

BANC 102: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

Course Code: BANC 102

Assignment Code: BANC 102/ASST/TMA/2020

Total Marks: 100

Answer the following in about 500 words each. 20X2= 40

1. Discuss the history and growth of social anthropology

Ans:

Social anthropology is the dominant constituent of anthropology throughout the United Kingdom and Commonwealth and much of Europe (France in particular), [1] where it is distinguished from cultural anthropology. [2] In the United States, social anthropology is commonly subsumed within cultural anthropology (or under the relatively new designation of sociocultural anthropology). [citation needed]

In contrast to cultural anthropology, culture and its continuity (including narratives, rituals, and symbolic behavior associated with them) have been traditionally seen more as the dependent "variable" (cf. explanandum) by social anthropology, embedded in its historical and social context, including its diversity of positions and perspectives, ambiguities, conflicts, and contradictions of social life, rather than the independent (explanatory) one (cf. explanans).

Social anthropology has historical roots in a number of 19th-century disciplines, including ethnology, folklore studies, and Classics, among others. (See History of anthropology.) Its immediate precursor took shape in the work of Edward Burnett Tylor and James George Frazer in the late 19th century and underwent major changes in both method and theory during the period 1890-1920 with a new emphasis on original fieldwork, long-term holistic study of social behavior in natural settings, and the introduction of French and German social theory. Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the most important influences on British social anthropology, emphasized long term fieldwork in which anthropologists work in the vernacular and immerse themselves in the daily practices of local people. This development was bolstered by Franz Boas's introduction of cultural relativism arguing that cultures are based on different ideas about the world and can therefore only be properly understood in terms of their own standards and values.

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Social anthropology focuses generally upon aspects of society such as social stratification, studies of social institutions such as those pertaining to economy, politics, religion and law. A major aspect of social anthropological studies is that pertaining to kinship, family and marriage. The classical works of these kinds were the books; African Systems of Kinship and Marriage, African Political Systems, Witchcraft among the Azande, The Nuer, Nuer Religion and so on. Social anthropologists also studied change and various types of social transformations. With the incorporation of Marxism into anthropology, the aspect of history was also covered in anthropological analysis.

Social anthropology deals primarily with the study of social relationships and the study of what we call as social institutions like family, kinship, political institutions and economic institutions. They study norms and rules of behaviour and the structures that constitute society.

2. Describe the classical and contemporary theories in social anthropology

Ans:

Block 1 Unit 1

Assignment – II

Answer the following in about 250 words each 10X2=20

1. Write a note on political institutions

Ans: Political Institutions: Useful notes on Political Institutions!

Political institutions are mainly concerned with the exercise and distribution of power and have the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. Institutions involving relations with other societies, including war, are also considered to fall in this category. For a sociologist, a society's political institution, or politics, is, like other institutions, a means of dealing with social problems.

In this connection, political sociologists have offered two opposite approaches of how order arises, is maintained and motivates members of any given society. These approaches are: structural-functional approach, and conflict approach.

Structural-functional Approach (Consensus Theory):

This approach stresses on co-operation and stability. Theorists of this approach believe that political institutions hold the values of the dominant society and arbitrate conflicts when they arise. One person may act on a value of freedom by marrying more than one spouse, or members of a sub-culture may feel free to use drugs. It is the political system that decides which value must be upheld or limited to maintain social order.

Conflict Approach:

This approach differs radically from structural-functional approach. It stresses on conflict and change as the centre of political life. It does not assume that societies are based on a set of values, but, rather, that they are drawn together by people's need for resources—food, shelter, and other necessities. Some groups get a larger share of resources to gain power.

They use their wealth and power to influence and control political leaders and mass media to support their economic interests. Unlike the structural-functionalists, who believe that the values of the society shape political systems, conflict theorists believe that political systems are run by elites who shape the values of society.

2. Write a short note on religious institutions.

RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

religion is an essential aspect of human societies and is located in the special qualities of the human brain and the capacity of Homo Sapiens for abstract thinking and imagination. As a social institution, religion has been analysed to serve critical functions in human societies.

Religion has two aspects; beliefs and practices. The former provides the cosmological basis for any society, giving explanations about life, death, the meanings of existence,

the nature of the world, the place of humans, non-humans and nature and their relationship with each other

As an institution religion has the strongest regulatory function to keep social beings in place. As Durkheim (1915) had theorised based on his analysis of totemic rituals of the Australian Aborigines, what people regard as religious is actually the social. Thus religious beliefs tend to protect the interests of society, and religious rituals serve to create and maintain social solidarity.

A religion requires that all who are followers of that religion be well versed in the rituals and beliefs of that religion. According to Durkheim, this can be called as a Church. A Church comprises of all those people who share the same beliefs and practices with respect to the same set of supernatural beings. In small scale societies, this comprises of a small group of people who have been socialised into the particular set of beliefs.

Answer the following questions in about 150 words each. 5X2=10

1. Socialisation and Enculturation

Ans:

What is Socialization

Socialization is the process by which we acquire knowledge, language, values, skills and habits of a society. The process actually begins during a person's childhood. When a person is born into the world, he or she needs to learn how to live in the society around him or her. In other words, an individual should generally conform to the norms and roles required for integration into a

group or community. It is why socialization is an important process. Basically, it teaches an individual how to be a member of a group or society. Socialization is, in fact, the main process of social life.

What is Enculturation

Enculturation is a very similar process to socialization. Enculturation is the process of being socialized into a certain culture. In other words, this is the process by which we learn the requirements of our surrounding culture and acquire the behaviours and values appropriate for this culture.

Relationship Between Socialization and Enculturation

Socialization refers to the general process of acquiring culture, while enculturation refers to the process of being socialized to a particular culture. Thus, it is not incorrect to say that enculturation is a product of socialization.

2. Tribe and Caste

Ans:

Communities are not just confined to villages. They are also found in urban societies, where in an anonymous world, they are like cohesive structures ('honeycomb systems') which integrate the individual to the society. One may refer here to the example of two types of communities – the tribe and the caste.

Tribes are found all over the world. In different parts of the world they are referred to by different names: in some they are called aborigines, Indians, minorities, indigenous people, or ethnic groups. In India, in addition to the term tribe, the term Scheduled Tribe is also used. The communities which have been identified for the benefit of reservation and the other developmental measures are known as Scheduled Tribes, which according to the Draft of the National Tribal Policy number around seven hundred.

Caste on the other hand is a principle of social organisation in Hindu South Asia.

M.N. Srinivas regarded caste as the 'structural principle of Hinduism'. The system is legitimised by Hindu religious texts. The Tenth Section (mandala) of Rig Veda submits that different castes have emerged from different parts of god's body. Each caste is assigned different functions and is not expected to change its occupation. The members of a caste marry within their caste, the principle is known as caste endogamy

3. Endogamy and Exogamy

Ans;

Endogamy

Is marriage within the believers of the same faith or religion, for example Hindus marry within the same caste group and the tribes marry within the same tribal population. In Hindu society the rules of anuloma and pratiloma are also prevalent. In the earlier Vedic times the rules of anuloma or hypergamy was prevalent where a boy from a higher caste could marry a girl from his own caste or from those below upto three varnas, however in such cases the status of the girl remains the same and only their children gets the father's status

Exogamy

Is marriage outside the group. In Hindu community one has to marry within the same caste group but outside the gotra. In societies where endogamy is prevalent parallel Institutions I: Kinship, Family and Marriage Basic Concepts cousin marriage is the preferential norm. Among such societies marriage between first cousins is permitted. Based on the rules of lineage exogamy cousins belonging to different lineage are preferred. For easy understanding the children of siblings of opposite sex (brother- sister) - are called cross-cousins; while the children of siblings

of the same sex (brother-brother) are called parallel cousins.

5. Household and Family

Many a time there is confusion between the term family and household. So let's first try to understand the term household. Household has been defined by Haviland (2003) as the basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organised and implemented. The members of a household at times share a common hearth. Let's take the example of the Mundurucu of the Amazon who organize themselves around a household. They have a unique system by which all men and boys above 13 years of age live together whereas all the women and children below 13 years of age live together (Haviland, 2003). Herein, we see that household is an extension of family, a family can be a household but a household need not be a family. To make this statement clear let's take another example from the present day situation. We see a lot of students moving out of their native place and settling in some other city or going abroad for higher education. These students usually on a low budget like to share accommodation with fellow students. Thus, two to three students take up residence and start sharing space and eating together. This makes them share a hearth but they are not necessarily members of the same family but belong to different families.

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