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## Nilgiri Tribals Tensed Over Destruction of Rock Art

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**40%** of the rock paintings in Karikiyoor at Kil Kotagiri in the Nilgiri forests have been **destroyed by trekkers, tourists, and vandals.**

- **Irula tribal community**, who have an ancestral link to the Nilgiri forest's rock art site, are extremely angered at the damage by illegal trekkers.
- **Scripts** on the rock paintings in Karikiyoor resemble the script found in **Indus civilization** sites of northern India.

### About Irula Tribe

- Irula people reside in northern districts of **Tamil Nadu** and in some parts of **Kerala**.
- Tribes have their origin from ethnic groups of **Southeast Asia and Australia**.
- They speak Irula language that is closely related to **Dravidian language** like Kannada and Tamil.
- Irulas are among the **Particularly vulnerable tribal group**.
  - The PVTGs are the **marginalized section** of the Scheduled tribes of India and are relatively isolated, educationally and socio-economically backward, living in a habitat far away from amenities.
  - PVTG is **not a constitutional category**, nor are these constitutionally recognized communities.
  - It is a Government of India's classification created with the purpose of enabling improvement in the conditions of certain communities with particularly low development.

**Rock Art:** Rock art is human-made markings placed on natural stone.

- Rock art is often divided into three forms: petroglyphs, which are carved into the rock surface, **pictographs**, which are painted onto the surface, and **earth figures**, formed on the ground.
- Rock art in India is extensively found in the caves of:
  - **Bhimbetka caves:** located between Hoshangabad and **Bhopal**, in the foothills

of the Vindhya Mountains.

- **Bagh caves:** located on the bank of Baghani river in the Dhar district of **Madhya Pradesh**.
- **Jogimara caves:** paintings were created before the Ajanta and Bagh Caves and belong to **Pre-Buddha caves**.  
Situated at Amarnath near the origin of Narmada, in Surguja in Chhattisgarh.
- **Armamalai caves:** Armamalai cave paintings located in **Vellore district of Tamil Nadu**, are known for a Jain temple with ancient paintings, petroglyphs and rock art.
- **Significance:**
  - The rock paintings serve, as a **“historical record”**, detailing the hunting habits and **ways of life** of the local communities.
  - Rock arts are used for **ritualistic purpose** by local residents.
  - Tribal communities rely on the rock arts for deriving their **cultural connections** by following the customs engraved in the rock art.