Ceramah Teknik (Technical Talk)

Marine archeology in India: Present status and new development
(Possible contribution to marine archaeology from earth scientists)

19 July 2004
Geology Department
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Report

About 20 people turned up at the talk on Marine Archeology by Prof.Gangadharam at the Dept. of Geology, Univ. Malaya on 19.7.2004. Prof. Gangadharam began his research into Marine Archeology when he was still a lecturer in the Geology Department of University Malaya when artifacts were salvaged from a sunken vessel off the East Coast of Johore. He continued to pursue his interest in Marine archeology after his return to India where he took up the post of Director for the Centre of Marine Archeology at Andhra University, Waltair, India focusing his research on sunken temples and other man-made structures of the Chola Period off the coast of Gujarat on the West Coast of India.

C.P. Lee

Abstract

India made its debut into the world of Marine Archaeology in the 1970's when Dr. S.R. Rao, a retired Archaeologist of the Archaeological Survey of India, located man made structures, (3rd to 4th c. BC) at DWARKA off Gujerat on the west coast of India. Later, Chola period structures were located at POOMPUHAR off Tamilnaidu on the east coast. This pioneering work was done under the aegis of the National Institute of Oceanography. In Andhra Pradesh, our Centre is investigating a temple, now submerged, of 11th c. AD, off VISAKHAPATNAM.

In the year 2000, the National Institute of Ocean Technology of Chennai (Madras) accidentally located a large site at 30m depth in the Gulf of Khambat (Cambay), where sonograms indicating large scale man made features, such as irrigation tanks, check dams and possible residential areas were found. "Dredging" of the site yielded artifacts, potsherds, woody materials, partially lithified human and animal bones etc. C=14, TL and OSL dating of site materials indicated a "period of continuous occupation of the site from 7,000 to 8,000 BP".

Our Centre, in a Project funded by NIOT is studying the petrology and chemistry of selected geological specimens from Cambay using neutron activation analysis and scanning electron microscopy. Our results are presented at the AOGS Conference held last week in Singapore. The shapes and holes in the specimens suggest involvement of human agency. The surprising findings show that they are calcareous sediments with foraminiferal microfossils. The characteristics of the specimens need to be tied up with nearby formations, on and off shore.