

HISTORY

Chapter 2: On the Trail of the Earliest People



On the Trail of the Earliest People

Hunter-gatherers

The people who lived in the Indian subcontinent two million years ago were called **hunters-gatherers** since they hunted wild animals and gathered fruits, nuts, roots and eggs. The hunters-gatherers would constantly move from place to place due to the following reasons:

1. Staying at one place would have resulted in the exhaustion of the available resources. Therefore, they had to find new places to search for food.
2. Since the animals in the wild also moved from place to place in search of their prey, the hunters-gatherers had to follow them in order to hunt animals.
3. Plants and trees bear fruit in different seasons, therefore the hunters-gatherers moved to different places according to the changing seasons.
4. Not all the sources of water such as rivers were perennial, therefore, people also moved to search for water.

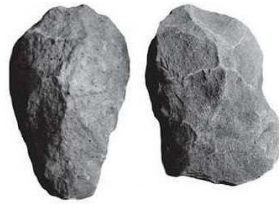
Archaeological Source - Tools

Tools are an important archaeological source of the past. They tell us about the various activities such as the kind of technology used by the humans, the food they ate etc. Earlier, tools were made out of stone, wood and bones. These tools were used for the following purposes:

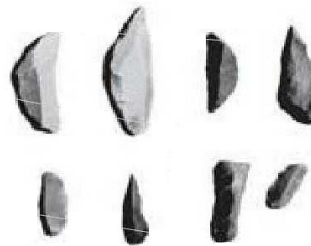
1. Cut meat and bones
2. Scrape the bark from the trees
3. Chop wood to make firewood or to make huts
4. Make spears and arrows for hunting (it was done by attaching sharp tools to the handles of bone or wood).

Tools have helped us to divide the early age into various periods as different tools were made during different periods. The tools of the Early Stone Age were coarse while the tools during the later ages were much sharper.

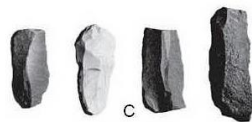
STONE AGE



Palaeolithic Tools



Mesolithic Tools



Neolithic Tools

Stone tools were made using two techniques:

1. **Stone on stone technique:** In this technique, the stone which was to be used as a hammer was held in one hand and made to strike off flakes from a second stone, which was held in the other hand. This was done to give the desired shape to the stone.
2. **Pressure flaking:** The stone or bone was placed on a hard surface. The hammer stone was then used to remove flake from it in order to shape the stone or bone into tools.
3. **Kurnool caves:** Traces of ash have been found here. They must have used the fire of many things like cooking, lightening the house and scaring the animals away.

Sites and Factories

There are various sites from where archeologists have found evidences of people living as hunters- gatherers. Most of these sites were located near the sources of water. People during this period tried to look for places where stone of good quality could be found. The places where people made tools out of stones are known as *factory sites*. These factory sites were identified due to the presence of several blocks of stone. The sites where people lived for much longer period of time are known as *habitation-cum- factory sites*.

Division of Early History into Periods

Historians have divided the early period of human history into three broad periods on the basis of the excavated archaeological remains of the tools:

1. Palaeolithic Period: The term 'Palaeolithic' is derived from two words, 'palaeo' which means old and 'lithos' which means stone. This period extends from about 2 million years ago to about 12,000

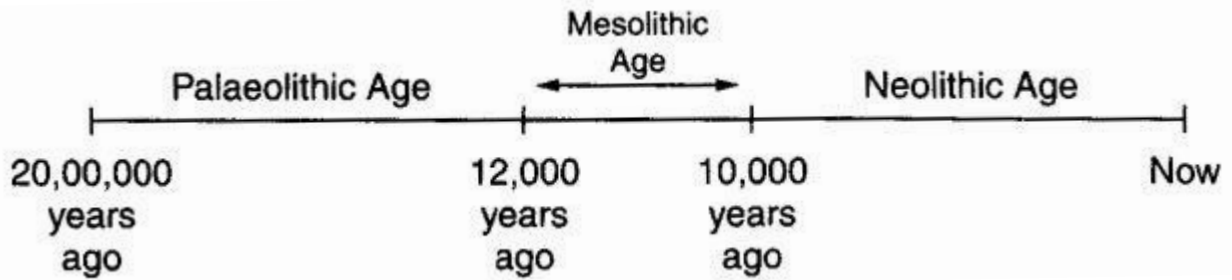
years ago. This period is further subdivided into the Lower, Middle and Upper Palaeolithic periods. This period covers 99% of the human history. It is interesting to note that ostriches were found in India during this period.

2. Mesolithic Period: During this time, environmental changes had begun to take place. This period begins about 12,000 years ago till about 10,000 years ago. During this time, Microliths (small and tiny tools made out of stone) were found.

3. Neolithic Period: This period begins roughly from 8000 B.C. During this Age, man evolved to a farmer from a hunter-gatherer.



Map showing the various Palaeolithic and Neolithic sites



Dateline

Discovery of Fire

Fire was known to humans during this time period and was used for lightening, cooking and scaring away animals.

Rock Paintings

The early men lived in caves. They painted many animal and human figures on the walls of these caves. Some of these caves have been found in Madhya Pradesh and Southern Uttar Pradesh.

Choosing a Place to Live In

Dwellings chosen by the early man were located near sources of water, such as rivers and lakes as well as where the good quality stone was available for their tools.

Habitation-cum-Factory Sites

Places where stones were found and early people made their tools. Sometimes, people lived (habitat) here for a longer span of time.

Bhimbetka: This is a place in Madhya Pradesh where we find examples of habitation sites, natural caves and rock shelters.

People who lived in the subcontinent about 2 million years ago were Hunter-gatherers. They hunted wild animals and gathered plant produce to get their food. They moved from place to place, in search of more food, water and resources.

Habitation refers to the place where people lived.

Changes in the Environment

The environment too began to experience changes during 8000 BC. The climate started becoming warmer which resulted in the following effects:

1. Warm conditions led to the development of grasslands. This resulted in an increase in the number of deer, goats and cattle.

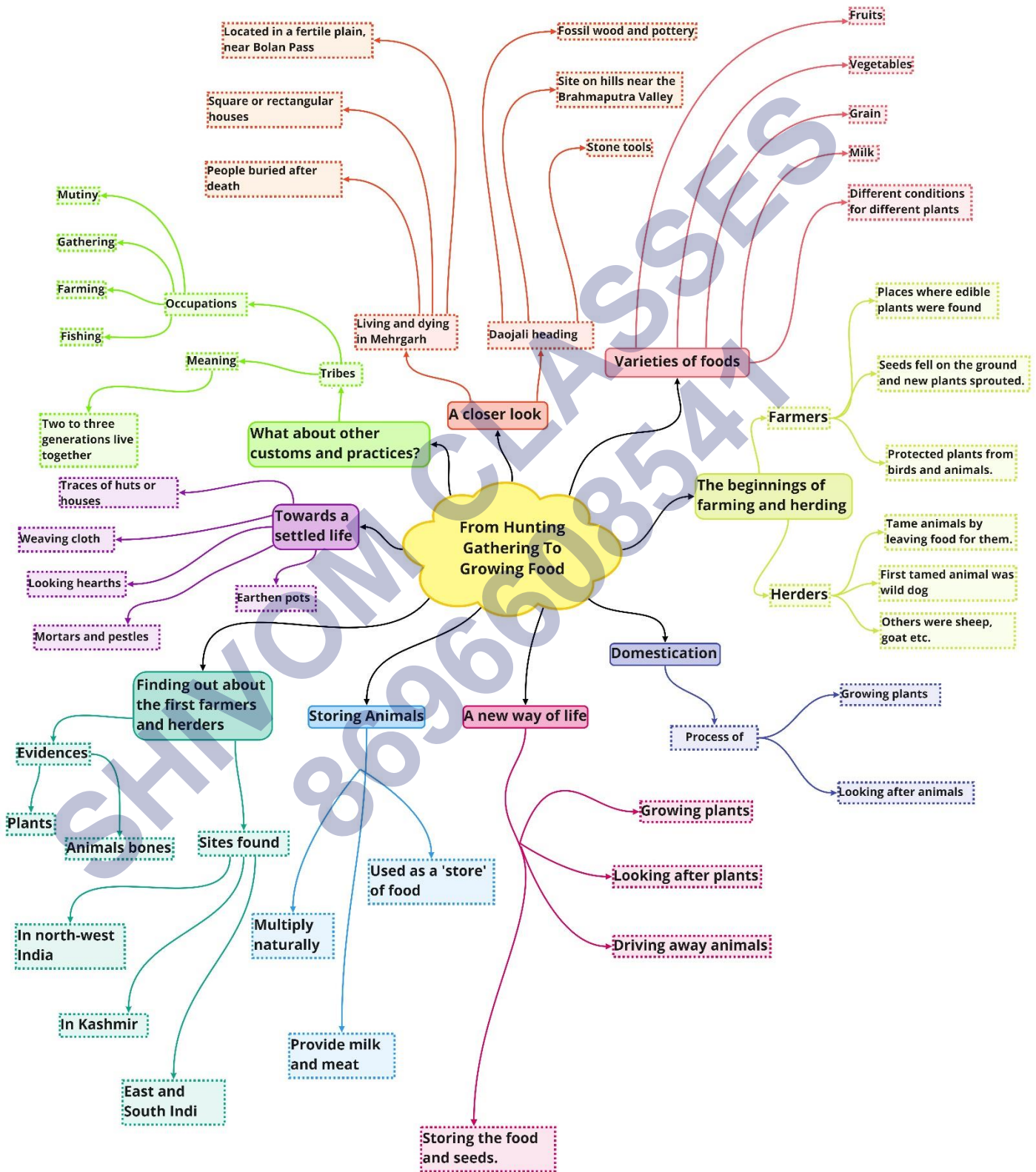
2. The people who so far had hunted these animals, learned about their habitat and breeding season. People began to think about the herding and rearing of animals. Fishing became an important means of livelihood during this time.
3. Due to the warm climate, several grass bearing wheat, rice and barley grew naturally in different parts of the world. Humans noticed these grasses and gradually began to think of growing them.

Hunsgi-A Palaeolithic Site

Many Paleolithic sites were found at Hunsgi located in northern Karnataka. A large number of tools of various kinds have been excavated here. These sites have been identified as *habitation-cum-factory* sites. Some of these sites were located near springs. Many tools found here were made from limestone.

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Class : 6th Social Studies
 Chapter- 2: From Hunting Gathering To Growing Food



Important Questions

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

1. Why did hunter-gatherers move from one place to other place?
 - A. In search of food
 - B. In search of shelter
 - C. In search of waters
 - D. All of the above
2. What were the purposes of stone tools?
 - A. To make spear and arrows
 - B. To chop roots and fruits
 - C. To cut meat and bones
 - D. All the above
3. Where was ash found?
 - A. Kurnool
 - B. Bhimbetka
 - C. Chennai
 - D. Delhi
4. What material was used by the earlier people?
 - A. Stone
 - B. Wood
 - C. Bone
 - D. All of the above
5. In which state eggs of Ostrich were found?
 - A. Kurnool
 - B. Maharashtra
 - C. Delhi
 - D. Chennai
6. Who gives us information about history?
 - A. Doctors
 - B. Engineers
 - C. Psychologists

- D. Archaeologists
7. How did ancient people travel?
- A. By Buses
 - B. By Trains
 - C. By Ships
 - D. On Foot
8. The early man lived in _____ by sides of _____.
- A. Hut, Forest
 - B. Building, Rivers
 - C. Building, Forest
 - D. Hut, River
9. Some stone produce _____ when struck with each other.
- A. Smog
 - B. Smoke
 - C. Fire
 - D. Dust
10. The man had lived on this earth for several hundred years before he learned the art of writing' this period is called.
- A. Post-historic period
 - B. Neo-historic period
 - C. Historic period
 - D. Pre-historic period
11. In 9000 B.C began an intermediate stage in stone age culture which is called.
- A. Mesolithic age
 - B. Chalcolithic age
 - C. Palaeolithic period
 - D. Neolithic age
12. Lithic means:
- A. Age
 - B. Old
 - C. Fruit

- D. Stone
13. The special feature of cave painting is the use of:
- Chalk
 - Colours
 - Soil
 - Brush
14. How do the historians know that early man was aware of the usage of fire:
- Through cave
 - Through Manuscripts
 - Trace the ashes
 - Through Inscription
15. The transitional phase between Palaeolithic and Neolithic age is known as:
- Microlithic age
 - Mesolithic age
 - Macrolithic age
 - Masolithic age

➤ **Match The Following:**

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Hunsgi	A.	Habitation site
2.	Perennial	B.	Old
3.	Palaeo	C.	Madhya Pradesh
4.	Lithos	D.	Water throughout the year
5.	Bhimbetka	E.	Stone

➤ **Fill in the blanks:**

- Grasslands developed around _____ years ago.
- The earliest people painted on _____ of the cave.
- Traces of ash have been found in the _____ caves.
- Perennial lakes and rivers have water _____ the year.
- _____ period covers 99% of human history.

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

- Some rivers are perennial while others are seasonal.

2. Tools of wood have survived better than tools of stone.
3. The sites where hunter-gatherers lived were close to water.
4. Hunsgi was located in the present-day Madhya Pradesh.
5. Man led a well-settled life by Palaeolithic Age.

➤ Very Short Questions:

1. Name the shelter of early men.
2. Write examples of habitation sites.
3. Name the earliest period of history given by archaeologists.
4. What kind of colours was used in the cave paintings?
5. How was wood used in the past?
6. Write any two grain bearing grasses.
7. List the foods hunter-gatherers ate.
8. What is Hunsgi famous for?
9. What does the rock paintings of Madhya Pradesh and Southern Uttar Pradesh depicts?
10. What are factory sites?
11. What are microliths?
12. What tools would you use today for cutting fruit? What would they be made of?
13. How can we say that the people of Kurnool caves were familiar with fire?
14. Why people chose to live in natural caves?
15. What did hunter-gatherers do to sustain themselves?

➤ Short Questions:

1. How were stone tools used in the past?
2. What do you know about habitation-cum-factory sites?
3. Mention the two techniques that were used to make stone tools.
4. What do you know about the work division among men and women in the ancient past?
5. What were stone tools used for?
6. Write a note on habitation-cum-factory sites.

➤ Long Questions:

1. What were the various reasons for hunter-gatherers to move from place to place? Mention in detail Describe tools used by farmers and herders.

2. What was the impact of the change in environment around 12,000 years ago?
3. How stone tools were made?
4. Write a short note on Palaeolithic period, Mesolithic period and Neolithic period.
5. Why did the hunter-gatherers travel from place to place? In what ways are these similar to/different from the reasons for which we travel today?

1. ANSWER KEY –

➤ Multiple Choice Questions:

1. D. All of the above
2. D. All the above
3. A. Kurnool
4. D. All of the above
5. B. Maharashtra
6. D. Archaeologists
7. D. On Foot
8. D. Hut, River
9. C. Fire
10. D. Pre-historic period
11. A. Mesolithic age
12. D. Stone
13. B. Colours
14. C. Trace the ashes
15. B. Trace the ashes

➤ Match The Following:

	Column-I		Column-II
1.	Hunggi	C.	Madhya Pradesh
2.	Perennial	D.	Water throughout the year
3.	Palaeo	B.	Old
4.	Lithos	E.	Stone
5.	Bhimbetka	A.	Habitation site

➤ Fill in the blanks:

1. 12000

2. Walls
3. Kurnool
4. Throughout
5. Palaeolithic

➤ **Write true (T) or false (F):**

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False

➤ **Very Short Answer:**

1. Caves.
2. These include caves and rock shelters.
3. Palaeolithic period.
4. Colours were made from minerals like ochre or iron ore, and charcoal.
5. Wood was used as firewood. It was also used to make huts and tools.
6. Grain bearing grasses includes wheat, barley and rice etc.
7. Foods hunter-gatherers ate fruits, roots, nuts, seeds, leaves, stalks and eggs.
8. Hunsgi is famous because number of early Palaeolithic sites was found here..
9. Rock paintings of Madhya Pradesh and Southern Uttar Pradesh depict animals and hunting scenes.
10. Places where stone was found and where people made tools are known as factory sites.
11. Stone tools found during this period are generally tiny, and are called microliths.
12. Today for cutting fruit we would use knives, which are usually made of iron or steel.
13. Traces of ash have been found in Kurnool shows that people were familiar with fire.
14. People chose these natural caves because they provided shelter from the rain, heat and wind.
15. They hunted wild animals, caught fish and birds, gathered fruits, roots, nuts, seeds, leaves, stalks and eggs.

➤ **Short Answer:**

1. Some stone tools were used to cut meat and bone, scrape bark from trees and hides le. animal skins, chop fruit and roots. Some were used as handles of bone or wood. Some were used to make spears and arrows for hunting. Other tools were used to cut wood.
2. Usually, we find blocks of stone, tools that were made and perhaps discarded because they were not perfect, and chips of waste stone left behind at factory sites. Sometimes, people lived here for longer period of time. These sites are called habitation-cum-factory sites.
3. **The two techniques of making stone tools were:**
 - i. **Stone on stone technique:** In this technique the pebble from which the tool was to be made was held in one hand. Another stone, which was used as a hammer was held in the other hand. The second stone was used to strike off flakes from the first, till the required shape was obtained.
 - ii. **Pressure flaking:** In this technique, the pebble or core was placed on a firm surface. The hammer stone was used on a piece of bone or stone that was placed on the core, to remove flakes that could be shaped into tools.
4. **It is totally difficult to know about it. However, we can mention atleast two possibilities which are:**
 - i. It is likely that both men and women may have done many of the work like hunting, gathering plant produce, etc. together.
 - ii. It is also possible that some tasks were done only by women and others only by men. And again, there could have been different practices in different parts of the sub-continent.
5. Some of these stone tools were used to cut meat and bone, scrape bark (from trees) and hides (animal skins), chop fruit and roots. Some may have been attached to handles of bone or wood, to make spears and arrows for hunting. Other tools were used to chop wood, which was used as firewood.
6. We usually find blocks of stone, tools that were made and perhaps discarded because they were not perfect, and chips of waste stone left behind at these sites. Sometimes, people lived here for longer spells of time. These sites are called habitation-cum-factory sites.

➤ Long Answer:

1. **Hunter-gatherers kept on moving from one place to another for the following reasons:**
 - i. Staying at one place for a long time would have ended up the availability of plant and animal resources.
 - ii. Animals move from place to place-either in search of smaller prey, or, in the case of deer and wild cattle, in search of grass and leaves. That is why, those who

hunted them had to follow their movements.

- iii. Plants and trees bear fruit in different seasons. Hence, people may have moved from season to season in the hope of getting different kinds of fruits, (iu) Plants, animals and plants need water for their survival. While many rivers and lakes are perennial others are seasonal. People living on their banks would have had to go in search of water during the dry seasons, le. winter and summer.
 - iv. People may have travelled to meet their kith and kin.
2. Major changes in the climate of the world with a shift to relatively warm conditions were noticed around 12,000 years ago. As a result, grasslands developed in many regions. This resulted in the increase in the herbivorous animals like deer, antelope, goat, sheep and cattle. This encouraged people to herd and rear these animals. They also engaged themselves in fishing.

Several grain bearing grasses such as wheat, barley and rice also grew around this time in different parts of the sub-continent. Men, women and children began to collect these grains to use them as their food. By the time, they also learnt where these grains grew and when they ripened.

3. **Stone tools were probably made using two different techniques:**

- i. **The first is called stone on stone:** Here, the pebble from which the tool was to be made (also called the core) was held in one hand. Another stone, which was used as a hammer was held in the other hand. The second stone was used to strike off flakes from the first, till the required shape was obtained.
- ii. **Pressure flaking:** Here the core was placed on a firm surface. The hammer stone was used on a piece of bone or stone that was placed on the core, to remove flakes that could be shaped into tools.

4.

- i. **Palaeolithic period:** This comes from two Greek words, 'palaeo', meaning old, and 'lithos', meaning stone. The name points to the importance of finds of stone tools. The Palaeolithic period extends from 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago.
- ii. **Mesolithic period:** The period when we find environmental changes, beginning about 12,000 years ago till about 10,000 years ago is called the Mesolithic (middle stone).
- iii. **Neolithic period:** The period from about 10,000 years ago, is known as the Neolithic.

5. **There are four reasons why hunter gatherers moved from place to place.**

- i. **First:** If they had stayed at one place for a long time, they would have eaten up all the available plant and animal resources. Therefore, they would have had to go elsewhere in search of food.

- ii. **Second:** Animals move from place to place - either in search of smaller prey, or, in the case of deer and wild cattle, in search of grass and leaves. That is why those who hunted them had to follow their movements.
- iii. **Third:** Plants and trees bear fruit in different seasons. So, people may have moved from season to season in search of different kinds of plants.
- iv. **Fourth:** people, plants and animals need water to survive. Water is found in lakes, streams and rivers. While many rivers and lakes are perennial (with water throughout the year) others are seasonal. People living on their banks would have had to go in search of water during the dry seasons (winter and summer). Besides, people may have travelled to meet their friends and relatives. They travelled on foot.

However, now days we travel for different purposes like education, work, business, entertainment.

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