Ancient History, Medieval History & Art and Culture

Author
Team Unique Shiksha
Why is this book important for your preparation?

There are several books in the market pertaining to the Ancient History, Medieval History and Art and Culture, but none of them deals with the current pattern of the examination. Hence, there is an urgent need to cater to the requirements of the aspirants of IAS, State Public Services, as well as other competitive examinations.

This book has been designed keeping in mind the pattern of Civil Services examination. Since there is a major change in the pattern of the questions of different examinations, especially UPSC, this book serves as an elixir to the aspirants.

This material is very comprehensive and covers all aspects of Ancient History, Medieval History and Indian Art and Culture along with the objective and subjective practice questions.

The content has been designed in point format and in lucid language covering length and breadth of each topic.

Though it is a factual topic but it includes many underlined concepts and inter-linkages which help in constructing a time-line of events through ages.

Thus, this book will enable students to understand the finer points as well the multi-dimensional perspective of the subject.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my parents, who supported me with love and understanding, my committee members, each one of them has provided patient advice and guidance throughout the research process.

Suggestions for improvement in the book are welcome.

Best Wishes

Amrit Singh Chopra
Chief Educator
Unique Shiksha
About the Book

Thought behind the Book

The ever-changing pattern of Civil Services Examination and the evolving needs of aspirants drove us to create a new series of reference books following a Unique Pattern.

This has been designed to meet two basic needs of every Civil Services Aspirant:

- **Content Retention Management** (Understanding of basic concepts and retention of facts); and
- **Time Management** (saving time by avoiding reading from different sources).

Pedagogical Assistance to be Found in the Book

The book covers – **Ancient History, Medieval History and Art and Culture material comprehensively.** The team comprising of the author, editors and publishing experts have followed the below mentioned concepts to ensure this book meets requirements like no other.

**Salient features are:**

- Each chapter is broken into units to signify how much content an aspirant must cover daily.
- Though it is a factual topic but it includes many underlined concepts and inter-linkages. All topics and key points are broken down into bullet points to help with lucid and concise learning.
- The materials have been designed to give student a time-line of historical events so that the connection can be established.
- Every unit ends with Prelims and Mains oriented questions to ensure that the aspirants test themselves on what they have studied to ensure clarity of concepts.

How this book is One-Stop reference

- The book is the amalgamation of different sources, edited by experts to provide one stop solution for Ancient History, Medieval History and Art and Culture.
- The content has been designed by taking assistance of **NCERT, NIOS and other standard books.** Further deep analysis of previous year papers have also been done to add more relevant topics.
- Hence it will act as a complete self-study material.

UNIQUE SHIKSHA MASTER SERIES vs. Other Books

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<th>Specifications</th>
<th>MASTER SERIES</th>
<th>OTHER BOOKS</th>
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<td>Standard content referred from different sources</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Crisp and Concise concept with indepth analysis</td>
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<td>Practice Questions</td>
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<td>Pictorial representation of content for easy retention</td>
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Trend Analysis of Ancient History

• Ancient History forms an important part of the Civil Services Examination. The weightage of questions asked in Prelims are generally 4-5.

• According to the trend, the questions related to Ancient History asked in the UPSC IAS prelims exam were moderate to tough in their difficulty level.

• Hence, Ancient history is an important portion of prelims paper which can’t be ignored.

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• If we analyse the previous year questions, certain sub-sections are frequently asked in the paper such as – Indus Valley Civilization, Vedic and Later Vedic Society, administrative aspects of different empires, etc.

Trend Analysis of Medieval History

• Though in UPSC less questions are asked from Medieval India but the questions are direct and factual in nature. Thus a student can easily score in that.

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• If we analyse the previous year questions, certain sub-sections are frequently asked in the paper such as – Administrative system of Mughals, Vijayanagar empire, Bhakti Movement.

Trend Analysis of Art and Culture

In Prelims Examination

• The UPSC does not specify the detailed syllabus related to the Art and Culture in Prelims (it comes under History of India) and in Mains it is described as “Indian Culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times”.

• Due to this, student many a times are not able to identify the areas to be prepared and end up losing marks in the examination.

• However, Indian Art and Culture form an important part of the Civil Services Examination. The weightage of questions asked in Prelims are increasing year by year. Though it is a factual
topic but it includes many underlined concepts and inter-linkages which help in constructing a time-line of events through ages.

- Similarly at least two questions are asked from this section in Mains examination.
- Yet year by year the numbers of questions in the examination related to it are increasing. The trend is as follows:

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- If we go through the questions, certain sub-sections are frequently asked in the paper such as—Buddhism, Jainism, Architecture, Vedic literature and Classical dance. Hence, student should study above stated topics thoroughly.

**In Main Examination**

- The questions asked in the Main examination are analytical in nature thus it require thorough understanding of concepts. Year by year the marks of questions in the examination are increasing. The trend is as follows:

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**Important Notes:**

1. A student should focus on understanding the chronology of events for retaining the facts in the history. He/She should read each chapter minutely, jot down the important points as designing Self study notes are very important for the revision.
2. The Topics and sub-topics related to Previous Year Questions have been catered in the book.

**What makes this book special?**

**ANCIENT INDIA MASTER SERIES**

**UNIT 1**

**Pre-Historic AGE**

Day-wise self study plan to achieve reasonable targets with respect to different dimensions of the subject.
The Division of Stone Age

- In earlier studies of History, the division was made into three groups based on the material of manufacture of these weapons and implements, recognized as three ages of stone, bronze and iron.
- The Stone Age was initially divided into an earlier period of chipped stone tools and a later period of ground or polished stone tools by, and is called as Palaeolithic and Neolithic, respectively.

MCQs for Preliminary Examination

1. Neolithic Age in India is characterized by
   (a) domestication of cattles
   (b) crop agriculture
   (c) Both
   (d) None

Subjective type questions for Main Examination

1. Throw light on elements of change and the continuity in pattern of life in Indian subcontinent during Stone Age.
2. Trace the evolution of life in Indian subcontinent during Stone Age on the basis of archaeological evidences till date.

How a Unique Shiksha foundation student should use this Book?

- Chapters and Content are in sync with the class to help in achieving desired daily progress. Thus student can use the material for daily revision and practicing of questions.
- Class Tests are drawn from the book to test a student for progressive learning.
- The subjective type questions can be given for checking to teachers once in a while, this may help in improving Answer Writing Skill.
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Part - A

Ancient History
Pre-Historic Age

From Palaeolithic To Iron Age

What is Pre-history?
Pre-history is the period of human existence, after in clear which written records are available about the existence of humans. It is the study of pre-literate societies of our earliest hunter-gatherer ancestors and the progress, technological and otherwise, as they domesticated animals, gradually mastered agriculture, and settled down in the earliest settlements, villages and towns. It follows the development of some of these settlements into differentiated and centralised human societies and the emergence of the first great civilisation of the world. The story of the progress from the earliest hunter-gatherer lifestyle to the diversity of human activity today encompasses a vast span of time, and is not uniform in the different parts of the world.

The Evolution of Man

It is believed that the genus *Homo* evolved in Africa roughly 2.5 million years ago. The *Homo Habilis* species that emerged were the first members of the *Homo Lineage*, and is definitely known to have made and used stone tools and artefacts. It is known that *Homo Erectus* populations, which had appeared around 1.8 million years ago, had spread out of Africa and occupied large regions of Eastern and Southeast Asia half a million years ago. *(Refer Fig. 1.1)*

Fully modern man or *Homo sapiens* appears in the period between 100,000 BP (before present) and 60,000 BP, initially in South Africa and the Near East. *In the Indian context, the oldest fossils of the Homo lineage have been found in Tamil Nadu and have been dated to 1.5 million years ago.*

India is one of the oldest inhabited regions on the planet. The Hominid activity in the sub-continent dates back to over 250,000 years. Significant human activity was underway in India by the Holocene Period some 10,000 years ago. Before delving into the ancient history of India, one of the vital things to understand is the Geological timeframe for better understanding of continuity and cultural pattern of the Indian history.
The Quaternary Period

The Quaternary Period is the current and most recent of the three periods of the Cenozoic Era in the geologic time scale. It spans from 2.588 million years ago to the present. The Quaternary Period is divided into two epochs, the Pleistocene (2.588 million years ago to 11.7 thousand years ago) and the Holocene (11.7 thousand years ago to today).

Pleistocene Epoch

- Pleistocene climate was marked by repeated glacial cycles in which continental glaciers pushed to the 40th parallel in some places.
- It is estimated that, at maximum glacial extent, 30% of the Earth's surface was covered by ice. The mean annual temperature at the edge of the ice was −6°C (21°F), and at the edge of the permafrost, 0°C (32°F).
- The evolution of anatomically modern humans took place during the Pleistocene. In the beginning of the Pleistocene, Paranthropus species are still present, as well as early human ancestors, but during the lower Palaeolithic they disappeared, and the only hominine species found in fossil records is *Homo erectus* for much of the Pleistocene.
- The Middle Palaeolithic saw more varied speciation within Homo, including the appearance of Homo sapiens about 200,000 years ago. Modern humans migrated from Africa, spreading all over the ice-free world during the late Pleistocene.

Holocene Epoch

The Holocene also encompasses the growth and impacts of the human species worldwide, including all its written history, development of major civilizations, and overall significant transition toward urban living in the present. The beginning of the Holocene corresponds with the beginning of the Mesolithic age in majority areas. The Late Holocene brought advancements such as the bow and arrow (at some places) and saw new methods of warfare. Spear throwers and their large points were replaced by the bow and arrow with its small narrow points beginning. Villages built on defensive bluffs indicate increased warfare, leading to food gathering in communal groups for protection rather than individual hunting.

Contd..
Ancient history can be divided into different periods according to the tools used by people then.

1. **Palaeolithic Period**: 2 million BC–10,000 BC
2. **Mesolithic Period**: 10,000 BC–8000 BC
3. **Neolithic Period**: 8000 BC–4000 BC
4. **Chalcolithic Period**: 4000 BC–1500 BC
5. **Iron Age**: 1500 BC–200 BC

### The Division of Stone Age

- In earlier studies of History, the division was made into three groups based on the material of manufacture of these weapons and implements, recognized as three ages of stone, bronze and iron.
- The Stone Age was initially divided into an earlier period of chipped stone tools and a later period of ground or polished stone tools by, and is called as Palaeolithic and Neolithic, respectively.
- Later, in the course of the discovery and study of several sites, it emerged that the Palaeolithic was not a single homogeneous period, but a sequence of prehistoric phases marked by faunal changes, and the changes in the lithic industries (lithic means stone). The Stone Age was thus divided into the Upper, Middle, and the Lower Palaeolithic.
- Stone tools smaller than the trademark Palaeoliths, known as microliths, were increasingly found in many deposits overlying Palaeolithic stone assemblages, which were ascribed to a period between the late Palaeolithic and early Neolithic. This period was given the term Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age). Therefore, the Mesolithic age was the transitional period from hunting-gathering to food-producing cultures.

### General Transitions through the Stone Age

- The time span of the Lower Palaeolithic was the maximum covering the whole of Lower Pleistocene and bulk of the Middle Pleistocene epoch. During this span many river valleys and terraces were formed. Earlier, people preferred to live near the water supply, as the stone tools are found mainly in or adjacent to the river valleys. Evidence of the earliest stone tools in Western Europe has appeared from the deposits of first inter-glacial phase in the Lower Pleistocene.
- The Upper Palaeolithic is marked by a lot of technological advances such as profusion in the variety of stone and bone tools and artefacts, constructing dwellings, sewing clothes with bone needles, etc. This is also the earliest occurrence of art—painting on walls of cave-sand dwellings, carving of human and animal figurines from stones and ivory and decorating bodies of the living and the dead with beads and pendants.
- The Middle Stone Age or Mesolithic is a brief period of transition between the Palaeolithic and the food-producing stage of the Neolithic in most parts of the world, and is characterised by the appearance of microliths (tiny stone artefacts, often a few centimetres in size), in the archaeological record. It is characteristically a few thousand years in duration after the last stages of the Upper Palaeolithic and ends with the advent of agriculture.
- The onset of the Neolithic varies between 10,000BC to 3,000 or 2500BC in different parts of the world. The Neolithic marked the beginning of settled life for humankind, though sections of the population still lived as nomadic or semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers or agro-pastoralists.

### What is Proto-history?

Protohistory is a period between prehistory and history, during which a culture or civilisation has not yet developed writing skills.

- The Stone Age (Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic) was followed by the Bronze Age in most parts of the world, and later the Iron Age. Script or writing makes an appearance in the Bronze Age in many parts of the world,
The periods following the Iron Age is in written part in most parts of the world, and hence the start of recorded history in these regions begins.

The Palaeolithic Age

- Palaeolithic is the first stage of Stone Age. During this period, man relied on hunting and had no knowledge of cultivation and house-building.
- During the Paleolithic Age or Old Stone Age man used crude implements for hunting wild animals or for the purpose of cutting and boring. The chief implements used were consisted of darts, scrapers, axes, and throwing the stones. \(\text{Refer Fig. 1.3}\)
- Tips of stones sharpened were used as heads of spears, lances or daggers. Most of the Paleolithic remains in India were made of a peculiar kind of rock called quartzite.
- According to the nature of tools and the change in the climate, the Paleolithic Age in India is divided into three phases:
  1. Lower Paleolithic (500,000 BC to 50,000 BC),
  2. Middle Paleolithic (50,000 BC to 40,000 BC), and
  3. Upper Paleolithic (40,000 BC to 10,000 BC).

A. Lower Palaeolithic Age

- They were mainly hunters and food gatherers; tools used were axes, choppers and cleavers.
- Earliest lower Palaeolithic site is Bori in Maharashtra.
- Limestone was also used to make tools.

Major sites of lower Palaeolithic age

[Soan valley (in present Pakistan), sites in the Thar Desert, Kashmir, Mewar plains, Saurashtra, Gujarat, Central India, Deccan Plateau, Chotanagpur plateau, North of the Cauvery River, Belan valley in UP.]

- There are also habitation sites including caves and rock shelters.
- The Early or Lower Stone Age in India may be associated with the people of the Homo sapiens group.

B. Middle Palaeolithic Age

- Tools used were blades, pointers, scrapers and borers.
- The tools were smaller, lighter and thinner.

Important middle Palaeolithic age sites

[Belan valley in UP, Luni valley (Rajasthan), Son and Narmada rivers, Bhimbetka.]

C. Upper Palaeolithic Age

- Emergence of Homo sapiens.
- Lot of bone tools, including needles, harpoons, blades, fishing tools and burin tools.

Major sites of Upper Palaeolithic age

[Belan, Son, Chota Nagpur plateau (Bihar), Maharashtra, Orissa and Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh]

Bhimbetta Rock Shelters

- Bhimbetta rock shelters are located in Raisen District of Madhya Pradesh, 45 km south of Bhopal at the southern edge of the Vindhyachal hills.
- These served as shelters for Paleolithic age man for over more than 1 lakh years.
- This is the most exclusive Paleolithic site in India which contains the rock carvings and paintings.
- These paintings belong to the Paleolithic, and Mesolithic ages, Chalcolithic, early-historic and even medieval times
- It was excavated by VN Mishra and it has many rock shelters and caves and is considered as richest haul of such dwelling.

Conti...
• Quarzite were used in Bhimbetka and is the earliest example of rock painting. Various colours were used in the paintings, i.e., Green and Dark Red colour. These colours were prepared by combining manganese, hematite, wooden coal, soft red stone, plant leaves. Sometimes animal fat and extracts of leaves were used as well. Brushes were made of the fiber of plants.
• It depicted animals, hunting scenes, birds and humans. Main animals depicted are: Elephant, Tiger, Lion, Bison, Rhinoceros, Bear.
• Bhimbetka is a World heritage Site. Earlier it was considered to be a Buddhist site and was later recognized as Paleolithic site. Bhimbetka Rock shelters were included in the world heritage list in 2003.

Fig. 1.2. The Bhimbetka Dwellings

• Nearly all of our knowledge of Palaeolithic human culture and way of life comes from archaeology and ethnographic comparisons to modern hunter-gatherer cultures.
• The economy of a typical Palaeolithic society was a hunter-gatherer economy. Humans hunted wild animals for meat and gathered food, firewood, and materials for their tools, clothes, or shelters. Human population density was very low, around only one person per square mile.
• This was most likely due to low body fat, infanticide, women regularly engaging in intense endurance exercise and a nomadic lifestyle. At the end of the Palaeolithic, specifically the Middle and or Upper Palaeolithic, humans began to produce works of art such as cave paintings, rock art and jewellery and began to engage in religious behaviour such as burial and ritual.

Palaeolithic Tools
• Palaeolithic humans made tools of stone, bone, and wood. Evidence shows these early hominids intentionally selected raw materials with good flaking qualities and chose appropriate sized stones for their needs to produce sharp-edged tools for cutting.
• The earliest Palaeolithic stone tool industry began around 2.6 million years ago. It contained tools such as choppers, burins and awls. The most recent Lower Palaeolithic implements completely vanished from the archaeological record around 100,000 years ago, and were replaced by more complex Middle Palaeolithic tool kits.
• Lower Palaeolithic humans used a variety of stone tools, including hand axes and choppers. Although they appear to have used hand axes often for various purposes of attack and defence.
• Choppers and scrappers were likely used for skinning and butchering scavenged animals and sharp ended sticks were often obtained for digging up edible roots. Presumably, early humans used wooden spears as early as five million years ago to hunt small animals, much as their relatives, chimpanzees.
• The Lower Palaeolithic hominid Homo erectus possibly invented rafts to travel over large bodies of water, which may have allowed a group of Homo erectus to reach the distant islands. Around 200,000 BP, Middle Palaeolithic Stone tool manufacturing spawned a tool making technique.
• This technique increased efficiency by allowing the creation of more controlled and consistent flakes. It allowed Middle Palaeolithic humans to create stone tipped spears, which were the earliest composite tools, by hafting sharp, pointy stone flakes onto wooden shafts.

Microliths or small stone tools or points were invented around 70,000 or 65,000 BP and were essential to the invention of bows and spear throwers in the following Upper Palaeolithic period. The invention of these devices brought many additional foods like fish into the human diets, which provided a hedge against starvation and a more abundant food supply (the period of appearance of microliths in India is still an issue of debate).
Fig. 1.3. Palaeolithic Sites in India
Pre-Historic Age 7

- Fire was used by the Lower Palaeolithic hominid as early as 300,000 or 1.5 million years ago, and possibly even earlier.
- However, the use of fire only became common in the societies of the following Middle Palaeolithic Period. Use of fire reduced mortality rates and provided protection against predators.
- Early hominids may have begun to cook their food as early as the Lower Palaeolithic or at the latest in the early Middle Palaeolithic.
- Some scientists have hypothesized that Hominids began cooking food to defrost frozen meat, which would help ensure their survival in cold regions.

### Paleolithic: The Info-Sheet

1. The Paleolithic infers to a time-period in history from approximately 2.6 million years ago to roughly 10,000 years ago.
2. In 1865, the archeologist John Lubbock coined the term Paleolithic which is derived from Greek words *palaios* meaning 'old', and *lithos* meaning 'stone'.
3. Paleolithic age is also called as Old Stone Age.
4. During Paleolithic many human cultures had emerged, and community living became a way of life.
5. In Paleolithic itself, the man began to use fire for cooking, develop early religions, and started creating art farms as can be seen in cave paintings dating back to this time.
6. Food items of the period included meat from animals, fish, fruit wild vegetables, insects nuts and legumes.
7. The Paleolithic tools included hand axes, stone-tipped spears, harpoons, and bow and arrows.
8. Animals such as dogs were perhaps first domesticated during the Paleolithic Age.
9. Calendars were devised during the Upper Paleolithic to track migration of animals.
10. The Paleolithic population was about 10 Lakhs.
11. Climate Change during the Paleolithic led to glacial cycles.
12. The end of Paleolithic means end of last ice age, and warming up of the Earth.

### Palaeolithic Society

The social organization of the Lower Palaeolithic societies remains largely unknown to scientists, though Lower Palaeolithic hominids were likely to have had more complex social structures than the so called chimpanzee societies.

Later *Homo erectus* may have been the first people to invent home bases and incorporate them into their foraging and hunting strategies like contemporary hunter-gatherers, possibly as early as 1.7 million years ago.

- However, the earliest strong evidence for the existence of home bases among humans only dates back to 500,000 years ago.
- Human societies from the Palaeolithic to the early Neolithic farming tribes lived without states and organized governments. By the end of the Palaeolithic era, about 10,000 BP people began to settle down into permanent locations, and began to rely on agriculture for sustenance in many locations.
- Much evidence exists that humans took part in long-distance trade between ‘bands’ for rare commodities such as ochre, which was often used for religious purposes such as ritual and raw materials, as early as 120,000 years ago in the Middle Palaeolithic.
- Some sources claim that most Middle and Upper Palaeolithic societies were possibly fundamentally egalitarian and may have rarely or never engaged in organized violence between groups (war).
- Nor was there a formal division of labour during the Palaeolithic. Each member of the group was skilled at all tasks essential to survival, regardless of individual abilities.

### Mesolithic Period
(Middle Stone Age)

**The Middle Stone Age**

- Continuing from the end of Paleolithic, in early Mesolithic, major climate change happened. The climate became warmer, and more humid.
- Humans began to live in groups and started switching towards the sedentary life style. The increase in the group size created the need of more food for the survival of all members of the family, this lead to improvements of the tools and weapons.
- The Mesolithic Era also brought modifications in the clothing and food style of those times. People started wearing clothes made of animal’s skin as well eating cooked food.
through use of fire. Primitive people were also fond of art and paintings as depicted by the popular cave paintings present at the Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh.

- Rainfall increased, and so more availability of flora and fauna.
- Domestication of animals and plants has been found for the first time, started 12000 years ago.
- First animal to be domesticated was the wild ancestor of the dog. Sheep and goats were the most common domesticated animals. Hunting and food gathering continued.
- The Mesolithic sites in distribution cover almost the entire country except a few areas like Indo-gangetic plain, Assam and most of the Western coast of India. In Indo-gangetic plain, their absence can be explained by the lack of primary raw material (stones) for making tools.
- Assam and Western coast were probably left uninhabited due to very high rainfall and dense vegetation in this area.

**Mesolithic: The Info Sheet**

1. Transitional Phase between Paleolithic & Neolithic Age
2. Characteristic tools of this Age: Microliths
3. Tools were very small made of stone, probably stuck to stones to be used as saws and sickles.
4. **Major Sites**: Brahmagiri (Mysore), Narmada, Vindhya, Gujarat, UP, Sojat (Rajasthan), Bhimbetka, Godavari Basin, Sarai Nahar Rai.
5. Prominent Mesolithic tools used were blades, crescents, triangles, trapezes, spearheads, knives, arrowheads, sickles, harpoons and daggers.
6. It seems that the Mesolithic people preferred the particular dwellings like Sand-dunes, Rock-shelters, Alluvial plains, Rocky plains, Lake-shore, Coastal environment

**Mesolithic Tools**

- The Mesolithic people perhaps produced a variety of implements and weapons such as arrows, spears, knives, sickles, etc.
- The unique features of these composite tools was that, being made of a number of micro-lithic components, one of the broken components could easily be replaced without discarding the whole tool. Meso-tools are characterised by parallel-sided blades taken out from prepared cores of fine-materials as chert, crystal, chalcedony, jasper, carnelian, agate, etc.
- In India, Microlith tools are associated with only Mesolithic period (whereas in many other parts of the world microliths are also found during Palaeolithic period).
- Numerous types among the microliths have been excavated such as blunted back blades, obliquely truncated blades, points, lunates, triangles, crescents, trapezes etc. Size of these tools varies between 1cm and 3cm.
- Some of the microliths were used as components of spearheads, arrowheads, knives, sickles, harpoons and daggers. They were fitted into grooves in bone, wood and reed shafts, and joined together by natural adhesives like gum and resin.
- It can be inferred that the Mesolithic people enjoyed a little material culture. Later, in contact with the metalworking and farming people, they acquired a few items of material culture like, pottery, metal tools, and stone beads for ornaments.

**Mesolithic Society**

- It seems to be certain that this period experienced the arrival of new people in India, possibly from the west. This is the reason for which the Upper Palaeolithic blade industry was non-existent in Indian context.
- The process of disposing off the dead was also unspecialized amongst Mesolithic people. The bodies used to be buried within the habitation area, whether it is a rock-shelter or an open-air site.
- At the site Sarai Nahar Rai in the District Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh all the skeletons are found to be placed in West-east direction keeping the right forehand diagonally across the abdomen.
- In fact, we are not sure whether the microlith makers of India were the hunters and food-gatherers of Palaeolithic tradition or they were the agriculturists.
This new subsistence economy based on food production had a lasting impact on the evolution of human society and the environment.

- Agriculture had not fully developed till this period.
- The earliest evidence of domestication of animals has been provided by Adamagarh in Madhya Pradesh and Bagor in Rajasthan.
- The Pachpadra basin and Sojat Area of Rajasthan is a rich Mesolithic sites and lot of microliths have been discovered.
- Bagor in Rajasthan is the almost largest Mesolithic site in India. Another major Mesolithic site is in Rajasthan, at Tilwara.
- In Gujarat, some places on the banks of River Sabarmati are Mesolithic sites which include the Akhaj, Valsana, Hirpur, Langhanj etc. Sarai Nahar Rai in Allahabad-Pratapgarh of Uttar Pradesh is a Mesolithic sites. Other sites in Uttar Pradesh are Morhana Pahar and Lekkahia.
- In Madhya Pradesh Bhimbetka along with Adamgarh are major Mesolithic sites. In Jharkhand Chhota Nagpur plateau is a major Mesolithic site of India. In Orissa, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundergarh are the major Mesolithic sites found in India.
- In south India Godavari basin is rich in microliths.
- The rock painting of Mesolithic period is found in Adamgarh, Bhimbetka of Uttar Pradesh and Pratapgarh, Mirzapur of Rajasthan.
- Apart from the animals, hunting scenes, the Mesolithic sites have also painting of social life, sexual activity, child birth, rearing of children and burial ceremony, which makes it clear that Mesolithic man had developed an aesthetic sense.

## Neolithic Period (New Stone Age)

The human settlements in the Mesolithic era got more sedentary and this was the beginning of establishment of villages. Moving from nomadic to settled life, the man now could domesticate cattle, sheep and goats and protect crops from pests.

### Onset of Food Production Economy

- In due course, as the efficiency of agricultural production improved, some farmers were able to generate the surplus food. As a consequence, a section of the population were freed from the task of food production and their talents and energies were diverted to tasks such as the production of pots, baskets, quarrying of stone, making of bricks, masonry and carpentry. This was the beginning of the new occupations such as the oil presser, washer man, barber, musician, dancers etc. This transition from hunting-gathering to food production is called the Neolithic revolution.
- Wheel was discovered. Ragi, wheat and horse gram were cultivated. Neolithic people knew to make fire.

Around 6000 BC, the smelting of metals such as copper began which was used for raw material to be used in tool production. Later, tin was mixed with bronze appeared which stronger metal than both tin and copper was.

- Use of bronze for tools led to the invention of wheel which revolutionized transport and pottery production. Art was seen in cave paintings of dance, evidence of well-designed houses, also show first intentional disposal of the dead.

### Important Neolithic Sites

- Inamgaon, Burzahom (Kasmir), Mehrgarh (Pakistan), Daojali Hading (Tripura/Assam), Hallur (AP), Paiyampalli (AP), Chirand (Bihar).

In north India, Burzahom site in Kashmir is located in a cave inside Mahadeva hills on famous Kashmir Valley. The other twin sites, Gurfkral & Martand, are close to it.

- The unique evidence of pit-dwellings with wooden super-structures, coarse grey or black polished pottery frequently with ‘mat-bases’, large number of bone tools in the shape of points, awls, needles, harpoon heads, stone-axes, ring-stones, a type of specialized choppers (pierced, rectangular), knife with razor-like blade, are the characteristics of the Burzahom Period. Burzahom cave site has another interesting point to note—an engraved hunting scene which strongly suggests hunting economy of the Neolithic.
- Most of the Neolithic sites of Central and South India lie in the zone between river Tapti in the north-west and Tungabhadra.
and lower Krishna Rivers in the south-east. Most of these sites may be declared as Neo-chalcolithic sites, excepting Brahmagiri and Sanganakallu which are referred to as orthodox Neolithic sites occurring in this part of this sub-continent.

- The significant zones of eastern India includes Assam, Bengal-Bihar-Orissa cultural sites. In Assam Neolithic sites, a type of small ground cells with rounded contour, shouldered cells, etc which are conspicuously lacking in the Neolithic sites of north and central India are found. These Neolithic finds are associated with the common occurrence of ‘Megalithic monuments’, widely distributed in entire hill areas of Assam. The raw materials for such tools are flat slabs of chert, sandstone and slate. Brahmaputra valley, Khasi, Garo and Kachar hills are the prominent Neolithic sites of Assam. In some places, tanged axes, grooved hammer-stones could be noticed in addition to other common tools. The districts of Midnapur, Bankura, Burdwan, Birbhum and Purulia in West Bengal together form a triangular zonal shape which offers significant Neolithic cultural tools. Polished elongated Celts, rectangular polished chisels, black coloured polished pottery, etc have been discovered from these Neolithic sites.

The Neolithic culture had been established in India at a stage when a far more advanced urban culture exhibiting Chalcolithic features flourished in the extreme north centring round Indus valley. This urban culture as found in Indus valley might have positive influence of Western Asiatic Neolithic-cum-Chalcolithic mixed cultural thrust.

- The Western Indian and Malwa forms of Neolithic tradition may better be termed as Neo-Chalcolithic, have had, their origin from a ‘self-evolved’ microlithic base. Thus, it is safer to say that the Neolithic culture developed in different parts of India, but not from a single source.

- Philological researches have established a definite link between these Neolithic peoples of India and the primitive tribes that lived in Indo-China, the Malayan Peninsula and the Indian Archipelago.

### Neolithic Tools

- The tools and implements of the Neolithic Age were very different from those of the preceding ages, i.e., the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. The people of this age used stones other than quartzite and the tools and implements they made were far better grooved, grounded and polished.

- For different types of work, the Neolithic people had different types of highly finished tools and these can be very easily distinguished from the rough, crude tools of the erstwhile Palaeolithic Age.

- As the name Neolithic suggests, it was the New Stone Age, metals except gold being then unknown. Neolithic people were skilled farmers, manufacturing a range of tools necessary for the tending, harvesting and processing of crops (such as sickle blades and grinding stones) and food production (e.g. pottery, bone implements).

- They were also skilled manufacturers of a range of other types of stone tools and ornaments, including projectile points, beads, and statuettes. The tools and implements left by the Neolithic people of India have been found all over India.

- A stone factory of the time has been discovered in the Bellary district of Madras where traces of the various stages of the making of the tools and implements can be still seen.

### Neolithic Society

- The life and living of the Neolithic men showed a distinct advance from those of the previous ages. Agriculture became known to them, domestication of animals like ox, goat etc, production of fire by friction of bamboos or pieces of wood or flint, making of painted pottery were all known, to them.

- They lived in caves, decorated these by painting scenes of hunting, dancing, etc. They knew spinning and weaving, as also making of boats. Some tombs of the Neolithic men which have been discovered show that they used to bury their dead in large earthen urns. There were also tombs with stone-slab roof on stone pillars.
• The domestication of large animals (c. 8000 BC) resulted in a dramatic increase in social inequality in most of the areas where it occurred. Possession of livestock allowed competition between households and resulted in inherited inequalities of wealth. Neolithic pastoralists who controlled large herds gradually acquired more livestock, and this made economic inequalities more pronounced.

• Families and households were still largely independent economically, and the household was probably the centre of life. Whether a non-hierarchical system of organization existed is debatable, and there is no evidence that explicitly suggests that Neolithic societies functioned under any dominating class or individual, as was the case in the later chiefdoms of the Bronze Age.

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**Pre-Historic Age**

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**Neolithic Revolution**

• Between 10,000 and 3000 BCE, people in several areas around the Earth developed new agricultural methods and machines, such as the plough pulled by horses or oxen. During this time, people also began domestication and development of both crops and animals.

• The results of these changes made agricultural production much more productive. Food output increased. More land could be farmed by fewer people or in fewer hours. This resulted in greatly improved production and the increased availability of food.

• Most importantly, the agricultural surplus and techniques also brought about deep social divisions and in particular encouraged inequalities between the sexes (male and female).

The change from hunting/gathering to primitive farming appears so sudden and fast that this technological change is often characterized as the Neolithic Revolution. The revolution resulted in the discovery of smelting and the creation of bronze tools led to the Bronze Age (name given to Late Neolithic period).

• Agricultural innovation greatly increased the food production output and created a surplus beyond what was needed for survival.

• Producing more food freed people’s time from agricultural work. Some people continued to work in agriculture, while others did other forms of work in large numbers (artisans, clerks, and priests etc).

• People could specialize in different works other than agriculture. The amount of non-agricultural goods produced had increased.

• With more food and temporarily better nutrition, the population increased. Often, a population increased at a faster rate than an area’s resources were capable of sustaining it, and nutrition per person returned to its original level.

• As families and the number of potential workers grew, food production could increase even more.

These developments provided the basis for densely populated settlements, specialization and division of labour, trading economies, the development of non-portable art and architecture, centralized administrations and political structures, hierarchical ideologies, depersonalized systems of knowledge (writing), and property ownership. Personal land and private property ownership led to hierarchical society, class struggle and armies.

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**Chalcolithic Period (Copper Age/Bronze Age)**

• About 5,000 years ago the man started using bronze along with the stone. Now the man had developed to a great extent. The population was mainly urban, including the priests, writers and clerks at this stage.

• Though the tools excavated suggest that there was over-lapping in use of stone and the metal, the similarity in the shape and types of stone and bronze tools shows simultaneous use of the bronze and stone. Tin mixed with copper was the major material used. That is why, the period is called as the Bronze age.

• The specialists were needed to manufacture goods with the metal, like smiths, miners and the smelters. During this period, the discovery of wheel revolutionized the whole system. The transportation was improved which eventually brought about the complexities in life of people. The initial commerce was developed.
There was surplus production, the people could now sell it away for luxuries. This gave rise to capitalism. The person with more resources was able to control the power. The status of rich and poor developed and along with this came the exploitation. This age is witnessed in Indus Valley Civilization that spread to long belt along the western India.

**Chalcolithic : The Info Sheet**

1. Cultivation & cattle rearing along with crop rotation use of irrigation & harvesting.
2. Excavation reveals structures like granaries, embankment & fortification, mud houses made of mud in circular & rectangular pattern along with mud chulha.
3. Famous Pottery of this age Black on Red ware.
4. Some other Chalcolithic settlements were Brahmagiri, Navada Toli (Narmada region), Chirand (Ganga region), and Mahishadal (West Bengal).

**Chalcolithic Tools**

- The Chalcolithic people used tiny tools and weapons of stone in which the stone-blades and blade-lets occupied an important role. In certain settlements, copper objects are found in good numbers, e.g., at Ahar and Gilund in Rajasthan.

- The Chalcolithic people made tools, weapons and bangles of copper, manufactured beads of semi-precious stones such as carnelian, steatite, and quartz because spindle whorls have been discovered in Malwa. Discovery of cotton, flax and silk threads shows that they knew well the manufacture of cloth.

- Though copper and bronze came to be used, their usage was limited due to the scarcity of the material, and the dependence on stone tool equipment did not changed much. The Neolithic trend of using polished stone tools continued in this period also. Copper and its alloys were used in making axes, chisels, knives, fishhooks, pins, rods, etc.

**Chalcolithic Society**

- People domesticated animals and practised agriculture widely. Occasionally their houses were made of mud bricks, but mostly they were constructed with wattle and daub, and seem to have been thatched. However, the people in Ahar lived in stone-built houses.

- Though the Chalcolithic people of Harappa made extensive use of bricks, the Chalcolithic people in the rest of India did not use any such material. The walls were constructed out of mud or mud and wattle. The houses were either circular or rectangular on plan, plastered with cow dung and lime. They had some light roof supported on wooden posts as post-holes were encountered in large number in all the Chalcolithic sites.

- The Chalcolithic people subsisted on farming and hunting-fishing, reared cattle, sheep, goat, buffalo and pig. The principal cereal was barley, though wheat was also cultivated. Neither plough nor hoe has been attested to at Chalcolithic sites, but perforated stone discs, which were used as weights for the digging sticks, do abound.

- Fish and animal flesh formed an important part of the diet of the Chalcolithic people. Fish bones and fishhooks attest to active fishing. Hunting also was an important occupation for bones of wild animals like wild pig, deer, stage, sambhar, cheetah, etc were found in the excavations. Cattle, buffalo, goat, sheep, pig and rarely horse were among the domesticated animals.

- Regional differences in regard to cereals, pottery, etc, appear in this phase. The dead were buried. Terracotta figurines of women suggest that the Chalcolithic people venerated the mother goddess. Probably, the bull was the symbol of a religious cult. Both the settlements and burial practices suggest existence of social inequalities. The rate of infant mortality was very high. Although most Chalcolithic cultures those existed in the
major part of the country are younger than the Indus Valley civilization, they did not derive any substantial benefit from the advanced technological knowledge of the Indus people.

- The rural life pattern, started in Neolithic period has been perfected in the Chalcolithic period, and this period forms the transition from stone age to pure metal age.

### Chalcolithic Culture

- Chronologically, there are several series of Chalcolithic settlements in India. Some are pre-Harappan, others are contemporaries of the Harappan culture and still others are post-Harappan. Pre-Harappan strata on some sites in the Harappan zone are also called early Harappan to distinguish them from the mature urban Indus civilization. Thus the pre-Harappan phase at Kalibangan in Rajasthan and Banwali in Haryana are distinctly Chalcolithic. So is the case with Kot Dijji in Sind. The Kayatha culture in Madhya Pradesh (2000-1800 BC) is a contemporary of the Harappan culture. It has some pre-Harappan elements in pottery, but it also shows Harappan influence. Several post-Harappan Chalcolithic cultures in these areas are influenced by the post-urban phase of the Harappan culture.

- Several other Chalcolithic cultures, though younger in age than the mature Harappan culture, are not connected with the Indus Civilization. The Malwa culture (1700-1200BC) found in Navadatoli, Eran and Nagda is considered to be non-Harappan. So is the case with the Jorwe culture (1400-700 BC) which covers the whole of Maharashtra except parts of Vidarbha and Konkan.

- In the southern and eastern parts of India, Chalcolithic settlements existed independently of the Harappan culture. In south India they are found invariably in continuation of the various Neolithic settlements. The Chalcolithic settlement of the Vindhyan region, Bihar and Bengali Pre-Harappan Chalcolithic cultures spread farming communities in Sind, Baluchistan, Rajasthan, etc., and created conditions for the rise of the ‘new’ urban civilization.

- In western India, these cultures disappeared by 1200 BC or so. Only the Jorwe culture continued until 700 BC. However, in several parts of the country, the Chalcolithic ‘black and red ware’ continued till the second century BC.

- The eclipse of the Chalcolithic habitation could be attributed to a decline in rainfall from about 1200 BC onwards. In fact, the Chalcolithic people could not continue for long with the digging stick in the black soil area which is difficult to break in the dry season. In the red soil areas, especially in eastern India, however, the chalcolithic phase was immediately followed, without any gap, by the iron phase which gradually transformed the people into full-fledged agriculturists. Similarly, at several sites in southern India Chalcolithic culture was transformed into megalithic culture using iron.

- In South India, the Neolithic phase imperceptibly faded into the Chalcolithic phase, and so these cultures are called Neolithic-Chalcolithic. The Chalcolithic communities founded the first large villages in peninsular India and cultivated far more cereals than is known in the case of the Neolithic communities. The settlements at Kayatha and Eran in Madhya Pradesh and Inamgaon in western Maharashtra were fortified.

### Iron Age

- The **Iron Age** was a period found at different points around the world where societies recovered from the collapse of Bronze-Age civilization, developed new tools, and built bigger, more complex civilizations than ever before. This is the era that gave Europe Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. It’s the time in which China developed Confucianism and Taoism. India, of course, was not to be left out of this.

- India’s Iron Age laid religious, philosophical, social, and political foundations that would go on to influence people across the world.

- India’s Iron Age emerged in an era of transition known as the **Vedic period** (ca. 1,500-600 BCE). The Vedic period covers both the end of the Bronze Age following the collapse of the Harappan civilization around 1,400 CE and the start of the Iron Age.

- The Harappan civilization of the Indus River Valley had been complex and highly urbanized. The societies of the Vedic period were smaller, most only about the size of a
village, recovering from the changes in the regional economy as well as drought, the likely culprit that collapsed India’s Bronze-Age stability.

- This was a time of re-organization, but also religious growth. The Vedic period is named for the Vedas, foundational religious texts of Hinduism. The oldest, written in the ancient script of Vedic Sanskrit, was likely created between 1,500 and 1,200 BCE.

- Thriving from about 1,200 to 600 BCE along the Indus and Ganges river valleys, the Painted Grey Ware people started using iron for agricultural tools, domesticate horses, and started re-organizing into more complex social and political units.

- This is the first period in Indian history to show clear evidence of social and political hierarchies, as well as true governments.
  (a) The upper Ganges valley and its peripheries
  (b) Malwa plateau and Tapti valley
  (c) South and Central Indian megalithic areas
  (d) Baluchistan plains
  (e) Middle and Lower Ganges valleys
  (f) North west mainly Peshawar region.
MCQs for Preliminary Examination

1. Neolithic Age in India is characterized by
   (a) domestication of cattles
   (b) crop agriculture
   (c) Both
   (d) None

2. Men started cave paintings in the
   (a) Palaeolithic period
   (b) Mesolithic period
   (c) Chalcolithic period
   (d) Megalithic period

3. Which of the following statement is true?
   (a) Mesolithic Technology is based on microblades which were mass produced.
   (b) First animal to be domesticated was sheep.
   (c) Both
   (d) None

4. Which of the following statements are true about Mesolithic culture?
   (a) People knew stock breeding.
   (b) People cooked on fire.
   (c) Both
   (d) None

5. Which of the following periods belongs to protohistoric periods?
   1. Neolithic Culture
   2. Chalcolithic Culture
   3. Vedic Age
   Choose the correct answer from the codes given below:
   (a) 1, 2 and 3
   (b) 1 and 2

(c) 2 and 3
(d) 1 and 3

Subjective type questions for Main Examination

1. Throw light on elements of change and the continuity in pattern of life in Indian subcontinent during Stone Age.

2. Trace the evolution of life in Indian subcontinent during Stone Age on the basis of archaeological evidences till date.

3. Highlight the changes witnessed by Human life in Mesolithic period.

4. The Indian subcontinent witnessed revolution during Neolithic age. Comment.

5. Mesolithic rock cut architecture of India not only reflects the cultural life of the times but also a fine aesthetic sense comparable to modern painting. Critically evaluate this comment.

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6. Underline the factors behind the social changes of pre-historic people.

7. Discuss how Neolithic Age was an age of revolution which pushed the society so it could achieve so much in next few millenniums.

8. The prehistoric man was concentrated in the few pockets of the Indian subcontinent and unlike modern man did not inhabit all of it. Elucidate.

9. Underline the basic principles of the division of the pre-historic time period.

Answers to MCQs

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (a) 4. (c) 5. (b)