

A Review about Nature and Scope of Population Geography

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Abstract – In the expression ‘population geography’, the term ‘population’ signifies the subject matter and ‘geography’ refers to the perspective of investigation. Population geography implies the investigation into human covering of the earth and its various facets with reference to physical and cultural environment. Although population geography is, in the early 21st century, a well-established subfield of human geography, this was not always the case.

Key Words : Nature and Scope of Population

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INTRODUCTION

A Case for Population Geography. Presidential address G. T. Trewartha 1953 is recognized as the original call for the establishment of a population geography subfield within the discipline. Since most of the world humanity lives in the less developed parts of the world, a significantly larger proportion of the net addition in world population during the first half of the twentieth century came from this part.

The need for a more detailed account of demographic characteristics resulted in a switch over from macro to micro level studies, which, in turn, facilitated population mapping. World population continued to grow at increasing pace. The growing availability of population data after the Second World War facilitated mapping of the other demographic attributes pertaining to different regions of the world. There was a growing consciousness among the people regarding population expansion and its effects on economic development. The less developed countries had also begun experiencing redistribution of population within their boundaries from rural to urban areas. The emergence of large cities and their manifold problems became a compelling focus for research by geographers.

DEFINITION

- According to Trewartha, population geography is concerned with the understanding of the regional differences in the earth's covering of people
- John I. Clarke, suggested that population geography is mainly concerned with demonstrating how spatial variation in

population and its various attributes like composition, migration and growth are related to the spatial variation in the nature of places

- Wilbur Zelinsky defines it as “a science that deals with the ways in which geographic character of places is formed by and, in turn, reacts upon a set of population phenomena that vary within it through both space and time interacting one with another, and with numerous non-demographic phenomena”.
- R.J. Proyer suggested that population geography deals with the analysis and explanation of interrelationship between population phenomena and the geographical character of places as they both vary over space and time.

NATURE

Trewartha proposed a very comprehensive outline of the content of the sub-discipline, which many subsequent geographers seem to have adhered to.

Broadly speaking, the concerns of population geography, according to Trewartha, can be grouped into three categories:

1. A historical (pre-historic and post-historic) account of population: Trewartha suggested that where direct statistical evidence is not available, geographers should adopt indirect methods, and

collaborate with anthropologists, demographers and economic historians.

2. Dynamics of number, size, distribution and growth patterns: In Trewartha's opinion, an analysis of world population patterns, population dynamics in terms of mortality and fertility, area aspect of over and under population, distribution of population by world regions and settlement types and migration of population (both international and inter-regional) form an important part of analysis in population geography.
3. Qualities of population and their regional distribution: He suggested two broad groups – physical qualities (e.g., race, sex, age, health etc.), and socio-economic qualities (e.g., religion, education, occupation, marital status, stages of economic development, customs, habits etc.)

Population geography studies the formation of the population in different territories in terms of structure, density, specific clustering (cities and rural communities), and the conditions that determine the particular forms of settlement.

The main concern of population geography revolves round the following three aspects of human population:

1. Size and distribution, including the rural-urban distribution of population.
2. Population dynamics – past and present trends in growth and its spatial manifestation; components of population change, viz., fertility, mortality and migration.
3. Population composition and structure. They include a set of demographic characteristics (such as age-sex structure, marital status and average age at marriage etc.), social characteristics (such as caste, racial/ethnic, religious and linguistic composition of population; literacy and levels of educational attainment etc.), and economic characteristics (such as workforce participation rate and workforce structure etc.)

Population geography receives important primary data from demography, which reveals the geographic aspects of natural and migration population change. Population geography also uses field teams for observation and investigation. It studies the physical forms of inhabitation (types of residences according to spatial differences, the nature of planning and engineering for populated points, and so on), because all of these features are reflected in the regional characteristics of the physical makeup of cities and rural settlements. The location of the

population both throughout the country and within its regions and the territorial organization of the population are basically determined by the nature and geography of production. The population density of individual populated points is usually related to their national economic functions, and the population density of regions reflects the degree of their economic development. At the same time the established location of population exerts in its turn an influence on the geography of production. The natural environment's influence on settlement occurs primarily through production. It can be seen that the study of population is multidisciplinary in nature, involving an understanding of biology, genetics, mathematics, statistics, economics, sociology, cultural anthropology, psychology, politics, geography, medicine, public health, ecology, etc.

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