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Source: *Annual Review of Anthropology* , 1976, Vol. 5 (1976), pp. 209–225

Published by: Annual Reviews

Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2949311

STATUS OF SOCIAL-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA

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INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY IN FOCUS

Although we have been invited to write on the status of social-cultural anthropology in South Asia, we prefer to confine our remarks to India for various reasons. To the best of our knowledge, anthropology has not been accorded independent academic recognition in Afganistan, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, although there are some anthropologists working in basically non-anthropological institutions. Sri Lanka has produced some well-known anthropologists, but their talent is being utilized by other countries.

In India, on the other hand, anthropology has been recognized by academic and nonacademic bodies and institutions for many decades. Before detailing the background of contemporary anthropology in India, we should like to say a few words about the discipline in general. We have been invited to write on social-cultural anthropology, the study of man. But it is appropriate to state at the outset that social-cultural anthropology in India is a subdivision of anthropology in the sense that the term is understood in the English-speaking countries. The other two major subdivisions of anthropology are physical (biological) anthropology and prehistory or archaeological anthropology. In recent years, some institutions of higher learning and research have begun to teach linguistic anthropology as well. As this account makes clear, we realize that there are areas of interest which the Indian social-cultural anthropologists share with Indian so-

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ciologists. But in the procedures, the manner of conceiving research problems, areas of research, theoretical orientations, and involvement with problem-solving there is a large difference between Indian sociologists as a whole, on the one hand, and Indian anthropologists as a whole, on the other. We firmly believe that social-cultural anthropology is neither a branch of sociology in India nor coterminus with it. This account, however, is not to be taken to mean that we are against meaningful cooperation or even collaboration with sociologists in India.

Among the colonialized nations, which became free after the Second World War, India has had a unique position. After the British entrenched themselves in this country, a group of English scholars began deriding the earlier rash accounts of "primitiveness" and "barbarism" of the native Indians as painted by some particularly egoistic and ill-intentioned British administrators. It did not take long for the West to realize that India had one of the oldest uninterrupted cultural traditions among all countries of the world. Sir William Jones's statement in 1776 about a more than accidental affinity between Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin and the consequent growth in comparative philology, with Sanskrit occupying the focal point of interest, contributed much toward changing the Western scholars' opinion of India. However, we do not agree with some of our fellow an-thropologists in this country who believe that anthropology in India began with the establishment in 1774 of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It is true that the Asiatic Society was responsible for the publication of materials concerned with antiquarian and anthropological interests.

In our view, the origin of anthropology in India goes back to the days of British colonial administration in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The British administrators gradually realized that a good acquaintance with the natives and their culture was a basic prerequisite for governing them properly without falling foul of their customs and thus causing avoidable irritations. Therefore, the administrative needs of the British rulers forced them to use official machinery to gather information about the social institutions, economic conditions, and religious beliefs and practices of the native Indians, who could be grouped easily into tribes and castes. H. H. Risley first published his accounts of tribes and castes of Bengal in 1891. He later became famous as head of census operations in India, which resulted in his most celebrated book, *The People of India*. He was able to establish an ethnographic survey as a wing of the census operations in 1905. This may be taken as a landmark in the development of anthropology in India. Crooke, Thurston, Grierson, Blunt, Mills, Dalton, O'Malley, Russel, Hutton, and others of the Indian Civil Service also contributed toward the founding and establishment of anthropology in India. The efforts of these British administrators gave us compendia of tribes and castes for different parts of India, district gazetteers covering almost every district of British India, the Imperial Gazetteer of India, and census reports. The report of the 1931 census conducted under the direction of J. H. Hutton is particularly notable for its ethnographic notes and comments on different communities of India. After India became independent in 1947, a social studies division was added to the office of the Registrar General of India, who is in charge of census operations in this country.

The preceding account highlights the fact that anthropological studies in India were the offshoot of colonial rule. They were undertaken by British administrators (39) to enable "the rulers to take stock of their position and to see how it has fared with the people committed to their charge" (39, p. 2). In some cases anthropological studies were motivated by genuine curiosity about the variety of different peoples of India and their exotic customs. A few notable consequences of these studies are worth mentioning. The early anthropological studies were not academic but utilitarian in their nature. The contributors were all foreigners who were studying the cultures of the natives. They were all based in India and did not have direct contact with the academic anthropologists like Tylor, Frazer, and others who were conducting researches at Cambridge, Oxford, and London universities. Thus their work did not become a part of British anthropology, which would have been the case had they been inspired by the British academic anthropologists or the colonial office in London. But in one sense their contributions were in tune with the main theme and ethos of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century anthropology. Their contributions were anthropological, in spite of the utilitarian bias, because they were often studying curious customs of people belonging to other cultures.

This early affiliation of anthropology with government agencies continued even after independence. There are certain research institutions that are doing anthropological studies. They are autonomous or semi-autonomous establishments and are financed by federal or state governments. The most notable research institution, probably the largest of its kind in the world, is the Anthropological Survey of India with its headquarters at Calcutta. It has seven regional stations and employs over a hundred professional anthropologists. It has been carrying on research in both social-cultural and physical anthropology. It has the best library of anthropology in India.

Several state governments have established tribal research institutes or bureaus in their states to collect information and plan the development of the tribal people residing in their states. In some states, anthropologists, besides working in the tribal institutes, are also associated with the *Harijan* and social welfare departments. Some other national institutes where anthropologists have been working are the National Institute of Community Development, National Institute of Family Planning, International Centre for Population Studies, and Indian Agricultural Research Institute. Anthropology in India is trying to carve out a unique place for itself in the holistic anthropological study under the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) at the Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad.

Anthropologists not only find places in governmental research institutions, but in some governmental investigating agencies as well. Some of these are the Office of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, social welfare departments of the Government of India and the state governments, the Office of Registrar General of India, and the Gazetteer Division of the state information departments. Anthropology's association with museums in this country is also quite old. Indian Museum at Calcutta and National Museum at New Delhi have separate anthropology divisions. Among the state museums,

the Government Museum at Madras has a very good section on anthropological exhibits and its curators are professional anthropologists. The Prince of Wales Museum at Bombay has an anthropology section, and Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad has a good collection of material culture items from the different tribes of Gujarat.

Until now we have talked about the recognition accorded to anthropology by nonacademic agencies. It is notable that even though anthropology had not been introduced as a regular subject of study in an Indian university, it was accorded recognition by the Indian Science Congress Association in its first session held at Calcutta. The Indian Science Congress began with a section on anthropology, which has remained a part of the Congress. Until recently it was the only social science discipline represented in the Indian Science Congress. This situation is parallel to that of the British and American Associations for the Advancement of Science. It may not be out of place to mention here that anthropology has been associated with the National Institute of Sciences of India (now called Indian National Science Academy) from its very inception. Anthropology also has a place in the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, and Indian Council of Social Science Research. Anthropologists are associated with the Planning Commission of India as well.

A discipline cannot be said to have made its mark until it is accorded recognition as a subject of teaching and research at the university level. Contrary to the popular idea that anthropology is a new subject, it entered the field of university education in 1920 at Calcutta University. Curiously, although the first inspiration for both academic and nonacademic anthropology in India came from Great Britain, Indian anthropological teaching has not followed the British pattern. At present, full-fledged departments of anthropology, covering all branches of the discipline, are conspicuous by their absence in British universities. Most of the famous British universities have departments of social anthropology, not anthropology. But in India, beginning with Calcutta University, practically all the universities teach anthropology as an integrated discipline although there has been more emphasis on the development of social-cultural anthropology. Out of over 100 universities in this country, provision for teaching anthropology at masters' level has been made in about 20. At the bachelors' level one paper in anthropology is usually given as a part of the sociology course in most universities.

Unfortunately, the growth of anthropology as a subject of higher study and research has not been rapid, at least not as rapid as that of sociology. Besides the regular universities, anthropology has carved out a small niche in technical and professional institutions as well. The Indian Institute of Management at Calcutta and the Administrative Staff College of India at Hyderabad have anthropologists on their faculty who are trying to extend the traditional boundaries of anthropology. Some anthropologists have also been recruited as members of the faculty of the social science and humanities division of the Indian Institutes of Technology, to train engineers. In our view in the last half-century the growth of Indian anthropology in general and of social-cultural anthropology

in particular has been notable, though not spectacular. Despite its under developed economic conditions and the lack of employment opportunities for many of its graduates, India probably is second only to the United States in the number of professionally trained anthropologists working in different institutions.

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AND CHANGING PERSPECTIVES

In the previous section, we referred to the colonial background of Indian anthropology. It may be worthwhile to repeat that the British administrator began anthropological studies in this country with a purely utilitarian purpose. He was an alien and looked at all kinds of native Indians with "non-involvement." Like his fellow countrymen studying peoples of Africa, Oceania, or the West Indies, his studies of Indian people were also "other-culture" studies. His contributions normally would have formed the Indian studies wing of British anthropology, but the British administrators conducted their studies of Indian institutions and customs as servants of the government of India while they were stationed in this country. Not the academic interests of British anthropology but administrative requirements motivated these early studies. Most of the writings were either official or semiofficial documents of the government of India.

At the turn of the century, L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and S. C. Roy entered the field of anthropological studies. Iyer, like the British administrators, worked on a serial publication (24 a, b) on the tribes and castes. Roy's work had a different flavor. Although not an academic anthropologist himself, he was in close touch with the leading Western anthropologists like Frazer, Rivers, Marett, and Dixon. He wrote detailed ethnographic accounts of several tribes of Chotanagpur, beginning with his first publication in 1912 entitled *Mundas and Their Country* (39a). Roy has himself called his procedure "the orthodox method of ethnographical monographs," which consisted of concise classified presentation of the different aspects of a culture as a whole. Roy considered his procedure to be different from the functional method of Malinowski. He was convinced, at the end of his career, that he would adopt the functional method if he were to do his anthropological studies over again.

It is strange that even these very able pioneering anthropologists of Indian origin did not think that their work should be different from that of the British administrator-anthropologists who were studying an alien culture. Roy was not a foreigner, but he quickly adopted the prevailing fashion of the day of studying tribals who were called animists by Tylor. Both Iyer and Roy thought that a study of tribal people through first-hand field work was central to anthropology. Other anthropologists of Indian origin followed the lead of these pioneers by choosing to work among the tribal people. Thus for a fairly long time (until the end of the 1940s) Indian anthropology was *primarily* a study of tribal people of India who were considered to be separate from the rest of the Indian population

and thus could be studied with the same kind of detachment that Western anthropologists had adopted in studying cultures of simple people, usually outside their own national boundaries.

In those days anthropology's exclusive concern was with exotic and non-literate peoples. The American anthropologists were primarily engaged in syn-chronic and historical studies of the American Indian. The "other-culture" perspective of American anthropology would not have developed in sharp focus if they had continued to study the American Indian alone. However, it was soon realized that a mere historical approach was inadequate for understanding the American Indian culture. After World War II, the American anthropologists started taking an interest in global ethnography and developed area special-izations. They thus reinforced the anthropological practice of studying cultures other than their own and contributed to the further development of the other-culture perspective and methodology. Even though American anthropology had begun with the study of the natives at home, the situation of the British and continental anthropologists was quite different because nonliterate peoples were not living within their national boundaries. They therefore had to go to Africa, Asia, or Australia and the Pacific regions for their anthropological studies of nonliterate (other) cultures. As pointed out above, the Indian an-thropologist considered it quite legitimate to concentrate on the Indian tribal population. Our pioneers thought that they could study the Oraon, the Munda, the Birhor, and other Indian tribes as though they were studying other cultures like the English administrator—anthropologists or other academic an-thropologists from the West who had started taking an interest in India in the late 1940s. After World War II, the foreign anthropologists who worked in India were academicians and not administrators. Some of them studied tribes. In due course, interest shifted from the study of tribes to that of castes. The transition was natural and smooth for both the foreign anthropologists and the Indian academic anthropologists who succeeded such pioneers as Iyer and Roy.

In changing the focus from tribe to caste, there was some difference in the nature of anthropological enquiry (3, 34, 36, 52). The tribes usually were com-pact, manageable, and more or less homogeneous communities with relatively little contact with the outside world. The anthropologists could not study castes under the same conditions. Therefore, many studies in the early 1950s of castes were attempted within the territorially defined limits of a village. Village studies were very popular at least for a decade and some are still being conducted. We are not sure of the ultimate value of village studies conducted by different anthropologists without any similarity in framework or plan of study. Such studies do not seem to be motivated by a desire to cover systematically the different subregions and regions of India to provide knowledge about the way people live in village India. We hope that those involved in village studies are fully aware that the results of their investigations, either individually or collec-tively, will not by themselves give us a proper understanding of the complexities of Indian civilization. However, this is not to deny that they will bring forth valuable concrete details of the ordinary aspects of life. But they are unlikely to tell us much about what Kroeber has called "the larger heightened elements" of

the total culture, such as "the national power, leadership, guidance, genius, resources and achievements" (29).

What has been said above should not be taken to mean that we are against community studies in general and studies of village communities in particular. However, interest in the study of castes did not allow the anthropologist— foreign or Indian—to confine himself to one particular village. The study of caste was bound to spill over from the village to a group of villages, to a region, and to figure in the national context as well. Here the traditional pull of the holistic approach was compelling the anthropologist to confine himself in his field research to only a village. That is why caste studies and village studies, for at least a while, seemed to be one and the same, but not for long. Both Western and Indian anthropologists have been primarily concerned with the study of caste (1, 37). This is borne out by the papers published in *Structure and Change in Indian Society* by the Indianists of the United States of America (50, 51). Four of the six sections of the book deal with caste under the following headings: "Caste and Social Structure," "The Structure of Inter-Caste Relations," "Is the Caste System Changing?," and "Caste in Politics, Economics and Law."

Let us pause here to examine the genesis and implications of the convergence of interest of the foreign and Indian anthropologists in Indian studies. A foreign anthropologist comes to India to study a culture other than his own. India is too complex and too vast a country to be covered fully by one or more empirical anthropological enquiry. The foreign anthropologist knows this full well. There- fore he has to strike a balance between knowing a small part of India very intensively and having a fairly good knowledge of the country as a whole. This is a basic prerequisite for recognition as an area specialist of South Asia in the country of his origin. He also fulfills the basic professional requirements of studying another culture by grappling with the entirely different, exotic, ex- tremely complex, and exciting Indian culture. When he comes to India he brings with him concepts and theoretical frameworks, as well as research procedures, developed by Western anthropologists in their studies of simple, nonliterate, and relatively homogeneous and isolated communities that are quite unlike those in complex India. True to the anthropological tradition of his country, he has to conduct an empirical enquiry. He therefore chooses a village, a few contiguous villages, or a small region for his detailed empirical study. Some- times his analysis is very penetrating because he goes into the minutest detail. There is no doubt that many of these studies prove to be quite illuminating even to the intelligent native laymen as well as scholars in understanding certain aspects of their own culture. We are fully aware that a well-trained native anthropologist who does a "self-study" on similar lines may miss some facets of the social dimensions because he takes many things in his own culture for granted, whereas they are brought to the surface by a foreign investigator due to cultural shock. The latter has to be especially alert to unravel the finer details to understand and account for the alien cultural system that he studies.

We are fully convinced of the desirability and importance of the an- thropological study of other cultures and greatly regret that the Indian an- thropologists are deficient in this area. But the requirements of anthropological

self-study must be different. For instance, as initial training in the specifics of anthropological field work, the native anthropologist may investigate problems similar to those studied by anthropologists working in an alien culture. For an Indian anthropologist born in India an account of how a joint family breaks up into two or more family units by having separate *chulhas* (hearths), how a caste Panchayat decides on violation of caste norms, or how a caste is ranked in a particular village should not be considered a significant contribution to knowledge, although they may be so for a British or an American anthropologist specializing in Indian studies. In India *anthropology as self-study* should throw light on those aspects of Indian culture that we are more competent to deal with than any foreigner because we have learned the goals, values, and ideals of our culture through enculturation. This means that we have to undertake to study those aspects of our culture that are of vital importance but that have not been investigated hitherto. This may sometimes result in dealing with the very basic and elementary aspects of life, not excluding those concerned with material culture. We must also devise special schemes for holistic description of different levels of organization, such as cities, regions, and the entire nation.

Let us return to the discussion begun earlier about the problems of a foreign anthropologist studying the complex Indian culture. As Kroeber aptly remarked, anthropologists have always desired to apperceive and conceive the subject matter of their study both empirically and holistically. The holistic urge has been most distinctive of anthropologists as a group, possibly because their investigations began with small-scale or simple "authentic" societies that can be viewed as discrete wholes. But when the anthropologist studies a complex society the scene changes drastically. How is he going to perceive and conceive the phenomena both empirically and holistically? To earn the right to be called a specialist on India in his country, a foreign anthropologist spends a year or more in an Indian village. Through time-honored first-hand field work he can study empirically only a small segment of the complex Indian society. But a community, a village, or even a group of villages is not an autonomous society. Therefore, the anthropologist for the first time realizes that he is empirical but not holistic in his approach. He has no better tool at his disposal than that of ethnographic investigation in a face-to-face situation. We are not denying the important contributions that can be made even by ethnographic procedure by concentrating on the study of linguistically or geographically defined communities within complex civilizations like India. But it should be made abundantly clear that the ethnographic procedure may always remain subsidiary in dealing with the existing documents in a complex civilization. A composite picture of Indian culture cannot easily be painted by combining only the results of several ethnographic accounts of different village communities. The problem of combining empiricism and holism in the study of the complex Indian society is difficult, though not impossible, to solve. The Western anthropologists working in India tried to solve this dilemma by positing concepts of "economic frontier," "text and context," "great tradition and little tradition," etc (32). It is a pity that we in India adopted these concepts and could not evolve anything better of our

own than "Sanskritization" (57). There is a lot of truth in what N. K. Bose wrote in 1952 about Indian anthropologists (7). Indian anthropologists have not made any problem peculiarly their own. They have failed to let their problems of research grow out of the life of their own people. Most of them have followed the paths beaten by anthropologists in the powerful Western countries.

R. Nicholas (35) says that "the position of South Asian specialists in anthropology—whether British, American, Indian or Ceylonese—appears to me to be less favorable than that of specialists in several other world areas" (35, p. 12). In our view this is so for two reasons. First, the South Asian specialist has treated his complex society data with the concepts and frames of reference developed elsewhere in the study of simple societies lacking written history. Second, a unique opportunity existed in India for a dialog between the foreign anthropologists who studied this culture from the "other-culture" perspective and the anthropologists born in India who did self-study of parts of their own culture, but this dialog has failed to materialize. Unfortunately, the India-born anthropologists are more to blame because instead of breaking new grounds, they became mere camp followers. We should have left it to the foreign anthropologists to be concerned with the infinite and minute details of behavior. They could perceive the bits and pieces of information that may have proved crucial in anthropological interpretations and analyses, although they might escape the attention of, or seem to be superfluous to, the native anthropologist. We wish we could have taken up the study of patron-client relationships, the position and role of women in different spheres of life, the dynamics of the joint family system, and the study of reciprocity and redistribution in economic as well as noneconomic transactions in different spheres of life.

We should also mention here some of the positive consequences of the involvement of Indian anthropologists in the study of segments of their own society and culture. We have imbibed the holistic spirit of anthropology and have demonstrated the utility of detailed and long-term face-to-face field work in the study of one's own culture or a part thereof. Almost all the major tribes of India have been covered through ethnographic studies. We are no longer obsessed with the exploration of merely the unusual and the exotic. One of our greatest drawbacks is the lack of other-culture studies by Indian anthropologists. It is high time that we did develop expertise in this field because research among other cultures has been the forte of anthropology. Such research will broaden the vision of Indian anthropologists and will help them understand their own culture better. However, what has until now been our weakness will prove to be a source of strength in the very near future. We do not think there is any other country in the world where anthropological self-study has been conducted by native-born anthropologists for almost seven decades. Before long, anthropologists of all countries, particularly the developing countries, will have to start studying their own culture. We cannot anticipate the kinds of problems these native anthropologists will face. This new aspect of anthropology in almost every country will encounter growing pains. The only exception then will be anthropology in India, which has long passed that stage. This does

not mean that we will have no problems, but they certainly will be different from those of anthropologists elsewhere. Moreover, our experiences during the early periods of growth of anthropology in India will prove useful to others. In yet another way Indian anthropology is unique. In most countries of the world, local problems and issues are dealt with by sociologists, economists, psychologists, and political scientists, but not by anthropologists. By concentrating on tribal studies for almost half a century, the Indian anthropologists carved out a permanent place for their discipline in this country. Therefore when they moved from the study of tribes to the study of communities, castes, and other more complex segments of the Indian population, they did so without losing their identity as anthropologists. As we show in the next section, in grappling with more complex issues of development, welfare, and nation-building, anthropologists have been trying to make their own contributions, although sometimes working in collaboration with other social scientists. Whatever may be the nature of anthropological investigation in the future, it is unlikely that Indian anthropology will wither away by merging its identity with one or more disciplines.

CONTINUING INTERESTS AND EMERGING TRENDS

In the days of colonial anthropology the Indian anthropologists were unconcerned with national issues, which in those days were centered around the struggle for liberation from foreign rule. Elwin's "national park" thesis recommended that the tribal people be left alone to develop along their own lines, free from exploitation of the neighboring caste Hindus (17, 18). This position created bad publicity for anthropology. Anthropology became suspect in the eyes of the nationalist forces, as it was taken to stand for separation between the tribals and nontribals by advocating that the former be kept in "reservations" and "scheduled areas." Thus it was supposed that anthropology was a handmaiden of colonialism and stood against the integration of different sections of Indian population into one nation. Ghurye (21) tried to repudiate the national park thesis, but he was not willing to go far enough to face the realities squarely. He viewed the tribal people as "aborigines so-called." It was left to the British administrator—turned—academic anthropologist, J. H. Hutton (24), to unhesitatingly declare that the tribals were nothing but backward Hindus and that their gradual assimilation into the Hindu fold had been going on for a very long time.

   Later the Indian anthropologists became involved with the nontribal people in their academic pursuits like the foreign anthropologists who served as their mentors and trailblazers. The Indian anthropologist considered it necessary to be detached and uninvolved. But such a state of affairs could not continue for long. The first few years of India's independence were full of turmoil and upheaval. The country was rocked with massive transfers of populations across the national borders, creating the problem of refugee rehabilitation. The communal riots and Pakistani conflict with India over Kashmir kept the new nation

on its toes. The situation drastically changed once the dust settled and the country decided to embark upon planning economic development and social reconstruction. A great challenge was thrown before all the social sciences in this country. The Indian social scientist could no longer remain in his ivory tower. He had to face the challenge. For anthropology the task has been far from easy. An agonizing process of reappraisal has set in. The goals and ideals of the discipline are not yet clearly defined, but we know that we can no longer escape our responsibility in the name of pursuing detached scientific enquiry. Most of our recent research is not related to the major issues of the day and is not concerned with the national goals and aspirations. Many of us still publish to gain approval from our peers and mentors in the West. S. C. Sinha (55) has rightly asked us to enquire as "to what extent academic patronage and linkages with Western *Gurus* and *Guru-Bhais* continue to be a decisive factor in shaping the contour of a scholarly enterprise in anthropology in India today" (55, p. 5).

In India today a debate has been going on as to what role the social sciences, including anthropology, must play. Almost everyone has pointed out the fact of borrowed techniques, concepts, and frames of reference. Time and again we are told of the triviality or the theoretical and methodological barrenness of the social science enterprises in this country. Among anthropologists also there is a strong feeling that we have to get away from Western models, which are unsuited for our purposes in this country because they are either created from data from simpler peoples or result from Westerners' responses to their own cultural requirements. Efforts are being made to identify the native institutions and areas for growth, development, and socioeconomic progress. But on the whole Indian anthropology's response to the Indian challenge has been ad hoc, diffused, and without focus or direction. We discuss these matters below, but note here that Indian anthropology has not altogether failed in its attempt to meet the new challenge. After all, the challenge is quite new and anthropologists elsewhere have not much that can be used as an example to be emulated. Moreover, the process of meeting the challenge is still going on and its success or failure can be assessed only after some time. Before discussing the new ground being broken, we would like to mention a few things that have been done on the usual topics and familiar areas of anthropological research.

Tribal ethnography has been the most researched area in Indian anthropology. In the past it was common to write an ethnographic account of a tribe, covering most of the important facets of its life. After a lapse of two decades in the 1970s the anthropologists have once more started taking interest in the study of tribes (12, 41). Most of the tribal ethnography is being done by government research institutions. Many of the tribes in Arunachal Pradesh about whom no literature existed were studied by the former North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) administration. Tribal research institutes in the states are also paying attention to tribal ethnography. Indian anthropologists feel that many monographs on the well-known tribes of India have become out of date. Therefore, the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has planned a restudy of tribes covering most regions of the country. The study will at first be confined to

a few selected tribes like the Chenchu, the Khasi, the Munda, the Kadar, the Naga, the Bondo, the Baiga, etc. Unfortunately, no outstanding functional study along the lines of Malinowski and his students exists for an Indian tribe. Verrier-Elwin's *The Muria and their Ghotul* is the most celebrated and well-documented study of one tribal institution, although it still cannot be called a functional study. Some scholars in the universities have attempted to study one facet of tribal life, and this trend is likely to be more popular with academically minded anthropologists interested in tribal studies. Study of health, sanitation, education, land alienation, and impact of industrialization and urbanization on the tribal people is likely to be more popular with future researchers. One reason for this trend may be the availability of more funds from governmental agencies for research on such topics rather than for investigating conventional tribal ethnography. The important difference in the attitude of the contemporary Indian anthropologists towards the tribal people is in marked contrast to what was true of our early forebears. Nobody now talks of tribes as if they were not a part of the total Indian population. The increase of consciousness among the tribal people and the knowledge of special privileges available to them under the constitution of India has changed the situation in the former tribal areas drastically. States of Nagaland and Meghalaya are populated almost exclusively by those whom we have known as tribal people.

The concept of caste is so uniquely Indian that some students of Indian social systems will always be interested in it. As pointed out in the previous section, soon after independence, both foreign and Indian anthropologists tried to synchronize the study of castes and villages. But since then the study of caste in wider horizons, beyond the village, has been more common (4, 13, 23, 27, 28). The role of caste in politics has attracted the attention of not only anthropologists but other social scientists as well (2, 5, 19, 22, 33, 38). Some political scientists, who are influenced by the concept of political culture, have paid particular attention to caste and its role in elections, factions and the functioning of political parties at regional as well as national levels. The attention paid to the scheduled castes and the funds available for conducting research to find out the kinds of discrimination they are subjected to and ways to ameliorate their condition have been the opic of research by some foreign as well as Indian anthropologists. In short, much of the empirical research on caste deals with the relationship between castes, status, power, stratification, and economic consequences flowing from them (6).

One of the most outstanding studies on caste to appear in the last 30 years is L. Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus* (16). It is a work in which a perceptive anthropologist makes good use of the empirical field material that he and others have collected in the past few decades. But he wisely does not confine his attention to the minutest details of stratification in a particular village. He rises above the empirical data to present a most illuminating account of the ideology of a caste society and distinguishes it from that of an egalitarian society. Unlike Indian as well as Western critics, Dumont does not condemn a caste society and refuses to consider it inferior to the so-called democratic Western society.

Recent research on kinship, marriage, and family has been conducted as in the past (31, 58). Some anthropologists have covered areas such as the Lakshadweep islands, which were not studied by others. But nothing strikingly new from a theoritical point of view has yet emerged. The position of family studies is somewhat different. Some anthropologists and nonanthropologists have studied the dimensions of the Indian family in nonrural settings.

Partly due to behavioral orientation in American political science during last decade or so and partly due to anthropological studies of political behavior and institutions in the newly independent Asian and African countries, there have been some studies in political anthropology also. We have already mentioned the study of impact of caste on politics. There have also been studies of voting behavior and political movements (30), and of rural leadership (20). Unfortunately, the Indian anthropologists have not tried to bridge the gap between the micro-level political behavior studies and the study of the forces and processes involved in nation-building. We feel that study of the cultural background of the Indian nation-building during the freedom movement and after independence requires the particular attention of anthropologists. Lloyd Fallie's study of nationalism in Uganda and similar studies may provide particularly valuable leads to Indian anthropologists.

The shift from tribal studies to urban studies is a big jump. The field of urban anthropology is quite new; therefore it is not surprising that anthropologists in India have not made much headway. The association of anthropologists with the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization has been long-standing. The late Nirmal Kumar Bose brought his knowledge of geography and anthropology to bear upon the study of Calcutta (9, 61). Vidyarthi (59) had posited the idea of the sacred complex in the study of a priestly community in a city in Bihar. Several American and Indian anthropologists have been involved in the study of the sacred complex of Bhubaneshwar and Puri under the leadership of Cora Du Bois. B. N. Saraswati (46) has been engaged in a long-term and multidirectional study of the holy city of Varanasi. These studies are going to break new ground. At Calcutta, S. C. Sinha (56) made a notable attempt to bring together experts from different fields of academics and the performing arts to present what he called the profiles of a city. Work in these areas may produce notable contributions by India to the science of anthropology.

India is in ferment after living through four Five-Year Plans and two decades of democratic rule. A great change has occurred in the thinking processes of people in many sections of India. Tremendous progress and remarkable achievements in agricultural production, industrial growth, irrigation facilities, and power supply have raised the level of aspiration, of the common man. It has also resulted in an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. The unfortunate stigma that has been attached to the untouchable castes for centuries has created much resentment among these people. They have not been able to rise above their traditional status despite massive governmental assistance. Poverty has become a major issue economically as well as socially. Those who are socially downtrodden are also among the economically most impoverished. People are

no longer willing to accept poverty as the dictate of fate that cannot be changed. Studies of the poor with a view to reduce the economic disparity, eradicate social discrimination, and ensure justice for every citizen has acquired a very prominent place in the present scheme of things in this country.

Anthropologists and other social scientists are charged with the responsibility of providing information so that the standard of living may be raised for the teeming millions who are steeped in poverty and underprivileged. In this context the concepts of relevance and of priorities of sociocultural research has acquired much importance (14, 15, 40, 47, 48, 60). The funding agencies do not say that fundamental research cannot be conducted. Yet it is expected that social scientists who are being funded from the limited resources available to the country will realize their responsibility toward the nation. They are required to help in the task of nation-building and national reconstruction. For this reason, more and more stress is being laid upon problem-oriented and theme-oriented research that may have a bearing on some issues the nation is trying to resolve. The Anthropological Survey of India has launched a study of the weaker sections of the population in different parts of the country. Some tribal research institutes have been charged with the responsibility of preparing regional plans for the development of tribal people and tribal areas. Anthropologists, therefore, will have to strike a balance between conducting research for their academic or aesthetic satisfaction as well as for planning for development of certain sections of our country. It is too early to determine the outcome of the present ventures. We hope that too narrow a view of relevance will not be taken. Otherwise anthropology will be converted into a mere problem-solving discipline, which in our view will be contrary to the spirit of the discipline.

Two of our deceased elder anthropologists are to be credited with some research trends that need to be pursued with zeal and devotion. As a result of her kinship studies, I. Karve (25, 26) was trying to formulate ideal types of North Indian and South Indian subcultural zones. Her study of Mahabharata from an anthropological point of view we hope will be a pacesetter for historical-culture studies. N. K. Bose (8) was a man of diverse interests. His studies of temple architecture and the culture of the Puri temple are examples of an early interest in topics not commonly pursued by Indian anthropologists. His attempt to identify similarities and differences among selected items of material culture covering different regions of India needs to be explored further. This should produce a notable contribution to Indian anthropological studies.

In the past decade anthropologists, especially those working in the field of management, have turned their attention to the study of complex organizations —those built around tasks, industry, government, hospitals, etc. N. R. Sheth's work on *Social Framework of Indian Industry* (49) and D. P. Sinha's *Culture Change in an Inter-tribal Market* (53) are examples of this trend. To these anthropologists a territorial frame of reference is of limited consequence. More important are issues and problems, as well as institutions for social action. The study of small groups in organizations by Sinha (54) is an attempt to identify indigenous institutions for action systems. Ethnographic description and social

analysis is not enough. Study of alternative choices and their consequences and implications are of great significance in contemporary anthropology. We may mention here G. Chattopadhyay & Sinha's work on the sociocultural relevance of new educational technology and the study of authority and dependency in Indian culture (10, 11).

Although methodology has recently been discussed in several forums, interest in problems of general theory and methodology is not reflected in the writings of Indian anthropologists. In 1959 critical appraisals of Radcliffe-Brown's concepts, except those on kinship by Murdock, were rare, but in an article in 1959 G. Sarana showed how Radcliffe-Brown confused the distinction between social structure and social organization (42). He further wrote on this theme in 1969 showing that Malinowskian functionalism was not "formless." He clarified the distinction between "functioning" and "having a function," pointing out its significance in understanding Malinowski's and Radcliffe-Brown's contributions to anthropology. In a paper presented at the American Anthropological Association meeting in 1965 in Denver, Colorado, Śarana made a critical appraisal of Lévi-Strauss's concept of model and his procedure for the analysis of myth (43). He anticipated Leach's assessment of Lévi-Strauss, which appeared several years later.

Śarana's interest in anthropological methodology is also longstanding. He has made a critical appraisal of the methodological premises of the German-Austrian historical school of ethnology. He has demonstrated the importance of reinterpretation through the analysis of the Swazi data in his recent essay on the anthropological procedures (44). But it is Śarana's contribution to the analysis of methods of comparison in social-cultural anthropology that is most notable. In his 1975 book, *The Methodology of Anthropological Comparisons,* he makes a systematic analysis of the comparative methods from the point of view of the units, purposes, and techniques and methods of comparison (45). The three methods of comparison are: (*a*) illustrative comparison (*b*) complete universe comparison, and (*c*) hologeistic sampled comparison. Śarana goes on to examine the relationship between ethnographic procedure, comparative methods, and explanation in social-cultural anthropology.

A most notable advance in anthropological studies is associated with space research. India has been experimenting for the last 6 months with the Satellite Instructional Television programs (SITE), which are screened in selected rural centers in a few chosen states of the country. Long before the SITE program was inaugurated on 15 August 1975 a team of anthropologists were preparing to make holistic studies on the impact of these programs on people for the duration of the experiment. The results of these investigations are anxiously awaited by the other anthropologists in this country. These will be another first to the credit of Indian anthropology.

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