

BLIS semester II
(paper – 5)
Reference Sources & Services
Topic – Geographical Reference Sources
e-content

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Geographical Reference Sources

Geography is the study of the Earth's surface and its lands, features, inhabitants, and phenomena, people's responses to topography and climate, and soil and vegetation. Geographical sources of information can be of the following types:

- Gazetteer
- Guide Book
- Map
- Atlas
- Globe

i) **Gazetteer:** A gazetteer is a geographical dictionary, an important reference for information about places and place-names, used in conjunction with an atlas. It typically contains information concerning the geographical makeup of a

country, region or continent, the social statistics and physical features, such as mountains, waterways, or roads. It also includes information about the location of places, dimensions of physical features, population, GDP, literacy rate, etc. World gazetteers usually consist of an alphabetical listing of countries, with pertinent statistics for each one, with some gazetteers listing information on individual cities, towns, villages and other settlements of varying sizes. Examples include The World Gazetteer, Worldwide Index, etc.

- ii) **Guides:** According to ALA Glossary of Library Terms, a guide book has been defined as handbook for travellers that gives information about a city, region or country or a similar handbook about a building, museum, etc.

- A guide to the literature assists a user to use literature of a specific subject. It helps to evaluate and introduce literature. It lays emphasis on the literature of a subject rather than its content and covers secondary and tertiary sources. It presents a detailed account of the bibliographical apparatus and tools, basic literature, agencies, etc. through which it is possible to follow the development, status and progress of a subject. It gives the broadest bibliographical view of the subject. A guide to the professional organization gives the address and a brief description of the organizations engaged in a particular field at the national or international level. Guides generally include guides to the literature of a subject, guides to the libraries, guides to organization etc.

- iii) **Map:** A map is defined as “a representation of a part or the whole of the surface of the earth or a celestial body delineated on a plain surface, earth points in the drawing intended to correspond to a geographical or a celestial position”. It represents the outer boundaries of a part of the earth or the earth as a whole on a plain surface. In simple, it is a simplified depiction of a space which highlights relations between components (objects, regions) of that space. Most usually a map is a two-dimensional, geometrically accurate representation, normally to scale, of all or a portion of the three-dimensional earth's surface or of the heavens, or another celestial body. More generally, maps can be devised to represent any local property of the world or part of it. Maps are usually stored in specially designed cases which allow them to lie flat.
- iv) **Atlas:** An atlas is a collection of maps, traditionally bound into book form, but also found in multimedia formats. It gives geographic features, political boundaries and some time geopolitical, social, religious and economic statistics. ALA Glossary defines atlas as “a volume of map, plates, engraving, tables, etc with or without descriptive letterpress”. It may be an independent publication or it may have been issued to accompany one or more volume of text. Some cartographically or commercially important atlases include Times Atlas of the World (United Kingdom, 1920-present); Atlas Mira (Russia, 1937-present); National

Geographic Atlas of the World (United States, 1963-present); Historical Atlas of China (China). Some other atlases are thematic. Example: The Times Atlas of World Exploration.

- v) **Globe:** A globe is a three-dimensional scale model of Earth (terrestrial globe) or other spheroid celestial body such as a planet, star, or moon. It may also refer to a spherical representation of the celestial sphere, showing the apparent positions of the stars and constellations in the sky (celestial globe).