

Anthropology:

Q What is Anthropology and its scope. State salient features of Anthropology?

Anthropology:

"It is defined as the scientific and holistic study of mankind / human beings"

* Anthropology is derived from the Greek words

Anthropos \Rightarrow 'mankind'

Logos \Rightarrow 'study'

* It is a discipline that has intense curiosity related to human beings. Anthropology is concerned with only a single species i.e. Homo Sapiens, human beings, its ancestors and near relatives i.e. primates.

According to University of Florida:

Anthropology is the study of mankind. Like other social sciences that study the existence and accomplishments of human beings, Anthropology explores the entire panorama of human's from their origin to the contemporary forms of culture and social life.

* From the day one, humans have queries related to themselves. Like who they are, where they came from, how and why they change over time and most important of all why do they behave in a certain manner. In historical era, there was no reliable source, data, or knowledge to answer these queries. So, the people relied on folklore and myths.

* But Anthropology provided a scientific approach to address these queries. Through different research methods (e.g. ethnography) it provides a detailed analysis of human origin and nature.

Scope of Anthropology:

- * It is believed that anthropologists have to travel to the far-flung and remote areas to study and observe the most exotic people around the world. It is also believed that anthropologists are the individuals that dig the earth to explore the fossil remains, pots, tools and other things left by the people living in different periods.
- * All these are stereotypes but they also indicate that Anthropology is different from other social sciences.
- * Anthropology is broader and wider in scope (geographically and historically).
- * Anthropologists study people of different places and the people living in different periods.

Salient features of Anthropology:

↳ There are many important features of Anthropology that makes it a distinctive and unique subject in all respects. These features are:

1. Holism

3. participant observation

4. Reflexivity

5. Universalism

2. Ethnography

Xenocentrism

8. Comparative perspective.

7. Cultural Relativism

6. Integration

Anthropology

1. Holism:

* Anthropology is the holistic study of mankind.

4. Economics is related to the production, exchange, and consumption. Political science covers social order, conflicts, war, etc. So anthropology covers all aspects human economic system, political organizations, marriage and family system, cultures and traditions, kinship and even how children are raised.

* Anthropologists study everything from **holistic lens**.

↳ One focal point is **Ethnocentrism** and the other is **Xenocentrism**.

Ethnocentrism

↳ In this the individual believes that his/her culture and tradition is superior to all other ~~all~~ cultures and traditions.

Example:

Pashtun Tribe of Pakistan consider themselves as 'Master race' and superior to all others.

Xenocentrism

↳ In this individual believes that other cultures are better / superior to the reference culture.

Example:

People of Asia consider their culture lower as compared to the west.

2. Study of Ethnography:

* 'It is a process of writing about others.' In ethnography the researcher goes into the culture and live there and participate in activities.

4. The technique of ethnography was established by

3- famous anthropologists

1. Franz Boas, USA

2. Bronislaw Malinowski, UK

3. Evans-Pritchard.

1. Franz Boas performed ethnography on the people and

culture of North West Pacific, Siberia and Alaska.

2. MaVinoski on the Proboscis Islanders of New Guinea.

3. Participant Observations:

* It is a very important feature. In this the practitioner has to participate in the daily activities of the culture he wants to study.

* It can also be conducted by interviews, questions and collecting whatever data seems important. These are written in field notes.

* Anthropologists also make films and videos etc...

4. Reflexivity:

* In this the anthropologists go through their analysis and data again and again in order to avoid biases.

* George Herbert gives significance to it as a process of putting mental faculties to use.

5. Universalism:

* Anthropology is a holistic subject. All the people around the world in remote and familiar places, exotic and known cultures, everyone is equal in this subject.

* Kachhau of Bushman tribe, Inuit, Irish, everyone is equal

* Pygmies and Australian Aborigines of the developed North America are also equal in this.

* In short, it is universal.

6. Integration:

* The most important aspect is integration. As human beings are related and integrated to different sectors like economy, political organization, marriage etc. So, in order to study humans we've to study

them. Therefore, it also holds the key feature of integration.

7. Cultural Relativism:

* Another important aspect that anthropology introduces is cultural relativism. It is in fact opposite to ethnocentrism. In order to understand people from different cultures around the world cultural relativism is important.

"It is a way to understand other cultures around the world according to the respective (their) cultural values, traditions and norms".

* Because it is not necessary, that the thing that is right and acceptable in one culture must be acceptable in the other cultures as well.

8. Comparative Perspective:

* As human beings are present in different parts of the world these cultures are diverse in nature. So, in order to devise a general theory related to humans it is necessary to study all the cultures present in different parts of the world and in different periods. Through comparative study it is possible and it is the most effective and efficient way.

Conclusion:

Therefore, anthropology is a distinctive and a unique subject that is essential to understand the origin and nature of human beings.

