TOURISM, CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT

ART AND CULTURE
MUSEUMS
ARCHAEOLOGY

POLICY NOTE
2019-2020

DEMAND NO. 29

K. PANDIARAJAN
Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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Introduction

3. Archaeology is an experimental discipline concerned with the recovery, systematic description, methodical and analytical study, identification and interpretation of the remains of the ancient humans to obtain a complete picture of their ancient culture as well as society to a possible extent.

Objectives of the Department

3.1 The State Department of Archaeology was established in 1961 with the following objectives:-

• To identify, conserve and preserve ancient and historical monuments.

- To conduct systematic archaeological explorations and excavations in the historically important sites throughout the State.

- Documenting the stone inscriptions by copying, deciphering and publishing.

- Establishing Site Museums.

Administrative Structure

3.2 The Department is headed by the Commissioner of Archaeology and supported by Deputy Director, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Executive Engineer, Assistant Executive Engineer, Assistant Superintending Epigraphist, Assistant Directors (Regional), Curators, Epigraphists, Archaeological Officers, Pre-Historic Archaeologist and Archaeologist.

Path breaking discoveries

3.3 On recommendation of State Department of Archaeology, the Central

Advisory Board of Archaeology [CABA] had permitted Sharma Centre for Heritage Education [SCHE], a research institute from Chennai to conduct explorations and excavations at Attirampakkam, Thiruvallur District during the years 1999-2004, 2015-2016, 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. These detailed research investigations unravelled the past environments during the Acheulian and Middle Palaeolithic cultures at the site.

It was recently demonstrated through Luminescence dating that transitional cultures and the Middle Palaeolithic Culture occurred here from around 3,85,000 to 1,72,000 years ago, far earlier than presumed in India. These path-breaking results positioned Tamil Nadu on the global map of prehistoric cultures through publications in the reputed journals such as Science (March 2011) and Nature (February 2018).

Conservation of Monuments

3.4 The Government of Tamil Nadu have enacted the Tamil Nadu Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act – 1966 and Rules – 1971 to protect the historical monuments in the State. As per the above Act and Rules, till date 91 ancient and historical monuments including religious and secular buildings have been declared as "Protected Monuments".

The last declared protected monument is during 2017-2018 with Jain Sculpture, beds, epigraphs in "Andi Malai Hillock" at Solavandipuram Village, Tirukovilur Taluk, Villupuram District. Likewise during 2018-2019, the preliminary notification had been issued for the Governor's Bungalow at Tarangambadi, Nagapattinam District for declaring as Protected Monument. In addition to this, 55 historical monuments were identified for declaring as

"Protected Monuments" of Department of Archaeology.

Funds for Conservation of Protected Monuments

3.5 During the year 2018-2019, a special fund of Rs.1 crore was sanctioned for the conservation and maintenance for "Protected Monuments" of the Department of Archaeology. In 2018-2019, 24 protected monuments were identified for undertaking conservation and maintenance works like erection of fencing, notice and direction boards and chemical cleaning, which were successfully completed.

Projects funded by Asian Development Bank [ADB]

3.6 The Infrastructure Development Investment Program for Tourism in Tamil Nadu [IDIPT-TN], a sub-project of the Asian Development Bank [ADB] provides funds for the

conservation and restoration works of important historical monuments.

The Asian Development Bank has approved Rs.24 crore under sub-project Tranche-IV, for the Restoration and Conservation of 12 Protected Monuments of Department of Archaeology. The proposed works are planned to be completed before June 2020.

Capacity Building

3.7 As a first of its kind in the country, the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology conducted short term course for six weeks on "Heritage Conservation and Restoration of Monuments" for the benefit of the Engineers and Sthapathies and a short term course for two weeks for Executive Officers of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department.

Sl No	Year	Course		Trainees	
		Six Weeks	Two Weeks	Engineers / Sthapathies	Executive Officers
1	2014-2015	2	---	44	---
2	2015-2016	2	3	40	75
3	2016-2017	---	3	---	75
4	2017-2018	---	4	---	164
	TOTAL	**4**	**10**	**84**	**314**

So far, 314 Executive Officers and 84 Engineers / Sthapathies were imparted with specific training programmes on conservation of temple structures, paintings as well as preservation activities.

Excavation in Historically Important Sites

3.8 The Department of Archaeology acts as a State Level Nodal Agency for forwarding the proposals for excavations from various Departments / Universities / Agencies with the recommendation of the Government of Tamil Nadu to the Central Advisory Board of Archaeology [CABA] for placing before the Standing Committee for approval in Tamil Nadu.

The Department of Archaeology alone so far, have conducted excavations at 40 historical sites and out of which, 36 excavation reports have been published as per Annexure.

Keeladi Excavation [2017-2018]

3.9 The site Keeladi with the cultural deposit mound extending over a vast area of more than 110 acres, amidst the coconut groves are located at Thirupuvanam Taluk in Sivagangai District.

Previously, excavation was conducted by Excavation Branch in Bangalore, Archaeological Survey of India at the site during 2014-2015, 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. In continuation of exposing the hidden treasures and antique of this site, the State Department of Archaeology has been conducting the excavation at this site after getting approval from the CABA. The excavation for the season 2017-2018 was

carried out during April – September, 2018 at a cost of Rs.55 lakh.

Key Findings – Keeladi Excavation

3.10 Excavation work, during this season had yielded 5,820 antiquities with enough cultural traits in the form of structural activity (brick structures, terracotta ring wells, fallen roofing tiles with double holes and deeply finger pressed grooves to draw rain water).

Antiquities like few pieces of golden ornaments, broken portions, copper objects, iron implements, terracotta gamesmen (chessman), hop scotches, ear ornaments, spindle whorls, figurines and portions besides beads of terracotta, glass, semi-precious stones (agate, carnelian, crystal etc.) and popular ceramic types like finer variety of Black and Red ware, Black ware, Black Polished ware, Red ware, Rouletted ware, few pieces of Arretines were also found.

There are also enough numbers of graffiti sherds of both pre and post firing nature. A good number of Tamil Brahmi sherds also have been unearthed.

All these finds clearly indicate the cultural richness of the ancient civilisation of the Tamils of this region having its close proximity to the temple city Madurai. Hence, it becomes essential to continue to probe such cultural hidden treasures of the Keeladi site in future and reveal the cultural wealth of the ancient Tamil society.

Scientific Dating

3.11 Archaeological investigations have no meaning unless the chronological sequences of the events are reconstructed faithfully.

The scientific dating principles are to be regularly analysed for the unearthed artefacts to position Tamil Nadu on the global map of prehistoric to historic cultures. In this context,

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the Department has obtained the dating report for some of the artefacts of Alagankulam and Keeladi Excavation from Beta Analytic Testing Laboratory, Miami, Florida, United States of America.

Sl.No.	Place of Excavation	Dating Result
1	Keeladi (6 Samples)	6th B.C.E to 3rd C.E
2	Alagankulam (4 Samples)	4th B.C.E to 1st C.E

Excavation at Pattaraiperumbudur [2017-2018]

3.12 Pattaraiperumbudur is a small village, situated about 12 km from the Taluk and District headquarters namely Thiruvallur. The excavation for the season 2017-2018 was carried out during May – September, 2018 at a cost of Rs.20 lakh.

This excavation yielded 1,201 antiquities from different periods. The antiquities at the site include stone tools, copper objects, iron objects,

glass objects like beads, bangles, bone points, bone beads, paste beads, semi precious stone beads, pieces of shell bangles, ivory objects, terracotta objects etc.

The antiquities, pottery collection and the structural activity like brick lined well prove the site as a very important settlement in the region. Ornaments, house hold objects, different types of potteries and other minor antiquities from the excavation has given a clear picture for settlement pattern of the site. Through these findings, the vibrant state of the economy, art, culture, literacy and society at large of the ancient Tamils living in this region, can be clearly understood.

Use of Technology in Excavation

3.13 Archaeology requires the application of a wide range of skills, from discovery to interpretation of the findings. Exploring new ways of thinking about the past, gathering and

maximising knowledge and adopting emerging technologies, will expand the knowledge base, improve interpretation of the past and capture everyone's interest and imagination.

In this endeavour, the Department has taken up a major initiative in adopting various technologies like Ground Penetrating Radar [GPR] Survey, Magnetometer Survey, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle [UAV] Survey, etc., to identify the ideal spot for carrying out the systematic archaeological explorations and excavations with the help of reputed institutions like Department of Remote Sensing, Bharathidasan University, Institute of Remote Sensing, Anna University and Indian Institute of Geomagnetism, Mumbai.

Archaeological Site Museums

3.14 The valuable antiquities that have been unearthed from archaeological explorations and excavations have been preserved and exhibited for the benefit of the scholars,

researchers and the general public in the following 14 archaeological site museums situated in various Districts of the State :-

Sl. No	Site Museums	Place / District
1)	Danish Fort Site Museum	Tarangambadi / Nagapattinam
2)	Under Sea Archaeological Site Museum	Poompuhar / Nagapattinam
3)	Gangaikonda Cholapuram Site Museum	Gangaikonda Cholapuram / Ariyalur
4)	Ramalinga Vilaasam Site Museum	Ramanathapuram / Ramanathapuram
5)	Arcot Site Museum	Arcot / Vellore
6)	Pre-Historic Site Museum	Poondi / Thiruvallur
7)	Tirumalai Nayakar Mahal Site Museum	Madurai / Madurai
8)	Rajarajan Site Museum	Thanjavur / Thanjavur
9)	Maratta Site Museum	Thanjavur / Thanjavur
10)	Karur Site Museum	Karur / Karur

11)	Coimbatore Site Museum	Coimbatore / Coimbatore
12)	Courtallam Site Museum	Courtallam / Tirunelveli
13)	Tirukkovilur Site Museum	Tirukkovilur / Villupuram
14)	Dharmapuri Site Museum	Dharmapuri / Dharmapuri

Funds for the maintenance of Site Museums

3.15 During the year 2018-2019, fund of Rs.20 lakh was sanctioned for the maintenance of Site Museums and setting up of specialized library.

Funds for conducting seminars, lectures, trainings, workshops etc.

3.16 During the year 2018-2019, fund of Rs.15 lakh was sanctioned for the celebrations of World Heritage Day (April 18th), World Heritage Week (November 19-25), Archaeology and Epigraphy awareness programmes, organising workshops, competitions, conducting seminars,

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lectures, trainings, etc., for the benefit of scholars, researchers, student community and general public. In this regard, two workshops were successfully organised at Arcot and Sivagangai.

Epigraphy

3.17 One of the primary functions of Archaeology Department is to copy, decipher, edit and publish inscriptions. At present, this Department is in possession of about 24,771 estampages of inscriptions from 29 Districts out of 32 Districts. In the remaining Districts, namely Pudukkottai, Sivagangai and Thoothukudi, the works are in progress. About 14,200 inscriptions have been deciphered by the Department Epigraphists, out of which 7,320 inscriptions have been published in 50 volumes.

An Institute of Epigraphy has been functioning at headquarters of Department of Archaeology since 1974, which conducts a one

year Post Graduate Diploma Course in "Epigraphy and Archaeology". Every year, 8 Post Graduate students are being enrolled and training is given in Epigraphy and Archaeology. So far, 242 students have undergone this course. Every month, a sum of Rs.2,000/- is paid as stipend to each student.

During the year 2018-2019, the stipend of Rs.2,000/- has been enhanced to Rs.4,000/- every month for the benefit of the students. The revised stipend is being extended to the students of the Institute of Epigraphy, with effect from August 2018. `

Setting up of Smart Class for Institute of Epigraphy

3.18 During the year 2018-2019, a sum of Rs.9 lakh was sanctioned for setting up of Smart Class for Institute of Epigraphy and the project was completed.

Publications

3.19 A modernized Department Press is exclusively meant for bringing out books in Tamil and English on Epigraphy, Monuments, Excavation reports, District Archaeological Guide books, Museum Guide books and Temple Monographs. This Department has so far published 301 books. A quarterly journal "Kalvettu" is also being published. So far, 104 issues have been published. 250 publications of this Department are available in its official website www.tnarch.gov.in.

Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre

3.20 Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Centre was established in the year 1869 which is functioning under the control of this Department currently located at the Anna Centenary Library, Kotturpuram, Chennai and this Library has a collection of

72,748 rare manuscripts and 25,373 reference books on various subjects like Mathematics, Astronomy, Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani, Vedas, Agama, Architecture, Music, Fine Arts, History and many other subjects written in Tamil, Sanskrit, Marathi, Urdu, Arabic and Persian Languages which are being safely preserved.

So far, 2,400 Manuscript bundles of 3,00,000 pages have been digitized and are available online. These resources are hosted on the official website, www.tnarch.gov.in of the Department. The information available in the website will be useful to the research scholars and all other readers worldwide.

Manuscripts Resource Centre

3.21 "The National Mission for Manuscripts" (NMM), in New Delhi under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India is engaged in the process of collecting all the manuscripts available in India and it has recognised the Government

Oriental Manuscripts Library in Chennai under the control of Archaeology Department as "Manuscripts Resource Centre" (MRC) for collecting the manuscripts in the State of Tamil Nadu and listing the manuscripts for conversion into electronic form and the work is in progress.

Till date, 66,110 manuscripts have been documented in Electronic form and the same has been sent to the National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi. In this process, the details of the manuscripts about Tamil culture, Astronomy, etc., are documented and preserved.

Manuscripts Conservation Centre

3.22 "The National Mission for Manuscripts" (NMM), in New Delhi under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India had approved to open a Manuscripts Conservation Centre at Government Oriental Manuscripts Library and

Research Centre. In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] had been signed for two years from 01.04.2018 to 31.03.2020. The works are in progress

3.23 Important Activities – 2018-2019

- During the year 2018-2019, a sum of Rs.6.50 lakh was sanctioned for installation of Fire Extinguishers in the Protected Monuments and Archaeological Site Museums. 85 Fire Extinguishers had been installed at a total cost of Rs.4.77 lakh and the project was successfully completed.

- During the year 2018-2019, the fixed pay of Rs.5,000/- was fixed for the watch and ward (part-time employees) of the Protected Monuments and Site Museums. In this context, orders were issued for 22 part- time watchmen as Monument Care Takers at a fixed pay of Rs.5,000/- per month.

- A training programme on the subject "Epigraphy and Archaeology" was conducted at Vellore and Sivagangai Districts at a cost of Rs.5 lakh each. 40 College lecturers, Epigraphy and Archaeology Research scholars and students participated in the above training.

- The World Heritage Week was celebrated from November 19th to 25th, 2018. School students were imparted with knowledge on the significance of the temple and conservation works in all site museums during the celebrations of the World Heritage Week to bring awareness on preservation and conservation of Archaeological Monuments. During this period, 16,119 visitors were benefited.

- The Department of Archaeology organised a special brainstorming session to create vision for the Department of Archaeology

from 08.01.2019 to 10.01.2019, in which around 50 research experts from all over India were invited to present their views and suggestions to sculpt an action plan. The session was successfully completed.

- The Department of Archaeology conducted monthly lectures on various topics such as "Social Aspect of Feminism during Chola period", "Archaeological View on Workship of Mother Goddess", "Palm Leaf Manuscripts", "War and War Techniques of Ancient Tamils", "Documents of Nayaka Period", "Copper Plates of Tamil Nadu", "Arjuna's Penance", "Re-imagining Muziri Pattinam / Muziris : The Ancient Port city of Tamilakam (300 BCE – 500 CE)", "The Role of Museums in preserving our Culture wealth : with special reference to origin and development of ASI's Site Museums", "The early Agropastoral Communities of South India", "Significance of

Forts in Tamil Nadu History" and "Craft Production Centres in Ancient Tamil Country". Scholars, Researchers, Professors and students of History and heritage enthusiasts have been participated significantly.

• In the year 2018-2019, 50 inscriptions were copied from temples and hills in the Districts of Pudukottai and Thiruvannamalai Districts.

TAMIL NADU INNOVATION INITIATIVES (TANII) SCHEMES

3.24 Under Tamil Nadu Innovation Initiatives Scheme for the year 2017-2018, a total sum of Rs.47 lakh has been sanctioned for three projects. Out of three, publication of Tamil Nadu Inscriptions Vol – XIII and ten selected Monographs of Students had been completed and the remaining two projects of creation of Virtual Museum and Installation of

Floor Projection Mapping at Rajarajan Site Museum, Thanjavur are nearing completion.

Multidisciplinary approach

3.25 Having recognised the valuable contribution of specialised disciplines into deeper analysis of archaeological findings, it has been decided to collaborate with the experts from the fields such as Archaeo-botany, Molecular Biology, Population Genetics, Environmental Archaeology and Linguistic Archaeology.

Conclusion

3.26 There has been a renewed interest in Archaeology and Heritage in our State. Hence, there is a huge scope for study of the past, to discover, care for, promote and enjoy our rich and diverse heritage, contributing to our well being and knowledge and conclusively position the history of Tamil Nadu in the global context.

The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology will undertake archaeological research through a multidisciplinary approach with reputed institutions across the globe. Similarly, ongoing field projects that include the conservation of monuments, development of local archaeological explorations and excavations, establishing site museums, copying and deciphering the inscriptions are to be given special attention. We envision that through this type of archaeological practice, we will advance the development of Heritage Management in Tamil Nadu.

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Annexure

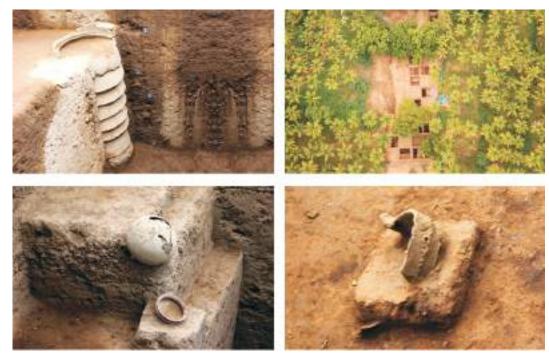| Sl. No	Place	District	Year of excavation	Nature of Site
1	Korkai	Thoothukudi	1968-1969	Early Historic
2	Panchalankurichi	Thoothukudi	1968-1969	Modern
3	Vasavasamudram	Kanchipuram	1969-1970	Early Historic
4	Anaimalai	Coimbatore	1969-1970	Megalithic
5	Pallavamedu	Kancheepuram	1970-1971	Medieval
6	Karur	Karur	1973-1974 1994-1995	Early Historic
7	Panayakulam	Dharmapuri	1979-1980	Early Historic
8	Boluvampatti	Coimbatore	1979-1980 1980-1981	Medieval
9	Kovalanpottal	Madurai	1980-1981	Megalithic
10	Thondi	Ramnathapuram	1980-1981	Early Historic
11	Gangai konda cholapuram	Ariyalur	1980-1981 1986-1987 2008-2009	Medieval
12	Kannanur	Tiruchirappalli	1982-1983	Medieval
13	Kurumbanmedu	Thanjavur	1984-1985	Medieval
14	Palayarai	Thanjavur	1984-1985	Medieval
15	Alagankulam	Ramnathapuram	1986-1987 1990-1991 1992-1993 1994-1995 1996-1997 2014-2015 2016-2017	Early Historic
16	Tirukkovilur	Villupuram	1992-1993	Early Historic

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17	Kodumanal	Erode	1992-1993 1996-1997	Megalithic & Historic
18	Sendamangalam	Villupuram	1992-1993 1994-1995	Medieval
19	Padavedu	Tiruvannamalai	1992-1993	Medieval
20	Tiruttangal	Virudhunagar	1994-1995	Microlithic
21	Poompuhar	Nagapattinam	1994-1995 1997-1998	Early Historic
22	Maligaimedu	Cuddalore	1999-2000	Early Historic
23	Teriruveli	Ramanathapuram	1999-2000	Early Historic
24	Mangudi	Tirunelveli	2001-2002	Microlithic
25	Perur	Coimbatore	2001-2002	Early Historic
26	Andipatti	Tiruvannamalai	2004-2005	Early Historic
27	Modur	Dharmapuri	2004-2005	Neolithic
28	Marakkanam	Villupuram	2005-2006	Medieval
29	Parikulam	Thiruvallur	2005-2007	Palaeolithic
30	Nedunkur	Karur	2006-2007	Megalithic
31	Mangulam	Madurai	2006-2007	Early Historic
32	Sembiyankandiyur	Nagapattinam	2007-2008	Megalithic
33	Tarangambadi	Nagapattinam	2008-2009	Modern
34	Rajakkalmangalam	Tirunelveli	2009-2010	Medieval
35	Talaichankadu	Nagapattinam	2010-2011	Medieval
36	Alambarai	Kancheepuram	2011-2012	Modern
37	Srirangam	Tiruchirappalli	2013-2014 2014-2015	Medieval
38	Ukkiran Kottai	Tirunelveli	2014-2015	Medieval
39	Pattarai perumbudur	Thiruvallur	2015-2016 2017-2018	Later Palaeolithic
40	Keeladi	Sivagangai	2017-2018	Early Historic

**Places of Excavations carried out by
Department of Archaeology**

PHOTOGRAPHS

Aerial view of excavation trenches and exposed ring well, furnace and pottery of Keeladi, Sivagangai District

Exposed scattered animal bones in the excavation trench - Keeladi, Sivagangai District

Findings of brick-well (Sangam Age), ringwell and unique conical utensils from the excavation at Pattaraiperumbudur, Tiruvallur District

Two weeks short term training course on "Conservation and Restoration of Heritage Monuments" for 164 Higher Officials and Executive Officers of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment Department in 4 Batches from 12.11.2018 to 07.01.2019

Organized a Brainstorming Session to create an action plan for the Department from 08.01.2019 to 10.01.2019 in the Auditorium of Tamil Virtual Academy

World Heritage Week Celebrations (19.11.2018 to 25.11.2018) - organized clay modelling and drawing competitions for the benefit of school students

Establishment of Smart Classroom for Institute of Epigraphy