

**e- Content**  
**M.A Semester III (2020)**  
**Code-GEO – M 303 ( CC-12)**  
**Human and Social Geography**  
**Unit III**

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**CULTURAL EVOLUTION OF MAN**

A culture can be defined as a way of life, a population, all the ways of doing various things, all kinds of behavior that are learnt and transmitted through generations. The language, religion, beliefs, skills, taboos, architecture, music and even food preferences are part of the culture. People express their culture in the way they communicate. Exploitation of resources, architecture and art are all part of the culture. Culture is not the result of biological inheritance and is not the result of some basic and primitive instincts.

Biological and cultural evolution are closely interlinked and man is the result of interaction between the two.

The greatest prehistoric achievement, his dispersal across the earth, his adaptation to enormous environments and growth in numbers. In the initial stage man acquired rudiments of knowledge of the environmental conditions. This promoted increase in numbers and ability to survive in a series of primordial environments.

Man is basically a Pleistocene's principal product. The first way he separated himself from other mammals by standing erect. This large primate added meat to his diet. He started running on hind legs and was able to add meat to his diet and had time for play, exploration and

inquisitiveness. Thus he started certain activities not previously attempted by other forms of life. Out of such events as social co-operation in food gathering, communication through gestures and sharing of food ,human culture emerged.

Before the end of Pliocene our primate ancestors had adapted to habitual tool using erect posture, which resulted in freeing of hands, and during the Pleistocene that followed our ancestors , as there brain increased adapted to the manufacture of tools designed and consistent purpose. As cultural tool making became the mark of man it also became the method by which man could refashion the earth's surface into human habitat. It is now recognized that 'Homohabilis' of Pleistocene was the earliest maker of tools. These tools were made of stone, wood, shell and bone. Man in this period was a food gatherer and he had to be always on the move in search of food.

The greatest of man's triumph the leading to subsequent success was discovery , utilization and control of fire . This exceeded tool making in importance. Exploiting fire long ago became one of the few universal traits of human culture. Fire made possible not only an extension of man's range over the earth from the sub-tropics to the higher latitudes., but also one of the cultural achievements that improved his chances of slowly increasing his number, maintaining kin group solidarity and further differentiating himself from other forms.

The creation of shelter was man's next important cultural achievement. Creating shelter helped him in adapting him in different environment's more extreme than those of the tropics and enables him to extend vastly his range over the earth .

Next was the evolution of 'Homo sapiens Neanderthalensis'. Neanderthal man was the creator of Mousterian culture (multifunctional tool). This is the first man we know to have lived in truly cold climate. They survived through the cold winters by use of clothing, shelter and control of fire.

Another measure of their cultural advancement is indicated by their development of the custom of human burial. Throughout the long Pleistocene man's survival depended on his skills of locating and securing food that grew through as a result of natural biotic process. In post glacial stage cultural breakthrough was achieved towards food production, based in part on crop growing and domesticating animals. The early man therefore, passed through five stages of food obtaining technology namely unspecialized food gathering, unspecialized food collecting, specialised food gathering, specialized food collecting and incipient food production.

Early man did not know the happenings of nature, fear of unknown, quest for assurance, faith in existence of supreme power religion lack of comprehension lies the origin of all formations of religious systems as such. As such.

The belief in natural objects started as belief in spirits, magic, rituals, mysticism and formal ceremonies. He later felt the need of god or gods and for systems for interpretation of faith and produce a social group of people larger than a family. This social group is . Thus social grouping by religious system is one of the basic structural pattern of human life. Religious social groupings became a regional phenomena. later strong cultural elements formed the cultural system. Religious pattern became dominant element in differentiation of culture all over the

globe .Once getting established the social group tend to develop a feeling of territoriality.’ A number of social groups and tribes evolved and developed friendly and unfriendly relationship.with each other.

Uptil now everything man did depended on his muscle.Later mass production task needed a large number of people over period of time . Development of axe and spear reduced dependence on human labour. Once domestication of animals started man acquired another work agent. The process of power application extended in many ways . In course of time man learnt to use the power of winds, running water and so on.

With all these achievements man began sedentary life and consequently increased his numbers. He developed means of communication and evolved various religious and cultural systems. Animal domestication was followed by plant domestication and it resulted in beginning of agriculture. He later developed cropping system. From shifting type, agriculture became sedentary in nature and wholly mechanized. His tools improved and finally engaged in modern machine building. Processing of raw material started with excess agricultural production and textile industry was the oldest industry started. Parallel to those developments were development of in the field of language and scripts culminating in the modern printing technology. All these developments accompanied by development of settlement of urban kind gave rise to the civilization of not only the old days but also of the modern era. Thus cultural evolution has involved a lot of processes and the accompanying result .

