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READING L. K. ANANTHA KRISHNA IYER WITHIN THE DISCIPLINARY TRAJECTORY

A much celebrated scholar of Indian anthropology, Prof. L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer shall be remembered for his invaluable contributions towards the introduction, growth and development of academic discipline of Anthropology through his exceptional caliber, hard work and integrity but also for his innovative approaches in the practice of the discipline. His contributions either in terms of the exhaustive socio-cultural descriptions of tribes and castes of South India or the analysis of their customs and practices singularly, remain as the baseline data for the anthropological researches even today crossing the barriers of time and space. What made it possible perhaps is his display of extraordinary brilliance in vision, insight and cognition, both conceptual and methodological, in understanding the disciplinary subject and in its application in specific socio-cultural and historical contexts. Working within the constraints, either institutional and/or technical, he attempted in his own possible ways to practice the discipline situating it within its context of its practice rather than origin. Living and practicing the subject much down the line of this lived legend, I certainly am not in a position to state whether or not this was a direct upshot of his deliberate attempts to shape a new horizon for the disciplinary practice, but without much of hesitation I would like to propose possibly that was an outcome of the predicaments that he encountered in undertaking the academic research of his own country people as 'other' and his specific socio-cultural locale of belonging to that same 'other'.

Against this backdrop the present paper is an attempt to explore the underlying methodological contextualizations evident in the writings of Prof. L. K. Anantha Krishna Iyer in order to understand his tremendous long sightedness about the scope and objective of the discipline that flares much beyond its conventional outlook. Lived and practiced during the formation and growth of the discipline in the country, Ananthakrishnan's works mostly limited to the tribes and castes – their physical characteristics, socio-cultural history, and the social institutions and so on. The paper begins with a brief bio-sketch of the scholar; this is done with the intention of placing him within the intellectual/academic and their socio-cultural locale of his historical times.

L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer – Life and Works

Way back in 1988, A. Aiyappan, (1988) said, “about five decades ago when I began my apprenticeship to anthropology, there were only three anthropological posts in India. Anthropology which began modestly in the museums of India, about a century ago made rapid strides, so that it is now time to think of an anthropological tradition in India, for tradition is a sign of respectability”. And that very modest beginning of the tradition of Indian anthropology started with one of the most careful, active and diligent scholars of Indian anthropology, Prof. L K Ananthakrishna Iyer, who has the distinction of not just as the first academic anthropologist¹ in the country, but more prestigiously as the father of Indian Anthropology and Ethnology². Born in 1861 to a Sanskrit scholar at Lakshminarayanapuram village in Palaghat district, earlier a part of the Malabar region in the Madras Presidency and in the present day Kerala, L K Anatha Krishna Iyer (1861 – 1937), the eldest of six children in the family, attempted his earlier education in the traditional style of going through a regular *adhyayana* and Sanskrit courses before entering into the formal western education system. One of the earliest from the region to take to English education he completed his matriculation from the Palaghat high school³. Then he joined the Kerala Vidyasala at Calicut which later came to known as Zamorin’s college. He joined for his graduation with natural science as his main subject at the Christian College, Madras, an institution with which he maintained his personal relations till much later in his life⁴.

Ananthakrishna started his professional career as a clerk at Revenue Settlement Office, Ooty (Ootacamund) (1888-1890). This was followed by teaching jobs, first in Victoria College (1890-1897), Palaghat, during when he also obtained a diploma in teaching from Madras University. In 1897 he joined as a teacher at Ernakulam College which later came to known as Maharaja’s College. He continued there as a teacher till 1908 when he was promoted as deputy director to the Inspectorate of Schools. It was during his tenure at Maharaja’s College as a science teacher that he *strayed* into the practice of colonial discipline of Anthropology⁵, at a time when the scientific orientation of the discipline of anthropology was least known within the country though it was getting increased recognition in the Western world for the reason that studying the ‘other’ cultures and communities became a part of tracing human evolution the epitome of which was considered as the intelligent ‘West’.

In 1901 as a part of the census operations of the colonial State it was decided to embark on an ethnographic survey of all of India. The survey was carried on by the superintendents appointed for the Provinces and States with a view to investigate and record the customs and manners of the tribes and castes in their respective areas. As a part of meeting the requirements, the state secretary of the Dewan of princely state of Cochin, who⁶ was closely known to Ananthakrishna, asked him to undertake an ethnographic survey of the state. He willingly accepted the project on honorary as an additional duty

to his already serving job of a science teacher at Maharaja's college. He was appointed as a superintendent of ethnography of the Cochin princely state and this resulted in the publication of twelve monographs between 1904 - 1906, which were later compiled⁷ and published as Tribes and Castes of Cochin in two volumes. The work on Cochin tribes and castes is a rich and a varied collection of data on numerous tribes and castes of former princely state of Cochin. The two sumptuous volumes on Cochin Tribes and Castes are still considered as the classics of Indian anthropology. Ananthkrisha described each and every tribe and caste in a 14 point format which included the introduction, their origin and tradition, habitation, marriage and customs, pregnancy and child birth, inheritance, tribal organization, religion, magic and sorcery, funeral ceremonies, occupation, physical and mental characteristics, food, social status and a conclusion. Generally in the introduction to each of the community Ananthkrisha talks about the etymology of the name as well.

It was in 1908 the first volume was published which comprised of eighteen chapters having details of twenty one tribes and castes. The volume gives a descriptive account of all the hill and jungle tribes and other low castes in the ascending order of the social status from the elephant catching Kadars of the jungles to the Nayadis who pollute a Brahmin a 100 yards off, to the composite artisan group known as the Kammalans which includes carpenters, stone masons, blacksmiths, workers in bellmetal, goldsmiths, and workers in leather. The volume thus deals with all Malayali and animistic castes, the members of which pollute the high caste people at various distances and cannot approach the outer walls of the temples of the higher castes. Published in 1912 the five hundred page richly illustrated second volume of the Cochin Tribes and Castes deals with other groups of people higher in social grade starting with Nayers. Next is taken up by higher social groups consisting of Ambalavasis, Nambidis etc., followed by Kashtriyas and then Brahmins. The volume got space for the ethnographic descriptions of a number of non-indigenous castes, mainly those migrated from the neighbouring states, which are dealt with in a separate chapter. Among the people of Cochin there were people outside the Hindu fold and who have a foreign character, like Jews – a rather unique community which has settled in Cochin from early times, and Syrian Christians and Jonkan Mappillas. The accounts also incorporated inputs required specifically for the 1901 census report such as the numerical strength of the tribe or caste with sex-wise split, the areas in which they generally stay, and the divisions of the caste, if any, and also the language that they speak. Ananthkrishna's painstaking ethnographic enterprise is rightly reflected in the words of K. S. Singh (1988:) as: "in conducting such extensive surveys Iyer showed a range and depth of knowledge, a fidelity to facts, a capacity for hard and sustained fieldwork and for establishing rapport with the subject of his study – the people, which has always been a great anthropologists forte."

Ananthakrishna retired from Cochin state service in 1920, although he continued to hold the position of superintendent of ethnography till 1924, thus continuing his ethnographic work in Cochin even for some years after his retirement. During his state service in recognition to his organizing abilities and scientific training the Cochin government assigned to him the responsibility of creating the state museum, zoological gardens, and an industrial bureau. During 1912-20, he was engaged in further studies with the intention of completing the Cochin survey with a third volume. This was interrupted by an independent work on Anthropology of Syrian Christians of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore that was completed in 1924 and got published in 1926 by the Cochin government press.

By 1913, after the publication of Cochin tribes and castes Ananthakrishna's reputation as an anthropologist was firmly established within and outside the country. His works got appreciation from the leading anthropologists of his time such as E.B Taylor, W. H. R. Rivers, Frazer, A. C. Haddon and so on⁸. Although his entry into anthropological practice was accidental, he carried out his endeavour with great passion, dedication and advocacy, something which granted him unquestionable position of founding father in the disciplinary advancement in the country. Ananthakrishna was elected as the president of Anthropology section at the foundation session of the Indian Science Congress in 1914⁹. During 1920-21 Sir Ashuthosh Mukerjee who met Ananthakrishna during the first session of Indian Science Congress, invited him who by then already delivered a series of special lectures on Ethnology in Madras University in 1916 - 17¹⁰, to Calcutta University to deliver a course of 12 extension lectures in Anthropology. Soon he joined as a lecturer in Anthropology and Ancient Indian History at Calcutta University, an appointment announced by the vice chancellor at the concluding lecture of the lecture series. In order to set up the anthropology department as well as organizing teaching and research Ananthakrishna was appointed as a senior lecturer when the university introduced first Anthropology post-graduate course. There he remained as the head of the department and the chairman of the board of studies in anthropology till his retirement in 1932. The lectures he delivered there at Calcutta university were later (in 1926) compiled and published as 'Lectures on Ethnography'. The lectures included subjects such as anthropology; ethnology and ethnography; race; racial history of Malabar, Cochin and Travancore; caste; sex and marriage; family, kinship and social organization; magic, sorcery and witchcraft; evolution of tastes in dress and ornaments and finally village community in south India. His volume on Lectures on Ethnography is his main theoretical work where his own views on theoretical problems are scattered throughout its text.

During his tenure at Calcutta University, in 1924 the Maharaja of Mysore invited Ananthakrishna to undertake the ethnographic survey of Mysore, which he accepted gracefully and carried out after the academic

sessions. His ethnographic work in Mysore resulted in the publication of four volumes of Mysore Tribes and Castes. Ananthakrishna started his work on Mysore tribes and castes on the ethnographic work started in 1903 but left incomplete due to untimely death by H V Nanjundayya where he as superintendent of ethnography in the usual administrative way. Thirty four monographs were published by him at various intervals between 1903 - 1918, till the work was handed over to Ananthakrishna for the completion of the survey. Ananthakrishna carefully revised and edited those thirty four monographs in the light of the fresh additional material that he collected first hand, added to that. When he found notes on fifty odd tribes and castes fragmentary he took permission from the Maharaja for a fresh ethnographic survey. He also surveyed on a few additional tribes and castes. Ananthakrishna believed that to a student of raciology and evolution of culture Mysore unfolds a region of extraordinary and absorbing interests. There the social life of the different communities has imbibed the effects of influences during the past centuries from contact with and movements emanating from the peoples of the north, east and south.

The second volume dealing with fifteen tribes and castes of Mysore appeared first in 1928. This was followed in 1930 by the third volume containing descriptive accounts of thirty four tribes and castes. The fourth volume, devoted to a survey of remaining forty three tribes and castes was published in 1932. Volume 1, the introductory and the one which contains the general conclusions of the survey came out last in 1934¹¹. A consolidated index of these volumes was finally added as a separate publication. The first volume of Mysore Tribes and Castes, as Ananthakrishna attempted, is more than a mere introduction to the three descriptive volumes. In Ananthakrishna's own words; "the science of anthropology, ethnology and ethnography in India are, with the exception of few students of the subject in universities, still new to the reading public. The sciences of anthropology and ethnology have been introduced in a few of the Indian universities and in the competitive examinations for public service; but the students appearing at these examinations have no suitable books which treat of Indian social topics, except the bulky volumes of tribes and castes dealing with the numerous communities in India to which they have no access except in libraries. Owing to the absence of a single volume ... to the study of Indian ethnology, the author ... thought it advisable to take a more extended canvas and to treat this volume as Ethnology of South India with special reference to Mysore". That was his commitment towards the development of the discipline in the country. Aiyappan remarked about ethnographic survey in Mysore "his work in Mysore comprehended a critical survey of about hundred tribes and castes published in four superb volumes, most beautifully edited and illustrated. These four volumes would always remain a monumental contribution to the descriptive science of south Indian anthropology".

As recognition to his professional contributions to the field of anthropology Ananthakrishna was entrusted with different honorary degrees like Rao Bahadur (in 1921) and Dewan Bahadur (in 1935) by the state government and a doctorate degree (in 1934) by University of Breslau. Early in 1934, Ananthakrishna visited Europe, and lectured at a number of universities. He was honored wherever he went. On his return he was invited by the chief commissioner of Coorg to conduct an ethnographic survey which he did in collaboration with Dr. Lidio Cipriani of Italy. Ananthakrishna, who dedicated his life to the practice of the discipline till his last, passed away on Feb. 26, 1937.

The science mission of the state

When Anantha Krishna Iyer began practicing anthropology early of last century, the discipline was in its nascent form in the country. In fact, the ethnographic investigations Ananthakrishna was invited to join were proposed in 1899 to the secretary of state in India by the British Association for the Advancement of Science, a proposal which later was accepted by the colonial state as part of census operations in 1901. Through an ethnographic survey what the colonial state intended was to acquire the 'data' in the most 'scientific' way, a process although meant to be of obvious advantage for their administration¹². The survey was anthropologically guided as the ethnographic questionnaires and its categories drawn were heavily influenced by E. B. Tylor. It required the 'recording' of data of the country – an accurate and well arranged record of the customs and the domestic and social relations of the various castes and tribes, as the entire native life in India was made up of groups of this kind and the status and conduct of individuals are largely determined by the group to which they belonged (GOI 1901 c.f. Ram, 2007: 71). The colonial 'neutral' state that upheld the western scientific method demanded 'objective' knowledge of the people where the scientist maintain a complete detachment from the observed world of social realities and take it for granted as a natural given. The purpose was to record the facts by observing people as one observes the natural world and they could be classified as so many representatives of different historical periods. This is also the period when added recognition was given to the linguistic advantages of English educated native anthropologist for a better 'empirical accuracy' in ethnographic representation of authentic and pristine culture demanded by the colonial state.

When the colonial state and science run into each other no wonder for Ananthakrishna Iyer – the English educated Indian, that too for a state led project, science becoming own very project. And that too when adhering to science gave one a universal identity traversing all others including the subjective local, racial and colonial. Ananthakrishna was praised for the scientific zest he held as a trademark of his ethnographic works. A recognition to his scientific zest had come from Dr. Baron von Eickstedt in his introduction

to *Mysore Tribes and Castes* that: “among those who have already taken up the task of detailed scientific work Mr Ananthakrishna Iyer has occupied for a long time a prominent place. For decades an indefatigable investigator of the ancient civilization of his country, he has described and analysed the tribes and castes ... we duly appreciate the fact that his works contain an astonishing mass of clear and objective facts carefully collected and related in an excellent style”. The scientific precision in his studies talks for themselves in terms of supporting his views by overwhelming evidence. The pages of *Lectures on Ethnography* are corroborated with historical and social facts to support every essential point in his theoretical arguments. Besides, most of his ethnographic descriptions of tribes and castes were enriched with photographs which were taken by Ananthakrishna himself during his field visits and the purpose of which as in the words of Ananthakrishna was: “with cold precision of mechanical eye, it registers everything brought within its shifting focus; so that science can have no doubt about the evidential value of its data” (Iyer 1935: li-liv). His alertness as an observer took him to the nuances of human behaviour which found a place in an accurate report of the members of the caste or tribe. His works showed that he followed a system of investigation designed to secure all the details necessary for an understanding of the people whom he studied. He maintained a zealous concern for ensuring fidelity to facts, so far they could be ascertained. The scientific vigour he maintained was applauded from all corners. The *Geographical Journal* (in May 1934) that reviewed his *Cochin Tribes and Castes* stated: “the author is not only a specialist in these investigations but also an enthusiast flavouring his minute and painstaking observation with illustrations and comparisons derived from a wide knowledge of the subject to which he has devoted many years of study”.

When Anthropology becomes Ananthropology

Yet, while practicing Anthropology within the institutional constraints within which he started off as an ethnographer under the conceptual grid put in place by the then Census Commissioner (1901) H. H. Risely, Ananthakrishna displayed singular courage in his attempts to appropriating the ‘scientific’ tradition adapting to the study of native people whom he is not only familiar with but also shares the commonality of belonging to the colony of west. As true to what M. N. Srinivas remarked: ‘Iyer’s contributions no doubt is unmatched in building the scientific disciplinary scholarship within the country which even had become a reason for referring anthropology as ananthropology (Srinivas cf Balaratnam, 1963)’, I would like to add, Ananthakrishna’s contextualized practice of anthropology was so distinctive to call it Ananthropology even in his own times. Ananthakrishna had the disciplinary insight to understand the power disparity within which the discipline was practiced in its study of the ‘other’. He said: ... ‘the purity of race or purity of type is only live in imagination. In all parts of the world, the advanced or white races hold the backward races in more or less complete dependence and

this brings social, economic and other hostile conflicts mostly to the disadvantageous of the latter' (Iyer, 1926: 39). Thus, with its outlash at cultural imperialism, this becomes the single most outstanding implication of Ananthropology in the present day anthropological thought.

Ananthakrishna's innovative efforts can be superbly witnessed at different realms of his ananthropological practice. As early as the formative period of anthropology in the country Ananthakrishna departed from the set format – the transposition of physical sciences to social world, the anthropometric and ethnological strand of collecting data by the circulation of questionnaires to the local government officers and then doing the physical measurement of the population. He rejected the administrative way of collecting information about the people. For his studies he made it a point that he personally visit the villages and interacted with the people in their natural environment. His way of collecting information of the native people is amply reflected in what Balaratnam (1963) says “he could speak to the people with understanding and sympathy, which won him the confidence of the tribal people and others who would normally feel reluctant to talk to strangers about their customs and initiate beliefs. An admirable blend of self confidence and humility, rare power of extracting the significant details from fragmentary evidence, quick eye for essential, firm hold of main points and above all his feeling for human motives and emotions gave life to his writings... the friendly manner in which he used to talk about the domestic, family, or community affairs was an expression of his understanding and sympathy, and he could enter into the motivations and emotions of the persons concerned in regard to their attitudes, views and reactions... he studied the drama of human existence. Apart from data collection about social groups, he was keen to discover what mattered to people in their daily lives, and what relationship that had to the development of social institutions”. And his approach had a definite advantage on the nature of the information that he collected about different communities. This perhaps may be the reason what made *American Anthropologist* to remark Cochin tribes and castes as the “first rate genius ... free from flaws which are found in other books of similar nature ... information well digested and presented in an agreeable form ... and the superiority of Ananthakrishna's work is partly due to the fact that he is a native of southern India”. And he takes full advantage of his nativity in his practice of the subject. Although he was collecting information as a part of the census process his anthropological interests never delimited to that instrumentality. His unusual courage, professional dedication, combining scientific zest in humanistic way may be what made him to make low castes like Nayadis to come within 300 feet which custom prescribes as limit of their approach to a Brahmin. Thus, though Ananthakrishna started within the framework of ethnographic survey established by others, he brought to bear on it an insider's view that marked out the ethnographic survey of cochin as probably one of the best in the ethnographic series (K. S. Singh in Ramdass: 29), which received an increased

disciplinary acceptance in later periods; as in the words of J. H. Hutton ¹⁵ that “he belongs to India by race and nativity, and had he not been so, it is hardly conceivable that he could have acquired such a vast mass of information on subjects which natives are usually very unwilling to discuss with Europeans”. The basis of his success is his approach to the main subject of his study – primitive people, with a sense of sympathy unusual for his time. Ananthakrishna’s interest in Anthropology perhaps was because of his interest in knowing about the development of human society; as an office assistant at Ootacamund he had the opportunity of staying in the tribal areas. He could successfully incorporate his personal politics to his professional practice when his general curiosity and sympathy extended to all people in his personal interactions with them could be extended in his dealings with the tribes he studied and in reporting their customs and manners, thoughts and sentiments.

Ananthakrishna – the visionary

Ananthakrishna was a true visionary of all times. Studying the ‘other’ for tracing the cultural history was the trademark of anthropological studies of his time. However, Ananthakrishna, traversing the boundaries of writing about the ‘other’ culture of classic ethnography, was aware of the macro historical processes of change the society was undergoing. It is rightly reflected when he devoted one full volume on Mysore tribes and castes on describing the context in which the communities lived. Ananthakrishna was keen to record the many changes happening then in the ways of life of the tribals while documenting facts about tribal customs and institutions. On the one hand, the evolutionist in him exclaimed: “to an anthropologist it is a matter for regret to see that these human fossils are rapidly disappearing” in the context of the changes occurring in the family and tribal organizations and day today economic and social life of Kadars. On the other hand he could not ignore the exploitative changes that occur to Kadars who, he said, “During the past fifteen years (1908 – 23) their frequent contact with the people of the plains and with Europeans in plantations has deprived them of their simple habits and brought them to a modified condition of life, morality and even language. ... they very much indulge in drinking and in other vices. Both men and women get into a fashion for costly dress”. This, according to him, happens despite the fact that, the rich knowledge base of Kadars. He added: “a Kadar can give a lesson to the present day civilized man; with a bill hook he performs wonders. ... the Kadar goes where an inhabitant of the plains fears to tread or conjures every creak of a bamboo into the approach of a charging tusker”. (Iyer in *Man in India* 1923). What he demonstrated here the underlying reason for the pathetic condition of Kadars as their exploitative relations with the plainspeople. Their encounter with modernity resulted in their dilapidated cultural condition.

Ananthakrishna's visionary explorations never ended there. At a time when anthropologists the world over devoted themselves to the study of pre-literate communities, he was the foremost to make a study of also literate communities such as Nambudiris, Nayars, and the Syrian Christians. Professors A. C. Haddon and F. J. Richards while paying homage to Ananthakrishna Iyer wrote in *Man* (1937): "his learned work on the tribes and castes of Cochin with its wealth of detail, earned for him a well deserved reputation among British, European and American ethnologists, which was enhanced on the publication of the equally valuable record of the tribes and castes of Mysore. His book on the Syrian Christian of Malabar is of great interest and *broke new ground*". And this breaking of new ground often extended to not just limiting to the descriptions of customs and manners but crossing over to interpretative analysis, for instance, his observations about the tali tying practice among Hindu marriages in south India: "the indispensable use of *tali* tied to a string and worn around the neck of the bride reminds one of the ancient systems of marriage by purchase in form if not in substance" (Iyer 1926: 165).

With a true understanding of the society in which he lived he both adopted and adapted the ethnographic tradition of his times. Although it was the twenty seven point format drawn up in 1885 by H. H. Risley and two others was the one followed for the census operations of ethnographic survey of India, Ananthakrishna modified it into 14 point one, which was suitable for the Indian context. On occupational categories of people in India, Ananthakrishna followed the conceptual framework of Nesfield but within an ethnographic format. True to the ethnographic tradition of his time Ananthakrishna gave greater weightage to the description of life-cycle ceremonies. But at the same time he could bring in innovative modifications warranted to the specific contexts within which he lived and practiced. Undermining the superiority of the scientific objective approach imposed by the west, Ananthakrishna, in his arrangement of tribes and castes of Cochin, instead of following the western rule of alphabetical order adhered to their arrangement in the order of their social status. Herbert Risely who reviewed the book in *The Pioneer* (in 1910) said: Unlike Thurston's work, the book is not arranged on an alphabetical plan; for the ordinary reader the plan has its advantages. It is difficult to imagine for anyone setting out to read through the encyclopedic treatises produced by Risley, Croke, and Thrston, Mr. Anantha Krishna Iyer's book can be read without any material breach of continuity; one caste leads to another in the order of social progression". Nonetheless, his arrangement of tribes and castes of Mysore was not in an alphabetical order and his reason was: "in the treatment of three volumes, an alphabetical order of arrangement, similar to that in the volumes of other provinces, has been adopted. Treatment, in the order of social precedence once attempted, cannot be now adopted without fear of offending the growing democratic temper of the communities concerned". Thus his efforts to a

contextualized study of subjects, which resulted in the expansion of the scope and terrain of the discipline of Anthropology in the periods to followed, were unmatched for the period and space he occupied.

Concluding Remarks

The idea emanates from the ongoing discussion is that just not becoming yet another cog in the disciplinary tool and imitating whatever is already in vogue as academic discourses, the unique production of knowledge of LK Ananthakrishna Iyer was an outcome of creative engagement within the academia and their subjects of study, which not only was innovative but also critical of the accepted disciplinary norms and guidelines. Living at a period of increasingly modernizing endeavour of the princely states and belonging to an upper strata of the society where the Brahminic and western intellectual environment complimented each other, the exhaustive monographs of Ananthakrishna Iyer were not always from the stance of a scholar cut off from the world but from an empathetic ethnographer putting efforts to understand people from their own standpoint. Dr. Verrier Elwin remembered: “indeed one of the things that has always struck me about the great professor ... is the generosity with which he always treated colleagues ... the spirit of kindness and cooperation has, for sometime past, been rather lacking in Indian anthropology, but it has been a very prominent characteristic of professor”. This personal attribute that Ananthakrishna Iyer upheld rather extended to his professional life as well; instead of treating the people he studied as mere objects of study, for him they were humans studying of whom required sympathetic understanding. This was rightly reflected in his studies where he stressed the importance of grasping the subtleties of daily life revealed through informal conversation and activities. A process through which, instead of understanding his own people and their culture as ‘alien’ he aptly appropriated and adapted the ‘alien’ concepts to a better understanding of his own setting.

It is not just duplication, either conceptual or methodological, of paradigms and models that is borne elsewhere, that this scholar of eminence demonstrated through his disciplinary practice, what is required instead is conscious criticality and innovative approaches suitable for and borne out of application in our own specific socio-cultural and historical context. And this is the disciplinary challenge before us in carrying forward the legacy left behind by the enlightened forefathers of the discipline.

NOTES

1. To become the first full time teacher of anthropology in the first Indian university to have a post graduate teaching department.
2. In a tribute to L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer Dr. Baron Egon von Eickstedt observes: “One finds his (Ananthakrishna Iyer’s) name mentioned with appreciation in English, German, Austrian and Italian works is the recognition of the fact that since long

his works are considered as the real store house of cultural and historical knowledge and are highly appreciated. We, therefore venerate him as the Father of Indian Anthropology and Ethnology”.

3. Palaghat High School which later developed into Victoria College.
4. The two inspiring influences that lasted long in his life beginning his days in colleges were that of Mr. Cecil M Barrow with whom he later worked as a colleague at Victoria and Dr. William Miller, then principal of Christian College.
5. In India, as is well accepted, the origin of Anthropology is associated with the exclusive concern with the study of exotic and non-literate peoples undertaken by British administrators who were interested in the scientific study of Indian people over whom they had to rule. Though the Anthropology of Indian people as a subject of study is much older, they were primarily undertaken by outsiders.
6. Iyer was a friend of C. Achuta Menon, who was secretary to the Dewan of Cochin. Iyer owed his first appointment at Victoria college, Palaghat, to his acquaintance with P Rajagopalachari who was formerly sub-collector of Palaghat and subsequently Dewan of Cochin.
7. Sir Albion Banerjee who was the Dewan of Cochin asked Iyer in 1908 to publish the material collected till then in a book form.
8. John Beddoe, the then president of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain characterized Cochin Tribes and Castes as a quarry from which anthropologists will be able to dig with an interest and confidence.
9. In 1914 Sir Ashuthosh Mukherjee who presided over the first ever Indian Science Congress at Calcutta, met Ananthakrishna Iyer, who was presiding over the anthropology section.
10. In February 1916 Iyer was appointed as Reader in Indian Ethnology in the University of Madras to deliver a series of ten lectures. Those lectures were first of the kind in the country on ethnology in India. Madras University did not print those lectures. Later in the decade the lectures that he gave at Calcutta got printed as Lectures on Ethnography (1925).
11. In addition to writing these full length hand books from time to time Ananthakrishna Iyer contributed over 100 research papers on different anthropological topics especially on religious and social aspects of tribes.
12. Iyer writes in the preface of Mysore tribes and Castes: the materials collected by them (the superintendents appointed for the provinces and states) were published in the form of monographs or volumes on tribes and castes as works of reference primarily for the benefit of the administrative officers.

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