

**Subject: Geography CBCS (HONS)**

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**CC: 13T- UNIT-II- FOUNDATIONS OF MODERN  
GEOGRAPHY AND RECENT TRENDS**

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Semester - VI (Hons.)  
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## Unit-II : Foundations of Modern Geography and Recent Trends

1. Evolution of Geographical thoughts in Germany, France, Britain and United States.

### German School of Thought

German's contribution in the development of geography is enormous as they gave a philosophical and scientific base to the subject, especially in 18th and 19th Century and put the subject as an independent discipline. Initially, the growth of the subject was slow, but the middle of the 19th Century was a period of political crisis in Europe. There was a great demand for maps and charts by the military officers and administrators to learn about the physical and cultural conditions of the different nations and regions of the world. Owing to the practical utility of maps, anything that can be plotted on map was considered as geography. During this period a number of geographical societies were established and the work of these societies was to publish geographical literature and information about the planet earth.

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## THE TURN OF THE CENTURY (PERIOD UPTO 1905)

At the dawn of the century German geography had already laid the solid foundation. After the death of Humboldt and Karl Ritter, the two modern German geographers Ferdinand von Richthofen (1871) and Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) were still active when the present century started. Both came to geography from the own subject of physical sciences. Von Richthofen remained primarily a physiographer, although he did not neglect the human side and he stressed the influence of the environment on the life of the people. Ratzel put a great deal of emphasis on the physical factors under which man lives. At the same time, other prominent geographers were Otto Krummel, who was a German oceanographer; George Gerald who was a geophysist, and, Alexander Georg Supan was especially known for his "Handbook of Physical Geography". The rebirth of geographic interest attracted many of the so-called younger groups like Albrecht Penck, whose "Morphology of the Earth's Surface" was a monumental work; Alfred Hettner who was a methodologist, who defined geography as the chorological science of the earth's surface; Alfred Philippson whose work "Greichische Landschaften" which deals with general geography; Karl Theodor Sapper who was a German traveller who worked on natural history, cultures and languages, and Joseph Partsch.

Geography, according to Hettner, is not a general earth science but the chronological science of the earth's surface. It is concerned chiefly with the interplay between nature and men, an evaluation of spatial relations. Its aim is primarily to study areas of region.

### THE PRE - WORLD WAR - I PERIOD (1905 - 14):

This period is the golden age of German geography. Physiography was overrated due in large part to the influence of Albrecht Penck. His chief interest was the study and explanation of the features of the land's surface. Another reason for the emphasis on physiography came from America, namely, William Morris Davis, *Las Spectacular*, but perhaps of equal influence was the work of Alfred Hettner. His articles were methodical and his discussion of climate and relief are still held in high regards in geographic knowledge. Alfred Philippon, in his book *The Mediterranean*, showed a classical study in regional treatment; a beautiful interpretation of all factors which together make this area a homeland of man and culture. The chief contribution to the rather neglected field of economic geography in that period was of Andree's. Among many authors, some new names appeared and they become specialists in the areas they discussed. Erich Obst, Walther Tuckermann, Otto Maull, Wilhelm Volz, Karl Hausofer played an important role in



## German geography.

### The WORLD-WAR - I PERIOD.

German geographical war publications of the period were more devoted to geographical description of the war zones and occupied areas than on the evaluation of war. The lack of a geographic approach to a new Europe made the German upto the summer of 1918 more confident of winning the war. The prevalent geographic thought of that period was discussed by Penck on the concept 'natural boundaries'. German geographers were called upon to make studies of the occupied areas. In 1922, W.L.G. Joerg published a book entitled 'Recent Geographical work in Europe'.

### The Post-War I PERIOD (1918-24):

After the war many books were published in Germany. In 1922, Rudolf Kjellen published his book 'The Great Powers of the world'. The ideas developed in Geopolitik were new to the German mind. The seeds of which was already laid in certain parts of Ratzel's 'Political Geography' and Supan's book entitled 'Guiding Principles of General Political Geography'. The geographical studies in Germany faced great

financial hardships. Gone were the time of world fairs, only South America offered possibilities as indicated by the work of Sapper, Maull, Fritz Klute. Hettner continued to publish, which appeared in his periodicals such as "The Terrain features of the Continents" and "The March of Culture over the World." In 1921, the pre-war and war periods were glorified by Walther Penck. He stressed the interplay between tectonic movements and erosion and its influence on landforms. The new geography - economic and political geography were well-represented and German geography widened its horizon with the closure of post-war period.

### The Pre - Hitler Period:-

The major emphasis during the period was on problems of geographic presentation. Hans Spethmann advocated 'dynamic geography' in contrast to the old static method. Generally speaking, the dominance of the physical had been broken and the trend developed in the direction of regional studies stressing the human element and also emphasising the totality of an area from all points of view. Kjellen continued his work of "The World Powers Before and After the World War (1930)". Haushofer described Geopolitik as the science of political life in the natural environment.

It was difficult to discover how the

German geographers on the whole faced the political situation which in 1933 brought Hitler to power. Some of them who were active in geopolitics favoured the new regime; others seemed to be too much involved in theoretical discussion to worry how the new government would effect their lives and studies.

### The Hitler Period :

This was the dark period of German geography. Fritz Klute's book "The Handbook of Geographic Science" is very important. The physical approach was no longer encouraged. ~~by the~~ Economic geography was greatly hampered by the fact that vulnerability of the German household, was not allowed to be mentioned. The regional studies within Germany, including such elements as protection against erosion, as well as planning, were probably still the best of this period. During the whole period the German School of Geography came entirely under Nazi supervision. Some geographers left the country during the period, either forcefully or because of their own free will.

### The World War II Period :

After the debacle of Stalingrad geographers were called upon to help the war effort.

Two military agencies were partly geographic, namely the units of Army and Navy were concerned with the preparation of maps. Topographical Sheets provided with geographical summary on the reverse side and also such factors as trafficability were stressed. Whatever, relatively small publications were done were mainly regional geography. At the end of 1941 the German Geographical Society was founded. In 1942, the Society published a handbook on 'Space Problems of the People of the Earth'.

### The Post-World War II Period -

This was not the place to evaluate the prospect for post-war geography in Germany. Many geographers were still available. It was a strange environment in that it has to start rebuilding, destroyed structure and libraries, financial difficulties and the unavoidable chaos of a period of transition, economic as well as material. In 1947, a new geographical periodical entitled 'Erdkunde' appeared. Then onwards, there is a trend towards an integrated approach to study landscape in which scholars of physical and social sciences are involved.





### References : —

1. Evolution of Geographical Thought — Majid Hussain.
2. Fundamentals of Geographical Thought — Sudeepa Adhikari.
3. ধূমোল চিন্তার বিকাশ — কুমুদা লাহিড়ী সও.

Unit II : Foundations of Modern Geography  
and Recent Trends.

1. Evolution of Geographical thoughts in Germany, France, Britain and United States.

French School of Geography

France shone in the intellectual firmament of the 19th Century and Paris was an outstanding centre in which many great scholars assembled. The awakening of interest in geography among the general public in France dates from their losses in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. The newly founded geographical societies in the Province of France have members who are leaders in favour of colonial expansion and it caused the general public to be more interested in the descriptive geography, which was a valuable step towards gazetteer geography.

The beginning of the 19th Century saw the pioneers of French geography such as Vidal de La Blache, de Martonne, Lucien Gallois, Jean Brunhes, Raoul Blanchard, Henri Baulig, Andre Cholley, Elisee Reclus.

Elisee Reclus was the most famous representative of the best kind of descriptive geography. Vidal de La Blache was truly the founder of

modern scientific geography in France. Starting with the assertion that geography must have a place among the natural science as well as in human studies, he laid down six principles —

- 1.) The unity of phenomena, by which he meant the interdependence and interconnections of physical forces.
- 2.) The variable combination and modification of phenomena, especially as seen in the study of world climate.
- 3.) The geography is concerned with all phenomena at the surface of the earth.
- 4.) The need to recognize the force of the environment in its various forms and types, such as the vegetational belts of the earth and man's adaptation within them.
- 5.) The need for a scientific method in defining and classifying phenomena.
- 6.) The recognition of the great part of man in modifying his basic environment.

By 1922, the French School of Geography has practically recovered from the losses and dislocations due to the first world war. Although, the scientific revolution has died in 1918, the subject was well established at nearly all the universities.

## Regional Geography:

The French have successfully merged the historical and geological schools and have achieved a regional synthesis unsurpassed elsewhere and for which they are justly renowned. It would be wrong to describe the full magnitude of regional work to France, although the development is central to the French outlook. Demangeon (1905), Blanchard (1906), Gallois, Vidal de La Blache (1903) separately published their theories to serve as model. The French have made an even greater contribution to geography by the 'Geographie Universella' (1930 and 1931) series. Originally it was planned by Vidal de La Blache. His work was out particularly with regards to the physical, climate, hydrography, vegetation and the recreation of man. It was the main subject matter of the first volume. The other two volumes in this series have been described by H. Baulig as "the best general regional geography of North America". In 1891, Vidal de La Blache founded a new professional periodical the 'Annales de geographie' in collaboration with Marcel Dubois.

## Human Geography

The French have also excelled in the study and development of Human Geography. They have developed Human Geography without



undue sub-divisions. ~~His~~ <sup>He</sup> Blache is regarded as one of the founding fathers of modern human geography. His 'Principes de Géographie Humaine' is regarded by geographers as a classical work. This book deals with several aspects of human life such as localization, correlation, the significance of environmental factors and of man's work in it.

Brunhes published his book titled 'Géographie Humaine' in 1910, and in this book he deals with the localization of settlement, rural house forms, the shape of village and towns and related matters. This book was the first large-scale attempt in France to examine fully the geographical facts in human economy.

One of Demangeon's greatest interests was rural settlement in France. His philosophy is well revealed in his book 'Problèmes de Géographie Humaine'. He defined human geography as the study of human groups and societies in their relationships to the physical environment. He laid emphasis on the work of man in modifying his environment by means of communication, the control of rivers and the evolution of new plants for human food.

Pierre Deffontaine edited books on 'Géographie Humaine' and founded new periodical 'Géographie Humaine et Ethnologie' in 1948. His study emphasized the struggle of man against environment and also the results achieved.

Jean Gottmann in an article

"The Political partitioning of our world: An attempt at Analysis examines the relationship between environment and the behaviour of states and its role in international relations

## Political Geography

French geographers have had little or no contact with the general principles of economics and therefore, they have produced particular rather than general works upon the political geography. In political geography France has produced a few outstanding works, particularly A. Siegfried and J. Ancel. Siegfried had undertaken work on geographical factors in French political parties and elections. Ancel wrote three volumes of his "Manuel Geographique de Politique europeenne". D. V. Makey in his article "Colonialism in the French Geographical Movement" in the Geographical Review in 1943 gave details of the part played by French Geographical Societies in popularizing the idea of French colonial expansion.

In France, colonial geography is best expressed by Demangeon in his book "L'Empire Britannique" published in 1923. Other outstanding authors were G. Hardy (Geographie et colonisation, 1933), G. Grandier (Atlas des Colonies Francaises).

# Physical Geography

The development of physical geography was slower and was affected either by geographers taking further training in geology or by geologists becoming interested in surface forms. De Martonne was the first French geographer to concentrate on physical geography. His 'Traité de Géographie Physique' was first published in 1909. The whole world is heavily indebted to De Martonne not only for his work on physical geography in general but also of Alps, Central Europe and the physical geography of France.

The other two great physical geographers in France are Blanchard and Baulig. Blanchard tries to work out the consequences of physical factors upon man's economy, and Baulig distinguished himself in analysing the Central Massif, particularly, its several erosion and peneplain surface.

At present French geography moves forward towards Phenomenology (philosophy that seeks to disclose the world as it shows itself before scientific inquiry, as that which is pre-given and pre-supposed by the sciences) and Hermeneutics (theory of the interpretation and clarification of meanings).

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1. Evolution of Geographical Thought—Majid Hussain
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