



HISTORY

UNIT 1

EVOLUTION OF HUMANS AND SOCIETY – PRE HISTORIC PERIOD

Dear students,

I think all of you studied the scientific foundations of Geology. Now we learn about Human Evolution and Migration.

HUMAN EVOLUTION AND MIGRATION

- The chimpanzee, gorillas and orangutans, along with humans, are collectively called the Great Apes.
- Among them, the chimpanzee is genetically the closest to humans.
- The ancestors to humans were called Hominins, and their origins have been traced to Africa.
- They evolved from those origins and then began to move to other parts of the world in due course of time.
- The Hominins emerged around 7 to 5 million years ago.
- Skeletons of Australopithecus, one of the early species of this tribe, have been found in Africa.
- The Great Rift Valley in Africa has many sites that have evidence for the prehistoric period.
- The Great Rift Valley is a valley - like formation that runs for about 6,400 km from the northern part of Syria to Central Mozambique in East Africa.
- Human ancestors are divided into various species according to their physical features.
- **Hominid** refers to all the species of the modern and extinct great apes, which also includes humans.
- **Hominins** (a zoological tribe) refers to the close relatives of human ancestors and their sister species including Homo sapiens. (the modern humans) and the extinct members of Homo neanderthalensis,
- Homo erectus, Homo habilis and various species of Australopithecines. Humans are the only living species of this 'tribe'.
- They stand erect, walk with two legs and have large brains
- **Homo habilis** (handy human) was the earliest known human ancestors to make tools in Africa.
- Modern humans, called **Homo sapiens** (wise man), first appeared around 3,00,000 years ago in Africa.

EARLIEST LITHIC ASSEMBLAGES OF HUMAN ANCESTORS

- The earliest tools made by human ancestors are found in Lomekwi in Kenya.
- They are dated to 3.3 million years.
- The human ancestors (Australopithecines) used hammer stones and produced sharp-edged flakes. The tools were used for cutting, slicing and processing food.



Stone tools from Kenya about
2.3 million year old.

LOWER PALAEO LITHIC CULTURE

- The Lower Palaeolithic Culture is marked by the human ancestors belonging to the species Homo habilis and Homo erectus.
- The human ancestors flaked large stone blocks and designed various tools including hand axes.
- They made various tools such as hand axes and cleavers to meet their subsistence needs.
- These tools are also known as bifaces.
- The hand axe tools are also known as Acheulian.
- This tool-making tradition continued till 250,000 years to 60,000 years ago in India.
- **Bifaces** are tools that have flaking on both sides (bi = two, face = side).



Hand axe - London Museum.



Flint biface from Saint-Acheul, France.

- They were intelligent enough to select stones as raw material and used the hammer stones to carefully flake the rocks and design tools for their needs.
- They hunted animals, fed on the meat of the animals killed by predators and gathered plant foods such as roots, nuts and fruits.



- In India, the Acheulian tools have been found near Chennai and many other sites such as Isampur in Karnataka and Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Core** is the main block of stone from which small chips are flaked by using a hammer stone.

MIDDLE PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

- The methods and techniques involved in the production of stone tools are called lithic technology.
- **Levalloisian** tools are the implements made after preparing the core.
- It was named after the town of Levallois in France.
- Neanderthals buried the dead people systematically.
- They did not have needles, sewn clothes and warm houses essential for survival in colder climates.

UPPER PALAEOLITHIC CULTURE

- The cultural phase that succeeded the Middle Palaeolithic is called the Upper Palaeolithic phase.
- This period was marked by innovation in tool technology.
- Long blades and burins were produced during this time.
- People used different varieties of silica-rich raw materials in this phase.
- Numerous paintings and art objects were made
- Horns and ivory were used for making tools and art works.
- Bone needles, fishhooks, harpoons and spears were also employed creatively.
- The humans of this time wore clothes and cooked food.
- The dead were placed in the burials with folded hands placed over their chest.
- **Ice Age** – the period before 8000 BCE when many parts of the world remained covered by ice sheets and snow.

MESOLITHIC CULTURE



Rock paintings from Bhimbetka



- Mesolithic period is known as the Middle Stone Age, as it is placed between the Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods.
- People mainly used microlithic (small stone) tools during this period.
- These people were hunter-gatherers.
- People of Mesolithic period widely employed microlithic technology.
- They made tiny artefacts that were less than 5 cm in size.
- They produced points, scrapers and arrowheads.
- **Microliths** are stone artefacts of small size.