



## Department of Anthropology University of Delhi

# REPORT

International Online workshop

# DIGITAL CHILDREN

**LEARNING CURVES, ACCESSIBILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH**

12-13 November 2021

2-5 PM | Zoom



CONVENOR  
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Professor & Head of the Department

ORGANIZING SECRETARY  
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Alison Kahn

### **Panel Discussion**

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### **Film presenters**

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## Introduction to the workshop

Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi organized a two-day international workshop on 'Digital Children: Learning curves, accessibility, and mental health' in its celebration of completing 75 glorious years of the department on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2021. In her opening remarks, the organizing secretary Dr. Avitoli G Zhimo reminded that anthropology is committed to the idea that culture is not inherited but learned, and children do a good deal of cultural learning. Till the 1990s there was not much effort made to treat children's lives as a topic of interest in itself, and within anthropology, ethnography among children remains almost unknown. Could there be an obvious link between children and women? Have the children suffered the same systematic exclusion from the anthropological gaze as their mothers? It is imperative that the emerging anthropology of children and childhood must take into account the rights of children as set forth in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The UNCRC includes three interlocking principles: protection, provision, and participation. Protection of children from harm and provision of needed resources, have resonated with international agencies and children's rights groups, but are they consistent across the world? The third principle, participation, has stirred a research and policy agenda that includes children's views and perspectives. For inclusive view of culture and society, the Studies of children and childhoods are the next logical steps. Rather than privileging children's voices above all others, it is more productive to integrate children into a more multivocal, multiperspective view of culture and society.



The workshop consisted interdisciplinary audience and it was attended by students, researchers, and faculty members from more than 40 colleges, institutes, Universities, deemed Universities, and IIMs. The resource person for this workshop was visual Anthropologist **Dr. Alison Kahn** who is a director of a research think tank at SDS-Heritage and a visiting fellow in digital learning systems at Loughborough University, England. The workshop included special lectures, panel discussions, paper presentations, and film screening.



The workshop was graced by honourable Pro Vice-Chancellor of University of Delhi and former Head of the Department Prof. P.C. Joshi, who briefly talked about few initiatives in India that addressed issues of children. He also mentioned the department's collaboration with UNICEF to tackle malnutrition among tribal children and many relevant issues.

### Session 1: Digital education and ethnographic Methods

Dr. Alison Kahn commenced her talk by explaining the importance of digital anthropology in research. She put forward two proposals. One was to introduce ethnographic method as a resource of education for teachers in digital education and the second was to introduce ethnographic film making as a collaborative method to gain insight and perspective on children's lives and as an essential digital skill. She put forth this question "Are children happy?" after coming in contact with many unhappy adult students during her University teaching days. She also talked about the digital learning of children during the pandemic. She added that children are learning digital skills like typing quickly, playing games, etc. but where is this digital learning heading to? The online learning worked for few children who do not like distraction during classes, but it was only good if they have access to the resources or device. Kahn also emphasized on learning without technology because some things cannot be experienced with technology.

According to her observation, during the pandemic, children were learning online where they had no affirmation of any thought. They were not able to read anybody else's body language, they were not learning any social skills while they were learning knowledge. The need to have emotional backup along with digital learning was stressed. The need to combine the conceptual world with the social world was stressed too. Children face difficulty in social situations after the pandemic- not able to interact properly with the people, feeling of anxiety about going out again. In the 21st century, it's not just parents or teachers who are imparting knowledge but computers and media too. Kahn deliberated on the need to have Anthropology in Education. The session ended with a quote given by **Richard Buckminster Fuller** "*If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking.*"

### Session 2: Panel discussion 'voices from the field'

Abstract: The session, Panel Discussion on "Voices from the field" was chaired by **Dr Chakraverti Mahajan**, Assistant Professor in Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi. He extended a warm welcome, inviting the speakers Dr Suniti Yadav, Harmeet Kaur, Neha Yadav and Janees Lanker to present their respective excerpts from the field on children mental health, as well as digital accessibility.



**Dr Suniti Yadav** is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology, University of

Delhi. Her pursuance of *“Culturally adapted risk assessment tools for developmental delays: providing equity through digital means in India”* has been developed with improvisations as per the cultural setting of India rather than the conventional Western Diagnostic



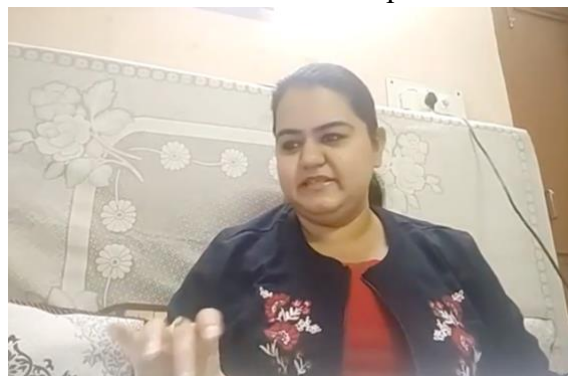
measures. The need for assessment of autism spectrum disorder should be tended from a very young age if possible, however, in India, the scenario is different with delays in health awareness assessment. Owing to other factors like cultural diversity, language barrier leading to issues with interpretation and cultural perception of behaviour the currently available tools that are not child friendly are based on the latest DSM-V criteria. Considering that visual development is before mobile development, a combination both in the context of visuals and sensory sensitivity is required in the Indian context. AUTEST is a culturally adapted risk assessment game for autism spectrum disorder developed under the Department of science and technology, GOI initiative in PPP mode. The current challenges with autistic spectrum disorder tools are more culture centred and lack of interactive methods. There is also the requirement of trained professionals in clinical settings to accommodate quick solutions. The developmental delays could further be better evaluated with efficient functional tools for risk assessment of ASD. Now with digitalisation, the coverage for early risk assessment among children has better opportunities than before. In India, with one among 100 children affected with ASD, the need for a home-based pre-diagnostic tool is more imminent. An audiovisual game app that country and people can administer is practical and capable of streaming children in natural environments such as school-home et cetera and tracking this periodical. For early evidence-based ASD screening, using psychological markers could get better results by reducing the intervention age, improving communication and language ability. To develop this audiovisual game application, more than 60 children literature is being covered across all zones among the 22 scheduled languages of India. To embed this literature into the audiovisual application for story corrected on eight attributes based on graphics, emotions, social relationships, culture complex. Folk tales like Panchtantra, Tenali Raman were chosen based on geographical and cultural preferences among the children. The early childhood acquaintance with the stories of animals, nature and moral empathy has better acceptance among children of geographical diversity than a generalised cross-cultural clinical tool. Testing and validation have been done based on professional reviews and test runs conducted in the domains of autism diagnosis. ISAA (Indian Scale for Assessment of Autism) scorecards variables have been tested with the discourse in four categories as in emoji is unwanted clicks, response delay, Observer questionnaire. The test results came with high accuracy, 91.67% consistent with existing tools, specificity of a hundred per cent positive predictive value of a hundred per cent and negative predictive value of 93.75%. The concordance rate between AUTEST and expert diagnosis for



the ASD group was 93.34% in the trial run of East and North India. While Panchatantra was the storyline for the North India trial, Tenali Raman is in pipeline for the storyline content of the South India control group. Using this calibre game app can help encourage early intervention as it gives more importance to the societal impact of the tools cultural adaptation and acceptability while also maintaining affordability as well as accessibility in the absence of trained professionals at the grassroots level. Dr Suniti concluded with the future scope of the application where expensive choices based on diverse storylines could be eventually incorporated. And with the inclusion of additional feedback from a diverse set of individuals working with ASD, a more culturally appropriate ASD intervention framework can be organised from the level of community health workers. This could further be incorporated into the ladder structure of primary and tertiary healthcare (ASHA and Anganwadi), through early formal education where behavioural intervention and support continues. She ended on the note that, the convergence of technology and culturally adapted tools would pave the way for an efficient solution to the screening of ASD in India.

**Dr Chakraverti Mahajan** thanked Suniti for presenting this remarkable work, screening autism using culturally adapted tools. Citing Dr Subhangi Vaidya's work, he says there is the need of answering a lot of tough questions like what happens to an autistic child without a parent, how do they bond within the family and socialise outside. He also expressed the importance of child and emotions, in the form of family bonding and social relationships from a very early age and with adequate interventions better management of mental health could be attained.

The second speaker **Harmeet Kaur** is a PhD research scholar in the Department of Anthropology, the University of Delhi working under the supervision of Dr Avitoli G. Zhimo. Her topic of interest: "*Education And Migrant Children: a journey pre and post-lockdown*" sheds light on the narratives from the field as documented during her fieldwork in Delhi. She studied the Meghwal community, who have migrated from Rajasthan to Delhi for better economic opportunities. She also observed that apart from job opportunities, the migrant population were also considerate towards the formal educational opportunities in Delhi. A typical day in the school of these children starts with morning assembly followed by marching to the classes with high morale after singing the national anthem. On a typical day before lockdown, a day of learning used to be combined with several co-curricular activities, sports, arts, music has changed in practice in the post lockdown scenario. Harmeet shared accounts of teachers, parents as well as the children who had to deal with a lot of moving parts in formal education among the migrants, with the onset of lockdown. From her observation, she founded earlier who migrated to the very availability of economic and educational opportunities, had to move back to Rajasthan to survive during this world crisis. They not only received withdrawal certificates from here, but many planned on staying back for a feasible solution to the uncertain prolonged duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. The wake of a digital boom as an educational platform came with its pros and cons. The first



requirement that was felt everywhere was very crucial for an economically backward family, that is to get a smartphone. Not everyone was able to afford the time and personally for all the learning members within the family. Another shared narrative was of a domestic helper who migrated back to Rajasthan saying that earlier **a child** could understand by learning from the school only, however, the added burden of tuition fees was not practical for her. The teachers also said that although their classes were being held in Google meet, the attendance was very thin owing to several factors in the primary being the digital space allowed the freedom to adhere by disciplinary rules. Some also said that the children used to adjust their Internet data before the classes and some simply didn't pay much attention because the students knew that before standard eight, they are mandated to pass. Post lockdown, the speaker shares that things are looking up as more children are returning to school, yet the teacher is still concerned about the growing use of smartphones among the children. There have been noticed disparity, access that is discriminatory among the children as well as the status of the type of educational institution. For example, Harmeet shared that the parents preferred giving the smartphone to the elder child or the one in private school when both required to use the equipment at the same time. According to them, the elder child in the higher class usually had more importance, so does the one in private school and also the male sibling as compared to the female particularly during this post lockdown phase. The speaker ended her note by sharing pictures from the field, presenting a wide array of co-curricular activities, celebrations and candid socialisation during a day of learning school, pre-lockdown and post lockdown. From her absorbed experience in the field, she concluded that post lockdown education was not the most favourable part for children, especially those social economically backward and migrant populations. Even many new students started directly learning online, without being introduced to learning and very specifically, "face to face learning" which is deep-rooted in Indian formal education for ages.

**Dr Chakraverti Mahajan** thanked Harmeet for sharing her voices from the field and making it relatable to getting used to technology. He also emphasized that endowed values and classroom behaviour that comes from the teacher-student learning experience is slowly replaced by the digital greeting and virtual world where everyone is so close yet so distant. He also highlighted that school is usually the first place, to begin with, social etiquette, moral values and social bonding, the lack of these within this pandemic has also shown that the upcoming generation is not naturally picking up and had to be introduced personally by the family, relatives and elders separately.

The next speaker **Neha Tiwari** is a PhD scholar in the Department of anthropology, the University of Delhi who has worked extensively on problems of education in slums of Nand Nagri Delhi under the supervision of Dr M Kennedy Singh. Education, considered one of the primary goals of "Millenium Development Goals" is made free and mandatory in India to reach 100 per cent literacy. Her paper tries to answer the challenges faced by slum children in attaining formal primary education in the Nand-Nagri pre and post COVID scenario. She adheres to the United Nation's and Delhi Govt's operational definition of the slum to choose her fieldwork area using a random sampling method among the other present criteria. She opens the need for education in slum areas, citing that formal education is one of the most viable ways of attaining prosperity and social-economic development by people deprived, marginalised as well as financially backward. Hence, formal education is one of the most recognised ways of

accessing opportunities in the financial and economic sector in an optimal way rather than attaining specialized skills, which has also the requisite of a certificate or degree from an institution of formal education. The government policies are directed in providing formal education accessible to all and affordable from the primary level, these public schools are more preferred by those of slum dwellers rather than the private schools. Education acts as a great tool of equalizer providing opportunities, accessibility, social mobility among the community for overall development. Even in a metro city like Delhi, people especially those in the slums are deprived of financial support to aspiring their dreams, complete their education or even fulfil their monthly basic needs. The exposure from the city, surrounded by all the opportunities in the capital of the country, the slum paints a whole new picture that changes the perspective towards formal education in the very heart of the country. In the above-mentioned slum, many government institutions of formal education are either male or female student-specific or co-educational. These institutions are looked upon by the students as their only means of attaining formal education to achieve prosperity in life. Among the many government initiatives, up till primary school textbooks are provided free of cost and mid-day meal is provided as well to address a nutritious healthy diet among the growing children motivating school attendance. There are also provisions of providing aids to minorities, for their economic welfare. These initiatives were more visible in the pre-COVID era, while later the urgent redressal came for training the teachers to conduct online teaching classes. This was followed by space accessibility by the slum children, who were limited to not to spacious and private rooms, and had to share a common room hindering their learning and education. The smartphone gadget, which was the only link to school and digital education was not properly available in the slum, considering the restraints although the government failed at providing it to all even with a collaborative effort of many NGOs. Many NGOs thus tried to reach out to the slums to bring education to their doorstep. The added woes to loss of parents and earning members of the family succumbing to deaths during COVID was at times much worse on children everywhere. Ms Neha also observed that many of the children aged 3 to 14 years were hit hard with losses, desperate conditions to cope up with, some could even begin their schooling and some who have to change their focus from education to meeting basic needs. The teachers had to face language barriers, with some children coming from as far as Nepal and Bangladesh, with the lack of communication it was even tougher for the teacher to help them understand. The parents also have their share of problems, beginning with all hands-on work to provide for the family and make both ends meet during the pandemic crisis. There are also disturbing events with more people staying at home and in many cases the male member causing the disturbance in the family. With more than one child in the house, usually, the elder one is said to look after the younger ones improvising on the responsibilities and adapting to micro changes during the post lockdown phase. She also noticed that the younger child had less access to a smartphone than their elder siblings, and owing to financial constraints other than sharing there was no long-term solution. Ms Neha concluded with the note that formal education has suffered and worsened post-covid. With more parents reluctant to send children, the dropout percentage has spiked. Online education is not feasible as tested and tried in this past, owing to lack of resources the worst hit will be those financially backward. Further lack of education will lead to further expansion of poverty and slum areas as well!



The final presentation of this panel is by **Janees Lanker**, who shares her brilliant fieldwork experience from Ze-Mnui titled “Not a Child’s play” led by Dr Avitoli G Zhimo as a part of M.Sc fieldwork of twenty days. This paper unravels a day spent through the eyes of Zeme children exploring the child in childhood and



approaching research focus “with” the children rather than “on” them. Situated in the Purvanchal, a nature’s gateway, the Ze-Mnui village is located on a cliff in Manipur, North East of India. Her paper challenges the classical construction of childhood, by locating self-indulgence within the researcher as well as among the participant children. The primary objective of the paper lies in tracing child, childhood and socialisation among the Zeme children while advocating an approach to children studies within academia that prioritises children as active participants/social actors, rather than mere subjects. This raises several questions on how children interact with their social and physical surroundings! With her paper, she chose the responsibilities of a child endowed with joy and play, striking a balance between the careful and carefree life of the children which could easily baffle an adult imparting their wisdom. Sharing audiovisual clips from her fieldwork, with roosters crowing and playful smiling faces from a farfetched distant glance spreads on the screen. This was the time of winter break and the time being playful for children to socialize. For her the welcome was both fascinating a warm, considering herself as an outsider for them. Ms Janees then speaks of her key informant, a little child, who drapes her younger sibling and yet plays with others as well striking such a beautiful balance in what she enjoys truly, one can not differentiate each from the other! While observing the children, she felt the very same where these children were very much active researchers themselves, with vivid curiosity and making her feel a participant who is welcome amongst them. Ze-Mnui had a very composed balance of education, with formal training in Christian Missionary schools and informal education in their respective tribal dormitories in the village. The role of responsibility was fascinating by Janees to be observed, as she witnessed the elder sibling taking care of the younger without compromising the joy and fun of both! This engagement as highlighted by the speaker was a common sight in the village, where the conditioned social factor didn’t interfere with the fun part of a child’s life. Some of her participants drew for her and made cards as a token of expressing their affection towards Ms Janees with creative ideas of their own. Janees points out that in an urban setup, while imaginary scenarios are given before starting with an idea of nature, there the reality is nature. They were recreating more from their sensorial experiences. Ms Janees shared a self-recorded video created by a child from the field, bonding over watching over a Korean drama. The children with the researcher’s camera wanted to show how the village looked as they saw, the

fortress and the surrounding, the mesmerizing beauty that was priceless for the children. Ms Janees summarized that by debunking the colonial myths of tribal terminology, these people are not as such away from technology, civilization and the globalized world! The most remarkable feature yet is having interacted and having learnt about things around, they choose to still stay rooted in their culture while steering through the contemporary modern world improvising along with technological advancement and development without shunting another completely, a perfect sustainable adaptation. For Janees, this revealing experience was a whole new window to explore the power dynamics between a researcher and/or children “(who are experiencing childhood while growing to be adults!)”. There was a fluid observance of role distribution among the children, transforming their roles while improvising with balance and acceptance in their daily life of a sensible responsible joy-filled social actor.

### **Session 3: Digital education: screening of Navyasara Jaiswal’s film on lockdown education in Delhi**

It was a 30-minute documentary made and narrated by a young lady, **Navyasara Jaiswal**. The documentary gave an insight into digital education and highlighted the worsening educational challenges faced by the students, parents, and teachers due to the ongoing covid crisis. This ethnographic filming was



based on a case study of two siblings studying in a Delhi school. It beautifully showed how covid classroom looks like, unconventional classroom unlike what we generally witnessed as a classroom in normal days, digitalization of education, unconventional digital learning and many more. It showed us the perspective of children and their parents about the digitalization of education, challenges faced by students in the learning process, how children tried to adapt to a new system of learning, intricacies of digital education, the role of parents, and gender disparity. The maker nicely narrated the new experience of the covid classroom, the impact of covid on education, and various aspects of digital education. After the documentary filming, Navyasara gave a brief about the document's theme. One of the main reasons she made the film was because she wanted to provide a visual impact of the current educational situation and grasp more audience so as aware public, government, etc., to trigger a change.

### **Session 4: Digital education in the age of Distraction**

The second day of the workshop was quite engaging and interactive. Dr Kahn reflected on the discussion held on the first day of the workshop. She started her lecture with a question that how we as anthropologists can contribute to the learning at the level of school. She appreciated the information coming out from PowerPoint presentations, discussions, and brainstorming sessions. She also reflected on the events of the first day at the workshop which talked mostly on anthropology and education. She put light on the kind of works that have been done by anthropologists on education. through her interesting PowerPoint presentations, she discussed how can ethnography help in improving the education systems across cultures? Emphasizing the need for an upgrade in methodology, she said If we refine a method, we can use it further and intrigue the way we think about culture and help children growing up and understand all the diverse ways in which children and children's culture manifest themselves. She pointed the technological gap in education where many children have not got access to the digital culture of education. Talking about the contact zones of museums and other interactive places as a negotiable space, as a collaborative space, she pointed out how these spaces have been lost in digital learning. Showing concern to the learnings in the digital world, she said with the digital revolution we have thrown a lot and lot of information on the children, but we don't know what they have learned out of all the knowledge. Many of the exams in the past couple of years have been in a not-so-old kind of order and when we are going into a new order, we are going to have to adapt to this new on and offline. She raised some fundamental questions on education, i.e., How are we going to translate the culture they are going to learn in the digital world, is a significant area of study. She said that the major difficulty in understanding the whole issue is that we haven't gone through these problems. We are not the products of digital learning. We do not know what exactly are the challenges a child can face during a digital class or digital learning. Dr Kahn also discussed the different aspects of the idea of blended learning and holistic learning.



After this, Dr Kahn introduced the audience of the session with eminent educationist Dr Ashish Jaiswal, a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (OxCHEPS) and a best-selling author of three books. He is an internationally renowned scholar on principles and methods and philosophies of education. She invited Dr Jaiswal to talk about his ideas on education and its challenges in the digital world of knowledge. Ashish, who is the founder of a community platform iHER (India for Higher Education Reforms) keeps eye on the issues related to education in India. Dr Kahn welcomed Dr Jaiswal and thanked him for being ready to be available for the workshop.

Challenging Dr Jaiswal in his profession, Dr Kahn began the session by putting a wider question to discuss- have the educators lost their edge? Dr Jaiswal thanked Dr Kahn for inviting him and started his discussion by wishing good morning to those in the UK and a good afternoon to everyone attending the workshop from India. Beginning with the question put by Dr Kahn, Dr Jaiswal said that the question is not whether the educationist has lost their edge, instead, it is sought how did they lose their edge? According to Dr Jaiswal, most educators are genuinely interested in teaching and imparting learning and, they want to keep on learning themselves. Teaching is a very thankless profession and covid has shown us that with children at home we can understand how crazy it can get. He said there are great teachers with good intentions out there and teaching is a very noble job. He further highlighted the role of various agencies which are responsible for this. Talking about the various aspect ranging from institutional inertia and intention which goes beyond the intention of the individual teacher to the increasing role of the Edutech companies' which have emerged in the education sector in the past few decades, and the kind of agendas being pushed upon, redundant pedagogies and the capitalist framework, Dr Jaiswal said that it is the system that should be blamed because at the end of the day by and large the whole education is dependent on the system. He also emphasized that, unlike the past times, there is so much happening every day as we all have seen in the last 30 -40 years. Things have never changed so drastic and so fast perhaps during the times of Plato and Aristotle also which was such an active and dynamic time. Eventually, educators also have various schools of philosophies and they do have some fundamental notions but same time, according to Dr Jaiswal, so much happening that as an educator it is difficult and challenging for us to keep pace with the knowledge stream as well as the pedagogical changes which are required.

Discussing the increasing role of artificial intelligence and virtual classes, Dr Jaiswal threw light on the struggles of keeping up to date with fast-changing technologies. She also raised the issue of funding blockage by those working at the top of the game and pointed how the ablest and the most influential are not passing down/filtering down the knowledge at the lower level. This creation of technological inequality is where anthropologists can take over and highlight the problems by going local rather than going global. Talking about the global pandemic, dr Kahn asked the second question that what is so global about the experiences we all went through it. Did we get global or local support during the pandemic? We are not talking about the micro because it has been taken over by the macro. Looking at the distractions and the children of the age that could be sucked in different social media outlets, what is your concern for the next generation as we try to prepare them as mature adults? She questioned.

Dr Jaiswal answered that Digital distraction works in many ways and the keyway is – it is not only what we are engaging with, also what we are being exposed to. He highlighted the basic questions of what should be the aim of education at the end? For him, that's the bigger distraction that takes our mind from the general curiosity of reaching the truth, what is eventually important for the world and what kind of lives we need to live, what are the agendas worlds are facing. He further said that we must ask ourselves that are we as a child being introduced to areas topics which are important also is this education articulate enough to enhance our ability to negotiate through all this clutter of fake news and agendas and projections which are all around?

He concluded that we lack proper pedagogical tools and curriculums which could prepare our children for the world. We are loading them with information and facts which is not enough. Dr. Jaiswal highlighted a very concerning issue and said, today learning has become so violent. Children are traumatized and they are not going to like what has happened to them in the last two years. Learning is not beautiful anymore; it has become traumatic. This is going to alienate the children from gaining self-knowledge. He questioned the present tools and mediums and their ability to teach them issues such as climate change. He said, today's digital platforms are just giving them presentations and moving on to the next topic. We are unable to teach them about the ability to comprehend. We need to bring the alternative ideas of education and learning need to be brought in the mainstream. Dr Kahn agreed to what Dr Jaiswal said and termed it as the voices from the wilderness.

During an hour-long session, Dr Jaiswal spoke on many other aspects of learning and teaching in the changing world. Dr Kahn reflected on the times of covid and suggested that even two hours of focused learning is enough which includes reading writing painting listening to radio programs etc. we don't need to glue our children's eyes with the computer for six hours. After the session was finished, the session coordinator opened the floor for the audience for Q&A where Dr Jaiswal answered the questions and cleared doubts of the participants.

### **Session 5 Film Screening; Visuals from The Field**

Raktim Das, an undergraduate student at, Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, presented a micro-documentary titled 'Loss of Education' and attempted to show an important issue of learning loss due to school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic. The documentary has captured visuals from several local nurseries and primary schools located in a place called Shankarpur which is 50 Km away from the city of Kolkata, West Bengal. In the documentary, Raktim interviewed people working in the school including the Headmistress, students, and teachers. Interviewees state the disruption of school education caused by the pandemic. The speaker has narrated that when the pandemic struck in 2020, the tragedy of education has become such a phenomenon that threatens to handicap the forthcoming generations. Further mentioned that the virtual model of learning stood up as a big challenge for the financially unstable households as they could not effort costly digital devices. While financially stable households have been able to buy digital devices for their children's education. Parents have told him that studies have become very irregular events since, and they are very much worried about their future as education is one of the important things in today's world. This documentary has presented the issue with utmost care and in an interactive way with the participants. In the end, the speaker pointed the necessity of an inclusive and holistic outlook towards the prevailing issues in the system of education.

Anusree, an undergraduate Student at, Department of Anthropology, the University of Delhi has presented a micro-documentary titled 'School'. In the beginning, she has captured her mother, who is a primary school teacher in the Palakkad district of Kerela. She has tried to capture her mother doing day-to-day household activities including cooking, collecting

vegetables from the backyard, and teaching during the lockdown. In the video, she has presented the challenges faced by the teachers at the primary schools due to the online mode of learning. She has put forward the difficulties faced by the parents who are mostly from the working class and rural areas of the village. It states that the Government of Kerala is providing online classes in the pandemic situation from June 2020 for standards 1 to 12 and the virtual education program titled 'First Bell' were introduced through government channel VICTORS (Versatile ICT Enabled Resource for Students) and you Tube. And these programs were executed by the government agencies like KITE (Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education), SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training). However, most of the students have the access to digital devices. Moreover, loan facilities and phones with the help of other organizations have been provided too. Teachers have talked about their experiences of online mode of teaching and said that the child can move forward in online education, only if the parents and environment at home are positively encouraging. Other than online teaching, these primary school teachers are visiting the homes of their students. Parents shared that online classes are not good because their children can hardly concentrate on the classes. Anushree has interviewed several female teachers and found women are struggling with their household work and schoolwork. It has been mentioned that the chores at home are never-ending for women and they are facing difficulties in managing their family time and work time. After the announcement of the reopening of physical classes, all the workers, teachers, and school staff have come forward to clean the school. In the end, the narrator interviewed her father, and he shares how this pandemic affected their family time.

Amisha Rawat, an undergraduate Student at, Department of Anthropology, the University of Delhi presented a micro-documentary. She has shared visuals from the state of Uttar Pradesh. She interviewed a child who belongs to an underprivileged family and the child mentioned the challenges faced by him due to the online mode of learning. The child had to depend on his parent's phone which was supposed to be shared with the whole family because there was only one phone. Sometimes, the child had to face the problem of the network in his house. Moreover, during a pandemic, they had to face a financial crisis because his mother and father had to leave their daily work and couldn't provide good education. In the second half of the film, another child was interviewed who belonged to a privileged family. The child had all the technical gadgets required for her studies, but she went through network problems, mental stress and faced eyesight problems. She talked about her behavioural changes as she felt lazy and annoyed all the time. Her family was able to provide all the technical devices required for the online classes, but they stated that online classes can never be a permanent solution. The video stressed the need for an alternative to this online mode of learning for the betterment of the children.

## **Session 6: Children and Mental Health**

Dr Alison presented an insightful, interactive, and explicit lecture with real-life examples for a better understanding of the concept. She started her lecture with the fact that one of the fundamental skills as an anthropologist she learned and tried to say things from a different point



of view. During the pandemic, she investigated her mental health, briefed her family about how they all had a difficult time, lost some work but were fortunately occupied with other work, and acknowledged the Kerala teacher documentary from the previous session. She talked about two things. First, how we can look after ourselves. Before the pandemic, she took mental health course for students. Children deal with different cultures, belief systems. Second, took a first-aid certificate. Then thinking about other things that she could do when she was young, helping children with their mental health and evolving for the better.

Discussed some Anthropological concepts that we might think about:

- As anthropologists see things through a cultural lens. We are with but remain apart, we experience but also observe. This lens helps us to translate, experience, and interpret its meaning.

- Micro to Macro: Awareness to understanding from understanding to redefining self-from self to other. It also helps us to imagine other people's dilemmas and bring perspective to our own.

- Understanding your situation: we all have experienced loss at some or another point. Ask the participants to name some of the things they've lost, be it material, social, psychological, financial, spatial, temporal, spiritual. Participants answered they have lost- person, family, patience, faith, future, parents, mentor, inability to control own surroundings, etc.

- Influencing factors: Bio-psycho-social (gender, attitude, behaviour, self-esteem, economic status, culture, relationships), historical, cultural, philosophical. Dr Alison encouraged we all should have some hope to be able to function.

Furthermore, we have five phases of collective trauma response. First, Sudden impact: Pandemic lockdown. Second, Heroic phase: we're going to win this, be the best possible mother, teacher and put lots of effort and hope. Then after a while, things became very tiring entering into the third Disillusionment phase. Why we're not getting what we thought, planned for. Fourth, the Rebuilding and Restoration phase that we will get through it and the last, wiser living phase. Some themes of loss experienced at this time, loss of- routine, coping strategies, work, financial stability, family, future, social contact, sense of safety.

Discussed Bereavement stages which include Denial (refusing to accept or deal with the situation, Anger, Bargaining (possible positive outcomes from a loss, Acceptance (understanding if not ability to change the situation). We can get through this by understanding that we are being heard. She asked how people were in the mid pandemic, cited their Facebook stories which reflected stages of Bereavement.

Additionally, talked about Network theory: emergent phenomena, a book written by Calderelli and Catanzaro. They said, "We all are connected through a disordered pattern of many different interactions, that is, they all have an underlying network structure". This idea stems from a complex system and suggests that "collective behaviour cannot be predicted by looking at the single elements forming a system". It's important to understand where am I in all this if we want to understand and manage them. Understanding why and when the network breaks down leads to an insight into how to fit into the puzzle and helps through the process of loss and to understand the fluidity of the situation.

As a filmmaker, she thought of film and media as one of the interactive networks. Human societies are such as social order arises from the combination of autonomous individuals, often with conflicting interests, that still end up performing tasks that nobody could do on their own. Filmmakers operate in teams as a kind of emergent phenomena, depending simultaneously on the quality of the individual and the sum of all together. Emergent phenomena rely crucially on the underlying networks. We learned that systems are not solid. They are fluid and we adapt- they adapt. Another way of saying that we can take control of the situation.

Further, she talked about identifying levels of our networks which includes underlying networks operating in your spheres of activity, which do we miss most, how many rely on human contact, formal physical space as in team briefings, informal physical space like a coffee shop. How well equipped are you to deal with loss. How can you make an evaluation? So, many personal stories need to be told. And encouraged the participants to record audios that would be treasured forever, the story behind a story, reflections of your time, who were we as individuals.

She also introduced the term "Stress Container" which describes what this is to help visualize personal impact and resistance to change. We put all the things burdening us, tap on it (means the things we use to distress). For example, if we have too much work in a day then go for yoga, swimming, walking in the evening. Counteract things that are making one burdened. Here, we visualize things burdening you and the potential for causing the problem to your mental health.

Moreover, she discussed strategies to keep your mental health in good shape which includes:

1) Trauma and Resilience exercise: in the context of the pandemic, what we have already lost and how acutely we feel this loss is unique to everyone based on our internal foundation. Personal resilience skills, who we are, our connections, and what gives purpose to our lives. It is the fear of loss that drives this anxiety which is both personal and collectively shared.

-Three-layer of Resistance: individual resilience, interpersonal/team resilience, organization resilience.

-Networks of Resistance, Resilience, and Reinvention

-A menu rather than Prescription, resistant networks: make your networks, resilience- keep doing what you do in different ways, public health film society, reinvention- other skills

2) Testing negative thoughts: here we think about how we are keeping up ourselves, what are we really worried about, what's stopping us to feel free and happy as human beings, worst that can happen, sometimes thinking about the feelings, thoughts, behaviours, physical response.

3) Strategies of balancing: balancing our thinking, identifying ourselves

4) Checking-in audit: aiming to increase your score each time, evolving, how we spend our time and energy



At the end, the participants were invited to share their observations of the workshop on ‘What aspect of the workshop did you like the best?’

Some of the (unedited) feedbacks are given below:

- *Holistic approach*
- *Concept of the resource person and interactions*
- *All the sessions were amazing and valuable.*
- *The diversity in the presentation and range of topics covered under CHILDREN*
- *Documentaries*
- *The ideas and concept of speakers*
- *Field visit presentations... Alison ma'am presentations*
- *Documentary and about the mental health*
- *A supportive platform and the shared journey, a huge learning experience.*
- *The interactive sessions, documentary, the wonderful discussion on mental health at last. it was the first online thing that really enjoyed.*
- *Films*
- *The diverse and relevant realms covered*
- *I sincerely appreciate the discursive sessions of methodological nuances and film presentations.*
- *Documentaries were remarkable. Professor Alison Kahn presentation was thought provoking. Discussions posed by other presenters were also very engaging. In a nut shell, It was an*

*excellent event and would like to congratulate the Department of Anthropology for organizing this amazing 2 day event.*

- *Micro-Documentaries*
- *How this workshop brings different schools of study together.*
- *Ethnographic films*
- *I learnt how education can also be captured via digital method by various ethnographic film presented in.*
- *Interactive*
- *Enjoyed all the sessions... The young film makers work were particularly inspiring and fills me with hope... The sensitivity they showed in dealing with their subjects and also the issue at hand. Also the main resource person was not only knowledgeable but so rooted and passionate... made me fall in love with Anthropology.*
- *Time consciousness and involvement for attendees, which are characteristics of good anthropological articulation (apart from the insightful sessions)*
- *The flexibility of the subject matter of discussions which can brought in large array of different disciplines into it .*

We closed the registration after 100; 60 registered participants participated in the workshop. The participants were faculty members, creative educators, research scholars and students from department of anthropology, University of Delhi, The British School, Gauhati University, Sambalpur University, IGNOU, Techved Consulting, Manipur University, Bangabasi College, University of Calcutta, University Of Kashmir Srinagar, Panjab University, Dr. Harisingh Gour Central University, Sagar, Madhya Pradesh., SIVPL, Nagaland University, Utkal University, Sidho Kanho Birsha University, University of North Bengal, Kannur University, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee University, University of Hyderabad, IIM Udaipur, O. P. Jindal Global university, Jawaharlal Nehru University, DSE, Delhi University. DEAS, DU, Observation Home & Special Home for Girls, Bam, University of Calcutta, Zunheboto government college, ARSD College, University of Delhi, Christ (Deemed to be) University, Kohima Science College, Helen O' Grady International, Mahatma Gandhi Central University, Bright career Academy, Miranda House, University of Delhi, V.P.Chest Institute, Delhi, PGIMER, Chandigarh, Gangadhar Meher University, Bangabasi College (University of Calcutta), Department of Germanic and Romance Studies Delhi university.

The workshop was truly an inter-disciplinary event; it brought together scholars and students from various disciplines. It concluded on a high positive note paving way to more elaborate and inclusive events in the future to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of department of anthropology University of Delhi.

### **End of Report**