

Ancient history can be divided into different periods according to the tools used by people then.

1. Palaeolithic Period: 2 million BC – 10,000 BC
2. Mesolithic Period: 10,000 BC – 8000 BC
3. Neolithic Period: 8000 BC – 4000 BC
4. Chalcolithic Period: 4000 BC – 1500 BC
5. Iron Age: 1500 BC – 200 BC

Palaeolithic Period (Old Stone Age)

This is further divided into three:

1. Lower Palaeolithic Age: up to 100,000 BC
2. Middle Palaeolithic Age: 100,000 BC – 40,000 BC
3. Upper Palaeolithic Age: 40,000 BC – 10,000 BC

Lower Palaeolithic age

- Hunters and food gatherers; tools used were axes, choppers and cleavers.
- Earliest lower Palaeolithic site is Bori in Maharashtra.
- Limestone was also used to make tools
- Major sites of lower Palaeolithic age
 - Soan valley (in present Pakistan)
 - sites in the Thar Desert
 - Kashmir
 - Mewar plains
 - Saurashtra
 - Gujarat
 - Central India
 - Deccan Plateau
 - Chotanagpur plateau
 - North of the Cauvery River
 - Belan valley in UP
- There are habitation sites including caves and rock shelters
- It was declared a World Heritage Site in 2003
- An important place is Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh

Middle Palaeolithic age

- Tools used were blades, pointers, scrapers and borers.
- The tools were smaller, lighter and thinner
- **Important middle Palaeolithic age sites**
 - Belan valley in UP
 - Luni valley (Rajasthan)
 - Son and Narmada rivers

- Bhimbetka

Upper Palaeolithic age

- Emergence of Homo sapiens
- Lot of bone tools, including needles, harpoons, blades, fishing tools and burin tools.
- **Major sites of Upper Palaeolithic age**
 - Belan
 - Son
 - Chota Nagpur plateau (Bihar)
 - Maharashtra
 - Orissa and
 - Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh
- Paintings at Bhimbetka site belong to this age.



Mesolithic Period (Middle Stone Age)

- Major climate change happened.
- Climate became warmer and more humid.
- Rainfall increased and so more availability of flora and fauna.
- Domestication of animals and plants were seen for the first time.
- Started 12000 years ago.
- First animal to be domesticated was the wild ancestor of the dog.
- Sheep and goats were the most common domesticated animals.
- Hunting and food gathering continued.

- First human colonization of the Ganga plains.
- Microliths have been excavated.
- They are small stone tools that were probably stuck to stones to be used as saws and sickles.
- **Major sites:**
 - Brahmagiri (Mysore)
 - Narmada
 - Vindhya
 - Gujarat
 - UP
 - Sojat (Rajasthan)
 - Bhimbetka
 - Godavari Basin
 - Sarai Nahar Rai
- Tools used were blades, crescents, triangles, trapezes, spearheads, knives, arrowheads, sickles, harpoons and daggers.

Neolithic Period (New Stone Age)

- Starting of agriculture
- Moving from nomadic to settled life
- Wheel discovered. Ragi, wheat and horse gram were cultivated
- They knew to make fire
- Knew pottery
- Art was seen in cave paintings of dance
- Also show first intentional disposal of the dead
- **Important sites:**
 - Inamgaon
 - Burzahom (Kashmir)
 - Mehrgarh (Pakistan)
 - Daojali Hading (Tripura/Assam)
 - Hallur (AP)
 - Paiyampalli (AP)
 - Chirand (Bihar)
 - Evidence of houses

Chalcolithic Period (Copper Age/Bronze Age)

Indus Valley Civilization (2700 BC – 1900 BC)

- Other settlements at
- Brahmagiri Navada Toli (Narmada region)
- Chirand (Ganga region) and
- Mahishadal (West Bengal)

Iron Age

- Arrival of the Aryans: Vedic Period
- Jainism, Buddhism
- Mahajanapadas: the first major civilisation on the banks of the river Ganga after the Indus Valley.