

Neanderthal Problem: - The phylogenetic position of the Neanderthal man is a disputed one. Previously it was thought that, they were the direct ancestor of Homo sapiens sapiens. But the reality of the situation is that the Neanderthal people existed side by side with the anatomically fully modern man in South Western Asia and in European. In the Mediterranean zone it is found that the Neanderthal arrived at a later date, some 60 years B.P and coexisted with Homo sapiens sapiens, which had already appeared there much earlier in time 6,000 years B.P. (Mellars et al, 1987).

Three propositions are currently available each of which independently helps to understand the phylogeny of Neanderthal man. These are →

1) The Neanderthal phase of Man Hypothesis: -

The hypothesis argues that the Neanderthal man evolved from a middle Pleistocene period and passed through a Neanderthal phase to give rise to modern man. This view is supported by Widenrich (1943 – 49), Brace (64, 84), Wolpoff (71, 80) and others.

2) The pre-Neanderthal Hypothesis: -

The hypothesis states that Neanderthal emerged from a pre-Neanderthal stock that became progressively specialized adapting to serve cold. Under the tremendous pressure of natural selection, gene flow was restricted leading to the classis Neanderthal isolated, like La-chappelle-sux-saints, La-Ferrassie. This view was supported by Hubbell (57, 75, 78) Le-gros Clark(64), Trinkaus (81).

3) Pre Sapiens hypothesis: -

The European Modern Sapiens lineage exemplified by swanscombe and Steinhein existed quite separately from the Neanderthal which ultimately gave rise to modern Europeans. The Neanderthals however, became extinct after wasis. This view supported by Boule (11, 13, 23), Vallois (54) & Leakey (74) .

The most recent studies of molecular biology (mDNA) help to understand the actual position of the above fossil group. The very recent DNA tests proves that there are different qualities of DNA materials and human DNA. Recent DNA studies by Dr.Svante Paboo (1997) reveal that the unit sequence of mitochondrial DNA of Neanderthal man and modern man differs by 27 units. [Where as in CroMagnon man it differs only by 7 – 8 unit sequences of DNA]

According to Mr. Dobson 'iodine deficiency' among the Neanderthal man explain why they were so easily replaced by the CroMagnon. He argued

that in genetic terms Neanderthal may have been anatomically similar to the modern human who were pathologically altered by the effects of iodine deficiency. (Reference- New York Time Service, 1993)