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Anthropology short notes

Applications of Anthropology

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

12. Applications of Anthropology: Anthropology of sports, Nutritional anthropology, Anthropology in designing of defence and other equipments, Forensic Anthropology, Methods and principles of personal identification and reconstruction, Applied human genetics-Paternity diagnosis, genetic counselling and eugenics, DNA technology in diseases and medicine, serogenetics and cytogenetics in reproductive biology.

Short notes by official syllabus heading.

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

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12. Applications Of Anthropology

Definition

Medical Genetics: It is the standard method for understanding the inheritance patterns of Mendelian disorders such as Huntington's disease, Sickle-cell anemia, and Thalassemia.

Example / case study

Information is reconstructed almost entirely through archaeological evidence. Together they explain humans from biological, cultural, linguistic and historical perspectives. Anthropology today extends far beyond the study of tribes.

Thinkers

E.A. Hoebel: "Anthropology is the study of man and his works." Franz Boas - historical particularism and the four-field approach (biological, archaeological, linguistic, cultural). Radcliffe-Brown: Used genealogies to reconstruct descent groups and social structure in Africa. Malinowski: Used them to understand kinship and land inheritance among the Trobriand Islanders. Claude Lévi-Strauss: Used genealogical/kinship data to develop Alliance Theory, focusing on marriage and exchange between lineages.

Anthropology Of Sports

Definition

Cultural Anthropology is the study of learned behaviour, beliefs, customs, traditions, institutions, and values of different human societies.

Example / case study

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Nutritional Anthropology

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

1: Lactose Tolerance: This biological trait evolved in specific pastoralist cultures with a history of milk-drinking (cultural economy), showing how a cultural adaptation changed the biological capacity of a population to thrive in their ecological setting. 2: High-Altitude Adaptation: In high-altitude regions like Tibet or the Andes, the ecological stress is hypoxia (low oxygen). Human adaptability here is integrated: it involves biological changes like increased lung capacity and the EPAS1 gene, as well as cultural adjustments like transhumance (seasonal migration) and iron-rich diets. in Indian Tribes: **ICMR (2009)** studies utilized these techniques to identify widespread Chronic Energy Deficiency (CED) among Indian tribal communities, using Body Mass Index (BMI) and mid-upper arm circumference as primary indicators of health status. in Indian Tribes: Clinical surveys conducted in tribal regions of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh revealed a high prevalence of Goiter (iodine deficiency) and Bitot's spots (Vitamin A deficiency)

Anthropology In Designing Of Defence

Definition

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Other Equipments

Definition

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Forensic Anthropology**Definition**

Scientific lens | Humanistic/social lens | Anthropological synthesis

Example / case study

- Ranakhandi village: women rejected high-yield wheat because of its colour and taste, showing why technically superior food interventions can fail without cultural acceptance.

Thinkers

Similarly, L.P. Vidyarthi's Nature-Man-Spirit Complex illustrates the interaction of environment, human society and cultural/religious beliefs in understanding tribal life.

Methods**Definition**

Study (Kamal K. Misra): >85% of tribal land transfers in AP, MP, Odisha are to non-tribals.

Example / case study

Involves complete sequencing of the genome using next-generation methods. To sequence the entire human genome and identify all genes.

Thinkers

Development-induced displacement (by B.K. Roy Burman) highlighting Eco, Health, Political marginalisation. Titles show caste influence: Singh, Pujari, Rana, Nayak.

Principles Of Personal Identification**Definition**

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Example / case study

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