UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
SCHOOL OF SCICENCES

ABSTRACT BOOK

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON

ANTHROPOLOGY IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICE: PATHWAYS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

IN HONOUR OF PROF. B.V. SHARMA

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Chief Patron
Prof. Basuthkar Jagadeeshwar Rao

Vice-Chancellor
University of Hyderabad

Patron
Prof. K. Suneetha Rani

Dean, School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad

Vice-Patron
Prof. M.Romesh Singh

Head of the Dept. of Anthropology
School of Social Sciences
University of Hyderabad

Convener

Dr. Srinivasu Nookarapu, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Co-Conveners

Dr. Nanda Kishore Kannuri, Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Dr. Madhuri N. V., Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Dr. Alok Kumar Pandey, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Committee Members

Dr. George Tharkan C., Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Dr. Apparao Thamminaina, Associate Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Dr. Shaik Abdul Munaf, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, UoH

Dr. Kalyan Reddy, Director, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST), Govt. of India

Dr. Sipoy Sarveswar, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Anthropology, Visva Bharati University, West Bengal

Dr. Priya Thomas, Advisor & Faculty(G), IHMR Bangalore and Consultant, Neonatal Foundation of India.

Sponsors

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India
Sthreesakthi Private Ltd., Hyderabad

Dakshin Foundation Bengaluru, Karnataka

9:00 – 9:30 am   Registration at Dr. Zakir Husain Lecture Hall Complex (Venue)

INAUGURAL SESSION (9:30 A.M TO 11:30AM)

26th September 2025
Venue: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad
                          Dr. Zakir Husain Lecture Hall Complex, University of Hyderabad

Chief Guest: *Prof. K. Suneetha Rani, Dean, School of Social Sciences, University of Hyderabad*

9:30 A.M   *Inviting the dignitaries on the Dais*

9:35A.M   *Adress by the Chief Guest and about the School of Social Sciences*

9:45 A.M   *About the Department*
                          Prof. M. Romesh Singh, Head, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

9:47 AM   *About the Seminar*
                          Dr. Nookarapu Srinivasu, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

9:50AM   *About Prof. BV Sharma*
                          Dr. Nanda Kishore Kannuri, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

9:55 A.M   **Message by the Guests of Honour**
                          Prof. SN Ratha, Former Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Sambalpur University

                          Prof. KK Basa, Chairman of the National Monuments Authority (NMA), GoI

                          Prof. Vijoy S Sahay, Emeritus Professor and Former Head, Department of Anthropology Allahabad University

                          Dr. KK Chakravarti, IAS (Rtd.), Former Secretary, Ministry of Culture, GoI

10:20 A.M   A Documentary on Prof. BV Sharma

10:30 A.M   Felicitation of Prof. BV Sharma

10:45 A.M   Prof. BV Sharma's Message

11:00 A.M   Keynote Speaker: *Prof. S.M. Patnaik, Head, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi & former Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University*
11:25 A.M   Vote of Thanks:
                          Dr. Alok Kumar Pandey, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

TEA BREAK: 11:30AM TO11:45 AM

PARALLEL SESSIONS

	SESSION: 1A	
	Theme: Ethnographies of Healing, Belief Systems, and Social Change	
	Chairperson: *Prof. SN Ratha, Former Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Sambalpur University*	
	Venue: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
	Time: 11:45AM-1:30PM	
1	From '*Mun*' to '*Mata*': The upsurge of syncretic faith healing in Sikkim Himalayas	K. R. Rama Mohan & Monila Limboo
2	Health, Healing, and Indigenous Knowledge: A study of the Ang (Jarawa) Tribe of Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India	Dr. Piyusa Ranjan Sahoo
3	Ethnophysiological and Social Connotations of Blood Among Tribal and Rural Communities in India	Sohini Ghosh
4	Psychosocial Stress in Transitional Societies: Evidence from Eastern India Background	Karishma Yasmin
5	Insights into Adult Kidney Transplantation: A Qualitative PubMed Systematic Review of Literature (2005-2025)	Amulya Kalangi
6	Health status of women: An anthropological study of Gollagudem Village	Gouda Deepthi

	SESSION:1B	
	Theme: Advancing Social Justice: Policy and Inclusion in Contemporary Times	
	Chairperson: *Prof. N Sudhakar Rao, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*	
	Venue: Seminar Hall (S 3), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
	Time: 11:45AM to 1:30PM	
1	Tribal Economy: In-Situ Economic Activities Among Tribes of Chintapalle Mandal, Andhra Pradesh	Dr. D. Ramesh & Chompa Naidu
2	Development Interventions and the SDGs: Assessing Policy Implications for the Dongaria Kondh Community	Hemalata Agrawalla & Nibedita Agrawalla
3	CMAM- An Evidence-Based Approach to Tackle Malnutrition in Children Under Five Years	R. Rajendra babu and
		Dr Veerabhadrudu B
4	Social Support and Drug Addiction Relapse Among the Female Addicts of Manipur	Nameirakpam Napoleon Meitei
5	Gender Inclusivity and Digital Education: Analysis on Kokborok & Its Rejuvenation	Partha Sarathi Sarkar

	SESSION:1C	
	Theme: Bio-Cultural Context of Health, Disease, and Wellbeing	
	Chairperson: *Prof. BR Shamanna, School of Medical Sciences, University of Hyderabad*	
	Venue: Seminar Hall (S 6), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
	Time: 11:45AM-1:30PM	
1	Cognitive Functions and Malnutrition among the Adolescents: A Systematic Review	Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
2	Assessing the relationship between 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels and urolithiasis: A case-control study among the Meiteis of Manipur	Malvika Yumnam & Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
3	CaSR gene polymorphisms as risk factor for hypercalciuria and urolithiasis: A meta-analysis	Aheibam Robertson Singh & Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
4	Narratives of death and living among the Savara: An exploration into Ethnocosmology	Y. Rupa Mounika
5	When Age Becomes a Barrier: Diagnostic Delays and the Cracks in Kerala's Early Breast Cancer Detection Paradigm for Younger Women.	Athira Kamal

6	Serum 25-Hydroxyvitamin D Levels and Its Association with Body Mass Index and Waist–Hip Ratio in the Meitei Community of Manipur	Erika Pebam & Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
7	Hypertension and Health-seeking behaviour among Gonds and Kolams of Adilabad districts, Telangana.	Pranav K &Anushree S Panikkassery

SESSION:1D		
Theme: Cultural Heritage, Art and Museums		
Chairperson: Dr. Navina Jafa, *Director, Indian Cultural Heritage Research Delhi, New Delhi*		
Venue: Class Room, First Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad		
Time: 11:45AM-1:30PM		
1	An Anthropological Study on the Artistic and Folk Traditions of Tribal People of Madhya Pradesh	Dr. Kasi Eswarappa
2	Toddy Festival of Koya Tribe: The Vibrant Cultural Heritage of Andhra Pradesh State	Dr. Naga Raju Chikkala
3	The Sacred Shrines of Baruni Hill: Conservation of Ecology and Cultural Identity of Chakpa Andro in Manipur, India	Shagolshem Santhalen Singh
4	The Hermeneutics of Ethnographic Fiction: A Textual-Ethnographic Inquiry into Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's Ponni in Contemporary Attappadi	Dr. Sreehari K R
5	Anthropological Understanding to Find Solutions to Social Issues and Challenges of Kuravar Community in Tamil Nadu	S. Sasi Kumar
6	Buddhavanam - A Buddhist Heritage Project of Telangana	Bakka Rupika

LUNCH BREAK: 1:30 PM TO 2:30 PM

Invited Speakers (2:30pm to 3:30pm)
VENUE: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad

Chair   Prof. Vijoy S Sahay, Emeritus Professor and Former Head, Department of Anthropology Allahabad University

Speaker 01:   **AI, Indigenous Knowledge and Sustainable Development: Some Thoughts**
Prof. R Siva Prasad, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

Speaker 02:   ***Cultural Skill Mapping, Heritage Landscapes and Sustainable Tourism***
Dr Navina Jafa, Director, Indian Cultural Heritage Research Delhi, New Delhi

Speaker 03:   **Infertility, Hope Technology and Anthropology**
Prof Subho Roy, Professor Biological Anthropology Unit, Kolkata Biological Sciences Division Kolkata and General Secretary, INCAA

TEA BREAK (3:30PM TO3:40PM)

PARELLEL SESSIONS

SESSION:2A		
Theme: Transforming Gender Practices and Challenges		
Chairperson: *Dr. NV Madhuri, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*		
Venue: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad		
Time: 3:45PM TO 5:30PM		
1	Fighting Cocks and Fighting Norms: Women's Agency and Evolving Roles in Andhra Pradesh's Cockfighting Culture	T.S.Janaki Ramaraju & Dr. Jesurathnam Devarapalli
2	When 'Free Time' is Not Free: A Gendered Analysis of Time Poverty and Water Collection in Barmer District	Sanjay Prajapati
3	Breaking Gender Barriers: The Transformative Impact of STEM Scholarships for Girls in Hyderabad, Telangana	Mumtaz Parveen and Thalari Jeevan Kumar
4	Economic Dimension of Status, Role and Empowerment of Tribal Women	Dr. D.Ramesh & Vennela Karri

5	Legally In(visible): A study of extra-legal and legal action of Tamil Nadu Dalit Christians against caste discrimination	Roy Anto Antoni
6	Applied Anthropology and the Mobility Challenges of Irular Women in Tamil Nadu	Sowparnika

SESSION: 2B	
Theme: Tribes, Vulnerability and SDGs	
Chairperson: *Prof. M Romesh Singh, Head, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*	
Venue: Seminar Hall (S 3), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
Time: 3:45PM TO 5:30PM	

1	A Perspective Study on Urban Dynamics: (With reference to urban slums in Vizag city, Andhra Pradesh, India)	Dr Adari kishore kumar
2	Indigenous Knowledge and the SDGs: An Anthropological Pathways to Climate Resilience and Sustainable Future	Dr. Charu Mujundar
3	Dam, Displacement, and Livelihood: A Study of Tumukhong Village in Manipur, India	Shougrakpam Utam Kumar Singh
4	From Village Ethnography to Sustainable Development Goals: A Restudy of the Gonds of Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh	Dr. Poonam Tripathi
5	Socio-Economic Conditions of Koraga: A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of Kerala, South India	Sarath Babu & Dr. Kasi Eswarappa

SESSION: 2C	
Theme: Environment, Culture, and Adaptation	
Chairperson: *Prof R Siva Prasad, former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*	
Venue: Seminar Hall (S 6), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
Time: 3:45PM TO 5:30PM	

1	Anthropology of Plastics: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Medical Waste and Sustainability	Akhilesh Bonthu & Dr Nanda Kishore Kannuri
2	Endangering Nomadic Pastoralism: A Case of Shauka Bhotiya of Central Indian Himalayas	D.V. Prasad
3	Political Ecology of Water and Traditional Water Management System in Manipur	Dr. M. Kennedy Singh
4	Sustainability and Consumer Culture: Tribal Wisdom from Jharkhand	Karishma Singh
5	Community Wellbeing and Development among the Marine Fishing Community of Andhra Pradesh	Dalibandhu Pukkalla
6	Traditional Livelihoods and New Economic Opportunities: A Study of Chenchus of Nallamala Forest of Andhra Pradesh	Sagar Kodi & Dr. Valerie Dkhar

Day 2: 27.09.2025 (Saturday)

Invited Speakers (9:15am to 10:15am)

VENUE: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad

Chair	**Prof P Venkata Rao, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad**
Speaker 01:	**Anthropology, Museum and Sustainable Future** *KK Basa, Chairman of the National Monuments Authority (NMA), MoC, GoI*
Speaker 02:	**Maritime Anthropology and SDG-14: Assessment, Academics and Advocacy for Development of Fisheries in India** *Prof P Vijaya Prakash, Vice Chairperson, APHERMC, Govt of A.P, & Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, Andhra University*
Speaker 03:	**Rationalising Affirmative Action for Ensuring Equity and Social Justice** *Prof S Gregory, Former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Chairperson, Department of Anthropology, Kannur University*

PARALLEL SESSIONS

SESSION: 3A	
Theme: Learning, Culture, and Social Change	
Chairperson: Dr. Appa Rao T, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad	
Venue: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
Time: 10:15AM to 11:45AM	
1	Understanding Urban Slum Educational Dropouts from Habitus Framework; A Case Study of Pulianthope, Chennai	Dr. Jesurathnam Devarapalli & T.S.Janaki Ramaraju
2	Disruption to Adaptation: Pathways to Post- COVID Digital Learning among the Children of Andhra Pradesh	Amareswar Theeda
3	Learning Experience: Exploring Relational Factor in Government Primary Schools of Telangana	T. Meghana Kanthi Priya
4	Teaching Anthropology to Multidisciplinary Audiences: Ideations, Reflections and Implications	Dr. Snigdha Vishnoi
5	Cultivating Change: Education and Culture in Social Change	K Mohan Chandu
6	An Approach towards Developed community Convergence and Collaboration a Success Story of ASR District.	Narayanareddy Gade

SESSION: 3B	
Theme: Education Systems and Innovation	
Chairperson: *Prof. G. Nagaraju, Head, Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad*	
Venue: Seminar Hall (S 3), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
Time: 10:15AM to 11:45AM	
1	The Mentorship Effect: TPD lessons from Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh	Sagarika Unnikrishnan and Sahil Sharma
2	Significant Factors for Parents to Choose International Schools for their Children: An Anthropological Study of International School Parents Preferences in Hyderabad	Bandaru Pavani
3	Mother-Tongue Education and Cultural Identity: Multilingualism, Policy, and Social Transformation in India	Korra Nithin
4	Building Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Public-School Infrastructure in Telangana	Mumtaz Parveen and Thalari Jeevan Kumar
5	Chrysalis Genie – The World's First Teaching Console in School Education Segment	Sundar Raj, Bharath, Ravi Teja
6	Everyone needs a 'Sahyogi': Lessons from the creation of teacher support cadres in rural Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh	Sagarika Unnikrishnan & Sahil Sharma

	SESSION: 3C
	Theme: Substantiable Practices and Resource Management
	Chairperson: *Prof. Vijoy S Sahay, Emeritus Professor and Former Head, Department of Anthropology Allahabad University and Editor, The Oriental Anthropologist.*
	Venue: Seminar Hall (S 6), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad
	Time: 10:15AM to 11:45AM

1	Evaluating Contemporary Adivasi Practices: Building a Roadmap to Sustainable Development	R. Venugopala Rao
2	Mapping of Sustainability and Sustainable Farming Methods of the Gond Tribe: An Empirical Investigation from the Anuppur District of Madhya Pradesh	Manisha Singh & Dr. Kasi Eswarappa
3	Are Fishers the only one responsible for sustainability: A case study of fishers in Palk Bay	Haripriya Eswaran
4	From Global Blue Economy to Local Struggles: Rethinking Sustainable Development in Kerala's Marine Fisheries Sector	Manju J Manoj
5	The Shandies `and Development among Tribes	Dr. D. Ramesh & Pavan Kalyan
6	Supersizing the Mind: CPSS for Sustainable Natural Resource Management	Aravind Krishnan
7	From Drifting Nets to Shifting Horizons: Is Transformation to Tourism Always A Sustainable Step In Fisheries Landscape	Meghana Teerthala

<div align="center">TEA BREAK (11:45AM TO 12:00PM)</div>

PARALLEL SESSIONS

	SESSION: 4A
	Theme: Gendered Embodiments and Reproductive Healthcare
	Chairperson: *Prof P Venkata Rao, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*
	Venue: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad
	Time: 12:00PM-1:30PM

1	Medical Tourism and Surrogacy: Public Health Perspectives	Dr Sunita Reddy
2	Menstrual Health Characteristics and Influencing Factors Among Poumai Women, Manipur, India	Karingailiu Panmei & Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
3	Changing trajectories of traditional post-natal care in Kerala: Rise of ayurvedic post-natal care	Vishnupriya M
4	Infertility, Inequality, and Social Navigation: Ethnographic Perspectives on Childlessness and Health in Telangana, South India	Dr. Venkatesh Boddu
5	Maternal Health and Policy Interventions: An Ethnographic Inquiry among a Tribal Community in Southern India	Neemkar Anoosha
6	Elastic Practices: Understanding Menstrual Cups Beyond Innovation and Feasibility	Sumukhi Marupaka

	SESSION: 4B
	Theme: Urban and Social Dynamics
	Chairperson: *Dr. George Tharakan C, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*
	Venue: Seminar Hall (S 3), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad
	Time: 12:00PM to 1:30PM

1	Human Meaning Orientation Theory: Inaugurating New Paradigm Shifts in the Study of Humanity	Dr. Pedarattaiah Gadde
2	Navigating exclusion in urban spaces: a journey of identity from village margins to city streets	Dr. Mithun Sikdar
3	Shaping Futures from the Margins: Women as Agents of Change.	Gangarapu Sandhya
4	Order in Chaos: Analysing Inter-Ethnic Conflicts and Space Negotiations in Kolkata's Chinatown	Syed Ayaan Alam & Dr. Valerie Dkhar

5	Vegetable Vending as a Dimension of Urban Dynamics: A Study in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh	Doraboina Udaya Kumar
6	Gangtok in Motion: Ethnography of Everyday Life and Sustainable Urban Practices	Ayushi Nirola and Sandhya Tamang

SESSION: 4C	
Theme: Navigating Online Spaces and Digital Transformations	
Chairperson: *Prof S Gregory, Former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Chairperson, Department of Anthropology, Kannur University*	
Venue: Seminar Hall (S 6), Second Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad	
Time: 12:00PM to 1:30PM	

1	Hashtags of Hierarchy: Instagram as a Site of Caste Consciousness and Political Expression	Shambhavi Ojha
2	Tradition in Transition: A Study of Socio-Cultural Change in a South Indian Tribe	Rambabu Marla
3	State-led Urban Digital Transformation: Key Lessons from 4 states	Mathews P Joseph
4	From Likes to Lifestyle: The Influence of Instagram on Young Adults	M Abhinay
5	Gaming the Field: Immersion, Agency, and Culture in Online Game Communities	Pranav Peyyala
6	Strengthening Public Education through STEM & Digital Learning Conceptual Framework (Girls focused)	Mumtaz

LUNCH BREAK (1:30PM TO 2:30PM)

INVITED SPEAKERS (2:30PM TO 3:30PM)
VENUE: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad
Chair   KK Basa, Chairman of the National Monuments Authority (NMA), MoC, GoI

SPEAKER 01: **My Kind of Anthropology**
Prof. Vijoy S Sahay, Former Emeritus Professor, Former Head, Department of Anthropology Allahabad University and Editor, The Oriental Anthropologist.
SPEAKER 02: **Indian Ontology, Existence, and the Contradictions of Land, Domination, and Sustainability**

Prof N. Sudhakar Rao, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad
SPEAKER 03: **GeoAcademics: the Politics of Knowledge Production**
Dr. Surya Prakash Upadhyay – Associate Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Mandi

TEA BREAK (3:30PM TO 3:45PM)

ROUND TABLE ((3:45PM TO 4:30PM)

VENUE: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad

Anthropology in Practice: Shaping Policy and Development through Academic Insights

Prof Vijoy S Sahay- *Former Emeritus Professor, Former Head, Department of Anthropology Allahabad University (Chair)*
Prof KK Basa-*Chairman of the National Monuments Authority (NMA), MoC, GoI*
Prof BV Sharma- *Director, Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, GoI, Kolkata (Chair) &Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*
Prof Amitabh Pande- *Director / CEO-Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya Shamla, Ministry of Culture, GoI, Bhopal*
Sri V. Sarveshwar Reddy- *Additional Director, Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Telangana, Hyderabad*
Prof SM Patnaik-*Head, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi & Former Vice-Chancellor Utkal University*

Prof Subho Roy-*Professor Biological Anthropology Unit, Kolkata Biological Sciences Division Kolkata and General Secretary, INCAA*

Prof P Venkata Rao- *Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*

Prof Vijaya Prakash-*Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, Andhra University, Visakhapatnam*

Prof N Sudhakar Rao-*Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad*

Prof S Gregory-*Former Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences and Chairperson, Department of Anthropology, Kannur University*

Dr. Malladi Sree Nagesh- *Technical Advisor- Education (South India), Bal Raksha Bharat, (formerly Save the Children, India)*

INCAA Hyderabad Chapter

VALEDICTORY SESSION
27th September, 2025 (Saturday)

VENUE: Conference Hall (G 9), Ground Floor, Zakir Husain LHC, University of Hyderabad

Chair: Prof KK Basa, *Chairman of the National Monuments Authority (NMA), MoC, GoI*

Guest of Honour: Prof Amitabh Pande, Director / CEO-Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Ministry of Culture, GoI, Bhopal

4:30 pm to 4:45pm	Rapporteur's Report
4:45 pm to 5:30 pm	Valedictory Address by: Prof Amitabh Pande
5:30 pm to 6:00 pm	Address by: Prof BV Sharma, Director, Anthropological Survey of India & Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad
6:00 pm to 6:15	Vote of Thanks: Dr. Nanda Kishore Kannuri, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

****

THEME

ETHNOGRAPHIES OF HEALING, BELIEF SYSTEMS, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Chairperson
Prof. SN Ratha
Former Professor of Sociology and Social Anthropology
Sambalpur University

From '*Mun*' to '*Mata*': The upsurge of syncretic faith healing in Sikkim Himalayas

1.K. R. Rama Mohan
Professor
Department of Anthropology
Sikkim University
Gangtok, Sikkim
2. Monila Limboo
Research Scholar
Department of Anthropology
Sikkim University
Gangtok, Sikkim
krrmohan@cus.ac.in, monilalimboo8@gmail.com

Abstract

An upsurge of *Mun* (Lepcha woman ritual specialist*)* to *Mata* (Hindu/syncretic ritual specialist) is gaining phenomenally in many parts of Sikkim. This paper analyses the changing nature of the identity among the Lepcha community ritual specialists and their healing process, particularly about the women ritual specialists/shamans of the Lepcha ethnic community. Through a detailed examination of its ritual/healing process, including diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, the paper provides an understanding of vernacular perspectives on medical ecology.

The transformative/ syncretic process of *Mun* to *Mata* reflects social or ritual fluidity, which informs the potential for the preservation of ethnic community healing practices. Additionally, the paper explores common health issues and the concept of soul loss as a fundamental illness in the community. This *Mata* phenomena elucidates how communities perceive and practice the healing process, an important theme in contemporary anthropological studies.

Keywords: Healing, Health, Himalayas, Illness, Rituals, Shamans

Health, Healing, and Indigenous Knowledge: A study of the *Ang* (Jarawa) Tribe of Andaman and Nicobar Islands of India

Dr. Piyusa Ranjan Sahoo, Superintending Anthropologist and Sub- regional head, Anthropological Survey of India, Govt. of India, Sub-Regional Centre, Jagdalpur, Bastar, Chhattisgarh-494001.

Abstract

The Ang (Jarawa) tribe, one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, represents a small hunter-gatherer community whose survival strategies are deeply rooted in their environment. Their traditional healthcare system is not a distinct institution but an integral part of daily life, intricately woven into their knowledge of tropical forests, soil, flora, fauna, and other natural resources. Like many indigenous peoples, the Ang (Jarawa) possess a sophisticated understanding of medicinal plants, which they employ for treating wounds, fevers, and other common ailments. In addition to plant-based remedies, they also make use of natural materials such as red clay for specific therapeutic purposes. These practices are both preventive and curative, reflecting a holistic approach to health. The transmission of healthcare knowledge is oral, grounded in cultural values, and passed from one generation to the next. Notably, practices related to childbirth, postnatal care, breastfeeding, and childhood illnesses hold a central place in their healing traditions. Such customs, observed since ancient times, continue to guide the community in managing everyday health concerns. Unlike many societies where designated healers or shamans exist, the Jarawa do not have specialized practitioners. Instead, elderly members, men and women act as collective custodians of health knowledge. Their role is essential in diagnosing ailments and applying remedies, reinforcing the shared and communal character of indigenous medicine. Overall, the traditional healthcare system of the Ang (Jarawa) exemplifies resilience, adaptability, and a profound symbiosis with their environment. It highlights the community's reliance on indigenous knowledge as a cornerstone of health and well-being. At the same time, it underscores the importance of preserving such knowledge systems, which embody centuries of accumulated wisdom and remain vital to the tribe's cultural identity and survival.

Key words: Ang (Jarawa), health, healing, healthcare practices, A & N Islands

Ethnophysiological and social connotations of blood among tribal and rural communities in India

Sohini Ghosh
Senior Research Fellow
Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata
Email: sohiniofficial17@gmail.com

Abstract

Blood, while biologically defined as the vital fluid of circulation, operates as a powerful cultural symbol that embodies ideas of vitality, morality, kinship, and identity. This paper examines the ethnophysiological and social meanings of blood among tribal and rural communities in India, situating them within broader anthropological debates on the body, health, and society. The central research questions are: How is blood conceptualised and acted upon in local cultural frameworks, and how do these meanings shape practices of health, kinship, and morality? In what ways do symbolic and biomedical understandings of blood intersect or diverge in contemporary India?

Methodologically, the paper combines ethnographic material from fieldwork in rural and tribal contexts with a comparative analysis of textual, ritual, and biomedical discourses on blood. This approach allows for tracing the continuities and disjunctions between indigenous knowledge systems and modern institutions such as blood banks, plasma trade, and biomedical technologies. Findings highlight that blood is perceived locally as central to vitality, reproduction, and health, with its colour, density, and flow serving as diagnostic markers. Illnesses are often attributed to polluted or obstructed blood; folk remedies emphasise purification and replenishment. At the same time, blood functions beyond physiology: it grounds kinship idioms and caste hierarchies, shapes moral and gendered discourses around menstruation and masculinity, and underpins ritual practices of sacrifice, vengeance, and devotion. In modern contexts, blood acquires further meanings in politics (martyrdom, nationalism), law (blood feud, blood money), and ecology (the earth's "lifeblood"), while also permeating art, cinema, and literature.
By integrating these diverse perspectives, the paper argues that blood operates as a cultural barometer — mediating between biology and society, the sacred and the profane, and the intimate body and collective life. The study thus underscores the significance of blood as both a material substance and a symbolic medium in understanding health, identity, and social order.

Keywords: Blood, Ethnophysiology, Symbolism, Ritual, Identity, Gender, Politics

Psychosocial Stress in Transitional Societies: Evidence from Eastern India Background

Karishma Yasmin, Ph.D.
research scholar
Department of Anthropology,
Central University of Odisha
Koraput
Email: kyasmin_phd@cuo.ac.in

Abstract

Rapid urbanization has reshaped social and cultural life in India, shifting populations from traditional agrarian lifestyles to modern urban routines. These transitions alter dietary habits, physical activity, and family structures, weakening traditional support systems. Psychosocial stress emerges as a key consequence of this transition and may heighten the risk of mental health disorders in transitional societies.

Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 993 adults in four urbanizing towns of Kalahandi district, Odisha. Data were collected on sociodemographic characteristics, lifestyle behaviors, and psychosocial stress using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10). Descriptive statistics established prevalence, while correlation and logistic regression identified determinants of stress.

Results

Moderate stress was the predominant category, reported by 53–63% of participants across sites, while 18–25% experienced high stress. Elevated stress was significantly associated with suboptimal fruit and vegetable intake, sedentary activity patterns, and nuclear family living arrangements. These findings indicate that the erosion of traditional communal support structures and adopting modernized routines contribute to heightened stress levels. Stress thus reflects both the psychosocial costs of modernization and a warning signal of potential future mental health burdens.

Conclusion

The transition from traditional to modern lifestyles in Eastern India has been accompanied by rising psychosocial stress, positioning stress as a critical public health concern in urbanizing contexts. Evidence from this study highlights the need for culturally responsive interventions that address psychosocial demands while integrating protective elements of traditional practices to mitigate mental health risks in transitional societies.

Insights into Kidney Transplantation: A qualitative PubMed Systematic Review of Literature (2005-2025)

Amulya Kalangi
Research Scholar
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

Abstract Background:

Kidney transplantation (KT) significantly impacts patients' physical, psychological, and social well-being. This systematic literature review (SLR) synthesizes qualitative evidence on lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and psychosocial outcomes associated with KT.

Methods:

A comprehensive PubMed search was conducted for articles published between 2005–2025 in English, available as free full text. The search included Key terms 'kidney transplantation' OR 'renal transplantation' combined with qualitative keywords, excluding quantitative, mixed-method, survey, and randomized trials. Inclusion criteria focused on adult patients, lived experiences and psychosocial perspectives.

Results:

Thirty qualitative studies were included. Thematic analysis revealed five major themes: 1) Decision-making and expectations; 2) Psychosocial and emotional experiences; 3) Quality of life and functional outcomes; 4) Coping strategies and support systems; 5) Gender and cultural influences. Findings emphasize the complex interplay between medical, social, and psychological factors influencing KT outcomes.

Conclusion:

KT profoundly affects patients beyond clinical outcomes. Qualitative insights highlight the need for personalized, culturally sensitive, and holistic care. Keywords: Kidney transplantation, Qualitative, Lived experiences, Psychosocial outcomes, Systematic literature review

Chairperson
Prof. N Sudhakar Rao
Former Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

Tribal Economy: In-Situ Economic Activities among the Tribes of Chintapalle Mandal, Andhra Pradesh

1. Dr. D.Ramesh,
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: dr.anthro.au@gmail.com
2. Chompa Naidu
M.A. in Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: chompanaidu1999@gmail.com.

Abstract:

The tribal economy is fundamentally primitive and subsistence-oriented, deeply intertwined with its ecological surroundings through simple technology and a mixed economy. This paper focuses on the contemporary tribal economy, particularly their in-situ economic activities among the tribes of Chintapalle mandal.

The methodology involved comprehensive fieldwork across three tribal shandies, employing structured schedules. Random sampling and stratified random sampling techniques are used for qualitative data. Qualitative anthropological methods, including participant observation and interviews, were also central and supplemented by secondary data from census reports and governmental bodies.

Key findings reveal that the tribal economy is fundamentally subsistence-oriented, characterized by simple technology and a mix of activities such as shifting cultivation (podu), agriculture (millets, pulses, oilseeds), and the collection of minor forest produce (tamarind, adda leaf, medicinal herbs, honey). Shandies serve as vital in-situ sites for tribals to engage in small trades, selling their surplus produce and handmade crafts (bamboo crafts, wooden tools)

to acquire essential commodities. However, these economic activities are significantly hampered by exploitation from private traders and middlemen who manipulate prices and employ underweighting tactics, leading to distress sales and chronic indebtedness. In post-COVID, these areas saw the emergence of small vendor shops (Kirana kottu). Some are engaged in online e-commerce activities for their needs. Infrastructural deficits, including the lack of storage facilities and shelters, exacerbate tribal vulnerabilities, compelling immediate sales at low prices. Despite the GCC's mandate to support tribal livelihoods, its operational limitations often lead tribals to favour informal credit from private moneylender-cum-traders due to easier access, despite exploitative interest rates.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the complex dynamics of in situ tribal economic activities and their role in the holistic development of tribal communities. It provides crucial insights for developing culturally sensitive and equitable interventions aimed at protecting tribal livelihoods and promoting sustainable economic integration.

Keywords: Tribal Economy, In-situ Markets, GCC, Sustainable economic integration

Development Interventions and the SDGs: Assessing Policy Implications for the Dongaria Kondh Community

1. Hemalata Agrawalla
School of Anthropology
Gangadhar Meher University
Odisha
Email: hemalata.agrawalla@gmail.com

2. Nibedita Agrawalla
Regional Coordinator
Vigyan Jyoti Programme
NVS Regional Office, Hyderabad

Abstract
Introduction: The Dongaria Kondh, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) residing in Odisha's Niyamgiri hills, embodies unique cultural and ecological knowledge. Despite numerous development interventions, they continue to face poverty, malnutrition, and marginalization. This study situates their lived realities within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
Objectives: The paper seeks to:

1. Examine the nature and scope of development interventions targeted at the Dongaria Kondh.
2. Assess their effectiveness in achieving SDG-linked outcomes; and
3. Explore policy-practice gaps and recommend culturally sensitive alternatives.

Methodology: A mixed-method approach was adopted, combining policy review with field-level qualitative research in the Rayagada district. Data sources included focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews with community members and frontline workers, and secondary literature. Thematic analysis was used to map interventions against specific SDG targets.

Results: Findings reveal that horticulture-based livelihood initiatives, the revival of indigenous food systems, and targeted schemes such as PM-JANMAN have enhanced income security and service access. However, policy discontinuities (e.g., closure of nutrition centres), limited community participation, and restricted forest access weaken long-term sustainability. While interventions contribute to SDG indicators, gaps remain in nutritional outcomes, educational continuity, and climate resilience.

Conclusion: The study underscores that sustainable development for the Dongaria Kondh requires ecosystem-sensitive and participatory policy frameworks. Strengthening indigenous knowledge, ensuring continuity of social services, and empowering community institutions are critical for aligning interventions with the SDGs. Policy reforms that balance livelihood security with cultural autonomy hold the key to inclusive and resilient development.

Keywords: Dongaria Kondh, Development Interventions, SDG, Indigenous Knowledge, Tribal Livelihoods.

CMAM- an evidence-based approach to tackle malnutrition in children under five years

R. Rajendra babu and Dr Veerabhadrudu B
State Program Officer,
Vijayavahini Charitable Foundation, Andhra Pradesh
Email: veerab@vijayavahini.org

 Abstract:
Malnutrition among children under five years of age remains one of India's most pressing public health challenges. Despite decades of targeted interventions, progress has been uneven and slow. According to NFHS-4 (2015–16), 38.4% of children were stunted, 21.0% wasted, and 35.7% underweight. NFHS-5 (2019–21) showed only modest improvements: 35.5% stunting, 19.3% wasting, and 32.1% underweight. The persistently high levels of wasting indicative of acute malnutrition remain above the WHO's emergency threshold of 15%. In Andhra Pradesh, NFHS-4 reported stunting at 31.4%, wasting at 17.2%, and underweight at 31.9%. NFHS-5 showed slight improvements, yet wasting remained largely unchanged at 16.1%, signaling the need for a more effective approach.

The Community-Based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) is an evidence-based strategy that enables early identification and treatment of children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) without medical complications and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) at the community level. CMAM includes four components: community outreach, outpatient care, inpatient care for complicated cases, and supplementary feeding for both SAM and MAM children. Pilot implementations in Indian states have shown promising outcomes, including high recovery rates and increased community participation. In Andhra Pradesh, where the ICDS and NHM platforms are well-established, CMAM can be effectively integrated using existing frontline workers like ASHAs and Anganwadi Workers.

This article focuses on the importance of the CMAM program and its rollout in Andhra Pradesh, and advocates for its scale-up under POSHAN Abhiyaan and SDG-2 (Zero Hunger), to address acute malnutrition effectively.

Key words: Malnutrition, CMAM, SAM, MAM, NFHS-5

Social Support and Drug Addiction Relapse Among the Female Addicts of Manipur

Nameirakpam Napoleon Meitei
Research scholar,
Department of Anthropology,
Manipur University, Manipur
Email: naponamei@gmail.com

Abstract

The substance use after successful detoxification and rehabilitation is a global problem affecting low- and middle-income countries more than high-income countries. The prevalence has been reported to be higher in men, but those women with drug addiction present a more vulnerable profile and are less likely to enter treatment than men. In many parts of the world, including India`s Northeast region, the discourse around substance use remains predominantly male-centric. Women who use drugs remain hidden, stigmatized, and undeserved, both in academic research and public health policy. This paper seeks to address this critical gap by exploring the role of gendered social support in influencing substance use relapse among females in Manipur. To investigate these crucial elements, in-depth interviews were carried out and the interviews were recorded on audio, transcribed verbatim account, and thematic analysis was done. Even though craving was experienced but it was not perceived as a trigger of relapse by most participants. Relapse, as reported by the participants, is mainly triggered by stigma and gendered norms, lack of family support, and emotional triggers. Their lives were filled with obstacles during their abstinence, including unfavorable financial circumstances, inadequate familial and social support, interpersonal disputes, stigma, and prejudice.

Keywords: Relapse, Substance use, Treatment, Social Support.

Gender Inclusivity and Digital Education: Analysis on Kokborok & Its Rejuvenation

Partha Sarathi Sarkar
Doctoral Scholar
Tripura University

Abstract

The renewal of Kokborok through online education can be appropriately examined from a socio-anthropological understanding, where language is not only considered a communicative medium but also a repository of identity, a mechanism of power, and a means of sociality. Tripura field data among Kokborok learners across schoolchildren, youths, and adult participants show that although state-led programs such as free textbooks, online platforms, and instructor training have increased access, gender access remains unequal, with rural women having lower digital engagement because of socio-economic impediments, time pressures, and patriarchal constraints on device possession. Based on muted group theory, women's accounts prove to be marginalised in online forums where men control the discourse, and coloniality of gender expounds how past hierarchies imposed by colonial educational systems reinforced male privilege in literacy and linguistic power. Indigenous standpoint theory, concurrently, discloses how women's epistemologies of community-based knowledge—hinging on oral narration, shared learning, and cultural transmission—are essential but untapped resources for digital pedagogy. Anthropologically, the online renaissance of Kokborok reflects the negotiation between indigenous oral culture and contemporary technological mediation in which language not only maintains ethnic identity, but remakes gendered roles in indigenous society. The information then implies that computer-based education, left unreflective, can become complicit in reproducing structural imbalance, but, when coupled with sociological and anthropological understanding, presents a revolutionary trajectory: embedding women's local knowledge systems within internet-based technologies, designing open spaces that eliminate hierarchies, and reclaiming language revitalisation as a technological and gender-equal social movement. This research is important as it links gender inclusivity, digital education, and indigenous language revival, ensuring Kokborok's sustainability while addressing socio-cultural inequalities through a socio-anthropological lens of empowerment and equity.

Keywords: Communicative medium, Digital engagement, Indigenous standpoint, Structural imbalance

Chairperson
Prof. BR Shamanna
School of Medical Sciences
University of Hyderabad

Cognitive Functions and Malnutrition among the Adolescents: A Systematic Review

Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Anthropology,
Manipur University
Imphal, Manipur-795003, India
Email:yaiphabameitei@manipuruniv.ac.in

Abstract:

Introduction: Adolescence is a crucial developmental phase characterised by rapid brain growth and increased dietary needs. Malnutrition during this period, in any form, presents a significant public health challenge worldwide, affecting not only physical health but also cognitive development and functioning.

Research Question: How does malnutrition impact cognitive performance in adolescents?

Methodology: A systematic review was conducted following PRISMA principles. Relevant articles were searched through PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, focusing on studies published between 2000 and 2025. After reviewing the literature, only a limited number of studies were included based on specific inclusion criteria: original research articles investigating nutritional status and cognitive effects in adolescents aged 10 to 19 years. A thematic analysis was conducted to integrate findings from various measures and contexts.

Key Findings: The analysis revealed strong evidence linking malnutrition to cognitive problems in adolescents. Undernutrition, characterised by protein-energy malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, particularly of iron and zinc, correlated with deficits in attention, working memory, and academic achievement. Longitudinal studies indicated that chronic nutritional deprivation had more severe negative effects than temporary episodes. Conversely, being overweight or obese was often associated with executive function issues, particularly in cognitive flexibility, processing speed, and inhibitory control. Large-scale cohorts demonstrated a J-shaped relationship, indicating that both underweight and obesity are associated with reduced cognitive ability. Intervention studies, including vitamin supplementation, school-based nutrition programs, and bariatric surgery, have shown some partial reversibility of cognitive abnormalities.

Significance: These findings highlight the urgent need for comprehensive dietary and cognitive health initiatives to promote overall adolescent health. Early detection and intervention of malnutrition may enhance cognitive functioning, academic performance, and psychological well-being, thereby supporting long-term educational and social development.

Keywords: Cognitive, Malnutrition, Adolescence, systematic review

Assessing the relationship between 25-hydroxyvitamin D levels and urolithiasis: A case-control study among the Meiteis of Manipur

1. Malvika Yumnam
Research Scholar,
Department of Anthropology,
Manipur University
malvikayumnam96@gmail.com
2. Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
Asisstant Professor,
Department of Anthropology
Manipur University
sanyaimei@gmail.com

Abstract

Research Question: The principal crystalline constituent of urinary stones is calcium, and vitamin D is one of the key regulators of calcium metabolism. Vitamin D promotes calcium absorption in the gut and renal calcium reabsorption and maintains its levels in the blood. Therefore, the present study attempts to evaluate the potential relationship between serum vitamin D levels and the risk of kidney stones.

Methodology: A hospital-based case-control study was conducted among adult Meitei population within the age range of 18-60 years old. Case samples with calcium urinary stones were collected from two hospitals, and their age-sex-matched healthy controls were recruited from the general population by household survey. Three hundred forty *individuals*, consisting of 170 cases and 170 controls, were included in the study. Blood samples were collected, and serum vitamin D (25(OH)D) levels were classified as Deficient (<20.0ng/mL), Insufficient (20.0-29.0ng/mL), and Sufficient (30.0-100 ng/mL).

Results: A slight higher prevalence of urinary stones was found among males (57.1%) than compared to females (42.9%). Most of the controls were found to be vitamin D deficient (72.9%), while only 22.4% were deficient among the case group. Higher serum vitamin D level was found to be significantly associated with urolithiasis. The area under the curve (AUC) was 0.80 (P = 0.0001; 95% CI 0.76–0.85) with a cut-off for optimum sensitivity and specificity at 19ng/mL.

Significance: Serum vitamin D levels were significantly higher among the urinary stone case patients than controls. The area under the curve (AUC) indicates a good discriminatory biomarker.

Keywords: Urolithiasis, calcium, urinary stones, serum, vitamin D, case-control

CaSR gene polymorphisms as risk factor for hypercalciuria and urolithiasis: A meta-analysis

1. Aheibam Robertson Singh
Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology
Manipur University
Canchipur, Manipur, 795003, India.
Email: aheirob@gmail.com
2. Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropolog,
Manipur University, Canchipur, Manipur, 795003, India
Email: sanyaimei@gmail.com

Abstract

Research question: The calcium-sensing receptor (CaSR) gene has been proposed as a candidate gene involved in urolithiasis. Several case-control studies have examined the association between CaSR polymorphisms and the risk of hypercalciuria and urolithiasis. However, their findings remain inconsistent. There is a need to develop a proper systematic review and meta-analysis to derive a more reliable estimation of associations between the CaSR gene polymorphism and urolithiasis and urinary calcium concentration. Our study aims to clarify this discrepancy and to establish an association between the CaSR gene polymorphism and urolithiasis and urinary calcium concentration.

Methodology: A meta-analysis was performed to address this issue. Odds ratios with 95% CIs were calculated to estimate the strength of associations between CaSR polymorphisms and the risk of urolithiasis. The pooled standardised difference (SMD) with 95% CI was used for the meta-analysis of CaSR polymorphisms and urine calcium concentration.

Key findings: For urolithiasis associations, carriers of the **SS genotype** of the A986S polymorphism exhibited a markedly elevated risk compared with both **AA** and **AS genotypes.** Individuals carrying the **RG genotype** of R990G polymorphism showed a significantly higher risk compared with RR homozygotes, suggesting that heterozygosity at this locus may play an important role in disease susceptibility. Regarding the urine calcium concentration association, individuals with the G allele of the R990G polymorphism show a significant association and have a higher level of urine calcium excretion than the noncarriers.

Significant: This meta-analysis reaffirms that the G allele of the CaSR R990G polymorphism increases susceptibility to urolithiasis and hypercalciuria. The S allele of the A986S polymorphism was also associated with urolithiasis.

Keywords: Urolithiasis, CaSR polymorphism, A986S polymorphism, R990G polymorphism, Urine calcium concentration, hypercalciuria.

Narratives of death and living among the Savara: An exploration into Ethnocosmology

Rupa Mounika
Senior Research Fellow
Anthropological Survey of India
Ministry of Culture, Government of India
Email: *rupamounika.y@gmail.com*

Abstract

Death is an inevitable event and a universal reality. The ways in which people perceive and deal with death often varies across the cultures. Most people don't feel comfortable talking about it due to fear or grief attached or due to their preconceived notions and taboos centered around it. In some cultures, people fear, the very mention of it would attract unfortunate events in the family. How people look at, interpret and deal with death is closely related to cultural notions relating to 'after birth', 'circulation of life', and even notions of natural and unnatural death. Further, place and time of death could be important elements of how death is perceived and responded to ritually and in the form of public narratives. For example, in Hindu culture elderly people choose to live in places considered as sacred geographies (like Varanasi, Puri) believing that dying in those places would wipe out their sins and their soul will attain *Moksha* and be released from reincarnation, the endless cycle of birth and rebirth. Among the Sikkimese tribes, all death rituals are considered based on whether the death is natural or unnatural. In Egyptian cultures, if a ruler dies half of his army along with his servants were killed and buried in pyramids along with material wealth as they believed in after life. In Tibetan culture, body of the dead is cremated and death rituals are carried out for 49 days as per *Bordo thedol*, their book of dead to guide the soul to the next phase after death which is centered around their concept of wheel of life as per *vajrayana buddhism.*

 The anthropology of death, especially construction of death among the tribals is an important area to explore as it reveals symbolic elements in the community on the one hand and also the social dramas surrounding the death rituals and the dead person's relationships within the community. The studies among the tribals present day context also will help to know the changes in the narratives with the changed explanatory models of illness and other knowledge. In this paper, the ethno-cosmology of death, along with rituals centered around death, their dialogue with ancestral spirits and the reasons for death among the Savara in recent times are examined for a contribution in the field of anthropology of death.

Keywords

Anthropology of Death, Ethnocosmology, Death Rituals, Shaman, Healing, Savara Tribe

When Age Becomes a Barrier: Diagnostic Delays and the Cracks in Kerala's Early Breast Cancer Detection Paradigm for Younger Women.

Athira Kamal
University of Hyderabad
Email: aathirakamal16@gmail.com

Abstract

Breast cancer is conceptualized as a disease of the ageing female body. However, data from low to middle-income countries (LMIC) show a clear trend of this disease emerging in women under the age of 40, at which point the disease is referred to as Young Breast Cancer or YBC. In younger women, malignant breast tumours are more aggressive and are often diagnosed at later stages, leading to a poor prognosis. In this paper, drawing from my ethnographic research in Kerala, I explore the structural, cultural, and epistemic barriers that delay breast cancer diagnosis for Malayali women. On the one hand, health providers advocate for breast awareness and early detection. On the other hand, younger women with breast symptoms are denied cancer screening owing to the standard understanding that women under 40 do not get breast cancer, and more importantly, the inadequacy of sophisticated and cost-effective diagnostic modalities. It is often the case that women's accounts of their bodily experiences are overlooked by health providers in favour of established biomedical knowledge. In addition, women's preference for consulting with gynaecologists as first-line responders to breast symptoms, lack of updated capacity-building programs for health professionals, and inadequate patient advocacy all contribute to a delayed cancer diagnosis for younger women. Situating these observations in critical medical anthropology and STS, my analysis shows the need for a culturally competent, patient-centric approach in the management of breast cancer in Kerala.

Keywords: Young Breast Cancer, Cancer Ethnography, Diagnostic Delay, Patient Advocacy, Healthcare Personnel, Kerala.

Serum 25-Hydroxyvitamin D Levels and Its Association with Body Mass Index and Waist–Hip Ratio in the Meitei Community of Manipur

1. Erika Pebam
Research Associate (Physical)
Anthropological Survey of India
Central Regional Centre, Nagpur, 440006
Email: pebamerika@gmail.com
2. Dr. Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
Manipur University
Canchipur, Manipur, 795003, India Email: sanyaimei@gmail.com

Abstract

Research Question: Vitamin D is one of the micronutrients whose deficiency can pose a serious threat to our health. Vitamin D plays a critical role in maintaining overall health, including bone metabolism, immune function, and metabolic regulation. Despite its critical

functions, Vitamin D deficiency has emerged as a global health issue, particularly in populations with limited sun exposure and inadequate dietary intake. This study will assess the status of Vitamin D levels among the Meitei population of Manipur and how it is associated with body mass index and waist-hip-ratio.

Methodology

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 200 Meitei adults aged 18–65 years from Manipur. Serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D [25(OH)D] concentrations were measured and categorised as deficient (<20 ng/mL), insufficient (20–30 ng/mL), sufficient (>30 ng/mL), or toxic (>100ng/mL). Anthropometric data, including weight, height, waist circumference, and hip circumference, were collected to calculate BMI and WHR. Statistical analyses were performed to assess the relationship between Vitamin D levels and obesity indicators.

Key Findings: Vitamin D deficiency was present in 65% of participants, with a similar prevalence among women (64.62%) and men (65.71%). Overweight and obese individuals (BMI ≥25) had significantly lower mean Vitamin D levels than those with normal BMI ($p<0.05$). No significant association was observed between Vitamin D status and WHR.

Significance: The study highlights a high burden of Vitamin D deficiency among the Meitei population of Manipur, with a clear association between deficiency and BMI but not WHR. These findings underscore the need for targeted public health interventions, including obesity management, nutritional supplementation, and promotion of safe sunlight exposure.

Keywords: Vitamin D, 25-hydroxyvitamin D, Body Mass Index, Waist–Hip Ratio, Obesity, Meitei Population, Manipur

Hypertension and Health-seeking behaviour among Gonds and Kolams of Adilabad districts, Telangana

Pranav K
Research Scholar
Public Health, School of Medical sciences
University of Hyderabad, Telangana – 500046
Email: pranavovr@gmail.com
2. Anushree S Panikkassery
Assistant Professor
Department of Economics
CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bangalore, 560029,
Email: anushree.panikkassery@christuniversity.in

Abstract
Tribes have their own unique way of understanding illness and, therefore, their own way of treating it. Their traditional medicines and healing practices shape their perception of illness and their treatment. Traditional healers and ethnomedicines hold a significant role in the health

system of Gond and Kolams. The chapter specifically looks into the case of Hypertension, a non-communicable disease that is now observed to be as prevalent among tribal communities as it is among the non-tribal population. Gonds and Kolams perceive their illness in connection to their ancestors and local deities. Therefore, traditional medicines are closely linked to rituals and cultural practices. At the same time, tribal populations are decreasing their dependence on traditional medicines these days because of their increased interactions with nontribal populations, non-availability of indigenous medicinal plants, and, along with this, their uncompromised cultural values in transferring traditional medical knowledge from one generation to another. Many villages in Adilabad are facing the challenge of the absence of traditional medicine men and religious healers for treatment. Extensive interventions of non-tribals into the tribal villages have opened the doors for bio-medicines into their health-seeking behaviour. Hypertension, relatively new to these communities, Gonds and Kolams largely seek medical help regarding its symptoms with the immediately available medications. The traditional and first aid medicines provided by the ASHA or Anganwadi workers come first in that category. So, treating the symptoms becomes the routine for these diseases even after diagnosing them, ultimately resulting in the communities seeking health care from both categories of medicines. Thus, medical pluralism becomes an unavoidable part of the treatment of Hypertension among the Gonds and Kolams.

Keywords: *Hypertension, Health Seeking Behaviour, Medical Pluralism*

Chairperson
Dr. *Navina Jafa*
Director
Indian Cultural Heritage Research Delhi
New Delhi

An Anthropological Study on the Artistic and Folk Traditions of Tribal People of Madhya Pradesh

Kasi Eswarappa
Assistant Professor
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University
Email: kasie@igntu.ac.in

Abstract

The concept of art, artistic, and folk traditions embodies the rich tapestry of human creativity and cultural expression, reflecting a community's identity, history, and values. Art, in its myriad forms, from painting to music, dance to sculpture, transcends mere aesthetics, often serving as a medium for storytelling, preserving history, and expressing collective beliefs and individual perspectives.

Key artistic traditions include music and dance, which are central to community life and ceremonies and often involve traditional instruments. Folk traditions encompass storytelling with oral transmission of myths and legends, rituals and ceremonies linked to agriculture and life events, accompanied by music and dance, a cuisine using local ingredients, and a rich heritage of herbal medicine. These practices demonstrate a profound respect for nature. This paper outlines a comprehensive study aimed at understanding and comparing the artistic and folk traditions of these tribes within the shared cultural landscape of Anuppur. While these tribes coexist in the same geographical region, there is limited scholarly attention to the distinct artistic and folk traditions of the Baiga, Panika, and Gond tribes of Anuppur. This paper seeks to address this gap by providing an in-depth comparative analysis of their cultural expressions, shedding light on unique features and shared elements.

The research embarks on an empirical study delving into the artistic and folk traditions of tribal communities residing in the Pushparajgarh block of Anuppur District of Madhya Pradesh, India. The study is rooted in the understanding that art and folklore serve as vital conduits for cultural expression, reflecting a community's identity, history, and values. Through a comparative analysis, the research aims to shed light on the distinctive features and shared elements of the Baiga, Panika, and Gond tribes, emphasizing their unique cultural expressions within the broader socio-cultural landscape.

The main objective of the paper is to document and analyze the artistic traditions and compare and explore the folk traditions, to identify the commonalities and differences in cultural expression, to understand the influence of the local environments and external factors, to analyze the influence of emerging scenarios of modernity and tourism on art and folk traditions and to understand the role of government and non-government agencies in addressing the fold and artistic traditions among the selected tribal people of Madhya Pradesh, India.

The methodology for the study will integrate a multi-sited ethnography and a case study approach alongside the qualitative, primarily ethnographic methods, to thoroughly investigate the cultural dimensions among the study populations.

Key Words: Artistic and Folk Traditions, Genres, Culture, Tribe, Anthropology, Empirical Study, Madhya Pradesh

Toddy Festival of Koya Tribe: The Vibrant Cultural Heritage of Andhra Pradesh State

Naga Raju Chikkala
Professor,
Tribal Cultural Research & Training Mission (TCR&TM),
Tribal Welfare Department, Visakhapatnam,
email id: naag.anthropology@gmail.com

Abstract

The tribes of Andhra Pradesh state have a rich cultural heritage that is being handed down from generation to generation. The tribal rituals, including rites, festivals, beliefs, and practices, constitute a vibrant cultural heritage that has survived as an integral component of the Indian culture without sacrificing its indigenous tradition. India is home to a diverse range of tribal communities, each with their own unique cultures, traditions, and festivals. One of the most significant and captivating aspects of the life of these ethnic tribes is their festivals, which offer a glimpse into their rich cultural heritage and provide an opportunity for community celebration, solidarity, and community bonding.

The present paper explores the significance of tribal festivals in Andhra Pradesh state, with special reference to the Koya tribe. The Koya tribe has its own festivals to regard and glorify their deities for protecting them in all difficulties, natural calamities, epidemics, and protecting their crops and livestock. The Koya tribe celebrates fifteen important community festivals throughout the year, which represent their unique culture and heritage. Among these festivals, the Toddy Festival is very famous and joyful, which creates strong bonding within the community. The paper also focuses on the significance of the Toddy Festival, narrates the steps of celebration, trends in their cultural practices, and conservation.

Key Words: Tribal Festivals, Toddy, Conservation of Culture and Heritage

The Sacred Shrines of Baruni Hill: Conservation of Ecology and Cultural Identity of Chakpa Andro in Manipur, India

Shagolshem Santhalen Singh
Ph.D. Research Scholar
Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi-110007
9958959478
shagolshemsingh12@gmail.com

Abstract

The concept of sacred shrines has existed in every religious space as a holy and spiritual element, often passed down to the next generations. Baruni Hill is one of the most sacred abodes of shrines for many Gods and Goddesses, especially for the Meitei community. The hill has become a holy complex for many deities. The study tries to show the significance of sacred shrines on Baruni hill in Manipur, influencing the socio-cultural fabric of surrounding villages, particularly the Chakpa Andro people. Chakpa Andro is one of the oldest ancient villages, known for preserving indigenous tradition, brewing alcohol, pottery, and pre-Hindu Meitei culture. The village serves as the repository of the rich and living heritage of the Meitei after the mass adoption of Hinduism in the region. Apart from the study, it extends the historical aspects of Andro village, regarding its origin, migration, and settlement in shaping the lives and identities of the people. Beyond their religious account, the sacred shrines of Baruni hill exemplify the notions of co-relationship between the natural ecosystem and the cultural significance of the Meitei people, resulting in safeguarding the forestland through various traditional ecological management systems. In addition, the study tried to contemplate the impacts of change on the old-aged culture with the influence of Vaishnavism. The research employs participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and auto-ethnographic methods in collecting primary data and books and articles for secondary data to understand the cohesiveness of the cultural identity.

Keywords: Baruni Hill, Andro, sacred shrines, ecology, cultural identity, heritage.

The Hermeneutics of Ethnographic Fiction: A Textual-Ethnographic Inquiry into Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's Ponni in Contemporary Attappadi

Dr. Sreehari K R, Research Assistant,
Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture and Folk Literature
Indira Gandi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh
Email: atrsreehari01@gmail.com

Abstract

Malayattoor Ramakrishnan's Ponni (1967), set in the tribal landscape of Attappadi, Kerala, offers a compelling narrative that interweaves the lives of Ponni, Maran, and Chellan with the cultural realities of the Irula and Muduga communities. The novel stands at the intersection of literature and ethnography, embedding detailed observations of kinship, ritual, ecology, and cultural negotiations within its fictional framework. More than half a century later, revisiting Attappadi as a field researcher allows for a critical re-examination of Malayattoor's narrative through the lens of textual-ethnographic triangulation, a methodological approach that integrates close literary reading, ethnographic immersion, and comparative interpretation.

Textual-ethnographic triangulation recognizes fiction not merely as an artistic representation but as a cultural text that may encode anthropological knowledge. By systematically placing Ponni alongside field notes, interviews, and participant observation in Attappadi, the research evaluates continuities and ruptures in the socio-cultural fabric of the region. This triangulated approach allows for two levels of analysis: first, decoding symbolic structures and cultural logics within the novel itself, and second, assessing their resonance with contemporary lived experiences of the Irula and Muduga people.

The methodological reflexivity is situated against the backdrop of the Freeman–Mead debate surrounding Coming of Age in Samoa (Mead, 1928; Freeman, 1983). While Mead's ethnographic authority was later challenged on grounds of representation and reliability, this study adopts a more dialogic stance by positioning Ponni as a 'textual interlocutor' rather than a factual document. Fieldwork findings suggest that Malayattoor's narrative, though fictionalised, demonstrates observational fidelity in its portrayal of rituals, clan dynamics, and gender relations of the period. At the same time, triangulation highlights areas of transformation, such as the impact of welfare policies, education, and religious influence on contemporary tribal life in Attappadi.

Through interpretive anthropology, the analysis further unpacks symbolic dimensions of Ponni: Ponni's struggles as a woman negotiating love, agency, and community restrictions; Maran's navigation between tradition and modernity; and Chellan's role as a cultural mediator. These characters operate not only as fictional constructs but also as ethnographic 'types' that illuminate structural tensions within Attappadi society. The comparative textual-ethnographic approach reveals how certain ritual practices, kinship obligations, and clan-based worship systems endure, while others have adapted under the pressure of external interventions and economic change.

By merging textual analysis with field-based ethnography, the study demonstrates the utility

of triangulation in bridging disciplinary boundaries. It argues that Ponni may be read as both literature and a secondary ethnographic archive, offering insights into the cultural memory and historical consciousness of Attappadi's tribes. This re-exploration thus underscores the value of fiction as a methodological resource for anthropology, while also affirming the significance of reflexivity in interpreting indigenous life-worlds across temporal frames.

Keywords: Textual-Ethnographic Triangulation, Attappadi, Irula and Muduga Tribes, Ethnographic Fiction, Literary Anthropology

Anthropological understanding to find solutions to social issues and challenges of Kuravar community in Tamil Nadu

S. Sasi Kumar
PhD Research Scholar
Tribal Research Center Tamil University
Thanjavur
Email: sakaasasi@gmail.com

Abstract

After India's independence, state and central governments that recognized the injustices faced by marginalized communities have been making efforts to improve their general living conditions. In particular, significant progress has been made in uplifting marginalized groups through affirmative action policies in education and employment. Similarly, the Tamil Nadu government has introduced various welfare schemes to empower them economically. As a result of these initiatives, many marginalized communities have been preparing themselves and striving for advancement. However, some ethnic groups continue to struggle, unable to overcome social challenges and rebuild their lives. Among these, the Kuravar community stands out as notably affected.

The reason is that the Kuravar people face more difficulties and challenges than any other community. This research article discusses the problems that hinder the progress of the Kuravar community.

Keywords: Kuravars, Development, Problems, Challenge.

Buddhavanam - A Buddhist Heritage Project of Telangana

Bakka Rupika
Archaeological Assistant,
Dept of Heritage Telangana,
Govt of Telangana
Hyderabad
Email – rupika2k@gmail.com

Abstract

The Buddhist heritage of Telangana stretches back to the pre-Satavahana period, with archaeological evidence dating back to the 1st century BCE, including Brahmi inscriptions that predate Ashoka. Buddhism flourished in the region under Ikshvaku and Satavahana patronage, producing stupas, viharas, and chaitya-grihas at sites such as Nagarjunakonda, Kotilingala, Dhulikatta, Phanigiri, Nelakondapalli, Badankurthi, and Kondapur. Excavations revealing coins, inscriptions, terracotta artifacts, inscriptions, beads, pottery, sculptures and architectural fragments, highlight Telangana's role as a centre of trade, cultural exchange, and Buddhist learning between the 1st century BCE and 5th century CE. In addition to the international significance of Nagarjunakonda, the site was once a prominent university site of the Mahayana doctrine.

In recent decades, over 25 explored and unexplored Buddhist sites have drawn renewed scholarly and governmental attention. Various Buddhist related initiatives such as the Telangana Buddhist Circuit and Buddhavanam at Nagarjuna Sagar aim to conserve these archaeological treasures while integrating them into heritage tourism and global Buddhist networks. This paper examines the historical depth and contemporary revival of Buddhism in Telangana, emphasizing its significance for heritage preservation, cultural identity, and tourism development. This paper underscores the significance of the Government of Telangana's efforts to preserve and promote the region's Buddhist cultural legacy through its ambitious heritage initiative, Buddhavanam. It further examines the ways in which the project curates and interprets a wide collection of archaeological evidence, offering valuable insights into the historical depth, artistic traditions, and cultural practices of ancient Buddhism in Telangana.

Keywords: Telangana Buddhist Heritage, Buddhavanam, Archaeology and Heritage Conservation, Buddhist Tourism, Satavahana and Ikshvaku Patronage etc.

Chairperson
Dr. NV Madhuri
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

Fighting Cocks and Fighting Norms: Women's Agency and Evolving Roles in Andhra Pradesh's Cockfighting Culture

1. T.S.Janaki Ramaraju
Research Scholar
Dept of Anthropology
Pondicherry University
Email: ramarajutsj@gmail.com
2. Jesurathnam Devarapalli
Professor, Dept of Anthropology
Pondicherry University
Email: drjesudev@gmail.com , drjesudev@pondiuni.ac.in

Abstract

Cockfighting in Andhra Pradesh is a deeply entrenched social and cultural practice known for its dynamic and elusive process. Traditionally, it is associated with men and linked to honour, status and prestige. This paper challenges this monolithic perception by examining women's nuanced and expanding roles at contemporary times within this centuries-old practice. This is an ethnographic study from the Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh; the tools include in-depth interviews, narratives, and life histories with women from different social strata. This paper particularly takes two life histories: the widow of a well-known rooster trainer and a pastor's wife, and their tryst with the cockfights. This study sheds light on the complex social world of cockfighting, where women's participation is reshaping the male-dominated arena. The women are involved in various roles integral to the cockfighting ecosystem, and their participation provides an agency for scholars to understand the place of women in this complex social process. The study provides some significant findings, such as Women as Breeders and Caretakers, which state that women are the primary caretakers responsible for raising and nurturing the birds. Women as Economic Agents, for many, raising and selling roosters provides a vital source of income, offering a path to financial independence that empowers them within the household. Their role is also tied to sentiment; many men believe that a rooster has a better chance of victory when handed over by women, signifying their perceived luck. The study demonstrates that the cockfighting arena is a space where women negotiate agency, depose patriarchal norms, and achieve social and economic mobility. In conclusion, women are actively carving out powerful spaces for themselves, encapsulating a dynamic shift in gender roles within a deeply rooted male-dominated cultural practice.

When 'Free Time' is Not Free: A Gendered Analysis of Time Poverty and Water Collection in Barmer District

Sanjay Prajapati
Junior Research Fellow
Anthropological Survey of India
Ministry of Culture
Government of India
e-mail: prajapatisanjay8117@gmail.com

Abstract

Females in Barmer district, Rajasthan, have primary water-gathering responsibilities: a task commonly described as work done during their "free time." By conducting ethnographic fieldwork and time-use analysis, this research critically evaluates such assertions, deconstructing the gap between women's own conceptions of leisure time and the objective account of time scarcity. While women refer to water carrying as an activity undertaken in moments of "free time," an emic (insider's view) analysis uncovers a contradiction: this supposedly leisure is caught up in invisible work, structured by long-standing gender expectations and norms that produce ubiquitous time poverty. Using both emic and etic approaches makes it possible to examine how cultural knowledge conceals women's restricted time. From an analytical perspective, the time women invest in walking and gathering water is seldom accounted for as work, even though it takes a toll on women's physical and psychological health. These entrenched routines greatly limit women's time for rest, earning an income, learning, and social engagement, fostering a hidden type of time poverty that is not picked up by standard economic indicators. Results underscore the localization of time poverty through gendered local frameworks and stress the need to incorporate women's own subjective experiences of time use into policy and research. In addressing Barmer's water access, therefore, solutions call not only for infrastructural improvements but also for a critical understanding of the cultural meanings that underlie women's time poverty. These findings feed into wider debates around gender equality and guide policy interventions in women's empowerment and time autonomy in water scarce areas.

Breaking Gender Barriers: The Transformative Impact of STEM Scholarships for Girls in Hyderabad, Telangana

Mumtaz Parveen and Thalari Jeevan Kumar

Sr. Manager - Desing, Strategy & Partnerships

United Way of Hyderabad (Leading Non-Profit organization)

Email: jeevanthalari@unitedwayhyderabad.org

Abstract

Gender inequities in STEM education remain a critical barrier for girls from underserved communities in India. The STEM Project, implemented in 3 districts of Telangana, introduced scholarships and mentorship support for 121 girls between 2017 and 2019 to enable their pursuit of higher/intermediate education in STEM. This case study draws on academic tracking, focus group discussions, and comparative analysis with peers who lacked such support. Findings reveal that scholarships significantly reduced dropout risks and enabled girls to pursue pathways in engineering, pharmacy, computer science, and life sciences. Girls reported increased confidence, stronger aspirations, and resilience in navigating financial hardship, family health issues, and social expectations. Academic progression data highlights a 22.7% increase in girls' uptake of technical and STEM courses between 2017 and 2024, with consistent evidence of higher STEM interest among girls compared to boys. The study underscores the value of combining financial assistance with mentorship, career guidance, and family engagement to support girls' long-term academic and professional trajectories. The scholarship model demonstrates how targeted interventions can break cycles of exclusion, foster social mobility, and create role models for future generations of girls in STEM.

Keywords: Girls in STEM; Scholarships; Higher Education; Empowerment; Telangana; AQRITI Project

Economic Dimension of Status, Role and Empowerment of Tribal Women

1. Dr. D.Ramesh,
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: dr.anthro.au@gmail.com

2.Vennela Karri
M.Sc. Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: vennelak19@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper investigates the multifaceted economic dimensions influencing women's status, roles, and empowerment, particularly tribal women, in regions such as Chintapalle Mandal, Andhra Pradesh. It explores their diverse economic contributions, persistent challenges, and the impact of various governmental and grassroots initiatives designed to promote their economic independence and development.

This research proposes a qualitative methodological approach based on the experiences and contexts described. This would involve participant observation to understand daily life and power dynamics, in-depth interviews to capture individual perspectives and nuanced narratives, and focus group discussions to explore shared experiences and social norms related to gender roles, status, and empowerment within tribal communities.

Tribal women are central to their economies, actively engaged in agriculture (including shifting cultivation, millet, coffee, and turmeric), allied activities (poultry and livestock), and forest-based livelihoods (NTFP collection). They also preserve traditional skills through handicrafts and participate extensively in wage labour, including schemes like MGNREGS. Shandies (local markets) serve as crucial platforms where women act as producers, sellers, and buyers, contributing to household income and decision-making power. However, they face significant challenges, including poverty, illiteracy, exploitation, lack of market access, poor infrastructure, limited financial literacy, and gender discrimination. Empowerment initiatives such as DWCRA, MGNREGS, Prerana, and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have provided self-employment opportunities, access to credit, skill development, and a savings culture, thereby enhancing their financial autonomy and community engagement.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial for recognizing tribal women's vital contributions to the economy, addressing systemic barriers to their development, and strengthening the effectiveness of empowerment programs. The study highlights how economic independence is crucial for empowering tribal women, enabling them to gain financial autonomy and improve their families' welfare.

Keywords: Tribal Women, Economic Empowerment, Livelihoods, Self-Help Groups, Rural Economy, Gender Roles.

Legally In(visible): A study of extra-legal and legal action of Tamil Nadu Dalit Christians against caste discrimination

Roy Anto Antoni
Independent Researcher
University of Oxford
Email: royanto063@gmail.com

Abstract
In this study, I explore the extra-legal and legal mechanisms available for Dalit Christians when faced with caste discrimination. Studies have highlighted the systemic caste discrimination faced by Christians of the Scheduled caste origin. While they live the social life of a Dalit, the state institutions view them through their religious identity and deny them Scheduled caste status. Because of this, they are excluded from the Protection of Civil Rights and Prevention of Atrocities Act, which is enacted to provide legal remedies for caste discrimination.

This exclusion has created a legal limbo where the caste discrimination of the Dalit Christian remains unrecognised. I use two case studies from Tamil Nadu to explore the navigation of the legal systems, such as the church, police, and courts, during caste discrimination. While both cases followed a similar (Extra-legal and legal) trajectory, it is in one case, the Dalit Christian could resolve a few caste discriminatory practices after 10 years of legal struggle. By analysing both cases, I argue that there is no reliable forum or legal act for recognising the caste discrimination of Dalit Christians, which leads them to approach courts for remedies. By exploring the often-overlooked topic, this thesis contributes to a growing body of work on caste, Dalit Christians, and Legal remedy mechanisms.

Keywords: Case study, Identity, Institutions, Social Life, Rights

Applied Anthropology and the Mobility Challenges of Irular Women in Tamil Nadu

Sowparnika. G
Anthropology,
PhD Research Scholar
Department of Tribal research, Tamil University, Thanjavur
Email: gsowparnika0921@gmail.com

Abstract:
Mobility is a key aspect of empowerment for marginalized communities, particularly for tribal women whose lives are shaped by intersecting sociocultural, economic, and political factors. This paper applies anthropological perspectives to examine the mobility challenges faced by Irular women, a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, it highlights how cultural norms, patriarchal values, kinship ties, and structural barriers restrict women's access to education, employment, healthcare, and public spaces.

The study shows that although welfare programs and schooling have opened new pathways for younger women, deep-rooted gendered practices, economic marginalization, and social stigma continue to hinder their freedom of movement. Seasonal migration and wage labor provide limited opportunities but often place women in precarious and vulnerable conditions.

By situating these findings within applied anthropology, the paper emphasizes the importance of linking community voices with policy frameworks. It argues that enhancing women's mobility is not only a matter of physical access but also of social dignity, participation, and agency. Applied anthropology thus offers valuable insights for designing inclusive policies and development strategies that address the lived realities of Irular women and contribute to social transformation.

Keywords: Applied Anthropology, Irular Women, Mobility, Gender, Tamil Nadu

Chairperson
Prof M Romesh Singh,
Head
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

A Perspective Study on Urban Dynamics: (With reference to urban slums in Vizag city, Andhra Pradesh, India)

Dr Adari kishore kumar..M.A.,M.A.,M.Phil.,Ph.D
Andhra University
Visakhapatnam
Email: adari.kishorekumar@gmail.com

Abstract:

Growth of urbanization in India and Andhra Pradesh cities' slums has serious consequences of urbanization; slums are a major problem in urban life. They are found all over towns and cities. They present the highest form of human degradation. They reflect the failures of urban planners, municipal authorities, and urban technology to provide basic services like housing, water supply, toilets, drainage, garbage disposal, etc. Most rapidly developing cities are not only in India but also in the Asian continent. In India, Slums are located near the banks of the main drainage canal, railway tracks, port areas, hill slope areas, and along the boundaries of industries. This study is focused on the causes of the impossibility of tracing the infrastructural facilities in slums, and socio-economic environmental factors are commonly presented in this paper. The data was collected about the total slum by random sampling for the study. Secondary data will also be used to understand the burning problems of urban slums in the city. Moreover, used various national sample surveys, and from GVMC for primary data, also used in this paper.

Key words: Urbanization, Infrastructural, Municipal Authorities, Technology

Indigenous Knowledge and the SDGs: An Anthropological Pathways to Climate Resilience and Sustainable Future

Dr. Charu Mujundar M.A, Ph.D
Email: charumujundarphd@gamial.com
Mobile: 7675822273
Academic Counsellor, IGNOU

Abstract

This research paper explores how the indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) possessed by the world's indigenous communities provide the ecological, sustainable, and cultural pathways to achieve the ambitious United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. By drawing on examples from India, Africa, Latin America, and South East Asian countries, it highlights how traditional knowledge and practices in agriculture, biodiversity conservation, water management and soil conservation contribute directly to climate resilience to fight against the global problems like Global warming, resource depletion and extinct of flora and fauna caused by climate change. Anthropology, with its focus on culture, ethnography, and community participation, plays a crucial role in connecting and integrating the indigenous knowledge and wisdom with sustainability frameworks to conserve the resources for the future and provide solutions for the present pressing global environmental problems. So, in this context, by taking the cognizance of world environmental problems, the present research paper argues that the world countries and other international agencies like UNO, World Bank, IMF and other regional blocks like SAARC, ASEAN, SCO, BRICS, European Union, African Union by adopting and integrating the indigenous knowledge systems into developmental planning and framework for building the resilient and sustainable future.

Key Words: Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations Organization (UNO), Climate Change, Global Warming, Sustainable Future, Biodiversity Conservation.

Dam, Displacement, and Livelihood: A Study of Tumukhong Village in Manipur, India

Shougrakpam Utam Kumar Singh
PhD Research Scholar,
Department of Anthropology
University of Delhi,
Delhi-110007
Email id: utamshougrakpam@gmail.com

Abstract

The construction of dams has given significant benefits and negative impacts on human societies. The present study examines the effects of the Mapithel Dam on the villagers of Tumukhong village in Manipur, India. Mapithel Dam is one of the biggest dams in Manipur. By using an anthropological perspective, it closely explores the everyday lives, struggles, and changes the villagers experienced since the dam's construction. The Tumukhong village, one of the downstream villages of the Mapithel dam, has faced physical and social consequences

due to the dam's construction. The study has focused on the livelihood patterns, water sources and management, culture, environment, and psychological aspects. The ethnographic fieldwork was conducted for primary and secondary data collection. This research seeks to elevate the voices of the community by listening to local experiences. This anthropological study adds important insights into the development project's respect for local lives and cultures. The key findings of the study include the displacement of the adjoining villages due to the construction of the dam, changes in the patterns of livelihood, work conflicts, division of labour, cultural impacts, environmental changes, and psychological aspects. The significance of the study is to capture and document the live experience of the villagers who are affected by the Mapithel Dam. It also highlights that the development projects ignore the people and reshape their social, cultural, and environmental environment. This study can help the government and the policy makers with development strategies in the adjoining villages of the dam.

Keywords: Mapithel Dam, Tumukhong, Livelihood, Water, Environment, Psychological aspects.

From Village Ethnography to Sustainable Development Goals: A Restudy of the Gonds of Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Poonam Tripathi,
Assistant Professor,
Department of Anthropology,
University of Lucknow,
Lucknow.
Email: tripathi_poonam@lkouniv.ac.in

Abstract

In 1941, Prof. D. N. Majumdar's classic work "Chhor ka ek Gaon" or a fringe village presented a vivid ethnographic account of rural life in the district Sonbhadra of Uttar Pradesh. His study offered an in-depth picture of social relations, economic practices, and cultural traditions in a village setting at a time when India had not yet embarked on planned development. More than eight decades later, this restudy revisits this tribe to examine how their lives have been reshaped by waves of development programs, changing policies, and wider socio-economic transformations. The research highlights how the introduction of community development initiatives, land rights legislation, education schemes, and welfare policies has altered everyday life. While some families have benefited from better schooling, healthcare facilities, and wage employment opportunities, others continue to face challenges of land alienation, displacement due to mining and power projects, and ecological degradation. Traditional practices—such as shifting cultivation, use of forest produce, and ritual life—still persist, but in modified forms that reflect adaptation to modern pressures. Gender roles, too, have undergone shifts, with Gond women increasingly participating in self-help groups, grassroots movements, and wage labor, though they still struggle with systemic inequalities. Methodologically, the study draws on both an archival reading of Majumdar's original text and contemporary ethnographic fieldwork, including interviews, oral histories, and village-level observations. This long-term comparative approach makes it possible to trace continuities as well as ruptures across generations. By bringing Majumdar's pioneering ethnography into conversation with present-day realities, the study demonstrates the relevance of anthropological restudies for understanding tribal resilience, cultural transformation, and the uneven impact of development.

It further suggests that the lived experiences of the Gonds provide valuable insights into the promises and limitations of development policies, and into the ways marginalized communities negotiate identity and survival in rapidly changing contexts.

Keywords: D. N. Majumdar, village restudy, community development programme, continuity and change, displacement, tribal resilience, rural transformation.

Socio-Economic Conditions of Koraga: A Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) of Kerala, South India.

1. Sarath Babu
Research Scholar,
Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture and Folk Literature,
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU),
Amarkantak-484 877, Anuppur DT,
Madhya Pradesh, India.
Email: sarathpanathur2000@gmail.com
2. Kasi Eswarappa
Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Tribal Studies, Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture and Folk Literature,
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU),
Amarkantak-484 877,
Anuppur DT, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Abstract

The Koraga are among the five Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in Kerala, South India. They are distributed in the thirteen panchayats in the North Malabar district of Kasaragod. As per the recent census data, the community's total population is 1,582. The study focuses on the overall socio-economic conditions of the Koraga people. The government initiated a number of development programs to enhance the well-being of the tribal people, fulfilling their various needs, specifically those of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. The research questions were developed after the critical readings of the available literature, and we aim to analyze the socio-economic situation of the Koraga people. It is a descriptive and analytical study. The primary significance is understanding and interpreting those conditions from an Indigenous point of view. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied in this study. The study follows secondary data from the available sources of official government records, research journals, MPhil and PhD theses, and related books. In the paper, we try to trace out the changes in the socio-economic conditions of the community through an empirical study carried out among the study community in the Kasaragod district of Kerala, South India.

Keywords: Development, Livelihood, Basic Amenities, Empirical Study, PVTG, Koraga, and South India.

Chairperson
Prof R Siva Prasad,
former Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

Anthropology of Plastics: A Transdisciplinary Approach to Medical Waste and Sustainability

1. Akhilesh Bonthu
Research Scholar, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad
Email: bonthuakhilesh@gmail.com
2. Dr Nanda Kishore Kannuri
Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad

Abstract
Anthropology as a discipline has transformed from studying non-Western exotic cultures to solving complex contemporary global problems. In this paper, we would like to share a perspective on Applied Anthropology, particularly the Anthropology of Plastics. We tried to shed light on the problem of plastics and how anthropology as a discipline can understand the complexity and the cultural aspects of dealing with it. The theoretical innovations, methodological approaches and human-centric interventions to deal with the problem. This paper is based on a review of the literature of various authors and a comprehensive analysis of each of them. We aim to uncover the possibilities of how Anthropology as a discipline can solve the global problem of Plastics. We mainly focused on the medical waste and how single-use plastic in the healthcare industry is dealing with it. To approach this question, we tried to follow a trans-disciplinary approach in which the concepts from Medical Anthropology, Discard Studies, Science and Technology Studies, and Sustainability were used. Methodological innovations such as Follow-the-thing, Life Cycle Analysis, Visual Ethnography, and Co-design workshops, apart from anthropology's core Ethnography. Theoretical innovations include marginality, politics of waste, Biomedical waste protocols, and sustainability. This paper tried to link all these theories and methods to investigate the problem of Plastics.

Keywords: Anthropology of Plastics, Ethnography, Gloablization, Medical Anthropology, Science and Technology.

Endangering Nomadic Pastoralism: A Case of Shauka Bhotiya of Central Indian Himalayas

D.V. Prasad

Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Delhi
Delhi-110007
Email: dvprasada@gmail.com;

Abstract
Uttarakhand is popularly known as *Dev Bhumi*, which is adorned with its pristine natural exquisiteness, with snow-laden hills. Bhotiya, Tharu, Buksa, Jaunsari, and Van Raji are the major ethnic communities who live in proximity to the mountain ecosystem. Among them, the Bhotiya inhabit several high mountain hills that are close to the international borders of Tibet and Nepal, and resorted to migratory pastoralism. They rely on traditional methods of resource management for sustaining life in such high-altitude terrains. The transhumance Bhotiya who take their stocks to higher valleys and resort to trade at borders. During the summer months, they cross higher mountain passes where they live in temporary villages to graze their stock and collection of valuable medicinal herbs. After the Indo-China War in 1962, their pastoral movement was restricted and adapted to a sedentary life through terrace cultivation. During the COVID-19 time, i.e., 2020, these restrictions were relaxed and the migration was taking place under the supervision of the Indian Army and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Unlike earlier migratory pastoralism, their movement was now restricted to the collection of rare medicinal herbs and the cultivation of crops in ancestral villages. With anthropogenic climate change, the collection of medicinal herbs and border trade have become very difficult. Hence, the Bhotiyas have resorted to alternative livelihoods such as tourism, agriculture, employment, and so on. Despite this fact, a few Bhotiya families still depend on traditional livelihoods and obtain their subsistence by managing the available natural resources of the Mountain ecosystem. The present study attempted to highlight how Shauka Bhotiya manages the available resources and makes a living in difficult hilly terrain.
Keywords: Climate Change, Ecosystem, Pastoralism, Transhumance, Tourism.

Political Ecology of Water and Traditional Water Management System in Manipur

Dr. M. Kennedy Singh,
Associate Professor,
Department of Anthropology,
Delhi University
Email: kenhcu@gmail.com

Abstract
Ithei Khong, a traditional irrigational canal system among Meiteis, is one of the basic essences of life as most of them sustain their livelihood through diverse agricultural practices. The traditional water management system, a collective socio-cultural system of managing and controlling water at Kakching, Manipur, is considered to be one of the unique phenomena of social entrepreneurship practising among the people of Kakching, which continues from generation to generation in conserving the natural resources. By utilizing the indigenous technological skills available among traditional societies and their collective engagement/ involvement with a strong sense of cooperation among the communities, they played a

significant role in the past. Eventually, these qualities entail strong socio-cultural imperatives for sustainable development and maintenance of a perennial source of water. The present paper tries to highlight the ground realities, importance, and relevance of Ethei Lou-Khong, a traditional water management system among the people of Manipur. The paper also tries to discuss a clear understanding of water and water-related issues like commoditisation of water, community and re-appropriation of water, contestation of water and water conflict, and traditional institutional effort as the age-old practice inherited from their forefathers, etc.

Sustainability and Consumer Culture: Tribal Wisdom from Jharkhand

Karishma Singh
Research Scholar
University of Allahabad
Email: karishmasingh061612@gmail.com

Abstract:
Over the last few decades, human society has experienced tremendous economic and social transformation that involves a change in household consumption in contemporary Indian regions such as Jharkhand. Our consumption behavior conveys a message to ourselves and others about who we are and how we fit in with, or separate ourselves from, other people. Ecological research suggests that consumption levels in many developed countries have reached unsustainable levels. Economic theory in the twentieth century assumed that the vast majority of people act rationally to maximize their utility. No other economic activity is shaped by its social context more than consumption. Consumerism is the attempt to acquire meaning, happiness, and fulfillment through the acquisition and possession of material things. Materialistic values penetrate all aspects of social life, leading to the rise of 'consumer culture' where a vast range of goods and services become materialized and health and well-being also become consumption objects (Gould &Gould, 2001; Solentus,2023). The history of consumer society is a reminder that a cultural transformation of huge magnitude could occur in a relatively short period of time. The article emphasizes recent scholarly practices that examines the nature of ordinary consumption, along with its social and environmental consequences, by understanding consumption as a cultural phenomenon (warde, 2014,2017).The objective of this article is to draw an outline of how consumerism and its consequences are linked to sustainability. Findings show that in Jharkhand, many indigenous tribes are dependent on their forest resources. Even now, these people consume their forest produce and earn a living by selling these resources for food or trade. Furthermore, the tribals have traditional healthcare systems and use plants as medicine. However, their environment gets disrupted by changes in climate, land division, etc Forest resources become scarce, and the quality and quantity of flora and fauna decline, the availability and yield of forest produce falls, which triggers a corresponding fall in market price for these communities. (Sirur, S.,2024) .An anthropological approach can help in understanding and intervening in positive ways. One of the critical issues to be resolved if marketers, consumers, researchers, and anthropologists work together to promote sustainability more is overconsumption. The perspective of Anthropology can be applied in contemporary consumer culture

Community Wellbeing and Development among the Marine Fishing Community of Andhra Pradesh

Dalibandhu Pukkalla
Department of Studies in Anthropology,
University of Mysore,
Manasagangothri, Mysuru, Karnataka &
Anthropological Survey of India,
Southern Regional Centre,
Mysuru,
Karnataka.

The small-scale fishing communities are one of the marginal communities facing the predicament of livelihoods in our country. Their contribution to food security and engagement is based on the' availability, access, and utilization of local resources. In recent times, due to unprecedented weather conditions and ecological changes, their livelihoods have become threatened, and they are encountering dilemmas in marine livelihoods, which impact their economic well-being. Further, the resource management and livelihood are interconnected to apprehend and evaluate their economic well-being, which helps us understand the fishing communities' development. This study is based on an ethnographic study conducted among the Jalaris of Peda Jalaripeta in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh.

Traditional Livelihoods and New Economic Opportunities: A Study of Chenchus of Nallamala Forest of Andhra Pradesh

Sagar Kodi
Research Scholar
Dept. of Anthropology
Pondicherry University
Dr. Valerie Dkhar
Associate Professor &
Head, Dept. of Anthropology
Pondicherry University

Abstract
Chenchus, traditionally a hunting and gathering tribe native to the Nallamala forest of Andhra Pradesh, are spread over in small habitations over the western and southern stretches of the Nallamala ranges, mostly in isolated groups. The Chenchu's livelihood is subsistence in nature and heavily dependent on the flora and fauna of this forest. They collect roots, tubers, leaves, fruits, and vegetables, and hunt small game like deer, rabbits, squirrels, and quails. Scouring the jungle for natural resources for survival, they became experts in locating food sources and identifying edible and medicinal plants. However, the commercial exploitation ofthe forest began rapidly, increasing inroads into the woods as they watched helplessly. In 1978, the Nagarjuna Sagar Sanctuary was set up within Nallamala Forest and upgraded to a Tiger Reserve in 1983. This led to displacement and relocation of the Chenchu hamlets outside the

Reserve, imposing restrictions on hunting and gathering, which are their primary source of livelihood. Thus, this paper attempts to critically analyse the Traditional Livelihood Activities that are continuing, and the New Economic Opportunities of the Chenchus for their livelihood as a result of displacement.

Keywords: Chenchus, Tiger Reserve, Relocation, Change and Continuity of Traditional Livelihoods, New economic opportunities.

LEARNING, CULTURE, AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Chairperson
Dr. Appa Rao T
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

1.Understanding Urban Slum Educational Dropouts from Habitus Framework; A Case Study of Pulianthope, Chennai

1. Jesurathnam Devarapalli
Professor, Dept of Anthropology, Pondicherry University, Puducherry.
Email id: drjesudev@gmail.com, drjesudev@pondiuni.ac.in
2. T.S.Janaki Ramaraju
Research Scholar, Dept of Anthropology, Pondicherry University, Puducherry.
Email id: ramarajutsj@gmail.com

Abstract

Education is often hailed as a primary tool for social mobility, yet India is grappling with a high percentage of dropouts before the completion of secondary education. The high dropout rate in urban slums damages the country's aspiration for development and the eradication of poverty. This paper relies on ethnographic fieldwork in Pulianthope, an urban slum in North Chennai, to analyse the complex interplay of factors contributing to the discontinuation of education. Data was gathered through in-depth interviews, quasi participant observation, and case studies with school dropouts, parents, teachers, and community leaders through purposive and snowball sampling. The dropout rate in Pulianthope is propelled by deep-rooted structural inequalities, lack of educational role models, and infrastructural deprivation. The schools misread the situation as individual failure rather than structural, thereby making educational discontinuation a rational choice.

Drawing on Bourdieu's capital theory and habitus framework, the paper examines how dysfunctional families and neighbourhoods, marked by violence and substance abuse, deny adequate social and emotional support, resulting in severe damage to the formation of educational habitus among the children. Infrastructural deficits such as congested housing, poor sanitation, and recurrent floods exacerbate the situation further and produce a hostile learning environment, making completion of school-related work nearly impossible. On top of that, the institutional habitus of the schools alienates the students from Pulianthope. Finally, the lack of community role models that promote education and the penetrating glamorous pop culture and social media for instant gratification results in cynicism toward education. This study concludes that the dropout rate in Pulianthope is not merely due to personal reasons but due to structural inequalities and habitus-field misfit.

Keywords: Urban Education, School Dropouts, Structural Inequality, Habitus, Pop Culture.

Disruption to Adaptation: Pathways to Post- COVID Digital Learning among the Children of Andhra Pradesh

Amareswar Theeda
M.A. Anthropology
University of Hyderabad
Email: amareswar7612@gmail.com

Abstract

Education extends beyond classrooms and curriculum; it is a continuous process of enculturation intertwined with socio-cultural life. The rapid shift to Digital learning, accelerated by the COVID pandemic, incorporated online learning as an essential part of pedagogy. However, socioeconomic Inequalities in access to technology hindered many, resulting in lost years of education. However, family, peers, and community created pathways to enable this transition.

This paper examines the social and psychological repercussions of the Pandemic, which disrupted schooling, while understanding the coping mechanisms that supported adjusting to the emerging forms of education. The study involves school students aged 13-16 and their Parents and teachers. It employs a mixed methodology combining qualitative semi-structured interviews, Group discussions with school records on bio-data, and questionnaires. It maps the students' socio-economic background with parameters of smartphone access, hurdles to online education, Illness due to the disease, and their preparedness to adapt alternative pathways.

Children remain an invisible part of the Pandemic. Survival concerns pushed learning to the background. Parental Income, occupation, and literacy level influenced children's participation in online education. Though contemporary societies offer a formal structure for education, the family's role in enculturation remains crucial. A support network formed by the family, teachers, and siblings ensured that children stayed engaged and overcame the learning gaps.

Although pandemics are rare, digital learning is the new normal. Education beyond classrooms requires a shared responsibility from the primary social institutions while ensuring awareness, affordability, and accessibility of the internet and devices. The study thus highlights that education is fundamentally a social phenomenon, even with new interventions.

Key words: *Anthropology of Education, Digital Learning, COVID pandemic, Enculturation.*

Learning Experience: Exploring Relational Factor in Government Primary Schools of Telangana.

T. Meghana Kanthi Priya
Master's student
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad
Email: 24sama13@uohyd.ac.in

Abstract

This study explores the complex and interrelated factors shaping the learning experiences of children in government primary schools of Telangana. The study employed a mixed-methods approach across 26 urban and peri-urban schools. It integrates first-hand data from classroom observations, stakeholder interviews, and assessment data to examine how teacher motivation, pedagogical practices, parental engagement, socio-cultural context, and infrastructure collectively influence children's everyday learning experience. By understanding the perspectives of children, teachers, and communities, this study highlights how the learning environment facilitates or hinders children's intellectual, social, and emotional growth. The findings reveal that while infrastructural barriers such as overcrowded classrooms, poor sanitation, and lack of digital facilities remain significant, their impact on learning is deeply mediated by the quality of teacher-student interactions, community involvement, and issues of caste, gender, and migration. The study underscores that improvement in holistic learning requires not isolated resource enhancements but integrated, child-centered strategies rooted in inclusive attitudes and responsive pedagogy. The findings intend to guide policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in designing targeted interventions that promote truly inclusive, culturally supportive, and effective education for all learners.

Key Words: Primary Education, Learner experience, Learning outcome, Cultural barriers, SDG, Anthropology of education.

Teaching Anthropology to Multidisciplinary Audiences: Ideations, Reflections and Implications

Dr. Snigdha Vishnoi
Assistant Professor
School of Liberal Studies
Dr. B. R Ambedkar University Delhi
Delhi – 06
Email: svishnoi@aud.ac.in

Abstract

Anthropology as a discipline has wide coverage of ideas, thematics, and varied areas of enquiry. The core of the subject argues for thinking from within, reflecting from the ground realities, participatory research, and most importantly, the self-reflective and ethical paradigms of speaking on behalf of the 'other'. Anthropological pedagogy has often received good attention owing to its 'field dimension', 'learning by doing-getting their hands dirty', also the 'the nuance of balancing the scientific orientation and artistic craft' in terms of anthropological writing, and is often seen to transgress the boundaries of disciplines that 'borrow', are 'inspired' or beyond any explicit relationalities. The anthropological research, pedagogy, and practice have been delving into its own politics of the discipline's outreach, practice, and the

future in terms of mapping its evolution and planning the future. In this regard, the paper aims to bring to the forefront the experiences of teaching anthropology to an interdisciplinary audience (also the disciplinarians) for the purpose of generating insights on the future of boundaries and exchanges the disciplines strive to both build and erase. The paper argues for collating and synthesizing the experiences of teaching anthropology to both the familiar/disciplinary meadows or interdisciplinary audience for the purpose of reinstating the importance of building anthropological armory and policy implications on teaching departments, collaborations, mergers and much more.

Keywords : Anthropological pedagogy, pedagogy in practice

Cultivating Change: Education and Culture in Social Change

K Mohan Chandu
M A political Science-11nd Year
University of Hyderabad
Email: mohanchandu227@gmail.com

This paper explores the connection between educational practices, cultural survivance, and social change. The key question is, how do educational programs, with an emphasis placed on cultural identity responding to a human experience, enhance the capacity of people and communities to engage in a transformative social change? Employing a qualitative, multiple case study research design, three uniquely different community-based learning programs were identified from each of their unique socio-economic conditions and an analysis of educational practices in their social contexts. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with both participants and educators, observations of educational spaces, and an analysis of program curriculum documentation.

The results of this study demonstrate that education acts to both affirm cultural heritage and support the development of critical consciousness. It was shown that when learning content is intentionally related to local cultural stories along with a human-centered pedagogical approach, an increase in learner agency and collective identity is achieved. This increase in empowerment potential represents an initial key leverage point, enabling the access of the learners' own practical agency and social movement from theory to action at the community grass-roots level. The study also showed that the best social changes were not driven by a structured, top-down kind of teaching model but developed within collaborative peer learning networks in which intergenerational and cultural barriers were crossed among the other networks in their respective communities.

This work is important as it adds to an emerging understanding of how learning, more broadly than just the academic definition, acts as a direct force for positive social change. The study provides valuable lessons for educational practitioners, policymakers, and community members working to develop and enact educational solutions that are not only effective in the development of skills but also culturally relevant and socially transformative.

Keywords: human, school, society, change, learning, culture

Chairperson
Prof. G. Nagaraju
Head, Department of Sociology
University of Hyderabad

The Mentorship Effect: TPD lessons from Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh

Sagarika Unnikrishnan and Sahil Sharma
Leadership for Equity
Email: Sahil.sharma@leadershipforequity.org

Abstract
Teacher mentorship is a critical component of Teacher Professional Development (TPD), offering a departure from traditional top-down training towards sustained professional growth and a supportive school culture. In India, however, this promise has largely gone unfulfilled. Despite strong policy intent, implementation is often constrained by bureaucratic inefficiencies, with Block and Cluster Resource Persons (BRPs/CRPs) functioning more as invigilators than as true mentors. This paper argues that structured, localised mentorship programs offer a powerful antidote to these systemic failures.

This study investigates two pioneering initiatives designed to reshape teacher support in rural India: Maharashtra's 'Vishay Mitra' and Andhra Pradesh's 'Sahacharulu'. Through a comparative case study analysis, we assess the efficacy of teacher mentoring models and provide critical reflections on their implementation. The study demonstrates that when carefully designed and contextually responsive, mentorship programs can transform the role of educators, enhance instructional practices, and cultivate a culture of continuous professional growth. The Vishay Mitra program, despite its early termination, catalysed significant shifts in teaching practices. The intervention covered a cascade training model to direct training via innovative 'EduFests' and curated learning packets. It also fostered peer learning and integrated digital literacy, establishing a formal academic support layer. In contrast, the Sahacharulu program noted consistent progression in teaching quality, with districts with the program outperforming the state average scores. Specific, measurable gains were observed in lesson facilitation, questioning techniques, and teachers' critical thinking. The provision of immediate feedback proved to be particularly impactful in these observed gains.

The comparative analysis of these two models yields crucial insights for effective TPD implementation. Both programs highlight the importance of robust governance, dedicated cadres, contextual responsiveness, and careful piloting before scaling. Beyond program design, factors like mentor motivation, recognition, and bureaucratic hierarchies are also critical for success. The experiences collectively illustrate a vital transformation of TPD: the creation of a dedicated support cadre. When these mentors, whether evolving from classroom teachers or repurposing existing roles, are empowered with clarity and purpose, they are better able to foster reflective and collaborative teaching practices, enabling continuous professional growth. Ultimately, these case studies demonstrate that structural mentorship is a powerful lever for teacher professional growth when designed with fidelity, contextual responsiveness, and formalised as policy.
Keywords: Professional development, Governance, Mentorship

Significant Factors for Parents to Choose International Schools for their Children: An

Anthropological Study of International School Parents Preferences in Hyderabad

Bandaru Pavani
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad
Email: bandarupavani2309@gmail.com

Abstract
Considering the wide range of school choices parents have in the current education and school system, parents' selection of a particular school for their child/children's a complex process. The present study aims to examine how and why parents in Hyderabad choose a particular international school for child education. The study employs qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data with a total sample size of 50 and in-depth interviews of 20 parents. Parents were observed in their residential spaces. The study findings reveal that among parents, majorly it is the father who makes the decision related to school choice and the role of the mother and child in the selection process is minimal and limited. Proximity, safe environment, teacher's accountability, and quality education are the major preferences for parents to choose an international school. Parent's aspiration to provide a wide range of opportunities for higher education after schooling is a major reason for parents choosing international school.
Keywords: International Schools, Children, Preferences, Higher Education

Mother-Tongue Education and Cultural Identity: Multilingualism, Policy, and Social Transformation in India

Korra Nithin
An Integrated Master of Arts, CALTS,
University of Hyderabad
Contact: 7981452840, korranithin871@gmail.com

Abstract
One of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, i.e., India, with over 1,600languages spoken. In a multilingual society such as India, the medium of education plays an important role in shaping children's learning outcomes and Social and cultural belonging. The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) emphasizes mother-tongue-based education, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". However, language hierarchies and socio-political pressures often marginalize tribal and minority languages, creating tensions between global aspirations and local identities. This paper, based on secondary data— government policies, UNESCO reports, and ethnographic studies—analyzes the role of multilingual education in sustaining cultural identity in India. Few Case studies examine the relationship between language endangerment and education, highlighting how mother-tongue-based education contributes to social transformation. Drawing from anthropological perspectives, the paper explores how language policies impact cultural continuity, how multilingual education negotiates identity, particularly how mother-tongue-based learning can sustain cultural identity, and also how linguistic justice is essential while addressing social inequalities in India. The paper also explores initiatives in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, and urban contexts, while also reflecting on contemporary challenges in the era of globalization and English dominance. The findings emphasize that educational practices grounded in linguistic diversity not only improve academic performance but also preserve cultural identity and reduce social inequalities, and offer pathways for empowerment and

inclusion. Challenges remain in terms of resource allocation, teacher training, and balancing national versus local languages. The study underscores the significance of policy interventions, community participation, and digital tools in sustaining linguistic diversity, making mother-tongue education a critical pathway for inclusive and sustainable development.

Building Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Public-School Infrastructure in Telangana

Mumtaz Parveen and Thalari Jeevan Kumar
Sr. Manager - Design, Strategy & Partnerships
United Way of Hyderabad (Leading Non-Profit Organization)
Email: jeevanthalari@unitedwayhyderabad.org

Abstract
Public schools in Telangana serve over 33,000 institutions and remain the primary access point for children from disadvantaged communities. However, many are increasingly vulnerable to climate risks, including heatwaves, water scarcity, floods, and poor WASH systems. This study proposes a systematic assessment of school infrastructure through the development of a Sustainable & Climate Resilience Index(SCRI), benchmarking schools across six domains: energy, water, WASH, building safety and using low carbon materials, waste/ecology, and disaster preparedness. Using a stratified sample of 500 schools across 33 districts, the approach combines digital audits, GIS mapping, environmental measurements, and stakeholder interviews to compute SCRI scores and classify schools into resilience bands. The research will generate district-level scorecards, GIS-based hotspot maps, and a cost investment roadmap for infrastructure upgrades. Expected outcomes include a comprehensive baseline of resilience gaps, actionable investment pathways, and policy recommendations to strengthen Telangana's alignment with the PM-SHRI Green School initiative and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 4, 6, 7, and 13). By providing robust evidence and scalable solutions, the study will contribute to ensuring safer, climate-ready, and equitable learning environments for millions of students.

Chrysalis Genie–The World's First Teaching Console in School Education Segment

I Sundar Raj. 2 Bharath, 3. Ravi Teja
Head – Corporate Communications - EZ Vidya,
Chennai
Email: sundar@chrysalis.world

Abstract
For modern-day kids, students in particular, modest exposure to basic technology and gadgets is quite common. In the case of the K-12 segment, there are three core challenges in homes and in classrooms. (i) Frequent distraction and limited time span, (ii) Teachers using the blackboard most of the time inside classrooms without facing their students, impairing face-to-face contact, and (iii) Unsatisfactory student engagement affecting their learning.

Methodology
Distributed portable 500 Genies with built in 270 degree rotatatable camera & over a lakh AR enabled Genie Kits that aids holistic teaching and learning processes Conducted Face to face teacher orientation & training s(1-2 days per school) Virtual training during the academic year span (2-3 sessions if required) for instant clarification if any Face to face Monitoring visits to affect corrective measures if any Face to Face – Classrooms Observance/surveys both questionnaire and online Review

Impact
Through GENIE, which is the world's first teaching console using Augmented Reality (AR), we have actively partnered with about 150 schools (private, govt, and anganwadis), implementing 500 gadgets, benefiting 1,50,000 students with around 2000 teachers. The journey continues......

Why Genie is a Boon
The teacher faces the students throughout the class period. •Teacher saves time in blackboard and notes writing, digital resource navigation. •Comes loaded with rich pedagogical tools/Genie kits. •Save time on repeated blackboard writing-with Genie, handwritten notes/drawings can be projected. •Project Real-time props-Instantly, Real-time props can be projected by simply placing them under

Technical Details
GENIE – comes with a 3-year replacement warranty.

GENIE Technical specifications

• Genie comes with a 12 MP rotatable camera (270 °).

•Genie comes with 2 USB ports; you can connect to the internet through LAN/WIFI.

•Genie can be connected to an interactive panel/ordinary flat monitor through HDMI or wireless.

•You can also download Microsoft Office onto GENIE, which brings the two worlds of Windows and Android apps.

•Genie Power supply DC12V/3A input.

•Genie Touch screen, multi-touch capacitive touch screen. •Genie LCD screen resolution - 1024 X 600.

•Genie Power supply DC12V/3A input.

•Genie Touch screen, multi-touch capacitive touch screen.

•Genie LCD screen resolution - 1024 X 600.

•Genie Flash memory-64GB.

•Genie minimum bandwidth 512 kbps.

•Genie operating Temperature –10'C - 60'C.

•Genie Video compression H.264 4K@60fps abd H.265 4k@60fps.

About Chrysalis

Since 2001, Chrysalis has been at the forefront of fundamental reform in school education. Its award-winning, innovative curriculum program, ThinkRoom, caters to grades nursery to class 8. Progressive schools across India are replacing their mundane 20th-century textbooks with all the new vibrant Chrysalis books, designed to meet the new-gen learners and teachers. Chrysalis is also pioneering cutting-edge technologies, including being the first to integrate QR codes in books and later fully integrating Augmented reality in books.

Everyone needs a 'Sahyogi': Lessons from the creation of teacher support cadres in rural Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh

Sagarika Unnikrishnan & Sahil Sharma
Leadership for Equity
Email: Sahil.sharma@leadershipforequity.org

Abstract

Recognizing the need for in-service teacher development, the Indian government constituted Block and Cluster Resource Coordinators (BRC/CRC) to support teachers. However, the lack of structured observation and feedback mechanisms has limited their effectiveness, often making them invigilators rather than mentors. This challenge is particularly acute in rural areas, where limited resources and qualified personnel contribute to outdated teaching practices. Addressing this gap, structured support mechanisms have been explored in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The need for structured teacher support was identified through field experience and alignment with government priorities. Maharashtra engaged teachers to form a new cadre, while Andhra Pradesh repurposed BRCs, CRCs, and headmasters. Selection was based on tests and interviews assessing motivation and capability. Effectiveness was gauged through classroom observations and structured mentoring. Comparative insights from both states highlight the importance of recruitment strategies and the evolving role of teacher mentors in improving instructional practices.

Maharashtra's "Vishay Mitra" and Andhra Pradesh's Sahacharulu programs aim to create a structured support system for in-service teacher development. Initially focused on implementing FLN initiatives in Maharashtra state, the model evolved into a broader mentoring framework in Andhra Pradesh. Teacher mentors here facilitate reflective teaching practices using the World Bank's "Teach" tool for standardisation. By embedding structured mentoring within existing education systems, these programs seek to enhance teacher effectiveness and instructional quality at scale.

Maharashtra's program covered 30 project offices, deploying 52 teacher mentors across 1,039 tribal schools. Andhra Pradesh's ongoing pilot operates in 141 schools across three districts with 90 mentors and is set for statewide scaling by June 2025. While administrative challenges led to Maharashtra's discontinuation, ongoing impact assessment in Andhra Pradesh has shown positive teacher feedback and measurable instructional improvements among 335 teachers, assessed using a standardised teaching evaluation tool.

Juxtaposing two case studies, from tribal districts of Maharashtra to rural areas of Andhra

Pradesh, we have learnt:

● Intentionally building government ownership is critical, ensured through alignment with existing priorities and cultivating champions across hierarchies.

● Clear role definitions prevent overlap and enhance program efficacy, given cadre members often juggle two roles.

● Leveraging government systems for delivery and management ensures scalability and integration, though challenges remain in long-term institutionalisation.

● The mentor role should evolve from passive adherence to proactive practitioners.

THEME
SUBSTANTIABLE PRACTICES AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Chairperson
Prof. Vijoy S Sahay,
Emeritus Professor and
Former Head, Department of Anthropology
Allahabad University &
Editor, The Oriental Anthropologist.

Evaluating Contemporary *Adivasi* Practices: Building a Roadmap to Sustainable Development.

R. Venugopala Rao
Senior Scientist
Laya-HRI
Visakhapatnam.
Email: habitatinstitute@gmail.com

Abstract

In India, *Adivasi* societies are largely concentrated in the high-altitude regions of the Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats, and the Himalayan Mountain ranges. Since immemorial, these communities have inhabited geographically similar but regionally diverse landscapes. Their traditional systems and practices are comparable in nature, shaped by their close interaction with the environment. The high-altitude Adivasi zone of Andhra Pradesh forms part of the Eastern Ghats. Over the past three decades, noticeable changes have emerged in the systems and practices of Adivasi communities. In the present decade, these changes have accelerated, driven largely by external factors. These external influences have significantly disrupted indigenous, value-based systems. However, resilient indigenous practices continue to persist, adapting to modern contexts while maintaining economic viability, ecological balance, and social acceptance.

There is an urgent need to explore the root causes of greed-driven contemporary practices, especially through the lens of development versus sustainability. The constitutional special status granted to *Adivasi* regions and their customary rights and traditional practices must be revisited, discussed, and further strengthened to ensure social harmony and ecological balance. In the context of resource utilization, several critical aspects demand attention. These are: Needy vs greedy use of natural resources, Resource depletion vs restoration, Long-term fallow *podu* (shifting cultivation) vs domestication for assured livelihoods. The role and status of Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) in entrepreneurial activities, Human-wildlife conflict and strategies for coexistence, Participatory approaches to ex-situ wildlife conservation, Coexistence between Adivasi & Adivasi, Non-Adivasi and Adivasi communities, Education to enhance management of common property resources, promoting optimal use of resources and reducing dependence on non-renewable inputs, Emphasizing renewable resources and eco-friendly tourism practices, Integrating revised, culturally-sensitive curricula in schools. Understanding and promoting both indigenous and conventional medical practices is essential for the overall well-being of Adivasi communities. Social cohesion is another critical factor, particularly in contrast with top-down social engineering efforts that may undermine traditional structures. Like other societies, Adivasi communities are undergoing rapid transformation. Infrastructure development, digital technologies, and external inputs increasingly influence their way of life. Digital tools, in particular, play a mixed role—bringing both opportunities and challenges. Food security and quality of life remain key concerns in these regions.

Strengthening institutional mechanisms is vital for achieving sustainable development goals. Finally, a comprehensive understanding of past and present Adivasi practices, combined with the active involvement of primary stakeholders and supportive secondary stakeholders, is crucial for charting a sustainable development roadmap for Adivasi regions across the Indian subcontinent.

Keywords: Adivasi, Development, Eastern Ghats, Transformation, Tribal Communities

Mapping of Sustainability and Sustainable Farming Methods of the Gond Tribe: An Empirical Investigation from the Anuppur District of Madhya Pradesh

1. Manisha Singh Research Scholar,
Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture and Folk Literature,
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU),
Amarkantak, Anuppur DT, Madhya Pradesh, India.
e-mail: manishasingh6261@gmail.com
2. Kasi Eswarappa
Assistant Professor, Faculty of Tribal Studies,
Department of Tribal Studies, Art, Culture and Folk Literature,
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University (IGNTU),
Amarkanatak, Anuppur DT, Madhya Pradesh, India.

Abstract

The concept of sustainability among the tribal community is comprehensive in their perspectives; they practice sustainability and carry it forward with their next generation. The Gond tribal community is the second-largest tribal community, with approximately 4.36million (4,357,918) people in Madhya Pradesh. They primarily reside in central and eastern states, including Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Among all states, Madhya Pradesh has the largest population of the Gond Tribe. The area where this tribal community primarily resides is known as the 'Gondawana' region and 'The Land of Gonds.' An empirical study among the Gond community of Tali village has shown that they follow the traditional farming method, which only supports their families, and try to maintain the stability of the land by following methods that do not affect the agricultural land. Further, agriculture and related activities are their primary livelihood and depend on forest resources. The sustainability practice in agricultural land supports the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of Life on Land and Zero Hunger. This paper aims to determine the sustainability of their livelihood sources, such as farming. The paper is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is gathered from the Gond tribes of Tali Village near the Amarkantak region of the Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. The primary data collection methods include observation, key informant interviews, the case study method, and focused group discussions from the field. The secondary data is gathered from government records, journals, articles, and books.

Keywords: Traditional Methods of Farming, Sustainability, Sustainable Development Goals, Empirical Study, Gond Tribe, Madhya Pradesh, and Central India.

From Global Blue Economy to Local Struggles: Rethinking Sustainable Development in Kerala's Marine Fisheries Sector

Manju J Manoj
Research scholar
University of Hyderabad
Email: 17saph03@uohyd.ac.in

Abstract

Kerala's positioning as a future global blue economy hub, exemplified by the 2025 Kerala–EU Conclave and the inauguration of the Vizhinjam International Seaport, highlights the state's commitment to infrastructure-driven development and sustainable growth. However, these projects also intensify debates about the social and ecological costs of large-scale investments. Drawing on secondary data on protests and field insights from fishermen in Kollam district, supplemented with interviews with activists and community members, this paper interrogates how policies framed under sustainability and conservation are experienced, contested, and reinterpreted by coastal communities.

The analysis demonstrates how fisherfolk's protests against port expansion and corporate maritime ventures articulate concerns over coastal erosion, loss of livelihoods, ecological degradation, and inadequate impact assessments. While state and corporate narratives emphasize operational efficiency, economic competitiveness, and alignment with SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 14 (Life Below Water), local actors question whether conservation policies remain intact when corporate capital flows dominate decision-making. These tensions reveal an ongoing conflict between technocratic visions of the blue economy and the lived vulnerabilities of artisanal communities, whose subsistence and cultural identities are deeply tied to the sea.

The paper argues that anthropology offers critical tools to uncover the disjuncture between policy rhetoric and ground realities by situating these struggles within the wider SDG framework. It highlights the need for participatory governance, transparent impact studies, and community-centered sustainability models. The study underscores anthropology's capacity to engage with pressing questions of development, justice, and environmental governance, offering pathways toward more inclusive and equitable futures in an era of intensified climate and corporate pressures.

Keywords: Anthropology, Blue Economy, Vizhinjam Port, Fisherfolk, SDGs, Development Policy, Coastal Protests, Kerala

The Shandies and Development Among Tribes

1. Dr. D.Ramesh,
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: dr.anthro.au@gmail.com

2. T.Pavan Kalyan,
MA in Anthropology
Department of Anthropology
Andhra University
Email: malreddy2909@gmail.com

Abstract

With this peculiarity, the research was conducted to study the role of shandies in tribal development. The data was collected by conducting the fieldwork in Chintapalle Mandal by employing the quantitative techniques of the Random sample technique and stratified random techniques using the pre-structured schedules. In participatory observation methods, tools such as interviews and secondary sources of information are considered for qualitative purposes. It was found that the shandy, with its strategic location, provides the opportunity for tribal people to integrate into mainstream society. Traditionally, shandies are the hub for social interactions among the tribal population, like meeting relatives, matrimonial alliances, and extending invitations for celebrations, which are slowly losing their relevance, with the government intervention by establishing all-weather connectivity roads to shandies, drawing the new developmental changes in the shandies, like establishing educational institutions and health care facilities.

The study signifies the roles of shandies in holistic development among tribes in education, health, economy, politics, and law and order by drawing the spirit of the integrated approach of tribal development envisioned by the first prime minister of India, Sri. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Keywords: *Economic anthropology, Shandies, Integrated approach of tribal development.*

Chairperson
Prof P Venkata Rao
Former Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

Medical Tourism and Surrogacy: Public Health Perspectives

Dr Sunita Reddy
Associate Professor
Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health
School of Social Sciences
Jawaharlal Nehru University
Email: sunitareddy@mail.jnu.ac.in, sunitareddyjnu@gmail.com

Abstract
South Asia, home to nearly one-quarter of the world's population, faces profound public health challenges rooted in poverty, inadequate investment, and inequitable access to care. While communicable diseases, maternal and child health, and malnutrition remain pressing concerns, globalization and liberalized trade in health services have fostered rapid growth of the private health sector and the rise of medical tourism (MT) and surrogacy as lucrative industries. India, in particular, has positioned itself as a global hub for "world-class treatment at third-world prices," attracting over a million foreign patients annually for procedures ranging from orthopedic surgeries and transplants to in-vitro fertilization and surrogacy.

Medical tourism thrives on stark cost differentials and state support through subsidies, partnerships, and promotional campaigns, while corporate hospitals benefit from public resources. However, this expansion accentuates inequalities: public health systems remain underfunded and overburdened, and ordinary citizens often lack access to essential drugs and emergency care. MT largely caters to non-emergency, high-end procedures, privileging affluent foreign and elite domestic patients over the vast majority of South Asians struggling with basic health needs.

Surrogacy, as part of the MT package, raises ethical and legal concerns about exploitation, commercialization of women's bodies, and weak regulatory frameworks. Both sectors illustrate a policy shift from health as a right to health as a commodity. Though framed as contributing to economic growth and foreign exchange earnings, the anticipated "trickle-down" benefits to public health remain unsubstantiated.

This paper critically examines medical tourism and surrogacy from a public health perspective, situating them within the broader dynamics of globalization, inequity, and state retreat from welfare commitments. It argues for re-centering primary health care, revisiting Alma Ata principles, and developing ethical, people-centered frameworks to ensure that health care remains accessible, equitable, and socially just in South Asia.
Keywords: in-vitro fertilization, Globalization, Medical Tourism, Public Health, Surrogacy, South Asia

Menstrual Health Characteristics and Influencing Factors Among Poumai Women, Manipur, India

Karingailiu Panmei[1], Sanjenbam Yaiphaba Meitei[2]
1 Research scholar, Department of Anthropology,
Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal, India–795003.
karingailiu.phd.anthro@manipuruniv.ac.in
2 Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology,
Manipur University, Canchipur, Imphal, India–795003.
sanyaimei@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Research question: Menstrual health is a significant public health issue that affects the physical, psychological, and social well-being of women. Despite its importance, it remains understudied and often stigmatized, particularly in marginalized communities. This study examines the menstrual health characteristics and associated influencing factors, such as biological, social, ingested, behavioral, and choice-based factors, among the women of the Poumai tribe in the Senapati district of Manipur, India.

Methodology: A cross-sectional study was conducted among 95 Poumai women (aged 12-49years) in Senapati District. A pre-structured questionnaire was used to collect relevant data on menstrual characteristics and associated influencing factors. Chi-square test and regression analyses were used to identify significant associations and predictors of menstrual health outcomes.

Key findings: Most participants experienced normal menstrual duration and regular patterns. Premenstrual symptoms and dysmenorrhea were commonly reported, especially among adults. Chi-square analysis indicated significant associations between painkiller use and menstrual flow duration and cramp severity, while restricted dietary practices were linked to flow volume and pain severity. Age at menarche was significantly associated with types of menstrual pain. Regression models revealed that the strongest predictors of menstrual discomfort were ingested and choice-based factors, with the type of sanitary product used and painkiller intake showing the most influence on flow volume, pain type, and cramp intensity ($R^2 = 0.270$ for type of pain). Educational qualification exhibited modest protective effects, whereas behavioral factors had limited associations with menstrual outcomes.

Significance: Menstrual health among Poumai women is shaped more by modifiable factors such as medication, diet, and menstrual product choice than by demographic characteristics. Addressing these modifiable factors through targeted education and improved menstrual hygiene management can enhance reproductive health outcomes and promote menstrual equity in tribal populations.

Keywords

Menstrual health, menstrual disorders, hygiene practices, menstrual characteristics, Poumai Tribe

Changing trajectories of traditional post-natal care in Kerala: Rise of ayurvedic post-natal care

Vishnupriya M
PhD Scholar
CSSEIP
University of Hyderabad
Email: vishnupriya123m@gmail.com

Abstract

In the advent of modernism, several indigenous practices, in an attempt to safeguard itself, rearranged and institutionalised to create what we know today as Ayurveda. Traditional midwifery practiced by lower caste women could not join the bandwagon with the rise of hospital birth. Between tradition and modernity, what remains of traditional obstetrics is postnatal care – shaped by intimate, embodied knowledge and practices of women within households and communities. This ethnographic research set in Malabar, Kerala, tries to document the traditional postnatal care practices and map their changes over the past few years. What used to be a polluting job practiced by lower caste people is in its transition phase with the growing popularity of ayurvedic postnatal care centres. The ayurvedisation of postnatal care reflects changing social structures and consumer needs. It also reflects how caste and gender hierarchies shape what is perceived as knowledge and expertise.

Keywords: postnatalcare; Ayurveda; Kerala; medical pluralism

Infertility, Inequality, and Social Navigation: Ethnographic Perspectives on Childlessness and Health in Telangana, South India

Dr. Venkatesh Boddu
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
School of Liberal Arts and Humanities
Woxsen University
Email: venkatesh.boddu@woxsen.edu.in

Abstract

Infertility in India is not just a biological condition but also a social experience shaped by the interplay of structural inequalities, cultural expectations, and gender politics. This ethnographic study explores social determinants of infertility and its treatments in and around Hyderabad, Telangana. This ethnographic study situates various kinds of infertility treatments within the everyday lives of childless men and couples. Drawing on fieldwork and interviews, the research illustrates how poverty, limited educational opportunities, stigma, social networks, and uneven access to healthcare converge to frame both the biological and social realities of childlessness. Infertility is revealed not merely as a medical diagnosis but as a continually negotiated struggle embedded in kinship obligations, moral discourses, and community surveillance. Couples navigate the dual burden of medical uncertainty and social scrutiny, with reproductive technologies offering hope while simultaneously reinforcing divisions based on class, gender, and locality. The experience of infertility is shown to reshape identities and relationships, challenging conventional pathways of marriage, parenthood, and belonging. By foregrounding lived narratives, this paper demonstrates that infertility in India cannot be understood apart from the broader social forces that contour health and reproduction. Ultimately, it argues for are framing of infertility as a social condition—one embedded in the intersecting realities of inequality, stigma, and the moral economy of reproduction in contemporary Telangana.

Key Words: Infertility, Inequality, Childlessness, ARTs, Poverty, Stigma, Gender

Maternal Health and Policy Interventions: An Ethnographic Inquiry among a Tribal Community in Southern India

Neemkar Anoosha
Research Scholar
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad
Email: 22saph02@uohyd.ac.in

Abstract

Maternal health policies in Southern India face numerous challenges in improving the well-being of women and children. Maternal health refers to the health of women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postnatal period (World Health Organization). India's Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) is an information system for tracking maternal and child health beneficiaries in the public health system and improving service delivery planning and outcomes. This ambitious health policy was launched in 2009 and currently covers all states in India. In this system, the mother and child receive necessary health care during the phases of antenatal, intranatal, and postnatal care, as well as by encouraging institutional deliveries. It emphasizes the role and contributions of public health institutions, ASHA workers, and community members in achieving maternal and child health.

The present study focuses on the maternal and child health care services, institutional arrangements, registrations under MCTS, and changes in reproductive health care, utilization, and safe birthing practices among the Savara community of Andhra Pradesh, classified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG). The study is based on the fieldwork in two e-sub centers in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh for four months, from December 2019 to March 2020. The study adopted mixed methods to collect data and used anthropological research methods such as participant observation, case studies, schedules, structured interviews, and purposive and random sampling. The findings highlight the role of policy intervention, socio-cultural factors, and improved mortality and morbidity rates in health care by MCTS. The study underscores the importance of integrating digital health interventions like MCTS with culturally sensitive approaches to ensure equitable maternal care among vulnerable tribal populations.

Keywords: Maternal Health, Child Health, Health Policy, Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS), Savara Tribe

Elastic Practices: Understanding Menstrual Cups Beyond Innovation and Feasibility

Sumukhi Marupaka
University of Hyderabad, University of Chicago
Email: sumukhim25@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines menstrual cups as technologies of the body, asking what their adoption reveals about the collective, elastic, and culturally situated dynamics of innovation in stigmatized contexts. While menstrual hygiene management in India has largely been framed through the distribution of sanitary pads, menstrual cups remain underexplored in both national policy and public discourse. By centering the cup, this project investigates how technologies and bodies co-constitute each other, and how knowledge circulates in contexts of stigma. The material for this paper emerges from Cup Chronicles, a podcast that blends personal narrative, interviews, and advocacy. At its center is a dialogic interview between myself and the researcher of a 2018 four-month public health study on first-time cup users at the University of Hyderabad, in which I was a participant. This recursive encounter offers a distinctive vantage point for reflecting on how menstrual technologies are studied, experienced, and translated. In addition, four further interviews with the interlocutors who had adopted, and in some cases later abandoned, menstrual cups provide textured accounts of use, refusal, and transformation. Findings from these conversations highlight how adoption is rarely linear. Cups were taken up through collective vocabularies, peer support, and improvisation, but some users later shifted to tampons or pads, underscoring the elasticity of menstrual practices. These dynamics show that menstrual technologies cannot be reduced to questions of feasibility or biomedical efficacy alone; they are entangled with stigma, availability infrastructures, and users' shifting imaginaries.

By framing menstrual cups as technologies of the body, this paper contributes to medical anthropology and science and technology studies by foregrounding dialogic and multimodal methods as crucial for studying embodied technologies. It demonstrates how podcasts and other experimental forms of ethnography can open new avenues for understanding menstruation, innovation, and collective practice.

Keywords: Menstrual cups, Technologies of the body, Dialogic research, Multimodal-ethnography, Medical anthropology, STS

Chairperson
Dr. George Tharakan C
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of Hyderabad

Human Meaning Orientation Theory: Inaugurating New Paradigm Shifts in the Study of Humanity

By Pedarattaiah Gadde,
General Secretary& CEO,
Anthropological Association for Humankind
Email: Secretary@aaafh.org

Abstract

This paper presents Human Meaning Orientation Theory (HMOT) as a new anthropological framework that places meaning at the center of human existence. In contrast to dominant paradigms that emphasize material, structural, or utilitarian dimensions of life, HMOT advances a "meaning-first" orientation, arguing that human beings primarily inhabit meaning worlds—conceptual, cultural, and experiential spaces in which purpose, coherence, and significance are continuously sought, constructed, and transmitted.

The theory proposes that, beyond social, cultural, ethnic, racial, or national backgrounds, humans can be classified into eight distinct orientations of meaning: Meaning Seekers, Meaning Givers, Meaning Receivers, Meaning Keepers, Meaning Makers, Meaning Designers, Meaning Builders, and Meaning Developers. Each orientation represents a unique mode of engagement with meaning, from those who search for personal significance to those who preserve inherited traditions, design frameworks, or develop meanings that adapt to emerging challenges. This classification offers anthropology a powerful conceptual tool for understanding both the universality and diversity of human meaning-making.

HMOT inaugurates multiple paradigm shifts: from material determinism to meaning orientation, from cultural description to meaning engagement, and from fixed structures to dynamic processes of meaning creation and transmission. Its applications are wide-ranging. In education, it can guide pedagogies that align with diverse meaning orientations. In health and well-being, it can inform culturally sensitive care rooted in patients' meaning frameworks. In migration and displacement, it offers insights into resilience and identity reconstruction. In climate adaptation and sustainability, it highlights how communities mobilize meaning to confront ecological crises. In governance and policy, it provides a framework for participatory, human-centered decision-making.

Positioned at the intersection of anthropology, philosophy, and applied social sciences, HMOT contributes both theoretically and practically to global research. It envisions an anthropology of the future—one that recognizes the primacy of meaning in shaping human resilience, identity, and collective destiny.

Navigating exclusion in urban spaces: a journey of identity from village margins to city streets

Dr. Mithun Sikdar
Superintending Anthropologist and Head of Office
Anthropological Survey of India
Southern Regional Center
Mysore, Karnataka

Abstract

Research Question: This study interrogates the ways in which the Budaga Jangam, a historically stigmatized community of itinerant performers, negotiate the contingencies of livelihood, identity, and citizenship within the shifting urban milieus of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Methodology: This is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2020 and 2021, in different geographic locations of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Because of the peripatetic nature of the community, it includes snowball sampling of participants with particular emphasis on participant observation in urban roadside settlements. It was followed by semi-structured interviews with key informants, family members, and discussions with local administrators. Different archival sources were also used to trace the historical trajectory of their marginalisation from the colonial Criminal Tribes Act to the post-independence period.

Key Findings: It reveals that the Budaga Jangam exemplifies a continuum of marginalisation that transcends both time and space. It endures from the colonial order into the fractured promise of postcolonial modernity. Their existence is marked not by the official maps of citizenship but rather by the precarious borders of urban life. Their improvised tents, erected alongside major thoroughfares, showed the coexistence of precarity and performance. The main sources of subsistence are itinerant street plays and ritualized alms-seeking, which perpetuate inherited stigma while also providing a means of subsistence. Their urban presence signifies not only a process of integration but also a reproduction of marginality in a new dimension.

Significance: It provides a thorough ethnographic understanding of Budaga Jangam's fight for acceptance and a living in urban dynamics. The paradox of India's urban modernity is clearly visible in this study, where the inclusionary state promises coexisting identities with deep exclusions. It contributes to debates in urban anthropology, caste studies, and postcolonial citizenship by showing how Denotified communities negotiate survival at the intersection of historical stigma, contested caste identities, and urban precarity.

Key words: Denotified Community, peripatetic caste, stigma, urban dynamics, livelihood

Shaping Futures from the Margins: Women as Agents of Change

Gangarapu Sandhya
Research Associate (Cultural)
Anthropological Survey of India
Southern Regional Centre
Mysore

Abstract

This paper presents an ethnographic study of Palaguttapalle, a small drought-affected village in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh, where women created new ways to survive and grow after agriculture failed. With little income and few options, a group of women began stitching reusable cotton cloth bags. This effort not only provided them with a steady livelihood but also helped reduce the use of single-use plastic, linking their work to both social and environmental change.

The study is based on field visits, interviews, and group discussions with the women of the village. It shows how they faced poverty, lack of education, and limited government support, yet built a small-scale business that gave them financial independence and dignity. Their work reflects resilience, collective effort, and innovation at the community level.

This initiative directly relates to global development concerns. It supports gender equality (SDG 5) by empowering women, sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) through eco-friendly bags, and climate action (SDG 13) by reducing plastic waste. The case of Palaguttapalle shows how local practices can contribute to larger goals like the Sustainable Development Agenda.

The paper argues that women at the grassroots are not just passive recipients of aid but active agents of change. Their work demonstrates how simple, community-driven actions can inspire wider discussions on development, sustainability, and policy. Palaguttapalle's story is a reminder that meaningful transformation often begins in small villages, through the determination of ordinary people.

Keywords: Women empowerment, SDGs, sustainability, rural development, cloth bags.

Order in Chaos: Analysing Inter-Ethnic Conflicts and Space Negotiations in Kolkata's Chinatown

1. Syed Ayaan Alam,
Pondicherry University,
Kalapet, Puducherry - 605014, India. e-mail: ayaan.anth@gmail.com
2. Dr. Valerie Dkhar,
Pondicherry University,
Kalapet,
Puducherry - 605014, India.
e-mail: valz2203@pondiuni.ac.in

Abstract

Cities are sites where cultural diversity is both celebrated and contested, and the negotiation of everyday coexistence often takes place through the management of shared spaces. In multiethnic neighbourhoods, questions of access, belonging, and recognition frequently give rise to subtle conflicts, but they also generate creative strategies of accommodation. This paper situates these dynamics within the Chinese neighbourhoods of Kolkata, one of India's oldest diasporic urban enclaves, to explore how inter-ethnic relations shape and reshape the meaning of communal space. The central research questions guiding this study are: *How do inter-ethnic interactions within these neighbourhoods influence the construction and contestation of communal space? What mechanisms are employed by residents to manage conflict and sustain coexistence in a multiethnic environment?*

Methodologically, the paper draws on ethnographic fieldwork, including non-participant observation, key informant interviews, semi-structured open-ended interviews, case studies, and archival research on the historical development of Chinese settlements in Kolkata. This multi-pronged approach highlights both the long-term trajectories of community relations and the immediate, lived practices of negotiation. Preliminary findings suggest that while inter-ethnic tensions do emerge around issues such as economic competition, cultural representation, and access to public resources, these are mediated through everyday interactions—ranging from occupational cooperation and neighbourhood networks to shared festivals and food traditions. Rather than static boundaries, communal spaces are continuously redefined through these interactions, producing both zones of friction and avenues of solidarity.

By analysing the relational dynamics among diverse groups, this paper demonstrates how the negotiation of *space* becomes central to the sustainability of multicultural coexistence. The case of Kolkata's Chinese neighbourhoods contributes to broader anthropological debates on urban pluralism and offers comparative insights for policy and practice in managing diversity in rapidly transforming cities.

Vegetable Vending as a Dimension of Urban Dynamics: A Study in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh

Doraboina Udaya Kumar
Research Scholar,
A.P. State Archives,
District Gazetteers and Oriental Manuscripts Library Dept. Vijayawada.
Email: udaykumarddu@gmail.com
Mobile Number: 9441451051

Abstract

This paper deals with the urban dynamics of vegetable street vending in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. The study reveals that Tirupati has transformed into a small city from being a sacred pilgrimage centre. Immigration, conjoined with economic diversification encompassing a variety of sectors, has resulted in the growth and expansion. What was once a relatively homogenous community, Tirupati is now witnessing the emergence of class structure. Middle-class people predominantly inhabit it. Low-income groups primarily comprised immigrant labour. The high-income group is also increasing. These changes have led to the flourishing of consumerism. Vegetable vending has become a prominent activity for the small and marginal farmers and landless people. Tirupati offers a vibrant consumerist market. This is augmented by the awareness of the health benefits of the consumption of vegetables and green leaves.

Vegetable vending has become ubiquitous and an aggressive marketing activity in Tirupati. The vendors are exposed to the wider economy and administration. The vegetable vending economy indicates that it caters to the needs of communities of various socio-economic classes. Impersonal fleeting relations are predominant and confined to economic transactions. Very little scope exists for upgrading the business in the absence of relevant interventions. Many vendors are unaware of government programmes. Vegetables are perishable and hence incurring losses is highly probable. Most of the vendors are adept at evaluation of demand and supply of vegetables, commodity selection for sale, fluctuations in the prices, calculation of cost-benefit, use of cashless transaction technologies, capital generation, and credit linkages. Vendors are prone to discontinue their business due to incurring losses, non-availability of time-bound credit, monotony, increased number of vendors etc. Vending vegetables often prone to create two problems: excessive generation of garbage and traffic congestion. Smart vending should prioritize cleanliness. Designing ergonomically efficient and smart displays of vegetable racks is to be integrated in the construction of smart street vending markets. Support systems for vendor livelihood security and city tidiness are to be ensured in the interventions.

Key Words: Vegetable Street Vending, Homogenous Community, Immigrant Labour, Class formation.

Gangtok in Motion: Ethnography of Everyday Life and Sustainable Urban Practices

Ayushi Nirola Ph.D Scholar, Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University
Sandhya Tamang Department of Anthropology, Sikkim University

Abstract

Cities and towns are constantly in transition, producing liminal spaces that reflect complex social, cultural, and environmental processes. These transitional phases are rarely linear, and the dynamics of urban life often extend beyond conventional intersectional frameworks, revealing intricate forms of human interdependence with the surrounding environment. Visual elements in urban spaces offer critical insights into how such processes are perceived, experienced, and negotiated.

This paper examines the streets of Gangtok—specifically Mahatma Gandhi Marg, Tibet Road, and Laal Bazaar—as public spaces in flux through an ethnographic lens, complemented by visual anthropological methods. Walking and street ethnographies will be undertaken to examine the everyday practices, spatial engagements, and social interactions that constitute daily life. Existing visual materials are analyzed and reinterpreted to construct the history of these streets and to explore evolving urban identities. The paper focuses on elements such as the display or decline of Tibetan prayer flags, the architectural structures, limited wall art, and the symbolic meanings of street names and commercial signage, situating them within broader cultural and ecological contexts. Data collection relies on conversational interviews, oral narratives, and participatory observation grounded in researchers' lived experience as residents of Gangtok.

By documenting and interpreting these visual and spatial transformations, the paper seeks to illuminate the interplay between everyday life, cultural identity, and sustainable urban practices in Gangtok. The findings contribute to anthropological understandings of urban change and highlight the role of visual culture in shaping perceptions of sustainability, belonging, and community in Himalayan towns.

Chairperson
Prof S Gregory
Former Dean Faculty of Social Sciences and Chairperson
Department of Anthropology, Kannur University

Hashtags of Hierarchy: Instagram as a Site of Caste Consciousness and Political Expression

Shambhavi Ojha
Field Investigator
Indira Gandhi National Tribal University
Email: 7ojhashambhavi@gmail.com

Abstract
With the increasing accessibility of social media, younger generations use these platforms for self-presentation and social learning. Based on fieldwork in a semi-modernised village in Tamil Nadu, the paper examines "how Instagram shapes caste consciousness among the younger population of the village." The author borrows Gramsci's idea of the reshaping of culture for the maintenance of cultural hegemony through the social media platform of Instagram, also drawing from Miller's work, the concept of scalable sociality. The paper addresses the issue of reaffirming caste consciousness, laden with political propaganda, among the village youth. The research sheds light on sustaining traditional distinctions through digital spaces, even with the evolution of media. Digital ethnography and content analysis of the local digital ecosystem of Instagram, including Insta bios of people, reels, and captions, showcased politically charged videos supporting local or regional parties, glorifying and endorsing dominant caste identities, and hashtags and slogans rooted in political-caste affiliations. The author also discusses Udupa and McDonnell's extreme speech in everyday digital communication with an attempt to provide balanced approaches and responses to it. In conclusion, the paper discusses how digital platforms mediate the reproduction of traditional hierarchies as digital hegemony by higher castes and provide space for alternative cultural hegemonic expression as resistance to the same. It emphasises shaping and reshaping cultural ideas, values, and practices that evolve society's social boundaries and the younger generation's social learning.

Keywords: Caste, Politics, Instagram, Digital Ethnography, Fieldwork, Tamil Nadu

Tradition in Transition: A Study of Socio-Cultural Change in a South Indian Tribe

Rambabu Marla
Anthropological Survey of India
Kolkata
Email: anthroram@gmail.com

Abstract

This research explores the socio-cultural experiences of the Naikpod tribe of Kistaraopet village in Telangana State, India, based on the ethnographic fieldwork. There is an ongoing debate on integrating ethnographic and digital ethnographies in contemporary research to understand the various community perspectives. However, the Naikpod is one of the tribal communities whose population is small, and more significant research is needed to comprehend their social and cultural identities. This study says that both traditional ethnography (fieldwork) and digital methods are used to understand community dynamics. It focuses on visual ways like photos and videos to record social and cultural life. This study employed various methods such as observations, interviews, group discussions, and visual documentation; also, the research blends visual anthropology techniques with ethnographic insights. This study further highlights their celebrations, often including wearing colorful masks, singing, dancing, and honoring their gods and ancestors. These traditions bring the community closer by sharing common values and beliefs. With more people using digital media and social platforms, new ways of seeing themselves and connecting with others are forming. In addition, this study also shows how rural and tribal communities are learning to live with this digital change to see their worldviews. Further, this study also understands the socio-cultural change among the Naikpod.

Keywords: Naikpod tribe, digital culture, visual anthropology, onsite culture, digital transition

State-led Urban Digital Transformation: Key Lessons from 4 states

Mathews P Joseph
eGovernments Foundation
mathews.p@egovernments.org

Abstract

India's urban transition is inevitable: by 2050, more than half of its population will live in towns and cities, contributing nearly three-quarters of the national GDP. Yet most Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), particularly small and medium municipalities, remain digitally underpowered, constrained by fragmented, paper-based systems. This policy brief asks: *How can states, rather than individual cities, drive scalable, inclusive, and sustainable urban digital transformation?* Drawing on four years of field research across Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha, and Punjab, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining primary interviews with frontline staff and municipal officials, document analysis of state programs, and comparative cost-efficiency data. The analysis highlights why state-led platforms outperform city-level initiatives in terms of scale, cost-effectiveness, and resilience.

Findings reveal five critical drivers of sustainable digital governance: (1) shared state platforms that reduce per-ULB costs and harmonise service standards; (2) continuity-oriented integration of legacy systems to build trust; (3) modular, incremental rollouts that evolve as "living systems"; (4) embedding human intermediaries; and (5) strong institutionalisation.

The significance of these lessons extends beyond the four states studied. They demonstrate how digital transformation can deliver measurable benefits such as 30–70% workflow efficiency gains, sharp revenue increases, and universal access despite digital divides. This brief argues for state-led, citizen-centric digital platforms as the most viable pathway for India's urban future, with global implications for digital governance in low-capacity contexts.

Keywords: Urban digital governance, digital platforms, infrastructure, inclusion, institutionalization

From Likes to Lifestyle: The Influence of Instagram on Young Adults

M Abhinay
Student
University of Hyderabad
meesalaabhi1427@gmail.com
E-mail: 22iams07@uohyd.ac.in

Abstract

Instagram has transformed social interactions among young adults, redefining how individuals connect, communicate, and form relationships. This study explores the platform's influence on social interactions through the lens of Émile Durkheim's concept of social solidarity, examining whether Instagram fosters mechanical or organic solidarity in digital communities. By analyzing engagement patterns, virtual communities, and algorithm-driven social connections, this research investigates how Instagram affects cohesion, inclusion, and the sense of belonging among individuals within the University of Hyderabad. Using surveys and comparative, historical, and cross-cultural research strategies, the study aims to determine whether Instagram strengthens social bonds or contributes to fragmentation in modern society.

Keywords: Instagram, social solidarity, Durkheim, young adults, digital communities, social cohesion

Gaming the Field: Immersion, Agency, and Culture in Online Game Communities

Pranav Peyyala
Educate Girls
Development Analyst & Communications Specialist
Email: pranavp6493@gmail.com

Abstract

Online games are now major cultural venues through which identities, relationships, and social practice are being created and negotiated. Rather than merely being places of amusement, massively multiplayer online games (MMOs) and online gaming sites are experiential spaces in which the creation of meaning, agency, and participation in dynamic culture occur. This article situates online game communities as ethnographic field sites in their own right, demonstrating how virtual ethnography can shed light on the play, power, and cultural production dynamics of digital worlds.

Based on case studies of in-game communities in games like World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy XIV, and Fortnite, the research delves into how immersion affects player identity and shared membership. It investigates how agency is exercised not just by gameplay mechanics but by emergent social practices like guilding, in-game rituals, and collaborative narrative. Designers, game rules, and platform design give regulative structures, but players constantly subvert, resist, and co-construct within these limits, dissolving boundaries between community practice and designer intention.

Methodologically, the paper considers the difficulties of ethnography in immersive digital environments, where the researcher is at once participant and observer, and where the fieldsite cuts across platforms like Discord, Twitch, and Reddit. By locating online gaming as a cultural production site, the paper contends that gaming communities provide rich insights into larger questions about identity, agency, and collective culture in digital societies. Finally, it shows

that virtual ethnography of gaming is not so much about the study of play but about appreciating the lived experiences, negotiations, and cultural creativity of players negotiating algorithmically mediated worlds.

Keywords: Agency, Culture, Digital Societies, Identity, Online Gaming

Strengthening Public Education through STEM & Digital Learning
Conceptual Framework (Girls focused)

Mumtaz
Senior Manager
United Way of Hyderabad
Email: mumtaz@unitedwayhyderabad.org

Problem statement

Despite improvements in basic infrastructure and enrollment, India's public schools still lack digital and STEM readiness. Approximately 21% of government schools have smart classrooms, and ICT labs and internet access are limited, at 23% and 24%, respectively. Computer availability also falls well below private school levels (44% vs. 71%). Although progress has been made—marked by significant increases in electricity (to 91.8%), computers (to 57.2%), and internet access (to 53.9%) over the past decade—these deficits continue to hamper the quality and equity of education and limit students' preparation for a technology-rich future.

A critical concern is the gender gap in STEM participation:

● While girls constitute nearly 43% of STEM graduates in India, they account for only 14% of the STEM workforce (World Bank Report 2023)

● Social barriers, financial burden, lack of role models, and unequal access to digital and STEM resources further limit their pathways into higher education and careers.

These deficits, if unaddressed, risk reinforcing gender inequalities and limiting the potential of India's public education system to prepare girls for a technology-driven future.

Considering the situation, a comprehensive STEM education program would offer a strategic pathway to increase girls' participation in STEM within the Public Education system. The project framework is mentioned below.

Inputs

Partnership with the Government, CSR, and NGOs

Teachers' training and resources

Digital and STEM Infrastructure and resources(Digital classroom, computer Lab, STEM Lab, STEM Library, and teaching and learning materials)

Strengthening School Management Committee(SMC)

Key Interventions

Upgrading STEM infrastructure and Resources(STEM Lab, STEM Library, Teaching and learning Materials)

Digital Learning(Computer Lab,Digital classroom,Digital content)

Enhancing the capacity of the Teachers(Mentoring, Workshops, and STEM CoE, gender inclusive training)

Student Entitlements(Scholarship support for girls, Exposure visits, Career guidance, Robotics Program, Experiential Learning, Tech Fest, Lifeskill program for girls)

Strengthening School Governance (Capacity building of the SMC)

Output/Immediate Results

Functioning STEM labs, STEM library, and digital classrooms

Teachers trained in experiential & digital pedagogy

Students engaged in Tech Fest, Robotics, Experiential Learning, exposure visits, and Life Skills

Strengthened SMC participation in school planning through regularisation of SMC participation in school meetings, and Increased women's voice in school planning.

Outcomes/Medium Term

Improved STEM learning outcomes & problem-solving skills

Increased digital literacy and innovation among students

Reduced dropout, improved transition of girls into higher education, specially in STEM

Stronger teacher networks and improved teaching and learning practices, adoption of gender learning practices

Impact/Long Term

Higher participation of girls in STEM Education.

Future Ready, Equitable Education System

Contribution to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) & SDG 9 (Innovation & Infrastructure)