

LECTURE I

NATURE OF GEOGRAPHY

Geography is an old discipline whose roots can be traced back to ancient times. The term “Geography” was coined by a Greek scholar Eratosthenes in 234 B.C. The literal meaning of geography is “description of the earth’s surface”. But modern geography has not remained confined to only the description of earth’s surface, rather its dimensions have expanded very much beyond mere description. The subject of geography has been defined differently by different geographers and philosophers from time to time according to the aims of the study and prevalent methodology. Definitions of some prominent geographers are given as under:

1. “Geography is description of the world and of its inhabitants”

(L. Dudley Stamp)

2 “Geography is the science of places”

(Vidal De la Blache)

3. “Geography is concerned to provide accurate, orderly and rational description and interpretation of the variable character of the earth’ surface”

(Richard Hartshorne)

4. “Geography tells what is where, why and what it is made of”.

(Bowman)

5. “Geography is study of earth as the home of man”

(E.A.Macnee)

6. “Geography is science of distributions”

(Marthe)
science”.

7. “Geography is correlative

(Taylor)

8. "Geography is human ecology".

(H. Barrows)

9. "Geography is study of spatial distributions and space relations on the earth's surface"

(Ackerman)

10. "Geography is the study of spatial organisation expressed as patterns and processes".

(Taaffe)

In light of above definitions one can safely conclude that geography has moved well ahead from mere description of the earth's surface. Modern geography deals with the study of earth's features, both natural and anthropogenic, its inhabitants, various processes and principles influencing these features and different kinds of relationships in spatial context. Geography helps us to understand the differences in patterns, phenomena and the processes, interrelationship between human society and the physical environment and utilization of earth's surface by man in spatio-temporal context. Understanding the nature and causes of aerial differentiation on the earth's surface has been prime concern of geographers since ages as man observed differences among different places. Geography is no longer treated as catalogue of earth; rather modern geography has emerged as a spatial science on the horizon of knowledge.

LECTURE II

OBJECTIVES OF GEOGRAPHY

Geography, as a discipline, has always been concerned with the characterization of places and with the significance of likeness and differences among them (places) and also with the spatial relations of things and events. Its objectives incorporate what, where, why and how of things of geographical significance. The subject has a wide range of its domain which has been sometimes considered to be too wide by some critics. In the past, its objectives were simply the description of the earth and its inhabitants, cramming of names of places and capitals, mountains and peaks, rivers etc. Now it has assumed wider dimensions. New element of scientific analysis has been incorporated in the geographical investigation and study. Also an attempt is made to establish cause and effect relationship between various geographical factors. Geography has not neglected its responsibility towards society. Geographical work involves seeking answers to four closely related sets of questions about geographical phenomenon or events or things. These are what is it, where is it, what is it like and how does it occur.

The first question relates to the nature of things/events and second to the location-both absolute and relative. Location determines the spatial context in which things are placed-a factor which to a great extent determines the peculiarity of its physical and human geography. The third question relates to description of the observed phenomenon in a systematic and scientific manner. It also has scope to incorporate the correlation of the phenomenon to some other phenomena of the same sort occurring somewhere else on the earth's surface. The last question relates to the cause-effect of the

phenomenon observed. In nutshell geography has the following main objectives

- To explain all the physical and biotic aspects on the earth and human response to the physical and biotic features in a particular area, which in turn form a total environment.
- To learn the location of places and the physical and cultural characteristics of these places.
- To understand an area as a part of earth's surface.
- It studies the surface in its totality as animated aspects of nature's creation.
- Geography throws light on areal differentiation on the earth's surface.
- To understand basic physical systems that affect everyday life e.g. sun-earth relationship, water cycles, wind and ocean currents etc.
- To explain how the processes of human and physical systems have arranged and sometimes changed the surface of earth.

LECTURE III

RELEVANCE OF GEOGRAPHY

Geography studies the earth in relation to mankind. Man's life is mostly shaped by the environment in which he lives and Geography studies the relation between the earth and man. It is a fascinating subject which reveals all the wonderful changes and the activities that have been going on in the world since the beginning of time. Whether it is a quiz show or just a news programme, importance of geography quite often passes undetected. By reading geography, we learn not only about our own country, but also about countries beyond the seas. We also learn about the mountains, oceans, lakes, islands, volcanoes and a number of interesting things about the world and the universe.

Geography is related to other social sciences and we can study them better with a background of Geography. Geographical factors influence agriculture, industry, trade, commerce and other aspects of economic development. Knowledge of Geography is essential for business, trade, commerce, agriculture, industry, navigation, military operation, and spacecraft and even for balancing and administration. Thus, Geography influences the economic, social and cultural life of a nation. Knowledge of Geography is essential for successful living. Because of its practicable intellectual, cultural and economic value, Geography has assumed a unique place in our present world. The relevance of geography can be summed up in the following points.

- 1.** Geography enables us to acquire the knowledge of natural resources. The problem of economic resources has been more complex today with millions starving and unemployed. Geography aims at resolving the problem of economic resources by better and efficient utilization of limited resources through systematic, scientific and long term planning.

- 2.** The human impact on natural environment is one of the most pressing issues of contemporary times. Such impacts lead to degradation and

deterioration of the quality of our land, forests, water resources, air and biodiversity. Geography makes us aware about these environmental problems and their magnitude. Therefore gives us an opportunity for making efforts to address these problems.

3. Geography studies variations in environmental conditions from place to place and the affect of these environmental factors on human life, which result in different living conditions of people in different parts of the globe. Thus geography provides us with the knowledge of living conditions of men in different parts of the globe.

4. The study of geography enables the intellectuals to be able to make sensible judgements about matters involving relationship between the physical environment and society.

5. The role of geography in international understanding cannot be ignored. Geography as a chorological science is the study of area of earth. Thus it helps us to understand global interdependence and to become a better global citizen.

6. It helps in the understanding of the spatial organization of society and to see order in what often appears to be random scattering of people and places.

7. Geography helps us to learn how to adapt to the changing circumstances and how to live harmoniously with nature and let others live. In this context, it is well said that geography is the base of humanity.

8. The usefulness of geography lies in its ability to study human problems. It explains many of the worlds critical issues like which parts of the world are facing over population crisis. A geographer may study this problem in relation to natural resources and social organizations.

LECTURE IV

BRANCHES OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Human geography deals with the study of man and his activities on the earth's surface. Principal focus of study in human geography is occupancy and use of physical environment by man. Study of man nature interactions and the result of those interactions is also important aspect of human geography. Thus human geography is concerned with the study of two aspects:

- Mans relationship with the environment in which he lives. Here geographers identify and analyse the form and nature of ecological system in which man interacts with the environment, being influenced by it and in turn modify it.
- How man uses and organises space. So far as this aspect is concerned, geographers are concerned with identifying and analysing the form and nature of spatial systems which man interacts with and other human beings through his economic, social, religious and political activities.

Human geography is subdivided into following branches:-

1. Social Geography

Social geography deals with the study of human society and the social phenomenon in spatial context. A social geographer focuses on the study of spatial arrangement of social phenomena in relation to the total environment. Radical and Welfare Geography, the off-shoots of social geography, concern with such things as social-being, social problems and their root-cause and their spatial variations. Further we have the following sub-branches of Social geography:

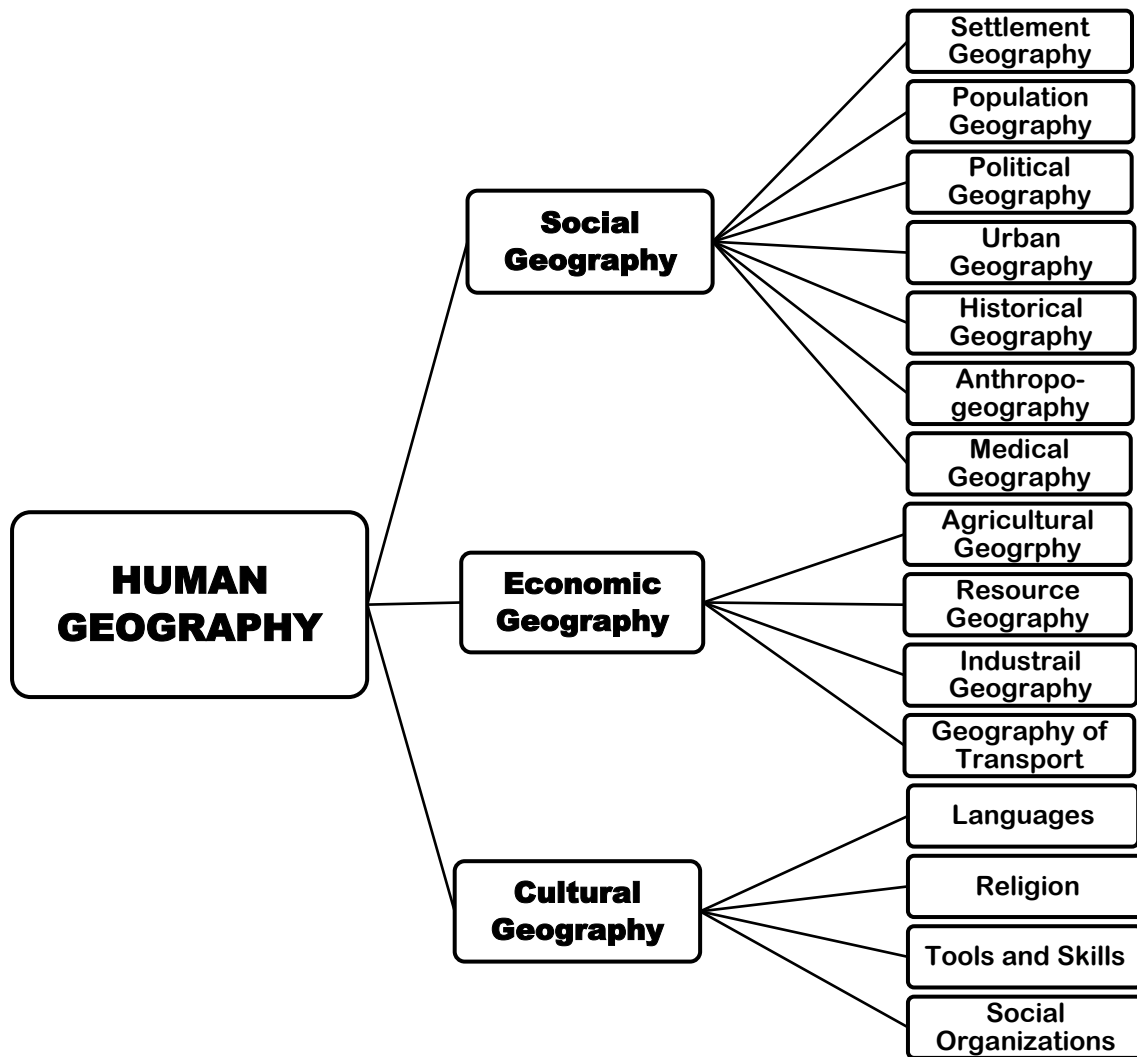
(a). Settlement Geography

It is that branch of social geography which deals with the study of human settlements – their spatial distribution, patterns, shapes, sizes and their evolution. It also analyses the influence of various geographical factors on the distribution, shape, size and types of human settlements. Settlement geographers are now concerned with a search for order in the spacing of settlements and in their internal organization and for greater understanding of the processes that help to shape settlements, including cultural influences and factors of perception.

(b). Population Geography

Population geography deals with the study of human population – their growth, distribution, density, composition and other demographic attributes. It studies the ways in which spatial variations in the dynamics of population, composition of population and factors of population growth are related to the nature of places. It is also concerned with the study of factors affecting population growth, distribution, density, composition etc.

Table 1. Various Branches of Human Geography



(c). Political Geography

Political geography is concerned with the study of political units i.e. states and nations in relation to their geographical settings. For this purpose the whole world is divided into various political divisions known as countries. Geopolitics and geostrategy are also important themes of study in political geography nowadays. A political geographer is concerned with the relationship between these countries and their physical background. F. Ratzel, a German Geographer, is considered as the father of modern Political Geography.

(d). Urban Geography

Urban geography is concerned with the study of urban centres i.e. towns and cities, their morphology, spatial patterns, origin, evolution, functions, problems and so on. Thus this branch deals with the land use patterns and classification of cities according to their function. Levels of hierarchy of the towns, functions of the towns, land use pattern and structure of the towns are explained with reference to the models.

(e). Historical Geography

The branch of social geography which is concerned with the past is called historical geography. The two main aspects of the field are: (a) reconstruction of past environments at a particular point of time, and (b) the study of the sequence of changes that take place with the passage of time at a place. The main aim is to ascertain how, due to human influence, a particular place, region or a geographical feature undergoes a change through time and how a cultural landscape is created. Paleontology , sedimentology and stratigraphy are of immense significance to a student of historical geography.

(f). Anthropogeography

The term anthropogeography was first coined by German geographer Friedrich Ratzel. This sub-field focuses on the study of the products of human social life in relation to the environment. It deals with the study of races of mankind – their origin, evolution, their physical characteristics and their diffusion. It bears the same relation to anthropology as biogeography to biology.

(g). Medical geography

Medical geography is a recent development in the field of human geography. It deals with the study of various diseases and their geographical

causes, diffusion of various diseases and the role of geography, spatial distribution of healthcare system and so on. The branch is based on the fact that health issues of the people differ from one geographical setting to the other.

LECTURE V

BRANCHES OF HUMAN GEOGRAPHY (CONTD.)

2. Economic Geography

This branch of human geography deals with the spatial variations in the economic activities and the different ways in which wealth is produced, distributed, exchanged and consumed. It is essentially concerned with the economic activities of man in relation to the physical environment. In this branch a detailed study of various human occupations like agriculture, manufacturing of goods, means of communication and transport etc. are taken up. Economic geography can be subdivided into the following fields:-

(a). Agricultural Geography

Agricultural geography deals with the study of agricultural activities of man. It studies the spatial variations of agricultural activities over the surface of earth and influence of geographical factors on agriculture. A comparative study is also undertaken with a view to understand how different agricultural systems are shaped in different areas of the world.

(b). Resource Geography

Resource geography is concerned with the study of resources, their geographical distribution, availability in terms of development, their production and their utilization.

(c). Industrial Geography

Industrial geography deals with the study of geographical variations in industrial activities on the earth's surface. It also studies role of geographical factors in industrial localisation. In a narrow sense an industry is confined to the production of goods i.e. manufacturing industry. However, in a wider sense it is meant to cover the provision of services as well such as tourism, banking, transport etc.

(d). Geography of Transport

Transport geography is concerned with the study of mobility of goods and people, transportation routes and different means and modes of transportation. It also analyses accessibility and connectivity and the control of geographical factors and geographical barriers.

3. Cultural Geography

Culture refers to the aesthetic and intellectual achievements of civilization. Cultural geography deals with the study of various cultural aspects of man such as his clothing, housing, tools, language, religion, food habits and their variations in time and space. It also deeply analyses the impact of geographical settings on human culture and impact of human culture on the physical environment or geographical settings in a particular region. Herodotus, who pioneered the study of the cultural traits of the people with whom Greeks were unfamiliar, is considered as the father of Ethnography (Cultural Geography). Cultural geography too has been divided into sub-fields which are Geography of Religion, Geography of Languages, Geography of Tools and Skills etc.

LECTURE VI

THEMES IN GEOGRAPHY

Areal Differentiation

Varied phenomena occurring on the earth's surface have a variable character which leads to differences in the concerned areas in terms of geographical character. The study of areal variations of physical and human phenomena, as they relate to each other spatially proximate and casually linked phenomena, is known as areal differentiation. It explains how and why one part of the world differs from the others. The concept of Areal Differentiation is mainly based on the ideas of Alfred Hettner who regards geography as chorological science concerned with the variable character of regions. The concept of region is the derivative of Areal Differentiation. The word region connotes an area which is unique and distinguishable from the other and is produced due to distinct interrelated and interwoven phenomena prevalent in the area. It has some degree of identifiable homogeneity in terms of some specific characteristics.

The term 'Areal Differentiation' was coined and used by Richard Hartshorne in his classic work, "The Nature of Geography", published in 1939. The Areal Differentiation is also known as chorology or chorography. Chorology is the study of areal difference of the earth's surface. It represents the oldest tradition of western geographical inquiry. In the 1980s Areal Differentiation has been reinstated as a central perspective in Human Geography. Despite all criticisms, Areal Differentiation is being considered as the rational and scientific definition of the discipline of geography.

Man – Environment Interaction

Man-environment interaction has been one of the central themes in geography. Friedrich Ratzel, the founder of human geography, and his disciple Miss Semple treated the subject of geography as the study of man-environment relationship. The theme of Geography as the study of man-environment interaction has stirred a debate about the position of man in relation to the environment. The debate first focussed on whether man is a part of the environment or apart from it, and then on the second issue-to what extent man is affected by nature. Currently the focus has shifted to 'interrelationship' between man and environment.

Early geographers emphasized that environment leaves an indelible imprint on human life in a particular region. Even the present day scholars of the discipline reiterate the same. Emphasis is laid on understanding various processes going on in the environment and on human response to adjust these processes. Human beings have always tried to adjust to the physical environment with the help of cultural and technological achievements. In this endeavour they have gone a step farther. They have not learnt only how to adjust to the environment but, in some regions, they have also attained the capability of adjusting their environment to their needs to some extent. Thus man and the environment are intimately related to one another. Environment influences man and in turn gets influenced by man. Environment determines way of life of man – his customs, traditions, habits, his complexion, skin colour, his dwellings and activities all are influenced by his environment. Man is also an important agent of change; he with his efforts constantly modifies his environment to his tastes and comfort.

Spatial Organization

This concept is based on the notion that if, within a given study area, spatial distribution of two or more phenomena are similar, then those phenomena are somehow related. Moreover, greater the similarity, stronger the relation between the phenomena they depict. Thus Spatial Organisation may be defined as the similarity within the same study area between two or more spatial distributions determined by the information collected for the same unit area. It provides a philosophical rationale for much geographic research.

LECTURE VII

DUALISM IN GEOGRAPHY

Dualism refers to existence of two contrasting or separate entities along side. Geography has a legacy of dualism in content and methodology. It was Varenus (1622-1650) who for the first time laid the foundation of dichotomy in geography by dividing geography into general geography and systematic geography. However, dualism in geography existed since ancient period as can be viewed in the works of various geographers. For instance Herodotus emphasized the study of tribes and nations as well as their physical surroundings where as Strabo was more concerned with description of regions and Ptolemy focused on mathematical geography. A good number of geographers studied and attempted an interpretation of influence of physical environment on the lifestyle of man. Dualism exists in other related disciplines of geography as well to varying degrees. In geography dualistic thinking gained prominence after renaissance in Europe. Then geography was visible in so many branches which were mutually exclusive. In geography dichotomies arise as a result of its vast scope and with the passage of time the number of

dichotomies increased. Some of the prominent dichotomies are listed as under;

Geography v/s Systematic Geography.	(i)	Regional
Geography v/s Human Geography.	(ii)	Physical
Geography v/s Contemporary Geography.	(iii)	Historical
Deterministic Geography v/s Possibilistic Geography	(iv)	

(i). Regional Geography v/s Systematic Geography

The dichotomy between regional and systematic geography was raised by Varenus in 17th century by dividing geography into regional and general geography. Later on, general geography was referred to as systematic geography. According to Varenus, general (systematic) geography is concerned with the formulation of laws, theories and principles; it derives its material from various systematic sciences for the formulation of universal laws and principles. General (systematic) geography treats the whole world as a unit. Regional geography on the other hand deals with the description of particular regions or spatial units.

After Varenus, Alexander von Humboldt, founder of modern geography continued the tradition of dichotomy between regional and systematic geography. He bifurcated the discipline into uranography and geography. He argued that uranography was descriptive astronomy where as geography was concerned with the interrelationship of phenomena found together in an area. Von Richthofen considered regional geography as descriptive in nature aimed at description of salient features of a particular region whereas, general geography, according to him, studies the distribution of geographical features. Historically the foundation of systematic

geography was laid by Alexander von Humboldt and that of regional geography was laid by Carl Ritter. Vidal de Lablache and Hettner also stressed for regional geography. After regional

geography lost popularity, three separate branches of geography emerged; general geography, comparative regional geography and descriptive geography. According to Berry there exists no conflict between regional and systematic geography as they lie at two extremes of a continuum.

LECTURE VIII

DUALISM IN GEOGRAPHY (CONTD.)

(ii). Physical Geography v/s Human Geography

Physical v/s Human is also pronounced and important dichotomy in the subject of geography. This dichotomy was initiated by Greek geographers in their writings as they divided geography into physical and human. Hecataeus, who is treated as father of geography, was interested in physical geography whereas Strabo and Herodotus were more interested in human geography. Physical geography studies various physical features on the earth's surface and its methodology is similar to those of systematic sciences like zoology, geology and so on and here laws and principles assume paramount importance. On the other hand human geography deals with the study of human phenomena, it is more related to social sciences as a result its methodology is more like those of social sciences and laws and principles are of least importance. Varenus in his work "*Geographia Generalis*" stressed on the differences of physical and human geography. Reclus was more interested in systematic physical geography called as "*la terre*". Marie Somerville published physical geography and Albrecht Penck coined the term

geomorphology. It was Vidal de Lablache who gave more importance to human geography and founded the school of human geography. Lablache stressed that it was unreasonable to draw boundaries between natural and cultural phenomena and they should be regarded as united as well as inseparable. Alexander von Humboldt, Carl Ritter, Davis, Koppen, Ratzel, Jafferson, Semple, Huntington, Mackinder, Herbertson etc were deeply interested in physical geography. Ritter and Ratzel were the early geographers who considered man as an important agent of change. Febvre, who has coined the term "*lebenseism*" treated dichotomy as a process of humanization of environment. Lablache, Albert Demangeon, Mark Jefferson, D.N.Anuchin were the supporters of human geography.

However some geographers believe that the dichotomy between physical and human geography is illogical and should be abolished for the survival of the subject. Hartshorne argues that if we divide geography into physical and human branches, we make rest of the work illogical. We should study the influence of physical factors on man and influence of man's activities on the earth in an integrated manner.

(iii). Historical Geography v/s Contemporary Geography

Historical geography studies the geography of a region as it was in the past decades. The basic premises of the historical geography do not exactly coincide with the frame work of geography, rather, it exists side by side with the geography of modern times. Historical geography encompasses both regional and general geography apart from all other branches. So, social geography in reality has become a part of historical geography. Historical geography can, therefore be considered as separate branch of study, complete

in itself. Contemporary geography revolves around the existing areal differentiation of phenomena which will ultimately pass into the realm of historical geography in the near future. Thus Contemporary Geography deals with the existing patterns of spatial differentiation of phenomena and will be Historical Geography with the passage of time. Therefore Contemporary Geography and Historical Geography are mutually exclusive and must logically exist as supporting each other.

C.T. Smith (1967) has mentioned the following concerns as those of historical geography

- The role of geographic factor in history.
- The evolution of cultural aspects of societies.
- The reconstructed study of past geographies.
- The study of changes in geographical features through chronological periods.

Past reconstruction of geography is of paramount importance for establishing a bridge between the geographical studies of the past and the present. Some geographers, Mackinder for instance, consider the distinction between historical and contemporary geography as baseless, because according to Mackinder historical geography has been concerned with the historical present. So historical and contemporary geography are one and the same because whatever we study in geography at present will be a past of historical geography in due course of time.