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A CENTURY OF ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA: SEARCHING THE NATIONALIST TRENDS

Abstract

There is little research on the history of anthropology in India. The works which have been done though contained a lot of useful data on the history of anthropology during the colonial and post-colonial periods have now become dated and they also did not venture into a search for the growth of nationalist anthropological writings by the Indian anthropologists in the pre and post independence periods. The conceptual framework of the discourse developed in this paper is derived from a critical reading of the anthropological texts produced by Indian anthropologists. This reading of the history of Indian anthropology is based on two sources. One source is the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists who were committed to various tasks of nation building and the other is the reading of literature by anthropologists who regarded Indian anthropology simply as a continuation of the western tradition. There also existed a view that an Indian form of anthropology could be discerned in many ancient Indian texts and scriptures before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent. I have argued that while criticizing Indian anthropology or sociology the critiques mostly ignored the studies done by the pioneers of the disciplines which were socially relevant and directed to the welfare and betterment of the underprivileged sections of our country and these studies for the betterment of the underdog were often conducted by anthropologists and sociologists who belonged to higher castes occupying elite positions in the society. The critics have only followed the smart way to criticize the pioneers instead of studying the socially committed works of the later and this was one of the reasons that Indian anthropologists failed to honour their nationalist predecessors and depended more on the wisdom of the Western scholars. The new discourse in search of a nationalist trend in Indian anthropology, therefore, is urgently needed for the construction of the historiography of the discipline.

Keywords: *Indian anthropology, Nationalist trends in Indian anthropology, History of Indian anthropology, Colonial anthropology, Hindu anthropology.*

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Introduction

There is little research on the history of anthropology in India despite the fact that courses on the growth and development of anthropology in India had been recommended at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the *Model Curriculum Development Report* of the University Grants Commission as early as 2001. (*Model Curriculum Development Report in Anthropology*, 2001). There are few published works on the history and the development of anthropology in India which included L.P. Vidyarthi's *magnum opus* entitled *Rise of Anthropology in India: A Social Science Orientation* (Vols. I & II) published in 1978. In the first chapter of volume I of the book Vidyarthi mentioned the 'sporadic attempts to review the researches in social anthropology in India' by scholars like S.C.Roy, D.N.Majumdar, G.S.Ghurye, S.C.Dube, N.K.Bose and S.C. Sinha. (Vidyarthi, 1978:1-29). Quite significantly, Vidyarthi could not find among these scholars any substantial attempt to search for a nationalist trend of social and cultural anthropology in India. Four years before the publication of Vidyarthi's book a biographical sketch of the eminent Indian anthropologists was published by, S.K.Ray, the then Librarian of the Anthropological Survey of India, which also gave us some idea about the growth of anthropology in India. (Ray, 1974). In the recently published Routledge Dictionary of anthropologists there is a short description of the development of Indian anthropology based on already published Indian materials. (Gaillard, 2004).

All these aforementioned works though contained a lot of useful data on the history of anthropology during the colonial and post-colonial periods have now become dated and they also did not venture into a search for the growth of nationalist anthropological writings by the Indian anthropologists in the pre and post independence periods. A recent book *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology* edited by Patricia Uberoi, Nandini Sundar and Satish Deshpande published in 2007 contained separate biographical chapters on pioneering Indian anthropologists and sociologists by individual authors. This book although not devoted to search for the nationalist trends in Indian anthropology and sociology, contained many interesting information on the activities and works of the pioneers of Indian anthropology and sociology in the pre and post-independence periods. There were of course a number of perceptive articles which touched on the different aspects of the history of Indian anthropology but none of them attempted to write a nationalist history of the discipline. (See for example, Sinha, 1967; 1971; 1974; 1978 & 1980; Bêteille, 1997; 2000 & 2013; Sarana & Sinha 1976; Uberoi, Sundar and Deshpande, 2000 & 2007; Srivastava, 1999 & 2000; Rao, 2012; Sahay, 1976; Joshi, 2015). In a recent period, Roma Chatterji in her brilliant article raised the question of Indianness in Indian anthropology and sociology but her point of departure was more on reflexivity of Indian anthropologists with a tangential touch on the nationalist thinking among sociologists like M.N.Srinivas and

T.N.Madan in the post-independence period. (Chatterji, 2005:162-176). In this context we may recall Surajit Sinha's perceptive review of Nirmal Kumar Bose's ideas about the development of an Indian tradition of anthropology through the studies on urgent problems of post-independent India and Sinha emphasized the dangers of using borrowed ideas from the West. (Sinha, 1967:1707-1709). Despite his repeated insistence for Indian anthropology, Surajit Sinha, however, did not delve much deeper into a historical search for nationalist trends in Indian anthropology. Sinha seemed to have restricted himself around the thoughts of Nirmal Kumar Bose only while looking at the nationalist tradition in Indian anthropology. N.K.Bose's research endeavours on the other hand were largely influenced by the American cultural diffusionists, like Franz Boas A.L.Kroeber and Clark Wissler (Bose, 1953).

Conceptual framework and methodology

Under these facts and circumstances, the conceptual framework of this discourse is derived from a critical and selective reading of the anthropological texts produced by Indian anthropologists. This reading of the history of Indian anthropology is based on two sources. One source is the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists which were committed to various tasks of nation building and the other is the reading of literature by anthropologists who regarded early Indian anthropology simply following the western tradition. These two readings of the texts are juxtaposed to write a new and critical history of Indian anthropology, which I have designated as the 'new discourse' in the title of this paper.

Analytical essays or parts of ethnographic monographs, rather than descriptive and/or simple ethnographic treatises, devoted to the role of anthropology in nation building have come under the purview of this research. So, Sarat Chandra Roy's pioneering article 'An Indian Outlook on Anthropology' (Roy, 1938) and Tarak Chandra Das's sectional presidential address at the Indian Science Congress entitled 'Cultural Anthropology in the service of the individual and the nation' delivered in 1941 and his novel paper on museum building in independent India are more important sources of data for this research rather than Roy and Das's classical ethnographic monographs on the Mundas and Purum Kukis of Manipur (Das, 1941). Another example is Verrier Elwin's comprehensive essay on the 'History of Anthropological Survey of India' published in 1948. (Elwin, 1948). Elwin's classical monographs on the Muria Gonds of Bastar do not directly come under the scope of this research.

Another group of anthropological works has also come under the ambit of my investigation. These were the works which were conducted on a burning problem of the country which has had tremendous bearing on nation building. For example, the rare and unique researches of Tarak Chandra Das on Bengal Famine (1949) and on Social Tensions among the refugees (1959) by Biraja Sankar Guha come under this category. (Guha, 2017; 2016a; 2010; &2011).

Quite offbeat and almost forgotten but original article written by B.R.Ambedkar on the origin of the caste system in India presented in an anthropology Seminar at Columbia University in 1916 has also been relooked in this context of nationalistic trends in anthropology, since it sharply differed with the explanations provided by Western as well as Marxist and non-Marxist Indian scholars (like N.K.Bose and M.N. Srinivas) on caste system in India. (Ambedkar, 1916).

The overall planning of this research paper is designed on the basis of the previous works done by the author on the history of anthropological research in India. It is also based on the hypothesis that a nationalist tradition of anthropological research is discernible in India. Accordingly, the methodology of the research is exploratory and involved intensive reading of the literature which carried this nationalist tradition. Readings of analytical papers and critical essays rather than plain ethnographies by the pioneers became more important in this discourse.

Colonial critique of Indian anthropology

There is a standard critique of Indian anthropology advanced by some of the Indian anthropologists. The critics say that Indian anthropology is the product of a colonial tradition and the Indian anthropologists for various reasons followed their colonial masters in one way or the other. Let me try to arrange the history of this critique of Indian anthropology in a chronological manner.

A chronological description of Critiques

1. As early as 1952, Nirmal Kumar Bose, in a significant article entitled, 'Current research projects in Indian anthropology', published in *Man in India* enumerated the research projects undertaken by the department of Anthropology, Government of India (the former name of the Anthropological Survey of India) and the anthropology departments at Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Delhi, Gauhati and Osmania Universities. Bose's investigation was exhaustive and based on written replies from the heads of the aforementioned institutions. After reviewing the overall scenario, he concluded:

There does not seem to be any problem which Indian anthropologists have made peculiarly their own. Anthropologists in our country have, on the whole, followed the tracks beaten by anthropologists in the more powerful countries of the West. What they do, we generally try to repeat on the Indian soil (Bose 1952: 133).

2. Followed by Bose in 1971 the famous Indian anthropologist Surajit Sinha in his insightful article published in the *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* (hereafter *JIAS*) observed that despite considerable growth in research publications and professional human

power in social and cultural anthropology during the last 100 years, the Indian anthropologists largely remained dependent on western and colonial traditions (Sinha, 1971: 1-14). In continuation of his pertinent examination of the colonial dependence of Indian anthropology, Sinha contributed a full chapter entitled 'India: A Western Apprentice' in a book, *Anthropology: Ancestors and Heirs*, edited by the Marxist anthropologist Stanley Diamond in 1980 published by Mouton. In that article Sinha discussed 'the process of naturalization of the different strands of Western anthropological traditions' and finally ended with a pessimistic note

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 (Sinha, 1980: 281).

Trained by both Nirmal Kumar Bose and Tarak Chandra Das and also at a later stage by Robert Redfield, Sinha was exposed to a wide arena of global and national anthropology. He completed his major works on the relationship between tribe and caste in the context of Indian civilization as well as state formation by mid 1960s. A closer view of his published works revealed that he first presented the critical idea on Indian anthropology in a Wenner-Gren Foundation conference held in New York in 1968 (Sinha, 1968). In fact, Sinha's self-critical views on the growth of Indian social science in general and anthropology and sociology in particular could be traced back to his article entitled 'Involvement in social change: a plea for own ideas' published in the radical social science journal *Economic and Political Weekly* as early as 1967 (Sinha, 1967:1707-1709). In this article Sinha stated quite categorically

A scholarly tradition of leaning heavily, if not abjectly, on ideas borrowed from the West is growing in this country. This is clear from the post-independence writings of a large number of Indian social scientists and the research policies of some of our modern research institutions.

The borrowed ideas and concepts, when accepted uncritically, obscure the major issues involved in planned social change and stand in the way of posing the right kind of questions in the study of social change. (Ibid 1707).

Sinha pursued with this critique of Indian social science by converging his attack on Indian Anthropology in the subsequent articles.

Taking note of his earlier article in the *JIAS*, Sinha in his 'Foreword' of the precious book *Bibliographies of Eminent Indian Anthropologists* (1974) written by Shyamal Kumar Ray, made a remark

.... there was a general reluctance among Indian scholars to take due note of the research publications of Indian pioneers and contemporaries. As a result, research endeavours of Indian scholars tend to be derivative, leaving

the responsibilities of breaking new grounds exclusively to western scholars (Sinha, 1974: iii).

Although Sinha praised N.K.Bose and T.C.Das at the individual levels for their insight and ethnography respectively the critiques advanced by Sinha in his 1967, 1971 and 1980 articles on the overall achievement of Indian anthropology was quite pessimistic and distressing. For him there was hardly any sign of an independent, let alone nationalist Indian anthropology. In his article entitled 'Urgent Problems for Research in Social and Cultural Anthropology in India: Perspectives and Suggestions' published in *Sociological Bulletin* in 1968 Sinha identified three distinct social anthropological 'vantage points' to approach the urgent problems in India, which were: (i) study of 'Primitive Groups' of tribes, (ii) study of human groups for the theoretical understanding of Indian society and (iii) anthropological study of problems urgently needed for national reconstruction and development. But quite interestingly Sinha left the third area untouched for the purpose of the paper (Sinha, 1968:123-131). It was not clear why he had done so and what purpose prevented him to undertake discussion on this vital area. More interestingly, few years later Sinha wrote in the Foreword of a book entitled *Bibliographies of eminent Indian Anthropologists*

We are also impressed by the fact that these pioneering scholars, often working under severe limitations of resources, were engaged in life-long endeavour in their particular areas of academic interest. Each of them demonstrated a rare quality of mental independence while living most of their lives under colonial rule (Sinha, 1974: iii).

But quite strangely, Surajit Sinha never came up with a comprehensive and overall review of the results of the 'mental independence' of his predecessors who lived their 'lives under colonial rule'. Sinha seemed to satisfy himself only with the praise of N.K.Bose and occasionally T.C.Das.

3. Next to Sinha came the critique of Amitabha Basu and Suhas Biswas who held professorial positions at the prestigious Indian Statistical Institute at Kolkata. In their article, '*Is Indian Anthropology Dead / Dying*' published in the *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, they raised the question of social relevance of Indian anthropology squarely and concluded that the subject was either dead or dying in the post-colonial period. (Basu and Biswas, 1980:1-4). More interestingly, some commentators (e.g. V.Balakrishnan, P.P.Majumder and D.Piplai, 1980, pp. 4-5, 9-10 & 11-12) on the paper disagreed with Basu and Biswas and argued that Anthropology in India was very much useful for the ruling and privileged classes and might not be useful for the masses!
4. Celebrated Social Anthropologist and Sociologist André Bétaille in one of his articles published in the *Sociological Bulletin* in 1997 wrote:

In India, each generation of sociologists seems eager to start its work

on a clean slate, with little or no attention to the work done before. This amnesia about the work of their predecessors is no less distinctive of Indian sociologists than their failure to innovate (Béteille, 1997:98).

Béteille's observation on Indian sociologists however, was not novel. About twenty five years before his pronouncement, Surajit Sinha critiqued Indian anthropologists almost in the same manner which I have already mentioned.

5. After about two decades of Sinha, another anthropologist, Biswanath Debnath in his article published in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, castigated Indian anthropologists for failing to evolve their own tradition and blindly following the footsteps of the colonial masters by studying small, isolated and marginal tribal communities and their process of integration in the mainstream Indian civilization (Debnath, 1999:3110-3114). Almost the same kind of shrill voice on the purported neo-colonial bias in Indian anthropology was heard in the writings of J.J.Roy-Burman in 2011 (Roy-Burman, 2011).
6. In a recent article published in *Economic and Political Weekly* Vivek Kumar, a professor of Sociology at Jawaharlal Nehru University in his article 'How Egalitarian Is Indian Sociology?' observed a higher caste bias in Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology (Kumar, 2017:)

Interestingly, none of these critiques were forwarded by any western anthropologist or sociologist and all the critiques were put forward by professionals who earned or are earning their livelihood by practicing Sociology and/ or Anthropology in India.

7. In a more academic vein, R.Srivatsan argued in his *Economic and Political Weekly* article that the dominant discourse among the anthropologists and sociologists on tribal policy in India had changed little from the colonial times to the emergence of nationalism in the early post-independent years (Srivatsan, 1986, pp.1986-1999).

Under the above scenario, I will argue that while criticizing Indian anthropology or sociology the critiques mostly ignored the studies done by the pioneers of the disciplines which were socially relevant and directed to the welfare and betterment of the underprivileged sections of our country and these studies for the betterment of the underdog were often conducted by anthropologists and sociologists who belonged to higher castes occupying elite positions in the society. Now I enumerate some of the remarkable scholars of the early Indian anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in anthropology and sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the

Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India. But before we move into the domain of nationalist anthropology, I will narrate another interesting story in the development of anthropology in India, which was Hindu anthropology.

Hindu anthropology

On the reverse side of the critiques there also existed a view that an Indian form of Anthropology could be discerned in many ancient Indian texts and scriptures before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent. As early as 1938 Jogendra Chandra Ghosh in his interesting article *Hindu Anthropology* published in the Anthropological Papers (New series) no. 5 of the University of Calcutta tried to show that before 6th Century B.C. the Hindus innovated various measurements on human body and its parts, which in European terms may be called Anthropometry, an important branch of Physical Anthropology. Ghosh began his article by saying

Anthropology is one of the modern progressive Sciences. Anthropometry and Ethnology are the two important branches of this Science. We shall here give some facts to show that the Hindus had their Anthropometry and Ethnology from a very early period (Ghosh, 1938, p.27).

Mr Ghosh further pointed out that the earliest record of those anthropometric measurements was found in *Susruta-Samhita*, a medical treatise written by the ancient Hindus. Ghosh also held that the ancient Hindus had their own notion of Ethnology and its first expression was found in *Rgveda* in which 'races' were classified on the basis of their skin colour. Suffice it to say that Ghosh was hinting at the fact that 'racial theory' became a major theme in later day western anthropology.

Another later proponent of Hindu Anthropology was the famous anthropologist Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972) who was a onetime secretary of Mahatma Gandhi and himself a committed nationalist. Bose in his earliest textbook entitled *Cultural Anthropology* published in 1929 made a novel attempt to show that the ancient Hindus in their scriptures classified the desires or needs of human beings into *artha*(economic), *kama*(sexual) and *moksha* (spiritual) almost in the fashion of later day functional anthropologists of the west. Bose probably held that the Hindus like the western anthropologists had their own scheme of understanding human nature and behavior which existed since long. Bose later proposed a theory in Indian anthropology entitled 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' which helped to induce the tenets of Hindu Anthropology more effectively among the successive generation of anthropologists in India. The idea was first proposed in a paper in the Indian

Science Congress in 1941. Bose's proposal was based on his short field trips among the Juang tribal community of the Pal Lahara region of Orissa.

The essence of the theory was the tribals who had come into contact with their powerful caste Hindu neighbours gradually lost their own tribal identity and were given a low caste status within the Hindu fold. This idea became very popular and acceptable among the mainstream Indian anthropologists and Bose's paper turned into a compulsory text in the curriculum of Indian Anthropology. There was hardly any question or restudy in the Juang area to recheck Bose's proposition and the idea took deep roots in the minds of Indian anthropologists for generations. The university and college students of India who studied anthropology were taught the theory of 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' as an established sociological fact. Bose's nationalist ideas, therefore, was based on his anthropological views of vertical integration of society in which the Brahminical ideals were at the topmost position. Sociologist Pradip Bose neatly summarized the essence of Nirmal Kumar Bose's Hindu nationalism in a brilliant manner

....Bose's depiction of Hinduism describes a process which vertically integrates various groups into a social structure administered and guided by Brahminical ideals and values. The same vision of the absorptive power of Hinduism explains his argument that tribals were successfully assimilated into the Hindu fold. In a way, Bose like early Orientalist writers, projected Indian social history as essentially the history of Hinduism, or of the assimilation of non-Hindu groups into Hindu society (Bose, 2007:326).

Hinduisation of the tribals was accepted as an obvious and inevitable process which also helped to overlook any possibility of protest by the tribals against the Brahminical imposition in any form. It also helped to hide the exploitation and subjugation of the tribals by the Hindus. Later, another theory proposed by M.N. Srinivas, one of the doyens of Indian Sociology and Social Anthropology reinforced the superiority of the Brahmins by showing that the lower castes always tried to imitate and emulate the life-style of the twice-born castes. This theory came to be known as 'Sanskritization' and also became an essential part of the college and university curriculum in Indian Anthropology and Sociology. A lone Indian sociologist Surendra Munshi criticized both N.K.Bose and M.N.Srinivas in his brilliant article 'Tribal absorption and Sanskritisation in Hindu society' published in the prestigious journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in unequivocal terms

My more serious criticism against Bose and Srinivas is that, lacking a general sociological theory of society and social change within the framework of which empirical data are to be collected, interpreted and transcended, they end up with the transformation of the object of study into a theory that has conditioned the study itself. In other words, in their concern with the ideal sphere, they are compelled to accept the ruling ideas of the society, past and

present, for providing them with the interpretation of the corresponding empirical reality studied by them. In sum, their analysis is ideological (Munshi, 1979:304).

Munshi, however did not deal with the inconsistencies and lack of fit between the data collected by N.K.Bose and the theoretical generalizations made by him in his Hindu method of tribal absorption paper.

Since the publication of the twin ideas, Indian Anthropology and Sociology revolved round 'Hindu method of Tribal absorption' and 'Sanskritization' and under the strong influence of Bose and Srinivas Anthropology and Sociology in India became oriented towards the study of Hindu religious and higher caste superiority. The path set by the doyens left little scope for a secular and materialist Indian Anthropology. The search for the counter movements against Hinduisation and ethnographies of anti-aculturative processes in Indian Anthropology and Sociology was marginalized to a large extent.

The Western scholars who came to India in the post-independence period too mainly studied caste and village level dynamics as well as Indian civilization under the framework of a high caste Hindu order which again added force to the models generated by Bose and Srinivas. The growth of a secular and national Anthropology in India was nipped in the bud. Indian anthropology became Hinduised, religious and at the same time westernized. Indian anthropologists forgot that the development of a national Anthropology also required a secular and indigenous approach to the problems of nation building. There were of course notable exceptions like McKim Marriott's study on technological change and problems of overdevelopment in a village in Uttar Pradesh and F.G. Bailey's excellent paper on the peasant view of bad life in Orissa wherein the authors discussed about the problems of Indian peasantry from a purely secular perspective (Marriott, 1952:261-272; Bailey, 1971: 299-321).

The tenets of Hindu Anthropology are still haunting some of the Indian anthropologists. Thus Ajit Kumar Danda, former Director of the Anthropological Survey of India and the Chairman of the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists(INCAA) claimed in one of the professional journals of the subject, *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society* in 2017

One of the earliest *Smritis: Manava Dharmashastra* (literally, *The Sacred Science of Man*), dates approximately 1350B.C..... is perhaps the most ancient text in Anthropology ever produced anywhere on the earth. It is claimed to be more than 1000 years older than the first application of the word Anthropology as such, which is believed to have been used for the first time by Aristotle (384-322B.C.) (Danda, 2017, p. 6).

Nowhere in his article entitled 'Anthropology in Contemporary India' could Danda discern a secular and nationalist stream of thought in the history

of Indian Anthropology. He had only seen anthropology as an 'academic discipline' (the westernized tradition) and a 'body of knowledge' (the ancient Hindu tradition) and thus failed to appreciate the secular, materialist and nationalist tradition of anthropological thought in India. Suffice it to say that in his 'body of knowledge' type of Anthropology, there was hardly any place for *the adivasis*, the *dalits* and the *lokayata* traditions of thought. I just give an example. The monumental work entitled *Lokayata: A Study of Ancient Indian Materialism* (1959). New Delhi: People's Publishing House, written by the famous Marxist philosopher Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (1959) did not find a mention in Danda's long text on Indian philosophy. Danda, however, unlike his predecessor Jogendra Chandra Ghosh, did not use the term 'Hindu Anthropology' but his intention was clear, which was to push an upper caste and Sanskritic tradition of thought in the academia under the cover of Anthropology as a 'body of knowledge'!

The nationalist anthropologists

Let me now make an inventory of some of the remarkable scholars of the early Indian Anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in Anthropology and Sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India. Here is the list.

I present below a list of seven nationalist anthropologists who neither blindly imitated the colonial masters nor were they besieged by a 'Hindu Anthropology'. All of the following anthropologists were born in India in the 19th century and applied their knowledge in anthropology and sociology for the cause of the marginalized and exploited tribals and other underprivileged and deprived sections of the Indian population. Although, these anthropologists were influenced by the theory and methodology of the western anthropologists but they used the western knowledge for the cause of the exploited tribals and marginalized communities of India and also towards the materialist exposition of Indian social reality.

Sarat Chandra Roy (1871–1942) is regarded as the father of Indian Anthropology who was a practicing lawyer at Ranchi and began to do research on the society and culture of the tribes of the region not out of ethnological curiosity, administrative need or evangelical mission like the Europeans, but driven by his humanitarian passion to deliver justice to the exploited tribals. He was deeply moved by the plight of the *Munda*, *Oraon* and other tribal groups, who were subjected to the continued oppression by an apathetic colonial

administration and by a general contempt towards them in courts of law, as “upper-caste” Hindu lawyers had little knowledge of their customs, religions, customary laws and languages. His keen interest and sympathy of the oppressed tribals inspired him to study their culture and Roy always stood for their cause. His house at Ranchi had a set of rooms prepared for his tribal clients so that those who came from far-off villages could stay on while their cases were being fought in court. (Ghosh, 2008).

Bhupendranath Datta (1880 – 1961) who was the younger brother of the famous Hindu revivalist social reformer Swami Vivekananda, joined the anti-British struggle and sent to prison by the colonial government in India, and later he earned an M.A. in Sociology from Brown University, USA and a Ph.D. degree from the University of Hamburg in 1923. His books *Dialectics of Hindu Ritualism* (1950) and *Studies in Indian Social Polity* (1963) although published much later, can be regarded as pioneering works on Indian society and culture from a Marxist perspective. (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhupendranath_Datta). Datta presented his research paper on the political condition of colonial India to V.I. Lenin. Lenin gave a reply to Bhupendranath and requested him to collect data on the peasant organizations in India, which was very much appreciated by Datta. (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1921/aug/26c.htm>) His contributions have not yet been included in the curriculum in Indian Anthropology nor the critics of Indian Anthropology mentioned Datta’s name in their critiques on the subject.

B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956). Ambedkar’s views on caste are also neglected in the Anthropology and Sociology curricula in the Indian universities and colleges. Ambedkar is still a nobody in the syllabi of Anthropology in India. As early as 1916, B.R. Ambedkar made a novel attempt to explain the caste system in India in a paper read before the Anthropology Seminar of Alexander Goldenweizer (1880-1940) at Columbia University. Ambedkar was then 25 years old and a doctoral student in Anthropology. The full title of his paper was ‘Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development. Starting from a fundamental anthropological finding of tribal clan exogamy Ambedkar had been able to show how caste endogamy was superimposed on the former. Secondly, his exposition of caste as an extreme form of class system as early as 1917 was also exemplary and this work of Ambedkar was never mentioned or referred by the world renowned scholars on caste in India. (Ambedkar, 1917). Take for example, G. S. Ghurye. In his famous book *Caste and Class in India* (1957) Ghurye mentioned the name of Ambedkar only once in page 226 and that too as ‘the leader of the Scheduled Caste’ although Ghurye discussed at length the importance of endogamy in characterizing the caste society in India (Guha, 2017).

Panchanan Mitra (1892 – 1936) was a professor of anthropology in India. He was among the first Indians to study at Yale University and conducted several anthropological expeditions in India and abroad. He was the head of

the Department of Anthropology of the University of Calcutta and is most known for his pioneering book *Prehistoric India* as early as 1923. This book which was the first of its kind by any Indian scholar showed the antiquity, richness and diversity of the culture of humankind long before the advent of scripts. He is still the lone Indian anthropologist who wrote a book on the history of American Anthropology in 1930 (Bose, 2006, p.1439).

Biraja Sankar Guha (1894-1961) was the founder of the Anthropological Survey of India and was known to the students of Anthropology as a Physical Anthropologist who made a classification of the Indian population on the basis of their Physical features. Very few people know that he first undertook a thoroughgoing field survey on the social tensions among the refugees of the then East Pakistan for suggesting the government about how to understand their problem and improve their living conditions.

K.P. Chattopadhyay, (1897-1963) was not only the Head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Calcutta but was also a life-long fighter for civil liberties movement in West Bengal before and after the independence of India. His researches on the jute mill workers and the workers of the then Calcutta Corporation were pioneering in anthropology which broke away from the colonial anthropological tradition (Roy-Burman, 2000).

Tarak Chandra Das (1898-1964) made a marvelous empirical study, still unparalleled in global and Indian Anthropology on the devastations caused by the Bengal famine of 1943 during the colonial period. Das was such a courageous academic that he in his Presidential address of the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress in 1941 criticized the colonial government and the Christian missionaries for doing a lot of harm to the tribals of north east India. He had a vision for the application of Anthropology for human welfare but that was forgotten by the Indian anthropologists. The critics of Indian Anthropology also did not care to look at the socially relevant and responsible studies of T.C.Das (Guha, 2011).¹

Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972). Bose was a versatile personality in Indian anthropology. His multifaceted interest ranged from temple architecture and prehistory to transformations in tribal life under the impact of Hinduism and modernization. He was a professor at the University of Calcutta, Director of the Anthropological Survey of India and Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Government of India, and was also a dedicated social worker, a Gandhian political activist, and above all a prolific writer in Bengali and English on diverse topics in professional journals, popular magazines and newspapers (a complete bibliography containing the full references of Bengali and English articles of N.K. Bose and his short life sketch can be found in Ray 1974: 61-120). Baidyanath Saraswati viewed Nirmal Kumar Bose as the 'Gandhian anthropologist' (Saraswati 2003: 1-26) while R.S. Negi in his 7th N.K. Bose memorial lecture at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts mentioned

that Raj Mohan Gandhi described Bose as a 'left leaning anthropologist' (Negi 2013: 1).

This list is not exhaustive. It only highlighted the missing strips of research in the history of Indian Anthropology, which has not yet become a tradition in the pedagogy of Indian Anthropology.

Sarat Chandra Roy: the first nationalist anthropologist in India

In an important book entitled *Anthropology in the East*, Patricia Uberoi, Nandini Sundar and Satish Deshpande in the subsection 'Nationalism and the Nation-State' of the 'Introduction' commented

We are yet to form a detailed picture of the ways in which nationalism exerted its influence in shaping Indian sociology and social anthropology. To be sure, almost every historical account of the discipline, whether it concerns an individual, an institution or the discipline at large, makes mention of this factor.... (Uberoi, Sundar & Deshpande, 2007, p. 38).

In the discussion that followed the above quoted opening statement, the authors admitted two important points, viz., the question of nationalism occupied a 'very wide spectrum' and second no Indian anthropologist or sociologist could oppose nationalism. I do not claim that I have been able to cover the whole range of the nationalist spectrum of Indian Anthropology but I could only discover some of the notable nationalist anthropologists and highlight their works in some detail just as a beginning.

Along with the colonial tradition, a nationalist trend in Indian Anthropology could also be discerned which was growing during the pre and post-independence periods in India and this trend was characterized by the works of the anthropologists who were socially committed and contributed to nation building through their analytical writings and research (Guha, 2018, p.8). These anthropologists learned the methodology of the discipline from the west but did not become blind followers of Europe and America and they also did not want to derive their anthropology from the religious scriptures of the ancient Hindus. Instead, they visualized an Indian character of anthropology which according to them could be used in nation building, a task which finally could not develop into full maturity by their own successors. Let me exemplify.

In 1938, the same year in which Jogendrachandra Ghosh wrote the article 'Hindu Anthropology' in a Calcutta University journal, one of the founding fathers of Indian Anthropology, Sarat Chandra Roy wrote an article entitled 'An Indian Outlook on Anthropology' in *Man*, the Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. This article can be regarded as one of the pioneering ones in the nationalist tradition of Indian Anthropology. Because, in this article Roy not only critically evaluated the major theories developed in the then western Anthropology, like evolutionism,

diffusionism and functionalism with much skepticism but he also made a novel attempt to synthesize the ideas of ancient Indian philosophers with western anthropological concepts. According to Roy, the essence of Indian thought lay in the subjective process of 'sympathetic immersion' with other cultures and societies and this could be combined with the objective approach of western Anthropology. I quote Roy

Thus the objective methods of investigation of cultural data have to be helped out, not only by historical imagination and a background of historical and geographical facts, but also by a subjective process of self-forgetting absorption or meditation (*dhyana*) and *intuition* born of sympathetic immersion in, and self-identification with, the society under investigation.

The spread of this attitude by means of anthropological study can surely be a factor helping forward the large *unity-in-diversity-through-sympathy* that seems to an Indian mind to be the inner meaning of the process of human evolution, and the hope of a world perplexed by a multitude of *new* and violent contacts, notably between Eastern and Western civilizations (Roy, 1938, p.150).

One may note that Roy did not bring in any Hindu religious connotation to this method. For him, the Indian way of reaching the Universal through a sympathetic understanding of particular cultures through tolerance and love could build up a national character which would not try to shape the different peoples and cultures in a uniform pattern. In Roy's words

The better minds of India are now harking back to the old ideal of culture as a means of the progressive realization of the one Universal Self in all individual- and group-selves, and the consequent elevation or transformation of individual and 'national' character and conduct, through a spirit of universal love. The anthropological attitude while duly appreciating and fostering the varied self-expression of the Universal Spirit in different communities and countries, and not by any means seeking to mould them all in one universal racial or cultural pattern, is expected to help forward a synthesis of the past and the present, the old and the new, the East and the West (Ibid).

Sarat Chandra Roy's approach to develop a nationalist Anthropology in India was not a simple theoretical exercise. One should remember that he founded one of the oldest journal of Anthropology in India named *Man in India* in 1921. Roy's aim was to develop an Indian School of Anthropology. In an editorial of *Man in India* published in 1985 the then editor Surajit Chandra Sinha commented

Sarat Chandra Roy's enterprise in *Man in India* was motivated by the national needs of his times and his personal pride in nationalism. As for lines of scientific enquiry he also wanted Indian scholars to seek suggestions from Western scholars and so was adopted a policy.... It also transpires that practically all the Western and Indian pathfinders in the anthropology of India

have contributed to this journal. (Sinha, 1985, pp. iv-v).

Suffice it to say that Roy was not a blind nationalist. He was open to suggestions and contributions from western experts in the pages of *Man in India* and quite a good number of western anthropologists had contributed their original research findings on India in this pioneering journal. Sangeeta Dasgupta's perceptive comment in this regard is useful

Roy's long and varied career witnessed the rise of Victorian evolutionism, then diffusionism, and the eventual displacement of these by functionalism: at different points in time he applied all these concepts to the Indian context. At the same time, as a professed Hindu and nationalist Indian, particularly in the later phases of his career, Roy sought to methodologically establish an 'Indian view-point' for anthropology, believing that anthropology would help in the integration of national life (Dasgupta, 2007, p.144).

Roy's nationalism, despite his professed Hindu background was basically Indian.

The professional nationalist anthropologists: T.C.Das and B.S.Guha

In this section I would narrate two cases of the practice of nationalist anthropology by two professional Indian anthropologists. Our first anthropologist is T.C.Das of the University of Calcutta and the second is B.S.Guha, the founder Director of the Anthropological Survey of India.

Tarak Chandra Das

In 1941, T.C.Das delivered the presidential address in the Anthropology section of the Indian Science Congress. The lecture was a 28 page full-length paper entitled 'Cultural Anthropology in the Service of the Individual and the Nation'. In this lecture Das's major objective was to convince his readers about the immense potential of social-cultural anthropology as applied science for the overall development of the Indian population. In the five subsections of the lecture, Das dealt with the application of anthropology in almost all the important sectors of a modern nation, viz. trade, industry, agriculture, legislation, education, social service and administration. With the help of concrete empirical findings either from his own field experiences or from the ethnographic accounts of world renowned social anthropologists (e.g. Lucy Mair, Felix Keesing, Issac Schepera, H.I. Hogbin, B. Malinowski) Das justified the inclusion of anthropologists in policy making bodies and application of anthropological knowledge in every sphere of nation building (Das, 1941, pp. 1-29). In order to substantiate his arguments, Das had used rather unconventional sources of data, like Mahatma Gandhi's 1937 article published in *Harijan* about the adverse effects of the methods adopted by the Christian missionaries to convert the economically poorer classes of the Hindu population in different parts of India (Ibid, pp. 17-23).²

One of the most vital section in the Presidential Address of Das was on the role of anthropologists in building up a proper type of educational system suitable for the real needs of a particular community in the Indian context. The great anthropologist had the courage to write strong words regarding the colossal wastage of public money by the then colonial government for the establishment of schools among the tribal people. Let us hear in his words:

Education is perhaps rightly claimed as the panacea of all evils that befall mankind. But people differ in its definition, and naturally it has different types. There is one kind of education which uplifts the individual morally and intellectually and makes him fit for the struggle for existence. There is another kind of education which is intended for the exploitation of the so-called educated. There is a third type of education which the enthusiasts in their zeal for ameliorating the condition of the poor and the ill-fated impose upon them without considering their necessity or capacity. We have neither time nor inclination to discuss this point here but suffice it to say that much labour and more public money have been squandered and are still being squandered in imparting education which does neither suit the people nor help them to put a morsel of food into their mouth (Ibid, 1941, pp. 13-14).

Had he stopped here the above words would at best been regarded as a fine piece of journalistic remark on our educational system. But Das then narrated from his own rich field experiences in Manipur valley of North eastern India about the adverse social impact of the establishment of a network of primary schools and a few high English schools. I quote Das again

The two schools I saw used to teach their students how to read and write Meitei besides a little arithmetic, which they managed to forget within a few months after their departure from the school. it is difficult to understand how high school education will help Manipuri agriculture or textile industry. The employments at the disposal of the State are very limited and the students who pass out of these schools every year will increase the number of unemployed as they no longer think of going back to their fields. During the first few years they will be idolized by the community but this will soon pass away when they will be looked upon as parasites and it is not impossible that they will be a source of trouble to the State (Ibid 1941, pp. 15-16).

Consider this insightful observation of Das in connection with the active participation of the English educated youth in the ethnic and secessionist movements that developed in this region of India after the independence. Das strongly advocated that in this type of situations the advice of the experienced and trained anthropologists is required in the Herculean task of educating the tribal and other underprivileged communities in a diverse country like India. Das probably was the first Indian anthropologist to advocate the indispensable role of social-cultural anthropology in nation building by combining micro-level field observations within a macro framework which is still lacking among

the majority of Indian anthropologists. We have a lot to learn from Das even today (Guha, 2011, pp. 245-265).

Biraja Sankar Guha

I will just take up two writings of B.S. Guha. The first is a short essay entitled 'The Role of Social Sciences in Nation Building' published in *Sociological Bulletin* in 1958. The second piece is a book titled 'Studies in Social Tensions among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan' first published in 1954 and then in 1959 by the Government of India. The article on the role of social sciences in India is remarkable for its contemporary relevance. In this article Guha's major emphasis was on how to understand the nature of intergroup tension (he called it 'social tension') with the help of the social sciences. He proposed quite cogently that if one cannot understand the mechanisms and anatomy of conflicts between groups having different morals, values and religious practices, then just a superficial approach towards nation building in the name of 'melting pot theory' (as in USA) or the epithet of 'Unity in Diversity' (as in case of India) will simply fail. The role of social sciences, not the physical or biological sciences, was thought to be crucial at this point. R. K. Bhattacharya and D.P. Mukherjee missed this point of Guha (see, Bhattacharya and Sarkar, 1996, pp.1-13 & Mukherjee, 1996, pp.35-82) while evaluating his contributions. I quote Guha

In the United States of America where the population is extremely heterogeneous and derived from many sources, with different ethnic and cultural traditions, such tensions and conflict have become very persistent in spite of the so called melting-pot theory and the ideal of inter-group tolerance, not merely as an ethical virtue but as a political necessity (Guha, 1958, p. 149).

In the same article Guha expressed his displeasure in giving 'undue weightage' to the superficial differences in dress, hairstyle and food habits among Indian populations. According to him the 'process of Indianization based on the underlying unifying forces of history, traditions and common values' should have been adopted. (Guha, 1958, p.150). Guha viewed the study of group relationships, conflict as well as tension among the human groups as the most important areas in nation building and social sciences according to him had a great role to play in this mighty task. For Guha, the importance of social sciences was the greatest in solving the problems arising out of conflict and tension and he urged that the Governments should keep substantial budgetary allocation for the social sciences towards this end.

The second sociological research of Guha, which I would discuss now was a book which was the result of team work. In this book Guha had taken up the issues he outlined in his article on the role of the social sciences in nation building. This book titled *Studies in Social Tensions among the Refugees from Eastern Pakistan* (1959) was based on intensive fieldwork done by an interdisciplinary team of researchers. Most surprisingly, virtually no discussion,

let alone evaluation of this book had been done by the critics of Indian Anthropology and by the admirers of Guha. Complete absence and/or inadequate treatment of B.S.Guha's book on social tension characterized the literature of Indian anthropology and sociology. I will now discuss Guha's arguments and analysis of the findings depicted by the authors in the different chapters of the book.

The book is basically a solid factual report and analyses of socio-economic, cultural and psychological data collected by a team of trained anthropologists and psychologists on the refugees who came from the then East Pakistan to West Bengal under the overall supervision of B.S.Guha. In his 'General Introduction' Guha first justified his selection of two sample areas of refugee resettlement colonies which he finalized in consultation with Gardener Murphy who was selected by the UNESCO as Consultant to Govt. of India in the project to understand the underlying causes of social tension in India. After this Guha put the survey in the wider political scenario of the country and mentioned in unequivocal terms the evil effects of the earlier 'divide and rule' policy of the British Government as well as the sectarian approach of the Muslim League Government of the then Bengal, which paved the way towards 'engineered' communal riots that led to large scale displacement of the Hindus from the then East Pakistan (Guha, 1959: viii). While searching the reasons behind the evacuation of the Hindus Guha based his arguments not on any sociological theory but on the empirical findings of his multidisciplinary team of fieldworkers. Therefore, according to him

The loss of prestige and social status which the Hindu community previously enjoyed, and the realisation of the futility of regaining it now or in the near future was a far more potent factor in creating the feeling of frustration than the loss in the economic sphere (Ibid).

In the subsequent pages of the 'Introduction' Guha went on to analyse the data on the 'areas of tension' among the Hindu refugees which were collected by his research team members through the use of social anthropological and psychological methods. Guha here made an excellent sociological analysis by putting the areas of social tension in an hierarchical and dynamic form. For Guha his data led him show how the areas of tension played their respective roles and how the affected members of the community shifted their grievance and aggression from one area of tension to another. Like a true social anthropologist Guha also ventured into the variation in the social tension at the level of age, sex and socio-political situation. Another interesting explanation of B.S.Guha was on changing authority structure of the traditional Hindu joint family and the worsening of the intra-family relationships among the refugees but here also he made a comparative interpretation of the two refugee settlements which were selected by him for the study. In one place where people depended on the governmental aid and assistance the traditional authority structure of the family was found to be

stronger than in the refugee colony where the uprooted people had to struggle harder to get them resettled (Ibid, 1959, pp.xi-xii). By and large what was most interesting to observe was Guha's technique of explaining such a complex thing like social tension. All through, he, like a seasoned sociologist or social anthropologist attacked the problem from a relational and dynamic angle without falling in the trap of a static view of society. While providing economic or psychological explanations he also did not take recourse to either Freudian or Marxian models. Finally, and what was really several steps ahead in his time Guha recommended a participatory and nationalist model for the resettlement of the refugees. For him, the social tension between the refugees and the government mainly arose owing to the fact that they were treated as 'outsiders' from the governmental side. The refugees should be given the responsibility of managing their own resettlement camps so that they could regain their self-respect. This was the view of Biraja Sankar Guha whom I would like to regard a one of the pioneering social scientists of the post-independence India.

I will end by quoting the last line from the Guha's 'Introduction' from the book on Social Tensions

Once their displaced energies are canalised into well-directed productive sources, there is every reason to hope, that instead of a burden and a clog, the refugees will turn out to be useful participants in the march of progress of this country (Ibid. 1959: xiii).

It is an irony that both the critics and admirers of Indian Anthropology during the post-colonial period missed the emerging spirit of a nationalist anthropology in the writings of B.S.Guha.

B.R.Ambedkar as a nationalist anthropologist

In this section I will narrate the contributions of B.R.Ambedkar which not only differed markedly from N.K. Bose but also may be viewed from a nationalist perspective.

As early as 1916 B.R.Ambedkar made a novel attempt to explain the caste system in India in a paper read before the Anthropology Seminar of Alexander Goldenweizer (1880-1940) at Columbia University. Ambedkar was then 25 years and a doctoral student in Anthropology. The full title of his paper was 'Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development'. It was an 18 page paper which contained a pure and detached academic exercise on the nature of the caste system in India and nowhere in the paper have we found any comment or observation from the personal experiences of the author. It was full of critical scholarship on the then existing anthropological and sociological literature on caste in a lucid and argumentative fashion. In the first part of the paper Ambedkar dealt with the works of four famous scholars like Emile Senart(1847-1928), John Nesfield (1836-1919), S.V.Ketkar (1884 –

1937) and H.H. Risley (1851-1911) and without being biased towards these well-known authorities, he pointed out the shortcomings of all these scholars in understanding the essential feature of the caste system. But his method of criticism was quite interesting. While criticizing the authorities Ambedkar did not fail to observe the positive aspects of their contributions. In his own words

To review these definitions is of great importance for our purpose. It will be noticed that taken individually the definitions of three of the writers include too much or too little: none is complete or correct by itself and all have missed the central point in the mechanism of the Caste system. Their mistake lies in trying to define caste as an isolated unit by itself, and not as a group within, and with definite relations to, the system of caste as a whole. Yet collectively all of them are complementary to one another, each one emphasising what has been obscured in the other [Ambedkar (1917): 1979:7].

Looking at caste as a system in which each *jati* is part of the whole was definitely a step forward in social and cultural anthropology as early as 1917 and Ambedkar was not ready to accept caste system as a system of 'division of labour' which minimized competition among occupational groups. For him caste system is a division among the laboring classes rather than division of labour. A closer reading of this article reveals that although in the milieu of Boasians at Columbia Ambedkar used the Morganian social evolutionary methodology to approach the basic principle behind the caste system. He observed that marriage outside one's own immediate kin-group represented through clan exogamy was the fundamental and universal feature of human society and in India the state of 'tribal exogamy' survived even in the stages of civilization whereas in the modern world this is no more the rule. Let me quote from the original

With the growth of history, however, exogamy has lost its efficacy, and excepting the nearest blood-kins, there is usually no social bar restricting the field of marriage. But regarding the peoples of India the law of exogamy is a positive injunction even today. Indian society still savours of the clan system, even though there are no clans; and this can be easily seen from the law of matrimony which centres round the principle of exogamy, for it is not that Sapindas (blood-kins) cannot marry, but a marriage even between Sagotras (of the same class) is regarded as a sacrilege [Ibid (1917): 1979:9].

This is the logical foundation based on which Ambedkar advanced his arguments to elucidate the caste system. Because, he cogently argued that since in India exogamy was the stronger rule so endogamy must have been foreign to the country. But then how caste system, which had to survive on endogamy, could come into place in India? The way Ambedkar answered this anomaly is the most interesting part of this original paper. Before going into the details let me quote again

Nothing is therefore more important for you to remember than the fact that endogamy is foreign to the people of India. The various Gotras of India are and have been exogamous: so are the other groups with totemic organization. It is no exaggeration to say that with the people of India exogamy is a creed and none dare infringe it, so much so that, in spite of the endogamy of the Castes within them, exogamy is strictly observed and that there are more rigorous penalties for violating exogamy than there are for violating endogamy. Consequently in the final analysis creation of Castes, so far as India is concerned, means the superposition of endogamy on exogamy [Ibid (1917): 1979:9].

Next to this analysis Ambedkar went on to explain how some of the social groups in ancient India which were classes turned into enclosed endogamous groups probably to ensure the privileges which they accrued out of the ancient class system. According to Ambedkar, since the Brahmin and the Kshatriyas were the most privileged classes it was these classes who began to enclose themselves to secure their privileges by becoming endogamous. Later other groups also emulated the higher classes and the system spread over wider regions. So classes in India were forerunner to castes, and castes according to Ambedkar were enclosed classes characterized by endogamy. I quote Ambedkar

We shall be well advised to recall at the outset that the Hindu society, in common with other societies, was composed of classes and the earliest known are (1) the Brahmins or the priestly class; (2) the Kshatriya, or the military class; (3) the Vaishya, or the merchant class; and (4) the Shudra, or the artisan and menial class. Particular attention has to be paid to the fact that this was essentially a class system, in which individuals, when qualified, could change their class, and therefore classes did change their personnel. At some time in the history of the Hindus, the priestly class socially detached itself from the rest of the body of people and through a closed-door policy became a caste by itself. The other classes being subject to the law of social division of labour underwent differentiation, some into large, others into very minute, groups.....The question we have to answer in this connection is: Why did these sub-divisions or classes, if you please, industrial, religious or otherwise, become self-enclosed or endogamous? My answer is because the Brahmins were so. Endogamy or the closed-door system, was a fashion in the Hindu society, and as it had originated from the Brahmin caste it was whole-heartedly imitated by all the non-Brahmin sub-divisions or classes, who, in their turn, became endogamous castes. It is "the infection of imitation" that caught all these sub-divisions on their onward march of differentiation and has turned them into castes (Ibid: 17-18).

Starting from a fundamental anthropological finding of tribal clan exogamy Ambedkar had been able to show how caste endogamy was superimposed on the former. Secondly, his exposition of caste as an extreme

form of class system as early as 1917 was also exemplary and this work of Ambedkar was never mentioned or referred by the world renowned scholars on caste in India. Take for example, G. S. Ghurye. In his famous book *Caste and Class in India* (1957) Ghurye mentioned the name of Ambedkar only once in page 226 and that too as 'the leader of the Scheduled Caste' although Ghurye discussed at length the importance of endogamy in characterizing the caste society in India. The same kind of omission of the anthropological contributions of B.R. Ambedkar could also be observed in the writings of Nirmal Kumar Bose.

In lieu of a conclusion

The colonial critique of Indian anthropology (Sinha, Basu and B eteille) and the proponents of Hindu Anthropology (Ghosh, Bose and Danda) ignored the materialistic, socially committed, secular and nationalist trends of Indian anthropology which was growing in the hands of some remarkable anthropologists before and after independence of the country. The critics have only followed the smart way to criticize the pioneers instead of studying the socially committed works of the later and this was one of the reasons that Indian anthropologists failed to honour their nationalist predecessors and depended more on the wisdom of the Western scholars. Surajit Sinha, for example, held a critical view on the growth of Indian anthropology in the post-independence period which was largely pessimistic. Sinha viewed Indian anthropology as 'Western apprentice' and in the process he never made any attempt to search for the nationalist trends in Indian anthropology although he found some of his teachers, for example N.K. Bose and T.C. Das, had independent ideas. But Sinha never attempted to make any comprehensive and overall review of Indian anthropology from a historical perspective. Had he done so, he would have found remarkable scholars of the early Indian anthropology who though worked during the colonial period tried to build up a nationalist tradition of anthropology. Sinha sensed their existence but missed them badly. The new discourse in search of a nationalist trend in Indian anthropology, therefore, is urgently needed in the historiography of the discipline.

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Notes

1. Interestingly, T.C. Das's obituary was not published in any journal of Anthropology in India. Only Sociological Bulletin published the obituary of this great nationalist anthropologist. (Sociological Bulletin, 1964)
2. N.K. Bose's paper entitled 'Hindu Method of Tribal Absorption' was presented as a lecture in the same Science Congress of 1941 in which T.C. Das delivered the presidential Address. Bose's lecture was later published in the journal *Science and Culture* and in course of time, became famous in Indian Anthropology while Das's lecture dealing with the role of anthropology in solving the burning and practical problems of nation building went into oblivion among the anthropologists in India.

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