



PRACTICAL MANUAL

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Objectives

In this manual, the learners would be able to:

- comprehend the need for theory in anthropological works;
- understand the theories in social and cultural anthropology; and
- integrate theory with fieldwork.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this practical manual we would try to explain with the help of examples how theory and fieldwork, are interrelated and how we ideally alternate between theory and the collection of data. The main purpose of doing fieldwork is not to just collect data but to collect it for a purpose, namely that of understanding and explanation. For this we need to conceptualise and conceptualisation cannot be done without theorisation. Since even to understand something that is fundamental and primary to our being like culture and society, we need to conceptualise, as these entities are not concrete, they have no substantive existence except according to how we construct them, and that is the process of conceptualisation or concept formation. It is clear that unless we have our concepts, we have no way to even collect data, for we will not know what we are looking for. Like when we have to begin to do fieldwork, we need to choose a universe or place of study, also a topic of study. But how can we choose a topic or place or universe of study unless we understand how we define and delimit the objects of our study? For example, if we decide to study a village, then the first question that needs to be answered is, 'What is a village?' You may think it is very simple, any place that is officially designated as a village, but when we get down to doing fieldwork, it is not so easy. There are villages and villages, one may need to know, how many kinds of villages are there? Is there any existing classification of villages? Has anyone defined a village? So, we have to go back to the books and begin to read. What we read, is already written in the form of existing concepts and conceptualisations, we can accept what is given, then in that case we will be reaffirming what has already been said, or we can contest what is written, and in that case, we will reconceptualise and maybe point towards new theory or use of

***Contributors:** Professor Subhadra Mitra Channa, Former Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi and Dr. Rukshana Zaman, Discipline of Anthropology, SOSS, IGNOU

a different theory and so on. As a teacher one often faces students who say, “but this village is not like what was defined as village in the book I read”, so what is to be done. You take the existing concept, and work on it according to your data and rebuild it. But then one can say, why we need the concept in the first place, why we need theory. A theory gives you a beginning, somewhere from where you can start. Once you have a definition, you can modify it, add to it or reject it. So, the relationship between theory and data collection is a two-way dialectical relation, they feed into each other.

Thus, the aim of this practical manual is to make you understand what is theory, how you can relate theory to empirical work. The said portions on how to write a synopsis and conduct fieldwork have already been covered in the courses BANC 102 and BANC 105. Through this manual we would only explain the positioning of theory within the context of fieldwork.

1.1 WHAT IS A THEORY?

A theory gives us the basic premises or paradigms that we use before we even begin to collect data, for we shall not know what we need to collect, unless we know which basic premises we are taking as given and which are the ones we are going to investigate and treat as variables. For example, if we going to study society, we must first have some basic premises regarding society, a basic premise is an assumption about something that is given and which we do not contest. What basic premises can we consider before defining a society. Do we take it as a bounded entity? Do we define it in terms of a population or a geographical area? Do we understand it as static or as dynamic? A very important question, when we are talking about basic premises is about the concept of normal. We usually find, that this refers to our commonsensical understanding of how we assume things normally are. Do we, when we begin to study a society, take marriage as a given and, accepted part of normal social life, do we take the existence of a family as given? Because, when we arrive at a field area, we are already armed with certain basic assumptions, some ideas of normalcy and some notions about expectancy. We assume normally that when we are going to study society, we will assume that marriage and family are going to be a part of it. But supposing we arrive at a place where people live in dormitories, they do not have marriage or family, like the Israeli Kibbutz, then our premises will change. We can no longer study marriage in a place where people do not marry, so we have to look for other theories and other premises. We may need to change the way we define society and what basic premises we shall use.

So, a theory will ready us with some basic premises, some expected entities, events and some taken for granted expectations about things that we normally expect to find. Sometimes these are preconceived notions and sometimes like self-fulfilling prophesies, the researcher gets more involved in proving what is given in the theory, than to actually look for what is happening. So, this is a pitfall that is advised to be avoided, like even if we are beginning with a theory, we should keep an open mind that it might need modification and change, it might need to be rejected or replaced.

Take for example, a very popular theory, in vogue in the beginning of the last century. Structural-Functionalism. Now structural-functionalism had some basic premises which were, that societies were in a normal state of harmony and social

solidarity was a norm. It was assumed that society remained in a state of equilibrium unless meddled with and that all parts of a social-structure (itself, a construct) were interrelated, and each part has a function to the working of the whole. A basic assumption was also that societies were bounded and wholes like an organism. Now this concept of social structure has been redefined, understood in different ways, and also rejected. But it was an integral part of the structural-functional theory. It was its basic paradigm.

Now given these assumptions, it was found that all anthropologists were devoted to finding the functions of each and every institution that they could see, of every practice, ritual and linguistic usage. To the extent that they deliberately overlooked data that contradicted or did not fall in place with their basic assumptions. When they were followed by the historical anthropologists, the conflict theorists such as the Marxists; most of their explanations and findings were found to be inadequate.

But then there were criticisms of the conflict and Marxist theories also. The first stage of theorisation in anthropology followed the basic assumption that a science of society was possible. That all the data that we gather as social scientists can be subjected to the rigour of a scientific analysis. But what was the assumption of pure science, that there is a truth to every phenomenon. For example, if the earth goes round the sun, and as long as it is not proven otherwise, it remains the truth. But for social sciences and humanities, things were not as simple. It is because we are not given entities to study. We only have concepts that are already constructed out of theory, out of the basic assumptions that we begin with. There is no solid entity like a society, or a culture, or a family, we construct them as we would like to visualise them, and this construction is through the medium of a theory.

A theory is defined as a relationship, that is taken as intuitively correct. But one can neither prove nor disprove a theory. One can only prove or disprove any hypothesis that arises out of a theory. But in case one already has an answer, then the tendency is to fit data into the assumption or the already taken for granted hypothesis. Like if one has a functional theory in mind, then if asked to understand or explain a phenomenon, for a theory is basically applied for this purpose, one will tend to show its functionality and not its conflictual or disruptive aspects. Like the present -day anthropologists have asked the question that how come when the anthropologists were studying the societies at the time of colonial rule, they paid no heed to the disruption, suffering and devastation suffered as a result of colonisation? How come these societies were always described as peaceful, happy and in equilibrium? Today, for example, if a student goes to a field armed with structural -functional theory will find it most unrealistic, for if one pays heed to what is actually happening on the ground, then one will see the suffering, the social disruptions and all the complexities about life, whether in a rural or in an urban area. One cannot explain the 'function' of female infanticide, by saying it is good way to control population.

Here we come to the question of right and wrong explanations. Now if we say that, and some anthropologists had actually said that in the past, it is not wrong. If we kill the females in any population, its size will automatically remain small. But now, given the premises of feminist theory for example, will it be the right or acceptable kind of explanation?

So right and wrong are not 'factual' or scientific in the positivist sense, when we are dealing with human societies. In the past the anthropologists treated the people they were studying as 'others'. This again was a major paradigm of anthropology, that a clear separation was made between the researcher and the researched. So, if people killed their daughters, it was their concern, it was for the anthropologist to only explain but not judge. So, the assumption of, 'cultural relativism', allowed the anthropologist to make analysis on an objective manner. But today not many anthropologists would agree with this approach.

A theory is a proposition about the tentative relationship between phenomenon, and it is arrived at deductively and logically. For example, the theory of social evolution was based on the observation of different types of societies, but with the paradigm that there is one human culture as human is one species. So, it was deductively concluded that the differences of observed culture were actually stages of cultural development. Now this was a generalized and what is known as a grand theory. Evidence collected was used to demonstrate the validity of the theory but, since no one had any actual evidence to prove which state of a phenomenon came first and which later, the entire theory was reformulated in terms of neo-evolution theories. One of the key debates, for example was about lineality, whether matriliney came first or patriliney and the debate was never concluded. Neo-evolutionism therefore tried to identify key variables that could be measured, for example Leslie White proposed the energy theory, that the stage of evolution could be identified by the amount of energy used in that particular society. Julian Steward proposed the Multilinear Evolution theory that relied on the dialectical relationship between a culture and its environment. The key hypothesis of Steward was that culture and environment both modify each other, and culture evolves because it has to then adapt to an environment, that has changed as a result of culture. Both these theories proved to be methodologically unworkable and rejected.

So, we see that to be accepted a theory needs to be both logical as well as methodologically workable. It is for this reason that anthropological theories have come down to more workable, down to earth, situational theories than the grand theories that were proposed in the early phase of the discipline. Today the emphasis is also on a more humane approach, treating the people to be studied as equal partners rather than objects of study. So, today we have included notions of ethics into fieldwork, into data collection and into analysis as well.

The premises on which theories stood have changed with changing times. Now the researcher is no longer a distant observer, a recorder only, but is considered to be part of the community that she is studying, they are as human as her. She must empathise and respond accordingly, so theory making no longer requires a bird's eye view but an involved and engaged theorisation, as is being done by marginalised anthropologists with the rise of the post-colonial critique and the decolonisation of anthropology.

The post-modern era has been devoted to deconstructing everything that came before. One of the major premises of post-modern theory was that theory is not to be built objectively but is a subjective product of the analyst's own life experience and historical placement. It began with the post-colonial critique that explained theories like structural-functionalism as being products of the mind-set of the theory makers who were part of the western society and culture, who had the power of being analysts while those who were made subjects of study

were usually the natives or the colonised people. This power equation was integral to the process of both theory- building and of analysis. So, what was being given out as the truth or the explanation was what the analyst believed was the truth and what they assumed about the people they were studying.

So, theories changed when the identity of the anthropologist changed. Very different perspectives and theories emerged, when people who were earlier the subject matter of study became the researchers, this included women, the marginal people, the indigenous anthropologists and so on.

It is now established that there is an inevitable relationship between theory, that is a perspective and assumptions of basic paradigms, and the subjective placement of the anthropologists.

What has gone into making theories and in our understanding of societies and material that has been studied is the relation between the researcher and the object of study. Theories are also products of their times. So, today when a researcher is going to the field, one must be aware of the present intellectual climate as well as the present conditions of doing research. Theory making and its applications changed when the researcher's identity was merged with those being researched, when there was no power hierarchy between them. So today research has become more engaged and more empathetic. Today a researcher will not observe female infanticide with cold objectivity but will probably become an action anthropologist to deal with it.

1.2 WHY STUDY THEORY IN ANTHROPOLOGY?

As you have read in the theory section of this course material, by now the learners are well acquainted with the various theories that are there in social and cultural anthropology. The development of theory in anthropology is the story of the historical development of the discipline, shifts in its power equations and the global shift in power and history.

Based on the changing times and associated paradigms the theories have also undergone changes. If we look back at the Enlightenment Age, we see that the thinkers were moving out of the realm of the given concept that everything was being created by a Supreme Being. Thus, the focus shifted to understand how things evolved including human beings, outside of the theological explanation. Initially, the questions were related to explaining the diversity and evolution of humans, both biologically and culturally once the paradigm of divine creation changed to one of natural creation and evolution. As anthropology progressed the focus shifted to understand the function of each institution in context and relation to other institutions, which led to the development of the ethnographic method. In order to conduct such studies, the anthropologists started to observe the societies from close quarters, by living with the people, as a member of that society, that we redeem as fieldwork or ethnographic study. The later anthropological theories shifted its focus when the 'natives' started studying their own selves. When the field was no longer the white Europeans 'heaven' but the 'natives' turned their gaze on their own kind. Reflexive and interpretive aspects became the norm.

1.3 WHY WE NEED THEORIES?

As already indicated, to understand anything it has to be translated into a concept. The human mind cannot understand anything unless it is classified, labelled and named. For example, when we speak, we speak in terms of concepts and labels. For example, if I say, 'there is a chair here'; chair is a concept that is already known through a shared language. If we did not know what a chair was, then we would be describing it like having four legs, a seat and so on. We use language in short hand because things have been converted to concepts that our minds are trained to use.

Similarly, as theory translates social phenomenon into concepts, it puts together a number of categories into one label, that is understood by all who are familiar with the theory. For example, 'family' is a term understood by anthropologists, and also in a way that is different from that of lay persons. This is because we are familiar with anthropological theories. Every theory or discipline has its 'jargon' as we say. There are words, classifications etc, that are part of the theoretical baggage of that discipline. For example, once you join anthropology, you become familiar with terms such as 'nuclear family', 'joint family'; the difference between household and family, through anthropological theories about family and kinship.

All of theory is not about grand generalisations, but about creating and understanding concepts, that then become a part of the discipline itself. Today few people agree with Morgan's theory of evolution of kinship, but the concepts that were created by this theory, such as 'kinship', 'kinship terminology', descriptive and classificatory kinship have become part of the language of anthropology. So, what theory does, is to classify, code and create a language that then comes to define the discipline.

Theories and the concepts they create, can be shared across discipline boundaries, enabling us to do interdisciplinary research. Sometimes we borrow concepts from other disciplines and create interdisciplinary theories.

- a) Taking an example from your theory section remember the Culture and Personality school where the question of the collective personality, that is representative of a culture as a whole, and its understanding by the cultural practices of bringing up a child in a particular environment was analysed by Ruth Benedict in her work on 'national character'. Benedict had borrowed the basic paradigm of Freudian theory, linking early childhood experience to adult personality, and then used this paradigm in anthropological terms. Linking the concept of personality, as understood by Freud, to the anthropological concept of culture, she reasoned that since child rearing practices are shared in a culture, so children in a particular culture have similar childhood experiences, and therefore by extrapolating Freud's theory, she put two and two together to say that there is a 'national character', the product of collective cultural practice of bringing up an infant. This is also an example of how a new theory comes up. It can come up by combining paradigms from two disciplines.
- b) Margaret Mead showed in her study of the Samoa's 'coming of age' that teenage, is a concept that exists only in American culture. Among the Samoans, there is no psychological teenage, and children make a smooth

transition to adulthood without trauma. Therefore, Mead also critiqued the Freudian notion of 'biology as destiny'; something she also used in her work to show that what is understood as feminine and masculine are also cultural constructs and not biological determinants.

- c) Anthropological theories, likewise can influence other disciplines and also various social institutions. You have seen in unit 1, how some of Morgan's ideas, were later taken up by Friedrich Engle's in his work, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884). The theories put forward by Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner on liminality and rituals have been taken up by tourism and performance studies. The existing theories in social and cultural anthropology has opened avenues for other disciplines. Thus, we see the influence of anthropological theories in shaping concepts and ideas in other disciplines too.
- d) The concepts and ideas generated by theories help to bridge the boundaries of the subdisciplines within anthropology (Barnard: 2007:130). We all know by now that within the ambit of anthropology there are many subdisciplines and more are being added as we move forward with our research. Herein, let's take the example of Kinanthropometry and Ergonomics. Can you relate how it is linked to the study of society and culture? Kinanthropometry and Ergonomics are part of design anthropology that helps in creating better equipment for sports where there is movement of the body and also for our everyday use. When you go to a shop to buy your clothes do you have to give your measurements every time? Or when you buy online clothes how do you choose your size? There are standard measurements that help you to choose as per your body height and weight. So where does this come from? The study of different human populations help in designing and creating articles for our needs. Thus, subdisciplines are interlinked. It would be a herculean task to claim equal expertise in all the branches of anthropology. Yet, the theories can help in bridging the boundaries so that they can be used effectively for the understanding of society and culture.
- e) As already explained theories and the concepts generated by them, help to give a direction and provide an existing typology for fieldwork. When we go to the field, we collect a huge amount of data. Sometimes the pile of data leaves us helpless and the question arises how to comprehend the data and to analyse it. Theory helps us classify and arrange the data, to generate hypothesis and to get an initial directive to put things into compartments. We can later on modify and even deconstruct these compartments, but with the help of theory, we can make a beginning. Like for example, when we go to study a village in India, we can recognise certain things, already classified and explained, like the caste system, the existence of a dominant caste, processes like Sanskritisation, parochialisation; elements of culture like Great Tradition and Little Tradition and so on. Existing theories make comprehension easier. Once we have a base to begin from then we can also criticise and transform according to the data we have. For example, we can begin to compare the characters of the local dominant caste according to the definition given by M.N. Srinivas, but we can change and modify it according to the local data. This is known as 'adding to theory'. This is one of the main purposes of doing research:

- a) To verify and apply existing theories.
- b) To add to them by modifying and changing existing concepts and their relationships.

1.4 ANTHROPOLOGICAL: THEORIES OVERVIEW

Firstly, because theories are created by humans, and humans are the products of their social situations and contexts, theories change as the context changes. Secondly, knowledge is always accumulative. Each generation of scholars learn from the previous generation and because the knowledge already exists, they are able to build up on it. Thirdly, there are paradigm shifts, that is when the very basic assumptions on which the discipline is standing, itself changes. This means a big transformation in the way we understand and explain. This happens when, after a large amount of knowledge accumulation, there is the emergence of a long-time perspective on things. Sometimes massive social transformations give a jolt to the entire philosophy of existence.

Before the Age of Enlightenment, it was believed that everything was created by the Supreme Being. But this received a big jolt with the French Revolution and the American Revolution. These revolutions revealed that humans have agency to transform society, and society is not a divine creation, for if it was, then humans could not have changed it. Along with this realisation came the exposure to other societies and cultures, when the Europeans started voyages for different purposes. Here they met people ‘who were not like them’, but different and the term ‘primitive’ was used to describe them. These contacts with other people had been going on for some time but then they were considered as other species or other types of human beings. But with the advances in biology, it was established that humans were a single species, with identical characters and capabilities, Evolutionism as a theory came up to explain differences that did not have a biological basis. Likewise, during the colonial period, anthropologists had through both official policies, and power differentials greater exposure to the native populations of the colonies, whom they were able to study at close quarters. Later, Malinowski’s official banishment to the Trobriands and his long and forced stay there, led to beginning of field tradition. Colonial agenda of peaceful rule and a desire for harmony led the emphasis on ‘function’ and the functional as well as the structural-functional approach. Structuralism, Marxism, Symbolic and Interpretive approach.

There have been a few major paradigm shifts in anthropological theories. The first premise on which anthropological theories were built was Positivism, where the key assumption was that society could be subjected to a scientific scrutiny and studied like an object. Those who followed this paradigm thought they could come out with ‘truths’, like scientific truths, and therefore followed a certain kind of methodology. It involved being close to the object of study, physically, but not emotionally. Here although anthropologists did fieldwork living close to the people they studied, they never revealed their own emotions and involvement with the people. They maintained what they considered ‘scientific objectivity’ So data collection was often done through standardised methods with measurements, collection of statistical and quantitative data, creation of typologies and a tendency for generalisations. For example, Radcliffe-Brown, gave what he

calls as the laws of kinship behaviour. The comparative method used in biology was often used by them to help in generalisations and comparisons. The entire classical kinship theories are based on such methods.

Then came the paradigm shift to Interpretive theories, that emphasised looking at the culture more closely and analyse keeping the motivations and explanations of the actors of the culture in mind. These anthropologists did even more in-depth fieldwork but kept away from quantitative analysis, as they thought it one could get to the reality better through thick description that would describe not only action but the emotions and motivations behind the actions. Clifford Geertz was the prime initiator of this methodology.

From the seventies onwards, anthropology became more critical with the post-colonial and post-modernist critiques. Post modernists did not believe that an objective analysis of society was possible as the social situation is an interactive one. The new paradigm shift was towards inter-subjectivity, where it was now understood that knowledge about societies and cultures is mediated through the person of the observer, and there is nothing like the objective truth. This led to a change in methodology when from impersonal data collection, a dialogic method was being used. Here the informant was now seen not as an object but as a collaborator. Now we find the use of narratives and personalised data being used. The autoethnography is also a part of this methodology.

The phenomenologists have taken over in a big way in the present day. Critical anthropologists and others like feminists are also using this approach that is situation and experiential. This approach or theory believes that there is no truth that exists apart from the experience of the scholar. It is what the scholar experiences in the field, in relation to the informants, that is what data comprises of. The analysis again is a collaboration between the fieldworker and the field. So, all knowledge is contextualised and it requires that the context of data collection be described very carefully.

Overall, there is a paradigm shift from the possibility of objective production of knowledge-to-knowledge production as subjective, interpretive and phenomenological. Today, there is also an emphasis to allow those voices to speak that were marginalised and silenced earlier. So, we have feminist anthropology, queer anthropology, anthropology from third world perspectives, anthropology of black scholars and Dalit scholars, views from the margins and the bottom. There is an overall shift to become more political, to realise that power intercepts knowledge production and there is nothing like pure objectivity.

The student in the process of data collection and analysis today must focus on the following ethical aspects of doing research and use of theory.

- Maintain complete equality between herself and the field.
- Foreground the voices of the informants and analyse things as they see it.
- To have complete empathy and not shirk away from involvement like helping someone or working together in a crisis.
- Keep the welfare and interests of the field, foremost.

1.5 THEORY AND FIELDWORK

In this section we would try to explain with an example how we can relate our topic and fieldwork to an existing theory. Let's take the example of 'ritual' as a topic. Now within the purview of ritual what aspect can we explore? This itself is a major question, how to contextualise ritual. Now there are many ways we can look at ritual, let's list a few.

- a) the emergence of rituals in a society.
- b) importance of rituals and their interconnectedness to the environment.
- c) the changes that the rituals have gone through owing to modernisation, urbanisation, globalisation, pandemics etc.
- d) rituals and the changing dynamics in a society.
- e) rituals as performance: Under this section the learners can explore how rituals are being performed and why?

Now, we have selected at least five subtopics within the context of ritual, there are many more topics that can be included in this list. But for an understanding of how to now correlate this with a theory let's move ahead with these examples. We are presenting herein very simple examples, which the learners can relate to. These are just examples for you to think of more such cases where you can bring together your theoretical knowledge to explore and present your empirical work. Please do not cite the same examples in your Practical work.

a) The emergence of rituals in a society.

Under this heading a learner can try to understand the context of the rituals. For example, during a marriage there are many rituals that are being performed. One such ritual is anointing the bride and groom with turmeric (*haldi* ceremony). One can look into the genesis of this ritual. Why the bride and groom are being anointed with *haldi* and why water for this ritual bath has to be collected from seven rivers (traditionally). In the present-day context, if these rituals are still being performed and how is the ritual of gathering water from five rivers is being done. Is this ritual still possible? Are these being just performed as mere symbolic gestures? These are some of the questions the learners can explore.

Theory component: Which theories do you think we can use to define this topic. Herein, we can work with many of the theories that we have under the rubric of social and cultural anthropology. The classical theories can be explored to understand the emergence of such rituals. One can also critically analyse what Tylor had stated as 'culture survivals'. Some of the rituals can be explored to see if the concept of culture survivals still stands valid or whether these theories are really defunct. We can also look at it from the symbolic and the interpretive approach, as the topic also relates to the life cycle ritual. The learner can consider looking at Van Gennep's work on '*rites de passage*', 'liminality' as defined by Victor Turner or 'key symbols' as have been described by Sherry Ortner to investigate their own findings.

b) importance of rituals and their interconnectedness to the environment.

Here one can explore how the rituals are intertwined with the environment. How environment plays a major role in the types of rituals a society engages in. For example, in Malinowski's work he had described how the Trobriand Islanders perform rituals before they venture out on their fishing expeditions. The rituals are performed before the onset of the journey, for a safe and successful fishing in the deep waters, so that no untoward harm comes to the fishermen owing to the vagaries of nature like a storm in the ocean. A fascinating aspect that was brought forth by Malinowski was that women were not a part of these rituals. Likewise, tribes have their sacred grooves that are being worshipped, as they are depend on the forest products for their livelihood.

Theory component: This topic can be looked at from the view point of cultural ecology. One can explore the works of Marshal Shalin or L.P. Vidyarthi's work on nature, human and spirit complex. Feminist perspectives can also be explored for such topics to understand the role or absence of women in some rituals performed in a society.

c) the changes that the rituals have gone through owing to modernisation, urbanisation, globalisation, pandemics etc.

For example, during '*chhath puja*' the Sun God is being worshipped and during sun rise the ritual of '*arag*' (offering water to the Sun God) is performed. This ritual is accomplished in a river, where the worshippers submerge themselves almost up to the waist in the water. But now, if we take the case of the pandemic where people are almost house bound, it would be thought-provoking to see how this ritual is being performed.

Theory component: Herein, we can explore the post-modernist, symbolic and interpretive approach.

d) rituals and the changing dynamics in a society.

Let's take an example of a recent change that has come up in the ritual of '*sindoor khela*' (smearing each other with vermilion) that is part of the Durga Puja celebrations particularly in West Bengal. The ritual of *sindoor khela* earlier was restricted only to the married women whose husbands are still alive, that is women who are allowed to use red vermilion on their forehead, a symbol to mark their married status. But in recent times, this restriction has been uplifted and all women, unmarried, married, widows, divorcees and transgenders are being welcomed to take part in this ritual. This is a monumental change as breaking away from a tradition that is as old as the Durga Puja itself is not an easy task. Likewise, the tradition of animal sacrifice for rituals in many societies today, has been replaced with sacrifice of some other objects like a pumpkin or a gourd.

Theory component: Again, this example can be looked at from different theoretical perspectives. One that immediately comes to mind is the feminist perspective. Likewise, it can also be studied from the perspective of post-modernism. The concept of 'key symbols' and its changing dimensions also can be taken into account.

e) **rituals as performance:**

Under this section the learners can explore how rituals are being performed and why?

Theory component: This topic itself can be explored from so many perspectives. Many scholars have explored this topic as not just rituals per say, but in terms of tourism anthropology, from the perspective of understanding dance and theatre performances etc. Many have explored the concept of liminality in performances.

1.6 SUMMARY

This practical manual has been designed for the learners to understand how theory can be integrated with their fieldwork. As we have seen, the theories have been changing as per the need of the time. We see various perspectives in the theoretical aspects, making it very difficult to assess and say which theory fits the bill. While doing fieldwork we urge learners to think before accepting or rejecting a theory for his/her work. One needs to have strong understanding of the theories to suggest if they can be used for the kind of fieldwork the learner is proposing. Thus, we have tried to explain this with many examples in this manual.

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