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Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Social Sciences

READING ETHNOGRAPHIES

School of Social Sciences

Indira Gandhi National Open University

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COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

			Unit Writer	Editor (Content, Format and Language)
Block I	**Themes in Ethnographies**			**Dr. Archana Singh and Dr. Deepak Paliwal**
Unit 1	Understanding Ethnography		Dr Gunjan Arora Post Doc Fellow, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	
Unit 2	Colonial Ethnography		Dr Gunjan Arora Post Doc Fellow, Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health School of Social Sciences Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi	

Unit 3	Classical Ethnography	Dr Sumit Saurabh Srivastava Assistant Professor Centre for Development Studies, University of Allahabad Uttar Pradesh	
Unit 4	Indian Ethnography	Dr. Ritika Gulyani Assistant Professor Department of Sociology, Miranda House University of Delhi	
Unit 5	Global Ethnography	Dr. Thuanbina Gangmei Assistant Professor, University of Delhi, Delhi	
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Unit 7	Coming of Age in Samoa-M. Mead	Dr. Kalindi Sharma Assistant Professor (Guest), Amity Institute of Anthropology	
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Unit 9	Mukkuvar Women: Gender, Hegemony, and Capitalist Transformation in a South Indian Fishing Community- Kalpana Ram	Dr. Ektaa Jain Sethi Post-Doctoral Fellow, South Asia University, New Delhi Kailash Bhawan Arya Samaj Road Rampura, Kota	
Unit 10	Stratagems and Spoils: Social Anthropology of Politics- F.G. Bailey	Dr. Ritika Gulyani Assistant Professor Department of Sociology Miranda House University of Delhi	
Unit 11	Street Corner Society- W.F. Whyte	Dr. Mahima Nayar Independent Researcher 23 Deepali Pitam Pura, Delhi	
Block III	**Ethnographic Practices and Styles**		**Dr. Archana Singh and Dr. Deepak Paliwal**
Unit 12	Debates on Doing Ethnography	Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Gilani Assistant Professor Dept. of Sociology University of Kashmir	

Unit 13	Scientific Ethnography	Dr. Ajaz Ahmad Gilani Assistant Professor Dept. of Sociology University of Kashmir	
Unit 14	Feminist Critique to Ethnography	Prof. Shubhangi Vaidya Interdisciplinary Studies IGNOU	
Unit 15	Interpretive Ethnography	Dr. Mahima Nayar Independent Researcher 23 Deepali Pitam Pura, Delhi	
Unit 16	Ethics and Ethnography	Dr. Twinkle Pal Assistant Professor Hindu College University of Delhi	

COVER DESIGN

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COURSE CONTENTS

COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course BSOE-144 on Reading Ethnographies encourages the student to read ethnographic texts in their entirety. It provides the students the fundamental understanding of ethnography and its varied usages through the colonial, classical, global and Indian ethnographies. It has simultaneously provided ethnographic case studies to highlight the socio-cultural, political, economic, feminist, conflict and urban dimensions of ethnographic writings citing examples from India and abroad. The last section of this course delineates ethnographic practices and styles based on the debates in doing ethnography by highlighting the scientific, feminist, interpretative and ethical dimension of ethnography.

The Course is divided into three Blocks. First Block is on 'Themes in Ethnographies'. It comprises of five units. First Unit informs the learners about the development of ethnography and discusses how different theoretical approaches have informed ethnographic practice. The unit also explains the pre-requisites of writing Ethnography. Second Unit explains how different theoretical approaches have informed ethnographic practice and discusses the various trends in ethnographic practice pre and post-colonial period. Unit three outlines the classical ethnography and its specificities and also describes the new kind of ethnography of 'contemporary' times. Unit four give a brief description of Emergence of Anthropology in India, contribution of Indian anthropologist and discusses different phases for the growth of Indian anthropology.Unit Five explains in detail the process of Globalization and Ethnography, social relations in an era of globalization and also discusses the issues and challenges to ethnography from the process of globalization.

Block 2 on Ethnographic Cases is divided into six units. Unit Six explains the processes involved in ethnographic research and also explain how to make mind maps and tables to process the labyrinthine data that one comes across during the field study. The unit explains the methods of observation and participation in detail in order to make sense of the reality in its actual context by giving importance to the inhabitants own meanings and interpretation of existence including their social, political, economic, religious and mythical accounts. Unit Seven develops an understanding of the socio-cultural milieu at the time of the research and publication of the *Coming of Age in Samoa* and also recognizes the methodology of practicing Ethnography (classical to contemporary times). The unit also demonstrates an understanding of the techniques employed by the Anthropologist. Unit Eight throws light on the work of M.N.Srinivias "Religion and Society among the Coorgs". It also discusses how and why this ethnographic work holds significance in Anthropology. The unit also explains the essentials of the Coorgs culture in this book. Unit Nine discusses in detail the position of women in Mukkuvar society, dichotomy of gendered power vis-a-vis economic independence and also sociological understanding of the feminine. Unit Ten discuss the important features and importance of the book "Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics" written by F.G.Bailey. The unit provides an overview of the book as written by Bailey. It also explains the main ideas of the book which is to discover some generalised principles in a political

structure, such that it goes beyond the culture that it is found in and that these tools could be used to help understand research in other cultures as well. Unit Eleven describes the main themes of the book Street Corner Society, written by William Foote Whyte (first published in 1943). The book is a study about social interaction, networking and everyday life among young Italian-American men in Boston's North End (called Cornerville by Whyte). The unit briefly discusses the lives of the street gangs called the 'corner boys' as well as their interactions with the racketeers and politicians. It presents the social relations and leadership patterns which exist in the Cornerville. An important contribution of the book is the detailing around carrying out participant observation in a community which is briefly described here. The main criticisms and important contributions of the book are also presented in the unit

Block 3 on Ethnographic Practices and Styles is divided into five units. Unit Twelve discussed the basic concept of ethnography through discussing how ethnography came into being and its subsequent development over a period of time. The unit has also discussed various methodological principles such as naturalism, ethics, the idea of understanding and induction. The unit explains the various stages of feminist ethnography; and two important analytical aspects of ethnography. Unit Thirteen describe the issues concerning the scientific nature of ethnography by going deep into its past and present of scientific ethnography. The unit discusses how an ethnographer formulates the research problem, the kind of field site that ethnographers chose to conduct their fieldwork, how they gain access and what it means to having access to a particular group or field site, how an ethnographer presents self to the group in which she/he participates and collects data as well as other steps until an ethnographer finally writes the report which is the last stage. This unit helps' learners to gain an understanding of scientific ethnography as a method and guides them in carrying out scientific ethnographic research. Unit Fourteen has attempted to bring out the impact of feminist theory and practice on ethnography. The unit discuss the strengths and limitations of the feminist approach and Identifies major areas of inquiry in which feminist scholars are currently engaged.

Unit Fifteen begins with tracing the history of Interpretive Ethnography-explores the reasons for the development of a more reflexive form of ethnography. It explains what is interpretive research; the importance of Interpretive ethnography and also describes the evolution of interpretive ethnography. The unit also discusses the advantages and disadvantages of interpretive ethnographies. Finally the last unit, Sixteen explains the concept of ethics and ethnography in detail. The unit in detail discusses various ethical issues that guide ethnographic research.

UNIT 1: UNDERSTANDING ETHNOGRAPHY*

Structure

1.0 OBJECTIVES

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

● describe the development of ethnography;

● discuss how different theoretical approaches have informed ethnographic practice;

● explain the pre-requisities of writing Ethnography;

● list the different types of ethnographies and explain their features; and

● outline the ethnography today.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The word *Ethnography* comes from *Ethnos*, a Greek term, denotes a people, a race, or a cultural group. When *ethno* prefix is combined with *graphic* to form the term *ethnographic*, it refers to the science devoted to describing ways of life of humankind. Ethnography, then refers to a social scientific

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*   Written by Dr. Gunjan Arora, Post Doctorate Fellow CSMCH, JNU.

description of a people and the cultural basis of their peoplehood (Peacock, 1986).

Ethnography is the art and science of describing a group or culture (Fetterman,1998:1). Emerging from Anthropology and adopted by social science disciplines, it is a systematic description of culture through fieldwork. It involves the ethnographer/researcher participating overtly or covertly in people's daily lives for an extended period and recording and collecting the available data to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995;1). Such an endeavour aims to provide a 'thick description'(Geertz,1973), i.e., an in-depth detailed description of everyday life and practice of the people. Ethnography as a qualitative methodology lends itself to studying the beliefs, practices, social interactions, and behaviours of the people through participant observation and later interpreting the data collected(Denzin& Lincoln,2011; Berry, 2011).Thus,

'Ethnography is the study of the people in naturally occurring settings of 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities, involving the researcher participating directly in the setting, if not also the activities, to collect data in a systematic manner without the meaning being imposed on them externally' (Brewer, 2000;10)

In its early stages, there was a desire by the researchers to make ethnography appear scientific and a set of rules were followed as to how ethnography should be done. Ethnography developed as a tool of social science. It involved the social scientific observer, the observed and the research report as text, and the audience to which the text is presented (Denzin& Lincoln,2011).

It is essential here to differentiate between ethnography as a process and as a product. Ethnography *as a process,* i.e., participating and collecting data in the field, allows the researcher to observe closely, record and engage in the daily life of another culture- an experience labelled as the fieldwork method. Whereas ethnography *as a product* (i.e., ethnographic writings), the ethnographer writes the accounts of the culture he studied in descriptive detail which are ethnographer's personal and theoretical reflections and are available for readers (Barnard &Spencer, 1996).

Here in this Unit, you would understand how the ethnographer writes ethnography for the reader to grasp the social reality. Ethnographic writing includes a detailed description that is presented in narrative form. The purpose of the description is to let the reader understand what happened in the field and the participant's worldview in the research. It also gives a glimpse of the social reality as deciphered and interpreted by the researcher and later produced as an ethnographic text. The text mentions all the particular events and activities that happened when the researcher was in the field. It would also tell the reader about those events which may be worth exploring further.

The ethnographies also include the kind of questions the researcher is trying to answer. An entire activity or event will often be reported in detail because it represents a typical or unique experience or allows a very detailed micro-analysis. But the extensive description of an event from the field is

always balanced by analysis and interpretation. An interesting, coherent and readable ethnographic report should provide sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the analysis and adequate analysis to enable the reader to understand the interpretation and explanation presented. It should also be noted that the facts presented in an ethnography are not just a set of objective truths but is an interpretation done by the ethnographer. The anthropologist who goes to the field, observes and participates in the reality, collects the data and later interprets this data. The interpretation is a construct of the reality they witnessed that forms the writing of the text. Before we go further, we must understand how ethnography became an essential part of social science research.

Check Your Progress 1

1)   Define Ethnography

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1.2 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY

In the first half of the 1800s, the term *ethnology* was more often used to study people by comparing their material artifacts and cultures. Ethnologists did not collect information by direct observation; instead, they examined the archives of government offices, missionaries documents or accounts of journeys or explorers' accounts of the 'primitives'. The descriptions of the 'other' cultures of the world written by Western missionaries, explorers and colonial administrators presented the perspectives of the colonizers/conquering civilizations whose mission was to civilize the 'less civilized'. Such accounts were a reversed image of the writer's ethno cultural ideal. The pioneering anthropologists then were not fieldworkers themselves but were armchair largely anthropologists. They researched the reports from missionaries and colonial administrators to second their theories about cultures other than their own. It is only later that fieldwork became an essential component of anthropological inquiry. Thus, ethnographic methodology did not erupt suddenly in anthropology; rather, it arose gradually through the works of various authors who initiated the fieldwork. Over time, the term ethnology i.e., the comparative study of culture, fell out of favour because anthropologists began to do their fieldwork. The term 'ethnography'(i.e., the empirical study of particular groups of people) was used to refer to the integration of both the first-hand empirical investigation and the theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organization and culture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007;1).

British and Chicago Schools of Ethnography

From being the 'travelers account', the journey of ethnography to a specialized text has been an interesting one. The interest of Westerners in the origins of culture and civilization with an assumption that contemporary

'primitive' people, those thought by Westerners to be less civilized than themselves, were, in effect, living replicas of the 'great chain of being' that linked the occident to its prehistoric beginnings (Hodgen,1964; 386-432). The cultural diversity of people outside the West posed a problem for these scholars to account for the origins, histories and development of such racial and cultural diversity and consider why differences have risen.

Two independent intellectual developments during the twentieth century, one in Britain and the other in North America, also referred to as the British and Chicago schools of ethnography, respectively, led to the development of formal ethnography. The classical tradition of social anthropology that developed in Britain led to the British school of ethnography, whereas the other is known as the Chicago Sociological tradition.

Boas, popularly called the father of American anthropology, strongly denounced the half- baked generalizations propagated by early 19th century anthropologists based on their scanty data made available through others. For Boas, to theorise one had to be dependent on proper ethnographic data collected on a first hand basis. Boas vehemently believed that all fields of anthropology had to be investigated in order to procure accurate data and to provide a viewpoint. This thought permitted him to reconstruct the history of the growth of ideas with much greater accuracy than the generalizations of a comparative method (Hyatt 1990:43). Boas thus introduced new ways of doing fieldwork in anthropology where he emphasised on ethnographic fieldwork, cultural relativism and participant observation method. His cultural relativism brought in new insights to the study of anthropology as the emphasis shifted from the reasoning of the investigating anthropologist to the perception and interpretation of the respondents of the culture investigated. This was to do away with objective notions of one society being claimed more superior than another, or more correct than the other

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Box 1.0

Though the British school is often linked with European colonialism, whose primary interest was to know the culture and native people of their colonies to exploit the labour powers of the natives and also utilize their natural resources to feed the extractive industries of Europe. It is no longer associated with colonialism. The European scholars mainly became interested in studying the 'other'-focusing on the non-industrialized people and their culture.

While E Tylor and L. H. Morgan were the pioneers who wrote on ethnography, Bronislaw Malinowski has explicitly described steps in an ethnographic study. Through his works on the communities of New Guinea, Malinowski defined the fieldworker as a 'professional stranger'(Agar,1980), becoming embedded into a culture and conducting fieldwork through participant observation (Participant observation is one type of data collection method by practitioner-scholars typically used in qualitative research and ethnography) to understand the social reality of the society. Malinowski emphasized holism to gain the native's point of

view and emphasized a rigorous scientific approach .In his famous work *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, in the Introduction itself, Malinowski described the methodological principles stating the goal of ethnography to 'grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, and realize his vision of his world'. Malinowski lived for two years (between 1914 and 1918) among the Kula of the Trobriand Islands, learned their language, used natives as informants and directly observed the social life, participating in their everyday activities.

From the 1920s onwards, ethnographic methodology was incorporated in Sociology, adopted by the Department of Sociology of the University of Chicago. The Chicago School (of urban ethnography) is usually regarded as the main force behind sociological fieldwork. The Chicago school researchers Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess and their students during the last quarter of the 19th century, just before the Great Depression, produced ethnographies based on everyday lives, communities and symbolic interactions of a specific group. The core chicago ethnographies that resulted presented a vital picture of the then urban life and these works are considered as classics throughout the world. These ethnographies captured urban life, talked of social change and used statistical data with qualitative techniques like interviews and life histories. Community studies and homegrown ethnographies were the two forms of ethnography encouraged in Chicago.

Box 1.1

By the 1930s several ethnographies had been written about the 'deviant sub-cultures' and members of the down-and-out groups in Chicago. The professional thieves, taxi dancers, and urban gang members were studied using the life history method. The interviews were conducted in natural settings like brothels, street corners, tenements, mission shelters, bars and Union halls, etc. (Van Maanen, 2011;19-20).

Another significant development in the latter half of the 20th century was that ethnography spread further to psychology and human geography. It was also influenced by theoretical ideas like anthropological functionalism, symbolic interactionism, philosophical pragmatism, feminism, constructionism, post-structuralism and postmodernism. Ethnography today plays a complex and shifting role in the dynamic tapestry that the social sciences have become in the 21st century. It has also, in a way, changed what ethnographers actually do, how they collect data and how the various paradigms in social science have informed and continue to inform the ethnographic practice. Let us first discuss what ethnographers do before understanding how the theoretical discourses influence knowledge production and thus ethnographies.

Check your Progress 2

1) What was the positivist approach to writing ethnography?

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1.3 PRE-REQUISITES FOR WRITING ETHNOGRAPHY

In the beginning, anthropologists and ethnographers accepted the positivist approach and the central aim of ethnography was to provide a rich, holistic and complete accounts of the fields they visited. As Hammersley states, 'the task is to document the people's culture, perspectives and practices, of the people in these settings. The aim is to '*get inside* the way each group of people sees the world'. The ethnographer provides a detailed description of the research setting and its participants based on the researcher's direct observations or interviews of a few key informants.

Owing to the complex nature of social life, the ethnographers gather data participant observations, directly engaging and involving with the world they are studying. During the observations, ethnographers use interview schedules/guides and even indulge in informal conversational interviews to collect data. The interview guide and informal discussions allow the researcher to immerse in reality, engage with the informants, and probe deeper into emerging issues. Ethnographers also gather in-depth interviews, documentary data and visual data as photographs and video recordings. Ethnographers also triangulate interviews and observation methods to enhance the quality of the data. Triangulation is a technique designed to compare and contrast different methods to provide a more comprehensive account of the phenomena under study. The triangulation technique is useful as it helps to contrast what people say and what their actual behavioris. Analysis of the ethnographic data is done in an inductive thematic manner i.e., the data is categorized into themes and then through careful analysis, the ethnographers generate tentative theoretical explanations of their empirical work.

It is important here to understand that any cultural interpretation of carefully collected ethnographic data using ethnographic methods and techniques has to also take note of certain fundamental concepts that shape an ethnography, notable- a holistic perspective, contextualization, emic and etic perspective and a non-judgmental view of reality (Fetterman, 2010).

1.3.1 A Holistic Outlook

Ethnographers assume a holistic outlook in research to get a comprehensive picture of the social group and describe the history, economy, religion, politics and environment. This outlook allows the ethnographers to grasp the reality even beyond the immediate cultural scene. For instance, knowing the history of a social group would reflect on the religion and rituals and their significance. Each scene is complex and multilayered and has a context to it and having a holistic outlook would help the ethnographer to understand the social whole.

1.3.2 Contextualization

Placing the observations made on the field within a social context would provide a larger perspective. Take an example of a study on girl's education. You may find that often the girl students' drop out rate from school is much higher than those of boys. Suppose the ethnographer locates this issue in a

larger context. In that case, he might find that the girls drop out of education due to the additional burden of daily household chores or taking care of the younger siblings and helping their mothers**.** The ethnographer taking into account the larger context of gender roles and such contextualization might help grasp social life. Take another example, on reaching puberty, the girls themselves are absent from the school because of lack of hygienic toilets. Then it is understood that due to lack of infrastructure, the girl's education takes a backseat. Thus, it is essential to move beyond the immediate cultural scene and contextualize the data within the larger perspective.

1.3.3 Emic vs Etic perspective

The emic perspective -the insider's or native's perspective of reality is at the heart of most ethnographic research. This insider's perception of reality is instrumental to understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviors (Fetterman,2010;20). This emic perspective helps the fieldworker understand why members of the social group do what they do and the emic perspective helps record the multiple realities. An etic perspective, on the other hand, is the external, social scientific perspective of reality. Most ethnographers record the emic perspective and then append it with their scientific analysis. And a good ethnography requires both emic and etic perspectives (ibid;22).Although taking the emic stance is a time-consuming task, this ensures the validity of the data collected. Combining both emic and etic helps produce a more scientifically informed empirical reality.

1.3.4 Non-judgmental view of reality

It is essentially a pre-requisite for the ethnographer to have a non-judgmental view in the field. They should refrain from making any inappropriate judgments if they encounter any unfamiliar practice. But it is also understood that the ethnographer cannot be neutral and has their own set of beliefs and biases. Ethnocentric behaviour i.e., imposition of one's cultural values and standards on another culture, assuming that one is superior to the other is an error in ethnographic practice.

Check your Progress 3

1) Differentiate between emic and etic perspective

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2) How do ethnographers get the insider's view of the people they study?

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1.4 TYPES OF ETHNOGRAPHIES

The difference between approaches and methods used by different ethnographers, especially at different periods, can be explained to some extent by the influence of various ideas in the social sciences (O'Reilly, 2005;44).

The philosophical approaches that inform ethnographic approaches can be Positivism, Functionalism, Interpretative, feminist and post-modernism.

1.4.1 Positivist and functionalist ethnography

During the 19th century, a positivistic approach in anthropology and ethnography predominated. This approach adheres to the empiricist notions of knowledge generation and advocates objectivity and distance from the object of inquiry. Objectivity requires the researcher to maintain distance and remain detached from the object of inquiry and the results are focused on facts rather than the researcher's own beliefs and values (Payne &Payne, 2004). The primary focus is to seek generalizable laws that may be applied to human behaviour. The anthropologists like Malinowski, Evans Pritchard and Radcliffe Brown, following the positivist approach, presumed that cultures were static and homogenous and a holistic approach would be best suited to collect the data in the field. This approach opined that every aspect of a culture has a distinct role in the maintenance of the whole, i.e., every element of culture had a function and contributed to the maintenance of the whole society. The society was presumed to be in equilibrium and functioning harmoniously. Some very famous ethnographies have been produced during this time.

Some of the classical ethnographies include, Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*(1922); E.E. Evans Pritchard's, *TheNuer*(1940) and Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa*(1928). Malinowski acknowledged that the aim of ethnography was to capture the native's worldview. The ethnographers tried to have a positivist approach and collected their data as scientifically and objectively as possible using participant observation.Similarly, Radcliffe Brown's work on Andaman Islanders is another example of an ethnographer taking an objective view of reality without considering the actual/ real thinking of the natives. Since they talked of harmonious societies in equilibrium, these ethnographies were more of a construct of reality. But it was soon realized that writing objectively about cultures does not describe actual and real situations and then it was urged to locate meanings in the situations in the field.

1.4.2 Interpretative approach to ethnography

With 'thick description', Clifford Geertz professed on meanings and real emotions rather than just noting of facts in the field. It was stated that it is essential to see humans as actors in the social world rather than simply reacting as objects in the natural world (O'Reilly;49). It was emphasized that the actual context of the situation be noted to know the relation between the action and the environment in which the action is taking place and what participants have to say about it. The focus shifted to creating more meaningful ethnographies with rich data and more qualitative depth. The aim was to generate an interpretative understanding (or *verstehen*) that is in search for meanings. Ethnographies then focused on just recording what people say, rather what meaning it has for the people. The ethnographer would then find the logic of the actions and then only the text would be insightful. Giving an example of the famous Balinese cockfight, Geertz has stated that each item of culture makes sense only when seen in a context and what meaning does the partcipant in the field attaches to it.

1.4.3 Phenomenological approach

Following Alfred Schutz (1972), much of the 1960s and 1970s qualitative research turned to phenomenological approach, i.e., obtaining the actor's point of view. Humans make sense of what we receive through our senses-we see, hear, smell, feel, and taste by splitting up the world around us into categories and sub-categories. By emphasizing on the 'constituted meanings', phenomenology offers a vision of the social world where human subjects define themselves and what they value and a variety of ways they experience the world. It becomes imperative for ethnographers to look how the 'lived world' of the people under study is constituted. Contemporary ethnographers cover this experiential dimension and subjective experience of the people they study and recreate a text in a reflexive manner. The idea is to make detailed observations combined with historical dimensions and create a reflexive account where the reader can draw their conclusions.

1.4.4 Critical ethnography

Some ethnographies are strategically situated to shed light on larger social, political, symbolic or economic issues. Moving from parochial vision, there has been a shift in ethnographies to larger issues like addressing the political economy or seeing from the perspective of the disadvantaged group in advanced capitalist societies. These are example of critical realist tales embedded within the Marxist frame. For example, June Nash's *We Eat the Mines and the mines Eat Us*, is a historical and contemporary account of Bolivian tin miners. Another example is Hochschild's (1983) work on the sociology of emotions, which does not have a Marxist slant but is an example of a critical tale. Using participant observation and interviews among flight attendants, the author has talked about a problematic emotional work – 'Service with a smile'. While providing a larger context, the ethnographers of these ethnographies have referred to Economics, Political Science, History and Psychology to advance their understanding of the social reality.

1.4.5 Feminist ethnography

Women ethnographers have brought a new perspective to the way ethnographies are written and read. During the 1970s when feminists began questioning the use of masculine pronouns and nouns, the female was essentially missing in the ethnographies. Sally Slocum's (1970) paper *Woman the Gatherer: The Male Bias in Anthropology* critiqued the popular conception of 'man-the hunter' and challenged the androcentric academy. Another volume by Peggy Golde *Women in the Field* is an edited volume by women anthropologists, opened the debate of how being women affected the experiences of anthropologists conducting their research in diverse settings. Such feminist paradigms have revealed that how women have been conceptualized in Western intellectual tradition, which is often constructed from a male and white-centric point of view, does not address anything associated with women. The production of knowledge was from the male perspective and power played a significant role in how the reality was looked into and how one did fieldwork. As done by traditional ethnographers, the power and hierarchy in the field further marginalized the women's perspective. And feminist methodology highlighted this. The fieldwork and analysis of the field was not free from relations of power between the

ethnographer/observer and the observed. Annette Wiener's famous re-study of the Trobriand Islands, (where she visited the site of Malinowski's classic work and incorporated women's voices) showed a different picture of the Trobrianders than one shown by Malinowski.

1.5 ETHNOGRAPHY TODAY

One of the major developments in anthropology has been the reflexive turn, which is a process of reflection that allows the researcher/ethnographer to be the object i.e., a focus on the self-examination, self-critique, and self hood is incorporated in the text. Reflexivity in anthropology developed due to three main developments, i.e.,

- acknowledgment of the Euro-centric bias in anthropology (which was critically addressed by scholars like Talal Asad and Dell Hymes)

- the emergence of the feminist movement that accused the androcentric nature of Anthropology.

- The 1967 publication of Malinowski's field diaries, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, revealed Malinowski's fieldwork's subjectivity.

The other two volumes that focused on different forms of new ethnographies and supported reflexivity were by James Clifford and George Marcus's Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography and Michael Fisher and George Marcus's Anthropology *Cultural Critique*. These developments changed the methodological approaches in Anthropology and emphasized reflexive understanding of the ethnographer and their field study. The most important reflexive ethnographies were *Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight* (1972) by Clifford Geertz and *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (1977) by Paul Rabinow.

In doing and writing ethnographies there were multiple voices, multiple identities and multiple actors – all of which needed to be given space. This included not only the natives being studied, but also the ethnographer himself/ herself, and his/ her own personality and life experiences both in and off the field. All these gave rise to reflexive ethnography and auto-ethnography and online or virtual ethnography.

1.5.1 Autoethnography

Autoethnography is where the researcher's thoughts and perspectives derives from their social interactions in the field form the central element of the study. Autoethnography refers to turning the ethnographic gaze inward on the self(auto), while maintaining the outward gaze of ethnography, looking at the larger context wherein self-experiences occur (Denzin,1997:227). It broadly refers to both the method and their product of researching and writing about personal lived experiences and their relationship to culture (Ellis, 2004;xix). As a methodology, it accommodates the subjectivity of the researcher and their influence on the research. Autoethnography began in the 1980s (although self-observation and confessional tales began in the 1960s) and two major works during 1992, namely *Anthropology and Autobiography* by Judith Oakley and Helen Callaway and *An Invitation to*

Reflexive Sociology by Pierre Bourdieu, led to its development. Personal narratives and experiences in the field were dealt with in the former book whereas awareness of the researcher's position in the social fields was discussed in the latter.

1.5.2 Online ethnography

An online or virtual medium used to study internet communities in various forms is a new way of doing ethnography. This research method explores how humans live and interact online through a wide range of different research strategies. Hine argues that ethnographic researchers start from the perspective of questioning what is taken for granted and seeking to analyse and contextualize 'the way things are' (Hine 2000: 8). In relation to the internet this means that researchers challenge the notion that the internet is the product of the features of its technology, and explore how it is constructed by the way in which people inhabit, utilize and actively make it. A diffuse and diverse set of approaches to Online ethnography has emerged that uses a variety of terms, including Virtual ethnography, Netnography and Cyberethnography, all establishing that online context could be sites for ethnographic study.

Ethnography conducted in online settings has been instrumental in demonstrating the complex nature of Internet based interactions and enabled us to explore the new cultural formations that emerge online (Hine, 2008; 401). As the Internet developed, so did various approaches to study the online spaces emerged. For instance, Kendall (2002) did fieldwork focusing on gender in an online forum. Later, Kozinets (2010) developed Netnography to efficiently study online domains used in the marketing context to understand consumer motivations and behaviours. Another example is Coleman's (2013) ethnography of a hacker community involving extensive online fieldwork. Robinson and Schulz (2009) have identified three different phases of online ethnography:

● Pioneering approaches saw the Internet as the new domain for identity formation and stressed the distinctiveness of online social formations.

● The transfer of offline methodological concerns into the online domain and

● The recent emergence of multi-modal approaches that consider video and audio data alongside textual data and also seek to conceptualize online interactions within offline spaces.

Internet studies have been a rich field for methodological development and have dramatically transformed the social research landscape. Mixed method research designs have emerged in Internet studies allowing for a combination of large -scale and small-scale focus through which researchers can explore both patterns and meanings(Hesse-Biber and Griffin, 2013). Coleman (2010) argues that ethnography in online spaces is significant as these sites have emerged as central sites of experiences in everyday life and offer heterogeneity. Online spaces have provided access for ethnographers to explore everyday life in depth and detail and have a significant contribution to social sciences.

Check your Progress 4

1) How the reflexive turn has changed the way ethnography is written today?

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2) Define Autoethnography

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3) Define Online Ethnography

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1.6 LET US SUM UP

Ethnography emerging from anthropology, developed as a tool in social science to describe the people one studies. It refers both to the process and the product. The process is defined as the actual fieldwork that the ethnographer or the researcher indulges in. The ethnographer collects the description of a particular culture- their customs, beliefs and behavior and then analyze and writes it as an ethnographic text. Also, an ethnography is not just a document on the lives of 'others', rather it presents the voice of a community or people, who, along with the author, are present in the text. The growth of ethnography has evolved over the years and has been informed by various theoretical approaches. The traditional ethnography has evolved and the contemporary ethnographies are more realist, confessional and critical tales, capturing new set of values, ways of thought and new ways of life. The ethnographer's subjectivities too inform the text and along with the voice of the observed.

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1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) Ethnography has been defined as the art or science of describing a culture or group. It emerges from the discipline of anthropology and adopted by social sciences.

Check Your Progress 2

1) During the 19th Century, the positivist approach predominated in ethnography and this approach was based on the empiricist notion of knowledge generation. It believed in objectivity and keeping distance from the object of inquiry. Thus, the researcher was supposed to maintain detachment while conducting ethnographic research.

Check Your Progress 3

1) Emic perspective is that of the insiders i.e. the nativer's perspective of social reality while the elite perspective is that of the outsiders, scientific perspective of social reality; as understood by the ethnographer.

2) The insider's view of the people is obtained by the researcher using methods of observation and interview through participation. It is this instrumental knowledge which helps to understand why people behave the way they do and this is the core of ethnographic research.

Check Your Progress 4

1) One of the major developments in anthropology has been the entry of the reflexive way of booking at social reality. It's a process of reflection which allows the researcher i.e. the ethnographer to be the object. She is allowed to be self examines; self-critique etc. one's own views and subjectivities and include it as part of the text.

2) Autoethnography is where the researcher's own thoughts and perspectives derives from their social interactions in the field form the central element of the study Auto ethnography; therefore, helps to turn the 'gaze' towards the ethnographer's own self at the same time obscuring and recording the social reality outside.

3) Online ethnography is ethnography which is done using the internet. It is virtual mode of collecting information etc. it differs from the traditional ethnography notions to ethnography done through technologically mediated interactions through online network.

UNIT 2: COLONIAL ETHNOGRAPHY*

Structure

2.0   OBJECTIVES

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

● understand the origin and development of ethnographic practice

● understand how different theoretical approaches have informed ethnographic practice

● understand the various trends in ethnographic practice pre and post colonial period

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The discipline of Anthropology, like any other social science, is historically and socially conditioned. The discipline emerged during the colonial period to meet the administrative needs of the expanding colonial regime. The administrative problems that arose in the expansion and consolidation of the colonial rule had the colonial powers in dearth of data on the colonized people. The intellectual climate of Western Europe and the political and economic conditions then favoured the development of social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology.

The growth of the two disciplines in India is also attributed to the interaction between the ruler- the colonizer and the ruled – the colonized. The origin of sociology and anthropology dates back to when British officials realized that knowledge about the Indian culture was essential for the smooth functioning of the colonial government. As early as 1769, Henry Verelst, the Governor of Bengal and Bihar, realized the need to collect information regarding leading families, their customs, and social life. Since then, the

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* Written by Dr. Gunjan Arora Post Doctorate Fellow CSMCH, JNU

British officials and missionaries made earnest efforts to collect and record information regarding the life and culture of their Indian subjects (Srinivas & Panini, 1973). This started the detailed analysis of the culture and society, and many anthropologists from England came to India to collect data on Indian populations and prepared monographs on them. Also, the Darwin's theory of evolution provided the idea and background that the institutions of the non-Europeans represented the stages through which the Europeans had passed long ago. This gave impetus to studies that collected data on the cultures of the primitives in various parts of the world. It was also thought essential to document the primitive culture before they vanish or develop to a more advanced stage. Social evolution theory was followed by philosophies on diffusionism that opined that the ideas, artifacts, beliefs and institutions spread from one part of the world to the other. Anthropologists thus started tracing the diffusion of cultural traits from one part of the world to the other. Later, with functionalism, participant observation and fieldwork among the native population became the principal technique to document the 'other'. Here in this Unit, we trace the development of ethnographies through the colonial age to the present. You would realize how India's historical, socio-political climate paved the way for the variety of studies and ethnographies that were initiated. These ethnographies are classic works of native scholars and Western scholars and have provided the background for future studies in anthropology and sociology.

2.2 ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF COLONIAL ETHNOGRAPHIES: AN OVERVIEW

Abbe Dubois, a French missionary in Mysore, wrote about people's lives, customs, and rituals and published *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* in 1816. These early works were systematic attempts undertaken by British officials, missionaries and scholars to document the colonized. In 1871, the British officials launched the first All India Census to collect information about Indian society. In 1901, Sir Herbert Risley conducted an ethnographic survey of India. Since then, the census data has been an invaluable source of information giving demographic details and useful information for social and cultural analysis. Indological studies involving studies on religious practices, customs and laws also gained a stimulus because of the efforts made by British scholars and officials. Sir William Jones, a British Orientalist, established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787. The society published a journal devoted to anthropological interests.

By the 19th century, the data taken from surveys, literature and other sources were used by Western scholars to write about society in India. Sir Henry Maine, Law Member in the Viceroy's Council, published *Ancient Law* (1861) much before visiting India. His second book, *Village Communities in the East and West* (1871), was published later (Srinivas and Panini,1973;184). Several monographs were written on tribal and other communities by British administrators and anthropologists. Anthropologists and sociologists like WHR Rivers became interested in India and published a study of *The Todas* (1906) after intensive fieldwork. And his posthumous work *Social Organisation*, edited by W.J. Perry came in 1924. Rivers two

students G S Ghurye and K P Chattopadhyaya, played an important role in the development of anthropology and sociology in India. Two other Indian scholars, namely S C Roy and Ananthakrishna Iyer wrote on castes and tribes of India. Roy wrote numerous monographs on several tribes of Bihar. His book *Caste, Race and Religion in India* (1934) is a famous work.

By 1900-1920, few departments in various state universities emerged in Mysore, Calcutta, Bombay, Lucknow and anthropologists and sociologists were conducting more and more ethnographic studies. And by the 1950s, the study of the two disciplines became professionalized. With this brief introduction about the development and growth of sociology and anthropology as formal disciplines in India during the colonial period, we now chart out how and what type of ethnographies were written and read about a few important scholars and their contributions to social sciences. But let us first see the different phases explaining how the discipline developed and what major ethnographies came during each phase.

The Formative phase (1774-1919)

For Majumdar, this phase ended in 1911, but for Vidyarthi, this phase extended to 1920. This phase saw the ethnographic studies on tribes and other communities. The monographs produced were on customs and beliefs, traditions and caste communities and social life. A lot of work on tribes was published during this period. The classical evolutionary theory that influenced the work to search for primitive survivals was attempted along with the listing of customs. Administrative reports and land revenue reports gave the realistic picture of India's rural society as reflected in the works of Dalton, Buchanan and Lord Baden Powell.

The Asiatic Society that was established in 1774 (later became the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784) by Sir William Jones also began to publish articles on Indian tribes in journals. Many works were published, which were primarily written by British administrators and missionaries rather than anthropologists. Some famous scholars like Edward Tuite Dalton, Herbert Hope Risley, William Crooke, J. T. Blunt, Buchanan, Sir Edward Gait, Sir Denzil Ibbetson (1848-1923) and others compiled works on castes and tribes of various parts of India. The Anthropological Society of Bombay (1886) published the first journal, and many anthropological studies were initiated. Anthropologists were posted in different parts of the country, which produced knowledge on local societies and cultures to acquaint the colonial government to facilitate the smooth functioning and implementation of laws.

Scholars like Herbert Risley, S.C. Roy, L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer, started publishing ethnographic works on the different communities in India. H. H. Risley, in 1891 published his famous work *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*.

The Constructive phase (1920-1949)

A full-fledged Department of Anthropology was established at Calcutta University in 1920. L.K. Anantha Krishan Iyer, who joined the University, published Monographs on *Tribe and Caste of Ernakulam*. He also wrote and presented a paper on *Marriage Customs of the Cochin State* and *Nambuthari Brahmins of Malabar* at Indian Science Congress in 1914. S.C. Roy was the first Indian ethnographer who worked among the tribal population of

Chhotanagpur and produced a Monograph *Munda and their Country* in 1912. In 1921 under the editorship of S. C. Roy, the print journal *Man in India* was started. Many Indian anthropologists like D. N. Majumdar, M Chattopadhyay, I. Karve and T. C. Das wrote on social institutions. Their works gave the necessary impetus to social anthropology in India. *The Changing Hoof* by D.N. Majumdar, *Marriage and Family in Mysore(1942)* by M. N. Srinivas and *Hindu Methods of Tribal Absorption(1941)* of N. K. Bose were significant works that were produced that are still popular among anthropology students. Many anthropologists like G S Ghurye were educated abroad who later contributed substantially to the discipline.

Many foreign scholars like Verrier Elwin and Christopher Von Fuhrer-Haimendorf contributed to studies on Indian tribes. Verrier Elwin's works among the tribes of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa made him produce some famous works, namely *The Baiga* (1939), *The Agaria* (1943) and *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947). Haimendorf, who was an Austrian ethnologist, spent nearly four decades in India and wrote and produced some famous ethnographies, namely *The Chenchus: Jungle folk of Deccan* (1943); *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad; Myth and Ritual* (1948); *The Reddis of the Bison Hills: A study of Acculturation* (1945). These ethnographic studies are popular among anthropologists and sociologists.

After independence, during the Analytical phase (1950-1990), many Indian scholars collaborated with foreign scholars like Oscar Lewis, Morris Opler, F G Bailey, McKim Marriott, Gerald D Berreman and David Mandelbaum and did fieldwork on Indian villages. A shift was seen as the emphasis shifted from descriptive tribal studies to analytical studies on village and caste studies. A large number of monographs were published on village studies both by Indian and foreign scholars. L P Vidyarthi, S C Dube, D N Majumdar, M N Srinivas, B K Roy Burman, G S Ghurye, N K Bose, T N Madan, Iravati Karve are some Indian scholars who made significant contributions to village and community studies. A large number of village study monographs were published in the 1960s through the Census of India 1961. These studies generated new ideas and concepts that provided a baseline for future studies. For instance, L P Vidyathi's famous work *The Sacred Complex of Hindu Gaya* in 1961, gave the concept of *sacred complex*. In his research in the famous Hindu religious pilgrimage spot of Bihar called Gaya- the place provided a meeting place of different people and traditions, of different castes and sects and different classes. The sacred geography, a set of sacred performances and a group of sacred specialists together constituted the *sacred complex*. These concepts became very popular in studying the traditional pilgrimage and religious places of the simple societies in India.

Likewise, M N Srinivas famous book *Social Change in Modern India* 1966 developed the *Sanskritization* concept. The concept explained how the low caste or tribe takes over the customs, rituals, ideology and style of life of higher caste i.e., people of lower caste imitate the people of upper or twice (*dwij*) born caste to improve their economic and political position in the society. He gave the example of the Chamars of Uttar Pradesh, the Ramgharias of Punjab, the Oraons of Bihar, the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh

and the Bhils of Rajasthan. He stated that they all tried to *sanskritize* their way of life.

The current evaluative phase, i.e., 1990 onwards, has led to the development of Indian anthropology with emerging new sub-fields like Medical Anthropology, Business Anthropology, Environmental Anthropology, Gender Anthropology, Psychological Anthropology and Tourism anthropology. Below is the description of some ethnographers and their studies that form most of the colonial ethnographies. Though the list is not complete, every student in anthropology and sociology should be aware of these scholars and their work from the colonial era.

Check your Progress I

1. Write a short note on the development of social sciences during the British period

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2. State the different phases in which the growth of anthropology in India is divided.

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2.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY IN COLONIAL INDIA: SOME FAMOUS PEOPLE AND THEIR WORKS

2.3.1 Herbert Risley (1851-1911)

Risley was colonial India's leading anthropologist who was elected as the President of the Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) in 1910. He was an 'official anthropologist' as his work was mainly taken on behalf of the government. He, along with William Crooke (1848-1923) and Sir Denzil Ibbetson (1847-1908), developed Indian ethnography and anthropology in the late Victorian period (Fuller, 2017;1). The purpose of official anthropology was to contribute to scientific knowledge and strengthen and improve British rule (ibid;2). The Indian society, as seen by the Britishers, was a 'traditional' society- an antithetical 'other' of modern European society. The society was made up of separate religious communities; castes were a distinct social group with the tribal population at the periphery. The systematic anthropology of India developed with the decennial censuses, which started in 1871-72 and these pioneers directed the census surveys over the next few decades. The various censuses done during that period gave a theoretical argument that the caste system was a product of the evolution of the division of labour. For instance, at the 1881 census, Ibbetson was the

superintendent for Punjab and classified castes based on their occupation in his ethnographic survey of Punjabi castes and tribes. Caste, as a single most important trope for colonial Indian society is also documented in Rilsey's classic work *The People of India.* Risley had earlier published a multivolume work, *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal,* in 1891. In 1901, he became the Census Commissioner of India for the 1901 census and collected the data on Indian castes and tribes. And later wrote *The People of India* (along with E A Gait), an expanded version of the commissioner's report on the 1901 census. Here he summarized his views on the origin and classification of the Indian races based on his historical speculations and anthropometric research. His contemporaries and subsequent writers criticized Risley for emphasizing the racial basis of caste and stressing anthropometric measurements.

William Crooke suggested that occupational criteria provided a much more comprehensive index for understanding caste systems than race. Another famous scholar, Edgar Thurston, the Director of the Madras Museum between 1885 and 1908, shared common enthusiasm on anthropometry as Risley and collected physical/biological data about the castes and tribes of India. He published a seven-volume work, The *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (1907), which mentioned more than three hundred caste groups listed in alphabetical order. Salient ethnographic features on each group- their origin stories, descriptions of kinship structure, marriage and funerary rituals, occupational profiles, material culture, and anthropometric measurements. The text was designed as an easy reference work for colonial administrators, police and revenue officers, district magistrates and army recruiters (Dirks,1992;70). These decennial censuses played the most crucial institutional role not only in providing the facts but also in installing caste as the fundamental unit of India's social structure (Dirks,2012;49).

2.3.2 Christoph Von-Fuhrer Haimendorf (1909- 1995)

Christopher Von Haimendorf was an Austrian ethnologist who spent four decades in India and did extensive fieldwork to collect data on the social and cultural life of tribal communities. Initially, he worked in the Naga Hills and published a travelogue titled *The Naked Nagas* in 1938. He later studied the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh, a hunting-gathering community. He described their social life and enumerated their problems in his book *The Chenchus: Jungle Folk of Deccan* (1943). In his other work, *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad: Myth and Ritual* (1948), he enumerated their problems, recommended welfare measures, and suggested separate development programmes. Later he made an extensive study on the Apatanis of Arunachal Pradesh and found them well educated and was impressed by their stage of development. Thus, based on his experience in the study of the tribes of India, he proposed the idea of Isolationism. He argued that since the Apatanis, who were isolated as they lived in difficult terrain, could not be contacted, they have developed better than many tribes who have come in contact with the people from the mainland. He suggested that the state should prevent or control their interaction with the outsiders and proposed that the tribes be left alone and allowed to develop independently. The main problem faced by the tribals was that their rights on the forests were curtailed, which had upset their

economic life. The new 'voortrekkers' snatched their lands, and the people from plains were disrupting the tribal life (Haimendorf,1985;326). He has also worked on tribes of Nepal and retired as a Professor from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He is well known for his detailed ethnographies and contributions to anthropology.

2.3.3 G S Ghurye (1893-1984)

G S Ghurye was the most influential Indian academic to write about Indian sociology during the colonial period and even after. He did his Ph.D. at Cambridge in social anthropology under the supervision of W HR Rivers and A. C. Haddon. He later became the head of the Department of Sociology at Bombay University in 1924. His famous work *Caste and Race in India* was first published in 1932. It outlined six significant features of the caste system: the segmental division of society, hierarchy, restrictions of feeding and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, lack of choice of occupations and restrictions of marriage (Dirks,2012; 246). Ghurye, having surveyed the literary sources, was also concerned to evaluate the claims of Risley about the racial origins of the caste and the use of anthropometric methods and data. He was also critical of Risley's views on the racial origin of caste. He also criticized that the colonial government's passion for labels and pigeonholes has led to the crystallization of the caste system, which was initially very fluid under indigenous rule (ibid, 248).

2.3.4 Verrier Elwin (1902-1964)

Verrier Elwin, a Christian missionary turned anthropologist (without anthropological training), mainly did his fieldwork because he was concerned about the plight of the aboriginals who were dispossessed of their land and were exploited (Haimendorf, 1964;174). He spent nearly three decades doing anthropological studies of Indian tribesmen and is well known for his works among the Baigas and Gonds of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh in Central India. He also worked on the tribes of Northeast states, especially North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA). In 1932, he started his social work among the Gond tribals. He produced substantial ethnographic data and was one of the most prolific writers. Elwin wrote about tribal art and culture, their music and dance, their dresses and ornaments, and their beliefs and values, which he thought would disappear under the influence of Hinduism and Christianity. Through his books, pamphlets, newspapers and magazine articles, he made the national leaders aware of the tribal situation and also made the tribal aware of their rights. In a way, his work was instrumental for tribal welfare and influenced policymakers. Elwin's extensive work influenced national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, who have acknowledged his knowledge about the Indian tribes. In 1945 he served as the Deputy Director of the Anthropological Survey of India. Later, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru appointed him as an advisor on tribal affairs for north eastern India. His famous works are: *The Agaria*(1943);*The Aboriginals; The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947). In his book *The Muria and their Ghotul*, among the Murias of Bastar, he studied the important role the youth dormitories had and were an indispensable part of the tribal society. These dormitories initiated the youth into sexual activity and also

trained them in various social activities. It was Elwin who proposed that the tribes should be left alone and allowed to develop in isolation away from the mainstream.

In contrast, Ghurye believed that tribals should be completely assimilated in the mainstream. But later Government of India under the leadership of Nehru set out the Panchsheel Document (which was also aided by Elwin) laid a middle path. It was proposed that tribal land and forest rights be protected and allowed to develop on their own. Their social and cultural institutions should be respected and no over-administration of tribal areas should be done.

2.3.5 D N Majumdar (1903-1960)

Professor Dhirendra Nath Majumdar, an anthropologist par excellence, was born in 1903 at Patna. He did his masters in anthropology from Calcutta University in 1924 and taught at Lucknow University in 1928. He conducted his fieldwork in the Chotanagpur region and later went on to Cambridge to complete his Ph.D. under professor T.C.Hodson . He selected the tribe Ho in the Kolhan region of Chotanagpur for his fieldwork. In his research he found that the external pressures were influencing the Hos. But he disagreed with either of the approaches of assimilating them with the mainstream or isolating them from the mainstream. He was of the view that tribes should be integrated into Indian society. His PhD was published as a book, titled *A Tribe in Transition: A Study in Culture Pattern* (1937), which is regarded as a first scientific study of the impact of modern civilization on tribal people.

He also gave lecture invited lectures at Cambridge and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland in 1936. He was also involved in the decennial census operations of 1941, carrying out anthropological surveys in the United Provinces (now Uttar Pradesh). Majumdar also studied the Khasas of Jaunsar-Bawar in the Himalayas and the Korwas and the Tharus of Uttar Pradesh and extended his studies from tribes to caste to urban societies. Some of his famous works are:

Races and Cultures of India (1944);

*Caste and Communication in an Indian Village (*1958) and

Himalayan Polyandry (1962) which was published posthumously.

Thus, it is observed that by the 1950s a large number of Western and Indian scholars were involved in village studies. D N Majumdar, M N Srinivas, Kathleen Gough, Pauline Kolenda Oscar Lewis and McKim Marriott produced books on village studies. Village studied took up the issue of caste, religion, kinship, marriage & family, peasant life and agrarian studies.

2.3.6 John Henry Hutton(1885-1968)

John Henry Hutton was the son of a Church of England clergyman. He was born on 27 June 1885 at West Heslerton, then in the East Riding of Yorkshire and now in North Yorkshire. Dr. Hutton has made a special study of the ethnography of the Nagas of Assam. Not only is he himself the author of two of the volumes in the series of monographs published under the auspices of the Government of Assam, one dealing with the Angami Nagas (1921) and the other with the Sema Nagas (1922), as well as a contributor

of numerous papers on Naga culture to scientific periodicals, but he has also so stimulated and organized the researches of his colleagues that the hill tribes of Assam are now as well, or even better known to anthropological science than any other comparable population of India. When Dr. Hutton was seconded under the Government of India to take charge of the Census of India, 1931, it was generally felt that no more suitable selection could have been made. His introduction to the Report marked him as no unworthy successor to the late Sir Herbert Risley. However much opinions may differ as to the validity of the conclusions on the racial history of India at which Dr. Hutton arrived in that remarkable document, it cannot be denied that he has shown a notable breadth of out look in grasping the essentials of his problem in their archaeological and historical perspective, combined with a detailed knowledge of the multifarious facts, which is without rival in the Indian field.

2.4 POST 1960s

In the late 1950s and 1960s, there was a sharp increase in the popularity of the two disciplines; there were more teaching posts in universities and colleges and the planned development charted for new independent India, demanded the development of social sciences (Srinivas&Panini;197). The census organization, which expanded its activity in independent India, needed sociologists, anthropologists, and social scientists (ibid. 198). The rapid transformation in Indian society post-independence also saw a shift in scholarship and ethnographic works that were now carried out. The analytical phase saw a shift from descriptive studies, which were single village studies. Many of these studies lack an emphasis on both institutional (rural-urban, peasant-elite, and caste -class) and conceptual (historical and political economy) linkages and led to the emergence of a movement towards the Indigenization of culture concepts (Gupta &Kedia, 2004;231). The growing influence of the Functionalist and structure-functionalist paradigm emphasized empirical fieldwork, systematic analysis and attention to theory. Yet, most studies remained descriptive and did not yield substantial methodological and theoretical innovations (Kolenda, 1985).

By mid of the 20th century, scholars like M N Srinivas brought structural-functional influence to the Indian work. His work on *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India* (1952) is an example. In this work. Srinivas shows close interconnections between religious institutions, family and kinship and the laws of inheritance and succession. Iravati Karve's *Hindu Kinship System* (1953) extended the functional paradigm and linked kinship and marriage with the caste system. Another work which was influenced by structure-functionalist paradigm was F G Bailey's *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (1971). Other scholars like S C Dube and D N Majumdar were exploring the nature and functions of the caste to understand the social structure of Indian villages. With the advent of community development programmes in India, many ethnographies like Majumdar's work on *Himalayan Polyandry* (1963) focused on the impacts of community development programmes on the Khasa tribal community in the Himalayas. Other noted scholar Louis Dumont worked within the structuralism model, embraced a cognitive-historical approach and published *Homo Hierarchicus*

(1970) and offered a cognitive and ideological structure of the Indian social system (Kedia &;233). A number of ethnographies were also written about the position of women in Indian society. Scholars like Susan Seymour and Patricia Caplan described the roles of women in the family. Caplan (1985) in *Class and Gender in India: Women and Their Organizations in a South Indian City* noted the relationship of gender to the formation and reproduction of class in capitalist societies using the example of upper-class women's voluntary social welfare organizations in Madras. Another noted work by Susan Wadley *Struggling with Destiny* (1994) captures the life stories of Karimpur respondents. It examines lives, feelings, images of Gods and Goddesses, negotiations with struggles, and women's role in the family and their health. Another theme that emerged was women's adjustment to the economic change, including gendered division of labour, modernization, economic development and urbanization. Seymour (2000) in *Women, Family and Child Care in India: A World in Transition* examined the impact of increased education and delayed marriage age on women's roles in the family.

Subaltern studies became a recent trend led by Ramchandra Guha, Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and others in the 1980s. They reinterpreted the colonial history of India, thereby providing a canvas for post-colonial anthropology. Anthropologists today are trying to reformulate their ideas about ethnographic practices and the construction of cultural concepts. Given the historical circumstances, anthropology and sociology and ethnographic writings have been immensely contributed by native scholars, native scholars trained abroad and western scholars. The Indian ethnographic practice thus has to be situated in the context of colonial and post-colonial history and politics. The local and global forces of globalization are another feature that must be taken care of. The new knowledge must be produced while being sensitive to historical and political-economic details. Given the extensive cultural diversity, India always has and will always provide immense potential for classic ethnographies.

Check your progress II

1. Discuss contributions of famous scholars during the colonial period.

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2. What are the new areas of research in anthropology?

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2.5 LET US SUM UP

The colonial period saw the development and rise of social sciences, particularly anthropology and sociology. The initial stages of the British rule required data on the people they colonized. Thus began the collection of detailed analyses of the culture and society of the people they ruled. The

colonizers wanted data on the local political, economic, and social systems to understand the people they ruled. Anthropologists from England came to India and collected data on the Indian populations and prepared monographs on them. The second half of the 19th century saw a substantial number of monographs on the tribal and other communities by British administrators and anthropologists.

Along with these, a small number of Indian anthropologists primarily trained in foreign universities in the US and UK were also involved in intensive fieldwork and wrote on the caste system, tribal communities and Indian villages. By the beginning of the 20th century, many Indian anthropologists had directed setting up Anthropology and Sociology departments in the country. Such Indian anthropologists wrote about the cultures they grew up in. The gradual shift has been witnessed in the kind of ethnographic studies that have been initiated over the decades. Moving from descriptive to evaluative and analytical studies, the Indian canvas of anthropology, though brought up under the dominant influence of the colonial regime, has shown immense potential for classic ethnographies. A move towards reflexive studies is promising for Anthropology.

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2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1.   Systematic attempts undertaken by British officials, missionaries and scholars to document the colonized. In 1871, the British officials launched the first All India Census to collect information about Indian society. In 1901, Sir Herbert Risley conducted an ethnographic survey

of India. Since then, the census data has been an invaluable source of information giving demographic details and useful information for social and cultural analysis. Indological studies involving studies on religious practices, customs and laws also gained a stimulus because of the efforts made by British scholars and officials. Sir William Jones, a British Orientalist, established the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1787. The society published a journal devoted to anthropological interests.

2. a) The Constructive phase

    b) Analytical Phase

    c) Evaluative Phase

Check your progress 2

1. a) **Herbert Risley-** He, along with William Crooke (1848-1923) and Sir Denzil Ibbetson (1847-1908), developed Indian ethnography and anthropology in the late Victorian period (Fuller, 2017;1). The purpose of official anthropology was to contribute to scientific knowledge and strengthen and improve British rule (ibid;2). The Indian society, as seen by the Britishers, was a 'traditional' society- an antithetical 'other' of modern European society. The society was made up of separate religious communities; castes were a distinct social group with the tribal population at the periphery. The systematic anthropology of India developed with the decennial censuses, which started in 1871-72 and these pioneers directed the census surveys over the next few decades.

    b) **Christoph Von-Fuhrer Haimendorf-** Christopher Von Haimendorf was an Austrian ethnologist who spent four decades in India and did extensive fieldwork to collect data on the social and cultural life of tribal communities. Initially, he worked in the Naga Hills and published a travelogue titled *The Naked Nagas* in 1938. Based on his experience in the study of the tribes of India, he proposed the idea of Isolationism. He is well known for his detailed ethnographies and contributions to anthropology.

    c) **G S Ghurye-** His famous work *Caste and Race in India* was first published in 1932. It outlined six significant features of the caste system: the segmental division of society, hierarchy, restrictions of feeding and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections, lack of choice of occupations and restrictions of marriage (Dirks,2012; 246). He criticized the colonial government's passion for labels and pigeonholes has led to the crystallization of the caste system, which was initially very fluid under indigenous rule

    d) **Verrier Elwin-** He spent nearly three decades doing anthropological studies of Indian tribesmen and is well known for his works among the Baigas and Gonds of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh in Central India. He also worked on the tribes

of Northeast states, especially North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA).

e) **D N Majumdar -**He was of the view that tribes should be integrated into Indian society. His PhD was published as a book, titled *A Tribe in Transition: A Study in Culture Pattern* (1937), which is regarded as a first scientific study of the impact of modern civilization on tribal people.

2. Anthropologists today are trying to reformulate their ideas about ethnographic practices and the construction of cultural concepts. Given the historical circumstances, anthropology and sociology and ethnographic writings have been immensely contributed by native scholars, native scholars trained abroad and western scholars. The Indian ethnographic practice thus has to be situated in the context of colonial and post-colonial history and politics. The local and global forces of globalization are another feature that must be taken care of.

UNIT 3: CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY*

Structure

3.0   Objectives

3.1   Introduction

3.2   Understanding Ethnography

3.3   Classical Ethnography: Key Signposts

   3.3.1   *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) by Bronisław Malinowski

   3.3.2   *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown

   3.3.3   *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) by Margaret Mead

   3.3.4   *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) by E.E. Evans - Pritchard

3.4   Classical Ethnography: Moving 'ahead'

3.5   Let us Sum Up

3.6   References

3.7   Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- describe the distinctive characteristics of the classical ethnography

- discuss the classical ethnography in social research;

- explain the classical ethnography as mode of data collection;

- discuss major signposts of classical ethnography; and

- describe the new kind of ethnography of 'contemporary' times

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Malinowski, the aim of ethnography is 'to grasp the native's point of view ... to realize his vision of the world' (1922: 25). At a rudimentary level, ethnography consists of two words; 'ethno' meaning the people and 'graphy' which can be understood as picturesque description of the people (in terms of group, community and/ or society). According to the Oxford Reference, ethnography is the 'scientific study of customs, habits, and behavior of specified groups of people, usually applied to tribes or clans of people in nonliterate societies' whereas for Merriam-Webster, it is the 'study and systematic recording of human cultures also; a descriptive work produced from such research'. Seen in this way, ethnography is a detailed and exhaustive descriptive analysis of any community's or society's holistic existence wherein both the Emic ('ingroup') and Etic ('outgroup') perspectives are important. As far as the disciplinary antecedents of the term ethnography is concerned, it primarily originated within the conceptual and theoretical domains of Anthropology and more particularly social (British

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*   Written by Dr. Sumit Saurabh Srivastava, CDS, University of Allahabad

usage) and cultural (American usage) anthropology. In this context, Geertz has rightly pointed out that "In anthropology, or anyway social anthropology, what the practioners do is ethnography. And it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly what doing ethnography is, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge" (1973: 5-6). Though, it is beyond the scope of the Unit, yet it is pertinent to note that anthropology has been many a times accused of being the 'handiwork of the Euro-centric colonialism' and 'ethnography (classical) being the study of 'Other' i.e. 'exotic society' (Clifford 1983: 118-146). Furthermore, it has been argued that classical/ colonial anthropology thrived on the exotic ethnographic accounts of the 'primitive' societies (Lewis 1973: 581-602). However, to arrive at such a definitive conclusion of such academic endeavour is beyond the scope of the present unit.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING AND DEFINING ETHNOGRAPHY (CLASSICAL)

Before one proceeds to define the term ethnography, it needs to be underlined that the discipline of Anthropology and the practice of ethnography evolved hand in hand. For instance, the anthropological ethnographic investigation/ study of the Iroquois people by L.H. Morgan published as *Systems of consanguinity and affinity of the human family* (1871); study of the Kwakiutl society on the Pacific Northwest coast during 1885 and 1930 by Franz Boas to understand the social dynamics of the potlatch ceremony among them published as *The Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians* (1897), *Ethnology of the Kwakiutl* (1921) and *Kwakiutl Culture as Reflected in Mythology* (1935); *Patterns of Culture* (1934) by Ruth Benedict, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) by Margaret Mead, *We, the Tikopia: a sociological study of kinship in primitive Polynesia* (1936) by Raymond Firth based on a year-long 'in-person' study in Tikopia among other similar texts are considered to be signposts not only of the classical ethnography but are also seen as 'stepping stones' of anthropology as a discipline. Needless to say, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) by Bronisław Malinowski and *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown revolutionised the 'field' altogether.

In one of the most comprehensive understanding of ethnography both in terms of definition and its method is outlined by Levi-Strauss for whom "ethnography ….. corresponds to the first stages in research - observation and description, field work. The typical ethnographical study consists of a monograph dealing with a social group small enough for the author to be able to collect most of his material by personal observation. Ethnography also includes the methods and techniques connected with field work, with the classification, description, and analysis of particular cultural phenomena" (1963: 354-355). According to Hammersley, "For most anthropologists, from the early twentieth century, ethnography involved actually living in the communities of the people being studied, more or less round the clock, participating in their activities to one degree or another as well as interviewing them, collecting genealogies, drawing maps of the locale, collecting artefacts, and so on" (2006: 4). Similarly, for the American

Anthropological Association, "Ethnography involves the researcher's study of human behavior in the natural settings in which people live" (2004). Thus, it becomes clear that ethnography involves both participant and non-participant observation, informal and semi−structured interviewing along with a degree of 'empathy' among the ethnographer and his/ her 'respondents/ informants'.

Check Your Progress I

i)   According to the ……………, ethnography is the 'scientific study of customs, habits, and behavior of specified groups of people, usually applied to tribes or clans of people in nonliterate societies'

ii)   Ethnography involves both participant and (a) …………………… observation, informal and semi-structured interviewing along with a degree of (b) ……………

3.3 CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: KEY SIGNPOSTS

In its definitional aspect, it is in the process of locating classical ethnography within the social science research, it becomes clear that ethnography (classical) is a qualitative research methodology wherein the researcher / investigator 'observes' a social setting/ location in person ('fieldwork') so as to provide 'thick' descriptions of a group, society, or organization. Such a process of sociological & anthropological inquiry crisscrosses with terms like 'field (work) diary' and 'field (work) notes' alike. According to Atkinson et al. 'the ethnographic traditions ..... are grounded in a commitment to the first-hand experience and exploration of a particular social or cultural setting on the basis of (though not exclusively by) participant observation' (2001: 4). In this way, fieldwork has been an essential mode of inquiry pertaining to data collection in ethnography (both classical and contemporary). As the unit will progress further, student/s will get to know how Malinowski in a way pioneered the term 'fieldwork' in his anthropological explorations of the Trobriand Islanders while studying the Kula 'ring'. Furthermore, participant observation (participating in activities during observations) is a key to the practice of anthropology in general and ethnography in particular. Nearly all the classical ethnographers and their respective ethnographies have a detailed account of the 'native' society's cultural practices which were 'witnessed in person' by the ethnographer him/herself. The key is to understand the 'inherent' meaning of any ritual or practice of the 'native' so as to arrive at a holistic interpretation of the same. At this juncture, it's very crucial to heed what O'Reilly has to say; 'The term "fieldwork" is often confused with participant observation and ethnography, as if they were all one and the same thing. To be clear: *ethnography* is a methodology, *participant observation* is a method, and *fieldwork* refers to the period of primary data collection that is conducted out of the office or library' (2009: 2).

3.3.1 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) by Bronisław Malinowski

With a Preface by James George Frazer, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of*

Melanesian New Guinea (1922) by Polish-British anthropologist Bronisław Kasper Malinowski is considered to be not only the classic text in anthropology but also the foundation on which the troika of ethnography i.e. fieldwork, participant observation and learning of the local/ native language/ dialect by the ethnographer have been formulated. His 'forced' two years long-term intensive fieldwork in 1915-16 and 1917-18 in the Trobriand Islands off the east coast of New Guinea in a way 'reconfigured' anthropological research method. He was fascinated by the 'Kula' which he saw as the circulating exchange/ trading system of valuables in the Archipelagoes of Eastern New Guinea wherein the 'primitive native' people stripped the commodity of its materialistic 'value' and treated it as a symbol of exchange fostering kinship and group ties. Elaborating upon the basics of the ethnographic research and three foundation stones of fieldwork, Malinowski stated that 'the student must possess real scientific aims, and know the values and criteria of modern ethnography. Secondly, to live without other white men, right among the natives. Finally, he has to apply a number of special methods of collecting, manipulating and fixing his evidence' (1922: 6). Furthermore, underlining the significance of participant observation, he noted that '… with the capacity of enjoying their company and sharing some of their games and amusements, I began to feel that I was indeed in touch with the natives, and this is certainly the preliminary condition of being able to carry on successful field work' (ibid.: 8). *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (Malinowski 1967/ 1989) is another classic masterpiece which outlined the day-to-day fieldwork travails. While writing its Introduction in 1989, Firth noted that 'One of Malinowski's outstanding contributions to the development of social anthropology was the introduction of much more intensive and much more sophisticated methods of field research than had previously been current in his subject. (ibid.: xiii-xiv). Though Malinowski's Diary has its fair share of critical analysis (Geertz 1983: 55-59), yet as Murdock has noted that 'The average quality of anthropological field work and ethnographic reporting has risen appreciably as a consequence of Malinowski's influence' (1943: 444).

3.3.2 *The Andaman Islanders* (1922) by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown

The Andaman Islanders: A Study in Social Anthropology (1922) by A.R. Radcliffe-Brown was the result of anthropological research carried out in the Andaman Islands during the years 1906 to 1908 so as to understand social institutions of the tribes of the Great Andaman. In the process of the study, he looked into the integrative function of an institution and while studying the social organization of the tribe's social organization, he outlined two main division termed as the Great Andaman Group and the Little Andaman Group having their own distinctive elements (ibid.: 11). It is only in the Chapter V titled 'Customs and Beliefs: Ceremonial' that one comes across the significance of ethnography as outlined by Radcliffe-Brown. For him, 'Living, as he must, in daily contact with the people he is studying, the field ethnologist comes gradually to "understand" them, if we may use the term. The better the observer the more accurate will be his general impression of the mental peculiarities of the race' (ibid.: 231). How Radcliffe-Brown understood ethnography and outlined its significance in

the overall discipline of ethnology / anthropology, I quote: 'The most urgent need of ethnology at the present time is ….. in which the observation and the analysis and interpretation of the institutions of some one primitive people are carried on together by the ethnologist working in the field' (ibid.: 232).

3.3.3 *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928) by Margaret Mead

Intrigued by the issues bordering to the culture and personality school "such as rebellion against authority, philosophical perplexities, the flowering of idealism, conflict and struggle - ascribed to a period of physical development" (1928: 5), *Coming of age in Samoa: a psychological study of primitive youth for western civilisation* (1928) by Margaret Mead attempted to answer "Were these difficulties due to being adolescent or to being adolescent in America ?" (ibid.: 5). To look for such answers she went to Samoa, a South Sea Island about thirteen degrees from the Equator, inhabited by a 'brown' Polynesian people and chose to concentrate upon the adolescent girl in Samoa (more particularly fifty girls in three small neighbouring villages on the coast of the little island of Tau, in the Manu's Archipelago). In the course of her investigative and ethnographic explorations attempting to underline unique cultural patterns, Mead 'tried to present to the reader the Samoan girl in her social setting, to describe the course of her life from birth until death' (ibid.: 12). Elaborating upon her method of study during the nine months which she spent in Samoa, this is what she had to say: 'I concentrated upon the girls of the community. I spent the greater part of my time with them. I spent more time in the games of children than in the councils of their elders. Speaking their language, eating their food, sitting barefoot and crosslegged upon the pebbly floor, I did my best to minimise the differences between us...' (ibid.: 10). Towards the end of the study, she concluded that 'adolescence is not necessarily a time of stress and strain, but that cultural conditions make it so' (ibid.: 234).

3.3.4 *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande* (1937) by E.E. Evans-Pritchard

E.E. Evans-Pritchard's ethnographic explorations are based on the fieldwork he did among the Zande and Nuer of now South Sudan. The former in particular were a central African people who live in the former colonial territories of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, French Equatorial Africa, and the Belgian Cong. Subsequently these findings were published as *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (1937) and *The Nuer* (1940) which made him a celebrated anthropologist with rigour and outstanding observational skills. Over a period of time his cumulative writings made him an authoritative figure in terms of African culture/ cultural system. *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic Among the Azande* (1937) is based on fieldwork conducted in Sudan in the 1920s and 1930s and is considered to be one of the classic texts of social anthropology. According to Evans-Pritchard, "Azande believe that some people are witches and can injure them in virtue of an inherent quality. A witch performs no rite, utters no spell, and possesses no medicines. An act of witchcraft is a psychic act. They believe also that sorcerers may do them ill by performing magic rites with bad medicines. Azande distinguish clearly between witches and sorcerers. Against both they employ diviners, oracles, and medicines. The relations between these beliefs and rites are the subject of this book"

(1976: 1). Significantly, the entire social life of the Azande revolves around witchcraft which is often associated with the 'cause' of their misfortune. In general, the Azande people, when they fell sick, they consult the 'witch-doctors' as one of their many oracles in the community who is both diviner and magician. Evans-Pritchard underlines that "By oracles they can foresee future dispositions of witchcraft and change them before they develop. By magic they can guard themselves against witchcraft and destroy it" (ibid.: 65-66).

It is in the 'Appendix IV Some Reminiscences and Reflections on Fieldwork' (ibid.: 240-254) of the book that Evans-Pritchard has flagged key issues pertaining to ethnographic anthropological fieldwork explorations in a concise manner. One of the issues relate to the extent /period of fieldwork to which Evans-Pritchard is of the view that it should be a minimum of two years with a break in a while so as to ponder upon the findings in between. Second issue is regarding what anthropologists have been talking about is participant-observation and its context; "By this they mean that in so far as it is both possible and convenient they live the life of the people among whom they are doing their research" (ibid.: 243). However, Evans-Pritchard has its own set of apprehensions regarding the same as it is very difficult for a person to transform into the 'native' within two years of research. For him, what best scenario can be achieved by the anthropologist is that "one lives in two different worlds of thought at the same time, in categories and concepts and values which often cannot easily be reconciled. One becomes, at least temporarily, a sort of double marginal man, alienated from both worlds" (ibid.: 243). Just to take a detour, while writing on the nature of anthropological understanding from the 'native's point of view', Geertz also is of the view that "'The trick is not to get yourself into some inner correspondence of spirit with your informant. The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to' (1983: 58). Furthermore, learning the language of the 'native' and subsequently conversing in the same with them is a first most requirement of a conducive ethnographic fieldwork. It was during the study of the Azande, as Evans-Pritchard informs us that he struggled very hard to make sense of the Azande language and was equally strained to write/ script it down so as to make sense of the daily social lives of the Azande. One of the profound issues regarding ethnographic fieldwork which has been raised by Evans-Pritchard which still rings true to its account is about the nature, context and 'validity' of the 'reflexivity' i.e. "transformed by the people they are making a study of" (ibid.: 245) in/ during the fieldwork. He after due deliberation affirms that "learnt from African 'primitives' much more than they learnt from me" (ibid.: 245).

Check Your Progress II

1. Differentiate between the following terms:

    Ethnography, Participant Observation and Field Work. Use three lines for your answer.

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3.4 CLASSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY: MOVING 'AHEAD'

Over a period of time, one comes face to face with the 'break' from the Classical to a Contemporary mode of ethnographic travails. With the emergence and subsequent widespread of audio-visual techniques and media earlier and new digital technology of the present has transformed classical ethnography. At the same time 'multi-sited' ethnography has been also making its mark. However, before one moves ahead in this direction, it is pertinent to have an informed conceptual discussion on what Clifford Geertz calls as 'thick description', a notion he, in his own admission, borrowed from Gilbert Ryle. For Geertz, "The ethnographer 'inscribes' social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted" (1973: 19). His understandings on the interpretation of the meaning of Balinese Cockfights have immensely added to what he meant by 'thick description' via seeing culture as a text.

3.5 LET US SUM UP

The objective of the Unit was to understand classical ethnography and its specificities. In the process of doing so, it was grounded on some of the key classical ethnographic texts authored by those anthropologists (& ethnologists) who in a way have made a paradigmatic contribution to ethnography. These texts included those authored by Bronisław Malinowski, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, Margaret Mead and E.E. Evans-Pritchard. It however does not mean that such an enumeration is exhaustive. It emerged from their writings that classical ethnography and the contemporary ethnography do share certain features and characteristics which are central to the practice of the same. It became clear to us that classical ethnography has been a holistic approach to the study of cultural systems primarily of the 'primitive' & 'pre-literate' societies. As the ethnographer is from the 'outside', he/ she has to make an attempt to understand and decipher the meanings within cultural systems. In doing so, it becomes clear that conducting 'fieldwork' is essential to classical ethnography. Associated with it is the requirement of the daily and continuous recording of fieldnotes/ field diary. It also emerged that if Malinowski has been credited with 'rediscovering' the basic tenets of ethnographic fieldwork in terms of participant observation and learning of the 'natives' language system; Radcliffe-Brown is often seen as the one who ascribed the functional dimension to the constitutive cultural elements of any social organization. As a female anthropologist, Margaret Mead in her various writings have grappled with the 'methodological' issues of how the gendered identity of the researcher intersects with that of the field and the 'subjects' of the study. In a way she outlined that being a woman anthropologist, it was conducive for her to conduct ethnographic fieldwork having adolescent girls as her central theme. By and large, the same issue has been also taken up by none other than Evans-Pritchard who has vividly discussed how women and adolescent girls of his 'varied' ethnographic explorations have interacted with him. He notes that in certain cases he was

at liberty to do so and in other cases, he was closely watched by the male members of the society.

In nutshell, what is being attempted here is to have some sort of 'continuity' at the epistemological, pedagogical and 'practical' planes having classical ethnography on one hand and the contemporary ethnography on the other extreme. The central features of classical ethnography as reflected in what is to be understood as fieldwork and participant observation are still very important in the contemporary times. To what extent the researcher while engaging in an ethnographic account of a community or social unit be allowed to 'go native' so that he/ she can retain his/ her obligation/ duty to 'report back' and to submit the key findings of his/ her study is something we still have to resolve. Though the proponents of the classical ethnography argued for a 'fieldwork' of a considerable amount of time; most of them were vary of this issue. Added to it is another issue of the 'reflexive' nature of the ethnographic fieldwork itself. In the Durkheimian mode of reference, how to be objective if one has to totally immerse him/her self into the 'field' and the 'community' under study to grasp the hidden / inner meaning / logic of the social practice. How to be neutral in with regards to the 'illogical / immoral' entities present in the 'field' is something which impinges upon ethics of doing fieldwork. So as and when, Mead became aware of the subtle presence of attraction between opposite sexes leading to sometimes sexual 'deviance'; how to respond to it? Needless to say, classical ethnography and texts associated with this era/ period are classical not only in terms of chronology i.e. they happened to be written 'first'; rather they are classical because the basic tents of ethnography they founded at that point of time (and place) still reverberates across great distances and spans of 'present and contemporary' time.

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3.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1.   Oxford Reference

2.   (a)   non-participant

      (b)   Empathy

Check Your Progress II

1.   *Ethnography* is a methodology, *participant observation* is a method, and *fieldwork* refers to the period of primary data collection that is conducted out of the office or library'

UNIT 4: INDIAN ETHNOGRAPHY*

Structure

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will should able to:

- understand emergence of anthropology in India;
- understand contribution of Indian anthropologist; and
- understand different phases for the growth of Indian anthropology;

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethnography comes from the Greek words "Ethnos" which means people and from the word "Graphein" which means writing. For Wolcott (1999) ethnography can be defined as the "description of the customary social behaviours of an identifiable group of people". Ethnography uses the method of first hand written description of different cultures. In other words, it can be understood as the account which pulls together all the scattered pieces of data into a common thread and presents it as a whole. It is essentially a comparative study which looks at the questions about human existence from the point of view of a specific society and the cultural system that exists within it (Armstrong 2008). There are three critical questions that constantly reoccur when talking about ethnography in the context of self and other. These are; how do we know what we know, how do we assume to speak for someone else and finally who is it being addressed to? (*ibid*, 55) The way in which this information is presented in can take many forms, such as articles, journals, statistical data, documentaries, books to name a few.

Two words are considered as seminal in the field of ethnography in the arena of modern anthropology. These are the works by British anthropologist

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*   Dr. Ritika Gulyani, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Sociology, Miranda House, DU

Bronislaw Malinowski in the Trobrian Islands of Melanesia and by the American anthropologist Margaret Mead in Samoa.

4.2 MODERN ANTHROPOLOGY OF INDIA

The idea of a modern, secular India has its origins in the second half of the nineteenth century. There are three major areas which influenced the emergence of anthropology in India. The first of these were the colonial attempts by British India to understand the historical and ethnographic knowledge. Secondly, a lot of societies and journals were founded and materials were displayed in the museums. This was also a way in which the subject was able to enter as well as make a mark for itself in the university setup. Thirdly, the movement for an independent India was also a reaction to the increasing control that colonial rule was exerting on the Indian state and anthropology was one of the ways in which this was done (Berger & Heidemann 2013)

Before Independence, the anthropological work in India was majorly descriptive and encyclopaedic in nature and the idea was the creation of an image of India that was seen as an exotic culture that needed to be explored and discovered. It was only a few decades before independence, around the 1920s and 30s that the discipline of anthropology was able to break free from the administrative chains and studies took place in India now looked at the understanding of India from a different perspective. Post 1947, the discipline of modern anthropology developed as a separate field, wherein not just within the country but also at a global level it went through numerous changes with regards to its discourse, methodology, conceptual understanding and so on. Not just these, but even the field got expanded to other states and union territories of India and did not just confine itself to the unexplored, remote areas. The urban areas also started to be looked into as well as concepts such as religion, the economy, politics, understanding of the social system as well as understanding about other parts of the culture. This process led to the emergence of multiple ethnographies which were very detailed and were located in very specific areas.

The Indian anthropology post independence stated to get influenced by international debates in anthropology and had discussions on the social and symbolic values, on ideas and values and on the idea of resistance and as well as on the concepts of post colonialism. Various Indian concepts such as caste, untouchability, nationalism also developed further. The development of anthropology then was a result of Indology, archaeology and history and well as long discussion of cultural continuity as well as the evolving concepts of change spanning over several decades (Berger & Heidemann 2013). The ethnographies before the independence were mainly centered around the understanding of the tribal societies, while the concepts of caste and religion took precedence post 1947. In the years that followed independence, anthropologists conducted detailed ethnographic research in all parts of the country, even though not equal attention has been accorded to the different parts of the country. Additionally, during various decades, the anthropological discourse has been completely different depending in the surrounding factors. The focus on what is considered to be appropriate and worthy of study has undergone a lot of changes (Berger 2012)

4.3 CONTRIBUTION OF INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGIST

In the context of India, there are seven eminent Indian scholars who can be mentioned whose works have been instrumental to the birth and development of anthropology in India. These are S.C. Roy, G.S. Ghurye, N.K. Bose, D.N. Majumdar, L.R. Vidyarthi, Surajit Sinha and S.C. Dube. **S.C Roy** made the first attempt in 1921 to provide a bibliographical account of all the publication on tribes and caste till that time which was present in published magazines, compilation of handbooks and monographs on the tribes. **D.N.Majumdar** made an attempt similar to Roy in 1946, when he reviewed how anthropology had developed so far and how the condition of the study was under the British Administration. **G.S. Ghurye** in his article 'The Teaching of Sociology, Social psychology and Social anthropology' in 1956 mentioned how India had not managed to keep pace with the development that was happening in Europe and America, and while the British influence was still present, the understanding of American Social Anthropology was completely missing. **S.C. Dube** discussed a similar issue and in 1962, he highlighted the need for more refined techniques of methodology and research for the Indian Social Anthropology. In 1963, **N.K.Bose** came up with a booklet, "Fifty years of Sciences in India, Progress of Anthropology and Archaeology" in which he discussed the progress of anthropology in India with respect to prehistoric archaeology, cultural anthropology and physical anthropology. **L.P Vidyarthi** in 1964 referred to the emergence of a new trend in Indian anthropology which was the study of village, caste, religion, kinship, and the emergence of applied anthropology. **Surajit Sinha** in 1968 in a conference observed that the direction that the Indian anthropology was taking was not so much as imitation of the west, but rather to establish the Indian traditions in anthropology.

4.4 VARIOUS PHASES OF INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Vidhyarthi and Sinha divide the growth of Indian anthropology into four phases

4.4.1 The formative phase (1772-1919)

The establishment of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 under the leader ship of Sir William Zones is taken as a point where the scientific study of 'Nature and Man' in India began. The society published a number of journals which reflected the various tribes and cases of India and detailed the various customs followed. Books by ethnographers were published which were the foundation of the study.

Anthropology in colonial India was mostly undertaken by the government and in that sense, most people who undertook this work belonged to the Indian Civil Services. A few others were a part of the army, and some belonged to the medical, educational, police and other services. The study of anthropology in India began around the same time that the census of the country were being taken, i.e., around 1871-72. The idea of this dual

exercise was to contribute to the scientific knowledge around anthropology as well as to help improve the British rule. This exercise also reiterated the idea that the traditional society present in India was composed of a number of separate castes and religious communities, which formed the core of the society, along with tribes which existed on the periphery (Fuller 2017).

While the attempts to classify and give accounts of castes and tribes have been a part of the census data since the 1870s, the first attempt to provide a comprehensive anthropological data on castes and tribes was in the census of 1901, which was led by Risley. Due to these efforts, a lot of tribes who resided in the interior parts of the country were brought into focus. This continued even in 1911, so much so that both these census were largely considered as 'anthropological classics'. In a similar vein, the 1931 Census was a very important milestone in ethnological studies as it formed the basis of classification of the people of the sub-continent (P. Padmanabha 1978)

Two very important works that came out of that period was 'The tribes and castes of the North-Western Provinces and Oudh' by William Crooke and 'The tribes and castes of Bengal' by Sir Herbert Risley. In nineteenth century, the common belief among anthropologist in India was that people had descended either from the more 'advanced' Aryans or the more indigenous and primitive Dravidians. Risley in his work discusses how the division among the castes cannot only be explained by a division of labour, but rather how it was a hierarchical distinction between the fair skinned Aryans, who were at a higher pedestal and the dark skinned Dravidians, who were at the lower pedestal. His theory, also supported by the anthropometrical measurements, also revealed this distinction between the modern Indians, and his work among the Bengalis showed hoe some bodily characteristics, such as the shape of the nose, could be strongly associated with the social status. Crooke on the other hand included anthropomorphic data from the North Western Provinces to show that nasal indices varied only marginally among the castes and tribes and this it could not be taken as a basis of caste, which for him could only be found among occupation.

Both authors devoted a lot of their space in their work to the internal structure of how caste, tribe and marriage worked. In both of their handbooks, the terms 'caste', 'tribe' and 'race' have been used fairly interchangeably. Race was sometimes used to denote another term for people and sometimes to a particular group. The terms caste and tribe have also been used to describe the same group, which is indicative of the fact that at that time, the distinction between them was not so sharp as it would be much later, which came about due to changing classifications of the census and their formal definitions to define the dalits and the adivasis, the schedule castes and schedule tribes. One of the main aims of the handbooks was to better the classification of the social groups that existed, more so for the reason that this could assist census better. The official belief was that understanding of the social system could only be sought through accurately counting and classifying the castes and tribes into their sub divisions (Fuller 2017). However, these handbooks have been criticised for being 'superficial' and 'inadequate' and for the fact that it does not include a holistic analysis of the regional caste system that they undertook with the help of their fieldwork.

4.4.2 The Constructive Phase (1920-1949)

A new turn came into the ethnographic studies when social anthropology was included as a subject in the curriculum of University of Calcutta in 1920 in the Post graduate syllabus. The inclusion of the subject as an object of study established it as a discipline worthy of research at the University level and not just as a tool in the hands of the administrators. Soon after, the department of anthropology also found place in the University of Delhi (1947) University of Lucknow (1950) and the University of Guwahati (1952). In 1938, a joint session of the Indian Science Congress and the British Assocation also took place which had in attendance many important national and international anthropologist, who discussed the future of the subject in India. Additionally, a lot of important works also came up such as the work by Majumdar on racial and ethnic surveys in Bengal, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh which was an important step in the study of physical and social anthropology and M.N. Sriniva's work on marriage and family in Mysore. In 1945, the Anthropological Survey of India was established in India, which looked at the anthropometric study in different parts of the country and focused on the racial classification based on the ethnic differences. This was also the time period when Vemer Elwin published a number of books on the tribal people of Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Orissa, which are seen as classics within the field.

The subject thus matured within this period and influenced by the British line of thought and works done eminent universities in Europe, the Indian anthropologists too stated to look at Indian anthropology from a different light and started to develop their own distinct study.

4.4.3 The Analytical Period (1950-1990)

Post the Second World War and the Indian Independence, in addition to the British line of thought, the American style of anthropology was also seen. The understanding of India as a pre-literate, isolate society, one that had been the influence of British thought, was replaced during this period with more emphasis on inward thoughts and study of India as a complex society emerged, with the idea of village study gaining much traction (Ghosh, A. & Banerjee 2008)

The work in 1955 by American Anthropologist Mc Kim Marriott titled "Village India: Studies in the little community' is one of great significance in Indian anthropology. A general shift was already taking place in general anthropology which was from studying "deserts, jungles, and arctic wastes" (Geertz 2010) towards more of complex societies, and similarly in India also, the shift was observed from more of tribal studies to now where the emphasis was more on the study of the Indian civilization from a grassroots' level. This edited volume contained reports of eight villages and five provinces of India, which in no way is representative of the villages in India, but still is an attempt to understand the method of dealing with the 'little community'. As mentioned in the forward of the work by American Anthropologists Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, this work was a great step towards looking at civilizations as a result of their smallest sections- the family, neighbourhood, work, economy, politics and so on. In this light the work displayed a variety of approaches to the study, and in fact these

different approaches went on to become the various theoretical stands in the anthropology of India (Berger 2012). Indian Anthropologists like D N. Majumdar, M.N. Srinivas and S.C. Dube were important figures in the study of community and village studies.

Not just the influence of British and American Anthropologists, but even French Structuralists such as Levi-Strauss and Dumont & Leach influenced study of kinship and caste respectively. (Ghosh, A. & Banerjee 2008) In the late twentieth century, around the 1980s and 1990s, the understanding to anthropology underwent a drastic change. This change was a result of the reaction to the caste studies that were popularised by the structural functional approach by Louis Dumont in the 1960s and 1970s. This decline from the 'village studies model' was what allowed Indian anthropology to break out of the mould of caste and move on to larger structures within the Indian setting, such as class, religion, and so on (Fuller and Spencer 1990).

Understanding of great and little traditions (Robert Redfield), social and economic basis of the India society (Katherine Gaugh, Edmund Leach, N.K. Bose), the study of caste as a system of stratification (M.N.Srinivas) among gave rise to a plethora of perspectives and helped the discipline expand leaps and bounds. Additionally, post independence, the spirit of nationalism was strong among the Indian scholars, which also led to the creation of multiplicity of indigenous approaches to study the society. N.K. Bose developed a model to look at the process of modernization for tribes and castes. S.C Dube looked at the Indian civilization through a six-fold classification of tradition (classical, national, regional, local, western and local sub-cultural traditions of social groups). Iravati Karve tried to explain the Indian civilization on the basis of historical, linguistic, structural and cultural variables. B.K. Roy Burman in order to understand India in terms of the socio-political process developed the concept of nation and sub-nation. M.N. Srinivas came up with a mobility model to understand social change. Surujit Sinha posited tribe and caste at two opposite continuum in order to understand the social structure of the Indian society (Ghosh, A. & Banerjee 2008).

Many anthropologists have also very keenly chosen the path of an active anthropology in order to direct their knowledge in pursuit of the welfare and development of the society. In light of this, in 1953, Tribal Research and Training Institutes were set up across the country with the main purpose of conducting research and using the collected data for planning purposes. Thus, this makes it apparent that the feature of the Indian anthropology that was a part of the colonial India has continued to remain so to some extent.

4.4.4 The Evaluative Period (1990 onwards)

Post the realization that the British and American anthropological analyses are unable to explain sufficiently the complexity of the Indian society, a need for the reorientation of the discipline was needed. Post the 1990's Indian anthropology had been much more concerned with the problems of one's own society, and it is the new and novel ways of looking at the data that has made Indian anthropology more distinct. There is now an increasing interest in newly emerging fields and sub fields of anthropology, such as Medical anthropology, development studies, and psychological studies,

among others. Adding to this, the interaction of the discipline with other social sciences, especially sociology has provided with a unique element to the study,. In this way, both disciplines now can rely on each other to look at issues pertaining to the tribal, the agrarian and the industrial socio-economic societies and cultural systems and give rise to holistic understandings of the discipline (Ghosh, A. & Banerjee 2008)

Check Your Progress

1.   In which year Asiatic Society of Bengal established?

2.   Iravati Karve explained the Indian civilization on the basis of ....variables.

4.5 LET US SUM UP

M.N. Srinivas maintains that due to the particular history of Indian anthropology, the scholars have gained a lot of experience in studying their own cultures and their own histories. This unique position will help the scholar of today, who has studied the others in order to understand the self, to now look at self in itself as a valid means of study. Thus, the study of one's own life can also become a case study.

The analysis thus shows how Indian anthropology has grown and sustained itself over the years. Beginning from a colonial pursuit, and being heavily influenced by the view point of British and later American perspectives, Indian anthropology has managed to grow, survive and thrive on its own strength. Due to various historical and cultural reasons, that shaped the study of Indian anthropology, the discipline has emerged in the form that it is visible today and it is important to understand this trajectory, in order to understand the present as well as the future of the discipline.

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4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1.   1774

2.   Historical, linguistic, structural and cultural.

UNIT 5: GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHY*

Structure

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you should be able to:

●   understand and define the process of globalization and ethnography.

●   re-define the character of social relations in an era of globalization.

●   understand the various perspectives of globalization: the global as forces, connections, and imaginations.

●   discuss the issues and challenges to ethnography from globalization.

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*   Dr. T. Gangmei, Assistant Professor, Delhi University, Delhi

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization has strongly exploded the sociological agenda in recent decades. It continues to be an increasingly important issue for contemporary anthropology and sociology as cross-border interconnections and the movement of peoples, capital and culture around the world expand and intensify. Since the 1990s, an increasing number of researchers have become interested in this general topic and the literature on the subject has proliferated. Within this literature has emerged an approach of the study of globalization commonly referred to as global ethnography (Tsuda et al., 2014).

In this chapter, we shall examine the changes brought about by the process of globalization which eventually impacted the site, relations of people, and ethnographic research. We shall also discuss the various alternative approaches to global ethnography and highlight the key issues and challenges emerging in global ethnography. The chapter conclude by discussing the way forward in this most challenging times.

5.2 UNDERSTANDING GLOBALIZATION AND ETHNOGRAPHY

5.2.1 Globalization

Globalization is a trans-planetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multi-directional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows (Ritzer, 2011). A term that is closely related to globalization is transnationalism and transnationality:

a) **Transnationalism** is the "processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders".

b) **Transnationality** denotes "the rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states".

5.2.1.1 The three axes of globalization

When considering the site of ethnographic research, it is important to take into account three axes of globalization: global forces, connections and imaginations.

a) Global forces are understood as those pressures on places, institutions, situations and people from such overarching, often intersecting, imperatives as capitalism, modernity and colonialism.

b) Global connections refer to trans-national links and networks between such globally mobile people.

c) Global imagination refers to the different and competing ways that globalization is understood and portrayed.

5.2.2 Ethnography

Ethnography emerged from anthropology, and adopted by sociologists, is a qualitative methodology that lends itself to the study of the beliefs, social

interactions, and behaviours of small societies, involving participation and observation over a period of time, and the interpretation of the data collected. In its early stages, there was a desire by researchers to make ethnography appear scientific, and with this in mind a manual was produced for people in the field, with a set of instructions as to how ethnography should be 'done. The goal of ethnography, argued Naidoo (2012) then was to give an analytical description of other cultures, an exploration of a particular phenomenon, rather than the testing of a hypothesis. The data consisted of unstructured accounts and the analysis, which provided interpretation of meaning, was done by the researcher, using observation, description and explanation.

The ethnographer's task, argued Naidoo (2012), is to find what connects to what, and to construct subjects in changing contexts as they act and are acted upon. In taking such a stance, the ethnography becomes an ethnography of the system, too, and the global, "…an emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites in a multi-sited ethnography. Ethnography is linked to the lived experience of the ethnographer.

5.2.2.1 Global Ethnography

Ethnography is an especially suitable methodology with which to investigate social structures that are constituted across multiple scales and sites. It can strategically locate itself at critical points of intersection of scales and units of analysis and can directly examine the negotiation of interconnected social actors across multiple scales. Global ethnographies can be outlined through the lens of three slices of globalization—global forces, global connections, and global imaginations (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

5.2.2.2 Global Forces

The first type of global ethnographies is those that examines how external transnational forces affect local peoples and how they respond to and appropriate such influences (Tsuda et al. 2014). These transnational forces originate in other countries as part of globalization and therefore impact localities from a distance. Examples include multinational corporations, international agencies and organizations, global migrants and ideologies, and global mass media/popular culture. Ethnographies that examine global forces do not necessarily have to be based on multi-sited research, since they can be studies of how the global affects one locality or community. However, researchers can use multi-sited fieldwork in various countries to compare how global forces affect two or more communities in a different or similar manner (Tsuda et al. 2014).

In studies of global forces, the social actors and places being studied are caught up in a place-making project constituted well beyond their influence that can hardly be shaped by them- although they may develop complex forms of adaptation, avoidance, and survival. Global ethnographies at their best reveal not just the impact of an impersonal force but also how localities are made penetrable by forces, how localities assimilate these forces into their own socio-scapes, and how forces are resisted, accommodated to, and fled from (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002). We include under "forces" what Burawoy (2000) calls "imagination," that is, local social movements that use aspects of globalization or react against it. In contrast, accommodation

refers to local communities that do not respond contentiously to the effects of globalization, but simply accept, acquiesce and adapt to them or attempt to mitigate their effects, especially in cases where globalization has a negative impact (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.2.2.3 Global /Transnational Connections

The global forces perspective tends to regard the global and local as dichotomous and separate entities that impact each other depending on whether they are constituted in relations of opposition, accommodation and appropriation. Instead, others approach globalization at the local level as a matrix of transnational interconnections and networks within which local actors and institutions are embedded. Such transnational connections are not simply between two countries, but can involve people living in multiple countries. These cross-border networks are therefore not unidirectional but can fan out and circulate in multiple directions (Burawoy 2000, 30) and enable local communities scattered across the globe to influence each other over considerable geographical distances. They are created and reproduced by peoples and commodities moving across national borders, as well as by de-territorialized social interactions made possible through telecommunications and the Internet (Tsuda et al. 2014:136).

Ethnographic studies about transnational networks can benefit the most from multi-sited fieldwork. Of course, it is possible to conduct research in a single site and explore how local communities maintain connections to other countries through telecommunications, the Internet, and mass media, as well as through the circulation of peoples and commodities across national borders. However, such studies examine only one node in the network and can only provide a geographically limited understanding of how it functions. If a social network extends across two countries, it should ideally be studied from both ends, which requires fieldwork in both sites. For transnational networks that extend across more than two countries, fieldwork in multiple sites may be necessary for a comprehensive global ethnography (Tsuda et al. 2014).

Examining the impact of globalization on local societies, it becomes quite apparent that most "global" influences are locally experienced and manifested only as specific transnational social processes and institutions. In fact, few global processes that affect localities are truly global in scope, since they do not actually encompass the entire world, but consist of more localized transnational processes that are simply part of globalization. Ultimately, all macro-level, global processes manifest themselves as specific, -level transnational flows and connections between local places and communities. Therefore, it is somewhat of a reification to claim that the "global" or "globalization" is actually impacting local societies when, in reality, their effects are actually represented by much more specific and geographically limited transnational forces. In fact, not only are transnational processes and networks smaller in scale, they are more rooted and embedded in specific localities as simply part of larger global forces, making them more amenable to localized, ethnographic study (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.2.2.4 Global / Transnational Imaginations

In studies of global imaginations, the local actively participates in public discourse about what globalization might look like. The construction of a

global vision has tangible implications for the outcome of a conflict. First of all, references to global ideas and actors today provide an entrance ticket to participating in public discourse, and those unwilling or unable to formulate their claims in global terms often find themselves invisible. Second, when local actors wage their battles with claims about the global, to acquire more credibility they themselves build connections to outside actors and enter globally circulating discourses. (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002:283).

In addition to being an external force and a configuration of transnational networks, globalization has also become a form of identity making. Ethnographies that focus on the imagination are those that examine how local peoples develop transnational identifications with other peoples, cultures, and societies through the lived experience of globalization. Global migration and mobility, as well as the increasing availability of mass media and the flow of information and communications across borders has enabled people to expand their imaginations and affiliations beyond their geographically confined lives. (Tsuda et al. 2014). As part of the lived experience of globalization, transnational affiliations and subjectivities can also inform local lives and relationships. However, we should not assume that globalization always broadens local people's imaginations and leads to more expansive transnational identifications and affiliations. Although this often happens when the experience of globalization is positive, it just as often evokes negative responses and emotions. As a result, individuals can react against the effects of globalization. This can cause them to strengthen nationalist loyalties and other localized affiliations, leading to more insular and parochial identities (Tsuda et al. 2014).

Check Your Progress I

i)   What do you know about Globalization?

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ii)   Explain the difference between Transnationalism and Transnationality?

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iii) Examine the three axes of globalization

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iv)   Discuss Global Ethnography.

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5.3 ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHY

The process of globalization challenges conventional ethnography. It destabilizes the meaning of the key concepts (e.g., site, place, and local) of ethnography because of the increasing impact of world-wide interconnectedness and interdependence. In order to study the imagined lives made possible by global mass media, ethnography must engage in cultural studies by examining mass media, film, literary fiction, and other types of public culture. However, if such mass media are to be incorporated into global ethnography, it must consist of much more than simply the researcher's interpretation of public cultural texts, as is often the case in cultural studies. Instead, we must do actual face-to-face fieldwork to gather information about how local peoples engage, interpret, and respond to such global mass culture from other countries and how it reshapes their subjectivities, identities, and imaginations (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.3.1 Virtual Ethnography

Another suggested approach to global ethnography is virtual ethnography based on the Internet and online communities. Since the internet is one of the primary means by which local people maintain social relations and communities across national borders. However, ethnographers should be cautious about regressing to a contemporary digital "armchair anthropology" based on secondary sources and interactions captured in cyber-communities. A rich ethnographic account of online communities would ideally explore the relationship between people's online activities and their actual offline social lives through firsthand fieldwork.

5.3.2 Multi-sited fieldwork

Since traditional ethnographic approaches that are restricted to one locality cannot capture the essence of global flows and trans-border processes, a number of scholars have urged ethnographers to engage in multi-sited fieldwork.

There are three reasons for global ethnographers to conduct multi-sited fieldwork.

a)   To compare how macro global institutions and processes are impacting multiple locales in similar or different ways.

b)   To conduct multisite fieldwork to track the movement and flow of global commodities, migrants, cultures, ideologies, and information across national borders.

c) To directly study the increasing transnational connections between different places and communities.

Multi-sited ethnography as a research method for globalization: Varol (2017) argued that the emergence of multi-sited ethnography as an alternative (research method) to the conventional ethnography for better understanding the interconnectedness in the globalized world. The globalization process destabilizes the meaning of the key concepts (e.g., site, place, and local) of ethnography because of the increasing impact of world-wide interconnectedness and interdependence. The world has experienced "time and space compression" because of the technological developments in travel and communication that led to the shrinking map of the world. Thus, distances between different places are no longer important for interaction between different cultures, societies and identities. Capitals and commodities can easily pass local and national barriers. The relationship between space and place are inherently dynamic and inseparable from each other. The identities of place are not fixed and one-dimensional because it is the result of the interconnections and links between local, national, and international. But conventional ethnography is not enough to understand the globalization process because it mostly situates itself in a single place for in-depth understanding of cultures and societies. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the multiplicity of global network and flows that overlap with one another in the global and local to better understand the globalized world because of the changes in our time and space experience. Thus, the multi-sited ethnography has developed to overcome the risk of avoiding the complexity of the global circulation and its impact on the local. The basic approach within multi-sited ethnography is to follow global flows (e.g., migrants, commodities and movements) to understand global interconnectedness and the interaction between the local and the global (Varol, 2017). Nonetheless, multi-sited fieldwork is by no means the only way to do global ethnography nor even necessary and essential since it is possible to study the impact of globalization in a specific locality through single-sited fieldwork. In addition, there are problems associated with multi-sited fieldwork that cannot always be easily overcome.

5.4 LOCATING THE GLOBAL IN TRANSNATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Although multi-sited ethnographic methodologies undoubtedly have strengths, we argue that these proposed ethnographic methods are not the only way of studying globalization. This is because traditional ethnography based on intensive and long-term fieldwork in a single location is a completely sufficient method for capturing global dynamics. Global flows may be large-scale, de-territorialized, and trans-local but they are not simply disembodied processes that supersede localities and thus escape ethnographic study. Instead, all global processes are manifested and embedded in specific places (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.4.1 Two types of globalization: Non-contiguous and Contiguous Globalization

It is important to remember that there are, in fact, two different types of globalization, both of which can be simultaneously experienced at the local level (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.4.1.1 Non-continuous

The first type can be called non-contiguous globalization—the flow of information and images across national boundaries in which the globalizing agent influences local societies over a geographical distance without being physically present. This type of globalization does not involve the transfer of actual materials or peoples, but occurs in the "space of flows," the non-contiguous, virtual space of telecommunications networks, the Internet, and other types of digital media make the exchange and transmission of information and images possible over long distances. This enables individuals and institutions to interact and communicate and therefore transcends the constraints imposed by territory. (Tsuda et al. 2014)

5.4.1.2 Continuous Globalization

There is another type of globalization that is contiguous and involves the actual physical movement of people, goods and capital across national borders. It de-territorializes, since it involves social processes that are no longer tied to specific places and territories, but move across national borders. Here the globalizing agent (whether people, goods, capital, or facilities) actually moves and relocates to other countries and is physically present in the local society.

Check Your Progress II

i)   What are the alternative approaches to Global Ethnography

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ii)   State the reasons for global ethnographers to conduct multi-sited fieldwork.

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iii) Discuss the two types of globalization.

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5.5 RE-IMAGINING THE SOCIAL IN GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography is uniquely well placed to deal with the challenges of studying social life under globalization because it does not rely on fixed and comparable units of analysis. It also faces significant challenges in reconfiguring itself for a global era—ethnography explicitly seeks to analyze the social by locating the researcher in the space of the social relations being analyzed, and this ability to straight forwardly access the social by going to the local becomes problematic under conditions of globalization recently, attempts were made in sociology to redefine the social under globalization (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

The conventional postwar social science view assumes that the nation is a container for everything within it, while international relations are assumed to account for all relations outside of the national. Ethnography tends to accept these categories—either, as in sociology, generalizing to the national society or, as in anthropology, taking the local as the site of culture, which is often analyzed in terms of its relationship to the world of nations (colonialism, nation-building, etc.). However, thematic approaches to globalization identify a new empirical phenomenon that has undermined, or at least destabilized, these established hierarchies of the local, national and international. Globalization signifies the increasing significance of trans-local relations, local-global relations, and global-global relations at the expense of national-national relations. (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

Some scholars claim that globalization fundamentally reorders the classical relationship between self and the other, society and knowledge, and most importantly between space and society. According to these authors, we must redefine the concept of the social itself; that under conditions of globalization social relations are disembedded from the local and can operate in contexts where space no longer matters because shared systems of symbols and knowledge circulate globally. Still others define globalization as the culmination of the disembedding of economy from society leading to a world market unbound (Gille & Riain, 2002).

5.5.1 The Social as Flow or Network

Lash & Urry (1994) argue that the disembedded "social" is increasingly constituted by flows of people, information, goods, and particularly signs or cultural symbols. For Appadurai (1990), the entities that "flow" around the world are "scapes" or cultural formations around finance, media, ideologies, technologies and people. Hannerz (1992) sees society as constituted by "networks of networks," down to networks among individuals. For Castells (1997) the networks are between places, and a space of flows is being superimposed upon, and replacing, a space of places. Those places left outside the space of flows are profoundly disadvantaged by their structural exclusion. A newer set of studies consciously borrows the network concept from economic sociology and talks of a new geography and the need to draw new maps.

5.5.2 The Social as Transnational

Some scholars have sought to retain the insight that cross-national networks are increasingly significant while still providing an analysis of the structured social relations within those networks. Transnational studies are understood as the study of various types of border-crossings by people, texts, discourses, and representations at various geographical levels. (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

5.5.3 The Social as Border Zone

Other authors are more concerned with social relations at the borders and boundaries of social orders. Marcus & Fischer (1986) opposed the imagery of global versus local with a view of still distinct cultural worlds increasingly in communication with one another. Their "anthropology as cultural critique" sought to explore the recombinant, hybrid forms of cultural life that were emerging at these boundary points of cultures in contact with one another and enhancing the possibilities for other societies to provide us with tools for cultural critique of our own society. However, conceiving of the social as a border zone and emphasizing connections and contacts means that the cultural worlds that come into contact with each other are still conceptualized as self-contained, territorial worlds with readily identifiable differences that then clash. Conceiving of the social as a border zone often implies that boundary-localities are liminal, hybrid, syncretic and fluid, an assumption that can only hold if we abstract away from the powers that create and maintain boundaries. (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

5.5.4 The Social as Place-Making Projects

Each of these approaches to redefining the relationship between the social and the local offers a different avenue for future conceptualization. From the discussion of flows, we see the need to redefine place in light of the multiple connections cutting across places. From the study of transnationalism, we see the critical importance of the emergence of new scales of social action and the reconfiguring of relationships among the multiple scales within which places are embedded. Finally, from the study of borders, we see the vital importance of seeing place as politically produced and contested. Together we can combine these various threads into a concept of the social as increasingly embroiled in place-making projects that seek to redefine the connections, scales, borders, and character of particular places and particular social orders. These projects are the critical sites through which global ethnographers can interrogate social relations in an era of globalization. (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002). Several scholars strongly believed that place continues to be central to global ethnography, albeit in a conceptualized form. In short, the locality-the site is historically produced in interaction with a variety of external connections, and this process also produces distinctive patterns of inequality internal to the locality. Together, these propositions form the basis of a global sense of place.

However, others quite in opposition to the authors advocating the idea of the social as network and flows that imply the fixity of the local—argues that communities in globalized places are fluid and scape-like as well. People may live in the same neighborhood or town, but their meaningful social lives may reach beyond that locality to a highly uneven degree.

These reaches or networks constitute what he calls socio-spheres, "distinct patterns of social activities belonging to networks of social relations of very different intensity, spanning widely different territorial extents, from a few to many thousands of miles" (Albrow, 1997). Prior to the contemporary era of globalization, these socio-spheres usually intersected in the locality, new intersections are now forming that he calls socio-scapes. Socio-scapes are fluid imaginations of spatial belonging and of the social formations created by and making possible the reach of social relations beyond the locality. The contemporary era of globalization consists not simply of a shift of power and of social interaction upward from the national to the global but of a destabilization of the existing hierarchies of spatial scales. While creating a crisis in national social formations, this also opens up opportunities for social actors to develop new combinations of local, national, transnational, and global social relations. Scholars begin to assume a global level of analysis at their peril and must begin their analysis by seeking out place-making projects that seek to define new kinds of places, with new definitions of social relations and their boundaries. Such a concept of global ethnography enables us to make sense of the variety of ethnographies dealing with global processes and to classify them according to how they identify their subjects' relations to certain place-making projects (Gille & 'O' Riain. 2002).

5.6 ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHY

An ethnographic approach to globalization requires the understanding of locally, socially, and culturally specific ways in which people understand the place of their locality in the global scheme of things, and the actions they take to shape that place. These understandings and actions are deeply political, and the very definition of the ethnographer's topic and site is shaped by the place-making projects within which any particular site is embedded. Globalization involves the contesting of the boundaries of places and negotiations concerning which geographical scale is best suited for action. As a result, the choice of site also becomes political. Thus, the challenge to ethnography from globalization lies in the concept of 'field', and the need to provide the 'hard' data that characterizes positivist research (Gille, 2001). Some researchers have always questioned the concepts of field or homework, rural or urban, community or corporation, arguing that such dichotomies create boundaries that are in fact non-existent, and are products of discriminatory white western discourses, whereby no alternative way of looking at 'other' is presented. Globalization, however, seems to have made such concepts redundant, since the whole notion of location appears to have lost its meaning. Gille (2001) argues that such challenges need to be put into the context of global social relations. For Naidoo (2012), the epistemological basis of ethnography involves the study of people who are in or affected by certain situations, and sometimes locale is difficult to define, even with Marcus' attempt to put this in the context of multi-sited ethnography, allowing for the fact that many localities are no longer isolated, but linked to the world in often complex ways. In fact, globalization (Tsuda, 2014) is not only instantiated at the local level as specific transnational processes; they often take on an even more localized character. The local

impact of macro-global processes is mediated by various local institutions and states, which are transnationally linked to other countries and places.

5.7 FUTURE DIRECTIONS

We have noted the continued relevance of ethnography for an increasingly globalized world. Globalization often refers to de-territorialized and large-scale forces that appear to be beyond the scope of ethnography, which is limited to the intensive study of micro-level social processes in specific localities. However, globalization is not simply an abstract, external force that supersedes and operates outside the purview of localities but that the global exists only as it is embedded and localized in specific places. The global and the local should not be conceptualized as opposed, dichotomous entities, which makes localized ethnographic fieldwork seem incompatible with the action of global forces (Tsuda et al. 2014).

The dynamics of contiguous globalization involve a constant dialectic between brief periods of de-territorialization and longer periods of re-territorialization in specific localities, making it mainly a place-based process. Even for de-territorialized, non-contiguous globalization, the cross-border flow of digital and mass media in virtual space becomes socially meaningful only as they are consumed and incorporated by local peoples according to local cultural understandings and identity-making projects. Because all global processes are territorialized, appropriated and/or challenged, and eventually re-created in localities, it is well suited for ethnographic approaches based on specific places and local communities. In addition, at the local level, most macro-global processes operate as transnational institutional and social networks that connect specific localities. It is therefore possible to study the transnational linkages that are part of globalization in the localized contexts in which fieldworkers traditionally operate. (Tsuda et al. 2014:137-139).

Although globalization is often associated with movement across localities, cyberspace, and mass media, ethnographers do not necessarily have to conduct multi-sited fieldwork that prioritizes breadth at the expense of depth or rely on the Internet or cultural studies. Traditional fieldwork methods based on long-term immersion in one locality are sufficient for global ethnography. The essence of globalization can be captured by face-to-face, single-sited studies of how individuals in a specific locality react to and appropriate global forces, how they create transnational connections to those living in other countries, or how globalization enhances their imagination, enabling them to construct transnational identities and subjectivities (Tsuda et al. 2014).

Most global ethnographies have examined what can be called globalization from below, the engagement of local peoples and communities in trans-border processes. However, we also need more ethnographic studies about the powerful elites and institutions that control globalization from above. Instead of simply focusing on local consumers, factory workers, labor migrants, or grassroots organizations, ethnographers need to "study up" and turn their attention to governmental officials and agencies that regulate globalization, managers of multinational corporations and financial institutions, and transnational NGOs and development organizations (Tsuda et al. 2014).

5.8 LET US SUM UP

Globalization is not simply a unilineal process that leads to increasingly greater transnational interconnectedness between various locales but can also lead to disconnection in some cases. This is true especially if local peoples react negatively to or resist the effects of globalization and actively withdraw from or reduce their connections to other places.

Globalization is often associated with macro-social processes, deterritorialized flows and networks across national borders, and large-scale international institutions and corporations that are either detached from localities or affect many places at once (Tsuda et al., 2014). In contrast, ethnography traditionally consists of in-depth descriptions of micro-social phenomenon in a specific locality and is based on long-term research and face-to-face relations in territorially bounded places. Given such discrepancies between the global and the localized nature of ethnography, how does one do global ethnography? (Tsuda et al., 2014).

Some researchers have advocated new types of ethnographic research in order to make it more appropriate for a globalized world. They include cultural studies, virtual ethnography, and multi-sited fieldwork among others. Although such new approaches can certainly supplement traditional ethnographic methods, some scholars believe they are by no means necessary or even desirable ways to do global ethnography. They argue that traditional ethnography based on in-depth fieldwork in one locale is sufficient to capture the intricacies of an increasingly globalized world, because globalization is ultimately grounded and instantiated in territorialized localities as specific transnational processes (Tsuda et al. 2014). Global ethnography does not necessarily entail new ethnographic methods based on cultural studies, the exclusive use of new digital media, or even multi-sited fieldwork. What differentiates global ethnography from other types of ethnography is not methodology per se, but scope of analysis. It contextualizes local peoples, communities, and practices within larger transnational processes and connections that operate across national borders and are part of globalization.

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5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

i)   Globalization is a trans-planetary process or set of processes involving increasing liquidity and the growing multi-directional flows of people, objects, places and information as well as the structures they encounter and create that are barriers to, or expedite, those flows. A term that is closely related to globalization is transnationalism and transnationality.

ii) Transnationalism is the "processes that interconnect individuals and social groups across specific geo-political borders" whereas, transnationality denotes "the rise of new communities and formation of new social identities and relations that cannot be defined through the traditional reference point of nation-states".

iii) The three axes of globalization are:

a)   Global forces are understood as those pressures on places, institutions, situations and people from such overarching, often intersecting, imperatives as capitalism, modernity and colonialism.

b)   Global connections refer to trans-national links and networks between such globally mobile people.

c)   A global imagination refers to the different and competing ways that globalization is understood and portrayed.

iv) Ethnography is a qualitative methodology that lends itself to the study of the beliefs, social interactions, and behaviours of small societies, involving participation and observation over a period of time, and the interpretation of the data collected. It is especially suitable methodology to investigate social structures that are constituted across multiple scales and sites. It can strategically locate itself at critical points of intersection of scales and units of analysis and can

directly examine the negotiation of interconnected social actors across multiple scales. Global ethnographies can be outlined through the lens of three slices of globalization—global forces, global connections, and global imaginations

Check Your Progress II

i)   The process of globalization challenges conventional ethnography. It destabilizes the meaning of the key concepts (e.g., site, place, and local) of ethnography because of the increasing impact of world-wide interconnectedness and interdependence. Scholars have suggested an alternative (research method) to the conventional ethnography for better understanding the interconnectedness in the globalized world which include: virtual and multi-sited fieldwork.

a)   Virtual Ethnography: Another suggested approach to global ethnography is virtual ethnography based on the Internet and online communities. Since the Internet is one of the primary means by which local peoples maintain social relations and communities across national borders. However, ethnographers should be cautious about regressing to a contemporary digital "armchair anthropology" based on secondary sources and interactions captured in cyber-communities. A rich ethnographic account of online communities would ideally explore the relationship between people's online activities and their actual offline social lives through firsthand fieldwork.

b)   Multi-sited fieldwork: Since traditional ethnographic approaches that are restricted to one locality cannot capture the essence of global flows and trans-border processes, a number of scholars have urged ethnographers to engage in multi-sited fieldwork.

ii) Reasons for global ethnographers to conduct multi-sited fieldwork.

a)   To compare how macro global institutions and processes are impacting multiple locales in similar or different ways.

b)   To conduct multisite fieldwork is to track the movement and flow of global commodities, migrants, cultures, ideologies, and information across national borders.

c)   To directly study the increasing transnational connections between different places and communities

iii) Two types of globalization: Non-contiguous and Contiguous Globalization

There are, in fact, two different types of globalization, both of which can be simultaneously experienced at the local level.

iv) Non-continuous: The first type can be called non-contiguous globalization—the flow of information and images across national boundaries in which the globalizing agent influences local societies over a geographical distance without being physically present.

v)   There is another type of globalization that is contiguous and involves the actual physical movement of people, goods, and capital across national borders.