

Indian Anthropology Congress – 2018

February 21-23, 2018

Organized by

Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University in association with Guwahati Regional Committee of INCAA, Guwahati, Assam, Under the aegis of Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists (INCAA)

4. FOCAL THEME :

CHANGING FACETS OF HUMAN BIOLOGY AND CULTURE : PROSPECTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Human culture and biology, at all time and places, are so inextricably intertwined that each affects the other in important ways.

Study of cultural variables has been a part of human biology since the time when the field of adaptive human biology went through major methodological and conceptual transformations. Human biological processes are constrained, organized and developed by culture. This includes technology, socio-economic and political structures, religious and ideological beliefs and artistic practices such as music, dance, paintings and folklores. The total cultural heritage therefore includes not only the skills and ideas being transmitted through generations but also the modified physical environment. The present day complex and technical society evolved from the sporadic tool using of an ape, through the simple pebble tools of the pre-modern man and the complex tool making traditions of ancient men to the hugely complicated culture of modern man

The pace at which this change occurred has been very rapid in the recent decades because of modernization and globalization. Globalization on one hand has opened the doors allowing greater understanding of cultures of other countries but on the other hand the negative influences are also there. It is this susceptibility observed all over the world that are suffering from recession, growing structural violence- physical and/or psychological harm (including repression, cultural and environmental destruction, poverty, hunger and obesity, illness and premature death) caused by impersonal, exploitative and unjust social, political and economic systems. Some critics refer to it as a “McDonaldization” of culture due to global advertising campaigns that undermine cultural diversity.

In such a situation many anthropologists wonder what today’s globalizing processes will create and what will be transformed, disrupted or damaged beyond repair. When traditional communities are exposed to intense contact with technologically empowered groups, their cultures typically change with unprecedented speed, often for worse, thus becoming less supportive and less adaptive. Now the question arises : How can thousands of different societies respond successfully to the radical changes hurled upon them? Today, many of the cultures have changed profoundly in response to not only the powerful outside influences but also due to the internal dynamics. Others have disappeared as a result of deadly epidemics, violent conflicts, acculturation, ethnocide, or genocide.

Anthropological perspective on local communities in the age of globalization makes key contributions to our understanding of such troubling problems as overpopulation, poverty, obesity, food shortages, environmental destruction and disease. The value of this perspective has been confirmed by international organizations like WHO and many others as well as some global corporations and state Government agencies.

The proposed seminar will address the basic issues mentioned above through understanding the local communities under the present changing situation. All the information generated through the deliberations in the seminar are expected to help the planners in formulating strategies for development and solving practical problems on local, national and global levels.

Both oral presentations and poster presentations will be organized on the issues related to the Focal Theme.