

## **School Geography Education:A Brief Review Of Literature**

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**ABSTRACT:** *A plethora of literature is available on various dimensions of geography education in schools throughout the world. The main focus of the research has been geography curriculum and pedagogy. However, for this thesis, only a select literature has been reviewed. Research in geography education in Indian schools is quite less. Whatever researches are present, they are very eclectic in nature. There have been very little attempt to diagnose problems of school geography based on empirical data. Most of the diagnosis and analyses are speculative in nature. Whatever researches are available have not been properly documented. Within school geography the most marginalized stage is geography at higher secondary stage. There are hardly few studies on this theme.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Geography Education, Indian Geography, School Curriculum, Secondary Stage.*

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### **I INTRODUCTION**

There are many literatures available in the field of geography education. This is an attempt to categorized some literature pertaining to this area. So that some research in this area could be conducted by the future researchers, specially from India, as there are very few contributed in this area. Many of the research were conducted by the education faculty but a few from the pure discipline i.e. geography research in this area was missing. This paper tries to discuss some of the literature consulted during my thesis submission to the University for Ph.D. degree. The work included are done both by international and national level researches.

### **II INTERNATIONAL STATUS**

Hartwig Haubrich (1996), the then chairman of the IGU Commission on Geographic Education, brought out and reported on the initial survey of the health of geography education in different countries at different levels of social and economic development. The survey became a bench mark for further studies on the international comparison on geography education. Based on the report of Hartwig Haubrich, Rod Gerber (2001: 249-277) studied the state of geography in curricula at different levels of formal education in 31 countries of the world. The study aimed to provide a sound basis for understanding the strength and weaknesses of international geography education. His study focused on the place of geography in curriculum; the approaches to geography in these curricula; the importance of knowledge, skills and values in these teaching resources; key aspects in preparing geography teachers; and common research methods used in geography education.

The International Charter on Geography Education (IGU.CGE, 1992) has become an important influence on policy development in geographical education in many countries. It was developed by the Commission on Geographic Education for the International Geographic Union. The document has been translated in many languages. The document offers international advice on key issues such as, the contribution of geography to education, concepts and contents in geographical education, and principles and strategies for implementation. The document has been complemented by Declaration on Geographical Education and Multicultural Education (IGU, 2000). It focuses on the importance of internationalizing geographical education with due regards to cultural differences and variations in different countries.

D. Tilbury and M. William (1997) have compiled writings of a range of British geographers/authors on the contemporary concerns in the teaching and learning of geography. They offer advice on future challenges in the subject as a separate subject.

Kent (1996) lists and refers to articles published in the Geographical Association's secondary journal, Teaching Geography, throughout the 1980s, many of them written by Kent, who was a leading authority and proponent of the use of IT in the geography curriculum. Besides Kent and Shepherd, several other significant authors have done much to promote the value and encourage good use of ICT in geography teaching and learning.

Lambert and Balderstone (2000) have jointly produced an important curriculum document which can be used by teachers and learners for enhancing their learning activities, practical activities and professional

development.

Fatih Aydm (2011: 297-305) has analysed the views of the secondary school students about geography lesson and their expectations about lesson (curriculum) in Turkey. The open-ended kinds of questions were asked to the students. These are: (1) which sides of geography lesson do you like? (2) which sides of geography lesson do you dislike? (3) how do you like geography lesson to be?

M. N. Obasi (2011: 140-148) has studied rural-urban differences in teaching and learning of geography in Nigeria. It focused on the problems of geography education in Nigeria.

Rosemary E. Sutton & Karl F. Wheatley (2003: 327-358) reviewed the limited literature on the emotional aspects of teachers' lives. First, a multi-componential perspective on emotions is described, then the existing literature on teachers' positive and negative emotions is reviewed and critiqued. Next a summary of the literature suggesting that teachers' emotions influence teachers' and students' cognitions, motivation, and behaviors. Four areas for future research are proposed: management and discipline, adoption and use of teaching strategies, learning to teach, and teachers' motivation. An overview of research methods used in a multi-componential perspective on emotions is provided. This review tries to draw on a variety of research literatures: educational psychology, social and personality psychology, educational sociology, and research on teachers and teaching.

Shelli A. Whitworth & Michael J. Berson (2002) discussed that within the social studies technology has served a dual role as an important instructional tool which may have a significant effect on the global, political, social and economic functioning of society. Since method of instruction and a topic of instruction is having the immense impact of computers and technology on social studies. However, the extent to which this potential is being fully realized in the social studies classroom has not been sufficiently explored. Technology-based learning has the potential to facilitate development of students' decision-making and problem solving skills, data processing skills, and communication capabilities.

Karen Nairn (2005:293-309) draws on this framework to review the geographic education literature concerning the role of experience. Tries to describe the pedagogical intentions of the lecturers organises the two geography fieldtrips. Further analyse data from interviews with students conducted some months after the fieldtrips had taken place and to claim that a logocentric essentializing epistemology is evident in the design and effects of the fieldtrips and that this is flawed theoretically, practically and ethically.

Charles W.J. Withers (2006:711-729) examines recent work on geography in the eighteenth century principally considers Britain, but the paper also incorporates evidence from other countries and, in its concentration upon the eighteenth century rather than 'early modern geography' (the period c. 1600–1850). It is argued that, although geography may in its books have been understood by contemporaries as a consistently defined textual practice, significant variations are existed in the cognitive content, purposive nature and institutional setting of geography. This is important implications both for what we take geography in the eighteenth century and for the nature of further research on the subject's historical, intellectual and geographical dimensions.

Stolman Joseph P. (1990) examines the ways that geography education has contributed to citizenship education. It does believe that geography education makes a significant contribution to the development of citizenship and citizenship competencies through its approach to knowledge and issues. It is important that the essential role of geography education in citizenship be articulated so that students who study geography are literate in the subject matter of geography; knows how to apply geography, its fundamental themes, skills, and perspectives to a wide range of political, economic, social, and environmental issues; and are better informed so they may actively participate as citizens in their local communities, the nation, and the world.

Catherine Nash (1996:399-411) focuses on the educational writings of James H. Cousins who advocated geography as a source of ordered knowledge, mystic insight, and resistance to imperialism. Although, much has been written about the complicity of geography with British Imperialism and projects of the nation state, Cousins formulation of nationhood in his writing on national education, his scheme of geographical education and his concern of ideal citizenship are discussed in order to explore his attempt to develop a Theosophical Geographical Imagination of non-hierarchical difference and global spiritual unity.

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet (1998:413-430) considers the development of geography in Iran during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and charts some of the connections between this new spatial sensibility and an emerging Iranian nationalism. Based on rare and hitherto unexplored nineteenth-century Persian sources, including several newspaper images, this article examines the importance which Iranian statesmen and diplomats in the service of the Qajar dynasty attached to geography and to geographical reasoning in their attempts to protect their authority from external threats. The forms of Iranian geography which developed in this

period sustained various myths and legends about Persia's historic importance and reflected western ideas and concepts as well as indigenous, Persian traditions.

David Mitchell (2009) describes living Geography draws from recent, school-focused research to guide and support you in providing a concept based geography curriculum that is relevant, purposeful and exciting for young people. It is written for all those involved with the teaching of secondary school geography. It contains 12 chapters that each focus on a theme relating to current UK policy, both in the national curriculum for geography and other overarching policy guidelines (including QCA and Every Child Matters 2007).

Glewwe Paul and Michael Kremer (2006:945-1017) reviewed recent research on the impact of education and other policies on the quantity and quality of education obtained by children in developing countries. According to them about 80% of the world's children live in developing countries. Their well-being as adults depends heavily on the education they receive. School enrolment rates have increased dramatically in developing countries since 1960, but many children still leave school at a young age and often learn little while in school. The policies considered include not only provision of basic inputs but also policies that change the way that schools are organized. While much has been learned about how to raise enrolment rates, less is known about how to increase learning. Randomized studies offer the most promise for understanding the impact of policies on learning

These researches provide important insight into what is happening in the frontier areas research in geography curriculum and pedagogy in the various stages of school education.

### **III NATIONAL STATUS**

Even though geography is being taught since the second half of the twentieth Century, unlike countries such as USA, UK, France and Germany, there are very few studies on the state of school geography in India. S. P. Chatterjee fifty Years of Geography in India mentions 10 papers on schools geography.

B. L. Shukhwal (1984: 223-230) made a comparative study of the geography education in the secondary schools of India and the United States of America. He has described the evolution of geography in India from ancient and the medieval times to the British and the post colonial period. His study concludes that the state of geography illiteracy is much more in the US compared to India. He considers that compared to some arts subject geography is in a better position in pre-college stage. He gives six reasons for this: (1) geography is taught by well qualified teachers (possessing masters degree in geography with Bachelor of Education); (2) better than average art students electing geography considered as a 'difficult subject' by them; (3) geography draws students from science and arts stream both; (4) history has not attained as high position as geography in {schools of} India; students enjoy knowing about geography 'more than' geography; and (6) the Britishers included geography as a very important subject in the school curriculum.

Pramila Kumar (1996: 248-253) has discussed teaching-learning process of geography in selected schools of Madhya Pradesh. Based on her studies she identified certain lacunae in geography syllabi and teaching processes. In her studies she identified some basic principles on which the teaching of geography could be based. Her study also identified certain areas of school geography which needs improvement.

Basabi Khan Banerjee (2006: 283-292) has studied the evolution of school geography since the British time. She has also explored the dynamics, popularity and utility of geography as a school subject in India.

Craig Jeffrey, Patricia Jeffery & Roger Jeffery (2005:2085-2101) examines the role of school education in reproducing caste and class inequalities in rural Bijnor district, Uttar Pradesh, India. Drawing on Bourdieu's work, the article shows that rural elite has used its superior wealth, connections, and social status to ensure that their sons receive privileged access to schooling credentials and government employment. The greater availability of formal educational opportunities allied to the political rise of lower castes has allowed a small group of Dalits to raise their social standing, but has failed to alter historical relationships of dependence and exploitation.

Sarfaraz Alam (2008) has critically examined the efficacy of environmental studies as an independent subject. Sarfaraz Alam (2009) has described the state of geography in Indian schools. He has described various problems and concerns pertaining to geography as a school subject.

Yemuna Sunny (2006: 270-278) has analysed the nature of geography against the backdrop of history, shifts in perspectives and ontology of geography as social science education.

Ravi S. Singh (2012: 33-44) has discussed the nature of neglect of school geography in India. He has highlighted some very pertinent issues concerning the neglect of school geography: curriculum framing, writing of school textbooks, availability of teaching aids, pre- and in-service training of teachers, failure to disseminate advances in geographical research to school geography, absence of geographical journals for schools, lack of association of school geography teachers and neglect of school geography by geographical societies in India.

Yemuna Sunny (2008: 45-49) has assessed the ontological position especially of science education on which the school system functions. Taking a constructionist perspective, she has criticized the empirically oriented geography education in India. The study is based on the examination of school geography textbooks and teachers of schools of Madhya Pradesh. An attempt is made by examining geography textbooks and students' responses, here to substantiate a problematic of social science education. The decontextualised nature of it contradicts everyday life experiences. This situation does not enhance a dialectic relationship between science and experience in geography education. It is argued that cognition by itself cannot address the issue of science "enculturation"; instead, it needs to be addressed through some essential relationships of geographical science. These include relations between common observations and reflections beyond appearances as well as relations of geography that modify and control nature.

Sarfaraz Alam (2010: 243-250) has critically examined the implications of the NCSE 2000 and NCF 2005 reports for geographic education in Indian schools. The NCFSE 2000 has recommended an integrated teaching of geography as one component of the social studies. The NCF 2005 has reverted to the pre-NCFSE 2001 framework, wherein all subjects under the banner of social studies would now be taught independently. These conflicting reports, and additional disagreement over the teaching of "local" Indian versus "world" geography, are investigated regarding their implications for teaching geography to Indian students.

Mathew Zachariah (1970:152-161) mentioned in his paper is that the academic concept has proved to be very resilient in attempting to change the character and structure of secondary education in India since 1952. This article deals with the period 1952 to 1964. The year 1952 marked the beginning of a nationwide expression of concern about the state of Indian secondary education. From 1952 to 1964, the Government of India and the State governments in India initiated several attempts to change the character and structure of academic secondary education. These attempts met with indifferent success. Which is usually explained in terms of the inadequacies of administering newly initiated reforms, but the position of this paper is that conflict over educational goals and differences of opportunities among the castes and classes are more important. The social class approach sheds new light on many of the educational theories and practices in India and exposes the crucial "failure of will" in implementing reforms.

Geeta Gandhi Kingdon (2007:168-195) provides an overview of school education in India. First, it places India's educational achievements in international perspective, particularly against countries with China. Second, the paper examines schooling access in terms of enrolment and school attendance rates, and schooling quality in terms of literacy rates, learning achievement levels, school resources, and teacher inputs. Third, the paper investigates the role of private schooling in India, examining the extent of growth of private schooling and surveying evidence on the relative effectiveness and costs of private and public schools. Last, the paper discusses some major public education initiatives. The concluding section suggests a future research agenda and appeals for evaluation of the impacts and costs of the numerous existing educational interventions, in order to learn about their relative cost-effectiveness for policy-making.

Some scholars have argued for the incorporation of latest technologies in higher secondary school curriculum. Aparna Pandey (2008) has justified inclusion of GIS in school geography so that '...with adequate training, analysis and interpretation of spatial data would be much easier and interesting for school children...its strong linkage with mathematics, and statistics help in developing analytical skills.'

Some of the studies pertain to the quality of school textbooks of geography in India. A study by Pramila Kumar (1996: 246-253) suggests that geography books of schools are grossly overloaded with facts. Virtually all regional geography books were very encyclopedic in forms. These were so written as heaps of trashes without any meaning. Children were expected to cram the facts and figures about people, places and environment of the earth. The learning process is generally dry and a burden on children. The presentation of lesson is generally also very uninteresting and boring. Practical works including field work were much ill planned areas of study at the school stage.

There was hardly any emphasis on map reading and map interpretation. Some other weaknesses of school text books of geography in India have been noted by R. P. Mishra (1983: 1-10).

1. They do not start with and explains the principles; they start with description of the distribution. The student is never able to answer the question *why*. They know the distribution of phenomena but do not know the principles underlying the distribution of phenomena.
2. The texts books are not related to the level of students. Often they reflect the level of the writer, though
3. The texts books are not written by the experts in the field are printed rather poorly. The rationalisation of the textbooks ought to have improved matters to a large extent.
4. Poor quality printing keeps the prices down no doubt but makes the book unattractive to the children.

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