

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1358
ANSWERED ON-28.07.2025

PUBLICATION OF INSCRIPTIONS OF NATARAJA TEMPLE, CHIDAMBARAM

1358. DR. D RAVI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram contains numerous inscriptions from the Chola period, with the earliest from the reign of Aditya Chola-I in the 10th century CE, which provide valuable insights into the temple's history and patronage and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has any plan to document, edit, and publish these inscriptions in the form of a book for scholarly and public access and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to make such a publication available free of cost or at a subsidised rate to devotees visiting the temple and if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, whether the Government is likely to consider initiating a project to preserve, publish and distribute the inscriptions, given their historical and cultural significance?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b) Yes Sir, Epigraphy Branch of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), has copied 297 inscriptions from the Nataraja Temple in Chidambaram, the earliest dating to the reign of Rajendra-I (1036 CE).

All these inscriptions have been deciphered, transcribed and their gist published in the Annual Reports of Indian Epigraphy from 1888 to 1963. Out of them texts of 157 inscriptions have been published in the volumes of South Indian Inscription.

(c) and (d) All the above ASI publications are available at different sales counters in ASI offices, protected monuments, museums and the Epigraphy Branch.
