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Sanjiv

Refresher

GEOGRAPHY

Class-XII

- Fundamentals of Human Geography
- India – People and Economy
- Practical Work in Geography Part-II

For English Medium Students

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Geography—Class 12

Fundamentals of Human Geography (Part-I)

Unit - I

1

Human Geography : Nature and Scope

SUMMARY

Nature of Human Geography : Physical geography studies physical environment while human geography studies “the relationship between the physical/natural and the human worlds, the spatial distributions of human phenomena and how they come about, the social and economic differences between different parts of the world”. The elements of the physical environment are landforms, soil, climate, water and natural vegetation etc.

Naturalisation of Humans and Humanisation of Nature : Human beings interact with their physical environment with the help of technology. Technology indicates the level of cultural development of society. Knowledge about Nature is extremely important to develop technology and technology loosens the shackles of environment on human beings. In the early stages of their interaction with their natural environment humans were greatly influenced by it. They adapted to the dictates of Nature 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’.

The Relationship between Nature and Man in the Early Stages : In the primitive societies, the man used to live in complete harmony with their natural resources. The physical environment for such societies becomes the “Mother Nature”. The people begin to understand their environment and the forces of nature with the passage of time. With social and cultural development, humans develop better and more efficient technology. He moves ahead to a state of freedom.

Possibilism : Human beings have obtained information about possibilities from resources. The imprint of human activities can be seen everywhere, Such as—Health resorts on highlands, huge urban sprawls, fields, orchards and pastures in plains and rolling hills, ports on the coasts, oceanic routes on the oceanic surface and satellites in the space etc. The earlier scholars termed this as ‘possibilism’. According to this ideology of human-environment interrelationship, nature provides opportunities and human being make use of these and slowly nature gets humanised and starts bearing the imprints of human endeavour.

Neodeterminism : Griffith Taylor introduced the concept of a middle path in relation to human nature. It was between the two ideas of environmental determinism and

possibilism. He termed it as Neodeterminism or stop and go determinism. The concept shows that neither is there a situation of environmental determinism nor is there a condition of possibilism. It means that human beings can conquer nature by his own efforts and by following the natural laws.

Fields and Sub-fields of Human Geography : Human geography attempts to explain the relationship between all elements of human life and the space they occur over. Thus, the nature of human geography is a highly inter-disciplinary. It develops close interface with other allied disciplines in social sciences to understand and explain human elements. The boundaries between sub-fields often overlap. The development of human geography has taken place under the following six stages—

	Periods	Approaches
(i)	Early Colonial period	Exploration and description
(ii)	Later Colonial period	Regional analysis
(iii)	1930s through the inter-War period	Areal differentiation
(iv)	Late 1950s to the late 1960s	Spatial organisation
(v)	1970s	Emergence of humanistic, radical and behavioural schools
(vi)	1990s	Post-modernism in geography

GEOGRAPHICAL TERMINOLOGY

1. Human Geography : The geography that studies the inter-relationship between the physical environment and sociocultural environment created by human beings through mutual interaction with each other.

2. General Geography : The branch of geography in which the whole earth is considered as a unit and its features are discussed, is called general geography.

3. Environment : The natural conditions in which a person lives and is affected by it.

4. Regional Geography : It is a study done in relation to the whole world or any region with respect to a particular geographical factor.

5. Environmental determinism : The ideology that assumes the primacy of natural forces over human forces. According to this ideology, primitive human society molded itself according to nature.

6. Possibilism : This ideology of the interrelationship of the human-natural environment gives importance to human choice or freedom.

7. Neodeterminism : According to this ideology, the middle path is followed between the extreme conditions of determinism and possibilism in human geography. It means that human beings can conquer nature by its own efforts and by following the natural laws.

8. Welfare ideology : This ideology refers to the inclusion of such social problems arising from capitalism in human geography, in which social and regional inequality, poverty, urban slums, etc. are studied so that emphasis can be placed on their solution.

9. Idiographic : A method, which places more emphasis on specific situations as opposed to the general type of events. This method was adopted under traditional regional geography because it analyses how different countries and regions differ from each other.

NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Choose the right answer from the four alternatives given below :

(i) Which one of the following statements does not describe geography?

- (a) an integrative discipline
- (b) study of the inter-relationship between humans and environment
- (c) subjected to dualism
- (d) not relevant in the present time due to the development of technology.

(ii) Which one of the following is not a source of geographical information?

- (a) traveller's account
- (b) old maps
- (c) samples of rock materials from the moon
- (d) ancient epics

(iii) Which one of the following is the most important factor in the interaction between people and environment?

- (a) human intelligence
- (b) people's perception
- (c) technology
- (d) human brotherhood

(iv) Which one of the following is not an approach in human geography?

- (a) Areal differentiation
- (b) Spatial organisation
- (c) Quantitative revolution
- (d) Exploration and description

Answers

(i) – (d)	(ii) – (c)	(iii) – (c)	(iv) – (c)
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Q. 2. Answer the following questions in about 30 words.

(i) Define human geography.

Ans. According to Ratzel, “Human geography is the synthetic study of relationship between human societies and earth's surface.” Thus, “Human geography is the science under which the relationship between humans and their physical environment is studied.”

(ii) Name some sub-fields of human geography.

Ans. Some sub-fields of human geography are :

Behavioural geography, Geography of social well-being, Geography of leisure, Cultured geography, Gender geography, Historical geography, Medical geography, Electoral geography, Military geography, Geography of resources, Geography of agriculture, Geography of industries, Geography of marketing, Geography of tourism and Geography of international trade.

(iii) How is human geography related to other social sciences?

Ans. Human geography attempts to explain the relationship between all elements of human life and the space they occur over. Thus, the nature of human geography is highly interdisciplinary. It develops close interface with other allied disciplines in social sciences to understand and explain human elements on the surface of the earth. With the expansion of knowledge, new sub-fields emerge and it has further expanded realm of human geography.

Q. 3. Answer the following questions in not more than 150 words.

(i) Explain naturalisation of humans.

Ans. Naturalisation of humans : Human beings interact with their physical environment with help of technology. Technology indicates the level of cultural development of society.

Human beings were able to develop technology only when they developed better understanding of natural laws. For example, the understanding of concepts of friction and heat helped us in discovering fire. Thus knowledge about nature is extremely important to develop technology and technology loosens the shackles of environment on human beings.

In the early stages of their interaction with their natural environment humans were greatly influenced by it. They adapted themselves as per nature because at that time the level of technology was very low and the stage of human social development was also primitive. At that stage of technological development, the man used to live in complete harmony with their natural environment. He considered nature to be a powerful force, worshipped, revered and conserved. Human beings were directly dependent on natural resources which sustain them. The physical environment for such societies becomes the “mother nature”. This process is called naturalisation of humans.

This type of interaction between primitive human society and strong forces of nature was known as ‘environmental determinism’.

(ii) Write a note on the scope of human geography.

Ans. Scope of Human Geography : Human geography attempts to explain the relationship between all elements of human

life and the space they occur over. Thus, human geography assumes a highly interdisciplinary 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.

It makes study of geography more relevant as it tries to relate the physical and man-made world with full causal understanding hence making it more applicable to our daily lives. It not only helps us to understand various problems, their causes and effects, but also helps us in finding a suitable solution for them. In the present scenario with increasing discord between human beings and nature resulting in environmental destruction, human geography becomes all the more relevant as it explains the relationship between human and nature and thus assumes highly important role in helping to bring back the environmental symphony and hence saving our planet. The relations of human geography with the subject area, sub-fields and allied subjects of social sciences have been presented in the following table—

Table : Human Geography and Sister Disciplines of Social Sciences

Fields of Human Geography	Sub-fields	Interface with Sister Disciplines of Social Sciences
Social Geography	—	Social Science – Sociology
	Behavioural Geography	Psychology
	Geography of Social Well-being Geography of Leisure Cultural Geography Gender Geography Historical Geography Medical Geography	Welfare Economics Sociology Anthropology Sociology, Anthropology, Women’s Studies History Epidemiology
Urban Geography	—	Urban Studies and Planning
Political Geography	—	Political Science
	Electoral Geography Military Geography	Psephology Military Science