

CHAPTER 2

FROM HUNTING –GATHERING TO GROWING FOOD

NOTES:



THE EARLIEST PEOPLE: WHY WERE THEY ON THE MOVE?

We describe people who lived in the subcontinent 2 million years ago as **hunter-gatherers**. This name has been provided because they hunted wild animals, caught fish and birds, gathered fruits, roots, nuts, seeds, leaves, stalks and eggs for their food.

Hunter-gatherers moved from place to place because of the following reasons:

1. If they had stayed at one place for a long time, they would have eaten up all the available plant and animal resources.
2. Animals move from place to place so these people had to follow their movements for hunting purposes.
3. People may have moved from season to season in search of different kinds of plants.
4. People living on their banks would have had to go in search of water during the dry seasons from their places.

### HOW DO WE KNOW ABOUT THESE PEOPLE?

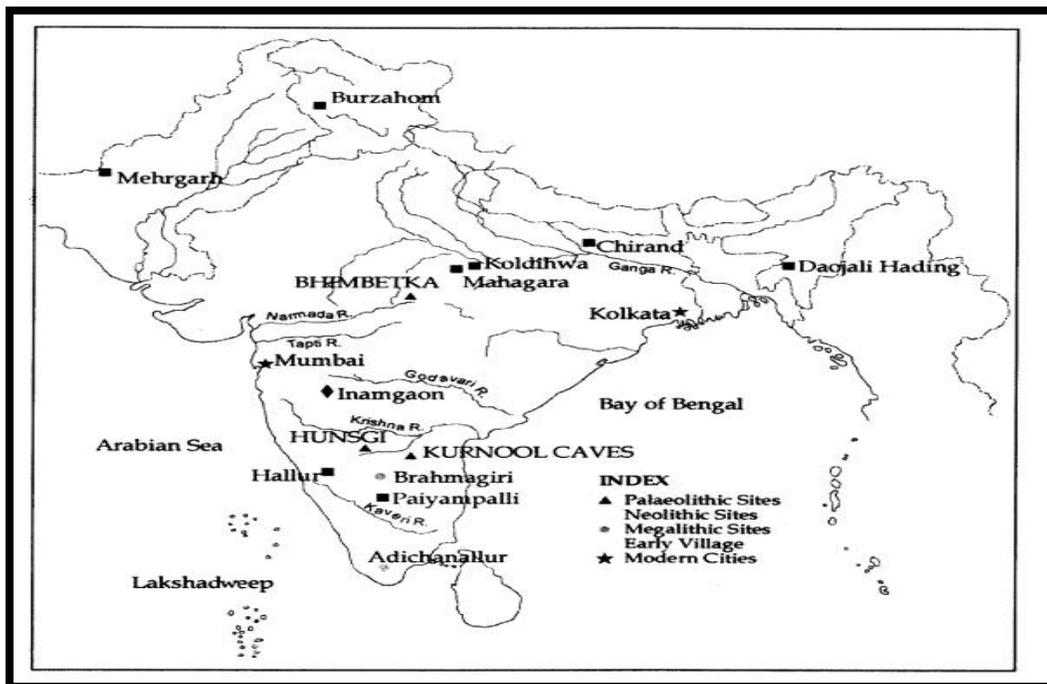
Archaeologists have found some of the things hunter-gatherers made and used. They made and used tools of stone, wood and bone, of which stone tools have survived best.

- Stone tools were used to cut meat and bone, scrape bark (from trees) and hides (animal skins), chop fruit and roots.
- Other tools were used to chop wood.

### CHOOSING A PLACE TO LIVE IN

People preferred to live in places having the following availability.

- They lived near to the sources of water, such as rivers and lakes.
- People tried to find places where good quality stone was easily available as it was important for hunting.



## FINDING OUT ABOUT THE FIRE

Traces of ash show that the people at that time have invented the fire. It could have been used for many things:

1. as a source of light
2. to roast meat
3. to scare away animals

## A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

Around 12,000 years ago, there were major changes in the climate of the world, which led to the development of grasslands in many areas. This also led to an increase in the number of animals that survived on the grass. So, people start thinking about herding and rearing these animals. Fishing also became important for people.

## THE BEGINNING OF FARMING AND HERDING

With the development of grassland, people came to know about growing wheat, barley, rice in different parts of the subcontinent. This is how they started practising **farming**.

People also attract and then tame animals by leaving food for them near their shelters. The first animal to be tamed was the wild ancestor of the dog. Animals such as sheep, goat, cattle and also the pig lived in herds, and most of them ate grass. Often, people protected these animals from attacks by other wild animals. This is how they became **herders**.

## A NEW WAY OF LIFE

People had to stay in the same place for a long time looking after the plants, watering, weeding, driving away animals and birds – till the grain ripened. Then they start thinking of storing the grain for food and seeds. They began making large clay pots, or wove baskets, or dug pits into the ground.

## STORING ANIMALS

Animals that are reared can be used as a ‘store’ of food.

## TOWARDS A SETTLED LIFE



Archaeologists have found traces of huts or houses at some sites which shows that people have a stable life.

1. They have also found cooking hearths both inside and outside the huts, which suggests that, depending on the weather, people used to cook food either indoors or outdoors.
2. Stone tools have been found from many sites. Many of these are different from the earlier Palaeolithic tools and that is why they are called **Neolithic**. These include tools that were polished to give a fine cutting edge, and mortars and pestles. Mortars and pestles are used for grinding grain even today. Apart from these tools, some of the tools were also made of bone.
3. Many kinds of earthen pots have also been found. These were used for decoration and for storing things.
4. People also began weaving cloth, using different kinds of materials. For example: cotton.

### A CLOSER LOOK – LIVING AND DYING IN MEHRGARH

Mehrgarh was one of the places where people learnt to grow barley and wheat, and rear sheep and goats for the first time in this area. At this village, many animal bones were found. Other finds at Mehrgarh include remains of square or rectangular houses. When people die, their relatives and friends pay respect to them. The dead person was buried with goats, which were probably meant to serve as food in the next world. Several burial sites have been found at Mehrgarh.

A BURIAL FROM  
MEHRGARH

