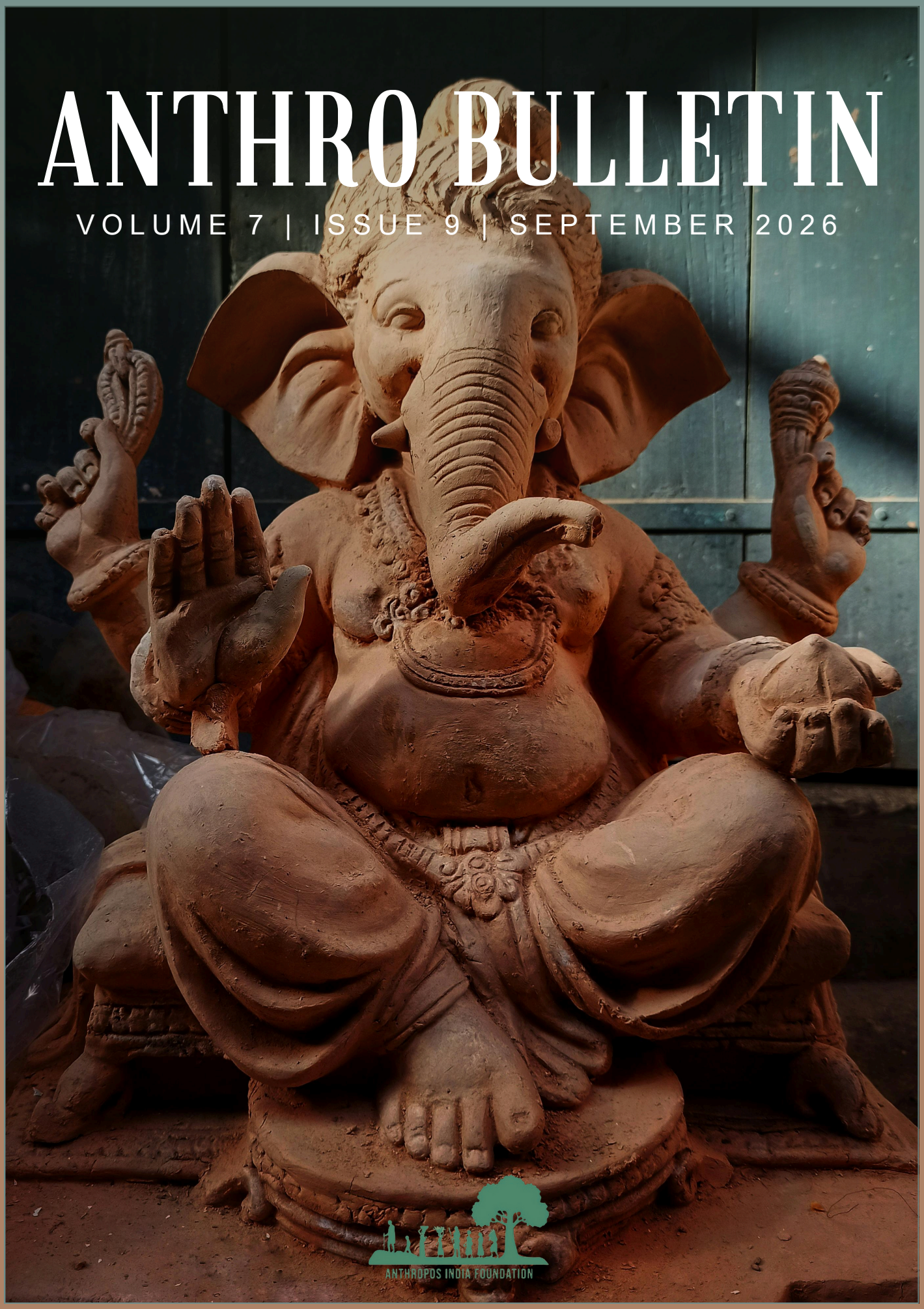
ANTHRO BULLETIN

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ANTHROPOS INDIA FOUNDATION

ANTHROPOS BOOKS

A digital magazine that celebrates cultural diversities of India.

ABOUT ANTHROPOS INDIA FOUNDATION

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 that is unique to their cultures and 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 conducts workshops, trainings and advocacy on various issues, especially on children. AIF promotes Visual Anthropology through vibrant, authentic, meaningful ethnographic films and photo documentation.

ABOUT *ANTHRO BULLETIN*

Starting from January 2025, AIF's monthly Newsletter has been upgraded into a monthly digital magazine, ***Anthro Bulletin,*** with a renewed focus and energy. As anthropologists, we have always been keen on covering the diversity of our country from various perspectives. Over time, we have explored a wide range of topics, and seeing the richness of the emerging content, we have transformed the Newsletter into something more appropriate and culturally stimulating. From now on, our monthly ***Anthro Bulletin*** will feature articles on themes related to Indian art, crafts, culture, and festivals from a unique, anthropological perspective, highlighting the country's rich diversity and traditions besides sharing the regular news updates. We have the '*Young Scholars - Notes from the Field*' column featuring fieldwork, travelogues, or PhD-related work of young and bright scholars, providing them a platform to share their valuable insights and experiences here as well. We are also excited to introduce a new column, '*Through the Lens*', featuring photo essays on human experiences. **Please write to us if you want to submit your article!**

We also welcome you to share high-resolution, portrait-size, self-clicked pictures of cultural events, traditions, and festivals to be featured on our magazine's cover page every month. Please note that the selection of articles and pictures is at the discretion of our editorial team and is based on several factors, including how well the submissions align with our objectives.

All submissions can be emailed to **aif.newsletter2025@gmail.com.**
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Understanding Our Changing World Through Anthropology

Dr. Sunita Reddy, Founder-Chair, Anthropos India Foundation

Culture is not a relic of the past; it is a living expression of how people understand their world, negotiate change, and create meaning in their everyday lives. The September 2026 issue of Anthro Bulletin invites us to explore this dynamic relationship between people, culture, history, health, and the environment through the distinctive lens of anthropology. The articles in this issue remind us that understanding human societies requires us to look beyond the obvious, listen to diverse voices, and recognise the complex relationships that connect individuals and communities with their larger social worlds.

In an increasingly interconnected world, globalization has transformed how people live, work, communicate, and imagine their futures. Yet, as Prof. Kamal K. Misra explains in his insightful article on anthropology and globalization, these transformations are neither uniform nor equally experienced. While global connections create new opportunities, they can also deepen inequalities, disrupt livelihoods, and marginalise communities whose histories and knowledge systems remain inadequately recognised. Anthropology enables us to understand these changes through people's lived experiences, drawing attention to the unequal distribution of power, resources, and opportunities. It reminds us that development and progress must be evaluated not merely through economic indicators but also through their social, cultural, and human consequences.

The importance of understanding the past is equally evident in the exploration of Chandraketugarh and Khana Mihirer Dhibi in ancient Bengal. The archaeological remains, temple structures, and material artefacts discussed by Debjyoti Das and Dr. Subhrajyoti Das offer glimpses into the region's historical settlements, religious traditions, artistic achievements, and networks of exchange. Such sites are not merely remnants of an earlier age. They are material records of human creativity, adaptation, and interaction with the environment. Preserving and interpreting this heritage helps us understand the historical foundations of contemporary cultural landscapes and the diverse influences that have shaped them. The article on Nawakhani, by Aneesh Pandey, brings us closer to the intimate relationship between land, food, family, and the sacred among the Gond community of Chhattisgarh. The ritual offering of the first harvest before its consumption expresses gratitude for the land and the agricultural cycle while reinforcing family bonds and community belonging. At a time when food is increasingly understood through markets, consumption, and commercial value, this account reminds us that food also carries cultural meanings, collective memories, and spiritual significance. It further illustrates how traditions can adapt to changing circumstances while retaining the values that make them meaningful to communities.



emories, and spiritual significance. It further illustrates how traditions can adapt to changing circumstances while retaining the values that make them meaningful to communities. The article on triglycerides and metabolic syndrome highlights the growing importance of metabolic health in India and draws attention to changing dietary patterns, physical activity, urbanisation, and socioeconomic conditions. From an anthropological perspective, health risks are not simply individual or biological phenomena; they are also shaped by the environments in which people live, work, eat, and interact. Integrating biological insights with an understanding of social practices and structural inequalities can strengthen public health approaches and make preventive interventions more responsive to people's everyday realities.

An especially valuable contribution to this issue comes from Dr. Rishma Basumatary's reflections on fieldwork among Bodo weavers in Sundrijhora, Assam. Her account demonstrates that cultural familiarity does not automatically translate into complete understanding. Returning to a familiar community as a researcher requires one to reconsider memories, assumptions, social positions, and relationships. Her reflections on handloom weaving reveal that a craft is much more than a product or an inherited tradition. It embodies technical knowledge, gendered labour, intergenerational learning, cooperation, and social relationships. The practice of reciprocal labour associated with weaving illustrates how everyday activities sustain social solidarity and transmit knowledge across generations. Such reflexivity is central to ethical and meaningful anthropological research.

These contributions collectively reinforce the continuing relevance of anthropology in contemporary India. Whether we examine ancient settlements, agricultural rituals, traditional crafts, changing health patterns, or global transformations, anthropology encourages us to connect broader structural processes with the everyday experiences of people. It challenges us to question simplistic distinctions between tradition and modernity, the local and the global, and the biological and the social.

As we continue to build Anthro Bulletin as a platform for diverse anthropological perspectives, we remain committed to bringing together established scholars and emerging researchers, academic analysis and field-based reflections, and written scholarship and visual narratives. We believe that young scholars, in particular, must have opportunities to share their field experiences, develop their analytical voices, and engage in constructive intellectual dialogue. Equally, research and publication must be guided by intellectual curiosity, methodological rigour, ethical responsibility, and respect for the communities whose lives and knowledge inform our work.

Ultimately, anthropology asks us to approach human diversity not as something to be merely catalogued or celebrated, but as something to be understood in its historical, political, ecological, and lived contexts. In doing so, it helps us recognise both the differences that enrich human societies and the shared concerns that connect us.

I invite our readers to engage with the articles in this issue with curiosity and a willingness to look beyond familiar assumptions, also contribute to the coming issues. May Anthro Bulletin continue to nurture critical thinking, encourage meaningful scholarship, and create space for conversations that deepen our understanding of India's diverse communities and our changing world.

Happy reading!



Anthropology and Globalization: Understanding Human Lives in an Interconnected World

Prof. Kamal K. Misra, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, KISS-DU, Bhubaneswar

The twenty-first century is widely characterized by intensified globalization, marked by unprecedented levels of connectivity, mobility, and interdependence across geographical and cultural boundaries. Rapid advances in digital technology, enormous expansion of transnational flows of capital and commodities, increased human mobility, and the growing interdependence of markets have significantly reshaped the economic, social, political, and cultural landscapes of contemporary societies. Yet globalization is neither a uniform nor an unilinear process. Its consequences are unevenly distributed and experienced, producing new forms of opportunity alongside widening inequalities, social dislocation, cultural contestation, and new configurations of exclusion. As Eriksen (2014) observes, globalization operates simultaneously through processes occurring "from above" and "from below," thereby connecting large-scale structural transformations with the everyday experiences of individuals and communities.

For anthropology, globalization is therefore not merely a macroeconomic or geopolitical phenomenon; it is more of a lived social and cultural condition. Anthropologists have drawn attention to the multiple and often contradictory flows through which people, ideas, images, commodities, technologies, and identities circulate across borders. Appadurai (1996), for instance, conceptualized the contemporary global cultural economy through interconnected but disjunctive "scapes" of people, technology, finance, media, and ideology, emphasizing that globalization transforms not only material conditions but also the ways in which people imagine themselves, their communities, and their possible futures. Such processes have increasingly questioned conventional distinctions between the local and the global, the traditional and the modern, and the territorial and the transnational.

At the same time, anthropology cautions us against viewing globalization as a dumb and uniform process of homogenization. Global connections are constituted through encounters involving unequal histories, competing interests, institutional asymmetries, and culturally situated forms of agency. Tsing's (2005) ethnography, for example, demonstrates how what appears as a large-scale global process is produced through contingent encounters and "frictions" among actors occupying very different social, economic, and political positions. Globalization, from this perspective, does not simply erase cultural difference; rather, it may generate new forms of cultural negotiation, hybridization, resistance, appropriation, and identity formation. The experiences of indigenous peoples provide a compelling example. Across the world, indigenous communities often find themselves at the centre of resource extraction projects involving mining, hydroelectric dams, industrial agriculture, and infrastructure development.



However, anthropological studies reveal that these initiatives may lead to displacement, environmental degradation, cultural disruption, and the erosion of traditional livelihoods. By documenting local perspectives, anthropology challenges development narratives that prioritize economic indicators while overlooking social and cultural costs.

Anthropology contributes by bringing the forces shaping society at the macro level into conversation with the lived experiences and everyday realities through which they are encountered. Ethnography enables us to examine how global transformations are interpreted, accommodated, contested, and sometimes resisted in particular social and cultural contexts. Migration may create transnational families and diasporic identities; digital technologies may simultaneously connect dispersed communities and digital divide in remote regions; global markets may transform local livelihoods while also generating new aspirations and cultural practices. The "global" thus acquires meaning only through its articulation with particular histories, places, institutions, and life worlds (Eriksen, 2015).

This perspective also requires anthropology to interrogate the unequal distribution of the benefits and burdens of globalization. Questions of class, caste, gender, ethnicity, indigeneity, citizenship, and access to resources remain central to understanding who participates in global networks and on what terms. Globalization may expand horizons of mobility and opportunity for some while intensifying precarity and marginalization for others. Consequently, an anthropology of globalization must move beyond the celebration of connectivity to examine the structures of power that determine the terms of that connectivity. The contemporary anthropological task, therefore, is not simply to study how the world has become easily interconnected, but to ask how global interconnections are produced, by whom, under



what conditions, and with what consequences for different communities. It calls for an anthropology capable of moving analytically back and forth between the global and the local, between political economy and everyday experience, and between structural transformation and human agency. In a world marked simultaneously by intensifying interconnectedness and persistent inequalities, anthropology remains vital for revealing the meanings, cultural negotiations, and lived realities through which globalization is experienced, negotiated, and contested beyond its abstract formulations.

Chandraketugarh and Khana Mihirer Dhibi: A Journey into Ancient Bengal



By Debjyoti Das & Dr. Subhrajyoti Das

Imagine travelling back hundreds or even thousands of years to a time when modern Kolkata did not exist, and rivers were the main roads of Bengal. In this ancient landscape, there was a busy city called Chandraketugarh. Chandraketugarh is located in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. It is situated near the Bidyadhari River, about 35 km northeast of Kolkata. Long ago, the landscape of this region was very different from what we see today. The Bidyadhari River was connected with the Adi Ganga, and several river channels provided an easy route towards the sea. Because of these waterways, Chandraketugarh gradually developed into an important settlement and port city. The rivers were like natural highways. They allowed people, goods, and ideas to move from one place to another. Chandraketugarh was connected with the Bay of Bengal mainly through the Bidyadhari and Padma rivers. Through these waterways, the people of the city are believed to have maintained trade connections with distant regions, including Southeast Asia and the Mediterranean world, with possible indirect links to the wider Greco-Roman world.

The Land Beneath the City

The story of Chandraketugarh is also closely connected with the geography of Bengal.The site lies within the Bengal Basin, the largest deltaic sedimentary system in the world. This huge basin has been formed mainly by sediments carried by the Ganga, Brahmaputra and Meghna river systems. These rivers carry enormous amounts of soil and sand towards the Bay of Bengal, where the sediments gradually accumulate. Today, the landscape around Chandraketugarh is mainly made up of the Holocene floodplains and delta of the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna system. Even the soil tells us something about the history of this region. The sediments mainly contain quartz and some feldspar, along with minerals such as carbonates, illite and kaolinite. Heavy minerals such as amphibole, pyrope and epidote are also found. Differences in these minerals help researchers understand where the sediments came from and how the landscape developed over time.

Khana Mihirer Dhibi: A Mysterious Mound

Not far from Berachampa lies another fascinating part of this ancient story—Khana Mihirer Dhibi, also known as Barahamihirer Dhibi. The name itself is connected with the legendary mathematicians Khāna and Mihir.

The site is actually a large structural mound and is considered part of the huge fortified township of Chandraketugarh. Today, it may look like an ordinary old mound, but beneath the soil lies evidence of a settlement that existed for many centuries.



The Beginning of Excavation

The story of archaeological exploration in this region began in the early twentieth century.In 1907, a young Bengali archaeologist named Rakhal Das Bandyopadhyay carried out an extensive survey of the Berachampa region near Barasat. During his work, he noticed the importance of the archaeological remains and suggested that the area needed further excavation. His work in Bengal was only the beginning of a remarkable archaeological career. About a decade and a half later, he would make history by excavating the ruins of Mohenjo-daro. Khana Mihirer Dhibi was later excavated by the University of Calcutta's Ashutosh Museum in 1956–57. The excavation was extremely important because it revealed a long sequence of cultural remains. The archaeological evidence suggested that the site had been occupied over a very long period, from the pre-Mauryan period to the Pala period, covering many centuries.





The Temple Beneath the Mound

One of the most exciting discoveries at Khana Mihirer Dhibi was the remains of an ancient brick temple.

At first, archaeologists thought that the temple belonged to the Gupta period. However, after studying its architectural plan and decorative features more carefully, it was suggested that the temple actually belonged to the Pala period. The temple was unusual because of its polygonal shape. It was built with massive bricks and had projections on three sides. It was also connected to a square vestibule. The structure was probably once much more impressive than what we see today. The temple's roof has completely collapsed, and only parts of the thick walls, a flight of stairs and a few scattered structural remains survive. Some sections of the walls are more than four feet thick. Even these broken walls give us an idea of how large and impressive the temple must have been when it was standing.

Treasures Found from the Excavation

The excavation did not only reveal the temple. Archaeologists also discovered several objects that provide clues about the people who lived here. Among the important discoveries was a stone plaque depicting Vishnu, found in the ambulatory passage of the main temple. Another interesting discovery was a lotus medallion made of curved brick. At its centre was a small semi-precious stone bead. It was found at the bottom of a square kunda located in the centre of a miniature shrine near the northeastern corner of the main temple.

Chandraketugarh Today

Today, the ancient remains of Khana Mihirer Dhibi are very different from the magnificent settlement that once existed here. The site is now a protected archaeological monument under the Archaeological Survey of India. It is surrounded by fencing, and boards at the entrance provide information about its history in English and Bengali.



Standing there today, one can see only the remains of the ancient temple—broken walls, stairs and scattered structural fragments. But these ruins tell a much bigger story. They remind us that the area around present-day North 24 Parganas was once part of a thriving ancient landscape. Rivers connected the settlement with the sea, traders travelled through waterways, craftsmen produced pottery and terracotta objects, people practised their religious traditions, and large brick structures were built.

The broken walls of Khana Mihirer Dhibi may appear silent today, but beneath them lies the story of ancient Bengal's people, rivers, trade, religion, art and changing landscape. In this way, Chandraketugarh is not simply an archaeological site. It is a window into Bengal's long and changing history.



Triglycerides: An Important Indicator of Metabolic Syndrome



By Dr. Subhrajyoti Das &

By Debjyoti Das,

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, metabolic syndrome (MetS) has emerged as a major public health concern worldwide. Characterized by a cluster of interrelated metabolic abnormalities, including central obesity, hypertension, elevated blood glucose, low high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL-C), and elevated triglycerides (TG), metabolic syndrome significantly increases the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) and type 2 diabetes mellitus. Among these components, triglycerides have gained considerable attention as an important biomarker of metabolic health.

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in the blood and serve as a major source of energy for the body. However, persistently elevated triglyceride levels can indicate disturbances in lipid metabolism and are often associated with obesity, insulin resistance, and other metabolic abnormalities. As lifestyles and dietary patterns continue to change globally, elevated triglyceride levels have become increasingly common across populations.

What Are Triglycerides?

Triglycerides are lipids composed of glycerol and three fatty acids. After a meal, excess calories that are not immediately used for energy are converted into triglycerides and stored in adipose tissue. Between meals, these stored triglycerides are released to meet the body's energy requirements.

While triglycerides are essential for normal physiological functioning, excessive levels can contribute to adverse health outcomes. High triglyceride concentrations are frequently linked with obesity, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, excessive alcohol consumption, and genetic predisposition.

Triglycerides and MetS

Metabolic syndrome represents a combination of risk factors that collectively increase the likelihood of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Elevated triglycerides constitute one of the key diagnostic criteria for metabolic syndrome. High triglyceride levels often coexist with abdominal obesity, insulin resistance, elevated blood pressure, and reduced HDL cholesterol. This clustering of risk factors reflects underlying metabolic dysfunction and indicates an increased risk of future chronic disease.

Research has demonstrated that elevated triglycerides are strongly associated with insulin resistance, a condition in which the body's cells become less responsive to insulin. As insulin resistance worsens, triglyceride concentrations tend to rise, further contributing to metabolic imbalance.

The Global and Indian Scenario

The prevalence of metabolic syndrome has increased substantially worldwide due to urbanization, changing dietary habits, reduced physical activity, and population ageing. Elevated triglyceride levels are becoming increasingly common among both developed and developing populations.

India is currently experiencing a rapid epidemiological transition characterized by a growing burden of non-communicable diseases. Increased consumption of energy-dense foods, sedentary occupations, and reduced physical activity have contributed to rising rates of obesity, diabetes, and metabolic syndrome. Studies conducted across diverse Indian populations have reported a high prevalence of elevated triglycerides, making TG an important marker for identifying individuals at risk of metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease.

An Anthropological Perspective

From an anthropological perspective, triglyceride levels are not merely biological measurements but are influenced by cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors. Food habits, dietary preferences, occupational activities, and patterns of physical activity are deeply embedded within social and cultural contexts. Rapid lifestyle transitions associated with urbanization have altered traditional diets and activity patterns. Increased consumption of processed foods, sugary beverages, and high-fat diets, combined with sedentary lifestyles, has contributed to the growing burden of metabolic syndrome.

Anthropological studies among indigenous and tribal populations have also highlighted how socioeconomic changes and market integration can influence nutritional practices and metabolic health. As communities move away from traditional subsistence lifestyles, the prevalence of elevated triglycerides and other metabolic risk factors may increase.

Prevention and Control

Maintaining healthy triglyceride levels requires a combination of lifestyle modifications and regular health monitoring. Important preventive measures include:

- Regular physical activity.
- Consumption of a balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Limiting intake of refined carbohydrates, sugars, and saturated fats.
- Maintaining a healthy body weight.
- Avoiding tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Periodic screening of blood lipid levels.
- Early identification of elevated triglycerides can facilitate timely interventions and reduce the risk of metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease.

CONCLUSION

Triglycerides are more than a simple laboratory measurement; they serve as an important indicator of metabolic health and a key component of metabolic syndrome. Elevated triglyceride levels often reflect broader lifestyle and nutritional transitions occurring within societies. Understanding the biological, social, and cultural dimensions of triglycerides can help inform effective prevention strategies and contribute to improved public health outcomes. As the burden of metabolic syndrome continues to rise globally and in India, monitoring triglyceride levels remains an essential step toward early detection and disease prevention.

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Nawakhani: When the New Harvest Becomes Sacred: Land, Food and the Gond Relationship with the Sacred



By Aneesh Pandey

For an agricultural community, the harvest is not just the end of months of toil but the beginning, the point of celebration and gratitude. For the Gond community of Nougai village in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, this relation to agriculture is manifested in the Nawakhani (also called Nawapani), the festival associated with the September-October period, after the new paddy harvest. During my fieldwork in Nougai, Nawakhani was a practice in which agriculture and food, family and the sacred, come together: new grain is not simply brought home and eaten, but is part of a ritual act of offering.

Agriculture plays an important role in the social and economic life of the Gond families living in Nougai, and the cultivation of paddy is closely related to the seasonal cycle of a rural life. When the new crop is harvested, the first food made from it is offered to Budha Dev, an important deity of worship for the family. The first food is offered before the family eats the new grain: the harvest thus follows a specific sequence, from the field, through the household into the kitchen, in which it is made into food, offered to the deity and shared among family members. The first grain represents both agricultural production, the work of cultivation, and the importance of the land, and the new cycle of agricultural life.

Budha Dev's sacred presence also has a place in the household surroundings. In one of the Gond households I had visited during my fieldwork, the shrine was a small white building behind the tree in the backyard. An elderly member of the family explained me the practice and the importance of offering the first food to Budha Dev, before the family would consume the new harvest. The shrine was not separated from the family's daily domestic life, but was within the space of the home and its surroundings. This makes the sacred part of daily household life rather than being something located in a specific religious space. During Nawakhani, the newly harvested rice becomes the centre of celebration: the family prepares foods like kheer, chausela, chilla and other preparations of rice, and a portion of the first preparation is offered before eating.

The timing of Nawakhani is also closely related to the agricultural cycle. September and October, following the paddy harvest, is the period when the new grain



moves from the field into the household. The agricultural calendar of Chhattisgarh records this new-crop celebration in this period as well, where the new grain is worshipped and only afterwards eaten. For the Gond families, the ritual also represents an understanding that the life cycle of agriculture depends not only on human intervention. Rain, soil, seasons, the conditions surrounding cultivation, and other factors influence the harvest. The offering to Budha Dev is thus a way of acknowledging the sacred in this agricultural cycle.





The importance of Nawakhani is equally reflected in the meal that follows from the offering. Family members get together and eat the newly harvested food: while agriculture may involve different members of a household in different stages of cultivation, the harvest becomes a shared experience. Food, as part of Nawakhani, is thus both a means of expressing gratitude and a sense of belonging and family togetherness. The first harvest is related to the well-being of the household as a whole: what begins as agricultural labour ends as a shared meal, bringing the family together around the food they themselves have harvested.

But Nawakhani is also part of a changing social environment. During my conversations with members of the community, the older generations spoke about a growing difference in the way certain traditional customs are engaged with by the younger generations. Education, changing lifestyles, and greater interaction with the wider society have influenced the way some practices are understood and performed: while this may imply the loss of a tradition, cultural practices may evolve in their form while maintaining the meaning that makes them important. Nawakhani continues to be a practice in which the new harvest is related to the household, the sacred and the family, even as the circumstances of community life change.

Nawakhani thus becomes a moment in which people, land, food and the sacred come together: the new grain holds the memory of cultivation and the importance of the land, but is part of a shared family experience through ritual and food. The first harvest is not simply eaten, but is acknowledged first: and in this simple act, a crop becomes food, food becomes a shared memory, and the relationship between people, land and the sacred becomes part of everyday life.



Beyond Nutrients: Understanding Food, Culture and the Social Determinants of Nutrition



By Ahsanat Ariba

Food is among the most ordinary experiences of human life, yet few things reveal as much about society as what people eat. Every meal is more than a combination of nutrients: it reflects cultural tradition, economic circumstance, social relationships and environment. Nutrition science explains how food sustains the body; anthropology shows how it carries meaning, identity and memory. Understanding nutrition therefore requires us to look beyond the plate.

This relationship became real to me as a postgraduate student of Food Science and Nutrition while helping organise "Poshan Se Samriddhi: Nourishing Minds and Building Nations," a state-level seminar at St. Xavier's College (Autonomous), Kolkata, on 1 October 2026. It prompted a question: if nutrition science is so advanced, why does nutritional well-being remain such a complex social challenge?

Food as a Cultural and Social Experience

Dietary choices are rarely made in isolation. Family traditions, religious practices, regional cuisines, social expectations and the availability of ingredients, all shape what reaches the plate.

Anthropologists have long studied these influences. Mary Douglas, in Purity and Danger (1966) and her essay "Deciphering a Meal" (1972), examined how food classifications and meal structures express cultural boundaries and social relationships. The structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, in The Raw and the Cooked (1964), explored how cooking expresses the opposition between nature and culture. Sidney Mintz, in Sweetness and Power (1985), traced how sugar moved from luxury to everyday staple through colonial plantation economies, linking a single ingredient to global systems of power. Though their methods differ, these perspectives remind us that food is not simply consumed; it is culturally organised and socially interpreted.

These meanings have practical consequences. Fasting, food taboos, beliefs about foods suitable in pregnancy or illness, and the order in which household members eat all shape intake; where women eat last, their heightened needs during pregnancy and lactation may go unmet. Good dietary guidance engages critically with such practices, respecting local knowledge while remaining evidence-based.

The Social Determinants of Nutrition

Knowing what a balanced diet looks like does not guarantee access to one. The social determinants of health, the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age, shape nutrition through income, education, gender relations, food systems and public policy. Amartya Sen's work "Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation" (1981), made a related point: hunger often arises not from an absolute shortage of food but from people's lack of entitlement, or means, to obtain it.

Food security therefore involves more than the presence of food; it means reliable access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food. A household may have enough calories to avoid hunger yet still experience "hidden hunger", deficiencies of micronutrients such as iron, vitamin A or iodine. India's National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) shows the scale: about 35.5% of children under five were stunted, while roughly 57% of women aged 15–49 and 67% of children aged 6–59 months were anaemic. Meanwhile, inexpensive, energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods are increasingly available, so undernutrition and overweight can coexist, sometimes within one household, a pattern known as the double burden of malnutrition.

These realities challenge the assumption that awareness alone can solve malnutrition. Sustainable improvement requires both informed choices and the conditions that make them possible.

Traditional Knowledge, Biodiversity and Modern Nutrition

India's food traditions hold valuable insights into nutrition and ecology. Millets, pulses, seasonal vegetables, fermented foods and wild edible plants reflect generations of knowledge about cultivation, preservation and preparation, and many of these practices have a nutritional logic. Ragi (finger millet) is notably rich in calcium and fibre. Combining cereals with pulses, as in dal-rice or khichdi, improves protein quality because the amino acids each lacks are supplied by the other. Fermenting batters for idli and dosa can reduce anti-nutrients such as phytates, improving mineral availability. The United Nations' International Year of Millets in 2023, proposed by India, renewed attention to these crops.

Traditional diets should not, however, be assumed complete; their adequacy depends on variety, preparation, availability and individual requirements. The challenge is a genuine dialogue: nutrition research can analyse the composition of local foods, while anthropology explains how they are produced, valued and eaten. As environmental change and shifting preferences reshape local food systems, protecting food biodiversity supports livelihoods, cultural continuity and dietary diversity alike.

Nutrition Across the Life Course

Pregnancy, infancy, early childhood and adolescence are critical periods. The first 1,000 days, from conception to a child's second birthday, are a window in which adequate maternal nutrition and appropriate infant feeding, including exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, have lasting effects on growth, immunity and cognitive development. Adolescent girls also deserve attention, since anaemia and undernutrition before pregnancy affect both their health and their children's.

In India, POSHAN Abhiyaan and the Anganwadi network connect nutrition with maternal care, child development and community participation. Rashtriya Poshan Maah, observed from 9 September to 8 October in 2026, highlighted these concerns under the theme *"Hamari Anganwadi, Hamari Jimmedari"* (Our Anganwadi, Our Responsibility), emphasising dietary diversity, adequate protein, fresh cooked meals and collective responsibility. A life-course approach recognises that outcomes at one stage influence well-being at later ones, including for older adults and economically marginalised groups.

From Individual Responsibility to Collective Well-being

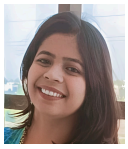
As a future nutrition professional, I increasingly see nutrition as both a biological science and a social responsibility. Scientific knowledge lets us assess needs and design interventions; social understanding explains why those interventions succeed in some contexts and struggle in others. Poshan Se Samriddhi brought these concerns into academic discussion and reinforced the value of collaboration among nutritionists, anthropologists, healthcare professionals, educators and policymakers.

Nutrition cannot be understood through nutrients alone. It must be examined through the relationships between bodies, cultures, economies and environments. Building a nourished society requires equitable access to nutritious food, culturally responsive public health programmes and sustainable food systems.

The path to nutritional well-being begins with understanding what people eat, but it becomes meaningful when we also understand why they eat it, what shapes their choices and what society can do to make nourishment accessible to all.



Dr. P. Anuradha



Interview by Saba Farhin

Dr. P. Anuradha is an anthropologist and museologist currently working at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) - the National Museum of Mankind; Bhopal. She has contributed numerous research papers to various academic journals and edited books. She actively participates in both national and international conferences, sharing her insights and research findings with a wider audience. With fourteen years of curatorial experience, Dr. Anuradha has played a key role in organizing numerous national and international exhibitions. Her work at the IGRMS involves not only curating exhibitions in Bhopal but also collaborating on projects across various parts of India, showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage. She did fieldwork among the Gujjar and Bakarwal in the Pir Pinjal range of Rajouri and Poonch area and among the PVTGS of Odisha specifically Dongria Kondhs, Lanjia Saora and Bonda. Dr. Anuradha has recently co-ordinated and curated an exhibition at Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Center for At Home function on the occasion of 80th Independence Day celebration on 15th of August 2026.

What first drew you to anthropology and how has your journey unfolded since then?

That is a very interesting question. I first came to know about anthropology while I was studying in +2 at BJB College. I learned that there was a subject that offered a holistic study of humankind, and I found that idea fascinating. I was also told that it was a subject in which one could perform well academically. Although anthropology was not one of my subjects at the time, I was so curious about it that I would borrow my friends' books and read them on my own.

When I entered graduation, however, my immediate focus was to become independent and find a job. So, I chose Economics as my Honours subject. But anthropology had already found a little corner in my heart, and I simply could not let it go. I therefore decided to take anthropology as a pass subject. While studying at Kamala Nehru Women's College, I came in contact with one of my teachers, Dr. Jyosthna Mohanty. She had a wonderful way of explaining anthropology and made the subject so accessible and interesting for me. My curiosity and interest in anthropology grew considerably under her guidance.

A major turning point came during my graduation when I received the S.C. Nanda Memorial Cup for securing the highest marks in Anthropology. That recognition gave me the confidence to seriously consider anthropology as a career and pursue it at the postgraduate level.



I cleared the entrance examination for the Master's programme in Economics at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, as well as the entrance examination for the Master's programme in Anthropology at Utkal University. Eventually, I decided to pursue my Master's in Anthropology at Utkal University. During the second year of my Master's, I specialized in Prehistoric Anthropology. I would give special credit for this phase of my journey to two of my teachers, Dr. Daitari Sahoo and Prof. K. K. Basa, whose guidance and encouragement played an important role in shaping my interest in the field. There were five of us in the specialization, and under the guidance of Prof. K. K. Basa, we undertook fieldwork and a prehistoric expedition in Angul district of central Odisha. That field experience opened my eyes to the incredible diversity within anthropology. I began to understand that anthropology was not confined to classrooms and books, it was a discipline that allowed us to engage directly with people, landscapes, material culture, history and heritage.

My specialization in Prehistoric Anthropology subsequently led me to appear for the entrance examination of the Institute of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India. I was fortunate to be selected. Those two years of training gave me tremendous exposure to the cultural diversity and heritage of different parts of India. The course brought together areas such as art and architecture, iconography, museology, anthropology, field archaeology, conservation and research methodology. It was a very enriching learning experience. It was actually during one of our field visits to Konark that I began thinking seriously about pursuing doctoral research on the stone-carving community. I remember being fascinated not only by the extraordinary craftsmanship but also by the people behind it, their knowledge, skills, traditions and the ways in which these were passed down through generations. I decided then that, if I got the opportunity, I would make the stone-carving community the focus of my doctoral research.

After completing the course, I enrolled for my PhD in the Department of Anthropology at Utkal University. My doctoral journey allowed me to explore the subject in much greater depth while continuing to engage with carver communities and their cultural practices. After that, I had the opportunity to work on documentation at the Sheesh Mahal Museum in Patiala. Then, in 2011, I joined the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, or the National Museum of Humankind. That marked the beginning of a completely new chapter in my professional life.

Looking back, my journey into anthropology was not something I had planned from the beginning. It evolved gradually from a simple curiosity as a student, to academic exploration, fieldwork, archaeology, doctoral research, documentation, and eventually museum work. At every stage, anthropology opened another door for me, and each experience deepened my understanding of people, culture, heritage and the incredible diversity of human life. In many ways, I feel that I did not simply choose anthropology; anthropology kept finding its way back into my life.

What would you consider your most significant contribution to the field?

I would consider my most significant contribution to the field of anthropology to be my work in ethnoarchaeology and material culture, particularly my study of the traditional stone-carving communities around Konark, Odisha. My research has attempted to bridge the gap between anthropology and archaeology by studying living craft traditions as a means of understanding the techniques, knowledge systems, social practices and technological processes and an archaeological experiment on sculpture that may also help us interpret the archaeological past.

My doctoral research, "Stone Carvers around Konark: An Ethnoarchaeological Study," gave me an opportunity to closely examine the knowledge and practices of traditional stone carvers, their selection and sourcing of stone, quarrying methods, tools, techniques of carving, transportation, transmission of skills and the social organization surrounding the craft and study of debitage analysis based on a small experiment on sculpture making. I believe this work is significant because it demonstrates how living traditional knowledge can provide an important anthropological lens for understanding archaeological monuments and material remains.

A second important dimension of my contribution has been my work as a museum Anthropologist at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya. Here, I have been able to take anthropology beyond academic research and engage with communities, ethnographic collections, documentation, conservation and public interpretation.

My fieldwork among Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups and other tribal and folk communities has involved documenting material culture and collecting ethnographic objects while attempting to understand the cultural meanings and knowledge systems associated with them. Through exhibitions, including single-object exhibitions and travelling exhibitions, I have also worked towards making anthropological knowledge accessible to a wider public.

Over the years, my research has expanded from stone technology and traditional craftsmanship to vernacular architecture, pottery and ceramic traditions, indigenous knowledge systems, tribal cultural identity and visual ethnography. This has reinforced my belief that anthropology has an important role in documenting not merely objects, but the knowledge, skills, memories, identities and relationships that give those objects cultural meaning. Therefore, if I had to identify one overarching contribution, I would describe it as my effort to connect ethnographic fieldwork with archaeology and museums, and to demonstrate the value of living traditional knowledge in understanding, documenting and preserving cultural heritage. I see this as particularly important at a time when many traditional skills and knowledge systems are facing the risk of disappearing.

How do you see the future of anthropology in India?

I see a very promising future for anthropology in India, particularly because India's social and cultural diversity provides an enormous field for anthropological research. At the same time, I believe the discipline is changing, and anthropology in India will have to become more interdisciplinary, community-oriented and technologically equipped.

Traditionally, Indian anthropology has made important contributions to the study of tribal communities, kinship, social organization, material culture, archaeology and human evolution. I believe that these areas will remain important, but the future of the discipline will increasingly lie in connecting them with contemporary issues such as cultural heritage, migration, urbanization, climate change, development, technology, public health and the transformation of traditional knowledge systems.

From my own experience, I particularly see a strong future for applied and museum anthropology. My work at the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya has shown me that anthropology does not have to remain confined to academic publications. Through fieldwork, ethnographic documentation, collection, exhibitions and public engagement, anthropologists can make knowledge about communities accessible to society while also helping preserve cultural traditions.

I also believe that ethnoarchaeology and material culture studies have considerable potential in India. My own research on the stone-carving traditions around Konark has demonstrated to me how the study of living craftspeople and their traditional knowledge can help us understand archaeological technologies, monuments and material remain. Similar approaches can be applied to pottery, architecture, textiles, metalwork, agriculture and many other traditional technologies across India.

Another major area for the future is the documentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge. Many traditional skills, oral traditions, rituals, technologies and ecological practices are changing rapidly. Anthropology can play an important role in documenting these traditions, but I believe this should be done with communities rather than merely about communities. Communities should be recognized as knowledge holders and active participants in deciding how their cultural knowledge is documented, interpreted and represented.

Technology will also significantly influence the future of anthropology. Digital archives, GIS, digital documentation, visual ethnography, 3D documentation, online exhibitions and artificial intelligence can provide new ways of recording and interpreting cultural heritage. However, technology should remain a tool rather than replace the fundamental anthropological principles of fieldwork, human interaction, cultural sensitivity and ethical engagement.

I also see greater scope for anthropology to contribute to public policy. India is experiencing rapid social transformation, and anthropological perspectives can help policymakers understand how development, infrastructure, environmental change and government programmes actually affect communities at the grassroots level.

So, I would say that the future of anthropology in India lies in moving beyond the boundaries of a single discipline and becoming a bridge between people, culture, heritage, archaeology, museums, technology and public policy.

For me, the strength of anthropology has always been its ability to understand people in their cultural and social contexts. If we retain that strength while embracing interdisciplinary research, new technologies and meaningful community participation, I believe anthropology in India can become even more relevant to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

What advice would you give to emerging scholars who wish to work in this space?

My advice to emerging scholars would be to remain curious, patient, field-oriented and open to interdisciplinary learning. First, I would encourage young scholars to develop a strong foundation in anthropological theory and research methods, but at the same time, not restrict themselves to the boundaries of one discipline. My own academic and professional journey has moved between anthropology, archaeology, ethnoarchaeology, museums, material culture and heritage. From my own research gave me opportunities to look at them from more than one disciplinary perspective.

Second, I would strongly encourage them to go to the field and spend time with people. Anthropology ultimately depends upon meaningful engagement with communities. Books and secondary sources are important, but they cannot substitute for observing, listening and learning directly from people. In my own fieldwork among tribal and folk communities and traditional craft practitioners, I have learned that knowledge is often embedded in everyday practices, skills, stories and objects, and cannot always be captured through conventional questionnaires alone.

Third, young scholars should learn to look at ordinary objects and practices as sources of knowledge. A tool, a pot, a house, a sculpture or a ritual object can tell us about technology, economy, identity, belief and social relationships.

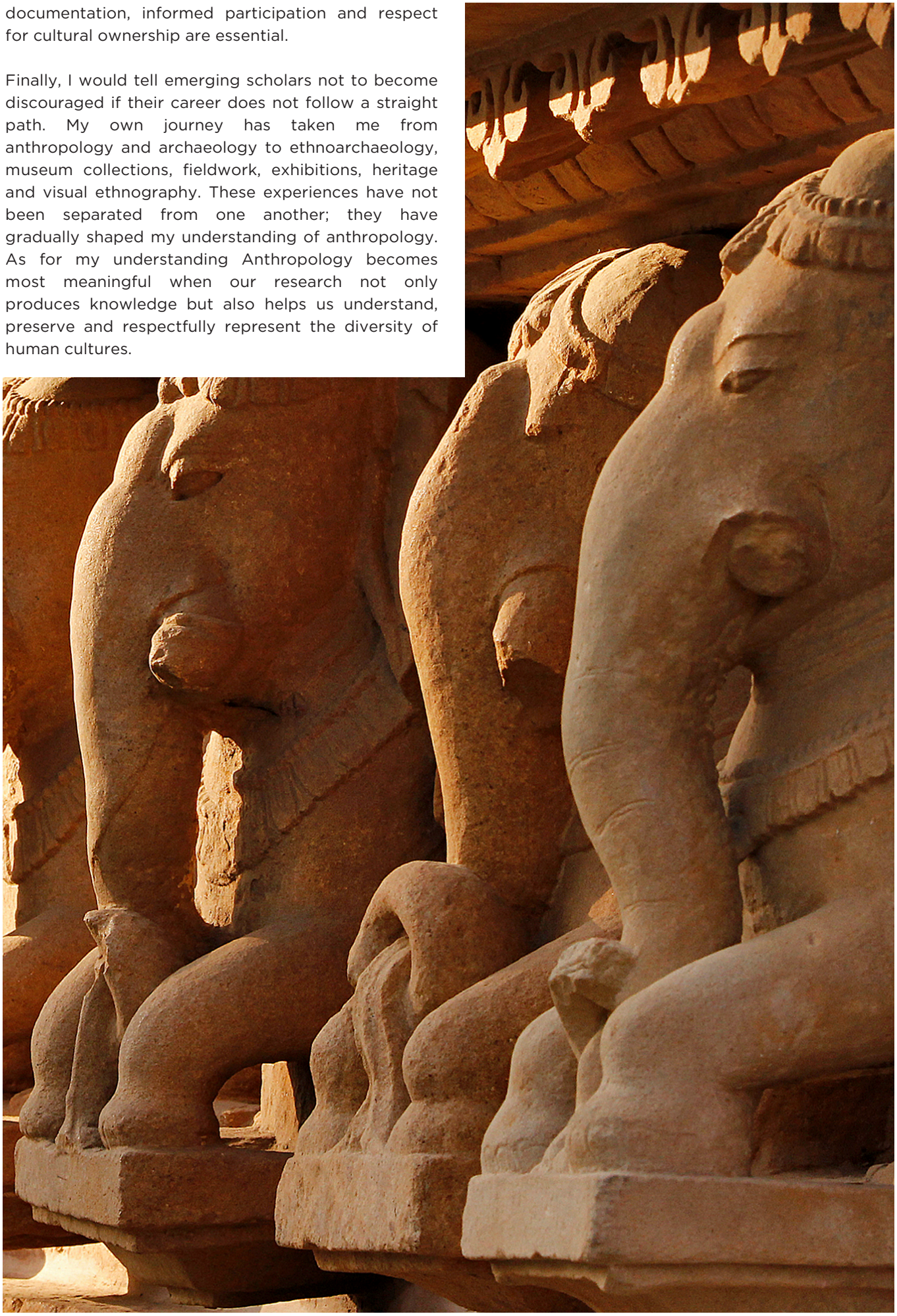
I would also advise emerging scholars to develop good documentation skills. Anthropology today is not only about writing field notes. Photography, audio-visual documentation, digital archives, GIS, databases and other digital tools are becoming increasingly important. At the same time, newer technologies, including AI, should be approached critically and ethically. Technology can assist research and documentation, but it should never replace field-based understanding or the voice of the community.

Another important piece of advice is to publish and communicate your research in different ways. A scholar should certainly publish academically, but research can also reach society through exhibitions, museums, films, public lectures, digital platforms and educational programmes. My experience in museum work has taught me that making anthropological knowledge accessible to the public is itself an important responsibility.

Most importantly, I would tell young researchers to work with communities rather than simply studying communities. When we document indigenous knowledge, traditional crafts or vulnerable cultural practices, we should recognize communities as knowledge holders and collaborators. Ethical

documentation, informed participation and respect for cultural ownership are essential.

Finally, I would tell emerging scholars not to become discouraged if their career does not follow a straight path. My own journey has taken me from anthropology and archaeology to ethnoarchaeology, museum collections, fieldwork, exhibitions, heritage and visual ethnography. These experiences have not been separated from one another; they have gradually shaped my understanding of anthropology. As for my understanding Anthropology becomes most meaningful when our research not only produces knowledge but also helps us understand, preserve and respectfully represent the diversity of human cultures.



Returning to a World Once Familiar: Reflections on Fieldwork, Memory and Positionality

By Dr Rishma Basumatary

During the summer of 2021, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Sundrijhora, a handloom village in the Kokrajhar district of Assam. Like many Bodo villages, Sundrijhora is situated within a landscape where ecological surroundings and social life are deeply intertwined. Lush paddy fields stretch across the village, bamboo groves line pathways and homesteads and streams flow through the settlement. Household gardens filled with seasonal vegetables and fruit trees contribute to everyday subsistence. Almost every household possesses a loom, making weaving a visible and enduring feature of village life. The rhythmic sounds of weaving, the movement of people between households and the seasonal cycles of agricultural activity together shape the everyday rhythms of the community.



Figure 1: Agricultural activities (Fieldwork, 2021)

Although, I entered the field as a member of the broader Bodo community, the research experience revealed the complexities of conducting ethnography "at home," demonstrating that cultural proximity does not necessarily translate into unmediated understanding. While cultural familiarity certainly facilitated entry into the field, my experiences demonstrated that belonging is neither fixed nor unproblematic. Rather, it is continually negotiated through social interactions, life histories, and changing relationships to place.

Having grown up in a rural environment characterised by agriculture, domestic labour, and the presence of handloom weaving, I possessed a degree of familiarity with the social world under study. However, years spent away from village life due to formal education and higher studies had gradually altered my relationship with this environment. The field therefore represented both a familiar and unfamiliar space. It was familiar because of shared language, cultural practices and collective histories; yet it was also unfamiliar because I no longer occupied the same social position as many of the individuals whose lives and experiences formed the focus of my research.

This tension between familiarity and distance shaped my engagement with the field in significant ways. Many practices that had once appeared ordinary during childhood acquired new meanings when encountered through ethnographic observation. Activities that had previously been taken for granted emerged as important sites through which social relations, cultural values and community identities were reproduced. In this sense, fieldwork became more than a process of collecting empirical data. It became an opportunity to critically examine the assumptions embedded in my own cultural knowledge and to reflect upon the ways in which familiarity can simultaneously illuminate and obscure ethnographic understanding.

The six months of fieldwork unfolded as a process of both relearning and recognition. Through conversations with weavers, participation in everyday activities and sustained observation of village life, I became increasingly aware of the distinction between cultural familiarity and experiential knowledge. Although weaving had always been present in my childhood environment, my engagement with it had largely been that of an observer. I was familiar with the presence of looms in household courtyards, the textiles produced by women, and the cultural significance attached to weaving. Yet I had little understanding of the labour, discipline, technical expertise, and social commitments required to sustain the practice across generations.



Figure 3: Traditional loom (Fieldwork, 2021)



Figure 5: si thwrnai saori (Fieldwork, 2021)

Furthermore, fieldwork revealed weaving to be far more than a cultural tradition or an economic activity. It emerged as a complex social practice through which gendered responsibilities, intergenerational knowledge, kinship relations and cultural identities were continually negotiated. Conversations with weavers highlighted the challenges involved in maintaining the craft amid changing economic conditions, shifting aspirations and transformations in rural life. These encounters challenged romanticised understandings of tradition and directed attention towards the everyday labour that sustains cultural continuity.



Figure 4: The labour of preparation, many hands behind a single weave (Fieldwork, 2021)

One practice that particularly illuminated the social dimensions of weaving was si thwrnai (warping) saori, a form of reciprocal labour exchange associated with the preparation of warp yarn. The process required collective effort and women from neighbouring households often gathered to assist one another in untangling yarn, arranging threads, and preparing the loom. These gatherings were simultaneously productive and social. While working, women exchanged stories, discussed family matters, shared local news and reflected upon changes occurring within the village.

From an anthropological perspective, si thwrnai saori functioned as more than a practical arrangement for completing labour-intensive tasks. It constituted an important mechanism through which reciprocity, cooperation, and social cohesion were maintained. The practice created opportunities for the circulation of knowledge, the strengthening of interpersonal relationships, and the reproduction of community ties. Labour and sociality were not separate domains but mutually constitutive aspects of everyday life. Through such collective activities, weaving became embedded within broader networks of kinship, obligation, and mutual support.

Observing these gatherings also prompted reflections on broader transformations in village life. Participants frequently spoke of earlier periods when communal labour exchanges occupied a more central place within everyday social relations. Before the widespread adoption of mobile phones and digital communication technologies, such occasions served as important spaces for interaction and information exchange. While many of these practices continue today, their social significance has been reshaped by changing patterns of communication, mobility, and economic activity.



Figure 6: Oldest respondent (Fieldwork, 2021)



Figure 2: Village life, traditional fishing in a village stream (Fieldwork, 2021)

The fieldwork experience ultimately underscored the fluid and relational nature of insider–outsider positionality. My shared cultural background facilitated access to participants and enabled a deeper appreciation of the meanings attached to weaving and village life. Yet temporal, educational and experiential distance also positioned me as an observer who was no longer fully embedded within the everyday realities of the community. Rather than viewing these positions as mutually exclusive, fieldwork revealed them to be interconnected and situationally produced.

This liminal position proved analytically productive. It enabled a balance between cultural intimacy and critical distance, allowing me to engage empathetically with participants while remaining attentive to processes of social change and cultural transformation. The field thus emerged not only as a site for studying handloom weaving but also as a space for interrogating questions of memory, belonging, and knowledge production. In this sense, ethnographic fieldwork became a reflexive process through which I sought to understand both the community under study and my own evolving relationship to it.

When the City Celebrates
A Photo Series on Ganesh Chaturthi in Bengaluru



By Vaishnavi Y Nayak

Ganesh Chaturthi begins long before the deity is worshipped. Artisans, families and community members come together to prepare idols, decorations and offerings. The making of the idol reflects material culture,

where ordinary materials acquire sacred meaning. It also reveals the often-unseen labour behind religious celebrations. Different communities set up Ganesha pandals, some themed, others marked by huge processions of bringing the idol, unveiling it, the morning aarti, preparation for the prasadam, annadasoha among the devotees, the dancing followed by the visarjan and after-celebrations.

The city transforms into a festive trance after the continuous monsoon showers of August. Many pandals are accompanied by large speakers which play devotional songs, narrate stories of the Vignaharta, and broadcast the ritual performance for the devotees, employing technology at its best. For a few days, an ordinary residential street becomes a ritual space. The festival temporarily changes not only how the street is used, but also who gathers there and how neighbours interact. These celebrations are often influenced by local traditions and heavy community participation. The festival therefore begins as a process of collective creation, not just worship.





Img: Ganapati idols in a house, a local street, and at a matha

Community organisation and local influences

Ganesh Chaturthi brings families, neighbours, volunteers and community groups together. In Bengaluru, celebrations range from intimate household rituals to large public gatherings. People participate through organising, decorating, cooking, performing and volunteering. The festival creates temporary spaces of social interaction and collective identity. At the same time, participation can reveal differences of age, gender, class and community.

Ganesh Chaturthi in Bengaluru reflects the interaction between Ganesha worship and the city's diverse local cultures. The festival is shaped by Kannada traditions as well as practices brought by Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Konkani and other communities. Local neighbourhoods and apartment communities often adapt the celebration to their own customs, food, music and forms of decoration. Bengaluru's urban culture also influences the festival through public events, cultural programmes and modern forms of organisation. Thus, Ganesh Chaturthi becomes a shared festival with multiple local expressions, showing how traditions change as they move across communities and places.





Image: Participation of local communities in the festivities



Image: Influence of local traditions - Puja Kunitha accompanied by drums





Imgae: Performer carrying the Puja- Colourful, intricately decorated structure housing a deity's idol

Tradition and Modernity

A new trend is the setting up of different stalls by local vendors, small eateries etc to mark the celebration. At every corner road and every circle of the town and the city is in festive bliss during this time. In some cases, idols are kept even in the months of October, November and till the end of December. The festival brings traditional rituals into contact with contemporary urban culture. Traditional flowers, lamps and devotional music may exist alongside LED displays, DJs and social media. Digital invitations, online donations and Instagram posts have created new ways of participating. This demonstrates that traditions are not static; they continuously adapt to changing social environments. Ganesh Chaturthi therefore becomes a space where tradition and modernity coexist.

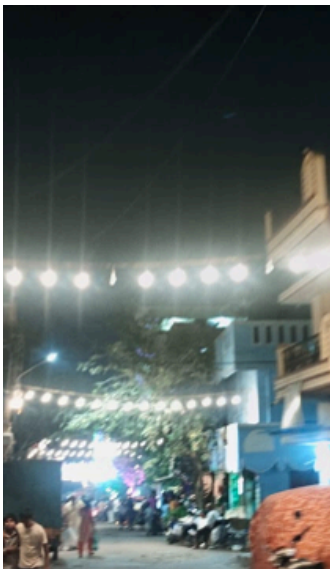




Image: Decorated streets for the festival











Image: A small mela with local vendors selling toys, ceramics, and food stalls to attract crowd





Image: Visarjan at the Dwarkanath Matha of the GSB community

The Visarjan

Visarjan is not simply an ending, but part of the ritual cycle. The immersion of Ganesha represents an important transition in the ritual cycle. However, in an expanding city like Bengaluru, traditional immersion practices intersect with environmental concerns. Clay idols, artificial immersion tanks and eco-friendly celebrations represent attempts to reconcile ritual practice with ecological responsibility. Visarjan therefore becomes both a religious act and a reflection of changing relationships between culture and nature. The procession and immersion mark the conclusion of the public celebration. The movement of the idol from the home or pandal towards the water creates a collective ritual journey. Music, crowds and participation temporarily transform the city once again. After immersion, the decorated spaces gradually disappear, and everyday life resumes. The cycle demonstrates the anthropological idea that ritual temporarily transforms social life before returning it to its ordinary form.

Once the celebrations ends, Bengaluru's streets return to their everyday appearance. The temporary pandals disappear, decorations are removed, and the crowds disperse. Yet the festival leaves behind memories, photographs, social connections and shared experiences. This suggests that the significance of a ritual extends beyond the ritual itself. What remains is not merely the physical space, but the social relationships and cultural meanings created through the celebration.

Sensitization on Sustained Perspectives of Gender Issues (A review of 'Gendered Marginalities' edited by Shalina Mehta, Manjit Monga and Harinder M. Sandhu)

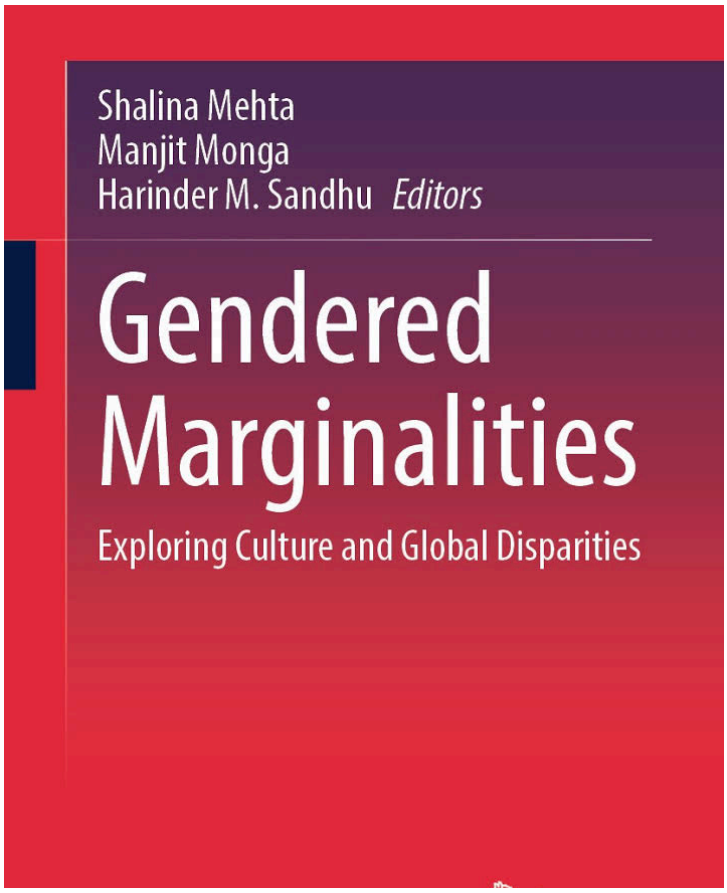


Reviewed by: Prof. A.B.Ota

The typification of gender down the ages has undergone a number of sea changes on the basis of the socio-economic and religio-cultural environments created for and imposed by human kind across the annals of history. How equal or unequal the gender persona is, has been debated in circles of rhetoric and the discussions of academics through chapters of fine print. The moot question being the marginalization of a singled focus group that is comparable in numerical strength, intellectual quantum as also balances well on the attainment scales of human endeavour. The recent awakening being to the third gender or maybe even the fourth, fifth and nth gender categorization. The book throws light on certain poignant foci pertaining to why the predominance of gender is an essential part of the socio-cultural rubric and why can there not be mutual coexistence, respect and acceptance of the sensitivities as they are.

Has mankind become so ensnared within the incivilities of behaviour that there is no parity set down formally or informally in the norms of behaviour of an individual or a community that has made developmental progress in the centuries bygone. Many of the points raised in the book set the grounds for further debate and discussion among the doyens of academia to resolve, if possible, the issues that at some point seem self-generated for the times, the community or even an individual. Along with looking closely at the trends of human behaviour on several facets of the questionable gender sensitization of governments and patterns of governance as well as socio-cultural ascribed and expected as well as accepted roles, the editors have brought to the surface an underlying latent stronghold of the human ethos.

Climate change and the part played by gender in combatting its adverse impact on existence of the animal and plant kingdoms has been explicitly dealt with in the second part of the book. Revelations on the predicted consequences of climate-change causing loss of agricultural income, water scarcity,



the rising threat of displacement and migrations creating a heightened sense of homelessness, and leading to an increasing number of single-mother headed households. Women comprise the worst-affected constituency and are yet the most resilient survivors of climate-change. However, only recently have the policy planners shown their awareness on this remarkable ability of the women from indigenous communities, and acknowledged them as the primary livelihood providers in a fast changing local and global landscape.

The editors have strung together the vision and thought of decades of scholarly writing on the aspects of gender whereby it has been seen as a string player in power equation of decision making from households to world communities; as a socio-cultural construct or a guiding force in the structural edifice of gendered roles and relations across generations and geographical climes.

The editors have examined how, "Over the years a narrative is being built in the name of "gender ideology" (Brown 1992; Lelwica et al. 2009) that is projected as a western universalizing agenda which is likely to destroy other cultural values and institutions. Sections of political, religious, and social hegemonies are at the forefront of this "gender-ideology" debate …" which keeps them "invested in cultural orthodoxies that promote, gender marginalization". They observe that "Gender ideology" is being used today as an instrumentality to promote conservative social and political order." At every juncture, however, women are most often located outside the core cultural matrix, hey are persistently living on the periphery or on the margins.

The book comprises 23 papers spread across eight sections. Starting with the introduction penned by the editors, the first part comprises the perspective of 'Gender Budgeting and inclusive policy where the paper on 'Gender budgeting in the government of India: Development and Challenges' which is authored by Dakshita Das while the paper 'From margins to mainstreaming: Indian women and electoral democracy' is authored by Dakshita Das and Srinath Sridharan. The second part of the book is devoted to the 'Gendered responses to climate vulnerabilities and resilience' wherein are the paper of on 'Exploring women's resilience: Flood phenomena and female farmers in Swayimane and Nhlazuka' by Thandeka Yasmeen Ndaba and Maheshvari Naidu; as also 'Gender experiences and responses to climate change in India by Ameer Sultana. The third part is titled, 'At the intersection of gender and health' and has the paper Shalina Mehta on 'Deconstructing gender in mental health discourse' as well as the papers of Mini Bhattacharyya Thakur, 'As one ages, what changes? A gendered understanding of social exclusion among the elderly in Guwahati city, Assam'. There is also the paper by Rame. V. Baru, on 'Gendered hierarchies and exclusion in healthcare work in India: intersections of class, caste, and religion and the paper by Maninder Kaur and Raminder Kaur on 'Neglected domain of menopausal health among rural women in North India: an anthropological exploration'. The fourth part of the book is on 'Gender and business' which comprises the paper on 'Dismantling the barriers? Challenges in advancing gender equality in the workplace' authored by Manjit Monga. The other papers are on 'Exploring the experiences of women working in the male-dominated video game industry' by Sarah N. Menz and Sarven S. McLinton; and 'Gender exclusion in the workplace in India - a comprehensive analysis' by Monica Munjial Singh. The fifth part is titled. 'Gender in the media and mediascapes' which carries the paper, 'Women in the arts: present but not equal' by Josephine Caust and 'Vulnerability of the displaced: the "alternative" male in Bimal Roy's Work by Srotaswini Bhowmick besides 'Challenging gendered media blackout through social media activism' by V. B. Ojong and H. S. Basure. The sixth part of the book is on 'Gender, rituals and stigma' and carries the paper on 'Gendered spiritual healing: a case of the Johane Masowe Echishanu Church' authored by Roselyn Kanyemba and Maheshvari Naidu as also the paper on, 'Voices and narratives: women and their access to mosque by Rukshana Zaman. Another paper is on 'Gendered spaces: a continuous reality', by Harinder M. Sandhu.

The seventh part is devoted to 'Social and legal institutions, narratives and counter narratives' and carries the paper on 'Khasi matriliny: ripples in calm waters' by Geetika Ranjan as well as the paper on, 'Women in prison: the invisibles among the marginalized by Jyoti Seth and Chakravarti Mahajan. There is also the paper on 'Metamorphosis of identity: a journey of reconstructing transgender integration' by Sanghamitra Ray.

The last part of the book is titled, 'Agency of the gender and voluntary sector'. It carries the paper on, 'Transforming lives of the marginalized homeless women: a goals convergence approach to positive social impact' by Manjit Monga and also the paper, 'Living on the margins: understanding and addressing gendered inequalities in development through ethnography and collaboration by Sunita Palita.

The book provokes an excellent debate on the question of gender and how the definitions and structure of the terminology have undergone tumultuous changes in the past few decades. In the contemporary era there is much to be clarified and further defined. As detailed by the editors there is "no single root cause for women in society getting left behind with respect to basic human rights and socioeconomic well-being. Several factors are intricately interlinked, creating a complex web of entrapment that standardized solutions—often developed by the same institutions that perpetuate the web in the first place—may not be effective in addressing". They continue, "Even when the woman steps out of the house to make a living, she returns home to hand over her entire earnings to the male members or elders of the household. Thus, paid employment does not necessarily translate to commensurate financial independence in women. There exists a wide chasm in their postural independence outside the house, and subjugation inside the family".

Thus, the vast array of experiences and sensitivities of the marginalized gender storyboard have been presented with rare expertise on the subject and makes an excellent referral work for promoting understanding of the subject that has been rarely tackled so comprehensively.

APPRECIATION FOR ANTHRO BULLETIN

Thanks for two enlightening editorials. Prof. Sunitaji, I appreciate the way you advice. So brief, still so much clarity. "Read widely. Think critically. Write regularly. Revise relentlessly. Seek feedback without hesitation. collaborate generously. Uphold research ethics uncompromisingly. Above all, cultivate intellectual curiosity and integrity." I love to hear your perspectives on these basics.

I remember, not while studying anthropology, but when I was working with CARE in my 20's, our administrator (CEO) advised me, "do not get carried away in short-term goals, but imagine where you want to see yourself after 10 years, and keep trying to reach your destination". It helped.

– Prof. Walimbe

Enjoyed , Sunita,going through your article on the state of affairs in the standard of quality of research..and your advice..Enjoyed the chief editor's- on the Anthropological Research..Race..Biological or Social products.
Congratulations Dr Reddy. Best wishes

– Prof. Bhagwan Roy

Great work Sunita and team. I totally agree with Dr Walimbe. Your futuristic approach for Anthropological approach is awesome.im looking at your newsletter becoming a journal in next few years. Keep that spirit.⏳👏👏✌️😍

– Dr. Nita Mawar

Many congratulations, Sunita Madam. The Bulletin fills a long-felt gap for Anthropology in India. It gives young scholars a platform to express themselves through words, images, and other creative forms. Your editorial on the quality of research in India, along with its suggestions, comes from your experience. Therefore, it is a very sincere representation of the state of research in India. Prof. K. K. Mishra's thoughtful reflection on why anthropology matters even more today is an essential reading. Other articles too engage the readers powerfully and they truly present India in its many colors. I think the best part of the bulletin is its cover page. The smiling face full of life.

– Dr. Khirod Moharana

My compliments to the editors for highlighting the state of anthropology and the urgent need to revive a culture of rigorous research and research-based publication.
The real crisis is not the shortage of quality publications but the erosion of scholarship. An academic system that rewards quantity over quality has reduced research to a numbers game, with technology merely serving as a convenient tool to accelerate output. Genuine research demands intellectual curiosity, integrity, sustained field engagement, critical reflection, and time – qualities beyond the reach of technology.
RACs and TACs can strengthen research only when their members are accomplished scholars with established research credentials. The uncomfortable truth is that the tradition of rigorous, field-based research in Indian anthropology is steadily diminishing. We know what needs to be done; the question is who has the conviction and commitment to do it.

-Prof PK Misra

The editorial, "Quality Research and Publications: What Is Lacking?", is both timely and thought provoking. While it rightly emphasizes the importance of collaboration, I believe we still need to reflect on what meaningful collaboration truly entails. Genuine collaboration should ideally be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary, bringing together researchers with complementary expertise to address complex scientific questions.

In this context, one may reflect on the scholarly contributions of Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava. Much of his work was conceptual and theoretical, demonstrating that originality and intellectual depth do not necessarily depend on multiple authorship. This is not to undermine collaboration but to remind us that the value of research lies in its quality, novelty, and scientific contribution rather than the number of co-authors.

As Prof. Sunita rightly observed, today's students are growing up in the digital era, with unprecedented access to artificial intelligence and online resources. While these technologies offer immense opportunities, they should complement, not replace, the development of conceptual understanding and critical thinking. Strong theoretical foundations remain indispensable for meaningful research.

At the same time, the current emphasis on collaborative publications calls for careful introspection. Collaboration should represent a genuine intellectual partnership, with each author making a substantial and identifiable contribution to the conception, design, execution, analysis, or interpretation of the research. It should not become a mechanism for inflating publication counts through honorary or ghost authorship, where names are exchanged without meaningful scholarly involvement. Such practices may increase the number of publications but ultimately diminish the credibility of both the research and the collaborative process.

The growing number of research retractions worldwide serves as a timely reminder of the importance of maintaining the highest standards of research integrity. India has witnessed an increasing number of retracted publications in recent years, highlighting the need for greater vigilance. As institutions strive to enhance their research output and global rankings, equal emphasis must be placed on scientific rigor, transparency, ethical authorship, and reproducibility. Quality should always take precedence over quantity in research dissemination.

I am reminded of the words of my teacher, Prof. R. K. Kar, who passed away last year. He often said, "Omission is better than commission." Those simple yet profound words continue to guide my understanding of research ethics. It is far better to refrain from making an unsupported claim than to compromise scientific integrity. In an era where publication pressure is steadily increasing, his wisdom remains more relevant than ever.
CONGRATULATIONS Team AIF. I am happy to see the ever improving quality of content of the ANTHRO BULLETIN.
Keep up.

- Dr. Arbind Sinha

FORTHCOMING EVENT

- An online lecture will be organised as a part of our Distinguished Guest lecture series.

  For updates, please follow our website's events page- https://events.anthroposindiafoundation.com/

PAST EVENT

- AIF has organized a seminar on **Menstrual Practices, Beliefs, Taboos, Health and Hygiene: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Menstrual Dignity"**

  Date: 16 - 17th Sept 2026



- AIF has organized a Workshop cum National Conference on "Himalayan Healers: Non-codified healer's Recognition and Policy" at SKUAST-K, Ganderbal, Jammu & Kashmir.

  Date: 25-29th Sept 2026



- For our Distinguished Guest Lecture Series, an online lecture was organised and delivered by **Dr. P. Anuradha** on **3rd October 2026 at 5:00 pm onwards**.

  For more details - **Click here**

  YouTube Live Link: **Click here**



FELLOWSHIPS AND JOB ALERTS

1. Assistant Professor (College Cadre), Anthropology - Himachal Pradesh Public ServiceCommission (Advt. No. 61/9-2026)
   Last Date to Apply: 16.10.2026
   Application Link: Click here
2. PhD Admissions 2026-27, Dr. Ambedkar Chair - Doon University, Dehradun
   Last Date to Apply: 30.10.2026
   Application Link: Click here
3. Postdoctoral Fellowships in Environmental Humanities 2027-28 - Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University
   Last Date to Apply: 20.11.2026
   Application Link: Click here
4. NIF Book Fellowship, Round 13 - New India Foundation (18 lakh)
   Last Date to Apply: 15.11.2026
   Application Link: Click here

NEW!

We are thrilled to announce the collaboration between Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) and Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS) to bring a series of offline workshops on "Ethnography and documentation of culture." We are excited to host the fourth workshop of this series soon — with many more to come!

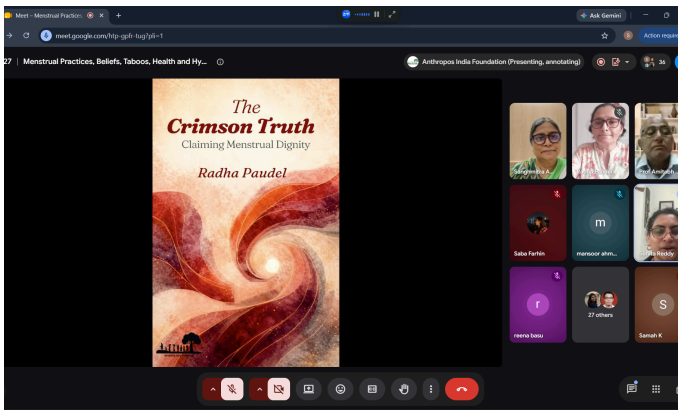
Let's learn, grow, and celebrate anthropology together!

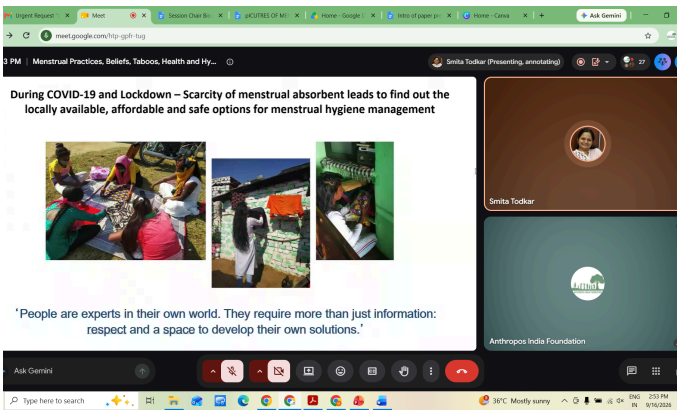


Please feel free to share your write-ups, comments and suggestions with us at aif.newsletter2025@gmail.com.

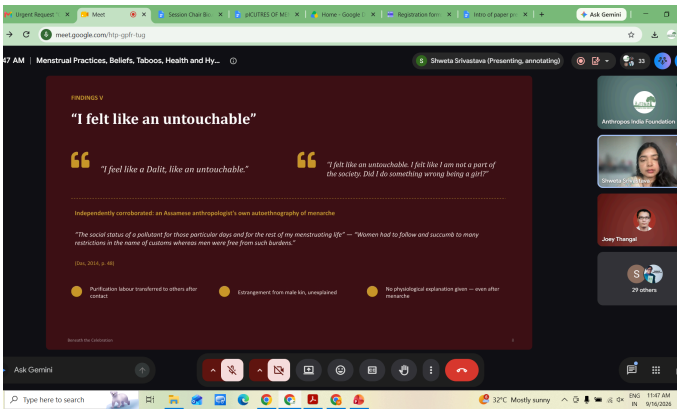
Menstrual Practices, Beliefs, Taboos, Health and Hygiene: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Menstrual Dignity

The seminar on "Menstrual Practices, Beliefs, Taboos, Health and Hygiene: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on Menstrual Dignity", jointly organized by Anthropos India Foundation (AIF), New Delhi, in collaboration with Global South Coalition for Dignified Menstruation (GSCDM), supported by Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalay (IGRMS), Bhopal, from 16th to 17th September, 2026.





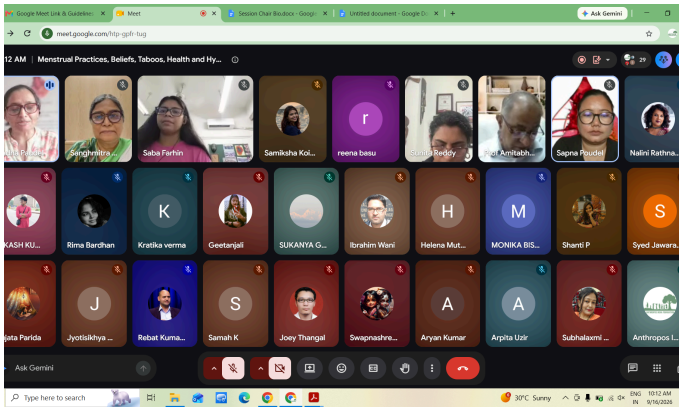












WORKSHOP ON "HIMALAYAN HEALERS: NON-CODIFIED HEALERS' RECOGNITION AND POLICY"

The workshop on "Himalayan Healers: Non-codified Healers's Recognition and Policy", organized by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir, with support from the Indira Gandhi Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), in collaboration with Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) at SKUAST-K, Ganderbal, Jammu & Kashmir, from 25-27th September 2026.



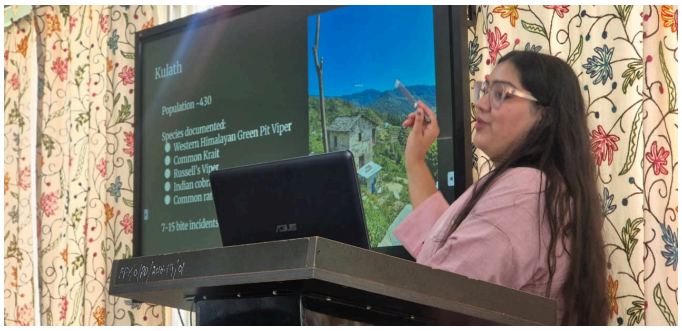


















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For contributing articles and photographs to the magazine, sharing feedback or ordering print copies, kindly write to us at aif.newsletter2025@gmail.com.

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