

SEMESTER VI (HONOURS)

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UNIT III: MODERN CONCEPT OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

1(a) HUMANISTIC GEOGRAPHY

Introduction:

- This approach deals with the meaning, value and human significance of life events.
- It consider human as a central agency.
- It deals with human behaviour or human psychology.
- It interprets man-space relationship with the historical approach.
- It developed during 1970s as a criticism against positivism and quantification in geography. (application of quantitative methods in geography due to quantitative revolution).
- Humanistic geography does not consider human as dot or data or statistical number.
- It consider human as a dynamic by nature.

Aim of humanistic geography:

- To Restore friendly relationship between social; sciences and man
- It considered man as a core of investigation and
- To apply wisdom in geographical research
- To explain the human experience

Focus: Humanistic geography focuses on four elements of

- human awareness ,
- human agency,
- human consciousness and
- human creativity.

Principles of Humanism:

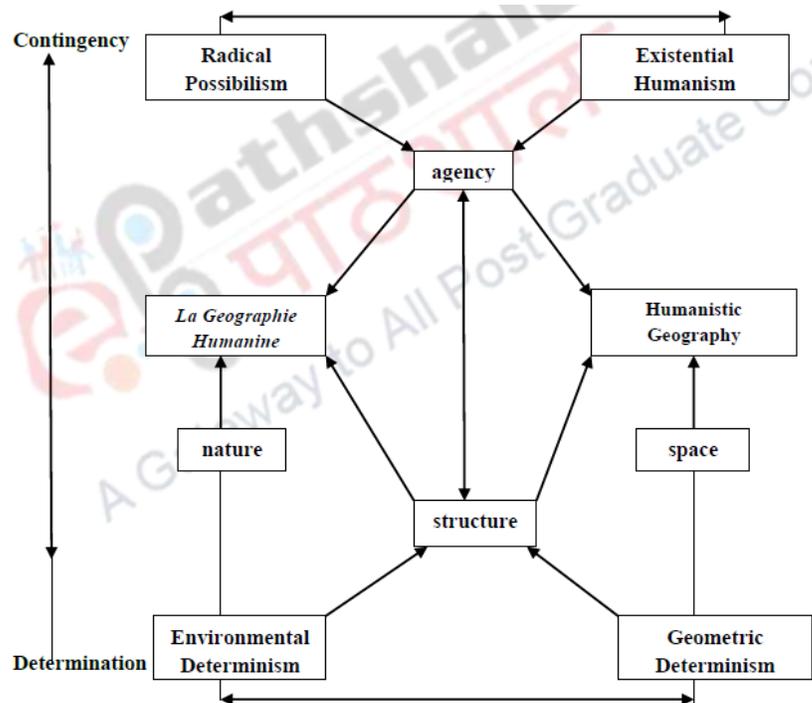
The principles of humanists are as follows:

- To study the special body of knowledge, reflection and substance regarding human experience and human expression.
- It deals with literary criticism, aesthetics and art history. Humanism is based on hermeneutics (the theory of interpretation and clarification of meanings).
- 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 an exercise as it is assumed to be.

Characteristics of humanistic approach:

- It deals with the meaning, value and human significance of life events.
- It gives central and active role to human
- It explains man -space relationship with historical approach. Man as a part of environment and change the environment by the help of his wishes.
- It connects knowledge with human experiences.
- humanistic approach is logical not statistical .

FIG 1: model of humanistic geography



Humanistic Geography *la geographie humaine* and humanistic geography (Gregory, 1981)

Approaches to humanistic geography:

- Idealism
- Humanistic
- Existentialism

Themes in humanistic geography :

Yi-fi-tuan identified five major themes in humanistic geography. These are:

- Geographical knowledge
- Role of territory and creation of place identities
- Crowding and privacy
- Role of geographical knowledge in determining livelihood
- Impact of knowledge

Demerits or critical appraisal of humanistic geography:

- Lack of practical examples,
- It separates physical and human geography
- Results are not authentic
- Does not offer any alternatives to scientific geography
- This approach is 'methodologically obscure'
- On methodological grounds, it separates physical from human geography. Such dichotomy is harmful.
- Since humanistic geography heavily depends on participant observation, it is difficult to develop theory, abstraction, generalisation and spatial geometry.
- It depends on subjective than objective research.
- It puts least emphasis on applied research. The trend is harmful for geography as other disciplines are well ahead in this regard.

NOTE: STUDENTS ARE ADVISED TO GO THROUGH ANY BOOK ON GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT FOR DETAIL STUDY.