

## **SYMPOSIA 2010**

On the occasion of the Indian Anthropological Congress: 2010 at Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh during February 21 – 23, 2010; a series of symposia has been scheduled to be organized by scholars of distinction on topics as mentioned against each. INCAA letter no. IAC-III / 10 dated September 26, 2009; that has been appended at the end of this announcement, indicates a few stipulations related to the symposia.

Briefs of the symposia, as have been articulated by respective organizers, follow:

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### **Development and its Impact on Communities: A Biological Anthropology Approach**

Biological (Physical) Anthropology continues to grow in its technological sophistication, hence extending its boundaries to embrace newer frameworks. The globalization and recent revolution in human molecular genetics research have enabled Biological Anthropologists to study genetic variation in depth at micro-level and exciting information on human and non-human primates is now becoming increasingly available. In fact, the entire human genome has already been decoded. Problems encountered in developing policies and programmes for different Indian communities involving assessment of nutritional status, human growth and development need urgent attention at the national level. All sub-disciplines of anthropology seek to establish a critical platform to promote cross-fertilization of concepts that cut across the field in order to bridge the gap among them.

The seminar solicits contributions especially from young scholars who specialize in the field of molecular genetic epidemiology, population genetics, cytogenetics, clinical genetics, human growth and development, abnormal growth and senescence, biological and ethical issues etc. These could include bold innovations in methods or significant newer findings. Original and critical review commentaries are specially welcome.

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## **Personality of India Revisited**

Exactly 52 years ago Dr. Bendapudi Subbarao presented a book on Pre and Protohistory of India and Pakistan. Interestingly he chose to call this book “The Personality of India”. He argued that doing history without geography is like presenting a picture without a frame. That is, every historical and prehistorical evidence in isolation remain hanging in vacuum until a regional context and its built-in imperatives are considered along with these evidences. Sir Mortimer Wheeler writes in its foreward “A dozen years ago it could not have been written: a dozen years hence it will have to be re-written, preferably by Dr. Subbarao himself.” Dr. Subbarao could bring out a second edition within two years of the first edition. However, fifty years have passed and we have till not had time to re-look at the thesis of Dr. Subbarao with the help of the enormous amount of the new evidences that has piled up since then. The symposium proposes to re-examine the regional approach of Dr. Subbarao.

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## **Relevance of Human Genome Study in Biological Anthropology in India**

The complete sequencing of human genome is indeed a major biological revolution of twenty-first century. This historic event marks the arrival of new era and will touch every facet of our lives. It has opened the floodgates of research. Now that all the functional and non-functional genes that make up the human genome have been deciphered, a new challenge is emerging to capitalize on when and where those genes are active and what are the nature and dimensions of gene-gene, gene-environment, and gene-culture interactions. Anthropology-the science of humanity has much to offer in the study of human genome in its own way. The technical breakthroughs in molecular genetics followed by complete draft sequence of human genome and development of bio-informatics have a number of consequences for biological anthropology. Can Biological Anthropology in India remain silent spectator to the recent biological renaissance? The proposed symposium is intended to discuss the emerging areas and issues where biological anthropology can play a significant role especially in addressing the following issues:

1.      Origins, evolution, genomic diversity of Indian populations

2. Gene-gene, gene-environment and gene-culture interactions with reference to life style diseases
3. Critical review of genome diversity studies of Indian populations
4. Host-Genome susceptibility/protection to infectious diseases
5. Community genetics with focus on prevention of sickle cell and thalasemia
6. Ethical and Social Issues associated with human genome study  
Educating people about our genome

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### **Development vis -a- vis State Control and Community Participation**

State and community may not see eye to eye on full and productive utilization of development benefits at the grass-root level. It sometimes creates a situation of conflict and violence shaking the very foundation of the nation- state. In this situation, anthropologists have a role to play not only to bridge the gap between the State and community, but also to help creating a strong public opinion to safeguard and promote the interests of the community. Incidentally, this year's (2009) Economics Nobel Winner Elinor Ostrom showed that communities can score over State control and corporations in running 'user-managed properties', such as fish stocks and woodland areas. While developing the subject, one may concentrate on a specific situation involving a specific community or communities, or look at it from a regional perspective. Issues of development in terms of faulty or misplaced policy and its implications, gender differentiation, control of resources and its fall-out, deprivations suffered at the community level as a result of misplaced priorities of development and some such issues may engage attention in this regard.

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### **Natural Resources, Community, and Development**

Natural Resources comprising land, water, forests, soils, etc. are most valuable endowment in the present era of sustainable development as its management redefined the development of human societies in ecological, economic and social contexts. India is

well-known for its natural resources and indigenous peoples. In historical contexts, both Anthropology and the then rulers' Forestry were introduced in our country during colonial rule for own requirement of administration, revenue earning and timber-harvesting. After attainment of independence, the same colonial legacy was followed till 1988. When from the policy level the change was brought, that was subsequently followed in the application of forest management and watershed management that led in 1990s the participatory development having opened up the decentralized, equitable, sustainable natural resource management and community development, which focuses on inclusive growth, sustainability and self-reliance. These have virtually given importance of human attitudes, community organization, and indigenous knowledge on bio-diversity management, cultural practices on conservation, gender sensitivity, application of community institution, livelihood system and significance in decision-making process. The proposed symposium would be arranged to discuss on those aspects in the inter-face management of natural resources and communities for the sustainable development.

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### **State, Ethnicity v/s Development** (The North-East India Scenario)

The study of 'ethnicity' and 'development' is fundamental to the study of social change. The State plays an important role by influencing both 'ethnicity' and 'development'. Ethnicity has been found widely related to State and development (Thompson and Ronen 1986). The State-sponsored development is often found to be more growth - oriented and State - centered than distributive. Ironically, it has been one of the determining factors for the ethnic upsurges around the world. Ethnic phenomena, on the other hand, are seen as contributing to the lack of development or standing as a shield to developmental programmes and therefore, are often considered 'anti-development'. It is in this backdrop that the present Symposium on **State, Ethnicity v/s Development** aims to deliberate on these ever conflicting concepts. The following sub-themes have been chosen to enrich the above major theme and to make it more holistic:

- 1). Migration, Ethnicity v/s Development
- 2). Competition for State Resources v/s Development.
- 3). Ethnicity v/s State Policy
- 4). Ethnicity v/s Mainstream Polity.
- 5). Inter-ethnic relations v/s Nationality Question.
- 6). Regionalism v/s Development.
- 7). Development v/s People's Aspiration.
- 8). People's Perception of Development.
- 9). Sustainable Development.

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### **Development of Tribes, Dalits and other Vulnerable Sections: Approaches, Interventions, Impact and Implications**

The term 'development' is viewed and understood in multiple ways by different people, depending on one's ideological leanings, political identities, social background, and individual interests. However, as development, in the value - free meaning of the term, is closely tied with the concerns of people's livelihood and well being, the responsibility of Anthropologists to respond to the concerns and challenges of the present day realities, in providing appropriate micro- level insights towards such an understanding of development, is more than ever before. The first-hand experience of the anthropologists with the lives of the tribes, dalits and other vulnerable sections of the society should be able to throw light on the ground-level realities of development approaches, interventions, impact and implications, reflecting on the lacunae in the adopted processes and showing the appropriate directions for a sustainable and inclusive development. This is particularly so, in today's global context, with the increasing gap between the haves and have-nots, growing consumerism, environmental degradation, and unsustainable ways of life. The task of Anthropology becomes, then, very crucial and urgent, especially towards justification of its claim as a people's science.

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### **Development Scenario in West Bengal: Anthropological Snapshots**

The findings of the anthropological village studies were never taken seriously by the early planners of India. The intricacies and complexities of caste politics and the village level household economy of the tribes and the caste were virtually squeezed into a non-entity under the huge weight of national sample survey data and the macroeconomic models of growth and development generated through the Five Year Plans initiated under the influence of Nehruvian socialism. It seems that the same story is now being repeated in this era of liberalization in which macro level planners are talking in terms of GDP, Special Economic Zones and rapid industrialization of the country.

In a left ruled State like West Bengal, which emphasized a bottom-up development policy, the constituent political parties of the Left Front Government secured their vote

banks in election after election by empowerment of the underprivileged mainly through land reforms and panchayati raj system. But here in this State too, macro - thinking began to invade into the heads of its policy makers and this has taken a very interesting course of argumentation. During the early 1990s the ruling Left Front Government's leaders started to argue that since land reforms is a very successful endeavour in the State which raised the agricultural production and also the purchasing capacity of the peasantry, this State is the ideal ground for the establishment of capital intensive industries. In other sectors of development the government discourses followed the macro - path. Tribal development, forest management, condition of women, functioning of panchayats to name some of the important ones, the governmental discourse always highlighted the success in terms of macro - figures and statistics, completely ignoring failures and adverse consequences of the implementation of the development paradigm.

Under this general background the papers in this symposium will address the issue of macro policy versus micro - level realities in West Bengal. The focus of the symposium would be to view the macro -level development policies from micro - level, empirical and anthropological perspective.

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### **Culture, Environment and Development**

It is an accepted fact that both the concepts of environment and development are intertwined, as they together relate to the management of natural resources in a sustainable manner. But since management of natural resources has a cultural dimension, in the sense that cultural imaginations play a vital role in the utilization of such resources, culture, environment and development form a mutually reinforced triangle in anthropological discourse. The role of culture in this kind of discourse is immensely important as it provides the very foundation of human perception and beliefs of environment that impinges upon the management of natural resources. The focus of this symposium, therefore, will be to explore theoretically as well as empirically the nexus between culture, environment and development, or the way in which culture triggers management of natural resources in a culturally prescribed way for people's development.

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## **Human Development and Anthropology**

International, National and State level human development reports are frequently released, which bring out the issues of how development is measured in economic terms and in terms of health and education. India as one of the fastest growing economies in the world has the maximum load of undernourished children. Tribal development departments provide relief programs for survival of tribal people year after year. The approach of human development for the empowerment of the people is totally lacking. The 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution amendment is expected to empower the PRI and provide autonomy for self governance. The bottlenecks could be empirically presented.

Anthropological theory about holistic culture translated into terms like comprehensive, sustainable development need to address the issues of human development. What are the qualitative indicators of human development? What are the processes through which a stable but poor tribal community strives to reach development according to its own perspectives? Can we document those capacity building, as well as empowering processes?

Economists like Amartya Sen have written on the issues of human development which legitimately is a subject matter of Anthropology. Anthropologists should discuss the issues of human development perspectives and empirical experience in the Indian Anthropological Congress: 2010

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### **Developmental Process and the Himalayan Communities**

There is by and large a feeling among the Himalayan Communities that they have been bypassed, neglected, and marginalized in the development process or suffer from the adverse fall-outs of the developmental projects taken up by the State. For instance, in case of River valley projects and Biosphere-reserves, people have been uprooted from their homes and hearths, without proper rehabilitation programme. There has been utter neglect in the sphere of infrastructural development; even the security concerns have remained un-addressed. Whatever little developmental activities have been there, that were in utter disregard to the environmental management. Over exploitation of forest and other natural resources for commercial end by the contractors and other agents, with the connivance of State agents, resulted in massive degradation of the fragile mountain environment. The knowledge system developed by the mountain inhabitants, over the generations, towards environment management, conservation and resource regeneration has been disdainfully looked down upon.

Due to such utter neglect and adverse fall-outs, the region experienced massive land alienation resulting into large scale migration of populations. In some areas, a very large number of villages have assumed almost a deserted look. Only old people, small children and women folk are to be met with. The working force is all out. Certain other areas experienced violent movements against the State apathy, as we presently witness in the shape of Gorkha Land Movement. Even the Naxal Movement grew in the Himalayan foothills/Tarai of Darjeeling region.

Anthropology as a discipline always has a concern for developmental activities and anthropologists have been associated with the development of the tribal populations. Now that the State seems to have woken up, since the Prime Minister has recently voiced some concern regarding the lack of adequate developmental activities in the Himalayan region or for the tribals. The chief minister of Uttarakhand has also proposed to set up an Integrated Development Authority for all the Himalayan states. Environmental activists in the Himalayan region have always been voicing their concern in this regard. We have had movements such as Chipko in the Himalayan region in the recent past. Under the changed scenario what role anthropology should have in order to fulfill its social obligations towards the development of mountain communities?

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## **Impact of Welfare/Development Measures Imposed on the Hunter-Gatherers of Andaman Islands: A Historical Perspective**

In the history of colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent and the neighboring countries of Southeast Asia, the case of the Andaman Islands is indeed a unique one. It has been unique in umpteen ways i.e.

- a) Highly strategic location of the Islands in the Bay of Bengal being close to the international sea routes for travel and trade and commerce since ancient times.
- b) The culturally and physically unique human groups that had been living and flourishing in this haven for millennia as self-reliant and autonomous communities.
- c) This situation sustained itself for thousands of years till they caught the attention of the greedy thoughts and evil eye of the European (mainly British) colonizers 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.
- d) This eventually translated into forcible occupation of the Islands initially in 1789-96 and finally in 1858 on a permanent basis by the British East India Company as part of the growing British Indian Empire in the East.
- e) One by one each island in the Andaman archipelago was occupied after prolonged bloody warfare and battles with local inhabitants – the Negrito Hunter Gatherers of the Andamans. The latter fought gallantly with bows and arrows and spears against guns and artillery. Eventually they had to submit to superior force.
- f) The warfare had caused large scale killings of warriors and people. But establishment of friendly and closer contact caused even greater destruction through the spread of - until then unknown – killer diseases brought by the colonizers to the Islands.

## **OUTCOME**

The upshot of all these factors combined with attendant developments over the years has been:

- i) Forced occupation and encroachments of tribal resources (land, forests, water sources, coastal areas) and their displacement from the land of their ancestors.
- ii) The demographic destruction/decline of their population all over from estimated 5000 people to a mere 500 today
- iii) Destruction/decline of their age old cultures combined with introduction of harmful/evil elements of alien culture in their lives.

## **PRESENT SITUATION**

- 1) **The Great Andamanese** – The original 13 Hunting Gathering Communities have been reduced to only 4. The ten tribes of Great Andaman's are survived by their remnants surviving on government aid and support in one tiny island called Strait Island. Population 50.
- 2) **The Onge of Little Andaman** (about 100) are now restricted to one small settlement at Dugong Creek there. Survive mainly on official aid and support.
- 3) **The Jarawa** – The brave and proud community that refused to submit to the British/Indian government domination or overtures till 1974 is today a community almost on the same path as traversed by the Onge and earlier by the Great Andamanese. The future looks far from bright.
- 4) **The Sentinelese of North Sentinel Island** – We have made friendly contact with them in 1991. The flimsy barrier of relative isolation may not stand the power of currents of time for long. So this community still enjoying the relative autonomy of its culture and social life may too be soon sucked into the cycle of destructive contact with the outside world!

## **THE ARGUMENT**

The argument of the administrators/politicians representing the dominant society - the so called "PRIMITIVE" societies needs to be given the "benefits" of civilization. But the "pitfalls" of the process of "civilizing" them being gruesome and destructive for the latter – the small and vulnerable groups – is a question to which they lack answers. The final results only serve the selfish interests and greed of the dominant society! After all, was that the idea!?

## **ANDAMANS A LABORATORY**

What has happened or is happening in the Andaman Islands is like a laboratory situation. The similar things happening to the larger tribal groups over centuries in the mainland of India have led to Naxal movement. Would that be a wrong conclusion!?

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## **Health and Development**

Health and Development is fundamental to improving the social, economic, and health status of the people. Improved health and well being of people contribute to the increase in productivity, efficient utilization of resources, and faster economic growth and development. In fact, the relation between health and development is reciprocal and has received considerable attention of the academic community, development planners, and practitioners. The process of development affects various aspects of life differentially at individual, gender and community levels. Contribution that men and women make to development differs at various stages of their life cycles and between socio-cultural groups. The work of the World Health Organization on 'Health and Development' tries to make sense of these complex links. It is concerned with the impact of better health on development and poverty reduction, and conversely, with the impact of development policies on the achievement of health goals. In particular, it aims at building support across government for higher levels of investment in health, and to ensure that health is prioritized within overall economic and development plans. In this context, 'health and development' work supports health policies that respond to the needs of the poorest groups - a development process that expands choices for everyone, regardless of gender, class, or race, and brings about more equitable distribution of resources. The mission can be achieved through research to identify the social and behavioral determinants of health, development and evaluation of interventions and policies leading to the improvement of population health, and the preparation of professionals and researchers who will fill leadership positions in advocacy and public service.

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## Indian State, Indian Tribes

There are nearly 700 Scheduled Tribe communities with a population of nearly 100 million, occupying diverse positions in the development layers, sharing deprivation, backwardness, exploitation, in praxis and consciousness in common. Indian State has tried to integrate these communities into the order using all the means of liberal-democratic management but has met only with partial success. One can readily identify at least three layers of interrelationships between the liberal-democratic Indian State and the tribal communities.

One, that of **active citizenship**; the tribal communities participate in the economic, social and political processes offered by the State and they feel integrated into the order, and cause upward mobility by capacity building, resource mobilization, and by taking the advantages of the policy of protective discrimination.

Two, that of **critical citizenship**; the tribal communities participate in the development process, fail to cope up with the market forces, nurse a sense of deprivation and alienation, and try to redress the grievances by organizing democratic movements of various forms, e.g., ethnic movement, tribal solidarity movement, trade union movement, or movement under the umbrella of NGOs.

Three, that of **the rebel**; the tribal communities nurse a strong sense of alienation from the State and resort to extra-constitutional means, such as struggle for independence (as in the case of ULFA in Assam, Naga movement, or armed struggle led by the Maoists in AP, Orissa, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chattishgarh).

The sub-theme invites papers on any topic covering the scope outlined above.

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### **Northeast India at Crossroad: Development Deprivation**

Northeast India remains a land of mystery to the people of other parts of the country. Usually it is thought to be a tribal land where the ‘primitives’ dwell in forests. It is presumed to be an isolated space where people live in their hory past. But in reality the region is one of the most exposed areas of India which is bounded by 98% international borders. Consequently the region has witnessed hordes of migration and now has become a mixing pot of races. The tribes constitute only about 23 per cent of the population.

Migrations, colonization and formation of a new nation - state has culminated into a multitude of problems, right from the issues related to environment, floods, earthquake and other natural calamities to ethnic strife and cross country conflicts. The situation has precipitated further with the governments in action and its military adventurism. The newly framed vision with the enunciation of ‘Look East Policy’ has resulted in greater trauma among the local populace for the fear of marginalization. The under-representation of the region in the parliamentary process and structural limitations have created a sense of disillusion in the region. Taking all these into consideration the symposium plans to encourage presentation of scholarly papers and serious discussions on the topics related to North - east, such as: race, ethnicity, people’s movements, government and non-governmental developmental programmes. ‘Look-East Policy’ and their impact, trans-border conflicts, etc.

Younger scholars involved in the field will receive priority treatment.

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### **Problems of HIV and AIDS**

Health is the most precious wealth, and healthy existence of future generation is the basic purpose of all the so - called development programmes. So, a topic on health and nutrition should not be overlooked /sidelined in the discussion on development. Under this theme, a sub-theme on the “Problems of HIV and AIDS” may be inserted.

One of the most dreaded challenges that the mankind has been facing in recent times is AIDS. Since the world became aware of AIDS in the summer of 1981, the disease has gradually spread like wild fire infecting millions and killing millions ceaselessly. Scientific achievements in HIV research, the causative agent of the disease, during the last 28 years, have not been able to bring the virus under total control except ,of course, the development of antiretroviral drugs. Recent claim of innovation of prophylactic injection in Thailand is, at the moment, an unsure gesture of rain in the desert. Prevention is the only remedy as there is no cure at present, and it can be achieved through mass education, young and old, rich and poor, literate or illiterate about the etiology of the disease.

Almost three decades of awareness campaigns and educative programmes, however, fail to check the virus from further transmission. Instead, it has, more unfortunately, taken new routes to innocent women and children. To whom and to what factors shall we blame for this? Anthropologists, being human scientists, have roles to play in finding out the **human factors** of failing to cope with the virus, which will ultimately pave way towards successful control of the disease.

It is, therefore, high time to have an assessment on various aspects relating to the disease, such as problems facing by the people (of different genders) of different areas and of different socio-economic statuses, and nature of activities taken up so far to tackle the situation.

## Appendix

### INDIAN NATIONAL CONFEDERATION AND ACADEMY OF ANTHROPOLOGISTS (INCAA)

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IAC – III / 10

September 26, 2009

#### INVITATION TO SYMPOSIA ORGANIZERS

Dear Colleague:

Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists (INCAA), in collaboration with Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) Bhopal, will organize the Third Indian Anthropological Congress at Bhopal during February 21-23, 2010. On this occasion, the Organizing Committee propose to have a series of symposia, preferably centering around the topic of the Focal Theme of the Congress: “State, Development, and Communities”.

On behalf of INCAA, I have great pleasure in forwarding to you a write-up on the Focal Theme and in inviting you to organize one such symposium on any of the sub-themes, as have been spelt-out in the write-up. You are, nevertheless, free to modify a sub-theme or select altogether a new one of your choice with prior intimation to us.

The Organizing Committee will reimburse travel expenses of the Symposium Organizers by train A/C 2-Tier Class. The paper presenters to the symposia, not exceeding 10 for each symposium, will be entitled to reimbursement in A/C 3-Tier Class, provided they submit full text of their presentations complete in every respect to the Member-Secretary, INCAA by January 31, 2010.

All Registered Delegates will be provided with local transportation and modest hospitality by the Organizing Committee free of charges. The Proceedings of the symposia, subject to qualitative considerations, will be published by INCAA.

We shall appreciate, if you kindly acknowledge receipt of this invitation and communicate your consent toward organizing the Symposium, along with title of the same, to the Member-Secretary, INCAA, by October 30, 2009.

With regards.

Yours sincerely,

(Prof. Ajit K. Danda)  
Member-Secretary