

Development of Population Geography

Population Geography as an independent sub-field of human geography is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Geography of the population is one of the most well established branches of general Geography. As it had been suggested, growing availability of population statistics has played an important role in the emergence of population geography. The purpose of this article review is to identify the challenges that facing population geography;

The most significant authors who worked on defining population geography were French geographers P. George (1951, 1959), Beaujen-Garnier (1965, 1966); North-American geographers: G. Trewartha (1953, 1969), W. Bunge (1962), J. Clance (1965, 1971), W. Zelinski (1966); in Great Britain: J.I. Clarke (1965); in USSR: (1950), (1966), (1973); in Poland V. Ormotski (1931), L. Kosinski (1967) A. Jagelski (1980). Those authors and their works had the significant influence on the development of population science in the world Development of population geography from Antropogeography to spatial-analytical approach.

1. Concept of Population Geography

According to Ogden and Philip, population geography is concerned with the understanding of the regional differences in the earth's covering of people. Moreover, population Geography had been defined as the branch of Geography that studies the distribution of the human population over the terrestrial surface.

- Geography is in charge of the distribution of facts and phenomena over the surface. In a more concrete sense, Geography consists of the —study of the terrestrial surface and of the phenomena that mutually affect it!
- 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. “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.
- The early works of George (1951) and the influential statement of Trewartha before the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers in 1953 are often considered as the turning point in the emergence of population geography as a separate field within geographical studies. The development, however, was not sudden nor was it unexpected.

The roots of the sub-field can be located in developments that were taking place both within geography and outside during some earlier periods.

- While some can be traced, as early as, in nineteenth century, others became potent forces in the first half of the twentieth century.

As *Kosinski (1984) and Clarke (1984)* have suggested, growing availability of population statistics has played a crucial role in the emergence of population geography. Prior to the emergence of governmental and international agencies as sources of data, several private agencies, mainly in Europe, were involved in collection and compilation of population data. The UN agencies began publishing demographic statistics on a regular basis soon after the end of the Second World War.

- By the turn of the twentieth century, most of the developed countries had completed this transition. Around this time, death rates started declining in the less developed parts of the world. Remarkably, this decline, unaccompanied by a corresponding decline in birth rates, was much faster than what had earlier happened in the West.
- Thus, world population continued to grow at increasing pace. 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.
- 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 of Population Geography

As noted earlier, population geography as an independent sub-field of human geography is a comparatively recent phenomenon. In the expression 'population geography', the term 'population' signifies the subject matter and 'geography' refers to the perspective of investigation. Thus, population geography can be interpreted as the study of population in spatial perspective.

Etymologically, population geography implies the investigation into human covering of the earth and its various facets with reference to physical and cultural environment.

- In the academic world, any discipline is almost invariably defined by its subject matter Johnston (1983:1). The subject matter of population geography has been a matter of

debate ever since Trewartha formally raised the issue in 1953. So is the case with the definition of the sub-discipline.

- *Trewartha*, population geography is concerned with the understanding of the regional differences in the earth's covering of people (Trewartha, 1969:87).
- "Just as area differentiation is the theme of geography in general, so is of population geography, in particular" (*Trewartha, 1953:87*).
- Population geography is the area analysis of population which implies "a wider range of population attributes than most geographers have ordinarily included" in their analysis (Trewartha, 1953:88).
- According to Trewartha, population geography is concerned with the understanding of the regional differences in the earth's covering of people (Trewartha, 1969:87)
- *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 (Clarke, 1972:2)
- *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" (Zelinsky, 1966).
- *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 (Proyer, 1984:25).

Nature of Population Geography

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:

- 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.
- 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.

- 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.

Reasons to Study population Geography

1. To understand basic physical systems that affect everyday life (e.g. earth-sun relationships, water cycles, wind currents).
2. To learn the location of places and the physical and cultural characteristics of those places in order to function more effectively in our increasingly interdependent world.
3. To understand the geography of past times and how geography has played important roles in the evolution of people, their ideas, places and environments.
4. To develop a mental map of your community, province or territory, country and the world so that you can understand the —whereof of places and events.
5. To explain how the processes of human and physical systems have arranged and sometimes changed the surface of the Earth.
6. To understand the spatial organization of society and see order in what often appears to be random scattering of people and places.
7. To recognize spatial distributions at all scales — local and worldwide — in order to understand the complex connectivity of people and places.
8. To be able to make sensible judgements about matters involving relationships between the physical environment and society.
9. To appreciate Earth as the homeland of humankind and provide insight for wise management decisions about how the planet's resources should be used.
10. To understand global interdependence and to become a better global citizen. One of the most challenges that facing population geography is migration.

The main concern of population geography based on three aspects of human population

- Size and distribution, including the rural-urban distribution of population.
- Population dynamics – past and present trends in growth and its spatial manifestation; components of population change, viz., fertility, mortality and migration.
- 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.

Demography by M.L. Jhingan et.al

Geography of Population by R.C. Chandna

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