

P.R. GOVERNMENT COLLEGE (A), KAKINADA
NAAC Accredited “A” Grade Institution (CGPA –
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Study Material for students



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TOPIC: Nature & Scope of Archaeology

Archaeology is the scientific study of past human life and activities through the recovery and analysis of material culture. It encompasses the study of human history and prehistory by examining artefacts, structures, and other tangible remains. The nature of archaeology involves a multidisciplinary approach, combining scientific methods with historical and anthropological perspectives to reconstruct past cultures and understand human behaviour. Its scope extends to all aspects of human existence, from daily life to social structures and belief systems, across all time periods and geographic locations.

Definition:

Archaeology, derived from the Greek words "arkhaios" (ancient) and "logia" (study), is the study of the human past through material remains. It's a way to understand how people lived, what they believed, and how they interacted with their environment by examining the physical objects they left behind.

Nature

Scientific:

Archaeology employs systematic methods for excavation, analysis, and interpretation of material evidence.

Multidisciplinary:

It draws upon various fields like anthropology, history, geology, biology, and chemistry to provide a comprehensive understanding of the past.

Reconstructive:

Archaeology aims to piece together past cultures by analyzing physical remains and their contexts.

Interpretive:

Archaeological findings are not just material objects; they are interpreted to understand past human behaviour and cultural processes.

Scope

Time Period:

Archaeology covers all periods of human existence, from the earliest hominids to the recent past.

Geographic Locations:

It investigates past societies across the globe, from ancient civilizations to prehistoric settlements.

Aspects of Human Life:

Archaeology explores various facets of human life, including subsistence strategies, technology, social organization, belief systems, and interactions with the environment.

Material Culture:

The scope includes artefacts (portable objects like tools, pottery, and jewellery) and structures (buildings, tombs, and monuments).

Sub-disciplines:

Archaeology has specialized branches like underwater archaeology, historical archaeology, and forensic archaeology, each with its own focus and methods.

Definition and Scope

The term archaeology is derived from the Greek word. In Greek, *archaios* means ancient and *logos* mean discussion, reason or science. Thus, archaeology is a science involving the study of human past through material remains. It methodically and meticulously studies to obtain a complete picture of human behavioural and cognitive systems. In short, archaeology is the study of human behavioural and cognitive systems to understand the cultural changes or processes that happened in the past through material remains.

To understand the cultural process, archaeologists study all physical traces encountered both in excavations and explorations as movable and immovable objects and also tangible and intangible evidences. Among the physical remains, artefacts (portable human -made objects) occupy a primary position. Archaeologists try to discern the non-material life of the people through these movable and immovable objects. Archaeologists follow certain specific methods and a body of theories to get a comprehensive picture of the material and non-material life of the people.

In method, the focus is on the collection of data. In theory, the focus is on the interpretation or giving a better explanation on the collected material. In the past, archaeologists generally.