



Civilisation and its Discontents

Reinterpreting civilisation and regulating culture have significant political consequences. Recent events in Tamil Nadu demonstrate how deeply these issues resonate with local identity.



by OJAANK IAS

The Keeladi Controversy

1

Initial Discovery

Archaeologist K. Amarnath Ramakrishna unearthed an ancient urban settlement near Madurai nearly a decade ago.

2

Report Submission

A 982-page report was submitted in January 2023, suggesting a flourishing civilisation from the Sangam era.

3

ASI Request

The Archaeological Survey of India asked for revisions based on inputs from two independent experts.

4

Refusal to Revise

Mr. Ramakrishna declined, asserting his findings were backed by detailed documentation.





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Historical Significance

Sangam Era Timeline

The findings suggest a parallel, if not earlier, timeline to the Vedic civilisation.

Cultural Identity

The excavation represents a crucial piece of Tamil Nadu's historical narrative and cultural heritage.

Political Suspensions

Many believe the Centre seeks to downplay the antiquity of Tamil civilisation.



Political Reactions



DMK and Allies

The ruling DMK and its allies condemned the ASI's request for revisions.



Historian's View

R. Balakrishnan described the demand as arising from "the pressure of history."



Centre's Response

The Ministry of Culture called the allegations "misleading" and "contrary to the truth."

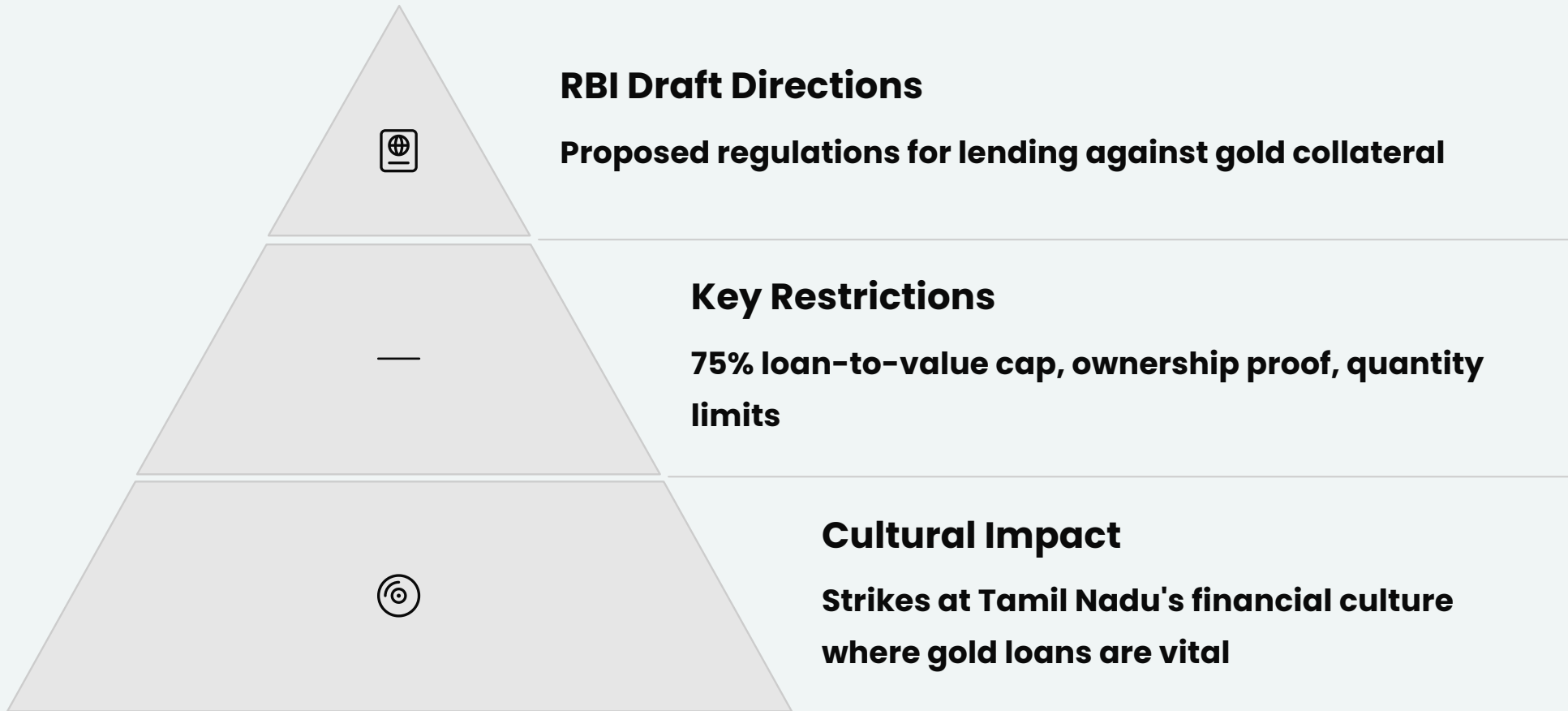


Historical Context

Previously, Central funding for excavations was halted midway, forcing the State to step in.



Gold Loan Regulations



The proposed restrictions would limit gold pledges to 1kg for ornaments and 50gm for coins per borrower.



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Gold's Cultural Significance



Family Security

Gold serves as a vital financial safeguard for Tamil households.



Rural Lifeline

Farmers and small traders rely on gold loans for business operations.



Women's Empowerment

Gold loans play a critical role in financial independence for women.



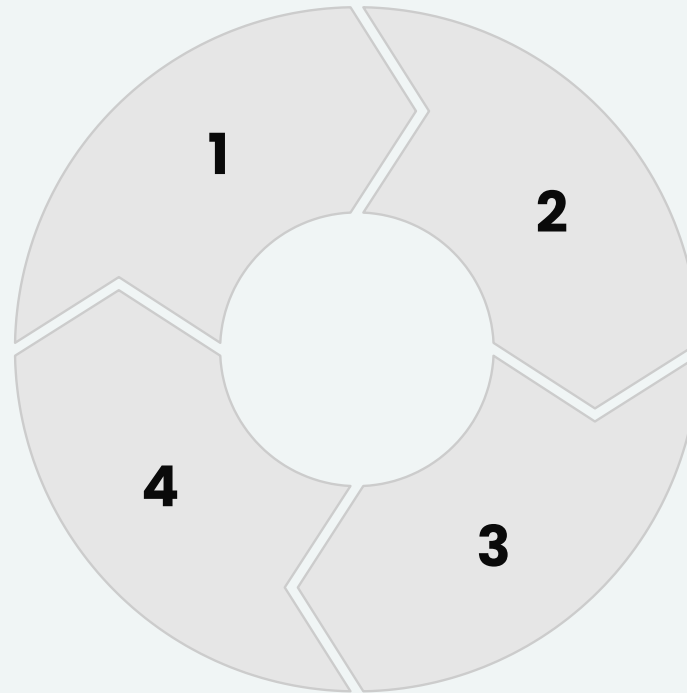
Unified Opposition

DMK

Chief Minister Stalin warned regulations would drive vulnerable borrowers to predatory lenders.

Finance Minister

Thennarasu called the guidelines "deeply insensitive."



AIADMK

Palaniswami argued new rules would hurt the poor and middle class.

BJP Allies

Even BJP supporters opposed the RBI's move.



Centre's Response and Implications

1

Recognition

The Centre recognized the political ramifications of both controversies.

2

Intervention

The Finance Ministry suggested exempting small-ticket borrowers below ₹2 lakh.

3

Political Sensitivity

Both issues highlight how civilisation and financial practices deeply resonate in Tamil Nadu.

4

Future Implications

The Centre may have averted volatile flash points ahead of next year's Assembly elections.



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