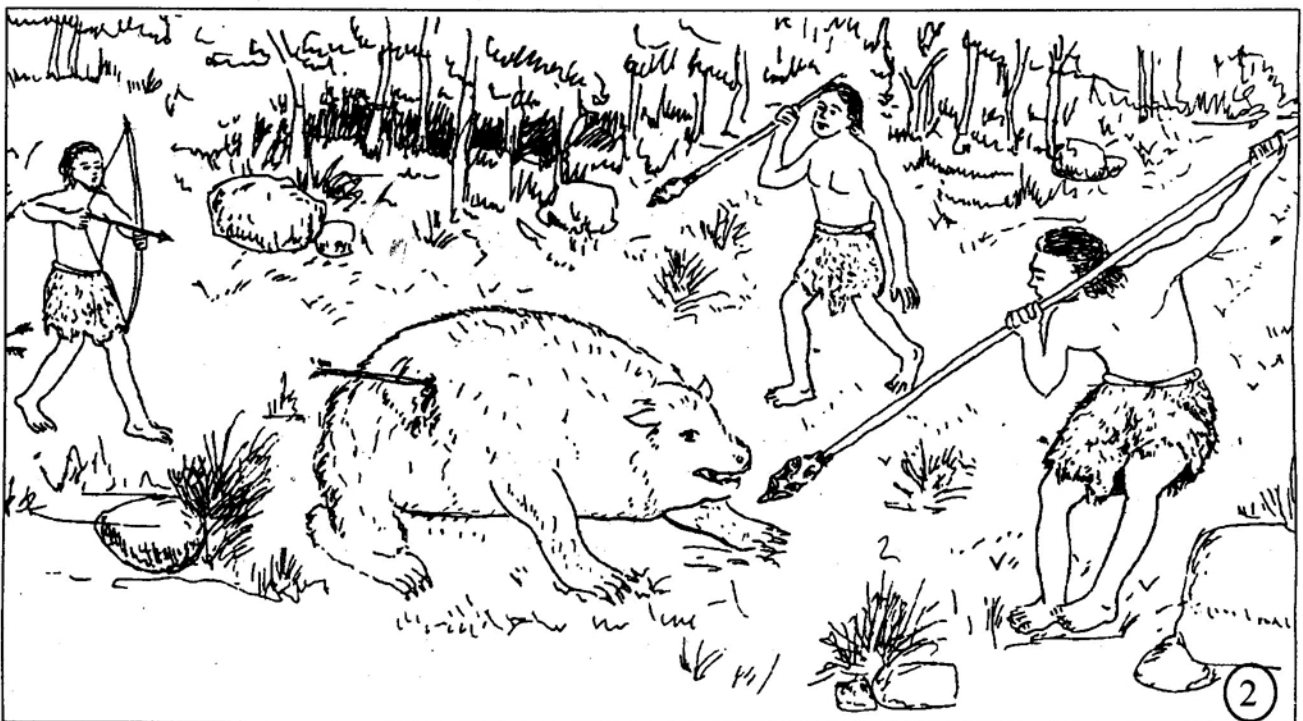


CHAPTER 1

THE HUNTER-GATHERERS

There was a time when people did not grow crops anywhere in the world. There were neither villages nor cities. Look at these pictures about those times.





- *How are these people gathering food?*
- *Look at the third picture. What have the men and women brought from the forests?*
- *What are the people wearing?*
- *You will find six or seven types of tools and weapons in these pictures. Can you identify them?*
- *How are these tools and weapons used?*
- *Can you draw them in your notebook?*
- *What are they collecting their food in?*
- *Look carefully at the third picture. What is each person doing?*

People used to live like this many thousands of years ago. As you can see in the pictures, they had learned to make many things.

Food, Clothing and Shelter

In those days people lived in small bands of 20 to 30 in forests all over the world. They hunted deer, buffaloes, elephants, rabbits, rhinos and other animals for their food. They fished in rivers and lakes. They collected

honey from bee-hives. They plucked fruits, dug out roots and tubers and cut wild grass for their grain. Their food mainly consisted of fruits, vegetables and tubers collected from the forests. Meat, even though important, was only a small part of their food.

Their clothes too were derived from animals and plants. They wore animal skins or covered themselves with leaves or barks of trees.

- *Why do you think they could not wear cotton and woollen clothes?*
- *Make a list of things people used to eat in those days.*
- *Where did they mainly get their food from - animals or plants?*

People lived like this very long ago. They did not live in houses then. They took shelter in caves or under rocks. If they couldn't find caves or rocks, they made small huts of leaves and branches.

We do not know much about people who lived so many years ago. It is by looking at things surviving from that period that we can try to imagine how their lives might have been.

Come, let's try to learn more about the lives of these people who hunted and gathered food from the forests.

Story Of A Nomadic Band

Let us imagine that thousands and thousands of years ago a small band of people lived in a forest. There was a fourteen year old girl in the band. She was called Karmi. One day, when she had gone to collect fruits in the forest, a wolf pounced on her and bit her leg. Somehow, she managed to escape. She was a brave girl. The wound on Karmi's leg did not heal for a long time. Her body was burning with fever. She simply could not move. Some people said, "Now Karmi will never recover. Leave her here. We must move on. There's nothing more to hunt in this forest. The water holes have dried up. Animals have left in search of water. All the fruits have also been eaten up. It is difficult to live here now. Let us move to another forest." Some people were sad to leave a brave and clever girl like Karmi behind to die. They said, "Let us stay on for some more time. We can manage to live here for a few days more." Karmi's mother said, "This morning I saw a lot of sweet roots. Stay on for four or five days. There will be enough

to eat till then." But many people did not agree. They said, "Those who want to stay here can do so. We will move on. This forest can provide food for eight to ten people, but there is not enough for all."

The older people felt it was a grave matter. They called the whole band together to take everybody's opinion. After a lot of discussion, it was decided that most people would go to another forest and wait. Only five or six people would stay back with Karmi and her mother. So most of the people in the band moved on to another forest.

Karmi's mother wondered what would happen if Karmi did not get well in three or four days. Then nobody would stay back for them. It was a big problem. The people who stayed back were worried that if wild animals attacked it would be very difficult to escape while carrying Karmi along.

Soon it was night. Karmi closed her eyes and gripped the trunk of a tree in pain. She tore out a piece of the bark and wrapped it around her wound. Then she fell asleep. When she woke up in the morning, much of the pain had gone. She felt much better. The bark of the tree had healed her. Karmi had found her



Fig. 4. Discussion in the band : 'What is to be done with Karmi?'

own medicine! After three or four days, Karmi left for the forest where the rest of the band had gone leaning on her mother as she walked.

- Why did some people in the band want to leave Karmi behind?
- What did Karmi's mother say to make them stay back?
- What was decided in the end?

You have just read an imaginary story. Perhaps such things happened in those days. True, animals and fruits in one spot would be finished and then people would have to move in search of food. Once the season for fruits came again, they could return. They could not live permanently in one place, the way we do now.

Look at the pictures once again.

- The pictures show that these people had very few belongings. They had no furniture or utensils. Can you explain why?
- Can you imagine what those people might have taken with them when they went from one place to another?
- Nowadays, why is it that most people do not have to wander in search of food?
- Do some people still wander in search of food? What do you know about them?

Stone Tools And Weapons

In the picture you can see the kind of weapons and tools these people used. In those times, people did not know about metals like iron or copper. What were tools made of then? Wood, stones, horns and bones of animals could be found all around. Weapons and tools were made by sharpening these. Look at the picture on Page 3. You can see two men sitting and making weapons. They are chipping flakes off a stone to make it sharp. They are making a sharp edge or a sharp point. They are also



giving it a shape which will make it easy to hold. Eventually they learnt to make fine, small pieces from stone. These pieces called 'microliths' were fixed to wooden or bone handles and served as sharp tools.

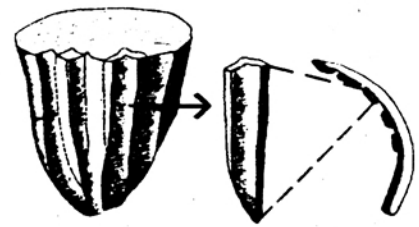


Fig. 6. Sickle made of stone

- Some pictures of stone weapons have been given below.
 - Can you see the marks that have been made by chipping off the stone? Put 'X' sign on them.
 - Which of the tools have wooden handles? Spot the wooden handles and colour them dark.
 - The stones have been fixed to the handles in two ways. Can you say how?
 - Which of these tools has no handle?
 - What were the different things which could have been done with stone tools?

At that time, there was no special artisans to make these tools. All the members of the band made them. Of course, some people may

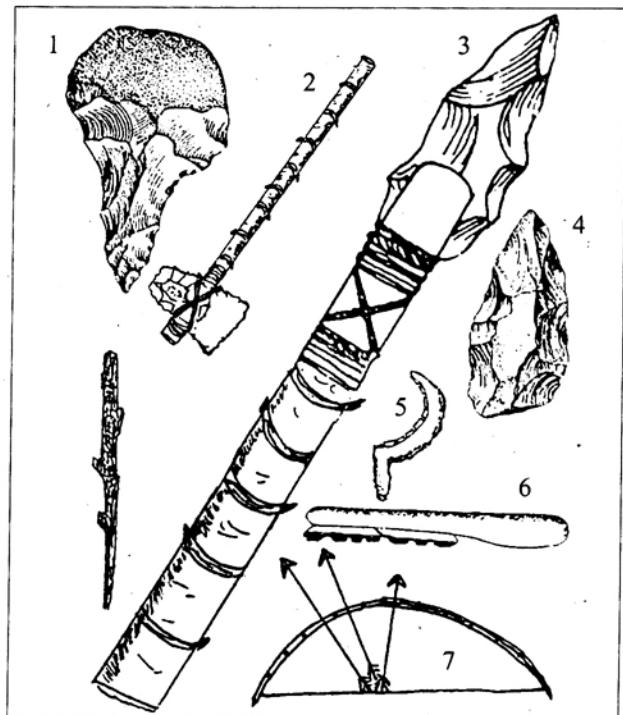


Fig. 7. Different types of tools

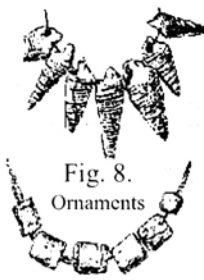


Fig. 8.
Ornaments



have made them better than others. Using these stone and wooden tools, people of those times made many things. Women and men used these tools to cut wood and bamboo to make other tools, baskets and fishing nets.

They made clothes of animal hides and tree barks to cover themselves. They also made necklaces from wood, shells, bones or ivory. Everyone made clothes and ornaments for their own use, since there were no special artisans for any work.

• **Fill in the Blanks -**

Hunter-gatherers made tools from _____ and _____.

_____ in the band made their own tools.

- **Nowadays do people themselves make all the things they need?**
- **What are tools made of nowadays?**
- **What is stone used for nowadays?**

Painting and Dance

Inside the caves, they made colourful pictures on the walls. Do you know how they got paint and brushes? Colour was made by grinding stones of different colours. Pictures were then painted on rocks with bamboo brushes. Even today one can see some of the pictures made by them on the walls of caves or on rocks.

• **Look at this picture and describe the paintings.**

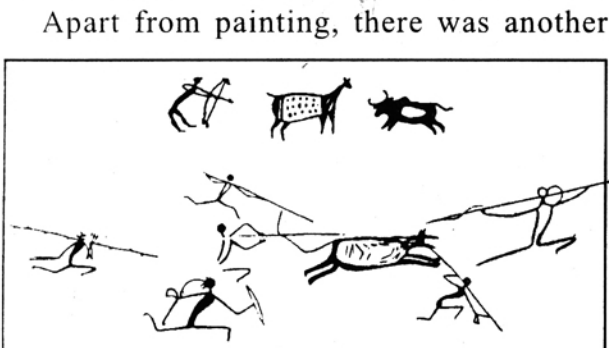


Fig.9. Paintings by hunter-gatherers

important activity in the lives of hunter-gatherers. They would get together and dance for long stretches. Let us read Karmi's story further to know more about their singing and dancing.

After staying in one place for some time, Karmi's band found it difficult to find animals to hunt. People went to the forests but returned empty-handed. The whole band was managing with roots and fruits. But now, even these were falling short. Karmi's mother called the whole band together and said, "We are passing through difficult times. We must do something." One woman said, "Yes, even the tubers and roots are getting fewer and fewer." Added a man, "There are many animals in the forest. But our arrows miss them and they slip out of the traps we lay."

Karmi's mother said, "We must do our dance ritual. Perhaps the Animal God is angry."



Fig. 10. Dancing figures in Bhimbhetka caves

That evening the dance began and all the people went to take part in it. Two of them sat in the middle and made music by beating sticks on shallow lags of wood. The dancers circled around them singing. Some dancers wrapped deer skins around themselves, or donned masks of horned deer. The rest carried bows and arrows or spears, and shot fake arrows at the 'deer'. They would pretend to wound the 'deer' and others would pull him out of the circle and pretend to cut him with a knife. Then they returned to the circle and another man now became the 'deer'.

In this way, the dance continued for a long time without pause. They believed that by dancing in this way they would gain some magical power by which they could draw the deer out of the jungle and hunt them down.

There was a wise man in the band. The others used to follow him in the dance. He made some pictures on the wall of the cave - pictures of animals, of men wearing deer skins and masks and pictures of dancing people. He also drew a picture of an animal being hunted. Everyone would come and shoot an arrow at the hunted animal in the picture, to ensure a successful hunt. When the dance ended, people again went out hunting in groups.

- **When Karmi's mother heard that although there were animals in the forest, they could not be hunted, what did she suggest Choose the right option**
i. Move to another forest. ii. Survive on roots and tubers. iii. Perform the dance ritual.
- **Fill in the blanks :**
Some dancers wore deer's _____.
They danced like _____.
The rest of the dancers pretended to _____ the deer.
- **Why did the hunters shoot arrows at the picture of the deer ?**

The Hunt

After a few attempts, Mako and his group returned with a couple of deers. Kora's group returned empty handed. They were worried that they could not kill a single deer. Seeing the deers that Mako's group had killed, they felt relieved. They were very happy and patted Mako's back in praise.

What happened next ? Each one went up to the deer and stroked them with their right hand while thanking them for allowing the hunters to kill them. "Rest in peace", they told them. One said, "Thank you for your horns," and another said, "Thank you for your flesh." Karmi's mother said, "Brother deer, you have been hurt because of us. Forgive us." After this, they roasted the deer and ate it. They knew how to make fire by striking stones.

After two or three days when the meat started rotting, they left it. Again, they formed bands and went out hunting. The women went out with the older children to collect fruits and sweet roots of plants.

You may think it to be very strange ! Hunters are thanking the hunted animal. But among these people, animals and humans were considered to be related to each other. Hence according to them killing an animal was like killing your brother. So, animals must be killed only to satisfy hunger, and after killing them, they should be thanked and asked forgiveness.

You too must have seen in your village that after the harvest, the stacked grain is worshipped.

- **Why do farmers worship the harvest ? Discuss in the class.**
- **Do you see any similarity between thanking the killed animal and worshipping the harvest ?**
- **Fill in the blanks with the correct alternative :**
When Kora saw that Mako had hunted two deers, he felt _____ (sad/happy)
When the hunters brought a kill, they _____ (ate it immediately / offered thanks)
Hunters regarded animals as their _____ (food / relatives) and believed that they should kill animals _____ (only when they were hungry / whenever they wanted)

Sharing and Eating Together

Perhaps life was something like this in those days. People went out hunting in groups because one single person found it difficult to

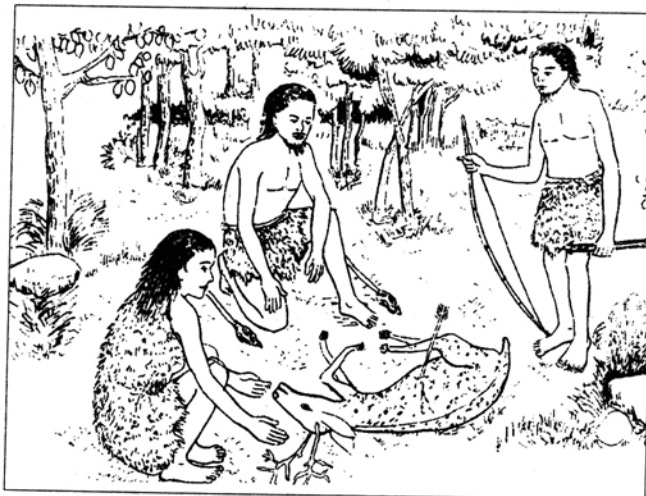


Fig. 11. Offering thanks to a hunted deer

face animals alone. People also went out in groups to collect food. Whatever food they brought was then divided among all. This was necessary because they did not know when food would be available. If they did not share food some people would surely starve. A person would have a lot of food at one time and nothing at all at another. Sharing food would solve this problem. Besides, what would one person do with a lot of food? Things like meat or fruit would rot fast, since there was no way of preserving them for long.

Even things that do not decay fast, like grains of wild grass, could not be stored since these people were always on the move. One could not pile up these things and become rich. So there were no poor or rich in those days. These people gathered food, and after eating it, looked out for more.

Like Karmi's band, there were many other bands of hunters. At times, they fought amongst themselves and quarreled over small things like which band would go hunting in a particular forest.

- Write down two of the most important sentences of this section.
- You read that Kora's band did not manage to hunt anything. How then did they get food?

So these were our ancestors. Our lives are very different from theirs. But there are many

things that we have learnt from them. The hunting people gave us knowledge about plants and trees, fruit, roots and herbs. They discovered a lot about animals, fishes and insects. They found out about stones and rocks, and made paths to travel from one place to another. Not only this, their dances are still performed on many occasions today. Have you ever seen such dances?

Remains of the Hunting People

How do we know all this about these people who lived thousands of years ago? There is evidence of the hunting people even today, in the form of weapons of stone, paintings on the walls of caves, bones of animals and people.

On the way to Hoshangabad from Bhopal you will find the Bhimbhetka caves. You can go and see these caves yourselves. Thousands of years ago, these caves were the home of the hunting-gathering people.

Such caves, stone weapons and cave paintings can be found all over Madhya Pradesh in Bhopal, Raisen, Hoshangabad, Budni, Pachmarhi, Baghai Khor, Bhedaghat Maheshwar etc.

Hunter-Gatherers Today

There were several things in the chapter about the customs, activities and life of the hunting people. How do we know all this? We haven't met these people who lived



Fig. 12 This picture shows a person of the hunting-gathering Chenchu tribe of Andhra Pradesh. Even today, these people live by hunting and gathering. They live in caves, or huts made of grass and twigs. Look at the picture and point out the differences between the ancient hunter-gatherers and the Chenchus.

thousands of years ago! We can get an idea about them from observing the hunting people of today. There are a few places in the world where hunter-gatherers still live. In India, such people live in the Andaman Islands, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and even Madhya Pradesh.

Some people have gone to live amidst them in order to get to know more about their life style. They have told us many things about their customs and inter-relationships and other aspects of their lives. From this we can understand more about how people lived many thousands of years ago.

EXERCISES

(Write the answers to all questions in your own words)

1. The title of this lesson is "The Hunting-Gathering People." Different parts of the lesson give information about different topics. For example, food, clothes and living arrangements are described in the first part under the sub-title, 'Food, Clothing and Shelter.'

How many sections does the lesson have? Choose one or two main points from each part and write 10 - 12 important (main) facts about the hunting-gathering people.

2. Give two similarities and two differences between the food of the hunting-gathering people and your own food.
3. What were the tasks performed by women hunter-gatherers?
4. You read two stories about the hunting-gathering people. Try to write your own story about them. Complete the story given below :

Long time ago, in a band of hunter-gatherers, there was a woman called Sama. Along with other women in the band, she used to gather fruits, roots and tubers. Whenever anybody asked her, she would give whatever she had collected. One day she thought, "Let me dry all the fruits and seeds I gather. If I keep doing that, I will be able to collect a whole lot of food. Then I can relax." So, she began to dry some fruits. BUT.....

5. This is a picture of a period long after that of the hunting-gathering people.

What are these people hunting with? Which are the wild animals in the picture? What weapons do the hunters have? What are they made of? What are the clothes of the hunters made of? Where must they be living? Would their food come entirely from hunting? Do these people belong to a hunting-gathering society?



This chapter is in English. But in those days, the languages we know today were not spoken. People certainly used to speak, but we do not know exactly which language they used.