

1. STONE AGE

Man is said to have appeared on the Earth (first in Africa) in early Pleistocene with true ox, true elephant and true horse. Bori in Maharashtra gives the earliest evidence of man in India, in the middle Pleistocene period.

In the Stone Age is divided into three broad divisions.

- Paleolithic Age (Early Stone Age) upto 8000BC.
- Mesolithic Age (Middle Stone Age) 8000-6000BC.
- Neolithic Age (New Stone Age) 6000-1000BC.

PALEOLITHIC AGE

- The Paleolithic sites are spread in practically all parts of India except the alluvial plains of Indus and Ganga.
- The people of this age were food gathering people who lived on hunting and gathering wild fruits and vegetables.
- Man during this period used tools of unpolished, undressed rough stones and lived in a cave and rock shelters. They had no knowledge of agriculture, pottery of any material.
- Homosapiens first appeared in last of this phase.
- It has been pointed out that Paleolithic men belonged to the Negrito Race.
- They mainly used hard axe, cleavers, choppers, blades, scrapers and burin. Their tools were made of hard rock called "Quartzite" hence Paleolithic men are also called "quartzite Men".
- The Paleolithic Age in India has been divided into three phases according to nature of stone tools used by the people and also according to the nature of change in the climate
 - Early or lower Paleolithic
 - Middle Paleolithic
 - Upper Paleolithic
- **Early Paleolithic Age** covers the greater part of the ice age, its characteristics tools are hard axes, cleavers and choppers, such tools have been found in Soan and Sohan river valley and in Belan valley in the Mirzapur district of UP.
- **Middle Paleolithic Phase** is characterized by use of stone tools made of flakes mainly scrapers, borers and blade like tools. The sites are found in

the valley of Soan, Narmada and Tugabhadra rivers.

- In the **upper Paleolithic Phase**, the climate became warm and less humid. This stage is marked by burins and scrapers. Such tools have been found in AP, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Bhopal and Chhota Nagpur Plateau.

MESOLITHIC ERA

- In this age, climate changes brought about changes in fauna and flora and made it possible for human beings to move to new areas.
- The people lived on hunting, fishing and food gathering; at a later stage they also domesticated animals.
- The characteristic tools of the Mesolithic Age are known as Microliths – pointed, crescentic blades, scrapers etc., all made of stone.
- The last phase of this age saw the beginning of plane cultivation.
- Various Mesolithic sites are found in the Chhotanagpur region. Central India and also south of the Krishna River.
- In the Belan valley of Vindhya, all the three phases of the Paleolithic followed by the Mesolithic and then by the Neolithic have been found in sequence. Similar is the case with the middle part of the Narmada.

NEOLITHIC ERA

- During this phase people were again depending on stone implements. But now they use stone other than quartzite for making tools, which were more lethal, more finished and more polished.
- Neolithic men cultivated land and grew fruits and corn like ragi and horse gram. They domesticated cattle, sheep and goat.
- They knew about making fire and making pottery, first by hand and then by potter's wheel. They also painted and decorated their pottery.
- They lived in caves and decorated their walls with hunting scenes and dancing. They also knew the art of making boats. They could also weave cotton and wool to make cloth.
- In later phase of Neolithic phase people led a more

settled life and lived in circular and rectangular houses made of mud and reed.

- Important sites of this age are Burzahom and Gulkral in J&K, Maski, Brahmagiri, Tekkalokota in Karnataka, Paiyampatti in Tamilnadu, Piklihal and Hallur in AP, Garo hills in Meghalaya, Chirand and Senuwar in Bihar, Amri, Kotdihji etc.

CHALCOLITHIC AGE

- In this period copper was used at first time.
- This period also called stone copper phase because stone and copper both were used.
- They used different type of pottery of which Black and Red pottery was most popular. It was wheel made and painted by white line design.
- These people were not acquainted with burnt bricks. They generally lived in thatched houses. It was a village economy.
- They venerated the mother goddess and worshiped the bull.
- Important sites of this phase are spread in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Bihar, MP etc.

SOME FACTS ABOUT STONE AGE

Kashmir only site where Microlith is completely absent.

- Burzahom-Domestic dogs were buried with their masters in their graves.
- Gilund: - Stone blade industry was discovered.
- Copper was first metal used by man.
- Older evidence from Soan valley (earliest and oldest).
- Alexander Cunningham visited Harappa twice 1853 and 1856 and recorded the existence of series of mounds. He is father of Archeology.
- Earliest site from where wheat evidence came it is Mahargarh site (Now in Pakistan-Afghanistan border)
- Earliest rice evidence from Allahabad.
- Pallavram (Madras) earliest of early man tools.
- Dead Body in North-south position -> Maharashtra.
- Dead Body in East-west position -> South India.
- Complete extended burial -> west India.
- Fractional burial -> East India.