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A Review of Recent Prehistoric and Proto-historic Research in Sri Lanka

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සංක්ෂිප්තය

ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ ආරම්භ වන්නේ යටත්විජිත යුගයේ සිට ය. එසේ ඇරඹෙන ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සඳහා දේශීය විද්වතුන්ගේ නැඹුරුව 1950 දශකයෙන් පසු ව දක්නට ලැබේ. විශේෂයෙන් පී. ඊ. පී දැරණියගල විසින් මේ සඳහා ප්‍රශස්ත දායකත්වයක් සපයන අතර ඔහු විසින් මධ්‍ය කඳුකරය හා අන්තර් මධ්‍යම කලාපය තුළ පර්යේෂණ රාශියක් සිදු කරනු ලැබේ. ඉන් අනතුරුව 1960 දශකයේ දී ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ පමණක් නොව පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සඳහා සිරාන් උපේන්ද්‍ර දැරණියගල යොමු වන අතර එතැන් සිට ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ හා පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ තුළින් එම යුගයේ මානව ජනාවාස, ජීවනෝපාය ක්‍රමය, සම්පත් පරිහණය හා තාක්ෂණය යන කරුණු පිළිබඳව අධ්‍යයන ආරම්භ විය. ඒ ඔස්සේ 1970 - 1990 දශක දෙක වන විට ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සඳහා සිරාන් උපේන්ද්‍ර දැරණියගල, ඩබ්. එච්. විජයපාල නිමල් පෙරේරා, ගාමිණී අදිකාරී වැනි අය ද පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සුදුර්ගත් සෙනවිරත්න රාජා ද සිල්වා, එස්. කේ සිත්තපුරම් හා කේ. ඉන්ද්‍රපාල හා රොබින්

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කනිංගුම්, රාජී සෝමදේව වැනි විද්වතුන් සිය දායකත්වය ලබා දී තිබේ. මේ යුගය තුළ ලංකාවේ ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සඳහා සිරාන් උපේන්ද්‍ර දැරණියගල දැක් වූ දායකත්වය කැපී පෙනෙන අතර ඔහු විසින් මධ්‍යම කඳුකරය අන්තර් මධ්‍යම පලාත වියලි කලාපය මෙන් ම මුහුදු වෙරළ කලාප ඇතුළු සියළුම ප්‍රදේශ ආවරණය වන ලෙස පුළුල් පර්යේෂණ සිදු කර තිබේ. එම පර්යේෂවල දී ශිලා මෙවලම් නිෂ්පාදන තාක්ෂණය මෙන් ම ඒවා වර්ගීකරණයට ලක් කිරීම ද කැපී පෙනේ. එසේම පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණවල දී එම අධ්‍යයනවල නියැළුණ විද්වත්හු විසින් ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික අවධියේ සුසාන ආශ්‍රිත ආකෘති මෙන් ම සුසාන තැන්පතු පිළිබඳව අධ්‍යයන කර ඇත. මෙම පර්යේෂණවල ඉදිරි සංවර්ධනයන් 2000 මුල් දශක දෙක තුළ නව විද්වතුන්ගේ දායකත්වය යටතේ සිදු වී ඇති අතර එහි දී පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික පර්යේෂණ සඳහා රංජිත් බංඩාර, තුසිත මැන්දිස්, මංගල කටුගම්පොළ හා ගල්වැවේ විමලක්ඛන්ති හිමි ඇතුළු පර්යේෂකයින් දායකත්වය ලබා දී ඇති ආකාරය මෙම රචනය තුළින් සාකච්ඡාවට බඳුන් කර තිබේ.

මුද්‍රාපද: පූර්ව ඓතිහාසික යුගය, ප්‍රාග් ඓතිහාසික යුගය, සුසාන තැන්පතු, ශිලා මෙවලම්

Introduction

The researches done in relation to the prehistoric and protohistoric eras in Sri Lanka are immense in number. From this research, many new discoveries have been made in the history of Sri Lanka and it has been able to uncover the latest information that has not been revealed before from the sources and to present modern convictions of the history of our country. This article briefs new discoveries which have been presented during the past 70 years and it is being done through prehistoric and protohistoric researches. Accordingly, in conducting a review of recent prehistoric and protohistoric research in Sri Lanka, the research contribution made by scholars such as P.E.P.Deraniyagala, Siran Upendra Deraniyagala, Raja De Silva, Wimala Begley, Sudharshan Senaviratne, S.K Sithrampalum, W.H. Wijepala, R. Ragupathy, Johan Caswel, Marthapriket, Rbin Conninham, Krisnaraja, Nimal Perera, Raj Somadeva, Gamini Adikari, Priyantha Karunarathne, D.K Jayarathna, Ranjeth Dissanayake, Melathy Saldeen, D.Thusitha Mendis, Mangala Katugampola, Rev. Galwewa Wimalakanthy are considered very important. In their reserches, it has been pointed out the importance of studying the theoretical elements, chronology, technology, life, settlements, arts and decorations, practices, social organization, physical anthropology, archeology, etc., in accordance with the prehistoric and Protohistory of Sri Lanka.

Methodology

The research methodology is employed to achieve the research's main objectives; Primary and secondary data collection methods were used as the basic methods for data collection for this study. Interviews were conducted under the Preliminary Data Collection Methodology, with the main focus on identifying data uncovered from prehistoric and protohistoric research. As the secondary data sources, books, magazines, research papers were used. Primary data were collected from some field surveys and excavations.

Discussion

Prehistory Period in Sri Lanka

Simultaneously, in global examination of the prehistoric period, researchers have divided the aeon into three epochs and this has taken place in relation to the evolution over a long period of time through which the technological transformations took place. The three epochs are Paleolithic Period (Lower Paleolithic, Middle Paleolithic, and Upper Paleolithic), Mesolithic Period, and Neolithic Period. Lower Paleolithic age is the oldest Paleolithic age in Paleolithic period. Though the factors in relation to the Lower Paleolithic period in Sri Lanka are not very clear, some information about the Middle Paleolithic period can be identified. Also, information on the Upper Paleolithic period has not yet been clearly reported. However, some amount of evidence assuming that Sri Lanka belongs to the Lower Paleolithic period has been reported from the Northern part of the island and as such, three limestone stone tools were found by Krishnaraja of the Department of History, Jaffna University, Mayakkai, Point Pedro, Jaffna in 1983. Experts in stone tools Nimal Perera and Peter Hiscock believe that they might belong to about 90% of the Achulian stone tools tradition in terms of their shape. (Press. Com. with Nimal Perera, 2019) Depending on the technology of production of those tools, they assume that they are likely to date between 0.5-1.6 million years from today.

The author of this article also conducted a preliminary investigation in and around the Mayakkai Limestone Cave in Point Pedro in the year 2017 and found that Jaffna native limestone deposits were found in the vicinity of the cave and it was created from the rock near the cave. It was also identified that there are 03 stone tools and a large number of removable flakes in the process of designing the stone tools. The

stone tools are currently on display at the Rajarata University Museum. The stone tools which were identified in front of the Mayakkai Limestone Cave were similar to the Achulian hand axe. Archaeological excavations at the time and technology of these stone tools are likely to confirm the Mayakkai area in Point Pedro is an important place to establish credible evidence of the Lower Paleolithic period in Sri Lanka. Geologists have pointed out that India and Ceylon had been on the same land for at least eight hundred thousand years out of one million years and especially India and Ceylon began to separate exactly 10,000 years ago and completely separated 7000 years ago. (Bossuyt et. al, 2004)



**Fig.01, 02 – Limestone Cave in Mayakkai and
Mayakkai Stone Tool**



Mendis, 2017

Iranamadu soil complex in the Northern region of the island is another place where the oldest archeological evidence of Sri Lanka can be uncovered. Siran Deraniyagala has pointed out that these can be dated to a relative period of 500,000 years. Also, from the Minihagalkanda sand deposits in Southeast Sri Lanka, prehistoric human settlements can be dated back to 250,000 years. (Deraniyagala,1992). The Iranamadu soil complex spreads from the Northwestern to Northern coastal areas of Sri Lanka (from Pallama to Pulumaduwa) and from the Southeastern to Southern region (from Ambalantota to Pottuvil-Komari). In 1972, Siran Deraniyagala began to research and determines the age of the Iranamadu soil complex, where 50 sites were explored. There, stone tools found at Boondala, Pathirajawela and Wellegangoda confirmed that medlle Paleolithic settlements in Sri Lanka had existed about 125,000 years ago (*ibid*). Siran Deraniyagala has further pointed out that tropical climatic conditions might have affected to the destruction of fators in relation to the human beings.

P.E.P. Deraniyagala has pointed out that a liquid soil deposit of the fourth period with archeological evidence belonging to the Middle Paleolithic period of Sri Lanka has been found in Ratnapura (Deraniyagala, 1958). Some scholars argue that hand axes and threshing instruments of the Achulian tradition that have been found are not of great archaeological importance. The main reason why they bear this conviction is the turbulent nature of the Ratnapura gravel bed. In addition to stone tools, a number of extinct animal fossils have been found in this molten soil. Among these fossils, there are a large number of other fossils of rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, guavas, and other species (Deraniyagala, 1963). Scholars point out that this soil deposit, which belongs to the Pleistocene, is closely related to the fauna of Shivalik and Narmada in India and they are believed to be deposited from melting glaciers which came via India (Deraniyagala, 1958; Deraniyagala, 1992). Most of these fossils have been reported from Avissawella, Kuruwita, Pelmadulla, Ratnapura, Kalawana, Lunugala and Adawatta areas (Manamendrarachchi et. 2005). These fossils found in Ratnapura are important in the study of the ancient environment of Sri Lanka during the Paleolithic period. Accordingly, it is possible to assume from the above facts that humans migrated to this country from the Indian subcontinent with the help of land bridges connecting the two countries at different stages and even animals came from there.

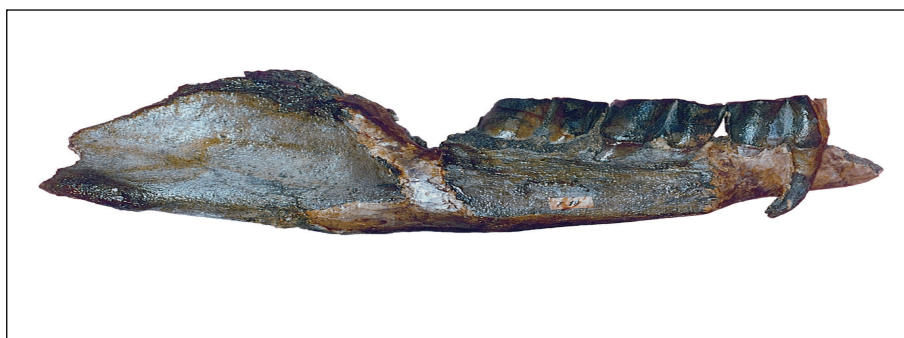


Photo by Kalum Manamendraarachchi

Fig. 03 – Rhinoceroses fossil- Rathnapura bed

Mesolithic Period in Sri Lanka

Among the prehistoric eras of Sri Lanka, the most recent discoveries have been made on the Mesolithic Period or the Balangoda Cultural. The Iranamadu soil complex as well as cave deposits in the wet and dry zone are important sites of evidence of

the Mesolithic period. Among these caves, Kuruwita Batadombalena, Kitulgala Belihena, Bulathsinhala Fahiean Lena Dorawakandalena, Attanagoda Alulena, Belilena - Aligala, Attanagalla Pothgullena, Diyawinna Udupian Galge, Ayagama Manelilena, Alupola Beligallena, Kukulgala Neravana Gallena, and Inner city of Anurafhpura, Kabaragala Gallena, and Kuragala LunuGalge etc can be put forward. Bulathsinhala Fahienlena is considered the oldest according to the age calculation and it is between 34,000-5,400 years (Deraniyagala, 1992). According to Nimal Perera's new research 47,000 years for today. Batadomba Lena at Kuruwita 28500 -1200 years (According to modern reserches it is 37000 – 11500) , Kitulgala Belilena 27,200-4000 years, Kegalle Alulena 10,350 years, Belilena Athula 8,200 years, Batatota Dahaiyalena today 7,700-4,800 years, Bellanbendipelessa 6,500 years (According to Nimal Perera's new research it is 13,000 years) (Perera, 2010,2011). The burial site is 6000 years old today, Anuradhapura is 5900 years old and Mannar is 3850 years old. The Mesolithic Period has provided a large number of physical evidences for a complete study of the Mesolithic Period in Sri Lanka. In the meanwhile, human skeleton factors are extremely important and they have led to the study of physical anthropology related to the Mesolithic Period. P.E.P Deraniyagala nominated this man as the Balangoda Man because of the information about the Mesolithic Man which was firstly reported from Balangoda area. As a scholar who studied the anatomical features of the Balangoda man P.E.P Deraniyagala, K.A.R. Kennedy, Diana Hockey,S.U Deraniyagala are important and they have pointed out that the anatomical features of the Balangoda man are as follows. According to Kennedy, the physical anthropological features of the Balangoda man can be identified as follows (Kennedy at.al, 1965, 1986, 1987, 1989).

1. The characteristics of the Balangoda man belong to the people who live in Sri Lanka and these characteristics are mostly apparent among the Vedda people.
2. It is said that there is a connection between the Balangoda man and some of the tribal people of India but is not as strong as the ones with the Vedda people.
3. The Vedda people certainly represent a biological generation and the Vedda people descend from the Balangoda man.

4. The Balangoda Man along with the Batadombalena Man shows the oldest evidence with the modern man in South Asia and they further show Austroloid Vedda features. (Kennady, 1965)
5. Also, according to the anthropological studies conducted by Diana Hockey on the Balangoda man, the following conclusions have been drawn.
6. Balangoda Man shows the ancient features of modern man in terms of physical features of South Asia. His teeth show that there were common lineages in Southeast Asia and Southeastern Europe.
7. Physiological features of the modern man might have probably originated in South or Southeast Asia. This view (through the evidence of Balangoda Man) challenges the currently accepted view of modern man's origin in Africa.
8. Balangoda Man has close ties with modern-day Melanesians but a lesser extent is reported with Indigenous people of Australia. This shows that the Balangoda man could be the ancestor of both these human beings.
9. The dental features of the Balangoda man show older traces than the Middle Stone humans of India.
10. The Balangoda man is most similar to the Veddas than to any other human group such as Sinhala, Tamil or Asian. The Veddas show more similarities with the Sinhalese and the Tamils than the Balangoda man (*ibid*).

According to the studies conducted by P. E. P. Deraniyagala on the Balangoda Man, the following conclusions have been reached.

1. Physically anthropologically, the Balangoda man is tall and has a pointed forehead. The molars of the jaw are always blunt and this feature is shown because their diet contained large amounts of sand (*ibid*).
2. Bottom lower jaw broadly abbreviated and the hip is abnormally small
3. The average height of males is 174 cm and that of females is 166 cm and the spine is unusually short in height. The axillary spine of the neck is short - the

skull is variable in volume - the groove is thick - oblong, it has a short hole and a protruding forehead - the posterior arch is obvious-

4. The jawbones are thick and broad - the eyebrows are sometimes heavy - the nasal bones are posterior to the upper and first annular - the distance from the base of the nostrils to the tip of the upper teeth is very large - the jaws are large and the broad jaws are stiff - The teeth are usually large - the grinding teeth are large - the claws are hard(ibid).



Photos by Thusitha Mendis

Fig. 04 ,05 – Human skeleton Miniatiylya and Pothana

Balangoda Man's Witchcraft, Cemetery Rituals and Food

Researches have confirmed some information about the occult and burial rituals of the Balangoda man. Meanwhile, his burial is important and it has been confirmed that he was bent over and buried when a man died at Bellanbedi Pelessa, Batadomba lena, Minithilya and Pothana Cave near Sigiriya. Also, the identification of the remains of about 38 persons buried at Kuruwita Batadolena and the discovery of the remains of 33 persons at Bellanbedipelessa and the remains of 10 persons at Pallamelana bear witness how burial rites were performed as masses. (Deraniyagala, 1958; Deraniyagala, 1992). Among the occult practices of this human being, information on the application of gurugal to the bones after death is found at Batadombalana,

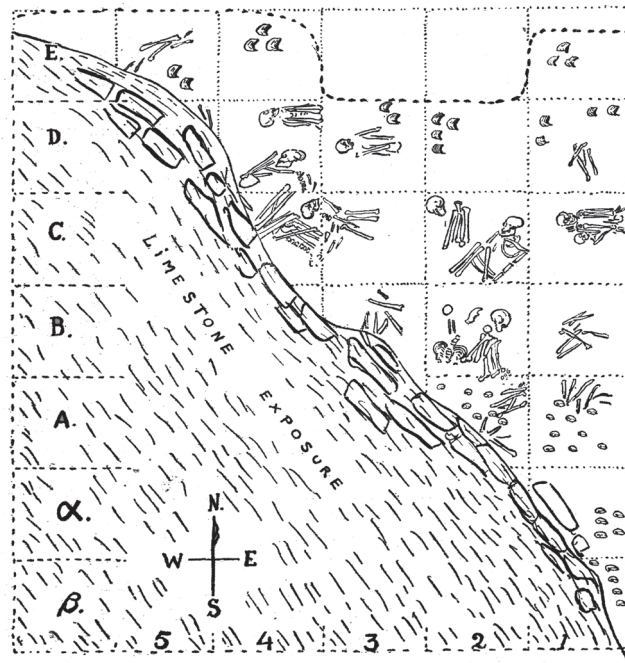
Bulathsinhala Fahieanlena, and Bellanbedipelessa and even from the Potgul Cave in Alawala. It is also clear that they had practiced some form of witchcraft after the death of a human being in an attempt to exhume the human skulls found at Ravanaella (Deraniyagala, 1958).

Archaeological excavations have revealed that the food file of the Balangoda man who lived in this country during the Middle Stone Age had ranged from small animals to elephants. The star tortoise, the black freshwater tortoise, the soft tortoise, the elephant, the cow, the giraffe, the sloth bear, the gona, the lanka, the dot, the tortoise, the lalena, the lapangolin, the monkey, the macaque, and the snail are very famous. According to anthropological studies of the Vedda and forest Sinhalese, the study of the file, the plant foods are sweet potatoes such as sweet potatoes, *Atamba*, *Sulu*, *Bulu* food file consisted Madhu, fruits such as Palu, Weera and Mora and flowers such as *Mee*. *Kekuna* seeds had been found in many places in the Middle Stone Age and it is assumed that *Waldel* and *Val-kesel* were also among them. Researchers have also shown that people in Balangoda might have eaten plant foods such as wild banana (Deraniyagala, 1992)



Photos by I. S. Madanayake

Fig. 06,07 Human Skull Rvanaella and Pallemalla



(Deraniyagala, 1958)

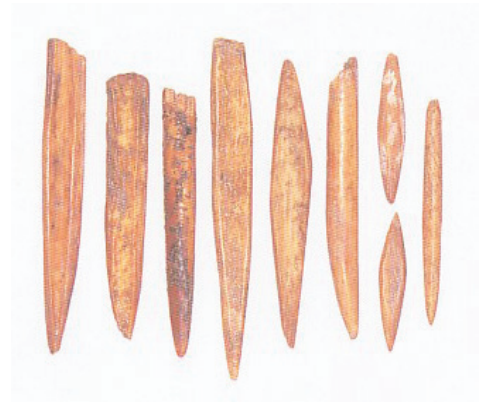
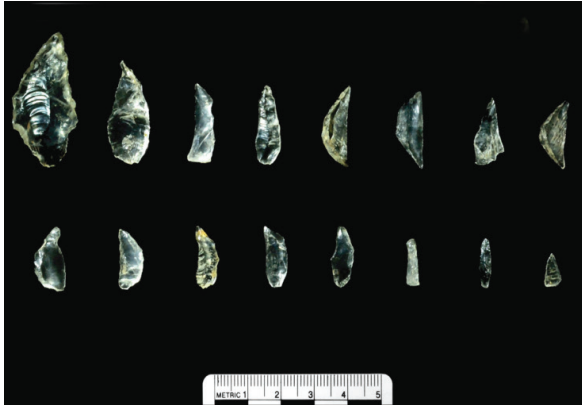
Plan No. 01- Prehistory Cemetry Bellanbadipalassa

Mesolithic Man-Made Tools and Artwork

Stone tools and skeleton tools were the main tools in the archeology of the Mesolithic Man who lived in Sri Lanka. Among the stone tools, Microlithic geometrically shaped tools are the most prominent tools of this era. Among these tools there were blade, scraper and chopping tools (Deraniyagala, 1992; Perera, 2010; Perera et.al, 2011). It is noteworthy that the materials used to make these tools were made from Quartz and Chertz, and the tools used to light the fire bear witness that this man burned and ate food. Bone tools used by the Balangoda man can be seen in the stone weapon file. Many of these tools had been designed by using animal horns, teeth, and bones, and it can be assumed that the tools were often used to dig up potatoes and further used for hunting (Deraniyagala, 1992; Perera at.al, 2011).

There is also information that the Balangoda man who lived in this country during the Mesolithic Period had done various works of art. It is obvious that the shells of fish teeth, sea oysters and freshwater oysters had been used to create beads and other costumes. Beads made of shark teeth had been found from Kuruwita Batadombalena

(*ibid*), Alawala Potgul Caves and Pothana Caves near Sigiriya. The oyster shells that were used to make beads found in the Batadomba Cave fall between 37,000 to 32,000 years due to the time determination. Accordingly, his art work is clear (Deraniyagala, 1992; Perera, 2010). Some scholars believe that some of the primary controversial cave paintings were painted by Balangoda man.



(Manamendraarachchi, 2014).

Fig.08,09 – Microlithic and Bone tools



(Perera, 2010).

Fig.10, 11, 12, 13– Shell bead and Fish teeth beads

Neolithic Period

Strong definite evidence of the Neolithic period has not yet been found in Sri Lanka. Wayland (1919), who categorized stone tools into two parts during the colonial period, classified the tools as mountainous belonging to the Neolithic Age. Although P.E.P. Deraniyagala later stated that a limited number of Neolithic tools was found at Bambaragala, Lunugal and Udupiyangal, no definite evidence is obvious (Deraniyagala, 1992). From the recent studies by TR Premathilake on the Horton

Plains, it was stated that the Barley and wheat cultivation started 18000 years ago and, the prosperous period was 13000 years ago (Premathilaka, 2003). After 4000 years the deterioration of the Chena cultivation took place and the features of the Neolithic age have been put forward in relation to all these periods (Premathilaka; Risberg 2003). In addition, the area near the port of Mathota and Dorawaka Mountain Cave in Kegalla District can be introduced as two other sites that reveal the Neolithic age of Sri Lanka. During the excavation of the cave, the carbon 14 chronological system showed that its bottom layer belonged to the (7250 BP) period (Premathilaka, 2007). From the evidence of Millet type grain in the cave, H.W. Wijepala proved that there were signs of using the iron tools and pottery as early as 5250 BC ((Wijepala, 1997). Deraniyagala stressed that excavations at Dorawaka Kanda had the potential to resolve the problems of the Neolithic or New Stone Age as pointed out by H. Wijepala (Deraniyagala, 2000). Though John Kassawel stated that he had found lead from the excavation of the vicinity of Manthai beach, the metal is believed to have come to the deeper layer of soil because of the animal activities (Carswell, & Prickett 1984). However, specific polished stone axes, pottery and tamed animals in relation to the Neolithic Age of India Peninsular have not yet been found in Sri Lanka. From the excavations at Dorawaka Kanda Cave in 1991, primary stone tools, earthen ware which was produced on the potter's wheel, grain and iron tools have highly been found. This is the first time that such a huge collection of Neolithic artifacts had been found in Sri Lanka and further researches should have been done. (Wijepala, 1997). Though the recent researches have uncovered some important information about Neolithic age in Sri Lanka, no clear and formal factors on prehistoric epoch have been found yet as it were in India.

Proto Historic Period in Sri Lanka

Although researches started to study the prehistoric culture in Sri Lanka during 1960s, extensive researches on them began to happen from 1980. According to the research done by those researchers, the chronology of the prehistoric period has been obtained as follows. Beragala Kalupahana Estate (Badulla) 2300-2400BC, Haldummulla (Diyatalawa) 1750 BC (Somadeva, 2018), Ranchamadama 1359 BC (Somadeva et.al, 2006), Aligala near Sigiriya BC. 1000 (Karunarathna and Adikari, 1996), Anuradhapura 1000 BC (Deraniyagala, 1992). Pomparippu 1000-800 BC (Begly, V. 1981 in Senaviratne, 2007). Kok - Ebe 790 BC (Mendis, 2017), Ibbankatuwa

700 - 400 BC (Bandaranayake at. al, 1987), Ihala Kalawellaulpatha (Sigiriya) 520 BC (Jayaratne, 2018) Polpithigama 520 BC (Press com. with Ranjith Dissanayake 2017), Kantharodaya: Jaffna 500BC (Ragupathy, 1987) in new research 620 BC (Press.com with Nimal Perera), Galgamuwa Andarawewa 491 BC (Mendis, 2019), Thammannagodella 490 BC (Dissanayake, 2018) Tissamaharama BC. 360-290 (Wissar at.al, 2003) Nikawalamulla 400 BC (Press com. With Nimal Perera 2018), Mantai 200 BC (Caswell et.al, 1984), Pinwewa 130 BC. 520 BC ,Wahalkada. 400-200 (Wagalawattala, 2017 Unpublished Excavation Report) Chilawe (Dummalasuriya) 100-350 AD (Press com. With Nimal Perera, 2018) .The culture of the proto historic period differs from the pre-existing culture due to its many features. Among these features, first rural colonies in Sri Lanka, fauna and flora domestication, Introducing BRW,BW,RW pottery making method, finished bead production, irrigation technology, residual metal use including iron and burial rituals.

The prehistoric people who transformed from stone technology to metal technology are the cultural group that created a new cultural look in Sri Lanka. These cultural groups, who have established habitats in every ecological region of Sri Lanka, are confirmed to have lived in almost all the areas and it is shown from the cemeteries and colonies they established in each area. The oldest evidences of the time determination have been found from these man-made cemeteries and they included in the Clay Cists known as Clay Canoes. These cemeteries were firstly reported during 1950s when road development was being done at Bandattara area in Matara. Although these graves were reported by PEP Deraniyagala, he did not identify them as cemeteries. (Wanninayake, 2016:fig17) Nimal Perera also stated that a similar grave was found during the excavations at Ibbankatuwa Megalithic Cemetery in the 1980s and this was identified as a burning site but not as a cemetery (Press.com with Nimal Perera 2017). Such graves were excavated by Raj Somadeva in the Ranchamadama area in Embilipitiya in 2006 and time determination was 1359 BC (Somadeva at.al, 2006). And another excavation was done at Bergala Kalupahana estate in the Badulla District being the time 2400 B.C. (Somadeva, 2018). Gamini Adikari also excavated such tombs in the Ruwanwella area and dated them to 250 BC. In 2013, Nimal Perera excavated such a cemetery in the Dummalasuriya area in Chilaw and dated it to 100-350 AD (Press com. with Nimal Perera 2017). An Indian prehistoric expert, K.S. Rajan acknowledged that these cemeteries were unique to Sri Lanka. Accordingly, this burial model, which is unique to Sri Lanka had come from very ancient times to the historical era.

The study of its architecture reveals that a number of burial models have spread throughout Sri Lanka since the culture of prehistory was established in the country. Among these burials, stone burials are referred to as megalithic burials. This burial model includes Cist Burial, Cairn Cercle, Stone Allinment, Cairn Mound or Heap, Delmenoiend, Menhir and Double Aotthestat .As megalithic burials, Urn pots and Clay Cits can be identified. (Seneviratne, 1984; Somadeva, 2006; Mendis, 2016; Dissanayake, 2018; Mendis, 2020). Of these, only megalithic burials from Sri Lanka are recorded from Kok - abe area and a new two- new burial pattern has been reported from Palipbothana.

Although the Cist Burial model is more common in Sri Lanka, other burial models can also be seen in some extent. Also, most of the non-megalithic burial models are located in the wet zone and inter-mediate zone in Sri Lanka and most of the megalithic cemeteries are located in the dry zone. The uniqueness of this cemetery's interior is its association with burial deposit. Beads, necklaces, metal utensils, and pottery used by the deceased are buried here. It can be expressed that special burial rituals and witchcraft practices were active at that time. Investigations of these burial deposits found in cemeteries also reveal various aspects of the technology available at the time. In particular, the production of advanced pottery, beads made of minerals and glass as well as different tools made of metals such as iron, lead and gold can be identified as the defining aspects of this culture. It is obvious from these data that this culture had taken steps towards a technology-perfect culture that was active in the country thousands of years before the time of the Buddha.

It is also important to find Brahmi inscriptions used in the particular period from the recent researches on the early history of Sri Lanka. Brahmi inscriptions in relation to 600 BC. – 500 BC. have been found from the innercity of Anuradhapura (Deraniyagala, 1990; Connigham and Batt, 1999). Deraniyagala pointed out a pen made from animal bones which was used to write Brahmi scripts at that time (Deraniyagala, Fig.66). In late 2017, the Department of Archeology and Heritage Management of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka conducted excavations at the Andarawewa Megalithic Cemetery near Galgamuwa in the Anamaduwa Divisional Secretariat. There, Brahmi script "Ta" and two other non-letter symbols have been identified from a pot shard that had been deposited in the tomb (Mendis, 2019). Excavations at megalithic cemeteries in proto historic Sri Lanka have so far uncovered

numerous non-Brahmin symbols on their lithic stones (Senanayake, 2002). Among them, several symbols have been found from the in the vicinity of the Megalithic burial site at Ibbankattuwa and more than 40 symbols were uncovered from the burial site at Yapahuwa, Pinwewa. (Seneviratne,1997). In addition, non-Brahmin symbols and Brahmi script are reported from Anuradhapura Gedige, Kantarodaya, Pomparippuwa, Anaikodda and Ridiyagama and Tissamaharama (Bandara, 2001, 2002). Various symbols and sometimes letters inscribed on a clay pot inside a tomb are found in Megalithic tombs and settlements but Brahmi inscriptions do not date back to 500 BC. Accordingly, the discovery in connection with the Andarawewa Megalithic Cemetery can be presented as a very important discovery in relation to Brahmi inscription of Sri Lanka.

In addition to this, the trophy marks on the lid stones of the Palipbothana Cemetery near Kahatagasdigiliya excavated by the University of Rajarata in late 2020 psented important evidence of the burial rites of that period. In the review of Archaeological excavations, they have uncovered a large amount of prehistoric and protohistoric data that have not yet been identified in the written history and these finding pave the history of Sri Lanka along a new avenue.

Conclusion

The prehistoric researches conducted within past 70 years in Sri Lanka have revealed information on Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods of Sri Lanka. These studies had focused on the subsistence pattern, settlements, environment, art and technology of the prehistoric man. Further, many scholars and researchers have contributed at national and international levels for these diverse researches about the prehistory of Sri Lanka.

In addition, the researches about the proto-history of Sri Lanka yielded valuable information on the sedentism, burial and burial rituals, technology, utilization of multi-resources, art, subsistence pattern, environmental factors, agriculture and irrigation system of the time period. These factors are helpful when bridging the cultural significances of the proto-history in Sri Lanka.



Fig.14– Clay Canoi Burial - Ruwanwell



Fig.15– Cist Burial - Kokebe



Fig.16– Delmenoid Burial - Rambukkana



Fig.17– Stone Allingment Kokebe



Fig.18– Cairn Mound Kokebe



**Fig.19– Double Orthostat Burial
-Palipothana**

(Mendis, 2019).

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