

## Geographic Education in Indian Schools: Development, Trends, and Issues

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### Abstract:

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Geography as a school subject was introduced by the British in the later part of the nineteenth century. Thereafter, it has gone through several changes and evolved with the evolving history of education in India. The present study has been designed to track down the evolutionary history of geographic education in India at the school level. With a systematic review of geography curriculum of Indian school education, the author tries to examine the present status and trends of geography in India. Based on the problems and issues encountered, attempt has been made to highlight some suggestions and recommendations for future improvement of geographic education in India.

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**Key Words Used:** National Curriculum Framework, Geographic Education, Physical Geography, Regional Geography, Systematic Geography.

### Introduction:

India has been known for its immeasurable diversities, complexities and historicity which are spread over a total land area of 3.3 million sq. km, and supporting a huge population of about 1,300 millions living in 5,161 towns and 593,731 villages, and speaking 22 officially—recognized languages. Geography is naturally the choice of tool to map and understand these profound attributes of India. Besides, temporal and spatial progression of these complexities further argues for the need of Geography. Diversities and complexities of the country again provide a rich laboratory for Geographers to experiment and explore the logics of Geography. However, Indian Geography had a very late beginning and is yet to achieve its due recognition among the Social Sciences. Imperial Gazetteer, the write—ups done for each district of India by the British traveler—authors in 1881 based on detailed field visits and meticulous observations, may be considered as the beginning of Geography in India. With the adoption of British model of school system in India, geography was first taught in schools under civics or social studies but at the university level, it was introduced much after the establishment of the universities. As such, geography teaching and research in India has a very limited history.

### Evolution of Geographic Education in India: A Historical Perspective

In the absence of any direct references to the status of Geography in ancient India, it was found necessary to look into indirect references like interpretation of various epics, and allusions in works of Indian scholars and philosophers. From the investigations, it is learnt that geography and geographical awareness was very well developed in ancient India. The past glory of ancient India correlates well with the level of importance that geography enjoyed. Right from the invention of zero to the understanding of astronomical phenomena, astrology in ancient India and almanacs, and every aspect of civilization shows clear understanding of geography. Location and construction of townships, trade routes, climate, irrigation schemes, agriculture, defense establishments and strategies are illustrations of the awareness regarding the subject in India. Ancient Indian universities used to get students from all over the world to study various subjects including geography. All these have gone into forgetfulness with centuries of alien invasions. There was a period of nonappearance of the subject between the end of the rules of the Guptas and the Maurayas, and the invasion of Alexander and various Muslim invaders until it began to pick up during the firm Mughal rule from the times of Akbar.

### Geographic Education in India in the Colonial Period: A Modern Beginning

Although geographical knowledge existed in pre-British India, formal education of geography, as a course of study, took shape in the early part of the twentieth century under the British tutelage where the steps in this direction, however, were already taken in the nineteenth century.

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Hence, Geography in India was trying to set its roots, after an era of its absence in the university system from the end of the Mughal rule to a firm British foothold after 1857 and Macaulay's education policy of 1887.

The concept of using geographic knowledge as a tool and the value of geography for surveying and mapping of the resources impressed the imperial rulers and nourished the European environment with Napoleon founding the first Chair in Sorbonne. Since the latter half of the nineteenth century, geography became a regular part of the elementary school curriculum in Britain and came in the purview of the secondary schools in 1902.

Demand or awareness about geography from the Indian side was not the cause for early development of Indian geography but it was closely associated with the imperialistic policy of the British in order to prepare Indians, knowledgeable about India and loyal to the Raj. The British, having an understanding of both symbolic and practical values, introduced geography in Indian schools along with arithmetic and English during this period. The symbolic value of geography lies with the fact that objective of map based geographic instruction was to heighten Indian students' grasp of world regions. Alongside this pedagogic goal, having keen interest in trade and commerce in India, the British imperial design to make Indian students aware of the persistent influence of the British Empire and produce submissive Indian subjects. As a result of this initiative, the format of geography curricula was very much similar to that of British one. Courses of geography had a huge component of the geography of United Kingdom in the absence of much knowledge about India. In the initial stages, the textbooks were that for British schools or were written by British authors.

Hudson (1994, 326), in his study of the teaching of geography in British colonial schools, points to the fact that "maps and books used in the classroom were typically designed to reinforce students' awareness and acceptance of the British Empire in which the colonies and their peoples played imperative, though subservient, roles." Further, he elaborated that "classroom maps of the world, generously splashed with red, emphasized the mighty and dominance of the Empire, so that when the geography teacher spin the globe in the schoolroom, the students 'could see only the red of the British Empire'". As studied by Sangwan (1990), the modest science education (including geography education) imparted was used as a means to expand and consolidate the British Empire in India and to pull out maximum profits from the country. In this sense, geography as a subject was used as an aid for colonization and consolidation of administration on the colonized land and its people. Perhaps it is because of its role in the expansion, consolidation, and administration of the British Empire in India that geography found little support in the school curricula in post independence India.

Since the colonial system ruled out any possibility to include indigenous and local knowledge in the school curriculum, amidst the foreign content and foreigner teachers teaching in a foreign language, education became so remote and dissociated from the real life experiences of Indian pupils. Thus teaching and learning process of geography was largely reduced to learning by rote memory for passing the examinations. As a result, development of practical knowledge and skill was ignored. Since geography was one of the subjects for the Indian Civil Service Examination (I.C.S.) or the other state level Public Service Examinations, pupils, nevertheless, had to study geography seriously and the process continues till independence.

### **Geographic Education in India: Post Independence Initiatives**

Kothari Education Commission was an important landmark in the history of education in general and school education in particular. All other commissions and committees dealing with school education considered Kothari Commission as the bench mark. The framework of geography teaching in schools considered to be adopted in India till recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework for Secondary Education-2000.

As mentioned in the Report of the Secondary Education Commission ([Mudaliar Commission] 1953, 81) geography as a separate subject was evidently out of favour. Similarly, the Kothari Commission (1966) also advocated for the study of geography within the framework of social studies in an integrated whole in relationship with the treatments of certain topics. The report advocated that geography should start in the higher primary school (classes V, VI, and VII). In the higher primary stage "social studies may continue as an integrated course if competent teachers and the requisite facilities are available; otherwise the study of history, geography and civics should be taken up as separate disciplines." In the secondary schools, these subjects will be treated as separate disciplines and form the basis of specialized studies in social sciences at the higher secondary stage (Kothari Education Commission-1966, 201). Therefore, the syllabuses of geography were designed separately like any other subject within the social science curriculum.

The newly born state crippled with tremendous poverty, swelling population, mass illiteracy, very weak infrastructure and fragmented economy with the partition wanted to open up all kinds of possibilities to reach education to its masses and was thoroughly charged to accelerate the processes for social and economic developments. The geographical knowledge in such a situation was found necessary for its role towards achieving a planned economic development.

Geographic knowledge was found useful by the Planning Commission of India for a balanced regional development. From the mid-1950s (Second Five-year Plan onwards), departments for teaching as well research in the area of geography were multiplied. These exercises have had a trickling-down effect on school geography as well. But during this period, in the absence of textbooks written by Indian geographers, the geography textbooks written by foreign authors were used in English medium schools, while in regional language medium schools, they were either based on those books or used translated versions. The focus of the school geography syllabus was mainly on regional and economic geography, though physical geography had a substantial content in the syllabus. The geography curriculum adopted the spiral method in the content of study. Some of the concepts as well as topics were dealt within the curriculum at different depths through the various stages of school education. Till 1976, pupils were free to choose elective subjects from class IX in the academic system of 8 + 3 school years. In that system, pupils could study geography as an elective subject from class IX and the approach was disciplinary with some focus on physical geography and the development of practical skills. Moreover, the state governments were free to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education, including designing the curriculum. In 1977, the national curriculum has undergone a major change introducing a new academic system of 8 + 2 + 2 school years. In this system, pupils have to study geography as a component of social science till class X. In this ten years of school, environmental studies (EVS) had inputs from geography from classes III–V, while from class VI geography was taught as a part of the social science curriculum but was disciplinary in approach. National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) prepared the textbooks of geography which appears to be huge with components from physical, economic and regional geography. The learners had to memorize names of the continents, countries, their capitals, hills, plateaus, rivers, seas, gulfs and so on, both from near and far. Additionally, they had to remember them on maps. It was observable enough that pupils did not find the subject interesting. This promoted the general practice of rote memory to pass the examinations. But some pupils went beyond the secondary stage and choose to opt for geography as an elective subject in the higher secondary stage. In this stage, they could get some flavor of geography as a subject of serious study and perhaps found worthwhile to pursue the subject in higher education.

#### **Geography in Pre-National Curriculum Framework:**

The CBSE overhauled its curriculum in 1977 and grouped biology, physics and chemistry into the general sciences while social studies include history, civics and geography. In fact, the board gave geography a non dualistic identity in school education. Despite a strong support for geography in the school curricula, from the side of Government of Mysore (now Karnataka), in the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Board of School Education (SCCOBSE; Ministry of Human Resource Development 1997, 293), demanding a marginal position of geography and history in the school curriculum and subsequent suggestions towards its improvements in schools, it has remained a marginal subject within the broader framework of social studies.

In 1986, the National Curriculum was revised again and a National Policy of Education for the entire country was recommended. Education was put in the Concurrent List. But there were not many changes in the scopes and content of school geography. The main focus was on regional and economic geography with spectrum of the syllabus very broad but without much depth. World geography was introduced in the upper primary level with geographical account from countries belonging to different continents. The books prepared by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1988 mainly were authors' text and descriptive in approach. Another aspect was language impenetrability. This was because of the absence of educational-psychological/pedagogic inputs in the texts. The language of the texts (be it in English, Hindi or any other language), for geography, history or in other subjects, was far more tough than the language instruction at that level. The syllabus being huge, teachers were too intense to complete the syllabus in time rather than giving interest in the pupils towards geographical inquiry. The textbooks were not much liked by the pupils for obvious reasons, but some used them later to pass in the Indian Administrative (formerly Civil) Services Examinations. Some states, like West Bengal or Kerala, had geography syllabuses somewhat different and retained the emphasis on teaching geographical concepts along with economic and regional inputs

Regional geography, systematic geography, and practical geography are found to be the three distinct approaches of study that predominates in India's school curriculum as revealed through the review of NCERT approved geography text books published during the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is learnt that the concentric model of learning was practiced in regional geography at primary and upper primary stage with the exception of the study of the geography of India which is taught in both secondary and higher secondary level.

Giving emphasis on inculcating an understanding of regional differences and similarities, major thrust of teaching of regional geography has been to help children acquire geographical knowledge of micro, meso and macro regional units in terms of the elements of regional environments and the way of life of different people ultimately leading to the study of the whole Earth.

However, a study by Kumar (1996) suggests that the treatment of the regions was very short and encyclopedic in form. The learning process was excessively dry and burdensome for children. The presentations of the lessons were equally monotonous. Hence, school children, without understanding the basic principles of the discipline used to simply memorize textbooks or answers to questions given at the end of their lessons.

Studying phenomena in terms of their significance to human beings at all geographical scales—starting from the local and culminating with the global scale was the main emphasis given on systematic geography. Those geographical phenomena that had a predominant presence in the immediate surroundings of children were taught in the lower classes, while in the higher classes the focus of teaching was on phenomena that occurred worldwide. However, books on systematic geography were mainly descriptive in nature in which a large numbers of facts and figures were presented. Another important shortcoming of systematic geography teaching was that topics were always treated in isolation. These books were mostly concerned with the where of some phenomena without writing much about their why (Kumar 1996). Therefore, the whole exercise was not only dull but also of very little use.

Relevant geographical skills, tools, and techniques including fieldwork were taught at all stages of schooling as practical geography. However, this aspect was the least planned and most neglected part of school geography. Field work and excursions were rarely conducted in schools, teachers lack skills of organizing fieldwork and practical teaching. Globes, maps, and other basic geographical teaching aids, tools of geographical representations as well as necessary equipments were scarcely available.

#### **The National Curriculum Framework:**

National Curriculum Framework or NCF in short is a document prepared by the NCERT that seeks to present a framework within which schools and teachers can select and plan experiences that they feel all children should have. The document offers a framework for making textbooks, syllabi, as well as teaching practices within the educational programs in Indian schools. Until 1976, Indian constitution allowed the state governments to take decisions on all matters pertaining to school education including curriculum. The centre could only provide guidance to the states on policy issues. It was under such state of affairs that the initial attempts of National Education Policy of 1968 and the Curriculum Framework designed by NCERT in 1975 were formulated. NCERT developed NCF in 1975 following the recommendations of the National Education Policy, 1968. In 1976, the constitution was amended to include education in the concurrent list, and for the first time in 1986 the country as a whole had a National Policy on Education (NPE-1986) which envisions National Curriculum Framework as a means of modernizing education. The Policy proposed a national framework of curriculum as a means of evolving a national system of education capable of responding to India's geographical and cultural diversity while ensuring a common core values and a comparable standards of education. **NPE-1986 emphasized a relevant, flexible and learner-centered curriculum.**

It recommended a common core component in school education throughout the country. The policy also entrusted the NCERT with the responsibility of developing the National Curriculum Framework and reviewing the framework at frequent intervals. Hence, in 1988 NCERT prepared the National Curriculum Framework for school education based on the recommendations of NPE-1986. However, the courses and text books prescribed couldn't meet the challenges of developing Indian society rather help increased the curriculum burden upon our children. This was clearly presented in the report of "Learning without Burden" submitted in 1993 under the chairmanship of Prof. Yash Pal. After that it was felt that curriculum needs to be flexible and relevant to meet the needs of diverse learners. Also issues of curriculum load and examinations stress needed attention. Therefore, National Curriculum Framework was reviewed in the year 2000 and the latest NCF-2005 appeared as a result of this review.

#### **GEOGRAPHY AND NCF-2000:**

One of the important recommendations of the NCFSE 2000 was to reduce the curriculum load on school children. It had identified two important sources for the burdensome curricula. Firstly, it is alleged that there has been an undue emphasis on memorization of a large number of lifeless facts, particularly in geography and history textbooks. Reiterating the recommendations of the report on Learning without Burden (National Advisory Committee [Yash Pal Committee] 1993), the document emphasized developing concepts and the ability to analyze socio-political realities rather than on the mere retention of information without comprehension.

Though memorizing facts is often boring and burdensome for schoolchildren, facts cannot be ignored on this ground only. Knowledge of useful and interesting facts is important, as they constitute the edifice for the development of concepts, generalizations, and theories. Some facts are also inherently interesting in themselves.

Secondly, overlapping of topics and themes in social studies in the schools is another reason. In this context, it is important to note that the objective of school education is as much on learning information as it is on comprehending concepts, methods, perspectives, and acquiring skills used in different disciplines. A topic can be a subject of study of many disciplines. However, all disciplines see the problem through their own lenses. Therefore, a reduction of load cannot be logically justified merely on these grounds.

Whatever the reasons for reducing curriculum loads, curriculum integration is questionable both on theoretical and practical grounds. The integration of different subjects is an intellectually challenging task as it requires the preservation of differences between subjects without interfering with their underlying relationships. It becomes even more difficult when one intends to integrate subjects that have diverse philosophical foundations. Integrating such dissimilar disciplines is an exceedingly difficult task. There is no guarantee that the basic concepts of individual disciplines will get due attention in the integrated situation. Similarly, one is not sure that integrated learning puts children in the most favorable learning situation. It also raises concern about how the teacher will cope with the demands of instructing students in an extremely amorphous field of social sciences. Some important issues are worth examining purely from the point of view of geography. Experiences from several countries suggest that integrated curriculum can have negative implications on the quality of geography education in the school. It has been found that in countries where geography has been integrated with social studies disciplines it has usually lost the natural connection with the physical sciences and become a minor component of the broader field of social sciences. In some cases, geographic instruction is attenuated to the extent that it serves merely as a source of examples for historical instruction. Bednarz's (1998, 86) study of integrated curriculum in the state of Virginia in the United States, for example, points out that, "Geography appears as a way to make history concrete, not as a tool of analysis or a discipline deserving of study in and of itself. Students will be directed to trace the routes that map colonial possession and describe geographical features of many places, but not to use geography to understand the past, present, and future." Further, teaching integrated social sciences would also imply that a single teacher (who may not have required training to teach geography) may be given the responsibility to teach geography in combination with history, civics, and economics. It is important to note that the teaching of geography requires some specialized skills like the construction of a scale, drawing, reading and interpretation of maps, and conducting field work, among others. In the absence of trained geography teachers, practical geography would be further marginalized in school curricula.

From the investigations, it is concluded that the geography curriculum was prepared by the NCERT in NCFSE - 2000 on the assumption that "anyone can teach geography"—an assumption that will not result in the kind of geography that "honors or best represents our science, or prepares our students to face the challenges of an progressively more diverse, troubled, and complex world" (Gritzner 2004, 44). Another major problem that is likely to arise with an integrated social studies curriculum is the neglect of physical geography. There is a broad agreement within the geographical community that physical geography constitutes the bedrock of the discipline. "The serious study of the subject cannot begin without the findings of physical geography; the play cannot proceed without a stage and it is a stage, be it noted, which plays a much larger part in the action than in theatrical performances" (Wooldridge and East 1966, 26). Therefore, geography education in schools requires striking a balance between geography as a physical science and as a social science. "An awareness of the intricate relationships between man and his environment is a major realm of scholarly investigation and informed concern on the part of all men who profess to be educated. A heightened understanding of such relationships can be gained only through a disciplined investigation of both sides of the fence, the natural environment, physical and biotic; and the human or cultural one. As a discipline, geography endeavors to maintain this perspective" (Aschmann 1962, 284). In a scenario where geography is merged into the social sciences, children would be placed at risk of not learning about relations of Earth with other celestial bodies and the nature of physical and biotic features and process of Earth's surface. NCF 2005 was another controversial recommendation. The controversy in this case relates to the document's proposal for a more focused study of India and its regions while the need for the study of world geography is ignored.

The review of NCFSE-2000 was an attempt to improve teaching-learning process and of evaluation taking into account both the merit and demerit side of the existing system of education. But, it fails to take any step to reduce the burden of curriculum and oppressive nature of examination system.

### **GEOGRAPHY AND NCF-2005:**

NCF-2005 attempted to present ways and means for complete withdrawal of defective structural problems of existing educational system and for making learning without burden possible to work. It was prepared to address the concerns of a large number of Indian academicians about the NCF- 2000. Following a strong protest against the integrated curriculum in both popular and academic media by a majority of social scientists on theoretical and practical grounds, the NCF- 2005 reverted to the pre-NCF-2000 framework, wherein all subjects grouped under the social sciences would no longer be taught in integrated manner. If the NCF-2005 brought positive changes by recommending independent teaching of geography, it ignored a very important aspect of school geography. The document clearly undermined one of the basic objectives of geography education by not including world geography. The debate over local geography versus world geography in school curricula is not new. Back in 1975 the NCERT document "The Curriculum for the Ten-Year School" had strongly advocated in favour of the study of world geography. The document stated that "the development of national consciousness and the development of international understanding should be one simultaneous process. Tolerance, friendship, cooperation and peace between nations are possible only with a proper appreciation of each country's contribution to the world" (NCERT 1975, 4). Elsewhere it stated that the geography curriculum should bring home to the pupils the interdependence of various regions of the country and the world. They should begin to appreciate that it is only through sharing with others that the peoples of the world can really enjoy the blessings of the mother earth". A decade later, the National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education: A Framework (NCERT 1988) reemphasized the value and importance of world geography. The document suggested that "the school curriculum, while promoting national identity and unity should also strive to create among the pupils an awareness of the necessity to promote peace and understanding between nations for the prosperity of all mankind. The curriculum should reflect some of the major issues facing the world...it will have to make the pupils aware of the concept of world as a family of nations, the distinctive culture of each nation and the interdependence among nations...the school curriculum [should enable the student]...to see himself/herself as a member of the new and emerging international community of mankind" (1988, 6). These objectives had to be fulfilled particularly through the geography and civics curriculum. But, both the NCFSE - 2000 and the NCF - 2005 have ignored the study of world geography and its implications in terms of developing an international perspective among school children. Instead, they have focused exclusively on the study of India and her contribution to the world. The argument is that local studies can be considered as important for imparting geographical concepts, skills, and values, but these alone cannot constitute the subject matter of geography. It is absolutely true that the teaching of geography by giving examples from children's surroundings would help them to comprehend the discipline's concepts and skills. What, however, is equally important is to teach about other geographical regions of the world, particularly in this era of globalization. One of the main complaints about regional and world geography has been that it puts an unnecessary burden on students by forcing them to learn in a dull, dread and boring fashion. Ad hoc approach to the study of world geography, without any serious consideration on its pedagogy, poor presentation of world geography text books and poor pedagogy are the problems associated. If we do away with world geography from schools, the ability to think about the world and imagine it as a mosaic of peoples, places, and environments will diminish in the minds of the future citizens of the country. Therefore, world geography needs to be refocused in view of increased connectivity across geographical space. One point that must be repeatedly stressed is that inclusion of world geography will contribute in developing a more sensitive perspective towards different regions (Nussbaum, cited in Harvey 2001, 210).

Knowledge and understanding about the geography of the world can be useful for students of other disciplines as well. Neglect of world geography may also hamper children's understanding of their local surroundings. On the contrary, the study of different regions and countries would only help in enhancing children's knowledge and understanding of their local situations. Doing local studies of one's home base is good and necessary but alone it is not adequate. It may be a place to start but from that local foundation we need also to be able to trace out and understand its intricate connections to the wider world. We need to develop a global understanding of the local. Quite apart from anything else, if we do not have that we shall never even understand how "the local place" comes to be as it is. (Massey 1999, 264) A sound knowledge of world geography would enrich international understanding and enhance goodwill among different peoples of the world. On the other hand, lack of knowledge about other peoples, places, and environments may lead to the development of parochialism, intolerance, and prejudice among children. Lessons in world geography also increase children's awareness about global interdependence and connectivity. ...each of our lives, places and societies is constituted through wider geographies, and yet that in it can hide the interrelations on which we depend: the other peoples and societies whose lives are inextricably linked to our own, whose actions have consequences for us and who are themselves affected by decisions of our own. (Massey 1999, 264). Knowledge and understanding about world geography enlarges pupils' horizons by allowing them to journey in their imagination into the geographically

varied areas of the world. The study of geography books, globes, and maps takes pupils far and wide in its description of human lives and people's activities as they relate to varying conditions of physical, spatial, and built environments. It is the right of every child to know how different peoples, places, and the environment of the Earth look, and are different from or similar to them.

### THE WAY AHEAD:

Among geography's academic credentials is the manner in which it can fascinate students' interests in peoples, places, and environments. Johnston(1985,334) argued that "geography's raison d'être should be to develop appreciation of the great variety of cultures that comprise the contemporary world, and to show how in each society these have evolved—and are evolving—as a specific response to environment, to place and people." According to Preston E. James (1971, 333–334), "geography sharpens our 'world understanding' in four unique ways:(i)geography presents an effective treatment of the land factor in the study of man-land relationships; (ii) geography places emphasis on the significance to the man of the differences which occur from place to place on the surface of the earth; (iii) geography teaches the reading and understanding of the map; and (iv) geography develops the capacity of out-of-door observation." In addition the "function of [school] geography is to train future citizens to imagine accurately the condition of the great world stage and so help them to think sanely about political and social problems in the world around" (Fairgrieve 1926, 18). In view of these reasons, geography merits an independent position in the framework of Indian school education. However, if one looks at the recommendations made by NCFSE- 2000 and NCF - 2005, one cannot help but feel the lack of sensitivity towards school geography. The on-again, off-again integration of geography in social studies and the manifest neglect of world geography marginalize the discipline in school curricula and hamper the very purpose of teaching the discipline. There is no doubt about the fact that children learn best through first hand experiences that can be gained by studying the geography of their local community. However, these experiences should not be an end in themselves; rather these should be linked to the understanding of regional and world situations. Every attempt should be made to give the child an understanding of the relationships between the home area and other parts of the world (Gault 1962). The ever-increasing interconnectedness and interdependencies among the countries of the world, the increase in travel facilities in an ever shrinking world, the Comparison of National Syllabus of Geography from 1986-2006 and beyond

1986-2000	Primary i-v	Environmental Studies	Integrated Approach
	Upper Primary vi-viii	Lands and Peoples: earth in the solar system, globe and maps, latitudes & longitudes, motions & four realms of the earth, Africa, S. America, Australia & Antarctica, atmosphere, hydrosphere, N. America, Europe Asia and India.	Subject approach, separate book Principles: simple to complex and remote to near.  Studying India in the backdrop of the world.
	Secondary ix-x	Humans and Environment: land, air, water, maps as an aid to understand environment, human impact on environment with case studies. India: Economic geography.	Subject approach, separate book for geography. Focus: knowledge input on geographical phenomenon.
	Hr. Secondary xi-xii	Compulsory unit within Social Science Paper. Physical geography: lithosphere, atmosphere, biosphere and hydrosphere, human and economic geography. India: General geography, its resources and regional development. Field-work and laboratory techniques in geography, Elective /optional subject.	35 of 100 marks Disciplinary approach 4+1 books.  Public Examination – 200 marks.
2000-2006	Primary	Environmental Studies	Integrated Approach
	Upper Primary	The Earth – Our Habitat: solar system, maps and globe, four realms of the earth, major relief features and India in the world. Our Environment: natural and human; land, air & water, flora and fauna; human and natural environment interaction: settlement transport and communications, various case studies. Resources and Development natural and human & their utilizations.	Integrated approach, geography as a unit within Social sciences, one book for the entire Social sciences.

	Secondary	India – Land and the People: location, physiographic, climate, drainage, flora-fauna and population. Resources and their Utilisation types, natural and human resources, infrastructure and industries of India.	Integrated approach, geography as a unit within Social sciences, one book for the entire Social sciences. Focus: awareness about pollutions, conservation of resources and sustainable development Project and activities.
	Hr. Secondary	Compulsory unit within Social Science Paper. Fundamentals of Physical Geography and Practical work. India: Physical Environment and Practical work, Fundamentals of Human geography and Practical work. India: People and Economy and Practical work Elective/optional subject.	35 of 100 marks Disciplinary approach 4+2 books Emerging concerns: global warming, green house effect, natural hazards and disasters: causes and consequences, use of computers in mapping & data processing, Spatial Information Technology or GIS and Field survey 200 marks.
2006 - onwards	Primary	Environmental Studies	Integrated in the curricular areas
	Upper Primary	The Earth – Our Habitat: earth in the solar system, globe and maps, four realms of the earth, major relief features and India in the world. Our Environment: natural and human; land, air & water (1 case study each of earthquake, cyclone & tsunami respectively), natural vegetation & wild life, human environment. Settlement, transport and communications, Resources and Development - natural and human & their utilisations.	“Disciplinary quality is understated with open boundaries” Separate book.
	Secondary	India: Land and the People - Location, physiographic, climate, drainage, natural vegetation, wildlife and population. Resources and their Development - types, natural and human; land, forest and wildlife, agriculture, water, mineral, power, industries, transport & trade.	Focus: disaster education, pollution study, conservation and judicious usage of resources. Project and activities.
	Hr. Secondary	Compulsory unit within social science paper. Fundamentals of Physical Geography and Practical work. India: Physical Environment and Practical work, Fundamentals of Human geography and related Practical work. India: People and Economy and related Practical work. Elective or optional subject.	35 of 100 marks Disciplinary approach, 4+2 books, Emerging concerns: global warming, green house effect, natural hazards and disasters: causes and consequences, use of computers in mapping & data processing, Spatial Information Technology or GIS and Field survey. 200 marks

Source: National Geography Curriculum

Growing complexities of international problems, increasing disparities in levels of development at all geographical scales, and continuing degradation and depletion of natural resources, have all made the study of geography far more relevant than ever. However, it is also important to accentuate that there is a need for a fundamental change in the way we teach world geography. In conclusion, the contemporary world is linked into an international network of transportation and communication. This has facilitated large-scale movements of people, goods, services, and information across national boundaries with ease. As a major player in the international economy and polity, India can ill afford to keep her citizens geographically illiterate. On the contrary, geographically literate citizens with sound knowledge of India's geographical variety and plurality as well as that of different parts of the world would go a long way in making India a better place. Well-planned geography education at all levels will help to make young minds more aware of other countries and cultures and prepare them to take their place in the world. Teaching geography as a part of social studies would undermine geography's educational role. The position of geography as an independent subject must be maintained.



It is hoped that revisions of the National Curriculum Framework, NCF-2005 which is likely to commence from the second week of November this year will include content checking and methods of teaching in schools as well as it will weed out content that is outdated, and incorporate contemporary and emerging trends. It is also learnt that NCERT has recently submitted a road map to the human resource development ministry. Soon after the finalization of the National Education Policy, 2020, the focus groups will be consulted.

### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Geography and geographical awareness were very well developed in ancient India. But somewhere along the way, the subject has been pushed to the background. Hence, geography is facing a crisis of survival in India. It was strongly felt by a vast majority of Indian Geographers that the future of Indian geography is not so bright. The following suggestions are placed for needful consideration and materialization.

1. Geography must be taught as a separate subject by maintaining its position in the framework of Indian school education with a strong component of world regions and physical geography in a more practical approach. Curriculum of geography must try its best to keep pace with the changing scenario of the world of Geography.
2. "Anyone can teach geography" assumption must be discarded with necessary corrections in the coming NCF where geography will be taught in Indian schools by well trained geographers only. Teaching of geography by a Non Geographer with the notion that any teacher of social science/arts graduate teacher, by reading a few books of geography can teach the subject easily must be stopped. Geography is not a subject to be read or written or taught about the already stated facts and information by means of lecture method, rather the subject needs geographers who have the right attitude towards the subject, who has the ability and skill to explain geographical phenomena and interactions with humans.
3. The teaching of Geography should consist of classroom teaching, laboratory exercises, demonstrations, assignments (written and oral), symposiums, seminars, public addresses, study tours, and social work for the application of geography for social use, debates, quiz, projects, and so on, at all levels of study.
4. Stakeholders must try to have appropriate and timely management of working environment like: the problem of placement in the educational set-up, decline in the social status of education and its staff, workload, working pressures, fast changes in the subject, incorporation of new technology, lack of fund, lack of infrastructure, lack of facilities for proper teaching and research, the politics of education, etc. as these have created considerable stress for the staff ( both teaching and the nonteaching).
5. School examinations in Geography must concentrate on how much is learnt, rather than why and how a thing is learnt and used.
6. A clear cut agenda must be framed to increase the applicability and employment opportunities for the students of Geography in India.

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