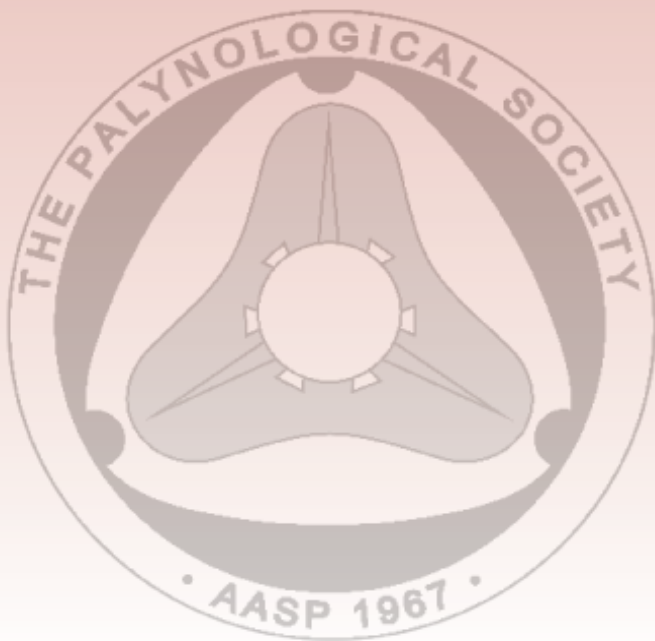


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INTERNATIONAL FIELD WORKSHOP ON VINDHYAN SUPERGROUP, CENTRAL INDIA  
(20<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010)

Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany (BSIP) co-sponsored an International Field Workshop on Vindhyan Supergroup, Central India organized under the aegis of the Palaeontological Society of India (PSI), Lucknow. In recent years, the international scientific community has showed a great interest in the geological studies of the Vindhyan succession. Palaeobiological and palaeomagnetic studies have challenged some of the established paradigms about the evolution of life and age of the basin. More than a decade ago, two scientific discoveries (Seilacher *et al.*, 1998 and Azmi, 1998) prompted the PSI to convene an international field workshop on the Vindhyan Supergroup. It successfully provided an opportunity to all interested international researchers to visit the specific sites and discuss the implications of papers in understanding the evolutionary history of life. In recent years, publication of Malone *et al.*, 2007, Azmi *et al.*, 2007, 2008 and Bengtson *et al.*, 2009 once again triggered the debate among the international scientific community.

After the gap of eight years, another international field workshop was organized by the PSI to assess the latest developments reported in the palaeobiology, palaeomagnetism, isotope geochemistry, geochronology, basin evolution

and oil prospects of the Vindhyan basin. Several classical sections were chosen for the study in the field of palaeobiology, sedimentology and economic geology spread over the two states-Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. During the eleven days field-workshop, participants studied 31 spots covering 2000 km of distance on bus/taxi and examined the representative lithostratigraphy of the Vindhyan Supergroup. The organizing committee incorporated all of the major specialities related to the topics-palaeobiology, sedimentology, geochronology and palaeomagnetism-so there was something to interest everyone in the delegation.

The formal inauguration was held in the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Dr. N. C. Mehrotra, Director BSIP was the Chief Guest of the function. Dr. Mukund Sharma, the Organizing Secretary, introduced the problem of Vindhyan, aims & objective of the workshop and scope of the 10 days long itinerary. Four lectures on the Proterozoic palaeobiology and Vindhyan Supergroup were delivered. Prof. Adolf Seilacher, Tubingen University, Dr. N. J. Butterfield, Cambridge University, Dr. O. P. Pandey, National Geophysical Research Institute and Dr. Bijai Prasad of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited delivered these lectures.

Chitrakoot, Rewa, Maihar (Satna) and Khajuraho cities were the camping stations during the field workshop for the delegations. Three to four spots were visited everyday, providing ample time for observations and discussions on every spot. After examining the crucial section of Chitrakoot section, the common consensus among the participants was that there were no proof of megascopic advanced life which decisively indicate the Cambrian age of the Semri Group or even any other part of the Vindhyan basin. Search at famous Chorhat locality, that previously recorded triploblastic animal traces, did not through up any new similar fossil remain. After extensive discussions on the Chorhat spot, Prof. Adolf Seilacher put forward an alternative explanation about the origin of (?) triploblastic structures that was not a product of animal activity. It is likely that he will publish the alternative explanation soon. Participants have collected samples for further investigations, which may result in collaborative projects among Indian as well International researchers. Phosphatic occurrence in Tirohan Limestone at Janki Kund, Chitrakoot, Molar Tooth structures in Bhandar Limestone at Girgita, Emaliya in Maihar and Rohtasgarh Limestone near toll gate in Sidhi district, carbonaceous Rohtasgarh Limestone in Bistara Mines, Katni are some of the new important research aspects which have drawn attention of the international community. Large oolites in Bhandar Limestone is possibly be another important aspect of future study. Extensive collection of *Chuarina* made by the participants in Dulni River Section at Maihar is likely to add to our knowledge.

Meticulously prepared 107 pages Field Guide-Book with coloured photographs and location maps was an added advantage to all the participants. All the 31 spots, covered during the workshop, were well marked and discussed in the field guide. It is a collection item for those who wish to undertake field work in the Vindhyan basin in future. It would be appropriate if PSI publishes the field guide book and make it available to all those who are interested in Vindhyan studies.

Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany and Centre of Advanced Study in Geology, University

of Lucknow co-sponsored the event. Organizers are grateful to Maihar Cement Factory, Bhadanpur and National Mineral Development Corporations, Majhagan Diamond Mines for hosting the lunch and the invite of erstwhile Maharaja of Rewa on the Republic Day of India. Financial assistance from Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, National Geophysical Research Institute and International Geological Correlation Programme-512 are kindly acknowledged.

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