

MASOC 2.1



**M. A. (SOCIOLOGY)
SEMESTER - II
REVISED SYLLABUS AS PER NEP 2020**

**CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVES IN
CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

© UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI

Prof. Ravindra Kulkarni

Vice Chancellor
University of Mumbai, Mumbai.

Prin. Dr. Ajay Bhamare

Pro Vice-Chancellor,
University of Mumbai.

Prof. Shivaji Sargar

Director
CDOE, University of Mumbai.

- Programme Co-ordinator** : **Anil Bankar**
Associate Professor,
CODE, University of Mumbai.
- Course Co-ordinator** : **Pankti Surve**
Assistant Professor,
CODE, University of Mumbai.
- Editor's name** : **Dr. Lakshmi Periyaswamy**
Kets Vaze College,
Mulund (East), Mumbai.
- Course Writers** : **Prof. Dr. Mariyah Gour Ghor**
Head, Dept of Sociology,
Rizvi College of Arts, Science & Commerce
- : **Dr. Sushila Yadav**
Head, Vartak College
- : **Pankti Surve**
Assistant Professor,
CODE, University of Mumbai.

January 2025, Print I, ISBN No. - 978-93-6728-635-7

Published by

Director

Centre for Distance and Online Education, University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari,
Mumbai - 400 098.

DTP COMPOSED AND PRINTED BY

Mumbai University Press,
Vidyanagari, Santacruz (E), Mumbai - 400098.

CONTENTS

Unit No.	Title	Page No
Module I Anthropology and Sociology		
1.	Sociology, Anthropology And The Colonial Episteme	1
2.	Ethnocentrism And Cultural Relativism	12
2a.	Subdisciplines Biological Anthropology, Linguistics, Prehistoric Archeology	23
Module II Perspectives and Methods		
3.	Perspectives : Holistic, Comparative And Ethnographic Fieldwork	34
4.	Evolutionist Perspectives , Diffusionism : The Kulturkreis School, British Diffusionism	42
Module III Antropologists and Contributions		
5.	Classical Studies In Kinship And Structural Functionalism	58
6.	Culture And Personality	76
Module IV Debates on Issues		
7.	Structuralism, Village Studies	81
8.	Marxism And Anthropology	89

SEMESTER II 507

CLASSICAL PERSPECTIVES IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Course Objectives

- 1) To understand the historical emergence of anthropology and its interconnection with sociology
- 2) To assess the distinct methods and claims of cultural anthropology as a unique system of knowledge production
- 3) To analyse the theories and methods developed by cultural anthropologists

Course Outcome

- 1) Appreciate the critical efforts of anthropologists to make sense of and value cultural diversity and otherness
- 2) Develop a humanistic approach to plurality of cultures and lifestyles
- 3) Understand the dynamics of cultural change
- 4) Assessment of the plurality of perspectives in cultural anthropology

Unit I: Anthropology and Sociology

- a) Sociology, anthropology, and the colonial episteme
- b) Ethnocentrism & cultural relativism
- c) Sub-disciplines: Biological Anthropology, Linguistics, Prehistoric Archaeology

Unit II. Perspectives and Methods

- a) Holistic perspective, comparative method & ethnographic fieldwork
- b) Evolutionism&Diffusionism
- c) Historical particularism

Unit III. Anthropologists and Contributions

- a) Kinship studies
- b) Structural Functionalism
- c) Culture and personality

Unit IV. Debates on issues

- a) Structuralism
- b) Village studies
- c) Marxism and anthropology

References

- Applebaum, H.A. (1987). Perspectives in Cultural Anthropology. New York: State University of New York Press. Candea, M. (Ed.), (2018). Schools and Styles of Anthropological Theory. London & New York: Routledge. Clark-Deces, I. (2011).
- Blackwell Companions to Anthropology: A Companion to the Anthropology of India. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell. Das, V. (Ed.). (2003).
- The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology. New Delhi: Oxford University Press. Erickson, P.A. & Murphy, L.D., (2017). A History of Anthropological Theory. (5th Edition). Ontario: University of Toronto Press. Erickson, P.A. & Murphy, L.D., (2017).
- Readings for a History of Anthropological Theory. (5th Edition). Ontario: University of Toronto Press. Godelier, M. (1977).
- Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology. London: Cambridge University Press. Lobo, L & Shah, A.M. (Eds.) (2022).
- Indian Anthropology: Anthropological Discourse in Bombay, 1886 – 1936. Routledge. McGee, R.J. & Warms, R.L., (2019).
- Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History (7th Edition). Rowman & Littlefield. Moberg, M., (2018).
- Engaging Anthropological Theory: A Social and Political History. London & New York: Routledge. Moore, H.L. & Sanders, T. (Eds.). (2014).
- Anthropology in Theory: Issues in Epistemology. Malden, M.A.: Blackwell Publishing. Moore, J.D. (Ed.). (2009).
- Visions of Culture: Annotated Reader. Lanham, MD.: Altamira Press. Ortner, S.B. (1984). Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties. Comparative Studies in Society and History. 26 (1): 126 - 166. Uberoi, P. et al. (Eds.). (2007).
- Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology. Ranikhet: Permanent Black.
- Any other relevant text or reading suggested by the teacher

MODULE I

ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

1

SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE COLONIAL EPISTEME

Unit Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Understanding Colonial episteme
- 1.3 Sociology, Anthropology, and Colonial episteme
- 1.4 Location of the researcher in the colonizer's period
- 1.5 Colonial Episteme in Sociology and Anthropology in India
- 1.6 Conclusion
- 1.7 Questions
- 1.8 References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To Understand the Concept of Colonial Episteme
- To examine the colonial episteme with reference to Sociology and Anthropology.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter answers the question as to how the colonizers impacted anthropology and sociology. The discussion carried out in this chapter related to colonial episteme would help you gain a perspective on knowledge politics associated with sociology anthropology and their impact, which exists even today.

Let us look at this in detail in the chapter.

• Anthropology at a glance:

Human diversity is studied in anthropology. Ethnography, also known as participant observation, is the main study methodology used by anthropologists. It also involves extensive, recurring encounters with individuals. Anthropology looks at culture more closely at the individual level. Anthropology also focuses on the unique cultural characteristics of a particular group or society.

- **Sociology at a Glance:**

As a discipline, sociology challenges its students to examine how people interact and behave. It tries to make them think beyond common sense and analyze what, why, and how individuals act within society's greater framework. Sociology is a broad discipline that frequently examines organizations, political movements, educational, religious, and other institutions and the power dynamics between various groups.

- **Sociology and Anthropology Development:**

Rao (1974: xxvi) points out that social anthropology was extended to include sociology in Calcutta and that sociology was practiced in the Bombay department together with social anthropology. According to Srinivas (1952), Social anthropology is a valuable topic of study because it provides a vital opportunity for in-depth fieldwork experience. In addition, Srinivas thought that studying one's own society would be more difficult for Indian sociology students than studying societies elsewhere. As a result, he thought that students should study social anthropology for at least two years to acquire an empirical perspective. According to Srinivas (1952: 36), Sociology will benefit from the union of Social Anthropology and Sociology. Therefore, it is crucial to remember that many universities did not see the development of clear divisions between sociology and anthropology, according to Rao (1974: xxvii). Rao based his study on the observation that, despite having training in anthropology, G.S. Ghurye, K.P. Chattopadhyay, and D.N. Majumdar researched both rural and urban settings—a topic of interest for sociologists—as well as among tribes and castes.

1.2 UNDERSTANDING COLONIAL EPISTEME

“Colonial episteme,” in simple words, refers to the body of knowledge, ideologies, and power structures that support colonial ideology used to control the colonies. It includes how colonial powers viewed and interpreted the globe. It is an epistemological framework that affects knowledge creation in several disciplines, including geography, anthropology, history, literature, and colonial policies and practices.

Significant facets of the colonial episteme are:

- **Eurocentrism:**

The colonial episteme has been criticized for using European methods of knowing and being. The colonizers valued their own methods and way of life over those of the colonized peoples, which was at the core of the colonial episteme. The knowledge created had been such that it frequently mocked or ignored local knowledge systems and cultural practices while elevating European culture, science, and ideals to a higher and universal status.

- **Racial Hierarchies:**

The underlying premise of the colonial episteme was the existence of deep racial distinctions and hierarchies. In order to justify the dominance and exploitation of non-European peoples, they frequently employed pseudoscientific beliefs and theories to create and uphold notions of racial superiority and inferiority.

- **Orientalism:**

Edward Said is associated with the term Orientalism. It is a theory used to describe how the West views and portrays the East (which includes Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa) as primitive, strange, and undeveloped—this method of producing information serves to legitimize colonial involvement and perpetuate stereotypes.

- **Disciplinary Knowledge:**

The growth of numerous academic fields, including history, anthropology, and archaeology, was impacted by colonialism. In order to produce information that benefited colonial interests, these disciplines were frequently developed within the framework of researching and overseeing conquered populations and areas.

- **Knowledge and Power:**

The colonial episteme shows the link between knowledge and power. It draws attention to how knowledge creation was not neutral but rather entwined with the power structures that supported and legitimized colonial dominance.

- **Cultural Hegemony:**

As part of the colonial episteme, non-colonized peoples were forced to adopt colonial languages, educational programs, and cultural ideals. In order to serve the goals and ideas of colonialism, this cultural hegemony attempted to transform native identities and ways of life.

- **Administrative and Bureaucratic Knowledge:**

A thorough understanding of the colonies' customs, traditions, and physical landscapes was essential to colonial administration. This bureaucratic expertise was used in colonial governance, resource extraction, and policy implementation.

- **Stereotyping and Representation:**

The colonial episteme made generalizations and stereotypes that were used to depict colonized peoples. These depictions frequently reinforced the idea that colonial control was necessary by being simplistic and demeaning.

1.3 SOCIOLOGY, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND COLONIAL EPISTEME

- **History:**

Both disciplines, i.e., Anthropology and Sociology, began as formal disciplines in the nineteenth and that of the twentieth century during the European colonial period. Colonial scholars used anthropology as a tool to study exotic cultures. Anthropologists like Malinowski and Pritchard used to conduct fieldwork related to indigenous people. Sociologists were also focused on studying the functioning and structure of the colonies.

On the other hand, for a considerable time, scholars from “all around the universities of Britain’s colonial empire” have “openly acknowledged the presence of a British academic community.” With the establishment of new research institutes and colleges in the colonies following 1945, the colonizers’ research communities were growing. This expansion was particularly noticeable in the colonies.

The colonists had even a significant influence on schooling. For instance, most of the faculty at colonial universities in Ghana and other countries were British for at least ten years. Comparative studies using data from colonies (e.g., Sumner, 1906; Durkheim, 1915) were often made. Applied sociological research was conducted at the imperial governments’ request (e.g., Balandier & Pauvert, 1950; Gulliver, 1985). Professional sociological activities to help the imperial control, like training colonial officials or serving on government panels that oversee colonial administration, were carried out by British Sociologists and Anthropologists.

By examining the social networks that connect colonies and metropolises, these colonial sociologists invented a type of “transnational” sociology (Banton, 1955). **It was also seen that when the researchers studied themselves, they were sociologists. When they studied the natives, they became social anthropologists**” in British academia (Little, 1960; Beteille, 1974, p. 704). This shows the politics associated with labeling disciplines and the approach of that period.

It could also be noted that a significant portion of the early anthropologists were Americans or Europeans who studied what they saw as “primitive” communities “untouched” by Western influence throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Due to this, the writings made by colonizers have long been criticized for their inaccurate representations of non-Western cultures. In other words, colonialists had a superior attitude toward them. For instance, early anthropologists frequently wrote about African cultures as static and unchanging, implying that Africans could never be modern and that their culture did not change over time as Western cultures did. Anthropologists such as James Clifford and George Marcus addressed these misrepresentations in the late 20th century, advocating for ethnographers to be more conscious and straightforward about the uneven power dynamics within themselves and the research participants.

Anthropologists began working more closely with sociologists throughout the war years, too. *Sociological Review* published works by Evans-Pritchard, Meyer Fortes, Raymond Firth, Daryll Forde, and Kenneth Little. In 1944, Firth reported to the Colonial Office that one of the major magazines that published studies on “matters affecting the colonies” was *Sociological Review*. The groundwork for sociology’s colonial turn was laid.

Some persons with degrees in anthropology who wanted to be acknowledged as sociologists suddenly started going to greater lengths in reaction to the development of disciplinary patriotism among younger PhDs in sociology and the heightened conflict between the two professions. They wrote introductory sociology texts (e.g., Goldthorpe, 1959; Cohen, 1968; Mitchell, 1970; Worsley, 1970), published in sociology journals, used the word “sociology” in book titles, conducted surveys, used statistical methods, and wrote on topics that are generally understood to be sociological, such as urbanization, industrialization, migration, and macro social change. Since there were fewer restrictions on obtaining a degree or PhD than there are, numerous scholars have moved from Sociology to Anthropology and back again.

Patrick Geddes, like Herbert Spencer (1902) and other liberal anti-imperialists of the time, saw empires as the source of militarism (Geddes, 1917, p. 100). Geddes held the first sociology professorship in India at the University of Bombay (1919–1923), where he made friends with intellectuals who supported independence, such as Tagore (Meller, 1990, p. 223). Geddes’ urban planning schemes in India and other British colonies fortified colonial settlement rather than challenging the empire itself (Meller, 1990, p. 299). Radcliffe-Brown referred to himself as a sociologist (Kuper, 1983, p. 2), and Audrey Richards used the terms anthropology and sociology interchangeably (Richards, 1961, p. 3).

Sociology departments were usually established before anthropological departments in the newly established African universities. An IRR study on racial relations in Rhodesia and Nyasaland was funded in 1952 by the Rockefeller Foundation (Rockefeller Foundation 1954, pp. 213–214). Along with Banton, Barnes, MacRae, and Rex, other colonial sociologists who contributed to the IRR’s magazine *Race* (later renamed *Race and Class*) were Roger Bastide, Floyd Dotson, Leo Kuper, and John Rex. *Race* published essays on issues such as “Indians and Coloreds in Rhodesia and Nyasaland” (Dotson and Dotson, 1963) and “The White Settler: a Changing Image” (Gann, 1960). The first ten issues of the IRR’s monthly newsletter, divided into geographical subheadings, featured only African colonies as the locales. However, a new region was included as the first subheading in February 1961: Britain. The study of *Race* concentrated more and more on immigration and racial relations in the UK throughout the latter years of the 1960s.

In the book *Japanese Anthropology in East, South-East, and Oceania: Colonial Contexts*, Shimizu discusses **Japanese colonization** in her writing.

Postmodern criticisms defined anthropology as a distinctly Western discipline that created hegemonic images of colonial outsiders in non-Western contexts. The West vs the non-West, the powerful opposed the helpless, and the observer (anthropologist) versus the observed is the analogous dichotomies upon which this concept is predicated. According to Shimizu, there have been three main historical trends in British anthropology: a shift from studying Race to studying culture, a move from studying humanity to studying “savages” in the colonies, and a specialization in Anthropology as a special branch.

Vermeulen notes that the cultural groups “were actively studied in order to (first) describe them, and (second) be able to control and tax them.” According to Pathy (1976, 1981), the disciplines of sociology and anthropology originated in India during the colonial era to serve administrative and political purposes. Afterward, these sciences helped to consolidate and expand the colonies. Pathy quotes Evans-Pritchard as saying, “It is useful to know who the chiefs are and what their functions, authority, privileges, and obligations are if it is the policy of a colonial government to administer a people through their chiefs.” Furthermore, one must first ascertain the people’s identity to administrate them according to their own laws and customs, Pathy (1981: 623), citing (1951: 109–110).

Check Your Progress

1. What is Colonial Episteme?

2. What kind of representations were made by the colonial scholars?

1.4 LOCATION OF THE RESEARCHER IN THE COLONIZER’S PERIOD

The anthropologist was frequently asked to advise and supply the West with information regarding its attempts to dominate and manipulate the non-Western world because he worked amid the dramatic political and economic changes accompanying the conflict between the West and the rest of the world. Anthropologists directly or indirectly supplied the information that led to his involvement in the colonization process. He was an impartial scientific observer, documenting “primitive” lifeways before they vanished or changed.

Since anthropology developed alongside the European colonization of non-Western regions, anthropologists were entangled in the colonial framework that governed interactions between Westerners and non-Westerners. Perhaps it is not entirely coincidental that a methodological position, the outsider's viewpoint, and a methodological technique, "objectivity," emerged and, looking back, appear to have been informed by and fostered by the colonial system.

The anthropologist's psychological superiority stemmed from the fact that other Europeans frequently gave him preferential treatment in positions of governmental power. Preferential treatment was given just because the anthropologist belonged to the dominant group, not because of the anthropologist's exceptional achievements or contributions that the native people respected. Maquet (1964) asserts that anthropologists who worked in Africa at various times unintentionally supported certain theoretical stances. The colonizer's administrative and political objectives concerning the groups under study demonstrate how, between World Wars I and II, unilineal evolutionism created a picture of the "savage" that appeared to support colonial expansion during the colonial era.

Galtung (1967:296) draws comparisons between the political and economic interests within a country and the exploitation carried out by social scientists. He refers to it as "scientific colonialism," which is "a process whereby the nation's knowledge acquisition center is located outside the country itself." The assumption of an unrestricted right to access any type of data is a key component of this process (p. 300), just as the colonial power believed it was entitled to seize any valuable product within the territory. Similarly, they extracted and processed any resource available (p. 296). According to Barroe and Hicks (1967), the anthropologist's obsession with the "primitive" and frequent field trips help him grow professionally and deal with his sense of alienation from his own culture.

In the late twentieth century, few anthropologists developed methods focussing on people rather than a dominant paradigm like that of Clifford Geertz, who studied about Balinese Cockfights. There are other works like that of *Street Corner Society* where a scholar from the West studies his own culture, i.e., *Chicago-based Slums and Crime*; such works are important and pathbreaking and talk about reflexivity, sensitivity, and understanding while studying one's own or other's culture.

Check Your Progress

1. What is Orientalism?

2. Why were the colonizers interested in studying about colonies?

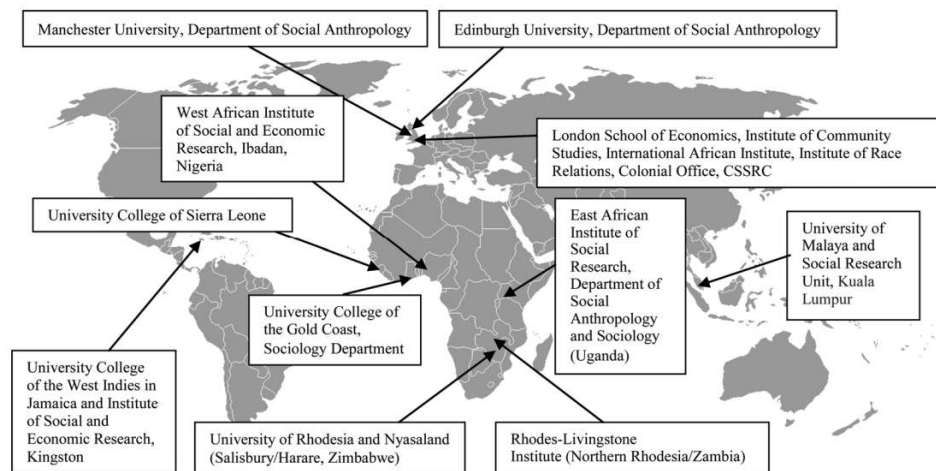


FIGURE 2.
Main centers of British colonial sociology, 1950s.

1.5 COLONIAL EPISTEME IN SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

As sociology students, we must comprehend that knowledge is socially constructed and historically situated, with macro-political economic structures like colonialism playing a significant role in the discipline's structuring. Social sciences was used to understand how people can be understood and regulated.

According to Patel (2011), there is a further argument that the institutionalization of sociology inside academic disciplines has been done to validate the regional frameworks of American and European sociology as “universal hegemonic” frameworks to understand and theorize social reality.

Pels demonstrates how “**orientalism was... superseded by ethnology** in the early 19th-century administration of British India” (using the life and work of Hodgson (1800–1894).

Pels makes a very useful distinction between “orientalism” and “ethnology.” Ethnology is described as “a research program that created the ‘oriental’ through a search for foundational texts,” while Ethnology is described as “a description of the Indian population in terms of a physicalist paradigm of ‘race.’ Pels attributes the emergence of orientalist studies in India to William Jones’s 1784 establishment of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Orientalists created cultures they respected and appreciated by interpreting Hindu or Muslim culture through the translation, exegesis, and commentary of fundamental texts.

Academics of an orientalist backed the incorporation of Indian languages and traditions into the colony's legal system and educational programs. Pels characterizes this stance as conservative relativism: "an admiration for (textual) customs [that] fostered an occasionally paternalist and feudalist appreciation for the distinctiveness of cultures and their history."

According to academics studying the discipline's history in India, the development of "sociology in India" must be examined through the lens of colonialism.

According to Patel (2011: xiv), social science originated in Europe and the West, where political colonialism was ingrained. This is why sociology and anthropology were divided. According to Patel, the political project was predicated on splitting the study of two distinct cultures into two distinct fields: anthropology, which studies non-Western countries, and sociology, which studies "us," or contemporary Western society. According to Guha (1989), sociology and anthropology should be distinguished from one another since sociology analyzes "macro" structures, while social anthropology analyzes "micro" structures.

Thapan (1991) describes such an argument as a "simplistic assertion;" therefore, one must critically examine how the disciplines were institutionalized within the context of the colonial encounter. According to Patel (2011), anthropologists, particularly those in the North, have characterized anthropology as the "handmaiden of colonialism" and the "daughter of (an) era of violence" since the 1960s. These scholars consider the colonial legacy of their discipline and contend that it organized and institutionalized the "othering" of the East. (cited in Uberoi and colleagues 2007: 22). According to Asad (1973), anthropology has its roots in the unequal power relations that exist between the West and the "Third World," wherein historical and ethnographic knowledge of the colonized regions allowed the colonizers to not only "know" and manage their colonies, but also reinforced the inequalities between that of the European and the non-European worlds.

According to Patel (2011: xiv), anthropologists researched the field's past to comprehend how administrative procedures shaped anthropological knowledge and how colonial authorities progressively employed it as part of their civilizing agenda. Patel quotes Dirks (2001:8), who argues that "cultural technologies of rule, in addition to superior arms and military organization, political power, and economic wealth, sustained the colonial conquest." According to Levi Strauss (1966:126), colonized people were considered nothing more than objects of study, and anthropology and its knowledge, together with its ideas and methodology, became a component of these processes of rule (2011: xvi). (quoted in (Pathy 1981: 623).

• Criticism:

Researchers who focus on their societies as anthropologists also make enormous contributions to the theory of humanity. However, some scholars have also pointed out that the anthropologist's inability to conduct fieldwork within their own community is an indicator of the

anthropologist's "disassociation" from his own culture, which has most likely distorted his comprehension of other cultures (Braroe and Hicks 1967:186).

Check Your Progress

1. What is Orientalism?

2. Why were the colonizers interested in studying about colonies?

1.6 CONCLUSION

A complex web of power, knowledge, and cultural understanding can be seen in anthropology, sociology, and the colonial episteme. The disciplines of anthropology and sociology developed and grew within the framework of colonialism, often mirroring and sustaining colonial power structures and epistemologies. This legacy has significantly influenced the study and comprehension of societies. With its emphasis on studying cultures and communities, anthropology initially supported colonial objectives by carrying out in-depth studies of tribes, frequently exoticizing and objectifying portrayals of colonized peoples. However, as time passed, it changed, evolving into a field that critically analyses its own methods and past. At the same time, sociology has focused on the social processes and structures inside societies, especially those impacted by colonization. The colonial episteme has impacted Sociological theories and research, especially in conceptualizing social hierarchies and inequalities. By emphasizing the agency of colonized peoples and the long-lasting effects of colonialism on contemporary cultures, postcolonial sociology aims to address these influences.

The historical interaction between anthropologists and non-Western peoples was shaped by colonialism. The colonizers wrote about the other population, i.e., the colonies, however, often from a dominant perspective. The colonial episteme has left a lasting impression on both the former colonies and the former colonial powers. Power relationships, cultural perspectives, and knowledge creation are still impacted by it today. Postcolonial studies seek to challenge and subvert the enduring effects of colonial epistemologies by critically examining these legacies.

It is necessary to question these theories and document the voices of marginalized groups. There needs to be interdisciplinary approaches developed. Challenging the colonial methodologies, theories, and approaches would help develop knowledge that has the local people's

voice. Instead of letting the colonial past continue, there is a need for reflective knowledge of the past colonized countries. There is also a movement of decolonizing research at present times and carrying out ethical research.

1.7 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Sociology, Anthropology, and Colonial episteme
2. Discuss the Colonial Episteme in Sociology and Anthropology in India
3. Discuss the location of the researcher in the colonizer's period

1.8 REFERENCE

- Bodenheimer, Rebecca. "Anthropology vs. Sociology: What is the Difference?" ThoughtCo, Apr. 26, 2021, thoughtco.com/anthropology-vs-sociology-4685772.
- Oommen, T. K. (2010). The Pasts and Futures of Anthropology and Sociology: Implications of Shifting Locations. *Sociological Bulletin*, 59(3), 47-66. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038022920100301>
- Anthropology and Colonialism, Review: Paul Barclay on new workshop proceedings, Jan van Bremen and Akitoshi Shimizu, eds, *Anthropology and Colonialism in Asia and Oceania*. Grant Evans, general editor. Anthropology of Asia Series. Richmond Surrey, U.K: Curzon Press, 1999. xi, 409 pages. \$55.00 (cloth), ISBN 0700706046.
- Published by H-Asia (May 2000). <https://socialhistoryportal.org/news/articles/109328>
- Steinmetz, G. (2013), A Child of the Empire: British Sociology and Colonialism, 1940s–1960s. *J. Hist. Behav. Sci.*, 49: 353-378. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jhbs.21628>
- <https://public.websites.umich.edu/~geostein/docs/Steinmetz%202013%20Jrnl%20Hist%20Beh%20Sci.pdf>
- <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/socp4/chapter/49/>
- <https://upscsociology.in/sociology-and-anthropology/>
- Lewis, D. (1973). Anthropology and colonialism. *Current Anthropology*, 14*(5), 581-602. The University of Chicago Press.

ETHNOCENTRISM AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Unit Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Understanding Ethnocentrism
- 2.3 Understanding Cultural Relativism
- 2.4 Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Questions
- 2.7 References

2.0 Objectives

- To learn about Ethnocentrism
- To understand Cultural Relativism in detail

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Although people from different regions reside in a town or a city, some people are shocked to experience different cultures. The concepts discussed in this chapter will help you understand why this happens. The concepts discussed here you must have learned in your undergraduate, too. Here, we will look into it in more detail. Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism are both very helpful concepts in understanding human behavior.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING ETHNOCENTRISM

The view that one's own culture is the best way to live is known as Ethnocentrism. Individuals who think their lifestyle is the most natural may be deemed ethnocentric if they have not been exposed to various cultures.

Whether conscious or unconscious, "ethnocentrism" is used to describe cultural or ethnic bias in which an individual views the world through the prism of their own group, establishing their own group as the archetypal group, and assesses all other groups from that. This kind of tunnel vision often results in two things:

- An inability to fully understand other cultures, and
- Value judgments that promote the in-group and assert its inherent superiority. Therefore, the term “ethnocentrism” is linked to a wide range of bias and intolerance, including racism, nationalism, tribalism, and even prejudice towards women and people with disabilities.

It is difficult to identify a single authoritative work on Ethnocentrism because of its imprecise meaning and widespread use as an implicit criticism. When Sumner first introduced the term in 1906, he described it as a “view of things in which one’s own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it.” The term “ethnocentrism” was coined by Sumner, though McGee 1900 used it to characterize what he called the primitive mindset. One of the more comprehensive and research-friendly definitions is provided by Levine and Campbell (1972), who drew on the literature from the fields of economics, sociology, psychology, political science, and anthropology to produce a set of twenty-three testable criteria.

When “ethnocentrism” was initially utilized in anthropology, it formed the foundation of the discipline’s early evolutionary theory and later became a focal point of social criticism. Its meaning and application shifted between subdisciplines and in tandem with theoretical trends, providing anthropologists with a never-ending challenge and source of inspiration.

The growing postmodern trend has been skeptical about the anthropologist’s own capacity to analyze and convey the “other” without cultural prejudice; this has led to a focus on reflexivity and subjective variety. Physical anthropologists tend to look into the concept’s potential evolutionary roots and define it more generally as preferential cooperation inside a specific in-group. Beyond the discipline, Ethnocentrism interests biologists, political scientists, communication experts, psychologists, and sociologists, particularly concerning politics, identity, and conflict. Marketers have used this phrase to describe consumers who prefer domestically produced goods, and in the era of globalization, individuals who think highly of their own culture are occasionally accused of being derivatively ethnocentric.

For a traditional interpretation of the term, Ethnocentrism is a trait of human culture with an implicit value judgment (see Herskovits 1948) for a classic articulation of Ethnocentrism as a universal sort of in-group consciousness (see Murdock 1949).

- **Ethnocentrism in unavoidable circumstances:**

Individuals frequently respond to the traditions or beliefs of another person or culture in an instinctual way. However, these reactions do not have to result in horrific events like genocide or war. To stop horrible catastrophes like that, we must all try to be more culturally sensitive. Ethnocentrism can lead to conflict between two different cultural identities. Under extreme conditions, a group of people may believe that another culture’s way of life is improper and, as a result, strive to

influence the other group to one's own way of life. A frightening conflict or genocide may break out if a group of people refuses to change their way of life.

Psychological and Sociological Factors of Ethnocentrism:

It is easier to see the underlying causes and expressions of Ethnocentrism when one is aware of the psychological and sociological roots of the prejudice. It is possible to create measures to counteract and lessen ethnocentric attitudes by identifying these underlying causes. Let us now look into Psychology and Ethnocentrism.

- **Cognitive bias:** This bias *is based on looking for or overvaluing information that confirms our beliefs or expectations*
- **Confirmation bias** is the tendency to look for, understand, and retain information in a way that supports one's preconceived notions. Due to this prejudice, people may ignore information that contradicts their cultural norms and favour information that upholds them.
- **In-group bias:** The tendency to favour fellow members of one's own group over non-members. This may lead to a preference and perception of superiority toward one's own culture.
- **Stereotyping:** Here, an individual makes assumptions or generalizations about a person or group with limited knowledge.
- **Ethnocentric Lens:** An individual perceives the world from the standpoint of one's own culture, which inevitably introduces bias into one's interpretation and comprehension of other cultures.
- **Dynamics of In-group and Out-group:** According to this view, people get their sense of self-worth and identity by belonging to a social group. Ethnocentrism is the belief that the norms and values of the in-group are superior.
- **Positive Distinctiveness:** It is the desire to see one's own group in a favorable light in relation to others. This may lead to a tendency to draw attention to the perceived shortcomings of other cultures compared to one's own.
- **Social Comparison:** Making frequent comparisons between one's own and other cultures might lead to skewed perceptions among people and support Ethnocentrism.

Sociological Bases:

- **Cultural Norms and Values:** Cultures set cultural norms and values that influence attitudes and conduct. These norms frequently support the idea that one's own cultural practices are superior by reflecting ethnocentric attitudes.

- **Socialization** is a process by which people pick up and embrace the customs, principles, and ways of behaving that are acceptable in their community. The passing down of ethnocentric views from one generation to the next is a common part of this process.
- **Cultural Reinforcement:** Ethnocentrism becomes more ingrained when cultural standards are reinforced through schooling, the media, and family lessons.
- **Educational Systems:** The dominant culture's perspective is frequently reflected in curricula and instructional strategies. This can result in marginalizing alternative cultural perspectives and encouraging Ethnocentrism.
- **Legal and Political Structures:** Policies and laws that benefit the dominant culture and disadvantage minority cultures structurally may reflect ethnocentric attitudes. Ethnocentrism is sustained by this institutional bias on a social level.
- **Economic Systems:** Disparities and the idea of cultural superiority can be reinforced by economic policies and practices that favour the dominant culture.

Check Your Progress

1. List the top three cultural practices or practices from your own culture that you consider to be the “right” or superior course of action. Describe the reasons for your convictions and the ways in which your upbringing, education, and media have all contributed to their reinforcement.

2. Consider a moment when you experienced a cultural practice that was distinct from your own. Explain the practice and how you first felt about it. Think back to the reason for your reaction. Was Ethnocentrism a factor in your response? In what way?

2.3 CULTURAL RELATIVISM

The German-American anthropologist Franz Boas developed the concept of cultural relativism which is used as a tool for analysis in the early 20th century. Cultural relativism played a significant role in the early social science movements. It was used to counteract Ethnocentrism, which white, affluent, Western men primarily carried out upon populations of

Indigenous people, people of colour, and those from lower socioeconomic classes than the researchers.

Boas's concept of cultural relativism holds that all people are equal despite cultural differences. He contended that it was "bad scholarship, as well as insulting to a culture's separate historical developments, by categorize them according to a predefined evolutionary schema. Boas urged employing "archaeological evidence, mapping out of the diffusion of cultural traits among neighbouring peoples, and the detailed examination of language and customs. He also discussed the significance of conducting in-depth research of specific civilizations.

As a result, anthropology's "historical school" was founded, endorsing the historical particularist theory. According to Boas, the attempt to explain human thought in terms of social organization ignored the role that people play as thinking acting beings and resulted in a relativization of all belief systems, including science and religion, undermining the assertions made by social determinists and cultural evolutionists. According to Peter Berger, relativizing analysis turns back upon itself when it is forced to its ultimate results. In fact, relativization itself is somehow liquidated as the relativizers are relativized and the debunkers are discredited (Wilson, 2012).

The idea of "cultural relativism" acknowledges that all points of view are equally valid and that truth is relative, depending on the individual's perspective or their culture. It highlights the value of preserving cultural distinctions and recognizes the diversity of civilizations. It also recognizes that cultural practices should be evaluated to see if they align with modern human rights values. Cultural relativism essentially asserts that there are only various cultural rules rather than universal truths and ethics. Moreover, a culture's code is just one of many and has no particular status.

Cultural relativism was, therefore, perceived as a concept that emerged to criticize Ethnocentrism. The ability to comprehend a culture on its own terms and refrain from passing judgment using the norms of one's own culture is known as cultural relativism. The benefit of cultural relativism is that it lets people appreciate and exercise their religion or cultural traditions without worrying about other people's motivations for doing so.

One of the key ideas in sociology is cultural relativism, which affirms and acknowledges the relationship between social structure and ordinary human existence. It is the notion that all moral and ethical systems, which differ from culture to culture, are equal and that no system is better than any other. A person's values and views should be interpreted within the framework of their own culture, not in light of those of another. The foundation of cultural relativism is the idea that there are no universal standards for what is right or wrong. As a result, any belief regarding what is right or evil is dependent upon the laws of society, culture, and religion. Therefore, a person's cultural perspective influences their moral or ethical judgment. Ultimately, it is impossible to identify one ethical stance as the

best. Cultural relativism asserts that there are no universal truths and that each culture must be studied uniquely since cultural concepts cannot be applied to other civilizations in the same way. Because cultures have positive social and economic effects, they are also valuable to society. The idea is occasionally put into effect to prevent cultural bias in research and to refrain from evaluating another culture according to the norms of one's own.

- **Cultural relativism Types:**

Cultural relativism can be classified into two different categories: absolute and critical. As per the beliefs of absolute cultural relativists, External observers should not question anything that occurs within a culture. On the other hand, critical cultural relativism acknowledges power dynamics and challenges cultural practices on who adopts them and why.

Cultural relativism also calls into question beliefs concerning the objectivity and universality of moral truth.

- **Components:**

There is debate over the various components of cultural relativism.

Among the assertions are:

- Moral codes vary among nations.
- No objective criterion exists that can be utilized to determine which social code is superior to another.
- One's own society's moral code is just one of many; it does not have a unique status.
- There are no moral principles that are always true for everyone, or what is known as a "universal truth" in ethics.
- A society's moral code establishes what is right and wrong in that society; in other words, if a society's moral code declares that an act is right, then that behaviour is also correct, at least in that community. It is rude for anyone to attempt to assess the behaviour of others. Rather, academics ought to embrace other civilizations' customs with tolerance.

- **Human rights and Cultural Relativism:**

Cultural relativism is a crucial idea that examines human rights in a social work context. All points of view are equally valid under the theory of cultural relativism, and each individual's interpretation of the truth is unique to their culture (Reichert, 2011). Every political, religious, and ethical conviction is a reality pertaining to a person's or society's cultural identity. Cultural relativism is acceptable in some human rights areas such as language, nutrition, artwork, building design exhibits, and cultural variances, which must be preserved (Pasamonik, 2004). Furthermore,

cultural relativism suggests a complex diversity among cultures. While each culture is distinct in its entirety, its components are also intricately entangled that no one can fully comprehend them.

The idea of natural law served as the foundation for the universalism of human rights. It indicated that everyone on the planet, regardless of where they lived, was entitled to human rights. It ought to be universally accessible and enjoyed by everyone, without distinction or restriction. On the other side, proponents of the theory of cultural relativism in human rights contended that human rights are particular and relative, depending on the culture and context in question, rather than universal. They disagree on the thought that human rights can be generalized everywhere.

- **International Relations and Cultural Relativism:**

Cultural relativism in international relations promotes tolerance for cultural diversity with reference to diplomatic communications and dispute settlement. Cultural relativism also promotes understanding and bargaining based on the cultural background of other countries rather than just imposing one's own cultural norms. This strategy can result in a tactful and courteous understanding of diplomacy cultural customs and beliefs. Recognizing and taking into account the cultural values and customs of all parties engaged might improve cooperation and mutual respect in talks or peacebuilding initiatives. Cultural relativism thus promotes solutions that consider the cultural settings of impacted communities, which can help tackle global challenges like human rights breaches.

- **The Significance of Acknowledging Cultural Relativism:**

Understanding cultural relativism allows us to see how our society affects our perceptions of what is virtuous, hilarious, repulsive, attractive, ugly, and appealing. It influences our perceptions of what constitutes excellent and terrible consumer goods, music, cinema, and art. In his work, Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu discusses these events and their effects in great detail. This difference is not just across national cultures but also between cultures and subcultures within a big community which are categorized by class, race, sexual orientation, area, religion, and ethnicity, among other factors.

- **Cultural Relativism and Businesses|:**

Cultural relativism significantly impacts global business processes, which highlights how crucial it is to comprehend and adjust to various cultural standards. Companies that operate globally have to deal with varying cultural expectations in terms of customer preferences, management methods, and communication. Businesses can stop themselves from making ethnocentric decisions that could result in cultural insensitivity or failure by taking a culturally relativistic stance. For instance, cultural variations may mean that marketing tactics that are appropriate or successful in one nation may not be in another. Businesses that appreciate and adjust to regional cultures are more likely to have solid bonds with

customers and partners, which result in profitable and long-lasting company operations in the global marketplace.

Strategies to develop Cultural relativism in day to day lives

1. When an researcher or individual becomes an active listener one learn other people's perspectives
2. One can learn about other groups and beliefs by asking open-ended questions too.
3. One has to be aware of one's own biases and try to overcome it
4. By being respectful and curious one can learn and not judge other cultures.
5. By using inclusive language, whereby an individual avoids stereotypes.
6. Recognizing one's own culture as well as developing an openness attitude to learning others is important.
7. Avoiding assumptions about other culture one would be able to learn and developing cultural relativism.

2.4 ETHNOCENTRISM AND CULTURAL RELATIVISM

Ethnocentrism is the act of evaluating another person's culture according to one's own values and views. From this perspective, we could present foreign civilizations as strange, fascinating, exotic, or even portray them negatively. On the other hand, when we engage in the idea of cultural relativism, we acknowledge that the different cultures around the world have their own beliefs, values, and practices that have evolved in specific historical, political, social, material, and ecological contexts. It makes sense that they would differ from our own and that none are necessarily right or wrong or good or bad.

Some of the key differences of that of Ethnocentrism and that of Cultural Relativism are –

Ethnocentrism can be seen as judgmental and comparative, while cultural relativism is descriptive and open.

Ethnocentrism is based on that of superiority while cultural relativism focuses on equality and diversity.

Ethnocentrism can lead to conflict and division among people, while cultural relativism promotes understanding and cooperation.

Discussions over globalization, immigration, and human rights are only a few examples that highlight the conflict between Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism. For example, cultural relativism can provide a useful framework for comprehending customs, food habits, or social standards that may appear initially strange or offensive. It also poses difficult queries

concerning tolerance limitations and moral relativism. Cultural relativism has its detractors who claim that it can occasionally be used as an explanation for actions that go against basic human rights, such as violence or discrimination against women. It is still difficult to strike a balance between the need to preserve universal ethical standards and appreciation for cultural variety.

It is vital to comprehend the workings of Ethnocentrism and cultural relativism in this day of growing global connectivity. The ability to handle cultural differences with sensitivity and insight becomes increasingly vital as global interactions increase. It is the responsibility of educators, legislators, and people in general to identify and combat ethnocentric prejudices while advancing a sophisticated understanding of cultural relativism. This calls for both theoretical comprehension and active attempts to interact with and absorb various cultural viewpoints. Building more inclusive and peaceful global communities can ultimately be achieved by promoting a balanced strategy that respects cultural variations while promoting universal human ideals. Within social science, anthropologists remain scholars of cultural variation and doubters of claims about human universals. **Other fields accept cultural variation and seek out more universal truths.**

Furthermore, there is an inherent contradiction in the idea of cultural relativism. Cultural relativism, by its own standards, cannot be applied to societies that do not share the idea of tolerance toward the values of other cultures since it is a Western construct dating back to the seventeenth century. This contradictory outcome makes it impossible to apply cultural relativism.

Check Your Progress

1. According to you, how to make people develop cultural relativism in daily life?

2. Discuss the different types of Cultural Relativism.

2.5 SUMMARY

Ethnocentrism is the term anthropologists use to describe the idea that one's own way of life is correct or natural. Sumner first introduced the term in 1906; he described it as a "view of things in which one's own group is the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with

reference to it.” The term “ethnocentrism” was coined by Sumner, though McGee 1900 used it to characterize what he called the primitive mindset. Psychological factors are involved in constructing Ethnocentrism, like Confirmation bias, stereotypes, and In group feeling. Sociological basis includes cultural norms and values, socialization, Cultural reinforcement, Educational systems, legal and political structures. A significant component of historical particularism is cultural relativism. According to this viewpoint, there are no superior or lower types of culture. This concept stems from the idea that every culture is distinct and fundamentally different. Cultural relativism is where the thought process is, my values are not always superior to those upheld by individuals from other cultures. The German-American anthropologist Franz Boas developed the concept of cultural relativism which is used as a tool for analysis in the early 20th century. Cultural relativism played a significant role in the early social science movements. It was used to counteract Ethnocentrism, which white, affluent, Western men primarily carried out upon populations of Indigenous people, people of colour, and those from lower socioeconomic classes than the researchers.

2.6 QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Ethnocentrism and Cultural Relativism
2. Discuss the Psychological and Sociological factors of Ethnocentrism
3. Explain in brief cultural relativism.

2.7 REFERENCE

1. Baylor, Elizabeth (2012). Ethnocentrism. *obo* in Anthropology. doi: 10.1093/obo/9780199766567-0045
2. [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Cultural_Anthropology/Cultural_Anthropology_\(Evans\)/01%3A_What_is_Anthropology/1.05%3A_Ethnocentrism#:~:text=Ethnocentrism%20is%20the%20term%20anthropologists,the%20correct%20way%20of%20living.](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Anthropology/Cultural_Anthropology/Cultural_Anthropology_(Evans)/01%3A_What_is_Anthropology/1.05%3A_Ethnocentrism#:~:text=Ethnocentrism%20is%20the%20term%20anthropologists,the%20correct%20way%20of%20living.)
3. Fokkema, D. (1993). The relativity of cultural relativism. *Journal of Literary Studies*, 9(2), 117–124. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02564719308530035>.
4. “Cultural Relativism .” International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. Retrieved July 11, 2024 from Encyclopedia.com: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/cultural-relativism>
5. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/philosophy-and-religion/bible/bible-general/cultural-relativism>

6. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/cultural-relativism>
7. <https://positivepsychology.com/cognitive-biases/>
8. Arat, A. (2022). Cultural relativism types and its elements. *Global Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 11(3), 001.
9. Cole, Nicki Lisa, Ph.D. (2024, June 25). Definition of Cultural Relativism in Sociology. Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/cultural-relativism-definition-3026122>

SUBDISCIPLINES BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY, LINGUISTICS, PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Unit Structure

2A.0 Objectives

2A.1 Introduction

2A.2 Biological Anthropology

2A.3 Linguistics

2A.4 Prehistory Archaeology

2A.5 Summary

2A.6 Questions

2A.7 References

2A.0 OBJECTIVES

- To learn about Biological Anthropology
- To understand linguistics and prehistoric anthropology

2A.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine the different subdisciplines of Anthropology: Biological Anthropology, Linguistics and Prehistoric Anthropology. According to its etymology, the word “anthropology” comes from two distinct Greek words: “logos,” which means study, and “anthropos,” which means man. One way to characterize anthropology is by studying human biological and cultural variety and evolution. Four branches could be used to broadly categorize anthropology: Anthropology that focuses on social-cultural aspects, physical/biological aspects, archaeology, and linguistic aspects. Let us begin with understanding Biological Anthropology.

2A.2 BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Biological Anthropology is also known as Physical Anthropology. It is a subfield of anthropology that focuses on humans’ and their ancestors’ biological and physical aspects. There are different key areas within biological anthropology like -

1. **Human Evolution:** Here, the focus is on a study of the origins and development of Homo sapiens and their predecessors through fossil records and comparative anatomy.
2. **Human Variation:** It examines the biological differences among contemporary human populations, including genetic, physiological, and morphological diversity.
3. **Primatology:** Focusses on non-human primates (e.g., monkeys, apes) to gain insights into human behavior, social structures, and evolutionary history.
4. **Forensic Anthropology:** Focuses on applying biological anthropology techniques to identify human remains. Forensic anthropology is also used to investigate crimes.
5. **Palaeoanthropology** studies ancient humans and their relatives through fossils and other remains to understand their biology and ecology.

From a biological standpoint, biological anthropology studies human differences, adaptations, and the evolution of our living and extinct ancestors. Biological anthropologists investigate fossil hominin records and non-human primates to understand humans' evolutionary history and the biological variations that exist. The field also examines how evolution and adaptation have shaped individual human behavior.

In a way, biological anthropology is a broad field that combines all the behavioral and biological sciences with an emphasis on humans. Biological anthropologists can be geneticists, ecologists, physiologists, ethologists, epidemiologists, osteologists (someone who studies the skeletal system of humans and primates), paleontologists and so on! Most experts in the discipline conduct fieldwork, sometimes in somewhat isolated locations. The biological anthropologist could be studying the health and development of children in South Africa, tracking the travel paths of extinct hominins in eastern Africa, and mapping the boundaries of genes and languages in Australasia (is a subregion of Oceania, comprising Australia, New Zealand), and the Pacific Islands, tracking gorillas or chimpanzees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or gathering skeletal data in prestigious museums throughout Europe, excavating archaeological sites in Iraq, Kenya, Vietnam, and South Africa.

Application of Biological Anthropology:

There are numerous uses of Biological Anthropology; for example -

Measurement of the human body form, or anthropometry, is used in various industries, including manufacturing, sports, the military, and the apparel industry. Kin anthropology, the scientific study of human bodies in action, provides sports firms with valuable information about physical potential, biochemistry and physiology, and the anatomy of the musculoskeletal system. Understanding how to create a profile of a

deceased person from unearthed bones and teeth through the study of human remains can be helpful in commercial archaeology and forensic casework (either relating to accidents/crimes or larger-scale contexts of wars or genocides).

Through biological anthropology, one can learn about global health variation, the connections between age, nutrition, disease, defective genes, susceptibility/resistance to diseases from the origins of humans and the spread of modern and ancient humans worldwide. Studying primates—the closest relatives of humans in the animal kingdom, particularly monkeys and apes—can benefit tourism, epidemiology, and conservation. In order to comprehend how people interact with their surroundings and how climate change affects people and cultures globally, it is helpful to have a distinct viewpoint on human ecology and evolution.

The anatomy and physiology of humans are investigated using biology and biological anthropology. Biological anthropology uses physiology, anatomy, embryology, zoology, and other fields in anthropological research. One important method for researching and comprehending human biological variety, including morphological variance (height, weight), is anthropometry. It consists of quantifying humanity. Three levels can be used to summarize the significance of anthropometric indices in the healthcare sector: individual, community, and population. Biological anthropologists frequently utilize family history as a source since it is a straightforward but effective clinical technique for risk assessment. As, family members share biological, cultural, and behavioral traits that are similar in their susceptibility to disease.

Check Your Progress

1. In Biological Anthropology, human beings are compared with whom?

2. What is the other name for biological Anthropology?

2A.3 LINGUISTICS

Linguistics is the scientific study of language and its structure, which encompasses a wide range of subfields like -

1. **Phonetics and Phonology:** This is a study of human speech sounds and how they are produced, transmitted, and received.

2. **Morphology:** Focuses on analyzing the structure of words and how they are formed.
3. **Syntax:** The study of sentence structure and the rules governing combining words into phrases and sentences.
4. **Semantics:** Here, the exploration of meaning in language, including how words and sentences convey meaning, is made.
5. **Historical Linguistics:** Here, an investigation of how languages change over time and the relationships between different languages is conducted.
6. **Sociolinguistics:** Examining how language varies and changes in social contexts, including dialect, register, and language policy issues.
7. **Psycholinguistics:** This studies cognitive processes involved in language acquisition, comprehension, and production.
8. **Applied Linguistics:** The practical application of linguistic research to solve real-world problems, such as language teaching, translation, and preservation.

Linguistic anthropology investigates the nature of human languages. In addition to investigating how social and cultural forms are rooted in linguistic practices, researchers in this subject aim to comprehend language's social and cultural underpinnings.

Linguistic anthropologists investigate how individuals use language to reproduce, challenge, and negotiate social structures and cultural forms. They look at how language might reveal information about the origins and development of culture and human society. Among the topics that linguistic anthropologists have explored include language socialization, literacy events, ceremonial and political events, scientific discourse, verbal art, language contact and language shift, and everyday contacts. Therefore, in contrast to linguists, linguistic anthropologists consider language interconnected with culture and social structures rather than only focusing on language itself.

In "Language and Social Context," Pier Paolo Giglioli states that anthropologists investigate how language and social communities interact, how speech affects socialization and interpersonal interactions, and how worldviews, grammatical categories, and semantic fields relate to each other. Here, linguistic anthropology focuses on countries where language is key in defining culture and society.

The relationship between language and socialization may also interest linguistic anthropologists. It describes the early life or the process of a foreigner becoming assimilated. An anthropologist would probably research a society's use of language to socialize its youth.

Anthropologists also examine a key measure of a language's global impact: the rate at which it spreads and its impact on one or more

communities. For instance, adopting English as a universal language may affect society everywhere. This is comparable to the consequences of colonization or imperialism and the spread of language among different nations, islands, and continents worldwide. Studying regional dialects and examining how people communicate with one another in particular contexts—such as formal settings, friend-family slang, or gender-role-based speech patterns—are all included in the field of sociolinguistics. Historical sociolinguists also look at language for societal alterations and modifications over time. For instance, in the English language timeline, a historical sociolinguistic analysis will examine the point at which the word “you” displaced “thou” in usage.

According to linguists, the creation of speech and written language by humans—which is enabled by their special ability to speak and understand language—is a basic process by which individuals build their culture and social lives. Scholars in the field today investigate a variety of techniques for accomplishing this creation. They emphasize the analysis of audio or video recordings of “socially occurring” discourse or words and sentences that would be spoken in a community whether or not the anthropologist was there. This approach is chosen because results from investigator-imposed actions like “interviewing” may be shaped unexpectedly by variations in how various societies interpret speech acts, like “questioning.” Variations in the cultural and structural use of different languages foster variations in the worldviews of human populations. It is a fundamental subject in linguistic anthropology. Language cultures in a given area may also favour some modes of expression over others.

The way that “cultural models,” or regional conceptions of the world, are transmitted in speech and writing is a significant area of study. Pupils studying “language ideologies” examine regional conceptions of language use. A major language philosophy that contributed to the establishment of contemporary nation-states defines some speech patterns as “standard languages”; once a standard is established, it is regarded as respectable and suitable, while other languages or dialects are stigmatized and ignored. The subject of how language variety relates to other forms of human difference is investigated by linguistic anthropologists, too. According to Franz Boas, “race,” “language,” and “culture” are completely unrelated to one another.

Historical linguists classified roughly 6,000 languages spoken worldwide in the 20th century into genealogical families. Major technological advancements like the adoption of agriculture can lead to geographically vast and numerically huge families by allowing the community of inventors and its language to grow at the expense of neighboring tribes. An alternate theory is that some physical environments, like the Eurasian grasslands, encourage language diversification and diffusion, while other physical environments, like mountainous zones, encourage the growth of tiny linguistic communities independent of technology.

At the start of the twenty-first century, when half of the world’s known languages faced extinction and a few languages—most notably English,

Spanish, and Chinese—were rapidly gaining new speakers, the question of why one language grows and diversifies at the expense of its neighbors was debated and discussed. Thus, Linguistic anthropological applications aim to address language extinction and prejudice based on language, which are frequently caused by prevailing beliefs about the relative worth and usefulness of various languages.

2A.4 PREHISTORY ARCHAEOLOGY

Prehistoric Anthropology is the study of human societies before the advent of written records. It involves several areas like:

1. **Archaeological Excavation:** Here, attempts are made to uncover and analyze the material systematically remains, such as tools, structures, and artifacts, from prehistoric sites.
2. **Cultural Reconstruction:** This focuses on interpreting material evidence to understand the social, economic, and cultural practices of prehistoric peoples.
3. **Chronology and Dating:** This establishes timelines for prehistoric events and activities using methods like radiocarbon dating, dendrochronology, and stratigraphy.
4. **Paleoenvironmental Studies:** In this analysis, environmental data is used to reconstruct the ecological conditions in which prehistoric humans lived and how they adapted to these conditions.
5. **Technological and Artistic Developments:** Here, prehistoric technologies and artistic expressions are studied to understand their innovations and cultural achievements.

Each subfield contributes to a broader understanding of human history, culture, and biology, providing insights into our past and its influence on the present and future.

Prehistoric archaeology is also the study of the human past before historical records began. Human cultures have existed and flourished for a long time. There have been complex political, economic and ideological structures without a writing system. A broader understanding of prehistoric archaeology is that it studies human hunter-gatherer groups before sedentary (permanent) settlements. **Prehistoric archaeology emphasizes the careful collection, recording, and analysis of data through excavation, classification, and description of artifacts, particularly the chronological ordering of data.**

According to Gordon Childe (1956), prehistoric archaeology studies all changes in the material world that are due to human action. Usually, material remains are food, tools, weapons, dresses, ornaments, houses, etc., which are daily necessities for survival. Prehistory covers a major part of human existence on Earth. D.K. Bhattacharya notes that Prehistory attempts to know all about man's total activity during that period of

developmental history when man had not evolved and there was no writing. M.C. Burkitt points out that Prehistory is that subject which deals with the story of man and everything that concerns him from the dim, remote moment when he first emerged from his animal ancestry until the time of existence of the written record, which leads the investigator into the realm of proper history.

The beginning of prehistoric archaeology was made by the findings of stone tools (hand axes) in association with fossil animal bones on the cliff over the river Somme in France by Boucher de Parthes in the year 1836. After this, Pengeley was discovered in a cave at Brixham, South Devon, England, in 1863. These discoveries led to the realization of the antiquity of the human past, which was not only millions of years old but also associated with very different climatic and geographical conditions. After that, the skeletal remains of a man were discovered. In 1857, a human skull was found on the river Dussel in Germany. This was identified later as the skull of a Neanderthal man (now extinct). With this began the foundation of the prehistoric studies. The finding of skeletal remains was an important part of the prehistoric archaeology.

Prehistory of India can be divided into three broad periods –

1. Paleolithic, where paleo refers to old and lithic means stone, i.e., Old Stone Age.
2. Mesolithic (meso-middle, lithic-stone, i.e. Middle Stone Age).
3. Neolithic (neo-new, lithic-stone, i.e. New Stone Age)

Different features and gradual improvement in tool-making skills and technology mark each period.

The first stone tool was discovered by Robert Brucefoot in Pallavaram, Tamil Nadu, in 1863. This is seen as the starting point of Indian Prehistory. After this, there were also three decades of work carried out by Robert Brucefoot, during which he further discovered sites in Gujarat and South India. Let us now look into the different stages in the prehistory period.

Paleolithic:

The Palaeolithic period is the longest phase in human history. Decades of research in Stone Age archaeology have enabled the reconstruction of Stone Age settlement in terms of accessing the raw materials for making stone tools, availability of water bodies and food resources like wild animals and plants, Stratigraphical (branch of geology studying rock layers) cultural sequences from Lower Palaeolithic to Mesolithic in most of the sites. Paleoclimate studies have helped understand Stone Age sites and the available resources during the different periods.

The evolution of tool technology is traced from the Lower Palaeolithic itself, which evolved into finer technology over time. Woodwork seems to have begun in the later part of the Lower Palaeolithic itself. The advent of

the Holocene (a name given to the last 11700 years of Earth's history) sees the emergence of a sedentary lifestyle and the expansion of art forms. Significant changes in climatic and environmental conditions mark the period when the Palaeolithic occupation took place. Mighty rivers, originating from the Himalayas, flowed during the Early Pleistocene in the semi-arid region of Rajasthan. Due to tectonic movements, these were replaced by pools and lakes.

The prehistoric period in India is divided into the following timescale:

Palaeolithic:

- a) Lower palaeolithic 1.5 to 0.2 million years
- b) Middle Palaeolithic 0.2 million to 40,000 years
- c) Upper Palaeolithic 40,000 to 10,000 years

Mesolithic:

Mesolithic was first identified by ACL Carlyle (1867-68), an assistant of Alexander Cunningham. He found microliths in the caves and rock shelters of the Kaimur range in the Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. Another work was carried out in the year 1950s at Langhnaj and a few other places in Gujarat, where H. D. Sankalia undertook excavations. V.N. Misra's work followed this in Central India and Rajasthan. In due course, numerous sites from the Mesolithic period were explored and excavated.

Mesolithic succeeded the Upper Palaeolithic. It connects the Old Stone Age and the New Stone Age. It further represents the transition from the Paleolithic's previous hunting-gathering stage to the Neolithic agricultural stage. Mesolithic phase is generally identified with warmer and favorable climatic conditions at the beginning of the Holocene. Lakes were formed and sea levels rose. The increase in rainfall led to an abundance of plant and animal life. This also led to significant growth in population. This abundant water and food supply also led to the increasing number of Mesolithic sites. This population growth manifested in the presence of Mesolithic sites in almost every part of the Indian subcontinent.

Mesolithic artifacts are on the thousands of sand dunes in western Rajasthan and Gujarat. Similarly, in the case of rock shelters in Central India, earlier when few of them were occupied, now all of them, amounting to several thousand, yielded evidence of Mesolithic occupation. A small district in Odisha, Koraput, yielded more than one hundred Mesolithic sites. The first human colonization of the Ganga plains happened during this period, which is evident from the over 200 archaeological sites found in the Prayagraj, Jaunpur, Mirzapur, and Varanasi districts. Effective colonization of deltaic West Bengal and parts of West coast (around Mumbai), Kerala took place.

Microwear analysis of microliths and associated features like hearths and grinding stones point to increased exploitation of plant foods during the Mesolithic phase. Apart from this, there are a variety of wild animals,

domesticated animals like sheep, goats, and cattle are present. This move towards partially settled life and more exploitation of plant foods pave the way for the emergence of agriculture.

Neolithic:

V. Gordon Childe used the term Neolithic revolution to highlight the importance of the change in lifestyle during this phase. It is identified with a new subsistence farming and stock-raising economy. It marks a major turning point in humanity's progress. So, the Neolithic phase led to the emergence of sedentary living and small village communities. Some of the earliest Neolithic Cultures worldwide are held at Jericho, Ain Ghazal in Jordan, Catal Huyuk in Turkey, and Spirit Cave in Thailand. These are dated to 8000-6000 BCE. The identification of Neolithic stone tools or celts started in the nineteenth century. Le Mesurier identified a celt or a Neolithic stone tool in 1842 in Raichur district, Karnataka. The Neolithic phase in India developed in different regions at different periods. In the Ganga Valley, it dates back to the 7th to 6th millennium BCE. The rest mostly fall in the range of 3rd-2nd millennium BCE. The variation in time and space in the Neolithic Cultures was also a result of adaptation to different ecological zones.

The exchange economy was active both locally and regionally. The introduction of wheat, barley, and soap-rock beads in the South Indian Neolithic throws light on the regional exchange network. The emergence, growth and spread of the Neolithic way of life laid the foundation of the Indian rural economy. The local or indigenous development is visible in the evolution of these cultures from the earlier Mesolithic phase traced at many sites.



**Rock painting from Bhimbetka Caves, Madhya Pradesh,
Cited from Naik**

1. What is Linguistics?

2. What are the three stages in Prehistory of India?

2A.5 SUMMARY

This chapter discusses the different subdisciplines of anthropology, i.e., biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and prehistoric anthropology. Biological Anthropology is also known as Physical Anthropology. It is a subfield of anthropology that focuses on humans' and their ancestors' biological and physical aspects. Biological anthropology employs a comparative method when examining human evolution and adaptation. It compares humans to other animals to comprehend biological variation and uniqueness in humans. It examines changes in human development and health over time to understand the evolution of hominins over the last 7-8 million years and looks at individual behavior in terms of adaptation and evolution as well as its underlying cognitive basis.

Linguistic anthropology investigates the nature of human languages. In addition to investigating how social and cultural forms are rooted in linguistic practices, researchers in this subject aim to comprehend language's social and cultural underpinnings.

Linguistic anthropologists investigate how individuals use language to reproduce, challenge, and negotiate social structures and cultural forms. They look at how language might reveal information about the origins and development of culture and human society.

Prehistoric Anthropology is the study of human societies before the advent of written records. Archaeological methods, such as excavation, are used to study Prehistory. It is also divided into different stages: the Paleolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic.

The Palaeolithic period is further divided into Lower, Middle, and Upper Palaeolithic. Mesolithic period gives evidence of the domestication of plants and animals and the eventual move towards settled life in the form of temporary settlements. These sites are found all over the Indian subcontinent. Rock art depicting Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Cultures various aspects of life is an important development.

2A.6 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the Prehistory
2. Explain the Biological Anthropology.
3. Write a note on Neolithic.
4. Write a note on Linguistics.

2A.7 REFERENCE

Subdisciplines Biological
Anthropology, Linguistics,
Prehistoric Archaeology

1. <https://www.arch.cam.ac.uk/about-us/biological-anthropology>
2. <https://anthropology.indiana.edu/about/four-fields-of-study/linguistic-anthropology.html>
3. Östör, Á. , Hannerz, . Ulf, Robotham, Donald Keith, Smith, . Eric A., Hill, . Jane H., Kolata, Alan L., Leslie, . Charles Miller, Feeley-Harnik, Gillian, Lomnitz, . Claudio, Kuper, . Adam J. , Seeger, . Anthony, Nicholas, . Ralph W. , Delaney, . Carol L. , Tuttle, . Russell Howard , Ghannam, . Farha , Hopkins, . Nicholas S. , Hanchett, . Suzanne L. , Keyes, . Charles F. , Spencer, . Jonathan Robert , Aronoff, . Myron J. , Jeganathan, . Pradeep, Paul, Robert Allen , Horowitz, . Michael M , Fernandez, . James W. , Varenne, . Hervé, Esterik, . Penny Van and Schildkrout, . Enid (2024, June 21). anthropology. Encyclopedia Britannica.
<https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology>
4. <https://utkaluniversity.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/KINDS-OF-SITES-IN-PREHISTORIC-ARCHAEOLOGY.pdf> Subrath Kumar Naik
5. https://www.academia.edu/43731226/Prehistoric_archeology_converted
6. <https://mu.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Paper-6-Introduction-to-Archaeology-English-Version.pdf>
7. <https://egyankosh.ac.in/handle/123456789/65790> biological anthropology

MODULE II PERSPECTIVES AND METHODS

3

PERSPECTIVES : HOLISTIC, COMPARATIVE AND ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELDWORK

Unit Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Chapter framework
- 3.2 Introduction to holism
 - 3.2.1 Origin
- 3.3 Comparative method
- 3.4 Fieldwork meaning
 - 3.4.1 Origin
- 3.5 Debates in Classical Anthropology
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Unit End Questions
- 3.8 References and Future Readings

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- To explore the development of different Schools of Sociology in India.
- To learn about the historical development of Bombay School
- To learn about the different approaches followed in Indian Sociology.

3.1 CHAPTER FRAMEWORK

In this chapter we would look into these topics. Firstly, Holism which is looking the subjects from all perspective to get a complete picture. Second section talks about how comparative method helps in founding out the common grounds of different society. The third section talks about the fieldwork tradition its meaning and its origin. The last section discusses the classical debates in anthropology about culture, origin through the theories.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

Every discipline grows with time, depending upon the need of the hour. In terms of Anthropology too such things happened. Several concepts have emerged; since its inception and has become a part of the subject. One such concept is that of holism or holistic perspective.

The holistic perspective looks human beings from all perspectives. It stresses the interrelationships among different aspects of life and emphasis that every culture has to understood not only in its local manifestation (context) but also from the global context or wider perspective ¹.

3.2.1 Origin:

The term holism is associated with South African Statesman Jan Christian Smuts (Harrington 1966: xxii; Smuts (1999) in the early 1920s. Before the use of this word the earlier anthropologists used words like ‘complex whole’, the whole phenomenon’ ‘collective representations’. There is no clear definition of holism as such. Nanda and Warms (2009: 6) states that Anthropologists have been using this since long time. In other words anthropology combines the study of human biology, history, and several other disciplines. This is one of the most unique feature too which separates anthropology from other subjects which focus on only one aspect of human group. In other words, holism provides holistic view of humanity, it provides a vantage view point. The methods associated with holism perspective is that of ethnography, fieldwork, participant observation. To understand certain society at times we also have to give importance on the context of the study. In a way it would help to making it more meaningful, cultural and functional. This would even help to understand and compare societies. Holism is like camera which allows to capture “whole bodies, whole interactions, and whole people in whole acts (Heider 2006: 6)

Check your Progress

1. List out the points related to your understanding of Holism in Anthropology?

2. Discuss the origin of holism?

3.3 COMPARATIVE METHOD

The basic operation in the comparative method is an arrangement of social or cultural conditions observed among existing peoples into a series that is then taken to represent a process of evolution.

The Comparative method was born in 1888 in a paper by Edward Burnett Tylor which he delivered to the Royal Anthropological Institute. It was developed out of the concern towards Anthropological methods. To quote his words,

“For years past it has become evident that the great need of anthropology is that its methods should be strengthened and systematized.... Strict method has, however, as yet only been introduced over part of the anthropological field. There has still to be overcome a certain not unkindly hesitancy on the part of men engaged in the precise operations of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, to admit that the problems of anthropology are amenable to scientific treatment.”

Tylor argued from a sample of 350 societies that the evolution of cultural complexity leads from matrilineal to patrilineal institutions².

In the book ‘The Methodology of Anthropological Comparison’, Sarana (1975) talks about three types of comparative method- global sample comparison, controlled comparison and illustrative comparison. Anthropologist when he makes a comparative study, he/she makes three levels of comparison. 1. Comparison of a single society with other societies. 2. He compares two institutions of a society with similar institution of other societies. 3. He compares the institutions within single society. Several Indian Anthropologists have been using comparative method too like Karve, N.K. Bose, Srinivas etc.

The comparative method has two dimensions:

1. **Synchronic:** here the data is seen from a given point of time in a society i.e. Past is not given much importance. This approach was used by functionalists like Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown.
2. **Diachronic:** Observes society as they change through time in a specific geographical location. In this approach historical dimension is used, whereby old traditions, folklore is given lot importance to build the past. Diachronic approach is important to reconstruct the origin of mankind and his culture.

There is also cross cultural comparative perspective- A scientific approach in Anthropology which tries to find out the regularities, patterns, generalizations, rules or laws which deals with human and social behaviour. The aim is to make macro analysis and making generalizing things (Robben, Sluka, 2012)i.

Hammel, (1980) notes that by using comparative method Tylor thought of comparing nineteenth century and trace the history. The comparative

method was initially used by the arm chair anthropologists. They tried to look into the parallels, similarity in different societies both in past and present. Till 19th century majority of comparative studies were based on secondary sources. Comparison method works on the basic idea of availability of basic notes and documents. Historians have been using archival materials since long. The early implementation of comparative method was accepted to draw human behaviour and the function and conclusions about historical development. He also points out that Reliable comparisons cannot be made between data sets that are not governed by similar theoretical intent, techniques of collection and types of classification. So, following this method is difficult even with computation and technological development.

Boas (1896) on the other hand in his paper writes the problems with comparative method. We have in this method a means of reconstructing the history of growth of ideas with much greater accuracy than the generalization of the comparative method will permit. Boas also points out the processes of growth of small geographical areas should also be made rather than just comparing societies. Comparative method according to him won't be successful until we renounce the endeavour to make uniform history of evolution of culture.

Through comparative method anthropologists try to develop the past and learn about the laws of the social processes. It also helps to make classification of the categories like caste, class and groups.

Check Your Progress

1. Write in brief about comparative method?

2. Discuss the Diachronic and Synchronic concepts

3.4 FIELDWORK MEANING

Powdermarker (1969) notes that fieldwork is the study of people and of their culture in their natural habitat. Anthropological fieldwork has been carried through the investigator who participated and observed the society. The aim was to get an insider view of the people and get an holistic perspective. Malinowski's study of Trobriand Islanders, he stayed with people for almost three years. In short fieldwork is immersion in a tribal society- learning, speaking, thinking, seeing, feeling and acting as a member of the culture and at the same time being a trained anthropologists and recording the observations.

Difference between social sciences and nature science in terms of fieldwork

Humanities – Fieldwork as an art form	Science – Fieldwork as a scientific method
Humanistic	Scientific
Qualitative	Quantitative
Subjective	Objective
Participant (emic)	Observer (etic)
Postmodernism	Positivism/empiricism

Figure 1. The above figure describes the difference between fieldwork in anthropology and other natural science discipline. It also clearly shows the methodological differences for the same.

According to Malinowski, the fieldwork can be categorized into three ways. Firstly, the student must possess real scientific aims and know the values and criteria of modern ethnography. Secondly, he has to put himself in good conditions of work, i.e. to live without white men and live among the natives. Finally, he (she) has to apply a number of special methods of collecting, manipulating, and fixing his evidence. Malinowski cannot be completely taken into consideration as there is ethical issue here like he is viewing the researcher as only male when he uses the letter 'he' and researcher cannot be black or other racial colors (white men) however, let us take only the core intention of his words which is to guide the investigators.

3.4.1 Origin:

The pioneers of Anthropology like James Frazer were arm chair anthropologists. i.e. they drew their references based on existing books written by travellers, explorers, merchants, scholars who had travelled to remote place. Some of the scholars were also inspired by other thinkers from other disciplines like Charles Darwin. The first school of anthropology the evolutionists were arm chair anthropologists. After some time, the American scholar named Franz Boas insisted on understanding and studying a culture from its own point of view. He gave the theory called Cultural Relativism which states locating a culture in its own context. So, in order to understand and record the context and observing the practices one has to go through rigorous fieldwork. Franz also inspired his students to carry out fieldwork like Margaret Mead, Ruth Benedict. With this fieldwork developing the methodology of ethnography was also born. Ethnography is a methodology where the researcher resides in a place for years and records everyday activities of the culture studied.

After Franz Boas, another renowned scholar named Malinowski who belonged to the functionalism school insisted on fieldwork in the place. He himself carried out fieldwork in different places and published several books.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the origin of fieldwork tradition

2. Discuss Powdermaker view of fieldwork?

3.5 DEBATES IN CLASSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The science of anthropology developed as an outgrowth of contemporary studies of the classification of human races; of the comparative characteristics of human anatomy; of the history of human settlements; of the classification of languages and the comparison of grammars; of the comparison between primitive and ancient societies; and of the historical development of man's economy and industry. Finally, about 1840, a principle for the study of human facts was proposed: the concept of evolution. This was even before Charles Darwin had published his celebrated *Origin of Species* (1859). This concept, arising in strong debates, provided the starting point for anthropology. Anthropologists also enter the arena of theoretical debate with far more than 'data'. They come to it with a set of intuitions, sensibilities and orientations that have been decisively shaped by the field experience.

The debate in Anthropology start with understanding the origin of culture and origin of human kind. Several theories have been proposed for this. The first one to be proposed was that of Evolutionists who formulated a uni-linear evolutionary theory. According to this theory human being passed through different stages like barbaric, savagery, civilization. This theory was rejected by the scholars from diffusionist school of German and British. The diffusionists claimed that there are nine centers through which the society moved and some saw the origin from that of Egypt. This theory was also rejected by the American Anthropologist Franz Boas. So, the debates surrounds around understanding the origin of culture.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the theoretical debate in Classical Anthropology?

3.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter we started with understanding the holistic perspective which is looking at a subject from multiple angles to get an overall picture. The next topic is that of comparative method which discusses that comparison should be made to understand patterns, commonalities. The third topic is that of fieldwork which talks about the tradition of anthropologist who reside in villages and study subjects for long duration. The last topic dealt with locating the theoretical debates in the anthropology with origin, development and the different theories.

3.7 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by holism? Explain its origin?
2. Explain Comparative Method
3. Explain fieldwork and its origin.
4. What is Anthropology? Explain debates in Anthropology.

3.8 REFERENCES AND FUTURE READINGS

- Robben, A. C., & Sluka, J. A. (Eds.). (2012). *Ethnographic fieldwork: An anthropological reader* (Vol. 23). John Wiley & Sons.
- Bubandt, N., & Otto, T. (2010). Anthropology and the predicaments of holism. *Experiments in holism: theory and practice in contemporary anthropology*, 1-17.
- Bock, K. (1966). The Comparative Method of Anthropology. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 8(3), 269-280. doi:10.1017/S0010417500004072
- Jorgensen, J. (1979). Cross-Cultural Comparisons. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 8, 309-331. Retrieved December 11, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155622>
- Hammel, E. (1980). The Comparative Method in Anthropological Perspective. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(2), 145-155.
- Boas, F. (1896). The Limitations of the Comparative Method of Anthropology. *Science*, 4(103), 901-908.
- Robben, A. C., Malinowski, B. (2007). Method and scope of anthropological fieldwork. *Ethnographic fieldwork: An anthropological reader*, 4-25. <https://www.britannica.com/science/cultural-anthropology/Historical-development-of-cultural-anthropology>
- <https://www.britannica.com/science/cultural-anthropology/Historical-development-of-cultural-anthropology>

- Ingold, T. (Ed.). (1996). Key Debates in Anthropology. London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203450956>
- Barnard, A., & Spencer, J. (2010). Encyclopaedia of social and cultural anthropology. pg. 146, Rout ledge.
- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/anthropology-and-archaeology/anthropology-terms-and-concepts/anthropology#KVI>. The Comparative Method in Anthropology Edmund R. Leach

EVOLUTIONIST PERSPECTIVES, DIFFUSIONISM: THE KULTURKREIS SCHOOL, BRITISH DIFFUSIONISM

Unit Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Evolutionist Perspectives
 - 4.1.1 Introduction
 - 4.1.2 Definition
 - 4.1.3 History of Cultural Evolution
 - 4.1.4 Types/Faces of Evolution
 - 4.1.5 Evolutionism of Tylor And Morgan
 - 4.1.6 Conclusion
 - 4.1.7 Critical Evaluation
 - 4.1.8 Summary
- 4.2 Diffusionism: The Kulturkreis School, British Diffusionists
 - 4.2.1 Introduction
 - 4.2.2 Definition
 - 4.2.3 German School of Thought
 - 4.2.4 British School of Thought
 - 4.2.5 Cultural diffusion
 - 4.2.6 Cultural Diffusion in Technology
 - 4.2.7 Economics and Cultural Diffusion
 - 4.2.8 Exchanging Ideas, Increasing Knowledge
- 4.3 Historical Particularism
 - 4.3.1 Contribution of Franz Boas
 - 4.3.2 Conclusion
- 4.4 Summary
- 4.5 Unit End Questions
- 4.6 References and Future Readings

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To comprehend the earlier theories of Anthropology

- To understand the social and cultural evolution
- To examine the significance of contribution of Tylor and Morgan to Theory of Evolution
- To explain the concept of Diffusionism
- To know various theories of Diffusionism

4.1 EVOLUTIONIST PERSPECTIVES

4.1.1 Introduction:

In anthropology, as in any discipline, there is a continual addition and flow of ideas. Early evolutionism in the early years of anthropology, Darwinism had a strong impact on theory. The prevailing view was that culture generally develops (or evolves) in a uniform and progressive manner, just as Darwin argued species did. It was thought that most societies pass through the same series of stages, to arrive ultimately at a common end. The sources of culture change were generally assumed to be embedded within the culture from the beginning, and therefore the ultimate course of development was thought. Although Darwin's idea of evolution by natural selection was strongly challenged when first published (particularly, as illustrated here, the idea that humans and primates shared a common ancestor), it has withstood rigorous testing and is the foundation of many anthropological theories.

4.1.2 Definition:

HERBERT SPENCER [1862] defined evolution as 'a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations'. Later he modifies his definition to mean that evolution need not begin with absolute homogeneity or heterogeneity.

4.1.3 History of Cultural Evolution:

The most influential evolution school of 19th C was called 'universal evolution' associated with Tylor, Morgan and Spencer. According to this approach, the whole human society was understood in terms of a sequence of stages comprising of

1. First stage of hunting and gathering.
2. Development of agriculture.
3. Development of some form of govt. i.e. chiefdom, kingdoms and primitive stages.
4. Finally the emergence of industrial culture.

The German scholar **Klemn**, made a compilation of customs to show how man had passed through successive stages of '**savagery**' a '**tameness**' to '**freedom**'.

Auguste Comte has shown man advancing from '**theological stage**' to '**metaphysical stage**' to the '**positive or scientific stage**'.

Theorists like Montesquieu proposed an evolutionary scheme consisting of three stages.

1. Hunting or savagery.
2. Herding or barbarism.
3. Civilisation.

4.1.4 Types/Faces of Evolution:

1. Unilinear Evolution
2. Universal Evolution
3. Multilinear Evolution
4. Differential Evolution

4.1.5 Evolutionism of Tylor And Morgan:

Two 19th-century anthropologists whose writings exemplified the theory that culture generally evolves uniformly and progressively were Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917) and Lewis Henry Morgan (1818–1881).

Contribution of Tylor:

Edward B. Tylor was an English scholar who was associate of Darwin, Galton and other leading thinkers. He is often called as the 'father of ethnology' his outstanding work, *Primitive Culture* [1871] offered the first full length explanation of evolutionary point of view. The evolutionary view point may be appreciated by quoting Tylor [1871]

By simply placing [the European] nation at one end of the social series and savage tribe at the other, [and] arranging the rest of mankind between these limits.....ethnographers are able to set up at least a rough scale of civilization.....[representing] a **transmission** from the savage state to our own.

As it is undeniable that human have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these here distinct conditions are connected with each other in a sequence of progress.

Tylor maintained that culture evolved from the simple to the complex and that all societies passed through three basic stages of development: from **savagery** through **barbarism** to **civilization**. "Progress" was therefore possible for all. To account for cultural variation, Tylor and other early

evolutionists postulated that different contemporary societies were at different stages of evolution. According to this view, the “simpler” peoples of the day had not yet reached “higher” stages.

Tylor developed the theory of ‘**animism**’. He believed ‘animism’ to be a dominated form of religion among the simplest of primitive society. Polythetic religion implying belief in many gods characteristic of agricultural societies and monotheistic religion [belief in one god] of the most advanced societies.

Tylor believed there was a kind of **psychic unity** among all peoples that explained parallel evolutionary sequences in different cultural traditions. In other words, because of the basic similarities common to all peoples, different societies often find the same solutions to the same problems independently. But Tylor also noted that cultural traits may spread from one society to another by simple diffusion—the borrowing by one culture of a trait belonging to another as the result of contact between the two.

Contribution of Morgan:

Another 19th-century proponent of uniform and progressive cultural evolution was **Lewis Henry Morgan**. A lawyer in upstate New York, Morgan became interested in the local Iroquois Indians and defended their reservation in a land-grant case. In gratitude, the Iroquois “adopted” Morgan. In his best-known work, *Ancient Society*, Morgan postulated several sequences in the evolution of human culture. For example, he speculated that the family evolved through six stages. Human society began as a “horde living in promiscuity,” with no sexual prohibitions and no real family structure. Next was a stage in which a group of brothers was married to a group of sisters and brothersister matings were permitted. In the third stage, group marriage was practiced, but brothers and sisters were not allowed to mate. The fourth stage was characterized by a loosely paired male and female who still lived with other people. Then came the husband-dominant family, in which the husband could have more than one wife simultaneously. Finally, the stage of civilization was distinguished by the monogamous family, with just one wife and one husband who were relatively equal in status.

Morgan's scheme places a lower stage of savagery as involving the ‘infancy’ of man. Middle savagery starts with acquisition of a fish subsistence and knowledge of the use of fire, upper savagery with the bow and arrow, lower barbarism with domestication of animals, upper barbarism with smelting iron and civilization.

Morgan, believed that there was no marriage in the earliest human society, where people lived in animal-like promiscuity; then there emerged group-marriages than polygamy [marriage of one man with more women] and polyandry marriage of one woman with more than one man and finally monogamy. Monogamy according to him was the highly involved form of marriage, characteristic of modern societies. As a matter of fact, some of the simplest societies like the Andamanes have had monogamy whereas

polygamy has existed among the 60-called 'civilized or advanced societies.

However, Morgan's postulated sequence for the evolution of the family is not supported by the enormous amount of ethnographic data that has been collected since his time. For example, no recent society generally practices group marriage or allows brother-sister mating. (In the chapter on marriage and the family, we discuss how recent cultures have varied in regard to marriage customs.)

4.1.6 Conclusion:

There are two main assumptions embedded in social evolutionism: psychic unity and the superiority of Western cultures. Psychic unity is a concept that suggests human minds share similar characteristics all over the world. This means that all people and their societies will go through the same process of development. The assumption of Western superiority was not unusual for the time period. This assumption was deeply rooted in European colonialism and based on the fact that Western societies had more technologically sophisticated technology and a belief that Christianity was the true religion.

4.1.7 Critical Evaluation:

The evolutionism of Tylor, Morgan, and others of the 19th century is largely rejected today. For one thing, their theories cannot satisfactorily account for cultural variation. The "psychic unity of mankind" or "germs of thought" that were postulated to account for parallel evolution cannot also account for cultural differences. Another weakness in the early evolutionist theories is that they cannot explain why some societies have regressed or even become extinct. Finally, although other societies may have progressed to "civilization," some of them have not passed through all the stages. Thus, early evolutionist theory cannot explain the details of cultural evolution and variation as anthropology now knows them.

All evolutionary theories reflect the meaning of human history, growth and progress. Cultural evolutionary theories have been criticized on the ground of their ethnocentrism and their indifference to the cultural diversity. Most evolutionary theories are antievolutionary, antihistorical, antiadaptive and are essentially teleological and represent the continuation of 2000 years of western self-praise.

Evolution was seen by these scholars as single or unilinear thread throughout history. It was rooted in the psychic unity by which all human groups were supposed to have the same potential for evolutionary development, though some were further ahead than others because of climate, soil and other factors.

4.1.8 Summary:

Social evolutionists identified universal evolutionary stages to classify different societies as in a state of savagery, barbarism, or civilization.

Morgan further subdivided savagery and barbarism into sub-categories: low, middle, and high. The stages were based primarily on technological characteristics, but included other things such as political organization, marriage, family, and religion. Since Western societies had the most advanced technology, they put those societies at the highest rank of civilization. Societies at a stage of savagery or barbarism were viewed as inherently inferior to civilized society. Spencer's theory of social evolution, which is often referred to as Social Darwinism but which he called synthetic philosophy, proposed that war promoted evolution, stating that those societies that conducted more warfare were the most evolved. He also coined the phrase "survival of the fittest" and advocated for allowing societies to compete, thereby allowing the most fit in society to survive. With these ideas, Spencer opposed social policy that would help the poor. Eugenacists used Spencer's ideas to promote intellectual and ethnic cleansing as a 'natural' occurrence.

Nineteenth-century evolutionists contributed to anthropology by providing the first systematic methods for thinking about and explaining human societies; however, contemporary anthropologists view nineteenth-century evolutionism as too simplistic to explain the development of societies in the world. In general, the nineteenth-century evolutionists relied on racist views of human development that were popular at that time. For example, both Lewis Henry Morgan and E. B. Tylor believed that people in various societies have different levels of intelligence, which leads to societal differences, a view of intelligence that is no longer valid in contemporary science. Nineteenth-century evolutionism was strongly attacked by historical particularists for being speculative and ethnocentric in the early twentieth-century. At the same time, its materialist approaches and cross-cultural views influenced Marxist Anthropology and Neo-evolutionists.

4.2 DIFFUSIONISM: THE KULTURKREIS SCHOOL, BRITISH DIFFUSIONISTS

4.2.1 Introduction:

Diffusionism refers to the diffusion or transmission of cultural characteristics or traits from the common society to all other societies. They criticized the Psychic unity of mankind of evolutionists. They believed that most inventions happened just once and men being capable of imitation, these inventions were then diffused to other places. According to them all cultures originated at one point and then spread throughout the world. They opposed the notion of progress from simple to complex forms held by the evolutionists. They also held that primitive or modern is also a relative matter and hence comparative method is not applicable. They looked specifically for variations that gradually occurred while diffusion took place.

4.2.2 Definition:

Diffusion may be simply defined as the spread of a cultural item from its place of origin to other places (Titiev 1959:446). A more expanded

definition depicts diffusion as the process by which discrete culture traits are transferred from one society to another, through migration, trade, war, or other contact (Winthrop 1991:82).

Diffusionist research originated in the middle of the nineteenth century as a means of understanding the nature of the distribution of human cultural traits across the world. By that time scholars had begun to study not only advanced cultures, but also the cultures of nonliterate people (Beals and Hoijer 1959:664). Studying these very diverse cultures stimulated an interest in discerning how humans progressed from primeval conditions to “superior” states (Kuklick 1996:161). Among the major questions about this issue was whether human culture had evolved in a manner analogous to biological evolution or whether culture spread from innovation centers by means of processes of diffusion (Hugill 1996:343).

This school of thought proposed that civilization spread from one culture to another, because humans are basically conservative and lack inventiveness (Winthrop 1991:83). An extreme example of this theory was the idea proposed by English scholar Grafton Elliot Smith. He considered Egypt as the primary source for many other ancient civilizations (Smith 1931:393-394). This form of diffusionism is known as heliocentric diffusionism (Spencer 1996:608). A wider concept, explaining the diffusion of culture traits, was formulated by Leo Frobenius, through the inspiration of his teacher, Friedrich Ratzel. This version is called “culture circles” or *Kulturkreise* (Harris 1968:382-83). An even more expanded version of diffusionism was proposed in the United States, where diffusionist ideas culminated in the concept of “culture areas.” A. L. Kroeber and Clark Wissler were among the main proponents of this version (Harris 1968:373-74).

Two schools of thought emerged in response to these questions. The most extreme view was that there were a very limited number of locations, possibly only one, from which the most important culture traits diffused to the rest of the world. Some Social Evolutionists, on the other hand, proposed that the “psychic unity of mankind” meant that since all human beings share the same psychological traits, they are all equally likely to innovate (see Social Evolutionism in this site for more on the psychic unity of mankind). According to social evolutionists, innovation in a culture, was considered to be continuous or at least triggered by variables that are relatively exogenous. This set the foundation for the idea that many inventions occurred independently of each other and that diffusion had relatively little effect on cultural development (Hugill 1996:343).

4.2.3 German School of Thought:

German anthropologists were considered to be extreme diffusionists. This school of thought was dominated by the Catholic clergy, who attempted to reconcile anthropological prehistory and cultural evolution with the Book of Genesis. One of the best-known leaders in this attempt was Wilhelm Schmidt, who had studied and written extensively on the relationships between the religions of the world. Schmidt was a follower of Fritz

Graebner, who was also working on a world-wide scale with “culture-circles” (Harris 1968:379-83).

German and Austrian diffusionists argued that there were a limited number of culture centers, rather than just one, in the ancient world. Culture traits diffused, not as isolated elements, but as a whole culture complex, due to migration of individuals from one culture to another (Winthrop 1991:83).

The Kulturkreise (culture circle) school of thought, even though inspired by Friedrich Ratzel, was actually created by his student, Leo Frobenius. This concept provided the criteria by which Graebner could study Oceania at first and, two years later, cultures on a world-wide basis (Harris 1968:383). The “culture circle” concept proposed that a cluster of functionally-related culture traits specific to a historical time and geographical area (Spencer 1996:611) diffused out of a region in which they evolved. Graebner and Schmidt claimed that they had reconstructed a “limited number of original culture circles” (Harris 1968:384).

4.2.4 British School of Thought:

Diffusionism occurred in its most extreme form in the ideas of the British school of thought. W. H. R. Rivers was the founder of these ideas. He confined his studies to Oceania, where he tried to organize the ethnography according to nomothetic principles and sought to explain the contrasts between Melanesian and Polynesian cultures by the spread of original complexes, which supposedly had been spread by successive waves of migrating people (Harris 1968:380). Rivers states that “a few immigrants possessed of a superior technology can impose their customs on a large autochthonous population” (Lowie 1937:174). He also applied this extreme concept of diffusionism to Australian burial practices. The obvious problem with Rivers’ explanations appears when questioned as to why the technology of the “newcomers” disappeared if it was superior. Rivers solves the problem with a rather fantastical flare. He claims that because the “newcomers” were small in number, they failed to assert their “racial strain” into the population (Lowie 1937: 175).

G. Elliot Smith (1871-1937) was a prominent British anatomist who produced a most curious view of cultural distribution arguing that Egypt was the source of all higher culture. He based this on the following assumptions:

- (1) Man was uninventive, culture seldom arose independently, and culture only arose in certain circumstances;
- (2) These circumstances only existed in ancient Egypt, which was the location from which all culture, except for its simplest elements, had spread after the advent of navigation;
- (3) Human history was full of decadence and the spread of this civilization was naturally diluted as it radiated outwardly (Lowie 1937:160-161).

Smith and W. J. Perry, a student of W. H. R. Rivers, hypothesized that the entire cultural inventory of the world had diffused from Egypt. The development began in Egypt, according to them, about 6,000 years ago (Harris 1968:380; Smith 1928:22). This form of diffusion is known as heliocentrism (Spencer 1996:608). They believed that “Natural Man” inhabited the world before development began and that he had no clothing, houses, agriculture, domesticated animals, religion, social organization, formal laws, ceremonies, or hereditary chiefs. The discovery of barley in 4,000 B. C. enabled people to settle in one location. From that point invention in culture exploded and was spread during Egyptian migrations by land and sea. This account was similar to the Biblical version of world history (Harris 1968:389-381).

4.2.5 Cultural diffusion:

Cultural diffusion is the spread of cultural beliefs and social activities from one group of people to another. Through cultural diffusion, horizons are broadened and people become more culturally rich.

Let's expand our horizons beyond those sushi dinners and daily tweets with some examples of cultural diffusion in society today:

- The spread of music throughout the world also illustrates cultural diffusion. For example, jazz started in the US as a blend of African and European musical traditions. Now, it's enjoyed across the globe, taking on many different variations within the genre.
- Many people in European cities and former colonies speak both their native tongue and English. In fact, almost 80 percent of English speakers in the world are non-native speakers due to the spread of the language through imperialism and trade.
- Japanese culture has often fascinated foreigners. The popularity of sushi around the world, a traditional Japanese dish, exemplifies the spread of Japanese culture and cuisine.

4.2.6 Cultural Diffusion in Technology:

They say knowledge is power. And, when one group of people develops an important element of technology that can benefit people across the globe, it's nice to see that information-sharing take place. Of course, in today's world that can happen at lightning speeds.

Let's take a look at technological diffusion through the years.

- Paper was first made in China, eventually spreading to the Middle East and Europe.
- Gunpowder also originated in China. Of course, nations all across the globe went on to produce gunpowder, too.
- The fax machine was invented by Scottish inventor Alexander Bain, but certainly didn't remain in the UK alone.

- The anti-lock brake system was developed in the United States, despite many claims that the German manufacturer, Mercedes, got there first. The Germans then perfected it.

4.2.7 Economics and Cultural Diffusion:

Even before the Middle Ages, when merchants traded their goods by traveling from region to region, the benefits of cultural diffusion were apparent. If one region didn't have the climate to produce one crop, another did, and those goods were diffused across countries and nations. One good was traded for another and communities enjoyed the benefits of varied products. Sure enough, that benefit remains today, as world trade continues to boom.

Let's take a look at the economics behind cultural diffusion.

Trade has been a means of cultural diffusion for centuries, dating back to the Silk Road and beyond, when caravans would travel and exchange goods between Europe and Asia.

People learn of new products in other countries, like personal computers or cell phones, demand increases, the product becomes more affordable, and the product is spread around the world.

4.2.8 Exchanging Ideas, Increasing Knowledge:

In the end, cultural diffusion can be life-changing. When an American woman in Wisconsin enrolls in salsa classes taught by an Argentinian man, they might forge a lifelong friendship that would've never happened if cultural diffusion wasn't a part of our reality.

As a man living in Los Angeles watches YouTube videos on how to make his own sushi, he reaps the benefits of a healthy lifestyle offered by the Japanese culture. One remark in the comments section might introduce him to a Japanese chef, and there you have it. A new friendship is formed and added morsels of knowledge are exchanged.

They say travel expands our minds and introduces us to undiscovered worlds. Cultural diffusion, however, is a little more permanent and steadfast. The learning opportunities continue, as entire communities of people exchange ideas, goods, and knowledge. If America's a melting pot, then we're sure to be on the winning side of cultural diffusion.

Particularism, also called historical particularism, school of anthropological thought associated with the work of Franz Boas and his students (among them A.L. Kroeber, Ruth Benedict, and Margaret Mead), whose studies of culture emphasized the integrated and distinctive way of life of a given people. Particularism stood in opposition to theories such as cultural evolution, Kulturkreis, and geographical or environmental determinism, all of which sought to discover for the social sciences a series of general laws analogous to those in the physical sciences (such as the laws of thermodynamics or gravity).

The idea of **historical particularism** suggests all cultures have their own historical trajectory and that each culture developed according to this history. This idea was popularized by the anthropologist **Franz Boas**, who is widely considered a founder of the discipline of anthropology.

4.3 HISTORICAL PARTICULARISM

The term historical particularism refers to the idea that each culture has its own particular and unique history that is not governed by universal laws. This idea is a big component of Boasian anthropology because it is where Boasians put their focus on when studying cultures. Historical particularism was developed in contrast to Boas' rejection of Lewis Henry Morgan's idea of an evolutionary path and the use of the comparative method. The evolutionary path used generalities and universal themes to explain cultural similarities, but Boas "contended that cultural traits first must be explained in terms of specific cultural contexts rather than by broad reference to general evolutionary trends". Boas and his followers would argue that cultures cannot be compared or be subjected to generalities because each culture experienced a different and unique history, even if it led to a similar cultural aspect. Historical particularism and the concept of diffusion actually go quite hand in hand. Traits that are similar between cultures may have diffused through interaction between various cultures. However, while these traits are similar, they will develop different and unique histories from their movement through various societies.

This approach claims that each society has its own unique historical development and must be understood based on its own specific cultural and environmental context, especially its historical process. Its core premise was that culture was a "set of ideas or symbols held in common by a group of people who see themselves as a social group" (Darnell 2013: 399). Historical particularists criticized the theory of the nineteenth-century social evolution as non-scientific and proclaimed themselves to be free from preconceived ideas. Boas believed that there were universal laws that could be derived from the comparative study of cultures; however, he thought that the ethnographic database was not yet robust enough for us to identify those laws. To that end, he and his students collected a vast amount of first-hand cultural data by conducting ethnographic fieldwork. Based on these raw data, they described particular cultures instead of trying to establish general theories that apply to all societies.

4.3.1 Contribution of Franz Boas:

Franz Boas and his students developed **historical particularism** early in the twentieth century. The Historical particularists valued fieldwork and history as critical methods of cultural analysis. At the same time, the anthropologists in this theoretical school had different views on the importance of individuals in a society. For example, Franz Boas saw each individual as the basic component of a society. He gathered information from individual informants and considered such data valuable enough for cultural analysis. On the other hand, **Alfred Kroeber** did not see

individuals as the fundamental elements of a society. He believed a society evolves according to its own internal laws that do not directly originate from its individuals. He named this cultural aspect superorganic and claimed that a society cannot be explained without considering this impersonal force.

Boas's own work emphasized studies of individual cultures, each based on its unique history. He held that the anthropologist's primary assignment was to describe the particular characteristics of a given culture with a view toward reconstructing the historical events that led to its present structure. Implicit in this approach was the notion that resolving hypotheses regarding evolutionary development and the influence of one culture on another should be secondary to the careful and exhaustive study of particular societies. Boas urged that the historical method, based on the description of particular culture traits and elements, supplant the comparative method of the evolutionists, who used their data to rank cultures in an artificial hierarchy of achievement. He rejected the assumption of a single standard of achievement to which all cultures could be compared, instead advocating cultural relativism, the position that all cultures are equally able to meet the needs of their members.

Boas responded to a particular school of thought in anthropology, known as the **social-evolutionary** perspective. This approach saw cultures as following a linear trajectory. In other words, more traditional cultures will eventually 'catch up' to the more developed cultures of Western Europe.

The problem with the social-evolutionary perspective, according to Boas, was that this led us to believe that Western European countries should be the model for what culture should look like. This led to ignoring the particularities of different cultures. This is where historical particularism comes in.

Boas felt that the only way to really understand cultures was through in-depth research into their individual histories. We can't assume any universal laws about cultures. This blinds us to the important ways that cultures are different from one another. So historical particularism is kind of like a research method, in a way.

Boas urged anthropologists to go directly to the place they wanted to study, as opposed to trying to examine it from afar. This was a response to a tendency at the time to simply write about cultures rather than engaging with them. This led to what many termed armchair anthropology. Imagine it like this: a professor in the ivory tower making judgments about cultures he never really explored.

Also, Boas didn't think that comparison was a very good way to understand other cultures. Instead of trying to find similarities and differences between two cultures, we should try and understand the aspects of each of them in depth.

4.3.2 Conclusion:

Under Boas's influence, the particularist approach dominated American anthropology for the first half of the 20th century. From World War II through the 1970s, it was eclipsed by neo-evolutionism and a variety of other theories. However, the particularist approach, if not the term itself, reemerged in the 1980s as scholars began to recognize that distinctive historical processes differentiate peoples even in the era of globalization.

4.4 SUMMARY

The German School of Diffusionism has chief proponents like Friedrich Ratzel, Leo Frobenius, Fritz Graebner and William Schmidt. Their approach was through the analysis of culture complexes identified geographically and studied as they spread and developed historically. It has both time and space dimensions. The first dimension of space was explained in terms of culture circles and the second dimension of time was explained in terms of culture strata.

The main proponents of British school of Diffusionism were G. Elliot Smith, William J Perry and W.H.R Rivers. They held the view that all cultures originated only in one part of the world. Egypt was the culture centre of the world and the cradle of civilization. Hence human culture originated in Egypt and then spread throughout the world. They pointed to the Pyramid like large stone structures and sun worship in several parts of the world.

The leading proponent of this extreme diffusionist school was Sir G. Elliot Smith. He claimed that Egypt was the source of culture and that every other culture in the world diffused from there, but that a dilution of this civilization occurred as it spread to increasingly greater distances. His theoretical scheme claimed that man is un inventive, so culture only arises under favorable circumstances. These favorable circumstances only existed in ancient Egypt (Lowie 1937: 161).

The Diffusionist thought in America centered on Culture areas which referred to relatively small geographical regions containing the contiguous distribution of similar cultural elements. The term culture area was first used by O.T Mason who identified 18 American Culture Areas. His ideas were elaborated by scholars like Clark Wissler and Alfred Kroeber and Robert Lowie.

Historical particularism was a dominant trend in anthropology during the first half of the twentieth century. One of the achievements of the historical particularists was that they succeeded in excluding racism from anthropology. The nineteenth-century evolutionists explained cultural similarities and differences by classifying societies into superior and inferior categories. Historical particularists showed that this labeling is based on insufficient evidence and claimed that societies cannot be ranked by the value judgment of researchers. Historical particularists were also responsible for showing the need for long-term, intensive fieldwork in

order to produce accurate descriptions of cultures. One important part of doing that was to learn the language of the study group.

Boas stressed the apparently enormous complexity of cultural variation, and perhaps because of this complexity he believed it was premature to formulate universal laws. He felt that single cultural traits had to be studied in the context of the society in which they appeared. In 1896, Boas published an article entitled “The Limitation of the Comparative Method of Anthropology,”¹⁹ which dealt with his objections to the evolutionist approach. In it, he stated that anthropologists should spend less time developing theories based on insufficient data. Rather, they should devote their energies to collecting as much data as possible, as quickly as possible, before cultures disappeared (as so many already had, after contact with foreign societies). He asserted that valid interpretations could be made and theories proposed only after this body of data was gathered. Boas expected that, if a tremendous quantity of data was collected, the laws governing cultural variation would emerge from the mass of information by themselves. According to the method he advocated, the essence of science is to mistrust all expectations and to rely only on facts. But, the “facts” that are recorded, even by the most diligent observer, will necessarily reflect what that individual considers important. Collecting done without some preliminary theorizing, without ideas about what to expect, is meaningless, for the facts that are most important may be ignored whereas irrelevant ones may be recorded. Although it was appropriate for Boas to criticize previous “armchair theorizing,” his concern with innumerable local details did not encourage a belief that it might be possible to explain the major variations in culture that anthropologists observe.

4.5 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1 Explain in detail the evolutionary perspective as early theoretical perspective of Anthropology.
- 2 Critically examine evolutionism in context of psychic unity of mankind.
- 3 Briefly elaborate on contribution of Tylor and Morgan to Evolutionary perspective.
- 4 Define Diffusionism. Examine various theories of Diffusionism.
- 5 Write a detail note on British and German School of Thought on Diffusionism.
6. Explain Historical Particularism.
7. Explain Evolutionist perspectives.
8. Explain the contribution of Tylor and Morgan to Evolutionism.

4.6 REFERENCES AND FUTURE READINGS

- <https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-cultural-diffusion.html>
- <https://www.sociologyguide.com/anthropology/main-approaches-to-the-study-of-society-and-culture/diffusionism.php#:~:text=Diffusionism%20refers%20to%20the%20diffusion,unity%20of%20mankind%20of%20evolutionists.>
- Gail, King, Meghan Wright and Michael Goldstein. Diffusionism and Acculturation:
- <https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/diffusionism-and-acculturation/>
- Hugill, Peter J. 1996 Diffusion. In Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology David Levinson and Melvin Ember, eds. Pp. 344-45. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Harris, Marvin. 1968 The Rise of Anthropological Theory. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company.
- Kuklick, Henrika. 1996 Diffusionism. In Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, eds. Pp, 160-162. London: Routledge.
- Lowie, Robert 1937 The History of Ethnological Theory. New York: Farrar and Rinehart.
- Smith, G. E. 1928 In the Beginning: The Origin of Civilization. New York: Morrow.
- Spencer, Jonathan 1996 Glossary. In Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology. Alan Barnard and Jonathan Spencer, eds. London: Routledge.
- Winthrop, Robert H. 1991 Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology. New York: Greenwood.
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory>
- Barnard, Alan. 2000. History and Theory in Anthropology. United Kingdom. The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge.
- Darnell, Regna. "Historical Particularism." In Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 397-401. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2013.
- Francisconi, Michael J. "Theoretical Anthropology." In 21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook, Vol. 1, edited by H. James Birx, 442-452. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2010.

- Frey, Rodney. "Historical-Particularism-as exemplified by Franz Boas (1858-1942)." University of Idaho. Accessed February 27, 2015.<http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~rfrey/220histpart.htm>.
- Graber, Robert Bates. "Social Evolution." In 21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook, Vol. 1, edited by H. James Birx, 576-585. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2010.
- Harris, Marvin, 2001. The Rise of Anthropological Theory : A History of Theories of Culture, Jaipur, Rawat Publication.
- Kottak Conrad Phillip, 1997. Anthropology, The Exploration of Human Diversity. New York The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc.
- MacGee R Jonand Warm Richard L Anthropological Theory and Introductory History (4THed) 2008, McGrawHill New York.
- MairLucy, 1965. An Introduction to SocialAnthropology (2nded), 1965, New Delhi, India.
- Moore Jerry, 2009. Visions of Culture an introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists (3rded) United Kingdom . Rowen and Little Publishers.
- Turner, Jonathan. "Spencer, Herbert." In International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 8, edited by William A. Darity, 57-59. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008.

MODULE III
ANTROPOLOGISTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

5

**CLASSICAL STUDIES IN KINSHIP
AND STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM**

Unit Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Classical Studies in Kinship
- 5.3 Structural Functionalism
 - 5.3.1 Introduction
 - 5.3.2 Bronislaw Malinowski
 - 5.3.2.1 Theory of Needs
 - 5.3.2.2 The Function of Magic
 - 5.3.2.3 Psychological functionalism
 - 5.3.2.4 Criticism
 - 5.3.3 A.R. Radcliffe Brown
 - 5.3.3.1 Structure and Function
 - 5.3.3.2 Organic Analogy and Functionalism
 - 5.3.3.3 Joking Relationships and Functionalism
 - 5.3.3.4 Exogamous Moieties
 - 5.3.3.5 Andaman Islander's ritual
 - 5.3.3.6 Conclusion
- 5.4 Comparison between Malinowski and Radcliffe- Brown.
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Unit End Questions
- 5.7 References and Further Readings

5.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the history of kinship studies in anthropology
- To explore the importance of kinship studies.
- To know the origins of structuralism

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Kinship is the system of social organization based on family ties. By 1850s, the modern study of kinship was prevalent, which by the end of nineteenth century, came to be a full-fledged field in anthropology. However the field of kinship has been very confusing as well as controversial from the beginning. Kinship can refer to blood relationships, consanguine relationships and those that are established by marriage. Within all cultures, we see this form of organization that is, categories of kins and affines, and its association with certain rights and obligations, make up what anthropologists call kinship system.

Kinship thus remained the most universal and basic underpinning of all human relationships, that are known by various names. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, if the study of kinship was defined largely by anthropologists, it is equally true that anthropology as an academic discipline was itself defined by kinship and that until the last decades of the 20th century, for example, kinship was regarded as the core of British social anthropology, and no thorough ethnographic study could overlook the central importance of kinship in the functioning of so-called stateless, nonindustrial, or traditional societies.

Lewis Henry Morgan, the American ethnologist and anthropologist, is regarded as the founder-cum-principal investigator for the kinship systems. His approach and studies laid the foundation of the system of kinship studies in anthropology. He states different types of kinship systems, in his book, '*Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*'. Other famous theorists and scholars include the English scholar Radcliff Brown, Evans Pritchard, Fortes, G.P. Murdock and Levi-Strauss.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Structuralism as a school of thought developed by the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in which cultures, viewed as systems, are analyzed in terms of the structural relations among their elements. According to Lévi-Strauss's theories, universal patterns in cultural systems are products of the invariant structure of the human mind. Structure, for Lévi-Strauss, referred exclusively to mental structure, although he found evidence of such structure in his far-ranging analyses of kinship, patterns in mythology, art, religion, ritual, and culinary traditions.

5.2 CLASSICAL STUDIES IN KINSHIP

The nineteenth century American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan (1818-1881) was interested in the evolution of culture as a general human phenomenon and held a strong belief that there were universal evolutionary stages of cultural development that characterized the transition from primitive to complex societies and because of this belief, Morgan is known as *unilineal* evolutionists (McGee *et al.*, 2017). He is thus best regarded for his contribution on the human social institutions, known as the kinship system.

Morgan's theoretical insights, Barnard *et al.* (2002) highlights, rest principally on the comparative study of North American Indians, and most especially on his work on the Iroquois, the tribal confederacy in the northeastern United States among whom he conducted both field and archival research. Morgan's studies, principally published between 1851 and 1877, provide landmark accounts of systems of kinship and marriage in general, and in particular the shape of matrilineal descent structures. Thus the Iroquois matrilineal system, though not matriarchal, was revealed by Morgan 'as permitting women to exercise exceptionally high levels of political influence'.

The Iroquois kinship system surprised Morgan. For example, as mentioned in Moore (2004), collateral kin were classified as lineal kin—the same terms are used for “father” and “father's brother,” for “mother” and “mother's sister,” and for siblings and parallel cousins. Descent among the Seneca was reckoned through the mother's line, and thus a child is a member of his or her mother's lineage, not his or her father's. Morgan further observed that Iroquois political organization was an extension of kinship.

In 1859 Morgan discovered that similar kinship systems were used by the Ojibwa of upper Michigan and possibly among the Dakota and Creek (White 1959:6–7). This led Morgan to a new approach to ethnographic data. Rather than solely document the folklore of the Iroquois, Morgan began to explore the relationships between different societies as reflected in shared systems of kinship. Morgan's greatest discovery, as anthropologist Leslie White put it, was “the fact that customs of designating relatives have scientific significance” (1957:257). That discovery was documented in Morgan's (1871) magnum opus, *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (Moore, 2004).

Morgan's studies of kinship were based on extensive questionnaires. Morgan sent a printed questionnaire requesting information about kinship terms to consular officials, missionaries, and scientists around the world. This cross-cultural survey, combined with Morgan's own field research, resulted in kinship data from 139 different groups in North America, Asia, Oceania, and ancient and modern Europe (Moore, 2004).

While in Fiji in 1869, Lorimer Fison (1832-1907), a missionary, journalist, and anthropologist, received one of these questionnaires. It drew his interest to anthropology and he became an ardent follower of Morgan, with whom he corresponded extensively. Fison's research into Australian aboriginal kinship systems, based on interviews with European settlers, provided important data for E. B. Tylor, J. G. Frazer, and Emile Durkheim as well as Morgan (McGee & Warms, 2017).

The landmark publication in the twentieth century studies of social organization, *Social Anthropology of North American Tribes*, edited by Fred Eggan (1937), developed Morgan's approach to the study of North American Indians, though it eliminated its evolutionary dimension. Influenced by the British structural functionalist, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown,

the contributors attend mainly to the social and political organization of a large variety of societies, especially the various Plains Indian societies of the north-central United States (e.g. Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho). The focus is principally on kinship organization, although other types of relationship, such as the 'joking relationship' famous among many North American Indian peoples, are considered as well (Barnard & Spencer, 2002).

Morgan's goal was to trace the connections between systems of kinship and to explore their "progressive changes" as man developed through "the ages of barbarism" (Morgan 1871:vi). At this point, Morgan had not outlined the evolutionary scheme that forms the explanatory structure of his *Ancient Society*. Rather, Morgan approached kinship systems as if they were languages and modeled his analysis on the comparative method (Moore, 2004).

Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, a British social anthropologist famously associated with structural functionalism, who drew heavily on Durkheim's work, sought to understand how cultural institutions maintained the equilibrium and cohesion of a society. Although he did fieldwork in the Andaman Islands and Australia, Radcliffe-Brown was more interested in deriving social laws governing behavior from the comparative study of different cultures than in cultural description based on intensive fieldwork in one culture (McGee & Warms, 2017).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, Radcliffe-Brown's theory had its classic formulation and application in *The Social Organisation of Australian Tribes* (1931). Treating all Aboriginal Australia known at the time, the work cataloged, classified, analyzed, and synthesized a vast amount of data on kinship, marriage, language, custom, occupancy and possession of land, sexual patterns, and cosmology. His later works include *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), *Method in Social Anthropology* (1958), and an edited collection of essays entitled *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage* (1950), which remains a landmark in African studies.

Radcliffe-Brown's study of kinship began in 1904 under Rivers, who himself followed the method of conjectural history, first under the influence of Morgan and later in the form of what he called ethnological analysis as exemplified in his *History of Melanesian Society*, in which Rivers highlighted the importance of investigating the behaviour of relatives to one another as a means of understanding a system of kinship (Radcliffe-Brown, 1941).

Radcliffe-Brown conducted ethnographic research among the Kariera and other aboriginal groups in western Australia from 1910 to 1912. Radcliffe-Brown's impact is evident in the writings of his students. When he left the University of Chicago, his students presented Radcliffe-Brown with a volume titled *Social Anthropology of North American Tribes* (Eggan 1962). That group—including Fred Eggan, Morris Opler, and Sol Tax—all became important figures in American anthropology (Moore, 2004).

According to Radcliffe-Brown (1941), the unit of structure from which a kinship is built up is the group which should be identified as an 'elementary family', consisting of a man and his wife and their child/children, whether living together or not. Children may be made members of an elementary family by adoption or by birth. Further, there also exists compound families such as polygynous and monogamous.

The existence of the elementary family creates three special kinds of social relationship – that between parent and child, between children of the same parents, and that between husband and wife as parents of the same child/children. These three relationships that exist within the elementary family constitute as the first order, whereas the relationships of the second order depend on the connection of the two elementary families through a common member such as father's father, mother's brother, or wife's sister and so on. In the third order, relationships are such as father's brother's son and mother's brother's wife. Thus, with the genealogical information, one can trace relationships of the fourth, fifth or nth order (Radcliffe-Brown, 1941).

An important figure in kinship literature is, no doubt, Claude Lévi-Strauss a French anthropologist and ethnologist, a significant contributor to the theory of structuralism. Lévi-Strauss's work on cross-cousin marriage clearly owes a considerable debt to Radcliffe-Brown's work on Australia. He both adopts Radcliffe-Brown's three types of cross-cousin marriage as the three possible elementary structures of kinship, and re-analyses Australian material in the first of the ethnographic sections of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. While Radcliffe-Brown regarded kinship as an extension of familial relationships to the tribal community in such a way as to achieve progressively higher levels of social integration, Lévi-Strauss regarded kinship as the product of a mode of thought which operated at a global (tribal) level, ordering people into opposed relationship categories such as 'father's father' and 'mother's father' (Barnard & Spencer, 2002).

Lévi-Strauss argues that "social anthropology is devoted especially to the study of institutions considered as systems of representations" (1963a:3). Lévi-Strauss uses "representations" as Durkheim did, to refer to beliefs, sentiments, norms, values, attitudes, and meanings. Those institutions are cultural expressions that are usually unexamined by their users; in that narrow but fundamental sense anthropology examines the unconscious foundations of social life. This search for the underlying structures of social life led Lévi-Strauss to explore three principal areas: systems of classification, kinship theory, and the logic of myth (Moore, 2004).

Levi-Strauss used the notion of the binary structure of human thought to analyze kinship, applying the work of Marcel Mauss, who in *The Gift* (1967, orig. 1925) had tried to demonstrate that exchange in primitive societies was driven not by economic motives but by rules of reciprocity upon which the solidarity of society depended. In *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969, orig. 1949) Levi-Strauss took Mauss' concept of reciprocity and applied it to marriage in primitive societies, arguing that in

those societies women were a commodity that could be exchanged. Levi-Strauss contended that one of the first and most important distinctions a human makes is between self and others. This "natural" binary distinction then leads to the formation of the incest taboo, which necessitates choosing spouses from outside of one's family (McGee & Warms, 2017).

Check Your Progress

1. What is the contribution of Lewis Henry Morgan?
-
-

5.3 STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM

5.3.1 Introduction:

Structural functionalism was a theoretical school in Great Britain originally formulated to move away from evolutionism and diffusion. As a new paradigm, functionalism was presented as a reaction against what was believed to be out dated ideologies. It was an attempt to move away from the evolutionism and diffusionism that dominated American and British anthropology at the turn of the century (Lesser 1935, Langness 1987). There was a shift in focus from the speculatively historical or diachronic study of customs and cultural traits as “survivals” to the ahistorical, synchronic study of social “institutions” within bounded, functioning societies (Young 1991:445).

Structural-functionalism's core concepts are, in harness, structure and system. Structural-functionalism emphasized the formal ordering of parts and their functional interrelations as contributing to the maintenance needs of a structured social system. The function of any institution (or ‘recurrent social activity’) was the part it played in the maintenance of the larger structural whole. This assumption attributed to social systems an internal integration of parts similar to that found in organisms.

Modern sociological and anthropological theory has been profoundly influenced by functional analysis. Its history can be traced to Comte’s consensus universals; Spencer’s organic analogy, Pareto’s conception of society as a system of equilibrium and Durkheim’s causal functional analysis.

Functionalism was a reaction to the perceived excesses and deficiencies of the evolutionary and diffusionist theories of the nineteenth century and the historicism of the early twentieth (Goldschmidt 1996:510).

Functionalists seek to describe the different parts of a society and their relationship by means of an **organic analogy**. The organic analogy compares the different parts of a society to the organs of a living organism. The organism is able to live, reproduce and function through the organized system of its several parts and organs. Like a biological

organism, a society is able to maintain its essential processes through the way that the different parts interact. Institutions such as religion, kinship and the economy were the organs and individuals were the cells in this social organism. Functionalist analyses examine the social significance of phenomena, that is, the function they serve a particular society in maintaining the whole (Jarvie 1973).

The term 'Functionalism' cannot be explained easily for the simple reason that the term 'function' and 'functional' have been used to mean different things by different thinkers. The functional approach is much older in biology, psychology and cultural anthropology than sociology. Earlier, the term 'function' was commonly used in a positive sense of contribution made by a part for the whole. Today it is used to mean 'consequences' which may or may not be intended or recognized.

Functionalism, as a school of thought in anthropology, emerged in the early twentieth century. Functionalism in anthropology is generally divided into two schools of thought, each associated with a key personality. **Bronislaw Malinowski** and **A.R. Radcliffe-Brown** had the greatest influence on the development of functionalism from their posts in Great Britain and elsewhere. Two versions of functionalism developed between 1910 and 1930: Malinowski's **biocultural (or psychological) functionalism**; and **structural-functionalism**, the approach advanced by Radcliffe-Brown.

Psychological functionalism is linked to Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). Malinowski's method was based on extensive in-depth fieldwork during which he gathered evidence to support his theoretical position.

The second school, structural functionalism, is associated with A.R. Radcliffe Brown (1881-1955). He sought to understand how cultural institutions maintained the equilibrium and co-hesion of a society.

5.3.2 Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942):

Malinowski is considered as one of the founding fathers of British Social anthropology. He was trained in physical sciences and received a Ph.D in physics and mathematics in 1908. He was influenced by Durkheim and Wilhelm Wundt at Leipzig. In 1910 he studied anthropology at London School of Economics. Later at LSE he trained many of the finest English Anthropologists including E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Isaac Schapera, Raymond Firth, Fortes and Nadel, etc. He built the anthropological program at the LSE and Cambridge.

Malinowski was interested in religion and folklore. He breached the boundary between fieldwork and theory through his field work revolution. His famous books are.

- Argonauts of the Western Pacific (1922)
- Sex and Repression in Savage Society (1927)

Malinowski's concept of culture was most stimulating contribution to the anthropological thought of his day but his contribution has been undervalued. His ethnographic concerns were with how culture met the needs of the individual. It contradicted with the views of A.R. Radcliffe brown who emphasized how culture met the needs of society. In order to understand this difference and to evaluate Malinowski's contribution one must begin with his theory of needs.

5.3.2.1 Theory of Needs:

Malinowski's theory of need is central to his functional approach to culture. Through his theory he tried to link the individual and society. According to him culture exists to meet the basic biological, psychological, and social needs of the individual.

Malinowski viewed function in physiological sense. He defined function as the satisfaction of an organic impulse by the appropriate act. He developed his physiological analogy further. For e.g. he argued that if we have to describe how normal lung operates we would be describing the form of the process, but if we attempt to explain why the lung is operating in a manner then we are concerned with its function.

Malinowski wrote that cultural institutions are integrated responses to a variety of needs and to outline those needs he used a variant of his synoptic chart.

Basic Needs	Cultural Responses
1. Metabolism	Commissarial
2. Reproduction	Kinship
3. Bodily Comfort	shelter
4. Safety	Protection
5. Movement	Activities
6. Growth	Training
7. Health	Hygiene

Malinowski described each of these needs are cultural responses in detail, but few examples are as follows:

The first human need, "metabolism" refers to

- the process of food intake
- digestion,
- the collateral secretions,
- the absorption of nutritive substances, and
- the rejection of waste matter.

The cultural response “commissarial” (the military unit that supplies food to an army) include.

1. How food was grown, prepared and consumed.
2. Where food was consumed and in what social unit.
3. The economic and social organization of distributing food.
4. The legal and customary rule for food distribution.
5. The authority that enforces those rules.

The basic need, safety, simply “refers to the prevention of bodily injuries by mechanical accident, attack from animals or other human beings” but the cultural response, protection, may include different behaviour as placing houses on piling away from potential tidal waves the organisation of armed responses to aggression, or the magical recruitment of supernatural forces.

And growth which in human is structured by long dependency of the infants leads to the cultural response of training by which humans are taught language, other symbols and appropriate behaviors for different stages unless they are socially and physiologically nature.

Malinowski summarized his theory of need with two axioms.

1. Every culture must satisfy the biological systems of needs.
2. Every culture achievement that implies use of artifacts and symbols, enhance human anatomy and thus directly satisfies bodily needs.

In short, culture is utilitarian, adaptive and functionally integrated and explanation of culture involves the delineation of function. A classic example is Malinowski’s approach to magic.

5.3.2.2 The Function of Magic:

Magic was an integral element to Malinowski’s theory because magic was central to Trobriand life. Magic was used to kill enemies and prevent one being killed to ease birth of a child, to enhance beauty of a dancer. Magic always appeared in those phases of human action where knowledge fails man.

Malinowski argued that magic has a profound function in exerting human control over those dimensions that are otherwise outside of our control. Primitive man cannot manipulate the weather. Experience teaches him that rain and sunshine, wind, heat and cold, cannot produced by his own hands, however much he might think about or observe such phenomena. He therefore deals with magic. He hypothesized that limited scientific knowledge of illness and disease led “primitive” man to conclude that illness are caused by sorcery and countered by magic.

Magic is organised in fishing too. In contrast, the magic is associated with ocean fishing, sailing, and canoes is complex and pervasive, because the danger and risks are greater.

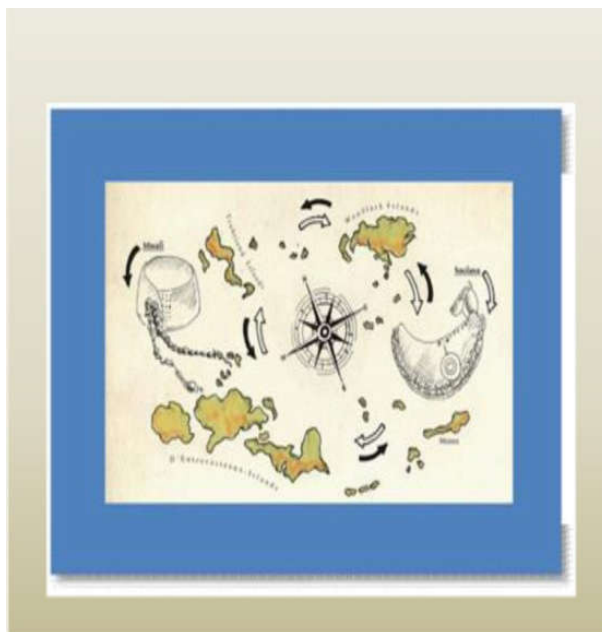
Similarly magic surrounding gardening is extensive and is considered an indispensable part of cultivation garden magic is public, direct and extensive, the village garden magician is either the headman, his heir, or closest male relative, and therefore he is either the most important or next most person in a community. Magic is an indispensable to the success of garden as competent and effective husbandry it is essential to the fertility of the soil. The garden magician utters magic by mouth, the magical virtue enters the soil. Magic is to them an almost natural element in the growth of the gardens.

Malinowski believed that the essential function of religion is an attempt to extend control over the uncontrollable elements of nature. In this sense, his analysis of magic reflects his functional approach to culture.

5.3.2.3 Psychological functionalism:

Malinowski's psychological functionalism is represented by "The Essentials of the Kula" in Chapter 3 of his ethnography, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922). In this Malinowski offers a description of trade in Kula. This chapter showcases Malinowski's skill as an ethnographer and also illustrates many of his fundamental ideas.

Example: The Kula Exchange of Trobriand Islanders. Malinowski's classic case of the Kula relates to an exchange of ceremonial goods among a series of ethnically different communities at east end



of New Guinea and on adjacent island groups. These form geographically a rough "ring". On every island and in every village, a more or less limited number of men take part in the Kula- that is to say, receive the goods, hold them for a short time, and then pass them on. Therefore every

man who is in Kula, periodically though not regularly, receives one or several Ynwali (arm-shells), or a Soulava (necklace of red shell discs). He then had to hand it on to one of his partners, from whom he receives the opposite commodity in exchange. Thus no man ever keeps any of the articles for any length of time in his possession. The partnership between two men is a permanent and lifelong affair. And any given Ynwali or Soulava is always found travelling and changing hands and there is no question of its ever setting down. Thus the principle "once in a Kula, always in a Kula" applies also to the valuable themselves.

Kula Exchange in Southeast New Guinea. Objects ceremonially exchanged are armlets made of spiral trachinus shell (left) and necklaces primarily of pink spondylus shell discs. After Malinowski Surrounded by elaborate social and magical activities of traditional character, the transactions are called 'Kula'. The ceremonial exchange of articles like armshells and necklaces is the fundamental aspect of Kula, but side by side the natives carry on ordinary trade, bartering from one island to another. Thus "Kula ring" ties all these people by way of such ceremonial gift between neighbours into a system of mutual interrelationships.

Kula activities tend to penetrate all aspects of their life: visiting, feasts, ceremonies, art display, religious activities, the status of Kin groups and individuals, opportunities for trade. An inquiry, therefore into the function of the Kula i.e. what it does, calls for an examination of its total meaning and content as regards each of the cultures concerned and also the intellectual relations involved.

5.3.2.4 Criticism:

Malinowski's work has been criticized on numerous grounds. His theory is considered as a rude theory in which all sorts of behavior are reduced to simplistic notion of utility. Yet Malinowski has been very influential as he emphasised the adaptive significance of culture. Malinowski's most enduring contribution was his effort to understand the subjective experience of another culture through the immersive strategy of ethnographic research.

5.3.3 A.R. Radcliffe Brown (1881-1955):

Radcliffe Brown was a British social anthropologist. He studied anthropology at Cambridge under Haddon and Rivers. He was greatly influenced by the work of Durkheim. Although he did his fieldwork in the Andaman Islands and Australia, he was more interested in comparative study of different cultures than in field work in one culture. By deriving his concept from Durkheim he tried to show how cultural systems function to maintain a society's equilibrium. His book *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) became the vehicle through which French comparative sociology shaped the course of British anthropology. Brown occupied a number of academic positions and frequently established new anthropology departments including University of Cape town, Sydney, Chicago, Oxford, Cairo and South Africa.

5.3.3.1 Structure and Function:

Brown used the concept of social structure as early as 1914. The notion of structure made his comparative approach possible. This was his unit of comparison. According to him structures are the relations of association between individuals, and they exist independently of individual members who might occupy different positions, much in the way that “hero”, “heroine”, and “villain” define a set of relationships in a melodrama regardless of the actors who play the roles.

Although he used the term culture in his early work, he rejected the concept later in his career. He believed that culture was an abstract concept. As the values and norms of a society couldn't be observed, a science of culture was impossible. He preferred to study social structures and principles that organize person in a society and the roles and relationships that can be observed first hand. Social structure includes all interpersonal relations.

Radcliffe Brown considered social structure to be empirically knowable and concrete. He used the term “Social structure” in a different way to make discussion difficult. For many, social structure has nothing to do with reality but he regarded social structure as reality. For e.g. he picked up a particular sea shell on the beach to recognize a particular structure. He may find other shells of the same species which have similar structure so that he could say there is a form of structure characterize of the species.

Thus, we can identify certain social structures exogamous moieties, joking relationships, cross cousin marring and so on to compare structures of different societies to understand principles of these social structures

5.3.3.2 Organic Analogy and Functionalism:

Inevitably, Radcliffe- Brown's explanation of social structure leads to consideration of function. He believed the function of culture to be maintenance of society rather satisfaction to individual needs as Malinowski argued. His theory was based on organic analogy, referring to activities meeting the needs of structure. And the continuity of structure is based on the process of social life. The social life of the community is defined as the functioning of the social structure. The function of a crime or a funeral ceremony is the part it plays in the social life as a whole and therefore the contribution it makes to the maintenance of structural continuity.

This view implies that social system has a kind of unity which can be called as functional unity. We may define it as a condition in which all parts of the system work together with a sufficient degree of harmony or internal consistency i.e. without producing any conflict.

Radcliffe Brown illustrated the concept of social structure by citing example from the tribes of Western Australia. He said that tribes are divided into number of territories and men, thus, connected with a particular territory formed a distinct social group. One may speak that this

was the unit of fundamental importance in social structure. Among the Australian tribes, class is known as Lorde. The internal structure of the Lorde was a division into families each composed of a man with his wife or wives and their young children. There is a continuous existence of a Lorde, as the members of the death of the old ones the newly born members enter the Lorde. Thus, continuity of the social group is an important factor for the existence of the social structure. And this continuity of the structure is maintained by the process of social life.

5.3.3.3 Joking Relationships and Functionalism:

The goal of Radcliffe Brown was to provide a scientific understanding of joking relationships. Following Durkheim and Spencer, Brown's main concern was to maintain social order. He understood society as made up of institutions, which could be understood in terms of its function (hence functionalism). Its function was the role it played in maintaining social order.

Radcliffe Brown sees a critical contradiction at the core of marriage. A husband does not be part of his wife's family but neither is he entirely separated from them. A wife doesn't become a part of her husband's family, and her family of origin continues to have interest in her and her children. This contradiction creates the preconditions for conflict between the two families. For society to function smoothly there must be an institution to resolve this conflict.

What is true within a group is also true between groups. Just as potential conflict between husband and wife's family can be resolved, so too the conflict between tribes and clan can also be resolved by avoidance and joking.

The social function of this is obvious. The social tradition is handed down from one generation to the next. This results in organizing a definite and stable system of social behaviour.

Thus Brown argues that structural relations between people in certain position in kinship system lead to conflict of interest. Such conflict could threaten the stability of society. However, this problem is solved through ritualized joking or avoidance between people in such positions. Thus when conflict threatens stability, society develops social institutions to mediate oppositions and preserve social solidarity.

5.3.3.4 Exogamous Moieties:

Exogamous Moieties are kin system in which a population is derived into two social divisions and a man of one moiety must marry a woman of another moiety. He began his analysis with aboriginal groups in New South Wales where moieties were matrilineal, exogamous and were named after their respective totems – eagle hawk (Kilpara) and the crow (Makwara). Radcliffe Brown argued that neither conjectural history nor diffusion provides satisfactory explanation and turned to comparison of structure.

He examined cases from Australia and found many cases of exogamous moieties, some patrilineal, others matrilineal named after birds. Further other form of organization (such as generation division) are also named after birds.

Radcliffe Brown analysed stories of eagle hawk crow and other moiety to gain insight into native thinking. The similarity and differences of animal species are translated into terms of friendship and conflict, solidarity and opposition. In other words the world of animal life is represented in terms of social relations similar to human society. Eagle hawk and crow steals. Other example of oppositions are black cockatoo versus white cockatoo, Coyote versus wildcat (in California), upstream versus downstream and so on. They are all associated with exogamous moieties. Thus brown concluded that whatever, in Australia, Melanesia or America, there exists a social structure of exogamous moieties who can be in "opposition".

5.3.3.5 Andaman Islander's ritual:

Radcliffe Brown contrasted between totemism and ancestor worship. He defined ancestor worship as the worship of a deceased ancestor or ancestors or clan. Offerings of food and drink are made to ancestors, which are usually conceived of as sharing a meal with an ancestor. The rite of ancestor worship also reflects a sense of dependency between the worshiper and ancestor who will give him children and well-being, provide blessings and illness.

For the individual, his primary duties are those of lineage. These include duties to the members now living, but also to those who have died and who are not yet born. In carrying out of these duties he is controlled and inspired by the complex system of lineage itself, past, present and future. The social function of rites is obvious by solemn and collective expression rites reaffirm, renew and strengthen the sentiments on which social solidarity depends. He also produced a broader theoretical statement about "the social function of religions. i.e. the contribution they make to the formation and maintenance of a social order".

5.3.3.6 Conclusion:

Radcliffe Brown's analysis of social structure and function redirected anthropological inquiry to the institution of human life and to the role such institutions play in the maintenance and reproduction of society.

5.4 COMPARISON BETWEEN MALINOWSKI AND RADCLIFFE- BROWN

While Malinowski emphasized on individual need Radcliffe Brown explained phenomena in terms of social structure specially its 'need' for solidarity and integration.

For Malinowski culture was the instrument by which human needs were met. Brown emphasized more on social function rather than individual function.

Malinowski's method was based on extensive fieldwork whereas Brown believed in comparative study of various cultures and societies.

Both Malinowski and Radcliffe Brown had much in common in their early writing as they were both influenced by Durkheim. But later Malinowski fell out of Durkheim influence whereas Radcliffe Brown remained loyal to Durkheimian tradition.

5.5 SUMMARY

In Europe, the reaction against evolution was not as dramatic as in the United States, but a clear division between the diffusionists and those who came to be known as functionalists emerged by the 1930s. Functionalism in social science looks for the part (function) that some aspect of culture or social life plays in maintaining a cultural system.

Two quite different schools of functionalism arose in conjunction with two British anthropologists—Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942) and Arthur Reginald Radcliffe Brown (1881–1955). Malinowski's version of functionalism assumes that all cultural traits serve the needs of individuals in a society; that is, they satisfy some basic or derived need of the members of the group. Basic needs include nutrition, reproduction, bodily comfort, safety, relaxation, movement, and growth. Some aspects of the culture satisfy these basic needs and give rise to derived needs that must also be satisfied. For example, culture traits that satisfy the basic need for food give rise to the secondary, or derived, need for cooperation in food collection or production. Societies will in turn develop forms of political organization and social control that guarantee the required cooperation. How did Malinowski explain such things as religion and magic? He suggested that, because humans always live with a certain amount of uncertainty and anxiety, they need stability and continuity. Religion and magic are functional in that they serve those needs. Unlike Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown felt that the various aspects of social behavior maintain a society's social structure rather than satisfying individual needs. By social structure, he meant the total network of existing social relationships in a society. The phrase structural-functionalism is often used to describe Radcliffe-Brown's approach. To explain how different societies deal with the tensions that are likely to develop among people related through marriage, Radcliffe-Brown suggested that societies do one of two things: They may develop strict rules forbidding the people involved ever to interact face-to-face (as do the Navajos, for example, in requiring a man to avoid his mother-in-law). They may also allow mutual disrespect and teasing between the in-laws. Radcliffe-Brown suggested that avoidance is likely to occur between in-laws of different generations, whereas disrespectful teasing is likely between in-laws of the same generation. Both avoidance and teasing, he suggested, are ways to avoid real conflict and help maintain the social structure. (American mother-in-law jokes may also help relieve tension.) The major objection to Malinowski's functionalism is that it cannot readily account for cultural variation. Most of the needs he identified, such as the need for food, are universal: All societies must deal with them if they are to survive. Thus, although the

functionalist approach may tell us why all societies engage in food-getting, it cannot tell why different societies have different food-getting practices. In other words, functionalism does not explain why certain specific cultural patterns arise to fulfill a need that might be fulfilled just as easily by any of a number of alternative possibilities.

Critical Evaluation:

A major problem of the structural-functionalist approach is that it is difficult to determine whether a particular custom is in fact functional in the sense of contributing to the maintenance of the social system. In biology, the contribution an organ makes to the health or life of an animal can be assessed by removing it. But we cannot subtract a cultural trait from a society to see if the trait really does contribute to the maintenance of that group. It is conceivable that certain customs within a society may be neutral or even detrimental to its maintenance. Moreover, we cannot assume that all of a society's customs are functional merely because the society is functioning at the moment. Even if we are able to assess whether a particular custom is functional, this theoretical orientation fails to deal with the question of why a particular society chooses to meet its structural needs in a particular way. A given problem does not necessarily have only one solution. We must still explain why one of several possible solutions is chosen.

5.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Write a note on Classical Studies in Kinship
2. Explain Structural Functionalism with special reference to Malinowski / Reginald Radcliffe Brown

5.7 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

- Darnell, Regna. "Historical Particularism." In *Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 397-401. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2013.
- Francisconi, Michael J. "Theoretical Anthropology." In *21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook*, Vol. 1, edited by H. James Birx, 442-452. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2010.
- Frey, Rodney. "Historical-Particularism-as exemplified by Franz Boas (1858-1942)." University of Idaho. Accessed February 27, 2015. <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/~rfrey/220histpart.htm>.
- Graber, Robert Bates. "Social Evolution." In *21st Century Anthropology: A Reference Handbook*, Vol. 1, edited by H. James Birx, 576-585. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Reference, 2010.
- Goldschmidt, Walter. 1966. *Comparative Functionalism in Anthropological Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Jarvie, I. C. 1973. Functionalism. Minneapolis: Burgess Publishing Company.
- Langness, L.L. 1987. The Study of Culture-Revised Edition. Novato, California: Chandler & Sharp Publishers, Inc.
- Lesser, Alexander. 1985. Functionalism in Social Anthropology. In History, Evolution, and the Concept of Culture, Selected Papers by Alexander Lesser (ed) Sidney W. Mintz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1922. Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1926. Myth in Primitive Psychology. New York. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1926. Crime and Custom in Savage Society. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1929. The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melaneisa; An Ethnographic Account of Courtship, Marriage and Family Life Among the Natives of Trobriand Islands, British New Guinea. New York: Halcyon House.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1939. "Review of Six Essays on Culture by Albert Blumenthal." American Sociological Review, Vol. 4, pp. 588-592.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1944. A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1944. Freedom and Civilization. New York: Roy Publishers.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 1954. Magic, Science and Religion, and Other Essays. Garden City, N.Y.:Doubleday.
- Malinowski, Bronislaw. 2001. Sex and Repression in Savage Society. New York: Routledge.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1933. The Andamen Islanders. Cambridge:Cambridge University Press.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. and Daryll Forde, eds. 1950. African Systems of Kinship and Marriage. London: Oxford University Press.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1952. Structure and Function in Primitive Society: Essays and Addresses. London: Cohen and West.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1958. Method in Social Anthropology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Turner, Jonathan. "Spencer, Herbert." In International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 8, edited by William A. Darity, 57-59. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008.
- Young, Michael W. 1991. Bronislaw Malinowski. In International Dictionary of Anthropologists.
- Lewis Henry Morgan:
<https://rochester.edu/College/ANT/morgan/bio.html>
- <http://anthrotheory.pbworks.com/w/page/29518607/Boasian%20Anthropology%3A%20Historical%20Particularism%20and%20Cultural%20Relativism>
- <https://www.britannica.com/science/particularism-anthropology>
- <https://study.com/academy/lesson/cultural-particularism-definition-examples.html>
- <https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/functionalism/>

CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

Unit Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction to Culture and personality
 - 6.1.1 Methods
 - 6.1.2 Scholars
 - 6.1.3 Ruth Benedict
 - 6.1.4 Margaret Mead
- 6.2 Summary
- 6.3 Unit End Questions
- 6.4 References and Future Readings

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To help learners to understand to get a basic understanding about culture and personality school.
- To know about the key thinkers of the culture and personality.
- To know about culture history and its importance for the society and understanding the concept too.

6.1 INTRODUCTION TO CULTURE AND PERSONALITY

Culture and personality is also seen as psychological anthropology is an important field in anthropology (ii). This field of study emerged in 1930s in United States. It is an interdisciplinary field of study (1).

6.1.1 Methods:

Culture-and-personality studies apply the methods of psychology to the field of anthropology, including in-depth interviews, role playing, elaborate biographies, studies of family roles, and dream interpretation. Ethnography, participant observation, long span of fieldwork were also some of the methods of scholars (1).

6.1.2 Scholars:

The Culture Personality study was predominantly dominated by students of two scholars namely Franz Boas and Kroeber. The pioneers of this school were Ruth Benedict, Margaret Mead, Cora Du Bois, Edward Sapir (2). There are other scholars like Sigmund Freud who have also carried

out work merging anthropological concepts and psychology. For example – Totem and Taboo. However, several anthropologists tried even testing Freud in their own field and they disproved it. In this chapter we would focus on two important scholars which is Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the few scholars associated with Culture and Personality school.

2. State some of the methods used in the Culture and Personality school.

6.1.3 Ruth Benedict:

Patterns of Culture:

One of her important work was Patterns of Culture. In the book she argues that every culture selects along an ‘arc of traits,’ choosing from a universal span pieces that at once fit together and create a distinct character: the Apollonian Pueblo Indian, the paranoiac, Dobu Islander, and the megalomaniac Kwakiutl. Her own society constituted the fourth character, subject of a stern critique for rampant greed and overweening ego, and intolerance of the individual who lacks those traits. The last chapters of Patterns offer a brilliant analysis of the relativity of ‘abnormality’ and the production of deviance through the imposition of rigid demands on conformity (3).

The Chrysanthemum and the Sword:

The book is a model of national character studies, beautifully written and persuasive. For Benedict, Japan exemplified a ‘high synergy’ society, in which institutions fit together coherently and personality coincides with culture. Benedict indicates the methods by which ‘integrity’ comes about, the details of behavior that reinforce the pattern and the methods of childrearing that guarantee successful integration of individuals into social institutions. She maintains the crucial tenet of her anthropology: bringing contrasting cultures into illuminating relation, in this case Japan and the US. The contrast was explanatory: one culture was driven by shame, the other by guilt. A book written to help the US understand its enemy established a comparative approach in the discipline premised on the diversity of emotional drives across cultures (3).

Benedict and other proponents of culture-and-personality studies directed the attention of anthropologists to the symbolic meanings and emotional significance of cultural features that had hitherto been considered primarily through functional analysis; at the same time, they led psychologists to recognize the existence of an inevitable cultural component in all processes of perception, motivation, and learning (1).

6.1.4 Margaret Mead:

Mead pioneered fieldwork on topics such as childhood, adolescence, and gender and was a founding figure in culture and personality studies (4). Mead was well known for her studies on nonliterate people of Oceania, on psychology, culture, cultural conditioning of sexual behavior, natural character, cultural change. She not only studied but frequently gave lectures on a range of serious topics like women's rights, child rearing, sexuality morality, nuclear proliferation, race relations, drug abuse, population control, environmental pollution and world hunger (5). *Coming of Age in Samoa*, *Growing Up in New Guinea*, and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* are some of the important works of Mead.

Coming of Age in Samoa:

This book is one of the important work of Margaret Mead. Mead conducted her study among a small group of Samoans in a village of six hundred people on the island of Tau, Samoa. She got to know, lived with, observed, and interviewed 68 young women between the ages of 9 and 20, and concluded that the passage from childhood to adulthood (adolescence) in Samoa was a smooth transition, not marked by the emotional or psychological distress, anxiety, or confusion seen in the United States. Portraying a society characterized by a lack of deep feelings and by a lack of conflict, neuroses, and difficult situations, the book offered Samoa as a clear example supporting the thesis that teenagers are psychologically healthier if they engage in sexual activities with multiple partners before marriage. The book was much more than a report of research conducted. It included an insightful introduction, a popularized opening chapter on "A Day in Samoa," and two popularized concluding chapters drawing lessons from the Samoan culture that Mead thought could be applied to improve the adolescent experience in the U.S. (6)

After her death Mead's account of Samoa was challenged by Derek Freeman's book, *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth* (1983) stating that the account of Mead was only one version of Samoa.

Thus, culture and personality school had made an important contribution to the field of anthropology.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain in brief the work of Margaret Mead?

2. Explain in brief about Ruth Benedict and her work?



Figure 1 This is a crown made out of clay. The image has been captured from Indonesia, Bali. There are hands in the top of the crown which can be seen as symbols of people approval towards the king. This also shows that before the advent of minerals like gold, diamond mud was being used.



Figure 2 This image is that of Meghalaya double decker root bridge. This is an example of culture history. This bridge is more than three hundred years old. The villagers gave the rubber tree direction and thereafter the trees grew on its own. These bridges were then used by locals to go from one village to another. It stands as a symbol of nature, culture and history passed on to generation after another. The best part it is it is indigenous, nature friendly. Earlier the bridge was only one level, when the flood came into the village Figure 2

6.2 SUMMARY

In this unit we started with understanding the culture and personality school. The key prominent thinkers associated with the school are that of Ruth Benedict and that of Margaret Mead. The school had begun from the year 1930s and its popularity was till 1960 and 1970. The scholars some important works were *Coming of Age in Samoa* and *Patterns of Culture*. In addition, we learnt how importance of culture exists as it acts as a record, historical evidence, a proof of how society has grown and as an identity of one selves or group.

6.3 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Explain relationship between culture and Personality
2. What is culture? Explain Material and Nonmaterial aspects of culture.

6.4 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

1. <https://www.britannica.com/science/culture-and-personality-studies>
2. (2016). Culture and Personality. obo in Anthropology. doi: 10.1093/obo/9780199766567-0144
3. Gordon, R. J., Lyons, H., & Lyons, A. (Eds.). (2010). Fifty key anthropologists. Routledge.
4. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0014.xml>
5. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Margaret-Mead>
6. https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Margaret_Mead#Coming_of_Age_in_Samoa
7. Barnard, A., & Spencer, J. (1996). Encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology. Taylor & Francis. P. 889.

MODULE IV DEBATES ON ISSUES

7

STRUCTURALISM, VILLAGE STUDIES

Unit structure

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Structuralism
- 7.2 Village Studies
 - 7.2.1 Introduction
 - 7.2.2 Importance of Village studies
 - 7.2.3 Themes
 - 7.2.4 Caste
 - 7.2.5 Methodology
 - 7.2.6 Interdisciplinary and Present times
- 7.3 Summary
- 7.4 Unit End Questions
- 7.5 References and Future Readings

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the field of ethnolinguistics
- To learn about the importance of ethnolinguistics and its role in the culture and Anthropology.
- To explore the background of village studies.
- To learn about the growth of village studies in India from start to present.

7.1 STRUCTURALISM

According to Pettit (1975), 'Structuralism' claims to provide a framework for organizing and orientating any semiological study, any study concerned with the production and perception of meaning. This school of thought has developed through many theorists and scholars across disciplines and its thus become very complicated, with a variety of it available in sociological and anthropological discourses. It is important to understand that these are not with neat boundaries and therefore are likely to be overlapping.

Most accounts of Structuralism tend to portray it as the radical enemy of any philosophy of consciousness, therefore of phenomenology, a study of the way in which consciousness constitutes a world (Sturrock, 1993). Under the influence of structural-functionalism and structuralism, material culture had ceased to be a focus of serious interest for most sociocultural anthropologists (Barnard & Spencer, 2002).

As Lechte (1994) highlights, the structuralist movement was set in motion by factors including the works of Marcel Mauss or Georges Canguilhem had already begun to de-stabilize the presuppositions of phenomenology and positivism. It has also been stated that two aspects of the structural approach stand out: (1) the recognition that differential relations are the key to understanding culture and society; and, (2) that, as a result, structure is not prior to the realization of these relations. Although one can easily see structuralism as a universal philosophy in the tradition of the philosophes, with its emphasis on the global nature of human thought, it also can be seen as a version of Boasian diffusionism (Wiseman, 2009).

'Structuralism' is associated more with a set of names: Lévi- Strauss, Althusser, Foucault, and Lacan (and, perhaps, Barthes, Derrida, Tel Quel), than with a clearly defined programme or doctrine. It is indeed the case that there are many differences between these thinkers, and that each has developed the basic ideas of structuralism in his o w n way. However there is a basic theme at the heart of structuralism and it is largely from the work of Lévi-Strauss that this theme comes (Clarke, 1981).

Lévi-Strauss's structuralism opened the door again to European ethnology. From the New School of Social Research in New York city, where he spent his wartime exile, Lévi-Strauss launched the structuralist movement that was to sweep the discipline in the 1950s and early 1960s (Barnard & Spencer, 2002). For structuralism any attempt to understand the human world must be based on an implacable opposition to the evils of 'positivism' ('naturalism' or 'realism') and 'humanism', marked by the naive belief in the existence of a reality independent of human apprehension or in the existence of a humanity that could create its own world (Clarke, 1981).

Louis Pierre Althusser, a French Marxist philosopher, was also famously known as a structural Marxist. According to Encyclopedia Britannica, For Althusser, historical change depended on "objective" factors such as the relationship between forces and relations of production; questions of "consciousness" were always of secondary importance. His emphasis on the historical process over the historical subject in Marx complemented efforts by French structuralists—including Claude Lévi-Strauss, Roland Barthes (1915–80), Michel Foucault (1926–84), and Jacques Lacan (1901–81)—to vanquish the "subjectivist" paradigm of existential phenomenology represented by Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–80) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908–61).

Claude Levi-Strauss (b. 1908) almost singlehandedly founded the field of structuralism. He began with the assumption that culture was, first and

foremost, a product of the mind. Since all human brains are biologically similar, he reasoned, there must be deep-seated similarities among cultures. The goal he set for anthropology was to discover the fundamental structure of human cognition, the underlying patterns of human thought that produce the great variety of current and historical cultures. Pursuing this quest, he has spent his career conducting cross-cultural studies of kinship, myths, and religion (McGee & Warmes, 2017)

Lévi-Strauss was mystified by the intense popularity of structuralism in the 1960s and 1970s. Part of the intensity was created by the verbal jousting between Lévi-Strauss and Jean- Paul Sartre, a debate that began in the last chapter of *The Savage Mind* (Lévi-Strauss 1966) but quickly spilled into the pages of intellectual journals and personified the conflicts between existentialism and structuralism as reigning systems of thought (Moore, 2004).

Examination of Lévi-Strauss' work not only has the advantage of directing our attention to the foundations of structuralism in this sense. It has two other advantages as well. Firstly, the work of Althusser, Lacan and Foucault is often extremely ambiguous, if not obscure, and is full of the most sweeping generalizations that make their claims very difficult to pin down. Lévi-Strauss, by contrast, developed the structuralist approach in the examination of particular symbolic systems, above all those of kinship and of myth, that makes his claims concrete and specific, and so amenable to rational evaluation (Clarke, 1981).

After his structural approach to kinship, as seen in the previous section, Lévi-Strauss expanded his search for structure, Moore (2004) notes, by turning to the study of myth because “the elements of mythical thought . . . lie half-way between precepts and concepts” (1966:18), relying on both concrete situations and the notions to which they refer. Mythical thought “builds up structured sets, not directly with other structured sets,” but by using the odds and ends of experience, building “ideological castles out of the debris of what once was a social discourse” (Lévi-Strauss 1966:21–22). For Lévi-Strauss, if basic unconscious structures were found in myth, then that might reflect the existence of fundamental mental structures that provide the organizing categories of cultural phenomena.

Check Your Progress:

1. What is ‘Structuralism’?

7.2 VILLAGE STUDIES

7.2.1 Introduction:

In India still more than 70 percent of population resides in villages. So, studying villages has become very much important. Studying villages will give a larger perspective of the Indian society. Villages are the lifeline

of the Indian society. Beteille states that Indian village are not merely a place where people live, it has a design in which the basic values of Indian civilization gets reflected (Beteille, 1980: 108).

The origin, development, and functioning of the various customs and traditions, the Hindu systems of caste and joint family, and the economy and polity of the village/tribal community were some of the prominent themes of study by the British administrators and missionaries as well as other British, European, and Indian intellectuals . To rule the country the colonizers had to understand the customs so they sponsored, invested on the translation of work.

The situation with regard to village studies underwent a radical change after the end of World War II when Indian social anthropologists, trained abroad, and their foreign counterparts, began making systematic studies of villages in different parts of the country (Srinivas, 1975) . There were even debates in journals by scholars like: (i) whether or not a village in India has a "sociological reality", (ii) can such a village be satisfactorily comprehended and conceived as a whole in itself, and (iii) can understanding of one such village contribute to understanding of the universe of Indian civilisation? Such discussions also have periodically emerged in the context of Village studies.

Check Your Progress

1. Write in brief the background of Village studies carried out India?

7.2.2 Importance of Village study:

Dube explains the importance of village study. He points out village communities all over the Indian sub-continent have a number of common features. The village settlement, as a unit of social organization, represents a solidarity different from that of the kin, the caste, and the class. Each village is a distinct entity, which has some individual more and usages. Different castes and communities live in the village and are tied together through economic , social, ritual patterns through mutual and reciprocal obligations. To an outside world it looks like a compact whole, organised .

7.2.3 Themes:

In the 1950s and 1960s, several micro-level studies of caste, joint families, and village communities, mostly from the viewpoint of structural-functional aspects and change, were carried out (encyclopedia). Studies were in the area of marriage, family, and kinship. The village studies focused on stratification and mobility, factionalism and leadership, the jajmani (patron–client) relationship, contrasting characteristics of rural and urban communities, and linkages with the outside world (ii).

7.2.4 Caste:

Several villages studies brought the caste and location dimension too. For example- Beteille in her study of Tamil Nadu village points out, it is possible to study within the framework of a single village many forms of social relations which are of general occurrence throughout the area. For example the relations between Brahmins, non- Brahmins and Adi-Dravidas and between landowners, tenants and agricultural labourers .

7.2.5 Methodology:

River explains the importance of fieldwork in village. According to him, a typical piece of intensive fieldwork was one in which the worker lived for a year or more among a community of perhaps four or five hundred people and studied every detail of their life and culture; in which he came to know every member of the community personally; in which he was not content with generalized information, but studied every feature of life and custom in concrete detail and by means of the vernacular language (River in Beteille and Madan, 1975: 2)

There are several important works by Sociologists on Indian villages like Village India by Marriot, Rural Sociology by A. R. Desai, Religion among Coorgs by M.N. Srinivas, Indian village by S.C. Dube. Several universities which had also started training students of sociology with field work with UG and PG.

Check Your Progress

1. Write in brief the different themes in the village studies carried out in India?

2. State the dominant methodology in village studies?

7.2.6 Interdisciplinary and Present times:

Since the early 1950s, government and other institutions have been encouraging and sponsoring research in the field of population and family planning (Visaria and Visaria 1995, 1996). Policies and programs concerning urban and rural community development, Panchayati Raj, education, abolition of untouchability, uplift of weaker sections (scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes), and rehabilitation of people affected by large-scale projects (constructions of large dams, industrial estates, capital cities, etc.) have been some of the other important areas of research by sociologists. Interdisciplinary research has

also been encouraged and sponsored by Indian Council of Social science research. In 1975–1976 the Indian Space Research Organization conducted a one-year satellite instructional television experiment in 2,330 villages spread over twenty districts of six states (Agrawal et al. 1977); the ICSSR sponsored a nationwide study of the educational problems of students from scheduled castes and tribes (Shah 1982) (ii,).

7.3 SUMMARY

For modern anthropology the most influential of the evolutionary theorists was Lewis Henry Morgan. While other 19th-century anthropologists generally based their work on library research, Morgan carried out fieldwork among the Iroquois and other Native American peoples. Morgan's theories thus suggested a mechanism for the evolution of the family: technological developments and the concomitant changes in the ownership of property drove the development of new kinship institutions.

Inspired by Morgan, Eggan and others, the social organization of the North American Indians has continued to fascinate anthropologists. In particular, the matrilineal societies, though not numerically preponderant, have received considerable attention. As well as the Iroquois, examples range from the Tlingit and Haida, hunters and fishermen of coastal and island southeast Alaska, through to the Hopi, pueblo dwellers of Arizona, and also the Navajo, a people noted for having taken up livestock herding in place of hunting and agriculture (Barnard & Spencer, 2002).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, the rise of feminist and Marxist scholarship in the 1960s and '70s was among several developments that challenged the basis of earlier kinship scholarship. The American Marxist-feminist anthropologist Eleanor Leacock and others brought to the fore the extent to which supposedly holistic practices of ethnography were actually concerned with men only, often to the point of excluding most or all information on the lives of women. The relative foregrounding of men in anthropological studies became less acceptable, and women's experiences became a legitimate topic of scholarship. Meanwhile, materialist studies of so-called traditional and industrial societies were increasingly able to show the political and economic inflections of the "private," "domestic" domain of the family.

The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (b. 1908) occupies a unique position in the development of anthropological theory and the intellectual life of the twentieth century. In anthropology Lévi-Strauss is known as the founder of structuralism, an approach that emerged uniquely in his work. In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Lévi-Strauss provides an encyclopedic summary of kinship systems but focuses on a central theme: kinship systems are about the exchange of women, defining the categories of potential spouses and prohibited mates (Moore, 2004).

The unconscious mediating between us and the world - creating the twin illusions of reality and subjectivity – is a theme that pervades structuralism and is developed rather differently in the work of different structuralists.

Althusser has developed the structuralist arguments largely in epistemological terms, recapitulating the neo-positivist critique of naturalism and of humanism. Foucault has developed it in a sustained relativist critique of the ideological pretensions of contemporary society. Lacan has developed it in a linguistic idealist reinterpretation of Freud. A comprehensive critical examination of structuralism would therefore require several volumes. However these different variations are developments of a common theme, and it is a theme that was introduced, at least in the structuralist form, in the work of Lévi – Strauss (Clarke, 1981).

The second section of the chapter is that of Village studies. Even today, more than 70 percentage of our population resides in villages. The earlier studies were sponsored by Britishers for their own purpose so that they could understand the customs. Through that they could rule the population. There were several scholars who were also initially trained abroad but continued their fieldwork and documented several important works. Field work has been the methodology used by scholars. Several important aspects of Indian society like Caste, Gender, Tribes have been studied even today. Indian government, ICSSR has been sponsoring such studies. Even the Indian space research organization has observed 2,330 villages this shows the importance of village studies even today. As it is the essence of Indian society.

7.4 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Explain ‘structuralism’ vis-à-vis kinship systems.
2. What has been Lévi-Strauss’s contribution to ‘Structuralism’?
3. Explain Village studies as a method in anthropology.

7.5 REFERENCES AND FUTURE READINGS

- Bêteille, A. (1980). Indian village: past and present. Peasants in history, essays in honour of Daniel Thorner, edited by EJ Hobsbawm...[et al.].

<https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/indian-sociology>
- Srinivas, M. N. (1975). Village studies, participant observation and social science research in India. Economic and political weekly, 1387-1394.
- Sharma, S. (1969). Indian Village as a Unit of Study—I. Economic and Political Weekly, 4(33), 1347-1354.
- Dube, S. C. (2017). Indian village. Routledge.

- Jodhka, S. (2000, April). Sociology/anthropology, nation and the village community. In Sociology Unit, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, National Workshop (pp. 19-21).
- Shah, Vimal P. 1982 The Educational Problems of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe School and College Students in India. New Delhi: Allied Publishers.
- B  teille, A., & Madan, T. N. (1975). Encounter and Experience: Personal Accounts of Fieldwork. Delhi, Vikas.
- Instructional Television Experiment: Social Evaluation—Impact on Adults, Parts I–II. Bangalore: Indian Space Research Organization.
- Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) 1972–1974 A Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology, 3 vols. Bombay: Popular Prakashan. Visaria, Leela, and Pravin
- Visaria 1995 India's Population in Transition. (Population Bulletin 50: 3). Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau.
- ———1996 Prospective Population Growth and Policy Options for India, 1991–2101. New York: Population Council.
- Agrawal, Binod C., J.K. Doshi, Victor Jesudason, and K.K. Verma 1977 Satellite Instructional Television Experiment: Social Evaluation—Impact on Adults, Parts I–II. Bangalore: Indian Space Research Organization.
- Reddy, D. Narasimha, (2012), “Studying Village Society in India, “Review of Agrarian Studies, vol. 2, no. 1. http://ras.org.in/studying_village_society_in_india

MARXISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Unit Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Marx and his influence
- 8.3 Marxism and Anthropology
- 8.4 Marxism and Anthropology and Other areas
- 8.5 Criticism
- 8.6 Exercise: Applying Marxist Theory to Ethnographic Research
- 8.7 Conclusion
- 8.8 Questions
- 8.9 References

8.0 OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the influence of Marxism and Anthropology
2. To learn about the important work of Anthropology

8.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter we will learn about Marxism and anthropology. Marx writings has influenced several disciplines including Anthropology. "Marxism and anthropology" are the broader intersection between Marxist theory and the field of anthropology. Marxism and anthropology include a range of approaches that anthropologists may use to discuss, critique, or incorporating Marxist concepts into their work. This can encompass the impact of Marxist ideas on various fields of anthropological inquiry, including political, economic, and social change studies. Let us now look into this in detail in the following chapter.

8.2 MARX AND HIS INFLUENCE

Marx, Engels and their followers' writings gave rise to Marxist anthropology. It emerged as a challenge and substitute for the dominance of Eurocentric viewpoints and Euro-American capitalism in the social sciences. Reading a great deal of philosophy from the Classical and Enlightenment periods had a big impact on Marx. Marx's comprehension of the relationship between the structure and the mode of production is also clearly influenced by Rousseau's emphasis on history which he used to support or counter political claims.

Marx was also primarily influenced by Hegel's work, who was focused on the community and its place in the historically time. His view was opposite to that of Kant's who emphasizes on the individual. For a large portion of his career, Marx would critique and borrow from Hegel. Marx was also very much influenced by the emphasis on the capacity of humankind to bring about social change, the conflicting structures of power, and the necessity of methodical research into the underlying causes of social issues (see Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, published in 1807). Hegel, however, promoted a teleological theory (finding a purpose, end, reason) of social change, which Marx would eventually deny in his writings. However, Marx accepted Darwin's theory of natural selection in *The Origin of Species* (1859) as self-evident and intuitive to his comprehension of natural world and human beings' role in it.

8.3 MARXISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

The foundation of Marxist Anthropology lies in the works of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, i.e. the two nineteenth-century German intellectuals. One of the most important anthropological ideas used to research various civilizations worldwide is Marxist Anthropology. Marxist anthropology emerged as a critique of Euro-American capitalism's hegemony. These are regarded as the two primary figures of Marxist thought. According to Marxist anthropology, material reasons are the primary source of social revolution in any culture or society. It is essentially a historical understanding of economics. Marx and Friedrich emphasized the role of the forces of production in social order.

Marxism's central claim was that power dynamics form the foundation of any economic system and that these dynamics ultimately result in class conflict. Thus, Marxist Anthropology investigates how social class, class struggle, the economy, the means of production and distribution, and how these factors contribute to social transformation in a particular culture.

French Marxist anthropologists questioned the understanding of communities without centralized political institutions by drawing on Marx's insights as well as their own research on non-Western (mostly African and Papuan) societies. Instead of focusing primarily on Marx's transitions from feudalism to capitalism and capitalism to socialism and communism, they attempted to develop a theory of materialism and structural analysis of modes of production that adequately explained transitions between various historical stages in discussing such societies, where political relationships were based more on kinship or other traditional nonstate forms.

According to one popular opinion, there were two main directions taken by French Marxist in anthropology: the first was led by the philosopher Louis Althusser (1918–1990) and his interpretation of *Capital*, which sought to apply Marxian analysis to all societies in a "overdetermined" manner; the other was taken by Maurice Godlier (1934–1934), who was himself a student of the French structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–1908), who supported selected incorporation of Marx's work that actually

rejected many of Marx's arguments regarding non capitalist societies and economic determinism.

In the year 1960s Marx works reappeared as a major figure in anthropology in three different social theoretical contexts: first, it was used for showing the relationship between capitalist and precapitalist social forms (especially in the context of the French Marxist tradition); secondly it was used to examine the workings of politics, including how ideas and classes were formed; and thirdly, to question the impact of capitalism in non-Western contexts (especially in the context of cultural, ecological, and political economic traditions, especially in the United States).

Apart from analysing the capitalists strategies of production, anthropologists have produced a number of ethnographies since the 1980s that analyse capitalist power and discipline in global contexts. Specially in the areas of industrial production, exploitation on women and peasants. The 1987 paper by Aihwa Ong about Malaysian women employed in factories and the 1979 research by June Nash about tin miners in Bolivia are two notable examples of ethnographies that explain the organization and reactions to labor change and alienation.

Wolf, Eric (1923-1999):

Eric Wolf was a prominent anthropologist whose work greatly influenced political economy and study of social relations. He was best known for his critical perspectives on culture, power and economic system emphasizing that cultures are shaped by historical and economic contexts.

A smaller amount anthropologist are now identifying themselves as Marxists than they were in the 1980s. There are three factors behind this. First, anthropologists are reluctant to make broad or legalistic assertions about the cultural notion due to their discipline's fixation with the colonial past of anthropology. Secondly, Marxist approaches have been criticized in some quarters for being unduly functionalist and even ethnocentric in their approach on the global role of capital, much like other so-called "grand narrative" approaches. Finally, in their attempt to comprehend the larger global web of capitalist effects, anthropologists seem to have adopted the cozier label of globalization.

Prominent writers associated with Marxism and Anthropology

Let us now look into some of the prominent writers who are associated with Marxism and Anthropology

Bloch, Maurice (1939):

British anthropologist Bloch is a well-known advocate of Marxist anthropology and French Marxism. He is frequently cited as having played a significant role in bringing French Marxism back to life in British Social Anthropology. Bloch's work has placed ideology, cognition, and

language at its core. These are seen as markers of the unequal power distribution in a system with structure.

Gramsci, Antonio (1891-1937):

A prominent Marxist figure before World War II and the Italian communist developed the concept of hegemony. He is regarded as one of the 20th century's most influential Marxist philosophers. According to Gramsci, the Marxist goal of social change focusses on human history. Here, Gramsci distinguished between the materialist concerns of traditional Marxism and his own socialist views. Gramsci developed the idea of cultural hegemony to explain why there had not been a revolution. During Mussolini's rule, Gramsci was imprisoned for his beliefs and eventually passed away in a prison hospital.

Althusser, Louis (1918-1990):

Throughout the 1960s, Althusser was a highly significant neo-Marxist who brought a structuralist perspective to Marxism. In addressing Marxism in economics, Althusser was renowned for adopting a critical stand against the French Marxist School and the Structural Marxist School, while also judiciously incorporated important theoretical ideas from both schools.

Godelier, Maurice (1934):

A French economist and Marxist who supported economic anthropology. Godelier is a keen supporter of anthropology that adopts a structuralist Marxist philosophy. His research focuses on figuring out what non-Western cultures' superstructure, infrastructure, and forms of production would involve. Godelier was accused by opponents of a particular kind of French Marxism of attempting to impose a capitalist system on the histories of non-Western peoples whose societies had not previously been capitalist.

Important works

Ancient Society (1877):

In this seminal work of anthropology, Lewis Henry Morgan employs the social evolutionary hypothesis to explain the evolution of material culture. This work influenced immensely Marx and Engels because it highlighted the critical role that material products play in developing a centralized economy and the subsequent emphasis that emerges on private property. This essay later served as the foundation for Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*.

The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State (1884): Engels's most important work in anthropology is the evolution of humankind from primordial communism through slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and finally industrial communism, which would transcend the classes of the preceding three eras.

The Evolution of Culture (1959):

Leslie White develops his thesis on the nature of culture and the role of material culture in his well-known work. The theoretical framework that White outlines in his chapter describes how the technological elements of culture give rise to the structural and ideological elements of culture. It is obvious that his understanding of culture as material is Marxist. It is aimed at the technical sphere with the understanding how technology affects individuals.

Perspectives in Marxist Anthropology (1973): In this collection of essays, Maurice Godelier investigates how a Marxist viewpoint might be applicable to precapitalist societies. Godelier considered economic systems as historically contingent with the modes of production, which led him to view the different aspects of culture and society. This were tied to economic transition as multifunctional traits.

Critical Medical Anthropology (1995): Hans Baer and Merrill Singer investigated how medical institutions mirror societal power structures. Singer and Baer use the intersection of the individual, economic forces, and political structures to argue that modern medical procedures and are representative of a trade. Critical medical anthropology focuses on these violations of human rights by closely examining the political economy of health disparities.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss two writers and their work related to Marxism and Anthropology.

2. The foundation of Marxist Anthropology lies in the works of which intellectuals?

8.4 MARXISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY AND OTHER AREAS

Marxism in anthropology has raised many problems for anthropological thinking. It led to the emergence of other alternative anthropological viewpoints, including materialism and cultural ecology. By focusing on American Materialism on the technological domain of cultures and its influence on the creation of cultural structures and ideologies, Leslie

White (1900–1975) expressed the Marxist perspective. White made a distinction between the modes of production, their interrelationships, and the ways in which the dominant powers control labor and production through mystification (Peace, 2004).

Another writer namely, Julian Steward (1902–1972) who was a proponent of cultural ecology, studied the material concerns of humans with reference to the environment. Marx had always insisted that humans are a part of nature. Given this, Steward looked into the connections between possible production processes and the environment.

Feminist Marxism and Anthropology:

Feminist anthropology was influenced by Marxism. This led to the development of feminist post-Marxism in 1956, which was initiated by Judith Butler. Butler studied the relationship between gender disparities in language use and power dynamics. The relationship between gender, language, and sexuality and class power was also examined by Sally McConnell-Ginet (2002); where she concentrated on the vocabulary employed in gender conflict and social solidarity.

Eleanor Burke Leacock (1922-1987):

Eleanor Burke Leacock (1922-1987) was the leading Marxist feminist in American anthropology. She has contributed to anthropology. She has carried out field work for nearly forty years and covered a diverse topic such as on hunter-gatherer, economies of Labrador child rearing in Europe, educational ethnography in urban America and rural Zambia etc. Leacock was a radical and expert in Marxist analyses of human society.

A central focus to Leacock's work was her argument that the subordination of women was the consequence of capitalism, not an innate reflection of gender differences. This argument was strongly supported by different evidences collected by her through field work.

Leacock's theoretical contributions were very important. She was one of the first American anthropologists to apply Marxist approach to understanding ethnographic realities, especially the historical transformation of women's status. She contributed immensely to the evolutionary thinking in American anthropology however, she was the advocate of materialist approach. Despite her immense contributions to the field of anthropology, she was excluded from American academic anthropology because she was a woman.

Property, Colonialism, And The Montagnais-Naskapi:

In 1915, the anthropological Frank speck had documented that the Montagnais-Naskapi bands of Labrador held territory, essentially showing that private property ownership existed among hunters and gatherers arguing that this was an aboriginal economic pattern. Speck's evidence for private landownership countered claims by Marx and Engels. Marx and

Engels believed that collective ownership and not private ownership was fundamental to hunting and gathering societies.

In 1950, Leacock went to Labrador to conduct ethnographic research with Montagnais-Naskapi bands of Labrador she researched the genealogies and mapped the hunting territories. By doing this she was able to reconstruct the historical transformations of the hunting economy and their property relations. Leacock observed that individual ownership resulted from the changes in property relationships started by the fur trade. It was not an aboriginal economic institution as argued by Speck. In her monograph, "The Montagnais Hunting territory and the Fur Trade", Leacock (1954) carefully builds this argument. Her monograph contained two important points of the historical changes of the Montagnais-Naskapi which showed that traditional non-western societies are not static they change. Her emphasis on the transformations caused by the fur trade highlighted two dimensions of change: Changing concepts of property and gender relations.

Marxism And Feminism:

In the early 1960s Leacock focused on the transformation of societies through colonially influenced class and state formation. She gave particular attention to the imposition or encouragement of capitalist development in the post-colonial period and to consequent changes in women's authority and autonomy.

Her central argument derived directly from her field experience in Labrador. She made following observations:

1. Bond – organized hunting and food gathering societies which tend to be characterized by communal ownership, egalitarian social relations, and non-hierarchical gender relationships.
2. The evolution of class societies and the development of capitalism also produced changes from kin-based societies that hold property communally and unify societies into social systems that define groups which compete for resources and control of labor.

In Particular, the expansion of capitalist systems and the creation of commodity production and exchange resulted in the restructuring of social control over production and products – a point made by Karl Marx. Finally, the subordination of women is an inevitable outcome of these economic changes. She noted that with the spread of the fur trade and the expansion of capitalism, women progressively were deprived of control over their labor. However, Montagnais maintained a higher degree of respect and autonomy for women compared to other societies. Leacock expanded her analysis beyond Labrador. In an extremely influential article, "Women's Status in Egalitarian Society: Implications for Social Evolution", Leacock (1978) showed how 'anthropologists' assumption that women had inferior status in most traditional societies was false and based on biases. She emphasized that colonialism and capitalism brought disruption and devastation of culture of traditional societies.

E.B. Leacock's work covered many different topics, but they showed a common set of themes:

1. She argued that the subordination of women was a product of history, not a universal condition.
2. She emphasized the historical transformations caused by the development of class societies and the expansion of western capitalism and asked anthropologists to be cautious in their assumptions about the "aboriginal" pattern in other societies.
3. Finally, Leacock merged the historical context of cultural patterns with a Marxist tradition of engagement and thus, created a unique body of scholarship and activism.

Marxism has also impacted archaeology, which is concerned with interpreting the tangible remains of social action, and feminist anthropology at large. Marxism has been ignored in many sectors and seen as a bit of an outdated theoretical paradigm in recent years. But anthropology has been using Marxism because its proponents are usually social justice advocates. The term "political economy" in the recent times is being used to characterize the rise of neo-Marxism. Modern political economy focuses mostly on the concrete inequalities between different socioeconomic classes that are brought about by political influences.

The works of Wolf, Andre Gunder Frank (1929-2005), Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-), and Noam Chomsky (1928), while drawing from Marx and Gramsci, are all related to Political Economy and Hegemony. Since the release of *Building a New Biocultural Synthesis: Political-Economic Perspectives on Human Biology*, biocultural anthropologists have been aware of the connections between health statuses, access to resources, and class disparities. Language use as a medium of trade is included in the study of language's political economy, which has grown in popularity (Irvine, 1989). Marx's lasting contribution is this deeper comprehension of the broader impacts of class systems on almost all human communities.

Environmental Anthropology:

Markets and economies have merged globally as a result of global capitalism, frequently imposing Western capitalist values on indigenous cultures. One probable result of this process is the degradation of indigenous practices, values, and means of subsistence. Marxist criticize this as a form of cultural imperialism in which the dominant economic systems and capitalist ideology turn over the long-standing cultural traditions. Regional farming and crafts may eventually disappear as local producers might not be able to compete with mass-produced goods. Additionally, by encouraging a reliance on foreign goods and technologies, this may weaken local autonomy.

Urban Anthropology analyzes the effects of urbanization on class and social relations.

Urbanization brought forth the economic development and concentrated upon people in cities, resulting in class-based social stratification. Marxist analysis was used to understand the laws governing housing and urban development which both reflected and worsen class differences. The physical division of wealthy and disadvantaged populations by space in cities is one way that class disparities are manifested. This segregation, which impacts opportunities for employment, education, and resource access, widens the cycles of poverty and social exclusion.

8.5 CRITICISM

Marxism is sometimes condemned for lacking a strong anthropological orientation and for not showing a great deal of interest in ethnography or culture in general. Marxism has been limited because it cannot "deal with culture as a distinct and irreducible order of signs and meanings." According to one critique Marxists themselves, have often "built their work on unacknowledged Marxist assumptions about the importance of class and inequality in social life without properly confronting either the strengths or weaknesses of Marxist theory."

One common criticism of Marxism is that it lacks a defined purpose or methodology; Marxists argue more with each other than with other ideas. Marxism also faced criticism for its interpretation of ideology, which presents it as a plot devised by the ruling class to mislead the working class. Further criticism also emerge there upon Marxism that it has also failed to explain how and why "primitive communism" evolved in societies without classes when there was no class struggle. There is no explanation on how different cultures, family, religion, and ethnicity seem to have established stronger ties than class. When taken into consideration independently, this criticism makes sense. However, no aspect of culture exists in a vacuum. Social systems can be characterized by social class in all of their components, including kinship, religion, and ethnicity. In other words, Marxism has also been criticized. The labor theory of value is one such expression that states that the total of the labor and material costs determines the worth of a task. This concept assumes workers cooperate voluntarily and does not include management costs or duties. Hence, Marxism is criticized for emphasizing capitalism's domination excessively. Marx's anthropology is based on broad conceptions of production, need, value, semiotic mediation, exploitation, alienation, the role of subjective action and consciousness, and the structural features of social production systems as totalities.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss one criticism made by scholars on Marxism and Anthropology.

2. Discuss Environmental Anthropology and Marxism.

8.6 EXERCISE: APPLYING MARXIST THEORY TO ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The objective of this exercise is to help you understand and apply Marxist theory in conducting ethnographic research. While doing fieldwork you have to focus on economic structures, class relations, and power dynamics within a selected community.

Instructions:

1. **Select a community:** Choose a community or cultural group for your study. This could be an urban neighborhood, a building or a slum or a section in rural village, or an occupational group.
2. **Research Economic Structures:** Investigate the economic structures within the community. Consider the following aspects:
 - o Modes of production and economic activities
 - o Class relations and social hierarchies
 - o Distribution of resources and wealth
3. **Analyze Power Dynamics:** Explore the power dynamics within the community. Focus on understanding how economic factors influence social relations. Key areas to consider:
 - o Forms of labor and employment
 - o Role of political and economic institutions
 - o Manifestations of class struggle and resistance
4. **Conduct a Case Study:** Write a case study that integrates the economic and social information you have gathered. Your case study should include:
 - o **Introduction:** Briefly introduce the community and the purpose of your study.

- o **Economic Analysis:** Provide a detailed analysis of the community's economic structures and class relations.
 - o **Power Dynamics:** Describe key power dynamics, emphasizing the role of economic factors in shaping social relations.
 - o You can also look into whether the income of the family influences their decisions, career, food habits.
 - o You can also look into how the male and female roles are segregated within the household and outside the house.
 - o **Conclusion:** Reflect on the importance of considering economic context in understanding cultural practices. Discuss how this approach aligns with Marxist theory.
5. **Reflection:** Write a short reflection (300-500 words) on the following questions:
- o How did the economic structures influence the social relations of the community you studied?
 - o What challenges did you face in applying Marxist theory to your research?
 - o How did this exercise enhance your understanding of the importance of economic context in anthropological research?
 - o Discuss the impact of this exercise on you as an individual.

8.7 CONCLUSION

Thus, Marxism has been a major influence in anthropology, both in the 20th century and in terms of understanding how economic forces are reshaping societies, despite all of these criticisms and fundamental flaws. It has raised a number of questions in anthropological thought about class conflict and societal evolution in all civilizations. An effective strategy for anthropologists researching change in modern environments is historical materialism.

Marxism has had a major impact on anthropology by offering a framework for looking at societies through the prism of power dynamics, class relations, and economic structures.

8.8 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the Marxist Influence.
2. Write a note on Marxist Feminist Anthropology as discussed by Eleanor Burke Leacock.
3. Discuss the important works associated with Marxism and Anthropology.
4. Write a note on Marxism and Anthropology.

8.9 REFERENCES

- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/marx-karl-impact-anthropology>
- <https://ebooks.inflibnet.ac.in/antp10/chapter/marxism-in-anthropology/#:~:text=around%20the%20world.-,Marxist%20anthropology%20developed%20as%20a%20critique%20of%20the%20domination%20of,in%20any%20culture%20or%20society>
- <https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/marxist-anthropology/>
- Marxist Anthropology by Sarah Morrow and Robert Lusteck
