Chapter 1: Human Geography: Nature and Scope

Exercises — Exercises

Q1 Which one of the following statements does not describe geography?
(a) an integrative discipline
(b) study of the inter-relationship between humans and environment
(c) subjected to dualism
(d) not relevant in the present time due to the development of technology

(d) not relevant in the present time due to the development of technology. The chapter presents geography as integrative, empirical and practical, concerned with human-environment relationships, and it notes the dualism debates; it is not made irrelevant by technology.

Q2 Which one of the following is not a source of geographical information?
(a) traveller's accounts
(b) old maps
(c) samples of rock materials from the moon
(d) ancient epics

(c) samples of rock materials from the moon. Traveller's accounts, old maps and ancient epics describe places and people on the earth's surface, whereas moon rock samples give no information about the earth's surface and its human-environment relationships.

Q3 Which one of the following is the most important factor in the interaction between people and environment?
(a) human intelligence
(b) people's perception
(c) technology
(d) human brotherhood

(c) technology. The chapter stresses that what matters is the tools and techniques with which humans produce and create; technology indicates a society's cultural level and loosens the shackles of the environment on human beings.

Q4 Which one of the following is not an approach in human geography?
(a) Areal differentiation
(b) Spatial organisation
(c) Quantitative revolution
(d) Exploration and description

(c) Quantitative revolution. Table 1.1 lists exploration and description, areal differentiation and spatial organisation as approaches; the quantitative revolution is the name given to the phase of spatial organisation, marked by computers and statistical tools, not a separate approach.

Q5 Define human geography.

Human geography is the study of the relationship between the physical or natural environment and the human world, the spatial distribution of human phenomena and how they arise. Ratzel called it the synthetic study of human societies and the earth's surface.

Q6 Name some sub-fields of human geography.

Human geography has several sub-fields, such as social geography, urban geography, political geography, population geography, settlement geography and economic geography. Further sub-fields include behavioural, cultural, gender, historical and medical geography, and the geography of resources, agriculture, industries, tourism and trade.

Q7 How is human geography related to other social sciences?

Human geography is highly inter-disciplinary and shares an interface with sister social sciences to explain human elements on the earth's surface. For example, social geography links with sociology, political geography with political science, population geography with demography, and economic geography with economics.

Q8 Explain naturalisation of humans.

In the early stages of interaction with nature, technology was very low and society was primitive, so humans were greatly influenced by their natural environment and adapted to its dictates. This type of interaction between primitive society and the strong forces of nature was termed environmental determinism. The naturalised human listened to nature, feared its fury and worshipped it. Such people depended directly on nature for the resources that sustained them, and the physical environment became their Mother Nature. The chapter's example is Benda of the Abujh Maad region in central India, who practises shifting cultivation, thanks the spirit of the forest, gathers herbs to barter at the tribal fair and lives in harmony with the forest. In such societies nature is a powerful force that is worshipped, revered and conserved.

Q9 Write a note on the scope of human geography.

Human geography attempts to explain the relationship between all elements of human life and the space over which they occur, so its scope is wide and highly inter-disciplinary. It studies the interaction of the physical environment with the socio-cultural environment that humans create, including houses, cities, road and rail networks, farms, ports and industries. It has developed close links with sister social sciences, and with the expansion of knowledge new sub-fields have emerged, such as social, urban, political, population, settlement and economic geography, each with further branches like cultural, medical, military, electoral geography and the geography of resources, agriculture, tourism and trade. Its approaches have also evolved from exploration and description to regional analysis, areal differentiation, spatial organisation, the humanistic, radical and behavioural schools, and post-modernism. It also examines concepts such as environmental determinism, possibilism and neo-determinism.