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**The Bijaygarh and Rampur Shales of the Vindhyan Supergroup, India: Transgressive System Tract Source Rocks of Mid-Proterozoic Age**

The Bijaygarh black shale of the Kaimur Formation and the Rampur black shale of the underlying Rhotas Formation, are of Mid-Proterozoic age and are between 50- 70m thick. Overall, both shales contain about 3% total organic carbon. The Bijaygarh shale is found only in the eastern or proximal part of the basin, whereas the Rampur shale is laterally extensive and can be traced for 1000's of kilometers.

Examination of thin sections and hand specimens reveal generally wavy lamination, wavy pyritic laminae, thin shreds of organic matter (up to 20mm in diameter) that may be contorted and folded, rounded organic particles (0.2- 0.3mm in size), clay/silt lenses (50- 300 mm in size), and clusters of pyrite in organic matter. These are characteristics that are also found associated with subtidal microbial mats of epicontinental shelf environments in other Proterozoic settings.

Both shales show a generally fining upwards succession with black shales most prominent towards the top. Extreme sediment starvation is indicated by abundant syngenetic pyrite formation and reworked pyritic clasts towards the top of the black shales. Features such as these may represent Transgressive System Tracts (TST) with a condensed zone related to Maximum Flooding (MFS) at their top. Our observations suggest that the black shales mark major flooding events that may be significant enough to be correlated with Proterozoic successions of other continents.