M.A. SOCIOLOGY
SEMESTER II (CBCS)

SOCIOLOGY PAPER -III
CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SUBJECT CODE :93395

CONTENTS

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

M.A. SOCIOLOGY
SEMESTER II (CBCS)
SOCIOLOGY PAPER -III
CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES
IN CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Course Rationale: This course seeks to introduce to the students the diversification of Anthropology, both in terms of the disciplinary boundaries as well as geographical locations. The reflexive turn in Anthropology is traced along with its myriad shades of aftermaths followed by the hybrid locations of anthropology in a post-colonial, globalized and media-saturated world.

Unit I: Cultural Materialism and Marxism
- Neo-evolutionism
- Cultural Ecology
- Cultural Materialism
- Marxist Anthropology

Unit II: The Interpretive Turn
- Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology
- Thick Description, Liminality and Communitas
- Theorizing the Nation State, Ethnicities
- Multiculturalism

Unit III: Reflexivity, Feminism and the Subaltern
- Fieldwork and Reflexivity
- Critique of Classical Ethnographies
- Feminism and Anthropology
- The Subaltern Turn

Unit IV: Post-Modern Locations
- Post-Structuralism
- Post-colonialism
- Globalization: Hybridity, Flows, Boundaries
- Cultural Studies

Essential Readings

- Barnard, A. (2004). History and Theory in Anthropology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. E. (Eds.). (2010).

- [1986]. Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Eriksen, T.H. & Nielsen, F.S. (2001). A History of Anthropology. London: Pluto Press.

- Marcus, G.E & Fischer, M. M.J. (Eds.). (1999). Anthropology as Cultural

- Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences. Chicago: Uni- versity of Chicago Press.

- Moore, J.D. (2009). Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists. Lanham: Alta Mira Press.

Further Readings

- Clark-Deces, I. (2011). Blackwell Companions to Anthropology: A Companion to the Anthropology of India. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

- Dube, L. (2001). Anthropological Explorations in Gender: Intersecting Fields. New Delhi: Sage. During, S. (2005). Cultural Studies: A Critical Introduction. London & New York: Routledge.

- Fabian, J. (2002). Time and the Other: How Anthropology makes its Object. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

- Geertz, C. (1983). Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. New York: Basic Books.

- Hannerz, U. (2002). Flows, Boundaries and Hybrids: Keywords in Transnational Anthropology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- McClaurin, I. (Ed.). (2001). Black Feminist Anthropology: Theory, Politics, Praxis and Poetics. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press

- Moore, H.L. (Ed.). (1996). The Future of Anthropological Knowledge.

- London & New York: Routledge.

- Ortner, S. B. (1996). Making Gender: The Politics and Erotics of Culture.

- Boston: Beacon Press.

- Rabinow, P. (2008). Marking Time: On the Anthropology of the Contemporary. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Ribeiro, G.L. & Escobar, A. (Eds.). (2006). World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power. Oxford: Berg.

❖❖❖❖

1

1.1 NEO-EVOLUTIONISM
1.2 - CULTURAL ECOLOGY

Unit Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

- To examine the evolution of anthropological thought through historical perspective

- To explain the methodological approaches related to the origin of culture

1.1   NEOEVOLUTIONISM

1.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Neo-evolutionism as a social theory, attempts to explain the evolution of societies by drawing on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution while discarding some dogmas of the previous theories of social evolutionism. *Neo-evolutionary* anthropological thought emerged in the 1940s, in the work of the American anthropologists Leslie A. White, Julian H. Steward and others. It developed extensively in the period after the Second World War—and was incorporated into anthropology as well as into sociology in the 1960s.

Neo-evolutionary anthropology developed in the mid-Twentieth Century as a response to the need to develop theories that better explained cultural differences, similarities and the processes of culture change.

While the 19th-century cultural evolutionism attempted to explain how culture develops by describing general principles of its evolutionary process, historical particularism dismissed it as unscientific in the early-20th century. Neo-evolutionary thinkers brought back evolutionary ideas and developed them, with the result that these became acceptable to contemporary anthropology. Neo-evolutionism discards many ideas of classical social evolutionism.

Neo-evolutionism is a new 20th century perspective on the evolution of society. In contemporary neo-evolutionism, there are two main currents of thought. These are:

1. Universal evolutionism of V. Gordon Childe (1892-1957) and Leslie White (1900-1975)

2. Multi-linear evolutionism of Julian steward (1902-1972)

1.1.2 V. GORDON CHILDE

V. Gordon Childe was a trained archaeologist and he described evolution of culture in terms of three major events, viz., Invention of food production, Urbanization and Industrialization.

He presented an overall view of evolutionary process by analyzing the transitions that took place under the impact of these major events and delineated its common factors.

	Archaeological Period	Level of cultural Development
Stage 1	Paleolithic	Savagery
Stage 2	Neolithic	Barbarism
Stage 3	Copper Age	Higher Barbarism
Stage 4	Early Bronze Age	Civilization

Childe's order of evolution differed from those of 19th century evolutionists. According to him, a drastic change in the life pattern of mankind appeared in the stage of civilization in which an aggressive attitude towards environment developed among mankind. First, dwellers or cave dwellers became house dwellers, hunters and gatherers became food producer by adopting agriculture. Writing made them capable of preserving their tradition and mathematics came into being for counting things. The development of cities made them urbanized and technological advancements made them capable of producing durable utensils and implements. Thus, according to him, at each stage of cultural development, mankind developed their technological skills to exploit natural resources. In the early stage, less advanced technological skill had made them less aggressive towards environment but as knowledge accumulated they became more and more aggressive.

Gordon Childe made an attempt to apply the Darwinian formula to cultural evolution and said, "variation is seen as invention, hereditary as

learning and diffusion, and adaptation and selection as cultural adaptation and choice". He sought an explanation for the universal laws of culture change, recognizing that all universal laws do change in the course of history.

The scheme of neo-evolution proposed by Childe is fraught with limitations, which are as follows: Firstly, he did not differentiate between the old hunters and the hunter-gatherers of today despite the fact that there is a significant difference between the possession, types and application of technology used for hunting. Secondly, there was too much emphasis on archaeological data as an explanation for cultural evolution. Thirdly, he categorically rejected the idea of universal precedence of matriarchy, sexual communism, etc., an argument put forth by the classical evolutionists.

In other words, Childe relied too much on archaeological data to explain cultural evolution and secondly he did not take any interest in the civilizational sequence outside Middle East and Europe. Thirdly, he did not take into consideration the universal existing institutions of matriarchy, sexual promiscuity, etc. But despite such criticisms he was successful in presenting universal scheme of cultural evolution in terms of archaeological sequences. Despite the weaknesses, Childe is credited for introducing the theory of technological determinism in the study of cultural evolution.

1.1.3 LESLIE A. WHITE: Theory of Cultural Evolution

Leslie White developed the theory of cultural evolution; which was at that time ignored by most anthropologists. White was impressed by Morgan's model and logic of his evolutionary theory, which prompted him to restore the evolutionary topic started in the 1920s. After careful study of the 19th century evolutionist literature, White concluded that evolutionism was not wrong in theory, and that cultural evolution was just as real and demonstrable as biological evolution. White developed the basic law of cultural evolution i.e. culture evolves as the amount of energy harnessed per capita per year is increased. White claims that industrialized cultures and complex societies are more advanced because they have the capacity to harness more energy– "thermo-dynamics" than non-industrialized and simple societies. In other words, a more advanced technology gives humans control over more energy (human, animal, solar, and so on) and cultures expand and change as a result. White treated societies as entities that evolved in relation to the amount of energy captured and used by each member of society. This energy is directed towards the production of resources for their survival.

While explaining cultural evolution, White believed that culture has general laws of its own. The task of the anthropologists is to discover those principles and explain the particular phenomena of culture. He termed this as the culturology approach, which attempts to define and predict cultural phenomena by understanding general patterns of culture.

White assumed that the greater the energy, the more highly evolved the socio-cultural system. White perceived 3 cultural sub-systems: 1) technological, 2) sociological and 3) ideological. The way society uses its technology to sustain life, influences the sociological and ideological systems. Technology and therefore culture evolve as more energy is harnessed. White's hypothesis of cultural evolution explained the differences in technology and energy production. He hypothesized, for example, in the *first stage*, the small-scale hunting and gathering societies had not developed complex socio-cultural systems because they depended primarily on human energy for production. Their societies were simple and undeveloped due to limited energy resources. However, socio cultural systems changed dramatically following the *second stage*, the capture of energy through the domestication of plants and animals. The *third stage* is the technological changes as the result of the agricultural revolution led to the emergence of cities, complex states, powerful political and religious elites and new ideologies. According to White, the changes in the agricultural societies had been gradual taking several thousand years till the *fourth stage*, of the Industrial Revolution. But the industrial revolution has taken less than five hundred years to produce wide spread global transformation, which is accompanied by the *fifth stage* wherein the nuclear energy is harnessed. White focused on socio-cultural change on the global level rather than on particular societies. So, his approach has been called general evolution. His main contribution was that he provided scientific insights to the evolution of culture.

White's orientation has been criticized for the same reasons that the ideas of Tylor and Morgan were. In the process of describing what has happened in the evolution of human culture, White assumed that cultural evolution is determined strictly by conditions inside the culture (predominantly technological conditions). In other words, he categorically denied the possibility of environmental, historical, or psychological influences on cultural evolution. The problem with such an argument is that it does not have the potentiality to explain why some cultures evolve, whereas others either do not evolve or become extinct. Additionally, White's theory of energy capture does not answer the question as to why only some cultures are able to increase their energy capture.

1.1.4   JULIAN STEWARD: Multi-linear Evolutionists:

Multi-linear evolution is a methodology based on assumption that significant regularities or parallels occur in cultural change and it is concerned with the determination of cultural laws. Multi-linear evolutionism is proposed by **Julian Steward**. He elaborated his theory of neo-evolution in his famous book — "Theory of Culture Change", published in 1955. He referred to himself as the universal evolutionist as he placed general stages of evolution applicable to mankind as a whole and not of specific or particular culture.

Steward proposed his theory of multi-linear evolutionism in order to reconcile evolutionary theory with the growing evidence of cultural and

social diversity available as a result of the advances of modern ethnography and cross-cultural comparative studies. He, for the first time gave a broad typology of evolutionists on the basis of his methodological study of different culture areas of the world.

Steward defined cultural evolution as "a quest for cultural regularities or laws" and added that there are three distinct ways in which evolutionary data may be handled.

1) **Unilinear Evolution** is the formulation put forth by 19th century classical evolutionists, which dealt with particular culture rather than with cultures. According to Steward, Unilinear evolutionists are those that refer to cultural evolution in terms of three stages- savagery, barbarism and civilization. Tylor, Morgan and others were the theorists who supported this scheme of cultural evolution. Steward observes that new empirical ethnographic and archeological research that concerns the history of individual culture has emerged in recent times. This research is relevant as it recognizes significant patterns and processes of change in particular cases.

2) **Universal Evolution** is an arbitrary term to refer to the remodeling of the Unilinear evolution. Julian Steward (1955) pointed out that universal evolution is represented by V. Gordon Childe and Leslie White and is the heritage of the 19th century evolution. These theorists emphasized on evolutionary concept of cultural stages by relating these stages to the culture of mankind as a whole. The distinctive cultural traditions and the local variations of the culture areas and sub-areas which have emerged as the byproduct of special environments are excluded as irrelevant.

3) **Multilinear Evolution** emphasizes on multiple developmental sequences. The distinguishing feature is that it searches parallel of limited occurrence instead of universals. Steward does not believe that culture followed a single line of development. His generalizations are based on intensive study of particular cultures. For him, multilinear evolution is a methodology based on the assumption that regularities in culture change occur. This is concerned with historical reconstruction with any set laws.

Steward's evolutionary theory, cultural ecology, is based on the idea that the environmental resources available to a people, determine their social system. He outlines three basic steps for a cultural-ecological investigation. First - the analysis of the relationship between subsistence strategies and natural resources. Second- the analysis of behavior patterns involved vis-a-vis particular subsistence strategy. Third – the analysis of how other aspects of the society are determined by and impacted by these behavior patterns.

The principal concern of cultural ecology is to determine whether cultural adaptations towards the natural environment bring about social transformations of evolutionary change. Although Steward did not believe in one universal path of cultural evolution, he argued that different societies can independently develop parallel features. Steward's evolutionary theory is called multilinear evolution because the theory is based on the idea that there are varied patters of progress toward cultural complexity. In other words, Steward did not assume universal evolutionary stages that apply to all societies.

1.1.5 CONCLUSION

Neo-evolutionary theories are based on empirical evidence from fields such as archaeology, paleontology and historiography. Neo-evolutionism is considered to be object and a simply descriptive approach, eliminating any references to a moral or cultural system of values. While the 19th century social evolutionism used value judgments and assumptions when interpreting data, neo-evolutionism relies on measurable information for analyzing the process of cultural evolution. In the years since White's and Steward's seminal work, neo-evolutionary approaches have been accepted, rejected, challenged and revised, yet they continue to generate a lively controversy among those interested in long-term cultural and social change.

Check your progress :

1. Can you briefly explain Neo evolutionism ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.2 CULTURAL ECOLOGY

1.2.1   INTRODUCTION

Cultural ecology is a theoretical perspective that endeavours to explain the adaptation of a culture to a specific environment and how changes in that environment bring about changes in that specific culture. This is a first theoretical approach that provides a causal explanation for the similarities and differences between cultures, since it focuses on overall environment, natural resources available, population and density, how the material culture, or technology is related to basic survival or subsistence. It also studies how a traditional system of beliefs and behavior allows people to adapt to their environment. Cultural ecology was created as an anthropological sub-discipline which stresses the

adaptive function of culture. Elements of the cultural ecology approach are reflected in ethnoecology, human behavioural ecology, political ecology and the ecosystems approach.

The central task of cultural ecologists is to study how humans in their society and through specific cultures interact with the larger environment. Human beings engage in what can be called as learned behavior that can be referred to as learned skill, technology and other cultural responses of a people in a society.

1.2.2 EMERGENCE OF CULTURAL ECOLOGY APPROACH

Cultural ecology approach was first developed by the American anthropologist Julian Steward in the 1930s and 1940s and became an influencing factor within anthropology and archaeology. It represents an approach that is distinct from the sociologically oriented human ecology approach. Steward studied materially simple culture of Native Americans in the arid areas of the Great Basin. He emphasized on the adaptive function of culture, a process that he called cultural ecology, and inquired how culture change is induced by adaptation to environment. The concept of culture as a non-biological adaptation does not necessarily mean mechanical environmental determinism. Culture is a creative process which is influenced and stimulated by, but not determined by, the environment. These ideas are reflected in the book "Theory of Culture Change: The Methodology of Multilinear Evolution" (1955).

Steward coined the term "cultural ecology" to describe his approach and is frequently referred to as the father of ecological studies in anthropology. Cultural ecology is understood as a continuation of his theory of multilinear evolution. Multilinear evolution searches for regularities in cultural change. Cultural laws can be understood as explanations as to why these changes occur. Patterns of interaction between parts of a society and the larger environment are related to patterns of historical change. In this context, cultural traditions with distinctive elements can be studied. Similarities and differences between cultures are meaningful and change in meaningful ways. Each society has its own historical trajectory through time. This, according to Steward, sets the ground for cross-cultural studies.

Steward was the first to combine four approaches in studying the interaction between culture and environment: 1) Culture was explained in terms of the environment where it existed, rather than just a geographic relation with economy; 2) The relationship between culture and environment is considered to be a process (and not just a correlation); 3) There was consideration of small-scale environment, rather than culture-area-sized regions; and 4) The connection between ecology and multilinear cultural evolution.

Steward's eminent ecological work, "Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups" (1938), studied the lives of native peoples of the

Great Basin. In that work, Steward described the following: the general environment, important resources located, and utilization of those resources. Within the same work, he discussed the sociopolitical patterns and established their relation to technology, environment and distribution of resource.

Steward made some path breaking arguments which are as follows: 1) cultures in similar environments may have similar adaptations; 2) all adaptations have a short life and are constantly adjusting to changing environments; and 3) alterations in culture can elaborate existing culture or result in entirely new ones.

Several anthropologists at the time used Steward's approach to compare cultures in order to understand the factors that influence similar cultural development; in other words, similar adaptations. The basic premise of cultural ecology is that cultures, not individuals, adapt. This approach assumes that culture is superorganic, a concept Steward borrowed from Alfred Kroeber.

Check your progress :
1. Can you briefly explain the concept of cultural ecology ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.2.3 CULTURAL TYPE AND CULTURAL CORE
Cultural ecology can be considered to be an adaptation by a unique culture modified historically in a distinctive environment. In the context of this definition, Steward outlined a creative process of cultural change. Steward focused on recurrent themes that could be understood by limited circumstances and distinct situations. This helps to identify and classify cultural types. Cultural type is an ideal heuristic tool designed for the study of cross-cultural parallels and regularities. This analytical instrument has several benefits. It allows the researcher to assemble regularities in cultures that have vastly different histories. This type of classification is based upon selected features of culture which are interrelated and are causally interdependent. These features are determined by a particular research problem within its own frame of reference.

Steward states that economic patterns are important because they are more directly related to other social, cultural, and political configurations. This is the cultural core. Steward proposed that the

adaptations need to be understood by first examining the cultural core, which was considered a crucial cultural component that determined the ability of culture to survive. The cultural core can be defined as the features of a society that are the most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements. It consists of knowledge, technology, labour, and family organization, all of which were used to collect resources from the environment.

Cultures are made up of interrelated parts. Depending on which traits are more influential than other traits, interdependence will also vary. The cultural core is grouped around subsistence activities and economic relationships. Secondary features are more closely related to historical contingencies and less directly related to the environment. Several technological innovations take place. Whether these technological innovations are accepted or rejected depends upon the environmental constraints and cultural requirements. Several factors such as: population pressure, internal division of labour, regional specialization, environmental tension, economic surplus, create the cultural conditions in which the technological innovation becomes attractive, leading to other cultural changes. These social adaptations have profound effects upon the kinship, politics, and social relations of a group.

Since the introduction of cultural ecology approach by Steward, anthropologists have expanded the definition of cultural ecology to include more abstract social concepts like social and political economy. They have gone further to apply it to the study of concepts and applications of power and resources. The theory has also contributed substantially in modern archaeological techniques and theories. One such technique is 'procedural archeology' which places an emphasis on documenting the ways ancient cultures have adapted their technologies to suit their environment. It also studies how these cultures use of resources have led to changes in the physical and biological characteristics of their surroundings.

Cultural ecology theory has been criticized primarily for its undue emphasis on environmental determinism. Scholars regard this as a potentially dangerous oversimplification of social and cultural processes because it gives importance to the environment and ignores the significance and power of social and individual agency. Despite the criticism, the value of cultural ecology approach and its impact on the social sciences cannot be denied and today, is still being used very effectively.

1.2.4 CONCLUSION
Steward observed that the ecology of humans both biological and cultural aspects, which were distinct from each other, yet were intertwined. He argued that the cultural aspect was associated with technology. This set humans and their cultures as important and separate from the rest of the environment. While Steward was correct in

recognizing the difference between the biological and cultural aspects of human ecology, he was wrong to view humans as separate from the rest of the environment.

1.3 SUMMARY

Neo-evolutionary anthropological thought emerged in the 1940s, in the work of the American anthropologists Leslie A. White and Julian H. Steward and others.

V. Gordon Childe was a trained archaeologist and he described evolution of culture in terms of three major events, viz., invention of food production, urbanization and industrialization.

Leslie White claims that industrialized cultures and complex societies are more advanced because they have the capacity to harness more energy– "thermodynamics" than non-industrialized and simple societies.

Multi-linear evolution is a methodology followed by Julian Steward is based on the assumption that significant regularities or parallels occur in cultural change and it is concerned with the determination of cultural laws. Cultural ecology is a theoretical perspective that endeavours to explain the adaptation of a culture to a specific environment and how changes in that environment bring about changes in that specific culture.

Steward discussed the sociopolitical patterns and established their relation to technology, environment and distribution of resource.

Cultural type is an ideal heuristic tool designed for the study of cross-cultural parallels and regularities.

The cultural core is the configuration of the features of a society that are the most closely related to subsistence activities and economic arrangements.

1.4   QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the emergence and development of neo-evolutionism as an approach in anthropology.

2. Examine the contributions of Gordon Childe, Julian Steward and Leslie White to the theory of neo-evolutionism.

3. Examine the key arguments of the cultural ecology approach and discuss its relevance today.

4. Evaluate the theory of cultural ecology with special reference to the cultural type and cultural core.

1.5   REFERENCES

- https://www.lkouniv.ac.in/site/writereaddata/siteContent/202004061923053959Sayed_Mashiyat_Husain_Rizvi_anthro_CULTURAL_EVOLUTIONISM.pdf

- **http://faculty.cascadia.edu/tsaneda/cultural/theories/neoevolutionism.html**

- Sutton, M. and Anderson, E.N. (2010): Introduction to Cultural Ecology, Second Edition, Alta Mira Press, New York

- https://www.ynufe.edu.cn/pub/shyjjxwyjzx/docs/20140512093722308008.pdf

❖❖❖❖

2

2.1 CULTURAL MATERIALISM
2.2 MARXIST ANTHROPOLOGY

Unit Structure

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- To examine Marxist influence on anthropological theory

- To apply anthropological approach to study factors influencing social structure

2.1   CULTURAL MATERIALISM

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

Marvin Harris (1927-2001), a cultural anthropologist, is responsible for the most systematic statement of cultural materialist principles. Cultural materialism is a systems theory of society that attempts to account for their origin, maintenance and change. Harris expanded upon the cultural ecology and called his approach "cultural materialism". Cultural materialism is one of the major anthropological perspectives for analyzing human societies. It incorporates ideas from Marxism, cultural evolution and cultural ecology.

Materialism contends that the physical world impacts and sets constraints on human behavior. The materialists believe that human behavior is part of nature and therefore, it can be understood by using the methods of natural science. Materialists do not necessarily assume that material reality is more important than mental reality. However, when they explain human societies, materialists give priority to the material

world over the world of the mind. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels have been in the forefront of the doctrine of materialism. They present an evolutionary model of societies based on the materialist perspective. They argued that societies go through several stages, from tribalism to feudalism to capitalism to communism. This work attracted limited attention from anthropology in the early 20th century. However, since the later 1920s, anthropologists have increasingly come to depend on materialist explanations to analyze developments in society and understand some inherent problems of capitalist societies.

2.1.2 CULTURAL MATERIALISM

Cultural materialism contends that human communities are interconnected with nature through work, and work is structured through social organization. In all human societies, this is the basis of the industry. Thus, the task of social science is to understand the deeper underlying connections between specific social actions and global trends. Within this, social structure is established by the industry, commerce, production, exchange and distribution. This, in turn, gives birth to the ideological possibilities of any culture. The interaction between technology and social organization in a particular environment provides the basis for the social-economic classes. The needs of every society and individual must be met and this creates its own ideological support. For example, with the development of the capitalist society, science develops to meet the needs of its economic requirements. Thus, science and modern industrial capitalism are closely interconnected. This is supported by the fact that the principal ideas of any class society are that of the ruling class. The values and belief systems of a society are defined by the class that controls the material forces of society. The dominant ideology reflects the dominant material relations of the society. In that sense, cultural ecology, cultural materialism shares the same threads with Marxism.

2.1.3 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Cultural materialism is based on two key assumptions about societies. First, the various parts of society change, other parts must also change. This means that an institution, such as the family cannot be looked at in isolation from religious, economic or political institutions of a society.When one part changes, it has an effect on other parts of the system. It views society as a system of interrelated part and this is at the core of most sociological theories. Other theories can be differentiated in terms of the organizing principles. The second assumption of cultural materialism is that the environment is regarded as the foundation of the sociocultural system.

Check your progress :

1. Can you explain the meaning of cultural materialism ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.1.4   LEVELS OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Cultural materialists identify three levels of social systems that constitute a universal pattern: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Structure, and 3) Superstructure. Infrastructure is the foundation for all other levels and includes how basic needs are met and how it interacts with the local environment. Structure refers to a society's economic, social, and political organization. Superstructure, on the other hand, refers to ideology and symbolism. Cultural materialists like Marvin Harris contend that the infrastructure is the most critical aspect as it is here that the interaction between culture and environment occurs. All three levels are interrelated and interdependent so that changes in the infrastructure results in changes in the structure and superstructure. These changes, in fact, might not be immediate. This may appear to be environmental determinism; cultural materialists do not disclaim that change in the structure and superstructure cannot occur without first change in the infrastructure. However, they do claim that if change in those structures is not compatible with the existing infrastructure, the change is not likely to become set within the culture.

2.1.5   BASE STRUCTURE AND SUPERSTRUCTURE

There exists a complex relationship between the material base of technology, the environment, population pressure, and the ideological superstructure. All the above should be considered as important factors while studying social change. The social consciousness, while being the product of real material relations of society, in turn has an impact on those social relations. This feedback loop is of central importance while understanding the historical dynamics of society. Social consciousness becomes the collective reflection of social relations. Social consciousness brings awareness among people and pushes them to act upon nature and society. Forms of social consciousness reflect a specific social existence. However, this social whole is not a static or passive relationship. Each community has a distinct ideological superstructure which undergoes changes as the economic relations of that society change. All parts of the society share an interactive relationship. Of all the interactive parts, economics is the most important. Simply put, all the interactive parts such as: religious expressions, commonly held feelings, ways of thinking, worldview and different forms of property relations are established from

economics. Thus, the social conditions of existence are reflected through the ideology of a society.

Members of a community are able to take from nature what they need to survive. This is possible through the means of production, which includes technology, environment (also referred to as Infrastructure), and work relationships (referred to as structure). The interaction between the structure and infrastructure, in turn, creates what is possible for the various parts of the superstructure. The superstructure includes not only the ideology but also the social psychology of a people. The infrastructure shapes and limits the structure and superstructure. The infrastructure also sets the limits of what is possible for both the structure and superstructure.

The interaction between social organization (structure) and the use of technology within an environment (infrastructure) can be used to understand many particulars about the total culture. This gives us more information about the evolution from band-level society to tribal-level society, tribal to chiefdom, and chiefdom to state-level society. Additionally, it gives us information about the changes in the organization of labour, including the growing division of labour and, ultimately, changes in the technology used by a people. With changes in the organization of labour, there are corresponding changes in the relationship to property. As technology and social organization become more complex, societies move through various stages to a more restrictive control over property. Over a period of time, with a state society, there develop restrictions on access to property, based upon membership in economic classes.

All the three approaches - Marxism, cultural ecology, and cultural materialism agree that a social system is a dynamic interaction between people, as well as dynamic interaction between people and nature. The foundation of the society is production for human subsistence. In producing what people need to live, people also produce their corresponding set of ideas. People create their own ideologies. The productive forces act upon people continually changing them, but at the same time people are always changing their relationships associated with these productive forces. In other words, people continuously change nature and thus change themselves in the process.

2.1.6 CONCLUSION
In spite of the criticism, it needs to be recognized that Harris left a significant legacy of creating an anthropological theory and disseminating to his students and the public. His work is widely recognized and cited by both proponents and critics of cultural materialism. Harris' anthropological textbook 'Culture, People and Nature' is a widely read text that proves the quality of his work.

2.2 MARXIST ANTHROPOLOGY

2.2.1   INTRODUCTION

This section briefly deals with the theory of Marxism followed by an insight into the growth and development of Marxist Anthropology. Essentially Marxism is an economic interpretation of history based primarily on the works of Karl Marx and Frederich Engels. Marxist thought is considered to be revolutionary in nature as the central argument is to understand capitalism in order to overthrow it. Marx's work on "Capital" (1867) and "The Communist Manifesto" (1848) discusses in length the rationale for the development of capitalism and the need to move towards communism. Taking a materialist and historical approach, Marx analyses four central points. These are as follows: 1) the physical reality of people, 2) the organization of social relations, 3) the value of the historical context of development, and 4) the human nature of continuous praxis.

The anthropological influence on the Marxist theory was first noticed in the work of Engels. Lewis Henry Morgan had taken a materialist perspective to understand evolution of societies. This led Marx to make extensive notes on "Ancient Society" (1877), which Engels later expanded into "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State: In Light of the Investigations of Lewis H. Morgan" (1884). Both Marx and Engels were influenced by L.H. Morgan and his model of social evolution based on material concerns. Morgan observed that societies moved from more primitive to more civilized stages of development. The Marxist version of the same was that societies transitioned from primitive communism, through ancient slave trade, feudalism and capitalism to communism. These stages are understood in terms of the modes of production which are dominant in each stage. Marx did not see these stages as progressive steps that every culture must progress through, but as being the development of historically contingent communities and their modes of production.

The modes of production form the base or infrastructure of a society. This base determines the superstructure (government, laws, courts, legal and political apparatus) and both determine the ideology (including philosophies, religions and the ideals prevailing in a society at any one time). Class struggle is the biggest factor of social change. It is inevitable that change will occur and that the classes will reorganize and realign themselves. However, the ruling classes will use any means at their disposal to maintain the status quo. They have a vested interest in maintaining their power and will resist change at any cost. A key tool of the ruling classes is the elaboration of mystification in ideology, which results in the false consciousness of the lower class. Social evolution can be slowed, but not stopped.

"Marxist Anthropology is typically understood as a phase within the history of Euro-American anthropology. In the 1960s, the discipline

of anthropology was dominated by functionalist and structural-functionalist approaches. Sherry Ortner's (1984) essay on "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties" describes how Marxism emerged as a disruptive theoretical force creating a dent in the popularity of functionalism and structuralism perspectives.

Marxist anthropology is an anthropological theory used to study different cultures around the world. The approach focuses on the ways material factors cause social transformation and social change. This comprises the study of the forces of production and their relationship to social organization. The basic premise is that economic relationships are based on power, leading ultimately to class struggle. This approach studies social class, class conflict, economics, production and distribution, and their relationship to social transformation within a community. The theories of Marx and Engels were published in the 19th century, yet the anthropological insights into peasant life were conducted only after the Second World War. Moore (2009) in his work on "Visions of Culture: An Introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists" argues that peasants are important to Marxist Anthropologists because they are the backbone of the agrarian economy and community. To cite an example, the study of peasants in Puerto Rico by anthropologist Eric Wolf, where he found there are three significant modes of production. One mode of production is the capitalist mode. Wolf identified three features of the capitalist mode of production: 1) that capitalists control the means of production, 2) that labourers must therefore sell labour to capitalists, and 3) this results in a spiral of capital accumulation, exploitation of labour, and reorganization of production. As a result, society is divided into classes. This aspect is very interesting to Marxist anthropologists because it helps in understanding how social classes were created, and how mode of production was related to social organization. The important highlight of Marxist anthropology is that it studies culture from a historical perspective, and accepts that culture and societies change over time.

Check your progress

1. What is Marxist Anthropology ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2.2.2   CONCLUSION
The most significant critique of Marxist Anthropology is that it places too much emphasis on economy and status to assume one's cultural

characteristics. Marxism is an anthropological approach which is based on the premise that "human social life is a response to the practical problems of earthly existence." Other approaches, such as Cultural Ecology, argue that economy is not the only factor that determines cultural phenomena because there are so many other factors that determine cultural relevance.

Another point of criticism is that conventionally the Marxist approach focuses solely on the premise that all cultural characteristics are based on economic factors. There is also the concern that this approach tends to be a historical which means that it cannot be applied to explain how something has come to be as it is today. Other scholars have rejected the central idea of Marxist theory of class struggle. They argue that functionalists would probably maintain that class stratification exists for a reason and all the classes perform functions to maintain the social order.

2.3 SUMMARY

Cultural materialism is a systems theory of society that attempts to account for their origin, maintenance and change.

Cultural materialists identify three levels of social systems that constitute a universal pattern: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Structure, and 3) Superstructure.

There exists a complex relationship between the material base of technology, the environment, population pressure, and the ideological superstructure.

Marxist anthropology is an anthropological theory used to study different cultures around the world.

Both Marx and Engels were influenced by L.H. Morgan and his model of social evolution based on material concerns.

The modes of production form the base or infrastructure of a society. This base determines the superstructure.

The most significant critique of Marxist Anthropology is that it places too much emphasis on economy and status to assume one's cultural characteristics.

2.4 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the basic assumptions of the cultural materialism approach.
2. Examine how Marxist principles are used to study culture change.
3. Evaluate the contribution of Marvin Harris to the understanding of cultural materialism.
4. Examine Marxist influence on anthropological theory.

2.5 REFERENCES

- Marxist Approaches in Anthropology:
  https://www.jstor.org/stable/2949362

- https://www.ynufe.edu.cn/pub/shyjjxwyjzx/docs/20140512093722308008.pdf

- https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/cultural-materialism/

- https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.an.04.100175.002013

- https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/cultural-materialism

❖❖❖❖

3

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATIVE APPROACH : VICTOR TURNER

Unit Structure:

3.0 OBJECTIVES:

- To examine the nature and origin of symbolic and interpretative Anthropology

- To comprehend the significance of Symbolic and Interpretative Anthropology

- To identify various schools of thoughts within these approaches

- To assess the contribution of Turner and Geertz to these approaches.

3.1 SYMBOLIC AND INTERPRETIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

The theoretical school of **Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology** assumes that culture does not exist beyond individuals. Rather, culture lies in individuals' interpretations of events and things around them. With a reference to socially established signs and symbols, people shape the patterns of their behaviors and give meanings to their experiences. Therefore, the goal of Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology is to analyze how people give meanings to their reality and

how this reality is expressed by their cultural symbols. The major accomplishment of symbolic anthropology has been to turn anthropology towards issues of culture and interpretation rather than grand theories.

3.2 ORIGIN OF SYMBOLIC AND INTERPRETIVE ANTHROPOLOGY:

Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology emerged in the 1960s when **Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and David Schneider** were at the University of Chicago and is still influential today. Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology does not follow the model of physical sciences, which focus on empirical material phenomena, but is literary-based. This does not mean that Symbolic and Interpretive anthropologists do not conduct fieldwork, but instead refers to the practice of drawing on non-anthropological literature as a primary source of data. The Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropologists view culture as a mental phenomenon and reject the idea that culture can be modeled like mathematics or logic. When they study symbolic action in cultures, they use a variety of analytical tools from psychology, history, and literature. This method has been criticized for a lack of objectivity. In other words, this method seems to allow analysts to see meaning wherever and however they wish. In spite of this criticism, Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology has forced anthropologists to become aware of cultural texts they interpret and of ethnographic texts they create. In order to work as intercultural translators, anthropologists need to be aware of their own cultural biases as well as other cultures they research.

3.3 SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT WITHIN SYMBOLIC AND INTERPRETIVE ANTHROPOLOGY

There are two schools of thought within Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology. The British school was interested in how societies maintained cohesion and this is illustrated by the work of Victor Turner and Mary Douglas. The American school is exemplified by Clifford Geertz and Sherry Ortner and was focused on "how ideas shaped individuals' subjectivities and actions" (Johnson 2013: 842). An important contribution of Symbolic and Interpretive anthropologists, specifically Clifford Geertz, is "thick description," which encourages rich descriptions and explanations of behaviors with an end goal of understanding their cultural significance. Geertz borrowed this concept from Gilbert Ryle, an Oxford philosopher. The classic example of thick description is the difference between a wink and a blink. A blink is an involuntary twitch (thin description) while a wink is a conspiratorial signal to another person (thick description). The physical movements are identical, but the meaning is different.

3.4 SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Edward Tylor, the nineteenth century pioneer in anthropology referred to the power of using words as signs to express thoughts with which their sound does not directly connect them. He also regarded language or symbolic communication to be the highest grade of human faculty, the presence of which binds together all races of mankind in substantial mental unity.

Symbols objects events, speech sounds or written forms to which humans attribute meaning. The primary form of symbolizing by human beings is through language, but humans also communicate by using signs and symbols in art, dance, music, architecture, facial expressions, gestures, body postures, clothing, ritual, religion kinship, nationality, space arrangements and material possessions, among many other things.

Human beings can attribute meaning, to any event, action, or object which can evoke thought, idea, and emotion. The perception of the use of symbols as a significant human feature has become an important object of study in anthropology. Leslie White (1940), in an article on humans as a symbolizing species, pointed to the importance of context in the meaning of symbols. Ernest Cassirer argues that without a complex of symbols, relational thought would be impossible. Humans have the capacity to isolate relations and consider them in their abstract meaning. Geometry, for example, conceptually deals with universal spatial relationships for which expression there is a symbolic language and a form of representation. Yet, this abstract system can be applied to building problems. Cassirer expresses the symbolic nature of human experience as follows.

"No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience. Al human progress in thought and experience refines upon and strengthens this net." As anthropologists began to develop a perspective of culture as a system of symbols, meanings and values, various sub-disciplines of anthropology with this orientation came into being. Two of these were semantic anthropology (the study of signs) and symbolic anthropology.

It is worth recalling that anthropologists of very different theoretical stripes agree that symbols mark the threshold of culture. For example, an arch-materialist like Leslie White writes, "The symbol is the universe of humanity" (1949:22). Yet relatively few anthropologists were concerned with how symbols mean. Sapir, for example, distinguished between primary symbols, which directly mimic an object—the picture of a dog that means "dog"— and secondary symbols, in which "a connection is no longer directly traceable between words, or combinations of words,

and what they refer to," as in the sentence, "The red, white, and blue stands for freedom" (1929:211).

Check your progress

1. Who was Edward Taylor ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.5 NATURE OF SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Symbolic anthropology views human beings as the carriers and products, as subjects and objects, of a system of signs and symbols which serve as a means of communication to import knowledge and messages. These provide the foundation for action and behaviour, as well as ideas and values. The symbolic theory of culture is a model of human beings as a symbolizing species, as compared with a materialist theory of culture based on humans as primarily a producing species.

The symbolic definition of culture is part of a trend which sees culture as the science of meanings. Symbolic anthropologists study the system of codes and messages received by human beings through their interaction with other human beings and with the natural world. The entire universe is perfused with signs, says Charles Peirce, who laid the foundations for the discipline of semiotics. The fact that all creatures communicate with some form of sign and symbol, symbolic anthropology is engaged in research which is universal in scope.

Most of the knowledge, thoughts, feelings and perceptions of human beings is wrapped in language, a symbol system. Words convey meanings or name and classily objects and thoughts. As such, they are conceptual perceptions of the word couched in symbols. Word symbols, languages are appropriate to a society at a particular time and place. The word "planet' meant something different in the first century than it does in the twentieth. Language and its development provide the foundation for the symbolic view of culture. Linguistics, the study of language, has given the symbolic anthropologists the techniques with which to unravel the code which represent the complex of motives, experiences, and knowledge which shape and express beliefs and actions. Thus, linguistics is the historical forerunner of symbolic anthropology.

The philosophical ideas of Immanuel Kant provide an important base to the orientation of symbolic and semiotic anthropologists, as does the structuralism of Levi-Strauss. Kant developed a general theory of symbolic forms. He argued that there were basic structures of thinking which were independent of the content of thought. Kant claimed that humans had no direct insight into the real world. It was only certain 'pure intellectual concepts, he believed, like those of possibility, existence, necessity, substance, cause, time and place, that enable humans to have the descriptive tools to gain knowledge about the external world. As Kant put it, in knowing, it is not the mind that conforms to things, but things that conform to the mind (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1985, Vol. 22:493-494).

Human Knowledge is wrapped in language, a symbol system. Words convey knowledge, and knowing is couched in words. Words, which become signs when written, are appropriate to particular societies at particular times and places. Symbolic systems represent knowledge developed by a community of persons with a historic tradition and a particular system of communication. Symbolic analysis can proceed on an individual or a societal level.

The outside world and the subjective view of it are intertwined. Subject and object become one in the cognitive and symbolic view. Events, objects, and experiences are embedded in a set of meanings, enmeshed in a system of cultural symbols. Reality exists out there, but not as pure experience or as pure events. In the symbolic perspective culture is the meaningful aspect of concrete or objective reality and the coming-to-be, the appropriation to consciousness, of objective reality.

According to Victor Turner, Symbolic anthropologists are classified into two groups-

1. The abstract systems group which includes linguists, systems groups which includes linguists, structuralists and cognitive anthropologists; (This group concentrates on formal analysis and is less concerned with content than with methods and logics),and
2. The symbols and social dynamics group, which includes semiotics and symbolic anthropologists, sociolinguists, folklorist and literary critics (This group tries to combine the formal analysis with content and perception and meaning with social action).

3.6 VICTOR TURNER'S VIEWS ON SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Turner points out that signs are deliberate constructs for precise communicative purposes and, as such, play an important role in social action, particularly in technical, political and economic action. In technology, there is the cad/cam computer system to drive machines. In politics, there are posters and pictures of leaders used to foster national

support, for leaders and their programmes. In economics, there are indexes which signal the growth or decline of the economy and can stimulate or put a brake on actions in the market place.

Wherever symbol systems are guides to action, they operate within a social context. This gives a symbol or a sign its specific meaning, which may vary from one social context to another. The word 'father' has one meaning within a kinship structure, and a different one within the context of the catholic religious structure. Society is the result of the intersecting actions and behaviours of persons occupying different boundaries and social contexts. Signs and symbols are cues which set humans in motion. In the symbolic view, the combinations of signs, symbols and context give meaning and interpretation to human actions and behaviour.

Turner's contribution—and an example of his sophisticated common sense—was to consider symbols within specific fields of social action. In analyzing Ndembu ritual, Turner wrote,

I found I could not analyze ritual symbols without studying them in a time series in relation to other "events," for symbols are essentially involved in social processes. I came to see performances of ritual as distinct phases in social processes whereby groups become adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external environment. From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field. The symbol becomes associated with human interests, purposes, ends, and means, whether these are explicitly formulated or have to be inferred from the observed behavior. The structure and properties of a symbol become those of a dynamic entity, at least within its appropriate context of action. (1967:20)

Thus, the symbol of the American flag takes on different meanings if it is flapping on a flag post in a schoolyard, hanging in the back of a Chevrolet van, or draped across the casket of a slain soldier. The image is the same, but the meanings associated with it are different in kind and intensity.

Turner considers cultural symbols, including ritual symbols, "as originating in and sustaining processes involving temporal changes in social relations, and not as timeless entities" (1974:55). Symbols have some basic properties in common. They are powerful condensations of meaning: "Many things and actions are represented in a single formation" (Turner 1967:28). For example, Turner analyzes the meanings associated with the chishing'a, a Ndembu hunting shrine consisting of only a forked stick placed in the ground, a piece of earth from a termite hill trimmed into a rectangle and placed at the base of the branch, and a braid of grass. The associated meanings include social relationships between hunters and nonhunters, the hunter's immediate family and matrikin, toughness of mind and body, piety toward the hunter's ancestors, fertility, skill in the use of weapons, and fairness in the distribution of meat— some fifteen

different meanings directly associated with this shrine. "This is but a single example of the mighty synthesizing and focusing capacity of ritual symbolism," Turner observes; "It might almost be said that the greater the symbol, the simpler its form" (1967:298). A moment's reflection on the evocative nature of the Christian cross—simply two perpendicular pieces of wood of unequal length—suggests the truth of Turner's observation. Therefore, symbols are "'multivocal,' susceptible of many meanings" (Turner 1974:55), though their meanings tend to cluster around two extremes of a continuum; at one end, there is often a cluster of meanings around physiological and natural phenomena, and at the other, another cluster of meanings about social relationships. For example, the red in the American flag is sometimes explained as representing the blood of those who have died in defense of freedom, the stripes as the original thirteen colonies, and the entire symbol as evoking values of patriotism and respect.

But the important point is that symbols, condensed and multivocal, may speak to different people in different ways; the construction and reconstruction of meaning occurs with specific, dynamic contexts of social process. This has profound theoretical implications. If, as so many anthropologists have argued, symbols are the key to cultural life, and if, as Turner suggests, symbols are dynamic social creations—with the potential for contradictory, but coexisting, interpretations—then how can a cultural trait or a social structure be abstracted from its dynamic context? Why should one believe that cultural patterns serve to create social stability (Radcliffe-Brown) or meet discernible human needs (Malinowski) when the very nature of cultural life is fluid, contradictory, and dynamic as opposed to stable, congruent, and static?

Turner's insights into symbols touch a central nerve in twentieth-century anthropological thought. Culture exists as experience; it only occurs insofar as it is practiced. This leads to an anthropology of performance and a concern with praxis (literally, "action" or "practice," as in the performance of an art or skill), rather than an anthropology of social structure.

Check your progress

1. Briefly explain Victor Turner's View on Anthropology ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3.7 A CASE STUDY IN SYMBOLIC ANTHROPOLOGY

Mary Douglas, Professor of anthropology at University college, London writes on Social and Religious Symbolism of The Lele. Like many other primitive peoples, the Lele have no systematic theology, nor even any hall-systematized body of doctrines through which their religion can be studied. There exists a bewildering variety of prohibitions, falling on certain people all the time. However, we need to appreciate their idea of propriety, their ideals of womanhood and manhood, and of personal cleanliness in order to interpret their rites.

The Lele grow maize, hunt, weave raffia and draw palm wine. Of all their activities, hunting is the highest in their own esteem. It is not surprising that the richest vein of symbolism is derived from reflections on the animal world, on its relation to the human sphere, and on the relations between the different breeds of birds and beasts. They are hunters and yet they feel certain sympathy with other living inhabitants of their land.

The idea of the basic distinction, the opposition between mankind and animal kind, is expressed by the Lele, by relating it to one dominant value, the virtue of buhonyi, which means shame, shyness or modesty. The most shameless animal according to them is the dog who shares his master's domestic life but never acquires the human virtue of buhonyi.

Buhonyi is the sense of propriety. It is nothing less than the reaction of the nicely cultivated person to any improper behaviour. It provides the standard for all social relations. Infants are not expected to feel it, but the informal training of childhood is directed to awakening a lively sense of buhonyi. If a whole moral code can be summed up in one word, such as honour, or charity, for the Lele it would be "buhonyi.

Symbolic anthropologists can thus understand and interpret the intricacies of people's behaviour only by sharing their language or symbol system, which convey specific meanings and influence the process of social interaction and interpersonal relations.

3.8 INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Humanistic or interpretive anthropology seeks to redirect cultural anthropology from a strategy of finding causal explanations for human behaviour to one that seeks the interpretations and meaning in human action. It is a strategy which seeks the humanities rather than science as the model for anthropology. It seeks analogies based on theatre, play, drama and literature rather than those based on crafts mechanics and organic structures.

Humanistic anthropology is mentalist in its orientation, seeing culture as a system of ideas, values and meanings. Interpretive or

humanistic anthropology eschews the search for causal explanation in favour of a hermeneutic approach which seeks meanings through interpretations of behaviours or texts.

Interpretive anthropology does not look at how people behave as much as the meanings which persons living in the society give to their actions and behavior. These meanings are conveyed through the use of symbols which stand for values, codes and rules. This viewpoint does not deny the material world but believes that the material and social world of humans can be best understood by listening to the way persons living in the society explain and understand their institutions and customs. The job of the anthropologists is to interpret the interpretations of the "Natives".

3.9 CLIFFORD GEERTZ

Geertz is the theoretical leader if not the founder, of the approach to anthropology called Interpretive. He asserts that anthropology cannot aspire to be a science in the way that the physical sciences are, with laws and generalizations based on empirical and verifiable data. Geertz believes that anthropology must be based on concrete reality, but, from this reality, one derives meanings rather than predictions based on empirical data. Use of models, Geertz argues, strips social analysis of its living qualities for models tend to be too abstract. Instead, anthropology should base itself on the humanistic disciplines, utilizing description, poetics, literature, myths, symbols and features of human beings which differentiates them from other species. Geertz is not the first to develop the idea that the human sciences are different from the natural sciences. German philosophers, like Rickert and Dilthey (Wilk 1984: 176) believed the study of human phenomena should be historical and ideographic, as contrasted with the study of human phenomena which is abstract and generalizing. Ideographic studies are particular and unique. They are based on the case study and as such, can capture the totality of life within a society in its complexity and variation. Ruth Benedict (1934) stressed the ideographic study, as did her mentor, Franz Boas. Benedict believed there was a discontinuity, in kind, between two whole cultures which as often overlooked in the process of cross-cultural comparison and generalization.

German philosophers believed that since human beings had the mental capacity for language and learned knowledge, the study of human society required methods, techniques and orientations different from the study of other natural phenomena. Geertz and other humanistic anthropologists shared this view.

Miles Richardson makes the case for interpretive anthropology as a science of "humanity". He believes interpretive anthropology combines the concept of culture as symbol with the concept of culture as social interaction. He states that the search for underlying causes for human behaviour takes away the magic of real life.

Geertz sees the cultural context, not as a set of general propositions, but webs of significance, which humans spin and in which they operate as they go about their daily activities. In his view, to reduce the world to a cause-and-effect perspective is to miss the human mode of being. This is similar to Sartre's existentialist approach which, while edging the materialist basis for existence, insists on the importance of humans' everyday activities in any social analysis.

Geertz's view of the importance of the single case is not a radical break with the past. Boas, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown used the study of a single culture in depth to derive insights about the functioning of human societies. Again Geertz's belief that meaning in a society should be derived from the "native" point of view is not a radical departure from anthropological tradition. The argument against ethnocentrism, and the insistence on the integrity of all cultures is part of the perspective that tries to see other cultures from the native viewpoint. This was a strong element in Boasian anthropology.

Geertz's orientation to seek meanings based on the native view is relativistic. It is designed to make the anthropologists sensitive to views other than his or her own. Geertz seeks is self-knowledge, self-perception, self-understanding that sorts out who the observer is and who the people are that he is trying to understand. In his book "Local Knowledge, Geertz's interest in the individual case, seeks knowledge by starting from the base of native knowledge and combining it with that of the observer.

Geertz's perspective in anthropology can be called humanistic as well as interpretive, in the sense that he aims for expositions which retain the individuality and complexity of human behaviour usually found in literature and art. He argues that a work of fiction, a play, a painting, or a poem captures and provides insights into the human condition often missed by abstract theorizing. He likes his type of anthropology to a sort of cultural hermeneutics, a semantics of action.

3.10 CRITICISM ON GEERTZ'S INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Most anthropologists agree with the position that there is room in anthropology for both theorizing and concrete interpretation of a particular. Disagreement comes only when Geertz makes a claim for the superiority of his approach. He calls his orientation more human! Shankman counter this claim saying that the test of superiority should be based on whether it provides a better understanding of a particular phenomenon.

There are two assumptions in Geertz's interpretive anthropology which could be subject to challenge. One is that a scientific approach is necessary a dehumanizing one. The second is that people reveal the

essence of their culture through symbolic forms. One could argue that scientific theory and data have been employed 'against' the dehumanizing phenomena of fascism, sex determination, ethnocentrism and superstition. One could also argue that people are unaware of the symbolic significance of their actions, ideas and values. Therefore, a theory of culture benefits from the interpretive approach using the data of natives, as well as the scientific approach using the models and categories of social scientific observers.

Geertz's work has stressed that culture and social organization do not exist apart from individuals but rather in and through individuals' interpretations of events and objects around them. He has thereby asserted the idea that the social order is both subjective and objective, a matter of individual values and motivations, yet bound up in public symbols and communication.

It is interesting to compare Geertz's ideas with that of Heidegger (1927), truth according to whom is sought through human engagement with the world. For Heidegger, hermeneutics, or interpretive understanding is not a way of knowing the world, it is the way we are. It is the basic form of human existence. Interpretation is not a tool it is the essence of being human. He believes that there is no way for the subject/observer to separate himself or herself from the object/observed. In this view, the search for knowledge is conditioned by culture, context, and history.

Gadamer (1975) insisted that consciousness is not historically neutral, as thought by Descartes. Rather, it is historically built up and is shaped by ways of seeing by attitudes, and concepts embedded in our language and in our cultural norms and styles. Gadamer does not believe in the possibility of the social sciences carrying humans beyond their culturally shaped context to some standpoint from which they can see the things in themselves. Geertz's view of anthropology shares these perspectives of Heidegger and Gadamer.

3.11 SUMMARY

To summarize, 'symbolic anthropology' is based on the notion that members of a society share a system of symbols and meanings called 'culture'. The system represents the reality in which people live. Symbolic anthropologists stress system, whether it is loosely or tightly integrated, since members of a society must articulate and share to some degree. If communication is the 'sine quo non' of human society, symbolize (Leslie White's term), signing and conveying meaning on thoughts and actions, is what defines a culture. Symbolic anthropology is dedicated to studying and researching the process by which people give 'meaning to their world and their actions in it.

To summarize interpretive and humanistic anthropology of Geertz, we may say the problem of meaning is part of the problems of understanding in the social sciences. Positivism, a philosophic approach to understanding the world that da from the nineteenth century, is an approach to knowledge based on sense perception and logic. The traditional anthropological view is that, it one is to understand the cultures of other people, one must take on the roles of others. Malinowski believed at only by actually doing what the native did could one understand what it meant to him. Geertz argues for a "native point of view as one road to anthropological understanding. He went beyond this to add an interpretive approach allied to hermeneutics. In this approach, interpretations are assembled, one set of perceptions compared with one another. The perception and knowledge of the observer are welded to those of the native. The medium for the comparison is a system of symbols which give meaning to individual and social life.

With the compilation of interpretations of texts, actions, symbols, social forms and events, understanding slowly emerges. It is then presented in the form of thick description, which leads to an understanding of the meaning of one's own, as well as others' cultures. This briefly, is the interpretive and humanistic anthropology of Clifford Geertz. It takes the humanities as its model. It is a new trend in anthropology. It is based, in part, on new trends in scientific methodologies in the human sciences. These methodologies and perspectives have modified the traditional, empirical epistemologies in favour of interpretive ones.

Yet the significance of Geertz's interpretive approach is amply borne out by what Edward Tylor, the nineteenth century pioneer in anthropology wrote, "The power of using words as signs to express thoughts with which their sound does not directly connect them, in fact as arbitrary symbols, is the highest grade of the special human faculty in language, the presence of which binds together all races of mankind in substantial mental unity. The perception of the use of symbols as a significant human feature has become an important object of study in anthropology. Susanne Langer sees it as a changing trend in modem human intellectual activity.

3.12 QUESTIONS

- Briefly evaluate the origin of symbolic and interpretative anthropology and various schools of thoughts within.

- Examine the nature of Symbolic Anthropology, with particular reference to Victor Turner's views on it.

- Discuss in detail the tents of Interpretative Anthropology with reference to Clifford Geertz.

3.13 REFERENCES:

- Brown, Curtis. "Functionalism." In International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol. 3, edited by William A. Darity, Jr., 231-233. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008.

- Douglas, Mary. 1970. Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology. New York: Pantheon.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973a. The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man. In The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 33-54. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973b The Cerebral Savage: On the Work of Claude Levi-Strauss. In The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 345-359. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973c The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973d Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. *In* The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 3-30. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973e Religion as a Cultural System. In The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 87-125. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973f Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. In The Interpretation of Cultures. Pp. 412-453. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

- Harris, Marvin and Orna Johnson. 2007. Cultural Anthropology, 7th edition. Boston: Pearson.

- Harrison, Anthony Kwame.2013. "Thick Description." In Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 860-861. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE .

- Johnson, Michelle C. 2013 "Symbolic and Interpretive Anthropology." In Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 841-846. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

- Lukas, Scott A. "Postmodernism". 2013. In Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology: An Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 639-645. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

- Margolis, Maxine L. 2013."Cultural Materialism." In Theory in Social and Cultural Anthropology, Vol. 1, edited by R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, 147-149. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

- Sapir, Edward 1929 The Status of Linguistics as a Science. Language 5(4):207–214.

- Turner, Victor.1967 The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Turner, Victor.1969 The Ritual Process Structure and Antistructure. Chicago:Aldine.

- Turner, Victor.1974 Symbolic Action in Human Society, Ithaca ComellU'sity Press.

- Turner, Victor.1974 Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Turner, Victor.1980.Social Dramas and Stories about Them. Critical Inquiry 7:141-168.

- https://emporiaslim.libguides.com/c.php?g=891108&p=6407585#:~:text=To%20aid%20anthropologists%20in%20the,patterns%20of%20cultural%20and%20social

- https://courses.lumenlearning.com/culturalanthropology/chapter/symbolic-and-interpretive-anthropology/

❖❖❖❖

4

THICK DESCRIPTION, LIMINALITY AND COMMUNITAS

Unit Structure:

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the interpretative approach developed by Clifford Geertz

- To comprehend the significance of "Thick Description" in our day-to-day life

- To examine the concepts and relation between the Liminality and Communitas

4.1 CONCEPTS

- **Liminality:** The transitional period or phase of a rite of passage, during which the participant lacks social status or rank, remains anonymous, shows obedience and humility, and follows prescribed forms of conduct, dress, etc.

- **Social Fields:** Spaces where alternatives are considered and developed.

- **Arenas:** Spaces where alternatives are applied and implemented in society.

- **Social Dramas:** Are the conflicts created by the implementation of alternative social patterns and values in society.

- *Communitas***:** A sense of spontaneous sociability, love for each other, a sense of solidarity and equality and heightened emotional, cathartic or spiritual experience.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) articulated the position that all ethnography involved multiple acts of interpretation. In Geertz's view, "interpretation" was not an anthropologist's unverifiable opinion of another culture's motives and actions, but rather an informed exposition of how those motives and actions were meaningful in a specific cultural context. Geertz's position was formalized in a 1973 essay, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in which he argues "that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, and I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."

In his first chapterin *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Clifford Geertz discusses the role of the ethnographer. Broadly, the ethnographer's aim is to observe, record, and analyze a culture. More specifically, he or she must interpret signs to gain their meaning within the culture itself. This interpretation must be based on the "thick description" of a sign in order to see all the possible meanings. His example of a "wink of any eye" clarifies this point. When a man winks, is he merely "rapidly contracting his right eyelid" or is he "practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking conspiracy is in motion"? Ultimately, Geertz hopes that the ethnographer's deeper understanding of the signs will open and/or increase the dialogue among different cultures[M. Murphy].

4.3 "THICK DESCRIPTION"

As an anthropologist, Geertz was first and foremost interested in ethnography. However, he was frustrated by what he saw as the many surface-level readings of culture that some anthropologists were producing (Geertz 1973/2013). Why was this an issue? Simply put, Geertz recognized that culture is a knotty and often mysterious thing, made up of layers upon layers of intertwined symbols and signs. ("[It's] turtles all the way down," he once noted, quoting ancient Hindu belief; 1973, p. 29). This means that culture is not an easy thing to define, and it is even harder to describe. To aid anthropologists in the task of defining their cultural object of study, Geertz introduced the concept of **thick description** into the parlance of the discipline; this term can be described as "the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the

patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context" (Holloway apud RWJF, n.d., para. 3).

An Example: The Multivalence of a Wink

To make better sense of what thick description entails, Geertz explained it with a simple example:

Consider ... two boys rapidly contracting the eyelids of their right eyes. In one, this is an involuntary twitch; in the other, a conspiratorial signal to a friend. The two movements are, as movements, identical; from an l-am-a-camera, "phenomenalistic" observation of them alone, one could not tell which was twitch and which was wink, or indeed whether both or either was twitch or wink. Yet the difference, however unphotographable, between a twitch and a wink is vast; as anyone unfortunate enough to have had the first taken for the second knows. The winker is communicating, and indeed communicating in a quite precise and special way ... Contracting your eyelids on purpose when there exists a public code in which so doing counts as a conspiratorial signal is winking. That's all there is to it: a speck of behavior, a fleck of culture, and—voila!—a gesture.

That, however, is just the beginning. Suppose, he continues, there is a third boy, who, "to give malicious amusement to his cronies", parodies the first boy's wink, as amateurish, clumsy, obvious, and so on. He, of course, does this in the same way the second boy winked and the first twitched: by contracting his right eyelids. Only this boy is neither winking nor twitching, he is parodying someone else's, as he takes it, laughable, attempt at winking. Here, too, a socially established code exists ... The point is that between what Ryle calls the "thin description" of what the rehearser (parodist, winker, twitcher . . .) is doing ("rapidly contracting his right eyelids") and the "thick description" of what he is doing ("practicing a burlesque of a friend faking a wink to deceive an innocent into thinking a conspiracy is in motion") lies the object of ethnography: a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived, and interpreted, and without which they would not (not even the zero-form twitches, which, as a cultural category, are as much non-winks as winks are non-twitches) in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn't do with his eyelids. (1973, pp. 6-7)

In this short but impactful passage, Geertz provides us with a perfect example of a behavior that can only be explicated by thick description. The three boys—the winker, the twitcher, and the parodist—are all doing the same physical action (as Geertz's says "rapidly contracting [their] right eyelids"), but given the socio-cultural context that each boy finds himself in, the exact same behavior can mean vastly different things. Geertz argues that it is this detailed context—this *je ne sais quoi*—that the ethnographer must dig into and discover if one wants to adequately explain behavior and by extension culture.

In summation, Geertz is quoted as saying "culture is context" (Geertz quoted in Shankman et al., 1984, p. 262), and this utterance helps understand what exactly he was getting at when he discusses thick description.

Victor Turner, utilized the model of *thick description*, as developed by Geertz, but integrated it with Van Gennep's model of *rites of passage* and used his new theory as a means to understand the development of the 60's counter culture and the experience of individuals at counter cultural protests and festivals, such as Woodstock or the Stonewall riots of the New York gay community. He also reconstructed structural functionalist models of social cohesion to incorporate the role of social movements, ethnic groups and disenfranchised minorities within the context of broader society. To a large extent, Turner brought the practice of anthropology into contemporary industrialized society and out of the realm of remote pre-industrial communities abroad. In doing so, he brought about a major revaluation of the traditional theoretical models upon which anthropology had been based.

To resolve the tensions between his love of science and the humanities he studied anthropology at university; a discipline that could enable him to explore both a science of culture and human behaviour and the role of aesthetics, symbolism and meaning in society. He also felt that anthropology could permit him to explore the role of social dramas and human interaction, an area he loved in literature and theatre, in a practical context.

To this end he criticized arguments that the practice of anthropology necessarily implied the objectification and thus oppression of their subjects of research. Though he acknowledged that it did sometimes occur, he felt that the post-colonial critique of anthropologists misunderstood the nature of an anthropologists engagement with a community.

He argued that when an anthropologist, and often his or her family, lives in the field with a community for 1-3 years they become involved in complex interactions with the community that he defined as *social dramas*. In particular, an anthropologist becomes part of the social and cultural life of the community rather than an objective disinterested figure that can be kept distinct from the complex social and cultural interactions that happen around him or her. Consequently, understanding the role of *social dramas* personal characteristics and the levels of meaning implicit in a conversation, as experienced by the anthropologist as a participant in that society, are extremely important areas of research.

> Each culture, each person within it, uses the entire sensory repertoire to convey messages: manual gesticulation, facial expressions, bodily postures, rapid, heavy or light breathing, tears, at the individual level; stylised gestures, dance patterns, prescribed silences, synchronized

movement such as marching, the moves and "plays" of games, sport and *ritual*s, at the cultural level.

However, he did not want to abandon the principles of science but he wanted to apply scientific method to new areas of research into the human condition. He used the principles of structural functionalism, kinship, class and power relations but he wanted to bring individual character, personal style, skill at speech making, personal choice, the power of symbols in communication and the emotive or feeling content of human interaction. In short, he wanted to ground anthropology as a social science in the context of personal lived experience and emotional/spiritual significance. In contrast to Geertz who argued that social meaning could be interpreted as a text, Turner argued that a better analogy for making sense of culture is perceiving social interactions as a kind of theatre.

Check your Progress

1. Explain Victor Turner's model of Thick Description ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.4 LIMINALITY

When Van Gennep constructed his theory of *rites of passage*, his transitional or *liminal* phase was a place in which there could be some liberation from social norms. He defined the *liminal* place as "a gap between the ordered worlds where almost anything could happen. Van Gennep utilizes the word liminal, derived from the Latin term for threshold, and Turner develops it as a crucial component of his concept of *liminality*. The real or symbolic thresholds are very important components of ritual and symbolic experience. At these points the ritual subject is between fixed points of classification, in an ambiguous situation, structurally invisible in terms of society's classification systems. *Liminality* is the condition of being midpoint between a status sequence.

According to Turner, major *liminal* occasions are when a society takes cognizance of itself, takes stock of people's place in the emotional, spiritual and social world and reinterprets the overarching pattern of social relations that define social structure. In *liminal* spaces a person can stand outside of their normal social roles and embrace alternative social arrangements and values. It is a dangerous place where structure looses its grip as is illustrated by the many taboos surrounding these periods.

Liminality represents a stripping down of structural status and so our conceptualizing of it is usually focused more on our interpretation of nature rather than culture as the dominating feature of *liminal* experience. In Turner's model, structural customs, once broken down, reveal two human traits, the liberated intellect and the natural; body/spirit.

4.5 SOCIAL FIELDS AND ARENAS

Turner describes the spaces where subversive alternatives to the dominant social structure can be posed as *social fields*. In these *liminal*mental and social spaces, alternatives to paradigms or models for how society could be are presented in *social dramas* or *cathartic experiences*.

Thus, he defines **fields** as abstract cultural domains where paradigms for social interaction, values and symbolic representations are formulated, established and come into conflict with existing social and symbolic structures.

Turner uses the term **arena** to describe the setting in which new paradigms of social and symbolic structure are put into place and established as the new orthodoxy. There is a subsequent power battle between the various sponsors of alternative models of socio-cultural structure and it is this conflict that gives the underlying meaning to the role played by *social dramas* in society.

4.6 COMMUNITAS

To make sense of this, Turner developed the concept of *Communitas*. It is a fact of experience central to religion, drama and literature but it is not generally examined from an empiricist or scientific perspective. It is visible in *rites of passage*, *counter cultures* and *religious* movements. It brings the role of transformative, cathartic and religious experience as a central component of understanding social structure as opposed to the functionalist model of religion existing as a superstitious method of maintaining the cohesion and politico-economic structure of society.

Turner argues that in *liminal* situations, *communitas* emerges in the form of spontaneous sociability, love for each other, a sense of solidarity and equality and heightened emotional or spiritual experience. A heightened sense of joy, wellbeing and belonging that challenges the orthodox social and cultural order. It is a space where utopian ideals and hopes for a better future can be voiced and alternative paradigms of socio-cultural structure devised. It is usually associated with a sense that people have removed the masks of the ordinary social world; that the people involved have become genuine authentic individuals free of the restraints of social obligations. According to Turner, the heightened sense of joy

and authenticity in relationships experienced by people in this state is one of the major sources for utopian ideals expressed by counter cultural movements such as the Hippy movement of the 60's. He argues that the tendency to drop out and form alternative communities was, at least in part, an expression the participants desire to live in a permanent state of communitas.

According to Turner all societies have an idea of society as a social structure (segmented categories of unequal people), which is contrasted with a desire for society to be a homogenous, undifferentiated authentic whole, embracing the idea of *communitas*. The latter model is more apparent when there is a collective religious or political utopian movement but it can also be seen in tribal rituals. Society is pictured as a *communitas* of free and equal comrades – a society of total persons with shared values and ideals and a sense of belonging. Rituals can be performed where cooperative and egalitarian behaviour is characteristic and everyday definitions of status and division are ignored. People who are normally divided and antagonistic can come together and transcend their differences in their common experience or humanity. As *Turner* comments,

> In passing from structure to structure many rituals pass through communitas. Communitas is almost always thought of or portrayed by actors as a timeless condition, an eternal now, as a moment in an out of time or as a state to which the normal structural view of time is no longer applicable.

Communitas arises spontaneously and is self-generated and, in Turner's view, is an indispensable need in society. To maintain a sense of communitas you try to eliminate outward signs of rank and division, to focus on the common experience of being human rather than a person's status and socially ascribed role. As Turner writes,

> People have a real need to doff the masks, cloaks and apparel and insignia of status from time to time even if only to don the liberating masks of a liminal masquerade.

Now while Turner sees *communitas* as existing outside structure, liminal situations do have their own alternative forms of structure and symbolism that is largely derived and reconstructed from the cultural mainstream of their society. For example, structure may exacerbate difference between the sexes in dress, decoration and acceptable behaviour people in a state of *communitas* may choose to deliberately diminish them or even reverse the roles. From a functionalist perspective this represents a dangerous and debilitating break down of social cohesion but for Turner these spaces represent the positive potential for *communitas* that reaffirms solidarity, values and social bonds between people as individuals sharing a common experience.

The association of symbols used in the construction of *liminal* spaces and *communitas* is usually appropriated from images of people associated with the margins of mainstream society. For example, gypsies, indigenous peoples, witches and other groups perceived to be on the margins or oppositional to mainstream culture are often appropriated as a symbol of communitas. The key issue is that these symbols are images of otherness or ostracization from mainstream society which are reconstructed and recast as symbols of individualism, alternate community and alienation from the cultural mainstream. This often leads to a situation of conflict when indigenous peoples, attempting to assert their own socio-political and cultural identity are forced to compete with constructed identities of people who wish to appropriate these images for the purpose of *communitas* and differentiation from the cultural mainstream.

The fact that these social groupings and images have their own alternative structures of social relationships, symbols and cultural matrixes which are derived from and, to some extent, dependant on the cultural mainstream for legitimacy and impact led Turner to describe them as *anti-structure*. That is to say the symbolic representations and association of images, often chosen for shock value, are derived from their position in relation to the cultural mainstream and are dependent on their perception within the cultural mainstream in order to function. As Turner comments,

If we understand *anti-structure* and *communitas* to be phenomenon that occurs on the margins of society then, in order to understand their role on the margins, we must have an understanding of how those margins are defined.

Check your progress

1. What is meant by Communitas ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4.7 LIMINALITY, COMMUNITAS, AND PILGRIMAGE

As noted above, Turner borrowed Van Gennep's concept of liminality and expanded it into a conceptual tool for understanding special phases in social life when transition is the dominant theme. "If our basic model of society," Turner wrote, "is that of a 'structure of positions,' we must regard the period of margin or 'liminality' as an inter-structural situation" (1967:93). Periods of transition during rites of passage or other

rituals or during pilgrimages are similar in that they are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. (Turner 1969:95)

Liminal periods fascinated Turner because they frequently are characterized by changes in and suspension of normal social relationships. Liminal periods are not just in and out of time but are also "in and out of social structure" (Turner 1969:96), suggesting the existence of two major models of human relationships:

The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated communitas, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. (Turner 1969:96)

Turner lists a number of binary oppositions that parallel the associated properties of communitas versus structure: transition/ state, equality/inequality, anonymity/systems of nomenclature, silence/speech, absence of status/status, and so on (1969:106–107). Such properties are part of rites of passage in traditional societies, but they also characterize moments in the major religions, particularly during pilgrimages.

The imagery of pilgrimage underscores its transitional nature; it is a recurrent metaphor in Christian literature, such as in the most famous pilgrimage in English literature, Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales:
> This world nis but a thrughfareful of wo
> And we ben pilgrims, passinge to and fro;
> Death is an end of every worldysoore

and this nineteenth-century American hymn:
> This world is not my home,
> I'm just a passin' through.
> My treasures are laid up
> Somewhere beyond the blue.

Christian imagery emphasizes the liminal nature of pilgrimage. After all, Christ was born while in transition, his human existence a brief separation from his true nature.

Outside the Christian tradition, pilgrimages are liminal phenomena exhibiting the quality of communitas in their social relations (Turner 1974:166–167). Such liminality may be communicated by removing the outward symbols of social differences. Turner comments onthe bond that

exists between communitas, liminality, and lowermost status. It is often believed that the lowest castes and classes in stratified societies exhibit the greatest immediacy and involuntariness of behavior. This may or not be empirically true, but it is at any rate a persistent belief….. Those who would maximize communitas often begin by minimizing or even eliminating the outward signs of rank as, for example, Tolstoy and Gandhi tried to do in their own persons. In other words, they approximate in dress and behavior the condition of the poor. (1974:243)

Pilgrimages are a type of social process with basic properties: they are liminal social relations characterized by communitas, and they employ symbols emphasizing the merger or inversion of normal social rankings. Shrines, the objects of pilgrimages, may create a ritual topography in which paramount shrines, related shrines, and the paths between them mark a network of social process. Pilgrimages touched on Turner's basic theoretical interests as he listed them: "the study of 'processual units,' 'antistructure,' and the semantics of ritual symbols. All these interests converge on pilgrimage processes" (1974:166).

4.8 CONCLUSION

Abrief sketch of Turner's key concepts does not do justice to his vigorous intellect and energetic exploration of such different ideas as the process approach to political anthropology (Swartz et al. 1966) and a study of Noh drama (Turner 1984). Edith Turner recalls that during the early 1960s, "it was as if, as his thought progressed, there would come a stage when it was time for him to take a new tack, like a sailboat beating upwind" (1985:8). Turner articulated how his varied interests formed part of a basic research agenda:

My work as an anthropologist has been the study of cumulative interactions over time in human groups of varying span and different cultures. These interactions, I found, tend to amass toward the emergence of sustained public action, and given my Western background, it was difficult to characterize these as other than "dramatic." (1984:19)

Turner thus came to the conclusion that *ritual*, *social dramas* and *cultural artefacts* could be best understood by what he defined as an *anthropology of experience*. In particular, rather than looking at the structures of society one should look at the symbolic and emotive impact of these structures and, more importantly, what happened between the structures; the *liminal* and *interstitial* places. In the areas outside of social structures and norms behaviour, in Turner's analysis, becomes *ergotropic*, exhibiting arousal, heightened activity and strong emotional responses. Social life is full of *social dramas* in transitional places. There is a sort of break in the rules and structures and normative patterns of behaviour in these places which corresponds to periods of heightened emotion and experience. Underlying structural categories and divisions may be

revealed in poignant, symbolic and theatrical patterns, often this can involve acting out the opposite or exaggerated representations of expected norms. In this focus on *interstitial* places Turner breaks significantly from traditional anthropology in that in his analysis it is not so much what happens within the confines of social structures but what happens between and outside of them that is important.

4.9 CONTRIBUTION

Turner's ideas have been immensely influential and many studies of counter cultures, carnival and festivals are based in his work. Perhaps the most famous is Dick Hebdige's *Sub-culture the Meaning of Style* which examines the Punk, Glitter and mod movements in the 70's. Turner's ideas represent a substantial contribution to the study of anthropology. He grounded anthropological research into peoples lived experience and reintroduced the study of spiritual and cathartic experience into the social sciences. He also focused the study of symbolic anthropology into the multiple levels of personal significance that symbols represent experientially to the individual and out of the realm of abstracted argument regarding a symbols essential value with regards to the society. Finally, he gave new tools that enabled the study of anthropology to move into the contemporary environment and deal with phenomena like sub-cultures and the impact of popular culture.

4.10 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the nature and significance of interpretive approach of Clifford Geertz. How does it help in understanding any culture ?

2. Examine in detail the concept of "Thick Description" developed by Geertz with relevant examples.

3. Elaborate on the how Turner used Liminality and Communitas as a conceptual tool for understanding special phases in social life when transition is the dominant theme.

4. Evaluate the relevance between Liminality, Communitas and Pilgrimage by Turner.

4.11 REFERENCES:

- Barnard, A. (2004). History and Theory in Anthropology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Geertz, C. (1973) The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books.

- (1983). Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology. New York: Basic Books.

- J.C. Alexander & P. Smith (ed).(2011) Interpreting Clifford Geertz: Cultural Investigation in the Social Sciences**.** Palgrave Macmillan.

- Moore Jerry, 2009. Visions of Culture an introduction to Anthropological Theories and Theorists (3rded)United Kingdom, Rowen and Little Publishers.

- Turner, Victor (1984)Liminality and the Performative Genres. In Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals toward a Theory of Cultural Performance. J. MacAloon, ed. Pp. 19–41. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.

- Turner, Edith (1985) From the Ndembu to Broadway. In On the Edge of the Bush. E. Turner, ed. Pp. 1–15. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

- Turner, Victor, and Edith Turner (1978) Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives. New York: Columbia University Press. White, Leslie 1949 The Science of Culture. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

❖❖❖❖

5

THEORIZING NATION-STATE, ETHNICITY, MULTICULTURALISM.

Unit Structure

5.0   Objectives.

5.1   Introduction

5.2   Nation-State

    5.2.1   Origin

    5.2.2   Theories on Nation-State

    5.2.3   Minorities challenge to nation-based citizenship

    5.2.4   National disintegration

    5.2.5   Emerging challenges with Nation-State- Cryptocurrency.

5.3 Ethnicity

    5.3. 1. Understanding Ethnicity

    5.3.2 Approaches in Ethnicity

    5.3.3Theories surrounding Ethnicity

    5.3.4 Politics and Ethnicity

    5.3.5 DNA Testing and Ethnicity

5.4.Multiculturalism

    5.4.1 Meaning of Multiculturalism

    5.4.2 Assumption

    5.4.3 Process

    5.4.4 Debates surrounding Multiculturalism

    5.4.5 Changes in the Multiculturalism

5.5 Summary

5.6 Questions

5.7 References

5.0   OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To learn about the concept of Nation-State and its theories.
- ❖ To understand Ethnicity and its different facets.
- ❖ To learn about Multiculturalism and the new changes in it.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will study three important topics, i.e., Nation-state, Ethnicity, and Multiculturalism. All these concepts will help you

understand our society and its emergence and changes happening within it. It would give you a perspective through which you could view society better.

5.2 NATION-STATE

A nation-state is a territorially bounded sovereign government (i.e., a state) ruled in the name of a group of citizens who identify as a nation. The authority of a core national group within the state determines the legality of a nation-sovereignty over a territory and the people who live there. Members of the state have a strong bond with the land and territory and consider it their home. As a result, they demand that other groups acknowledge and obey its rule inside and outside the state.

5.2.1 Origin –
France was seen as the first nation-state after the French Revolution. However, some see the English Commonwealth in 1969 as the beginning of nation-state creation. The origin of the Nation-state is influenced by ideologies like communism or religious beliefs too. E.g., Church, Buddhism, Monarchy. There is also a revolution aspect whenever there is oppression in the state too. A nation-state is based on the principle that a nation belongs to the people, and there is consent which the rulers have earned through some form of election or consensus. Though there exist several nations, who act on dictatorship too. So, for the origin of a certain state, some people are needed, and they have some common consensus within them[i].

5.2.2 Theories on Nation-State

1. **Declarative theory of statehood** – This theory defines a state as a person in international law when it meets the following criteria: 1) a defined territory; 2) a permanent population; 3) a government 4) a capacity to enter into relations with other states. According to it, an entity's statehood is independent of its recognition by other states.

2. **Constitutive theory of statehood**- This theory defines a state as a person in international law if, and only if, it is recognized as sovereign by other states. This theory of recognition was developed in the 19th century. Under it, a state was sovereign if another sovereign state recognized it as such.

3. **Westphalian system**- A global system based on the principle of international law that each state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs, to the exclusion of all external powers, on the principle of non-interference in another country's domestic and internal affairs, and that each state (no matter how large or small) is equal in international law. The doctrine is named after the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War[ii].

5.2.3 Minorities' challenge to nation-based citizenship

In some nation-states, ethnic minorities have challenged the traditional model of nation-based citizenship because they claim rights based on principles alternative to citizenship: that rely on international conventions that recognize individual human rights or the collective rights of minorities and indigenous peoples (some scholars call this phenomenon "post-national citizenship."

5.2.4 National disintegration

Increasing economic inequality between regions within nation-states and the rise of identity politics since the late 20th century have increased the likelihood of national disintegration in some countries through the development of secessionist aspirations among some ethnic groups, a phenomenon sometimes called Balkanization. Balkanization can be observed both in relatively young nation-states in the postcolonial developing world and in established Western nation-states with long traditions of republicanism (e.g., the United Kingdom and Spain). This type of struggle may spill over to other nation-states by spreading information and images via international media channels and the new social media.

5.2.5 Emerging Challenges with Nation-State – Crypto currency

What will be the future of the nation-state? Will its social control over the people reduce in the future? There are several challenges that the nation-state has to face, like threats from civil society, religious extremist groups, cultural revolution. Let us now take the example from the field of finance. We will discuss this with an illustration of Crypto currency, the buzzword right now on the internet. In the traditional system, the state printed notes; coins are called fiat currency, there is a buyer and a seller. The government regulates it and takes responsibility for its value.

On the other hand, Bitcoin and Crypto currency is a digitally encrypted, decentralized currency not linked to or regulated by any government or central bank. It is based on blockchain technology, which operates with a distributed ledger framework. Blockchain is a distributed ledger managed by a network of computers that maintains an exact copy of the database and updates its record by consensus based on mathematics. Here there is no middle person involved. It is handled from peer-to-peer networks in a free, open-source computer. Crypto currencies have not been widely approved as fiat currencies; however, there would be a huge change of power if it happens. Imagine if it gets approved, then the government's monopoly in terms of regulating the finances would be reduced. There could be a huge divide, unlike the digital payment system brought whereby literate people can use these structures and take more benefit out of it. Those who invested earlier into this would benefit more than the latter[iii].

Suppose the state loses its monopoly of controlling its people's finance, actions. How much the state will control its people in a

democratic structure is also an important question as citizens also have the right to choose and make their own decisions. Markets are open for both foreign companies, so who controls the economy.

Check Your Progress
1. Discuss the theories connected to Nation-State?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain in few lines the challenges with the nation-state?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.3 ETHNICITY

Understanding Ethnicity

Ethnicity, in simple words, means a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition. Ethnicity was a salient feature of many historical societies. In modern settings, ethnicity first consists of a reference to a collective identity, involving fundamental dilemmas[iv]. In sociology, Ethnicity is a concept referring to a shared culture and a way of life. This can be reflected in language, religion, material culture such as clothing and cuisine, and cultural products such as music and art. Ethnicity is often a major source of social cohesion as well as social conflict. In our world, we have large ethnic groups to small ethnic groups which consists of just a dozen people too[v].

The intellectual history of the term 'Ethnicity' is relatively short: before the 1970s, there was very little mention of it in anthropological literature and textbooks containing no definitions. Since the mid-1970s, the concept has partly acquired strategic significance within anthropological theory as a response to the changing postcolonial geopolitics and the rise of ethnic minorities activism in many industrial states. The shift has resulted in a proliferation of theories of Ethnicity, explaining such diverse phenomena as social and political change, identity formation, social conflict, race relations, nation-building, assimilation, etc.

Approaches in Ethnicity

There are three competing approaches to the understanding of Ethnicity. They could be roughly categorized as primordial, instrumentalist and constructivist. Roughly speaking, primordial theories assert that ethnic identification is based on deep, 'primordial' attachments to a group or culture; instrumentalist approaches treat Ethnicity as a political instrument exploited by leaders and others in pragmatic pursuit of their interests; and constructivist approaches emphasize the contingency and fluidity of ethnic identity, treating it as something which is made in specific social and historical contexts, rather than (as in primordial arguments) treating it as a 'given'. A Primordialist views the objectivist theories of Ethnicity, which assert that ultimately there is some real, tangible foundation to ethnic identification, can be subdivided into those in which ethnicity is viewed as a predominantly biological phenomenon and those in which it is construed as a product of culture and history. The conceptual differences are ultimately rooted in different understandings of human nature and society. In those theoretical frameworks strongly influenced by evolutionism, Ethnicity is usually conceptualized as based on biology and determined by genetic and geographical factors.

Theories surrounding Ethnicity

Some authors view that recognition of the group affiliation is genetically encoded, being a product of early human evolution when the ability to recognize the members of one's family group was necessary for survival (Shaw and Wong 1989). Sociobiological interpretations of Ethnicity have been severely criticized (Thompson 1989: 21–48), but the main thesis – that human ethnic groups are extended kin groups or collectivities based on the descent – was assimilated by relativists in talk of 'quasi-kinship' groups (Brown 1989: 6–8). Explicit primordialism was entertained in Russian and Soviet anthropology. Taking its origin in Herder's neo-romantic concept of the Volk, as a unity of blood and soil, it was worked out into a positivist program for ethnographic research in the work of S.M. Shirokogorov, who has defined the 'ethnos' as 'a group of people, speaking the same language and admitting common origin, characterized by a set of customs and a lifestyle, which are preserved and sanctified by tradition, which distinguishes it from others of the same kind' (1923: 122). This approach was later developed in the works of Y.V. Bromley, who has given a very similar definition of ethnos (1981), and L.N. Gumilev (1989).

The latter believed in the existence of the ethnos as a 'biosocial organism' and developed a framework for the study of ethnogenesis as a process that was geographically determined: the rise to the existence of an ethnos was depicted as a combined effect of cosmic energies and landscape. Instrumentalist approaches from the late 1960s, in theories of modernity and modernization, Ethnicity was treated as a remnant of the pre-industrial social order, gradually declining insignificance. It was a marginal phenomenon to be overcome by the advance of the modern state and national integration and assimilation ('melting pot,' or assimilationist

ideology, prevalent in American cultural anthropology from the 1960s to the mid-1970s).

Until the mid-1970s, Ethnicity was defined structurally, i.e., in terms of the cultural morphology of a given society (the linguistic, religious, and racial characteristics treated as 'primordial givens' or 'bases' of Ethnicity). It was suggested that objective and perceived differences between the various groups in society served as a basis for producing a distinctive group identity, which in its turn created the context for inter-group relations and political mobilization. Cultural affinities might be exploited as a basis for inter-group affiliation in political struggles but were seen as temporary and minor impediments on the way to the modern Ethnicity 241 nation-state. So, in this cultural approach to the study of Ethnicity, it was typically defined in terms of the objective cultural structure of the society (Smith 1969: 104–5). The common observation that not every cultural group develops an ethnic identity or consciousness of group affiliation could be accounted for in the concept of 'latent or 'silent' Ethnicity. Sometimes this functionalism acquired a psychological twist, then Ethnicity was explained as an effective means of recovering lost ethnic pride (Horowitz). The debates would be continuous and every time, it would develop further. However, we can come to the common consensus that the definition of an ethnic community as a group of people whose members share a common name and elements of culture possess a myth of common origin and common historical memory, who associate themselves with a particular territory and possess a feeling of solidarity, opens further avenues for integration of anthropological, political and psychological knowledge in the understanding of ethnic phenomena.

Politics and Ethnicity

At times, ethnicity is converted into a product of political myths, created and manipulated by cultural elites to pursue advantages and power. The cultural forms, values, and practices of ethnic groups often become resources for elites in competition for political power and economic advantage. At times even for generating votes. They become symbols and referents to identify members of a group, which are called up to ease the creation of political identity. Thus, ethnicity is created in the dynamics of elite competition within the boundaries determined by political and economic realities (Brass 1985)[vi].

DNA Testing for Ethnicity

With technology becoming more advanced, people who have lost touch with their roots due to migration, forced migration, adoption, etc., can find their origin through DNA tests. DNA testing is available through services such as 23andMe, My Heritage, and Living DNA, allowing people to explore their genealogy using their genetic information. Examining DNA can reveal information about a person's ancestry and ethnic background. While the principles of DNA testing are sound, the private companies that offer this service through home-testing kits have been criticized for their methodologies (vi)

Check Your Progress

1. Explain how to know one's own ethnic identity through technology?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the interaction of politics and Ethnicity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.4 MULTICULTURALISM

5.3.1 Meaning of Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is a situation in which different cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities and none is ignored or regarded as unimportant[vii]. In Sociology, Multiculturalism means how a given society deals with cultural diversity, both at the national and the community level.

5.3.2 Assumption

There are several assumptions through which Multiculturalism works like - Members of often different cultures can coexist peacefully. Multiculturalism believes that society is enriched by preserving, respecting, and even encouraging cultural diversity. There are two theories associated with Multiculturalism, salad bowl theory, melting pot theory[viii].

5.3.3 Process

A given society becomes multicultural because of several reasons like immigration, migration, urbanization. For example – Canada invites people from all over the world to stay in their country. They give permanent resident status to them. This is done for two reasons because they have a vast amount of land and fewer people. To maintain the required amount of population ratio. Clifford Geertz saw Multicultural culture as a 'system of symbols and meanings, which he contrasted with norms, defined as oriented patterns for action (Kuper 1999: 71).

5.3.4 Debate surrounding Multiculturalism –

In the late twentieth century, much of the multicultural debate has focused on the politics of multicultural citizenship in plural or immigrant

societies and concerns language or religious rights rather than just dealing with 'culture.' Critics of Multiculturalism come from everywhere - the socialist left and the liberal center and right. They include postmodern anthropologists, multiculturalism feminists, and human rights activists. Current theories in anthropology are based on the idea that cultures are creative and changing, internally contested and heterogeneous. People in one culture constantly borrow from others. Cultures are therefore inescapably hybrid and permeable. For this reason, too, cultures do not have a single, unified leadership and any attempt by the state to impose one is false and oppressive. Critically also, diasporas have multiple and intersecting identities, including party political affiliations to the left and right (Werbner 2002).

Feminists such as Okin (1999) argue that Multiculturalism gives too much power to religious elders. Usually, men rule over women and their bodies and deny them their rights as equal citizens to choose how to dress, whom to marry or divorce, if and when to have children.

In current human rights discourse, the right of individuals and collectivities to foster, enhance and protect their culture and traditions is enshrined, but so too are freedom of speech and freedom from violence, which deny the absolute right of traditional practices such as forced marriages. Thus, Multiculturalism has its contradictions.

Anti-multiculturalist liberals argue that liberal democracy allows sufficient space for ethnic and religious expression in civil society and the private sphere. Universal individual rights to equality before the law are at risk if cultural rights are given preference. Talal Asad has argued (1993) that minorities need protection from offensive symbolic and civic or material exclusions and violations. On the left, the argument is that the superficial celebration of Multiculturalism – of exotic cuisines, popular music, or colourful festivals and rituals – disguises ongoing economic and political inequalities. Rather than addressing these, the state funds multicultural festivals and turns its back on real deprivation, prejudice, and discrimination problems. Hence, multiculturalism and identity politics obscure the common oppression of the underprivileged within capitalist society and divide anti-racist movements. Critics on both right and left tend to assume that Multiculturalism is a conspiracy of top-down state engineering. Beyond the struggles for local recognition, Multiculturalism has today become a global movement against national assimilationist pressures. It refers to different struggles by minorities demanding autonomy, recognition and a share of state or local state budgets. Rather than thinking of Multiculturalism as a discourse that highlights culture, it needs to be thought of as a politics of equal and just citizenship that bases itself on the right to be 'different' within a democratic political community.[ix].

5.3.5 Changes in the Multiculturalism

Are we heading towards monoculture is an important question that we need to ask, driven by modern-day capitalistic groups? These groups

are not just based in India but from different parts of the world. If yes, then in what pattern do these things operate. Let us try to look into this with some examples and search for answers to this question.

- **Consumerism**- Our choice of products has immensely been modified by different players in the market. Let us take the example of Amazon. Amazon gives free home delivery with a prime membership. As a result, the small traders with local shops and their business have impacted immensely. Many people prefer to buy from Amazon as there is a wide choice available. There are reviews which one could read and then make a decision to buy.

- **Food habits** – Eating from Zomato, Swiggy is a growing trend. Especially among those who work in offices. These companies are bringing the renovation in the food and technology industry. As a result, obesity in the country increases with the new food culture that has emerged post-liberalization.

- **Transportation** – There are certain parameters in a lay person's language when someone is seen as rich. One of the parameters is that of owning a car. If you cannot afford a car now, we have Zoom car, Uber, Ola.

- **Infodemic** – In the traditional setting, the knowledge was accessible only to a limited group. They preserved it and passed it on to their generation. However, right now, all are using the internet and mass media. The same ideas are being presented and the market creates an opinion. The information is broadcasted repeatedly, and one is made to think about a specific topic or person.

- **Instagram and Youtube**– Traditionally, socializationwas from family members, friends, peers from the workplace, or even from schools. However, now people follow certain habits from that of Instagram, Youtube. Nearly most millennials living in cities know to take a selfie, must have tried making a reel in Instagram. It can be seen as a herd behaviour where one creates a path and all the others follow. Sociologically speaking, it is peer pressure, fear of missing out, and even fad. However, this affects at a large scale the behaviour of individuals where one looks for instant results; there is also a higher amount of dopamine that is released from the brain when one gets the instant result. The individual then gets into similar behaviour and searches for another dopamine-releasing product and it follows. This affects concentration, the self-esteem of the individual at a large level.

We are now getting into an era of visual culture. Companies are making products that cater to this culture, like swiping culture, whether online card payment or relationship. Companies are making this kind of homogeneous culture to make it easier for them to sell things in large quantities to a large group. In cultural studies terms, we would call this mass culture. However, these corporates have just used our data, which

we publish on social media, which search in google to sell the products to us or even gain votes like in the Cambridge Analytica case in America. However, there are still issues of marginalization, minorities existing, which are not resolved yet. Accepting diversity is the only solution for a peaceful world.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the changes in the multicultural society?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain Multiculturalism in few lines.

_____

_____

_____

_____

5.4 SUMMARY

This chapter began with understanding the concept of a nation-state, a territory bounded sovereign government (i.e., a state) ruled in the name of a group of citizens who identify as a nation. In the second section of the chapter, we learned about Ethnicity, a social group with a common national or cultural tradition. The size of the group could be as small as even a dozen of members. Ethnic groups have often been marginalized through politics, culture, migration, war, etc. In modern times, we have several websites like MyHeritage and LivingDNA to trace one's ethnic identity and roots. In the last part of the chapter, we learned about Multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a situation in which different cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities, and none is ignored or regarded as unimportant. We tried to also understanding Multiculturalism and looked into the transition through capitalistic ventures in Indian society. In current human rights discourse, the right of individuals and collectivities to foster, enhance and protect their culture and traditions is enshrined, but so too are freedom of speech and freedom from violence, which deny the absolute right of traditional practices such as forced marriages. Thus, Multiculturalism has its contradictions.

5.5 QUESTIONS

1. Explain Nation-State its origin, theories and emerging challenges associated with it.
2. Explain in brief Ethnicity and the approaches and theories surrounding it.
3. Explain Multiculturalism and the debates surrounding it.

5.6 References

- https://www.britannica.com/topic/nation-state

- http://uafulucknow.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Nation-state-part-1.pdf

- https://www.goodreturns.in/classroom/difference-between-fiat-currency-and-cryptocurrency-1208124.html

- Ben-Rafael, E., & Sternberg, Y. (2015). Ethnicity, sociology Smelser, N. J., &Baltes, P. B. (Eds.). (2001). *International encyclopedia of the social &behavioral sciences* (Vol. 11). Amsterdam: Elsevier/

- https://www.thoughtco.com/ethnicity-definition-3026311

- Sergey Sokolovskii, Valery Tishkov (2009) ed. Barnard, A., & Spencer, J., *The Routledge encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology*. Routledge.

- https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/multiculturalism

- https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-multiculturalism-4689285

- Werbner, Pnina (2009) ed. Barnard, A., & Spencer, J., *The Routledge encyclopedia of social and cultural anthropology*. Routledge.

❖❖❖❖

6

FIELDWORK AND REFLEXIVITY, CRITIQUE OF CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHIES

Unit Structure

6.0 Objectives

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Difference between fieldwork and opinion

6.3 Understanding the fieldwork process

6.4 Advantages of fieldwork

6.5 Disadvantages of fieldwork

6.6 Qualities required for fieldworker.

6.7 Reflexivity

6.8 Critique of Classical Ethnography

6.9 Summary

6.10 Questions

6.11 References

6.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand about Fieldwork in detail.
- To learn about Reflexivity in research.
- To understand classical ethnography with few scholars' work.

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss Fieldwork and Reflexivity from a practical approach, i.e., how you will encounter it in the field. There are two approaches in which anything could be studied. The first is book view and the second is field view. Before getting into the details, let us begin with understanding what a field is. A field is where a researcher is studying a topic by himself or herself. University programs like M.Phil, PhD. students go themselves to the field. However, in big projects carried out by Non-Governmental Organizations, Professors generally have a team that is involved. For example - During the Census survey, people come to your home and ask questions. So here, the Chief Commissioner of India does not come to our doors, but trained field workers come to our homes. So, your home is the field for the person who visits to enquire about the question. Here, the person who is asking a question is the fieldworker.

6.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FIELDWORK AND OPINION

Let us begin this chapter by understanding what fieldwork is. Let us take an example. Imagine you are sitting on the bus and it suddenly starts raining. The bus starts moving slowly, you are bored now and start to speak with the stranger next to you. You say, 'isn't it heavy rains today. Yes, the other person responds. He also adds the weather is unpredictable these days. Now, this conversation can you call as fieldwork. Well, the answer is no. It is just an exchange. However, if you travel by the same bus every day for a month and talk to the person and learn about his travel experiences in bus, how the transport system was he was a child and so on. You also add few questions like problems, difficulties. You collect information across gender, age, religion, or any specific criteria and then draw observations based on that then, it could be called fieldwork. Few points you have to remember also during fieldwork are that it is an art form like dancing and music. It takes time to learn and develop within oneself. Every field is different from one another. The experiences and people you would also be encountering will both be changing. No matter how prepared you are, there will be some element of surprise you would witness in the field. It could lead to culture shock, respect, appreciation, and other emotions within you as a human being and a researcher.

6.3 UNDERSTANDING THE FIELDWORK PROCESS

Let us take an example - Imagine you have to study about Antarctica. There are two ways to study it. You are going to a library and studying Antarctica and writing a report on it, then it is called book view. In other words, you are writing your research outcome through the basis of someone else study, data, records, etc. Same Antarctica if you are going yourself by taking a plane, clearing all the paper works. You may be facing challenges on the way, like getting the documentation done. Fearful thoughts on your own mind about whether survival etc. and then finally you reach your destination Antarctica and then you write about it. On the basis of your writing about it, this would be called as fieldwork. Here you have a gone through a process by yourself. There are some challenges, obstacles which you have faced. There is a learning and personal experience together, which is special and what you have learned on your own. This experience is unique to you; no one else has this. Hence, when you write about it, that would be your field report. The process of searching for a economical plane ticket, people whom to interview, and how to go about it is all your fieldwork. Further you spent around some months in Antarctica and you started observing them, talking to the natives, saw their festivals, made notes of everything that is data collection. Fieldwork, in other words, through this example, is whereby you are taking steps to study a topic (problem) in the actual setting (location of people).

6.4 ADVANTAGES OF FIELDWORK

There are several benefits of doing fieldwork. You get closer to the subject. There are personal relations built based on trust and understanding—these things one cannot find in the quantitative or positivist tradition. Fieldwork helps us to get into the depth of the problem the roots than just a superficial understanding.

6.5 DISADVANTAGES OF FIELDWORK

It is time-consuming. Resources draining too, as one has to look out for a place to stay. Develop rapport in the field. You cannot just go and ask random questions one has to prepare. Develop trust, which takes a lot of time. If the culture is different from which one has been growing up and the culture of the people being studied is different, then there is a bias that could emerge knowingly, unknowingly. There could be negative experiences in the field which could harm the researcher or even vice versa. For example, several whites have studied non-white society and negatively portrayed the group, especially tribal societies. There is a powerful element that is involved between researcher and researched. These things make the outcome of research at times inaccurate.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain your understanding of fieldwork ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the disadvantages of fieldwork ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Hence, ethics should be an integral part of the training of research and that of fieldwork.

6.6 QUALITIES REQUIRED FOR A FIELDWORKER –

1. **Contextualization -** Understanding the other person from his own background is very important. One has to look from the other person's location, view, education, setting.

2. **Honesty -** Honesty develops trust among the researcher. However, it is challenging, yet practicing honesty helps create a relationship not only for you but also for other researchers who are going to come after you to study that particular group.

3. **Listening skills -** If you will not listen to your subject, then they would not share their worldview with you. Talking to them, listening to their opinion makes the other person feel relatable with you, and it develops a rapport and further builds a community and bond. This would help you to understand yourself.

4. **Immersion -** Immersion is an important element in the field. The more you let go of yourself and look from the people's point of you, you would be able to get a clear picture of the world of the field.

5. **Questioning -** Asking the right questions is important to develop interest among people on the conversation. Unnecessary questions or sensitive questions have to be asked very carefully like caste, age, salary etc. if it is not directly related to your topic, it is better to avoid as it could take the interview to a very different angle. If you ask these questions to the people, then it is advisable to explain why you are asking them too. So, they understand its background and develop faith that the information collected will not be misused.

6. **Probing -** If you have watched the news, a reporter takes an interview with mike. He holds the mike and asks the people around what do you think about this the person responds with his answer. When the person stumbles with words, at that time, the reporter adds few words to get more answers from the common person. This is what is probing. Probing helps to get into the details of the issue and helps to get clear answers. It is a skill set which one needs to learn.

7. **Humility –** Humility is an asset when you are at the field. If you are approachable and ready to learn new even if the locals laugh at you, you will learn more about the people. Humility will help the distance between the researcher and the researched population. If you respect the people whom you are studying, then they would respect you too.

8. **Ethics –** Being ethical is very important in research. You acknowledge the participants in your work, not giving money and getting the data, not forging the data by any means.

6.7 REFLEXIVITY

For those unfamiliar with qualitative research, learning how to do it might be intimidating, especially given the paradigm's emphasis on complexity and emergent design. Even though there are standards in the

literature, each study is unique, and the individual researcher must finally decide how to proceed. Reflexivity involves comprehension of both the phenomena under investigation and the research process as a whole. Using a reflective diary, the author gives a behind-the-scenes look at a first project, bridging the gap between theory and practice. This personal story emphasizes the need of reflection both during and after a study, and it may assist newcomers to the profession understand the research process[i].

Fieldwork, or conducting research, alters every researcher in a variety of ways. As field researchers, you engage in learning experiences known as reflexivities. The changes in you that have occurred as a result of the research process and how these changes have influenced the research process are detailed here. It illustrates the process of figuring out how we, as researchers, shaped and were shaped by research output. The efforts made to learn about and comprehend different social problems such as poverty, development, gender, migration, and population health. In our reflexivity notes/insights, we discuss the problems we have experienced in our epistemological stance/s and personal and methodological issues. When researchers recognize these shifts, that reflexivity in research becomes a component of the study. Through this consciousness, we, our teammates/co-researchers, and all those engaged with the research project become aware of personal and methodological issues' relational and reflective nature. Throughout the reflexive research process, we as researchers must be aware of our contributions to the formation of meanings and lived experiences[ii]. Let us recall the Antarctica example discussed in the earlier part of the chapter, the process and difficulty and the fearful thoughts are your reflective experience. With Clifford Geertz's example in Bali were when he visited and people were not ready to speak with him when he wrote about this where an outsider is not being accepted and later accepted, this is his reflective experience.

Activity –

Imagine you are going to study Child labor in Kalina (Field). What are the steps you are going to take?

1. Find where the children are – Traffic signals. (Topic)

2. Plan out how you are going to contact them.

3. List out the questions you will ask them (Questionnaire)

4. Make notes about your observations in the field. (Data collection)

5. Write down your own emotions, fear, conflicts on hearing those children story. (Reflexivity)

6. Include everything in your project. (Findings)

There are several work which has used reflexivity like Remembered Village by M.N. Srinivas. In the book, he writes about his journey in the village where he had to talk to locals. His place of residence where nearby there were cattle, and he found it difficult to be there.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain your understanding on Reflexivity?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the qualities required for a fieldworker?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

6.8 CRITIQUE OF CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY.

Ethnography is where the researcher resides in the community for a long time. Generally, for a year or 7-8 months. Here he/she observes the day-to-day activity of the people. The main point here to look is to get into the actual setting and context of the community. Several ethnographers also pick up the language of the people on whom the study is being conducted. Some take the help of translators too. The goal is to get into the roots of the people and be one among them. In other words, they were looking from Insider's perspective. Several Anthropologists have contributed like Malinowski, Radcliffe Brown, Kroeber, Clifford Geertz, and Evans Pritchard. In India, we have Vidyarathi, M.N. Srinivas and several others. Each have contributed to the discipline and creating a new set of tradition too. Clifford Geertz, for example, with his classical work 'Cockfight study in Bali developed the Interpretative tradition.

Critical ethnography started in the late 1950s and early 1960s and was initiated by the dominant social and cultural reality of the time. This is the time of the demise of colonialism and the inward turn of classical ethnography to explore marginalized groups[iii] Radcliffe Brown, associated with the structural functionalism school, maintained a distance with the subject yet observed them. He could not learn the language of the local[iv]. To understand the topic of critical ethnography, will we take few texts and their work.

1. **Bronislaw Malinowski** - The average quality of anthropological fieldwork and ethnographic reporting has risen appreciably due to Malinowski's influence. The institutional method of cultural analysis has produced integrated descriptions instead of loosely classified catalogs of traits and has stimulated the fuller recording of case material from actual behavior as a supplement to the listing of ideal patterns.[v] Malinowski's work had a deep impact on the functionalism school and upon his followers too. His first book was 'The Family among the Australian Aborigines' (1913). There are several important works like 'Argonauts of the Western Pacific' where he discusses the Trobriand people's culture. However, his work was appreciated, discussed in his time. Post his death his diary was found by his wife and published. The diary revealed that he did not practice what he preached. He tried maintaining an objective view in his writings. However, his diary revealed how he critical views of the Trobriand culture and their way of living. Though Malinowski's work helps us know the problems ethnographers undergo, there are some problems. It is also the best example of critical ethnography.

2. **Margaret Mead**[vi] - Margaret Mead, born in 1901, was the best-known anthropologist of the 20th Century. She began her career doing fieldwork in Samoa; in 1928, she published a book calle*d Coming of Age in Samoa*. Mead used this study of adolescent girls to reflect on socialization processes for children and adolescents in our own society. Using anthropological methods, she hoped we could see more clearly how we treat adolescents, what stresses we place on them, and see the role that our culture plays in this context, and thus be better able to prepare children and youth for their complex lives in modern society[vii]. This book is a classic work of Anthropology with a comparative perspective. Freeman criticized this book then turns to one of Mead's major conclusions. Mead alleged that adolescence in Samoa was the age of maximum ease and there were none of the stresses and storms, the conflicts and troubles that characterize coming of age in Western civilization. Mead relegated to a special chapter her evidence on girls whose adolescence involved conflict. Taking this evidence (4 out of the 25 girls in Mead's sample were delinquent), Freeman finds that the Samoan rate for delinquency in the age group 14-19 is 40 per 1,000 per year and is roughly ten times higher than that which existed for females in the same age grouping in England and Wales in 1965, where the rate was 4 per 1,000. Freeman then introduces evidence from his own fieldwork to show that adolescence in Samoa is far from being untroubled and unstressed[viii]. However, later some writers criticized even Freeman's interpretation was criticized too. However, the point to note here is how a text brought about scope for discussion, interpretation, reading and further fieldwork.

3. **M.N Srinivas**[ix]**- Remembered village** is a monograph of a village in the South Indian state of Karnataka written from memory. Srinivas spent eleven months in 1948 and continued to visit the same place

until 1964. In the late 1960s, all three copies of the author's research notes were destroyed in an office fire and, over the next decade, he worked to reconstruct the village from burned fragments and recollections. In 1978, the book was celebrated as a modern classic and derided as an academic failure. anybody looking for a sophisticated account of change, transformation, and development in rural India will be disappointed. Between the 1940s and 1964, by that time he became the first professor of sociology at the Delhi School of Economics, Srinivas makes repeated visits to Rampura. During this time the village is electrified, it gets a middle school, and new bus services connect it to urban centres. But Srinivas tells us nothing of how access to energy, education, or goods and services transforms or reproduces material and symbolic relationships between castes. Instead, as he puts it in the introduction, he set out to write a book about Rampura 'as it was in 1948'. This commitment to reconstructing and salvaging the past rather than applying sociology to questions of social and material inequality saw the book demolished by some of his most vociferous critics. By 1978 his Anglophile commitment to a school of structural functionalism looked increasingly anachronistic as sociologists of India drew energy from the worlds of French structuralism and Marxism. Even though his commitment to an empirical tradition of field-based research, Srinivas' remembered village appeared then, as now, impervious to change. He missed certain reality[x].

Check Your Progress

1. Explain Ethnography?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss M.N. Srinivas work Remembered Village with reference to critical ethnography ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

1.9 SUMMARY -

Thus in this chapter, we started with understanding what a field is. A field is a place where the researcher conducts his investigation or carries out his/ her study. We also looked into the qualities that a fieldworker needs to possess like honesty, humility, ethics, listening skills etc. Later we studied about reflexivity. Reflexivity is the researcher's thoughts, observation than the social reality. It is more of a mental process. We further dealt with understanding ethnography. Ethnography is the study of culture in the actual setting, real location and documentation of it. Ethnographers generally reside in the study site for a year, learn the language, observe daily life, and write about it. We also learned about critical ethnography with the help of few scholars and their work like Margaret Mead, Malinowski, M.N. Srinivas.

6.10 QUESTIONS -

1. Explain the fieldwork and the qualities required for a fieldworker.

2. Discuss in brief Reflexivity in research.

3. Discuss about Critical ethnography with two ethnographers work.

6.11 REFERENCES

I.   Watt, D. (2007). On becoming a qualitative researcher: the value of reflexivity. *Qualitative Report*, *12*(1), 82-101.

II.   Palaganas, E. C., Sanchez, M. C., Molintas, V. P., & Caricativo, R. D. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. *Qualitative Report*, *22*(2).

III. Mantzoukas, S. (2012). Exploring ethnographic genres and developing validity appraisal tools. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *17*(5), 420-435.

IV.   https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/18971/1/Unit-26.pdf

V.   Murdock, G. P. (1943). Bronislaw Malinowski.

VI.   https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/aa.1943.45.3.02a00090

VII. Mead, M., Sieben, A., & Straub, J. (1973). *Coming of age in Samoa*. New York: Penguin.

VIII.   Mead, M. (1995, February). Selection from coming of age in Samoa. In *Child and Youth Care Forum* (Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 67-76). Kluwer Academic Publishers-Human Sciences Press.

IX.   Appell, G. N. (1984). Freeman's refutation of Mead's Coming of Age in Samoa: The implications for anthropological inquiry. *Eastern Anthropology*, *37*, 183-214.

X.   Srinivas, M. N. (2020). *The remembered village*. University of California Press.

XI.   https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2013/09/05/book-review-the-remembered-village-srinivas/.

❖❖❖❖

FEMINISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Unit Structure

7.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand Feminist Anthropology, its meaning, context.
- To learn about the contribution of Feminist Anthropology.
- To learn about some of the pioneers in the field of Feminist Anthropology.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Feminist anthropology brings different fieldapproaches to anthropology (archaeological, biological, cultural, linguistic). It aims to reduce male bias in research findings, anthropological hiring practices, and the scholarly production of knowledge.[1] The Anthropology format of comparative studies, holistic perspective have been used by several disciplines too.

7.2 UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT OF FEMINISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Feminists in the West were questioning the assumptions on which the patriarchal nuclear family was based and looked to anthropology for examples of alternative arrangements from contemporary non-Western societies. Households, domestic arrangements, marriage, procreation, childbirth, and other aspects of what had previously been defined as

kinship were central to the study of gender. As a result, one issue that soon emerged was how kinship and gender could be considered separate analytic domains. How did they articulate with each other? Did kinship define gender relations, did gender exist before kinship, or were these domains "mutually constituted"? The anthropological study of gender very quickly placed in question the analytic viability of kinship as a field of study and its centrality within the discipline. Anthropology seemed uniquely well-placed to examine cross-cultural variation in gender ascriptions.

Feminists also argued that institutions such as the family and the household, relations between men and women, and the meaning of being a man or a woman were understood quite differently in different cultures. Rather than accept Western definitions of such concepts, anthropologists and sociologists began to subject them to analytical scrutiny. How did these institutions appear to be "natural" and "given" when culturally variable? Of particular interest were how political hierarchies emerged from these seemingly natural categories or distinctions. What kinds of cultural processes were involved in producing such hierarchies, and how had they achieved the illusory appearance of being natural or given?

From the 1960s onward, the feminist movement and scholarship inspired important work in kinship studies. This resulted first in several important works that led to the documentation of women's lives, previously omitted from ethnographic accounts. Women's involvement in household and domestic arrangements, trade, exchange, labor, religion, and economic life was studied.

Feminist writings have been in several disciplines. Several studies point out that the ratio of female scholars and scientists working in science is very less than that of men even today. There are important works on literature like women writing in India, which uses the anthropological methods of stories, narratives, and context and questions the social structure. Every field has its share of documenting and writing about Feminism. However, Anthropology has its place as it documents the issue holistically. It gets into the roots of the problem by studying the tribal societies, remote areas, villages by staying over a long period.

7.3 FEMINIST SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Sociology as an independent discipline has its roots in the background of Industrial development. So, the dominant methods in sociology have been Positivistic tradition like that of Survey tool, etc. On the other hand, Anthropology developed at the background of understanding culture. The field of study has been that of simple societies. With time, these methods have been adopted. Though developed in industrial setup, Sociology has adopted the anthropologist's methodology of Ethnography, Narrative, Folklore, Oral history. In other words, both of these disciplines have collaborated with their exchange of methods and tools often.

7.4 CONTRIBUTION BY FEMINIST AND ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Feminist anthropologists have played in worldwide campaigns against human rights abuses, domestic violence, and environmental degradation. It also celebrates their work closer to home, helping to explode the developed world's preconceptions about sex, gender, and sexuality. They have also brought insider perspectives on the fields they study. Feminist anthropology has also shaped the emergence of fields like women's studies, black and Latina studies, LGBTQ studies, masculinity studies, affected theories, and science and technology studies[i]. In other words, feminist anthropologists' writings have led to the emergence of several other disciplines.

7.5 CHALLENGES TO FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

Men's Rights Activists (MRA) have emerged in India since the 1990s through political outreach via social media, legislative lobbying, and street action. They represent various ethnic and religious groups, including several prominent women leaders, and reflect some diversity of class positions. Their common target is the cynical misuse of civil and criminal laws relating to marriage and domestic violence, particularly the simultaneous deployment of multiple laws. MRA discourses are a crucial site for tracing contestations of gender and the formation of subjectivities.[ii]

Check Your Progress
1. Explain your understanding of the context of emergence concerning Feminism and Anthropology?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the challenges with Feminist movements ahead?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.6 ADDRESSING THE CULTURE DEBATE -

Walter (1995) argues that feminist anthropology as a field of study should pose questions about how differential power constitutes gender differences. It should also address these questions and calls for an approach to the study of gender and power. In addition, one should also look into the relationship between structure and agency. Such an approach is the one that analyzes the practice of gender over time from intersubjective, political perspectives. The author also argues that feminist anthropology is a justice claim, which demands an ethic of engagement. Feminist anthropologists also contribute to the large debates over the concept of culture and the epistemological problem of representation within anthropology; it discusses the current debates within cultural studies over the politics of culture[iii].

7.7 FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGISTS FROM THE WEST

Margaret Mead - Margaret Mead's work helped both the feminist movement as well as Anthropology. She was also very vocal about her stand and expressed it on several platforms. One of her important contributions is *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*(1935). This book laid the foundations for the feminist movement, suggesting that gender roles were socially constructed and not biologically based.

In a broader sense, *Coming of Age in Samoa* is about nature vs. nurture and the turn away from genetic determinism. She pointed out that it is a culture that determines individual behavior than genes or racial superiority.

Mead became the second female president of AAAS in 1975 (after Mina Rees in 1971). Mead was "a key figure in AAAS' work to address social issues," particularly in bringing up inequalities towards gay and lesbian scientists. Under her leadership, an AAAS Council noted that "because of this discrimination, some scientists are denied the opportunity to practice their profession and others are treated inequitably in terms of salary, promotion, or assigned duties." As AAAS president, she oversaw the passage of a policy deploring discrimination against queer scientists[iv]. These pioneers have laid the foundation for several other scientists, Anthropologists to come and express their views openly, a space to write about it. It is because of these scholars a foundation has been laid out. They fought. They took chances. As a result, others got encouraged and that is why we still read them and look at them as classical writers.

Ruth Benedict - Benedict, a student of Franz Boas was an early and influential female anthropologist, her doctorate was from Columbia University in 1923 (Buckner 1997: 34). Her fieldwork with Native Americans and other groups led her to develop the "configurational approach" to culture, seeing cultural systems as favoring certain personality types among different societies (Buckner 1997: 34). Along

with Margaret Mead, she is one of the most prominent female anthropologists of the first half of this century. One of her important works is the book 'Patterns of Culture'.

Zora Neale Hurston - The first African American to chronicle African American folklore and voodoo, Hurston studied anthropology at Barnard in the 1920s under Franz Boas. This encouraged her interests in African American folklore. Data for her scholarly work and creative writing came from growing up in all-black Eatonville, Florida. She drew upon the keen insights and observations gained from her anthropological research in crafting her fictional work. The only black student at Barnard when she attended, she received a B.A. degree in 1928. Two of her anthropological works are *Mules and Men* (1935) and *Tell My Horse* (1938). Hurston's contribution to anthropology resided not merely in her superior ability to provide vivid imagery of Black culture but also in her pioneering efforts toward theorizing the African diaspora and her methodological innovations (McClaurin,2001).

Phyllis Kaberry is a social anthropologist who worked with Bronislaw Malinowski while earning her PhD., Kaberry's work focused on women in many different societies, especially in Australia and Africa. While placing great emphasis on the study of religion, she also examined relationships between men and women.

Margaret Mead was a key figure in the second wave of feminist anthropology since her work clearly distinguished between sex and gender as categories of anthropological thought. Her theories were influenced by ideas borrowed from Gestalt psychology, that subfield of psychology that analyzed personality as an interrelated psychological pattern rather than a collection of separate elements (McGee, Warms 1996:202). Her work separated the biological factors from the cultural factors that control human behavior and personality development. Her work influenced Rosaldo's and Lamphere's attempts to build a framework for the emerging sub-discipline. Mead's work analyzed pervasive sexual asymmetry that fit well with their reading of the ethnographic literature (Levinson, Ember 1996:488).

Eleanor Leacock adopted a Marxist approach in her ethnographies, and she argued that capitalism is the source of much female subordination. She also challenged Julian Steward's work on hunting and trapping. (Gacs, Khan, McIntyre, & Weinberg 1989).

Louise Lamphere worked with Michelle Rosaldo to edit *Woman, Culture, and Society*. This was the first volume to address the anthropological study of gender and women's status.

Sherry Ortner (1941-): She is one of the early proponents of feminist anthropology, constructing an explanatory model for gender asymmetry which was based on the premise that the subordination of women is a universal, that is, cross-cultural phenomenon. In an article published in

1974, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture? " She takes a structuralist approach to the question of gender inequality. She argued that women have always been symbolically associated with nature. Since nature is subordinate to men, women are subordinate to men. She suggests that women's role as child-bearer makes them natural creators, while men are cultural creators (Ortner 1974: 77-78)). Ortner points out that men without high rank are excluded from things like women are excluded from them.

Margaret Conkey (1943-) was one of the first archaeologists to introduce feminist theory into that sub-discipline. She is a professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley.

Michelle Rosaldo and Ortner offered an integrated set of explanations, each at a different level, for the universal subordination of women. Rosaldo argued that because women frequently participate in behaviors that limit them, one must perform an analysis of the larger system in order to understand gender inequality.

Nancy Scheper-Hughes is a feminist ethnographer whose work questions the idea of a universal definition for "man" and "woman." Her book, *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*, criticized the concept of innate maternal bonding, as women were forced to favor infants who would survive due to harsh living conditions. This book is now regarded by many as a classic in medical anthropology.

Gayle Rubin is an activist and influential theorist of sex and gender politics. She introduced the "sex/gender system," which distinguishes biology from behavior in the same way Mead did with her work (Rubin, 1975). She shaped her ideas from works by Marx, Engels, Levi-Strauss and Freud.

Lila Abu-Lughod seeks to demonstrate that culture is boundless. In *Writing Women's Worlds*, she shared Bedouin women's stories and showed that they find advantages in a society that separates gender. Her works, like many others, dispel the misunderstandings many western feminists have about Islam and Hinduism[v].

Check Your Progress
1. Explain the connection between Sociology and Anthropology in terms of Feminism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the contribution of Margret Mead in few lines ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.8 FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA

In our country, nearly 70 percent of the population is dependent on Agriculture. In other words, every village would have farms where families are working. In which women are also working, they are carrying water, cooking food for their husband, children, sowing crops, helping in harvesting, even working as laborers in other farms. Some even work on farms and do some part-time work like handicrafts to supplement some more income. If the farms are a family property, then she doesn't earn anything. However, if it is someone else, then her earnings are again contributed to the family. Such immense contribution needs documentation and discussion both from the people's perspective and the perspective of the scholarly work. The point to draw here is that we still have a large scope for anthropological writings on gender experiences in our country. Every narrative will have a different story because we have layers of caste, class, sub-caste, hierarchy within families, outside the family (public sphere). This becomes very much necessary to document. In India, we have several female Anthropologists. However, we would just look into two scholars over here.

Irawati Karve[vi]

Irawati Karve used the Indological approach. Her study on the *Kinship Organization in India* was an important contribution. She used language patterns and geographical divisions to find out more about the variations in kinship structures across the expanse of the country. She was an orientalist and so did not shy away from using Sanskrit and Pali material to substantiate her findings. She also worked on the culture, rituals, and institutions of Maharashtra.

Her writings in Marathi have established her as a competent storyteller as well. Her book, *Yuganta: The End of an Epoch,* is a historical rendering of the *Mahabharata*. The characters are not treated as fictional – instead, their circumstances and actions are explained using socio-political cues. Using the *Mahabharata*, Karve maps the political scenarios of ancient India. *Yuganta* was **awarded** the *Sahitya Akademi Award* for Marathi in 1968, making Karve the first female author from Maharashtra to receive it. She experimented with methodology in an

atmosphere that wasn't welcoming of women researchers. Despite her privileged background, she researched the hinterlands of India and proved herself to be an inspiration for young anthropologists across the country.

Leela Dube

Leela Dube's writings trace her own anthropological and personal journeys and capture one history of the gendering of the social sciences in India, particularly anthropology. Dube drew strength from the growing women's movements worldwide and the burgeoning scholarly literature to pull together her reflections on kinship, marriage, motherhood, womanhood and gender relations[vii]. Patel (2012) points out the immense contribution of Dube. Dube played an important role in shaping Towards Equality Report: Committee on Status of Women in India (1974). It led to a discussion that further got the Parliament of India to bring women's studies at centre stage in Indian academia through UGC and ICSSR. Dube had also played an important role in the World Sociological Congress in 1984 by raising concerns over women's studies. In a debate on sex-selective abortion carried out EPW during 1982-86, she noted a direct relationship in the deficit of women and increased and intensified violence against women[viii]. Her important works are *Visibility and Power: Essays on Women in Society and Development*, co-edited by Leela Dube, Eleanor Leacock and Shirley Ardener (1986). This book gives an international perspective for the anthropology of women in the contexts of India, Iran, Malaysia, Brazil and Yugoslavia.

Her article titled "On the Construction of Gender: Hindu Girls in Patrilineal India", *Economic and Political Weekly* (1988), has been used by several women's groups for study circles and training programs. A volume in the series on Women and the Household, *Structures and Strategies: Women, Work, and Family* (1990), co-edited by Leela Dube and Rajni Palriwala, has taught women's studies in Economics, Sociology, Geography, Social Work and Governance courses. *Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia* talks about the (1997) kinship systems provide an important context in which gender relations are located in the personal and public arenas.

Her book *Anthropological Explorations in Gender: Intersecting Fields* (2001) examines gender, kinship and culture by looking into several unconventional materials such as folk tales, folk songs, proverbs, legends and myths to construct an ethnographic profile of feminist thought. She provides an understanding of the socialization of the girl child in the patriarchal family, with the "seed and soil" theory propagated by Hindu scriptures and epics symbolizing a domination-subordination power relationship between men and women. Her last publication, a Marathi translation of her last book in English, was *Manavashastratil Lingbhavachi Shodhamohim*, which appeared in 2009. Thus, the contribution of Karve is very impactful even in today's time.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the contribution of IravatiKarve?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the Leela Dube important works in few lines?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7.9 SUMMARY

We began the chapter by understanding Feminist anthropology as an important approach that brings different field approaches to anthropology (archaeological, biological, cultural, linguistic). It aims to reduce male bias in research findings, anthropological hiring practices, and the scholarly production of knowledge.[1] We looked into its contribution to different disciplines like Environment, Queer studies and several other fields. The chapter also discussed important feminist anthropologists from India as well as from West countries.

7.10 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the context of Feminism and Anthropology
2. Explain in brief the contribution of Feminist Anthropologists in India.
3. Explain in brief the contribution of Feminist Anthropologists from the West.

7.11 REFERENCES

- Silverstein, L. M., & Lewin, E. (2016). *Mapping feminist anthropology in the twenty-first century*. Rutgers University Press.

- "Looking through Misogyny: Indian Men's Rights Activists, Law and Challenges for Feminism" *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, Special Issue on "Men's Groups: Challenging Feminism," 28.1 (2016): 28-51. https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/abs/10.3138/cjwl.28.1.45

- Walter, L. (1995). Feminist anthropology?. *Gender & Society*, *9*(3), 272-288.

- https://massivesci.com/articles/anthropologist-margaret-mead-our-science-heroes-cultural-sexual-revolution/

- https://anthropology.ua.edu/theory/feminist-anthropology/

- https://feminisminindia.com/2018/10/15/irawati-karve-indian-sociology/

- Palriwala, R. (2012). Remembering Leela Dube. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32-35.

- Prof. Leela Dube (1923–2012): Gendering Anthropology

  V Patel - Social Change, 2012 - journals.sagepub.com

❖❖❖❖

<div align="right">**8**</div>

THE SUBALTERN TURN

Unit Structure

8.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of Subaltern
- To learn the historical setting for the emergence of the Subaltern.
- To learn about the contribution of the founders of the subaltern perspective.
- To explore the different fields which have been influenced by Subaltern turn

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will look into the meaning of the Subaltern, its historical development, and the foundation scholars who helped develop it. Here we will also study how these scholars have used subaltern perspectives in their work. We will also discuss how this perspective has been applied in different cultural settings. Understanding the subaltern perspective will help you understand the politics behind the construction of literature and history and in a way that shapes one's worldview and that of forthcoming generations. Subaltern studies, in a way, are an important tool through which the marginalized history has got a voice. Understanding subaltern history will help you critically view the textbooks, stories, and narratives you have heard since your childhood. Learning this concept/ perspective in detail will help you grow as a progressive human being. This simple perspective has immense application value, and you could apply this to day-to-day events.

8.2 MEANING OF SUBALTERN

The word Subaltern has Latin roots whereby *sub* means - ("below"), and *alternus* ("all others"); *Subaltern* is used to describe someone of a low rank (as in the military) or class (as in a caste system). Subalterns occupy entry-level jobs or occupy a lower rung of the "corporate ladder." But the term is also used to describe someone who has no political or economic power, such as a poor person living under a dictatorship. A *subaltern* is also someone who has a low ranking in the social, political, or other hierarchy. It can also mean someone who has been marginalized or oppressed.[i] The uniqueness of the term subaltern is that it comes across in several disciplines and merges them too, like political science, history, sociology, and anthropology.

Ckeck your pregress

1. What do you mean by Subaltern ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.3 UNDERSTANDING SUBALTERN PERSPECTIVE AND ITS HISTORY

The Italian Marxist scholar Antonio Gramsci conceived Subaltern as he was in prison for a long period. His work was subject to censorship. Hence, he used Subaltern as a codeword for any class of people (especially peasants and workers) subject to the hegemony of another more powerful class. The term has been adopted by a group of Postcolonial Studies scholars, thus forming a sub-discipline within the field known as Subaltern Studies. The group was founded by South East Asian historian, Ranajit Guha and over time, it has included several other scholars like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Following Gramsci's footsteps, it aims to examine the formation of subaltern classes in various settings in South East Asia. Especially in India and its near neighbors, to provide a kind of counter-history, to address the imbalances of 'official' histories, which tend to focus exclusively on the affairs of the state and the ruling class.

Spivak's famous essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', incorporated into A Critique of Postcolonial Reason (1999), problematizes the key premise of Subaltern Studies, namely that the heterogeneous group of

peoples classified as Subaltern can have sufficient unity such that 'they can speak. Her answer to her question is a resolute no. The term has also been used in Latin American studies for a similar purpose. However, it is given a slightly different slant: it also refers to the habit or mindset of servitude and subservience that must be overcomed to bring about political change[ii]. Subaltern Studies: Writings on Indian History and Society, as mentioned earlier, began in 1982 as a series of interventions from some debates while discussing modern Indian history. Ranajit Guha began it with eight scholars from India, UK, Australia, an editorial collective called Subaltern Studies. This series now has a global presence in India as well as other parts of the world. Even postcolonial theorists have explored this dimension in their work. Subaltern studies critique history and nationalism and point out that it has Orientalism and Eurocentrism.

Subaltern Studies hence can be seen as a postcolonial project of re-writing history. While writing history, the relationship between Postcolonialism and historiography and the contribution of other disciplines like political science, legal studies, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, and economics—have been included in the subaltern studies. Subaltern Studies cannot be viewed as just another version of Marxist/radical history but as a postcolonial outlook. The author also points out that the discipline of history has not received much attention[iii].

In India, there have been several social movements that Western scholars have not included and valued back then. The Subaltern studies were thus developed by a group of scholars who studied in the West and they felt that the literature projected by the other on India was biased and partial. So, they thought of writing their history. Many writers focused on different areas. Ranjit Guha documented how the peasant struggle existed. Readings of Subaltern Studies began in India, where writing about Subaltern Studies began in book reviews. At first, each volume in the series was reviewed separately as a collection of essays. Still, by 1986, an accumulation of writing inside and outside the project had established a distinctive school of research whose adherents came to be called "subalterns" or simply "subalterns." Their seminal essays appeared in paperback in 1988, when Selected Subaltern Studies was published by Oxford University Press in New York and Oxford, edited by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, with a foreword by Edward Said. By 1990, Burton Stein could cite the growing interest in Subaltern Studies as one sign that the 1980s were "a decade of historical efflorescence" in South Asian studies. In the 1990s, Subaltern Studies became an interesting topic in academic circles on several continents; a weapon, magnet, target, lightning rod, hitching post, icon, gold mine, and fortress for scholars ranging across disciplines from history to political science, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism, and cultural studies.

In other words, it is giving a platform for the voiceless who have been suppressed for generations together. Here, society is viewed from the bottom to the top rather than the top to bottom approach. We will now

look into detail about the few scholars who are associated with this perspective.

Ranajit Guha

Guha in his book Subaltern Studies which consists of several volumes, writes in the introduction chapter the complexity of Indian history. Guha insisted that mostly the writings of historians had focused on the Indian National Movement, which was also seen only from the perspective of the movement's leaders. All else, he went on to attribute, in the history of our society, was left either untouched or not examined enough or examined only as an adjunct of the mainstream of the national movement. What was needed, Guha argued, was a subaltern perspective wherein society could be studied from the point of view of the oppressed, those who were the fodder in the cannon of history, as it were. According to Guha Tribal or peasants, insurgents have not to be seen as merely 'objects' of inquiry but makers of their own history (Guha, 1983). Subaltern historiography seeks to restore a balance by highlighting the role of the people's politics as against elite politics played in Indian history (Dhanagare, 1993). The subaltern studies have the immense possibility of projecting, constructing and analyzing the people's lives, institutions, problems, movements, values and the processes of their formation, structuration and restructuration at local and regional levels. The meanings thus need not be viewed from a Marxist perspective but Indian historiographical and culturological perspectives. Some of the important works of Ranjit Guha is 'A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the idea of permanent settlement(1963), Elementary aspects of Insurgency in colonial India (1983), Subaltern studies (edited volume – 1-10).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

A critical analysis of Spivak's classic 1988 postcolonial studies essay, in which she argues that a core problem for the poorest and most marginalized in society (the subalterns) is that they have no platform to express their concerns and no voice to affect policy debates or demand a fairer share of society's goods.

A key theme of Gayatri Spivak's work is agency: the ability of the individual to make their own decisions. Spivak's main aim is to consider ways in which "subalterns" – her term for the indigenous dispossessed in colonial societies – were able to achieve agency.

Spivak is herself a scholar, and she remains acutely aware of the difficulty and dangers of presuming to "speak" for the subalterns she writes about. As such, her work can be seen as predominantly a light exercise in the critical thinking skill of interpretation; she looks in detail at issues of meaning, specifically at the real meaning of the available evidence, and her paper is an attempt not only to highlight problems of definition but to clarify them.

What makes this one of the key works of interpretation in the Macat library is, of course, the underlying significance of this work. Interpretation, in this case, is a matter of the difference between allowing subalterns to speak for themselves and of imposing a mode of "speaking" on them that – however well-intentioned – can be as damaging in the postcolonial world as the agency-stifling political structures of the colonial world itself. Spivak takes a stand against a specifically intellectual form of oppression and marginalizationby clearing away the residue of scholarly attempts at interpretation.

Dipesh Chakrabarty has also been an active member of the Subaltern Studies Group or Collective. His contribution towards postcolonial and Subaltern studies can be seen from his pioneering works such as 'Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference' (2000). This text explores the relationship between history and postcolonial theory. His other work in subaltern studies is titled 'Habitations of Modernity: Essays in the Wake of Subaltern Studies' (2002). He is a founding member of the editorial collective of Subaltern Studies and was the editor for 'Subaltern Studies Vol. 9' (1997) and Shahid Amin. He is also a founding editor of Postcolonial Studies. His 'Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference' first published in 2000. It deals with the mythical state of Europe that is frequently taken to be the original site of modernity in various histories of capitalist evolution in non-Western nations[iv]. Dipesh Chakrabarty notes that the relation between 'subaltern pasts' and the practice of historicism is not one of mutual exclusion. Subaltern pasts act as a supplement to the historian's pasts and in fact aid our capacity to historicism. They enable history, the discipline, to be what it is and yet at the same time help to show forth what its limits are[v].

Several writers have applied subaltern perspectives in India as well as in world. Though at times they may or may not call themselves as subalterns. However, their works address the issues and brings out the loopholes within the system that he has failed to acknowledge for generations.

Though developed at a local scale, the Subaltern spread out like a tree branch and has now been used by several scholars in different parts of the world. Let us look at how this concept, the theory, has been used by people to understand their social problems.

Check Your Progress
1. Explain the meaning of Subaltern?
_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain in brief the contribution of Ranajit Guha?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.4 SUBALTERN IN THE CLASSROOM SETTING –

A classroom is one of the important secondary groups which a child visits nearly half of his childhood. However, within a classroom, too, one could observe a hierarchy. This could at times continue for nearly a decade from the time the child is in the first grade right up to his college. In the Indian context, the divisions could be based on caste, class. Addressing these issues is very important. In the book, The Subaltern speak – Curriculum, Power and Educational Struggles the author writes about whose perspective, experience and history is privileged in educational institutions has shaped curriculum debates for decades. In this insightful collection, Michael W. Apple and Kristen L. Buras interrogate the notion that some knowledge is worth more than others. *The Subaltern Speak* combines an analysis of how various forms of power now operate, with a specific focus on spaces in which subaltern groups act to reassert their own perceived identities, cultures and histories[vi].

8.5 SUBALTERN AND URBANISM

Subaltern Urbanism tries to understand and transform how the cities of the global South are studied and represented in urban research, and to some extent in popular discourse. Subaltern Urbanism undertakes the theorization of the megacity and its subaltern spaces and subaltern classes. Of these, the ubiquitous 'slum' is the most prominent. Writing against positive and negative narratives of the slum, subaltern urbanism provides accounts of the slum as a terrain of habitation, livelihood, self-organization and politics. This is a vital and even radical challenge to dominant narratives of the megacity In a megacity the slum has, mass politics and the habitus of the dispossessed. It has to be also looked from the — peripheries, urban informality, zones of exception and gray spaces. In other words, it could be studied from subaltern spaces[vii].

8.6 SUBALTERN GEO POLITICS

The concept of Subaltern makes direct reference to postcolonial notions of power relations, suggesting a position that is not completely

other, resistant or alternative to dominant power, but instead one that occupies an ambiguous position of marginality[viii]. Traditionally, the West had the power to write about marginalized groups, interpret their culture, behavior, customs, and even dictate education and technology. This geopolitics has even continued today. However, a tiny section is like the subaltern groups questioning these taken-for-granted rules and practices in society. With globalization, developed countries have further entered into the underdeveloped countries and continue to influence these lands, at times positively and negatively.

8.7 SUBALTERN CITIZEN

The "re-presentation" of the Subaltern has to be viewed from the power dimension. Subaltern citizen is not just about the technical question of citizenship. Instead, the claim is about historical agency and belonging - in a society and its self-construction. It is the fight of 200 years old and more, the struggles waged by the oppressed and subordinated, i e, for the subalterns, it is the struggles for recognition as equals. The history of these efforts appeared as a history of sameness. However, in the later decades of the 20th century, this struggle was extended to encompass another demand - the demand for recognition of difference - the existence of various differences that explained the diversity, density and richness of human experience. It is this paradox that needs to be answered, while debating the construction of a subaltern citizen: how is the long-standing struggle for equality supposed to be folded into this newly asserted right to the recognition of difference?[ix] Subaltern Citizenship can be best explained with the movement of Henry Lefbreve's *right to the city* where the marginalized groups are shifted to the periphery with the rise of the center of the city. So, here the demand is that local citizens have to be included while making policies, changing landscapes, and building skyscrapers. This would create a sense of belongingness and cordial relationships among the state and the people.

Check Your Progress
1. Explain Subaltern studies from the work of Gayatri?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss Subaltern turn and Urbanism?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

8.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter we began with understanding the meaning of Subaltern. Subaltern comes from two latin words – sub meaning *Subaltern* is used to describe someone of a low rank (as in the military) or class (as in a caste system). Subalterns occupy entry-level jobs or occupy a lower rung of the "corporate ladder." The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci conceived Subaltern as he was in prison for a long period. His work was subject to censorship. Hence, he used Subaltern as a codeword for any class of people (especially peasants and workers) subject to the hegemony of another more powerful class. The term has been adopted by a group of Postcolonial Studies scholars, thus forming a sub-discipline within the field known as Subaltern Studies. The group was founded by South East Asian historian, Ranajit Guha and over time, it has included several other scholars like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Partha Chatterjee, and Dipesh Chakrabarty. We also looked into how Ranajit Guha developed the perspective that initially started with book reviews, articles, discussion, and a social movement that challenged the body of work produced by the elites and scholars from the West. It was kind of movement where they believed the one's who live in the history should write it themselves than the other. Subaltern studies used history to a large extent and questioned the bias within it. The power dimension within it. It also was celebrated and accepted not only in India but other parts of the world. We further looked into detail work profile of three different pioneers of the subject. We also looked into the application of the Subaltern in terms of classroom, citizenship and even Urban setting.

8.10 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of Subaltern and its history
2. Discuss in brief the application of Subaltern in different areas like citizenship, urbanism.
3. Discuss the contribution of Guha and Gayatri.

8.11 REFERENCES

- https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/subaltern

- https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803 100539334

- Chakrabarty, D. (2000). Subaltern studies and postcolonial historiography. *Nepantla: views from South*, *1*(1), 9-32.

- http://epgp.inflibnet.ac.in/epgpdata/uploads/epgp_content/S000013EN /P001456/M019901/ET/1496140851Paper10%3BModule35%3BETex t.pdf

- https://www.epw.in/journal/1998/9/special-articles/minority-histories-subaltern-pasts.html

- https://www.routledge.com/The-Subaltern-Speak-Curriculum-Power-and-Educational-Struggles/Apple-Buras/p/book/9780415950824

- Roy, A. (2011). Slumdog cities: Rethinking subaltern urbanism. *International journal of urban and regional research*, *35*(2), 223-238.

- Sharp, J. (2011). Subaltern geopolitics: introduction. *Geoforum*, *42*(3), 271-273.

- Pandey, G. (2006). The subaltern as subaltern citizen. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 4735-4741.

❖❖❖❖

POST-MODERN LOCATIONS POST-STRUCTURALISM, POST-COLONIALISM

Unit Structure

9.1 POST-STRUCTURALISM

9.1.1 Introduction:

Structuralism was an intellectual movement in France in the 1950s and 1960s that studied the underlying structures in cultural products (such as texts) and used analytical concepts from linguistics, psychology, anthropology, and other fields to interpret those structures. It emphasized the logical and scientific nature of its results. It flourished in a climate critical of dogmatic Marxism, and, in particular, Stalinism. Jean-Paul Sartre, many believed, had failed to offer a convincing account of Stalinism. Structuralism offered a critique of both dogmatic Marxism and of liberal institutions in the period leading up to the student protests of

May 1968. Structuralism offered a legitimation story that functioned much like critical theory-like the writings of Lukacs, Gramsci, and the early Frankfurt School.

Structuralism failed to deliver on its promise of scientific predictability. Though politically attractive at the time, if failed to help social scientists and critical theorists deploy the structures to anticipate or project future outcomes. Linguistic structures, for instance, impose some constraints on the way that agents talk, but not necessarily on what they say. The structures do not necessarily control or determine behaviour. The constraints of language coexist with freedom of individual expression, so that the patterns that emerge are no more than that-patterns. They help make sense of individual expression, but do not dictate how agents will deploy language.

This deficiency led many to seek different avenues post structuralism. One of the more successful—or at least interesting—is Pierre Bourdieu's attempt to synthesize structuralism and existentialism. Bourdieu's theoretic approach—what he called "practice theory"—stressed that, through habituation, agents may internalize the structures that surround them. They may internalize the binary distinctions that Lévi-Strauss identified and that then may become part of their habitus—part of their way of understanding the world and acting within it.

"The social world," Bourdieu wrote in Outline of a Theory of Practice in 1972, "may be the object of three modes of theoretical knowledge, each of which implies a set of (usually tacit) anthropological theses" (1977:3).

1. The first mode of theoretical knowledge, Bourdieu associated with Jean-Paul Sartre. This mode of knowledge "sets out to make explicit the truth of primary experience of the social world" (1977:3).

2. The second mode of theoretical knowledge, Bourdieu called "objectivist" and he associated it with Claude Lévi-Strauss. This mode focused on the linguistic relations that structure primary knowledge of the social world.

3. The third mode of knowledge, Bourdieu attributed to himself: it is a theory of practice, and it represents a break from both existential and structuralist modes of knowledge.

It is a mode of knowledge that treats actors as ensconced within structures-semiotic and material-that are internalized and taken for granted, and who navigate these structures strategically. Actors understand the rules of the game, and play by, manipulate, and strategize the rules often in a second-hand way. It incorporates both the Lévi-Straussian moment of unconscious structures and the Sartrian moment of subjectivity in a theory of practice that is intended to let us better understand and predict actions.

87

For Bourdieu, the tension between structuralism and existentialism crystallized the central problem in contemporary thought—namely, the lack of a theory of human agency.

Check your progress

1. What is Structuralism ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain Bourdieu's "practice theory".

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.1.2 Post Structuralism

Post structuralism is a style of critical reasoning that focuses on the moment of slippage in our systems of meaning as a way to identify—right there, in that ambiguous space—the ethical choices that we make, whether in our writings or in everyday life, when we overcome the ambiguity and move from indeterminacy to certainty of belief in an effort to understand, interpret, or shape our social environment.

Post structuralism concentrates on the moment when we impose meaning in a space that is no longer characterized by shared social agreement over the structure of meaning. It attempts to explain how it comes about that we fill those gaps in our knowledge and come to hold as true what we do believe—and at what distributive cost to society and the contemporary subject. By so clearly identifying points of slippage, post structuralism clears the table and makes plain the significant role of ethical choice—by which we can mean decision making that is guided by beliefs about virtue and the self, not by moral or political principle. Post structuralism is, in this sense, a penultimate stage in the emancipation from that "self-incurred immaturity" that Kant famously identified—in his essay "What is Enlightenment?"—as "the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another" (Kant 1970:54). In that

essay, Kant elaborated the central features of the Enlightenment, and his essay played a key role in the philosophical discourse of modernity.

9.1.3 Post structuralism and Anthropology: Foucault and his Impact

Post structuralism is a term loosely applied to members of the next generation of French thinkers after Lévi-Strauss who also concerned themselves with texts and discourses. Of these, <u>Michel Foucault</u> had the greatest impact on anthropology. Foucault's work is specifically concerned with the relationship between knowledge and power. Knowledge, for Foucault, is not primarily a collection of facts or even ideas, but only takes on significance within what he calls an *episteme,* an overarching framework situated in time, within which such ideas emerge as relevant and indeed possible. Though Foucault avoids Marxist terminology, one might characterize his epistemes as "modes of thinking" as opposed to "modes of production." In a similar manner, he situates "power" within a framework of possibilities determined by an overall system rather than as a property of individual actors. In *Discipline and Punish* (1975), he uses the modern prison system as a central example of how these two systems, of knowledge and of power, are fused in contemporary society. Discipline is, he argues, a central feature of modern institutions—prison, army, school—inscribing power relations on the bodies of subjects who must conform but must also be constantly monitored; this monitoring of subjects is the intellectual task of modern "disciplines"—psychology, sociology, anthropology, and others.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) argued in a similar vein that European and American expert knowledge of the "Orient" and particularly the <u>Middle East</u> was inextricably connected with the exercise of Western hegemony over the region. Such critiques have made anthropologists much more self-conscious about the implications of their own representations of "other," non-European peoples. James Clifford and George Marcus have been concerned with the ways in which such representations are constructed through writing, and the rhetorical means by which anthropologists lay claim to "authority." Talal Asad has suggested that anthropologists' attempts to arrive at ahistoricized definitions of such phenomena as religion serve to naturalize (that is, make cultural concepts and thought systems appear timeless, natural, and universal) post-Enlightenment systems of European thought while simultaneously problematizing other systems of practice, even in European history. Paul Rabinow has been perhaps the most adamant disciple of Foucault within the discipline, both as an exegete and as an ethnographer of modern France.

9.1.4 Derrida and Deconstruction

At first sight, <u>Jacques Derrida</u>'s *Of Grammatology* (1967), which makes the provocative claim for the logical priority of writing (or at least "*archè* -writing") over speech, might not seem a likely candidate for a work that would influence anthropological thinking. Derrida's point is, first of all, that writing reveals the spaces, silences, and erasures that

speech conceals; second, that there is an apparent gap in time and space, a *différance,* between the enunciation and reception of a written text, whereas speech gives the illusion of immediacy. Derrida's purpose is to radically call into question the relevance of authorial intention and the possibility of any fixed meaning. Texts, written or spoken, must be interpreted not only in terms of what they "say" but of what they keep silent, and with respect to other texts before and after. Derrida's approach to texts, "deconstruction," lays bare the internal contradictions of any text, precluding the attribution of definitive meaning, intentional or otherwise.

The term *deconstruction* has been used so loosely by many anthropologists that it has lost any clear referent—an ironic fate for a concept intended to challenge the fixity of meaning. More specifically, Derrida's skepticism about intentionality in the interpretation of texts has fueled "postmodern" critiques of anthropological representations of the "other." Derrida's wordplay and elliptical style have inspired new forms of anthropological writing, best exemplified by the work of Michael Taussig.

9.1.5 Claude Levi-Strauss and the Four Tenets of Structuralism

Post structuralism builds on, but, more importantly, rejects some of the central tenets of structuralism—from where it gets its name. For this reason, it is crucial, in order to understand post structuralism, to start with Claude Levi-Strauss and the structuralist enterprise.

Structuralism was the rage in Parisian intellectual circles in the 1960s, but its popularity distorted important differences between the theoretical approaches of the leading intellectuals labelled as "structuralist" at the time. Of the four key thinkers associated, in the public imagination, with structuralism—Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, and Claude Lévi-Strauss, only one was, strictly speaking, structuralist. That was Claude Lévi-Strauss, the anthropologist in the group.

Claude Lévi-Strauss built his structural edifice on the basis of the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure, whose lectures on linguistic theory were published posthumously by his students in the now famous Cours de linguistiquegénérale (1916). In a concise and useful essay titled "Structural Analysis," Lévi-Strauss summarized the central tenets of structural linguistics:

  i. First, structural linguistics shifts from the study of conscious linguistic phenomena to study of their unconscious infrastructure;

  ii. Second, it does not treat terms as independent entities, taking instead as its basis of analysis the relations between terms;

  iii. Third, it introduces the concept of system. . .;

  iv. Finally, structural linguistics aims at discovering general laws, either by induction "or. . . by logical deduction, which would give them an absolute character." (Lévi-Strauss 1967a:31; see also Lévi-Strauss & Éribon 1988:158)

In relation to the four basic tenets of structuralism, poststructuralism builds on the first three tenets, but rejects the fourth, the idea that we could discover general laws. It builds on the notion that meanings are derived from relations of difference, that these are largely subconscious, and that they form a structure. But it emphasizes the gaps and ambiguities in the structure of meanings. Lévi-Strauss had said that "starting from ethnographic experience, I have always aimed at drawing up an inventory of mental patterns, to reduce apparently arbitrary data to some kind of order, and to attain a level at which a kind of necessity becomes apparent, underlying the illusions of liberty" (Lévi-Strauss 1970 (1964): 10). This is precisely what poststructuralism rejects. Poststructuralism resists, then, the fourth tenet: structures of meanings are not universal, and do not reflect ontological truths about humans or society. Poststructuralists focus on those gaps and ambiguities in the system of meaning and find meaning there.

9.1.6 The key move of poststructuralism is: How is it that we come to believe the meaning we impose in order to hide the gaps and ambiguities? The central question that poststructuralists pose in their work is precisely how knowledge becomes possible at any particular time under specific historical conditions. In Foucault's words, the question is: "how is it that the human subject turns himself into an object of possible knowledge, through what forms of rationality, under what historical conditions, and finally at what price? My question is this one: at what price can the subject tell the truth about himself?" (Foucault 1983:442).

Foucault's perspective, in effect, asks a different set of questions than the structuralists, but derived from the structuralist framework. Foucault is interested in the history of knowledge and rationality, the history of the subject. How is it possible that any of these discourses—existentialism, structuralism or practice theory—could be received as correct, useful, intelligible? How does the process of making a discourse 'true' shape the way we, as subjects, judge, think, categorize, desire the other? How is it that we turn ourselves into objects of study? This is not to suggest, of course, that discourses do not become 'true.' They certainly have. They are true to many of us. But that is not the issue, for Foucault. The real question is, how is it that they have come to be seen as true at this particular time?

Post-structuralism and Foucault's project thus bear a strained relationship to structuralism—building on parts, but rejecting others. Foucault himself was adamant that he was not structuralist. (Foucault 1970:xiv).

In contrast to other forms of critical theory, post-structuralism focuses on the social distribution of power associated with the construction of knowledge, what has come to be known as the "power/knowledge" critique: How, exactly, do we come to believe what we hold as true? How is it, for instance, that we come to believe a progress

narrative of punishment? What institutions and practices shape us to believe in the idea of the "delinquent"—or, for that matter, in the idea that we could possibly "rehabilitate" or "correct" that "delinquent"? How have our own disciplinary practices contributed to shaping our beliefs? And at what cost? As noted earlier, in her book Gender Trouble, Judith Butler locates post-structuralism in the work of Jacques Derrida (Butler 1990:158 n.6). If, as we suggest, her definition is right, then why the different location? "Why not in Derrida?" one may ask. Why do we classify Derrida as a deconstructionist and distinguish deconstruction from post-structuralism? The primary reason, I would argue, is that deconstruction never embraces the moment of developing an explanation—a complex social theoretic, historical, and genealogical explanation—for how we come to believe what we do believe. Foucault does—for instance, when he meticulously explains how we came to believe that it was right to judge the soul of the delinquent, not just the delinquent act, in Discipline and Punish. Deconstructive practice does not provide explanation, nor does it analyze the price we pay when we do that—it does not flesh out the distributive consequences of those ethical choices. It identifies the choice, but stops there. Deconstruction, in effect, never overcomes the radical moment of ambiguating meaning, which distinguishes it significantly from poststructuralist work.

One can see this well in a text like Force de loi, the first part of which is a keynote lecture that Jacques Derrida delivered in October 1989 at a conference titled "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice" in New York City. The text is fascinating and plays on the structural relations between law and justice, but it does not move significantly past the slippage once it has identified the ethical choice. Relying on a "pensée" of Pascal, Derrida excavates in Force de loi the basis of a modern critique of liberal legalism. The "pensée" in question concerns the relationship between justice, law, and might (la force), and is indeed provocative: "It is important then to bring together justice and might; and to that end, to make sure that that which is just be strong, and that which is strong be just" (Derrida 1994:28).

This exposes, for Derrida, the mystical foundation of the authority of law, and enables a modern critique of liberal legalist ideology. The foundation of law, Derrida suggests, is precisely the force required to first create, inaugurate, or found the law itself. This, Derrida suggests, requires "un appel à la croyance" (a leap of faith) and thus represents "un coup de force" (32-33); and it exposes deconstructive possibilities. It makes possible, according to Derrida, the very possibility of deconstruction (35), which is precisely what leads him, paradoxically, to assert that "La deconstruction est la justice" (35). What he means by that is that it is precisely the auto-authorization of law—the moment of the appeal to faith—in law itself that represents the moment of rupture, of indeterminacy, and of force that makes possible the critique of liberal legalism and that represents the moment of deconstructive practice. In typical fashion, it represents a Derridean inversion of the very title of the

conference, "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice." It is justice—because it is self -authorizing—that creates the possibility of critique and thus, the possibility of deconstruction. Notice here, though, and importantly, that Derrida does not take the further step—which is associate with post-structuralism—of offering a social theoretic, historical, or genealogical account of how we come to take that central leap of faith. Derrida stops with the identification itself. In the end, then, post-structuralism should be distinguished from deconstruction, and represents the penultimate stage of modernity. It is the stage where we began to focus on the ambiguity in meaning as the central location at the edge of critical reason that helps identify ethical choice. Derridean construction, one can argue, comes after post-structuralism and represents the last stage of modernity: no longer willing to offer thick descriptions of how we come to take our leaps of faith, deconstruction focuses only on the ethical choice itself. What comes after deconstruction? Perhaps the absolute acknowledgment of the limits of critical reason and the refusal to take any leap of faith at all.Perhaps, a turn, instead, to randomization.

9.1.7Conclusion:

Ultimately, both structuralism and post-structuralism have contributed to tendencies on the part of many (but by no means all) anthropologists to call into question the characterization of their discipline as "science" and to reposition themselves more centrally in the humanities—structuralism through its emphasis on the decoding of symbols, a domain often considered antithetical to strictly "scientific" approaches; and post-structuralism by forcing anthropologists to call into question their own practices of representation. Critics from within the humanist camp, however, have pointed out that both structuralism and post-structuralism are theoretically de-humanizing (that is, ignoring or minimizing the impact and importance of human agency), most obviously in Derrida's critique of human intentionality but also, at least implicitly, in the work of Lévi-Strauss and Foucault. At best, such theories make any consideration of human agency problematic; at worst, they leave no place for it at all.

9.2 POST-COLONIALISM

9.2.1 Introduction:

Post-colonialism (postcolonial theory, post-colonial studies, post-colonial theory) is a specifically postmodern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of, the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism. It offers a counter-narrative to the long tradition of European imperial narratives considering Political, economic, Social/ Cultural and Psychological oppression. It aims to study the after effect of colonization on the language and culture of the people being colonized.

9.2.2 What is colonialism and post-colonialism?

Colonialism is an extension of a nation's rule over territory beyond its borders. It is a population that is subjected to the political domination of another population.

Post-colonialism is defined in anthropology as the relations between European nations and areas they colonized and once ruled. Post-colonialism comprises a set of theories found amongst history, anthropology, philosophy, linguistics, film, political science, architecture, human geography, sociology, Marxist theory, feminism, religious and theological studies, and literature. Post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries, or literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized peoples - it embraces no single method or school.

9.2.3 Goals of Post-colonialism

The ultimate goal of post-colonialism is accounting for and combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures. It is not simply concerned with salvaging past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect.

Post-colonialist thinkers recognize that many of the assumptions which underlie the "logic" of colonialism are still active forces today.

A key goal of post-colonial theorists is clearing space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies - subalterns. It is widely recognized within the discourse that this space must first be cleared within academia. Edward Said, in his book Orientalism, provides a clear picture of how the scholars who studied what used to be called the Orient (mostly Asia) disregarded the views of those they actually studied - preferring instead to rely on the intellectual superiority of themselves and their peers. This attitude was forged by European imperialism.

To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by them, or as a kind of cultural and international proletariat useful for the Orientalist's grander interpretive activity. (Said, 1978: 208)

Some postcolonial theorists make the argument that studying both dominant knowledge sets and marginalized ones as binary opposites perpetuates their existence as homogenous entities. Homi K. Bhabha feels the postcolonial world should valorize spaces of mixing; spaces where truth and authenticity move aside for ambiguity. This space of hybridity, he argues, offers the most profound challenge to colonialism. (Bhabha, 1994: 113) However, Bhabha ignores Spivak's stated usefulness of essentialism have been put forward. Reference is made to essentialisms' potential usefulness. An organized voice provides a more powerful challenge to dominant knowledge - whether in academia or active protests.

Ultimately, however, post-colonialism is a hopeful discourse. The very "post" defines the discipline as one that looks forward to a world that has truly moved beyond all that colonialism entails, together. Mbembe finds it gives him "hope in the advent of a universal brotherly [and I would add sisterly] community". Asking what it means to be human together, post-colonialism aims at decolonizing the future.

9.2.4 Subject matters

"The final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination." (—Che Guevara, speech to the United Nations, December 11, 1964)

The critical nature of postcolonial theory entails destabilizing Western ways of thinking, therefore creating space for the subaltern, or marginalized groups, to speak and produce alternatives to dominant discourse. Often, the term post-colonialism is taken literally, to mean the period of time after colonialism. This however is problematic because the 'once-colonized world' is full of "contradictions, of half-finished processes, of confusions, of hybridity, and liminalities". In other words, it is important to accept the plural nature of the word post-colonialism, as it does not simply refer to the period after the colonial era. By some definitions, post-colonialism can also be seen as a continuation of colonialism, albeit through different or new relationships concerning power and the control/production of knowledge. Due to these similarities, it is debated whether to hyphenate post-colonialism as to symbolize that we have fully moved beyond colonialism. Post-colonialism as a literary theory (with a critical approach), deals with literature produced in countries that once were colonies of other countries, especially of the European colonial powers Britain, France, and Spain; in some contexts, it includes countries still in colonial arrangements. It also deals with literature written by citizens of colonial countries that portrays colonized people as its subject matter. In Dutch literature a specific colonial and postcolonial segment is named Indies (after Dutch East Indies) literature. A sub-segment specifically focuses on postcolonial identity formation and culture of the diasporic Indo-Europeans, a (Eurasian) community originally from Indonesia. Its main author was Tjalie Robinson. Colonized people, especially of the British Empire, attended British universities and with their access to education, created this new criticism. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union during the late 20th century, its former republics became the subject of this study as well.

Often, previously colonized places are homogenized in western discourse under an umbrella label such as the 'Third World'. Post-colonialism demonstrates the heterogeneity of colonized places by analyzing the uneven impact of Western colonialism on different places, peoples, and cultures. This is done by engaging with the variety of ways in which "relations, practices and representations" of the past is "reproduced or transformed", and studying the connections between the "heart and margins" of the empire. Moreover, post-colonialism recognizes that there was, and still is, resistance to the West. This resistance is practiced by many, including the subaltern, a group of marginalized, and least powerful.

Postcolonial theory provides a framework that destabilizes dominant discourses in the West, challenges "inherent assumptions", and critiques the "material and discursive legacies of colonialism". In order to challenge these assumptions and legacies of colonialism, postcolonial studies need to be grounded, which entails working with tangible identities, connections, and processes. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said's 1978 book Orientalism has been described as a seminal work in the field.

Furthermore, Postcolonialism deals with cultural identity in colonized societies: the dilemmas of developing a national identity after colonial rule; the ways in which writers articulate and celebrate that identity (often reclaiming it from and maintaining strong connections with the colonizer); the ways in which the knowledge of the colonized (subordinated) people has been generated and used to serve the colonizer's interests; and the ways in which the colonizer's literature has justified colonialism via images of the colonized as a perpetually inferior people, society and culture. These inward struggles of identity, history, and future possibilities often occur in the metropolis and, ironically, with the aid of postcolonial structures of power, such as universities. Not surprisingly, many contemporary postcolonial writers reside in London, Paris, New York and Madrid.

The creation of binary opposition structures changed the way we view others. In the case of colonialism, the Oriental and the Westerner were distinguished as different from each other (ie. the emotional, static, Orient vs. the principled, progressive Occident). This opposition justified the "white man's burden," the colonizer's self-perceived "destiny to rule" subordinate peoples. In contrast, post-colonialism seeks out areas of hybridity and trans-culturalization. This aspect is particularly relevant during processes of globalization.

In post-Colonial Drama: theory, practice, politics, Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins write: "the term postcolonialism – according to a too-rigid etymology – is frequently misunderstood as a temporal concept, meaning the time after colonialism has ceased, or the time following the politically determined Independence Day on which a country breaks away from its governance by another state. Not a naïve teleological sequence which supersedes colonialism, postcolonialism is, rather, an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies ... A theory of postcolonialism must, then, respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence, and to more than just the discursive experience of imperialism."

Colonized peoples reply to the colonial legacy by writing back to the center, when the indigenous peoples write their own histories and legacies using the colonizer's language (e.g. English, French, Dutch) for their own purposes. "Indigenous decolonization" is the intellectual impact of post-colonialist theory upon communities of indigenous peoples, thereby, their generating postcolonial literature.

A single, definitive definition of postcolonial theory is controversial; writers have strongly criticised it as a concept embedded in identity politics. Postcolonial Theory - as epistemology, ethics, and politics - addresses matters of identity, gender, race, racism and ethnicity with the challenges of developing a post-colonial national identity, of how a colonised people's knowledge was used against them in service of the colonizer's interests, and of how knowledge about the world is generated under specific relations between the powerful and the powerless, circulated repetitively and finally legitimated in service to certain imperial interests. At the same time, postcolonial theory encourages thought about the colonised's creative resistance to the coloniser and how that resistance complicates and gives texture to European imperial colonial projects, which utilised a range of strategies, including anti-conquest narratives, to legitimise their dominance.

Post-colonial writers object to the colonised's depiction as hollow "mimics" of Europeans or as passive recipients of power. Consequent to Foucauldian argument, postcolonial scholars, i.e. the Subaltern Studies collective, argue that anti-colonial resistance accompanies every deployment of power.

9.2.5 Postcolonial literature
Postcolonial literature is a body of literary writings that reacts to the discourse of colonization.

9.2.5.1 Subaltern (Postcolonialism)
In postcolonialism and related fields, subaltern refers to persons socially, politically, and geographically outside of the hegemonic power structure.

9.2.5.2 History
The term, derived from the work of the Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, entered postcolonial studies through the work of the Subaltern Studies Group, a collective of South Asian historians interested in exploring the role of non-elite actors in South Asian history. In the 1970s, the term began to be used as a reference to colonized people in the South Asian subcontinent. It provided a new perspective on the history of a colonized place from the perspective of the colonized rather than from the viewpoint of the colonizers. Marxist historians had already begun to view colonial history from the perspective of the proletariat, but this was sometimes seen as unsatisfying as it was still a Eurocentric way of viewing the globe. "Subaltern Studies" began in the early 1980s as an "intervention in South Asian historiography." While "subaltern" began as a model for the Subcontinent, it quickly developed into a "vigorous postcolonial critique." Subaltern is now regularly used as a term in history, anthropology, sociology, human geography, and literature.

9.2.5.3 Meanings
The term subaltern is used in postcolonial theory. The exact meaning of the term in current philosophical and critical usage is disputed. Some thinkers use it in a general sense to refer to marginalized groups and the lower classes—a person rendered without agency by his or her social status. Others, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak use it in a more specific sense. She argues that:

Subaltern is not just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who's not getting a piece of the pie....In postcolonial terms, everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is subaltern——a space of difference. Now who would say that's just the oppressed? The working class is oppressed. It's not subaltern....Many people want to claim subalternity. They are the least interesting and the most dangerous. I mean, just by being a discriminated-against minority on the university campus, they don't need the word 'subaltern'...They should see what the mechanics of the discrimination are. They're within the hegemonic discourse wanting a piece of the pie and not being allowed, so let them speak, use the hegemonic discourse. They should not call themselves subaltern.

Subaltern was first used in a non-military sense by Marxist Antonio Gramsci. Some believe that he used the term as a synonym for proletariat, possibly as a codeword in order to get his writings past prison censors, while others believe his usage to be broader and less clear cut. In several essays, Homi Bhabha, a key thinker within postcolonial thought, emphasizes the importance of social power relations in his working definition of subaltern groups as oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power.

Check your progress

1. What is the Colonial theory ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.2.6 Conclusion:

Postcolonial theory tries to understand the power and continued dominance of Western ways of knowing. Edward Said's work on Orientalism is related to the idea of the subaltern in that it explains the way in which Orientalism produced the foundation and the justification for the domination of the Other through colonialism. Europeans, Said argues, created an imagined geography of the Orient before European exploration through predefined images of savage and monstrous places that lay outside of the known world. During initial exploration of the Orient these mythologies were reinforced as travelers brought back reports of monsters and strange lands. The idea of difference and strangeness of the Orient continued to be perpetuated through media and discourse creating an "us" and "them" binary through which Europeans defined themselves by defining the differences of the Orient. This laid the foundation for colonialism by presenting the Orient as backward and irrational and therefore in need of help to become modern in the European

sense. The discourse of Orientalism is Eurocentric and does not seek to include the voices of the Orientals themselves.

Mainstream development discourse built on knowledge of colonialism and Orientalism focuses on modernization theory which follows the idea that in order to modernize underdeveloped countries one should follow the path of developed Western countries. It is characterized by free trade, open markets and capitalist systems as the way to development. Mainstream development discourse focuses on applying universal policies at a national level.

While the subaltern by definition are groups who have had their voices silenced, they can speak through their actions as a way to protest against mainstream development and create their own visions for development. Subaltern groups are creating social movements which contest and disassemble Western claims to power. These groups use local knowledge and struggles to create new spaces of opposition and alternative futures.

9.3 QUESTIONS

1. Explain post Structualist Theory ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain post Colonial Theory ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9.4 REFERENCES

- Asad, Talal. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.

- Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988.

- Clifford, James, and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.

- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology.* Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976.

- Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* New York: Praeger, 1966.

- Dreyfus, Hubert L., and Paul Rabinow. *Michel Foucault, beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

- Dumont, Louis. *Homo Hierarchicus: An Essay on the Caste System.* Translated by Mark Sainsbury. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.

- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge.* Translated by A. M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock, 1972.

- ——. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison.* Translated from the French by Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon, 1977.

- ——. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977.* Translated and edited by Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon, 1980.

- Héritier, Françoise. *Two Sisters and Their Mother: The Anthropology of Incest.* Translated by Jeanine Herman. New York: Zone Books, 1999.

- Heusch, Luc de. *The Drunken King, or, The Origin of the State.* Translated and annotated by Roy Willis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

- Hugh-Jones, Stephen. *The Palm and the Pleiades: Initiation and Cosmology in Northwest Amazonia.* Cambridge, U.K., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

- Leach, Edmund. *Claude Lévi-Strauss.* Revised edition. New York: Viking, 1974.

- ——. *Culture and Communication: The Logic by Which Symbols Are Connected.* Cambridge, U.K., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

- ——. *Rethinking Anthropology.* London: Athlone Press; New York: Humanities Press, 1961.

- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship.* Translated by James Harle Bell, John Richard von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham. Boston: Beacon, 1969.

- ——. *From Honey to Ashes.* Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. London: J. Cape, 1973.

- ——. *The Naked Man.* Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. London: J. Cape, 1981.

- ——. *The Origin of Table Manners.* Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. London: J. Cape, 1978.

- ——. *The Raw and the Cooked.* Translated by John and Doreen Weightman. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

- ——. *The Savage Mind.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

- Manganaro, Marc, ed. *Modernist Anthropology: From Fieldwork to Text.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990.

- Ortner, Sherry. *Sherpas through their Rituals.* Cambridge, U.K., and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

- Rabinow, Paul. *French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989.

- Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* New York: Pantheon, 1978.

- Taussig, Michael T. *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999.

- ——. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses.* New York: Routledge, 1993.

- *Robert Launay*

- New Dictionary of the History of Ideas

- BerrinChatziChousein- Turkey Architecture News - Aug 11, 2013 - 13:31

- https://worldarchitecture.org/architecture-news/pgmgz/postcolonialism.html#:~:text=Postcolonialism%20is%20defined%20in%20anthropology,they%20colonized%20and%20once%20ruled.

- https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1029&context=public_law_and_legal_theory

- https://www.slideshare.net/britishstudiesintehran/postmodernism-poststructuralism-and-postcolonialism-in-ir encyclopedia.com

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

10

GLOBALIZATION: HYBRIDITY, FLOWS AND BOUNDARIES

Unit Structure

10.0 OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of Globalization and its relevance to Anthropology.

- To understand the concepts connected to Globalization like Hybridity, flow, and boundaries.

- To understand the impact of Globalization on Tribes, research in Anthropology.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we are looking into Globalization from the perspective of Anthropology. We are also looking into three concepts that are connected to Globalization. Some major revolutions have affected the world, like the invention of the wheel, industrialization, and Globalization. Globalization resulted in two structural changes among countries' Homogenization and diversification.

Human beings have been moving since times immemorial. People have travelled for trades, as pilgrims, marriages, invasion as migrants, kings used to send their sons to study in other countries to acquire new skills. Silk, spices have been exchanged among several kingdoms. The age of discovery and science led to the growth of economies and movement among people too. So, technically Globalization is not something new phenomenon which has happened in society. However, understanding it academically is essential to understand one's evolution and even that of society.

10.2 HISTORY OF GLOBALIZATION

With colonies in several countries, global integration did not begin rapidly until the Nineteenth Century. The development of steamships, railroads, the telegraph, and other technological achievements and increased economic cooperation across countries ushered in the first "wave" of globalization. After the disaster of World War I, the globalization trend weakened and crashed, followed by post-war protectionism and the Great Depression. Following World War II in the mid-1940s, the U.S. pioneered attempts to revive international commerce and investment under established ground rules, starting the second wave of globalization that is still going strong, despite periodic downturns and increasing political scrutiny[i].

At present, we are in the most advanced society in terms of technology with 3D printing, 5G coming with high internet speed. Reusable rockets, large population using planes, digital currency, wallets like pay ™, UPI. However, global warming is a big threat in the most advanced world too. There are still conflicts through religion even though we are in a technologically advanced society. Some countries like China have also played a major role by increasing the manufacturing business and higher export. In other words, the products made by China has reached nearly all parts of the world. This has affected the home country and the trade globally.

There is also rapid consumption by the economies like India, especially the aspiration middle class. Luxury goods are also being consumed to a large extent in the growing economies. These growing economies are also seen as a market by the developed economies.

E-commerce has changed the behavioural habits of human beings. It has reduced the face-to-face interaction business. People are buying and experimenting with a wide variety of products due to the large size of products available in the market. New technologies are changing the cost of the operation of the business. Like work from home, opportunities reduce the cost for infrastructure through offices, electricity, computers, etc.

10.3 UNDERSTANDING GLOBALIZATION

According to the IMF (International Monetary Fund), "globalization" is a historical process resulting from human innovation and technological progress. It refers to the increasing integration of economies worldwide, particularly through the movement of goods, services, and capital across borders. The term sometimes also refers to movement of people (labour) and knowledge (technology) across international borders. There are also broader cultural, political, and environmental dimensions of Globalization. There are four major parts within the Globalization like increase in trade, Capital flow, migration and movement of people, exchange of knowledge[ii]. There are several reasons for the development of modern Globalization, one of them being the growth of the advanced stage of industrialization and the growth of the service sector. It has affected nearly all sectors of society. Upadhyay (2014) notes that Globalization has affected several areas like gender equality, family structures, social security net, administration, education, technology, health care system, festivals, language, music, literature, cinema, television, drugs, trafficking.[iii]

Thus, there are different types of Globalization like –

a. Economic Globalization talks about the liberalization of markets and economy and free trade.

b. Technological Globalization where technologies like computers, robotics, artificial intelligence is made.

c. Cultural Globalization where food habits and lifestyle are made homogenous or exchanged. For example, if you look in the malls, few brands are the same throughout every mall. Another example is that of TIK TOK, which emerged in another country; however the consumption market developed throughout the world.

d. Political globalization - Geo-political decisions or any decisions made by one country could affect another. For example, changes in the policies of oil-producing countries would all those countries dependent on it.

Globalization can have a positive impact on the development of economies. For example, India in recent times has received the highest foreign direct investment i.e., The Reserve Bank of India reports that the FDI in India has increased from $97 million in 1990-91 to that of $81,722 million in 2020-21[iv].

10.4 IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON CITIES

Mathur (2005) points out how the cities, workspaces, land costs in cities rose because of Globalization. This was due to the result of huge FDI investment into the country, especially with the cities. Several new

companies entered into India like that of knowledge business, service industries, BPOs. This led to the economic development higher in the six cities. He also adds the investment initially by FDI in India was low compared to other Asian countries.[v].

With liberalization, the education sector also changed. Several new courses were introduced for the changing market, like Bachelor's in Mass Media, Business Management (Bhatia, Panner, 2019). Several business schools were also developed to create employment-ready individuals, especially for the new market. These schools produced optimally skilled individuals who reduced the skill employability gap in industries.[vi]

There is one more problem with the emergence of globalization: the Globalization of diseases and viruses due to the number of people traveling from one country to another. For example - the recent pandemic of coronavirus. With coronavirus, several changes occurred, like the tourism industry got shut down. Lakhs of people walked barefoot to their villages. Online education started. It mostly impacted children too. Especially children who do not have access to mobile phones. Its problematic as suddenly young children are expected to adopt new technology. Lack of access to technology is also a big problem. For example, in the documentary Kasheer, the children in the remote parts of Kashmir are struggling to attend online classes without access to a network. Some have to walk 4 km to get a network over the valley. In addition, there are some villages in the wildlife sanctuary. As a result, they have to fear the wildlife and be in a conflict zone; they have to study and remain alert. [vii] This shows the access to technology; advancement has still not reached the villages of our country.

10.5 TECHNOLOGY AND GLOBALIZATION

There is the rapid advancement of technology and the growth of artificial intelligence. In other words, we are in a world of data-driven. Everything is being digitized right from banks, libraries to education, health care facilities like telemedicine, medical-related to apps. This has created new health problems like overconsumption of technology devices like mobile, especially social media. Higher consumption leads to new sets of problems like late-night sleeping among children. Large amount of dopamine release in their brains and the tendency of having instant gratification.

Cyber frauds are also a big issue, where people who are not aware of crimes and the Internet are fooled and looted by scammers. This is through phone calls, spam emails. Victims are falling from both advancing and developed countries. Around 3.17 lakh cybercrimes and 5,771 FIRs were registered online through a centralized portal in the last 18 months and a large number are from Maharashtra and Karnataka, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday[viii].

Drone crimes are also rising. These devices up in the air are not only problematic for military areas but also for laypersons. There are chances of drones being used by thieves by checking the number of people residing in houses, smuggling drugs in prisons. Holograms which is not still available in India could replace the appearance of a human and be involved in crimes. In short, technology has both advancements and disadvantages. Proper awareness has to be created for both senior citizens and children.

10.6 GLOBALIZATION AND LANGUAGES -

With Globalization, the dominance of English has become stronger. This has affected the local languages and the regional languages to a large extent. In several states of India, regional languages schools have been shut down. This has brought competition and discrimination in access to education. On one side, we have the international schools, Matriculation schools, CBSE board students, and then municipal schools and tribal schools in the same country. This leads to the output, i.e., students entering into society, workforce divided right at the base level. In Maharashtra itself, 41 BMC schools have been shut down; an NGO reported this called Praga Foundation. There is a 58.6 decrease in the enrolment of students from the year 2009-10 to 2018-19[ix]. Another newspaper points out that there are nearly 37 Marathi medium schools have been shut down by the BMC[x] This leads to problems like those who are poor and cannot afford education would further suffer.

10.7 GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE INDUSTRY -

Several new products which were never available in India have been introduced today. This has led to the change in the food habits of the mass population. Let's say the example of Avocado, Dragon Fruits, Oats; you may not be aware of these foods earlier. However, these foods are imported or produced within the country and consumed by a large population.

The cosmetic industry was not so much population before 1994 as India was a new market where industrialization came late. So, the large population was still a big market. The beauty contests and miss world, miss universe created a foundation for the large cosmetic industry.

10.8 ANTHROPOLOGY AND GLOBALIZATION CONNECTIONS –

As Anthropologists who study culture, Globalization as a concept is of special importance to us. Evolutionary Anthropologists developed theories to explain different societies. They tried to show how society has moved from savagery to civilization stage. Diffusionists also tried to show how culture spread from one place to another. So, Anthropologists have

played a key role in building theories of growth. Hence, given this background, understanding Globalization, hybridity, flows, and boundaries are very important in today's time for you as a student of Sociology/anthropology.

Check Your Progress

1. According to you, what is Globalization, and how has it impacted Indian society?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the interconnections between Globalization and Anthropology?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Anthropological Periods

	Time	Focus of Interest	Dominant Paradigms	Major Theorists
Formative	Late 19th century	Savage, barbarian, civilization	Cultural evolution	Tylor, Frazer, Morgan
Classic	1900–1945	Primitives: bands, tribes, chiefdoms	Historical particularism, structural functionalism	Boas, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown
Modern	1945–1980	Peasants, urban shantytowns, underdeveloped societies	Modernization theory; later, dependency and world systems theories	Wolf, Worsley, Harris
Transitional	1980–1990	Anthropology itself	Interpretive anthropology, critical anthropology, postmodernism, poststructuralism	Geertz, Clifford and Marcus, Jameson, Foucault
Global	1990–	Transnationals, diasporas, nations, ethnicities	Vocabulary and selected assumptions of postmodernism	Appadurai, Hannerz, Friedman, Kearney

Source: Roughly based on Kearney 1996: 23–41.

The above table could be observed how the Anthropological area of interest has been evolving with time. Apart from this, it could be seen the theorists who dominated the particular tradition. The first column also shows the Anthropological periods.

10.9 GLOBALIZATION AND TRIBAL POPULATION

Colonizers impacted the tribal group to such an extent that they labelled certain tribal groups as Criminals. The consequence of that is they are still facing the stigma of it even today. Roads and railways further made many villagers and outsiders enter into tribal lands, which led to encroachment. Dams funded by international agencies further led to the displacement of tribals in their lands, leading to land alienation and social movements in India. Globalization has further impacted tourism, whereby tribal artifacts and symbols are being modified to suit the tourists' needs and portray them as exhibitions of exotic culture.

The local language of the tribals is impacted due to Globalization. The introduction of tourism further hampers the cultural practices, forest and outsiders encroaching their areas.

10.10 IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION IN ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Globalization has changed the teaching and practice of anthropology massively. There are several methodological problems that Globalization emerged. With the higher migration and population flows due to the globalized world. The site of study for traditional anthropologists, i.e., simple society, has been moved to modern societies or those in transition[xi]. The Internet has also been used to a large extent in research to collect data from other countries. Culture in the form of words, skills, styles, artifacts, even entire languages or religions is transmitted between individuals and between societies with modern transport, communication becomes global too. For example – U.S. Hip Hop has spread to nearly all countries. Japan sushi food[1] is very popular or Indian food Paneer Masala, Chicken Tikka, Biryani.[xii] Globalization has impacted not a minuscule level but at a macro level. Hence, research methods to study emerging societies also need to be constantly modified to capture the reality of the research problem. Let us now further look into understanding Hybridity.

10.11 HYBRIDITY

Hybrid, in simple words, is a mixture, i.e., two elements are being combined. Initially, this term was used for animals and plants. However, in the later stage by post-colonialists theorists. Several scholars also locate the term hybridity with that of migration, Globalization who mix with

cultures. Hybridity can create and question the existing culture like race relations, the caste system in terms of the Indian context[xiii]. Hybridity must be understood in three historical contexts: (a) the emergence of racial and cultural mixture vocabularies from the mid-nineteenth Century onwards; (b) the historical foundations of Hybridity (c) the point at which modern hybrid identities collide; and like language, communication[xiv].

Some anthropologists view "hybridity" as the dissolution of rigid cultural boundaries between groups leading to the intermixture of various identities and the dissolution of identities. Much anthropology in this field demonstrates how identities have been invented and reinvented for political and other purposes out of disparate historical and cultural experiences. Other studies have repeatedly shown that—contrary to a group's self-representation and assertion of identity—identities are driven with contradictions and are not to be understood as seamlessly unified comprehensive cultural entities[xv].For example, the Netflix series on Sweet Tooth portrays the hybrid children born with animals' traits.

Kraidy (2006) points out that Hybridity as a characteristic of culture is compatible with Globalization because it helps globalization rule, as Stuart Hall once put it, through a variety of local capitals. Hybridity entails that traces of other cultures exist in every culture, thus offering foreign media and marketers transcultural wedges for forging affective links between their commodities and local communities. Let us understand this with some examples. Reality television is a good example to understand this phenomenon. There is American Idol, Britain's Got talent and in India, we have Indian Idol. The local culture is being brought in the mass culture format. Let us look into another example. Maggie was just a noodle that entered the market. After that, it merged into the Indian market with hybridity models like Indian Masala Maggi, Atta noodles as wheat is seen as healthy than maida. Let us take the example of milk products for infants. Few multinational companies have monopolized the market through advertisement and creating brand value. As a result, there is no local competition as we are made to think about brand value and brand as healthy. This can be seen with several health drinks, cold drinks which we consume every day. So, we can draw everyday habits that are being monitored, modified with Globalization entering our lives.

Check Your Progress
1. Explain Hybridity in few lines?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Discuss the impact of Globalization on the tribal population of our country?

_____

_____

_____

_____

10.12 FLOW AND BOUNDARIES

Contemporary globalization results from the increasing flow of trade, finance, culture, ideas, and technology of communications trade and neoliberal capitalism and people adapting to this flow or resisting it.[xvi] It could also be seen that Globalization also makes skilled people to migrate to other countries and impact both home and host countries. The boundaries have changed due to different job opportunities in other countries. Cohen points out that Globalization is a product of a rearrangement of the state's purposes, boundaries, and sovereign authority. It also influenced state sovereignty and the patterns of immigration policy, even in developed countries like the United States.[xvii]. Globalization has not only brought economic growth and the exchange of goods and services, but it has also led to the spread of viruses from one country to another. For example, the SARS Virus, the present pandemic of covid-19, emerged in one country and spread to other countries.

In the present times, we are in the market where the flow of information is at its peak. For example, imagine you have your birthday today and are trying to surf and find a new dress. Immediately, advertisements for dresses, shoes, and sandals start appearing whenever you browse the Internet, even the following days. As of now, we are in a data-driven world where information exchange is easy. Companies store our data and show us tailored-made products so that we could buy them. This many times happens when you have your Gmail account login and you are surfing. Major scams can be prevented, at least at the individual level, if we are cautious about our security.

There are mainly three types of flows that can be observed among different countries. The first one is that of trade flows. Secondly, human capital flows and the third one is that of investments. Out of these three, the human capital flows are a big asset that creates a lot of problems to the host. In India, in the early 90s and even today, the high skilled population has been moving like doctors, nurses, engineers, scientists to other countries. As a result, the home country loses important resources that could create massive changes within our own economy.

With the Globalization, there is a free flow of capital. There is also other problems like illicit financial flows. Let us look into this in detail.

The term illicit financial flows (IFFs) is an umbrella term that covers various forms ofmoney laundering and tax or market abuse. It includes the laundering of proceeds madethrough:

- organized criminal markets (such as narcotics)
- corruption (such as embezzled funds)
- tax abuse (such as tax mis-invoicing)
- market abuse (such as insider trading)

The term illicit financial flows emerged in the 1990s but were popularised in the 2000s byRaymond Baker and Global Financial Integrity (Kukutschka et al. 2019).

IFFs also reproduce inequality in several ways. First, IFFs are associated with less efficient economic outcomes, lower rates of poverty reduction and more rent-seeking behaviour. Second, IFFs reduce state capacity and, in particular, the revenues needed to finance development and state-building.

Third, IFFs are often associated with state capture and deteriorating institutional quality. Fourth, IFFs have disproportionately detrimental impacts on those citizens already most "left-behind," given their effectiveness in facilitating and exacerbating corruption and conflict in the poorest countries.

We are presently in the advanced stage of globalization, which has affected nearly all sectors of our lives. Let it be through eCommerce, foreign capital, food, education, etc. However, the important question that we need to ask over here is whether Globalization has created a new borderless world and created a new form of inequality.[xviii]?

10.13 SUMMARY

In the present chapter, we started with understanding globalization, i.e., trade, culture, and products are exchanged. After that, we observed the discipline's relevance as traditionally Anthropologists have been studying simpler societies; however, simpler societies like tribal groups are impacted with the large globalization process. In this chapter, there is also a discussion of the formation of hybrid which means mixture. This could be applied in any field of language, customs, clothing habits etc. We also learned about the flow of technology, skilled people, that is moving across boundaries due to Globalization.

10.14 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss in brief history and impact of globalization on cities.
2. Explain the concept of hybridity and flow of illicit capital.
3. Discuss impact of globalization on Anthropology.
4. Explain the impact of globalization on language and technology.

10.15 REFERENCES

- https://www.piie.com/microsites/globalization/what-is-globalization
- https://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/ib/2008/053008.htm
- Upadhyay, R. K. (2014). Socio-cultural impact of Globalization in India. *The Discussant*, *2*(3).
- https://theprint.in/economy/97-mn-in-1991-to-82-bn-in-2021-how-reforms-made-india-a-go-to-destination-for-fdi/699786/
- Mathur O.P. (2005) Impact of Globalization on cities and city-related policies in India. In: Richardson H.W.,
- Bae CH.C. (eds) Globalization and Urban Development. Advances in Spatial Science. Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg. https://doi.org/10.1007/3-540-28351-X_4
- Bhatia, S. M., & Panneer, S. (2019). Globalization and its impact on business education in emerging economies: A case of India. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, *6*(2), 278-291.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-nFTGNC_Nc
- https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/317-lakhs-cybercrimes-in-india-in-just-18-months-says-govt/article34027225.ece
- https://mumbaimirror.indiatimes.com/mumbai/civic/41-bmc-schools-shut-down-last-year-says-ngo-study/articleshow/72861861.cms
- https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/BMC-shuts-37-Marathi-medium-schools-in-5-years/article16812599.ece
- Eriksen, T. (Ed.). (2003). *Globalization: Studies in Anthropology*. LONDON; STERLING, VIRGINIA: Pluto Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt18fs8zb
- Eller, Jack David. *Cultural anthropology 101*. Routledge, 2015.
- https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences-and-law/sociology-and-social-reform/sociology-general-terms-and-concepts/hybridity
- Kraidy, M. (2006). *Hybridity, or the cultural logic of Globalization*. Temple University Press.
- https://www.britannica.com/science/anthropology/The-anthropological-study-of-education#ref839808.
- Lewellen, T. C. (2002). *The Anthropology of Globalization: Cultural Anthropology Enters the 21st Century: Cultural Anthropology Enters the 21st Century*. ABC-CLIO.
- Cohen, E. S. (2001). Globalization and the boundaries of the state: A framework for analyzing the changing practice of sovereignty. *Governance*, *14*(1), 75-97.
- http://people.tamu.edu/~aglass/econ452/Ceglowski_BordlessWorld.pdf

❖ ❖ ❖ ❖

CULTURAL STUDIES

Unit Structure

11.0 OBJECTIVES

- To get acquainted with the meaning and origin of Cultural studies.
- To understand the historical context behind the emergence of the subject.
- To learn about the core concepts associated with it.

11.1 RELEVANCE OF THE SUBJECT

As an Anthropology student, you are studying culture studies for several reasons. It would help you give a new perspective towards understanding our sub-discipline anthropology, i.e., Cultural Anthropology. There are several topics which cultural studies touch upon, like popular culture, high culture, low culture, culture industry which you can apply and understand and use in your research. These topics and

concepts will help you understand, help you reflect on your own life experiences and also help you better understand our society in general. This chapter is giving an outline, introduction of this 70 + year old discipline. Cultural studies are taught as a subject for English Literature, Mass Media students. It is taught as an independent course/stream in several Universities in India, to name a few like Tezpur University Assam has M.A., Ph.D. in culture studies, TISS offers M.A. in Media and cultural studies, English and Foreign languages University, Hyderabad and several countries in the world. There isn't enough literature on Anthropological, cultural studies. So, here we are more going to discuss cultural studies only. The takeaway from this chapter is that you are being introduced to interdisciplinary subjects through cultural studies.

11.2 UNDERSTANDING CULTURE

Before understanding culture studies, we need to look into what culture is. Culture comes from the Latin root *colere* (to inhabit, cultivate, or honor), generally referring to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activity significance. Anthropologists commonly use "culture" to refer to the universal human capacity to classify, codify, and communicate their experiences symbolically [1].

Edward B. Tylor defined culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" [2]. In other words, culture is associated with growth like agriculture, whereby crops are cultivated.

11.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

1. **Culture is learned and acquired** – Culture is acquired because certain behaviors are carried from one generation to another. Individuals inherit certain qualities from their parents. Socio-cultural patterns are learned from family members, immediate circle, society in which an individual grows. Thus, it could be drawn that the culture of human beings is influenced by the physical and social environment through which they operate.

2. **Culture is shared by a group of people** – A thought or action may be labeled as a culture if it is shared and believed or practiced by a group of people.

3. **Culture is cumulative** – Knowledge learned by one generation is passed to another generation with time. The next generation adds some of their observation, creativity and further; it gets modified. Hence, we can call this cumulative. For example – If you have inherited an ancestral property. You may further paint the home, decorate, make certain modifications and pass it on to your siblings or family members. Further, they would make some changes like have rainwater

harvesting system, air conditioners, something new changes and it passes it on.

4. **Culture changes –** As we can see, modification and addition are an integral part of the culture. Hence, culture is never constant; there are some little changes. Generally, the aspects that are not useful for a particular society don't last; however, certain rituals and customs essential for the continuity of society continue. For example – Marriage in earlier times used to happen for days, annual festivals in villages used to take place for days together now it has been changed to 3-4 hours event. The process has changed. However, it continues.

5. **Culture is dynamic –** Culture keeps on evolving with time, and it's also fluid.

6. **Culture makes us human –** Animals have an instinct in them. If you have observed a chick as soon as it is born, it keeps searching worms, insects for feed. With humans, learning is for a long period—college, schools, learning.

7. **Culture is ideational –** It stands as the benchmark through which individuals are expected to follow.

For Stuart Hall, culture does not consist of what the educated élites fancy, such as classical music or the fine arts. It is, simply, "experience lived, experience interpreted, experience defined." And it can tell us things about the world, he believed, that more traditional studies of politics or economics alone could not. For Hall culture is also a site for 'negotiation [3]'.

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisitiongoes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and understanding learned by socialization. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Given this background, let us now look in detail into cultural studies.

11.4 ORIGIN OF CULTURAL STUDIES

Cultural Studies is an interdisciplinary field that is concerned with the role of social institutions in shaping culture. Cultural studies emerged in Britain in the late 1950s and subsequently spread internationally, especially to the United States and Australia. Originally cultural studies were identified with the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (founded 1964) by scholars like Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams. Cultural studies later became a well-established field in many academic institutions. It has since then influenced sociology, anthropology, historiography, literary criticism, philosophy, and art criticism. The dominant areas are race, ethnicity, class, gender, and the production of cultural knowledge [4]. In other words, it talks about culture studies from the perspective of an interdisciplinary subject.

The creation of this discipline was not easy for the founders. Stuart Hall wrote letters in the University of Birmingham to other Departments like the Department of Sociology to collaborate and work in an interdisciplinary way. However, he did not receive any response. Interdisciplinary what has been accepted today as normal was back then difficult[5]. The history of cultural studies can be seen with literary criticism. Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart developed the Leavisite stress on literature. In other words, social evaluation, but later on, they shifted their focus from literature to everyday life.

Check your progress

1. What is Culture ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain any 4 feature of Culture.

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.5 UNDERSTANDING THE MEANING OF CULTURE STUDIES

Culture studies, in other words, talk about the politics behind the construction of culture. Who owns the power to create culture, how it is created, and the consumers ask such questions? Traditionally, the culture of the rich was seen as high and studied and discussed. Cultural studies observe the downtrodden masses culture and its complexity and even question the concepts of high and classical cultures.

Culture studies founders were inspired by Italian Marxist Scholar Gramsci, who spoke about the cultural domination of capitalist groups over marginalized groups. The dominant ideas of capitalists being sold to the lower and marginalized class. The process is so slow that one does not realize it. Similarly, many harmful products, which are the products created by capitalists, are being made habitual to the people who cannot afford them. It is the emotion that is being sold to the people.

Baker notes that the subject of culture studies talks about taking for granted behavior, hegemony (power), culture construction. How certain

things are accepted and why it operates that, and how certain things are side-lined. Those powerful groups control the media and influence the decisions and affect the marginalized groups (7). There are some perspectives in Cultural Studies, too, like phenomenology, cultural anthropology, structuralism, and critical theory.

Cultural studies aim to comprehend how meaning is generated, distributed, and produced within a culture through varied activities, beliefs, institutions, and social structures. It demonstrates how certain objects in civilization or community gain meaning and value. Cultural studies are thus dedicated to studying a society's whole variety of arts, beliefs, institutions, and behaviors. According to Habib, much of what is labeled as cultural studies might "easily be classified under numerous other titles such as Marxism, Structuralism, New Historicism, Feminism, and Postcolonialism," according to Habib. Cultural studies are concerned not only with the study of culture but also with the formation of meaning through symbolic forms and signifying acts, as well as the impact of these practices on subjectivity.

11.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURAL STUDIES

1. Cultural studies try to understand cultural practices and their relation to power. Here the goal is to expose power relationships and show how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices.

2. Cultural studies aim to understand culture holistically and analyze the social and political context within which it works.

3. Culture in cultural studies always performs two functions: the object of study and the location of political criticism and action.

4. Cultural studies try to bring about complexity in the field of knowledge.

5. It tries to evaluate modern society and its construction.

11.7 METHODS TO PRACTICE CULTURAL STUDIES –

1. Observe the codes, signs, text
2. Try to decode it.
3. Look how it is represented.

Check Your Progress
1. Discuss the characteristics of Cultural studies?

2. Write in brief about the origin of Cultural studies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.8 SEVERAL KEY CONCEPTS ARE DISCUSSED IN CULTURAL STUDIES LIKE -

1.8.1 Popular culture – According to Stuart Hall, "Popular culture is one of the sites where this struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged: it is also the stake to be won or lost in that struggle," he argues. "It is the arena of consent and resistance[7]." For example – Wearing jeans by the student movement in Europe was a resistance against the dominant practice of being in Blazers and ties and neatly polished shoes.

1.8.2 **Culture industry –** The term "culture industry" was given by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. They believed that mass media had negative effects on people. According to them, through advertisements and films, citizens forget their reality and thus become easily manipulated. Mass media had a primary role in exercising power by communicating determinate ideas, advertising products, and ignoring themes or issues[8]. For example – Aerated drinks are not healthy for the human body. However, it has been marketed in such a way that drinking it makes you look cool. There are also diet products available in a similar way.

Fig. 1 This image is a Newspaper advertisement [9] from 1944 to market fruit from California. It was advertised then, and post-Globalization, the fruit has gained popularity in India too. There are several cheap homegrown products like a banana; however, it is a fad to eat the popular avocado, which is often imported from other countries.

Fig. 2. This is a 1960 advertisement [10]. Let us take the example of McDonald's to understand popular culture. There are rarely malls without McDonald's food being served. The culture of eating out on special days. To celebrate birthdays and relaxation of norms of junk food. Example – In the 1950s, if someone ate out, elders at home used to say isn't their food available at home that one had to eat out. However, now it is a culture to go out and have food on celebrations, weekends for families who could afford it.

11.8.3 Folk Culture and Oral history –

Folk culture is generally associated with peasant society. It is the culture connected to the roots of the population, for example – Proverbs, riddles, poetry, oral history, folk songs. These songs are recited during village festivals (Patras). They involve stories of heroes, epics, mythological characters. Many a times these oral songs are recited and passed on from one generation to another. It is rarely recorded; hence these songs are marginalized in the mainstream historical literature of textbooks and reference books. Globalization further marginalizes these songs through rapid mass media interventions and television.

Check your progress

1. Explain what is Pop Culture ?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.8.4 Culture and signifying practice -.

As Hall puts it, 'By culture, here I mean the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages, and customs of any specific society.

11.8.5 Representation

Cultural studies are centered on representation questions, like how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us in meaningful ways.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the Culture industry?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain folk culture and oral history?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.9 FEMINISM AND CULTURAL STUDIES

In the Centre for Contemporary Cultural studies in Birmingham in the 1970s and 1980s, feminist cultural studies developed. It aimed at becoming a multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural field. This area drew attention from different countries scholars like Germany, France, U.S, Canada, Australia. There were also works from different political standpoints: women of color, Marxists-feminist, women-in exile, post-colonialist, lesbian studies, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, sociology, medical science, etc. Different methodologies were also used to study feminism and cultural studies.

11.10 HEGEMONY AND CULTURAL STUDIES

To understand Cultural studies better, we also need to learn about the concept of hegemony. The Cultural studies foundation school used this concept and was influenced by the creator of this concept too. Antonio Gramsci is the person who is involved with the creation of the concept. He was an Italian Marxist scholar. When he was jailed, he wrote about this concept in the book Prisoner's Notebook. Hegemony. Hegemony is the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. _Hegemony_ derives from the Greek term _hēgemonia_ ("dominance over"), which describes relations between city-states. Gramsci's discussion of hegemony followed his attempts to understand the survival of the capitalist state in the most advanced Western countries. A hegemonic class can attain the consent of other social forces, and the retention of this consent is an ongoing project. To secure this consent requires a group to understand its interests in relation to the mode of production, as well as the motivations, aspirations, and interests of other groups. In other words, Hegemony is control over individuals by a powerful group. This control is through such a slow, passive process that the opponent doesn't realize that they are being controlled or manipulated by the powerful. For example - In today's time, people spend on luxury. Achieving luxury is the dream of every individual. Class is being respected and valued by the majority, and achieving that is the goal of a large population. The capitalists are selling this idea to marginalized groups. This leads to the marginalized groups often being discontented. Consumerist behavior is also a reflection of this. People buy many

products online or in malls just because they are available for cheap; however, they may not have a utility. The smartphone is another example whereby people have been addicted to it, yet they cannot separate it as its utility value.

Check Your Progress
1. Explain Feminism and Cultural studies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain the concept of hegemony regarding cultural studies?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

11.11 CULTURAL STUDIES AND INDIA

Cultural studies can be observed in India from different angles, layers, dimensions, and facets due to the diversity. Class, caste, digitization, languages, technology, Bollywood, film industry, reality shows, electric vehicles, and industries influence culture and hierarchy. In India, at times, we have individuals who belong to the 18th-century practices and the modern technological thoughts driven person too within oneself. For example, the individual could have a university education yet follow unhealthy practices like dowry, child marriage, caste superiority, superstition, etc. So, documenting and understanding Cultural studies is a complex task. However, independent studies have been carried out by different Anthropologists, Sociologists, Literature students.

11.12 SUMMARY

In this chapter, we started with understanding culture and then introduced the discipline named Cultural studies. The subject predominantly tries to understand the meaning of culture, how it is represented in a particular society, its complexities, and its power dimension. We studied several key concepts like culture industry the

popular culture, which tries to show how the culture of the dominant groups is being sold to the masses. Originally, cultural studies were identified with the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham (founded 1964) by scholars like Richard Hoggart, Stuart Hall, and Raymond Williams. Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary subject that has impacted worldwide. We also learned about Cultural studies concerning feminism and the Indian context.

11.13 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the origin and meaning of cultural studies.
2. Explain the following concepts –
   a. Popular culture b. Culture industry. c. Folk culture.

11.14 REFERENCES

[1] https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Culture

[2] https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Burnett-Tylor

[3] https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/stuart-hall-and-the-rise-of-cultural-studies

[4] Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia (2015, July 26). *Cultural studies. Encyclopedia Britannica.* https://www.britannica.com/topic/cultural-studies

[5] https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/blog/what-is-cultural-studies/

[6] Sardar, Z. (2015). *Introducing cultural studies: A graphic guide.* Icon Books Ltd.

[7] https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/66910_An_Introduction_to_Cultural_Studies.pdf

[8] https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/cultural-industry

[9] https://in.pinterest.com/pin/438045501239141885/

[10] https://www.thrillist.com/eat/nation/looking-back-on-58-mcdonald slogan

Additional reference list for further readings

- https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/slk/anglistik_amerikanistik/kulturstudien_grossbritanniens/studium/lehrveranstaltungen/list-of-major-works-in-cultural-studies

- Louis Althusser (1918-1990), e.g. *For Marx* (1959/1969), "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

- Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), e.g.*Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (1867-9)

- Roland Barthes (1915-1980), e.g. *Mythologies* (1957/1973), *Criticism and Truth* (1966/1987), *Image, Music, Text* (1977)

- Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007), e.g.*Simulacra* (1981), *Simulations* (1983)

- T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), e.g.*Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948)

- Michel Foucault (1926-1984), e.g.*Madness and Civilization* (1965), *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (1966/1970), *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1979), *The History of Sexuality* (3 vols., 1976-84/1978-86)

- Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), e.g.*Prison Notebooks* (1929-1935)

- Stuart Hall (1932-2014), e.g.*Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997)

- Richard Hoggart (1918-2014), e.g. *The Uses of Literacy* (1957)

- F.R. Leavis (1895-1978), e.g.*Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (1933), *Culture and Environment* (with D. Thompson, 1933)

- Jean-Francois Lyotard (1925-1998), e.g. *The Post-modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979)

- Edward Said (1935-2003), e.g.: *Orientalism* (1978), *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)

- E.P. Thompson (1924-1993), e.g. *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963)

- Raymond Williams (1921-1988), e.g.*Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958), "Culture is Ordinary" (1958), *The Long Revolution* (1961), *Communications* (1962), *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976/1983), *The Sociology of Culture* (1982).

❖❖❖❖