
PRACTICAL MANUAL

Structure

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Learning Objectives

After reading this unit, you will know:

- The location of tribal communities on the map of India;
- how to prepare a synopsis for ethnographic study;
- how to conduct an ethnographic study among tribal communities; and
- how to write tribal ethnography.

15.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of tribal communities started with anthropologists' interest in the study of 'other cultures'. Anthropology as a discipline emerged with the study of tribes. The concept of tribe has traversed a long academic and intellectual history in anthropology. In fact, many scholars consider the term 'tribe' synonymous with the development of anthropology as a specialized discipline, which focused primarily on the study of 'primitive', remote, isolated and small-scale societies.

Anthropologists such as Morgan, Sahlins and Godelier saw a tribe as an organized society with well demarcated social and cultural boundaries. This concept of tribe as an endogamous unit was challenged by later scholars who witnessed fluidity and permeability in the aforementioned boundaries within the societies identified as tribes, especially in the context of South Asia.

In spite of these differences, the tribal people are an integral part of the Indian population. Their isolated ecology, economy, society and religious beliefs have centuries-long association with the Indian society. In fact, the genesis of anthropology can be traced back to attempts made by European colonists, travelers, explorers and missionaries to understand and describe the ways of life of the native people. The forest and hill dwelling savages were called tribes to differentiate them from other population.

This manual will help you to understand how to conduct ethnographic research on tribal cultures and the requirements and groundwork that are required before one commences ethnographic work.

15.1 TRIBAL PROFILE OF INDIA

In India, tribal people are known by many names, such as:

- *adivasi* (original settlers)
- scheduled tribes (*anusuchit janajati*)
- tribes
- janajati (folk communities)
- *girijan* (hill dwellers)
- *vanvasi* (forest dwellers)
- *vanyajati* (forest caste)
- *adimjati* (primitive caste)
- hill tribe (mountain dwellers)
- indigenous people.

In the term '*adivasi*', *adi* means "earliest time", and *vasi* means "a resident of", so *adivasi* means 'indigenous people' or 'original inhabitants. The government of India recognizes *adivasi* under the Constitutional term "Scheduled Tribes" derived from a schedule in the Constitution Order of 1950. The population of scheduled tribes (STs), as per Census 2011 is 10.45 crore. STs constitute 8.6 percent of the country's total population (Ministry of Tribal Affairs 2020-2021).

The tribal communities in India are enormously diverse and heterogeneous. There are wide ranging diversities among them in respect of languages spoken, size of population and mode of livelihood. The number of communities that find their place in the list of Scheduled Tribes in the Indian Constitution is reflective of this diversity. The Government of India, in its Draft National Tribal Policy, 2006 records 698 scheduled tribes in India. As per the Census of India 2011, the number of individual groups notified as scheduled tribes is 705.

Article 366 (25) of the Constitution of India refers to Scheduled Tribes as communities who are scheduled in accordance with Article 342 of the Constitution. This Article says that only those communities who have been declared as such by the President through an initial public notification or through a subsequent amending Act of Parliament will be considered to be scheduled tribes.

The term "Scheduled Tribes" is defined in Article 366 (25) of the Constitution as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of, or groups within such tribes, or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this Constitution". Article 342 prescribes the procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of Scheduled Tribes.

The criteria followed for defining a community as a scheduled tribe are:

- Indications of primitive traits

- Distinctive culture
- Geographical isolation
- Shyness of contact with the community at large
- Backwardness.

Scheduled tribes notified under Article 342 of the Constitution of India are spread over different states and union territories of the country. Scheduled tribe communities occupy about 15% of the country's area, living in various ecological and geo-climatic conditions ranging from plains and forests to hills. Tribal groups are at different stages of social, economic and educational development.

While some tribal communities have adopted a mainstream way of life, others haven't. These vulnerable scheduled tribes, 75 in number, are known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Earlier termed as Primitive Tribal Groups, their characteristics have been covered under the Section on the Scheme for Conservation and Development of PVTGs. The criteria followed for determination of PVTGs are as under:

- A pre-agriculture level of technology
- A stagnant or declining population
- Low literacy
- A subsistence level of economy.

As per Census figures, literacy rate of STs in India improved from 47.1 per cent in 2001 to 59 per cent in 2011. Among ST males, literacy rate increased from 59.2 per cent to 68.5 per cent and among ST females, literacy rate increased from 34.8 per cent to 49.4 per cent during the same period. Literacy rate for the total population has increased from 64.8 per cent in 2001 to 73 per cent in 2011. There is a gap of about 14 percentage points in literacy rate of STs as compared to the all-India literacy rate.

15.2 TRIBAL COMMUNITIES ON A MAP OF INDIA

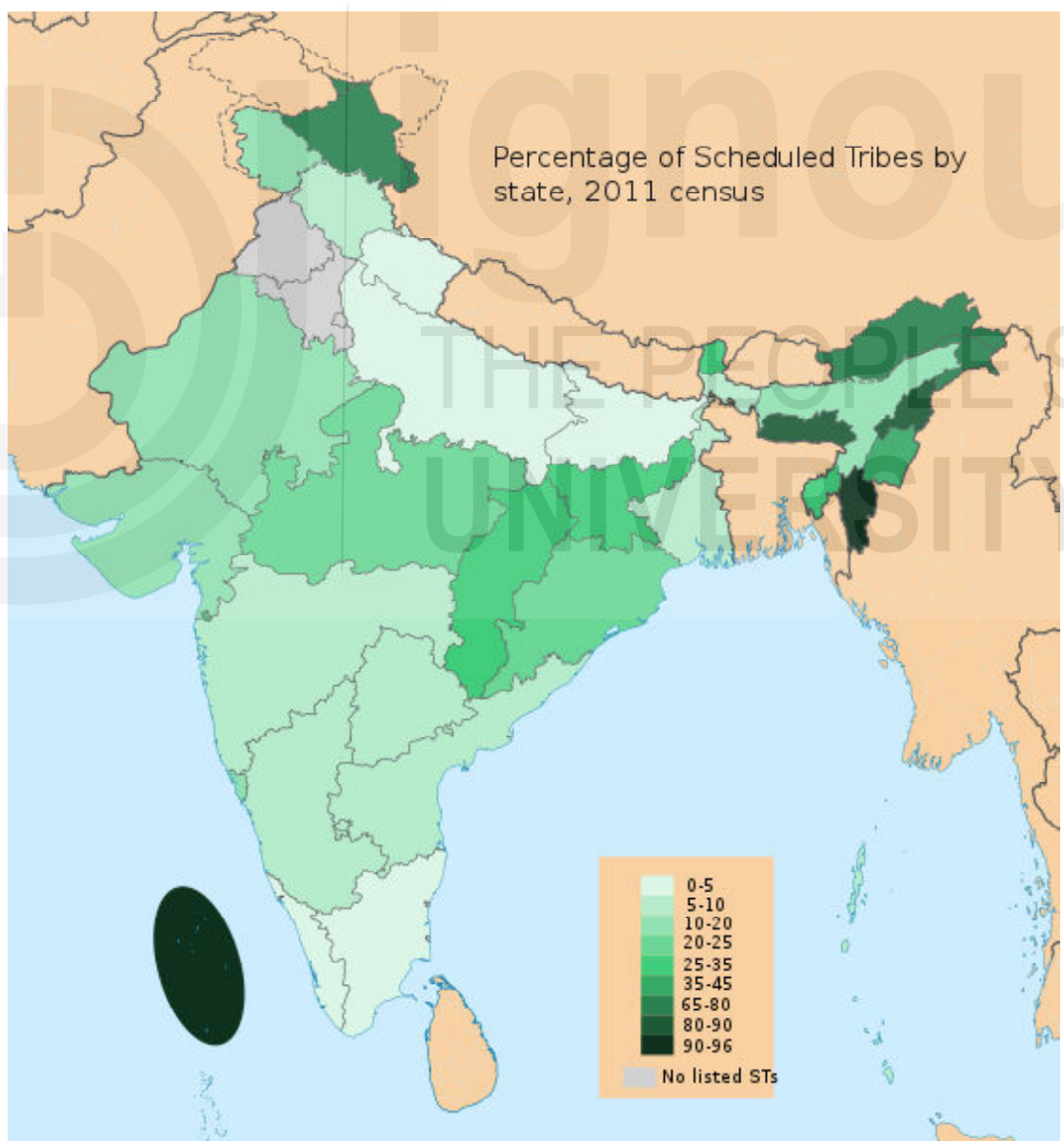
The geographical distribution of tribal population is not uniform. Everywhere they have adapted to the local ways of living, thus cultural differences are quite visible within the same community. The major tribal groups who have been scheduled in India include:

- Gonds
- Santals
- Khasis
- Nagas
- Garos
- Mundas
- Oraons
- Kharias
- Hos

Problems, Development Programme and Constitutional Safeguards

- Angamis
- Bhils
- Kols
- Chenchu
- Kondadoras
- Kondakapus
- Totos
- Paharias
- Bhutias.

Bhils form the largest tribal group in India, followed by Gonds, Santhals, and Meena tribes. The largest concentration of scheduled tribe population is found in the eastern, central and western belt:



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2011_Census_Scheduled_Tribes_distribution_map_India_by_state_and_union_territory.svg

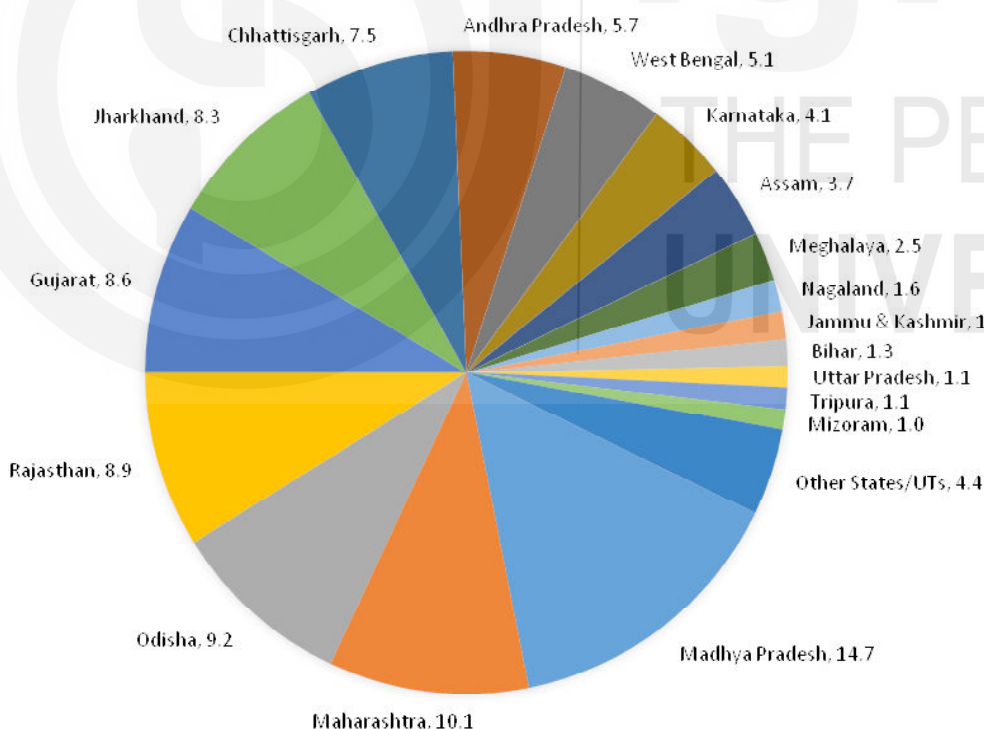
According to 2011 Census, the proportion of scheduled tribes to the respective state/ UT populations was:

- Lakshadweep (94.8 per cent) (highest)
- Mizoram (94.4 per cent)
- Nagaland (89.1 per cent)
- Meghalaya (85.9 per cent).
- Chhattisgarh (31.8 per cent, highest)
- Jharkhand (26.3 per cent)
- Odisha (22.1 per cent).

Of the total ST population in the country, Madhya Pradesh accounted for the highest proportion of ST population (14.5 per cent) followed by Maharashtra (10.2 per cent), Orissa (9.7 per cent), Gujarat (8.9 per cent), Rajasthan (8.4 per cent), Jharkhand (8.4 per cent) and Chhattisgarh (7.8 per cent). In fact, 68 per cent of the country’s ST population lives in these seven states only.

Percentage Share of Scheduled Tribes

STATE/UT'S SHARE OF SCHEDULED TRIBES (ST) TO TOTAL ST POPULATION OF INDIA



Source: Scheduled Tribes, 2011 Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India

Except the states of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, and the union territories of Chandigarh and Puducherry, tribals inhabit all parts of the county.

The detailed list of tribes of India is available at https://web.archive.org/web/20131107225208/http://censusindia.gov.in/Tables_Published/SCST/ST%20Lists.pdf

In India their number and other demographic features vary from one state to another. The largest number of tribal communities (62) are in the state of Orissa (Census 2011). Some of the major tribes of different states are given below:

Table 1: Percentage of Tribal People in Different States and Union Territories of India

States	Major Tribes	% STs in India/State to total population of India/State
Andhra Pradesh	Andh, Sadhu Andh, Bhagata, Bhil, Chenchus (Chenchawar), Gadabas, Gond, Goudu, Jatapus, Kammara, Kattunayakan, Kolawar, Kolam, Konda, Manna Dhora, Pardhan, Rona, Savaras, Dabba Yerukula, Nakkala, Dhulia, Thoti, Sugalis.	5.3
Arunachal Pradesh	Apatanis, Abor, Dafla, Galong, Momba, Sherdukpen, Singpho.	68.8
Assam	Chakma, Chutiya, Dimasa, Hajong, Garos, Khasis, Gange.	12.4
Bihar	Asur, Baiga, Birhor, Birjia, Chero, Gond, Parhaiya, Santhals, Savar.	1.3
Chhattisgarh	Agariya, Bhaina, Bhattra, Biar, Khond, Mawasi, Nagasia.	30.6
Goa	Dhodia, Dubia, Naikda, Siddi, Varli.	10.2
Gujarat	Barda, Bamcha, Bhil, Charan, Dhodia, Gamta, Paradhi, Patelia.	14.8
Himachal Pradesh	Gaddis, Gujjars, Khas, Lamba, Lahaulas, Pangwala, Swangla.	5.7
Jammu and Kashmir	Bakarwal, Balti, Beda, Gaddi, Garra, Mon, Purigpa, Sippi.	11.9
Jharkhand	Birhors, Bhumij, Gonds, Kharia, Mundas, Santhals, Savar.	26.2
Karnataka	Adiyan, Barda, Gond, Bhil, Iruliga, Koraga, Patelia, Yerava.	7.0
Kerala	Adiyan, Arandan, Eravallan, Kurumbas, Malaiarayan, Moplals, Uralis.	1.5
Madhya Pradesh	Baigas, Bhils, Bharia, Birhors, Gonds, Katkari, Kharia, Khond, Kol, Murias.	21.1
Maharashtra	Bhaina, Bhunjia, Dhodia, Katkari, Khond, Rathawa, Warlis.	9.1

Manipur	Aimol, Angami, Chiru, Kuki, Maram, Monsang, Paite, Purum, Thadou.	40.9
Meghalaya	Chakma, Garos, Hajong, Jaintias Khasis, Lakher, Pawai, Raba.	86.1
Mizoram	Chakma, Dimasa, Khasi, Kuki, Lakher, Pawai, Raba, Synteng.	94.4
Nagaland	Angami, Garo, Kachari, Kuki, Mikir, Nagas, Sema, Lotha.	86.5
Odisha	Gadaba, Ghara, Kharia, Khond, Matya, Oraons, Rajuar, Santhals.	22.8
Rajasthan	Bhils, Damaria, Dhanka, Meenas (Minas), Patelia, Sahariya.	13.5
Sikkim	Bhutia, Khas, Lepchas.	33.8
Tamil Nadu	Adiyan, Aranadan, Eravallan, Irular, Kadar, Kanikar, Kotas, Todas.	1.1
Telangana	Gond, Pardhan, Kolam, Koya, Chenchus.	9.3
Tripura	Bhil, Bhutia, Chaimal, Chakma, Halam, Khasia, Lushai, Mizel, Namte.	31.8
Uttarakhand	Bhotias, Buksa, Jannasari, Khas, Raji, Tharu.	2.9
Uttar Pradesh	Bhotia, Buksa, Jaunsari, Kol, Raji, Tharu.	0.6
West Bengal	Asur, Khond, Hajong, Ho, Parhaiya, Rabha, Santhals, Savar.	5.8
Andaman and Nicobar	Oraons, Onges, Sentinelese, Shompens, Jarawas and Nicobarese.	7.5
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	Dhodia, Dubla, Kathodi, Kokna, Koli Dhor, Naikda and Varli	52.0
Daman & Diu.	Dhodia, Dubla, Naikda, Siddi, and Varli	6.3
Lakshadweep		94.8

Source: <http://tribal.gov.in/writereaddata/mainlinkFile/File722.pdf> <https://tribal.nic.in/ST/Statistics8518.pdf>

Activity

Prepare a list of tribes in your surrounding areas.

15.3 ANTHROPOLOGY AND TRIBAL STUDIES

Historically, the discipline of anthropology has been engaged in studying tribal communities. In the initial years, anthropologists were mainly interested in understanding and explaining tribal communities. With time, the discipline of

anthropology got diversified. Besides studying the tribes, anthropologists now also study the various aspects related to non-tribes and humankind in general.

During the 18th century, the British government felt the need to have an ethnographic account on different tribes of India with a view to rule them easily. Early ethnography work was done by British officials, but their account on the tribes provided ample information on the tribal history of India. A number of foreign anthropologists visited India to record the customs and traditions of the Indian tribes. British anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers came to India in 1904 and studied the Toda tribe of South India, which was published in 1906. Another anthropologist, Alfred Radcliffe-Brown came to India to study the Onge tribe of the Andaman Islands in 1906 and 1908. A monograph on the Onge tribe was published in 1922 under the title *The Andaman Islanders*. Therefore, from the colonial period, we have works on tribes which are administrative accounts and ethnographic studies. Most of the data was collected from fieldwork. In social anthropology scholars started publishing their ethnographic work on different populations of India.

Some of the notable works of this kind include *Tribes and Castes of Bengal* published by H. H. Risley in the year 1891. Among the Indian scholars, S. C. Roy is regarded as the first Indian ethnographer who helped the oppressed tribals of the Chota Nagpur region. He started his work among the tribals of Chota Nagpur and published his monograph *Munda and their Country* in 1912. Some scholars from abroad carried out ethnographic works in India. These works include the following:

- *The Khasi (1907) by P. R. T. Gurdon*
- *The Lhota Naga (1922) by J. P. Mills*
- *The Lushei Kuki Clans (1912) by J. Shakespeare*
- *The Chamars (1920) by G. W. Briggs*

Anthropologist D. N. Majumdar contributed immensely to tribal studies in India. He conducted fieldwork among the Ho tribes of Bihar, which was later published as a book *The Changing Hoin* 1937. He was the first Indian to study and write about the impact of non-tribals on the life of Indian tribes. Indian social anthropologists such as S. C. Dube, B. K. Roy-Burman, Makhan Jha, P. K. Misra, K.S. Singh, T. N. Madan, N. K. Bose, T. C. Das, Iravathi Karve, Chattopadhyay and Mukherjee have published a large number of monographs on village and community studies.

J. K. Bose, through field study, studied the changes taking place among the Garos in their new settlement with reference to their original settlement in Garo Hills. M. N. Srinivas conducted ethnographic study among the Coorgs. He gathered data on marriage and family in Mysore, which was published in 1942. M. N. Srinivas in his book *Social Change in Modern India* in (1966) developed the concept of “sanskritization”. In simple terms sanskritization means people of lower caste imitating people of higher caste (cultural mobility) owing to an improvement in their economic or political position resulting from their contact with a source of the Great Tradition of Hinduism, such as pilgrim centers. M.N.Srinivas gave examples from the Ramgharias of Punjab, the Chamars of Uttar Pradesh, the Oraons of Bihar, the Bhils of Rajasthan, and the Gonds of Madhya Pradesh, and said that they have all tried to sanskritize their way of life.

L. P. Vidyarthi’s study of a Munda village reflects how Manjhi, a section of Munda tribe, has adopted the Hindu style of life and become a caste. He conducted his study

in Gaya, the famous Hindu religious pilgrimage spot of Bihar. This resulted in a book called *The Sacred Complex of Hindu Gaya* in 1961. He presented the concept of “Sacred Complex” playing an integrating role by providing a meeting place for different kinds of peoples and traditions, of castes and sects, of classes and statuses. This concept became a very popular theoretical model in anthropological literature for studying traditional places of pilgrimage and religious complexes of simple societies in India.

L. P. Vidyarthi published a book on Cultural Contours of Tribal Bihar (1966) which explains the historical, geographical and social background of the tribes of Chota Nagpur. L. P. Vidyarthi and B. K. Roy-Burman wrote a book under the title *The Tribal Culture of India* (1976). Taking data from secondary sources at the Indian level, the authors attempted to present a comparative and comprehensive view on the social, economic, political and religious life of the Indian tribes. The book also presents a good amount of information on folklore, art, course of life and personality structure in the context of tribal India. The book highlights the character of tribal village, matriliney and polyandry in tribal India. It also deals with the approaches, planning and programmes for tribal development and cultural changes among the tribes of India.

Cultural and ethnographic studies cover a wide range of topical investigations. Civilizational studies, for example, are an important dimension of such studies. *Tribal Cultures of Peninsular India as a dimension of Little Tradition in the Study of Indian Civilization: A Preliminary Statement* (1959) by Surajit Sinha is an example in this regard. In civilizational studies, village studies constitute an important dimension. You will find works on village studies which have enriched tribal studies in general. Many topical divisions present the culture of the tribes. These include monographs, works on cross-cultural studies, ethnographic works on society and social institutions, beliefs and practices and so on. A few general works on ethnography and tribal cultures are mentioned below. Some of the British social anthropologists who came to India for ethnographic work were:

- W.H.R. Riverse: conducted study on Todas of Nilgiri Hills
- A.R. Radcliffe-Brown: well-known structural functionalists who studied the Andaman Islanders
- Charles Gabriel Seligman and Brenda Z. Seligman: wrote on the Veddas of Sri Lanka.

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L.K. Anantha Krishna Iyer published his work on “*Cochin Tribes and Castes*” and “*Tribe and Caste of Ernakulam*”.

At this juncture, many other foreign scholars contributed problem-oriented works on tribes. Foremost among them were Verrier Elwin and Christopher von Fürer-Haimendorf. Elwin worked on the tribes of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. Among his books were:

- *The Baiga* (1939),
- *The Agaria* (1943) and
- *The Muria and their Ghotul* (1947)

Haimendorf was an Austrian ethnologist who spent nearly four decades in India. Among his books were:

- *The Chenchus: Jungle folk of Deccan (1943).*
- *The Raj Gonds of Adilabad: Myth and Ritual (1948)*
- *The Reddis of the Bison Hills: A Study of Acculturation (1945).*

In his studies he described extensively about the social and cultural life of these tribal communities and paid special attention to their problems and recommended welfare measures for tribal development. Renowned anthropologists and sociologists Morris Opher, Oscar Lewis and David Mandelbaum and their students came to India from America to study Indian society and culture. Many of these scholars did their fieldwork in Indian villages and tested their hypothesis on village studies. After gaining work experience in the above areas, many Indian and foreign anthropologists helped the government in planning economic development and social reconstruction of the country. The above classic ethnographic studies will provide models for future anthropologists. Learners must read the above ethnographies.

Activity

Name the tribes studied by Verrier Elwin.

15.4 WHAT IS ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH?

The word ethnography comes from Greek words *ethnos* meaning people and *graphein* meaning writing. That is why ethnography is also known as “culture writing”. In 1871, an anthropological definition of culture, for the first time, was given by Taylor in his famous book *Primitive Culture* which said, “Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Through this definition one can assume culture to be:

- a complex whole of everything
- everything to every people
- a way of life.

Culture can be either material or non-material. This means culture adds meaning to everyone, and different meaning to different people according to time and space in which they live.

Ethnographic research is discussed in detail in the field of anthropology, where it originated. Ethnographic study too has its own place in anthropology, in depicting a culture holistically, providing a descriptive account on a particular community.

In ethnographic research the researcher lives among the inhabitants with the purpose of understanding the culture that the people share. Sometimes ethnographic research takes years to be completed, to understand the culture of the community under study. In order to do so, ethnographers have to learn the local language for socializing with the inhabitants and understanding their daily habits, rituals, norms and actions.

Thus, ethnographic research is a qualitative research on a group of people and their behaviours and social interactions within their own, native environment. It involves studying people in context, mainly making observations rather than focusing on hard data and numbers. Ethnography is an analysis and systematic interpretation of a culture in the dimension of time and space.

In the 1930s, critical sociologists of the Chicago school introduced a new stream of ethnographic studies when they started to explore their own street corners just as if they were unknown places (Deegan, 2007). Currently, the field sites of ethnographic research can be anywhere, including familiar settings. Ethnographic research can take place in many types of communities including formal and informal organizations such as workplaces, urban communities, fan clubs, trade fairs, shopping centres, and social media. In addition, the research is often performed in the native language of the researcher.

The main aim of the ethnographers, however, remains about the same: to observe and analyze how people interact with each other and with their environment in order to understand their culture (Paivi Eriksson & Anne Kovalainen, 2008).

A classic example of ethnographic research would be an anthropologist traveling to an island, or tribal village, living within the society on the said island or tribal village for years, and researching its people and culture through a process of sustained observation and participation. Bronislaw Malinowski in his study of the Trobriand Islanders, acknowledged the magic rituals of the tribe, which they then used when fishing, leading him to study the entire social and economic aspects of the community. Malinowski also proposed the method of **fieldwork** which is the retrieving of data usually by first-hand observation in the social and cultural context which is being studied.

Ethnography is a further branch of Malinowski's idea of fieldwork, which is the account of a culture or community. Malinowski also stressed the interrelation of customs and that practicing field work or ethnography would lead one to examine the entirety of society. Malinowski is considered the "Father of Fieldwork" due to his in-depth description of how to properly go about participant-observation and ethnography in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*.

Radcliffe-Brown first started his anthropological fieldwork in the Andaman Islands in 1906. In 1922, he published his first book called *The Andaman Islanders*. Margaret Mead, perhaps the most famed ethnographer in history, did for her ethnography *Coming of Age in Samoa*, published in 1928.

Ethnographers seek to gain an emic perspective, or the 'native's point of view' of a specific culture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). This means that they try to look at the culture under study from the inside; through the meanings that the members of that culture live with. Therefore, ethnographers avoid imposing conceptual and theoretical frameworks on empirical data at the beginning of the research process (Paivi Eriksson & Anne Kovalainen, 2008).

Activity

Define ethnography.

15.5 HOW TO CONDUCT ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Ethnographic research is carried out in the real world. The field site is the place in which your research happens among a tribal community.

Preparation of Research Proposal

The research proposal is the first step for conducting ethnographic research. The research proposal should:

- clarify the conceptual framework
- contain a brief statement of the problem.

It should include the following:

- objectives,
- hypothesis (if any),
- universe of the study (overall milieu),
- sample size,
- proposed tools for data collection,
- data collection process,
- tabulation and statistical calculation and
- the proposed scheme of chapterization,
- limitations if any, and
- future direction for further research.

The steps involved in preparation of research proposal are:

- Selection of a topic of your interest

Select a topic of your own choice. The choice of topic should preferably be based on the theme or problem of subject matter. For example,

- Ethnographic profile of the of Bhils,
- Marriage Customs of Bhutia of Gond Tribe,
- Matriliney in Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya,
- Social Organization of Santhal Tribes of India,
- Food Habits of Toda Community,
- The Nagaland Hornbill Festival,
- Tribes of India and their Religious Practices,
- Ceremonies and Festivals of Munda Tribes,
- Dance and music of Konyak tribes,

- Cultural Heritage of Mizos,
- Folklore, Art and Craft of the Baiga Tribes
- Culture Change among Kona Reddi Tribes of India.

Generally anthropologists often find a topic to research by carrying out a *literature review*, or reading what others have already written about the subject to learn whether a gap in previous research exists.

- Introduction/Background: In this statement you clarify what it is that you are interested in studying.
- Statement of the research problem/hypothesis/research question/research design: This statement should briefly contain an analysis and relevance of the problem. This is the rationale for carrying out the study.
- Review of Literature: Existing literature is reviewed and gaps are brought out. Literature review provides a tentative solution to the problem. It also reflects upon the theory on which the study is supposed to be based. Literature review can be divided into two sub-components: theoretical review and review of previous studies.
- Objectives of the Study: This should state your intention for carrying out this research. Usually a topic contains three to four objectives. These objectives can be given in a serial form, pinpointing your approach. For example, you want to study “Ceremonies and Festivals of Tribes”. The related ceremonies and festivals of tribes are classified into two groups, one at the individual or family level, and another at the village level. The rites of birth, marriage and death are observed family-wise whereas the agriculture cycle, hunting, eating new fruits etc. are observed for the village as a whole.
- Research Methodology: This is considered the backbone of a research proposal. It is a plan to tackle the problem. It gives a clear picture of how the research will begin and how it will end. So the research methodology determines the quality of research results. It is divided into five sub-components:
 - study design
 - nature and sources of data
 - population and sample
 - data collection tools & techniques
 - method of analysis.
- Significance of the Study: In this section, clearly state the purpose of the study and explain the study’s significance. Discuss how the study adds to the theoretical body of knowledge in the field of the study.
- Tentative Chapterisation: Include all tentative chapter names and some details about them. This exercise will help you in completing your dissertation smoothly and in a systematic way.
- Bibliography/References: A full bibliography, covering all works cited in the main text.

Activity

List steps involved in preparation of research proposal.

15.6 FIELDWORK AND DATA COLLECTION

Preparation for the Fieldwork

To conduct ethnographic study preparation is required. If a fieldwork is to be successful, you must attend to a number of essential matters during this preparation period.

- Decide on the location or locations for the research.
- Take proper health precautions.
- Obtain all relevant immunizations, before leaving home.
- For research in a tribal area, a well-stocked medical kit and basic first-aid training are essential.
- Buying specialized equipment, such as a tent, warm clothing, waterproof clothing, and sturdy boots, depending on the field's location.
- Research equipment and supplies are another important aspect of preparation. For example, cameras, video recorders, tape recorders, and laptop computers are now basic field equipment you should carry to the field for recording data in the field itself.
- Maintain a field dairy and record data related to the topic assigned in a separate notebook.

Field Site Selection

A research field *site* is the place where the research takes place; sometimes a research involves more than one site. The research site depends upon the problem selected for study. The chosen problem may be concerned with a particular aspect of tribal community. Researchers are responsible for ensuring that participants have consented to being part of the study. Sometimes this may require the use of signed consent forms, but given that much of anthropological research relies on informal modes of communication, this may not be feasible. Nevertheless, it is essential that researchers ensure that participants understand the research and agree to participate. It is advisable that this is undertaken repeatedly rather than only once. If you are unfamiliar with the local language, try to learn their language before or in the field because it is very important to communicate with them.

Gaining Rapport

In the field many times participants withhold their support for the research, refuse to participate, or withdraw their consent at any time in the research process, and it is the researcher's duty to build rapport with the study population. Rapport is a relationship of trust between the researcher and the study population. In the early stages of research, the primary goal is to establish rapport with key leaders or decision makers in the community.

Data Collection

Once the researcher is at the selected research *site*, the next step is collection of primary data. Primary data is the first hand information collected by the researcher directly from the field. This is a very important part of your ethnographic research as this is the base of your whole “Ethnography”. You can collect primary data using appropriate data gathering tools and techniques and interaction with people. Among the tools and techniques at the fieldworker’s disposals are:

- observation,
- questionnaire,
- interviewing,
- participant observation,
- ethnographic mapping,
- census taking,
- document analysis,
- the collection of genealogies, and
- photography.

Questionnaire and interview are two important techniques adopted in anthropological ethnographic research. Different tools are used while using the techniques. Schedule is a tool to conduct interview or observation.

Questionnaire is considered as an important tool of data collection in field. It is a good instrument for obtaining information about socio-economic conditions and other personal life aspects of the community under study. Data collection in tribal areas using questionnaires becomes impossible when the respondents are non-literate or less-educated. In such situations, the researcher has to fill data using some other device. Schedule is one such device used by the researcher to fill in data in the presence of the respondent.

Ethnographic method, as discussed earlier, is essentially based upon field observation. It is one of the primary methods of obtaining data about the community under study. In ethnographic research, one of the most important and extensively used method is observation.

Observation as a method is not simply watching; it is watching with a purpose. Thus, observation is more than the bare act of observing. An anthropologist as an ethnographer observes individual and collective behaviour in real life settings.

In ethnographic research, as a researcher you can observe day-to-day life of the tribal group under study either by participating in it or without participating in it. For example you can observe the proceedings of Rai Sabha (a traditional council of the Gond tribe of Adilabad Telangana), and during the proceeding you may observe the following:

- The composition of the traditional council
- What people discuss, how they discuss, who are the people
- Facial expressions

- Language used, voice modulation
- Patterns of communication, behaviour
- Sitting pattern—is it as per status?
- Status symbol, if any
- Gender dimension.

When the researcher actively participates in the activities of the ethnographic study, it is known as participant observation. In complete participant observation, the researcher conceals his/her identity to keep the natural setting intact, without any kind of disturbance. While conducting ethnographic research you can actively participate in the agricultural activities or in festivals of the community under study.

The use of the participant-observation technique has the following methodological advantages:

- It increases rapport
- It allows the researcher to distinguish between real and normative behavior.

The use of participant-observation technique has the following methodological shortcomings:

- It is time-consuming,
- It poses problems of data comparability,
- It presents difficulties in recording data
- It may interfere with the very thing that is being studied.

Interview is a direct method of data collection. Interview is universally used for the study of human behavior. Interview means conversation with a purpose. Interviews can be categorized based on different criteria.

- On the basis of persons involved, there are Individual interviews and Group interviews.
- On the basis of nature of questions included, it could be classified as structured interview (Formal interview) and unstructured interview (Informal interview).

Ethnographic interviewing, which is useful for collecting both attitudinal and behavioral data, is of two basic types:

- unstructured interviews: interviewers ask open-ended questions and permit interviewees to respond at their own pace
- structured interviews: interviewers ask the same questions of all respondents, in the same order, and under the same set of social conditions.

An interview has a purpose: it seeks scientific information. It demands preplanning, a definite attitude and behaviour and the interviewer. When researchers conduct field research in cultures different from their own, they need to be personally flexible and should always expect the unexpected.

Like anyone else trying to operate in an unfamiliar cultural setting, researchers are susceptible to culture shock.

Framework for Tribal Ethnographic Study

- (a) Name, identity, origin and history of tribe
- (b) Distribution and tribal population trends
- (c) Tribal physical characteristics
- (d) Tribal family, clan, and other analogous divisions
- (e) Tribal dwelling, dress, food, ornaments, and other material objects distinctive of the community
- (f) Tribal environmental sanitation, hygienic habits, disease and treatment
- (g) Tribal language and literature
- (h) Tribal economic life
- (i) Life cycle of tribal culture
- (j) Tribal religion
- (k) Leisure, recreation and child play
- (l) Tribal relation between different segments of the community
- (m) Tribal inter-community relationship
- (n) Tribal structure of social control, prestige and leadership
- (o) Tribal social reform and welfare
- (p) References and bibliography.

Activity

Name the types of interviews.

15.7 DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORT WRITING

After the data is gathered, the next important step is analyzing the data. Various ways of analyzing data are used both in qualitative and quantitative methods (Henslin and Nelson, 1996).

- For quantitative data (which are mainly expressed in terms of numbers, percentages, rates to measure size, magnitude) researchers use sophisticated statistical techniques using computer models. Plans for data analysis are often made early, before the data is collected (Mann, 1976).
- For qualitative data (expressed in terms of descriptive statements; the depth, details and sensitive dimensions of information which are difficult to express in terms of numbers) researchers use field notes, tape recording and transcribing the interviews. Tape-recording the interview process and transcribing are the essential components of analysis (Jones 1995).

In analyzing the data, the anthropologist must distinguish between his own views and the views of the people being studied (Scupin and De Corse, 1995). Many possible

analytic schemes can be employed. Some computer models for analyzing qualitative data are also available.

The ethnographic research process is not complete until the results are reported in a written document (Rosenow and Rosenthal, 1996). The content of the research report differs according to the type of research. Research report writing in anthropology, as in all other sciences, follows a specified standard way of writing. The following structure is recommended:

Title of the Dissertation

- Table of Contents
- List of Tables and Photographs/Figures
- Acknowledgements
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Study Area and People
- Materials and Methods
- Data Analysis and Results (to be presented in chapters or sections or paragraphs)
- Discussion and conclusion
- References

Activity

Making use of the above steps try to undertake an ethnographic study in your surrounding areas on tribal culture.

15.8 SUMMARY

Tribal population is found in almost all parts of the world. India has the second largest concentration of tribal population in the world. Historically, the discipline of anthropology has been engaged in ethnographic study of tribal communities. Ethnographic method, essentially based on field work, is at the core of anthropological research of tribal communities. In ethnographic study a researcher has to collect reliable and accurate data systematically. In anthropological study different types of data are collected, such as primary data, secondary data, qualitative data and quantitative data. During ethnographic study a researcher collects primary data directly from the field. Different methods and techniques are used in anthropology while conducting ethnographic study, such as observation, questionnaire, interviewing, participant observation, ethnographic mapping, census taking, document analysis, the collection of genealogies, and photography. The steps in an ethnographic research include topic of the research, research problem, purpose of the research, review of literature, significance of the research, objectives of study, methods of data collection, data analysis, interpretation of data, report writing and preparation of reference list.

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SAMPLE QUESTIONS

- 1) Discuss the steps in preparation of research proposal.
- 2) How does participant observation help in research?
- 3) What is ethnographic research?
- 4) Discuss types of tools and techniques in anthropological research.
- 5) What is data analysis?

SUGGESTED READING

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