

Review of: "Is Fieldwork losing its grace? Encountering Western and Indian Experience"

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Good and concise article on a topic which is often raised today. During every conference we encounter articles which raise the question of methodology. Sociologists and political scientists and ecologists are finding this methodology helpful to them, while some young anthropologists are looking for short cuts not to need to spend so much time in the field. The Covid period made this topic more pronounced as it would be unwise to travel and stay with other people and then travel again and return to one's home. Meanwhile social media and possibility of long and repeated interviews through phones is replacing displacement. Do these justify the hallmark of anthropology, its uniqueness and its contribution to all human and social sciences, to fade?

The justifications mentioned in this article could have mentioned 1960's and 70's when different countries in Africa, South America and Asia gained independence and they would no longer allow anthropologists to do research in their countries, and the search of anthropologists for new grounds for research, and the beginning of urban anthropology and other branches of cultural anthropology.

As anthropologists in various countries engaged in this field with its methodology, they came up with various problems. For India the author mentions "fieldwork" as having become a "ritual obligation," (p.5), or "postgraduate-level fieldwork in most Indian universities lasts on average, for 12 to 15 hours", and the fund for doing long-term research having become difficult to find, (p.6), or "the instances where more than one fieldworker interacts with one or more respondent (s)". The question which should be studied today with world anthropologies, is should such problems be solved at area or nation level, or could one policy or methodology be applied world-wide? Perhaps in certain locations a new field is born and therefore another name or a hyphenated named should be given to it. Many countries do not like to have anthropologists study the areas where modernization measures of their countries have been disastrous, and in order to prevent the presence of such scientists in the field, official permits are demanded of anthropologists to make fieldwork more difficult.

How would these situations affect anthropology as a field with its definition? This is a topic which will be definitely discussed more and more before a definite answer could be found to it.