

# 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
<b>Northwest India</b>	River Soan Valley (Punjab, now in Pakistan)	• One of the earliest known Paleolithic sites in the Indian subcontinent.

<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.

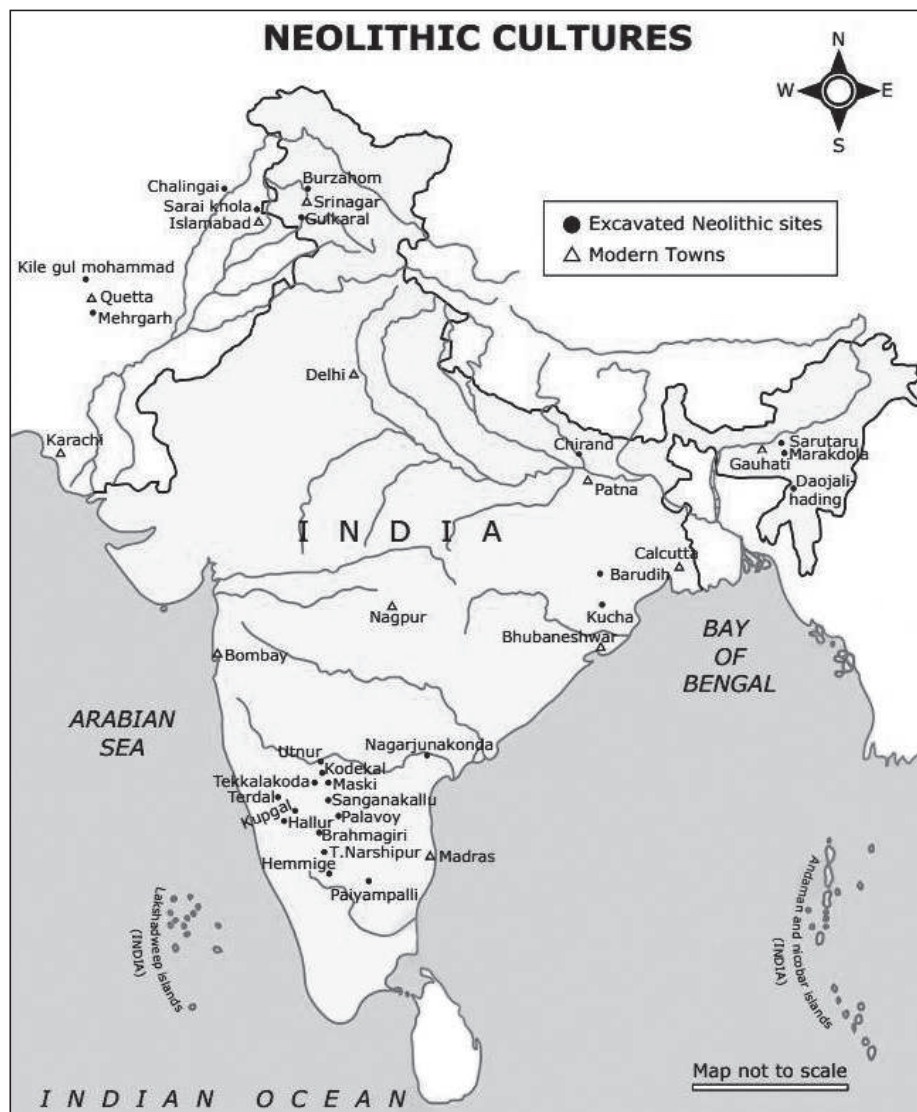
### THE NEW STONE AGE OR NEOLITHIC AGE

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 Mehrgarh** - cultivated crops and domesticated animals, but did **not** use **pottery**.
  - They cultivated six-row barley, emmer and einkorn wheat, jujube, ilanthai, 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.
- **2nd cultural phase (5500-4800 BC) and 3rd phase (4800-3500 BC) of Mehrgarh**
  - 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 Palvay 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:** Paiyyampalli.

### 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 **Vindhyas in the Belan Valley** all three phases of the Palaeolithic, followed by the Mesolithic and Neolithic phases, have been found in sequence.

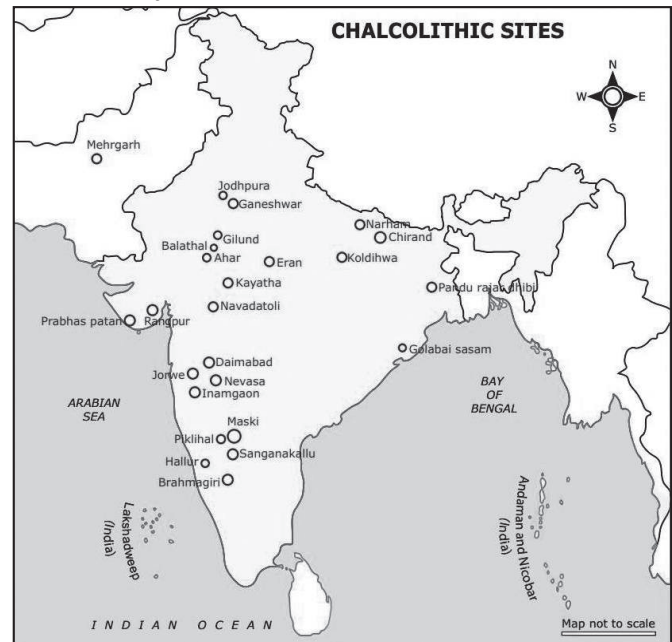
### CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD (2600-1200 BC)

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.



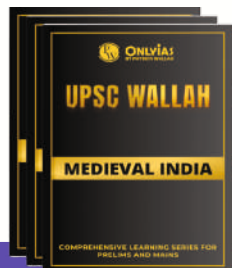
### Early Chalcolithic Sites

Region	Key Sites	Key Features	Economy/ Subsistence
<b>South-eastern Rajasthan</b>	Ahar, Gilund, Ganeshwar	Ahar: Absence of stone axes or blades Gilund: Stone-blade industry Ganeshwar: Copper supply to Harappa [UPSC 2021]	Hunting and agriculture
<b>Western Madhya Pradesh</b>	Kayatha, Eran (Malwa), Navdatoli (Narmada)	Evidence of Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	Multiple sites in the Allahabad region, proximity to Vindhyas	Multiple Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
<b>Western Maharashtra</b>	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
<b>Eastern India</b>	Chirand (Ganga River), Pandu Rajar Dhibi, Mahishdal (West Bengal)	Eastern Chalcolithic settlements	Hunting and agriculture
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	Kodekal, Utnur, Nagatjunikonda, Palavoy	Some Chalcolithic elements; absence of copper objects	Hunting and agriculture

#### Pottery:

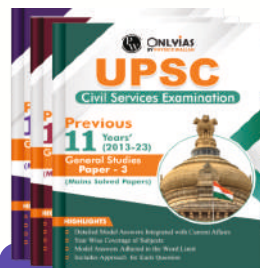
- Mainly **black-and-red ware**, that was wheel-based, and painted with white linear designs are found.
- People living in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra produced **channel-spouted pots**, dishes-on-stand and bowls-on-stand.

# OUR CONTENT



**BOOKS**

**Comprehensive Coverage**



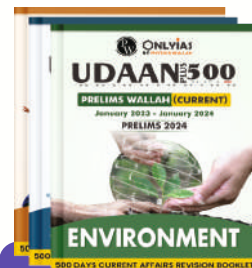
**BOOKS**

**11 Year PYQs Solution (Prelims + Mains)**



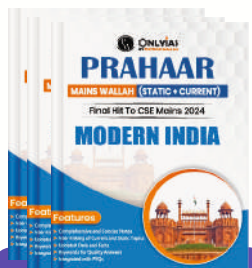
**FREE MATERIAL**

**UDAAN (Prelims Static Revision)**



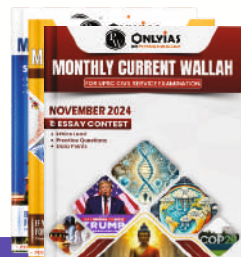
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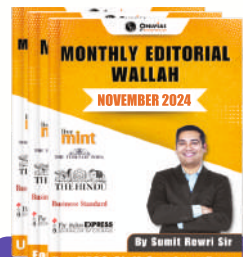
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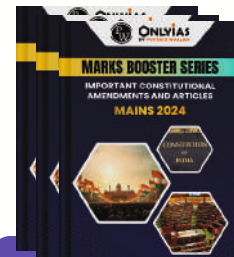
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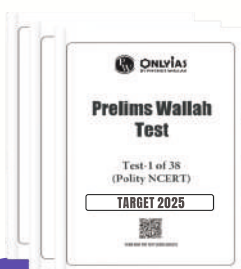
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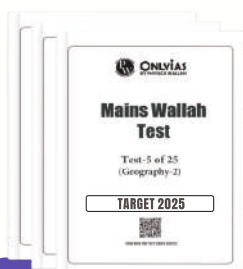
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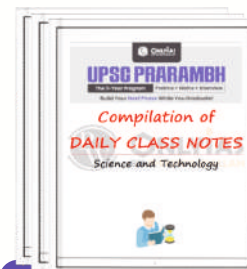
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