

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

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1. *Meaning, scope, themes and approaches of Geography.*
2. *The location, shape, and size of Ethiopia and the Horn.*
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1.1. Geography: Definition, Scope and Themes

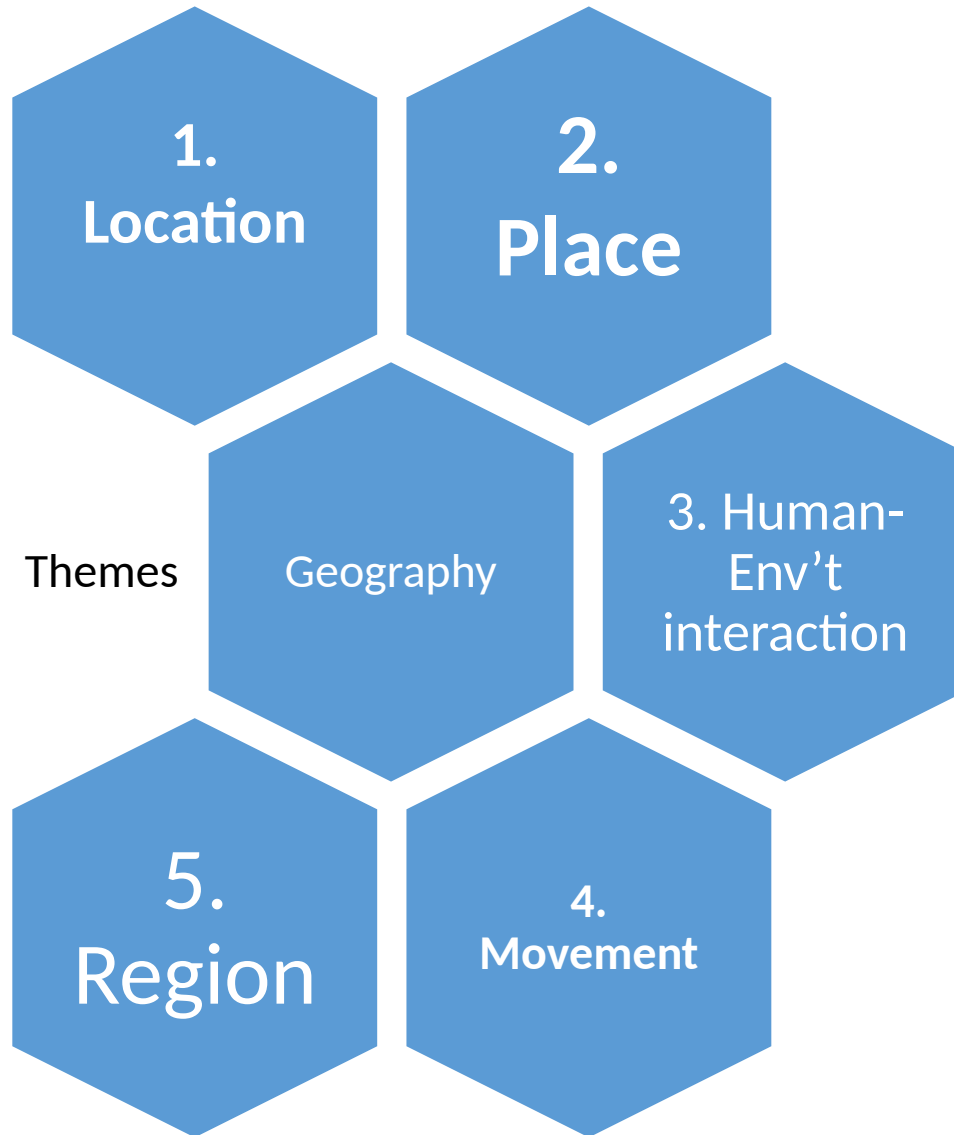
Meaning of Geography

- ❑ It is difficult to forward a definition acceptable to all geographers
- ❑ because of the **dynamic nature** of the discipline and the changes in its scope and method of study
- ❑ Geography is the **scientific** study of the Earth that describes and analyses **spatial and temporal variations** of physical, biological and human **phenomena**, and their interrelationships and dynamism over the surface of the Earth.

The Scope and Approaches

- Geography is a **holistic and interdisciplinary field of study**.
 - Thus, the **scope of Geography is the surface of the Earth**, which is the very thin zone that is the interface of:
 - ✓ Atmosphere,
 - ✓ Lithosphere,
 - ✓ Hydrosphere and
 - ✓ Biosphere, which provides the habitable zone in which humans are able to live.
- Geography can be approached by considering two continuums:
- 1. Human-physical continuum:** The topical (systematic) fields of Geography view particular categories of physical or human phenomena as **distributed over the Earth**
 - 2. Topical-regional continuum:** regional geography is concerned with the associations **within regions** of all or some of the elements and their interrelationships.

Themes of Geography



1. Location

- *Location is defined as a particular **place or position**.*
- *Location can be of two types: absolute location and relative location.*

2. Place

- *Place refers to the **physical and human aspects** of a location.*
- *Each place in the world has its unique characteristics expressed in terms of landforms, hydrology, biogeography, pedology, characteristics and size of its human population, and the distinct human cultures.*
- *The concept of “place” aids geographers to compare and contrast two places on Earth.*

3. Human-Environment Interaction

- Humans have always been on ceaseless interaction with their natural environment.
- No other species that has lived on our planet has a profound effect on the environment as humans.
- Humans have adapted to the environment in ways that have allowed them to ***dominate all other species on Earth.***
- Thus, human-environment interaction involves three distinct aspects:
 1. ***Dependency:*** refers to the ways in which humans are dependent on nature for a living.
 2. ***Adaptation:*** relates to how humans modify themselves, their lifestyles and their behavior to live in a new environment with new challenges.
 3. ***Modification:*** allowed humans to “conquer” the world for their comfortable living.

4. Movement

- Movement entails to the translocation of human beings, their goods, and their ideas from one end of the planet to another.

Aspects Or dimensions

1. Physical movement: allowed the human race to inhabit all the continents and islands of the world.
2. Transport of goods from one place on the Earth to another.
3. Flow of ideas that allows the unification of the human civilization and promotes its growth and prosperity.

5. Region

- A region is a *geographic area* having distinctive characteristics that distinguishes itself from adjacent unit(s) of space.
- It could be a *formal region* that is characterized by homogeneity in terms of a certain phenomenon (soil, temperature, rainfall, or other cultural elements like language, religion, and economy).
- It can also be a *functional or nodal region* characterized by functional interrelationships in a spatial system defined by the linkages binding particular phenomena.

1.2. Location, Shape and Size of Ethiopia and the Horn

- The Horn of Africa, a *region of eastern Africa*, is a narrow tip that protrudes into the northern Indian Ocean, separating it from the Gulf of Aden.
- It is the *easternmost extension of African land* defined as the region that is home to the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, whose cultures have been linked throughout their long history.
- Although the countries of the region *share many common features*, there is also *great diversity* among them, rendering each country unique in many respects.
- In terms of size, Ethiopia is the largest of all the Horn of African countries, while Djibouti is the smallest.

1.2.1. Location of Ethiopia

- The location of a country or a place on a map or a globe is expressed in two different ways. These are astronomical and relative locations

A. Astronomical location: also known as absolute or mathematical location, states location of places using the lines of latitudes and longitudes.

- Astronomically, Ethiopia is a landlocked country located between 3°N (Moyale) and 15°N (Bademe) latitudes and 33°E (Akobo) to 48°E (the tip of Ogaden in the east) longitudes.
- The east west distance (15°) is longer than the north-south distance (12°).
- The latitudinal and longitudinal extensions are important in two ways.
- First, as a result of its latitudinal extension the country experiences tropical climate
- Secondly due to its longitudinal extension there is a difference of one hour between the most easterly and most westerly points of the country.

B. Relative location: expresses the location of countries or places with reference to the location of other countries (vicinal), landmasses or water bodies.

Table 1.1: The relative location of Ethiopia

Vicinal location	In relation to water bodies & land masses
☞ Sudan to the west and northwest ☞ South Sudan to southwest ☞ Djibouti to the east ☞ Somalia to the east and southeast ☞ Eritrea to the north and northeast	☞ In the Horn of Africa ☞ Southwest of the Arabian Peninsula ☞ South of Europe ☞ Northwest of the Indian Ocean ☞ In the Nile Basin

The implications of the location of Ethiopia

a) Climate: The fact that Ethiopia is located between 3°N and 15°N (between the Equator and Tropic of Cancer) implies that the country has a **tropical climate**, though **modified by its altitude**.

The location of Ethiopia relative to the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean and the African and Asian landmass has also various bearings on the climate of Ethiopia.

b) Socio-cultural: Ethiopia is one of the earliest recipients of the major world religions namely Christianity, Islam and Judaism due to its proximity to the Middle East, which was the origin of these religions.

- The linguistic and other cultural relationships, which Ethiopia shares with its neighbours, reflect the influence of location.

c) Political: The political history of Ethiopia has been considerably influenced by:

- ❖ Geopolitical considerations of superpowers.
- ❖ Adjacency to the Red Sea (a major global trade route).
- ❖ The Middle East geopolitical paradigms.

As a result, Ethiopia has been exposed for external invasions in a number of times; though the country resisted foreign intervention and remains free of external domination.

1.2.2. Size of Ethiopia

- Ethiopia with a total area of approximately 1,106,000Kms is the 8th largest country in Africa and 25th in the World.
- It extends about 1,639 km East-West, and 1,577 Km N-S.
- About 0.7% of the country is covered by water bodies.

Table 1.2. Advantages and disadvantages of Ethiopia's large size

Advantages	Disadvantages
Possess diverse agro ecological zones	Demands greater capital to construct infrastructural facilities
Variety of natural resources	Requires large army to protect its territory
Own extensive arable land	Difficult for effective administration
Have larger population size	Difficult for socio-economic integration
Home for diverse cultures	
Greater depth in defense external invasion	

1.3 Basic Skills of Map Reading

What is a Map?

- A map is a *two-dimensional scaled representation* of part or whole of the Earth surface on a flat body such as piece of paper, black board, wood or cloth.
- Map reading encompasses a systematic identification of natural features and manmade features.
- Although many disciplines use maps, they have a *special significance for Geographers* as primary tools for displaying and analyzing spatial distributions, patterns and relations.

Importance of maps

- ❑ Provide the basis for making geographical details of regions represented
- ❑ Maps are powerful tools for making spatial analysis of geographical facts of areas represented.
- ❑ Maps are useful for giving location of geographical features by varied methods of grid reference, place naming etc.
- ❑ Storage of the geographical data of areas represented.
- ❑ Maps are potentially used to assess reliable measurements of the geographical features. The measurements can be of area size, distance etc.

Types of Map

- There are many types of maps according to their purpose and functions. For the purpose of this course, topographical and statistical maps are considered.
- a. Topographical maps:* Topographic maps depict one or more natural and cultural features of an area.
- They could be small, medium or large scale depending on the size of the area represented.
- Contents of topographical maps depend on purpose of a map, scale of a map, date of compilation, and nature of the land represented.
- b. Special purpose/statistical maps:* These are maps, which show distribution of different aspects such as temperature, rainfall, settlement, vegetation etc.

Marginal Information on Maps (Elements of Maps)

- Marginal information is shown on a map to enable the reading and interpretation of the geographical information of an area represented. This includes:

a. Title: It is the heading of the given map which tells what the map is all about.

b. Key (legend): It is the list of all conventional symbols and signs shown on the map with their interpretation.

c. Scale: It is the ratio between the distance on the map and the actual ground distance.

- It can be expressed as representative fraction, statements/verbal scale, and linear (graphic) scale.

d. North arrow: It is indicated with the north direction on a map; used to know the other important directions of the mapped area like east, west, south, and west.

e. Margin: Is the frame of the map. It is important for showing the end of the mapped area.

f. Date of compilation: It is a date of map publication. This enables map users to realize whether the map is updated or outdated.

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