

# Behavioural Geography

## Why did behaviorism develop in geography?

In the 1970s, in geography, there was considerable dissatisfaction against the quantitative revolution and the positivism approach to geography, which led to the development of behaviorism in geography.

### **Following are the main reasons for the development of behaviorism:**

As the quantitative revolution and positivism approaches hold that human decisions are always profit-maximizers, but in reality, human decisions are not always profit-maximizer but only satisfying.

According to Wolpert's study, the optimum agricultural practice is not practiced by Swedish farmers, although despite having very fertile and productive land, they were satisfied with 60% productivity.

- Indian farmers also used excess fertilizer which reduces the long-term productivity of the land. Their decision gives immediate satisfaction.
- From the above two examples, we can say that man's decision is not always to maximize profit, but only to satisfy the man.
- Man's judgment is not always objective in nature, man's judgment is subjective. Human judgments cannot be determined by quantitative tools.

Since quantitative revolution rejects the role of human values, beliefs, culture, etc. in decision making; Reality is different, the contribution of values, culture, and religion in human judgment can be seen in daily life. for example,

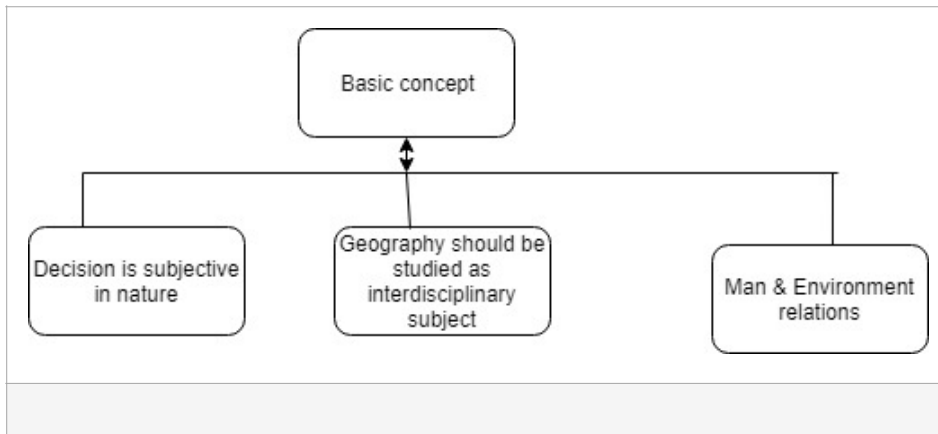
- Going to the temple is purely a religious decision, not a financial decision.
- Some people like to donate blankets to the needy and some people like to do Jagran or Hari Katha at home/temple.

So we can say that human decisions cannot be made objective.

## **Basic Concept of Behaviorism in Geography:**

Behaviorism emphasized the inclusion of other factors like ethnicity, age, profession, knowledge, caste, religion, etc. in addition to economic factors for the decision-making of human beings.

The following diagram shows the basic concept of behaviorism:



## **Human judgment is subjective in nature:**

In fact, as we know that human behavior is dynamic, what is liked today may be disliked by the same person tomorrow. Human judgment is subjective in nature and it can not be objectified because basic human decisions are different for each human. Human behavior or human choice is influenced not only by benefits, as the quantitative approach assumes, but also by:

- Pre knowledge
- ethics, morals
- culture, religion
- time or situation
- economic need

For example:

- Some people give more importance to time than money, some people take expensive flights to save time, and some travel by passenger train to save money.

## **Mind Map in Geography:**

Each person has his own perception of the environment and this experience depends on his moral, pre-knowledge, cultural, social,

economic background, etc. An environmental image, also called a mind map, is formed in the human brain of each individual.

Everyone has their own mind map for specific actions. For example,

- Every person has a route map from home to the office and this route map is different in every person's mind. Some people prefer the short and congested route, and others prefer the longer route.
- In this way, what work to do throughout the day remains in the form of a mind map in the mind of every person.

There is a high correlation between a mind map and actual decision-making. People make decisions based on their mind maps, for example, the route from the office to home varies from person to person, the choice is based on their mental map, the same route leads to the office

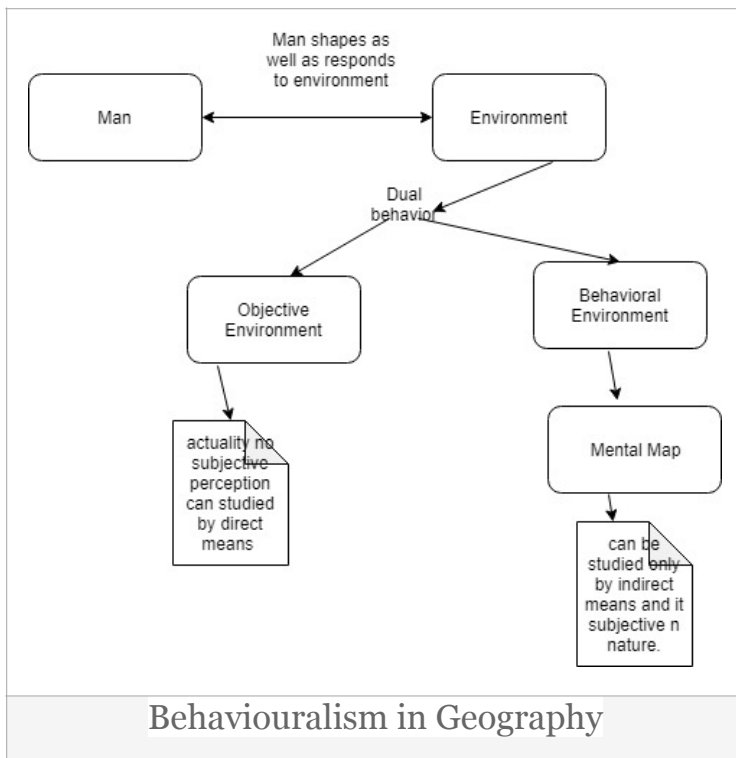
### **Geography is an interdisciplinary subject.**

Behaviorism Geography considered the subject of geography as an interdisciplinary one,

Geography = Psychology + Sociology + Science

### **Man and environment Relations**

As per behaviouralism, man and the environment are dynamically interrelated. The following diagram shows the summed behavioralism.



### The following are the main points in human and environmental relations:

- Humans and the environment are dynamically interrelated.
- The environment plays a dual role, the objective environment, and the behavioral environment.
- In an **objective environment**, the perception of the environment is the same for every human being. For example,
  - If it rains, everyone will feel that it is raining.
- In the **behavioral environment**, the perception of the environment is different for different people. This perception of the environment is based on individual knowledge, values, culture, and specific needs. For example,
  - if it rains outside, the feeling of rain will be different for farmers, potters, and construction workers.
  - For mining in tribal areas,
  - Tribals want to conserve the forest because they use it, they don't want to mine the minerals because it destroys the forest.
  - But industrialists give priority to mining, not forest conservation.

- Here the concept of environment is different for tribes and industrialists.
- Therefore, the environment is acting as a behavioral environment here.
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### **Support of Behavioralism in geography:**

In the support of the behavioral approach, **Kirk** asserted that:

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- In a similar geographical environment, the meaning of the same information would be different for people of a different culture, ethnicity, race, and economic background people.
- Each society acts differently to the same piece of information about the resource, space, and environment.
- For example, for a piece of land on the Indus-Gangetic plain, Jat Farmer prefers to grow sugarcane in his field while Ahir Farmer prefers to grow fodder crops for their animal.

**Wolpert** gives two concepts on the support of behaviouralism

- **The satisficers concept**, as we already discussed in the first paragraph of this post.
- He criticized for gravitation migration principle and the same is true for support of Behaviourailism. He asserted migration largely depends on personal choice, women rarely want to migrate, and a parent whose children are in school does not want to migrate, despite economic opportunities.

**Glibber White**, in his flood study, asserted that:

- People mark the boundary of the river flood, they believed that the flood will not cross this boundary.
- Sometimes, because of this pre-knowledge and overconfidence, the flood does more destruction than aspected.
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### **Criticism of Behavioralism**

- This approach is more theoretical and psychological rather than scientific.
- The model can not be developed using this approach, as it can not be objectified.
- Some terminology like objective and subjective environment perception is loosely defined.