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READING ETHNOGRAPHIES

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2024

(Solved)

READING ETHNOGRAPHIES

B.S.O.E.-144

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions.

Q. 1. In what way is the notion of 'social' dealt with in global ethnography? Explain.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 40, 'Reimagining the Social in Global Ethnography'.

Q. 2. Discuss the social and psychological background of Mead's ethnographic study in American Samoa.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 59, 'Key Issues in Coming of Age in Samoa' and Page No. 61, Q. No. 5.

Q. 3. 'The Okka or the patrilineal and patrilocal joint family is the basic group among Coorgs.' Explain with reference to M.N. Srinivas's writings.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 72, Q. No. 3.

Q. 4. Discuss the contribution of Whyte's 'Street Corner Society' to ethnographic research.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-11, Page No. 95, 'Methodological Contribution of Street Corner Society'.

Q. 5. Outline the major concerns of feminist ethnography.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 106, 'Feminist Ethnography'.

Q. 6. In what way does socio-political environment influence ethnographic research? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 87, 'Disorder and Change in Politics'.

Q. 7. Critically examine the major concerns of interpretative ethnography.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 134, 'Critique of Interpretive Ethnography'.

Q. 8. Critically review Bailey's 'Understanding of political system as a game.'

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 88, Q. No. 1.

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QUESTION PAPER

December – 2023

(Solved)

READING ETHNOGRAPHIES

B.S.O.E.-144

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions.

Q. 1. What is 'global ethnography'? Outline major issues and challenges that confront global ethnography.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 38, 'Global Ethnography', Page No. 42, Q. No. 4, Page No. 41, 'Issues and Challenges in Global Ethnography'.

Q. 2. What is 'Kula'? Explain its importance in the life of Trobriand Islanders.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 54, Q. No. 1 and Page No. 50, 'The Natives of the Trobriand Islanders', 'The Essential of the Kula' and Page No. 56, Q. No. 4.

Q. 3. Discuss Derek Freeman's critique of Mead's study on American Samoa.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 63, Q. No. 8.

Q. 4. Critically discuss the role and responsibilities of a leader in the context of Bailey's 'Strategems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics.'

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 85, 'Position of the Leader'.

Q. 5. Discuss the new approaches to ethnographic studies.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-12, Page No. 105, 'New Approaches to Ethnography'.

Q. 6. In what way is scientific ethnography different from interpretative ethnography? Explain.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-13, Page No. 117, Q. No. 2 and Chapter-15, Page No. 137, Q. No. 2.

Q. 7. Discuss the issues of anonymity and confidentiality in ethnographic studies.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-16, Page No. 148, Q. No. 2.

Q. 8. Outline the social structure of Coorgs.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 69, 'Chapter 2: Social Structure'.



Sample Preview of The Chapter

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READING ETHNOGRAPHIES

BLOCK-1 : THEMES IN ETHNOGRAPHIES

Understanding Ethnography



INTRODUCTION

Ethnography is derived from the Greek term 'Ethnos', which refers to a people, a race, or a cultural group. The term ethnographic refers to the science committed to describing human ways of living when the ethno prefix is coupled with graphic. The term "ethnography" refers to a social scientific account of a people as well as the cultural foundations of their peoplehood (Peacock, 1986). The art and science of ethnography is the description of a group or culture (Fetterman, 1998:1). It is a systematic depiction of culture through fieldwork that originated in Anthropology and has since been embraced by social science fields. It entails the ethnographer/researcher joining overtly or covertly in people's daily life for an extended period of time, capturing and collecting all available data in order to shed light on the issues at hand (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:1). Such an endeavour tries to produce a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), that is, an in-depth thorough depiction of people's daily lives and practices. Ethnography, as a qualitative methodology, is well suited to examining people's beliefs, practices, social interactions, and behaviours through participant observation and subsequent interpretation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011; Berry, 2011).

It's critical to distinguish between ethnography as a process and ethnography as a product. Ethnography as a method, i.e., participating in and collecting data in the field, allows the researcher to intensively watch, record, and interact in the daily life of another culture, a process known as fieldwork. Unlike ethnography as a product (i.e. ethnographic writings), the ethnographer provides detailed descriptions of the culture he studied, which include the ethnographer's personal and theoretical

thoughts and are available to the public (Barnard and Spencer, 1996).

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNOGRAPHY

The term ethnology was more commonly used in the first half of the 1800s to study people by comparing their tangible objects and civilizations. Ethnologists didn't observe the 'primitives' directly; instead, they looked through government records, missionaries' documents, and accounts of voyages or explorers' accounts of the 'primitives.' The opinions of the colonizers/ conquering civilizations whose aim was to civilize the 'less civilized' were presented in the descriptions of the world's 'other' cultures published by Western missionaries, explorers, and colonial officials.

British and Chicago Schools of Ethnography

The evolution of ethnography from a "traveller's narrative" to a specialized literature has been fascinating. Westerners' fascination with the origins of culture and civilization, based on the notion that today's 'primitive' people, those considered by Westerners to be less civilized than themselves, were, in effect, living reproductions of the occident's primordial beginnings (Hodgen, 1964; 386-432).

The creation of formal ethnography was spurred by two separate conceptual breakthroughs in the twentieth century, one in Britain and the other in North America, known as the British and Chicago schools of ethnography, respectively. The British school of ethnography arose from the classical tradition of social anthropology that emerged in Britain, while the Chicago sociological tradition arose from the other. Boas, known as the "Father of American Anthropology," passionately

opposed the half-baked generalizations made by early nineteenth-century anthropologists based on insufficient data obtained from others.

Though the British school is frequently associated with European colonialism, its principal goal was to learn about the culture and native peoples of their colonies in order to exploit the natives' labour force and use their natural resources to feed Europe's extractive industries. It no longer has a colonial connotation. European academics became increasingly interested in studying the 'other,' particularly non-industrialized people and their culture.

Ethnographic approach was implemented into sociology in the 1920s, and the University of Chicago Department of Sociology was one of the first to do so. The Chicago School (of urban ethnography) is often credited with establishing sociological fieldwork as a viable option. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, right before the Great Depression, Chicago school researchers Robert E. Park and Ernest Burgess and their students created ethnographies based on everyday lives, communities, and symbolic relationships of a specific group.

Several ethnographies of Chicago's 'deviant sub-cultures' and down-and-out groups had been written by the 1930s. The life history method was used to study professional burglars, taxi dancers, and members of urban gangs. The interviews took place in places including brothels, street corners, tenements, mission shelters, pubs, and Union halls, among other places. (19-20) (Van Maanen, 2011).

PRE-REQUISITES FOR WRITING

ETHNOGRAPHY

The positivist method was first supported by anthropologists and ethnographers, and the major goal of ethnography was to produce comprehensive, holistic, and complete accounts of the fields they visited. 'The job is to capture the people's culture, attitudes, and practices, of the people in these circumstances,' Hammersley says.

The goal is to "get inside each set of people's worldview." Based on the researcher's direct observations or conversations with a few key informants, the ethnographer provides a thorough description of the research location and participants.

The ethnographer provides a detailed description of the research setting and participants based on the

researcher's direct observations or talks with a few key informants. The triangulation technique is beneficial because it allows you to compare what people say to what they actually do. The ethnographic data is analyzed inductively thematically, that is, the data is categorized into themes, and then the ethnographers construct preliminary theoretical explanations of their empirical work by rigorous examination.

A Holistic Outlook

Ethnographers use a holistic approach to research in order to obtain a whole image of a social group and to characterize its history, economy, religion, politics, and environment. This perspective enables ethnographers to perceive reality outside the immediate cultural context.

Contextualization

Placing the outdoor observations in a social context would provide a broader perspective. Take, for instance, a study on female education. You may notice that the dropout rate of female students is often substantially greater than that of male pupils. Assume that the ethnographer situates this problem within a larger context. In that instance, he may discover that the girls drop out of school as a result of the added weight of everyday household tasks or caring for younger siblings and assisting their mothers. The ethnographer may be able to perceive social life better by taking into account the greater context of gender roles.

Emic Vs. Etic Perspective

Most ethnographic research revolves around the emic perspective, or the insider's or native's perspective of reality. Understanding and accurately characterizing situations and behaviours rely on this insider's vision of reality (Fetterman, 2010; 20). An etic perspective, on the other hand, is a social scientific view of reality from the outside. The majority of ethnographers document the emic perspective before adding it to their scientific research. Furthermore, a good ethnography necessitates both emic and etic view-points (ibid; 22). When emic and etic are combined, a more scientifically informed empirical reality emerges.

Non-Judgemental View of Reality

If they come across an unfamiliar practice, they should refrain from making any improper judgments. However, it is recognized that the ethnographer cannot be objective and has their own views and biases. Ethnocentric behaviour, or the imposition of one's cultural norms and standards on another culture based on the assumption that one is superior to the other, is an anthropological fallacy.

TYPES OF ETHNOGRAPHIES

The influence of various ideas in the social sciences can explain to some extent the differences in approaches and methods utilized by different ethnographers, especially at different times (O'Reilly, 2005;44).

Positivist and Functionalist Ethnography

In anthropology and ethnography during the nineteenth century, a positivistic approach predominated. This approach promotes impartiality and distance from the topic of inquiry, according to empiricist conceptions of knowledge formation. The researcher must maintain distance and remain detached from the object of inquiry in order to be objective, and the findings must be based on facts rather than the researcher's personal opinions and values (Payne & Payne, 2004). The main goal is to find generalizable laws that may be used to explain human behaviour. Following the positivist approach, anthropologists such as Malinowski, Evans Pritchard, and Radcliffe Brown assumed that cultures were static and homogeneous, and that a holistic approach would be best suited to collecting data in the field.

Bronislaw Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), E.E. Evans Pritchard's *The Nuer* (1940), and Margaret Mead's *Coming of Age in Samoa* are among the classic ethnographies (1928).

The goal of ethnography, according to Malinowski, is to capture the native's view-point.

Interpretative Approach to Ethnography

Clifford Geertz's 'rich description' focused on meanings and real emotions rather than just recording facts in the field. Humans must be seen as actors in the social world rather than just reacting as objects in the natural world, according to O'Reilly (49). It was urged that the situation's actual context be observed in order to understand the relationship between the action and the setting in which it takes place, as well as what participants had to say about it. The emphasis moved to producing more relevant ethnographies with more qualitative depth and richer data. The goal was to create an interpretative understanding (or *verstehen*) in which meanings were sought.

Phenomenological Approach

Following Alfred Schutz (1972), much qualitative research in the 1960s and 1970s shifted to a phenomenological approach, which entails gaining the actor's point of view. Humans make sense of what we see, hear, smell, feel, and taste by categorizing and sub-

categorizing what we see, hear, smell, feel, and taste. Phenomenology offers a perspective of the social world in which human subjects define themselves and what they value, as well as a diversity of ways they experience the world, by emphasizing 'constituted meanings.' It becomes critical for ethnographers to examine how the individuals under study's 'lived world' is constructed.

Critical Ethnography

Some ethnographies are placed in strategic locations to illuminate wider social, political, symbolic, or economic themes. In ethnographies, there has been a trend away from provincial vision and toward wider themes such as addressing the political economy or seeing the world through the eyes of the underprivileged in advanced capitalist nations. These are examples of critical realist stories set in a Marxist context. *We Eat the Mines and the Mines Eat Us*, by June Nash, is a historical and present account of Bolivian tin miners. Hochschild's (1983) work on the sociology of emotions is another example of a critical story that does not have a Marxist leaning.

Feminist Ethnography

Women ethnographers have given ethnographies a fresh viewpoint on how they are written and read. When feminists began questioning the use of masculine pronouns and nouns in the 1970s, the feminine was virtually absent from ethnographies. Sally Slocum's paper *Woman the Gatherer: The Male Bias in Anthropology* (1970) attacked the andocentric academic by criticizing the popular image of "man-the-hunter."

Peggy Golde has released yet another book. *Women in the Field*, an edited volume by women anthropologists, sparked a discussion about how being a woman influenced anthropologists' experiences conducting research in various contexts. Such feminist perspectives have highlighted that how women have been imagined in Western intellectual tradition, which is typically formed from a male and white-centric perspective, does not solve the issues.

ETHNOGRAPHY TODAY

The reflexive turn, which is a process of reflection that permits the researcher/ethnographer to be the object, i.e., an emphasis on self-examination, self-critique, and self-awareness, has been one of the significant advances in anthropology. The word *hood* is used in the text. In anthropology, reflexivity arose as a result of three major changes, i.e.

- acknowledgement of anthropology's Eurocentric slant (which has been criticized by authors such as Talal Asad and Dell Hymes)
- the birth of the feminist movement, which decried Anthropology's androcentric orientation.
- 'A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term', a 1967 release of Malinowski's field diaries, highlighted the subjectivity of Malinowski's fieldwork.

Writing Culture: 'The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography' by James Clifford and George Marcus and 'Anthropology Cultural Critique' by Michael Fisher and George Marcus were the other two books that concentrated on different types of new ethnographies and supported reflexivity. These changes altered Anthropology's methodological techniques, emphasizing the ethnographer's reflexive awareness of their field work.

Autoethnography

The primary feature of autoethnography is the researcher's views and insights derived from their social contacts in the field. Autoethnography is the practice of shifting ethnography's view inward on the self (auto) while preserving ethnography's outward gaze on the larger context in which self-experiences occur (Denzin, 1997:227).

It encompasses both the process and the end result of investigating and writing about personal life experiences and their connections to culture (Ellis, 2004:xix). It accommodates the researcher's subjectivity and influence on the research as a methodology.

Online Ethnography

A new technique of practicing ethnography is to use an online or virtual media to examine internet communities in various forms. Through a variety of study methodologies, this research method investigates how humans live and interact online. According to Hine, ethnographic researchers begin by questioning what is taken for granted and attempting to analyze and contextualize 'the way things are' (Hine 2000: 8). In the case of the internet, this implies that academics question the concept that the internet is a product of its technological aspects, and instead investigate how it is built by the way people inhabit, use, and actively make it.

Ethnography in online environments has been helpful in revealing the complexities of Internet-based interactions and allowing us to investigate new cultural formations that emerge online (Hine, 2008; 401). As the Internet grew, so did the number of ways to studying online areas.

Three eras of online ethnography:

- Pioneering methods viewed the Internet as a new realm for identity development, emphasizing the uniqueness of online social forms.
- The recent advent of multi-modal techniques that integrate video and audio data alongside textual data and
- Also strive to conceive online interactions inside offline environments, as well as the transfer of offline methodological problems into the online domain.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. Define Ethnography.

Ans. One of the best ways to provide ethnography definition is to describe it as a way of doing flexible research that can allow the people to gain more understanding about any group culture, social dynamics, and conventions in the best way.

With ethnography, there might be some ethical and practical challenges that people have to face but that is all a part of the research. With the help of ethnography, people can understand a community or any organization in a better way. We hope this can answer your question on what is the definition of ethnography.

Ethnography: Examples and Uses

With the origination of ethnography, the department of anthropology had a very big rise since this section was a part of it. An anthropologist would live in an isolated community for a certain extended period of time so that they can understand the culture and the people in a better way. Now this type of studying and research could take so many years. For example, Colin M. Turnbull had to live with the tribe of Mbuti for about 3 years in order to produce the final research product 'The Forest People'.

However, in the present world, ethnographic fieldwork forms a very important part of social science. It is not just a way to study unfamiliar and distant cultures but also to do research on certain communities within the societies as well. For example, there are certain instances where ethnography has proved to be very essential in studying football fans, gang investigation, police officers, call center employees, and much more.

Ethnography: Meaning and Advantages

One of the biggest advantages of Ethnography is that it helps in the field of research. The people who are practicing ethnography will be able to know more about the practices and culture of any group that they