

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY MEANING & SCOPE

Human geography or anthropogeography is the branch of geography which studies spatial relationships between human communities' সম্প্রদায়সমূহ, cultures, economies, and their interactions with the environment, examples of which include urban sprawl and urban redevelopment.

Definition:

“Human geography is the synthetic study of relationship between human societies and earth’s surface”. – Friedrich Ratzel

Human geography studies the inter-relationship between the physical environment and socio-cultural environment created by human beings through mutual interaction with each other.

Elements of physical environment? landforms, soils, climate, water, natural vegetation and diverse flora and fauna.

Elements which human beings have created through their activities on the stage provided by the physical environment? 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.

How human beings interact with the nature?

Human beings **interact with their physical environment** with the help of technology. It is not important what human beings produce and create but it is extremely important ‘with the help of what tools সঁজুলি and techniques do they produce and create’.

Human beings were able to develop technology after they developed better understanding of natural laws. For example, the understanding of concepts of **friction and heat helped** us discover fire. Similarly, understanding of the secrets of **DNA and genetics** enabled us to conquer many diseases. We use the laws of aerodynamics to develop faster planes.

Table 1.2: Human Geography and Sister Disciplines of Social Sciences

Fields of Human Geography	Sub-fields	Interface with Sister Disciplines of Social Sciences
Social Geography	—	Social Sciences – Sociology
	Behavioural Geography	Psychology
	Geography of Social Well-being	Welfare Economics
	Geography of Leisure	Sociology
	Cultural Geography	Anthropology
	Gender Geography	Sociology, Anthropology, Women's 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/Rural Planning

Environmental determinism. **পারিপার্শ্বিক** pariparsik **নির্ণয়বাদ**

In the early stage 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.

Possibilism **সম্ভাব্যবাদ**

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. They move from a state of necessity to a state of freedom. They create possibilities with the resources obtained from the environment. The human activities create cultural landscape. The imprints of human activities are created everywhere; 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. The earlier scholars termed this as **possibilism**. Nature provides opportunities and

human being make use of these and slowly nature gets humanised and starts bearing the imprints of human endeavour.

How work: Read about other primitive societies which live in complete harmony with their natural environment.

Table 1.1: Broad Stages and Thrust of Human Geography

Period	Approaches	Broad Features
Colonial period	Exploration and description	Imperial and trade interests prompted the discovery and exploration of new areas. An encyclopaedic description of the area formed an important aspect of the geographer's account.
Colonial period	Regional analysis	Elaborate description of all aspects of a region were undertaken. The idea was that all the regions were part of a whole, ie (the earth); so, understanding the parts in totality would lead to an understanding of the whole.
1930s through the inter-War period	Areal differentiation	The focus was on identifying the uniqueness of any region and understanding how and why it was different from others.
Late 1950s to the late 1960s	Spatial organisation	Marked by the use of computers and sophisticated statistical tools. Laws of physics were often applied to map and analyse human phenomena. This phase was called the quantitative revolution. The main objective was to identify mappable patterns for different human activities.
1970s	Emergence of humanistic, radical and behavioural schools	Discontentment with the quantitative revolution and its dehumanised manner of doing geography led to the emergence of three new schools of thought of human geography in the 1970s. Human geography was made more relevant to the socio-political reality by the emergence of these schools of thought. Consult the box below to know a little bit more about these schools of thought.
1990s	Post-modernism in geography	The grand generalisations and the applicability of universal theories to explain the human conditions were questioned. The importance of understanding each local context in its own right was emphasised.

