



## The Pre-Historic Sites in Anantapur District, India: A Study

D. Sahadevudu<sup>1</sup>, C. Venkateswarulu<sup>2</sup> and Y. Ramachandra Reddy<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of History, Govt. College (M), Ananthapuramu-515001, Andhrapradesh, INDIA

<sup>2</sup>Department of History, M.S. Degree College Gooty-515401, Andhrapradesh, INDIA

<sup>3</sup>Department of History, S.K. University, Ananthapur-515001 Andhrapradesh, INDIA

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### Abstract

*Pre –Historic period deals with story of man and everything that concerns from that remote dim movement to existence records leaves properly. Much work has not been done on pre- historic period of Indian History. Dr.Primerose rediscovered Indian prehistory in 1842 at Lingsugur of Karnataka state in India. Robert Bruce Foote discovered large number prehistoric sites in south India. Sir Martimer Wheeler efforts resulted putting India firmly on the World map of history. Stuart Piggot published a book Pre–Historic India in 1950. However we are now in a position to say something about this period. Here we exhibit a small effort of light on the darkest and oldest Pre-historic sites at Anantapur district of Deccan Region in India.*

**Keywords:** Pre-historic site, Discovery, remote.

### Introduction

Human beings historical evolution from rock age to rocket age classified into three phases Pre-Historic period, Proto-Historic period and Historic period. Before inventing script Humans journey ran in Pre-Historic period and its first evidence found in Africa. In this age Humans association was largely with using stone tools. Due to this reason Pre-Historic period was classified as Old Stone Age, Middle Stone age, new Stone Age. Anantapur district forms a part of Deccan in India hence has got prehistoric Archaeological value and the ancestor, the prehistoric man wandered, settled, and disappeared, as thousands of years elapsed, leaving behind simple and crude implements he used and artefacts he employed for the next generations to improve, develop and build a heritage<sup>1</sup>.

### Pre-Historic sites

Many sites were excavated and remains dug out and exhibited in museums. These objects-tools, weapons, bones, ornaments, engravings and articles of use and those of rituals-throw light on their occupation, habits and traditions when we see such objects and sites where they were found<sup>2</sup>. We wonder and try to guess what sort of men they were, what type of life they enjoyed and how they started building up a culture which now has become so much complicated. Occasionally we read about the civilization and culture and see and enjoy, visiting historical places, but generally we don't come across the prehistoric civilization nor visit the sites of excavation of prehistoric culture. But visit to these places increases our interest in the prehistoric heritage, which has been largely revealed to us in the history books.

We present an account of pre-historic sites and relate them to the social and economic conditions of those times. The antiquity of human life especially in south goes back to 1, 50,000 years. But for quite a very long time man lived an animal life perhaps for lakhs and lakhs of years. Our archaeologists were not only digging the past, discovering the ancient civilization but also fixing the rough period of time for each age. In Anantapur district we find such excavated sites belonging to various stages-Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and megalithic ages.

**Early and Later Stone Age -Palaeolithic and Mesolithic ages** (1, 50,000B.C. - 5,000B.C.): The Historian, Sankalia describes the Andhra Region as 'Asia classical land of Stone Age man'. Anantapur district is situated in the heart of Andhra and Karnataka States and stones like laterite, quartzite haematite are found in abundance<sup>3</sup>. Bhimbetka Rock Shelters Important Palaeolithic sites in India. The Palaeolithic men might have wandered here<sup>4</sup>. The crude stone implements he prepared and used such as axes spears, digging tools knives and choppers were found in many places. We can date this advanced stage to 25,000 B.C. As the times passed he achieved some more progress with improved techniques. Now the tools and weapons were smaller than before. We can date this age to 5,000 B.C.

At first these Stone Age people were 'food gatherers', eating nuts, roots and fruits and meat got by hunting. He developed skill using stones as weapons in hunting animals. At early phase he used large and rough stones. They gradually transformed to fine and sharp stone tools invented from big stones. They might have developed a primitive social organization on blood relationship. At a later stage marriage relationship between two clans, a great step in bringing the neighbouring clans together came into vogue. The stone tools again modified with sharp and

small in fine quality. The new sharp stone tools were used as supporting items between big trees. By this there was rapid change occurred in collecting food as well as in dressing. These new tools were considered as safe in hunting animals from distance place. We find these primitive settlements along the hill-sides where suitable stone was available and a river or stream flowed.

**The Palaeolithic Age:** Anantapur district offers some vivid glimpses of Stone Age. The Sites in this region gave important evidence evolution of early humans in different developed stages which testify to the existence of man even in the remote past.

Bruce Foote surveyed the northern part of this district towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is an open country with a number of granite hills which are castellated and which once offered strongly defensible sites. The plain at their base must have been securely cultivated by the people, who kept a watch from the top of the strong rocky fastnesses to get timely warning of the approach of enemies.

Corn – crushers of pre-historic rock from the Lattavaram hill, Budihal or Budikonda is also a fine castellated hill with many capital rock shelters, yielding a small pestle made of diorite, a rare large oval mealing stone made of grey earthenware vase. Bruce Foote also found a long shallow stone through between two good rock seats and a very remarkable oblong terrace with a flat bare rocky floor where people carried on their mealing work. On the east and west hills of Vidapanakallu, he collected a large number of chisels, flakes, strike – a – lights, scrapers and cores made mostly of chert, agate, Chalcedony and Quartzite. The agates must have been obtained from a considerable distance probably from the valley of the Thungabhadra. From the Velpu madugu hill, Foote collected quite a number of Celts, scrapers, flakes, flake knives and cores. At the site east of Tadipatri he picked up many pot-shreds of highly decorated and good quality, presumably belonging to the well-to-do classes. The most interesting finds on the Haveligi hill belong to the fine series of artefacts of chert and agate. The site at the Kalamedevuru hill revealed the existence of a flake factory. The finds at the place include numerous broken Celts, corn-crushers, pounders and pot-shreds of excellent quality.

An outcrop of black trap rock runs near Demakethapalle near Hindupur along the crest of a hill. The boulders of the rock show signs of having been struck with stone hammers for producing flakes required for working for finished Celts. Hundreds of flakes and unfinished stone implements lie scattered at the base of these boulders. This site must have once been used as a factory for manufacturing Celts.

Sites excavated in Anantapur district are as follows: surrounding of Guntakal Railway Station, Vidapanakallu fort, Uravakonda Hill, Lattavaram, Karukumukkala, Kothapeta west Hill, etc.

**New Stone Age or Neolithic Age:** The Old Stone Age was followed close on its heels by New Stone Age (Neolithic) Palaeolithic settlements were gradually transformed into Neolithic Settlements. Now 'Man' becomes food producer rather than food gatherer. Cattle-breeding and agriculture became his mainstay Carpentry pottery and spinning and Weaving were some other industries. The Neolithic men found rock shelters more suitable for their living.

They built new settlements on them hills; they could produce small and fine stone implements such as axes, Chisels, hammers, anvils, corn crusher's marbles and objects of worship such as stone implements such as stone Lingams etc. Wooden tools articles were also used, but no wooden object was found in the excavations except a wooden comb found at a sandy mound nearby Guntakal Railway Station by Bruce Foote, the European Archaeologist.

As the cultivation required special attention of the males, their importance, grew, leading to the replacement of matriarchal system by patriarchy. The nomadic culture of the previous Generations was transformed into Agro-pastoral culture. Now the Neolithic man acquired mastery, over Nature but still he was ignorant. New doubts arose in them giving place to new beliefs which internal led to the worship of new Gods and Goddesses.

**Neolithic Sites:** At the moderately important sites Celts, flakes, chisels, hammers, corn-crushers, mealing stones, cores, pot shreds and linchets were commonly met with. The only wooden pre historic object of the Neolithic age which survived till today was a small comb which was discovered Guntakal railway junction by Cornelius Cardew, a friend of Foote. Many of Cardew's finds are now preserved in the Madras museum.

A few dolmens were discovered at Kalyandurg and Kambadur. Hundreds of kistvaens were found to occur at Mudigallu, Devadulabetta, Malyavantham, Kondapuram and Puleru. The existence of cairns at places like Mudigallu, Devadulabetta, Kalyandurg and Thodagutta was also brought to light.

The dolmens were usually found intermingled with cairns and kistvaens and appeared to have been erected as tombs in memory of the departed and also receptacles for votive offerings to propitiate the spirits of the dead. Dolmens were sometimes converted into hero – shrines dedicated to some local chief or warrior or into shrines of Shiva with stone Lingams installed in them. Such shrines can still be seen at Kalyandurg and Kambadur.

The remnants of the post Neolithic period included the fortification on an isolated round top granite hill at Velpumadugu near Gooty. Foote's exploration also revealing that there are many signs of continued settlements in the middle and eastern parts of the Haveligi hill. Traces of an iron age settlement which succeeded the Neolithic one's evidenced by the shape of iron slag strewn all over the surface were brought

to light at Kalamedevuru near Dharmavaram. Cornelies Cardew made some excavations and found an iron and Bronze Age site near the Guntakal railway station from which valuable series of earthenware and iron article were obtained.

As civilization advanced, other metals like gold, copper and bronze came into existence. This age refers to as the later Iron Age by the archaeologists passed down into the proto historic age which forms the link between pre historic and historic age.

In Anantapur district 25 places were excavated by Bruce Foote various kinds of broken objects were unearthed; Lattavaram site was famous for corn crushed. At Budehal we could find Rock shelters and a stone table and benches. Vidapanakallu Fort, Vidapanakallu west Hill and Velpumadugu sites were famous for stone implements like Celts, hammer axes, chisels, knives, discs, mill stones etc. Fine Specimens of earthen ware-broken bowls, lotahs etc- were found at Tadpatri site<sup>5</sup>.

At Kalmedunur site we could find objects belonging to Stone Age and Iron Age Vajrakarur, Uravakonda, Karakumukkala, Bogasamudram, Havaligi Hill, Muchukota, Jammadinne Hill, Yerragudi Hill, Mundlavariipalli, Dorigallu and Anantapur Town are some other Neolithic sites.

### The Iron Age or Megalithic Age

The Iron Age brought another revolution in the culture of Neolithic people now man discovered the superiority of iron over stone. He learnt the chemical process, constructed, furnaces and manufactured implements and utensils. Agriculture was revolutionised, channels were dug, fields were irrigated and forests were cleared. Crafts like smithy, Carpentry Stone-Cutting, weaving, boat making etc- developed. Archaeologists associate this with Megalithic culture<sup>6</sup>. Now the pre-historic man used stone cist to keep the remains of the dead with objects like food materials, knives and ornaments and bury it and placed big stones around it as monuments.

The megaliths are often found on hill-slopes or amidst rocky places. It seems great care was also taken to select the burial places. This reveals the cultural advancement as seen from the above we can easily assume that the megalithic or Iron Age people built up a well knit social order culturally far advanced. But we are in short of evidence to Proview whether it is Urban or Rural. Further we don't know whether these people knew the art of writing. But there is an Asoka pillar near our district border at Yerragudi of Kurnool District<sup>7</sup>.

Unless the people knew the Language and script there was no necessity for the erection of Asoka's Edict, addressing the people from this we can infer that the iron age had soon brought in an Urban culture and there was also reference in Indian of Megasthenese about the Andhras along with Rethicas and Cholas, and the people might have known Brahmi script and might have used it for their Dravidian language<sup>8</sup>.

**Iron Age Sites:** We find at Kalamedunur and Guntakal R.S. the Iron Age sites adjoining Neolithic ones. Kambaduru, Mudigally, Devadulabetta, Malyavantham, Kondapuram and Puleru were famous for Metal tools. Recently at Palvoy ovens for smelting iron were found. In places like Budidigaddapalle we see ash mounds, but they are yet to be excavated by archaeologists<sup>9</sup>.

### Conclusion

Such is the long journey of pre-historic ancestor in Anantapur district, From a state of absolute dependence on Nature he fought against it and handed down to us a well knit social order and sophisticated culture for further development. Thus the present South India is one of the Ancient inhabited regions of the world and its prehistoric Excavations and relations with neighbouring land, so far as they are discovered, placed significant annals in the history of the world.

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