

Humanistic Geography

Humanistic geography studies human awareness and human agency, human consciousness and human creativity. It, therefore, deals with the meaning, Value and human significance of life events. It interprets man-space relationship with the historical approach. Humanism is a subjective approach which aims at 'Verstehn', i.e., understanding of man in his environment. William Kirk was the first geographer to advocate a humanistic approach in 1951. But it was Yi Fu Tuan (1976) who postulated humanistic geography. Humanism grew as a criticism against positivism and Quantification in geography. Humanists are not in favour of reducing space to mere Geometrical concepts of surface as viewed by the positivists. From a humanistic viewpoint, space is inseparable from consciousness of humans who inhabit it. It shifted from its attack on positivism to criticize structuralism and structural Marxism; simultaneously it moves from its association with idealism to develop a more incisive methodology in the field of Geography.

Principles of Humanism

- To study the Spatial Body of knowledge, reflection and substance regarding human experience and human expression.
- It Deals with literary criticism, aesthetics and art history.
- It Endeavours to interpret the landscape as a medium of symbolic meaning. It also widens the traditional definitions of iconography- Study , Description, Cataloguing and Collective representation of landscape.
- It Relies on Participant observation. Discussion and logical Conclusion rather than quantitative tools.
- Humanists believe in objectification being not as simple as

exercise as it is assumed to be.

Themes in Humanistic Geography :

A. Geographical Knowledge:

- Knowledge of Geography is a basic instant for the survival of animals. Even non geographers possess a mental map regarding space, location, place an resources.
- The Formalization and progress of Humanism during the 1970s may be attributed to deep dissatisfaction with the mechanistic modals propounded by spatial science that had been vogue during the quantitative revolution.
- Due to This reason during, the initial years, both behavioural Geography as well as humanistic geography were inseparable in their approach.
- But Humanistic Geography soon established itself as a district identity because of its emphasis on the “essential subjectivity of both the investigator and the investigated”.
- Humanism is more than a mere critical Philosophy, rather it is a rejection of the ‘ Geometric determinism which views human being as always dictated by “universal spatial structures and abstract spatial logics”.

B. Territory and Place:

- Like other animals, humans have a sense of belonging to a place or territory. Which they protect for their survival, For example, Hunters and food gatherers may not envisage the boundary of a place or Territory, Which remains a Network of Paths and Places.

C. Crowding and Privacy:

- A crowded place often generates psychological stress. However, Culture, Social Institutions and infrastructures reduce these stresses. Man needs privacy in order to generate his own world, where he can exercise his creative ability in solitude.

D. Livelihood and Economies:

- Almost all human activities are functional in nature, since they support the social system, to which the human being belongs. People plan Their Economic Activities according to their knowledge and technology.

E. Religion: Religion is a universal institution. All over the world religious culture seeks coherence and a clearly structured world view. Humanists argued that we should take into consideration the individual human desire for coherence and also how it differs from person to person.

Criticism of humanistic Geography:--

- 1) Critics argued that in humanism it is difficult to draw any conclusion because one can never be sure whether the right conclusion has been reached.
2. One methodological ground, it separates physical from human geography. Such dichotomy is harmful.
3. Since humanistic geography heavily depends on participants' observation, it is difficult to develop theory, abstraction, generalization and spatial geometry.
4. It depends more on subjective than objective research.
5. It puts least emphasis on applied research. The trend is harmful for geography as other disciplines are well ahead in this regard.
6. Humanistic geography thus does not offer any alternative to scientific

geography.It is best seen as a form of criticism.