

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.

Write short notes on the Realism

Ans. Realism is a posture that assumes the constitutive autonomy of different phenomena in relation to our ability to understand them, and the reliability of our understanding in apprehending them correctly. Realism can be ontological (relating to a fundamental belief that cannot be demonstrated) or epistemological (and as such considered to be the only correct manner of scientific undertakings: confronting things as they exist, independently from our own volition). This means that realism requires a degree of confidence in the reliability of our openings onto the world (our sensory experience, report by others, scientific measures). Thus positivism can be said to be a form of realism that casts doubt on immediate experience and our spontaneous categorisations, tending to integrate these into protocols that aim to extract explicative relationships or laws from reality, these being the only objects worthy of being targeted by science.

Realism is the view that reality exists independent of the mind; it is not mind dependent. It is antithetical in many respects to idealism. Gibson suggests realism as a viable alternative explanation to idealism. The basic philosophy of realism is that facts speak for themselves and explanation is logical and inductive. Realism advocates the use of theories and models in geographical explanation. It is very close to the objective philosophy of positivism but has different methodology of explanation.

Historically, realism by the Platonic-Socratic thought was used in opposition to nominalism” for the doctrine that universal and abstract entities have real objective existence. At present, it is, however, used in opposition to idealism. In contrast to other philosophies of science such as naturalism, positivism, and idealism, realism is based on the doctrine that human science is an empirically-based rational enterprise which explains observable regularities by describing the hidden, but 'real' structures that casually generate them.

In his theory of ideas, Plato asserted that the forms we see, touch, taste and smell in time and space do not exist and are not knowable with our senses. A particular phenomenon is only appearance which shall disappear in due course of time.

For example, a specific mountain like the Himalayas does not exist, it will be worn down to the ocean floor over geological time. Contrary to this, the general and universal term 'mountain' is rigid and fixed. Just opposite to it, the nominalists, notably, Aristotelians denied the existence of an ideal mountain. For the early nominalists 'mountain' was a mere term. What is real is a particular mountain that we can all see and touch.

The battle between the realists and nominalists over the existence of abstract entities of problematic entities, carried over the medieval period. During the medieval period, the Platonic-Socratic thought came to be known as scholastic realism. The main proponent of scholastic realism was John Scot.

In the 19th century, 'realism' took the shape of 'direct' or 'naive' realism which was a polemic against idealism. Cook Wilson was the founder of 'naive realism'. He and his pupils denied the existence of any problematic or abstract entity—a denial which of course runs counter to Plato. For direct realist:

Nothing existed that was not observable in time and space. From this ontology they developed a logic of perceiving the world, a common-sense logic which argued that our views of the world are

constructed in the mind by an interaction, through society, with the physical world.

This direct naive realism has had a sustaining influence on geography, especially on commercial and military geography, since the Victorian period. For the naive or common-sense geographers, the mind grasps the world in a simple effortless process, something we do all the time.

Geographical facts of observed phenomena and changes within them can be objectively established and any question of unseen entities, problematic, abstract forms or subjective impressions is irrelevant. With due precautions, by simple common-sense, we can know the reality of a place, as the topography looks, as the soil feels, as the water tastes, etc. The objectives of 'naive realism' are common to those social reform to or national surveys. Stamp, with this objective, conducted the land use survey of Britain and suggested significant changes in the utilization of land.

It gave more job opportunities and greater respectability to geographers. The sixties can be called as a period of extreme of naive realism, which has also been termed as a phase of 'quantitative revolution' in geography. This revolution was based mainly on a move toward philosophical 'positivism'.

Realism has taken the shape of 'new or critical realism' in the last few decades. It was propounded by T.P. Nunn. The essence of the concept of new realism is that anything we experience depends for its existence upon the fact that it is experienced. In other words, the objects of our perception are actual properties of the physical world. The proponents of this philosophy asserted that nothing exists excepting that which is experienced.