

Chapter – 2

From Hunting – Gathering to Growing Food

2marks:

1. Why do people who grow crops have to stay in the same place for a long time?

Answer:

When they plant a seed, it takes some time to grow. Depending on the type of seeds used, the time taken would vary from days, weeks, and months to years. It means they had to stay in the same place to take care of the plants by watering, weeding, driving away animals and birds till the grain ripened. Once ripened, they had to think of ways to store it. Hence, they had to stay in the same place for a long time.

2. Why do archaeologists think that many people who lived in Mehrgarh were hunters to start with and that herding became more important later?

Answer:

Archaeologists found the bones of many animals such as deer in the earlier levels. Hence, they could conclude that they were hunters to start with. Herding became important because they found bones of sheep and goat in the later levels.

3. 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?

Answer:

There are 4 reasons:

1. They would have used up all the plant and animal resources.
2. Animals move from place to place, hence they had to follow their movements.
3. Plants and trees bear fruits in different seasons. So, people may have moved from season to season, in search of different kinds of plants.
4. They need water to survive, and many rivers and lakes were seasonal. So, they had to go in search of water during dry seasons.

4. List three ways in which hunter-gatherers used fire (see page 15). Would you use fire for any of these purposes today?

Answer:

It was primarily used for 3 purposes.

1. Clearing forest area
2. Cooking
3. For protection from wild animals

Nowadays, we use fire for:

1. To keep ourselves warm
2. Cooking

5. List 3 ways in which the lives of farmers and herders would have been different from that of hunter-gatherers.

Answer:

1. Farmers and herders would stay in one location; whereas hunter-gatherers would have to move from place to place, following the movement of animals.
2. Farmers and herders would stay in huts or houses, whereas hunter-gatherers would stay in caves.
3. For farmers and herders, the food source would be crops and domesticated animals like sheep and goat, whereas hunters would rely on wild animals as a source of food.

6.What is the Palaeolithic period, and why is it significant in human history?

Answer:

The Palaeolithic period, meaning "old stone," spans from around 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago. It is characterized by the use of stone tools and covers 99% of human history. This period is

significant as it represents the early stages of human evolution and the development of essential tools for survival.

7.How did environmental changes around 12,000 years ago impact human lifestyle?

Answer:

Around 12,000 years ago, major climate changes led to the development of grasslands, influencing the abundance of grass-fed animals. This shift played a crucial role in prompting human communities to follow these animals, contributing to the emergence of herding practices and a transition from hunting-gathering to settled agricultural lifestyles.

4marks:

1.Discuss the reasons why hunter-gatherers engaged in a nomadic lifestyle. Provide examples of how their nomadic habits were linked to the environment.

Answer:

Hunter-gatherers adopted a nomadic lifestyle for various reasons. Firstly, staying in one place for an extended period would deplete local resources, necessitating the need to move in search of food. Secondly, the migration of animals, a crucial food source, influenced their movement. Additionally, seasonal variations in plant and fruit availability and the need for water during dry seasons contributed to their nomadic habits. For instance, the movement of hunter-gatherers was closely tied to the migration patterns of prey and the seasonal availability of fruits and water sources.

2.Explain the significance of stone tools in the Palaeolithic period. How were these tools used, and what insights do they provide about the lifestyle of early humans?

Answer:

Stone tools were crucial in the Palaeolithic period, serving various purposes. They were used for cutting meat, scraping hides, and chopping fruits and roots. Some were adapted to create spears and arrows for hunting. These tools also indicate a level of technological sophistication among early humans. The surviving stone tools suggest

the complexity of tasks like hunting, indicating social cooperation and planning. The tools' versatility highlights the adaptability of early humans to their environment.

3.Compare and contrast the lifestyle of hunter-gatherers with that of early farmers. Highlight the key shifts in economic activities and settlement patterns.

Answer:

Hunter-gatherers and early farmers had distinct lifestyles. Hunter-gatherers were nomadic, relying on hunting, fishing, and gathering for sustenance. In contrast, early farmers practiced settled agriculture, growing crops and rearing animals. This transition marked a shift from a mobile lifestyle to a more sedentary one, as farmers needed to tend to their crops regularly. Additionally, early farmers developed storage techniques like pots and pits to store surplus food, a departure from the immediate consumption characteristic of hunter-gatherers.

4.Describe the process of domestication and its impact on plants and animals. Provide examples of domesticated species and explain their significance in early human societies.

Answer:

Domestication is the process by which humans selectively breed plants and animals for desirable traits. This practice led to significant changes in domesticated species compared to their wild counterparts. For example, domesticated plants like wheat and barley were selected

for traits such as larger grain size and resistance to disease. In animals, the domestication of sheep and goats provided a consistent source of meat, milk, and other resources. This intentional breeding and management of species played a pivotal role in the development of agriculture and animal husbandry.

5.Explore the environmental changes that contributed to the shift from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture. How did climate change and the development of grasslands impact human societies?

Answer:

Around 12,000 years ago, climate changes led to warmer conditions and the development of grasslands. This shift influenced the abundance of grass-fed animals like deer and cattle, encouraging humans to follow these herds. The increased availability of these animals, along with the discovery of naturally growing grains like wheat and barley, prompted humans to consider herding and farming. These changes marked a significant transition from a nomadic, hunter-gatherer lifestyle to settled agricultural communities.

6.Discuss the archaeological evidence found at sites like Mehrgarh. What insights do these findings provide about early human

settlements, including their dwellings and burial practices?

Answer:

Archaeological excavations at Mehrgarh revealed remains of square or rectangular houses, some with storage compartments, providing insights into early human dwellings. Cooking hearths both inside and outside these houses suggest flexibility based on weather conditions. Burial sites at Mehrgarh, where humans were buried with animals like goats, indicate cultural beliefs regarding the afterlife. These findings offer valuable information about the settlement patterns, architecture, and cultural practices of early human communities.

7.Examine the role of fire in early human societies. How did early humans use fire, and what impact did it have on their daily lives?

Answer:

Fire played a crucial role in early human societies. It served as a source of light, a means to roast meat, and a tool to scare away animals. The use of fire also had social and symbolic significance. The ability to control and use fire allowed early humans to extend their activities into the night, enhancing their productivity. Furthermore, fire played a role in shaping communal activities, as it provided a central gathering point and contributed to cultural practices.

8. Analyze the impact of the Neolithic Revolution on human societies. How did the shift from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture transform social structures, economy, and daily life?

Answer:

The Neolithic Revolution marked a transformative period in human history. The shift from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture brought about profound changes in social structures, economy, and daily life. The establishment of permanent settlements led to the development of complex societies with defined roles. The cultivation of crops and domestication of animals provided a stable food supply, enabling population growth. This shift also allowed for the accumulation of surplus resources, leading to the emergence of specialized occupations, trade, and more intricate social hierarchies.

7marks:

1.Explain the lifestyle of hunter-gatherers and the factors that led them to move from place to place.

Answer:

Hunter-gatherers, living in the Indian subcontinent around two million years ago, obtained their food through hunting wild animals, fishing, and gathering various plant resources. Their nomadic lifestyle was influenced by several factors. Firstly, staying in one place for an extended period would deplete local plant and animal resources, necessitating a move in search of food. Secondly, the migration patterns of animals, such as deer and wild cattle, compelled these groups to follow their prey. Thirdly, the seasonal availability of different plants and the need for water resources drove these communities to move in pursuit of sustenance. This nomadic lifestyle was integral to their survival.

2.How did the transition from hunting-gathering to settled life occur, and what were the key factors contributing to this change?

Answer:

The shift from hunting-gathering to settled life marked a significant transition in human history. Around 12,000 years ago, climatic changes led to the development of grasslands and an increase in animal populations. This, coupled with the natural growth of grain-bearing grasses like wheat and barley, prompted people to consider

herding and farming. The ability to attract and tame animals, starting with dogs, facilitated herding practices. The domestication of plants and animals, a gradual process, allowed for a settled life as people cultivated crops and reared animals for sustenance.

3.Discuss the importance of environmental changes around 12,000 years ago in shaping the lifestyle of ancient communities.

Answer:

Approximately 12,000 years ago, significant climate changes globally resulted in warmer conditions, leading to the development of grasslands. This environmental shift played a pivotal role in the lives of ancient communities. The increased availability of grass-fed animals like deer, antelope, goat, sheep, and cattle influenced human settlement patterns. Communities began to follow these animals, gaining insights into their habits and breeding seasons. This, in turn, contributed to the emergence of herding practices and a shift towards a more settled lifestyle.

4.Elaborate on the process of domestication and its impact on plants and animals.

Answer:

Domestication, the process of growing plants and looking after animals, involved selecting specific qualities for cultivation. In plants, people chose traits like disease resistance and large grain yield. The preservation and cultivation of seeds from selected plants ensured the

continuity of desirable traits. Similarly, domesticated animals were chosen for their gentleness and utility. Over time, domesticated plants and animals evolved, exhibiting distinct differences from their wild counterparts. This selective domestication, starting around 12,000 years ago, contributed significantly to modern agriculture and animal husbandry.

5.Explain the archaeological evidence that supports our understanding of the transition from hunting-gathering to settled life.

Answer:

Archaeological findings provide crucial evidence for the transition from hunting-gathering to settled life. Stone tools, including implements for cutting, scraping, and hunting, showcase the technology used by early communities. The discovery of pottery, hearths, and traces of ash indicates the use of fire for cooking, warmth, and scaring away animals. Additionally, the identification of burnt grains at archaeological sites points to early farming practices. Excavated settlements with evidence of houses, storage facilities, and tools reveal the gradual shift towards settled agricultural societies.

6. Analyze the significance of Mehrgarh as an archaeological site in understanding early agricultural communities.

Answer:

Mehrgarh, located near the Bolan Pass, is a crucial archaeological site offering insights into early agricultural communities. Dating back around 8000 years, Mehrgarh provides evidence of barley and wheat cultivation, sheep and goat herding, and domesticated animals.

Excavations revealed square or rectangular houses with storage compartments, showcasing settled habitation. Burial sites with animal offerings indicate religious or ritualistic practices. The site's findings contribute significantly to our understanding of the development of agriculture, herding, and settled life in the Indian subcontinent.

7. Discuss the ways in which early farmers and herders adapted to their new way of life, including technological advancements.

Answer:

Early farmers and herders adapted to their new lifestyle through various technological advancements. Polished stone tools with fine cutting edges replaced earlier Palaeolithic tools. Mortars and pestles were utilized for grinding grain, a practice still relevant today. The invention of pottery allowed for cooking and storage. Additionally, the cultivation of cotton for weaving cloth marked a shift in textile technology. The gradual evolution of tools and techniques reflects the

innovative responses of early communities to the challenges and opportunities presented by settled agriculture and herding.

8. Evaluate the role of burial sites in understanding the social and religious practices of ancient communities, citing examples.

Answer:

Burial sites play a crucial role in the social and religious practices of ancient communities. Examples from Mehrgarh reveal burial practices associated with offerings, such as burying the dead with goats, possibly meant for the afterlife. These practices suggest a belief in an afterlife and the importance of provisions for the deceased. The presence of decorated pottery in burials also indicates the significance attached to rituals or ceremonies associated with death. Burial sites provide valuable clues about the cultural and spiritual dimensions of ancient societies, contributing to a holistic understanding of their way of life.

Fill in the blanks:

1. _____ were people who lived in the subcontinent around two million years ago and were known for hunting wild animals and gathering food.

Answer:

Hunter-gatherers

2.The Palaeolithic period, lasting from _____ to about _____, is characterized by the use of stone tools by early humans.

Answer:

2 million years ago, 12,000 years ago

3.Hunter-gatherers moved from place to place due to reasons such as the depletion of _____ resources and the seasonal availability of _____.

Answer:

plant and animal, different kinds of plants

4.The period when environmental changes occurred around 12,000 years ago, leading to the development of grasslands, is known as the _____ period.

Answer:

Mesolithic

5.The process of selectively breeding plants and animals by humans is referred to as _____, leading to changes in the characteristics of domesticated species.

Answer:

Domestication

6.Early humans used stone tools for various purposes, including cutting meat, scraping hides, and making tools like spears and arrows for _____.

Answer:

hunting

7.The shift from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture during the Neolithic Revolution brought about profound changes in social structures, economy, and the emergence of _____ occupations.

Answer:

specialized

8.Archaeological evidence at sites like _____ revealed remains of houses, cooking hearths, and insights into early human settlements.

Answer:

Mehrgarh

9. _____ is the name given to the process in which people grow plants and look after animals, leading to the differentiation of domesticated species from their wild counterparts.

Answer:

Domestication

10.Fire played a crucial role in early human societies, serving as a source of light, a means to roast meat, and a tool to _____ away animals.

Answer:

Scare

Multiple choice:

1.What is the term for the process in which people grow plants and look after animals?

- a) Domestication**
- b) Migration**
- c) Nomadism**
- d) Exploration**

Answer:

- a) Domestication

2.During which period did the Palaeolithic era extend?

- a) 1,000 years ago**
- b) 10,000 years ago**
- c) 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago**

d) 100,000 years ago

Answer:

c) 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago

3.What major environmental change occurred around 12,000 years ago?

a) Ice Age

b) Development of deserts

c) Shift to relatively warm conditions

d) Rise of volcanic activity

Answer:

c) Shift to relatively warm conditions

4.What is the name given to the time period from about 12,000 years ago to 10,000 years ago?

a) Palaeolithic

b) Mesolithic

c) Neolithic

d) Microolithic

Answer:

b) Mesolithic

5.Which animal was likely the first to be tamed by early humans?

- a) Elephant**
- b) Cow**
- c) Horse**
- d) Dog**

Answer:

- d) Dog**

6.What did the earliest people use stone tools for?

- a) Writing**
- b) Cooking**
- c) Hunting and gathering**
- d) Painting**

Answer:

- c) Hunting and gathering**

7.What was the primary reason for early humans to move from place to place?

- a) Social gatherings**
- b) Lack of tools**
- c) Search for water and food resources**

d) Fear of predators

Answer:

c) Search for water and food resources

8.What is the term used for the time period beginning about 10,000 years ago?

a) Mesolithic

b) Neolithic

c) Paleo lithic

d) Micro lithic

Answer:

b) Neolithic

9.What was one of the significant finds at Mehrgarh, one of the earliest villages?

a) Gold jewelry

b) Advanced weaponry

c) Remains of burnt grain

d) Hieroglyphic inscriptions

Answer:

c) Remains of burnt grain

10. What did people learn to do at Mehrgarh for the first time?

- a) Writing**
- b) Farming and herding**
- c) Metalworking**
- d) Navigation**

Answer:

- b) Farming and herding

Summary:

The passage explores the transition of early humans from hunter-gatherer lifestyles to settled farming and herding. Beginning around two million years ago, hunter-gatherers roamed the subcontinent, relying on hunting, fishing, and gathering for sustenance. Their nomadic existence was driven by factors such as the seasonal availability of resources, the movement of animals, and the need for water.

Over time, the shift from hunting-gathering to settled agriculture occurred, marked by environmental changes around 12,000 years ago. The climate became warmer, leading to the development of grasslands and an increase in animals suitable for domestication. This prompted humans to consider herding and farming practices. The process of domestication involved selectively growing plants and taming animals, resulting in the gradual transformation of wild species into domesticated forms.

Archaeological evidence, such as stone tools and rock paintings, provides insights into the lives of early humans. Sites like Bhimbetka and Mehrgarh offer glimpses of their habitats, tools, and burial practices. The transition to settled life brought about changes in dwelling structures, with pit-houses and tools like mortars and pestles being used for farming activities.