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ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY, ISLAMABAD

Course: Commercial Geography (1428) • Level: ADC

Semester: Autumn 2026

Assignment No. 1 (Units 1-4)

SOLVED ASSIGNMENT GUIDE

(For Study & Reference)

Note: This guide is prepared for study and reference purposes. Students are advised to read the relevant units of the course book, understand the concepts, and then write the assignment in their own words.

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Question 1: Commercial Geography and the Importance of Economic and Commercial Geography (20 Marks)

Define commercial geography. Also, explain the importance of economic and commercial geography in detail.

Introduction

Every human society must answer three basic questions: what to produce, how to produce it, and for whom to produce it. The answers to these questions are never the same everywhere, because the land, climate, minerals, water and people on which production depends are distributed very unevenly over the surface of the earth. One region grows surplus wheat while another cannot grow it at all; one country possesses coal and iron while another must import both. It is this uneven distribution of resources, and the trade that arises from it, which

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commercial geography studies. Commercial geography therefore stands at the meeting point of geography and commerce: it explains where economic activities are located, why they are located there, and how goods move from the areas of production to the areas of consumption. In a country like Pakistan, where agriculture, industry and foreign trade all depend heavily on the geography of the Indus plain, the northern mountains and the Arabian Sea coast, the subject has a direct practical value for students, traders, industrialists and planners alike.

Meaning and Definition of Commercial Geography

Commercial geography is that branch of economic geography which deals with the production, distribution and exchange (trade) of commodities in relation to their geographical environment. It studies the earth's surface not merely as physical landforms, but as a field of human economic activity: farms, factories, mines, markets, ports, roads and railways, and the movement of goods between them. In simple words, commercial geography is the study of commerce and trade in its geographical setting.

Different scholars have defined the subject in their own words. In the words of George Chisholm, whose Handbook of Commercial Geography became the classic work on the subject, commercial geography deals with the facts of production and commerce in so far as they are affected by geographical conditions. According to another widely accepted definition, commercial geography is the study of the geographical factors that influence the production of commodities, their transport and their exchange in national and international markets. Dudley Stamp described the field as the study of the sources, distribution and trade of the principal commodities of the world and the geographical conditions that control them.

From these definitions three points are clear. First, commercial geography is concerned with commodities — the food grains, raw materials, fuels, minerals and manufactured goods that enter trade. Second, it is concerned with geographical conditions — relief, climate, soil, minerals, rivers, position and distance — which make production possible at one place and impossible or costly at another. Third, it is concerned with movement: goods have no commercial value until they reach the consumer, so transport, markets, ports and trade routes form an essential part of the subject. Commercial geography is thus narrower than economic geography as a whole, because it concentrates on production for exchange and on trade, but it is broader than a mere list of products, because it always explains the geographical reasons behind the facts.

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Relationship between Economic Geography and Commercial Geography

Economic geography is the parent subject. It studies all the economic activities of man — agriculture, mining, manufacturing, transport, trade and services — in relation to the physical and human environment. Commercial geography is the part of economic geography which deals with those activities that are connected with commerce: production for the market, the exchange of goods, and the trade routes and centres through which goods pass. The two subjects therefore overlap and support each other. Economic geography gives the wide background of resources and activities; commercial geography applies that background to the practical questions of buying, selling, importing, exporting and choosing locations for business. A trader who knows only prices but not the geography behind them works blindly, while a

geographer who knows resources but not markets cannot make his knowledge useful. Together, the two subjects give a complete picture of man's economic life on the earth.

Importance of Economic and Commercial Geography

1. Importance for Traders and Businessmen

For a trader, commercial geography is a practical guide to profit and loss. It tells him where a commodity is produced in surplus, where it is in demand, what its season of production is, and by which route it can be carried most cheaply. The cotton merchant of Multan, the rice exporter of Karachi and the importer of machinery all depend on such knowledge. It also informs the trader about foreign markets: their climate, population, purchasing power, tastes and competing suppliers. Many business losses in international trade occur simply because an exporter ignored the geographical facts — for example, shipping goods without allowing for a monsoon, a frozen port or a harvest season in the importing country. A sound knowledge of commercial geography reduces such risks and helps the businessman choose the right market, the right time and the right route.

2. Importance for Industrialists: Location of Industries

Every industry must be located somewhere, and the right location can decide whether it earns a profit or closes down. Commercial and economic geography explain the factors of location: nearness to raw materials, sources of power, water supply, labour, capital, markets and transport. This is why the cotton textile industry grew in Karachi, Faisalabad and Multan near the cotton-growing areas and ports; why sugar mills stand inside the sugarcane tracts of Punjab

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and Sindh, because sugarcane is bulky and loses weight and sugar content when carried far; and why the sports goods industry of Sialkot depends on skilled local labour and an export airport and dry port. An industrialist who studies economic geography before investing can avoid costly mistakes, such as building a factory far from its raw material or in a region without power and transport.

3. Importance for Agriculture

Agriculture is the most geographical of all occupations, because crops depend directly on soil, temperature, rainfall and irrigation. Economic geography teaches which crop suits which region, where cash crops can replace food crops profitably, and how farming can be improved by matching crops to climate. In Pakistan it explains why rice dominates the flooded plains of upper Sindh and central Punjab, why wheat is the universal rabi crop of the Indus plain, and why fruit orchards flourish in the valleys of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Such knowledge helps farmers, agricultural officers and exporters raise production and earnings.

4. Importance for Trade, Transport and Markets

Trade is impossible without movement, and commercial geography studies the transport network — roads, railways, ports, airports and shipping routes — that links producing and consuming regions. It explains why Karachi became Pakistan's greatest port and commercial capital, why dry ports were established at Lahore, Sialkot and Faisalabad, and why the Karakoram Highway and the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) routes have changed the commercial map of the north. For transport planners and traders alike, the subject shows where new roads, markets and warehouses will serve the greatest flow of goods.

5. Importance for Government and National Planning

No government can plan development without geographical knowledge. Decisions about dams, canals, power stations, industrial estates, new cities and trade agreements all rest on the facts collected by economic geography: where the resources are, where the people live, and what each region can best produce. Pakistan's decisions to build the Tarbela and Mangla dams, to develop Thar coal, to establish special economic zones under CPEC and to expand Gwadar port are all applications of economic and commercial geography at the national level. The subject also helps the government reduce regional inequality by identifying backward areas and the industries and transport links that can develop them.

6. Importance for the Wise Use of Natural Resources

Natural resources are limited, and many, such as coal, oil and minerals, can never be replaced once used. Economic geography inventories these resources, maps their reserves and teaches how they should be used carefully and where substitutes can be found. It warns against the exhaustion of forests, the over-pumping of groundwater and the pollution of rivers, and it points to renewable resources — sun, wind and flowing water — in which Pakistan is rich. In this way the subject serves not only the present generation but also the future.

7. Importance for Employment and Vocational Guidance

The study of economic and commercial geography opens many fields of work: teaching, banking, customs and trade services, transport and shipping companies, market research, town planning, tourism and development organisations. It also guides young people toward the occupations of their own region — for example, fisheries on the coast, mining in Balochistan, or

textile and surgical-goods industries in Punjab — by showing them the economic possibilities of the place where they live.

8. Importance for Understanding International Relations

Much of world politics is, at bottom, commercial geography. Countries need each other's wheat, oil, cotton, machinery and technology, and this mutual dependence creates trade blocs, shipping routes and sometimes conflicts over resources and sea lanes. Pakistan's trade relations with China, the Gulf states, the European Union and the United States cannot be understood without the geography of its position between South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. The subject therefore trains students to read world affairs intelligently.

Importance with Special Reference to Pakistan

For Pakistan the subject has a special urgency. The country's exports depend on a small number of geographically based products — cotton textiles, rice, leather, sports goods and fruits — while its imports include petroleum, machinery and edible oil, which together create a constant pressure on the balance of payments. Commercial geography shows how exports can be diversified, how value can be added to raw materials at home, and how new markets and routes, such as trade with Central Asia through Afghanistan and China through Khunjerab, can be developed. It also explains Pakistan's internal economic problems: the concentration of industry in a few cities, the backwardness of Balochistan despite its mineral wealth, and the dependence of agriculture on Indus water. A citizen trained in this subject understands his own country's economy as a living geographical system rather than as a list of statistics.

Conclusion

To conclude, commercial geography is the study of the production, distribution and exchange of commodities in relation to geographical conditions, and economic geography is its wider parent subject covering all economic activities of man. Their importance is practical as well as academic: they guide the trader to his market, the industrialist to the right location, the farmer to the right crop, the planner to the right project and the government to the wise use of national resources. For a developing country like Pakistan, where prosperity depends on using land, water, minerals and location to the best advantage, the study of economic and commercial geography is not a luxury but a necessity.

Question 2: Location and Physical Regions of Pakistan — The Northern Mountainous Region (20 Marks)

Describe the location of Pakistan, write the names of its major physical regions, and explain the northern mountainous region.

Introduction

The physical personality of a country — its position on the globe, its mountains, plains, plateaus and deserts — decides to a very large extent what its people can grow, build, trade and even how they live. Pakistan is a land of striking contrasts: within a few hundred kilometres one passes from some of the highest snow-covered peaks on earth to hot deserts and a tropical sea coast. This variety is the result of Pakistan's location at the junction of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East, and of the great mountain systems and the Indus river system that shape

its land. This answer first describes the location of Pakistan, then names its major physical regions, and finally explains the northern mountainous region in detail.

Location of Pakistan

Pakistan is situated in South Asia, in the north-western part of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. Astronomically, it extends from about 23 degrees 35 minutes to 37 degrees 05 minutes North latitude, and from about 60 degrees 50 minutes to 77 degrees 50 minutes East longitude. The Tropic of Cancer passes just south of the country, so most of Pakistan lies in the sub-tropical and warm temperate zone, which explains its hot summers, mild winters and generally dry climate outside the monsoon belt.

The total area of Pakistan is about 796,095 square kilometres (excluding Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan), which makes it the 33rd largest country in the world and the second largest in South Asia after India. In regional (relative) location, Pakistan is surrounded by important neighbours on every side. To the east lies India, along a long border running from the Rann of Kutch to the Himalayas. To the west lies Iran, and to the north-west Afghanistan, with which Pakistan shares the Durand Line. In the extreme north-east, Pakistan touches China through the Khunjerab Pass, and a narrow strip of Afghan territory, the Wakhan corridor, separates Pakistan from Tajikistan and Central Asia. To the south lies the Arabian Sea, with a coastline of about 1,046 kilometres along Sindh and Balochistan.

This location is of immense commercial and strategic importance. Pakistan stands on the shortest land route between China and the Arabian Sea, between the oil-rich Gulf region and South Asia, and between Central Asia and the warm waters of the Indian Ocean. The ports of

Karachi, Port Qasim and Gwadar, and the road and rail corridors of CPEC, all derive their value from this location. At the same time, the location gives Pakistan a largely continental climate in the interior, a monsoon-influenced climate in the east, high mountains in the north that act as a water tower for the whole country, and the Indus river system that is the lifeline of its agriculture.

Major Physical Regions of Pakistan

On the basis of relief, structure and climate, Pakistan is divided into the following major physical regions:

Table 1: Major physical regions of Pakistan

Physical Region	Location	Main Features
The Northern Mountains	Extreme north: Gilgit-Baltistan and northern KP	Himalaya, Karakoram and Hindu Kush ranges; highest peaks, glaciers, deep valleys
The Western Mountains	Western KP and north-western Balochistan	Safed Koh, Sulaiman and Kirthar ranges; dry, rugged, lower than northern ranges
The Balochistan Plateau	Whole of western and south-western Pakistan	High, dry plateau with hills (Toba Kakar, Central Brahui) and desert basins
The Potohar Plateau and Salt Range	Northern Punjab between Indus and Jhelum	Undulating plateau, about 300–600 m high; Salt Range with rock salt at Khewra
The Indus Plain	Central and southern Pakistan along the Indus	Upper Indus Plain (Punjab Doabs) and Lower Indus Plain (Sindh); fertile alluvium, canal irrigation
The Desert Areas	Thal, Cholistan (Punjab), Thar (Sindh), Kharan (Balochistan)	Sandy deserts with dunes, extreme heat, very low rainfall, sparse population

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Of these regions, the Indus Plain is the economic heart of the country: although it occupies less than one-third of the total area, it supports the great majority of the population, almost all the canal-irrigated agriculture and most of the large cities and industries. The mountains and plateaus, by contrast, are thinly populated, but they are rich in water, minerals, forests and scenic beauty, and they protect and feed the plains below them.

The Northern Mountainous Region: An Explanation

Extent and the Three Great Ranges

The northern mountainous region covers the extreme north of Pakistan, including Gilgit-Baltistan and the northern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa such as Chitral, Dir, Swat and Kohistan. It is one of the most remarkable mountain regions on earth because three of the world's greatest mountain systems meet here: the Himalayas, the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush. This junction, sometimes called the Pamir Knot region, makes northern Pakistan a land of giant peaks, enormous glaciers and deep, narrow river gorges.

The Karakoram Range lies in the north-east and is the most heavily glaciated mountain range outside the polar regions. It contains K-2 (Mount Godwin-Austen), 8,611 metres high, the second highest peak in the world, along with Gasherbrum I and II and Broad Peak, all above 8,000 metres. Its great glaciers — Siachen (about 72 km long), Biafo, Baltoro and Hispar — are among the longest valley glaciers on earth and store a huge quantity of fresh water in the form of ice. The Himalaya Range enters Pakistan from the south-east and includes Nanga Parbat (8,126 metres), the western anchor of the Great Himalayas, whose bare rocky face rises dramatically above the Indus gorge. The Hindu Kush Range stretches along the north-west,

separating Pakistan from Afghanistan; its highest peak in Pakistan is Tirich Mir (7,708 metres) in Chitral. Between and below these ranges lie beautiful valleys — Gilgit, Hunza, Skardu, Chitral, Swat and the Astor and Diamer valleys — where most of the population of the region lives on terraced fields and orchards along the rivers.

Rivers, Passes and Climate

The northern mountains are the birthplace of Pakistan's river system. The Indus rises beyond the mountains and cuts through them in one of the deepest gorges in the world near Nanga Parbat; its tributaries — the Gilgit, Hunza, Shyok, Shigar and Astor rivers — are all fed by melting snow and glaciers. In this sense the northern mountains are the water tower of Pakistan: the Tarbela Dam and the irrigation system of the plains ultimately depend on the snow and ice stored in these ranges. The mountains also contain historic passes that have linked Pakistan with its neighbours for centuries: the Khunjerab Pass (about 4,693 metres) connects Pakistan with China and carries the Karakoram Highway, the highest paved international road in the world; the Shandur, Lowari, Broghil and Babusar passes connect the northern valleys with each other and with the plains.

The climate of the region varies sharply with altitude. The high peaks remain under permanent snow; the slopes between about 2,000 and 4,000 metres have cold winters and cool, pleasant summers with forests of pine, deodar and fir; while the valley floors, lying in the rain shadow, are surprisingly dry, receiving little rainfall, so that farming in valleys such as Gilgit and Skardu depends on irrigation channels (kuhls) carrying glacial meltwater to the fields. Winters are long

and severe, roads are often blocked by snow and landslides, and avalanches are a constant hazard.

Economic Importance and Problems of the Region

Economically, the northern mountains contribute far more to Pakistan than their small population suggests. They supply the water and hydroelectric potential on which the plains depend — the Diamer-Bhasha Dam under construction on the Indus is in this region. Their forests provide timber and protect the watersheds. Their orchards produce apricots, apples, cherries, walnuts and almonds, and Hunza apricots and Chitrali handicrafts are famous. Above all, the region is Pakistan's greatest attraction for domestic and international tourism and mountaineering: Hunza, Skardu, Fairy Meadows, Khunjerab and the Deosai plains draw visitors whose spending supports hotels, transport, guides and local crafts. The mountains also contain minerals and precious stones, including emeralds in Swat and rubies and other gemstones in Hunza and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Against these advantages stand serious problems. The terrain is rugged, so roads, schools, hospitals and markets are costly to build and maintain; many valleys remain cut off in winter. The region lies in an earthquake-prone zone, as the devastating 2005 earthquake showed, and landslides and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) threaten settlements and the Karakoram Highway. Population is scattered, agricultural land is very limited, and young people often migrate to the cities for education and work. Development of tourism, hydropower, horticulture and road links under CPEC is gradually reducing this isolation, but progress must respect the fragile mountain environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistan's location between 23°35'N and 37°05'N and 60°50'E and 77°50'E, bordered by India, Afghanistan, Iran and China and washed by the Arabian Sea, gives it a strategic and commercial position of the first importance. Its major physical regions — the northern mountains, western mountains, Balochistan Plateau, Potohar Plateau and Salt Range, the Indus Plain and the deserts — form a complete geographical system in which each region supports the others. The northern mountainous region, where the Himalayas, Karakoram and Hindu Kush meet, is the crown of this system: it guards the northern frontier, stores the water that feeds the Indus, generates power, and offers unmatched scenery, even though its ruggedness and severe climate make life there hard. Understanding this region is therefore essential to understanding the geography and economy of Pakistan as a whole.

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Question 3: Human Economic Activity and Its Classification (20 Marks)

Define Human economic activity and describe its classification.

Introduction

Man is not a passive creature who simply accepts what nature gives him. From the earliest times he has gathered, hunted, grown, made, exchanged and carried things in order to satisfy his wants for food, clothing, shelter and comfort. All these purposeful efforts are his economic activities. Unlike the activities of animals, human economic activities are organised, learned, improved by technology and carried on in society through exchange and division of labour. Their forms differ from place to place — the fisherman of Karachi, the wheat farmer of Punjab,

the weaver of Faisalabad and the software engineer of Lahore are all performing economic activities, but of very different kinds. Geographers and economists therefore classify human economic activities into clear groups, so that the economic structure of any region or country, including Pakistan, can be described, compared and planned.

Definition of Human Economic Activity

A human economic activity may be defined as any activity of man which is directed towards the production, distribution, exchange or consumption of goods and services for the satisfaction of human wants and for earning a livelihood. In shorter form: economic activities are all those lawful human efforts by which goods and services are produced and made available to consumers, and through which the persons performing them earn their living. Three features of this definition should be noted. First, the activity must be directed to satisfying a want — purely recreational or charitable acts, however noble, are not economic activities in the strict sense. Second, the goods or services produced must normally pass through exchange or be capable of being valued in money; that is why the same cooking is not an economic activity when done by a mother at home but is one when done by a cook in a hotel. Third, economic activities involve a relationship between man and his environment: man uses the resources of nature — land, water, minerals, forests and climate — with the help of his labour, capital and technology.

Economic activities are influenced by both physical and human factors. Relief, climate, soil and minerals decide what is possible; population, capital, technology, markets, transport and government policy decide what is actually done. As a society develops, its economic activities become more complex: simple gathering and farming give way to factories, and factories in

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turn generate vast service, information and management activities. This movement from simple to complex activities is the basis of the standard classification described below.

Classification of Human Economic Activities

Human economic activities are generally classified into five groups: primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary and quinary activities. The classification is based on the closeness of the activity to nature and on the type of product or service it provides.

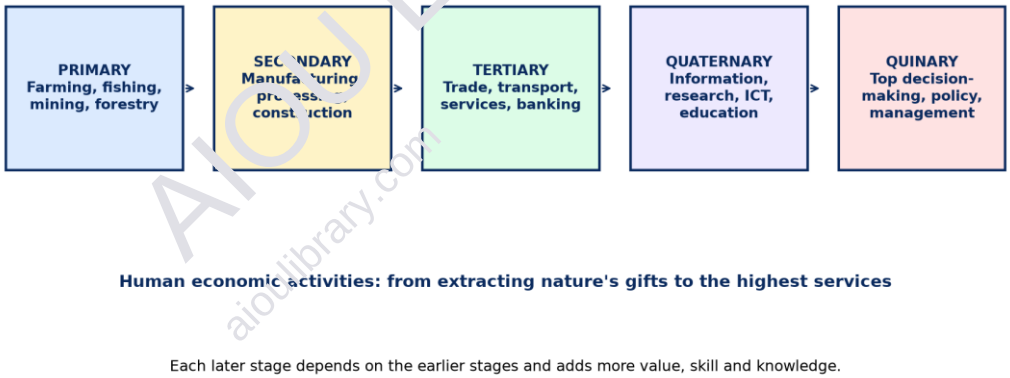


Figure 1: The fivefold classification of human economic activities.

1. Primary Activities

Primary activities are those in which man obtains products directly from nature, with little or no processing. They include agriculture (growing crops and rearing livestock), fishing, forestry and lumbering, hunting and gathering, and mining and quarrying. These activities are the oldest in human history and still employ the largest share of Pakistan's labour force: roughly more than one-third of Pakistani workers are engaged in agriculture alone. Primary production depends most directly on geographical factors — a farmer cannot escape his soil and climate as a factory

owner partly can — and it provides the food and raw materials without which no other activity can exist. Its weaknesses are that it is often low in productivity, dependent on weather, and earns relatively low incomes, which is why developing countries try to move workers from primary into higher activities without neglecting agriculture itself.

2. Secondary Activities

Secondary activities are those in which the raw materials obtained from primary activities are transformed, by manufacturing, processing and construction, into more useful and more valuable finished goods. Cotton becomes cloth and garments; sugarcane becomes sugar; iron ore and coal become steel and machinery; wheat becomes flour and bread. This group includes all factory industries (textiles, cement, sugar, fertiliser, steel, automobiles), small and cottage industries, food processing, and the construction industry, which builds houses, roads, dams and bridges. Secondary activities add the greatest value to raw materials, create large-scale employment in towns and cities, and are the usual engine of economic development. In Pakistan the textile industry of Faisalabad, Karachi and Lahore, the cement industry of the Salt Range and Karachi region, and the sports and surgical goods industries of Sialkot are leading examples. They depend on power, capital, transport and markets far more than on local climate.

3. Tertiary Activities

Tertiary activities do not produce goods at all; they provide services that help production and distribution and satisfy the direct needs of consumers. They include trade and commerce (wholesale and retail), transport and communication, banking, finance and insurance,

warehousing, advertising, and personal and public services such as education, health, hotels, repair work and government administration. The truck driver who carries cotton from Multan to Karachi, the banker who finances the shipment, the shopkeeper who sells the finished cloth and the teacher and doctor who serve all of them are tertiary workers. As economies develop, the tertiary sector grows fastest: in Pakistan services now contribute the largest share — well over half — of the gross domestic product. Without this sector, primary and secondary production would remain locked in the villages and factories, unable to reach markets.

4. Quaternary Activities

Quaternary activities are a specialised part of services concerned with knowledge and information: research and development, information technology and software, data processing, consultancy, higher education, media and scientific services. Their product is information and expertise rather than goods or ordinary services. The software houses of Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, agricultural research institutes such as those at Faisalabad and Tandojam, university laboratories and television and digital media organisations belong to this group. Quaternary activities require highly educated and skilled workers, and they raise the productivity of all other sectors — for example, when research produces a better cotton seed (primary), a more efficient loom (secondary) or a new method of online marketing (tertiary).

5. Quinary Activities

Quinary activities are the highest level of services, concerned with decision-making, policy and control. They include the work of top executives of large companies, senior government policy-makers, financial regulators, leading scientists and strategists — sometimes called the 'gold

collar' workers. Their number is small, but their decisions direct the work of millions of others: a decision of the State Bank on interest rates, or of a government to build a dam or sign a trade agreement, changes economic activity throughout the country. Some writers include quinary activities within the quaternary group, but separating them highlights the difference between producing information and using it to take the highest decisions.

Table 1: Classification of human economic activities with examples

Group	Nature of Work	Examples	Examples in Pakistan
Primary	Obtaining products directly from nature	Farming, fishing, mining, forestry	Wheat and cotton farming, Thar coal, coastal fishing
Secondary	Transforming raw materials into finished goods	Manufacturing, processing, construction	Textiles (Faisalabad), cement, Sialkot sports goods
Tertiary	Providing services and distribution	Trade, transport, banking, health, education	Trucking, Karachi port services, banks, shops
Quaternary	Knowledge and information services	Research, IT, consultancy, media	Software houses, agricultural research institutes
Quinary	Highest decision-making and policy	Top executives, policy-makers, regulators	State Bank policy, federal planning, corporate boards

Interdependence of the Activities and Their Importance

The five groups are not separate compartments; they form a chain in which each link supports the others. The primary sector supplies food and raw materials; the secondary sector converts them into goods and provides the tools, fertilisers and machines that raise primary productivity; the tertiary sector moves, finances and sells everything; the quaternary sector improves knowledge and technique at every stage; and the quinary sector takes the decisions that

organise the whole system. A weakness in any one group harms all the rest — for instance, poor transport (tertiary) spoils the farmer's fruit (primary) before it can reach the factory or market. The classification is also important practically: it helps governments measure the structure of the economy, compare countries, plan education and training, and decide where investment is most needed. The typical path of development — from the dominance of primary activities in poor countries to the dominance of services in rich countries — can only be understood through this classification.

Conclusion

To conclude, a human economic activity is any organised human effort directed towards producing, distributing, exchanging or consuming goods and services for the satisfaction of wants and the earning of a livelihood. These activities are classified into primary activities, which take products directly from nature; secondary activities, which transform raw materials into finished goods; tertiary activities, which provide services and distribution; quaternary activities, which deal with knowledge and information; and quinary activities, which take the highest decisions. For Pakistan, where agriculture still employs the most people but services contribute the most income, this classification is the key to understanding the economy and to planning its balanced development.

Question 4: Economic Geography of Pakistan — Major Industries and Economic Zones (20 Marks)

Define Economic Geography of Pakistan. Explain the major industry and economic zones of Pakistan.

Introduction

To speak of the economic geography of a country is to describe how its people earn their living upon its land: what they grow, mine, make and trade, where these activities are located, and why they are located there. Pakistan offers a clear and instructive example, because its economy is written plainly on its map — canal-irrigated farming on the Indus plain, great textile and engineering industries in a few favoured cities, minerals in the dry west and north, and trade flowing through Karachi and, increasingly, Gwadar. This answer first defines the economic geography of Pakistan and outlines its main features, and then explains the major industries and the principal industrial and economic zones of the country.

Definition and Main Features of the Economic Geography of Pakistan

The economic geography of Pakistan may be defined as the study of the economic activities of the people of Pakistan — agriculture, industry, mining, trade, transport and services — in relation to the physical and human environment of the country, that is, its relief, climate, rivers, soils, minerals, population, capital and markets. In practice it means a description and explanation of the regional pattern of production and exchange within Pakistan: why rice and sugarcane dominate the canal colonies, why industry clusters in Karachi and central Punjab,

why Balochistan, rich in minerals, remains industrially backward, and how the whole system is linked by roads, railways and ports.

Several features stand out. First, Pakistan's economy is still led by agriculture in employment, even though services contribute the largest share of national income and industry an intermediate share. Agriculture provides food, raw materials for the textile, sugar and leather industries, and a large part of exports in the form of rice and cotton products. Second, the economy is dominated by the Indus river system: the world's largest contiguous irrigation network makes farming possible in a largely dry land and determines where most people live. Third, industry is geographically concentrated: a small number of cities — Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Multan and Hyderabad — account for most factory production, while large areas have almost no industry. Fourth, Pakistan possesses significant but under-used mineral and energy resources, including Thar coal, Balochistan's copper, gold and chromite, and northern hydropower. Fifth, the country's trade is sea-based through Karachi ports, but new corridors — the Karakoram Highway, CPEC routes and Gwadar — are slowly re-drawing its economic map towards the north and west.

Major Industries of Pakistan

Cotton Textile Industry

The cotton textile industry is by far the largest industry of Pakistan and the backbone of its exports, earning roughly half or more of total export income through yarn, cloth, garments, bedwear and towels. It is located mainly in Karachi, Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan and Hyderabad. Its location is explained geographically: abundant local raw cotton from Punjab and Sindh,

cheap and skilled labour, a large home market, power and water supplies, and port access at Karachi for importing machinery and dyes and exporting finished goods. The industry supports millions of jobs directly and indirectly, from cotton picking to garment stitching, and its health is closely tied to the cotton crop, energy prices and world demand.

Sugar, Cement and Fertiliser Industries

The sugar industry stands second in the agro-based group, with mills spread through the sugarcane tracts of central Punjab, upper Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; mills must lie close to the cane fields because cane is bulky and its sugar content falls rapidly after cutting. The cement industry is located near its heavy raw materials — limestone and gypsum — in the Salt Range (Khewra, Daudkhel), at Wah, in the hills near Karachi (Hub, Thatta) and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Kohat, Cherat); Pakistan not only meets its own construction needs but exports cement and clinker. The fertiliser industry (urea and other products) is based mainly on natural gas, with large plants at Multan, Daharki, Mirpur Mathelo and Karachi; it is vital because it supports the yields of every major crop.

Sports Goods, Surgical Instruments and Leather Industries

Sialkot produces the majority of the world's hand-stitched footballs and is famous for sports goods generally, while its surgical instruments are exported to hospitals worldwide. These industries rest on generations of skilled craftsmanship, organised largely in small and medium units linked to exporters, with a dry port and an international airport to overcome Sialkot's distance from the sea. The leather industry, centred in Karachi, Lahore, Kasur, Sialkot and Gujranwala, converts hides and skins from Pakistan's large livestock population into leather,

garments, gloves and footwear for export, though tanneries must now meet strict environmental rules about their waste water.

Other Major Industries

Other important industries include iron and steel (Pakistan Steel Mills at Karachi, now largely idle, and many private re-rolling and electric-furnace units around Lahore and Karachi); automobiles, tractors and engineering goods in Karachi and Lahore; pharmaceuticals in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad; food processing, vegetable ghee and beverages in all large cities; paper, chemicals and plastics based largely on imported raw materials at Karachi; and a growing information technology and services industry in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad. Together these industries employ roughly a fifth of the labour force and contribute about a fifth of GDP, a share Pakistan seeks to raise through export promotion and special economic zones.

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Table 1: Major industries of Pakistan and their location factors

Industry	Main Centres	Geographical Reasons for Location
Cotton textiles	Karachi, Faisalabad, Lahore, Multan	Local cotton, labour, power, port at Karachi
Sugar	Central Punjab, upper Sindh, KP	Must be inside sugarcane tracts; cane loses weight and sugar quickly
Cement	Salt Range, Wah, Hub/Thatta, Kohat	Heavy limestone and gypsum deposits nearby
Fertiliser	Multan, Daharki, Mirpur Mathelo, Karachi	Based on natural gas supply and farm markets
Sports goods & surgical instruments	Sialkot	Skilled hereditary labour, dry port and airport for export
Leather	Karachi, Kasur, Lahore, Sialkot	Livestock hides, export links, port access

Steel & engineering	Karachi, Lahore, Gujranwala	Imported scrap/ore via port, large urban markets, skilled labour

Major Industrial and Economic Zones of Pakistan

Industry in Pakistan is not spread evenly; it is grouped in recognisable zones or clusters, each with its own character.

- **Karachi Zone:** Pakistan's largest industrial and commercial zone and its gateway to the world. Karachi combines the country's busiest ports, the SITE, Korangi, Landhi, North Karachi and Export Processing Zone industrial estates, the Pakistan Steel site at Bin Qasim, banking and insurance headquarters and the largest consumer market. Textiles, pharmaceuticals, automobiles, chemicals, food processing and engineering are all represented. Its problems are congestion, power and water shortages and high land costs, which have pushed some new industry toward Hub in Balochistan and Nooriabad and Dhabeji in Sindh.
- **Lahore–Sheikhupura–Kala Shah Kaku Zone:** the industrial heart of Punjab, producing textiles, garments, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and auto parts, food products, electrical goods and chemicals, supported by the Ravi and Sundar industrial estates, a huge skilled labour force, universities and the Lahore dry port.
- **Faisalabad Zone:** the 'Manchester of Pakistan', specialised in textiles and garments from ginning and spinning to made-ups, with growing chemicals and food processing; its prosperity rises and falls with cotton and world textile demand.

- **Gujranwala–Sialkot–Gujrat Zone (the Golden Triangle):** a zone of small and medium export industries — Sialkot's sports goods and surgical instruments, Gujranwala's fans, ceramics, sanitary ware, rice mills and light engineering, and Gujrat's fans and furniture — remarkable for its entrepreneurship and export earnings per worker.
- **Hyderabad–Kotri and Multan Zones:** Hyderabad–Kotri produces textiles, glass, bangles and food products near Sindh's agricultural belt, while Multan anchors southern Punjab with textiles, fertiliser, solvent extraction and agro-processing, serving the cotton and mango regions around it.
- **Peshawar–Hattar and Quetta Zones:** smaller but important: Hattar and Gadoon estates near Peshawar and Haripur produce pharmaceuticals, textiles, food and engineering goods, and Quetta's zone serves Balochistan with food processing, wool, marble and trade with Iran and Afghanistan.
- **Special Economic Zones under CPEC:** the newest economic zones are the special economic zones being developed with China — Rashakai (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Allama Iqbal Industrial City (Faisalabad), Dhabeji (Sindh) and Bostan (Balochistan) — together with Gwadar Free Zone. These offer infrastructure and incentives to attract relocation industries, joint ventures and export production, and are intended to spread industry beyond the traditional clusters.

The pattern these zones reveal is clear: industry follows raw materials, power, skilled labour, transport and ports. The government's task, as economic geography shows, is to extend these advantages — power, roads, water, trained workers and law and order — to the lagging regions of Balochistan, southern Punjab, interior Sindh and the merged districts of Khyber

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Pakhtunkhwa, so that industrial development becomes national rather than confined to a few cities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the economic geography of Pakistan is the study of how Pakistan's economic activities are arranged on its land in response to its rivers, soils, minerals, climate, population and position. Its major industries — textiles first of all, followed by sugar, cement, fertiliser, sports and surgical goods, leather, steel and engineering — are concentrated in well-defined zones: Karachi, Lahore–Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, the Gujranwala–Sialkot–Gujrat triangle, Hyderabad–Kotri, Multan, Peshawar–Hattar and Quetta, with new special economic zones and Gwadar adding a fresh pattern. A clear understanding of this geography is the first step towards correcting its imbalances and using Pakistan's resources more fully.

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Question 5: Natural Resources of Pakistan and Mineral Resources by Region (20 Marks)

What do you know about the natural resources of Pakistan? Explain the types of mineral resources in different regions of Pakistan.

Introduction

Natural resources are the gifts of nature which man can use to satisfy his wants: land, water, sunshine, forests, fisheries and the minerals hidden in the earth. A country's prosperity depends not merely on possessing such resources, but on knowing them, reaching them and

using them wisely. Pakistan is often described as a country rich in resources but poor in their development: it has one of the world's great river systems, vast agricultural land, huge coal reserves, valuable metals in Balochistan and gemstones in the north, yet it still imports fuel and many raw materials. This answer describes the natural resources of Pakistan in general and then explains, region by region, the types of mineral resources found in different parts of the country.

Natural Resources of Pakistan: A General Account

Pakistan's land resources are headed by its agricultural land. The Indus plain, level, fertile and served by the largest canal irrigation system in the world, is the country's greatest natural asset, producing wheat, cotton, rice, sugarcane and maize for home consumption and export. Closely linked with land is water: the Indus and its tributaries (Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej), fed by Himalayan and Karakoram snow and glaciers, supply irrigation, hydroelectricity and domestic and industrial water, stored in great reservoirs such as Tarbela, Mangla and Diamer-Bhasha (under construction). Pakistan's climate itself is a resource: abundant sunshine throughout the year gives very high potential for solar energy and permits two cropping seasons, kharif and rabi, while the long coastline on the Arabian Sea provides fisheries, ports and potential for shipping and tourism.

Forest resources are, by contrast, deficient: only about five per cent of Pakistan's area is under forest, far below the roughly twenty-five per cent considered desirable. The coniferous forests of the northern mountains, the riverine forests of Sindh and the mangroves of the Indus delta provide timber, fuelwood, watershed protection and wildlife habitat, but they have been

heavily cut and need protection and planting. Animal resources are substantial — Pakistan has one of the world's larger livestock populations, which supplies milk, meat, hides, wool and draught power — and the fisheries of the coast and inland waters provide food and exports. Finally, Pakistan's human resources are immense: a population of more than 240 million, young in age structure, supplies labour at home and earns large remittances abroad. The task of economic policy is to convert these natural and human resources into sustained income without exhausting them.

Classification of Mineral Resources

Mineral resources are usually divided into three types. Metallic minerals yield metals, such as iron ore, copper, gold, chromite, manganese, lead and zinc; they are often associated with the old, hard rocks of mountains and plateaus. Non-metallic minerals do not yield metals but are valuable for industry and agriculture: rock salt, gypsum, limestone, marble, silica sand, sulphur, fluorite and precious and semi-precious stones belong to this group. Fuel minerals (energy minerals) provide power: coal, petroleum (crude oil) and natural gas. Pakistan possesses all three types, but their distribution is very uneven: the great bulk of metallic and fuel minerals lies in Balochistan, the Salt Range and the Potohar and Kohat regions, while Punjab's plains and Sindh's plains have mainly non-metallic and fuel resources such as salt, limestone and the great Thar coalfield.

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Mineral Resources by Region

Balochistan

Balochistan, occupying about 44 per cent of Pakistan's area, is the richest province in minerals, though the least developed. At Saindak, near the Iranian border, copper and gold have been mined for decades, and at Reko Diq in Chagai district lies one of the world's largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits, whose development is expected to transform the provincial economy. Chromite, essential for stainless steel, is mined at Muslim Bagh and Kharan. The province has large coalfields at Quetta (Sor Range, Degari), Mach and Harnai; natural gas was first discovered in Pakistan at Sui in 1952 and Sui gas still supplies the national network along with fields at Pirkoh and Uch. Balochistan also yields lead and zinc at Duddar, marble and onyx of fine quality, iron ore at Chilhazi and Pachin Koh, barite, fluorite, sulphur and vast deposits of limestone and decorative stone. Remoteness, water scarcity, poor transport and security problems have slowed the development of this wealth.

Punjab

Punjab's minerals come chiefly from the Salt Range and the Potohar and Makerwal hills rather than from the alluvial plain. The Salt Range contains the famous Khewra salt mines — among the largest rock salt mines in the world — as well as salt at Warcha and Kalabagh, gypsum of high quality, limestone used by the cement industry, and coal at Dandot and Pidh. Iron ore occurs at Kalabagh, and uranium-bearing minerals have been reported in the Siwalik rocks near Dera Ghazi Khan. The Potohar region is one of Pakistan's two main oil and gas areas: oilfields at Meyal, Balkassar, Dhurnal and Adhi and gas at Dakhni supply refineries at Rawalpindi and

Karachi. Silica sand, fire clay and fuller's earth (Multani mitti) are also mined, serving the glass, ceramics and other industries.

Sindh

Sindh's mineral importance rests above all on the Thar coalfield in Tharparkar district, one of the largest lignite coal deposits in the world, estimated in the tens of billions of tonnes. Thar coal, long considered difficult because of its depth, water and remoteness, is now mined and used in mine-mouth power stations that supply the national grid — a development of great importance for Pakistan's energy security. Sindh also has the Lower Indus oil and gas basin: gas fields at Khairpur, Kandhkot and Mari and oilfields in Badin and Sanghar districts make Sindh the leading gas-producing province. Limestone and other raw materials near Karachi and Thatta feed the cement industry, and deposits of granite, laterite and silica sand occur in Nagar Parker and elsewhere.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is rich in both fuels and high-value non-metallic minerals. The Kohat–Potohar petroleum region extends into the province, with oil and gas fields in Kohat and Karak districts (including Nashpa and Makori) that have raised Pakistan's domestic oil production. The province is Pakistan's leading source of marble — the white and coloured marble of Buner, Swat, Mardan and the merged districts is exported worldwide — and it also produces granite, limestone, soapstone, gypsum and coal (in Hangu and Cherat areas). Swat is famous for its emeralds, among the finest in the world, and chromite and other minerals occur in Malakand

and Bajaur. Hydropower, though not a mineral, is the province's other great natural wealth, with Tarbela on its border and many mountain streams awaiting development.

Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir

The northern areas are noted less for bulk minerals than for precious and semi-precious stones and for some metals. Rubies in Hunza, emeralds, aquamarine, tourmaline, topaz and other gemstones in Gilgit, Skardu and Nagar valleys support a small but valuable gemstone trade that could grow greatly with modern cutting and marketing. Deposits of iron, copper, lead and gold have been reported at various places, though the rugged terrain has prevented detailed exploration. In Azad Jammu and Kashmir, ruby deposits in the Neelum valley, along with graphite, marble, limestone and other minerals, are known. For both territories, the greatest natural resources remain water and hydropower, forests and scenery for tourism.

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Table 1: Mineral resources of Pakistan by region

Region	Main Mineral Resources	Type
Balochistan	Copper & gold (Saindak, Reko Diq), chromite, coal, gas (Sui), lead-zinc, marble	Metallic, fuel, non-metallic
Punjab (Salt Range & Potohar)	Rock salt (Khewra), gypsum, limestone, coal, iron ore, oil & gas (Potohar)	Non-metallic, fuel, metallic
Sindh	Thar coal, oil & gas (Lower Indus basin), limestone, granite	Fuel, non-metallic
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Oil & gas (Kohat, Karak), marble, emerald, limestone, soapstone, coal	Fuel, non-metallic, gemstones
Gilgit-Baltistan & AJK	Ruby, emerald, aquamarine, tourmaline, iron, copper, graphite, marble	Gemstones, metallic, non-metallic

Problems in Developing Mineral Resources and Suggestions

Despite this wealth, mining contributes only a small share of Pakistan's GDP and exports. The reasons are geographical and organisational: most deposits lie in remote, dry or mountainous areas far from ports and markets; water is scarce in Balochistan where the minerals are; transport and power infrastructure is weak; exploration has been incomplete, so the true extent of many deposits is unknown; technology and capital are limited; and provincial disputes over ownership and royalties, together with security concerns, discourage investors. To improve the position, Pakistan needs systematic geological survey and mapping, roads, rail and water supply to the mining areas (as is being planned for Reko Diq), transparent and stable mining policies that share benefits fairly with local people, local processing of minerals so that value is added at home rather than exported raw, and training of geologists, mining engineers and skilled workers. Gemstones in particular should be cut and marketed domestically instead of being sold rough at low prices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Pakistan is well endowed with natural resources: the fertile, canal-watered Indus plain, the great Indus river system, a sunny climate, a long coastline, livestock and a large young population, though its forests are deficient. Its mineral resources include metallic minerals such as copper, gold, iron and chromite, concentrated mainly in Balochistan and the north; non-metallic minerals such as rock salt, gypsum, limestone, marble and gemstones in the Salt Range, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the northern areas; and fuel minerals — Thar coal, Balochistan and Sindh coal, and oil and gas from Potohar, Kohat and the Lower Indus basin. If these resources

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are explored scientifically, developed with infrastructure and fair sharing of benefits, and used with care for the environment, they can greatly reduce Pakistan's import bill, earn foreign exchange and raise the income of its least developed regions.

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