

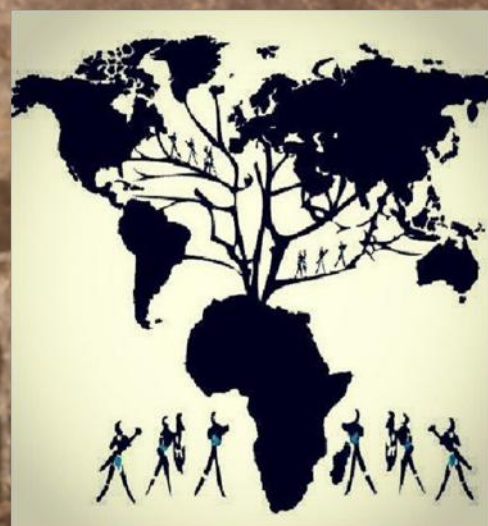
Recent Advances in South Asia's History and Archaeology

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCES CENTRE, IIT GANDHINAGAR

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Prehistoric Colonization in the Indian Subcontinent



According to evolutionary anthropologists, dispersal is an adaptive behaviour in the event of calamity, demographic pressure, etc. — “survival in adversity”. Archaeologists focus on the cause of dispersals, especially biocultural and changing climatic conditions. Palaeoanthropology and Palaeolithic archaeology have produced datasets which trace three major phases of human colonisation of the subcontinent. In this talk, the speaker will draw from these disciplines to outline this scenario.

About the speaker

Ravi Korisettar was formerly Professor of History and Archaeology at Karnatak University, Dharwad, Karnataka. Currently he is a Senior Fellow of Indian Council of Historical Research New Delhi and an Adjunct Professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru. His geo-archaeological research in the Kaladgi Basin highlighted the discovery of buried stone lines containing Acheulian artefacts that gave new leads to reconstructing Quaternary landscapes. This work resulted in the recognition of alluvial fans and lake facies as well as a sequence of alluvial deposits with which the Early Palaeolithic sites have been found associated.

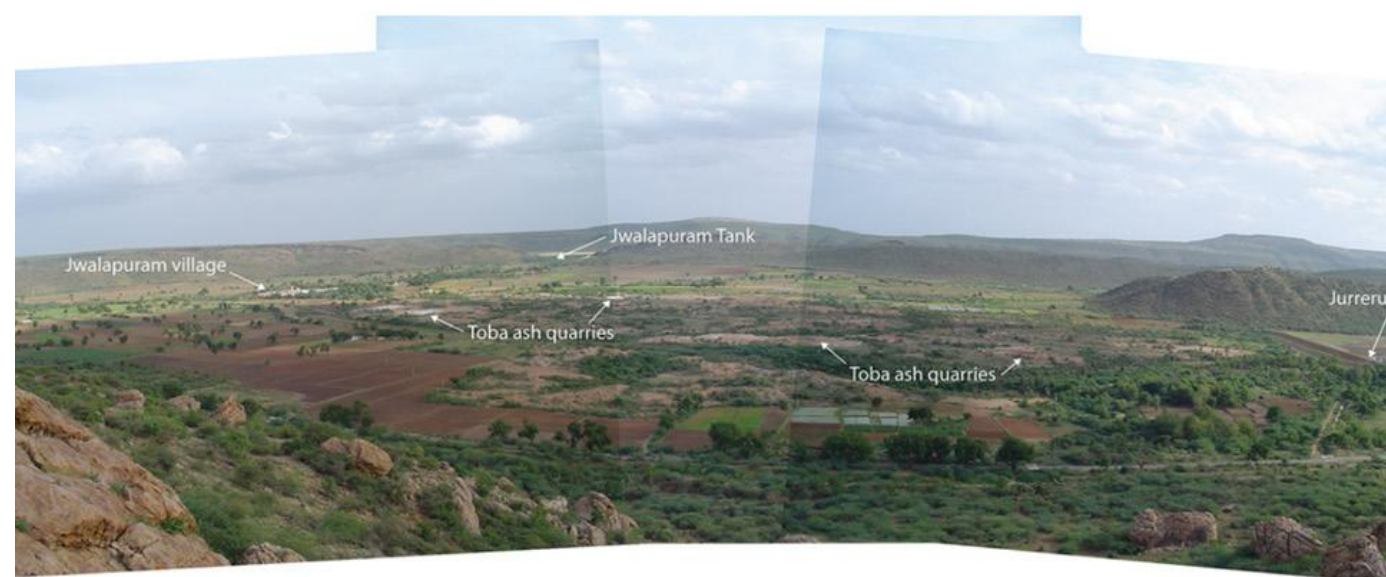


Work on the origins of agriculture in south India has produced exciting results and helped establish the independent origins of Neolithic agriculture in south India characterized by the domestication of local millets and pulses before the introduction of cereal crops from outside. Nearly 40 Neolithic sites distributed between Eastern and Western Ghats in the Lower Deccan Region covering Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka were revisited. At the end of this survey, he launched the excavation of Sanganakallu Neolithic site. Results of these excavations have been widely published.

Prof. Korisettar's discovery of the volcanic ash site of Jwalapuram near Banaganapalle and later excavations both at Jwalapuram and Billasurgam caves in the Kurnool district, helped in establishing geochronology of Palaeolithic cultures, and documenting hundreds of painted rock shelters and excavation of Late Pleistocene occupation of rock shelters by hunter-gatherers.

The painted rock shelters, comparable to those of Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh, were systematically documented and published in reputed journals. The findings opened up the debate on when modern humans entered India. In addition the oldest known microliths, stone beads, and fragmentary human remains were recovered from rock shelter excavations, ranging in time from 35,000 – 12,000 years ago.

Prof. Korisettar is also actively engaged in public outreach activity and has established Robert Bruce Foote Sanganakallu Archaeological Museum at Ballari in Karnataka and regularly conducts interactive sessions on archaeological heritage of the region with school teachers, in collaboration with the Azim Premji Foundation.



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