

## Newly discovered rock art heritage in the Kaimur range of Bihar, India

SACHIN KR. TIWARY

### Introduction of region and political overview

The study area Kaimur Range, falling in the eastern margin of the Vindhyan Range, is composed of very intra-cratonic sedimentary rocks of Meso-Neo Proterozoic eras (Soni 1987:87-138). It is extending from Sasaram in Bihar in the east, Rewa in Madhya Pradesh in the west and passing through Mirzapur divisions of Uttar Pradesh. The Kaimur range is separated from the rest of the plateau by the valley of the Vindhyan range and form an undulating table rising abruptly from the plain in bold and lofty precipices, to eminences of about 365.76 m. above sea level (Mallet 1869:129). The range never raises more than a few hundred meters above the surrounding plains and has a maximum width of around 80 km (Iblistomira 2000:134).

In the month of October 2007, September 2008, March 2009, October 2009, October 2010, March 2011, August 2011, November 2011, July 2012, December 2012 and March 2013 author discovered 14 rock art sites in the Kaimur range of Bihar (Fig. 1). All the sites can be divided in to two part on the basis of findings, i.e. pictographs and petroglyphs. This is a general reporting of the discovered sites focusing light through the photographic views.

### Tentative Chronology

However, as suggested by some of the scholars like V.S. Wakankar (Wakankar 1975:7-29), E. Neumayer, Y. Mathpal (Mathpal 1975:38-93) and others, the most important basis for relative dating of the rock art is the study of the superimpositions. Rakesh Tewari, in his monograph on the Rock art of Mirzapur also advocates the same method and has divided the rock art of Mirzapur into twelve phases based on the superimpositions. Looking at the patterns of superimposition of figures, it was obvious to note that the red paint/ Geru paint was applied on earlier paintings and over them motifs/patterns/figures were executed using dark red and other colours. Observation of the colours of early paintings reveal that carefully painted figures in a thick, very dark red to rust coloured, paint may be earlier than lighter coloured red figures, which seem to be more haphazardly painted with plant brush/hair brush paints. There are different periods, and it has dated from the beginning of second urbanization to as late as the late medieval periods. (Flow Chart-I) In addition, somewhere we have rock art belonging to modern period also.

Present study is primarily based on archaeological data supplemented by exploration and local traditions wherever possible. Efforts were made to undertake extensive but arduous exploration of the most difficult caves and rock-shelters of the Kaimur range with highly encouraging results. The

details of the sites and illustrations given in the following pages.

Sachin Kumar Tiwary, Ph.D.

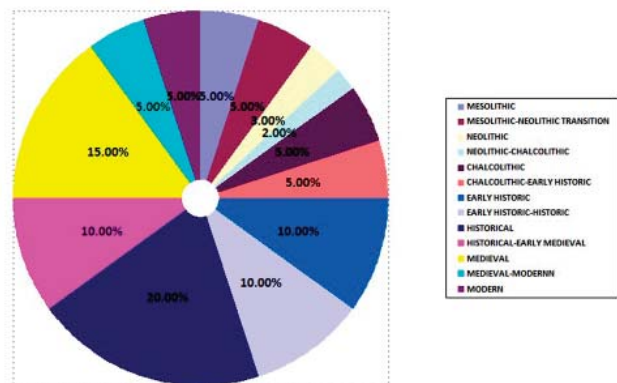
Assitt. Archaeologist

Archaeological Survey of India, Patna circle, Patna, Bihar, India

E-mail: sachintiwary@rocketmail.com

### References

- IBLISTOMIRA, Bai 2000. *Students Britannica India*, Vol. III. Baba Bharkhanath Printer, New Delhi.
- MALLET, F. R. 1869. On the Vindhyan Series Exhibited In Northwestern and Central Provinces of India; Geological. *Survey India Memoir* 7(1): 1-129.
- MATHAPAL, Y. 1975. Rock Art of India; An Orthographical Interpretation. *Bulletin of Deccan Collage* 35(3-4): 83-93.
- SONI M. K., Chakrabarty S. and Jain S. K. 1987. Vindhyan Super Group - A Review. In: Purana Basin of India, Memoir. *Geological Society of India* 6: 87-138.
- WAKANKAR, V.S. 1975. Bhimbetaka-The Prehistoric Paradise. *Prachya Pratibha* 3(2): 7-29.



Flow Chart-I of the Rock art accumulation with tentative chronology

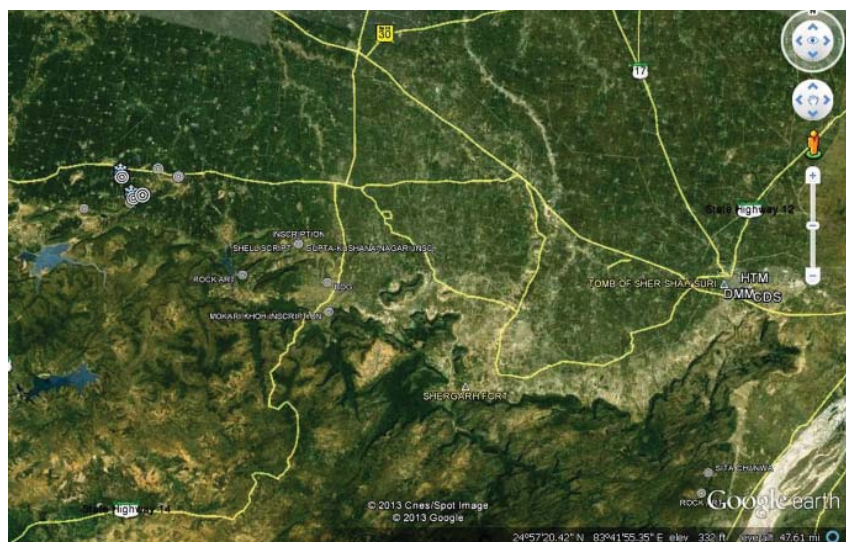


Figure 1. Archaeological sites discovered in Kaimur range of Bihar. Google Earth image.



*Figure 2. General view of the shelter and executed pictographs and petroglyphs on the wall and floor, the paintings are painted with reddish, ochre and brown colour. The paintings are human, animal (Deer, Bull), bird and some bamboo like motifs on the wall. In spite of pictographs there are some petroglyphs also found on the floor, which is known as Baghbakariya/Soraha gotiya geometric motif and pit hole. Chhamahiya Maan, Sasaram Block of Rohtas District.*



*Figure 3. The red painted human pictograph with long hat like headgear, Gandke Valley, Tilauthu block of Rohtas district.*



Figure 4. Highly decorated Shell script belonging to 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. on the floor of Jibhi mai, Pravara hill, Bhagwanpur block of Kaimur District.

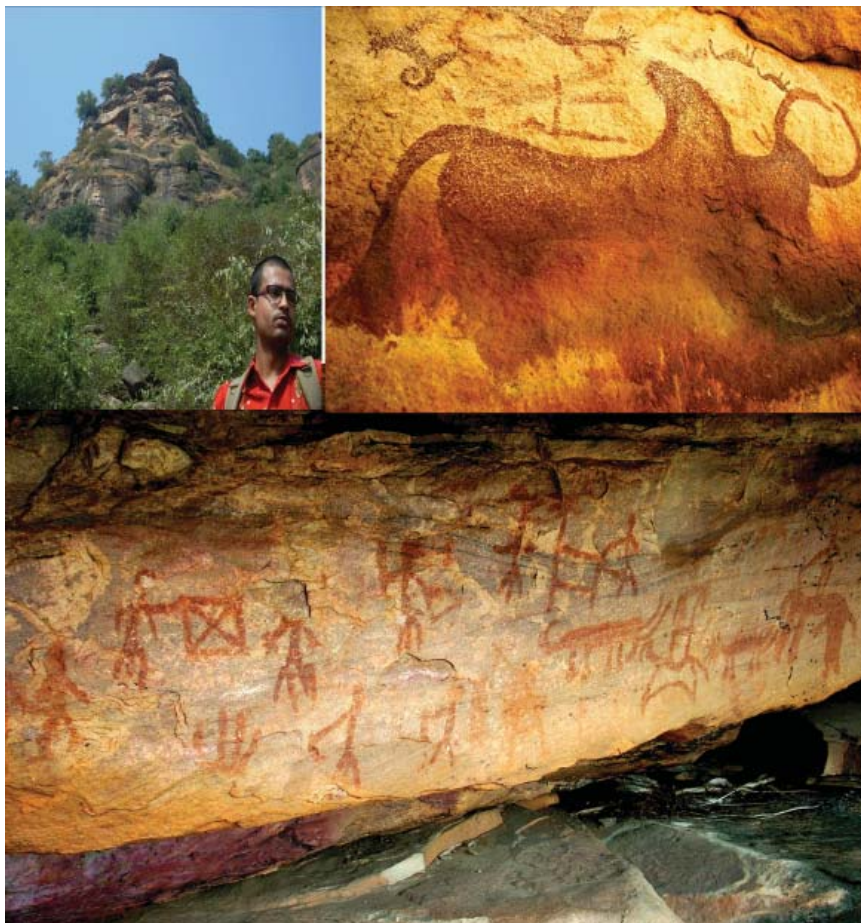


Figure 5. General view of the cave, The gigantic pictograph of animal (humped bull) painted on the ceiling of the shelter, Small group of human composition such as dancing (dynamic scene), standing (static scene) and riding animal (dynamic scene) pictographs painted in the cave on the wall facing outward, Badki goriya hill, Bhagwanpur block of Kaimur District.



Figure 6. General view of the shelter and the detail view of the pictographs on the wall and ceiling, Gausgir Ka Ashram, Ghamha hill, Bhagwanpur block of Kaimur District.



Figure 7. General view of the shelter and their executed pictographs and petroglyphs, the Lord Buddha flanked by two votive Stupas on either side, prehistoric hunting scene and petroglyphs of dog like animal, Chand Block of Kaimur District.

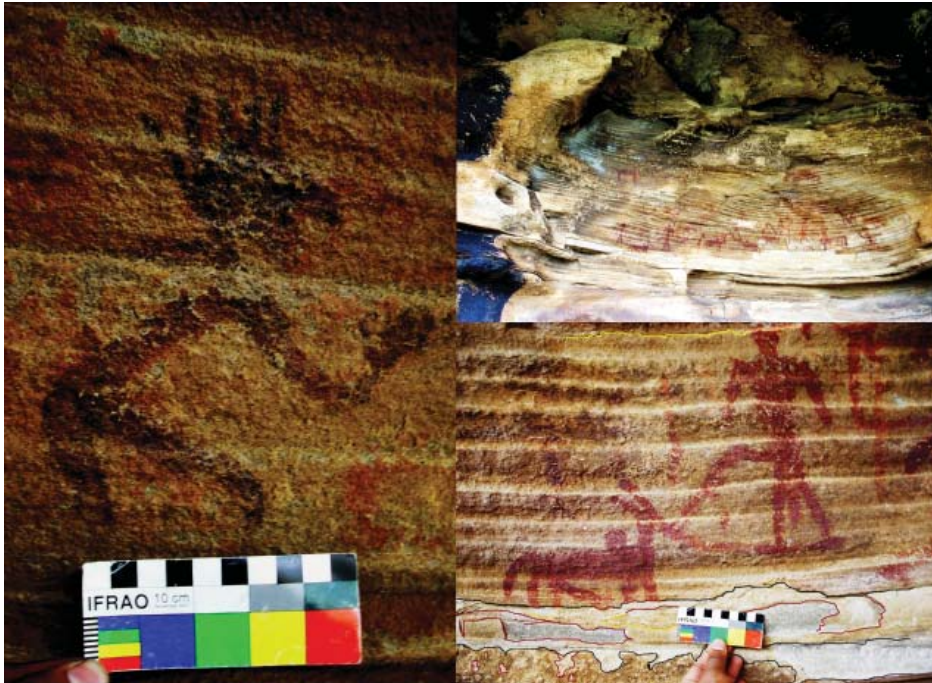


Figure 8. General view of the pictographs executed on the wall of the cave with Red, Geru and dark brown colour, Rajpur hill, Chand block of Kaimur district.

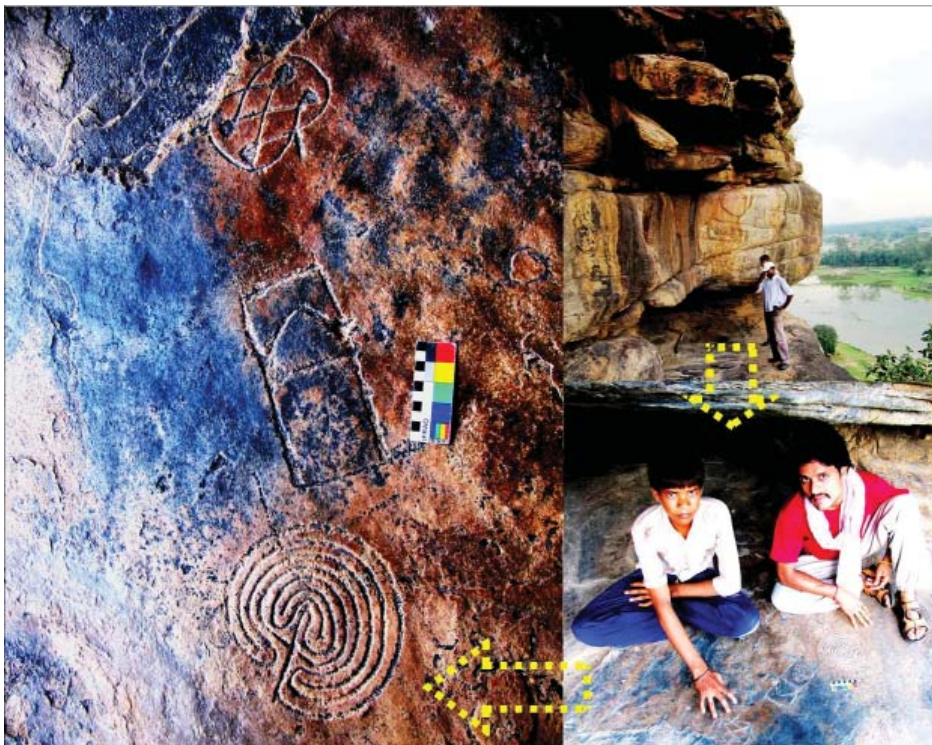


Figure 9. General view of the shelter in inset and the engraved petroglyphs, The common motifs are nothing but circular lines, which have also been noticed from mysterious cave at Chand Block of Kaimur region and from Usgalimol, South Goa, where similar motif is deeply engraved on the laterite bed. Author himself noticed the similar petroglyphs on the Ashokan pillar at Kolhua, Muzafferpur. Other motifs are box like, circular with some lines inside connecting with each line, dots in eight rows running from west to east direction. Similar types of artistic works have also been noticed from Creek East, Australia, golaka maan, Sasaram block of Rohtas district.



Figure 10. General view of the Shelter and their detail pictographs and petroglyphs views, the pictographs are very few but the petroglyphs are in uncountable condition, the petroglyphs are noticed on the wall and ceiling of the shelter, the petroglyphs are inscriptions belonging to several historical period and phases, the scripts are Brahmi, Kharosthi, Nagari. The petroglyphs are sun motif and human with bow and arrow, Khaniya hill, Chand block of Kaimur district.

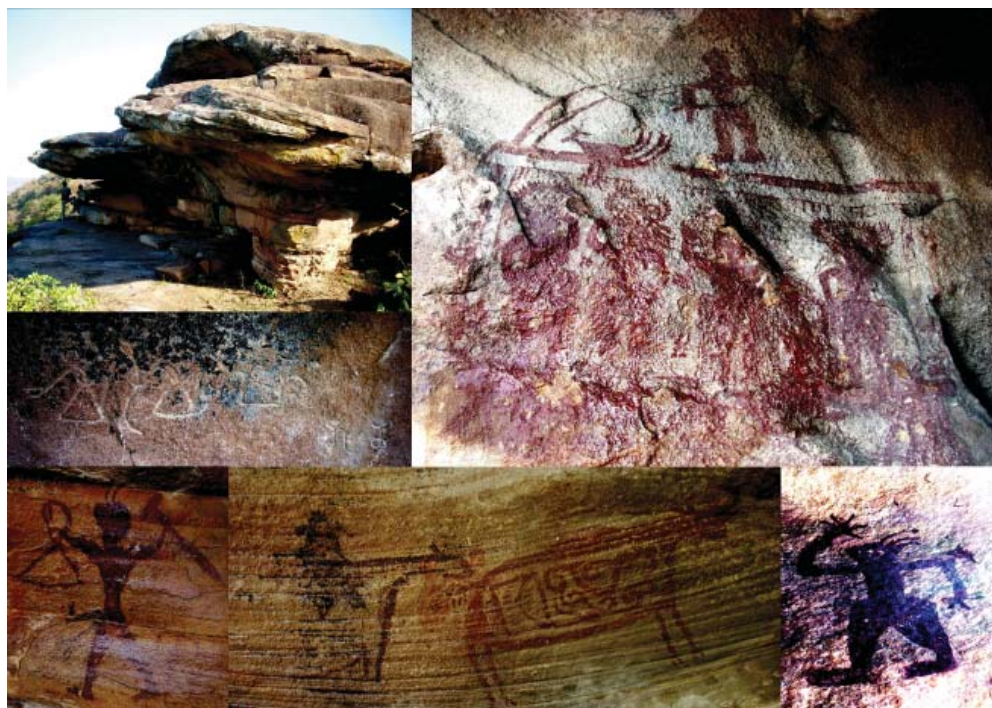


Figure 11. General of the shelter and executed pictographs- petroglyphs (in the form of Kushan inscription). On the walls and ceilings of this rock shelter there are a number of paintings in red-ochre colour and inscribed inscription, a male and female have shown carrying a prey on his shoulder. An animal and hunter scene is very attractive, Further, on the Patesar hill at some distance away from the tunnel-like rock shelter there is an another rock shelter which has a projected roof, Patesar hill, Chand block of Kaimur district.

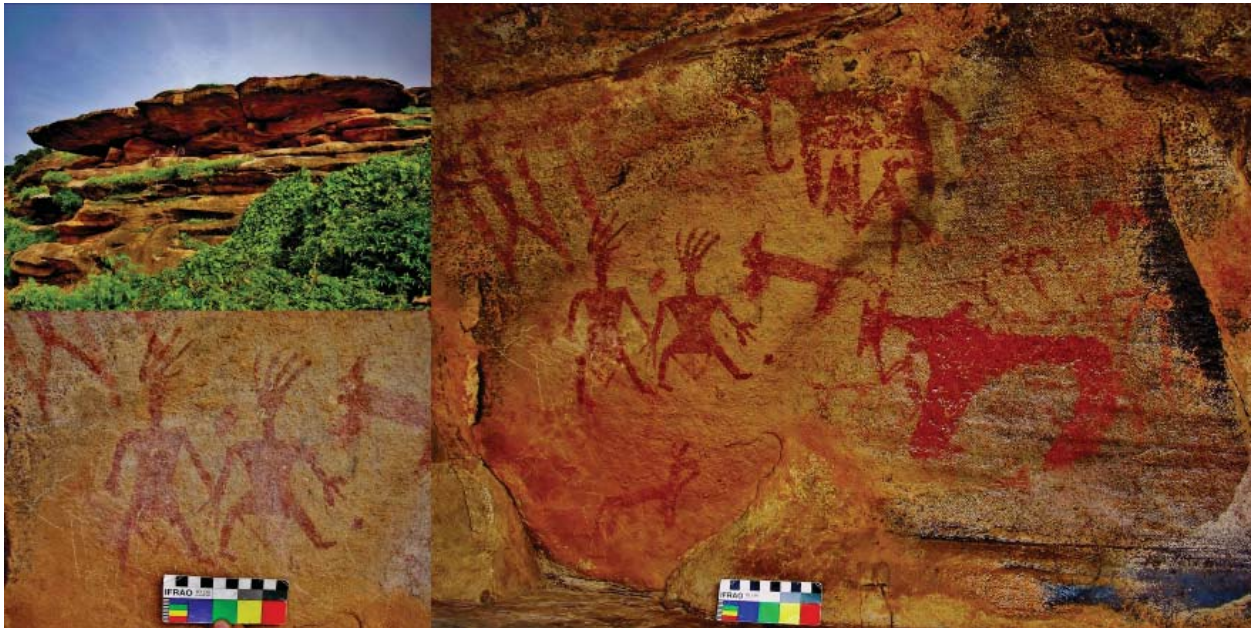


Figure 12. General views of the shelter and their artwork on the wall, on the wall hundreds of images, very often superimposed upon one another, constitute a fantastic canvas that has been many times reused to paint red figures. The depiction of paintings shows lifestyle of hunting and gathering society particularly by the later people. An important depiction of this period is two men standing together. A painting depicted over ceiling on this cave making an animal in-group, which is painted in light and dark reddish colour, Rajpur Kahrauli, Chand block of Kaimur district.

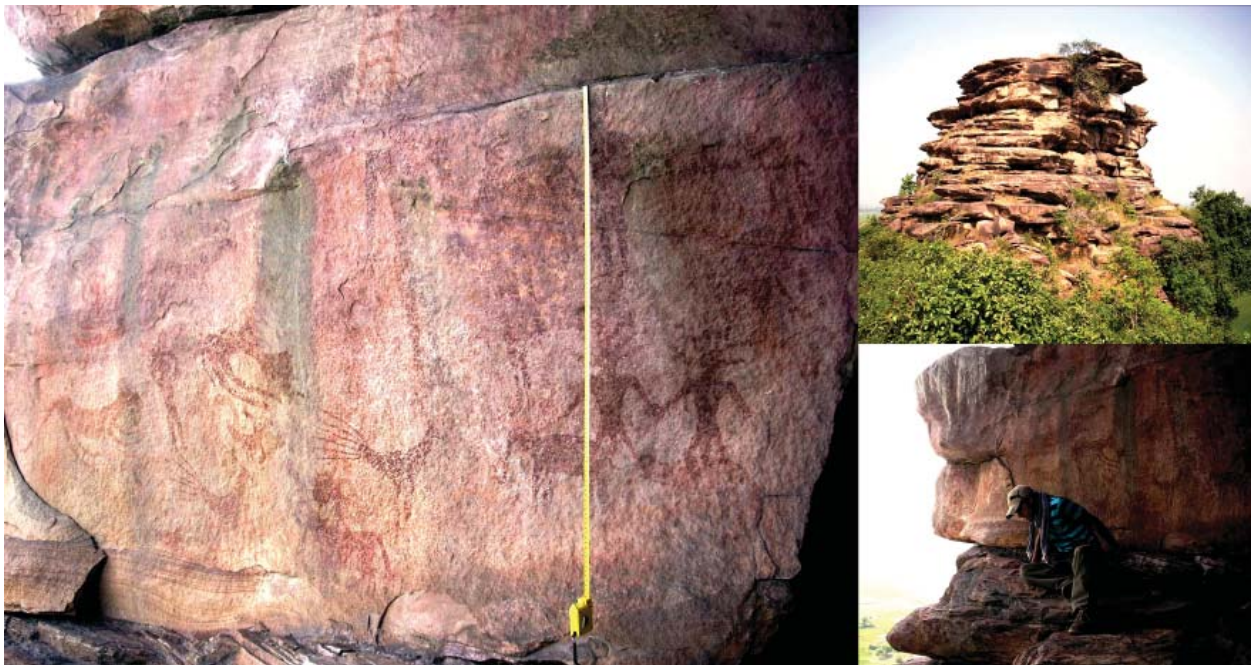


Figure 13. General view of the shelter and cave. The cave has sufficient space inside, the paintings are made on the walls, and ceiling, Mesolithic paintings are in row with hand together, stick like with red colour. These paintings also consists same aspects like expression of their life. On the wall some figures of animals which can be recognised as deer, lion, elephant alone and with riders also, monkeys, bull, peacock, bird etc are documented, Sitakhoh of Dewane Mokwa hill, Chand Block of Kaimur district.