Topic: Contribution of H J Mackinder
B A III year, paper-5 unit 1

By Dr. Bhawana Nigam
Dept. of Geography, A N College,
Patliputra University, Patna.
Introduction

- **Sir Halford John Mackinder** (15 February 1861 – 6 March 1947) was an English Geographer, academic and politician, who is regarded as one of the founding fathers of both Geopolitics and Geostrategy.

- He was the founder of Geography in Britain and started the study of Geography at the University level.

- He held many important positions in Britain as Director of London School of Geography and Political Science.
Early life and education

- Mackinder was born in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England, the son of a doctor, and educated at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Gainsborough, Epsom College and Christ Church, Oxford.
- At Oxford he started studying natural sciences, specializing in zoology.
- He was a strong proponent of treating both physical geography and human geography as a single discipline. Mackinder served as President of the Oxford Union in 1883.
- He received a degree in biology in 1883 and one in modern history the next year.
HIS WORKS / BOOKS/ PUBLICATIONS.

• In 1887, he published "On the Scope and Methods of Geography", a manifesto for the New Geography.

• A few months later, he was appointed Reader in Geography at the University of Oxford, where he introduced the teaching of the subject.

• In 1892, he was the first Principal of University Extension College, Reading

• In 1893, he was one of the founders of the Geographical Association, which promotes the teaching of geography in schools.

• In 1895, he was one of the founders of the London School of Economics. At Oxford, Mackinder was the driving force behind the creation of a School of Geography in 1899.
• In 1902, he published *Britain and the British Seas*, which included the first comprehensive *geomorphology* of the *British Isles* and which became a classic in regional geography.

• In 1904, Mackinder gave a paper on "*The Geographical Pivot of History*" at the *Royal Geographical Society*, in which he formulated the *Heartland Theory*.

• Mackinder left Oxford and became director of the *London School of Economics* in the same year.
THE HEARTLAND THEORY

• His next major work, *Democratic Ideals and Reality: A Study in the Politics of Reconstruction*, appeared in 1919.

• It followed the 1904 book titled *The Geographic Pivot of the History*, and presented his theory of the Heartland.

• The book's most famous quote was: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; Who rules the Heartland commands the World Island; Who rules the World Island commands the World."
• British political geographer Mackinder presented his paper ‘The Geographical Pivot of History’ in 1904 to elucidate the link between power struggle and geography. Mackinder’s heartland theory regards political history as a continuous struggle between land power and sea power with the ultimate victory going to continental power.

• Mackinder divided the world and call Europe, Asia and Africa as ‘World Island’ which has 2/3rd of world land and 7/8th of population.

He arranged the landmass of the world in 3 tiers:

1. The Heartland: It is the huge area of inner Eurasia east and north of river Volga surrounded by mountains on three sides (S-E-W) and by ice-bound Arctic on the north. This was so called ‘pivot area’ that he later renamed as ‘heartland’. The distinguishing feature of heartland was that it was not accessible to sea powers and therefore it was strategically secure like a fortress. This was resource rich area having agriculturally fertile Russian grassland Steppes and coal fields.
2. **Inner Crescent**: The pivot area was surrounded by an ‘inner’ or ‘marginal’ crescent consisting of an arch of coastland. It included rest of Europe, W. Asia, E. Asia, and S. Asia. This area was characterised by drainage into navigable seas.

3. **Outer or Insular Crescent**: North America, South America and Africa south of Sahara, Oceana were put in outer crescent category.
• According to Mackinder, the Heartland was self-sufficient and self resourceful
• It was secured from all sides and not accessible; so could not be attacked.
• Thus the heartland will emerge as a super power and gradually expand its boundary over marginal lands and will further consolidate this power.
• This theory became popular in 1944 when USSR was emerging as the super power but later on it lost its relevance.
criticism

• This concept is an analysis of the political pattern of the world and includes predictions based on this analysis.

• Its simplicity and boldness have been achieved at the cost of accuracy regarding the historical and the geographical details.

• One major drawback of this theory is its inability to make allowances for the technological advances.

• The theory was formulated at the end of the railway age. Mackinder saw it as a high point of communication system capable of uniting the whole Heartland into a cohesive unit.

• That never actually happened. Although the age of airplanes had begun, the theory failed to take into account its potential.
conclusion

• Mackinder's work paved the way for the establishment of geography as a distinct discipline in the United Kingdom.

• His role in fostering the teaching of geography is probably greater than that of any other single British geographer.

• In 1944, he received the Charles P. Daley medal from the American Geographical Society, and in 1945 was awarded the Royal Geographical Society's Patron's Gold Medal for his service in the advancement of the science of Geography.

• The Heartland Theory and more generally classical geopolitics and geostrategy were extremely influential in the making of US strategic policy during the period of the Cold War.
Reference.

• Geographical thought- MAJID HUSSAIN
• Geographical thought- R D DIKSHIT
• National digital Library.
• Google scholar.

THANKS.