

The Distribution of Prehistoric Sites in the Central Highland with Special Reference to *Sindurankanda*, *Udunuwara*, Sri Lanka

A. Rajapakse*, R.M.M. Chandraratne

University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, 20400, Sri Lanka

**arunat@pdn.ac.lk*

The earliest prehistoric investigations on the Island were conducted by E.E. Green from the *Peradeniya* area in 1885. Subsequently, other researchers documented the occurrence of prehistoric tools in the Districts of *Matale*, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya and other areas. Commonly, the evidence was found in high-altitude caves and open-air sites. The site is situated at *Sindurankanda*, *Udunuwara*, where the State Department of Archaeology and the Central Cultural Fund conducted surveys in 2014 and 2020, respectively. The authors and a few academic staff members carried out a systematic exploration of the area, collected data, and recorded the material culture which was examined and interpreted. The exploration has yielded quartz fragments (wastes, potential, and used tools) comprising very few Mesolithic tools and a few snails (*Cythopoma* spp.). The site contained a rock summit, a water canal below the rock, and raw material (clear, milky, and pink quartz) that shows a factory site and a community gathering location. The elevation at *Sindurankanda* is ca. 700m. Evidently, the Mesolithic inhabitants preferred to reside ca. 1000m above the sea. Observing the other sites in Kandy, many quartz tools were found in *Dotulugala*, the Knuckles range, and the *Bambaragala Rajamahavihara* area. Horton Plain consisted of the evidence of microlithic tools. Some prehistoric tools have been reported from *Gampola*, *Nawalapitiya*, and *Nuwara Eliya* while *Peradeniya*'s findings were not considered reliable tools. Fauna and flora play a significant role in the Mesolithic subsistence pattern. The authors observed the nature modification during the exploration because of colonial coffee and tea plantations, and later cultivation. Consequently, secondary vegetation is predominant. The implements measuring length < 4.5cm, showing Microlithic technology, and can be relatively dated to the Mesolithic Period (10,000-1800BP). Moreover, human-made landscape modifications have resulted from the loss of a surface material culture in the area.

Keywords: Mesolithic Period, Landscape modifications, Prehistoric investigation, *Sindurankanda* exploration

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