



DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
LOYOLA HISTORY ASSOCIATION (2024-25)

SHRI ASHOK MEHTA ENDOWMENT LECTURE

On January 30th, 2025, the Department of History, Loyola College conducted the Shri Ashok Mehta Endowment Lecture on the topic "Indus Civilization: Known and Unknown". The lecture was delivered by Dr. N. Marxia Gandhi, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist (retired) of the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology, at the De Nobli Auditorium.



The lecture formally commenced with an invocation of God by the Department choir team. This was followed by a warm welcome from Rev. Dr. Arockiyasamy S. J., Coordinator (shift 2) who also remembered Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary. Dr. J. A. Charles, the Deputy Principal of the college, delivered the keynote address, expressing gratitude to the resource person for her presence. He also reminisced about his own growing interest in history while sharing insightful thoughts on the subject. Following the welcome address Dr. N. Marxia

Gandhi was felicitated with a shawl by Deputy Principal, Dr. J. A. Charles as a token of respect. Following this, Dr. Anuradha D, the convener of the lecture, introduced the resource person to the audience, highlighting her as the first woman epigraphist from Tamil Nadu and detailing her pioneering works scholarly contributions to the fields of History, Archaeology and Anthropology.



Dr. N. Marxia Gandhi began her lecture by recounting the pioneering efforts of excavators like John Marshall, R. D. Banerji, and Daya Ram Sahni in unearthing the lost civilization, explaining how the announcement of the Indus Valley Civilization unfolded to the world. She also clarified why many historians refer to the Indus Valley Civilization as the Harappan Civilization. Additionally, she provided details about the chronological period of the Indus Valley Civilization, based on the usage of metals, and elaborated on its phases: Pre-Harappan, Early Harappan, Mature Harappan, Late Harappan, and Post-Harappan.

Dr. Gandhi elucidated various salient features of the Indus Valley Civilization, such as city planning, drainage systems, the use of weight measures, early religious activities, and the trade activities of its people, by showcasing pictures of excavated artifacts. She then addressed the lesser-known aspects of the Indus Valley Civilization, particularly the scripts and seals, emphasizing the need for structural analysis and a multidisciplinary approach. She explained that the scripts were developed forms of thoughts that evolved from cave paintings, which depict the culture of the people. She also discussed the research work of Fr. Heras and Iravatham Mahadevan, which primarily emphasized the connection between the Indus Valley script and the Dravidian script through an understanding of megalithic graffiti. Following her enlightening lecture, a quick discussion ensued with student participants, during which topics such as the economy of the Indus Valley Civilization, its worship structures, and the position of women in the civilization were discussed. Dr. Gandhi encouraged the students to engage in further research on deciphering the Indus Valley scripts, noting that this remains a hot topic in history forums.

The lecture concluded with the Vote of Thanks delivered by Dr. Muthu Raman, Convenor, thanking Dr. Marxia Gandhi for her engaging lecture and expressing gratitude to the staff and students who helped to organize the event.