A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FOOD PLANTS BETWEEN PGW PERIOD AND LATER VEDIC PERIOD IN UPPER GANGA PLAIN

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Knowledge about this pot tradition is found by the excavation of Ahichchhatra site during 1940-44, near Ramanagar in Bareily district of Uttar Pradesh. This culture is mainly found in Punjab, Hariyana, Northern Rajasthan and Upper Gangetic plain. It is the special culture of Upper Gangetic plain.

There are different opinions of various archaeologists, related to period of P.G.W. culture. The excavator of Hastinapur Mr. B.B. Lal, has decided the period of P.G.W. culture in Hastinapur as 1100 B.C. to 800 B.C. approximately. For deciding the period of P.G.W. culture, Mr. B.B. Lal has taken the period of N.B.P.W. culture as base. According to Mr. Lal, the early dating line of N.B.P.W. culture can be decided as 6th century B.C. on the basis of evidences found from Taxshila, Kaushambi and Aichchhatra. In Hastinapur, there was a cultural gape of time in between the starting of N.B.P.W. culture and end of P.G.W. culture on the basis of cultural evidences of these two cultures, Mr. B.B. Lal has decided 200 years of time for this gape. End of P.G.W. culture in Hastinapur has been decided as approximately 800 B.C. The average deposition of layers of P.G.W. culture has found from 1.50 to 1.20 meters. Approximately 300 years of time is decided for this whole cultural deposition of P.G.W. culture. Like this the date of P.G.W. culture in Hastinapur is decided as 1100 B.C. to 800 B.C.

Mr. R.C. Gaur, the excavator of Atranjikhera site in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh has decided the early date of P.G.W. culture as 12th century B.C.

The date of P.G.W. culture found in excavation at Kaushambi, has been decided as 885 B.C. (900 B.C.) to 605 B.C.

Accept it, there are some C^{14} dates are available from various excavated sites, among which Hastinapur, Ataranjikhera, Ahichchhatra and Noh etc. These carbon dates decide the duration of this culture about 800-400 B.C.

Like from the above discrimination, it is clear that the dates of P.G.W. culture are argumental and the available evidences are inadequate to reach to any final conclusion. By the available proves, the period of P.G.W. culture can be proposed as 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. [1]

On the basis of lingual evidences, it is views of some scholars that Aryans came to India in at least two groups:

1. Rigvadic Aryans
2. Later vadic Aryans

Relation of P.G.W. culture can be set with the Later Vadic Aryans. In later Vadic literatures (Brahmans, Upanishadas etc.), there is eulogy of middle country (*Madhy-Desh*) and its *Madhy-Desh* is generally called as Upper Gangetic Plain by the various geographers. In this area, there are many archaeological sites are located, related to P.G.W. Culture, which prove this fact. So we can set the relation of P.G.W. culture with the Later Vadic Period. During Later Vadic Period three Vedas were composed, which are- SamVeda, Yajurveda, and Atharva Veda, and the standard dates of these literatures is 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. The Brahman literatures and early

Upanisadas were also composed in this duration.[2]

In the below given table, there are various food grains described, which are mentioned in Later Vadic literatures and found in various excavation in Upper Gangetic plain.

Table

Archaeological Sources	Literary Sources
Cereals	
Rice	Rice (Atharva veda) Rice (Yajurveda): 1. *Mahavrihi* 2. *Krishnavrihi* 3. *Shuklavrihi* 4. *Hayana* *Trin Dhanya* (Yajurvedic Samhitas) 1. *Priyangu* 2. *Anu* 3. *Shyamaka* 4. *Niwar* 5. *Amb* 6. *Namb*
Barley (*Triticum of vulgare perc*.) Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*)	Barley (Atharva veda)
Dwarf wheat (*Triticum sphaerococcum perc*.) Bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*)	Wheat (All Samhitas except Rigveda)
Pulses	
Lentil Field pea Pigeon pea Chik pea Moth bean Green gram Black gram Horse gram	Lentil Black gram Green gram } Yajur veda
Oil	
Sesame	Sesame Mustard } Yajur veda
Millet	
Sawan millet Ragi millet	
Fruits	
Pakad Jujube Ber	Ber Date palm Mango

Phalasa Gular Water melon	Amla Pumpkin Cucumber Water chest nut

There are too many evidences of food plants found in various excavation of Upper Gangetic plain, which are very helpful to show the food economy during P.G.W. Culture. In the above mentioned table, there are many grains shown, which are found in excavation of Hastinapur, Madanapur, Ataranjikhera, Sringaverpura, Radhan and Saunphari sites in Upper Gangetic plain. At the same table they are compared with the grains mentioned in the Later Vadic Literatures. It clears that the economic life of the makers of P.G.W. culture was dependent mainly on agriculture.[3]

There is mentioned all the four activities of agriculture in *Shatapatha Brahmana*, which are ploughing, sowing, harvesting and hoeing. Field ploughed by plough. *Kathak samhita* describe that plough pulled by 24 oxs.[4]

The evidences of rice found in Upper Gangetic plain in abundance. It is found from Hastinapur, Madanpur, Ataranjikhera, Sringaverpura, Radhan and Saunphari etc. sites. Descriptions of rice is also found in *Atharvaveda*. In *Yajurved*a, there are 5 types of rice mentioned, namely- *Mahavrihi, Krishnavrihi, shuklavrihi, Ashudhanya* and *Hayana*. Among these *Mahavrihi* was the best variety of rice. *Ashudhanya* ripened in less time and *Hayana* named red rice gets ripened in a year. In the Samhitas of Yajurveda, there are descriptions of some wild variety of rice (*Trin Dhanya*) found, name as – *Priyangu, Anu, Shyamaka, Niwar, Amb and Namb*. Other than this, rice was also used in various holy activities. Rice used in religious sacrifice and oblation of god and goddesses.[5]

So, it is clear from both the evidences, archaeological and literary that rice was the main food grain of people and was produced in P.G.W. culture in Upper Gangetic plain in abundance.

From the Upper Gangetic Plain, there are two varieties of barley are found - *Hordeum vulgare L*. and *Triticum of vulgare pers*, which was produced by the people in abundance.[6.1-4] Description of barley is also found in Atharva Veda. Archaeological and literary both sources prove that barley was the main part of food in this period.

Archaeological evidences of wheat are also found in various sites of Upper Gangetic Plain. In Vadic Literatures, description of wheat is found in all Samhitas except Rigveda.[7]

Archaeological evidences of maize found in P.G.W. culture of Hastinapur, but is not found from Madanpur, Atranjikhera, Sringaverpura and Radhan sites. It is less described in Later Vadic Literatures also, which shows that in the Upper Gangetic plain maize is not used in abundance as food grains during the P.G.W. culture.

From the Upper Gangetic plain, there are evidences of many type of pulses found,[8] which are - Lentil, Grass pea, Field pea, Pigeon pea, Chik pea, Moth bean, Green gram, Black gram, Horse gram. These were the main leguminous crops, which were produced by the people during P.G.W. culture and were used in their food.[9.1-5]

In the Samhitas of Yajurveda, pulses like black gram (*Urad*), green gram (*Moong*), lentil

(*Masoor*) etc. are described, which shows that various pulses were used in the food of people, lived in Upper Gangetic plain in P.G.W. culture and they must grew various type of pulses through agriculture.[10]

Descriptions of sesame and mustard are also found in Later Vadic Literatures. These were produced in Upper Gangetic Plain. In the archaeological excavation of Madanapur site, sesame found from P.G.W. layers, which may be used as oil.

So, the archaeological and literary both sources prove that farming of oil plants were done in Upper Gangetic Plain and used for the preparing food and taste.

Evidences of Kodan millet are found from excavation of Madanpur and Saunphari which was used by people in their food during P.G.W. culture. Sawan millet and Ragi are also found from P.G.W. layers of Saunphari in Upper Gangetic plain, shows the farming of various type of millets in this area during P.G.W. culture.

The archaeological and literary both sources prove that, people of Upper Gangetic Plain ate many type of fruits. By excavations of Madanpur and Saunphari many evidences of fruits are found form P.G.W. levels as – Pakad, Jujube, Ber, Phalsa, Gular and water melon. Similarly Ber, Date palm, Mango and Amla mentioned in Later Vadic Literatures. Three varieties of Ber described in Later Vadic Literatures – *Badar, Kuwal and Karkandhu*, Cucumber (*Kakari*), Lotus cucumber (*Kamal Kakari*), lotus roots (*Kamalgatta*), pumpkin (*Lauki*) and water chestnut (*Singhara*) etc. are also described in Samhitas.[11]

So, archaeological and literary, both sources prove that the people of Upper Gangetic Plain did farming in vast level in P.G.W. culture and produced various type of food grains. No doubt, their food must be of high quality. Agriculture was well developed during 1000 B.C. to 600 B.C. and iron tools were used in Northern India during Later Vadic Period. Iron tools like- plough shares, sickle etc. was to employ for agriculture and this iron technique bought a great changes in the area of agriculture.[12] There are many prayers mentioned in *Atharv Veda* for prosperity of agriculture, good crops and increase in money. There is a vivacious description seen in a spell of *Atharva Veda*, which tells about the happiness of farmers before harvesting crops.[13]

On the basis of above described facts, we can clearly say that people of Upper Gangetic plain used rice, barley, wheat, maize, and many type of pluses like – lentil, grass pea, field pea, pigeon pea, chick pea, moth bean, green gram black gram and horse gram in their food in P.G.W. culture. They used sesame, linseed etc. for greasiness in food. Sawan millets, Kodan millets and Ragi millets are also used as food grains and utility of fruits increased in their life.

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