

BA (H) GEOGRAPHY

SEMESTER VI

EVOLUTION OF GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT

Unit: 5 – Future of Geography

Introduction

Geographers are undertaking a critical reappraisal of their discipline in terms of its content, philosophy and methodology, besides that, interrelationship with other academic disciplines and outside world. For some, reappraisal is essential for a healthy academic discipline whereas to others, its episodic and unnecessary. For a better future of a discipline, intense debates are crucial and self-criticism within the discipline is substantial. This must involve all the geographers in a constructive way esp. those who hope to study geography in higher education or intellectual enrichment and career development.

Ways to involve in contemporary geographical debates

1. By summary over-view volumes (or text-books)
2. Involve the protagonist in a published debate

Debates to be appreciated, must be set in context. It is necessary to outline briefly the current nature of geography and the forces influencing it.

Contextual Debate

1. Geography: What it has become

Since the beginning, it must be accepted that there is no for a discipline of geography. National and regional difference in the constitution of geography had been observed esp. in the developed countries like UK, USA and USSR. But besides that, Geographers

have been able to convince the powerful groups within many societies of the need of the discipline especially in research and education industries. Their focus is 'Knowledge about the earth as the home of humankind'.

2. Geography: raison d'etre

Two sets of rationales are suggested for their raison d'etre

- a. Internal reasons: provide the base for continuous debate.
- b. External reasons: involves the discipline and its community in scrutiny from the outside, to which it must respond.

3. Response to Threat

Two types of behaviors can be identified for the response to threat

- a. External posturing: in which one group under threat seeks to promote itself, to the detriment of others. It takes variety of forms, depending on the local circumstances. It promotes the view of homogeneous, united discipline, skilled in relevant knowledge
- b. Internal threat: The biggest internal threat is not the debate about the detailed response. but geographers as members of society and disciplinary community, their interpretation and response to cries as citizen will influence their interpretation and response as geographers.