

**Post Congress of World Anthropology Congress
(October 25-26, 2023)**

Theme: Anthropology and Digital Cultures

The investigation of the impact of technology on the life of people today receives priority for various reasons. The concepts of digital culture, transhumanism and posthumanism result from such research. Though digital culture is variously defined and has been used to refer to many contexts, anthropologists may primarily understand it as one that deals with how technology and the internet influence how we interact, build relationships and create groups as humans. It's how we behave, think and communicate within society under the influence of today's technologies. The concern for radically changing bodies, minds, and even the nature of humanity itself is appropriately voiced by scholars under these circumstances.

It is now clear that the number of people inhabiting the metaverse is fast increasing. The opportunities for human interactions and social transformations in the digital world are enormous, yet without cultural dynamics with deep implications on ethical comportments. And so, there lies the promise for digital anthropology (UNESCO 2023).

The 'digital anthropology', that has now emerged as an important subdiscipline, has enormous scope, includes diverse topics for study and has the potential to raise very pertinent questions relating to anthropological approaches and methods. This field covers anything from the consequences of the rise of digital technologies for particular populations to the study of specific digital technologies and the incorporation of these technologies in anthropological methodologies. Writing in the Annual Review of Anthropology, Wilson and Peterson (2002) have also raised some fundamental questions that reflect the strength of anthropology to dwell upon important contemporary issues. What are the ways in which information technology and media are themselves cultural products? How are the individual and community identities negotiated on and offline? What are the dynamics of power and access in the context of new communication media? It is pointed out that the internet brings about changes, but these changes are essentially embedded in society's existing practices and power relations. Thus, as we progress in 'digital India', the question of how inclusion and more meaningful participation is possible to create a positive identity among socially marginalized women remains central.

The uncertainties dawdle as we accept digital technologies for social transformations: The uncertainties are currently about 'disinformation', 'inappropriate content', 'the evolution of gaming and pornography, extension of discrimination and inequalities (UNESCO 2022). Uncertainties are part of life. However, the uncertainty being experienced, comprehended and theorized post COVID pushes us to explore new ways of working and grouping and, in general, the emergence of different cultures under the impact of technology. Ellers et al. (2022) highlighted 'how technology adoption produces marginality in service delivery, situating technology amidst the ecologies of everyday life and the interplays of culture, structure and agency'.

The 2023 WAC at Delhi 'intends to critically look at the old hierarchies and marginalities and how they have been reinforced during contemporary crises'. The theme of the post-Congress, in the light of what has been observed above, offers to continue on these central themes of marginality and uncertainties, relating them to the digital world and also to focus on 'digitising the human' and 'humanizing the digital', which the UNESCO (2022) report highlights.

The works of scholars in the area of digital anthropology paved the way for anthropological insights into many areas, which have implications for both methods and theory. However, research on digital cultures in India is scanty. Some of the important subjects that need India-specific research include the empowerment of marginalized communities through the facility of mobile-phone-based money systems; transformations in time and space of work practices; the potential and consequences of replacing caregivers with robots; processes and effects of transborder parenting on different actors; challenges and opportunities posed by newer forms of news dissemination; the composition, leadership and functioning of digital communities etc.,

Considering scholars' varied interests, which fit the theme of Anthropology and Digital Cultures of this post-Congress, many subthemes are listed (see the box). Scholars considering presenting a paper or organizing a panel may identify these subthemes and relate their paper to them. However, scholars are also free to identify any other area that falls under the theme of the post-congress.

- ✚ Digital Inclusion and exclusion
- ✚ Representations of gender in digital space
- ✚ Digital Identities
- ✚ Digital technologies and consumer cultures
- ✚ Popular culture in the digital age
- ✚ Social media and sub-cultures
- ✚ Networking communities
- ✚ The proliferation of personal digital devices and its Impact
- ✚ Digitized presentation of everyday life
- ✚ Surveillance and privacy
- ✚ Remote work and Remote education
- ✚ Telemedicine
- ✚ Digitized ritual experiences
- ✚ Engagement beyond limits & Digital wellbeing
- ✚ Artificial intelligence, Smart homes
- ✚ Designer and User cultures in the digital world
- ✚ Cyberbullying
- ✚ Digitizing materiality – Museums in the digital age
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- ✚ Religious practices in the digital space