Cairn Circles

A megalith is a large prehistoric stone that has been used to construct a structure or monument, either alone or together with other stones. Cairn-circles are the prehistoric stone row which is a linear arrangement of parallel megalithic standing stones.

Recently, the State Department of Archaeology, Chennai has identified 250 cairn-circles from the Kodumanal excavation site in Tamil Nadu. This is for the first time that 10 pots and bowls were discovered from the site, instead of the usual 3 or 4 pots, placed outside three-chambered burial cists and inside the cairn-circle.

More numbers and bigger size of boulders suggests that the grave could be of a village head or the head of the community. Findings from the site also include an animal skull, beads, and copper smelting units, the mud walls of a workshop, potteries, and Tamil Brahmi script.

Other types of megaliths are

1. **Dolmenoid cists** - Box-shaped stone burial chambers,
2. **Capstones** - Distinctive mushroom-shaped burial chambers (found mainly in Kerala)

Kodumanal

- Kodumanal is a village located in the Erode district in Tamil Nadu. The place is an important archaeological site.
- **It is located on the northern banks of Noyyal River, a tributary of the Cauvery.** The earlier excavations of Kodumanal revealed that multi-ethnic groups lived in the village.
- **It also revealed that the site served as a trade-cum-industrial centre from 5th century BCE to 1st century BCE.**