AREA OF META DATA	CONTENT
THEME	Discovery of Arikamedu – An Ancient port Town of India
SUBJECT	History
LINKAGE OF THEME WITH CHAPTERS(NAME)	
CLASS/LEVEL	Class VI
Target Audience	Students and Teachers
OBJECTIVES	• To create awareness on the importance of Arikamedu as a trading centre. • To appreciate the work done by archaeologists in unearthing significant findings.
DESCRIPTION	Arikamedu is an archaeological site near Pondicherry (currently Puducherry) in southern part of India. The site was identified as the port of Podouke, known as an "emporium" in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.* Excavations have found Amphorae, Arretine ware, Roman lamps, glassware, glass and stone beads, and gems at the site. Extensive archaeological excavations have been conducted at this site since 1940. Excavations have unearthed significant findings which show that Arikamedu was a bustling trading centre which carried out extensive trade with Rome as early as

	2nd century BCE. Subsequent excavations carried out in 1989-92, revealed that Arikamedu was a well established settlement even before trade with the Roman empire had started. The presence of celadon ware (green ware pottery that originated in China) and Chola coins of eleventh century AD indicate that Arikamedu continued to be an important trading center, and that after the 9th c., the people were trading with other lands as well.
Key Words	**Arikamedu, Poduke, *Periplus of the Erythraean, yavana, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Vimal Begley, Amphora Jars, Terra Sigillata, Celadon ware, Indo-Roman trade, Chola coins***
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Imagine

A place in southern coast of India bustling with Roman people in their traditional costumes bargaining with local people; ships from Rome docked at the port; Roman wines, jars ,glass beads, and olive oil being sold in the local market. This is what Arikamedu may have been in the ancient times. Today what remains are ruins of old structures of this otherwise busy port.

LOATING   ARIKAMEDU

TAMIL NADU

Thiruvallur

Chennai

Vellore

Kancheepuram

Tiruvanamalai

Dharmapuri

Vilu-
ppuram

P   P - Pondicherry

The Nilgiris

Erode

Salem

Cuddalore

Namakkal

Perambalur

Nagapattinam

Coimbatore

Tiruchira-
ppalli

Ariyalur

P

Karur

Thanjavur

Thiruvarur

Pudu-
kkottai

Nagapattinam

Dindigul

Theni

Madurai

Siva-
ganga

Virudhunagar

Ramanathapuram

Toothukudi

Tirunelveli

Kanniyakumari

Arikamedu is an archaeological site located about 4 km from Puducherry (earlier known as Pondicherry) on   the Coromandel coast of India. It is situated on the banks of the Ariyankuppam River, also known as Virampattinam river   which forms the northern outlet of the Gingee River as it joins the Bay of Bengal. Extensive archaeological excavations have been conducted at this site since 1940. These excavations have unearthed significant findings which show that Arikamedu was a bustling trading centre which carried out extensive trade with Rome as early as 2nd century BCE.

Ariyankuppam   River

Puducherry Beach

PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHRAEAN SEA : AN IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Our information on Indian port cities in ancient period is mainly derived from Graeco-Roman works such as the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* written by an anonymous Greek writer and in writings of Ptolemy and Pliny. Arikamedu is identified with Poduke in *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, it is referred to as a major trading centre for goods to the Graeco Roman world. Poduke is mentioned along with Poompuhar and Muziris .
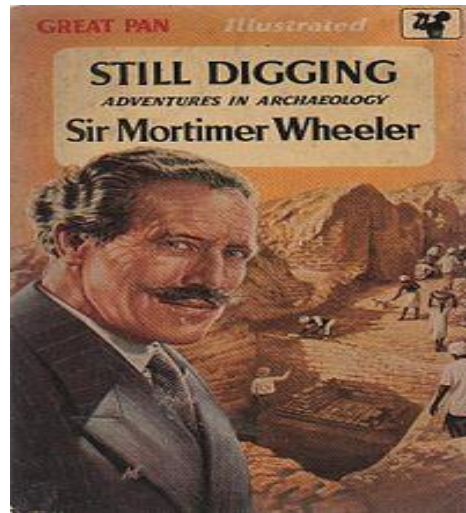

Periplous of the Erythraean Sea

Περίπλους τῆς Ἐρυθράς Θαλάσσης

1st century AD

Beyond these places, the unexplored ocean curves around towards the west and mingles with the western sea

MORE CLUES

The Sangam texts (ancient Tamil literature) mention India's trade links with the west. They mention people whom they called "*yavanas*", who were merchants bringing goods like lamps, gold and wine. At this time the word *yavana* was a generic term used for foreigners such as Greeks and Romans. Old Greek texts also mention trade between the Roman Empire and India between 200 BCE-200 C.E., and have mentioned names of ports and lists of goods. Thus ancient Tamil texts, Greek works and archaeological evidence show that Arikamedu must have been one of the many trading centers where the Roman and Indian merchants carried out trading activities.

DISCOVERY OF ARIKAMEDU AND SUBSEQUENT EXCAVATIONS

Guillaume Le Gentil

Sir Mortimer Wheeler

Excavations at the site in 1947

Arikamedu was first mentioned in the works of a French astronomer Guillaume le Gentil who visited Pondicherry sometime between 1768-1771. He noticed some huge bricks, ruined walls and remains of old wells. His observation was followed by excavations by some French archaeologists who identified it with the ancient city of Poduke, mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.* But it was Sir Mortimer Wheeler who excavated the site in a more scientific manner in 1945 and named it Arikamedu, which meant mound in the local language. In 1989-92, Prof. Vimal Begley and her team excavated the site extensively; these excavations revealed that Arikamedu was a well established settlement even before trade had started with the Roman Empire in 1st century. BCE.

Remains of a building

ACTIVITY 1

CIET: DRAG AND DROP

Drag And Drop The Correct Answer From The Options Given Below.

1. Arikamedu	
2. Sangam Texts	
3. Poduk	
4. Vimal Begley	
5. *Yavana*	
6. Mortimer Wheeler	

7. Guillaume le Gentil	

OPTIONS

- ➤ An Archaeologist who excavated the site in a more scientific manner in 1945.
- ➤ An ancient trading centre.
- ➤ A generic term used for foreigners such as Greeks and Romans.
- ➤ A French astronomer who visited Pondicherry .
- ➤ An archaeologist who excavated Arikamedu in 1989.
- ➤ Ancient Tamil literature.
- ➤ An ancient city mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.*

CORRECT ANSWERS

1. Arikamedu- An ancient trading centre.

2. Sangam Texts- Ancient Tamil literature.

3. Poduk - An ancient city mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.*

4. Vimal Begley - An archaeologist who excavated Arikamedu in 1989.

5. *Yavana*-   A generic term used for foreigners such as Greeks and Romans.

6. Mortimer Wheeler- Archaeologist who excavated the site in a more scientific manner in 1945.

7. Guillaume le Gentil-   A French astronomer who visited Pondicherry .

ACTIVITY 2

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER

CIET: Correct answer should flash in green.

1. In *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, Arikamedu is identified with ……………………………………

   (**Poduke**/Muziris/Poompuhar)

2. Arikamedu was a busy…………………………….

    (Textile centre/**Trading centre**)

3.   Arikamedu is an archaeological site located near…………………………

   (**Puducherry** /Coimbatore/Chennai)

4. Yavanas or merchants are mentioned in …………………………….

   (Rig Veda/**Sangam Texts**/Upanishads)

5. Mortimer Wheeler was an ………………………………….

(Astronomer/==Archaeologist==/Architect)

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