

Life of Man Through the Stone Age

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Lesson Focus

- Palaeolithic age : discovery of fire
- Mesolithic age : development of agriculture.
- Neolithic age : Invention of wheel
- Chalcolithic age
- Bronze age

The modern human being is believed to have appeared about 1,20,000 years ago. The continent of Africa is cited as the home of early species of the human family.

Main ages of the past of mankind

S. No.	Name of age	Duration of age
1.	Stone age	c. 5,00,000–4000 BCE
2.	Copper age	c. 4000–3000 BCE
3.	Bronze age	c. 3000–2000 BCE
4.	Iron age	c. 1500 BCE onwards

The Stone age was the longest of all the ages. It started around 5,00,000 BCE and ended around 4000 BCE. During the Stone age, man progressed towards a better life. The Stone age is broadly divided into three periods as listed in the table in the next column.

Know This

The major achievements of this period were: the discovery of fire, making of stone tools, beginning of agriculture, beginning of community living, bonding of humans as a family, etc.

Main phases of the Stone age

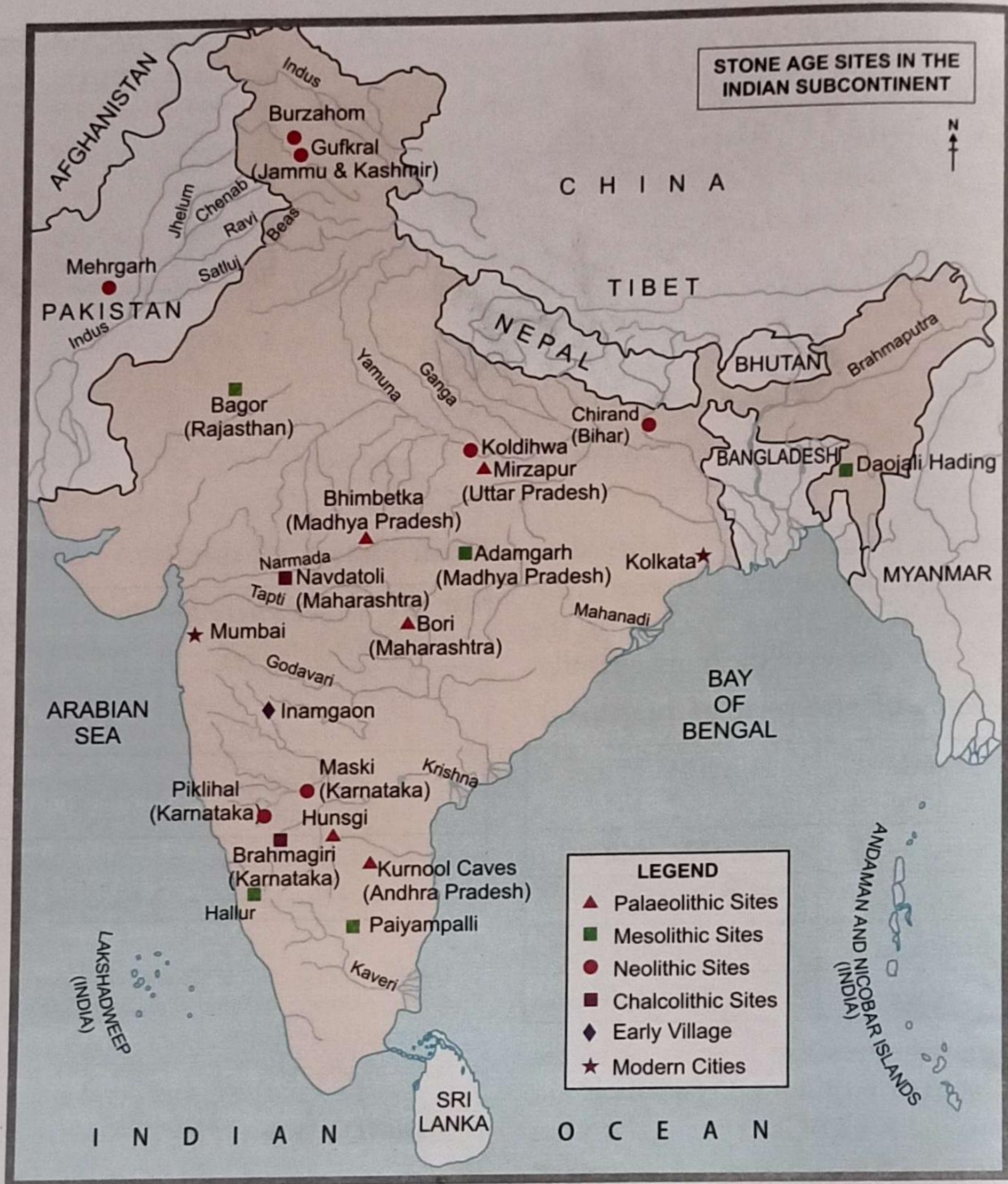
S. No.	Distinct Phase of the Stone age	Duration of the Phase
1.	Palaeolithic age or Old Stone age	c.5,00,000 BCE to 10,000 BCE
2.	Mesolithic age or Middle Stone age	c.10,000 BCE to 8000 BCE
3.	Neolithic age or New Stone age	c.8000 BCE to 4000 BCE

Notes:

1. The word Palaeolithic is made of two Greek words *palaaios* meaning 'old' and *lithos* meaning 'stone'
2. *Meso* meaning 'middle'
3. *Neo* meaning 'new'

Palaeolithic age

The Palaeolithic man lived as a hunter-gatherer in small groups and led a nomadic life. **Hunter-gatherer** is a person who obtains food from edible plants and hunting animals. The Palaeolithic man hunted animals either for food or to protect himself. Hunting created the need for weapons and tools. So, they started making weapons and tools from stones.



Stone age sites in the Indian subcontinent

Stone Tools and Weapons

The Palaeolithic man used a variety of stones such as flint, basalt and sandstone and also wood, bones, shells and antlers to make tools. He made big crude tools by chipping stones. The Palaeolithic tools are called macroliths (macro means 'large' and lithos means 'stones')

Some of the early stone tools were the mortar and pestle, arrowheads, spearheads, choppers, scrapers and hand-axes. Apart from hunting, man used stone tools for digging the earth to find edible roots and for felling fruits from trees.

In India, prehistoric tools have been excavated at Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh), Bori (Maharashtra), Kurnool (Andhra Pradesh), Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh) and in the valleys of Tungabhadra, Narmada and Godavari rivers.



Some flint tools of the Palaeolithic age

Nomadic Lifestyle

The Palaeolithic man was always in search of food and shelter. He took refuge in rock shelters, caves and slept on trees. His food consisted of wild fruits, nuts, and berries. He ate raw flesh of wild animals, birds and fishes. The Palaeolithic man wore tree barks,

leaves and animal skins to protect himself from rain, heat and cold. For recreation, he made petroglyph on the walls of rock caves.

Discovery of Fire

The discovery of fire is considered as the most important event of the Old Stone age. While making tools, man might have rubbed two stones that produced a spark of fire. This accidental discovery of fire changed the early man's life for the better. He started using fire for safety, survival and cooking.

Recap

1. The earliest-known ancestors of humans are 4.5 million years old. The modern human being is believed to have appeared about 1,20,000 years ago in Africa.
3. The Old Stone age or the Palaeolithic age was the longest of all the ages.
4. The early man in the Old Stone age or the Palaeolithic age lived as a hunter-gatherer and led a nomadic life. He made big crude tools by chipping stones.
5. The discovery of fire was the most important event of the Old Stone age.

Know This

A petroglyph should not be confused with a pictograph, which is an image drawn or painted on a rock face. Actually, petroglyph are images created by removing part of a rock surface by incising, pecking, carving, etc. Petroglyph served as a means of communication for the prehistoric people before the invention of writing. Petroglyphs have been discovered in different parts of the world, including Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh, India.



A petroglyph at Bhimbetka rock shelters in Madhya Pradesh

CLASS - VI HISTORY.

CHAPTER - LIFE OF MAN THROUGH THE STONE AGE.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING:
PART-I

1. The Stone Age started around _____ and ended around _____.
2. Write any four major achievements of the Stone Age.
3. What do you mean by Hunter-gatherer?
4. What do you mean by Macrooliths?
5. Name four early stone tools?
6. Name four places in India where prehistoric tools have been found.
7. Write about the Nomadic lifestyle of the palaeolithic man.
8. Write a short note on Petroglyph.
9. How fire was discovered?
10. Name three variety of stones used by the Paleolithic man.

We shall be discussing the other two phases of the Stone Age in the next class along with the answers of PART-I.

Till then Stay Safe, Stay Healthy at Home and wash your hands at regular intervals.