

= DakshinaChitra =

DakshinaChitra (" a picture of the south ") is a living @-@ history museum in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu , dedicated to South Indian heritage and culture . It is located 25 kilometres (16 mi) to the south of Chennai . Opened to the public on 14 December 1996 , the museum was founded and is being managed by the Madras Craft Foundation (MCF) . The MCF was established in 1984 . Deborah Thiagarajan , an Indian art historian of American origin , governs the museum .

The museum is built on 10 acres (4 @. @ 0 ha) of land taken on a 33 @-@ year lease from the Government of Tamil Nadu . Developed as a heritage village , DakshinaChitra has an array of displays depicting the life pattern of Indians in the states of South India . The exhibits portray the living beliefs of art , folk performing @-@ arts , craft and architecture of India , in particular of South Indian traditions .

= = History = =

DakshinaChitra , meaning " a picture of the south " , is a heritage village where the lifestyle of South Indians is displayed based on their states . It was founded by the Madras Craft Foundation (MCF) , an NGO started in 1984 , by Deborah Thiagarajan . Thiagarajan came to Madras (now Chennai) in 1970 , and visited several rural villages in Tamil Nadu and Kerala . She founded MCF in 1984 with the intent of preserving the regional culture and heritage . In July 1991 , the MCF received 10 acres (4 @. @ 0 ha) of land for the project from the Government of Tamil Nadu on a 33 @-@ year lease . In establishing the museum , cooperation was maintained between government organizations , industry and specialists in the sphere of conservation . Contributors to the museum 's creation included long @-@ term corporate donors and a network of organizations , such as Prakriti Foundation , Amethyst , National Folklore Support Centre , the Crafts Council of India , Ford Foundation and the Office of the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts .

= = Design = =

The museum ? s plan concept was developed by architect , Laurie Baker , without charging any fee , because of his interest in rural architectural design . Baker 's approach included the use of local materials and the adaptation of artisanal production methods suited to the environment . Benny Kuriakose was the architect at site . Kuriakose , retained the main ? spatial types and syntax ? , but altered the layout plan . The southern part of the museum was devoted to restoring and recreating native structures and putting them together in a sequence in the order of the states of Andhra Pradesh , Karnataka , and Tamil Nadu ; a separate area was initially earmarked for the tribal people of these states but this was not put into effect .

= = Architecture = =

The museum has 18 heritage houses representing the living styles of people from the states of South India such as Tamil Nadu , Andhra Pradesh , North Karnataka , Kerala and Telangana . These houses , which were actual houses that were allowed to be demolished by the original owners , were recreated by a team of architecture students , carpenters and workers . The original houses in their " vernacular style " were purchased by MCF and purchase costs varied from Rs . 50 @, @ 000 for ordinary mud houses to Rs . 1 @. @ 5 million for the Chettinad merchants ' mansions with crafted doors and woodwork .) They were then dismantled systematically under the guidance of stapathis (temple architects) . The dismantled elements were transported to the museum site and recreated at the allotted space in their exact original form . Apart from recreating the homes , the roads and all other features that existed in the old village sites were recreated .. Some critics have complained that the characterization of pre @-@ industrial village life is inaccurate , focusing too much on the Nattukkottai Chettiar , and that the site is " stamped " with " American consumerism " .

= = Collections = =

The artefacts in the museum reflect the daily life in the Southern States . As of 2014 , there were 4 @, @ 220 artefacts on display ; 3 @, @ 200 are art @-@ related , and 70 pertain to contemporary subjects . Approximately 950 objects are clothing , featuring typical South Indian attire of men and women in cotton and silk fabrics .

The museum contains a collection of books and journals pertaining to arts , crafts , performance , anthropology and folklore of South India . There are also 1 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 pictures . The entire display is in the English language , and highlights the cultural aspects of Brahminical people and the craft traditions of heritage homes of South India .

= = Programs = =

The museum is a center for living traditions of art , folk performing arts , and crafts set up with the objective of preserving and promoting South India 's heritage and culture . Special programmes feature dances , crafting of necklaces , basket weaving , and puppet shows . The museum also holds workshops for training in traditional crafts such as indigo dying . Potters trained at the center are issued a certificate of their skills by the regional office of the Department of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) . Classical dances such as Bharatnatyam , Mohiniyattam and Kuchipudi , and music concerts are regular events held in the large amphitheater . Each year , 15 @, @ 000 school children visit the museum .

= = Grounds = =

The center occupies ten acres overlooking the Bay of Bengal , at Muttukadu , 25 kilometres (16 mi) south of Chennai , on the East Coast Road to Mamallapuram , Tamil Nadu , India . The grounds include a research unit , crafts bazaar , playground , an area to hold religious functions , stone workshop , and souvenir kiosks . The craftsmen demonstrate or explain how they make their wares .