

Ornaments from the Early Historic Sites and its Reflections in the Monuments of Odisha

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Introduction

Ornament and ornamentation has a big connotation, here the concept has been used only in a narrow sense only taking into account a few objects found in excavations and depicted in the sculptures in Odisha. To enhance the embellishment of the body, to look elegant, appreciative, charming and to project one's taste, aesthetic value, cultural significance, it has been probably the human urge for using ornaments (Deo 2000: 3). Though it is very difficult to say exact period when the human being started using different ornaments. The earliest evidence of the ornament used in India was found in Upper Paleolithic period in the form of beads made out of ostrich egg shells. Several contemporary sites also have given evidence of similar occurrences as well as ornaments made out of bones, marine shells (Bedranik 1993: 33-40). From that period onwards we start getting a number of evidence of beads along with other ornaments from all the succeeding period such as Mesolithic, Neolithic, Harappa, Chalcholithic, Megalithic and Historical period. The references to various kinds of ornaments in ancient India are found from the literary sources, inscriptions, numismatics and also from the sculptural representations. But the exact idea about the prevailing ornaments comes from the archeological excavations where we have an eye view of the actual ornaments used by the ancient contemporary people, where it occurs.

The cultural history of a region as well as the period has depended on the major findings from the excavation especially pottery, coins, structural remains and other utility objects. Though ornaments made out of different materials and shapes are found from the excavation are found from earlier cultural periods, the early historic sites produce profuse amount these artifacts. However, these things in archaeological records are regarded as the small findings or as minor antiquities and have not got the due attention they deserve. In many a reports the scholars have ignored the importance of these ornaments in revealing the cultural human-interacting past of the region to a large extent. The careful study of these ornaments helps in understanding not only the ancient people's way of life, penchant for such an use, gender differentiation if any, but also the economic status, cultural contact within different parts of ancient India as well as outside the country. The excavation gives variety of actual ornaments used by the ancient people made of different material and design.

These ornament types are also reflected in the sculptures which show the true nature and mode of wearing of various categories of ornaments and actual use pattern. When these excavated specimens of ornaments are studied with the ornaments found depicted in the monuments and compared with ethnographical evidences, it may provide the idea about the growth and development of adornment

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