

## **Archaeology in India: Future of Past**

**Alok Tripathi**

### **ABSTRACT**

Beginning of archaeology in India is traced back to 1784, with the foundation of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Appointment of Colonel A. Cunningham as Archaeological Surveyor from 1st December 1861 is taken as the foundation day of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Archaeology in India is more or less the history of the ASI, one of the oldest and the largest institution working under the Central Government. For proper functioning and development of any discipline, proper legal framework is a must. Under the Allocation of Business Rule implementation of “the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958” is assigned to the Department of Culture, which in turn is implemented by the ASI.

The principle Act, governing more or less all the archaeological activities in the country, was implemented in Independent India to deal with archaeological activities according to the federal structure of the country but the functioning of archaeology continued with little change. This paper touches important events in the history of archaeology in India, implementation of procedure, function of different institutions and their effects on the development or deterioration of the subject. It throws light on several vital aspects which remain untouched and uncared by field archaeologists. Based on the history and provisions of the law, it suggests remedies for proper functioning of various stakeholders so that archaeology can be developed to achieve its goal for reconstructing the “*itihas*” of the people who lived and performed in this region.

*Keywords: archaeology in India; policy, law and future planning; recent developments, itihasa*