



NEWS AND NOTES

Archives - 1

from The Indian Geographical Journal Formerly Known as The Journal of The Madras Geographical Association

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Letters to the Editor

Geography and the Indian Science Congress

The Baroda session of the Indian Science Congress in January 1942, saw the last of the separate Geography section and thus we have lost the only existing body that could bring Indian Geographers together. Now it struggles as a mere annexure to geology. We are, however, thankful for sparing us this short spell of individual honourable existence.

This step-motherly treatment with such an important Human Science as Geography merely shows the narrowness of the outlook of those who are responsible for it. This unwise step is a clear illustration that we in this country have not yet fully understood the great importance and practical utility of geography – a subject which has been defined as a 'Pivotal subject' by eminent educators of modern times. I only hope and pray that we may soon realise what an unjustified 'butchery' has been committed by a body that claims within its fold the cream of Indian scientists and educationists. We have not yet forgotten at what an unearthly hour and under what circumstances, the Geography section was voted to be closed down at Benares in 1941.

It was perhaps simply a gesture of good will to the British Geographers who visited the Calcutta session of the congress in 1938 that a temporary Geography section was so triumphantly started. The British visitors took a wise step in passing a resolution for the permanency of the section and it was somehow, decided to make the section a permanent feature. The section had hardly begun to settle down when in 1940 a proposal for its re-amalgamation with Geology was put forward at Madras. Then in 1941 the work was done and it was voted to be closed down. This 'mortal' anxiety on the part of some, lays bare their insincerity and narrow mindedness. Window dressing against the visitor is perhaps inherent in us. I wish I could know what are the reactions of the British geographers to this.

Geography needs no charity or patronage for its existence. I, or any of my fellow 'students of geography' have no intention of begging the delegates to the next sessions to graciously reconsider the whole situation. I, on the other hand challenge those who are responsible for it, to justify their action. To me and to all sensible and progress-loving persons, Geography is a subject of utility and great promise-and it is only the shrouded imagination of the foggy-headed conservative that may refuse to believe it. Its importance

and great popularity is already established in our schools and intermediate colleges and it has also made a triumphant entry into some of our Universities. Much useful research work has already been effected and much is in progress. As such, Geography deserves all encouragement and due nourishment to grow to a grand maturity. Such unwise and uncalled for actions may only hinder its useful progress.

Geography is not envious of Geology or Anthropology-subjects that are as yet so uncommon in our colleges and yet nobody ever thinks of amalgamating them with something else. It only hopes that people in this country will someday wake up to its great importance as a 'human science' and restore it to its proper place in the realm of Indian Education.

V. S. Mathur

Archives - 2

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Geography in Indian Universities: with the march of time

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It is indeed a pleasure for us to record the fruit of our appeal through the Monograph 'Geographical Education in Indian Universities' to the Universities of India to enhance the cause of Geography as a subject of University education. We congratulate the authorities of the Allahabad and Agra universities for having started M.A., classes in geography since July 1946. It is highly satisfying to see that some of the universities which have till date been neglecting the subject have now realized the importance of geographical studies in their future programme of educational planning and expansion.

Allahabad University. – This University, since July 1946, has started geography in M.A. only. No provision has been made for M.Sc., course. Naturally it would take some time to make provision for research, but we trust that the authorities will do their utmost to develop the department soon into a research centre. I learnt that no addition has been made in the staff and that Dr. R.N. Dubey, M.A. D.Litt, continues to be the Head of the Department. It is good as far as the new Department has to function under Dr. Dubey, but, I wonder his visualizations are likely to be poorly or insufficiently realized without a good and extended team of professors. I therefore strongly urge the academic council to make immediate additions to the staff, which at present consists of only two members including the Head of the Department.

The number of students admitted to the M.A. previous class this year is 25, and the enrolment to the same class is expected to be 25 to 30 next years and the following years.

It may also be maintained here that the number of students who offered geography in the juniors B.A., class in 1946 was 72 as compared to 50 in 1944, showing an increase of 50% in two years.

Agra University, - It was reported in my monograph that geography had been included in M.A., courses of the Agra University but no affiliated college was recognized for M.A. It is now pleasing to note that St, John's College, Agra which had been teaching geography upto B.A. classes for a dozen years nearly, has begun M.A. classes in geography since July, 1946. The number of students admitted to this college is 8. A great number of students had to be refused admission on grounds of 'No Vacancy'. But this smallness in number is likely to be compensated by a contingent of private teacher candidates from the United Provinces and Rajputana who are to appear at the first M.A., previous examination of the University in 1947. The strength of the private candidates may be estimated to be not less than 100, judging from the number of candidates, from Udaipur, alone (seven) who will be taking their examination this year.

Mr, N.M.Ghose, M.A, (Hons.), assisted by two lecturers, is the Head of the Department of Geography at the College. Geography has been included in only M.A., courses as in the Allahabad University, It is hoped that the other colleges affiliated to the University will follow suit in the near future so to make geographical instructions in these classes available to a wider area. The private examination system in the subject, however, in my opinion, has to be discouraged, directly or indirectly. India needs today trained geographers who have a thorough understanding of the aims and methods of geographical research and who have had inspirational education under a regular College staff.

Bombay University, -- In my Monograph befitting reference could not be made about the contributions of the Bombay University towards the progress of this science in India under the person of Dr, Maneck B, Pithawalla, D,Sc., B.A., F.G.S., L.C.P., University teacher in geography for postgraduates research. The University is fortune in having a scholar like him. It is expected that the University will recognize his services very soon and start M.A., classes under his chairmanship. Dr, Pithawalla, Who happens to be one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, has been doing pioneer work in the field of geographical research in this country. He has over 50 research papers and seventeen publications to his credit. He was the first Doctor of Science in Geography in India of the Bombay University. He received training in the methods of research at the University of London under Professor E.G.R. Taylor and was awarded the Research Certificate in Geography by the same University, He conducted a regional survey of the Lower Indus Basin. This thesis consisting of 17 papers published in various scientific journals of India, was awarded the Moos Gold Medal, the highest Science award by the University of Bombay in 1942, for the best thesis for the year.

At present some Ph.D, students are working under him for the Ph.D. Degree on the following problems.

1. A Regional geography of the Upper Ganges Basin.
2. A Geography of Sind during the Arab occupation of the region (711 A.D. to 1200 A.D).
3. A Geography of Sind with special reference to animal life.
4. Parsee settlements on the West Coast of India.

Review

The Progress of Geographical Education in Indian Universities

Mr. Srivastava has placed all those interested in the progress of geography lastingly in his debt by preparing a very careful and detailed statement showing the present position of geographical studies in Indian Universities, He not only deals in general terms with geography as a University subject, but goes on to indicate the rapid growth in popularity of the subject amongst undergraduate students. He estimates the total strength of students pursuing studies in geography in degree classes at approximately 1,000, with a total teaching staff of 74. He summarizes the position by saying, however, "The progress of geographical studies in India has been very poor. We started late and still the onward march is unsatisfactory slow." As he rightly says, geography was introduced into the Universities of Europe at a relatively late stage compared with many other subjects. It gained an important position in Germany and later in France and although geography has been taught in Oxford since 1887 and in Cambridge since 1888, it was really not until the first World War that the importance of geographical studies became so obvious that Honours Schools were set up in practically all the Universities of the British Isles. As he rightly says, therefore, the positions in India is simply that there is a lag of a few decades.

The development to date has been very different in different parts of India. A special mention must be made of the pioneering work of the Department of Geography of the Muslim University at Aligarh, and this University stands in the forefront. Very important progress has been made at Calcutta and there are now important developments at madras and Bombay and in the Punjab. Details are also given of University work in geography at Agra, Allahabad, Mysore and Patna.

Mr, Srivastava describes the work of the Indian geographical Society, Calcutta Geographical Society, and mentions the Punjab Geographical Review.

When the Indian Science Congress celebrated its coming-of-age in 1937 -38 and about one hundred delegates came from the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the old established section E (Geography) of the British Association was naturally represented by a strong continent of University geographers , including Professor H.J.Fleure, F.R.S., Professor C.B.Fawcett, Professor A.G.Ogilvie, Professor L.Dudley Stamp, Mr. R. H.Kinvig, and Professor W.T.Gordon, all of whom are, or were then Heads of Departments of Geography in British Universities. The delegates included others who had contributed to geographical research. The meetings of the special Section of Geography which was established that year for the first time were well attended and it is tragic to have

to record that the separate Section of Geography of the Indian Science Congress has since been remerged with Geology. It is clear, therefore, that a fresh start must be made and the author of this monograph sets out in some detail proposals for a Central Institute of Geographical Research.

He introduces his proposals by some very wise remarks. He points out that the geography which has been taught in India has very naturally been introduced by those whose training has been in Europe, or elsewhere abroad. As he says, the student has tended to learn more of the geography of other countries and continents than he has of his own country, and that the vast field of research into Indian geography remains unexplored. There is at the present time no adequate account of the geography of India in any language and the regional studies which play such an important part in work in other parts of the world have only recently begun. There is no doubt that the great need in India is for those who have a thorough training in the aims and methods of geographical research to turn their attention to the problems of their own country. He proposes, therefore, a Central Institutes of Geographical Research. Rather naturally the University of Aligarh is suggested as a possible Centre as being one of the few places in India where advanced geography is taught and where there is a considerable library. From Aligarh there is reasonable access to the Imperial records at Delhi and reasonable communications to most parts of the country.

He goes further and suggests the personnel of the governing body and here there seems a danger in introducing at the outset, too much rigidity. The recent development in Britain whereby the Government has made available a large sum for research in the Social Sciences, some of which is being used to further the objects of such Central Institutes, might well be taken as a model by the Indian Government at a time when there can be few if any more pressing problems than those which fall within the purview of the Social Sciences. Among the Social Sciences, geography takes a fundamental place in its study of the physical environment of man. Surely such an Institute should be under a Director of quite unimpeachable academic status, and well provided with funds to be used for the furtherance of geographical research along the lines that would be done in India, that the allocation of definite regions for primary study to the University Departments which is further suggested has some advantages, but there are many problems of central research which the Institute itself might undertake with the help of Research Fellowships.

Just as the first World War resulted directly in the realization that the countries of the world knew little about their own background and still less about one another and led therefore to the establishment in Britain, America and elsewhere of many University Departments of Geography, so the second World War has led to a very real appreciation of the importance of trained geographers and geographical studies. The Intelligence Departments of the Allies were staffed to a very considerable extent by those whose University training had been in geography. The operations off the fighting services depended very largely on geographical information collected for and supplied to them by trained geographers. At the same time, those who were engaged on the work of reconstruction came more and more to rely upon detailed surveys, such as surveys of land

use, carried out by teams of geographers. There is a realisation that all physical planning is in essence the determination of the right use of land in the national interest and in accordance with international co-operation, and such surveys involve essentially a geographical training and the representation of the data on series of maps. The greatest difficulty at the present time is a lack of well-trained first-class personnel to carry out the surveys. There is no doubt that the author's plea for a Central Institute and its adequate equipment is well founded, and judging by what is happening in other countries where geographers are finding their rightful place in many spheres of Government and private activity, there is no lack of opportunities for those who look upon their geographical training as leading to other careers than that of the teacher, important as that remains.

L.D. STAMP.

THE INDIAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

Department of Geography, University of Madras, Chennai - 600 025

14th IGS Online Talent Test – 2024

Date: 05.01.2024 Time: 11.00 a.m. - 12.00 Noon

WINNERS

Young Geographer (Under Graduate Programme)

The IGS Founder Prof. N. Subrahmanyam Award

Total Participated: 839

Name of the Student	Name of the Institution	Marks Scored	Rank
Gokhila Annapoorani B	Dept. of Geography, Tourism & Travel Management, Madras Christian College (Auto), Chennai-600 059	67/75	I
Anusha S	Department of Geography, Government Arts and Science College, Amaikulam, Gudalur - 643 212	64/75	II
Jesslit Sebastian	Department of Geography, Presidency College (Autonomous), Chennai – 600 005	64/75	II
Karthikeyan.S	Department of Geography, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Kumbakonam - 612 002	64/75	II
Preetam Pathak	Dept. of Geography, Tourism & Travel Management, Madras Christian College (Auto), Chennai-600 059	63/75	III
Aadithya J	Dept. of Geography, Tourism & Travel Management, Madras Christian College (Auto), Chennai-600 059	63/75	III
Elakkiya E	Department of Geography, Bharathi Women's College (Autonomous), Chennai - 600 108	63/75	III
Nivetha R	Department of Geography, Bharathi Women's College (Autonomous), Chennai - 600 108	63/75	III
Dhanush Ram R	Department of Geography, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Coimbatore - 641 018	63/75	III
Jayagowri L	Department of Geography, Sri Meenakshi Government Arts College for Women (Auto), Madurai – 624 002	63/75	III

**Young Geographer (Post Graduate Programme)
Prof. A. Ramesh Award**

Total Participated: 234

Name of the Student	Name of the Institution	Marks Scored	Rank
Aishwarya Lakshmi R J	Department of Geography, Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvavarur – 610 005	68/75	I
Suvankar Dey	Department of Geography, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli - 620 024	64/75	II
Shalini S	Department. of Geography, Kundavai Nachiar Govt. Arts College for Women (Autonomous), Thanjavur - 613 007	64/75	II
Abisha P	Department of Geography, University of Madras 600 025	64/75	II
Shyamaladevi B M	Department of Geography, Central University of Tamil Nadu, Thiruvavarur – 610 005	64/75	II
Gunavathi. G	Department of Geography, Presidency College (Autonomous), Chennai – 600 005	62/75	III
Varsha R	Department of Geography, Kundavai Nachiar Govt. Arts College for Women (Autonomous), Thanjavur - 613 007	62/75	III
Bharathi S	Department of Geography, Sri Meenakshi Government Arts College for Women (Auto), Madurai – 624 002	62/75	III
Harish R	Department of Geography, Government Arts College (Autonomous), Coimbatore – 641 018	62/75	III