



What is Geography?

Scope of Geography and its branches



A Greek scholar Eratosthenes was the first to coin the term Geography derived from the two Greek words i.e. ‘Geo’ means earth and ‘graphy’ means description. Geography is thus a description of earth’s surface and the entire phenomenon appearing on it.

What is Geography?

- A science that deals with the description, distribution and interaction of the diverse physical, biological and cultural features of the earth’s surface.
- Geography is the study of Earth’s physical features and environment including the impact of human activity on these factors and vice versa. The subject also encompasses the study of patterns of human population distribution, land use, resource availability and industries.

Scholars who study geography are known as geographers. These people engage themselves in the exciting task of exploring and studying the Earth’s natural environment and human society.

Definition of Geography by different authors

- Peter Haggett (1969) defined geography as the study of the earth surface in the space within which human population lives.
- Ackerman (1958) stated that the fundamental approach to geography is the differentiation of the content of space on the earth surface and the analysis of the space relations within the same universe.
- Hartshorne (1959) geography is concerned with providing accurate, orderly and rational description and interpretation of the variable character of the earth surface.

Scope of Geography

- Maps form an important aspect of explaining the spatial phenomenon of the earth. Geographical Information System (GIS) is an advanced computer software programme useful in almost all disciplines in the economy of the world.
- Geography covers many of the physical and human branches in general knowledge and such general knowledge questions come in competitive examination like punjab public service commission (ppsc).
- Geography students can get better opportunities in Tourism, town planning, teaching etc. Geography as a subject therefore offers wide and diverse employment opportunities in their career.



Scope of Geography

Jobs directly related to Geography degree:

1. Cartographer
2. Commercial/residential surveyor
3. Environmental consultant.
4. Geographical information systems officer
5. Planning and development surveyor
6. Secondary school teacher
7. Town planner

Physical Geography

Astronomical Geography: is the part of mathematical geography that treats the earth in its relation to the other celestial bodies in the solar system. Astronomical geography thus studies the earth as a planet with its shape, size, imaginary lines of latitude and longitude, time zones, and the earth's diurnal and annual motions (yearly calendar and seasons).

Geomorphology: According to Bloom 'Geomorphology is a systematic description and analysis of landscapes and the processes that change them'.

Climatology: According to Miller 'Climatology is the aggregate study and analysis of climatic conditions with long term keen observations'. Climatology is thus a science

which deals with the atmosphere various changes that take place in the atmosphere due to temperature, humidity and atmospheric pressure and so the formation of various climatic zones on the earth and their influence on the natural environment.

Physical Geography

Oceanography: According to J. Proudman Oceanography studies the fundamental principle of dynamics and thermodynamics in relation to the physical and biological properties of the sea water. It is related to the study of oceans i.e. temperature, salinity of the ocean water, relief of the ocean floor, movements of the ocean water, tides, ocean currents etc.

Hydrology: It is a study of earth's surface and subsurface water bodies found in the form of oceans, rivers, glaciers, lakes and seas, underground water, water vapor in the atmosphere.

Biogeography: It is a study of factors responsible for evolution and spatial uneven distribution of various species (plants and animals / flora and fauna) found on the earth.

Physical Geography

Soil Geography: It helps to understand the formation, its nature (structure and texture), types and distribution on the earth. Soil is the most important component of the earth that determines the growth and distribution of natural vegetation and thus the species associated with it.

Human Geography

Population Geography: is a branch of geography that studies factors responsible for various patterns of spatial distribution and location of population on the earth's surface. It studies various demographic aspects of human population explaining growth of population, structure and occupation of population and other socio cultural aspects.

Settlement Geography: Settlement geography explains the evolution and growth of rural and urban settlements in relation to their site and situation; their structure and pattern, nature of functions.

Economic Geography: This branch explains us about spatial distribution and concentration of different types of economic activities influenced by physical factors and practiced by man based on their locational attributes. Accordingly they can be classified as:

- i) Primary activities: e.g. Food gathering and hunting, agriculture, fishing, mining and quarrying.
- ii) Secondary activities: e.g. Manufacturing and construction activity.
- iii) Tertiary activities: e.g. Trade, Transport and Communication.
- iv) Quaternary activities: e.g. activities related to specialist service providers such as banking and insurance, administrative and educational, defense and security, legal and medical.

It is noticed that large population engaged in primary activities are concentrated in underdeveloped countries while in developed countries they are concentrated more in secondary, tertiary and quaternary activities

Human Geography

Regional Geography: is a branch of geography that takes into account the homogeneous physical characteristics of an area to designate it as a region. Thus various regions are formed by taking into consideration its climate, relief, drainage, natural vegetation and population that determines unique characteristics for forming a particular region. For example Monsoon region based on climate, Himalayan mountainous region based on relief, coastal region based on coastal location, savanna region based on grassland, Amazon region based on forest, demographic regions based on population characteristics for example density of population etc.

Cultural Geography: studies various traditional customs and traits of a community which is reflected in their life-style, dressing pattern, food- habits, religious rituals and ceremonies, fairs and festivals, arts and architecture, language, and the type of occupation practiced by them and the nature of governance over the space.

Human Geography

Historical Geography: is a branch of geography that takes into account the geographical and human factors and processes responsible for the happening of different historical acts and events in the space over a period of time.

Political Geography: is a branch of geography that studies the organization of political system in a country. It mainly deals with its jurisdiction (boundaries and frontiers) and nature of relationship with neighboring and other countries in the world. The functioning of the political system determines the stability/instability of the government and its power within and outside the country in the world.