



# Study of a Newly Discovered Microliths and Rock Art Site, Badedev Rakseha at Panna District of Madhya Pradesh, India

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RESEARCH PAPER

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## ABSTRACT

The literary data revealed that the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh has not been explored extensively in the context of prehistoric archaeology. Therefore, present study is considered, keeping in view for the same. For this purpose, a systematic exploration of Panna district was conducted during seasons 2019–20. After exploration, a rock art and microliths assemblage site, Badedev (24°45'41.80" N 80°17'2.73"E), Rakseha was discovered at Panna district by the first author and recovered around 500 Microliths assemblages and 02 rock shelters with depiction of paintings. The major type of microliths artefacts identified are; core, flake, blade, bladelets, scraper, lunate, borer, burin, points, triangle, and debris. The typo-technological and morphological analyses of assemblages revealed that various types of stone artefacts used by prehistoric group of this area were made on locally available raw material and they have a sound knowledge of durability of raw material used for tool making, as we have identified more than 36% and 30% of agate and quartz type of microliths respectively among the whole artifacts collected, as both of these are hard as well as durable type of stones. Remains of microliths assemblages and debitage stone material also certified that Badedev prehistoric site was a tool manufacturing site at this area.

In rock paintings, themes are most dominantly zoomorphic figurine, human figurine, handprints, and geometric and non-geometric design. For detail study of pictographs DStretch software was utilized. On the basis of rock art style, color, composition, technique, theme, subject matter; motifs such as hunting scenes and large number of animal groups, it is assumed that this site was inhabited by hunter-gatherer group. Finally we are in position to say that the discovery of prehistoric site Badedev Rakseha enhanced our knowledge about the prehistoric culture of central Indian region

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Indian prehistory has played a significant role in understanding prehistoric habitation in the South Asian subcontinent. However, prehistoric remains and literary archaeological data witnessed that Indian prehistory dates back to 1.5 million years and it continues till Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (Deo and Rajaguru, 2014). India has one of the earliest microliths industries during the Microlithic periods as compared to three continents that had the highest microliths manufacturing rates such as, Howiesons Poort in southern Africa, and Bondaian in Eastern Australia (Hiscock, Clarkson and Alex, 2011). Central India is well known for prehistoric habitation, as many lithic assemblages and faunal remains have been reported from various excavated and explored prehistoric sites in different locations of this region (Mohanta, 2017; Singh, 2018; Khatri, 1962; Mishra, 2006–07). Meanwhile, a large number of rock shelters have also been discovered and analyzed by various scholars from this part of India, some of which represents paintings and engravings (Mathpal, 1984; Sankaliya H. D., 1974; Wakankar and Panday, 1996; Gupta, 1984; Bajpai, 1964, 1996; Banerjee, Varma and Pike, 2015; Chadar, 2015; Allchin and Allchin, 1968; Misra, 1965; Rajan and Joshi, 1958).

The present study area belonging to the prehistoric period is located in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh which is also a part of Central India. Therefore, it is believed that the Central Indian environment, geography, and natural recourses have provided a suitable landscape for the prehistoric habitant. Due to suitability of landscape more than a dozen of sites were used by prehistoric group in this region as various scholars and we have explored such type of places. These are associated with Paleolithic, Microlithic culture and rock art culture. Most of microliths from these sites are recovered in open-air nearby the shelters and less numbers were found inside shelters. From only few sites microliths were noticed while majority of microliths site are associated with rock shelters. Typologically, Panna area of microliths contains geometric and non-geometric types and in the absence pot-shreds it represents a pre Neolithic Microlithic tradition.

Various studies on prehistoric archaeological artefacts revealed that microliths assemblages are usually associated with the Mesolithic prehistoric cultures (Deo and Rajaguru, 2014; Mishra, 1965, 1989). The Mesolithic microliths assemblages were possibly used to make various types of weapons and tools like, harpoons, sickles, arrowheads, spearheads, and knives which were used with the association of haft of horn, wood, antler and bone. It is also noticed that these organic materials are very well preserved in hot dry and cold dry climatic zones. However, archaeological studies also indicated that utilization of microliths was not only limited to Mesolithic cultures but has been continued till the Iron Age (Mishra, 1989). Thus the Microliths culture is assumed the most productive and widely spread prehistoric cultural period in the Indian subcontinent. It has been found in huge parts of geographical regions and ecological habitats of India (Deep, 2018).

## STUDY AREA

For present study, the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh was considered; it is a part of the Bundelkhand region. Panna district is well known for its Diamond mines, natural beauty, National Park, lots of waterfalls, and cultural history. The prehistoric site of Badedev (24°45'41.80" N 80°17'2.73"E) is situated 15 km. east from the district headquarter of Panna and half a kilometer north of the village Rakseha (Fig.1). To approach the Badedev archaeological site, we have to follow the route of Panna-Brajpur road. This site is located on the left bank of the Runjh river, which meets in Baghin river in the Banda district of Uttar Pradesh.

First author have explored some rock paintings and microliths assemblages in a particular place which is locally known as Badedev during his field work. It is believed that this place is named after a small temple, Badedev. This temple is just close to the prehistoric site of Badedev. However, just aside the Badedev prehistoric site a river flows down and it is locally known as the Runjh river which makes a small waterfall. Runjh is the tributary of the Baghin river. The Badedev area is covered with forest and several natural rockshelters, which might have been attracted prehistoric humans for their habitation.

The prehistoric site, Badedev was discovered during the fieldwork in November 2019, and the main objective of the present study was:-

- (1) To investigate the unexplored prehistoric site as well as rockshelters in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh and
- (2) To analyse the rock paintings and microliths for documentation.

## GEOMORPHOLOGY

Geology plays the most significant role in the studies of the Stone Age to understand and track the resource utilization of prehistoric habitation. The ancient people must have very good knowledge about the availability and accessibility of the different raw materials in the regionally geographic zones (Padhan, 2013).

Geomorphologically Panna district is a prominent part of the Vindhyan plateau within an average height of 350 meters. The oldest rock in the district belongs to the Bundelkhand granite, which is composed of different types of sediments i.e. Kuddapa rock group and Vindhyan rock group. Kuddapa is also known as the Bijawar group and layers of limestone, homstone, sandstone, hematite, quartzite, conglomerate, and kimberlite are found in this series. The famous diamond mines are found in Kimberlite sediments. The Bijawars rock group and Bundelkhand Granite are overlain by rocks of Vindhyan super group represented by the Bhandar group, Rewa group, Kaimoer group and Semri group. Panna erosion level was formed in the Miocene age and the cause was a disturbance in the Oligocene-Miocene erosion cycle due to tertiary upliftment (Sinha, 1994).

## PREVIOUS WORK OF THE AREA

Central India plays a significant role in Stone Age studies. The first prehistoric discovery in this region was made by A.C.L. Carlyle in 1867. Later on a large number of prehistoric sites of different cultural periods were reported from this region by various scholars (Khatri, 1962; Mathpal, 1984; Wakankar & Panday, 1996; Bajpai, 1964; Banerjee, Varma, & Pike, 2015; Chadar, 2015; Singh, 2018; Joshi, 1961; Gupta, 1984 etc.). Hathnora is well known for Pleistocene faunal remains and Bhimbetka is worldwide famous for prehistory and it's preservation of the early Paleolithic to historical occupational remains (Sankaliya, 1974; Chauhan, 2009; Mathpal, 1984).

First prehistoric site in Panna district first was discovered by Soundara Rajan and Joshi in 1956-57 during the exploration of river valley of Panna district. They have brought to light several Stone Age tools of different types from Bariyarpur (Ken river valley) which were evolved bifacial tools of the Madras handaxe culture (Acheulean culture). Beside first microliths site, another microliths site was also discovered from Panna district at Jamunai hill of Pahari-Khera (Ghosh, 1957-58). In 1959 Allchin explored some middle Stone Age sites in central India and they discovered Pandav fall and Baghin river gravel in Panna district and recovered the middle Stone Age artefact. The discovery of Pandav fall and Baghin river assumed that this landscape was utilized from the Pleistocene period by our ancestors (Allchin, 1959). After the discovery of Bariyarpur, Sundarajan analyzed the artefacts of Bariyarpur and published an article in the *Ancient India Journal*. In this article, they have described details about the artefacts of Bariyarpur (Soundarajan, 1961). Later on, Sengupta in 1961 recovered the early Stone Age artefacts from Saduwabridge on Panna-Navgoan road. Those artefacts were recovered from a nullah which was having 1 meter thick deposition of conglomerate (Ghosh, 1961-62). Joshi (1960) also discovered a prehistoric site in the Sonar, Bearma rivers valley of Damoh district, reported fifteen prehistoric sites in this region (Joshi, 1961). These discoveries suggested a lot of possibilities for future research and due to this reason we have considered this area for our investigation.

In Panna district the first rock art site was reported by K.P. Jadia in 1961-62 at the Brahspati-Kund near Brijpur village of Panna-Paharikhera road. The painted rockshelter is situated on the bank of the Baghin river of the Vindhyan range. This paleoart site belongs to Mesolithic to historical periods and most of the depicted paintings are hunting and dancing scene (Ghosh, 1961-62). Later on Gupta in 1976 discovered eight rock art sites in Panna district, these are;

Majha-Pahar; Putarihaugathi, Kanlyanpur-Biladi; Barachh-Pandvan-II; Barachh-Pandvan; Tapkaniya and Hathidol. They have briefly described their location, themes, colour, style, and a major scene of the paintings (Gupta, 1984). After a long gap, Manoj Govil (2010) discovered two rock art sites during the archaeological architectural and monumental field survey in the Panna district. He has provided a brief description in his survey report. Some scholars explored the area and made some discoveries afterward. During the same years Dehuri and Roy (2015) discovered a painted rockshelter at Belha in 2013. Pushendra Nandan also discovered some rock art sites in the district during his Ph.D. fieldwork in 2013. Subsequently Vijay Kumar (2017) discovered few new rock art sites such as, Chereliha-Pathar-Tutuniya; Putariyan-Peti; Lakhonseha Ari and Rai ka Rapta. In Dehuri in 2018 reported three more rock art sites near Brahspati Kund and these are; Bhimpur, Churhai-Johar, Magarkachh.

## THE PHYSICAL CONDITIONS OF THE ARTEFACTS AND RAW MATERIAL

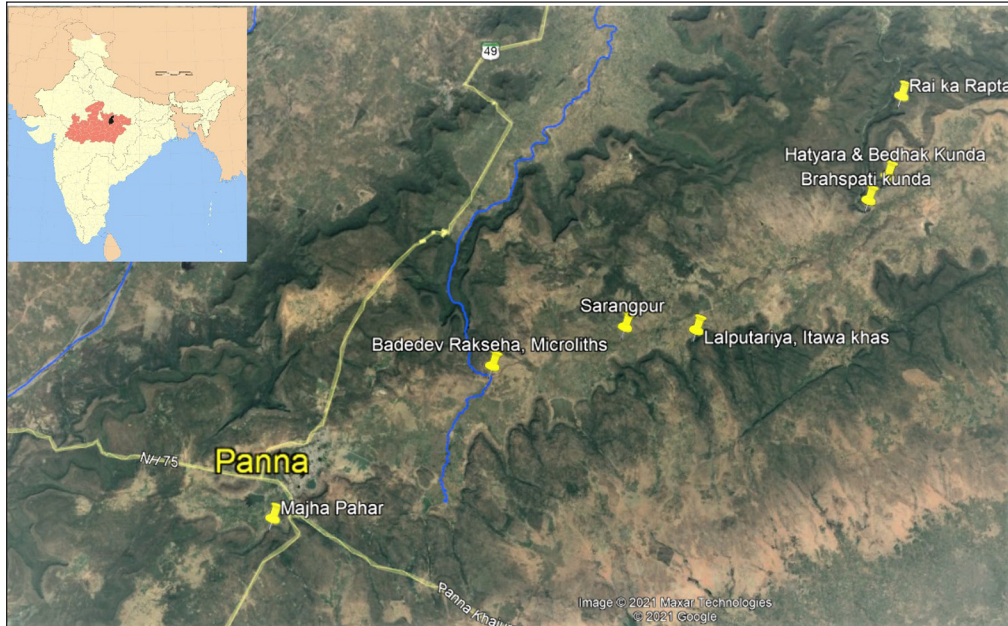
It has been described above that during the field exploration or survey, microliths assemblages were collected from the surface of the Badedev Rakseha site and nature-wise they are in rolled condition. The preservation of artefacts are not depending only on the physical condition of nature but also depends on the quality or nature of raw materials used to manufacture the artefacts (Jayaswal, 1970; Polley and Ray, 2010). Among the collected artefacts it is observed that these artefacts were made on quartz and these are much damaged than the other artefacts which are made on chalcedony, chart, etc.

| SL. NO.      | RAW MATERIAL | TOTAL NUMBER | PERCENTAGE (%) |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1.           | Agate        | 182          | 36.4           |
| 2.           | Quartz       | 154          | 30.8           |
| 3.           | Chert        | 114          | 22.8           |
| 4.           | Jasper       | 30           | 06.0           |
| 5.           | Chalcedony   | 11           | 02.2           |
| 6.           | Breccia      | 9            | 01.8           |
| <b>Total</b> |              | <b>500</b>   | <b>100%</b>    |

**Table 1** Quantitative analysis of raw material used for making artefact at Badedev site.

The raw material plays an important role in the manufacturing of stone tools (Jayaswal, 1970) and their functionality also depends on the quality or condition of the raw material. The prehistoric groups utilized a variety of raw materials for manufacturing the artefacts. In present study area (Badedev Rakseha) we have recovered several types of raw material that were used by prehistoric habitants for the production of stone tools (**Table 1** and **Figure 1**). There principal raw materials used for making the stone tools were agate, while other raw materials used were quartz, chert, jasper, chalcedony, and breccia. Interestingly, most of the raw materials used for making these tools are locally available in the surrounding area at present. The analyses of tools revealed that the most dominant raw material used in this site was agate, as among the collected artefacts 182 assemblages are of this type, which made 36.4% contribution of total assemblages. Second raw material used was quartz as out of 500 assemblages, 154 assemblages were made on this, which made a contribution 30.8% of total lithic assemblages. Third most used raw material was chert. As 144 chert assemblages were collected from the site, which made a contribution 22.8%. Other raw materials recognized as jasper, chalcedony, and brescia and these made the contributions of 6%, 2.2%, and 1.8% respectively. In Vindhyan region, mostly utilized raw materials were cryptocrystalline siliceous materials such as; chalcedony, quartz, agate, jasper (Mehra, 2018). Prehistoric hunter-gatherer people of the Upper Paleolithic-Mesolithic periods used very small and thin lithic artefacts which are called microliths. So they have used the hardest raw material keeping in view of the durability of stone, therefore, they have preferred agate, chert, chalcedony, jasper, and quartz which are the hardest variety of stones. According to the Moths scale, the hardness of these raw materials is in between 6.5 to 7.0 which showed the knowledge of prehistoric hunter-gatherer society about the raw materials.





**Figure 1** Location of Microliths Site, Badedev, Rakseha.

| SL. NO.      | TYPE OF ARTEFACTS | AGATE TRANSPARENT | JASPER    | QUARTZ     | CHALSDONY | CHERT      | BRESCIA   |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| 1.           | Core              | 05                | 04        | 06         | 01        | 14         | 01        |
| 2.           | Flake             | 57                | 07        | 47         | 02        | 21         | 02        |
| 3.           | Blade             | 05                | 01        | 02         | —         | 02         | —         |
| 4.           | Bladelet          | 19                | 06        | 13         | —         | 16         | —         |
| 5.           | Scraper           | 10                | 04        | 04         | 02        | 03         | —         |
| 6.           | Lunate            | 04                | —         | 03         | —         | 01         | —         |
| 7.           | Borer             | 04                | —         | 03         | —         | —          | —         |
| 8.           | Burin             | 01                | —         | 02         | —         | 02         | —         |
| 9.           | Triangle          | 01                | 02        | —          | —         | 02         | —         |
| 10.          | Points            | 04                | —         | 02         | —         | 01         | —         |
| 11.          | Debris            | 72                | 06        | 72         | 02        | 52         | 06        |
| <b>Total</b> |                   | <b>182</b>        | <b>30</b> | <b>154</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>114</b> | <b>09</b> |

**Table 2** Typology analysis of raw material of artefacts.

## LITHIC ASSEMBLAGES

Various prehistoric cultural assemblages have been recovered from this region and its adjoining areas by various scholars (Allchin, 1959; Bajpai, 1964; Chadar, 2015; Dehuri, 2018; Ghosh, 1957–58; JOSHI, 1978; Nandan, 2013). Their works showed the progressive chronology of prehistoric culture present in the various geological depositions of the Panna district and its adjoining areas. However, there is lackness about the systematic description of prehistoric lithic assemblages.

The archaeological site Badedev was discovered during the field session 2019 and during exploration we have recovered microliths along with debitage from the surface. These assemblages were collected through the grid and random collection method. For grid method, grid was made by one by one meter by using locally available bamboo sticks and it was divided into four sub-quadrants. By using this device microliths assemblages were collected systematically. Some assemblages were collected randomly (*Figure 2A* and *Figure 2B*).

A total of 500 artefacts were collected from the site. Among which cores consist of 6%; flakes 27.04%; points 1.04%; crescent 1.06%; borer 2%; burin 1% and triangles 1%; blades comprise only 2% of the assemblage; whereas bladelets are 10.8%, including some backed tools (*Table 3*). The percentage of the retouched tool is very less, it comprises only 1%. Waste products cover 42% of the total lithic assemblage of the Badedev microlithic site.





**Figure 2** (A) *In situ* Microliths Assemblages their sampling through quadrant method. (B) *In situ* Microliths Assemblages their sampling through random method.

| LOCATION OF ARTEFACTS | TYPES OF ARTEFACTS |       |         |       |           |       |          |       |       |          |        | TOTAL OF ALL | PERCENT (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-------|----------|-------|-------|----------|--------|--------------|-------------|
|                       | CORE               | FLAKE | SCRAPER | BLADE | BLADELETS | POINT | CRESCENT | BORER | BURIN | TRIANGLE | DEBRIS |              |             |
| Grid A1               | 03                 | 26    | 04      | 01    | 08        | 03    | 00       | 00    | 00    | 00       | 27     | 72           | 14.4        |
| Grid A2               | 00                 | 15    | 01      | 00    | 00        | 00    | 03       | 00    | 00    | 00       | 17     | 39           | 07.8        |
| Grid A3               | 04                 | 22    | 03      | 00    | 00        | 00    | 00       | 01    | 00    | 00       | 55     | 90           | 18.0        |
| Grid A4               | 04                 | 19    | 05      | 00    | 00        | 00    | 01       | 00    | 01    | 01       | 40     | 71           | 14.2        |
| Random                | 19                 | 55    | 11      | 09    | 38        | 04    | 04       | 09    | 04    | 04       | 73     | 229          | 45.6        |
| <b>Total</b>          | 30                 | 137   | 24      | 10    | 54        | 07    | 08       | 10    | 05    | 05       | 210    | 500          | 100         |
| <b>Percentage (%)</b> | 06                 | 27.4  | 4.8     | 02    | 10.8      | 1.4   | 1.6      | 02    | 01    | 01       | 42     | 100          |             |

**Table 3** Quantitative analysis of lithic artefacts at Badedev Rakseha prehistoric site.



Typological and morphological analysis of assemblages is present in *Table 3* and *Figure 3*. It is evident from *Table 3* that from entire collection only 30 assemblages are the cores, which made the 6% contribution of the total assemblages of the site. Morphological analyses also revealed that they were used for detaching the blades or bladelets and various types of flakes. We have identified different types of cores such as, cylindrical, pyramidal and prismatic and these cores are having single, double and multiple platforms of characterization. They are also showing many types of flaking direction, like single directional, bidirectional and multidirectional. Most of the cores in the collected artefacts are flake cores and quantity of blade-bladelets core is very less. The length of core artefacts extends in between 29.96 to 11.01 mm with an average of 20.28 mm., width extends in between 25.35 to 9.46 mm with an average of 14.63 mm, and the thickness of the cores are extended in between 18.47 to 5.09 mm in an average of 9.31 mm (*Table 4*). The size of the core and their flaking scars clearly indicating that they were extensively used by prehistoric groups.



**Figure 3** Types of Cores from Badedev Rakseha.

## FLAKE

Flakes are primarily detached objects from the natural or prepared core. From the Badedev Rakseha site, 137 (27.4%) flake artefacts were collected among the total lithic assemblages of the site (*Table 3* & *Figure 4*), these are made on various types of raw material such as, agate (41.60%), quartz (29.92%), chert (15.32%), jasper (5.10%), chalcedony (1.45%) and brescia (1.45%) (*Table 2*). It is evident from *Table 4* that the length of the flake extends in between 22.08–6.91 mm (an average of 13.99 mm), width extends in between 19.18–7.39 (an average of 12.15 mm), and the thickness of flake is extended in between 7.26–1.81 mm (an average of 4.27 mm). Morphological analyses also clarified that a very less number of flakes are modified for making the artefacts. The broken parts of artifacts, completeness and quantity of assemblages clearly indicated that this site was used as a tool manufacturing site by prehistoric habitants.

## BLADE

Blade is a type of stone tool which is created by striking a long narrow flake from a stone core, technologically the length of bladelets should be at least twice of the width of the blade. According to Mishra and Nagar (2009) the characteristic feature of bladelets is that the length should be more than twice of the width and width should be less than 12 millimeters. From Badeve Rakseha site a total 64 blades or bladelets artefacts were recovered, which are 12.8% of total lithic assemblages collected (*Table 2* and *Figure 5*). For manufacturing the blade assemblages, agate, quartz, chert, and jasper raw material have been used (*Table 2*). Among 64 blade artefacts 10 were found in backed condition and it is also noticed that most of the



**Figure 4** Types of Flakes from Badedev Rakseha.



**Figure 5** Types of Blade and Bladelets from Badedev Rakseha.

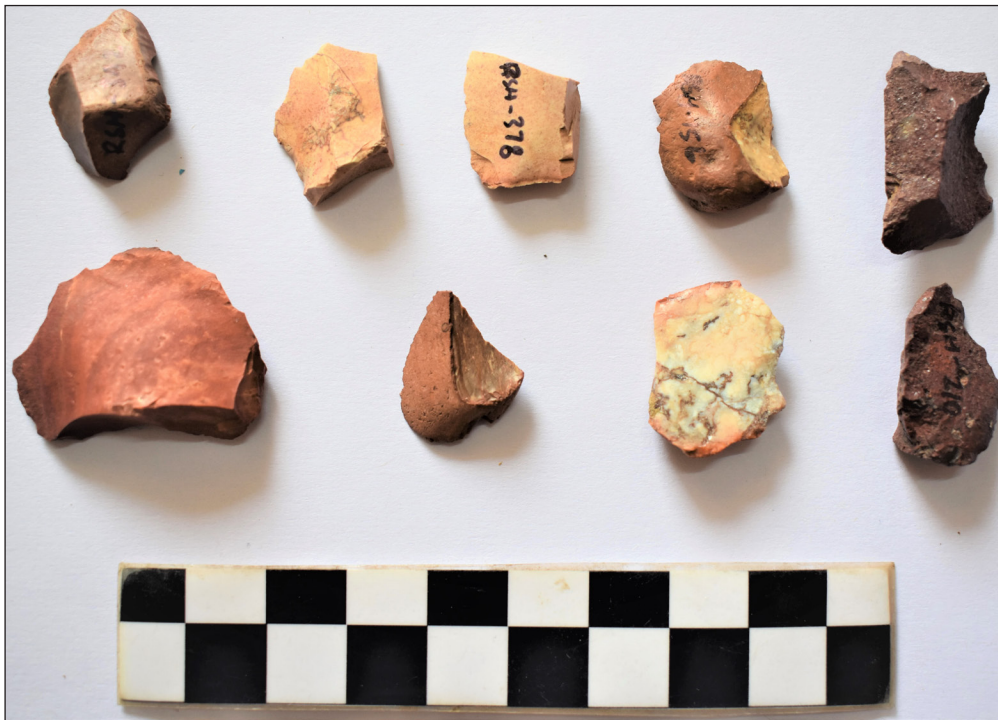
blade or bladelets artefacts are recovered in broken conditions, as only their proximal, medial, and distal parts are in existence. Results presented in *Table 4* shows that the length of the blade or bladelet artefacts extend in between 21.61–10.08 mm (an average of 15.70 mm), width extends in between 11.11–4.06 mm (an average 7.28 mm) and the thickness extends in between 5.65 – 0.87 mm (an average thickness of 3.10 mm).

## SCRAPERS

Scrapers are the unifacial tools that were used as scraping wood, wooden materials, bones and something else. In the study of microliths artefacts, scrapers are one of the major tool type. During our field exploration 24 scrapers were identified out of 500 assemblages and it is 4.8% of the total lithic assemblages collected (*Figure 6*). Results of Morphological identification mentioned in *Table 2* showed that scrapers were made on various types of raw materials, such as agate (41.66%), quartz (16.66%), chert (12.5%), jasper (16.66%), chalcedony (8.33%).



Metrical analyses of all the scrapers have also been done systematically, which is shown in *Table 4* and based on their specific features they are further divided into four subtypes, such as side scraper (50%), end scraper (25%), convex scraper (12.5%) and concave scraper (12.5%).



**Figure 6** Types of Scrapers from Badedev Rakseha.

## OTHER ARTEFACTS

Besides the above a total of 500 microlithic assemblages includes other different varieties of tool types such as burin (1%), borer (1.8%), point (1.4%), crescent or lunate (1.6%), triangle (1%) and all these are 6.8% of total lithic assemblages (*Table 3* and *Figures 7A, 7B, 7C* and *7D*). Crescent or lunate and triangle are made on flake and point, burin and borer are made on blade or bladelets. Most of them are not retouched. It is also interesting to add here that among other assemblages, the highest percentage is of debitage which represents 42%.

|                          | CORE  | FLAKE | BLADE | SCRAPER |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| <b>Length (in mm)</b>    |       |       |       |         |
| Maximum                  | 29.96 | 22.08 | 21.61 | 27.85   |
| Minimum                  | 11.01 | 6.91  | 10.08 | 10.03   |
| Average                  | 20.28 | 13.99 | 15.70 | 18.91   |
| STDEV                    | 3.80  | 3.36  | 2.54  | 3.78    |
| <b>Width (in mm)</b>     |       |       |       |         |
| Maximum                  | 25.35 | 19.18 | 11.11 | 33.77   |
| Minimum                  | 9.46  | 7.39  | 4.06  | 9.06    |
| Average                  | 14.63 | 12.15 | 7.28  | 15.70   |
| STDEV                    | 4.29  | 3.22  | 1.40  | 5.42    |
| <b>Thickness (in mm)</b> |       |       |       |         |
| Maximum                  | 18.47 | 7.26  | 5.65  | 9.01    |
| Minimum                  | 5.09  | 1.81  | 0.87  | 2.55    |
| Average                  | 9.31  | 4.27  | 3.10  | 5.39    |
| STDEV                    | 3.19  | 1.30  | 1.04  | 1.59    |

**Table 4** Metrical analysis of assemblages.



**Figure 7** (A) Types of Crescent or Lunate. (B) Types of Triangles. (C) Types of Points. (D) Types of Borers and Burin.

## ROCK ART (BADEDEV RAKSEHA)

Sandstone formations of these hills have revealed nearly many rockshelters but there are only two rockshelters occupied by prehistoric groups whose evidence is found in the depiction of rock paintings. In the shelter most paintings are vandalized by local people, they have written names on paintings and also damaged the same by firing.

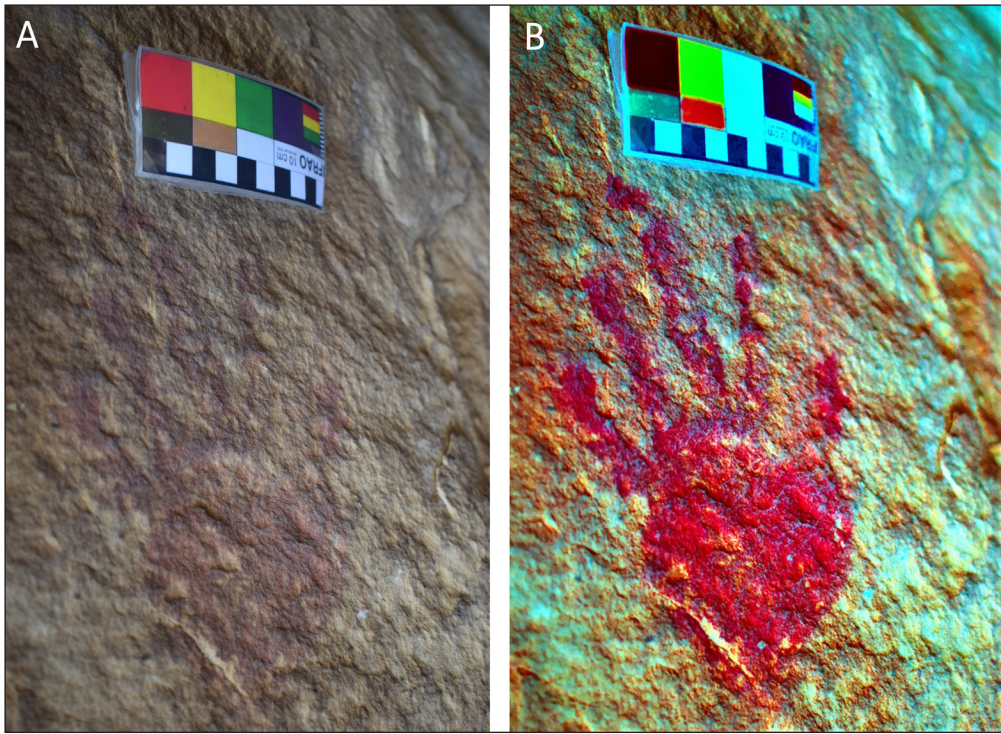
### SHELTER NUMBER-1

Rockshelter number one is west facing on the right hand of the waterfall (*Figure 8*). The shelter is huge but very few painting is visible because local people destroyed them in the lack of knowledge of its importance. All depicted figures are in red or ochre-colour. The prehistoric groups of this site used a shelter wall for making their paintings. The depictions of scenes are geometric and non-geometric figures. Not only is this, a depiction of three handprints also recognized (*Figures 9A* and *9B*), which visualized other scene. When it is enhanced by using DStretch, identified as a human figurine and some animal figures (*Figures 10A* and *10B*).

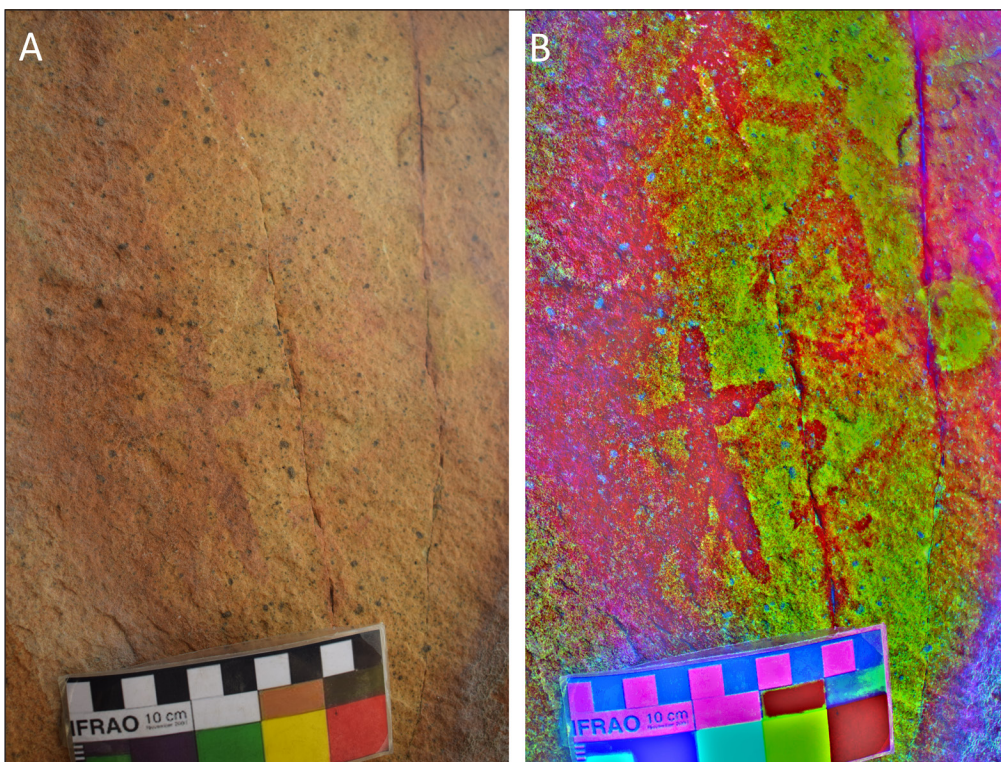


**Figure 8** View of Rakseha, Rock Shelter-1.





**Figure 9 (A)** Painting of Handprint (In situ). **(B)** Painting of Handprint (enhanced by DStretch).

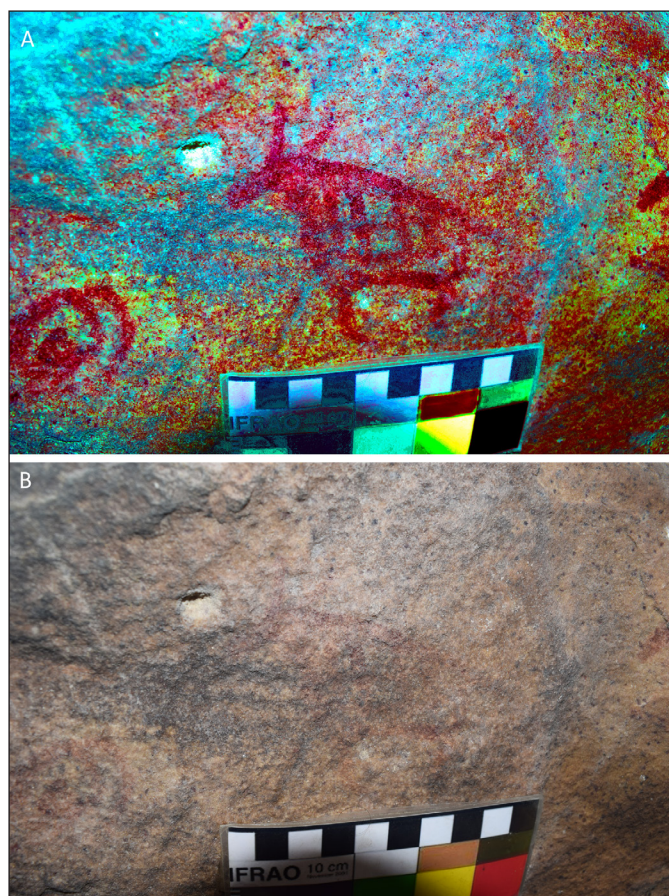


**Figure 10 (A)** Anthropomorphic Figure (In situ). **(B)** Anthropomorphic Figures (Enhanced by DStretch).

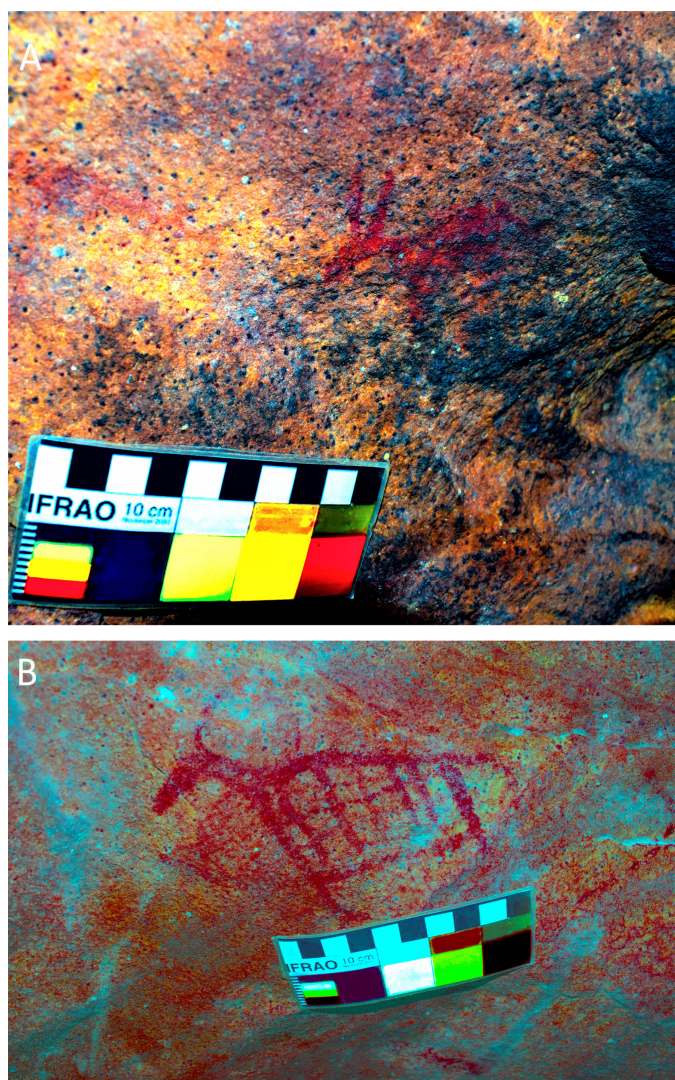
## SHELTER NUMBER-2

Rockshelter number two is located on the left side of the waterfall and it faces on north. The paintings of this shelter are adversely affected by nature, so lots of figures are not identifiable. It is significant that in this shelter, all figure depictions are in a natural style. In this shelter red color was used for drawing the scenes and all the depicted scenes are identified as the animal figures, these animals are deer, neelgai and rabbit, as it can be seen in *Figures 11 (A & B), 12 (A & B) and 13 (A & B)* respectively.



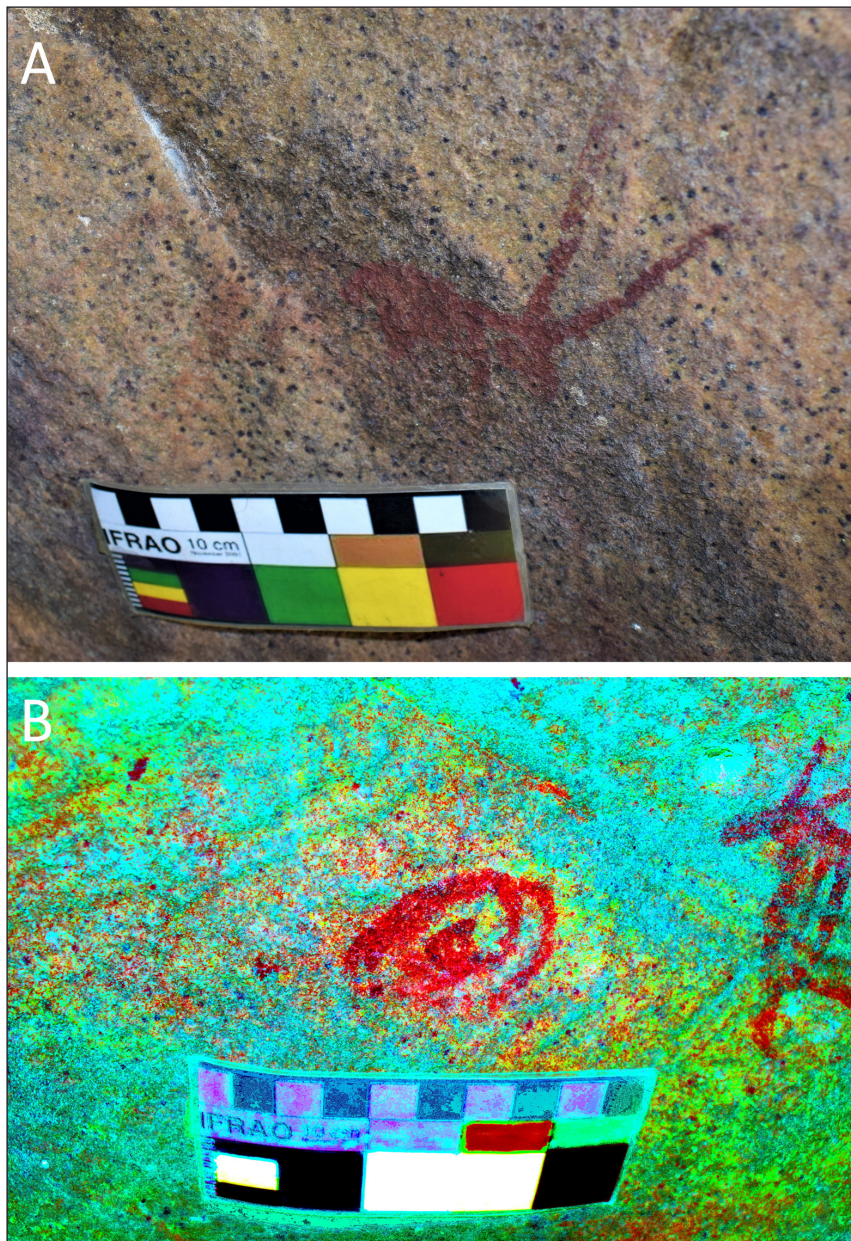


**Figure 11 (A)** Animal Figures at Shelter-2, Rakseha. **(B)** Animal Figures at Shelter-2, Rakseha (Enhanced by DStretch).



**Figure 12 (A)** Animal Figure at Shelter-2, Rakseha. **(B)** Animal Figure at Shelter-2, Rakseha (Enhanced by DStretch).





**Figure 13 (A)** Animal Figures at Shelter-2, Rakseha. **(B)** Animal Figures at Shelter-2, Rakseha (Enhanced by DStretch).

## CONCLUSION

The archaeological studies carried out so far revealed that central India is well known for the studies of Stone Age and Rock art investigations. Archaeological explorations and excavations also suggested that in central India, microliths tradition probably had continued from the Upper Paleolithic period (Deo and Rajaguru, 2014). On this typo-technological and Morphological basis, the microliths industry of central India is characterized by geometric and non-geometric microliths made on bladelets along with other artefacts, such as a triangle, crescent, burin, points; and trapezes made on cores, flake, and blades.

It is already discussed above that the study areas of present investigation are situated on the bank of Runjh River, on foothill of Vindhyan range, so plenty of water sources are there, and easiest availability of raw-material for the manufacturing the microliths artefacts as these are available still at present in the surrounding area of the site. Location of this site could be an ideal landscape for the prehistoric hunter-gatherer-society for their habitation purpose. Based on typo-technological and morphological analysis of the collected assemblages from the site, it is evident that prehistoric habitants of this area have been using varieties of stone artefacts, which were made on locally available raw material. The results morphological and metrical analysis also indicated that the prehistoric group of Badedev Rakseha was having a sound knowledge of durability of raw material used for tool making, as we have identified more than 36% agate and more than 30% quartz type of microliths and both of these are hard and durable type of stones. The remains of microliths assemblages and debitage stone material certifying the evidence of the tool manufacturing site.

The depictions of paintings identified and rockshelters explored also clarified that the prehistoric hunter-gatherer group must have spent some time in this area. It is evident from the pictographs of Badedev, where three varieties of depiction i.e. animals, humans and handprints are found. In rockshelters lots of motifs are not identified due to vandalism and natural causes. On the basis of rock art style, color, composition, technique, theme, subject matter; motifs such as hunting scene and large number of animals, it is assumed that this site was inhabited by hunter-gatherer group. We do not have any absolute dates, so we cannot say anything about the exact chronology of rock art.

The extensive field exploration revealed that in Panna district area of Madhya Pradesh majority of microlithic sites are associated with rockshelters and most of them are situated nearby the natural waterfall, such as Brahspati kund (Dehuri, 2018), Rai ka Rapta (Kumar, 2017). Finally we are in position to say that the discovery of prehistoric site Badedev Rakseha enhanced our knowledge about the prehistoric culture of central Indian region which will definitely be helpful for further research.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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