

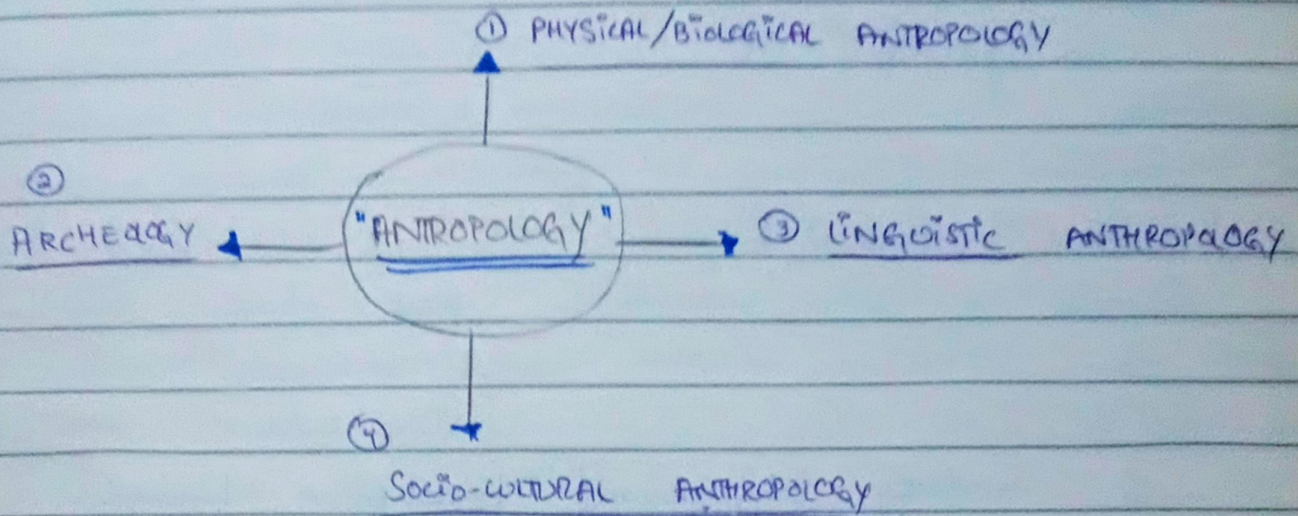
Q5) Discuss subfields of anthropology with their modern branches.

Ans) ① Introduction:-

Anthropology is the scientific study of humans or the study of people. Its origin is from the Greek words, "anthropos" (meaning human) and "logia" meaning study. It is the study of human societies and cultures throughout the world and throughout time. It is called a holistic scientific study of human beings because, the depth of the ability of this discipline provides a holistic approach to the study of humankind. It is divided into several subdisciplines, each unique in their ability to address aspects of humanity and each contributing to each other in order to create a more complete picture of humans throughout time. Holistic approach considers culture, history, language and biology essential to a complete understanding of human society.

## ② Major Subfields of Anthropology

There are four major subfields or subdisciplines of anthropology.



These four subfields allow anthropologists to study the total variety present in our species. It allows them to study everything about human being and therefore better understand the origins and developments of who we are today. For anthropologists it is like study of our origins.

### (i) Physical/Biological Anthropology

It is the study of humankind from a biological perspective. It focuses primarily on those aspects of humanity that are genetically inherited. Biological anthropology is probably best known for the study of human evolution and the biological processes involved in human adaptation.

### a) Explanation :-

People are found under a broad range of ecological and social conditions. Human ability to survive in diff situations is based on the enormous flexibility of cultural behaviour. The capacity for culture, however, is grounded in human biological history and physical makeup. Thus, human adaptation is biocultural, involving both cultural and biological dimensions. Therefore, to understand human, we need a sense of how these biological aspects of this adaptation came about and how they influence human cultural behaviour. In "Catching Fire" (2009) it is argued that "Human evolution was both a biological and a cultural process" (Richard Wrangham).

### b) modern subfields and branches of biological anthropology. It involves numerous subfields

such as:-

- 1) skeletal analysis / osteology
- 2) study of human nutrition
- 3) demography / statistical study of human population
- 4) epidemiology / study of patterns of disease
- 5) primatology etc.

### c) Practical Examples of biological anthropology

A subspecialty of biological anthropology is "paleoanthropology", where paleoanthropologists search for the origins of humanity, using the fossil record to trace history of human evolution. They study the remains of the earliest human forms, as well as those ancestral to humans and related to humans.

Another subspecialty of biological

anthropology is called "Human variation". It is concerned with physiological differences among humans. Anthropologists who study these map physiological differences among modern human groups and attempt to explain the sources of this diversity. They study "primates" as well.

d) Famous Biological anthropologists - Jane Goodall and Dian Fossey are two well known anthropologists who studied primates in the wild. Fossey (died 1985) worked with gorillas in Rwanda. While Goodall works with chimpanzees in Tanzania. Biological anthropologists study these nonhuman primates in the wild.

### (ii) Linguistic ANTHROPOLOGY

Linguistics is the scientific study of language. Linguistic anthropology is concerned with understanding language and its relation to culture. Language is primary means by which people communicate and it is essential part of what it means to be human and a basic part of all cultures.

#### (a) Explanation-

Linguistic anthropologists want to understand how language is structured, how it is learned and how this communication takes place.

Language is a complex symbolic system that people use to communicate and to transmit culture.

Thus, it provides critical clues for understanding culture. Language involves much more than words.

When we speak, we perform. Linguistic anthropologists are interested in ways in which people perform language.

in the ways they change and modify the meanings of their words.

## b) subfields .

In linguistic anthropology, we have <sup>four</sup> ~~three~~ main subfields :-

1) Historical linguistics → Evaluates the development of languages throughout history.

2) Descriptive linguistics → Examines language as a concrete phenomenon, studies its structure.

3) Sociolinguistics → Examines how & language affects changes in the societies that speak it.

4) Ethnolinguistics → studies that how languages and cultures are related

## c) Examples of how linguistic anthropology

works Historical linguistics work to discover the ways in which languages have changed and how they are related to each other. This helps in better understanding of histories and migrations of those who speak them. For instance, understanding of Native American languages etc. Linguistic anthropology also contributes to archaeology by helping to decipher ancient text through rules of modern language.

Another classic example of linguistic anthropology is how modern English came to be created. It descended from a Proto-Germanic language through an Anglo-Frisian language.

Thus, <sup>linguistics to</sup> contribution of a anthropology is undisputed.

d) Famous linguistic anthropologist -

1) Edward Sapir → the most famous linguistic anthropologist to study with Boas.

2) Franz Boas → one of the first anthropologists involved in language documentation.

etc.

### (iii) ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology is the study of past cultures through their material remains. Archaeologists add a vital time dimension to our understanding of cultures and how they change. The knowledge gained through archaeology is important to cultures and individuals, highlighting its value as a key discipline in anthropology.

a) Explanation - The past surrounds us, it defines us as well as our cultures as well. Archaeology is a critical way of knowing about the past. By excavating sites created by humans in the past, archaeologists attempt to reconstruct the behaviour of past cultures by collecting and studying the materials and remains of people in the past. These are known as "Artifacts". An artifact is any object that human beings have made, used or altered. They include pottery, tools, garbage and whatever else a society has left behind. It can be challenging task as they have to infer past lifeways from these things. They look at how cultures change over time.

## b) Important subfields :-

There are many different specialities within archaeology. Some good examples are :-

2) Urban Archaeology → Urban archaeologists delve into the recent and distant past of current day cities. In doing so, they uncover knowledge of the people often left out of the history books, making our understanding of the past far richer.

Example :- \* Elizabeth Scott's work at  
Nina Plantation in Louisiana (2004)

↓  
adds to understanding of life of slaves & labourers from 1820s to 1890s.

\* ⑥ Discovery of an African Burial Ground in New York City (1991) → provides insight into lives of enslaved Africans in 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> c.

2) CRM / Cultural Resource Management

Another important subfield is CRM.

Archaeologists working in CRM are concerned with the protection and management of archaeological, archival and architectural resources. They are often employed by federal, state and local agencies to develop and implement plans for the protection and management of such cultural resources.

c) Practical Example of Archaeology - many archaeologists study "Pre historic" societies, those for which no records have been found or no writing systems have been deciphered. Even if they are found like in case of ancient Greece or Colonial America, it still helps us to understand those who came before us.

In popular media, archaeology is also identified mainly with spectacular discoveries of artefacts from prehistoric cultures, such as "Tomb of the Egyptian king Tutankhamun".

d) Famous Archaeologists - 1) The most famous archaeologist, known for discovering Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922 was → Howard Carter.

2) Kathleen Kenyon → She was known for her work in Levant, also for her revolutionary excavation techniques.  
etc.

## ii) Socio-cultural Anthropology

The study of human society and culture is known as cultural anthropology or socio-cultural anthropology. It deals with the origins, history and development of human culture.

a) Explanation :- Anthropologists define society as a group of people persisting through time and social relationships among them, including their statuses and roles. Traditionally, societies are thought of occupying a specific geographic location but modern transportation



and electronic communication have made specific locales less important. Societies are increasingly global rather than local phenomena. On the other hand, culture is an extremely complex phenomenon. Culture is the major way in which humans adapt to their environment and give meaning to their lives. It includes human behaviour that he learns and also the objects that he produces.

Cultural anthropologists attempt to understand culture both as a universal human phenomenon and as a characteristic of a group of people. They use different research strategies to search for general principles that underlie all cultures or examine the dynamics of a particular culture.

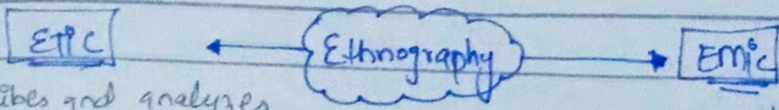
### ① Practically, how cultural anthropology operates / functions -

Research in cultural anthropology is almost always based on "participant observation", a long-term fieldwork gathering data by observing and participating in people's lives.

Furthermore, Ethnography and ethnology are two important aspects of cultural anthropology. Ethnography is the description of society or culture. An Ethnographer (cultural anthropologist) attempts to describe an entire society or a particular set of cultural institutions or practices. Ethnographies may be either emic, etic or may combine the two.

Whereas, Ethnology is the attempt to find general principles or laws that govern cultural phenomena.

Ethnologists compare and contrast practices in different cultures to find regularities.



• describes and analyzes culture according to principles and theories drawn from western scientific traditions such as ecology, economy or psychology.

• attempt to capture what ideas and practices mean to members of a culture.

• attempts to give readers a sense of what it feels like to be a member of the culture it describes.

(c) Major subfields :-

It is a complex field with many different subfields. Major ones are:-

① { Political and legal Anthropology } → concerned with issues of nationalism, citizenship, state, colonialism and globalism.

② { Humanistic Anthropology } → focused on personal, ethical and political choices facing humans.

③ { Visual Anthropology } → Study of visual representation and media.

(d) Famous Cultural Anthropologists

1) Franz Boas → known as father of modern cultural anthropology

2) Bronislaw Malinowski → father of social anthropology, founder of functionalism, pioneered participant observation as an ethnographic method

### 3) Conclusion.

The detailed discussion of subfields of anthropology fully elucidates that it is a holistic study of human being. Each of these subdisciplines contributes different aspects to the understanding of humans in the past and present. Rather than focusing on a single aspect such as biology or history; anthropology is distinct in its holism, which is. These subfields provide the basis for this holistic approach.