

Prehistoric Period**Paleolithic Period:****Introduction**

- **The Paleolithic Period** is an ancient cultural stage of human technological development, characterized by the creation and use of rudimentary chipped stone tools.
- **The Paleolithic Period** was also **characterized** by the manufacture of small sculptures (e.g., carved stone statuettes of women, clay figurines of animals, and other bone and ivory carvings) and paintings, incised designs, and reliefs on cave walls.
- The **Palaeolithic Age in India** is divided into **three phases** in accordance with the type of stone tools used by the people and also according to the nature of climatic change:
 - First phase may be placed broadly between 600,000 and 150,000 BC
 - Second between 150,000 and 35,000 BC
 - Third between 35,000 and 10,000 BC.

Lower Paleolithic Age

- **The Lower Palaeolithic or the Early Old Stone Age** covers the greater part of the ice age.
- The Early Old Stone Age may have begun in Africa around two million years ago, but in India it is not older than 600,000 years.
- This date is given to **Bori in Maharashtra**, and this site is considered to be the earliest Lower Palaeolithic site.
- This age consists of two principal tool-making or cultural traditions:
 - The **Soanian tradition** forming part of the East and Southeast Asian chopper chopping tool tradition, and
 - The Handaxe-cleaver or biface assemblages constituting the **Acheulian tradition**, which is widely known from the western half of the Old World (African, Western Europe, West and South Asia)
- People used hand axes, cleavers, and choppers.

- The axes found in India are more or less similar to those of western Asia, Europe, and Africa.
- Stone tools were used largely for chopping, digging, and skinning.
- Early Old Stone Age sites have been found in the **valley of river Son or Sohan** in Punjab, now in Pakistan.
- Several sites have been found in Kashmir and the Thar desert.
- Lower Palaeolithic tools have also been found in the Belan valley in UP and in the desert area of Didwana in Rajasthan
- **Nagarjunakonda** in Andhra Pradesh is an important site, and the caves and rock shelters of **Bhimbetka** near Bhopal also show features of the Lower Palaeolithic age.
 - The rock shelters may have served as seasonal camps for human beings.
- The people of the Lower Stone Age seem to have **principally** been food gatherers.
- They took to small game hunting and lived also on fish and birds.

Middle Paleolithic Age

- The Middle Palaeolithic industries were largely based upon flakes or small pieces of stone which have been found in different parts of India with regional variations.
- This culture consists of a variety of tools made on flakes; and these flakes are produced by specialized techniques. Therefore, it is widely referred to as **flake tool industry**
- The artefacts of this age are found at several places on the **river Narmada**, and also at several places, south of the Tungabhadra River.
 - **The Belan valley (UP)**, which lies at the foothills of the Vindhyas, is rich in stone tools and animal fossils including cattle and deer.
 - These remains relate to both the Lower and Middle Stone ages.

Upper Paleolithic Age

- This age, in the world context, marks the appearance of new flint industries and men of the modern type.

MANIDHANAHEYAM FREE IAS ACADEMY – TNPSC - PRELIMINARY EXAM
UNIT – IV – HISTORY & CULTURE OF INDIA

- The Upper Palaeolithic is marked by **technological advances** in stone tool manufacture by the production of parallel sided blades which are finished into a variety of tools by blunting one side or by backing.
- In India, we notice the use of blades and burins, which have been found in AP, Karnataka, Maharashtra, central MP, southern UP, Jharkhand and adjoining areas.
- Caves and rock shelters for use by human beings in the Upper Palaeolithic phase have been discovered at Bhimbetka.
- An Upper Palaeolithic assemblage, characterized by comparatively large flakes, blades, burins, and scrapers has also been found in the upper levels of the Gujarat sand dunes.

Mesolithic Period

Introduction

- **Mesolithic**, also called **Middle Stone Age**, is an ancient cultural stage that existed **between** the **Paleolithic** (Old Stone Age), with its chipped stone tools, and the **Neolithic** (New Stone Age), with its polished stone tools.
- Mesolithic material culture is characterized by greater innovation and diversity than is found in the Paleolithic.
- In India, this age spanned from 9,000 B.C. to 4,000 B.C., and is **characterized** by the appearance of **Microliths** (small bladed stone tools).
- Mesolithic period in **human cultural history** is defined as the **earliest Holocene culture** that occurs before agriculture was started.

Tool Types and Technology

- **Microliths** are the predominating and the most common tool types of this cultural phase
 - Microliths are described in terms of **geometric and non-geometric shapes**.
- Geometric ones are types such as trapeze, triangle, lunate or crescent.

- The nongeometric types are named by the nature of blunting of the back, such as partly, fully or obliquely blunted blades or after their functions such as scraper, point, knife, blade, awl, burin and borer
- These were used as composite tools for plant gathering and harvesting, slicing, grating, plant-fibre processing
- Another type of tool used by the Mesolithic people is called the **Macrolith**
 - These were bigger than Microliths, and were a continuation of the Upper Palaeolithic types such as scrapers
 - These are considered as heavy-duty tools
- **Bone** and antler tools are yet another category of tools used by the Mesolithic people

Indian Mesolithic Culture

- **Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age** was of a **much shorter period** than Palaeolithic.
 - It lasted from over thirty thousand years in Sri Lanka and parts of Africa to only about ten thousand years in India and West Asia.
- Besides the use of microliths, the Mesolithic people made a number of **technological innovations** like the bow and arrow for hunting, querns, grinders and hammer stones for grinding and pulverising plant foods like roots, tubers etc.
- They created a **large volume of art** in the form of several thousand paintings and engravings, which not only tell us about their aesthetic taste but also their capability for innovating new technological elements, modes of subsistence economy, items of material culture, social organization and religion

Indian Mesolithic sites

- The earliest discovery of microliths and other Mesolithic tools were discovered in the **rock-shelters of Mirzapur district** of Uttar Pradesh.
- Major excavated sites in India include:
 - Tilwara, Bagor , Ganeshwar in Rajasthan

UNIT - IV - HISTORY & CULTURE OF INDIA

- Langhnaj, Akhaj, Valasana, Hirpura, Amrapur, Devnimori, Dhekvadlo,
- Tarsang in Gujarat
- Patne, Pachad, Hatkhamba in Maharashtra
- Morkhana, Lekhahia, Baghai Khor, Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha, Damdama,
- Chopani Mando, Baidha Putpurihwa in Uttar Pradesh
- Pachmarhi, Adamgarh, Putli Karar, Bhimbetka, Baghor II, Baghor III,
- Ghagharia in Madhya Pradesh
- Paisra in Bihar
- Kuchai in Odisha
- Birbhanpur in West Bengal
- Muchatla Chintamanu Gavi, Gauri Gundam in Andhra Pradesh
- Sanganakallu in Karnataka
- Tenmalai in Kerala.
- The above excavated sites have provided us with a vast amount of information regarding technology, material remains, burial practices, anatomical remains, customs associated with burial, art and charcoal for dating of the sites.

Neolithic Period**Introduction**

- The term Neolithic Period refers to the **last stage of the Stone Age**
- The Neolithic period is **significant** for its megalithic architecture, the spread of agricultural practices, and the use of polished stone tools.
- Neolithic was a very important stage of the history of human culture, when humans were **no longer dependent** entirely on nature but had started to exploit nature to their own advantage.

Neolithic Culture

- **Agriculture**
 - The idea of **Neolithic Revolution** refers to the origin of agriculture, animal domestication and a settled way of life
 - It indicates the **transformation of society** from a food gathering (hunting-gathering) economy to a food producing (agropastoral) economy.
 - The people of the Neolithic Age cultivated ragi, horse gram, cotton, rice, wheat, and barley and hence were termed as food producers.
 - They domesticated cattle, sheep, and goats, as well.
- **Tools**
 - Unlike the Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age) period, people in this period began to use **polished stone** tools and axes, often called celts.
 - The Neolithic tools appear more refined than the crude flaked stone tools of the Palaeolithic period
 - They also used tools and weapons made of bone
- **Living**
 - The introduction of domestication of plants and animals led to the production of a **large quantity of grains and animal food.**
 - The food that they produced had to be stored and hence, pottery-making emerged.
 - They had to settle in open areas away from caves and thus, houses were built.
 - Large villages developed and permanent residences were built
- **Housing**
 - The people of the Neolithic Age lived in rectangular or circular houses which were made of mud and reed.

- The people of Mehrgarh lived in mud-brick houses while pit-dwelling is reported from Burzahom, the Neolithic site found in Kashmir.
- **Pottery**
 - With the advent of Agriculture, people were required to store their food grains as well as to do cooking, arrange for drinking water, and eat the finished product.
 - As a result, pottery **first appeared** in the Neolithic Age.
 - The pottery of the period was classified under grey ware, black-burnished ware, and mat-impressed ware.
- **Architecture**
 - The Neolithic Age is significant for its **Megalithic Architecture**.
 - **Megalithic** means '**large stone**' and in general, the word is used to refer to any huge, human-built or assembled structure or collection of stones or boulders
- **Community Life**
 - Further, the surplus food production was one of the main factors for the development of early urban cultures at a later context.
 - Also, Neolithic people had **common rights** over property. They led a **settled life**.

Neolithic cultures of India

- Extensive explorations and excavations have yielded immense amount of material about the Neolithic cultures of India.
- One thing to note about Indian Neolithic is that Neolithic cultures in India **did not develop everywhere** at the same time, nor did they end simultaneously. There were regional variations too.
 - Thus, each of these regional Neolithic traditions seem to have been conditioned by local, ecological conditions and need to be studied separately.
- Broadly, however, we can say that the **Neolithic of India** was a **farming and pastoralism** based sedentary/semi-sedentary village culture.

The Neolithic sites of the Indian subcontinent or South Asia are divided into various regional cultural groups, as follows:

Region	Important Places	Characteristic Features
North-Western Region – Pakistan and Afghanistan	Mehrgarh in the Kacchi plains, Kili Gul Muhammad in the Quetta valley, Rana Ghundai in the Loralai valley and Anjira in the Surab valley.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is one of the earliest regions of the world which has given combined evidence of plant and animal domestication.
Northern Region – Kashmir	Burzahom, Gufkral and Kanispor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neolithic culture of Kashmir region was contemporary with the Harappan civilization.
Vindhyan Hills, the Belan and the Ganga River Valleys	The sites of ChopaniMando, Koldihwa, Lehuradeva and Mahagara in the Ganga valley are the important excavated sites of this region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Belan river valley witnessed one of the earliest Neolithic occupations in India.
Mid-Eastern Ganga Valley Region	Chirand (on the banks of the river Ghagra in district Saran), Chechar, Senuwar (near Sasaram) and Taradip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Neolithic sites of this region also have evidence for transition to the Chalcolithic
Central-Eastern Region	Kuchai, Golbaisasan and Sankarjang are some of the important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These cultures show similarities with the Neolithic complexes

MANIDHANA EYAM FREE IAS ACADEMY – TNPSC - PRELIMINARY EXAM
UNIT – IV – HISTORY & CULTURE OF INDIA

	Neolithic sites of this region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of east and Southeast Asia
North-Eastern India	Marakdola, Daojali Hading and Sarutaru are the Neolithic sites of Assam region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In north-eastern India, the Neolithic culture belongs to a slightly later period. • This region today has evidence for shifting cultivation, cultivation of yams and taro, building stone and wooden memorials for the dead, and the presence of Austro-Asiatic languages.
South India	Sanganakallu, Kodekal, Budihal, Tekkalakota, Brahmagiri, Maski, T.Narsipur, Piklihal, Watkal, Hemmige and Hallur in Karnataka; Utnur, Pallavoy, Nagarjunakonda, Ramapuram and Veerapuram in Andhra Pradesh; and Paiyyampalli in Tamil Nadu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Neolithic people of South India had an agro-pastoral economy. • Further, the Neolithic sites of South India have ash mounds in the early stages and evidence of plant and animal domestication is found.

- **Social Organisation and Belief System**

- The evidence for understanding the **social organization** of the Neolithic people is very limited.
- People began to live in sedentary and semi sedentary settlements. They perhaps had **tribe level social organization**.
- The idea of land and plant ownership emerged, as they domesticated plants and animals.
- The presence of small houses may suggest nuclear families.
- The ceramics and beads suggest the improvement in **material cultural production**.
- People had demarcated certain territories.
- The dead were buried within the houses and sometimes, animal burials are also found. They suggest the adoption of certain rituals and the worship of the dead.
- They may have worshipped the natural forces. Evidence of art objects is limited; the terracotta images of cattle suggest some fertility cult.
- Thus, the transition from hunting-gathering to food-producing, in fact, brought about important changes in social and cultural development.
- And, the **foundations** for the **earliest Indian villages** were laid in the Neolithic times.

Chalcolithic Period

Introduction

- With the **end of the Neolithic Age**, several cultures started using metal, mostly copper and low grade bronze.
- The culture based on the **use of copper and stone** was termed as **Chalcolithic** meaning **stone-copper Phase**.
- The term Chalcolithic means “copper” and “stone” or Copper Age; it is also known as the **Eneolithic or Aeneolithic**

Chalcolithic Culture in India

- With the end of the Neolithic Age, several cultures started using metal, mostly copper and low grade bronze
 - In India, it spanned around 2000 BC to 700 BC.
- This culture was mainly seen in Pre-Harappan phase, but at many places it extended to Post-Harappan phase too
- The people were mostly rural and lived near hills and rivers.

Characteristics of this Culture include:

Pottery

- A main identifying characteristic of the Chalcolithic period is polychrome painted pottery.
- Ceramic forms found on Chalcolithic sites include “fenestrated pottery”, pots with openings cut into the walls

Domestication of Animals

- Farmers typically raised domestic animals such as sheep-goats, cattle, and pigs, a diet supplemented by hunting and fishing.
- Milk and milk by-products were important, as were fruit trees (such as fig and olive).

Agriculture

- The major crops cultivated were barley and wheat, lentil, bajra, jowar, ragi millets, green pea, green and black gram.
- Traces of rice cultivation are also found. This shows that their food included fish and rice.
- Eastern India produced rice and Western India produced barley

Houses and Burial Styles

- Houses built by Chalcolithic farmers were constructed of stone or mudbrick.
- One characteristic pattern is a chain building, a row of rectangular houses connected to one another by shared party walls on the short ends.

- Burials varied widely from group to group, from single interments to jar burials to small box-shaped above-ground ossuary and even rock-cut tombs.

Tools and Weapons

Metals such as copper and its alloys were used to make knives, axes, fishing hooks, chisels, pins, and rods

Art and Craft

- The people of Chalcolithic Age were expert coppersmiths, ivory carvers, lime makers, and terracotta artisans.
- Ornaments were made from semiprecious stones and beads such as agate, jasper, chalcedony, and carnelian were used.
- People had knowledge of spinning and weaving. Flax, cotton, and silk thread is found from sites in Maharashtra

Chalcolithic cultures identified on basis of their geographical location:

1. Ahar Culture

- **The Ahar culture –also known as the Banas culture, the latter term derived from** the name of the valley in which most of the sites of this culture are located—is among the **earliest Chalcolithic cultures** of India.
- Major excavated sites are Ahar and Balathal in Udaipur district, Gilund in Rajsamanad district, Ojiyana in Bhilwara district Rajasthan.
- Ahar culture had a **rich ceramic tradition** consisting of Tan ware, thin Red ware, Black and Red ware and Grey ware. Shapes include dishes, dish on stands and globular
- Available radio-carbon dates (calibrated) suggest a time bracket of 2025 BC— 1270 BC for the Chalcolithic Phase.

2. Kayatha Culture

- This Chalcolithic culture was named after the type site Kayatha, in Ujjain district,
- Madhya Pradesh.

- **Radiocarbon dates** suggest a period of 2000 to 1800 BC.
- The **characteristic forms** of ceramics include: the chocolate slipped ware also known as Kayatha ware.
 - The types are bowls, high and short-necked storage jars with globular profile and basins.
 - Similarities are evident with the sturdy painted pottery found at some pre-Harappan sites
- In this culture, people lived in small huts with well-rammed floors and wattle and daub walls supporting a thatched roof.
 - A mixed economy was practiced as seen from evidence on subsistence farming, stock raising and hunting-fishing.
 - Barley and wheat were grown.
 - Domesticated animals included cattle and sheep/goat.
 - Interestingly, **horse remains** have been found from the Chalcolithic level at Kayatha.
- The **sudden end** of this culture is ascribed to an earthquake.

3. Malwa Culture

- The Malwa culture is the most **predominant chalcolithic culture** of central India, with a wide distribution of sites almost all over Malwa region.
- It was first identified in the excavations at Maheshwar, **on river Narmada**.
- Other excavated sites of this culture are Nagda, Kayatha, Eran etc.
- On the basis of calibrated dates the Malwa culture is placed in the bracket of 1900-1400 BC.
- These Sites are mostly found on the banks of the tributaries
- The subsistence practices and diet can be reconstructed from remains of carbonized grains of wheat, barley, jawar, rice, legumes, oilseeds and fruits.
- The **material culture** constituted chiefly of ceramic types, the Malwa ware forming the principal type.

- It was essentially buff or cream slipped with painted patterns in dark brown.
- Other ceramic wares were white painted black-and-red ware of the Ahar culture, a cream slipped ware, a coarse red/grey ware and handmade storage jars
- **Religious beliefs** are reconstructed from fragmentary evidence.
 - Terracotta female figurines of indistinct types have been found while a few examples of more definite forms exist.
 - Terracotta bull figurines were either mere toys or associated with religious beliefs.
- The **decline of the Malwa culture** has been placed in around 1400 BC which coincided with that of Ahar culture as well.

4. Jorwe Culture

- The Jorwe culture is the most important and characteristic chalcolithic culture of Maharashtra, extending almost all over the present state, excepting the coastal strip on the west and Vidarbha in the north east.
- The culture is named after the type site of Jorwe in Ahmadnagar district, Gujarat.
- The culture was discovered in 1950
- In regions, such as, Prakash in the Tapi valley, Daimabad in the PravaraGodavari valley and Inamgaon in the Bhima valley large centres of this culture were found
- The Early Jorwe houses were rectangular in plan while the Late Jorwe ones were circular.
- A large number of Jorwe sites can be classified as villages, most of them being about 2 ha in extent.
- Based on an analysis of organic remains the subsistence base has been reconstructed.
- It was based on dry-farming with stock-raising and hunting-fishing as ancillary activities.

- A variety of crops were grown, and the Jorwe farmers have also been credited for practicing crop rotation.
- The principal crops were barley, wheat, jowar, rice, ragi, green pea, grass pea, lentil, and green and black gram.
- A noteworthy feature of the Jorwe culture is the mode of disposal of the dead.
- Many child burials were found in urns laid in pits.
- In case of adults, the portion below the ankles was chopped off.
- A large number of the settlements were deserted at the end of second millennium BC for climatic deterioration.

5. Ochre Coloured Pottery culture

- **The OCP or the Ochre Coloured Pottery culture is named after a ceramic type** which is extremely rolled and fragile.
- It has a wash of red ochre which is easily washed off and hence its name.
- OCP people led a sedentary existence, similar to many early farming communities of this period
 - Remains of domesticated animals like cattle, and evidence of cultivated crops like rice and barley further provide information on their **subsistence practices**.
- OCP sites have been found in Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh.
- Some assign the OCP either to pre-Harappans, Harappans, or Late Harappans, while others assign this to the Aryans, still others see a tribal association.
 - The chronological span ranges from 2600 to 900 BC.

6. Painted Grey Ware (PGW)

- **Painted Grey Ware (PGW) is a very fine, smooth, and even-coloured grey pottery**, with a thin fabric.
- It was made out of well-worked, very high quality clay.

- PGW seems to have been a deluxe ware, forming a very small percentage of the total pottery assemblage at the levels at which these were found.
- The dates of the PGW culture range from **1100-500/400 BCE**, and the sites show a wide geographical distribution, stretching from the Himalayan foothills to the Malwa plateau in central India, and from the Bahawalpur region of Pakistan to Kaushambi near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh.
 - Apart from the plains it has been found in the hilly regions of Kumaon and Garhwal.
 - Sporadic potsherds were found at a few places like Vaishali in Bihar, Lakhiyopur in Sind and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh.
- Structural remains at PGW levels consist mainly of wattle-and-daub and mud huts.
 - **Unbaked bricks and one baked brick** were found at Hastinapura
 - Jakhera represents a fairly-evolved proto-urban stage of this culture.
- The PGW sites indicate a subsistence base that included cultivation of rice, wheat and barley.
 - There is no actual evidence of irrigation facilities, but a few deep circular pits outside the habitation area at Atranjikhera are indicative of kachcha wells.
 - Animal husbandry was also practiced.

Conclusion:

- In the Chalcolithic period, copper predominated in metalworking technology.
- Hence it was the period before it was discovered that by adding tin to copper one could create bronze, a metal alloy harder and stronger than either component.

MANIDHANAHEYAM FREE IAS ACADEMY - TNPSC - PRELIMINARY EXAM
UNIT - IV - HISTORY & CULTURE OF INDIA

- In relevance to India, to sum up, the scenario in north, west and central India in the period spanning from beginning of the 3rd millennium – 800 BCE speaks of a great deal of diversity.
- Overall, the survey of Chalcolithic sites in India, also highlights the regional diversity

