

Ethno rock art tradition exemplified through Kaimur range

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Abstract. Ethno archaeological evidences and studies very often facilitate the interpretation of significance of rock art. But sometimes there are problems in explaining the things if there is incoherence between local ethnic activities and the rock art of by-gone days which may be due either to a remarkable shift in social behaviors during the long period span or to the relative seclusion of the developing society from the inspirational art traditions manifested in local rock art. The present paper is based on the ethno rock art investigation made in the Kaimur region of Bihar. Because of new evidences in present tradition and also game method author have come to resume whether any link can be made between ancient rock art living pattern and modern local groups art and culture, those are residing in the hill, foot hill (the tribes, semi-tribe) and on the plain.

Introduction

The study area, covered by hard rock formations, is situated in Kaimur and Rohtas district of Bihar, India. Geologically the area comprises of upper Vindhyan formations consisting of sandstone, quartzite and shale. Vindhyan formation is overlain by quaternary alluvium, which was deposited on the eroded basement. Kaimur Range also known as Kymore, is located in the eastern part of the Vindhyan Range, which is a very intra-cratonic sedimentary rock of Meso-Neo Proterozoic eras in Central India (Soni, 1987:87-138) extending between Sasaram in Bihar in the east to Chittaurgarh in Rajasthan in the west and passing through Madhya Pradesh (An integrated approach of Remote Sensing, Geophysics and GIS to evaluation of Groundwater potentiality of Ojhala sub watershed, Mirzapur district, U.P., India, Amaresh Kr. Singh and S. Ravi Prakash, Remote Sensing applications centre, U.P., Sector -G, Jankipuram, Lucknow, Map India 2003, Water resources) about 483 kilometers (300 mi) long (Ghosh: 1989: 279).

Ethno archaeology is the ethnographic study of people for archaeological purpose, usually through the study of the material remains of a society. Here author using the term ethno rock art; similarly as ethno archaeological study, ethno rock art aids archaeoscientists in reconstructing ancient life style by studying the rock art and associated tradition or continuity in modern societies.

Ethno rock art can provide insights of value to archaeoscientists into how people in the past may have lived, especially with regard to their social structures, religious beliefs and other aspects of their culture. However, it is still unclear how to relate most of the insights generated by this anthropological research to archaeological investigations. This is due to the lack of emphasis by both archaeoscientists and anthropologists on the material remains created and discarded by societies and on how these material remains vary, based upon differences in how a society is organized? (Tribhuvan, 2003:72).

Prof. Malik in an article explained the context of cultural proximity between ancient rock art sites and traditional people of the present era. He said "...the fundamental art tradition persists by way of contemporary 'folk' and 'tribal' in oral ways, such as amongst the Warlis, Santhals, the Gonds and so on. In short, Rock art may be seen as a part of a living tradition, in terms of local histories and in the understanding of the psychology and history of mankind. It is the universality of the medium and the message within this global creative urge that holistic thinking and alternate methodologies may emerge".

Thinking in the way of ethno rock art

Study of ethno rock art started during 1870s, by Bleek and Loyd, he has noticed the continuity of rock art even today by the San/Bushmen tribe at Drakensberg Mountains in Kalahari Desert. (Ghosh, et., 2009:50-57) Even today in Chumash community at West coast of North America, (Blackburn, 1975:23) suggest that magic and supernatural power play a prominent role in most of their narratives.

The tradition of modern tribal and village art in India is rooted in Indian rock art tradition though in a vague and general way. The ideological system behind these paintings is considered lost to us. The root cause of it is that the living groups of people do not identify themselves with these paintings. (Chakrabarti, 2006: 98-99)

The tribal groups apparently do not "associate themselves with such art in their areas, except to explain it as the work of evil spirits or epic heroes." (Chakravarty & Bednarik, 1997: 31) A similar opinion has been expressed about the rock art in Odisha, where "the local people do not attach any special significance to these rock art sites. To them, the works of art in the shelters are the works of the heavenly bodies or that of the ghosts. They often consider it a taboo to touch such works of art" (Pradhan, 2001:27)., According to the local belief near Bhimbetka is that "witches paint on these rocks during the dark nights of Kanaiya Art (Shri Krishna Janamashthami) every year" (Mathpal, 1984: 107, 1985:112, 1992: 207-214., 1998-52).

The best examples of the recent work of Dr. Sadashib Pradhan in the south of Odisha, who did documented ethnographic study with rock art, which is quite discernible in terms of colour composition, geometric frames, symbolism and overall delineation of the subject matter of depiction. (Pradhan, 2004:39) In his excellent book on the "Rock Art in Orissa", Pradhan devotes a whole chapter to the "Ethno Archaeology of Rock Art". (Pradhan, 2001:62)

In India festivals and their ritual activities like, *Bhaiya Dooj*, *Nag Panchami*, *Savan Puran Masi*, *Holi*, *Deepawali*, *Kartik Ekadasi*, *Anthe Thapa*, *Nava Ratra*, *Navami Ka thapa*, *Bhaiya Dooj*, *Pidiya*, *Marriage thapa*, *Chouka* of Marriage features on- ritual symbols on wall and floor of the house. This process is called *lipna*. Then the painters proceed to do their work mixed with various colour tones, different designs depend on the different regions of India. (Sankrityananda, ed., 1999:5-8) Some time these are very similar to *Godana* practice, which is all more similar with the Rock art. If I am not wrong in all over the India the pastoral people did mostly the artwork. Similarly, the data available today, over 05% of



all known rock art was produced by hunting and gathering societies while less than 95% is the work of pastoralists and agriculturalists in Kaimur.

Problem in the study and understanding of regional rock art archaeology and ethno archaeological study

Until recently, such concerns were not well voiced in studies concerned with the art and archaeology of the small societies, and a working knowledge of the role of art in ethnographic contexts has not been seen as an essential prerequisite for the interpretation of archaeological art.

For the first time in world context, some Australian researchers (Maynard, 1979:109) have made a distinction between 'ethnographic' and 'archaeological' approaches to the analysis of rock art. Such distinctions do not take into account sufficiently the extensive literature dealing with the relationship between ethnography and archaeology, as well as the more general literature on the philosophy of science.

Some problems in the study of rock art in this entire region in bullets given below, that why, what are the obstacles in the study of rock art and ethno archaeological or any other research work?:

- Relative geographical inaccessibility,
- Deep forest,
- Social turbulence,
- Language understanding,
- Communications connectivity and connection,
- Inaccessibility of academic and research institute,
- Lesser known region,
- Multidisciplinary approach,
- Authenticity of dating,
- Primitive stage of rock art study.

Kaimurian ethnic groups and their life style

The Kaimur plateau and foothills are predominantly inhabited even now, as before, by aboriginals i.e. tribes and semi-tribes such as the *Oraons*, *Cheros*, *Kharwars*, *Bhuiyans*, *Karias*, etc. who now reside in the villages mostly in mud built houses. This is ancient western boundary of Magadha Empire known *Karushadesha*. Even the tribes of Chhotanagpur and Santhal areas belongings to the *Atavika* kingdoms of the *Karushadesha*.

The people of this region especially of the Adhaura, Nauhatta and Tilauthu block are still living on the forest and this is applicable to people of the lower strata of society such as the *Musaharas*, *Harijans*, *Cheros*, *Kharwars*, *Oraons*, *Dhanus* and *Dushadh* etc. these people sell fire wood in the local markets such as Chenari, Bhagwanpur, Bhabhua, Adhaura, Sasaram and Nauhatta. From the money thus gained, they purchase the essential commodities such as cloth, oil, food, rice etc. The *Musaharas*, *Kharawara* and *Bind* still go into deep forest at the time of the ripening of *Mahua* and collect them for selling in the local market. They also collect *Piyar*, *Tendu* and the Gum of *Karmahala* to sell in the local market. Dr. Shahida Ansari has explained certain specific features of hunter-gatherers of the past using the cultural practices of the *Musahars* or rat-eaters, of Uttar Pradesh. (Ansari, 1999-2000: 142-150) It was claimed by the author that some of the small animals in rock paintings include rats for

eating. During the harvesting of crops, they come down to the plain areas to work in the fields of the cultivators and thus earn livelihood. Therefore, the mode of livelihood of majority of the *Musaharas*, *Kahars* and *Harijans* of this region is similar to that of the *Cheros* and *Kharwars* of Rohtas, which still subsist on the products of the forest and lead a migratory life.

Most of the functions to sustain daily life are performed by the ladies of the house, such as taking care of the cattle, cleaning and removing of the dung, fetching water both for the family members and cattle, cooking food and rearing the children. Taking cattle and other domestic animals to the pastures, preparing milk products, and selling it in the market, etc form the duty of male persons but sometimes females also help in making mud home.

On *Deepawali*, houses are cleaned and painted. Each house are made of local available stone with mud mortar and some dry masonry for the boundary wall for keeping animals and drying and processing of the agricultural yields. In all the villages, a thin paste of cow dung/ buffalos dung mixed with clay is applied in the courtyard, floors and walls of the houses.

Its keep house safe and clean, which are painted white either with lime or with *Khadia/chuna/safeda* (Calcium carbonate) with a small base generally in red colour and in ochre. For wall decoration mostly red, ochre, white colour is used which is easily available in market now a days and easy to prepare in home.

Legacy of colour preparation:

The tradition of colour preparation with the powdered geru, oil, *sindur* (vermillion), juice of the bark trees and of beans and other vegetation etc, is prevalent even now amongst the tribal folks of this region. They are using local colours such as the dark or Indian red, yellow ochre, blue and white. Generally, brush is made of palm twigs with crushed ends. Sometimes, woman hairs are also used to hold colour in hand, and to be applied with a projected finger. Mostly females and childrens along with his or her mother or sister create arts. Quality of the work depends upon the aesthetic sense and skill of the artist.

The paintings are executed during the slack rainy season or, occasionally, during festivals. In the *Musahara* society, women carry out all domestic work and look after the children, while the men cultivate fields, and gather fruits and honey. It may thus be surmised that this tradition of colour preparation and using them for painting various figures and patterns on the walls may have had been certainly handed down from generation since the earliest rock painters devised them.

Legacy of rock art in tradition and Culture

The tradition of rock paintings are still found among forest dwelling tribals of Kaimur region. The most significant thing is that tribals of this region are still using the same symbols and pattern, almost same types of colours prepared from household objects, depiction of same subject matter such as various animals, human beings geometrical pattern indicates great continuity in the tradition of rock paintings with little changes. Significantly, the tradition of painting the wall of their houses continues, sometimes with the same kind of



symbols and patterns seen in the rock paintings, besides some modified ones.

The region of Kaimur shows a prehistoric base of the religious practices widely prevalent in the region. The idea of primitive religion in the form of tribal nature shows its survival in the form of *Shakti* worship, which has found a universal acceptance in the region. No village exists in the entire district where the worship of *Sitala* or *Saptamatrika* is not performed seasonally. The ritualistic performances regarding birth, death, marriage etc. are closely associated with the worship of seven sisters whose base is primitive as well as benevolent spirit of the dead bodies. The *Bhaluni Dham* of Rohtas at Natwar Bazar which is now a days known as *Yakshini Bhawani*, testifies to the fact that this type of primitive religion and worship has continued from the very early period. Though originated from the cult of Mother Goddess and *Pashupati* of the Indus valley civilization, it had genesis in the eastern India, particularly the Vindhyan or Kaimur region of the tribal belt. (Singh, 1976:172-173) Originally, it was in form of primitive religion whose influence or genesis one can trace out to the forms triangle, circle etc. observation the rock paintings of the area.

The six circles and other features of *yantra* of the *tantra*, no doubt resemble much more with the prehistoric triangles, circles and swastika symbols. Moreover, the region Kaimur yields all these features outside and inside of house on wall (Fig. 1). In addition, among the backward people *Matsya*, *Maans*, *Madya*, *Mudra* and *Mithuna* were common and *Mithunas* scenes have been found in certain rock paintings of Kathotia, Madhya Pradesh. (Neumayer, 1983:94) No one can easily make a distinction between the religion, magic, superstitions, sacrifices and oblation of the area being performed by the local living group. It differs from block to block not on a large scale but with slight difference which one can grope only through minute observations. The rituals of '*Gharawa* symbol itself, (Fig. 2 A) is not prevalent of tribal nature but it is also practiced by the Brahmana families of the area in the same manner during engagement of son or daughter and some time for spiritual activities. It has noticed in Maharashtra local tribal (Fig.2 B, C, D) people also.

At the time of *Navaratra* or *Ramnavami* in the month of April one can see sacrifice of goat and sheep at the altar of *Sitala* in each village of the Kaimur region which undoubtedly shows tribal character of religion and its ritual continuity. Locally the people also call it as a *Deswai* or *Saire Mata*, Pigs are usually killed to propitiate her. The deities worshipped in prehistoric time by the forest dwellers appear to resemble the *Yakshini Bhawani* at *Bhaluni*, *Tarachandi* at Sasaram, Takari Devi at Tilauth block of Rohtas, *Bakhari Devi* at Sasaram, *Chandimata* at *Madurana* and *Mundeshwari* at Bhabhua etc. (Fig.3 A, B, C, D) At the time of *Navaratri* female members of the family press our own palm covered with *Haldi* (turmeric) on the wall of their house, outside and inside both. Similarly during the marriage time whole wall of the house outside covered with the plam impressions (Fig. 4 A,B) because it's a believer of the society, that the evil cant effect the new married couple and house will always safe with every bad things. In spite of above the fisher group (*machhuwara*) always put their hand mark on their own boat, (Fig. 5 A,B) keeping this view that 'our boat will support and will provide all facility of the life and keep safe while boating in the river'.

If one has, a close look at the *Kharwar* houses

one finds the plants, animal, human, sun, circle all around (Fig.1) and moon and the stick man concepts, which we find in pre-historic and historic rock art sites (Fig.6 A, B,C,D). The paintings depict an organized catching of animals for domestication. (Fig.6 B) The dancing is seen among the present day tribes of the region. Other symbols seem to be magical or religious. The walls coated with clay covered with white ash also observed in present Kaimur villages known as the *putai*; decorate the house walls with paintings and sketches are showing unique relation with the ancient rock art. There is depiction of palm on the wall of a house in the Diwane Mokwa village. (Fig.3 B) Symbols painted on the same prepared wall closely resemble a rock painting of the Mirzapur shelter.

In *Dugha Hathia* rock shelter there are some couples dancing in groups, (Fig.7) thereby depicting the dance form, which is still traditionally prevalent among the Adivasis of this region and of Jharkhand state. From Dugha Hill in the shelter one animal painting, which has been noticed in the form of terra-cotta toys from Adhaura Block, are very close resemblance of the painting. (Fig.8) Palm *Chhapa* motifs on the wall are made in white colour. They were prepared modern motifs such as flowerpots, name in Devanagari script, swastik, handprint etc, in their creations. The doorjamb and lintels of every house and wall are decorated, so also the water place, which is generally made in the centre of the house wall.

Near Badkigoriya shelter, Bhagwanpur block along the *Suvara* River I have noticed one long high stone which looks like *Menhir* facing towards north having many *tilaka* (Fig. 9 A, B, C, D) over the plain surface. This is locally known as *Bhuinya maei*. *Bhuinya maei* is the presiding non-iconic deity of this area. It used to be a big and heavy stone slab of a rock, smeared with crimson in ghee. She is worshipped on each occasion of the social life like birth of child, marriage time and every festivals of Hindus community under the belief that when pleased she protects the village from all sorts of trouble, calamities and brings prosperity to each family in the every movement of the life. For worshipping the deity all villagers, male and female, young, children and elders come together, perform worship, offer flowers, fruit and sweets and sing devotional songs. Slogans for wishing to the deity are chanted in high pitch. The environment used to be full of joy, enthusiasm, energy and happiness. This is very much similar to the Hazaribagh deity '*Lohsingna*'. Moreover, the difference is that here in Kaimur the ritual practice is continued without any help of priest, whereas in Hazaribagh expert priest performs the worshipping. Interestingly in the absence of priest, his son is eligible for this religious activity (Subhashis Das, The Sacred Menhir). The *Tilak* is Very Common Continue Everywhere in India. Such type of tradition continue in Rajgir hill on one cave known *Indra Gufa*, (Fig.17) where the Lord Buddha discussed with *Indra* about *dharma*.

The painted design with *Kohwara* paintings by the *Adivasi* women today is continued. This tradition has been carried on in the decoration of the house walls with painting executed in the same vivid styles (Fig. 10 A, B, C) and with the same vital symbols, which are familiar with the rock art. I may point out that even in the whole Gangetic plains the tradition is known as *Kohavara* (Where the bride and bridegroom first relax together), and hand (palm) stamping of women usually in red colour, appear on walls or on a piece of coloured cloth. (Sinha, ed., 2000:313-319) Such a continuity of tradition is still dominant in



Figure 1. White painted circles on the mud wall outside the semi-tribal group Bind house, Chand block, Kaimur Dist. Bihar.

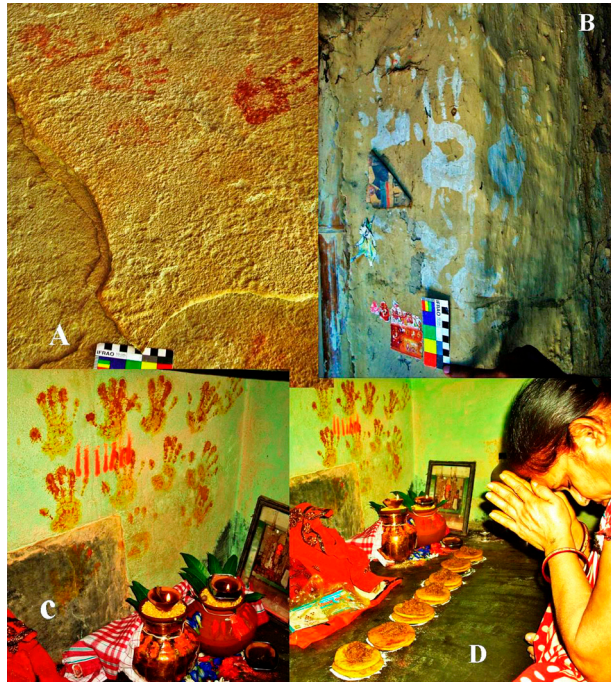


Figure 2. Palm motif/hand print inside cave on the ceiling (A), palm print on the mud wall on the lintel of the Kharwar house Chand block (B), palm stamped of turmeric and tilak on the modern RCC house of Brahmin family inside room on the occasion of Navaratra, Bhabhua block, Kaimur dist. (C,D)



Figure 3. The 'Gharawa' symbol, Bhabhua block, Kaimur dist., Bihar (A) similar motif noticed in Maharashtra local tribal people (B,C,D) (courtesy: K. Pawar).



Figure 4. Palm stamped all around the mud house of Kharwar house, A dhaura block, Kaimur dist.

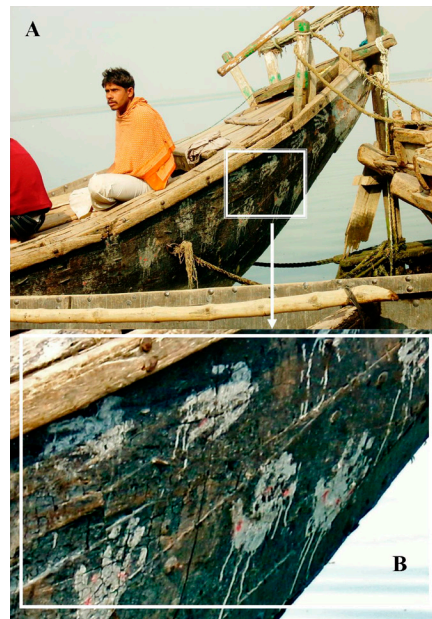


Figure 5. Palm stamped on the boat of Machchuwara, G a n g a river(A,B).



Figure 6. Red painted and white washed wattle and daub house all around (A), red-white painted human, domestic animal, plants on the wall outside (B), white-red stroke from up to down and right to left on the mud wall of the Kahara house, Bhagwanpur block, Kaimur dist. (C,D).

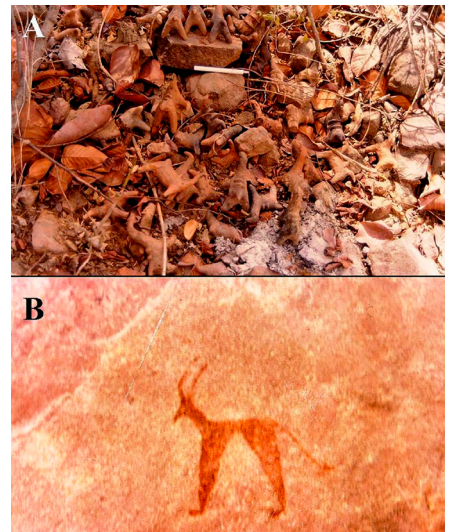


Figure 8. Terracotta toys, Adhaura Block (A) Similar pictograph noticed from Dugha Hill in the shelter (B).

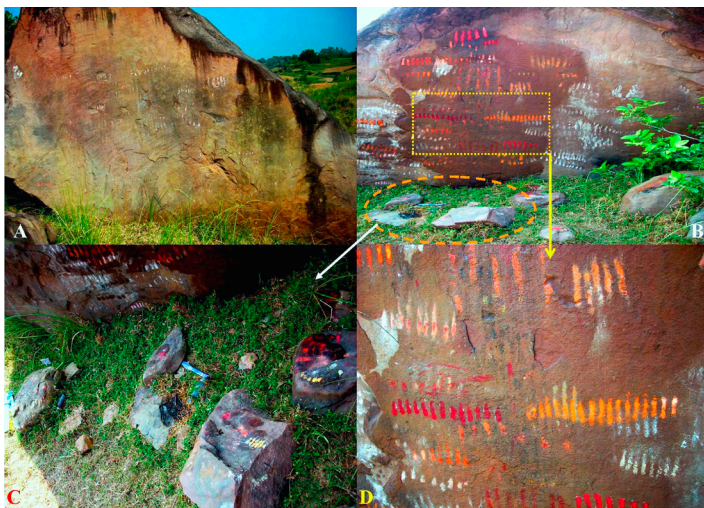


Figure 9. The evidence of ethno rock art near the site on a huge triangular erected stone, (A) traditionally it is known as Bhuini mai having tika tradition (B & D) and ritual practices (C) for the welfare of house members, agriculture, animal and every aspect of society.



Figure 7. Couple dancing scene, Dugha Hathia rock shelter, Bhagwanpur block, Kaimur dist.



Figure 10. Kohwara paintings by the Adivasi women, Adhaura block, Kaimur dist. (A,B,C).

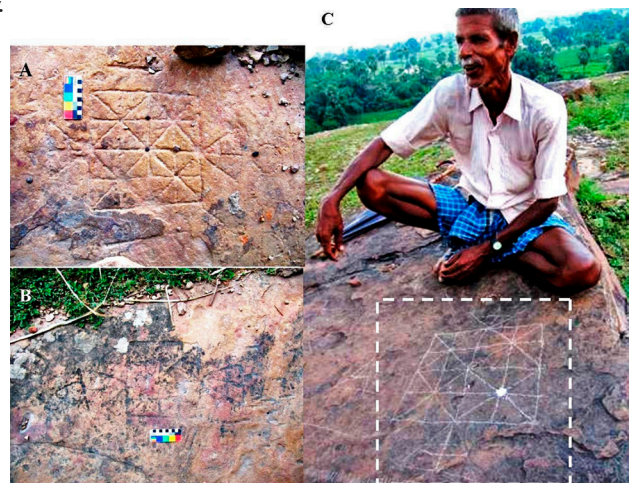


Figure 11. Soraha-gotia/Solaha-gotiya pass time fun petroglyphs on the floor of the shelter and in open sky, Hathia maan (A,B), Similar practice by the Kharawar person, Chhamahiya hill (C), Rohtas Plateau, Kaimur .



every caste and class of society in Kaimur region in the form of Kohwara and Navaratra. These symbols are mainly ritualistic and religious and, in general, are concerned more with the environment and the hard life of the people for sustenance.

The tribal paintings from Jharkhand on wall and floor of the house one often made of white or black paints. Neumayer (Neumayer, 1994-95: 80-84) tries to give these paintings the context that is present in the Vindhyan rock paintings, comparing styles and patterns to show similarities and differences. The *Oraons* and other tribes in the region use similar styles of paintings even today in their depiction of various scenes on their bridal huts, which they had been calling *Khowar*. Hence, due to this nomenclature, the tribal *Khowar* art has been transformed from the ancient past to the present day according to the claim of Bulu Imam and others. The proof of such a claim is still awaited though some tools have been picked up from the floor of the cave. The linkage of the tools on the floor with the period of the paintings is still not clear. Prasad (Prasad, 1992-93:87-88) calls it the *Vratya* tradition.

Another important artistic work during the festival known as *Bhaiya Dooj* is continuing. (Fig. 18 A,B) The festival is actually performed by the females for the healthy wealth of her brother. The myths behind this is, that if brother is healthy, he will protect sister by the evils and all kind of bad things, which is in society. The group of women performing this festival always together; shows how the festivals are the best way of unity through these types of religious activities. Now a days the *Bhaiya dooj* is performed by the tribal, semi-tribal and even in plain area by every group and class of society. The paintings cannot be completed without the plant juice and rice powder paste mix with *ghee*. The whole painting will cover an area about 2 square feet. Within a boundary the performers are painting Sun, Moon, domestic animal, plant, flower, rooms etc. Actually the meaning behind this "Hey *Bhaiya Dooj Maiya (Devi) as Sun, Moon, and every natural things are surviving in the earth from the beginning of this human kind, As same keep my brother safe.*"

In spite of these during exploration, I have noticed some animals with their painted horns with the market available paints. Bulls and cows are painted generally with *haldi* especially during the local festivals known as *Bhuinya Baba*. The painting on horn is reflection of a feeling of gaiety, prosperity and a life full of energy, joy, colours and happiness. In India cattle are worshipped because they are an integral part of the life of the people and they form the main source of their economy, wealth and prosperity. If the animals fall ill they are properly treated in traditional ways and sometimes-burning treatment in which the affected portion of the body is burnt with hot iron object is also given when bones are broken or displaced.

Ethno rock art study of regional games (Pastime fun)¹

Fun is a type of meditation. At least some rock

art people found time for the same types of entertainment that people generally enjoy today. During the course of exploration in Rohtas plateau of Kaimur region, I have documented some time pass fun, game.

The games and amusements can be divided in to two major types: (1) Games and amusement in pictograph form, and (2) Games and amusement in petroglyph form.

But in detail it should be further divide into two way, that is: a) Games and amusement with the help of other articles, and b) Games and amusement without any article.

My best evidence for this comes almost entirely from this study area such as *Hathia Maan*, *Golka Maan* of Sasaram block, some *Adhaura* block sites and *Basanha* of Chand Block. Here many separate petroglyphs and pictographs decorated with unmistakable representations of pastime fun of human acts. In the way of Ethno rock art study, what I have noticed is given below:

I. **Soraha-gotia/Solaha-gotiya**, (playing with sixteen play discs or sticks): There is an engraved big square sub divided into 16 sub squares with each having four sub squares. (Fig.11 A, B, C) In the centre of two sides, meant for two contestants, there is a projection capped by a circle. Each contestant plays with, five dices with the wining target of either entry with five dices into the other's triangle or removing the others dices through regulated moves and keep it in the circle of his side. The contestants with maximum numbers of dices of the above process are declared a winner. The same pattern (Fig.12 A, B, C) in the form of pictograph and petroglyphs I have noticed in the Rohtas plateau of Kaimur region.

II. **Gilahariya Katava**, (Expressed with tally mark symbols/strokes): In this game the two contesting shepherded have the target of making a series of parallel short lines on some say 10, hidden parts of the rock surface. (Fig.13 A, B) Thereafter the contestants try to trace the other's marking and make a crossing line over it. The contestants who first traces the other's marks became a winner and puts as many thrashes on the loser's back as the number of lines mistakenly left by the other which making the cross line. Many distinctive marks are noticed in the Kaimur region. Similar type of marks have also been observed from Karnataka, which is also very enigmatic (Murugeshi, ed., 2010-11:142-143) and also from megalithic site, Nelladichanpara, where on the bed rock there are engravings of marks like tally. (Kurian, ed., 2010-11:82).

III. **Bagh Bakariya**, (rival of tiger and goat): This game (Fig.14 A, B) consists of one dice named as "*Bagh*" (the tiger in hindi language known as *Bagh*) under one contestant and five other dices named as "*Bakari*" (the goat in hindi language known as *Bakari*) under the opposite contestant. Through regulated moves the *Bagh* moves ahead to eat *Bakari* and the five *Bakari* moves ahead either escaping to became victims if the *Bagh* or to block the movement of *Bagh*. The victory is declared if either the *Bagh's* movement is blocked or the *Bagh* eats away the five *Bakaries*.

IV. **Chaubis gotia**, (Play with 24 discs or sticks): There is a square in the canters with four rectangular projections on each arm, each projection with a number of small squares. (Fig.15) The game is played with six

¹ Presented a power point presentation on "Depiction of Games in rock art (Pastime fun): An ethno-rock art interpretation" in National Seminar organized by the Department of Culture, Government of Chhattisgarhi, Raipur (16th to 18th January 2012).

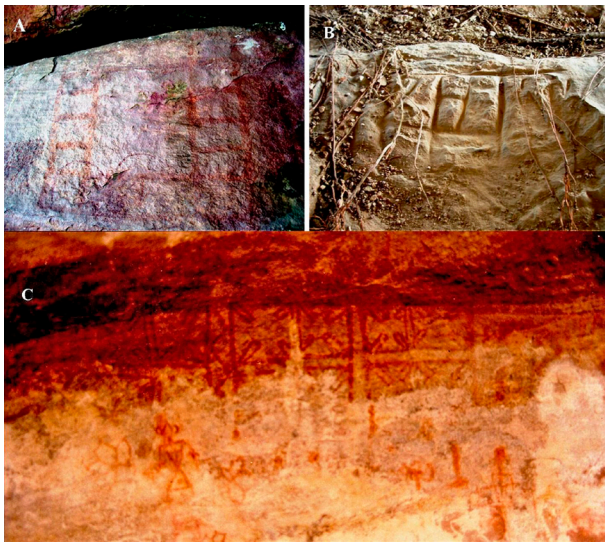


Figure 12. Pictographs of Similar Saraha-gotia on wall of the cave from, Dewane Mokawa, Chand Block (A), Petroglyph of same on the floor of the shelter, Badaki Goriya, Bhagwanpur Block (B), Pictograph of same on wall of the shelter, Badap, Adhaura Block (C), Rohtas and Kaimur.



Figure 13. Gilahariya Katava in practice by the Kharwar man, Sasaram block, Rohtas dist., (A) Pictograph of same on the wall of the cave, Chhaya Hill, Adhaura Block (B).

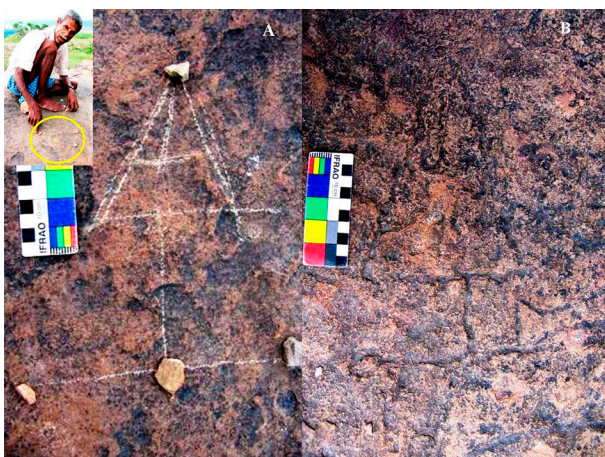


Figure 14. Bagh Bakaria time pass fun playing by the Kharwar man, Sasaram block, Rohtas dist. (A) Similar petroglyphs, Golka maan, Rohtas Plateau, Sasaram block, Rahtas dist. (B).

dices in each projection making the total number of dices twenty-four (chambers) which gives name to the game. To win, the dices on each of the four sides are to be moved into the central well through regulated moves. Primitive thought of chess *Chaubis gotia* is very much resemble with the *Chaupad* game.

V. **Tarawa khela**, (Fun with star & discs): there is a stellate engraving with dices put at the tip of all arms of the star as well as at each crossing of the arms in the middle spore. A little away on one side another dice is put which is striker for the game. The contestant hits the striker to propel the dices out of the stellar space. The striking process is rotated among the contestants, generally two. (Fig.16 A, B) In Odisha this game is known as *Tara Bagari*. This type of game have been noticed in petroglyph form only, which is in few nos. All this petroglyph are found on the floor of the cave and shelter or outside the cave on the bed rock only. The all above same pattern in the form of petroglyphs and pictograph I have noticed in the Rohtas plateau of Kaimur region.

VI. **Ghughuaa mamma**, (Fun with child): This is game between child and guardian, who may be mother, father, elder sister, elder brother or any relative or friends. In this way, the child put on knee in lying position and shaking up and down. In this act child feel happy and the guardian, sing a song "*Ghughuwa/Ghughuaa mamma*" several time. This game still continues in the villagers and some times we notice it in the city also but in lower and middle class family only, very rare in upper or higher class family. I have noticed these types of drawing from the *Badaki goriya*, shelter no. 1, Bhagwanpur block.



Figure 15. *Chaubis gotia* petroglyphs, Chanchai hill, Rohtas Plateau, Tilauthu block, Rohtas dist., Bihar.

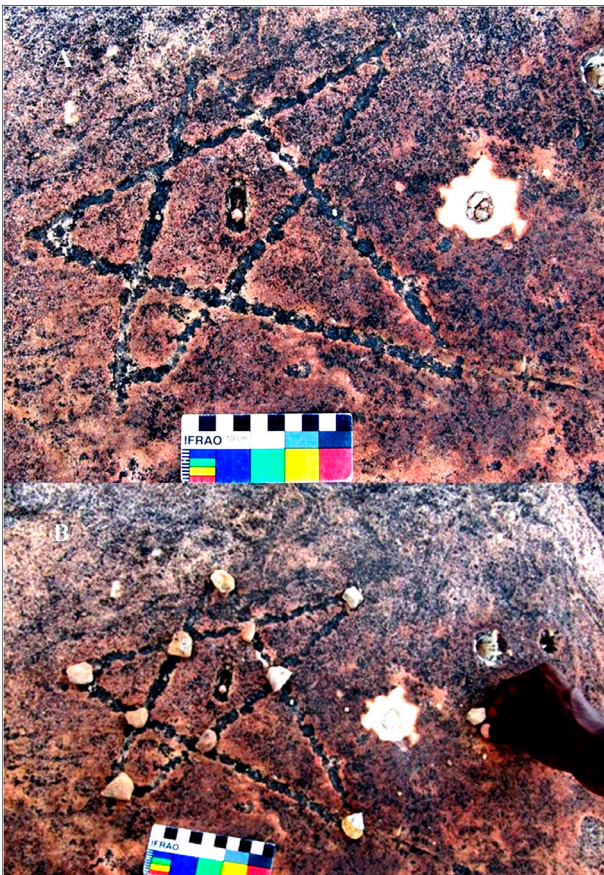


Figure 16. Tarawa khelwa similar to stellate petroglyph, Rohtas block, Rohtas dist., Bihar.



Figure 17. Worship by way of putting Tilak around the cave, Giriyaak hill of Rajgir, Nalnada dist. Bihar (A,B,C).

VII. Terracotta Animal toys: The terracotta animal figurines in the region have been discussed above. There seems to be an animal figure in the rock carvings and painting found in the cave and shelter of Kaimur region, even in Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. It has been also recovered from the excavation at Senuwar, Rohtas District of Bihar (IAR, 1990-91: 103, 1991-92:139-140, 1997-98:170-72) (Fig.8) Further; Rajgir has many terracotta animal figurines being a venerated item dated to the Sixth to third century BC. This continues into the terracotta animal figurines in Bengal. Such figures also exist in Vaishali and Kumrahar in Bihar between 2nd century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. The gradual differentiation of peasantry from an earlier tribal ancestry in the Indian context. (Sharma, 1972-73: 60-63).

During 1883, John Cockburn had mentioned the fact that "the aborigines of the Kymores were in a stone age as late as the 10th century AD" and thus had a very long artistic tradition (Chakravarty, 2003:11). Nowadays, India is one of the rare countries in the world with a continuing ethnological tradition, which has manifested itself in a vivid tribal life, even though, as far as we know, rock art has not been made for a very long time and the memory of its purposes and meanings has long been gone.

The creative traditions of the present pastorals of Kaimur region are reflected in the constructions and decorations of their houses, celebration of festivals, religious functions and affection with their animal stocks, and that too in rock shelters of Kaimur.

Ethno-rock art in Kaimur region can be called a ritual rather than an art form for it is "performed" to thank God or for a wish or a boon to be granted. A comprehensive understanding of this ritual will call for a narrative. The head priest of the community who is called "Baba", is summoned when a problem occurs in a family. The problems are narrated to the Baba "who offers solutions, which almost always involves the painting of mushaharas on the walls of the house. The Baba is considered the reigning deity of the community and his



Figure 18. Bhैया Dooj motif, (A,B) Bhabhua block, Kaimur dist., Bihar.



presence is considered the solution of all problems.

In the case of archaeological/rock art research, ethnographic study is just one of a number of possible sources for generating ideas for the explanation of material evidence for past behavioral systems. In some cases, detailed ethnographic information on local group ideology and beliefs has enabled finely resolved explanations for the content and structural properties of rock art assemblages to be advanced and tested. In other cases, the lack of ethnographic context or historical continuity means that explanations, which may draw from a variety of sources, including the general ethnographic literature, are necessarily more coarse-grained.

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