



DEPARTMENT OF
HERITAGE TELANGANA



ROUND TABLE MEET
On The Occasion of

WORLD HERITAGE WEEK -2023
On 20th November 2023, Monday



DECCAN
HERITAGE
ACADEMY TRUST

Organised by
DEPARTMENT OF HERITAGE TELANGANA &
DECCAN HERITAGE ACADEMY TRUST

on the topic
MEGALITHIC MENHIRS SITE, MUDUMAL : ITS SIGNIFICANCE
Ancient site with ARCHEOASTRONOMICAL features.

Chief Guest:

Smt. Shailaja Ramaiyer, IAS,
Director, Dept of Heritage Telangana,
Principal Secretary, YAT&C Department,
Government of Telangana

Presided by:

Er.Vedakumar Manikonda,
Chairman,
Deccan Heritage Academy Trust,
Hyderabad

Key Note by:

Prof. K.P. Rao,
Honorary Professor,
Department of History,
University of Hyderabad

**MAHAVEER AUDITORIUM, STATE MUSEUM, TELANGANA,
PUBLIC GARDENS, HYDERABAD, Telangana State, India**

The Department of Heritage Telangana entered into an MOU with the Deccan Heritage Academy Trust on 06-06-

2023 to undertake Research, Conservation and Documentation of the Menhirs site at Mudumal village in the Krishna Mandal, Narayanpet district, Telangana.

An archaeological site, locally known as *Niluralla Thimmappa*, is a significant site reflecting the culture, tradition and astronomical knowledge of the people living in this area some 3000 years ago. In archaeological parlance, the monuments are known as megaliths. Here, we have about 80 big menhirs (77.41121E 16.378998N), which are as tall as 10-15 ft. and several thousands of boulder stones which have dimensions of about 3-4 ft in width and breadth, arranged in different formations. Originally, the monuments were spread out in an area of about 80 acres. It is to be noted here that nowhere in India or probably in Asia we have so many menhirs and alignment stones concentrated at a place. Apart from these, we also have several megalithic stone circles at this place.

The menhirs and alignment stones are arranged in rows with several stones in each line. These rows face different directions. Observations in the past indicated that, some of these rows align with the rising and setting Sun on the days of solar significance like the summer and winter solstice. It appears that the ancient people at this place used these alignments to observe the seasonal movement of the Sun and for making calendrical calculations to determine the changing seasons. Study of the cup-marks has revealed that, it is a depiction of Ursa Major constellation, which is also known as Great Bear constellation. The constellation is known as *Saptarshi Mandala* (*Sapta*=seven) in Indian Tradition. The significance of this constellation is that, any time in the night in any season the top two stars of the seven stars known as 'Dubhe' and 'Merak' always point to north. An imaginary line drawn through these stars points to 'Pole Star' or the north direction. At present the depiction of this constellation is the earliest depiction of the night sky from ancient South Asia.

Fresh Discovery of Constellations

Intensive study by the Team of Researchers has resulted in the discovery of another elaborated depiction showing several constellations. This depiction is executed on a bed rock. In this newly discovered depiction, we can notice Ursa Major as well as Leo Constellations. It is also interesting that, they have even depicted the 'North Star' or the 'Pole Star'. This fact suggests that the Megalithic community could definitely determine the orientations and they could identify the North Star.

The Archaeoastronomical significance of the site has been brought to the notice of the International community by Shri Prof. Er. Manikonda Vedakumar, Chairman, Deccan Heritage Academy Trust when he attended recently the ICOMOS conference at Sydney in Australia. It is hoped that all these efforts will help in obtaining World Heritage tag for the site.

The research on the site is being taken actively by the research team. Photogrammetric Survey of the site and identification of more alignments among the boulder stones is in progress. An iron barricade has been erected around the stone containing the Ursa Major depiction. Boards informing the significance of the site are erected on the site. Signages along the road leading to the site are put up to help the tourists reach the site easily from the Highway at Gudabellore village on the Mahbubnagar-Raichur road.

Considering the uniqueness of the site and the potential to develop as a major Tourist centre, that can help in boosting the economy of the region, it is appealed to the local people to take active part in preserving these monuments without causing any damage during agricultural operations.

A Round Table meeting was conducted on 20 November, 2023 involving the Officials of the Department of Heritage, Telangana, the Scientific Team formed by the Deccan Heritage Academy Trust and the experts in various fields to make suggestions for proper Research, conservation and Documentation of the site. It is hoped that all these efforts would ultimately help us in obtaining World Heritage tag for this unique Megalithic Menhir site with Archaeoastronomical features.

Prof. Er. Vedakumar Manikonda presided over the Round Table

Meeting Prof. K. P. Raogave the keynote address on the significance of the site.

Smt. Shailaja Ramaiyer, IAS., Director, Dept of Heritage, Telangana expressed that the site is a very unique site and assured that the department would like to have frequent interaction with the experts to take forward the initiative to get Mudumal Megalithic Menhir's site included in the world heritage list.

The speakers have stressed on the need to conduct further investigations involving technology like ground penetrating radar and excavations for complete understanding of the culture and scientific features.

Around 20 Members consisting of eminent historians and research scholars have participated in the occasion.
