INTRODUCTION

Anthropology in India was introduced by anthropologists from England who came to India and collected data on Indian populations and prepared monographs on them. It was during the second half of the nineteenth century when a number of monographs on tribal and other communities were written by the British administrators and anthropologists. A small number of Indian anthropologists who were being trained by the British to assist them in their anthropological work began to appear on the scene. By the beginning of the twentieth century, departments of Anthropology were set up in various universities which in time produced large numbers of students. Since then, Anthropology as an integrated science of man made a headway and today there are over thirty departments of Anthropology across the country.

Anthropologists like W. H. R. Rivers, J. H. Hutton, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and C. G. Seligman who came to India influenced people like Paul Olaf Bodding, Hoffman, Emelen, etc. to work on Indian communities. These anthropologists in turn influenced others who were of Indian origin to work in anthropology. Such Indian anthropologists wrote of the cultures that they knew best and among whom they had grown up. Thus, some kind of ‘auto-ethnography’ was already being practiced in India by Indian anthropologists long before it became a major issue in western anthropology.

The setting up of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 by Sir William Jones is a landmark in the history of anthropology in India. Under this organization, a number of anthropological works were conducted and many were printed in the journal of the Society. Attempts have been made to review the growth of anthropology in India by S.C. Roy, D.N. Majumdar, G.S. Ghurye, S.C. Dube, N.K. Bose, L.P. Vidyarthi and Surjeet Sinha etc. In 1921 S.C. Roy presented a bibliography of the publications of tribal and caste studies in India. Twenty-five years later, D.N. Majumdar reviewed the development of anthropology in India. G.S. Ghurye reviewed the development of anthropology in Bombay in a volume published by UNESCO in 1956. S.C. Dube presented a review in the proceedings of the IV International Congress of Anthropology.

**Phases of development**

The growth of Indian anthropology has been divided into different periods by the above mentioned and other notable anthropologists in various ways. S.C. Roy classified the growth of anthropology in India in terms of the sources of publications such as magazines, handbooks and monograms etc. and also in terms of the nationality of the authors. According to S.C. Dube, this growth can be classified in three phases: i. Compilation and publication of volumes on tribes and castes, ii. Detailed monographic studies of individual tribes mostly based upon personal observation and iii. Quantitative advancement and qualitative achievement. N.K Bose divides the growth of anthropology in India into three phases: i. Encyclopaedia of tribes and castes, ii. Descriptive monographs and iii. Analytical studies of village, marriage and family, caste and civilization etc. D. N. Majumdar divided the growth of anthropological researches in India into three historical periods: i. Formulation phase (1774-1911), ii. Constructive phase (1912-1937) and iii. Critical phase (1938-to present day). According to L.P. Vidyarthi the constructive period started around 1920 with the opening of the Department of anthropology in Calcutta with R. Chandra as its head and the starting of Indian Journal of Anthropology by S.C. Roy in 1921. Indian and British Anthropologists met on the occasion of Silver Jubilee of the Indian Science Congress at Lahore and this meeting marked the Critical Period. D.N. Majumdar feels that the Critical Period began with the publication of a problem-oriented monograph on the Ho...

This period also witnessed the initiation of American collaboration with Lucknow University in anthropological studies. Noted anthropologist Oscar Lewis came to India as a consultant to the Central Ministry of Community Development to carry on anthropological studies on a large scale. Another significant outsider to help in this growth was Morris Opler.

Some noted Indian anthropologists like S.C. Dube also visited academic anthropological institutions in America. An important publication of this period was *Religion and Society among the Coorgs of South India*, by M. N. Srinivas, published by Oxford University Press in 1952. Thus the Critical Period was also called Analytical Period by some anthropologists including L.P. Vidyarthi. In short the growth of anthropology in India can be briefly summarised as follows:

1. **Formative Period**

Majumdar is of the opinion that this phase ended in 1911, while according to Vidyarthi it extended to 1920. This period seems to have been characterized by an emphasis on tribes, a natural history approach and descriptions of the diversity of customs. A variety of encyclopaedias on tribes and castes were published during this period. Sir William Jones started Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1774 as its founder president to study nature and man in India. Since then the British administrators, missionaries, travellers and anthropologists studied Indian tribes and published their accounts in the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1784), *Indian Antiquary* (1872), *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society* (1915), and *Man in India* (1921). Accounts were also published in a series of districts Gazetteer, hand books and monograms on tribes.

Data were collected on the tribes during the census in 1931 and 1941. Important contribution in this direction was made by scholarly British administrators such as Risley, Dalton, O'Malley, Russel, Thurston and Crooks. Cambell, Latham and Risley published general books on Indian ethnology. These were followed by detailed accounts of specific tribes by Briggs, Shakespeare, Gurdel, Mills, Parry and Grigson.
Apart from ethnographic reports, listings of customs, and administrative reports, there were also land revenue settlement reports that gave a more realistic functional idea of Indian rural society, like the works of Dalton, Buchanan and Lord Baden-Powell. Some missionaries also made important ethnographic and linguistic studies. Among these were P.O. Bodding and J. Hoffman, C.G. Seligmann, B.G. Seligmann and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown. In 1911, W.H.R. Rivers’s important work, *The Todas*, was published by MacMillan and Co., London. Again in 1911, Cambridge University Press published the work of B.G. Seligmann and C.G. Seligmann entitled *The Veddas of Ceylon*. In 1922, A.R. Radcliffe-Brown’s work *The Andaman Islanders* was published by Cambridge University Press.

H. H. Risley first published his account of the tribes and castes of Bengal in 1891. Later, he was famous as head of census operations in India. This period resulted in *The People of India*. He developed a wing in the census operations that was devoted to ethnographic survey in 1905. After Independence in 1947, a social studies division was added to the office of the Registrar General of India, who was in charge of the census operations in India. Many others who were not anthropologists also influenced the discipline. These included Indians like Dadabhai Naoroji, G. K. Gokhale, R. C. Dutt, M. G. Ranade, Raja Rammohun Roy, K. C. Sen, Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda.

By 1915 journals like *The Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society* and *Man in India* along with books and District Gazetteers which are still in print came out. After Grierson’s linguistic survey of India, many associations brought out small monographs on the tribes of their region, their social and cultural mores and customs, as well as their language. *The Mythic Society* of Bangalore was also publishing a journal by this time.

### 2. Constructive period.

According to Majumdar (1950), this phase began in 1912 and ended in 1937. In 1919 Social Anthropology was included in the curricula of Bombay University in Sociology. In 1921 Department of Anthropology was started at Calcutta University, in 1947 in the University of Delhi, in 1950 in Lucknow and in 1952 in Guwahati. Other
universities having Departments of Anthropology included Sagar, Pune, Madras, Ranchi, Dibrugarh, Utkal, Ravi Shankar at Raipur, Karnataka, North-Eastern Hill University at Shillong, Garhwal, Manipur and so on.

Among those who made important contribution to the growth of anthropology in India, the most notable were the studies of P.N. Mishra, L.KA. Iyer, K.P. Chattopadhyay, T.C. Das, and D.N. Majumdar in the East and North India, and G.S. Ghurye, Iravati Karve, L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer and A. Aiyappan in the West and South India. All these scholars stimulated anthropological research and publication of articles, monographs and books. In 1938 a joint session of the Indian Science Congress Association and the British Association reviewed the progress of anthropology in India. This was the first review of the anthropological researches in India. Among the most notable contribution made to anthropology during this period are the works of D.N. Majumdar, M.N. Srinivas, Verrier Elwin, C. Von Furer-Haimendorf and N.K. Bose. Verrier Elwin had commented that the tribes should be left alone and they should be allowed to develop in isolation, away from the mainstream. This would ensure that outside populations did not influence and exploit these tribal populations. On the other hand, G. S. Ghurye had not even wished to enumerate the tribals separately in the census operations, thus enforcing his contrary idea that the tribals should be completely assimilated by the Hindus as a part of the mainstream. J. H. Hutton had claimed that tribals were to be seen as backward Hindus, and also that their assimilation into the Hindu fold had been going on for a long time.

During this period, the tribal studies continued to be the exclusive field of study by the enlightened British scholars, administrators, missionaries and later by the British and Indian anthropologists till the end of the forties of this century. Indian anthropology was characterised by ethnological and monographic studies with a special emphasis on researches in kinship and social organization.


According to D. N. Majumdar, this phase began in 1938 and carried on to the present. During this phase, a shift was seen from the descriptive studies of preliterate villages to the analytical studies of complex societies. The Americans who
came to India during this period made their works famous for all time and immortalized also the names of the villages they worked in. These studies began with the work of Sir Henry Sumner Maine, Sir Baden-Powell, Morris Opler, David Mandelbaum, W.H. Wiser and Charlotte Wiser, Alan and Ralph Beals, Harold A. Gould, Kathleen Gough, Stephen Fuchs, Ruth and Stanley Freed, F. G. Bailey, Robert Redfield, W. A. Rowe, M. S. Luschinsky, M. R. Goodall, Scarlett Epstein, McKim Marriott, John T. Hitchcock, John J. Gumperz, Kolenda, Ralph R. Retztaff, Leigh Minturn, A.P. Barnabas, Adrian C. Mayer, G. M. Carstairs, Henry Orenstein, Robbins Burling, Milton Singer, Gerald D. Berreman, O. T. Beidelman, Martin Orans etc. Indian anthropologists who were included in this group are S. C. Dube, M. N. Srinivas, A. Aiyappan, D. N. Majumdar, Prof. Inder Pal Singh, K. S. Mathur, Yogendra Singh, G. S. Ghurye etc. A large number of village study monographs were published in the 1960s through the Census of India 1961 of which a study of Ghaghra by L. P. Vidyarthi was one of the first. A large amount of data generated on a very large number of villages from all over India provided a very good baseline from which emerged other kinds of studies as well as new theoretical ideas. The work of L. P. Vidyarthi, B. K. Roy Burman, R. M. Sarkar, Baidyanath Saraswati, Makhan Jha, A. Danda, M. K. Raha, P. K. Misra, K. S. Singh, T. N. Madan and others is memorable.

Among the important seminars conducted and published during this period are: Urgent Researches in Social Anthropology and Tribal Situation in India published by Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, Numerous papers have been published by Anthropologists in India concerning (a) change leading to tribal identity, integration, vanishing culture and planning, (b) emergence of industrial anthropology, (c) increased emphasis on tribal demography, and (d) integrated study of tribal regions. Important contribution has been made to Action Research, Socio-Psychological Research, and Folklore researches, Studies of Power Structure and Leadership and Anthropology of Religion. The role of the Indian social and religious traditions in economic development were studied with special emphasis on the theories of Max Weber.

In spite of these influences from American cultural anthropologists, the influence of British anthropology on Indian anthropologists continued to be very important. A professional cadre of anthropologists was developing with a Ph.D. degree being very important. Influences from Redfield were coupled with those of Levi-Strauss, Dumont,
Books and articles increased in large numbers and many publications of Indian anthropologists in foreign journals occurred. However, in following the West so assiduously, Indian anthropologists seem not to have followed a constructive trend in their own approaches to a logical conclusion. In 1952, Ghurye made a reference in Vienna to the mistrust of social workers and popular political leaders of anthropologists.

According to D. N. Majumdar in 1956, Indian anthropologists had an inadequate knowledge of American anthropology. By 1953, attempts were being made in India to use anthropological knowledge to intervene, train, develop and to help the tribals. This was done through the setting up of the Tribal Research and Training Institutes all over India at the instance of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Such institutes would conduct researches and their data would be used for all planning and welfare programmes. In studying culture change, Indian anthropologists have been involved in studies relating to the determination of whether the caste system is disintegrating or whether it has been strengthened since Independence. Studies have also been conducted on adult franchise, urbanization, industrialization and their effects on the caste system. With this there has been an emphasis on the nature of Indian unity and the characteristics of various categories of sub nationalism. By 1979, 8420 social science periodicals were in print in India. By 1980, the number of Ph.D.s awarded by Indian universities in social science exceeded 10,000. The study of social science seems to have been restricted to universities between 1947 and 1969. After this period, it has come out of these centres to other institutes and organizations. One major event was the setting up of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) in 1969, which started funding a lot of social anthropological work (Sharma; 1992).

Those who developed a distinct research methodology to conduct their studies included Das (using genealogies to study Purum society), N. K. Bose (spatial distribution technique used to date Indian temples, use of human geography in study of culture-historical issues as well as the use of family histories in studying social change in urban centres), Chattopadhyay and Mukherjee (use of statistics in studying social change), Iravati Karve (text analyses incorporated with kinship studies) and L. P. Vidyarthi (using the concepts of sacred centre, cluster and segment to study sacred complexes). Perhaps, a caste structure and community content of the Indian anthropologists may have influenced their comments on Indian civilization. According to Sinha (1980: 281), “it is unlikely that Indian anthropology will find a strong
domestic orientation in the near future. For some time, the proliferation of trained manpower, random efforts at catching up with the latest developments in the West and a general increase in the number of publications will characterize the development of Indian anthropology.”

Many Indian anthropologists have proposed their own theories as they began to feel that a better interpretation of such complex interrelationships could be given by Indian anthropologists. An increasing interest in Medical Anthropology, Religion, Development studies, Psychological studies, as well as other areas is becoming more evident. M. N. Srinivas seems to believe that due to its particular history, Indian anthropologists have gained much more expertise in studying their own histories and cultures. Present-day anthropology stands on the shoulders of the stalwarts who created a field of study where none had existed before. He advocates that this background should enable studies of others to understand the self (self-in-the-other) may now give way to studies of the self itself as a valid mode of anthropological inquiry. Each life (one’s own) thus becomes a case study, which the anthropologist self is uniquely placed to study (Srinivas; 1996).

CONCLUSIONS

Indian Anthropology has come a long way and still needs to move forward to make administrators and policy-makers feel the need of the relevance of anthropological research. For this reason, Indian anthropologists have to present themselves as committed to planning, development and nation-building. In the way of all life, only time will tell in which direction anthropology in India will move. Funding organizations will play a great role in determining the direction. The progress of a nation depends on proper plans for future problems. Problems can be encountered and overcome only if the root cause is identified. Anthropologists can contribute a lot in identifying the root causes which lie within the society. Indian Anthropology, therefore, should focus on new issues and problems being faced by this developing country and provide solutions.