

Prehistoric Period

Prehistoric Period in India

The Prehistoric Period is the period before writing and development. Approximate dates for when Homo sapiens first resided on the Indian subcontinent range from 200000 to 40000 BC.

The Stone Age, or prehistoric era, in India can be split into three main categories:

- Paleolithic
- Mesolithic
- Neolithic

The other major periods in prehistoric India were:

- Chalcolithic or the Copper Age
- The Iron Age

Stone Age

Because the stone age was part of the prehistoric era, or the period before writing was developed, archaeological studies were the main source of information about it. By means of excavation, archaeologist Robert Bruce Foote discovered the Pallavaram handaxe. It was the initial palaeolithic tool ever discovered in India. Based on the technique and kind of stone tools, the geological age, and the level of subsistence, the Indian Stone Age can be broadly classified into three categories. The list is as follows:

- Palaeolithic age (Old Stone age): 500,000 to 10,000 BCE
- Mesolithic age (Late Stone age): 10,000 to 6000 BCE
- Neolithic age (New Stone age): 6000 to 1000 BCE

Paleolithic Age (Old Stone Age)

The Old Stone Age is another name for the Paleolithic Period. It was made between 500 and 10,000 BCE. Indians during this time belonged to the "Negrito" race. The Greek words "palaeo" for old and "lithic" for stone are combined to form the word "Palaeolithic." As a result, the term "Paleolithic age" designates the prehistoric stone age. The Pleistocene epoch, also referred to as the Ice Age, is a geological period when the earth was covered in ice and the environment was extremely cold, making it impossible for both plant and animal life to survive. India's palaeolithic or old stone age society began to develop at this time. However, the earliest species of men may have existed in a tropical region where ice had melted.

The old stone age can be divided into three parts

- **Lower Palaeolithic age**

The Lower Paleolithic period, often known as the Ice Age, was dominated by hunters and gatherers. People used crudely cut-out stones for hunting. The palaeolithic epoch saw the development of extremely primitive tools, and at the conclusion of this time, humans began to create and use fire. The main Paleolithic Age archaeological sites include:

- Soan Valley (Pakistan)
- Bori (Maharashtra)
- Kashmir
- Saurashtra

- Gujarat
 - Chotanagar plateau
 - Belan Valley
 - Central India
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- **Middle Palaeolithic age**

The development of pointed and sharp tools including pointers, flakes, and blades by humans began during the Middle Paleolithic Age, a period of the Old Stone Age. For both slaying small animals and removing the flesh from deceased, hunting animals, they employed specialised instruments. The principal locations where middle palaeolithic period artefacts were found include;

 - Belan Valley (UP)
 - Bhimbetka
 - Luni Valley (Rajasthan)
 - Son and Narmada rivers
 - Songhai Cave
 - Postwar Plateau
 - **Upper Palaeolithic age**

In this instance, the climate warmed up toward the end of the Ice Age. At this point, Homo sapiens began to emerge. Numerous other bone tools, including needles, fishing gear, and boring tools, were also created. Bhimbetka is one of the main Upper Paleolithic sites where blades, hand axes, and scrapers have been discovered (South of Bhopal). Major sites:

 - Belan
 - Chota Nagpur Plateau
 - Son
 - Orissa
 - Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh
 - Maharashtra

These three periods, which make up part of the old stone age, saw variations in equipment as well as belonging to various sides in India.

Mesolithic Age

The Middle Stone Age, during which the majority of the implements used for hunting and fishing were discovered, is another name for this time period. Between 8000 BC and 4000 BC was the Mesolithic Age. There were discovered microliths, which were tiny tools formed of crypto-crystalline silica.

People lived in semi-permanent settlements and trusted in life after death during this middle stone age. Animal skin was used to make the clothing that people wore at this time.

The primary Middle Stone Age sites were:

- Azamgarh
- Rajasthan(Bogor)
- Mirzapur (UP)
- Langhnaj(Gujarat)

Neolithic Age

The development of agriculture and pottery occurred during the Neolithic Age, commonly referred to as the New Stone Age. Neolithic Age was between 4000 and 2500 BC. In addition to this, the New Stone Age signalled the start of civilizations with human-built circular homes.

The primary Neolithic Age sites were:

- Mehrgarh(Balochistan, Pakistan)
- Koldihwa and Mahagara(Allahabad)
- Chitand (Bihar)
- Burzahom(Kashmir)
- Belan

The ending of the Neolithic age also marked the end of The Stone Age.

Chalcolithic Age (The Copper Age)

Due to the widespread usage of bronze and copper at this time, the Chalcolithic period is also known as the Copper Age. This period spanned 1800 BC to 2500 BC. The Chalcolithic Age also called the Pre-Harappan period, marked the beginning of cow raising and rural settlement. In addition to this, there was an increase in art and craft, which included stonemasons and coppersmiths.

According to data discovered by archaeologists in Maharashtra, the Copper Age was characterised by high rates of infant mortality in the burial sites. There were also discovered clay goddesses and copper or bone jewellery. The Chalcolithic Age's principal locations were:

- Gilland (Rajasthan)
- Ahar (Rajasthan)
- Malwa (MP)
- Nevada
- Songhai
- Kayatha

Iron age

The Bronze Age came to an end with the advent of the Iron Age in the 19th century. In this time, a lot of weapons were produced. Between 1500 and 600 BCE, there was the Iron Age. Aryans and the Vedic era, along with Buddhism and Jainism, arrived during the Iron Age. Indus and Ganges Valley civilization, which was divided among the 16 major powers known as Mahajanapadas, was also witnessed by people.

The main Iron Age sites can be located in modern-day Northern India. In India, these were the Stone Ages. The Stone Age, Copper Age, and Iron Age were all eras of prehistory in India. The Ice Age and the development of Homo sapiens were both seen in prehistoric India.