



Public Lectures



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RE-VISITING IRON AGE IN SOUTH INDIA

*On 20th August 2019 (10:00 am)
At AC Conference Hall, Velloppilly Samskrithi Bhavan
Nalanda, Thiruvananthapuram*

Kerala Council for Historical Research

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
www.kchr.ac.in

Iron Age Social Formation in South India

Dr. V. Selvakumar

Iron Age has been a formative phase in the early history of South India. Megalithic burials attributable to the Iron Age and Early Historic period are found all across Peninsular India and also in Sri Lanka. They are the most widely distributed archaeological remains in South India, with major similarity in material culture. Although numerous megalithic burials of the Iron Age have been identified, documented, excavated and researched in different parts of South India, the question of social formation has not been addressed sufficiently, except for a few attempts (Udaiyaravi Moorthy 1994; Gurukkal 2012). Megalithic burial practices were in vogue in the Early Historic period as well. One of the issues here pertains to the vast time span of the megalithic burials, mostly extending from the first millennium BCE to the first millennium CE, although a few of the burials could fall out of this time span. Comprehending the megalithic burials belonging to such a vast time-span has been a complex issue. The megalithic traditions witnessed diverse historical dynamics throughout their existence. In the early historic context, we get evidence for the introduction of script, coinage, political formations, Mauryan political domination and Indian Ocean exchange. The vast variations in the megalithic burial typology do suggest differences in belief systems and the nature of burial practices across South India. Although the megalithic burial types are similar, population diversity must have emerged among the Iron Age population of South India. Settlement evidence and literature throw light on various communities of this period. The evidence from literature does point to the diversity of populations around the beginning of the Common Era. It appears that Iron Age South India had bands, tribes and chiefdom-like political formations in diverse landscapes. This lecture looks at Iron Age social formation in South India based on material and textual sources.

'Kerala Megalithic Gazetteer Project' and Excavation of a Cist Burial at Enadimangalam

Dr. Abhayan G. S.

A project funded by the University of Kerala titled *Kerala Megalithic Gazetteer Project* (KMGP) is being implemented by the Department of Archaeology, University of Kerala in collaboration with Kansai University, Japan. The project intends to undertake fresh documentation of megalithic remains through explorations/revisits in order to locate new and previously reported megalithic sites across Kerala, which are vulnerable to large scale destructions in recent years because of human interventions. In spite of the long period of megalithic researches in Kerala from the 1820s till date, only a few reliable publications have come up. Most of the works remain unpublished, many reports are very preliminary in nature and some others are old publications where the data is not adequate to satisfy the needs of current parlance/trends of research. Many of the earlier reported sites are not traceable due to the lack of proper geo-coordinates and description of locations or due to destructions. An integrated database of sites and the nature of cultural materials from the region is a prerequisite for any further serious research into the megalithic culture. In this backdrop, the region demands a thorough survey of megalithic sites and remains. Intensive surveys conducted as part of the above project in certain areas revealed wider distribution of sites than anticipated. Excavation of selected megalithic sites is another major element in the project. As a part of this, salvage excavations were conducted at Nannangadikkunnu in Palakkad and a systematic problem-oriented excavation was undertaken at Kuttikol in Kasaragod district and Enadimangalam in Pathanamthitta district. The recent excavation at Enadimangalam in the month of May 2019 revealed a double chambered cist burial with cot/bench like features inside the chambers and a range of typical Megalithic pottery types. This talk encompasses the recent findings, radiocarbon dates and discussions derived from the collective research activities as part of the *Kerala Megalithic Gazetteer Project*.

Kerala Council for Historical Research

(KCHR)

is organizing

Public Lectures

on 20th August 2019 (10:00 am)

at AC Conference Hall

Vyloppilly Samskrithi Bhavan

Dr. V. Selvakumar

Associate Professor

Department of Maritime History and Marine Archaeology

Tamil University

will speak on

Iron Age Social Formation in South India

Dr. Abhayan G. S.

Assistant Professor

Department of Archaeology

University of Kerala

will speak on

***'Kerala Megalithic Gazetteer Project'
and Excavation of a Cist Burial at Enadimangalam***

You are cordially invited

Professor P. Sanal Mohan

Director, KCHR

Dr. V. Selvakumar



Dr. V. Selvakumar is a faculty member of the Department of Maritime History and Marine Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur. He completed his Doctoral and post-Doctoral research from the Deccan College, Pune. He was a faculty member at the Centre for Heritage Studies, Tripunithura, Kerala from 2003 to 2007, and the Department of Epigraphy and Archaeology of Tamil University, Thanjavur, from 2007 to 2017. He was a Nehru Trust for the Indian Collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum (NTICVAM) Visiting Researcher at the Centre for Maritime Archaeology, Southampton University in 2004. With a NTICVAM UK Visiting Fellowship in 2018, he was trained in Ceramic Studies at the UCL and the British Museum. His research interests include archaeology of India, prehistory, heritage management, maritime history and archaeology, archaeological theory, history of science and technology, ceramic studies, Indian Ocean Cultural interactions, and eco-criticism.

Dr. Abhayan G.S.



Dr. Abhayan G.S. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Archaeology, University of Kerala. He completed his Doctoral research from the Deccan College, Pune. He has specialized in zoo archaeology, specifically Ichthyoarchaeology (studies in fish bones). He played a key role in the establishment of a Zoo- archaeology Laboratory at the University of Kerala. He has a keen interest in Megalithic-Iron Age archaeology of Kerala and is currently directing a multidisciplinary archaeological research project titled *Kerala Megalithic Gazetteer Project*. He has participated in various explorations and excavations works across the country and was a part of archaeological excavations in Kerala at sites such as Vizhinjam, Pattanam, Marayur, Arikkadi fort, Kuttikol, Nannangadikkunnu and Enadimangalam. He is also the co-editor of the journal *Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*. He has 23 research papers, 6 articles in edited books and an edited book to his credit.



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