

THE NEOLITHIC MAN OR NEW STONE AGE (4000-1800 BC)

The next period is called the Neolithic Age. This term is also derived from two Greek words meaning 'new stone'. The significance of this name lies in the fact that in this age too, man had to depend solely on stone implements and was ignorant of any metals, except gold. However, their implements were very different from those of the preceding stones other than quartzite and these were not merely chipped, but were clean, bright, finished and shiny. Remains of Neolithic men are found almost every part of India including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Bengal and Orissa to Maharashtra (as per recent political map of India). By then, man was familiar with agriculture and was later and it

Cultivating wheat, barley, maize and many types of vegetables. The Neolithic man was not nomadic, but learnt to construct huts and also domesticate animals. He also, weaved cloth from wool and cotton. Special tombs called dolmen (consisting of three or more stone props in a circle supporting a massive roof stone) are dated to this age. Evidence of domestication of animals, adoption of agriculture, permanent village settlements and wheel turned pottery dating back to the middle of the sixth millennium BC has been found in the foothills of Sindh and Baluchistan (or Balochistan in the current Pakistani usage), both in the present day Pakistan. Neolithic settlements have also been found in the Kashmir valley at Burzahom and Gufkral. The people of Burzahom lived in pits and persisted on hunting and fishing economy. They made bone tools. Here, the evidence of domestic dogs buried with their master has been found. Piklihal in Andhra Pradesh is also an important Neolithic site.

The thread of the story interrupted at Langhnaj (northern Gujarat) may be picked up in Baluchistan (Pakistan). This is a transitional zone lying between the higher inland plateau of central Asia and the low flat plains of Sindh. Not only was the Quetta Valley extensively inhabited in the pre-historic times, but at a site like Kili Ghul Mohammad near Quetta, a cultural development is found. Here, four periods have been identified. During the earliest period dating back to approximately fourth millennium BC the people lived in mud brick houses, used chert and bone tools and

domesticated sheep or goat. Some kind of crop production also existed. In the next period, hand-made, basket-impressed ware came into use. In the third period however, we see two distinctive elements which seem to form, along with the above mentioned chert tools, the diagnostic trails of the succeeding culture for a long time.

The people of the Stone Age suffered from one limitation. Because they had to depend entirely on and weapons made of stone, they could not find settlements far away from the hilly areas. They could settle down only in the hilly river valleys.

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