

Geographical Thoughts in India

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Geographical Thoughts in India

Snapshots and Visions

for the 21st Century

By

Rana P. B. Singh

Banaras Hindu University, India

Foreword

Martin J. Haigh

(Oxford Brooke University, U.K.)

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P U B L I S H I N G

Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Visions for the 21st Century,
by Rana P. B. Singh

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VIEWS ON THE BOOK

“For many years, it seemed that the Cultural Turn in Geography led into just a single culture, a Western hegemony of ideas, discourses and sentiments. Professor Rana P.B. Singh provides some balance and an alternative—the authentic voice of Indian tradition and philosophy. He brings to Geography, all Geography not just its Cultural wing, perspectives from ancient yet living traditions, which truly have heard most of those ‘exciting new ideas from the West’ long like Gaia and sustainable development itself, long before.”

—Prof. Martin J. Haigh (from the Foreword),
Oxford Brooke University, Oxford, U.K.

“The roots of Indian geographical thought span a wide canvas from *Upanishads* and *Rig Veda* to twentieth century imports from Western schools. While addressing a wide international readership, this book has an urgent message for Indian colleagues who, in the author's view, have neglected their own cultural heritage and especially its deep-seated moral imperative of respect for nature and sustainable living. Rana P.B. Singh is widely known for his work on Hindu geographical thought, and has endeavoured throughout his career to remain abreast of global developments in the discipline. *Geographical Thoughts in India* opens a window on challenges facing the discipline in this fascinating and rapidly changing land.”

—Prof. Anne Buttimer, President: IGU, 2000-04, &
Professor of Geography, University College Dublin IE

“In his new book – *Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Vision for the 21st Century* – Prof. Rana P.B. Singh illustrates not only how a blend of metaphors and geometric symbolism help us find the way in the unknown, but also how these sophisticated reasoning tools are deeply embedded in the historical realities of the socially and culturally taken-for-granted. Although his focus is steadily on the metaphysics and sacred ecology of India, his findings and insights are in reality more general than they might at first appear. To put it differently, we here have a demonstration not of our differences but of our similarities, a cross-cultural analysis of the intricate inter-weavings of mind and matter that make us *homo sapiens*, a species of knowing beings.”

—Prof. Gunnar Olsson, Emeritus Professor,
Uppsala University, Sweden

“It is always a pleasure when Professor Rana P.B. Singh brings out a book, journal issue, or perspective on the field of Geography, broadly defined. His perspective in the early chapters of *Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Vision for*

the 21st Century is expansive, from site and story to myth and cosmos. He relates these cultural sources to the contemporary landscapes of India. Other chapters offer generous reviews of recent literature in the fields of cultural and historical geography. Still others creatively examine longstanding phenomena in fresh ways, such as his exploration of heritagescapes. Above all, one knows that his perspective will advance what might be called the geography of conscience that has deep roots in India and “co-pilgrimly” analogues he has helped create around the world.”

—Prof. James L. Wescoat Jr., Aga Khan Professor,
Urban History & Planning, M.I.T. Cambridge, U.S.A.

“Professor Rana Singh has produced an excellent book on geographical thoughts in India. The book sets a standard for future work in terms of the breadth and depths of its research. No other book provides such comprehensive coverage. It is an important book not only for what it contributes to the vocabulary of Indian geographic thought, but even more strikingly, for how it pushes forward understanding of powerful and provocative basis for theorizing geographic thoughts in India.”

—Prof. P. P. Karan, Professor Emeritus,
University of Kentucky, Lexington KY, U.S.A.

“This is a timely and pertinent book on the geographical undergirding of India’s ascendancy as a major global economic player in the 21st century. The questions that Rana P.B. Singh attempts to answer reveal a strong sense of pragmatism, realism and responsibility about India’s sustainable pathways. Given India’s complex history and culture, *Geographical Thoughts in India* serves as the cultural compass, ecological ideology and functional Vāstu Śāstra for understanding India’s Human-Nature relationships. This is a master narrative of the enduring Indian dialogue with Gods, Nature and human communities told by a geographical storyteller *par excellence*.”

—Prof. Victor R. Savage, National University of Singapore, Singapore

“The book is a unique contribution to the Indian geographic thoughts primarily focused on cultural, religious and social aspects of the country. Its richness lies in its all-inclusive coverage of Hindu mythology, Indian philosophy, the country’s belief system and tradition; reviewing the contributions made by different scholars from all over the world. It will remain a significant addition to the knowledge of Indian cultural geography during the rest of this century and beyond. Every library of the world that is interested in Indian studies particularly relating to its society, culture and heritage ought to have a copy of this book.”

—Prof. Ashok K. Dutt, Professor Emeritus, Geography and Planning & Urban
Studies, The University of Akron, Akron, USA

“It is often said that the world is now approaching to the cross-road — a bright or a dark future in our history! The concerned scholars of the world are struggling in search of a bright future society. Under such circumstances, Indian thoughts are always attracting world scholars to find a new horizon for re-constructing our future society as a sparkling star. The book *Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Vision for the 21st century* by Prof. Rana P.B. Singh, would certainly give to scholars and readers some clear ways to understand, guidance to meet others, and a new vision for making future world more pleasant, and ultimately proving the use of geography in creating a happy and harmonious global society.

—Prof. Shuichi Nakayama, Emeritus Professor of Geography and Director:
International Centre of Development, Hiroshima University, Japan

“This book on newly emerging geographical thoughts in India is a truly pioneering work from the insider’s perspective. Blending the rich diversity of sacred ecologies and cultural images with postmodern discourses, the author, eminent geographer and scholar, has brilliantly managed to read the Indian landscape, its holy rivers, its villages and its sacred cities, both as text and context. This authentic voice of Indian cultural geography and philosophy will inspire fellow scholars from the West to review the tensions, contradictions and struggles that shape today’s India as expressions of a distinctive geographical milieu where ancient, yet living traditions meet, in a unique way, with the dynamism of modernity.”

—Prof. Hans-Georg Bohle, Director: Geographical Institute,
University of Bonn, Germany

“This is a fascinating contribution in many ways. I am sure it will help a lot to reduce the ignorance that many of us still have on the cultural geography and the history of geographical thought outside the “Western” world. In this respect, this book also links directly with two of the main objectives pursued by the IGU Commission on the History of Geography in the last decade: To tackle the thematic and methodological challenges involved in the development of a world history of geography that might overcome the traditional, Western-orientated and insider’s approaches to the discipline’s historiography; and, To explore, in the light of its history, the capacity and the usefulness of geographical thought as a fruitful instrument of reflection about the great problems and challenges of contemporary world and, by the same token, as a fertile source for the development of critical conscience.”

—Prof. Jacobo García-Álvarez, Chairman - IGU Commission on the History of
Geography, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain

“Prof. Rana Singh makes an impassioned plea for the need to transform geography as a discipline in the present context. His book provides a rich tapestry of a journey through the cultural milieu of Indian geography, challenging the binaries of ideology and ‘isms’. Thus, ‘cultural turn’ with an Indian perspective provides a much-needed corrective to the imperialist, culturally insensitive geography imported from the core to the periphery. His book provides a thoroughly embedded deep sense of hope and optimism. This is attempted here through a trilogy of milieu, metaphor and meaning thereby reinforcing the immediacy of relational identity of the ‘*laukik*’ (locality), the ‘*vaishvika*’ (universality) and the ‘*brahmandiya*’ (cosmality). “

—Dr. M. Satish Kumar, Director, India Initiative,
School of Geography, Queen's University of Belfast, U.K.

“In the age of reflection on the short-sighted materialistic values prevalent in the world, people might look to traditional values, thoughts and cultures in search of those relevant in the coming decades. Professor Rana P.B. Singh’s timely initiative of publishing *Geographical Thoughts in India: Snapshots and Vision for the 21st Century* will be rewarded by the applause of many readers in and outside India. It will certainly offer invaluable inspiration and insight to the IGU Kyoto Regional Conference of August 2013, which is to be held under the banner of ‘*Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge for the Earth’s Future*.’”

—Prof. Yukio Himiyama, Institute of Geography,
Hokkaido University of Education, Japan

“It is always interesting to see Indian geography examined and analysed and this book offers much thought provoking material for those who seek a fuller and more informed portrait of the topic.”

—Prof. Alastair Bonnett, Editor: *Area*,
Newcastle University, NC upon Tyne, U.K.

“Illustrated by some 75 tables and figures, this book’s 430 pages make us wander at the richness of this sub-continent’s cultural geography. The material landscape reflected by the people thoughts, makes a fascinating combination of past, present and future, of space and spirit, material and divine.”

—Prof. Ran Aaronsohn, Professor of Human Geography,
Hebrew University, Mount Scopus, Jerusalem, Israel

“From the deep roots of his Indian heritage Rana surveys his remarkable vision for a new Sacred Ecology in this book. With the help of this vision, we can change our ways of thinking and acting to save our planet and secure the welfare of all living beings. It is a true cornucopia for everyone concerned with how to live our lives and how to preserve the planet.”

—Prof. Åke Sander, Professor of History of Ideas and Religion,
University of Gothenburg, Sweden

Dedicated to

David E. Sopher

(1923 - 1984)

the master, whose message and appeal for searching
‘deeper’ roots of Indian Geography has been the main
source behind this and its predecessor book on
geographical thought in India...

and

Fr. Thomas Berry

(9 November 1914 - 2 June 2009)

the person *par excellence* as cosmologist and
geologist, who paved the path of *verbatim et*
litteratim – hope that in coming future people will
realise towards the destination *ad valorem* ...

— I don’t know to what extent I have understood the
Indian root with the help of their lenses, but as token
of tribute to their most appealing critique and
challenges cross-culturally, I dedicate this work to
them.....

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FOREWORD

In Geography, as in life, there is always a clear choice. In the words of Bhaktivinoda, a Vaishnava Acharya, *"The human spirit is a creature pulled between two world views, an amoral, self-serving, material world and the ethical, service-oriented world of the conscient spirit"* (Bhaktivinoda 1895: 233). In many ways, this book is about that choice. Approaching the second decade of this new Millennium, our world faces new concerns, environmental, and economic, which share one common property – they are global, they affect everybody. For many years, progressive people have talked about One Earth, perhaps echoing Rabindranath Tagore's thoughts about planetary citizenship, but the main stream of life has rejoiced in the self-serving, amoral and material and in the process carried the world into a condition where the future seems perilous. Today, everyone knows that things must change and Geographical thought finds itself struggling to create within its own corpus something that emulates and advances the new spirit of our times. In the outside world, the old certainties of expansion, consumption and the heroism of personal wealth creation are looking as seriously out dated as the values and priorities of the Victorian age of machines, Nations and Empires. Emergent is a new litany of sustainability, restraint and personal responsibility - expressed not in terms of the narrow sectarian interests of a clan or Nation but on the part of the whole planet. Globalisation, powered as it is by commerce, communication, travel, tourism and the media - especially the internet, has done the world one great favour. It has finally brought home the reality that we share one planet, which is bounded in space, resource and its capacity to resist damaging environmental change. In the process, an unpleasant realisation has surfaced, which is that, while we may think of ourselves as civilised, in truth, we are the new barbarians, the new Vandals, and share with that tribe the doubtful honour of being the first generation for many Centuries to have made our planet a worse place to live for our children. Certainly, the old belief in 'progress', 'economic development', perhaps even in the superiority of the capitalistic Western Way, is ailing, if not quite as dead. However, like those other materialist dreams of the Soviet Union, its proper place is in history. For the future, we need a new Geography – a new Geography for an anxious new world. Its time to try a new direction and for life as for Geography, the way ahead

may lead toward that second path, “*the ethical, service-oriented world of the conscient spirit*” (Bhaktivinoda 1895: 233). This book is part of the search for that new Geography and, perhaps in the process, a new Indian Geography.

As for today’s Geography, in recent decades, its human fraction, more wedded to spin than revolution, has twisted its way around Quantitative positivist, radical Marxist, and elitist but romantic Postmodern Cultural ideas, before finally, currently, hopefully, making its Affective turn from the material towards the personal and spiritual in the 1990s. Meanwhile, Physical Geography, after a brief flirtation with application and relevance, problem solving work, has drifted back into the deep mire of the modelling and palaeo-history that many still call ‘blue sky’ research. Geography, as a discipline, has been ailing for many decades. There is a need for a new Geography that pulls its wayward subdisciplinary parts together and tries to find out what it can do, not for any benefit of its own, but for society at large. Professor Singh writes: “Good to have a sweet dream that ‘Geography matters’, but it’s neither a destiny, nor societal acceptance. Society has right to ask geographers about their responsibility, credibility and accountability for the tasks they carried within a society or culture (!). It is not the issue of ideology, but a dreadful and shameful reality that we are not close to the society the level which is expected” (Singh 2009: 1). Geography can integrate, it can inspire, it can affect and it can provide a service to Society and it can do this best by building on its traditional span, which crosses the social – environmental divide, its global vision, and its long traditions in communication and education. The discipline could train disparate geomorphologists, information system technicians, generic liberal arts folk and cultural studies people or it could train people who are ecoliterate and empowered citizens of the world, people who are skilled enough in the ethical and practical domains to effect the changes in society needed to create a sustainable future. In sum, Geography could make something better of itself and, in some way, this book surveys that path.

Professor Singh writes: “The old ethics that ‘Only Truth Triumphs’ (*Satyameva jayate*) has been superseded by ‘Only Money triumphs’ (*Arthameva jayate*)”. This reality seems painfully true for much of Higher Education. Consider, it has been many years since it was thought at all unusual for an academic to win their Chair for the reason that they had won a large bag of money rather than for their research or public service. It is still longer since someone won their Chair on the basis that they were a good teacher. However, it is in education that the new Geography may have its greatest role – if fostering better planetary citizenship is the spirit

of our age then Geography is uniquely placed to promote the global awareness that is needed. Meanwhile, I am hopeful that this book also helps signal the rise of a larger new ethic in Higher Education, as in Geography, which is the ethic of service (*seva*). Service, in these terms, is work done not through any expectation of future gain but for the welfare of all living beings, work done simply because this work must be done (*Bhagavad Gita* 5.25, in Prabhupada 1972: 267)). After some years, scanning the horizon for some sign of a change in social attitudes within Geography and Higher Education, I wonder if I have found it in the work of our International Government in waiting, the United Nations, and their campaigns for “World Citizenship” and “Education for Sustainable Development” (Haigh 2008).

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD 2005-2014) is dedicated to the task of helping human society live as though the future mattered and to saving us from the scorn and contempt that future generations may pour upon our memory from the ruins of their damaged world. Higher education and a kind of spiritual appreciation of the importance of the environment are thought to be the key to achieving the change in attitudes that will succeed in making our society less self-destructive. Towards this, the UNDESD insists that every graduate from every college and in every discipline should be ‘ecoliterate’ and aware of their own responsibilities to the environment. However, as recent history shows, it is not enough to know, it is necessary to believe and commit (Lovelock 2009). This implies an approach that is as deep or even deeper than the eco-spirituality of Deep Ecology and perhaps as deep as the Sacred Ecology proposed by this book. Professor Singh writes: “In Hindu tradition the basic thought is the awareness of unity and mutual interrelation of all things and events. The *Gita* (10.20) mentions: “The world is a living whole, a vast interconnectedness, a cosmic harmony inspired and sustained by the One Supreme”.

Building a sustainable future, however, is not a task for those afraid to take action and become involved (László 2002). My invitation to write this foreword invoked the name of several great sages, including Lord Dattatreya, Sri Aurobindo and Svami Vivekananda, all sages linked to the Vedanta spirit of detachment from the material world and all sages who are linked with devoted work, service, for the benefit of the world. Sri Dattatreya, as quoted by Lord Krishna in the *Uddhava Gita*, taught us to recognise the spiritual messages within the world of everyday life (Saraswati 2000) and was the one summoned to teach Lord Krishna’s son Pradyuma about the absolute Truth (*Garga Samhita* Canto 7, Garga Muni 2006: 530). About teaching, he wrote something from which I personally

take heart, advising learners to *“Recognise only the essence. Does not a boat, though devoid of vermillion paint, nevertheless ferry passengers?”* (Avadhuta Gita 2.2, in Ashokananda 1981: 41). Sri Aurobindo adds; *“The first principle of teaching is that nothing can be taught.. S/He does not call forth the knowledge that is within .. only shows where it lies and how it can ... rise to the surface”* (Aurobindo 1921: 21). Similarly, Swami Vivekananda writes: *‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in Humans. Therefore, the only duty of the teacher... is to remove all obstructions from the way... That is our duty, to clear the way’* (Vivekananda 1894, vol. 4: 358).

Of course, clearing this way is not easy. Professor Singh proposes and demonstrates a path that unites the “three apexes of the local environment (earth), human environment (habitat) and their resultant culture” and which extends from locality through universality to ‘cosmality’ (*brahmandiya*). This path is constructed upon cultural traditions that, while they reach back over five thousand years, are still resonant in the intellectual and cultural life of India. Here, and even in Indian Geography, the ancient is woven into the modern and the greatest shame is that so much of the ‘modern’ owes so much of its thought to the West, while so much produced locally exhibits the dusty legacies of Empire or some slavish imitation of the West’s failing materialist project. In this book, Professor Singh sifts the gravel of Indian Geography seeking those rare specks of gold and records his findings amongst its snapshots and those of its predecessor (cf. Singh 2009).

The local problem is that Indian Geography could do so much more both to recognise its heritage and bring what is best within Indian tradition out to the World. The Hindu religion had its Swami Vivekananda, its Yogananda, its Srila Prabhupada, and, yes, some less altruistic souls, who brought a previously hidden Indian spirituality into the outside world. Modern India has produced its Mahatma Gandhi, its Vinoba Bhave and their political philosophy of ‘Sarvodaya’, which was the first to dream of sustainability, stability, harmony and spirituality rather than rampant growth and exploitation (Doctor 1967). Today, these ideas provide bedrock for the Western Environmentalist ‘counter culture’, which is now becoming the mainstream. So, the challenge to Indian Geographers is to look to their own culture, gather what is best from what is there already and share it with the world. Get up, get out, communicate and educate! More than a Century ago, in equally strident terms, Swami Vivekananda urged: *“Our duty to others means helping others; doing good in the World”...“each person manufactures a world for themselves.. Life is good*

or evil according to the state of mind [and] it is a privilege to help others” (Vivekananda 1989: 75-76).

If the West has been a leader in material science, India remains its leader in the spiritual sciences. The future will challenge us to make best use of all of our multicultural resources and some of these are sketched out in this volume and in its predecessor. However, for many years, it seemed that the Cultural Turn in Geography led into just a single culture, a Western hegemony of ideas, discourses and sentiments. Professor Rana P.B. Singh provides some balance and an alternative — the authentic voice of Indian tradition and philosophy. He brings to Geography, all Geography not just its Cultural wing, perspectives from ancient yet living traditions, which truly have heard most of those ‘exciting new ideas from the West’ long like Gaia and sustainable development itself, long before. The challenge for Western Geography is to put aside the assumption that theirs is the only culture and also any belief that the mysterious workings of markets and technology will save the world. Probably, they will not. However, the actions of people might. It is oft quoted but former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said it well in his Dhaka speech “*Our biggest challenge... is to take an idea that seems abstract – sustainable development – and turn it into a reality for all the world's people*” (Annan 2001: 2). These days it is recognised that our greatest challenge is to change our human minds, our attitudes and lifestyles, to a condition where our species becomes fit for long term life on Earth (Orr 1994; Lovelock 2009). Probably, there are resources in many cultural traditions that may be essential to helping our global society develop a more reflective, balanced and effective approach to a future and address that greatest challenge, which is to encourage people to take greater personal responsibility. Collectively, we need to understand our place on Earth, to learn to live together, to respect all life, and to create a society based on notions of community and dutiful service. Yes, yes, you may say, quite! Of course, we know all this! We have heard this kind of vapid sermonising too many pious times before! However, the Ark is still sinking and the problem remains of how to create a future that will be both tolerable and sustainable (Myers 1979; Haigh 2009). Our collective task remains to change minds, maybe one mind at a time, towards a sustainable future. Could it be that this book by Professor Singh, Geographer, scholar and pilgrim can signpost part of the way? I confidently hope so!

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PREFACE

WALKING ON THE PATH OF INDIAN GEOGRAPHY

Practicing geography in the era of postmodern and postcolonial discourses involves a trilogy of themes, *milieu* (backgrounds), *metaphor* (symbols), and *meaning* (values) — conceived as framework within which the *contexts*, *carriers* and *contents* have to play the role, respectively. *Milieu* reflects upon the individual's settings and formative years that shaped the basement and the background. *Metaphor* connotes cognitive style what received from the cultural past and as to how we carried and passed on to the followers, and finally *Meaning* refers to professional choice and working ideology in making our identity. That is how milieu is covering context, metaphor is explicit carrier, and meaning is the inherent content. On all the above three grounds, there is scope for dialogue, co-sharing and mutual understanding. Their cohesive and integrated frame together unites the understanding and the personality. This way the deeper messages of Indian geography may be linked to the outline of UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014; cf. Chalkley, Haigh and Higgitt 2009). The message of this work is in corroboration to the focal theme of the IGU Kyoto Regional Conference of August 2013, i.e. '*Traditional Wisdom and Modern Knowledge for the Earth's Future*'.

Generally, the image of geography is derived from the school-level training what one received. It is this background that promoted the image of the subject as 'catalogue book', however the subject has marched a long way and now being part of life considered as a 'way' of understanding in a variety of ways, means and projections, ranging from locality to universality. That is why geography means not the same to all those practice, perceive, project or even profess it. This openness has also helped to put into confusion, but this is not the problem of the subject itself. In fact, this is the issue of context and interpretation.

Geography is at once field science, behavioural ways, nature theology, marketing system in intellectual enterprises, and what not. This is already justified by our leaders and luminaries in the past: "Geography is the way

to handle knowledge and the disciplines". One of the most valuable aspects of geography is that it matters and explains what is going on in today's world and how it is linked to the passage of the past while passing through changes and transformations. Therefore, it is more relevant today to re-think, re-assess and re-evaluate the glories and pitfalls of the past, and their context and application today, and also envisioning the future. In other words, geography may be conceived as a perennial source of flowing thought-process that links the past, analyse the present and project the future. Where does the Indian Geography stand?

Thinking on the path of 'understanding our root in the service of humanity and also making a visionary future', one can get inspiration from the ancient classics and books of metaphysics. Indian students and writers should generate ideas from their own natural soil and cultural heritage. This is a submission and appeal to realise and understand the inherent and eternal interrelationship with the earth and also to contribute in making this world more happier. This will be a new education that needs a different meditation, another mind and another awakening. The concept of *Prithviputra* ('Earth-human') as narrated by a great Hindi laureate V.S. Agrawal (1960: 23), characterised by integrative thought among the diversities. Those who loose the wish to be away from their earthly root will certainly reach to the grip of decay and death. Inspired by the *Atharva Veda* Agrawal (1960: 91) proposed the frame of needful design that has three apexes of the local environment (earth), human environment (habitat) and their resultant culture. This would be a way of linking 'locality' (*laukik*) to 'universality' (*vaishvika*), and finally ending to 'cosmality' (*brahmandiya*). This is an approach from the 'bottom to up'.

What once Herodotus (c. 484-425 BCE) said that 'Circumstances rule men; men do not rule circumstances', needs revision in the 21st century on the line of catastrophic transformations and globalising society. In the postcolonial discourses the need for mutual cohesive interaction and self-realization and awakening to search, re-search and understand the roots are the popularly accepted way of thought process. Let us return to our 'home'— a place that offers security, familiarity and nurture for our strength, identity and existence. The present book is another attempt in this direction. We should help the field of Indian Geography through re-thinking and re-orienting ourselves to know our roots, contents, concerns and the vision. Hope that my fellow friends find it useful in making their fancy frame for deeper understanding in the service of geography.

While there can be no denying the utility of the western paradigm for many purposes, the geographic research to which it has so far led in India has been, for the most part, lacking in originality and of limited interest to

scholars in disciplines other than geography. There is, however, much scope from Indian cultural traditions. What is now needed is to enrich geographic research in India through a skilful blending, in appropriate cultural contexts, of the rigor of the western scholarly paradigms and greater application of culturally-rooted and relevant concepts to which the east and the West both can easily co-share, co-operate and lead to unified march in making geography as a way of understanding, awakening and cohesiveness.

During imperialism the process of absorption has progressively resulted into at least four interpretive consequences: (i) the changed mind setup, resulting to accept and project the superiority and ingenuity of the British that constantly flows from its imperial source to colonised destination, (ii) the establishment of political strategy under which the colonised areas are projected as the destiny to be slaves, (iii) the world is run by a globalised vision of colonialism that takes care of the human well being, and (iv) the mirror of intellectual understanding of the West is the only integrated frame in which the East can see its reflections.

British imperialism has also influenced geographical thought and arena (courses, teaching and products) like the literary world. However, the worst part of it is that even passing sixty-two years that has neither changed, nor realised, and not seriously thought over too. The senior and old grandmasters still pontificate their glorious experience and administrative discipline what they inculcated and inculcated as 'certified expertise' from the West. At the other side the young followers of the grand masters, like opium-edict are busy in their job without feeling for professional ethics and communal harmony. However mere criticism to the imperial strategy and their cultural colonisation would not solve any problem, nor give way to the new awakening.

In case of India the quantitative revolution of the West has certainly done some harm — becoming more dependent, value-laden and identical production, also by producing some half-baked geographers who neither tried to understand geographical problems nor quantification, but proudly flaunted their newly acquired skill, without any valid conclusion or generalisation, but in time they became the leaders and makers. This revolution was product of the era that rarely have now instinct at their origin centres, but their ideological rubrics still predominate the scenario in Indian Geography, of course presently under the umbrella of GIS, GPS and RS, this umbrella has promoted good market for jobs, and easy and short-cut paths for mass production that fits to our mind: 'Don't deserve but desire and get it done anyhow'. In fact, we marched far away from the basic philosophy of any discipline, i.e. to understand social realities and

serve the cause of the society — the ethics behind education. Following paraphrased Shakespeare's saying 'there is nothing like right, or nothing like wrong, these are the conditions evolving according to the need of the society in time and responsibilities of the human intellect'.

In early 20th century the teaching of geography in India was started by British-trained geographers who were responsible for successful superimposing of the colonial attitude, ways and concepts while completely neglecting the role of processes responsible for the resultant pattern that records a history of continuity, maintenance and existence. Most of the major geographical works have marginally considered the question of 'Indianness' and identity of 'India'. This question has been raised by geographers like Sopher (1973), and Mukerji (1992), however their appeal has not received the required due attention by fellow geographers in India (cf. Singh 2009). Somehow there developed a gap in the thought-process, or negligence among the practicing geographers. Impact of Mughal invasions and colonial stressful hegemony by British were some of the obstructive factors in this respect. Those not aware of the richness of the Sanskrit and *Puranic* literature blame that Indian literature has no perspective about spirit of place and creative thought. In fact, the sense of nature-spirit and spirit of place both are thoroughly elucidated in Indian thought. Metaphysical narration of the mother Earth and the motherly river Ganga as identity of unitary principle of Indian culture and civilisation is an example of sublime symbolism and ecopsychological context in search and realisation of ecological identity. However, on the road of transformation we diverted or deviated to other too widened paths that reach to dead end! Thanks that now we are searching the alternative way that may link the roots.

We (so-called senior geographers of the contemporary era) have developed an unique mindset which rarely tolerate critical-rational remarks, or just ignore it on the name of pitifulness, habituated to be happy by listening false glories and praises together making negative stories about others, never doing our own duty ethically or professionally but pontificating others, fond of secret plagiarism, honourably putting the names as senior authors in the researches carried by students and junior colleagues, stupidly manoeuvring the teaching programmes but rarely teaching, feel proud to humiliate other colleagues, avoiding to waste time in library or on the Google search engine, devotedly visit other centres as external examiner that helps to have good monetary return, always ready sincerely to do other subsidiary work replacing teaching and research, without having experiencing of the field studies as armchair authority explaining everything, tactfully successful to superimpose their rotten and

age-old ideas and knowledge that mostly based on gazetteer-approach and duplication, creating terror among juniors by propagating their powers that required for promotion or fresh appointments, always ready to produce and re-produce the members of the same ideology and behaviour and celebrating their expansion by giving treats of non-vegetarian dinner and alcoholic drinks, and... so on! Opening of post-graduate programmes in various colleges based on self-paid system of education is an obnoxious wound on the health of geography. At such places neither faculties, nor facilities, or even most basic requirements like instruments, maps, topo-sheets are not available. Shame to the educational system and our morality that even MPhil and PhD programmes also introduced at these centres, and according to the rate of revenue generated, there developed good networking for the distribution of the money that all the people involved share and enjoy. The teachers not having any experience of post-graduate teaching, or even not having any paper published in research journal, are now serving as supervisor for doctoral theses. The old ethics that 'Only Truth Triumphs' (*satyameva jayate*) has been superseded by 'Only Money triumphs' (*Arthameva jayate*).

Good to have a sweet dream that 'Geography matters', but it's neither a destiny, nor societal acceptance. Society has right to ask geographers about their responsibility, credibility and accountability for the tasks they carried within a society or culture (!). At the cultural turn in 1980s the sensitive issue of how geography matters to society was examined and three distinguished studies of interrelationships were noticed: the interaction between society and social process and spatial organisation, interrelationship between society and environment, and the role of geography in sharing with historical purview of economy, social structure, cultural formation, politics, and so on (cf. Massey 1984: 1). Again the voice was raised in the West, but its echo reached to the Indian environment so distantly and distortedly.

It is not just that geography dealing with changing phenomena of space, nature and society matters, but it should also see the way the society conceptualise, accept as part of behaviour and thus making the distinct lifeways and life-philosophies.

It is not the issue of ideology, but a dreadful and shameful reality that we are not close to the society the level which is expected. We know the question, now let us answer it rationally, ethically and above all responsively taking ground realities in perspective, visions in understanding, and messages that are inherent in thought and traditions that in evolutionary passage we transformed, carried on and certainty would

like to handover to our forthcoming generations — grandchildren, great grandchildren, grandchildren's children's and their grand-grandchildren.

A profusely cited proverb says 'geography without history is a frame without picture'. A political scientist with a deep sense of geography observes that "geography should be kept close to history because much history is introduced best through geography, and much geography is taught best through history" (McDougall 2003: 229). His provoking that "we live and move and have our being" (ibid.: 218) may be taken as one of the essence of geographical practices. It is easy to prescribe needs to intensify its involvement towards a committed professionalism (cf. Singh, Ravi 2008), yet the question remained unanswered about the recognition of Indian geographical thought! There is a hope in the era of New Age.

In such a terrible and pathetic situation, one may note that to restore the glory, respect and recognition of Indian Geography from its low image, a new awakening and Self-realisation (*sva-chetna*) can only help to change the situation. At least in this book some such spotlights are presented in different ways, contexts and substances — altogether be considered as a diagnosis in the contemporary era of self-realisation where paving the path of Education for Sustainable Development is being taken as ethical domain. No way the reflections presented in this book, are to be taken as *bias* or with reference to any group or ethnocentric in a personal way. The emphasis is given on the embeddedness (always-already) but set at margin, mostly by the imperialistic mindset and lack of devotion to the subject. Let variety of flowers bloom in different gardens, but there should also be a soothing fragrance that to be shared by all, crossing the boundaries of nation-state. Let geography flourish where the roots are to be searched through the present while understanding its linkages in the past, but envisioned it into making the better future. Let us hope that this publication may help for exploring new visions of alternative ways of thinking, alternate ways of practicing, alternative ways of life-philosophy, alternative ways of reflecting upon the societal responses, and alternative ways of understanding that rooted in locality but reflected in universality. As a part of global community, let's take past as companions in this noble journey with courage, hope, and vision.

Of course, most of the people think of the inside first, rather than thinking of the outside, it has been tragic that to inside we have been using lenses of outside. One should always think of physical environment as purview or passage for the cultural environment that matters more than we think. We are what we think and as we think, and hoe we continue thinking. This book is second in the series that attempts to assess and get experience about the 'good spots' and making 'good places'; the inherent