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Q4(c)

Describe the evolution of Fieldwork tradition in Anthropology.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 15 marks · Fieldwork tradition in anthropology

(a) Fieldwork tradition in anthropology

Core demand of the question

- Describe the evolution of Fieldwork tradition in Anthropology
- Write about 200 words for 15 marks

Revision summary

Early anthropology used travellers, missions, and questionnaires.

Torres Strait and Boas professionalised field collecting.

Malinowski's Trobriand stay became the charter of immersion.

Indian village studies localised the tradition.

Reflexivity and multi-sited work are the late evolution.

Introduction

Fieldwork became anthropology's craft over a century. It moved from travellers' notes to a professional stay, then to reflexive and multi-sited work.

Body**Before the year in the village**

- Missionaries, administrators, and **Morgan's** questionnaires gathered data at a distance.
- **Rivers** on the **Torres Strait** expedition (1898) brought genealogical method and a team survey.
- **Boas** on the Northwest Coast combined museum collecting with repeated visits.

The classical stay

- **Malinowski** in the Trobriands made **participant observation**, the native language, and the tent the charter.
- **Radcliffe-Brown** in the Andamans, **Mead** in Samoa, and **Evans-Pritchard** in Nuerland spread the model.
- **Srinivas** and the Indian village school brought the tradition home.

Later turns

- Team projects, **Chicago** urban work, and **Whyte's** Street Corner Society widened the 'tribe' field.
- **Writing Culture** made the stay a written, power-laden encounter. Women and indigenous anthropologists named the old male colonial gaze.
- **Marcus** multi-sited fieldwork follows people, things, and NGOs across borders.

- Ethics boards and long-term restudies, as in **Firth's** Tikopia returns, now mark the craft.

Flow diagram

Expedition Rivers Boas -> Malinowski immersion

Malinowski immersion -> Village India Srinivas

Village India Srinivas -> Reflexive multi-sited

Conclusion

The fieldwork tradition evolved from notes and expeditions to **Malinowski's** immersion, then to village India, cities, and multi-sited, reflexive research. The constant is presence among the people studied.

Facts & figures

Torres Strait 1898

Haddon, Rivers, and others; genealogical method in a team expedition.

Malinowski

Argonauts of the Western Pacific: the founding myth of the long stay.

Srinivas

Rampura and the field-view of caste in India.

Marcus

Multi-sited ethnography for a connected world.

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