

Bones of child found in megalithic urn



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Bones of a child, believed to date back to 3,000 years, were unearthed during an excavation at an urn burial megalithic site near Nadapuram in Kozhikode district. Megalithic refers to a period from 1000 BC and 500 AD.

The site was discovered when the courtyard of Kadayam Valayath Balakrishnan, a resident of Varikkoli, was being dug. "The one-metre urn burial jar was found 1.5 metres under the earth. A black and red ware bowl and a black ware pottery were inside the jar. The red and black colour of the bowl may be due to the temperature variation while in the furnace. But a significant aspect of the discovery is that the urn contained bone pieces including parts of limb and thorax of a child aged between 5 and 10 years," said N.K. Ramesh, an anthropologist-cum-archaeologist, who visited the site.

The archaeological remains, including pottery, which are wheel-based and kiln-based, have been shifted to the Kunjali Marakkar Memorial Museum of the State Department of Archaeology at Iringal following a directive by K.P. Sadhu, in-charge of the museum.

Five years ago, an eagle-head-like figure, iron chopper, dagger, black ware pottery with lid, terracotta figurines and an urn burial jar were found from Perumundassery, 2 km from this site.

“The recent archaeological discoveries from Kozhikode clearly shows the rich pre and proto historic habitation of the State,” said P. Rajendran, geo-archaeologist and former scientist of University Grants Commission.

Prof. Rajendran, who has been credited with the discovery of the a well-fossilised human skull (christened laterite baby) dating back to 1.66 lakh years at a site near Villupuram district in Tamil Nadu, said that even now the primitive customs of Megalithic age were practised by the tribal community.

Mr. Ramesh said the secondary burial practices had been widely accepted in Megalithic culture. Sometimes personal properties or materials such as pottery, ornaments, and weapons of the deceased were also kept in the burial urn. Previously, a large number of iron ingots were detected at another megalithic urn burial and cist burial sites at Manikkovilakam and Kuitheri in Kozhikode. This also showed that iron-smelting technology was prevalent in the area in the pre-historic age, he said.

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