

Unit-one: Introducing Anthropology

- **Definition**
- **Historical Development**
- **Scope**
- **Subject Matter**
- **Subfields**
- **Unique Features**
- **Importance**
- **Misconceptions**

1.1.1 Definition and Concepts in Anthropology

- ❖ Etymologically the term **anthropology** is a compound of two Greek words, 'Anthropos' and 'logos', which can be translated as **human being/mankind** and **reason/study/science** respectively.
- So, anthropology means reason about humans' or the study or science of humankind or humanity'.
- ❖ Moreover, man has two dominant characteristics: **biological** and **cultural** characteristics. It is very important to understand that the biological and the cultural characteristics are inseparable elements. Culture influences human physical structures and the vise-versa.

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- ❖ literally, anthropology is the study of humans. In one sense, this is an accurate description to the extent that anthropology raises a wide variety of questions about the human condition.
- ❖ Yet, this literal definition is not particularly **informative**; because a number of other academic disciplines—including **sociology, biology, psychology, political science, economics,** and **history**—also study human beings.
- ✓ therefore, What is it that distinguishes anthropology from all of these disciplines?
- ❖ Anthropology is the study of **people**—their **origins**, their **development**, and **contemporary variations**, wherever and whenever they have been found.

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- ❖ It is a broad scientific discipline dedicated to the **comparative study** of humans as a group, from its **first appearance** on earth to its **present stage of development**. Of all the disciplines that study humans, anthropology is by far the **broadest in scope**.
- ❖ In more specific terms, **Anthropology** is the science which:
 - ✓ Investigates the **strategies for living** that are learned and shared by people as members of human social groups;
 - ✓ Examines the characteristics that human beings share as members of one species (**homo sapiens**) and the diverse ways that people live in different environments;
 - ✓ analyses the products of **social groups**: material objects (material cultures) and non-material creations (religion/beliefs, social values, institutions, practices, etc..)

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- ❖ Anthropology seeks to explain how and why people are both *similar* and *different* through examination of our *biological* and *cultural* past and *comparative study* of contemporary human societies.

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- ❖ **So The ultimate goal of anthropology** is to develop an **integrated picture of humankind**—a goal that encompasses an almost **infinite** number of questions about all aspects of our existence. We ask, for example,
 - ✓ **what makes us human?**
 - ✓ **Why do some groups of people tend to be tall and lanky, while others tend to be short and stocky?**
 - ✓ **Why do some groups of people practice agriculture, while others hunt for a Living?**
- ❖ As a matter of simplicity and brevity, anthropology primarily offers **two kinds** of insight. **First**, the discipline produces knowledge about the **actual biological** and **cultural variations** in the world; **second**, anthropology offers **methods** and **theoretical perspectives** enabling practitioners to explore, compare, understand and solve societal problems.

1.2.2. The historical development of anthropology

- Like the other social sciences, anthropology is a fairly recent discipline. It was given its present shape during the 20th century, but it has important forerunners in the **historiography, geography, travel writing, philosophy** and **jurisprudence** of earlier times.
- There are, in any case, many ways of writing the history of anthropology, just as, in any given society, there may exist competing versions of national history or origin myths, promoted by groups or individuals with diverging interests.
- History is not primarily a product of the past itself, but is rather shaped by the concerns of the present. As these concerns change, past events and persons shift between foreground and background, and will be understood and evaluated in new ways.

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- ❖ If we restrict ourselves to anthropology as a scientific discipline:-
 - some would trace its roots back to the **European Enlightenment**, during the **18th** century;
 - others would claim that anthropology **did not arise as a science until the mid 19th century or until 1850s**;
 - yet others would argue that anthropological research in its present-day sense only commenced **after the First World War(1914-1918). Never can we avoid such ambiguities.**

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- ❖ It is beyond doubt, however, that anthropology, considered as the **science of humanity**, originated in the region we commonly call the **West**, notably in three or four **Western** countries: **France**, **Great Britain**, **the USA** and **Germany**.
- ❖ Historically speaking, this is a European discipline, and its practitioners, like those of all European sciences, occasionally like to trace its roots back to the ancient Greeks.
- ❖ The present **academic anthropology** has its roots in the works and ideas of the great ancient and Medieval Greek, Roman, and Hebrew philosophers and social thinkers. These people were interested in the **nature**, **origin** and **destiny of man**, and the **morality** and **ethics** of human relationships.
- ❖ While the roots of anthropology can be generally traced through the **history of western** culture as far back as ancient Greek social philosophical thinking, the discipline did not emerge as a distinct field of study until the **mid-nineteenth century**.

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- Generally speaking, anthropology as an academic discipline was born during the **19th century**, out of the intellectual atmosphere of the Enlightenment, which is the **18th century social and philosophical movement** that emphasized human progress and the power of reason, and based on the Darwinian Theory of Evolution.
- By the late 1870s, anthropology was beginning to **emerge as a profession**.
- And a major impetus for its growth was the expansion of western colonial powers and their consequent desire to better understand the peoples living under colonial domination.

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- ❖ During its **formative** years, anthropology became a profession primarily in **museums**. In this regard, in the 1870s and 1880s many museums devoted to the study of humankind were found in **Europe**, **North America** and **South America**.
- ❖ Regarding their focus, Early anthropologists mainly studied **small communities who were technologically simple societies**. Such societies are often called by various names, such as, **traditional**, non-industrialized and/or simple societies.
- ❖ Anthropologists of the **early 1900s** emphasized the study of social and cultural differences among human groups. Here, many of the **indigenous peoples** of non-western world and their social and cultural features were studied in detail and documented.
- ❖ And this approach is called **ethnography**.

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- ❖ By the mid-1900, however, anthropologists attempted to discover **universal human patterns** and the common **bio-psychological traits** that bind all human beings. This approach is also called **ethnology**.
- ✓ Ethnology aims at the **comparative understanding** and **analysis** of **different ethnic groups** across time and space.
- ❖ In Ethiopia, professional anthropologists have been studying culture and society on a more intensive level only since the late 1950s.
- ❖ Almost inevitably, the initial emphasis was on **ethnography, the description of specific customs, cultures and ways of life.**

1.1.3 Scope and Subject Matter of Anthropology

- ❖ The scope and depth of anthropology is immense; there no time and space left as far as man exists.
- ❖ **Temporal**-dimension covers-**past**, **present** and the **future**.
- ❖ **Spatial**-dimension-Arctic **to Desert**, from **Mega polis** to **hunting gathering** areas.
- ❖ **Substantively**- covers all aspects of human ways of life experiences and existence, as humans live in a social group. It touches **all aspect of human conditions** as far as there is a relation between human beings themselves, and humans and natural environment.

Subject matter

- We have said that **Anthropology** (from Greek Anthropos = human being + logy- = science of) is the scientific as well as humanistic study of the origin, behaviour, and the physical, social, and cultural development of humankind

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- ❖ Anthropology not only tries to account for the **social and cultural variations** in the world, but a crucial part of the anthropological project also consists in conceptualizing and understanding similarities and differences between social systems and human relationships.
- ❖ As one of the foremost anthropologists of the 20th, Claude Lévi-Strauss, has expressed: **Anthropology has humanity as its object of research**, but unlike the other human sciences, it tries to grasp its object through its most **diverse manifestations** (1983:
- ❖ In other words, anthropology studies humanity **with its all aspects of existence**, and in its all **means of differences (diversities) and similarities (commonalities)**.
 - ❖ **Wherever human beings live, there is always anthropology.**

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- ❖ The discipline also accounts for the **interrelationships** between different aspects of human existence, and usually anthropologists investigate these interrelationships taking as their point of departure a detailed study of local life in a particular society or a delineated social environment.
- ❖ One may, therefore, say that anthropology asks large questions, while, at the same time, it draws its most important insights from small places.
- ❖ Although anthropologists have wide-ranging and frequently highly specialized interests, they all share a common concern in trying to understand both connections **within societies** and connections **between societies**.

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- ❖ Such focus areas of investigation and the stated aims of the discipline convey that the areas covered by anthropology are **diverse** and **enormous**.
- ❖ Anthropologists strive for an understanding of the **biological** and **cultural origins** and **evolutionary development** of the species.
- ❖ Anthropologist are concerned **with all humans, both past and present**, as well as their **behaviour patterns, thought systems, and material possessions**.
- ❖ In short, anthropology aims to describe, in the broadest sense, **what it means to be human** (Peacock, 1986).

Sub-fields of Anthropology

- Anthropology is often divided into **four** major subfields:
 - I. **Physical/Biological Anthropology,**
 - II. **Archaeological Anthropology**
 - III. **Linguistic Anthropology and**
 - IV. **Socio-Cultural Anthropology.**

Each sub-field of anthropology is further divided into a number of specialization areas some of which are indicated in Fig. 1.

1 Physical/Biological Anthropology

- In what ways does man differ from other animal species?
- What are the sources of biological variation?
- What differentiate human body from other animals?
- How humans have evolved up to the present time?
- From where did we (human species) come from?
- What is evolution? We hope you remember your high school science lessons on evolution.

Physical Anthropology.....

- Physical anthropology is a branch of anthropology that focuses on the **biological aspects** of human beings. It studies the biological dimensions of human beings including:-
 - **biological evolution of humans**
 - **physical variations between modern populations**, and
 - **the biology and behaviour of non-human primates.**

Physical Anthropology.....

- ❖ Human biological variations are the result of the cumulative processes of invisible changes occurring in every fraction of second in human life. These changes have been accumulated and passed through **genes**.
- ❖ **Genes are characteristics that carry biological traits of an organism, including human beings.**
- ❖ The major sources of biological variations are derived from the interrelated effects of **natural selection, geographical isolation, genetic mutations.**

Physical Anthropology.....

- Physical anthropology is essentially concerned with two broad areas of investigation: **human evolution** and **genetics**.
- Human evolution is the study of the gradual processes of simple forms into more differentiated structures in hominid. It is interested in reconstructing the evolutionary record of the human species using fossils/bones.

❖ human evolution: Human evolution is the evolutionary process that led to the emergence of anatomically modern humans, beginning with the evolutionary history of primates—in particular genus Homo—and leading to the emergence of Homo sapiens as a distinct species of the hominid family, which includes the great apes

❖ Research in human evolution shows that the origin of humanity is traced back over 6 million years. Africa is found to be the cradle of human beings. Research findings indicate that East Africa, especially the Great Rift Valley, is the origin of mankind. The oldest fossils of human ancestors were discovered in this part of the continent. The discovery of fossils such as Lucy/Dinknesh (Australopithecus Afarensis) in the Afar Region shows that Ethiopia is among African countries regarded as the origin of human ancestors

- Human evolution is further divided into three specialties: **Paleo-anthropology**, **Primateology** and **anthropometry**.

1. Palaeoanthropology:- Palaeoanthropology (*paleo* meaning “old”) is **the study of human biological evolution through the analysis of fossil remains** from prehistoric times to determine the missing link that connect modern human with its biological ancestors.

2. Primateology:- Primateology studies about primates or recent human ancestors to explain human evolution. Primateologists study **the anatomy and social behaviour of such non-human primate species as gorillas and chimpanzees** in an effort to gain clues about our own evolution as a species.

- **Primateologists** study and observe the **anatomy** and **social behaviour** of such non-human primate species as **gorillas, gibbons, orangutans** and **chimpanzees** in their natural habitats in an effort to gain clues about our own evolution as a species and to ascertain the similarities and differences between these other primates and humans

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3. Anthropometry: The study of human variations within and among different populations in time and space, **human ecology**, **population genetics**, etc make up the central concerns of this sub-branch of physical anthropology.

- These physical differences may be in terms of blood types, skin colors, skull shape, facial shape, hair texture, and the like.
- Anthropometry shades some light on how differing physical characteristics have helped human groups adapt different geographical environments

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- Population genetics, the study of biological inheritance plays an important role in anthropometry, what is sometimes termed as biological anthropology (Scupin and DeCorse, 1995; Howard and Dunaif-Hattis, 1999)
 - **Human genetics**; concerns to investigate how and why the **physical traits** of contemporary human populations vary throughout the world.
 - It focuses to examine the genetic materials of an organism such as **DNA** and **RNA**.
 - In addition, genetic studies are crucial in understanding –how evolution works and plays important role in identifying the genetic source of some **hereditary disease** like sickle cell anaemia and cystic fibrosis.

2 Archaeological Anthropology

- ❖ Archaeological anthropology or simply archaeology **studies the ways of lives of past peoples by excavating and analysing the material culture/physical remains** (artefacts, features and eco-facts) they left behind.
- ❖ Archaeologists study artefacts to get clues about **values, beliefs, and norms**; in general, about the cultures of societies that existed in the past.
- ❖ **Artefacts** :- are material remains made and used by the past peoples and that can be **removed from the site and taken to the laboratory** for further analysis. Tools, ornaments, arrowheads, coins, and fragments of pottery are examples of artifacts.
- ❖ **Features**:- like artefacts, are made or modified by past people, but they **cannot be readily carried away from the site**.
- ✓ Archaeological features include such things as house foundations, ancient buildings, fireplaces, steles, and postholes.
- ❖ **Eco-facts** :-are non-artefactual, organic and environmental remains such as soil, animal bones, and plant remains that were **not made or altered by humans; but were used by them**.
- ✓ Eco-facts provide archaeologists with important data concerning the environment and how people used natural resources in the past.

- ❖ Linguistic anthropology generally focuses on the **evolution of languages** by studying contemporary human languages as well as those of the past.
- ❖ It studies how language is **used within a society**, and how the **human brain acquires** and **uses languages**.
- ❖ It tries to understand languages variation in their **structures, units, and grammatical formations**. It gives special attention to the study of **unwritten languages**.



- ❖ Language is a key to explore a culture. Indeed, linguistic anthropology or anthropological linguistics studies human language as a **cultural resource** and speaking as a **cultural practice** in its social and cultural context, across space and time.
- ❖ Language is basically a system of **information transmission** and **reception**. Humans communicate messages by sound (speech), by gesture (body language), and in other visual ways such as writing.
- ❖ Analogous to genes that carry and transmit genetic materials to descendants, languages **hand down cultural traits** from one generation to another. In fact, some would argue that language is the **most distinctive feature of being human..**

- ❖ Although animals could develop certain behaviours through conditioning that mimic to humans, they do not have a **capacity to pass on their own offspring**. This is the boundary between human beings and other animals including higher primates.
- ❖ Linguistic anthropology is divided into **four distinct branches** or areas of research:
 - I. **Structural or Descriptive Linguistics,**
 - II. **Historical Linguistics,**
 - III. **Ethno-Linguistics, and**
 - IV. **Socio-linguistics**

I. Structural /Descriptive Linguistics: -

- studies the structure of linguistic patterns.
- Structural linguistics studies **grammatical patterns** of languages to identify the similarities and differences among contemporary languages.
- It examines **sound systems**, **grammatical systems**, and the **meanings attached to words** in specific languages to understand the structure and set of rules of a given language. every culture has a distinctive language with its own logical structure and set of rules for putting words and sounds together for the purpose of communicating.
- In its simplest form, the task of the descriptive linguist is to **compile dictionaries** and **grammar books** for previously unwritten languages.
- For structuralist linguist or structural linguistic anthropologist, even if there are thousands of human languages, at least structurally all of them are similar making it possible for us to grasp and learn languages other than our so called **mother tongue**.
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II. Ethno-linguistics (cultural linguistics):

- Examines the relationship between language and culture.
- In any language, certain cultural aspects that are emphasized (such as types of snow among the Inuit, cows among the pastoral Maasai, or automobiles in U.S. culture) are reflected in the vocabulary.
- moreover, cultural linguists explore how different linguistic categories can affect how people categorize their experiences, how they think, and how they perceive the world around them.

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III. Historical linguistics: -

- Deals with the **emergence** of language in general and how specific languages have **diverged over time**.
- It focuses on the **comparison** and **classifications** of different languages to differentiate the historical links between them.

IV. Socio-linguistics: -

- Sociolinguistics examines how the use of language defines **social groups**.
- It investigates **linguistic variation within** a given language.
- No language is a homogeneous system in which everyone speaks just like everyone else. One reason for variation is **geography**, as in regional **dialects** and **accents**. Linguistic variation also is expressed in the bilingualism of ethnic groups.

4.Socio-Cultural Anthropology

- ❖ This branch of anthropology is called differently in different parts of the world.
- ❖ For example
 - ❖ Cultural anthropology –USA universities;
 - ❖ Ethnology -Germany;
 - ❖ Social anthropology -in countries like UK and Ethiopia.
- ❖ it studies contemporary societies and cultures throughout the world.
- ❖ In the past, however, mainly social anthropologists from the Western world conducted ethnographic fieldworks in non-Western societies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania.
- ❖ Many of the classical ethnographies of African societies were produced by ethnographers from the then colonial countries: France and Great Britain (currently the United Kingdom).
- ❖ Famous anthropologists such as Evans Pritchard and Meyer Fortes conducted ethnographic research in the British colonies.

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- ❖ Currently, socio-cultural anthropologists conduct fieldworks all over the world including in urban-industrial societies.
- ❖ **Indigenous anthropology** or 'anthropology at home' has also emerged as more and more anthropologists have begun doing fieldworks in their **own societies**.
- ❖ **Society** is the group of people who have **similar ways of life**, but **culture** is a way of life of a group of people.
- ❖ Society and culture are two sides of the same coin.
- ❖ Socio cultural anthropology **describes, analyzes, interprets, and explains social, cultural and material** life of contemporary human societies.
- ❖ It studies the **social** (human relations), **symbolic** or nonmaterial cultures (religious, language, and any other symbols) and material (all man-made objects) lives of living peoples.
- ❖ Socio-cultural anthropologists engage in two aspects of study: **Ethnography** (based on **field work**) and **Ethnology** (based on **cross-cultural comparison**).

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- ❖ **Ethnography:-** provides a comprehensive account of a particular community, society, or culture.
- ❑ It describes the features of specific cultures in as much detail as possible including local behaviour, beliefs, customs, social life, economic activities, politics, and religion.....
- ❑ These detailed descriptions (ethnographies) are the result of extensive field studies (usually a year or two, in duration) in which the anthropologist observes, talks to, and lives with the people he or she studies.
- ❑ During ethnographic fieldwork, the anthropologist (ethnographer) gathers data that he or she organizes, describes, analyzes, and interprets to build and present that account, which may be in the form of a book, article, or film.
- ❖ **Ethnology:-** is the comparative study of contemporary cultures and societies, wherever they may be found.

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- ❑ It examines, interprets, analyzes, and compares the results of ethnographic data gathered in different societies.
- ❑ It uses such data to **compare** and **contrast** and to make generalizations about society and culture.
- ❑ In other words, Ethnologists seek to understand both why people today and in the recent past differ in terms of ideas and behaviour patterns and what all cultures in the world have in common with one another.
- ❑ Looking beyond the **particular** to the more **general**, ethnologists attempt to identify and explain cultural differences and similarities, to **test hypotheses**, and to **build theory** to enhance our understanding of how social and cultural systems work.
- ❑ **Indeed, the primary objective of ethnology is to uncover general cultural principles, the – rules that govern human behaviour**

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Ethnography	Ethnology
Requires field work to collect data	Uses data collected by a series of researchers
Often descriptive	Usually synthesizes ethnographic data
Group/community specific	Comparative/cross-cultural

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- ❑ Socio-cultural anthropology uses **ethnographical** and **ethnological** approaches to answer all sort of questions related to culture and human societies.
- ❑ To properly address emerging questions related to culture and societies, it has been sub-divided into many other specialized fields as:
 - ❑ Anthropology of **Art**,
 - **Medical** Anthropology,
 - **Urban** Anthropology,
 - **Economic** Anthropology,
 - **Political** Anthropology,
 - **Development** Anthropology, A
 - anthropology of **Religion**,
 - **Demographic** Anthropology,
 - **Ecological** Anthropology,
 - **Psychological** Anthropology,
 - **Ethnomusicology**, etc.
- ❑ All of them are considered to be the applied areas of anthropology

1.2 Unique Features of Anthropology

- ❖ There are several distinguishing characteristics that identify anthropology from other disciplines.
- ❖ Anthropology is unique in its scope, approach, focused and method of study.

a. Anthropology has a broad scope.

- ❑ It is interested in all human beings, whether **contemporary** or **past**, "**primitive**" or "**civilized**".
- ❑ It is interested in many **different aspects of humans**, including their phenotypic characteristics, family lives, marriages, political systems, economic lives, technology, belief systems, health care systems, personality types, and languages.

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- No place or **time** is too remote to escape the anthropologist's notice. No dimension of human kind, from **genes** to **art styles**, is outside the anthropologist's attention. Indeed, Anthropology is the broad study of human kind, around the world and throughout time.

b. Its approach

- ❑ In its approach anthropology is **holistic**, **relativistic**, and **Comparative**.

✓ **Holistic**, in a sense, means that it looks **any phenomena** from different vantage points. Studying one aspect of the ways of life of a group of people by relating it to other complex related aspects of life.

- ❑ Accordingly, anthropology considers **culture**, **history**, **language** and **biology** essential to a complete understanding of society.

- ❑ Anthropology seeks to understand human beings as **whole organisms** that adapt to their environments through **a complex interaction of biology and culture**.

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✓ Relativistic

- ❑ The concept of relativism is highly appreciated in anthropological studies. Anthropology tries to study and explain a certain belief, practice or institution or a group of people **in its own context**.
- ❑ It does not **make value judgment**, i.e., it does not hold the position that a given belief or practice is **good** or **bad**.

✓ Comparative

- ❑ Anthropology's comparative perspective helps to understand **differences** and **similarities** among human beings across time and place. -Studies certain aspects of the culture of a group of people by comparing it **across societies** and **different times**; the present with the past, the modern with the traditional, etc.

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C. Focused/Emphasis on Insiders' View

- ❑ Another important perspective is a way of looking at **people's ideas**.
- ❑ it considers **insiders' views** as a primary focus of any anthropological inquiry.
- ❑ Anthropological studies give attention to how people **perceive themselves** and **understand their world**; how a particular group of people explain about their action, or give meaning to their behaviour or cultural practices.
- ❑ This is what anthropologists call an **emic perspective**. It helps to understand the logic and justification behind group behaviour and cultural practices

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➤ D. Its Research Approach/method of research

- ❑ Anthropology is highly dependent on *qualitative research* (collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences) to understand the meaning behind any human activity.
- ❑ Qualitative research methods such as Extended fieldwork, participant observation, in-depth and key informant interviews and focus-group discussion are qualitative research instruments to explore change and continuities in human societies.
- ❑ *Ethnographic fieldwork* is an important strategy which normally requires spending a year or more with research subjects and document realities occurring across time.

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- For most anthropologists, fieldwork is a process requiring them to tune-in; hangout; and hang-on' to the societies and cultures they are interested to study
 - Focusing more on the **local** than the **big social processes** has been another exclusive approach in the discipline.
 - Paying great attention to **local** or **micro-social processes** certainly helps us to better understand big changes in societies.
 - A detailed account of an event or a phenomenon discovers **multiple realities** in a community

1.4 Misconceptions about Anthropology

- ❖ Due to lack of appropriate awareness about the nature, scope and subject matter of the discipline, different misconceptions are held about anthropology.
- 1. **One misconception about anthropology is related to the area of its study.** It is said that anthropology is limited to the study of "*primitive*" societies.
- 2. **Another misconception is that anthropologists only study the rural people and rural areas.**
- 3. **It is also wrongly misconceived that anthropology is the study/analysis of fossil evidences of the proto-humans like that of Lucy/Dinkinesh.**
- 4. **It is also misconceived that the purpose of anthropology is to study and preserve communities far from development and obsolete cultural practices in museums.**

1.6 Contributions of Anthropology

- ❖ The philosophical underpinning is that since we are human beings, we have to know our civilization.
- ✓ Anthropology has established for itself the **task of examining** all aspects of humanity for all periods of time and for all parts of the globe.
- ✓ Because of the **enormity** of this task, anthropologists must draw on theories and data from a number of other disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences.
- ✓ Accordingly, its contributions are **immense**. By studying anthropology, we get the following **benefits**, among others

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□ First **it promotes the idea of relativism:-**

- **the anthropological perspective**, with its emphasis on the **comparative study** of cultures, should **lead us to the conclusion that our culture is just one way of life among many found in the world**, and that it represents one way (among many possible ways) to adapt to a particular set of environmental conditions.
- Through the process of **contrasting** and **comparing**, we gain a fuller understanding of **other cultures** and **our own**.
- Anthropology also helps us **better understand** ourselves or our own ways of life. As a mirror of human life, by studying others, we can better understand ourselves. Hence, it gives an opportunity to understand and to be critical about the ways of lives of our own community

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- ❑ Second, anthropology gives us an insight into different ways and modes of life of human society (social and cultural diversity), which helps to understand the logic and justification behind group behaviour and cultural practices.
- Knowledge about the rest of the world is particularly important today because the world has become increasingly **interconnected**. So, today it is important that we not only know something about other peoples of the world, but also grasp how our everyday decisions are influencing them in a multitude of ways and how others' decisions are also influencing ours

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- ❑ Through its distinctive methodology of long-term, intensive, participant-observation research, cultural anthropology offers a unique perspective on how local cultural groups are engaging with the **processes of globalization**.
- Although many pundits discuss the consequences of globalization by talking to only government and business leaders, cultural anthropologists are more likely to see what is actually occurring on the ground and how the local people themselves talk about their life experiences in a time of rapid globalization.
- ❑ Because of its **Relativistic approach**, anthropology helps us to be more **sensitive to** and **appreciative of cultural diversity** and **variability**.
- It helps us to avoid some of the **misunderstandings** that commonly arise when individuals of different cultural traditions come into contact.
- Anthropology helps us **fight against prejudice** and **discriminations**.
- It helps us fight against **ethnocentrism**: the belief that one's own culture and one's own way of life is superior to others' cultural, social and material lives. This arises from **ignorance** about other ethnic groups and their ways of lives.

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- ❑ Anthropology, in its **Applied perspective**, is also used as **a tool for development.**
- The application of anthropological knowledge and research results has become important element to ensure people's rights in development and to be able to sustain a project's life.
- In general, anthropology is able to suggest sound solutions to all things human. For example, it is often applied in areas of ***Environmental Change, Health and Nutrition, Globalization, Social Justice and Human Rights, cultural resource management (CRM) and Cultural Dimensions of Civil and Religious Conflicts.***