

BOOK REVIEW

Practical Workbook of Anthropology by Anjali Chauhan and Preeti Gupta, published by Bharat Book Centre, Lucknow-226001, 1st Edition, 2022, pp xi + 127, price, Rs. 150/-

Reviewed by Prof. Rajan Gaur, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh.

'Practical Workbook of Anthropology' is basically a simple workbook for practical in physical anthropology. The book has been written with an aim to provide ready made information to students at one place for their practical work. The authors have tried to keep the book simple for the students to develop a basic understanding of anthropometry and some aspects of human osteology. The present book under review consists of apparently nine to ten chapters, though the chapters have not been numbered as such.

The first chapter is mainly devoted to a brief introduction to anthropometry in which it traces the origin of anthropometry and its historical background. The chapter also explains different sub-divisions of anthropometry and the various categories of anthropometric measurements. At the end of the chapter, the applications of anthropometry in different fields have been provided.

In the second chapter, some standard instruments employed in basic anthropometric measurements have been explained in sufficient clarity and detail with respect to their construction, parts, and method of use. In addition, some general definitions of various planes, positions and directional terms applicable to human body, while taking measurements, are also provided.

The third chapter is titled craniology and craniometry. The first section of this chapter provides names of some major bones of human cranium. The next section of this chapter deals with craniometry in which the authors define craniometry and trace its brief history and also discuss its applications. Thereafter, the morphological details of the skull are described, norma-wise, in sufficient detail along with several labelled illustrations. In between, some cranial landmarks are defined followed by morphological description of mandible. Thereafter, definitions of cranial landmarks and more than a dozen elementary cranial measurements are described, along with their techniques, instruments and precautions followed by cranial indices. The distribution of the material in this chapter is somewhat confusing as craniometric landmarks keep appearing in between cranial morphology. A few cranial angles could have provided a wider perspective of craniometry.

The fourth chapter is devoted to cephalometry. It begins with the objectives of cephalometry and general precautions to be taken while taking cephalometric measurements. A total of 14 cephalometric measurements are described along with their definitions, landmarks involved and the instruments required. In addition, the technique of taking each measurement and the precautions to be taken for the measurement are also given. For ease of understanding, illustration of each measurement has also been provided. Three indices, viz., cephalic index, nasal index and morphological total facial index, along with their classification and gender-wise ranges of variation are explained at the end of this chapter.

The next chapter deals with somatometry in which six very elementary somatometric measurements are described and illustrated along with their definitions, landmarks involved, methods and precautions. The chapter ends with an explanation of Body Mass Index, its cut-off points and various categories.

The last chapter of this work book pertains to somatoscopy. In this chapter, variations of human scalp hair, head form, forehead, eyebrows, eye shape and colour, nose form, lip shape, chin form, face form, ear shape and skin colour are described with illustrations. Various categories of each somatoscopic parameter are also explained.

Overall, it is a workbook that is going to be useful for a part of physical anthropology practical work of undergraduate students of anthropology. The book has been written in a simple language for easy comprehension by an undergraduate student. It would provide an understanding of elementary concepts of anthropometry and human craniology to beginners. The craniometric and somatometric measurements covered in this workbook are only basic and not exhaustive. It appears to have been designed to probably cater to the undergraduate syllabus of Lucknow region and Uttar Pradesh State. One annoying aspect of this workbook is very poor quality of the illustrations, several of which are not clear or out of proportion or skewed to one side. Also, the arrangement of the subject matter could have been more systematic. A pleasing aspect of this workbook is that each chapter contains a set of questions with answers, which would be helpful to students from examination point of view. The templates of a practical note-book page provided at the end of each chapter would also be useful to the students. The workbook is very reasonably priced at 150 rupees, which makes it affordable for students.

The getup of the book is nice and quality of printing is good. This workbook would be useful to undergraduate students of anthropology and human biology.



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