<u>CHAPTER-IV</u>

PRESENT POSITION OF GEOGRAPHY

TEACHING IN GENERAL

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4.1 STATUS OF GEOGRAPHY

The educational frame work

The Geography has been originally influenced by educational system of Great Britain. Geography in our country arrived much latter on the scene than subject such as economics, history, physics, chemistry and biology. The first department of geography was established in Aligarh University in 1921. There are universiclasses ties which have post-graduate teaching. Mainly the affiliated colleges enroll students for undergraduate classes. The undergraduate courses consisted generally of four academic years. The first year as 'Pre-degree' and the next three as a "three year degree course". Entry of geography was only possible, as new subject in higher education as an 'optional subject'. There was an influence of the British pattern of geography in our universities has had a direct impact on the content and the teaching of geography in our universities.

In the expansion of teaching of geography in India two academic bedies have given the strong support to subject. In the earlier phase it was the Indian Science Congress that accorded a place for geography as a science by organizing a combined Geography-Geology section with in the frame work of its activities. It's review report helped to high light the status of geography in higher education and research. U.G.C. gave grants for development of the subject and also appointed a committee of Geographers to examine the status of Geography (1968). Recently

the U.G.C. has given encouragement to write and publish collegiate text books in regional languages and other all possible help in order to increase the scope of the subject. But the educational frame work is changing and the smaller lecturing classes, seminars, tutorials, the semister system, internal assessment and sessional records are becoming more important.

Geography in collegiate studies

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The development of geography as a collegiate study started in the mid-thirtees. It was mainly due to the efforts of the pioneers in the field of secondary school geography, commerce education and geology. Calcutta started its department in 1941. After some lull during the war period, a renewed growth took place in the period 1946-1962. During this period the undergraduate courses experienced an extensive development in the universities of the North, particularly in the U.P. Recently most of the universities have started university departments, and as for undergraduate studies, almost all the Indian Universities provide courses in some of their affiliated colleges.

The place of Geography in the structure of courses of study offored .

Geography as a school subject is continuously pursued upto the secondary school certificate examination as a compulsory subject. In the Pre-degree course it is in most universities offored as an optional paper to history/mathematics in Arts. It was compulsory paper in Commerce, but only in the Pre-degree year.

It was not provided for at all in the Pre-degree courses in the science faculty.

Some universities recognize the place of geography in all three faculties (Arts, commerce & science), while a few réstrict it to only the Arts faculty. Geography can be taken as a subject at the undergraduate level either as a 'optional' or as a 'special' subject, leading to a B.A. or B.Sc. degree examination. In the three year degree course it can be taken as an optional subject or special subject, provided practical tests adequately.

Classroom approaches

Lecturing continues to be the main method of imparting instruction, although tutorials, and seminars were gaining ground. At the undergraduate level class size varies from 15 to 60 depending on the status of the college and its teaching staff, as well as the relative strength of other colleges in the neighbourhood offering geography. Tutorials were conducted in groups of 10 to 12 students while seminars may have as many as 25 or 30 participants including some members of the teaching faculty. Tutorials were oriented towards a particular 'paper' in the courses of studies while seminars were aimed at an integration of findings arising out of allied papers, Visual aids are commonly used in lecturing. There is, however too great a reliance on the part of students on class room notes and text books.

Although laboratory and field work have been adequately provided for in the scheme of instruction, they tend to suffer from a routine approach and often lack reference to reality. They are more often apt to became a ritual than an exciting apportunity to stimulate observation and thinking.

Syllabi

Recently the geography syllabi in many universities have been changed in fact changed too rapidly and drastically. The changes; by and large, betray lack of a cohesive and object oriented approach while regional geography still claims much attention at the undergraduate and graduate levels, quantification and geographical thought are the new favourites at the undergraduate stage. Without going into the details of the merits and limitations of syllabi, it is possible to note the following common factares. There is a tendancy for the syllabi (1) to often overlap from the lower to higher levels (2) to regard each of the subfields in isolation, unfortunately instruction is often superficial since the courses are usually taught by 'generallists' with inadequate training in the particular sub-fields. (3) to follow uncritically theorotical concepts without reference to the Indian context or local realities (4) to miss the vital links between theoretical and classroom approaches and between laboratory and field work and (5) to dominate the system of examinations to the extent of depriving the teacher of initiative. This is unfortunate as it tends to make the study of geography a textbook ridden ritual divorced from the exciting reality of life. Hence the current demand for 'examination reform'.

Programmes and curriculum

There is no uniformity in the Indian Universities for undergraduate, programmes and curriculum, but it is possible to classify these causes of study in geography in three categoees. (a) A three year course of instruction (eq. Poona, Ranchi, Magadh), the first year course is common to 'General' and 'Special' programmes with a university examination at the end of it. After this, one can apt for a (i) General or (ii) an 'Honours' course consisting of two years, at the end of which there is again a university examination. (b) In some universities (eq. Nagpur) instruction is spread over three academic years and at the end of each academic year there is university examination. (c) Another variation is that only a two year programme of instruction is offered (eq. Bombay, Allahabad, Agra, SNDT) and the examination is held at the end of the second year.

Generally, the courses of instruction have a common pattern in a three year programme. In the first year, it is (i) Physical basis (ii) a regional paper and (iii) practicals oriented towards mapwork, surveying and field work. In the second year and the third year of the General course (i) some advanced study in physical basis (ii) economic and social geography (iii) Asia with a detailed study of India and (iv) practicals are provided for. In an Honours programme instruction covers generally four or five papers and one or two practicals and consists of (i) advanced physical basis (ii) Asia with detailed study of India (iii) a regional paper (other than Asia) (iv) an optional paper of specialization (economic, human cartography, political, climatology, oceanography etc.) and (v) two practicals consisting of cartographical studies, surveying and field work.

Working conditions and course load

In the affiliated colleges, the course load varies with the level of teaching work, a teacher does, a post-graduate teacher does about nine periods of lecturing work, an undergraduate teacher between 12 + 16 periods and tutors and demonstrators about 22 to 24 periods per week. While the working conditions as regards space and facilities in the university departments are marginally satisfactory. Teachers in affiliated colleges complain of excessive course load, lack of working space, inadquate library and other facilities and lack of research opportunities.

Resources

In library facilities the undergraduate colleges are weak. The number of books are very less except few colleges. Collections of maps and atlases are negligible. In the case of journals ' subscription the inability to maintain complete sets of back issues constitutes a handicap in many libraries. In such condition,' the situation in affiliated colleges doing post graduate work is more unfortunate with poorer collections of books and maps preveling. The most of the colleges suffer from lack of adequate reading space. The efficient maintainance of libraries in geography

departments is handicapped by (i) government restrictions on topographic maps and air photographs and (ii) the very high cost of foreign books, atlases, maps and journals and (iii) in adequate or totaly absent documentation or reproduction facilities.

Equipment

In colleges items in survying, meteorology and cartography are generally available though the emphasis, on instruments such as theodolites and sunshine recorders seems to be archaic and absolute, projection equipment does not seem to be as uptodate as one would wish. The new photocopying and reproduction equipment that has proved so useful and necessary for geographical work does not seem to be present in most of the laboratories. The same is the case for calculation machines. A greater emphasis on cartographical equipment is also necessary. The difficulty in modermizing a geographical laboratory in India is not only finance, but inadequancy of locally manufactured equipment and restrictions on foreign imports. Precision in study and research, application of quantitative methods and good cartographical standards cannot be achieved without adequate and efficient equipment.

Field work

It is necessary to mention that every college department does provide a grant for annual field work though in all cases it proves to be highly insufficient to defray the minimum expenses of the staff and the students. A more purposeful policy with

adequate financing is indicated. Lengthy 'study tours' on the one hand and 'village surveys' on the other need to be replaced by a field work programme covering small areas elaborated in depth, by a viable party of students under a faculty guide, and with a maximum duration of a week or 10 days. This should impart better training and insight to the students and the results obtained by them individually and as a team would elicit more precise and significant results.

4.2 GEOGRAPHY IN SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY

Shivaji University established in 1963, and geography survives in this university from its birth. The geography is taught at undergraduate level as well as post-graduate level. Affiliated colleges enroll students for undergraduate classes. Undergraduate courses consisted four academic years. The first year as 'pre-degree' and the next three as a three year degree course. Now the course is divided into two parts. The junior college which consists 11th and 12th standard classes and the senior college consists of three years degree course. Examinations of 11th and 12th classes are conducted by higher secondary board, Poona. The examinations of first year, second year, third year of ' degree course are conducted by the university. There are also external examinations conducted by the university. In junior college, geography is kept as an 'optional subject'. In senior college geography is kept for three years but as an 'optional subject'. There is proveision of special subject as geography

offered at graduate level'. Students can become graduate by offering geography as a special subject.

In last decade development of geography as a collegiate study took place. It was mainly due to the increase of importance of the subject at national and international level. It was also due to the pioneers in the field of geography. University department of geography opened in 1969, and enhanced geography teaching in colleges.

Shivaji University recognizes the place of geography in all three faculties that is Arts, Science and Commerce. Geography can taken as a subject at the undergraduate level; either as a 'optional' or as a 'special' subject, leading to B.A. or B.Sc. degree examination. In the three year degree course it can be taken as an optional or special subject providing practical work adequately.

Lecturing is the main method of teaching. Tutorials, seminars, periodical tests, are carried on. At the undergraduate level class size varies from 10 to 100 depending on the status of the college and its teaching staff. Tutorials, periodical tests are conducted like examinations. These are oriented towards a particular paper in the courses of studies. Visual aids are less used in lecturing. The students are mostly rely on classroom notes and textbooks. The seperate laboratories, libraries for subject are not found in colleges. Field work is taken mostly in third year.

At the begnings, Shivaji University followed the pattern ' of Poona University for the syllabus. But now the syllabus changes frequently and independently. These changes are not object oriented. Regional geography still claims much attention at the undergraduate level. The inclusion of new favaurites like quantification at undergraduate level are not found in this university.

In the colleges and university the course load varies with the level of teaching work. A past graduate teacher does about ten periods of lecture work per week. The college teacher (undergraduate level) does about 16 to 18 periods per week. While as regards space and facilities in the university departments are marginally satisfactory than the colleges departments. Teachers of affiliated colleges have lack of working space, inadequate library, other facilities and lack of research opportunities. They are engaged in extra-curricular activities of the colleges.

The library facilities of the undergraduate colleges are weak. The number of books are very less except few colleges. Collections of maps and atlases are neglible. The most of colleges are suffered from lack of adequate space for reading. The geography libraries are handicapped because of high cost of books, atlasses and journals.

Equipments in affiliated colleges are less. Instruments for surveying, meteorology and cartography are available, but

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costly instruments are not available. Laboratories are not well equipped because of lack of funds. College management neglects to purchase costly instruments for the subject.

There is provision in syllabus to do some field work. In colleges, generally, village survey is done at third year level, who offered geography as special subject. There is also provision for study tour in geography syllabus.

Recently geography in Shivaji University is getting importance. There is one post graduate department in Kolhapur and other two post graduate departments run in Satara by Chh.Shivaji College and in Solapur by Dayanand College. Generally, the new entries in geography accepted immediately in this university. Though the geography being taught in all three faculties, it is specially included in science faculty. The study of recent trends in geography is made and its cognigance is taken carefully. The future for this subject, in university is also better in all respect.

4.3 EXAMINATIONS IN GEOGRAPHY

Examinations occupy a very important place in our educational system and have today became the central pivot round which the whole of education including the syllabi courses of study, method of teaching, employment potentialities etc. must revolve. It would not be an exaggerations to say that examinations have a determining influence not only on the system of education

but on the standards of teaching and research and the careers of millions of students. Students appearing at university examinations are, in a manner of speaking marked for life.

An educational examination may be defined as a process of assessment of a students performance when confronted with a series of questions, problems or tasks in order to ascertain the amount of knowledge that he has acquired and the extent to which he is able to utilize it or the quality and effectiveness of skills he has developed or the attitudes, interests and personality tracts he has acquired.

Examinations have served as a good tool for testing the standard of attainment of pupils and the efficiency of teachers in teaching. They are also helpful in judging academic standing of educational institutions. They also give feed back to the teacher by informing him has his students stand in the subject he has taught. This is essential if the teacher is to provide guidance to the pupil so that he may improve on his present attainment and make adequate progress in the work to follow.

Secondly, they also give feed back as to the effectiveness of his teaching methods. In the light of examination results, the teacher can modify and improve upon his teaching methods. Again in the light of examination results, we can judge the effectiveness and / or significance of curriculum and accordingly we can modify as change the same for better one.

Thirdly examinations also serve as a real stimulus to effort on pupils part. It is as clear as day light that a majority of pupils usually put in much effort in to their studies for the simple reason that an examination keeps on approaching every now and then. This may prompt us to make the following equation.

No examination = No study

Fourthly examinations are also the basis of reporting to parents and guardians about the progress and success which their sons and daughters are achieving. It is therefore, concluded that no educational system can do a way with examination. A good examination system, though not a sufficient requisite, is undoubtedly a necessity for a good educational system. So what we need to do is to overcome deficiences with which our examination system suffers.

Examinations (past)

There has been lot of hue and cry from the student and parent community about the inadequency of the prevalent examination system at the university level. The university authorities complain about the number of cendidates, growing number of examinations and growing number of question papers to be set twice every year. These buffling numbers show, the urgency for re-thinking of the examinations pattern if the university examinations are to remain credible tests of measuring the academic attainment of candidates. Two decades ago, a candiate appeared for only two university examinations in a four year graduation course and for one more university examination in two year post-graduation course viz. Inter and final year of B.A./B.sc./B.Com. only and one final year examination for M.A./M.Sc. & M.Com. and the remaining two examinations were conducted by the colleges at the graduation level and there was either college or no examination for junior M.A./M.Sc./M.Com.

With the introduction of 3 year intergrated pattern in some universities of Maharashtra (e.g. Shivaji, Poona, Nagpur) the system was changed and at the end of each academic year there was an examination held by the universities, thus increasing greatly the strain on the university administrative machinery. Consequently the chief function of a university remained at the level of conducting examination and a university became a mere examining body. The number of examinations remained the same, the only change being in the nomenclature of various examinations. They were called pre-degree, F.Y., S.Y., T.Y., B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com. III equiped for such a task of no mean function, the administra--tive machinery began giving way, much to the anxiety and worry of academiciations, parents and students, delays and postponement at every stage of examinations become unavoidable, and these brought in their wake corruption in the form of leakages of question papers, changing of marks etc.

Then come the new pattern called the 10 + 2 + 3 pattern

for secondary, higher secondary and university education in Maharashtra. It cannot be gain and that this pattern did not achieve the expected results. Although a part of the total examinations work load was transfered to the Higher Secondary Board (viz. 12th standard examination) the quantum was not much reduced. The number of students admitted every year to university courses and of these waiting in the portals of colleges/universities desirous to get admission is so alarming that any person who is closely watching the situation cannot remain unconcerned and would fear a total collapse of the system under its own weight.

Examinations (present)

As with other subjects the usual pattern of examination in geography is that of the formal university examinations. The subject of examination reforms is favourite theme with Indian educationalists, it however defies a satisfactory solution. Evaluation of sessional work, periodic tests, internal assessments, semesters system and like are being tried, Geography too, participates in this general trend to play down the role of formal and written examination, and to give more credit to the students continueous performance during the session and his contribution in tutorials and seminars.

In Shivaji University pattern of 10+2+3 continued, but at university level, semister system introduced in our university. Main objective of the semister system to split up the syllabus of year in two parts and reduce the burden of examinations, to

understand subject properly. Unfortunately the purpose has not been achieved but burden of examination on university body has tremendously increase. Throughout the year, conduct of examination became a function of the university. Secondly the examination became of memorisation, mal practices increased and hence cause discontinuation of semister system. Now again the annual system introduced in Shivaji University. As per guidlines of University Grants Commission, this university has started a continuous internal evaluation (C.I.E.) scheme, since 1983-84, both for undergraduate and post-graduate level. The main objective of the C.I.E. Scheme is to increase reliability and validity of overall assessment by making use of a varity of tools. It encourages the students to work throughout the year instead of the end. It helps . better retension of knowledge. This scheme is becoming popular in Shivaji University.

4.4 THE NEW CONSIDERATION

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The examination system three-component examination is placed here for consideration. Author believes that the system will be helpful to the students of geography.

Three component examination system

The system is a three-component examination at the graduate level, with the weightage given to each component while deciding graduation of a candidate. The three components of a university examination may be -

(a) A college tests given each year periodically, say monthly and conducted by the teachers of the same college.

(b) An objective set of questions whose answers can be tabulated and judged by a computer.

(c) A short university examination which can be evaluated uniformly by some teachers and or persons of academic interest.

Modes operundi of the 3-component examination

(a) A teacher who takes a particular class for a specific subject (say Geography), to ask his students to write a set of essays (in form of what is known as tutorials) for which students may be induced to refer to standard reference works, text books and related material. But unlike tutorials whose alloted marks are not counted in the university examination held at the end of the academic year, a certain percentage be reserved for this assigned; work may say 25% of the total aggregate.

(b) At the end of the first term and also in the middle of the second term each a set of objective questions (say 100) provided by the university be given to students by colleges and answers to these objective tests be evaluated by a computer. An aggregate of another 25% be reserved for these tests.

(c) The final examination to be at the end of academic year be necessary a very short affair in which a candiate's grasp of the subject be judged and not memary feat. This examination be conducted by the university and only 50% marks be alloted for this examination.

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