

Fundamentals of Human Geography

Chapter -1 Human Geography Nature and Scope

Key Notes:

- The core concern of geography as a discipline is to understand the earth as home of human beings and to study all those elements which have sustained them
- Its emphasis is on study of nature and human beings
- Geography as a field of study is integrative, empirical and practical
- It studies each and every event on the earth over the space and time
- Geography can be studied through law making or descriptive
- Both physical and human phenomena are described in metaphors using symbols from the human anatomy
- German geographers describe the 'state/country' as a 'living organism'. Networks of road, railways and water ways have often been described as "arteries of circulation".

There are two approaches of geography a. Systematic approach and b. Regional approach

- According to Ratzel, "Human geography is the synthetic study of relationship between human societies and earth's surface."
- According to Ellen C Sample, "Human geography is the study of "the changing relationship between the unresting man and the unstable earth."
- According to Paul Vidal De la Blache, "Conception resulting from a more synthetic knowledge of the physical laws governing our earth and of the relations between the living beings which inhabit it".

NATURE OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

- Human geography studies the inter-relationship between the physical environment and socio- cultural environment created by human beings through mutual interaction with each other
- Houses, villages, cities, road-rail networks, industries, farms, ports, items of our daily

use and all other elements of material culture have been created by human beings using the resources provided by the physical environment

Naturalisation of Humans

- Man interact with nature with the help of technology
- It is not important that what he creates but with what tools he used to create
- Technology indicates the level of cultural development of society
- Human beings were able to develop technology after they developed better understanding of natural laws
- In the early stages of their interaction with their natural environment humans were greatly influenced by it. They adapted to the dictates of Nature. This is so because the level of technology was very low and the stage of human social development was also primitive. This type of interaction between primitive human society and strong forces of nature was termed as Environmental determinism
- Primitive societies which live incomplete harmony with their natural environment
- Nature is a powerful force, worshipped, revered and conserved. There is direct dependence of human beings on nature for resources which sustain them. The physical environment for such societies becomes the “Mother Nature
- It is the theory that the environment sets certain constraints or limitations, but culture is otherwise determined by social conditions
- A geographer, Griffith Taylor introduced another concept which reflects a middle path (Madhyam Marg) between the two ideas of environmental determinism and possibilism. He termed it as Neodeterminism or stop and go determinism

Humanisation of nature

- With the development of technology people understood the nature well
- They move from state of necessity to state of possibilities
- Human activities created cultural landscape
- The concept shows that neither is there a situation of absolute necessity (environmental determinism) nor is there a condition of absolute freedom (possibilism)
- It means that human beings can conquer nature by obeying it

Human Geography through the Corridors of Time

- If we imagine the beginning of human geography with the interaction of environment and human beings, it has its roots deep in history
- The concerns of human geography have a long temporal continuum though the approaches to articulate them have changed over time
- This dynamism in approaches and thrusts shows the vibrant nature of the discipline
- For example, in the late 15th century witnessed attempts of explorations in Europe and slowly the myths and mysteries about countries and people started to open up
- The colonial period provided impetus to further explorations in order to access the resources of the regions and to obtain inventorised information
- The intention here is not to present an in-depth historical account but to make you aware of the processes of steady development of human geography

Fields and Sub-fields of Human Geography

- Human geography assumes a highly inter-disciplinary nature
- It develops close interface with other sister disciplines in social sciences in order to understand and explain human elements on the surface of the earth

Fields of human geo	Sub field	Sister disciplines
Social geography	---	Social science-Sociology
	Behavioral geography	Psychology
	Geography of social well being	Welfare economics
	Geography of leisure	Sociology
	Cultural geography	Anthropology
	Gender geography	Sociology, anthropology, women studies
	Historical geography	History
	Medical geography	Epidemiology

Urban geography	---	Urban studies and planning
Political geography	---	Political science
	Electoral geography	Psephology
	Military geography	Military science
Population geography	---	Demography
Settlement geography	---	Urban and rural planning
Economic geography	---	Economics
	Geography of resources	Resource economics
	Geography of Agriculture	Agricultural science
	Geography of industries	Industrial economics
	Geography of marketing	Business studies, economics, commerce
	Geography of tourism	Tourism and travel management
	Geography of international trade	International trade