

Ancient Civilisation in Maharashtra

Prelims - *Current events of national and international importance | History of India*

Mains (GS-I)- *Indian Heritage and Culture*

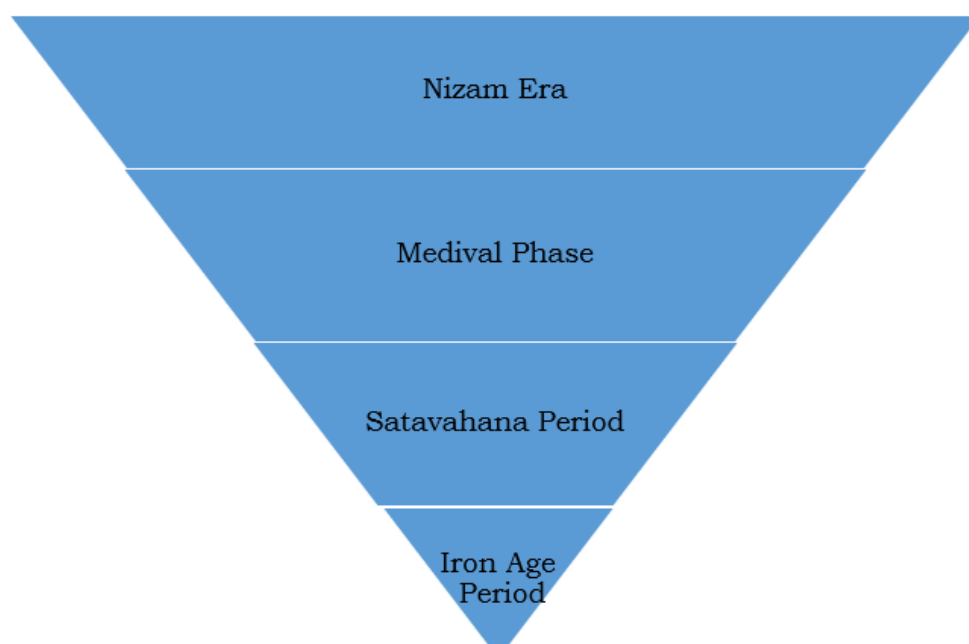
Why in News?

Recently, Nagpur University researchers have unearthed a potentially 3,000-year-old Iron Age civilization in Maharashtra's Yavatmal district.

- **Prime site of excavation** - It was a mound that produced a cultural deposit measuring around 8.73 meters in thickness, indicating a multi-period and extensive occupation.

In archaeology, **mounds** commonly describe zones of long human settlement, in which soil and rubbish of a cultural nature accumulate over centuries or millennia.

- **Findings** - It revealed a multi-layered settlement with distinct cultural periods.



1st Cultural Phase - Iron Age

- It represents the base layer of the settlement.
- Artefacts such as iron instruments and certain classes of pottery were found.

2nd Cultural Phase - Satavahana period

- It presents their inhabitation in the Deccan plateau, from about the 2nd century BCE to the 3rd century CE.
- Artefacts of this era included ceramic shapes and other artefacts typical of this transformative period in history.

3rd Cultural Phase - Medieval phase

- Settlement contains evidence of reuse or reoccupation.
- Although it yielded fewer artefacts, their presence was sufficient to position it within the chronological sequence of the site.

4th Cultural Phase - Nizam period

- It is the highest occupation level.
- It indicates that the mound was subsequently reused as a watchtower during the 18th to 20th century.

- **Architectural observation** - Remains of **round houses**, a feature commonly used by early agrarian and tribal communities.
- The houses featured **limestone floors**, which indicate some planning and stability in building.
- **Wooden posts** has been inserted around the perimeter of the houses, probably to frame organic material roofs such as thatch and wood.
- There was a house plan with a **chulha or mud oven** suggesting that there was a **dedicated cooking space in the house**.
- **Artefacts findings** - Different styles and textures of pottery.
- **Iron tools, beads** made of semi-precious stones, terracotta beads and **bone artifacts** were also found.
- **Significance** - It offer insights into the **daily lives and technological advancements** of the ancient inhabitants.
- Excavated artefacts reveal that they were also involved in craft, trade, and perhaps ritualistic practices.
- The findings of beads can be seen to reflect involvement in broader trading circles or **cultural exchange with the outside world**.
- **Future prospects** - Organic samples were sent to the Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC) in New Delhi to reach a correct timeline.
- **Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) dating**, a highly precise technique employed to estimate the age of ancient materials by measuring carbon isotope decay, will be carried out by the IUAC.

Reference

[Times of India| Discovery of Multi-cultural Settlement in Maharashtra](#)