

CBCS : Human Geog Paper - 2016 (Chapter - 5)

I Sem

Racial composition of Popn &

Religious & Linguistic composition



4th Sem Major : Human Geog. Paper - 402 (Unit - 5)

The composition or characteristics of population can be represented in many ways. There are many types of population composition. Population composition may be broadly divided into three types: biological composition, cultural composition and economic composition. Under biological composition, we discuss race and ethnicity, colour, fertility, mortality, sex-ratio, age structure and so on. Cultural composition involves education, literacy, marital status, religion, language and so on. Economic composition consists of working and non-working population, unemployment, under employed, surplus labour, economically active and inactive populations and the like.

BIOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION:

(A) Racial and Ethnic composition of Population:

The population of a country may consist of different races and communities. There may not exist any genetic differences among human races. The notion of pure race is unrealistic for the earth's population is essentially a mixture. There is no hard and fast rule for distinguishing races. However, anthropologists consider only three primary races — Caucasoids, Negroids and Mongoloids. The white or the Caucasoid group is the most numerous and widespread over the earth, amounting to nearly half the human population. This race consist of Europeans, Indo-Iranians and Semites and Hamites. The Indo-Iranian branch is concentrated in the northern and eastern parts of South-west Asia Minor. Negroid peoples are found mostly in Africa, and Asiatic blacks are

found in southern India and parts of Southeast Asia and Oceania. The Mongoloid peoples are yellow and brown in colour. They are found in East and central Asia, Malaya and Indonesia. The blending of American Indian, white and negro strains has produced in Latin America a population mixed in character. In Asia, we find Eurasians who are mixtures of whites and Mongoloid.

At present, there is no conclusive classification of the world population on the basis of races and communities. The physical features that differentiate various races and ethnic groups are not very important for judging the culture of people. The qualities of different races are not functional in nature. Similarly, the division of the earth into two parts consisting of DCs and LDCs, does not seem to be a very happy division. The people in the LDCs mostly have pigmented skins (black, brown and yellow), but they are not inferior in quality.

In the USA, the percentages of white and negro population were 88.1 and 11.9 respectively in 1955. In the same year there were only 1.9 crore Negroes in America. In 1990, 90% of the Negro population lived in the south and that is why the south was called the "Black Belt". In the twentieth century, a large number of Negroes migrated to the north. Now, America is a cosmopolitan country. In Russia, 76% of the population is Slav. Now there are more than 100 different races, such as Uzbeki, Kazaki, Jew, Armenian etc. China has been described as

The land of many small races and tribes. The main race is the Hans (94%). In Japan, Malayan Mongolian constitutes 60%, Chinese Mongolian 30% and Jnu 10% of the population. Northern Sri Lanka is inhabited by Tamilians which is 12% of the total population. There are 5 lakh Moors; 16 lakh Hindus, 5 lakhs Muslims, 7 lakh Christians and 52 lakh Buddhists.

### (B) CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF POPULATION:

Population composition is also based on culture like literacy, religion, language, marital status and so on.

#### Religious Composition:

Religion is an important feature of population. History furnishes many instances of the religion of a population functioning as a motivating force. There were many religious wars fought in the past in Europe, Israel and other places. The religious force was much stronger earlier than of it is now. But it is still a significant force. The partition of the sub-continent of India into two states of Pakistan and India following World War II had as its basis the rivalries between Hindus and Muslims.

Religion is mainly concerned with the well-being of mankind on earth. But actually, in many places, religions have departed from their humanitarian goals and striven instead for wealth and temporal power. Religions have engaged themselves in ruinous factional fight

and political intrigues. All religions have left an imprint on the customs, art, literature, architecture, food habit, politics and cultures of mankind. The imprint is particularly strong where the religion was combined with state power, as in Spain and France.

Religion has been a divisive as well as a unifying force. The Nazis destroyed six million Jews. The hatred between Arabs and Jews in the eastern Mediterranean lands remained at the boiling point for a long time. Ireland is seriously split between the Catholic south and the Protestant north. Religion also plays an important role in food habits, birth control and so on. But for the population geographers, religion is difficult to map and its world pattern is very difficult to analyse. The data on religion are indeed inadequate. Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam are very widespread religions in the world. Christianity prevails in the western Hemisphere and in Europe, Buddhism is concentrated in East Asia, Hinduism in South Asia and Islam in southwestern Asia, North Africa, and parts of southern and south eastern Asia. There are approximately 780 million Christians, 660 million Buddhists, 380 million Hindus and 320 million Muslims in the world.

### LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION :

Language is a meaningful population characteristic for the purpose of mapping. It is closely related to nationality. It is a part of ethnicity. There are at present several thousands different languages in the world. Many of these languages



may be sub divided into numerous dialects. However, there is no definite information available on this issue. A common language within a country fosters cohesion and unity. It strengthens nationalism and patriotism. There can be no doubt that language differences foster separatism in some countries. This is particularly true of Canada, Belgium, India and Sri Lanka. India is divided into a number of linguistic states. However, in spite of the existence of four languages, national development and cohesion did not suffer in Switzerland. The DCs have mostly internal linguistic homogeneity. It has been found that the language of a strong and powerful nation with a large colonial empire and trade links tends to become internationalized. In this way, English and French became international languages.

In LDCs, linguistic diversity is especially found in Negro Africa and some parts of Asia. This may be partly responsible for the slow tempo of economic development in these countries. Multiple languages are found in Asian countries, particularly in the southeast and south where languages have created separatist tendencies. Latin America, on the contrary, has a high degree of linguistic cohesion and homogeneity. For the unified and smooth development of a country, it is necessary to have a common language, and an international language through which international communication is possible. Too many languages may create diversity in unity which may be a bottleneck towards the development of the country.