



## UPSC History

Today's Current Affairs Channel

*Like • Share • Subscribe*

# THE STONE AGE & CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD

---

- ✓ Paleolithic Age (Early, Middle, Late)
- ✓ Mesolithic Age
- ✓ Neolithic Age
- ✓ Chalcolithic Cultures
- ✓ PYQs – CDS, CSE, CAPF

*Ancient India Series | Episode 1*

# Stone Age – Overview & Timeline

PALEOLITHIC • MESOLITHIC • NEOLITHIC

## Paleolithic (Old Stone Age)

2.5 million – 10,000 BC

## Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age)

9,000 – 4,000 BC

## Neolithic (New Stone Age)

After 2500 BC in India

**Stone Age:** Prehistoric period when stone tools were the primary technology used by early humans.

### Key Principle:

Each age is identified by the TYPE and TECHNOLOGY of stone tools used. Regional variation existed – different areas evolved at different paces.

### First Humans:




Homo Habilis & Australopithecus began using stone tools ~2.5 million years ago.

# Paleolithic Age – Tool Technology

EARLY | MIDDLE | LATE (UPPER)




## Early / Lower

500K – 50K BC

 **Tools:** Core Tools: Chopper (unifacial), Chopping tool (bifacial), Hand axe, Cleaver  
 **Stone:** Quartzite  **Occupation:** Hunting, food gathering, fishing




## Middle

50K – 40K BC

 **Tools:** Flake Tools: Blades, Scrapers, Points. Fire discovered. Homo Sapiens appeared.  
 **Stone:** Quartzite  **Occupation:** Hunting + early animal domestication begins

## Late / Upper

40K – 10K BC

 **Tools:** Flint Tools: Burins, Bone tools (harpoons), Needles, Projectile points, Wall paintings appear.  
 **Stone:** Chert, Jasper  **Occupation:** Hunting + fishing + art & religion emerge

# Mesolithic & Neolithic Ages

## TRANSITIONAL AGE • AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

### MESOLITHIC AGE (9,000 – 4,000 BC)

- ▶ Tools: MICROLITHS – tiny (1–8cm), geometric shapes (trapezoid, lunate, points)
- ▶ Composite tools: Microliths grafted onto wooden shafts
- ▶ Semi-permanent homes; wore animal skins
- ▶ Cave paintings widespread; belief in afterlife (burial practices)
- ▶ Key Sites: Adamgarh (MP) & Bagor (Rajasthan) – earliest animal domestication
- ▶ Also: Bhimbetka, Langhnaj (Gujarat), Sarai-Nahar-Rai (UP)

### NEOLITHIC AGE (After 2500 BC in India)

- ▶ Tools: POLISHED / GROUND stone tools; Celt (digging tool)
- ▶ Stones: Dyke, Basalt, Dolomite
- ▶ Food PRODUCTION begins – Regular agriculture
- ▶ Mehrgarh: wheat & cotton; Mirzapur: rice cultivation
- ▶ Settled life; rectangular/circular houses with sun-dried bricks
- ▶ Key Sites: Burzahom (Kashmir) – pit dwellings, dog burial; Chirand (Bihar); Piklihal, Hallur (Karnataka)

# Stone Age – Comparative Summary Table

## QUICK REVISION

Feature	Early Paleolithic	Middle Paleolithic	Upper Paleolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic
Tools	Core (Chopper, Cleaver, Handaxe)	Flake (Blades, Scrapers, Points)	Flint (Burin, Harpoon, Bone tools)	Microliths (geometric)	Polished Stone (Celt)
Stone	Quartzite	Quartzite	Chert, Jasper	Agate	Basalt, Dolomite, Dyke
Fire	-	YES	YES	YES	YES
Pottery	No	No	No	First evidence	Hand-made; wheel later
Agriculture	No	No	No	Ends; domestication starts	Full agriculture begins
Burials	No evidence	No evidence	Paintings begin	Burial with food items	Dog buried (Burzahom)
Key Site	Soan Valley, Punjab Bhimbetka (MP)	Bhimbetka Adamgarh (MP)	Bhimbetka Belan Valley	Adamgarh, Bagor Bhimbetka	Burzahom, Mehrgarh Chirand, Hallur

# Stone Age – Important Sites to Remember

## UPSC EXAM FOCUS

### Paleolithic & Mesolithic Sites

#### **Bhimbetka, MP**

Cave paintings – all 3 Paleolithic phases + Mesolithic. Discovered by V.S. Wakankar.

#### **Adamgarh (MP) & Bagor (Raj)**

Earliest evidence of animal domestication – Mesolithic Age.

#### **Soan / Sohan Valley, Punjab**

Early Paleolithic – Core tools, Chopper type industry.

### Neolithic Sites

#### **Burzahom, Kashmir**

Neolithic – Pit dwellings, domestic dogs buried with masters, coarse grey pottery.

#### **Mehrgarh, Balochistan**

Neolithic – Earliest agriculture; wheat & cotton; ~8000 BCE.

#### **Chirand, Bihar**

Neolithic – Continuous settlement from Neolithic to Iron Age.

#### **Koldihwa & Mahagara (UP)**

Neolithic – Evidence of rice cultivation; circular huts.

# Chalcolithic Period – Introduction

COPPER + STONE AGE | 2000 BC - 700 BC

"Chalco" = Copper + "lithos" = Stone → Copper-Stone Age (also called Eneolithic / Aeneolithic)

## Pottery

Polychrome painted pottery; fenestrated pottery (pots with openings cut in walls)

## Agriculture

Barley, wheat, lentil, bajra, jowar, ragi, rice; Eastern India → rice; Western India → barley

## Tools & Metal

Copper knives, axes, fishing hooks, chisels; Period BEFORE bronze (tin not yet mixed with copper)

## Animals

Sheep, goats, cattle, pigs domesticated; milk & dairy products used; hunting continued

## Houses

Stone or mudbrick; chain building pattern (rectangular houses connected by shared walls)

## Art & Craft

Expert coppersmiths, ivory carvers; ornaments from agate, jasper, chalcedony, carnelian

# Chalcolithic Cultures of India

## REGIONAL CULTURES - UPSC FAVORITE

### Ahar / Banas Culture

2025 – 1270 BC

*Udaipur district, Rajasthan – Ahar, Balathal, Gilund, Ojiyana*

Rich ceramic: Tan ware, Black & Red ware, Grey ware. Bowls, dish-on-stands.

### Malwa Culture

1900 – 1400 BC

*Central India – Maheshwar (Narmada), Nagda, Kayatha, Eran*

Most predominant Chalcolithic of central India; buff/cream slipped pottery; female terracotta figurines.

### OCP Culture

2600 – 900 BC

*Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Western UP*

Ochre Coloured Pottery – fragile, easily washed; rice & barley farmed; connection to Harappans debated.

### Kayatha Culture

2000 – 1800 BC

*Kayatha, Ujjain district, Madhya Pradesh*

Chocolate slipped ware; horse remains found; wattle-and-daub huts; sudden end – earthquake.

### Jorwe Culture

2nd millennium BC

*Maharashtra – Daimabad, Inamgaon, Prakash, Jorwe (Ahmadnagar dist.)*

Dry farming + crop rotation; early houses rectangular, later circular; child urn burials; adults – ankles chopped.

### Painted Grey Ware (PGW)

1100 – 500 BCE

*Himalayan foothills to Malwa plateau; Bahawalpur to Kaushambi (UP)*

Fine smooth grey pottery; luxury ware; wattle-and-daub huts; rice, wheat, barley cultivation.

# Chalcolithic – Must-Know Sites & Burials

## CSE DIRECT QUESTION ZONE

### BURIAL PRACTICES – EXAMINER'S FAVOURITE

#### Burzahom (Kashmir)

Domestic dogs buried WITH their masters – unique Neolithic practice

#### Jorwe Culture

Children buried in URNS (jar burials). Adults: portion below ankles CHOPPED OFF before burial

#### Chalcolithic General

Single interments, jar burials, box-shaped ossuary above ground, rock-cut tombs found in different cultures

### KEY SITE FACTS TO REMEMBER

- ★ Inamgaon (Maharashtra): Chalcolithic site | Daimabad (Maharashtra): Bronze artefacts, Jorwe culture
- ★ Chandraketugarh (West Bengal): Terracotta art | Ganeshwar (Rajasthan): Copper artefacts
- ★ Ahar (Rajasthan): 'Black & Red Ware' pottery | Kayatha (MP): Chocolate slipped ware + horse remains

# UPSC CDS (I) 2020 | Stone Age in India

**Consider the following statements about the Stone Age in India:**

1. Different periods are identified on the basis of the type and technology of stone tools.
  2. There are no regional variations in the type and technology of tools in different periods.
  3. Stone Age cultures of different periods evolved uniformly in a near unilinear fashion all over the subcontinent.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct? a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (a) 1 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 ✓ CORRECT** - Each phase is defined by its tools: Core → Flake → Flint → Microliths → Polished.

**Statement 2 ✗ WRONG** - Regional variation DID exist. E.g., Neolithic began at different times in different parts of India.

**Statement 3 ✗ WRONG** - Evolution was NOT unilinear or uniform. Different cultures evolved at different paces across the subcontinent.

# UPSC CDS (II) 2024 | Mesolithic Art in India

**With reference to the Mesolithic art in India, consider the following statements:**

1. Alexander Burns discovered the first rock paintings in India at Sohagighat in Uttar Pradesh.
  2. Bhimbetka rock paintings were discovered when archaeologist V.S. Wakankar noticed the rocks from a train window while travelling from Bhopal to Itarsi.
  3. The paintings and engravings do not exist in the same shelter in the rock art of Orissa.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct? a) 1 only b) 2 only c) 2 and 3 d) 1 and 2

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (b) 2 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 ✘ WRONG** - It was V.S. Wakankar who made the major rock art discoveries, not Alexander Burns.

**Statement 2 ✓ CORRECT** - Bhimbetka was discovered by V.S. Wakankar who spotted rocks from a train on the Bhopal-Itarsi route.

**Statement 3 ✘ WRONG** - Paintings AND engravings DO exist in the same shelter in Orissan rock art.

# UPSC CDS (II) 2023 | Levallois Technique

Consider the following statements regarding the 'Levallois Technique':

1. It refers to making perforated Harappa pottery.
2. It refers to making prehistoric flake tools.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct? a) 1 only b) 2 only c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (b) 2 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 ✘ WRONG** - Levallois Technique has NO connection to Harappa pottery. They are from completely different periods.

**Statement 2 ✓ CORRECT** - Levallois is a Middle Paleolithic flake-tool making technique. Stone was knapped in a specific way to produce predetermined flake shapes.

💡 **Remember:** Levallois = Flake tools = Middle Paleolithic Age.

# UPSC CDS (II) 2023 | Paleolithic Tools

**Consider the following statements with reference to Paleolithic tools:**

1. Islampur was a well-known center of stone tool manufacture located in Gulbarga district of Karnataka and was situated along a small seasonal stream known as Kamta Halla.
2. A Paleolithic blade is a flake tool, the length of which is more than twice its width.

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (c) Both 1 and 2**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 ✓ CORRECT** - Islampur (Gulbarga, Karnataka) was indeed a major Paleolithic stone tool manufacturing hub situated along the Kamta Halla stream.

**Statement 2 ✓ CORRECT** - The blade is defined as a flake tool where  $\text{LENGTH} > 2x \text{ its WIDTH}$ . This is the standard archaeological definition.

💡 **Remember:** Blade = Flake tool where length is more than TWICE the width.

# UPSC CAPF 2023 | Neolithic Period (Which is NOT CORRECT?)

Which one among the following statements with reference to the 'Neolithic Period' is NOT correct?

- a) The characteristic features included ground and polished stone tools, agriculture, animal domestication and pottery.
- b) This period is also known as the 'New Stone Age'.
- c) The characteristic features appeared almost at the same time in various parts of the subcontinent.
- d) Earliest evidence of agriculture is found from Mehrgarh around 8000 BCE.

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (c) The characteristic features appeared almost at the same time in various parts of the subcontinent.**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Option (c) is WRONG** - Neolithic features did NOT appear at the same time across India. The age began at different times in different regions.

- a) ✓ Correct - Polished tools, agriculture, animal domestication & pottery = Neolithic characteristics.
- d) ✓ Correct - Mehrgarh (Balochistan) ~8000 BCE is the earliest evidence of agriculture in the subcontinent.

# UPSC CSE 2024 | Archaeological Sites – State – Description Matching

Consider the following information (Archaeological Site : State : Description). In which of the above rows is the information correctly matched?

1. Chandraketugarh : Odisha : Trading Port town
2. Inamgaon : Maharashtra : Chalcolithic site
3. Mangadu : Kerala : Megalithic site
4. Salihundam : Andhra Pradesh : Rock-cut cave shrines

In which of the above rows is the given information correctly matched?  
a) 1 and 2 b) 2 and 3 c) 3 and 4 d) 1 and 4

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (b) 2 and 3 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Row 1 ✘** - Chandraketugarh is in WEST BENGAL (not Odisha). It is famous for Terracotta art, not just a trading port.

**Row 2 ✓** - Inamgaon (Maharashtra) is a major Jorwe Culture (Chalcolithic) site. Correctly matched.

# UPSC CSE 2021 | Historical Places – Well-Known For

Consider the following pairs (Historical place : Well-known for). Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

1. Burzahom : Rock-cut shrines
2. Chandraketugarh : Terracotta art
3. Ganeshwar : Copper artefacts

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 c) 3 only d) 2 and 3

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (d) 2 and 3 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Pair 1 ✗ WRONG** - Burzahom (Kashmir) is known for PIT DWELLINGS & dog-master burials - NOT rock-cut shrines.

**Pair 2 ✓ CORRECT** - Chandraketugarh (West Bengal) is famous for exquisite Terracotta art from the early historic period.

**Pair 3 ✓ CORRECT** - Ganeshwar (Rajasthan) has the largest collection of pre-Harappan Copper artefacts found in India.

# UPSC CDS (I) 2024 | Jorwe Culture of the Deccan

Consider the following statements about the Jorwe culture of the Deccan:

1. It covers, practically, the whole of modern Maharashtra except the coastal Konkan district.
2. The Pravara-Godavari valleys seem to have been the nuclear zone.
3. The large sites of this culture yield evidence of shifting agriculture.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 1 and 2 only  
c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

✓ **CORRECT ANSWER: (b) 1 and 2 only**

✚ **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 ✓ CORRECT** - Jorwe culture spread across almost all of Maharashtra, excluding the coastal Konkan strip (west) and Vidarbha (northeast).

**Statement 2 ✓ CORRECT** - The Pravara-Godavari valley (Daimabad, Inamgaon) is considered the heartland/nuclear zone of Jorwe culture.

**Statement 3 ✗ WRONG** - Jorwe practiced DRY FARMING, not shifting agriculture. They are actually noted for practicing CROP ROTATION.

# THANK YOU!

---

## Topics Covered Today:

- ✓ Stone Age – Paleolithic (Early / Middle / Late)
    - ✓ Mesolithic Age & Microliths
    - ✓ Neolithic Age – Agriculture begins
    - ✓ Chalcolithic Period & Regional Cultures
  - ✓ PYQs – CDS 2020, 2023, 2024 | CSE 2021, 2024 | CAPF 2023
- 

 Like |  Subscribe |  Comment your doubts!

Next Episode: Harappan Civilisation 