

Palaeolithic India and Human Dispersal

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ABSTRACT

Studies of Palaeolithic evidences from India are numerous but most of these are based on surface collection. So, for a majority of sites, technological analysis or demonstrating internal evolution is not possible. A brief survey has been done to show the three basic periods through which these studies progress. It is also shown that Indian archaeology till date remains more or less *Descriptive* and one has to still wait for an *Analytical* phase to emerge. Human evolution within India cannot be traced through hard evidence because of an almost total absence of fossils. Yet one cannot deny on the basis of the archaeological evidences that India not only acted as the corridor of human migration to south-east Asia, but also had intensive human occupation at a time much before any other place in the Old World.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rise and development of studies on Palaeolithic archaeology in India can be viewed as having passed through three stages – *Formative*, *Descriptive* and *Analytical*. The *Formative* stage sees the exploration of virgin forests and hills leading to the discovery of stray antiquities from these regions. Since these discoveries were made immediately after Charles Darwin's theory of evolution became popular in the West, these antiquities were taken to be evidences of the presence of Prehistoric man in India and the extent of their expansion.