



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

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WEBINAR CONCLAVE

Recent Advances in Anthropological research

MAY 8-9, 2020
10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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Meeting ID: 790 172 6364
Password: 08090520

Organising Committee
Dr. K.N.Saraswathy (Convener), Dr. R.P. Mitra, Dr. Avitoli G Zhimo, Dr. Vipin Gupta

Patron

Prof. P.C. Joshi
Head of the Department

Rapporteurs

SESSION 1

Arun Kumar & Debashmita Banerjee

SESSION 2

Krishna Kant & Sayak Chakraborty

SESSION 3

Harsh Vats & Sweta Prasad

SESSION 4

Suryasnata Mazumder & Shardhanjali Sinha

SESSION 5

Sudipta Dutta & Apoorva Sharma

SESSION 6

Sohini Sinha & Hansdeep Kaur Kohli

SESSION 7

Somen Rath & Navjot Kamboj

Report compiled by

Eche Wangnyu Konyak

Webinar Conclave Report

On

Recent Advances in Anthropological Research

The Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi organised two days webinar conclave (8th May to 9th May 2020) to explore and understand the recent advancements in Anthropological Theories, Methods, and techniques. The webinar conclave was conducted through Zoom Cloud Meeting App. The conclave unfolded with **Dr. Avitoli G Zhimo** (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi) on screen as the Moderator of the Webinar. As the clock struck 10:00 AM and the participants started checking in Dr. Zhimo invited **Dr. K.N. Saraswathy** (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi) to deliver the welcome address. Dr. Saraswathy on behalf of the organizing committee warmly welcomed the faculty members and the participants to the conclave. She shared how exultant she is to receive such a positive turn up from the faculty members as well as the scholars. Following the welcome note, **Dr. R.P. Mitra** (Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi) took over the screen to give an introduction to Conclave. Dr. Mitra accentuated on how important it is for an anthropologist to keep ourselves updated with the recent advances in research. He also talked about the shift in socio-cultural anthropology where the significance of the body and role of an individual/agency is seemingly a fresh concept. Dr. Mitra reiterated the scholars that the three things expected from the webinar are: what are the recent advancement in theories, methods, and techniques? How will these new methods influence the practice of Anthropology in general? And how is it going to make a difference in future discipline?

Prof. P.C. Joshi, Head of the department in his address fondly remembered the summer school organized by the Department of Anthropology in 1967, at Dalhousie. The who's who in anthropology deliberated on the future of anthropology for three weeks, and the foundation of Indian Anthropological Association was laid during the summer school. According to Prof. Joshi, this webinar is not going to be less than summer of 1967. It is different and unique from usual seminars as we are going to meet virtually depending on the available technology to connect us from across the country. For two days, the research scholars will deliberate on their research work and recent advances in anthropological research.

Session 1: Advances in medical Anthropology and public Health research

Rapporteurs: *Arun Kumar and Debashmita Banerjee*

The Session was chaired by Prof. P.C Joshi, the Head of the Department with Dr. Kiranmala Devi as the discussant. 15 minutes were allotted for paper presentations and 5 minutes for discussion.

The first presenter was **Dr. Abhilasha Kapoor**, with her paper titled as “Recent approaches in the management of Diabetes mellitus”. She started the presentation with a brief introduction to diabetes, its prevalence among the world and Indian population. As diabetes is currently a global health problem, she briefly mentioned about the different risk factors like dietary factors, lifestyle factors, biochemical factors, and genetic factors etc. which are associated with Diabetes. The main highlight of her presentation was the use of recent Digital technologies like digital mobile app for monitoring type 2 diabetes, self-care through digital education, etc. She also talked about the limitations of these techniques as to how it is not possible for illiterate people as well as people with lower income to access these technologies.

The second paper was presented by **Mr. Vineet Choudhary** on the topic ‘COVID-19 and Haemoglobinopathies in India: Some Reflections’. He majorly focused on the holism approach of anthropology and how bio-social dynamics are important to understand public health issues. He used the term *staga casa* (used by Spain for awareness purpose) which means Stay at home. Information from New York Times was presented, and the major focus was to understand how the socio-economic inequality is associated with COVID-19. He further introduced the term 3P (Pandemic, Poverty, Pre-existing Health condition) to emphasis on the specific population, that are fighting not only with COVID-19 but also abnormal haemoglobins. He concluded his presentation by focusing on therapeutic intervention on the manifestation of the severity of infections.

The third speaker, **Ms. Sohini Sinha**, presented a paper titled ‘An Anthropological Understanding of the recent Advances in the screening and treatment of Post-Partum Depression’. She defined and described the term mental health and how it is related to every aspects of human wellbeing. She then described the post-partum depression and its importance in public health. There are a number of screening methods for post-partum depression however the main objectives that she wished to present in her paper was the importance of these methods. She explains that, after having neonates in life, mothers become very anxious and experiences different kind of psychological changes. This is the time when mothers are in need

special physical as well as psychological care and attention. If they were deprived of these basic needs a woman can be depressed for a longer period of time and as such it will not only harm her or her children but also affects the whole family. She concluded that mental health is a foremost important factor to be taken care of by all individuals.

In this session few questions were asked by different participants and some needful suggestions was given by Head of Department Prof P. C Joshi, Dr. K.N Saraswaty and Dr. R.P Mitra.

The brief summary of all the three presentations was given by Dr. Kiranmala Devi along with some additional needful suggestions and opinions.

The session ended on a successful note in given time.

Session 2: Advances in Ethnography and Fieldwork Methods.

Rapporteurs: *Krishna Kant Yadav & Sayak Chakraborty*

Kevingu Khate took the opportunity to host the session and welcomed Dr. Benrithung Murry, the chair of the session to get the session underway. Dr. Murry thanked the organizing committee and gave a statement about the session. Then he invited Dr. Indrani Mukherjee to make the first presentation of the session.

Dr. Indrani Mukherjee is a post-doctoral scholar at the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi. She presented her paper on the topic titled “Fieldwork Post-lockdown (Covid-19): More Questions than Answers” in which she spoke about her concerns on conducting the fieldwork after the pandemic ends. She was waiting to conduct her research on water ATMs in the summer, when the demand for water ATMs is high, but due to the pandemic, her fieldwork had met an abrupt blockade. She stated that lockdown will end and everyone will be back to normal life but we will encounter a different reality. Highlighting the various protocols issued by WHO and other government agencies, Dr. Mukherjee stated how these protocols will bring a change in the fieldwork setting. Fieldwork is conducted in very close proximity to the people and communities. Physical contact is a constant part of such a fieldwork. Confidential information is also exchanged with respondents while maintaining a very close proximity. Such information can help with the fieldwork extensively. But with the new norms of keeping social distancing, putting mask on our faces, it will be difficult for us to get the information in the same way. Wearing a mask to the field shall not be a plausible solution and with the respondents also wearing masks, gestures and expressions, which are a key source of information in the field and often divulge many important details, shall be missed. So this may build a wall between the fieldworker and the field. Dr. Mukherjee highlighted the

importance of hospitality in the field participants in order to establish rapport in the field. She raised the question as to how we can rebuild that bond when we re-enter the field? When the pandemic subsides, researchers will be encountering communities that are socio-economically vulnerable and have scarcity of resources. People may not be as welcoming as before and view researchers and new people with a lens of suspicion. Now every community across the world is united due to the pandemic. It has created a space where the pandemic has helped build social cohesion. We must think how we can use this social cohesion positively while re-entering the field. Lastly, Dr. Mukherjee emphasized upon the fact that fieldworkers may not stay in the field as long as they want, that too on ethical grounds. Fieldworkers must ensure the health and safety of the respondents, their community and also of their own selves, since they shall be the outsiders and will probably have a better awareness and idea about any disease. Dr. Murry explained that we are all facing problems but we are a dynamic society and we will adopt to this “new reality” or the “new normal”.

Dr. Mitashree Srivastava pointed that it is not new for anthropologist to face such situations as anthropologists for long have had the “image of a spy”. She proposed that such views may be “neutralized by adopting more etic approaches rather than an emic approach”.

Prof. P. C. Joshi elaborated that we should not presume that the current conditions will remain same and that we have to put on masks forever. Neither should we presume that there will be no vaccine. This is not even desirable. But yes, those of us having any such issue must not go to conduct field as it may not only put the population at risk but it is also a criminal offence. An anthropologist uses facial expression, gestures and eye contacts as tools of their research and thus, putting on a mask will not be easy to conduct the research.

The next presenter in the session was **Mr. Somen Rath** who gave a power point presentation on the topic “Saora Art through the Lens of Anthropological Research: Trends and Transitions.” Mr. Somen Rath is a Ph.D. scholar at the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi. Speaking from his home in Odisha, he introduced the Saora tribe as one of the most ancient Indian tribes. Through his presentation, he discussed the Saora paintings and its relevance. He explained how Saora painting, apart from having aesthetic values also plays an important role in their religious life. Traditionally, the Saora have no practice of idol worship, their pantheon is different from the ones of mainstream religions and these wall paintings are a part of their rituals. Discussing the origin of Saora painting, he describes its close relation with shamans and shamanistic performances. In older times, it was the shamans who used to draw these paintings based on their dreams or visions they had while in trance. It

was mainly drawn with white diluted rice paste on the reddish walls of their homes. But things have been changing nowadays as 70% of Saoras now are Hindus and about 30% are Christians. Deities like Jagannath have taken the centre-stage in Saora painting, making Saora art a modern day melting pot of traditional practices and modern beliefs. Adding to that is the commercialized market of Saora art all over the world, in which the art is being represented on garments and handicrafts, being painted with acrylic paints and dyes, and are being sold. It must add to Anthropological understanding of art and aesthetics. Mr. Rath explains that since the times of Franz Boas, art has been studied in various ways with new methods constantly coming forward of which he highlighted the one by Tim Ingold especially. He concluded by saying that Saora art must be preserved using visual representations such as augmented virtual realities and the use of deep learning in order to help preserve them, rather than just relying on lengthy visual texts.

Prof. P. C. Joshi, mentioning the book “Dialogue with the Dead” by Piers Vitebsky, told how Saora art is a classic example of how shamanistic traditions linked to shamanistic art have transitioned into modern art. He also drew visual parallels of Saora art with art of the Worli tribe and also Palaeolithic Art and described it as a complicated, uncharted area of study upon which further research can be conducted.

The third presenter of the session was **Ms. Ankita Mehta** who presented her paper “Toward Well-Being: Fieldwork and Anthropological Experiences”. Ms. Ankita Mehta is a doctoral scholar at the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi. In her paper, Ms. Mehta tried to understand the concept of well-being in the context of migrant workers. Through her qualitative study based on fieldwork method, she tried to understand the lives and working conditions of migrant workers. Her fieldwork was mainly based on the narratives of the people. She had chosen six different construction sites across Delhi. She had also visited one of the native villages in Uttar Pradesh where the migrant workers come from. Most of them are seasonal migrants and come to urban areas, like Delhi, to eke out a living. This makes them a fluid population, making it hard for researchers to conduct studies on them. She elaborated about her own challenges of doing fieldwork at construction sites, especially when officers and other officials of the construction site kept their vigilance on her. Most of the labourers were busy during the day and were only available before eight o’clock in the morning and after 7 o’clock in the evening. She, being a woman, did have to face few problems in order to enter the field as the men were mostly unavailable and the women initially had an unfavourable idea about women from cities. She had to quell this misunderstanding with the women and it became

easier for her to get close to them. But she explained that getting close to the children was the easiest. She described how domestic violence, sexual harassment and other issues are common scenario in the labour camps at construction sites, which created ethical dilemmas in her. Ms. Mehta ended her narration of her experiences by stating that the establishment of rapport is important and it proves the credibility of the researcher.

Keeping in mind, the present scenario of Covid-19 pandemic, Prof. P. C. Joshi explained that the mind of the migrant workers must be understood. Understanding their minds will lead us to understand their actions better, which in turn will help us solve the present scenario of migrant workers stuck in places away from their homes, in this pandemic, across India. Someone who has the experience and expertise on migrant workers and their life should be given the responsibility of handling the situation.

Dr. Astha Ranjan raised the question about what occupation do these migrant workers have back home and what the government should do to ease their situation. To this, Ms. Mehta responded that these migrant workers have no occupation as such back home. The shutting down of construction sites at urban centres have left many migrant workers homeless, since they have been ousted from the labour camps as well. The government must ensure proper sheltering for them and organise their transportation back home as soon as possible.

At the end, Dr. Astha Bansal put forward a statement of discussion about the entire session with rapporteur Mr. Sayak Chakraborty summarising the session in brief.

With this, Dr. Murry concluded the session and the host, Mr. Kevingu Khate, drew the session to an end.

Session 3: Advances in Bio-chemical Genetics; Molecular Anthropology; Forensic Science

Rapporteurs: *Harsh Vats and Sweta Prasad*

The session was chaired Dr. P.R. Mondal with Ms. Ayesha Parveen as the discussant.

Firstly, **Mr. Imnameren Longkumar** presented his paper titled 'Global 5-methylcytosine affects blood glucose level through DNA hypomethylation: A cross-sectional study among a rural population from North India.' He gave a brief introduction on epigenetics in biomedical research. For the present study, he used global DNA methylation with a sample size of 508 individuals of Jat population. He talked about Hyperglycemia/Diabetes which is a complex, multifactorial and chronic condition which is projected to rise to 642 million people by 2040. He hypothesized that hyperglycemia is mediated by alterations in global DNA methylation. His research findings showed that significant DNA hypomethylation was found among the

people who have elevated blood glucose as compared to those having normal blood glucose. Also, significant DNA hypomethylation was found among males as compared to males. He further found out that significant DNA hypomethylation was found among the older people as compared to the younger ones i.e., increasing age is associated with increased incidence of type 2 diabetes. He concluded his talk by emphasizing that global DNA methylation becomes an upcoming approach to understand molecular domain of human health and could enrich Anthropological research.

The next presenter **Ms. Sunanda Rajkumari** presented her paper titled 'The association of FTO rs9939609 gene polymorphism with Metabolic syndrome among Liangmai and Mizo population of Manipur, India.' She started her presentation with a brief introduction on Metabolic Syndrome which have become a major public health challenge globally and is associated with the development of Type 2 Diabetes, Coronary Artery Disease, CVDs, etc. She studied 2 Mendelian populations i.e., Mizo and Liangmai of Manipur having different gene pools and have reported to have different ancestral origin with a sample size of 344 Liangmai and 359 Mizo. For the present study she used National Cholesterol Education program adult treatment panel III criteria. She reported an increased prevalence of obesity and type II diabetes among the Mizo as compared to the Liangmai. The frequency distribution of mutant A allele of FTO gene was found to be higher among Metabolic syndrome case group of both Liangmai and Mizo but it was not statistically significant. In the end of her presentation, she talked about the limitations of her study which include low sample size, less statistical analysis, etc.

The third presenter **Ms. Manisha Kharaliya** presented her paper titled 'Electrocardiogram - An Emerging Era in Biometrics'. She talked about Biometrics which is a way of identifying someone through digital processes which is way more secure than pins and passwords which we can forget anytime. The examples of biometrics include- fingerprints, palm prints, retina scan, etc. Biometric authentication systems run in two modes namely Identification mode and Verification mode. She then talked about the limitations of biometrics which include false rejection, false acceptance, etc. There are various types of biometric identifiers including fingerprint biometrics, ultrasonic fingerprint reader, Iris pattern biometrics, retinal biometrics, etc., each having their pros and cons. Lastly she talked about ECG i.e., Electrocardiogram which results from the electrical conduction through the heart needed for contraction. ECG has various advantages like it is permanent, it is universal, it denotes liveness i.e., we know that it is taken on a live person which is a limitation for other biometric identifiers.

The last presenter of this session **Ms. Monika Kulshreshtha** presented her paper titled 'Prevalence of musculoskeletal injuries among Kathak dancers'. She started her presentation by talking about musculoskeletal injuries' prevalence among dancers. She chose Kathak for her study because it is a prevalent dance form of North India which requires excessive training and practice. The sample size of her study is 204 female Kathak dancers. There were 10 different types of injuries found in them and most injuries were found in the lower extremity because Kathak requires lots of foot movement. The causes of injury were overwork, unsuitable and insufficient warmup and cool down, etc. Around 62% of the dancer's performance was affected due to an injury and around 28.30% of dancers ignored their injuries. She concluded her talk by suggesting that awareness regarding the recognition and prevention of musculoskeletal injuries should be created among Kathak dancers.

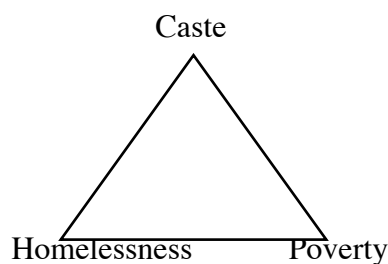
Session 4: Advances in Anthropology of Development: Gender Studies

Rapporteur: *Suryasnata Mazumder*

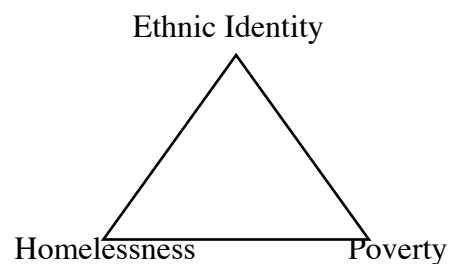
The session was on the recent advances in the field of development with special emphasis on gender. The chair and discussant of the session was Dr. Neli Deli and it was hosted by Vineet Chaudhury. The session consisted of four presentations by Sarika Negi on 'Spatial Approaches and Anthropology'; Kanika Saran on 'The dichotomy of public and private space in the village of Raghunathpura, Udaipur, Rajasthan'; Saptarshi Bairagi on 'Understanding the representation of queer culture through LGBTQIA+ Pride movement in India: A Multi-sited ethnography'; and Eche Wangnyu Konyak on 'Exploring the approach of Visuality-Materiality to the study of Dress among the Konyak of Nagaland'. The first three presentation dealt with the concept of space.

Sarika Negi in her presentation focused on spatial approaches with special reference to homeless population in India and US. She talked about the representation of space and how the spatial approaches taken from geography revived urban anthropology and helped in understanding the concept of space rooted in urban complexities. She talked about Margaret Rodman's emphasis on phenomenology to understand the lived spaces i.e. how people grounded their experiences through construction of space. She worked among the homeless population and tried to understand the concept of space. She tried to understand how people who never got the access to dwelling or residence constructed the idea of space. She says, 'Home is a place where social relations are seen. When a person starts living in a place and

becomes familiar to it, they start calling it home'. When you understand this, the dynamics of homelessness becomes problematic. The homeless people she worked were mainly migrant workers and for them home was their native home. They establish their identity with their native home. For homeless people, there is nothing they could establish their identity with. She said in the context of India, it has lot to contribute to the understanding of homelessness. She made a comparison between India and US to understand the homelessness in a better way and she has come up with the idea that in India, there is a close interaction between caste, poverty and homelessness. In US, it is mostly associated with the ethnic characters.



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Hence spatial approaches are needed to look at the inequalities to understand the country and its dynamics at a deeper level. Towards the end of the presentation, she said, 'When we talk about spatial approaches, we need to understand the intersection between spatial and socio-economic to unfold the nature of particular space for further anthropological intervention and policy framing.'

Kanika Sharan talked about how spaces are central to social relationships. She talked about the veiling practices and the dichotomy of public and private space in Raghunathpura, Udaipur. She talked about the concept of 'Ghera' in Raghunathpura which is equivalent to a verandah. 'Ghera' is a place where women and people belonging to the lower caste are not allowed to enter and there is a clear cut demarcation of public and private space in Raghunathpura where the private space is completely given to women and public space is dominated by men. 'Ghera' is a place where the person with the highest status commonly referred to as 'Bhopa' sits at the centre and the rest surrounding him forming concentric circles. Introducing all to this concept, she put forth the idea of veiling in Udaipur and also to the dichotomy of private and public sphere. The Veil is not just a practice; it has inherent meanings associated with him as mentioned by Kanika Sharan. She says veiling also means veiling if eyes and voice. It is strictly

associated with the concept of 'honour'. There is restriction of movement and no freedom of speech. Through these restrictions, hierarchy is enforced. She gave a distinction between a married woman and unmarried daughter and explained how they negotiate spaces. While concluding, she talked about how spaces are and always have been produced by the activities and how it is negotiated by the women. Suggestions were given by Prof. P.C. Joshi and Dr. R.P. Mitra to also explore the difference in gait between the daughter and daughter-in-law and the practice of veiling in other communities to understand whether it is a phenomenon of space or phenomenon of custom.

It was followed by the presentation of **Saptarshi Bairagi** who talked on the LGBTQIA+ communities and how the term 'queer' evolved over time. He talked about how this political term gives the LGBTQIA+ communities the space, rather than forcing them into the binary categories set by the society. He introduced the audience to the idea of parade as a shared space of the queers. He said, 'Parade is a procession of people, usually organized along a street, often in costume, and often accompanied by marching bands, floats, or sometimes large balloons. Parades are held for a wide range of reasons, but are usually celebrations of some kind. Parade is form of festival, where we share a common space, a common identity, a common goal, etc. He also talked about how they were perceived and how they fought to express their right. He said 'The term 'queer' was a hate word in everyday speech. It was used as a derogatory term for homosexual people. Its contemporary use within political activism and consequently academic theory is therefore a conscious reclaiming of the term to put it to use in a positive and productive way.' He then talked about 'queer politics' and towards the end he concluded by saying that he is at a very initiating stage and it requires much anthropological intervention especially after the Supreme Court verdict. After the presentation Dr. R.P. Mitra took some time to appreciate the fact that the term 'queer' which was once considered absurd, not falling in line is now considered a term with no pejorative connotations which is a victory within itself and he was of opinion that more research should be done to explore the world of LGBTQIA+ communities.

The last presentation was of **Eche Wangnyu Konyak** who talked about the approach of 'visuality-materiality' in understanding body supplementations and body modification in the study of material culture. She said in the study of material culture, 'visual' is a new term and visual images are extremely powerful. She talked about the tattoo culture among the Konyak Nagas of Nagaland and how it was associated with head hunting. In earlier times, those men who were head hunters were considered as warriors and were tattooed. Tattoo is prevalent

among the Konyak women as well. They adorn their bodies with tattoos. She talked about how tattoo is a visual identity of Konyak Nagas. Towards the end of the presentation, she stressed on auto-ethnography and discussed its two basic components: emotion and notion of shared language. She shared her experience as she is working in her own community. She said that, 'Through emotion, you develop a quest to learn more and through shared language, there is no conflict of understanding. This auto-ethnography has opened my eyes to the world of my own culture. I am feeling like I am contributing to my own community in a better and deeper way. It gives me a deeper sense of responsibility.'

Session 5: Advances in Political Anthropology, Tribal Studies and Environmental Anthropology

Rapporteurs: *Sudipta Dutta and Apoorva Sharma*

This session of the webinar was chaired by Dr. M. Kennedy Singh, who started the session with a brief introduction. He talked about what are the insight we were going to get from the presenters. This session of the webinar is one of the important sessions because presenters focused on political anthropology, tribal anthropology and environmental anthropology.

The first presenter of the session was **Krishnakant Yadav**, whose topic was "Panchayati Raj and its role in the politics of rural development". He started his presentations with a brief introduction of the "Panchayat raj". The present paper tries to understand the role of Panchayati Raj and its role in the rural development. The paper investigates the changing role of panchayats at village level. Along with investigating the government policies on the ground level. Objectives of this study are to observe the exercise of local politics through Panchayati Raj and to understand the interaction of local people with the government institutions and policies. The aim of the research lies in main three questions which are the role of power in different category, impact of the modern state institutions and organized political forces on the traditional community, and how people of different ethnic and gender identities represent themselves in the state institutions like Panchayat. He discussed it with the example of a village called Kanpur and he found the caste-tribe relationship of the area. Here we found how the tribal lands are used by the local political power for their own benefits. And not only land Kanpur which is in Rajasthan face problems of water, even ground water is also facing threat due to the pollution created from poor government plans. There are also some false information regarding toilets and LPG connections have been seen by the researcher.

During the discussion session Prof P.C. Joshi gave him some insights about who the panchayats are working now in the grass root level, during the pandemic due to Covid-19.

The second paper was presented by **Richa Joshi** titled “The Role and Position of Women in Relation to Land: A Case Study among the Tharu in Uttarakhand”. She gave a brief introduction about the Tharu tribe from the district Udham Singh Nagar of Uttarakhand. Tharu population constituted about 35-40% of the total population in the district. Ms. Joshi discussed that land as an institution constitutes the fundamental social and economic arrangements in working and benefiting from land. She explained that according to Jacob, ‘50% of Indian population depends upon land for livelihood’. In spite of that average land holding size is 1.33 hectares only. She also talked about how there has been a decrease in male workers in the agricultural sector and how the female workers has increased. She mainly discussed about agricultural practices, feminization of agriculture and the fact that how 60% of the workers on the farm are women yet according to Kelkar’s report only 10% women holds ownership of the land. In addition to that women laborers are paid less in comparison to men. She shared some of the main findings from her study; that land size defines the status and power relations among the tharu, the *Mukhiya* / Head was chosen according to the land size and labor based on blood ties i.e. ‘cooperate group functioning’ a concept given by Leach. She outlined that the inheritance of land was unquestionably male centered with patrilineal ownership while women on the other hand were expected to receive property only through jewelries or household articles, which may be seen as a dowry. Bina Agarwal termed dowry as ‘Pre-Mortem inheritance’. Some of the points discussed in her paper were: role and position of women in marital relations where women are presumed to behave as a good wife; widow and land rights where childless widows were not allowed land inheritance. She concluded by stating that land titles and ownership should be taken into account and also that there is a huge gap in distribution of land ownership between men and women.

Third and the last presenter of the session is **Sankarjyoti Saikia**, who presented on the topic “Bourgeois Environmentalism vis-à-vis Urban Ecology: Reflections of Praxis in Delhi”. In this presentation he explained about the concept of Bourgeois environmentalism, not only that he explained the concept of nature to the marginalized people. He reviewed Amita Baviskar’s work “the uncivil city: Ecology, Equity and the common in Delhi”. He explained that all the construction works are done on the name of public development program, those are not for the common public those are actually for the bourgeois. He gave an example how constructions

project during the Common wealth Delhi is not for the common mass. Which actually beneficial for the bourgeois group. Not only that all the development programs like wide road, industries, even parks all of them are for the bourgeois community not for the marginalized people of the city. Also banks of Yamuna where poor people were staying, government dislocate them and give those land to the private industrialists, which causes huge ecological issue of the river.

During the discussion session Dr. Indrani asked him about the concept of “Uncivil”. He explained that what we think that marginalized people are the cause of all environmental issue we are facing , but it is actually bourgeois group who are actually cause of the uncivil city. Also another insight came from the Dr. Mitra on how the concept of space works among the marginalized people in the city.

Session 6: Advances in Palaeoanthropology, Physiological Anthropology and Public Health

Rapporteurs: *Sohini Sinha and Hansdeep Kaur Kohli*

The Chair for the session was Dr Manoj K Singh, and Discussant was Dr Shivani Chandel. Dr Manoj K Singh addressed all the participants, and gave introduction to major presentations for this session. This session was co-hosted by Imnameren Longkumar.

The session began with a presentation from **Sayak Chakraborty** on “The Denisovans have joined the chat: The Hominid at the forefront of modern Palaeoanthropology”. He started his presentation with an introduction to the topic of palaeoanthropology, explaining how different fossil primates have become important and highlighted during different times. He focussed his presentation based on discovering fossil remains, of previously unknown specimens and about new knowledge gained in arena of human evolution with new discoveries. Denisovans as new emergent race of prevalent evolution were discovered in a cave in Russia in 2008 by Michael Shunkov and his team. Mr. Chakraborty compiled various evidences found on the newly discovered branch of hominid. Evidences included were different parts of its Partial parietal bone, mandible, molars, and premolars. In 2010, different parts were discovered in Baishiya cave (China) by Chen Fahu and Zhang Dongju and was later declared as a Denisovan in 2019, through protein analysis and dates back to around 160k YBP. He also outlined some evidences from DNA that had been passed down from an archaic population of possibly *Homo erectus* which showed signs of inter-breeding with Denisovan population. There may have been few distinct Denisovan population groups which may have contributed later to the human genome

as quoted by Jacobs et al., 2019. According to the evidences and possible anatomical features, the presenter put forward a discussion that may be Denisovan related to modern human population as Denisovan genetic introgression is found in East Asian, eastern Polynesian, Melanesian aborigines and a few groups in South Asia. The inter-breeding of Denisovans can be evidenced from arte-facts found in middle Palaeolithic which may have had Neanderthal manufacturers.

Dr Manoj asked for Mr. Chakraborty's insights or reflection on issues relating to the absence of evidence of Denisovan population in India. To which, Mr. Chakraborty explained how presence of Achuelian arte facts could be researched further in context of finding evidence for Denisovan fossils, and also he explained how lack of data for Denisovan prevalence cannot be ruled out as explanation the absence of Denisovan population in India. The lacuna in research about Denisovan migration in India should be the bridge for further researches in this context and Neanderthal migration in India.

The next presentation was "Association of Obesity with the Prevalence of Hypertension among Bhil tribal population from Gujarat, India" by **Kevingu Khate**. He discussed about the Bhil tribal population of Gujarat where he studied the association of obesity with the prevalence of hypertension taking into concern various demographic, lifestyle, somatometric and physiological variables. After examination and analysis of the various obesity variables with hypertension, pre- hypertension and BP status, and the study showed how morbidly high WHtR was found to pose 3.68 fold increased risk for hypertension among the Bhil tribal population. He reported that underweight was found to pose significantly reduced risk for hypertension which is similar to the result of the present cross-sectional study, where underweight BMI and WHtR are the factors to pose significant reduced risk for hypertension. Hence he concluded that obesity was found to pose an increased risk for Hypertension and has reached epidemic proportions. His study also recorded that hypertension is not just found in the urban population but also in the rural and tribal populations with a prevalence of 31.6%. This proved that it is not only the burden of the affluent population groups but also exists in populations with lower socio-economic status. Thus, controlling and management of obesity among all populations will help control hypertension.

Dr Shivani Chandel and Prof. P.C. Joshi gave few suggestions about taking fat percentage also in final analysis for Ph.D. research submission as results will be more relevant.

Prof. Joshi also advised the presenter not to just assume things but also to base his arguments on evidences and available literatures.

The next presentation was on “Contribution of Anthropology to Global Mental Health: A SWOT Analysis” by **Shagufta Naaz Ansari**. She explained the importance of mental health amid the situation of crisis and routine life. She laments how the increase in student and farmer suicides, drug abuse and decreasing life satisfaction are few of the important factors indicating decreasing mental health situation in global context. Mental disorders constitutes 32.4% of all disease burden, as explained by the presenter with evidence of literature about global burden of mental disorders found in India and China (Baxter et al. 2016). According to National mental health survey 2014, it was found that every 5th Indian is depressed. Through this paper she explained how cultural brokers, engaged scholars and anthropologists have a crucial part to play. Mental health has now become a global health burden and studies revealed that India is contributing to 15% of it. She highlighted the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that anthropology contributes in the global mental health centres and lack of health care delivery services. She also talked about how the policy makers and clinicians deal with such issues and ethnography of psychiatric patients should be integrated with the medications to have a better understanding of the patient’s lives. Anthropologists from the developing, low and middle income countries are needed to give a better representation of their conditions. She thus concluded by stating the fact that anthropologists and clinical epidemiologists though do not walk on the same path to explore the illness but they fundamentally have the same questions, goals and principles.

Prof. P.C. Joshi, Dr. R.P. Mitra and Dr. Shivani Chandel suggested the presenter to give importance to current situation of pandemic in global context, to read some anthropological articles and to include it in her analysis as this could further her argument about mental health. Dr. R.P. Mitra suggested Ansari if she could include the context of special spaces for people with disability but are not considered abnormal. Dr Mitra also talked about the concept of ‘*Babla*’ and Prof. Joshi about ‘*Lattas*’ in Himalayas as people with disabilities but given special status as a measure to cope up with stress.

The next presentation was on “Blood pressure and handgrip among Sikh population of Delhi” by **Sukhmani Kaur**. The researcher explained how hypertension is a significant burden on the health system, and how it increases the risk of heart, brain, kidney, and other diseases. She drew her explanation from a cross-sectional study, with total participants of 222 adults between the age group of 18-55. She talked about the relationship of blood pressure and hand grip strength among the adults of the Sikh community. She also mentioned about her cross sectional

study where she took into consideration various somatometric measurements and physiological variables. She found that all the variables were significantly higher among males than females except the BMI. Mean BP was found to be higher than the normal range among males and BMI was found to be more than the normal range among both males and females. She talked of how handgrip strength is significantly associated with the risk of hypertension and is a protective factor for hypertension. She concluded with the fact that the present study shows that stronger handgrip strength is associated with a lower risk of hypertension though further studies from large scale samples are needed to verify these results and explain the possible mechanisms of this relationship and may have an important relevance for hypertension intervention. Dr K.N Saraswathy questioned on if there is any technique for increasing the handgrip. The researcher mentioned few exercise techniques which may help in increasing handgrip as hands play an important role in performing day to day activities.

Session 7: Advances in Ethnography and Field-work Methods

Rapporteurs: *Somen Rath and Navjot Kamboj*

Naveen Kumar hosted the session by welcoming Dr. Chakraverti Mahajan to take the Chair and preside over this session. Dr. Chakraverti Mahajan thanked the organizing committee and introduced the session in coherence with the theme of webinar. Then he invited Miss Rashmi Patel to deliberate on her topic as the first presentation of the session.

Firstly **Ms. Rashmi Patel** is a PhD Scholar in the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, who presented her paper titled “Entering the Field: Towards the Ethnography of an Infertility Clinic”. She gave a Brief introduction on Infertility and its types; Primary and Secondary. Through this paper she wished to discuss about; how to resolve the challenges faced when working in a privatized and closely monitored health setup and also to deliberate upon the newer challenges posed by Covid19 pandemic. She talked about the challenges of conducting fieldwork in privately owned infertility clinics, dealing with doctors and hospital staff, gate –keepers, structure of power and hierarchy. She then talked about ‘Entering the Field site’ and the struggle to situate the researcher into the existing ‘structure’ of the clinic.

The second component she mentioned was about the challenges encountered in understanding the ‘flesh and blood’ of the clinic which Malinowski called the ‘imponderabilia of actual life’ She concluded that entry into the field site was a struggle which involved dealing with the medical staff and the clinicians who saw themselves as the ‘gate keepers’ with the duty to keep their profession and workplace insulated from the prying eyes of a researcher and invite any

unwarranted attention to their practices. There was an invisible thread of rank and privilege which kept her self-conscious all the time.

Dr. Saraswathy asked Ms. Rashmi, whether there is a viable solution to attend towards the issue of conducting research in a hospital scenario, where unethical approaches and negotiations leads to shifting of the research to another hospital rather than attending to it! Although it is a bit easier in Public hospitals through official channels, but attempting to access the private healthcare domain is difficult. Should there be any initiative at the policy making framework to address such problems? Could there be any representative body from anthropological domain to be a permanent title in addressing these recurrent issues!

Ms. Rashmi responded that more protocols are necessary, but as of now many find it easier to negotiate within ethical boundaries by willing to do a collaborative study.

Prof. Joshi gave an example of doing health care based study that was possible in case of Prof. Anita Manocha from Department of Sociology DU, because of her husband, who's a surgeon himself. This allowed her to access the medical facility (ethically) without the regular hindrances created by medical staffs in general. He suggested a need for public discourse to be created, by approaching ICMR or related bodies to create a niche where anthropologists and researchers fit into health care contributing with their skills.

Archita from the audience raised question regarding the privacy in ethnography through online discussions, reciting Malinowski's "imponderabilia of everyday life" in the context of this paper! Ms. Rashmi replied that while conducting research in hospital, she had to be conscious about the medical staff monitoring her, and while online, she's conscious about the immediate as well as virtual surrounding.

Dr. Mahajan wrapped up this paper with his remarks that PhD research is much different from projects as they are time bound and hence leading to negotiations as a temporary fix. He also spoke on the administrative power hierarchy, with special reference to corporate health care and private clinics where doctors happen to be mere workers under neo-liberal corporate administration.

The next Presenter **Ms. Harmeet Kaur**, a PhD Scholar in the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, presented her paper titled "Understanding Migration from the Lens of Qualitative Methods". She conducted her fieldwork with migrants from Rajasthan, those who have shifted to Delhi for better economic opportunities. She preferred qualitative methods to study migration because methods like ethnography, narrative method, etc., adopts an understanding approach to social phenomenon like migration that is why they have an

indispensable position in social research practice. A holistic approach through participatory method, was employed by her to reconstruct the life trajectory of migrants and the material conditions through narration. She found the method of narratives as an important method to rely on the spoken words of individuals, focusing on their lives as told through their own stories. She concluded Narratives help her to collect life histories and case studies, which contributes majorly in her research findings. She maintained an interview guide to ensure uniformity in approaching the respondents. She used two effective visual methodologies in her research which are ethno photography and photo elicitation. Next, she discussed the Challenges faced at the field as well. She said that due to security reasons, visit was possible only during the day time and People were not comfortable sharing their pictures and video with her. Sometimes she just observed them from afar without any intervention, when nothing else was going on. She concluded with her recollection of the negotiations a researcher had to do in order to reach the goal, and appreciated this seminar as a productive initiative amidst the lockdown.

Dr. Chakraverti Mahajan asked whether she has been in touch with the migrants during this COVID-19 lockdown phase and how well they are coping with it! Ms. Harmeet responded that it has not been possible to keep in touch or contact during this time. But she has been able to communicate with one women who is visiting the same clinic as her.

Prof. Joshi commented that as anthropologists, especially those working in social anthropology using qualitative methods, would have to look beyond a schedule of 10am – 5pm to be able to build rapport and get the whole picture. It is important to observe people more closely and the intimacy that is built yields better understanding and professional empathy, bringing a holistic picture into account.

The third presentation was deliberated by **Subhradeep Pathak**, a PhD Scholar in the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, presented his paper based on the empirical data of his Post-Graduation thesis. His paper on “Reverence through experience: Traversing the life story of a priest in a Vaishnava shrine” elucidated his fieldwork experience at Darbar Sri Pindori Dham in Gurdaspur, Punjab in 2016. Mr. Pathak started his presentation by stating the importance of Life-history method in understanding the holistic concept of life vs a single or particular moment that constructs it. He highlighted the Polish migration study in USA, which employed life-history method for the first time to create a discursive interpretation of the biography, through narrative approach. Respondents as story-tellers, bringing forth the native voice, is a very good way to represent the emic perspective. He discussed the challenges

of the researcher in writing the native voice, and the reflexivity of researcher's personal experience as well as academic perspective. Although the 'content', 'what to write or what not' has been debated, a meaningful creation of life and a holistic subjective mapping is possible through the life-history method. Sometimes the ad verbatim transcription provides new insights, as the reader gets to analyse the context rather than the researcher advocating a certain perspective. Mr. Pathak's utilization of the life-history method in his fieldwork, was an unplanned improvisation to understand the climacteric religious identity creation of his respondent. He contrasted the value of 'turning point' in life-history study against a complete timeline of the studied case, citing example of Jews exodus and Rohingyas. Subhradeep concluded citing Prof. V.K Srivastava on Mendelbaum and life-history, as the study of life history of a common man through the 'dimension', 'turning point' and 'adaptation' as the important bits and pieces in the due course of life, rather than searching for a grand sense.

Dr. Mahajan encapsulated the three papers presented to provide a coherent insight towards the flow of the session, from Malinowski to life-history leading to the final presentation "Advances in Ethnography" by Ms. Suryasnata Mazumder.

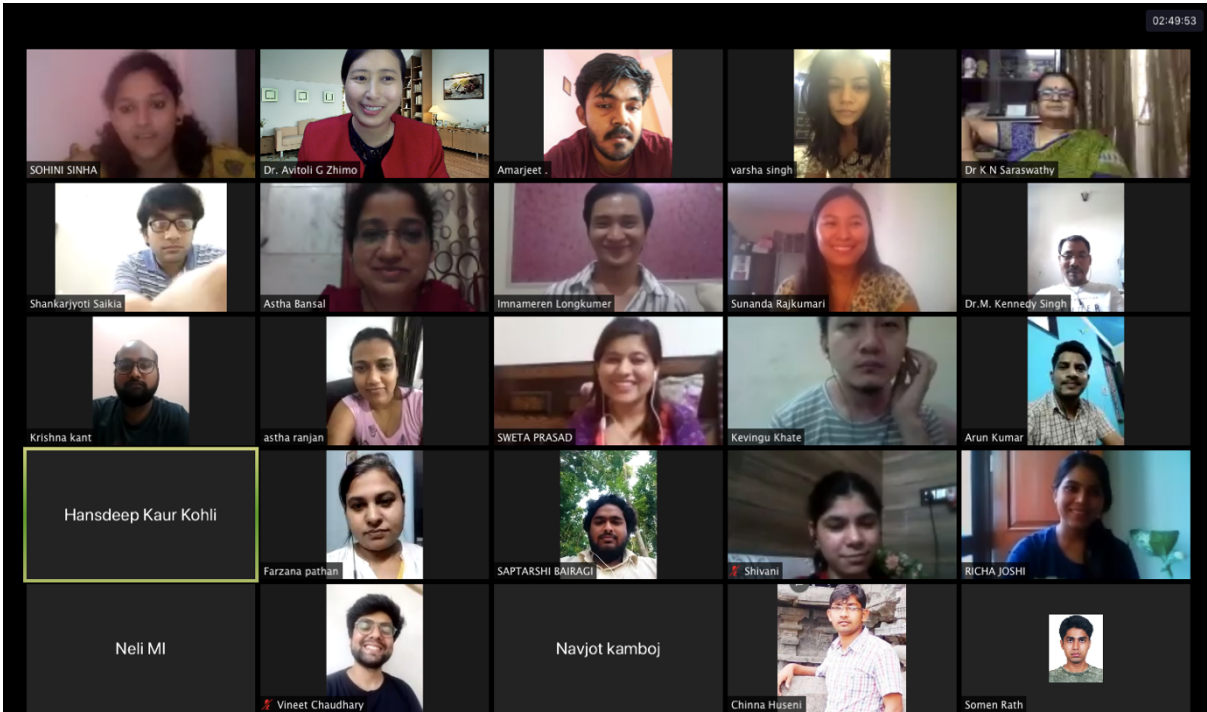
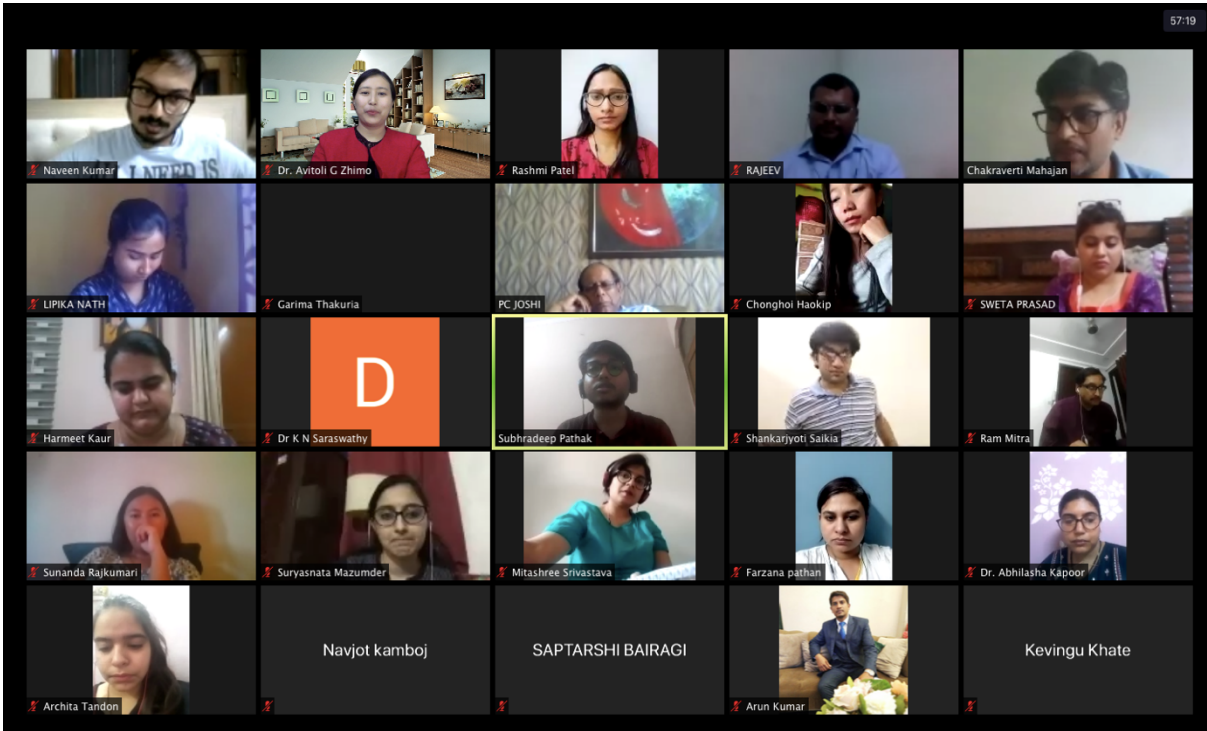
Ms. Suryanasta Mazumder, an M.Phil. Scholar in the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, has done her fieldwork in Gurdaspur (Punjab) and Kolkata (West Bengal). She urged the academic community to fathom the prevailing issues in anthropological research beyond the domain of classical ethnographic approach and tribal communities. With the ongoing global digitalization, the need of updating the approaches and methods in anthropological research is a must. She highlighted that it is time to consider the 'emotional vulnerability' of the informant, on how they feel after the researcher leaves the field, contrasting the earlier trend of studying the 'emotional vulnerability' of the latter alone. She advocated using visual interventions and multisensory approach to comprehend diverse feelings as in prayers or chanting rather than traditional textual description alone. In this current COVID-19 pandemic lockdown situation, more and more of digital techniques have been integrated into anthropological research. Ms. Mazumder talked about using social media application Facebook, to locate and contact her informants, in her study of Dawoodi Bohra community in Kolkata (West Bengal) as a requisite method. Then she expounded the essentiality of 'Cyborg anthropology' or 'Netnography' in this contemporary situation citing Daniel Miller's work as a reliable example. She introduced 'Visual Ethnography' and "Auto-ethnography" as expanding horizons while mentioning the dilemmas of securing identity and privacy in virtual space. 'Video Ethnography' is again another way of capturing the vibrancy

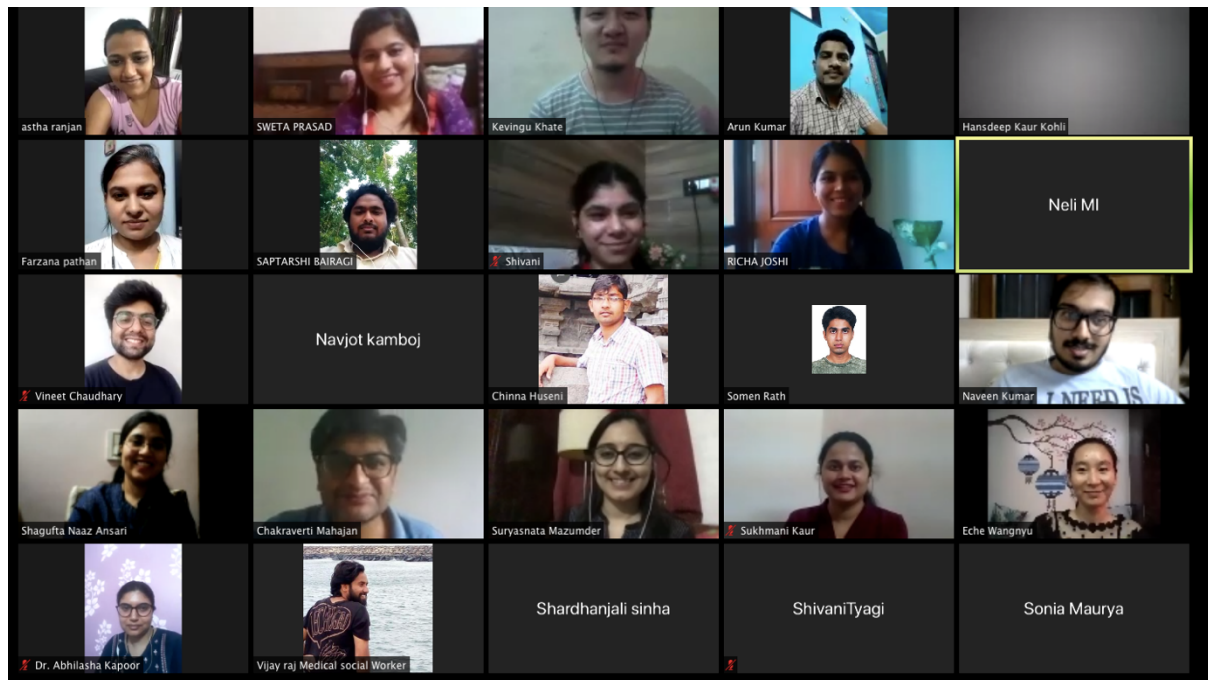
of the moment as it is experienced in a dynamic setting, where the sensory perception simply cannot be accounted with a textual description. Ms. Mazumder explained the concept of 'Participant Audition' that paves a way forth into the community in action with special emphasis on language, and in situations not directed by the researcher. She projected that while writing ethnography, it is crucial to keep authority, polyvocality and reflexivity in consideration and balanced. Suryasnata concluded her presentation touching upon the ethical grounds of these emerging advances, and how the classic ethnography has expanded its boundaries, going beyond the tribal studies while keeping the basic essence of anthropology intact in the contemporary world, where the world has digitalised itself.

Dr. Mahajan complimented with his remarks on the need of integrating diverse and latest ethnographic research methods along with the classical approach, to adapt to this changing scenario of anthropology fieldwork amidst uncertain and unanticipated times. With this, he concluded the seminar congratulating the deliberators for their presentation and Mr. Naveen Kumar brought the session to an end.

The valedictory session began with the address from the Head of the Department, Prof. P.C. Joshi. Prof. Joshi deliberated on how the theories of anthropology will keep emerging concerning social reality. Given the current scenario where COVID-19 has become a widely discussed health issues, he supposed that it may even be possible to come up with a sub-discipline called 'Anthropology of COVID-19'.

Following the Address by the Head, Dr. Zhimo took over the screen to present the rapporteurs' report. At the end of the report, Dr. Zhimo concluded that post covid-19, ethnography may head towards virtual ethnography or networked anthropology. Dr. K.N. Saraswathy, in her vote of thanks, graciously thank the Head of the Department Prof. P.C. Joshi for his diligent initiatives towards the academic growth of the department. She also expressed profound gratitude to the organizing committee for drawing on such relevant and stimulating themes for the webinar. Lastly, she thanked all the participants for their enthusiastic participation.





~ End of report ~