

New Light on the Presence of Megalithic Dolmen in Middle Waingangâ Basin of Vidarbha Region in Central India.

Kantikumar Anant Pawar

Abstract:

Peninsular India is extremely rich in Megalithic culture, which is marked by its diverse burial types. Eastern part of the Maharashtra, known as Vidarbha, earlier part of C.P. & Berar provinces, showing considerable typological diversity in the megaliths. The Middle Wainganga basin is an area subjected to major findings of several burials and habitational sites have been explored and few of them are excavated. Stone circle, one of the common burial types of Vidarbha megaliths, so far known to scholars as main type prevalent in the region. In the present paper an attempt has been made to throw light on the fresh discovery of dolmen type of Megalithic culture, which is uncommon in the area. Critical analysis of dolmen architecture and associated finds shows the significance of this type. This paper has been made correlation of this dolmen with other dolmens present in the middle Wainganga basin.

Introduction

Research on the monuments and burials referred to as 'Megaliths' or *pandukals* or *pandukutis* in India was initiated in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Babington (1823:324-30) unearthed an interesting group of the burial monuments at Bangala Motta Paramba in the northern part of Kerala. Since then number of scholars, antiquarians and treasure hunters attracted to the issues related to their origin, chronology, authorship and other aspects (Mohanty and Selvakumar 2002: 313-351). The Indian Megalithic burials and monuments generally belong to the Iron Age and are largely sepulchral in character. In fact in the earlier stages of research, the term 'megalith' was used to designate only the large stone monuments, as the term 'megalith' derived from the Greek words *me-gas* meaning 'huge' and *lithos* meaning 'stone' (Wheeler 1959: 150). However, subsequently, in India, the term was applied to all burial and habitation sites yielding the pottery with 'black-and-red' surfaces in peninsular India, irrespective of their association with 'megaliths' in the Early Iron Age context. Main concentration of these megalithic graves and habitation sites have been found in Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra (especially Vidarbha) region of Peninsular India.