

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1300**  
ANSWERED ON-08.12.2025

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM KEELADI EXCAVATION**

1300. MS S JOTHIMANI:  
SHRI SELVAGANAPATHI T.M.:

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government acknowledges the archaeological evidence from Keeladi and related sites in Tamil Nadu indicating the existence of an advanced, literate Iron Age civilisation;
- (b) if not, the reasons for the reluctance to formally recognise this antiquity despite carbon dating and artefact analysis from reputed national and international institutions;
- (c) whether it is a fact that Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is not recognizing the findings of the Keeladi report prepared by the Government of Tamil Nadu or the antiquity of Iron in Tamil Culture, if so, the details thereof and if not the reasons therefor,
- (d) whether the Government is aware that Dr. Amarnath Ramakrishna, the archaeologist who led the initial Keeladi excavations and brought national attention to the findings, has been transferred multiple times, and if so, whether the Government has reviewed concerns raised by historians and civil society about such actions affecting academic independence, and
- (e) whether the Government is willing to work collaboratively with the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department and leading research institutions to ensure scientific integrity, transparency and national recognition of Tamil Nadu's ancient archaeological heritage?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) and (b) Archaeological evidence of different cultures in Tamil Nadu have been brought to light through various excavations and explorations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department, Universities, and Research Institutes. Excavations conducted during the last 5 years is as under:

	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (till Aug)
ASI	2	2	1	2	1
State Government	9	8	-	8	1
Universities	3	-	1	2	3
Research Institutes	-	-	2	-	-
Total	14	10	4	12	5

(c) Draft report on excavation at Keeladi conducted between 2014 and 2016 by ASI has been submitted. However, no final report on the excavations conducted since 2018 by Government of Tamil Nadu is received so far.

(d) Allocation of works to archaeological officers is a routine administrative matter.

(e) Government of India grants approval for excavations as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Rules 1959 and ensures implementation of the Act. It also collaborates with State Department of Archaeology and other institutions/ agencies, as and when required.

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