

Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson, students will be able to

- know the evolution of the universe.
- understand the building blocks of the universe.
- know more about solar system.
- know Kepler's laws of motion.
- calculate the orbital velocity and the time-period of satellites.
- know about International Space Station.



Introduction

In the earlier days, before the invention of astronomical instruments, people thought that Earth is the centre of all the objects in the space. This was known as the geocentric model, held by Greek astronomer Ptolemy (2nd Century), Indian astronomer Aryabhatta (5th Century) and many astronomers around the world. Later Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus proposed the heliocentric model (helios = Sun), with Sun at the centre of the solar system. Invention of the telescope in the Netherlands, in 1608, created a revolution in astronomy. In this lesson, we will study about the building blocks of the universe, Kepler's laws of motion, time period of satellites and International Space Station (ISS).

9.1 Building block of the Universe

The basic constituent of the universe is luminous matter i.e., galaxies which are really the collection of billions of stars. The universe

contains everything that exists including the Earth, planets, stars, space, and galaxies. This includes all matter, energy and even time. No one knows how big the universe is. It could be infinitely large. Scientists, however, measure the size of the universe by what they can see. This is called the 'observable universe'. The observable universe is around 93 billion light years (1 light year = the distance that light travels in one year, which is 9.4607×10^{12} km) across.

One of the interesting things about the universe is that it is currently expanding. It is growing larger and larger all the time. Not only is it growing larger, but the edge of the universe is expanding at a faster and faster rate. However, most of the universe what we think of is empty space. All the atoms together only make up around four percent of the universe. The majority of the universe consists of something scientists call dark matter and dark energy.

Activity 1

Form a team of three to four students. Prepare a poster about the astronomers.