

While poor soil,
horticulture is more
common as



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While herding is common in areas with poor soil, horticulture is more common as a means of subsistence in regions with fertile soil. But the horticultural societies first appeared at about the same time as pastoral societies. Examples for horticultural societies: (i) Gururumba Tribe in New Guinea, (ii) Masai people of Kenya. 1.

Domestication of Plants: Horticulturists specialise in the domestication of plants such as wheat, rice, etc. The simplest horticulturalists cultivate manually with hoes or digging sticks in relatively small gardens without using the metal tools and weapons. More advanced horticultural societies have metal tools and weapons and not ploughs. Like hunting-gathering societies, horticultural societies are just subsistence societies. 2. Slash and Burn

Technology: The subsistence strategy of the horticulturists is typically based on a “ slash and burn ” technology. This is a type of strategy in which people clear areas of land, burn the trees and plants they have cut down, raise crops for 2 or 3 years until the soil is exhausted and then repeat the process elsewhere. Horticulture is essentially an alternative to pastoralism and depending upon the environmental factors people select one or the other” If the soil and climate favour crop cultivation, horticulture is more likely to be adopted.

It is found that many horticultural societies still exist in Africa, Asia, South America, and Australia. 3. Horticulturalists are better settled than

Pastoralists: Unlike the pastoralists, horticulturalists are relatively better settled, although periodically they must move short distances.

They develop settlements that have larger populations and stay in one place longer before they migrate in search of better conditions. 4. Relatively More Complex Division of Labour: This society assures better food supply and the possibility of surplus. Existence of surplus leads to specialisation of roles. It means that some people no longer have to work at food production, and hence, specialised statuses and roles appear such as those of Shaman [religious leader] trader, or craft worker. Advanced horticultural societies sometimes consisting of as many as 5000 people [and sometimes even more], support specialists producing and trading with a variety of products such as boats, salt, volcanic glass, shells, pottery, war weapons, utensils and even textiles. 5. Emergence of Political Institutions: The surplus production allows some wealthy individuals to become more powerful than others.

This leads to the emergence of political institutions in the form of chieftainships. Warfare is more common in the horticultural societies. Since it is more convenient and easier to steal one's neighbour's goods or property than to produce one's own, giving protection to wealth and property becomes a necessity.

This situation necessitated warfare. In fact, horticultural societies are also the first known societies to support the institution of slavery. 6.

Creation of Relatively Elaborate Cultural Artefacts: Since these people live in comparatively permanent settlements, they can create more elaborate cultural artefacts. These could consist of, for example, houses, thrones, or large stone sculptures. Their settled way of life also contributes to greater complexity in social structure and a more diverse and elaborates material

culture. 7. Some Rare Practices: One important feature of the horticultural societies is that some rare practices such as cannibalism, headhunting, and human sacrifice are found exclusively in a few horticultural societies, “Cannibalism usually involves either eating one’s deceased relatives as an act of piety or eating one’s enemy’s skin as an act of ritual revenge. The successful hunting of heads is taken as evidence of the courage and skill of the warrior.

The emergence of human sacrifice coincides with a change in the nature of religious beliefs.” In the more advanced horticultural societies, political and economic institutions become well developed as conquest and trade, link various villages together.