

Ques. 1 (c) What is radical approach in Geography?

Ans. 1(c) The radical approach in geography developed in 1970s as a reaction to 'quantitative revolution' and positivism which tried to make geography as a spatial science, with great emphasis on locational analysis.

The followers of radical approach in geography mainly concentrated on the issues of great social relevance like, inequality, racism, sexism, crime, delinquency, discrimination against blacks and non-whites, females, exploitation of juveniles and environment resources and the opposition of the Vietnam war in U.S.A. Events of the late 1960s, such as the burning of large cities in the western world, student-unrest, worker-uprising in Paris in 1968, massive anti-Vietnam war protest actions and radical cultural reformation exposed the social and political irrelevance of geography as a spatial science and proved the hollowness of locational analysis.

It was in this background that the radicalized students and junior faculty members challenged the traditional geography (geography as spatial science) and they started publishing articles with more 'socially relevant' geographic topics in the professional journals. In 1969, Antipode—a Radical Journal of Geography was founded at the Clark University in Worcester (Massachusetts), specifically to publish the research papers of the younger geographers with a revolutionary leaning.

The young radical geographers published papers in Antipode dealing with urban poverty, discrimination against women, colored people and minority groups, unequal access to social amenities, crimes, deprivation, permissiveness and sexism. They also published articles on underdevelopment, poverty, malnutrition, and unemployment and resource misuse in the Third World countries. Thus, the radicalists took the side of the oppressed, advocating their causes and pressing for fundamental social change. In brief, the radical geography was a quest for social relevance of the discipline geography at a time of contradiction and crises in the capitalistic society of the west.

The origin of the radical geography movement can be traced to the in late 1960s, especially in the U.S.A. with three contemporary political issues: The Vietnam war, Civil rights (especially of the American blacks), and The pervasive poverty and inequality suffered by the residents of urban ghettos and deprived rural areas all of which were generating increased social unrest and tension. In the words of Peet (1977), radical geography developed largely as a negative reaction to the established discipline (spatial science). The radical geographers introduced the study of topics such as poverty, hunger, health, and crime to human geographers, who had previously very largely ignored them.

The salient features and objectives of radical geography were:

- To expose the issues of inequality, deprivation, discrimination, health, exploitation, crime and environmental degradation in the capitalist countries.

- To highlight the weaknesses of the positivism and quantitative revolution in geography which emphasized on geography as a 'spatial science' with a thrust on locational analysis.
- To bring a cultural revolution to eradicate permissiveness, sexism and discrimination against females.
- To remove regional inequalities.
- Radicalists opposed political centralization and economic concentration. Contrary to multinationals, they favoured small- scale self sufficient social units, living in greater harmony with their natural surroundings.
- They were against imperialism, nationalism, national chauvinism and racism.
- They opposed the idea of the superiority of the white and the west.
- According to radicalists the man and environment relationship may be understood through history. In other words, the mode of production in any society determines the economic relation among its people.
- One of the objectives of the radicalists was to explain not only what is happening but also to prescribe revolutionary changes and solution to the social problems.