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Andhra Pradesh's Second Largest Petroglyph Site

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Andhra Pradesh's **second largest petroglyph site**, containing about 80 petroglyphs, has been discovered at Mekala Benchi in **Kurnool district**.

- **Kandanathi**, with 200 petroglyphs, the **biggest petroglyph site in Andhra Pradesh** is

also in **Kurnool district**.



- Petroglyphs are **rock carvings (rock paintings are called pictographs) made by pricking directly** on the rock surface using a stone chisel and a hammerstone.
 - These Petroglyphs mostly have images of **bulls or bull-riding, in addition to human figures, an elephant, tiger-like animals and cupules**.
 - While Mekala Benchi has petroglyphs dating back from the **Neolithic to the Megalithic period**, Kandanathi carvings range from the **prehistoric to the historic period**.
 - The petroglyphs at Kandanathi reveal the presence of the Boya community divided into many exogamous groups such as Mandla (herdsmen) and Yenubothula (buffalomen).

Stone Ages

Palaeolithic (Old Stone) Age

- Basically a **hunting and food gathering** culture.
- Palaeolithic tools include sharpened stone, chopper, hand axe, scraper, spear, bow and arrow, etc. and were generally made up of hard rock quartzite.
- Rock paintings and carvings found at **Bhimbetka, Madhya Pradesh** reflect upon hunting as the main subsistence activity.

- Palaeolithic age in India is divided into **three phases**: Early or Lower Palaeolithic (50,000 – 100,000 BC), Middle Palaeolithic(100,000 – 40,000 BC) and Upper Palaeolithic (40,000 – 10,000 BC).
- Homo sapiens mark their **presence in upper palaeolithic age**.

Mesolithic (Middle Stone) Age

- The age is marked by transition from Pleistocene period to Holocene period and favorable changes in the climate.
- The early period of Mesolithic age marks the **hunting, fishing and food gathering**.
- **Domestication of the animals** began in this age.
- The tools called **Microliths** were smaller and had improved geometry than the Palaeolithic age.

Neolithic (New Stone) Age

- Referred to as the concluding phase of the Stone Age, the age heralded the beginning of food production.
- **Sedentism (living in one place for a long time)** use of pottery, and invention of crafts are characteristics feature of neolithic age.
- The neolithic tools composed of heavy ground tools like pestles, grinders, pounders and also axes and sickles.

Megalithic culture

- Megaliths refer to **large stone structures** that were constructed either as burial sites or as commemorative sites.
- In India, archaeologists trace the majority of the megaliths to the Iron Age (1500 BC to 500 BC), though some sites precede the Iron Age, extending up to 2000 BC.
- Megaliths are **spread across the Indian subcontinent**. Majority of them are found in peninsular India, concentrated in the states of Maharashtra (mainly in Vidarbha), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.