



**PRACTICAL
MANUAL**

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PRACTICAL MANUAL

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this manual, the learners would be able to:

- comprehend how practicing anthropologists work in the field;
- identify the tools and techniques used by the practicing anthropologists; and
- find avenues for project work in anthropology of practice.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the theory section, we had dealt with the beginning of anthropology in practice and how it emerged as a subfield within the discipline of anthropology. We had tried to discuss how anthropology in practice involves not only the academicians but also anthropologists who work dedicatedly in the field, with the communities to solve their problems. The work of the practicing anthropologists begins mostly after data had been gathered through the ethnographic method. The practicing anthropologists work more towards intervention, working in close proximity with the communities wherein changes are taking place like displacement and rehabilitation owing to the construction of multi-sited projects, forest laws owing to which many of the tribes have had to give up their original abode in the forest, the rapid process of industrialisation and globalisation that brought about changes in human resource deployment and how the need to protect and safeguard the interest of the working class arose. They work more towards understanding the requirements of the local communities and intervene wherein the government projects etc. are to be initiated. Their work is more towards helping the local communities to make the transition, if they are willing to, without jeopardising their own cultural practices. So, in this regard the tools and techniques that are to be employed by the practicing anthropologists differ. Not with standing the fact, the ethnographic method, tools, and techniques are the core and still play a vital role in aiding practicing anthropologists. In this

*Contributor: Dr Rukshana Zaman, Discipline of Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, New Delhi and Mr. Ubaid Dhar, Research Scholar, Discipline of Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU. Section 1.1.2 has been adapted from Unit 11 Tools and Techniques contributed by Mr Ubaid Dhar for the course Applied Anthropology BANE 145

practical manual, we would try to explain the tools and techniques that are at the disposal of the practicing anthropologists, some of which you can deliberate upon to utilise for your own projects. Herein, we are presenting the tools and techniques that cover the different branches of anthropology like social, cultural, physical, and biological. An understanding of the methods and concepts of the different branches is vital as it concerns the different aspects of human life. One may deal with the physical or biological methods or the collaborative ones. So, while deliberating on a topic of interest, that you would like to create a project for, you may choose from the tools and techniques provided below.

1.1 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Practicing anthropology is mainly concerned with three activities (a.) obtaining information; (b.) formulating plans and policies, and (c.) translating the plans and policies into action. All three steps are interrelated. In the first step, the information is obtained through research. A phase where the ethnographic methods of data collection are being used like observations and interviews to gather information. The nuances of which you had read about in your course on research methods (BANC 110). This can be regarded as the diagnosis step in terms of obtaining information by which the problem is defined and identified through a hypothesis. The second step is formulating a plan that is goal setting, wherein analyses are put together to bring about a guide for the actions. The third phase is implementation, here action tools are used directly in the field for the desired outcome or to achieve the practical goal. The aim of practicing anthropology is the direct involvement of the community in every aspect and thus, in the three steps we have mentioned the community is taken into confidence and their ideas and suggestions are the valuable inputs that help in the policymaking and action-taking.

1.1.1 Innovative Techniques

With time, the methodological tools have become more refined and time-efficient to meet the ever-increasing demand of agencies or individuals working on a variety of projects and programs. As anthropological techniques like participant observation are extensive and time-consuming, applied anthropologists have come up with the tools and techniques that provide the results in a noticeably short period with absolute accuracy. These techniques may differ, or overlap based on the type of research one is interested in. Some of the tools and techniques used in both qualitative and quantitative research are discussed briefly here.

1.1.1.1. Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP): is an important data collection tool in anthropology that is applied in projects where short deadlines are set. For example, in health programmes data needs to be collected in a rapid way to give possible solutions to the problem, and for that purpose, this technique is employed. RAP offers an efficient technique for directing fast subjective evaluations of local conditions and needs, information, perspectives, and practices (UCLA, 1987). Most of the RAPs depend on ethnographic procedures custom-made to the requirements of short-term applied projects. The specific techniques utilised comprise formal and informal interviews, discussions, participant observation, multi-scalar research, social network analysis, participatory action research (PAR), and focus groups (Kedia & Bennet, 2005).

To make speedy and effective assessments for planning or appraisal, RAP can be also utilised with other strategies as well. Moreover, it can be utilised at various phases of the venture cycle, for project arranging just as interaction and finishing up assessments. So, RAP is quite flexible as a tool that can fit various zones, circumstances, and populaces.

1.1.1.2. Focus Group Discussion: Focus group discussion (FGD) or focus group interviewing is one of the most widely used techniques for Rapid Assessment Procedures. For quite a long time, applied anthropologists have been using this technique to obtain information on different themes in a particular community. For example, the marketing experts have utilised this technique to recognise the needs, likes, and dislikes of a population to increase the probability that customers will buy certain items over others. Progressively, social researchers are utilising the focus group technique, as proven by the developing number of insightful scholarly articles by sociologists, analysts, and anthropologists making use of this method. (Kedia & Bennet, 2005)

In this technique, around 8-12 participants are chosen as a target group of a particular community for a group discussion/interview to obtain the emic opinions and perspectives about a given topic. Usually, those participants are selected who are influenced by the same issue or who share a collective experience or information about the given research topic. There is a moderator in this group who leads the debate toward the given topic while allowing for a wide-ranging discussion of other relevant issues. The main purpose of this discussion is to create an environment that gives each member a sense of freedom to put forth their answers and views. This ecosystem of differing views with the same background helps in identifying the core issues faced by the community and thereby framing better solutions.



Figure 1: Major Steps in Focus Group Discussion

Like all research methods, focus group discussion requires considerable skills, competence, and expertise. As an applied anthropologist, you need to be flexible and unbiased. Moreover, one needs to have a solid foundation of all the theoretical and conceptual ideas pertaining to the problem or topic that needs to be studied. FGD is a structured talk and to comprehend all the ideas and views, one needs to have proficiency in the local language. It is not possible to conduct FGD with the help of a translator or interpreter. Some prior training and experience in handling the group discussions is a must for this method as without it one can lead the conversation to issues that can only create problems for future researches.

1.1.1.3. Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA): Rapid Rural Appraisal is a technique that is used by applied anthropologists in research-based in rural settings. This technique is useful for quick evaluation of assessments of locals on a specific issue and solutions they need. As the name indicates, in RRA a team

of researchers intends to get results as quickly as possible and for that, they consider the collaboration of villagers as well. Why? Because the local people are more aware of the problems they face and may come up with better solutions if equipped with some scientific knowledge. The result of RRA technique is in a form of a report that can be used in various ways like project design, enhancement of an ongoing project, review of national policies, etc. (Das, 2012). RRA is utilised during the events that demand rapid appraisal of the people like floods, earthquakes, epidemics etc. So, Rapid Rural Appraisal is identified with fast activity for the betterment of the people.

Advantages of RRA Technique

1. RRA aids in the quick identification of a problem and its solution.
2. It is advantageous in the case of research based on natural disasters.
3. RRA is helpful in post-disaster studies like relief distribution etc.

Disadvantages of RRA Technique

1. There are greater chances of bias in this technique as it is strongly associated with the affected people.
2. Sometimes it becomes exceedingly difficult to study the people who have been severely affected by a disaster.
3. With the high involvement of locals, expectations are always on a higher side thereby creating problems later if those expectations are not met.

1.1.1.4. Participatory Rural Appraisal: PRA research technique developed in the 1980s and is the result of participatory research done in rural areas. An anthropological methodology has seen an immense shift post-world war II and this shift was witnessed in the applied aspects as well. In the middle of the 1970s however, the requirement for PRA was visibly felt among the anthropologists, when the anthropological understanding was brought into action for upliftment of downtrodden, poor, and oppressed people. This ultimately led to the foundation of a method that was to be used for the betterment of communities with the active participation of both the researcher and the researched i.e., Participatory Research Appraisal technique. (Pandey, 2018)

In the beginning, PRA was termed as participatory research appraisal, but due to its continuous application in villages and rural areas, this technique later came to be known as participatory rural appraisal. In participatory rural appraisal, the researcher and the locals work in collaboration in the identification of the problems by utilising the local peoples' capabilities. The role of a researcher is just to act as a facilitator in PRA with the ideal objective being the empowerment and capacity development of local communities. Unlike RRA, the participatory rural appraisal is a lengthy progress that continues for a considerable period. This is because communities in the process assemble their mastery to address their interests, assess potential outcomes and likewise direct exercises for their advantage. So this way, PRA permits the rural folks to impart, improve and look at their actualities of life and circumstances which help them to plan and act. (Das, 2012)

Advantages of PRA Technique

1. Participatory rural appraisal helps in the identification of problems at the rural level and aids in the proper formulation and implementation of policies.
2. This technique guarantees the monitoring at the community level during the implementation and evaluation of rural development programmes.
3. The data obtained is more reliable as compared to other techniques and is usually free of any bias.

Disadvantages of PRA Technique

1. Due to the direct involvement of local communities, the process can sometimes take more than the required time and budget.
2. As the members of the community under study may differ in some opinions, it becomes difficult for a researcher to cooperate with all. This sometimes creates a situation of conflict as well.
3. Domination of one sect over others in some communities hampers the process of unbiased data collection and the results may end up with the opinions of only a few.

RRA and PRA Tools

Certain tools are used by the applied anthropologists while carrying out Rapid Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Appraisal technique. These are:

1. Focus Group Discussion: See section 11.2.2.
2. Resource Mapping: Resource mapping is a technique that is used by applied anthropologists for many years now in different forms. Also referred to as community resource mapping or asset mapping or environmental scanning, it is a system-building measure utilised by various groups at a wide range of stages to adjust assets and policies according to explicit framework objectives, techniques, and anticipated outcomes.
3. Social Mapping: Social mapping is a process whereby a researcher draws an overview of the socio-economic conditions of the area under study by obtaining information about village design, demography, language, religious beliefs, economy etc. Social mapping is of great use in applied anthropological studies as it makes us aware of the societal environment and the relationships of people with each other and their atmosphere.

Check your Progress

1. What do you understand by Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP)?

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2. Explain the steps involved in focus group discussion?

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3. Define RRA and PRA.

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4. Briefly discuss the tools used in RRA and PRA.

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1.1.1.5. Participatory Action Research and Evaluation: Participatory methods to research and evaluation deliberately incorporate individuals and groups who are generally influenced by an inquiry in the plan and execution of the process (Participatory Action Research and Evaluation, 2021). Moreover, this method guarantees the reflection of local cultures, opinions, problems, and perspectives. Participatory approaches to research and evaluation can be generally organised into three broad categories and each one is briefly described here:

- a. **Participatory Research:** This type of research is led by anthropologists who are in the academic or other professional fields. These researchers include or team up with the local people or communities that otherwise would have been called the ‘subjects’ of a research study. This form of research is mostly concerned with the expansion of knowledge in the scholarly world instead of focusing on changing the condition of groups, individuals, or organisations under observation.
- b. **Participatory Action Research (PAR):** is a technique that has been in use since the 1940s. It involves researchers and participants working together to inquire and bring a change in their community. PAR aims to promote democracy and challenges inequality because of its ultimate focus on societal change. Participatory action research begins with the detection of a problem with the help of community members and is followed by the collection of data using other techniques like FGDs and structured interviews. After the data is collected and analysed, a collective plan with the local people is chalked out and finally, sustainable action is taken by all.

- c. **Participatory Evaluation (PE):** There is always a need for evaluation of actions taken collectively by an applied anthropologist with the members of the community under study. Participatory Evaluation (PE) is utilised in that case to measure the effectiveness and/or impact of a policy, plan, or action during or post-implementation. In the case of PEs, they are usually conducted by the experts who make use of participatory approach, or these evaluations are designed and directed by the applied anthropologists in collaboration with the community members only without the involvement of any professional evaluator.

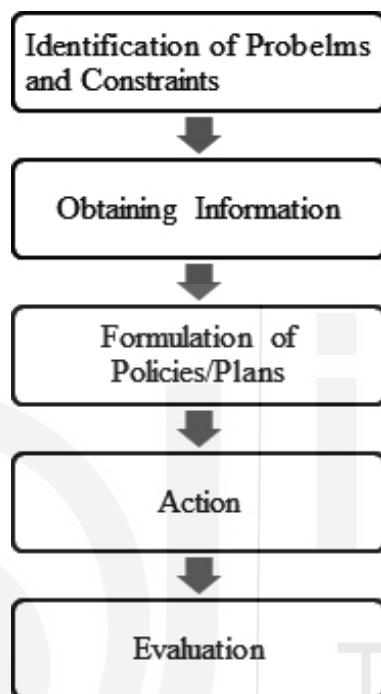


Figure 2: Steps in Participatory Action Research

1.1.1.6. SONDEO Techniques: “*Sondeo*” etymologically means “to sound out”. It is a participatory research action technique or rapid appraisal method of studying the skills, opinions, problems, and perceptions of the people in their natural setting. Sondeo is different from the traditional survey method in the sense that it generates data in a comparatively shorter period. Moreover, it also promotes the active participation of local people in the identification of the problems, planning the available solutions, formulation, and implementation of policies, monitoring and evaluation etc. A *sondeo* gives information about those as well who are usually left behind in traditional research settings, for example, women and limited resource clients (Butler, 1995). In this technique, data is not only obtained and disseminated like traditional research but being a participatory action research technique, it involves the participation of members of the community equally in the analysis of the gathered data and finally action.

Now, why do we need *sondeo* or rapid reconnaissance technique? Because it takes way less time in the field than other available techniques and considers the elements of other tools like formal survey, key informant interviewing and participant observation. The rapid appraisal is also economical, apt, and accurate in the description of the natural setting where the group under study is based. Due to reduction in prejudgments and stereotypes, these techniques are

also effective in decreasing outsider bias when concerned about local needs and apprehensions.

Advantages of SONDEO Technique:

1. It provides a deep understanding of a situation or a problem faced by a particular group.
2. *Sondeo* helps in building a good rapport between professionals and the local people thereby making it possible to gather rich qualitative data.
3. This technique is cost and time effective and facilitates broad participation and communication from the locals.

Disadvantages of SONDEO Technique:

1. One of the limitations of *sondeo* is that it cannot be generalised to a large population.
2. It does not guarantee equal treatment to all the respondents and their confidentiality.
3. If hastily applied then it can fail to develop a good community rapport, thus making the interviewees feel that they were being ‘used’ for some purpose.

1.1.1.7. Anthropometry: The term anthropometry comes from the Greek words, *Anthropos* (man) and *metron* (measure). So, anthropometry etymologically means, measurement of man or the measurement of humans (Herron, 2006). This term was introduced by a French naturalist known as Georges Cuvier (1769-1832). In this technique, various bodily measurements are taken to access the static (body composition and body shape) and dynamic (body movement and strength capacities and the use of space) anthropometry (ibid). This technique is mostly used in studies related to physical anthropology but nowadays it is creating its mark in the field of applied anthropological studies as well. From designing clothes, tools and equipment, anthropometry has got associated with ergonomics as well. Ergonomics is an applied science that is concerned with designing and arranging the things that people use. Another area where anthropometry is highly applicable is design anthropometry. As mentioned earlier, it is the application of anthropometric measurements for designing equipment, gears, uniforms, seating etc. As a research tool, anthropometry has also contributed immensely to the analysis of variation among human populations in terms of race, sex, and body dimensions. Similarly, this technique is also employed in the field of forensic sciences in the identification of skeletal remains and their proper analysis and interpretation. With prior knowledge and training in anthropometry, anthropologists can easily distinguish and classify skeletal remains based on sex, age, and species. So, we see that the technique of anthropometry is applicable in many fields and continues to have its impact in multidisciplinary research as well.

Tools used in Anthropometry:

Anthropometric measurements are obtained using different kinds of tools, some of which include:

Tool	Used for the Measurement of
Anthropometers	Length and Circumference of body segments
Stadiometer	Height
Bicondylar Calipers	Bone Diameter
Skinfold Calipers	Skin thickness and subcutaneous fat
Scales	Weight

Source: Biology Dictionary (www.biologydictionary.net/anthropometry/)

Check your Progress

5. Define Participatory Action Research (PAR).

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6. What do you understand by sondeo technique?

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7. Name some tools used in anthropometry with their uses.

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1.2 EXAMPLES OF AVENUES FOR PROJECT WORK

Based on the tools and techniques that we have elaborated on in the earlier sections, herein we are presenting some areas where you can think of working for your project. Please think of other areas, innovative spaces where you can apply the knowledge of practicing anthropology or put your anthropological knowledge into practice. We are presenting below some of the spaces, but you would have to decide which tools and techniques to be used.

1. The learner may visit an NGO or corporate office or census office in their area and its adjoining areas and give observations on the same.
2. Write a project on constitutional provisions or evaluation of any development project/report.

3. Social Analysis of a Development Project/Programme
4. Draw a scene of the crime and identify the various evidence in a portrayed crime scene.
5. Write a project on Religious Tourism / Tribal Tourism / Health Tourism / Fashion / Human Rights / Ecotourism.
6. Write a project on the demographic profile make a schedule on the demographic profile.
7. Collect data on bio-social problem/ genetic disorders and design counselling and give the analysis and interpretation.
8. Use multimedia to create a project on cyber crimes, Facebook Offerings and the Transformations on the Real and Virtual Youth, the impact of Films/ TV on Society, or any such areas.
9. Write a project where the learner can use anthropometric knowledge to design a utility item like sports gear, T-shirts, shoes, chair making, etc.
10. Changing Lifestyles and Utility of Kinanthropometry in them
11. Migration
12. The impact of COVID 19 on migration, health, family, employment, business-like malls, etc.
13. Cultural Understanding of Illness and its Significance in Delivering Remedies
14. Emergence of Small Exotic Eateries in Tourist Spots by Locals or Cloud kitchens during the COVID pandemic
15. Infrastructure of Local Schools/ Colleges, facilities rendered by Primary Health Centres
16. Disaster management and preparedness: earthquakes and People's Preparedness Rehabilitation of a Flood Affected Community etc.
17. Health and lifestyle diseases, consumption of tobacco, smokers and drinkers and health Interventions
18. ChildWorkers and Factory Hazards
19. Preparation of Working Plan for Welfare of an Identified Population
20. An Assessment of User-Friendliness (for Differently Abled) of Public Facilities

1.3 SUMMARY

In this manual, we have provided you with the knowledge of tools and techniques that are at the disposal of practicing anthropologists. This manual would equip you with the knowledge that would help you in creating your project. Try and use the innovative techniques for your project along with the ethnographic methods to justify your work in the lines of practicing anthropology.

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