

Retrospective Study

The Marginal Changes of Occupation Pattern, Education, Health and Social Behaviour: An Ethnographic Insight in the Age of Coronavirus Disease-2019

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ABSTRACT

Background

The present paper sheds light on the status quo of ethnographic inquiry during the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The ethnographic data include, through the lenses of smartphones, media coverage (TV news, Facebook, YouTube news-Channels), newspapers, and field observations. According to social anthropology, these equipments (smartphones, tablet and Camera) regarded as the ultimate essential technological devices for investigating human behaviour in a pandemic situation. The present study examines who have changed their occupations and how they have willingly accepted a new lifestyle. In addition, the paper illustrates several changes in daily language, changes in the education system and sector, and changes in kinship behaviour and pattern during the pandemic.

Objectives

The fundamental purpose of the present study is to enlighten on smart ethnography research and its correlation with the concept of visual anthropology.

Methodology

The current paper does not contain the typical research techniques or methods used in social science. The data was collected from various electronic sources or media. Hence, it may be said that “content analysis” has been used. The “telephonic interview method”, the “observation method”, and several tools for collecting photographs, such as mobiles, phones, and computers, are essential for the present study. The paper is fascinated with secondary and qualitative data.

Conclusion

Anthropologists pay attention to ascertaining how the people of the new profession and their family members adjust to the present condition of life. Anthropology is interested in searching for how those people who shifted their occupational pattern to another occupation and how they have willingly accepted the new style of life.

Keywords

Smart ethnography; Occupation; COVID-19; Language; Kinship behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

What is the current situation of the fieldwork methodology to be held under smart ethnography. “*Smart ethnography probably is the analogical form of visual anthropology and it is solution of ethnographic research problems during the any pandemic state within in a time period*”. This is an important issue of current anthropological research. On this subject, is it possible for an anthropologist to do fieldwork in society at this present time through participant observation? If the researcher has taken all types of protection, will the respondents

accept them? That factor is the first challenge for an anthropology student in this situation. The “rapport establishment” and permission of all sectors, such as government, administration, and medical authority, are necessary tools for researchers in anthropology in this pandemic situation to work hard in the field. Only anthropologists detect the changes in human behaviour patterns during the pandemic. So, the necessary measures are to be applied by anthropologists to observe the new social behaviour in society today. At the beginning of the essay, remember that if we go back to armchair anthropology before Malinowski,¹ where anthropologists

had collected data from travellers and other sources, in the present situation, data is collected from the newspaper, the internet, research papers, webinars, and mobile phones from the opposite side of the devices-the participant may be a respondent. Therefore, the concept of a researcher, fieldworker, and respondent has slightly changed under this pandemic situation due to social or physical distancing.

The present paper says that the investigation of social anthropology is very much crucial in studying current society. It will be an excellent success for social anthropologists who have dedicated their lives to collecting data from people in a state of lockdown, social distancing, or physical distancing. However, anthropological work must be done by the scholar of the subject to maintain coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) protocol for the protection of human society through social distancing or physical distancing and lockdown. "Smart ethnography" most probably originated from that situation. Some anthropologists think that smart ethnography and visual anthropology are the same subjects. They probably think "Smart ethnography" is another term for visual anthropology. However, visual anthropology is a separate subfield of anthropology and has no relation to smart ethnography. "Smart ethnography" is the result of the ethnographic problem.

Furthermore, it is a solution for social anthropological research-while the researcher and respondent would not be able to close (first-hand contact) contact with each other. In that situation, social anthropological research may depend on smart ethnography. Nevertheless, in this present paper, it would not desire to enlighten on this matter. Instead, in this study, it has tried to write the human behaviour pattern that has existed at this moment.

HISTORY OF LITERATURE

Sarah² has described that "*Photography, video, and web-based media are the progressively intrinsic elements of the study of ethnographers. It would be difficult for a contemporary ethnographer to complete the study without using these media forms and environments and the practices associated with them. We use (increasingly digital) media in doing ethnographic research, we seek to develop ethnographic research, we seek to develop understanding of the meanings and the experiences that images and visual media practices have in other people's lives, and very fieldwork sites may cross online and offline contexts*". Sarah² has also said that "*images are everywhere. They permeate our academic work and everyday lives*".

According to Banks et al³ have said that the visual anthropology has a fundamental "duality and focus" and is interested in (1) the use of visual materials in anthropological research and (2) studying the study of the visual system and visual culture. They also stated that the study of arts is conceivably the other field, alongside.

Usually, it is observed in visual anthropology to trace the use of visual tools to the advent of modern photographic technology of fixed and movie cameras and sound apparatus. However, withering visual anthropology, it is true that humans drew the picture about 30,000-years ago, and we have evidence of cave art from palaeolithic men. Moreover, that evidence shows the ancient

life and culture in a vast pictorial record. Therefore, it is assumed that pictorializing is never ceased throughout human existence, paralleling the beginnings of culture itself.⁴

According to Bouquet⁵ said that "*visual anthropology has expanded its scope from an earlier- almost exclusive-association with ethnographic film and photography, it has come to include, via the materialists of these media, a range of visual and material culture: from art, landscape, technology, architecture and consumption to heritage-and, hence, museums and their particular ways of materializing culture.*" The qualitative research methods comprised long transect walks, visual ethnography, structured questionnaire survey, and group discussion. Visual Anthropology is a unique tool for contemporary qualitative research. This method is extensively adopted to capture the social, economic, and political life of the people. This tool helped us to understand the necessary elements of energy demand, energy access extensively.⁶

Bonotti⁷ have stated that "*COVID-19 has severely affected the economic, social, political lives of people around the world. The international community has had to contend with a global recession. Socioeconomic inequalities have had an impact on the effects of COVID-19 not only within individual countries but also global scale*". The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the world political economy through the acceleration of incipient trends.⁸ Ranjan et al⁹ have described that corona virus created a tremendous loss and broke worldwide, from developed to developing, and no country safe from it.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The fundamental purpose of the present study is to enlighten smart ethnography research and its correlation with the concept of visual anthropology. This article has attempted to focus on how marginal changes in behaviour patterns impact human society. Moreover, the paper also manifested the use of new language concerning COVID-19 and how marginally occupation pattern has shifted.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology indecisive to the objective of the research, axis on it, or compiling an intellectual outline of how the overall-research strategy is adopted. The current paper does not contain the typical research techniques or methods used in social science. The data was collected from various electronic sources or media. Hence, it may be said that "content analysis" has been used. The "telephonic interview method", the "observation method", and several tools for collecting photographs, such as mobiles, phones, and computers, are essential for the present study. The paper is fascinated with secondary and qualitative data. The study area name Gobardanga is a small semi-urban town and municipality under Gobardanga Thana or Police Station of Barasat subdivision in the North 24 district of West Bengal. It is one of the oldest municipalities in West Bengal. It is located at 22.870N 88.760 E, and its average elevation of 6 meters (20 feet). The nearest Railway station is Gobardanga of the Sealdaha-Bangaon section of the Eastern Railway, and its distance from Sealdha (SDAH) is 52 km. As per the 2011 census, the total population is 45,392 persons. Male constitute 23059 of the total population, and female is 22333.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Changes of Behaviour on their Daily Language Level

However, the changes have not been spread equally in all areas. It has allegedly occurred at different levels in different places. Supposedly, the people of an urban area of a country may or may not have concerned about this type of new language before the pandemic, but in the case of the people of the rural areas, they most probably had not. In places such as the region of West Bengal in India, where we have lived in semi-urban localities, most people were unaware of these new languages. They have now started to use the imported words from COVID-19. At the very beginning; the people of this locality did not understand the actual meaning of COVID-related medical terms. For example, the terms are as follows: quarantine, home quarantine, social distancing, sanitizing, COVID-19, Corona, buffer zone, lockdown, un-lock, and containment zone. It has been seen that the people of this locality are very much interested in reading daily newspapers and watching TV news and are also accustomed to collecting knowledge of the outer world regarding the affections of corona. That is a significant issue in social anthropology because it has changed the nature of humans' mindset from inequality to equality (in the context of linguistics). First, people are more concerned about the death rate of COVID-19 and its effect on daily life. Next, they understood the contiguous spread power of COVID-19 along with its death rate. For this reason, in the beginning, people were reluctant to adhere to the authoritative medical recommendations (social distance, physical distance, washing hands with soap, wearing mask, using sanitizer etc.) to protect against the spread of the novel Coronavirus.

It is observed that the people willingly maintained all medical instruction provided by the government, police, administration, and various social media to protect public health. Because the government, administrations, police, and news channels had previously failed due to people's lack of knowledge about people infected with the coronavirus. So therefore, on hand, it is expressed that the comprehending changes are as follows: 1) New language usages evolve regarding COVID-19. 2) Reading and watching the daily newspaper and television, as well as various social media news sources 3) comprehending all types of statistical analysis and models of COVID-19. The concepts of medical terms have entered all sectors of society, and their cognitive level on these issues has grown so much that they can understand the esoteric meaning of all medical terms. This shift is a significant and positive step forward for social anthropology. It may be one of the remarkable societal changes under the light of social anthropology that have been detected in the present era.

Changes in Self-health and Hygiene

Changes in self-health and hygiene are one of the most relevant changes that have been seen in human life in the pandemic. Even today, people are concerned about their health and family members, which has never been seen before. Every day, people wash their hands with soap and sanitising as instructed by the government or public health department. They take tea without sugar and

milk three to four times every day. People in these localities drink hot drinking water every three-or four-hours. The people in these localities drink that type of liquid and take it three to four times daily. The liqueur is made with pest zinger, cinnamon, and pepper dust; bay leaves are mixed and boiled for 20 to 30-minutes. Now, how do I get that data because I am not in the field? One of my friends is a bank employee. Over the telephone during banking hours, they take such liquor for protection. At the same time, all members took this liquor. As a result, the new types of liquid add variety to their daily lives with tea. A new habit is associated with human behaviour in these areas; wearing mask. Every person has tried to use the mask when they leave the house. There is only a cross of people who intentionally do not use the mask. Most probably later, two or three days after people have washed their clothes and used masks.

Several local companies are "*producing masks that are scientific or not*"; that is not the central theme of the present paper. The paper's main interest is to raise awareness about the use of musk in this pandemic situation. There are so many different colours of the masks that the local inhabitants choose. It is also interesting to note the "art of mask-wearing". Some people wear this under the lower lip and on the chin. They believe that wearing masks helped them for breathing. Somebody usually uses that for their breathing. It has been observed in the village or semi-urban towns where women use the hem of the sari as a mask. So many varieties of mask wearing have been seen in this locality. Therefore, the habits which are admixing are as follows: (1) every time people wash their hands with soap, (2) people use sanitizer (3) Mask wearing (4) taking some medicines and (5) in taking per day three to four times taking tea and hot water and a specific type of herbal liquor.

MARGINAL CHANGES IN OCCUPATION

The different types of shops are usually found on the platforms of the local railway stations in these areas. The shopkeepers temporarily shift their job for collecting their bread and butter after lockdown because railway services are closed. So, we have seen them in another job. They have moved everywhere in the street or lanes to sell vegetables, fruits, fish, and chicken. The local market and transport are also closed during the lockdown. The green vegetables, fish, and other materials are sold nearby because these green vegetables are not transportable elsewhere. Small or cottage industries have been affected. As a result, the economic conditions of the people in that class have been slightly cramped. Moreover, it brings unexpected lifestyles.

All local trains, buses, and other vehicles are closed due to the lockdown. Therefore, no people or passengers are seen on the way. Only employees of emergency services leave their houses because the number of passengers drops steadily. Accordingly, the local van pullers and rickshaw pullers have engaged in other occupations or professions. Many must sell temporary fish, butter, ghee (made from cow's milk), and even flower garlands to the local residential areas. In this context, it is valuable to say that the inhabitants of this locality regularly offer wreaths to their Hindu deities and for so many other poses. Before the lockdown, people

usually collected these materials at the adjacent market. Now they get these at the front of their house. If it had been left in previous situations, many flower business-related workers or traders would have moved to the city and spread their business across the state. However, it is a fact that insufficient amounts result in a loss in their business because of this consequence. Besides, an abundant or sufficient quantity of production has not been possible to trade as well as been. As a result, a few flower traders are offered to such unemployed people to sell flowers in the local market. Reaching the nearest cities like Calcutta has not been easy under the current situation and the scheduled pandemic protocol of the government. These workers are accustomed to travel their travelling place by personal vehicles like tempo, matador and small cars during the midnight at 2.00 am to 3.00 am and return next day at 2.00 pm to 3.2.00 pm. As a result, the time of trading has been changed periodic mango (*Mangifera indica* L) cultivation, and production has unique leading small economic industries in this locality. Lots of workers are associated with this industry. Generally, ripe mangos have grown in two ways in this area. The first method is to pick green mangos from the tree and put them into a bamboo basket with a chemical reagent, and the second is to pick the ripe mango from the tree directly and sell it to the market. It has also been observed that such a temporary local market has emerged near mango orchards. A few mango workers sell the mangos to the local town and nearby villages. It observes that some people sell sweets in the street, and that picture generally was not seen before the epidemic.

During the lockdown, all educational institutions are closed; as a result, all education-related works have been conducted through an online system in schools, colleges, and universities. The form fill-up (before the examination process) of that educational institution happened privately in several cybercafés and xerox centres. Such shopkeepers have earned as they expected, but in this period, due to the lockdown, they do not open their business centre the whole day because, in this locality, category-wise, shops would be open as per the instructions of the state administration in the pandemic. For this instance, they slightly changed and shifted the commodity structure of the shop, which means they showed the shop not only for selling educational items; it also sold tea, cafe for drinks, and green vegetables. At the same time, the student group also wants to get full facilities from those places. Therefore, we have seen that the shops for educational articles have shifted as the source of tea shops or green vegetable shops. Some of them have extended their shops to include groceries.

Moreover, this is a new type of shop or stall that has appeared during the pandemic. In this connection, the number of bookstalls (Shops of books) also faces a similar problem. Some are currently considering shifting their business to another because of the pandemic. People currently purchase online books and other commodities daily. Several important issues have been observed in this locality, although they have not been at a massive level. However, it is essential to bring the discussion into the light of social anthropology. During the lockdown, restaurants and other hotels are closed. A restaurant (air-conditioning) has started to sell green vegetables. A popular newspaper in West Bengal has flashed the

news that honey collectors in the Sundarbans are called 'Moule' (a Bengali word). Last year, the forest department of West Bengal had not permitted them to collect honey from the mangrove forest. Additionally, they offered permission to honey collectors under specific conditions this year. The team of honey collectors has a small number of five to six people. The members of that group must have the skill, age, and experiences; others are not allowed.

Changes Occurred in Kinship Patterns and Behaviour

In parallel, their socioeconomic lives have changed. Due to social distancing or lockdown, most people start to live together in their homes with their families. In rural areas of this locality, interpersonal and active face-to-face relations are usually observed among the community. Due to the lockdown, this chain of connectivity among the people has now been temporarily closed. In rural area it is usually seen that neighbours come residents house but in the pandemic they did not so. So, the rural people's physical contact and communication density are duly affected by COVID-19. Family rituals at this moment do not worship. The relatives have not been invited to such programs. No duties and active participation of relatives have been looked at. May be it is observed, but not in its proper manner.

Relatives are staying apart. The result is that the kinship behaviour pattern has now gradually changed. Kinship and its presence are being virtualized. A WhatsApp group has formed, and their relatives are making their kin relations and behaviour known. Photographs of the family and its ritual are sent to relatives through WhatsApp or any social media platform. There are so many changes that have been occurring in the lives of people in their daily behavior. Older adults are bound to get the necessary training to use modern devices to communicate with each other. Corona-related rituals have now been observed elsewhere. Some newspapers in West Bengal have focused on this matter.

A recent marriage ceremony has finished in the residential area. My family and I were invited to this occasion, and we participated. At least 150 to 160 people were invited to the event; interestingly, most invitees were neighbors. In comparison, there were minimal numbers of relatives. The invitees had determined to maintain the following COVID-19 protocol: Relatives would most likely be unable to attend the program due to lockdown transpiration, or they would prefer to avoid the crowd. The nearest residential relatives have enthusiastically joined the program. Maybe that is why the neighbours who are not relatives have shared their hands in this event as pseudo relatives, and they perform different duties in every "function" of marriage. In this way, throughout the pandemic, people have played valuable 'functions' in several cultural institutions in this area.

Changes have been Seen in the Educational Sector

The education system has been dependent upon the online process. From pre-primary to students of higher studies, they have been bound to take their education online in this pandemic situation. There is a problem in remote sensing areas where the Inter-

net is unavailable. The students of this locality could not access education properly. The problem arises in students who are the intrinsically first learners in society because their parents are not well-trained to use the internet, smartphones, and laptops. That is why the availability of the internet system classifies society into two aspects. These are as follows: a) Society with internet access and b) Society without internet access. In those areas where the Internet is available, education is convenient in a pandemic situation. Without access to the internet, education is not usually attainable in the same way as in internet-accessible areas. Rare examples have found that some teachers and volunteers have been allowed to serve education in the remotest localities on footpaths and free land while maintaining the rules of social distancing. It has been observed in some newspapers in our locality that children are not interested in teaching through an online system.

The former facts are running at this moment. The overall structural behaviour pattern has changed now. People have acclimatized to a new cultural behaviour system dependent on medicine rather than its traditional cultural continuum. A famous Bengali newspaper¹⁰ published a report on August 27, Port-blaires, India; the Great Andamanese tribal population is now fifty-strong in this locality. Out of fifty, there are ten tribal people affected by the coronavirus. Out of ten 'there are six cured, and the rest of the four are under treatment by government hospitals. From there on, a medical team reached Strait Island and examined thirty-seven people, finding four people with Corona positivity. At the end of the commentary, it is said that social-cultural anthropology is very much in the chief interest of the researchers in anthropology. And both divisions of anthropology can play a tremendous role in scientific research or inquiry today.

CONCLUSION

Anthropologists pay attention to ascertaining how the people of the new profession and their family members adjust to the present condition of life. Anthropology is interested in searching for how those people who shifted their occupational pattern to another occupation and how they have willingly accepted the new style of life. That is a vital factor in the study. In this paper, it has been shown that the changes in the study area's social, cultural, and economic life have been explained into four categories. These are as follows: 1) Changes in daily language behaviour; (2) Changes in health and hygiene; (3) Marginal changes in occupation pattern; (4) Changes in Kinship activities (marginal); and (5) changes in the case of the education sector. They are distressed by the new situational life and their unhappiness. They hoped that when COVID-19 left, they might be returned to a comfortable life. Now they have eventually changed their eating habits and clothes. Some social and cultural life patterns have now changed slightly. People used COVID-19 and related medical terms and understood their proper meaning. People regularly followed medical instructions like washing their hands with soap and wearing masks properly. People arranged all

types of social-cultural programs in an abundant number; a pin-drop change was seen in the case of ritual activities. The kinship behaviour pattern and activities have also been changed. Very few relatives were invited to their familial programmers and rituals to perform the occasions. Therefore, in the pandemic, a new fabric of changing behaviour has been temporarily seen in society. Nonetheless, the emergent behavioural changes do not appear to be permanent.

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