

Understanding Ethnography
Lecture - 6
Conclusion

These were some very interesting examples of ethnographic research being applied to different kinds of questions and a variety of projects. And each of our contributors used different ways to engage with their participants. Professor Athwankar, Amaya, and Prasad used visual tools and interactive games. Professor Anirudh Joshi used the ethnographic approach in combination with user research methods that designers are familiar with. Professor Sahana Murthy showed us how ethnography can help us understand some of the most complex processes of human life, such as learning and problem-solving.

And Professor Alka Hingorani took us a step further into the space of collaboration and participation. From her, we learnt how ethnography can encourage and enable participatory design. There are so many ways in which the ethnographic method is interpreted and applied. For researchers, understanding of phenomena is the primary goal; and for people from disciplines such as design, engineering, or management, research is a way to inform the products and services they create for the other.

Regardless of the goals of our research, what remains important is our approach and the ethics of our engagements. We must at all times, respect the context of the other, and learn to listen to them. We must be reflexive about our processes and about our location in the research. As we do so, we may learn as much about ourselves as we do about the other. And that is one of the most powerful outcomes of ethnographic engagements, to recognise the similarities between ourselves and those we think of as the other.

As the journey of our course ends, your journey of ethnography begins. It is a journey of engaging with the unfamiliar and to see the familiar in a different light; of finding new ways to engage with your projects, your participants, and their worlds; it is a journey of ethnographic engagements. Thank you. Bon voyage and good luck