

**Study Material for Pedagogy of School
Subject (Geography)**

Teaching Methods of Geography

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CHAPTER-III

METHODS OF TEACHING GEOGRAPHY

III.1 INTRODUCTION :

Teaching methods are very useful to impart the geographical knowledge to the students. The teacher of geography should understand the psychological requirements of the student and the method of teaching has to be modified accordingly.

Various methods are employed in geography teaching. The geography teacher has to establish an association of the known things with the unknown and help the student to acquire further knowledge. Therefore, geography teacher has to know the previous knowledge of the student.

Before using the particular method the geography teacher has to think over objectives of geography, curriculum of the subject, unit planning, annual planning and dynamic change in the subject.

The geography teacher should select the proper methods of teaching. Methods of teaching should be adopted according to the nature of units to be taught otherwise the teaching will not be effective. It is quite likely that the teacher will be required to use more than one methods while teaching some units.

III.2 METHODS OF TEACHING GEOGRAPHY :

There are several methods of teaching of geography. But the teacher does not use them according to the need. He simply follows lecture method, hence there is no interest among the students and the class atmosphere becomes dull. Therefore, the geography teacher should employ new methods like observation, experimental, field work etc. to achieve the objectives of the subject. He should avoid the traditional methods of teaching geography. Prof. Ponshe, in his book " भूगोलाचे अध्यापन " remarks about successful teaching in the following words :

जेव्हा शिक्षक विद्यार्थ्यांसमोर भौगोलिक सत्य घटना ठेवून त्यांच्या सहाय्याने अनुमाने काढाव्यास विद्यार्थ्यांना प्रवृत्त करतील आणि नकाशे, आकृत्या इ. च्या सहाय्याने काढलेले निष्कर्ष त्यांना स्वतःला पडताळून पाहण्यास लावतील तेव्हाच भूगोलाचे खरे अध्यापन होईल. शिक्षकाचे काम मार्गदर्शक व प्रेरक असे असते.

In teaching a teacher plays a vital role, the teacher should create a free atmosphere in the class. There should not be spoon feeding. He should avoid 'talk and chalk' method and allow the students to talk. The teacher's real and important part is to allow the children to create an atmosphere in which interests are encouraged and developed.

The researcher discussed some of the important methods of teaching geography, in brief, in the following paragraphs.

i) Observation Method :

It is one of the most effective and popular methods. In observation method the children are taken out to observe the facts. In the study of geography in particular and in other subjects in general, direct observation is an important method to acquire knowledge.

Knowledge acquired through observation is clear and perfect. Teacher should give the students an opportunity to observe geographical things in their environment. The teacher should ask them to collect geographical data after their observation. The teacher must guide the students in observing things and in collecting data.

ii) Excursion Method :

"More geography is learned by feet rather than head". This statement properly emphasizes the importance of this method. Excursion gives opportunities of observation and learning through the actual experiences. So wise teacher must arrange a good number of opportunities of paying visits, atleast to local places.

In fact, it is a part of observation method. In excursion, students observe the things in real form. So the teacher should give opportunities to the students to observe the things.

There is co-relation between indoor and outdoor studies. This relation is aptly pointed out by O.P. Verma in the following words :

"The outdoor observation work should be very closely correlated with indoor work. The results of these visits may be expressed in the form of maps or geographical essays or stories and, if possible, in the form of relief models."2

Excursion method has many advantages. In excursion students acquire the practical knowledge. It breaks the monotony of the class-room. Students have an opportunity to express their views and take down notes of the things they have observed.

Prof. E.A. Macnee has pointed out the importance of this method in the following words :

"It is essential that the foundations of geographical knowledge shall be laid in the field. No amount of reading from books can make up for a practical knowledge gained by looking at the earth which the child is studying. It follows that from the very early stage expeditions should form part of the geography."3

iii) Laboratory Method :

In this method concepts of geography can be understood. So the teacher should teach the units - latitude, longitude, preparing maps and models etc. through the laboratory method. In this method teacher has to work more. He has to discuss important points. Students have to observe and write down notes on what they observe and have to do the experiments independently.

In 'Memorandum on Teaching Geography' the use of combination of experimental and observational methods is thus emphasized,

"....geography may be said to have a method of its own, such a method will be based on a combination of the oral, the experimental, and the observational, each of these elements coming into prominence when it is found to be appropriate to the stage of the course or of the lesson."⁴

It is scientific method in which students have to make use of their eyes or their hands or of both. The object is to make the hands and the eyes useful servants of the brain.

iv) Project Method :

"A project is a 'Problematic act carried to completion in its natural setting."⁵

A 'project' is a purposeful activity on the part of pupils. The subject has a bearing on real life and there is no cramming at all. It fosters social qualities such as co-operation and the spirit of give and take.

In this method students are given certain problems and projects. They carry out these projects and solve the problems and learn geography.

Psychologically it is based on the principle of learning by doing. Both teacher and pupils are active in this method. Importance of this method is very well brought out in UNESCO's publication as follows :

"The term 'activity' is used as the opposite of 'passivity' in order to represent a change in the role both of the teacher and of the pupils as compared with older forms of teaching."⁶

Every project has following steps :

- a) Aim of the project.
- b) Procedure of the project.
- c) Time-table of the project to be done.
- d) Evaluation.

Geographical projects which can be employed in schools are as follows : Running of vegetable stall, cloth shop, stationery shop, cultivation or ploughing of field,

preparing models from clay or sand etc., hill scene, setting and running of geographical museum, organisation of excursion etc.

v) Regional Method :

Regional method may be defined as "an intensive observational study of an area along regional lines."

Prof. E.A. Macuee has explained the meaning of Regional Method in the following words :

"The regional method of teaching geography is, then a method in which the area studied is divided into natural regions, each of which is studied separately."⁷

In this method countries with common geographical features are studied together. Herbartson gave impetus to this method by dividing the world into broad climatic regions. His classification is of great value in sub-dividing the continents and in analysing the factors which influence human activities. This method of geography has certain advantages. It is the quickest way of getting pupils to grasp the salient features of the geography of any area.

There is a common procedure to study the geography with the help of this method. It contains the location, structure, relief, drainage system and climate, natural vegetation and animal life, distribution of minerals,

development of industries, population and its distribution, means of communication, locations of the towns and study of a region in relation to other regions of the world.

Types of Regions :

The order of natural regions is given below :

- a) Artic regions and hot regions.
- b) Tropical forests and monsoon lands.
- c) Temperate grass lands.
- d) Regions of mediterranean climate
- e) Temperate forests.⁸

Herbarton in his book 'Senior Geography' has given detailed division of the world into natural regions. He has recognised the following four main types :

- a) Polar types
- b) Cool temperate types
- c) Warm temperate types
- d) Types of tropical hot lands.⁹

Regional method of teaching geography has some limitations. The boundaries of the natural regions are not very exactly defined and so they merge into another, while paying attention to broaden regions we may miss the smaller one. It is impossible to have final division on the regional basis.

vi) Socratic Method :

In this method teacher asks questions and students answer them. Teacher asks questions on the previous knowledge of the student. After having systemised the previous knowledge the teacher provides the new knowledge. The teacher has to awaken the curiosity and has to create interest for the topic among his pupils. The new knowledge is strengthened with the help of questions and answers, description and discussion.

While using this method, the teacher has to be very cautious. He has to put only those questions that shall be useful for keeping up the interest of the students.

vii) Inductive Method :

In inductive method of teaching, an attempt is made to proceed from particular to general. This method is quite psychological and logical.

In this method teacher gives typical examples and tries to elicit the rules from the students. In order to use this method successfully and scientifically the teacher has to take certain precautions. He should give limited examples. The teacher should try to elicit the rules and theories from the students and he should encourage them to develop power of reasoning e.g. the students should be asked to sit in circle around the fire. Questions should be asked

and attempt should be made to draw the principle that on the equator the sun rays are straight and therefore, there is so much of heat.

viii) Deductive Method :

This method is contrary to the inductive method. In it certain theories or principles are put. Then with the help of illustrations, those principles are clarified e.g. the teacher has to explain to the students that in the equatorial regions it is very hot throughout the year and in the polar regions it is very cold. The teacher may tell this thing at the very outset. Then he may put forward certain illustrations to strengthen this knowledge of the students.

ix) Political Method :

Formerly geography was taught on the basis of the political divisions of the world. According to this method some political divisions of the world or of some countries was made a unit.

This is also known as single country method of teaching geography. In this method study of a particular country giving description of its location, neighbouring countries, longitude, latitude, area, population, weather,

forests, mineral wealth, crops, industry, towns, means of communications, ports, economic progress and human life is made.

This method does not appear to be psychological and scientific as greater stress is laid on political countries and not on physical features. This method is time consuming as there is repetition which leads to boredom.

x) Human Method :

Man is very much influenced by physical features, and environment. Study of man in relation to geographical environment is done in this method. Study includes contribution made by man in the development of occupation, distribution of population, cities and communication.

Prof. E.A. Macnee correctly remarked,

"Geography is not a mere recital of unrelated facts. Most geographical facts are related to other geographical facts and it is the business of geography to elucidate these relations. In geography teaching, therefore, cause and effect should be traced wherever possible and in particular the influence of physical and biological factors on human life."10

xi) Dalton Plan or Dalton Method :

This method was introduced by an American teacher, Miss Helen. In this method the teacher encourages students to self study. The students have a laboratory where they work freely. The work of a teacher is only to guide the students and to give hints in critical position. Through this method students can learn discipline and importance of co-operation.

In this method, the whole syllabus is divided into certain parts. The students are supposed to complete certain parts in specified period. The students are free to divide their time for the study. The teacher is there to direct and guide. He/She encourages the students and solves their difficulties. For example, the students may be asked to draw maps, depicting the climate of India. The students should plot the lines of temperature showing 80° , 75° , 60° , 55° in the month of January and 90° , 85° , 80° in July. These two lines are to be plotted separately. Then students should ask which parts of India are extremely cold and extremely hot.

Various plans may be given and the students may be asked to learn geography through this method.

xii) Journey Method :

In journey method, students do not go on actual journey. They sit in the class room, but take an experience of journey by buses, trains, aeroplains with the help of maps.

The students observe bus stand, railway station, physical environment and human life etc. through maps, charts, pictures. Through this method teacher should develop the students observational skill and utilise the knowledge of maps.

xiii) Text-book Method :

In text-book method, a teacher asks students to read lessons, pictures, maps in the text-book. Students read them and ask difficulties and the teacher solves them.

This method is not scientific and psychological. Pupils lose interest in the subject and they become inactive. Through this method students develop the habit of cramming. This method may be useful for the students from examination point of view, but it is not useful for acquiring the real knowledge of geography. As far as possible use of this method should be discouraged.

xiv) Descriptive Method :

This is a class-room method. Teacher explains or narrates the subject matter to be taught.

In geography, to understand the casual relationship the teacher has to describe geographical facts. Through this method it is possible to awaken the power of imagination. The teacher should not go in detail, he should encourage the students to take part in the description. The teacher should describe the things in simple language and as vividly as possible.

In this method, generally, students become passive. It fails totally if the teacher cannot describe things vividly. Again other methods are not complete in themselves as long as descriptive method does not supplement them.

xv) Lecture Method :

This method is usually employed for higher classes of secondary school. It is useful particularly when there are students more than fifty in the class. Students are passive listeners and only the teacher is active, delivering a lecture. So it is not considered to be psychological and scientific. While delivering the lecture, a teacher should determine the mental age and psychological requirements of the students. Teacher should use such a vivid language so the student should visualise the situation. Those teachers who have a mastery on language can effectively employ this method successfully.

xvi) Story-Telling Method :

Children like to listen to stories. They listen to them carefully. So the teacher should impart the knowledge through this method. Geographical facts should be presented in the form of stories but teacher should remember that the story-telling is not the aim of the lesson, to explain geographical concepts is the aim of the lesson.

Story telling is an art, but with some efforts everybody can improve this art. With the help of attractive, fluent language, appropriate change in the voice, proper gestures, a teacher can tell a story effectively.

Stories may be of the following types :

- a) Stories concerned with the life of peoples of various countries, animals and geographical environment of different countries.
- b) Stories on travelling and excursions.
- c) Stories about conquest of man over nature.

This method is very useful for the teaching some units of geography in lower classes.

xvii) Comparative Method :

The teacher employees 'from known to unknown' principle in this method. The students have some geographical

knowledge. This knowledge is compared with the new knowledge. So the teacher should try to connect new ideas with old ones.

While teaching through regional method the teacher can employ this device. Because a combination of the comparative and regional methods results in considerable economy of labour. Certain regions of the world have the same kind of climate and may be expected to have the same natural vegetation, cultivated crops and modes of human life.

Prof. Macnee remarks in this respect as follows :

"....for the teacher, wherever possible to bring the new ideas which he wishes to present into relation with the previous experiences of the pupils, in other words, to talk new knowledge on to old. This is the psychological basis for the pedagogical maxim, 'proceed from the known to the unknown'.11

Therefore, geography teacher may compare the geographical features of a particular country with the geographical features of a other countries. It is also very useful in fixation of knowledge, by recalling the old knowledge the teacher fixes the new knowledge, more firmly in the minds of the pupils.

III.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS :

All these methods are more or less very useful to realise the objectives of the subject of geography. Therefore, a geography teacher should employ various methods and innovative techniques. He should think over unitwise methods to be employed. He should apply one or more methods at the time of teaching.

However, the use of an appropriate method is one of the conditions of making a geography lesson interesting and effective. In order to make the teaching of geography effective and interesting, teaching aids like maps, globes, charts, pictures should also be used by the geography teacher. It is, therefore, necessary to know the various audio-visual aids useful in making the teaching of geography effective. These various audio-visual aids are described in the next chapter.

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