

Pre historic Life in the Jaffna Peninsula - A Preliminary Investigations for the study of Stone Age culture based on Archaeological Evidences.

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Abstract:

The investigation undertaken here on prehistoric life in the Jaffna Peninsula is a preliminary study of the stone age culture based on archaeological evidences. Having considered the remarkable collection of stone implements from the Jaffna Peninsula, it is expected to stratify the cultural successions before the historical records came to use in the Peninsula. Most of the excavation missions so far have been deployed in this region which focused light on the Megalithic cultural layers and material culture of the period. But for the first time an excavation mission was targeted by the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka with finding of prehistoric layer deposits and prehistoric remains at Kantarodai and Mayakkai in 2011 and 2020 respectively in the Peninsula. The concept of prehistoric settlements in the Jaffna Peninsula had been developed from the research findings of this author who has been working since more than 30 years in collecting of material like stone tools in many variety which had been used by the mankind lived in this Peninsula before the written records come to the usage. This investigation has been categorized into the three main divisions based on the material we received in relation to the prehistoric life adopted in this land. Having conducted explorations, surface collections and unexpected discoveries of artifacts from the archaeological sites like Mayakkai Cave site in Point Pedro District and the Lower Valley of Thondamanaru salt water basin site have yielded much stone implements from time to time. The most important discovery was held that the 31st Layer of the 2nd Trench Pit at Kantarodai (excavation held in 2011) which exposes the prehistoric sediments. Thus, the morphology of the stone tools found so far from the Peninsula stimulate us to develop a room for research space for prehistoric life existed in this peninsular region. Though the time span of the prehistoric culture is much wider, our material collections are very narrow for this particular period of research as the title indicates the aim and scope of the investigation is a preliminary studies. Our proposed hypotheses have enhanced to highlight the prehistoric cultural strata with the life style of the people who lived before the historic ages. Therefore, this is not an entity of un-witnessed mission or concepts but the collection of accumulated man made implements from the surface basins of Thondamanaru and Valukiyaru have testified our hypotheses that 'The prehistoric settlement was formed from the sand dune area which was located in Vadamaradchi- East, as the northern edge of the expansion of Iranaimadu Culture ends. B.) Deviation of Neolithic Life and Microlithic culture intermingled in the Lower part of Thondamanaru Salt basin and C.) Prehistoric Cultural epicentre was formed at Mayakkai in Vadamaradchi as socio- economic influences received from Iranaimadu Basin at the time. However, to make very clear cut phenomena of the prehistoric cultural phases from Palaeolithic, Microlithic and Neolithic cultural strata in the Jaffna Peninsula we need to have stratigraphic evidences which will be available when excavations taking place. However, in this introductory research a preliminary examination has been done in order to verifying the collected stone tools of the cultures.

Keywords: *Prehistory, Cultural Epicentre, Iranaimadu Culture, Stratigraphy, Trench. Morphology, Cultural Successions.*

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Some Issues: Stone Age Culture in Sri Lanka & South India

Tamil Nadu and Kerala's commercial and cultural ties with the Northern Sri Lanka have played very important role to evolve the base of cultural layers and resulted as receiving and amalgamating the culture from South India rather than the Southern Sri Lanka. As a region of cultural buffer in between Southern Sri Lanka and Southern India, the Northern Sri Lanka (including the Islands of the Jaffna Peninsula) have paved the cultural foundation and construct the superstructure throughout the years of its history. Therefore, the interchanging of the material culture in the Northern region begun from the early periods, and the peninsular Jaffna had played as a bridge between South India and Sri Lanka. But we do not know much of the prehistoric interlinks between South East Asia and Sri Lanka. Now due to the recent archaeological findings it is believed that the migration had taken place from South India to Sri Lanka during the Palaeolithic period onwards and the cultural exchanges were very active from the Sub-Continent to Sri Lanka. But the Eastern sea shore of Sri Lanka was often influenced from Malaysian Archipelago during the historical periods as literatures and the monuments of that region have been testifying. On that way scholars do believe that the origin and development of Iranaimadu Culture were boosted from the South East Asian countries otherwise Atirampakkam of Kotalaiyaru basin from South India. Thus the stone tool makers who were influenced by Indo-Asian countries penetrated to Iranaimadu Region and then might have penetrated into the region of Vadamarachi-East where the Stone Age settlers found the Rock-shelter at Mayakkai gravel area. It is with this intention in this brief research, we are attempting to trace the history of antiquity of man in Jaffna as it was confirmed with the Acheulean type Hand-Axe found at this cave where the stone implement was used by the Homo-erectus man. Thus, considering the prehistoric environments of the region in Vadamaradchi had launched the first settlement of human beings in Jaffna, i.e. Homo erectus and the first man-made shelter was at Mayakkai cave around 600000 BP. For the datum line for living Homo-erectus man we should have a look at the distribution of the same cultures in the neighborhood i.e. in South India as Dr V.Selvakumar gives a potential brief records on the Stone Age material Culture of South India recently in his research work which as follows (Selvakumar, 2010:17-27).

“...Now scholars generally agree that the Acheulian culture emerged in India due to the migration of the Homo erectus species from Africa. In India, the Lower Paleolithic phase is dated to about 700000 years to 20000 years BP. The Achulian tradition also continues into the Middle Paleolithic period. Lower Paleolithic sites are found in several parts of India... Aitirampakkam is one of the earliest Palaeolithic sites in to be discovered in India. Several scholars have studied this site from early 19th century onwards. Shanti Pappu and her team excavated this site recently. These excavations have revealed very important evidence for early human occupations. Achulian living floor and animal foot prints and animal fossil bones have been excavated at this site. Palaeomagnetic measurements suggest an age within the Bruhes-Matuyama chronology of 730000 years BP.”

There is no doubt that in the Southern tip of South Indian progress on Prehistoric Archaeology now have reached to a remarkable achievement. There are many sites have been plotted for the existence of Palaeolithic culture in South India and even in the regions located to the South of Madurai for this settlement in Tamil Nadu are very important in our research view point.

K. Indrapala in his recent research publication gives a summary of pre and proto historical developments in both, South India and Sri Lanka under the caption of ‘Peopling of the Region–The common Gene Pool’ (Indrapala, 2005:36).

“Not much can be learned about these early humans other than about their obvious activities of hunting and gathering. The techniques employed by them to make their stone tools were basically very similar to those found in west Asia, Europe and Africa. The majority of the Lower Palaeolithic artefacts were made of quartzite. Some developments began to occur in the Middle Palaeolithic period which was „a time of regional and local diversity both in terms of stone technology and artifact types“. In the Upper Palaeolithic period, the stone industries „represent a marked and fairly consistent change in methods of making stone tools” (Indrapala, 2005:38).

Scholars from the universities of Sri Lanka have not much paid the attention on investigations pertaining to the prehistoric archaeology of the Northern part of Sri Lanka for a long period, but they are very rigorously and intentionally working on the Buddhist culture and sometimes the pre-Buddhist and the Megalithic culture in the Central and the Southern Regions of Sri Lanka. The reason was why that the unbalanced political situations prevailed in the North and East with South for a long time is the main fact that prevented their attention of the mission of deployment of Archaeological activities in the North and the East. But now the political situation in the North has completely changed and a new enthusiasm has developed in this particular field of investigations and the members and the officers of the department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka now has turned amicably to consider on the antiquity of the past of this Northern region. Therefore, the situation has now provoked to the researchers from Southern Sri Lanka to make data analysis of the archaeological and inscriptional evidences from the Northern region. Thus, the benefits and results of the investigations of this region definitely promote the inter-cultural relationships not only among the Sri Lankan communities but among the academicians and researchers from South India and interNational countries. The recent discussions made on the prehistoric findings of artifacts in Jaffna with V. Selvakumar and S.Rajan of Tanjore and Pondichery universities respectively were resulted with mutual exchanges of ideas which enhance to establish the prehistoric culture in this region. Therefore, to investigate on the stone age material culture in the Jaffna peninsula, we should have a look at the distribution of the same cultures in the neighborhood i.e. in South India.

Archaeologists of South India and Sri Lanka have defined on the distribution of Palaeolithic culture in South Asia situated along with the gravel deposits which contain the gravel layer along the coast of the semi-arid zones belonging to the quaternary period

is one of the most important locations that yields prehistoric evidence. On the basis of this theory they have tried to advocate that there will be no Palaeolithic life pattern and Palaeolithic phase to the south of Madurai in South India. This objectified statement is meant for the inclusion of Sri Lanka too and in Sri Lanka there are no any possibilities to find anything in regards to stratum of Paleolithic cultural life. K. Indrapala has decisively believing the same theory regarding the Paleolithic culture in Sri Lanka. However, in the current status of progress of the investigation in finding the stone tools of Acheulean type (of the Lower Palaeolithic Culture) has provoked us not only to change the time limit on the existence of Palaeolithic culture in Sri Lanka in particular but also this new finding motivate the Archaeologists to avail new interpretations of prehistoric culture in the Jaffna Peninsula and to find new dating line for Palaeolithic strata with South Asian context.

A simple summary of the evidence relating to the Palaeolithic period as given by F.R Allchin who has studied the prehistory of South Asia almost throughout the second half of the twentieth century. F. R. Allchin's statement runs which as follow: "...the Palaeolithic industries of the Pleistocene can be divided into three major groups, on the basis of the shape, size and method of manufacture of the principal artefact types. The Lower Palaeolithic is characterized by hand axes, cleavers, chopping tools, and related artefact forms. Middle Palaeolithic industries are characterized by smaller, lighter tools based upon flacks struck from cores, which in some cases are carefully shaped and prepared in advance; the Upper Palaeolithic by yet lighter artefacts and parallel-sided blades and burins" (Allchin & Allchin 1982:33).

However, a concept on prehistoric life in the Jaffna Peninsula has been developed on an archaeological basis one decade back by P. Ragupathy and that the view is now under the review because of the earliest cultural layers in the Peninsula preceded to Megalithic strata at Kantarodai (2011), Kalabhumi and Thus the opinion that the early settlements in the Jaffna Peninsula by the Megalithic settlers are now has been replaced as weaken up and a new theory has been forwarded with recent discoveries. The first huts in the Jaffna peninsula appeared not from Karainagar (Kalabhumi) but from Mayakkai and then from Thondamanaru salt river basin (Achuvely to Kopay). Further, the recent exploration works conducted by the author in the Myliddy harbor and its hinterland area which revealed the Microlithic tools along with the Megalithic artefacts. Thus, by keeping concerned on the morphology of the stone tools found so far in the Jaffna peninsula in particular, we able to confirm that the Palaeolithic man was living here in the first phase and in the third phase, Microlithic people have been identified in three main sites such as the major sites in the Peninsula like Karainagar-Kalabhumi, Kantarodai and Myliddy Harbour. Then in the fourth phase, Megalithic settlements came into the social formation in the Jaffna Peninsula. Megalithic settlements in the third century B.C. onwards were embraced the Buddhist culture in its inception in the Jaffna Peninsula. Of the three major Microlithic sites in the Peninsula, Karainagar-Kalabhumi is indicating the intermingled cultural developments of Microlithic culture with Megalithic culture likewise Mayakkai and Myliddy cultures are also had cultural fusion with Megalithic culture. These both

prehistoric sites in the Jaffna Peninsula are receiving very keen attention of the scholars now as the Iranaimadu culture gave the route of developments of prehistoric settlers in the Jaffna Peninsula. Therefore, a feasibility of environment of existing Microlithic culture is indicating and enhancing to develop the prehistoric life system prevailed prior to the Megalithic culture in the Jaffna Peninsula. In this way prior to the Microlithic culture in the Peninsula the Palaeolithic culture existed here as the Mayakkai Cave site was identified as Palaeolithic stone age settlements area.

Iranaimadu Basin and Iranaimadu Culture

It is felt to spell out briefly on the Iranaimadu Culture which enhanced our hypothesis of this research because of our discovery of Achuelian Hand Axe from Vadamaradchi has intimately related with the kind of hand-axe unearthed from Iranaimadu Basin. Of course, Iranaimadu is nowadays well known to archaeologists as it is located in Kilinochchi district but its cultural influences from the dawn of life of man kinds in this Island Nation mat not be known to all. The researchers and the students of prehistory of Sri Lanka have no any way to unknown from Iranaimadu Culture. The term ‘*Iranaimadu Formation*’ is often used by the prehistoric archaeologists in Sri Lanka and S. Deraniyagala, the champion of prehistoric wellversed archaeologist of Sri Lanka, is the scholar who using this terminology often on his monumental works, *The Prehistory of Sri Lanka Vol. I & II*. According to him this Iranaimadu *Formation* is running towards south up to Mankulam and towards west up to Murungan in Mannar Di strict. When Deraniyagala define the prehistoric man’s habitation site in Sri Lanka, he divides into three categories of deposits in which archaeological remains were unearthed such as 1). The Ratnapura river Basin deposits of the lowland wet Zone, 2). The coastal alluvial deposits and sand dunes of the Iranaimadu Formation in the semi-arid Zone and 3). The Rock shelters and open air sites of the lowland wet Zone. ‘Out of these the second category, the gravel layer along the coast of the semi-arid zones belonging to the Quaternary period is one of the most important locations that yields prehistoric evidence. Due to erosion these deposits have turned from a dark red to a reddish brown. This deposit which is spread in a large area was first identified by E.J. Weyland as *plato deposit* and latter known as the *Iranaimadu Formation IFm*’. Further, S.Deraniyagala has stressing a view that on the Lower Palaeolithic strata in Sri Lanka was not clearly well documented so far but many stone implements have been collected stand for the period of Lower Palaeolithic culture in Sri Lanka. The following note of his view is very important to us at present (Deraniyagala, 1992:82).

The Lower Palaeolithic has not been reliably documented in Sri Lanka. The alluvial (gem bearing gravels of the Ratnapura district referred to as the Ratnapura beds, have yielded manmade chopping and cutting tools (Ratnapura Industry), in association with a fossil fauna (Ratnapura fauna), which could tentatively be assigned to the Palaeolithic. Tools found associated with high level coastal deposits in the North and South-East of the island (Irannaimadu Formation) and recent finding from Jaffna can also be assigned tentatively to the Lower Paleolithic and pending scientific dating of these occurrences.

In these background though the Iranaimadu Culture is termed by the British prehistoric archaeologists to denote the *three stages of Stone Age strata* such as the Palaeolithic, Microlithic and Megalithic cultural arena, to compare and contrast the Acheulean type of Hand Axe found from the Mayakkai Cave shelter Iranamadu stone implements are very important from our point of view. Thus, having considered the hand-axe implement found from Mayakkai Cave would have been a course way to open of the demised Hand–Axe culture in Vadamaradchi and disclose the way of relations with the Iranaimadu culture.

Mayakkai: It's Location in Vadamaradchi.

Now we are able to discuss and analysis on the phase of Stone Age Culture of the Jaffna Peninsula for the first time. Scholars may ask a question now that how far is it reliable to determine ‘a stone age’ of the Peninsular Jaffna before confirming the Palaeolithic culture or Neolithic culture in Sri Lanka. But the fact that the recent archaeological research in the Jaffna Peninsula has resulted with material evidences of stone age cultural strata from the site, Kantarodai in the Jaffna Peninsula. Now we have good enough space in archaeology with definite material remains of Stone Age phase from the Jaffna Peninsula in relation to the culture of cave dwellers from Vadamaradchi area. In 1983 and thereafter we were able to collect stone tools like hand axes from Mayakkai Cave, located near to Thampaciddy in Point Pedro. In 2011 a team from the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka had visited to this cave site and Dr. Siran Deraniyagala also was one among them. At the cave site itself after the careful explorations and the examination of the collected kit of stone tools, Dr. Siran Deraniyagala has declared that the cave was once occupied by the *Homo erectus* man who lived at this cave site probably 600000 years BP. However, it was realized that until we have evidences like skeletons, food fossils and any associated remains with stratigraphic evidences for the conformation of the site and the date of the cave dweller at Mayakkai. Thus, this situation paved the new development in the Jaffna Peninsula to facilitate firmly to the researchers on the prehistoric investigations combined work with the Archaeologists from Sydney University of Australia. So that there is a new cultural phase of Stone Age brought up methodically to the research horizon in the field of archaeology of the Jaffna Peninsula. Few scholars have been refuting of the Hand Axe discovered at Mayakkai in the Jaffna Peninsula. They are by stating by that as to the dawn south of Madurai there are no any evidence for Palaeolithic culture existed and so far no solid evidences had been recovered from the layer of Palaeolithic culture. So, then how far is it possible to have evidences for Palaeolithic culture in the Jaffna Peninsula?

These are the few negative interpretations of scholars at present day. But in Archaeology everything will change in due course of time. However, the reports of British archaeological missions which held in the Iranamadu basin in the latter part of 19th century give the detail of presents of Palaeolithic stone Age culture and the date along with Microlithic culture and the Megalithic sediments. Due to this the culture had been framed as ‘Iranaimadu Culture’ which seems to be extended towards North up to

Vadamaradchi-East as it was extended in the main land up to Mankulam in the south and up to Mannar in the west. So far there is anyone did not switch on to study the expansion of Iranaimadu Culture towards the Northern frontier, i.e. into Vadamaradchi-East. Due to the absence of pre-historians in the North and East the investigation related to the many aspects in cultural history have been left behind.

Discussion

This portion is of the result of the rigorous research and consultations with Deraniyagala, an eminent prehistoric archaeologist of Sri Lanka, regarding the collections of stone implements from a cave site, namely, Mayakkai, located in Puloly-Thambacetty, in Point Petro region in Vadamaradchi (Plate nos. 23,45,295 & 296). It was wonder for that in Jaffna when a team from the Department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka collaterally confirmed with very confidence that the stone implements collected from inside and outside of the cave of Mayakkai were belonging for a period of Lower Palaeolithic Stone Age culture. After the 30 years of civil war which came to an end on the month of July, 2009, the excavation programs in the Northern part of Sri Lanka also has been initiated by the Department of Archaeology and there are the two very important sites such as Kantarodai and the Jaffna Dutch-Fort. When the joint team (the University's staff and students together with the staff and the workers of Archaeology epartment of Colombo) was working at Kantarodai in 2011, I have placed the all collected stone implements from Mayakkai, in front of them. At the day of the visit to the habitation site at Mayakkai, Dr. Deraniyagala, Dr. Nimal Perera and other experts of excavation team were present and they confirmed unanimously that these stone implements are belong to a period of 600000 years, during which the Lower Palaeolithic stone age man, *Homo erecters* lived. The discovery of stone implements held by me in 1983, during which the civil war was taking place in the Northern part of Sri Lanka. Even though, during the civil war times, the academic activities of the University of Jaffna were running with very strength and stability. At that time most of the archaeological discoveries in the Northern part of Sri Lanka had been made and excavation and exploration works were carried out by the Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Jaffna within the Peninsula as well as in the Vanni area.

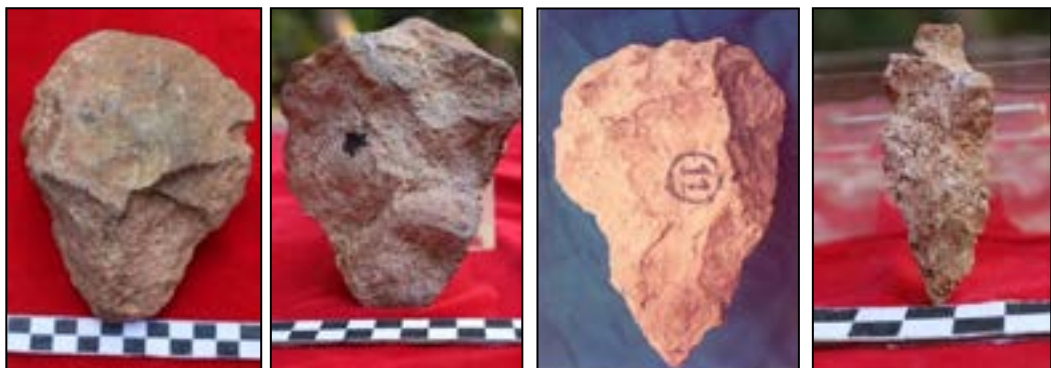


Fig.01. Acheulean Type unifacial Hand Axe (white Granite)) Hand Axe-(Chert material) spear Head (Lime stone?)

The site, *MAYAKKAI* was first identified by me in 1979 when an archaeological exploration work carried out in order to write a dissertation for the Final Year examination. ‘The main Archaeological Sites in the Jaffna Peninsula was the title of the dissertation which was guided by K. Indrapala even after the completion of that dissertation, few archaeological remains like roof tiles, iron slag, an Islamic or Arabic coin and earthen wares which were recovered from Mayakkai were included in the dissertation in the year 1979 as archaeological findings from an ancient site in Vadamarachchi. But, in 1983 after the completion of Masters of Arts degree from the University of Mysore, India, I returned to Jaffna. At that time I was able to recognize the site as Stone Age culture (Old Palaeolithic) on the basis of recovered stone implements from the site.

However, K. Indrapala and S.K. Sitrapalam both of them had hesitated and neglected to ensure the site for stone age culture and as the prehistoric environments and had refused to conduct further research or explorations at this cave site. That the reason was why the whole investigation on stone age culture in the Jaffna peninsula was totally given up by us and then after more than a three decades of time span, the time has come again unexpectedly to confirm that those implements are, as real, Palaeolithic stone tools by the experts of the department of Archaeology of Sri Lanka in 201 while an excavation mission was taking place at Kantarodai. This conformation, provided by them as Palaeolithic stone implements, which gave us an opportunity to chance the views on the history of Sri Lanka in general and the history of Jaffna in particular. This new tendency has put forward a new phenomenon on the beginning of Sri Lankan prehistory from the Northern Sri Lanka. S. Deraniyagala has firmly confirmed that these were being the tools of the Palaeolithic cultural site and he further visited directly with the team of the Department of Archaeology to the particular site and have collected ecological conditions of the area especially the distance between the caves dwelling site



Fig.02. Mayakkai. The middle one is Myliddy Harbour.

Some issues on the Third phase: Microlithic culture in Sri Lanka and South India.

The Palaeolithic industries lasted for a very long time and about ten thousand years BP we see the beginning of new stone industries in Northern Peninsular India. This particular period of culture is generally mentioned as Mesolithic period. Mesolithic and other stone industries of the Holocene period represent a further development of the stone

tools industries, particularly in microliths. By this time, there were settled communities of hunters, fishers, gatherers and pastoralists co-existed with settled communities up to the beginning of the Iron Age (about 1000 BC) and in some places even later. Mesolithic culture had its widest impact on the people of South India and Sri Lanka almost simultaneously but the life of the same in Sri Lanka had evolved densely rather prior to the South India because of the South–East –Asian influence of prehistoric culture reached first to this island. Even though, the Jaffna Peninsula had not consists of material culture relating to Mesolithic period, but the recent archaeological investigations here have done indicating that the life during the Mesolithic period had flourished even before the Megalithic cultural layers formed. There are places like Kantarodai in Valikamam, Chattirantai and Kalapumi in Karainagar have yield small (Micro) stone lithic tools and cultural layers prior to the Megalithic culture. This conducive situation is now with evidences to confirm the existence of Microlithic cultural life within the Jaffna Peninsula (Ragupathy, 1987:129).

Archaeologists from South India are still in paradox in viewing the date of Microlithic culture of Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan archaeologists though they have succeeded in dating of the Microlithic culture in Sri Lanka approximately in 29000 B.C., prior to South Indian complex, they have traced the parallel cultural affinities of life of the period between these both material cultural complex. S. Deraniyagala while demarking the final datum line for the Microlithic culture in Sri Lanka, he states that ‘the dating of the inception of the geometric Microlithic tradition of stone tool manufacture in Sri Lanka at ca. 30000 BP is very much earlier than what has so far been recorded from India. This appears to be the result of inadequate sampling. Excavations at the Teri sites are certain to produce dates for geometric Microliths that are comparable to these from Sri Lanka. Similarly, probes in caves located in the wetter parts of Southern India, as in Kerala, are likely to provide dates akin to those from the Sri Lankan caves’ (Deraniyagala, 2004:20-21).

The Microlithic site from Kerala has received much importance from South Indian archaeologists in recent days and Selvakumar has done more research works on these southern Microlithic sites. He has attributed a new theory on the origin and evolution of Dravidian language groups from these southern Microlithic cultural settlements and further he put forwarded a new concept of the origin and development of two major language groups in Sri Lanka through these extended settlement complexes of the Southern Microlithics through the North Eastern part and the upcountry sites. Moreover, V.Selvakumar has corroborated his evidences from the Southern Microlithic sites like in the Gundur Basin with place names as described in the early literatures, so that the development of a group of language in Southern India (proto Dravidian Languages) evolved and spoken through the extension of *Teri culture* from Kerala to Tamilnadu in dawn South . Further, he dated these cultural sites to 5000 years BP (Selvakumar, 2001:260). But Rita Gardener is dating for this Microlithic culture in South India as 20000 BP (Rita 2010 :13) In contrast to this dating of Microlithic culture of South India , the Microlithic phase in Sri Lanka deviate much time span as had been dated

from skeletal remains from Mesolithic (Balangoda) culture for 29000 B.C. South Indian archaeologists are still viewing that the Microlithic culture of Sri Lanka was inherited from South India. But they did not consider the South East Asian prehistoric links with this island existed prior to South Indian cultural links. Even the research results of Microlithic culture of South India were not in unanimous dating and not even comparable with the Sri Lankan dating. Therefore, it enhances our research theme here by viewing a brief recent interpretational development in Mesolithic culture in the dawn South India and South East Asia. There are still controversial which prevailing among the scholars who have had the uncertainty on the presence of Mesolithic culture between the western and Eastern Ghats in South India. Under these circumstances the Sri Lankan Microlithic has been dated on the datum line such as 30000 years BP (Recently it was discovered as pre-Mesolithic culture which is belonging to before 10000 BP). Thus, Vadamaradchi region has been vividly throw a light to confirm its peculiar inter-groups of cultural life system. The modern people of Vadamaradchi have been denying to get out from that region for marriage life and they never have had bride or bridegroom from out of the region. This behavioral mentality of these people prove that the continuation of a kind of groupies in life system which existed since the prehistoric period.

As new developments had been taken place in the discovery of archaeological remains in Vadamaradchi, we have a preamble to conclude that there are three stages of Stone Age phases stretched could be classified, such as the Paleolithic culture (Lower Palaeolithic or upper Paleolithic), Neolithic culture and Megalithic culture. The Mesolithic phase of life was completely absent in Vadamaradchi area, but in Valikamam–west area there are possibilities for Microlithic culture. The Neolithic cultural life in Vadamaradchi had a hinter land of an area of open space where naturally salt harvesting had held. From Karumanatpiddy to Mandan of Thondaimanaru basin the Neolithic cultural sediments seem to be spreader over in both sides of the Thondamanaru basin. The origin of cotton culture in Vadamaradchi begun from the Neolithic cultural period and weaving as well as winding grass mat also might had flourished side by side near to this period at the Nagarkoil area. The physical and climatic conditions of this area was very conducive for this developments of palaeo-indusries like agriculture-based handy-craft, domestication of cattle keeping and the production of cotton. The village Amban had played very important duel role as market centre for the cattle keepers and as center of coin mint for administrators to entire region of Vadamaradchi during the colonial period. Due to this, the economic importance which was prolonged over the periods, the western colonial rulers like the Portuguese and the Dutch had occupied and controlled this market place. The high quantity of the Dutch coinage was minted at the village, AMBAN (in Java Island in South East Asia the Dutch authorities had a settlement place is called Amban where they developed an industrial complex as an economic zone under them) (Plate no. 39). The term Laadam (metal shoe nail for cattle) industry and the iron works for bullock-cart were also well designed at Amban and Kudattanai villages and this tradition is still prevailing. The making iron rim for the wheels of bullock-card is still being continued in these villages and the technology was adopted and used for this works would have been

inherited since the Neolithic cultural activities of this region. This development was not a sudden growth as we seen today at this area but it would have been inherited from the society of ancient passed, i.e. the people who lived at this region during the Neolithic period. The Neolithic culture here was succeeding by the Megalithic culture as we seen in the down South India. The identification and the location of ash mound in Vadamaradchi–East have been the source of material to investigate further in relation to the Neolithic culture in the Jaffna Peninsula. A site naming as Karumanatpitti in Nagar Kovil was an ash mound from where a spouted pot was unearthed. Due to the seasonal shifting of sand dunes here archaeologists are unable to locate the exact site and excavate any ash mound site in this region so far.



Fig.03. Archaeological field visit

As V.Selvakumar remarked, the Mesolithic cultural phase in the down South Indian context which differ on the regional basis as well as periodical basis which caused for the language diffusional development under one material culture (Selvakumar, 2010:25-27). According to him the development of South Indian language group had its embryo from the period of migration of the Microlithic people towards down south including Sri Lanka. But the Sri Lankan periodization for the Mesolithic culture seems to be earlier than the down South Indian one and further the distinctive character of Sri Lankan Microlithic phase is the skeletal remains which we unable to see in down Southern India but in North India skeletal remains were recovered from many regions. The last phase of Microlithic life of the people was intermingled with the Megalithic culture in many places in Sri Lanka except in the Jaffna Peninsula, around 800 B.C. According to Deraniyagala the Nagas Dynasty who terminated the Stone Age culture and initiated historic periods in Sri Lanka (Deraniyagala, 2001:321). As he has suggested, the stone age period ends in Sri Lanka with the rise of Nagas Dynasty simultaneously from the various local points in this island which resemble with South India as we seen at Brahmagiri where the Satavahanas flourished as the first dynasty of the historical period of Deccan from the Megalithic culture. Therefore, we have an assumption that wherever the Buddhism had gripped strongly in Sri Lanka that there the Megalithic culture preceded to the historical period and wherever non Buddhist influence prevailed here where either the Neolithic Culture or the Microlithic culture preceded to the historical period. The Jaffna Peninsula also had these Environments through material culture.



Fig.04. Microlithic Tools from Myliddy Harbour: (1) Milky Crystal Scrapper (2) Flint (Chert material) (3) Flack Tool (Hard Lime stone)

The Kalapumi excavation at Karainagar conducted by Ragupathy in 1981 revealed the Microliths and the Megalithic artifacts of both had intermingled together. But in the Jaffna peninsula, according to the excavation conducted by the government Department of Archaeology in 2011, the Microlithic culture was preceded to the Megalithic culture and the basement of beginning of life at Kantarodai with Microlithic phase (see the Excavation report annexed). The surface collection of material artifacts from the area from Nagar Kovil to Mandan of Karanavai along with Thondaimanaru basin in Vadamaradchi region indicate the intermingled of last phase of Microlithic culture with the Megalithic cultural phase which resulted the course for the sedentary agricultural development and domestication at this region. There were non-Buddhist influences had prevailed at the most places where the Neolithic or Microlithic influences have been found. Thondamanaru basin is the best example for this concept. The material culture of the villages at *Kudatanai* and *Amban* in Vadamaradchi -East are till now indicating the lively goods style that of the amalgamation of those both cultures. A village name „*Mandan*” is naming because of a verity of fish. This kind of fish is being called as silt fish. Many sub-varieties of silt fish have been available for the sustained life of the people who lived along with Thondamanaru basin. From Chundikkulam down to Mandan the material life of the people were interconnected with fishing and harvesting of grain crops like paddy .and millet along with Thondamanaru basin. *Mandan* was a place where naturally salt harvesting is taking place in season. The local people of the area have shown much concern with this natural consuming material which enhances the life of the local people for some time periodically.

Conclusion

The searching of the material culture of Stone Age period in Sri Lanka has very lengthy literature review. The reports and the scholarly works on stone age culture from. Pole to Siran Deraniyagala have comprise various approaches and yardsticks to measure the culture with corroborating archaeological materials. But, there are no any literatures or other evidences to mark the Stone Age cultures of the Jaffna Peninsula. While many pre historians have paid their interest to flash out the cultural activities of the pre historic people of Southern Sri Lanka in a comparative manner, only a single scholar, Nimal Perera, former Deputy Commissioner of Archaeology, has been showing

his earnest interest in bring out the elementary information on the Palaeolithic culture from the Peninsular Jaffna. In the meantime, the discovery of Stone Age settlement and its conformation with the Palaeolithic stone implements at Mayakkai cave in Vadamarachi gave an impact in writing of prehistory of Sri Lanka. Siran Deraniyagala directly visited to this site and studied the surrounding of this cave site and has fixed a time line for this stone age culture tentatively as to be 600000 years and the Homo erectus human being had used the stone implements which found in the cave. According to Siran Deraniyagala's view that it was the way of life in which the Jaffna Peninsula received a big impact either from South East Asia or from South India during the Pleistocene period. Thus, during the way of migration of the team of homo erectus for some time they had stayed at this cave sites and might left to Iranaimadu or other place. Further, besides of the stone implements a side in Mayakkai, there are the YAKSHA and NAGAS' traditions have still prevailed and rooted in the culture of Vadamarachi-East.

According to authorized and confirmed archaeological materials which have been collected recently, it is possible to come to a conclusion that the first inhabitants of Sri Lanka were the Paleolithic and the Neolithic people who lived not only within the caves or open air but they lived in different locations in both periods in Sri Lanka. As the first phase of Sri Lankan prehistory is now confirmed clearly by the *Iranaimadu culture* now it could be at least to say that the prehistory of the Jaffna Peninsula begins with the Mayakkai Paleolithic stone implements in association with Palaeolithic coastal gravels and the possibility of occurring this cultural layer is under the search by an Expedition from the Sydney University as engaged in excavation in the Jaffna Peninsula. In the previous decades many investigations conducted along with South-Eastern costal gravels of Sri Lanka with the cultural identity of *Iranamadu Formation*. As the results of this investigations on the coastal-gravel regions the different conclusions had been reached. From the Lower Palaeolithic up to the Megalithic phase of Iranamadu Cultural Formation (stratum -V, Site no-50_a. provides Black and Red Ware (BRW) comprises with the Carbon date of 2,800 BP.). There were different cultural phases had been shown under the *Iranaimadu Cultural Formation*. But the *Iranamadu Formation* is referred for mostly to indicate the Flack Tool phase (Stratum-II with Ferruginous quartz, the stratum -III with clay loam, and the stratum -IV with basal gravel deposited.) No one had indicated the same culture towards North because already it has been indicated the Microlithic culture was absent in the Peninsular Jaffna. But the result of the excavations were held at Kantarodai in 2011 and 2019 giving the positive evidence to the cultural layers of Prehistoric Basal gravel deposits which underlying to the BRW cultural layers have prevailing to give the feasible condition to determine the stone age in the Jaffna Peninsula. Therefore a new impetus has come to light to investigate on the Stone Age culture with the *Iranamadu Formation* for Palaeolithic cultural pheses in Sri Lanka. However, commendable works have been done recently by Dr Nimal Perera and Dr. S.U.Deraniyagala in unveiling the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic phases of Sri Lanka and thanks to them the efforts for confirming the Palaeolithic phase of settlement at Mayakkai cave in Point Pedro region and for giving a tentative date for the hand axes (as *Homo erectus man used*), which could be made around

600000 years back, as Siran Deraniyagala presumed the chronological boundary for this prehistoric habitation site. In 2004, S.U.Deraniyagala while delivering Second Vesak Commemoration lecture on 'Prehistoric basis for the rise of Civilization in Sri Lanka and South India', he pointed out that a unified research design could conceivably clarify as to why the *Acheulean* techno-tradition of stone tool manufacture did not extend to South of Kaveri river in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. The same concept also had been forwarded by Dr.V.Selvakumar before the year 2004. Even though this problem has already been discussed among few scholars in South India and Sri Lanka (Deraniyagala 2004:20). Deraniyagala is giving much more importance to investigate on *Acheulean Culture* in Sri Lanka after the finding of Hand axe implements from Mayakkai cave and the excavation mission was undertaken by an International Expedition from the Sydney University. Thus, a new phase of prehistoric stage from the Jaffna peninsula is one of the contributions for the Prehistoric cultural horizon of this region. This will be a very important change in the evolutionary cultural history of not only Jaffna peninsula but also the whole of Sri Lanka and for South Asia as well. It is, therefore, possible that humans were present in Sri Lanka from at least as early as one million years ago. There are ancient coastal sands and gravels, referred to as the *Iranamadu Formation*, in the North and Southeast of the Island which could be as old as 250,000 BP or even 700,000 - 500,000 BP.

The investigation on material culture in the Jaffna peninsula for Stone Age period needs a wide spectrum of non-partial approach to get a clear picture of the evolution of its cultural growth. A classification for Stone Age culture could be marginalized with a few stone (age) implements found from the cave site at Mayakkai in the Point Pedro district. As most of us do believe today that of absence of Microlithic cultural layer in the Jaffna peninsula does not mean that the previous Stone Age cultures are totally absent. Even though, we are due to bound with some theories for the reasons for the absence of some layers of prehistoric cultures in the Jaffna peninsula, the recent development of investigations in the extreme South of India confirms the 'those of missing cultural layers'. With the experience we gained through archaeological field works from the Jaffna peninsula, each major region of the peninsula indicates a different (pre)historic background which influenced each region with different characters. If we take the Vadamardchi region, this area has been mostly influenced not by the Megalithic culture but by the Palaeolithic and Neolithic cultures. In contrast to this the Valikamam region was influenced mostly by the Megalithic culture based on mercantile activities even after the Roman trade ended. As far as Tenmaradchy is concerned the region has played its role for transitional cultural contacts through both the land and the sea routes. The original shape of the prehistoric villages can be seen in Vadamardchi-East where the Nagas and Yakshas lived as described in the Pali-Buddhist literature of Sri Lanka.

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