

The Geographical Surroundings and Development of Cultural Civilization of Mewar

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Abstract - The historical developments in Mewar State were accompanied with cultural and artistic activities leading to provide historic Mewar a prominent place in terms of efforts contributed to the development and preservation of human civilization and especially Indian culture. It is evident on the basis of archeological evidence from excavation in the terrain of morrains, river valleys and rocks that about a million years ago, human began to move from the time of ancient stone age to the pre-historic era of human civilization.

Keywords – Paleolithic civilization, Medpat, Chalcolithic age

Introduction

The state of Mewar has a special place in the historical states of India. In medieval historical contexts, the famous landmass from Mewar's name is mentioned in the Medapaat. Medapat noun is used for Mewar terrain in the historical sources in the sixth century and beyond. Formerly there was more distinction on this land, ie the population of Meo or Mer, so this area was called as Mewar or Medpat.¹

A part of Mewar is still called Meval, which reminds the kingdom of the Mewos in the Deogarh area of Mewar and Ajmer Mewar district, the majority of which has been taken from Mewar. Many scholars count the caste of Mer (Meo, Meda, in Hunas, but the Mer people) describe their abode as Shakdwipi Brahmins from the Shakdwip Shaksastan on the Iranian side, and the name Mer (Mihir) also informs the same. Therefore, it is possible that these castes are followers or descendants of Western satraps (Nagari Pracharini Patrika Part – 2, p. 235)²

Chittorgarh and its adjacent land of Mewar state was called 'Malav Rajya' in the third century. (Nandasa Inscription Vikram Samvat Eeeswi 282.225) 7 miles north of the fort of Chittor are the ruins of an ancient city called Madhyamika and was called the "Nagari" at that time. Several copper coins found from there with inscription in Brahmi script of around the third century BCE, 'Majhimikaya Sivijnapadas' (coinage of the Madhyamika of Shubdesha). From this, it is inferred that Mewar (or the part around Chittor) at that time was famous as Shishibahnam. Later this landpart was called Medapat or Mewar and its ancient name was forgotten by Shibi 'People'. (Nagari Pracharini Patrika Part 2 pg. 334-35)

The inscription of Karanvel, near Jabalpur, describes the Guhilvansi king Hanspal Vari Singh and Vijay Singh of Mewar. In which they have been called the king of "Pragvat". Therefore, 'Pragvat' should be another name for Mewar. In Sanskrit inscriptions and books, the use of "Pragvat name" is found for Porwar Mahajans and they tell their exit from the "PUR" town of Mewar and on the basis of name of Pragvat landmass they have been calling themselves Pragvata Vanshi. (Nagari Pracharini Patrika Part 2, p. 336)

In parallel to the historical developments of Mewar, cultural and artistic activities continued to be conducted in this region and upon analyzing them, it becomes clear that human efforts in this land for the development and preservation of human civilization and especially Indian culture started from very ancient times, flow thereof is going on till the present time. Archaeological evidence from excavation in this terrain testifies the existence of Paleolithic civilization here. Although it is factual that the prehistoric period has been sufficiently long, it can be interpreted on the basis of safe evidence in the rocks, terrains of the morrains, rivers, stone tools and ceramic residues.⁵ Archaeological evidences prove the fact that about a million years ago, humans began to move from the time of the ancient stone age to the prehistoric era of human civilization. (V. N. Mishra - The Pre and Protohistory of Mewar - published in Mewar through the ages, page 1-6) On the basis of the archaeological evidence found so far, the ancient and original history of Mewar (Pre and Proto History) Mewar is divided as follows :-

1. Ancient Stone Age
2. Middle Stone Age
3. Post-Stone Age
4. Copper Stone Age (Chalco lithic age)
5. Iron Age

Prehistoric period: The history of Mewar has entered the historical era (V. N. Mishra – Pre & Proto history of Mewar, Mewar through the ages) through various stages of the development of human civilization, viz Early Stone Age, Mid-Stone Age, Post Stone Age, Copper Stone Age and Iron Age.⁴

1. Ancient Stone Age: - On the banks of many rivers of Mewar, evidences of human history from the Early Stone Age to the chalcolthic period and the Iron Age have been found. Two rivers near Chittorgarh the Gambhiri and Bedach were excavated from bains there of along with the Chambal river basin near Singoli and near Sanita village, were also excavated in its gradient, resulting in availability of choppers (cutting tools), hand axes, cleavers (tearing) tools peelers and scrapers (stone flake schlock tools, peelers and scrapers) etc. S. R. Rao found 19 tools from Spanita, including three choppers, four cleavers, eight scrapers. Lax tools were of the clactonian technique. Thus, Sohan Choppers and Madras lax were found simultaneously. Both types of equipments were also found simultaneously from Bhainsrodgarh and Baroli. (I.A.R. 1953-54 p. 37, 1956-57 p. 5 Bamani, Ruparel). Important prehistoric stone tools have been obtained from parts of the rivers Bamani, Ruparel, Nallas, Bheechod and Parsoli, Bhichod and Parsoli rivers, among which handaxes, choppers and scrapers are prominent. Dr. V. N. Mishra did the discovery work in the valleys of Banas river and its tributaries – Kothari, Khari, Bagan, Bedach, Kadmal and Gambhiri in which the main places of the district Bhilwara are - Hamirgarh, Sarupganj, Mandapia, Bigod, Jahajpur, etc. Archaeologist Dr. V. N. Mishra has labeled these Palaeolithic inhabitants of Mewar as Alien, whose main characteristic of culture has been that of hunting and food collection (Dr. V. N. Mishra - The Pre

and Protohistory of the Badachbasin, South Rajasthan, Poona 1960 p. - 22)⁶

Prehistoric instruments in the Berch Basin were obtained from the following villages - Daroli, Karanpur, Ghimara, Sarjana, Vallabhnagar, Gadariawas, Thakurwa, Ghanet and Nagri. A large number of instruments have been received from Ghanet and Nagri. 123 paleoliths (stone tools) were collected from Nagri (District Chittor) by Archaeological Department and Shri Vijay Kumar of Museum of Jaipur, which has 42 lakh, 15 courses, 30 handaxes, 21 cleavers and 14 choppers. A large number of handaxes, cleavers and choppers have been obtained from Rathanjana, a place on the river Gambhiri and near Nimbahera. The excavation of the Vagan river yielded paleoliths from Hajia Khedi, Beawar, Bhootiya and Champakhedi villages. In fact, in these villages, the sand of the rivers is quite rich in stone tools and equipments have been obtained from the area near of Kadmal river. The place Sigoh Pallielith situated near Nimbahera, on the banks of the Kadmal River is the place of attainment of Sigoh Paleoliths. Paleoliths collected from the valleys of the rivers are made of quartzite. Paleoliths derived from the river Dhanet, Nagri and Gambhir are constituted of refined blue and pink colored quarzite.

Various types of stone-made weapons - tools like cutting tools, handaxes, sawing tools, stone scales tools, peeling-scraping tools etc. which are obtained from the bains of rivers flowing in different parts of Mewar, (Indian Archaeological - A Review: 1953-54 p. 37, 1954-55 p. 58, 1955-56 p. 68, 1956-57 p. 6, 1958-59 p. 42, 1959-60 p. 39, 1961-62 P. 38, 1962-63 p. 8, 1963-64 p. 29) of the design, shape-type and methods of use On the basis of analysis of design and shape thereof, the archaeologists are of the opinion that the major work of the medieval human groups wandering in Mewar was to make rough, impregnated tools of the stone, hunt and collect food for their need. They also used wooden spears and sticks to kill wild animals. They used to eat raw meat of wild deer,

pigs, elephants, Dariyayighoda, and many other (currently extinct) animals (Dr. V. N. Mishra - The Pre and Protohistory of the Bedachbasin, South Rajasthan, p. 22).

2. Middle Stone Age: - In order of continuation of the Acheulean culture, stone equipments have been achieved as a result of excavation on the banks and basins of Gambhiri, Bedach, Nallas, Parsoli, Vagan and Kadmal rivers. First, obtained the equipments obtained by Rao from Gambhiri, Berach, Nallas and Parsoli. Paleoliths were obtained by V. N. Mishra from the valleys of Banas and its tributaries in Bhilwara and Chittor district. Later, some other sites of medieval rock megaliths were discovered in Chittor and Udaipur districts by Sankalia, Miksha, Sundararajan, Sengupta, M. D. Khare etc. (A. I. R. 1954-55 p. 58, 1955-56 P. 68, 1956-57 p.5-7, 1958-59 p. 42, 1959-60 p. 39, 1961-62 p. 38, 1963-64 p. 29-30)⁸ Dr. V. N. By Mishra, did systematic study of the Megalithic artefacts collected from the valleys of Vagan and Kadmal rivers. These rock equipments of wagon, have been collected from Hajia Khedi, Beawar, Bhootiya and Champakheri villages, which reveal the development of the Middle Stone Age civilization after the ancient Stone Age civilization. Archaeologists from the study of Paleoliths derived, from the Berch Basin opined that there is no disruption in the type of equipment between the pre-Paleolithic and the Mesolithic period, because the handcaxes, cleavers, which were made of quartzite stone in the pre-Paleolithic, were made of good quality Ramsekashm and Zesper in the medieval period, although their size is comparatively small.

3. Post-Stone Age: - The tools of post Stone Age are of small size. The equipments first obtained by RAO in 1954-55 from Bichhod, Haripura, Singholi, Balukheda, Badi Achaler, Beawad Bamania, Tara and Kalikunja in Chittor district, which are sharpedged, Nokdar, blades, Lunates trapez made up of and Agate, Quartz, Jesper and Chalcedony etc. Sharp, pointed, perforated weapons have been obtained from Kudias, Deoti, Mangroop of Bhilwara

district. More microlithic locations were discovered in Badi Bedha, Bichdi, Garua, Dabok, Mader, Kanpur, Bijna, Mordai, Gotia and Intali villages of Udaipur district (A.I.R. 1954-55 p. 58, 1955-56 p. 68-69, 1956-57 p. 8, 1957-58 p. 43).

Bagore: - Bagore is located in Bhilwara district on the banks of Kothari river. Here excavation work was done by Deccan College, Poona and Department of Archeology, Rajasthan, this place is very important from the point of view of excavation. From this place important archaeological materials from the Late Stone Age to the Iron Age have been obtained, due to which the work of hunting and collecting food is mainly proved. The people were unaware of the use of utensils. They started living in a permanent residence at one place on the floor made of stones, because food items were easily and abundantly available to them. They were unaware of economic and cultural systems like agriculture and animal husbandry. They used to bury their dead in the enclosure of their place of residence. The head of the dead body was kept in the northwest, and the animal flesh was used to kept with the dead body along with the body. Such remnants of shavotsarga have been found at places like Bagaur, which reveal that the spirit of life or other life after birth was born in them. (Dr. V. N. Mishra - Pre and Protohistory Mewar, Mewar through the ages, p. 5)⁹

4. Copper Stone Period: - After the later Paleolithic period in Mewar, clear residues of New Stone Age (Neo-Lithic Age) have not been available. The post Paleolithic period lasted for a long time and then changes seem to be happening in the chalcolithic era. Gradually, the use of utensils along with weapons and other megalithics started. Low quality handmade utensils were available in the Bagore excavation phase-II.¹⁰ Copper - stone age Archaeological evidences include the remains of agricultural and animal husbandry civilization achieved from the mounds located on the banks of Kothari, Ahar and Banas rivers in Mukhtamaya Bagore, Ahad near

Udaipur and Gilund respectively. There are many such sites associated with the copper - stone age civilization, which are located in the valleys of Banas and its tributaries and extend from Udaipur, Bhilwara and Chittor districts of Mewar region to Ajmer and Tonk districts of Rajasthan.

Ahad culture: - The first excavation work was in Ahad done by R. C. Agarwal, Ex-Director, Department of Archeology and Museums, Rajasthan,¹² but the first experimental, excavation work was done during the princely rule of the state of Mewar, by Pandit Akshay Kirti Vyas, head of the department of archeology and museum department of this state. Under supervision of Shri N. Chakravarti, Chairman, Department of Archeology and Government of India in 1951-52. The results of the excavation work conducted by R. C. Agarwal in the Ahad were very encouraging and about 40 places were discovered by the Archaeological Survey of the India while doing a detailed survey work in the valleys of Banas River, where black and red vessels were obtained. Under the direction of Shri H. D. Sankalia, the excavation work was done by the Government of India in Gillund in 1961-62.

From the pottery available as a result of archaeological excavation in the Ahad region, it is inferred that the people of the Ahad culture were familiar with the art form of making ceramic pottery. Beautiful designs been made on the red and black pots achieved from this place. They used to make big and thick and strong containers store to the grain, cooking clay pots, dishes, bowls and lotus-shaped utensils, and beautiful dishes to keep water. They used to cook them in the fire in such a way that the inner and throat and part of the pot remained black and the outer part remained red.

Copper remnants have also been achieved from Gilund. Both Ahar and Gilund are close to the copper-producing place, so the people of the ancient civilization were aware of copper metal, they knew the methods and

techniques to extract copper from the earth as a raw mineral and cleaned it in furnaces making, pure copper tools and equipments This fact is evidenced by the metalwork furnaces used in Ahar (Dr. V. N. Mishra's Pre and Proto History of Mewar) The excavation work done in Ahar has yielded important information about ancient settlements. The Ahad people lived in mud, stone houses by settling in a fixed place. The roofs of the houses were sloping and supported by bamboo. Big chulhas were used by big families. They produced wheat, barley, rice, millet etc. and ate them. They also reared animals like buffalo, sheep, goat, pig, dog, donkey etc. Meat eating was also prevalent in their time. They kept on increasing the number of their animals. The places from which archaeological evidences have been obtained are Balathal, Khedi, Javar, Gadariawas, Bans, Champakheri, Gillund, Miroli Chhatrikheda, Pahuyan, Marmi, Uncha, Jasama, Kodukota etc. The clay pots obtained from all these places are mainly classified into three groups - 1. Red clay pots, 2. Grey clay pots, 3. Painted black and red clay pots (H. D. Sankalia excavations at Ahad P.216 - 220)¹²

These three clay pottery classes point to the gradual and progressive development of the Ahad culture & civilization and also make it clear that the aesthetic sense developed for the expression of feelings and mental thoughts along with the fulfillment of basic biological needs of life. Which made a substantial contribution in the cultural and artistic development of the Mewar region. The people of Ahad were fully farmers and had knowledge of metallurgy.

6. Iron Age: - The invention of iron brought about a huge change. According to Dr. V. N. Mishra, the evidence of the Aharad iron settlements proves that their existence came after many centuries of the earlier settlements. That is, the human community of iron culture settled in the Ahad region after many centuries of the end of the copper culture. Remnants of iron culture derived from different parts of Mewar land area help in accepting the understanding that before 500 BC in Mewar, the use of iron had started and a

completely well-organized village culture had developed in the Mewar region. In fact, this archaeological fact symbolizes that Mewar also has its own special place and contribution in the course of development of human culture in India.

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