



**ONLYiAS**  
BY PHYSICS WALLAH

# UDAAN

**PRELIMS WALLAH (STATIC)**

**PRELIMS 2025**

## ANCIENT INDIA



**QUICK AND COMPREHENSIVE REVISION SERIES**

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# 1

# Early History

History can be classified into three categories: **Pre-History, Proto-History, and History.**

- **Pre-history** covers the events **before writing was invented**. The three Stone Ages usually represent it.
- **Proto-history**, generally, refers to a period between prehistory and history when the knowledge of writing was there, but their scripts are yet to be deciphered.
  - The **Harappan** script has not yet been deciphered, but the civilization is mentioned in the writings of Mesopotamia.
  - Similarly, the **Vedic civilisation** from 1500–600 BC had an oral literary tradition.
- **History** is the **study of the past after writing was invented** and the study of societies based on written and archaeological sources.

## PREHISTORIC PERIOD

The Indian Stone Age is divided into **three main categories**.

### Indian Stone Age

Age	Period	Time Frame
Old Stone Age	Palaeolithic Age	5,00,000–10,000 BCE
Late Stone Age	Mesolithic Age	10,000–6000 BCE
New Stone Age	Neolithic Age	6,000–1000 BCE

### PALAEOLITHIC AGE (APPROX 3.3 MILLION YEARS TO 10,000 BP)

#### Introduction

- 'Palaeolithic' means "Old Stone Age" and begins with the **first use of stone tools**. It extends from the earliest known use of stone tools by **Hominins** (immediate ancestor of **Homo Sapiens**) 3.3 million

years ago to the end of the **Pleistocene, or Ice Age**, 11,650 BP (before the present period).

- Human ancestors are likely to have **first evolved in Africa** and **later migrated** to different parts of the world. The **earliest human ancestor** species to **migrate out of Africa** was **Homo erectus**.
- They were **hunters and gatherers** who lived in **caves and rock shelters**. They also learned to **use fire** later in this phase.
- They used unpolished stones like hand axes, cleavers, choppers, blades, burin, and scrapers. They are also called **Quartzite men** in India because they used **quartzite** for their tools.

The Palaeolithic Age is further divided into **three phases** according to the nature of the stone tools used by the people and the nature of change in the climate.

- **Lower Palaeolithic Age** (20,00,000 – 60,000 BP)
- **Middle Palaeolithic Age** (3,85,000–40,000 BP)
- **Upper Palaeolithic Age** (40,000 – 10,000 BP)

#### Lower/Early Palaeolithic Age (20,00,000 – 60,000 BP)

During this phase, the human ancestor species **Homo erectus** is believed to have lived in India.

The **Narmada Valley** yielded a partial **hominid skull cap** in a **basal conglomerate** deposit in **1982**.

- This fossil is the **oldest hominin fossil** found in India and is known as the **Narmada Man**, or **Sivapithecus sivalensis**. It was found at **Hathnora** near **Hoshangabad** in **Madhya Pradesh**.
- It is considered to represent the **Archaic Homo sapiens**.
- It is the only existing **fossil find of human ancestors in India**.
- It provides direct evidence of the presence of early human ancestors on the subcontinent.

Region	Key Sites	Key Features
Northwest India	River Soan Valley (Punjab, now in Pakistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of the earliest known Paleolithic sites in the Indian subcontinent.</li></ul>

<b>Northern India</b>	Belan Valley (Mirzapur district, Uttar Pradesh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rich Paleolithic and Mesolithic evidence.</li> <li>Presence of early microlithic tools and habitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Southern India</b>	Athirampakkam, Pallavaram, and Gudiyam (near Chennai)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of Lower Paleolithic culture.</li> <li>Stone tools (hand axes and cleavers) from Acheulian tradition.</li> </ul>
<b>Deccan Plateau</b>	Hunsgi Valley and Isampur (Karnataka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presence of Acheulian sites with extensive tool-making evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>Central India</b>	Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNESCO World Heritage site.</li> <li>Rock shelters with Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic evidence.</li> </ul>

- Lifestyle:**

- The early humans of this age were primarily **hunters** and **gatherers** and lived a nomadic lifestyle.
- They hunted animals and gathered roots, nuts, and fruits. They fed on the flesh and bones of animals killed by predators.
  - In the Narmada valley, animal fossils of **Elephas namadicus** (giant tusked pre-historic elephant), **Stegodon Ganesa** (a giant pre-historic elephant), **Bos namadicus** (wild cattle) and **Equus Namadicus** (extinct great horse like animal) have been recovered.
  - At **Attirampakkam** teeth of **Equus**, evidence of **Water Buffalo** and **Nilgai**, as well as 17 **animal hoof prints** have been uncovered.

**Equus** refers to the genus of animals, including horses, asses and zebras.

- Homoerectus** lived near the river valleys in caves and rock shelters, as seen from evidence in **Bhimbetka** in **Madhya Pradesh** and **Gudiyam** near **Chennai**.

- Homo Erectus** did not have a **complex language culture** like **Homo Sapiens**. They may have expressed a few sounds or words and used **sign language**.

- Tools:**

- The **first** Palaeolithic tools were identified at the site of **Pallavaram** near Chennai by **Robert Bruce Foote** in 1863.
- Tools included **hand axes**, **choppers**, and **cleavers**, similar to tools used in Western Asia, Europe, and Africa. The tools had **physical symmetry**, highlighting pre-historic human's high-quality cognitive (perception) skills and capabilities.

## Acheulian Culture vs Sohanian Culture

Aspect	Acheulian Culture	Sohanian Culture
<b>Tool Types</b>	Mainly hand axes and cleavers.	Choppers and chopping tools.
<b>Geographical Spread</b>	Found more in Central and South-Eastern India (near Chennai); absent in Western Ghats, coastal, and North-Eastern India due to heavy rainfall.	Confined to the northwestern part; named after the Sohan river valley in Pakistan.
<b>Distinctive Features</b>	Well-documented sites across India.	Limited documentation, specific to the northwestern region.

## Middle Palaeolithic Age (3,85,000–40,000 BP)

- During this phase, changes took place in **lithic technology**, and the species of human ancestors diverged due to behavioural modernity.
- In India, this phase was first identified by **H.D. Sankalia** on the **Pravara River** at **Nevasa (Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra)**.
- While the African Middle Stone Age is associated with the **Homo sapiens**, it is associated with the **Neanderthals** in Europe.
  - No hominin fossil bone** evidence has been found in **India** during this time.

### Neanderthals

- They lived in **Eurasia** from approximately 400,000 to 40,000 years ago.
- They were a **species of archaic humans** closely related to modern humans, sharing a common ancestor.
- Distribution:** Found in Narmada, Godavari, Krishna, and Yamuna areas and south of the Tungabhadra River and Soan River Valley.
- Ways of Life:** The human ancestors were **hunter-gatherers** and lived in **open-air**, **cave**, and **rock shelter sites**.

- Tools:** Prominent tools include hand axes, cleavers, choppers, chopping tools, scrapers, projectile points or shouldered points, and knives on flakes; the **flake industry** was predominant with tools like scrapers, points, and borers.
  - The **tools became smaller**, and there was a decrease in the use of hand axes in relation to other tools.
  - Chert, jasper, chalcedony, and quartz** were used to make tools.

### Upper Palaeolithic Age (40,000 – 10,000 BP)

- Modern humans** evolved in Africa around 300,000 years ago, migrated to Asia by 60,000 years ago, and possibly introduced the Upper **Palaeolithic** culture in India.
- This period is marked by **innovation in tool technology** and increased **cognitive capability** in humans.

### Site distribution

Region	Sites
Karnataka	Meralbhavi
Andhra Pradesh	Kurnool Caves
Telangana	Godavarikhani
Madhya Pradesh	Baghor I, Baghor III (Son Valley), Bhimbetka, Bhopal
Maharashtra	Patne
Jharkhand	Chotanagpur Plateau

○

**Ostrich egg shells** from the Upper Palaeolithic sites of **Bhimbetka and Patne (Jalgaon, Maharashtra)** have been dated to 25,000 years before the present.

- Way of Life:**
  - The people of this period used **caves** as well as the **open-air space** for living.
  - Evidence of art appears in the form of paintings, beads and ornaments. Some of the **Green colour** paintings of **Bhimbetka** date to this period.
  - Incised ostrich eggshell, shell and stone beads of this period, have been found at **Jwalapuram** in **Andhra Pradesh**, **Patne in Maharashtra**.

### Upper Palaeolithic Shrine

A shrine-like structure is found at **Baghor, Uttar Pradesh**, it is the earliest known evidence of a shrine in India.

- It is indicated by a **block of sandstone** surrounded by a **rubble circle**, similar to the contemporary shrines.

- Tools:** It was based on **blade and bone** tool technologies. Bone tools and faunal remains have been found in **Kurnool caves** in **Andhra Pradesh**.
  - Microliths** (tiny stone tools) were introduced, and these tools were made using different varieties of silica-rich raw materials.

### MESOLITHIC AGE (10,000-1,000 BC)

The Mesolithic Age in India is believed to have **started** around the **end of the last Ice Age** and continued till the inception of the Neolithic Age.

The date of the Mesolithic culture varies in different parts of the world. This culture is assigned to **pre-agricultural times** in certain areas. In the **Levant** (Eastern Mediterranean), they are dated between 20,000 and 9500 BC.

- Climate:**
  - After the Ice Age, with the advent of global warming, human groups became highly mobile and began to occupy various ecozones.
  - Monsoon pattern emerged, with some regions witnessing higher rainfall. Freshwater lakes were known to exist at **Didwana** in western Rajasthan.
  - The animal bones from this period suggest a **dry, deciduous type of forest** during the Mesolithic period.
- Geographical Distribution:** Mesolithic locations can be discovered throughout India, spanning a range of eco-zones from the coastline to the mountains.
  - Sites:** Paisra (Bihar); Langhnaj (Gujarat); Baghor II, Chopani Mando, Sarai Nahar Rai, Mahadaha and Damdama (all in Uttar Pradesh); Sankanakallu and Kibbanahalli (Karnataka).
  - Rock shelter sites** are found in **Lekhakia and Baghai Khor** in Uttar Pradesh; **Adamgarh and Bhimbetka** in Madhya Pradesh.
  - Coastal sites** are seen at Mumbai; **teri sites** (a **coastal landscape** caused by **sand dunes**) of Thoothukudy in Tamil Nadu and Vishakapatnam.
- Life-Styles:** Subsistence **hunting** and **gathering**.
  - Agriculture** was **not practised** in the early stages, but at the end of the Mesolithic period, humans domesticated plants and animals (paving the way for the Neolithic way of life).
  - The people **used fire** and perhaps **roasted food**.
  - Domestic animal bones** of cattle, sheep, goats, pig and dog have been found at **Kanewal, Loteswar** and **Ratanpur** in **Gujrat** and from **Adamgarh** and **Bhimbetka** in **Madhya Pradesh**.
  - Camel bones** have been found from **Kanewal**.



- The Mesolithic people were **highly mobile**. They moved in search of animals and plant food. They made temporary huts and also used caves and rock shelters.
- Traces of **oval and circular huts** and possible wattle daub are found in **Chopani Mando** and **Damdama** in Uttar Pradesh and **Bagor** and **Tilwara** in Rajasthan.
- **Characteristic Tools:** They used **microlithic tools** to suit the changes in flora and fauna. These tools enabled them to hunt smaller animals and birds.
- **Art and Culture:**
  - A **chert stone** with **geometric engravings** was found in **Chandravati** in Rajasthan, bone objects and **human tooth** engraved with **geometric design** from **Bhimbetka**.
  - **Rock paintings** are found in the **rock shelters** of Madhya Pradesh and Central India. They show people hunting, trapping animals and fishing and dancing.
  - **Bhimbetka** near **Bhopal**, **Raisen** and **Pachmarhi** in **Madhya Pradesh** and **South Mirzapur** in **Uttar Pradesh** are some of the sites with evidence of art.
  - Bhimbetka paintings show that various animals were hunted and for this men and women went together.
- **Burials:** People buried the dead, which suggests their beliefs.
  - Human skeletons have been found in **Mahadaha**, **Damdama**, and **Sarai Nahar Rai** in Uttar Pradesh.
  - At **Mahadaha**, a man and a woman were buried together.
  - They buried the dead along with **grave goods**. One burial had an **ivory pendant** as the grave good.

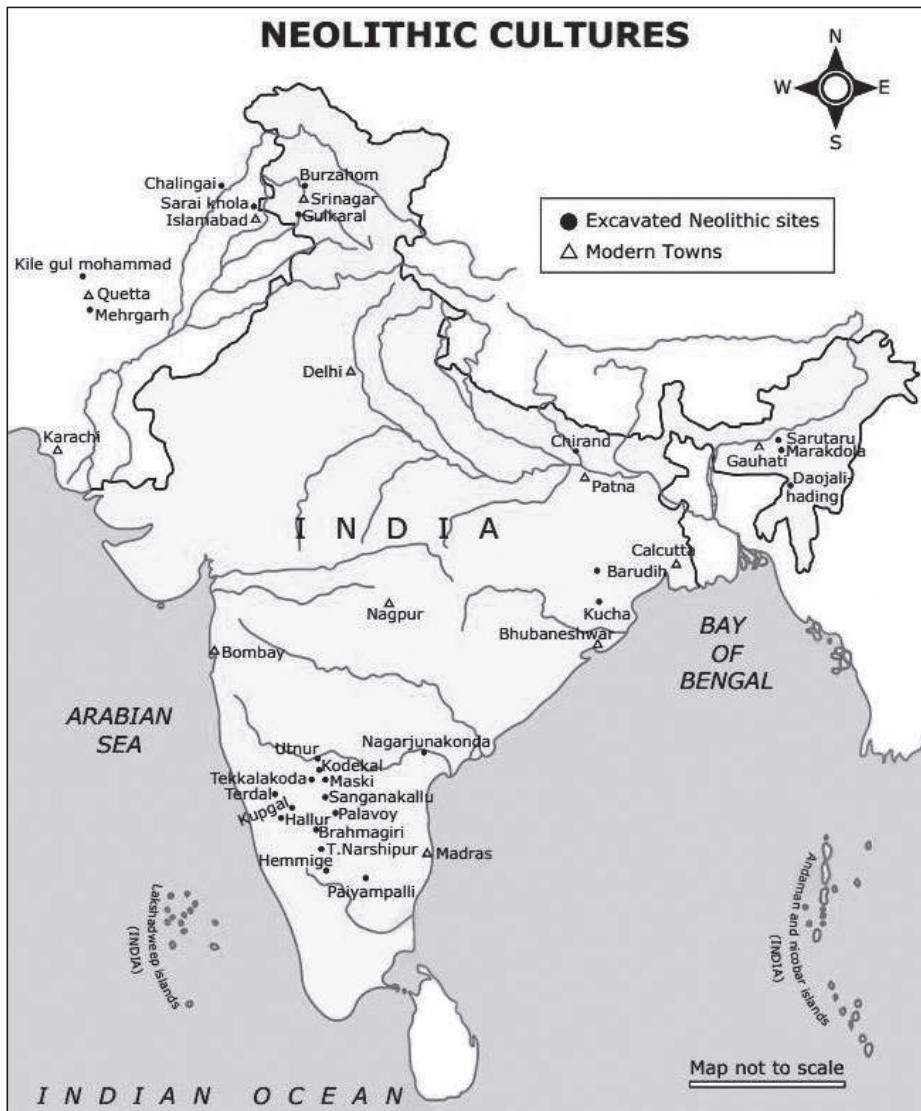
## THE NEW STONE AGE OR NEOLITHIC AGE

The period started around 10,000 BC and marked the **beginning of agriculture** and **animal domestication**.

- Early evidences of **Neolithic culture** are found in the **fertile region of Egypt** and **Mesopotamia**, **Indus region**, **Ganges valley** of India and also in **China**.

### Neolithic Revolution

- The **development of agriculture** led to **surplus food production**, resulting in the rise of civilisations.
- Large villages came to exist, alongwith the **development of pottery** and the **building of permanent residences**.
- **Characteristic Tools:** Polished stone, stone axes, microlith blades.



### Neolithic Sites and their Characteristics

The Neolithic culture of north-western India is the earliest to have evidence of plant and animal domestication in India. Neolithic sites in **Northwest India: Mehrgarh, Rana Ghundai, Sarai Kala and Jalilpur**. These sites are now situated in Pakistan.

**Mehrgarh** has produced evidence of early Neolithic times, dating to 7000 BC. **Wheat** and **Barley** were

- cultivated and sheep, goat and cattle were domesticated. This culture preceded the Indus Civilisation.
- **1<sup>st</sup> cultural phase (7000-5500 BC) of Mehergarh** - cultivated crops and domesticated animals, but did **not** use **pottery**.
  - They cultivated six-row barley, emmer and einkorn wheat, jujube, ilanthalai, and dates.
  - They were semi-nomadic, pastoral groups, built their houses with mud and buried the dead.
  - They used sea shells, limestone, turquoise, lapis lazuli, and sandstone ornaments.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> cultural phase (5500-4800 BC) and 3<sup>rd</sup> phase (4800-3500 BC) of Mehergarh**
  - They practised **long-distance trade** (revealed by Lapis Lazuli, which is available only in **Badakshan**).
  - Evidence for pottery during these periods.
  - Terracotta figurines and glazed faience beads have been found.

#### Early Dentistry in the Neolithic Mehrgarh

From the Neolithic period, people began to eat ground grain and cooked food, which caused dental and other health problems. The earliest evidence for **drilling human tooth** (of a living person) has been found at **Mehrgarh**. It is seen as a prelude to dentistry.

### Valley of Kashmir

- **Burzahom**, an important site of this culture, provides evidence for the **Megalithic** and **Early Historic Periods**.
- People lived in **pit dwellings** to escape the **cold weather**. The houses were **oval** in shape, wide at the bottom and narrow at the top.
- They used bone & stone tools. There was evidence of **menhirs** (standing stone) and the use of **redware pottery** and metal objects. They used **copper arrowheads**.
- The people **practised agriculture** and **domesticated animals**.
- Seeds of wheat, barley, common pea and lentil have been recovered from the excavations. The **use of lentil** suggests that they had contacts with **Central Asia**.
- They were **contemporary** to **Harappa civilization** and **traded** with them.
- **Two phases** of **Neolithic culture** have been identified. They are termed **aceramic** and **ceramic phases**. Aceramic phase did not have evidence of ceramics. The ceramic phase shows evidence of pottery.
- They also used **black ware pottery**, beads of **agate** and **carnelian and painted pottery**.
- A burial site produced **wild dog bone and antler horn**. An engraving of a hunting scene is depicted on a stone with dog and sun.

### Ganges Valley and Central India

- **Lehuradeva, Chopani Munda, Koldiwa and Mahagara** in **Uttar Pradesh**; **Chirand and Senuwar** in **Bihar** are major sites.
- The site of **Lehuradeva (Uttar Pradesh)** has produced **early evidence of rice cultivation** dated to 6500 BC.
- These sites also have evidence of pottery and plant and animal domestication. These sites are characterised by **cord-marked pottery**.
- Evidence for the **cultivation of hulled and six-rowed barley**, several types of wheat, rice, pea, green gram, and gram/chicken pea, mustard, flax/linseed and jackfruit have been found.
- Sheep, goat and cattle bones have been found besides bones of wild animals.

### East India

- The Neolithic sites are found at many sites in **Bihar** and **West Bengal**.
- **Birbhanpur, Chirand, Kuchai, Golbaisasan, and Sankarjang** are important sites.
- Tools like pointed butt, celts, chisel and shouldered axes have been found.

### South India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and the North-western part of Tamil Nadu)

- **Tools used** include stone axes and blades.
- **Fire-baked earthen figurines** are found suggesting cattle keeping.
- These sites have **ash mounds** in the centre with settlements around them. **Utnur** and **Palvoy** in **Andhra Pradesh** and **Kodekal, Kupgal and Budihal** in **Karnataka** feature ash mound sites.
- These sites are found near the **granite hills with water sources**.
- These sites are found in the **river valleys** of Godavari, Krishna, Pennaru, Tungabhadra and Kaveri.
- **Major sites include:**
  - **Karnataka:** Sanganakallu, Tekkalakota, Brahmagiri, Maski, Piklihal, Watkal, Hemmige and Hallur;
  - **Andhra Pradesh:** Nagarjunakonda, Ramapuram, and Veerapuram;
  - **Tamil Nadu:** Paiyampalli.

### North East India (Assam and Garo Hills)

- The culture dates from **2500-1500 BC**.
- Tools like **shouldered axes and splayed celts** were found at the sites in Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Daojali Hading** and **Sarutaru** are important sites bearing evidence for **shifting cultivation**.
- The cultivation of yams and taro, **building stone and wooden memorials** for the **dead**, and the presence of **Austro-Asiatic languages** are the marked features of this region.

- **Rice cultivation** in the **sixth millennium BC** was found in northern Vindhya spurs, Mirzapur, Allahabad, and Balochistan, suggesting ancient agriculture.
- The later Neolithic settlers were **agriculturists** who lived in circular or rectangular houses made of mud and reed, leading a settled life.
  - **Agricultural produce** includes **Ragi** and **horse gram** (kulathi).
- Hand-made pottery is found in the early stages. Later, they used foot wheels to turn up pots.

On the northern spurs of the **Vindhya in the Belan Valley** all three phases of the Palaeolithic, followed by the Mesolithic and Neolithic phases, have been found in sequence.

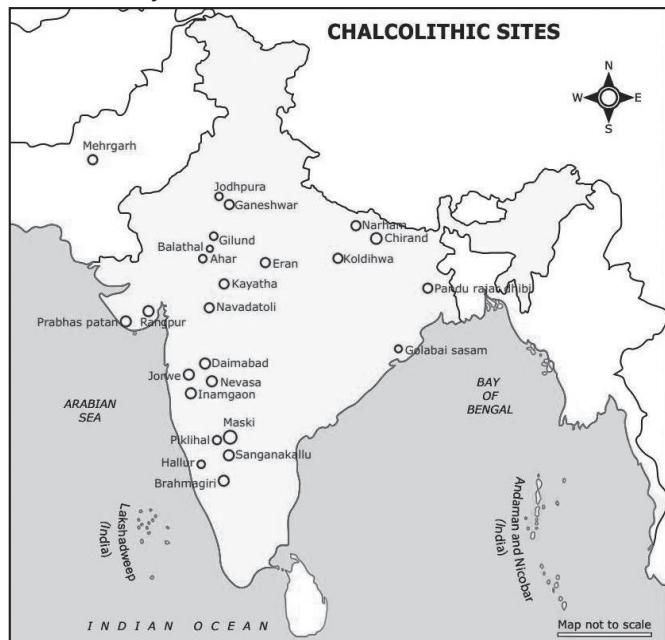
### CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD (2600-1200 BC)

Towards the end of the Neolithic period, the use of metals began, with the **first metal being copper**. Chalcolithic period witnessed the combined use of stone and copper tools.

- The **Pre-Harappan cultures** are the **earliest Chalcolithic cultures** of India which were found in the time before the beginning of the mature phase of the Harappan culture and continued to exist even after the decline of Harappan civilization.
- In the **northwestern and western regions** of India, the **early farming** cultures are associated with the

**Chalcolithic cultures** rather than the Neolithic cultures. Their traces are found all over the country, except for the **alluvial plains** and **thickly forested areas**.

- **Tools:** They used **small tools and weapons**, such as stone axes, and the stone blade industry flourished. **Copper objects** such as flat axes, bangles, rings, antimony rods, knives etc. were found.



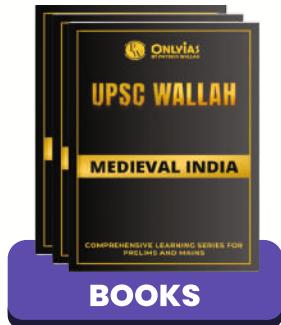
### Early Chalcolithic Sites

Region	Key Sites	Key Features	Economy/Subsistence
South-eastern Rajasthan	Ahar, Gilund, Ganeshwar	Ahar: Absence of stone axes or blades Gilund: Stone-blade industry Ganeshwar: Copper supply to Harappa [UPSC 2021]	Hunting and agriculture
Western Madhya Pradesh	Kayatha, Eran (Malwa), Navdatoli (Narmada)	Evidence of Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
Uttar Pradesh	Multiple sites in the Allahabad region, proximity to Vindhya	Multiple Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
Western Maharashtra	Jorwe, Nevasa, Daimabad (Ahmadnagar), Chandoli, Songaon, Inamgaon (Pune)	Jorwe: Flat and rectangular copper axes Chandoli: Evidence of copper chisels [UPSC 2024]	Hunting, agriculture, and early metallurgy
Eastern India	Chirand (Ganga River), Pandu Rajar Dhibi, Mahishdal (West Bengal)	Eastern Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
Andhra Pradesh	Kodekal, Utnur, Nagatjunkonda, Palavoy	Some Chalcolithic elements; absence of copper objects	Hunting and agriculture

#### Pottery:

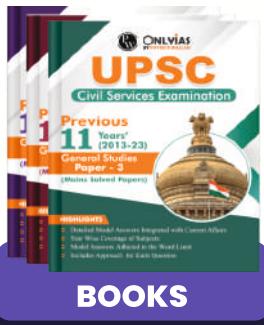
- Mainly **black-and-red ware**, that was wheel-based, and painted with white linear designs are found.
- People living in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra produced **channel-spouted pots**, dishes-on-stand and bowls-on-stand.

# OUR CONTENT



BOOKS

Comprehensive Coverage



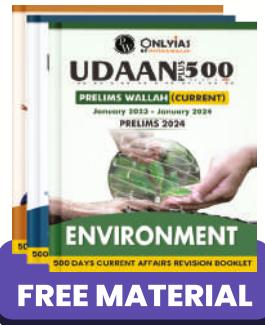
BOOKS

11 Year PYQs Solution (Prelims + Mains)



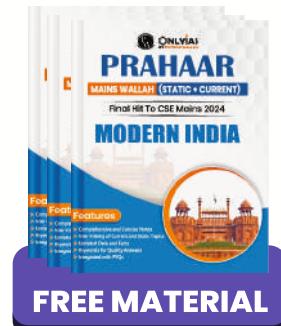
FREE MATERIAL

UDAAN (Prelims Static Revision)



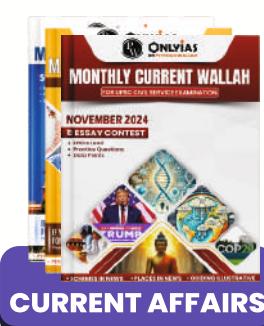
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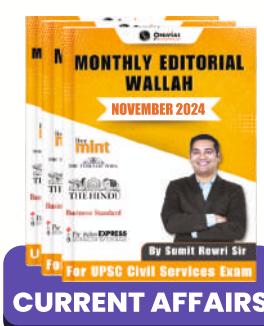
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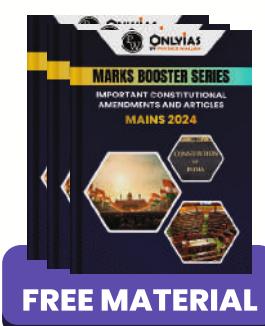
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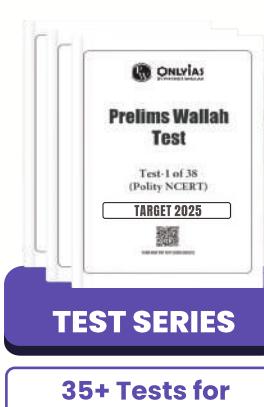
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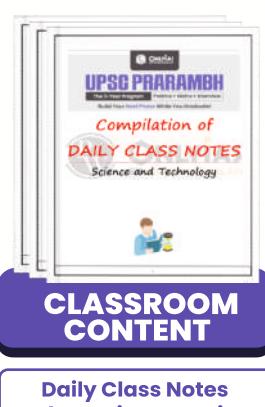
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