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Anthropology short notes

Concepts and methods of Ecological Anthropology: Bio-cultural Adaptations

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination • Anthropology Paper 1 • Anthropology GS 1 (Paper I)

9.7 Concepts and methods of Ecological Anthropology: Bio-cultural Adaptations-Genetic and Non-genetic factors. Man's physiological responses to environmental stresses: hot desert, cold, high altitude climate.

Short notes by official syllabus heading.

Revision notes for the Anthropology optional. Confirm thinkers and examples against standard texts and recent papers.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/archives/anthropology-notes/paper-1/concepts-and-methods-of-ecological-anthropology-bio-cultural-adaptatio/>

Concepts And Methods Of Ecological Anthropology

Definition

Scientific lens | Humanistic/social lens | Anthropological synthesis

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works.

Definition

Even where food is available, nutritional outcomes can differ because of access, intra-household distribution, gender relations and social status.

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works.

Definition

Adaptability refers to human physiological, developmental, and behavioral responses to environmental stress. Political economy shows that socio-economic inequality limits and shapes these responses.

Example / case study

In the Banaba Island case, the environment was rendered uninhabitable because of phosphate mining driven by colonial economic interests, illustrating how the political economy can physically destroy an ecological niche.

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works. Conclusion: While Clifford Geertz sought to interpret the "web of meanings" that define human existence, Victor Turner aimed to understand how those meanings are performed and transformed through ritual action. Together, they engineered the "**Symbolic Turn**," proving that human action is fundamentally mediated by meaning and symbolic complexity.

Definition

Scientific lens | Humanistic/social lens | Anthropological synthesis

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works.

Definition

Use field studies and empirical data.

Example / case study

Naga identity - multiple tribes unified by colonial rule + Christianity.

Thinkers

Scholar: Clifford Geertz (Old Societies and New States, 1963). Ernest Gellner: Riots happen between two equal groups; if one weak → genocide. Titles show caste influence: Singh, Pujari, Rana, Nayak. E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works.

Definition

Nutritional anthropology is a subfield of biological and biocultural anthropology that examines the interaction between diet, human biology, ecology, and culture. It views nutrition not merely as a biological requirement but as a biocultural phenomenon shaped by environment, social organization, and political economy. Anthropologists such as **John Bennett (1943)** and later **Scrimshaw and Young (1989)** emphasized that nutrition must be analyzed as a process where food intake is inseparable from the inequality and ecology of a community.

Example / case study

Developmental Acclimatization (Ontogenetic Development)

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel - Anthropology is the study of man and his works.