

## 1 The discipline of human geography

Geography can be divided into two major parts: physical and human. Both are branches of natural science, which encompass the study of the living world. Physical geography mainly deals with the processes of the atmosphere, biosphere and ecosphere, whereas human geography studies people, culture, population distributions, the urban environment, etc. It studies many cultural aspects and how they relate to their environment as well as why people migrate and how this impacts on their culture. Human geography is special in that the findings of the study of human geography may vary over time.

## 2 Human geography and development

Marston et al. (2005) referred to human geography as incorporating several sub-disciplines, such as globalization, urbanization, the environment and migration. These are interrelated as the condition of one of these can be reflected in the development of another. Human geography discusses the profound interaction of cultural, environmental and social evolution, and considers the views that societies adopt in addressing these issues (Robinson, 2006). Thus, the core of human geography engages directly with change and development, but can be extended to deal with the economic, social, institutional and environmental dimensions of sustainability.

Development can present diverse patterns, each with its own characteristics, as the different aspects of development, i.e. culture, economy and politics vary all the time. We can consider all these changing patterns as the results of development. The factors in development interact with each other, and change in one field can affect another or lead to changes elsewhere. Development transforms people's lives, and as a result, development gradually alters human geography, particularly the aspects of human lifestyle, the political environment, the economic situation and even nature. Thus, the human geography of a place is its phylogeny, and that is how human geography relates to development.

## 3 Key themes/issues relevant to development

Human geography is an incomplete discipline without considering development, to which there are various branches, such as culture, economics, politics, health and history. However, we will discuss these aspects under the headings generally adopted by researchers, as below.

### 3.1 Culture

Culture is the norms and practices of people in particular places, and it encompasses language. It also reflects the region of settlement and other phenomena that may change or remain consistent. The first traces of the study of various cultures in different regions appeared in early 20th Century. At that time, the study of culture study was considered as an alternative to environmental determinism, which argued that human beings and societies are determined by their environment. It focuses on describing and analyzing the ways

language, religion, economy, government, and other cultural phenomena vary or remain constant from one place to another and on explaining how humans function spatially (Jordan-Bychkov, et al 1994). Culture is a profound condition and is related to a region, and it has a significant impact on regional development. On the other hand, development can greatly affect cultural norms. The interaction of culture and development is just one aspect of human geography.

### 3.2 History

History is the study of a wide variety of topics, including physical, theoretical, human, fictional and real geographies as well as the past. Historical geography mainly discusses how a place or region changes through time, how people interact with their environment and how the cultural landscape is created. In essence, human history is the phylogeny of people, while human geography is the study development.

### 3.3 Globalization

Globalization is the process of worldwide integration derived from the interplay of world views, products, ideas and aspects of culture. It reveals the interchange of social and cultural forces, including economics, politics and religion. The Economics, politics and religion play an important role in the development of a region. (Al-Rodhan, R.F. Nayef and Gérard Stoudmann. 2006) Furthermore, the regional conditions of these factors are products of development. Advances in telecommunications, transportation and Internet business are key factors of globalization, and so development involves, in particular, industrial progress and national or international trade, and studying the close relationship between the environment, the economy and real estate. Trade is the exchange goods and services, and the ensuing economic development can improve the standard or quality of life; real estate is a reflection of the extent of urbanization. Therefore, only with all these developmental aspects can globalization become realized.

### 3.4 Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one region or country to another, where they are not 'locals' but settle there. Economic migrants generally seek better education, job opportunities, life conditions and so on; the status of development in the home nation/region is the most crucial factor in immigration. Political migrants generally seek freedom from oppression. Some migration is based on other, more personal reasons, and may be the product of culture and tradition. Immigrants can bring new changes and such interplay or intercommunication partly contributes to the evolution of human geography.

### 3.5 Urbanization

Urbanization is the development of cities, and many rural migrants concentrate in cities, resulting in the physical growth of the urban environment. The structure and experiences of the urban landscape are crucial to human geography. Urbanization is closely linked to modernisation, industrialisation and the sociological process of rationalisation. During the process of development, cities and towns grow, and urban population around the world have been soaring. Urbanization is not just a social phenomenon; rather, it is a historic reform of human behaviour on a worldwide scale. The rapid growth of some big cities, such as Chicago in the 19th Century and Tokyo in the 20th Century, is largely the result of rural-urban migration; it is commonplace in developing countries. People living in cities can take advantage of diversity, proximity and competition in the marketplace. With all these factors, the urban environment can develop rapidly.

### 3.6 Environment

Environment is a subfield of human geography and a reflection of development. Specifically, transformation of the environment is a result of physical and biological factors caused by the interactions of culture, customs, politics, industry and other aspects, i.e. development. Being part of human geography, the environment changes during the development process, and these changes also affect human geography.

## Human Geography

Human Geography is a branch of Geography that focuses on the study of patterns and processes that shape human interaction with various environments. It encompasses human, political, cultural and social and economic aspects. While the major focus of Human Geography is not the physical landscape of the earth, it is hardly possible to discuss Human Geography without referring to the physical landscape on which human activities are based. In Human Geography, we focus on vertical and horizontal relationships on the earth surface. Vertical relationships links different elements in the same location e.g. people and the environment while horizontal relationships links elements in separate locations for instance inter place relationships through flow of goods, people, information and services (Ayiemba, 2004). Human Geography as a social science studies particular aspects of the society that relates to human beings and space. Perpillou (1966) defined Human Geography as the study of the ecology of man, that is, how man relates to his environment. Human Geography may also be regarded as the science of societies; it studies evolution of societies, from simple to complex activities on the surface of the earth. In a nutshell, Human Geographers examine those facts of Geography that relate directly to human beings and their activities observing their effects upon them and the results of human activities on their surroundings.

In a nutshell therefore, we can define Geography as the study of the earth, both the physical (natural) aspects as well as the human (man-made) aspects. On the other hand, Human Geography is a branch of Geography that studies how humans relate with their natural environment. Human Geographers study the effect of human activities on the natural environment as well as how the natural environments affect humans.

### EVOLUTION OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Dear learner, in this section we shall study the evolution of Human Geography.

Some of the first geographical studies occurred more than four thousand years ago. The main purpose of these early investigations was to map observed features and places as explorers travelled to new lands. At this time, Chinese, Egyptian and Phoenician civilizations were beginning to explore the places and spaces within and outside their homelands. The earliest evidence of such explorations comes from the archaeological discovery of a Babylonian clay tablet map that dates back to 2300 BC (Pidwirny, 2006). The early Greeks were the first civilization to practice a form of Geography that was more than mere map making. Greek philosophers and scientist were also interested in learning about the spatial nature of human and physical features found on the Earth. One of the first Greek geographers was Herodotus (484 - 425 BC) who wrote a number of volumes that described

the human and physical Geography of the various regions of the Persian Empire (Pidwirny, 2006).

There are many changes that took place that defined the subject that we call Geography today. However, we cannot study every detail. According to Chisholm (1975), the changes that have shaped the discipline of Human Geography can be summarised in three phases namely; (1) The age of discovery (1400-1800), (2) The period between 1800 -1950 and (3) The period after 1950. Let us now explain each phase;

### **The age of discovery (1400-1800)**

The period between 1400 and 1800 was when the subject matter and the methodology of Geography were not fully developed. The discipline can be described as having been in an embryonic stage. This period was characterized by exploration, discovery and conquest as exemplified in the voyages of Vasco da Gama and Christopher Columbus in 1492. Numerous journeys of geographical exploration were commissioned by a variety of nation states in Europe. Most of these voyages were financed because of the potential commercial returns from resource exploitation. The voyages also provided an opportunity for scientific investigation and discovery. The making of maps (cartography) was

important in the discipline of Geography due to the emphasis on location of phenomena on the earth surface, e.g. location of trade routes, relief features and settlements. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Bernhardus Varenius published an important geographic reference titled *Geographia generalis* (General Geography: 1650). Varenius used direct observations and primary measurements to present some new ideas concerning geographic knowledge. This work continued to be a standard geographic reference for about 100 years.

The Royal Geographical Society still sponsors "voyages of discovery" even up to today. This is because the desire to understand the earth is at the core of the study of Geography. The Royal Geographical Society was founded in 1830 in Britain and has interests in supporting research, education, expeditions and fieldwork in order to enjoy and understand the earth. Navigators and explorers were concerned with tales and fantasies about people or races of the world and their ways of life.

According to Ayiamba, (2004), the methodology of Geography at this time was heavily influenced by the compilation, revision and evolution of maps and their projections. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the German philosopher, Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) proposed that human knowledge could be organized in three different ways. One way of organizing knowledge was to classify its facts according to the type of objects studied. Accordingly, zoology studies animals, botany examines plants and geology involves the investigation of rocks. The second way one can study things is according to a temporal dimension. This field of knowledge is of course called history. The last method of organizing knowledge involves

understanding facts relative to spatial relationships. This field of knowledge is commonly known as Geography. Kant also divided Geography into a number of sub-disciplines. He recognized the following six branches: Physical, mathematical, moral, political, commercial and theological Geography (Pidwirny, 2006). You should note that as Geography has evolved the branches have continued to change in context while new fields have emerged that study emerging human problems.

### **The period between 1800 -1950 :-**

The period between 1800 and 1950 was characterised by the work of various philosophers who helped to expand the scope of Geography. The discipline of Geography became more distinct in the subject matter. Geographic knowledge saw strong growth in Europe and the United States in the 1800s. This period also saw the emergence of a number of societies interested in geographic issues. In Germany, Alexander Von Humboldt, Carl Ritter and Fredrich Ratzel made substantial contributions to Human and Physical Geography. Humboldt's publication *Kosmos* in 1844, examines the geology and physical Geography of the Earth. This work is considered by many academics to be a milestone contribution to geographic scholarship. Late in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ratzel theorized that the distribution and culture of the Earth's various human populations was strongly influenced by the natural environment.

This period was characterised by classical philosophers who attempted to gain a deeper understanding of the earth as a habitat for humans. Geography as a discipline became more descriptive in approach and adopted a regional approach in the study of spatial phenomena (Ayiemba, 2004). Emphasis was placed on uniqueness of regions in terms of resources availability and how they could be harnessed to meet human needs in terms of goods and services.

There are two schools of thought that emerged during this period as an attempt to explain the relationship between human beings and their environment. These were environmental determinism and possibilism. Proponents of environmental determinism school of thought such as Mackinder, Semple and Huntington believed that human actions and activities were moulded by the physical (natural) conditions (Ayiemba, 2004). In developing countries, human beings are susceptible to natural disasters such as drought, famine, floods and earthquakes. Human beings under such natural conditions usually surrender to nature. A good example of environmental determinism is the influence of the natural environment on human activities such as nomadic pastoralism. Nomadic Pastoralism is so much dependent on the natural environment. Pastoralists do

very little to modify their environment but rather they conform. That is why they migrate from one place to the other in search of greener pastures and water for their herd. We can

therefore say that the natural environment determines nomadic pastoralism as a human activity.

The proponents of possibilism school of thought, such as De la Blanche (cited in Smith, 1977) saw the environment as a limiting factor rather than as a deterministic force. Sauer, one of the proponents of possibilism, for instance argued that culture was important in determining human activities on the earth (cited in Smith 1977). In 1847 George Perkins Marsh gave a powerful discourse on the role of human activities on the natural environment. Such activities included deforestation and land conversion to other land use other than agriculture. This became the foundation for his book; 'Man and Nature' or 'The Earth as Modified by Human Action', which was first published in 1864 (Pidwirny, 2006).

According to the possibilism school of thought, human beings had several alternatives in their environment and that their actions were influenced by the decisions they made in the environment (Tidswell, 1976). Human beings are major decision makers hence they have the ability to modify the natural environment through the use of technologies. According to this school, human beings and activities can survive below and above the limits created by the natural environment e.g. climatic conditions. For instance, humans and their activities can survive in hot or extremely cold conditions due to their ability to modify the environment to suit them. You should note that, this may not be possible without technological innovations that may be designed to overcome environmental limitations. In developed countries, the use of technologies and capital has helped people to modify the environments to suit their needs. In other words, it is possible to engage in any economic activity even in the harshest environments and that there are many other forces

such as political, cultural and technological factors that may affect human decision making and spatial human behaviour. A good example is the fact that in many arid countries such as Israel, humans have overcome the constraints set by the natural environment such as low rainfall, high temperatures and poor soils. They have done this by using technology to grow various crops under irrigation. In other words, the natural environment is not a deterministic force, but instead humans are able to make decisions to modify the environment. Such modification may be influenced by several factors such as socio-cultural, economic, technological and political.

There were contributions by other scholars that should be mentioned here. For instance, German scholars, Richthofen (1872) and Otto Maull and Hettner gave prominence to Human Geography by expanding its scope through their publications emphasising human-environment interaction. In particular, Otto Maull published a manual on Human Geography titled *Anthropogeography* whose emphasis was on regional approach to the study of human races and how humans adapted to different ecological conditions (Perpillou, 1966; Ayiemba, 2004). On the other hand, Hettner emphasised Population

Geography as an important sub branch of Human Geography. In fact, the first population map of Britain was published in 1860. Other publications that helped to expand the understanding of the discipline included *Cosmos* published by Alexander Von Humboldt in 1845, *Regional Geography* of the world published by Carl Ritter in a publication called *Erdkunde* in 1817 (Ayiemba, 2004). French geographers such as Vidal de la Blanche (1903), Jean Bruhnes, Aurousseau and the French school of Geography, contributed to the origin of Economic Geography as a branch of Human Geography by incorporating population data, settlement types, patterns and human occupations in the scope of the discipline. American geographers such as Jefferson and Semple expanded the scope by including population problems that other disciplines such as economics, sociology and history were concerned about (Ayiemba, 2004).

### **The period after 1950 :-**

Until 1950s, Human Geography was more of an art subject where facts were established by casual observation in the field rather than by careful measurement and hypothesis testing (Smith, 1977). The only theoretical perspectives before 1950s were what has come to be known as environmental determinism and possibilism. In the 1950s there was new development in the discipline where F. Schaefer initiated a move to seek 'laws' which would explain geographical phenomena, particularly within the field of Human Geography. Using laws, it is possible to predict what will happen. If we can predict successfully, we can plan and control possible changes in patterns and distribution of spatial human behaviour.

The emphasis began to shift to location analysis and quantification of human spatial phenomena. One of the important developments in this period was the use of quantitative techniques in the study of spatial human behaviour. Quantitative techniques refer to various statistical tools that are used to synthesize data about human activities. Quantification came about as a result of the expanding scope of the discipline as well the need to understand human activities that were becoming more diversified and complex as societies developed. Pioneers in quantification include McCarty et al (1956), Cole and King (1968), Yeates (1968) and King (1969). Quantification begun in Physical Geography and spread to Human Geography (Ayiemba, 2004).

This greater emphasis on methodology and statistical techniques is what has come to be known as the quantitative revolution in Geography. It was referred to as a revolution because it marked a new beginning in the way the subject matter of Geography was to be studied. The quantitative revolution involves the use of descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, basic mathematical equations and the use of deterministic models. Burton (1963) described the quantitative revolution as "a radical transformation of the spirit and purpose" of Geography. By this he meant a new-found enthusiasm for the use of numerical techniques of some kind, directed towards elucidating the details of earth surface patterns -

or what became known as 'spatial science'. Many geographers believed that numbers are more precise, and therefore perceived as more scientific compared to words. In addition, the use of models and theories became very important in explaining spatial human behaviour. Researchers began investigating process rather than mere description of the event of interest. Today, the quantitative approach has become even more prevalent due to advances in computer and software technologies.

Closely associated with the quantitative revolution was the discovery of models and theories. Model building is related to the development of spatial theory (Smith, 1977). This was exemplified in the spatial economic theory as seen in the works of Losch (1954), Greenhurl (1956), Isard (1956) and the classic work of Christaller (1933) on central places. After 1960, Human Geography began to diversify as inspired by the quantitative revolution, spatial economics, and model building. These new developments are seen in the publications by Bunge (1962), Adams, Abler and Gould (1971), Morrill (1970) and Hagget (1972) (Ayiemba, 2004). Emphasis was more on methods of analysis rather than on the subject matter of the discipline. Such topics as diffusion of innovation, social ecology of cities and regional studies became very popular due to the availability of computer programmes.

Dear learner, we have seen that the quantitative revolution was a milestone in the evolution of Geography. A second revolution referred to as the radical revolution occurred where emphasis shifted on contemporary issues related to human problems such as the environment, poverty, hunger, racial discrimination and social inequality (Smith, 1977). This new approach that occurred at the end of 1960s is referred to as the 'welfare approach'. The new development contributed to new sub disciplines of Human Geography such as medical Geography and Social Geography. Other areas of interest for human geographers especially in Africa, Asia and Latin America were economic development and how it relates to human welfare. Since the 1970s the literature on welfare issues such as poverty led to the launch of a new radical journal of Antipode (Peet, 1970; 1972) and the first book in "problems" series in Geography (Morrill and Wohlenberg, 1971).