

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**DOYENS OF INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY** by **Amitabha Sarkar and Samira Dasgupta** (Eds.), (1920-2019), Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 2019. ISBN :978-81-938457-8-3, Price Rs. 1100.00/-

To understand the nature of human living in diverse zones of Indian subcontinent some scholars-administrators of the British Government studied the diverse religious beliefs, customary laws, traditional life and habits of the people in various dimensions mainly for the sake of good governance, better execution and regulation of the society under the control of the British Colonial Raj. The present treatise records the contributions of the western as well as Indian scholars in the field of anthropological studies. The book focuses on the life, academic qualifications and activities of those luminous eminent anthropologists

Besides the Introduction of the book it contains three important chapters, entitled 'Essentiality of Field Work in Anthropology', 'New Approaches of Social / Cultural Anthropology' and 'New Dimensions of Physical Anthropology'. On essentiality of field-work in Anthropology the procedures of intensive field-work, field data collection followed through methods of participation, observation, unstructured and structural interviews, genealogical technique, questionnaires and schedules have been discussed. This chapter hints at the relevance of community in-depth study in Anthropology for deep insights of social behavior of a community or about a community village as a whole. In the 'New Approached of Social / Cultural anthropology' it has been said that anthropology has definite role in establishing a harmonious relation among the multi-cultural ethnic groups for polarization of relation, a prevalent continuum. This is a common psycho-cultural facet, which makes societies consolidate in the grass-root level. Monotheism is not the criterion of Indianization, rather it is polytheism, often with cultural diversity.

In the 'New Dimensions of Physical Anthropology' the authors have mentioned the parameters, the paradigms of these are overweight and obesity, globosity of man in positive manner, latent obesity without BMI for increased deposition of adiposity of body, hyperkinesia, Kinesiology for selection of players in sports, PBF (present of body fat), CVD, Visceral fat, WHR (waist to -hip ratio), non-communicable disease (NCD), Type 2 diabetes, mellitus (T 2DM), polygenic NCD, heart, artery, liver, kidney, knee pain diseases, transplantation of kidney for regeneration or ophthalmology therapy, body image, stem cell research for implantation of tissue in body polymer, prediction in reproductive biology especially for scissorian babies, distribution of fat and muscle, body age concept, a very new concept in anthropology for lung volume and oxygen saturation in blood giving light on

COPD, CVD and cardio-thoracic patient, microbes for population variation study, blood group and finger loops as genetic trail marker for identifying thief, genetic study which depends on genomic DNA, CDNA and RNA and genomic mutation, tissue engineering helpful for replacement of Knee, eye, nail, skin, bio-technology, biochemical study of blood sugar, cholesterol, triglyceride and urea, forensic anthropology, reconstruction of blood from teeth,, foot and head length, rare genetic anaemia for bone marrow failure (Labile cell) and unhealthy insufficiency of blood, gerontology for studying ageing, metabolic and molecular genetic, multi-potent progenitor, eg., lymphoid lineage and myeloid lineage analyses, cloning of cells etc. In the introduction cultural activities and socio-economic problems of the Indians are highlighted and for studying and eradicating those problems Sir William Jones established the Asiatic Society in Calcutta on 15<sup>th</sup> January in 1784. It led to anthropological studies in India and a number of Western scholars helped towards the end. Sir Herbert Hope Risley started census of Indian population with anthropological knowledge and became the Director of Anthropology in 1901 and hold the post of Secretary in the Home Department of Government of India. A good many western scholars came forward and joined hands to study anthropology. Among them J.H.Hutton, J.P.Mills, Verrier Elwin and C.Von Furer-Haimendorf deserve mention in the study of the tribal people.

Life-sketches and contributions of twenty four doyens of anthropology in India have been presented in this book. Apart from the anthropologists who are not in their mortal presence among us , contributions of some of the living scholars have been discussed. Here we find Sarat Chandra Roy, Kshitish Prasad Chattopadhyay, Nirmal Kumar Bose, M.N.Srinivas, S.C.Dube, S.C.Sinha, B.K.Roy Burman, L.P.Vidyarthi, M.N.Basu, I.Karve D.N.Majumdar, A.K.Danda, B.K. Das Gupta, Ram Dayal Munda, to name only a few. However, it is surprising that there is no discussion on Tarak Chandra Das and Andre Beteille in the volume. Physical / Biological Anthropologists Biroja Sankar Guha , S.S.Sarkar and Bhuban Mohan Das' contributions have been duly discussed in the book.

Dharanidhar Sen is singularly representing the Prehistoric-archaeology. Some more names could have been accommodated.

This slick publication will be very useful, nevertheless, to students and research scholars in anthropology arena and worth even though for preserving in the seminary library.

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**WORK, LOVE AND LEARNING IN UTOPIA: EQUALITY REIMAGINED** by Martin Schoenhals ; Routledge ; London ; 2019; Pp.i-viii +269; ISBN : 978-1-138-54951-7.

Evolution and the emergence of humans has always been a fascinating topic of our academic and general interest. However, of late, the matter of greater concern appears to be the fate and future of humanity. The future is being predicted on the basis of the reading of the past to reshape the present. We most often subscribe to the view that the human history is ‘survival of the fittest’ – and this survival is effected through a continuous and internecine struggle. Thus, we are made to believe that it is natural to fight over the environmental resources at inter and intra specific levels. This view has been recast in the mould of a natural law to project it as a scientific truth to justify or give rationale to war and conflict. At times, I think that Darwin was probably misconstrued since his theory of conflict or struggle seems to have been overemphasized than his theory of cooperation as he advocated in his *Descent of Man* (1871). In the book, Darwin talked about the triumphing ‘moral sense’ which made humanity unique and provided them with the necessary gadgets for his survival in this planet. Johnson (2013) argued that the evolution of cognitive traits made the overt selfish behaviour more costly. He added that the natural selection itself acted in favour of the mechanism that reduced the selfishness. In 1893, Scottish naturalist and Evangelical Minister Henry Drummond also attested greater importance of altruism as transpired in the work of Darwin. Therefore, while there are tons of theories justifying or at least giving reasons behind the belligerent world torn with violence, deprivations, and hierarchies, an alternative voice calling for a more just and cooperative world must not go unheeded as utopian thought. Martin Schoenhals’ book *Work, Love and Learning in Utopia – Equality Reimagined* (2019) under present review is telling us about such a world based on tolerance and love evidenced though a substantial presence over 95 per cent of the history of humanity. Martin’s book can be said to lead us to a glorious moment of enjoyable coexistence of humanity in a more just environ through a remaking of our contemporary orientations towards life and world.

What anthropology tells us is all about how we make and unmake our world. What can be considered the greatest contribution of anthropology is providing us with the understanding of how best the world can be made habitable for the entire humanity. Unfortunately, the yearning for such a desirable living fell to deaf ears a number of times owing to the nefarious design of the intelligent creature. When this human species gifted with excellent cognitive abilities do this devastation or violence results, then why do they not do away with this and replace it with love and compassion? This question seems to be the fulcrum of the arguments in the book. The author starts the book with a very simple yet deep question: ‘What for you would be an ideal life be like?’ He aspires to describe what an ideal world

should be like. The book unfurls author's imagined world as 'utopia' substantiated with possibilities of realization, arranged in eight chapters within its covers. Utopia is a place where everything is perfect or near perfect. Thomas More portrayed an ideal island with many desirable features in his celebrated book *Utopia* in 1515. However, the present book is very different from More's depiction of utopia both in approach and content. For Martin, 'utopia' is:

'Society – individuals working in concert – will provide the resources for individual joy-maximization, rather than being the obstacle to joy as society so often is today, due to the existence of hierarchy and the anxiety it generates.'(p.8)

How this seemingly unattainable utopia could be a possibility has been discussed in the book with regard to equality of gender, sexuality, and love(chap.2), inclusive communities and new solidarities (chap.3), nature of work in utopia(chap.4), communication in utopian community(chap.5), pleasures and purpose of learning (chap.6), politics(chap.7), and psychological dilemma( chap.8). Martin's principal aim is to do away with all forms of hierarchy which he counts to be the root of all distresses of the humanity. Such eradication necessitates a complete reshuffling and reorganization of social structure. The single most important impetus behind this event is mentioned as 'interactive joy' which is conceptualized to be derived from any kind of interaction between humans in any context as long as it is not constrained by hierarchy. The proposed utopia would minimize or eliminate all forms of hierarchy, change the nature of work to a pure enjoyment without any coercion, there will be open schooling free of means –ends relationship, there will be no place for meritocracy which according to author produces hierarchy, the administrators will be chosen by lottery in turn. In the utopian world, there will be no border between countries, anybody can freely settle anywhere in the earth and no nation-state will exist in that world. However, at times, the author is himself uncertain of the exact details of how these will take place in reality, though he is confident that the basic human nature is ordained more towards cooperation than conflict. He has given ample of examples from primate ethology and hunting-foraging societies to substantiate the essential human behaviours based on sharing and cooperation. His own ethnographic study on the agriculturist Yi people of China also provided a number evidences in support of his argument.

We are not sure what course of action the future human society will take up in order to sustain for a still longer period than the past, but the book has proved an anthropologist's might in showing the possibility of happy and good life the humanity is avidly looking for at present. At times, his utterances appear saintly and sermonic. He has also presented his arguments convincingly with ethnographic and ethologic data, though the practical reason may say something else. The utopia is a new philosophy of life which creates an overarching symbolic power of which religion is one current example now. The book did not embark on any separate discussion on religion. The non-refusal to certain forms of marriage does not

always create hierarchies because socio-cultural features of the marrying parties are important considerations here. It is fact that one may raise umpteen numbers of questions regarding the functioning of the proposed utopian world; the answers to those questions may not readily be available to the author as well as interrogator, but all the time during these moments of interrogations, we must keep in mind the purpose of the book that appeals to the purest conscience of humanity to bring in a happier and enjoyable life to all. The book is a must read for all across academic specializations.

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