

VERTEBRATE FAUNAL ASSOCIATION OF THE PERMIAN INDIA

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Permian vertebrate fossils are very poorly represented in India. Apart from some palaeoniscoid fishes and temnospondyl amphibians, a rich and varied fauna composed essentially of upland reptiles is recovered from the Kundaram Formation, a Lower Gondwana unit of the Pranhita-Godavari valley. The material, composing of isolated and dispersed skulls and lower jaws, are covered by hard iron matrix and formed spherical or oblate nodules. The fauna shows a preponderance of medium and small dicynodonts. The medium – sized dicynodonts are largely represented by *Endothiodon*. At least two species of *Endothiodon*, *Endothiodon uniseri* and another new species are identified. The skull length of the former is about 350mm whereas the new species have relatively smaller skull size. The latter includes two nearly complete skulls, several snouts, fragment of skulls and lower jaws amounting to about thirty individuals. The other dicynodonts of the fauna include *Oudenodon*, *Cistecephalus*, *Emydops* and *Pristerodon*. The first three are tuskless while the latter bears large caniniform tusks. The fauna also contains some lower jaw fragments of carnivorous therapsids and an odd captorhinid. The emerging picture of the fauna allows the horizon to be correlated with *Tropidostoma* and/or *Cistecephalus* Assemblage Zones of the Beaufort Group of South Africa and suggests a Late Permian probably Tatarian age. It is also correlated with the basal beds of the Madumabisa Mudstones of Zambia, the Ruhuhu and lower part of the Kawinga Formation of Tanzania and the Morro Pelado member of the Rio do Rasto Formation of Brazil.