
UNIT 1 HUNTING AND GATHERING

Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Evolution of Modern Humans
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

Life on earth began about 3000 million years ago. The life which started from a simple cell form developed into complex living beings in thousands of species. All these living beings have been changing and developing over time. The present day humans have also evolved from primates who lived about 55 million years ago. They had some characteristics similar to us. Till about the end of the 18th century it was believed that all life on earth has existed as it is since the beginning of life and that all life including plants and animals was the creation of God in this form. It was only in the late 18th and early 19th century that scientists began to put forward the views that the nature and life have changed over millions of years. It was argued that the present life forms have evolved through various forms and that many of these are now extinct. When Charles Darwin (1809-1892) put forward the theory of biological evolution in 1860, it influenced the thinking of large number of scientists and scholars. Now, the evolution of modern humans from a common ancestor was an area which became focus of researches and a number of discoveries were reported from different parts of the world. With the help of archaeological findings and anthropological researches it can be said with some amount of certainty that modern humans have had many ancestors with common biological characteristics. The whole question of human evolution has two major aspects. The first is the biological evolution and the second social and cultural evolution. The former is to be studied mainly through the changes which have taken place in the facial features, musculature, the structure of bones, limbs, toes, fingers, and size of brain etc. of humans from the earliest forms. The latter is concerned with the changes in the way humans adapted to their immediate environment to arrange their food, the way they lived, their interaction and communication with fellow humans etc. through various phases and forms of their biological evolution.

Before you move on to study the above referred two aspects of human evolution we would like you to carefully go through the methods and sources which we have discussed along with the introduction of Block 1. Apart from the sources