

Nature of Geography as a Discipline

Lesson No.	Title	Activity
1	Nature of Geography as a Discipline	Explore the other new branches/trends popular in recent times

Meaning

Geography is one of the oldest earth science. It is the study of the interaction of all physical and human phenomena and landscapes created by such interactions. This interaction has also created many branches in the discipline of geography. From description to analysis, the subject area of geography is continuously growing.

Geography in Daily Life

- Earth's surface is changing due to continuous interaction between the environment in which we live in and the way we use it.
- The spatial differences between different areas are also an important aspect of the study of Geography.
- Study of maps is another important feature to study earth surface and analysis. Now, maps can also be drawn by using satellite images using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools.
- Geography, not only investigates what is where on the Earth, but also why it is there.
- Geographers study the location of activities, its pattern in any specific areas, the reason behind these patterns and linkages between different locations.
- Spatial Planning can be done using both maps and the study of geography.

Basic Concept in Geography

- Ancient Greece- two distinct traditions-
 - Mathematical tradition focused on fixing the location of places
 - Gathering geographic information through travels and field work.
- The descriptive character of geography led the emergence of regional approach.
- Humboldt said geography is the science and studies all material things found on earth.
- Another school defined geography as the study of man-environment relationships.

Development of Geography

Ancient Period

- Understanding the physical domain of the earth
- Use of maps and astronomical measurements.
- Greeks were the earliest geographers- However, Herodotus, Thales, Aristotle and Eratosthenes.

Pre-Modern Period

- Middle of 15th to early 18th century.
- Information of the world by the travels and explorations.
- Beginnings of a new scientific geography.
- Explorers and travelers- Columbus, Vasco de gama, Ferdinand Meghellan and Thomas cook
- Geographers- Varenius, Kant, Humboldt and Ritter

Modern Period

- Latter half of nineteenth century.
- Founders of modern geography- Ritter and Humboldt
- Ratzel built the structure of modern geography.

Recent Period

- Post Second World War period
- Maximum contribution by the American and European geographers such as Hartshorne
- Regional and systematic approach as complimentary rather than contradictory.

Scope of Geography

Armed Services	Planning
Environment Management	Various Social Sciences
Water Resources	Tourism
Disaster Management	Health Related Activities
Meteorology	Housing

Approaches to Study Geography

A. Systematic Approach

- A study of specific natural or human phenomenon creating a spatial pattern and structure on the earth surface.
- Four main branches:
 - i. Physical geography,
 - ii. Biogeography including environmental geography,
 - iii. Human geography,
 - iv. Geographical methods and techniques

B. Regional Geography

- Study of spatial imprints of one or all the systematic geographic processes in a specific region.
- They try to focus on how and why areas are different from each other.
- The main sub branches:
 - i. Regional studies
 - ii. Regional analysis
 - iii. Regional development
 - iv. Regional planning including areas and community planning.

Geography and Society

- Geographical thinking and concepts affect daily decisions in a number of ways.
- Helpful in rural development planning, localization of industry, infrastructure development, use of resources, by understanding physical structure, climatic conditions and availabilities of resources of area.
- This also helps in providing relief during disasters.

Methods and Techniques of Geography

Cartography

- “Cartography” is the study and practice of making maps and diagrams.
- It represents the earth with maps and abstract symbols.
- Maps have traditionally been made using pen, ink and paper.
- Computers and GIS methods has revolutionized the cartography.
- Commercial quality maps are made by software that falls into one of three main types; Computer aided data management (CAD), Geographic Information Systems (G.I.S) and Global Positioning systems (GPS).
- “Geographic Information Systems” deals with the storage of information about the Earth for automatic retrieval by a computer in an accurate manner.
- Next to Survey of India, inherited from the British Ordinance Survey, the NATMO is a premier organization for mapping in India.

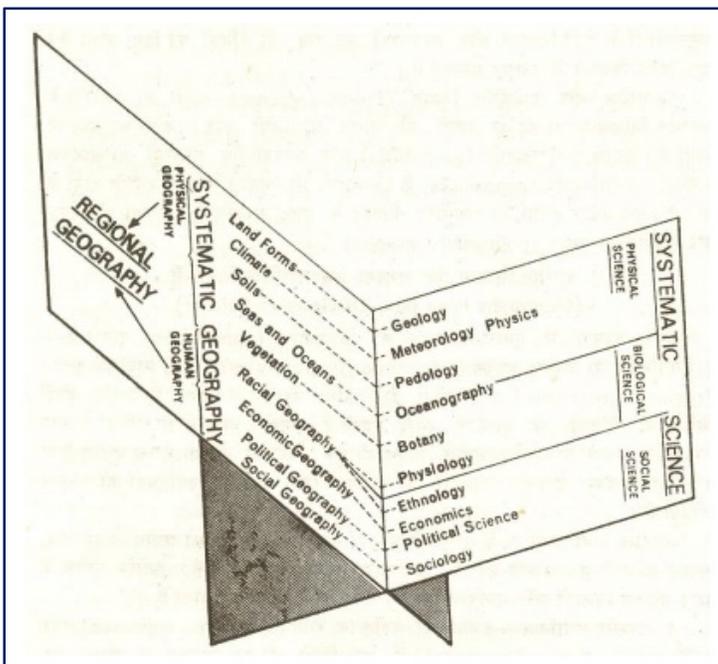
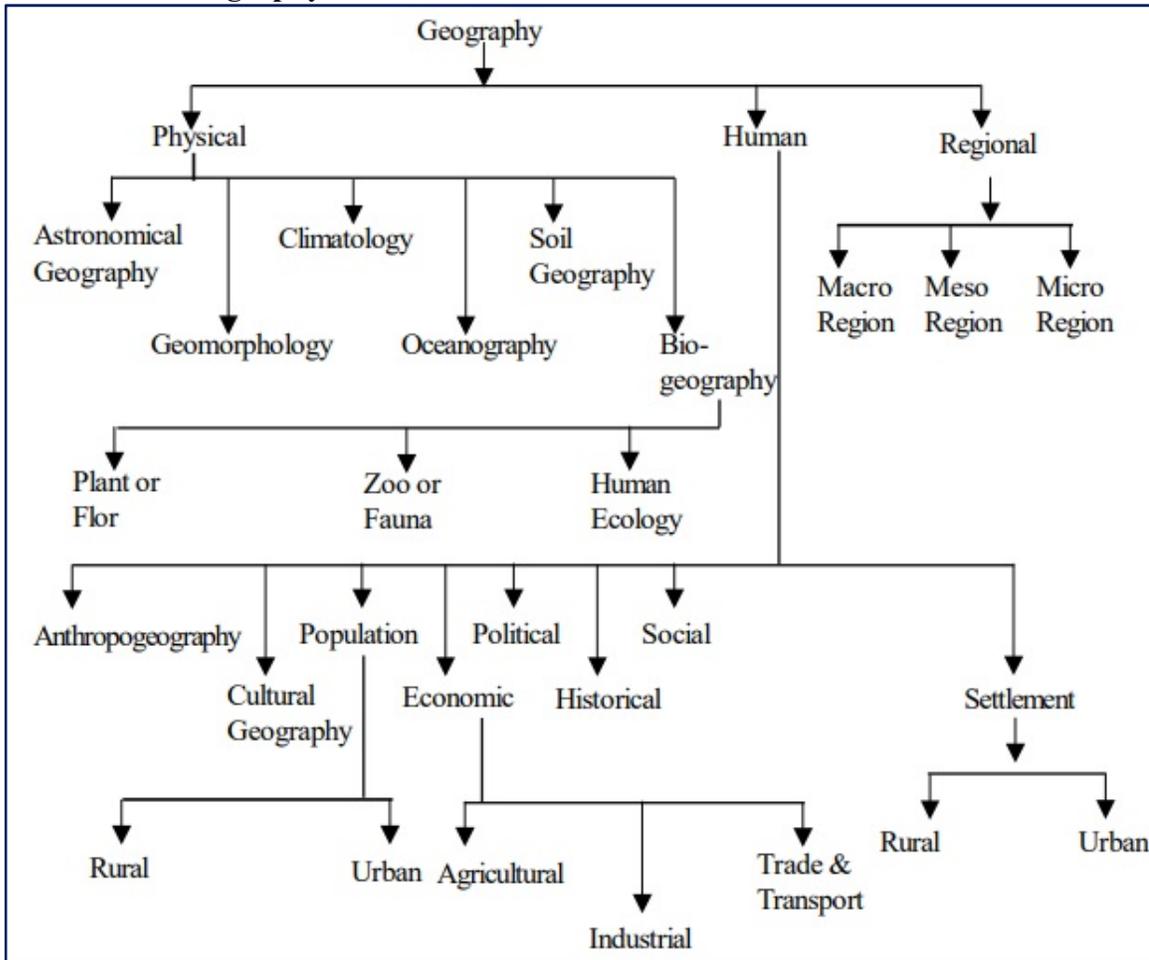
Quantitative methods in Geography

- These aspects of geographical techniques deal with numerical methods most commonly found in geography.
- In addition to spatial analysis, methods like cluster analysis, discriminant analysis in geographic studies.
- These statistical techniques are useful methods in finding patterns and identifying relationships between space and the activities that are performed in them.

Regional science method

- In the 1950s, the regional science movement arose led by Walter Isard.
- Regional Science comprises the body of knowledge in which like regional economics, resource management, location theory, urban and regional planning, transportation and communication, human geography, population distribution, landscape ecology, and environmental quality are examined for regional development.

Branches of Geography



Geography as an Inter-disciplinary Subject

Geography has its strong relation with mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. It studies several kinds of phenomena, each already studied by another science.

Evaluate yourself

1. Why geography is called the mother of all sciences.
2. Distinguish between the Systematic and regional geography.
3. 'Human geography an important part of geography.' Explain with suitable examples.
4. Discuss the techniques of geographical studies.