



CULTURAL DEPICTION IN ROCK PAINTINGS OF SAGAR, DISTRICT – MADHYA PRADESH

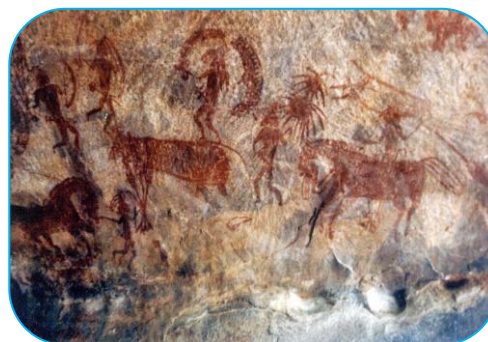
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ABSTRACT:

The Sagar District in Madhya Pradesh is situated between latitude 23° 10'to 24° 27'North and longitude 78°40' and 79°21' East. The area of this district is 10,252 square Km. The origin of name come from the large lake of the headquarter town. Sagar district surrounded by Vindhyan range is the Headquarter of Sagar division is a part of Bundelkhand region of Madhya Pradesh. Vindhyan ranges and many rivers like Sonar, Berma, Gadheri, give the facility of residence for prehistoric man. They lived on the different rock shelters and river banks of this area. His remains are found as the rock paintings and Paleolithic tools from different places of this region. The colours used on these paintings are mainly- Black, Red, White, Ochre, Green, Yellow, and Pink. Hunting, dancing, wars, animals, are the main subject of these paintings. Warriors are shown holding different weapons like bows and Arrows, Swords, Lances and Javelin. The animals which depicted in paintings are- Elephants, Dogs, Deer, Horse, Reindeer, Bison, Bulls etc. the different birds like peacock, cranes and some other animals like rabbits and fish are also painted in these shelters. Some symbols which have religious important in present society like swastika, taurine, cross, and trees within railings are also painted in these paintings.



KEY WORDS: Vindhyan ranges , headquarter town, paintings.

INTRODUCTION:

The Sagar District in Madhya Pradesh is situated between latitude 23° 10'to 24° 27'North and longitude 78°40' and 79°21' East. The area of this district is 10,252 square Km¹. The origin of the name derived from the large lake of the Headquarter town. Vindhyan ranges and many rivers like Sonar, Berma, Gadheri, give the facility of residence for prehistoric man. They lived on the different rock shelters and riverbanks of this area. His remains are found as the rock paintings and Paleolithic tools from different places of this region. Numerous rock painting has been founded from various sites in Sagar district. In which some important sites are Aabchand, Gadaulli- Maulali, Khanpur, Jerai- Jarara,

¹ Krishnan V.S, Sagar Gazzetier (Bhopal: government central press, 1967).

Bhapel in Narayavali area, Peparai, Kadata, Talguari, Ramgarh, Gauridant in Rangir area and Madaiya God, Pathari, Dhamoni, Kota, Barodiya, and Hirapur are located in the Dhamoni area.

Aabchand- is situated on Sagar to Damoh road at 35 km east of Sagar. Painted rock shelters are found in both the hilly bank of the river Gadheri tributary of Sunar River. There are dozens of rock shelters are with paintings. Some of their rock paintings are at close proximity from the river, on a lower level, which is rather an unusual feature. Rock paintings are more than in number on northern bank comparison of the southern bank. The rock shelters are starting from Aabchand village and spread on a 5km square area. The colors used in these paintings are mainly- Black, Red, White, Ochre, Green, Yellow, and Pink. Hunting, dancing, wars, animals, are the main subject of these paintings².

Warriors are shown holding different weapons like bows and Arrows, Swords, Lances and Javelin. The animals depicted in paintings are- Elephants, Dogs, Deer, Horse, Reindeer, Bison, Bulls, etc. the different birds like peacock, cranes and some other animals like rabbits and fish are also painted in these shelters³. Some symbols which have religious importance in present society like swastika, taurine, cross, and trees within railings are also painted in these paintings.

The oldest paintings of Aabchand rock shelters are made of brown color⁴. The ochre color paintings have second and the paintings which are made by white color have third place in chronology. The mixed color if white and red also used in some paintings. Aabchand is an important place of Sagar district for antiquity, diversity, depiction, artistic, and many numbers of rock paintings. The first information about the rock paintings of Aabchand was given by Mr. Vedanand. Prof. K.D. Vajpayee, Head of the Department of Archaeology of Sagar University surveyed the site in 1955 A.D⁵. The painted rock shelters of Aabchand are divided into these categories-

1. Temple Rock shelter
2. Bhadbhada rock shelter
3. Raptaghat
4. Dhabua
5. Imlikarar
6. Ekla ghat
7. Garhhua ghat

1. Temple rock shelter

The temple rock shelter can be divided into 6 parts, the figure which is in cell number 3 most of these pictures are of animals. The first picture is a marking of seven men in a brown-colored graphing style. A red and ochre-colored human figure depicted in the second picture. The main picture of rock shelter number 4 has 2 main picture the first picture has used a red color, five archers with his tarkash are shown behind the dog in a row. The second picture depicts the foot soldiers carrying swords and shields behind the horse-drawn warrior. There are three main pictures in cell number 5, in the first picture, the row of deer and reindeer is marked off, in the second picture is the marking of the man and woman. The number of prehistoric paintings is the highest in rock shelter number six; these paintings are made from dark brown color, on which the layer of the lime has gone. Wild buffalo and deer figures are more in animals, besides these Horses drown warrior, buffalo, elephant, deer, peacock; cranes and many birds are depicted⁶.

2. Bhadbhada rock shelter-

² R.N. Agrawal, *Bhartiya Chitrakala Vivechan* (merrut, 1995).

³ Vijay Singh, "Early Rock Paintings of Sagar Region" (Savitribai Phule Pune University, 1987).

⁴ K.D. Bajpayee, *Sagar through the Ages* (Sagar, 1964).

⁵ Bajpayee.

⁶ K.K. Chakrawarty, *Rock Art and Archaeology of India*, ed. K.k. Chakrawarty (delhi: agam kala prakashan, 2008).

There have been mainly two rock-shelters in the area, in which two batches of humans and deer and other animals have been painted.

3. Rapta Ghat shelter-

Rapta ghat rock shelter is divided into two parts. In the first part of the shelter The human in dancing pose, group of dancing men, Knight Rider, Foot soldiers holding the sword and shield, the warrior and the person riding on the elephant are depicted. The second part of the rock shelter depicts the departure of the warriors for battle, the dog, the lion, the cow, and the horse and knight riders.

4. Dhabua Ghat Rock Shelter-

This rock shelter is the largest rock shelter of this region in terms of size and pictures, due to the falling of big rocks; it has been divided into three parts. Elephants, horses, and deer are depicted in the middle part. There is a marking of the constellations, Sun and Moon around a tree. In this rock, shelter depicts a wounded warrior, a warrior with a sword and a shield, a warrior with a bow and arrow, a person riding a horse, a mounted warrior, cow, peacock, etc. Another important painting is that a person is dragging an animal tied with a rope.

Imlikarar Rock Shelter-

Very less number of paintings in this rock shelter. Among the pictures found, there are pictures of humans, lions, horses and warriors in complementary style and illustration style.

Ekla Ghat-

There are more pictures of war scenes and horsemen in this rock shelter. Most of the pictures are depicted in red and ochre colors.

Gadhvaar Ghat-

Most of the pictures of the Garhwar Ghat had made of red and ochre color. The important paintings of these rock shelters are horse rider with hood, warriors holding swords, a dancing woman and a peacock, etc.

Khanpur- Khanpur located on the route going from Sagar to Bina at 5 km inside the village named Barkheri, in dense forests, there are four painted shelters. Here the paintings are made of dark red color, in addition to this, ochre and brown colors have also been used. The subject matter of the pictures is wildlife, peacock, wild buffalo, Boar, Sambhar, monkey, etc. Horse, warrior, Horse rider, procession, dance-related to human life are also depicted in shelters. Colors of Some of the pictures have been dulled due to the influence of natural factors.

Pathri Kota- In Pathari Kota, the figure of a huge animal is painted in red. The original image was probably of an elephant but due to the attempt to give the shape of a horse in the later period, it is unclear. A picture of reindeer is in red in complementary style with the back part has been given the form of Dhanusha, which is a new style. A picture of a mridang maestro has also been depicted playing a riot mridanga or dholak in his waist from here.

Kadta village- Kadta is situated at a distance of 25 kilometers from Sagar, at Sagar Rahli road. total ten caves are founded from here, but the pictures are in a few caves. Ocher, red, black, and white colors have been used for making pictures. The most notable pictures that have been obtained from here is painted in white color. In which, on the left, a male of shorter height is shown running, the man on the right side is attacking with the longer one. Some Palaeolithic tools also have been obtained from rock shelters here.

Targuari- Targuari is located in dense forests 15 km from Baroda, some rock carpets and some historical ones are found in the rock paintings obtained from here. In the rock paintings obtained from

here, horse war made from Lalganj, pictures of warrior and horseman and reindeer nilgai in wild animals, etc. have been obtained.

Piprai- Piprai is located 8 km from Baroda on rehli Sagar road. only a large size rock shelter is found here. The oldest picture found from here is a picture of an unclear animal and human. the second picture depicts a horse and five human figures above them. The picture of the horse is painted geometrically. A warrior in white is depicted carrying a shield and a sword in his hand. Another picture shows a warrior in blue-black hunting a white-colored bird. The bird is probably a peacock. Different types of miniature stone tools made of quartz are found from this rock shelter.

Madaiya Gaud- Madaiya God village is located about 20 km away on Sagar Dhamoni road. Right from this village, two pictures are available in two rok shelters found in the hills at a distance of 4 km. According to local residents, this is the result of witchcraft. The style color and composition of the rock paintings show that some paintings belong to the Middle Stone Age and some paintings from the Neolithic and historical periods are also pictures.

Cultural Aspects in Rock Paintings of Sagar-

Culture is a very broad term that includes all aspects of the behavior of a society, social condition, economic condition, religious condition, governance, administration, war, and artistic aspect. All practical, ideal and intellectual aspects also included in it. According to Edward Taylor "An Archaeologist defined culture as Knowledge, Belief, Art, Morals, Law, Customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a man as member of the society ". Many pictures related to culture are found from Sagar which provides knowledge of civilization and culture of that time. The civilization and culture known from the pictures obtained from the rock paintings of Sagar can be explained under the following points-

Social Aspects-

In the rock paintings of Sagar many pictures related to human activities, daily interest, etc. are found in these areas, people are shown in group or duet dancing which provides knowledge of mutual harmony and means of entertainment in human society. The pictures of women and men dancing together demonstrate the idea of equality between men and women in prehistoric Man. The early instruments used for entertainment include the marking of the drum and flute in several paintings in which a person is shown playing these instruments. In one picture a woman is holding a Drum in her right hand is and drummers stick in the left hand. It seems that she is about to play the Drum or she has finished, and in the present society, Drums are played by women in various ritual works. Pictures of people playing flutes are extremely captivating and remind us of Lord Krishna. A large number of pictures using musical instruments also show here that the lives of people were full of fun⁷.

We also get the knowledge of erstwhile sections of the society from these pictures⁸. Different social groups like kings, chiefs, soldiers, ordinary men, and servants are depicted on this. The person sitting on a horse elephant represents the upper class of the society while the pedestrians painted with them represent the ordinary section of the society. Four people in a rock shelter three of which are wearing something like a vest and the fourth one is the bare body and is shown carrying some memory on the back. The person, who is wearing clothes, will have a better financial condition than the fourth one. A person is shown wearing a triangular turban and a triangular vest on the head. A buffalo is shown hanging in front of it and behind it, 6 people stand with a stick in hand⁹. These are shown to the chief and other individuals. Family life also depicted in pictures scene is related to food collection

⁷ Meenakshi Pathak Dubey, *Rock Art of Panchmrhi Biosphere (Mesolithic to Historic Times)* (New Delhi: B.R. World of Books, 2013).

⁸ K.K. badam, G.L, Bajpayee, S.K, Chakrworthy, Madhya Bharat Ki Shailchitrkala (New Delhi: B.R. World of Books, 2009).

⁹ Singh, "Early Rock Paintings of Sagar Region."

childbirth and child-rearing. A picture shows a man carrying 2 children who have some material on his head. We also get many proofs of dog rearing from these pictures. Individuals are shown riding on many animals such as horses, elephants. One picture shows a person riding a dog and in another picture, a person rides a peacock. We also get to know the means of dressing and dressing of the then human beings through various types of clothing ornaments worn by individuals in pictures.



Economical Activities-

Much information related to the economic activities of those times found from Sagar's paintings. Hunting and collection of food were the main means of livelihood¹⁰ this time which is depicted in most of the paintings in this area. One picture shows a woman carrying a basket on her back possibly the woman is collecting edible items. In the second picture, two people are wearing something on their heads. Hunting images have been found in large numbers in the rock shelters of this area. The pictures show the hunters hunting deer, wild buffalo, boar, dog, goat, tiger and various other animals. Hunting by one person by two persons or in group Used to be done from the pictures made here, birds were also hunted, the peacock hunting just shows the hunting Spear bow, and arrow and wooden poles were also used for hunting. Along with hunting, we also get evidence of animal husbandry. From these pictures, a picture obtained from the Dhabhua Ghat showed a man dragging a bull tied with a rope. In rock shelter number 17, a person is shown carrying a plow-like instrument in one hand and a bull tied with a rope, on the other hand, indicating agricultural activities. It is also inferred from a picture such as a boat obtained in a cave that they may have been using Boat for movement. In one picture a person is shown floating in a pose with a fish-like appearance in one place. A white-colored fish is shown a painting indicating fishing activities¹¹. Pictures of horse riding and elephant riding are believed to be of the historical period, with Tiara and turban on the head and wearing various kinds of Jewelry, garments and holding weapons, inform the businessmen of textile manufacturing, jewelry manufacturing, and weapons construction. These occupations must have been the means of earning livelihood for the people engaged in these, thus the rock paintings also give knowledge of the then economic life.

¹⁰ V.S. Wakankar, *Painted Rock Shelters of India* (Bhopal: Director Archaeology, Archives & Museum Government of Madhya Pradesh, 2005).

¹¹ Singh, "Early Rock Paintings of Sagar Region."



Religious Activities-

Rock paintings also provide knowledge of the religious beliefs, symbols, method of worship and mystical spirit of human beings of that period. Knowledge of these aspects of erstwhile human life is also found in paintings obtained from Sagar ¹². A picture obtained from the Dhabua Ghat depicts the Sun, Moon, and constellations around a tree, which is proof of the worship of trees and constellations by the prehistoric man¹³. Surrounding a tree is depicted by the Sun Moon and the constellations, which are celebrated by humans by worshiping trees and constellations. There is evidence of not being done. A person with a fish-like tail and a human-like body mentioned behind can be considered a water deity or a mermaid. Later literature also finds mention of water fairies. In one place In one picture, a powerful and larger-than-normal person is shown ready to fight a tiger, Which bears some resemblance to the mythological narrative of Gilgamesh, perhaps some kind of meaning is the depiction of a god or a half-god and half-human being. In a rock shelter, various types of animals, birds, drummers, dancers, and images of human beings, as well as the impression of palms have also been made. At present the palms are also installed on the walls of ritual and marriage occasions, it symbolizes the belief in the mysterious powers of the erstwhile human beings and leads any religious and auspicious event. In the same rock shelter, a round circle is probably seen dancing 12 human figures around the fire, which is being instructed by an exorcist or priest¹⁴. Animals and humans have been shown many times in the number of 7; probably number 7 also had some religious significance. Apart from all these, various types of modern religious icons are also depicted in these paintings, the main ones are Thunderbolt, sun, Constellation and Chakra and trees.



Administrative and War scene-

¹² Mohan Lal Chadhar, "Rock Paintings of Sagar District Madhya Pradesh Conference: Presented This Paper on "Rock Paintings of Sagar District Madhya Pradesh" In the National Seminar Organized by Directorate of Culture and Archaeology (C.G.)," 2012.

¹³ Sharma Shastri, Ajay Mitra, R.K, *Vajpeya:Essay of Evolution of Indian Art and Culture*, ed. Sharma Shastri, Ajay Mitra, R.K (delhi: Agam Kala prakashan, 1987).

¹⁴ Singh, "Early Rock Paintings of Sagar Region."

Battle scenes are found in large numbers in the rock shelters of Sagar. The depiction of monarchical administration is also in these paintings. Administrative or military officers are shown riding on horses or elephants wearing turbaned and crowns on their heads. His servants and followers are shown walking behind him. A person walking on an elephant in a picture and the picture of a warrior and foot soldier riding on a horse depicted at Rapta Ghat. A picture of an injured warrior in Dhabua Ghat and warriors with sword, bow, arrow, shield, etc are depicted in many paintings are shown in war or normal state. In one picture, two people have arrows in their bodies, Two people near them are standing with their hands raised, possibly depicting the surrender after the defeat of the soldiers in the group.



Artistic Aspect-

We get much information about the artistic aspects of human beings from the rock paintings of Sagar. First of all, the pictures made by humans in rock shelters are proof of her artistic interest. These pictures also provide knowledge of the development of prehistoric human art. Comparisons of early paintings later pictures are more beautiful and sophisticated and beautiful¹⁵. In the beginning, the paintings were made only by outlines¹⁶. But later pictures have been decorated with different geometric figures. Evolution is also seen in the use of colors. The most ancient paintings are made of one or two colors mostly in red but in later period pictures, many colors have been used¹⁷. An ornate picture of a horse is obtained from the Bhadbhada rock shelter. Rock painter has also achieved considerable success in the display of emotion, the fight between man and tiger. A picture of a wild boar is an illustration of the skill of painters in which all the parts of the boar are painted with a lifelike. Flower leaves are also marked for decoration in the rock shelter. Four deer is shown running away from the fear of a hunter the artist has complete success in portraying the fear. The picture of a Nilgai and his baby is very captivating. A very attractive picture has been found in which one of the deer is attacking a wild buffalo and 4 deer are shown running in fear The artist has effectively portrayed the deer becoming increasingly smaller in size. A picture depicts the lifelike depiction of the stork in white as its eggs are also shown near stork¹⁸.

¹⁵ Singh.

¹⁶ Brooks Wakanakr, V.S, *Stone Age Paintings of India* (Bombay, 1976).

¹⁷ Wakankar, *Painted Rock Shelters of India*.

¹⁸ Singh, "Early Rock Paintings of Sagar Region."



CONCLUSION-

Rock paintings found from Sagar rock shelter has a long history from the Stone Age to the historical period. In these pictures, we get a complete depiction of different aspects of human life. We get the knowledge of the environment of the Erstwhile human, his daily life, his customs, means of subsistence, entertainment, war hunting, etc. All characters of the Theater of Cave Dweller peoples are presented in these paintings. It is like a book which provides knowledge of that dark period of history, we do not get written and clear evidence in relation to this, and these pictures are also a clear indication of the changes and development in human life. A clear indication of the changes and developments taking place in human life is also obtained from those pictures. The knowledge of tools and the technologies used by it and the development of technology is known by the changes in the weapons and equipment shown in these pictures. How much importance was there in the life of the then human beings, it can also be known from these pictures, such as the depiction of a large number of animals in various stages, which shows that animals were of immense utility to the human beings, whether hunting or other tasks such as traffic, agriculture, these pictures also provide us knowledge of human development because the initial picture represent the hunting-gathering life, the pictures of the later period are related to animal husbandry, agricultural administrative system, war, etc. which are the sign of developed life. Thus clear knowledge of the different cultural aspects can be obtained from the rock paintings of Sagar.

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