INTRODUCTION

1. THE PROBLEM

The existence of a distinct Upper Palaeolithic stage in the Indian Stone Age was a matter of debate as late as 1972. The same year in the International Symposium on Radiocarbon and Indian Archaeology organized by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay (eds. Agrawal, D.P. and A. Ghosh, 1973: 504-509) Sankalia proposed the term Upper Palaeolithic for the recently discovered blade-and-burin industry in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and parts of Uttar Pradesh. He also pointed out that in the revised edition of his book Prehistory and Protohistory in India and Pakistan he has included all the available data regarding the stratigraphy and that there was no doubt that the assemblage belonged to the Pleistocene period. Sankalia's proposal was, however, not accepted. The main points, around which the argument of those who opposed to the above proposal was centered, may be brought out as under:

1) In India, the stratigraphic position of the blade-and-burin industry is not always clear.
(2) The Upper Palaeolithic cultural stage in Europe belongs to the Pleistocene. At present, we have no clear idea of the age of the blade-and-burin industries discovered in India.

(3) The Upper Palaeolithic is a term for a particular cultural stage in Europe during the Pleistocene in which not only blades and burins developed, but a large number of other tools, such as scrapers of specialized types, points of different size, bone tools of a large variety, as also representational paintings and engravings in caves and movable art-objects of bone and ivory also appeared. In India we have only a blade-and-burin assemblage.

Since then more important and fresh evidence has come to light from various parts of the country in support of the view expressed by Sankalia regarding the existence of a distinct Upper Palaeolithic stage in the Indian Stone Age. In this context the evidence that has come to light as a result of my work at Pate in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra, is quite important and which will be described and discussed in this thesis.

2. MY CONTRIBUTION TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

In the year 1957, as a member of the Archaeological Survey of India, I was assigned the work of carrying out village-to-village survey of antiquarian remains in the West Khandesh district, subsequently named Dhulia and now Dhule district, of Maharashtra State, lying in the Central

In contradistinction to these two the other assemblages comprised parallel-sided blades, including a backed variety, burins, scrapers, points and borers, the last four being on blades, flakes and cores. On the whole, these assemblages were dominated by blade element. The raw material used was chiefly jasper, chalcedony and fine-grained red basalt. Techno-typologically these industries showed Upper Palaeolithic characteristics.
They were, therefore, designated as Upper Palaeolithic or late Palaeolithic (IAR 1959-60: 33-34; 1960-61: 26). The explorations, especially in the valleys of the Ranka Nala and of the rivers Kan and Panjhra, showed that similar tools also occur in stratified deposits sandwiched between those of the Middle Stone Age and the Late Stone Age (Sali, 1967; also, Sankalia, 1974: 226). The explorations in Dhule district thus showed that there exists in this region a Stone Age stage which intervenes between the Middle Stone Age and the Late Stone Age and that the tools of this stage, typologically and technologically, show Upper Palaeolithic characteristics. However, further evidence was necessary for understanding the details of this cultural stage and hence I was in search of a suitable site, preferably a primary or a living site for this purpose.

Already, as early as 1952, on our way to Pithalkhora caves from Chalisgaon, Shri M.N. Deshpande (former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India) and I had discovered a rich Stone Age site at Patne in East Khandesh (present Jalgaon) district. The surface of this site which, as will be shown later, lies on a fluvial flat in what I have called as Area B and where I conducted an excavation, was found to be literally littered with stone tools made on chalcedony and jasper. We had then regarded these artifacts as "microliths".
My subsequent explorations in the years 1958, 1970, 1971 and 1972 (Chapter II)\(^1\) revealed that the area of Patne represents a vast primary or living site of the Stone Age times. In 1958, it became clear for the first time that the stone tool industry, noticed in the year 1952, occurs in a stratified deposit and not merely as a surface scatter. Besides, it was also noticed that in the industry the blade element was dominant. In 1970, around Patne, were found tools not only of the Late Stone Age but also those of the Middle Stone Age and the Early Stone Age.\(^2\) In my subsequent explorations in 1971 and 1972 I obtained evidence of stratigraphical succession of Upper Palaeolithic and Late Stone Age industries (IAR 1971-72: 32-33; also Sali, 1973). This work also gave me, for the first time, a general idea about the succession of sediments in the upper levels of the sequence. In order, therefore, to obtain more cultural data and to confirm the succession of the Stone Age culture-sequence and also to understand properly the sedimentological sequence in relation to the cultural material, excavation was conducted at two selected spots at Patne in the year 1972-73.

\(^1\) Although I had visited Patne between 1958 and 1970 a couple of times these visits are not mentioned because they have not contributed much to the problem under study.

\(^2\) In this year apart from the Stone Age remains I also discovered at Patne a chalcolithic and an early historic site.
The results of this excavation form the core of this thesis. My contribution to the studies in prehistory of the area in general and in particular solution to the problem, outlined in the beginning, is the discovery of the Upper Palaeolithic Culture in a stratified context in the excavation preceded by the Advanced Middle Palaeolithic and succeeded by the Mesolithic. Its importance is further enhanced due to the fact that the cultural remains were obtained from the excavation at a primary site. The excavation also laid bare evidence of the Mesolithic in relation to its antecedent culture. Apart from the above evidence, lithic artifacts of the Lower Palaeolithic and the Middle Palaeolithic were also collected in the course of exploration in the area, thus giving an idea about the potentiality of the area.

3. TERMINOLOGY

In this thesis, I used the terminology as understood and adopted now, i.e. Lower Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. In this connection, it may be stated that till 1960 three kinds of terms were in vogue in India about the Stone Age. The first divided the Stone Age along the European lines into the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic (Krishnaswami, 1947). The second divided it into Series I, Series II, Series III and Series IV (Burkitt and Cammiade, 1950). In 1958, Subbarao divided the Indian Stone Age into Early Stone Age, Middle Stone Age and Late Stone Age on the African lines. The First International Conference on Asian Archaeology held in 1961 in New Delhi recommended this last-named terminology as a provisional terminology for the Stone Age in India.
A separate category was made for the Neolithic. In this terminology there was no place for the Upper Palaeolithic, because, it was presumed that "the Levallois flake industry (Middle Stone Age) slowly develops into the microlithic (Late Stone Age) facies as in Africa." (Subbarao, 1958: 39). At that time, there was very little evidence of the Upper Palaeolithic in this country. In recent years, however, evidence is pouring fast to show that the Upper Palaeolithic is represented in several parts of the country as a major cultural phase and that it follows the so-called Middle Stone Age (see infra, Chapter IV). Moreover, what have been termed as Middle Palaeolithic industries seem to show affinities to the Middle Palaeolithic Levalloisian-Mousterian industries of Europe (Sankalia, 1974). In the light of recent developments in the Indian Stone Age research, Sankalia (1974) has rightly advocated and followed the European system of dividing the Indian Stone Age into the Palaeolithic and the Mesolithic and subdividing the former into Lower Palaeolithic, Middle Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic. As pointed out above, the same has been adopted in this thesis.

4. RESEARCH OF THE WORK

This thesis has been divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter the site, its environment and the geomorphological features have been described. In the second chapter are detailed the results of the exploration undertaken by me at Patne from time to time prior to the undertaking of the excavation. In Chapter III are recorded
the details of the excavation and the lithic tool industries of the Stone Age found. Chapter IV deals with comparison of the Stone Age evidence from Patne with that available elsewhere in India. In Chapter V is discussed the chronology while in Chapter VI the life of the Stone Age man at Patne has been described. The last Chapter, contains the summary and conclusions of the work done at Patne outlining its importance.