



Prehistoric Period

Prehistoric Period

It refers to the time in human history before the advent of written records. The prehistoric age in India dates back to the start of the Stone Age.

Stone Age in India: A Brief Overview

The **Stone Age** in India marks the earliest phase of human history and is characterized by the use of stone tools. It is generally divided into three major periods:



1 Paleolithic (Old Stone Age): It is the earliest and longest phase of human history, spanning from around 2.5 million years ago to 10,000 BCE. During this period, early humans developed basic stone tools, lived as hunter-gatherers, and began to adapt to their environments.



According to the kind of stone tools people used and the pattern of climate change the **palaeolithic age in India is divided into three phases.**

PALEOLITHIC PHASE (2.5 Million years-10,000 BCE)

	Tools	Lifestyle	Sites
Lower Paleolithic (2.5 million years-10,000 BCE)	<p>Hand axes, Cleavers, Choppers, Scrappers etc.</p>	<p>It mostly encompasses the Ice Age. Peoples were nomadic hunter-gatherers, practice cave dwellings</p>	<p>Bhimbetka, Attirampakkam, Soan Valley (in present Pakistan), Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh, Several sites have been found in Kashmir and the Thar desert.</p>
Middle Paleolithic (10,000 BCE-40000BCE)	<p>Tools were largely based upon flakes or small pieces of stone. Flakes, blades, pointers, scrapers, and borers were the tools employed. In comparison to other instruments, the use of hand axes decreased.</p>	<p>Nomadic hunter-gatherers.</p>	<p>Belan Valley, Valley of Luni (Rajasthan), Rivers Son and Narmada river valleys, Bhimbetka, Potwar plateau (between Indus & Jhelum), Cave of Sanghao (near Peshawar, Pakistan) etc.</p>
Upper Paleolithic (40000 BCE -10000 BCE)	<p>The era is characterised by technological and tool innovation. a large number of bone implements, including burins, harpoons, parallel-sided blades, and needles.</p>	<p>The last stage of the ice age, Nomadic hunter-gatherers.</p>	<p>Bhimbetka, Sohan Valley, Nevasa (Maharashtra.) Bellan Valley. Only the caves of Kurnool and Muchchatala chintamani Gavi in Andhra Pradesh have yielded bone implements.</p>

2 Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age): Existed between the Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) and the Neolithic (New Stone Age). A rise in temperature and a warming of the environment during this time period caused the ice to melt and brought about changes in the flora and fauna.



Stone Tools of Mesolithic Age

- 🔦 **Time Period:** Around 10,000 BCE to 7,000 BCE
- 🔦 **Tools Used:** Smaller, more refined tools called microliths (a microlith is a small stone tool usually made of flint or chert and typically a centimetre or so in length and half a centimetre wide), made for hunting and fishing.
- 🔦 **Bone and antler tools** are yet another category of tools used by the Mesolithic people.
- 🔦 **Lifestyle:** The people of this age lived on hunting, fishing, and food gathering initially but later on they also domesticated animals.
- 🔦 **Famous Sites:** Bagor (Rajasthan), Adamgarh, Pachmarhi, Bhimbetka, Baghor II, Baghor III (Madhya Pradesh), Lekhahia, Baghai Khor, Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha, Damdama, Chopani Mando (Uttar Pradesh), Langhnaj (Gujarat) etc.

3 Neolithic (New Stone Age): Greek words “neo” for new and “lithic” for stone. As a result, the phrase “Neolithic Age” designates the “New Stone Age.” Since it brought about numerous significant changes in man’s social and economic existence, it is also known as the “Neolithic revolution”- man transitioned from being a food gatherer to a food producer.



Stone Tools of Neolithic Age

- 🔦 **Time Period:** Around 8,000 BCE to 2,000 BCE
- 🔦 **Tools Used:** Polished stone tools like sickles, axes, and grinders along with microliths and bone implements like arrowheads, scrapers, needles, and borers.
- 🔦 **Lifestyle:** Settled life, agriculture, domestication of animals, use of wheels, pottery, and the beginning of early village life.
- 🔦 **Famous Sites:** Mehrgarh (Balochistan, Pakistan), Gufkral and Burzahom (Kashmir) known for pit dwellings, Chirand (Bihar), Utnur (Andhra Pradesh), Piklihal and Brahmagiri (Karnataka), Koldihwa and Mahagara (Uttar Pradesh).

Conclusion

The Stone Age in India shows the gradual evolution of human society from primitive tool use to settled agricultural communities. The **Paleolithic** period marks the dawn of human culture with crude tools, followed by advancements in the **Mesolithic** and **Neolithic** periods, where societies became more organized and involved in early forms of agriculture, leading to the foundation of civilization.



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