



Anthropos  
India Foundation

# Newsletter

VOLUME II - ISSUE 04 - OCTOBER 2022

## ABOUT US

Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) is a trust registered in Delhi in October 2011. The aim is to promote the discipline of Anthropology, its philosophy and methods and engagement in applied and Action Research. AIF, through its work, seeks to address issues in the local/ regional context, based on the 'emic' perspectives and bottom-up approach to solve the problems faced by the communities and its people. Taking due consideration of the local knowledge and respecting the local culture and ecology, AIF has been conducting community-based research and, in its effort, has tried to inform the Policy initiatives too.

### EDITOR

Dr Sunita Reddy,  
Founder Chairperson, AIF

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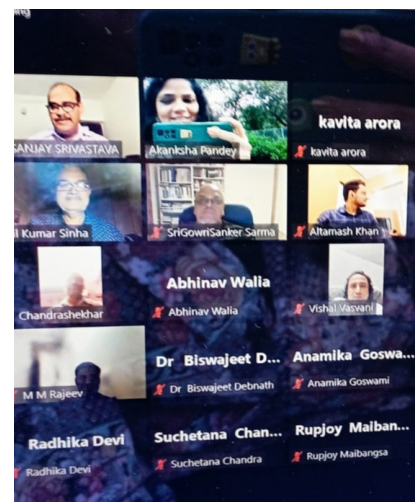
### AIF website:

<https://anthroposindiafoundation.com>

## EVENTS OF THE MONTH

### 1. Launch of *Know Disasters* Magazine

Anthropos India Foundation partnered with Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROPC) to launch a magazine, 'Know Disasters' with a theme of Children and DRR, September issue through a webinar platform. Anil Kumar Sinha, IAS (retd. as Chairman of Bihar Disaster Management Authority), Col. Sanjay Srivastava (Chairman, CROPC), Dr Sunita Reddy, Asso. Prof. JNU and Chairperson AIF, Dr Javaid Rashid, Asst. Prof. Kashmir University, Ms. Gargi Saha and Mr Sarabjit from UNICEF deliberated on the issue. The challenges faced by children during and after disasters are many, as they are one of the vulnerable groups. It is important to understand children in a disaster situation, as they are heterogenous, having intersectionalities of caste, class, gender, and ethnicity and need special planning based on their ecology. Rather seeing children as lacking agency and as 'victims', there is a need to treat them as important stakeholders who can also facilitate recovery. It is also important to see how much resources we spend on children; thus, 'Child budgeting' is also important. The magazine was released by a young student who had also contributed to the magazine.



## 2. Workshop on 'Audio-Visual documentation'

AIF organized a small workshop on 'Audio-Visual documentation' on 18th October 2022 in collaboration with Media Faces. Mr Mushtajab Malik, founder of Media faces and filmmaker introduced the workshop. Dr Sunita Reddy shared the need to upskill the pedagogy, learn audio-visual skills for learning and teaching, and use them for advocacy and policy to bring change. Mr. Rajnesh, director and editor, conducted the workshop. Actor Sandeep and Alizia, a student and budding filmmaker, shared their experiences. Research scholars got the basics and some hands-on skills to do audio-visual documentation. Another workshop will be conducted to learn editing skills in near future.



## 3. Anthropos India Foundation celebrated its 10th Anniversary

On 27th October 2022, AIF celebrated its tenth anniversary with the launch of the 4th issue of 'Childhood Matters' a digital, bilingual, quarterly, participatory magazine. This magazine was started to create awareness about child rights issues and advocate for the safety and security of children. Despite so many stringent laws like POCSO, the crimes against children continue unabated. There is complete apathy towards children, and it is important to create awareness about child rights issues. Dr Sunita Reddy, founder chair, of AIF shared the journey of the foundation. AIF brings out a monthly newsletter, organizes distinguished guest lectures, capacity building, and research training, and also brings out book series 'People, Cultures and Societies – Exploring and Documenting Diversities' with Springer Nature, an international publisher. AIF has been researching on various child rights issues in collaboration with other organisations. The magazine was launched by a gathering of child rights activists, academics, students and professionals. The magazine was released by Shri Amod Kant, Founder of Prayas, and Ex. DGP of Delhi in the presence of Dr. Rajender Dhar, Ex. Additional Labour Commissioner, currently member of consumer court, NCT Delhi, Shri. M.L. Mehta, Retd. Judge from High Court, Dr. Rajeev Seth, Director, BUDS organization, Shri. Heeralal Wangloo from SOS International, Prof. Sanghmitra Acharya, Dr. Nemthinngai Guite, Dr. Garima Dalal from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Christine from Jindal University, and friends and wellwishers of the foundation. The foundation aims to do action, applied and visual research. It also aims to collaborate with other civil society organizations and complement the efforts to bring positive change in society.





**Waste(d) Collectors: Politics of Urban Exclusion in Mumbai**

By: Sneha Sharma

September 2022

ISBN: 9783837658248

248 pages

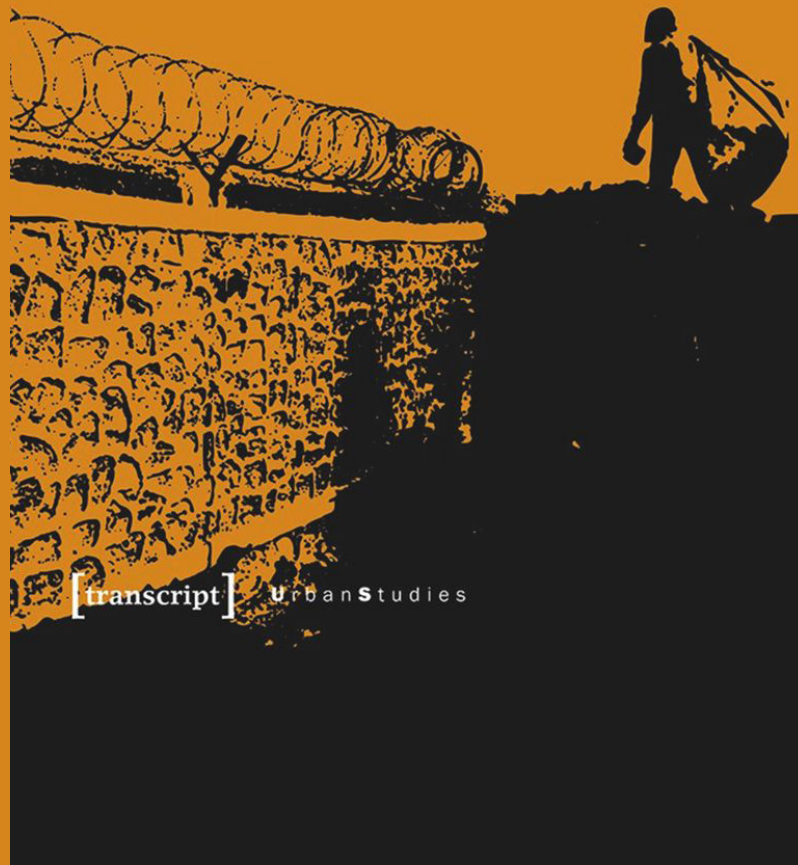
Modern waste disposal systems in mega-cities of the global South are embedded in sociocultural belief systems, colonial histories and neoliberal logics which operate by reproducing existing social hierarchies. Sneha Sharma critically interrogates the politics around urban waste disposal in Mumbai, India, by undertaking an ethnographic journey to the city's most unwanted space, a dumping site. She challenges the dominant techno-managerial paradigm in waste management and reveals how spaces and people are made into waste through exclusionary social practices. Offering new insights on topics of urban marginality, informality, and urban planning, this book will attract scholars from sociology, urban studies, and human geography.

**Sneha Sharma** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Geography, University of Bonn, Germany. She was awarded a DAAD scholarship for undertaking her Ph.D. from the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), University of Bonn. With her keen interest in discard studies, urban practices, and questions of informality and infrastructure, she continues to draw from critical perspectives in urban sociology to shape her current research.

Sneha Sharma

**WASTE(D)  
COLLECTORS**

Politics of Urban Exclusion  
in Mumbai



**Prof L K Mahapatra (29.10.1929 to 01.06.2020)**

**P**rofessor Lakshman Kumar Mahapatra (1929-2020), an eminent anthropologist and educationist from Odisha, was born on 29th October 1929 in the erstwhile princely state of Rajanilgiri, Balasore district of Odisha. He did his matriculation from MKC High School, Baripara and secured the second position in the Orissa state. He completed his intermediate from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and later did his graduation and postgraduation in Anthropology from Calcutta University. He was a Jawaharlal Nehru Scholar (1957-1960) and did his PhD in the field of 'Cultural Anthropology, Sociology and Comparative Education' in 1960. His thesis was on the 'A Hill Bhuiyan Village and its Region: A Socio-Economic Empirical Study'. He held various positions in his career. He was Joint Secretary of, Tribal Research Bureau in 1954 and Lecturer in Anthropology at Lucknow University (1954-55). He was Head of the Department of Sociology, Merrut College in 1955 and later joined as Lecturer in the Community Development Training Centre for Tribal Areas, Ranchi, from 1955-56. He was also Lecturer at Guwahati University (1956-62) and Reader at Karnataka University (1962-64) before finally joining Utkal University as Reader in 1964. He became Head of the Department in 1967 and continued as Professor and Head of the Department until 1989. Under his leadership, the Anthropology Department at Utkal University was accorded the status of Department of Special Assistance (DSA in 1988) by UGC. Prof Mahapatra also served as the Vice Chancellor of Utkal and Sambalpur Universities and, subsequently was Chairman of the NKC Centre for Development Studies. He pioneered the study of Development Anthropology and Population Anthropology in his Department. He also established two multidisciplinary research centres, the Centre for Regional Studies and the Population Research Centre. He encouraged research in diverse areas like temples and monasteries of Bhubaneswar and Puri, potters and brass workers, caste system and mobility, kinship systems, slums and urban neighbourhoods. He is one of the significant scholars in tribal studies in India and was an advocate for tribal issues. He conducted extensive research on castes, and tribes, on tribe/caste transformation

and continuum, folklore, swidden cultivation, tribal development etc. He also studied oral traditions, music, language, myths, social institutions and the cultural heritage of Odisha's tribes. He was a prolific writer and has written and co-



edited 15 books and published about 180 research papers in international and national journals. He was the Founder-Editor, Man in India (Journal of the Department of Anthropology, Utkal University) and Founder and Editor of South East Asian Perspectives (First International Journal in the Social Sciences from Odisha). His famous works include *Development for Whom: Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy in India* (2013) and *Knowledge for Actions: A Treatise in Anthropology* (2016). He received many awards during his distinguished career like the Swami Pranavananda Award (1993), R.P.Chanda Birth Centenary Memorial Medal (1994), R.P.Mahapatra Memorial Award (1996), Certificate of Honour for Outstanding Contribution to North East Indian Studies (1999), Gold Medal for Life-time Achievement in Anthropology (2004), Think Odisha Leadership Award (2011) to name a few. He passed away on 1st June 2020 after long illness at the age of 91.

**References:**

1. Mishra, K.K. 2020. "A personal Homage to an extraordinary teacher: Professor Laxman Kumar Mahapatra, 29.10.1929-1.06.2020". *Journal of the Indian Anthropological Society*, 55: 122-125.
2. <https://www.lkmahapatra.org/>
3. <https://www.anthropologyindiaforum.org/indian-luminaries/professor-l-k-mahapatra>



## Socio-Cultural Meaning Associated with the Khasis Traditional Dress

*Habiba Haroon (AIF Intern)*

**T**he Khasis are one of the oldest indigenous residents of the state of Meghalaya. They are one of the few remaining matrilineal societies in the world. They call themselves Ki Khun U Hynñiewtrep, meaning “Children of the Seven Huts.”

Textiles are the source of hope for survival and offer a variety of stories concealed in the colours and patterns of textiles, stories about human creation, magical deities, and allied forest spirits. These patterns offer tangible evidence of legends passed orally in each tribe over centuries through fabrics. There is simplicity in the Khasis people's dressing style, which brings out the beauty of the place even more. The rituals, identity and traditions of any community are well represented by the dresses worn by the people living there. The Khasi traditional male dress is usually a sleeveless coat called ‘Ka Jymphong’ over the upper torso and a dhoti-like lower garment, usually of maroon colour called jainboh. Apart from this there is a waist belt knotted on the side (jainteh syngkai). Elderly men wore a turban known as ‘Jainspong’ of white colour. Moreover, the size of the turban varies with a person's age. They also wear a shawl known as ‘Ryndia Tlem’. The Khasi traditional female dress is extremely elaborate with several pieces of cloth, giving the body a cylindrical shape.

Women belonging to the tribe of Khasi wear a Jainsen along with a blouse. This Jainsen covers their body right from the waist down to the ankles. On top of these dresses, ka tap-moh khlieh, a cotton shawl, is worn, representing an apron. Jain kyrshah is the traditional yet informal attire for Khasi women of Meghalaya. It has a checked pattern and is worn by women as a top layer over their clothes. The local Khasi women use Jain kyrshah as an apron, the difference being it is worn throughout the day. It is considered conservative and respectable attire, and sometimes wear it on occasion. Wearing Jain





kyrshah is an ancient practice followed by the women of Meghalaya as a symbol of modesty and respect for society. Even at home, women use it to cover themselves from the cooking stains. The Khasi women wear the cloak, especially senior women, in such a way to hide the graceful contours of the figure and also to keep them warm.

The Bhois (a subgroup of the Khasi tribe) have myths around evolution of cotton and how the loom was created from the body of a monster. They have a deep connection with nature, and they believe that all forms of nature have their character, so using them without proper care will have a negative effect on the person wearing them. The origins of design lay in the folk songs about the growing of flowers.

The religion and the culture of Khasis are very strongly bound together with nature i.e., the worship of mountains, especially tree and river spirits, divination, glorification of ancestors, and other allied elements. A design symbol represents a certain identification of the group, especially when it comes to tribal society. The designs, patterns, and symbols can express and give meaning to selected objects, identity, nationality, dominance, or allegiance.

So, the clothes of Khasis have motifs, designs, and patterns of flora, fauna and other nature-related things and show their bond with nature. Like their clothes have only natural colours (red and yellow) and natural dyes are used as they don't harm the environment.

Their clothes have designs that tell the stories of their cultures like Siar Rynkoh, meaning cock, their religious symbol, which is sometimes used as an element in their clothes. Many folktales about their culture are incorporated in their dresses, e.g., tiger, elephant's motifs. These tribes have a Siar Rynkoh meaning Cock, as their religious symbol, which we see used on a flag of the Seng Khasi, painted with white on a red dyed cloth. The cock is a sacred symbol and has a special place as a sacrificial offering. According to a tradition, once the world was plunged into darkness, when the Sun refused to come out from her hiding place from a Cave. A cock was used as a messenger to persuade the Sun to come out. With the cock's crowing, the

Sun repaired, and there was light again.

For this reason, the cock has a special place and is considered a mediator between God and man. Signs are read out from the entrails of the cock when they are sacrificed. The Cock is also seen as a design embroidery on the Jymphong, the jacket worn by the male. There are many patterns containing geometrical elements and can be reduced to mathematical formulae that correspond to the patterns that occur in the natural and scientific.

The format of repetitive designing is seen in the Khor silk cloth used for the turban. Khla, meaning tiger is also used as one of the motifs in the costumes Dhara especially worn by the female of the Royal family members and turbans by Khasi men during the dance festival. Thus, tiger has an important place in the folk stories of the Khasi, where one clan is called Nong-Kla, meaning tiger people. These tribes believed in living in harmony with nature, so they never hunted a tiger. Using the tiger motif is to show strength and power, the characteristic of the animal, so it is restricted to royal attire. But during the research, it's known that the silk cloth bearing the tiger and peacock motif took too much time to be woven and was very expensive for a Layman to afford. Few weavers in Assam weave the traditional costumes.

It is seen that the daily worn costumes have no motifs, symbols or design but only a geometrical pattern of simple checks and strips. Since the colours used were natural colours, therefore the combinations were limited. In some communities, designs are also markers of age and marital status. However, the colour of the dresses of men and women also varies. The traditional dress of Khasis is also gender specific. The men, on occasion, usually male dancers, wear a turban with bird's feathers attached to it and female members wear a crown of gold or silver. However, the gold crown is worn by royal members and the silver crown by dancers. The turban is also age-specific, usually red and white with golden designs. Young men put on Sala or cotton pagri. Ruling officials like the dalois, myntris, basan use silk design pagris coined Khor, usually of white colour. Only the way of draping it on their head was unique. They believed that while the

person was alive, the pagri should be wrapped clockwise, and when the person dies, it should be wrapped anticlockwise during his funeral. The pagris have different styles in which they are wrapped depending on the region and the age of the person wearing them. The factor that remains common amongst them is the interlocking of the cloth in such a manner that the pagri takes the shape of a cap and does not open up when removed from the head and hence can be re-worn many times, although it is not stitched.

Silk dhotis were worn by the ruling officials and were similar to the Dhara or Nara worn by the women. The motifs and design patterns are also similar i.e., floral, geometrical and animal motifs.

The traditional attire worn by the Khasi women is a costly silk material woven out of mulberry silk yarn. This traditional Khasi dhara is simple but elegant in design and comes in various colours and simple border patterns. It is also made of finely woven silk decorated with intricate designs and because of these imprints, they are relatively heavier and louder in design. This contrasts with the simpler traditional dhara that is hand-woven and plainer with patterns based at the border. Therefore, each pattern is a little capsule of information—containing tales of ancestors, social values, clan practices, and more. When women from the household would work at the loom, their designs would emerge from their worldview understanding of oral traditions and folktales.



## 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](http://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 in 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 repositories. Hope you will share your publications with us. 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 bring awareness and create a safe environment for the wellbeing and overall development of children. Its a participatory magazine, any one of you can write an article and send it to [aif.digitalmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:aif.digitalmagazine@gmail.com) The editorial team will have the final say in selection of the articles. You can access the previous issues with the following link.

<https://www.anthroposindiafoundation.com/publications/digital-magazines.html>

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Anthropos India Foundation

## 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 google form. The life members will be receiving our Newsletter, quarterly digital magazine, “Childhood Matters”, research study summaries conducted by AIF, alerts for Upcoming Courses, Workshops & seminars and job alerts. You can access our newly created E-resource Center, a one-stop destination where you can find research articles by eminent anthropologists in one place

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