

Newsletter

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NEW!

ABOUT US

Founded in 2011, Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) promotes the discipline of Anthropology, its philosophy and its methods to engage in applied and action research. Our work seeks to address issues of local communities through a bottom-up approach unique to communities and their people. We conduct community-based research rooted in local knowledge systems, local culture and ecology to inform policy initiatives and drive transformational impact. AIF also promotes Visual Anthropology through vibrant, authentic, meaningful ethnographic films and photo documentation.

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Do you want to organise training programmes in hybrid mode through hands-on workshops? We conduct trainings on themes such as ethnography, ethical use of AI tools, academic writing and publications, child rights, good parenting practices etc. among others. If you want to train your team, then **LOOK NO FURTHER!**

Email us at anthroposif@gmail.com and share your requirement. Our experienced AIF team will do the rest.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

➤ Distinguished Guest Lecture Series (Online Lecture by an Eminent Anthropologist)

Prof. Abhijit Guha has graciously obliged to deliver a lecture on **"Anthropology in India: A Historical Exploration"**. He is a former professor in Anthropology from the Vidyasagar University and former Senior Fellow of ICSSR at IDSK.

Date: 6th Sept. 2024

Time: 7 p.m. onwards

Meeting Link: [Click here](#)

Livestream Link: [Click here](#)

ANTHROPOS INDIA FOUNDATION
INVITES YOU FOR A DISTINGUISHED GUEST LECTURE
ON
ANTHROPOLOGY IN INDIA: A HISTORICAL EXPLORATION
6TH SEPTEMBER, 2024, 7PM ONWARDS

ABSTRACT
Research on the history of anthropology in India, unlike western countries, has not yet become a formidable tradition despite the fact that academic courses on the growth and development of anthropology in India had been instrumental at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels at the Master Curriculum Development Board of the University Grants Commission as early as 2001. Under this category, the conceptual framework of the discipline has been derived from a critical and selective reading of the anthropological texts produced by Indian anthropologists.

This reading of the history of Indian anthropology was based on two sources. One source was the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists who were connected to various levels of nation-building, while the other was the reading of literature by anthropologists who contributed to Indian anthropology as simply following the western cultural tradition. These two readings of the texts were juxtaposed to write a new and critical history of the discipline, which emphasized the national tradition of Indian Anthropology.

On the reverse side of the national tradition, there also existed a view that an Indian form of anthropology could be developed if many eminent Indian thinkers and scholars before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent, have developed the same in India.

Finally, I have argued that anthropologists did make attempts to tackle some of the major challenges (i.e. famine, rehabilitation of refugees and development-related displacement) encountered by the country in the early period of nation-building, which cannot be seen in detail in this lecture. Under the changing times and circumstances, the future of national anthropology in India is envisaged through the available tradition of anthropology developed by some of the pioneers. This justifies the historical re-appraisal of the national tradition in Indian anthropology in the present and future.

KEYWORDS: history of anthropology, Indian anthropology, Colonial Anthropology, Hindu Anthropology, Nationalist Anthropology, Nation-Building.

GUEST SPEAKER

ABHIJIT GUHA
Former Professor in Anthropology,
Vidyasagar University &
Former Senior Fellow of
Indian Council of Social
Science Research at
Institute of Development
Studies Kolkata

DATE	TIME	MEETING LINK	LIVESTREAMING LINK
6th, September	7 p.m.	(Click here)	(Click here)

➤ Online Workshop for Academic Writing and Book Publishing, 12th - 13th October, 2024

AIF is happy to announce its next workshop for PhD scholars, young faculty and those who wish to become authors in the future. This is your chance to learn the basics about the art of academic writing and getting published to advance your career goals.

Keep checking our website for more updates!

One-day online course on *“Pathways to two dozen careers in Anthropology”* held on 1st September, 2024

Anthropos India Foundation conducted an online, full-day workshop on “PATHWAYS TO TWO DOZEN CAREERS IN ANTHROPOLOGY” on 1st September, 2024. It was attended with fervent spirit by 100 participants from all over India. Participants came from different institutions like IGNOU, North Eastern Hill University, University of Delhi, Punjab University, University of Calcutta and so on. Majority of the participants were from the anthropology background but a few enthusiastic participants represented disciplines like sociology, computer science, political science and Dalit and Minority Studies. Most of the participants were in search of guidance about how to achieve their career goals or how to orient their skill sets to achieve the same.

We were lucky to have some very senior persons as our resource persons for the workshop. They represented various government and private institutions making the event special as they shared their journeys, challenges and guided students while addressing their concerns through engaging sessions. Prof. Amitabh Pande spoke about careers in anthropology within the Ministry of Culture. He highlighted the need for a strong understanding of anthropology, fieldwork skills, and the ability to work with people, as well as the potential for employment in government institutions and other related areas. On career opportunities in archaeology and within the Archaeological Survey of India, Prof. Kishor Kumar Basa delivered an excellent address, wherein he delineated the interdisciplinary nature of the field and the challenges of reconstructing past human cultures. He also encouraged students to gain field experience through internships.

With regards to career opportunities with the Tribal Research Institutes and Ministry of Tribal Affairs as well as UN and other developmental agencies, Prof. Akhila B Ota, IAS (retd.) gave a detailed and informative session.

He discussed the importance of anthropology in various sectors, including tribal development departments, NGOs, and government agencies, while emphasizing the need for anthropology students to gain practical fieldwork experience and additional skills to be competitive in the job market. For opportunities in the Civil Services, Dr Naresh Vaid, or just ‘Vaid Sir’, gave an eye-opening talk where he spoke about the impact of simple interventions in improving tribal communities’ access to healthcare, employment, and finance. He tried to drive home the point that real change was do-able, but with the right understanding of the society, how it functioned, and the right attitude.

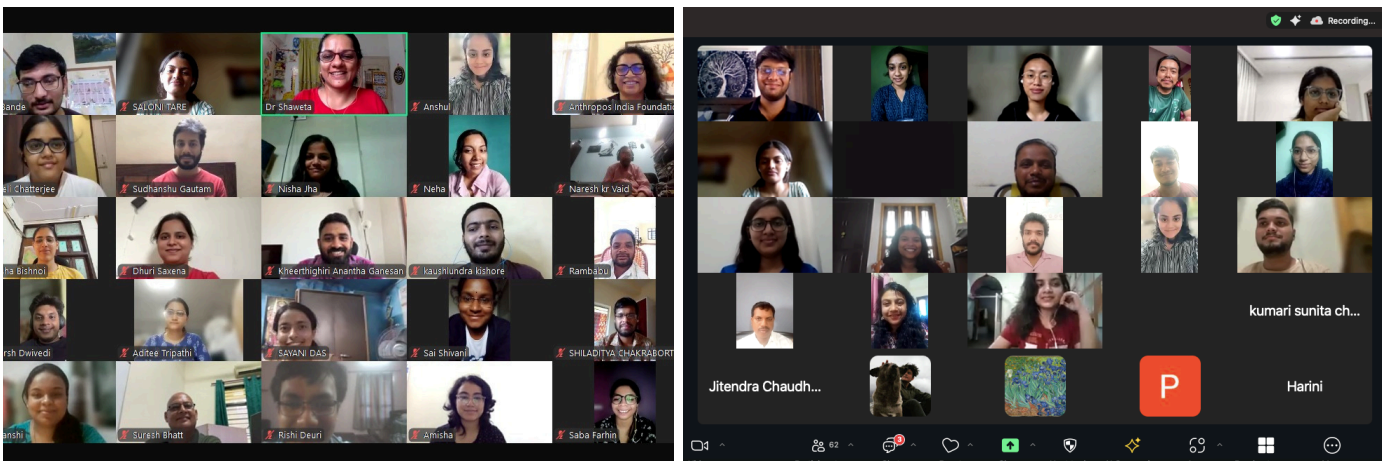
This was followed by a very engaging session with Dr Alison Kahn concerning careers in computer science and visual anthropology. She shared insights on career opportunities in the field, stressing the significance of considering both micro and macro perspectives, and also the attitude of being a bit of a maverick while in the field. Sharing both personal and professional anecdotes, she expressed concerns about job competition. She spoke of some of the challenges graduates faced in showcasing their skills, for instance, amidst the rise of AI in recruitment processes. Last but not the least, Anthropos India Foundation’s Founder-Chairperson Dr Sunita Reddy gave a lucid talk on other opportunities in the field while encouraging participants to continue to work hard to make their mark. She also encouraged the participants to stay connected to AIF to keep themselves engaged with the field of anthropology in particular. This was followed by the release of AIF’s *“Two Dozen Careers in Anthropology”* e-book by Dr Vaid. The last session was the feedback and interaction session for the participants.



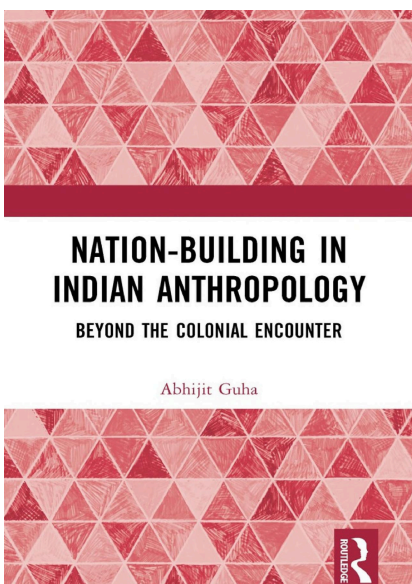
PAST EVENT



The workshop culminated on a positive and promising note with a vote of thanks by Dr Shaweta on behalf of the Organizing Committee comprising Habiba Haroon, Pratham Gupta and Aryan Bante. Many participants shared that the workshop enhanced their understanding of career paths, reignited their anthropological curiosity and boosted their confidence. The final takeaway was that an urgent need was felt to promote anthropological associations and the reach of the subject of anthropology since “anthropology was too wide a subject to stay only with the anthropologists.”



BOOK UPDATE



Nation-Building in Indian Anthropology Beyond the Colonial Encounter *by Abhijit Guha*

This book offers valuable insight into the development of anthropology as a discipline especially juxtaposed with the ongoing nation-building process in the country. Newly independent India, despite its independence, was facing many challenges, and this book seeks to highlight the role of Indian anthropologists in addressing those challenges while simultaneously discovering new hurdles as well. The author delves into topics such as the rehabilitation of refugees after the 1947 Partition, displacement caused by large dams, industrialization, and famines. This book serves as a must read for students of anthropology, sociology, and researchers interested in the history of social sciences and development studies in India.

Professor Abhijit Guha

Professor Guha is well-known in contemporary Indian anthropology for his research on nation-building in Indian anthropology and land acquisition. He was a professor at Vidyasagar University in Medinipur, West Bengal, and a Senior Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research at the Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata. Guha has taught at Vidyasagar University for 30 years. In one unique research, he attempted to discover and construct an anthropological narrative of his own University campus. He has published numerous research papers and articles, and has authored books such as *Nation-Building in Indian Anthropology*, and *Encountering Land Grab: An Ethnographic Journey*. In 2008, Professor Guha acted as an expert member for the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the amendment of the Land Acquisition Act of 1894.



He graciously answered all our questions over email.

How does it feel to be a veteran in anthropology? How did you finally decide to pursue this particular field of study?

I really feel embarrassed to consider myself as a veteran in Indian anthropology when I see a number of active and accomplished anthropologists around me. Take for example, my Phd supervisor Prof. Rajat Kanti Das, the editor of the Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society (JIAS). Prof. Das is editing JIAS meticulously and writes very perceptive editorials. Another is Prof. P.K.Chattopadhyay of Delhi University, a world renowned Forensic Anthropologist who travels around the world. I also see many bright, junior anthropologists, like Suman Nath of a Government College in West Bengal, who are very promising. I feel proud to be among older veterans, and brilliant younger ones.

Can you please tell us a bit more about your life experiences in the field? When you look back, did they have any bearing on you as a person?

My life-experiences continue to be thrilling around anthropology because the subject is like a never-ending book.

A book which always opens new chapters before me! I started with Bengali kinship and then plunged into the field of governmental land grab, which took me to look at my own university campus, and then into the nationalist history of Indian anthropology. I do not know what is there in the next chapters of this book!

Yes, my attitude towards human beings has been transformed through my journey in anthropology. I feel that I have developed a tolerance towards other human beings, other ways of living and thinking, particularly in a multicultural country like India. I am forever indebted to anthropology.

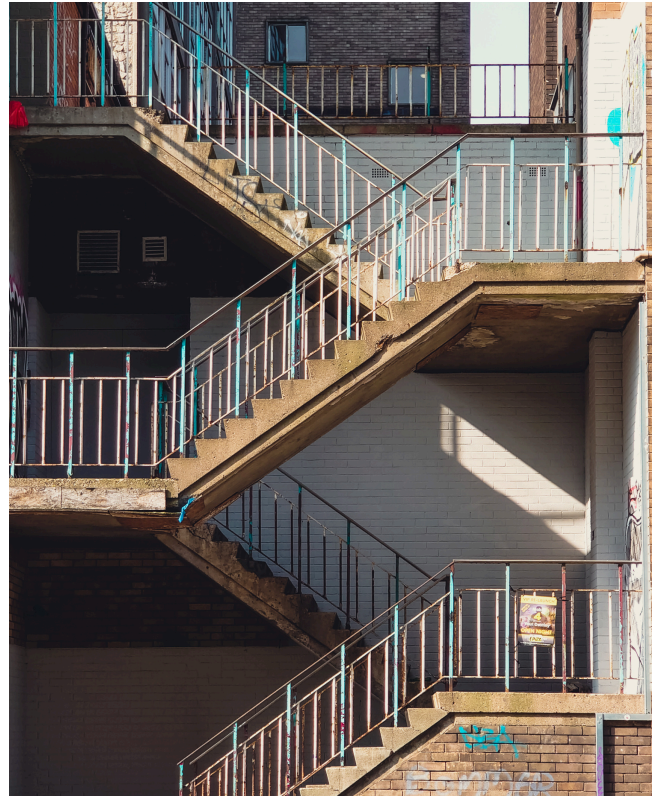
Given your vast experience as an anthropologist, how would you say the subject has grown over the years? Moreover, what is its scope for the younger generation?

I do not know whether my experience is vast or not but the subject has definitely expanded itself during my lifetime. In my younger days, that is during the 1980s and 1990s, ethnography, at the

ordinary level meant a good description of a culture. At its best, it was a Geertzian 'thick description'. But now-a-days, we find ethnographies from the perspectives of political economy and bio-cultural synthesis. I also find multi-sited ethnographies and looking at the global from the local perspectives. The younger generation is making the scope of the subject broader and broader without waiting for the directions from the veterans. The scope for the younger generation is infinite. The subject depends on them and they do not necessarily depend on the old guards.

How will upcoming technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) affect the process of nation-building in the upcoming years?

To tell you very frankly, I know so little about artificial intelligence! Whatever I have understood about AI is that anthropologists have to learn to handle it carefully. Nation-builders, of course will be using AI in technological and economic progress. But the real task of the anthropologists would be to study the effects of AI in the processes of nation-building or any other human activities for that matter. Take for example, how can AI help in making a good and just resettlement and rehabilitation package for the poor people to be displaced by a big dam or industry? It will depend on the kinds of inputs planners give to the AI machine. From where will the inputs will come? Definitely not from another AI lab but from the ground, the field, and, who will do the field work? Trained anthropologists or super-computers? The supercomputers will definitely help the fieldworker anthropologists but participatory fieldwork will have to be finally done by human anthropologists. This much I have understood about the future implications of AI in anthropology. AI is a means to an end not an end in itself!



JOB/FELLOWSHIP ALERTS

1. Goa PSC Recruitment 2024 for 18 Assistant Professor and Various Posts
Last Date to Apply: 06.09.2024
Application Link: [Click here](#)
2. Museologist
Karabi Artworks Pvt. Ltd - Noida, Uttar Pradesh
Last Date to Apply: Not specified
Application Link: [Click here](#)
3. Raman–Charpak Fellowship 2024
Last Date to Apply: 08.09.2024
Application Link: [Click here](#)
Eligibility: Indian & French PhD Students and French Masters' Students
4. Junior Research Assistantship
Last Date to Apply: Not specified
Application Link: [Click here](#)



CELEBRATING MITHUNA SANKRANTI: THE RAJA FESTIVAL OF ODISHA

Dristi Gupta, Intern - AIF

The state of Odisha, which is renowned for its colorful celebrations and rich cultural legacy, revels in the Raja Festival with great delight and excitement. This unique holiday, also called 'Mithuna Sankranti', honours women and marks the start of the monsoon season. Raja Festival, which lasts for three days, is a period for celebration, respite, and renewal, especially for Odisha women. Let's delve into the customs and meaning of this lovely celebration.

The Raja Festival's Significance

Pronounced as 'raw-jaw', the Raja Festival, which in Odisha signifies the fecundity of the ground like that of women, ushers in the agricultural year. Mother Earth is thought to go through her menstrual cycle around this time and have some rest before the rainy season begins. In addition to honoring this organic process, the event highlights the value of women and their contributions to society.

The Tri-Day Festivity

The three days of the Raja Festival each have their own distinct traditions and events:

Pahili Raja - Pahili Raja, the first day, is a day of preparation. Women clean their houses, do a variety of household tasks, and get ready for the upcoming celebrations. The enthusiasm and anticipation leading up to the big celebrations define this day.

Raja Sankranti - The most important day of the celebration is the second one, Raja Sankranti or Mithuna Sankranti. Women take time out from their everyday schedules to rest and pamper themselves. They usually do not cook or do other domestic chores. Rather, they get new clothing, color their feet red with *alta*, and decorate themselves with jewelry.



Basi Raja - More sports, entertainment, and feasting are part of the celebrations on the third day, known as Basi Raja. As family and friends get together to participate in a variety of activities, the day is defined by a feeling of community and togetherness.

Traditional Games and Activities

The customary sports and activities that unite communities are among the Raja Festival's attractions. An essential feature of the festivities are swings, or 'Raja doli' which are seen dangling from trees in cities and villages. The happy and festive mood is created by women and girls swinging and singing traditional folk songs in turn.

The fun is increased by the many games that are played both indoors and outside. Popular alternatives during the event include board games like Ludo, card games, and kabaddi. Participants' delight and sense of camaraderie are fostered by these activities.

Raja's Culinary Delights

Raja is just another one of those festivals in Odisha that wouldn't be complete without its gastronomic treats. To celebrate, special meals are made, with Poda Pitha serving as the centerpiece of the Raja feast. Slow-cooked rice cake called poda pitha is created using rice flour, coconut, jaggery, and a variety of spices. The cake gets its unique smoky flavor from being cooked in clay ovens as it is customarily made.



A variety of pithas (rice cakes), including Arisa Pitha, Chakuli Pitha, and Manda Pitha, are among the other delights. Everyone enjoys these savory and sweet delicacies, which heighten the joyful mood.



*Raja festival is being celebrated by Bajarangbali Cricket Club, Narsinghpur, Keonjhar, Odisha
Photo courtesy: Mr. Soumya Shree*

The Raja Spirit Festival

For the ladies of Odisha, Raja Festival is more than simply a celebration—it's a moment for solidarity, happiness, and gratitude. It gives women the chance to refresh, take a well-earned vacation, and recognize their value in society. The celebration, which coincides with the start of the monsoon season, which is essential to the state's agrarian way of life, also highlights the harmonious co-existence of humans and environment.

The Odisha Raja Festival is a singular occasion that artfully combines ethnic customs, honoring women, and love for the natural world. The entire community gathers during this time to celebrate the revitalizing power of the monsoon and to recognize and acknowledge women. Raja Festival creates a lasting impression on anybody who attends with its colorful traditions, mouthwatering cuisine, and upbeat activities.

E-Resource Center Invitation

We realize that there is no centralized resource center for the Anthropological works of Indian Anthropologists, where a scholar can look for publications - articles, papers and books. Thus, AIF is developing an anthropological e-resource center hosted at the AIF website - www.anthroposindiafoundation.com.

Given your valuable contribution to anthropological discourse in India, we would be glad if you can share your publication to be uploaded on the AIF e-resource center, which will benefit all the researchers from India and abroad interested in various fields of the discipline. This will be one of its kind e-resource repository. Do let us know if you have any questions or queries.

'Childhood Matters'- A Participatory, multilingual, Quarterly Digital Magazine

AIF brings out a digital magazine for increasing awareness about child rights issues and sensitize about various aspects of children and childhood. Despite stringent laws, like POCSO, the crimes against children are increasing, this magazine is a humble effort to create a safe environment for the wellbeing and overall development of children. It is a participatory magazine. We welcome all the readers to freely contribute articles for the upcoming issues along with sharing their feedback at aif.digitalmagazine@gmail.com. The editorial team will have the final say in selection of the articles.

For subscribing to the upcoming issue of the magazine, kindly register [here](#).

Get Involved & Support Us

- > **Promote Anthropological work**
share your work- blogs, documentaries, videos, podcasts, photographs
- > **Intern with us**
- > **Collaborate with us** *in research, workshops, digital magazine*
- > **Volunteer**
- > **Fund our activities**

AIF Life Membership

You can now register with us to become a Life Member of Anthropos India Foundation for a nominal fee of Rs 1000 and by filling the form [\(Click here\)](#).

The Life Members will be receiving our monthly Newsletter, in-house research study Summaries, alerts for upcoming Courses, Workshops and Seminars organised by AIF, along with notifications about release of our quarterly, bilingual Digital Magazine 'Childhood Matters'. The older issues of the magazine can be downloaded for free from [here](#). You can access our newly created e-resource center, a one-stop destination, where you can find research articles by eminent anthropologists at one place.

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