CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION TO ROCK ART IN INDIA
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Art is one way to present symbols for use in human social life, fixing invisible and enduring form otherwise intangible and transient images, ideas and events. Art in its most basic meaning signifies a skill or ability. It becomes a language in images and symbols by which man communicates his conceptions of order in perceptual more than conceptual terms. The various branches of creative activity concerned with the production if imaginative designs, sounds or ideas e.g. paintings, music, writing, considered collectively is art. It is the creation of works of beauty.

One working definition of art for anthropological purposes is given by E.G. Burrowes, in his work Flower in My Ear : Arts and Ethos in Ifaluk Atoll. He said "art is any human activity or product (artifact) that emphasizes from beyond all requirements except those of a distinctive pleasure that the manufacture and contemplation of form can give. By form is meant a perceptible relation of parts to whole. The distinctive pleasure it gives is here called aesthetic experience".

Art is also a social expression, and inevitably exists as a part of culture. Since the individual is always a creature of society and the child of culture, art ipso facto serves social as well as individual interests and needs. Art is inextricably tied to religion and magic and to politics as well.

Art is the most authentic record of mankind and a complete visual complementary of human mind. The examples of art are the best documents monuments no less-of the thought world that has departed. The history of Indian Art is, thus a comprehensive account of the gradual growth and development of Indian mind and society.

Primitive art is that made and used by members of primitive societies. Such art is generally functional to the extent that primitive sculpture, paintings and decoration are usually of religious and social importance, while the meaning and uses of primitive art objects are not always known, it is better to assume them all to be useful rather than as made for art's sake. Primitive art is simply the art of primitive peoples. It includes music, dance, myths and oral
literature, religious ceremonies, decorative arts and crafts, religious icons, weaving, pottery, statutory carvings and paintings. It runs a wide gamut from technical clumsiness to high skill, from child like simplicity to impressive complexity from naturalism and realism to conventionalized abstraction. In most primitive societies, art an expression of world view and a hand maiden of religion.

Ceremonial art is ac conscious and determinate effort to make important symbols visible and permanent. Since aesthetic quality is common to all art the word primitive refers only to the nature of the society in which the work originates. The art of the very first society probably never will be known, however the term primitive primacy of a society and its art. The oldest surviving art known is that of the upper Paleolithic in Europe, but this should not be called the dawn of art in Europe, and in other parts of the world as well. The arts of pre-civilized and non-civilized societies mat both called primitive.

Rock art is a term used to define several types of artistic examples in the form of paintings, bruising, pecking, and engravings etc; in the bare rock surfaces of caves, rock shelters and isolated rock boulders, executed by our ancestors. Basically there are two types of rock art. One of them is produced by an "additive process" i.e. by adding some colour substance to the rock surface to depict motifs, figures etc. This form of art is variously known as pictographs, petrographs, paintings etc. Since majority of this form of rock art occurs in caves and rock shelters and which cannot be moved from place to place, it is also known as 'parietal art'. The second form of art is produced by a 'deductive process" i.e., by removing rock particles from the rock with the help of a sharp instruments, of stone or metal, to depict the desired figure, motif or symbol. This form of art is known in various forms depending on the technique of execution, as petroglyphs, engravings and bruising.

Rock art is a global phenomenon with its antiquity going back to more than forty thousands of years, when men's subsistence economy was based on hunting and gathering. In the history of mankind no work of fine art other than rock art has such a wide distribution lasting for such a long time. It constitutes the earliest written and visual document of the mankind-a very powerful means
of expressing ancient artistic sophistication. It is a storehouse of information for archaeologists and historians in their efforts to reconstruct the life style of the peoples of the remote past. These works of art provide first hand information on society, beliefs, rites, rituals, costumes, tools and implements, technological attainments, means of subsistence, contemporary flora and fauna and above all man-nature relationship. They exhibit incredible artistic maturity, be it in selection of colours or articulation of a form or a pattern.

GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION OF ROCK ART

Notwithstanding the global distribution the six principal regions recognized for rock art worldwide in terms of their concentration and antiquity are: (i) Southwestern Europe, (ii) North Africa, (iii) South Africa, (iv) Australia, (v) India and (vi) Russia. Rock art is reported from Spain (Betran. 1982), Italy (Anati. 1964), Portugal (Bahn. 1985), Scandinavia (Lommel. 1966), Sweden and Siberia (Lommel.1966), Western Alps (Seglie. 1988), France (Wagneur. 1988), Japan (Ogawa.1988), China (Zhao Fu. 1988), USSR (Ksica. 1988), Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia (Anati. 1979), Tibet (Hui Sheng. 1988), Pakistan (King.1940), Sri Lanka (Bandaranayake, et al. 1986), Thailand (Bullen. 1988), New Guinea (New man & Mark. 1988), New Zealand (Taylor.1988) and Fiji Islands (Brodrick. 1948).10

In the continent of Africa rock art is reported from more than 20 countries with its rich concentration in the Saharas (Brentjes. 1969). It survived with the Bushman as a glorious tradition until a century ago. Rock art is reported from Libya, Chad, Egypt, Suez, Sudan and Ethiopia (Alimen . 1957), Niger (Striedter. 1988, Kenya & Tanzania (Leakey. 1983), Malawi (Juwayegi. 1988), Zimbabwe (Genge. 1987), Republic of South Africa, Swaziland (Masson 1987), Namibia (Sandelowsky. 1987), Angola (Holm. 1961), Lesotho, Botswana and Mozambique (Williams.1983).11

Australian rock art is known from over 1,00,000 sites, with a rich corpus of paintings and engravings. The main concentrations are noticed in Kimberley, Arnhemland and Cape York. Rock art in both North and South America is a later phenomenon. Except a few sites in the lower Pecos and Rio Grande rivers in
Texas, rock art in America belonged to the historic period. In the USA rock art is found in San Francisco, Mendocino county, Coast Ranges, the Pacific Northwest, California and Sierra Nevada (Mark & Newman. 1988). Other rock art areas are Arizona, Utah (Bednarik. 1988), Ontario and Minnesota (Dewdney & Kidd. 1962). In South America rock art of a very late historic period is reported from Costa Rica, Lesser Antilles, Venezuela, Guianas, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Equator and Colombia.¹²

New sites and new areas are located every day in the rock art map of the world. These are the records of the human societies of the distant past surviving in different stages of their preservation in different geographical locations of the world.

ROCK ART RESEARCH IN INDIA

India is one of the three countries with largest concentration of the world heritage of rock art, the other two being Australia and South Africa. It is also significant to note that India pioneered rock art research in the world. The evidence of first petroglyphs were reported from Almora in India by Henwood (1856: 204-05) as early as 1856. The first reported discovery of stone age paintings was made in India in 1867-68, twelve years before the sensational discovery of Altamira in Spain, by a British archaeologist Archibald Carlleyle at Sohagighat in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. What is significant is that Archibald Carlleyle even in those days claimed stone age antiquity for those rock paintings on the basis of the large number of microliths he collected along with pieces of charcoal and haematite from the occupational deposits of the painted rock shelters. Unfortunately, Carlleyle's discovery could not come to limelight and remained confined to his field notes as he did not publish any account of his discovery. It was only in 1906 Vincent Smith managed to collect the field notes of Carlleyle from Rev. R. Gatty, a friend of Carleyle and published them in Indian Antiquary. (Smith. 1906: 185-95). The first scientific article on Indian rock art was published by John Cockburn, an officer in the Opium Department of the British Government, in 1883 when he reported his discovery of a few painted rock shelters in the Kaimur ranges (Cockburn. 1893: 56-64). Cockburn published his second article on rock art of India in 1899 (Cockburn. 1899: 89-97). After


ROCK ART IN INDIA

The aforesaid account reveals that within a period of one and half a century rock art has been reported through out the length and breadth of the
country. Its largest accumulation, nearly two third of the total, are reported from the quartzite and sandstone belt of Central India, mainly in the Vindhyas, the Satpuras and the Kaimur ranges, located in the states of undivided Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Favourable for weathering, the Vindhyan sandstones composed of different layers of varying degrees of weathering have favoured creation of series of rock cavities and rock shelters of varying dimensions, which in turn attracted the prehistoric man to dwell in. In an area of about 40,000 square miles the concentration of rock art in this region is; about 457 painted rock shelters in a chain of 31 hills in the Betwa source region (Tiwari; 1984:228-40); 400 painted rock shelters within a cluster of 542 rock shelters in Bhimbetka (Mathpal. 1984), about 250 painted shelters in Mirzapur (Verma; 1964; Tiwari. 1990) and about 650 painted shelters in 63 complexes in the Chambal valley (Kumar, etal.1992). Central India abounds with paintings. Petroglyphs are negligible, almost absent compared to the vast assemblages of the rock paintings. 14

In comparison to the Central India the peninsular India has a rich assemblage of petroglyphs in the granite hillocks. Petroglyphs are noticed in Maski in Karnataka and in far south in Kerala. Maski is one of the prominent centres of petroglyphs in India where thousands of figures of cattle are incised on granite boulders. Engravings and bruising have also been reported from Pikiilhal, Chitradurga, Hampi, Korugodu, Koppugallu and Sangankallu. Paintings in Karnataka are found in the sandstone hills of the Kalagdi group at Ramdurga in Belgaon district, Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal. The Karnataka assemblage is mainly confined the Krishna-Tungabhadra valley. In Andhra Pradesh paintings are found in Ketavaram in Kurnool, Chinnaur and bruising are reported from the granite hills at Virpalli Mallasamudram, Sangananpalli and Lankapally. Rock paintings have also been reported from Madurai, Nilgris and south and north Arcot districts of Tamilnadu. In the north petroglyphs are noticed at an altitude of 4000m. in Kargil, Leh and Lower Ladakh regions (Neumayer, 1983 & 1993). Both pictographs and petroglyphs are found in the Himalayans as reported from Almora, Kumaon and Garhwal regions (Mathpal. 1995). In the Himalayas paintings and petroglyphs are found in stratified belts of sandstone, limestone, slate, granite and schist.
In Bihar rock paintings have been reported in the Kaimur range at Makwa, Patesar, Jhania pahar and Dughdha Hathiadah and rock engravings from Ghat silica in Singhbhum district. In Gujarat rock art sites are noticed in the granite boulders lying one above the other in Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Baroda, Bhabnagar district and Thangarh in Surendranagar district. Recently rock art is also reported from the Garohills of Assam, Manipur and Bengal (Indian Archaeology. Review. 1982-83:104; 1983-84: 59-60). In the west Inamgaon, Chandrapur and Nasik in Maharashtra also report evidence of rock art. In a conservative estimate India records more than 500 rock art sites with several rock art shelters in each site.15

In the forthcoming discussion an account of rock art heritage reported from different regions of the subcontinent is presented as the background to understand the distinct regional traits of Orissan rock art, the study area of the dissertation.

Rock Art in Andhra Pradesh

The rock art sites in Andhra Pradesh are located in three geological zones of granite, limestone/sandstone and shale, each in what appears to be an ecological niche of its own. Andhra Pradesh (12°14' to 19°15'N of 76°50' to 84°15'E) is located on the eastern sea board of peninsular India. So far the discovery of rock art in Andhra Pradesh is concerned there are 28 rock art sites in 12 districts. Both paintings and engravings are reported. The names of these rock art sites are Adoni, Bollaram, Budagari, Budigepalli, Chintakunta, Durgam, Dappalle, Dupadugattu, Edthanur, Gavibanda, Kethavarampuri Cherla Complex, Kakapet, Kaluvabugga, Mudumula, Naidupalli, Pandavula Gattu, Regonda, Rekinda, Ramagundam, Rama Chandra Puram, Sanganun Palli, Tenagal, Velpumadugu, Vembakhandriga, Wargal, Lanjabanda, Dongalagattu & Jupalle. The favorite colour of the shelter dwellers are red, white, black, blue, yellow, green and brown. Here we notice four phases of rock art i.e. Mesolithic phase, Neolithic phase, megalithic phase and historical phase.

The thematic content of rock art of Andhra Pradesh in the Mesolithic period comprise animals of deer species – the hallmark for the identification of
Mesolithic phase and other animals, like rabbit, porcupine, tortoise, carnivores like fox, hyena, dog etc. Human figures and anthropomorphs, masked human figures, geometric figures, hand prints and drawings also occur. All the rock paintings of the Mesolithic are done in red colour. No petroglyphs occur in the Mesolithic period.

One noteworthy feature in the Mesolithic rock paintings is that no hunting scenes are depicted although the game animals occur. The human figures are nowhere depicted as hunters nor there bows and arrows. Female depictions are almost absent except in one instance at Chintakunta where a sexual act is shown.

The rock paintings in majority depict humped cattle in association with or without human figures in Neolithic phase. All the paintings are done in red colour. Petroglyphs make their appearance in the Neolithic phase in Andhra Pradesh. The number of Neolithic rock art sites is more than the Mesolithic and in all the sites of Neolithic rock art, humped bulls are the most prominent. In this phase we found the occurrence of human fingers with bows and arrows side by side with humped bulls. Some geometric figures are also reported. The important petroglyphs of the period are humped bulls and cup marks.

The Megalithic art of Andhra Pradesh occurs at Naidupalli, Mudumula, Budigapalli, Ramachndrapuram and Tenegal. The Megalihic art is in majority symbolic although the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic elements continue. Most of the megalithic art is petroglyphs and the pictographic content is limited. In the paintings besides red, black and white colours are also used. The most interesting rock art site belonging probably to the megalithic period is the Ramachandrapuram site where petro-pictographs (painted engravings) occur.

The most commonly occurring symbol in the megalithic art is “circle-with a trident in both petroglyphs and pictographs form. The other forms are humped bulls, human figures with bows and arrows, swords shields riding animals which could possibly be horses and deers etc.

The rock art of Andhra Pradesh during the historical period is identifiable by the religious symbols, personages and inscriptions, and by animals-
depictions like horses and elephants with warriors riding them. At Kethavaram the painted inscriptions and some religious symbols like Swastika and eternal knot indicate their early historical antiquity. At Ramachandrapuram the engravings of the monkey god “Hanuman” belongs to the historical period.  

**Rock Art in Kerala**

Kerala the green crescent-like land lying between north latitudes 08°04’ and 12°44’ & east longitudes 74°54’ and 77°12’ possess seven rock art sites. They are Ancode, Attala, Edakkal Guha, Ezhuthu Guha, Kovil Kadavu, Tenmalai and Toberimala. Kerala is the southernmost area of rock art in India. The Edakkal and Ancode caves are the only centers of dark cave carvings in India.

All together there are 762 motifs in rock art so far known in Kerala. Of these, 568 (74.5%) figures are incised on rock surfaces and 194 (25.5%) are painted with different pigments. The human figures (77) cover less than one-eighth (12%) of the total motifs and the animal figures (77) constitute ten percent only, the rest 593 (78%) figures are those of abstract motifs, most of them belonging to different geometric shapes. The number of rock art motifs has increased considerably because of 348 one-line patches, all of them are found in a single cave, namely the Edakkal Guha.

The painted shelter of Ezhuthu Guha is situated in a sandalwood forest, and depicts the largest human figures even bigger than the life size. The animal figures found both in paintings and engravings are deer, humped bull, god, elephant, horse, tahr, peacock, lizard, fish cow, fox etc.

The abstract motifs are cup marks, inscriptions, decorative design, flower pot, tree etc. Putting aside there are 536 geometric shapes, symbols and signs. Among the geometric shapes like square, rectangular, circular the presence of some triangular motifs are very important.

At Ezhutto Guha there are negative hand stencils and huge drawings of lizards. The cave paintings at Attala in the Western Gats near Maraiyur represent a hunting scene as well as a group dance, a group of people holding
weapons is shown as if in a dancing attitude. According to KJ. John all the rock art of Kerala is of megalithic period. But according to Mathpal two different types of sequences are found in the rock art of Kerala. In the paintings seven phases are recorded while in carving category only four phases are noticed.

Rock Art in Tamilnadu

Tamilnadu (Lat 8°N to 14°N Long 76° E 80° E) is located in the Eastern side of Peninsular India with discontinuous ranges of Eastern Ghats and Pockets of other mountains. The first discovery of rock paintings was made in Tamil Nadu in the year 1978 by K. V. Raman at a place called Mallapadi in Dharmapuri district. This was followed by several scholars and now more than 75 sites are discovered.

In Tamil Nadu the rock art is concentrated in the Eastern Ghats area of Villupuram district, Western Ghats and in the hills of Coimbatore and Nilgiris district etc. Unlike other states, the rock art in Tamil Nadu are found in isolated rock boulders and megalithic dolmens. Both white and red colours are used in paintings.

The rock art sites are found in association with Mesolithic, Neolithic, Iron Age and to some extent in Early Historic phase. With regard to engravings, Tamil Nadu witnessed limited evidences. The Perumukkal engravings could be seen as the best among them.

The subjects matter of Tamil Nadu rock art are human form, deer, buffalo, wild boar, tiger, horse, fish, cow and calf, rhinoceros, goat, man riding horse & cattle bird, an archer, human figure with weapons, star, hand prints, floral designs, elephants, fowl, ladder, monkeys and mongoose, bird headed human form, man rowing on the boat, antelope and many more geometric designs etc. The hunting scenes were shown in different delineations and besides that human being dancing in a row are seen. The paintings observed at Kuruvinayanapalli had symbol having 12 square boxes formed out of 5 vertical and 4 horizontal strokes. Symbols like star, human genital, flower motif, circle with a dot etc. are very interesting. Recently at Perumukkal and at Tirumalpadi Engravings were found on the rock shelter.
Rock Art in Karnataka

The richest rock art zone in south India known so far is the granitic-gneissic zone of Karnataka. The area covering the Benekal forest and Piklihal area in Raichur district and the sandstone hills around Badami in Bijapur district are the main countries of rock art in Karnataka. Much of the Karnataka rock art is confined to the Krishan Tungavhadra Valley. The rock art corpus of Karnataka is the best known and studied one in south India.

The paintings of the Hire Benakal area (Munn 1935, Gordon and Alchin 1955, Sundara, 1968, 1974) consist mainly of human beings, horse riders, dancers and human beings with weapons like bow, arrow and axe. There are also pictures of animals like the humped bull, dog, cow, antelope, stag and the tiger. Certain geometric figures of rather obscure nature are also found. All these paintings are done in red colour and in different shades.

In the paintings of Piklihal three groups of printings were recognised painted in white, red and red on a white background. The subjects are bulls, human figures with swords, elephants, tree with stylized dotted branches, lizard, sheep, snake and various symbols like the cross, star, circle, square etc.

At Tekkalakota, the paintings include compositions of a hunting expedition preceded by a community dance; stylized human figures and animals such as humped bull & dog with twirled tail.

Engravings are found in the boulders of a trap dyke near the excavated site of Sanganakallu. There are five engravings depicting sexual activities. Besides these, there are representatives of three horned bulls, oxen raised on T-shaped stands and also figures of animals like the elephant, stag etc., and birds.

Majority of bruising at Piklihal are of bulls. The other forms are human in dancing pose and also in holding weapons and animals like horse, buffalo, sambar, deer, sheep and goat. Extensive rock brushings and engravings occurrences were notices at Kupgal, Hunsgi, Kodemathi, Hallur and Hebbal
Buzurg representing humped cattle, houses, buffaloes in addition to several indistinct symbols.  

The paintings date back to Neolithic, Megalithic and early historic periods on account of their content and the style of representation. The rock paintings with representations of various symbols like the stars, the sun, the moon, umbrella, temple etc.; appear to be comparatively recent period. It seems that like the rock paintings, their range of time is also very vast, extending from Neolithic to modern times. But the representations of swords, shields, elephants and also the figures of large groups of warriors with horses, holding metal weapons found at Kupgal, Fiklihal and other sites suggest an early historic rather than prehistoric date to some of these bruising and engravings.

**Rock art in Kumaon Himalaya**

The Kumaon Himalaya is that mountainous area of the Himalayas which is one sixth part of the present day Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It lies approximately between 28°44' and 31°28' North latitude and 77° and 81° East longitude. Kumaon Himalaya encompasses the three districts of Kumaon (i.e. Almora, Nainital and Pithoragarh) and five districts of Garhwal (i.e. Chamoli, Dehradun, Pauri, Tehri and Uttarkashi).

There are 68 sites of rock art in Kumaon Himalaya found in stratified belts of sandstone like stone, slate as well as in the crystalline belts of granite, gnesis and schist. Most of the sites (50%) are located in the district of Almora. The source region of the Suyal, a tributary of the Kosi, is rich both in Pictograph and Petroglyphs.

The subject matter of rock art of Kumaon Himalaya comprises of anthropomorphic figures, animals, plants, material culture symbols, designs, cup marks and inscriptions. Human figures constitute the main body of painted motifs. Both dancing and hunting scenes are depicted. The animals include ox, boar, goat, dog, fox, snake and some other unidentifiable animals. Except for a lotus flower and a lotus bud paintings, no examples of flora are found in rock paintings of Kumaon Himalaya. But in engravings a tree motif is noticed at Barchhina site. Among the material cultures the curious triangular objects found
painted and incised at Lwethap are indefinable as arrow heads. Symbols like swastika and trident are found incised on boulders near Barechhina. Cup-marks are big holes that are most common in central Himalaya. They resemble closely the present day grinding mortars (ukhal) used by the villagers.

Rock painters of Kumaon Himalaya used mineral colour of heamatioid red found in different shades ranging from orange, vermilion, light red, crimson to brown and purple. The other colours are white and black. There are only four superimpositions noticed in the rock paintings of Kumaon Himalaya, which are now in a very bad state of preservation. On the basis of the subject matter and material culture the rock art of Kumaon Himalaya date back to megalithic period and its antiquity is assigned to some three thousand years ago.29

Rock Art in Gujurat

Gujurat remained Terra Incognito in the field of rock art studies unit 1970. To fill this lacuna in the archaeological wealth of Gujurat, a group of rock shelters with paintings were discovered first by V. H. Sonawane around Tarsang village in the Panchamahal district in 1971 while working on the "Archaeology of Panchamahals"30 As per our present state of understanding, the rock art sites of Gujurat basically representing rock paintings are confined to the part of Panchamahals, Baroda, Sabarkantha, Bhavnagar and Surendranagar districts with granite outcrops. It is strikingly different from those of the adjoining Vindhyan region sites of Central India. Besides, few rock art sites are also reported from the isolated granite hillocks of Sourashtra Peninsula.

The Gujurat rock paintings, to a large extent, are found drawn on the shelter walls or projected ceiling hoods and in variably in the niches developed by natural weathering of the granite boulders. The great mass of rock paintings shows predilection of red colour in several shades ranging from a rather dark violet to a yellowish brick-red colour. The red pigments in most of the cases are secured from red hematite nodules containing iron oxide found in laterite deposit. Occasionally, we do find paintings depicted in white colour, might have been obtained either from calcium carbonate nodules or kaolin clayey deposits.
Because of the non-availability of required physiographic features suited for the execution of rock printings the number of rock art sites in Gujurat is less. The sites are in the districts of Panchmahals, Sabarkantha, Baroda, Bhavnagar and Surendranaga.

The subject matter of the rock arts of Gujurat are human figures, floral and geometric designs and motifs like Triratna, swastika, Trishula (trident), lamp, sun, moon, palm, animals like cow and calf, deer, rhinoceros, horse with riders, bison, peacocks, donkey and tiger, sailing boats, stupa and painted inscriptions. On the basis of its subject matter, colour of execution and material cultures the art are ranging from Mesolithic period to late historic period.

The distinguishing factor that differentiates rock art of Gujurat from other regions of the Indian subcontinent is the absence of the superimposed paintings. This may because of the availability of sufficient space for the creation of rock paintings even in case of successive cultural stages of different habitational activities existing in the close vicinity of painted shelters. The absence of engravings and bruising is another characteristic feature of the rock art of Gujurat.

Outstanding in the rock paintings of Gujurat are the picture of two sailing ships, the only paintings of a sea vessel found in India so far. These sailing ships from the shelter in Chamardi have all the features of vessels current after the contact with the western marine technology. Further north of Gujurat in the district of Sabarkantha are several rock printings of Buddhist Stupas and inscriptions, which belong to the early historic period. Similar stupas are known from rock paintings in Kotra near Narsinghgarh.

Rock Art in Jharkhand

Jharkhand, the newly formed state in Eastern India, besides its own political boundaries, has a discrete eco-cultural setup with considerable dominance of tribal elements in the overall matrix of culture. Rock art sites in the state are mostly located within the forests, in rock shelters as also on open boulders in the river valleys.
Rock art sites in Jharkand are located in Singhbhum, forest areas of North Karanapura valley in Hazaribag district, forest and hilly regions of Giridih, Kodarma, Nawadah and Jamui districts. The rock art found in Singhbhum district was the earliest discovery of palaeoart in the entire eastern India. Panchanana Mitra of Calcutta University had discovered a large panel containing petroglyphs from the bank of Subarnarekha river at Ghatstila. The rock art is present only on a large boulder like outcrop of bedrock just above the flood plain adjacent to the present river bed. Mitra said that the Ghatstila figures are almost identical in pose and style with the petroglyphs of Bantry Bay, Australia.

The rock art of Dahigora near Ghatstila is in the form of petroglyphs depicted on the flat floor of a bedrock lying in open air on the eastern bank of Subarnaraka river. Locals believe that the human figures depicted on the rock represent five Pandava brothers of Mahabharata, who slept on the rock for a night and left their mark on it. A close examination of the traces of the carvings on the exposed bed-rock has revealed a total number of 28 motifs, out of which 19 are outlines of circles and rest are anthropomorphic figures. The largest and the most prominent anthropomorphic figures are represented in the front view with both hands upraised. It is significant that in two anthropomorphic figures, phallus and testes are prominently shown. The gneissic bed rock is greenish gray in colour. It is relatively softer than the granite.

In Hazaribagh district five rock art sites have been identified by S. Chakraborty in North Karanpura Valley, in Mahudi range, Mandar and near Raham village adjacent to Garhi river.

Rock Art in Chhotanagpur Hills of South Bihar and adjoining Jharkhand

The entire area is hilly and densely forested and drained by the south north flowing Kiul and Sakari rivers and their tributaries. The painted rock shelters containing prehistoric or historic paintings, and rock inscriptions are located mainly in the Granite-gneiss regions forming part of Nawada, Giridih, Kodarma district and also in the activities of the highly weathered metamorphic rock in Jamui district which include various schist reaching up to sillimanite.
grade of metamorphism together with quartzite and quartz sericite schist forming persistent bands.

The area in a tribal belt and very thinly populated. The Santals are the main inhabitants. On periphery of the forest are small village of Bhullas / Kharwars and Ghatwars. Birhores in small bands can also be seen moving one place to another. They still lead primitive Stone Age lifestyle.

Rock Art of the region consists of pictographs as well as petroglyphs. Pictographs are found in the walls and ceilings of the naturally formed granite rock shelters / caves in the Nawada & Jamui district of Bihar and the adjoining areas in Giridih and Kodarma districts of the newly created state of Jharkhand. The petroglyphs are found mainly on open boulders and also some painted rock shelters in form of cup marks and engraved figures.

The subject matters of printings in this area are mostly of geometrical designs, symbols and trees / plants. The geometric designs comprise of grids, zigzags, dots, chevrons, curves, nested curves, triangles and rectangles. The intricate designs include rhombic meanders, concentric circles, spirals and their variants. Human in the form of hunting, dancing and standing behind animals are depicted. Shamans / wizards and occasionally mother goddesses have also been depicted in several rock shelters.

The animals depicted in the rock paintings and engravings include antelope, elephant tiger, horse, dog, deer, boar, bison, monkey, humped bulls etc. various types of symbols / geometrical sings are associated with the animals.

Reptiles find an important place in the rock art of this region. These mainly include Lizards and snake. Frequent depiction of snakes in several painted rock shelters is unique feature of this regions rock art. This may be remotely related to the development of the Naga cult in the eastern region. Excessive presence of snakes in this area may also be one of the reasons for overwhelming depiction of snakes.
Birds shown in the paintings include peacock, eagle, vulture, bats etc. Through depiction of insects are rare in rock art, in this area we found depictions of insects like beetle, centipede, bees etc. Handprints, both negative and positive are found in the caves.

Petroglyphs in form of cup marks have been found in many painted rock shelters of this region. The cup marks are in a series of parallel lines and also in a combination of cupules or independent ones.

The technique of engraving and filling in the groves with colour is found in some of the rock shelters, like rock art and Sundargarh and Sambalpur district in Orissa and at Bainete Banda in Andhra Pradesh. Existence of engraved humped bulls on a granite boulder is a very rare feature of these rock art regions.

Last but not the least, the rock inscriptions in Brahmi, Kharoshti and Shankh scripts also from an important features of rock art of this region.

The colours used in paintings are haematiod red of different shades, white, black, yellow and green and blue colour.

A large number of Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic tools, potsherds, charcoal and bone pieces have been found in and around the shelter areas. Used pieces of *geru* have been recovered from inside the painted shelters along with microliths.39

**Rock Art in Ladakh**

Ladakh in the Himalayas that forms the northern most part of India has one of the most elevated regions of the earth inhabited by man right from the stone age. Rock engravings on the boulders and rocks in the river valleys are one of the earliest cultural remains of the region. Except rock carvings and engravings of human and animal forms40 a few smaller sites with stone age tools and Buddhist effigies in rock relief are also found prior to the introduction of Tibetan Buddhism and from the little remains of the early culture of Ladakh.
Rock art is found in Leh, Nubra and Zanskar regions. The rock engravings, particularly those on boulders in river valleys, mostly embedded into the ground at varied depths, are the earliest remains of the cultural heritage of Ladakh as they depict scenes of prehistoric, early historic and later historical life of man and culture of the region. The earliest one are represented by animal figures of ibex, cattle, yak, goat, deer, dog, wolf, horse and human figure including those in hunting with bow and arrow or with spear and in dancing positions in groups, horse riders, fighting scenes and symbols of sun, palm, swastika and others. They were some times copied in later periods also as are evident from overlapping and scratching without patina and looking fresh on granite boulders. The latest engravings are represented by stupas or chortens with or without Tibetan inscription mentioning names of persons and years in Tibetan Calendar.41

Francke had noticed rock engravings with primitive figures (engravings) in between the stretch from Shargola to Kargil and Kargil to Drass at several places at Chanigund and Donggaall in the Dard area besides the sculptures and inscriptions at Drass, the first one being now declared as protected monuments42.

Rock carvings for the late phase of early historical and of early medieval periods were notices at Byama, Khumbu, Kartse Khar, Sani and Padum on Kargil Padum road. At Byama Khubu in Suru Valley, about 33 kms from Kargil the rock carving in low relief has a figure of Padmapani Avalokitesvara flanked by two goddesses with two line inscriptions in Tibetan script.43

At Padum, facing the river Zansakar a rock shelter and two huge rocks contain figures of five seated and five standing Dhyani Buddhas respectively, besides other engravings and carvings showing worshipers, a 5.00 mtrs. high standing Maitreya, animals attached to Ratnasambhava, Akshobhya, Vairochana, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi and figures of Chrotens or Stupas. Rock Carvings of Buddhist images are also found at Apati in between Kargil and Batalik and Shey of Leh area.44
On Kargil-Podam road rock carvings were found on the boulders at Khumthan Hamilling, Shagam, Phey and on the right back of river Zansakar in between Kumi and Thongde. Here the subject matters are ibex, human figures, wild goat, symbols like swastika, sun, asses, horse with rider, tiger etc. At Khumthang and Hmilling ibex wild goat composed of two triangles. Hunting of ibex is an important subject of engravings.

At Skinbrisa in Batalik area on the bank of Indus engravings of ibex, man hunting ibex with bow and arrow and drawing of a ibex with two triangles are found along with the battle scene with horse riders. At Tilichang engraving of group dancers, man with triangular body, deer and ibex are found.45

Rock engravings at Nubra Valley contains figures of ibex, human with bows and arrow, horse rider, deer, goat, palm impressions, oval symbol etc. On the right bank of Indus at Nor Nis rock engravings of ibexes, sun, yak, hunting scenes, human figures, camel and conical huts have been found.46

The dominance of ibex in rock art of the region is very interesting. According to A. H. Dani it was known that depiction of a male ibex on the boulder would lead to human pregnancy because ibex had a close relationship with fertility.47

Rock Art in Chambal Valley

Chambal valley is one of the regions having the richest treasure of rock art heritage India. In the upper Chambal valley from its source in Indore district up to Kota region some 1300 rock shelters have been explored by V. S. Wakankar, M. G. Dikshit, R. K. Pancholi, A. Chaudhary, S. C. Bhatnagar, G. S. Runwal, J. N. Srivastava, J. D. Tripathy and Giriraj Kumar. They have been found mostly in sandstone region, of course a few in limestone and laterite regions in districts of Mandasaur and Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh and Jhalawad, Kota, Bhilwada and Chittodgadh districts of Rajasthan.

The discovery has brought out about 1300 rock shelter in 63 sites distributed in 14 regions. About 650 are decorated with rock art belonging to five periods from upper Paleolithic to Historic periods.
Within the shelter paintings have been done both on the rear walls and on the ceilings. Paintings when done on the walls have been arranged roughly horizontally, while in case of ceilings they have been oriented in all most any direction with no apparent scheme of composition.

Petroglyphs have been discovered in the form of cupules forming a series of parallel lines or a design of circles and geometric forms. Except the above subject matter in petroglyphs all the rock art in Upper Chambal valley is in the form of rock paintings. The pigments used are red ochre, dark blackish-red, green, white & yellow.

The subject matter in paintings are animals, human forms and decorative devices, symbols, mythical figures etc. Bison, cattle, antelope, deer, elephant, rhinoceros, fish and wild boar appears most frequently. Smaller animals include rabbit, lizard, jackal, snake, centipede, etc. The leopard, crocodile, horse, donkey, goat, sheep and a variety of birds are often shown. The birds depicted are crane, peacock, heron, crow etc. In the majority of locations paintings have been successfully superimposed. Some figures are clearly visible where as some are eroded. Microliths have been discovered in clusters from nearby all the rock art sites, or they are found scattered in front of or near by the shelter.48

Central Indian Rock Art

Situated in the heart of the country, central Indian is the most promising area in Rock Art. It extends into three states of Uttar Pradesh, Madya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Almost 80% of the rock paintings in the country are located here. This area is located on three district mountain systems: Vindhyanchal and Satpura in Madya Pradesh and Aravali in Rajasthan. These mountains are the sources of many perennial rivers and tribes like Gonds, Bhils, Korkus and Santals inhabit the jungles.

The predominant colour in the paintings is red with its variant shades. White is the next most widely used colour. The other colours like green, black, yellow, blue, orange and pink are also found in the late series.
The painting in most of the rock shelters are drawn one upon the other. Stylistically the paintings of this area have been grouped under five categories: (a) Naturalistic, (b) Stylized, (c) schematic, (d) conventionalized & (e) eclectic.

The paintings of the central India is divided into the following themes:

a) Hunting – gathering
b) Cattle rearing and food production
c) Domestication
d) War scenes
e) Religion
f) Entertainment.

Rock Art in Phancamarhi Hills

The Panchmarhi Hills form one of the most beautiful parts of the Satpura Range in Madhya Pradesh. The shelters are found all over the hills and the surrounding forests, although favored sites were located along the foothills and river banks. The walls and the ceilings of the shelters are covered with paintings depicting a wide range of subjects expressed on a variety of styles. The hills formed of the Gondwana sandstone belonging to the Gondwana series of the Talcher Group formations.

The painted rock shelters of Panchmarhi hills were brought to the notice of D.H. Gorden by H.G. Hunter. Hunter excavated here in 1932 & 1934-35 and from the excavated remains the rock paintings of this region is placed to Mesolithic and later periods.

The subject matter of the Mesolithic period is quite varied, although game animals are most frequently represented. Bulls, bison, elephants, wild boards, deers, tigers, buffaloes, dogs, monkeys and crocodiles appear alongside smaller species such as rats, lizards and fish. Some of the birds are identified as peacocks and others resemble jungle fowl. Arthropods, such as scorpions and wild bees are also depicted. The hunters are portrayed using spears, axes, struks and bows and arrows.
Female figures are occasionally shown. Through the Panchamahi paintings extends from the stone age to the early and medieval historic periods, most of the paintings are from the historical period. Conflict is one of the main themes depicted during this time—war scenes are common.

The descendants of the regional hunters and gathers and artists of this region are the tribal Korkus and Gonds who still uphold some of the traditions of their ancestors. In the rock paintings their ancestors are depicted dancing in pairs or in rows and playing musical instruments. The tribal living in these hills have wooden memorial boards on which they carved horse and its rider is similar to those painted by their predecessors in the past on the walls of the rock shelters. They also decorate the walls of their houses and this activity seems to have its roots in the cave dwelling traditions of their ancestors. Men and horses of geometric construction are randomly spaced across the walls. Such paintings are done during the rainy season and on festive occasions, and bear a close resemblance to those found in the painted shelters.

The walls paintings of the houses, as the great majority of rock paintings, are executed in red and yellow pigments prepared from hematite or other iron oxides. The white pigment was made from limestone or Kaolin, while mixtures of pigments that produce pinks are also found used in paintings.

Though the tradition of tree worship is very old, paintings of trees are found in this region. In a rock shelter named Rajat Phrabat the depictions of honey collection is very striking.

The tribal paintings in wood and house walls of this region have a great similarity with the rock art of this region found in rock shelters. That the two traditions share the same roots can be seen in the common subject matter and the continuing stylistic conventions displayed by the contemporary tribal artists.50

Rock Art of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh

The Mirzapur district in U.P. is very important in the context of Indian rock paintings because the painted rock shelter were discovered for the first
time in this area in 1867-68 and this is the second largest rock art centre known in the country.

Scholars like A. Carlyle, Cockburn, Dixit, G. R. Sharma and T. P. Verma reported numerous painted rock shelter in this districts. After this in between 1973 and 1988. R. Tewari started exploring a large area and increased the number of rock shelters in Mirzapur to 240. Microliths, sometimes along with a few rubbed pieces of hematite, are found on the floors or in the nearby areas of the painted rock shelter. Paintings are usually executed on the inner wall and ceiling of the shelters. Usually paintings are executed in one or two colours. Different sheds of ocher are the most common colours. Beside this black and white colours are also used.

The subject matter of the paintings includes many motifs, themes and symbols. The number of human figures is twice that of the figures of other living creatures. About sixty dance scenes are recorded from Mirzapur.

Among the animal figures, deer is the most common. Others include one horned rhino, elephant, bison, leopards, wild boar, wild bull, nellore (antelope), monkey, cattle porcupine house, camel, dog and lizard. A few depictions of birds like peacock, crane, water birds, ostrich, fish and snakes are also recorded. Inscriptions in Brahmi, Sankha and Nagari scripts are also found in some shelters.

On the basis of the above discussion and observations the rock art of this regions is placed in between Mesolithic to historical periods.

The tribesmen of the area deny any link with these rock paintings. They ascribe these works of art to evil spirits.
References:


33. *Ibid*, p .244.

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