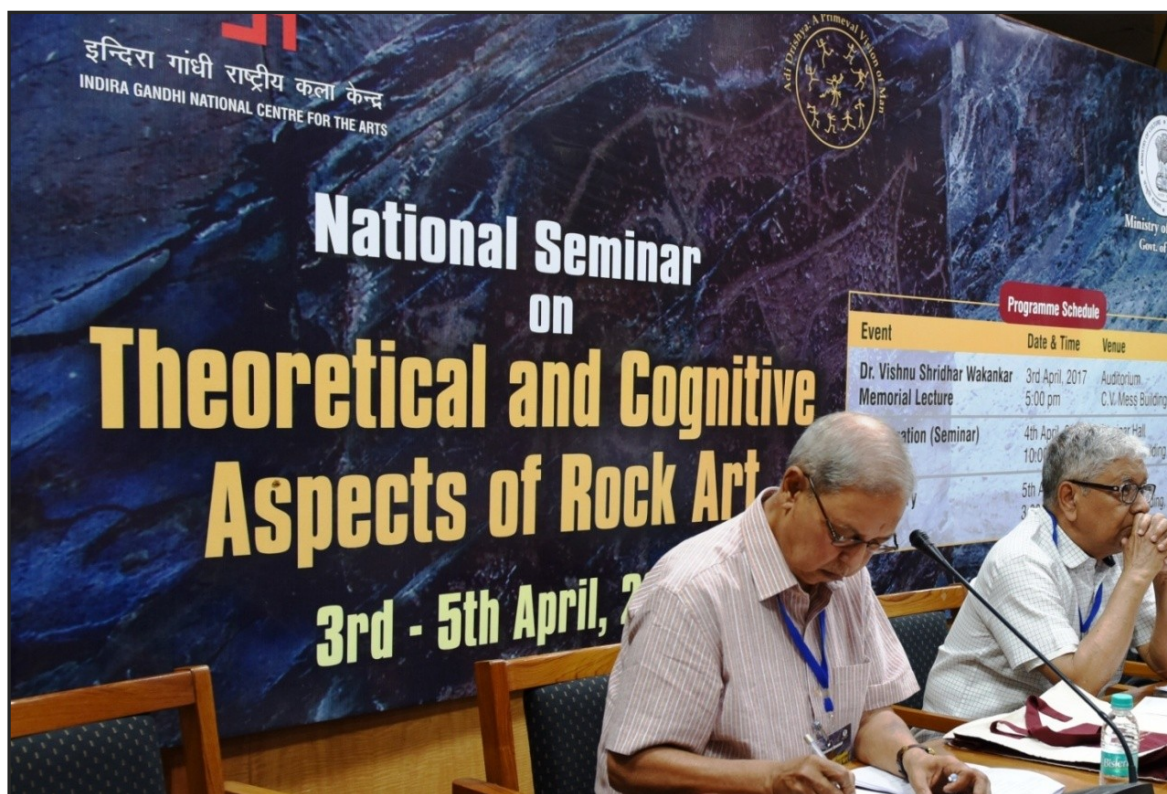




National Seminar
On
Theoretical and Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art
(3rd - 5th April, 2017)

Venue: Conference Room, C.V. Mess, IGNCA, New Delhi

A Report



INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS
New Delhi



Following the inauguration and presentation of 1st Dr. Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar Memorial Lecture on 3rd April, 2017, a national seminar titled '*Theoretical and Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art*' was organized from 04th to 05th April, 2017 at Conference Room, C.V. Mess, Janpath, IGNCA. The seminar was inaugurated by Dr. G. B. Deglurkar, Former President, Deccan College, Pune who was the Chief Guest on the occasion and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNCA was the chairperson on the occasion.



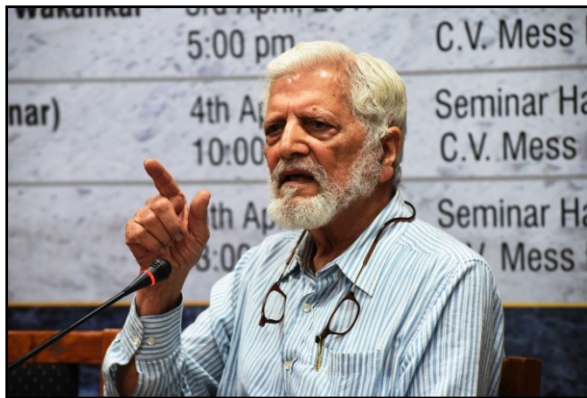
Dr. G. B. Deglurkar and Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi inaugurating the Seminar.

The two days national seminar on '*Theoretical and Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art*' was a huge success in which 20 scholars from various parts of India participated and presented papers on rock art and its allied disciplines. Students from various colleges and institutions from Delhi and other states also participated actively in the seminar along with rock art enthusiasts. During the two days national seminar several papers were presented by different scholars on various aspects of rock art, its survey, research, discovery and documentation.



Release of the Seminar Brochure.

After the inauguration, the 1st session of the day chaired by Sh. B. M. Pande begun and several papers were presented in the session by eminent scholars like Prof. V.H. Sonawane, Dr. S.C. Malik and Dr. Parth Chauhan. The first paper of the day titled '*Explaining Regional Patterns of South Asian Symbolic Behaviour: Global Context*' was presented by Parth R. Chauhan, Asst. Professor, IISER, Mohali. The paper highlighted several issues related to technologies, cultures, world views and associated practices of symbolic behaviour in relation to rock art studies. Prof. V. H. Sonawane in his paper '*Decoding Rock Art*' observed that it is imperative to consider the backdrop of the site, area, region or countries in order to look for a meaningful interpretation of rock art. In '*Re-contextualising Rock Art*' Prof. S. C. Malik emphasized on moving beyond the mechanistic, analytical and evolutionary methods to the direction of intuitive- aesthetic approach for rock art interpretation.



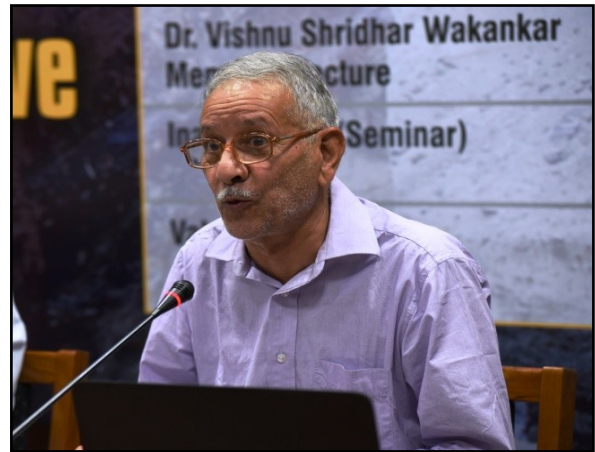
Prof.S.C. Malik (L) and Prof. Sonawane presenting their respective papers.

The afternoon session of the day was chaired by Prof. S. C. Malik. In this session, the Cognition and Rock Art was the major topic and several scholars presented their papers on this subject like; *Cognition: Some Aspects of Symbolism with reference to Rock paintings of Central India* by Maheshwar P. Joshi, *Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art with Special Reference to Mahadeo Hills, Pachmari, Central India* by Ruman Banerjee & Somnath Chakraverty, *Symbols and Material Culture in Cognitive Representation With Reference to Iron Age- Early Historic South India* by V. Selvakumar, *A Behavioural Exercise to Comprehend Rock Art Tradition through Ethno-archaeological Perspective* by Kanti Kumar Pawar, *Some Recent Discoveries of Petroglyphs in the Western Trans-Himalayan Region* by O. C. Handa and *Rajasthan ki Shail Chitrakala* by Murari Lal Sharma.



Participants at the seminar.

Dr. Maheshwar P. Joshi, Historian and Archaeologist in his paper brought to light the significance of symbolism in the rock paintings of Central Himalaya. Dr. V. Selvakumar, Dept. Of Epigraphy and Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur in his paper highlighted the nature of the visual representations and their relationship with art, traditions, identity, material culture and language based on archaeological and textual sources; while understanding of socio-behavioural pattern among the Gond community of central India with emphasis on rock paintings has been the primary focus in the paper presented by Dr. Kanti kumar Pawar, Deccan College, Pune. Dr. O. C. Handa reflected on some of the recent discoveries of rock art sites primarily petroglyphs on boulders in the regions along the Western Himalayan zones of the country.



Dr. Selvakumar (L) and Dr. Maheshwar Joshi presenting their papers.



Dr. Murari Lal Sharma (L) and Dr. O.C. Handa presenting their papers on day one.

The day one's session concluded with *Rajasthan ki Shail Chitrakala* by Dr. Murari Lal Sharma. The paper elaborated on the types of rock art found in Rajasthan, the environment of these rock art sites, colours used for its preparation and techniques applied along with probable chronology of these paintings etc.

The following day's session (05th April, 2017) was more elaborative with presentation of papers by scholars on recent research and discovery of rock art across the country. The morning session was chaired by Dr. O. C. Handa, four papers were presented in this session by Archaeologist, Anthropologist, independent researchers etc. *Tracing Cultural Continuum from Present to Past: Rock Art, Mortuary Rites and Burial Practices in India* by Somnath Chakraverty, *Understanding the Rock Art of North East India: Issues and Context* by Dwipen Bezbaruah, *Continuity of Art through Ages and Some Regional Variations at Gawilgarh Hills, Madhya Pradesh* by Nandini Bhattacharya Sahu and Prabash Sahu and *Animals in Indian Rock Art: An Appraisal for Relative Chronology and Deductive Methodology* by Ruman Banerjee.



Dr. Somnath Chakraverty and Dr. Nandini B. Sahu presenting their respective papers at the seminar.

Dr. Somnath Chakraverty in his paper examined that almost all over India particularly in Peninsular India, rock art has been the manifestation of burial art that developed during megalithic period. Dr. Dwipen Bezbaruah elaborated on key aspects in relation to rock arts of Brahmaputra valley in order to understand the rock art forms of northeast India which is comparatively a recent area of research. Whereas the paper by Dr. Nandini Sahu and Dr. Prabash Sahu highlighted the recent findings of a rock art treasure trove at Gawilgarh Hills and its significant variations in relation to the usual rock art patterns of Central India. The presentation by Ruman Banerjee elucidated on the importance of animals as time markers in Indian context where animals are represented in a multitude of styles and colour compositions.

In all the academic sessions there was an elaborate and fruitful discussion after each presentation.



Dr. Dwipen Bezbaruah and Dr. Ruman Banerjee presenting their papers.

At the end of the 2nd day's session, an open session on Technical Aspects of Rock Art: Meaning and Jurisdiction chaired by Prof. V. H. Sonawane was held at 2.00 pm. Scholars along with students and other observers participated actively in the session discussing on various aspects of rock art and at the end gave their suggestions/ observations and recommendations.

Following were some of the recommendations presented in the session and agreed upon by all the scholars and participants unanimously at the seminar;

1. Seminar/workshops should be held in town/cities near rock art sites. Academic sessions should be followed by a visit to at least one rock art site.
2. Serious and earnest efforts should be made for its preservation in tandem with scientific means and methodologies. It is imperative to spread awareness about the precious heritage of rock art amongst the general public and encourage students and researchers in its study and significance.
3. More and more publications on rock arts should be published in Hindi and other regional languages. Efforts should be made to include Rock art in the syllabus at school, college and University levels in order to create awareness about this precious heritage among the younger generation.
4. Steps to protect rock art sites need to be taken in consultation with various Central and State agencies like Archaeological Survey of India, Forest Departments and other State Govt. agencies.
5. Digital documentation of rock art sites & cultural traditions, views and interpretations of the local people and natives are important. They have to be documented without any delay as we are losing this precious art form rapidly due to both human and natural factors.
6. Impetus to be given to the lesser known facts of Rock Art and its Interpretation to be more emphasized.
7. An online database of Indian rock art is needed (both English and Hindi) and dating of rock arts found across the country needs to be priority.
8. The proceedings of the seminar should be published at the earliest while looking into the importance of the theme of the conference. Earlier hardly any attempt has been made by anyone to discuss the subject 'Theoretical and Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art' in a structured manner.

The Valedictory session was held at 03:00 pm in the Conference Room, C.V. Mess, Janpath, IGNCA, New Delhi. Dr. G. B. Deglurkar was the Chairperson on the occasion and Dr. B. R. Mani, Director General, National Museum, New Delhi delivered the valedictory address. All the session's rapporteurs/chairpersons presented a brief summary of the papers presented by scholars at the seminar.

Dr. B. R. Mani observed that there emerged some issues which need immediate attention, namely; systematic documentation of unexplored as well as existing rock art sites by all means and methods across the country; Conservation/preservation of rock art sites all over the country in consultation/ collaboration with various Central /State Govt. agencies.



Dr. B.R. Mani and Dr. G. B. Deglurkar at the Valedictory Session.

Dr. Mani appreciated the task undertaken by IGNCA for initiating a national multi-disciplinary project for documentation of rock art and its allied subjects state-wise in a standard format. He stressed on the need to explore and document more such rock art sites in every part of the country before this precious heritage vanishes at the hands of natural hazards and human vandalism. While suggesting introduction of rock art as a subject at school and college levels in the country, he emphasized on involving students and scholars in various programmes/initiatives etc. at college and University levels. In his valedictory speech he elaborated upon the *Theoretical and Cognatic Aspects of Rhythmic Figures in Rock Art of India*.

Dr. G. B. Deglurkar, in his address on the occasion highly appreciated the fruitful participation of scholars / experts during the seminar on rock art. He further stressed that such seminars will be very fruitful for researchers on rock art and also in highlighting the rock art treasures of India within the country as well as to the world on a grand scale. Dr. Deglurkar highly appreciated the work undertaken by IGNCA in the field of rock art studies in India.

Concluding the three days national seminar on '*Theoretical and Cognitive Aspects of Rock Art*', Dr. B. L. Malla, Project Director, IGNCA presented the vote of thanks. He thanked all the delegates / participants and other observers for their active participation in the Seminar. Dr. Malla, specially congratulated the organizing committee and his young team for successfully organizing the Seminar.

Glimpses of the National Seminar



Dr. Sachchidanand Joshi, Hon'ble Member Secretary, IGNC during the Inaugural Session.



Shri B. M. Pande chairing the session on day one and Dr. Malla outlining the agenda of Seminar.



A view of the seminar in session.



Scholars and participants at the Seminar.



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