Geography of Ethiopia and the Horn (GeEs 1011) CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Geography: Definition, Scope and Themes

At the end of this chapter, the learners will be able to:

- Comprehend the meaning and scope of Geography.
- Explain the themes of Geography.
- Explicate the implications of location, shape and size of Ethiopia and
- the Horn on the physical environment, socioeconomic and political aspects.
- Acquire basic skills of map reading.

Meaning of Geography

- 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, Approaches and Themes of Geography

- Geography has now acquired the status of science that explains the arrangements of various natural and cultural features on the Earth surface.
- Thus, the scope of Geography is the surface of the Earth, which is the very thin zone that is the interface of the 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: a human-physical continuum and a topical regional continuum.
- The topical (systematic) fields of Geography view particular categories of physical or human phenomena as distributed

Themes of Geography

- Geography has five basic themes namely location, place, human-environment interaction, movement, and region.

Location

- Location is defined as a particular place or position. Location can be of two types: absolute location and relative location.
- In the former case, the location of a place is defined by its latitude and longitude or its exact address.

Place

- Place refers to the physical and human aspects of a location.
- This theme of geography is associated with toponym, site and situation

Human-Environment Interaction

- Humans have always been on ceaseless interaction with their natural environment.
- Thus, human-environment interaction involves three distinct aspects dependency, adaptation, and modification.

Movement

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

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

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 .
- **Astronomical location,** also known as **absolute or mathematical** location, states location of places using the lines of latitudes and longitudes.
- Astronomically, Ethiopia is a land locked country located between
- **3˚N** (Moyale) and **15˚ N** (Bademe - the northern most tip of Tigray) latitudes and
- **33˚ E** (Akobo) to **48˚ E** (the tip of Ogaden in the east) longitudes.
- The latitudinal and longitudinal extensions are important in two ways.
- First, as a result of its **latitudinal extension** the country experiences tropical climate and
- secondly due to its **longitudinal extension** there is a difference of one hour between the most easterly and most

The implications of the location of Ethiopia are described as follows:

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.

Size of Ethiopia

• Ethiopia with a total area of approximately **1,106,000 square** km 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	

The shape of Ethiopia and its Implication

- Countries of the World have different kinds of shape that can be divided into five main categories: compact, fragmented, elongated, perforated, and protruded.
- These shapes have implications on defense, administration and economic integration within a country.

Compact shape countries: The distance from the geographic centre of the state to any of the borders does not vary greatly. It is easier for defence, socioeconomic and cultural integration.

Fragmented shape countries: They are divided from their other parts by either water, land or other countries.

Elongated shape countries: They are geographically long and relatively narrow like Chile.

Perforated shape countries: A country that completely surrounds another country like the Republic of South Africa.

Protrude shape countries: Countries that have one portion that is much more elongated than the rest of the country like Myanmar and Eritrea.

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 the geographical facts of an area such as relief, drainage, settlement etc.
- 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.
- Maps are used on various disciplines like **land use planning, military science, aviation, tourism, marine science, p**opulation studies, epidemiology, geology, economics, history, archaeology, agriculture etc.
- Map makes **storage of the geographical data** of areas represented.
- Maps are potentially used **to asses' 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 convectional 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. Scales enable the map user to interpret the ground measurement

d. **North arrow:** It is indicated with the north direction on a map.

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

Basic Principles of Map Reading

- **Map Readers** must have ideas about the symbol and also the real World (landscapes).
- Every map symbol must be visualized by the reader to read a map.
- The first **symbols introduced** should be those, which refer to landscape features of which the reader already has some images.
- Secondly, **knowledge** of directions is an important principle in reading maps.
- Once you have located where you are, the grid system makes it simple to give an accurate description of your location.
- This description, which will be a series of numbers, is known as a grid reference.
- At grid references the numbers going across left to right, are called easting (heading eastward), and
- The numbers going up the face of the map from bottom to top are called northings (heading in a northward direction).
- There are two ma[illegible]pes of grid reference: **4 Figure**