

CHAPTER 5

MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

Middle Palaeolithic Culture, in the Indian context, is one of the archaeologically most ubiquitous cultures, which was first defined by Sankalia (1956). The classification was based on the occurrence of scrapers, borers, notches, points etc. made on flakes of fine grained silicious material in the Palaeolithic assemblage at Nevasa in the Pravara Valley, Maharashtra. Subsequently, over a period of three decades, a large number of sites, yielding similar findings, have been brought to light from the Indian subcontinent (Sankalia, 1974; Paddayya, 1984).

Typologically, the tool types of this culture are predominantly of light duty, made on flakes. However, a great degree of variation in the tool types and the raw material has been observed. The occurrence of Acheulian facies e.g., handaxes and cleavers along with the conventional Middle Palaeolithic assemblages has also been reported at several places. (Murty, 1966; Misra, 1976; Raju, 1981; Jayaswal, 1982; Blumenschine, 1983; and Paddayya, 1984).

Extensive explorations carried out by the present author in the upper reaches have not yielded any record of Middle Palaeolithic culture in the area. The previous explorations however have brought to light evidence of this culture from various localities, spread in the middle and lower reaches of the valley (Joshi et al, 1981). In the present study a part of previous collection has been reexamined in order to

understand the typological variations within the tool assemblage.

Raw Material and State of Preservation

The Tools have predominantly been made on chert and chalcedony which were probably easily available to the Early Man. The tools in the assemblage are moderate to considerably rolled, indicating excessive exposure to the fluvial activity.

Technology

The assemblage is represented by two groups of artefacts viz., simple artefacts and shaped artefacts. The components of simple artefacts include different types of flakes and cores. Flakes exhibit unfaceted and faceted platforms and every flake possesses a bulb of percussion indicating the use of soft hammer technique. The cores are small and well flaked. The shaped artefacts such as scrapers, notches and borers have been made on the flakes with moderate retouching at the sides and ends of the flakes.

Typological classification

The tools have been described on the basis of the typological classification, which is after the scheme proposed by Kleindienst (1962).

Shaped artefacts

There are a total of 96 artefacts which constitute this group. They are divided into several groups on the basis of position and shape of the working edge.

i) Scrapers (Fig. a)

The group comprises a total of 82 tools which are made on flakes. 20 scrapers show retouching on both the sides, while the rest (62) have it on one side only. On the basis of shapes these scrapers have been classified into sixteen types which are tabulated further.

ii) Notches (Fig. b : 1 and 2)

These are 8 in number and are chiefly made on flakes. The working edge resembles with that of concave scrapers.

iii) Borers (Fig. b : 1 , 2 and 3)

There are a total of 6 borers in the assemblage. They are made on flakes and working points are situated at the tips of the flakes. The boring points are made by retouching on both the sides of the point.

Simple artefacts

This group consists of a total of 71 artefacts. The average dimensions of the artefacts are small, the tools being thick and uncouth in preparation. The artefacts have no intentional working edge. Simple artefacts have been divided into the following groups;

i) Flakes (Fig. c)

This group includes a total of 50 artefacts. All the flakes are small and have irregular shapes. On the basis of shapes these are divisible into following categories.

- 1) End flakes - 19
- ii) Side flakes - 8
- iii) Indeterminate flakes - 23

ii) Cores (Fig. d)

A total of 18 artefacts constitutes this group. The cores are medium to small sized, but do exhibit several flake scars on the body. The percentage of cortex varies from 30% to 70%. However most of the cores are amorphous and can be classified into the following groups.

- 1) Pyramidal cores - 1
- ii) Discoidal cores - 3
- iii) Formless cores - 14

iii) Chips (Fig. d : 3 and 4)

These are the by-products, produced during the preparation of the cores. The chips in the present collection are 3 in number and very small.

Remarks

The Palaeolithic assemblage under study comprises a total of 171 artefacts out of which 96 have been classified as Shaped and 71 as Simple. The shaped artefacts comprise scrapers (82), notches (8) and borers (6) and are chiefly made on irregular flakes. The group of Simple artefacts constitutes a total of 71 tools. The simple artefacts are subdivided into flakes (50), cores (18) and chips (3). It is however, worthwhile to note that there has been a total absence of

heavy duty tools in the assemblage undertaken for the present typological analysis.

The assemblage was not recorded in association with any palaeontological material and hence the dating of the assemblage is rather uncertain. Geomorphologically the deposits have been dated to the late Pleistocene period, which appears to be in close congruity with the dates available from the fossiliferous deposits in the upper reaches of the valley.

Table 8

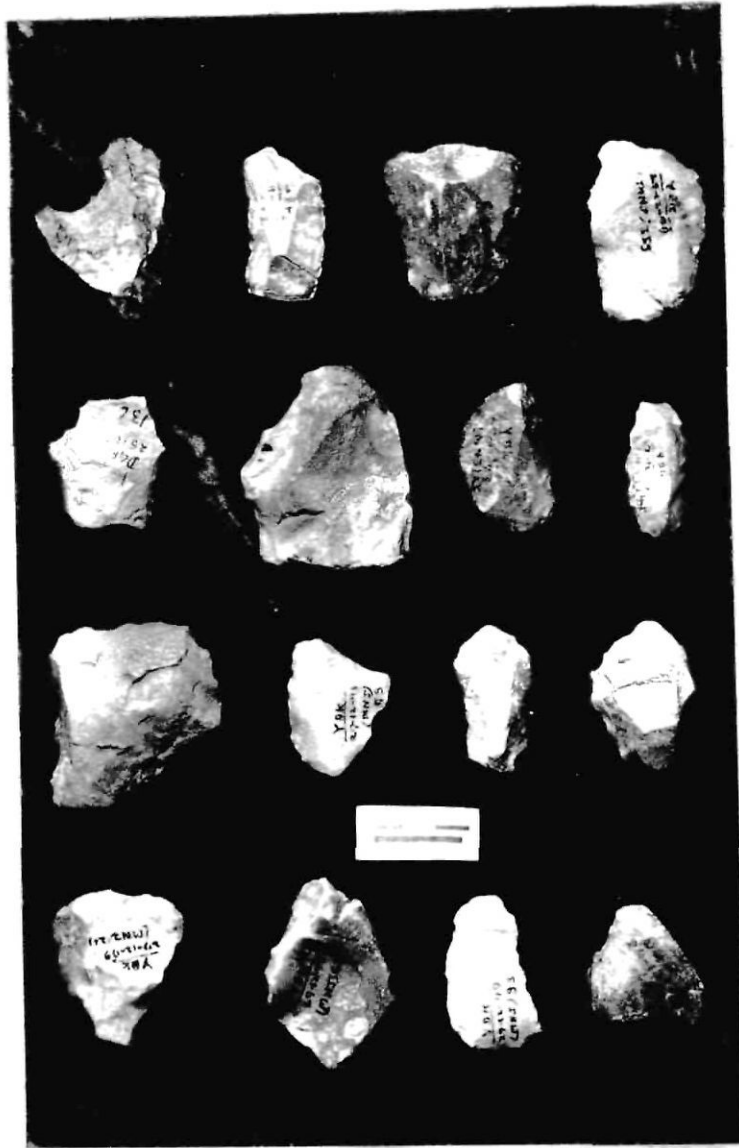
TYPOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SIMPLE ARTEFACTS

SITE	FLAKES			CORES			CHIP
	END	SIDE	INDETERMINATE	PYRAMIDAL	DISCODIAL	FORM LESS	
DEGLUR	19	8	20	1	1	7	3
YENDIKOL	--	--	3	--	2	7	--

Table. 9 ITROLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE SHEET ATTRACTS

SITE	SCRAPERS																NOTCHES	BOURNS	ROBIN	POINT	TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16					
Daglar	2	11	-	1	1	1	1	8	1	2	1	5	2	1	1	-	4	6	1	-	-
Yendikol	-	6	4	2	-	14	-	-	3	-	4	-	-	1	1	-	4	-	-	-	1
Chitiganta	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	20	4	3	1	15	8	1	5	1	10	2	1	2	1	4	8	6	1	1	87

1. Straight Scraper
2. Convex Side Scraper
3. Convex Convex Side Scraper
4. Straight Side Scraper
5. Straight Concave Side Scraper
6. End Scraper
7. Side and End Scraper
8. Core Scraper
9. Concave Side Scraper
10. Concave Concave Side Scraper
11. Double Convex Concave Side Scraper
12. Straight Convex Double Side Scraper
13. Straight Concave Double Side Scraper
14. Double Sided Straight Scraper
15. Double Straight Side Scraper
16. Double Sided End Scraper



From Left to Right

- 1) Notch
- 2) Convex Concave Side Scraper
- 3&4) Double Straight Side Scraper
- 5) Straight Scraper
- 6) End Scraper
- 7) Double Convex Concave Side Scraper
- 8) Convex Convex Side Scraper
- 9) Straight Concave Double Side Scraper
- 10) Double Sided Straight Scraper
- 11) Straight Concave Side Scraper
- 12) Core Scraper
- 13) Side & End Scraper
- 14&15) Concave Side Scraper
- 16) Concave Concave Side Scraper

fig. 1 : Shaped Artefacts(Middle Palaeolithic) from the Lower Manjra Valley



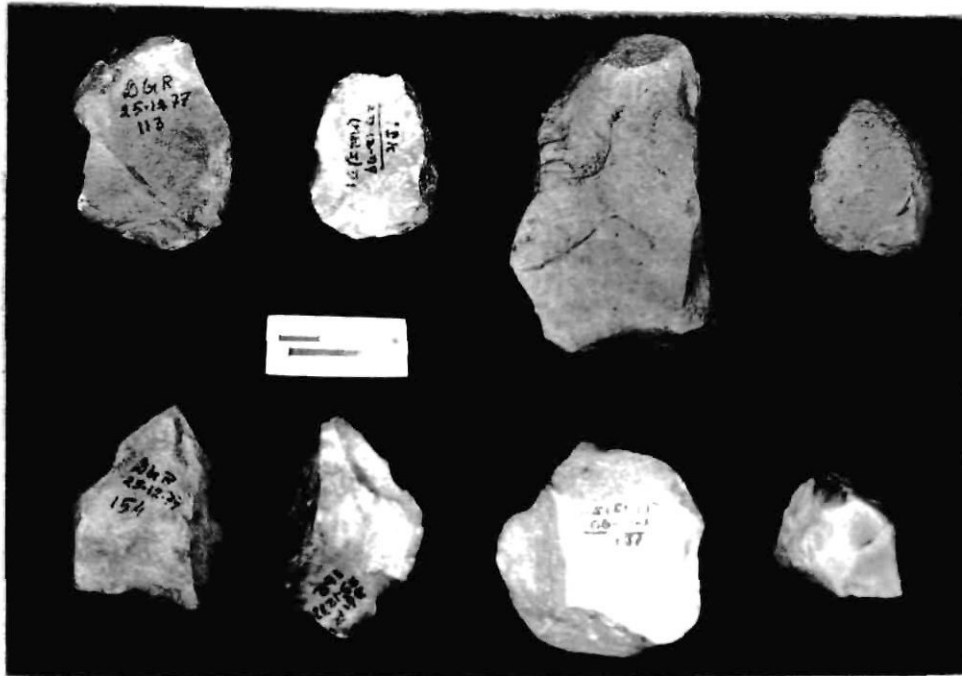
From Left to Right

1,2&3) Borers

4) Burin

5) Point

ig 1 2 : Shaped Artefacts(Middle Palaeolithic) from the Lower Manjra Valley



From Left to Right

1&2) Side Flakes

3&4) End Flakes

5&6) Indeterminate Flakes

7&8) Cores : Discoidal & Pyramidal

Fig. 2 : Simple Artefacts(Middle Palaeolithic) from the Lower Manjra Valley