Region: Definition, Concept and, Types

A region is an area that has common characteristics that distinguish it from neighboring areas. In other words, a region is a perceived segment of space differentiated from other regions on the basis of one or more defining characteristics. Since the defining characteristics are of various types so are the regions.

For example, the defining characteristic may be natural (i.e. natural vegetation, climate), thus the defined region are natural region (tropical rain forest region), if the defining characteristic is cultural (language), or economic (industrial cluster), the region will be identified as cultural region (Tamil, Telugu, Oriya) or economic region (Bhilai industrial region).

The basic criterion in the defining of a region seems to be a relative uniformity or homogeneity of geographical phenomena over space. Thus, every region has a certain level of homogeneity of geographical phenomena over space. As such, with in a region a certain level of homogeneity is found in the observed phenomena and that makes it distinct from other regions. The observed phenomena may be physical, social, economic or other characteristics.

All those contiguous territories over which the uniformity of the selected phenomena extends are included in one region.

Types of Region

The region may be divided into two broad categories;

1. Naively Given Region
2. Instituted or Denoted Region

The naively given region refers to a territory as recognized by people or by the people who live outside this territory. For example, Avadh, mithila, Mewat are naively given regions. Generally, these regions do not have sharply defined boundaries as they are delimited on the basis of shared culture or history and a sense of belongingness amongst the people.

Instituted regions are delimited by human agency and thus, have a distinct limit. For example state, districts and the administrative regions. Therefore, Uttar Pradesh, National Capital Region, and Damodar Valley Corporation are the instituted regions.
The denoted region is further classified into two categories;

1. Formal Region (Uniform region)
2. Functional Region (Nodal Region)

A formal region is a geographical area which is homogeneous in terms of selected geographical characteristics such as climate, soils, vegetation, socio-economic characteristics.

The functional regions are identified on the basis of;

a) Organization  
b) Internal Flow (goods, services, people etc) AND  
c) The presence of Nodal place or a focus point

Functional regions are emphasize interdependence (linkages), and may comprises of heterogeneous units such as cities, towns and the villages which get interlinked through flows in a system of interdependence. The Port-hinterland and the City-Umlands represents functional regions.

Planning Region

A planning region is a segment of territory (space) over which economic decision apply.

J Boundeville defined Planning region as “an area displaying some coherence or a unit of economic decision.”