

# Evolution of Fieldwork in Geographical Studies

Also the Inquisitiveness <sup>(Aristo)</sup> Compelled Geographers to find out the observations based field experiences of multiple characters of the natural surroundings. Asking <sup>questions</sup> about LOCATIONS (where it is? → Starting from known living space, in what direction do we travel & how far) (where are we? → when we reach the place on the other side of the horizon).

is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the field study, what we call Geography. Also the phrase "What is it like?" stands for a fundamental thought process.

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## → Evolution of Fieldwork in Geographical Studies →

~~The evolution of Fieldwork in Geography around 1850 in Germany~~ The Fieldwork seems to be the building block of the discipline of Geography with its foundations in the ancient →

- The 1<sup>st</sup> incredible period took place in 4<sup>th</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Centuries BCA in the Ancient Greece. The Greeks developed the procedures that we describe as the "Scientific method". Aristotle, a Greek philosopher, who developed the INDUCTIVE PROCEDURES, preferred to formulate his concepts as GENERALIZATIONS of empirically observed facts, which established the modern ideas of fieldwork in geography.

with the rise of Muslims in 7<sup>th</sup> Century, the city of Baghdad occupied similar position as Alexandria. Arab scholars made important observations about the climate. In 10<sup>th</sup> Century, Balkhi prepared the world's 1<sup>st</sup> climatic Atlas (Kitab Al-Ashkal) on the basis of travels observations.

Miletus, the ancient town in Ionia on the eastern side of Aegean sea near the mouth of river Meander, became the first major centre for geographical knowledge about people & places beyond Greek horizons. It was purely based on empirical observations & facts brought by various travellers & explorers. Later Alexandria on the bank of river Nile became similar such centre. It was abode of scholars like ERATOSTHENES & HIPPARCHUS (made stereographic & orthographic projection). (Coin the term Geography)

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- The impetus for exploration provided by the improvements in art of Navigation & wide adoption of magnetic compass, improved <sup>more</sup> accurate measurements in Sea Voyages, which further improved the field observation. From 1450 to 1650 (Two hundred years) is known as AGE OF DISCOVERY, that revolutionised the observation of new places people followed by assessment of rich bio-geodiversity & cultures. The efforts of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Captain James Cook etc in the field of cartography lead to the widening of Earth's known horizon as home of Humankind.

- The Age of discovery lead to the "Branching geographical thinking" through the works of Bernhard Varenius, Immanuel Kant, Alexander von Humboldt & Carl Ritter. Eventually, the geographical inquiry became dichotomous due to approaches of geographical inquiries, i.e. →
  - General - Particular,
  - Ideographic - Nomothetic,
  - Systematic - Regional,
  - etc. paved the way for making of the subject matter of Geography as a discipline.

- In 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Century, field work & empirical observations based analysis occupied prime seat in the Research Methodology of Geographical Research & formed the Backbone of ~~their~~ discipline of Geography when it got introduced in university education system in Germany around 1870s.

The organisations such as →

- The Royal Geographical Society (London)
- The American Association of Geographers (AAG), &
- The International Geographical Union (IGU) etc

lead to the establishment of geography as INTER-DISCIPLINARY subject & fieldwork as its core Component.

develop  
Recent ~~work~~  
Geography in  
the fieldwork  
(Heading)

In 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the geographers deals with the problems of environment and society in all possible ways. From accessibility, Innovation diffusion, density & other derivatives of relative location to the advances of GIS; a geographer tries to solve & bring out potential solutions to the problems. Fieldwork in Geography enables geographers to carryout this noble work of identifying, assessing, analysing a problem & finally formulating strategies for its ~~mitigate~~ mitigation. The

⑤ different kinds of Questions that a geographer studies are as follows \*

- 1) GENERIC Question → that have to do with the Content of Earth Space.
- 2) GENETIC Question → that have to do with the Sequences of Events leading from past situations through geographic changes, to the present Conditions.
- 3) THEORETICAL Question → that deals with the formulation of empirical generalizations with the method of logical deductions.
- 4) REMEDIAL Question → that have to do with the application of geographic concepts & skills to study of practical economic, social as political problems.
- 5) METHODOLOGICAL Questions → that have to do with experiments in new methods of study, new techniques of observation and analysis @ new Cartographic methods.

\* All the above Questions have "Field based observations" as Common element.

