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THE MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC CULTURE OF THE NAGULERU VALLEY

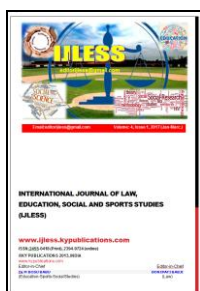
RESEARCH ARTICLE

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**ABSTRACT**

In general in the Indian context the middle Paleolithic industries an unflinching link with the preceding Acheulean culture. Similarly some of artifacts anticipate the forthcoming blade flake industries of the upper Paleolithic in India. The sites from Naguleru valley on the basis of typological analysis can be exactly placed in between the lower Paleolithic tool types and those of the upper Paleolithic. In the Naguleru valley the middle Paleolithic artifacts show an affinity to the flake made tools.

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THE MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE**GENERAL**

The Middle Palaeolithic culture of the Naguleru Valley is represented only at 11 locations. 1.Gutlaalli 2.Kanumalacheruvu, 3.Kochcherla, 4.Angaluru, 5.Chakravapalem, 6.Ayyannapalem, 7.Lalipura, 8. Rajupeta, 9.Kanchikonda, 10. Mantrapalla, 11.Takkalapadu. At most of these sites it appeared as though the culture is evolved out of the preceding the Lower Palaeolithic Culture. However the lower Palaeolithic and the Middle Palaeolithic do not occur in succession at the same sites. A geographical distribution of the Middle Palaeolithic sites in the Naguleru Valley indicated that these are located slightly away from those of the Lower Palaeolithic, but within the reach of the trunk channel and the tributaries of the river system.

Elsewhere in India the specimens of the Middle Palaeolithic occurred as mixed industries either as derivatives from the preceding Lower Palaeolithic are as independent entities. In some of the Middle Palaeolithic locations across India the tool typology approximates itself to the flake blade tradition as revealed at Renegunta. It must be mentioned that being more or less mixed industry the Middle Palaeolithic of India does not show many parallels with similar industries from western Europe.

In Europe the Middle Palaeolithic has been thoroughly investigated and certain local variations among the tool assemblages have been identified (Bordes F 1961). Even in Africa the Middle Palaeolithic showed regional variations across North Africa and south east and south – west Africa. It has been established that the Middle Palaeolithic of France occurred in Typical Mousterian, Charentien Mousterian, Denticulate Mousterian, Mousterian of Acheulean Tradition A and Mousterian of Acheulean Tradition B. As La Mouster was supposed to be the type site of the Middle Palaeolithic, of the industries the time bracket are named after it. In Africa however the northern portions have a few features in common with the Mousterian of France. However across the wooded forests of Africa the Middle Palaeolithic hunter gatherers produced a large number of digging picks as a component part of the Middle Palaeolithic assemblages. In the open – air steppe zones of Africa the industries produced flake knives in good quantities. The regional variation in tool typology has become an established factor among Middle Palaeolithic typology. In India Nevasa on the river Godavari produced evidences related to the relative stratigraphic position of the Middle Palaeolithic of France occurred in Typical Mousterian, Charentien Mousterian of Acheulean Tradition B. As La

Mouster was supposed to be the type site of the Middle Palaeolithic, of the industries the time bracket are named after it. In Africa however the northern portions share a few features in common with the Mousterian of France. However across the wooded forests of Africa the Middle Palaeolithic hunter gatherers produced a large number of digging picks as a component part of the Middle Palaeolithic assemblages. In the open-air steppe zones of Africa the industries produced flake knives in good quantities. The seasonal variation in tool typology has become an established factor among Middle palaeolithic typology. In India Nevasa on the river Godavari produced evidences related to the relations stratigraphic position of the Middle Palaeolithic assemblages (Sankalia H.D. 1974). In most of the river systems of the Peninsular India it has been observed that there were two to three cycles of aggradation. In on such contexts the Middle Palaeolithic specimens were recovered from gravel beds of the second phase of aggradation. This evidence is almost similar to the observations made by H.D.Sankalia at Navasa on the river Pravara, a tributary of the Godavari. In addition Middle Palaeolithic assemblages in varying densities have been discovered at places like kimbhanahalli, Jalahalli, etc. of the Karnataka region. These are termed as Karnataka Navasian Industries (Sankalia H.D.1974)

Middle Palaeolithic assemblages located in the open-air context as at Bhera Ghat, Pandavafalls, Rehuntiya of fields, Krishna bridge Kondapur etc., Provide another facet of the culture (Allechin B. 1959).

In the Nagarjuna Konda valley Levallois based industries have already been noted (Subramanyam R 1975) Thus the prepared core technique presence itself among the flake blank and flake made tool of the Middle Palaeolithic of Andhra also. The case with Naguleru is not much different because of its proximity to the Nagarjuna Konda Valley. In the adjacent regions of the south, particularly across the Gundlakamma Vally employment of the Levallois technique has already been noted. (Issac N 1960).

PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION OF ARTEFACT TYPES IN THE MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC SITES

	ANP	CKP	KCK	MTL	LLP	RJP	TKP	GLP	KMC	AGL	KCR
CHOPPERS	4.46	2.32	3.10	3.28	3.12	3.98	2.04	1.85	3.52	6.47	4.39
Chopping Tools	1.67	3.48	4.66	1.97	4.37	1.99	3.40	3.70	5.29	2.94	3.84
Handaxes	6.14	5.23	6.73	5.92	6.87	6.96	4.76	4.93	4.11	5.88	6.04
Miniature Handaxes	1.67	2.32	2.07	1.97	3.12	2.98	0.00	0.00	3.52	0.00	1.09
Cleavers	0.00	0.00	1.03	1.31	2.50	1.49	1.36	2.46	1.17	1.76	1.64
Discoids	0.00	1.16	1.55	1.97	1.25	0.99	2.72	3.70	1.76	1.17	3.29
Knives	8.93	6.97	8.29	8.55	10.00	5.47	8.84	11.11	6.47	5.29	9.89
Scrapers	12.84	16.27	12.43	13.15	11.25	12.43	9.52	16.04	10.58	10.00	8.79
Scrapers Cum Borers	2.23	1.74	2.59	1.97	1.25	1.49	3.40	3.70	3.52	1.17	1.64
Borers	4.46	4.06	3.10	4.60	2.50	3.48	2.72	6.79	4.70	3.52	3.29
Points	14.52	6.97	8.80	12.50	5.62	8.95	7.48	11.11	12.35	9.41	6.04
Elura	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.23	2.35	1.17	0.00
Retouched Flakes	8.37	14.53	13.47	7.23	6.87	12.93	8.84	6.79	9.41	11.76	9.34
Levallois Flakes	3.35	3.48	3.62	3.28	3.12	4.47	4.08	4.93	1.76	5.88	4.39
Flake Blanks	17.87	16.27	16.06	15.78	13.12	15.92	19.72	6.17	12.35	14.70	15.38
Blade Flakes	0.00	3.48	2.59	4.60	2.50	2.98	5.44	3.08	4.70	3.52	5.49
Levallois Cores	1.11	1.16	1.55	0.65	1.87	1.99	.04	0.00	1.17	2.35	2.19
Amorphous Cores	5.58	6.97	4.66	7.23	9.37	6.96	9.52	7.40	6.47	7.64	9.89
Core Fragments	6.70	3.48	3.62	3.94	11.25	4.47	4.08	4.93	4.70	5.29	3.29
	99.90	9.89	99.92	99.90	99.95	99.93	99.96	99.92	99.90	99.92	99.91

ANP : AYYANAPALEM

LLP : LALIPURAM

KMC:KANUMALACHERUVU

CKP : CHAKARAVA PALEM

RJP : RAJUPETA

AGL : ANGALURU

KCK : KANCHIKONDA

TKP : TAKKELAPADU

KCR : KOCHCHERLA

MTL : MANTRALAMMA

TYPO-TECHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

In the Naguleru valley Ayyannapalem, Chakravapalem, kanchikonda Montralamma, Lalipuram, Rajupeta, Takkilapadu, Guttlapalle, Kanumalacharuvu, Angaluru and Kocherla yielded small clusters of the Middle Palaeoliths.

In most of the cases the specimens are fresh and they were not subjected to post depositional alterations. These locations are not far removed from the Acheulean long occupation. Perhaps the assemblages represent only a transitional phase. Also with the available data it cannot be established if there be any regional variations. As most of them are from alluvial context it should be admitted that none of the locations represent a primary site or a factory site.

CHOPPERS

Excepting Anguluru at all other sites choppers occur in small numbers, even though they are not recovered in considerable density. These specimens look almost like their the Lower Palaeolithic counterparts. No technical and those already interpreted among the Acheulean assemblages. All the choppers are made on fine grained quartzites of grey and brown varieties. Their sizes also do not show any variation with the preceding phase of the Lower Paleolithic. On technological grounds the choppers from the culture groups look alike.

CHOPPING TOOLS

The chopping tools of the assemblages show again low densities representation. However they appear to be short of any refinement achieved during the lower palaeolithic times. The employable units show waviness and none of them approximates to the protohandaxe stage. Most of them were fabricated on thick nodules and sub-angular pebbles of quartzite.

HAND OXES

Compared to choppers and chopping tools, handaxes of the various industries show a better representation at places like Rajupet, Gutlapalli, Anguluru And Kocherla. The handaxes do not appear to have reached the technical level of the preceding. Cultural phase. The common type of handaxes which is of frequent occurrence is the pointed variety. It is interesting that some of the specimens were made on flat pebbles or fragments.

There is a clear degeneracy set in the making of the handaxes. Handaxes could serve heavy duty functions and their role in the food quest has been gradually taken over by the other tool types of the Middle palaeolithic. Possibly some of these irregular handaxes could have served as food

MINIATURE HANDAXES

Miniature handaxes were recovered in small number at Ayyannapalem, Chakravapalem, Kanchikonda, Mantralamma, Lalipuram, Rajupet, Kanamalcheruvu and Kocherla. These constitute a heterogeneous group of specimens fabricated on small nodules and thick flakes. In our collections a large number of them are of pointed variety. They retained thick butts and wavy side margins. The employable unit, the pointed end, is worked by deliberate secondary working. All the specimens are made on fine grained grey brown variety of quartzite.

CLEVERS

We have a small number of cleavers at Kanchikonda, Mantralamma, Lalipuram, Rajupet, Kanamalcheruvu, Anguluru and Kocherla. Their sizes have been reduced almost approximating to the miniature forms. The cutting edges in most of the cases is straight. A few specimens however maintained concave edges with respect to the breadth axis. The butt sides are usually "U" shaped and a few specimens possess irregular butts. Most of the cleavers are made on fine grained variety of red and brown quartzites. Functionally the cleavers in the present assemblages are unfit as heavy duty cutting tools. On the other hand they could have been utilised for working on wood or while processing of the food.

DISCOIDS

Discoids are of common occurrence among the Middle palaeolithic assemblages of the Naguluru Valley. They are obtained in a small number at all the sites excepting the one at Ayyannapalem. However the site at Kocherla Produced relatively a large number of them. They are made on thick flakes as well as thin fragments. A large number of them possess unifacial working. Discoids of the present assemblages are made on grey and brown varieties of quartzites. Functionally they are intended as equipment for throwing at a running animal.

Knives are collected at all the Middle Palaeolithic sites of the Naguluru valley. At Kocherla and Gutlapalli they are obtained in a large number of followed by the site at Lalipuram. Knives are a usual component of the Middle palaeolithic across the tropical belts. Flake knives of the present assemblages were made on grey variety of fine grained quartzite. In the field of application they are intended for cutting purpose, Bordes (1968) mentions that flake knives are of common occurrence among the faunal industries of Africa the flake knives of the present assemblage were employed for cutting and food processing purposes. Possibly they are also employed for sharpening the ends of wood

haftes. The presence of flake knives in the present industries of the Naguleru go parallel to such finds at Nagarjuna Konda and Gundlakamma valley of the immediate surroundings.

SCRAPERS

Scrapers are steep edged specimens intended for such activities like scraping, witting, sharpening etc., these are a component of the Middle Palaeolithic Culture in the Naguleru valley. Scrapers of a variety are found at all the Middle palaeolithic locations. These flakes were either detached from cores and some of the flakes could as well be the biproducts the preparation of heavy duty tools. Our collections chakrawapalem produced the largest density of scrapers represented by 25 percent.

SCRAPER CUM BORERS

This is a composite implement workable both as a scraper and a borer. Though represented in small numbers they are available at all the Middle palaeolithic sites of the Naguleru valley. Among our collections kanchikonda, Tallakonda, Gutlapalli and Kanamalacheruvu yielded these specimens in considerable numbers. At other sites their representation is very weak. At all the sites the specimens were made on end flakes by retouching. The raw material employed is fined grained quartzite.

BORERS

Borers are equipment intended for making holes in the given medium. They possess. Pointed beak like projection with unimarginal or bimarginal retouch. Among our collections borers are found in considerable number at Gutlapalli and Kanamalacheruvu. At all other locations these are represented in small numbers. At the present state of our knowledge and available data, we cannot guess any further regarding the actual medium on which they were employed.

POINTS

Points are the usual component among the Middle Palaeolithic industries of the Naguleru Valley. They are found at all the sites in varying densities. However their yield is more at Ayyanapalem, Kanamalacheruvu, Montralamma, Rajupet and Guttlapalli. In our present collection asymmetric forms are represented in larger number than their symmetric counter parts at all the sites. Even good quality leaf shaped points are also not available in the naguler Valley.

In the Present collections elura or dumpy lunates are recovered in small numbers from kanamalacheruvu, angaluru and Guttlapalli. At all other sites they are totally absent. The preparation of elura the craftsmen employed relatively thick flake medium. All the specimens are fabricated on fine grained grayish quartzite.

RE-TOUCHED FLAKES

Retouched flakes constituted one of the flake tool components of the Middle Palaeolithic of the Naguleru Valley. These are available at all the 11 sites in varying densities. Functionally these are very effective as cutting tools. A large number of the specimens are made on irregular or oblong flakes. Sometimes the retouch to be seen along both the margins of long flakes. We do not however have serrated flakes among our collections from the Naguleru Valley. The raw material employed is fine grained variety of grayish quartzite.

Other ARTEFACTS

This constitutes the waste products of various kinds including a variety of cores and fragments. Levallois flakes occur at all the sites along with a few Levallois cores. Some of the flake blanks maintain parallel sides recalling blade flakes. The Levallois flakes, blanks and blade flakes would naturally be the medium on which scrapers, bores and points could be made. In addition cores fragments and debitage are the result of tool making. Their presence in the industries of the Naguleru indicates that the finished products were prepared at the respective sites.

Conclusion

As elsewhere in India the middle Paleolithic culture in naguleru valley represents a transition from the lower Paleolithic to the upper Paleolithic. This feature is common Europe. Particularly Mousterian culture. We have Mousterian of achelean tradition – A and Mousterian of the tradition – B. Other Industries in the naguleru valley compare with the Mousterian of achelean tradition – A of france. Also the middle Paleolithic Africa as represented by mixed industry. Have also some features in common with the middle Paleolithic industries of the naguleru.

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