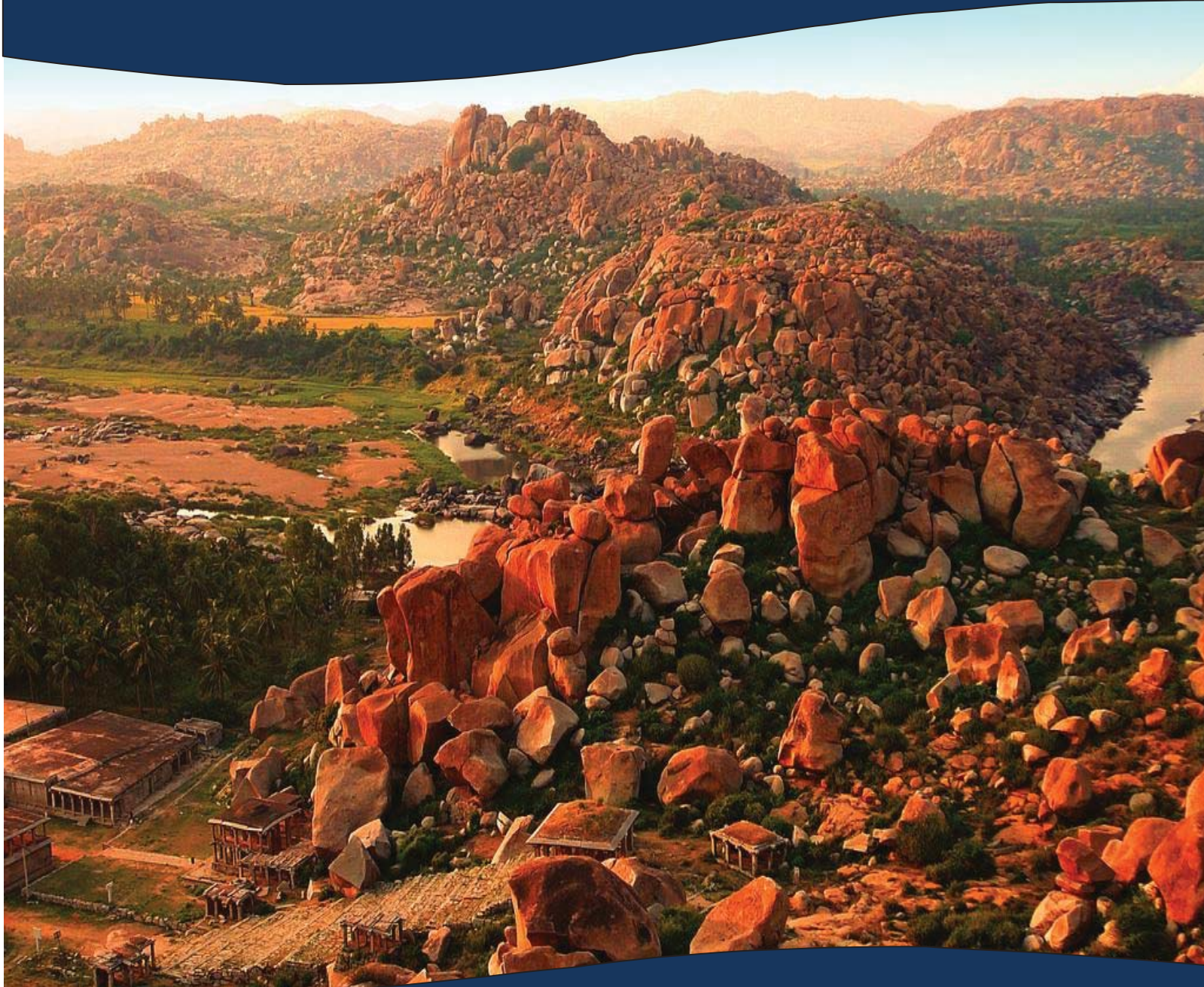


A MONOGRAPH ON
NATIONAL GEOHERITAGE
MONUMENTS
OF INDIA



INTACH

INDIAN NATIONAL TRUST FOR ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE
NATURAL HERITAGE DIVISION
MARCH 2016

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We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Dr. D. Rajasekhar Reddy, Advisor, Geoheritage Cell, INTACH for his vital contribution to this monograph. He has surveyed many extant sites and also drawn up the format [Annexure I] for listing fresh geoheritage sites. Dr. Pushpendra Singh Ranawat (INTACH Udaipur Chapter) has ably authored all sections pertaining to sites in Rajasthan. We are thankful to Mr. L.N. Aggarwal (Convenor, INTACH Kangra Chapter) for the section on Himachal Pradesh, and to Dr. Digvijay Parmar and Mr. Sukhanandi Pratik Jawaharbhai for covering the sites in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

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Foreword

Every country has various unique geological and geomorphologic features which constitute its geoheritage. Over time, the development process obliterates many of these features and this loss necessitates the preservation of representative and/or spectacular features which explain the geological process over geological time or otherwise attract interest due to their magnificent visual characteristics.

Geoheritage has been a neglected feature in the conservation landscape of India. Geological Survey of India [GSI] identified 26 geological sites over the years as National Geological Monuments. Most of these are located in geologically rich states such as Rajasthan, Odisha, Karnataka, Andhra/Telangana, Tamil Nadu.

In advanced countries the concept of geoheritage and geoparks has found much traction with sites being properly protected as part of larger bio-diverse landscapes and form part of tourism circuits.

Unfortunately, beyond declaration as geological monuments little else has been done to protect these marvels of the nature. The survey carried out for this report shows that most of the sites are lying forlorn and desolate and may well be lost to the country during the course of 'development'.

In India, there is little realization of the significance of our geological heritage outside academia and the GSI. There is a need to develop and conserve these geological identities recognizing and understanding the scientific value of the features and landforms. The tourism departments and tourism industry would also need to be made a major stakeholder to establish a fresh revenue stream, generate additional livelihood opportunities as well as create the rationale to preserve more of our landscapes and associated biodiversity. The more spectacular the site the greater the tourism potential.

This monograph presents the results of a survey of the geo-monument sites, outlining threats and recommendations for their conservation. The endeavour is to influence the policy makers to adopt the draft legislation for protection of geo-heritage sites and encourage tourism departments to popularize these sites in tourism circuits. **Thus, a major archaeological site such as Hampi is equally a rich geo-heritage site, an aspect which has been completely overlooked.**

Similarly, rock art sites in Telangana such as Pandavulagutta [Warangal. district] have been overlooked as spectacular geological formations. In Rajasthan, the ancient mining and smelting site (>2000 year old) at Zawar has been recognized by the British Museum London (1983) and American Society of Metals (ASM International, 1988) as a site of international significance.

There is a crying need to identify stakeholders who will actively protect these sites, sensitize local administrations, tourism departments, and the public at large about this neglected heritage. Simple measures of protection, raising visibility and awareness, can make a significant difference. There is a long road ahead.

Subsequently, it is anticipated that many more geoheritage sites will be identified and notified, thus affording these sites the necessary protection during the course of development. With serious effort some of these sites can make it to the UNESCO list of Geoparks. It is hoped that this monograph will help to trigger work in that direction.

Manu Bhatnagar
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INTACH



Kedar Valley

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