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Q2(a)

Delineate the salient features of Chalcolithic cultures.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 20 marks · Chalcolithic

(iv) Chalcolithic

Core demand of the question

- Delineate the salient features of Chalcolithic cultures
- Write about 250 words for 20 marks

Revision summary

Chalcolithic means copper with a continuing stone kit.

Indian cases are rural farmers, not Harappan cities.

Painted pottery and mud houses are typical.

Ahar, Malwa, Jorwe, and **OC** are the main regional labels.

Sankalia's Deccan work made **Inamgaon** a teaching village.

Introduction

Chalcolithic, or Copper-Stone Age, cultures use copper with a still-strong stone toolkit. In India they are village farming cultures after the Neolithic and beside or after Harappa in many regions.

Body**Salient features**

- **Mixed metal and stone:** thin copper axes, fish-hooks, and ornaments; plentiful microliths and ground stone.
- **Rural farming:** wheat, barley, rice, pulses, and stock (cattle, sheep, goat) in regional mixes.
- **Mud and wattle houses**, sometimes planned, with hearths and storage pits. Burials may be urns or pits inside or near the house.
- **Painted pottery** is a fossil director: black-on-red, white-painted, and ochre-coloured wares in different provinces.
- **Craft specialisation is modest:** bead-making, copper smelting on a small scale, not Harappan urban workshops.
- **Chiefly or lineage villages**, not full cities. Contacts with Harappan and later Iron Age groups vary by zone.

Indian geography of the type

- **Ahar-Banas** in Mewar: copper, black-and-red ware.
- **Kayatha** and **Malwa** in central India; **Jorwe** at **Inamgaon** and **Daimabad** in Maharashtra.
- **Ochre Coloured Pottery** and copper hoards in the Ganga-Yamuna doab.

- **Ganeshwar-Jodhpura** copper, **Anarta** in Gujarat, and eastern sites such as **Pandurajar Dhibi** show the same grade.
- **Sankalia**, **Dhavalikar**, and **Misra** made these sequences teachable.

What it is not

- **It is not a single pan-Indian people. It is a technological and settlement grade:** farm village plus copper.

Flow diagram

Chalcolithic -> Copper plus stone
Chalcolithic -> Farm village
Chalcolithic -> Painted pottery
Farm village -> Ahar Malwa Jorwe

Conclusion

Chalcolithic cultures are farming villages that add copper to stone. Painted wares, mixed farming, and regional names from **Ahar** to Jorwe are the Indian salient features.

Facts & figures

Inamgaon

Jorwe-period planned village in Maharashtra, excavated under Dhavalikar.

Ahar

Mewar copper and black-and-red ware Chalcolithic.

OCP

Ochre Coloured Pottery of the doab, often linked to copper hoards.

Sankalia

Framed Deccan Chalcolithic stratigraphy as a village sequence.