

Archaeological Findings and Socio- Economic Changes in Samba District (J&K): A Probe

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Abstract: This paper seeks to understand the explored and excavated archaeological sites of Samba district. There are no written texts for the study of society and economy in pre-historic period and archaeologically it is very difficult to define the society of primitive man in Jammu region. In sharp contrast to the wealth of archaeological data for the period from pre-historic to early medieval period has yielded only handful of excavated and explored materials. With the help of these archaeological findings we have tried to define and analyses the socio-economic changes through the ages. The commencement of Archaeology in Samba acquainted the world of its rich heritage and culture of it. Samba was a cradle of culture in ancient period. The exploration of the Samba district started in 20th century and during their exploration, many Archaeological sites have been reported which attracted the archaeologist. From 20th century onwards, Archaeological Survey of India became active in Jammu and Kashmir and explored and excavated many sites of different cultures in the district of the regions.

Keyword: Sutah, Mananu, Dayala chak, Pltha, Samba.

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeological findings/remains are a crucial part of the heritage. Archaeologically, the material culture of early human history categorized as they are evidences - for Pre-historic, Neolithic, Harappan, early historical, Kushana, Gupta and early medieval periods. Many artifacts of these periods are traced out. These are the only evidences of the past development of our society and culture and human interaction with the natural environment and thus help us in the interpretation of the landscape of Jammu region. In many ways, there is a continuing and close relationship between the natural and the cultural heritage, including archaeology. Archaeological findings are a finite and non-renewable resource and should, therefore, be regarded as a part of the environment to be protected and managed.

(I) Foundation of the Study of Pre-history in India

It is Robert Bruce Foote who laid the foundations of the study of pre-history in India. Pre-historic period characterized by unwritten records. Therefore, our knowledge of cultures of this period is based

only on the materials found in the archaeological explorations and excavations. The earliest man living during this period made tools and implements of stone founds in surroundings. These tools helped him to hunt and gather food in order to satisfy his hunger. Since the earliest tools used by human were made of stones, this phase of human development is known as the Stone Age. On the basis of the different type of tools and techniques in the stages of human development in prehistoric period are described as the Palaeolithic or Old Stone Age, the Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age and the Neolithic or new Stone Age. The archaeologists have dated this culture to the Pleistocene period about two million years ago. The Pleistocene period is the geological period of the age when the earth's surface was covered with ice, and the weather was so cold that human or plant life could not survive. But in the tropical region, where ice melted, the earliest species of man could exist.

(II) Natural Resources as a Source of Subsistence of Man

The man in Stone Age times was completely dependent on nature and his source of subsistence was only hunting. He used to kill wild animals with the help of stone tools and maintain himself in the flesh of that animals. The process of hunting was always at the risk of his own life. Hence, man made every effort to keep certain area from danger and meant for escape. The essentials for the location of Stone Age sites are, therefore, deposition of boulders, gravel, sand, and silt, area of forest with an adjoining open land meant for escape or rock-cut shelters. The Jammu region was full of these resources for primitive man. We know from archaeology that the first artifacts made by humans were of stone and had made their appearance more than two million years ago. This had marked the beginning of the Palaeolithic Culture. It was a remarkable occurrence and showed 'a high level of thought and knowledge of materials' on the part of the Stone Age Man 'suggestive of acute powers of observation and deduction and of sensitive awareness of much of the available potential of the world around'. Most of these artifacts were made with the objective of assisting them in their quest for food, hunting, and gathering. Stone tools were used primarily for cutting, digging root crops, scrapping wood and obtained honey.

(III) Jammu Region as an Abode of Pre-historic Man and Beast

The Jammu region, comprised of mountainous surface fringed by the south ward sloping strip of plain, represents a typical habitat for the primitive man. Spreading from the Jhelum to Ravi, a span of over 200 Kilometres, in the northern frontier of India, containing elevated and low lands, high and firm river banks, abundant natural flora and fauna and above all loose stone pebbles and rocks of all descriptions and dwelling of man and beast since the known antiquity of mankind. Millions of years ago, there was a time when its low forests and green bushy valleys were represented by elephants some thirty to forty feet in height; and probably the primitive man, not much different from the elephants and other wild animals, except in physical makeup found this region very congenial because of the abundance of lose rabble stones to serve as crude, natural, ready-made weapons for him.

The forest producing edible fruits and roots and the rivers full of water and the mounds and heights serving as natural and safe dwellings, were amenities enough to invite hordes of human beings and their companions, wild animals. This culture has its roots in the modes of primitive human society, growing through various stages of evolution and enriched this region from abroad and from within India. Pre-history comprise the various stone ages when man was a nomadic hunter, a 'savage', as he is called. The archaeological explorations conducted in Jammu region discovered the geological fossils picked up here and there, amply prove the presence of man in large number in Jammu region during the old and new stone ages and afterwards.

(IV) Archaeological Findings from Jammu Region

In 1961-62, the Archaeological Survey of India started exploration in Jammu region to find out the archaeological sites. During the course of exploration and excavation many archaeological sites have yielded the evidences of Pre-historic, Neolithic, Harappan, Kushana, Gupta and early medieval cultures in Jammu region. These archaeological sites are located from Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Jammu, Kishtwar, Punch and Rajouri districts.

(V) Archaeological Findings from Samba District

Presently Samba is a newly formed district of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and located 37 km. east of Jammu. Before formation (2006) of this district, the area under the district was part of Jammu district. In Samba district exploration was carried out in 1968-69 by the ASI, and explored the area flanking the river Basanter just near Samba town, and collected early Stone Age tools from the **terraces** at Nandi, Mananu and Palth.

(i) Paltha Site

(a) *Pebble tools*: Paltha site is situated in district Samba and yielded more than 50 pebble tools of various types including discoid flakes and cores. Besides, two sand stone mace-heads were obtained from Palth along with a gritty red-ware. It indicate that the primitive man used pebble for making their tools.

(b) *Pottery*: The pottery is also found from the Paltha site which is handmade, medium to thick in fabric and shows medium -grained sandy inclusions. The pottery indicates that man had learnt and used the natural resources for his need.

(ii) Dayala-Chak Site

Dayala-Chak is situated twenty km. east of Samba district on Pathankot-Jammu National Highway. From Dayala Chak site an agricultural tool was found which is known as mace head in archaeological terms.

(iii) Mananu Site

The site Mananu is situated on the bank of river Basanter in district Samba.

(a) *Mace-head*: The site Mananu has yielded one stray mace head, which is noteworthy . Mace heads found from Dayala-Chak and Mananu indicates that people changed their nomadic character of Old Stone Age and took to settled life and started production of food through crude form of agriculture and cattle-rearing. It indicates that agriculture was started in the region and society and economy was emerged.

(iv) Sutah Site

Sutah site is situated on the right bank of Basanter River in district Samba and yielded early Stone Age tools.

(a) *Tools*: Sutah site has yielded a large numbers of tools comprising a bifacial (bifacial is a stone tool from which flakes have been removed from both upper and lower faces) hand axe, unifacial (unifacial is a tool which has flanked on one face only), choppers scrappers (choppers scrappers used for implement of stone, bone or metal specially made for scraping hides and smoothening wood), discoid and flakes (a piece taken out from a bigger stone or pebble for preparing a better finished

tool. Quartzite formed the chief material of these artifacts excepting one or two tools which were in sandstone. Among the tools, particularly note worthy was bifacial hand axe on a quartzite which shows considerable rolling. The working edge and the pointed end of the tool are rendered and show a yellowish or creamy patina. Patina is the outer surface layer of an artifact, which may differ in colour, texture and substance from the inner part because of physical or chemical attraction with the environment. In contrast to this, some tools show no signs of rolling, their working edge being sharp and fresh. Here, the area on the right bank is dissected by numerous streams, which join the river Basanter. Exposed sections showed the basal weathered bluish grey sandstone, overlain unconformable by a pebble conglomerate of varying thickness, the main lithic constituents of which are quartzite and sandstone laid in a calcareous and sandy matrix.

There are no written texts for the study of society and economy in pre-historic period and archaeologically it is very difficult to define the society of primitive man in Jammu region. In sharp contrast to the wealth of archaeological data for the period from pre-historic to early medieval period has yielded only handful of excavated and explored materials. With the help of these archaeological findings, we have tried to define and analyses the socio-economic changes through the ages. Archaeological findings tell us that people lived in small groups in the hilly areas in the Palaeolithic age in Jammu region. Their principal source of subsistence was the game they hunted, and the wild fruits and roots they collected. Man learnt to produce food and live in houses towards the end of the Stone Age and the beginning of the use of the metal. The primitive man travelled a long path from making stone tools to metal in Jammu region. We can assume that pre-historic man slowly and steadily progressed and improved his condition from hunter-gathering to produce food, practice agriculture and domestication of animals in the region. The fowling factors might be played a leading role in the progress and development of human evolution in Jammu region.

1. Social requirements: In all ages and in all societies the human beings have had certain fundamental needs. These arise from the very fact that he is a human being, living in a society. No man can live more than a limited period by himself; even if he could survive alone for his own life-time, he could not reproduce his kind. He must therefore have some relations with his fellow men. As a producer and consumer, he has an economic part to play in the life of his society. He has certain nonmaterial needs, which he pursue with greater or lesser intensity in accordance with his own personal wishes and with the demands made upon him, and the opportunities provided for him, by his society.

2. Society in Pre-historic period: At the stage of hunting and gathering, the society, as we understand it had not emerged in Jammu region. The main occupation of the early stone tool societies was hunting and gathering fruits and seeds for food. The units hunted together for while and dispersed. There was no permanency in societal relationship. This stage of gathering and hunting remained for almost ten millions years. It is only with the domestication of plants and animals that the first settlement emerges. The transition from gathering and hunting to the domestication of plants and animals also resulted in the emergence of what is known as the tribal world. The earliest societies in the world were not tribes, but are called 'bands' or 'hunter gatherers'. Periodic movement, no permanent villages and lack of clearly defined membership in residence group characterized them. The only stable social group was the family. The different families might co-operate in raising shelters at a seasonal settlement, or in hunting a large animal, but such co-operation was only for that particular task.

3. Economic requirements: The basic economic requirements of human beings are food, shelter, and clothing. In prehistoric societies their pursuit must have consumed such an enormous proportion of available human energies that there was little left for other activities. Food could be obtained from animals and wild plants, which were hunted or harvested in accordance with the skills and techniques

available to the society. Such an economy may be termed a natural one-man was dependent entirely upon what was provided for him by nature, especially if he clothed himself in animals skins and lived in caves, and human energy was the only motive power available to him. When nature failed him, he moved on to a more favourable location, where he continued to live in a natural economy. In prehistoric period in Jammu, region man was condemned to live from hand to mouth. He had no means for preserving his food, which he had to be killed and eaten, as he needed it. He took his environment provided for him.

4. Role of nature and environment: With the passage of time, human being adapted and learnt surrounding the nature and environment, which was suitable for him. He was very dependent on nature. The most important natural resource put to a widespread use by the humans was stone. At very early stage in the evolution of human societies in the Jammu region, the use of stone as material for shaping some of basic tools was discovered. We do not know the precise time when this discovery was made. However, we know with some certainty that the early tools crafted from the naturally available stone consisted of hand-axe and the cleaver, which were used for breaking the grains and various types of chopping tools, has been discovered in Jammu region. The primitive human of Jammu region using such tools were ably assisted by their implements in their occupation. The tools were of crude nature but seemed to work well in the given situations. The types of stone used in making these tools were mainly sandstones, quartzite and shale. The flakes, which were the by-products of the manufacture of core tools, were utilized on a large scale. In the subsequent stages of stone tool making, the flakes were used as the main objective of the toolmakers and they became the intrinsic part of stone tool manufactures. One of the main sources of this was the river pebble and the rivers of Jammu region are full of pebbles. These sites are located on the banks of river Ravi, Basanter, Tawi and Chenab in Jammu region. It is evident that these sites are few and scattered between rivers Chenab to river Ravi.

5. Economy in Pre-historic period: During the hunting-gathering stage, the human groups were totally dependent on natural resources for their sustenance as they did not possess any knowledge of agriculture with the help of which they could have grown their food. Hunting gathering is generally considered that earliest stage in the social evolution of human groups for which evidence for organized community life appears with regularity in Jammu region. The Shivalik hills of Jammu region is full of natural resources, which might be, used its resources by the hunting gathering people of Jammu region. Hunting-gathering societies were solely dependent on wild plants and animals. Wild plants foods gathered mainly by women might have been a more substantial component of the diet than the meat from the hunt. In fact, we may have been feeling that such communities should be more appropriately termed gatherer hunters. Whatever was collected/hunted would have been according to need and consumed immediately, there was no likelihood of storage or surplus. Camps would have had to frequently shift in response to the availability of both plant and animals resources.

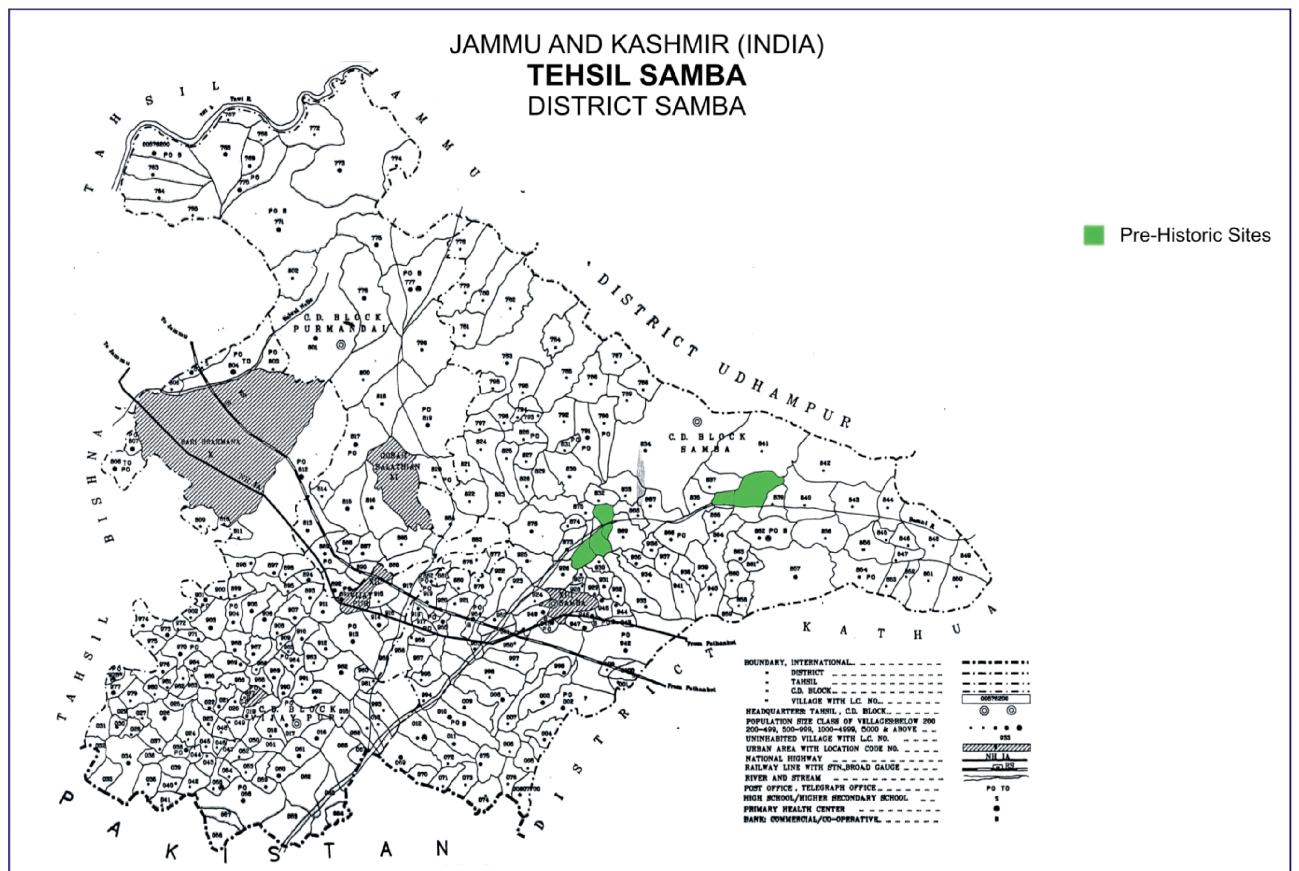
Hunter-gatherers collected their food from the natural surroundings in which they lived. This food consisted of fruits, edible roots, forest produce such as honey and berries etc. The forest of Jammu region might be provided all resources to primitive man of Jammu. This complete dependence of hunting-gathering societies on resources obtained naturally from their environment during the major part of human existence has curious implications. The most plentiful material remains connected with hunting-gathering communities are stone tools and implements. In fact, the other material, if any, might have been of perishable type and therefore has not survived. Stone being a hard imperishable substance has succeeded against all natural odds and has revealed to us the information on hunter-gatherers. No other records pertaining to them have survived and we have to depend almost solely on the surviving assemblages of stone implements and tools for reconstructing the living patterns and

culture of hunting-gathering communities in Jammu region. These tools were made of selectively chosen stone material. They were also crafted with a definite purpose and with an economy of effort and material both. Besides the availability of suitable material, the other considerations were perhaps an abundant supply of water and food. The emergence of the Stone Age is generally attributed to the Pleistocene period- that began at about 1.8 million years ago. V. N. Mishra stated that because of the length of the time involved and the changes in landscape and climate, most of the early (Pleistocene) sites have been either obliterated or disturbed by natural and human agencies.

TEHSIL SAMBA DISTRICT SAMBA

Table 1: Pre-Historic Sites

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Name of Sites/Villages</i>	<i>2001 Census location Code number</i>	<i>Page No.</i>
1.	Nandi	836	375
2.	Mananu	872	374
3.	Palth	871	375
4.	Sutah	870	376



Map : Archaeological Sites of Tehsil Samba



Photo 1a: Tool Bearing Terrace Of Paltha Samba District



Photo 1b: Mace-Head From Paltha Samba District

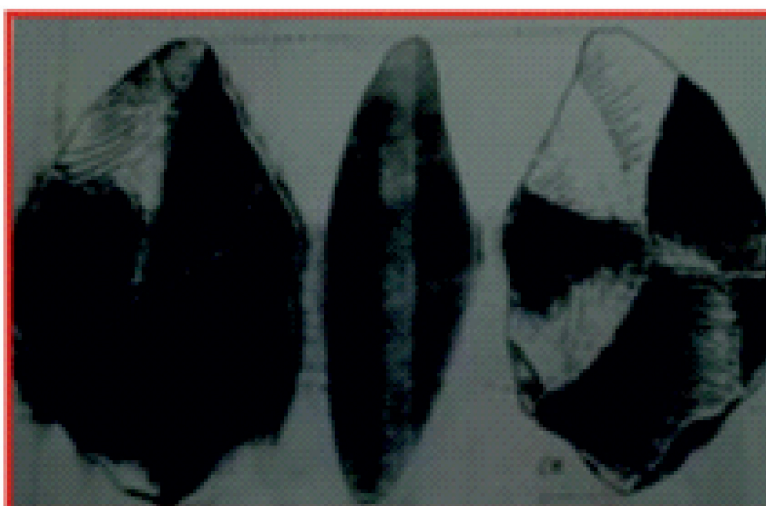


Photo 1c: Hand Axe From Sutah Samba District

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