

## RESEARCH PAPER

# Ethnic roots of cultural tradition illustrated in Kaimur rock art

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*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 discrepancy between local ethnic activities and the rock art of by-gone days which may be due to either a remarkable shift in social behaviors during long period span or to the relative seclusion of the developing society from 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. In this paper the author has attempted to link between ancient rock art living pattern and the art and culture of modern local group especially the tribe and semi tribes residing in the hill, foot hill and 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: 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 long (Ghosh, 1989: 279).

Ethno archaeology is the ethnographic study of living communities by selectively looking at the archaeologically recoverable material culture. Ethnoarchaeologists carry out a kind of ethnography to examine and document the relationships between human behavior and the resultant patterns of artifacts. Ethno rock art, similarly as ethno archaeological study aids archaeologists 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 archaeologists 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 anthro-

logical research to archaeological investigations. This is due to the lack of emphasis by both archaeologists 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? (Trihuwan, 2003: 72) During the study of rock art of Kaimur region it was observed that many themes are in conformity with the ethnic traditions prevalent in the region. This prompted the author to study in depth whether the origin of rock art is rooted in the ethnic tradition or inspired by it. The result was very encouraging. Thus a need was felt to coin a new term to those aspects of rock art which are connected to ethnic tradition to distinguish, it from rest of the rock art themes and thus "ETHNO ROCK ART" was propounded by author as the most appropriate new term.

Prof. Malik in an article (Paper presented on the occasion of International Rock Art Conference held in Nov. 2012 at New Delhi organized by IGNSA) 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'.

## Background of ethno rock art studies

Study of ethno rock art started during 1870s, by Bleek and Lloyd. They had noticed the continuity of rock art 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) magic and supernatural power play a prominent role in most of their narratives.

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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 communities 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). 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: 5–52). Even in the Patesar hill of Kaimur region it is belief among the local villagers that, “*There was a Jogi, he was very talented and educated man, he was there with his own family. A one day he murdered his all-family members and draws the pictographs on the wall and ceiling of shelter and cave to their bloods*”. The villagers are still wants to know that why and how that Jogi murdered his family and what he has written on the shelter? According to them “*these are not only figurative and iconic form whereas these are mysterious script which is very difficult to decipher.*” In the same region the shelter full of cup marks in various sizes on the ceiling and wall. This is believes of the local people that “*these are done by that Jogi, who killed his family and draw the pictographs in these shelters. The small one are prepared by pushing his thumb, semi bigger cup mark made by pushing his elbow and the bigger one are developed by pressing his head on the rock surface*”.

The best examples of the recent ethno rock art study is that of Dr. Sadashib Pradhan in the south of Odisha, who combined 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* (a festival celebrated all over the country to strengthen the bond between brothers and sisters), *Nag Panchami* (a ritual of snake worship generally celebrated during July-August), *Holi* (the festival of colours celebrated on the full moon day in the month of Phalgun which is the month of March as per the Gregorian calendar), *Deepawali* (popularly known as the “festival of lights” and is one of the most important festivals of the year), *Kartik Ekadasi* (Kartik Ekadasi is the Ekadashi that falls during the waxing phase of moon in Kartik Month (Women observe a fast, eating once a day throughout the month of Kartik-October to November) *Nava Ratra* (Also known as Dasehara, in Hinduism, a 9-day festival followed on the 10th day by the dasehra celebration. Dasehra is associated with the victory of Rama over Ravana, acted out in a pageant climaxed by the burn-

ing of effigies of demons), *Navami Ka thapa* (the process of palm impression on the wall during Navaratri festival), *Marriage thapa* (the process of palm impression on the wall during marriage ceremonies). This process is called *lipna*. Then the painters proceed to do their work mixed with various colour tones, different designs depending on the different regions of India. (Sankrityananda, *edi* 1999: 5–8) Some time these are very similar to *Godana* practice, which is all the more similar with the Rock art. The author is of the opinion that in all over India the pastoral people did mostly the artwork in the shelter and cave. 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 Tradition and ethno archaeological study**

Until recently, the role of art in ethnographic context has not been seen as an essential prerequisite for the interpretation of rock art. For the first time in world context, few 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.

Major problems in the study of rock art are stated below:

- 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 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 the ancient western boundary of Magadha Empire known as *Karushadesha* (Law, 1967: 276–268). The modern day Chhotanagpur and Santhal region was earlier known as Atavika Kingdom which was under the political boundary of Karushadesha.

The people of this region especially of the Adhaura, Nauhatta and Tilauthu block are still living in 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 sale fire wood in the local markets such as Chenari, Bhagwanpur, Bhabhua, Adhaura, Sasaram and Nauhatta blocks. The distance of the above cited markets are from 10 to 25 kms from their settlements. From the money thus gained,

they purchase the essential commodities such as cloth, oil, food, rice etc. The *Mushaharas*, *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. Ansari (1999–2000: 142–150) has explained certain specific features of hunter-gatherers of the past using the cultural practices of the Musahars or rat-eaters, of Uttar Pradesh. It was claimed by Ansari 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 *Mushaharas*, *Kahars* and *Harijans* of this region is similar to that of the *Cheros* and *Kharwars* of Rohtas, who still subsist on the products of the forest and lead a migratory life.

Most of the daily activities 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. Houses are made of locally available stone with mud mortar and some dry masonry used in the boundary wall for keeping animals and drying and processing of the agricultural yields. In all the villages, a thin paste of cow dung/ buffalo dung mixed with clay is applied in the courtyard, floors and walls of the houses. This cow dung paste keeps 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 and white colours are used. These pigments are easily available in the market as well as prepared 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 still prevalent 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's 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 do the paintings. 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 *Mushahara* society, women carry out all domestic work and taking care of 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 similarity 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 on the wall and ceilings of the rock shelter and cave, 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. There are no village 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 at present is 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 its genesis in the eastern India, particularly the Vindhyan or Kaimur region of the tribal belt. (Singh, 1976: 172–73).

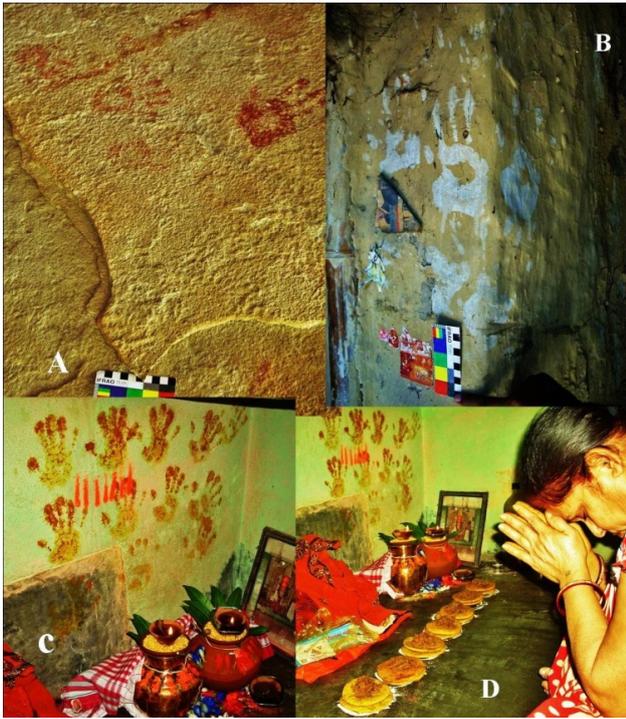
The six circles and other features of yantra (*Yantra* is the Sanskrit word for "instrument" or "machine". Much like the word "instrument" itself, it can stand for symbols, processes, automata, machinery or anything that has structure and organization, depending on context) and *tantra* (The word *tantra* is derived from the combination of two words "tattva" and "mantra". "Tattva" means the science of cosmic principles, while "mantra" refers to the science of mystic sound and vibrations. *Tantra* therefore is the application of cosmic sciences with a view to attain spiritual ascendancy) is believed to have a special spiritual power and the symbols 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 in tribal practice 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 been noticed among the local tribe in Maharashtra also. (fig. 2 B, C, D).



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



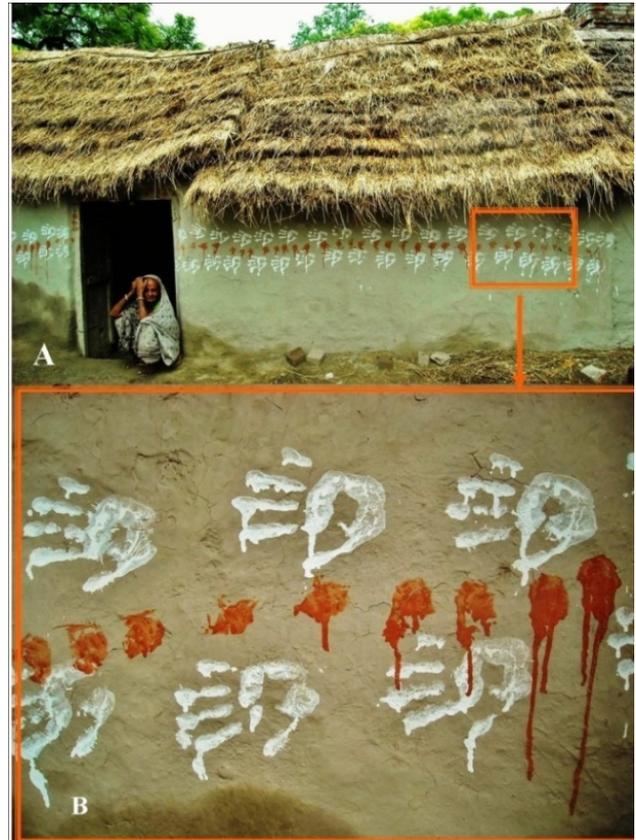
**Figure 2:** The '*Gharawa*' symbol, Bhabhua block, Kaimur dist., Bihar (A) similar motif noticed in Maharashtra local tribal people (B, C, D) (courtesy: K. Pawar)



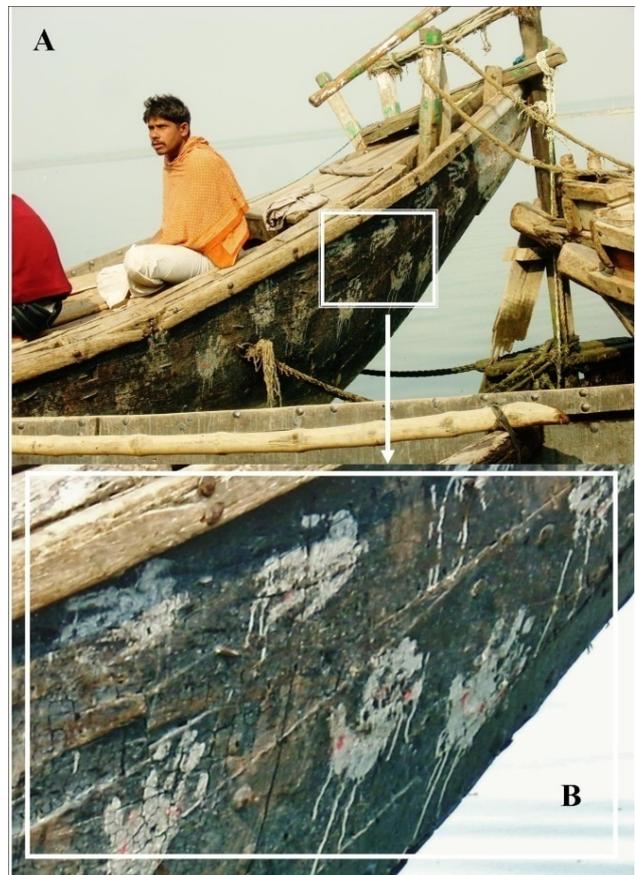
**Figure 3:** Palm motif/hand print inside cave on the ceiling (A), palm print on the mud wall on the lintel of the *Kharwar* house Chand block (B), palm stamped of turmeric and *tilak* on the modern RCC house of Brahmin family inside room on the occasion of *Navaratra*, Bhabua block, Kaimur dist. (C, D)

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. Locally the people also call it as a *Deswai* or *Saire Mata*, Pigs are usually killed to propitiate her. All these practices are indigenous which is continuing for generations. The deities worshipped in prehistoric time by the forest dwellers appear to resemble the *Yakshini Bhawani* at *Bhaluni*, *Tarachandi* at Sasaram, *Takari Devi* at Tilauthu 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 apply *Haldi* on their palm and then leave its impression (turmeric) on both the inner and outer wall of their house, . Similarly during marriage ceremonies, outer wall of the house is covered with palm impressions (fig. 4 A, B). These palm impressions are believed to safeguard the newly married couple as well as the house from any evil effects. The same belief is also seen among the fishermen (*machhuwara*) who always put their palm impression on their own boat, (fig. 5 A, B) which will then be bestowed with prosperity, abundance and safety while sailing.

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



**Figure 4:** Palm stamped all around the mud house of *Kharwar* house, Adhaura block, Kaimur dist.



**Figure 5:** Palm stamped on the boat of *Machhuwara*, Ganga 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)

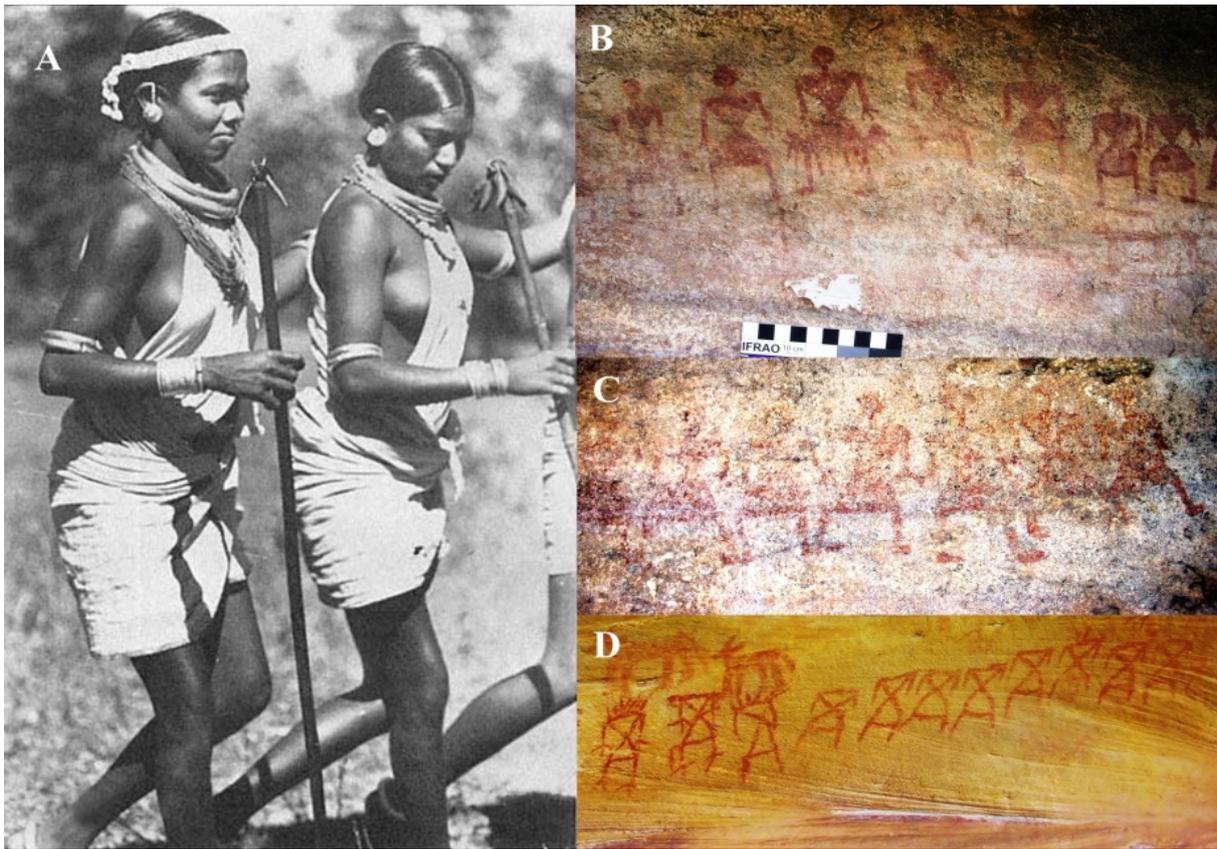
be magical or religious. In present day Kaimur villages, the house walls are coated with clay and then applied with white ash and is locally called *putai*; decorated paintings and sketches on the house walls are showing unique relation with the ancient rock art. There is depiction of palm on the wall 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 are modern motifs such as flowerpots, name in Devanagari script, swastik, handprint etc. The doorjamb and lintels of every house and wall are decorated, so also the water place, which is generally constructed in the centre of the house.

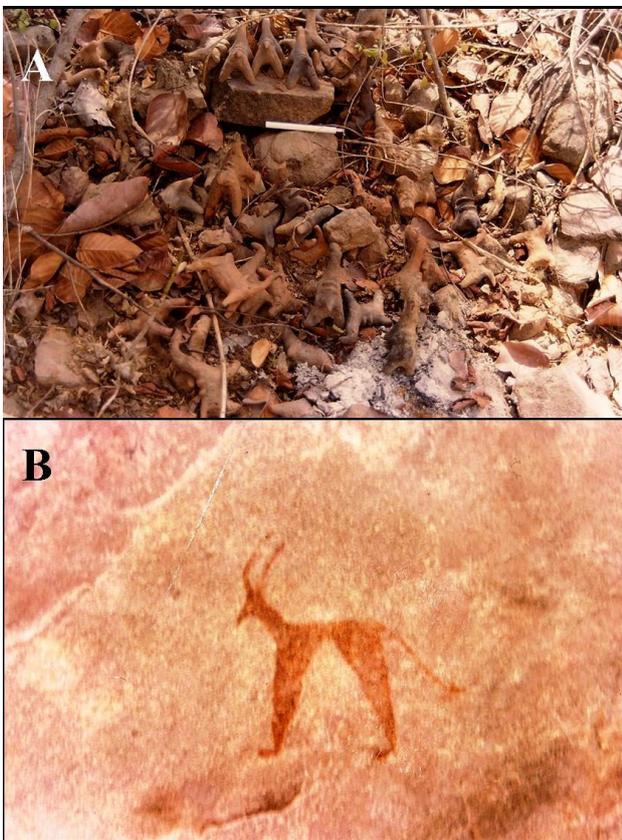
Near Badkigoriya shelter in Bhagwanpur block along the *Suwara* River the author noticed one long high stone which looks like *Menhir* facing towards north having many *tilaka* (fig. 9 A, B, C, D) over the plain surface. This is locally known as *Bhuinya maei*. *Bhuinya maei* is the presid-

ing non-iconic deity of this area. It used to be a big and heavy stone slab of a rock, smeared with crimson in ghee (clarified butter). She is worshipped on each occasion of the social life, like birth of child, marriage occasion and every festivals of Hindu community. The associated belief is that when pleased the goddess protects the village from all sorts of trouble, calamities and brings prosperity to each family. The deity is being worshipped by all members of the village coming together, offering flowers, fruit and sweets and singing devotional songs. Chantings are done in high pitch in an environment full of joy, enthusiasm, energy and happiness. This is very much similar to the Hazaribagh deity '*Lohsingna*'. However, the difference is that here in Kaimur the ritual is practiced by any individual of the village, whereas in Hazaribagh expert priest performs the worshipping. Interestingly in the absence of priest, his son is eligible for this religious activity ([http://www.Megalithindia.in/2011\\_08\\_26\\_Archive.html](http://www.Megalithindia.in/2011_08_26_Archive.html)). The *Tilak* is very common and is practiced everywhere in India. Such type of tradition continue in Rajgir hill in one cave known as *Indra Gufa*, (fig. 10) where Lord Buddha is believed to have discussion with *Indra* about *dharma*.

The painted design with **Kohwara paintings** are being practiced by the *Adivasi* women even today. This tradition has been carried on in the decoration of the house walls with painting executed in the same vivid styles



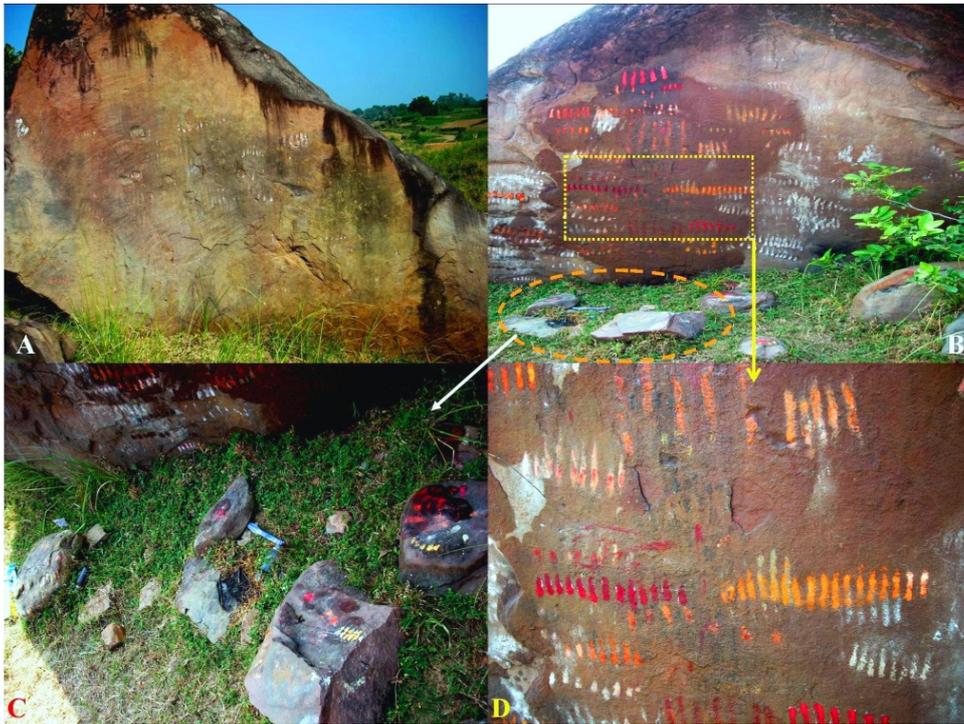
**Figure 7:** Dancing tribal women, Adhaura (Source: Fürer-Haimendorf, Christoph, 1982, *Tribes of India: The Struggle for Survival*, Berkeley, University of California Press) (A), Pictographs of dancing movement, Ghamha Hill (B) Pictographs of human chain holding hands, Jhapia Hill (C), Stick like human pictographs in a row, Ghurahupur, Chand Block



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

(fig. 11 A, B, C) and with the same vital symbols, which are familiar with the rock art as has been documented from the Ghurahupur hill of the Chand Block, Bihar. The red painted square with geometric lines and dots as we are getting from the *Kohaaara* art have noticed on the wall. The author wants to point out that even in the whole Gangetic plain 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, *edi* 2000: 313–319). Such a continuity of tradition is still dominant in 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 the wall and floor of the house are often made of white or black paints. Neumayer (Neumayer, 1994–95: 80–84) had associated these paintings with 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 call *Khovar*. Hence, due to this nomenclature, the tribal *Khovar* 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.



**Figure 9:** 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 10:** Worship by way of putting *Tilak* around the cave, Giriyaq hill of Rajgir, Nalnada dist. Bihar (A, B, C)



**Figure 11:** Kohwara paintings by the Adivasi women, Adhaura block, Kaimur dist. (A, B, C)

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. 12 A, B) The festival is actually performed by the females for the healthy wealth of her brother. The myths behind this are, that if brother is healthy, he will protect sister from the evils and all kind of bad things, which is in society. In present day context 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 paint Sun, Moon, domestic animal, plant, flower, rooms etc. Actually the meaning behind this.

In spite of these during exploration, the author has noticed some animals with painted horns with paints available in the market. Bulls and cows are painted gener-



**Figure 12:** *Bhैया Dooj* motif, (A, B) Bhabhua block, Kaimur dist., Bihar

ally 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.

### Ethno rock art study of regional games (Pastime fun)\*

Funs, including the ancient games played by ethnic groups as referred, involve a high degree of concentration in respect of the norms and rules for playing forward the games. Probably in the prehistoric time people staying in caves also indulged in fun activity during leisure time as is evidenced in the rock arts of Kaimur region of Rohtas Plateau. During the course of exploration in Rohtas plateau of Kaimur region, the author documented some past time fun activity.

The games and amusements can be divided into two major types.

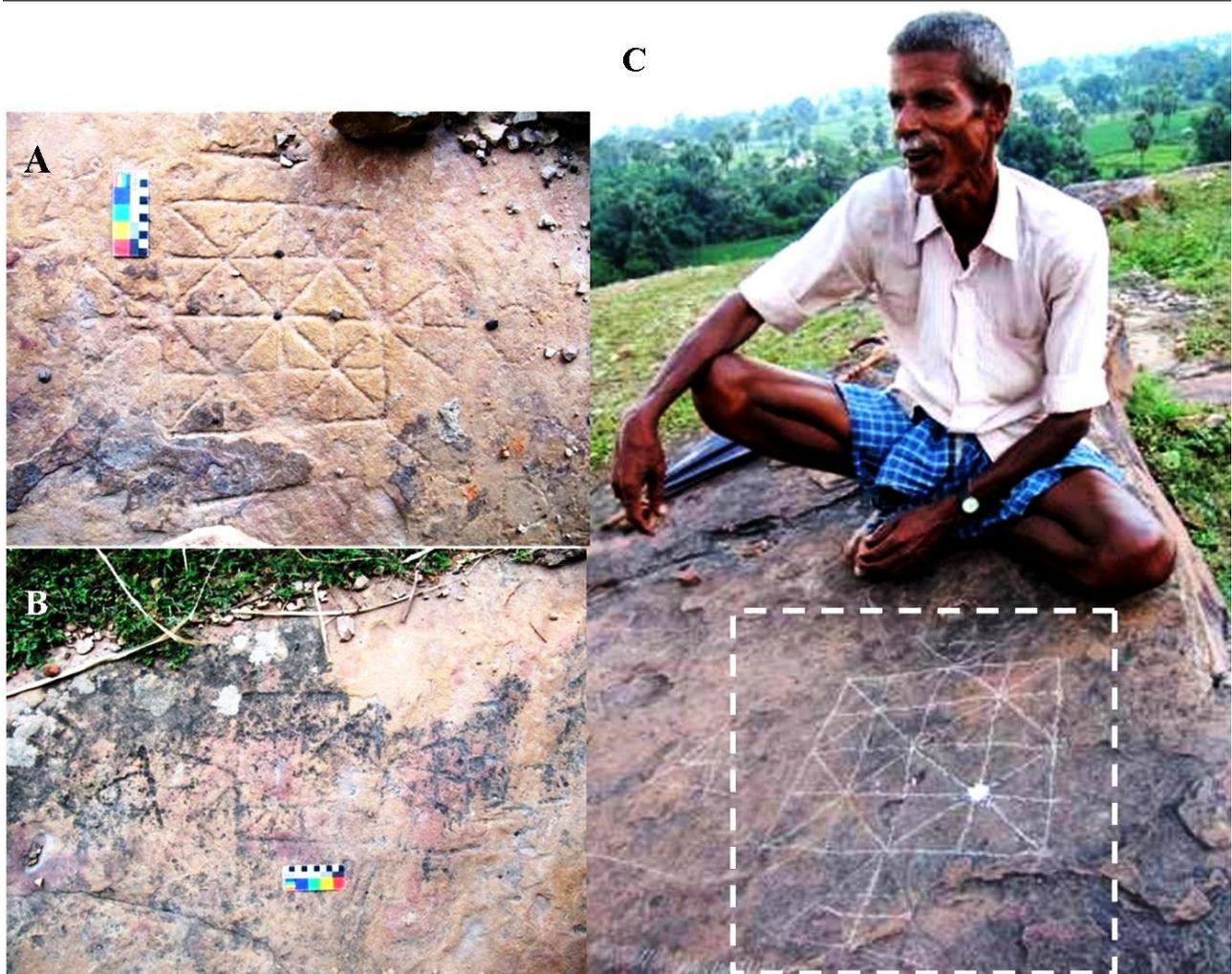
- (1) pictograph form and
- (2) petroglyph form.

But in detail it should be further divide into two ways, that is:

- a) Game with the help of articles, and
- b) Game without any article.

The evidence for this comes almost entirely from this study area such as *Hathia Maan*, *Golka Maan* of Sasaram block, few *Adhaura* block sites and *Basanha* of Chand Block. Here many separate petroglyphs and pictographs decorated with unmistakable representations of pastime fun as human activity. In the way of Ethno rock art study, what the author has 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. 13 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 winning 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. 14 A, B, C**) is noticed in the form of pictograph and petroglyphs in the Rohtas plateau of Kaimur region.
- II. ***Gilahariya Katava***, (Expressed with tally mark symbols/strokes): In this game the two contest-



**Figure 13:** 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



**Figure 14:** 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

ing shepherds have the target of making a series of parallel short lines on some say 10, hidden parts of the rock surface. (fig. 15 A, B) Thereafter the contestants try to trace the other's marking and make a crossing line over it. The contestant who first traces the other's marks becomes the 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, *edi*, 2010–11: 142–143) and also from megalithic site, Nelladichanpara, where on the bed rock there are engravings of marks like tally. (Kurian, *edi*, 2010–11: 82)

- III. **Bagh Bakariya**, (rival of tiger and goat): This game (fig. 16 A, B) consists of one dice named as “*Bagh*” (tiger) under one contestant and five other dices named as “*Bakari*” (the goat) under the

opposite contestant. Through regulated moves the *Bagh* moves ahead to eat *Bakari* and the five *Bakari* moves ahead either to escape or to become victims of 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 centre with four rectangular projections on each arm, each projection with a number of small squares. (fig. 17). The game is played with six 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 deep circle through regulated moves. Primitive form of chess *Chaubis gotia* 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



**Figure 15:** *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), Kaimur dist., Bihar



**Figure 16:** *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)



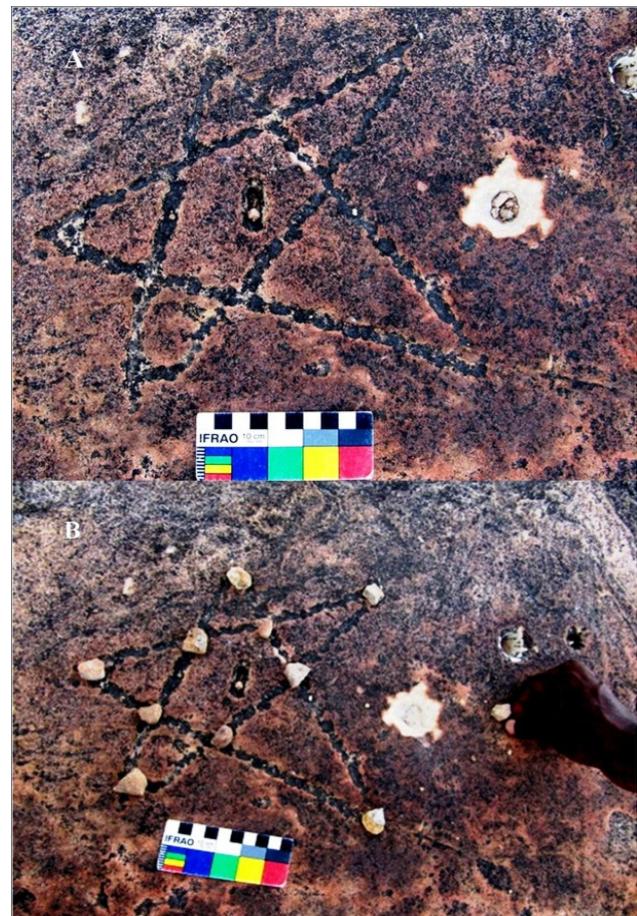
**Figure 17:** *Chaubis gotia* petroglyphs, Chanchai hill, Rohtas Plateau, Tilauthu block, Rohtas dist., Bihar

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. 18 A, B) In Odisha this game is known as *Tara Bagari*. These types of games 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 game, the child put on knee in lying position and shaking up and down (fig. 19). In this act child feel happy and the guardian, sing a song "*Ghughuwa/Ghughuua mamma*" several times. This game still continues in the villagers and sometimes we notice it in the city also but in lower and middle class family only, very rare in upper or higher class family. The author has noticed these types of drawing from the *Badaki goriya*, shelter no. I, Bhagwanpur block.
- 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, (fig. 8) 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) 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 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. to 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D. This type of terracotta we are getting right from prehistoric times (as from senuwar) to historical period even today. This gradual differentiation is noticed everywhere 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 ethnic tradition, which has manifested itself in a vivid tribal life. The creative traditions of the present pastoral community 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 have similarities with the rock art of Kaimur region.



**Figure 18:** *Tarawa khelwa* similar to stellate petroglyph, Rohtas block, Rohtas dist., Bihar



**Figure 19:** *Ghughuaa mamma* scene, *Dugha Hathia* rock shelter, Bhagwanpur block, Kaimur dist. Bihar

### Conclusion

Ethno-rock art in Kaimur region can be considered more as a ritualistic expression rather than simply artistic expression as these are mostly associated with rituals. . 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 usually involves the painting of mushaharas on the walls of the house. The *Baba* is considered the reigning deity of the community and his presence is considered the solution of all problems. Since there are a lot of similarities between the present day rock art of Kaimur region with their prehistoric counterparts found in the caves of the same region, it could be presumed that the prehistoric rock art had similar ritualistic functions and importance associated with it. This presumption is based on the holistic study of present tribes, semi-tribes groups and the people those are residing on the plain area along with the Prehistoric Rock Art parallels found in the same region.

### Acknowledgment

I am deeply thankful to Dr. D.N. Sinha for guidance in the preparation of this paper and also scholars research articles and books. In addition, I sincerely like to thank

Mr. Amitabh Kr. Tiwary and the editors of the publication who take keen interest in the publication of this article.

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**How to cite this article:** Tiwary, S 2013 Ethnic roots of cultural tradition illustrated in Kaimur rock art. *Ancient Asia*, 4: 2, pp. 1–16, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/aa.12308>

**Published:** 13 November 2013

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