

# **A National Workshop on “Archaeological Anthropology: Demonstration of Exploration and Excavation Techniques” from 20th March to 22nd March 2024**

## **Concept Note**

Central India is the ideal place for archaeological exploration because of its richness of culture and tradition ever since its historical and prehistorical times. From magnificent forts to majestic palaces and palatial temples, the region makes for must-visit historical sites for curious historians and archaeologists for ages.

In pre-historic times, this region was inhabited by primitive people. Fossils, pre-historic paintings, and sculptures are evidence of their presence in the region. Evidences were also found in Bhopal, Raisen, Chhanera, Nemawar, Mojawadi, Maheshwar, Dehgaon, Barkheda, Handia, Kabra, Singhanpur, Azamgarh, Panchmarhi, Hoshangabad, Mandsaur and Sagar in Madhya Pradesh. Various paintings can be seen on the walls of ancient caves and rocks. The sculptures obtained from the gulls near Hoshangabad, the Kandas of Bhimbethka near Bhopal, and the hills near Sagar are proofs of this. These rock paintings are also found abundantly in the hills along the banks of the Shivni River of Mandsaur, Narsinghgarh, Raisen, Azamgarh, Panna Rewa, Raigad, and Ambikapur.

This exotic place has provoked the minds of many to dig deeper underneath the surface to see what it has to offer to reconstruct the history of humankind. One of the earliest archaeological works had been done by De Terra and Paterson who established the Acheulian Stone Age sequence of central India. Again, among the earliest scholars who ventured into this lesser-known corridor of human history was Dr H.D. Sankalia. Sankalia tried to bridge the gap between the prehistoric sites and historic sites in terms of timescales by excavating the sites of Navdatoli and Maheshwar.

The excavations at the Acheulian site of Tikoda is another landmark in understanding the nature of the Acheulian sites of central India. This excavation was a joint venture of Deccan College, Pune and the Archaeological Survey of India. The geoarchaeological investigations in this area were led by Dr S.B. Ota and Prof. Sushama Deo in 2010 and the site was excavated continuously for five years. The site is an open-air site where the Acheulian artefacts are scattered in a vast area. One of the important features of this site from the point of view of a stone tool analyst is the occurrence of a proportionately large number of cleavers.

Many more sites namely Eran, Navadatoli, Awara, Dangwala, Nagda, and Khedinam have been discovered and excavated partially but no elaborate excavation has been done so far.

When we look into the methods of exploring and excavating the tools or evidence, it is mostly limited to classroom understanding without any hands-on training. To have a thorough understanding of prehistoric archaeology and to enjoy and expand its scope as a discipline, it is elemental to have firsthand knowledge about the methods and techniques used in this field to dig up human remnants. This would only give the zeal for the upcoming generation to take up this discipline with new fervor and take an interest in exploring the vast unexplored treasure house of evidence hidden underneath the Indian surface.

(b) Objective of the program:

1. To impart hands-on training on the techniques of exploration and excavations by visiting an archaeological site (probable site: Tikoda Village, Raisen District, MP).
2. To demonstrate how the theoretical knowledge of prehistoric archaeology can be translated into on-site practice.
3. To discuss and understand about the past, present and future prospects about the prehistoric culture of central India.