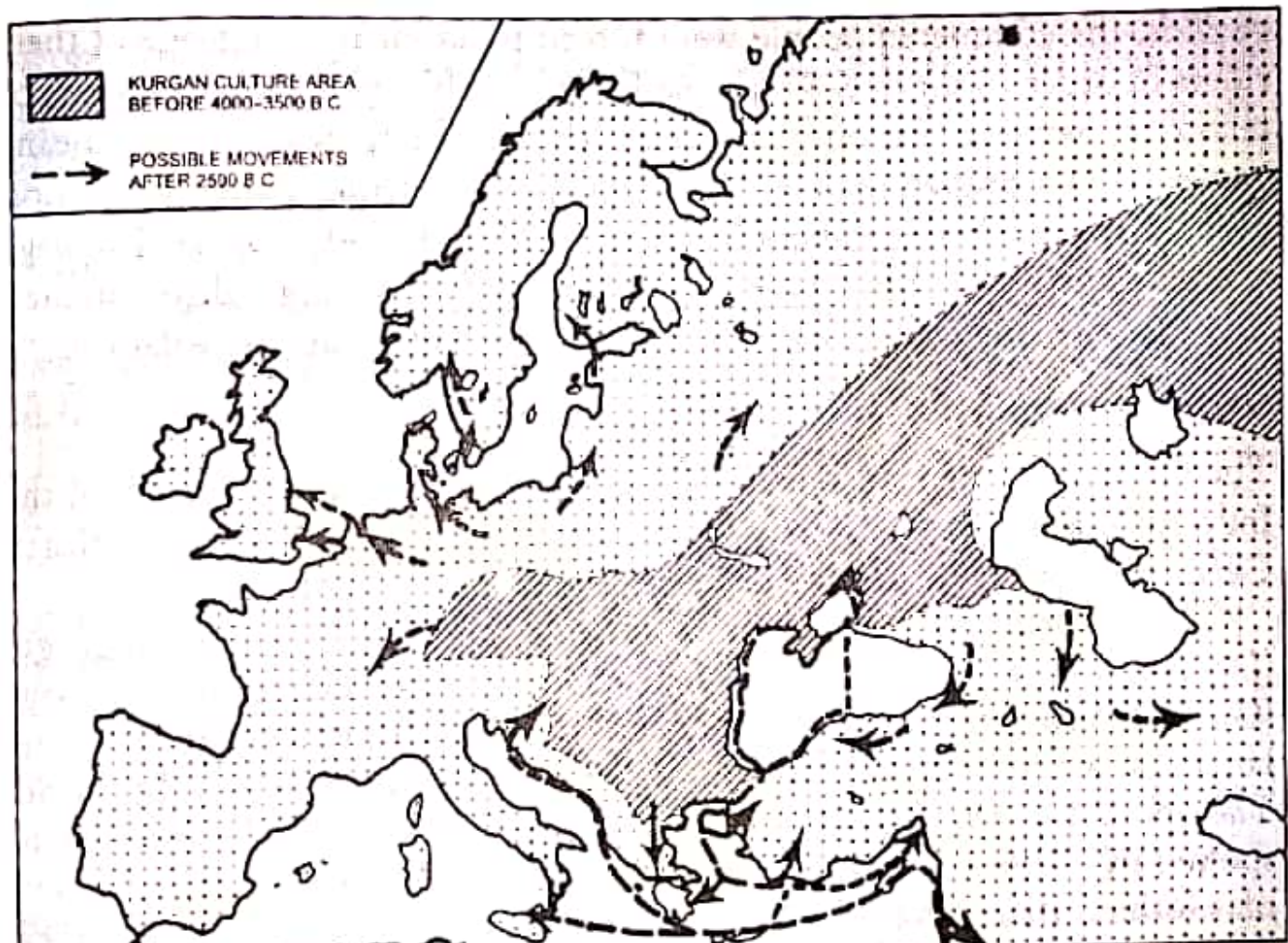


In some seventy years (1558–1625) of literary and linguistic creativity during the reign of Elizabeth and James I, an estimated 12,000 words, based upon borrowing from Latin, Greek and other languages, were introduced. In Urdu language, thousands of words have been borrowed from Persian, Sanskrit, Arabic, Turkish and Hindi languages. The South Indian languages and Bengali language have borrowed a large number of words from Sanskrit language.

Ancestry of Indo-European Languages

The Indo-European languages have a common ancestry. The first speaker of an Indo-European language, which can be called Proto-Indo-European, were Kurgans, whose homeland was in the steppes to the north of Caspian Sea near the Volga river. The earliest archaeological evidence of the Kurgans dates to around 4300 B.C.

Figure 5.3 *Proto-Indo-Europeans*



some animals and trees in the Indo-European languages have common roots, whereas others do not. Similar expressions appear for words like beech, oak, bear, deer, bee and pheasant bird, but there are no such words as elephant, camel, rice and bamboo. The evidence with regard to the homelands of the various animals and trees has helped in pinpointing the origin of the Indo-European languages.

The original speakers of the Proto-Indo-European language, the Kurgans, are known by archaeologists to have had a pastoral economy. Many animals were domesticated, including horses and cattle; but the Kurgans did not have highly developed agriculture.

The Kurgans migrated to other parts of Europe and Asia, taking their language with them. Between 3500 and 2500 B.C., Indo-European warriors moved west through Europe and east to Siberia and south-east to South Asia, conquering the previous occupants of the land. The horse was particularly an effective weapon in the conquest. The Kurgans were evidently looking for additional grasslands for their animals. As in later periods, the conquered people were forced to adopt the language of their rulers in order to survive. While the Kurgans infiltrated a large expanse of territory between Europe and Asia, the territory was by no means governed in a unified manner (Figure 5.3). The various bands were soon isolated from other members of the tribe. The Indo-European language was disseminated across a wide area but became increasingly differentiated into separate languages as a result of generations of complete isolation.

Germanic Family

The Germanic language, including English, constitutes one branch of the Indo-European language family. It has three branches, i.e., North Germanic, East Germanic and West Germanic.

The North Germanic branch includes the Scandinavian languages (Danish, Swedish, Icelandic, Faroese). The East Germanic language (Gothic) also existed in history, but they are now extinct, i.e., the languages are no longer spoken in daily activities by anyone in the world. The main Eastern Germanic language was Gothic. It was used to be spoken in Crimea (Ukraine). The language died because the descendants of Gothic tribe were converted to other languages through political dominance. The West German branch of the Indo-European language includes German, Yiddish, Anglo-Saxon, Modern English, Old Saxon, Dutch and Flenish languages.

Out of the West Germanic languages, English is the most widely used language. It has its origin around 1,500 years back. The land, now known as England, was invaded by the Angles, Jutes and Saxons. The name England is derived from the Angles, and the English language is a fusion

of languages spoken by the three tribes. English is thus a Germanic language and it shares many structural similarities with other Germanic languages. Prior to the invasion of British Isles by Angles and Saxon tribes, Celtic was the main language of the peoples but later on they were pushed to the remote areas of Scotland and Wales.

English was diffused around the world through the establishment of colonies in North and South America, Australia, New Zealand Africa and Asia. At present, English is the lingua franca, one of the important languages of international communication.

The Latin Linguistic Family

The Latin linguistic group is also known as Romance languages. The main languages of this group are French, Italian, Provençal, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan and Romanian.

The rise in importance of the city of Rome was paralleled by a spread of the Latin language. As the Roman armies occupied the greater parts of Europe and Asia Minor, they brought the Latin language with them. The languages spoken by the natives were extinguished or suppressed in favour of the conquerors.

The five most important contemporary Romance (Latin) languages are Spanish, Portuguese, French, Italian and Romanian. An examination of a physical map of Europe provides ample evidence for the development of separate Romance languages, because the Spanish, Portuguese, French and Italian language regions are separated from each other by mountains. In fact, mountains serve as a strong barrier to communications between people living on opposite sides.

Like English, the Latin languages, especially Spanish and Portuguese, have achieved worldwide prominence because of the colonial activities of their speakers. Over 80 per cent of the speakers of these two languages live outside of Europe, mainly in Central and South America. French is the language of France and it has been adopted as a national language in Switzerland, Canada and several countries of Africa. Italian language has its major concentration in Italy, Sicily, Switzerland and some islands in the Mediterranean Sea, while Romanian is the official language of Romania.

Balto-Slavic Languages in Europe

The other Indo-European branch with large numbers of speakers is Balto-Slavic. The Slavic languages are generally divided into east, west and south. As late as the 7th century A.D., the Slavic languages were particularly identical, but differences developed as the Slavic tribes became separated.

The most widely used Slavic languages are eastern ones, primarily Russian which is spoken by about 240 million people, including 80 per cent of the Russian population of the Russia. Russian is one of the five official languages of the United Nations. The other two important Balto-Slavic languages are Ukrainian and Byelorussian (White Russian).

The other west Slavic languages include Polish, Czech and Slovak. The south Slavic languages include Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian and Macedonian. The differences among the various Slavic languages are relatively small with a considerable amount of mutual intelligibility existing among speakers of the different languages.

Indo-Iranian Languages

The Indo-Iranian family include more than one hundred individual languages, spoken by about 800 million people. The branch can be divided into an eastern group—Indic—including speakers primarily in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan; and a western group—Iranian—used by about 50 million people.

Most residents of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan speak an Indo language. In Pakistan, the principal language is Urdu, while in India Hindi is the national language and it is spoken mainly in Northern India. The people of Bangladesh, West Bengal and its adjacent areas speak Bengali.

The main cultural distinction of nearly 900 million people of India is language. India has several hundred languages and eighteen official languages (recognized in the constitution). In general, Indo-European languages are spoken in the northern India, while languages of Dravidian family are used in the south. Languages of the Sino-Tibetan family are found in the North-East and South-East Asian languages are found in Meghalaya, Chotanagpur Plateau and central highlands of India.

Iranian Languages

The western part of Asia uses Indo-European languages as well, including Farsi in Iran, Pashto in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Kurdish (used by the Kurds) in Iran, Iraq and Turkey. These languages are written with Arabic letters.

The language spoken in Sri Lanka is Sinhali which also belongs to the Indo-Iranian family. The Sinhalese-speaking Sri Lankans are Buddhists, whereas the Tamil-speaking are Hindus or Muslims.

Table 5.3 displays the Indo-Iranian branch of languages with more than 5 million speakers.

Table 5.3
World's Living Languages

Language	Speakers (In million)	Language	Speakers (In million)
Hindi	211	Rajasthani	71
Bengali	127	Punjabi	36
Urdu	58	Assamese	13
Punjabi	57	Nepali	10
Marathi	52	Sinhalese	10
Gujarati	30	Sindhi	09
Persian	25	Turdish	07
Oriya	24	Others	13
Bihari	22		

Source: Language families modified from Siegfried H. Muller (1964), *The World's Living Languages*, and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. All figures are for 1976.

Sino-Tibetan Languages

Sino-Tibetan is the language family encompassing the languages of the peoples of Republic of China (the world's most populous nation) as well as many smaller countries in South-East Asia. The most important language of China is Mandarin, which is spoken by about three-fourths of the total population of China. It is the official language of the United Nations. There are four other languages spoken in China, namely, Cantonese, Min, Wu and Hakka. The relatively small number of languages in China, in comparison to India, for example, is a source of national strength and unity.

In addition to the Chinese languages, the Sino-Tibetan language family includes a second branch, known as Tibeto-Burman, used mainly in South-East Asia. The two main languages of the Tibeto-Burman language are Thai and Myanmari (Burmese). Moreover, Japanese and Korean are the other important languages which have been substantially influenced by the Chinese language.

Semito-Hametic Languages N. A.

The Semito-Hametic languages include Arabic and Hebrew, as well as a number of less-used languages found in Northern Africa and South-Western Asia. The international significance of this language family transcends the number of speakers because the languages were used to write the holiest books of two of the four major religions—the Judeo-Christian Bible and the Islamic Holy Quran.

marriage and death; and the obedience to doctrine established by a religious hierarchy, by tradition, or by sacred texts.

Geographers are concerned with the interaction between religion and the landscape. As one of the most important characteristics of culture, religion—the recognition of God as an object of worship, love and obedience—leaves a strong imprint on the natural environment. Religion may be studied as a geographic process, with a point of origin, pattern of diffusion, and current distribution across the earth's surface.

The relationship between physical environment and religion can also be studied. On the one hand, religious content may be derived from events in the physical environment; on the other hand, religious ideas underlie human transformation of the physical environment. Like other cultural characteristics, religion is a source of pride to the people, an identification of a distinct culture. This intense identification with religion has led to conflicts between different religions and secular political organizations.

Religion may intimately affect all facets of a culture, directly or indirectly. Since religions are formalized views about the relation of the individual to this world and to the hereafter, each carries a distinct conception of the meaning and value of this life, and most contain strictures about what one must do to achieve salvation. These rules become interwoven with the traditions of a culture. For example, for Muslims, the observance of *Shariat* (law) is a necessary part of Islam, submission to Allah. In Judaism, the keeping of *Torah*, the law of Moses, involves ritual and moral rules of holy living. For Hindus, the *Dharma*, or teaching, includes the complex laws.

The basic task of human geographers is to study the process by which religion, like other cultural characteristics, is diffused from one location and region to another, resulting in a distinctive spatial distribution. The distribution of a particular religion is generated by process of spatial interaction, as religion is diffused from a point of origin in accordance with a distinctive pattern of communication networks. The process of diffusion of a religion is important to geographers because it is a major force in the spread of cultural values.

Apart from the process of diffusion of religion, the impact of religion on social and cultural practices is also an important area in which human and cultural geographers are exploring. In the opinion of many social geographers, religious belief orthodoxy and conservatism may be taken as the indicators of cultural and socio-economic development.

The impact of religion upon landscape and resource management is quite significant. The historical and contemporary studies also prove that the economic impact of religion is enormous and the peoples of different

faith and ethnicity living in the same environment are utilizing their resources differently.

Classification of Religion

Religion may be classified in a number of ways. Taking the belief in God as the criterion, religion may be *monotheistic* and *polytheistic*. The followers of monotheism believe in a single deity, while the followers of polytheism believe in many gods. This classification is, however, not spatially or regionally relevant. Religion has been classified on the basis of areas of origin; for example, Eastern versus Western, or African, Far Eastern and Indian. With proper detail such distinctions may inform us where particular religions had their roots but not reveal their courses of development, paths of diffusion, or current distributions. These theological or historical classifications are not very useful for geographers. Geographers are mainly concerned with the patterns and processes of diffusion and the spatial distribution of religions (Figure 5.4). Geographers generally classify religions into following:

(a) Universalizing Religions

These include Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. These are the faiths that claim applicability to all humans and that seeks to transmit their beliefs through missionary work and conversion. Membership in universalizing religions is open to anyone who chooses to make some sort of symbolic commitment, such as baptism in Christianity. No one is excluded because of nationality, ethnicity, or previous religious belief.

(b) Ethnic Religions

Ethnic religions have strong territorial and cultural group identification. One becomes a member of an ethnic religion by birth or by adoption or a complex life style and cultural identity, not by simple declaration of faith. These religions, usually, do not proselytize, and their members form distinctive closed communities identified with a particular ethnic group or political unit. An ethnic religion is an integral element of a specific culture. Judaism, Hinduism, and Japanese Shintoism are the examples of ethnic religions.

(c) Tribal or Traditional Religions

Tribal or traditional religions are the special forms of ethnic religions distinguished by their small size, their unique identity with localized culture groups not yet fully absorbed into modern society, and their close ties to nature. The belief of tribal religion is also known as *animism*. The followers of animism believe that life exists in all objects, from rocks and

The most frequently used language in this family is Arabic, the official language of twenty countries of South West Asia and North Africa from Morocco to the Arabian peninsula.

Hebrew, as a native language, is spoken by only about three million people, mainly in Israel. Most of the *Old Testament* was written in Hebrew. Hebrew became extinct as a language in daily activity in the 4th century A.D. but it is being revived after the creation of Israel in 1948.

African Languages

No definitive count has been made of the number of different languages in Africa, nor is there agreement concerning the proper classification of the languages into the families. (Nearly 1,000 distinct languages, as well as several thousand named dialects, have been accounted in Africa.) It has, however, been estimated that only approximately forty of the languages are used by more than one million speakers.

The language picture is relatively clear in the northern part of Africa, where Arabic is widely used, although in a variety of dialects. In the south of the Sahara the pattern is complex and less easily classified. The dominant language family of the south of Sahara is the Negro-Congo, which has six branches, namely, Mande, Gur, Kwa, Adamawa and Benue-Congo.

The Nilo-Saharan languages are used in north-central Africa, just north of the Niger-Congo area. The Khoisan language family is found in south-western Africa. In Nigeria alone, there are more than 200 languages, the most widely used language is Hausa. Yoruba and Ibo are the other important languages of Nigeria. In Tanzania and East African countries, Swahili is the official language. The Swahili language was originally developed by the Arab traders and has Arabic influence. Swahili is one of the few languages with extensive literature.

Religion

Religion knows neither frontiers nor geographical barriers with the exception of tribal religions which, though differing from one another in form and ritual, all seek to explain the mystery of life by insisting that nature is animated by spirits, most religions have, for one reason or another, spread beyond the lands of their origin.

Religion has been defined differently by various scholars. In the 18th century, Friedrich Schleiermacher defined religion as "feeling of absolute dependence"—absolute as contrasted to other, relative feelings of dependence. William James called religion as "the enthusiastic temper of rapture". Such definition appears to be more usually applicable to primitive Asian religions than belief-oriented ones.

Otto defines the essence of religious experience as pure, unimpeded belief of fear and fascination before the divine. The main characteristics of religious life are: (i) traditionalism, (ii) myth and symbol, (iii) language of salvation, (iv) sacred places and objects, (v) sacred writings, (vi) sacred rituals, (vii) sacred community (ecclesiastic order), and (viii) the sacred experience.

Religion, like language, is a symbol of group identity and a cultural rallying point. All societies have value systems—common beliefs, understandings, expectations, and controls—that unite their members and set them off from other different cultural groups. Such a value system is termed as a religion when it involves systems of formal or informal worship and faith in the sacred and divine. A religion may involve prescribed patterns enunciated in the ancient book of Manu. Ethics of conduct and human relations rather than religious rituals are central to the Confucian tradition of China, while the Sikh Khanda, or holy community, is defined by various rules of observance, such as prohibiting the cutting of one's hair.

The non-religious values like Marxism also affect the man and environment relationship. The Russian political ideologies (communism), for example, have a quasi-religious role. They have many of the elements of a religion, including a set of beliefs, ethical standards, revered leaders, an organization and a body of literature akin to holy scriptures. In addition, the adherents of communism may display an almost religious zeal and fervour in their desire to proselytize (convert non-believers) and to root out heretical and orthodox beliefs and practices. Even the societies that are officially atheistic, however, are strongly influenced by traditional values and customs set by predecessor religions in days of work and rest. Thus, beliefs mould the mode of life of people, their exploitation and management of resources, consumer behaviour and their interaction with natural environment.

The food habits, clothing, shelter and higher needs of peoples are also closely influenced by religious beliefs. For example, religious restrictions on food and drink may affect the kinds of animals that are raised or avoided, the crops that are grown, and the importance of those crops, cattle and animal in the daily diet. The occupational assignment in the Hindu caste system (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras) is religiously supported. In many countries, there is a state religion, i.e., religion and political structures are intertwined. Buddhism, for example, has been the state religion in Myanmar (Burma), Laos and Thailand. By their official names, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran proclaim their identity of religion and government behaviour, including regular prayer; special rites marking birth, puberty,