

GEOGRAPHICAL DETERMINISM

Introduction:

Geographical Determinism means (from the Greek word 'geographia' meaning "description of the Earth" and Latin word 'Determine, meaning "I define"): a world outlook and a scientific/philosophical school whose backers absolutize the influence of geographical conditions on human lives and actions claiming that geographical environment is the determinative factor of social development. Under geographical environment is meant, as a rule, the part of terrestrial nature (the upper lithosphere, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, flora and fauna) involved in human activities and being a necessary precondition for social existence and development.

HISTORICAL VIEW OF DETERMINISM:--The French philosophers of the eighteenth century Turgot and Montesquieu are commonly thought of as the founders of geographical determinism, this concept dates back to Antiquity. We can distinguish between real geographical determinism developed by the Greek historians Herodotus and Strabon aiming at revealing the dialectics of interrelations between nature and human development; physiological geographical determinism founded by the Greek physician Hippocrates and studying interconnections between human health and natural environment; geopolitical geographical environment.

In the eighteenth century a mechanistic geographical determinism emerged insisting on nearly total dependence of human activity on natural environment. The founder and the most outstanding representative of this school was the French Enlightenment philosopher Charles Montesquieu (1689–1755). In his large treatise *On the Spirit of Laws* he extensively announced his concept, stating that their geographical and climatic environment directly causes human life, morals, laws, customs, evidence and political organization.

German ethnographer and geographer F. Ratzel was the foremost representative of geographical determinism at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. Building upon ideas of Kant, von Humboldt, Ritter, and others, he was the first one to link politics to geography in his attempts to explain the behavior of this or that state by its geographical position and the space it occupies. The fullest description of these ideas can be found in his volume *Political Geography* (1887).

In 20th century, human economic and social life depended on the geographic environment and the forces of nature less than when their economic and technical capabilities were higher.

CONCEPT OF DETERMINISM:--

Philosophy of determinism is based upon the interaction between primitive human society and strong forces of nature. It says that the strong forces of environment control the course of human actions. This implies that the history, culture, mode of living and the level of development of the societal groups and countries are exclusively or largely controlled by the

physical environment.

Determinism is also called as 'Environmental Determinism'. This philosophy says that the aspects of physical geography, particularly climate, influenced the psychological mind set of individuals, which in turn defined the behaviour and culture of the society that those individuals formed. For example, tropical climates were said to cause laziness, relaxed attitudes and promiscuity, while the frequent variability in the weather of the middle latitudes led to more determined and driven work ethics.

Basic Principles of environmental determinism:--

1. According to Determinism, man is a passive agent and nature is a active agent, which controls and determines the action and decision making processes of man.

2. As per determinism, the human actions can be explained as a responses to the natural environment.

3. The core philosophy is that the supreme achievements of civilization in any region were always Bound up with a particular type of climate and variations in climate led to pulsations in the history and culture of the people.

CONCLUSION:---- The geographers who propounded this theory say that the civilisations of Egyptians, Mesopotamians , indus valley, disappeared because of the climatic changes. This attracts of the Central Asian nomads in different directions in the 13th century were also attributed to the drying up of their pastures directions of climatic change.