In tracing the history of the teaching of geography in India, or for that matter, in any country in general, there exists virtually very little or no literature on the subject. But let it be recalled that the ancient Indians, like the peoples of the other ancient civilizations had educational arrangements well adapted to the ideas that prevailed among them, and from them important elements of culture have descended to us.

Ancient India had developed no programme of state education. However, a type of formal education designed to develop moral character through the study of the Vedic literature and other religious writings did evolve for the males of the three higher castes, Brahmins, warriors, and teachers. The most common pattern of education was a private tutorial type of arrangement under the direction of gurus (masters), men who originally had performed all the prescribed religious rites, and were usually, though not always, members of the Brahmin caste. A guru would accept a certain number of students into his household where they would serve him, beg alms (as a form of moral training), live with him as a member of his family, just like one of his own sons. They would engage in academic studies in which great stress was put on oral work and memorization. The close bond between the students and teacher was the key to successful education. These students, or disciples as they were called, learned and imbibed the inner method of the teacher and were in touch with the spirit of his work.

A quiet, preferably wooded, setting for instruction was considered of utmost importance. The school was the home of the
teacher, a hermitage amid sylvan surroundings away from the hubbub of town life, amidst silence and in a calm atmosphere, a place of solitude, an ideal place for contemplation and meditation on Truth or Reality. The education which the boys received in these ideal surroundings was a combination of ritualistic and academic learning, and was considered complete at any time that the teacher pronounced it so.

The acceptance of these boys by the teacher was part of a religio-educational ritual and took place after the boys had participated in simple religious ceremonies, learned the alphabet, and perhaps acquired the rudiments of arithmetic, and, by the fourth century B.C. when a script had been developed, writing.

Although a highly literary flavour permeated the curriculum, specific attention was given to the role which the student as a caste member would play in society. Thus military science and economics, the arts of war and commerce, might be taught for those who would have future need for them. This latter, more practical consideration of the curriculum was also based on Hindu philosophy which dictated that man could only achieve his spiritual goal by performing his task in the present life to the best of his ability.

In addition to the home-school mentioned above, another type of educational institution arose to satisfy the needs of advanced students. Groups of students in ancient India, much like those of medieval Europe, wandered through the countryside to sit at the feet of learned scholars to listen and to debate. Such arrangements, as they became more institutionalized, were called academies, debating circles, or sometimes, even univ-
Although education was private, the large universities were open to all scholars, and studies were not assigned according to caste. In reality, however, though higher education was nominally accessible to all youth, the Brahmins long held a monopoly of it. By the fourth century, B.C., these universities had gained renown as great centres of learning and were attended by students from all over Asia. In addition to advanced religious studies, there were sports activities, military and medical institutes, and departments in economics, botany, philosophy, and astronomy.

In India, then, several centuries before Christ a rather extensive system of education was in operation which while largely limited in its concern to the moral side of man's nature, it did spread a common language (Sanskrit) and a common culture. Moreover, at the advanced stages, a wide range of secular learning was available.

With the birth of Buddhism in India about the fifth century B.C., there began a splendid epoch in Indian cultural history. The priestly schools of Buddhism evolved a memorable artistic heritage in the magnificent sculptures, shrines, temples and paintings, interspersed with Buddha's teachings of the Middle Way with its ethical, aesthetic, and educational implications.

One of the most significant penetrations of India was that of Islam in the eighth century, A.D. The moslem invaders brought with them Persian culture, language, and a great architecture, besides a new monotheistic religion in conflict with the polytheism of the Hindus.
The moslem schools or madrassahs were open to a broad spectrum of the population. One of the major gifts of India to the world occurred during this period with the creation and transmission of the Indian numerals, including the zero or sunya, which became known as the Arabic numerals and gave us the beginnings of positional mathematics.

In addition, Hindi, a common Indian vernacular combined with some Arabic, formed Urdu which became a kind of lingua franca among the moslems.

An aesthetic synthesis of the two cultures created profoundly beautiful works of art, particularly of architecture, and served to enrich greatly the native vernacular literature.

The moslem education that was introduced followed the same pattern as that which had been established in the Arab lands. Herein the maktaba (primary schools) children learned to memorize and recite the revealed truths of the Koran, and acquired some grammatical skills and achieved some knowledge of arithmetic. In the madrassahs (high schools or colleges) however, advanced learning was promoted and the curriculum included Arab literature, Law (largely theocratic), mathematics, history, interspersed with Arab geography and astronomy.

The next great intrusion by Europeans, the Portuguese, English, and French, came by sea and brought an advanced European technology to India. The English won control of the subsontinent in the eighteenth century. Early in the nineteenth century they made the decision to use English rather than the vernacular in education, and thus opened up the techno-
logy, science, and art of the Western world to India. This step also made education a bookish literary preparation for civil servants.

In all the subjects of school instruction, the modern period is deeply indebted to the ancient world, and since treatises on geography, astronomy and natural history were authoritative for many centuries, it is almost certain that these played an important part in the school curriculum of the ancient Indians.

To determine the nature of geography taught and the extent to which it was taught, it is necessary to consult early text books, programmes of study, and teaching manuals, if any. But here again, there is very little available along these lines. This may be due, in large measure, to the fact that in ancient times, knowledge was transmitted orally from teacher to student, and in recent times, to the fact that India was under the British regime for more than two hundred years before she gained her independence in 1947.

Another reason why there was a lack of research work in the history of the teaching of geography in India is because geography in higher education is relatively recent accelerated only since independence.

In recent times, and especially during the period under British rule, the teaching of geography in general closely parallels the historical development of the subject in England. Among the influences would be the influence of Great Britain as the 'mother' country of the then famous
So, the first stage, like in England, was a period when students learned great masses of facts about the earth by rote. The subject was being taught in that dull, uninteresting manner, emphasis being on location and its memorization. Considerable work of a formal, deadening factual nature was generally in evidence in the teaching of the subject. The tendency of many teachers was to dictate notes which the students slavishly copied and memorized against the dreaded day of the written examination.

The text books used were printed in England, were mostly encyclopaedic though much of the content was simple. The list of facts to be learned were arranged in an orderly fashion, and no effort was made to present the subject in any other way than that which used political boundaries as a criteria of division. Maps, globes, and instructional films were not known. Mathematical and physical geography were stressed emphasizing physical geography to the detriment of human geography, and without showing any inter-relatedness. The result was that for the student, geography became the driest and most wearisome subject in the curriculum.

The second stage in the history of the teaching of geography in India came about the turn of the century with an improvement in text books, teaching aids, and general view-point. But the books were still printed and published in England though the texts were more humanized. A better balance began to develop between the human and physical aspects of the subject. The idea that modern geography was a study seeking to trace and explain the lives and activities of man as influenced by the varied
elements to be found in the world was catching up. But students were to a considerable extent, still concerned with the catechismic memorization of unrelated facts.

Beginning with books on imaginary journeys and stories of other countries, there was emphasis on the study of the Indian subcontinent followed by England and other countries of the world. This was a direct influence of England in Indian educational history, and human aspects of geography such as ways of living and occupations of man began to be properly related to the environmental factors which influenced them. So geography took on more meaning. The over-emphasis on physical geography began to be dropped, there was more human geography, and the overall picture became more encouraging. Physical geography, however, continued to be taught in the high schools but there was a marked decline in its importance. As in England, the study of the world on a regional basis began to be popular from the standpoint of approach in teaching during this period. A knowledge of physical geography was required and this formed the basis of the regional study. Thus, in theory, the study of geography began to be diversified and to break away from the old memorization of physical facts.

Then came a period between the two world wars where a great variety of textbooks stressing different aspects of geography courses came into the country stressing world affairs, economy and world trade, particularly the books dealing with commercial and economic geography courses.
During the same period, a variety of methods were being used. These corresponded mostly to the educational achievements of the teacher, but mostly to the available texts of which there were several.

Another factor that contributed much to the improvement of geography teaching in Indian schools was the introduction of short training courses for teachers of secondary schools in the metropolitan areas. These were condensed courses in methodology and content entitled 'Teachers' Training Certificate' course at several universities. The writer was a trainee in one of these courses run by the University of Calcutta for a limited period. Subsequently, these courses were merged into the Bachelor of Teaching or Bachelor of Education courses of several Indian universities where a special provision for a methods and content course in geography was available and made part of the syllabuses.

Finally, came the undergraduate, two year's courses for the Bachelor of Arts and Science on two levels, namely the 'Pass Course' and the 'Honours' courses and these being extended into another two year's course for the Master of Arts and Science degree in geography. In this way, the university has played a significant role in the improvement of geography teaching in the Indian schools. The role of the university geographer on the university level in propagating independent geography in the secondary school curriculum of the Indian schools has been an important one during this period.

Thus, geography occupied an important position in the Indian school system. A student prosecuting his studies in a regular school has geography several hours each week for eleven successive years, that is, for all years in
primary and secondary education, though the first three or four years are sometimes associated with stories of adventure and travel. The everyday experiences and interests of young children, both out-of-doors and in the classroom, offer many opportunities for this kind of geography teaching in the lower grades, and the approach to the teaching of geography and history is not one of amalgamation but rather of individual courses in each discipline taught by teachers who have sufficient background in the subject.

Free universal education at least at the elementary level had been recommended by the end of the Third Five Year Plan ending 1965-66, but this goal has not yet been fully achieved. Students enter the elementary school at age five and typically finish the high school at seventeen plus.

Description of the course of study in Indian schools is relatively easy because most regular schools in each state have uniform curricula, textbooks are recommended by the Boards and/or Departments of Education of each state with prescribed methods of instruction. Each state decides and promulgates the curriculum though the language media may differ; the sequence of teaching and the time spent on each subject are laid down in some detail in instructions from the Departments of Education in each state. The same geography textbooks typically are used for a number of years though with minor revisions in a new printing each couple of years or so.

In short, geography in the Indian schools represents a closely coordinated, substantial, and specialized programme. The students are exposed to important concepts in physical and regional geography, to a considerable range of
of geographic techniques, and to a large body of geographic knowledge. In recent years, the best and the most advanced work appears to be that on the Indian Subcontinent itself.

As in the United States, the object of geography teaching in Indian schools is to give the students a knowledge of the inter-relationship between man and his environment in specific regions, and also to train them to apply such knowledge in solving the problems of life. By studying the regions of the world, students are encouraged to realize how the peoples of the world live and work, and how their life and work are related to their environment.

However, in considering some aspects of the teaching of geography in the Indian school system, primary consideration must be given to the question of syllabuses, since they determine what is taught, and in large measure, how it is taught. The traditional high school syllabus is based on world regional geography, which attempts to cover the geography of the larger part of the world, the fundamental approach being that of regional division.

To complete their world regional coverage, most teachers are expected to describe as accurately as possible the life of the people in the region studied. They are to lay aside the logical order, that is, position, relief, climate, natural vegetation, etc., and to draw on the physical basis for just those relevant facts required to explain what they have described. They are to put people before places, description before causation, economic conditions before political conditions. Physical geography is to be studied to throw light on the relation between man and his environment. The different
regions are to be taught in different ways in order to bring out the essential characteristics of each. Principles gained from the study of the home region are to be applied to other regions throughout the world. In field work or outdoor activities, the students are to observe the physical features, climate, lines of communications, configurations, sites, water supply, drainage, soils and rocks, local industries, docks and warehouses, vegetation, etc. An attempt is to be made to teach definitely the idea of a region and, wherever appropriate, comparisons between different countries and regions are to be made or given in detail. It is expected that the students may learn to establish certain world generalizations after the major regions of the world have been studied.

Teachers of high school geography in Indian schools are also expected to take account of the psychological considerations and intellectual development of the students. True, the syllabus is arranged in order of complexity but in the main, the only concession made to intellectual maturity is to increase the amount in detail. Also, from age fifteen plus, the adolescents normally use their reason more and more in order to understand the world and their own place in it. Their dominant interests are usually social life, its different manifestations and, to some extent, its spiritual values. They tend to find everything around them old-fashioned and in need of reform and are often perplexed by the contradiction they find among adults between ideals and reality, or between the principles they have been taught to affirm and adult behaviour.

In discussion, young people at this stage find it difficult to admit the
exception to the rule. Their opinions tend to be rigid and they cannot easily perceive the complexities or finer points of an argument. The gregarious period ends around this time, but the social sense develops and social relations become more personal. For the most part, group work is not very useful.

This is sometimes called the age of generalization. Knowledge is classified and either pigeon-holed, or synthesized into a workable instrument according to its usefulness in everyday life. It is also the age of when ideals relating to behaviour, attitude and character, are formed on the basis of conclusions drawn from previous reading and observation.

In spite of all this background, most teachers of India follow one of the conventional arrangements of the continents, culminating in the prescribed examination regions, interweaving local geography, mapwork, and physical geography into the regional course in varying degrees, usually not by shortening the regional content, but by shortening the time allocated to each topic.

This is due in a great extent to the over-full examination syllabus devised by the various Examining Boards and it is these Examination syllabuses which dictate more than anything else what is to be taught in Indian schools. Most Boards demand knowledge of the larger part of the world, and thus to be fair to the students, teachers have to cover these areas. Syllabuses which are intended to be a framework are so overloaded that teachers are forced to cover them by stereotyped teaching methods which are economical in time. So, teachers cover large areas in a short
time by pumping in the facts in the oft-repeated pattern of the Regional Catechism... relief, drainage, climate, vegetation, minerals, agriculture, etc., etc., Hence, in most cases, regional geography becomes a dull uninteresting routine. Obviously, regional geography can be vital and interesting but the more interesting approaches are also the most time consuming. Thus, teachers often fall back on the stereotyped approach, which is economical of time and which enables them to complete the syllabus.

One turns a blind eye on the boredom thus created and the result is loss of student interest at the cost of covering the syllabus. Moreover, most teachers do not have the time to develop work which interests their students. So, in following the examination syllabuses, they are engaged in the actual assembly of facts on the whole world rather than sorting and analysis of new facts involving mental processes other than sheer memory. Cramming too much regional geography into the syllabuses leads to much bad geography teaching and it leads to the exclusion of much that is interesting and valuable.

No doubt there is much dead formalism in many a classroom. No doubt many facts and principles that are expounded there fail to get into the real thinking of the students. That would be true of any subject, taught in any country. But what is striking in geography teaching in the Indian high schools is that it is difficult to make use of modern methods or to select the best materials for teaching because of the rigid requirements of an external examination. When a set syllabus has to be covered in a limited
time, lectures and repetition in class are often thought to be the only means of making certain that the students have followed the lesson and have memorized the necessary facts. There is little opportunity for the teachers to interpret or explain texts and related materials, to help with study projects, or to arrange much practical work. Knowledge is absorbed rather than digested, and tends to be discarded once the examination is over. The plan of teaching geography in Indian high schools gives very little time and thought to building up in the student's mind a considerable body of information, and to the development of skill in observation, interpretation, description, and graphic representation. The subject is not made to deal with realities in a very human way, by the emphasis on out-of-door studies, by the immediate association of map symbols with the things they represent, and by the correlation of geographic materials with allied subject matter from other fields of knowledge. Nevertheless, Indian geography teachers and administrators of schools in general have faith in the contribution the subject of geography has to offer to the goals of general education, and are willing to use their energy in improving its teaching in spite of the limitations of external examinations.