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**REVIEW ARTICLE**

**ARCHEOLOGICAL TOURISM: POTENTIAL AND INTRICACIES IN TAMIL NADU – A STUDY**

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**Abstract**

Tamil Nadu, one of the greatest Tourism destination in India placed first in domestic tourism and second place in Foreign Tourist Arrivals. Also it has several Archaeological endeavours like Inscriptions, Archaeological sites, Museums with an Historical values. Archeo tourism or Archaeology tourism is a new form tourism connecting and visiting on the purposes for acquiring knowledge and getting high pleasure for own. On the consequences to identifying Archaeological sites which reflects the social, cultural, historical life and livelihood of Ancestors. Tamil Nadu has a enormous potential on Archaeological tourism, but some constrains lack the same. Besides, Keezhadi, Porunthal, kodumanal and kaveepumpattinam leasing the forefront and attract the tourists. However, without awareness, advertisement, provide basic and infrastructure facility may not improve the tourism. However, Tamil Nadu has a potential for all kind of tourism compare to other states. So the Central Government and state Government rake necessary steps to develop Archeo tourism may attract the Global audience.

**Keywords:** Archeo-Tourism, Potential, constraints, Archaeological sites, Ancestors, Museums

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**Introduction**

Tamil Nadu is an Archaeological heaven which comprises vast Archaeological endeavours reflected the socio economic and cultural status of Ancestors. Also, it has 24,771 inscriptions out of 75,000 which was deciphered and made estampages by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) till 2019. Moreover Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department

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enlisted 242 central protected monuments from all over the state, those having unique cultural background. Fortunately, 40 excavation sites were carryout and in 36 sites reports brought into book form. On the Consequences, so much valuable antiquities and artefacts unearthed and transformed as an Archaeological site museums. In Tamil Nadu, there are 14 Archaeological site museums opened and running successfully by Tamil Nadu archaeological Department. This rich numbers revealed the capability of Tamil Nadu tourism potential. Also Tamil Nadu ranked first place in Domestic Tourism in India. Moreover, Tamil Nadu topped Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) three consecutive years from 2015 to 2017. In 2018, it slightly dropped one place to uphold the second place. Other than Domestic Tourism Tamil Nadu have an potential of Heritage Tourism, Coastal Tourism and Adventure Tourism. Additionally, this state having abundant possibilities for Archaeological Tourism. Nevertheless, both Central and State Government unaware and contemplate on the fields. Last few decades Tamil Nadu Government, Central Government, NGOs, Volunteers, Researchers, Academicians involved identifying the new sites or new findings on earlier sites helping to flare up Ancient History. These studies focused on exhibit potential of Archaeological Tourism in Tamil Nadu and identify the intricacies on the fields.

### **Archeo-Tourism**

Archaeological tourism otherwise known as Archeo-tourism which means to travel Archaeological sites knowing Ancient history with immense pleasure. Tourist's eager to visit archaeological sites to acquire ancient peoples history is a great phenomenon. Perhaps, Archaeological tourists labelled as 'Archeo-tourists' those who are acute attention on Archaeological sites other than Tourist places. Around the world people some kind of tourist have choose only archaeological form of tourism. On the whole, Complex of Badbek, Lebanon, Leptis Magna, Africa, Delphi, Greece, Pompeii, Italy, Easter Island, Chile, The terracotta army, China, Petra, Jordon, Tikal, Gauthamala, The Great pyramid, Egypt were listed top Archaeological tourist attraction in the World. Like wise, Lothal, Gujarat, Mehruli park, Delhi, Kailbangan, Rajasthan and Dolavira, Gujarat

are the most visited Archaeological sites in India. Further archaeological tourism included Museums, places of historical significance, Archaeological parks and etc., Tamil Nadu has Urban Archaeological site, Grave yard Archaeological site, Megalithic sites to attract the tourist visitors and educational persons too. Archaeological sites were the popular tourist attractions sources of high revenue. Bit without proper management it was damaged by the tourists. Moreover Archaeological sites has a social, historical, educational and economic potential in Tamil Nadu.

### **Madras Museum**

In Colonial period a British Geologist namely Robert Bruce Foote accidentally identified prehistoric elements in Pallavaram, Tamil Nadu on May 30, 1863. After this invention he named pre historic tools as Madras Hand Axe. Robert Bruce Foote called India the original home of mankind. His restless efforts reflected on excavation made to collected more than 4000 artefacts and sold to the Madras Government Museum for Rs.33,000. Madras Museum of Chennai is the second oldest museum in India next to Calcutta museum which was established in 1851 for the effort of Madras library Society. This museum possessed vast collection on the fields of Archaeology, Anthropology and Numismatics. It spread across on area 16.25 acres of land ranked largest museums in India. It campus has six separate buildings and 46 galleries. With extreme historical value, Madras Museum is a important place of Archaeology Tourism perspective. Moreover, it has potential to composite other museum in India, but some constrains ate there.

### **Fossils Museum**

Fossils museum are the great tourist attraction of both domestic and international tourist. Fossils are the preserved remains of organisms that lived pre historic period. It denoted Animal, Human and trees remain. While Archaeological excavation made the several fossils objects discovered. Fortunately, Tamil Nadu has pre historic fossils in Ariyalur reflects the human history. Ministry of state Government established fossil museum in Varanavasi on 100 acre

campus. It showcases the evidence of the existence of dinosaurs and other associated reptilians. This museum possess fossils, rocks and minerals ,Jurassic and Cretaceous period has been exhibited. Already Ariyalur, a state is economically very poor compare to other districts in Tamil Nadu. This great initiative enhances the Tourism and economy to high level.

### **Keezhadi Archaeological site**

Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department (TNAD) has made excavated process from 1950 to till date, identified more than 40 sites. Earlier excavation made at Adicha nallur, Alagankulam, Korkai, Kodumanal, karur, Teriruvveli, Uraiyur, Mangalam and Porunthal. Among them keezhadi excavation may lead the other sites for its unique identity. Keezhdi, a small village from Sivagangai District situated 12km distance from Ancient city of Madurai. Now the carbon dating has confirmed that it belong between 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE. Moreover, the artefacts dated as 580 BCE. This site excavation started form 2017 may continue till today (2019) on five phases. Keezhadi is the third habitation site in Tamil Nadu after Arikkamedu and Kaveripoompattinam. Fortunately, so much treasures had been unearthed in keezhadi site included massive brick strictures with ring wells and drainage systems. Moreover romantic unique artefacts discovered on this site like potsherds with Tamil-Brahmi script, ivory earlobes , ivory dice , bi-conical gold beads, Chola and late Pandya period coins, roulettes were, russet coated ware, white paired black pottery, decorated shell bangles, beads made out of quartz, Jasper, carnelian and chalcedony, big copper beads and terracotta figurines. On the lower septs of the quadrants founded variety of iron implements such as axes, daggers, knives, nails and forceps, roof tiles embedded with long iron nails in sockets, and the black and red ware from the iron age.

Last few decades, people are very much interests to know the ancient culture and Nation's Historical identity. On the path, Keezhadi fulfil their pleasure to acquiring knowledge on practical way then books. In 2009, October peoples from Tamil Nadu and other states have visited more than 8,000 and near 10,000 in

Keeladi Archaeological site. Meanwhile, several educational institutions have arrange educational trip on this site which lead large crowd. Government of Tamil Nadu and Archaeology Department arrange basic arrangement for the visitors. But authorities and workers have been facing some constrains from the visitors. So they were allowed only 32 digging sites, 22 digging sites prohibited. Nevertheless, people have an curiosity to see the site to overcome their difficulties. Thus, Government of Tamil Nadu should plan to establish open site museums or museums in keezhdi lead more visitors may see the ancestors history lively.

### **Porunthal Archaeological site**

The porunthal site is located on the south west of palani in Tamil Nadu which was discovered in 2006. It is a graveyard Archaeological site exhibited the Indian writing system existing 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Earliest, ancient site discovered here and dated 470 B.C. porunthal excavation unearthed several objects, like Human terracotta figurine, copper coin, gold piece, a terracotta female head and several pots and bowels . Besides, charred grains like paddy and seeds of tamarind had discovered. Moreover, the interesting objects were unearthed like ear lobes, ear rings, hook, hopscotch, spindle whorl, ball and cart wheel. Likewise a copper ring, a bell, the weights, made of quartz and ivory were identified. Interestingly, a heat polishing production of beads, small clay vessels, terracotta objects were excavated reflect the historical value of this place. Moreover, identification of phytolith evidence revealed the new insight into the transformation of urban fringe landscape with possible irrigated agriculture in those broad ecological and cultural contexts Porunthal site has enormous historical and cultural significance apt for Tourism destination. It has more potential for establishing open site museum to attract the people.

### **Kodumanal Archaeological site**

The kodumanal village situated in Perundurai taluk in Erode District, Tamil Nadu. This site classified into two cultural period's viz., Megalithic and the early historic period. Kodumanal excavations

exposed the megalithic cairn circle and lids, bowls, dishes ring stands were founded. Also excavated the unique artefacts like black, red ware, black slipped ware, russet posted ware and red slipped ware found in the excavation. Part from these, bead made of quartz and Claudia, in scribed potsherds and graffiti potsherds was unearthed. Besides, four Orton swords, a cooper toddy, filter with lotus and peacock designs, double edged ace, small daggers, stirrup like object, potsherds bearing graffiti were also gathered. Kodaikanal is a grave yard archaeological site which has been attracted Archaeologists and local visitors. These village has enormous archaeological tourism potential, but the lack or awareness not develop the tourism on this field.

### **Marine Archaeological sites**

Marine Archaeology or Coastal archaeology means to excavate in the coastal areas and under sea. On the fields, six coastal archaeological sites were identifies and excavates the south India. Alagnakulam, Nagapattinam, Kaveripumpattinam, Karaikadu (Mudiyadu), Adika medu and patnam were the Coastal archaeological sites. Among them four belonged to Tamil Nadu alone. Kaveepumpattinam was a ancient city, which have vast remains of ancestors. This site was explored both off shore and onshore areas by Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department. First time in India, Underwater Archaeological site museum established in 1981 attracted the tourist ever. This is a good initiative by the state government for the purpose of tourism. At present, Tamil Nadu has a potential of both Coastal, land, under water archaeology tourism to attract the tourist and fulfil their tourism needs. More over here unearthed several archaeological objects like Roman ore later sherd, Head of Buddha(Terracotta), Buddhapadam (Terracotta), Big size bricks, Beads, Roman, Chinese lotteries, Stamped lotteries from Alagankulam Excavation, wooden artificers, Ring wall, Megalithic appendages, Chinese jar, British cooling jar, Silambu terracotta figurines, Lead ingots and Buddha statue off poompuhar, stone sculpture of Ayyanar and models of ship.

### **Intricacies of Archaeological a Tourism**

First up all, Archaeological tourism not popular in India like other tourism fields. Particularly, Archaeological tourism have not developed like countries like Egypt and Jordon. Even North India also developed on this fields rather than south India. Earlier only academicians, Archaeological scholar, students interested in this field. Now a days, particularly after the identification of Keezhadi Archaeological site enhance Rachel tourism in Tamil Nadu. Suddenly, Keezhadi site was crowded by all kind of tourists reflected several difficulties to the Government of Tamil Nadu and Tamil Nadu Archaeology department. But these facilities was mot full their needs. Also they different not to get basic facilities and infrastructure facilities. Tourists who have visiting museum and saw the artefacts not give pressure and it is sometime boring also.

### **Suggestions and recommendations**

On the princess of excavation, first identify the site which have an historical value, then started the excavation on the site, unearthed artefacts, further it projected on the Museum is a cycle process. But some countries have developed a new concept like on site museums and open air museums. Government of India announced to establish three in site museum in Keezhadi, korkai and Adichanallur on 2018, but not yet finished. To connecting the Archeo tourist places into one trip under ministry of tourism may develop the tourism in Tamil Nadu. Few years back, Government of India launched Swadesh darshan scheme selected tourism places united a under 13 groups called tourism circuits. So the Indian ministry of tourism form a Archaeology tourism circuit in Tamil nadu develop the tourism. Apart from this schemes and initiate, product the sites and allowed fund for development, provide basic facilities like water, rooms, sanitation, parking, restaurant and etc., Further, provide infrastructure facilities like road, bus service improve the tourism into high esteem.

### **Conclusion**

Archaeological tourism represents the previous people History, culture and community. Fortunately, Tamil Nadu has several Archaeological

sites compare with other states In India. Also possible to identify the sites on future , funding may lead success. Only identification, excavation, establish museum does not enhance the Archeo tourism, but Awareness, Advertisement, Development of Basic facilities, infrastructure facilities attract the tourism. Over the years, For construction of buildings several sites were damaged and completely vanished. Archaeological sites not just an historical place, it is a Nations pride and it leads Tourism into Global level.

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