

All the whole
community. sharing of
food serves



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

All societies used this subsistence strategy of hunting and gathering until only two thousand years ago. Even today there are still a handful of isolated peoples who still continue this style of life. Example: (i) Aranda of the Central Australian desert; (ii) The San people of Kalahari Desert in Southern Africa, (iii) Itibamute Eskimos, (iv) Bushmen of Southwestern Africa

1. Small in Size: Hunting and gathering societies consist of very small but scattered groups. The environment in which they live cannot support a large concentration of people. They depend upon whatever food they can find or catch from one day to the next.

They live in small primary groups and sometimes their number does not even exceed 40-50 members.

2. Nomadic in Nature: These people are constantly on the move because they have to leave one area as soon as they have exhausted its food resources.

3. Not Desire to Acquire Wealth: There is no strong desire among these people to acquire wealth for two main reasons: (i) Firstly, no individual can acquire wealth for there is no wealth to be acquired (ii) Secondly, sharing is a norm in such societies.

Hence, people who do find substantial food resources are expected to share it with the whole community. Sharing of food serves as a "social insurance" for it guarantees the one who shares his surplus today, some food tomorrow, from some one particularly when his collection is not good.

4. Family and Kinship are the only defined Institutions: Hunting and gathering people have the only interconnected social institutions which are somewhat well defined namely; family and kinship. Family is all in all for these people. Educating the young, economic production, protection of the members of the group and such functions [which are normally looked into by the specialised institutions

in the other established societies] are performed by the family itself. Kinship is also important in the sense most of these groups are based on kinship, with most of their members being related by ancestry or marriage.

The entire society is organised around kinship ties, which means the idea of individual families existing as distinct units within society is unknown. 5.

Absence of Political Institution: In these institutions the difference between the ruler and the ruled is not there, because political institutions are not found here. Statuses in these societies are essentially equal and hence the difference between the leader and followers is not there. Most decisions are made through group discussion. Warfare is unknown to these people, partly because they have virtually no property and therefore have very little to fight out. 6. **Limited or No Division of Labour:** There is no scope for division of labour in these societies except along the lines of age and sex.

Men and women, young and old perform different roles, but there are no specialised occupational roles. There is gender-based division of labour but there is no gender inequality as such. Most people do much the same things most of the time. Hence they share common life experiences and values.

Production is communal and co-operative and the distribution system is based on sharing. 7. **Constant Need to Face Danger:** Some hunters and gatherers constantly face the danger of extinction in a struggle against adverse environments.

Among the Itibamute Eskimos, for example, a family's fate rests in the hands of the father, who must find and catch the game, build the house and maintain the family. Hunting and gathering people in order to eke out their

living in the natural set up, must command a complex knowledge of the plants, animals, environmental conditions, and seasonal changes in the environment. 8. Simple Religious Belief: Religion is not developed among these people into a complex institution. Their religion does not include a belief in a powerful god or gods who are active in human affairs. On the contrary, they tend to see the world as populated by unseen spirits that must be taken into account but not necessarily worshipped. It is clear from the above description, though the hunting and gathering lifestyle seems alien to us, it appears to have been the most common form of society for most of the history of our human species.