

The here was used
as an anvil for



The most important excavated sites are Birbhanpur in West Bengal, teri sites in Tamil Nadu, Langhnaj in Gujarat, Bagor in Rajasthan, Bhimbhetka and Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and Sarai Nahar Rai in Uttar Pradesh.

Mesolithic Sites in India: The first microliths were discovered by Carlyle in 1867 from the Vindhyan rock shelters and this was followed by more discoveries by Cockburn and Rivet Carnac in the nineteenth century. In the first half of this century, Cammiade, Todd, Hunter and Gordon reported microliths from different parts of the sub-continent 1984. However, systematic and scientific work on the Mesolithic was started only by Sankalia's excavations at Langhnaj in Gujarat in the early forties. Zeuner, Allchin, Krishnaswamy, Subbarao and Malik explored and excavated various sites. In recent years Verma has excavated sites in Mirzapur district, U. P.; Joshi and Khare in Madhya Pradesh; and Sankalia in Karnataka. V. N. Misra excavated sites in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and has published extensively on the Indian mesolithic.

Langhnaj: Langhnaj is situated in Gujarat. It has yielded important objects. In the Mesolithic layer geometrical shaped microliths like lunates, semi-triangles, crescents, trapezes, roundish, rectangular or square scraper have been found. Most of these tools are crude though the material is chert, agate, carnelian and occasionally quartz. A huge rhinoceros shoulder blade discovered here was used as an anvil for manufacturing microliths. Along with that Mesolithic people subsisted on cow, buffalo, sheep, goat, dog, fish, etc. Human skeletons from Langhnaj generated lot of controversy regarding their racial affinities. The crouching posture in which the skeletons have

been found indicated that they were deliberately buried along with some tools as part of burial ceremony.

Bagor: Bagor on Kothari River in the Bhilwara district of Rajasthan is still a very important and extensive site of Indian Mesolithic. The variety and quantity of cultural remains recorded from this site are exceptionally rich. It was discovered in 1967 by Misra.

The settlements here have more substantial structures, stone paved floors, more pottery and a rich stone industry. Bagor is the best studied Mesolithic site in the sub-continent. The microlithic industry is most profusely distributed-more or less all over the inhabited area.

The main raw material employed was quartz and chert. One sees a mass production of micro-blades and their conversion into various microlithic forms. This microlithic industry is essentially geometric and geared to a hunting economy. Numerous bones, many of them charred and split open, as also stone pebbles, used both to break the bones and to make microliths have also been found. Only one extended adult burial with head pointing west was found; the grave was inside the habitation and had no funerary appendage.

This industry is characterised by perfect symmetry of tool form and a very high standard of craftsmanship. Radio Carbon dating puts this site at 4600 BC. Bhimbetka and Adamgarh: The rock shelters and caves of Madhya Pradesh have yielded a lot of microliths and Sankalia has opined that the whole of Vindhya Range from west to east is not only a prolific source of microliths but perhaps holds the key to the microlithic or mesolithic problem

of Central India. The general sequence of the Mesolithic cultures in Bhimbhetka begins with a geometric microlithic horizon, devoid of pottery. At Adamgarh, near Hoshangabad the sequence is similar to Bhimbhetka's.

The microlithic industry is geometric though a bit cruder in comparison. Pottery, too, occurs throughout the microlithic level. Sarai Nahar Rai: Sarai Nahar Rai in Pratapgarh district of Uttar Pradesh was excavated by Sharma. Significantly hearths have also been discovered.

A floor, of 5 x 4 m, was made of rammed, burnt clay lumps and four post holes on the four corners suggesting some sort of communal cooking. Animal bones, charred and uncharred, and microliths have been obtained from these hearths but no human bone. The animal bones recovered from hearths and floors give an idea of the fauna of that time-stag, bison, rhinoceros, fish and tortoise were roaming this part of India.

From other areas of the site thirteen burials were found; the head pointing west and the forearms diagonally placed across the abdomen region. There were hearths nearby indicating that burials were inside the habitation. The microlithic culture of Sarai Nahar Rai is pre-pottery culture because pottery is completely absent in the burials, floors and hearths exposed in the excavations.

Sangankallu: Sangankallu, situated on the western fringe of the Karnataka plateau, was excavated by Subbarao, and later by Sankalia. The excavations produced an industry based on trap and quartz. The characteristic features of the southern Mesolithic in general are that quartz was the main material used which allowed only a crude blade technique. Geometric element is

either absent or very minor, As most of the collection are from the surface and the few excavation that were attempted confined themselves exclusively to tool types, we do not know any thing more about the Mesolithic culture except its tools.