



Introduction and achievements

The Rock Art Society of India (RASI) was founded in the national conference on rock art held in Dayalbagh Educational Institute (Deemed to be University) in 1990. It has more than 200 Members from different disciplines from different parts of India and abroad working for the cause of Rock Art Discipline. RASI has been registered with the Niti Ayog Darpan, and obtained its Unique Id No. UP/2018/0217354.

RASI is one of the pioneering members of the International Federation of Rock Art Organisations (IFRAO) and provides an international forum for the dissemination of research findings. RASI journal *Purakala* is the only Indian journal completely devoted to the promotion of scientific research and popularization of rock art heritage. It is one of the major journals of the IFRAO Family. It was established in 1990 and is being regularly published annually. *Purakala* Volume 29, 2019 will be released in the RASI Conference Bhopal, 2020. It is being supported financially by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR) and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).

In order to test the antiquity of early Indian petroglyphs by International Commission the EIP Project was established in 2000. It is a joint venture by RASI and Australian Rock Art Research Association (AURA) under the aegis of IFRAO. More than any other evidence during the last 100 years, the evidence produced by the EIP Project, especially from the excavations at Daraki-Chattan, has established unambiguously that the antiquity of rock art goes to Lower Palaeolithic. It has shown that we have misjudged the time depth of palaeoart and of human cognition, creative ability and symbolism; that modernity of cognition and culture began evolving during the reign of *Homo erectus*; and that southern Asia, not south-western Europe, was the hub of this development. It is going to change the established perception of Pleistocene hominin development in southern Asia, and rewrite the history of cognitive and cultural evolution of hominins in the world, just as the Pleistocene evidence of seafaring has recently revised the technological paradigm. Now India has become a pioneering country in the study of early rock art. EIP Phase-II Project on "Scientific dating of the earliest rock art of the world was carried out in 2016-2018. Its results are awaited.

Bhimbetka Complex of Rock shelters has been inscribed as the World Heritage Site by the UNESCO in 2003. Then RASI President, Giriraj Kumar, was one of the resource persons to help in preparing the document by the ASI for submission in the UNESCO for the same. Besides, for the promotion of the Indian rock art heritage both among the scholars and general mass RASI has been organizing national seminars and rock art exhibitions regularly since 1991 throughout India. So far RASI Congresses have been organised in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Pondichery, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The 24th RASI Congress, 27-29 February 2020 is being organised at Bhopal by the Directorate of Archaeology, Museums and Archives, Madhya Pradesh jointly with M. P. Tourism Corporation, Bhopal.

The RASI-2004 International Rock Art Congress at Agra from November 28 to December 02, 2004 followed by field trips to rock art sites in the Central, Western and Eastern India was a major endeavour for the promotion of the Indian rock art heritage globally.

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