

## BOOK REVIEWS

**PUBLIC ANTHROPOLOGY IN A BORDERLESS WORLD** by Sam Beck and Carl A. Maida (eds). Berghahn Books, (2015) New York: [ISBN: 9781782387305(HB)], pp. 412. Price INR 6179.

The book examines how engagement of public is transforming the discipline of anthropology and its practitioners to contemplate on the traditional researcher's subject relation into using of new techniques for conducting, communicating and applying research to everyday life of communities and public. Public Anthropology acts as a fertile ground for anthropological explorations with special reference to transformative change at the individual, group and societal levels. It engages people using grounded theories in their lived experience and placing empirical knowledge in deeper historical and comparative frameworks.

The book makes a departure from the study of the traditional kinds of anthropological universe by examining the role of Public Anthropology in unconventional places like museum, urban places in California, Philadelphia and Mexico especially using the participatory approach to collect, analyse and represent the study results. The book is divided into thirteen chapters. The first three chapters elucidate the construction of public knowledge and bridging communities through Participatory Action Research (PAR). Use of this method results in identification of social and structural factors that lead to disparities and injustices in the society. Further it directs the change to rethink, innovate and experiment with PAR strategies in a museum set up. The museum was incorporated with multimedia strategies which were integrated into PAR methods to create pathways to empower community. It explores how professionals and common people knowledge works together in improving urban quality of life in the city of Pacoima in California state. Professionals along with local residents were aware and showed concern on degradation of environment because of exposure of toxic substances in an adjacent area.

The fourth and fifth chapters offer practical insights to the manner in which social process affects value choices related with political decisions. Participant observation delineates the various complications of the action process. The radical politics is distinguished that of reformist politics on the basis of systemic quality of injustice and availing opportunities for change. The author moves forward from initial dichotomy to examine several aspects of the social and political process of engagement within the reformist frame. The purpose of fifth chapter is to contribute to the further development of a socially conscious anthropology guided by critical social theory that engages contemporary human problems.

The sixth and seventh chapters acknowledge recent transformations of researcher's relation with the subjects. During such transformation the subjects become consultants and collaborators during the research process. The Author of the book shares his experience of working in a project where he intends to use his experience of data collection, analysis and communication to different public in Philadelphia to examine how power relations affected different audiences in taking up research results.

The subsequent chapter narrates the story of a Public Anthropology research project on dialogue and civil society in Guadalajara. It offers an account of the underlying tension between an academic project and activists expectations regarding its analysis and proposals.

New kind of activists that has gained ground in Mexican public life over the last few years are middle class, university educated, well travelled professionals. In recent years academic anthropologists have mostly forgone the core problems of the discipline . Meantime vigorous skillful popularization in public engagement has given neoliberal , xenophobic, and reductionist views of humanity.

The storyline of chapter ten is concerned with controversies about human nature. Author envision Public Anthropology that might have been successful , given the appropriate toolbox and a collective memory mindful of why anthropology mattered in the first place. In the next chapter author draws on these discussions and understandings of a Public Anthropology to address what role images and the domain of the visual could have. It is noteworthy that debates about the contours, definitions and examples of a Public Anthropology have focussed primarily on the text. contributing to advocate for a more public presence of anthropologists.

In the chapters eleven and twelve authors explore the nature of modern graffiti art in relation to the larger context in which it appeared and developed . The author asserts that graffiti should not be understood in terms of objectification as markings on a space in public view but as a process through which identity is claimed and the forces that produce it are revealed.

The last chapter documents a project on an apartment complex for improving living conditions in United Nation habitat parlance as a slum upgrading facility. It was designed to mobilise domestic capital for urban upgrading activities by facilitating links among local actors , financial institutions and potential investors in the global capital markets with the specific intent of leveraging further domestic capital for slum upgrading .

The book offers scope for understanding Public Anthropology in future studies by engaging people in their lived experience and placing their empirical knowledge in deeper historical and comparative frameworks.

Research Scholar  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Delhi, Delhi

**Richa Joshi**

**ANTHROPOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY by Gardner, Katy and David Lewis. Pluto Press, (2015), London.**

Anthropological engagement with development, in theory and practice, continues to be incessantly contentious yet inexorably fascinating. Gardner and Lewis's *Anthropology and Development* is a rescript of their quondam book *Anthropology, Development and the Post-Modern Challenge* published in 1996 of which barely a quarter of the original text has been retained after minor editing while the rest has been substantially rewritten adding up-to-date accounts of what has happened thenceforth. The authors not only animadvert the prevailing premises and approaches to development but also try to offer ingenious alternatives based on true polyvocality and options entrenched in reality rather than simply in palaver.

The chapters have been disserved based on the distinction between anthropology *of* development and anthropology *in* development. Divided into two parts, the first chapter introduces the historical and theoretical underpinnings of development. The former section deals with period

up to 1996 providing an overview of history and meaning of development during colonial and postcolonial era, 'aid industry', the acclivity and declivity of theories of development and the subsequent emergence of post-modernity characterized by polyvocality. The latter section explores the trajectory of development over past two decades depicting the rise of global inequalities, dramatic changes in aid industry and the new forms of capitalist penetration, transformation and resistance in developing countries. Finally the chapter reflects on how anthropologists engaged with development, both academically as well as practically, have dealt with challenges of development, thereby, strengthening the discipline.

The second chapter presents a comprehensive account of applied anthropology beginning with the historical overview of the evolution of applied anthropology before moving on to the roles taken up by anthropologists in the field of development such as assisting development agencies in projects and advocacy of planners on behalf of voiceless disadvantaged groups. Authors discuss the predicaments of applied work subjecting applied anthropologists to censure by their academic peers on the basis of quality, objectivity, ethical integrity and opportunism. The section on engaged anthropology in the twenty-first century examines three components: public anthropology, activist research and protest anthropology. Lastly, authors questions the distinction between 'pure' and 'applied' anthropology and accentuate the need for dissolving the boundaries to transcend the dichotomous way of thinking.

The next chapter explores the establishment of anthropology of development where the first part relies largely on the erstwhile review of the field in 1996 book and the second part presents an updated account of thriving relationship between anthropology and development. The views from 1996 revolve around three themes: the social and cultural effects of economic change, the social and cultural effects of development project (and why they fail) and, the internal workings and discourses of the 'aid industry'. From 2000 onwards, the research areas in anthropology of development focussed on two interlinked dimensions. The first one approaches the development as a discursive field where the aid industry and its projects are deconstructed and analysed by ethnographies or anti-politics machine and Aidnographies of Aidland. The second dimension emphasizes on economic and social transformations and the ways in which the world is changing in terms of morality, belief, ethical business moral markets and accumulation by dispossession and activist anthropology.

The subsequent chapters have been presented largely in their original version as outlined in the 1996 edition of the book. The fourth chapter employs a critical analysis of three core questions of access, effects and control that have contributed to changes in policy and practice. Concurrently, authors avow that while anthropological perspectives are invaluable in development interventions; anthropology has also been enriched by the study of development. Unlike external planners, anthropologists are aware of the heterogeneity and inequalities in communities that result in differential access to resources and decision-making power. Questions pertaining to social and cultural effects of development are often ignored by the planners lacking anthropological insight. Lack of control of communities over their own resources and agendas fortify the dependency on external funds and staff.

In the last chapter, authors muse on fate of the ideas considered innovative two decades back, revealing some of the ways in which these ideas have spun free from their radical roots and been co-opted by the dominant discourse. The chapter describes the rise and fall of politicised development shining light on how the three key elements i.e. gender and development, empowerment and participation have lost their radical bite. Nevertheless, the authors insist that all is not lost and despite co-option the basic concepts of access, effects and control remain

wholly relevant, in fact, more significant than ever. Although these ideas have been co-opted and neutralized in some quarters, their potential for progressive change in other contexts is no less. Subsequently, the authors illustrate with examples the continued role of academic and applied anthropology in forming new ways of working within development.

The concluding chapter contends that Anthropology has much to say about new forms of development and about transcending development altogether as authors advocate for anthropology of engagement in which questions of access, effects and control are foregrounded. Tackling the question of role of anthropologists in the world we work in, the authors aver that both anthropology in critique and anthropology in action have significant role within the discipline and are mutually beneficial. Finally, the chapter excogitates on the twenty-first century challenges for the anthropology of development that are: first, to document and explain continuing an deepening inequalities at all scales; second, to identify, analyse and challenge the anti-politics of development; third, to challenge normative frameworks and; last, to describe alternative ways of seeing and doing.

This book, in essence, is a laudable attempt to move the development debate forward in a manner that can meaningfully engage students, teachers, researchers and practitioners by familiarizing the readers with knowledge of histories, approaches, quandaries and challenges that have underpinned the anthropological engagement with development in theory and practice. The authors have efficaciously accomplished what they set out to do, that is, provide an account of in-depth historical account of anthropology *of* development and anthropology *in* development while accentuating, contemporaneously, the pressing need for engaged anthropology. Coherently written, this textbook seems promising to benefit anthropologists, sociologists, development workers, policy makers and various agencies of development. Equipped with a comprehensive glossary of development and anthropological patois, systematically compiled endnotes, exhaustive bibliography and a detailed index, it would be a valuable asset for the libraries across various disciplines.

Research Scholar  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Delhi

**Chitra Kadam**