



The Lower Palaeolithic Culture – Mellavagu

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THE PREVIOUS WORK

During the excavations at Nagarjuna Konda, Soundara Rajan K.V(1958), reported a number of stone age locations in the region submerged by the Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir. During the Investigations he reported stone age sites close to Karempudi on the Naguleru Valley which lies adjacent to the Naarjunakonda Valley. He stated that the artefacts from Karempudi appeared crude and rolled in conditioned. Sarma I.K (1974) reported palaeolithic artefacts from the Dandivagu bed which is not far removed from the Naguleru Valley. Also a little to the east of Naguleru an acheulean location was reported from Rajupalem (Murti D.B and Kesava K.S 1987). Artefacts were reported. Close to the bank of river Krishna Middle Palaeolithic assemblages were reported from Madduru (Murti D.B 1977). Also on the left bank of the Krishna a number of palaeolithic locations were reported across the Nalgonda District (Rao S.N

MELLAVAGU

North Latitude : 16deg19'30

Contour : 166mts

1966). Of further interest are the investigations made by Issac N (1960) on the Gundlakamma and the discovery of an excellent Upper Palaeolithic site from the regions lying the west of Naguleru, at Yerragondapalem (Timma Reddy K. 1974). Recent investigations of Murali Mohan S (1990) have brought to light many more palaeolithic locations from the regions lying to the west of Naguleru.

The investigations made by David Raju B (1985) brought to light many New Stone Age sites in and around the Naguleru Valley.

In this contest the present author is inspired to take up detailed investigations of the Naguleru valley for pre-neolithic finds spots. He has chosen this area because the Naguleru provided varied Geo-Eco settings and the area is surrounded by stone age tool bearing localities.

“Eastern Longitude : 79deg44'30”

Sample area : 200 x 200mts

Mellavagu is a small village located at about 4 Kms. Due east away from the Naguleru on its right bank. However to the south of the village a few hill streams emerge from the local range of hills. These small streams are alive only during the wet season and dry away at other

times. These hill streams flow due north and finally fall into the Naguleru flowing close to Reddipalem. To the south of the village Mellavagu the area is characterized by partly eroded land scape with occasional clusters of rock-waste strewn across the entire region. At the



time the investigation was undertaken the flat surface of the local landscape is being brought under dry cultivation. This event perhaps was preceded by a little clearance of the local mixed-jungle and the denudation of the top soils was at its initial stages.

The stone-age artefacts of the region were discovered as surface

remains across partly eroded patches of the land. It must be noted that the artefacts appear to have been distributed over a very wide area (PLATE VIII-A). Also it is seen that through a stretch of 2 to 3 kms. Lying to the south of the village and the landform close to the range of hills on

TABLE :01 LOWER PALAEO-LITHIC CULTURE

Site : MELLAVAGU

SI.No.	Type	Number of Total	PERCENTAGE	
			1 ST %	2 ND %
1.	Choppers	05	4.95	2.48
2.	Chopping tools	18	17.87	8.69
3.	Handaxes	27	26.73	13.04
4.	Cleavers	08	7.92	3.86
5.	Discoids	03	2.97	1.44
6.	Knives	12	11.88	5.79
7.	Scrapers	08	7.92	3.86
8.	Points	03	2.97	1.44
9.	Re-touched Flakes	17	16.93	8.21
	Sub - Total	101	99.99	
10.	Blade-Flakes	07	-	3.38
11.	Flakes Blanks	27		13.04
12.	Broken Handaxes	02		0.96
13.	Cores	43		20.77
14.	Fragments	27		13.04
	Grand Total	207		100.00

The south, artefacts occur as isolated groups also. By a close examination of the entire region lying to the south of Mellavagu, it appeared as though the entire region constituted the hunting round of the pre-historic settlers here.

At present residual patches of open scrub-jungle are distributed across

the terrain. The landform itself a gentle slope to the north as is indicated by the small streams that flow in this direction. Intensive collection of artefacts was limited in an area of 200 x 200 mts. A majority of the artefacts fall into the Acheulean types (PLATE VIII-B). However the actual confines of the site



cannot be fixed in the field, as some of the adjacent regions have been brought under dry farming, thereby disturbing the archaeological horizon.

Only 8 specimens are considered for metrical details from Mellavagu. The handaxes show a mean length of 110 millimeters, a mean breadth of 72 millimeters and a mean thickness of 39 millimeters. The measurements of the weight of handaxes indicated a mean value of 320 grams while the a mean

actual volume is 172 cubic centimeters. It is observed that the breadth angle is almost close to 40 degrees while the thickness angle is 22 degrees. The number of flake scars an average is more than 19 with a few specimens showing more than 21 flake scars individually. In all probability the low weight and the large number of flake scars would claim a position with Upper Acheulean status for the handaxes from Mellavagu.

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