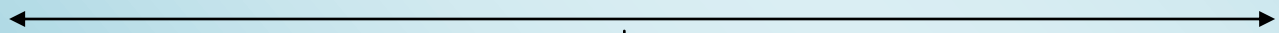


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NEOLITHIC CULTURE OF SOUTH KASHMIR – A REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

The rationale for choosing the topic, 'Neolithic Culture of South Kashmir', is that the attitude and interest of research about the prehistory of Kashmir among the regional institutions, students and scholars is less. The national and international surveys and studies have also come to halt because of the political issues in the region. Moreover, one of the most important reasons of working on this topic is the deteriorating condition of the sites, which need the attention and care from the concerned departments. The literature available regarding prehistory in general and Neolithic culture of South Kashmir in particular is very scarce and for most of the sites is nil, as one can see the passing references or just names of the sites mentioned in the Indian Archaeology-A Review volumes, without any description. So the important purpose of this study is the documentation of the explored Neolithic sites of the south Kashmir region. We live in the materialistic age where wealth is important to survive and land is considered most precious wealth as it cannot be extended after occupying it and increasing population adds fuel to the fire. The exploitation of the land resources for habitations, cultivation, civic amenities, industries, etc. is devastating the archaeological and heritage sites. So I feel it necessary to record these precious sites before they get totally invisible. I have tried to note down the site locations, extensions, and collection of available material remains, etc. after a fresh field survey of the region, so that these sites would be excavated and preserved in near future.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Only two among forty-one enlisted Neolithic sites (Map 1) have been so far excavated; one fully and another partially. Presently the scope of prehistory is widened with more meaningful approaches for understanding the human past, environment, economy, society, behavior and other spheres of life. The fresh survey, recording of sites and surface collection may divert the attention of the archaeologists to excavate these sites to add more features and knowledge to the said period. It will add to the present knowledge of Neolithic culture of Kashmir. The study can help to figure out the changes and the reasons behind them that had occurred in certain traditions of the Neolithic culture of south Kashmir. The study is related to the reasons behind the rise and decay of the Neolithic culture of the south Kashmir in particular and whole valley in general. This study has broad scope as the many dimensions of the culture can be known through interpretation and dating of the excavated material from the unexcavated sites in the region. So the study can through light over the hidden prehistory of south Kashmir.

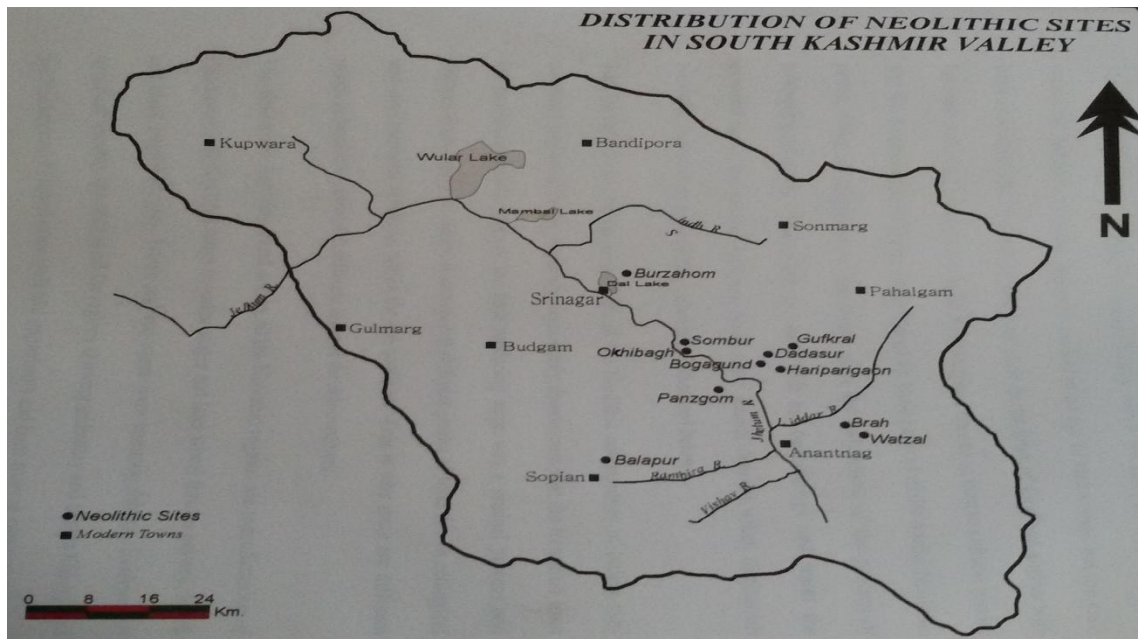
SOURCES OF THE STUDY

The sources of the present study are based on primary and secondary. The primary sources include the field survey, surface collection, mythological concepts of the people and tales, and very scarce literature in the form of

exploration and excavation reports, study of the chance finds, etc. The secondary sources include the works of scholars on prehistoric Kashmir in general and on the period of study in particular.

HYPOTHESIS

The distribution, pattern and number of Neolithic sites located in south Kashmir, the geological formation of the Valley with respect to South-Kashmir, the cultural sequence obtained in the area so far, material remains found there by surface collections and during excavation etc. show that south-Kashmir was the hub of Neolithic activities in Kashmir. Gufkral was earlier site and nucleus of Neolithic sites found in its close vicinity. Keeping in view the geology of the area, the formation of Pir Panjal and Karewas, and the drainage of primaevial lake and formation of river Jhelum and presence of lower Paleolithic artifacts suggest that man lived in the area earlier than any other part of Kashmir.



Map 1. Neolithic Sites in South Kashmir

Cultural Profile of South Kashmir:

The cultural profile of south Kashmir with special reference to the region under study (three districts of Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian) is given as under:

Paleolithic Period: H. de Terra and T.T. Paterson of Yale Cambridge expedition were unable to locate or find any evidence of Paleolithic man in Kashmir valley after their prolonged geological investigations and explorations in 1935. According to them the Anantnag. In 1970, Sankalia accompanied by R.V. Joshi and two others collected nine more tools from deposits attributed to the second through third

continued uplift of the Pir Panjal range and the extreme cold were the two reasons for the apparent absence of the Paleolithic man in the valley. However, Prof. H.D. Sakalia proved their theory wrong, when in 1969 he with R.K. Pant and Sardari Lai of Frontier Circle of ASI discovered early Stone Age (lower Paleolithic) tools including a massive flake and an Abbevillian Axe belonging to second Glacial and second Interglacial respectively at Lidder Valley Pahalgam district

Glacial periods also belonging to the Lower Paleolithic at Pahalgam Anantnag. To Sankalia this collection was earliest in Asia because of their

stratigraphical location and manufacturing technique. From district Shopian of south Kashmir, D.P. Agrawal and his team during their Palaeoclimatic Project on Kashmir found pebble tools belonging to Paleolithic period, comprising choppers, discoid's and scrapers, at Balapur Shopian on the top of terrace of river Rembiara. At Sombur in district Pulwama R.K Pant, Claire Gaillard, S.L. Shali etc. collected 100 artifacts including burins, points and borers, etc. All the tools were attributed to Upper Paleolithic period and dated 20,000 to 18,000 years B.P. But S. L. Shali has termed the presence of such tools in the valley as occurrences not the sites, because there has been a lot of erosion, denudation and human destruction which have destroyed the structural and sequential system of the locations.

Neolithic-Megalithic Period: In 1962-63, with a view to find the geographical extent of the Northern Neolithic culture, Sardari Lal and R.K. Pant of the Frontier Circle of ASI explored the valley of river Jhelum from Anantnag to Pampur (Pulwama), a distance of about 48 kms. They located three sites in Tehsil Tral, district Pulwama including Begagund (Begund), Gufkral and Hariparigom, five in tehsil Pampur, district Pulwama including Olchibag, Pampur, Panzgom, Sempur and Sombur, and Thajwor and Jayadevi-Udar in tehsil Bijbehara, district Anantnag. At all these sites, Neolithic assemblage similar to that revealed at Burzuhom was found. At Kanyalwan Bijbehara and Haribous in Tral, and Borus Avantipora in district Pulwama yielded Neolithic pottery similar to that recovered at Burzuhom. Different Neolithic wares were also found in Pinglish in Tral, Romu in tehsil Pakherpora, Shah Pend in tehsil Pampur in district Pulwama and Balapur in district Shopian.

Neolithic Period at most of these sites was succeeded by Megalithic period, as Menhirs of Burzahom type were found at Begund, Gufkral, Dadsar Hariparigom and Sombur in district Pulwama and at Brah and Waztal in district Anantnag. Very little or no attention has been paid to research and investigate the Megalithic age in the Valley, which dominated the scene for more than five centuries. According to C¹⁴ dates, this period arrived in Kashmir around

1850 B.C. and introduced rice and iron to the valley with a new race in addition to the development in other spheres of the culture.

Early Historic Period: In south Kashmir region, the evidence of the earliest historic period was found at Gufkral preceding Megalithic period without any break. Because of limited excavation no structures were found except floors of that period with wheel made thin bright-red ware, definite evidence of rice, animal bones, stone and bone artifacts, terracotta and iron and copper objects. It has been dated between 1350 B.C. to 700 B.C. The gap between Neolithic period and the advent of Kushanas in about the first century A.D. is filled by the Semthan excavations. Semthan (75°9' E Long. 33°48' N Lat.) is located 44 km south of Srinagar on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway in tehsil Bijbehara, district Anantnag. The site which is situated on the top of the Chakradhara Karewa, an isolated Karewa near village Semthan, has yielded a sequence of six cultures starting from the middle of first millennium B.C. upto the late medieval times (post 13th century A.D.). It included, Period I, Pre-NBP (700-500 B.C.), Period II, NBPW (500-200B.C.), Period III, Indo-Greek, (200 B.C.-beginning of 1st century A.D.), Period IV, Kushana-Huna (100 A.D. to 500 A.D.), Period V, Hindu rule (500-1100 A.D.) and Period VI, Early Medieval. In addition, there are ancient monuments falling within the time bracket of 1st to 13th century A.D. in the region, which include Shrine of Siva Vijeshvara, Martand and Anantnag temples in Anantnag district, Avantismamin and Avantessvara temples, Kakapora temple, Khrew, Luduv, and Siva temples, remains of ancient Stupa in Malangpora and Pampur temple in Pulwama district. These ancient monuments testify the rich history of the region under study.

Description of the Neolithic Sites under Study in South Kashmir:

There are 19 identified Neolithic sites in South Kashmir out of 41 in the whole valley of Kashmir. As the area of study is South Kashmir including district Anantnag, Pulwama and Shopian, it is decided to choose ten sites out of nineteen. which

include Gufkral the only excavated site, Begund, Hariparigom, Dadsar, in tesil Tral, Barus, (Avantipora) Sombur, Olchibag, in tehsil Pampur in district Pulwama, Balapur in district Shopian and Waztal and Brah in district Anantnag; all the nine are unexcavated sites. Below is given the description of the sites under study.

1. Gufkral

Location and Extent of the Site: The site of Gufkral (Latitude 33°54' N and Longitude 75°0' E) is situated 41 KMs to the south-east of Srinagar near tehsil town of Tral in Pulwama district 1644 meters (5393 Feet) above the sea level (Plates I & II). Two roads can approach it; first, Awantipora – Dadsar - Tral road and Kaigam – Tral road, both link roads are right side of National Highway-1A while going from Jammu to Srinagar. The site is adjacent to the village Hardu-Mir's Bonmir side in between two *Nallahs* that join river Jhelum nearly ten Kms to the west. It is located on an extensive deposit of upper Karewa at the top of the archaeological mound which measures 400 meters north-south and 75 meters east-west. Maximum height of the mound from the eastern side is 33 meters and 35 meters from the road level on the western side. On the southeastern slope of the mound are 20-25 houses of potters, who continue their traditional profession of pottery making since Neolithic period. On the slopes of the archaeological mound, 35 Neolithic caves have been found both single and multi-chambered with pillars. Some caves particularly on the southeastern side of the mound are being occupied by the *Krals* (potters) for storage purposes. Some caves are deserted with closed entrances due to the vagaries of weather and some destroyed by the humans. That is why the site has the name Gufkral literally 'Guf' means Cave and 'Kral' means Potter hence potter's caves.

The mound is almost plain at the top with an elevated surface in the middle and used as helipad by army choppers. On the southern end of the mound, a two-roomed school building is built with a separate bathroom. On the middle of the archaeological mound, two water tanks have been built for the

storage and supply of drinking water. The northern side of the site is occupied by army bunkers. All these constructions have disturbed the site largely. On the eastern slope of the site are found menhirs, which are not in their original position. The archaeological site being on the top of the Karewa is surrounded below by the agricultural land in the east, west and the south and village Hardu-Mir in the northern side. Walnut and apricot trees decorate the slopes around the mound. On the northern extension of the mound, a thick deposit of conglomerate composed of limestone, trap and quartzite with boulders is exposed.

Description of the Menhirs at the site: Almost at the center, there are 17 fallen Menhirs on the eastern edge of the mound on the slope. None of these is in its original and upright position and most of them have rolled down to the slope. Because of the ruinous state of the monuments, the present condition of the site is far from complete. There seems no alignment or pattern of their construction. The result of this destruction may be vandalism by the locals may be due to systematic destruction at the hands of an invading enemy because of the colourful history of Kashmir. The first glance of the site did not reveal any signs of recent destruction. To know the exact reason of destruction it is necessary to excavate the site fully particularly nearby the fallen Menhirs. The megaliths are arranged in such a form as to suggest a 'cromlech' type structure. Most of the stone slabs are facing North and northeast lying in the North-south position. As the shape of some stones resemble a snake face the locals believe that there is a snake ghost as presently snakes come out from under these slabs also. The three main slabs on the top of the slope in the North-south direction are lying in a single line with three more exact behind them almost in the same position with two more behind them like a pair of stones sleeping together. At the right side of the front group, there are two slabs in the shape of English alphabet 'T', with one slab in front of it and three scattered backside of it. Two small slabs are almost down the slope and one at the bottom of slope as a bridge on the stream. It can be conjectured the megaliths were erected and arranged in a crescent or semi-circle, as the fallen

slabs show the same pattern with empty space in the middle and menhirs scattering around. Four Stone slabs have two to two and a half inch deep with 2-3 inch diameter round and rectangular cup marks. The length of the slabs vary from 2.50 m to 5.50 m and breadth 1 to 2 m. The longest slab is 6.75 m and 3.15 m breadth and 0.50 m thick. These slabs are fashioned of trap available at the nearest source of the mountain not more than 2 kilometers away from the site.

2. Dadsar

Location and Extent of the Site: Dadsar is located between 33°54'14" North Latitude and 75°5'4" East Longitude, 1620 meters (5314 Feet) above sea level (Plate III). It is a Neolithic-Megalithic site in village Dadsar in tehsil Tral district Pulwama approachable by Awantipora-Tral road. It is 38 kms southeast of Srinagar city, and 10 km right of the river Jhelum in the east of Avantipora. There is a local version about the nomenclature of the village that it was once a 'big spring' locally called '*Dadh*' meaning Big and '*Sar*' meaning spring or lake. It is a small plain valley between the nearby Karewas and hills, which seems to be the factor in choosing it is as their habitat by the prehistoric people after the lake water drained off and settled here as it was appropriate place for cultivation. The site is identified with a straight standing Menhir about a fifty meters south of the village Dadsar. It is located in the middle of the agricultural fields. Neolithic site Gufkral is about one kilometer west of this site. Because of the agricultural activities and lack of exploration records, it was not possible to give an exact extent of the site. Nevertheless, the raising ground around the menhir is 17 by 23.9 meters north to south and 26 by 22.5 meters east to west. There is a small spring sprouting out about twenty steps south of the menhir, which somehow substantiates the legend of village being a big spring in the past. In addition to it there are eight more springs including the one in the center of village known as *Naleen Nag* and rest are in between the agricultural fields. The erect menhir is locally known as *Seiez Kaein*, meaning straight stone. The triangle shaped menhir is 2.80 meters long, 1.40 meters wide at the base, 1.30 meters at

middle and 0.55 meters at the top and it is 10 to 13 inches thick. The plain side of the slab is facing east with an engraving of a Hindu deity which seems a recent work and the slab bears about seventeen cup marks on the same side.

3. Begund

Location and Extent of the Site: The site is located on a Karewa situated on the left side parallel to the village Begund at an altitude of 1640 meters (5380 Feet) between 33°53'53" North Latitude and 75°3'43" East Longitude (Plate IV). The Karewa is about one km long and average 160 meters wide. Village Begund (recorded as Beg-gund in exploration report) is located on the right side of the Awantipora-Dadsar-Tral road nine kms from National Highway 1A from Awantipora and 39 kms from southeast of Srinagar. The village got its name from *Beg* tribe, the first tribe who lived there. The village is drained by river *Chandereh Aarah* throughout the year. The site is located at the southern end in the middle of karewa between almond trees. The height of the karewa near the site is 42 meters from the road level below. The excavated Neolithic site Gufkral is half a kilometre west of this site. *Wastur wan* and *Bosi Bal* are the two hills about three kilometers northeast and east of the site. There is a spring known as *Ameer Sund Nag* and agricultural fields exact at the lap of the Karewa. There is a Menhir at the site with a large quantity of pot shreds and small broken stone boulders. The extent of site according to the concentration of pot shreds and stone flakes is measured in a pentagon as 62.3 meters north to northeast, 53 meters from northeast to south, 61.2 meters from southern point towards west, 42.3 meters from west to northwest and 61.5 meters from northwest to the north. The menhir is in laying position with many small size cup marks. It is 2.82 meters long with a breadth of 0.54 meters at one end, 0.70 meters at the middle and 0.15 meters at the other end. One side of the whole slab is beneath the ground.

4. Hariparigom

Location and Extent of the Site: Hariparigam is a village in tehsil Tral district Pulwama located 10

kms south of the Tral between Dodu Karewa and Amlar Karewa into two parts; Hari and Parigam. The site is located on the Amlar Karewa between North Latitude 33°53'19" and 75°4'19" East Longitude at the altitude of 1638 meters (5374 Feet) above the sea level (Plate V). The village is situated 2 kms east of river Jhelum and Srinagar-Jammu national Highway 1A from Kaigam Awantipora. The village got its name from a spring namely *Hariya* and the singing fairies (*pari* in local language). The site is identified by a good quantity of scattered pot shreds and the Menhir above the Amlar Karewa or *Amlar Wuduer* between the almond and apple trees. The Menhir is locally called *Pari Kaein* meaning stone of fairies. The Karewa is 42 meters in height between village Amlar and Hari-parigom with a background of hills *Kamleh Baal* and *Wasturiwan* in the east and north respectively. The concentration of shreds is more around the menhir, which is in the middle of the 1.5 km Amlar Karewa at the southern end. The site measures 43 by 39 meters and 54.3 by 36 meters. The fish shaped menhir is in fallen position with two rows of 21 small cup marks. The slab is 4.5 meters long with a breadth of 0.55 meters at one end, 0.75 meters at middle and 1 metre at other end and it is 7 inches thick. The site is 3 kms south west of the Gufkral Neolithic-Megalithic site.

5. Sombur

Location and Extent of the Site: Village Sombur is situated on the right bank of river Jhelum between a Karewa and the river, exactly along the Jammu-Srinagar NH1A. The area is famous for its Karewas and Saffron grown on them. The Paleolithic-Neolithic-Megalithic site of Sambur is situated on the Karewa of Sambur village not more than a hundred meters east of the bank of river Jhelum, 17 kms south of the Srinagar city in tehsil Pampur district Pulwama. It is between 33°57'52" North latitude and 74°55'33" East Longitude at an altitude of 1596 meters (5236 feet) above sea level. The potsherds and the Menhir are located on the top of the mound measuring 33 by 29 meters and 36 by 28 meters. On the mound, now water supply tanks are erected. Earlier the Paleolithic and Neolithic artifacts as surface collections and the elephant tusk have

been recovered near the mound on the Karewa. The menhir looks like a sleeping horse which a flat slab is laying on the ground. It measures 2.88 meters in length, with a width of 0.70 metre at one end and 1.10 metre at middle and 0.30 metre at the other end. Locals believe that it was a horse of a Muslim saint, who turned into a monolithic stone because of disobedience to his master. There are a number of old caves, scooped into the west slope of the Karewa.

6. Olchibag

Location and Extent of the Site: Olchibag is village 20 kms southeast of Srinagar city about 15 kms north of Pulwama district (Plate VI). The site is situated on the 35 metre high Karewa near the village between North Latitude 33°57'42" and 74°56'19", 1599 meters (5246 Feet) above the sea level. The site is 500 metre from east to west and 90 metre north to south marked by the scattered pot shreds and the caves and Gufkral like dwelling pits, which are in a ruinous condition in the slopes of the Karewa. The age-old lake deposits can be still seen in the form of lacustrine strata at the gullies formed by rainwater and the nearby agricultural land, which show that how Neolithic man lived on the Karewas, and after draining out the water, used the land for cultivation.

7. Panzgam

Location and Extent of the Site: The village Panzgam is situated 2 km west on the left bank of river Jhelum from NH1A at Sangam Bijbehara and about 32 km southeast of Srinagar in district Pulwama. The site is located in the west side of the village on a 30 metre high Karewa between almond trees near a school at the lap of the Karewa. Because of cultivation on the Karewa it is almost impossible to identify the site, however the dispersed but scarce pot shreds help in identifying it. The site is located at an altitude of 1623 meters (5324 Feet) above the sea level between 33°50'50" North Latitude and 75°1'28" East Longitude. Because of the cutting and dredging of the soil near the Karewa it has yielded a good quantity of pottery shreds but mostly it seems they belong to historical period.

8. Brah

Location and Extent of the Site: Brah is about 9.6 km east of Martand temple and 19 km north of district Anantnag. A rocky hill is standing near the Karewa without any vegetation. The site is situated between 33°44'32" North Latitude and 75°17'37" East Longitude at a height of 1726 meters (5662 Feet) above the sea level. There is a megalithic complex consisting of more than half a dozen menhirs lying dispersed on a sloping Karewa just north of the outskirts of the village Brah. The menhirs are located so wide apart (average 200 meters) from each other that no coherent plan can be made out. Shreds of gritty red ware were found during the exploration by T.N. Khzanchi and the team in 1969-70, but I could not find any piece of pottery related to the period of study.

9. Waztal

Location and Extent of the Site: Waztal is a site situated in the agricultural land west of village Halwani about 12 kilometers north of Mattan spring and 22 kms north of district headquarter Anantnag (Plate VII). There are 20 Menhirs lying scattered in the fields. Local folk believe that these stones are the bride and bridegroom with the guests and a horse who turned into monolithic stones (in local language *Wateis*) because of their bad deeds. That is why the site is known as Waztal, because a standing Menhir is believed as a cook or chef serving the feast turned into a monolithic stone, who is called *Wazeh* in local language. The site is 45 metre north to south, 46 meters south to west, 39 meters west to north and 42 meters from north to east keeping in view the scattered menhirs. It is located at 33°48'4" North Latitude and 75°16'24" East Longitude, 1651 meters (5412 Feet) above the sea level.

Description of the Megaliths:

During the present field survey of the site, it was possible to record only 12 megaliths because the rest were covered by the paddy crops. All the menhirs are in lying position except one standing at the south corner of the site. It is like geometrical 'Trapezium' shaped megalith, broad at the top and narrow at

bottom, which is 2.85 meters long, 2 meters wide at top, 1.60 metre at the bottom and 11 inches thick. There are two smaller slabs 3 m south of this standing stone in a streamlet. 4 m south of the standing Menhir, there are 4 megaliths in a row one after other with their ends touching each other and a parallel line of 2 stones towards the north of them forming like an 'Avenue'. There are two slabs outside the two lines of menhirs. It gives an idea that the megaliths might have been in a pattern and formed an alignment. One stone is half buried under the soil in falling position about 80 meters west of these menhirs. Rest of the stones were under the paddy crop, which according to the owner of land are scattered in the fields in the east and the west of the above mentioned complex. The longest slab among these is 4.28 meters, 0.54 metre wide and 0.74 metre thick. The smaller one is 0.75 m long, 0.51 m wide and 0.32 m thick. The average length of the menhirs is 3 m, with mean breadth 1.2 metre. Because no excavations have been done here, there is lack of information whether these are burials or not. However, the pot shreds point us towards the fact that Neolithic-Megalithic people lived here.

10. Balpora

Location and the Extent of the Site: Balpora is the only Paleolithic-Neolithic site so far explored on the exposed Lower Karewa or Hirpur formation on the left bank of river Rambiarra in village Balpur or Balpora in district Shopian. The site is located on the mean height of 40 meters above the Karewa at 33°45'16" North Latitude and 74°52'40" East Longitude at the altitude of 1956 meters (6417 Feet) above the sea level. The village is famous for the folk tale of *Hemal* and *Nagraj* and there are two springs associated with the two names commemorating the love story of the two serpents. The site is situated between the two springs on a mound and can be reached by a link road from the Shopian-Puwama-Srinagar main road. It is 51 kilometers south of Srinagar and 21 kms from Pulwama. The shreds are present on a mound measuring 350 meters in length and 288 meters breadth based on trench marks dug by Department of Geology and Geophysics University of Kashmir.

However, the actual site is ambiguous, but the pottery shreds made it possible to identify it.

In addition to these sites, there are other sites in the region, which belong to the area under study, which include, Barus, Sempora, Pinglish, Haribous, Kanailwan, Thajwor, Pampur, Shahpend, Romu, JayadeviUdar etc. Most of these sites yield surface collections in the form of pottery shreds, stone flakes and dwelling caves and pits.

The Surface Evidences and the Excavated Evidences from the Sites

Excavated Evidences:

Material culture or artifacts and other concrete things left by past cultures are an important and authentic source for reconstructing history of a particular time and space. Its study helps us to systematically explore the linkage between the construction of social identities and the production and use of culture. Material culture after exploration, collection, identification and analysis is documented to know the relationship between artifacts and social relations of the people lived in past. It acts as text from which the ideas about the structure of the past can be inferred. For prehistory material culture in the form of stone and bone artifacts, pot shreds, skeletal remains, various types of ornaments, dwelling structures etc. represent the settlers of the period. The study of this material culture helps us to know about the life of the man lived in past and his relations with his surroundings.

There is enough archaeological data available for the study of the Neolithic culture of South Kashmir, The old used materials, pottery, artifacts and the objects recovered from these sites give us ample information of these sites. As mentioned earlier that among the ten sites under study only one namely Gufkral is excavated, which have yielded good amount of archaeological data during excavation, but the rest of sites were just explored and identified as Neolithic sites and have yielded

surface evidences in the shape of pot shreds. The details of the material evidences that have been

collected from these sites during explorations or excavations are given as under.

Variety of polished stone and bone implements have been found at Gufkral during excavations, which include stone Celts, ring stones, pounders, pestles, points, polishers, sharpeners, saddle querns, spindle whorls, sling balls etc. The bone tools comprise of points, arrow-heads, awls, scrapers, long borers, needles, harpoons, and splinters of long bones of animals with well polished tips. A few copper implements, semi-precious beads of stone, carnelian, paste, steatite, terracotta, bone, cowrie shells and comma or tigers nail shaped pendent on light green jade were also recovered there. In addition, handmade pottery in different fabrics, colours, shades and shapes were also found. The pottery mostly comprised of handmade Coarse Grey, Black Burnished, Grey Burnished, Combed wares and wheel turned Black Burnished and Fine Gritty red wares. The pottery were decorated with cord and mat impressed flat bases, reed and straw impressions on body to create rough surfaces, pinched designs, rough and oblique designs on the necks and body of the vessels.

The nine sites other than Gufkral are all unexcavated and no stone, bone or metal implements have been found during the explorations. Only ceramic distribution has been reported by the explorers from these sites. Hariparigom, Begund, Olchibag, Sombur and Panzgom have yielded Coarse Grey, Fine Grey, Burnished, Combed and Gritty red wares. 30–50 cm long stone Celts belonging to Neolithic period were found at Sombur. There is no report of any material remains from Dadsar. From Waztal and Brah pieces of gritty red ware have been found. From Balapur in district Shopian huge chopper like discoid core was found with Burnished, Coarse Grey and Gritty ware.

Surface Collections during Field Survey of the Sites:

All the sites under study cannot be identified, because of the destruction of the sites by humans, vagaries of weather and lack of attention by the archaeology department. So it was difficult to found a good amount of the physical remains of the people living there in the past. At the same time these sites

are unexcavated and added to the difficulty. However, the surface evidences that were collected during the field survey are as under.

From Gufkral, a stone Celt, three ring stones of different sizes, a bone pendant, an adze, some broken neoliths, twelve beads of carnelian, agate, etc., a circular stone about 4 inch thick with 10 inch diameter 1 inch depressions at both sides at the centre, and some unfinished stone tools were collected. In addition skeletal remains of a human body lying north-south position was also recorded. The pot shreds of different wares and fabrics were also collected which can be seen in abundance there. From Balapora a stone ball was recovered with pot some shreds during the field survey of the site. From rest of the sites pot shreds of different wares were collected which are given in

Table 3.

Key + = Present, - = Not present

Description of the Artifacts Found during Field Survey:

S.No.	Site Name	Burnished	Coarse Grey	Combed	Fine Grey	Gritty Red
1	Gufkral	+	+	+	+	+
2	Hariparigam	+	+	+	+	+
3	Begund	+	+	+	+	+
4	Dadsar	+	+	+	+	+
5	Olchibag	+	+	+	+	+
6	Sombur	+	+	+	+	+
7	Panzgom	+	+	+	+	+
8	Brah	-	-	-	-	-
9	Waztal	+	+	+	+	+
10	Balapora	+	+	-	-	+

The tool assemblage of the Neolithic Kashmir collected from the excavated sites is mainly represented by the stone and bone implements with some miscellaneous objects of other materials. Same

type of remains of the period has been collected during the field survey of the sites under study. A brief description of the material remains collected during the field survey from the sites of the Neolithic period used by the Neolithians of South Kashmir is given as under. The names and functions of these tools are determined on the basis of morphological resemblance and parallels from modern tools and not by using any scientific reasoning.

A Stone Celt:

A polished stone Celt or a ground axe of shale stone, about 18.6 cm long, 58.52 mm broad and 40.71 mm thick at centre and 17.16 mm at the cutting edge was found at Gufkral. (Plate VIII, No. 1) It is roughly cylindrical in appearance and broader at the cutting edge, narrower at the butt end and squarish or elongated in form. The broader surface invariably meets in a gentle slope to form a median cutting edge. The lateral sides are thick, square and tapering in a gentle slope. The butt end is round. It seems that the Celt was not hafted because of its size and weight. It might have been held free hand and was intended for heavy work. The possible purposes of the Celt were cutting, chopping, dressing, shaping, splitting etc. of the things. The Celt was recovered in a cave.

Bone Pendant:

A 4.91 mm long, 22.7 mm broad bone pendant of animal bone with rounded heads tapering towards the centres with 18.99 mm thickness was found at Gufkral (Plate VIII, No. 2). It seems a joint bone of an animal and a hole had been pierced through one end for hanging purpose. It might have been a neck ornament used as a pendant. Besides the rough hole no other work has been done on it.

Disc with circular Hole:

Item No. 3 on Plate VIII is a half or semi-circle disc with a circular hole. It has been polished and designed from a shale stone with 18.74 mm whole. It is thick at centre thinner while moving towards its edges. Its both faces are finely polished and forming cutting edge all along the outer periphery. The artifact is 126.69 mm long, 38.82 mm broad at the centre and 12.8 mm thick at middle. It might have

been used as spindle whorl or a harvesting tool. A similar half of the disc was found during excavation of the site in 1981-82. This half was found at the slope of the mound at Gufkral.

Spindle Whorl or Mace Head:

It is a ring stone with 46.63 mm diameter and 11.38 mm thick made from shale stone (Plate VIII, No. 4). It has a perforation or a hole at the middle creating depressions at the centre on both sides. It is not much grounded. It might have been used as spindle whorl intended to act as a fly wheel on a spindle, giving momentum to its rotation. It gives the evidence of spinning during Neolithic period. It also seems that it might have been hafted through the centre perforation and plugged to hold tight while using as harvesting tool. In this operation it might have been mounted on a long stick which was struck against the standing crop and its edges ensured the harvesting of agricultural produce. As a mace head it might have been used as a powerful offensive weapon. This tool was found near the menhirs in Gufkral.

Half Ring Stone:

A half ring stone measuring 101.06 mm in length, 42.78 mm breadth and 28.13 mm thick was also found at Gufkral (Plate VIII, No. 5). It has a 22.32 mm perforation at the centre. It is broken at one end and is not polished on other side, revealing its formative stage. Such thick type of ring stones might have been used as weight units for digging sticks.

Stone Ball:

A stone ball was recovered from Balapora site (Plate VIII, No. 6). It is smooth sling ball almost spherical in shape. It was possibly used as loom weight for the weaving of cloths. It might have been used as net sinkers during the fishing operations, as it was found near the stream originating from a spring. A big pounder and a big quern were also seen during the survey in the spring.

An Adze:

An Adze made from shale stone was found at Gufkral. It is thin, cylindrical and made on a flake.

One of its faces is broad, flat and sharp, while the other is broken. The cutting edge sharp and over all finely ground. It is smaller and lighter than a Celt. It resembles with the present day carpenter's metallic adze but without haft. Neolithic people had used it for slicing, chipping, dressing the wood and digging the earth. It is 75.20 mm long, 43.72 mm broad and 11.72 mm thick at middle. It was found outside a cave at Gufkral.

Beads:

A bead is a small decorative object of different minerals chiefly of rocks in various shapes, sizes and colours. It is the artistic embellishment of the hard work of the craftsmen to convert it into an ornament. In almost every period of history people used things to adorn themselves and decorate their surroundings, because of their aesthetic sense. Same was the case with the prehistoric people, who wore ornaments of different materials available as adornments. No doubt simplicity of the ornament was the general rule of the prehistoric people. Beads were one of the ornaments used by them for decoration, beautification and to counteract the evil of planetary positions. Beads are of three types i.e., non-stone, semi-precious and precious stone beads, depending upon the availability of material used in manufacturing in different regions. Beads are of different shapes like disc, spherical, cylindrical, barrel, tube, globular, bicone etc. So for the Neolithic culture of South Kashmir is concerned we have found twelve beads of semi-precious stones during field survey of the sites. Below is given the description of the beads.

Description of the Beads:

Twelve Beads of Carnelian, Agate, Chert, and Jasper were collected from the archaeological mound of Gufkral site (Plate IX). These beads were scattered over the top of the mound near the recently constructed water tank where about 30 feet each two trenches have been dug as the water reservoirs. It suggests that the beads were under soil, which came to the surface during the digging of trenches. The description of the beads is given as under.

Carnelian Beads:

Beads Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 on Plate IX are beautiful translucent red color carnelian beads. Carnelian is chalcedony that contains iron oxide formed in the vicinity of volcanic rocks. It is mainly red or brown-red in colour.

Bead No. 1 is a standard long cylinder with two convex ends carnelian bead. It has a hole pierced in the middle with smooth polished body. It is 13.57 mm long and 15.30 mm broad.

Bead No. 3 is a short cylinder carnelian with two convex ends. It is 12.2 mm in length and 14.14 mm broad. Both the beads have two round edges each to give the beads convex shape.

No. 5 is a circular carnelian bead with plain ends measuring 9.22 mm X 12.83 mm. No.7 is a pure circular carnelian bead which is 7.87 mm long and 8.59 mm diameter.

Bead no. 8, which is 9.08 mm long and 9.90 mm broad is also a circular carnelian with wider hole as compared to Nos. 5 and 7.

No. 9 is a long convex bicone four faced carnelian bead with squarish ends and four longitudinal edges and one edge at the bulging centre of the bead. It is 17.55 mm long and 9.15 mm broad and 9.16 mm thick. No. 10 has 13.22 mm length and 7.65 mm breadth. It is a circular long truncated convex bicone carnelian bead.

Bead No. 12 is a circular standard truncated concave bicone carnelian bead with 12.03 mm length and 9.01 mm breadth at centre.

No. 11 is a long truncated convex cone carnelian pendent with its hole vertically towards the small end. It is 14.32 mm long and 8.30 mm thick at the centre.

Other Beads:

On plate IX, bead No. 2 is a circular white agate bead with black bands or eye bead. Agate is microcrystalline variety of silica found in various rocks. Its length is 12.60 mm and breadth is 15.59 mm.

Bead No. 4 on Plate II, is a disc shaped milky chert bead with 18.67 mm diameter and 7.62 mm thickness. Chert is a fine-grained silica rich micro

fibrous sedimentary rock. Earlier no bead of such material has been recovered from Gufkral during excavations.

Item No 6 on plate II is a dark-reddish roughly square shaped Jasper bead. It is 19.46 x 12.85 x 16.67 mm bead with some small depressions. Jasper is an impure variety of silica and a form of chalcedony.

Earlier a hoard of 1400 such beads was obtained from Burzuhom and a few from Gufkral. The beads resemble in shape to the beads of Indus culture and these might have been acquired from Harappa. As Harappan people transported Alabaster and Lead from the valley through upper Jhelum river valley. Similarly the Neolithians of Kashmir would have transported beads from Harappan sites. In Kashmir fine agates and carnelians occur to the north of the Pangong Lake in the Rudok district of Ladakh. But, there is no evidence of contact with this region during Neolithic period. So it is obvious that these beads are not a local production because of the absence of the raw material in the region. There is also no evidence of bead manufacturing at any of the sites excavated or explored because not a single unfinished bead has been found. But at the same time the presence of the beads at the Neolithic sites point towards the fact that there were trading activities going on; the economic condition of the people was good; people were having sense of glamour and aesthetics and were not living in a closed society. They had impact of the neighboring and foreign cultures as that of Harappan culture.

Pottery:

The vessels or utensils made of clay and designed in different shapes and sizes with some purposes or usage is known as pottery. It is also known as ceramics derived from a Greek word 'Keromas' meaning 'burned stuff' or 'earthen ware'. The pottery being common man's utility since prehistoric times gives us enough information about his daily life and the society he lived in. Man has initially expressed his feelings, aesthetics and art through different means but pottery is one of the impressive means of his communication of ideas. Study of the prehistoric pottery helps us to know the society,

culture, economy, and sometimes religious beliefs of the people. It throws light on the petrology, engineering skills, artisanship, and technological perfection of the people of that time. Archaeologically pottery is conceptualized interpretative tried suggesting that in the context of human social evolution. It has been considered as the alphabet of archaeology and archaeological history and an indicator of a country's civilization. It helps to reconstruct the history of a particular time and space as it is non-perishable in nature and its fragments are sufficient to indicate the age or chronology and the various cultural stages of the bygone societies.

Neolithic Pottery of South Kashmir:

Most of the Neolithic sites of south Kashmir have been identified and located on the basis of presence of the pot shreds of that period as pottery is sufficiently available throughout the Neolithic sites of Kashmir. A good number of earthen vessels and pot shreds of different colors, fabrics, shapes, forms and sizes have been recovered from the excavated Neolithic sites of Kashmir. Same is the case with unexcavated Neolithic sites of Kashmir. During the field survey of the sites under study pot shreds of different fabrics were collected from the sites. On the basis of color, texture and fabrics these pot shreds have been recognized of four types viz., Coarse thick grey ware, Fine Grey ware, Black burnished ware and Gritty red ware. The shreds of the different wares were found almost at every site but in small fragments except a few big pieces. Hence, it is not possible to draw the shapes of the pots from these shreds. Therefore, these pot shreds have been discussed in general on the basis of color, surface treatment, slip, texture etc. Neolithic pot shreds from four sites have been choosed and their description is given below (Plates X, XI, XII and XIII).

PLATE X:

Item Nos. 1 to 6 in Plate X display the pot shreds collected from the Neolithic Site Gufkral. No 1 is the shred of a shallow bowl with straight flared out body in thick medium fabric Burnished Grey ware made

on slow wheel. It has featureless rounded rim. The diameter of the mouth of the bowl is 20.5 cm.

No. 2 is the shred of a globular bowl in dull red ware with black patches in medium fabric. The top portion of the rim is flattish concave with outward projecting narrow ledge. The low neck portion has nail pinch designs which seems to have been executed by a youngster considering the curvature of the nail. The diameter of the mouth of the bowl is 20.5 cm.

No. 3 is the neck and mouth portion of a relative straight sided pot in dull red ware of medium fabric made on slow wheel. The diameter of the mouth is 19.5 cm. The out curved featureless rim has rounded edge.

No. 4 is the neck and mouth portion of a coarse fabric dull red ware pot with out-flared rounded rim. The neck portion has gritty exterior finish which seems to have extended on the body. The diameter of the mouth of the pot is 26.5 cm.

No. 5 is the bottom portion of a black slipped ware having a hallow disc base in fine fabric.

No. 6 is the mouth portion of a pot in dull red ware of medium fabric having evidence of burnishing on the surface. The out-flared mouth is uniformly thick with rounded edge which seems to have been finished by hand. The diameter of the pot at mouth is 23 cm.

PLATE XI:

From No. 1 to 6 of Plate XI the shreds have been collected from Neolithic site Waztal of South Kashmir. The description of the items is given as under.

No. 1 is a piece of wide conical bowl in coarse dull red ware with uneven exterior finish. The diameter of the mouth of the vessel is 24.5 cm. the edge of the rim is gradually narrowed to give a rounded finish. It is slow wheel made pot.

No. 2 is the bottom portion of a pot in medium grey fabric having burnished finish on the both the inner

and exterior surfaces. It is a wheel throne pot with a low disc base.

No. 3 is a pottery piece of a flared out rim of a pot in dull red medium fabric. The featureless rim has rounded finish.

No. 4 is a portion of an out-flared mouth of a big pot in medium fabric. The featureless rim has flattish termination at the edge. It is dull red ware.

No. 5 is the mouth portion of a pot with extremely out-flared rim made of medium red fabric, but coated with a slip that has given it grayish lustrous smooth finish. The gradually thickness of rim portion has rounded finish.

No. 6 is the neck portion of a pot with slightly slanting straight neck made in medium red fabric. The pot is given grayish slip giving it lustrous smooth surface.

PLATE XII:

Plate XII show the pot shreds collected from the Neolithic site of Sombur. Below is given the description of the pottery fragments collected there during field survey.

No. 1 is the mouth portion of a dull red ware in medium fabric with flared-out rounded rim with reduced thickness towards the exterior. It is a wheel made but the exterior has gritty appliqué finish. The diameter of the mouth of the pot is 22.5 cm.

No. 2 is a grey ware shred of a slanting straight sided mouth portion of a pot in medium fabric with rounded featureless rim. The diameter of the rim of the pot is 39 cm.

Item No. 3 of the Plate is a rim portion of a dull red ware in medium fine fabric with grayish slip on the interior which has turned reddish on exterior. The Diameter of the mouth of the pot is 45 cm. The rim of the pot is rounded with thumb thick section having slightly slanting profile on the exterior.

No. 4 is the mouth portion of a dull red ware with flared-out rounded featureless rim in medium fabric. The diameter of the mouth of the pot is 21 cm.

No. 5 is the mouth portion of a pot in dull red ware of medium fabric with featureless flared-out rim in medium fabric.

No. 6 is the mouth portion of a dull red ware with straight curved sides having drooped down exteriorly extended rim in medium fabric. The diameter of the mouth of the pot is 19.5 cm.

PLATE XIII:

Item nos. 1 to 6 of Plate IV are the pot shreds belonging to the Neolithic site of Hariparigom in south Kashmir. The description of the pot shreds is gives as under.

Item No. 1 of the Plate XIII is a mouth portion of a fine red ware having near horizontal flared-out rim with slightly elevated and having out-ward double indent exteriorly. The inner portion of the rim also has deep indented line near the rim. The shred is given thin grayish red slip exteriorly. The diameter of the mouth of the pot is 14 cm.

No. 2 is the mouth portion of a hand-made Grey ware with slightly out curved rim. The rim portion is unevenly finished.

No. 3 is the mouth portion of a Grey ware in medium fine fabric with extremely flared-out rounded featureless rim, which is thinned down gradually towards the exterior. The neck portion is given slanting line decoration.

No. 4 is the bottom portion of a dull red ware in fine fabric with rounded bottom and with disc base.

Item No. 5 is a shred of a fine grey ware with exterior basket impression of fine reed. No. 6 is the shred of a grey ware in medium fabric containing basket impression exteriorly.

From the above description of the pot shreds from the Neolithic sites of south Kashmir we come to know that the pottery of the Neolithic culture of

Kashmir belongs to two technological classes i.e., medium coarse and medium fine fabrics in grey, black, and dull red ware. Coarse fabric is characterized by crude and handsome pottery in which clay used for manufacturing the pottery is not well levigated. And the different colors are because of uncontrolled firing. In fine fabric the clay used for manufacturing of pottery is well levigated, refined by elutriation and of small particles. Burnished grey ware, red ware and shades of these wares like black, ashy, buff etc. are main wares of this fabric. Both handmade and mostly slow wheel throne pottery was found at most of the sites under study. While examining the shreds it seems strip and coil techniques were utilized for the production of pottery. Handmade pottery could have been given shapes by pressing hollow ball of clay in thumbs and then thinning thin walls between the thumb and finger, specifically in shaping the small sized vessels. The neck and rims of the pots were made in various forms and mostly the pots were having disc bases. The main decoration types found on the pot shreds are nail impressions, basket impressions, grass and reed impressions, mat impressions, ridging and notches on the rims and the necks of the vessels. There is no evidence of colored or painted pottery from any of the sites. The shreds of mouth portions of the vessels show that the pots were having flaring rims, short curved and straight long necks and wide and open mouths.

The virtue of the Neolithic pottery of south Kashmir lies in the fine mastery of form and style. The above given description of the shreds in plates X to XIII suggest that Neolithic people produced pottery of different shapes and sizes and for various purposes. The main uses of the pottery could have been storage of various things, cooking, dishes used while eating etc. It is obvious that the Neolithic folk of south Kashmir knew the skillful craft of pottery production, which had gone through different stages of pot making. However, what are lacking are the evidences for substantiating the different stages of experiments in pottery production. While as the handmade and wheel throne, pot shreds in different fabrics and colors clearly show that the Neolithic

pottery of south Kashmir belonged to different sub-cultural phases and stages of Neolithic period.

CONCLUSION

Neolithic Period was that stage of human history which we can call 'modern age of prehistory' because, no doubt, presently we live in the age of technology, but the main basic necessities and demands of living are same in the form of food and shelter with the same sources. Therefore, the single most profound change in human cultural history was the domestication of plants, which altered the basic patterns of life during Neolithic period. Other developments in the culture were the bi-products of the process of cultivation of food. Man came to terms with his surroundings and learnt the exploitation of the natural resources. Some other general features which distinguish Neolithic Period from its preceding cultures are given as under.

The survey of cultural assemblage of the Neolithic communities of Indian sub-continent presented in the preceding pages amply demonstrates that the transition from the hunting-gathering stage to the food producing stage was a gradual process and differed from region to region. It emerged at different points of time due to ecological and environmental variations within the sub-continent and for different time periods. That is why there are different Neolithic cultures in different area of the sub-continent with different traits.

The similarities that were found among all the Neolithic regions are manufacturing of Hand-made and sun dried later kiln fired wares in earlier stages and later wheel throne pottery. Black and black burnished, grey, brown and red-wares were common fabrics prepared. Evidences of structural remains were seen in all the regions showing sedentary and settled life style of the Neolithians. Polished stone tools and implements and bone tools at some places was another common feature of these cultures. Disposal of the dead with some regional peculiarities were also witnessed almost in all Neolithic regions.

Almost all the sites of the different regions have yielded the remains of wheat, barley, Lentil, Pea and

rice as the source of food. Faunal assemblages in the form of bones dominated by wild animals in the lower levels and gradually leading to the domesticated ones in the upper Neolithic levels show that the Neolithic people ate meat and were animal hunters and herders. It is supported by the evidences of butchering, skinning and filleting marks on the animal bones.

The other interesting observation about the Neolithic cultures of India is that each Neolithic region maintained their own unique and distinctive character delineated by varieties of pottery types, tools and tool typology and techniques, organized economy, etc. But, at the same time all these cultures maintained cultural contacts with their counterparts in the neighboring areas or within the region. This interchange of ideas, exchange of skills and swapping of material culture was then the balanced need of the both sides.

In terms of chronology of the Neolithic cultures of Indian sub-continent, there are variations in the C¹⁴ dates given by the different experts. The chronological time-spreads vary not only from one Neolithic region to another region but different levels within the sites in the region. To Sankalia, the Neolithic era of India dates from 3500 B.C. to 2000 B.C. D.P. Agrawal in 'The Archaeology of India' has given detailed chronological time periods of the Neolithic cultures of India. On the basis of half-life value of 5730 years, the radiocarbon dates show that the Neolithic culture at Kili Ghul Mohammad started around c.3500 B.C. and according to Habib's *Prehistory*, Mehargarh pre-ceramic period began in 7000 B.C. to mature Neolithic culture 4000 B.C. The Northern Neolithic represented by Kashmir has a bracket of c.2400-1500 B.C. The Chirand in Bihar started around c.1600 B.C., while as the Southern Neolithic time-spread is confined to c.2500 to 1000 B.C. Hand-made ceramics and rice cultivation was done in Period I in Eastern Neolithic dates between 2500-2000 B.C. Vidhyan Neolithic culture began in c.3500 B.C. and continued till 1200 B.C.

The present study titled 'Neolithic Culture of South Kashmir' was intended to full exploration and

documentation of the unexcavated Neolithic sites of South Kashmir region accompanied by the surface collections. After going through the available literary sources, field survey and analysis of the surface collections, the general features of the Neolithic culture of south Kashmir that came forward are given as under.

Geologically, it is proved that due to the rise of the Pir Panjals around four million years ago uplifted and folded the lake sediments and shifted the lake to the Himalayan flank. The rise of the range continued till the final drain out of the Primaeval lake around 85,000 years B.P. The point here is that the Karewas in the Southern Part of Kashmir were first exposed and became the abode of early man. As the earliest Paleolithic tools in Asia were recovered in the Lidder Valley and Sombur of South Kashmir region also justify that the Neolithic people of the region were their successors and hence these Neolithic sites are earliest in the valley.

The Neolithic sites are mainly located in the areas of high elevation between 1550 to 1650 meters above sea level, on the Karewas, which suggest that the water was not fully drained out of the valley or the land could have been swampy, hence inefficient for the cultivation and the Neolithians might have done their cultivation on the Karewa beds or terrace cultivation. It is substantiated by the distribution pattern of the sites which show a preference for the elevated areas for both settlements and the terrace farming as is done presently on these Karewas. All the sites are located close to the water sources, which might have been utilized for drinking water, farming, and fishing and may be for transportation. In other words, all the sites are mainly located on the banks of river Jhelum and other streams. And all the sites are near the hills with the availability of rocks as raw material for tool manufacturing and forests for food gathering, hunting and cattle rearing.

The occurrence of the Neolithic pottery on the surface of the sites in the region of South Kashmir, indicate the site formation process and possible use of associated tools in the region. The number of sites demarcates the region as a potential area for the

domestication of both plants and animals. Unfortunately, all the sites are unexcavated except Gufkral, so much less is known of the subsistence, environment and ecological transformations of these Neolithic Sites. Making subsistence mode of the Gufkral as the base of our evidence we can say that the people who lived in other Neolithic sites near it were agriculturalists and animal herders. The distance between the sites from one or other ranges from one to ten kilometers except Balpora, which suggests that there were demographic changes and increase in the population. All the sites are near or around the Gufkral, with almost same pottery types, points towards the fact that the people migrated from Gufkral to the other nearby places. It also seems that the skill of pottery making during the period under reference spread from Gufkral to its nearby sites including Begund, Dadsar, Hariparigam etc. as is supported by the features of the pottery found there.

The recovery of various Neolithic stone tools, bone pendent and fractured bones of a human body and pottery fragments of various fabrics and colors testify the presence of Neolithic man and Neolithic activities associated with him. It is substantiated by the presence of dwelling pits and caves of the period. The presence of this material culture points towards the fact that Neolithic people of south Kashmir were good craftsmen and practiced the art of pottery and tool manufacturing.

The recovery of the semi-precious beads of carnelian, agate and chert from the same site are not found locally and resemble with that of Harappan beads, attest that the Neolithic people of south Kashmir were having contacts with the outside cultures. It also shows that there were trading activities taking place during that period. In order to find out the extent and volume of contact it is necessary to excavate the sites under reference.

So for the chronology of the partially excavated site Gufkral is concerned, there is the presence of a well-defined aceramic Neolithic level going back to 2797-1850 B.C. the earliest not only in Kashmir but in India. This is also a proof that south Kashmir was earliest abode of Neolithic people in Kashmir.

At all the Neolithic sites under study except Olchibag, Panzgom and Balpora Menhirs are found, which are evident for the succeeding Megalithic phase in the region. It indicates some sort of movement of the new comers in the valley. So they could have brought new traits with them, which also show that Neolithic period was succeeded by the Megalithic period with different features and some past continuities. In order to know more about this cultural stage it is necessary to excavate sites, collect and analyze material culture of the period.

The distribution of Neolithic sites and material culture in South Kashmir encourages speculation about the wider nature of Neolithic culture in Kashmir. Inferences about the past behavior certainly depend on accurate descriptions of the materials on which they are based, and additional attempts to enlarge our knowledge of the data base are essential. But these sites are still waiting for the archaeologists dig and then material culture can be excavated and investigated so that many issues can be responded. Many empirical and theoretical problems are yet unresolved about the Neolithic culture of Kashmir. There are much more exciting avenues of research well worth pursuing regarding the Neolithic culture of Kashmir in general and of south Kashmir in particular.

PLATES



Plate I. General view of Gufkral



Plate II. Menhirs at Gufkral



Plate V. A view of Hariparigom



Plate III. A standing menhir at Dadsar



Plate VI. A Neolithic Cave at Olchibag.



Plate IV. A View of Begund.



Plate VII. A standing menhir at Waztal.



Plate VIII. Neolithic Tools



Plate XI. Pot shreds from Waztal.



Plate IX. Neolithic beads from Gufkral.



Plate XII. Neolithic pottery from Sombur.



Plate X. Neolithic Pottery from Gufkral.



Plate XIII. Pot Shreds from Hariparigom

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