

Chapter - 1

Human Geography : Nature and Scope

Human Geography : Meaning and Definition

Human geography is considered to be the fundamental branch of geography. Geography is a science of areal description in which facts are studied in regional context. Geography as a field of study is an integrational, empirical and pragmatic, in which the place and time of an event is studied in geographical relation. Geography studies the earth as a human home and studies all those facts which have supported the life of human beings. It emphasizes the study of nature and human beings. These are inseparable elements and it should be visualized as a whole. Due to these two fundamental components geography is divided in two different branches ie. Physical Geography and Human Geography. Physical Geography studies the physical environment. Human Geography studies relations between physical environment and cultural environment, the spatial distribution of human happenings and social and economic differentiations in the different parts of the world. In other words, human geography is the study of humans and their environmental powers, effects and reactions of mutually functional relations on regional basis. Human geography can be understood from the following line of given poem.

**“Human facts are studied in Human geography
It shows the inter-relations between human and environment.**

Agriculture, animal husbandry, industry are being done!

Transportation, communication and trade are studied under it.”

Origin and development of human geography is predominantly from the 18th century. Many geographers have defined human geography in their own way. Some important definitions are as follows:-

According to the German Geographer, Friedrich Ratzel, the father of modern human geography.

“Human Geography, is a synthetic study of relationships between human societies and the surface of earth” Ratzel has given this definition in his book “Anthropogeography”. He has explained the relation between man and environment in this definition. He described the effects of environment on human activities with emphasis on terrestrial unity.

According to Miss Ellen Churchill Semple, a pupil of Ratzel and famous American Geographer “Human Geography is a study of the changing relationship between the unresting man and the unstable earth”.

Ellen Semple was the staunch supporter of determinism though her definition is more wide than other determinists. Man has been an active living

being right from his primitive stage of development. All his activities had an effect on the environment. Vidal de la Blache, a famous French human geographer who laid Stone of possibilism. According to him “Human geography offers a new conception of the inter-relationships between earth and man in which a more synthetic knowledge of physical laws governing our earth and the relation between the living beings which inhabit it is included”.

According to Dicken and Pitts “Human Geography is looked upon as the study of man and his works”.

Definition : Human geography is that science in which mutual relation of cause and effects and reaction of natural and cultural environment of human groups in different region of the earth and local groups are studied on the regional basis.

Nature of Human Geography

According to famous geographer Jean Brunhes, “Just as economics is concerned with price, geology is concerned with rocks, botany is concerned with plant, ethnography is concerned with castes, history is concerned with time, in the same way the place is the central point of geography in which it try to answer the important question like, 'Where' and Why.”

Any Man made phenomenon on earth surface is studied under human geography. So the human activities are the central point in the nature of the geography. Where, when and how the human activities took place is studied from the geographical view point that shows the nature of human geography.

Human Geography remains focused on the ecological adjustment of various regions and the study of regional organization. This is analyzed in human geography that human group residing in any region being what changes in environment take place and how they use environment for their

biological, economic, social and cultural development human geography creates strategic arrangement of population, region and resources. Human beings adapt the activities and living condition according to their environment. Thus we see that human geography is specific regional studies of all the critical facts and mutual relation of humans and environment with respect to time with man in the central position.

Scope of Human Geography

In human geography -1. Population 2. Natural resources 3. Cultural landscape and beliefs of life and 4. their mutual relation of different regions are studied with the aim of human welfare and development.

Subject Matter of Human Geography

Huntington divided the subject matter of human geography into two sections : (i) Physical conditions and (ii) Human responses.

The Subject area of human geography is very vast.

The different aspect of human geography has been shown in the following diagram.

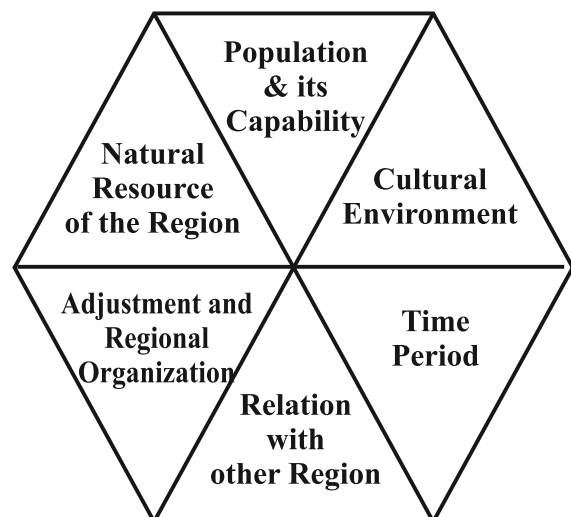


Diagram 1.1 : Subject area of Human Geography

The main aspects of human geography are as following in brief:-

1. Population

Human geography analyses distribution of population, agglomeration, migration, settlement and race wise social structure in historical context.

2. Natural Resources of the Region

The study of different elements and effect of elements on human activities are carried out. It consists the study of natural resources, land, water, forest and minerals.

3. Cultural Environment

Cultural elements show the inter-relationship between human and environment. Thus it studies the adaptation of living things and human with environment, the source of livelihood, transportation, building material and settlement etc.

4. Time Period

Human Society and their geographical relations are not static. With cultural development of human they become successively elastic and dynamic.

5. Adjustment and Regional Organization

The geographer does not only know just that how human conditions are distributed but it is necessary to know how the distribution has been done so in such a specific manners. In the study of human geography, study the human environment in the future relation to the environment. Nature is becoming unbalanced due to unbalanced development. So environmental planning has become an integral part of human geography.

6. Relation with other Region

Man is not an isolated being on the earth. He also has economic, social, cultural and political relationships with other region. This relationship is also studied in human geography.

Development of Human Geography

The process of adaptation with environment and adjustment and its modification had started from the beginning of human origin on the earth. If

we imagine the starting of the origin of human geography with mutual activities related to human and environment then we find that its roots are very deep. There is change in approaches in due course. For the sake of study, the development of human geography is divided into three eras.

1. Ancient Period

Interaction between different societies in ancient period were few. Knowledge about others was limited. The standard of technological development was too less and there was just natural environment all around. The people of ancient civilization of India, China, Egypt, Greek and Rome believed in the effect of natural powers. In Vedas, the sun, air, fire, water, rain etc. were worshiped by believing them as god. Greek philosopher Thales and Anaximander described climate, plants and human societies. Aristotle told that the people of cold region were brave but bit weak in thinking while the people of Asia were dull but contemplative. Historian Herodotus described the effect of environment on nomadic races and permanent farming races. Hecataeus managed the available geographical knowledge about the world.

That's why he is known as the father of geography. Strabo and his contemporary Roman geographers clearly mentioned the effects of geo-ecological state on human and their progress.

2. Medieval Period

During this period, mystery and secrets started to open about the country and people due to navigation discoveries and proficiency of technology. Colonization and trade interest brought broad knowledge of the world due to invention and discoveries of new regions. During this period emphasis was given on invention and regional analysis. All the sectors of regions were broadly described in regional analysis. It was believed that all the regions are perfect unit and parts of the earth. It will help the people to understand the earth by understanding the regions.

3. Modern Period

This period began with introduction of German Geographer Humboldt, Ritter, Frobel, Pastel, Richthofen. Most of the development of human geography took place in France.

Ratzel, Vidal-De-La Blache, Brunhes, Demartin, Dementia and Frobel wrote many books on human geography. Human geography has developed rapidly in the United States and Great Britain Ellen Semple, Huntington, Bowman, Carl 'o' Sauer, Griffith Taylor in America and Herbertson, Mackinder, Rocks and fluar in Britain contributed more in the development of human geography. In 20th century human geography developed in every country.

Frederick Raetzel, who is called founder of modern human geography laid emphasis on synthetic study of human societies and mutual relationship with the surface of the earth. In the beginning of this period, environmental relationship were studied according to determinism, possibilism and neo-determinism. Man was supposed to be more effective in possibilism and nature was effective in determinism. In the beginning of 21st century, according to neo-determinism, it has laid emphasis on the close relationship between nature and the man. The line of thinking is known as “Stop and Go”. The determinism concept of neo-determinism was put forth by Griffith Taylor.

In the 1930, human geography was divided into cultural geography and economic geography. Due to increasing specialization, human geography was divided in many sub division like political geography, Social geography and medical geography.

Between period of two world wars special attention was given to the study of areal differentiation.

In the two decades after world war II, scope of human geography was to understand patterns of different human activities by spatial organization

approach.

After 1970, Human welfare approach related to social welfare of different sides of people like health, education, habitant, etc. According to behaviorism at the time of economic activities a man does not think only for his economic profit but his many decisions are based on realistic environment rather than mental map. Change in thoughts came into existence due to partial change in the standard of analytical changes. In 21st century in human geography the usefulness of “General Body Theory” and the “Globalizing Theory” that explain the human conditions are being questioned. But in itself it is being emphasized in the importance of every local context. Thus, human geography has been always dynamic with development. Its importance, nature of study and relation with other subjects are increasing with time. Today, the study of this important branch of geography is done in the whole world.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Geography is a science of areal descriptions in which facts are studied in regional context.
2. There are two branches of geography - Physical geography and human geography.
3. Human geography is the science in which people of different groups in different regions are studied on the basis of power of natural and cultural environment of effects, mutual relations of reactions and local communities.
4. Human geography studies complx nature of mutual relations in a particular place of man and environment with time, keeping man in central position.
5. Huntington has divided human geography into two groups physical condition and human response.
6. With the time, there has been a change in the approaches that explain the topic of human geography.

7. The development of human geography has been divided into three eras for the sake of study.

EXERCISE

Multiple Choice Type Questions

1. Who is the father of modern human geography?
(a) Humboldt (b) Ritter
(c) Ratzel (d) Huntington
2. "Human geography is the study of changing relationship between unresting man and unstable earth." Who gave this definition?
(a) Ratzel (b) Ellen Semple
(c) Blache (d) Carl O Sauer
3. Who was the founder of neo-determinism?
(a) Griffith Taylor (b) Blache
(c) Mackinder (d) Herbertson
4. Who is not a French geographer out of the following?
(a) Blache (b) Brunches
(c) Demanzia (d) Ritter

Very Short Answer Type Questions

5. Name the tri-equilibrium factors of human geography?
6. Name the book written by Ratzel?
7. Who gave the concept of possibilism?
8. Name the famous centres of ancient civilization?

Short Answer Type Questions

9. Name the five sub-division of human geography?
10. Describe the nature of human geography?
11. Describe the development of human geography in medieval period?

Essay Type Questions

12. Describe the scope of human geography?
13. Describe the development of human geography in modern period?