



Anthropology NCERT Test 1 Model Answers

Section A

Q1. Write short notes on the following in about 150 words each:

a) Bio-social nature of Anthropology

In the definition given by Herskovits, the term 'man' implies human as a 'biological organism' and 'works' stands for 'culture'. Anthropology studies organic or biological factors as well as social/cultural factors of human beings.

Both the factors are equally important and relevant since anthropology studies the biological factors like human origin, evolution and variation as well as social-cultural factors like society, culture etc.

As it accepts and uses the general principles of Biological and Social Science, it is considered as a bio-social science. It is said that anthropology is the most humanistic among the sciences and the most scientific among the humanities.

(Source- Slides 18-19)

Anthropology is different from biology. Biology views human as a biological entity but anthropology considers the biological and social peculiarities of human.

Since anthropology is a bio-social science, it is related to many biological and social sciences. It also examines the bio-social adaptation of different human populations living

in different geographical and ecological settings. Anthropology is very much related to biology. Both study the origin and evolution of human beings. Anthropology is also related to many social sciences like, Sociology, History, Economics and Political Sciences.

b) Fieldwork Tradition

In order to understand humans in their totality, anthropologists resort to a unique method of ethnographic investigation by conducting long term intensive field work. Anthropology a Field Science There are differences between a tourist and an anthropological researcher. A tourist is a passer by who watches things without any specific academic motive. But an anthropologist visits a place for research with an intention to collect reliable and valid data from the source.

As anthropologists deal with human social life and culture, they give prime importance to field work method. Fieldwork is the backbone of anthropological research Anthropologists use participant observation as one of the important techniques to collect data. Physical and biological scientists need a laboratory for conducting experiments.

But for anthropologists, field is the laboratory which includes any place where peoples and cultures are found. During fieldwork, an anthropologist goes to the field, stays with the people with whom he wants to interact, learns their native language observes the phenomena under study and records them systematically. It is true that all events in the society cannot be observed and studied at once.

The researcher has to wait until they occur. The researcher can also utilise other techniques such as interview, case study, genealogy etc for collecting the information during fieldwork.

Fieldwork is the heart and soul of anthropology as it is a field science. It is a condition where the physical presence of the anthropologists is considered mandatory. It helps to observe phenomena through one's own senses.

c) Sociocultural Anthropology

It is the study of relations and patterns of life among different types of people. The study is based on the facts, collected through direct investigation from the field using anthropological techniques.

Radcliffe Brown defines “Social Anthropology as the natural science of society”. Social cultural anthropology attempts to understand culture as a major mechanism by which human beings adapt to their environment. They study its origin, development and diversity as it changes through time and manifests among people. It is the study of human society and culture. It describes, analyses, interprets and explains the social and cultural similarities and differences.

Social cultural anthropology concerns with the study of social institutions such as family, marriage, kinship, “Human population construct their cultures in interaction with one another and not in isolation”.

Different sub-fields have emerged in sociocultural anthropology to contribute to the total understanding of culture in all its dimensions. Some such sub-fields are the following:

(a) **Familial Anthropology**: It makes a comparative study of families of different cultures and societies. It studies the origin of family, its forms and functions in different societies. Marriage is the basis of family and hence Familial Anthropology also studies different forms of marriage, ways of acquiring mates and marriage payments in different societies.

(b) **Economic Anthropology**: All aspects of culture are closely related. Economic activities play an important role in social organisation. Sometimes sudden change in economic sector leads to radical change in the structure and function of other sectors also. Economic Anthropology studies the economic organisation of human societies ranging from preliterate food collecting economy to modern industrial economy.

(c) **Political Anthropology**: The administrative set up prevailing in a society also plays shaping the ways important role in shaping the ways of life of the people. The branch of social cultural anthropology that deals with the types and forms of government, state as well as stateless political organisations, regulations including mores and norms as well as

customs and laws, nature of sanctions including punishment and rewards, etc. is known as political anthropology.

(d) **Anthropology of Religion:** Beliefs and practices related to supernatural powers and forces play an important role in shaping the culture of a group. Beliefs and practices associated with supernatural elements, and rituals and performances, etc., come under the purview of this specialised area of anthropological study.

(e) **Development Anthropology:** This sub-field addresses some of the basic concerns of human society in terms of welfare, progress and development, with the ultimate aim to ensure security, and decent livelihood for human beings.

Hence, the questions of poverty, inequality, human welfare, social justice, human development and environmental sustainability become the core concerns under this specialisation.

(e) **Ecological Anthropology:** Ecological Anthropology studies the inter-relationship between humans, environment and culture. Environment plays an important role in shaping the culture of the people. Relationship of culture and environment, natives' Textbook for Class XI - Anthropology 18 Prepare a chart/collage/ poster showing the bio social nature of anthropology. attitude of their relationship with environment etc., are studied in Ecological Anthropology.

(f) **Medical Anthropology:** Medical Anthropology is concerned with the bio-cultural understanding of humans and their works in relationship to health and disease. Local beliefs regarding health and disease, treatment and preventive measures are some of the aspects studied in Medical Anthropology.

(Source- Slides 36-41)

d) Branches of Anthropology

From this, it is evident that Anthropology is a holistic science. In order to understand its holistic nature, it is important to know the major fields/branches of Anthropology. Thus the scope of Anthropology includes all the four major branches as given below:

1. Biological Anthropology
2. Social Cultural Anthropology
3. Archaeological Anthropology

4. Linguistic Anthropology

(a) Biological Anthropology: The branch of Anthropology that examines human biological features, is called biological anthropology. Can you answer the following questions: Why do people differ in skin colour? Why do offsprings look similar to their parents? How are humans evolved?

(b) Social cultural Anthropology: It examines the social and cultural peculiarities of human life. It is the study of relations and patterns of life among different types of people. The study is based on the facts, collected through direct investigation from the field using anthropological techniques.

Radcliffe Brown defines “Social Anthropology as the natural science of society”. Social cultural anthropology attempts to understand culture as a major mechanism by which human beings adapt to their environment. They study its origin, development and diversity as it changes through time and manifests among people.

(c) Archaeological anthropology: Another area of Anthropological interest is the study of prehistoric culture of human being which come under archaeological Anthropology. It is a branch of anthropology which deals with past cultures in relation to environment. It examines the origin and development of human culture.

The word Archaeology is derived from two Greek words- “arkhaios” means ancient and “logos” means study. So archaeology is the study of human activity in the past. Archaeologists examine the tools, pottery, other material remains left by humans as well as the remains of humans, plants and animals.

(d) Linguistic Anthropology: It focuses on the study of language, symbols and the features of human communication. The branch of anthropology that studies human languages is called Linguistic Anthropology.

Language allows people to preserve and transmit their culture from one generation to another. Through the study of language in its setting, anthropologist can understand how people perceive themselves and the world around them. Anthropological linguistics may also make a significant contribution to our understanding of human facts. Linguistic anthropology seeks to discover the ways in which languages are similar or different from one another.

(Source- Slides 28-46)

e) Applied Anthropology

The term applied is not a recent origin. It was used by D G Brinton in his speech as early as 1875. But it is used mainly since late 1920s and early 1930s. Applied anthropology simply refers to the practical uses of anthropology findings. The systematic use of such a study for an effective administration in India was realised as early as 1807. Francis Buchanon was appointed to undertake ethnographic survey.

Applied anthropology refers to the application of anthropological knowledge, data, perspective, theory and methods to identify, assess and solve contemporary social problems. All sub-fields of this discipline have applied scope.

Let us examine the applied scope of the four subfields of anthropology.

(a) Biological Anthropology: They use the knowledge of anthropometry in designing clothes, footwear and furniture and designing machinery, artificial limbs etc. Data on human osteology, serology and genetics have medical application. They also contribute to disease research, diet and nutrition, health planning, reconstructive surgery, genetic counseling and eugenics. Inputs of biological anthropology also help in forensic tests to identify criminals and crime.

(b) Sociocultural aspect: The Socio cultural anthropologists undertake studies concerning human social problems. They can contribute to the understanding of labour disputes, minority problems, community development projects, economic development schemes, friction in industry to minimise tension, etc. It has become therapeutic science of human relations. They understand the psychological attributes of people along with the values of culture and can suggest contextual solutions.

(c) Archaeological application: The Archaeological Anthropologists offer general information and education to the people through museums where the reconstruction of human culture found through excavated materials are kept open for public view.

(d)Linguistic anthropology: It enhances the knowledge about the past on which our existence depends. The Linguistic Anthropologists serve many practical purposes related with 'exotic' languages.

(Source- Slides 52-57)

Section B

Q1. Anthropology as a discipline upholds human diversity. Comment.

In human life, there could be a number of differences in various spheres of life, some deep rooted and others merely out of habitual formation. Not all differences may lead to such behavioural responses and reactions. It is the differences that bring about diversity in human society. We all encounter a number of differences in our day-to-day life.

Most often, people are not ready to accept and appreciate human diversity. We experience diversity in every sphere of human life. There are significant variations in various aspects of human life across nations and cultures. Beals and Hoijer (1971) cite a few examples of such variations in their book 'Introduction to Anthropology'.

- Eskimos of the Arctic live almost exclusively upon meat and fish.
- Mexican Indians depend on cereals and vegetables.
- Milk and its products is a luxury among the Bayganda of East Africa but for the people of West Africa it is least regarded.
- Meat of dog is considered to be very delicious for Mexican Indians.

There are variations even in the combination of food. Orthodox Jews do not combine meat and dairy products. Eskimos do not combine seafood and meat obtained from land. Variations are there in the process of eating table manners or etiquette. Similarly, variations could be observed in dress and ornaments. Some Australian and Andaman Tribes go about naked. Others like the Bayanda of East Asia are fully clothed from neck to ankle.

It is evident that diversity exists among humans in terms of physical appearances, cultural practices, languages and lifestyles. In fact, such diversity adds to the beauty to our society and culture.

Anthropology as a discipline upholds human diversity, as it is a reality which need to be appreciated and accepted. Anthropology enquires into the diversities with a curious mind. It underlines the fact that diversity is cultural, while biologically, we belongs to one species. Anthropology, is interested in studying the biological and cultural uniqueness and variations of the most intelligent species on the earth - Homo sapiens sapiens.

Anthropology, as a distinct discipline with bio-social nature, provides one with an opportunity to explore human difference. 'Difference is the essence of humanity.' Difference is an accident of birth and it should therefore never be the source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. Therein lies the most fundamental principle of peace: respect for diversity", according to John Hume.

(Source-Slides: 3-10)

Q2. Anthropology's ultimate goal is to develop an integrated picture of humankind. Elaborate.

Anthropology is more than a biosocial science. It has many other peculiarities. Anthropology, on the other hand, considers human life in totality. Most often, people think that anthropologists study fossils, and non-industrial and non-western cultures alone which is a misconception. As a matter of fact anthropology is a comparative and integrated discipline that examines all societies, ancient and modern as well as simple and complex.

(Source-Slides: 20-21)

Anthropology seeks to explain how and why people are both similar and different through examination of our biological and cultural past and comparative study of contemporary human societies. Anthropology's ultimate goal 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, what makes us human? Why do some groups of people tend to be tall and lanky, while others tend to be short and stocky? Why do some groups of people practice agriculture, while others hunt for a living? Anthropologists are interested in all things human.

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 behavior as a product of the natural processes, and in the context of the animal kingdom.

Q3. Discuss the relevance of the discipline of Anthropology.

As we found earlier, embraces all the areas of human life. Moreover, the anthropological understandings can be applied at various levels of human life. In anthropology we study about human beings of all times, places and types. Hence anthropologists are keen to examine the life of even the most isolated, simple tribal communities, who are otherwise not considered properly.

Let us examine the importance of anthropology in detail.

- Learning of anthropology enables students to have a holistic approach. It shares different areas of natural and social sciences. The geographical field of anthropology is global. But in terms of time, it extends to millions of years in the past. It examines the evolutionary and historical changes and shares the concern of our shared future.
- The study of anthropology helps the students to develop intellectually, personally and professionally. Anthropological studies being a part of the study of cultures and life style of unfamiliar societies cultivate critical thinking and skills in students. Anthropology promotes a cross cultural perspective.
- It allows to see ourselves as part of one human family. Anthropology students are keen in understanding the cultural, biological, environmental, and historical bases of humanity.
- The self-reflection that results from applying the holistic approach and comparative method provides a broadened world view. It helps to avoid ethnocentrism (Outlook that one's own culture is superior to that of others) and is more open to acceptance of other ways of living.
- Students develop as global citizens, with an awareness of the world around them – their similarities, differences, and inequalities with other peoples or groups.

Anthropology students are trained in oral and written communication, interpersonal skills, problem-solving, research, and critical thinking, which are needed for success in a variety of careers.

These skills provide flexibility in career mobility and form a foundation for lifelong learning as employment possibilities are continuously transformed. Anthropology also helps in 'knowing more about the world'. It provides global literacy, sensitivity to other Anthropology is peculiarly fitted to fill a tremendous need in liberal education. It tries to conjoin rather than fragment the knowledge of man. It can be taught so as to give understanding of the farthest past of man and yet with close relation to the life today.

In short anthropology is one of the important disciplines that help to grow oneself according to the needs of the society. As anthropology equips an individual for different social responsibilities, it provides a wide range of career opportunities as well.

(Source- Slides: 47-51)

Q4. Elaborate on the growth and development of Anthropology in the world and India.

Anthropology is comparatively a new subject, and the origin and growth of the subject has taken place through centuries. T. K. Penniman classifies the development of anthropology into four periods. He proposes these classifications in his book 'Hundred Years of Anthropology' (1935) as discussed below:

Formulatory period (before 1835) :

This is the first and longest period in the history of Anthropology. It extends from the time of the Greek historians, philosophers and naturalists. Penniman considers Herodotus (484 - 425 BC) as the first anthropologist. He is also considered as the father of Greek Ethnography. He travelled throughout the world and researched about races and customs entirely alien to him. Herodotus asked some questions like the following: Is the father natural head of the family or the mother? He not only talked about the origin of culture, but also described the spoken language, physical types, material culture, marriage and divorce, social laws, customs etc.

Protagoras (480-410 BC) was the first to propose the theory of relativism. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle (384 – 322 BC) studied humans, society and culture. Aristotle said that man is a social animal.

In the medieval period, various travellers and explorers wrote details about the people they encountered. Among these, Marco-polo (1224-1313) and Vasco-Da-Gama (1397-1499) contributed a lot towards the enrichment of knowledge on Anthropology. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) wrote the book Anthropology in 1789 suggesting the animal origin of man and concluded that human knowledge comes from pre-human condition.

Vesalius had made an attempt to compare human being with ape. He also tried to dissect the human body. In 1735, Carl Linnaeus published his book ‘Systema Naturae’ where he has clearly mentioned about the inclusion of human in the Zoological classification. During 16th and 17th centuries, Christian missionaries studied the culture of native people to make their attempt of conversion easy.

During the period of colonisation British administrators conducted many studies on native people to make their administration easy. Edgar Thurston, (Castes and Tribes of India) William Crook (Tribes and Castes of the North Western Provinces) , Verrier Elwin, (Philosophy of NEFA) and John Russel made significant contributions in Anthropology by conducting various studies on the culture of different groups in India

Convergent Period (1835-1859) :

During this period, divergent views about the origin of biological and social aspects of human being were expressed by scholars. Marx accepted the dialectical process as the moving power of history. In the field of Archaeology, Boucher Depertthes discovered flint implements at Abbeville in 1838 and Dr. Rigollet’s discovered at Saint Acheul in 1854. Neanderthal’s discovery at Dusseldorf in 1857 gave a new outlook about human evolution.

The convergence of all these ideas was completed with the publication of Charles Darwin’s book The Origin of Species (1859). In this book, he proposed his theory of organic evolution popularly known as ‘Darwinism and physical evolution of human being based on scientific investigation was established.

Constructive Period(1859–1900) :

During this period Anthropology started as an independent discipline in many universities. A Department of Anthropology was started in Oxford University in 1884 and Cambridge University in 1900. Scientific researches and publications by scholars like E B Tylor, James Frazer, Henry Maine, and L. H. Morgan, came out during this period.

Different branches of anthropology like ethnology, pre-history, social anthropology and physical anthropology were also evolved. Apart from England, Germany and USA, anthropological researches had flourished in France and some other countries as well.

Contributions of Emile Durkheim in France helped to popularise Anthropology in France. Some important journals like 'American Journal of Folklore', 'Bulletin of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland' (now known as 'Man') etc. were also started during this period. The researches done by British officers like Edgar Thurston, Russel, and others facilitated the growth of anthropological tradition in India.

Critical Period (1900 onwards) :

Penniman used the term 'critical' to denote this period because of the crucial contribution made to the development of Anthropology during this period. The first chair of social anthropology was started in 1908 in the University of Liverpool in Britain. It was chaired by Sir James Frazer. The first Anthropology department in India was started in the University of Calcutta in 1920. In 1919, Social anthropology had been introduced as a subject in the Department of Sociology at the University of Bombay.

During this period, different schools of thought in anthropology were founded. Functional school of thought, structural school of thought, school of diffusion, and culture and personality school are prominent among them. For instance, B K Malinowski, based on his field expedition among the Trobriand Islanders proposed his idea of Functionalism. Radcliffe Brown, based on his study of the Andaman Islanders established his theory of Social Structure during this period. Similarly, the American scholars such as A L Kroeber, Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, and Clark Wissler played their own role in shaping the destiny of world anthropology.

Growth and Development of Indian Anthropology

The course of development of anthropological thought and study in India was slow but steady. Basu Roy describes the following phases of development of Indian Anthropology, while some other anthropologists differ in their opinion regarding the time span of these periods.

Formative phase (1774 - 1919)

During this period the emphasis of anthropological studies was on tribal life and the diversity of their customs in India. Many Encyclopaedia on tribes and castes were published. The foundation of Asiatic Society of India by Sir William Jones in 1774. In 1886, the Anthropological Society of Bombay published its journal. H H Risley

published his report on the Tribes and Castes of Bengal in 1891 and started People of India project. In 1912, S C Roy published the monograph Munda and their country.

Constructive Phase (1920-1949)

Anthropology came into the curriculum of Post-graduate studies in Calcutta University by 1920. Another remarkable step during this period was the publication of journal 'Man in India' in 1921, under the editorship of S C Roy. The 25th Indian Science Congress was held at Calcutta in 1938 and the focal theme was 'Anthropology in India'. A joint session of the Indian Science Congress Association and the British Association reviewed the progress of anthropology in India. This was the first review of the anthropological researches in India.

In 1939, Verrier Elwin published his book 'The Baiga' proposing an isolationism approach. Anthropological Survey of India was established in 1945. In 1947, a Department of Anthropology was opened in the University of Delhi.

Analytical Phase (1950-1990)

This phase began in 1938, and carried on to the present. The earlier anthropologists like Surajit Sinha, called this, the recent phase. Foreign influence was also seen. Moreover, during this period, there was a shift from the descriptive studies of preliterate societies to the analytical studies of complex societies.

A large number of village study monographs were published in the 1960s through the Census of India 1961. The first of these was a study of Ghaghra by LP Vidyarthi. During this period, some anthropologists developed distinct research methodology to conduct their studies.

These include T C Das (using genealogies to study the Parum society), N. K. Bose (spatial distribution technique used to date Indian temples, use of human geography in study of culture-historical issues as well as the use of family histories in studying social change in urban centres), Chattopadhyay and Mukherjee (use of statistics in studying social change), Iravati Karve (text analyses incorporated with kinship studies) and L. P. Vidyarthi (using the concepts of sacred centre, cluster and segment to study sacred complexes)

Evaluative Phase (1990 to the Present)

Interest in Medical Anthropology, Religion, Development studies and Psychological studies are more evident like studies on change leading to tribal identity, integration, vanishing culture and planning, emergence of industrial Anthropology, increased emphasis on tribal demography, integrated study of tribal regions.

To conclude in the words of L. P. Vidyarthi, “The journey of Indian anthropology still continues”. It has gone much ahead under the influence of and in collaboration with the British and American anthropologists. Of course, in a broader perspective, they will continue to influence the Indian social science for some more time..

(Source- Slides:79-117)

PLUTUS IAS