

CHAPTER 1 MEANING AND SCOPE OF GEOGRAPHY

Objectives

After studying this chapter, students should be able to: (i) explain the meaning of Geography.
(ii) state the importance of studying Geography.

1.1 Introduction

The word geography is derived from two Greek words: geo, meaning the earth and graphy, which means description. Thus, geography can be defined as the description of the earth. Geography is the study of the environment as the home of people. It seeks to interpret the world and how it changes overtime: past, present and future. It explores the relationships and connections between people and both the physical and cultural environments. Geography is concerned with the spatial distributions, patterns, and relationships of things on the earth surface. The study of Geography focuses mainly on the following:

- 1. Location:** This involves the identification of the absolute (Latitude and longitudinal on the map) and relative location (location in relation to other features) of a place.

- 2. Place:** Geography is concerned with the physical characteristics (climate, landforms, vegetation, soil, etc) and human characteristics (ethnic groups, language, cultural characteristics, settlement patterns) of a place.

- 3. Man – environment interaction:** Geography deals with how people depend on the environment to meet basic needs such as water and food; and how people adapt to their environment in the way they dress and build their houses and human activities that modifies the environment such as building of roads and dams.

- 4. Movement:** Geography examines how a place is connected with other places and how it affects transportation, communication, trade and migration of people and animals.

- 5. Regions:** Regions are areas on the earth's surface that are defined by certain unifying characteristics. Geographers are able to group places based on physical (climate, landforms, crops), human (language, religion, ethnicity), political and economic characteristics.

1.2 Importance of Geography

- Geography stimulates our interest about things around us and enables us to describe, explain and interpret them.
- It explains where places are and what is said about them.
- Knowledge of maps and problem-solving skills prepare students for adult life and employment.
- It is an important link between natural and social sciences. It helps us understand topics in History, Biology, Economics, Mathematics, etc.
- It improves our understanding of the resources in our environment and how to conserve them.
- Geographical knowledge is useful in several professions such as Regional Planning, Estate Management, Geology, International Relations, Surveying, Population Studies like census and migration.



Fig.1.1(a): A surveyor at work



Fig.1.1(b): A geologist at work



Fig.1.1(c): A market place

Revision Questions

Objective Questions

1. Geography can be defined as the

- A. description of the earth.
- B. study of plants and animals.
- C. study of places.
- D. study of physical features.

2. Which of the following is not a physical feature?

- A. Hills
 - B. Vegetation
 - C. Soil
 - D. Animal
 - E. Cars
3. An example of human (man-made) feature is
- A. roads.
 - B. rivers.
 - C. seas.
 - D. vegetation.

4. Which of the following is not studied by geographers?

- A. Man-environment interaction
- B. Distribution of physical features
- C. Distribution of cultural features

D. Mars and gravity

5. Human activities include all except

A. mining.

B. farming.

C. marketing.

D. None of the above.

Answers

1. A 2. E 3. A 4. D 5. D

Essay Questions

1. Explain the term Geography.

2. What do geographers study?

3. State the subjects that are related.