



A Review of the Teaching of Geography in India's Secondary Schools

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Abstract: *In secondary schools in India (from class 6 to class 10), geography is taught as a required subject by all of the country's school boards. Although the topic is regarded as social science, there are significant variations in how it is taught in schools throughout school boards. Using primary data and a literature review, the report gives a general summary of geography taught in secondary schools. with special attention to its role in the curriculum, the credentials of geography teachers, its methodology, the resources and tools available for teaching it, and its overall perception in the classroom. In addition, it lists the main difficulties facing geography instructors, school principals, school board members, and State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs) as well as offering some suggestions. The study makes the case that geography's vastness and complexity are the main causes of the discrepancies in how it is taught in India's secondary schools.*

Keywords: *Geography Education, School Geography, Geography Curriculum, Geography Teachers, Geography Pedagogy.*

Introduction:

In India, both the central and state governments are in charge of things relating to education. Numerous international, national, state, autonomous, or connected school boards are recognized by the Indian government. The highest authority established by the Indian government to support and counsel the national and state governments on academic issues concerning school education (from elementary to higher secondary levels) is the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Course curricula, syllabi, textbooks, and extra reading materials are prepared by the NCERT for use in primary through upper secondary education. All national and state school boards continue to include geography as one of the traditional courses in their curricula. Most of these school boards teach basic geography lessons as part of social studies or environmental studies at the primary school level. In contrast, all secondary schools connected to all school boards require geography as a subject. The course is offered either individually or incorporated as a component of social science. All school boards have maintained geography as an optional subject for upper secondary students (class 11 and 12), although most higher secondary schools do not allow pupils to choose geography as an elective. Most educators and geographers concur that teaching geography is important and should take place throughout a student's time in school. Their disagreements stem from differing opinions about which geographic subjects and how best to teach them. As a result, when it comes to the value placed on geography in the classroom, its role in the curriculum, its syllabus, and its methodology, school boards differ and agree. Given this, the purpose of the paper is to provide an outline of the problems

associated with teaching geography in Indian secondary schools. Additionally, it looks for significant obstacles to geography instruction in schools.

Review of Literature: Sukhwal (1984) conducted a comparative analysis of geography education in Indian and American schools. He pointed out that not all parties involved were involved in the creation of the Indian school curriculum: “University professors create textbooks, develop curricula, and lead refresher courses; teachers only implement the policies these professors have established.” It is evident that educators grow disenchanted with the educational system and begin to feel alienated from it.

Brar (2004) conducted a critical evaluation of the instruction of geography in Punjab state’s elementary and high schools, paying particular attention to the course objectives. The author came to a fairly pessimistic conclusion about geography education. He discovered that many geography teachers were not aware of the goals of teaching geography in classrooms.

S. Inamdar (2014) investigated issues with geography instruction in Maharashtra state’s secondary Marathi-medium schools. She pointed out drawbacks in the conventional approach to teaching geography. She discovered that a large number of pupils struggled to understand fundamental concepts and were unable to apply them in their day-to-day lives due to teachers’ heavy reliance on the lecture style of instruction. Instead of being active learners, kids start to become passive listeners, and their questions are frequently left unanswered. Overcrowding in the classroom hindered pupils’ inventiveness. Many students grow to dislike the topic as a result. Teachers are under pressure to finish the assigned material in the allotted time before exams since their instruction is topic-oriented. Thus, instructors must typically adhere to the curriculum.

Y, Ciineanu conducted a content study of geography (2017: 40–71). textbooks used in Maharashtra schools for grades 9 through 12 and compared them to Romanian geography textbook recommendations. Textbooks are created by vast teams of professionals with Competencies from various domains and material utilized in the geography textbooks were carefully chosen in accordance with scientific standards, taking into account the unique characteristics of the students’ ages as well as their degree of knowledge and proficiency. When taken as a whole, these studies offer valuable insight into Indian school geography. However, there hasn’t been much conversation up to this point on how geography is taught differently and similarly across India’s school boards. textbooks used in Maharashtra schools for grades 9 through 12 and compared them to Romanian geography textbook recommendations. Textbooks are created by vast teams of professionals with Competencies from various domains and material utilized in the geography textbooks were carefully chosen in accordance with scientific standards, taking into account the unique characteristics of the students’ ages as well as their degree of knowledge and proficiency. When taken as a whole, these studies offer valuable insight into Indian school geography. However, there hasn’t been much conversation up to this point on how geography is taught differently and similarly across India’s school boards.

Objectives of the Study: The paper’s goal is to give a general review of geography instruction in secondary schools across India’s various school boards. The paper specifically aims to:

- Assess the current state of geography education in Indian secondary schools by looking at curriculum, pedagogy, resources, and teacher availability;
- Identify the main obstacles to geography instruction in Indian secondary schools affiliated with various school boards.

Methodology of the Study: The study conducted a comparative analysis of geography education in secondary schools using a variety of methodologies. A portion of the study is based on a literature-based analysis of the geography curriculum, pedagogy, and syllabus in secondary schools in India that are connected with various school boards. A comprehensive evaluation of studies and papers pertaining to education in schools, authored by multiple committees and commissions established by federal, state, and

local school boards, has been conducted. The majority of the data included in this paper was gathered from school board members, principals, and teachers between 2022-2023. As previously said, three sets of questionnaires were created for the three categories of respondents, and their validity was confirmed by sending them to a specialist in education. The expert's remarks and recommendations were appropriately included.

Through a survey of five schools in the Pakur area of Jharkhand, the questionnaires intended for geography teachers and principals were pilot tested in order to standardize them.

Discussion And Findings: Geographic information is produced, acquired, and disseminated through processes that predate human civilization. A civilization could not have survived for very long without an accurate and thorough understanding of the local and regional environment. Geographical knowledge was primarily employed to achieve political goals of feudatories, kingdoms, and empires, as well as to meet the socioeconomic demands of people during different stages of the history of human society. The common people relied on geographic knowledge for their survival and means of subsistence, while the rulers used it to enhance and safeguard the interests of their kingdoms. In ancient and medieval India, there was no formal education for children in the contemporary sense. The majority of the schooling was community-based, and some degree of geographic knowledge was also taught.

Conclusion and Recommendation: In summary, geography is taught in Indian schools as a social science subject. The majority of geography professors lacked the necessary credentials to instruct the subject. In most schools, there were insufficient teaching aids and resources. Though understanding geographical concepts and abilities has become more important recently, most school boards' geography curricula still offer a wealth of facts and data. Students did not find geography textbooks to be user-friendly, and there was no real effort made to provide subject-specific teaching guides for geography instructors. Field teaching is completely disregarded, despite the fact that geography is regarded by many as a field science. Geographic education has a bad reputation in both academia and society. In light of these, several recommendations for improving the geography teaching-learning process in schools can be offered. Accumulating data and information shouldn't be the primary goal of geography education. Rather, it ought to assist in cultivating a mindset and a way of thinking unique to the subject. The status of geography as a subject in schools would increase with the hiring of trained instructors. Regular orientation courses for geography instructors and high-quality teacher preparation are necessary. The interests of geography would be furthered in a curriculum that is becoming more competitive and crowded with qualified teachers.

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