7 FIELD WORK

7.1 Developing an Interview Format

Interview one person or family from each of the occupational groups you have listed, using the guidelines given below.

- Set aside time for designing a questionnaire before you go out to interview.
- Start by defining what it is that you want to find out. Write this out in a single sentence. Keep in mind that the beginning of any research project, whether in the library or in the field, is a statement of purpose that can be expressed in a few sentences. Develop this statement carefully as it will serve as a way to introduce yourself to both community members and research and reference librarians assisting you in pre-fieldwork preparation. Each time you visit a research facility or conduct an interview, be prepared to explain the purpose of your project.
- Now select the target group to be interviewed. How many people will you speak to and will their responses be very varied? Will you choose the people to be interviewed through a random selection or will you handpick them?
- Once you have decided these issues, you can start listing out all the possible questions to be asked. Try and think of all possible responses/answers to each question. Is your question specific enough? Is the information you are seeking really relevant to your study? Are the questions organised in the correct order? Do they need to be translated into the local language?

Children sketching craft objects for documentation

Review your questions along with your group, and make sure that everybody has the same set of questions. Now you need to focus on how you

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will carry out the interview. Before starting your interview you need to establish a rapport with the individuals being interviewed. To get to know them well, you must relate to them as equals.

- A personal touch will go a long way in your being accepted. For instance, if you are offered a cup of tea, do not refuse it even if you don't particularly like tea! Share something about yourself, your family, school/college, your interests — these will all help indicate your sincerity and friendliness.
- In addition, you may want to explain your course outline and syllabus and why you are interviewing them and how the information you collect will be used.
- Role-play interviews and responses in the classroom. This will help you refine your questionnaire even further.
- See that you are dressed appropriately for the interview. Keep in mind who you are interviewing. Your clothes need to be both comfortable and right for the occasion.

Do explain who you are to the community people and why you have come, and keep your interaction as informal and friendly as possible. Be aware of the fact that this is your first visit. You are the learner in this situation. Answer questions with patience. This will establish your credibility as a learner and help in building a positive relationship with the crafts community. Keep in mind that the craftsperson you are inteviewing has:

- had a rich experience of life
- played an active role in society
- maturity and wisdom
- creative abilities with varied skills
- carried out complex tasks with dexterity
- organised and planned her/his activities
- the skills of communicating intelligently
- energy and enthusiasm
- and is possibly far older and wiser than you.

In other words, in all aspects of their lives they are as capable as any one else.

Use the following sample documentation format to create your own, adapting it so that it is relevant to your chosen field of study and locality.

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Sample Documentation Format from the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad

Name :

Class :

Statement of purpose for documenting the craft:

Data Base of Products

(i) Name of the craft/product
In English/local language:
Meaning:

(ii) Location/geographical region:
State/district/city/town/village/mountain/desert/coastal area/plain/forest

(iii) Types of products made (typology):
household products/musical instruments/interiors products/masks/props for theatre/products for ceremonial or ritual purpose/toys and games/folk art/painting/toys and games/building craft/footwear/others

Product Description

(i) Specific product description/craft vocabulary:
- *Size, dimension, texture, form, motifs and patterns (notice detailing)*
- *Colour, craftsmanship, design, symbology of form*

(ii) Function and use of the product/occasion of use:

(iii) Materials used:

(iv) Processes and techniques used (note down quotable quotes of the craftsman):

(v) Product range:
traditional and new; history and origin of the craft

(vi) Traditional design:

(vii) Changes in the design repertoire/new range:

(viii) Innovation in form/innovation in technique/material:

(ix) Cost of product:

(x) Study of the craft as a livelihood:
socio-economic aspects, links between the maker and the user, maker and patron or market; maker to market chain, raw material sourcing, related skills

(xi) Marketing:
(a) local market/regional/international/national
(b) Retail/wholesale:
(c) Direct marketing:
haat/mela/outlet
(d) Indirect marketing:
major clients/buyers

(xii) Volume of production

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Process and Technique

(i) Process of making:
(ii) Finishing:
(iii) Tools/equipment used — how they are made, their significance:
(iv) Raw materials used:
(v) Time taken for each process:
(vi) Labour cost:

Craftsperson's Profile

Personal Data

(i) Name:
(ii) Age:
(iii) Family:
(vi) Language:
(v) Educational background:
(vi) Experience/hereditary skill:
(vii) Aspirations:
(viii) His/her definition of craft (note quotes):

Socio-economic Data

(ix) Dress:
(x) Food:
(xi) Family members:
(xii) Community:
(xiii) Religion:
(xiv) Income:
individual/joint/primary/secondary
(xv) Personal assets:
land/house/property/cattle
(xvi) Busy season/slack season
(xvii) Employment:
self-employed/employee/member of cooperative/member of association/major clients
(xviii) Membership of any group:
(xix) Aspects of learning related to the craft:
(xx) Transmission of skills, aspirations and world view:
(xxi) Find examples of other creative expressions, craftsperson's relation with colleagues/community, work innovation, and creativity:

Environmental Aspects

(i) Craftsperson's house, work place:
(ii) Bird's-eye view of the village/town/city; any landmarks — art, architecture or historical market:

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(iii) Infrastructure:
communication facilities, industries, roads, transportation etc.

(iv) Craft and region and biodiversity:

(v) Awareness of eco-friendly practices:

(vi) Recycling of material/object:

Cultural Aspects

(i) Festivals celebrated:

(ii) Festivals related to the craft/material:

(iii) Myths/legends related to the origin of the craft or origin of the universe:

(iv) Songs related to the craft:

(v) Overlaps with art, etc.

Technology

(i) Definition of manufacturing process:

(ii) Any changes/modifications made:

(iii) Energy sources used:

Skill

(i) Proficiency:

(ii) Awards/recognition with examples:

(iii) Training received/workshop attended:

(iv) Craftsperson's concept of quality:

Nature of Change

(i) New motifs, colours, materials and layouts:

(ii) How does the craftsperson respond to change, to market forces, to competition, to new work ethics, changed prosperity?

(iii) Factors in his/her environment, profession, thinking that have contributed to expressing change and in which way:
material, texture, form, colour

(iv) Issues that affect development of the crafts sector in the state/region:
examine and identify social, environmental or governmental legislations, or global trends which are affecting the growth and sustainable development of the craft.

(v) Intervention by Government and NGOs and resultant issues:

(vi) Future of the craft:

(vii) Caste/social practice/religion/gender issues:

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7.2 Consent Letter

Make sure you and your team have obtained signed letters from your parents giving their consent to your field trip.

- The letter should be countersigned by your teacher or principal.
- It should mention the day, date and time of your field trip.
- It should mention the purpose, so your parents/ guardians are aware of your programme.
- The letter should also indicate how you will return home.

7.3 Making an Appointment with the Craftsperson

Most districts and towns have a design centre, bazaar, *mela* or street where crafts communities live.

It is best to contact the craftsperson for interview before you go. Either the team can make a preliminary contact visit, or make an appointment through a resource person.

Explain the purpose of the interview and documentation programme and how much time it is likely to take.

Choose a time and date that is convenient for both of you, and does not interfere with the craftsperson's schedule of work and market days.

7.4 Things to Take for the Field Study

A simple checklist for the fieldworkers might include the following items. The list will vary according to the project.

1. Notebooks, sketchbooks, pens and pencils so that you can take notes and make appropriate drawings.
2. Camera, film, or digital medium, and accessories as needed, such as an assortment of lenses, a flash, lighting equipment and a tripod.
3. Audio or video recorder (battery-operated ones are useful, microphones, plenty of fresh tape, discs, or sound cards, batteries, and an extension cord.

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7.5 After the Interview

After carrying out the interviews, those who have investigated related occupational/economic groups broadly group together. Then present your material to the rest of the class using a variety of presentational techniques.

The presentation should include samples gathered in the field study. Show pictures and maps. Describe any difficulties and share with the class the special experiences you may have had. You may make the presentation in any of the following ways.

- A powerpoint presentation on the computer
- Charade/role play (enact your interviews)
- Charts and audio-visuals
- Open group discussion

Hands-on training during field work

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