

Dear students, in class 11, you have obtained extensive information about Physical Geography. You must have realized that Geography is a very useful and interesting subject. In class 12, you will be introduced to Human Geography.

Geography is a science that makes a systematic study of the Earth. All natural and social sciences aim **to know the reality**. Geography attempts to explain the reality in holistic form. There are two approaches to study Geography : (1) Systematic approach and (2) Regional approach. Human Geography is a branch based on systematic approach. It studies those cultural characteristics that evolve from continuously changing processes between man and nature.

The period from the second half of the 15th century to the 18th century is known as the **age of exploration**. During this period, information about various regions of the world was collected through explorations. Map making developed. The information so obtained was classified in scientific framework leading to development of the subject Geography. As a result Bernhardus Varenius in his book '**Geographia Generalis**', has indicated two divisions of Geography : (1) Relative Geography and (2) Absolute Geography. In relative geography, characteristics of the Earth are studied considering it as an entire single unit. In absolute geography, the different regions and their human life are studied. Human life has progressively developed on the earth. The natural factors influence man's basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, etc. In human geography, the mutual impacts of human and natural factors are studied. In human geography, 'Man' is at the centre. Man's activity is determined by his habitat. E.g., in plain regions, man's activity is farming, man living in forest collects forest products, while man in coastal region does fishing. Thus the field of Geography has developed through activities that originate from interrelations between man and environment. Keeping this in mind, Varenius has classified the subject matter of Geography into three sub-fields : (1) astronomical characteristics (2) locational characteristics and (3) human characteristics.

Geography is an integrative, empirical and practical science. Geography studies the various elements and aspects on the earth's surface all with respect to man. Based on their origin all elements found on the earth's surface can be placed into two categories : (1) Physical elements, (2) Human or cultural elements


In the 19th century, branches like physical geography and geomorphology developed, but as a response to it, some geographers gave much importance to man and environment interrelations. This resulted in the development of the branch of Human Geography. To study the earth as a home of man is the first step of human geography. Human geography gives significance to the study of three aspects : (1) Relation between physical elements and human world (2) spatial distribution of human activities and their causes and (3) study of economic and social disparities in different regions of the world.


All development related activities of man are influenced by the physical environment. He makes adjustment with the physical environment and creates the cultural environment. Man environment

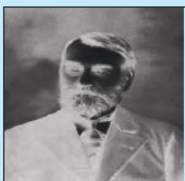
interrelations are dynamic. Relation between physical elements and human world, causes for development of cultural environment, social and economic disparities among different world regions, cultural and economic activities of man and such other aspects are studied in human geography. Man and nature are indivisible elements. Human geography tries to explain both from a holistic view. Renowned French geographer Jean Brunhes while defining human geography says : 'Human geography studies all those elements that are influenced by man's actions and reactions'.

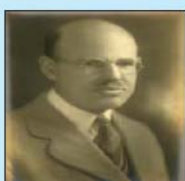
You would like to know

Definitions of Human Geography

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| (1) |  | (1) Human geography is the synthetic study of relationship between human societies and the earth's surface.

- Friedrich Ratzel |
| (2) |  | (2) Human geography is the study of the changing relationship between the unresting man and the unstable earth.

- Ellen C. Semple |
| (3) |  | (3) 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.

- Paul Vidal de la Blache |
| (4) |  | (4) Human geography studies interrelations between geographical environment and human actions

- Ellsworth Huntington |

Aristotle, Buckle, Humbolt, Ritter and other scholars stressed the 'influence of land on history'. Then, Ratzel and Ellen Semple explained how 'physical environment influences human activities'. Huntington explained the influence of climate on society, culture and history. From the views of these scholars, it is clear that human geography stresses on interrelations between human society and its environment. Human geography is a **dynamic** science. The subject matter of human geography is growing and expanding with time. Now let us understand the subject matter of human geography.

Subject matter of Human Geography

Man – environment relations are changing with time. Man's relationship with the environment is at the centre of study of human geography. There are diversities of colour, health, clothing, shelter, language, religion, social structure and many other aspects among people of different regions. Secular countries like U.S.A. and India present best examples of cultural diversities. American geographers Finch and Trewartha have divided the subject matter of human geography into : (1) Physical environment and (2) Cultural environment.

Physical environment includes natural elements like relief, drainage, soils, vegetation, minerals, climate, etc.

Cultural environment includes population, settlements, agriculture, industry, transport, communication, trade and such aspects created by man.

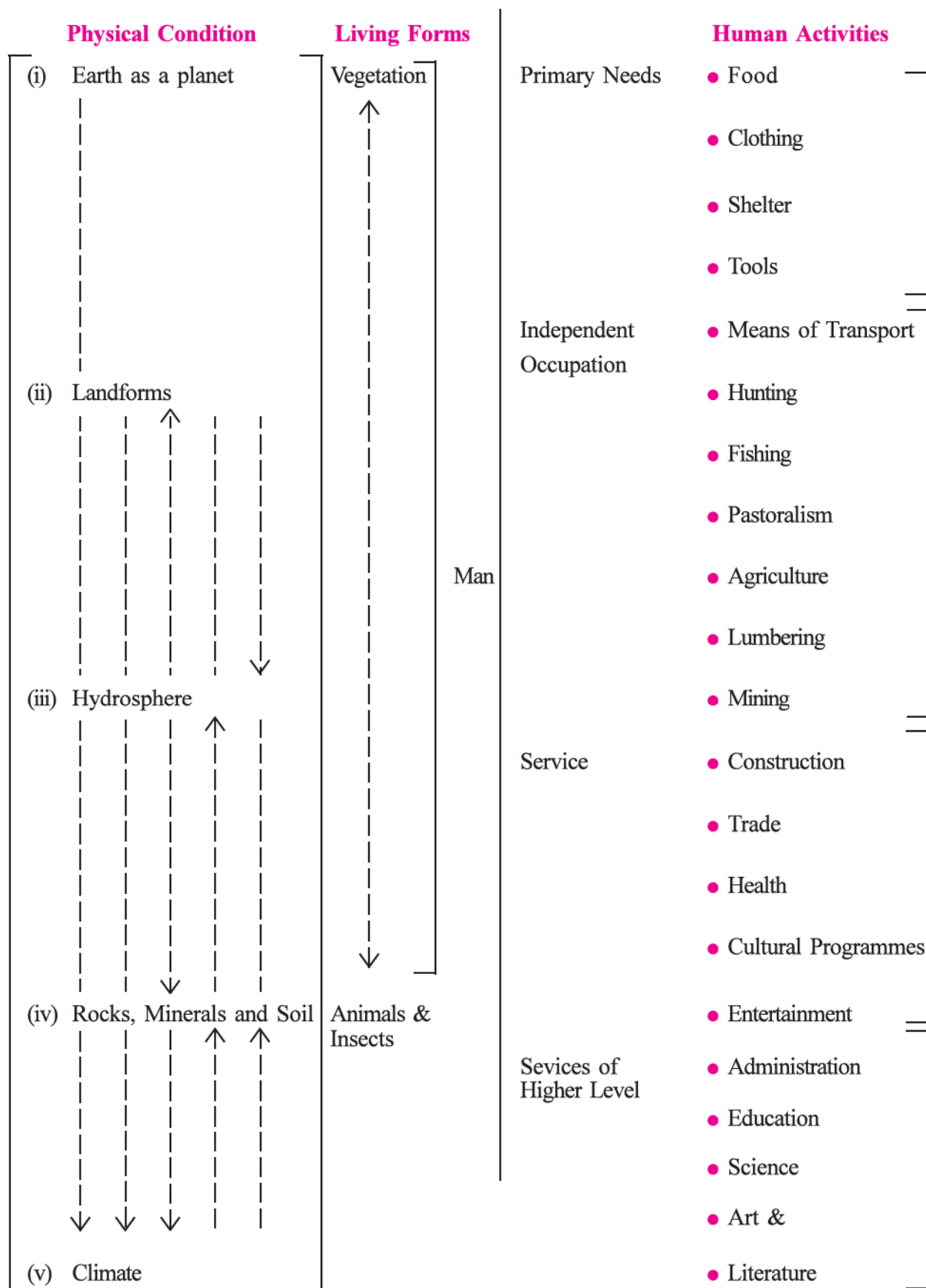
Major changes have occurred in the subject matter of human geography with time. In the beginning of the 20th century, there was more focus on the cultural and economic aspects. But afterwards, new problems and challenges occupied centre of the subject matter. Contemporary, integrating and inter disciplinary aspects are incorporated in human geography. Human geography is tied up and interrelated with economics, history, demography, agricultural science, sociology, statistics, political science, etc. Important aspects included in the subject matter of human geography are as follows :

- origin of man, human races and their settlement on the earth.
- distribution, density, growth, characteristics of population and migration of man.
- primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, quinary activities of mankind.
- man's relations and his adjustment to landforms, atmosphere, soil, vegetation, minerals, etc.
- settlements, rural and urban settlement patterns, settlement problems.
- man's economic activities -hunting, animal rearing, farming, industry, transport, communication and trade.
- social and cultural organizations.
- man's cultural activities -language, literature, sculpture, music, religion, folk literature, traditions, etc.
- assessment of resources in terms of their future and plans for their conservation.

Human geography has three interrelated functions :

- (1) Spatial analysis of human induced phenomena :** This includes human population, their characteristics, art, skills and their expansion.
- (2) Ecological analysis :** Here study of man and his relations with the environment in a particular geographical region are given importance.
- (3) Regional integration :** Here spatial and ecological approaches are combined. In it, the aim of study is to understand internal structure and external relations.

Based on the cultural development of man, Brunhes and Ellsworth Huntington have suggested various parts of subject matter of human geography, such as division of labour, exploitation of natural resources by man, over mining, urban problems, destruction of forests and wild life, etc.



1.1 Fields of Human Geography (as per Huntington)

(Note : Arrows indicate geographical conditions influencing each other.)



1.2 Study areas of Human Geography

Approaches of Human Geography

Man and environment interrelations are at the centre of human geography. Various approaches have been adopted for analyzing these relations. With time, the subject matter of human geography, ways of studying the subject, methodology and approaches have also changed. Some important approaches are as follows :

1. Historical Approach :

Right from man's origin upto the present, man's relations with the natural environment have been dynamic. After the industrial revolution of the 18th century, man has made notable progress in science and technology. This has changed man's life style. Using this approach, we can clearly understand changes that have occurred in man -environment relations with time.

2. Spatial Analysis Approach :

This approach gives significance to human environment as developed by man residing in different regions and parts of the world. With this kind of approach we can understand diversities in life styles of man. Till the beginning of the 20th century, human lifestyle was dependent on the natural environment.

3. Ecological Analysis Approach :

This approach analyzes how man makes adjustment of his activities with the natural environment, and how he overcomes physical challenges through technical development. This approach

includes the study of ecological change that results from establishing adjustment with unfavourable conditions of the natural environment. Concepts of Determinism and Possibilism are related to this approach.

Determinism :

According to this concept, all human activities and processes are controlled by the environment. Natural environment influences every human community, nation's history, culture, lifestyle and amount of progress. This concept considers man as an inactive factor. Scholars such as Hippocrates, Aristotle, Herodotus, Strabo etc., have explained influence of natural conditions on man. Afterwards, this concept was advocated by Kant, Humbolt, Ritter, Ellen Semple and Ellesworth Huntington. The concept developed till the first half of the 20th century. Ellen Semple and Ellesworth Huntington were strong supporters of this concept.

Possibilism :

Here man is considered more important relative to nature. Possibilism is an idea which considers man to be more active. **Lucian Fabvre** used the term 'Possibilism' for the first time. According to him, man is an owner of possibilities. Man decides the use of elements of nature. The geographer, **Vidal de la Blache** was a propagandist of this idea.

Possibilism was criticized by many scholars. Griffith Taylor introduced another concept which reflects a middle path between the two ideas of Determinism and Possibilism. He termed it as 'Neodeterminism'. He stated that man has to utilize nature following the rules of nature. Use of natural elements is essential but man should limit his cultural environment. Damage to the natural environment will cause man induced problems to the human society. Human development would be adversely affected.

4. Behavioural Approach :

The cultural environment that evolves in a particular area depends on the individual characteristics, beliefs, values, practices, rituals, etc. Geographical conditions of any region influence the behaviour of people of that region. Cultural environment evolves from the behaviour and lifestyle of human groups.

5. Human welfare Approach :

This approach studies poverty, hunger, war, apartheid, racism, civil war, terrorism, man induced hazards, etc. in view of their natural environment. This approach stresses on the socio-economic system whereby all world citizens have an equal right and control over all world resources. This will fulfill the objective of social justice. Man can easily fulfill his primary needs and human welfare can be achieved.

Ritter, Ratzel, Huntington, Blache, Brunhes, Demangeon, Finch, Trewartha, Dickens, White and such other scholars have presented their views on approaches to human geography.

A Comparison of approaches to Human Geography :

The approaches to human geography analyze the relations between man and natural environment. According to the deterministic idea, all activities of man are controlled by the environment. The natural environment influences the history, culture, people's lifestyle and direction of development of any nation. While idea of possibilism gives more importance to man instead of the natural environment. Man himself is full of possibilities. Due to human creativity, man's central and functional roles gain, significance. Historical approach makes it clear that human welfare and

progress is possible only if balance of physical environment is maintained. Man can have victory over nature only by obeying the laws of nature. Relations between cultural factors and natural factors have always been dynamic. Man has always tried to have adjustment with the unfavourable conditions of the natural environment. Thus human welfare approach, aims at social justice by establishing equal right for all human beings over all the resources of nature. This concept explains that human welfare is possible only if poverty, hunger, civil wars, unrest, apartheid, terrorism etc. are eradicated and such other social and economic problems are totally solved. Thus, various approaches to study human geography place 'man' at the centre and throw light on the study of earth as the home of man.

Exercise

1. Answer the following in detail :

- (1) Explain the meaning of human geography and discuss its fields of study.
- (2) Give an outline of the development of human geography.
- (3) State the different approaches to study human geography and discuss any one.

2. Give to the point answers for the following :

- (1) Explain the concept of possibilism.
- (2) State clearly the three functions of human geography.
- (3) Discuss the concept of Determinism.

3. Answer the following in brief :

- (1) State any two points of difference between determinism and possibilism approach.
- (2) What is human welfare approach ?
- (3) State any two points of differences between natural and cultural environment.
- (4) What is Human Geography ?

4. Answer in one or two sentences :

- (1) Which time period is known as the 'age of exploration' ?
- (2) Who first used the term 'Possibilism' ?
- (3) Which elements are included in the cultural environment ?
- (4) State Jean Brunhes' definition of Human Geography

5. Select the correct answer from options given :

- (1) Who was a strong advocate of Determinism ?
 (a) Kant (b) Ellen Semple (c) Ritter (d) Humbolt
- (2) Which of the following is not an element of natural environment ?
 (a) Rivers (b) plain (c) transport (d) forests
- (3) Who was the author of the book 'Geographia Generalis' ?
 (a) Bernhardus Verenius (b) Strabo (c) Aristotle (d) Lucius Faver
- (4) _____ is at the centre of Human Geography.
 (a) earth (b) physical elements (c) industry (d) man
- (5) Who stressed significance of 'land on his ...'
 (a) Kant (b) Strabo (c) Aristotle (d) Huntington