

INTRODUCTION: STUDIES IN LATER INDIAN PREHISTORY

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The 14th Congress of the IPPA held in Yogyakarta made significant contributions in the area of early man and his activities, covering a great part of the Old World. I was given the responsibility of sub-session 2C, entitled "Transitions to agriculture in India." In the final programme there were six papers. But for unavoidable reasons two scholars could not participate in the Congress, being Professor M.L.K. Murty and Dr S.B. Ota. This deficiency in numbers was compensated for by Dr S. Roy who participated and Dr P.G. Chatterjee who was unable to attend but sent the manuscript of his paper.

The present sub-session with five papers offers a wide spectrum. The paper of A.K. Ghosh and D. Chaudhuri gives a new insight into the demography of prehistoric populations with hunting-gathering and food producing economies. An attempt is also made to correlate hominid population demography with the demography of tool types. The result comes out very successfully. A continuation of this issue is made by P.G. Chatterjee who discusses foods and their values. His conclusion indicates that for sustenance mechanisms the food intakes of hunter-gatherers were in no way inferior to those of agriculturists. Data from present day tribal groups are superimposed on two groups of prehistoric populations with different economic activities.

The analogy between prehistoric and modern day primitive cultures was further examined in the paper by S.K. Roy in which he discussed the functional utilization of Neolithic shouldered hoe blades from the Garo hills of Meghalaya. In his paper (not published here) the energy inputs and productive outputs were found to be in a state of balance. Pottery is also an important cultural trait of Neolithic cultures and with a view to finding out the socio-economic ties between potters and their production Dr. Ranjana Ray, jointly with two other authors, has supplied some data-based information.

The following paper, by Ravindra Kumar, deals with settlement patterns in the middle Gomati basin of northern India. The main focus of this work points to the dispersal of settlements through time. On a related matter David Liversage discusses the distribution of radiocarbon dates for later South Asian prehistory and presents calibrations and computer graphics.

Being the Chairperson for sub-session 2C, I had the opportunity of listening to these papers and their visual accompaniments. Again at the editing stage I had to go through all the papers and thereby to be exposed to a bigger dimension of knowledge, both in time and space. The same contents in 'print will surely communicate new information to readers. This will give rise to a continuation of ideas with modification and development, corroborated with methods, data and above all knowledge, the expected feedback in scientific communication.