

Anthropology

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Question no. 3

Introduction :-

Anthropology is the holistic study of the origin, development and nature of mankind. It is the study of man in totality in all space and time.

Religion possesses an important role as a social institution of man's life and many anthropologists indulged themselves with the study of religion and derived various approaches to study religion, however through a lens of anthropological holistic lens. The evolutionary scheme of religion was the first approach to study religion and holds significant importance.

Defining Religion :-

EB Tylor, the renowned Anthropologist was the first one to describe religion making it analyzed through the lens of anthropology. EB Tylor says,

"Religion is the belief in spiritual beings"

Criticism of Tylor's definition :-

- (1) The definition does not include ritual aspect.
- (2) It does not include emotional element.
- (3) It does not separate the belief of an individual and community.

Emile Durkheim, a renowned and an astounding sociologist also defined religion as

“ a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things i.e. things set apart and forbidden beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them. ”

Durkheim explained that there are three aspects of religions :-

- (1) sacred aspects which give rise to
- (2) moral aspect ; which makes a moral community
- (3) social order is formed eventually.

Therefore, according to Durkheim, religion and society go hand by hand when he analyzed this phenomenon in Aranda tribe of Australia.

(3) Melford E Spiro is another anthropologist who explained religion through a lens of culture. Spiro says,

“ Religion is an institution of culturally patterned interaction with culturally postulated superhuman beings. ”

Characteristics of Religion :-

Following are the characteristics of religion which also sums up the process of the development of a religion:

- (1) The Holy : Religion possesses sacred aspect, which according to Emile Durkheim is opposition of profane aspects. This holy maintains the social order and guide to remain clear of the profane.
- (2) Response : Religion exists when there is acknowledgement of the claim of religion and people starts to respond to religion.
- (3) Beliefs : As people start to respond to religion, it generates beliefs, practices and doctrines and those beliefs differ from religion to religion.
- (4) Rituals and Liturgy : Beliefs and practices as a result of participation result in individuals and communal rituals.
- (5) Ethical Codes : Religion develops the code of conduct for its followers.
- (6) Community : When people follow the norms and code of conduct of a religion, they adhere together to form a community - a social aspect of religion according to Durkheim.

Characteristics Of Religion By Talcott Parsons :

Talcott Parsons, a renowned functionalist, listed five factors which he believed that all religions would include. Following are the five characteristics :

- (1) Sacred Entities
- (2) Expressive Symbols
- (3) Ritual activities
- (4) Social Solidarity
- (5) Ethical Codes
- (6) Moral Values

Evolutionary Approach of Religion :-

Evolutionary approach of religion is one of the important approaches to study the origin of religion. The Evolutionary approach of religion - like Darwin's biological evolution - reiterated that religion developed as a result of evolution from different stages.

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Early anthropologists used the data from the studies of primitive societies to speculate about the genesis and functions of religion. They believed that religion is a problem solving phenomenon and have originated by the process of evolution.

Contribution of James Frazer :-

actual answer starts from here
 James Frazer was a proponent of classical evolutionism and regarded as an 'armed chair anthropologist'. Like his predecessors Tylor and Morgan, Frazer also used comparative method for his universal evolutionary scheme. He gave concept of psychic unity of mankind which explains that all human beings have some evolving thinking patterns and go through the same stage of religious evolution.

He collected data from various primary and secondary sources, primarily secondary sources like christian missionaries, colonial administrators, travelogues etc.

Religious scheme of Evolution By

James Frazer :-

James Frazer contends that the religion has developed through three stages of evolution: magic, religion and science.

(1) Magic :

Magic is the first stage of the development of religion. There were two types of laws in this stage which says about the 'principle of like produces like' and gives rise to imitative magic. The second is law of contact which is based on the principle that 'once in a contact always in contact' which deduces contagious magic. The practitioners of these laws were called magicians.

and they performed magic.

(2) Religion :-

The second stage was the stage of religion where practitioners were the religious specialists (priests). People began to see that they are fairly helpless, because the laws of previous stage do not work anymore. Their abilities to contact supernatural elevated their social status, gave them prestige and power. They gradually became divine kings and after death, their souls were received as gods.

(3) Science :-

The third and final stage of the evolution scheme of James Frazer is that man finally reached a scientific stage - highest development of human mind - and resorted his efforts to control nature, but with rational principles rather than irrational in case of science.

Criticism :-

(1) According to Malinowski, James Frazer was an armed chair anthropologist and collected data from secondary sources. Thus, the data was highly ethnocentric.

(2) Primitive people were also rational. They had some capabilities of a modern man. Eg Trobriand Islanders.

(3) In ethnographic reality, magic, science and religion co-exist and not in stages.

Conclusion :-

Anthropology is the study of man in totality in all times and spaces. Religion is an important part of the life of an individual, so anthropologists dedicated their lives to study religion through different approaches. James Frazer also explained religion through an evolutionary scheme that religion passes through three stages: magic, religion and science. However, he was deemed an armed chair anthropologist, as his data was highly ethnocentric.

Question no. 6

Introduction :-

Culture is the study of a way of life of a man. Culture is the core of the study of anthropological research as culture is as old as the existence of mankind. Anthropologists have dedicated themselves to study past and present cultures and draw a comparison between them. Anthropology deals with and studies past and present relations of a modern man to its ancestors. They make use of ethnology and ethnography both to study culture and both techniques are used for cultural research, but some anthropologists prefer ethnography over ethnology.

Anthropological Research :-

An organized and systematic enquiry into physical and socio-cultural phenomenon to explore new areas or discover the hidden areas and to verify and validate the existing knowledge can be termed as scientific research in Anthropology.

Research Methodology and Research Method :-

Research Methodology is the philosophy, ideology or science behind the research whereas research method is a manner in which a research is conducted.

Research Methodology can be the study of culture of a particular society and research methods would be ethnology and ethology in which research methodology, the study of culture would be carried out.

(1) Ethnology :-

Ethnology is the systematic and comparative study of patterns and processes of culture in the present times. It examines, interprets, and analyzes the comparative cultural study. It uses data to compare and contrast and to make generalizations about society and culture. Ethnologists attempts to identify and explain cultural differences and

similarities to build theory to understand that how social and cultural systems work.

(2) Ethnography :-

Ethnography is the process of writing about people. It is a way to get inside other cultures. It seeks to understand the issue at grass root level. It is one of the peculiar and unique features of Anthropology. During ethnographic fieldwork, the ethnographer gathers data that he/she organizes, describes, analyzes and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, journal, an article or a film. The most notable anthropologist of the late 19th century and early 20th century are :

- (a) Franz Boas
- (b) Malinowski
- (c) Evans-Pritchard

Prevalence of Ethnography over Ethnology :-

It is apparent that some anthropologists give prevalence to ethnography over ethnology. Following are the reasons for the importance of Ethnography in Anthropological research :-

(1) Ethnography is writing about the culture of a society after analyzing, examining, observing and studying the culture of that society in detail. Ethnology is basically the result of Ethnography. The data that is used to compare culture comes from the ethnographic work.

(2) Ethnography is essential to make Anthropology a holistic field of study, because ethnography focuses on all aspects of culture in detail. For example, Malinowski studied the Trobriand Islanders and gave detailed account of the culture of that society. On the other hand, ethnology is also important, but ethnography prevails ethnology in terms of holistic feature.

(3) Another important point of the prevalence of ethnography is that it includes the phenomenon of cultural Relativism in contrast to cultural ethnocentrism which usually arises as a result of ethnology. Cultural relativism is the phenomenon of studying the attitudes, beliefs and customs of a society from the perspective of that society whereas ethnocentrism studies culture in a biased way and judges a culture from the perspective of anthropologist's culture.

Conclusion :-

Anthropological research is the study of an organized and systematic enquiry into physical and socio-cultural phenomena.

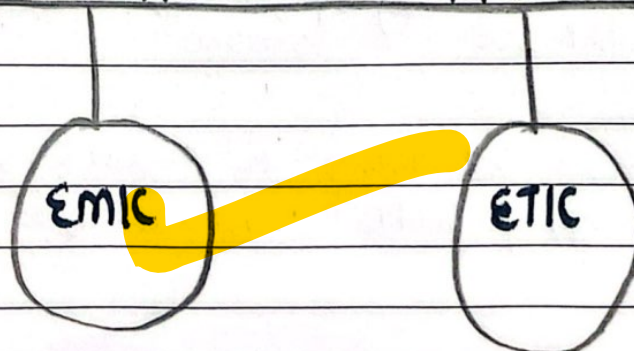
Anthropological research include the research methods of ethnology and ethnography. However, some anthropologists prefer ethnography over ethnology, for it explores the holistic lens of anthropology and supports the cultural relativism approach of a culture.

Question no. 7

Introduction :-

Anthropological research is different from the researches of other social sciences, because it possesses various research methods and research technique to collect data. This helps to find hidden areas of Anthropology along with those areas which were never explored. Anthropology uses two types of techniques: Emic and Etic approach both of immense importance to the research of Anthropology.

TWO TYPES OF APPROACHES



(1) Emic :-

The emic approach is an insider's perspective, which looks at the beliefs, values and practices of a particular form of culture from the perspective of the people who live within that culture. This approach aims to understand the cultural meaning and significance of a particular behaviour or practice, as it is understood by the people who engage in it.

(2) Etic :-

The etic approach, on the other hand, is an outsider perspective, which looks at a culture from the perspective of an outside observer. This approach tends to focus on the observable attitudes, behavior and practices of a culture. It often involves the use of standardized measures and frameworks to compare different cultures and may involve the use of other disciplines such as sociology or psychology.

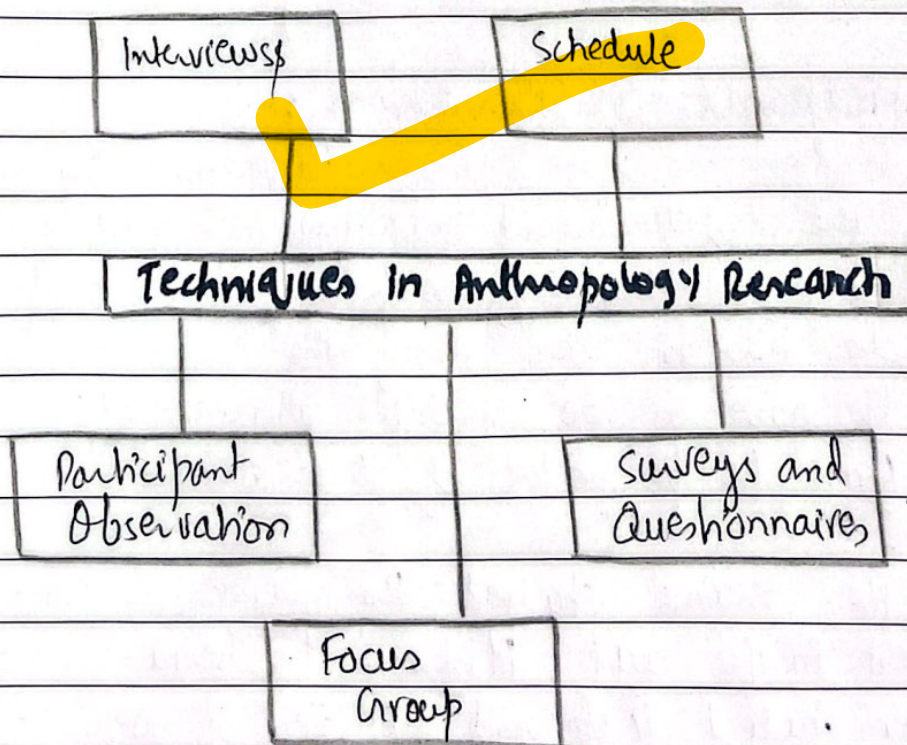
Difference Between Etic and Emic approach :-

EMIC	ETIC
1: It focuses on one culture and looks for culturally specified behavior.	Etic approach compares psychological theories about culture.
2: It focuses on behaviors specified in one particular culture.	Etic approach looks for universal behavior.

3: Emic approach emphasizes the uniqueness of a culture	Etic approach looks for similarities and differences between cultures
4: It seeks an insider's perspective.	It brings out an outsider's perspective.
5: Induction is the primary strategy	Always moves from Induction to deduction & particular to general.

Ethnographical Techniques in Research in Anthropology :-

Following are the ethnographical techniques in Anthropological research :-



(1) Interviews :-

Interview is the most common ethnographical technique in research in Anthropology. In interviews, the researcher asks questions from interviewee, probably a person belonging to that culture, that is being studied. It is less expensive. However, it can be double biased: biased from the perspective of interviewer and interviewee.

(2) Surveys and Questionnaires :-

Another important technique of data collection is the conduction of surveys and questionnaires. These survey are very convenient and can be in the form of oral or written and open-handed or close-handed. However, after surveys, a person cannot change his answers and can also create misconception if the person does not understand the survey questions.

(3) Participant Observation :-

Participant observation is one of the most important techniques and unique characteristic of Anthropology. In participant observation, a researcher has to live among the people he is studying to have an in-depth analysis of the culture from the perspective of that culture.

For example, Franz studied the indigenous people of north west Pacific coast, Alaska and Siberia.
Malinowski studied Trobriand Islanders of New Guinea.

Participant observation can be conducted either in controlled setting and uncontrolled setting.

(4) Focus Groups :-

Focus group is another important research technique in which researcher plays the role of a moderator and rather a passive role. He collects data through group discussions in which interviewees speak more and moderator listens.

(5) Schedule :-

In schedule, the researcher collects data by explaining the questions to the interviewees in case if the people are not literate and then note down their responses.

Conclusion :-

There are different kinds of approaches in Anthropology that make them distinguished from other researches. These approaches are emic and etic approaches focusing on insider's and outsider's perspective respectively. Moreover, Anthropology is more inclined towards science. Therefore, it has different techniques of data collection such as interviews, surveys, participant observation, focus groups and schedule.

Question no. 8

Xenocentric Approach :-

There are different approaches to the study of a culture and among them, xenocentric approach is one of the crucial one. Xenocentric approach is the approach in which people consider their culture to be inferior than other culture and consider the others culture - according to them the prominent one - is the superior culture.

For instance, the people of the Asian and African countries consider their culture as inferior to those cultures of the west. They try to adopt the specialities of that superior culture.

Ethnocentric Approach :-

Ethnocentric approach is the approach which is exactly opposite of xenocentric approach. Ethnocentric approach believes that the ways of one's own culture is superior and better than the cultures of other people. Ethnocentrism is the process of analyzing the perspectives, attitudes, beliefs and customs of a particular culture from the perspective of researcher's culture. Therefore, ethnocentric approach produces judgemental and biased results and serves the role of a hindrance to realize the holistic nature of Anthropology.

For example, the concepts of Orientalism by Edward Said and Imperialism as best presented by

Kipling in his poem "White Man's Burden".

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Acculturation :-

Culture is the way of life of human beings and according to EB Tylor, culture is the multifaceted set of knowledge, belief, art, laws, moral acquired by a man as a member of a society. On the other hand, Malinowski defined culture as a instrumental for satisfaction of needs of man. Culture is dynamic and is subjected to change. In a society, there are two elements: superordinate and subordinate. Acculturation is the process by which individual adopt the superordinate culture of a society because according to Malinowski, culture should satisfy the needs of an individual.

For example, if a person migrates from an Asian culture to a western culture, he would adopt the western culture to satisfy his needs. This is called Acculturation.

Enculturation :-

Enculturation is different than acculturation. Enculturation is the process by which an individual learns the culture of a society. The process of enculturation can be done through various agents such as socialization through family, schools and other agents such as media, television etc. It is process of a way of learning of life.