



1st
Edition



ANCIENT & MEDIEVAL HISTORY

FOR UPSC CSE & STATE PCS EXAMS



Ancient and Medieval History

A Complete Guide on Ancient and Medieval History
for UPSC CSE and State PCS Examinations

Study IQ Education Pvt. Ltd.

Ancient and Medieval History 1st Edition by Study IQ Publications

Author/Copyright Owner: Study IQ Education Pvt. Ltd.

© Copyright is reserved by Study IQ Education Pvt. Ltd.

Publisher: Study IQ Publications

All rights reserved. No part of the text in general and the figures, diagrams, page layout and cover design, in particular, may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system—without the prior written permission of the Publisher.

This publication in all formats, i.e. via paperback, E-book, or Kindle Ebook, is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, photocopied, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the prior written permission of the Publisher.

All images/maps used in this book are illustrations for educational purposes only. The images/maps/table and any graphical representation have no resemblance with real dimension, area, scale or projections. The information in the book is not intended to hurt any religious, cultural, or any other feeling of any section of society. Study IQ Publications stands for affordable education for all sections of society.

Information contained in this publication/book/Ebook/Kindle Ebook has been obtained by a collective effort of the editorial team of Study IQ and is believed to be accurate and reliable. The information is sourced from contributors whose work is vetted and checked for plagiarism before use. However, neither Study IQ nor the editorial team guarantees the accuracy of any information given in this publication. It shall not be responsible for anyone damages arising out of the use of this information.

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Aspirants,

We are incredibly grateful for the wonderful response we received for our Polity, History, Economy, , Art & Culture, Disaster Management and Geography books. Inspired by this positive feedback, we are thrilled to announce the release of the first edition of our book titled “Ancient & Medieval History”.

The General Studies Paper I of the UPSC (both Prelims & Mains) examination necessitates a holistic grasp of ancient and medieval history, encompassing various facets such as socio-cultural evolution, governance structures, economic developments, and their impact on present-day society. Nonetheless, the aspirants often encounter challenges due to the absence of a consolidated resource, compelling them to depend on diverse materials. This book aims to address this gap, providing a comprehensive solution by presenting a systematic approach to the subject matter.

Special Features of this Book

This book aims to make your preparation focused and relevant based on UPSC's current trend and pattern, it is revision-friendly, and up-to-date.

- The book delves into the journey of India's past through various political, socio-economic and cultural developments during the ancient and medieval periods.
- All the important facts from different times of ancient and medieval period have been included to provide aspirants a one-stop source for UPSC Prelims examination.
- We have taken great care to ensure that the content is written in a simple and lucid manner to ensure that students can easily learn and recall the concepts to their advantage.
- Wherever necessary, we've incorporated maps and infographics on various topics to make learning interactive and easy.
- We have incorporated the relevant previous years' questions so that the students can test their knowledge and understand the pattern of the examination.

With all sincerity and humility, the Study IQ team wishes you the best in your preparation, and we hope this book will help you in your journey.

Table of Contents

1	PREHISTORIC CULTURES IN INDIA	1
1.1	Human Evolution	1
1.2	Prehistoric Cultures in India - The Stone Ages	4
1.3	Chalcolithic Age	12
1.4	Previous Year Questions	16
2	INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION	17
2.1	Origin of the Harappan Civilization	17
2.2	Different Phases of Harappan Civilization.....	17
2.3	Categorization of Indus Valley as a Civilization	18
2.4	Different Aspects of Indus Valley Civilization	19
2.5	Comparison of Indus Valley Civilization with other Ancient Civilizations.....	27
2.6	Decline of Indus Valley Civilization	28
2.7	Important IVC Sites.....	29
2.8	Previous Year Questions	31
3	THE VEDIC AGE	33
3.1	The Aryans.....	33
3.2	The Vedic Age	36
3.3	Sources of Study of the Vedic Age	37
3.4	The Rig Vedic Period	42
3.5	Later Vedic Age	49
3.6	Comparison between Early (Rig) Vedic and Later Vedic Periods.....	58
3.7	Previous Year Questions	59
4	JAINISM AND BUDDHISM	60
4.1	Causes of Origin of Jainism and Buddhism	60
4.2	Jainism	61
4.3	Buddhism	69
4.4	Comparative Analysis between Jainism and Buddhism	81
4.5	Other Heterodox Sects.....	82
4.6	Previous Year Questions	82
5	THE AGE OF MAHAJANAPADAS	84
5.1	The Janapadas and Mahajanapadas.....	84
5.2	Polity During the Age of Mahajanapadas	86
5.3	Socio-Economic Life During the Age of Mahajanapadas	91
5.4	The Rise of Magadha	95

5.5	Persian and Greek Invasions	98
5.6	Previous Year Questions	102
6	AGE OF MAURYAS	103
6.1	Sources of Information on Mauryan Empire.....	103
6.2	Political History of Mauryas	105
6.3	Different aspects of Mauryan Rule.....	113
6.4	Decline and Causes of Decline of the Mauryan Empire.....	128
6.5	Significance of the Mauryan Rule:.....	130
6.6	Previous Year Questions	131
7	POST-MAURYAN AGE	133
7.1	Post-Mauryan Northern India	133
7.2	Post-Mauryan Eastern India	136
7.3	Post-Mauryan Southern India	138
7.4	Central Asian Invasions	143
7.5	Previous Years Questions	149
8	SANGAM AGE	150
8.1	Sources of Studying Sangam Age.....	150
8.2	Life in Sangam Age.....	153
8.3	Previous Year Questions	159
9	THE GUPTA AGE	160
9.1	Sources of Information on the Guptas.....	160
9.2	Political Condition of Northern and Central India on the Eve of Rise of Guptas to Imperial Power	162
9.3	The Gupta Empire	167
9.4	Different Aspects of Gupta Rule	173
9.5	Decline of the Gupta Empire	182
9.6	Is the Gupta Age Accurately Referred to as the Golden Age?	184
9.7	Previous Year Questions	184
10	POST-GUPTA AGE	186
10.1	Northern India.....	187
10.2	South India	194
10.3	Spread of Civilization in Eastern India	199
10.4	Features of Post-Gupta Age.....	200
10.5	Previous Year Questions	204
	<i>TRANSITION FROM ANCIENT TO MEDIEVAL PERIOD</i>	
	Ancient Period vs. Medieval Period	205
	Transitions from Ancient to Medieval Period	205

11	AGE OF THE THREE EMPIRES IN NORTHERN INDIA	208
11.1	The Rise of the Three Empires and Their Struggle for Dominance in Northern India	208
11.2	The Pratiharas	213
11.3	The Rashtrakutas	215
11.4	Previous Year Questions	219
12	THE CHOLA EMPIRE	220
12.1	The Rise of the Chola Empire	221
12.2	Administration of the Cholas	224
12.3	Chola Society and Economy	226
12.4	Cultural Life	229
12.5	Contacts with South-East Asia and China	230
12.6	Decline of Chola Empire	231
12.7	Previous Year Questions	232
13	THE RISE OF SMALLER KINGDOMS IN NORTHERN INDIA	233
13.1	The Rajput States.....	234
13.2	Kingdom of Kashmir and North-West.....	239
13.3	The Chedis of Tripuri.....	240
13.4	The Senas of Bengal.....	241
13.5	The Gangas/Chodagangas of Orissa	242
13.6	Western Chalukyas of Kalyani/Later Westrn Chalukyas	242
13.7	Rise and Spread of Islam.....	243
13.8	Arab Conquest of Sindh	244
13.9	The Ghaznavids and Mahmud of Ghazni	245
13.10	The Turkish Conquest of North India.....	246
13.11	Causes of the Defeat of the Rajputs	248
13.12	Previous Year Questions	248
14	THE DELHI SULTANATE	249
14.1	The Mamluk/Slave Dynasty (1206-1290 AD)	249
14.2	Khalji Dynasty (1290–1320 AD)	253
14.3	Tughlaq Dynasty (1320–1412 AD)	257
14.4	Sayyid Dynasty (1414–1450 AD)	260
14.5	Lodi Dynasty (1451-1526 AD)	261
14.6	Administration Under Sultanate Period.....	262
14.7	Economic and Social Life under Delhi Sultanate	264
14.8	Cultural Life	268
14.9	Foreign Travellers/Famous Historians	269
14.10	Previous Year Questions	270

15	THE DECCAN AND SOUTHERN INDIA	271
15.1	The Vijayanagar Kingdom (1336 AD–1672 AD)	272
15.2	The Administration of the Vijayanagara Empire	278
15.3	Social and Economic Life During Vijayanagara Kingdom	280
15.4	Cultural Contributions During Vijayanagara Kingdom.....	282
15.5	The Bahmani Kingdom (1347 AD-1527 AD)	283
15.6	Disintegration of Bahmani Kingdom.....	286
15.7	Bahmani Administration	288
15.8	Major Towns And Cities During The Vijayanagar And Bahmani Kingdom	288
15.9	Previous Year Questions	289
16	PROVINCIAL KINGDOMS OF MEDIEVAL INDIA	292
16.1	Emergence of Regional Powers	292
16.2	Western India	293
16.3	Northern India.....	297
16.4	Eastern India.....	298
16.5	Previous Year Questions	303
17	THE MUGHAL EMPIRE	304
17.1	Mughal Rule in India.....	304
17.2	Sher Shah Suri and Sur Empire: An Interregnum (1540-1555 AD).....	309
17.3	Akbar (1556-1605 AD).....	314
17.4	Jahangir (1605-1627 AD).....	323
17.5	Shah Jahan (1628-1658 AD)	324
17.6	Aurangzeb (1658–1707 AD).....	327
17.7	The Later Mughals	333
17.8	Decline of the Mughal Empire	335
17.9	Economic, Social and Cultural Life Under the Mughals	337
17.10	Mughal Army.....	339
17.11	Previous Year Questions	341
18	THE RISE OF MARATHAS AND OTHER REGIONAL KINGDOMS	343
18.1	The Marathas	344
18.2	Bengal	348
18.3	Awadh	349
18.4	Hyderabad	349
18.5	Previous Year Questions	349
19	RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS	351
19.1	The Bhakti movement in North India	352
19.2	The Bhakti Movement In North East India.....	354

19.3	The Bhakti Movement in West India (Maharashtra)	355
19.4	The Bhakti Movement in South India	357
19.5	Non-Sectarian Bhakti Movement	359
19.6	Women in Bhakti Movement	362
19.7	Importance of Bhakti Movement	362
19.8	The Chishti Silsilah	363
19.9	The Suhrawardi Silsilah	364
19.10	The Naqshbandi Silsilah	365
19.11	The Qadri Silsilah	365
19.12	Similarities between Bhakti Movement and Sufi Movement	366
19.13	Importance of Sikhism	371
19.14	Previous Year Questions	371



Prehistoric Cultures in India

Dawn of Civilization in India

The history of India, one of the world's oldest and most diverse civilizations, reveals itself through a complex blend of cultural, social, and political changes over thousands of years. The story of India can be classified into three different phases—prehistory, protohistory, and history. Each phase contributes to our understanding of the intricate evolution of Indian society, shedding light on its societal, technological, and cultural advancements.

“Prehistory” is the period of human evolution before writing was invented and records kept. The word ‘Prehistoric’ was introduced by Daniel Wilson in 1851. This phase is characterized by rudimentary tools, artefacts, and practices of early human communities, reflecting their interaction with the environment. Archaeology is the primary source of prehistory knowledge, but various natural and social sciences, including biology, palaeontology, geology, anthropology, linguistics, and genetics, also contribute to understanding Indian prehistory.

“Protohistory” is a transitional phase between prehistory and history. The term ‘la Protohistorique,’ was first coined by the French, to refer to a period transposed between prehistory and true historical Period. It is characterized by undecipherable written records. However, the presence of inscriptions, seals, and symbols that indicate communication and organization within society. In India, the phase of Proto-History encompasses the period roughly spanning from 3000 B.C. to 600 B.C. This period includes the Bronze Age and Chalcolithic culture, ranging from the early stages of the Harappan civilization to the beginning of the historical period in the 6th century B.C.

“History” is the phase after invention of writing. It is characterized by an abundance of extensively documented written records that offer a thorough insight into past societies, events, and individuals.

HUMAN EVOLUTION

In 1859, Charles Darwin, released **“The Origin of Species”**. In this work, he detailed the concept of evolution driven by a mechanism he termed “natural selection.” Darwin’s theory proposed the idea that humans and apes evolved from a common ancestor through the long and complex process of Hominization.

TRACING THE ORIGIN OF HUMANS

Humans first appeared on Earth during the pre-Pleistocene and early Pleistocene epoch. At that time, various hominids, or human-like beings, inhabited southern and eastern Africa approximately 6 million years ago. Initially, these early humans bore a striking resemblance to apes, which had originated some 30 million years earlier.

The pivotal moment in human evolution occurred with the emergence of **Australopithecus** (“southern ape”). Australopithecus had a blend of ape-like and human characteristics and existed from about 5.5 million to 1.5 million years ago. They were the last of the pre-human hominids, and hence, also called “proto-human.”

The next significant development in the evolution of humans was the appearance of **Homo habilis** (skilful or handy man) around 2-1.5 million years ago in eastern and Southern Africa. These first humans could break stones into pieces and fashion them into tools.

A critical step in human evolution followed with the emergence of **Homo erectus** (upright or erect man), dating back to 1.8 to 1.6 million years ago. Homo erectus is credited with the discovery of new types of stone tools like the hand axe. Further, these early humans learned to create and utilize fire. Unlike Homo habilis, Homo erectus travelled significant distances, with their remains found not only in Africa but also in China, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

Denisovans

Denisovans are an extinct species of hominid. They, together with the Neanderthals, are the closest relatives of modern humans. Denisovans have been named so after Denisova Cave, in Siberia, where their DNA was discovered for the first time in 2008.

Our species evolved from **Homo sapiens** (wise man), exhibiting similarities to the **Neanderthal** man discovered in Western Germany around 230,000 to 30,000 years ago. The Neanderthals likely evolved in Europe, although their remains have been found in the Near East and other parts of the Old World.

The fully developed modern human, **Homo sapiens sapiens**, can be traced back to around 115,000 years ago in southern Africa during the Upper Palaeolithic period.

Species	Time Period	Characteristic Features
Australopithecus	5.5 million to 1.5 million years ago.	Bipedal; pot-bellied; very small braincase, measuring 400 cubic centimetres
Homo habilis	2-1.5 million years ago	Braincase measuring 500-700 cubic centimetres
Homo erectus	1.8 to 1.6 million years ago	Strongly built skull; braincase measuring 800-1200 cubic centimetres.
Homo Sapiens	230,000 to 30,000 years ago	Large rounded braincase, lack of a brow-ridge, a chin, and a narrow pelvis compared to other species in the Homo genus.
Homo Sapiens Sapiens	115,000 years ago	Modern human beings; only living members of the genus homo; large rounded braincase measuring 1200-2000 cubic centimetres.

THE FIRST HUMANS IN INDIA

Two competing versions exist regarding when Homo sapiens first arrived in India: the “**early version**” and the “**late version.**” The early version suggests that they arrived between 74,000 to 120,000 years ago from Africa through the Arabian Peninsula with Middle Stone Age tools. In contrast, the late version posits a much later arrival, around 50,000 to 60,000 years ago, with more advanced microlithic tools.

The pivotal geological event in this debate is the **Toba supervolcanic eruption** in Sumatra, Indonesia, about 74,000 years ago. The early version argues that humans reached India before this event, while the late version claims the opposite. Findings from recent studies indicate that early humans from Africa may have reached South-east Asia, including India, before 60,000 years ago. This aligns with the views of some archaeologists, who have argued for an earlier migration. This has been supported by evidence from sites like Jwalapuram in Andhra Pradesh which show that Toba Volcano eruption covered the area in ash, but the valley’s Palaeolithic inhabitants survived the devastation. In contrast, the genetic studies

generally support the late version, suggesting that the Out of Africa migration could not have occurred before 70,000 years ago.

Important Fossil Records

Only a limited number of fossil discoveries related to the evolution of humans have been made in the Indian subcontinent.

- **Ramapithecus (female) and Sivapithecus:** These are the earliest skull fossils found in the Potwar plateau (in the Siwalik Hills), situated in the Punjab province of Pakistan. While, these skulls, exhibit some characteristics resembling hominids, they are primarily apes. These skulls are generally considered to be around 2.2 million years old. According to studies, the further evolution of the hominid category came to a halt in the subcontinent, leading to their extinction.
- **Narmada Man:** In 1982, an almost complete hominid skull was unearthed on the banks of River Narmada at Hathnora in Madhya Pradesh. This fossilized skull was initially referred to as *Homo erectus*, but it is now anatomically recognized as archaic *Homo sapiens*.

Did You Know?

Fossils of fully developed modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*), have been reported in Sri Lanka. These fossils were found in Fa Hien cave and date back approximately 34,000 years. Fa Hien cave is considered the earliest Upper Palaeolithic site in the Indian subcontinent.

Influence of Geographical Setting

The geography and environment of a place, such as its climate, soil, water resources, and topography, have a significant impact on how people live and develop.

- The semi-arid climate of the Sind region in ancient India provided the ideal conditions for the development of the Harappan civilization. The region's rivers, such as the Indus and Saraswati, served as a source of water for irrigation and transportation, facilitating the growth of urban settlements.
- The rise of Pataliputra, the capital of the Magadha kingdom, can be attributed to its strategic location and favourable physical features. Surrounded by the Ganges, Son, and Gandak rivers, Pataliputra enjoyed natural defences and internal communication routes. Additionally, the fertile Indo-Gangetic plains supported a large population.
- The environment also influences the resource potential of a region. Forested regions can provide timber, while coastal regions can yield seafood. Hilly regions with mineral-rich rocks can lead to the development of metallurgy. For example, Magadha was located near iron ore mines and sources of stone and timber in the Chotanagpur plateau. This gave Magadha a significant economic advantage.
- The environment also affects the subsistence pattern of a region. River plains have alluvial soil, which is highly fertile. This allows for surplus production of crops. The type of soil also determines which crops can be grown. Surplus production leads to exchange activities, which can develop into large-scale trade.
- Regions with navigable rivers have well-developed trade and communication networks. Ancient Indian literature mentions many riverine routes that were used for trade in ancient India. Similarly, coastal routes promoted long-distance trade with other countries.
- Mountain passes were also important for trade, as they allowed goods to be transported between different regions. For example, the Palghat Pass linked the east and west coasts of India and helped to facilitate Indo-Roman trade in ancient times.

PREHISTORIC CULTURES IN INDIA - THE STONE AGES

The earliest humans crafted tools and implements from stones readily available in their environment. These tools aided them in hunting and gathering. As the initial tools used by humans were made from stones, this stage of human development is referred to as the **Stone Age**. The Indian Stone Age is divided into three categories based on geological age, stone tool type and technique, and sustenance base.

- Old Stone Age or Palaeolithic Age (5,00,000–10,000 BCE)
- Middle Stone Age or Mesolithic Age (10,000–4000 BCE)
- New Stone Age or Neolithic Age (7,000–1000 BCE)

Did You Know?

John Lubbock coined the terms “Palaeolithic” and “Neolithic” in his publication “Pre-historic Times” in 1865. “Mesolithic” as an intermediary phase was subsequently included by Hodder Westropp in 1866.

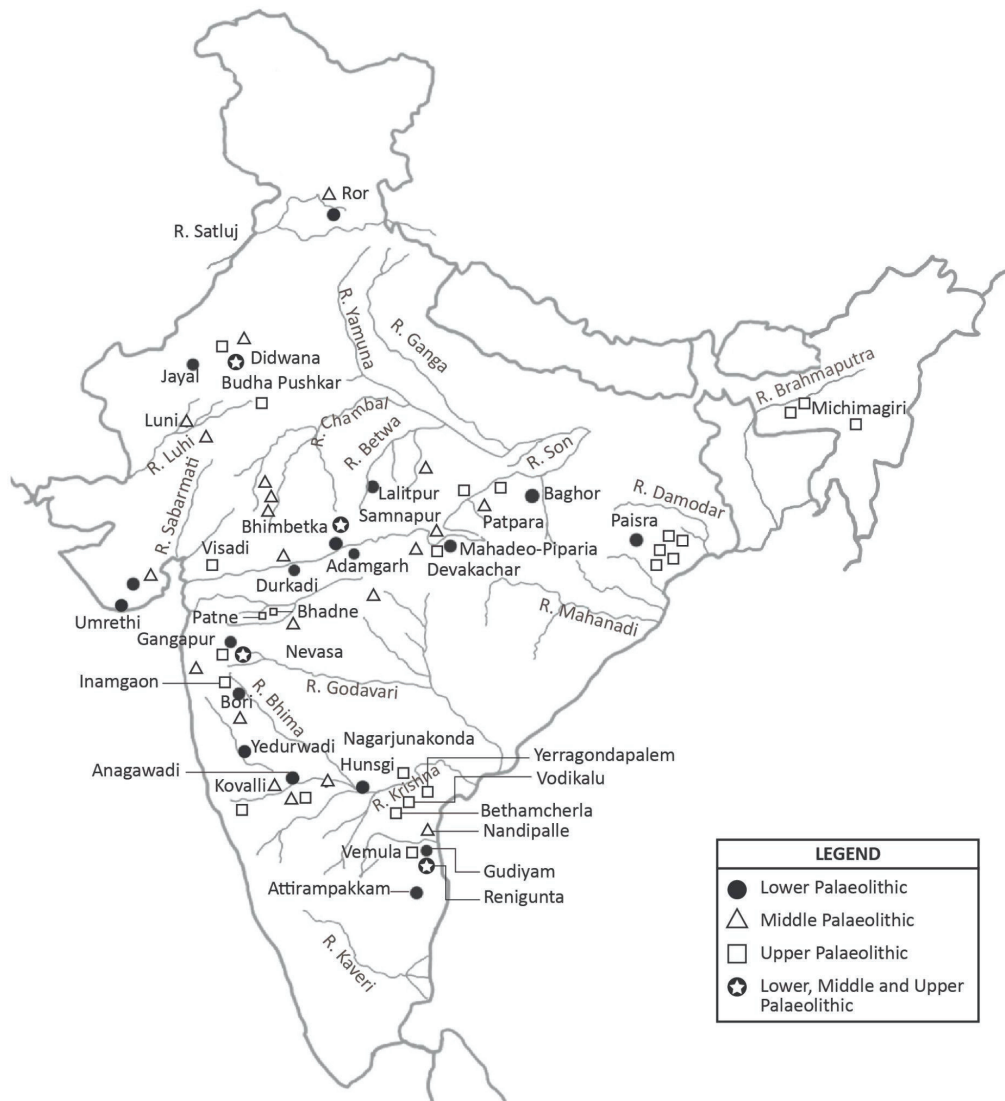
PALAEOLITHIC AGE

The term “Palaeolithic” originates from the Greek words ‘palaeo’, meaning old, and ‘lithic’, denoting stone. Therefore, the expression “Palaeolithic age” signifies the era of the Old Stone Age. Archaeologists have assigned this cultural phase to the Pleistocene epoch, approximately two million years ago. Based on advancements in techniques for crafting tools, changes in hunting and foraging methods, and the nature of climate change, the Palaeolithic age is categorized into three different phases known as the Lower, Middle, and Upper Palaeolithic.

Comparative Analysis of Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic

Age	Time period	Characteristic Features	Important Sites in India
Lower Palaeolithic	600,000 to 150,000 BC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covers greater part of ice age. 	<p>Tools: Large sized tools such as hand axes, cleavers, chopping tools, polyhedrons, etc. The raw materials used included various types of stone, such as quartzite, chert, quartz, and basalt. There were two principal tool-making cultures:</p> <p>Soan Culture: It is the chopper chopping tool tradition, found in Soan valley, Punjab.</p> <p>Acheulian Culture: Also known as the Madras culture, it is the Hand-axe tool tradition found in Indian peninsular region.</p> <p>Habitation: Early human ancestors inhabited open-air locations, rock shelters, or caves, in proximity to water sources, food and raw materials for tools.</p> <p>Sustenance: People primarily relied on food gathering, small game hunting and also ate fish and birds.</p>	Soan Valley (Punjab in Pakistan), Belan Valley (Mirzapur in U.P.), Narmada Valley (Madhya Pradesh), Didwani (Rajasthan), Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh), Singrauli Basin (Uttar Pradesh), Chhotanagpur Basin (Jharkhand).

Age	Time period	Characteristic Features	Important Sites in India
Middle Palaeolithic	150,000 to 35,000 BC	<p>Tools: There was an advancement in tool making techniques, with a tendency to produce smaller and thinner tools. The age was mainly characterized by flake tool industry. The tool types included small and medium-sized hand-axes, cleavers and various kinds of scrapers, borers, and knives.</p> <p>Nevasan Culture: The Middle Palaeolithic tool making industry found in central and peninsular India is called the Nevasan culture, named after the Nevasa site (in Maharashtra), where the renowned archaeologist H. D. Sankalia first discovered Middle Palaeolithic tools.</p> <p>Habitation: Middle Palaeolithic sites roughly coincides with lower Palaeolithic sites. People occupied open air sites, rock shelters and caves near to food, water and raw material sources.</p> <p>Sustenance: People were primarily hunters and gatherers.</p>	Bankura and Purulia (West Bengal), Nevasa, Nodur, Madhmeshwar, Suregaon (Maharashtra), Malaprabha Basin and Ghatprabha Basin (Karnataka), Didwana and Budha Pushkar (Rajasthan), Bhimbetka (M.P.), Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, Yamuna River Valley
Upper Palaeolithic	35,000 to 10,000 BC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coincides with the last phase of Ice Age • Marks the appearance of Modern Humans (Homo sapiens sapiens) 	<p>Tools: The basic technological innovation was the method of producing parallel sided blades from a carefully prepared core. The main tool types included scrapers, points, awls, burins, borers, knives, etc.</p> <p>Habitation: Climate became warmer. Early humans continued to occupy open air sites, rock shelters and caves.</p> <p>Sustenance: People were primarily hunters and gatherers.</p> <p>Rock Art: The early paintings primarily featuring simple human figures, human activities, geometric designs, and symbols. Important examples of early rock painting sites in India include Lakhudiyar in Uttarakhand, Kupgallu in Telangana, Piklihal and Tekkalkotta in Karnataka, and Bhimbetka and Jogimara in Madhya Pradesh, among others.</p>	Kurnool (A.P.), Meralbhavi (Karnataka), Baghor-1 and Baghor-3 (Central M.P.), southern U.P, south Bihar plateau, Gujarat, Patne (Maharashtra), Cave shelters at Bhimbetka.



Paleolithic Sites in India

MESOLITHIC AGE

The term Mesolithic is the combination of two Greek words, meso (middle) and lithic (stone). Hence, the Mesolithic stage of prehistory is also known as the **Middle Stone Age**. The Mesolithic Age (10000 B.C. to 4000 B.C.) marks a phase of transition between the earlier phase of hunting and gathering seen in the Palaeolithic age and the subsequent shift to farming and herding during the Neolithic age. This age aligns with the onset of the Holocene epoch-characterised by a warmer climate, melting of glaciers and a resultant change in flora and fauna.

Important Mesolithic Sites in India

Sites	Location in India	Important Findings/Significance
Bhimbetka Rock Shelters	Madhya Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The rock shelter houses rock art paintings depicting scenes from daily life, animal and human figures and abstract designs. The shelter contains about 500 painted rock shelters. The art paintings provide insights into the social, cultural and religious aspects of Mesolithic people. It has been recognised as a World Heritage Site by the UNESCO.
Bagor Village	Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site has well-preserved artefacts including stone tools, pottery, shells and animal remains. Provides an insight on the technological advancements and the subsistence strategies adopted by the Mesolithic people. The evidences from the site hints the presence of a microlithic industry. People inhabited on hunting and pastoralism. Potteries made up of wheel and iron was introduced. They had a highly developed geometrical microlithic industry as well as a hunting and stock raising economy. By third millennium BC they had learned the use of copper and bronze tools. Evidences of contacts with agricultural villages of the period like Mewar and Malwa and Urban Harappa are found.
Langhnaj Village	Gujarat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The excavations have uncovered stone tools, pottery fragments and bones of animals. The evidences showcases the lifestyle adopted by the Mesolithic communities was based on hunting and gathering. The site also contains the earliest evidences of human burial. Bones of animals like wolf, bear, rhinoceros, blackbuck, and other animals were also found.
Sarai Nahar Rai	Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This site provides insight on the trade and exchange network prevalent among the Mesolithic communities. The evidences from this site like ornaments, pottery, stone tools and beads made up of shell and bones suggest that they were involved in long distance trade and had interactions with distant communities.
Adamgarh Cave	Madhya Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site provides an insight on the artistic side of the Mesolithic communities. The paintings in the caves depict humans, animals, symbols and geometric patterns. The symbols provide a deeper understanding on the beliefs and rituals of the Mesolithic communities. The site also provides the earliest evidence of domestication of animals.

Sites	Location in India	Important Findings/Significance
Deccan College Archaeological Site	(Pune) Maharashtra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site provides an insight on the transitioning aspect of the Mesolithic communities from a nomadic hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a settled agrarian society. The excavations at this site unearthed evidences like stone tools, pottery and early agricultural practices.
Bhagimori Site	Rajasthan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site provides an insight on the cultural practices and technological advancements of the period. The excavations unearthed artefacts like fragments of pottery, tools made up of bones, microliths etc.
Chaturbhujnath Nala	Madhya Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site provides an insight on the daily lives, societal organisation and the cultural practices of the Mesolithic people. The excavations unearthed artefacts like stone tools, bones of animals, pottery etc.
Baghpat Site	Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site provides an insight into how the Mesolithic communities utilized the resources that was available in their surroundings. The site was revealed with variety of artefacts like stone tools, pottery and evidences of plant and animal remains.
Roopkund Lake	Himalayas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lake showcases the presence of skeletal remains. The lake is also known as the Skeleton Lake.
Rakhi garhi	Haryana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is significant for providing insights regarding the transition from Mesolithic to the Neolithic period. The site has been uncovered with agricultural tools hinting early agricultural practices. Evidences of early domestication of animals has also been found.
Moharana Pahara	Uttar Pradesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site unearthed the earliest burial evidences.

Characteristic Features of the Mesolithic Age

- **Tools and Technological Innovation:** The Mesolithic age was characterized by the use of **microliths**-small stone tools made from microblades of one to five cm length. These microliths were crafted from crypto-crystalline silica, chalcedony, or chert and used as components for composite tools, such as spearheads, arrowheads, and sickles. Apart from microliths, Mesolithic people used a variety of non-microlithic tools made of flakes, cores and blades.
- **Changes in Lifestyle:** There was a trend towards more **semi-nomadic** settlement patterns, suggesting a gradual shift towards settled living. Further, there was a **shift in the hunting pattern**, from the big animals in the Palaeolithic period to the smaller animals that could be targeted with the help of bows and arrows.
- **Domestication of Crops:** From sites in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, it has been revealed that Mesolithic communities were essentially hunters, food-gatherers and fishermen, but also practised some form of agriculture.

- **Domestication of Animals:** The first attempts for domestication of animals were made during the Mesolithic age. Animals domesticated were dogs, sheep and goats. The evidences of animal domestication have been found from excavations at Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh and Bagor in Rajasthan.
- **Rock art:** The behavioural and social and cultural modernity during the Mesolithic age manifested in the form of various rock paintings. These rock paintings, popularly known as “Mesolithic art”, have been found in Bhimbetka, Adamgarh, Pachmarhi are other cave sites. Recently, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered a Mesolithic period rock painting depicting a person tilling a piece of land in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh.
- **Relation with Chalcolithic cultures:** From the excavations at Bagor in Rajasthan and Langhnaj in Gujarat, it has been revealed that the Mesolithic people had interactions with the Harappan and other Chalcolithic cultures. They engaged in trade, exchanging various commodities. Notably, the excavation at Bagor yielded three copper arrowheads that are characteristic of the Harappan Civilization.



Mesolithic Sites in India

NEOLITHIC AGE

The Neolithic or New Stone Age (neo= new and lithic =stone), spanning from around 7,000 to 1,000 BCE, represents a significant chapter in human history. This era witnessed profound changes in human society, technology, and cultural practices. The primary trait that sets the Neolithic Age apart from the other cultures of the Stone Age is deliberate food-production, as opposed to mere food-gathering, as the means of subsistence. The other characteristics often associated with the neolithic age are manufacture of pottery and smoothed stone tools.

In a global context, the Neolithic age, commenced around 9000 BC. The oldest Neolithic settlement within the Indian subcontinent, dated to approximately 7000 BC, is located in Mehrgarh, in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan. Neolithic settlements in South India are generally believed to date back to around 2500 BC, while Neolithic sites discovered on the northern slopes of the Vindhyas mountain range are not more ancient than 5000 BC. There are also some Neolithic sites found in certain parts of Eastern India and South India that are as recent as 1000 BC.

Characteristic Features of Neolithic Age

- **Agriculture:** The Neolithic people were the earliest farming communities. They produced ragi, kulathi (horse gram) and even rice. Wheat and barley were produced by the Neolithic people of Mehrgarh. Further, they continued to hunt wild animals, gathered plant foods and were involved in fishing to supplement their diet.
- **Domestication of Animals:** Alongside agriculture, the domestication of sheep, goats and cattle was widely prevalent. Cattle were used for cultivation and for transport.
- **Tools and Technology:** There were innovations in stone and tool technology such as making of ground, pecked, and polished stone tools, with a notable emphasis on stone axes. These axes served a multitude of purposes for the people of that time and have been discovered in large numbers across various hilly regions of India. An important distinguishing factor of the Neolithic people was their utilization of edged and pointed stone **Celts**. These Celts primarily functioned as agricultural tools like hoes and ploughshares, designed for the purpose of preparing the soil and planting seeds.
- **Habitation:** Domestication of plants and animals led to a **sedentary lifestyle**, as people started settling more permanently at places. They resided in houses constructed from mud and reeds, which took on either circular or rectangular shapes. It is believed that Neolithic people of circular houses collectively owned property.
- **Pottery:** With progress in agriculture and animal domestication, there was a need for pots to store food grains and for other purposes like cooking, eating and drinking. Consequently, pottery made its debut during this period, initially crafted by hand. Later on, **foot wheels** were employed by Neolithic communities for making pots. According to various historians, the **potter's wheel** was introduced to Baluchistan from Western Asia and then disseminated throughout the subcontinent. Neolithic pottery was of various types, including **black-burnished ware, grey ware, and mat-impressed ware**.
- **Trade:** Trade relations started developing during the Neolithic age. For example, items such as pendants, beads, terracotta bangles excavated from Burzahom (Kashmir) suggest cultural and commercial contacts with the people of neighbouring regions of Pakistan, Tibetan Plateau and other sub-Himalayan areas. The presence of lentil in the Burzahom Neolithic further explains that the people of Burzahom had wide contacts with Central Asia.