



# REVIEW OF RESEARCH

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## PREHISTORIC PERIOD OF SAGARA NADU

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### ABSTRACT:

*Prehistoric Era The history of mankind is often classified into pre-literate and prehistoric period. The prehistoric period is roughly said to have lasted for five million years till the beginning of the first BC. The human activity recorded in this period is classified as Stone Age and Bronze Age. Based on the fossils that indicated the human activity, this period is further divided into Paleolithic Age, Mesolithic Age, Neolithic Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Megalithic Age and Modern History. All these periods have taken place at different parts of the world at a different period of time. The human activity happened at different parts of world differ from the human culture that evolved during the Stone Age in India. Likewise, differences have been noticed in the human culture that emerged in the North West of India with that of the human culture Gujrat-Malwa and North and South Karnataka regions. Studies on Stone Age seems to have begun from Karnataka. As far the excavations, Kalburgi district is the most ancient administrative units among all the districts of Karnataka. Research studies have focused mainly on Sagaranaadu region of this district. D.H.Sankalia, K.Paddaiah and R.S. Pappu in association with Deccan College, Pune (1976) have conducted extensive research studies in Kalburgi region and have successfully excavated Stone Age sites in the catchment area of BhimaKrishna rivers. The efforts of R.S.Pappu and Paddaiah have not only prompted Archeological Survey of India to conduct detailed surveys in Shahpur, Surpur and Jewargitaluks but unearthed three Stone Age sites in Sagaranaadu region<sup>1</sup>*



**KEYWORDS:** Prehistoric Era, pre-literate and prehistoric period.

### INTRODUCTION

Early paliolithic Age Noted historian Joshi.R.V conducted a detailed survey in the Valley of Malaprabha River in 1955 and this is perhaps a more comprehensive study to be done in North Karnataka. R.S.Pappu followed the footsteps of Joshi and exerted more efforts to gather more evidences in Upper Krishna River catchment area in 1974. The research zeal of Paddaiah and Pappu resulted in unearthing Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Megalithic Age sites in Sagaranaadu region. These two researchers discovered Paleolithic tools such as backed blade, core, point, triangle, lunate and trapeze like scraper, burin and choppers. These tools are found in Agateertha, Arakera, Isapura, kachakanur, Kuppi, Kalladevanahally, Chikkahebbal, Channur, Teggihally, Devapura, Banahatty, Baichabala, Benakanahally, Mallura, Mudanura, Ediyapura, Sadaba, Hebbala and other places in Jewargitaluk<sup>2</sup>.

Middle Paleolithic Age Tools of middle Paleolithic Age have been found in Sagaranaadu which are made of flint, chert, jasper and chalcedony and quartz. These rock types were used to make a toolkit

consisting of hammer stone, stone cores, and sharp stone flakes. Middle Stone Age toolkits included points, which could be used to make spears; stone awls, which could have been used to perforate hides; and scrapers that were useful in preparing hide, wood, and other materials. As per the radiocarbon dating, this period lasted more than 10,000 to 40,000 years age<sup>3</sup>. The tools of this age have been found in Sagaranaadu and in Tumkur, Bhimarayan gudi, Machanur, Lingerashirivala in Shahpur and in Chennur, Rajola and Hothamadu villages in Jewargitaluk. Tools of Epipaleolithic age. But A. Sundara has discovered a tool making unit at BandeppanaSalawadigi in Hagaratigi Nadu near Sagaranaadu.

Mesolithic Age: K.Paddaiah, in 1970, has discovered sites of Mesolithic Age in Sagaranaadu. The studies conducted by Paddaiah have unfolded unique evidences about the food, housing and funeral rituals of this period. Also, his studies have thrown light on culture, socio-economic activities, belief system and artefacts. The Mesolithic man settled at one place thus stopping migration from place to place. He began to learn fishing, hunting, food gathering and agriculture. To carry out these activities, he used tiny stone tools. That is why this period is called Mesolithic Age. Burins, scrapers, chisels, hand axe and other tools of Mesolithic Age have been found in Sagaranaadu. These tools have been excavated in Chigarhally, Channur, Jewargi, Shahpur, Sagara, Vibhutihally, Rastapura, Manginahala, Tumkur, Basavanthapura, Kurihala, Kennekolagu, Dorenahally, Agaateertha Agni, Arakeri, Isampura, Kuppi, Kalladevanahally, Channura, Teggihally, Bijasapura, Mudanur, Yadiyapura, Rampura, Hebbala and other villages in Jewargi, Shapura and Surapurthaluks. The Stone Age sites have been found by the river sides but owing to density of population and agriculture, this Age might have been existed 2500 to 10,000 years ago in Sagaranaadu<sup>4</sup>.

Neolithic Age: The studies conducted in Sagaranaadu by K.Paddaiah in 1973 and Hanumantharao and S. Nagaraj in 1979 have unearthed the sites of Neolithic Age in Hunasagi, Mukihala, Bijasapura, Tanmandi, Shiravala, Roja, Benakanahally, Budihala, Biranur, and Talibidi villages<sup>5</sup>. Neolithic people manufactured a wide range of tools that were required for doing agriculture, harvesting of crops and also for storing of excess crops produced. With new occupations coming into light, new tools were invented. They continued to use flake implements made on flint, blade tools formed part of other heavy tools for example the blade tools were fitted into wooden handles to be used as awl, graver, saw, sickle etc. Wet sand stone was used as abrasive. The tools in Neolithic period became more sophisticated and strong. The new stone working technique were used for making tools including plane choppers, wedges and chisels. All Neolithic tools like axes and adzes were having handles. A polished stone axe head of this period is commonly known as Celt. They were highly polished with sharp edges. Another important feature of this Age is Neolithic people made a heap of animal dung and wood. This practice is equated to the traditional fire set up during Holi festival of modern days. As per the radiocarbon dating, this age might have started in 1000 BC<sup>6</sup>. Studies have shown that the Neolithic Sites in North India are more ancient than the sites found in South India.

Chalcolithic Age: Chalcolithic Age succeeded the Neolithic Age in South India. This Age which started in Indus Valley around 4000 years ago, entered South India in 1200 BC<sup>7</sup>. The pottery fossils found in Sagaranaadu are compared to that of the pottery of Jorway and Savala. A main identifying characteristic of the Chalcolithic period is polychrome painted pottery. Ceramic forms found on Chalcolithic sites include fenestrated pottery pots with openings cut into the walls. Stone tools include adzes, chisels, picks and chipped stone tools with central perforations. Such artefacts are found in Tintini, Thanamadi, Thampa, Budihal, Bonala, Bandoli, Benakanahally, KanneKoluru, Biranur, Budihal, Ijeri, Vadageri and Haranur villages<sup>8</sup>.

Megalithic Age: Most extant megaliths were erected between the Neolithic period through the Chalcolithic period and into the Bronze Age. A megalith is a stone which is larger in size and has been used to construct a monument or a structure. The monument or the structure has been constructed either alone or together with other stones. Megalithic has been used to describe buildings built by people living in many different periods from many parts of the world. The construction of this type of structures took place mainly in the Neolithic and continued into the Chalcolithic Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. There are large numbers of megaliths found in Hirebenakal village in Gangavathitaluk of Koppal district. Walking among these structures, one gets the eerie feeling of being in a ghost town of

abandoned houses. Moriyara Mane (houses of the dwarves) is what the local residents of Hire Benakal call these. Legend has it that these structures were the houses of an extinct dwarf race called the Moriyas who were endowed with superhuman strength to split and heft heavy stone slabs to erect them<sup>9</sup>. There are many types of megalithic structures seen; Menhir, Cists, Dolmenoid Cists, Dolmenoid Cists with Single Cairn circle, Dolmenoid Cists with Double Cairn circle. There are many monuments of different sizes and forms at various places across Karnataka including Sagaranaadu. Sagaranaadu contains a variety of megalith types, making it virtually a museum of megalith forms. The large dolmens discussed earlier are the most prominent. They are box-like structures made of four upright stone slabs, with a large capstone covering and weighing down the structure. Though the dolmens are tall enough for a grown person to walk in erect, the portholes are small in diameter. Dolmenoid cists are smaller structures, about a metre tall, built in a similar manner as the dolmens, but half-buried in the ground. Cists are rectangular stone-lined graves fully sunk into the ground. Apart from these, there are crude dolmens made by raising a slab on smaller rocks and plugging the gaps with stone blocks and natural rock shelters plugged with stone blocks to create an enclosure. Given the sheer extent and number of monuments in Karnataka, it must have been a composite site built up over centuries. It is said that this age began from 1200 BC to 1000 BC and continued till 2nd or 3rd century. In Karnataka, this age witnessed decline in 1200BC to 250 BC<sup>10</sup>. A large number of terracotta pottery dated to the Megalithic Iron Age period has also been excavated in parts of Sagaranaadu. The importance of the vast urn-burial site is that it belongs to a period earlier than the Megalithic Age in Sagaranaadu. The conical bottomed urns were buried below the soil surface. While some had ritual pottery and terracotta plates inside, others were empty. There were disintegrated human bones in several urns. It was discovered that the cairn circles or the big stones, i.e., liths, were placed in a circle on the surface of the soil and urns were kept below them. The urns were found to have been kept inside cists.

Another important feature of Megalithic culture, besides iron, is terracotta vessels. These terracotta vessels are coated with red and black colour. Interestingly, terracotta vessels were also used to bury dead bodies, including children and they were called 'pot burials'. In addition to burying the dead bodies, the earthen vessels were used to store food grains<sup>11</sup>. Such earthen wares are largely found the vicinity of Sagaranaadu such as Vibhutihally, Roja, Rakhamgera, Kolluru (Shahpur taluk), Arakeri, Chikkenahally, Ryamanahala, Yarakihala, Hebbala, Andola, Ijeri, Jewargi, Vadageri and Sigarthahalli<sup>12</sup> (Jewargi talluk).

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