

Pre Historic Sites of Kampli Taluk

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Abstract:

The Kampli taluk archaeological region, situated in the Bellary district of Karnataka, is a significant locale within the Southern Neolithic cultural zone of South India. Positioned near the Tungabhadra River, Kampli has yielded a rich array of prehistoric evidence, including habitation remains, megalithic burials, and rock art. These findings point to a continuous human presence from the Neolithic through the Iron Age, and into the early historic period. Excavations and surface explorations at Kampli have revealed stone tools, pottery shards, and ash mounds, suggesting agrarian lifestyles, animal domestication, and ritual practices. The presence of veeragallu indicates a warrior-centric culture and social stratification during the early historic period. Kampli's archaeological record contributes significantly to understanding the settlement patterns, socio-economic structures, and religious practices of prehistoric and early historic communities in the Tungabhadra Valley. Its proximity to major historical centers like Hampi enhances its relevance in tracing cultural and political transitions in South Indian history.

Keywords: Hale Nelludi; Menhir; Black stone; Kanive Thimmlapura; Prehistoric; Wild boar; Devalapura; Siting image; Metri; Ash mound;

Introduction

In India, there are many examples of early human beings living in different periods of prehistory. It may be noted that the geographical environment of the state of Karnataka was very conducive to the habitation of primitive man and his livelihood activities started here since ancient times. In pre-writing, the period of human culture has been identified as the prehistoric period. 1 Archaeologists have investigated the sites, ruins and paintings of the prehistoric period from various researches and have divided certain stages in human life and development into Old Stone Age, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Copper Stone Age and Iron Age chronologically. The State of Karnataka is home to thousands of prehistoric settlements associated with each of the Central and State Archaeological Departments, various universities, research scholars and some organizations, amateur researchers, archaeological scholars and many primitive human settlements have come to light in Karnataka.

1. Hale Nelludi

Hale Nelludi is situated in the Kampli-Kurugodu road, about 10 km from Kampli. The distance from here to Bellary is about 40 kms. The village is located on the banks of the Narihalla, which is of historical importance. The distance between the town and the village is about half a mile. It is also

known as Gurudevvara Siddeshwara Deva or Siddalingappa Deva. It is noteworthy that in the last century, Jede Tatha or Jadesidda Shivayogis (1809-1899) of Shivasharana Emmiga Noor in Bellary district often stayed in this temple. The fact that Sharana, Chalavadi Hunumappa, is also an old stone, testifies to the importance of this edam.

The river here overflows only during the rainy season and flows from the south to the west. It flows between the old and the new. Now many traces have been found that this lake has been playing an important role in the development of environmental culture here since ancient times. About 60 years ago, people who left Old Stone due to the plague, walked about 2 km. A new bridge was built on the other side of the canal. Their lands are still in ruins. There are about 180 families here. The total here. The majority of the population (about 1100) is Chalavadis and Kurubas. Among the rest, there are many. The historical remains now found in the Old Stone Age period. Agasebaghillu, Buddekallu, Anjaneya temple near Agasebaghillu and the closed trenches bear witness to the fact that the village was once surrounded by a defensive wall. The idol of 'Veeranna' was kept on the bank of Maledibba, south of the village. Now there is only an idol, no tree. The idol is facing east. Among the temples in the town, the main ones are the Eshwar Temple and the idols of Lord Venkateswara. Among these, the black stone idol of Mahishasuramardini is the main one. It is built in the Nalamba-Pallava style of architecture.

The main attraction of this village is Siddeshwara Devanele, which is located outside the town. The three lingas in black stone, the sculptures of Nandi and Gajalakshmi, and the Veeragala stone sculptures in kerosene, attract attention. There is a huge temple here which was built during the Nalamba-Pallava period. Although there is no Siddheshwar temple here now, its ruins can be seen. It is special that in the expanse of about 60 feet this place is completely covered by the ancient Gona Damra or Gondumara. It is considered sacred and beneficial from the medical point of view. Although it is believed that sugar used to fall from this tree in every Shravan month, in reality, the little flower left in it is as sweet as sugar.

According to the 11th-century Nalamba-Pallava inscription, which is placed in front of the Siddheshwara temple, the Pallava Permanandideva, who assumed the mantle of Vipranarayana, is said to have been the one who fiercely abandoned Gurudevvara Siddheshwara in the Nerunnagalla field. The Pallava Permanandidevaru, who comes in the text of this inscription with a curse and who gave the land grant to Siddheshwara Deva, was a Ghatayankara of the Nalamba-Pallava dynasty. 1010-1024). It is known that Udayaditya was the Pallava Permanadi of Jagadekamalla, who ruled from 1024-1054. An inscription on the door from this king states that he left an abundance of land for the upkeep of a gurukula there (S.E., 1X-1 No. 80). This inscription is significant in that the king first shifted his capital from Henjeru to Kampili in Bellary district. Also, a 1028 CE inscription of the same king near Kalleshwara Temple in Kallukamba village of Bellary Taluk confirms that this king lived in the abode of Vipranarayana. The fact that the old stone is next to Kampili also increases the possibility that this king had arranged for an earthwork for Gurudevvara Siddheshwara. Since his time was a peacetime without wars, there was room for more attention to administrative reform and the distribution of charities.

It can be argued that the prefix 'Nerunna' in the inscription 'Nerunnagallu' is the original form of the present place name 'Nelludi'. It is possible that the neeruna gradually ground into the present day paddy. 'Nerunna' is a compound word meaning 'straight' and 'straight'. It is clear that this word points directly to a physical evidence that led to the place name here. If the inscription 'Nerunagallu' means stone, an upright stone, then the inscription and the standing stone (**Menhir**) in the vicinity of Siddheshwara Devanelai in the present context justify this claim. Called by locals as the Standing Stone, the monument

sheds new light on its original name and the fact that the area has been inhabited since prehistoric times. Standing gallows (menhirs) are memorial stones set up on the sides of prehistoric graves.

The stone that has now been discovered is a black stone. Its surface is well rubbed and smooth. This practice indicates that the stone was associated with worship. Its height is 1.42 m; the average width is 1m. Its thickness at the base is 42 cm. 15 cm at the top. Its length is 36 cm. It's wide. 21 cm in length. m. There is a diameter man-made hole (cup-mark), in which there are two more holes that have been dug inside. Similarly, about 20 holes of different diameters have been made on the surface of the platform from the base to the tip. [This author notes that of the forty new steles he has so far discovered in Chitradurga district, several have cup-marks.] All in all, this unique sandstone has all the main characteristics of the Neolithic. With the cooperation of the villagers this memorial stone which was lying east - west and got stuck in the dust has now been lifted and kept in good condition. The shepherds of this village worship this stone even today, which indicates that it has remained a ritualistic monument from the beginning.

It is clear from these that the ancient stone environment, which was important in the time of the Nolamba-Pallavas, had been awakened since the time of prehistoric man. Significantly, one of the most important traces of Neolithic life, Ash mound, has now been discovered on the banks of the Narihalla. About 2 miles to the north. It is located in the Shantinagar Subbarao Camp on the eastern bank of Narihalla. The land here is called the "cradle." This is a key finding of the present study. The ash mound, which is about 1 metre thick and 956 metres wide, has survived despite extensive erosion caused by prolonged digging. Ash is found in heaps here in the form of lumps. Such craters are found in many places. For example, there is an ash heap on the side of Venkatakondappa's field in the Muddapura environs. Along with this, the 'garasina set' in the Subba Rao camp has also come to light. The relationship between the postulate explored in the Old Stone and these ash plumes may be superficially plausible. Overall, the study reveals that Old Stone Age has material possibilities from prehistoric to post-Vijayan times and still continues to be a living village. As such, it is clear that ancient prehistoric remains are a prime example of the process by which the past controls and directs the future. The impact of the past on the present can be seen in the context of thousands of villages in India.

2. Kanavi Thimmalapura

Gavivarna paintings (Cave Painting) of prehistoric times have recently been discovered in the Hiregudda area of Thimlapura village in the valley of Kampli Taluk in Ballari district. It is about 10 km from the city. Recently, Talavara Narasimha, an assistant professor in the history department of Government First Grade College, Sandur, unearthed prehistoric Gavi Varna paintings as evidence that Thimmalapura village, a remote valley, was the abode of early humans. The images were found in the forest of Hiregudda, about 4 km from Thimmalapur village in the valley, and belong to the Megalithic age Age or Iron Age. Ravi Kori Shettar, Shri. Sharanabasappa Kolkar and Shejeshwar Director, Department of Archaeology, Hampi. The Scholar said. These images were created around 1100 BCE to 500 BCE. These are 3000 years old. Stone Age man painted these images, most notably an 8-foot-long and 5-foot-tall wild boar. Some scholars have suggested that this could be the case. Along with this picture, a lot of bulls and pictures of human beings and other pictures can also be seen. These are helpful in understanding the culture of the Kampli region. This cave Paintings describes the characteristics of prehistoric paintings, which may help the country's scholars to carry out further studies.

The paintings date from about 1100 BCE to about 500 BCE. These pictures are 3000 years old. You can see these pictures. In particular, the image of an 8-foot-long and 5-foot-high rhinoceros is considered by some scholars to be a rhinoceros. Along with this picture, a lot of bulls and pictures of human beings and other pictures can also be seen. These are helpful in understanding the culture of the Kampli region.



Picture of a Wild boar measuring 8 feet long and 5 feet wide

3. Devalapura

Stone Carvings paintings and musical stones dating back 3,000 years have been found in a hillock near Devlapur in Kampli taluk. The bullets are six inches long and four inches wide and have images of bull, tiger, other animals and humans. Along with this, an eight-foot high, four-foot wide flat stone and three bed sheets on the side are pierced on which music is heard. An image of a primitive human found in a hill near Devalapura. The sound emanating from the pillars at the Vijayavithala temple in Hampi can be heard here as well. Looking at the pictures of Kutu in this part, it can be identified that these are the features of the early human habitation. Recently this place was discovered by Dr.Govind Assistant Professor in Kannada Department, Hampi University.



A prehistoric Sitting image discovered on a hill near Devalapur

4. Ash mound of Metri village

Metri village is 9 km from Kampli taluk and 40 km from Bellary district headquarters. Geographically,

this village is surrounded by hills and mountains. In the western direction, there are huge granite boulders in the line of hills. Along with it is the Karekallu hill. This hill extends for about 2 km from east to west. To the north of this hill, there is a fertile land with small natural streams that overflow during the rainy season and flat land where water stagnates.

Two previously undiscovered ash mounds have been discovered in this village. This research confirms that the environment around Metri village was a suitable place for the settlement of Neolithic people. The ash mounds found in this village are analyzed for prehistoric pit and scratch paintings. Two ash mounds have been found on the edge of the Karakallu hill in the west-northwest direction in this village. One ash mound is a huge ash mound in an open field on the edge of the Karakallu hill. In addition to it, there is a small ash mound at a place called Akshara Gundu, i.e. on the upper side of the hill. The huge ash mound in the open field below the hill is spread over an area of about a quarter of an acre. Its height is about 4 to 5 feet. The locals have taken the ash from the top to the bottom of this mound to cultivate it and to put this soil (ash) on the houses. This helps in identifying the layers of the bottom and finding the remains. This mound has been destroyed by half. It is completely in a dilapidated state. Its upper part is hard like burnt iron filings. Similarly, the inner part i.e. the lower layer is found as soft ash powder. Pottery fragments. Stone tools can also be seen in this layer. Stone tools related to the Neolithic age have been found in the vicinity of this mound. The ash mound near Aksharagundu, although small, can be seen in its natural state without being disturbed by the locals or any natural disaster. Since this ash mound is on a hill, it is safe without any kind of disturbance.

Background of Ash Mound Research : The problem of ash mounds or ash mounds in the archaeological context has aroused the interest of a large number of scholars. In this regard, about 70-75 (Bellary-Raichur) sites have been discovered from the 1840s to 1993. Robert Bruce Put examined some of the ash mounds and the remains of the surrounding Neolithic cultures and recorded them in his work 'India Pre-Proto Antiquities' and concluded that they were of the same period. The study of these ash mounds continued in 1995 and later. One mound at Uttanur has been scientifically reconstructed. Earlier, Majumdar and Rajaguru had excavated the ash mound at Sanganakall and the ash mound at Rama Reddy Palya and presented their respective opinions based on their studies. Similarly, Peddaya excavated the ash mound at Budihal between 1992 and 1995. The results of this were briefly recorded in Karnataka History Volume-1 edited by A. Sundar. A. Sundar believes that Mackenzie was probably the first to mention some ash mounds in the Bellary region. Scholars who have given further explanations about these are F.R. Altin, Rama Reddy, Peddaya, Majumdar, Rajaguru, S.R. Rao, A. Sundar, P.C. Venkatasubbaiah and Ravi Kori Shettar, etc. have studied and presented their respective opinions. Scholars' opinions on the construction of ash mounds: Ash mounds are the main remains found during the Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Iron Age periods. During this stage, animal husbandry developed along with agriculture, and the huge ash mounds formed by burning cattle dung indicate the extent of animal husbandry. These ash mounds are often found in prehistoric sites and in areas near villages. They are found in large numbers in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Among them, the important sites in the Bellary district are Sanganakallu, Kappagallu, Belagallu, Halakundi, Kuduthini, Tekkalakote, Halenelludi, Konchigeri, Ingalagi, Kurekuppa, Kakubalu, Gadiganur, Nimbapur, Venkatapur, Shanavasapura, Sirigeri and Metri (the author has newly discovered ash mounds in the last two sites). Chemists have explained their opinion on the formation of these ash mounds in this way. They have expressed through research that these are such ash mounds because the dung of cattle was burnt at very high temperatures (i.e. about 1200 centigrade). Such ash mounds are called by different names by the

locals. For example, they are called boodi dibba, boodi dinne, halu dilla, boodigudda, boodikanive. When asked about their construction, locals say that they were formed by burning heroes and demons. Scholars have different opinions about how these ash mounds or ash mounds were formed.



Ash Mound Metri Village

- According to Robert Bruce Foote, 'Neolithic people, when they were raising cattle, would pile up the dung of large herds (groups) and burn it from time to time, as it was waste. These dung mounds would accidentally catch fire and burn to ashes.
- According to F.R. Alvin, ash mounds were cattle sheds (places where cattle were kept) where large amounts of dung would gradually accumulate. It would be burned. Since this process took place from top to bottom in the same place, it would gradually form layers.
- According to Rama Reddy, ash mounds were originally mounds formed by collecting iron ore and burning it to make metal.
- According to Majumdar and Rajguru, ash mounds or ash mounds were not originally pots, but dung collected from cattle pots and stored elsewhere. Such aggregates are called ash mounds.
- According to K. Peddaya, ash mounds were formed by burning cattle dung, but since the fire was kept for days (at night), it was a measure to keep away wild animals that came to catch domesticated animals and humans.
- According to A. Sundar, it must have been a practice to burn such large amounts of dung in memory of famous heroes of the people who used to cremate their dead by cremation in the past. There are many opinions about such strange ash mounds. One is true. These are indeed from the prehistoric period and their period is about 1000 BC. Archaeologists have estimated that it dates back to 2000-600 BC.

Key things learned from ash mounds : In the Neolithic Age, it seems that agriculture was mainly dependent on animal husbandry. People who settled in the hills and mountains must have kept their livestock in barns. The dung that was collected daily was piled up on one side and burned from time to time as it was waste. Or these dung mounds must have been deliberately set on fire. It is possible that it gradually burned down and formed ash mounds.

Rock paintings in Metri village: In this village, there are countless rock paintings on the rocks in the middle and upper levels of the hills, like a pile of large rocks on the Karekallu hill. A large number of images of bulls have been found on this hill. Along with these, there are images of deer, wild buffalo, **human images and images of people riding horses**. It is noteworthy that images have been found at this site from the Neolithic to the historical period. The rock paintings of Metri village are mostly similar

to the rock paintings found at the Tekkalkote and Hale Daroji sites, which are the prehistoric sites adjacent to this village. Their time period can be identified as belonging to the Neolithic and Copper Stone Age culture periods.

Bulls standing face to face: Images of bulls have been found mostly in the prehistoric period of Karnataka. In the open-air rock paintings, the images of bulls are the ones that seem to have some kind of interest for this ancient painter in depicting pairs of animals standing opposite each other. The images of bulls from Metri village have their own uniqueness in the design of the crest and body. The structure of these bulls is different, with the face and crest resembling a blackbuck and the body resembling a bull. Images of this type can also be seen in Halakundi, Kappagallu, and Durgamma hills. This style of images is described briefly as being related to the Neolithic era (Mohan R. Chitrare Ravaru in his work titled Karnataka Primitive Painting).

A picture of a man hunting a wild boar : The wild boar carving in this site is very special. Its lines are very beautiful and attractive. Its lines are shown in an oval shape. This picture is depicted as a man hunting with a bow and arrow. This picture is very rarely seen in carvings. This type of pictures of wild buffalo and buffalo are found in large numbers in the Emmegudda of Kallur. Similarly, wild buffalo pictures can be found in sites such as Tekkalakot, Halakundi, Kappagallu (Bellary district), Nayakallu (Ananthapur district), Maski (Raichur district), etc. Such pictures are very rare in prehistoric art and more research needs to be done on them.



A picture of bulls standing face to face

A Picture of a man Hunting a Wild buffalo



Handprints in Siting paintings : In ancient times, man also used his hand as a painting material. When he had to paint hand pictures, he would dip his hands in a colored solution and directly press the images on the rock walls to create pictures. These handprints are found in large numbers in paintings. But they are usually found in Kuttu paintings. These handprints are found in large numbers in left-handed handprints. Right-handed handprints are found in small numbers, and two handprints are rarely seen. Handprints have so far been found only in paintings, and for the first time in Kuttu paintings, handprints have been recorded in Piklihalu and Bhillamarayanagudda (Raichur district), according to Mohan R. in his work Karnataka Primitive Painting. Similarly, it is noteworthy that handprints have also been found in Kappagallu, Tekkalkote (Bellary district) sites. The authors have recently identified handprints in Kuttuchitras from sites such as Gulyapalayam, Pampanur (Ananthapur district) and Kandanathi (Kurnool district) and presented a paper on these data at the Andhra Pradesh History Congress in

January 2019. Handprints are found in Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Iron Age cultural sites such as Kappagallu, Tekkalkote in Varna and Kuttuchitras. Even in modern times (in rural areas), handprints (chatta siya) can be seen around the house during weddings. Similarly, the practice of pressing handprints on the bodies of cattle during the Karahunnim festival is still alive today. There is no doubt that Kuttu fingerprints shed special light on history.

Conclusion:

The prehistoric sites of Kampli Taluk offer invaluable insights into the early phases of human settlement and cultural evolution in southern India. Archaeological findings—including Paleolithic tools, Neolithic ash mounds, and Iron Age megalithic burials—demonstrate that this region was a continuous cradle of human activity for thousands of years. The presence of diverse material culture reflects a gradual transition from nomadic hunting-gathering communities to settled agricultural and pastoral societies. Kampli's geographical position near the Tungabhadra River provided essential resources and strategic advantages that sustained human life across various prehistoric periods. The region's material heritage not only highlights local technological and social advancements but also connects Kampli to broader cultural developments in the Deccan plateau. Preserving and studying these sites is crucial for reconstructing the deep history of Karnataka and understanding the roots of South Indian civilization.

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