

Chapter Five

Population Distribution & Definition of Population Geography

Population Geography is concerned with the study of demographic processes and their consequences in an environmental context.

- It may thus be distinguished from demography by its emphasis on the spatial variations in the growth, movement & composition of populations and its concern with the social and economic implications of these variations.

- Census: - A census has been defined as 'the total process of collecting, compiling, evaluating, analyzing, and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining at a specific time, to all persons in a country or in a well defined part of country.'

The earliest modern censuses were organised in Scandinavia - in Sweden in 1748 and in Norway & Denmark in 1769.

80% of the total population occupies less than 20% of land surface. More than 90% popⁿ is found in the northern hemisphere and over 85% in the old world.

Primary Concentration of population (regions)
South-East Asia, Europe, and North-Eastern North America. (70% of world's popⁿ)

② Secondary Concentrations: -
California, Eastern Brazil, the River plains lowlands, north and south Africa and South-Eastern Australia. 5% of world total

③ Tertiary Concentrations: -
- knots such as - high basins of Mexico.
- strings such as Nile valley.

Ecumene and Non-Ecumene

"Ecumene" word used by ancient Greeks for inhabited portion of the earth's surface.

The term revived by German geographers in early 19th century.

The term "non-ecumene" is used to refer to the uninhabited, intermittently inhabited or very sparsely inhabited areas of the earth's surface.

Zones of Ecumene (Canadian's)

- Intensive Ecumene - Urban occupancy and industrial patterns, intensive agriculture, services & amenities.
- Extensive Ecumene - mainly rural occupancy, extensive types of agriculture, Permanent Planned forest production.
- Exploitation Ecumene - systematic mining development with permanent transportation facilities and power supplies.
- sporadic Ecumene - very scattered economic activities.
- Non-ecumene - empty space with no foreseeable development.

Influences on Population Distribution.

The factors affecting population distribution rarely, if ever operate in isolation but rather in combination. Thus it is virtually impossible to evaluate the level of influence of any single factor.

→ Role of Physical factors in the spatial distribution of population declines in direct importance as civilization advances in complexity.

⇒ Physical Influences on Population Distribution.

- (i) Altitude - C-ve effect, -La Paz highest city of the world.
- (ii) Latitude - mountains that rise and mountains that attract.
- (iii) Relief - steep gradient, exposure, and rugged terrain all tend to deter settlement by restricting movement and possibilities of cultivation.
- (iv) Climate - extremes of heat, cold, humidity and aridity all deter population.
- (v) Soil - Deltaic and alluvial soils frequently attract agricultural populations, while podzols and laterites, with their limited possibilities for cultivation, generally support only sparse population. The attractiveness of particular soil types also depends to a large extent upon the agricultural technology of the population in question.

Vegetation:

Mineral and Energy resources:

ex. South African Rand, the Appalachians coal fields, the Donets Basin, Northern Canada and Interior Australia.

Economic, social and political influences on Population distribution

The density of population in a particular area depends to a large extent upon the "type and scale of economic activity in that area".

→ In the present century, with increasing governmental control over economic activity, political influences have emerged as a significant factor affecting population patterns.

(i) Historical processes - duration of settlement in any area.
Cycle of Occupation - where by population numbers and densities increase and then decline only to be followed by a second cycle of population growth.

Measures of Population Density and distribution:

(i) Distribution - refers to the actual pattern of spacing of units or individuals.

(ii) Density - It is an expression of the ratio between total population and land area.

(i) Crude Population density -
$$\frac{\text{total pop.}}{\text{total cultivated area}}$$

Physiological density -
$$\frac{\text{total pop.}}{\text{total agricultural area}}$$

(ii) Agricultural density -
$$\frac{\text{total agricultural pop.}}{\text{total cultivated areas}}$$