

## CONTINUATION OF PREHISTORIC CULTURAL TRAITS AMONG THE INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY IN ANGUL DISTRICT OF ORISSA

**Supratim Bhattacharya**

Research Investigator, Cultural Research Institution (C.R.I.)

B.C.W. Department of West Bengal, Kolkata, India.

*supratimanthropology@gmail.com*

**Key words:** Ethno-archeology, Indigenous people, Material culture, Mesolithic culture, Microliths, Prehistoric cultural traits.

### **Introduction**

Orissa has rich cultural heritage of Perihistoric period from Palaeolithic to Chalcolithic period. There is a continuous habitation of the prehistoric people from prehistoric periods. Their behavior and social cultural aspects are reconstructed through the material remains yielded from different sites. There is another method which highlights the same is called ethno-archeology. The indigenous people lived in the area for a long time. They are indigenous in the sense that they utilize more natural resources as they are living very close to the nature. Present paper is an approach to study the ecological and ethnographic parameters to understanding the archeological data. In the present context, main emphasis is given on the Mesolithic culture. Mesolithic period is the earliest post-Pleistocene human culture that occurs before the advent of agriculture. It is a period that bridges the Paleolithic with Neolithic. The people of this period made very small tools known as microliths. Microliths are found from the later upper Paleolithic phase and continues in the

Chalcolithic and even in the historical period. So, according to Sali (1990) "those hic microlithic industries, which belong to the post-Pleistocene times prior to those of Neolithic are only regarded as Mesolithic". The Mesolithic is the most prolific and widely distributed Prehistoric cultural period in the Indian subcontinent. It has been found in a wide variety of geographical situations and ecological habitats. With review of different sites of Orissa, the present work has been carried out in Shigarh in Angul district of Orissa. This is an open air site and the different clusters are distributed over a wide area. The microliths are distributed on the sandy lateritic soil. Total seven grids were made to know the different clusters of artifacts. The geomorphology also studied to know the proper stratigraphic position of the culture. Different indigenous communities like Hos, Juangs are living around the sites. The present paper mainly highlights the continuation of Mesolithic cultural traits among the indigenous people of the area and also vice-versa the behavior of the Mesolithic people

could be reconstructed through the study of these people (Binford 1968).

### **Objectives**

An objective of the present study is to go insight into the behavior of the Mesolithic people lived around the site Shigarh in Angul district of Orissa. The behavior of the Mesolithic people will be reconstructed through the analysis of the artifacts collected from the sites. The reconstructed behavior will be evaluated with the material culture and the behavior of the indigenous people living in the area. There is an approach to study the cultural continuity and also the reconstruction of past human behavior in the light of ethno-archeology.

### **Material and Methods**

The present field work done in Shigarh in Pallahara sub division in Angul district of Orissa. It is very near the town Pallahara. Both extensive and intensive exploration was carried out in the area to know the stratigraphic position of the tools as well as the extent of the culture throughout the area. The indigenous community lived around the area to study the ethnographic background including male/female ratio, education, and economic background of the people. The material culture is studied in depth with proper measurements, material, mode of procurement and also the mode of use. This material culture may highlight the techno-material level of the people to correlate with the Mesolithic cultures of the area. To collect the ethnographic data interview, schedules and observation both participant and non participant were used in the field.

### **Result**

The present study reveals that there is a continuation of the prehistoric cultural traits among indigenous community. They still depend on the hunting-gathering and fishing. These were the main economic resources of the Mesolithic people. The material culture also has similarities with the Mesolithic tools but the material is different. The structure and use are more or less similar, but the raw material is different. The house pattern, hunting and gathering behavior also highlights the past economic behavior of the Mesolithic people. They practice group hunting in nearby jungle with bow and arrow and the hunted animals are shared among them. The most of the implements are procured from the nature except the iron. They lived in more or less same material level, however social level and ideological level has been changed with the time. The present study is important in the sense that the people are living in the area with same ecological setting of the past. So, the influence of the environment with the material culture and the behavior of the people may be reconstructed.

### **Conclusion**

The present study is a preliminary approach. There are number of limitations regarding the study of culture. The culture is not static, however changed through the time. So, it is unbelievable to study the people as in the same techno-economical level of the past. Without ignoring the time gaps the present study is the important to know the past cultural behavior as because there are no other methods to study this cultural phenomenon of the past. Extensive survey is needed to

know the distribution of the culture and study of this community from nearby places to know the variation in different ecological setting.

**References**

- Basa, K. K. and P. Mohanty, 2000, Archaeology of Orissa, Pratibha Prakashan, Delhi.
- Binford, L R 1968, "Post-Pleistocene Adaptation" in New Perspectives in Archeology, L R Binford & S.R. Binford (ed.), Chicago, Aldiane.
- Clark, J.G.D. 1936, The Mesolithic Settlement of Northern Europe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Fagan, B.M. 1991, In the Beginning, an Introduction to Archaeology (Seventh Edition): Harper Collins Publishers.
- Grant, Jim, Sam Gorin and Neil Fleming 2007, The Archaeology Course book; Routledge, London and Newyork.