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Q1(b)

Society and Culture.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · The Nature of Society

2.2 The Nature of Society: Concept of Society; Society and Culture; Social Institution; Social groups; and Social stratification.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on Society and Culture
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Society is organised relations of persons.

Culture is **Tylor's** learned whole of custom and knowledge.

Kroeber stressed culture as superorganic; **Radcliffe-Brown** stressed structure.

Nuer lineages show society; cattle idiom shows culture.

Keep both in one ethnography.

Introduction

Society is the organised relations among persons. Culture is the learned design for living that those persons share. Anthropology holds the two together.

Body**The pair**

- **Radcliffe-Brown** treated society as a structure of statuses. **Tylor** defined culture as knowledge, belief, art, law, and custom acquired as a member of society.
- **Kroeber** called culture superorganic: it outlives any one biography. **Malinowski** showed culture meeting needs inside a living social set.
- A Nuer cattle camp is a society of lineages. The cattle idiom, spear names, and feud rules are culture.

Why split at all

- Society answers who is related to whom. Culture answers what they know and value.
- **Geertz** later read culture as public meaning. Structure without meaning is empty; meaning without organisation will not feed a camp.

Flow diagram

Society relations -> Persons statuses
Culture learned design -> Meaning skill
Persons statuses -> Field case
Meaning skill -> Field case

Conclusion

Society is relation. Culture is learned meaning and skill. Fieldwork must name both, as in Nuer politics and Trobriand garden magic.

Facts & figures

Tylor

1871 definition of culture as a complex whole acquired as a member of society.

Radcliffe-Brown

Social structure as actually existing relations of person to person.

Kroeber

Culture as superorganic, patterned beyond individual psychology.

Evans-Pritchard

Nuer work showed segmentary society carried by a cattle culture.