

78

जनवरी-जून, 2020

मध्य भारती

मानविकी एवं समाजविज्ञान की द्विभाषी शोध-पत्रिका

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ISSN 0974-0066

(अंक-78, जनवरी-जून, 2020)

संरक्षक

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कुलपति

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डॉक्टर हरीसिंह गौर विश्वविद्यालय

सागर (मध्यप्रदेश)-470003

दूरभाष : (07582) 297133

ई-मेल : madhyabharti.2016@gmail.com

Rock Art of PataTangar, Jharkhand: An Archaeological Study

Mshkoor Ahmad Quadri
Seema Mamta Minz

Introduction

The discovery of rock art sites of Jharkhand has begun in the 90s when some adventure seeking people have reported rock art in the densely forested, hilly areas of Jharkhand. In this context the work of Bulu Imam is noteworthy, who mentioned about some of the rock art sites in the present Hazaribagh and Chatra districts¹(Bulu Imam, 2014: 32-34). Similarly, E. Neumayer, has elaborated the rock art sites of Hazaribagh, and S Chakaravarti has presented the ethno-archaeological study of Isko site of Hazaribagh. Very recently Jha and Mohanta has studied the rock art of Hesalong, Ramgarh district, Jharkhand². Thus, time to time, studies have been conducted in this part of India, but it has not got attentionsame like Madhya Pradesh, Odisha or Chhattishgarh. Therefore, the rock art of Jharkhand may not get same attention from the scholar world, as it has received for the stone tools of prehistoric age. But, this is the way, Jharkhand preluded its presence in the map of rock art of India or in other term listed itself as, "state with ancient rock arts". The discoveries of rock art sites, seldom reported, in the newspapers, articles and books. So far some rock art sites have discovered all over Jharkhand and the interesting part of it is that, they are good examples of by chance discoveries, which lacks extensive, systematic studies.

As like the other Rock art sites of Jharkhand PataTangar rock art site is an accidental discovery, located in PataTangartribal village ofPalkot block of Gumla district. The physical geography of this site tells that, land scape is part of Chhotanagpur (Jharkhand) plateau that is connecting to present Chhattisgarh state or can be said a plateau region that is making a large portion of geological Archaeanformation extended to Chhatishgarh, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh(Wadia, 1944, P 83)³. At closer observation on the topography of the site reveals the direction of the hill running from north to south, whose description throws such light on the landscape of Gumlathat it may be quoted in extenso (Macpherson, T.S., & Hallett, M.G., 1917: 3).

"The district of Ranchi consist of three plateaux. The first and highest plateau is in the north-west of the district and comprises roughly the area included in thanaChainpur and Bishunpur and the western part of Thana Lohardaga. It is shut off from the west of Palkot and Gumla to the boundary of the district north-west of Lohardaga, and form such a striking feature of the landscape from the subdivisional headquarter at Gumla. From the distance these hills give the impression of a magnificent natural wall stretching from the north to south in an unbroken line, but a near view shows them to consist of rocky spurs of various heights with deep valley radiating from the central mass."

On the basis of the above discription of the topography of Gumla one can understand the topography of PattaTangar rock art site. At first, the rock painting depicted on the plateau thattoo has lower height because, the altitude of the plateau successively decreases almost shut off towards Palkot, Gulma and north-west of Lohardaga. The end point of the plateau range at Palkotshows single plateau masses strewn over the land rather than chain of plateaus running one after another in definite direction.

Landscape of the PataTangar Site

The closer observation of the rockart site unveils that the figures have beendrawn at a low altitudinal plateau which has a steady and gradual slope that makes the plateau easy to climb. Not only that, the plateau is extended to a large area in such a way that the slope of the plateau make you realize that you are walking on a ramp but just before reaching to the rock painting wall the slope abruptly rises like a barrierthat one sees in hurdle race. The surface of the rock is very smooth, plain and hard that is being used by the villagers for domestic purposes for example, during our visit to this site, the village Oraon agriculturists were using it for thrashing their rice paddy. The adjacent area of the rock painting site is slightly raised from the general ground level. The Oraon community have cultivated this land into terrace farming which goes along with their settlement areas. The top of the plateau is flat which approximately covering the area of 70 to 80 square meters. Such flat plateau top with cultivated land is locally known as "Pat" which is the distinctive feature of this tract (Macpherson, T.S., & Hallett, M.G., 1917: 3 & 4).

This rock painting comes in the area ofSankh and North Koelriver basin that is also being held responsible to attract the early settlement. No wonder the rock painters of this site had selected this particular place due to the presence of water resource. It is a very rare piece of coincident confer to this site in the form of an underground water spring. From the journey towards rock painting wall one will come across dry bed of a water stream on the rock surface and further ahead at the ground levelled land where the plateau splits and creates a V shape alley, at that point one can easily see the flow of the narrow creek rippling down over rock bed to lower land and disappears hardly after traveling 5 meters. The marks

of the stream can be seen all over the declivous rock surface that may indicates a presence of resourceful underground water body. In order to understand the life of early age it is very important to make it clear about the nature of water body of this place which is discussed below:

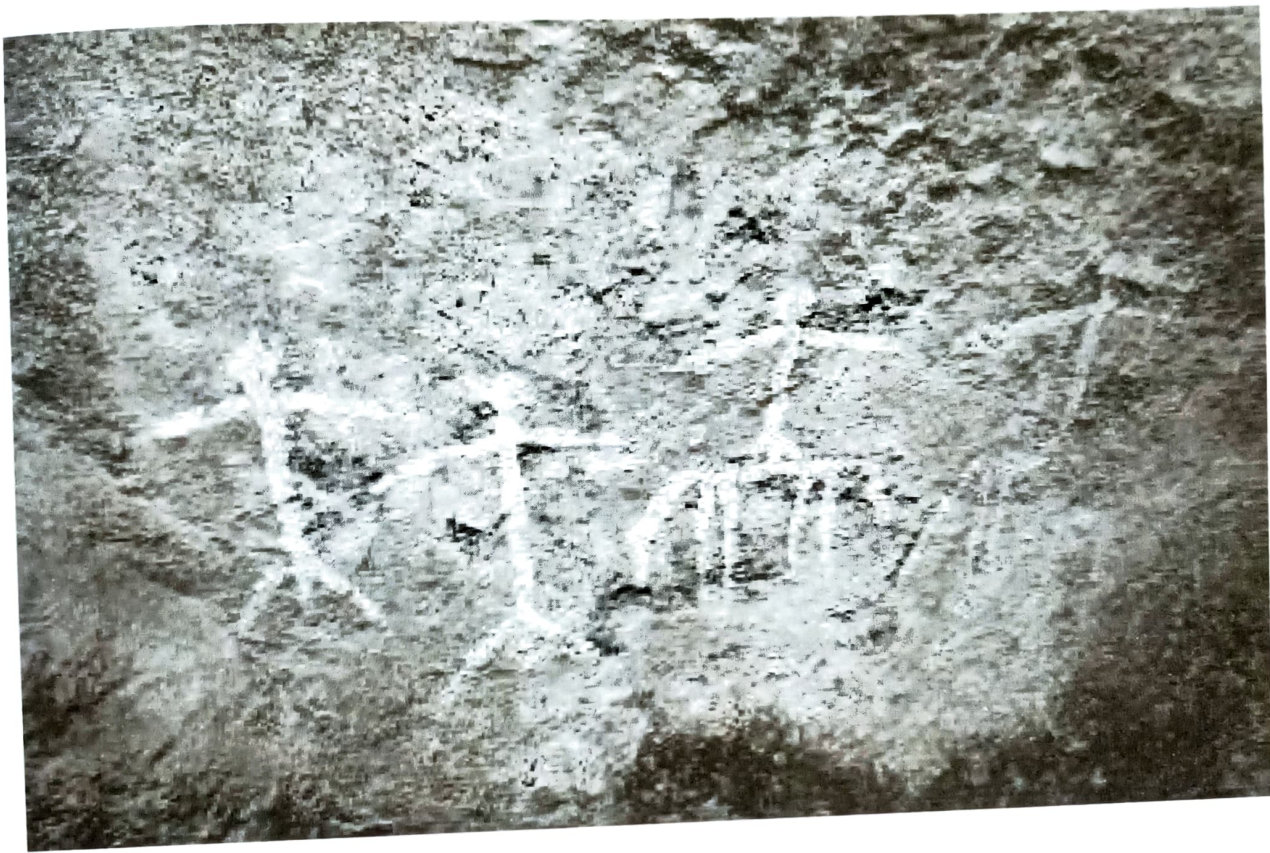
1. The water stream flows in many branches during rainy season and left behind eroded lines which are visible during dry season.
2. The trail of stream may vary from few inches to 2 to 3 feet. During rainy season these big and small creeks join together into wide stream.
3. One can also see trail of stream studded with wild grasses. During our visit we found it dry but the length of the grass suggests it grew in enough but shallow running water condition.
4. The remains of moss are also visible as dark patches on the rock surface.
5. The main passage of the stream studded with shrubs, few trees and grasses. However, the origin point doesn't appear but a set of green plants grown near the rock painting wall, successively coming towards downhill assert the origin point as well as passage of the stream. Interestingly, the stream goes underground after reaching to field.
6. The wall on which the paintings have been depicted also gives interesting proof about the stream since there is a long horizontal rift with a gap of one to half feet inches located just beneath the painting wall creates a very surprising natural formation of narrow rock cave which due to narrowness not preferred by human but bat, snake, lizard, and other reptile like creatures and insects. Through this rift water drains in rainy season otherwise remains dry.

As such the underground water at this rock art site clearly answers that it was due to availability of water around the year had become first choice of early men in order to select this place for their shelter. Otherwise the low and easy accessible height may not be favourable by the early man for shelter purpose. The site facing towards east that too is very common feature of any rock art site (Pandey, Shyam Kumar, 1993:5).

Detail Description and Relative Dating of the Rock Art of PataTangar

All together the site is very impressive and has about more than fifty figures painted on the rock wall. For study purpose the whole site is divided into five panels. The detail of these panels have mentioned below.

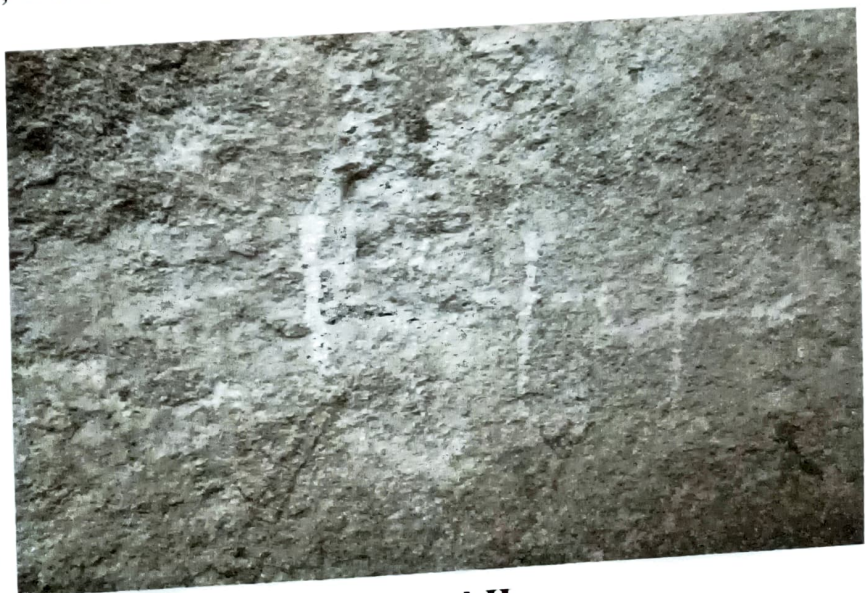
Panel-I: the extreme right of the painted rock wall is being numbered with panel-I, which occupies with approximately 6 figures. All the figures in this panel are delineated in bold and white colour. This Panel has figures of humans and animals both. In number there are four human figures and two animal figures. The human figures have depicted without weapons. Even the animal figures have simple articulation. In artistic point of view these figures do not show high quality. Both the animal and human figures are sketch out in straight white lines which sub-standardize them from artistic point of view.



Panel-I

Panel II: the paintings of a plate no.1 of Panel II have covered under thick layers of patination, therefore the figures are almost vanished. In the same sequence in Plate no 2 of Panel II, above the white straight line human chain has marked out on the rock wall. In

plate no. 2 of Panel II has used red colour to paint the figures. The human figures have holding staff as a weapon. Towards the right side of the plate two monkeys are painted in red colour. All the figures in this Panel are painted in conversationalize style. Plate no. 3 has a human chain in which humans have depicted in stick form. In the hands of

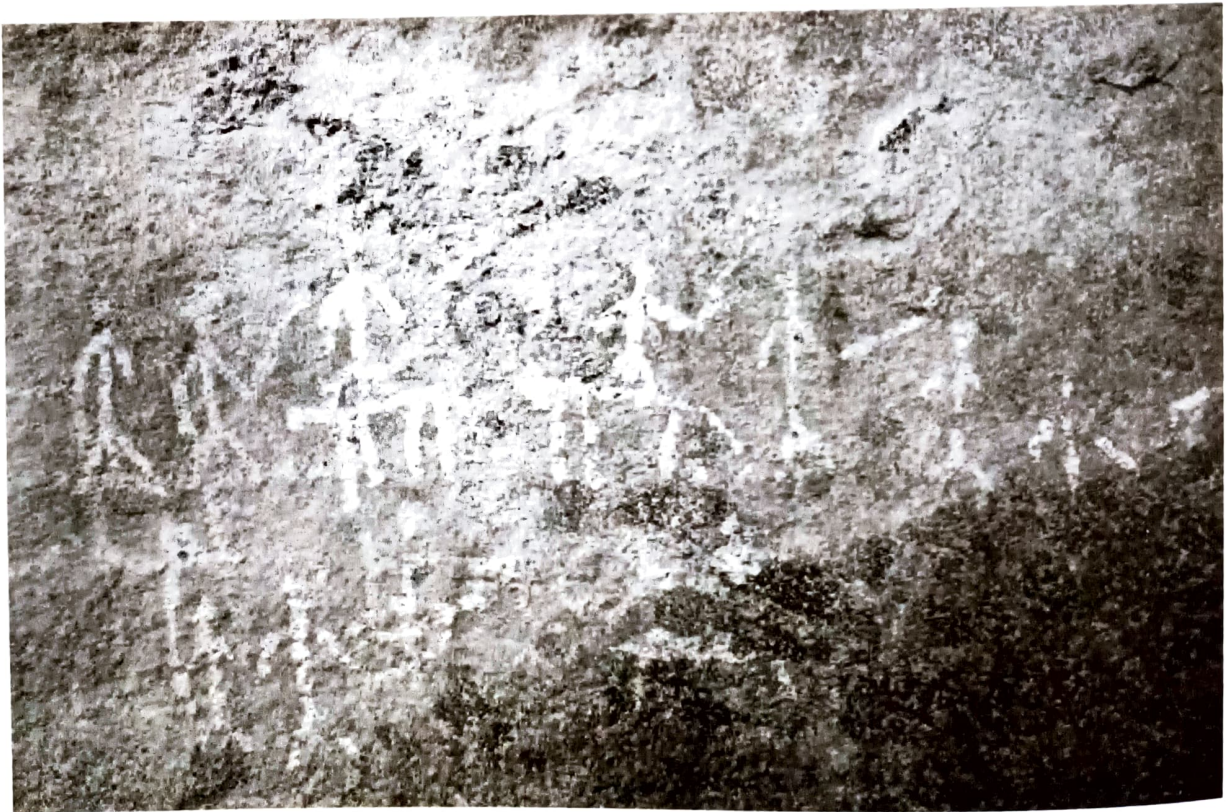


Panel-II

human figures stone tools are visible which may be used as a weapon. Figures may be categorised into eclectic styles and show inferior quality of articulation. Plate no 4 also has human chain which clearly shows two chain lines. The first

chain is older and faded than the second chain and covered under the thick patination. At the right side of the plate needs special mention of a human figure which may be older than the human chain. All the human in sequence (Chain) are articulated in stick form. A group of human delineated in sequence have stone tools like staff. The paintings in this plate no. 4 are articulated in eclectic style (Mashkooor Ahmad Quadri, 2002: P 90). Further ahead in same sequence towards left below the human chain a monkey is mark out in red colour in filler style. This figure is influenced by schematic and decorative style. In the same plate little below the monkey figure a moving muscular human figure is delineated in red colour. This figure may fixed in conversationalize style (Mashkooor Ahmad Quadri, 2002:90). The figure of plate no 5 is same like Plate no. 4. The plate no. 6 also have same figure like plate no. 4 and 5.

Panel III: plate no. 1 of Panel III has stick form human figure in white colour. This plate has beautifully depicted the warrior and war related scene. In this plate three figures are of humans, riding on horses. Human paintings are holding sword in their hands and the style may goes to eclectic style. Plate no 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 have same figures. Hunting scene in delineated in plate no 7 in which a man is hunting a bull by sword like weapon. The bull has muscular body. A horse rider is also there in the plate.



Panel-3, Plate No. - 1

Plateno 8 of Panel no. III has figures of special hand impression with a stick human figure which is holding a staff. The figures in this plate are distinctively

classified into conversationalize style which is a signatory feature of Chalcolithic age (Pandey, Shyam Kumar, 1993:95). In the bottom right hand side of the same plate two white monkeys are drawn. The delineation of these figures may be classified within aneclectic style. Plate no. 9 is more or less similar to Plate no 8.

Plate no. 10 of Panel No. III has a human drawn in a stick form along with depiction of bow and arrow as his weapon credited with special mention. The figure is painted with white colour. The human figure is drawn in mask style. To the right side of the human archer two other human figures are drawn. They too are in stick figures. These two figures have a thing in common-both depict hunting scene and are related to late Chalcolithic period. To the left side of the Plate three monkeys are coloured in white, they are depicted by straight vertical lines. In the middle of the Plate the Sun is drawn in white colour. After the classification of this Plate's figures reveal that they are of traditional and selective style both which are related to late Chalcolithic period to early Historic period (Pandey, Shyam Kumar, 1993:165)

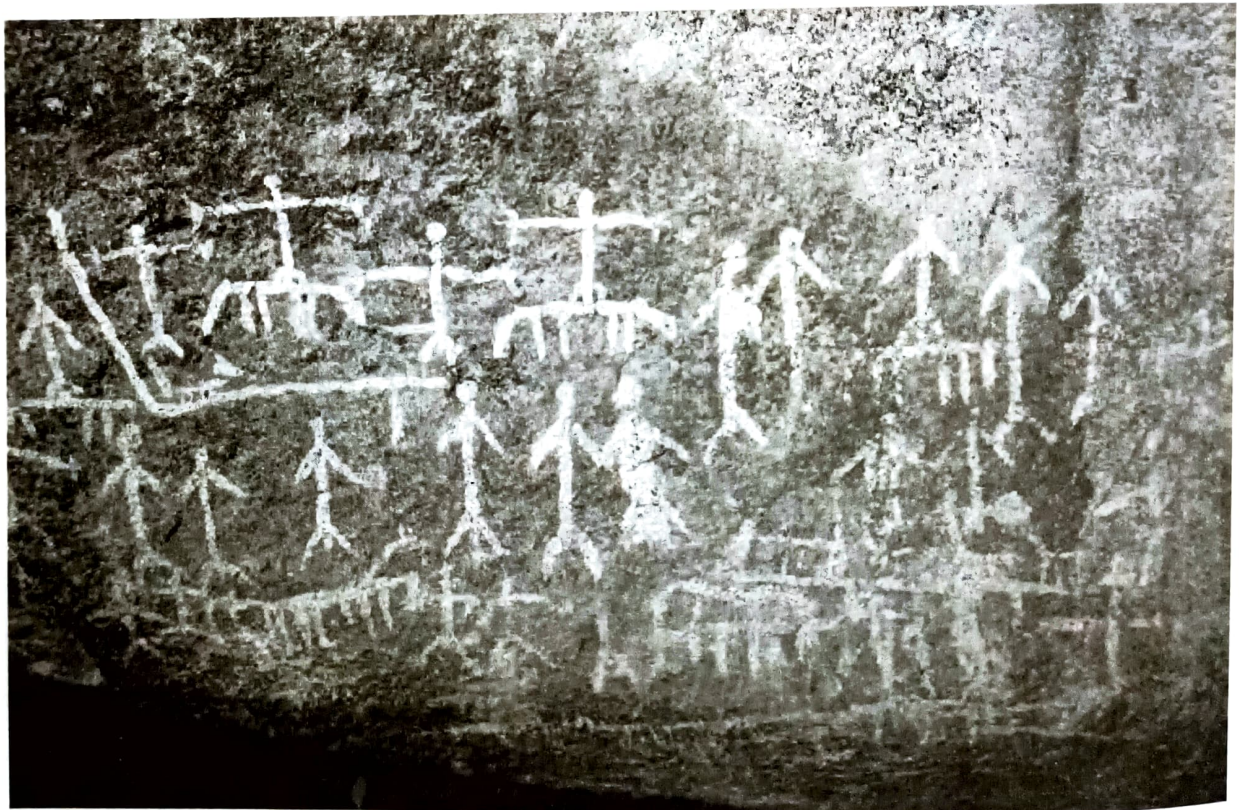


Panel-3, Plate No. - 10

Plate no 15 has yielded two types of depiction. In this depiction a troop of monkeys were appeared in light yellow colour. These figures might have been drawn in white colour but after a long period of time due to natural causes they faded into yellow. Below the yellow figures a herd of deer can be seen depicted by thin white lines. This figure may be classified into early Historic period (Jha V. D. &Dubey N 2006: 199).

Plate no. 17 delineates three muscular men drawn in white colour whose lower cloths are visible in the painting. Due to patination over the paintings of these men disturb the visibility of weapons which are holded by them. Probably the painting depicts these men indulging in hunting. The paintings of this plate show inferior artistic skill and may be categorise into early Historic period (Jha V. D. & Dubey N 2006: 199).

Panel IV: The Plate no 1 of Panel IV has depiction of a group of human in white colour stick figure, there are some horse riders along with other human figures they seem to be trying to surround some animals. This probably shows a hunting scene. On the basis of art and style these figures may be categorized into early phase of Historic age. Plate no 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 of panel no IV are similar. In plate no 8 and 1 the humans are drawn in red, they are sketched in stick form. In this group of human figures staffs are being depicted as a weapon. Further, in this painting a running man is depicted in stick form and a deer is depicted in red double lines. In between these two figures the Sun is painted in red colour. The red coloured deer and human figures are painted earlier than the Sun painting. They are artistically superior and belong to Chalco-palaeolithic period.



Panel IV

Panel V : Plate no 1 of panel Vth has a figure of an Alpana (sacred symbol), which is round in shape and within inner circle there is a cross sign. Straight small thin lines are depicted on the outer circle which give the idea of rays which are coming out of the alpana. On the basis of art and style the figure is classified

into traditional style. Plate no 2 has figure of muscular human that too in stick form. Below this a herd of deer have depicted in bold red lines, in rectangular shape which is filled by vertical lines. This is decorative style of painting. But this also related with traditional style and can be classified into late Chalco-palaeolithicperiod (Pandey, Shyam Kumar, 1993: 175).

The plate no 3 has a figure of human group in bold lines. Further it was tried to give muscularity in these figures. In this painting the humans are depicted with mask. This type of style is related with traditional style and may be belong to Chalco-palaeolithic period.

Conclusion:PattaTangar rock art site is one of the very important rock are sites of Jharkhand. A region which is very rich is prehistoric archaeology and is famous for stone age cultural remains may further reiterate the its significance in prehistory by the time to time discoveries of rock art site. The PattaTangar rock art site gives a lot more information other than general idea about the rock art of Jharkhand in particular and India in common. No doubt this site may be supply valuable information in favour of understanding the rock art of Odisha and Jharkhand both. Such discoveries may be contribute to the preparation of chronological and style sequence of both the states.

A part from that, the paintings of the site cover a long span of time. Not very old but the paintings reveal the socio-cultural life of Chalcolithic-palaeolithicperiod and further extended to early historic age to late historic age. On the basis of style this site does not give very impressive data and over all three styles of rock painting dominated the entire paintings viz. elective style, decorative style and conversationalize style. The stick form of painting dominated the whole site. In nutshell this site has immense value so far the Jharkhand rock art is concern.

Dr. Hari Singh Gaur Vishwavidyala, Sagar, (M.P.)-470003

*Central University of Jharkhand,
Ranchi (Jharkhand)-835205*

Reference

1. Bulu Imam mention the location and name of six rock art sites viz. Raham, Satpahar, Thethangi, Nautangwa, Sidpa, and Khandar but could not give detail documentation of the rock art site.
2. Time to time, the rock art sites of Jharkhand got place in the Journals and edited books like Erwin Neumayer, published research paper on the rock art of Hazaribagh district in Purattava, Vol 25., 1994-95, S. Chakaravarti described Isko rock art of Hazaribagh district in one of the chapter on the edited book "Recent Prospectives on Prehistoric Art in Indian and Allied Subjects"edited by R. K.Sharma and K KTripathi, Aryan book international. Jha and Mohanta recently published rock art of Ramgarh district in Kosala 7, 2014.
3. In the Ph.D. thesis of Abdul Rahman, on the topic "The Geochemistry and genesis of Lohargada Bauxite Deposits, Ranchi District, Bihar.", Department of Geology, Aligarh Muslim University,

1979, mentions the physiography of the area i.e. Gumla, gives a very interesting feature of the plateau range. In fact, the plateau has large extension which joins present Lohardaga, Palamau and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand. On the other hand, it is also connected to the plateau range of Raipur, Sarguja and Bilaspur districts of Chhattisgarh.

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