

2 Quaternary Period :

This Period began one million years ago is continuing upto present. This Period is called the age of man and is divided into two epochs.

(i) Pleistocene: This epoch began one million years ago and is continuing upto present about ten thousand years B.C.

This epoch witnessed four times glaciation alternating with warmer intervals. Wide spread glaciation lowered the sea level. Ice was formed in the polar regions and on the mountains in temperate parts and the high altitudes. When ice retreated during warmer intervals, various lakes like the Swiss lakes and those of Northern Italy, English and Scottish lakes and Great Lakes between eastern Canada and the United States were formed.

The repeated glaciation and the cold weather caused diversifications and modification of animals. Saber toothed tigers, ground sloths and mammoths became extinct. Hairy elephants, woolly rhinoceros and cave bears became adapted to cold climate by developing hairs. The erect, bipedal primates appeared during early hours of this epoch. More advanced humanoids appeared and spread widely through the Old World during glacial and interglacial phases. These included *Homo heidelbergensis*, (Heidelberg Germany), *Pithecanthropus pekinensis* (China) and *Pithecanthropus erectus* (Java). The entire Pleistocene epoch was dominated by man.

(ii) Holocene: This is an epoch of ten thousand years B.C. The climate has again become hot during this epoch. Ice formation became reduced. Deserts became spread over large areas. Modern species of man *Homo Sapiens* evolved. Man was forced to cultural evolution and got psychological as well as intellectual during this epoch. Hence this epoch is regarded as the 'age of man'.