

## **CHAPTER-2: ON THE TRAIL OF THE EARLIEST PEOPLE**

### **MODULE -2/2**

#### **Finding out about fire**

Traces of ash (fire) have been found in the Kurnool caves of Andhra Pradesh. This shows that people were familiar with the use of fire. Fire could have been used for many things:

- i. As a source of light
- ii. To roast meat and
- iii. To scare away animals.

#### **A changing environment**

Around 12,000 years ago, major changes in the climate were found.

This climate change leads to the development of grasslands and therefore it leads to increase of animals like antelope, deer, cattle, sheep, etc.

People who hunted these animals started following them, learning their food habits and breeding seasons. This helped them to think about herding and rearing of animals.

During this time they even came to know about the crops – where do they grow? When do they ripened? And they started using them as food.

This may have led them to think about growing crops on their own.

#### **Names and Dates**

Archaeologists divided the earliest time periods into three Ages.

#### **Palaeolithic**

They called the earliest time as Palaeolithic. This comes from two Greek words 'palaeo' , meaning old and 'lithos' meaning stone. Hence this period is also called as "Old Stone Age".

It was divided into three parts which are lower, middle and upper Palaeolithic. This time extends from 2 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago. This long span of time covers 99% of human history.

### **Mesolithic**

Mesolithic began from 12000 years ago up to 10000 years ago and is also called as “Middle Stone Age”. It was the time in which environment changes and development of grassland started.

### **Neolithic**

The last stage which we know is the Neolithic time from 10000 years ago is also called as “New Stone Age”.

### **Rock paintings and what they tell us**

Early people lived in caves and many such caves have paintings drawn by them on the walls. These paintings help us to know about the lives of early man. Caves of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are the best examples of the rock paintings.

Other Paintings of wild animals were found in France. Colours were made from minerals like iron ore and charcoal. These paintings might have been done on ceremonial occasions.

### **Who hunted, gathered plant produce, made stone tools and painted on cave walls?**

There are two possibilities.

- i. Both men and women
- ii. Either one of them

### **A closer look- Hunsgi**

Archaeologists found a number of early Palaeolithic sites in Hunsgi, Karnataka where hunter gatherers lived. A large number of tools were also found at these sites. These were probably “habitation-cum-factory” sites. Most tools were made from lime stone which was locally available.

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