

P R E F A C E

The idea of unifying the physical environment with the social desirability of man, has emerged as a recent offshoot of geographical thoughts. In fact, the dictum of the control of the physical environment on the human geography is gradually loosing ground due to the stimulating intellectual challenges in consequence to the modern urban sprawl. The human geography is fastly moving to obtain a status of scientific subject being equipped with various quantitative and statistical techniques but putting negligible stress on the physical basis of the subject.

But several geographers like Chorley, Haggett, Leighly, Tricart Wilderburg etc. in the end of 20th century (1963-1972) with a view to retain the existence of geography as a separate discipline where the interrelation between man and environment claims attention, began to think the modern man-oriented geography in another sense.

The world of physical environment i.e. the assemblage of geology, relief, climate, soil, vegetation etc, can be relevant to the modern concept of geography by dint of its resource attributes. It means the physical environment is not only responsible for rendering mineral and forest products but also by the way it behaves, to make an environmental-sensitive human geography. Cooke and Doornkamp (1974) are of the opinion that to evaluate the landscape for any sort of human need, it is necessary to analyse and describe the form, process, temporal or spatial inequalities of occurrence since the skeleton of any place is composed of the stuffs of the physical environment. Young (1974) has emphasized the role of

physical environment as a necessary prelude for development planning especially in developing countries where among the three trinities of economics i.e. land, labour and capital, the 'land' or physical environment needs detailed study.

However, the present study attempts to coalesce all the ideas stated in the foregoing paragraphs and follows a three-phase approach to attain the chief hypothesis i.e. how the different composites of the physical environment help to provide a guide line of solution, to the needs of people residing in a rain-fed river basin of West Bengal.