

Tiya Chatterji

Title of the book- Marine Archaeology in India : The Lost Enigma

Summary and Results

The work is based on a very interesting and niche topic of Underwater Archaeology which is part of a broader concept of Underwater Domain Awareness. The domain study is specific to the Indian context and particularly the sites that are submerged in nature. This is to merit focus on a singular aspect while distinguishing from the versatile underwater finds. The study is based on secondary sources and acts as a level one document to facilitate further research with the help of primary sources. After profound contemplation of the available data, it can be stated that the domain of Underwater Archaeology in India is in a stagnant state and demands urgent revival failure to which, the glorious and finite maritime heritage would be lost forever. The need to preserve and conserve heritage is pivotal in nature, owing to the nature of finds, added with ecological and human induced factors of deterioration. There is paucity of organizations, colleges and courses in the country with a handful of experts, which is a major hurdle for the sustainable development of the domain. A major deduction of the research is the absence of maritime law in the country, pertaining to underwater heritage along with non-existence of a document which discusses the process of underwater research. A model template is suggested as a plausible solution for the growth of the domain along with many analogies and global inferences.

Underwater Domain: Its Challenges and Potential

Research in the domain of Underwater Studies in India is a relatively niche area and yet in its developmental phase, when analyzed on the global scale. The studies pertaining to the underwater realm require specific skills and training along with cutting edge technology. There are a vast number of constraints when it comes to conducting research underwater and they range from; Threat from marine life, Martini effect, Blue -Green Monochrome, Cold temperatures etc. When we ponder over the constraints of the domain specific, the constraints emerge in the form of lack of resources, human limitations to work underwater, limited number of institutions and experts, expensive equipments and the like. However, the domain of Underwater Research poses immense potential, and has been the centre of man's curiosity since ancient times. The world underwater is like a treasure house, when the allied domain of Underwater Archaeology is concerned. Ancient civilizations, that once thrived along the waterfront and submerged due to various natural factors could be lost from history and forgotten if we did not conduct studies on the same. The legendary discoveries at Dwarka, Thonis Heracleion (Egypt), Mahabalipuram etc are a consequence of efforts directed at locating and preserving the maritime heritage, while also aiding history. The integral nature of history is always undermined and the possibilities of learning from the same, will only aid to development on the national level.

My Experience at the Maritime Research Centre

My engagement at MRC began in 2018 and it will continue for a long time to come. The Founder Director ,Dr (Cdr) Arnab Das is a visionary and provided me an opportunity to work on Underwater Archaeology; an unexplored domain with vast potential. The work environment is peaceful and also equipped with adequate resources for research and influx of ideas. The library and Maritime museum , creates the perfect ambience for maritime studies. The interns are MRC are from diverse backgrounds and this brings a diverse working environment and exchange of knowledge. The visiting guests and IMF dignitaries, all add value to working at MRC with an opportunity to interact with esteemed and experienced domain experts and allied discipline specialists . Being a part of MRC also instilled in me the qualities of team work, administration and management. I was awarded a book fellowship, to continue my research and shape it which is a rare opportunity bestowed on me by my mentor, whose active guidance helped me carve out a niche in the domain of underwater archaeology.

Suggestions for Future Research Scholars

The domain of Underwater Archaeology is a niche yet promising area for research, however to pursue the same in our country is quite challenging. The first and foremost constraint begins with the nature of research based on primary or secondary sources. To conduct research based on primary sources is a laborious task which requires an interdisciplinary approach. The knowledge of certified Scuba Diving is essential, if one wishes to pursue research based on primary sources. It is essential to have a background of archaeology along with technical knowledge and experience of working with reputed organizations which are domain related. The prospect of pursuing a course overseas, could be a suitable option which will facilitate theoretical and practical training, which is a must in this domain. The importance of having a visionary mentor is always helpful and one must not undermine the necessity of the same. The experience of studying an unexplored subject is very rewarding and also full of limitations like the paucity of documentation, relevant organizations, courses, and training opportunities. The stated constraints and the infinite opportunities have been a major driving force to explore the glorious maritime pride of our country.

Biosketch

Tiya Chatterji has a background of History, Archaeology and Museology pursued from Kirori Mal College (DU), Deccan College Pune and the National Museum Institute, Delhi respectively. She has attended various field works and has her articles contributed in Seagull, MRC website, CIDOC, Tilak Chronicles, Littoral Wind etc. She has been associated with prestigious organizations like Archaeological Survey of India, Rajasthan Vidhyapeeth and Deccan college for various research and training programmes. She has various skills including content generation, social media handling and visitor studies. With the research pursued at the Maritime Research Centre, a book titled- Marine Archaeology in India : The Lost Enigma is scheduled to release in February.