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Anthropology short notes

Nutritional anthropology.

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

Nutritional anthropology.

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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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)

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