



This page is da bomb, there will be no survivors.

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Finding treasures



If history, civilisation and culture are the words that click with you, then an archaeologist is your go-to career. A mix of excavation, recovery and analysing artefacts with a command on preservation laws, the life of an archaeologist is an adventurous one. Here's **Mahi Modgil, X A & Jaya Jha, XI J, AIS Gurugram 46**, to show you what the experts have to say about archaeology as a career prospect.



Know the Expert

Arsh Ali, India's Youngest Archaeologist & Egyptologist

A 20-year-old student, certified as 'The Youngest Archaeologist of India', Arsh Ali has been a part of various Archaeological explorations and is currently working on the experimental approach to Ancient Egyptian cuisine, particularly bread and ancient Egyptian mummification.

Journey

I have always had a very intimate relationship with Egyptology. It started in Class II when I was introduced to the fascinating country of Egypt and its rich culture. Thereafter, I started learning the pictographic script of Egypt, ancient hieroglyphs. Besides, for me, being an Egyptologist is a privilege as I get to learn about the two most ancient cultures of the world, India and Egypt, simultaneously.

A regular day

My schedule is quite open headed. Since Egyptology is a very research-intensive field, the bulk of my work is done on the desktop. Excavation, especially in India or Egypt, usually takes place during the winters. It begins in December and lasts up till May. The remaining months are used to analyse the artefacts found and employ multidisciplinary approaches like physics, soil sciences, etc., to figure out

the purpose of the said artefacts.

Requisites

I believe 'interest' is the most crucial factor. Further, one must know how to deal with a vast area of knowledge to be able to make perfect links between different cultures/countries. History is never static; it is always dynamic. Therefore, keeping up with the changes, and understanding what factors, whether economic or social, influenced the said changes is necessary. In terms of technical know-hows, understanding the language can also be considered the most important requisite of this field as everything is recorded in manuscripts that need to be decoded.

Courses

There aren't any colleges offering Egyptology in India, but there are many abroad. The American University, Cairo, is one I recommend. Before specialisation, however, graduation

is important. After post-graduation, one could opt for masters or MPhil and then finally PhD.

Challenges

One of the more realistic challenges is surveying the excavation site. Excavation is a very costly process, one can't just excavate everything, so a small portion of the site is chosen and from there the hypothesis about the culture begins. For this to succeed, we need to make sure that the portion we've chosen uncovers something important about the culture, and that the techniques we employ are precise for an accurate hypothesis.

Scope

Archaeologists who provide management, scientific and technical services earn an average of 35,00,000 INR a year, while those who conduct scientific research and provide developmental services earn an average of 33,00,000 INR p.a.



Know the Expert

Akansha Rastogi, curator, Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi

Akansha Rastogi is a curator, Programming and Exhibitions, at Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, Delhi. With a Master's Degree in History of Art, she is a part of the artist collective WALA and is also a proud recipient of the 2014-15 IFA Research Grant for studying Exhibition Histories and Practices of Indian Modern and Contemporary Art.

Journey

My journey as an art curator has been amazing. Developing and putting creative ideas on display gives me great creative satisfaction. Engaging with audience from varying backgrounds has also been a very fulfilling experience for me.

A regular day

The museum where I work has a permanent collection as well as temporary exhibitions, both of which require research work. Therefore, a major chunk of my schedule goes in researching, making notes, and connecting them to art. Since we organise several online events, I am also engaged in conceptualising and executing those programmes.

Requisites

As a curator, one engages with scientists as well as artists. So, it's the integration of all disciplines and hence, a little knowledge in all disciplines comes

handy. Besides, keeping an open, learning mind is very essential. Always keep fresh ideas, reach out to artists, find out at what stage they are or if their ideas sit with your own ideas or not. Collaboration brings out the best in people so being open to other's ideas is very helpful.

Courses

Speaking about myself, my experience was more on-field and I did not get a degree in curation but now many universities are offering courses in the same. A degree in art history along with knowledge about art from different periods and countries is preferable. Along with it, a degree in curation is a must.

Challenges

The biggest challenge that I feel is conviction and convincing. If one has an idea, an institution might not always be ready to accept it. So, a lot of work has to be put behind the presentation of

that one idea. The key challenges thus are being inclusive of all voices and making space for utmost creativity, diversity and dynamism.

Scope

Art curation is a creative as well as administrative work. One can be a programmer, festival organiser, etc. Besides, there is going to be an upsurge in these opportunities as a huge return to culture is expected post the pandemic. Online exhibitions has further fueled the hunger for art. I strongly believe that we are at a very interesting point of time where a new field is about to blossom, and many hands will be needed. In terms of markets as well, art is doing well. Hence, there is a lot of scope for this career. As far as remuneration goes, it is on project-to-project basis. If one is working with a gallery, the remuneration can vary from 30,000 INR to 3,00,000 INR a month.



Know the Expert

Sadhish Sharma, researcher, Archaeological Survey of India

Sadhish Sharma, researcher at the Archaeological Survey of India, is a research enthusiast in field of astro-archaeology, cultural heritage management, iconography, prehistory and temple architecture.

Journey

My childhood experiences were perhaps my biggest inspiration. As a matter of fact, I had accidentally come across the degree, bachelors of technology in temple architecture. I had the privilege of pursuing this degree at the University of Madras that has a wonderful set up at their Mammallapuram campus which has been around for 60 years, a legacy if you will. From there began my interest

and journey in Indian art, temple architecture and archaeology.

A regular day

Temple architecture is a field where a great deal of research is required. I don't have any specific schedule as it is subject to change, seasons being one of them. Summer offers more work, whereas winter and monsoon are relatively free. There are days where 12-14 hours of work are essential and on other days around 2-3 hours is enough.

Requisites

Constantly developing yourself, staying optimistic and working hard is a general formula to achieve anything and everything. Temple architecture

covers a lot besides just history, so while you can't be expected to know everything, having the willingness to learn is a must.

Challenges

As temple archaeologists, we evaluate the nature of the place and the locality, geographical factors and physiological factors. The history of the individual structure along with the history of the locality is analysed as well. We also create a map in order to segregate the structure into different pieces. Technically speaking, a lot of analysis is involved, not just of the particular site, but of local public as well; this can be a daunting task. A sizeable amount of practical additions are also taken into account because what's written about a place might be different from what's actually

there, which is another challenge. Besides, finding the right opportunities is also challenging.

Scope

Temple archaeology has a pretty wide scope, one could be anything from a scholar to a teacher, or even a temple archaeologist such as myself. Apart from this, one can work in the Arts and Culture department, either state or central. International organisations like UNESCO also provide job opportunities. All in all, these are interlinked in one way or another and hence the possibilities are endless. The remuneration is varied. For instance, in the public sector, teaching is the most sought-after option and can offer about 1,00,000 INR per month. In the private sector, establishing temple workshops is an option. Regardless of the field, one can easily earn 7,00,000-8,00,000 INR per annum.

