



RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES IN JHARKHAND



MEGALITH OF PUNKARI BARWADIH



प्रत्नकीर्तिमपावृणु

SUPERINTENDING ARCHAEOLOGIST

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA
Ranchi Circle

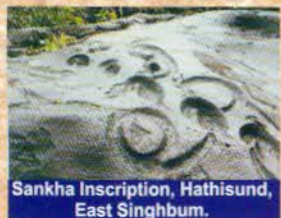
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RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES IN JHARKHAND

"Jharkhand", the name first appears in a copper plate inscription of Ganga dynasty king Narsingha deva, datable to 12th century A.D., reported from south Orissa and signify as land of Jungle and the eco-system nurtured and nourished archaeological tradition. The region of Jharkhand is also referred as Marundo or Murundu in Vayu Puran, Purundu in Matsya Purana, Nurundu or Gurundu in Bhagwat Purana and Nurundu in Brahmanda Purana.

Indeed, the present Jharkhand holds a number of glorious archaeological monuments, sites, and remains, which can be noticed right from West-Singhbhum in south to Kodarma in North, Sahabganj in East to Gadwa in West. However, in recent past, the Archaeological Survey of India, Ranchi Circle has explored some areas thoroughly and discovered some new archaeological relics.

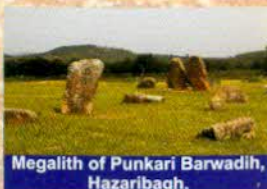
Among them, the most important monuments and sites are Hatisund, Sitagadha, Punkri Burwadih, Mahadev toli, Itkhori, Ichak group of temples, Kaitha temple, excavated site at Saridkel and scientific clearance at Khekpata Shiva Temple premises from where a new dimension of cultural glory of bygone age of Jharkhand is brought into light.



Sankha Inscription, Hatisund, East Singhbhum.

The excellence cultural heritage of Hatisund has hold shell inscription on a huge boulder in the left bank of Dharagiri stream. The long and deep letters of the inscription are engraved in such a manner, which appears like an elephant with long tusk and trunk. Very close to the site, there are another shell inscription, which also deserve the attention. Apart from these, the Dharagiri valley has reported a number of artifacts of pre-historic period.

The Megalithic remains, popularly known as "Asura tila" (the grave yard of Asuras) are the main feature of grave culture of Jharkhand, which is still in vogue in a few



Megalith of Punkri Barwadih, Hazaribagh.

areas. The Punkri Burwadih site, which is located about 22 km south-west of the district headquarter Hazaribagh contains a number of Menhir type of Megalithic comprising a large amount of potsherd of variant typology and the picturesque landscape. Apart from these, the site has reported a large amount of iron slag, which emphasized the importance of the iron smelting technology in regional perspective but presently facing heavy threat from proposed mining project of N.T.P.C.

Another Megalithic site Banadag has contains cluster of Menhirs. The land is little sloppy and threat by blasted away in north-west side of the hill. Few menhir are inclined in nature suggest the cosmic orientation and which reflect ancient geometry of sacred sky.



Sitagadha - Baharanpur Site, Hazaribagh.

The Sitagadha-Baharanpur site, about 10 km south-east of district head quarter Hazaribagh, is significant with two small circular mound and a irregular large mound containing large amount of bricks and potsherds. This mound is locally known as "Do Bigha Tad" or "Itwa tila" along with a stone well. The votive stupa and other relic indicate the existence of huge stupa. The votive stupa bears images of Buddha in different mudras in co-ordinal directions.

The temples play a major role in archaeological research. A group of ruined temples have been noticed in Mahadev toli near Murhu Block of Ranchi district. A number of Phallus within the ruinous platform indicate practice of Saiva cult requires further research.



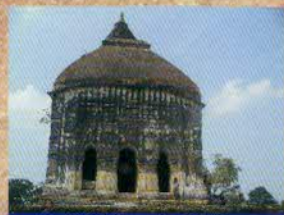
Sculpture at Mahadev Toli Murhu, Ranchi.



Votive Stupa, Itkhori Chatra.

Itkhori, One of the biggest bi-cultural site with large number of architectural parts of temple and huge amount of votive stupa depicting Buddha image, datable to late Pala period. It is noted that a number of panels depict Hindu God and Goddess, specifically Vishnu avataras attains quality of high plasticity.

The Ichak group of temple has one of largest concentration of late 19th century temple of Jharkhand. These temples are dedicated to different Hindu deity viz. Lord Shiva and Lord Surya. Here a group of four temples made of bricks, dedicated to Lord Shiva built on a isolated undulating landscape influenced by late Mugal and Bengal style are noteworthy. Here it is not out



**Brick Temple, Ichak
Hazaribagh.**

of place to mention the brick temple located at Kaitha near Ramgarh in Hazaribagh district. This temple is planned in a double storied with a splendid cylindrical Shikara having square section.



Kaitha Temple, Ramgarh.



**Excavated Remains at Saridkel, Khunti
Ranchi.**

Saridkel, a gloomy village in khunti region of Ranchi district is a historical importance one. In a recent excavation, the site has yielded the ruins of house complex of burnt bricks and a number of iron antiquities suggest a rich cultural heritage. The noteworthy feature of Saridkel is the presence of a 5m width fortification wall running along with the left bank of river Tajna.

Last but not least, the scientific clearance at Khekparta Shiva temple premises has reveal a group of Shiva temple plinth with phallus. After study the plan of the exposed ruins of temple show Navanga type plan. The central temple has a fragmented Vairaba image facing towards east. The architectural fragments of temple suggest tri-rath type rekha deul and small in nature.



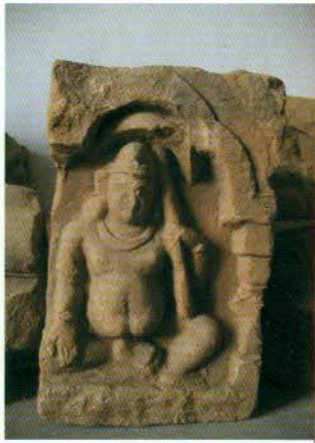
**Excavated Shiva Temple
Khekparta, Lohardaga.**

However, the cultural essence of Jharkhand will spread

when the public extend their support and co-operation to save them from natural as well as artificial hazards for which the Archaeological Survey of India is dedicated in its motive.



Prehistoric Astifacts, Hathisund
East Singhbhum.



Sculpture at Itkhor, Chatra.



Dasavatara Panel, Itkhor, Chatra.



Ichak Group of Temple, Ichak, Hazaribagh.

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