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PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY AND PROGRESS

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BLOCK 2 PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY AND PROGRESS

Introduction

Anthropology is an applied science. However the practice of anthropology as a means of study in classrooms and as learning material for study has developed recently. This is more so in the case of India where, how anthropological knowledge and training can be of use professionally has not been elaborately dealt with. The term practicing anthropology is almost used simultaneously with applied anthropology today though initially this term coined by Barnislow Malinowski meant applied work done outside of academics.

Our purpose for providing some kind of knowledge to our learners about practicing anthropology is clearly because it is as defined by Baba and Hill¹ “a profession whose fundamental commitment is the application of knowledge to solve modern human problems.”

The four units in this Block on *Practicing Anthropology and Progress* thus try to bring forth to the learners the best ways and areas in which anthropologists can act and intervene productively. The first unit is on *Anthropology and Development*. The unit attempts to look into the role anthropologists can play in the development of nations. Aid agencies and government agencies are well aware of the intellectual support anthropologists can provide in creation of development plans, policies and programmes. It is for such purposes, anthropologists are used as consultants and advisors where they perform with other agents who work for development. As socio-economic issues are the concerns of transformation, anthropologists as practitioners, play significant roles in planning, evaluation, and implementation of development programmes.

The second unit is called *Anthropology and Market*. We might think what advice can anthropologists possibly give to the area of market? In this unit we will find out how anthropologists can be located facilitating guidance in areas related to market economy, globalisation, liberalisation and multi-national corporate houses. Anthropologists guide the contemporary processes of globalisation, liberalisation, multiculturalism etc., by giving advice and culturally embedded solutions related to organisational culture and consumerism behaviour. The fact that consumers are social beings and not just buyers of products makes the involvement of anthropologists more convincing and needed. Physical anthropology also promotes market research as measurements related to anthropometry are used for designing of products like clothing, footwear, office equipment etc.

The third unit is called *Advocacy, Policy Research and Anthropology*. This unit will help us know if anthropologists in the process of studying communities also get involved at an intrinsic level to try and improve the conditions in which people live or act as intermediary or active managers of transformation. Anthropologists involved in advocacy are concerned from issues related to practicality and efficacy to basic issues like morality and ethics. With advocacy,

¹ Baba, Marietta L. and Carole E. Hill, eds.1997. *The Global Practice of Anthropology*. Williamsburg, VA: College of William and Mary

the kind of research that fits into the bill is policy research. This concern is also looked into in this unit. Policy research allows communities and formal agents of change with practical and functional suggestions and counseling and feasible activities to solve pertinent social problems. Anthropologists are thus associated with policy research like evaluation, social impact assessment and cultural appraisal through which the policy and decision makers have the opportunity to chalk out various courses of action to achieve planned social change.

The last and fourth unit in this block is *Action Anthropology*. Action anthropology as the words suggest is also quite clearly used to provide benefits for the people and communities. Action anthropology arose from the need to either go to what length to understand a community or to use it as an experimenting space to try out anthropological notions or knowledge. These concerns were to finally help in the creation of theory and remedies through policies. Action anthropology is about working towards bringing about change according to exactly how the community wants it. These suggested changes are seen to be now accepted and propagated by the government, private stakeholders and academics alike.



UNIT 1 ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Suggested Reading
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Learning Objectives



After reading this unit, you will get a broad idea about:

- the concept of development;
- anthropological insights on development;
- the contribution of anthropology to development, and its limitations;
- modernisation and dependency theories;
- response to modernisation prescriptions for India;
- recent trends on development efforts; and
- reorientation in teaching and training of anthropology.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The involvement of anthropology in development can be traced to the colonial era, when anthropologists focused on the study of the introduction of innovations in simple societies. The interest of anthropologists increased considerably, when they started studying the introduction of planned change in the newly independent nations (the erstwhile colonies). International aid agencies providing financial and infrastructural assistance to third world countries recognised the value of anthropological knowledge and employed anthropologists as consultants and advisors. In the context of development, anthropologists play a variety of roles. Approaching planned development as induced change, anthropologists participate along with agents and agencies of development. For anthropologists dealing with

development, the interest lies in policies and programmes. They analyse the impact of global, national, and regional processes on local populations. They also deal with issues related to economic development, different types of inequality, poverty, hunger, issues related to environment, international migration, identity, ethnic conflict, resettlement, displaced people, refugees, and human rights.

1.2 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF THE TERM DEVELOPMENT

The word development is used in several ways. It refers to an ongoing process. It also denotes something that has been already achieved. Economic growth through increased production is an important dimension of development and distributive justice is its inseparable part. To put in simple words, 'development' is desirable replacement for underdevelopment or backwardness. For United Nations Organisation, development involves providing increasing opportunities to people for a better future. Well known economist, Gunnar Myrdal viewed development as a process by which poverty is alleviated, inequality reduced, and opportunities for self-actualisation increased. Marxian concept of development is based on egalitarian values, a social order free from exploitation leading to freedom, mobility towards better quality of life, a classless society. However, there is no general agreement on this concept. A variety of terms such as progress, civilisation, modernity, industrialisation, westernisation are used loosely as synonyms for development. For anthropologists, development is not just using new technologies for increased production, but involves a change in objectives, outlook, ideas and relationships.

From an evolutionary perspective, early scholars constructed sequences and used dichotomous concepts to indicate the progressive social changes in human society. Some of them are: savagery, barbarism and civilisation (Henry Morgan); Reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange (Karl Polanyi); Status based relations to contractual relations (Henry Maine); Mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity (Emile Durkheim); Theological to positivistic outlook (August Comte); Religious and militaristic societies to modern and industrial societies (Herbert Spencer). Such scholars invariably projected western society as developed and rest of the world as yet to catch up with the west. But, the view of evolutionary theories that underdevelopment is an early stage, succeeded by development is no longer acceptable. Many societies and civilisations, which were well developed at one point of time in history, have witnessed a decline due to various factors.

1.3 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX

Initially development was used as a synonym to economic development, identified through increased production leading to generation of wealth. Later, development came to be understood not just as increase in productivity, but also as broader redistribution of the increased production. The earlier practice of measuring development in terms of economic indices (like gross national product, per capita income, etc.), are no longer considered as sufficient. At present, Human Development Index is considered as the most acceptable measure. This index gives importance to health and education along with income. Human Development Index is a composite index measuring average achievements in

three basic dimensions, i.e. (1) long and healthy life (2) knowledge (3) a decent standard of living.

Some of the indicators used to measure human development given below provide us a broad idea of the coverage of different developmental aspects under the index.

Economic aspects: G.D.P., per capita income, estimated earned income, contributing family workers, per capita consumption of electricity and other fuels, unemployment, employment by economic activity, agricultural and industrial services.

Health: Life expectancy at birth, availability of adequate nutrition, health services, Immunisation, water, sanitation, percentage of children underweight for age, and births attended by skilled health personnel.

Education: Public expenditure on education, education levels, education index. Adult literacy rate (% age, 15 of above)

Gender Empowerment: Political participation, power of economic decision making, number of seats in Parliament shared between males and females; number of women as managers, senior officers, professional and technical positions, power over resources, estimated earned income.

Others: Housing, electricity, consumption of CFC, CO2 emission, cellular subscribers, computers in use, contraceptive prevalence, people victimised by crime, affordability of drugs.

As per the Human Development Index, countries like Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Australia, Netherlands, Belgium have a higher ranking in development achievements. Scholars are still searching for better measures of development, as high ranking in Human Development Index is also found to be associated with human distress and unhappiness. As the objective of development is to bring happiness to people, some scholars even advocate construction of Human Happiness Index as a correct measure of development.

1.4 VARIED PERSPECTIVES AND INVOLVEMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS

The discipline of anthropology began as pursuit of knowledge about human diversity. From the initial attempts to understand other cultures, the practitioners of anthropology have come a long way as translators of culture, analysts, spokespersons on behalf of people, and students of change. Applied anthropology came into existence during the colonial period to assist the administrators in finding solutions to practical problems. In the beginning, applied anthropology was involved in the application of knowledge by those who were responsible for administration of colonies. Anthropologists prepared ethnographic accounts describing the customs and practices of people, and served as advisers. Knowledge of the language, customs, and traditions of people was found useful by the administrators to deal with the people in the colonies they administered. Anthropologists with their special comparative knowledge of cultures are considered to be best suited to help in dealing with people. Anthropologists were also offering training to colonial administrators on dealing with 'natives'. The

culture contact studies of anthropologists provided insights into communities under transformation. While applied anthropology came into existence to deal with the people in the colonies of the European countries, in United States of America the context was that of American Indians.

Due to the minimal development objectives of colonial governments, applied anthropology had a limited role during the colonial period. During the Second World War, American anthropologists participated in war related studies. After decolonisation, and also with the end of Second World War, there was a boom in development programmes in the third world countries, for bringing out deliberate transformation of societies and economies. With liberal aid extended by the western nations to their former colonies, anthropologists are involved in the study of development projects in the postcolonial era. They started examining the cultural and social barriers to changes. This was succeeded by the role of production of knowledge for development policy making and implementation. Anthropologists also started participating in the evaluation of development programmes and projects, and their impact on people. Thus, the postcolonial era witnessed a shift in the focus, with the emergence of studies on planned change and development programmes in the newly independent nations. The community development projects and rural development measures led to a number of studies on various hurdles affecting the development programmes in rural areas. Studies on tribal problems, policies, the functioning and impact of welfare measures aimed at them received maximum attention in India.

Instead of developing theories on socio-cultural change and human behaviour, the applied anthropologists believed in using their knowledge for ameliorating the living conditions of people. A variant of applied anthropology has its emphasis on action. Action anthropologists do not influence the decisions of people, but help in providing clarifications. Ultimately, the people have to take their decisions. The action anthropologist is one who is helping the people in goal clarification in decision making and choice making, at the same time learning from the people. The American anthropologist, Sol Tax popularised the practice of action anthropology.

The term 'development anthropology' was used by anthropologists like Glynn Cochrane, who felt that the term applied anthropology had colonial connotation with limited utility. As the focus of the countries is on development, this new label is considered as more appropriate. Development anthropologists study the incorporation of local societies in larger, regional, national, and world economic systems, and the resultant effects. Escobar (1997) makes a distinction between 'Development Anthropology' and 'Anthropology of Development'. Both 'Development Anthropology' and 'Anthropology of Development' give importance to anthropological insights for introducing and understanding development interventions. According to Escobar, 'Development Anthropology' accepts mainstream view of development. Doing 'Development Anthropology' involves active engagement with development institutions on behalf of the poor, with the aim of transforming development practice from within. 'Anthropology of Development' prescribes a radical critique of development, and prefers distancing away from development establishment. 'Anthropology of Development' questions the very notion of development. It views development not as natural and inevitable, but asserts its historical character. This view of development as an invention implies that the invention can be unmade and reinvented in multiple ways. The perspective of 'Anthropology of Development'

criticises 'Development Anthropology' for its adherence to a framework of development which aims to shape cultural transformation according to the western notions of modernity (leading to western domination). On the other hand, for 'Development Anthropology', the perspective of 'Anthropology of Development' is morally wrong, leading to non-involvement in a world that desperately needs anthropological input. According to Escobar, anthropologists should offer an effective challenge to dominant paradigms of development, contribute to a better future by engaging in critical issues (like poverty, environmental destruction), strengthening at the same time progressive politics of cultural affirmation in the midst of globalising tendencies.

1.5 RELEVANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY TO DEVELOPMENT

So far, the contribution made by anthropologists is in analysing policies, studying the implementation of projects and programmes and their impact on people; and advising planners and administrators. They are involved in collection of data useful for planning and administration. Frequently, the preoccupation of anthropologists can be seen in social impact assessment. In the context of development, anthropologists emphasise respect for human and natural resources, knowledge and experiences of people, protection of environment, and equity. In the post colonial period, when developed nations started offering economic and technical aid to third world nations, anthropologists started looking into the social implications of developmental assistance. Anthropologists assisted administrators to plan for development programmes, by applying their knowledge of people. They played a role in understanding the resistance of people to development innovations. They analysed the social framework of the communities as reflected in beliefs and values, in order to suggest suitable measures to minimise resistance to development innovations. The measures taken for planned development and their consequences are not only of applied value, but these also help anthropologists in analysing the socio-cultural changes resulting from development.

The programmes aiming at development of the people will be successful, only if the policymakers, planners, and development administrators understand the people, their culture and pressing needs, and their aspirations. The needs and priorities of people, their capacity to absorb development innovations, the compatibility of development innovations with the culture of people have to be understood. The expertise of anthropologists helps in framing of policies, relevant and meaningful to the people. The holistic approach of anthropologists makes them realise the overall consequences of development such as changes in relations, institutions, values, etc. In a developmental scenario, the anthropologists focus on the perceptions or the points of view of the people. Anthropology highlights the need for tolerance towards cultural variation, and disapproves ethnocentric imposition of alien ideas and practices in the name of development.

There have been unsubstantiated claims made by applied anthropologists about prediction and production of social change; and diagnosing social ills and treating them as 'social doctors'. Terms like social doctor, human engineer, and social pathologist were used. There is a lack of agreement whether applied anthropologist should be the student or agent of change; whether s/he is a therapist or an analyst. Many believe that anthropologist can only be an analyst and not therapist. The

role is seen as that of mid-wife in facilitating smooth socio-economic transformation. The view that all cultures are valid leads to the position that anthropologists have no right to intervene in developmental situations. Further, there are ethical issues involved with regard to supporting insider's view or government/funding agencies' perspective. The contribution of anthropologists has been conspicuous in highlighting the failure of top-down approaches, inculcating social and cultural sensitivity in project formulation, building bridges between people and development administration.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Applied anthropologists are said to function as analysts, consultants, administrators, and co-administrators. They are involved in diverse settings and circumstances such as hospitals, factories, schools, prisons, law, management, population policy, agriculture, ethnic problems, and drug abuse but, factually, the number of anthropologists employed in planning, policy making, and development administration is limited. To an outsider, the role of anthropologists is not very clear, as it exhibits considerable diversity. Different terms such as activist, administrator, agent of change, analyst, advisor, advocate, consultant, cultural broker, educator, evaluator, expert, facilitator, human engineer, mediator, social doctor, and student of change denote the diverse role and activities of anthropologists. The diversity of roles claimed by anthropologists does not clearly convey what anthropologists are capable of, or not capable of. Generally, it is believed that anthropologists are committed to gradualism which is not popular with planners and policymakers, who think that anthropologists are neither accustomed nor fully equipped to think in terms of planning. Misconceptions exist that anthropologists seek to preserve traditional ways of life when people seem to seek faster modernisation.

The adherence to the concept of cultural relativism which lays down that culture can be understood in its own terms and frame, and the emphasis on the study of socio-cultural wholes and inter-relationships, leads to a suspicion that any change coming from outside as potential source of destruction. Those who subscribe to extreme cultural relativism do not see any justification for involving themselves in development situations. Anthropologists suggest non-interference with value systems, not to introduce changes at a rapid pace and to take into account the cultural consequences of innovations. The influence of positivism has made some anthropologists look at anthropology as a discipline offering insights and illustrations on the functioning of society in the quest for unraveling the scientific laws about it. Further, anthropologists have been kept away from development agencies by labeling them as isolationists, conservationists, and colonial stooges. Development is a macro-phenomenon, planned and executed in national contexts, while the expertise of anthropologists is at micro-level. Their respect for customs, values and traditions of people sometimes comes in the way of accepting modern innovations. In the context of development, another limitation of anthropology is its emphasis on qualitative approach (which is also its strength). Development is more of a quantitative exercise, as the focus is on improvement in the measurable development indices. Anthropological training is deficient in quantitative models. Their approach for fieldwork involving long term stay and participant observation is not popular with development administrators, as they want feedback and inputs at the earliest for grounding time bound action programmes at the earliest.

1.7 MODERNISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The western scholars have pointed out that the institutions of traditional societies are obstacles to development and prescribed for replacing them. People living in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are labeled as belonging to traditional societies. The dominant characters of traditional societies include: ascriptive statuses, authoritarian power structure, predominant use of animal and human power (in contrast to mechanical devices in modern societies), majority of people living in rural areas; traditional values, customs, and practices are sacred and binding on people. All these factors are considered hindrances to modernisation and development. But, anthropological studies show that traditions neither are totally replaced, nor are they completely irrational. The incompatibility between tradition and development has been overemphasised. They do coexist, accommodating each other, giving rise to pluralism and syncretism. There can be technological advancement without modern world view.

Modernisation theories have equated a shift from tradition to modernity as development. The modernisation theories revolved round the conservative features of traditional societies and the attitudes of peasants as obstacles for development. Peasants are characterised as lacking in innovativeness and aspirations, and having a fatalistic outlook, and parochial attitude. Modernisation theories deny any link between backwardness and colonial rule. The theories blame the economic, political and cultural inadequacies of people of third world nations, for their underdevelopment. The third world countries are blamed for their own backwardness and are asked to learn from and follow the examples set by the western nations. Modernisation theories are supportive of the market ideologies of the western nations.

Sociologists and economists (like Max Weber, Neil Smelser, Everett Hagen, Daniel Learner, Gunnar Myrdal) have popularised modernisation theories. The traditional societies were considered as poverty ridden, conservative, fatalistic, and politically incapable. Take-off theories proposed by economists like W.W. Rostow (*Stages of Economic Growth*) emphasised the importance of technology and capital coming from foreign countries, followed by industrialisation and effective governmental policies for ushering in development. Modernisation theories attributed underdevelopment to endogenous factors. They deny the relevance and potential of traditional institution. They prescribe that western models are to be followed for achieving development. They emphasise the institutional reforms and infrastructure development as priorities.

Another set of theories known as the dependency theories project the poverty of the nations as a result of colonial intervention and the policies pursued by them; such as adverse conditions of trade. Many conditions of underdevelopment originate outside the state and community. These theories explain that rich countries became wealthy at the expense of poorer countries. Economists projected development as the outcome of a successful deployment of capital, technology, and education through proper policies, planning and execution of programmes. In the context of such econocentric and technocentric dominated models of development, Escobar (1977) argued for inclusion of social and cultural considerations. According to him, development is equated with the replications of the conditions of western nations such as industrialisation, urbanisation,

education, intensive agriculture, widespread adoption of values and principles of modernity including particular forms of rationality and individualistic orientation. Escobar even argued that the concept of development is losing its hold due to its failure in fulfilling the promises. For him, this is evident from the social movements and protests that the communities all across the world have launched against the negative effects of development. We should not forget that these are 'victims of development'. Escobar argued that anthropologists should re-conceptualise their engagement with development; challenge the Eurocentric ideas of modernity, support and articulate alternative ideas.

1.8 DEBATE ON DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

According to S.C Dube (1988) there are several dilemmas that we need to reconcile in the context of development. They are: endogenous versus exogenous development, self-reliance versus inter-dependence, growth versus distribution, industry versus agriculture, centralised versus decentralised planning, physical investment versus investment in human capital, latest technology versus intermediate or appropriate technology, etc.

Indian society has been portrayed by western scholars as slow changing, lacking in innovative and entrepreneurial abilities. Scholars like Max Weber, Gunnar Myrdal highlighted the inherent problems in Indian society, and its institutional structures were held responsible for underdevelopment. Max Weber argued that the other worldly focus of Hindu religion as responsible for the absence of materialism, leading to the western processes of capitalism and industrial revolution not finding a base in India. The dominant Hindu ideas of *dharma*, *karma*, *samsara*, *moksha*, the institutions of caste and joint family are said to be the major drawbacks for the modernisation of Indian society. But, this kind of understanding of Indian society is based on textual knowledge on India. Empirical and contextual studies by scholars like Milton Singer, Scarlett Epstein questioned these notions by arguing that caste is not an impediment for economic development. Epstein's studies proved the rationality of the villagers in continuing with inter-caste relations, or breaking away from them. Milton Singer showed that religious beliefs do not come in the way of entrepreneurial activities of industrialists in Madras city.

Many anthropologists argued that traditional institutions are not always obstacles for development. T. N Madan (1983) pointed that many western scholars tended to blame Indian society and culture as responsible for underdevelopment. They prescribed the need to have reforms in social, economic, and administrative structures, for promoting economic development. Madan pointed that through planned development India can achieve a modern diversified economy with impressive increase in agricultural and industrial production, life expectancy, and skilled man power. At the same time, poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of basic amenities have plagued the nation. Adoption of inappropriate development strategies borrowed from the west, emphasis on growth while postponing the issue of social justice, growth of education unrelated to national needs are identified as responsible for the lopsided development in the country. Madan argued for an endogenous development model, an economic development not separate from culture, ethics and philosophy.

1.9 RECENT TRENDS IN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Looking at development as economic growth has affected the quality of living among poorer sections of the society. Development efforts resulted in better economic growth, simultaneously increasing inequalities. The dependency and subordination of the third world countries, resulting from development initiatives of the west led to the realisation about the need of new paradigms such as participatory development, sustainable development, capacity development, and equity.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development has been defined as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment Development, 1987). Sustainable development is the outcome of the realisation of the undesirable consequences of the prevailing models of development which focus on growth through optimum production, resulting in resource depletion and high energy consumption. The undesirable consequences of development include deforestation, desertification, loss of soil fertility, ground water depletion, destruction of ozone layer, pollution, global warming, rapid disappearance of fossil fuels, etc. The philosophy of sustainable development revolves around the need for harmony with nature, and discourages consumerism. The main issue in sustainable development is whether the local agriculture and industrial practices can continue indefinitely without destroying the local resource base and environment. It envisages equity and justice, emphasises on participatory approach, and looks at nature not only as a resource for development but as essential for survival and development of humankind. This requires avoiding irreversible environmental degradation, and to bring in beneficial environmental transformation.

Anthropology has an important role to play in various strategies to usher in sustainable development, especially in tribal areas. Anthropologists conduct studies and contribute towards strategies in areas such as: watershed development, afforestation, social forestry, agri-silviculture, forest based industries and cottage industries, conservation of flora and fauna. Anthropologists emphasise that sustainability should become the criterion for all developmental initiatives. Sustainable development highlights the value of local and indigenous knowledge, and this has always been a part of all anthropological studies.

Participatory Development

For a long period, the basic objective of planned development in backward areas has been to accelerate modernisation. Development meant imparting better methods in agriculture, animal husbandry, health and other sectors. From this perspective, tradition represented a stagnating and retarding entity. Conflict between tradition and modernity was considered as inevitable. Following this view local practices were undermined in favor of innovations originating from outside. Local knowledge became irrelevant. Many local practices and the ideas associated with them disappeared and replaced by external practices, alien concepts and terms which are projected as modern. With programmes and schemes

being formulated elsewhere, the felt needs of the local populations were neglected. The implementation of programmes was marked by an unequal and uneasy relation between development functionaries and the people. The former having little faith in the capabilities of the latter, and the latter not clear about the intentions of the former and resenting interference. Development agencies relied on extension methods for popularising innovations and extracting compliance of the people. The situation was characterised by 'we give you this-you participate' kind of scenario. People remained by and large the recipients and beneficiaries. The studies conducted by the social scientists, especially anthropologists brought out that people's participation in development process as an important factor for the success of the development programs.

Participatory development is emerging as the major strategy to achieve sustainable development and empowerment of people. Stress is being laid on people's capabilities, knowledge, skills and elimination of the external vested interests (Chambers, 1994). In this approach, the outsiders act as facilitators and catalysts. The premises underlying participatory development are: i) development process is sustainable if the functionaries act as catalysts and facilitate people's participation, ii) the people have tremendous knowledge about the topography, resources, etc., much better than outsiders. Participatory development aims to involve people in all stages of development, i.e. planning, execution and monitoring. People's role is that of partners, and not as recipients of developmental benefits. These days participatory development approach is being used mainly in natural resource management (like soil, water, forest, fisheries, wild life conservation, agriculture, health, and food security for the poor).

Sustainable Livelihoods Approach

A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required for living. A livelihood is sustainable if it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in future, while not undermining the natural base. Sustainable livelihoods approach aims at reduction of poverty. It is an improved way of thinking about the scope, objectives and priorities of development that will meet the needs of the poor in a better way. Sustainable livelihoods approach is also a tool for intervention, analysis, monitoring of evaluation. This approach was first used by the World Commission of Environment and Development. International agencies like DFID, UNDP, CARE, OXFAM, adopted this for their respective rural development programs. Though not a magic formula for development, it has considerable potential as an analytical framework to guide practitioners and researchers. It is still evolving as discussion on its strengths and weaknesses continues. Though none of the elements in this approach are new, this approach is popular because it is sensitive to the context of the situation.

Sustainable livelihoods approach assumes that freedom from poverty can be achieved with assets and livelihood strategies that can sustain households and individuals through the stresses and shocks of life. Integrating basic human needs, food security, sustainable agriculture practice and poverty reduction are essential ingredients of this approach. The approach is based on the premise that asset status (tangible and intangible, material and social) of the poor is fundamental to understanding the options available to them. It also looks into the strategies they adopt to attain livelihoods, the outcomes they aspire to, and vulnerability context

under which they operate. In order to create livelihoods people must pool their assets. The approach combines the following five different types of assets available to poor to generate livelihoods that are sustainable

Human capital – skills, knowledge, information, ability to work, health.

Natural capital – land, water, biodiversity, environment. resources flow and services

Financial capital – savings, credit, remittances, pensions

Physical capital – transport, shelter, water, energy, communications.

Social capital – networks, groups, trust, access to institutions.

The resulting livelihood strategies involve agriculture intensification or extensification, occupational diversification, and migration. Institutional reforms offer protection from exploitation, thus reducing vulnerability.

The livelihood outcomes are expected to provide: coping up from shocks and stresses, more employment, more income, protection of rights, recovery of dignity, self-esteem, security, happiness, reduced vulnerability, improved food security, avoiding depletion of stocks, replenishment of soil fertility and vegetation cover.

1.10 TRAINING FOR DEVELOPMENT

Anthropologists who want to participate in planned development should have the ability to understand the people under the programmes and motivate them to be part of development processes. They need to provide specific data, pointed towards concrete problems, required by the policymakers and administrators. The expertise on development available with the discipline has to be projected. Anthropologists need to strike a better equation with planners, policy makers and administrators, to overcome the biases existing against anthropologists. It is essential to understand aims of the government and methods for attaining them. Thus, anthropology needs to take more interest in understanding the nature of state, its policy making, and planning process. Increasing opportunities available in NGO sector need to be explored, identified, and tapped.

Anthropologists do feel the need to strengthen the training being given to students to make them effectively participate in policy making, planning and development administration. The training given to students needs to provide necessary expertise in the field of development. Anthropology teaching is concerned mostly with the identity of the subject as an integrated study of society and culture, and prepares them for academic jobs. But, academic jobs are always limited, and anthropologists need to look for non-academic careers. In countries like United States of America, large numbers of anthropologists are either employed in the private sector or self-employed as consultants. Glynn Cochrane (1971) feels that students who want to work in the field of development must be trained differently. They should try to communicate with development planners and administrators more frequently. According to him two sets of skills are needed. : i) training in subsidiary subjects such as business administration, law, public health engineering, etc. ii) knowledge of mathematical models, ability to converse in the language of administrator.

There is a need for conducting broad based development studies taking into account issues at regional and national level. Anthropologists need to move from micro to macro studies and work with larger wholes. They must participate in inter-disciplinary studies, develop better quantitative skills to enhance employment outside the academic field. Apart from in-depth knowledge on societies acquired from long-term residence or fieldwork, practical experience in organisations is extremely helpful. Experts envisage the need for internship in an institutionalised setting (in government agencies, private research companies, and advocacy groups) under the supervision of experienced practitioners.

1.11 SUMMARY

Role of anthropology in development, started on a very limited scale during the colonial era, became significant and diverse in the later. The postcolonial period witnessed the newly independent nations embarking upon development plans and policies. As the programs are meant for transforming the socio-economic conditions of people; anthropology began playing an important role in planning, evaluation, and implementation of development programmes, anthropologists are not confined to government sponsored development, but participate in varied roles and settings. Involvement of anthropologists in development is not uniform, as there are varied perspectives within anthropology on such involvement. Development is an interdisciplinary arena, and economists dominate all agencies dealing with development. But, anthropologists have their own strengths and contribute in delineating the implications of development through their qualitative studies. In India, anthropologists participate in debates dealing with the compatibility of traditional institutions with modernisation. Anthropology is playing a significant role in undoing the negative consequences of development in the past, through recent strategies in development. There is a need to strengthen the training given to anthropology students including hands-on-experience through organisational internship.

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Sample Questions

- 1) What do you understand by the term development? What is Human Development Index?
- 2) Discuss the contribution of anthropology to development. Add a note on its limitations.
- 3) Examine the varied perspectives on the involvement of anthropologists in development process.
- 4) Examine the arguments of dependency theories and modernisation theories.
- 5) Describe the western prescriptions for development of India, and the response of anthropologists to these prescriptions.
- 6) Discuss some of the recent approaches to development.

UNIT 2 ANTHROPOLOGY AND MARKET

Contents

- 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 What is a Market?
 - 2.3 Understanding the Relationship between Anthropology and Market
 - 2.4 Anthropological Methodology and Organisation/Consumer Research
 - 2.5 Organisational Culture, Human Resource Management and Corporate Ethnography
 - 2.6 Consumer Behaviour and Marketing
 - 2.7 Social Marketing
 - 2.8 Summary
- References
Suggested Reading
Sample Questions

Learning Objectives



After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- understand the concept of market;
- realise the anthropological legacy in market studies;
- appreciate the anthropological methodology for organisational/consumer research;
- understand anthropological approach towards organisational culture and human resource management;
- locate ethnographic research in a corporate setting; and
- define and explain, consumer behaviour, marketing and social marketing and the role of anthropologists in these areas.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit on Anthropology and Market tries to locate an anthropologist in the backdrop of market economy, globalisation, liberalisation and multi-national corporate houses. Anthropology as a discipline has come of age and it is no more just a subject studying ‘simple’ and small-scale societies. As the forces of urbanisation gained strength, people from villages started migrating to the city. With their subjects migrating anthropologist too started to shift their focus from villages to complex societies in cities. This gave rise to an entirely new branch of anthropology called urban anthropology. However, the study of market is not entirely linked to the advent of urban anthropology since anthropologists have been studying markets in simple societies under the ambit of economic institutions. Even, the archaeological anthropologists have tried to understand the phenomenon of market during the Indus Valley Civilisation where markets occupied an important place among the urban societies, as evidence also points

towards inter-continental trade in silver and other metals and goods. Such studies of market were concerned with deciphering the character of “tribal” and proto-historic market and compare it with the western markets. Such studies generated a lot of insight in understanding the underlying concept of markets in terms of people’s participation and interaction. But, anthropological quest for knowledge was never limited and this was reflected when anthropologists chose modern markets as their area of study.

2.2 WHAT IS A MARKET?

Before understanding the dynamic relationship between anthropology and market, it would be in the fitness of things to know and understand the concept of “Market”. We all have experienced and gone several times to a market for purchasing books, CDs, clothes, grocery items, etc. But how many of you have really tried to define the place and your experience regarding the market? It is for sure in the present socio-political context that market is a place that takes care of diverse needs of the people. Since we cannot produce everything we want therefore, it is a market that supplements us with diverse products. Functioning of a market is based on a system of standardised exchange where we purchase a commodity in exchange of a standard currency, i.e. money. This is a characteristic of all monetised economic systems, where currency is exchanged for goods and services. In order to understand the concept of market, few important dimensions need to be kept in mind for defining market:

- 1) It is a place, a real or a virtual space where exchange of goods and services take place.
- 2) It is an interactional system where two groups of people, i.e. buyers and sellers enter into a legal contract regarding sale and purchase of goods and services.
- 3) It is a socio-cultural space where a product manufacturer tries to convince consumers that their products are best suited to their demands.
- 4) From the point of view of a manufacturer or seller, market is a place where she can get buyers for her products.

One can go on adding other criteria and characters to this list depending upon the perspective through which one is trying to understand this system. For example, if an economist is defining a market then she might emphasise the economic aspect of it, like the cost of the product, impact of inflation on the product cost, impact of governmental policies on various sectors of the economy, etc. Whereas if a social scientist is trying to understand market then she will focus on the issues like how market can be seen as a system of interaction and transaction of values and culture. She will be interested in understanding the behaviour of different stakeholders in the market system. She would also try to look at the cross-cultural trends in consumer behaviour. Again, if a business manager is trying to understand market then she has to look into both the dimensions and many others that can help in maximising profit with optimum cost of production. Hence, the basic point that one needs to understand about market is that it is a dynamic place where exchange and transaction happen. It is also a concept that is occupying a very central and important place in the present political-economic context where everything is governed by the hegemony of the markets.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANTHROPOLOGY AND MARKET

Anthropological study of markets is not a new phenomenon. Since the inception of functionalist paradigm in anthropology a community or a tribal group or a geographical space was studied in its totality. The concept of holism or holistic study became the hallmark of anthropology. This holistic study of a community took into account various institutions that were part of the community life, like political institutions, marriage, family, economic institutions, etc. It was under the umbrella of economic institutions that anthropologists tried to understand the market among 'simple societies'. Hence, the study of markets in anthropology was conducted under the rubrics of ethnographic research among 'simple societies'.

Karl Polanyi an economic historian talked about two meanings of economy-formal meaning and substantive meaning (1944). The formal meaning of economy is based on the understanding that resources are limited and they should be used in such an optimum and rational way that it should lead to profit maximisation. It is thus based on the principles of rationalisation, optimisation and maximisation. On the other hand, the substantive meaning of economy is based on the premise that resources are abundant and one should utilise only that much that should lead to the satisfaction of needs rather than multiplying them for profit. It is the latter meaning that used to guide the economic institutions of simple societies as they were basically self-sufficient subsistence economies that produced whatever they needed and were dependent on other groups only for those items that they did not produce and which they used to procure through the system of barter. In this system goods were exchanged in return of other goods. In such societies, the market was more of a social phenomenon than an economic one. Market was a place not comprising only of buyers and sellers but it was a place where social ties were strengthened. Market was also not a regular phenomenon but rather weekly or monthly, and hence there was a physical space that could be called a market but it did not work on market principles of demand and supply. It worked more on social principles of solidarity and social interactions. A day of market was almost always a day of celebration. It is therefore said that simple societies have market place but do not have "market mentality" which is based on profit maximisation. They also did not have a standard medium of exchange like currency which is a hallmark of the contemporary market place. Also, one can basically find two categories of goods in a market, viz., luxury goods and subsistence goods. Subsistence goods are those that are necessary for survival whereas luxury goods are those that are acquired in order to enhance one's social status. As far as markets in simple societies are concerned, they largely deal with luxury goods rather than subsistence goods because these societies are largely self sufficient and do not need subsistence goods and therefore market is a place more for the transaction of luxury goods or status enhancing goods.

However, this scenario has undergone a change with the advent of enlightenment and industrialisation. With the advent of increase in transport and communication facilities, the tribal societies came in increasing contact with the "outsiders". The so-called simple societies also went through a sea change in terms of their economic organisation with the introduction of standardised currency as a form of exchange. This process had a bearing on the nature of market in simple societies

which changed in their character and outlook. Anthropologists have also documented such changes in the basic institutions of tribal societies. This change in the discipline of anthropology occurred around the 1960s. 'Market' as we understand today is largely an urban market place with a market mentality of profit maximisation and gain. The market place today is not only physical but also virtual in the form of e-commerce and online trading. It is also characterised by the presence of multi-national companies and corporate houses with a formal structure and ideology. In this era of globalisation the markets have really gone global with cross-cultural trading and organisational set-up.

2.4 ANTHROPOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY AND ORGANISATION/CONSUMER RESEARCH

The methodological discourse in anthropology began with the 'comparative method' which was used in the context of evolutionary approach to understand the advent of human society, its institutions and culture. Then, with the emergence of functionalism a more synchronic and idiographic approach towards understanding human society gained currency and hence ethnographic research using the method of fieldwork and participant observations became the hallmark of anthropological investigations and expeditions. Again, with the emergence of new-ethnography, structuralism, post-structuralism and interactionist perspectives the importance of narratives, linguistic categories, conversational analysis became important tools of understanding human behaviour, social structure and culture. This points towards the fact that the anthropological tool kit for understanding social structure and culture is extremely rich and diversified that provides an opportunity to understand human relations from varied perspectives and dimensions.

This entire range of tools can be applied basically at three levels, i.e., i) at the level of understanding the organisational structure and culture of a multi-national corporate business house; ii) at the level of understanding the behaviour of consumers and customers for enhancing product design for attaining more profit; and iii) at the level of understanding the impact of market culture on the lifestyle and social institutions like family, marriage patterns, etc. The anthropological tool of comparative method provides opportunity for cross-cultural comparisons and reaches a generalisation of best practices in relation with marketing and the set-up of an organisation. Again, participant observation and multi-sited ethnographies can provide in-depth knowledge and understanding of human relationships in an organisation that can further help in social engineering. Understanding consumers in their cultural and social background helps in better product design and being sensitive to their values and hence enhances brand credibility. Having said this, anthropologists have to face an entirely new range of ethical and moral issues while conducting research in such settings. For example, most of the corporate and business houses are very protective regarding their image and use of information regarding sensitive issues related with management and leadership. This gives rise to some dilemmas between conducting research and using sensitive information.

Activity

Read and collect references regarding multi-sited ethnography.

When we are talking about market research then one should not confuse it with the markets where only goods are on sale. Besides this there is an entire range of job markets that are a result of globalisation and liberalisation. The result of such totalising processes like globalisation has been in the form of creating a knowledge based post-modern and post-industrial society. This has created jobs in the sectors of information technology, BPOs, management, etc., and hence established a job market in a cross-cultural perspective. This led to people from different cultures and nations working at a same place and hence develops an entirely new organisational culture and hence created a field for anthropological research and understanding (Upadhyaya, 2008).

2.5 ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE, HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE ETHNOGRAPHY

Anthropologists have been conducting research on the topics like organisational culture and human resource management with the help of ethnographic research. The traditional understanding of a society with the help of organic analogy has also been applied in the context of organisational research. In this analogy, society was seen as consisting of different parts that provide it a definite structure. These parts are in the form of different social institutions. These parts function towards maintaining the whole. In the context of multi-national companies and corporate organisations one can easily find different parts that are responsible for different kinds of work and hence work in co-ordination to maintain the entire organisation. As in the case of a simple society, one can choose these organisations for fieldwork and conduct ethnographic research.

Jasmin Mahadevan, in one of her anthropological research on a chip-tech company, has employed the methodological tools of ethnographic method and narratives. In her research, she has tried to understand the diverse narratives of the technical (engineers) and administrative (management) staff and how these narratives create an identity of “us” and “they”. This identity formation is extremely important in the context of how the relationship between the engineers and managers will take shape. This has in-turn important bearing on the smooth functioning of an organisation as these two are important pillars in any technical-knowledge-based organisation. These identities are formed due to interaction within these groups. An important understanding based on narratives in this case was an identification of a presence of conflict between the engineers and managers. This conflict arises due to a general understanding among the technical staff that they are superior as compared to the administrative division in technical know-how and blame the management for the shortcomings in the company. Similarly, managers “*complain about those engineers who make their managing job so difficult and who constantly thwart organisational goals.*” But a question then arises that in presence of such conflicting discourses, how does a company function? Mahdevan makes an important observation to this end where she says that besides such conflicting discourses, some alternate discourses of integration also run within the organisation. Like, for example, the managers try their best to understand the nuances of the technical staff during informal meetings and themselves sometimes criticise the management for some shortcomings and hence play a role in terms of identifying with the problems and feelings of the technical staff and contribute towards organisational integration. Apart from this, other

heterogeneous (external) forces (like global competition) play their role towards integration because beyond a point no one would like to lose their job due to lack of ownership of work.

Similarly, anthropological knowledge comes in handy while dealing with cross-cultural staff in a multi-national organisation. Many anthropologists have been employed in such organisations to understand the interaction between people from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. In one such example, an anthropologist, Jill Kleinberg, undertook a research task to identify the areas of problem and conflict between the Japanese and American staff in a Japanese-owned company situated in the United States. The problem was approached from two dimensions: i) from the point of view of the larger cultural differences between the American and Japanese culture; and ii) from the perspective of the organisational culture at the workplace. While conducting fieldwork in the organisation, it was discovered that most of the managerial positions are occupied by the Japanese people since it was a Japanese owned company. It was contended by Japanese managers that it is very difficult to handle and manage American staff because they are much concerned about their salary and power in the organisation. On the other hand, when American staff was interviewed, it emerged that they wanted clear job description, and complained of ambiguity in terms of their duty and job profile. The Japanese however were more comfortable with flexible job titles and responsibilities. This difference was a clear reflection of the larger cultural determinant of attitude of people towards their job and life as a whole. This kind of cultural difference in professional outlook gave rise to dissatisfaction among the people which was reflected in human resource productivity and company's output. The solution that Jill recommended for managing such a situation emphasised the importance of Americanisation of Japanese work culture where Japanese managers should become more sensitive towards the American cultural ethos of individuality, certainty and equal opportunity for professional advancements (Kleinberg, 1994). Also, she recommended that employees should be given more information about the company's policy and work culture at the time of hiring the staff. Apart from this, she also recommended that cross-cultural training programs and workshops should be conducted to highlight differences in business culture and subsequently move towards their resolution. Thus, a practicing anthropologist is of prime importance to such corporate organisations. It is in this context that Andrew Miracle has equated the work of an anthropologist in action to that of a 'shaman' in simple society. Just like a shaman, an anthropologist is called to diagnose the problem and extend solution that is in sync with the larger cultural values and mores of the parties involved. However, unlike the 'shaman' an anthropologist conducts grounded research and does not diagnose and treat the problem in a state of trance (Miracle, 1998).

Activity 2

Write an ethnography of an organisation with the help of different narratives.

Another way of understanding the behavioural dimensions in an organisation is to look at it from the perspective of the impact of socialisation process of its employees and top management on the organisational culture. This kind of study falls into the category of culture and personality school of thought where culture is perceived as a driving force behind the personality traits of the individual. In the context of India and elsewhere there have been such studies that highlight

the impact of early socialisation on the personality of employees and management which shapes their behaviour in the organisational set-up and hence become instrumental in deciding the quality and character of inter-personal relationships in multi-national companies. This in-turn has an impact on the human resource in an organisation and its output which affects the overall performance of companies.

The inculcation of certain traits as a result of cultural patterning of behaviour in an Indian extended family system gets reflected in the organisational structure. In an Indian extended family, the head of the household is of prime importance who commands authority over the other members. He is the *karta* who exercises authority and at the same time extends parental nurturance towards other family members. This kind of trait is the most sought after in a leader of an organisation, one who is authoritative and at the same time benevolent like a father figure. Such leaders are the most successful in an Indian organisational scenario. Such leaders are known as the 'nurturant-task' leaders (Sinha, 1979).

Just like an Indian extended family system where the head of the household is idealised as someone who is all powerful and one who should not be offended, employees in corporate organisations in India look upon their head (CEO) in the same way. This kind of idealisation has a distinct advantage over their western counterparts where there is more cohesion with the organisation. This also ensures increased loyalty and commitment towards the organisational goals and improved work ethics. However, this also has a potential disadvantage in the form of lack of decision making by the management in the middle and extreme dependence on the leader. This in-turn leads to excessive centralisation of authority (Kakar and Kakar, 2007).

Indian social structure is also marked with different kinds of hierarchies in the form of power, caste, class, gender, which also get reflected in an organisational set-up where working in teams becomes difficult due to the prevalence of such and many more hierarchical manifestations. Difficulty in doing team-work is also compounded by the fact that Indians are very reluctant in receiving and giving a negative feedback. Even if someone does not like the style of work or an idea, he/she will not express his/her unwillingness to implement it directly, instead their non-compliance will be communicated indirectly.

A research project by the name GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness) was conducted among different countries to understand the values that are of prime importance to an organisational set-up. In their study it was discovered that South-Asian organisations- where India is a major player- scored highest on the domain of power distance which means that the difference in status between the head of the organisation and an office peon is the highest in this region when compared with other regions like Europe and America. They also scored high on humane orientation and in-group collectivism. This supports the above assertion that Indian leaders are authoritative which is reflected in power distance, but at the same time they are benevolent which gets reflected in humane orientation. Also, the in-group collectivism points towards cohesion to the group and organisation (House et.al., 2004).

Thus, in the above discussions we have seen how cultural factors are of prime importance in an organisational set-up. It is at this juncture that anthropological knowledge and research gains importance in understanding the functioning of

such multi-national and corporate organisations. Anthropologists have a lot to contribute towards diagnosing and treating structural and cultural problems that may arise due to cross-cultural interactions. At the same time cultural and structural patterns get reflected in the way people behave at the personal and professional fronts. Knowledge of such patterns can be very handy in understanding organisational culture and inter-personal relationships in an organisation.

2.6 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND MARKETING

Marketing is a process by which companies reach out to their consumers. In this process a product or a service is displayed in order to convince people to buy them. The best example of this process is the television commercials that have occupied a large space on-screen in order to reach out to as many people as they could. But, simply displaying the product and highlighting its advantages are not sufficient for selling it. Marketing should also take into account how the consumers behave when they are out to buy something. What their preferences are, what their choice are, who does the decision making in a family in order to buy a product are just some of the considerations that need to be taken into account in order to sell a product. This therefore makes marketing a very culturally embedded process where cultural values, societal norms and people's attitude play an important role. Hence knowledge of disciplines like anthropology, social psychology, becomes indispensable for effective marketing strategies.

Understanding consumer behaviour is of utmost importance for effective marketing. Consumer behaviour is influenced by class, gender, culture, etc. Once the behaviour of consumers is deciphered, marketing strategies need to be made in order to target that behaviour. In this post-modern world we simply do not buy a product based on its merits, instead we look for the value attached with that product. The symbolic identity of a product is closely linked with the identity of the consumer's self. Personal/consumer identity is shaped by the materials that we possess. For example the status of a person can be defined on the basis of the car that she drives. Similarly, the brand that we wear decides our social and economic rankings. To give another example, people who wear Raymonds clothes are considered to be the 'complete man' which is projected in its commercials. Also, Peter England is an 'honest shirt'. You must have noticed such tag-lines and commercials that attach value to a brand and thus we do not consume a product but we consume a value attached to it. Such kind of value formation is based on the *narrative identity theory*. According to this theory, a product is projected in a form of a narrative where different actors are placed and interact with each other. Such narratives compel the consumer to identify with one or the other actor. When we see a movie or read a novel, we are attached to some character in the story, in the same way the narrative identity theory says that our own identity gets projected in the form of a television commercial. We tend to identify with some characters in the commercial and hence are attached to the value of the product. In this way brands help in symbolic construction of self where brand or product identity is attached to self identity. Thus marketing takes the shape of not just selling product design but also forming a product identity which can later be transformed into the consumer identity. Apart from the technical design or chemical constituent of a product, a definite value needs to be attached with it and this can be done with the help of anthropologists and other social and

behavioural scientists who understand the nuances of social norms and values (Ramachander, 1988 and Elliot et.al., 1998).

Understanding consumer behaviour and tailoring marketing strategies accordingly, also involve effective communication between the company and the target consumer. This opens up a whole new and exciting dimension of communication anthropology that can be employed to effectively communicate and market the product. In communication anthropology, it is taught that communication is not just a linear process of sending and receiving messages but it is also a process where cultural interpretation of a message takes place. How effective a communication process will become, will be decided by how effectively it catches the imagination of the people, or in other words how well it strikes a chord with the collective consciousness of the people. Thus a lot of effort in marketing a product is invested into forming appropriate messages in order to reach effectively to the target.

2.7 SOCIAL MARKETING

After having understood the fundamentals of marketing and the place that anthropology occupies in this area, we may now move towards understanding yet another important field of social marketing. Broadly speaking, marketing is a process through which we try to influence the consumer and bring about a change in her/his attitude and practice. It is also a process whereby we sell the products (goods and services). Thus, marketing involves two important processes of change in behaviour and selling products. The concept of social marketing however, has broadened the scope and definition of a “product”. In terms of social marketing, a product is not just a material object or some service but is also an idea, a behaviour, a habit which could be called ‘social products’. Social marketing is basically aimed at bringing about some positive change in the behaviour of people like campaigning against smoking, alcohol abuse, drinking and driving, etc. Social marketing is also widely used by the health sector to bring about change in people’s attitude and practice towards their health.

The term ‘social marketing’ was coined by Philip Kotler, a professor of management, in 1971. He defined social marketing as: “*design, implementation and control of programs calculated to influence the acceptability of social ideas and involving considerations of product, planning, pricing, communication, distribution and marketing research*”. The basic premise on which the entire idea of social marketing is based can be summarised in the following words: ‘*why can’t the idea of brotherhood be sold like soaps?*’ in this sense, social marketing becomes a tool of promoting social causes and becomes instrumental in social engineering. You must recall the advertisements that were aimed at family planning like the one that promoted the use of *Nirodh* condoms (Walsh et.al., 1993). Again, the marketing of pulse polio mission comes under the ambit of social marketing. Other examples may include aggressive marketing for HIV-AIDS prevention and removing of social stigma attached to AIDS patients in the workplace, school and homes.

Activity 3

Make a list of television and radio advertisements that can be kept under the category of social marketing.

The entire process of social marketing can be understood in the form of three stages viz- stage one corresponds to research and planning that includes the identification of the target through consumer analysis and market analysis. Stage two is for strategy design where a strategy is worked out in terms of designing the message, its contents and testing it with the pilot audience. Finally, in the third stage, we go for its implementation, where the actual message and its contents are implemented through television, radio, newspapers, etc. Thus social marketing is a process that borrows its inspiration and tools from the marketing world and implements them to bring about a positive change among the target population.

2.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have learned the concept of market and how anthropology as a discipline is relevant to this field of enquiry. We saw that the relationship between anthropology and market is not a new one and anthropologists have been studying markets as part of their ethnographic research among the simple societies. But markets that were described in such monographs are on the way out and the entire economic scenario has undergone sea change. In the contemporary world, markets are defined by the macro processes of globalisation, multiculturalism and liberalisation which has given birth to multi-national corporate organisations and consumerism that calls for an entirely new approach to understand organisational culture and consumer behaviour. Anthropological knowledge has contributed towards this and anthropologists have been equated with ‘shamans’ in a way that like shamans, anthropologists diagnose the problem in a multi-cultural organisational set-up and give culturally embedded solutions for its treatment. In the area of consumer behaviour, anthropological knowledge and methodology has helped towards the understanding of consumers as ‘cultural and social beings’ and not just buyers of a technological product. This understanding has changed the way products are marketed in different settings or different cultures. Not only socio-cultural anthropology, but physical anthropology also has a lot to contribute towards market research and culturally embedded product design. The entire range of anthropometric measurements can be used in this direction for product design and standardisation on the basis of average measurements in clothing, footwear, office designing, interior decoration, etc. Besides this, the understanding of a product not only in terms of goods and services but also in terms of ideas and abstract concepts has given rise to the field of ‘social marketing’ which aims at changing people’s behaviour for better health, crime reduction, reduction in aggression, etc. Thus, anthropology has a lot to contribute towards a globalised market scenario and anthropological training and knowledge can be used for profit maximisation and consumer satisfaction at the same time.

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Sample Questions

- 1) Define a market and delineate its characteristics.
- 2) What is the relationship between anthropology and market?
- 3) How is anthropological methodology suited for organisational/consumer research?
- 4) What is corporate ethnography?
- 5) Explain the narrative identity theory.
- 6) What is social marketing?

UNIT 3 ADVOCACY, POLICY RESEARCH AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Contents

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Advocacy and Anthropology
 - 3.2.1 Advocacy Debate: Moral Engagement in Anthropology
- 3.3 Policy Research in Anthropology
- 3.4 Involvement of Anthropologists as Policy Advisers
- 3.5 Summary
 - References
 - Suggested Reading
 - Sample Questions

Learning Objectives



After covering this unit, you should be able to understand:

- the concept and meaning of advocacy;
- the relationship between anthropology and advocacy;
- how anthropologists act as advocates for the people;
- the meaning of policy research and its relevance in anthropology; and
- the role of anthropologists in policy making.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Advocacy may be defined as a political process by an individual or a large group, which exerts influence on the public policy and resource allocation decisions within the socio-political and economic systems and its associated institutions. It may be inspired from moral, ethical or faith principles or may simply focus on the protection of assets of interest.

However, there may be several definitions of advocacy. Action for Advocacy Development uses the following definition, which is based on the work of Dr Wolf Wolfensberger. Advocacy groups in Australia discussed this definition during a National Advocacy Workshop in Sydney in June 1994. Most of these elements were agreed upon:

Advocacy is speaking, acting, writing with minimal conflict of interest on behalf of the sincerely perceived interests of a disadvantaged person or group to promote, protect and defend their welfare and justice by:

- Being on their side and no one else's;
- Being primarily concerned with their fundamental needs; and
- Remaining loyal and accountable to them in a way which is emphatic and vigorous and which is, or likely to be, costly to the advocate or advocacy group.

The National Lead for Advocacy, Valuing People Team, 2009 defines advocacy as 'taking action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need. Advocates and advocacy schemes work in partnership with the people they support and take their sides. Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice'.

In society, decision making process holds considerable importance for its members but due to some reason or the other, people feel marginalised or excluded from the political system. They are devoid of personal freedom and there are a number of barriers which prevent people from actively taking part in decision making process, which affects their lives and individual's ability to speak for them.

Advocacy has the ability to cater to the needs of the marginalised and disadvantaged sections of the community, where formal services and systems fail; where people have lost faith and confidence in the system and feel excluded, advocacy reestablishes them. Advocacy as a process has developed to recognise differences both in people themselves and in their needs for support which may change during their life.

There are several forms of advocacy depending upon the peoples need, and depending on the context, in which they are to be used, each has a different approach in the way change is brought in society and the way goal is accomplished. One of the most popular forms of advocacy is Social Justice Advocacy. For them, advocacy represents the series of actions taken and issues highlighted to change the "what is" into a "what should be", considering that this "what should be" is a more decent and a more just society (Cohen, de la Vega and Watson, 2001). Those actions, which vary with political, economic and social environments in which they are conducted, have several points in common (ibid, 2001) which are:

- Questions the way policy is administered;
- Participate in the agenda setting as they raise significant issues;
- Target political systems "because those systems are not responding to people's needs";
- Are inclusive and engaging;
- Propose policy solutions and
- Open up space for public argumentation.

*The four most common forms of advocacy are self, peer, citizen and professional advocacy. **Valuing People Now** has simplified their definitions:*

- *Self-advocacy as people coming together to speak up for themselves*
- *Citizen advocacy as volunteers developing long term relationships with people and speaking up for them*
- *Professional or representational advocacy as people being paid to advocate with and for, individuals on a short or long term basis*
- *Peer advocacy as people who have the same or similar experience of discrimination as the person they are acting as an advocate for.*

Although there are several types of advocacy, there is no best form according to *Action for Advocacy*, 2009. Some advocacy organisations combine different approaches, and some approaches may be more common or suited to specific local need or groups of people. Some organisations may undertake advocacy work as part of a wider remit which may include self-help groups, independent living support services or general support services. Other organisations and agencies, such as advice centres, welfare rights teams, befriending and counseling services may deliver a service similar to advocacy but are not normally recognised as part of the independent advocacy sector.

3.2 ADVOCACY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

“Those who have the good fortune to be able to devote their lives to the study of the social world cannot stand aside, neutral and indifferent, from the struggles in which the future of that world is at stake.” Bourdieu (Cited in Hillier and Rooksby, 2005:7)

The relationship between anthropology and advocacy can be traced back to colonial times when anthropologists were engaged directly or indirectly, with varying degrees of enthusiasm and complicity, in the colonial project or its legacy (Asad, 1973; Kuper, 1996; Ervin, 2000; Sillitoe, 2007). Anthropologists have always found themselves involved at micro-level with individuals and local communities. The question arises here about the role of anthropologists when they study any society. Should anthropologists act to improve the conditions of people or act as intermediary or active agents of change?

To quote Karl Marx [1969 (1845)], “The philosophers have interpreted the world in many ways; the pain however is to change it.” When we analyse this statement in the context of anthropology, it raises one question that can anthropologists act as advocates for the rights of people they study, or does this compromise their objectivity?

There are a number of arguments in support of advocacy. These range from pragmatism and effectiveness to more fundamental issues around morality and ethics. It can also be argued that from an epistemological perspective all anthropologists are in some ways acting as advocates through documenting and communicating their informants’ perspective to others: “Advocacy derives naturally from the practice of anthropology...it is an integral part of the process of representing other people’s views”(Layton 1996:40).

Singer adds: “From this perspective all of anthropology is advocacy, because all activity is goal oriented and has consequences in social life” (Singer 1990: 548).

Layton (1996) also said that the promotion of advocacy lies in its ability to bring change in people’s lives and it also helps the anthropologists to get closer to people and hence collect rich ethnographies but the debate questions the ethics and morality of interventions by the anthropologists as an outsider in promoting a particular cause or voicing on behalf of other people they study.

Wade (1996) has also raised concern about the issue of the ‘inherent reflexivity of anthropological practice’. With reference to Colombia, he said that local anthropologists are directly involved in social problems and political struggles. The central point of argument is that production, control and communication of

knowledge is highly controlled and unequally distributed. He argues for enhanced reflexivity through methods which ‘subvert’ normal communication channels ‘to try to create an arena in which anthropologists can engage politically and speed up, so to speak, the cycle of reflexivity’ (Wade,1996:4).

He strongly supported direct advocacy and denied that if such action means engagement at ‘the sharp end’ of these problems, this is not a good enough reason for not engaging. He defines advocacy as ‘a particular mode of engagement or reflexive academic practice’ and in common with other forms of political engagement is inevitably problematic: Who and how to represent? Whose interest to privilege? How to deal with divided communities?

3.2.1 Advocacy Debate: Moral Engagement in Anthropology

Scheper-Hughes is critical of anthropologists as a ‘neutral, dispassionate, cool and rational, objective observer of the human’ (1995: 410) and she has advocated a radical approach, which is politically committed and morally engaged. She believes that anthropology must have an ethical grounding and she equates cultural relativism with moral relativism, which is no longer appropriate.

Cultural Relativism

Cultural Relativism is an approach, a principle in anthropology advocated by Franz Boas in early 20th century. For Boas, this approach posited that all cultures are to be given equal worth and to be comprehended from the point of the people’s own cultures.

The personal story of her own transformation ‘from “objective” anthropologist to politically and morally engaged companheira’ is illuminating. She went to a poor *favela* (a shanty town) in Brazil as a Peace Corps Volunteer and worked as a ‘politically committed community organiser’. She returned to the same place after twenty years, but this time as an anthropologist (and mother) to study infant mortality and chronic hunger (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). Instead of participating in community action she tried to focus on her research, but was challenged by the women in *favela*: “Why had I refused to work with them [as before]? Didn’t I care about them personally any more, their lives, their sufferings, their struggle? Why was I so passive, so indifferent? (1992:17-18). she replied: “my work is different now. I cannot be an anthropologist and a companheira at the same time.” But this argument was rejected by the women who insisted that “the next time I came back it would be on their terms, i.e. as a companheira, ‘accompanying’ them as I had before in the struggle and not just sitting idly by taking field notes. ‘What is this anthropology to us any way?’” (1995: 411). She accepted and in her next visits, she spared equal time and loyalties between both anthropology and political work in support of her friends and informants. At the end she realised that the more she engaged with the public world beyond the *favela* ‘the more my understandings of the community were enriched and my theoretical horizons were expanded’ (ibid: 410). Here, she suggests that politically engaged advocacy is not only morally correct, but theoretically valid and practically advantageous.

She had been constantly involved with extremes of violence, poverty and social exclusion which led her to realise that “there was little virtue to false neutrality in the face of broad political and moral dramas of life and death, good and evil, which were being played out in the everyday lives of people. ...What makes

anthropology and anthropologists exempt from the human responsibility to take an ethical (and political) stand on events we are privileged to witness?" (1995: 411).

She believes that 'those of us who make our living observing and recording the misery of the world have a particular obligation to reflect critically' (ibid:416), and to produce "politically complicated and morally demanding texts and images capable of sinking through the layers of acceptance, complicity and bad faith that allow the suffering and deaths to continue" (ibid: 417).

She advocates for an approach of accountability, commitment, engagement, responsibility, solidarity, empathy, compassion and interestingly suggests that such an approach would be 'more womanly'. She even said that a change is needed which would turn the anthropologists form 'spectator to witness', and explains why 'neutrality' is not an option – as non-involvement is also an ethical and moral position.

Her position resembles Bourdieu's criticism of a synoptic view of activity- in which the viewer attempts to stand apart from the action, as opposed to a participatory view which regards the world from a participant's standpoint (Hiller and Rooksby, 2005:21). We are all actors within a social reality and cannot be neutral, disengaged spectators. Therefore, according to Scheper-Hughes (1995:417, 418), we have a responsibility to be involved: we cannot flee 'from local commitments, local engagements, and local accountability', but must use our ethnography as 'a tool for critical reflection and for human liberation.'

There is a study of an isolated indigenous group (Arhuacos) of northern Colombia by Hastrup and Elsass (1990), which put forth a contrasting opposite argument, where they were requested by some Arhuacos to help promote a 'development' project to increase their autonomy within Colombian society. Their limited traditional land had a threat from encroaching peasant farmers and the proposed irrigation project was meant to increase yield. The aim of the project was to revitalise the traditional cultural patterns through its combined 'ecological and cosmological overtones' and the main beneficiaries would be women. Elsass and Hastrup thought that the proposal was sound and decided not to act as advocates.

They felt that at first they were not needed, that some of the educated Arhuacos could do what was required; secondly, they were concerned about their relationship with the Bureau of Indigenous Affairs; thirdly, they questioned why they should privilege the Indians over the peasants; and at last, they felt that their participation would be patronizing and an extension of romantic notions attached to the European vision of the Indians as the ultimate 'other'. They ask: "in what sense could we 'speak for' them without possibly inflicting romantic post-colonial views up on them to the exclusion of a thorough understanding of the complex Colombian context?" (Hastrup and Elsass, 1990: 304).

They attempted to justify their position by citing literature which argues that the advocacy discourse is "over-emotional, oversimplified, rhetorical, over-dramatic, exaggerated, single-minded, without footnotes: in short the exact opposite of our academic writing". This is an unhelpful generalisation as advocacy can equally well be 'dispassionate, empirical, substantiated, careful in the way it is framed and based on very substantial information and research' (Ervin, 2000: 129).

Hastrup and Elsass argue that the rationale for advocacy is never ethnographic and that advocacy is incompatible with anthropology as scholarship: ‘what is required of the anthropologists as a scholar... is to raise the context awareness of the people themselves so that they may eventually become better equipped to plead their own cause’. Neither do they believe that any ‘cause’ can be legitimated in anthropological terms as: ‘advocacy has its own discourse because it is directed towards specific goals. The pursuit of these goals cannot be legitimated in terms of anthropology, though it can be informed by it’. They also emphasise that difference in terms of knowledge by claiming that ‘ethnography is legitimated by established canons of scholarship and the creation of knowledge, while advocacy rests on moral commitment and the use of knowledge’, they conclude that to become advocates, anthropologists have to ‘step outside’ their profession.

Grillo (1990: 308) points out that Hastrup and Elsass propose an ‘amoral relativism’ and ‘an austere, persuasive definition of anthropology and a rather narrow view of the principles on which the subject and its practices are based and of what they can and should compromise.’ In contrast, Scheper-Hughes insists on the central importance of morality: ‘if we cannot begin to think about social institutions and practices in moral or ethical terms, then anthropology strikes me as quite weak and useless’ (ibid: 410).

3.3 POLICY RESEARCH IN ANTHROPOLOGY

There can be many definitions of research, but if we put in the simplest term, it is the systematic collection and presentation of information. Policy research is a special type of research that can provide communities and decision-makers with useful recommendations and possible actions for resolving fundamental problems. Such research provides policy-makers with pragmatic, action-oriented recommendations for addressing an issue, question, or problem. The primary focus of policy research is linked to the public policy agenda and results are useful to the development of public policies (Majchrzak, 1984). A policy research effort begins with a social issue or question, evolves through a research process whereby alternative policy actions for dealing with the problem are developed, and communicates these alternatives to policy-makers. Policy research is unique in focusing on action-oriented recommendations to social problems.

Who Uses Policy Research?

Policy-makers, Government, Special Interest Groups, Community Organisations, Policy Organisations, Policy Analysts and Advisors, Voluntary Sector, Lobbying Groups, Universities, Individuals, Private Sector, Anyone Else Wanting to Impact Policy.

Policy research finds its place in applied and practicing anthropology. John van Willigen (2006) used “applied anthropology” in a generic and inclusive sense, as the knowledge and practices of anthropologists that involve action directed at some practical goal other than gaining knowledge for the sake of knowledge. Applied anthropology exists in many forms, including advocacy anthropology, action anthropology, research and development anthropology, action research, and cultural brokerage, as well as various kinds of policy research such as evaluation, social impact assessment, needs assessment and cultural appraisal.

Kirk L. Gray (1978) argues that unlike traditional ethnography where the anthropologists can work with few encumbrances other than those imposed by the community being studied; the anthropologists in a policy research endeavour such as the Experimental Housing Allowance Program must develop what is termed a *sense of client*. To whom is research responsible and for what purpose will the data be used? What are the policy makers' specific objectives in conducting research? How can the anthropologists use his special skills to become a viable part of the policymaking process? Although the accumulation of general knowledge about a given subject customary in traditional ethnography is interesting, if it does not meaningfully relate to specific questions, one is not fulfilling one's contractual obligations.

He also argues that policy research is undertaken with the idea that its results will help a decision maker choose between alternative courses of action to accomplish planned social change. Such a goal differs from that of traditional or basic social science, which seeks only to explain a phenomenon with little foresight as to its application to public policy.

3.4 INVOLVEMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS AS POLICY ADVISERS

Anthropologists have always been involved in different domains of policy research and suggesting the policy making agency by their academic and research insights. It may be either developmental studies or research in the area of displacement due to formulation of one or the other projects. Anthropologists are hired by government agencies for preparing resettlement action plan for the project affected population which involves the social impact assessment studies.

Social Impact Assessment includes:

- Identification of the project's adverse impacts, i.e. loss of agricultural land, trees, standing crops, loss of dwellings, farm buildings and other structures (wells, irrigation works, fencing), break up of communities, disintegration of social support networks, restricted access/loss to community resources including water resources, pasture, forest and wood land, medicinal plants, game animals or fisheries, loss of business, loss of access to public infrastructure or services, loss of reduced income due to above losses;
- Land acquisition survey;
- Census;
- Socioeconomic survey and studies; and
- Consultation with project area people.

A resettlement action plan is required where projects cause displacement (physical or economic) and it is necessary to reestablish social and economic bases of displaced communities. It is a document that specifies procedures and action to be followed to mitigate adverse project impacts, to compensate losses and to provide developmental benefits.

A report on a workshop held by the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) on March 27, 1999 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London have put forth the following:

Applications of anthropology for policy makers:

- The anthropological model of economics as being embedded in social relationships is essential for policy makers;
- Methods from anthropology and sociology can be applied to enhance the social factor in development projects – focus group interviews, household census surveys, participatory appraisal etc;
- Social factors are often marginalised in project planning and management. They should be prioritised;
- Anthropological approaches have had an extensive impact in the world of policy and economics: the fields of participatory development and reflexivity in the world of aid have benefited from anthropology; and
- Policy makers should draw upon data from both national statistics and local anthropological case studies.

They have also recommended the following for anthropologists involved in public policy and economics:

- While local studies are the strengths of anthropology, these should be related to broader levels through the use of theories, models or hypotheses to make them relevant to policy and the work of economists;
- Anthropologists are encouraged to join policy organisations and change them from inside; they are equally encouraged to undertake informed ethnography and constructive critique of policy organisations and documents;
- If anthropologists are in positions of power in project design and management, social factors can be given the emphasis they require for project success;
- Anthropologists are encouraged to develop a range of country studies and social profiles presented in a user friendly way, by region and by theme, giving an outline from the point of view of sociology and anthropology of what the country is like, and on portfolios on particular themes and development issues. This would be very useful for policy makers;
- Anthropology courses should include training on applied research and consultancy skills;
- When anthropologists are communicating with experts from other disciplines, they must make comments of relevance and interest, even if they are subversive and provocative. Clear expression is of paramount importance; and
- Policy messages which might be simple in anthropological terms, such as ‘economics are embedded in social relations’, need to be communicated clearly in policy circles, as they have still not been taken on board fully. They must be backed up with convincing analysis which links the case study with policy implications.

3.5 SUMMARY

Therefore, we can say that there are multiple ways of ‘doing’ anthropology and given the complexity of most situations the call by Paine (1990) for “a professional statement about the kind of things we do, or should do as anthropologists’ would seem unnecessary”. However it is relevant to be reminded that “the people who find themselves being researched are rarely content with academic studies of their communities. They want information that can improve their lives rather than furthering someone’s career” (Ervin, 2000: 129). They can also legitimately expect some form of reciprocity, and as Kirsch (2002) points out : “activism is a logical extension of the commitment to reciprocity that underlies the practice of anthropology.”

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Sample Questions

- 1) What do you understand by advocacy?
- 2) Where does advocacy lie in the discipline of anthropology?
- 3) What is the meaning of policy research?
- 4) How do anthropologists contribute to policy making?
- 5) How can you correlate advocacy anthropology and an anthropologist who is engaged in policy research?

UNIT 4 ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY

Contents

- 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 Action Anthropology
 - 4.3 Characteristics of Action Anthropologists
 - 4.4 Difference between Action and Applied Anthropology
 - 4.5 Fox Project: A Real Life Laboratory
 - 4.6 Ideological Perspectives of Action Anthropologists
 - 4.7 Role of Action Anthropology
 - 4.8 Engaging as Action Anthropologists
 - 4.9 Rationale for Action Anthropology in Indian Context
 - 4.10 Challenges of Engagement for an Action Anthropologist
 - 4.11 Future of Action Anthropologists
 - 4.12 Summary
- References
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Learning Objectives



After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand the concept and ideological perspectives of action anthropology;
- understand the role of action anthropologists in the past and in the future; and
- practice as an action anthropologist in a real life situation.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Anthropologists have always remained concerned for the future of anthropology and its sub-disciplines (Srivastava, 1999). One of the earliest expressions of such concerns was raised by Franz Boas, the first president of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) in 1919. Later, Bronislaw Malinowski was categorical in his writing about the need for anthropological knowledge for the benefit of people. In 1929, he wrote that “a new branch of anthropology must sooner or later be started: the anthropology of the changing native”. He called it “Practical Anthropology”. As a subject, especially social anthropology finds its feet within socially and spatially excluded communities. The question that perplexes anthropologists is about the degree and extent of involvement with the community; or to use “community” as a laboratory to experiment anthropological idea or knowledge for generation of theory and policy prescription. This emerging ethical concern of social anthropologists gave way to a new way of thinking and doing - called Action Anthropology. Action Anthropology as a sub discipline was an outcome of project with Fox Indians in

USA by Sol Tax. It is more about the way the “communities” are used in a real life laboratory. Action Anthropology suggests a new approach to involve, inculcate and insinuate changes as desired by the community in the real life laboratory. It is more to facilitate what the community wants and less about introduction of “outsiders rationale view”. It is also termed the ethno-scientific approach towards development in anthropological knowledge. In other words, it is more of action than reaction to local situations.

4.2 ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY

In 1951, the term action anthropology was coined by Sol Tax at the American Anthropological Association meeting in Chicago. According to Sol Tax, action anthropology is similar to clinical method of study. Like a clinician continuously improves his diagnosis with tentative remedies, action anthropologists do not conceptualise the community as simply observing what would happen “naturally”; action anthropologists are willing to make things happen, or to help them along or to be at least catalysts. Therefore, action anthropologists are interested in solving anthropological problems, but perused in the context of action; hence, a sub-discipline called *action anthropology* (1975). In principle, it implies that there is no one pill for every ill. Every ill requires subjective treatment in the specific local conditions.

Action anthropology has been applied to solve practical problems of human welfare in a variety of situations. According to Holmberg (1970), the situation demands a strategy for local solution through collective action. Therefore, the action anthropologists are expected to bring decision-making bodies of the community to a level of competence to redress local problems. The approach by action anthropologists is to seek participatory solutions. Here, local knowledge inspires the community to reflect and act. This knowledge as a tool can only be understood and implied as a fieldworker. Therefore, action anthropology cannot be practiced without fieldwork. In the current context of scale and speed of social change, fieldwork entails challenge of time tenacity and trust of the community members.

4.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF ACTION ANTHROPOLOGISTS

The action anthropologist does not apply ‘science’ to solve a local problem. She or he in fact coordinates two critical goals:

- 1) Desires to help a group of people to solve a problem, and
- 2) Wants to learn something in the process.

Action anthropologists therefore are interested for welfare while keeping the culture intact with the community. In fact, such priorities are given because of two important reasons: Firstly any tribal community like most cultural minorities, value their way of life and resent any external threat. Secondly, often the state leads development activities that are introduced among tribal communities with an effort to change their lifestyle towards modernity. But the result of such a ‘top down approach’ has often failed and instead of positive outcomes, it may result into several irreversible negative consequences. The failure of ‘top down

approach' is primarily due to a lack of understanding of local conditions. This may be the result of overemphasis on their reinforcement of limited knowledge of the experts. The problem of top down approach can be best illustrated in a cartoon (figure 4.1). This cartoon is about the lack of understanding in a holistic perspective resulting into different interpretations of the same problem. As an outcome, the development intervention overlooks the larger context. In the beginning of the Fox program, there was a dilemma of introduction of some good practices. But later it was decided not to introduce it as it may be an outsider's or expert's choice. And this choice may not be best suited for the actors in the local situation. Therefore, the best decision can be made by the community; and it is not for the experts to decide what would be good for people. Anthropologists have been critical of the top-down approach.

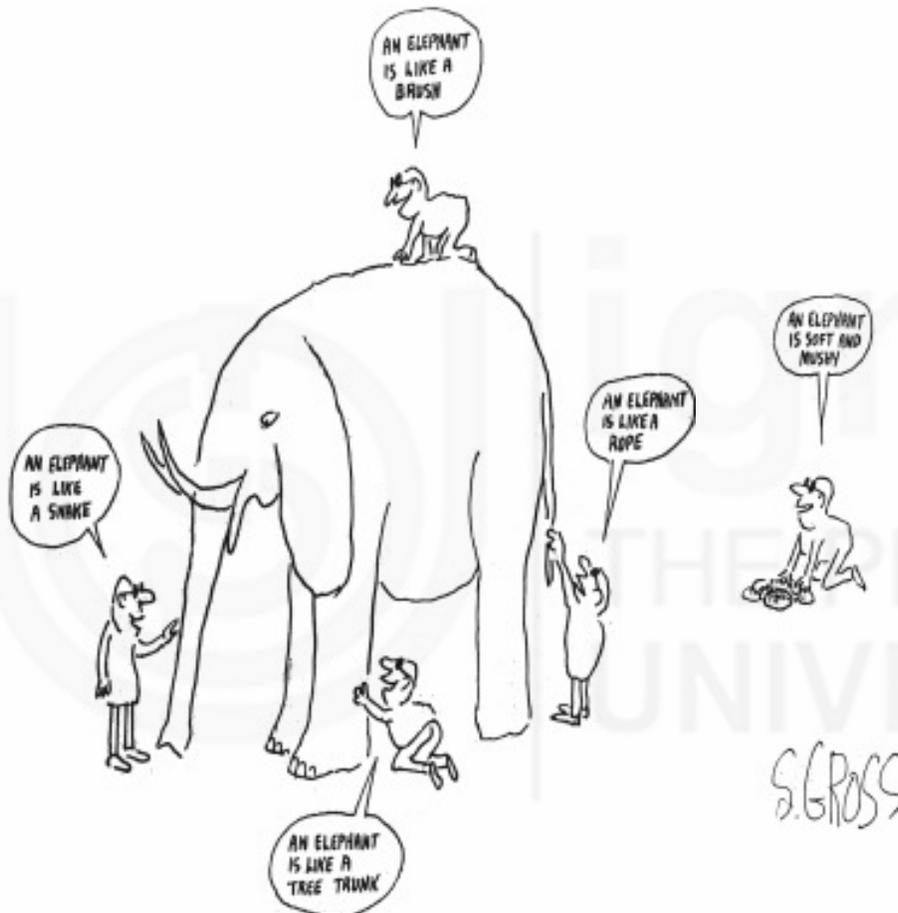


Fig.4.1

Source: Sam Gross' cartoon: *Six Blind Men and an Elephant* (1980)

This is a common problem in development when we are biased and myopic in our understanding about the situation due to limited perspective. Unlike above, the action anthropologists understand and enable solutions of the native - by understanding how one problem is configured with larger system in the local context –the worldview. In the current context of globalisation, cultures are to assimilate; it is matter of time and degree of change. In other words, retaining cultural identity in a globalising culture is rather inevitable. But what is essential is, voluntary change as a choice rather than a compulsion. We therefore as an action anthropologist, our first and major step should be to lay out how these traditions or cultural values of local knowledge are configured and how these traits are variously reproduced and changed.

4.4 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ACTION AND APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY

Applied and action anthropology revolves around seeking probable solutions to a social problem. The difference between applied and action anthropology lies in the degree and form of involvement. In applied anthropology, the anthropologist may provide solutions to a local problem, but they seldom solve the problem while being part of the community. In other words, action anthropologists facilitate (*work with the*) community to seek solutions, while in applied anthropology, community may be provided (*work for*) with alternate solutions. According to Piddington (1970:138-39) the fundamental distinction exists in the refusal of the action anthropologist to draw up a “blueprint” for action, instead letting the community decide what should be done. This strategy of the action anthropologist can be termed participatory. Action anthropologists can also be considered as “nondirective counseling for a community” (Peattie 1968:303). In this definition ‘nondirective’ is referred to a situation where the community decision is preferred over that of the anthropologist. Applied anthropology differs from action anthropology in adhering to the means-ends scheme of planning. According to Sol Tax (1960:168), applied anthropology applies a body of scientific knowledge as empirical propositions. This knowledge in the form of solutions is developed by theoretical anthropologists and awaiting application to particular situations when they are asked to do so by management, government, administrator, or organisation. Sol Tax addressed the difference between action anthropology and applied anthropology in the following ways:

- 1) As an action anthropologist, they should become part of the lives of people of another culture.
- 2) An action anthropologist learns the world of the studied or host culture without asking, and
- 3) They must be a theoretical anthropologist, not in background but in practice.

Last but not the least, an action anthropologist cannot have any master; he or she works as a member of the local community.

According to Barth (2002), understanding human knowledge allows us to unravel a number of aspects of the cultural worlds which people construct. According to him there are three faces of knowledge:

- 1) A substantive corpus of assertions: ideas about aspects of the world.
- 2) A range of media of representation- communicated in the form of words, concrete symbols, pointing gestures, actions, and
- 3) A social organisation: distributed, communicated, employed, and transmitted within social relations.

This knowledge interrelates in particular ways and generates tradition-specific criteria of validity for knowledge about the world. Thus the trajectory of a tradition of knowledge will be to a large extent endogenously determined. This implies that anthropologists can demonstrate how already established thoughts, representations, and social relations to a considerable extent configure and filter our individual human experience of the world around us and thereby generate culturally diverse worldviews.

4.5 FOX PROJECT: A REAL LIFE LABORATORY

The tribal (or Indian communities) are uncomfortable with the changing socio-economic conditions and the response of the state. Most of the spatially and socially excluded communities are under the pressure to change. This pressure is internal as well as external. Internal pressure is propelled by its vulnerabilities; while external pressure is formed due to either market forces or state policies as alternate options. Often these external pressures on small and vulnerable community result in the disappearance of its cultural traits; or it might lead to conflict if they resist. American Indian communities faced a similar situation. They have adjusted to the dominant cultural environment of the contemporary Americans and in past with the Europeans. According to Sol Tax: 'this is a world-wide syndrome' (1975).

An approach to practical problems was tested in the Fox project, which later came to be known as "action anthropology". It was developed in a project that Sol Tax and his associates at the University of Chicago carried out among the Fox Indians at Tama, Iowa. The Fox (also called Meskwaki) came originally from Wisconsin, USA. During the nineteenth century, due to increase of white population in the region, Fox Indians migrated to Illinois, Iowa, and subsequently to Kansas. Being primarily a forest community, for Fox Indians, Kansas with less forest and insecure land rights was not a compatible choice for settlement. As a result, by selling their horses, they purchased land near Tama in Southern Iowa in 1854. In 1960s, five to six hundred Fox Indians were settled in around 3,000 acres of land. The settlement was different to that of the usual tribal reservation allocated by the Government. The Bureau of Indian (Tribal) Affairs administered school and basic supplies of primary health care. As the land was not fertile, the Fox had no other option but to migrate to Tama and neighbouring towns to work as unskilled labour force. Consequently their quality of life was below the average standard in most of the development indicators, such as health, education, and poverty.

Box 1

Acculturation is a process of culture change. In acculturation two cultures intermingle, the dominant culture dominates over the less dominant culture. At that point of time, the less dominant culture due to pressure accommodates with the cultural traits of the dominant culture but internally do not accept. Several studies indicate that when the less dominant culture regains power, they resist for culture revival. There are several examples of such movement, such as Jharkhand Movement (before 2000 when it carved as a separate state) for a separate state in India.

The perpetual social and economic exclusion of the Fox Indian and the constant dominance by outside culture resulted in *acculturation* (See Box 1). The Fox community (living in Iowa) was the result of acculturation from the modern dominant American culture. Sol Tax's study highlights that though there are few families who have adapted Christianity as their religion, the traditional Fox totemic religion still dominates the cultural and religious traits. There is, however, influence of inter-tribal (Indian) cultural trait also, such as the widespread *peyote cult* (See Box 2)

Box 2

The Peyote Cult, also called the “Peyote Road,” and the “Peyote Way,” is a religious movement involving the ritual use of the *Lophophora williamsii* plant (peyote). Use of peyote for religious purposes is thought to have originated within one of the following tribes: the Carrizo, the Lipan Apache, the Mescalero Apache, the Tonkawa, the Karankawa, and the Caddo, with the Carrizo and the Lipan Apache being the two most likely sources. Since then, despite several efforts to make peyotism illegal, ritual peyote use has spread from the Mexico area to Oklahoma and other western parts of the United States. Notable peyotists include Quannah Parker, the founder of the Native American Church, and Big Moon of the Kiowa tribe

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_religion)

The ethno-history of Fox Indian like many other tribes asserts their own cultural trait being original and not borrowed. This assertion of past culture is very common between the tribes. The ethno-history often justifies their self esteem for existing cultural trait. Often they act as reinforcement mechanisms for resisting their own culture change, especially among the youths in the contemporary society. This is also reflected in a contemporary belief about the Chippewa reincarnation of Christ. According to this belief the unmarried daughter of an old Chippewa couple became pregnant. The Chippewas lived in the forest. The mother, knowing that her daughter had no interaction with boys, suspected her father of making her pregnant. At the time of birth, her mother thinking it to be an incestuous child raised an axe to kill the baby. Reacting to this gesture, the newborn baby boy spoke, that he was born to the whites across the sea and they killed him. He asked the mother: Are you going to kill me too? He showed the marks on his body (stigmata) corresponding to those left on Christ’s body by Crucifixion (said to be on the body of St Francis of Assisi and others). This led to the belief that the boy will soon become a religious leader of the tribes, as his predecessor did for the white man.

4.6 IDEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF ACTION ANTHROPOLOGISTS

Sol Tax formulated a system of three values that one should have as an action anthropologists. These three values are as follows:

- 1) *The value of truth*: represents the fact and knowledge as expressed by the community
- 2) *The values of freedom*: represents the freedom for individuals to choose the group to which they identify and for a community to choose its ways of life. That means that as an action anthropologist we must reduce restrictions or create an option that expands choices for the community.
- 3) *The value or principle of operation*: is like law of parsimony which tells us not to settle questions of values unless they concern us.

4.7 ROLE OF ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY

Action anthropology emphasises the right of self-determination. As Sol Tax candidly puts it that it is the choice and freedom of the community to make

mistakes. In today's language it may be termed as *doing while learning*. The Fox were faced with the need of making decisions relevant to their future. The role of the action anthropologist is not to impose his or her own knowledge as solution. This applies more to development agencies, administrators or policy makers, who decide solutions for tribal communities without appropriate consultation. The action anthropologist's role is to act as a catalyst, to help clarify issues for the tribal communalities and to make available to them sustainable options and outcomes, which either may not be accessible to them or may not have occurred to them. Any lines of action or solution, even if it appeals to the action anthropologist, must be rejected if they are not acceptable to the people.

Box 3

Key questions one should ask while enabling sustainable solutions as an action anthropologist are:

- 1) *Who initiated decision?*
- 2) *Who supported the decision?*
- 3) *Who opposed the decision?*
- 4) *Who mediated among conflicting actors on the decision?*
- 5) *Who prevailed in the decision?*

If the options and outcomes emerge from the community, it is often sustainable and more successful. An example is the annual *pow pow* event among the Fox Indians. The effects of action anthropologist are exemplified in the *Tama Crafts* project. The anthropologists discovered a young Fox called Charles Pushetonequa who had high artistic ability. He had left the Fox community for a while and received some training in art. But he preferred to sacrifice his artistic aspirations in an alien community and to return to Tama to take up unskilled employment. The Fox, with the assistance of the action anthropologists, organised a small group with which Indian style designs drawn by Pushetonequa, produced highly ornamental and original ceramic tiles and greeting cards.

Box 4

Solving Puzzle

Sometimes communities' willingness is affected due to awareness. An action anthropologist can understand this by simple matrix as stated below:

Puzzle Solving Matrix		
	Aware	Unaware
Willing	A	B
Not Willing	C	D

According to this matrix to seek solutions, community members can be understood in the following four categories. A is a population of the community who is aware and is willing, while B are the community members willing though unaware about the alternative. In the case of B, action anthropologist role is to facilitate intermingle A and B population for creating awareness about the alternative. C is the section of members in the community who are aware but not willing. Often the number of C category is very less. These groups seek advantage of their not willing. While D category are category of members who are neither aware nor willing. One effective way to create awareness and willingness is through exposure and exchange among the aware and willing population of the community. The action anthropologists should forgo C initially and attempt to assimilate A,B, and D category of members.

The Tama Craft project was successful and its impact was primarily threefold:

- 1) Firstly it has built the self-esteem and confidence of the Fox. The experiential knowledge made the Fox Indians to realise that they can run entrepreneurial activities efficiently and effectively within the larger American economy. The process also added substantial per capita income to Fox families.
- 2) Secondly it has built confidence of the outsiders, particularly the administrators, that the Fox are capable of promoting self sufficient livelihood options, resulting in change in the stereotype that tribal communities are incompetent and burden on the state and
- 3) More importantly, it has provided Charles Pushetonequa (and many aspiring youths) with a career in which they can pursue their artistic aspirations without losing the identity of their community. This led to a new way of thinking that converts art as fulfilling interest and income too.

4.8 ENGAGING AS ACTION ANTHROPOLOGISTS

As a result two broad perspectives emerge: one that employs anthropology to challenge the reproduction of structural inequality (Mullings 2000) and the others whose anthropological work reaches beyond the boundaries of the intellectual endeavour influencing non-academic spheres. Action anthropologists incorporate the discipline serving advocacy interests from an interventionist perspective capable of liberating the marginalised communities (Harrison 1997).

In broader terms, the role and relationship of anthropologists at work are threefold. According to Hymes (1972), anthropologists:

- 1) Are critics and scholars in the academic world;
- 2) Work for communities, movements, institutions; and
- 3) Are linked to direct action as members of a community or social movements. All three roles are necessary. More importantly they are present in every role with varying degree of priority.

4.9 RATIONALE FOR ACTION ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIAN CONTEXT

The tribal population of India is 8.43 crore, constituting 8.2 percent of the total population (Census, 2001). Central Indian states have the country's largest tribes, and, taken as a whole, roughly 75 per cent of the total tribal population live there. About 47 percent the Scheduled Tribe population is concentrated in the States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Gujarat and Odissa. The tribal community varies in size, there are approximately 700 communities recognised by the government as Scheduled Tribes. The Gonds are roughly 7.4 million, the Santals are approximately 4.2 million while Chaimals in the Andaman Islands are limited to 18 members only. According to the National Tribal Policy (Draft), the STs have traditionally lived in about 15 percent of the country's geographical areas, mainly forests, hills, undulating inaccessible terrain in plateau areas, rich in natural resources. Out of 58 districts, which have 67 percent of

forest cover, 51 happen to be tribal districts. 70 per cent of their total income is from the collection and marketing of minor forest produce (MFP). A survey of 2001-03 forest cover shows a net increase of 321,100 ha in tribal districts. On the other hands, the tribal community remains most marginalised spatially excluded group with respect to health, education, income and well being. This spatial exclusion clubbed with socio-economic exclusion have been responsible for the lower growth, dissimilar pattern of their socio-economic and inability to negotiate and cope with the consequences of their involuntary integration with the mainstream society and market.

According to the Planning Commission, Government of India, the proportion of ST children, aged 12-23 months who received basic vaccinations, is much lower than the rest of the population. The ST children also have a much higher incidence of anemia. The incidence of stunting and wasting is much higher among ST children. Incidence of overall under-nutrition (underweight) is significantly higher among the ST children than among others (2008). According to NHFS III, deliveries in a health facility are only 18 percent among the tribes in comparison to the general population with 51 percent (National Family Health Survey 3, 2005/6).

Till late 2000, the essential interdependence of the forest and tribe that came in the wake of colonial rule was not accorded due recognition. However, the above changes in the policy

Anthropologists such as Verrier Elwin and many anthropologists worked towards tribal welfare with the principles of action anthropology. Some non-anthropologists such as Jean Drèze have also used the principles of action anthropology for the benefits of marginalised communities in India.

context have resulted in a changed perspective among the policy makers. The Hon'ble President of India in her address to Parliament earlier this year laid down the task of completing the process of distribution of title deeds under the Forest Rights Act by 2009. On November 4th 2009 the Prime Minister addressed Chief Ministers' Conference, State Ministers of Tribal Affairs, Social Welfare and Forest Department on the implementation of Forest Rights Act 2006. In his speech he reiterated, those whose lives are dependent on the forests should be made essential partners in the process of planning, conservation and protection. Just after his speech, the Minister of Tribal Affairs shared the issues and concerns over inequality of distribution of outcomes and opportunities between other social categories and the scheduled tribes.

4.10 CHALLENGES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR AN ACTION ANTHROPOLOGIST

A problem common to all action anthropologists entering agency employment from academia is the conflict between disciplinary specialisation and teamwork. Unlike anthropologists in academics who usually carry out a research project or fieldwork, analyse the data and publish their articles and reports, and devote most of their time teaching, action anthropologists work in close collaboration with other like-minded administrators or policy makers, activists and community members to draw their attention towards the problems of the communities under

study or observation. According to Raymond Firth, a bridge is to be built between the people and the culture that is forced upon him; and the anthropologist can play their part in what may be called, social engineering. (Firth 1950: 399)

The question today for action anthropologists and policy makers are to retain tribal culture , attain a decent standard of living and sustain their natural habitat.

The philosophical basis of action anthropology is practical application of engagement in participatory learning activity. Increasing knowledge through participation with the community yields constructive, cohesive and collateral action. The purpose of the action anthropologist is to learn local knowledge and apply it in a manner in accordance with the existing value and social structure of the people involved. Action anthropology is more clinical. Like doctors, anthropologists deal with human lives. No attempt is made to apply general anthropological principles directly to the body of observed data existing at any fixed time. Nothing is force-fed; top-down approach is not followed; the people themselves make all the decisions which might influence their future i.e. the bottom-up approach.

The principles of action anthropology developed by Tax and associates during the Fox Project, were applied independently by Holmberg in (the Vicos Project) and by Spillius during fieldwork in Tikopia (Tax 1975:108). Due to the demand of different situations the Vicos' approach was different from that of the Fox Project. The Vicos project adopted different strategies in social action. Holmberg subscribed to identical principles: "to bring decision-making bodies of the community up to a level of competence at which we, the patrons, could be dispensed with." In his critique of the Fox Project, Stucki (1967:313) concluded that it was doubtful that a project of this type would ever be undertaken again. Reservations on action anthropology and challenges of action anthropologists are legitimate, but action anthropology is possible and is successful; however, it requires long term commitment and engagement.

According to Karl H. Schlesier (1974), an action anthropologist becomes part of the studied community's culture. Their obligation to the community is first; they must protect them in the fragile phase of cultures. Schlesier elucidated about the, action anthropologists' relations that they may face challenges from the discipline, from grant or Government agencies, and with the host population.

- 1) **The Discipline:** The action anthropologists are suspected by their colleagues because he or she violates the established approaches of research and standards of anthropological professional behaviour, especially in academics. He or she neither uses nor develops theoretical propositions. Instead, he addresses himself to a specific case which demands specific adaptations for practical solutions.
- 2) **Grant or Government Agencies:** The action anthropologist is suspected by the bureaucracy or administrators because he may challenge existing practices. He may publicly expose or make transparent the bad policies or programmes design that are harmful to the host population. Consequently, he may be perceived by the bureaucratic power structure as an opponent of the system, or a radical activist.

- 3) **The host population or the community:** Often action anthropologists are suspected at the beginning by many members of the host population. Some may remain unconvinced until the end of his engagement. In an action anthropology engagement, the host population often suspects the hidden motives of the action anthropologist.

4.11 FUTURE OF ACTION ANTHROPOLOGISTS

According to Dana-Ain Davis (2003), the discipline is a logical extension of community work especially, in the methodological tools used to understand priorities and preferences of the community. Today with rapid globalisation and opportunities of cultural interaction, the notion of community and time has changed. The community is of stakeholders and may reside in any part of the society, while time has accelerated its scale and speed. In other words, anthropologists need to understand community as a multi-cultural paradigm in limited time. The point the action anthropologists put forth is that no action work can be carried out independently of the political scenario and concerns. What is universal is the politics of change; thus one has not to forgo this politics. In fact, anthropology and activism (advocacy included) can be profitably combined, after all the aim is not just to understand that local situation, but initiate an array of changes in consultation with the local people, who are at the ‘centre of changes programmes’.

In the late seventies, the anthropologists were occasionally working in development or administrative agencies (D’Andrade et al. 1975). But today, the employment opportunities for anthropologists in development agencies have increased. According to Almy (1979), anthropologists are presented with three alternatives for “involved” research:

- 1) Anthropological research under the direct control of oppressed minorities, or community advocacy.
- 2) Research as consultants employed by evaluative research firms or government agency to feed data into analyses contracted by other agencies to assist in their decision-making, and
- 3) Adversary research from a university or development agency setting on contemporary bureaucracies and power elites, for the oppressed majority.

4.12 SUMMARY

However, in the last one decade, the principles of action anthropology are accepted across the section of the society and stakeholders, be it government, private or in academics. It is primarily due to the growing trans-disciplinary research and increasing specialisation of sub-disciplines within anthropology. Anthropology as a discipline is more inclusive and the scope of work is robust today than ever. Today the principles of action anthropology provide a valuable orientation for all anthropologists, administrators and others concerned with the rights and aspirations of ethnic groups which have remained in a culturally subordinate position because of a series of historical accidents (Piddington, 1960).

Perhaps we should hope for a new breed of anthropologist, ready to bid farewell to the romantic age of exploration and to embrace instead the new era of scientific consolidation- S. F. Nadel

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Sample Questions

- 1) What is action anthropology?
- 2) What are the ideological perspectives of action anthropologist?
- 3) How is action anthropology different from applied anthropology?
- 4) What is the paradigm of people centered development intervention in India?