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MANI-001

ANTHROPOLOGY AND METHODS OF RESEARCH



Introducing Anthropology

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“ शिक्षा मानव को बन्धनों से मुक्त करती है और आज के युग में तो यह लोकतंत्र की भावना का आधार भी है। जन्म तथा अन्य कारणों से उत्पन्न जाति एवं वर्गगत विषमताओं को दूर करते हुए मनुष्य को इन सबसे ऊपर उठाती है।”

- इन्दिरा गांधी



Education is a liberating force, and in our age it is also a democratising force, cutting across the barriers of caste and class, smoothing out inequalities imposed by birth and other circumstances"

- Indira Gandhi

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BLOCK 1 INTRODUCING ANTHROPOLOGY

Introduction

Anthropology being the study of human beings combines in one discipline the approaches of both the biological and the social sciences. Its problems centre, on the one hand, on humans as a member of the animal kingdom and, on the other, on their behaviour as a member of society. Furthermore, the anthropologist does not limit herself/himself to any particular group of men or to any one period of history. On the contrary, s/he is as much interested in the earlier forms of man and her/his behaviour as in those of the present day.

Any discipline that claims to study all of humanity is claiming a great deal. Such an ambitious endeavor is obviously beyond the capabilities of any single individual, for no one person could possibly master the knowledge needed to study human beings in their entirety. Therefore, within anthropology there are 'specialties' or divisions, and each anthropologist elects to concentrate on only some of these.

Anthropology is a highly diversified field and as such to acquire indepth knowledge an anthropologist ideally specialises in one of the branches. Anthropology is broadly divided into physical or biological anthropology and social or cultural anthropology. There are many sub-fields within these, archaeological anthropology and linguistic anthropology being the main ones. They in fact encompass such vast concerns, that they are studied separately. However the significance of the core two-fold division of the field into physical and socio-cultural anthropology is that humans are always both biological and cultural beings. Our species has a particular kind of physical structure, physiology, and biochemistry, and all human beings also have a particular culture.

Understanding of these core divisions of anthropology forms the basis of the understanding of the subject itself. In this background, Block 1 'Introducing Anthropology' has been divided into four units. **Unit 1** deals with defining anthropology. Meaning, scope and background, is the subject matter of **Unit 2**. **Unit 3** exclusively deals with the branches of anthropology. Emerging frontiers is the content of the last unit, **Unit 4**. After going through the learning materials one would gain knowledge about:

- 1) Emergence of anthropology as a science of human beings.
- 2) Anthropology as a holistic science and human being as its subject matter.
- 3) Aspects and importance of studying diversity and variation in anthropology.
- 4) Anthropological study of diversity and variation in Indian context and its related issues.
- 5) Relevance of comparative method in anthropology.
- 6) The meaning, scope and background of anthropology.
- 7) The growth and development of anthropology during renaissance period, and in the period of enlightenment.
- 8) Anthropology as a natural, social and humanizing science.
- 9) How anthropology is unique in terms of its holistic perspective.

- 10) Comprehend about the different branches of anthropology.
- 11) Interpret how current realms can be explored within the subject.
- 12) The importance and applied aspect of anthropology.
- 13) Use of anthropology in the management and corporate world.
- 14) Anthropology in policy making and governance, its history and present context.

These objectives would serve the purpose of understanding the subject matter of Anthropology in greater detail in the following units.



UNIT 1 DEFINING ANTHROPOLOGY

Contents

- 1.1 Introduction
 - 1.2 Emergence of Anthropology
 - 1.2.1 Holistic Science
 - 1.2.2 Understanding Diversity and Variation
 - 1.2.3 Issues Related to the Study of Diversity and Variation: Racism and Ethnic Conflict
 - 1.2.4 Understanding Diversity and Variation in the Indian Context
 - 1.3 Comparative Study of Culture and Population
 - 1.3.1 Development of Comparative Method in Social Anthropology
 - 1.3.2 Relevance of Comparative Method: Present Perspective
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Learning Objectives



This unit deals with the understanding of anthropology as a science of humankind in pursuit of understanding diversity and variation. This unit also deals with the discussion of comparative method in anthropology. After going through the writings in this unit, you would be able to know:

- emergence of anthropology as a science of human beings;
- anthropology as a holistic science with human beings as its subject matter;
- aspects of studying diversity and variation in anthropology;
- importance of studying diversity and variation;
- the issues related to the study of diversity and variation;
- anthropological study of diversity and variation in Indian context;
- comparative method in anthropology; and
- relevance of comparative method.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will trace the emergence of anthropology as a study of human beings. Anthropology is the study of man (which includes both women and men) in time and space. It is very important to know how this discipline came up. The emergence of anthropology marks the subject as a holistic science of man. Besides this, anthropology also emerged as a subject of studying diversity and variation among human beings. It always explores around the differences in human society and culture. To understand these differences anthropology follows the comparative method. It studies one society in respect of other human societies. Comparative method has a

historical base in anthropological studies and this method has its own importance in the discipline.

Section 1.2 of this unit discusses the emergence of anthropology as a science of human beings and its holistic approach in studying them. The same section describes anthropology as the science of human beings in understanding diversity and variation in human society and culture. It also includes anthropological issues related to the study of diversity and variation, like ethnic conflict and racism. The same matter of discussion has also been discussed in the Indian context in the same unit.

Section 1.3 discusses comparative method in anthropological study. It explores various dimensions related to this method like history and its relevance.

1.2 EMERGENCE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology started with the narrative of human culture and society. Though the interest towards studying human beings can be traced back to the fifth century B.C. with the writings of Herodotus, the emergence of anthropology as a distinct discipline occurred recently only during the nineteenth century. The development of scholarship came after the Europeans who had been travelling to distant corners of the globe for about four hundred years since the age of Columbus. The explorers in the course of their voyage visited different people and diverse customs. With the advent of colonialism, missionaries, traders and government officials also started visiting different parts of world. These people took huge interest in knowing different people and their culture with whom they encountered for their own benefit. For the government officials it became a part of their administrative strategy to know the diverse cultures of those people whom they administered. The missionaries had a religious goal. They wanted to spread their own religious ideology. For this it was necessary for them to know the language and cultural values of the people among whom they wanted to spread their ideology. The missionaries even went far beyond this. They not only studied the culture patterns of these people, but they also took some initiatives to improve the life style of these people in their own terms, thus introducing culture change. Likewise traders also had their own economic interest and hence attempted to know the diversity of these people. Explorers from the days of Columbus who wrote about these people and their customs had almost no political interest except to communicate their 'strange' experience of meeting people who were different from their own. The interest to know about 'other cultures' in anthropology, started with this. The people other than the Europeans were the point of interest. Explorers could only notice the variety of human culture by keeping themselves within the safe boundary of a much more 'competent' and 'advanced' culture, i.e. the European culture. So, their writings reflected superimposed ideas and narrations about these simple cultures and societies which they encountered. Early anthropologists started their study with these works only. These writings helped to develop the anthropological temperament and by following these narratives, anthropological study emerged. The first theory in anthropology was propounded by Henry Lewis Morgan as the theory of evolution and this was of course based on these travel accounts to a great extent, although Morgan did go for some sort of fieldwork.

In India, anthropological work began with the works of missionaries and government officials. These people wrote many monographs on different tribes of India. British colonial rule gave a colonial impression to anthropology in India. It was thought that anthropology was nothing but a tool to expand colonial rule. It was considered as a means to communicate with the common people of India who had different cultural

backgrounds. But, in spite of all these many scholars came out to initiate anthropological study. Anthropology in India in comparison to other parts of the world is a much younger discipline.

Anthropology is considered as the product of scientific development in the western world. The tradition of social philosophy continued till the advent of industrialisation in the west and it emerged as a distinct discipline in the nineteenth century. With Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, new thoughts and ideas emerged in the field of anthropology. The study of human evolution became the prime concern for the anthropologists. Many scholars defined anthropology as the study of origin and development of humanity. Scholars like R.R. Marret (1912) termed anthropology as the 'child of Darwin'. From this time onwards anthropology progressed with a new pace. Different theoretical dimensions started developing like, evolutionism, structural-functionalism, functionalism, structuralism etc. A good number of scholars contributed to the field of anthropology. Different branches within the discipline came up. The British school of thought defines anthropology as having three basic branches: 1) biological or physical anthropology, 2) social anthropology, and 3) archaeology. On the other hand American school of thought considers four major branches of anthropology: 1) physical anthropology, 2) cultural anthropology, 3) archaeology and 4) linguistic anthropology. In India generally we follow the British school of thought. Each of these major branches of anthropology has been assigned with some specific subject matter, but there is no specific boundary. All these branches are interdependent yet interlinked. Physical anthropology while studying biological aspects of man cannot ignore the cultural influence. Likewise, while studying material culture and its development, social anthropologists have to take into account its evolutionary growth and for this they refer to the archaeological findings of prehistoric culture. It is the same with prehistoric archaeologists also. To identify the cultural use of some prehistoric findings, they have to refer to the present context with which the social anthropologists deal. Again social anthropologists have to consider some biological aspects of human life while studying culture. There are some other sub-disciplines also, which have their own boundary of subject matter which is however not rigid, like economic anthropology, political anthropology, anthropology of religion, etc. They also deal with the different issues related to human life focusing on one particular field.

1.2.1 Holistic Science

Man is the most wonderful creature in this world. It is the only species in the animal kingdom having two aspects: biological and cultural. Man is the creator of his own culture. Anthropology is concerned with a rounded study of man, it studies man at all levels of culture. Unlike other disciplines like economics, political science or zoology, anthropology does not study only one aspect of human life. It covers all dimensions i.e. biological, cultural, environmental etc. Each and every matter related to human beings becomes the subject matter of anthropology. Thus, anthropology is a holistic science of man. It covers all aspects of man. We can take up the example of culture study. Within culture various aspects like art, religion, politics, economy, kinship, marriage, family, health, etc. are combined into one whole. On the other hand these cultural aspects differ from society to society. Anthropology not only deals with these various aspects of culture, but also explores the variety from all aspects. For example, if we take up kinship, we will see that anthropologists not only have studied kinship as an aspect of human culture but also have studied various kinship patterns in different societies in the world. So, anthropological study explores around particular to general and also sometimes general to particular. Sometimes it

is inductive logic and sometimes it is deductive logic. Anthropology has many theoretical issues regarding this aspect of exploration. But now the main issue over here is that irrespective of any theoretical issue, anthropology keenly examines all aspects of human life from each and every dimension. Thus, as mentioned before, anthropology is a holistic science of man. This holistic study of man has been clearly described in Unit 2 (Meaning, Scope and Background)

Activity

Try to identify the cultural variation in your area and examine whether it comes under the domain of anthropological study. Also try to find out the similarities and examine the importance of these similarities in anthropological study.

1.2.2 Understanding Diversity and Variety

The dictionary meaning of diversity is 'a range of many people or things that are very different from each other'. On the other hand variety means 'several different sorts of the same thing'. Thus, diversity is a range which is a broad category covering different people and variety is relatively a smaller category defining difference within the same thing.

Anthropologically, these two words are very important as it, in a nut shell, defines the whole area of anthropological research. As we have already discussed that anthropology is a holistic science and it studies all aspects of human beings, anthropology not only studies such aspects but also examines these aspects from various dimensions identifying differences within it. Diversity and variation thus becomes the core of anthropological study.

Emergence of anthropology, as we have already discussed, began with the curiosity of man to know differences among themselves. The European voyagers while exploring identified different people with varied customs and this developed the anthropological interest to know about diversity in human beings. Diversity was the initiation point for anthropological research. People wondered why members of the same species, homo sapiens differ culturally. Biologically, homo sapiens is one species capable to interbreed. But, culturally the same species defines certain rules which do not suit the biological definition of species. Human beings have different mating patterns according to their own cultures. Different societies have different forms of marriage. Thus, man has diverse patterns of mating and variety of marriage rituals. Anthropology basically deals with these diversities and varieties.

The scope of anthropology includes two dimensions: the objectives or aims of the discipline and the subject matter covered by it. The general understanding of anthropology is that it tries to study human beings including all its aspects. Secondly, employing the comparative method, anthropology finds similarities and differences in diverse societies and population. This helps anthropologists to move from differences to similarities and also enables them to construct universal anthropological theories.

Anthropologists employ a variety of tools and techniques to study these complex characteristics that define the human enterprise. The study of anthropology is concerned with understanding biological, cultural and other aspects that define life among peoples across the world. The basic premise of anthropology is that all humans are born with the same physical characteristics but depending on where they are born and raised, they adopt different cultural, ethical and religious mores. It is this conditioning or the effect of different cultures on humans as they evolve with time

that comprises the study of anthropology. Considering the vast nature of the scope of study associated with anthropology, it can be said that the canvas is hugely broad and that anthropologists indeed have their tasks cut out.

The branches of anthropology are divided into sub branches. These sub branches add to the wide variety of research material that is available in this field and the researchers in these branches do their bit to enrich our understanding of where we come from, why we are the way we are and other questions. To understand what the study of anthropology is, we need to delve deep into these branches and the way in which anthropologists study complex societies. An example of this is the ant-hill with its various divisions of labour and the often complex interactions between the members.

If we go deeper to the branches of anthropology, we will see the diverse fields with which they deal. Physical or biological anthropology looks at human beings as a biological organism and tries to find out: 1) what characteristics make them different from other organisms, 2) what characteristics they have in common. While studying evolution the physical anthropologists try to find various factors influencing human evolution. For this they need to do research among various communities to identify such factors. Population-wise physical characters differ. Environmental conditions also make differences. These are the various dimensions with which physical anthropologists need to deal with. Sub-branches of physical anthropology like paleoanthropology, primatology, racial history, human genetics, and population study, etc., deal with various other aspects. Paleoanthropology and primatology basically deal with the evolution of man. Paleoanthropology derives data from the fossil remains while primatology studies living apes which have an evolutionary relation with the ancestors of humans. On the other hand racial history studies living races. They consider the different traits of physical manifestation (skin colour, eye and hair, quality and distribution of hair on the body, eye colour, shape of the nose, eyelid, body weight, general body build, etc.) and compare these among contemporary human populations in order to find out the basis of human variation. Racial history occupies a very important role in the study of growth and development. Human genetics attains a very important position in anthropology too. Genetics throws light on the ways of inheritance which helps anthropologists to understand the complicated process of evolution and variation. The academic field of population genetics includes several hypotheses and theories regarding genetic diversity. The neutral theory of evolution proposes that diversity is the result of the accumulation of neutral substitutions. Diversifying selection is the hypothesis that two sub-populations of a species live in different environments that select for different alleles at a particular locus.

Another major branch of anthropology is archaeology. Archaeology is concerned with the study of extinct cultures. To trace the human cultural evolution, it is necessary to reconstruct the prehistoric past. Cultural anthropology deals with the social behaviour of human beings where the past and the present are equally important for them. They stress the emergence and development of customs and social behaviour from the prehistoric level and goes up to the contemporary level where both the primitive and civilized people form social counterparts.

Social anthropology, another branch of anthropology studies social behaviour and organisation of social groups. We have already discussed how this branch deals with the diverse cultural aspects taking into consideration variation in it.

Another branch of anthropology is linguistic anthropology (following the American school of thought). Here also we see that the focus is on the study of diversity and variation. Culture is an important aspect of human behaviour. Transmission of culture from one generation to the other has been possible only through language. Linguistic anthropologists, study language and deal with the emergence and divergence of languages over time. The different branches of anthropology are discussed in detail in Unit 3 (Branches of Anthropology) of this block.

Thus from the above discussions we can understand how anthropology study human kind in pursuit of understanding diversity and variation. Each and every branch of anthropology deals with this dimension. In fact, it is one of the core matters of anthropological study.

Activity

Try to make a list of diverse fields of Anthropology dealing with diversity and variation.

1.2.3 Issues Related to the Study of Diversity and Variation: Racism and Ethnic Conflict

While describing anthropology as the study of humankind in pursuit of understanding diversity and variation we often face some critical issues. These issues bring out some questions like: Why do we need to study diversity and variation? Various conflicts among different communities are observed, the basis of which is these variations and diversities. Do we really need to make our differences distinct by studying them in great detail? To discuss these issues we will take up two examples- racism and ethnic conflict.

We have already mentioned that racial history has occupied an important place in anthropology. All human beings living today belong to the single species homo sapiens which includes different groups or populations each differing from other populations in the relative commonness of certain hereditary traits. Each of these populations constituting the species homo sapiens may be regarded as a race.

The skeletal material of different periods gathered from diverse parts of the world show that hybridisation among different human populations has been taking place since long past. Race admixture is an ongoing process and as a result a pure race does not remain. Hybridisation, on the one hand is responsible if partially for race formation and on the other it is also involved in the extinction or assimilation of racial groups. Therefore, we can say that there was never a pure race of man and at present too there is no pure race.

Scientists have accepted the fact that each of the various races differ from the others in relative frequency of certain heritable traits. They are interested in the study of nature and extent of such variations and similarities among the various racial groups. They try to account for this inequality of human races. This type of scientific and objective type of study of different aspects of race has nothing to do with the issue of racism. Racists look at races from a different angle. Racism believes that certain races are underdeveloped and as such are inferior to the others. Anthropologists point out that racism involves the assertion that inequality is absolute and unconditional, i.e., that a race is inherent and by its very nature superior or inferior to others quite independently of physical conditions of its habitat and of social factors. During the Second World War racism led to the death of many innocent people in Germany.

Likewise in America also it created many inhuman conditions. Black skinned people were considered to be inferior to white skinned people in all aspects. Many people faced human discrimination. In this context, anthropologists argue that race and ethnicity are cultural constructs that have almost no correlates in real human physical attributes. Anthropologists contends that the biological basis of race is a colonial construct to represent the non-western others as inferior.

Ethnic conflict on such a notion of racism has become very common in today's world. Exploitation and discrimination for many long years made ethnic groups or races intolerable and it resulted into conflicts. After the Second World War a general consensus came out to secure human rights. The United Nations also took steps to finish racial discrimination and UNESCO too passed a statement on the concept of race and the scientific study of race stating that race is biological and no race is superior to the other. Anthropological or any other scientific research on race has created the field for ethnic and racial conflict. There are many other factors. We can take up the example of the racial conflict in Rwanda between the Tutsi and the Hutus. Hutus and the Tutsis had almost the same physical characteristics with little anthropometric differences. These two groups shared the same geographical area. But it was the Belgian colonial power in the 1930s on the basis of cattle ownership, physical measurements and church records, issued identity cards to these groups thus creating a racial distinction. These documents played a key role in the genocide of 1994.

Thus we can see that there are many issues related to the study of diversity and variation. Anthropologists have faced many such issues and at the same time it has regained the status of a scientific study that carefully handles these crucial issues. Anthropologists now-a-days are taking keen interest in the study of ethnic and racial conflicts. Many theoretical dimensions are also coming out from such studies.

1.2.4 Understanding Diversity and Variation in the Indian Context

India being a multicultural democratic country exhibits a very diverse population having cultural and social differences. Anthropologists from the very beginning have taken immense interest in studying these diverse cultures and societies. Anthropologists from outside or inside India have taken up studies among various tribal people of India starting from North-east India to the south. Early anthropologists like S.C. Roy, M.N. Srinivas etc., have written many monographs on these tribal people depicting various diverse ways of life. Village study in India has also revealed many diverse cultural aspects. Ideologies like tribe-caste continuum, sacred complex, little and great tradition have also appeared. Various social institutions like marriage, kinship, and politics have also been studied. These institutions showcase the diverse nature of Indian culture. For example, in Meghalaya the Khasis practice matrilineal system of marriage; in south India Todas have a peculiar kind of marriage system. Likewise, caste system in India is unique. These castes follow a special form of relationship with each other. Sometimes even among Hindus, which is a single religion, practice of different forms of rituals are seen. On the other hand the tribal people and these caste groups also share a special kind of relation. Sometimes it is of suppression, sometimes it is of cooperation. Thus, various dimensions can be found in India itself and anthropologists through the years have been exploring all these and more.

1.3 COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CULTURE AND POPULATION

Anthropology conducts comparative study of culture and population. It has been one of the most ancient and popular method of anthropological investigation. In fact, anthropological research started with this dimension.

Anthropologists study man in totality. Social anthropologists try to find out what is common to all societies and at the same time what is different to all societies. For this social anthropologists need to carry out a comparative study of the societies. To gather full understanding of a society it is necessary to examine the same in the context of another. So, for the anthropologists it becomes important to conduct comparative study of the societies and populations.

In a social anthropological comparative study there are many levels of comparison. First, a social anthropologist compares a single society with other societies. Second, he compares one or two institutions of other societies and third, he compares the institutions within a single society.

The history of the use of comparison as a method goes back to the nineteenth century. During this period the theory of evolution was in great practice. The exponents of the comparative method in British social anthropology were Emile Durkheim and E.E. Evans Pritchard. This method has the following objectives:

- 1) It is through these methods social anthropologists reconstruct the past and discover the laws that govern the social process. Comparison of particular features of social life for the purpose of historical reconstruction has great value.
- 2) It is through this that we make classification of the social systems in different categories such as caste, class and groups. Comparative method is deployed for discovering the social process; and to classify the social systems of all the societies of the world as well.

1.3.1 Development of Comparative Method in Social Anthropology

Comparative method has more than a hundred years of history in social anthropology. Durkheim used it first as a reliable method of data generation. In his classical work the *Rules of the Sociological Method* (1895) for the first time Durkheim explained the significance of comparative method. In the nineteenth century, the principal attraction of the comparative method lay in the belief that it could be used for discovering scientific laws about human society and culture.

Franz Boas contested the arguments of Durkheim, by suggesting that the latter had made only sweeping generalisations using comparative method. After Durkheim, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown pleaded the usefulness of the comparative method. In his Huxley memorial lecture in 1955 he argued that the comparative method was highly useful in social anthropology for restructuring human social history. At a later period of time Evans-Pritchard took up the theme of comparative method in his Hob House Lecture in 1963. He argued that despite all its scientific pretensions, the comparative method as used by Radcliffe-Brown and many others were little more than the illustrative method.

In the nineteenth century and the mid twentieth century, there were different attitudes of social anthropologists towards the use of comparison. Comparative method also faced many criticisms.

In India too many anthropologists used this method. Anthropologists in India have conducted many intercultural and cross cultural comparisons. Among these, names may be mentioned of D. N. Majumdar, N. K. Bose and Irawati Karve.

1.3.2 Relevance of Comparative Method: Present Perspective

Even today the comparative method in anthropology occupies a major place in anthropological research. With the rapid change in society the comparative method is earning new methodological dimensions. Though comparative method is not the most popular research method in anthropology in today's context, it is not merely a generalised study either. It has many dimensions in it which anthropologists apply accordingly. Comparative method can sometimes reveal very important findings. The matter of concern that should be of utmost importance is that comparison should be unbiased and justified. The main criticism that this method faces is that it compares primitive societies with the so called civilized, advanced societies and the result seems to be much generalised. It leads to the publication of biased analysis. Some societies are termed uncivilized in context of the other which ironically are studied by the people of these 'advanced' societies. Not only in the field of social anthropology but also in the field of archaeological and physical anthropology, there is the use of comparative method. In the field of population genetics, anthropologists compare the gene frequencies so as to find out the populations' variations. Such studies cannot be done in one population. So, comparison becomes very important. Likewise, in the field of archaeological anthropology, two different past cultures need to be compared to find out the chronological relevance of the both. So, comparison becomes quite pertinent here too.

Criticisms can be sided apart by conducting an unbiased and scientific comparative study of the societies and it can reveal some very important anthropological findings. Thus, comparative method has its relevance in today's context as well.

1.4 SUMMARY

After reading this unit you would be able to know the broad area covered by anthropology. You have learnt from this chapter how anthropology has developed as a holistic study of human beings. You have learnt how anthropology deals with the diversity and variation in human society and population. Anthropology primarily deals with diversity of human behavior and culture. The subject matter of anthropology revolves around diversity and variation. This has been widely discussed in Indian context as well. As an important part of this lesson we have discussed the comparative method. You have learnt how comparative method developed in the field of anthropological research and you have also learnt the relevance of it. Diversity and variation takes a major part in anthropological research. Different culture patterns, different societies and different human groups are the subject matter of anthropology and to study all this, anthropology has developed certain methods.

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Sample Questions

- 1) Discuss how anthropology covers human diversity and variation within its subject matter.
- 2) Briefly discuss how anthropology emerged as a discipline which covers human diversity and variation.
- 3) Discuss diversity and variation in Indian context.
- 4) Discuss comparative method.
- 5) Discuss the relevance of comparative method in anthropology.

UNIT 2 MEANING, SCOPE AND BACKGROUND

Contents

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Anthropology, its Meaning and Scope
- 2.3 Anthropology and its Background during Renaissance
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References

Suggested Reading

Sample Questions

Learning Objectives



After completing this unit, you are expected to:

- define the meaning, scope and background of anthropology;
- describe the growth and development of anthropology during the renaissance period, and in the period of enlightenment;
- explain anthropology as a natural as well as a social science; and
- depict how anthropology is unique in terms of its holistic perspective.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As a broad and diverse discipline, anthropology aims to construct a holistic understanding of the human species by integrating research on the cultural, biological, evolutionary, linguistic and historical aspects of our kind. Anthropologists research, observe, analyse, and apply what they learn to develop an understanding of the variations of the human condition. In other words, anthropologists aim to understand us: *Homo sapiens*.

The unit deals with introductory concerns such as anthropology, its meaning, scope, and background during renaissance. Further, in the same section it will discuss about development of anthropology as a natural and social science and also anthropology and colonialism. At the end, the unit will describe the uniqueness of anthropology in terms of its holistic perspective.

2.2 ANTHROPOLOGY, ITS MEANING AND SCOPE

The term anthropology is derived from the Greek language: *anthropos* and *logos*. The term *anthropos* corresponds to the word mankind or human being, whereas *logos* means study or science. So the combination of both the words together means

that anthropology is the study of humankind. Anthropology can also be defined as the science of human beings. In fact anthropology is only one of the sciences of human beings, bringing together the common aims of many disciplines which describes human beings and explains them on the basis of both biological and cultural characteristics, in time and space.

The subject matter of anthropology is very broad. As humans live in a social network of relationships, the subject covers all aspects of human life and culture. Learning the meaning, nature, origin, and destiny of human beings is one of the significant concerns of anthropology. The discipline seeks to explain about how and why people are both similar and different through examination of our biological and cultural past and by comparative study of contemporary human societies. The ultimate goal of anthropology is to develop an integrated picture of humankind—a goal that encompasses an almost infinite number of questions about all aspects of our existence. We ask, for example, where did human species come from (i.e. what are the origins of mankind)? In what ways does man differ from other animal species? How did mankind arrive at the present stage of biological, intellectual, and cultural development? What makes us human? Why do some groups of people tend to be tall and thin, while others tend to be short and stout? Why do some groups of people practice agriculture, while others hunt for a living? Anthropologists are interested in all aspects of human existence (Howard and Dunaif–Hattis, 1992).

As indicated earlier, the interests and subject-matter of anthropology are wide-ranging. General anthropology investigates the basics of human biology, society, cultures and considers their interrelationships. Anthropology includes four main sub-disciplines or sub-fields. Anthropology's four sub-fields are socio-cultural, archaeological, biological and linguistic anthropology. They have been discussed in detail in Unit 3 (Branches of Anthropology).

Anthropology today is clearly used and practiced in all aspects of life, professionally or otherwise. In this context the knowledge of applied anthropology also becomes imperative. Applied or practicing anthropology refers to the application of anthropologic data, perspectives, theory, and methods to identify, assess, and solve contemporary social problems. In its most general sense, applied anthropology includes any use of the knowledge and/or techniques of the four sub-fields to identify, assess, and solve practical problems. It has many applications, and this is why, more and more anthropologists from the four sub-fields now work in such “applied” areas as public health, family planning, and economic development.

Applied anthropology makes use of the research done by physical and cultural anthropologists in order to help governments and other institutions form and implement policies for specific population groups. It may, for instance, aid governments of underdeveloped countries in showing people from less privileged zones on how to cope with the complexities of the 21st century civilization. It may also be used by governments in the formulation of social, educational, and economic policies for ethnic minorities within their borders. The work of applied anthropology is often done by specialists in the fields of economics, sociology, history, and psychology.

The unique feature of anthropology is its direct, experimental tactic to investigate through the use of the technique called participant observation. While working increasingly in recent years in industrialised societies, anthropologists for the most part have conducted field research in those parts of the world that go through serious societal problems, such as poor health, inadequate food production, high infant mortality, and rampant pollution growth, to mention but a few. The very nature

of anthropological research involving, as it does, living with people, sharing their lives, and frequently befriending them makes it difficult for anthropologists to ignore the enormity of the problems they face on an everyday basis. It should therefore come as no surprise that many socio-cultural anthropologists feel a sense of responsibility for helping to solve or at least alleviate some of these pressing social problems.

Even though anthropologists to one degree or another have always applied their findings, theories, and methods to the solution of human problems, an increasing number of anthropologists at various times during the past half century have become involved in research aimed very explicitly at practical applications. These practitioners represent the relatively new and growing sub-discipline known as applied anthropology. Distinguished by problem-specific research among the world's contemporary populations, these relativistic anthropologists try to utilise anthropological data, notions and schemes to the solution of social, economic and technological issues, both at home and outside. Over the past decades a number of nomenclatures have been given to these many efforts to apply anthropological research for the betterment of human situations. They are action anthropology, development anthropology, advocacy anthropology etc.

Each of these sub-branches is basically an independent science, although specialists in one field frequently consult and cooperate with scholars in the other. With its holistic perspective, anthropology crosses the multiple approaches to the study of humankind-biological, social, cultural, historical, linguistic, cognitive, material, technological, affective, and aesthetic. Physical anthropology is generally classified as a natural science, while socio-cultural anthropology is considered as social science and humanities. This interdisciplinary approach is integrated within anthropology as a whole and formalised in the four major sub-fields-although many anthropologists also conduct research across these fields. Anthropology therefore goes beyond what are typically perceived as intellectual boundaries separating natural science, social science, and humanities.

By the above various sub-fields in the discipline covering all aspect of human beings the overall scope of anthropology has widened. Specialists in the various sub-fields of anthropology work to maintain their holistic vision. An extension of holism is to collect primary data in natural field settings. The various perspectives in the discipline make the scope unique and widened. The perspectives are holistic, comparative, historical, synchronic and diachronic, emic and etic and also based on case study.

In the early 19th century, anthropology had stayed beyond the industrial civilization of the modern West. The field of research in anthropology was at first restricted to those societies that was given one unacceptable label after another, for example, "primitive", "tribal", "traditional", "savage", "preliterate", etc. These societies presented themselves as being the most "different" or the most alien to the anthropologist; and it is to be noted that in the early years of anthropology, the anthropologists were either always European or North American. The distance between the researcher and the object of his study has been a characteristic of anthropological research; it has been said of the anthropologist that he was the astronomer of the sciences of man. Anthropologists today study more than just primitive societies. Their research extends not only to village communities within modern societies but also to cities, even to industrial enterprises. The "participant-observation" method of research was developed early in the discipline of anthropology and remains one of its cornerstones. Nevertheless, anthropology's first field of research, and the one that perhaps remains the most important, shaped

its specific point of view with regard to the other sciences of man and defined its theme. If, in particular, it is concerned with generalising about patterns of human behaviour seen in all their dimensions and with achieving a total description of social and cultural phenomena, this is because anthropology has observed small-scale societies, which are simpler or at least more homogeneous than modern societies and which change at a slower pace. (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2004).

The scope of anthropology is so broad because the discipline has nexus between natural science, social science and the humanities in terms of its research focus and methods. Among all the disciplines that study aspects of human existence and accomplishments, only the discipline of anthropology explores the entire panorama of the human experience from human origins to contemporary forms of culture and social life. Anthropology is generalising, comparative and cross-cultural with a concern for understanding human diversity on a global scale. It is a relative subject that inspects all societies – ancient and modern; simple and complex. It analytically evaluates information from diverse populations and time periods. Though other social sciences tend to concentrate on a single society, anthropology proposes a distinctive cross-cultural outlook by continuously comparing the customs of one society with those of others. Anthropologists involve in experimental and pragmatic exploration with recognised theories, methods, and analytical techniques. They conduct field-based investigations as well as laboratory analyses and archival research. Anthropology is a uniquely 'comparative' and 'holistic' discipline. The term 'holism' in anthropology refers to the study of the whole of the human condition: past, present, future; biology, sociology, language and culture. The global scope of anthropological studies has actually increased in recent years. Anthropology has become more self-reflexive and involved with communities and with social conflicts as anthropologists increasingly apply their findings to real world social issues and engage their subjects as colleagues and collaborators.

2.3 ANTHROPOLOGY AND ITS BACKGROUND DURING RENAISSANCE

Though humans have maybe always studied other humans in one way or another, the first official study of human variation can be found in the 5th century. For many thousands of years, travel, trade and exploration have brought people of different languages and cultures into communication. These communications generated tales of strange and exotic peoples and their customs.

Many philosophers, travelers and thinkers, conducted studies of anthropological nature as early as the 5th century BC. Historians of anthropology often claim that anthropology as a discipline originated during, and due to, the period in history known as the renaissance. It is also believed that anthropology evolved due to the growth of other disciplines like natural science, social science and humanities.

The interest of anthropology in differences among humans had its beginnings in the Italian Renaissance of the 14th and 15th centuries, specifically in renaissance archaeology. The first differences which were recognised as significant to a general understanding of humankind were the cultural and linguistic differences between classical antiquity and what was then the present. It was only after the beginnings of an archaeological perspective had been established that the interest in differences was extended to contemporary contrasts (J. H. Rowe 1965).

Renaissance studies of classical antiquity not only stimulated a general interest in differences among humans, they also provided models for describing such differences. When the problem of describing contemporary non-Western cultures arose, there were renaissance studies of Roman customs and institutions to serve as precedents. Similarly, renaissance grammar and dictionaries of classical Latin and Greek became models for the description of spoken languages in all parts of the world, and the study of the ancient monuments of Italy and Greece became the basis for archaeological reporting elsewhere. The beginnings of physical anthropology were delayed, because the study of classical antiquity in this case offered little precedent (ibid).

Writers of classical antiquity who took an interest in anthropological comparison are visible exceptions as they are very few. Most of the early philosophers who carried anthropology related research were Greek scholars, like Herodotus in 500 BC, Aristotle in 400 BC and Strabo in 100 BC. In the BC era, Roman philosophers like Lucretius made significant contributions to anthropology, while in the AD era, noted Roman philosophers like Tacitus, Aquinas and Polo were the ones to significantly contribute to the field of anthropology. Since the earliest times of the Greeks the study of humankind has been a major scholarly venture, a subject for conjecture and for examination. Philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, speculated on what it was to be human and what was the place of human kind in nature and in the universe.

The Greek historian, Herodotus, wrote about human existence in the middle of the 5th century. He might thus be seen as one of the earliest anthropologists. In the fifth century BC he travelled around the Greek colonies of the Mediterranean and North Africa and described in considerable detail the indigenous peoples of those regions and their ways of life. Herodotus displayed as much interest in the customs of the Egyptians, Libyans, Scythians, Syrians, Mesopotamians, people from Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, southern Ukraine, Russia and other peoples who were termed “**barbarian**” then. The observations he made in his travels were published in his *History*. Along with his narrative of the Persian Wars and other events involving the Greek city-states, he described the customs, social habits, religions, and political structures of many of the peoples he visited on his travels. It has been said on this account that he is “the father of anthropology” as well as “the father of history” (Momigliano 1960 and J. L. Myres 1908).

Anthropology during renaissance, between 14th and 17th centuries, acquired new dimensions. Knowledge about different continents and the peoples inhabiting those continents grew. Especially, the maritime explorers provided the world with information on new continents, on new cultures and on new societies. In general the scholars of renaissance European philosophers, social thinkers and other academics explained the diversity of cultures and societies. For example Vasco de Gama (1397-1499 A.D.) provided some descriptions of the cultures and societies in Africa and India. Christopher Columbus (1451-1506 A.D.) discussed the cultural and societal diversity of American Red Indians. Vasco Munez de Balboa (1475-1570 A.D.) discussed the cultural and social conditions of American Native Indians. The accounts of these maritime explorers brought the existence of peoples quite different from those of Europe to attention and raised the problem of how those peoples came to have such cultures and societies (Hodgen, 1964).

Herodotus and other scholars’ writings could be described as some of the earliest ethnographic descriptions but if we are to talk of anthropology as a discipline rather than a loose collection of traveller’s tales, we must move forward to the nineteenth century when the scholarly study of human cultural and biological diversity began to

take shape. At this time the western world was in the throes of some rapid and far-reaching developments. Across Europe and North America the expansion of new industries, mass migration from the countryside to the cities and the development of new systems of communication and transport had profound impacts on social life and the organisation of society and economy. This was also a time when western colonial expansion and domination were at their height. Social commentators and philosophers were keen to understand the changes that were happening around them. The foundations of the major academic disciplines, as we know them today, were laid down during this period.

Anthropologists do trace the origins of this discipline way back to the ancient Greeks, particularly Herodotus but anthropologists have only been calling themselves anthropologists officially since the late 19th century. The definition, meaning and the scope of anthropology never remained the same at the time of its coining more than two thousand years ago. Aristotle (384-322 B.C), the Greek philosopher developed the definition and meaning of anthropology at the time of its innovations during the classical period that existed over 2000 year ago. He defined anthropology as the 'gossip' which revolves around man and the anthropologist as the gossip who talks about himself. He is also considered as the first anthropologist who has coined, defined and explained the term anthropology. That is why he is referred to as the father of anthropology. Later on between 14th and 17th centuries anthropology was begun to be nourished in the philosophical faculties in the University of Germany. During this renaissance period, German thinkers defined anthropology as 'a systematic study of man as a physical and moral being'. According to them physical aspect includes the biological conditions of humankind while the moral aspects are the intangible characteristics like the beliefs, morals, ethics and ideals of mankind, which also include the technological skills, political, economic and social life. So as to make the range of its appeal very wide both the biological and moral aspects were stressed in the definition of anthropology. In the age of renaissance, anthropology could find a place in academics. Its ideal scope was broad but its actual scope was narrow. The ideal scope of anthropology laid stress upon the study of physical and moral dimensions of human species all over the world. However, in practice its scope was restricted to a discussion on strange people and quaint customs.

In the 18th century, in the period of enlightenment anthropology was passing through its childhood. During this period scholars recognised it as a branch of knowledge to be developed and propagated. Particularly, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), the German philosopher in his book entitled *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* in 1798 defined anthropology as a study which describes and explains the animal origins, social as well as cultural development and progress of humankind (Louden, 2006). While explaining the above definition, he said that man is an organism, that he has animal origins and that he is a product of biological evolution. After his emergence, man tried to improve his nature through development and progress. In other words, he made it clear through his argument that just as a man is a product of biological evolution, man's customs, institutions, and society are the products of social development and progress. According to Kant's statement, anthropology aims to present a total picture of the biological antiquity of man and the development and progress of human society. This view of anthropology received support in the writings of several intellectuals of those times. Many scholars in biological, natural and social science like, Buffon (1701-1788), Turgot (1717-1780) and Lamarck (1744-1829) in France, Monboddo (1714-1799) in Italy, Robertson (1721-1793) in Scotland, Prichard (1786-1848) in England, and Blumenbach (1752-1840) in Germany, not only wrote about the diversity of man in terms of races,

customs and languages but also described the progress of man in terms of social and cultural development. The idea of biological evolution as well as the idea of socio-cultural development and progress of man roots spread in almost all intellectual circles during this period. Thus by the end of the 18th century the stage was set for the emergence of anthropology as a full-fledged subject.

Anthropology identified its scope as the study of animal origins along with social and cultural development. In the transition from the renaissance to the enlightenment era, starting from the late 17th century, the previous devotion to textual authority was abandoned and instead focus was put on empirical experiences. Travel accounts became very popular. Reason and rationality were key concepts of this period. Many important anthropological questions were posed in the age of enlightenment when people became especially interested in the relation between nature and society, the definition of humankind and what distinguishes a natural condition of humanity from cultured condition. The scope of anthropology thus includes a systematic portrayal of an integrated picture of human nature in terms of its biology, culture and society. Indeed the scope was broad-based that it included all human aspects throughout the time and world over.

During the 18th century, European leaders became interested in the potential for discovering and exploiting new resources around the world. Expeditions were mounted to systematically explore uncharted territory. For example, several voyages under the command of James Cook (1728-79), selected for the job because of his background as a land surveyor. His expeditions included a team of trained scientists, their aim being to collect information on, amongst other things, indigenous societies on behalf of the British government.

Anthropology as an intellectual tradition and a distinct branch of scholarship emerged in the course of the 19th century. In the 19th century in the year 1822 *Encyclopedia Britannica* defined anthropology as a discipline devoted to a discourse on human nature. Human nature includes biological nature (nature of human biology), cultural nature (nature of human culture in terms of art, morals, law and religion) and social nature (family life and political life). Since human nature is a complex phenomenon, it can be inferred from this definition that anthropology is equally curious about human biology, human culture and human society. It is the biological evolution of man which contributed to the cultural evolution and the human cultural capacity is responsible for the origin and development of human society. It is these intricate interconnections between biology, culture and society that anthropology explores. An explanation of the above definition reveals that humans are organisms, hence part of nature and not separate from nature. The definition and ideas of anthropology filtered into natural and social science and inspired several other academicians like biologists, physicians, philosophers, historians, and philologists to devote themselves to the study of the biological, social, and cultural nature of man.

Anthropology began to emerge as a separate discipline in the beginning of the 19th century. Towards the end of the 19th century the discipline gained sufficient respectability to be admitted into the world of academics. Between the years 1880-1890 the first university departments of anthropology were founded in England, America, France, and Germany. In Great Britain, Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917), developed the first department of anthropology at Cambridge University. In America, Franz Boas (1858-1942), established a department of anthropology at Columbia University and a department established by Paul Broca (1824-1880) in France became the pioneers in anthropology. In all the departments anthropology emerged as an integrated discipline of four branches. E.B. Tylor in his book *Anthropology*

(1881) defined anthropology as the study of old remains of people and the physical features, races, languages, customs and practices of primitive peoples. According to his definition of anthropology he has restricted the scope of anthropology to the study of 'primitive people' only. Paul Broca on the other hand, defined physical anthropology as the study of man at all levels. The anthropologists have emphasized that the scope of anthropology extends even to the study of modern people and their culture.

Tylor, Broca, Morgan and many other anthropologists defined anthropology on the basis of human evolution. According to their definition anthropology studies man who is alive today and man who lived in the distant past. The study begins with the origins and subsequent development of man besides the biological variation of contemporary man. The skeletal remains in the form of fossils can explain the origins and later development of man. The physical features and races through ages can reveal the biological variation up to the contemporary man. The tools left by early man can show the course of cultural evolution. The contemporary primitives and their cultures are the fossilized remnants of civilized man. Their bodily structure, their customs and their institutions can reveal what their biology was, culture and society in the evolutionary stage of savagery and barbarism before they could become civilized. The study of evolution based on fossil materials and the study of biological variation based on contemporary populations were the concerns of physical anthropology. The study of extinct cultures based on their material remains was the subject matter of archaeology. The study of evolution and variation of language was the focus of linguistics. The study of 'primitive' cultures as replicas of the previous stages of civilized peoples was the task of ethnology. In their totality all these sub-disciplines constituted anthropology. Anthropology, then, was concerned with the biological, cultural and social aspects of man from his emergence mostly up to the primitive level of his development and to some extent up to the civilized level of his development.

In 1890 British anthropology became professionalised with the advent of new methods. It was no more the listing of 'facts' but the observation and scientific interpretation of such facts. These new methods made the anthropologists view other cultures and societies with newer perspective which revealed more complex societies than were imagined before. However anthropologists of this time did not venture out to the field themselves but handed out questionnaires to travelers, missionaries, administrators to collect information for them. Due to this they were called armchair anthropologists. A guide on how to conduct anthropological enquiry was introduced called *Notes and Queries on Anthropology*, which was first published in 1874. It includes queries on a large array of topics, which included questions ranging from physical anthropology to questions on cultural anthropology. It also contained precise instructions on how to collect data, as well as reflections on retaining some sort of objectivity when recording observations.

As an emerging field of study, anthropology as a subject gradually matured during the early part of the 20th century. In the 20th century scholars like Franz Boas (1858-1942) in America, Malinowski (1884-1942), and Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1954) in Britain helped in the development of anthropology and developed the discipline into an increasingly complex and segmented academic field of study. They defined anthropology as the study of man at all levels of development. They explained the meaning and scope of anthropology in terms of biology, culture, and society throughout time and in all parts of the world. This means that anthropology studies man in the past, present, and future and in every nook and corner of the world. It studies early man as well as contemporary man. Again, it studies the contemporary

man in the form of 'primitive' man, peasant man, and urban man. At the same time, it studies all aspects of man, namely biological, cultural and social aspects. By covering all these aspects in time and in every nook and corner of the world, anthropology describes, analyses and explains both the similarities and differences among human societies and discovers universalities (what is common to all societies), generalities (what is common to all societies), and particularities (what is unique to all societies), and searches for biological, social and cultural laws governing man or the human species as a whole. Such integration of all aspects of man in time and space was explained as holism. Hence anthropology was declared as a holistic discipline. The above definition which is defined by Franz Boas, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown represented a significant departure from the definitions offered by Tylor, Broca, and many other anthropologists of the previous century.

Up until the beginning of the 20th century, in anthropology many different thoughts about how to understand other cultures were employed. Affected by the ideas of natural science, thoughts of systematic work, scholars interested in human studies set out to establish a science, which would legitimize their work. To do this, anthropologists developed new methods to employ in their research, in order to make their data trustworthy and reliable. Questionnaires were compiled to guide travellers as to what information was interesting for the educated anthropologists to study, and develop theories about human life. This way of working is today referred to as armchair anthropology, and at the turn of the last century, doubts as to the value of the methods and theories created in this manner arose.

A new generation of intellectuals in anthropology interested in the study of humans and culture found these methods of data collection unreliable. They were inspired by the idea of the natural scientists in their laboratories, and became concerned with developing new methods to apply within their field. The two forerunners in this quest were Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown. They both travelled to distant parts of the world, and participated in the lives of the indigenous people of these far-away places. They felt that this gave them a different kind of in depth understanding of how these societies functioned, and became advocates of this method of research. Malinowski is considered to have coined the term participant observation, which is still predominant in the field today. This methodology combined theories of culture studied at universities with first-hand experience on the part of the researcher. These attributes combined to create an image of the field as a laboratory, and this contributed to the establishing of a scientific reputation of the human sciences within the academic community of the time. This idea of the field as laboratory was the defining factor in developing the science of anthropology.

From the knowledge that they gained from their fieldwork, they developed theories of human life dependant on understanding aspects of culture in connection with the function they served within the given society, and dubbed these theories as functionalism and structural functionalism. These theories became very influential, and their impact is still evident in contemporary anthropology.

Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown's generation also succeeded in institutionalising the subject. Radcliffe-Brown coined the study of cultures as social anthropology, and their combined interpretation of the field is today termed British social anthropology to distinguish it from the American cultural anthropology. All these changes contributed to anthropology developing into the science that it is today. Emergence of different methods in ethnography has contributed greatly to the value of anthropology as a science. Furthermore, we find that ethnography as methodology is still highly relevant in the study of human life and culture.

Activity

Write about the history of anthropology in your own words.

2.4 ANTHROPOLOGY AS A NATURAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

There has been a long controversy regarding the position of anthropology among various sciences, whether to consider anthropology as a social science or a natural science or humanities. During the period when anthropology was still emerging, it was considered as a natural science. This is mainly because anthropology has adopted evolutionism as its approach. Under this approach, man is considered as a part of nature and social laws are similar to natural laws. But on the other hand, German scholars regarded human life and nature as two separate things and refused to accept human life as a part of natural life. It is not clear whether many of the modern anthropologists regard anthropology as a natural science or a social science.

According to scholars like Malinowski, anthropology stands in between natural and social science. Anthropologists like Radcliffe-Brown, Nadel and other regard anthropology as a natural science. According to them, anthropology is not involved in giving a detailed description about some special culture. Its job is to give a comparative analysis of different cultures and to frame social laws about the origin and change of human society through that analysis. According to these anthropologists, there are some patterns in the social life of man that do not undergo any change with a change in place and time, and the work of the anthropologist is to discover laws about them. On the other hand, anthropologists like Kroeber, Bidney and Evans-Pritchard maintained that culture and nature are different things and have no real unity in them. According to this school of thought, anthropology is a branch of history. As a matter of fact, both these viewpoints about the relation of anthropology and other social sciences are still accepted in different branches of anthropology. While on the one hand, the methods of science are owned in physical anthropology, on the other hand, along with these methods, the methods of history and aesthetics are also owned and their examples are found in the writings of Evans-Pritchard and Ruth Benedict. Robert Redfield says that holistic tendencies are on the increase in anthropology. Under this approach, man is scrutinized on different levels of culture and interest in the study of values and personality is increasing. All these tendencies show that in future, anthropology will come closer to social sciences in comparison to natural sciences.

Anthropology is commonly classified as a social science, related to such disciplines as sociology, psychology, geography, economics and political science. Through biological anthropology, it is closely connected to such fields as anatomy, physiology, embryology and genetics. Biological anthropology, archaeology and cultural anthropology, all exchange points of view with the more general biological sciences of ecology and ethnology. Archaeologists seeking new methods of dating or new ways of analysing archaeological sites and their contents are often closely linked to geologists, paleontologists, soil chemists, and physicists, linguists, archaeologists, and cultural anthropologists maintain a close liaison with such humanistic disciplines as history, literature, art and music. For almost all scientific and humanistic disciplines, anthropology provides a view of the past and a constant remembrance of human diversity.

The principal contribution of anthropology to other disciplines stems from its role in the development of the concept of culture. For the humanistic disciplines, the concept of culture carries the implication that styles of art, music and literature are based upon arbitrary criteria characteristic of individual cultural traditions. Because anthropologists are the only academic specialists who are routinely trained in the art of studying and understanding cultures other than their own, anthropologists have emerged authorities on the art, music and literature of most of the peoples of the world. Just as the student of language must turn to the anthropological linguist for information about the languages of the world, so the student of the humanities must turn to the cultural anthropologist for knowledge about the artistic creations of other cultures. Because anthropologists rarely possess the specialised knowledge acquired by specialists in the humanities, anthropologists, for their part, should turn to the humanities for information about the methods to be used in describing and analysing art styles or literary or philosophical traditions. Specialists trained in the social sciences, like specialists in the humanities, tend to emphasise the study of their own or closely related cultures. If they are to make wide ranging generalisations about human psychology, politics or economics, social scientists must depend on anthropologists and the data they have collected in order to demonstrate the general importance of their findings.

As biologists and anthropologists are united in the study of living things, there is a continuing exchange of information and point of view between anthropology and the biological sciences. Biologists who are directly concerned with the study of human beings must depend on anthropology for much of their information about human beings living in different cultures. Because anthropologists tend to think in holistic terms, both about humanity in general and societies and cultures in particular, anthropology has an important role to play in integrating the findings of more specialised disciplines into more general holistic explanations of human behaviour. Anthropology has brought to the less global sciences a special sort of objectivity and relativity of point of view. The anthropologist's ability to compare modernised societies with other quite different societies tends to highlight unusual features of modern society and modern thought.

Throughout the 20th century, anthropology advanced to develop into an engaging subject for its unique method of investigation and theoretical approaches to know human society and culture. Anthropology helped a lot in the growth of universal learning and intellectual development, delivering perceptive and extraordinary wisdom about society and culture. As a result anthropology became a discipline to be reckoned with in the social sciences.

Anthropology has a strong affinity with natural sciences as well. In fact, anthropology is well known by that aspect of it which is mainly concerned with the biological/physical dimensions of mankind as a biological being in group context. Hence, it may be inappropriate to say that anthropology is only a social science. It is also a natural science, not in the sense that it deals with the natural phenomenon or man as an individual entity per se, but in the sense that one of its main interests is to study man and man's behaviour as a product of the natural processes, and in the context of the animal kingdom (Scupin and DeCorse, 1995).

2.5 ANTHROPOLOGY AND COLONIALISM

It is undeniable that the initial basis for anthropological research, and the rise and consolidation of anthropology as an academic discipline from its inception, is intimately

linked to colonialism. From the founding fathers onwards, anthropology has sought out the exotic “other”, and had usually concentrated this search in the colonial possessions of the British Empire, at least until the period of decolonisation and independence (Kuper, 1996, 1999).

According to Howard and Dunaif-Hattis (1992) by the late 1870s, anthropology was beginning to emerge as a profession. A major impetus for its growth was the expansion of western colonial powers and their consequent desire to better understand the people living under colonial domination. In the United States, for example, the government sought information on Native American peoples who were being subdued and placed on reservations. As the tribes were subdued, anthropologists were employed to help devise means to administer these people. However, many anthropologists were motivated by the desire to record local customs before they disappeared and were forgotten.

Anthropology emerged from the colonial expansion of Europe. Colonialism structured the relationship between anthropologists and the people they studied and had an effect on methodological and conceptual formulations in the discipline. The anthropology of colonialism is neither the exclusive province of anthropologists nor restricted to colonialism. Scholarship in the anthropology of colonialism has already turned to studies of colonist, examining the agents of capitalist enterprise, the development or imposition of new ideologies through missionary activity, and the diversity of and conflicts within colonist populations.

During the 1870s and 1880s, anthropology became a profession in museums, specially in Europe, North America and South America. This helped in its growth, in the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, particularly in the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in ethnographic research.

Initially at that time anthropologists concentrated on studying small communities in non-complex societies. During this period the social and cultural characteristics of indigenous peoples of simple societies were studied meticulously and recorded. This was in the beginning actually done by colonial administrators to better understand and help the administration to rule the foreign cultures. They also tried to understand their past. The societies studied were at that time comprehended to be ‘primitive’ a stage which the Europeans thought to be the initial stages of man's cultural evolution, the past of their own ‘superior’ selves.

Activity

What is the role of anthropology during colonialism?

2.6 HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE: CULTURAL AND BIOLOGICAL

To understand the dynamics of human life both culturally and biologically, anthropologists apply a holistic approach of enquiry. This is a unique feature of anthropological study. It is easily noticed that culture, biology, language and human beings of the past are all inter related. Hence an investigation in isolation would be quite incomplete than a study which includes different dimensions of humans. Present day societies have to go back to their past to understand their present better.

The study of anthropology is comprehensive in a number of important respects. First, the anthropological approach involves both biological and socio-cultural aspects

of humanity. That is, anthropologists are interested in people's genetic endowment as well as what people acquire from their cultural environment after birth. Second, anthropology has the deepest possible time frame, starting with earliest beginnings of humans several million years ago right up to the present. Anthropology is holistic to the extent that it studies all varieties of people wherever they may be found. That is, anthropology's global perspective considers the life-ways of East Africa pastoralists, Indian tribes, Polynesian fisherman, and Japanese business people all as equally legitimate subjects of study. And finally, anthropology studies many different aspects of human experience.

Anthropology is a holistic science, which means that anthropologists view *Homo sapiens*, and the evolutionary ancestors of modern humans, in the broadest context possible – as both biological beings and cultural beings through a time span. In other words, we study everything about people for as long as humans and their immediate humanlike precursors have existed as a species. We keep this broad, integrated perspective no matter what specific detail of human life we might be investigating. For example, a paleoanthropologist will consider the cultural adaptations (including tool use and possible social behaviour) of the biological ancestors of modern humans. The broad time frame covered by anthropology is significant because anthropologists believe that any insights about contemporary human adaptations, either biological or cultural, should be made with an eye to past adaptations.

As holism became the unique feature of anthropology, distinguished scholars segmented anthropology into sub-disciplines on the basis of the different aspects of man. Anthropology has taken a "holistic approach" to its study of people; this accounts for the wide scope of the field. As mentioned earlier, anthropology is divided into four major sub-fields: physical anthropology, cultural anthropology or social anthropology, archaeological anthropology and linguistic anthropology. Physical anthropologists examine the physical and biological processes of the human body and the relationship of these to cultural and historical factors. Paleontologists and anthropologically oriented archaeologists are concerned with the origins and evolution of the human body and of culture. Cultural anthropologists, for the most part, analyse contemporary socio-cultural systems around the world, while anthropological linguists specialise in studies of language, a major area of culture. The anthropologist is able to gain an understanding of humanity through use of holistic approach (Gary P Ferraro 1992).

Activity

What do you understand by holistic perspective in anthropology?

2.7 SUMMARY

In this unit we have examined the definition, meaning scope and background of anthropology from the time of its emergence to its present. Anthropology, a uniquely holistic and comparative discipline, is the scientific and humanistic study of humankind, of human biology and cultural diversity and its immediate ancestors. The discipline anthropology includes four main sub-disciplines or sub-fields as discussed above. Many anthropologists add applied anthropology to this list as a fifth field of study, whereas others incorporate applied anthropology into each of anthropology's subfields. Each of the major branches of anthropology has several specialised areas of study within it.

Anthropology is also the study of human unity and diversity (similarities and differences) in time and space. The discipline of anthropology emphasises on comparing human groups to understand the range of normal variation in human behaviour and biology, and therefore considers what it is to be human. Anthropology attempts to provide a general worldview; characterised by its holistic ideal, a belief that an understanding of human nature requires drawing together and relating information from all aspects of the human condition. The discipline is devoted to 'holistic perspective' to study humankind, to the understanding and explanation of human beings in all of their diverse aspects at all times and places. All these have been compactly described in this unit.

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**Meaning, Scope and
Background**

Suggested Reading

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Sample Questions

- 1) Define the meaning and scope of anthropology?
- 2) Is anthropology a natural or a social science? Discuss
- 3) Describe about anthropology during renaissance period?
- 4) What is the holistic perspective in anthropology? Explain.

UNIT 3 BRANCHES OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Contents

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Physical/Biological Anthropology
 - 3.2.1 History and Development
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 - 3.3.1 History and Development
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Learning Objectives



After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- comprehend about the different branches of anthropology;
- critically evaluate how these parts study humanity; and
- interpret how current realms can be explored within the subject.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit deals with the four branches of anthropology: biological/physical anthropology, socio-cultural anthropology, archaeological anthropology and linguistic anthropology. It highlights the holism of the discipline and how these parts with their uniqueness still manage to retain an analytic connectivity. Before elucidating on the different branches of the subject, we move forward with a brief outline of what anthropology entails. Anthropology studies humankind in its totality taking into consideration both the past and present. And in this pursuit to comprehend the intricacies of human life, anthropology assembles knowledge from humanities, social sciences, biological sciences and physical sciences.

3.2 PHYSICAL/BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Physical anthropology now popularly known as biological anthropology, analyses the physical and biological facets of humankind from comparative, ecological, and

evolutionary vistas. The name biological anthropology came into vogue when scientists started studying humans based on evidence which were not just limited to bones. For example: the study of human genetics, the study of primates and their relationship to the environment, etc. In its comprehension of variability, adaptation and evolution, it also identifies itself as a social science, as the study of human species is incomplete without its cultural context. So physical anthropology trains one to learn the basic principles of evolutionary biology and human genetics; the similarities and difference between humans, mammals and primate species; the vital issues of hominid evolution including the analysis of fossils and molecular evidences to understand the origin of modern humans; role of genetic, ecological and socio-cultural components on biological differences in living human populations and bio-cultural overview on human growth and development. To further elaborate on the subject, it is pertinent to provide a general overview of how it all began.

3.2.1 History and Development

We would now discuss how this branch took shape and became what it is today. Physical anthropology grew gradually and established itself as a human science with the amalgamation of various sciences by venturing into new areas and with the application of already existing concepts to new data. Edward Tyson (1650-1708), one of the prominent founders of primatology, conducted the first systematic research in 1699 on the anatomical differences between humans and apes. This facilitated the interest to know the origin and nature of human race which consequently solicited the beginning of physical anthropology. This can be dated back to the eighteenth century when the study of race took a scientific turn. The German physician Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752-1840) is considered to be the first prominent physical anthropologist who invented the study of craniology through which he made 5 major classifications of the human races (Caucasian, Mongolian, Malayan, Ethiopian and American) on the basis of skull findings. He was a student of Carl Linneaus, who was an exponent of zoology and included humans in the classification of primates.

During the 30s and 40s of the nineteenth century, there were heated debates related to human races being monogenous or polygenous. James Cowles Prichard, an English physician and ethnologist who was a supporter of monogeny, believed that all races were derived from Adam conforming to the biblical notion of procreation while American physician, Samuel George Morton (1786-1848), advocated polygeny, which proposed that humanity could not be attributed to have begun from a single species but that humans came from several species leading to various races. Morton used anthropometric measurements to study human physical variation. He was largely read and discussed in the scientific world in Europe and America in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Around the same time, anthropological traditions started to gain ground with French anthropologist and physician, Paul Broca (1824-1880) becoming the founder of the Anthropological Society in Paris in 1859, the *Revue d'Anthropologie* in 1872, and the School of Anthropology in Paris in 1876. He made huge advances in the study of cranial anthropometry, thus paving the way for more development in the study of physical anthropology. In Germany Rudolf Virchow (1821-1902), one of the founders of social medicine opined on how human beings changed gradually and the role of environment and diseases on it. In the philosophical arena at the beginning of the 20th century, with anthropometry becoming more sophisticated and scientific, thanks to the efforts of Karl Pearson (1857-1936), the Americans also started gaining ground in the creation of physical anthropology as a distinct discipline.

Ales Hrdlicka (1860-1943) is synonymous to the development of physical anthropology at the Smithsonian Institute in America. Earnest A. Hooton (1887-1954) introduced the subject at Harvard University. Hrdlicka was responsible for establishing the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* in 1918. He also encouraged the creation of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists in 1930. Earnest Hooton, on his part trained many noteworthy physical anthropologists like Harry L. Shapiro and Carleton S. Coon. During the same period, Germany produced anthropologists to reckon with, like Eugen Fischer, Fritz Lenz and Erwin Baur. Though there was continuous intellectual conflict between the Americans and the Germans, both contributed immensely to the development of physical anthropology.

Physical anthropology entered its modern realm in the early 19th century with Franz Boas (1858-1942) an academic in Columbia University not only stressed on the variability of humans physically but also emphasised on the study of human races in terms of culture. More understanding of the study of culture can be had in the second part of the unit. Other academics who laid the foundations of present day physical anthropology with their discernments are Juan Comas, W.K. Gregory, William Krogman, Dudley Morton, Adolph Schultz, William Straus, T. Dale Stewart, Robert J. Terry, T. Wingate Todd, Mildred Trotter, etc. Though initially physical anthropology concentrated on anatomy and medical science, later with Harvard University training more anthropologists, it allowed them to think in newer ways about human biology and look for other forms other than anthropometry to make comparative studies about human populations. In the 1950s and 1960s physical anthropology took a different turn where fieldwork tradition was reintroduced. It was Sherwood Washburn, a student of Hooton who spearheaded this trend by giving weightage to the understanding of primatology and paleoanthropology rather than just concentrating on human races. This paved the way for contemporary anthropology which included newer fields like human genetics, paleopathology, etc. Scholars like L.S. B. Leakey, Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, etc. contributed to the study of naturalistic science in anthropology.

3.2.2 Current Fields of Study

Today the study of physical anthropology has become immensely diverse. It has come a long way from the study of primates with the help of fossils and skull findings. However, primate classification on the basis of fossil evidence which still remains vital to know the hominid tree, other concerns like evolution of the human species, extinction and mutation of species, differences and similarities occurring in the process, etc. have gained ground. The biological bases of human behaviour and human biological variability are also other major concerns of study. Methods of study used by physical anthropologists are highly scientific and allow cross comparative analysis.

Current concerns of physical anthropology are briefly discussed to give a basic understanding to the learners.

Paleoanthropology

This field is the most fundamental and among the oldest fields in physical anthropology. It is a study which combines paleontology and physical anthropology to learn about humans and their evolution from fossil hominid evidence, artifacts and also on the basis of geological and burial site evidences. Through such collection, repairing and reconstruction is done to provide anatomical description, show variation and the specimen position in hominid evolutionary development. Wherever necessary, statistical methods are also made use of.

Paleoprimatology

Besides taking help from past evidences, physical anthropologists also seek help from non-human primates to make a comparative study of their behaviour and perceptive capacity with human ancestors, to comprehend humans' natural history, to know their position as mammals, etc.

Osteology

The name is a scientific connotation of what the study of bones is. It is that part of physical anthropology which helps in the identification of human remnants in terms of age, sex, growth, development and death by studying the bone structure, skeletal features, morphology, etc.

Human Genetics

The field of human genetics is of use to physical anthropology as together they primarily study hereditary transmission in humans. In fact physical anthropology began to be called biological anthropology with the introduction of genetics into its framework of study. As genes are the most common factor to provide for most inherited human traits, hence the study of human genetics is important in anthropology. As anthropology fundamentally concerns itself with humans, human genetics serves enough help to understand human diseases and also provide solutions for such.

Population Genetics

This field, though a hard-core biology oriented domain, is particularly important to physical anthropology as it concerns itself with the processes of evolution, i.e., natural selection, genetic drift, gene flow and mutation. It takes into consideration components of populations to study the frequency, distribution and change in allele which in turn helps in understanding how new species are developed and their adaptation.

Molecular Anthropology

This arena of physical anthropology deals with the use of molecular analysis, to comprehend the connectivity between earlier and contemporary humans. This is done with the use of DNA sequence. It also includes the comparative study of all existing populations.

Human Variation

The study of human variation is a prominent facet in physical anthropology where how human evolution has occurred throughout history throughout geographic locations is learnt. The study of "race" which dominated the development of the discipline is what human variation is all about, giving it a more ethical representation. The variability observed are ones which have permanency, like mental and physical differences, which can be measured.

Human Growth and Development

This field is an important subject for physical anthropologists to investigate. It probes to find out and detail the rate at which a human grows, points out specific events in the process of development and also inquires how environment, nutrition and heredity affects the physical body.

Human Ecology

The relationship of humans with their physical, natural and created environments and its study is another part of physical anthropology which is immensely needed as human ecology exhibits the implications it has on human growth, behaviour and

sustainability. As human ecology links itself with the social life of humans, it is hence studied in social anthropology too.

Forensic anthropology

This is a popular applied portion of physical anthropology where the techniques developed in it are used in the identification of human remains in a legal scenario. Forensic anthropologists help to imply the sex, height, age and other features of a dead person from the remains of the body.

Demography

To understand the size, structure and distribution of human populations, physical anthropology makes use of statistical methods which fall under the fold of demography. It also looks into changes in time and space in population on the basis of birth, migration and death.

So from the above deliberation we see that physical or biological anthropology has come a long way in its pursuit of cognizance concerning the development and evolution of human beings. Today its processes have widened hugely and have opened avenues for individuals by providing opportunities in academics, research institutes, health organisations, museums, primate centres, etc. Physical anthropology contributes to the understanding of humans in all its aspects.

3.3 SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The second major branch of anthropology that we need to learn about is socio-cultural anthropology. Socio-cultural anthropology also known as social anthropology or cultural anthropology is an established area in anthropology. It can clearly be stated as the principal discipline which concerns itself with the comparative study of culture and society. The way in which physical anthropology devotes itself to the study of the physical and biological facets of humans, in the same manner socio-cultural anthropology, concerns itself with the cultural diversity of humans and their societies in time and space. This comparative study stemmed out from 19th century ethnology [see **Box 1**]. Its development in the 19th century also connects it to a large extent to colonialism.

Box 1

Ethnology: Ethnology may be called the science that deals with the study of origin, operations, behaviour, institutions and organisations of diverse societies to understand their similarities and differences. The discipline has gone through a gamut of alterations with changes taking place in human lives and their ways of living.

We now provide a comprehensive description of how the subject came into being and what paths it followed to establish itself as a definite area of study.

3.3.1 History and Development

People have been interested in themselves and their way of life since much earlier times. There has always been an interest to learn more about oneself, one's social life and also to know how others live. We can find evidence of such methodical rationality in the works of the Greeks during the fifth century B.C. The name that is popularly mentioned today while tracing the beginnings of socio-cultural anthropology, is the Greek scholar, Herodotus (c. 484 B.C – c. 425 B.C) who provides us with a

detailed account of ancient conventions, practices, natural habitats, political scenario etc. of various cultures and their conflicts in his book, *The Histories*. He is recognised as the “father of anthropology” by many. But proper systematic study of the subject began with the formation of colonies by the Europeans and their induction to these cultures. The stark difference in lifestyle led scholars, intellectuals, missionaries to study them. Travelers David Hume and Immanuel Kant may be cited in this context.

This study was highly imperialistic and racist in perception, with the scholars calling the societies studied in colonies as primitive, as there was dependence on basic technology for survival. The biggest example in the development of social anthropology was the deliberation on unilineal evolution advocated by Sir Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917). This model was influenced by Darwin’s natural selection [see **Box 2**], from a cultural point of view where two ideas were put forward: unilineal evolution and psychic unity of mankind. The first idea postulated that human beings evolved culturally from primitive to civilized. The second idea postulated that human beings developed the same thoughts depending on their needs and requirements irrespective of their physical separation in time and space. The two ideas were meant to be connected as due to the same speculations, humans pass through the same stages of evolution, i.e. from simple to complex, though at different points of time depending on availability of resources. Tylor propounded his scheme from the point of religion where he suggested that it evolved from animism (worship of spirits, connected with simple societies) to monotheism (worship of one divinity, connected to advanced societies), polytheism being the middle stage.

Box 2

Natural Selection: Charles Darwin developed a theory which suggested that all species originated from common ancestors through a process called natural selection. Natural selection is considered to be the biggest factor resulting in the diversity of species and their genomes. Natural Selection has four constituents. They are: Variation, Inheritance, High Rate of Population Growth and Differential Survival and Reproduction.

Thinkers Henry Maine and Lewis H. Morgan’s works *Ancient Law* (1861) and *Ancient Society* (1877) were based on their own investigations and travelogues of their time. They too were supporters of the cultural evolutionary theory and played significant roles in the development of social anthropology. In fact Morgan’s evolutionary model of humans going through the stages of savagery, barbarism and civilization played forth in the growth of this school of thought. Other notable cultural evolutionists were James Frazer, W. H. R. Rivers, Carlos Seligman, A. C. Haddon, etc.

However, this theory received much criticism from other contemporary scholars of that time. This came from theorists who believed that cultures while evolving into a greater identity also sometimes get degenerated. This group of scholars was referred to as diffusionists. They were of the view that human beings were by nature generally uninventive. A culture having grown in a particular area spreads to other areas by diffusion, migration, infusion and borrowing. The main supporters of diffusion school may be divided into three, based on their geographical and national identity. They are American, British and German. Main propounders of this school are Schimdt, W.J. Perry, Robert Lowie, Franz Boas, Clark Wissler, A.L. Kroeber, etc.

Franz Boaz who is considered to play an important role in the development of modern socio-cultural anthropology, completely denounced the unilinear evolutionary

model and emphasised that humans and their societies are to be studied by conducting extensive fieldwork, by living with the group studied. He was also of the view that all cultures were distinctively different and that they were understood and viewed on their worth and not be compared with others. This is what Boas termed as cultural relativism. It led to the condemnation of theories built by armchair scholars and brought the advent of empirical field research. This was what came to be called historical particularism, with cultural relativism and diffusion as its main concerns.

3.3.2 Current Fields of Study

In Britain, modern socio-cultural anthropology began with the emphasis of field research, use of native language while conducting fieldwork, and denouncement of unilinear evolution. The early twentieth century scholar Bronislaw Malinowski was the main advocate of this. He emphasised that societies functioned on the basis of the needs that they fulfilled. His theory of social existence was termed as functionalism. Another advocate of empirical research was A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. He stressed on the idea that social organisations are made of parts and each part function in a way to form a complete whole. This model of Radcliffe-Brown's is known as structural functionalism. Boas' work in the Baffin Islands, Malinowski's in Trobriand Islands and Radcliffe-Brown's in the Andaman's depicted their ideas and in turn influenced and inspired many scholars and intellectuals throughout the years.

Boas was also a pioneer in influencing and inspiring many of his students to build up on a theory in the study of socio-cultural anthropology in the early twentieth century (1930s). This was related to the psyche of the individual and its connection to society. This was more popularly known as the culture and personality school. Here both the effects of culture on personality and vice versa were researched elaborately. The main exponents of this school were Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict, Cora du Bois, Ralph Linton, A. Kardiner, etc. They drew selectively on Freud's psycho-analysis. This though did not find many takers in the beginning, psychological anthropology as a sub part of social anthropology is today a highly recognised field of study.

In the late 30s of the twentieth century another school of thought which emerged in the study of socio-cultural anthropology was in response to the Boasian model of studying society. Two ideas, one based on ecology having a powerful effect on cultures and second being means of production influencing society's behaviour, which gave credit to material culture, came up. The first idea was advocated by anthropologist Julian H. Steward (1902-1972) in his *Theory of Culture Change* (1955). The latter idea was promoted by anthropologist Leslie A. White (1900-1975) and archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957). The trios' ideas came to be called neo-evolutionism.

Newer interventions and thoughts stemmed out by the 1950s with linguistic, symbolic and cognitive anthropology building on concepts of how humans gave meaning to the world surrounding them. At the same time a highly intellectual theory of society, which was connected to "meaning" came to being, called structuralism and in anthropology was postulated by the eminent French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss. In America, symbolic anthropology based on magico-religious concerns of society became more popular than structuralism with works of Emile Durkheim, Victor W. Turner, Mary Douglas and Clifford Geertz holding forth.

Socio-cultural anthropology has passed through various theories in the study of society. From the middle of the twentieth century, concerns related to women, class and power structure, caste, employment, migration, urbanisation, etc., though studied before, got newer and more critical intellectual exploration. Theories like marxism,

feminism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, post-structuralism came to be used with the works of social scientists like Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Michel Foucault (1926-1984), Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), etc., heavily influencing anthropological thinkers to view society from more pertinently prevailing concerns.

We end the discussion on socio-cultural anthropology with a mention of the areas which are of interest to socio-cultural anthropologists today. In the global scenario, contemporary socio-cultural anthropology is involved in researching issues in all parts of the world. While remaining true to its central idea of investigating the diverse cultural traits and social activities of humans all over, (with its intrinsic style of holism, fieldwork and comparison), it now also focuses on areas of relevant universal concerns. The discipline associates itself with all kinds of communities in connection with globalisation, transnationalism, multiculturalism, with diaspora studies becoming a major trend. Gender studies have also gained ground in socio-anthropology with the role of women in society and other newer sub-areas like studies of sexuality involving lesbian, gay and transgender being explored minutely. Concerns related to human rights are also included in this gamut of study and other more interesting domains like the corporate sector, public-health sector, cinema, social work, all fall in the range of studies in socio-cultural anthropology in the current scenario. All these surely help in understanding one's lifestyle and society in a critical and analytical manner.

3.4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

In this portion we will talk about the third branch of anthropology which is archaeological anthropology. This branch is equally relevant like the other three and more so because it deals with humans and their culture since the time of their inception. It too, like biological anthropology, concerns itself among other things with the origin and development of human beings but with an entirely different perspective of course. It should be noted here that archaeology exists as a separate discipline but in its study of humans, it gets connected to anthropology, and thus making it a humanistic science. The material remains of humans and the humans themselves (from burial remains) are matters of investigation through methods like excavation where differences, origin, both biological and social evolution can be comprehended. In archaeology the time period covered are prehistoric, proto-historic and also later periods like what is called civilization. Both anthropology and archaeology use scientific methods to recover and construct human beings' past through deductive and inductive processes.

Today archaeological anthropology also deals with palaeoanthropology, ethnoarchaeology, settlement archaeology, etc. as the gamut of knowledge accumulated from the reconstruction of the past has become vast. In recent times archaeological anthropology has been studying the history of cultures and its processes through studies like new-archaeology, processual archaeology and the latest being post-processual archaeology. Much earlier the subject only depended on methods like absolute and relative chronological dating to know about both physical and material cultures. Later demographic conditions and environmental order, looking into subsistence patterns, economy, etc. also fell under the purview of study in archaeology. To put it simply, archaeological anthropology seeks to gather knowledge about the origin and development of human beings and their culture in its own distinctive way.

We provide here a detailed description of archaeological anthropology in terms of stages studied, methods used and recent variations and trends. Archaeological anthropology as mentioned above follows a sequence in events starting from prehistoric to recent stages in history.

3.4.1 History and Development

Prehistoric archaeology is an important part of archaeological anthropology where origin and development of human beings are studied through certain stages based on their characteristics. We use the word prehistory to denote a stage before history where no material or knowledge was documented in any form specially writing. The term was used by Paul Torunal (1833) as pre-historique after findings made in the caves of Southern France. However, the exact term prehistoric was used by Daniel Wilson in 1851. Prehistoric stages are studied by archaeologists with the help of substances like stone, wood, bone, metals, earthen ware, tools, ornaments, outfits, etc. It is in fact in these investigations that the experience of an anthropologist comes in handy to the archaeologist, where both systematically gather such objects to study. Initially prehistoric archaeologists used the three age system where human prehistory was divided into tool making stages such as Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age respectively. Later on Bronze Age also included copper in it, thus calling it the Copper/ Bronze age. However, the Stone Age being so vast was further sub-divided into lower palaeolithic, middle palaeolithic and upper palaeolithic. The other stages after the three palaeolithic stages are called mesolithic and neolithic stages or cultures. All these were divided on the basis of the kind of tools used (i.e. from hand axes to microliths to mazes and harpoons). There were other pre-historians who were not satisfied with these classifications based on the use of technology from stone to metal. They rather preferred to classify them according to the subsistence economy humans made use of in different stages, like barbarian or food gathering stage, food producing stage and finally urbanisation stage.

The next stage that we are going to learn about is protohistory. This is a period where some form of writing was found in some cultures or countries (like the Greek texts) while others had not yet invented it. More clearly it can be called the period between prehistory and history. In India, from the pre-Harappan days to the time of Maurya rule, can be said to fall under proto-historic category, i.e. from 3500 to 300 B.C.

We will now briefly touch upon what civilization is, before proceeding to an explanation on archaeological anthropology in detail. For archaeologists and anthropologists civilization is a point in history or time where there are large complex societies, settled existences, domestication of animals, plants, specialist occupations, division of labour, trading, etc. In India, the Indus valley civilization (2500 B.C.), with its two cities Mohenjodaro and Harappa, is considered to be one of the first civilizations of the world. Other important civilizations known at that time are Egypt, China and Mesopotamia. However, the Indus valley was unable to endure itself and completely disappeared from history. This is also a major concern for study for the archaeologists about why some civilizations disappeared and others continued.

Archaeological anthropology tries to find and explain the origin, growth and development of cultures in the past. For this, as mentioned above, experts take help of tool remnants, or material like pottery, ornaments, artifacts, etc. to understand the ability of a particular past culture studied. For all these, burials where much of the remains are found turn to be the best place to investigate. Along with these, the environment and climatic condition of a particular time period is also comprehended

from evidences gathered from the earth's surface. Though the main method employed by the archaeologist is excavation; surveyance and data analysis also form important methods.

Archaeology as a discipline as pointed out by Walter Taylor is neither history nor anthropology. As an autonomous discipline, it consists of a method and a set of specialised techniques for the gathering or production of cultural information. The main aims of archaeology are to recover, record, analyse and classify material collected. It then provides a description or interpretation of things created and behaviour leading to such creations.

3.4.2 Current Fields of Study

In the United States archaeology is more interested in understanding the human past rather than concentrating on material remains, or on techniques to recover them, and as such in the United States, archaeology is also considered to be one of the main branches of anthropology. As part of anthropology, archaeology exists as a humanistic discipline as well as a science. It therefore tries to understand things like evolution of culture, people, ideology, power and anything and everything that has effected in the changes that societies go through. As a science it tries to build events on the basis of whatever evidence is available with them. This combination of humanism and science in the reconstruction of humans is admirable in the subject. To sum up, archaeological anthropology studies the way of life in the past through use of scientific methods in its understanding of human behavior. Till date for archaeologists along with anthropologists studying the human past, both relative and absolute dating methods remain pertinent.

While trying to know about archaeological anthropology, we also need to learn about different areas of the subject which it deals with. Palaeoanthropology is one important area of study where people who lived in the Palaeolithic times are studied. Evidences on which this study is based on are skull remains, bones, burial grounds, etc. Fossils too form an important component in this study by which human lineages and its evolution are learnt. For comparisons, it takes the help of primatology which deals with our living non-human primates. Ethnographic details are also used to draw definite conclusions. Hence, the methods used for reconstruction, can be termed as historical, comparative and survivals.

We have mentioned above that archaeologists study environmental evidences also to understand impacts of culture on environment and vice-versa. This study and sub-part of archaeology is called environmental archaeology. It studies the relationship of human beings with nature with the help of fossilized remains of plants, animals, pollen cores, land site, change in course of rivers, etc. Hence it involves geological and biological methods which are used to study the environments of past human societies. In environmental archaeology, the main concerns of reconstruction are ecological, social and economic.

In archaeology, when we concentrate on the material remains of a particular society specifically than on culture as a whole, it can be termed as ethno-archaeology. This study helps us in deciphering how societies of the past lived, what religious beliefs they contained, what their social structure was like, etc. It is a recent form of study and has many complications engulfing it. It is the use of ethnography in the study of archaeology and makes use of experimental methods where controlled observation of processes (depending on knowledge collected from living societies) are used and have connections to archaeological records.

Another area studied in archaeological anthropology is new-archaeology or processual archaeology. This study involves studying the processes by which humans lived, i.e. how humans in the past did things like create artifacts and how they finally got decayed. Thus, the archaeologist studies how artifacts were created and what natural or cultural reasons made the archaeological site look like the way it does during the time of study. This is termed as a site formation process. It is in fact the processual archaeologists who made use of the cultural historical method in the study of past human societies. This trend set in from the 1960s in the U.S. specially after Sally R. Binford's and Lewis Binford's book on *New Perspectives in Archaeology* (1968) came out, where they suggested the use of computer technology for the analysis of information gathered.

Settlement archaeology is yet another part of archaeological study. It deals with the study of settlements in landscape and how they build themselves according to some principles, it also concerns itself with relationships shared between urban and rural spaces, also how work done by humans have an impact on the environment, etc. All these concerns are studied but situated in past circumstances. Other than archeological approach used to provide a detailed explanation of past cultural events, settlement archaeology also makes use of geography to understand the patterning of settlements in a particular environmental setting. As this process of studying social occurrences with use of archaeological and ethnological expertise gained importance, it paved the way for scholars to give immense notice to traditional issues related to cultural archaeology. Settlement archaeology, hence, is one of the core areas of archaeology and it is sometimes also called non-site archaeology as it also investigates bigger areas instead of just focusing on a single site. This form of archeological study was first carried out extensively by Gordon R. Wiley in the Vriu Valley of Peru.

The last category of archaeological study that we will briefly discuss here is post-processual archaeology. It is also known as interpretative archaeology. This is a highly controversial process in the study of the past lives of humans. It is in fact at times called a movement which started in archaeological theory. In its interpretations it is critically subjective. Post-processual thinkers are influenced by theories of society more specifically by neo-marxism, post-modernism, feminist archaeology, critical theory, structuralism, etc. It nevertheless makes use of archaeological methods and techniques as well. Post-processual is equally used in the United States and the United Kingdom, though as a theoretical study, it made its appearance first in the United Kingdom. This was sometime between the late 1970s and early 1980s. The main propounders of post-processual archaeology in the United Kingdom are Ian Hodder, who also coined the term, Christopher Tilley, Daniel Miller, Peter Ucko, etc. This theory arose as a reaction and critique of processual archaeology. It highly denounced the use of technological methods and scientific methods to analyse data from which it claimed objective conclusions could be drawn. Post-processual archaeology displays any archaeological knowledge as open to interpretations which emphasises on reflexivity [see **Box 3**] and multivocality [see **Box 3**].

Box 3

Relexivity : Being aware of one's own position relative to the material.

Multivocality: Accepting multiple interpretations and approaches as being complementary in understanding archaeological material.

To end our discussion on archaeological anthropology, we may recapitulate that it is the study of mankind from the time of their creation, their processes of development

and the different cultural achievements they made in it. The way to study it is reconstruction of history with the help of material remains along with matter like skulls, bone remains, fossils, pollen remains, artifacts, burial grounds, etc. It uses various kinds of method for its investigation and hence we find different categories in archaeological anthropology like, new-archaeology or processual archaeology, settlement archaeology, ethno archaeology, paleo-anthropology, environmental archaeology, post-processual archaeology, etc.

3.5 LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

The branch of anthropology we will talk about lastly is linguistic anthropology. Linguistic anthropology is an interdisciplinary science in anthropology. It deals with the study of language and how it can be viewed as part of the cultural reality in human society. The subject acknowledges language as an accomplishment which furthers human social behaviour and activities. Linguistic anthropology as an interdisciplinary subject works hand in hand with anthropological linguistics, ethno-linguistics and socio-linguistics. This linkage helps in the investigation of how language affects the creation and management of individual and group identities, social norms and ideals and also concentrates on the biological implications language has in the functioning of society. Initially this branch started off with the attempt to study the origin, evolution and development of languages and the salvaging of languages which were on the verge of disappearing. Eventually it progressed to embrace various facets of language and how it influences even the minutest concerns of social life.

3.5.1 History and Development

It was the American scholars, notably Franz Boas (1858-1942) who became interested in the study of Native American Indian languages in the later part of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. During this period, this became an integral part of anthropological study. Students of Boas' were encouraged to critically involve in the description of linguistics, which included description of grammar and typological categorisation. He was of the opinion that the study of languages would assist in fieldwork and the study of culture. The model followed by Boas was documentation of languages of almost extinct tribes, which was then called 'salvaging anthropology' and now more commonly known as 'anthropological linguistics'. In the study of language too, Boas remained loyal to the use of cultural relativism [see **Box 4**] and studied cultures and their languages based on their own understanding of their lives.

Box 4

Cultural Relativism: Cultural Relativism is an approach, a principle in anthropology advocated by Franz Boas in the early 20th century. For Boas, this approach posited that all cultures are to be given equal worth and to be comprehended from the point of the people's own cultures.

The term 'anthropological linguistics' can also be traced back to Edward Sapir (1884-1939) as he inspired his pupils to take up linguistics as a subject to further their study of anthropology and language. It is no surprise that they deliberately started calling themselves as anthropological linguists who studied anthropological linguistics. Sapir himself was a student of Boas and carried forward Boas' interest of comprehending grammatical procedures and their utility in the study of cultures. Sapir differed from Boas by concentrating on comparative studies of cultures on the

basis of language. Sapir and his student Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897-1941) further advanced a hypothesis on linguistic relativity which suggests that language influences thought which in turn affects cultural behaviour. This hypothesis came to be known as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (coined by another pupil of Sapir's, Harry Hoijer) and is nothing but a furthering of Boas' concept of cultural relativism. Here people speaking a particular language would behave in a certain manner depending on the language they speak. Therefore, different languages and their influence on society cannot be understood on the basis of one language, for example, the English language.

Whorf on his part came up with his own methodological and conceptual framework. He categorised use of grammar into overt and covert for delving into the speakers' sensitivity. He developed this idea more in the 1950s which he termed as metapragmatics. He opined that thought processes of speakers are influenced by their ways of speaking. Though Whorf's idea was highly criticized in the 60s and the 70s, it nevertheless kept playing a crucial role in the development of linguistic anthropology throughout. In fact Sapir and Whorf's concepts were utilized by scholars in the 1980s especially in the contemporary study of language ideology.

In the historical explanation of linguistic anthropology, one would be curious to know the role of the European scholars in its evolvment. The early German scholars Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803), a literary critic and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), a linguist, inspired the works of Sapir and Whorf. Herder's views on language determining human thought and Humboldt's idea of language being a rule-governed system led to Sapir and Whorf's concept of literary relativity and Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. In the United Kingdom anthropologists stressed on the use of native language during fieldwork, with Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) setting a benchmark by providing the theoretical and methodological framework for it. In the 1950s, the study of ethno-linguistics gained ground where linguistics was studied in relation to anthropological issues. However these events did not produce as much effect as the subject did in the United States.

In the United States the subject went on expanding as more intellectual investigations were conducted. After Whorf's emphasis on deliberating on the grammar in speech, the study of language in anthropology evolved to concentrating on theoretical understanding in the use of language. This advent paved the way for the study of languages being called linguistic anthropology in the 1960s where more than the description of grammar, the aesthetics of language and its implications on cultures through communication were delved into. Dell Hymes, a sociolinguist and anthropologist (1927-2009) may be regarded as the person who introduced this name. He was also integral to the initiation of 'ethnography of communication'. He along with John Gumperz, a linguist (1922-____) postulated that use of language through which, among other things knowledge is also shared and can be considered as a cultural activity. This was to be investigated through ethnographic methods. Hymes named the study of languages as part of social activity, linguistic anthropology, with a wish to assimilate this study into central concepts of anthropology. Yet he was not completely successful in his attempt. Though the earlier model of anthropological linguistics, moved more towards definitive linguistics, linguistic anthropology while covering pertinent concerns like 'cultural organisation of speaking', nonetheless, was unable to take into its fold the entire gamut of anthropology, as it ignored major ideas like 'language evolution'. Hymes and Gumperz promoted their students to conduct fieldwork using methods and techniques for linguistic analysis. This appeared in the late 1980s. It involved the study of social life of speech, language diversity, use of language in social interactions, etc.

3.5.2 Current Fields of Study

Here we look into some of the prominent issues studied in linguistic anthropology. The paradigms developed in the history of linguistic anthropology, are still in use and have been mixed with new theories and ideas to conceptualise newer understanding of language. Fieldwork with its use of anthropological methods and techniques remains a significant aspect in the linguistic inquiry. Linguistic performances seen as a social action built by the interaction of two individuals, is an example which is learnt by first hand anthropological investigation. It helps the researcher or fieldworker to comprehend the cultural forms of the act of speaking, for example: role of groups in the creation and transmission of linguistic sensibilities along with their institutions. The example above depicting the role of individuals and groups can be observed as an area of study in linguistic anthropology, where the notion of socio-cultural identity is deciphered from the point of view of linguistics.

Another area of investigation in linguistic anthropology since the 1980s is language socialisation. It bears cognizance to an extremely central topic of concern in anthropology, socialisation [see **Box 5**]. The pioneers of language socialisation can be credited to Elinor Ochs and Bambi Schieffelin, who are both linguistic anthropologists. In 1984, both defined the field as (a) the process of getting socialised through language and (b) the process of getting socialised to language. With this, the acquisition of communicative competence as an essential part of ethnography of communication, developed completely. Infants and children, they postulated, acquire language and culture as a cohesive process. Ochs and Schieffelin established that simple language used while talking to children is not universal and also shows that it demonstrates their position in society, both real and symbolic. This process of learning through language is continuous as language socialisation creates new ways of using language.

Box 5

Socialisation: In anthropology, the process of rearing and teaching an individual the basics of social life and its various aspects, like norms, rules, customs, etc. in her/his growing up years is termed as socialisation. The first place of socialisation is the family. Peer groups, school teachers, etc. also play important roles in the socialisation of a person.

In the 80s again, the concept of language ideologies gained ground with earlier works of scholars like Valentin Voloshinov (1895-1936), Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) and Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) being discussed with newer ideas by many linguist intellectuals. Among them, Michael Silverstein (1945-____), a student of Roman Jakobson's tried to elaborate on language ideology, which is now considered to be a significant field in linguistic anthropology. Language ideology implies ideas that are related to language and its connection with social, economic and political ethics of society. This occurs because language as a sign system allows its use to convert itself into a social reality.

Throughout the years, linguistic anthropologists have also been concentrating on studying languages as a system of power play. To explain simply, scholars try to find out how language can be used to control actions and behaviours. Through detailed findings, researchers of this field have found that language can be used either to make situations better or worse or do nothing but duplicate an existing situation. It also assists in describing social identities and how these identities thus link to their social realm. In their work on how language can be associated to politeness, Penelope

Brown (1944-____) and Stephen Levinson (1952-____), both socio-linguists, stressed that polite speech can be used to ease 'face threatening acts'. This theory on politeness was formulated in 1978, and have since then been elaborated and researched critically by intellectuals. Maurice Bloch's (1939-____) work exhibits how in some societies speakers of a language use speech resources to conserve a situation. His study of traditional oratory, suggests that a speaker in power is in a position to maintain coercive authorization for years without allowing any change, by sheer use of words.

From the above detailed description of linguistic anthropology, we now have a fundamental idea about what the subject is and how the use of language defines the social and cultural world human societies reside in.

3.6 SUMMARY

The various branches of anthropology thus highlight the fact that the subject with its four branches is a holistic science of human beings in all aspects. On the one hand, physical/biological anthropology guides us about human evolution, our place in the animal kingdom as primates, our genetic conditions, variability in people, etc., and on the other hand socio-cultural anthropology tries to explore the social and cultural life of human beings in society. For this anthropology as a discipline takes help of societal aspects like religion, economy, polity, power, kinship, marriage, family, gender behaviour, and try to understand why and how humans behave in different situations to live their lives in order. Archaeological-anthropology is pertinent in anthropology as it involves both physical and social aspects of human lives but of what is bygone. It clearly deals with reconstruction of whatever has occurred in an era where evidences are not very concrete but it is with them, that archaeologists along with the use of various methods try to decipher the past. Lastly linguistic anthropology is a branch, which is closely associated with social anthropology and it tries to understand human society with the help of languages of the past, languages of the present, gestures, symbols, etc. To end anthropology as a subject is completely unique for it being able to take into consideration all facets of human life and provide knowledge and generate thought for deliberation.

Please note: For scholars who are alive and are discussed above, the date of birth is mentioned alone and a dash is given afterwards to signify that they are still living.

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- Morgan, Henry L. (1877) 2000. *Ancient Society*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Steward, Julian H. (1955) 1972. *Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Suggested Reading

- Ember, Carol R., Melvin R. Ember and Peter N. Peregrine. 2010. *Anthropology* (13th Edition). Ontario: Pearson Education Canada.

Sample Questions

- 1) What are the branches of Anthropology? Describe each.
- 2) How did each branch develop? Mention the history and growth of each.
- 3) What are the current concerns of each branch? Describe in detail.
- 4) Do you think Anthropology is a holistic science? How?



UNIT 4 EMERGING FRONTIERS

Contents

- 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 Anthropology– As an Applied Discipline
 - 4.2.1 History and its Development
 - 4.2.2 Present Scenario
 - 4.3 Emerging Fields in Anthropology
 - 4.3.1 Anthropology in Management and Corporate World
 - 4.3.2 Anthropology in Policy Making and Governance
 - 4.3.2.1 Historical Background
 - 4.3.2.2 Indian Context
 - 4.3.2.3 Present Context
 - 4.4 Summary
- References
- Suggested Reading
- Sample Questions

Learning Objectives



This unit would enable you to know:

- the applied aspect of anthropology;
- importance of applied anthropology;
- emerging fields in anthropology;
- use of anthropology in management and corporate world; and
- anthropology in policy making and governance, its history and present context.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit will focus on the applied perspective of anthropology. Like many other disciplines, anthropology also has an applied part in it. Anthropology has been used in various contexts. Starting from colonial administration to present day market economy, anthropology has various uses. This unit discusses these issues.

Section 4.2 of this unit would describe anthropology as an applied discipline. It explores the various applied dimensions of anthropology viewing its historical development in the field of anthropological study and also covers the present scenario.

Section 4.3 discusses the emerging fields of anthropology in the present context. It explores mainly two broad areas: anthropology in management and corporate world, and use of anthropology in the field of administration and policy making and governance. This section would also explore the historical dimensions along with the present picture.

4.2 ANTHROPOLOGY AS AN APPLIED DISCIPLINE

Daniel G Brinton first put forward the concept of applied anthropology. The concept

was developed in America. It's a very recent development. After the Second World War, American anthropologists developed this concept that finally contributed in administration and development policy in the third world. Applied anthropology, in general, tried to improve the life of people who were in a disadvantageous position in the modern world of colonialism and imperialism. American anthropologists advocated the need of change in those societies and so undertook the challenging task of development under the colonial administration. They also started monitoring other factors in changing people's lives. The most famous case of 'applied anthropology' is Cornell University's Vicos project in Peru, where an anthropological team under the guidance of A. Holmberg took up the role of 'patron' in a large estate. The team carried out basically a paternalistic reform plan but aimed at developing power to the producer.

In India, S. C. Roy, among the Oraons of Chhotanagpur region provided a happy solution to the people regarding a dispute over flags. Applied anthropology does not acquire the same place in all the countries. It does not hold a very respective position in all the countries. But Anthropology has many applied dimensions to it.

4.2.1 History and its Development

It was the British who first gave value to the pragmatic use of anthropology and officially recognised it by employing applied anthropologists (Foster 1969). E. B. Tylor, called anthropology a "policy science" and believed that its use would make human conditions better (Sills 1968). It was Northcote Thomas who used anthropology in 1908 in Nigeria as part of the British administration (Foster 1969). However in the United States it was not until 1934 that applied anthropology was used in administrative work, more specifically in the Indian Reorganisation Act of the New Deal. Anthropologists acted as connection between the Native Americans and the government and recommended the formation of tribal charters and constitutions (ibid). John Collier who was a commissioner of Bureau of Indian Affairs, was vital in the introduction of anthropologists in government work as he believed that their specialised competence can be of immense use in public sector programmes (van Willigen, 1986). In Archaeology too applied anthropology was introduced in the 1920s as policy makers collaborated with archaeologists in projects which were public related. (Fiske and Chambers, 1997).

The issues and conditions faced by Japanese communities which were forcibly removed from the West Coast of Japan to prison camps in the eastern parts of Sierras during the 2nd World War, were studied by applied anthropologists hired by the War Relocation Authority (Foster 1969). In America, Margaret Mead, Fred Richardson and Eliot Chapple, were responsible for starting the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) in 1941 (Fiske and Chambers, 1997). It was in the same year that a journal on applied anthropology with the same name was started by this society. In 1949, the name of the journal was changed to *Human Organisation*. The members of the society put forward a stand on ethics in anthropology and invited anthropologists to endorse it. It mentioned that anthropologists are to "take responsibility for the effects of his recommendations, never maintaining that he is merely a technician unconcerned with the ends toward which his applied scientific skills are directed" (Mead, Chapple, and Brown 1949; van Willigen 1993).

After the war ended, there was a great demand for doctorates in anthropology who were offered to fill in positions in various anthropology departments in the United States (Fiske and Chambers 1997). The U.S. government also introduced a Point Four Program to advance and evaluate formal technical international aid and foreign

policies. For this the government sought help from anthropologists (Foster 1969). However in the 1960s and 70s the PhD holders were not keen to take up jobs in the public sector due to the U.S. policy in Vietnam (Fiske and Chambers, 1997). But it was a good time for anthropologists specialising in archaeology as jobs were available in resource management of culture which was an outcome of the 1969 National Environment Policy Act (ibid). But concerns were put forward regarding the quality of the archaeologists at work. In view of this the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA) was launched and new criteria were created for trained archaeological professionals working in both public and private segments (ibid).

Anthropology students in the 1970s insisted on the need to view “pressing human needs” by the discipline. They also pleaded that they be made well prepared for any job market they might need to join after the completion of their education (ibid). This led to the growth of students taking in jobs with the policy research while voids were created in academic jobs. USAID came out with jobs which required the researcher to find out the social and cultural implications of policy on health care delivery and adoption of technology in it. A journal entitled *Practicing Anthropology* was brought out in 1978 by SfAA. It was to bring forth the experiences of practicing anthropologists to the public. This they hoped would help to bring academics and practice closer and to influence further involvement of anthropologists in policy research and execution and also as a medium for discussion on the present and future of anthropology (Everett, 1998; 20[1]).

4.2.2 Present Scenario

Today it is not necessary that one has to be in a university to promote anthropological knowledge. Many anthropologists act as practitioners and exercise their intellect on various cultures and use anthropological methods to conduct research and implement them around the world. Hence we may find them in corporate houses, government departments, health centres, educational organisations etc., providing service through their empirical knowledge. Sometimes these researchers are themselves the administrators, business men, programme officers etc. They make a design and carry it out to curb problems.

It is the challenges that applied and practicing anthropologists face, which make them special. The views and solutions that they offer should express notions of humanity combined with cross-cultural intellect and a spirit which should be action based. They may work on their own or work as a team, with scholars and professionals from other occupations and disciplines.

It is the applied anthropologists who offer much to humanity today. They help in building bridges between cultures. Unlike other professionals, anthropologists in the applied field show reverence towards varied cultures and try to promote common humanity. For the policies that are created by administration and corporations, anthropologists make videos or write simple explanations about policies so that these are also understood by a larger group of audience. Along with this their knowledge of research methods highly help in the formulation of policies, programmes, plans which are of significant benefit for human beings all over.

Different issues related to the development of human beings have been dealt with by the applied anthropologists. Various burning issues like rehabilitation and resettlement of various tribal groups in different parts of the world, disaster management, etc. have also been taken care of by these anthropologists. Other development related issues comes under the coverage of development anthropology. In today's world of

globalisation anthropology has immense scope in this context. Various new issues are coming up and anthropologists are handling these issues with great interest.

Activity

Try to examine how anthropology can be used in practice.

4.3 EMERGING FIELDS IN ANTHROPOLOGY

With the new advancement of anthropology many new sub-branches are coming up. Such branches have direct relation to the applied aspect of the discipline. In various new fields like marketing and management, governance and policy making, development and education, in the cyber world and in new media and visual representation, physiological anthropology, eugenics, DNA fingerprinting, etc., anthropology has been emerging as a new dimension. Not only the traditional areas, but also with these new emerging fields anthropology is expanding its horizon to cover up new aspects of human life. Here we will discuss two major emerging areas—management and governance and policy making.

4.3.1 Anthropology in Management and Corporate World

As non-academic practitioners began to be employed in the world of marketing and business, to provide a humanistic approach, the term business anthropology came into being in the 1980s. However terms like industrial anthropology, applied anthropology in industry, anthropology of work, etc., were already in use to signify anthropological research in business related areas. Now business anthropology which has become a broad term for working in business related areas is considered to be a sub field of applied anthropology.

Business anthropology may be said to apply anthropological theories and practices to the needs of private sector organisations, especially industrial firms. Its main areas of interests are 1) marketing and consumer behavior, 2) organisational theory and culture, 3) international business, especially international marketing, intercultural management, as well as intercultural communication, and 4) product design and development.

As anthropology studies each and every aspect of any concern, in business anthropology too, its interests are unlimited. It researches all facets of business. Pragmatic anthropological theories and methods are used by business anthropologists to explore everyday business issues.

So to be clearer anthropologists who study business and all its arenas to offer anthropological solutions to business problems can be termed as business anthropologists. The arenas that interest business anthropologists are organisational culture, management, product design and development, consumer behaviour, international business, marketing, human resource management, operations etc. They use anthropological methods, more specifically ethnographic methods, like observation, interviews etc., to study them. Business anthropologists give advice to corporations about how to adopt culturally viable ways to conduct business with customers, suppliers, partners etc. With people of different ethnicities, gender, age group etc., working together today, such anthropologists mete out ways by which equal opportunities and legal provisions for all are created in a working space.

Hence in practice, business anthropologists work on everything from corporate culture, marketing approaches to development of business. They can be so influential,

that if they work systematically, they can enable administrative or institutional reformations for a better and resourceful economy.

Business and industries are created and developed to fulfill human needs in urban market systems and thus they act as basic arrangements of managing economic endeavours. For Marietta Baba (1997) business means the buying and selling of goods and services in the marketplace, also known as commerce or trade, while industry refers to the organised production of goods and services on a large scale, it consists of all the business firms produce and subsequent marketing of the same product. These nomenclatures, when used by business anthropologists in their research, get connected to the main areas of business anthropological practicalities. They may be: 1) anthropology's involvement in the production of goods and services and the places (industries) where such production takes place, 2) designing of new products and services for customers which are ethnographically related and 3) anthropology and its study of market and the consumer behaviour.

In many universities today, business anthropology is not only taught as an offshoot of applied anthropology but also included in the master's in business administration programme. This has opened new avenues and more opportunities for the business world and anthropology to work together.

More clearly, such attempts are of much help as they erase many issues which arise in the corporate world. It is noticed through research that most international business collaborations fail regularly due to the incapacity to comprehend and adjust to others' ways of rationalising and behaving. The world today sees constant changes and people who are in positions to take decisions, have to understand these new advancements and their inferences. To stabilize such situations, the involvement of anthropologists and anthropological methods can certainly come in handy. The understanding of cultural context in both the domestic and the international spheres is equally important. In fact it is in the international arena that the cultural differences would be acute. This of course maximizes the danger of grasping issues incorrectly and taking inappropriate actions or decisions. Anthropologists can help in finding and explaining patterns of behaviour in both domestic and international spheres which has an influence on policies and schemes.

Organisation is one word which both anthropology and management sciences tackle, yet from very different perspectives. What is tangible to management sciences, it is completely symbolic for anthropology. What is defined as a firm to describe organisations for management, for anthropology, it is a much bigger order consisting of institutions. Anthropologists, and especially Mary Douglas, tackles two intricate and connected issues: "how do organisations think"? and "In what conditions could an organisation be an Institution"? In Douglas' view, organising (which results in organisation) and instituting (which results in institution) are definitely entangled. For anthropology, organisation is a perceived and implicit order of things, a conventional process, some sort of classification linking heterogeneous things, whether tangible or intangible. The result is the institution, which becomes an obvious and natural fact, interwoven with the rest of society. Institution is thus a set of rules that maintain or support coordination.

In fact, for anthropology organisation is something which is imagined, a basic representation but something which is not a visible structure of society. Both anthropology and management studies can contribute to each other's knowledge and gain from each other.

In today's world of global economy anthropologists have a lot to do in the management and corporate world. Social organisation being the basis for anthropological study has direct relation to the field of management and corporate world. Until and unless one does not research the local market areas, it is not possible for any business group to capture the market. The market competition has also been influenced by the local market policies. Multinational companies also need to manage the local markets following the local trend. So, it has become very important for them to discover the interests of the local people. For this, anthropological knowledge becomes very necessary. On the other hand, in the corporate world, the analysis of role and status is very important. This is another core area of anthropological research. To manage the corporate employees becomes a very important perspective and for this also anthropological knowledge skills are very much applicable. Thus, we can see that anthropology has a very close relation with the management and corporate world.

Activity

Take any commercial company as a setting, (for example Reebok or Coca Cola) and try to find out if anthropological knowledge can help the company do better.

4.3.2 Anthropology in Policy Making and Governance

It has already been mentioned that anthropology has many other emerging fields, one among them being, anthropology in policy making and governance. This area comes under the vast area of development anthropology.

Social anthropologists became immensely involved in the quickened amalgamation of countries which were colonies earlier in the final quarter of the 20th century into the economic system of the world. This process of assimilation, called anthropology in development, involved the poor countries receiving technology, funding and expertise from countries that were already industrially developed. This was done through multinational, governmental and non-profit organisations and also to a large extent by private companies. This involvement of anthropologists in decolonisation has been going on since after the Second World War, however the emergence of the anthropology of development only became a viable sub field of anthropology in the 1980s. Now a great number of development anthropologists are given jobs by agencies outside academics in order to provide assistance in the development of countries. The World bank, agencies of United Nations, non-governmental organisations like OXFAM, CARE and World Union for the Conservation of Nature are some outfits to name a few, which take in anthropologists. Now it is not the anthropologists who work from the peripheries in availing socially acceptable work but they are the team leaders who act as overseers of such work.

However the exponents of cultural relativism in anthropology have contested the acceptability of specifically development oriented anthropology. They believe that anthropologists should describe social change but they should not create situations to cause change. However the subject believes to take a stand on atrocities observed in local cultures related to child labour, gender hierarchies, poverty, infant mortality, exclusion of poor by democratically participating in administration etc.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of development anthropologists has been the demonstration to economists and technical specialists that the "beneficiaries" of development, the low-income majorities in poor countries, must be active participants at all levels of the process if it is to be successful. This means that their expertise as

resource managers must be acknowledged and fully incorporated in the identification, design, implementation, and evaluation of development projects. Anthropologists have also demonstrated the internal complexity and socioeconomic differentiation (by class, age, gender, ethnicity, education, etc.) of local communities that were assumed by outside “experts” to be homogeneous. Development anthropologists have repeatedly demonstrated that projects assumed to be broadly beneficial have too often created more losers than winners.

Anthropologists nevertheless have had a considerable effect on the development of river basin interventions, particularly in resettlement of population from upstream and downstream regions near large hydropower dams. Involvement has also been seen in pastoral production systems on semi-arid rangelands, environmental management of communities, social forestry, gender aspects of development, ethnomedicine, involvement of indigenous practitioners in health systems, sharing of indigenous knowledge and in matters of biodiversity.

4.3.2.1 Historical Background

Since the days of colonialism, anthropology has served various interests of people. The earliest use was found in the political administration in England. The expertise of anthropologists was utilised in tackling certain administrative problems in British colonies. But as the employer solely decided the objectives, the anthropologists had hardly any scope to understand the situation with empathy. The needs and consequences of the target group community did not get any importance. However, the duty of anthropologists was chiefly concerned with the recording of the behaviours of the native people who prevented the administrators to take crude decisions and hasty political action. Some anthropological training centres were established for future colonial rulers where ethnology and comparative linguistics occupied a prominent place. Anthropological surveys on colonial people were instituted from 1929, under the enthusiasm of Bronislaw Malinowski.

In the United States, anthropology began to be used in office of Indian Affairs by 1933. The most significant use was noticed with agriculture. It helped in understanding the way of life of American farmers. However, the knowledge of anthropology used in the office of Indian Affairs was almost similar to the colonial administrators in England. None of them were conscious about the ethics involved. France, Belgium, Netherlands also started employing anthropologists to facilitate the administration of their colonies.

During the Second World War, United States’ government hired many anthropologists to help in solving their military problems. The situation got complicated with the Japanese prisoners who did not behave in the usual way. All the Japanese soldiers who were captured in the battle showed a practice of self killing before they were taken to prison. Studies of anthropologists on Japanese culture and character made the American military leaders aware that the Japanese soldiers preferred an honorable death in their own hands because they consider capture as a matter of great disgrace. Anthropologists also informed that the Japanese regarded their emperor almost like God, whose word was sufficient to cause all Japanese soldiers to lay down their arms. After working with the anthropologists, Americans not only learnt about the Japanese mode of thinking, they also acted as per the advice of anthropologists to win the situation. Since anthropologists have solved many political and military matters, after the Second World War a considerable number of applied anthropologists were called upon to upgrade different other projects associated with health, economy, education, etc. A list furnished by Clyde Kluckhohn showed that the anthropologists

of America worked in the various departments of states, in office of strategic services, in the board of economic welfare, in military, in naval services, in the office of war information, in peace corps, in foreign economic administration, in federal security administration, in medical branch of army-air forces, in chemical welfare division, etc. the expertise of anthropologists was recognized in various situations. Their roles were basically like advisers. Sometimes they advised the government of an emergent nation about building of roads, bridges, dams, etc. and sometimes helped a public health specialist in epidemiology by giving advice regarding the control of Malaria, Leprosy, Tuberculosis, etc. An anthropologist might act as an economist, an educator or an agronomist. Many applied anthropologists conducted rehabilitation programs for the handicapped.

Thus, we can see how anthropologists have participated in many governmental affairs influencing policy making and administration. Not only in the west but also in our own country we find such immense participation of anthropologists in these fields.

4.3.2.2 Indian Context

The British East India Company made the first application of anthropological knowledge in 1807. Francis Buchanan was appointed to conduct ethnographical surveys in order to project a clear picture on the life-style and religion of locals. Anthropological training was provided to some officials who performed administrative jobs as well as prepared some hand books, gazetteers and monographs on tribes and castes of India. The persons involved in such works were- Risley, Dalton, Grigson, Thruston, etc. The officials who worked in health services and the educators who were in missionary schools utilized these information with the help of British rule and administrators. Verrier Elwin and C.V. Furer-Hamindorf came forward with the concept of tribe. They also formed the tribal policies. Indian anthropologists Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy studied extensively the tribes of Chhotanagpur and Orissa. He fought for the tribal rights and influenced government policies to a great extent.

In the post colonial period we get some other responsible anthropologists who not only contributed to the study of tribe, caste and village but also influenced the policies of governance. The provisions of Indian constitution where the interests of the scheduled castes and tribes are being protected are also based on anthropological findings. In post independent era anthropologists like N. K. Bose, D. N. Majumdar, A. Aiyappan tried to understand the tribal situation in India. Anthropologists evolved the Constitution of India. These anthropologists kept themselves involved in formulating development programs for the weaker sections of the society and showed their interest in the implementation and evaluation of the programs. The knowledge of anthropology helped both the Union Government and States in framing policies of socio-economic amelioration. Anthropology-oriented approach was proved useful for internal reconstruction of the country.

4.3.2.3 Present Context

Today's anthropologists do not limit themselves with tribal life or rural people as like the past. They have extended their knowledge and views for overall development of the nation. They have provided attention on health and nutritional status, family welfare and childcare, care of aged and disabled and so on. The work of anthropologists ranges from tribal rehabilitation to population growth, malnutrition and adult education, vocational training to labour unrest. The varied anthropology fields include administration, Medicine and public health, education, industry, economic

development, community development and also the area of race and ethnic relations with social policy issues. The opinions of anthropologists have even found to be valuable in the needs of athletics, defense service, forensic science and criminology, national integration and international relations.

It is the eminent Indian anthropologists like S. C. Dube, L. P. Vidyarthi, B. K. Roy-Burman, M. N. Srinivas, M. N. Basu and many others, whose values and thoughts, and actions have accelerated the progress of India.

The ideas of anthropologists in formulating plans and policies for the Indian Government do not always get due weightage. There are immense scopes in this field of policy making, where anthropological knowledge can really bring change, specially in a country like India where diverse populations live. The developmental projects are operated often by the people with no or little anthropological knowledge. Hence, due to lack of proper implementation many policies fail to attain the goals. In these cases anthropologists can put forward their knowledge. Some methodological dimensions like Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA) are coming up and we can hope for frequent participation of the anthropologist not only in policy making but also in policy implementing in near future. The concept of good governance also supports implementations.

4.4 SUMMARY

In this unit you studied new trends and emerging frontiers in anthropology. You have learnt how anthropology has developed in different points of time and has reached today's status. We have discussed these different phases of development in anthropology. Like any other discipline, anthropology has been coming up with new areas of interest. The applied perspective is such a new area under anthropological study. Anthropology as an applied science is getting immense importance in different areas like management and governance. People's participation becomes important in these areas and anthropological research provides such scopes. As a result anthropological research methods are becoming more and more relevant for these areas. After learning these emerging trends you would be able to get an idea about the future perspectives of anthropology.

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Suggested Reading

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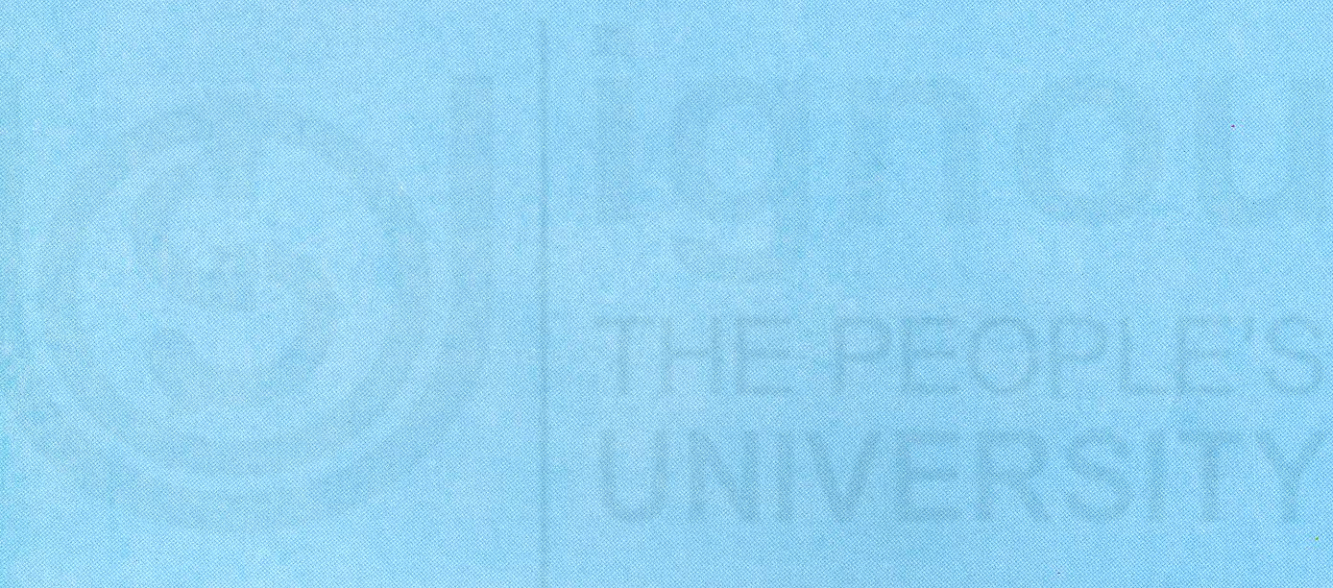
Sample Questions

- 1) Discuss the emerging fields in anthropology.
- 2) Discuss how anthropological research is useful in policy making and maintaining good governance.
- 3) Discuss how anthropology is related to management studies.
- 4) Critically discuss the role of anthropologists in colonial rule.

NOTES



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