

3

The First Farmers and Herders



DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The emergence of agriculture was the most important development of the Neolithic Age. Early man turned into a Food Producer from a Food Gatherer. Agriculture led to a settled life. Man moved into larger settlements. He cultivated the fields, grew crops and stayed in one place. He did not have to move from place to place in search of food. He started living in huts made of dried leaves and mud.

The first cereals to be grown were wheat and barley. Later, he learnt to domesticate animals like dog, goat, sheep and cattle.

Agriculture was first practised by the people of the Near East (Modern Iran, Iraq, Turkey) and the Levant (Lebanon, Palestine and Southern Syria) as early as 7000 BC.



Farming became a major occupation as humans gave up their nomadic lifestyle and formed settlements



Agricultural tools from the Neolithic period: a grinding stone and flint blades, which may have been used for reaping



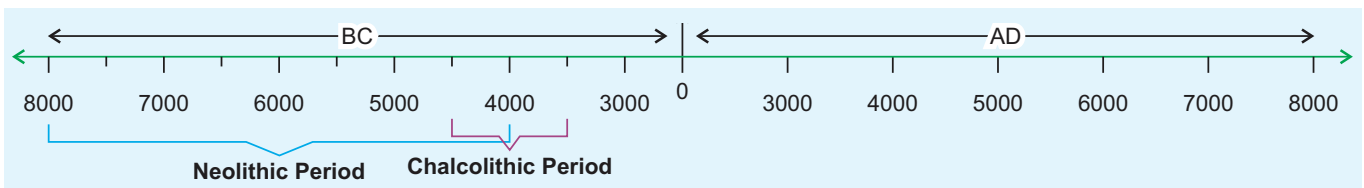
Many Neolithic sites have been discovered where traces of wheat, millets, lentils, grains and animal bones have been found. They are

- Mehrgarh in Pakistan.
- Koldihwa and Mahagara in Uttar Pradesh.
- Gulkral and Burzahom in Kashmir.
- Hallur and Paiyampalli in Andhra Pradesh.

DOMESTICATION OF ANIMALS

The first domesticated animal was the dog. Dogs were most probably used for guarding caves and for pulling loads. Cattle, goat and sheep provided meat, milk and wool.

The domestication of animals gave rise to pastoralism. But what is pastoralism?



Timeline

Pastoralism is a form of farming in which animals such as camels, goats, cattle and sheep move in herds in search of fresh pastures and water.

Did you know?

- Domestication is a name given to a process in which people grow plants and look after animals.
- In domestication a selection of plants and animals are made by the people.
- Plants which are healthy, can bear and yield grains, are chosen. People choose seeds from selected plants so that they could have new plants of the same healthy quality.
- Gentle animals who could be trained were selected from the wild animals.
- Domestication began 12,000 years ago.
- Sheep and goats, along with the dog, were among the first animals to be domesticated.

POTTERY

Once early man learnt how to grow food, he also developed the art of storing food. He needed vessels for it.

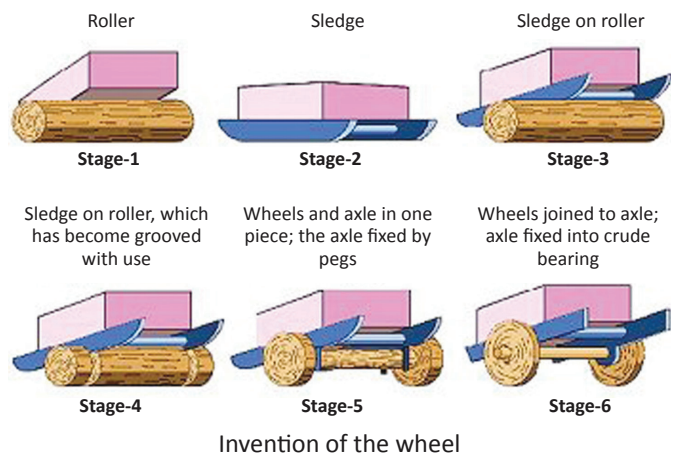
Neolithic man needed vessels to store food grains and water. He learned to make clay pottery with his hands. Later, these pots were decorated with various designs of animal figures on them. With the invention of potter’s wheel, various types of pottery could be made easily and faster.



Chinese Neolithic pottery

INVENTION OF THE WHEEL

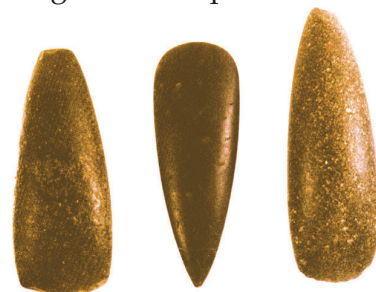
One of the major achievements of the Neolithic period was the invention of the wheel. The potter’s wheel enabled him to make pots of different shapes and sizes. The use of wheels made transportation easier and faster. The invention of wheel led to invention of carts and then to bullock-driven carts. Man could now move heavy loads easily and go from one place to another faster. Invention of wheel led to invention of spindle whorls for weaving cloth of wool and cotton. Various types of pottery enabled early men to store grains and seeds for the next season. The invention of wheel quickened the march of civilisation.



NEOLITHIC TOOLS

Tools of the Neolithic Period included agricultural implements like sickles, digging sticks, hoes and ground tools like the mortar and pestles.

- Polished stone tools with fine cutting edge were used for grinding grains and other products. Some tools were made of bones too.
- Stone axes found from Bellary district (Karnataka) and Santhal Parganas (Jharkhand) also belonged to this period.



Polished stone tools of the Neolithic Period

Findings at Various Neolithic Sites in India

Neolithic Site	Location	Remains of Bones	Remains of Grains
Mahagara	Uttar Pradesh	Marks of cattle hoof	Rice
Kaldihwa	Uttar Pradesh	Bone fragments of animals	Rice
Chirand	Bihar	Bones of buffalo and ox	Wheat, barley and peas
Mehrgarh	Pakistan	Bones of sheep, goat, cattle	Wheat, barley
Burzahom	Kashmir valley	Bones of buffalo, cattle, dog, sheep, goat	Lentil, wheat
Gufkral	Kashmir valley	—	Lentil, wheat
Hallur	Andhra Pradesh	Bones of cattle, pig, goat and sheep	Milletts
Paiyampalli	Andhra Pradesh	Bones of cattle, pig and sheep	Milletts, black gram

LIFE OF THE PEOPLE – TRIBES

Early man moved in groups to protect himself from wild animals. His group consisted of men, women, children and domesticated animals. And, his settlements were called villages. The people living in these villages formed a tribe. Every member of the tribe shared and divided the work. They also got time to take part in singing, dancing and other recreational activities.

Tribes are formed by families living together in small settlements for two to three generations. They are usually related to each other.

The men of the tribe looked after hunting, gathering, herding and fishing. The women did most of the agricultural work. They prepared food, looked after the plants and harvested grain. Both men and women looked after the animals. They cleaned and milked them.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The first Neolithic site to be discovered in India was Burzahom in Kashmir. Unlike our present day homes which are above the ground level these houses were below the ground. The people dug pits into the ground with the help of stone tools. The pits were narrow at the top and wide at the base. Some of the deeper pits had a few steps leading down. Living in these pits was the only way to keep themselves safe and warm from wild animals and cold. But how do we know if these men actually lived in these pits?

Ash, charcoal and pieces of pottery have been found in them. Some of the pits had ovens (*chulhas*) made of stone on which people cooked their food. A stone used for grinding corn was also found in one of them.

Many other sites have been discovered in Kashmir. They are Begagund, Olchibag Pampur, Panzgom and Brah.

NEOLITHIC BURIALS

The burials were usually carried out under house floors or in compounds. The bodies of the dead men were smeared with red ochre.

Early man believed in life after death. Many items were placed along with the body. Animals were sometimes buried along with humans and sometimes alone. They included dogs, cattle, buffaloes, goats and sheep.

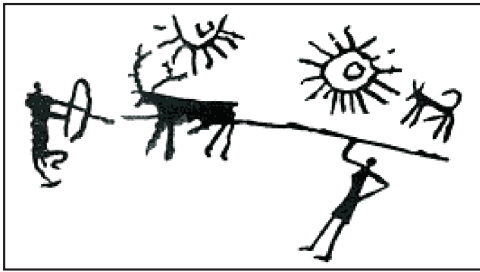


Mehrgarh burial

NEOLITHIC PAINTINGS

People of this age painted on caves, walls, rocks and slabs of stone. A slab of stone found

in **Burzahom** shows a hunting scene. It depicts two hunters hunting a deer, one hunter holds a spear, the other a bow and arrow.



Hunting scene, Burzahom

CHALCOLITHIC AGE

The period between 4500 BC and 3500 BC is

referred to as the Chalcolithic Age. The word is derived from Greek word **Chalcos** (copper) and lithos (stone). Chalcolithic is also known as the 'Copper Age' period. During the Chalcolithic period, man used tools and vessels made of copper and stone. Copper tools were stronger than stone and man could cut down crops and trees faster.



Pot in Chalcolithic Period

Other objects found in copper were bangles, beads, earrings, finger rings, fish hooks etc.

Case Study – 1

Mehrgarh

Mehrgarh in Pakistan, located near the Bolan Pass, was one of the earliest pastoral sites of the Neolithic period. It was here that wheat and grains were grown in abundant quantity and cattle and sheep were tamed to provide milk and meat. Important findings include beads, pendants, ornaments and semiprecious stones. Terracotta art developed. Female figurines and bulls were found at Kulli and Naushaw.

Numerous burials have been found with baskets, stone and bone tools, beads, bangles and pendants. Sometimes artefacts showing animal sacrifices have been found with burial of males. In one burial a goat is buried along with a dead person. This was meant to serve as food in next world. Ornaments of seashell, limestone, lapis lazuli have been found along with figurines of women and animals. A stone axe was discovered in a burial and many more were obtained from the surface. Remains of houses in square or rectangular blocks have also been found. Each house had four or more rooms.



Clay Vase of Mehrgarh, Pakistan



House in Mehrgarh

Case Study – 2

The North-East

In the North-East, archaeologists have found signs of Neolithic people living in Daojali Hading in Assam. Many tools and implements made of stones and ceramics have also been found. It indicates that people used grinders, mortars and pestles for grinding and cooking food. A large number of pots have also been found. Other sites where settlements have been seen are Manipur and Tripura. Jade and other precious stones which were common in China were also found here.

Points to Remember

- Early man became a food producer from a food gatherer.
- The Neolithic period was characterised by the development of agriculture.
- The people living during the Chalcolithic period used tools made of copper and stone.
- Archaeological evidences include pottery, tools, pit houses and burial sites.
- The invention of the wheel was a remarkable achievement of the Neolithic Period.

Glossary

- CHALCOLITHIC PERIOD** : The period between 4500 BC – 3500 BC when tools made of copper and stone were used.
NEOLITHIC PERIOD : The period when men began to grow crops and domesticate animals.
PASTORALISM : A form of farming in which animals move in herds in search of food and water.
PIT DWELLINGS : Underground houses used for living by some Neolithic people.

TIME TO LEARN

A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

1. Man became a food-producer from a food-gatherer during which Age?
(a) Palaeolithic Age (b) Mesolithic Age (c) Neolithic Age (d) Modern Age
2. Which of the following was not an important invention/discovery of Neolithic Age?
(a) Invention of wheel (b) Discovery of agriculture
(c) Discovery of fire (d) Domestication of animals
3. Which were the first animals to be domesticated by Neolithic people?
(a) Sheep (b) Goats (c) Dogs (d) All of these
4. Which of the following Neolithic sites is located in Kashmir?
(a) Mehrgarh (b) Burzahom (c) Chirand (d) Kaldihwa
5. Which of the following statements is incorrect?
(a) Early man believed in life after death.
(b) Animals such as goat, dog and sheep were buried alongwith the dead.
(c) These were supposed to be used in the next world.
(d) Early man did not believe in life after death
6. The Period between 4500 BC and 3500 BC is referred to as
(a) Neolithic Age (b) Chalcolithic Age (c) Palaeolithic Age (d) Mesolithic Age
7. During the Chalcolithic period, tools and vessels were made of
(a) copper (b) stone (c) bronze (d) both (a) and (b)

B. Match the following

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Pit houses | (a) Precious stone |
| 2. Chalcolithic period | (b) Pots of different sizes |
| 3. Neolithic site | (c) Underground houses |
| 4. Jade | (d) Copper vessels |
| 5. Potter's wheel | (e) Burzahom |

C. Very short answer type questions

1. What was the most important development of Neolithic Age?
2. Name two important archaeological sites of Neolithic India?
3. Which were the first cereals to be grown by early man?
4. Which were the first animals to be domesticated by early man?
5. What is pastoralism?

D. Short answer type questions

1. What does the burial practice of Neolithic people tell us?

2. How did the invention of wheel benefit early man?
3. Where have the Neolithic tools been found in India?
4. Why did the early man live in groups?
5. Why were the animals buried with the dead?

E. Long answer type questions

1. How did the invention of wheel quicken the march of human civilisation? Explain. **[Value Based Question]**
2. Describe the pit houses of Burzahom.
3. Bring out the main aspects of the Chalcolithic Age.
4. Describe the effect of development of agriculture on human civilisation. **[HOTS]**

F. Project

Prepare a project report on the life of Neolithic people. Paste relevant pictures.

G. Activity

1. Prepare a model of the earliest carts used by the Neolithic people.
[Use thermacol sheet/ cardboard/ wood etc.]
2. Collect grains of various cereals first grown by the Neolithic people. Put them in sachets and attach in your scrapbook.
3. Early man made fire by rubbing stones together and burning dry leaves. Do it yourself and find out.

LIFE SKILLS

Setbacks are inevitable in human life. A setback can act as a driving force and also teach us humility. We should have courage and faith to overcome the setback.

What could be your response in case you have to face a setback. Tick (✓) the correct options.

- Face the situation calmly.
- Bemoan and lament your fate.
- Face the situation boldly and courageously.
- Have faith in God and in yourself.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>