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THE MESOLITHIC CULTURE IN THE NAGULERU VALLY

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ABSTRACT

Mesolithic phase represents a transition the food gathering stage to the early food producing stage. The cultural components included various artefacts fabricated on crypto crystalline silicates and crystalline silicates. Typotechnologically the phase marks the culmination of flaking tool techniques and the resultant types of tools. There is a gradual diminishment in size of the specimens through out Palaeolithic and it alternately led to the production of micro-sized blade tools, constituting the Mesolithic phase. In early literature this phase has been referred to as the Microlithic phase or the Late stone age.

General

In Andhra Pradesh sites representing the Mesolithic Phase are extensively distributed in the northern coastal Andhra and the Godavari valley. In the Krishna valley however the distribution is limited to the Nagajunakonda area and the adjacent regions. In south coastal Andhra Mesolithic artefacts are recovered in far less number of sites in the valleys of the Gundlakamma, the Musi, the Paleru and the Manneru. In the Paleru valley Mesolithic sites are not well documented. In the Renugunta region of the Swarnamukhi valley Mesolithic artefacts have been reported but the density is far less compared to the Lower Godavari valley. In the cuddapah district Milavaram is a promising Mesolithic site but the full report is awaited. In the Kurnool district Mesolithic artefacts are discovered as surface remains. In part of Telangana particular at Aklasapur of karimnagar and Albaka of the Kamam district have produced reasonable sound assemblages. But it must be noted that both Aklasapur and Albaka fall in middle reaches of the Godavari valley.

It is seen that microlithic artefacts of the Mesolithic nature occur even in the post Mesolithic phases also as can be seen at some of Neolithic sites of coastal Andhra Pradesh.

There is a change in the raw material from the fine grained quartzite to crypto crystalline silicates like chert, jasper, chalcedony, opal, agate etc, and crystalline silicates like milky quartz, crystal quartz etc., there are a number of specimens made on lydianite. With the reduction in the size of the specimens there is a concurrent conservation of raw material also.

As the Naguleru is located geographically proximal to Nagarjunakonda it is natural that the both regions shared almost similar cultural levels and the component tools. In the naguleru valley Mesolithic sites are located at only five sites. They are at Mekaladinne, Papayapalem, Budawada, Gamalapdu and Nimmalagunta tanda. At all the sites density of specimen yield is much less compared to any of the Mesolithic sites of the Godavari valley or the northern coastal Andhra. Typologically the Mesolithic artefacts are classified in to retouched blades, serrated blades, backed and retouched blades, retouched flakes, blade blanks, symmetric and asymmetric points, tanged and crescentic points, triangles and lunates, scrapers of variety, borer burnins. Besides these we come across few flake blanks and blade cores and amorphous cores.

PERCENTAGE REPRESENTATION OF ARTEFACT TYPES IN THE MESOLITHIC SITES

	MLD	PPP	BDW	GMP	NGT
Retouched Blades	4.94	7.86	6.71	5.11	4.92
Serrated Blades	1.62	2.62	1.79	2.87	2.46
Backed Blades	6.58	6.11	5.22	7.75	5.23
Blackened And Retouched Blades	3.29	3.93	2.23	3.83	4.00
Retouched Flakes	4.11	7.86	9.32	7.66	7.38
Blade Blanks	24.69	15.72	19.40	14.69	16.30
Symmetric Points	2.46	1.74	4.10	3.83	3.69
Asymmetric Points	3.29	5.24	2.61	2.55	2.76
Tanged Points	0.00	1.31	0.00	0.95	0.92
Crescentic Points	2.46	2.18	2.61	3.51	3.38
Scalene Triangles	1.23	1.71	1.49	1.91	1.86
Lunates	2.46	2.62	4.47	3.51	2.76
Side Scraper Straight	4.94	5.24	2.98	4.15	4.30
Side Scraper Concave	3.29	2.62	4.10	2.55	2.46
End Scraper	4.11	3.49	4.47	3.19	5.53
Borers	4.94	2.62	2.98	4.47	2.76
Burins	2.46	5.24	3.35	5.11	4.30
Flake Blanks	11.52	12.22	15.67	13.41	16.61
Blade Cores	4.94	3.49	2.23	5.11	4.92
Core Fragments	6.58	6.11	4.47	5.75	3.38
	99.92	99.96	99.90	99.91	99.92

MLD : MEKALA DENNA

GMP : GAMALPADU

PPP : PAPAYAPALEM

NGT : NIMMALAGUNTA TANDA

BDW : BHODAWADA

TYLO TECHNOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The blade tool component comprising of retouch blades, serrated blades, backed blades and retouched backed blades constitute by far good number of specimens at all the five sites. They have been fabricated variously on blade blanks whose distal ends have been nipped away. They possess only one ridge parallel to margins on the proximal end. Depending on the necessity retouching is done along one of the margins. There are stray cases where the retouch is done on both then margins. By bunting one of the side margins backed blades obtained. Serrated blades are constituted a group of tools which are basically blade tools but possess saw like edge on one of the margins produced by careful retouch. In the association of the above specimens a few flakes with retouched side margins also occurred. Blade blanks in the association of the above tool kit constituted the blank medium.

Points of a variety are available at all the five location of the Mesolithic phase. On Mophralogical grounds they are divisible into symmetric points, asymmetric points and tanged points. Though the asymmetric and symmetric forms occurred at all the five locations the tanged variety is limited in occurrence at only Papayapalem, Gammalapadu and Nimmalagunta tanda. In either case all the specimens are fabricated on blade lets and flake blanks. The crescentic points which are available at all the location in varying densities are made exclusively on blade lets. Most of the blade tools are made blade lets, which are nipped from blades of longer dimensions. It must be noted here that the industries being poor in artifact densities we do not have micro-burins, though the employment of micro-burin technique for nipping blade lets of proper dimensions cannot altogether be ruled out.

A few triangles of scalene variety are collected at all the locations. The backing is done by careful secondary working and the employable units are sharp and straight. Also the working edges are free from retouch excepting that in isolated cases, there are a few sign of use damage.

Lunates are present at all the Mesolithic sites of the Naguleru valley (PLATES – XVII-A,B) They are fabricated on blade lets. The acr is not well developed but the chords are straight and sharp. On the dorasal side a flake ridge runs parallel to the chords. Occasionally signs of use damage are to be seen on some of the edges.

Among the scraper of the industries, which are present all the locations, side scrapers and end scrapers are identified. The scraping edge of a large number of side scrapers is targiht though in a small number of cases it is worked out to be concave. The steep scraping edges are obtained by careful retouch. Most of the side scrapers are found on long flakes excepting in a few cases where they are modeled on blade blanks as a Nimmalagunta tanda and Mekaladinne. Most of the end scrapers are produced on blade blanks at all the locations.

Borers made on blade blanks and flake blanks occur at all the locations. The tip of the borer in all the cases was worked out through bumarginal retouch.

The associated burins are made on blade cores. Their number is high at Nimmalagunta tanda, Gamalapadu and Papayapalem, In all the cases there is one burin facet.

Flake blanks in large numbers are obtained at all the five locations Numeraically they rank next to the blade blanks. The flake blanks might have been utilized for making scrapers and sometimes symmetric points.

The blade cores at all the locations indicate that they do not possess the flutatings all around their body. On the other hand they retain patches of cortex on portions of their cylindrical body.

In the association of the above artefacts a good number of core fragments are discovered at all the locations. They appear to be the result of the primary trimming of nodules.

Conclusion

In the present industries we do not come across core-rejuvenation flakes. On the whole the Mesolithic industries of the Naguleru valley exhibit some of the essential elements of the Mesolithic typology. The absence of trapezes and isosceles triangles would only make it a primitive Mesolithic enterprise. Also as most of the artefacts are made on quartz and very rarely chert was utilized, the industries place themselves at the beginning stages of the Mesolithic phase.

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