



Current Excavations of Archaeological Survey of India

Pallavaram- Tamil Nadu



Old view of the site

Megalithic site

Pallavaram derived its name from Pal lava settlement. It is one of the most ancient inhabited sites of South India, occupied since Paleolithic period.

British archaeologist Alexander Rea discovered a Sarcophagus in 1888 with several other objects like pots, cups, bowls and iron nails. This gave the site place amongst megalithic sites of India.

Did You Know?

The burial discovered at Pallavaram was given the name- *Madhumakkal thazi*.

In old Pallavaram, ASI marked several acres of land for excavation against the wishes of the residents of the area. In a trial excavation on the foothills of Parivettumalai hill lock in December 2017, they discovered a Sarcophagus. A terracotta coffin identical to the one discovered 140 years earlier in a near intact condition, confirming the existence of megalithic culture in Pallavaram.





Tradition of Burial Urns

Burying the dead in an extended form of pot differing in size and shape with grave goods is practiced since late Stone Age. 3 major sarcophagus were discovered in Tamil Nadu, two from Irugur and one at Pallavaram.

Did You Know?

The sarcophagus discovered in 1888 By Alexander Rea is on display in Madras Government Museum in Egmore.

Characteristics

- The sarcophagus is estimated to be 2,300 years old by ASI.
- The burial is 5.6ft long and 1.5ft wide with the depth of 1.64ft.
- The burial had 3 holes in the lower part where ropes could be tied to move the coffin.
- Impressions of a crescent on the burial indicate the belief that the dead would remain immortal like a moon.





Significance

The excavation confirms the existence of megalithic culture in Pallavaram.

This also makes clear that the civilisation residing in the area were not Nomads.

They were technological savvy in a way that they could make a sarcophagus with 12 legs and designs.

Excavation has highlighted the importance of the site for future preservation.

DID YOU KNOW?

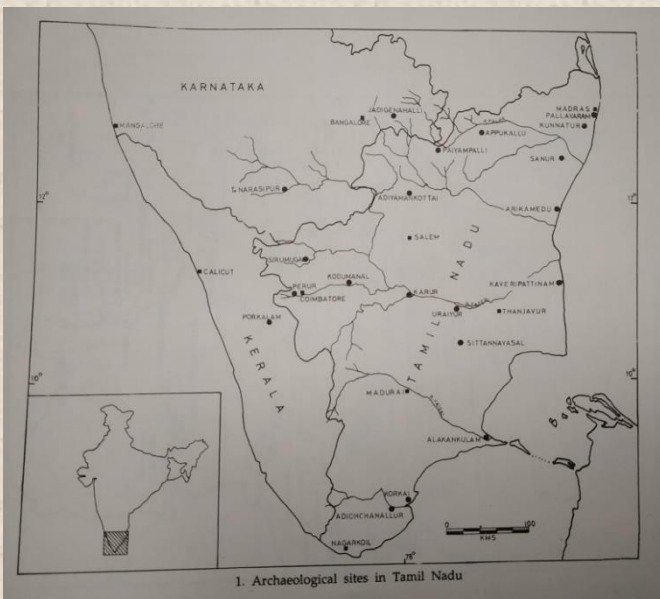
Geologist Robert Bruce Foote in 1863 discovered the stone hand axe on the parade ground at Pallavaram cantonment, Chennai.



Activities

Activity 1- Fill in the Blanks:

- 1) The excavation connects the articles found to the story of _____ in Indian Mythology.
- 2) In a recent excavation at Keezhadi a city of _____ era is discovered.
- 3) The traditional way to bury dead was _____.
- 4) The technique of dating the excavated object is _____.



Activity2- Mark any 4 excavated sites of South India.

Activity 3- Visit an excavation site near you and describe your experience and observation in 800 words.

Activity 4- Get hold of an old coin and try to date the coin. Who minted when did it come to circulation and why?

Sources:

K. Ranjan, Archaeology of Tamil Nadu, Book India publishing co.

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