

A Public Dialogue cum Awareness Workshop At Robertsganj, Uttar Pradesh (16 April, 2015)





INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
NEW DELHI



A meeting was conducted at the District Magistrate office, Sonbhadra for awareness of the common people regarding rock art. The meeting was inaugurated with lighting of the lamp and attended by the local member of the legislative assembly Ghoraval, Sh. Ramesh Chandra Dubey as well as the Chief Development Officer Mr. Mahendra Singh (the DM was away due to some exigency). Among the interdisciplinary team the following were present: Dr. BL Malla and Mr. Jigmet Namgyal from IGNCA, New Delhi; Prof. Sunil Bajpai and Dr. CM Nautiyal, BSIP, Lucknow; Prof. DP Tewari & Prof. KK Agarwal, University of Lucknow; Dr. Prabhakar Upadhyay, BHU, Varanasi; Dr. A Misra, Fisheries Dept. (Sonbhadra); Dr. JK Singh, Sonbhadra; Mr. Angad Singh, Research scholar, University of Lucknow. In addition to the expert members of the team, the meeting was attended by local influential citizens and rock art enthusiasts like Raja Badahar, Dr. Arjun Das Kesari, Dr. JK Singh, and Panchayat officials, village *pradhans*, government staffs, common people and the media persons.





Members and participants at the Rock Art awareness campaign at Robertsganj

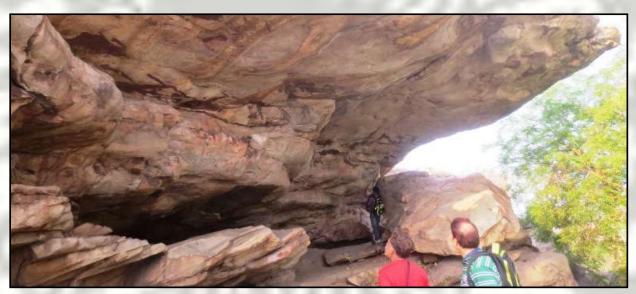
Dr. BL Malla, Director of the project from IGNCA explained the significance of the project to the audience and emphasized on the systematic documentation and preservation of the rock art sites of the region. He urged academicians, general public and local administration at large to contribute for its conservation and preservation. The Chief Guest at the awareness campaign, Mr. Dubey assured of all the support from the administration and also mentioned some efforts towards development of the sites. Prof. S Bajpai, Director, BSIP-Lucknow, said that such sites archives our history and should be conserved, mandating their documentation and multi-

disciplinary study. Prof. KK Agarwal from the Centre of Excellence, Geology Dept., University of Lucknow and Dr. Prabhakar Upadhyay, Banaras Hindu University, also stressed on the documentation of rock art sites in the region. A PPT presentation of some of the rock art sites of the region by Prof. DP Tewari, Dept. History & Archaeology, University of Lucknow was well appreciated by the people. Dr. CM Nautiyal, coordinator, also shed light on the objective of the programme and proposed the vote of thanks.

Following the meeting, the team visited the rock art site at Lodhi village in front of the DM's office.







A view of the Rock shelter near DM's office.

The Field documentation of Rock Art sites in the region and Awareness Campaign were widely covered by national and local dailies:







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Scientists to study, document rock art of Sonebhadra

Lucknow (PNS): The valleys of Belan tiver in Sonebhadra and of Son in Sonebhadra and some parts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh are rich archives of the creativity of early men including tribals like Kol and Gonds. This is reflected in the art pieces in many shel-ters and on rocks. However, while ters and on rocks. However, while through proper management and appropriate marketing skills, the Bhimbetaka rock art in Madhya Pradesh has made it to the hallowed gallery of UNESCO heritage, the art in Uttar Pradesh had been craving for attention of the connoisseurs, scientists attention of the connoisseurs, scientists and conservationists. But things have changed of lase. With CM Nautiyal, scientist in charge of the Radiocarbon Dating Lab of Birbal Sahni institute of Palacobotany (BSIP), as coordinator, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (FONCA), New Delhi, has constituted a multi-disciplinary committee which will coordinate and conduct the study of rock art in Uttar Pradesh too.

Nautiyal, who has just returned from the visit to Sonebhadra, told The Pioneer that BSIP scientists would be a part of the team that would study and document the rock art of Sonebhadra.

"We will, in the first phase, be documenting the rock art of because it is vanishing and being vanadalised, and

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umenting the rock art because it is vanishing and being vanadalised, and there are thousands of these rocks which are present in the area. By documenting them, we will at least have a buseline data. After we document them, we will start the process of analysing them, he said.

Nantiyal said considering the emerging potential of numerically dating those sites and analysing the materials used in the art work, far more elaborate and penetrative look was desired for firmer conclusion regarding time.

orate and penetrative look was desired for firmer conclusion regarding time, geographical extent, spread and char-acteristics of the culture. It is also essential to apprise the res-idents of the areas of the academic and cultural importance of these sites to motivate them towards conservation.

Nautiyal said that presence of the green authigenic mineral glaucony and occurrence of marine fossis in the area indicated shallow marine conditions in

indicated shallow marine conditions in the past in that region.

The mineral-availability in the region may have been responsible for the practice of smelting techniques in Vindhyan region as evinced by findings of iron and copper artifacts. Efforts have been made by BHU in collaboration with BSIP to date such sites. By dating charcoal associated with care articharcoal and vegetal materials used for artwork and uranium—containing calcite on rocks or engraving, one may set limits on rock art age," he said.

set limits on rock art age, he said.

The isotope-based K-Ar and ura-nium-lead series-based dating meth-ods have clearly established that Vindhyan series like Semri formed over Vindhyan series like Semii formed over a billion year ago. He stated that Ganga plain and Vindhyan regions were likely to be early homes to early civilization as indicated by evidences of paddy farming in Ganga plain and iron smelting evidences discovered by BHU researchers in the area such as Raipura but we need more numbers for firm conclusions. The studies can help in understanding the spread of civilization in the region.

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The rock art in Sonebhadra is dominated by figures of animals especially deer family though elephants, wild boats, also featured. Funting and dancing were commonly depicted. Unlike most other places, single hunters are depicted. There were also some unusual drawings seen in the local rock art such as half bird-half animal and wondered if it was sign of some extinct animal.

To assess the status and discuss the involvement of community, a discussion was also organised at Deogarh in Sonebhadra on March 14 under the aegis of IGNCA. Several members in the audience took active part in the discussion and clarified doubts by asking questions.

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