

---

**SHORT REPORT**

# A Short Report on the Preliminary Investigation at the Site of *Papamiya Ki Tekdi* – a Palaeolithic Site in Chandrapur District, Maharashtra, India

Amrita Sarkar and P. D. Sabale

---

The site at *Papamiya Ki Tekdi* lies about 5 km north-east of the District headquarters Chandrapur on Ambe nullah (locally known as Jharpat nullah), the site has been reported by Archaeological Survey of India in 1960s, followed by subsequent explorations and one geo-archaeological excavation also. But unfortunately the site was forgotten by the Archaeological fraternity until recently when it came to light that larger portion of the site has been acquired to build a Government Medical College and Hospital in Chandrapur. Looking at the vulnerability of the site's existence, the authors felt it important to take up an immediate survey to understand the extension and potentiality of the site for prehistoric studies.

---

## Introduction

The prehistoric site – Papamiya Ki Tekdi is located at Vijaynagar area, along Chandrapur–Hyderabad National Highway, on the eastern side of city, in the jurisdiction of Junna Reserved Forest Zone. It is located on latitude 19°57'26.56"N and longitude 79°19'19.57"E geocoordinates, on an average elevation of 192 m from AMSL (**Figure 1**). It is situated along the both banks of Ambe stream, which is a tributary of Erai river, and spread over a large area. It is bounded by Chandrapur-Nagbhir railway line at south, SAIL Company at east, Lohara road at north and Rajiv Gandhi Nagar at west. The site is accessible by road, from railway station and Central Bus Stand.

The site was discovered by Shri L. K. Srinivasan of the South-eastern Circle of the Survey in 1960–61 (IAR 1960–61: 22). Since then, the site has been mentioned many a times in IAR reports (1962–63: 30, 1976–77: 78, 1986–87–121) until 1993–94 (IAR 1993–94: 78) when the site was put to trial excavation under the direction of S.B. Ota, assisted by N.K. Nimje, P.S. Pashine, R.K. Dwivedi and P.C. Dogra of Prehistory Nagpur Branch with the aim of geo-archaeological investigation.

The site has been reported with large flake acheulian tools comprising of choppers both unifacial and bifacial, handaxes, cleavers, picks, scrapers, etc. In 1994–95 (IAR 1994–95: 55) a team comprised of G.L. Badam, Usha Gadre, Jitu Mishra and Nripen Das of the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute, Pune reported Lower and Middle Palaeolithic tools at Papamiya ki Tekdi.

## A brief Report of the present Survey

The authors undertook a preliminary investigation at the month of May 2019 by the order of Deccan College authority both from archaeological and geological perspectives at the site and the surrounding which is under threat. Major part of the site has fallen in an area acquired for the construction of the Chandrapur Government Medical College and Tata Hospital. The construction work, the boundary wall, the approach road and the foundations of the proposed buildings are already underway. Thus, portions of the site which, have already been disturbed due to the digging of foundation walls, needs immediate attention and also the areas which are to be developed for the Medical College project in the coming year.

From geological point of view, the region belongs to the Gondwana formation comprising of Kamthi and Barakar Sandstone and Maleri and Talchir Shale and also occupy north-south extending elongated stretch in central and southern parts of the district in parts of Warora, Bhadravati, Chandrapur, Ballarpur, Rajura and Gondpipri Talukas. The sandstone is usually friable and possesses primary porosity due to its granular nature.

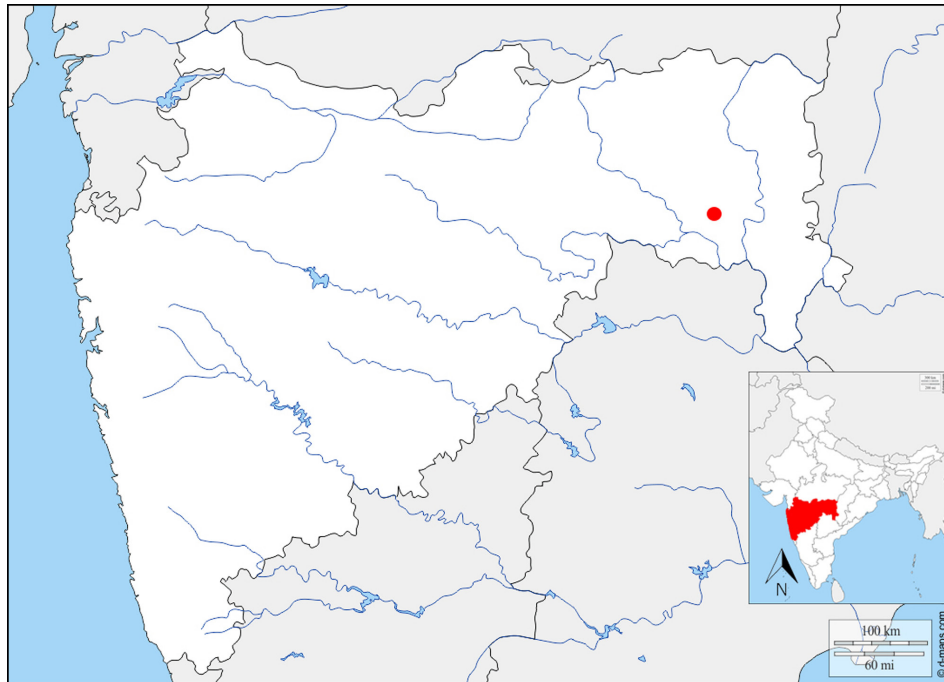
The plane region is made up of widely spread and flat terrain occurring mostly along the stream. In the valley, flat terrain exhibits rolling topography with residual hills and the wide alluvial flood plains are observed along the bank. The alluvium found along the stream channel at the base region of Papamiya hill is mainly of fluvial origin comprising sand, silt and clays.

Upon a detailed investigation in the site, the authors found out that the surface is rich in raw materials and tools (finished and unfinished) cemented with brownish clay rich in calcium carbonate materials. At places rhizo-concretion has developed in the sediments which indicate Pleistocene formation. The authors also noticed

few exposed sections along gulleys. These are second order tributary with highly dissected land surface flowing north – south. The second layer in this section is formed of calcrete rich brown silty clay fused with innumerable tools on both banks of these gulleys (**Figure 2**).

Apart from this, there are hundreds of tools which have been removed during the construction of boundary wall are now piled up on the surface. The authors have collected seventy seven samples of these artefacts from within and outside the boundary area (**Figures 3 and 4**). Among these seventy seven, 17 are core tools, 55 are flake tools and one blade tool. Within core tools there

are handaxes, bifaces, picks, discoid cores and chopping tools. Within flake tools there are different kinds of scrapers and few points. Only one blade tool has been collected by the authors. Majority of the artifacts are observed with thick patina and carbonate and lateritic encrustations. Some of the artifacts are weathered and rolled indicates artifacts were exposed to the surface for longer time and might have gone through multiple geological processes. The major raw materials of the artefacts are quartzite and sandstone which is locally available. A flake tool made out of agate was also found on the surface but that's a very rare find.



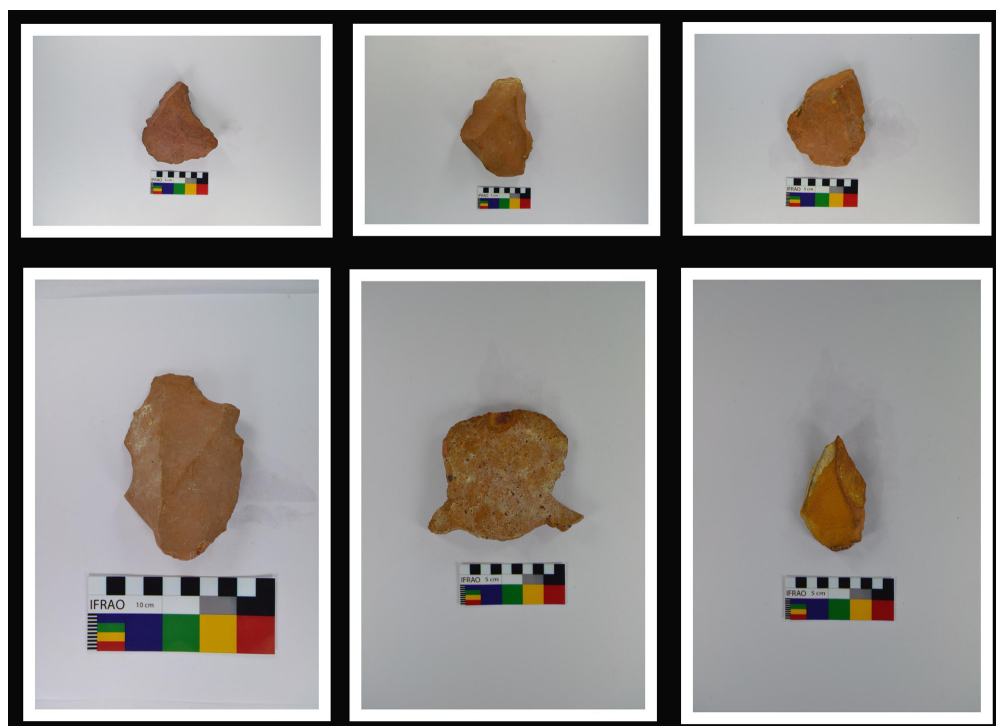
**Figure 1:** Location of Papamiya ki Tekdi in Maharashtra, India (base maps source: [https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num\\_car=4182&lang=en](https://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=4182&lang=en)).



**Figure 2:** Arrow pointing the artifact horizon in the picture.



**Figure 3:** Palaeolithic core tools from the site.



**Figure 4:** Palaeolithic flake tools from the site.



**Figure 5:** First author pointing out a lithic cluster.

Tools are found in many clusters. However one lithic cluster stood out as it has exposed an area probably of a working floor with finished and unfinished artefacts (**Figure 5**).

#### Scope of Prehistoric Study in the site

The site is extremely potential to foster understanding of Palaeolithic culture and life style in Maharashtra under the broad framework of understanding in South Asian context. The following are some of the issues in Prehistory that could be addressed in the site.

- (i) **To understand Maharashtra's earliest occupants:** The links between technology, culture and human evolution
- (ii) **To address the origin of South Asian Stone Age Cultures:** The lower palaeolithic in Indian subcontinent is characterized by the Acheulian stone technology. However, South Asia has its own trajectory development as seen from the peculiarities of its material content and also the early dates from Isampur (Paddayya et al. 2006) and Attirampakkam (Kumar et al. 2018).
- (iii) **To examine changes in technology and cultural identity at the regional scale:** Distinctions in tool types and technologies might be identifiable from the different areas, reflecting regional cultural groups. This needs to be dealt with
- (iv) **To understand the regional diversity of Acheulian Culture:** The developmental history within Acheulian is poorly understood as few sites are reported in primary context and most of the sites do not have a continuous stratigraphic record. But the culture could not have remained dead static and must have changed and improved over a long period spanning more than a million.
- (v) **To understand the geoarchaeological context of Maharashtra's earliest occupants:** The aim will be to study the depositional and post-depositional processes at the site since its positioned with a fluvial system.

#### Conclusion

The Palaeolithic is more than just a foundation of World Prehistory. 95% or more of all human history took place in the Palaeolithic. However, till date there are many fundamental issues relating to prehistoric cultures in India that needs to be addressed for example their origin, migration, chronology, environmental challenges and adaptive strategies. *Papamiya ki Tekdi* as a prehistoric site has the potential to study all the above mentioned issues in South-Asian prehistory. However, it was alarming to notice that major part of the site is damaged because of modern anthropogenic activities, such as construction of roads, building, industrial sheds, brick factories, canals – drainage lines and by different urban developmental activities under city expansion project. Infact the authors fear that by the time this short report is published more of the site will probably get destroyed because of the ongoing construction activities. This kind of site is rare in the eastern part of Maharashtra and should be immediately taken up for excavation before it gets completely destroyed. Acheulian sites indeed are not that common in Maharashtra. Based on dates available from Chirki- Nevasa, Bori and Morgaon, Maharashtra seems to have been occupied by early humans since the Early Pleistocene circa 0.8 Ma BP (Deo in Deotare et al. 2013: 66). More archaeological excavation and high resolution chronology are still needed to understand the circumstances in which our ancestors emerged and developed prehistoric cultures and *Papamiya ki Tekdi* fits perfect in this context.

#### Acknowledgement

Authors are grateful to the authorities of Deccan College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Deemed University, Pune for giving official permission to study the site. We are also thankful to our colleague Dr. Kanti Pawar for helping us with the accommodation during the field survey. We are equally thankful to Mr. Lalhminghlua, Ph D student of our University for assisting us in the field work. Thank you to Sumeet Jadhav for preparing the map.

### Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

### References

**Deotare, BC, Joshi, PS and Parchure, CN.** 2013. *Glimpses of Ancient Maharashtra Through Archaeological Excavations*. Pune, India: Bharataiya Itihas Sankalan Samittee and Deccan College.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1960–61. Pp-22.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1962–63. Pp-30.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1976–77. Pp-78.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1986–87. Pp-121.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1993–94. Pp-78.

*Indian Archaeology: A Review.* 1994–95. Pp-55.

**Kumar, A, Pappu, S, Rajapara, HM, Gunne, Y, Shukla, AD and Singhvi, AK.** 2018. Early Middle Palaeolithic culture in India around 385–172 ka reframes Out of Africa models. In: *Nature*, 554: 97–101. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1038/nature25444>

**Paddayya, K, Jhaldiyal, R and Petragliya, M.** 2006. The Acheulian Quarry at Isampur, Lower Deccan, India. In: Goren-Inbar, N and Sharon, G (eds.), *Axe Age: Acheulian Tool Making from Quarry to Discard*, 45–74. London: Equinox.

**How to cite this article:** Sarkar, A and Sabale, PD. 2019. A Short Report on the Preliminary Investigation at the Site of *Papamiya Ki Tekdi* – a Palaeolithic Site in Chandrapur District, Maharashtra, India. *Ancient Asia*, 10: 5, pp. 1–5. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/aa.179>

**Published:** 04 September 2019

**Copyright:** © 2019 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.