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Anthropology short notes

Linguistic and religious minorities and their social, political and economic status.

UPSC Civil Services (Main) Examination • Anthropology GS 2 • Anthropology GS 2 (Paper II)

5.2 Linguistic and religious minorities and their social, political and economic status.

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/mains-answers/anthropology-gs-2/linguistic-and-religious-minorities-and-their-social-political-and-economic-status/>

Linguistic

Definition

Minorities control highest lands, have legal safeguards, socio economic condition of every community increased since independence but slower for some minority shows largely gov not directly discriminated in benefits till now but it is the result of ineffective implementation.

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Example / case study

Nuclear Family: Parents and their immediate children. Joint / Extended Family: Multiple generations (grandparents, parents, siblings, cousins) operating under a single kinship structure.

Thinkers

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown - structural-functionalism: institutions function like organs to maintain social structure.

Definition

History studies past events chronologically.

Thinkers

Clifford Geertz (Interpretive Anthropology): Geertz focused on cognition and meaning. Heavily influenced by **Max Weber's** Verstehen and hermeneutics, he argued that humans are suspended in "webs of significance" they have spun themselves. Victor Turner (Symbolic Anthropology): Turner focused on social processes and action. Influenced by Max Gluckman and Arnold van Gennep, he examined how symbols move and work dynamically during crises and transitions.: Symbols as **Vehicles vs. Operators. Geertz** (Vehicles): Symbols are viewed as vehicles of culture that convey established ideas and orientations to decode what a society "tells itself about itself". Turner (Operators): Symbols are operators in social processes. They act as tools to prompt social action, resolve conflict, and guide individuals through status changes. Turner identified specific properties of symbols: Multivocality (many meanings), Condensation (packed meanings), and Polarization (sensory vs. ideological poles).: **Thick Description vs. Social Drama. Geertz** (Methodology): He championed "**Thick Description**," which involves providing a detailed account of behavior within its cultural context to explain not just what happened, but its deep intent and meaning (e.g., distinguishing a blink from a conspiratorial wink).

Definition

Folklore = record of the past, should be studied as social memory.

Example / case study

A family member living in another city is still part of the family, but not part of the household. Conversely, a live-in roommate is part of the household, but not the family. Nuclear Family: Parents and their immediate children. Joint / Extended Family: Multiple generations (grandparents, parents, siblings, cousins) operating under a single kinship structure.

Thinkers

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown - structural-functionalism: institutions function like organs to maintain social structure.

Definition

F.G. Bailey (OD - Bisipara, Kondhmal region)

Example / case study

Distillers (Boad caste) improved economic status under British rule → acquired land → challenged ritual dominance of warrior castes, earlier they were lower caste.