

**Loyola College (Autonomous)
Chennai - 600034**

Department of History

Prof. Rajendran Endowment Lecture

21st September 2016

Theme: Recent Advances in Understanding early Historic Tamil Nadu.

Speaker: Dr. K. Rajan, Professor of History, Pondicherry University.



The endowment lecture began with a prayer song invoking the blessings of the lord Almighty. The Head of the Department, Dr. L. Selvanathan welcomed the gathering.



Prof. Xavier honoured the Guest Speaker by presenting him a memento. Prof. Yesubhaktan introduced the Guest Speaker and invited him to deliver the Dr. Rajendran Endowment Lecture.



Dr. K. Rajan spoke on the topic *Recent Advances in Understanding early Historic Tamil Nadu*. He gave a power-point presentation with numerous archaeological artifacts. He emphasized the importance of the past for a prosperous future. According to him, 97.3% of human history is not yet unearthed and the lack of human resources and interest makes the task more challenging. He illustrated the advances of human history in the last 100 years. He gave the explanation of how Rajaraja I gave the Tamils something different from the *Vatteluthu* of the Keralites. He divided the course of lecture by explaining what are pre-history, proto-history, early history and historical studies. He also pondered upon how the epigraphy and numismatics are available till the Vijayanagar period.



Prof. K. Rajan also emphasized on the diversity in India with its gigantic land mass, variable geography, topography and the monsoon. He explained the lifestyle of the Neolithic people, their agricultural purposes, Microlithic tools, cattle worship. He showed a Neolithic-cell from *Dharmapur* that had the rock art of cattle images. According to him, the South Indians went directly from Stone Age to Iron Age without an intermittent Copper Age.

In his excavations, he found chambers piled up with 25 tonnes of stones near *Dharmapuri*. Also every 5 meters a burial was present that explained the high density population. According to him, ancient Tamils were a maximum 5.8 inches and lived up to an average age of 55 years. They discovered the earliest steel so far available on earth dated around 1300 BCE. His major excavation sites **surrounded** *Thandikudi, Porunthal, Kodumanal* areas. He excavated double chambered burial, with quartz, semi- precious stones. In *Porunthal*, they found gold coins and Roman coins. They unearthed monochrome glass beads and glass bowls along with the skeletons. Interestingly, in one of the excavations they found a jar of 2.5kg of paddy stored which was cultivated 2500 years before.



He also stated the extraordinary exchanges, trade and commerce of the ancient Tamils that led to their prosperity with wealth and assets. Earliest date of a *Tamil- Brahmi* script has been dated around 6th century BCE. He discovered the 1st hero stone in India.



He then concluded stating that there is lot more to know and learn about pre - historic sites and that he is still a student learning new things. He stressed on the fact, India is a great nation of heritage and we all must work tirelessly in collaboration and reconstruct our past without any prejudice.



Mr. L. Hareesh of II PG delivered the vote of thanks which was followed by the National Anthem.