



Kodumanal Excavation

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Why in News

Recently, the State Department of Archaeology, Chennai has identified **250 cairn-circles** from the **Kodumanal excavation** site in Erode district of Tamilnadu.

- **Cairn-circles** are the **prehistoric stone row** which is a linear arrangement of parallel megalithic standing stones.
- A **megalith** is a **large prehistoric stone** that has been used to construct a structure or monument, either alone or together with other stones.



Key Points

- This is for the first time that **10 pots and bowls** were discovered from the site, instead of the usual three or four pots, placed outside three-chambered burial cists and inside the cairn-circle.
 - More numbers and bigger size of boulders suggests that the grave could be of a village head or the head of the community.
 - It also suggests **burial rituals** and the **concept of afterlife** in **megalithic culture**. Believing that the deceased person will get **a new life after death**, **pots and bowls** filled with grains were placed outside the chambers.
- The rectangular chambered cists (a small stone-built coffin-like box) are made of stone slabs, and the entire grave is surrounded by boulders that form a circle.
- Findings from the site also include an animal skull, beads, copper smelting units, the mud walls of a workshop, potteries, and Tamil Brahmi script.
- **Previous Excavations:**
 - The earlier excavations of Kodumanal revealed that **multi-ethnic groups lived in the village**.
 - It also revealed that the site served as a **trade-cum-industrial centre** from 5th century Before Common Era (BCE) to 1st century BCE.

Megaliths Culture

- Megaliths refer to large stone structures that were **constructed either as burial sites or as commemorative sites**.
- The burial sites are the sites with actual burial remains, such as **dolmenoid cists (box-shaped stone burial chambers), cairn circles (stone circles with defined peripheries), and capstones (distinctive mushroom-shaped burial chambers found mainly in Kerala)**.
- The megalithic culture lasted from the Neolithic Stone Age to the early Historical Period (2500 BCE to CE 200) across the world.
- In India, the majority of the megaliths are of the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC),
- Megaliths are spread across **peninsular India**, concentrated in the states of **Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**.
- The chambers containing the mortal remains were usually made of terracotta.

Kodumanal

- It is a village located in the Erode district in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu.
- The place is an **important archaeological site**.
- It is located on the northern banks of **Noyyal River**, a tributary of the Cauvery.

Source: TH