



**ACADEMICIA**  
**An International**  
**Multidisciplinary**  
**Research Journal**  
 (Double Blind Refereed & Peer Reviewed Journal)



**DOI: 10.5958/2249-7137.2021.01787.0**

**STUDY OF PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Virender Singh\***

INDIA

**ABSTRACT**

*Historical archaeology examines that part of the human history which has recorded. While it shares many of the methods used in ancient archaeology, written documents provide an advantage in researching historical archaeology. Archaeology is not an anthropological discipline in Europe, but a historical one. This is because most civilizations have written languages in the Old World. However, archaeologists in the New World did not have this resource, save Mesoamerican archaeologists who studied Maya, whose hieroglyphic language has been decoded until lately. Due to this disparity, archaeologists in the New World have in many instances more common anthropologists than historians. A discipline of historical archaeology which examines the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean, which include Greece and Rome, may be called classical archaeology. Egyptology may also be seen as an archaeological discipline of history. Historical archaeologists examine colonial sites in North America, such as Jamestown or Salem, and civil war sites such as the Gettysburg Battlefield..*

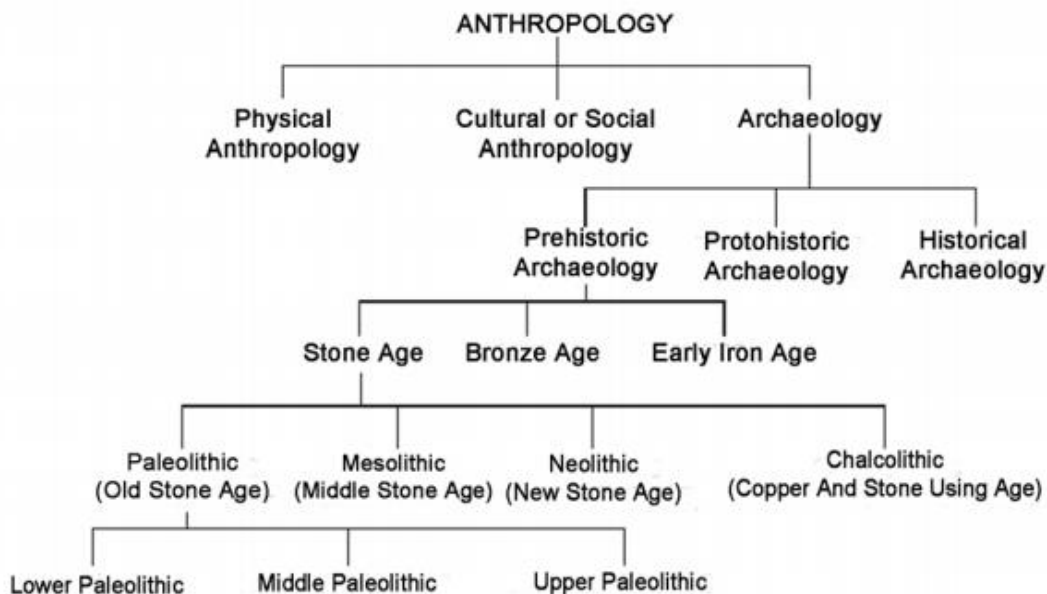
**KEYWORDS:** *Anthropology, Antiquarian, Hunter-gatherers etc.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The term archaeology originates from two Greek words 'arkhaios,' meaning ancient or ancient, and 'logia,' meaning learning or studying. Archeology is a study of the old and recent human history through the recovery and examination of residues of materials. Several consider it an anthropology subfield (the study of all human culture and development) along with many other subfields of anthropology. Archeology may both be seen as a social science and as a human branch (the study of humans and their society). It does, however, also utilise other learning divisions such as biology, chemistry, geology, botany, geography and other subjects. With all this, archaeologists are able to comprehend and reproduce the major elements of the environment in which these former cultures lived. The only way to investigate human activities in the material

world is to use archaeology when other evidence, such as a range of written texts and oral traditions, that recount specific phenomena fails. The survival of written records is very restricted and thus, when these papers become accessible, archaeology provides new tools for interpreting man's historical actions based on material remnants. In this regard, archaeology must not only analyse tangible remnants of human activities, but must also provide light on literary interpretations of the phenomena of the past. It enables us to value and maintain our common human history. It educates us about the past, allows us to understand where we were from and tells us how people lived, faced difficulties and created today's civilizations.

### The major anthropological branches displaying part and section



### Prehistoric archaeology

Prehistoric archaeology is an archaeological department that examines civilizations of the past. It is a history study before historical records started. It is an area of study that focuses on all the world's pre-urban civilizations. It contains various methods to analyse material remains to enable archaeologists to rebuild their ecological environments. The research on ancient archaeology reflects contemporary society's cultural interests through interpreting period between economic development and political stability. It is also intimately linked to biology, anthropology and geology. Because of its indirect traces with complicated patterns, it is sometimes called anthropological archaeology.

### Scope of Prehistoric Archaeology

Prehistoric archaeology has now become an institution with many academics establishing sub-disciplines. Each student propagates fresh ideas and pursues various techniques. Recently, we have learned that prehistoric archaeology has made a significant contribution to studying not only antiquities or relics in previous civilizations, but also the current people and contemporary

cultures by means of basic technology, in the light of their activities in prehistoric times. It may also assist in certain archaeological research if contemporary society's lifestyles are extremely similar to those of ancient existence. It is now a focus of study. We relate something from the past to an item in use now in one way or another. For instance, megalithic or utilising megaliths to build monuments, in most areas of the globe, is a dead cultural phenomena. But in Northeast India, particularly in Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya, it is still performed by various tribal groups in the same manner or in some modified form. The megalithic heritage is alive among these indigenous groups. Many ethno-archeological experts are thus eager to recreate, in the light of this ongoing legacy, the former life of the ancient inhabitants of these areas.

### **Nature of Prehistoric Archaeology**

The nature of Prehistoric Archeology is in part the discovery of historic riches, in part the thorough effort in scientific research and in part the exercise of creative imagination. It works for example with live Eskimos (to record the living tradition) in the snow of Alaska in the sun or excavation in the deserts of Rajasthan or Mesopotamia. It descends into the ancient ruins of Dwarka on the west coast of Inde (Gujarat) or the Spanish wrecks on the shore of Florida, and it examines the ancient civilisation of India (Harappan civilization) (Folsom culture). It is also an elaborate job of interpreting, so that we grasp what these phenomena imply for human civilization in the past. This makes prehistoric archaeology both a physical activity on the ground, for research, excavations or both, and an intellectual study analysing and writing a finding on the gathered materials in the laboratory. It's an intriguing search—the that's search for knowledge about the young guy in the distant past. As mentioned above, Anthropology is a wide field studying humanity with three minor branches: physical anthropology, cultural or social anthropology and archaeology. Prehistoric Archeology is an archaeological department that examines civilizations of ancient times. This section may alternatively be characterised as the past tense of cultural or social anthropology in this context. This is because both primitive as well as current cultures are studied by a cultural or social anthropologist, whereas prehistoric archaeologists mainly study the societies of the ancients via their material remnants. For example – the housing zones (such as open-air stations, grottoes, rock shelters, pits, huts, lake resorts, etc.) tools, weapons, tools, decorations (deco works), artworks (including works of painting and graving), and other artefacts known as the material culture that were left by the early man. And for prehistoric archaeologists, the most difficult job is to understand the previous material civilization in terms of humans.

### **Approaches in Prehistoric Archaeology**

Let's analyse the various methods in prehistoric archaeology.

#### **Ethno-Archaeology:**

Ethno-archaeology has become a leader in contemporary archaeology. You can only comprehend archaeological remnants or documents if you grasp more fully their existence and the process of their creation. The study of living people and their material culture is undertaken in order to improve our knowledge of the archaeological remains and records. Ethno-archeology. For example, the study of butchers by Lewis Bin ford amongst the Nunamiut Eskimo from Alaska has given him many new ideas on how archaeological remains or relics have been produced so that he may re-examine the bone remains of animals eaten by very early people elsewhere.

Archeologists think that current hunting gatherers such as the Australian Aborigine and North American Eskimo, as well as the people who lived in the Neolithic, have a lot in common with each other's style of living.

### **Environmental Archaeology:**

Another significant specialty in ancient archaeology is environmental archaeology. Three archaeology disciplines, e.g., zoo archaeology which examines the study of the ancient animal remains, soil geography, sediments, rocks, natural deposits etc. and archaeobotany which studies the remains of the ancient plant, are covered. Environmental archaeology is a branch of archaeology and is the study of rebuilding the connections between previous civilizations and their surroundings. It is now in its own right a well-developed field. It considers that human beings interact with other species in the ecological system or ecosystem as part of the natural world. Human existence is governed by the environment. Geographical characteristics influence the flora that determines the animal life in turn. And all these factors together define how and where people lived or, at least until very recently, what they did. The work of environmental recovery is essential, since if we have to comprehend how human beings operate and the society they belong to, we must first know how their world was.

### **Marine Archaeology:**

Another area of expertise is marine archaeology or maritime archaeology or underwater archaeology. It requires both tremendous bravery and expertise. There is a great deal of risk while operating at low depths and with limited visibility. The employment of robotic divers, equipped with powerful lights and cameras, contributes significantly to the security of underwater archaeology. It particularly examines the connection of humans with the sea, lakes and banks by studying accompanying physical remnants such as ships, coastal infrastructure, port buildings, cargoes, human remains and surrounding landscapes. It is widely believed to get its first significant push during 1853-54 when huge amounts of wood posts, ceramics and other artefacts were placed down by a very low water level in Swiss lakes. It has been a useful supplement to land work from the first research utilising rudimentary diving belts.

### **CONCLUSION**

It may be both a social science and a humanity branch (the study of humans and their society). It also utilises other areas of learning, though. Archeology is the only technique accessible when additional evidence such as various written documents and oral traditions relating to specific phenomena is lacking in the study of human activities in the material world. It educates us about the past, allows us to understand where we were from and tells us how people lived, faced difficulties and created today's civilizations. The formation of the discipline of archaeology has origins in history and people interested in the past, such as monarchs who sought to display their national triumphs of the past. The actual beginnings of the field of archaeology are unclear. Since time immemorial, excavations of historic sites and the collecting of antiquities took occurred. Some leaders showed interest in researching the past. Tentative beginnings towards archaeology as science were undertaken in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries during the Age of Illumination, often known as the Age of Reason. However, it was only in the 19th century that the systematic study of the past through its physical remnants started in a way that contemporary

archaeology students recognised. Archeology and history are mutually complementary. Together, the two disciplines offer a more complete history.

#### REFERENCE

1. Chakraborti, D. K. 1988. *A History of Indian Archaeology: The Beginning to 1947*. Delhi: MunshiramManoharlal Publishers.
2. Childe, V.G. 1956. (First Edition) *Piecing Together the Past*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
3. Kenyon, K. M. 1964. *Beginnings in Archaeology*. London: J M Dent & Sons Ltd.
4. Daniel, Glyn. 1967. *The Origins and Growth of Archaeology*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
5. Markham, C. R. 2004. *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys*. Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors.
6. Srivastava, K. M. 1987. *New Era of Indian Archaeology*. Delhi: Cosmo Publication
7. Ascher, R. (1961), "Experimental Archeology", *American Anthropologist*, 63 (4), pp. 793–816, doi:10.1525/aa.1961.63.4.02a00070
8. Billman, B.R.; Feinman, G. (1999), *Settlement Pattern Studies in the Americas—Fifty Years Since Virú*, Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press
9. Binford, L. (1962), "Archaeology as Anthropology", *American Antiquity*, Society for American Archaeology, 28 (4), pp. 217–25, doi:10.2307/278380, JSTOR 278380
10. Denning, K. (2004), "The Storm of Progress' and Archaeology for an Online Public", *Internet Archaeology*, 15
11. Ebrey, Patricia Buckley (1999), *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-43519-2, OCLC 223427870
12. Flannery, K.V. (1967), "Culture History v. Culture Process: A Debate in American archaeology", *Scientific American*, 217 (2), pp. 119–22, doi:10.1038/scientificamerican0867-119
13. Flannery, K.V. (1982), "The Golden Marshalltown: A Parable for the Archaeology of the 1980s", *American Anthropologist*, 84 (2), pp. 265–278, doi:10.1525/aa.1982.84.2.02a00010