



# Value Addition NOTES

## Anthropology

### UNIT 9.2: Role of Anthropology in Tribal and Rural Development



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### Role of Anthropology in Tribal Development

#### 1. Understanding Tribal Culture and Worldview

- Anthropology studies kinship, customs, rituals, and beliefs to ensure that development is culturally compatible.
- *Verrier Elwin* advocated for preserving tribal culture and warned against forced assimilation.
- **Case Study:** In the North-East, Elwin's approach led to the creation of the **Sixth Schedule** under the Constitution to preserve tribal autonomy.

#### 2. Participatory and Emic Approaches

- Anthropologists use **emic (insider)** perspectives to incorporate tribal voices in planning.
- *N.K. Bose* promoted integrating tribal participation rather than imposing top-down development.
- **Case Study:** *DK Bhattacharya's* fieldwork with Juangs in Odisha highlighted the success of participatory forest management (Joint Forest Management - JFM).

#### 3. Evaluating the Impact of Development Projects

- Anthropologists assess **displacement, loss of land, and livelihood disruption**.
- *B.K. Roy Burman* documented the adverse impacts of dams/mines and stressed **rehabilitation with dignity**.
- **Case Study:** *Sardar Sarovar Project:* Studies showed that without anthropological input, the displacement of Bhil tribes caused cultural disintegration.

#### 4. Advocating for Rights and Entitlements

- Anthropology supports **legal recognition of tribal rights**, especially land and forest rights.
- *Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf* emphasized the importance of securing tribal tenure over resources.
- **Case Study:** FRA 2006 (Forest Rights Act): Anthropologists helped identify genuine forest dwellers and documented traditional usage for claim validation.

#### 5. Designing Tribal Development Policies

- Anthropology contributes to **Tribal Sub-Plans**, health schemes, education strategies, etc.
- *L.P. Vidyarthi's* concept of the "Sacred Complex" influenced culturally sensitive temple conservation and tourism around tribal areas.
- **Case Study:** Jharkhand's tribal education initiatives incorporated tribal myths and local language thanks to anthropological input.

#### 6. Health and Nutritional Interventions

- Medical anthropology identifies **disease ecology, traditional healing, and nutritional deficiencies**.
- *P. K. Bhowmick* studied Santal nutrition and showed how millet-based diets protected against anaemia.
- **Case Study:** Odisha's Dongria Kondhs were found to have Vitamin A deficiency; anthropological surveys led to targeted nutrition programs.

## 7. Empowering Women and Gender Studies

- Gender anthropology reveals **women's roles** in the tribal economy, rituals, and politics.
- *Leela Dube* highlighted the matrilineal strengths among Khasi tribes and how state policies could build upon them.
- **Case Study:** Meghalaya's schemes for microfinance and matrilineal inheritance laws were strengthened through anthropological consultation.

## 8. Preserving Indigenous Knowledge Systems

- Anthropology documents tribal **ecological, medicinal, and agricultural knowledge**.
- *D.N. Majumdar* emphasized the practical value of tribal ecological wisdom.
- **Case Study:** The **Apatani** of Arunachal Pradesh practice sustainable fish-rice cultivation, which has been recommended as a model by anthropologists.

## 9. Language and Linguistic Inclusion

- Linguistic anthropologists aid in preserving **tribal languages** and ensuring access to education.
- *Ganesh Devy* emphasized linguistic diversity and started the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI).
- **Case Study:** Inclusion of **Santhali** in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution due to consistent anthropological advocacy.

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Schemes

- Anthropologists serve as neutral observers to assess **implementation** and **cultural impact**.
- *Andre Beteille* argued for a balance between cultural sensitivity and economic advancement.
- **Case Study:** Evaluation of **PESA Act (1996)** in Madhya Pradesh showed that awareness and implementation were low; anthropologists helped conduct awareness campaigns.

## 11. Safeguarding Tribal Identity and Autonomy

- Anthropology protects tribal identity amidst threats of assimilation and globalization.
- *F.G. Bailey* highlighted how development must not erode tribal political and cultural institutions.
- **Case Study:** *Dongria Kondh* resistance to Vedanta mining project was supported by anthropologists emphasizing their cultural and ecological identity.

## 12. Facilitating Legal Anthropology in Tribal Justice

- Anthropologists study customary law, dispute resolution, and help integrate these into formal legal frameworks.
- *T.N. Madan* advocated for recognizing **legal pluralism** in tribal areas.
- **Case Study:** In Nagaland, the Village Council system blends customary law and statutory power, a model supported by anthropological fieldwork.

## 13. Mitigating Cultural Shock Due to Modernization

- Anthropology helps tribes cope with **culture change**, urban migration, and modern education.
- *Surajit Sinha* stressed the need to study acculturation patterns to minimize disintegration.
- **Case Study:** Mizo integration into the mainstream was successful partly due to policies respecting cultural symbols and tribal festivals.

#### 14. Disaster Response and Climate Resilience in Tribal Areas

- Anthropology informs climate adaptation strategies grounded in tribal ecological practices.
- *Julian Steward* (cultural ecology) stressed how traditional societies adapt to environmental challenges.
- **Case Study:** Post-Tsunami in the Andamans, the **Nicobarese** tribal community used traditional knowledge to rebuild sustainably; anthropologists documented and reinforced these methods.

#### 15. Preserving Tribal Art, Aesthetics, and Oral Traditions

- Anthropologists document and promote tribal **music, folklore, dance, painting**, etc.
- *Nirmal Kumar Bose* recognized tribal art as both aesthetic and socio-religious expressions.
- **Case Study:** Revival of **Sohrai and Warli painting** for tribal livelihoods (Jharkhand, Maharashtra) was facilitated through anthropological NGOs and state initiatives.

#### 16. Contributions to Tribal Education Reform

- Anthropology supports **multi-lingual education** and curriculum based on local context.
- *G.S. Ghurye* criticized “urban-biased” education systems for tribals and called for contextual curriculum.
- **Case Study:** *Ekalavya Model Residential Schools* incorporated local history and crafts in tribal pedagogy, improving retention rates.

#### 17. Guiding Ethno-Tourism and Tribal Economy

- Anthropology balances the development of tourism with **respect for tribal life**.
- *Clifford Geertz*’s concept of “thick description” helps avoid exoticization and stereotyping.
- **Case Study:** In Chhattisgarh and Odisha, tribal tourism has been developed with cultural consent and benefit-sharing mechanisms.

#### 18. Combating Stereotypes and Discrimination

- Anthropologists challenge **colonial and casteist** portrayals of tribal people as primitive.
- *L.P. Vidyarthi* argued for seeing tribal culture as dynamic and adaptive, not backward.
- **Case Study:** National curriculum frameworks have revised tribal representations in textbooks after anthropological critiques.

#### 19. Monitoring Implementation of Constitutional Provisions

- Anthropology tracks how well laws like **PESA, FRA, and Fifth Schedule** are applied.
- *Walter Fernandes* called for decentralization of power to tribal institutions.
- **Case Study:** In Maharashtra’s **Gadchiroli district**, anthropology-driven activism helped Gram Sabhas reclaim control over minor forest produce.

#### 20. Migration Studies and Tribal Labor Mobility

- Anthropology investigates tribal migration patterns, causes (e.g., debt bondage), and socio-cultural effects.
- *M.N. Srinivas* noted how mobility impacts tribal social structures, often weakening traditional ties.
- **Case Study:** Santhal migration to brick kilns in West Bengal and Jharkhand, highlighted by anthropological research, led to improved safety and welfare provisions.

## Key Government Reports and Committees on Tribal Development

### 1. Xaxa Committee Report (2014)

**Full Title:** *Report of the High-Level Committee on Socio-Economic, Health and Educational Status of Tribal Communities of India*

**Chairperson:** Prof. Virginius Xaxa (Renowned Tribal Sociologist)

- **Anthropological Insight:** Strong emphasis on using ethnographic and participatory methods.
- **Key Recommendations:**
  - ✓ Integrate **tribal worldview and knowledge** in education and forest governance.
  - ✓ More tribal representation in bureaucracy and planning bodies.
  - ✓ Respect and promote **Adivasi autonomy and customary law**.
- **Relevance:**
  - ✓ Recognized that past failures in tribal development were due to **top-down policies**.
  - ✓ Recommends strengthening **Gram Sabhas under PESA and FRA**.

### 2. Bhuria Committee Report (1995)

**Full Title:** *Report on Panchayati Raj Institutions in Schedule V Areas*

**Chairperson:** Dileep Singh Bhuria

- **Anthropological Insight:** Based on tribal traditions of **village self-governance**.
- **Key Recommendations:**
  - ✓ Drafted the **PESA Act (1996)** to give legal recognition to tribal governance.
  - ✓ Empower Gram Sabhas to manage land, forests, and resources.
- **Relevance:**
  - ✓ Built on anthropological recognition of tribal **customary institutions**.
  - ✓ Emphasized **culturally sensitive decentralization**.

### 3. Lokur Committee Report (1965)

**Purpose:** Standardize criteria for identifying Scheduled Tribes

- **Anthropological Insight:** Relied on **ethnographic characteristics** such as:
  - ✓ Primitive traits
  - ✓ Distinctive culture
  - ✓ Geographical isolation
  - ✓ Shyness of contact with the community at large
- **Relevance:**
  - ✓ Became the **basis for ST classification**.
  - ✓ Helped incorporate anthropological field data into constitutional recognition.

## Role of Anthropology in Rural Development

### 1. Understanding Rural Social Structure

- Anthropology helps analyze caste, kinship, gender roles, and power dynamics, which are critical for rural policy success.
- *M.N. Srinivas* highlighted how caste, dominant caste, and kinship influence rural hierarchy and politics.
- **Case Study:** In Karnataka, *Srinivas* demonstrated how the dominant caste controlled resources and Panchayat politics, thereby affecting development outcomes.

### 2. Participatory Rural Planning (Bottom-Up Approach)

- Anthropologists advocate **participatory planning**, ensuring villagers are decision-makers.
- *N.K. Bose* emphasized that rural development must incorporate **local knowledge systems and customs**.
- **Case Study: Watershed Development Projects** in Maharashtra succeeded where local communities were involved in planning and execution.

### 3. Evaluating Rural Development Programs

- Anthropology evaluates schemes like MNREGA, PMAY, and NRLM by studying **ground-level impact** through fieldwork.
- *Andre Béteille* cautioned that bureaucratic implementation often overlooks **rural social realities**.
- **Case Study:** In Bihar, anthropologists found that **MNREGA job cards were often held by dominant caste men**, while SC/ST women remained excluded.

### 4. Understanding Rural Livelihood Systems

- Anthropology maps **subsistence patterns**, agrarian practices, and **informal economies**.
- *D.N. Majumdar* studied how rural livelihoods were shaped by ecology, caste, and labor systems.
- **Case Study:** In the Indo-Gangetic plains, studies showed that **green revolution benefits** bypassed landless Dalits, worsening inequality.

### 5. Health and Sanitation in Rural Contexts

- Medical anthropology studies **traditional healing systems**, cultural beliefs about illness, and sanitation practices.
- *P.K. Bhowmick* studied rural health among Santhal communities and emphasized **ethnomedicine**.
- **Case Study:** In Odisha, immunization drives failed until anthropologists designed campaigns in **local dialects** and involved local midwives.

### 6. Improving Rural Education

- Anthropology helps tailor school curricula to rural context, reducing dropouts.
- *Leela Dube* emphasized understanding **gender and class** in rural school attendance.
- **Case Study:** In Rajasthan, **Balika Shiksha Abhiyan** succeeded only after curricula were made **culturally relatable** to rural girls.



## 7. Enhancing Gender-Sensitive Development

- Anthropology highlights **gender inequality** and women's roles in rural economies and households.
- *Leela Dube* and *Carolyn Nordstrom* advocated that development must not reinforce patriarchal norms.
- **Case Study:** In Tamil Nadu's **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, women's savings and credit were more successful where **gender dynamics** were addressed via anthropological insight.

## 8. Preserving Local Knowledge and Sustainable Practices

- Anthropology documents rural knowledge in agriculture, water management, and conservation.
- *Julian Steward's* **cultural ecology** shows how rural people adapt to local environments.
- **Case Study:** In Gujarat's **Saurashtra region**, traditional **village tank systems** revived with anthropological inputs outperformed modern irrigation.

## 9. Mitigating Social Exclusion (Caste, Tribe, Minority)

- Anthropology reveals how **Dalits, Adivasis, and minorities** face exclusion in rural development.
- *G.S. Ghurye* and *B.K. Roy Burman* showed how caste-based exclusion affects access to resources and rights.
- **Case Study:** In UP villages, **toilets built under SBM** were unused by Dalits as dominant castes did not allow access to common pathways.

## 10. Migration and Rural-Urban Linkages

- Anthropology tracks **seasonal migration**, remittance patterns, and impact on rural families.
- *Madhav Gadgil* highlighted how migration affects **rural labour structures and community relations**.
- **Case Study:** In Bundelkhand, out-migration of male labour led to **feminization of agriculture**, a trend documented by anthropologists advising women-centric schemes.

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