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Thamirabarani Civilisation: Tamil Nadu

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Why in News

The **Thamirabarani civilisation in Tamil Nadu** is at least **3,200 years old**, reveals **carbon dating** done on organic material retrieved from archeological excavations in **Sivakalai, Thoothukudi district**.

Carbon Dating: The determination of the age or date of organic matter from the relative proportions of the carbon isotopes carbon-12 and carbon-14 that it contains.



Key Points

- **Thamirabarani River:**

The **shortest river in the state (Tamil Nadu)**, the Thamirabarani starts in **Pothigai hills of the Western Ghats in the Ambasamudram taluk**, flows through Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts and **empties at Korkai** (Tirunelveli district) **into the Gulf of Mannar** (Bay of Bengal).

- **Significance of the Findings:**

- It could **lead to evidence** that there was a **city civilisation (Porunai River (Thamirabarani) civilization) in south India as long back as 3,200 years ago**, the later part of the **Indus Valley Civilisation**.
- Also, **archaeological excavations** would be carried out **in other States and countries in search of Tamil roots**.
 - In the first phase, studies would be undertaken at the **ancient port of Muziris, now known as Pattanam, in Kerala**, to establish the ancientness and culture of the **Chera empire**.
 - Research would be conducted at **Quseir al-Qadim and Pernica Anekke in Egypt**, which were once part of the Roman empire, as well as in **Khor Rori in Oman**, to establish the Tamils' trade relations with these countries. Potsherds bearing Tamil scripts have been found in these countries.
 - Studies would also be conducted in Southeast Asian countries, such as Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam, where **King Rajendra Chola had established supremacy**.
 - The three ruling houses of Tamil India, the **Pandyas, Cheras, and Cholas**, fought for supremacy of southern India and Sri Lanka. These dynasties promoted early literature on the Indian subcontinent and built important Hindu temples.
 - **Sangam literature**, which was written over a period of six centuries (3rd BCE – 3rd CE) contains references to various Chola, Chera and Pandya kings.

- **Other Recent Findings:**

- A silver punch marked coin was recently **excavated from Keezhadi** (Tamil Nadu) which bore the symbols of the sun, the moon, the taurine and other geometrical patterns.

Studies on this found the **coin to date back to the 4th century BC**, which is before the time of the **ancient Maurya empire** (321-185 B.C.E).

- Archaeological excavations are **being done at numerous places** such as Kodumanal, Keeladi, Korkai, Sivakalai, in Tamil Nadu.

As per the carbon dating of artefacts, the **Keeladi civilisation dates back to 6th century BC**.

Source: TH