context so far from India.

<p>Check Your Progress</p> <p>4) What do you understand about Lower Palaeolithic culture?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

1.5.2 Middle Palaeolithic Culture

Middle Palaeolithic culture is distinguished from lower Palaeolithic with the presence of large quantity of flake tools. These tools are made by careful preparation of the core prior to the detachment of the flake. In Europe middle Palaeolithic culture is known as Mousterian culture also. In India no comparable Mousterian culture is found but prepared core technique is considered as a hall mark for middle Palaeolithic culture in India. Sankalia discovered this culture from the site Nevasa in Maharashtra.

The middle Paleolithic culture is flourished during upper Pleistocene epoch. Absolute dating method of this stage point to a time range of 1,00,000 to 40,000 years. It is important to mention here that unlike the preceding Stone Age for which we have more than one primary site to enable us the reconstruction of life style in the past, Middle Palaeolithic sites of this nature are still rare. Further, while some of the river valleys have yielded huge concentration of evidence of Middle Palaeolithic culture, there are others where such evidences are not so distinct. No wonder that this had earlier led many people to believe that Middle Palaeolithic is a phenomenon of central and Deccan region in India. Bhimbetka shows a classically Mousteroid industry developing right from within an Upper Acheulian base. Here the raw material also continues from the preceding phases. A hundred kilometers away at Shivna, the main Middle Palaeolithic of Narmada valley appear to be completely exotic because of the complete changeover to finer raw material. Maharashtra and Karnataka adopts a proper Levalloise based Middle palaeolithic and hence come close to Mousteroid character even thin leaf shaped tanged points is also known from this area.

1.5.3 Upper Palaeolithic Culture

Upper Palaeolithic culture belongs to late Pleistocene. Very broadly the age of the Upper Palaeolithic falls between 40000 BCE to 8000 BCE.

Upper Palaeolithic as a distinct cultural stage in India is still not comparable to what we would understand by this term in south west France or for that matter in Ukraine. In these areas upper Palaeolithic culture is represented by large number of blade and burin complex. It is essentially a typologically identified stage for most part of India. Profusion of worked blades are significant for Upper Palaeolithic culture in India. The bone tools and art objects which form a major characteristic of Upper Palaeolithic in

Europe are also more or less absent from India. It is to be remembered that by large India is a tropical monsoonal country. Bones and organic matters are hardly preserved. In the face of this missing character many scholars in the west and at home have been taking the claims of Upper Palaeolithic of India with doubt. Some scholars proposed an alternate term 'Flake-Blade culture' for all terminal Pleistocene cultures in place of Upper Palaeolithic.

Cultures which are undoubtedly upper Palaeolithic in India are briefly described as follows:

- i) **Renigunta:** M.L.K. Murthy reported three-four localities along the river Ralla-Kallava near the temple town of Tirupati. These localities called Vedullacheruvu and Nallagundlu yielded Upper Palaeolithic mixed with microliths.
- ii) **Muchchatka Chintamani Gavi:** In the district Kurnool of Andhra Pradesh a cave site with above name was excavated by Murthy. It became immediately famous because here, for the first time, Upper Palaeolithic with bone tool component could be demonstrated from a primary context. The lithic industry comprised of only 9.70 percent, while bone industry formed 90.30 percent. Most of the blades are not retouched. Besides these, one burin and four retouched flakes were identified.
- iii) **Bhimbetka:** These caves and rock shelters from Raisen district of Madhya Pradesh have already been discussed in Lower Palaeolithic consideration. The excavation in cave number III F-23 yielded a deposit lying between Middle Palaeolithic and Mesolithic which is distinctly Upper Palaeolithic in character. There are 6 cm to 10 cm long blades and tools made on them have been illustrated. The usually illustrated types include 8×4 cm blades retouched into burins, end scrapers and backed blade Gravettian points.

1.6 MESOLITHIC CULTURE

Mesolithic is the culture, which flourished in the early part of the geological epoch Holocene. People of Mesolithic culture were hunter gatherers. Their economy preceded agriculture. In India this period flourished between 8000 BCE to 6000 BCE.

It is characterized by the total adaptation to microlithic tools prepared by punch and pressure flaking technique. Evolution of this variety of tools has taken place well within Pleistocene period for instance at Jwalapuram in Kurnool and Bata Domba Lena in Sri Lanka microliths are found to occur from as early as 40,000 B.C. but it emerged in its fulfilled form and as major tool type during Holocene times.

Given below are some sites, which yielded evidences of Mesolithic culture in India.

- i) **Tilwara and Bagor:** Tilwara in western Rajasthan is the western most Mesolithic site of India and lies almost at the fringe of the desert in Barmer district. V. N. Misra excavated the site in 1971 and reported two distinct phases. Of these the earlier phase appears to be more clearly a Mesolithic settlement. The younger phase yielded bits of iron, glass beads and several wheel made pottery.

Bagor was another site in Bhilwara district which seem to be an extension of the Tilwara cluster. Here a deposit of 1.5 meter was excavated and within it three distinct cultural phases were identified. Phase I occupies a depth of 80 cm. It has yielded profusion of microliths and several animal bones. This phase has a radiocarbon bracket of 5000-2800 B.C. Phase I belongs to Mesolithic culture.

Phase II yields copper tools, pottery and the usual microliths. The date bracket of this phase is 2800-600 B.C. The last and the upper most phase III yields iron implements besides pot-sherds. The date of this phase is 600 B.C. – 200 A.D. Extended burial of skeletons measuring nearly 6 feet with the feet chopped off have also been found from this site. The microliths of Bagor are extremely tiny and sometimes measure as low as only few millimeters. Only phase is Mesolithic in nature.

- ii) **Bhimbetka and Adamgarh:** Both these are cluster of caves and rock shelters on either side of the river Narmada in Raisen (Bhimbetka) and Hoshangabad (Adamgarh). As usual both the sites yield profusion of microliths along with animal bones and also human burials. At Bhimbetka in addition to the excavated materials there is a suggestion that during Mesolithic period possibly there was an attempt to building a screen or wall by piling stones up to a height of 3ft. near the mouth of the cave.

Both Bhimbetka and Adamgarh shows huge amount of rock art executed in various shades of ochre. The art motifs have been studied by Yashodhar Mathpal, who demonstrated many economic activities of Mesolithic culture. These include fishing, hunting, use of microlith mounted arrows and harpoons.

- iii) **Teri sites:** A group of 11 sites of microlithic cluster occurs along the fossilized sand dunes of Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. These are usually referred to as Teri sites. It is believed that older transgressions of the sea had caused the formation of these sand dunes. During the early Holocene and during the subsequent regressions dunes at three respective levels were created nearly as far as 10 km in land from present day coast. One of these transgression beaches has also been dated to nearly 5000 B.C.E. Microlithic occupation took place once these dunes were in the process of consolidation.

Check Your Progress

5) What are the various sites of Mesolithic Culture in India.

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1.7 NEOLITHIC CULTURE

The *Neolithic* period (New Stone Age) was the period following the Mesolithic when profound changes took place in human history. Agriculture and domestication of animals, manufacture of pottery, and grinding and polishing technique were newly introduced in this period. Domestication of plants developed in more than one centre in the world: the Near East, South-East Asia and Meso-America.

The impact of agriculture and domestication was tremendous. Communities became more or less settled and due to a regular food supply life became more secured. There was well-regulated community life, growth of specialization and division of labour such as weaving and pottery. Concept of property also developed leading to the system of ownership of land, cattle and tools etc. in the later phase of Neolithic culture, which

ultimately leads to conflicts, quarrels and wars. Agricultural advances were further intensified by domestication of animals.

In India this culture is found throughout the length and breadth of the country. Given below are some of the evidences for Neolithic culture.

Indo-Pakistan Border: Agriculture-based Neolithic settlements, which used only stone tools, have been known from sites like Kili Ghul Mohammed, Rana Ghundai etc. in the hilly terrain of Baluchistan for several decades. Their beginning was dated to 4000 BCE. However excavations at Mehrgarh have pushed back the antiquity of settled village life in the subcontinent to 7000 B.C.E. This is a site near the Bolan Pass in Baluchistan and excavated by Jarrige and Lechevallier in 1954. Here seven phases have been found, out of which Phases I-III are Neolithic. Phase I has been dated to 7000 – 5500 BC. The major findings of phase IA include polished stone tools, microliths bone tools. Possibly economy included hunting, stock-breeding and plant cultivation. Domesticated animals included cattle, sheep, goat and water buffalo while the cultivated plants comprise several varieties of wheat and barley. The houses were made of mud and mud-bricks.

Assam Complex: The tools found from this region include ground stone celts of shouldered and splayed varieties collected mostly as surface finds. These along with cord impressed pottery found in the excavations of Daojali Hading and Sarutaru in Assam, and Selbalgre in Meghalaya, form the material evidences. The pottery is handmade and of impure clay. Daojali Hading is a stratified Neolithic site from North Cachar Hills, Assam and due to the presence of a large number of household appliances like corn grinders, mortar, pestle, querns and mullers, it has been conjectured as an indirect evidence of food production by Neolithic inhabitants of the area. Large quantities of grinding stones and by-product flakes have been found here too. Parsiparlo, an excavated site from Kamala valley in Arunachal Pradesh, on the other hand showed Neolithic cultures preceding the Iron Age. Mostly pecked and ground stone implements together with a few sherds — square-grid and honey comb beater impressed pottery were found. Few fire places with deposition of ash and charcoal was found. However no structural remains were seen suggesting that Parsiparlo was an open-air site. Selbalgre, the site from Garo Hills in Meghalaya turned out to be a stratified site, with the Neolithic phase overlying geometric and non-geometric microliths. The Neolithic period showed handmade pottery, very coarse and grey or dull brown in colour. No radiocarbon dates are available for the Neolithic period in north-east India. However H. D. Sankalia inferred that the Neolithic cultures in the region could have been within the time frame of 5000 BC to 1000 BC.

Southern Region: Results obtained from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are similar with a few exceptions. In the earlier phase, handmade coarse pale red ware with microliths and ground stone tools were found. In the later phase, handmade, dull burnished grey ware, ground stone tools like axes, adzes, wedges, chisels etc; and bone points, beads and terracotta were found. Extended exhumation with stone grave goods for adults and urn burials for infants were used. Ash mounds (*accumulation of cow dung burnt into ash*) were found in Utnur with evidence of stockade and cattle pen. They are closely associated with habitation sites and provide tell-tale evidence of the role of cattle pastoralism in the economy. It is believed that dung from cattle pens was allowed to accumulate and periodically set ablaze, probably in a ceremonial way as is done at annual cattle festivals in south India even today. The ash in the mounds consists of several distinct layers; in some layers it is soft and loose and in others heavily vitrified, suggesting that cow dung was burnt at varying temperatures. The contents of the ash include stone and bone tools, animal bones and pottery. At Utnur (Mahbubnagar,

Andhra Pradesh) and Budihal (Gulbarga district, Karnataka) hoof impressions of cattle have been found beneath the cow dung, showing evidence of cattle penning. Besides, Budihal has also produced evidence of a butchering floor. Animal husbandry evidently was the mainstay of their economy as 85% of bones found belong to domestic cattle, buffalo, sheep and goat. Plants cultivated were millets, pulses and legumes. Houses were probably made of wattle and daub - evidence of a burnt hut from Sanganakallu shows that the huts had a thatched roof. The Neolithic culture is dated by C14 dating from 3000-1000BC.

It is very clear that there are different cultural traits as far as Neolithic in India is concerned. Again as far as the time span is concerned, India seemed to have witnessed a very fluctuating Neolithic culture from the 7000 BCE Mehrgarh culture to the 1000 BCE of Assam culture. In terms of relationships, it would seem that with the exception of the Chotanagpur region which may have some connections with the south, the early farming communities in each region were distinct from each other. Of these the Indo-Pakistan community seems to be inspired from West Asia, the north from North-East, the Ganges valley from South, and Northeast from South-East Asia and vice versa. In fact, Northeast India which is very strategically located in the borderline of Southeast Asia and South Asia has been touted by many as the nuclear area of early rice cultivation. At Koldiwah, near Allahabad in Ganga valley, evidence of cultivated rice is found, which is dated to 5000 BCE.

1.8 SCOPE OF PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY/ ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Prehistory refers to the life of early hunter gatherers and subsequent farming communities. The subject provides evidences about human societies which gave rise to civilizations/urbanizations (Renfrew and Bahn, 1991). Prehistory does not only study the life of early men before the advent of writing but also study the present day communities which are continuing as hunter gatherers, pastorals or primitive farmers. Study among such present day communities provide clue to the life style and cultural systems of comparable prehistoric societies.

Culture is a device of man for its survival on earth. Since it consists of materials taken out of the environment and is not a part of his body, it is known as extra-somatic behaviour of man. It is made of both tangible and intangible components. Tangibles are the material part of the culture and intangibles are of such behavioural aspects as, customs, beliefs and ideas. The latter may be reconstructed from the material remains. According to Gordon Childe (1956) prehistoric archaeology studies all changes in the material world that are due to human action. Usually material remains are food, tools, weapons, dresses, ornaments, houses etc. of daily necessities for survival. Prehistory covers major part of human existence on earth. Writing dates on an average 5000 years from the present day. Much of the evidences of prehistoric times is lost and perished under the severity of nature through the long time dimension. Fragmentary evidence of culture and fossils are found.

Anthropologists have devised scientific methodology for reconstruction of life and works of early man. Culture is found over wide areas on earth and it varies in response to subsequent environment. Environment varies from one geographical location to other. Area wise location of culture is very important for an archaeologist. Environment changed through time. Geologists call the time of man as Quaternary, which has two divisions, Pleistocene, the earlier and Holocene the later, starting roughly around 10,000 years ago and is still continuing. Smallest unit of material culture is stone tool and artefact. Any

object taken from the world surrounding man and used by him either in an unaltered or altered fashion is called artefact. Tools are artefacts, which are altered, fashioned and used by man (Childe, 1956). Tools give the prehistoric archaeologist clue to the purpose of its manufacture and understanding of the tool maker's necessity and capability for making a tool.

We cannot set us apart from our past because development depends on the tradition on which a particular culture is built. It illustrates course of development of a culture and civilization. The reason for defining aim and objective is that the mode of exploration varies due to the specific problem prehistory wants to solve. Main aim is to fit the facts of prehistory into the perspective of world history (Hole and Heizer, 1969). Broadly aim of prehistoric Archaeology is as follows: (i) reconstruction of culture history, (ii) reconstruction of past life ways, (iii) the study of culture process, (iv) building of sound chronology. Ethno-archaeology is included in prehistoric Archaeology. This provides for scope for study of settlement pattern.

1.9 SUMMARY

Prehistoric Archaeology is also known as Archaeological Anthropology. The term prehistory has a special connotation. It is the study of man of the time when writing was not known. In other words it is the study of preliterate time. Scripts came very late, only in last 5000 years back and that too is not simultaneously everywhere. Life ways of prehistoric time period is reconstructed on the basis of evidences of culture that are left by early man. In this unit you have learned about the history and development of prehistoric archaeology. The unit also discusses the Stone Age cultures in India.

1.10 REFERENCES

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1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) Anthropology is broadly divided into four branches: Social-cultural anthropology, Physical/Biological anthropology, Archaeological anthropology and Linguistic anthropology.
- 2) Archaeological Anthropology is variously defined as “anthropology of the dead”, “the ethnography of extinct societies (palaeo-ethnography)”, “study of extinct cultures”, “past tense of cultural anthropology” or simply study of human past based on past material objects recovered by systematic explorations and excavations which are classified, analyzed, described and interpreted based on various scientific theories. According to Brian Fagan (2016), Archaeology is “a special form of anthropology that uses material remains to study extinct human societies”.
- 3) During the nineteenth century the work of Danish Antiquarian Christian Jurgensen

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Thomsen systematically classified the prehistoric collections into three periods the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age-based on the material manufacture. Thomsen had arranged these periods chronologically, with the Stone age being the earliest and the Iron Age the latest. This Three Age system formed the basis for all the Old World Archaeology.

- 4) The Lower palaeolithic culture is dated back to 2.5 million years to 1,00,000 years. This period is characterized by core tools such as handaxes, cleavers, choppers and chopping tools.
- 5) Three important sites of Indian Mesolithic culture are: (i) Tilwara and Bagor (ii) Bhimbetka and Adamgarh and (iii) Teri



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