

You must have noticed that even these people, who lived in villages and cultivated land, hunted animals. This is not surprising.



This was the first stage of cultivation. People were just beginning to learn the ways of agriculture. They did not grow enough crops to feed themselves for the whole year. Besides people also needed meat in their diet. So they continued to

hunt animals and collect fruits when needed, although not as much as they did earlier. Earlier, people depended totally on the forest. Now, they depended more on agriculture.

Those who took to agriculture gradually cleared the forest. What tools did they use for this? They used axes made of stone fixed on wooden handles. It was difficult and time consuming to cut down the thick forests with these axes. But in those days the use of metals like iron and copper had not yet begun, so they did not have better tools.

Everyone in the band worked hard to cut and then burn the forest. The soil was cleared of stones. Only then land became ready for farming. With the efforts of the entire band, the land under agriculture kept spreading. You can see in the picture that there are fields near the village and the forest is far away.

- *Why did those who practised agriculture also hunt?*
- *Why did it take long for the band to clear land for cultivation?*

Settling Down In One Place

The village was on the river bank. Every year, during the rainy season, the river got flooded. The flood water used to fill the fields. After a few days, the flood would subside but a new layer of soil would be left behind. A good harvest would result every year from the new soil. Now, there was enough grain to last the whole year. There was no need any more to wander in search of food.

People were also not able to wander because they had to look after their fields.

- *What are all the things that have to be done between sowing the seed and harvesting the crop?*

Villages began to emerge near rivers, streams and lakes. People began to live in these villages for many years together. Now people started to settle down and live in one place itself.

In the beginning, there were about 100 to 150 people living in one village. This seems a small number compared to the villages of today. But compared to the small bands of hunter-gatherers, this was a large number.

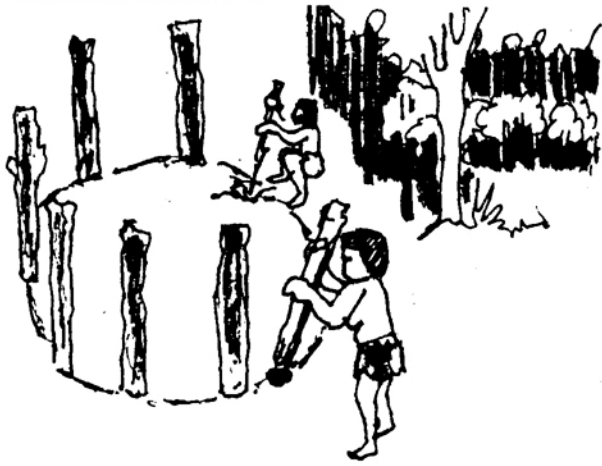
Early Houses

Digging up the remains of early houses, we can get some idea about how those people lived. Different types of houses were built in different regions. Some people dug pits in the ground and made houses in these pits. Some made houses of grass and twigs. From the following pictures, you can get an idea of the houses built on the banks of the Narmada some 3500 years ago.

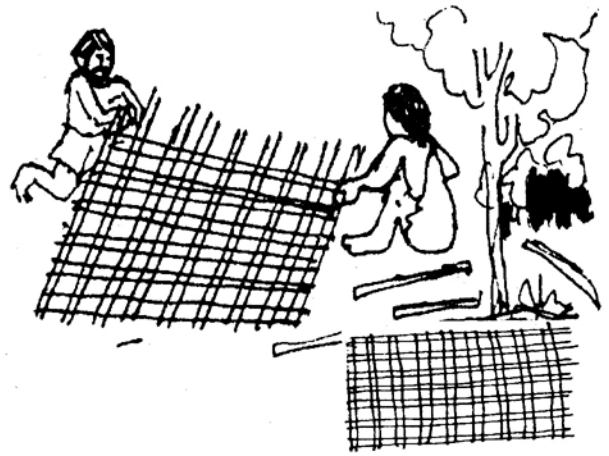
ONE OF THE EARLY METHODS OF MAKING HOUSES



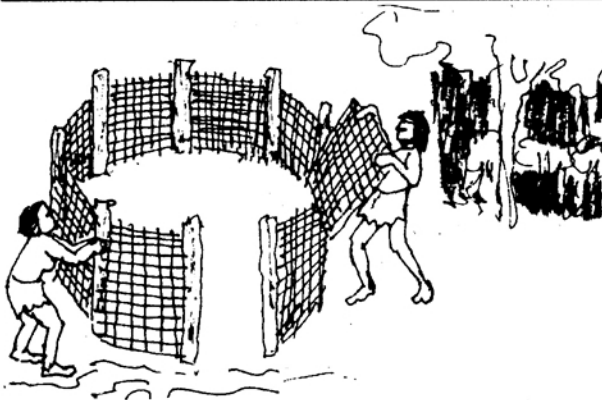
People collected these materials from the forest. They gathered clay and kneaded it with water.



1. First the land was cleared and stones and pebbles were removed. Then holes were dug and wooden poles were fixed.



2. Bamboo was cut into thin strips and these strips were woven into mats



3. Bamboo mats were then fixed to the poles.



4. Thin strips of bamboo were used to make the roof. Grass was spread on the roof and tied on to it.



5. Then the whole roof was placed on top of the poles and tied firmly.

After this the walls were plastered with mud from the inside as well as the outside. Mud was also used to plaster the floor.



6. Are some of the houses in your village made in this way?

Do you remember how the hunting-gathering people lived? They did not make permanent houses like these farmers

- *Do you think the hunting-gathering people did not know how to make houses like this, or did they not need permanent houses then? Why did the farmers need permanent houses?*

Storing Grain

The farmers had to face many new situations. After the harvest, there was plenty of grain. It had to be protected from water, insects and rats, so that it could be eaten for many months.

One reason for building their houses properly was to preserve grain for a longer period.

- *How long can grains, dal, oilseeds, etc. be preserved?*
- *The hunting-gathering people ate fruits, roots, meat, etc. How long did these last? Who needed to store more - the hunter-gatherers or the agriculturists?*

In the days of the hunter-gatherers, baskets made of twigs, bags made of hide and little bowls made of leaves were used. Once agriculture began, grain had to be stored for 6 to 12 months. For this, people began to make storage jars. From the days of hunting, men and women knew how to weave baskets. Now, for storing grain, they began to weave big baskets of twigs and strips of bamboo. These were coated with clay and left in the sun to dry, or baked in the fire. The baskets got burnt in this way, but the clay coating became stronger. In this way they preserved the grains from getting wet or being eaten by rats and insects.



- *Why did the hunting-gathering people not feel the need for big, strong storage-bins?*
- *What is grain stored in nowadays?*

There was another way of making storage jars. Clay was kneaded well. Then it was rolled by hand into long ropes. These clay ropes were placed in rings, one on top of the other. This way it took the form of a vessel. This was dried in the sun or baked in fire. Grain was stored in such jars.

Those were the days when people did not know the use of the potter's wheel.

New Utensils to Cook Food

The hunting-gathering people roasted meat on fire, and roasted grain on ashes or soaked the grain in water. They ate raw roots and fruits. Hence they did not make vessels for cooking food.

Once people started agriculture, they began to eat more grain. The grains had to be cooked. What would they cook in? When people started domesticating animals, they needed utensils for boiling milk and making milk products. They now started making clay utensils with their own hands. These were dried in the sun. Once the potter's wheel was invented, people made beautiful earthen vessels on it.

Before the grains could be cooked they had to be ground. Hence grinding stones for grinding grain could now be found in every house.



- How is grain ground to flour nowadays?
- How is a grinding-stone used nowadays?

Fire often got extinguished when utensils were placed directly on it. Therefore people now raised the edges around the fire so that the utensils could be placed on the higher edges. This is how the stove (chulha) came into being.



- If there was no stove (chulha) and no grinding-stone, how would it affect our food?

Remains From the Early Villages

Just as there are some remains of the hunting-gathering people, there are also

remains of the early villages.

- Do you remember what remains can be found of the hunting-gathering people?

While digging around the places where the early villages existed, we can find plastered floors, earthen utensils, pieces of cooking stoves (chulhas), grinding stones, small stone tools and stone axes. Not only this, we can even find a few burnt pieces of grain. Bones of domesticated animals have also been found. In some places, small earthen idols have been found. Perhaps these are idols of their gods. Although most things of every day use have been destroyed, these remains give us some idea about the lives of the people who first took to agriculture.

- What will we not be able to find in the remains of these early villages?

EXERCISES

1. Why did the farmers begin to build houses?
2. Why was there no need for farmers to roam in search of food?
3. Boma and Goma's band lived in one place, and the agriculturists also lived in one place. But there are some differences between the two groups. Write about any three differences.
4. There are many things in this picture. Which of these things could not have belonged to the hunting-gathering people? Which things could have belonged to both the hunting-gathering people as well as the agriculturists? Put different signs to distinguish them.

