

# Behavioral Geography: Study of Human Behaviour



Behavioral geography is a subfield of geography that focuses on understanding how people interact with the environment, including how they make decisions, how they move through space, and how they perceive and use the environment. It is an interdisciplinary field that draws on concepts and methods from psychology, sociology, anthropology, and economics, as well as from traditional geographic disciplines such as cartography, remote sensing, and GIS. Some examples of topics studied in behavioral geography include travel behavior, land use, and urban design.

It is a sub discipline of Human Geography which emphasizes the role of cognitive (subjective) and decision-making variables as mediating the relationship between environment and spatial behaviour. It represents a point of view, it focuses on the processes leading to observed spatial patterns. It attempts to understand human activity in space, place, and environment by studying it at the level of the individual person.. It generates primary data about human behaviour and does not to rely heavily on the published data.It's objective is to search for methods other than the mathematical and statistical that could uncover the latent structure in data and decision-making.Behavioral geography is a move toward to human geography that attempts to understand human movement in space, place, and environment by studying it at the disaggregate stage of analysis at the level of the individual person. Behavioral geographers analyze data on the behavior of individual people, recognize that individuals vary from each other. A key belief of behavioral geography holds that models of human activity and interaction can be better by incorporating more sensible assumptions about human behavior. Behavioral geography additional maintains that human environment relations are dynamic and bidirectional The actions and mental states of individuals reason and are caused by physical and social environments inside the context of continuing and changing interactions.

The study being qualitative in nature, deals with the nature and quality of behavioral geography, and concludes that in order to understand the behaviour of man in different geographical conditions, the knowledge of behavioural geography is very essential.

**Keywords:** Behaviour, Geography, Human, Approach, Experiments.

## Introduction

Behavioral geography is a subfield of geography that focuses on understanding and explaining human behavior and its relationship to spatial patterns. It combines elements of psychology, sociology, and geography to analyze how individuals and groups interact with and modify their environment. There are several approaches to the study of behavioral geography, including-

**Quantitative Methods:** Behavioral geographers often use quantitative methods to collect and analyze data. This can involve surveys, questionnaires, experiments, and statistical analysis. Quantitative methods allow researchers to quantify and measure behaviors, identify patterns, and make statistical inferences about relationships between behavior and spatial variables.

**Qualitative Methods:** Qualitative methods are also used in behavioral geography to explore subjective experiences, meanings, and interpretations of places and spaces. Techniques such as interviews, observations, and case studies are employed to gain in-depth insights into human behavior, motivations, and perceptions. Qualitative methods help researchers understand the context and complexities of human behavior within specific spatial settings.

**Cognitive Approaches:** Cognitive geography examines how individuals perceive, think, and make decisions about space. It focuses on mental processes and representations of space, including mental maps, spatial cognition, and wayfinding. Researchers in this approach investigate how cognitive factors influence behavior and spatial choices, and how spatial environments are mentally represented and interpreted by individuals.

**Environmental Perception and Behavior:** This approach emphasizes the relationship between people and their physical and social environments. It explores how individuals perceive and evaluate their surroundings, and how these perceptions influence their behavior. Studies may investigate how characteristics of the built environment, such as architectural design or neighborhood layout, impact human behavior, social interactions, and well-being.

**Time Geography:** Time geography examines how individuals and groups allocate and use their time in relation to space. It focuses on the constraints and opportunities presented by

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time and space, and how they shape behavioral patterns. Time geography analyzes daily routines, activity-travel behavior, and the scheduling of activities to understand how time-space constraints affect human behavior.

**Behavioral Modeling:** Behavioral geographers often employ modeling techniques to simulate and predict human behavior. Agent-based modeling and spatial interaction modeling are common approaches. These models simulate the actions and interactions of individuals or groups in a spatial context, allowing researchers to test hypotheses, understand emergent patterns, and explore the impacts of different scenarios on behavior. These approaches are not mutually exclusive, and researchers often combine multiple methods and perspectives to gain a comprehensive understanding of human behavior in geographical contexts.

#### **Objective of the Study**

The chief objective of the study and research paper is to elaborate behavioural geography in all its aspects and to highlight the importance of its study.

#### **Related Studies & their Review**

Behavioral geography' is identified as having two meanings. The first describes a broadly based movement that thrived within geography from the late 1960s through to 1980. Stressing the importance of the links between environmental cognition and behavior, it offered a corrective to the prevailing assumptions that underpinned spatial science and supplied a catalyst that stimulated new approaches. The second and more contemporary meaning of 'behavioral geography' is as an increasingly peripheral subdiscipline of human geography, which adopts a disaggregated approach to human behavior and emphasizes cognitive processes in shaping spatial decision-making.<sup>1</sup>

'Behavioral geography includes the study of the processes involved in spatial decision making and the consequent traces of human decisions and movements in the environment. Two components, labeled 'spatial behavior' and 'behavior in space,' are generally recognized. 'Spatial behaviors' are the spatially manifested or overt acts of people performing a range of daily or other episodic activities (e.g., journey to work, shopping, recreation, education, and so on). These acts yield data such as distance and direction of movement, directional bias, trip frequency, episodic interval, and repetitiveness, and are represented and analyzed as occurrences in space. 'Behavior in space' focuses on supplying reasons for these overt acts and requires understanding processes such as decision making and choice, spatial cognition and cognitive mapping, spatial knowledge acquisition, risk aversion, uncertainty, habit, search and learning, emotional state, attitudes, cognitive representations, and values and beliefs.'<sup>2</sup>

'Behavioral geographers give more weight to an individual as opposed to gatherings, or associations or society. As such, the focal point of study is the individual, not the gathering or network. They attest that examination must perceive the way that the individual shapes and reacts to his physical and Behavioral condition. Truth be told, it is important to perceive that the activities of every single individual have an effect upon the earth, in any case, slight or incidental that effect might be. Man is an objective coordinated creature who impacts the earth and thus is affected by it. In a nutshell, an individual instead of a gathering of individuals or Behavioral gathering is increasingly significant in man-nature relationship. Behavioral methodology in geology proposed a commonly connecting connection among man and his condition, whereby man formed nature and was in this manner molded by it.'<sup>3</sup>

'Behavioral Geography as important new themes in human geography were recognized in the 1960s, to examines human behavior using a disaggregate approach, deals with the study of cognitive processes with its response to the environment, through behaviorism(1), underlying spatial reasoning, decision making, It was draws early from behaviorist works such as Tolman's concepts of "cognitive or mental maps. In addition, behavioral geography is an ideology/approach that makes use of the methods and assumptions of behaviorism to determine the cognitive processes involved in an individual's perception of, and/or response and reaction to their environment. The approach adopted in behavioral geography is closely related to that of psychology but draws on research findings from a multitude of other attitudes and disciplines including Customs, habits, heritage, health, economics, sociology, anthropology, transportation planning, and many human and physical aspects. Some geographers studies behavioral geography through recognition of spatial dimensions of sites and relationship with some skills and experience, mental map is one of this experiences and recognition, realize and understanding relationship between human and his environment.'<sup>4</sup>

#### **Hypothesis**

1. The behaviour of man is different in terms of geographical conditions
2. The behaviour of man under different geographical conditions is studied scientifically by behavioural geography

3. In order to have a peep into the changing behaviour of man under the different geographical conditions, the knowledge of behavioural geography is essential

**Methodology**

The study which is qualitative-interpretative in nature, aims at elaborating the various aspects of behavioural geography. The author abided by all the prescribed steps of research, beginning with the selection of the title to the conclusion and generalization. Throughout the study, an attempt has been made to bring forth the deeper details about behavioural geography. The hypotheses formulated by the author at the beginning of the study, later turned out to be true.

**Conclusion**

Geography is the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and the interaction and interrelationship between human beings and physical environment including the distribution of populations and resources and political and economic activities. Pioneer Greek geographer "Hecataeus" is widely recognized as the Father of Geography. Hecataeus was a resident of Miletus. Very little is known about his date of birth and early life but he was a great statesman and pioneer geographer. He was the first writer of Greek prose. He collected and classified information of the known Greek world and the unknown distant areas. His main book is *Ges-periodos* which was published most probably before the end of the 6th century.

*Ges-periodos* is the first systematic description of the world and because of this fact Hecataeus is known as the "Father of Geography". History is the record of human activities in the bygone days comprising civilizational marches in different periods spent in the lap of time. Geography is primarily spatial and environmental and history is temporal.

A perusal into the world history squarely establishes the fact that history is mostly shaped and enriched by prevalent geographical settings. Geographical attributes such as river, mountains barriers, landforms, climate phenomena are natural foundations upon which the edifices of human history at any time or in any geographical regions are erected. Rivers, known as the cradle of human civilization, have played an enviable role in setting the civilizational wheel on move. The early civilizations that formed along the Nile River in Egypt, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the Middle East, the Yangtze River in China, or the Ganges River of India provide the rudimentary structure to human history. Each development had a lasting influence on history. Considering the impregnable nature in the early period, big rivers provided many advantages like constant supply of clean, fresh water for humans, their crops and animals, easy means of transportation and exploration, protection against invasion, food etc. Rivers allowed the Vikings to raid far into inland Europe, and the Mississippi River made it far easier for Europeans to explore North America.

Geographical features like mountains and plains have had equally profound impact on human history. Mountains invariably influence the history of many countries. In the past, these lofty physical features perennially guarded against foreign invasions and restricted movement of settlers, traders and travellers at various times. Mountains and mountain passes have had historic effects because of their military significance. The three hundred Spartan soldiers who held off Xerxes and his thousands of Persian warriors at the pass at Thermopylae saved ancient Greece from being conquered by the Persian Empire. The defense of the Iron Gap, a pass through the Carpathian Mountains, kept the nomadic hordes of Huns from capturing parts of Europe and the the Kesselring Line in Italy's northern Alps temporarily fended off Allied troops from entering Germany at the end of World War II. The invincible northern mountains mostly restricted the number of invaders from Central Asia and Europe though some dared to reach Indian subcontinent through dangerous passes. Even large flat plains have important impact on the lifestyle and history of their inhabitants as in case of the tribes of the Great Plains of North America, the Tartars of the Siberian Plain and the Tuaregs of the flat sandy plains of North Africa. The vast expanse and domestication of horses have greatly influenced the indigenous culture and history of these areas.

The climate aspect of geography also largely influences the history and its characteristics. The combination of weather and land features, in which civilization lives, is especially powerful catalyst of history of a region. The major cities of North Africa all lie to the north of the Atlas Mountains, an area of reliable rainfall. The area to the south of the mountains is home to the desert tribes and a completely different history and lifestyle.

The temperate climate, limited space, proximity to sea that made them sea-faring and lack of adequate natural resources perhaps made most of European nation states colonialise almost the whole of the world to satiate their economic and political passions. It redefined the human history and devoured a major chunk of medieval and modern history of mankind. Or else, history would have taken a different course. Geography, therefore, is the

steering force that moves history rolling and history stands a mute traveller on the varied terrain of geography.

Behavioural geography is tributary of human geography and sub tributary of geography, in behavioural geography we study about the function human and nature with respect time and space. Geography is one of the few subjects that can boast of being a part of both Humanities and Science. You see, it has best of both the worlds. It is a subject that can engross you deeply once you start off. It certainly makes for an interesting reading. If you want to know the how, why, where, when, what of your surroundings, seek the answers in Geography. Just to illustrate. Place yourself amidst an imaginary landscape which is made up of mountains, rivers, deserts, seas, oceans, vegetations etc. behaviour geography study with the help of psychology , sociology , anthropology.

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