



The upper Paleolithic Culture Venkupalem in the Naguleru Valley in Guntur District

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Introduction

Detailed studies relating to the Upper Paleolithic phase in Andhra were made at a large number of locations in western Andhra and south coastal Andhra though with a few references to those sites in northern coastal Andhra. Parts of Cuddapah, Kurnool, Chittor, Prakasam and Guntur have by far yielded the bulk of information while the data from Karimnagar and Vishakhapatnam areas help understanding the spatial dimension of the culture. The assemblages from the various find spots have been analysed in detail and certain trait features common to groups of industries have been identified, obviously these categories blade – flake, blade-tool and blade – burin (Murthi, M.L.K. 1979) – need not always represent successive stages of evolution in leptolithic industries but could as well occur contemporaneously with or without inter site contact.

Also where typology alone becomes the basis of classification, the validity of these propositions depends much on the nature of the samples, particularly so when samples reported long time back and

VENKUPALEM

which lack confirmation are considered for analysis. In the absence of radio carbon dates for most of the sites, the only rationale for classification of the sites appears to be taxonomy and statistical correlation of artifacts. An overview of the various industries indicates that the upper Paleolithic industries at some of the sites retain unflinching links with those of the preceding middle Paleolithic while at others a clear genesis of some of the trait features of the forthcoming Mesolithic could be perceived.

PREVIOUS WORK

During the excavations at Nagarjuna konda, Soundara Rajan K.V (1958) reported a number of stonage locations in the region submerged by the Nagarjuna sagar reservoir. During the investigations he reported stonage sites close to Karampudi on the Naguleru valley which lies adjacent to the Nagarjuna konda valley. In this context I was inspired to take up detailed investigations of the Naguleru valley for pre Neolithic finds spot. The primary aim of the present investigation is to record pre Neolithic stonage succession of the Naguleru valley.

North Latitude : **16deg 06'**
Eastern Longitude : **79deg 41' 30"**



Contour : 100 mts.
 Sample area : 50 X 50 mts.

Venkupalem is a small village located at a distance of 3 km north – west of Vinukonda. It is on the road connecting Vinukonda with Vellaturu. Close to the village on the northern side there is a long range of hills extending from west to east. Venkupalem is located at varying distance from the main course of the Naguleru. Some of the peaks reaches to a height of about 350 meters and the range is locally known as Errakonda. To the south of the Venkupalem the area is almost barren. A

few wet weather rills rising on the southern flanks of the Errakonda ranges joins together and drain into an unnamed stream. On the northern slopes of the Errakonda also the wet weather rills join to form a local stream.

The ranges of hills constituting the Errakonda are grown over by scrub jungles and mixed jungles forming part of the Vinukonda Reserved Forest. The vicinities of Venkupalem are characterized by open jungles, cleared here and there for the development of Flori culture of Jasmine etc.

UPPER PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

Site : VENKUPALEM

SI. No.	Type	Number of Total	PERCENTAGE	
			1 ST %	2 ND %
1.	Parallel sided blades	160	33.89	27.16
2.	Retouched – blades	94	19.91	15.95
3.	Notched blades	20	04.23	03.39
4.	Denticulates	15	03.17	02.54
5.	Pen knives	12	02.54	02.03
6.	Simple points	16	03.38	02.71
7.	Tanged Points	03	00.63	00.50
8.	Levallois Points	18	03.81	03.04
9.	Borers	10	02.11	01.69
10.	Burins	16	03.38	02.71
11.	Scrapers	23	04.87	03.90
12.	Re-touched flakes	42	08.89	07.13
13.	Notched flakes	10	02.11	01.69
14.	Denticulate flakes	14	02.96	02.37
15.	Elura	12	02.54	02.03
16.	Miniature handaxes	07	01.47	01.18
	Sub - Total	472	99.90	
17.	Blade cores	14		02.37
18.	Levallois cores	08		01.35
19.	Amorphous cores	40		06.79
20.	Levallois flakes	12		02.03
21.	Amorphous flakes	43		07.30
	GRAND TOTAL:	589		99.86



An Upper Palaeolithic site is located at a distance of 2 Km north west of Venkupalem on the western slopes of the Errakonda ranges (PLATE X-A). The site is close to the road laid across the Errakonda connecting Venkupalem with Vellturu.

The Upper Palaeolithic artefacts occur as surface remains across the denuded surface of the local area. The specimens are in the association of nodules and chunks of quartzite. The artefacts are devoid of post depositional alterations.

METHODOLOGY

For achieving the two parts of the aim of our investigation explorations were conducted in the entire Venkupalem village in the naguleru valley right its from origin till it meets with the river Krishna. In order to collect to the samples of stone remains probabilistic sampling method was adopted. I was tried to collect data through small trenches. I was applied probabilistic sampling method for quick recovery of historic data. The artifacts so collected were examined for post depositional alterations and where ever possible the edge wear is examined under magnifying glass. For the artifact analysis numerical taxonomy is adopted for comparing the artifact assemblages culture wise Robinsons (1951)method of the matrix for agreement scores is adopted. Also the method of proximity analysis suggested

by the Collin Renfrew and gene stead (1969) was adopted.

FINDINGS

I was collected artifacts included in general, parallel sided blades, retouched blades and notched blades under the category of blade element. They have been drawn from cylindrical cores and occasionally retime a patches of cortex on their dorsal surface on general look most of them appear parallel sided. A few specimens show a slight taper of the site margins towards the distil end. On the dorsal surface usually a single longitudinal ridge is present. Blade bands and retouched blades posses to flake ridges on their dorsal surface. Retouched plates from this side process sign of retouched on a single margin. The notched blades posses only one notch on one of the side margins of the side.

CONCLUSION

The upper Paleolithic site of venkupalem appeared to be biased to the flake blade tradition. As such the industry does not show all the type components expected of a typical upper Paleolithic culture. This is perhaps because the industry themselves in the area of our investigation were at the bigining stage and the sites were deserted soon after. If a comparison is to establish between the present industries and those of Europe. Probably perigordian industry of France as good similarities at the present industry.



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