Continuity of Art from Its Primitive Stage to Modern Times: A Brief Introduction of Ethno Rock Art Study Based on Rituals and Festivals

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Abstract: The current research is based on the study of festivals, importance of animal worship, floor art activities perform by the inhabitants of mainly Bihar. The methodology followed for this study is based on field work taken in various part of Bihar. Simultaneously author studied and gives a conclusion after the compared study of early art and present art in the form of paintings on wall, floor and animal body, relief, engravings on mud wall etc. After the field work and compartment author collected the data from the few but important published texts. This is an attempt to think about the decoding of rock art by way of tradition present art work usually done during ritual like death, marriage and festivals on different occasion throughout the year. The present work almost tries to redefines the concept of origin and purpose of rock art. It offers an extensive and all-inclusive classification of the rock art without hesitating to coin new terms for certain classes that were hitherto accommodated under groups which they were not conveniently belonging to on the basis of features and typology. Further, the contemporary lifestyles of the native habitants have been deeply observed for the first time revealing connectivity of the early art with the tradition art leading us to the belief that the social moorings of the present society extend to that by gone era.

Keywords: Ethno-Rock Art, Symbolism, Animal Worship, Floor Art, Cognition, Conceptualization, Contextualization

Introduction
In this context during the study of rock art it was observed that many themes are in conformity with the ethnic traditions prevalent even today in our village and city societies which can be compared to the Oraon Kudukh folklore. This prompted me 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. After the thoughtful reflection, the author came out with a new term propounded the “Ethno Rock Art” (Tiwary. 2013:1-16). Though it was
coined in the contact of Kaimur rock art while author was engaged in field work between 2009 to 2016, I found that it can be used to all of the rock art in global context as well. This justifies the universal application of the newly devised term. In short we can say that, “Ethno-rock art is a facet that tries to study ethnic groups that practice rock art or similar art forms on various media and during various occasions to try, interpret and understand rock art”.

In India, the application of ethnographic analogies, with respect to cultural relationship between informant and artist has received mixed reception. Few contemporary tribal groups are still actively engaged in rock art production and many show very little interest in local rock art sites, unlike some contemporary indigenous groups in Australia. Some researchers advocate establishing direct analogies between prehistoric rock art producers and contemporary tribal groups. The ethnographic study of rock art in India has expanded the potentialities of general understanding with regards to its creation, social, ritual and political aspects. The principle study on rock art, in India and abroad, has focused on shamanic, ritualistic or hunting interpretations, whereas, the Indian ethnographic record suggests a much wider range of reasons why art was produced by traditional societies. For instance, contemporary tribal art illustrates the diverse range of techniques for the painting and aesthetic elaboration of habitation sites. In this regard James and others stated that “Art is also often produced in the domestic context in India by mostly women, as part of ritual, healing, or auspiciousness - producing, or decorative activities, this interpretation of rock art is obviously tricky but can enable an effective hypotheses to be tested by other means” (James et al. 2012:185).

Preceding Investigations
At the end of the nineteenth century, European researchers concerned with the discovery and interpretation of upper Palaeolithic art, were heavily influenced by the publication on Primitive Culture by Tylor in 1873, Golden Bough by Frazer in 1890 and The Native Tribes of Central Australia by Spencer and Gillen in 1899 (Mitteiigen.1928), all of which emphasised the importance of totemism in 'primitive' ideology. Spencer and Gillen’s work also described the totemic context of rock art in Central Australia (Franklin. 1989:278-288). This resulted in totemism being directly lifted out of the ethnographic literature and used to explain upper Palaeolithic art as being concerned with sympathetic magic.

Some Australian researchers (Maynard. 1977:91-92) have made a similar distinction between ‘ethnographic’ and ‘archaeological’ approaches to the analysis of rock art (Keberry. 1839:219). Such distinctions do not take into account the extensive literature dealing with the relationship between ethnography and archaeology. Although rock art studies have a unique database, they are concerned with material evidence for past human behaviour and can be undertaken using the same basic methods of analysis. Study of rock art legacy started during 1870s, by in the works of Bleek and Lloyd. They noticed the continuity of rock art even today by the San/Bushman tribe of Drakensberg.
Mountains in the Kalahari Desert (Ghosh et al. 2009:50-57). The Chumash community of the western coast of North America (Balckburn. 1975:23) suggest that magic and supernatural power play a prominent role in most of their narratives.

The ethno-archaeological studies have a wider scope for estimating the role and significance of rock art, which prevailed in different time and space. The most interesting observation is the continuity of tradition and symbol being shown in rock art of the Bihar region with the modern folk-art rituals, symbology still practiced by Adivasi people today. For ethno-rock art, certain levels of meaning remain accessible and justify speculation of the role played by such art in the society that created it.

**Difficulties to Understand**

There are certain concerns for studying and interpreting rock art. These concerns make the analysis difficult and hence conjectural studies form the foremost hypothesis. However, the speculation cannot be completed or hold a solid ground until the investigations are undertaken in a scientific manner inclusive of ethnography. Firstly, the geographical location of these sites sometimes makes them inaccessible as they are located in deep forests. Secondly, it becomes paramount to respect the socio-cultural sensitivity of the inhabitants and comprehend the turbulence that is present, if any. Thirdly, the language and communication might hinder research if not handled effectively. The region also faces the lack of academic and research institutes to apply scientific dating and multidisciplinary approach in this primitive phase of rock art study of the region. The information availed from the data supplied from the study area gives a surface understanding of the ethnological groups suggestive of the tribes being an inherent part of iron-using and iron-making segment. It is possible; they had been instrumental in forming some of the first states in the region. The data available on the tribes will thus be discussed in detail throwing light on the various issues that emerge. This attempt will thus help us in formulating a better idea of the cultures that lived during the prehistoric, proto-historic and historic period.

**Consequences of Cognition - Conceptualization - Contextualization in Rock Art**

Being by far the major remaining evidence of communication and creativity among early Homo sapiens, rock art is an invaluable source for the study of cognitive development by the observation of artistic changes occurred in the different forms of rock art. Within the range of time since the emergence of Homo sapiens, it is the main archive of early humanity. It is somehow surprising that this immense cultural and historical resource did not yet receive the consideration it deserves. One way to learn about the role of rock art in past societies is to use ethnographic tools. This approach uses ethnographic records to interpret rock art or involves ethno archaeological research with living people in present context. Ethno Rock Art research can give an idea of how art functions in contemporary indigenous societies and this can be used to
develop models for interpreting rock art patternning in relation to past societies which based on the concept of researcher developed since he or she started the work.

Rock art studies define the cognitive approach of art towards the development. The contextual study of rock art tries to comprehend the landscape, demographics and surrounding archaeological framework and at the same time conceptual study of rock art explains the hidden meaning, purpose and techniques of execution, which enables the understanding of developmental neuroscience in the early humans.

Different Forms and Their Relevant Conclusions in Ethno Rock Art Context
The continuity of rock art is seen in the form of pictographs by the use of natural/artificial colour and clay. It is also seen as relief art on mud walls and several house hold items. Since the earlier times, spiritual aspirants have used caves for meditation and sorcerers have used it for secret rituals. Few rock art caves in India are still found to be occupied by hermits and considered to be cave temples. Continuity of pictographs is observed on various animate (humans/animals) and inanimate objects (house/household commodities).

Imitation of Animal Worship in Rock Art and Its Identification through Present Rituals
According to many scholars, the execution of animals in rock art was done for multiple reasons. The important one is probably hunting. It seems to instruct the manner in which the animal must be hunted. This however, cannot be held true in each case. Ethnographic observations suggest that the region continues to constitute a major focus on cattle – related ritual activities; local shrines and other cattle relate representation could be more common in India than in other parts of the world as cattle has been represented in rock art of Spain, motifs and figurines of bull have also been greatly found at Catal Huyuk and in early Mediterranean civilisations. Other lines of evidence also suggest a degree of long - term continuity in the use of particular symbols on their body, supporting more symbolically oriented interpretations of rock art production. Animal cults or icons can be classified to be represented in either their outward form or inward form which may undergo transformations.

The depiction of animals in rock art has pointed its associations of certain qualities pertaining to certain animal species. For instance, the Greeks associated wisdom with the owl and believed that Athena, the goddess of wisdom, had a particular affiliation with birds; hence, she is frequently represented by an owl. The universal practice amongst the hunting and gathering people displaying respect for animals and implementing ceremonial behaviour toward animals is an implication of worship of the hunting practice and not deifying or worshipping the animal itself. Even in case of totemism, the animal categorised is part of a social classificatory system and not implying worship of the animal. In this context, the interactions with local inhabitants
indicate many continuing traditions of regional festivals which have displayed similar inferences to the modern times. It is now held by some authorities that the early art of cave-dwelling man had also a ritual origin; that is, the representations of animals were intended to act magically to increase the "supply of the animal or help the hunter to catch him." 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. Even the goats and sheep (Figure 1) are painted with variety of homemade colours, but the reason behind this is different. While moving from one place to another these colours are used as markers of an individual’s property. The colour and it’s placement on a definite part of an animal’s body are the indication of its ownership. Few continuing festivals include the Bhuinya Baba festival, the Pola festival, the Hurra-Hurri festival, the Sohari festival and the Deepawali festival. There are two kinds of animal worship one is by way of cruelty and second by way of worship.

Figure 1: Particular symbols and colours are also use to identify the animal group while movement from one place to other place so that they never mix with other group of animal.

*Bhuinya Baba Festival:* Bhuinya Baba festival is a local festival celebrated in middle Ganga plain. Ahir, Kharwar, Mushahara, harijan and Kurmi usually celebrate this festival in the month of December to Feburary. Interestingly, while carrying out explorations in the region of Kaimur it has been noticed that the animals have painted
horns and body (Figure 2) with the market available paints. Bulls and cows are painted generally with haldi, red ochure 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. The similarly instances can be seen in the Pola festival of Maharashtra where the bullocks are worshipped, Jallikattu from Tamil Nadu and other festival from Karnataka which identify similar practices. In Jallikattu bull race is a significant part for the start of the festival (Figure 3). This is quite interesting that the strokes and design made on the body of the bull are similar to the rock paintings of the central India. We know that the above stated communities are inhabitants of this region where the similar art work are still continuing on living things. The art works are figurative and non-figurative both are noticed on the body of animal. The non-figurative forms are in geometric and non-geometric forms. This is probably the possible explanation of the continuity of an art from its primitive stage to modern era.

Figure 2: Worship of cow, ox and bull on different occasion in different parts of India (A: On the occasion of Bhuinya Baba festival the yadavas use to paint or decorate their animal with various colour, sometime colours are homemade but mostly market available colours they are using, Kaimur., B: Ladies are worshiping the Bull on the occasion of shivaratri., C: Decorated bull on the occasion of Makarsankranti Pola festival, Maharashtra (Courtesy- Google) and D: Cow decorate with variety of symbols on her body in a regional festival Hurra-Hurri).
**Figure 3: Similarity between A to C** - Decorated ox on his upper part of body very similar to the pictograph executed in a shelter, these type of decoration are noticed on the occasion of Pola festival when a domesticator draw their animal, A- from Chaturbhujnala, Madhya Pradesh, C- from Kaimur district; and **Similarity between B to D** - as picture A and C the similarity of painting between prehistoric art and present animals, the decoration of humped and back part is occasionally noticed at the time of Sorahi festival, B and C- from Kaimur district.

**Hurra-Hurri Festival:** Hurra-Hurri festival involves animal cruelty, as do other regular traditional and cultural events all over the world. Animal cruelty is often defended because of being part of a tradition or culture. The festival of Hurra-Hurri takes place in Bihar. It is usually performed by the Mushahara, Ahir, Harijana community. It is a horrific event in which a buffalo or a bull torment a terrified piglet which later dies. On this day farmer’s and cattle domesticators bring their cattle to an open ground. The cattle are decorated with the colourful threads and their body is painted with multiple colours (Figure 4). Once the cattle have gathered, one person enters the hoard to tie a piglet to the leg of a certain cattle. The piglet will whine during as the cattle moves and that further results in intense running of the cattle. It continues till the piglet dies. After the death of piglet, the owner of piglet takes it back home to be cooked. The meat will be distributed amongst the people those who participated in the festival as an offering. It is more or less similar to the Bhuinyan Baba festival, because similarly animals used to paint and decorate their body along with their threads, new threads to every animal. The only difference is animal cruelty, which is not in Bhuinyan Baba festivals.
Figure 4: At the time of Hurra-Hurri festival women use to decorate their animal with homemade colour and they draw with two particular symbol i.e. dots and circle, which is more or less similar with the Figure 2 A and D and figures noticed from the Kaimur rock art.
Soharai Festival: This festival is celebrated the month of Pous (February), shortly after the harvest of the rice-crop of the year. On this occasion domestic animals are worshipped (Figure 3), after being washed, anointed with oil and smeared with vermilion.

Deepawali Festival: On the eve of Deepawali (Diwali) the inhabitants of region clean, plaster and decorate their houses and bathe their domestic animals (Figure 5). On the day of the festival, they decorate their domestic animals with different liquid colours. These liquid colours are prepared from hirinchi (colour powder). The white colour is prepared from grounded rice mixed with water. All these liquid colours are arranged in separate pots. Various colours are used depending upon the body colour of the domestic animal. For decorating the animals they dip their palm or opening of a glass or a round piece of a ridge gourd etc. and print human image with geometric design on the body of the animals. These rituals include sprinkling of Neem water on the animals which is supposed to possess medicating properties marking of animals for identity purposes.

Bull and Tiger Worship: Painting of and on a bull in this region is usually found in various mode, with X-ray, full filled body, an outline of body features and illustrates the hunter's detailed knowledge of his prey. Many of these animals continue to be worshipped by the different tribes of India. In this area, the Mushahara and Gond semi-
Figure 6: In Kaimur region some of the inhabitants are used to celebrate their festivals known as Bull and Tiger worship, they dance like fight with sword and shield are beautifully observed in the caves of Jharkhand, Bihar and lower part of Vindhyian range, researchers normally identified such scene as war but the scene of fighting always should not be identify as war scene.
tribes worship *Bagan Deo* or *Baghawa Raja* or *Baghawa Baba*, a tiger and *Bhuiyan Baba* a bull deity. Paintings of these animals, with its body decorated by parallel red lines are observed in the caves and shelters. Human figures are portrayed with two stylistic variations: as naturalistic representations, and as schematized geometric forms with the body constructed of straight lines and with a square, rectangular or triangular head. Conflict is represented by human figures holding swords and shield (Figure 6). In the Kudukh folklore of the Oraon they used to sing about the worship of tiger for their agriculture welfare. In Jharkhand and Bihar without conflict Oraons are calling *Bagan Deo* for their welfare to the buffalo that is destroying the agriculture land.

**Figure 7:** At the time of marriage in Oraon tribe a women drawing her cow with black colour, the figures are drawn in line drawing form and the icons are human form in a square (Courtesy: Neumayer)

**Cow Worship:** In the month of July, women worship the cow. In the temple courtyard a cow is tethered, with perhaps her calf beside her. While the women sit watching in reverent silence the priest bates the cow’s hooves, places a red-colour thread on her horns, and makes offerings of flowers, moistened wheat, incense (*Tribhuwan et al*. 2003:72) and so on (Figure 7). Rock art of Kaimur depicts many animals, hardly showing its significance by worship or rituals (Figure 3). The animal representation can be classified into various animal types for making a convenient understanding of man-animal relationship exhibited via rock art.
Tortoise Worship: The tortoise denotes stability. It is designed in white or red wash on the floor of a Gond house to ensure that the building will be secure (Wakankar et al. 1976:97-98). The magical practice is followed by the shaman to prevent the god or ghost from stealing the grains. Verrier Elwin observes that it involves making a double circle of blood of the sacrificed animal and rice-flour paste around the stack. According to Elwin this practice prevents the evil powers from stealing the grains and will attract more grains from outside to the enclosed space.

This is an opinion about its continuity from it’s began stage to modern time and the tradition never die it gets change only based on geography and other different social groups. We don’t have any direct evidence of rock art symbols and present ethnic symbols with their meanings. But due to similarity we can co-relate its relation though both are in different context. Rock art we found in rock shelter on the rock surface whereas in the modern society the paintings are still in practice on mud wall, living animals and on household movable object. We should not forget that our ancestor

Figure 8: A: Floral drawing on the brutal mud house in a proper manner that a straight line made of three coloured big dots, Tilauthu Block, B: Similar floral motifs are noticed from the rock shelter, Basahan, Chand Block, C: On the alpana in Brahmin family one can observe the floral drawing for the purity of any ritual activities and D: Floral motif with flower pot from Bhimbethaka, Madhya Pradesh.
moves from hill top to caves/shelters then valleys and finally plain. It is a gradual process occurred in different location and context time to time. People carried their tradition as they moved but not in the same idea same context. Place change, context change and themes are gets change. In early stage when human usually draw their experiences through symbols, scenes and signs, whereas now we are doing the same thing in different context.

**Ritual Activities Related to Floor Art**

Floor art is a manifestation of the beliefs and customs of the groups of population in different parts of the world. Floor art known as Rangoli in Maharashtra, Sathiya in Gujarat, Kolam in Tamilnadu, Muggulu in Andhra Pradesh, Rangavali in Karnataka, Chowkpurana in Northern India, Mandana in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, Aripama in Bihar, Alpana in Bengal, Osaor Jhenti in Odissa, Aipan in the Himalayan region, Poovidal in Kerala and so on. Today, the commonly used word is rangoli which synonymous to all the prevailing floor art.

The practice of floor painting was practiced in many cultures across the world, it has survived only in India with respect to day to day practice of the art executed generally by the women especially in south Indian and occasionally in north India. According to Mulk Raj Anand, “the sources of the folk painting lie in the protection sought by Homo sapiens in the magical drawing, which may prevent the auras of bad spirits from coming into the house” (Neumayer. 1983:94).

Apart from being a symbol of auspiciousness, the art of rangoli is in fact drawing of magic diagrams to ward off the evil, invoke the deity, to fulfil the wishes when taking a vow (vrata), for meditative purposes and to create a sacred space within the confines of home. It is intimately linked with agricultural life and village tradition. The tradition is carried forward by women, which is passed down to generations. The women elaborate their vision in forms by which the floor is covered with the magic potency in patterns (Figure 8).

In the ancient treatises, paintings are classified into shashvatak (permanent) and tatkalik or kshanik (temporary or momentary). The wall paintings definitely come under the former type as it lasts or are made to last at least for a year in the rural homes. Needless to say, the execution of floor paintings during the age of rock art come under tatkalik or kshanik category. The ancient treatises also classify the paintings as bhauma-chitra and bhitti-chitra, thus further elaborating the difference. Some ancient treatises like the ‘Shilparatna’ classify the paintings as ‘rasachitra’ (wet paintings made using some sort of paste) and ‘dhulichitra’ (powdered paintings). Floor paintings come under both the categories as it is made with dry as well as wet medium but the wall paintings come only under rasa chitra category. Pertaining to this differentiation, the technique of drawing also differs. Rasa chitraris almost always drawn using some tool like a brush, a stick or a piece of cloth whereas the dhulichitrais invariably drawn by fingers only. As
mentioned earlier, the necessity of drawing with a solution of ground powder must have arose when the painting was intended to be drawn on the walls.

Motifs drawn on the floor are highly symbolic as compared to the walls. Many times the surrounding flora and fauna are drawn factually. Thus the wall paintings and floor paintings definitely differ from each other in terms of the medium, technique, longevity and motifs. Ethno-rock art of any region can be an articulation of ritualistic beliefs as it displays worship of god in return for boon. The head priest of the community or Baba is summoned when a problem occurs in a family. The problems are narrated to him, to which he offers solutions majorly involving the painting of Mushahara on the walls of the house (Figure 9). The Baba is the god man of the community and his presence is considered to be the solution to all difficulties.

A Bind, Harijana and Mushhara house is however usually considered for the painting all around with different themes and colours. The walls to be painted are first plastered with mud and cow dung by a lady or group of family member or neighbours, and then coated with chalk powder for white and Alta (a kind of red liquid colour or some time dry). This process is called lipna (Figure 10). The archaic Indian rock paintings are symbolic representations of the primitive way of life. Some common symbols include Swastika, Sun, Moon and Stars, Chakra, Spirals, Labyrinths, Trident, Vajra, Cross,
Mangala-ghata, certain triangular and quadrangular patterns (Pandey. 1975:35-46) similar to rangoli are still in practice among the every class of the India.

Figure 10: A: A geometric square decoration in red colour inside shelter on the wall, Mirzapur, B: Similar rectangular pictograph made in black colour on the wall, Kaimur district, C: Rectangular pictograph made in red colour executed on the wall of the shelter, Kaimur district, D: Lipna mud paste in a pot and cotton cloth in a hand of a lady belongs to Mushahara group and E: Mushahara lady making an art on the floor (an example of floor Art) with the mud paste only and she draw many things on the square canvas like flowers, plants, wavy lines, straight and zigzags line.

Madhushravani Festival: One of the important floor art (Figure 11) in practice is seen on the occasion of Madhu Shrvani Festival or MadhuSravani Puja, which is a main festival observed in Bihar. Madhu Shrvani is celebrated in the Hindu month of Shravan which falls between July and August for a consecutive period of thirteen days and ends on Shravan Shukla Tritiya with an elaborate ritual and feast.

Madhu Shrvani Puja represents the arrival of monsoon season. It is solely observed by married women. During this festival, women worship the Nagas (Serpent), Gauri (A form of Durga), Shanti Kalash (A small pot of bronze or copper), Surya (Sun), Chandrama (moon), Navagrah (the nine celestial planets) and Shasthi (Sati). During the festival of MadhushravaTritiya, newly married girls move to their maternal homes. As a part of the
ritual the married girl also illustrates a painting over the floor using homemade colour (Figure 12). The similarities between this ritual and rock art motif can be pointed out.

![Image](image1.png)

**Figure 11:** These are the examples of floor art which are noticed in rock art form and in living tradition among the advanced family or plain land inhibitors. A: Pictograph in square form executed on the wall of the shelter, B: Living tradition in the form of Govardhan festival made of cow dunk, C: The art on floor is made of cow dunk and homemade colour like turmeric, rice powder and wheat powder on the occasion of Bhaiya dooj sometime called Alpana and D: Floor art practice on the occasion of Madhushravani Puja, Bihar.

**Kashiya Mahotsava:** In the pre-Vedic age, man was surrounded by the five natural elements namely, Prithvi (earth), Aap (water), Vayu (air), Tej (luster), Aakash (ether). Over time he realized that till these natural elements do not display their Rudra or fierce nature consistently. They in fact contribute to his well-being and prosperity. Periodically, these elements are destructive in nature. Hence man began to worship them so as not to incur their wrath. The verse is even used till date:

**Prithvisagandhasarasastathapahsparshivayurjvalanamsatejah**
**Nabhahsashabdhammahatasahaitekurvantsarve mama suprabhatam**

Which means- Let the Earth, full of fragrance, the water, having different tastes, the wind whose touch is very pleasing, the lustrous burning (sun), the sky full of words
(sounds of winds and clouds), make my dawn (the early morning) pleasant. The experience gained by the primitive man facing the powers of these elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether in turn they were worshipped as conscious entities in various symbolic forms (Sodhganga Web).

Figure 12: A: ‘Gharawa’ symbol on a small stone boulder noticed in Maharashtra local tribal people (courtesy: K. Pawar); B: A lady is drawing similar symbol on the natural rock surface at the time of their regional festival, Maharashtra; C: Similar motifs are noticed from the Bhabhua Block at the time of marriage. D: Bhaiyadooj drawing on the wall of the house are very popular among the inhabitants of Kaimur, for the welfare of brother, sisters use to celebrate this festival after the deepawali festival, drawing comprise many floral, faunal, geometric and non-geometric symbols, similarly as pidiya ladies are prepared the colours and E: Similar drawing are execute on the occasion of marriage when bride came to husband home, Kaimur.
Figure 13: A: Drawing made of mud paste over the mud wall of Kharwar tribe, B: Red circular paintings over the wall of the Oraon wattle and daub house, C: Seven vermilion tika on a stair, this is a part of many ritual activities, a symbolic representation of seven goddesses, and D: Five tika on the Kush (a kind of grass) celebrate on the occasion of Kushiya Mahotsava, symbolic meaning of these five tika is Earth, Air, Water, Sky, Fire.

Some say that the Kusa grass represents the hair of Brahma; others say it is the hair of Vishnu. In one folk variant of the Ramayan, it is the hair of Seeta as she sets of into the earth where the distraught Rama tries to hold on to her but could only catch a few strands of her hair that turned into Kusa grass whose sharp edges cut Rama’s fingers. Kusa grass is used in fire sacrifices (Homa, Havan etc.). The officiating priest shapes a ring of the grass and wears it on the finger. It is also assembled and tied for its use to sprinkle water on the presiding idol and other sacrificial items. A mat is also made of this grass for the devotee to sit. The early rock art gives testimony to the fact of symbolising nature as a divine representative of god. Today during the Kushiya-Mahotsava wife and husband together perform this ritual after the holy bath with the help of the priest (Figure 13).
Sacrifices of an Animal and Local Deities

The area south of Ganga was the home of the autochthonous races and still dominated by the inhabitants of middle Ganga plain. The areas of Japala and Adhaura are still dominated by the Chero, Kharawas and Oraons. The tribes of Chhotanagpur and Santhal areas belong to the Atavika kingdoms or the Karushadesha. At the time of Navratri 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 and its ritual continuity. Locally, people also call Sitala as a Deswai or Saire Mata; Pigs are usually killed to propitiate her. The deities worshipped in early time by the forest dwellers appear to resemble the Yakshini Bhawani at Bhaluni, Tarachandi at Sasaram, Tekari Devi at Tilauthu block of Rohtas, Bakhari Devi at Sasaram, Chandimata at Madurana and Mundeshwari at Bhabhua etc. Moreover, a large number of deities mostly found in and outside various villages are installed on a high platform under Pipal or a Neem tree.

Each household has a place of worship (Devakula or Devta ka Ghar) where rituals are performed at the time of new undertaking, initiations, on the eve of birth of a child and at the time of the marriage of a family member. Each house has a deity that is Brahma, Sitala or any other male or female deity. Hence, the primitive nature of religion along with the practices of paintings is still found among the people of India. Thus, the early religion of India constituted of all the features of primitive religions, such as animism, magic, fetishism, shamanism etc. that may be found in its unaltered form in the presently ongoing religious life of the inhabitants of the region.
Human artistry heritage since the hoary past remained a parallel endeavour beyond time and space. The aborigines even today carry out their endeavour around their shelters. If one has, a close look at the Kharwar houses one finds the motifs of sun and moon and the stick man (Figure 14) concepts, which we find in early rock art sites.

Review of Ethnographical Data

The author (Tiwary.2016:73-75) wishes to review the earlier descriptions of ethnographers of the demographics of groups of people, remembering that the data are generally correct. The data also depend on the methods of scholars. It is worth stressing that scholars have often treated some activities as exclusively male, notably hunting, stone tool making, fighting and rock art, as well as all domestic activities like making food and clothes and keeping house. However, ethnography shows that women often do these things too. Scholars were ignorant of this fact, or chose to ignore it, and the result was a skewed version of the past. But the feminists themselves, far from shunning this (while justifiably complaining about it), do exactly the same by ignoring or brushing aside examples of men carrying out ‘female’ activities. In any case, the realization that women made stone tools will hardly produce compelling insights. Tools tell us nothing about gender: even if some future analytical technique were to detect traces of pheromones or couplings on a stone tool, or blood residues that could be identified as male or female, this would merely tell us which sex was the last to touch it; it would reveal nothing about which sex made or habitually used it.

Any detailed knowledge we have about which sex did what comes from ethnohistory and ethnography, not from archaeology. There is no alternative to reconstructing the past in this way, combining modern observations with the archaeological data. But how far can ethnography help to find women in the past? We can understand the demographic structure by way of folklores, folktales, mythology and the study of rock art. The basic problem is that ethnography can usually provide a number of possible explanations for archaeological data. It has been pointed out that even a rich female burial does not necessarily indicate that the occupant had any power; it could merely reflect her husband’s wealth (and the opposite is equally applicable to a rich male burial, of course). First of all what is the necessity of this genderisation of archaeological relics’ demography? Archaeological data never directly provide enough information to construct such interpretation. Men and women as well as children contributed in all the activities of subsistence during ancient times. This is very easy to understand by looking at the behavior of certain groups today which are still prevalent in modern society. One can see that how the Mushhara, Bind, Harijana are even today decorating their outer wall by family support and neighbor help too on special occasion. Even the earliest texts maintain the equality of gender in all activities, be it learning, warfare, politics or arts and crafts.

Conclusion

The tradition of rock paintings is still found among forest dwelling tribal of India carried out by the women folk. The most significant thing is that tribal women of this
region are still using the same symbols and pattern, almost same types of colours prepared form household objects (Pati et al. 2002). Similarly, depiction of same subject matter such as various animals, human beings geometrical pattern indicates great continuity in the tradition of rock paintings with little changes.

Ethno-rock art can provide insights of value to archaeo-scientists and social anthropologists of the past livelihoods 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 anthropological research to archaeological investigations. This is due to the lack of emphasis by 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 organised.

There are greater problems persisting with archaeological information. Due to lack of taphonomical qualification, such data prompts greatly distorted perceived realities. While the archaeo-scientists have always made some allowance for these distortions by common sense, without systematic correction one must accept that any interpretation of the record will be substantially distorted (Wylie. 1985:63-111, Bednarik. 1991:18-21, Bednarik. 1993). According to the folk tradition, the rock art drawings were carried out by using animal blood. This could also be the folk interoperation of the colour red that is widely used in the execution of art.

The conclusion is based on the holistic study of present tribes, semi-tribes, their rituals and the people of the region. Rock Art is comprehended to be a part of the ritual activities of the tribes and modern societies. The conclusion based on the present evidences which are seen as continuous traditions.

Needless to say that in description of rock art, there is little information to speculate the connections between man and his environment. The examples of animal representation, floor art, marriage ritual and continuing tradition manages to explain somewhat presumed logic and interrelationships of self with nature.

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