# GEOGRAPHY AS A DISCIPLINE

Opportunities & Challenges

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### Change Detection in Hydrological Time Series Data

Rupak Kumar Paul

Abstract: Scientists are accustomed to use statistical tools and techniques to detect change in hydrological time series, but these available techniques are not the panacea for resolving such issues since the concerned techniques provide expressions of probability and not certainty. For instance, the change in annual discharge has been detected for long term dataset but this change might not be due to alteration of any one or more components - like land use land cover, or climate or change in agri-technology - of the system in basin scale, rather it happened due to change in methodology of concerned data generation or shifting of gauge station etc. So, there is always the chance to detect change while it is not there in reality as the statistics merely provide the evidence, not the proof. Until and unless geographical knowledge is used to substantiate the outcome of statistical analysis, the result of change detection cannot be justified. Moreover, different methods identify different change points for the same time series. So, very often more than one method of change detection is required to be applied and ultimate decision making becomes subjective depending on the geographical condition of the basin. So, one should be very cautious about the applicability of the available tests when these are being applied to detect any change in hydrological time series. Here, an attempt has been made to make a documentation of these statistical tests along with a brief discussion on the applicability of each.

### Introduction

Trend detection is one of the key components of hydrological study as natural system is rarely proved to be stationary in the long run, although