

OBITUARY

Remembering F.G Bailey (1924-2020)

Prof. Frederick George Bailey who passed away on 8 July 2020 is well known to Indian anthropologists as an eminent researcher and prolific writer. He made immense contribution to Indian anthropology particularly for anthropological studies in the state of Orissa. Trained in Manchester, U.K. Prof. Bailey had a long career in teaching and research spanning over seven decades at Manchester, SOAS, Sussex U.K.; and University of California at San Diego in USA from where he retired in 1997.

Though Bailey is better known for his work in Political anthropology, he made valuable contribution in the areas of Indian society, religion, ritual and morality, economic anthropology, Applied anthropology, and Research methods. His Ph.D work (1954) was supervised by Max Gluckman and Elizabeth Colson. He published this work in 1957 under the title *Caste and the Economic Frontier* (Foreword by M.N Srinivas). In this study, Bailey dealt with aspects of social change, focusing on the consequences of shift from agricultural economy to mercantile economy (extension of economic frontier) and also the study of impact of State policies on the tribals (extension of administrative frontier). This work has become a trend setter having several distinctive features like shift from synchronic studies to historic studies, convergence of structural functionalism of the British anthropology and the little community and village studies tradition of the American anthropology. In his second book *Tribe, Caste and Nation* (1960), Bailey examined in the post-colonial Odisha, the struggle for control of land between 'tribal' Kond and caste Hindus and the dynamics of political power. He continued to focus on political aspects in his third book, *Politics and Social Change: Orissain 1959* (1963). Here, Bailey focused on the newly introduced political democracy in the state of Orissa. In this book Bailey presented a vivid portrait of leadership in Orissa in 1959. For this, he compared two villages which have been subjected to differential social and economic change. The monograph *Stratagems and Spoils: a social anthropology of politics* (1969) has been regarded as his important contribution. For this book, Bailey produced a sequel: *Treasons, Stratagems, and Spoils How leaders make use of beliefs and values* (2001). In this book Bailey analyzed how morality is used as an instrument to control power. Appropriately, one of his significant examples was Gandhi's use of morality as a weapon in the freedom struggle against British colonial rule. Bailey continued to write on morality and religion and his book is titled *The Witch-Hunt; Or the Triumph of Morality* was published in 1994. In the book titled *The Need for*

Enemies (1998), Bailey dealt with regional and micro level scenario of politics in the post-colonial South Asia. He analyzed the problems of the leaders such as the dilemma between duty to public, and personal interests. The study used a combination of functionalism and game theory by describing the politics as a contest between players organized in to teams that are governed by rules. These rules have been can be categorized in to normative and pragmatic providing a choice for the leaders. Based on his study of leadership, In the paper titled 'The peasant view of bad life' (1966), Bailey brought out perceptions of poor peasants about leaders and officials. While moving from traditional systems to democratic systems officials replaced the leaders. But they are approached with suspicion by the peasants as official institutions are not part of peasants' moral community. He explained that relations with traditional leaders have been multiplex relations whereas the relations with officials are single interest relations. Bailey suggested that a better acceptance of development programs by peasants is possible only when there is change in the cognitive map of the peasants. Bailey's differentiation between tribe and caste has been a pathbreaking concept where he used an economic criteria i.e. land ownership. According to him large number will not have access to land ownership in caste society. For him, "Larger the proportion of those having direct access to the land, nearer is the group to tribal kind of organization" (1961). He borrowed the ideas of Durkheim on organic and segmentary solidarity for differentiating between tribe and caste. Bailey will be remembered for his stimulating debates with Louis Dumont in the volumes of *Contributions to Indian Sociology*. On the issue of the relationship of the village to the macrocosm of Indian civilization, Dumont and Pocock argued that India cannot be understood through villages and pointed out "India, sociologically speaking, is not made up of villages". They emphasized on the ideological dimensions of Indian civilization such as 'purity and pollution'. On the other hand, Bailey gave importance to village studies and argued that the study of villages was important not only for India, but for international anthropology as well. For, Bailey, a valid sociological understanding is possible by abstracting from people's empirical behavior.

Like his contemporary Scarlett Epstein who also worked at the same time in India, Prof. Bailey dealt with socio-economic changes through village studies; dealt with shift from subsistence economy to market economy; blended statistical data with ethnography; traced the processes of local economy drawn in to larger economy. Bailey continued publishing valuable books and papers for years after his retirement. He wrote more than sixteen books and large number of papers. Empirically, conceptually and from methodological point of view, Bailey's research contribution enriched our understanding of Indian society. His valuable contribution will be remembered and emulated by Indian anthropologists for a long time.

P. Venkata Rao

University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad



This document was created with the Win2PDF "print to PDF" printer available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>

This version of Win2PDF 10 is for evaluation and non-commercial use only.

This page will not be added after purchasing Win2PDF.

<http://www.win2pdf.com/purchase/>