

Newsletter

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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.

Anthropology is a holistic study of human beings. It is a vibrant and dynamic subject. Anthropology is everywhere, let's practice it!

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Do you want to organise training programmes in hybrid mode through hands-on Workshops on themes such as ethnography, ethical use of AI tools, academic writing and publications, child rights, good parenting practices etc. ?

LOOK NO FURTHER!

Connect with us at anthroposif@gmail.com. Share with us your requirement and our experienced AIF team will do the rest.

UPCOMING EVENTS

One-day course on "Pathways to Two Dozen Careers in Anthropology" on 1st September, 2024

- Do you want to opt for Anthropology course but are unsure about the types of jobs it offers in the future?
- Can you earn a decent living after studying Anthropology?
- Do you feel unsure about which related courses to take in addition to Anthropology in order to select a professional path that interests you?
- Do you want to choose Anthropology as a subject for graduation or post-graduation and discover routes to twenty-four different occupations with this carefully designed course?
- Do you want to hear from the leaders of the organisations who will direct you towards courses and careers both in India and elsewhere?

If you resonate with some of these concerns then enrol for a one-day course entitled "Pathways to Two Dozen Careers in Anthropology" that will help you choose a career path that piques your curiosity and passion while dispelling any reservations you may have.

ENROL NOW & BOOK YOUR SEAT!

Click here to Register: <https://forms.gle/CTnuJWyiyGuCoekU8>

Online Workshop on AI Tools for Social Science Research and Writing, July 27-28, 2024

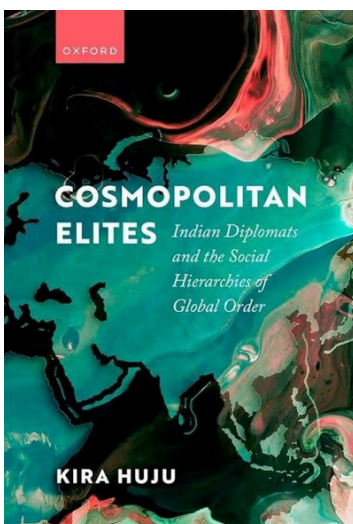


AIF hosted a two-day intensive, hands-on workshop that catered specifically to the requirements of social science scholars to help them with ethical research and writing using the new-age AI Tools. The workshop began with an insightful talk about the origin of AI, its evolution, its optimal and ethical uses in today's digital age and so on. Professor Shandar Ahmad, Dr Neha Vinayak, Dr Sunita Reddy, Dr Sandesha Rayapa, and seven bright scholars with the appropriate technical expertise were the key resource persons for the online workshop.

The sessions were divided evenly into two days keeping in mind the various logical steps involved in the research process. For instance, the first AI Tools to be discussed were *Elicit* and *Doclime* that assist in searching for content on any particular subject, much needed during the initial phases of research. In the next session, AI tools such as *as Research Rabbit*, *Scispace* and *IdeaMap* were introduced for mind mapping, literature review and better conceptualisation of the area of research. This way, many AI tools were introduced such as *Colab* (for analysing and visualisation of data, and for working collectively on projects as a team in real time), *Quillbot* (for proofreading, grammar check, AI detection, translation etc.), *Canva* (for basic graphic designing), *Zotero* (for referencing), *Gemini* (for making powerpoint presentations) and so on. The idea was to get the participants to start exploring the tools and eventually take help from some, whichever worked for them better. An underlying caveat while introducing every tool was the judicious and responsible use of AI with a general disclaimer that AI was not a substitute for the very creative human mind, and that no AI tool should create a condition of blind dependency on it.

About fifty five researchers, mostly students and some teachers, took part in the workshop from various fields of study such as sociology, anthropology, english, journalism etc. From Nagaland to Tamil Nadu, Odisha to Himachal Pradesh, they represented the length and breadth of the country. Further, the youngest participant was all of 17 years of age while the eldest participant was its reverse-number i.e. 71 years old! A competition was organised towards the end to see if the participants were able to grasp the working of a few AI tools learnt through the workshop. More specifically, whether or not they were able to utilise them in practice. Many submissions were awarded a '*Special Certificate of Appreciation*' in the end.

LATEST BOOK UPDATE



Cosmopolitan Elites: Indian Diplomats and the Social Hierarchies of Global Order by Kira Huju, Oxford University Press (2023)

This book critically examines the diplomats from the elite Indian Foreign Service, many of whom were present at the founding of this order. These diplomats initially sought to remake the global order, vouching for a radically anti-colonial stance, and propagating the voice of the global subaltern. But in doing so, they ended up seeking status in the hierarchies, the legacy of which they sought to dismantle. Shedding light on myriad topics such as the struggles of belonging, it tries to explore what it takes to be a recognized member of international society and how historically marginalised actors within the diplomatic club navigate social hierarchies related to race, class, religion, gender, and caste. Tracing the journey of the service from its ICS days to now, this book proves to be an interesting read for all those interested in politics and international relations.

Prof P.K. Misra

Prof. P.K. Misra is a renowned social anthropologist with a distinguished career. He obtained his Masters and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Lucknow. He worked in the Anthropological Survey of India from 1958 to 1983. Following that he did several teaching assignments. Starting off as a Professor in the University of Mysore, he then went on to become the Head of Department of Studies in Anthropology there. He has also worked as Professor and Director of the Tribal Research Institute, Tamil University, and later as Professor of Anthropology at NEHU, Shillong. Prof. Misra has been a Visiting Professor to the University of Oregon, USA, and University of West Indies, Trinidad. He is the former President of the Anthropological Association, India. He has also been a National Fellow at the Indian Council of Social Science Research. It is our great honour and privilege to be interviewing such a distinguished and celebrated anthropologist for AIF's monthly newsletter.

Prof. Misra has been instrumental in the study of Indigenous Systems of Knowledge, study of Hunters and Gatherers and Nomads, as well as Development studies and Indian Diaspora throughout his decades-long illustrious career. He has written 20 books on anthropology, ethnographic methodology and fieldwork. Some of them are listed below:

1. Nomads in the Mysore City (1971), P.K. Misra, C.R. Rajalakshmi and Isaac Varghese, Memoir (29), Anthropological Survey of India.
2. The Nomadic Gadulia Lohars of Eastern Rajasthan (1977), Anthropological Survey of India, Calcutta.
3. Doctor Narasimhan's Life Story: Experiments in tribal development (1988), Prachi Prakashan, New Delhi.
4. My Anthropological Journey (2003), P.K. Misra, Mittal Publications.
5. Bio-Cultural Development of Scheduled Tribes: Policies and Issues (2012), P.K. Misra, Rawat Publications.
6. 'Tribal' Heritage: An Overlooked Chapter of Indian History (2018), Aayu Publications, New Delhi.

Sir, how did you come to anthropology? Can you please tell us a bit about your experiences in this field?

Pardon me, in order to understand the influences I carry in my career in Anthropology a bit of my biography may not be out of place. I was born in Lucknow and my professional association with anthropology has been for more than six decades. I was at least ten years older when we gained Independence. I vividly remember some of the images

of my childhood days. We lived in a traditional locality in Lucknow, where everyone knew everybody, and elders of the locality irrespective of their caste kept a watch over us all the time and they were addressed with appropriate kinship terms and also those who served us. The elders would sit outside the homes and talk about various incidents, the most vivid in my memory are those which



were related to Indian independence movement such as Jallianwallah Bagh massacre, Kakori train looting case and so on. Also, as a child, I remember noticing that at times the people who were injured owing to their participation in the movement in the city were brought into our lanes, for first-aid and treatment. But it was done all very quietly, a sort of hush hush affair. They were not taken to hospitals for fear of police action against them.

My father was in the Railways and was transferred to Asansol, Bengal. This was where I first encountered 'discrimination'. To talk about discrimination is very different than experience it. We were given railway quarters to live in the locality which hitherto was reserved exclusively for 'white' only. As we were the first occupant in a predominantly 'white' locality we were looked down by the 'white' people and despised by their servants. There, the children of 'white' people were not allowed to play with us and the children of servants had no time to play. Literally, I had not many playmates. Thus our moving from the traditional Lucknowi setting to Asansol which was completely dominated by colonial setting was a huge cultural shock for me and my family. We were not used to that kind of 'saheb' oriented living. At Asansol, I would often see movement of troops and witnessed the tragic impact of the Bengal famine as well. Images of dead people lying unattended are still very firm in my mind.

Later, when I grew up I joined the Department of Anthropology in Lucknow University. Prof D.N. Majumdar was the head and was a highly acclaimed scholar. He had done many important research projects which were much talked about. Other professors and well-known anthropologists like K.S. Mathur and Gopala Sarana were also there. But my real anthropological training started when I joined the

Anthropological Survey of India in 1958. The two very important people who played a pivotal role in my career were Prof. N.K. Bose and Prof. Surajit Sinha. They were my mentors.

I still remember that Prof. Bose had started a project on 'Material Traits Survey' and he had chosen me to conduct the pilot research for the project. We had developed a good working relationship. Slowly I realised that he was trying to train me not only in anthropology, but also in the intricacies of fieldwork. He was also training me to become a proper and scientific field-observer. He would ask me questions on the most mundane things that made me to learn to always remain alert about what I see and hear around me. At times, frankly, I would get a little irritated by his questions. I was too raw. I was more interested to learn about the theories in Anthropology from him rather than worry about mundane things. Prof. Bose was a master Guru, His mantra was proceeding from simple to complex.

My message to all potential researchers in anthropology is that you should first cultivate an understanding of the problem you want to study. Many times, students are not properly aware of what exactly they are trying to study. Thus developing efficiency in fieldwork and understanding of the research problem becomes crucial. Coming back to my own story, after completing the project on the study of material traits (the result of which were published as 'Peasant Life in India' edited by Prof. Bose) which was indeed a tough training, advised by Prof. Bose, I did an intensive study of Nomadic Gadulia Lohars of Rajasthan. This was my doctoral work too. Indeed this was most challenging research for a variety of reasons. There was hardly any study of Nomads in India. It was not easy to conduct field work on a mobile population. Besides, the anthropologist is also a human being who needs essential creature comforts. These field experiences taught me many things like how to converse with the people and how to record one's observations etc. These days we have many gadgets to help us, but during those times, noting down all the observations and conversations as quickly as possible was the only option.

My third major field work was with the forest dwellers which was again very challenging, because food gatherers are very different from people in villages. This aspect is generally not understood. Food gathering population as well as the tribals are often projected as isolated populations. But that is far from true in India. Foragers have been a part of Indian civilization is one of my favourite theme and my book Tribal Heritage is all about it.

Something that would interest you is that while working with the food gatherers, I had the opportunity to supervise the work of Rajalakshmi, who would later on go on to become my wife.

At that time she was working among the Mullu Kurumba. As her field work progressed, I could compare my fieldwork among the Jenu Kuruba done earlier with what she was doing among the Mullu Kurumba. I found that there was a significant difference in the quality of my fieldwork and that of hers. For instance, in the morning the Mullu Kurumba men were eager to show her the work they do in the forest or field. In the day time the elderly ladies of the village were pulling her to take her to their houses to relate their woes and also listen to their gossip. In the evening the unmarried girls (there was a dormitory system among the Mullu Kurumba), would drag her to their dormitory and listen to their stories. She attended at least three child deliveries and was a regular consultant to their health issues. In my case the Jenu Kuruba were generally reluctant to spare their time for me, they are highly individualistic and there was hardly my interaction with their females. Thus the quality of our field work varied drastically. However, I must add a rider that this advantage has not been adequately used by the female anthropologist. A debate on this issue I reserve it for some other day. One of my recommendations is that a husband-wife or a team consisting of a male-female researcher to conduct fieldwork would be ideal. I would rather say strongly that there is generally gender bias in anthropological studies because a good part of the world of females is beyond the reach of male anthropologists.

I was also in Trinidad for three years studying the Indian Diaspora. Then I did some village studies, and studies on the weaker sections also. My latest interest - related to my previous experience of nomadic studies -is the study of vendors in urban settings. Lately I have become interested in the study of Ramayana, both from academic point of view and for my spiritual understanding. It may surprise you that I recently did a paper on Caste in Gita which may be published in an Anthropological journal. My understanding is that we have generally overlooked our sacred ancient literature which is a vast source of knowledge. I am discovering though late in the day that there is much in these texts to understand the Indian Society. Unfortunately, I still don't know much as I don't know Sanskrit. For example, in Valmiki Ramayana (composed in BC) in one of the episodes, Sugriya directs his senior soldiers to go in search of Sita in all the four directions of the country. To each he gives detailed instructions of the hills, lakes, forest, fauna and flora etc., of the regions that they were going to come across and most of them have been identified, and mark my word each one of them is a named category. That is significant from structural anthropology point of view. Sugriya also tells them that they were going to encounter different climate and people. Anyway, I ask a mundane question what was the source of all this information? It at least indicates that we are not talking about dark continent inhabited by 'savages.'

Issues arising from these are worth researching and certainly should be taken into account by those who are doing research on Indian society.

Sir, given your wonderful experiences as an anthropologist, how would you say the subject has grown over the years and what is its scope for the younger generation? Also, we would like to know what have you personally gained from being an anthropologist?

You have asked a very thought-provoking question. It is not easy to tell my 60 to 70 years' experience in one interview. Still, I will try. Firstly, I believe it helps you become a more complete person. It helps you to understand yourself. After doing intensive fieldwork in different and diverse regions, I have come to realise that you cannot judge any human being with your preconceived notions. This was something that earlier anthropologists did, especially colonial anthropologists.

Then the focus of anthropologist on culture is outstanding. The discovery, 'wonder that is culture' is exhilarating. How true is the oft quoted statement that the human beings are caught up in the web they themselves weave, in this regard whether it is the people in Oregon (USA) or in the forests of Kerala are same. Discovering the structure of the society human beings construct, the values they inject into it and boundless creative urges of the human beings are exciting aspect of the never ending journey of the anthropologist. In this regard, the President of United States of America pardoning a Turkey on Thanks giving day is as mysteriously interesting as the conception of the world of the dead among the Toda or the concept of sacred grove among the Khasi In anthropology we discuss pressing issues and try to come up with solutions. However, many

times we fail to come up with viable solutions. An example of this is climate change. The researches have shown that the foragers are excellent resource managers which help them to sustain their resources. But can we go back to the foraging stage? No. Can we put a stop to development? There is ever growing demand for more. How do you resolve this puzzle?

As students of anthropology, we must study the subject with an open mind. I also feel that we Indian anthropologists should try to expose ourselves to other cultures outside India. We must go out to other societies and understand the nuances of everyday life there, how they are working and what challenges they are facing. That will help us to understand ourselves better. There are so many opportunities for upcoming research in the field. I believe ICSSR funding should also be given to scholars who would like to go abroad and study. Colonial domination has influenced our thinking and our choices of study. So it is important that we systematically de-colonise anthropology. It needs focussed thinking. It is important that we have more scholars from the country who study not just their own societies but also myriad societies around the world. Comparative studies are important to understand our strengths and the common challenges we, as a shared humanity, face. Gender issues are also a very important area of research. Though AI will definitely play a big role in anthropology, fieldwork can never be replaced by technology. It can help in collecting data maybe, but AI does not have answers to all the questions. So, I think that anthropology as a subject is constantly evolving and its scope is ever increasing.

The first part of this interview has been transcribed here. To listen to the entire interview, kindly [click here](#) for the podcast.

JOB ALERTS

1. Multiple applications for posts of Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, and Professors in multiple departments. Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

Last Date to Apply: 14.08.2024

Application Link: [Click here](#)

2. Tamil Nadu PSC- Combined Technical Services Examination

Last Date to Apply: 24.08.2024

Application Link: [Click here](#)

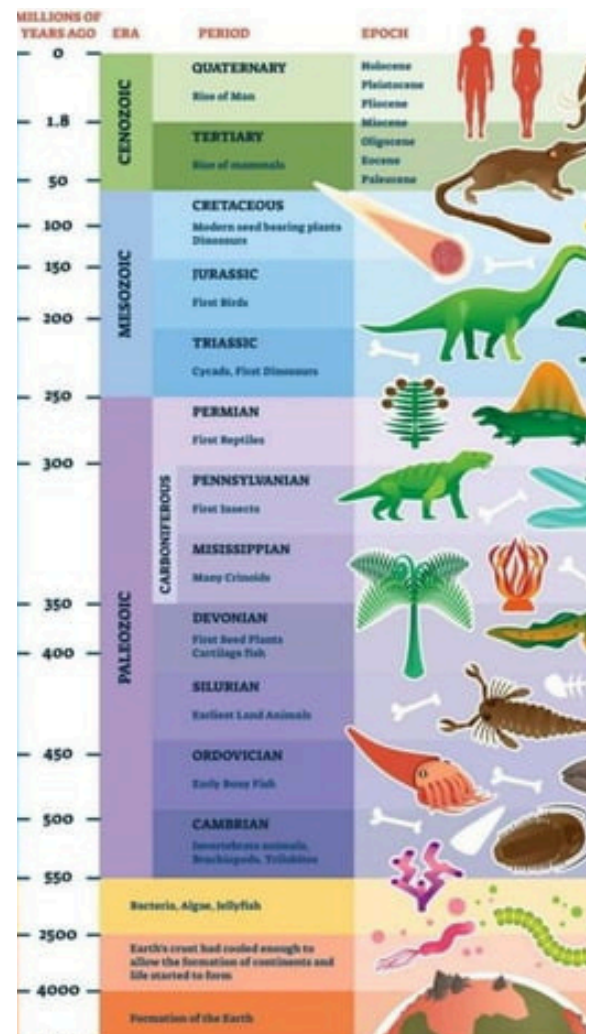


Ancient Monkey Bone Tools Shake Up the Narrative of Early Human Migration to the Rain Forest

R. Harini, Intern-AIF

For decades, it had been presumed that primate adaptation within the New World had been exclusively concentrated around grasslands and arid woodlands and how these paleographic associations impacted primate phylogeny and morphology, in turn leading to a gradual transition of primates from arboreal environments to terrestrial ones. However, this article presents a novel hypothesis by restructuring the journey of geological migration and reframing that primates could adapt to multiple environments; with dense jungles and rainforests becoming the index for primate settlement and the formation of familial structures that gradually evolved, influenced by the work of Eleanor Scerri of the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

Understanding primate environmental adaptability. In order to understand the adaptation of primates to past environments, paleoenvironmental reconstruction by examining the timing and intensity of continental drift, rerouting of ocean circulation, stable oxygen isotopes and modifications in glacial ice through systematic methods is crucial. A research paper published by Blythe A. Williams of Duke University discusses how new mammalian species derived from temperature changes. Higher plant diversity created favourable environments for primates that lead to growth in populations as well as morphological changes that indicated an increased dependence reliance on vision rather than smell or tactile senses, and may have evolved in association with insect predation in low light environments such as the canopies and understories of tropical forests. However, approaching the end of the Oligocene and during the early and middle Miocene period, there was an expansion of sub-tropical forests and drier climates but did not take away from the dependency of these primates towards trees and low seasonality for trees for under-branch suspensory locomotion, foraging, and nest building. The shifting of populations towards Asia during the Pliocene exposed them towards newer and denser vegetation led to an increase in cephalization as these hominoids settled into wetter areas and adapted new social connections and interactions depending on diet, mobility and shelter.



This understanding coupled with the knowledge of the presence of anatomically modern humans in South and South East Asia presents the idea of environmental adaptation that traces back to primate cultures from the Miocene Epoch. The analysis can be further supported by the widening of their diets from smaller mammals and insects towards more fibre rich fruits and larger mammals such as boars and pigs represented by gastrointestinal adaptations preserved through ancestral lineages.

Behavioural Responses Of Ancestral Primates And Their Connection To Modern Humans:

Changes in the environment are primarily identified by behavioural flexibility and the adoption of social behaviours that emphasise upon an established hierarchy and an increased dependence on environmentally derived tools and equipment that also carries forward onto present day humans and can be specifically observed in traditional communities. Food abundance in tropical rainforests, though well distributed; can be hard to actually obtain and requires distinction of edible material from those containing biological toxins, leading to an increased usage of tools, foraging that was systemically distributed among various members of a primate population and cognitive associations with pigment, form and shape. These changes could also be found in other environments; even those unfavourable such as the Arctic, where primate remains have been unearthed from. The article associates these attributes with the discoveries Niah Caves in Borneo and Fa Hien Lena caves in Sri Lanka as ancestrally drawn processes that continued through lineage rather than an adoption generated after migration from grasslands and savannas as the initialising point of human settlement.

Conclusion: Primate environmental adaptability not only affects its morphology and social behaviours, but in turn is equally affected by it. The hypothesis presented regarding primate adaptation towards multiple environments is supported by both phylogenetic and behavioural transitions within primate groups across geological periods that are ancestrally passed down and inherited by human populations. The article is not able to only establish the same through its recollection of discoveries and research from multiple archeologists; but also forces us to view environmental dependency differently. It also touches on the difficulties faced during the study of rainforest habitats and how these climatic and environmental attributes impact the reconstruction of the paleobiology and history of rainforest environments.

References

1. **Lorraine Boissoneault** (2019): Ancient Monkey Bone Tools Shake Up the Narrative of Early Human Migration to the Rain Forest (Smithsonian Magazine)
2. **Urs Kalbitzer & Colin A. Chapman:** Primate Responses to Changing Environments in the Anthropocene
3. **Blythe A. Williams** (2016): Effects of Climate Change on Primate Evolution in the Cenozoic (The Nature Education)



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, Bilingual, 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 feedback on 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](#) .

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- > **Collaborate with us** *in research, workshops, digital magazine*
- > **Volunteer**
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