

**CONCEPTS IN DEMOGRAPHIC GEOGRAPHY,
AN OVER VIEW OF LITERATURE**

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Abstract

Demography is the empirical, statistical & mathematical study of human population. It is the quantitative study of the size, distribution & composition of human population & of the major components of change in these features. The dynamic components comprise fertility, mortality and migration, to which some demographers would also add marriage & social mobility.

Population geography, or geography of population – the terms have the same meaning- is concerned with demonstrating how spatial variations in the distribution, composition, migrations and growth of populations are related to spatial variations in the nature of place. The population geographer is also concerned with the genetic or dynamic aspects of spatial variations over time, or how spatial relations or interaction between phenomenon occur. The emphasis is particularly on space, and in this way population geography is distinguishes itself from demography, which is the science of population viewed as a single topic. In practice, while demographer is concerned with numbers and demographic processes especially for political units as a whole, the population geographer is more concerned with areal variations in population & their relations with physical, cultural and economic phenomenon.

Keywords: *Demography, Population Geography, Scope of Population Geography*

Demography

Demography is the empirical, statistical & mathematical study of human population. It is the quantitative study of the size, distribution & composition of human population & of the major components of change in these features. The dynamic components comprise fertility, mortality and migration, to which some demographers would also add marriage & social mobility.

Any apparently static demographic condition or pattern represents merely a temporary equilibrium among the formative elements, which are always at work within a population. Within demography a distinction has commonly been made between formal or pure demography & population studies or social demography. The former emphasizes the demographer's prime concern with the collection, evaluation, adjustment, analysis

and often projection of population data. A common core of analytical techniques comprises the standardization measures which 'control' differences in population composition in order to pinpoint more precisely the nature of the dynamic processes. Within the more general approach of population studies or social demography, the need to handle and analyse the basic demographic data objectively is not disputed, but this is regarded as the starting point in the exercise -a means to an end & certainly not an end in itself. Analysis proceeds to an attempted explanation of demographic patterns & processes from the subjects matter and theories of social science disciplines like anthropology, economics, human geography and Sociology indeed, the great majority of demographers have been trained in such disciplines before specializing in demographic research; few opportunities exist for undergraduate specialization in demography itself.

The distinction then between a narrow and a broad approach to demography is a real one, although the labeling distinction is much less clear &, some would say, inappropriate. It would be difficult, for example to make any distinction in content between the two leading English language journals in the field, Demography and population studies.

Demography deals with the analysis & measurement of fertility, morbidity, mortality, migration, & net change in population. Demography as a subject has historically contained elements both of a social science & a policy science. Demography now is much more than the study of vital statistics but less than the all – encompassing science of human being would be an error to regard demography as a very wide subject.

Demography studies (i) theories, (ii) events, (iii) vista, & (iv) Policy propositions. We study “how to adjust the economy to the requirements of population”, but this is “economics of development we can study “how to adjust population to the requirements of the development of economy”, & this is part of population studies. The border between the two types of the studies is however, an “open” one.

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Geographer's interest in demography & population studies is a phenomenon of post- fifties of the 20th century. Geography deals with geo – climate studies & the settlement of towns & villages. Demography & Geography both study the (i) interface between spatial distribution of population & the patterns of fertility, mortality & migration as also the (ii) Cropping pattern as it depends on the geo – climatic conditions & determines the food supplies for supporting population. Geographers study the “ process of urbanization “ but do not study the “urbanity or urbanism” as it affects the fertility decisions. Geographers deal with planning without studying the monetary & fiscal changes or without taking into account the savings, capital formation, investment, & income propagation process. They also do not take into account the rates & ratios associated with them.

Hence population problems are studied in Geography in a very narrow way.

Population Geography & Demography

Population geography, or geography of population – the terms have the same meaning- is concerned with demonstrating how spatial variations in the distribution, composition, migrations and growth of populations are related to spatial variations in the nature of place. The population geographer is also concerned with the genetic or dynamic aspects of spatial variations over time, or how spatial relations or interaction between phenomenon occur. The emphasis is particularly on space, and in this way population geography is distinguishes itself from demography, which is the science of population viewed as a single topic. In practice, while demographer is concerned with numbers and demographic processes especially for political units as a whole, the population geographer is more concerned with areal variations in population & their relations with physical, cultural and economic phenomenon.

Like demography, population geography is basically quantitative; it is largely dependant upon statistical data. But both have qualitative approach; demographer examines various physical, intellectual and character qualities of populations to see their connections with quantitative aspects, while population geographers endeavour to unravel the complex inter – relationships between physical and human environments on the one hand, and population on the other. The explanations and analysis of these inter – relationship is the real substance of population geography.

Introduction To Population Geography

Population Geography has recently emerged as a separate discipline of study and Research. It is concerned mainly with the spatial analysis of population. It involves not only the magnitude of the human population but also its different characteristics growth and mobility. It is related to other allied areas like demography, sociology, economics and related disciplines.

Population geography is the spatial study of human population. It is mainly with one aspects of the study of population-its spatial distribution and arrangements. In fact, population provides the essential background for all geography. Population serves as the point of reference from which all other geographic elements are observed, and from which they all singly and collectively, derive significance and meaning. This view of has been accepted by all geographers in modern times. In population geography, the main focus of study is the human population.

Trewartha pointed out that the essence of population geography lay in understanding the regional differences in the people covering the earth. The central theme of science of population geography is area differentiation. It is essential to understand the process of spatial organization. Population constitutes the most dynamic the central element in such a process.

observed that the main task of population geography is to study areas of variations in population & their relations with the physical, cultural & economic phenomena.

lays stress on the spatial aspect of population and distinguishes population geography from demography. In his book, population geography, published in 1965, **J.I.** observes that population geography is concerned with demonstrating how spatial variations in distribution, composition, migration and growth are related to spatial variations in the nature of places does not agree with the definition of population geography as given by **G.T. Trewartha**. According to **Demko**, in spite of statements pleading for a study of dynamics, the dynamics are stressed only for understanding areal differences. However, the definition of population geography has to be formulated with reference to the nature of geography as a distinct discipline where population is the main stock – in – trade. The fact that population provides the focal point in geography, and man is not only the utilize of physical earth but also the creator of the cultural earth, has led **Tewartha** to place man at the center of the theme & thinking of geography

According to **Melezin**, population geography is the study of population distribution & productive relationships existing with in various population groups, the settlement network and its fitness, usefulness & effectiveness for productive goals of society. The study of population geography is identified with the analysis of territorial groupings of settled places with emphasis upon their economic functionality. This is so because the pattern of distribution of population is basically represented by a network of settlement, & changes in the settlement patterns are influenced primarily by the production processes.

Population geography is a systematic branch of pure geography. It lays emphasis upon regional differentiation of area in terms of their population. It does not study man as phenomena in or by itself, but as an area characterising & area - differentiating element. (**J.P.Yadav Vol 1 P.2**)

Population geography is concerned with the temporal spatial analysis of population attributes. Population geography should develop theories, explain spatial pattern & processes and should make reasonable projections regarding the main attributes of population. After all, population is the single most significant element in the study of the surface of the earth.

Population geography is therefore, that branch of the discipline which treats the spatial variations in demographic & non – demographic qualities of human populations & the economic and social consequences stemming from the interaction associated with a particular set of conditions existing in a given areal unit.

India is the second most populous country in the world with a population 846 Million in 1991 and an average population density of 273 persons per sq Km² (**Nanda, 1993**) despite family planning the population has been rapidly growing. It is alarming that during 1981 – 91 decade, India has added 163 Million persons to its population, which is almost the size of the population of Australia. To meet the needs of a billion persons by 2001 A.D., India has to double its food output (**Hooper 1976**). This must be done with out straining agricultural land & natural resources, by harnessing modern advances in bio-technology (**Singh, 1983**). This,

India needs bio-industrial development rather than pure industrial development, stabilizing population will help resource conservation & development. **(S.L.Kayastha P.19)**

Natural and human resources are the foundation of a country's economy. India has ample resources in men & materials. Natural resources comprise those of land & soil, water, forests, minerals & power. These are important to agricultural and Industrial development. However, the value of natural resources depends very much on the quality of the man power & the human institutions through which all actively is organized.

India possess a well trained cadre of scientists & technologists. It has a long tradition of skill in arts & crafts. In fact India has more trained personnel than its economy can at present absorb, a number of engineers, scientists, doctors & other scholars have left for other countries to seek more profitable employment.

Resources and Population

Gandhiji once said “Economy is roughly congruent with the set of phenomena connected with the production, distribution & consumption of goods & services for the fulfillment of human wants. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values.”

Resources use implies the wise use of resources for the largest number of people for the longest possible time. Gandhiji further added that resources use should include the fulfillment of human wants & the welfare of man.

India has often been described as rich country inhabited by poor people. The main cause of its poverty lies in the under development of its resources & its economy.

In 1947, when India attained Independence, industry provided employment for a mere 2.4 million workers. India's population in 1901 was 238.3 million, by 1951 it had grown to 360.9 million, reflecting a rise of 52% during the half century **(S.L.Kayastha P.160 ,161)**

Subject matter and scope of Population geography:

Edward Ackerman indicates that the first set of problems in population geography involves the identification of generic relations, which includes the categorization, classification, and differentiation procedures. The last step is the determination of co – variant relations, that is, the search for understanding the space relations of spatial processes, which are expressed in terms of areal association and interaction between and among phenomenon.

The main field of population geography is the aerial differentiation which is helpful for solving the problems of static relationships between variables. Population study by geographers should lead to a better understanding of the processes creating areal distribution as expressed in the concepts inherent in, & by the study of spatial interaction. The study of population should consider the spatial system which arises from, or leads to the geographic character of population. Thus, the subject matter of geography is spatial distribution

and spatial interaction of population. This will be meaningful only when carried a step further to include inquiry into the processes which influence, indeed create, particular spatial distributions and interaction.

Population geography as a formal and systematic sub field of the discipline of geography, places greater emphasis on man. Man is the main focus of study of population geography. In addition to the inclusion of mans culture, his economic activities, and his general distribution at present or in the past, there exists a need for better understanding of spatial aspects of population per se.

The subject – matters & scope of population geography can be delineated briefly as follows.

- i) **Study of population distribution** in all its aspects, i.e. size and spacing of settlement of units, continental and sub continental population distribution- patterns, gross patterns of distribution economic & the non – economic aspects, inter – temporal & inter – regional distribution.
- ii) **Density of population** : Its various types, determinants & density over the regions, & world patterns.
- iii) **Spatial movement of population (migration)** , internal migration , inter – nation migration, determinants, types, causes, consequences and laws of migration & the migration of highly quality manpower from LDCs (Less developed Countries) to DCs.
- iv) **Growth of Population** Measurement of population, birth & death rates, components of population, determinants, trend, causes, theories, and population projection.
- v) **Population Composition** Ethnic composition, religious composition, linguistic composition, age & sex composition, occupation structure, marital status, educational composition, economic composition, dependency ratio, work force, employment status, industrial classification, income & expenditure, income distribution & poverty.
- vi) **Literacy & Quality of population** Literacy differentials, determinants world pattern, quality of population, eugenic programme & practice & methods for improving the quality of population.
- vii) **Population resource Ratios** Population growth & resource development, population pressure, resource based theories of population, Optimum population, under population & over population. World resource population pattern, Resource – population ratios, population policy.
- viii) **A Geographical Overview of World Population** - World population growth (Trend), population projections, world migration, Distribution of world Population, Age & Sex Ratios, Median age of population, life – expectancy, & economic, Social, Cultural. Health, Climatic, & Political indicators of world population.

The above scheme of study fits in well with the scope & subject – matter of population geography.

Relationship of population geography with other disciplines

Population geography belongs to that borderland of geography which opens on economics, sociology and demography, while demography is devoted to numbers & depends heavily upon statistical methods, population geography relates numbers to area & relies on mapping.

Clarke pointed out that population geography should study areal variations in population & this relationship with the physical, cultural & economic phenomenon. The analysis of numbers & demographic process for political units belongs to the area of demography.

Population geography is concerned with spatial analysis of population. It also incorporates the economic attributes of population like income, expenditure, occupation, income distribution, poverty & so on. The science of economics is basically concerned with allocation & valuation problems. It allocates the scarce resources among the competing ends. It also studies the economic behavior of components of population as producers as well as consumers.

Where as the subject – matter of economics is the money earning & money – earning & money – spending activities of human beings, the main focus of population geography is man as an important element on the surface of the earth. Thus, both economics & population geography are inter – related & they have many common grounds of analysis. This is perhaps the reason why population geography is considered as a part of economic geography in the Soviet union. In fact population geography can not remain a loop from the domain of economic analysis pertaining to population (**J.P.Yadav Vol 1 P.3,4,5,6**)

Types of data

There are mainly 2 types of data required by population geographers. One type of data, known as cross section data are collected from a cross section of a population with respect to a particular variable or a group of variables at a point of time. The data may also be historical in character, extending over a period of time consisting several years, such data are called time series data.

Time – series data are collected with respect to a particular variable or a group of variables for a long period of time. Time – series data give a long – run perspective, where as cross section data give only a temporal and short – term picture of a phenomena.

The data may be collected from a particular family, household or individual. Such data will be micro level data which are utilized for micro level study. Data may also be collected from various families & countries for the system as a whole for micro level study. Micro level study requires micro level data which are to be collected for the country as a whole for finding some useful conclusion which will have implications.

The data may be personally collected by investigator through questionnaires, schedule or personal interview methods. Such method of data collection is known as primary method of data collection.

Where as the primary data are collected by the investigator himself from the primary sources, the secondary data what have already been collected by some body else and are available in published from. The study made by population geographers may be aggregative or disaggregative in nature and, accordingly, they have to find out the suitable data. There are mainly 3 sources of population data.

i. Census report.

ii. Vital registration.

iii. Miscellaneous sources.

Census : In most countries, the population census is undertaken at 10 year intervals. A census is an enumeration at a specified time of individuals inhabiting a specified area, during which operation particulars are collected regarding age, sex, marital status, occupations, religion, etc. A census does not intend to count the number of people alone. It collects information on the various aspects of the population. The\ census of population may be defined as the total process of collecting, compiling and publishing demographic, economic and social data pertaining, at a specified time or times, to all persons in a country or delimited territory.

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