

Recent Research in Science and Technology 2011, 3(4): 66-70
 ISSN: 2076-5061
www.recent-science.com



GEOLOGY

GEOCHEMISTRY AND PETROGRAPHY OF PYROXENITES FROM METTUPALAIYAM ULTRAMAFIC COMPLEX, TAMIL NADU

K. Anbarasu*, Ali Mohammed Dar, A. Karthikeyan

Department of Geology, Periyar University, Salem

Abstract

The Mettupalaiyam ultramafic complex (MUC) in Tamil Nadu is a major lithological association consisting mostly of Pyroxenites, Peridotite, Gabbro, Anorthosite gabbro in a predominantly gneissic granite-granite terrain. Pyroxenite occurs as thin lenses and bands, at times attaining moderate thickness. Major, Trace and rare earth element geochemistry and petrography of pyroxenites collected from well exposed outcrops near Thenkalmalai areas of this complex are presented in this paper and their Petrogenetic significance is discussed.

The geochemical signatures of the pyroxenites show a significant variation in major and trace element concentration. The pyroxenites show SiO₂ composition ranging from 49.6-55.5%, Al₂O₃ from 6-13.6%, MgO from 3.6-14.3%, CaO from 8.4-15.5% and TiO₂ from 0.24-1.7%. Bulk composition/whole rock analyses indicate that the magma type is tholeiitic but trending towards a calc-alkaline. The pyroxenites are poor in incompatible and high field strength (HFS) elements like Rb, Sr, Hf, and Ta.

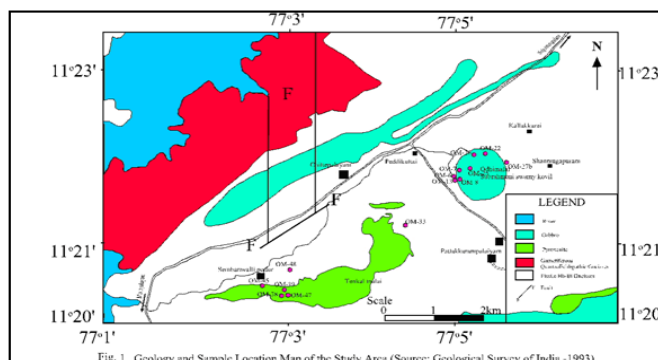
Total rare earth element (Σ REE) content varies in a limited range and exhibits limited REE fractionation in both LREE and HREE. The pyroxenite sample shows Negative Eu-anomalies with slight enrichment of HREE. Primitive mantle normalized multi-element spider grams suggest that the melt parental to these pyroxenites was derived from a mantle source enriched in several trace elements.

Introduction

The Mettupalaiyam Mafic-Ultramafic complex located in the western part of Tamil Nadu forms a part of the Archean Complex of the peninsular shield. The detailed studies lead to the recognition of an array of rock types including leucogabbro, anorthosite with chromites layers, pyroxenites, and peridotite, occurring as layers in close association. They show a flat E-W trending linear bodies showing sub-parallelism to the trend of main shear. The pyroxenites in the complex occur as thin lenses and bands where as some outcrops shows moderate thickness. The ultramafic and mafic association represents dissected pattern and are considered to have been emplaced along

reactivated lineaments, shear zones and deep crustal fractures. These rocks form part of Bhavani layered complex, emplaced into the rocks of the Sathyamangalam Group and was subjected to three phases of deformation (Selvan, 1981; Baskar Rao et al., 1996). The general geology of the study area is given in Fig. 1. The general trend of the foliation of the different litho units within MUC is ENE-WSW with moderate southerly dip in the southern part and moderate to steep northerly dip in the northern part. All the litho units had undergone high degree of deformation as evident from shearing, flattening and compression with well developed linear and planar fabrics.

Fig. 1: Geology and sample location map of the study area (Source: Geological survey of India-1993)



* Corresponding Author, Email:

Petrography

Petrographic analysis was performed on 20 thin sections cut from the hand samples collected in the field. Pyroxenite is the dominant lithology in the studied area. In hand specimen, the pyroxenites are coarse grained dark grayish in color. Pyroxenites in thin section are texturally characterized by distinct adcumulate texture. They are quite mafic and probably represent pyroxene rich and plagioclase poor portion of cumulate. The sample OM-37 and OM-40 is composed of coarse grained clinopyroxenes, orthopyroxenes and medium grained hornblende crystals. Most of the grains show euhedral crystal surfaces. The accessory phase being the magnetite and ilmenite, concentrated characteristically along the grain boundaries.

Geochemistry

Seven representative pyroxenite samples were analyzed for bulk chemistry at National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI) Hyderabad. Major elements were determined by X-ray fluorescence Spectrometry (XRF) using Philips MAGIX PRO Model 2440. Trace and REE elements were analyzed by Inductive Coupled Plasma mass Spectroscopy (ICP-MS) using a Perkin Elmer SCIEX ELAN DRC II. The geochemical signatures of pyroxenites show a significant variation in major and trace elements. The SiO₂ abundance covers a narrow compositional range of (49.6-55.5wt %). The pyroxenites shows a slight concentration of TiO₂ (0.24-

1.7wt %). MgO content varies from (3.6-14.3wt. Major, Trace, and rare earth element (REE) concentration are given in (Table 1). The pyroxenites shows a high concentration of Total iron (8.4-16wt %), MgO (3.6-14.3wt %) with moderate enrichment of TiO₂ (0.24-1.7wt %) and depleted alkalis Na₂O (0.39-2.5wt %); K₂O (0.03-1.5wt %). Bulk composition/whole rock analyses indicate that the magma type is tholeiitic but trending towards a calc-alkaline nature also supported by AFM diagram (Irvin and Banger) (Fig. 2). A plot for SiO₂-K₂O based on (Peccerillo and Taylor 1976) (Fig. 3) indicates that the samples belong to low-K tholeiitic series. The element Mn, Ti, and P are relatively immobile and insensitive to hydrothermal processes. Based on the TiO₁, MnO, P₂O₅ triplot (proposed by Mullon 1983) most of the samples fall within the Calc-alkaline basaltic (CAB) field but trending towards boninite field which represents MnO rich sector of CAB field (Fig. 4). Thus it could be inferred that the tectonic environment of eruption is volcanic arc environment and the studied sample falls within the Calc-alkaline basaltic field. Concentration of compatible trace elements in pyroxenites like V (263-309.4ppm), Cr (9877.1-21200.4ppm), Co (87.0-111.5ppm) and Ni (676.8-1055.4ppm) are high while these pyroxenites are poor in incompatible and HFS elements like Rb, Hf, Ta, Th, and U. Sr shows a remarkable low concentration ranging from (0.37-0.94wt%).

Table 1 Representative Major (wt %) and trace (ppm) element composition of Pyroxenites from Thenkalmalai (Mettupailium Ultramafic complex), Tamilnadu, South India

Rock Type	Pyroxenites							
Sample No	OM-36	OM-37	OM-38	OM-39	OM-40	OM-45	OM-52	
SiO ₂	55.5	51.8	52.6	51.4	51.8	49.6	53.9	
TiO ₂	0.88	0.65	0.24	1.7	0.42	0.38	0.45	
Al ₂ O ₃	13.1	13.6	8.4	10.6	13.7	13	6	
Fe ₂ O ₃	13.5	16	8.4	15.4	11.8	12.6	15.8	
MnO	0.19	0.21	0.11	0.19	0.17	0.13	0.23	
MgO	3.6	6.5	14.3	6.6	8	10.3	7.9	
CaO	10.9	8.4	15.5	12.6	12.7	10.3	15.1	
Na ₂ O	1.9	2.5	0.39	1.2	1.2	1.7	0.53	
K ₂ O	0.32	0.13	0.05	0.24	0.09	1.5	0.05	
P ₂ O ₅	0.07	0.08	0.01	0.06	0.03	0.24	0.02	
Total	99.96	99.87	100	99.59	99.91	99.95	99.96	
Sc (ppm)	9.9	8.9	8.6	7.7	8.5	8	7.9	
V	298.6	286.5	288.3	263	307.7	309.4	273.7	
Cr	21200.4	10690.4	12720.9	13342.2	11503	11938	9877.1	
Co	111.5	102.5	108.7	104.4	106.1	94.1	87.1	
Ni	1055.4	894.5	1016.5	990.5	851.3	676.8	1013.4	
Cu	60.7	66.3	29	115.7	34.8	90.2	78	
Zn	72.3	27.4	73.8	83	29.4	64.2	46.6	
Rb	16.4	9.7	4.4	6	4.3	11.2	5.5	
Sr	0.57	0.71	0.44	0.53	0.37	0.39	0.94	
Y	1.9	2.2	2.1	1.7	2.2	2.4	2.1	
Zr	0.27	0.32	0.27	0.24	0.37	0.3	0.28	
Nb	3.7	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.8	4.8	
Ba	19.6	6.6	8	5.8	6.8	7	8.2	
Hf	0.42	0.43	0.45	0.36	0.55	0.49	0.46	
Ta	0.01	0.04	0.05	0.08	0.02	0.02	0.15	
Th	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.03	1.2	0.72	2.7	
U	0.13	0.05	0.21	0.1	0.08	0.1	0.25	
Rare earth element composition								
	OM-36	OM-37	OM-38	OM-39	OM-40	OM-45	OM-52	
La (ppm)		1.16	1.02	1.28	0.83	1.30	1.05	1.15
Ce	2.93	2.91	2.94	2.26	3.40	3.08	2.88	
Pr	0.34	0.34	0.37	0.28	0.38	0.39	0.36	
Nd	1.71	1.91	1.83	1.46	1.94	2.08	1.82	
Sm	0.44	0.48	0.45	0.38	0.50	0.52	0.45	
Eu	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.14	0.12	
Gd	0.79	0.83	0.89	0.67	0.89	0.95	0.89	
Tb	0.16	0.17	0.18	0.14	0.20	0.20	0.18	
Dy	1.38	1.48	1.49	1.18	1.55	1.71	1.49	
Ho	0.35	0.38	0.37	0.31	0.39	0.44	0.38	
Er	1.12	1.26	1.21	1.02	1.28	1.43	1.26	
Tm	0.18	0.21	0.19	0.17	0.20	0.23	0.20	
Yb	1.20	1.42	1.26	1.13	1.33	1.51	1.31	
Lu	0.21	0.25	0.24	0.20	0.25	0.26	0.23	
Pb	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	
ΣREE	12.08	12.81	12.83	10.13	13.75	13.99	12.73	
Co/Ni/Yb/N	0.66	0.55	0.65	0.54	0.69	0.53	0.59	
La/N/Sr/N	1.66	1.32	1.76	1.35	1.62	1.25	1.58	
Gd/Ni/Yb/N	0.54	0.49	0.58	0.49	0.55	0.52	0.56	
Eu/Eu*	0.62	0.61	0.57	0.65	0.63	0.60	0.57	
Rb/Nb	4.97	2.48	1.14	1.54	1.03	2.64	1.27	
Th/Nb	2.93	2.24	2.91	1.98	2.13	1.26	4.67	

Fig. 2 AFM diagram for pyroxenites (after Irvin and Baragar, 1975)

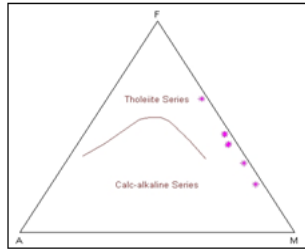


Fig. 3 Rock Classification diagram (K₂O Vs SiO₂ after Peccerilli and Taylor 1976)

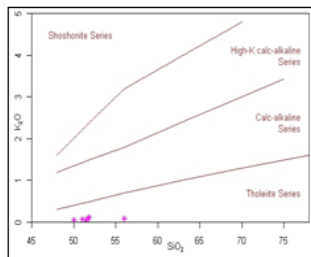
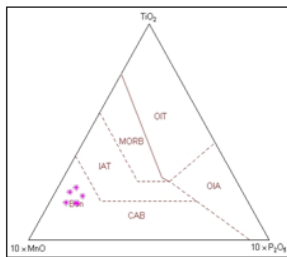


Fig. 4 TiO₂-MnO-P₂O₅ triplot for Pyroxenite. (after Mullen 1983)



Total REE value of pyroxenites varies from (10.13-13.99ppm) with limited REE, ($Ce_N/Yb_N = 0.55-0.69$) and LREE fractionation ($La_N/Sm_N = 1.32-1.66$). The HREE also conclude limited fractionation ($Gd_N/Yb_N = 0.49-0.58$) with negative Eu anomaly.

Chondritic normalized REE plot (after Sun and McDonough (1989) of pyroxenites reflects negative Eu anomaly with slight enrichment of HREE (Fig. 5). The negative Eu anomaly in these samples may be interpreted as due to fractionation of plagioclase ± hornblende and can be imposed when the melt phase enters the stability field of plagioclase. The Low LREE and slight enriched trend of HREE may be retained some what by clinopyroxenes or to a greater extent by hornblende. Relative to primitive mantle most of the samples shows the relative enrichment of LILs and LREEs (Fig 6). They are further characterized by a low Th abundance and a distinct Nb-Ta, Zr-Hf trough. These features are characteristic of tholeiitic basalts produced at destructive plate margins or within plate

tholeiites contaminated by continental crust (Hawkesworth et al., 1994). In order to understand the tectonic environment of the studied samples the plot Ti/1000 & V (after Shervais, 1982) shown in (Fig. 7) depicts that the studied samples fall in the Arc tholeiitic environment.

Fig. 5 Chondrite normalized REE diagram for the Pyroxenites after Sun and McDonough (1989)

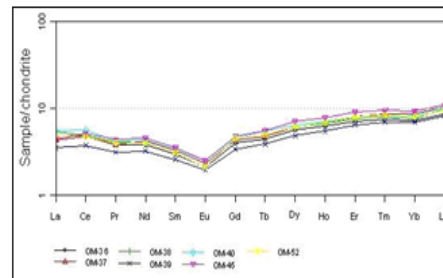


Fig. 6 Primitive Element-normalized multi-element diagram for Pyroxenites after Sun and McDonough (1989)

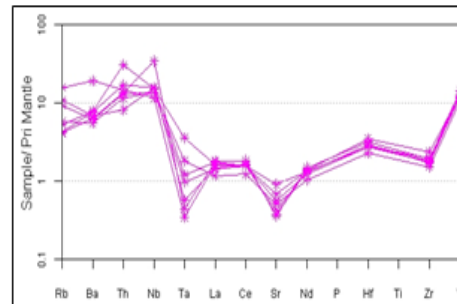
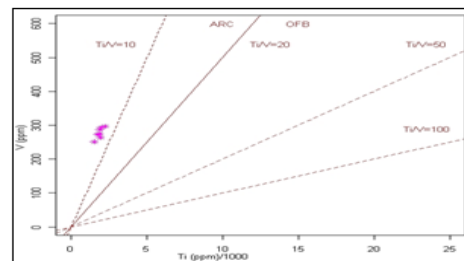


Fig. 7 Ti/1000 Vs V tectonic discrimination diagram (after Shervais 1982) for Pyroxenite



Conclusions

The geochemical constraints of the pyroxenites of Mettupalaiyam ultramafic complex suggest island arc magmatism. The major element relations of pyroxenites suggest tholeiitic to calcalkaline signatures of typical island arc environment. They are further characterized by a low Th abundance and a distinct Nb-Ta, Zr-Hf trough. These features are characteristic of tholeiitic basalts produced at destructive plate margins or within plate tholeiites contaminated by

continental crust. The studied samples show depleted trend in HFSE. The -Ve Eu anomaly observed in the pyroxenite samples signify the role of plagioclase fractionation in their petrogenesis.

Acknowledgements

The authors are thankful to Department of Science and Technology for providing financial support. We acknowledge the help received from Mr. Sariput Sawant during geochemical analysis at National Geophysical Research Institute Hyderabad (NGRI).

References

- Ahmad T, Tarney J (1994) Geochemistry and petrogenesis of late Archean Aravalli volcanics, basement enclaves and granitoids, Rajasthan. *Precambrian Res* 65:1-23.
- Balaram V, and Rao TG (2003) Rapid determination of REE and other trace elements in geological samples by microwave acid digestion and ICP-MS. *Atom. Spectrosc* 24:206-212.
- Barker F, Arth JG, Peterman ZE, and Friedman I (1976) The 1.7 to 1.8-b.y. old trondhiemites of south western Colorado and northern new mexico. *Geochemistry and depth of genesis. Geol Soc Am Bull* 87:189-189.
- Brique L, Bougault Joron JL (1984) Quantification of Nb, Ta, Ti, and V anomalies in magmas associated with Subduction zones: petrogenetic implication. *Earth and planetary Science Letters* 68:297-308.
- Dungan MA, Rnodes JM (1978) Residual glasses and melt inclusions in basalts from DSDP Legs 45 and 46: evidence for magma mixing. *Contrib Mineral Petrol* 67:417-431.
- De Paolo DJ (1981) Trace element and isotopic effects of combined wallrock assimilation and fractional crystallization. *Earth Planet Sci Lett* 53:189-202.
- Dessai AG, Arolkar DB, French D, Viegas A, and VISWANATH TA (2009) Petrogenesis of the Bondla Layered Mafic-Ultramafic complex, Usgaon, Goa. *Jour Geo Soc India* 73: 697-714.
- Hoffmann AW (1988) Chemical differentiation of the earth: the relationship between mantle, continental crust and oceanic crust. *Earth planet Sci Lett* 90:297-314.
- Hawkesworth CJ, Gallagher AK, Hergt JM, and Mcdermott BF (1994) Destructive plate margin magmatism: Geochemistry and melt generation. *Lithos* 33:169-188.
- Irvine TA, Baragar WRA (1975) A guide to the chemical classification of the common volcanic rocks. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences* 8:523-546.
- Janardhan AS, and Leake BE (1975) The origin of meta-anorthositic gabbros and garnetiferous granulites of the Sittampundi complex, Madras, India. *J Geol Soc India* 6:391-408.
- Jensen LS (1976) A new cation plot for classifying subalkalic volcanic rocks. *Min Nat Resources Ontario Division of Mines Misc paper* 66:20.
- Kepezhinskas P, Mcdermott F, Defant MJ, Hochstaedter A, Drummond MS, Hawkesworth CJ, Koloskov A, Maury RC, Bellon H (1997) Trace element and Sr-Nd-Pb isotopic constraints on a three component model of Kamchatka arc petrogenesis. *Geochim Cosmochim Acta* 61:577-600
- Krishna AK, Murthy NN, and Govil PK (2007) Multielement analysis of soils by wavelength-dispersive X-ray fluorescence spectrometry. *Atom Spectrosc* 28:202-214.
- Middlemost EAK (1994) Naming materials in the magma/igneous rock system. *Earth-Science Rev* 37:215-224.
- Mullen ED (1983) MnO/TiO₂/P₂O₅: a minor element discriminant for basaltic rocks of oceanic environments and its implications for petrogenesis. *Ear Planet Sci Letters* 62:53-62.
- Mistafa M Hariri (2004) Petrographical and geochemical characteristics of the ultramafic rocks of Jabal zalm, central arabian shield, Saudi Arabia. *The arabian Jour for Science and Engineering*. 29:123-132.
- Rao YJB, Chetty TRK, Janardhan AS, and Gopalan K (1996) Sm-Nd and Rb-Sr ages and P-T history of the Archean Sittampundi and Bhavani layered meta-anorthosite complexes in Cauvery shear zone, South India: evidence for Neoproterozoic reworking of Archaean crust. *Contrib Mineral Petrol* 125:237-250.
- Rollinson H (2008) Secular evolution of the continental crust: Implications for crust evolution models. *Geochem Geophy Geosystems (G3)* 9 (12):1-14.
- Santosh M, Maruyama S, and Sato K (2009) Anatomy of a Cambrian: Pacific-type orogeny in Southern India. *Gondwana Res* 16:321-341.
- Selvan TA (1981) Anorthosite-gabbro-ultramafic complex around Gobichettypalayam, Tamil Nadu and their possible relation to Sittampundi type anorthosite complex (unpublished). Ph.D. thesis Univ Mysore Mysore India.
- Subba Rao MV, and Srikanth B (2004) Major, Trace and platinum group elements (PGE) geochemistry of the pyroxenites of Mettupalaiyam ultramafic complex, Tamil nadu. *Journal of applied geochemistry* 6:190-197.
- Subramanian AP (1956) Mineralogy and petrology of the Sittampundi complex, Salem district, Madras state, India. *Bull Geol Soc Am* 67:317-390.
- Sun S, and McDonough WF (1989) Chemical and isotopic systematic of oceanic basalts: implications for mantle composition and processes.

- In:* A.D.Saunders and M.J.Norry (Eds.), Magmatism in the ocean basins. Geol Soc London Sp Pub 42:313-345.
- Shervais JW (1982) Ti-V Plots and Petrogenesis of modern and ophiolitic Lavas. Earth Planet Sci Lett 59:108–118.
- Taylor SR, McLennan SM (1985) The continental crust: its composition and evolution. Blackwell, Oxford.
- Verma SP (2006) Extension-related origin of magmas from a garnetbearing source in the Los Tuxtlas volcanic field, Mexico. Int J Earth Sci (Geol Rundsch) 95:871–901.
- Weaver BL, Tarney J (1983) Chemistry of the sub continental mantle inferences from Archean and Proterozoic dykes and continental flood basalts. In: Hawkesworth CJ, Norry MJ (eds) Continental Basalt and Mantle Xenoliths. Shiva Nantwich :209–229.
- Windley BF, and Smith JV (1976) Archean high grade complexes and modern continental margins. Nature 260:671-675.
- Yellappa T, Chetty TRK, Tsunogae T, and Santosh M (2010) The Manamedu Complex: Geochemical constraints on Neoproterozoic suprasubduction zone ophiolite formation within the Gondwana suture in south India. J Geodyn doi:10.1016/j.jog.2009-12.004.