

The Mewar Plain Archaeological Assessment: Community Engagement in Northwest India

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The Mewar Plains Archaeological Assessment (MPAA) systematically collects archaeological data and assesses the state of heritage preservation in northwest India. The collaborating PIs, representing KSU, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University (India), and Deccan College (India), intend to build a pilot outreach and education program with the goal of preserving an endangered archaeological site and creating a collaborative model that can be expanded across the region. The MPAA supports several goals of the DGA regarding engagement, education abroad, and research. The program facilitates community engagement by building a model outreach, education, and research program that will promote preservation of endangered local heritage with local communities in India. The ongoing international collaboration with RVU and DC contributes to the internationalization of KSU and uses archaeological excavation and oral history collection as a vehicle for engaging with local communities and building appreciation for preserving the ancient past. The project also provides a non-traditional, fully immersive education abroad experience for KSU undergraduates. Now in its eighth year, the MPAA has built a solid foundation upon which to expand. The team has a proven track record of attracting press coverage for its activities and expects that our activities will continue to gain national attention in India.

This project will result in a strengthened collaboration between KSU, Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University, and Deccan College. The project will also create a model outreach plan for archaeological preservation; a teaching module on Rajasthan archaeology and preservation for the elementary level; a pamphlet on local oral history and archaeology for the residents of Pachamta village; a robust excavation database; a set of oral histories; course materials for two of the PI's classes, and a team of villagers, three KSU undergraduate students, and six Indian graduate students who are trained in excavation methods. The project will also result in presentations at American and international venues including the Society for American Archaeology annual meetings, the European Association for South Asian Art and Archaeology, and the Society of South Asian Archaeology. Three KSU students will also earn 6 credits each and present their work at the Southeastern Anthropological Society and CETL's Symposium of Student Scholars. In the three years following the project, the project team also anticipates publishing the results in prominent peer-reviewed journals in India (*Heritage: Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Archaeology*), and the US (*Heritage Management*). Finally, the project team plans to ultimately expand and apply this model across the region.