

UNIT

1

Evolution of Humans and Society - Prehistoric Period



Learning Objectives

- To trace the world's early history
- To understand human evolution
- To know prehistoric Tamilagam up to the Iron Age



Introduction

We live in the age of Information Technology. The mobile phones have literally put the world on our finger tips. The all-encompassing knowledge that we possess now, which has helped in the development of powerful technology, did not emerge all of a sudden. The foundation of our modern life was facilitated by the development of the process of cognition among the human ancestors in the prehistoric age.

Prehistoric people were the pioneers of creative knowledge. From the artefacts and the languages they developed, we are able to understand how intelligent they were.

1.1 Origin of the Earth and the Geological Ages

The history of humans is closely related to the history of the earth. The earth contains geological, archaeological and biological records of historical times in its upper layers. They are important for reconstructing the history of the earth and various living organisms. The fossil bones of the human ancestors are embedded in the earth's layers.



Palaeoanthropologists and archaeologists excavate the soil and rock layers on the earth and extract evidence about human ancestors. These layers and the fossils are scientifically dated to study the various stages in human evolution and prehistory. Through the gathered evidence, they attempt to understand the evolution of human history and developments in a chronological order.

Archaeology is the study of human past through the analysis and interpretation of material remains.

Palaeoanthropology is the study of the human ancestors and their evolution by the study of the fossil remains.

The earth was formed approximately 4.54 billion years ago. Gradually, conditions emerged for the growth of organisms. Then plants and animals came into being, and thereby foundation was laid for the evolution of humans. The long span of time in the history of earth is divided into eras, periods and epochs by the geologists

1 billion = 100 crore

1 million = 10 lakh

Australopithecines were the apes from which modern humans evolved. Now they are extinct, but they are considered to be the close relatives of humans.