

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

- The word politics comes from the Greek word “*polis*” which means “affairs of the city state”.
- Political geography is a recent branch of human geography and developed with the publication of political geography by Richard Hartshorne(1897).
- According to Whitelessy (1922)- Political Geography is concerned with the areal differentiation based on political phenomena.
- According to Richard Hartshorne(1897) – Political Geography is a science of political areas or more specifically the study of the state as a characteristics of areas in relation to other characteristics of area.

NATURE OF POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

- 1) Political geography is mainly interested in the study of a state. A state means a politically organized area and is sovereign in nature.
- 2) Political geography tries to search for spatial pattern of state and its affairs and tries to answer for the pattern’s differentiation in different parts of the world.
- 3) Political geography originally made use of the organic approach to study its subject matter but later on functional and morphological approaches came into prominence.
- 4) Geopolitics has become one of the most discussed aspect of political geography. It is basically the application of principles of political geography to the modern state.
- 5) Political geography is one of the most dynamic branch which is changing with time. Green politics which is concerned with protection of the environment is the most recent trend in political geography.

APPROACHES OF POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

- A) Organic approach- This approach was made into use by the geographer Friedrich Ratzel. It was highly influenced by the Darwinian concept of the survival of the fittest. He stated that the states are involved in endless struggle for space. All living organisms are in a fight of space. The most powerful of the state will have the largest spaces. States with higher population density have a more valid claim to empty land than those with low density.

The organic aspects of state evolve as greater occupations of space leads to its organization, the differentiation of land uses and exchange among regions. Transport roads are the veins and arteries of the state organism and the landscape is transformed from natural to cultural.

- B) FUNCTIONAL APPROACH - This approach was postulated by Richard Hartshorne where he stated that the fundamental role of the state is to organize section of land and section of people, to bring all varied territorial part, the diverse regions of the state- area into a single organized unit. The functional approach of the Richard Hartshorne can be compared to that of the anatomy of the human body wherein the human brain organizes the other body organs to perform their function in a systematic way for continuing the human life. Here the human brain has been compared to that of the role of the state as said by Hartshorne.

In executing functionality, regarding many social aspects like class structure, family organization, religion and education a state may tolerate considerable variation in its different region. But because of the significance of these factors to political life, there is a tendency in some states to exert unifying control even over this institution. The main aim of every state is how to bind together more or less separate and diverse areas into an effective one.

- C) LAW- LANDSCAPE APPROACH – This approach was put forward by Whitelessy in the year 1935. This approach was first published in the form of a article called “ The impress of effective central authority upon the landscape” in the Annals of American Geography. He believes that the state should exert full control over its area or territory. While exerting control over its territory it modifies the landscape to a large extent. In his work he emphasized his treatment in into 4 major sections. They are- expression of security, special features of boundaries, expressions of government activity and effects of the legal activity.

- D) POLITICAL PARTITIONING MODEL – This model was given by Gottman. In his words, “ Political world is a limited one; it extends

only over the space accessible to men. Accessibility is the determining factor; areas do not have any political standing or problem.... Gottman hypothesizes two dominant sets of forces- circulation and iconography- which act upon the coherence of the political unit. He identifies iconography as a force for stability and coherence whereas circulation leads to political change.