

International Studies in Vernacular Architecture
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Lecture: 05
Anthropology of Shelter- Conclusion

Welcome to the course International Studies in Vernacular Architecture. Today, we are going to discuss about the concluding lecture of anthropology of shelter unit 1. We started our journey with an understanding of who am I and his relationship with various other factors and how the concept of cultural identity is related to many factors throughout his journey. And similarly, from the lectures of Melissa and Anne, you have understood the materiality of it, and how the concepts of anthropology plays an important role in the shelter process.

So, as a part of concluding session for this unit 1, I am going to briefly summarize on various aspects of anthropology, what is anthropology and why it is needed to study in the fields of architecture and especially in the context of vernacular architecture?

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When you look at this slide, have you ever experienced any kind of differences of variations at any time of your life, you might have been born as a vegetarian, but, throughout your journey, you might have interacted with various cultures various people from different castes, different religion, different continent, and they may be having from different food practices, different religions beliefs, the same connotation would have been reflected in a different community in a different manner and they might have understood in a different manner.

For example, many of these Hindu festivals for example, harvesting a festival of Pongal usually people do not cook a non-vegetarian in their house, but in many other cultures, for their main festivals, they cook non-vegetarian. And the way we eat is very different, the manner we eat, whether it is a table manners, whether it is a group, how we sit together and eat on a banana leaf was a defined through a particular culture.

And similarly, eating without touching the food is from comes from another culture and coming with sacrificing come from a different culture. So, different processes, and how they are all defined by each segments of the community is very important. If you go to a Bengal in any occasion, wedding occasion or anything in Bengal, you know the fish is the most priority, it is one of the they even the for the marriage occasion on the very first morning, they bring this fish to the event and that is how the ceremony starts. So, each of these cultures are originated and their roots come from various historic aspects and their sense of belonging.

Like in some of these South Indian cultures, you have this kolam representation you have these rangolis of course, they are very much relevant in other parts of in Gujarat and Rajasthan and in the northern parts of India, and they follow certain typical patterns in different parts of the country. For instance, these patterns are very much followed in the South Indian shows a bit of continuous stretch.

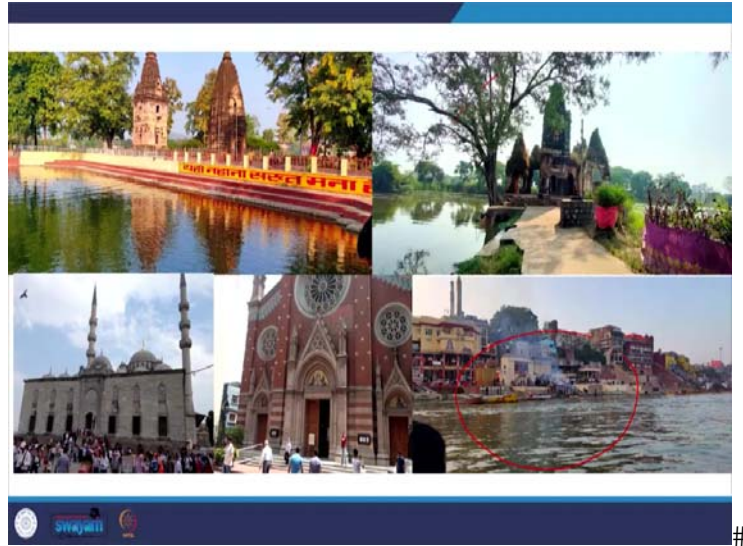
And also, especially during the Pongal season, they have a typical patterns which are enclosed with four entrances, that is referred as Vaikunta vakili, like they are referred to the Gods adobe, God Vishnu's adobe where it has four entrances. So, like that there are various myths that are depicted in the floral patterns, whether in terms of rangolis, whether in terms of wall decorations, whether in terms of the feasts they have, whether it kind of ornamentation they do, even the fabrics they wear, the colors which they do not and they do wear on certain occasions, this is very typical of particular communities.

And, in fact, not only about our food habits, not only about our fabrics what we wear, but it is also to do our religious belonging, how we actually pray, how we worship our gods, some of us we worship as a temple form as an idealistic form, and whereas in the mosque, the Islamic societies they prays in the mosque and the Christians they have the churches.

And even the burial traditions vary from culture to culture, even not only the birth traditions, but the death traditions, although, also vary from culture to culture, like even within the Hindu society, there are certain caste which go for the burial traditions, whereas, some of

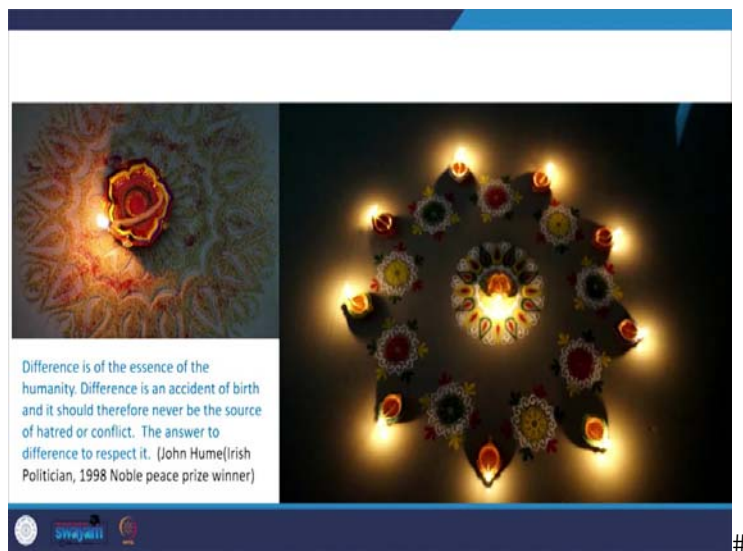
them they actually burned the dead bodies, so that is how various traditional practices have been evolved in time and some of them have eventually also changed.

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For example, these are the temples this is Bisaria temple which will actually significantly built on in between two ponds, and it also differentiates the society, who access from the front side, and who access from the rear side, at that point of time, during the kalacuri times and ratanpur that time itself, they actually also defined the access points of these temples.

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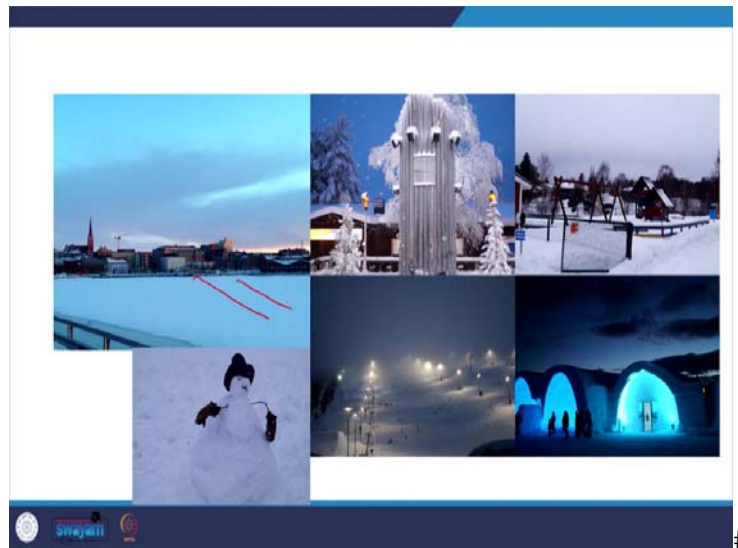
From the anthropological perspective, difference is a sense of the humanity and differences in accident of birth, and it should therefore, never be the source of hatred or conflict, the answer

to difference to respect it. So, this was actually John Hume talked about, because, we are born with the difference, we are differences in accident of birth. And, so, here what we really have to understand here it is, we need to accept it, and we need to respect it.

So, we are born from different family backgrounds with different socio economic backgrounds, we are grown up in different cultures, we are grown up in different climatic conditions, we are processed through various genetical processes, and we are grown up in different climatic conditions and we adapt to different cultural practices, and we are tuned with certain behaviors, we are able to accept certain behaviors, and we will not be able to accept certain behaviors, so this is how it goes back to how from where you come from, and what you are able to accept and what you are not able to accept.

When we talk about the climatic conditions, especially the harsh winter climatic conditions, if you go to the Arctic Circle where, or the Antarctic Circle where the Eskimos live, and even in the northern parts of Sweden where my own experience is, where people modify or adapt themselves in winter differently, and in summer differently.

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For instance, the left-hand side photograph is a complete Sea, which was completely frozen and then they actually create a passage to walk or to drive on the sea. So they are trying to adapt different ways how to crossover to the different islands and during the winter, how they do and during the summer, how they do.

And also they are proposing of various attractive winter cities, concept of attractive winter cities where there are playgrounds, which are meant to play they are mostly shut down for

almost 6 to 8 months, but then how people try to adapt to accept these winter conditions how they bring various winter sports like skiing, and some of these cultural activities, they bring art into the public places.

And one of the another concept is the tourism sector, how a hotel which stays only for a temporary time, for maybe during harsh winter time is ice Hotel near Carona is built only during the winter time, and after that, it is completely taken out. So even in the harsh conditions, man was able to adapt himself and he was able to innovate different ways of living with the harsh conditions.

When we talk about the differences, let us start over understanding a difference in a small room where we work, like in a small lab, where three or four researchers or the colleagues working in it, they are not from the same background, they are from same, they are not from the same professional background either or they may not be from same ethnic background, one may be from Africa, one may be from Chinese, one maybe from India.

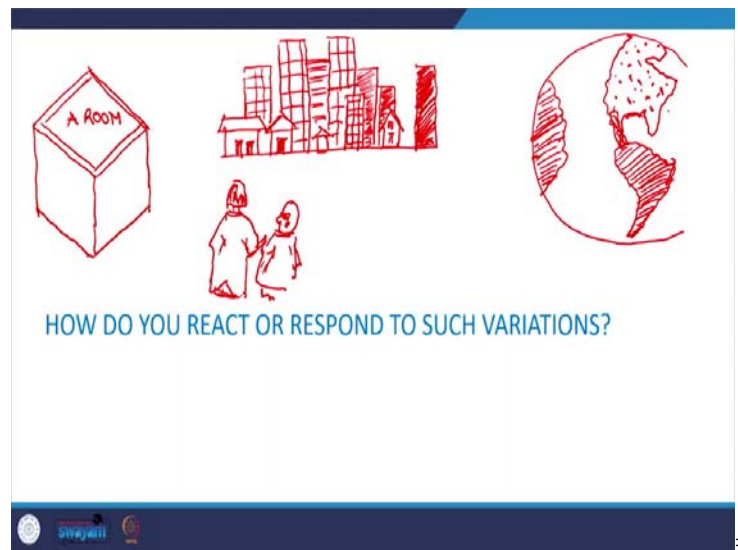
So, anyone or even within the Indian subcontinent in my own lab, I can see that people coming from south, people coming from north, people coming from west, so people come from abroad, each of them have their own cultural ways of working.

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Someone wants to hear music, someone wants to get disturbed in it, so that happens in every office, what we can see. So, some are very sensitive to the sound some are sensitive to social way of working. So, like that our understanding of difference can start, within a small room itself.

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So, when we will look at the scale of these differences, not only at a scale of a room, but when we take about these wider number of samples of people living in a big metropolitan city, how there will be people who are migrants coming from different rural places, there are lower income groups, there are middle income groups, there might be a higher income groups, there might be multimillionaires and billionaires living in the city, how this diversity has been addressed? So, are not people living in smaller Hamlets, how do their lifestyle is people living in rural villages how do their lifestyle is, and people who were living in a tall towers how do they lifestyle is?

So, we talked about even a city we have such kind of differences, and we have that kind of variations. And now we consider the globe, the whole world, where Africans are very different from Americans and South Americans are different from North Americans. Similarly, the Asians, if you consider the continent of Asia, we the middle eastern people are very different, their food habits are different, their religious belonging is different.




Whereas in the South Asian cultures, it is very different you have the Buddhist and Hindu, Jain cultures and also the Islamic cultures and the Christianity as well. So, when there are mixed cultures, obviously, within whether it is in a scale of a small room, or to your city, or even to a country, not only to your country, but to your continent as well, but how do we react or respond to such variations that is the most important part.

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What the people think about their own culture is emic and what an outsider thinks about a culture other than his own is etic. The term emic refers to what insiders do and grasp about their own culture. It includes people's view of reality and their explanation of why they do and the way they do

Emic view	Etic view
There is a local belief that the nails and hair removed from the body are not to be thrown in the open space, because there is a chance of the same being used for black magic causing harm to the person concerned.	The etic side of it may be that throwing nails and hairs carelessly is not hygienic, and it will in turn mix up with food materials.
In Hindu families, the elders do not allow the coconut piece (half) open inside the home saying that it is done on the occasion of death.	Keeping half of the coconut open will lead to the coconut becoming dry and unfit for use.

Source: Higher secondary course Anthropology, (2016) Prepared by State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Govt. of Kerala



So, from an anthropological perspective, there are two views, which has been talked about. One is the Emic view, and the Etic view. So, what the people think about their own culture is an Emic and what an outsider thinks about a culture other than his own Etic. So, the term Emic refers to what insiders do and grasp about their own culture. It includes people's view of reality, and their explanation of why they do and the way they do.

Like I, myself coming from an Andhra Pradesh state, and I am coming from a small town, which is close to Tamil Nadu, so the way I eat, the way the food items I eat, and the way I dress in my home, the kinds of festivals I celebrate, what I perceive is very different, my own culture.

But whereas, a person coming from Punjab or Haryana and looking at my culture, eating on a banana leaf, or maybe a foreigner coming and seeing us sitting down and eating on a banana leaf, maybe he may feel it a different way, so that is how the difference between the EMIC view and the Etic view. For example, some of the references was given from the textbook of this anthropology, which is, of course a school based a textbook but it is very interesting to see the information that they have provided in this particular anthropology textbook for the 11th class.

And in EMIC view has given some examples, there is a local belief that the nails and hair removed from the body are not to be thrown in the open space, because there is a chance of same being used for black magic, using harm to a person this is the kind of myths which people might have carried over from generations to generations. But the Etic side of it may be

limbs work, and how the impacts of fishing has been seen in few decades, what are the root causes for it.

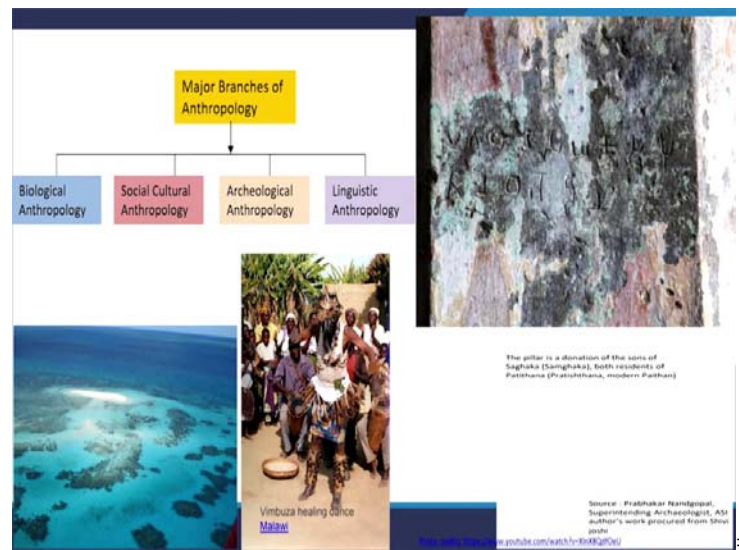
Similarly, in my own work, also, when I have been part of these fishing activities, especially in the context of Tamil Nadu, what I learned in this process is initially I went with kind of a questionnaire approach, which never worked out with working with the local communities, because many of them are illiterates, and they were not able to understand and most of the responses in a very superficial level. But when I started living with them, when I started developing a trust with these communities, interacting with them regularly, and roaming around, going to fishing with them, and that actually developed certain trust between and bond between me and communities, myself and the communities.

So, one of my another colleague from France, he was actually living there in the fisherman house, he started learning Tamil, sometimes it requires to learn the local language, because you need to understand the deeper understanding of what the community talks about, sense about, sometimes linguistics plays an important role.

So even in my case, I ended up learning Tamil, whatever the villagers were talking about gradually, in few months, I was able to understand what the gender issues they were talking about what the livelihood issues they are talking about. And of course, within the process, I also tried to develop some mental maps and other aspects.

So, similarly, in the education we once for sava conference, what we did was we brought these tribes, arugula tribe from the northern part of Andhra Pradesh, and then we asked them to construct these disaster resilient shelters in three hours time. So, that is where our students were involved with involved learning from the tribes on how they can actually make these bamboo shelters within three hours time. So, in that way, even the transfer of knowledge, how we can actually learn from these tribes, learn from these communities is very important. And in the process, we also need to unlearn many things what we already know.

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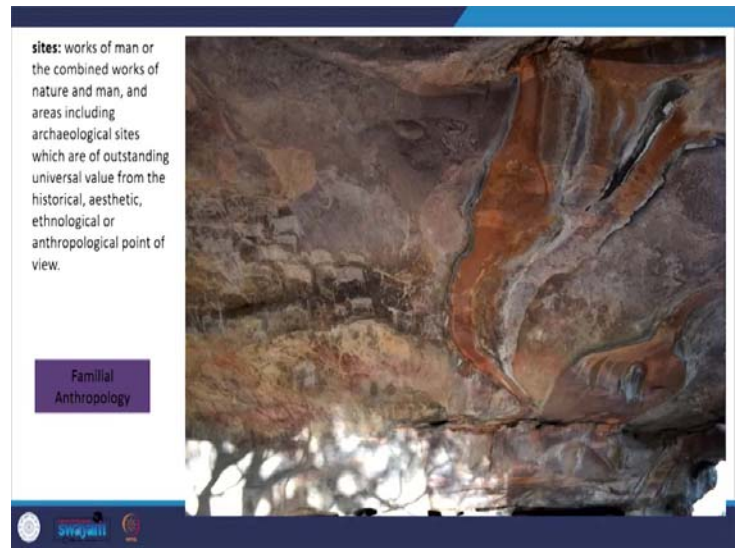


So, when we talk about the major branches of anthropology, so, in a biological anthropology, for example, Great Barrier Reef, where certain biological processes are analyzed, whether in terms of algae or fungi, and how these are actually damaged in the current conditions, there are many ways one can look at it. Similarly, the most important part from the architectural perspective is the social cultural anthropology and archaeological anthropology and of course, linguistic anthropology.

So, let me show you some examples of for example, you have this Vimbuza healing dance in Malawi, where it talks about certain knowledge on medicinal aspects, how these different cultures practice and how they are passed on from generation to generation. So, there is a cultural process, where the knowledge is transferred from one generation to another generation. Whereas, if you see some of the archaeological evidences, you can see there is a text written here, it says, the pillar is donation of sons of sanghaka, sagamghaka, both residents of Patithana.

So, which means even the decoding the linguistic part of this particular text on archaeological site, in Pitalkhora caves, it actually tells reveal some information about some other cities, some other donor who funded this construction. So, in that way, there is collaboration between the linguistic understanding of it in the archaeological context and talking about some other families situated in some other city so, in that way, it creates certain linkages.

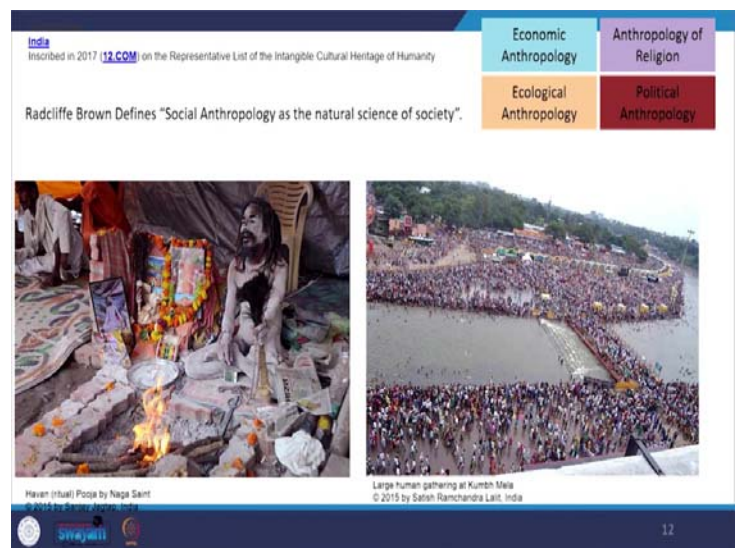
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Even in the context of Bhimbetka, what we can actually see these are the sights and the works of man and where, how he is interacting with these nature and how he was celebrating his life. What kind of activities used it is all captured in these rock paintings, which is actually a World Heritage Site.

But, some of these evidences actually gives certain clues how a particular clan or a particular society or a particular tribal group or a particular families, so how their lifestyle was, how their way of behavior was? So, in this is where we reflect with the anthropology. So, we can actually track back certain transformations that happened with that particular families or particular class or particular societies.

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With one of these prominent example where we talk about the Kumbh Mela, which was recently inscribed in as the intangible cultural heritage by the UNESCO list. So, this is one of the huge social congregation which happens either in Allahabad or even in Haridwar, there is a huge congregation, which happens, and people from different parts of India come together and they actually take a dip, or they take the holy water from here and they go to their temples, so, there is various activities which takes place.

But if you look at it, even the Harvard University they have studied the economic feasibility, the economic aspects of this particular social congregations, like these economic aspects, what are the how much, how many business ventures it opens up and how. Even the Muslim communities are part of many of these kawad, kawadiya, kanwariya taraba. And, so in fact, there is a communal different societies which serve these people, there is a tourism industry, which comes in, which plays an important role.

There is also the disaster management committees, which plays an important role in it, how the crowd management system, the transport hubs, how they actually provide different facilities for these pilgrims to come and go back to their own place. So, like that there is and what is the expenditure for this? How do administration's look at it? How do the health sector look at it, and not only that, when we look at this kind of congregations, there is a religious perspective in it.

And we can also look from an ecological perspective where the Swachhata and Pavitrata aspects could be observed, which means cleanliness and holiness, how they are interrelated to each other, and how they influence each other, both in a positive ways and in negative ways, how they are interpreted by different societies.

So similarly, the political anthropology. How the politics perceive this whole congregation, like in this one example, actually can talk about many issues in terms of socio cultural anthropology, because on there is an economic perspective in it, there is a political vision in it, along this ecological understanding in it, there is a religious understanding in it.

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Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe

Medical Anthropology

Andean cosmivision of the Kallawayas
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
Inscribed in 2008 (3.COM) on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (originally proclaimed in 2003)

Vimbuza healing dance
Malawi



© Jérôme Tubiana
The Kallawayas ethnic group, based in the mountainous Bautista Saavedra region north of La Paz, traces its roots to the pre-Inca period.

© François-Xavier Fretz/UNESCO

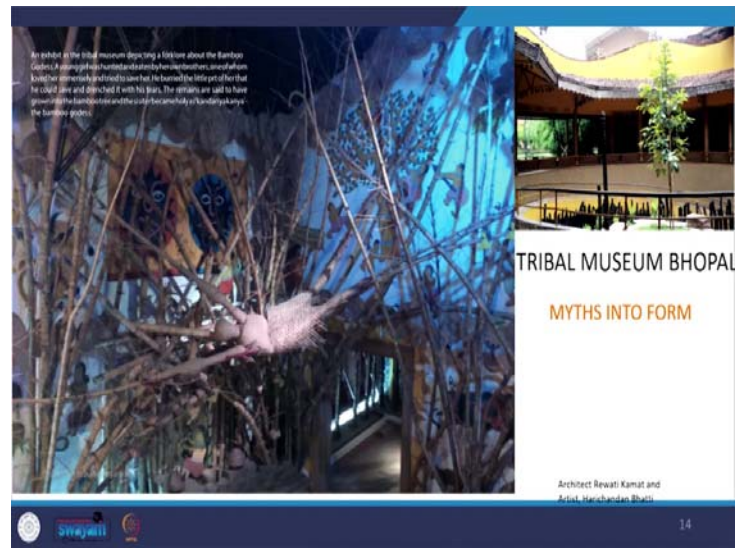
Like many aspects of Andean culture, the Kallawayas's practices and values have evolved through the fusion of native and Christian religions.

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So similarly, when we talk about there is another branch of medical anthropology, where the knowledge and the practices concerning the nature in this universe. For example, we have this Kallawayas ethnic groups in the mountainous regions, and they actually dates back to the pre-Inca period and they many, like many aspects of these Andean cultures, this Kallawayas practices and values have evolved through the fusion of native and Christian religions, even these are all represented in the UNESCO intangible cultural heritage, including the Vimbuza healing dance, and how these whether it is a dance practices, whether it is a knowledge on herbs on the process, they are all concerned with the nature. So, how they are transferred from one generation to the another generation.

So that is a kind of brief understanding of anthropology and how it has certain interactions with the human nature and how humans have intervened with the nature and evolve their identities and how they transform their understanding to the legendary how they transmitted their understanding towards the next generations. So now, I am going to talk to about how it is relevant in architecture. Like I am going to talk to you a few cases and few aspects, how architects have considered the anthropological aspects of certain societies.

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One of the important case I would like to bring forward is a tribal Museum in Bhopal designed by Revati Kamat and artists Harichandan Bhattiji. And so, in this, I will show you the way they conceptualize the galleries of the tribes of Madhya Pradesh and one of the gallery is oriented towards the spiritual nature of it, one of the galleries oriented toward the life, in the lifestyle of it, the another gallery is more oriented towards their the myths and the play aspect of it.

So, this is one of the artifact of course they have exaggerated the scale of it to the from the museum perspective, but if you see there is a myth in the tribal places that the bambusa, the goddess bambusa, the bamboo goddess. What is the story of this bamboo goddess? So basically, there was an the story talks about a young girl who was hunted and eaten by her own brothers.

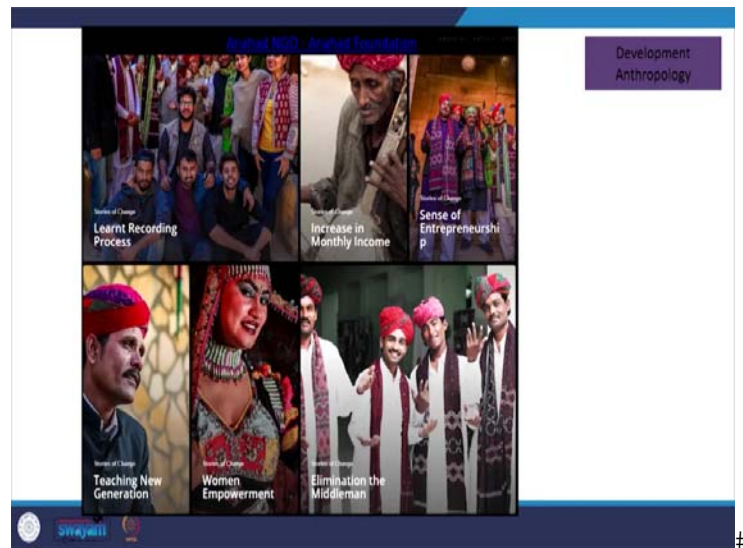
And one of the brothers was not was trying to protect her from the rest of these brothers, he loved her immensely and he always tried to save her. But at some point of time, he was not able to save her and he buried the little part of her body and that is where people believe that the tears, the tears have branched that and that is actually have grown into a bamboo tree and so that is what they refer to as the Holy Kandhariya Kanya as a bamboo goddess.

So, but you see, this whole myth was just a kind of fairy tale, which has been told as to the stories to their children in the tribal societies, but then some of those anthropologists got all these myths or these tales, and then that has an artist has depicted that form, the woman has

been tortured by a few people here, that kind of expression has been brought by an artist and then that has been captured within the museum.

So, in that way, an anthropologist, an artist and architect, how they closely work together to bring that message of that particular myths which were there in the societies to the present day audience. Similarly, the kind of place they have, the kind of celebrations they have, so all these galleries were portrayed, based on their observations with the society, their narratives, which they have collected from the society.

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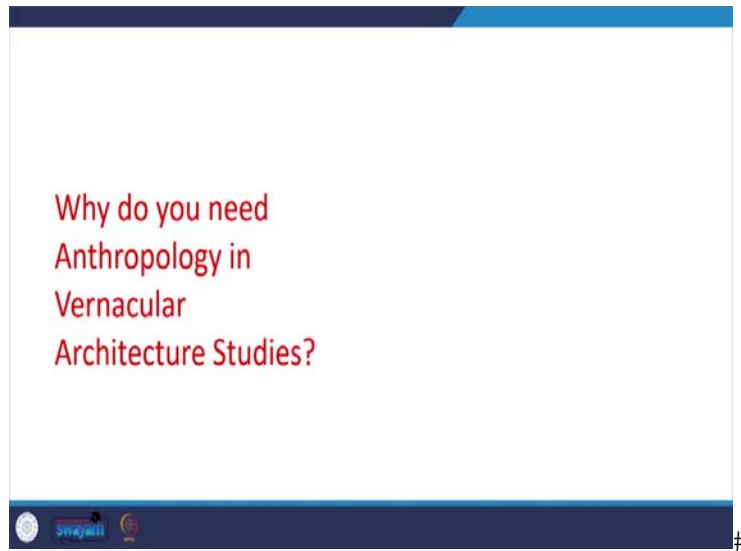


So, another example, which I would like to say, in terms of the development, anthropology. Even anthropology is not just limited to any historical or archaeological or a biological conditions or inquiries. But in the development anthropology, I will just refer one of the NGO's work Anahad Foundation, by Abhinav and his team, they are doing wonderful work, what they are doing is they are actually tapping down the unknown potential of these rural musicians and they are actually bringing them into kind of business, making them as entrepreneurs.

So, in fact, they are understanding these root causes, why this music is not coming to the mainstream, so that is where they are approaching the villagers, they are actually capturing their own talents, and they are actually increasing their monthly incomes and they are bringing the kind of sense of entrepreneur they are connecting these villagers with many other agencies.

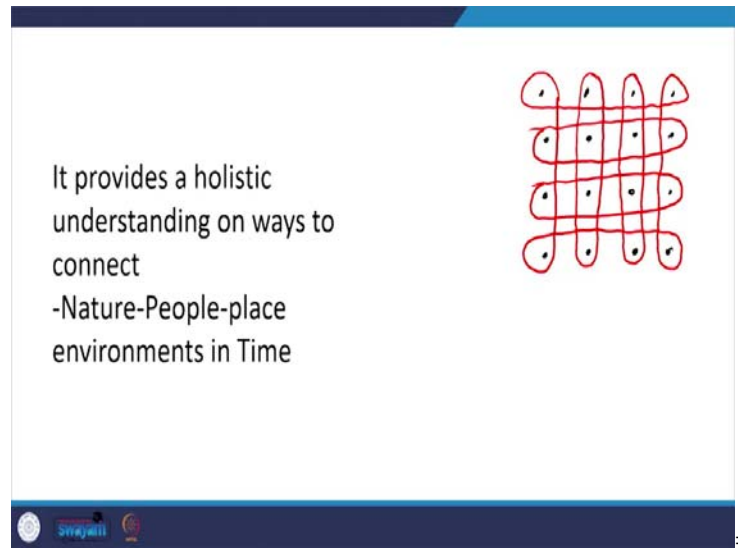
So, in that way, they are able to teach the new generations and at the same time, there are some woman empowerments programs has been conducted. And in between in the music management process, then trying to reduce the role of the middlemen in this process, so that where the musicians can get a direct benefit of that. So, in that way, in the context of music management Abhinav have done wonderful work.

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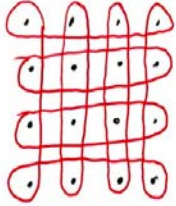


Now, just to summarize the whole understanding, why do you need anthropology in Vernacular Architecture studies. So, as we understand that, there are lots of information one maybe at a very deep community rooted something, which is very deeply rooted with the nature, so, what we really have to do is run this in the context of anthropological studies, we need to connect these dots, various dots, sometimes they may not be in an organized pattern, they may be in a regular pattern, but we need to connect these dots.

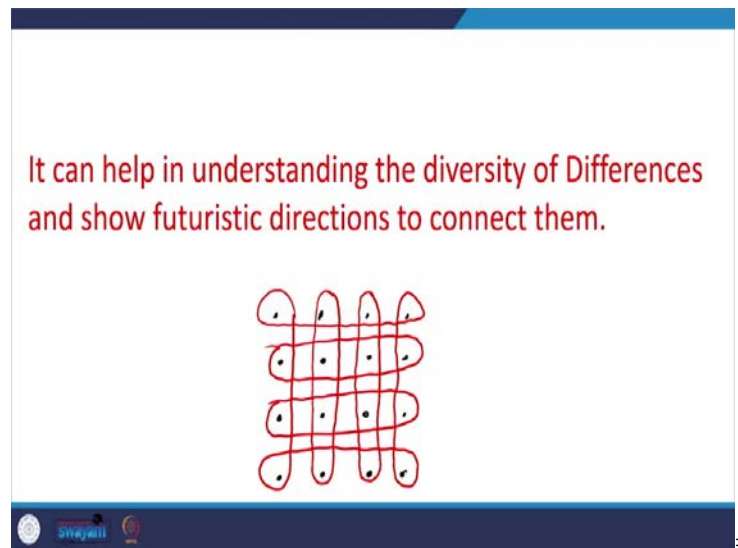
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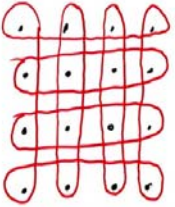
It provides a holistic understanding on ways to connect
-Nature-People-place environments in Time



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It can help in understanding the diversity of Differences and show futuristic directions to connect them.



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It actually provides a holistic understanding on ways to connect nature, people and place environments in time. So, it can also categorizes and classifies certain types of differences, it can help in understanding the diversity of differences and show the futuristic directions to connect them. For example, it could be a small kolam design and in front of a house, but one can easily understand that how it has connected not only the people in the house and the people going on the street, and also it connects their neighborhood.

And so, if someone is today in the Pongal time, they are not able to see this particular kolam in front of their house immediately the neighbor's staying is well are they feeling well, and they used to inquire, how are you feeling? But in present context when we moved on from individual house concepts to the apartment complex on a high rise buildings, today even the

next generations they will be not be aware of these kinds of arts, the floral designs, how actually these are connecting the people.

So, this is something even with a small design focus of this kolam design, one can investigate how a society have transformed, the role of this kolam in the transformation of the societies and their interactions that also could be studied. So, in that way, I would like to end the session about the anthropology of shelter. Thank you.