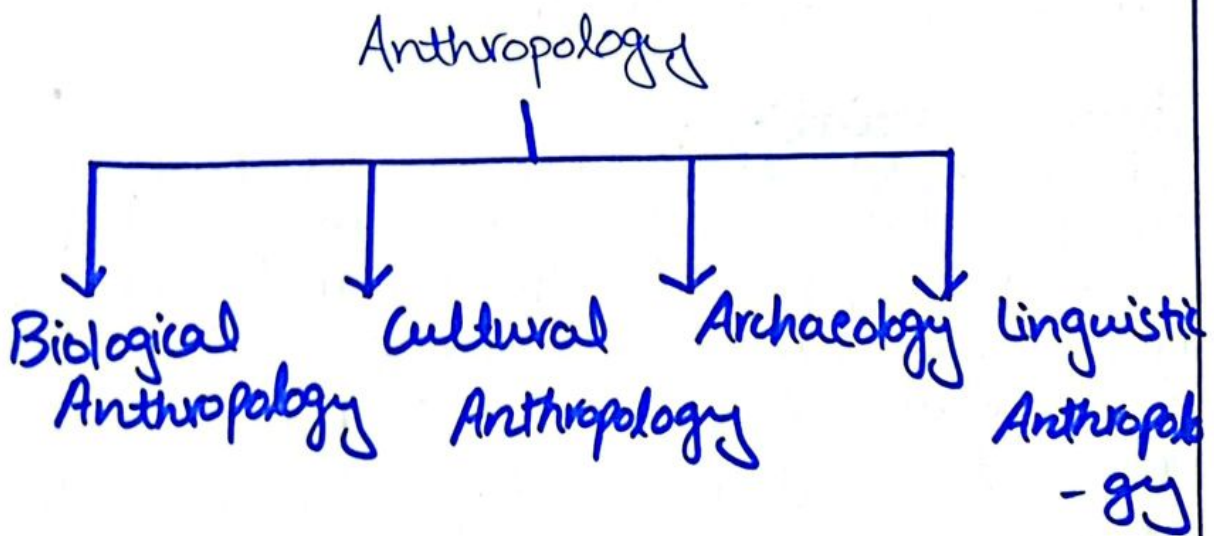


Q: Discuss the branches and subfields of Anthropology.

Explicating Anthropology as a discipline

Anthropology is the scientific study of humans, human behavior and societies of the past and present. It is a holistic discipline that seeks to understand the full spectrum of human experience. There are four branches of anthropology: biological anthropology, cultural anthropology, linguistic anthropology and archaeology. Anthropology is crucial for illuminating diverse tapestry of human existence as it focusses on all aspects of humanity.

Branches of Anthropology



1- Biological Anthropology

This branch deals with the study of humans from biological perspective, primarily focussing on aspects of human kind genetically inherited.

Subfields of biological Anthropology

i- Primatology:

The study of non-human primates is called primatology. One of the significant works in this field is of Jane Goodall who has made groundbreaking field research on chimpanzees of Tanzania (In the Shadow of Man, 1971).

ii- Osteology:

The study of bones is called as osteology. Stanley J. Olsen's multivolume work "Osteology for the Archaeologist" is a classic in this field that explains the details of human and animal bones.

iii- Human Variation:

This subfield deals with the study of genetic and phenotypic differences among contemporary human population. The seminal work of Franz Boas named as "Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants" challenges the notion of fixed racial types by demonstrating how environmental factors influence physical traits within a single generation.

Forensic Anthropology:

This subfield deals with the identification and analysis of human remains for criminal investigations. For instance, "Death's Act" is the book of William M. Bass that explores his research conducted at University of Tennessee Research Facility and explains application of this field in human decomposition and criminal understanding investigation.

v- Paleo-Anthropology:

This subfield deals with tracing human evolution through fossil record. "Lucy: the Beginnings of Humankind" is pivotal work of Donald Johanson that explores discovery of fossil "Lucy". This discovery is essential for understanding human bipedalism and evolution.

2- Cultural Anthropology

This branch of anthropology deals with the study of cultural variations among humans. Cultural anthropologists study how people live in different cultures, how they organize their societies and how they make sense of their world.

Subfields of Cultural Anthropology

i. Ethnology:

This subfield deals with the ^{comparative} study of cultures. For instance, Ruth Benedict's comparative study of different cultures of Zuni, Dobu and Kwakiutl is a classic of this field (Patterns of the Culture, 1934). Similarly, "The Golden Bough" of James Frazer is monumental work of this field that compares different religious and mythological practices of different cultures.

ii. Ethnography:

This subfield is qualitative and detailed study of a particular culture or community through immersive fieldwork. For instance, Malinowski's immersive fieldwork in Trobriand Islands explore the Kula Ring, which is an elaborate system of exchange of Trobriand Islanders.

iii. Economic Anthropology:

This subfield deals with the study of economic practices structured within ^{different} cultural contexts.

For instance, Marshall Sahlins studied economic practices of hunter-gatherer societies and challenged the notion of primitive economies as being based on scarcity. His concept of "Original Affluent Society" argues that these societies were able to meet their needs with minimal labor (Stone Age Economics, 1972).

iv- Political Anthropology:

This subfield deals with the study of political organizations of different cultures. For instance, Evans-Pritchard studied political organization within Kachin Society. He explored how power and authority is distributed and maintained within Kachin Society (Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure, 1948).

v- Urban Anthropology:

This subfield deals with how urbanization affects social relations and cultural practices. For instance, Herbert J. Gans studied an Italian-American neighborhood in Boston to explore how urbanization affects social structure, class stratification and kinship networks within communities.

vi- Anthropology of Religion:

This subfield deals with the study of religious practices, beliefs and institutions within different cultures. For instance, Robert N. Bellah traces evolution of religion from its origins in pre-historic societies to development of complex religious systems in the Axial age (Religion in Human Evolution, 2011).

3. Linguistic Anthropology

This branch of anthropology deals with the study of role of language in human social life.

Subfields of Linguistic Anthropology

i- Ethnolinguistics:

This subfield deals with the study of relationship between language and culture. For instance, Edward Sapir's book "Language and Culture" explores the ways in which (culture) language both shapes and reflects cultural beliefs.

ii- Sociolinguistics:

This subfield deals with the study of social dimension of language use. For instance, William Labov's book "The social stratification of English in New York City" explores the correlation between language variables (pronunciation) and social factors (such as socioeconomic class).

iii- Historical linguistics:

This subfield deals with the study of historical development of languages over time. For instance, Antoine Meillet's book "The Indo-European languages" explores the historical and cultural development of Indo-European language.

4. Archaeology

This branch of anthropology deals with the study of past human societies and cultures through analysis of material remains.

Subfields of Archaeology

i. Prehistoric Archaeology:

This subfield deals with the study of past human societies and cultures, focussing on the period before invention of writing. For instance, Kristian Kristiansen's work explores the societies and cultures of prehistoric Europe, tracing evolutions from Paleolithic period to Iron age.

ii. Historical Archaeology:

This subfield deals with the study of past human societies and cultures, focussing on the period from the advent of written history to recent past. For instance, Martin Hall's work examines and compares the archaeology of colonial encounters in South Africa and Chesapeake region of United States (**Archaeology and the Modern World: Colonial Transcripts of South Africa and the Chesapeake, 2000**).

iii. Classical Archaeology:

This subfield deals with the study of ancient Mediterranean world, including civilizations of

ancient Greece and Rome. For instance, Sybille Haynes studied the Etruscan civilization which is pivotal work in this field (Sybille Haynes, *Etruscan Art*, 2000). This civilization flourished in Italy, before rise of Rome.

Concluding Thoughts

Anthropology is a unique and holistic discipline that provides in-depth knowledge about human history, human societies and cultures. This field provides key insights about human nature because anthropologists study humans and human societies by their immersive fieldwork. Thus, anthropology provides information about each and every aspect of human, human nature and societies.