



Devising Strategies: Study of Issues in Anthropological Research as Faced by Graduate Students

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ABSTRACT

Research in anthropology is mandatory for any graduate student. It requires fieldwork in the community. This makes anthropology a vibrant and thrilling discipline. However, the graduate students in Pakistani universities are not well versed with research and particularly with fieldwork-based research in social sciences. Although the courses taught prior to fieldwork in one way or the other attempt to train the graduate students for practical fieldwork it still is not enough if a student does not put enough effort at the preparatory or synopsis stage. The advisor role of the supervisor is also very significant during this phase. This paper brings forth only five of many challenges and problems of research and fieldwork faced by Pakistani graduate students. This paper echoes the experiences of fieldwork and anthropological research by the graduate students of anthropology in Pakistan. The major challenge identified in the preparatory phase was a selection of the research topic. The rest of the challenges are of the fieldwork, starting with the choice of 'locale' and willingness or reluctance of interlocutors, and leading to language and translation challenges to write the accurate findings of the research and later present the research to a larger audience. Methodology as a recurrent challenge for graduate students of anthropology is a serious concern that is reported in this paper. This paper is based on the responses from 101 graduate students of anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University, collected during 2009-2020 in the form of written assignments.

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1. Introduction

Graduate students of anthropology may see the ethnographic fieldwork and write of their thesis or dissertation as liminal phase of their academic life. This liminality, in line with Van Gannep, is highlighted by danger and requires ritualistic performances to overcome the danger or fear associated to resume the achieved status of graduate. This journey is filled with hybrid, intellectual and physical, challenges. Perceiving and refining a topic, considering the ethical concerns, doing extensive and continuous literature review, understanding the challenges of sampling and methodology, opting for inductive or deductive frames of research, facing the challenges of entry and acceptance in the field, collection and triangulating data, synthesizing data to understand patterns, writing the journey for a range of readers – all these steps are shared milestones of this journey of every graduate student of anthropology. This study brings forth reflections of many graduate students of anthropology at Quaid-i-Azam University to serve as a reference for future graduates to understand the subjective nature of difficulties in anthropological fieldwork. 'Devising strategies' refers to the idea of multivocal alternatives that could be the plausible solutions available to the graduate students, it also invites the students to ponder on the nature of fieldwork and methodological challenges in the discipline that is in flux because of rapid changes of the dynamics of culture and human life.

Anthropology as a discipline arrived in India sometime after 1951 when M.N. Srinivas returned from Oxford after having completed his Doctoral Studies under Radcliffe Brown, and is credited with establishing Indian Social Anthropology as a "structural-functionalist discipline" (Eriksen, 2013). In Pakistan however, it was to arrive with a 20-year delay, in the year 1974 under the guidance of Prof. Dr. Ahmad Hassan Dani (Late) (Anthropology, n.d.). The first batch was granted admission in the year 1975 (Tarrar, 2004). Since then, it has spread to a number of universities in Pakistan raising the profile of the subject including, Peshawar University, Arid University, Sindh University, etc.

However, what is still lacking after almost 45 years of its establishment is a serious look at the issues that we, Academics and Students, face in the study and execution of any fieldwork within our own context. There has been little or no platform where these problems have been addressed to give rise to concrete solutions that can be adapted for fieldwork. Instead, what we have witnessed is that there is a steady decline in the quality of problems and researches that have come forth, a point raised by Akbar Zaidi back in the year 2002 (Zaidi, 2002).

This paper thus aims to take a cursory glance at the problems currently faced in the field by researchers, this is done through evaluation of the papers written by Students of Quaid-e-Azam University where they documented the issues faced by them during their fieldwork. This is provided against a backdrop of global debates in the anthropological circles, where issues of fieldwork have come into focus since 1967. This glance should allow us to see just the tip of the ice-berg and provide some sort of guidance as to the direction we need to be taking as Academics or Anthropologists to do justice to the subject, if it is to make significant contributions to the work coming out of Pakistan.

2. Literature Review

There has always been a general consensus that Fieldwork and Observation Participation is the key element that defines Anthropological Study. The purpose of any ethnographical work is to become "a member of the group" to understand its culture and behavior (Schensul, 1980), with the ideal being that you study the host people "as intimately as possible" (Wax & Wax, 1980). Different ways have been employed by anthropologists to achieve this goal, including "helped with the harvest, participated in sports and games, danced and drunk, given people rides, and helped at times of community and personal crisis" (Schensul, 1980). On the academic side, their responsibilities remain to ensure a scholarly and accurate description of their observations and work through fieldnotes, which can be retained to study long after the project has come to its conclusion (Wax & Wax, 1980). The organization of knowledge is critical experiential frame for contemporary social sciences (Schneider, 2021).

However; Godina asserts that since 1967 the notion of fieldwork, once held as the pillar of anthropological research, has been mystified due to the publication of Malinowski's diary titled "A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term" (Godina, 2003), attributing fieldwork with being "bored, depressed, lonely and frustrated" (Geest, 2017). These concerns have been shared by James Clifford as well in his book *Writing Culture* (Marcus, 2012). These debates have further deepened with the emergence of Postmodern debates (Godina, 2003). Not only that with the downfall of the European Anthropologist and the rise of the Native Anthropologist, the notion of where the field is and who gets to write about it have also been rigorously debated.

New issues have emerged in the field as the notion of a distant field recedes into the background, with the world becoming connected and globalized. What happens in one place has direct repercussions in another. The field is no longer isolated, as in the time of Malinowski or Turner. These connections mean that today it is not possible to take a holistic look of a community as they head out of the universe into sub-universes of their own, made up of their educational institutions, offices, recreational spaces, etc. Greater connectivity means that trust becomes a critical factor, since chances of the data being available for wider distribution are dramatically higher, creating a situation where this attention on a community can go any which way – either positive or negative (Wax & Wax, 1980).

Gender remains a critical variant throughout the anthropological world, as issues of harassment, stalking, informality are some of the fears experienced by female anthropologists (Geest, 2017). The NGO factor, mentioned by Marcus as well as many students who reported

back on their fieldwork in Pakistan, consider it to be the number one issue within Anthropology in relation to "neo-liberal projects" of today which stands in contrast to the traditional notions of fieldwork (Marcus, 2012). More so, there are still no clear-cut ideas or methodologies as to how one should conduct fieldwork and solve the various issues that arise out of such work (Godina, 2003). Emotions are an important element when one considers gender in ethnographic experience. "Field-workers cannot predict in detail the range and depth of feelings they will come to experience in the field, but often some educated guesses can be made (Warren & Hackney, 2000)." Many undergraduate students tend to ignore this gender dimension of fieldwork.

Coming to the Pakistani context, Akbar Zaidi is critical of the lack of original ideas coming out of Pakistan, which have had an impact on either the regional or the global scale. His argument is that it is Economics as one of the subjects of Social Sciences that have taken up the dominant position, much evident by the number of papers that come out on the subject. He contributes this to a number of issues – many of which appear in the issues of the students as well. The relevant to the current argument includes, "patronage of the state" ... "an intolerant culture where dissent and debate are discouraged and the lack of any effective, working, institutions to speak of, and hence outcome and output is based on individual effort and endeavor" (Zaidi, 2002). Zaidi also discussed the role of the NGOs and donor agency in changing the landscape of Social Sciences Research in this country, with them having the resources to do whatever kind of research they want, which lacks in academic circles. The NGO is now a reality which impacts the field for all of us.

The beginning of Anthropology as a discipline here was through the establishment of Department of Anthropology in Quaid-e-Azam University, which participated in the many "large-scale rural development projects" that had been initiated by the Government of Pakistan under the sixth five-year plan (Tarrar, 2004). According to Tarrar, "With few exceptions, the researchers in Anthropology at Pakistani universities have largely worked under an evolutionary and structural functionalist paradigm, and most of the studies are restricted to stereotypical concepts of village community, castes, and tribes" (Tarrar, 2004). The trend is ongoing to some extent, rather a more sociological survey is practiced in the name of ethnography at times. This kind of view is further asserted by a testimony that he presents in his paper of S.A. Khan, a professor at the department, in which he mentions that fieldwork among primitive tribes is considered as an essential part, and are considered as "as if they were alone, isolated and independent from the rest of the larger society".

Many anthropologists and social scientists, including both Zaidi and Tarrar, have now come to the conclusion that there is a critical need to re-evaluate the current social sciences and anthropological paradigm and come up with new ways to deal with the duality of the researcher's identity as he negotiates with the ethical dilemma as well as the conflict between the "scientific objectives" of their work and the "developmental needs of the community" (Schensul, 1980), as well as negotiates with a field that is far more connected than when the foundations of this subject were laid. This point is made further critical when one looks at the problems that are faced by the researchers and students in the field where they have a keen understanding of their role as people who are preying on a community and the lack of trust that has evolved within these communities, where the community is simply a pawn – more often than not – in an International Donor Game.

3. Research Methodology

The study relied on finding the problems that are faced in the field through reports and assignments that had been submitted by students for their coursework. With a dread of writing in Social Sciences coming out of Pakistan, relying on students' reports provides us a way to look at the cyclic trends of these problems, and to determine whether they have been a constant source of difficulty. If this was the case, then it would be easy to assert that due to the consistency of these issues over a certain period of time, these problems are of a critical nature and need to be addressed in urgency and in detail. The study went through a total of 101 research papers to understand the various issues that are faced in the field by Students of Anthropology, ranging from years 2009 to 2020. These papers belonged to students of M. Phil and MSc, so one could expect a certain level of skill from them in conducting fieldwork. The study of these papers allowed the writer to get a better understanding from students' own experiences and case studies.

The assignment was written for a course titled "Issues in Anthropological Research", where they were required to write about 5 problems which they faced during their fieldwork, giving examples of their own work, and whether they employed any strategies to overcome these problems. Most of the time it was only the problem that was cited, without any solutions. The papers were studied, and problems that they had identified were jotted down. Three things were looked for from amongst these problems.

- Understanding of the problem, in terms of its anthropological definition
- Experiences from fieldwork
- Solutions for these problems

In this paper we look at the 5 most cited problems that the students faced in the field. These problems have been chosen depending on the frequency of them being mentioned by the student in their reflection assignment.

4. Problems in Fieldwork

Students mentioned many problems varying from methodological issues to practical difficulties. However, the mentioning of ethical issues was absent in almost all the responses. The most frequently reported issues are included in this paper to make it more focused, although these mentioned issues comprehend multiple sub-issues within them if treated as categories. The 5 problems that were most cited by the students include the following:

- Locale
- Reluctance of Respondents
- Selection of Topic
- Selection of Methodology
- Lost in Translation / Language

4.1 Locale

There is a general understanding by what one means when they talk about 'locale' amongst the students, which includes that entry in the field of the researcher should create no disturbance within the locale, it should include a diverse group of people within a community to help guide their research processes and the issues of access, limitations, accommodation and language are a part and parcel of it.

However, there are a number of issues that arise related to this aspect. The more basic of these issues are linked with finances and logistics. With no grant or funding available to them for their fieldwork, there is a lack of interest in exploring areas that can become a financial liability. The result is that students often end up choosing areas that are close to, or are, their villages or residence. It should be mentioned that this is a decision that is not based – or was not mentioned as being based – on any postmodernist concerns or any philosophical leanings, but was a decision taken based on logistical and financial realities.

The role of gender itself becomes a critical variable, with most of the female students - due to restrictions - being forced to conduct research in their own towns or villages as well. Mobility for female students is a hurdle and living in the field; without a male or female relative accompanying is often not permitted by the family. This then tends to lead to its own set of problems. Students themselves have mentioned a link between bias and lack of objectivity. A certain level of normalization already exists that tends to interfere in an objective understanding of their locale and its issues. This could be put down to the simple notion of thinking in "us" versus "them" mentality (Godina, 2003) – how do you draw this distinction in a locale where you are part of the "us"? In most of the student papers, the researcher appears from the very beginning to be confused about how to handle any contradictory notions or practices that might appear in their research because of this normalization. One of the ways in which the students have tried to minimize their subjectivity is by ensuring that they document everything which they observe in the field.

Issues of trust also lead to how a locale and its members treat you. The NGO factor, as discussed previously in literature review section, plays a critical role in this, where the assumption generally is that the researcher has come only to take advantage of their situation

and return to earn money out of their misery. Rapport Building, another problem area highlighted by students, is one strategy that has been employed to get better access and build bridges with the community. By spending time with the farmers or the working-class members of the locale, they were able to better relations with the community. Another strategy employed by a student was to take gifts for the interlocutors and talking to elders, and while it is a solution, it does raise question of how this might lead to further expectations or compound the NGO factor where there is a certain expectation of gifts and freebies?

Places of worship or shrines are also challenging locales for a lot of students. Gender plays a big role in this, getting links with the shrine custodian went a long way for many of the students. The socio-economic-religious background are also contributing factors in this, where students from a certain demography or sect, dressed in a certain way, or following a certain religious practice felt uncomfortable in observing certain practices.

Often the issue of access can be simply solved by having the right kind of documentation which identifies your work. In one scenario, the student researcher was denied entry into a camp in Altit, Hunza. The situation was able to be countered simply by the supervisor reaching out to the local councilor and getting the relevant permissions. In another, when the police refused to accommodate a certain researcher, it was the links with the Shrine Incharge that provided the access and trust of the community.

A Local contact can go a long way in making things easy for a researcher; however, that is not always the case. For example, in research on the Jogi Community, the researcher was only able to get access to this tight knit community by befriending an artist in the Jogi community, and through him getting access; as well as their respect. In some other cases of some key informants though, the research could only get a one-sided perspective with the informant only introducing the researcher to a certain type of people, who can ascertain an approved narrative or dominate the overall direction of the research.

Controversial issues however are more daunting a task to observe especially when the locale is not fixed and is fluid. In a study on Homosexuality, the researcher didn't know where to observe his subject, and ended up interviewing people in Red Light District, which didn't provide him with the entire picture. This directly links to the issue of connectivity, where the chances of greater distribution impacts how forth-coming people can be.

Different strategies are also devised by students to deal with a large sized locale, which has been highlighted as another issue they face in their fieldwork. This is an understandable problem, considering that they only get around four to five months for their research and exploring an area in its entirety can be challenging. One researcher divided it into different zones and then ensured that equal representation was received from all those areas. Multisite research however is a challenge for most, since there is a feeling that something is missed in the process of observing multiple sites in real time. Or when the site is in the same town where the researcher is based, the commute back and forth, due to the socio-cultural factors, also acts as an impediment.

Security has been an issue that has resonated with the entire population and therefore it is not surprising that it was quoted by several students as a hinderance in accessing their locale. One reported research on Gilgit was impacted due to the sectarian violence in the region, the same was the case with another research on polio cases in Bajur Agency. In most scenarios, the researchers are forced to change their locale, which again raises questions as to why these concerns weren't eliminated or addressed at the planning stages. The adaptability of a locale can also create issues for the researcher. Though the stay in the field during academic fieldwork is short, students have mentioned issues of dealing with the food and weather patterns of a new place. This points to the lack of practice that most students have in conducting fieldwork.

4.2 Reluctance of Respondents

Students choose the topic of their graduate research under the influence of literature or opinions of their peers or suggestions by the faculty without a realization of the level of ease or difficulty to talk on the selected topic to the interlocutors, who are situated in the larger social and cultural frame. Greater connectivity and wider distribution are reasons why a lot of respondents hesitate to talk about their problems or the area of research being conducted.

Stigmatization often leads to respondents not being comfortable discussing a certain topic, for example HIV/AIDS patients. In one such scenario, the researcher decided to rely upon people already working in the field and snowball sampling to get the data. In another case, the dual nationality research within military hit a stonewall, due to security and military restrictions on such status. The researcher openly confessed her own dual nationality to overcome this issue and be forthcoming. In another scenario, the parents of young interlocutors complained about the topic of abuse and the researcher interviewing their children about it (although this requires to question the ethical position of researcher about informed consent and ethics of dealing with underage respondents).

The impact of omnipresent NGO interventions in the community for cosmetic measures to address socio-economic problems; was a deterrent in people collaborating or talking to the researcher. One of the students resorted this issue with the fishing community of Ghazi Ghat by taking his friends for boat rides, thus breaking the initial ice. As mentioned earlier in the discussion on 'locale', that being a native can create issues of identity, but in some cases, it can also help with the research question. When it comes to political and social issues, a lot of time the respondents are not forthcoming due to genuine fears for their safety. However, being a local or insider sometimes helps with this, since there is already an understanding of the issue, and one can act as a comrade who is also going through the same problems. In other cases, however, the choice of the informant can create difficulties. In one scenario, the researcher relied on an IB officer to make inroads in the community, in another a *pir* or spiritual leader. Both of these cases resulted in the community not being able to develop faith in the project, and thus the reluctance persisted. One researcher befriended and stayed with the only Sunni (sect) family when conducting research on Ismailis (sect), thus creating tension between the community and the sincerity of his research efforts.

In other scenarios, too much probing can also be detrimental, as the researchers felt that their permission would be revoked. Relying on multiple sources, therefore is a much better strategy in such circumstances. Instead of finding gaps in single in-depth interview, triangulating statements from varying sources can help resolve the reluctance of respondent challenge. From the respondent's perspective though, permissions pursued from higher authority instead of direct consent from interlocutor; makes interlocutors skeptical. One way the students found to resolve this issue is to delay asking direct questions about administration for as long as possible to generate trust amongst the community members. Direct friendships should also be avoided in these scenarios with authority figures, for example in a research study on Nurses and Healthcare professionals, any informality with doctors was seen by the nurses as deception, and thus created hinderance in getting their cooperation.

In smaller or close-knit communities, another issue which results in reluctance is the crowd that tends to gather around a respondent. This usually results in them giving answers that are already expected from them, or the crowd pitches in with their own responses. This is an understandable problem and can be linked with the alien nature of the researcher or the work that they are doing. Most of the students felt that the best they could do in these situations was to be patient. However, if enough time is given for the novelty of the work to subside, then these issues should not occur.

Socio-economic-cultural issues can't be factored out for such reluctance. In a lot of cases, the married female respondents refused to talk about their private lives with an unmarried female researcher, though the researcher reports back that they were comfortable with making sexual jokes and remarks. Male respondents also are not comfortable talking to female researchers, or would do so only in the presence of female family members. This can lead one to question the authenticity of the responses. Female respondents are also concerned with repercussions that they might face from the male members of their family in case the answers are not considered acceptable or is reported back to them. On a study on iodized salt, the community itself refused access to interview female members since they had been informed by their religious leaders that such salt contained contraceptives.

In other cases, the respondents fear for their livelihood, case in point being a community of woodcutters, who feared that their accurate responses can lead them to trouble with the authorities. More often than not, the reluctance emerges from simply not knowing the researcher

or the work. The researcher working on lawyers decided to tackle the lack of response to her appointment requests by the lawyers by simply showing up to their offices. This led to no cancellation and effectively put a face to the voice who was seeking appointments, creating some level of trust.

4.3 Selection of Topic

There is, or should be, a general consensus that the selection of the topic should depend on the interest of the researcher, after gaining a certain level of conceptual clarity by undertaking a thorough literature review. The finalization of the topic is usually done after having talked to teachers and seniors who are able to guide them better. The chosen topic should be novel, that is it adds to the field, after having considered the available resources, time management and all financial and logistical dimensions. There is also an understanding that the paper should have some real-world implications or shall be applied in nature. However, the papers/assignment responses revealed that there are serious issues in this regard. Novelty is often ignored and repetition of certain topics is recurrent.

Majority of times controversial topics that are critical of the state or religion are not allowed to be pursued leaving a serious gap in the kind of research that is coming out from a department. This is a problem that has been highlighted by both Zaidi and Tarrar in their papers when they talk about the development of social sciences in Pakistan. A student mentioned that they were refused research on the certain topic and had to change it, i.e. research on blasphemy. Other times there are other Institutional barriers, for instance the study on dual nationality within armed forces became an issue since respondents were not forthcoming with information. The only solution available was to change the focus of the study, by talking about the perceptions that people have of those with dual nationality. In one of the proposed researches about Bari Imam, the researcher wanted to look at the power struggle between various groups in the shrine, but was told that the topic would be too controversial. The result was that the title had to be sugarcoated to get the required approvals.

Students also mentioned that a lot of time they were simply told by the supervisor the topic to take up without taking into account their own interest. A lot of the time the student themselves are misguided by their seniors to not pick a topic that is too challenging or to find previous research and to adjust it according to a new locale. This sort of thing can be countered by having a thorough research committee that takes a close look at the proposed research topics. Another student reported how he had put a lot of research into his desired topic, but was forced to change it as the teacher announced in the class a topic for the student to take up and develop. Coercion by the supervisor may lead to amendments into the topic of research.

4.4 Selection of Methodology

Selection of methodology is understood as a way to choose one's research tools, sample size and then deciding on the typology of the demographic, which would go on to have a significant impact on the research's direction. This includes deciding on whether it would be qualitative or quantitative in nature and what the research paradigm would be, and should be devised so as to understand a specific problem from a certain lens otherwise the issue of time management could come into play. The varied problems also include whether they should be taking an emic perspective or an etic perspective. Another problem includes either going with the inductive or the deductive approach.

In the responses that came forth with this problem, a lot of the time, the researchers felt that they have the capability to manipulate the responses. In a study on Pakistani cinema, the researcher purposefully gave the responses that would direct his research in a direction which would support his own notions about the industry. There also appeared to be a feeling among the graduate student researchers that they aren't provided enough guidance or critique on their synopsis at the initial stage, which results in learning from the field only and then revising their strategies mid-way, and being a financial and logistical waste. A few researchers also stated that how they were unaware of doing the literature review first to compose their objectives.

Most of these issues arise since the students only enter the field once in their academic life that is just before they are to write a thesis. This lack of experience means that they have not understood the complexities of the field. One researcher for example devised a quantitative means of data collection since that would mean no rapport building, but was soon to conclude

that this is an ineffective means of getting the complete picture. There is also an understanding that the methodology will depend on the research questions itself, but due to the lack of understanding or knowledge of all the tools available to them, the students tend to make mistakes in devising a strategy.

Some of the problems that came into play in this include how to develop a sample size. Most of the students rely on a random sample size, but sooner than later, they are confronted with the issue of heterogeneity of the universe or are unable to get a response that is reflective of the whole community. Difficulties also arise when the locale is out of country which means that the methodology is strategized without any understanding of the problems of the context. This then results in wasting of time, and at a later date changing the methodology and shifting to a purposive sampling. These issues are such that they can be resolved or debated out of the equation at much early stages of planning.

4.5 Lost in Translation / Language

There is a notion that if one can get the language, then the doors of a particular culture will lay themselves open. This assessment is wrong since "culture is not coterminous with language" (Godina, 2003). However, this seems to be a well-kept secret at least amongst the researchers who were studied.

The most cited issue in research and fieldwork remained that of language, which is a considerable issue since in Pakistan there are around 74 languages and dialects being spoken in the country (Simons & Fennig, 2018). The fieldwork usually is quick to reveal that the researcher is unaware of the local dialect even when the language is the same creating a barrier and confusion. In one case one of the respondents was made a fool by a local boy when he translated certain sentences into abuses and slurs. Therefore, having some primary knowledge of how to use the language and some basic sentences can go a long way. While some of the researchers feel that they can fall back on Urdu for communication, experience has shown that the respondents are usually not even comfortable in that. In scenarios where translators have been used, it was felt that they take away more from the environment

In research conducted at Golra Sharif by a graduate student, the problem of dialect was quite apparent since the visitors were from different parts of the country. The researcher resolved the problem by talking to people who could understand his language – and while this is a temporary solution, it does bring into question the validity of the data, how speaking to a certain ethnicity only effects it. The questionnaire plays a key role here, where students usually rely on Urdu or English as a language for data collection. More so the translation of certain definitions and ideas to clarify something from English to Urdu leaves many gaps in the understanding and communication of a concept. One researcher resolved this issue by translating the questionnaire with the help of an entire group into an easy and effective language. A pilot study was then conducted before revising it again to ensure that it can communicate effectively.

The primary issue emerges in translation of certain words and terminologies in English or whichever language is the language of the Dissertation. Some have been able to find a way around it by using conceptual meaning – but these are efforts that are made at a personal level and are not part of any policy or guidelines. What we have then is a fine balance that needs to be struck. The reality remains that there is also the issue of language skills of the researcher themselves who sometimes are unable to represent the views of the locals, who then feel that their opinions are being misrepresented. We need to be providing ample time as part of the research process to allow climatization with the language.

4.6 Proposed Strategies

We need to create the understanding, quite urgently, that it is impossible to foresee all the problems that one might face in the field and have a response ready for that situation (Geest, 2017). Our course needs to take into account the failures in the field that many have faced before us. Aljendra Colom takes about her own undergraduate experience as an anthropological fieldworker and mentions how they were required to take a fieldwork 6 to 8 weeks every year, in their 5-year program at Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (Colom, 2002). During this time, they worked in partnership with organizations which allows them from the get go to understand

the problems of fieldwork and learn from the experiences of the groups and seniors. In our scenario, the loner researcher is sent off on the field, the first time all alone, with nothing but a theoretical understanding.

Not only that we need to redefine our terminology, and hope that it would affect our thinking pattern. The people in the universe can no longer be participants in our observations, but need to be thought of as collaborators (Marcus, 2012). The philosophy of Engaged Anthropology or being part of the community's action needs to be our purpose, which can result in resolving many of the issues mentioned above, particularly reluctance of respondents, and selection of methodology. It can help us understand that the community is not following a theoretical path laid out by an anthropologist, but are in fact, determining their destiny based on their reality. By involving one-self in the action that is coming out from the community gives relevance and worth to the very voices of the Community. Schensul discusses how their own involvement with key activists of Chicano community in West side of Chicago by being helpful in their projects and work, worked far better as a strategy to gather data on the community and their issues, since the leaders had an "ethnographic understanding of the community" that couldn't have been gathered from the periphery (Schensul, 1980). We as an Anthropological Body in this country need to finally sit down and come up with strategies for our own context.

5. Conclusions

Fieldwork is pivoted around the idea of spatial presence of the community that makes choice of 'locale' as the primary element in ethnography scheme. Graduate students restrict the scope of successful ethnography when their choice of 'locale' is restricted by challenges of mobility, often embedded in financial and logistic barriers. At times gender roles and social expectations restricts the choice of 'locale' for the female graduate students. Interlocutors may not be too willing to be part of a research, therefore, a training into perceived challenges and barriers of such form shall be rehearsed in mock role plays to generate discussions among students during course work or during preparatory stage of the research. Research proposals must address any such threat and a contingency or alternative to resolve likely challenges.

Selection of topic may occur as a normal affair but it has serious consequences on the successful completion of research. Given that academic research required for award of degree should focus more on enhancing the skill level of the graduate student, therefore, shall not turn to be based on a controversial topic. Topics that can put researcher into any potentially dangerous situation should be avoided for graduate student research. Methodology is like a backbone for any anthropological research, ethnography being the leading methodology in anthropology shall be focused for its complexity and holism during the taught courses to graduate students. Provided students often lack any prior research experience or training; methodology related courses shall arrange brief practicum to introduce a taste for fieldwork.

Language is at the core of any social research. Given that universities in Pakistan have English as medium of instructions and it is required of a graduate student to write his or her thesis or dissertation in English after conducting ethnographic fieldwork with multilingual communities, one must focus on acquiring skills of translation prior to starting of the fieldwork. Availing services of professional translation and proof-reading services is an alternative. To enhance the abilities of translation for understanding the cultural dimensions of language, researchers must reflect on their linguistic abilities in their journals and field-notes and ultimately in their thesis or dissertation.

This paper can help in revision of curriculum where ethnographic fieldwork could be taught in segments through introduction of multiple research methodology courses for each post graduate degree; instead of one or single course addressing research methods. In addition, students shall attempt to establish informal forum for discussing the field issues and challenges. Groups and Organizations at national level shall be established to promote anthropology, train ethnographers, and help researchers devise strategies to meet the challenges of the ethnographic endeavors. Dedicated publications shall be initiated to support the national scope for anthropologists to outreach the global audience.

Like any other study this study owes to its weaknesses a realistic account of mentioning the limitations. This study is based on a synthesized extracts of multiple subjective accounts and therefore, provides a generalized version rather than phenomenological subjective accounts.

The study span reflects almost last decade, but did not capture the transformations occurred in anthropology and ethnographic fieldwork in Pakistan. This study provides only the leading five issues identified by the graduate students; a more comprehensive list of issues could be developed in the light of collected reflections. Voice of research supervisors and mentors is not included in this paper. That could have made it more vivid.

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