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## Megalithic Sword Unearthed in Kozhikode

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The State Archaeology Department in Kozhikode recently has unearthed a **Megalithic era iron sword, a chisel** and a few **decorated pottery** from a **rock-cut cave** at Pothuvachery in Kannur district of Kerala.

- The sword is 105 cm long, & is said to be **2,500 years old**.
- The recovery of the implements revealed the **technological advancement** of the Megalithic people.

### Megalithic Culture

- Megaliths refer to **large stone structures** that were constructed either as burial sites or as commemorative sites.
- The burial sites are the sites with actual burial remains, such as **dolmenoid cists** (box-shaped stone burial chambers), **cairn circles** (stone circles with defined peripheries), and **capstones** (distinctive mushroom-shaped burial chambers found mainly in Kerala).
- Commemorative megaliths include memorial sites.
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC), though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.
- Megaliths are **spread across the Indian subcontinent**.
- The **majority** of megalithic sites are found in **Peninsular India**, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana.

### Rock-cut cave

- Natural caves were the earliest caves used by local inhabitants.
- Most of the rock-cut structures were closely associated with various **religions and religious activities**.
- As manifested by archaeological evidence, the **Mesolithic period** (c. 6000 BC) marked the first use and modifications of the early caves.

- The overhanging rocks embellished with **petroglyphs or the rock-cut designs** that were created by carving, chiselling and abrading part of rock surfaces forms the early instances of such rock caves.
- The **Bhimbetka rock shelters** inside the tiger reserve '**Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary**' exemplifies the settlement of human life in these rock shelters during the **Stone Age** in India.
- In the beginning, remarkable Buddhist and Jain rock-cut structures were excavated by the Buddhist monks for **prayer and residence** purposes. The best example of this is **Chaityas** (prayer halls) and **Viharas** (monasteries).

**Source: TH**