
Exploratory Data Analysis of Megalithic Remains in Upper Wainganga Valley, Maharashtra

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Abstract: In terms of systematic archeological explorations relating to Early Iron Age, upper Wainganga Valley had no distinct record of its own. Therefore, the present author intended to investigate and document the early Iron Age remains in this region. Extensive explorations carried out in upper Wainganga valley by the researcher brought to light ten megalithic burial sites. What makes the discovery of these megaliths a significant find is the fact that these are typologically different from Vidarbha megaliths. Hence, they together constitute a specific kind in the plethora of megalithic finds from Vidarbha. This paper deals with the detailed investigation and documentation of each newly discovered megalithic burial as reported during the course of exploration in upper Wainganga valley.

Keywords: Megaliths, Upper Wainganga Valley, Typological Variant, Resource Exploitation, Stone Circle, Cairn Circle, Menhir

Introduction

In the scheme of geographical regionalization of Maharashtra, Upper Wainganga region stands out as a zone of physical as well as cultural transitions. This area constitutes the easternmost part of Vidarbha and forms a part of Wardha-Wainganga basin (Singh 1971). This region has proven itself rich in historical and archaeological domain. The early historic sites like Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1970; Nath 1998), Adam (IAR 1988-89: 50-62; 1989-90: 61-65; 1990-91: 45-50; 1991-92: 63-68) and Chandankheda (Meshram *et.al.* 2015:562-580) are situated in Wainganga drainage system and amply exhibit the archaeological potential of the region. The region also abounds in rocky formations and outcrops making it an area of attraction not only for the prehistoric communities but also for the megalithic builders as well. Keeping in mind the same, systematic explorations were carried out in the region with the aim to document novel megalithic sites (Figure 1).

Previous Works

One of the earliest attempts to trace the antiquity of the region was done by Henry Cousins who explored this region in 1871 (Cousins 1871). After the excavations at

Pauni (Deo and Joshi 1970; Nath 1998) and Nagra (IAR 1979-80: 56) this region was looked upon as a promising area amongst the archaeologists and historians. However, no systematic attempt was made to trace the antiquity of region before early historic period. Antiquity of the upper Wainganga valley goes back to the prehistoric times (Sharma 2005). Excavation carried out in the at Kachgarh caves has given stratified evidence of Middle Palaeolithic and Upper Palaeolithic specimens. In first decade of Twenty first century Narange and Vaidya explored a part of the region and discovered new Megalithic sites in Gondia and Bhandara district respectively (Narange 2005, Narange 2013, Vaidya *et.al* 2015: 85-92). But compared to the tremendous potentiality this region has, very little intensive work has been so far carried out on the early Iron Age. During the exploration author had discovered Megalithic habitation-cum-burial site Malli, in Gondia District and due to its potential, this site was excavated in 2010-11 and 2012-13. (Sontakke 2014a, Sontakke 2015:43-53).

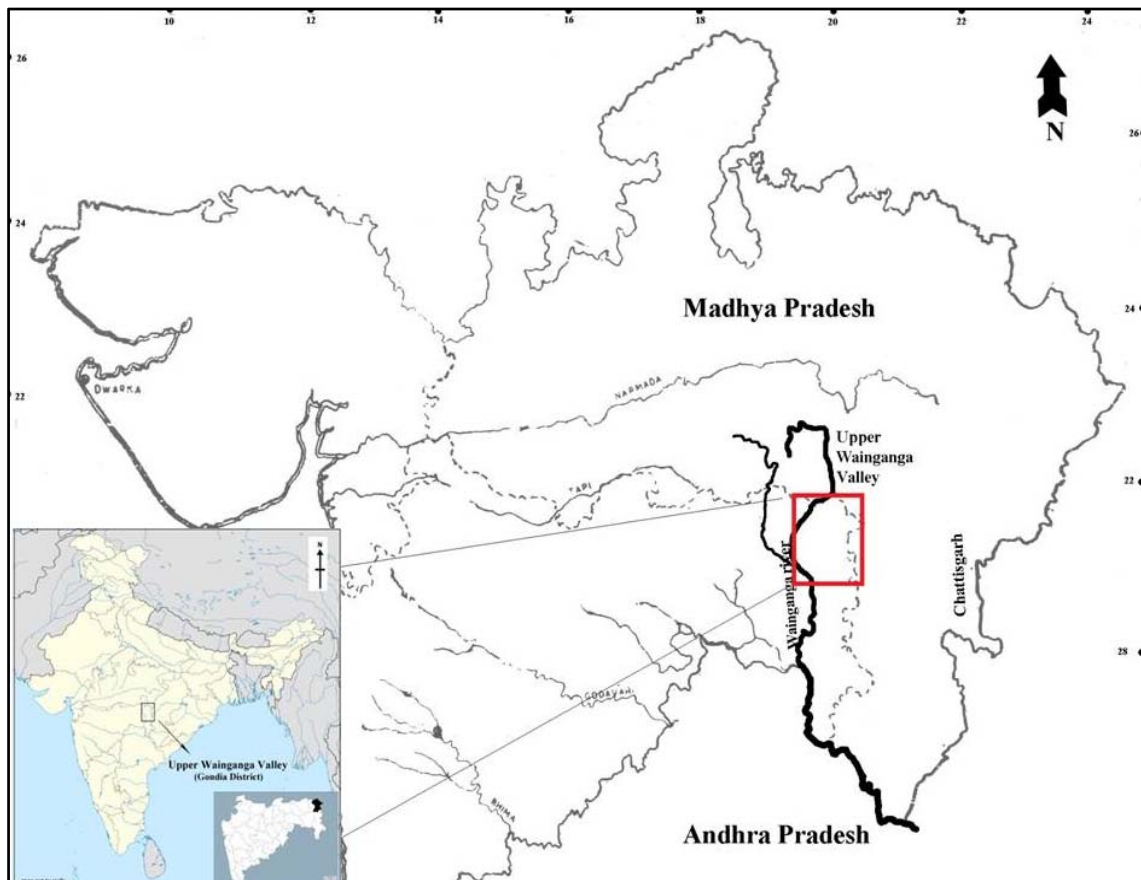


Figure 1: Location of Upper Wainganga Valley

As a part of the study, size-wise documentation of each intact megalith at each site was carried out. Each discovered megalith was plotted through GPS and also documented according to typology. Every megalith was given a number and measured manually. The results of site and locality wise size-variations were plotted in charts to highlight the most preferred size range of stone circles and rare size group as well. The results with regards to discovered sites are as follows.

Malli

The megalithic burial-cum-habitation site Malli ($21^{\circ}19'08''$ N; $79^{\circ}54'15''$ E) is located in Tiroadataluka of Gondia district (Sontakke 2014a). Detailed investigation carried out at Malli brought to light 396 megalithic burials of different types (Figure 2). The site has been divided into four localities due to its geographical widespread occurrence (Figure 3). Locality I had the highest concentration of megaliths in the form of 140 megalithic burials. Locality II and III documented 100 and 38 megaliths respectively. While, 108 megaliths were documented in locality IV. Stone circles, Cairn circles, Cists, Menhirs and Dolmens are identified as main types. Other than broad typological variations megaliths with inner architecture such as single cist inside the stone circle, double cist inside the stone circle, multiple cists inside the stone circle, cist inside the cairn circle, menhir inside the stone circle and dolmen inside the stone circle were also documented.



Figure 2: Distribution of Megaliths at Malli

Megaliths in Malli spread in more than 2 km area. On the basis of concentration of megaliths, its geographical differences and typological variations megaliths of Malli are divided into four localities. Figure 4 shows the widespread distribution of megaliths at Malli.

Figure 4 shows that stone circle type of burial was the most preferred mode of burial construction at Malli as over three hundred specimens of stone circles are documented

here. Stone circles are followed by cist burials. A few occurrences of cairns, dolmens and menhirs are also documented. Besides this, variation of megaliths in stone circles and cairn circles having single, double, triple and even four peripheral circles are also reported here. Cist and capstones inside the stone/cairn circle are also found at Malli.

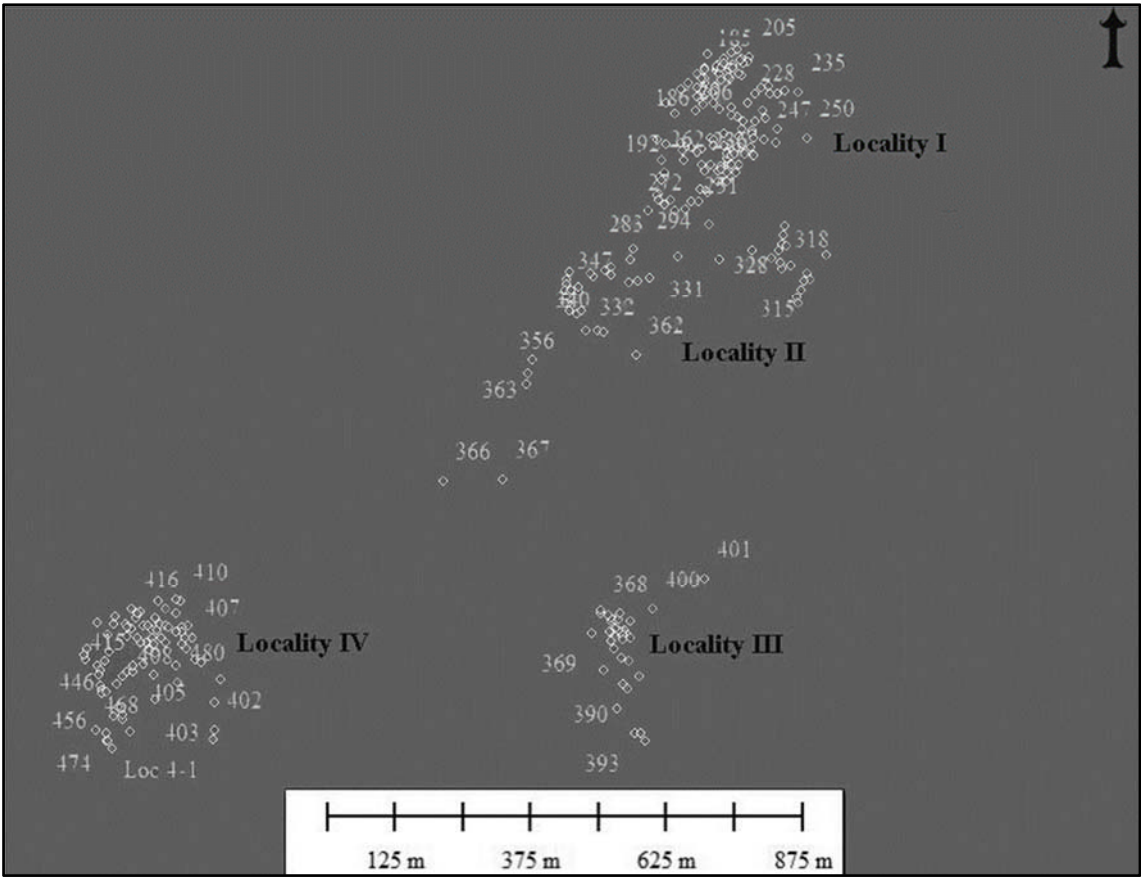


Figure 3: Distribution of Megaliths at Malli

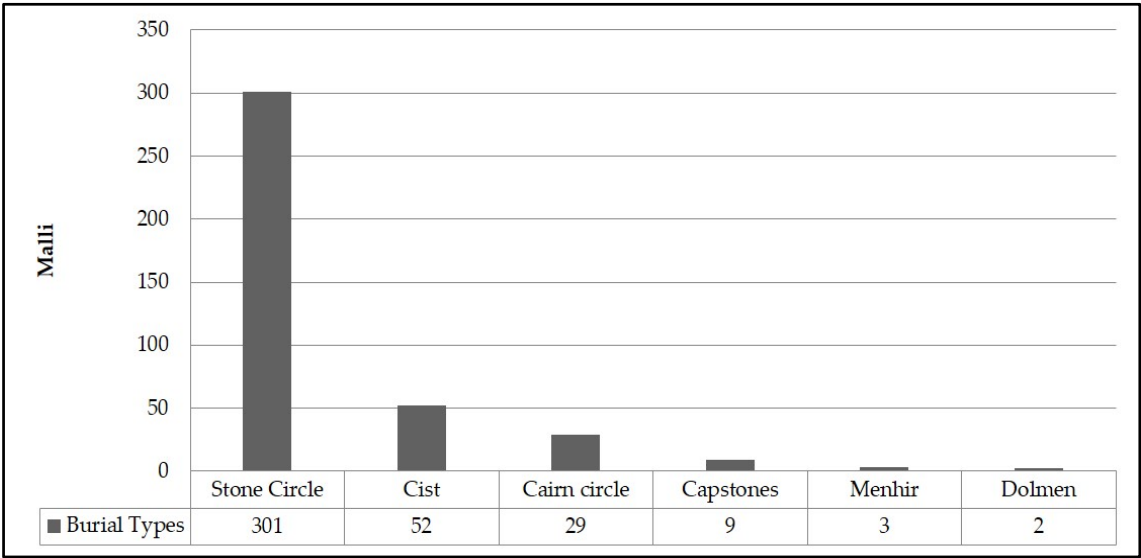


Figure 4: Type wise Distributions of Megaliths at Malli

Locality I: Locality I ($21^{\circ}19'09''\text{N}$; $79^{\circ}54'18''\text{E}$) is situated south-east of the present village Malli. Megaliths of this locality are found in between the artificial lake on the north and the rainy nulla on the south. This locality contained 141 megalithic burials situated on lateritic belt with slightly undulated landscape in the south and north. This locality has the highest concentration of megaliths. The megaliths in this locality are prominently stone circles followed by cairns, cists and menhirs. Distribution of different types of megaliths in locality I is presented in Figure 5.

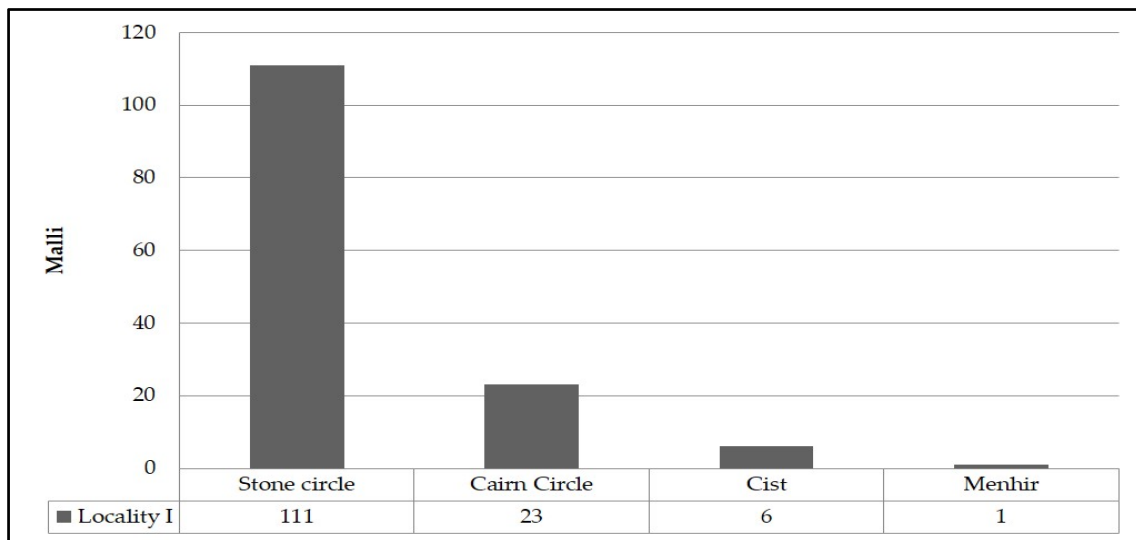


Figure 5: Distribution of Megaliths in Locality I

Locality II: This locality ($21^{\circ}18'56''\text{N}$; $79^{\circ}54'08''\text{E}$) is situated to the south-west of locality no I about five hundred meters from present village Malli. Small rainy nulla flowing from west to east direction separates this locality from locality no. I. Survey carried out in this locality brought to light 118 megalithic monuments of different typology. In this locality stone circle found in large number followed by cist, cairn circle and dolmen (Figure 6).

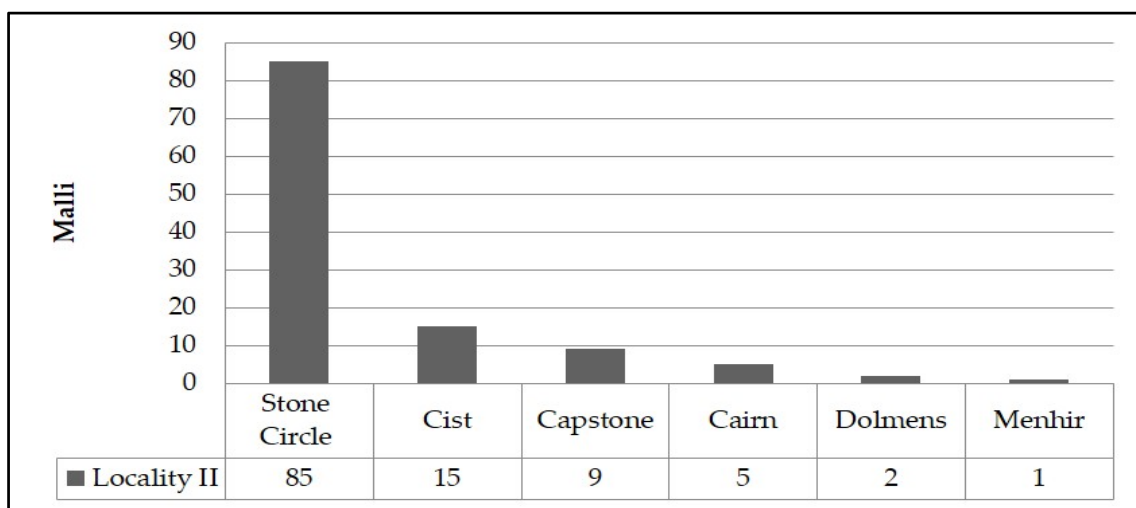


Figure 6: Distribution of Megaliths in Locality II

Locality III: This locality (21°18'39" N; 79°54'07" E) is situated south-east of locality II and on the southern side of locality I. Distance of this locality from village is nearly 1.2 km towards south. Interesting feature of this locality is majority of cists are found independently. Cists of this locality are huge in size with massive capstones. Figure 7 shows that out of 38 megalithic monuments documented in this locality, 22 are represented by cists followed by stone circles. Decrease in numbers of cairn circles is noticed here as only 1 megalith is represented in this category.

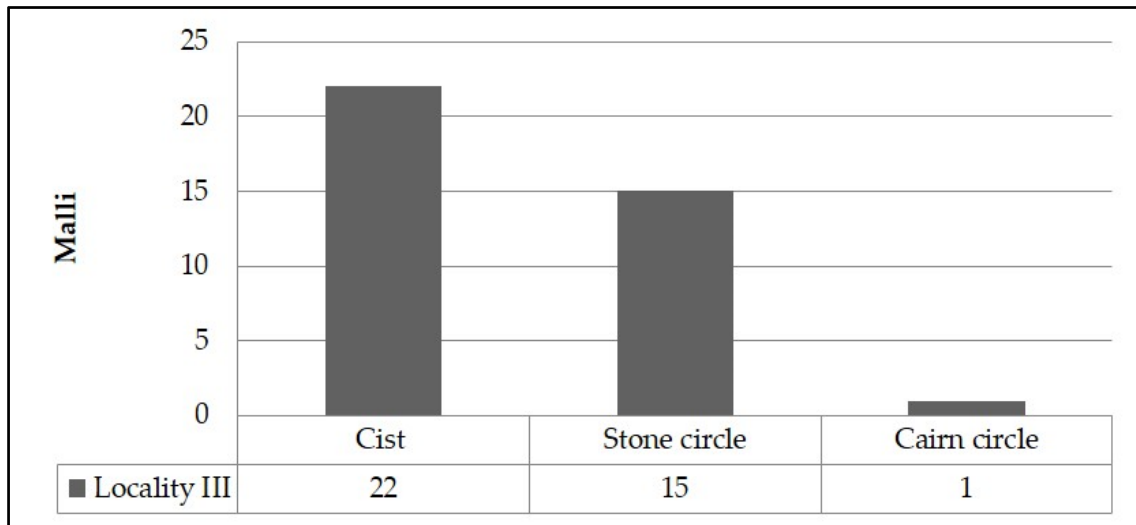


Figure 7: Distribution of Megaliths in Locality III

Locality IV: Locality IV (21°18'43"N; 79°53'35"E) is situated to the west of locality I and about 2 km away from Malli village. Like locality I, stone circle found in majority in this locality too. From the Figure 8 it becomes clear that out of 100 megalithic monuments, ninety are represented by stone circle, nine are cists and one is menhir. Complete absence of cairn circle is seen in this locality as not even a single burial of cairn type is found in locality IV.

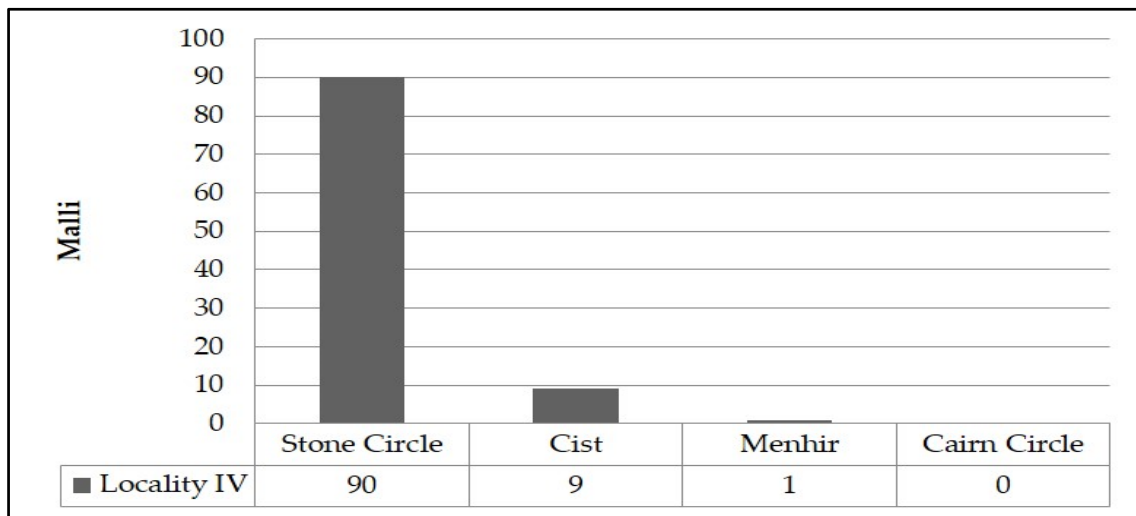


Figure 8: Distribution of Megaliths in Locality IV

Survey carried out in Malli exposed unique typological variations in megaliths which was hitherto unknown in Vidarbha megaliths. Figure 9 shows distribution of 396 megalithic monuments across four localities in Malli. It was concluded on the basis of data from all the four localities that the stone circles constituted the most popular type of burial at Malli since they were found in highest numbers in all four localities. Stone circles were followed by cists in popularity of which 52 specimens were documented. However, cairn circles were few in number and were completely absent in locality IV. Menhirs and Dolmens were very rare, but they do represent themselves with their proper architectural features in Malli.

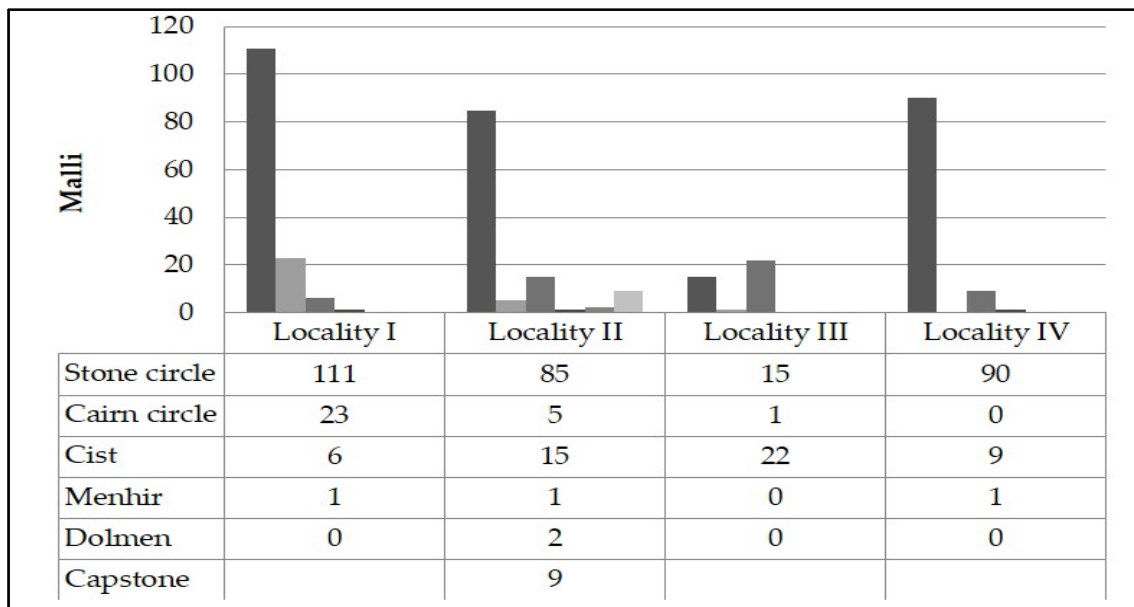


Figure 9: Locality wise Distribution of Megaliths in Malli

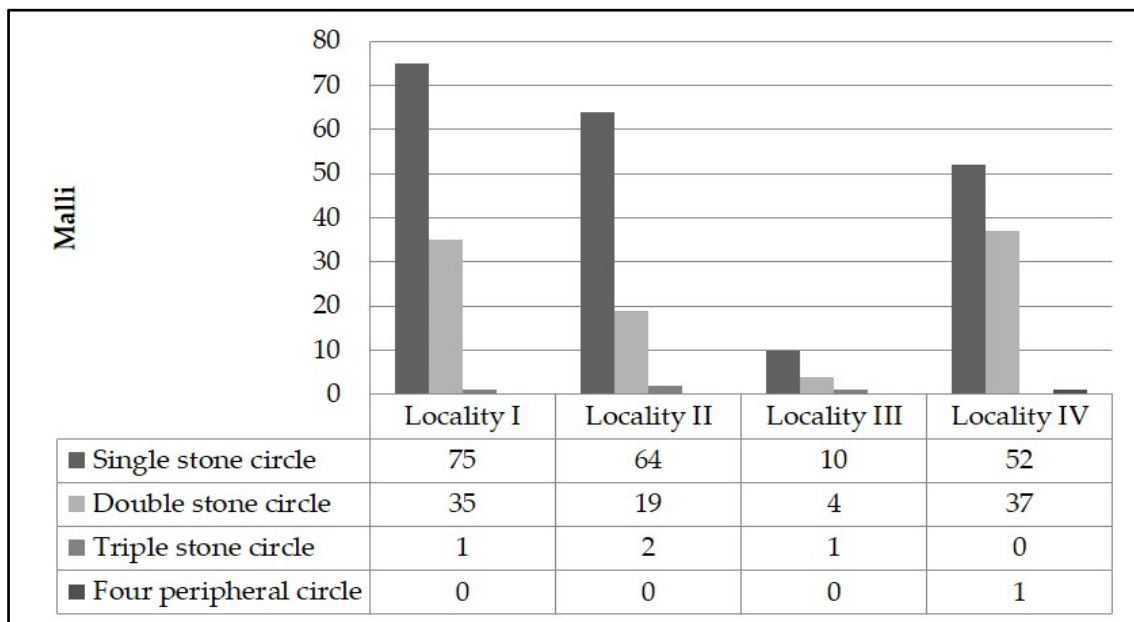


Figure 10: Locality wise Variation of Stone Circles in Malli

Variations in stone circle such as circles with single periphery, circles with double periphery and circles with triple periphery were noticed in all localities of Malli. Moreover, circles with single periphery were commonly found in Malli. Circle with triple periphery were also noticed, however, they are represented by only a few numbers. Circles with four peripheral boundaries were extremely rare and they were documented only from one locality in Malli. In case of stone circles with double periphery, outer circle of the burial was generally situated at a distance of 20-40 cm from the main circle and usually contained bigger stones than those used in single circle. Figure 10 shows the variation of stone circle documented in different localities in Malli.

Cist is another major type of burial type found in Malli. Overall 187 cists were documented at this site which either lies independently or inside the stone circles and cairn circles. Occurrence of cists in Malli are shown in Figure 11. It is interesting to note that cists were found in more number in stone circles or cairn circles as compared to independent cists. Also, stone circles with single periphery incorporated a large number of cist inside them.

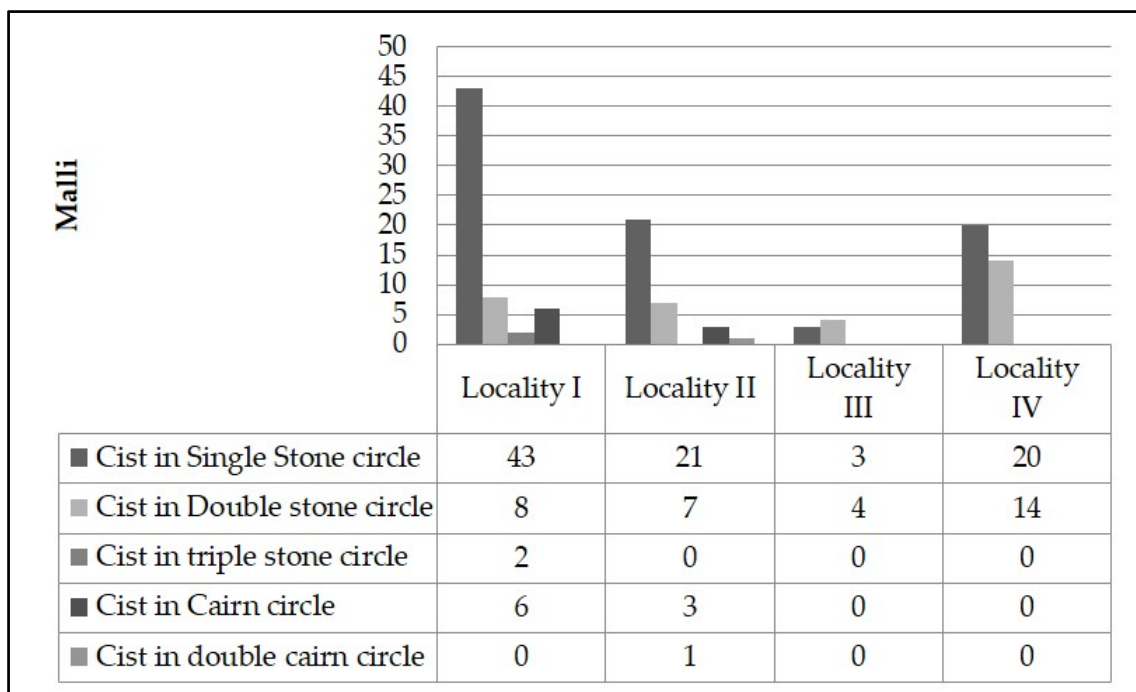


Figure 11: Locality wise Occurrence of Cists in Malli

Out of 301 stone circles in Malli, 114 circles were disturbed by various reasons. Total 187 stone circles having proper burial setup along with peripheral boulders were documented (Figure 12). Among them 5 to 10 meter size megaliths were dominant. Small megaliths with 1 to 5 meter size were also given preference as indicated from 49 such examples. Stone circles with 10 to 15 meter diameter also seem to be a favorable group with 46 stone circles belonging to this size. It is important to note that stone circles with bigger diameter (15 to 20 meter) were reported from every locality of Malli.

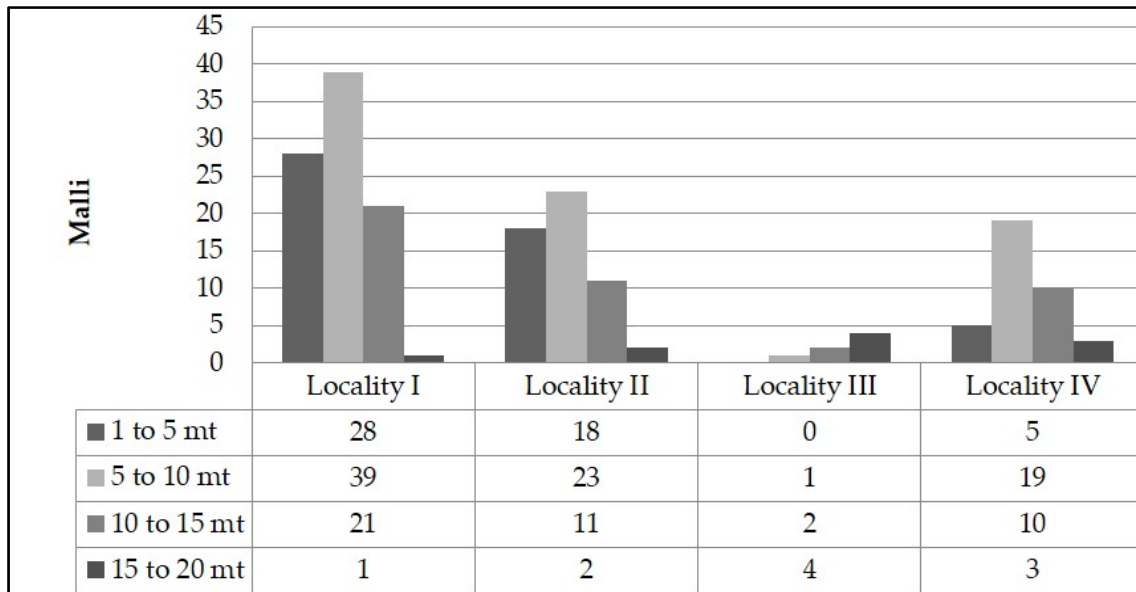


Figure 12: Locality wise Variation in Size of Stone Circles in Malli

Silli

Silli ($21^{\circ}19'27''$ N; $79^{\circ}53'28''$ E) is a burial site located on left side of Bhandara-Tiroda road in Tiroda Taluka of Gondia district. Megalithic monuments are situated on the southern side of present village Silli. Megaliths at Silli are constructed of lateritic stones and are mainly cairn circles. Here eleven megalithic monuments constructed over a lateritic barren surface was documented. Out of eleven megaliths, nine were cairn circles and remaining two were menhir (Figure 13). It is in sharp contrast to Malli where majority of burials were stone circles.

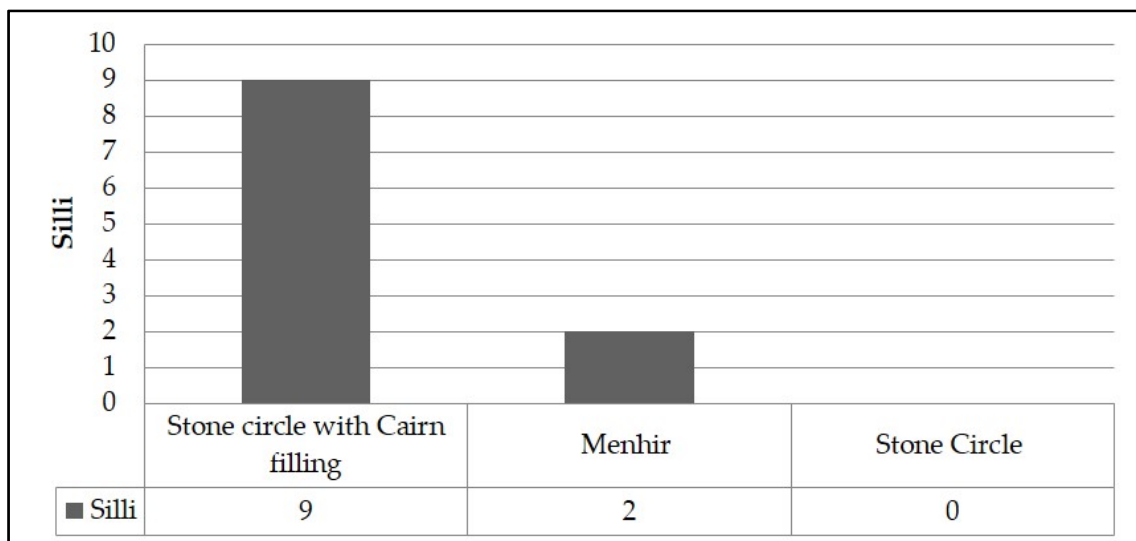


Figure 13: Distribution of Megaliths in Silli

Stone circle with cairn filling of Silli have a 20 to 50 cm deposit over the surface. For making heap like structure, lateritic pebbles of 10 to 30 cm were used. No inner

architecture was visible inside the circle. However, a depression at the center of the burial was observed during the documentation of the megaliths. Most of the cairn circles were over 10 meter size. Of the two menhirs found in Silli, one measured 95 x 70 x 22 cm and was made out of schist. Other menhir was of same height but of different material. Out of nine stone circles with cairn filling, four were disturbed by the villagers. No early iron age habitation remains could be located at Silli.

Gangla

Megalithic burial site Gangla (21°19'55" N; 79°53'70" E) is located on either side of Bhandara-Tiroda road in Tiroda taluka of Gondia district. Survey carried out at the site brought to light 44 megaliths constructed over barren lateritic earth.

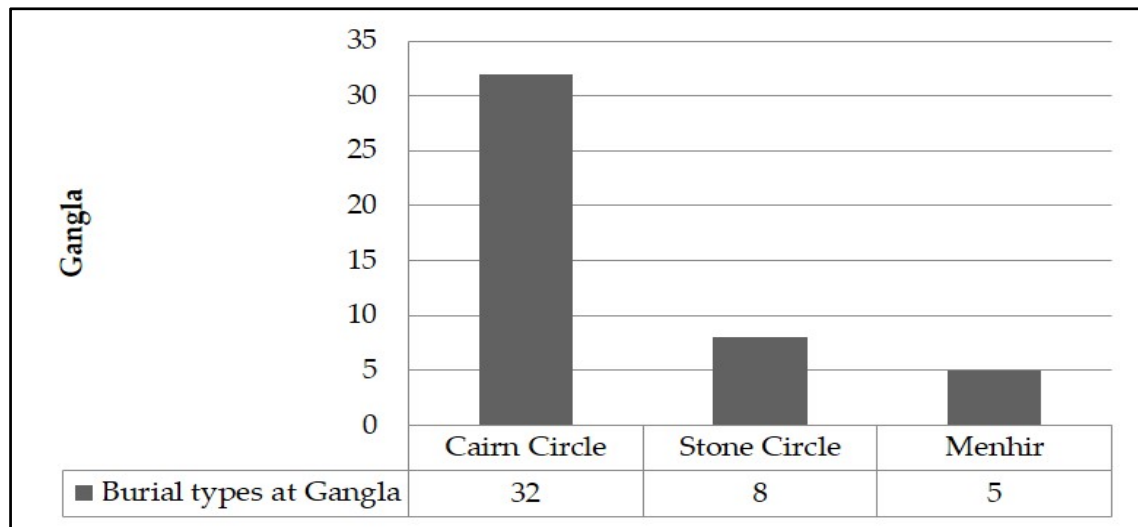


Figure 14: Distribution of Megaliths in Gangla

Figure 14 indicates that cairn circle were the dominant burial type in Gangla. Deposit of cairn circles ranged between 50 cm to 85 cm from ground level. Pebbles of laterite along with brown soil were generally used as filling material. Few cairns encompassing double periphery of stone circles were also documented here. Space between the rows of stone was filled with lateritic pebbles smaller than peripheral boulders. Only eight stone circles were found in Gangla. A few specimens of menhirs were also found at the site located in the same cemetery.

Survey carried out at Gangla revealed different size of stone circles which are shown in Figure 15. It is interesting to note that big megaliths (10-15 meter) were given more preference at Gangla. The biggest megalith found in Gangla comes under 15 meter to 20 meter category (16.80 north-south and 17.20 east-west).

A glance at the size of stone circle in Gangla shows a contrasting picture with regard to megaliths found at Malli. Here, big circles were given preference than smaller ones. For instance, at Malli small size (1 meter to 5 meter) stone circle were the dominant types whereas, in Gangla not a single stone circle was found belonging to this category.

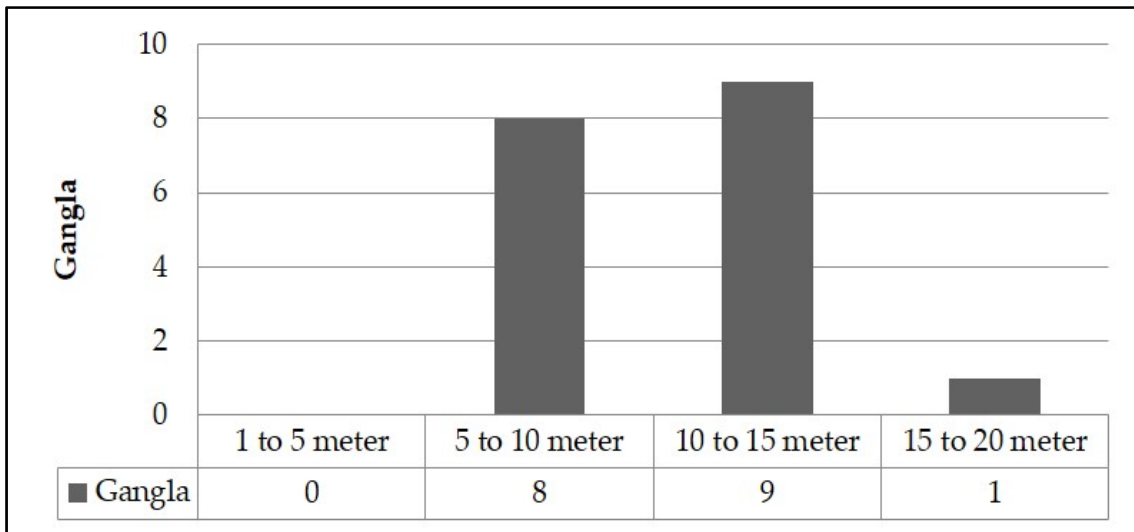


Figure 15: Variation of Stone Circle Size in Gangla



Figure 16: Stone Circle and Cairn Circle Situated Close to each other at Satona

Satona

The site Satona ($21^{\circ}19'50''$ N; $79^{\circ}55'14''$ E) is located on left side of Tiroda-Sakoli road in Tiroadataluka of Gondia district. The burial site is located on outskirts of the present village Satona (Figure 16). The megaliths spread over a kilometer area. Seventy-nine megalithic burials were documented here which were situated on a flat lateritic land. The megaliths documented at Satona can be broadly categorized into stone circles and cairn circles. Nine menhirs were also documented at the site. Periphery boulders of cairn circle are big in size and contain small pebble deposit inside. Big stones as compared to stone circles were employed for making the outer periphery of these cairns. A few circles comprised dressed lateritic stone in their periphery. Small lateritic,

sand stone, conglomerate and schist stones were used as filling material in the circle. The deposit of the cairns ranged from 20 cm to 80 cm. Menhirs were situated outside the megalith cemetery. This is in contrast to Gangla where menhirs were located within the same cemetery. These menhirs were generally thin in section, short in height and were carved out either from sand stone or schist. Distribution of megaliths in Satona is shown in Figure 17 which clearly indicates that stone circle had highest occurrence followed by cairn circles.

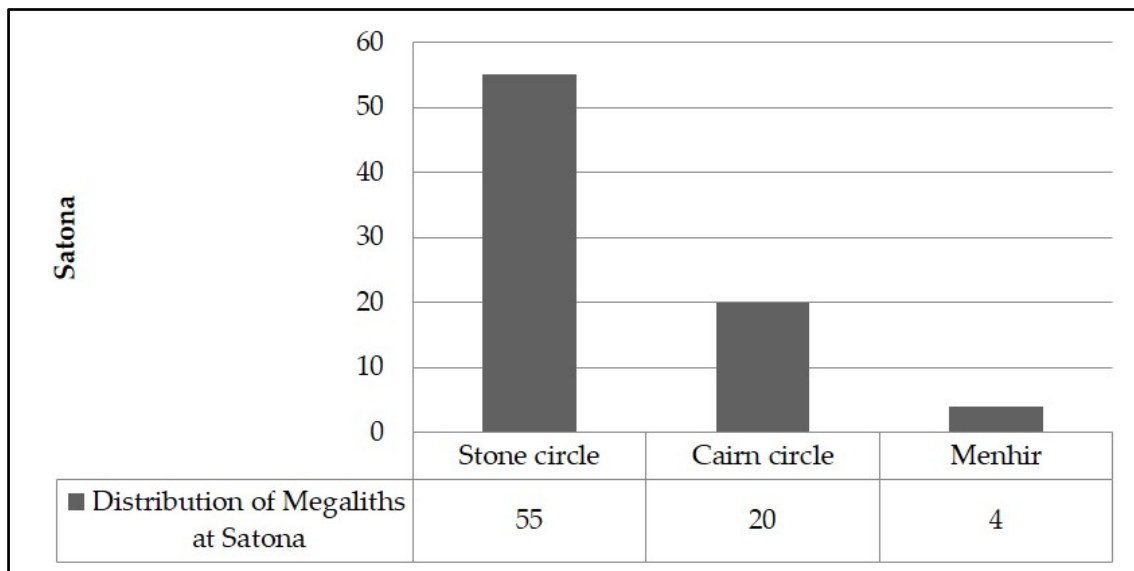


Figure 17: Distribution of Megaliths in Satona

Stone circle without any filling inside the circle are also reported from Satona. Among 55 stone circles, 20 had double peripheral boulders. Space between two peripheral circles generally remained unfilled. Big stones were utilized in the outer row of the circle in case of double stone circles.

Out of 79 megaliths documented at Satona, 42 are disturbed due to modern activity. Total 37 burials with intact peripheral circles of various sizes are documented and divided according to their size. Size variation at Satona is shown in figure 18. Circles having diameter of 1 meter to 5 meter are 9 in number. Circles between 5 meter to 10 meter size seems to be most favorable size for construction of burial here as 17 megalithic stone circles are documented in this group. 8 megaliths belong to 10 to 15 meter diameter size. 15 to 20 meter size group also identified as “elite class” is represented by a solitary evidence. It measured 17.20 meter. The smallest circle in Satona measured 4 meter.

Significant finding at Satona is a square shaped megalith possessing double peripheral row of boulders. It measured 13.10 meter (north-south) and 12.70 meter (east-west). Important evidence of rectangular megalith with an opening towards south is also documented at Satona. Megalith no. 70 and 71 share common periphery of stone and thus are identified as twin burials.

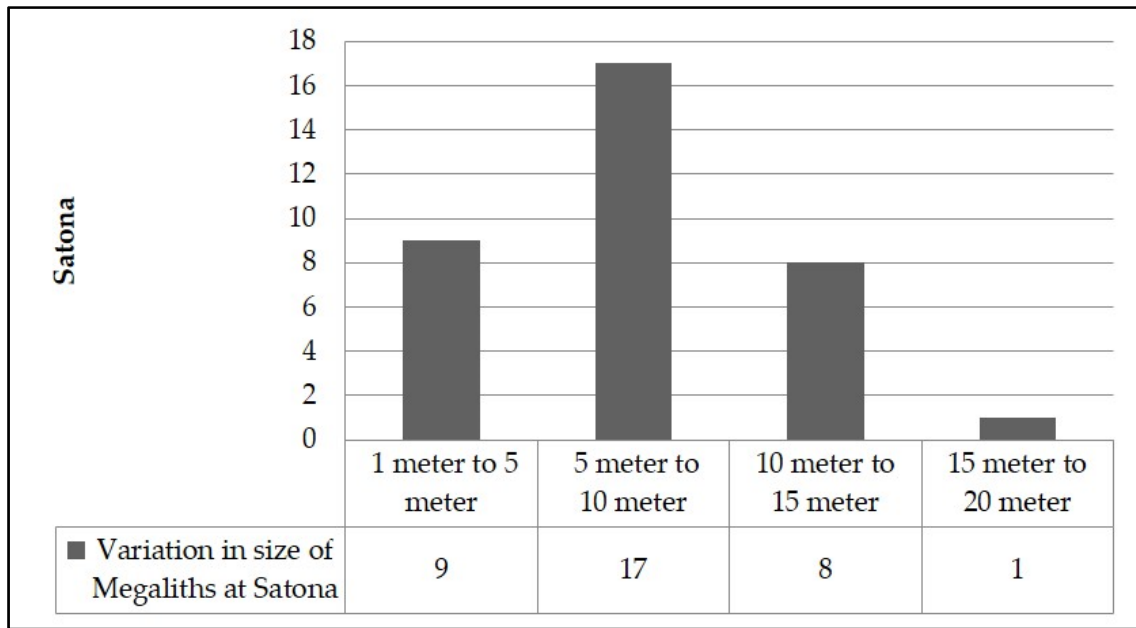


Figure 18: Variation of Stone Circle Size at Satona

Close observation of the cemetery site at Satona suggest a specific clustering of the megaliths. Megalith no 1 to 6 are located close to each other and seem to surround huge megalith no. 1. Interestingly, all these megaliths belonged to cairn circle type and had a good deposit. This clustering of specific size, specific type and good filling deposit may be taken to represent a burial of specific class of people, family or a community with preferably similar mortuary beliefs.

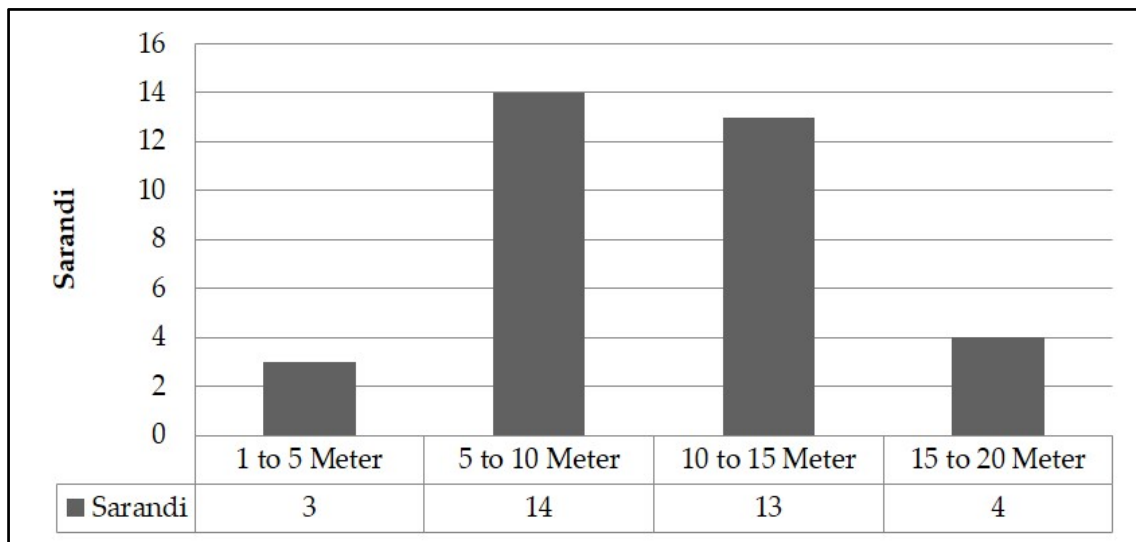


Figure 19: Size-wise Distribution of Megaliths at Sarandi

Sarandi

Megalithic burial-cum-habitation site Sarandi (21°22'13" N; 79°52'17" E) is located on the left side of Tumsar-Tiroda state highway on a non-agricultural land. The site is on

the left bank of Bodalkasa river. Interesting feature of the megaliths at Sarandi is that the majority of the monuments belong to cairn type. Cairns of Sarandi do not possess outer peripheral circle which is generally found in other documented sites. Small stones of quartzite and chert are used as main filling component of the cairn. Light brownish soil is used for uppermost deposit of the cairn. Total 36 megalithic monuments are documented here. Only one burial of stone circle type identified here.

Homogeneity of cairn is generally seen at the site but close observation revealed the variation in burial size which is documented in Figure 19. Burials ranging from 5 to 10 meter and 10 to 15 meter size were much preferred. Four megaliths belong to 15 to 20 meter category. Smallest burial documented here was 5 meter whereas, biggest circle encountered in Sarandi was 28.50 meter. Deposit of these circles ranges from 10 cm to 1 meter. No inner architecture was observed during the surface survey.

Janva

The megalithic burial site Janva ($20^{\circ}43'43''$ N; $80^{\circ}01'32''$ E) is located in Arjuni-Morgaon taluka of Gondia district on the bank of Bhagmar nulla which is a tributary of Gadhvi river in Wainganga drainage system. Present village Janva is situated on ancient burial site therefore burials are badly disturbed. Total 14 megalithic burials were documented here. They can be divided into three categories viz. menhirs, stone circles and cists. The menhirs were located away from each other and were life size. One of the biggest menhir measured $403 \times 105 \times 33$ cm. Menhirs were made from rock such as schist, gneiss and sand stone. Stone circles were less in number as compared to menhirs. Peripheral stones of the circle were generally lateritic but usage of quartzite was also observed. Only one cist was found in Janva and that too was badly disturbed and dug out. The distribution of megaliths documented in Janva is described in figure 20.

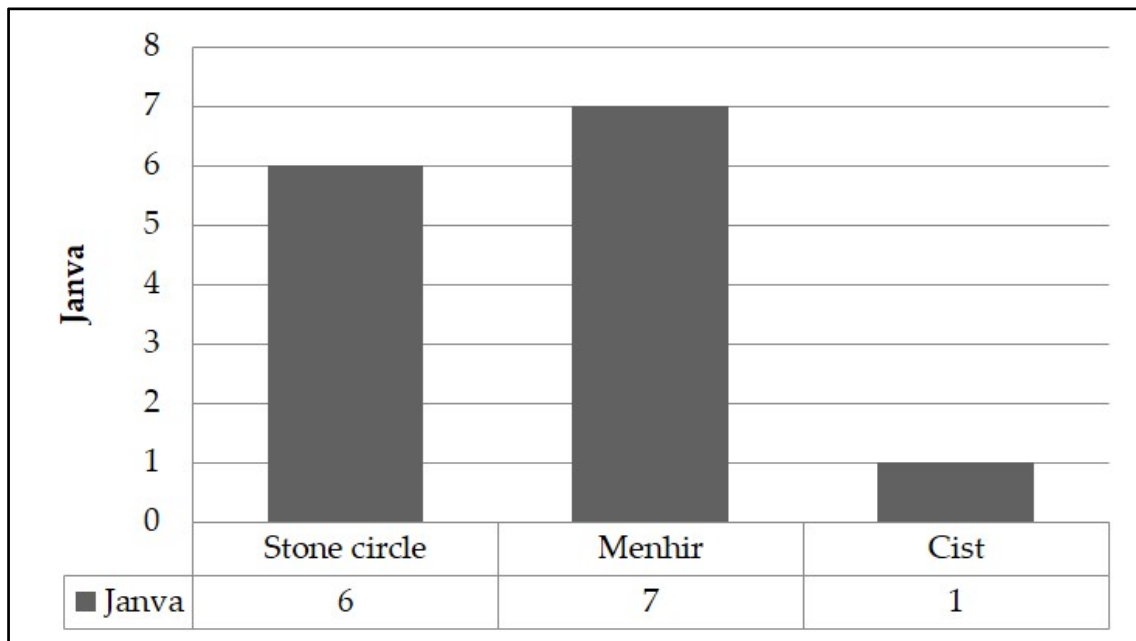


Figure 20: Distribution of Megaliths in Janva

Navegaon

The megalithic site Navegaon (21°23'04" N; 80°29'28" E) is located in Salekasa taluka of Gondia district. Here two stone circles were documented. This is the only site in upper Wainganga valley where megaliths are erected right on the bank of the river. Locality no II was situated to the south of the village away from water bodies. It consisted of 9 megaliths. It was noticed that local villagers had dugout megaliths for stones and soil for plastering and construction of houses. Out of eleven stone circles in Navegaon, only three were found in good condition while remaining were disturbed.

Bharretola

This megalithic burial site (21°07'59" N; 80°20'15" E) is located in Goregaon taluka of Gondia district. Here three cairns were documented. The cairns of the site were small in diameter and their size range between 4 to 5 meter. Pebbles of sand stone, schist and laterite were used as filling material. The maximum deposit of the cairn was 25 cm from the ground. It appears that this site possessed more megaliths but they are not traceable today since people constructed their houses over the burial sites. Pebbles which were used in cairns could be seen scatted around the houses.

Datora

Datora (21°26'53" N; 80°15'47" E) is a megalithic burial site in Gondia district. Two megaliths were found to the north-west of the modern village. These megaliths were located on a barren land suitable for cemetery. Small lateritic stones were deployed in periphery of the circle. These megaliths were almost merged in the natural soil. Half of the peripheral stones were also buried inside the earth.

Vadegaon

This megalithic burial site (21°19'11" N; 79°55'29" E) is situated in Tiroda taluka of Gondia district on Sakoli-Tiroda road. Two stone circles were documented situated to the south-east of the present village. Here the megaliths were represented by stone circles with filling inside. Lateritic boulders were used for periphery of the circle. Vestiges of burials in form of peripheral boulders scattered around the site could be seen at the site.

Resource Availability

The region of upper Wainganga Valley is geologically different from rest of the Maharashtra. Metamorphic formation in form of natural outcrops spread over the region. Easy availability of source of stones played a crucial role in the megalithic complex of upper Wainganga Valley. It is discussed that the lateritic stone is used by early Iron Age folk, for construction of megaliths as this stone was available locally (Figure 21). It seems that the megaliths were constructed on non-agriculture lateritic belt and near the quarry area. The lateritic stone quarries are documented at Malli, Satona, Vadegaon and Gangla. Multiple stone quarries are observed in Malli where more than three hundred megaliths were erected while single lateritic stone quarry are

found Satona, Vadegaon and Gangla. These stone quarries are situated not far from the burial site (Figure 22). Other than parent lateritic stones, usage of variety of stones was observed at Malli. The source of these stones is also not far from the site and they can be brought within two km radius.



Figure 21: Source of Raw Material of Schist Rock Near Chorkhambara Lake



Figure 22: Open Cast Mine of Phyllite Schist Source at Kodelohara Area

Conclusion

Fruitful conclusions were drawn with the help of data analysis. It was observed that the majority of the megalithic sites were located away from the big rivers but had some sort of other water resources nearby. The exception to this is seen only at Navegaon where two burials were located on the bank of the river Bagh. It appears that the megalithic community of the upper Wainganga valley preferred areas near small perennial river and nullas and water bodies. Major preference was given to locations near the rainy nullas. It is important to note that majority of burial site in upper Wainganga valley are located not more than one km away from perennial source of water on barren land. In case of habitation sites, they were located on the bank of sub tributaries of Wainganga river valley. The site Malli and Sarandi are located on the bank of Chorkhambara river. Both burial and habitation sites are not situated on the bank of Wainganga or its major tributaries. The possible explanation of the selection of site may be accounted to the avoidance of repeated floods from main river.

Malli emerges as a major site amongst Silli, Gangla, Satona and Vadegaon and other newly discovered site of the region. Heavy concentrations of burials with different typological variation are found in Malli which are not present in any other site of the Upper Wainganga valley (Sontakke 2014b: 493-515). This indicates special preference given to a particular site or as a matter of fact, that Malli was an important site during early Iron Age. It is also observed that the megalithic sites in upper Wainganga valley are situated close to each other. The main site Malli was surrounded by other sites. Silli is located 1.5 km toward west from Malli; Megalithic cemetery of Gangla is situated 2 km from Malli habitation; burial site Satona is located 3 km southwards from Malli; stone circles of Vadegaon lie 3.5 km south-east of Malli. It is also noticed that the megalithic sites were located close to each other, but different type of burial practice was observed at each site. For instance, stone circle with cist inside is peculiar feature of megaliths at Malli which is not found in any documented site in the upper Wainganga valley. A few cairn circles are found in Malli whereas it is the dominant type in Satona and Gangla. Cairns heaps are only found in Sarandi. Nevertheless, a few features of megalithic architecture are represented in each explored site such as filling devoid stone circles and small lateritic peripheral boulders. Commonness seen in their burial type might be due to the proximity of these sites and also due to social relations and intra-regional cultural exchange.

Almost six hundred megalithic monuments were documented in upper Wainganga valley during the course of survey. It appears that the region had easy access to burial building material which played a vital role in concentration of sites in upper Wainganga valley. That is why most of the sites here were located close to the resource burial building material. Open exposure of laterite was observed within 500 meters of the burial site at Malli. Laterite quarry is situated nearly 400 meters away from the burial site in Satona. Furthermore, easy availability of schist, gneiss, sandstone, conglomerate and quartz in the region diversified the resource base used in burial construction as is reflected in usage of varied rocks in the inner architecture of

megaliths. For example, cist with laterite chamber and orthostats which is an uncommon burial type in Vidarbha, is known from upper Wainganga valley probably on account of its diverse resource base accommodating various rock types and thus offering greater choice. It was also observed that use of various types of rock could also be for different purpose. For example, lateritic stones were used as peripheral boulders and for making orthostats. Schist, gneiss, sandstones and conglomerates were used for cap stones and sub-cists. Small pebbles of laterite, quartz, chert were used as filling material in the cairn. That is to say, one can identify a selective preference for certain rock types for certain tumulus.

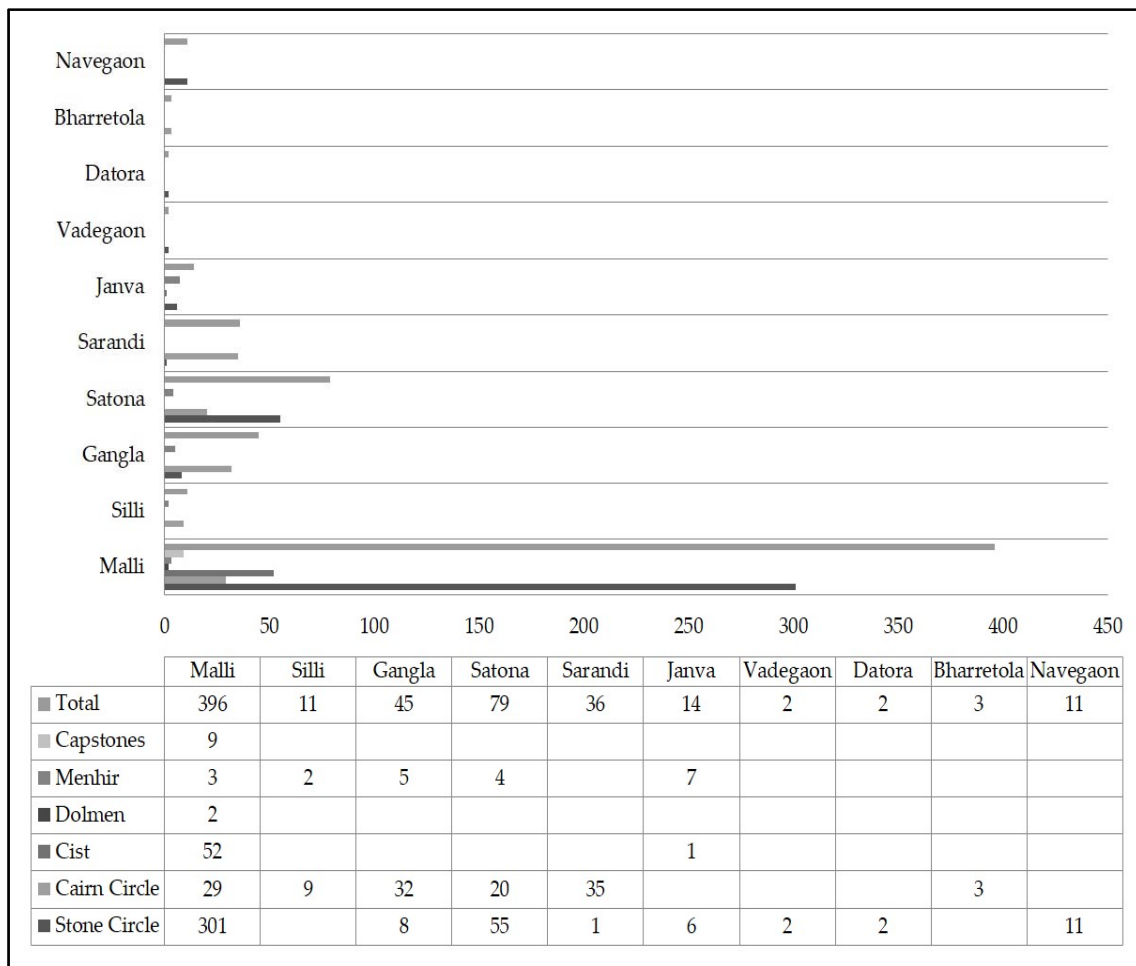


Figure 23: Burial Typology of Upper Wainganga Valley Sites

Data analysis further revealed distinctive selection with regard to burial architecture in figure 23. For example, presence of stone circles was documented at 8 sites out of 10. On the other hand, there are sites where stone circles appear as predominant type of burial architecture such as Malli, Navegaon, Satona, Sarandi and Gangla. There are sites like Gangla, Sarandi and Janva where stone circles are present in minority. There are only two sites, Silli and Bharretola, where stone circles are completely absent. In contrast, there are sites like Vadegaon and Datora which shows strict specialization in

one specific burial typology-stone circle. Capstones (stone slabs) and Dolmens are only documented in Malli whereas, cairn circle (heap) is only found in Sarandi. Thus it appears that though, burial sites were located close to each other, they had different burial customs and practices. Amongst burial sites, Malli seems to be an important type site where all types of burials are present. As noticed in central Vidarbha (Nagpur district), stone and cairn circle dominate in this region. But, certain peculiarities have been noticed in stone circles like chambers suggesting presence of regional characteristic traits among the population.

On the basis of number of burials, sites of upper Wainganga valley can be broadly divided into two categories: main sites and sub-sites. Main sites are basically those which incorporate large number of burials and were probably occupied for a longer period or had a bigger population. Sub-sites are those sites which consists a few megaliths and were probably lived in for a shorter duration or had small population. Sites like Malli, Satona, Gangla and Sarandi are designated as main sites as they consist of 396, 79, 45 and 36 megaliths respectively. On the other hand, sites like Datora, Bharretola, Navegaon and Janva can be identified as sub-sites as they consist of 2, 3, 11, 2, 14 megaliths respectively. Abundance of megalithic burials at Malli is probably due to long duration stay represented by five habitation mounds of thick deposit.

Significant observations with regard to density of megaliths was also noted during data analysis. It was also observed that the megaliths were found located close to one other even though ample space was available nearby the burial ground. This can be taken to denote attachment with the ancestors and the clustering of megaliths in a closed space probably indicates burials of family members near the ancestral burial. Ethnographical studies too have demonstrated such a trait. For example, each clan of Munda tribe of Chota Nagpur, which practices megalithism, had a separate place of burial where its family members were buried (Roy 1970).

Megaliths of upper Wainganga valley incorporate wide-ranging inner architectural variation. With regard to paucity of ceramics, metals and stone artifacts as noticed in excavated megaliths in upper Wainganga valley, it can be safely inferred that inner architectural variations in the burials of upper Wainganga valley can be taken as a parameter for social and economic differentiation or representation of status. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that the construction of a megalith is a community effort which requires labor, time and money (Mohanty and Walimbe 1993: 93-103). Other than ordinary megaliths, more labor effort was needed for creating inner architecture. Thus, it can be safely considered that the megaliths which yielded inner architecture probably belonged to the important or wealthy people of the megalithic society.

Diverse types of megalithic burials were documented in various sites of upper Wainganga Valley, this perhaps may be because of people of different belief- faith or clans and groups. Ethnoarchaeological researches in Vidarbha megalithic community

suggests the construction of Menhir was for the person who died naturally. Moreover, in case of death of child and pregnant women different types of megaliths were erected (Mohanty and Walimbe 1996: 136-149, Geetali 1999, Thakural 2005). Such evidence suggests that the nature of megalithic and typological differences is probably due to diverse socio-religious trait of megalithic community of Upper Wainganga Valley.

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