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CTD: o2AM - APPROACHES, METHODS, AND METHODOLOGIES

SUB-DOMAIN: METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND NEW APPROACHES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

PANEL TITLE:

THE FUTURE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Contemplating over the progress of anthropology over the last one century, one finds that the role of anthropologists has been criticized more often than appreciated. The relationship between the anthropologist and the people they study have undergone several transformations. All possible cautions have been taken to see that the voice of the people being studied reaches wider sections of the society. Enough spaces have been provided to see the coming up of 'auto-anthropology' or 'native' anthropologists articulations in the public domain. The most important thing that happened, among others, is integrating anthropology as a practice to the questions of public sphere, power, domination, and discrimination (see Moore 1999). Ethical dilemmas and moral possibilities have crept into the very discourse and practice of the discipline. The results have been diverse. There has been a retreat not only from static theory, but even from the project of archetypal anthropology itself (Moore 1997). Nonetheless, at the turn of the millennium, there are several calls for rethinking and renewal of theories and theorizing, methods, and practices, and self and subjectivity (Giri 2005). With postmodern perspective, anthropologists in India and elsewhere do not aim to radically transform the discipline of anthropology, but to strengthen and empower the discipline, sharpen its research tools. This would help modulate anthropologists to have conversations with people in private and public arenas. It furthers production of knowledge sans ethnocultural biases, critiquing one's own work, empathising with others' pain. Anthropological enterprise is now focused on bringing voices of voiceless in public discourse and even possibly passing the mic to the "voiceless" and hearing them out. And, therefore, are we the anthropologists in the process of internalising, and possibly materialising, what Ruth Benedict once said, "the purpose of anthropology is to make the world safe for human differences?"

Keywords: Future of anthropology, Anthropological knowledge, Theories, and methods

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