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**Title : Grant of adequate funds for archaeological excavations in
Tamil Nadu-Laid**

DR. T. SUMATHY (A) THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN (CHENNAI SOUTH): The age-old contributions by Tamils to history, culture and art have been unearthed recently through archaeological expeditions backed by factual and scientific rigour. The importance of Tamil Nadu's Iron Age sites as seen at Mayiladumparai shows that the oldest Iron Age site in India is from Tamil Nadu. The use of iron in Tamil Nadu dates back to around 4,200 years ago. Other findings by the State Archaeology Department proves that the trade and culture depicted in more than 2000 poems by 473 poets of the Sangam literature era, around 2,000 years ago, were descriptions of the real world around them which showed that Tamils effectively used iron technology at that time. More recently, the excavations by the Central Archaeological Survey of India also showed similar proofs in Adichanallur where precious historical artifacts have been discovered. The state archaeology department is currently excavating seven sites including Adichanallur, Sivakalai, Keeladi, Korkai, Mayiladumparai, Kodumanal and Gangaikonda Cholapuram. More funds and investments are required in all these sites.

Hence, considering these strong proofs of antiquity in Tamil Nadu, I request the Union Government to support the efforts of the Tamil Nadu Govt. by providing appropriate funds for archaeological excavations. The budgetary allocation for the Central Archaeological Survey of India for Tamil Nadu has been inadequately earmarked

despite the contributions by the state. This needs to be raised to at least a minimum of Rs.10 crores. The Union Government should also help in declaring these important historical sites of Tamil Nadu as World Heritage Sites. Apart from this, they should include this history in school and university curricula and build relevant on-site museums to show the historical significance of the work done by Tamils.