

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1742
ANSWERED ON 10.03.2025

HORIZONTAL EXCAVATIONS IN ANCIENT SITES OF TAMIL NADU

1742. Dr. T Sumathy *Alias* Thamizhachi Thangapandian:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has any plans to conduct horizontal excavations in the ancient sites in Tamil Nadu to bring out the material evidences for the Iron Age dated prior to 2500 BC;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Union Government has any plans to encourage the decipherment of the enigmatic Indus Script and to establish its relationship with archaic Brahmi script of the Dravidian culture;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the measures taken by the Government to decode, decipher and record archaic Brahmi inscriptions found in Tamil Nadu as well as in other States in the country and in foreign countries like Sri Lanka, Egypt, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AND TOURISM
(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) and (b) Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is conducting archaeological excavation at the Megalithic Cists and Cairns, Amur, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu. No scientific date is obtained from this excavation so far. Besides, Government of India has also granted approval for ten archaeological excavations in the state on the recommendation of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

(c) and (d) Ministry of Culture through the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has taken some initiatives towards deciphering the Indus Script and exploring its connections to other ancient scripts. The activities to promote research into deciphering the Indus Script, include organizing seminars and publishing relevant works etc. Prime objective of the Epigraphy Branch of the ASI is also to study ancient scripts and advancing research in this area.

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(e) Epigraphy Branch of ASI has been continuously conducting epigraphical survey for copying inscriptions which includes Archaic Brahmi inscriptions found in Tamil Nadu as well

as other states in India. Inscriptions in foreign countries such as Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam have also been studied by the scholars of Epigraphy Branch.
