

Mesolithic Culture of Middle Ganga Valley

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Introduction

Mesolithic Culture is a part of Prehistoric Period and it is followed by upper Palaeolithic and superseded by Neolithic Culture. It is the first culture of Holocene period, starting from 10,000 B.P. In the Holocene period, first time present climate started with winter, summer and rain.

Middle Ganga Valley that is called Gangetic Plain by geologists covers nearly two-third of Uttar Pradesh of India and has been built by the Ganga and its tributaries. It comprises an alluvial tract of Pleistocene and recent deposits of clay and sand. The height of the entire plain area outside the Bhabhar and Terai belts generally ranges between 80 metres and 250 metres. The plain is watered by the Yamuna, the Ganga and its northern tributaries, the Ram Ganga, the Gomati and the Ghaghara.

The Mesolithic Evidence from Middle Ganga Plain

Interesting evidence of Mesolithic Period has come to light in the districts of Pratapgarh, Allahabad and Varanasi in the Ganga Valley. The striking feature of the explored area is the occurrence of horse-shoe or oxbow lakes. These lakes probably represent the abandoned meanders of the Ganga. On the banks of these lakes settled the Mesolithic man as evident from the discovery of a large number of sites of the Mesolithic on their banks.

The lithic industry in the explored area shows three stages as follows:

1. Transitional stage (from Late Upper Palaeolithic to early Mesolithic): The tools of this stage are identical with those recovered from the deposits overlying the Cemented Gravel III in the Belan Valley. The tool types included simple and backed blades, burins, points, scrapers and lunates.
2. Non-geometric microliths: Majority of the Ganga valley sites belong to this stage. Typologically, however, this stage does not seem to differ from the above mentioned first stage as the tool types occurring in this stage are said to be parallel sided and backed blades, scrapers, points and lunates.
3. Geometric microliths: Only a few sites belong to this stage.

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