Marine Archaeology, which is a branch of archaeology is a nascent and fast emerging discipline in India. It is also termed sometimes as Underwater Archaeology or Nautical Archaeology. It can be defined as the study of seafaring activities of the past. Some port-towns and other habitational sites which existed in the past, but may now be under the sea due to the changes in sea level. There are also several ancient historic shipwrecks in the coastal zone, wrecked either by inexperienced navigation, storms or overloading.

The Indian Ocean has witnessed the dawn of several Bronze Age Civilisations around it; for instance Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Indus Valley in the 4th to 3rd millennium B.C. The evidence of their overseas trade are also found. Around Christian Era Romans were very actively involved in overseas trade with India. This is already proved by the presence of several Roman Period Sites along the Indian coast. Finally in the 16th century AD several European companies such as Portuguese, British, Dutch, French and Danish etc. came through sea route down to Africa, Madagascar and India. There are several archival records which suggest that a number of ships sank in the sea, which have now become a part of the cultural heritage of the respective countries. Apart from shipwrecks several ancient ports have also been submerged in the sea which need to be unearthed for educational and scientific purposes.

Submerged sites and sunken ship wrecks are our cultural heritage. It is critical for us to decipher the records and link the past with the present. The rampant developmental activities in the coastal zone may destroy the evidence of bygone civilisations for ever. It is therefore imperative to make marine archaeological investigations mandatory in the coastal zone, when any kind of developmental activities take place, such as development of ports, harbours, industry and tourism etc. In case any kind of archaeological remains are found, the archaeological authorities should be informed, because once the evidence is lost, it can never be recovered.

Cohesive and intensive efforts should be made by the public in general and archaeologists in particular to save the heritage. A body to monitor and educate concerned organisations from different countries for the purpose should be established.