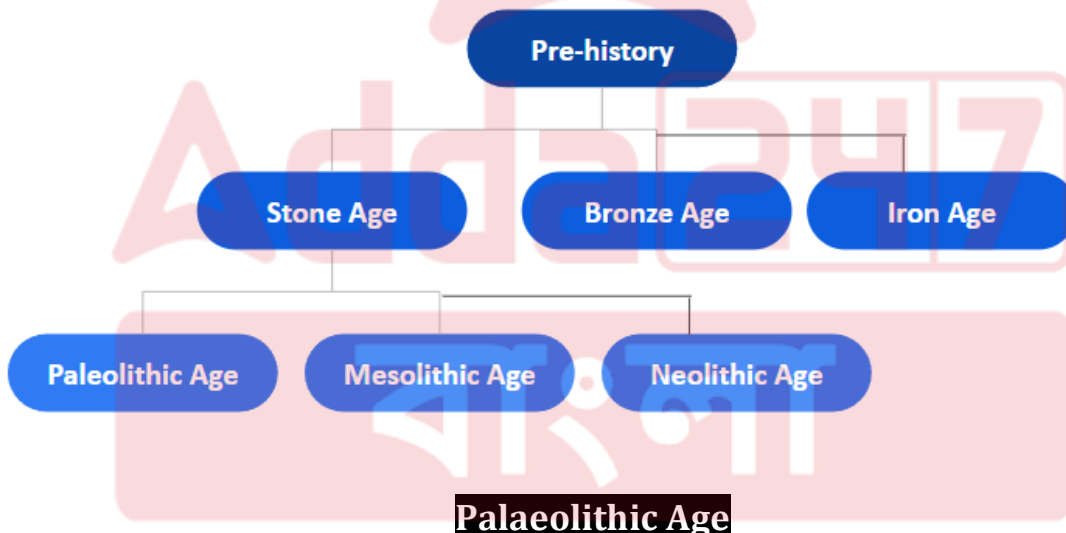


India in the Pre-Historic Age

The term 'History' is derived from *Historia* (a Greek word), which means 'to inquire or knowledge gained by investigation'. This study of past events is significant as it shapes human experiences. It is further divided into pre-history, proto and historic age.

Pre History	Proto History	History
This phase occurred before the invention of written sources. Stone ages such as Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic fall under this period.	The time period between pre-history and history.	Study of the past course of events based on the archaeological and literary sources.



Palaeolithic Age

- ❖ Palaeolithic age lasted 2.5 million- 10,000 BC/8000 BC.
- ❖ **Robert Bruce Foote** was honoured with the credit for discovering probably the first Paleolithic tool in India in 1863- the **Pallavaram handaxe**.
- ❖ The climate was cold. Ice age occurred in this stage.
- ❖ Men were mainly **hunter-gatherers**. Men used hand axes and cleavers, which were big and rough stone tools.
- ❖ Most of the tools are made up of **quartzite**. Hence, palaeolithic men are called **quartzite men**.
- ❖ No knowledge of the use of fire, agriculture, settlements and animal domestication.
- ❖ Important Palaeolithic sites: Soan and Sohan river valley, Godavari Valley, Bhimbetka Cave, Narmada Valley and Tungbhadra Valley.

Mesolithic Age or Middle Stone Age

- ❖ The Mesolithic age lasted from 10,000 BC - 6000 BC/ 4000 BC and belongs to the Holocene period.
- ❖ A warm climate started to take place in this phase.
- ❖ Temporary settlements (semi-permanent) were seen in the Mesolithic age.
- ❖ This age is called the 'Age of Microliths' or miniature stone tools with sharp points (1-3 cm).
- ❖ Men were still hunters and gatherers. However, the **domestication of animals began in this phase.**
- ❖ The First domesticated animal by men was- **Dog.**
- ❖ **Rock art** was first initiated during this age.
- ❖ Important Mesolithic sites: Bagor (Rajasthan), Adamgarh (MP), Bhimbetka (MP), Sarai Nahar Rai (UP), Birbhanpur (West Bengal).

Neolithic Age or New Stone Age

- ❖ Sir John Lubbock coined the term 'Neolithic Age' in 1865.
- ❖ Agriculture started. A settled lifestyle was seen in the Neolithic age.
- ❖ The earliest evidence of agriculture in India was at Mehrgarh, Balochistan.
- ❖ The agricultural revolution was initiated in the Neolithic age. Men grew crops like *Ragi* and *Kulathi* (horse gram).
- ❖ The Neolithic age was coined as the "Neolithic Revolution" by V. Gordon Childe because it introduced alterations in the socio-economic lives of men.
- ❖ Animal domestication became more prevalent.
- ❖ Neolithic people first started with pottery with the help of the potter's wheel. Hence, large-scale pottery occurred in this phase (including grey ware, mat-finished ware and black burnished ware).
- ❖ Important Neolithic sites are as follows:
 - ★ Mehrgarh (Bread basket of Baluchistan- now in Pakistan).
 - ★ Burzahom, Jammu & Kashmir- dog burial with owner was found.
 - ★ Gufkraal, Jammu & Kashmir- evidence of pit dwelling.
 - ★ Koldihwa, Belan Valley- the earliest Rice cultivation occurred here.
 - ★ Chirand, Bihar.
 - ★ Chopani-Mando, Belan Valley- the earliest proof of pottery was found.
 - ★ Brahmagiri and Maski, Karnataka.

Chalcolithic Age or Copper-stone Age

- ❖ The chalcolithic age began towards the last phase of the Neolithic culture (3000-500 BC or 4500-2500 BC).
- ❖ The emergence of various metal tools alongside stone tools is a significant characteristic of this age.
- ❖ The first ever metal used by man is **Copper**. Chalcolithic men were experts as **Coppersmiths**. [The first metal discovered was **Gold**.]
- ❖ Bronze was used occasionally.
- ❖ Smelting metal ores and metal artefacts was known to Chalcolithic men.
- ❖ It is primarily a rural civilisation in comparison with Harappan culture. Houses in the Chalcolithic period were mainly made of mud bricks.

- ❖ Jhum cultivation or slash burn was evident in this period. However, no evidence of a plough was found.
- ❖ Bead making, ornament making and decoration were often practised by chalcolithic people.
- ❖ Coloured potteries and fortified settlements were notable features of this age.
- ❖ Important Chalcolithic sites are:
 - ★ Ahar (Banas Valley, Rajasthan) - evidence of Microlith
 - ★ Gilund
 - ★ Nevasa (Maharashtra)
 - ★ Navdatoli
 - ★ Daimabad (Maharashtra)- It is said to be the largest site under Jorwe culture. A lot of Bronze materials were recovered from this site.
 - ★ Nasik, Inamgaon, Songaon (Maharashtra)
 - ★ Malwa (MP)

Iron Age

- ❖ Starting in 1200 BC, the iron age happened to occur after the Chalcolithic period.
- ❖ Iron is mostly referred to the Vedic culture that occurred even after the Harappan phase.
- ❖ Megaliths have been found in this age as well in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu regions. Megalith stands for 'large stones'.
- ❖ BW pottery and various Iron artefacts were significant shreds of evidence of the Iron Age.

