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## **Bio-cultural Approach: The Essence of Anthropological Study in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**ABSTRACT** This paper is concerned with a bio-cultural/bio-social approach to the study of human variability. The basic premise is that the bio-cultural approach is essential for anthropological study of the survival and well-being of human populations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The chapter is delimited to two basic questions: What and why is bio-cultural approach? How is to go about it? Addressing the first question, it is suggested that bio-cultural approaches should be taken as essential not only for bridging the gap between cultural and biological anthropology but also for popularizing anthropology with *integrative thinking* especially in India. It is also suggested that anthropology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to formulate and deal more with research questions that are socially relevant. With respect to the second question, an attempt has been made to provide an overview of different bio-cultural models/paradigms, based on series of assumptions and relationships, which can be modified with new research questions relating to human biological variability – the subject matter of anthropological research. In addition, the operational aspects and challenging tasks for bio-cultural studies were briefly highlighted.