



Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists

Newsletter, February 2023

Greetings from the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists!

We are happy to publish the INCAA Newsletter since the present Governing Council took over in April 2020.

At the outset, we would like to pay our homage to the departed souls of our life members, who left us for heavenly abode during this period.

The outbreak of pandemic has disrupted the entire humanity and so also the functioning of INCAA. INCAA, as an organization had a number of administrative and academic plans and programmes, but could not execute all due to this pandemic situation. Nevertheless, let me present before you whatever we could do during this period.

INCAA Annual Meeting 2020

The Annual Meet of Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists (INCAA) and Celebration of 100 Years of Teaching Anthropology in India was held in Kolkata on 21st & 22nd February, 2020. This programme was organised in collaboration with the Asiatic Society, Indian Museum and Anthropological Survey of India. The Inaugural Address on the Celebration of 100 Years of Teaching Anthropology in India was delivered by Professor Vinay K. Srivastava, Director, Anthropological Survey of India on the topic *Whither Goest Anthropology? Some Thoughts, Some Lessons*. A volume on *Ethics and Objectivity in Anthropology*, edited by Professor P. K. Misra – which is the Proceedings of Round Table 2019 held in Pune – was jointly released by Professor R. K. Mutatkar and Professor R. K. Das. Prof. B. M. Das

Memorial Oration 2020 was delivered by Prof. S. L. Malik and Professor S.C. Dube Memorial Oration was delivered by Professor P.C. Joshi. The theme of the Round Table 2020 was on 'Envisioning Anthropology in Twenty- First Century India', which was coordinated by Professor Vinay K. Srivastava and Professor Kishor K. Basa. The Valedictory Function was held under the Chairmanship of Professor R. K. Das, the President, Indian Anthropological Society. The Valedictory Address was delivered by Dr. Satya Brata Chakrabarty, the General Secretary, Asiatic Society.

Indian Anthropology Congress 2021

The theme for the Indian Anthropology Congress for the year 2021 was “Anthropology: Theory to Application” in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi in a blended mode. The theme of the Round Table meeting for 2021 was “Anthropology: Towards an Integrated Paradigm”. This year, Professor B. M. Das Memorial Oration was delivered by Professor R. Siva Prasad on the topic "Theory Behind Practice and Practice Behind Theory: The Case of Indigenous Knowledge"; and Professor S.C. Dube Memorial Oration was delivered by Professor Shalina Mehta on the topic “Protest, Change and Democracy: Locating 'current' farmers protest movement in Dube's construct of 'Understanding Change’”. The congress was attended by a large number of national and international delegates. In 2021, for the first time the organisers hosted Professor Vinay K Srivastava Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by Professor Abhik K. Ghosh on the topic “The Grandmaster of Ethnographic Presentation: A Passionate Anthropologist”. The congress had 39 subthemes. The subthemes of this congress ranged from Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing to Food, Culture and Nutrition, Gender and Sexuality, Anthropological Demography, Anthropological Genetics, Power of Politics, Rural/Urban Transformation, Religious Diversity, Demography and Maternal Health, Crime, Criminals and Forensics, Food Culture, Tribal World and Challenges, Prehistoric Culture, Climate Change and Disaster Management, Human Adaptations, Strength and Endurance, Primate Behaviour, Anthropological

Perspectives on Disabilities and so on. The Valedictory session was graced by Professor A. Papa Rao, and Professor Balaram Pani.

Indian Anthropology Congress 2022

The Indian Anthropology Congress of the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists (INCAA) was held from February 21, 2022 to February 23, 2022 in a blended mode in Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology, University of Hyderabad. The theme of the Congress was “Anthropology and Biocultural Diversity in India: Retrospect and Prospect”. In 2022, Professor B.M. Das Memorial Oration was delivered by Professor Padamashri K. Paddyaya, Professor Emeritus and former Director of Deccan College, Pune, India; and Professor Vinay K Srivastava Memorial Lecture by Professor Agust'in Fuentes, Department of Anthropology at Princeton University. Professor S.C. Dube Memorial Oration could not be held because of the sad demise of the speaker Professor I.S. Marwah, former Professor of Delhi University. There were three Round Table sessions in that Congress. Apart from the INCAA Round Table session on the topic “Anthropology and Pandemics”, the organizers conducted two other Round Table sessions, viz. “Decolonizing the Discipline: Anthropology in India and Cultural Diversity and Tribal Education in the context of NEP”. There were 12 symposia in the Congress. The themes of the symposia were diverged ranging from Diversity, Endangered Languages and Sustainability, Genome Diversity and Gene-environment Interaction in Health and Disease, Recent Research in Archaeological Anthropology, Biological and Cultural Diversity of Northeast India: Tradition and Transition, Changing Ecological Consciousness: Religious Beliefs and Altering Interventions with Nature, Mitigating the Natural Hardships through Cultural Interventions in the (Sub) Himalayas, Anthropological Insights on Issues of Biocultural Diversity in India, Studies on Malnutrition, Nomadic Tribes in India and Biocultural Diversity: Knowledge and Conservation, Tribal Tourism and Biocultural Diversity, Food, Identity, and Reaction of the Communities during the Pandemic Crisis in the North-East India and so on.

Four ethnographic films were screened during the congress. These were Nagoba Jatara by Ms. Jennifer Alphonse; Prof. (Dr.) A. Aiyappan –The Great Indian Anthropologist by Dr. Mahendra Kumar; Birth 1871 by Dakxin Bajrangee and Sent Away Boys by Harjanth. There were 25 technical sessions in the Congress ranging from Nature-Culture interaction to Livelihood and Traditional Knowledge, Livelihood and Ecological Knowledge, Biodiversity and Tourism, Covid Pandemic-Challenges and Responses, Physical Anthropology I and II, Prehistoric Arts Crafts and Folklore, Reproductive and Sexual Health and so on. There were poster sessions, where the participants presented their research. The conference received 225 presentations excluding those absent for various reasons. Out of which, 200 were from various parts of India and 20 presenters from various countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Iran, Japan, United Kingdom, and USA. Overall, 44 sessions were conducted during three days for academic deliberations besides a few sessions for organizational management. The valedictory session was chaired by Prof. V. Usha Kiran, Honorary Director, ICSSR-SRC. The Valedictory address was delivered by Prof. S. M. Patnaik, Former Vice-Chancellor, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. The three-day Congress did have significant audience in each session despite conducting 5-6 parallel sessions each day. At any given time, the Congress was attended by 300-400 participants, all the sessions put together in online and offline modes. There were 150-250 online participants and 100 offline participants for the memorial orations. Everything put together, the Congress had the participation of more than 5000 online and offline delegates in various roles.

Indian Anthropology Congress 2023

The theme for the Indian Anthropology Congress for the year 2023 is “Anthropology in Nation Building in the Post-Independence Era and the Road Ahead”, February 21-23, 2023, in collaboration with the Department of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia, West Bengal.

The following is the Concept Note of this year's Congress.

“In the colonial period, ethnographers generated information about people and their customs for the benefit of raj. After independence, anthropologists have got together frequently to explore the relevance of their studies to the growing challenge of development. In recent years, path-breaking researches have been undertaken in the field of physical anthropology, which are immensely relevant to the task of upgrading the status of health and nutrition of the people of India particularly, the indigenous, backward, economically weaker and down-trodden as a vast number of our people living below the level of poverty. Similarly in the area of social and cultural anthropology, a good deal of work has been done that offers valuable insight into our people's traditions, attitude and behaviour which are now considered as an essential social input in planning and development.

The present Indian Anthropology Congress will encompass the role anthropology/anthropologists has/have played in the last 75 years towards nation building and the road ahead. The platform will allow to disseminating the scientific works which has been done so far and which need to be done. It will eventually bring out a scientific discourse of the role of anthropology in nation building in form of book/proceedings. Thereby, we, the anthropological fraternity of India will celebrate the *Azadika Anrit Mahotsav* – the 75 years of Independence through and our contribution and role in Nation building”.

The following are the Sub-themes of the congress

1. Sustainable development of the backward communities
2. Archaeology, Heritage and understanding the Nations landscape
3. Conflict, Peace and Nation building
4. NGOs and Nation Building
5. Diaspora and Nation Building
6. Health and Nutrition of the tribes and other indigenous peoples
7. Problems of women, children, and adolescents

The Inaugural session of this Congress will be graced by Professor Dipak K Kar, Honourable Vice-Chancellor, Sidhu-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia; Professor Kishor K Basa, the Chairman of INCAA and the Chairman of National Monument Authority, Government of India; Professor Deepak K Behra, Honourable Vice-Chancellor Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, Bhubaneswar; Professor P.C. Joshi, former Vice-Chancellor of University of

Delhi and Professor Nachiketa Chakraborty, the Registrar, Sidhu-Kanho-Birsha University, Purulia.

Professor B.M. Das Memorial Oration 2023

This year Professor B.M. Das Memorial Oration will be delivered by Professor P.K. Chattopadhyay [Former Professor of Forensic Sciences, Punjabi University, Patiala]. The topic of the oration is “Anthropology in Crime Investigation and Trials”.

The following is the abstract of the oration

“Crime and Criminals are as old as the human society itself. Every society in order to maintain its integrity and safeguard the interest of its members, has devised norms, customs and laws on the one hand and methods to identify the criminals and punish the guilty on the other so that it acts as a deterrent for others to desist from such activities. The method of investigation may, however, vary from mere interpretation of the facts/statements as they are by magico-religious practices to analysing the evidences using scientific tools and techniques to prove the involvement of a particular person(s) beyond any reasonable doubt. The evidences may at times look to be trivial but their analysis at the end may yield information which can solve the problem.

The evidences may include wearing apparels, ornaments, finger, palm, sole and toe prints/impressions, lip prints, shoe prints/impressions, stains of body fluids (blood, semen, saliva, urine) foecal matter, hairs, body parts, mutilated or decomposed dead bodies, etc. These need to be collected carefully, packed, sealed and sent to the laboratory. Proper scientific analysis of the evidences can help to identify the victim or the suspect, and link them with one another or with the scene of crime conclusively.

Since crimes are committed by human, it is but natural that Anthropology will play a very important role in crime investigation. In the course of the presentation some important cases will be discussed to highlight the application of Anthropology in Crime Investigation and Trials. It is hoped that some students will take up the study of this aspect of the subject which has hitherto been neglected by anthropologists and play their role in CRIME INVESTIGATION AND TRIALS.”

Professor S.C. Dube Memorial Oration 2023

This year Professor S.C. Dube Memorial Oration will be delivered by Vijoy S Sahay (former Professor of Anthropology, Allahabad University). The topic of the oration is “Anthropology in Nation Building in the Post-Independence Era and the Road Ahead”.

The following is the abstract of the oration.

“After all, what the concept of nation-building is? What is meant by nation-building? Is it only the economic growth of a nation in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) be called nation building? Is it only the infrastructural developments of a nation in terms of mega-industrial projects, or mega-dam projects, or construction of super-class highways, or piling up of tanks, missiles, and nuclear arsenal be called nation building? I think these are not the only features of nation building. Had only these been the sole features of nation building, our immediate neighbouring nation Pakistan does have all the above infrastructural features; rather, in terms of nuclear arsenal, it surpasses India. But why is Pakistan considered 'a failed state'? And why India is considered an emerging 'superpower' in many respects. Who builds a nation - the anthropologists, sociologists, or other social scientists, the doctors, the engineers, the businessmen, the police, the military, the political parties, or the government? What is a nation? What are the characteristics of a nation? What are the essentials of nation building? What is the role of anthropology in nation building? Is anthropology's role in nation building only to study the advantages and disadvantages of construction of dams or mega-projects of industries? Is only the study of success or failure of resettlement and rehabilitation schemes contribution of anthropology in nation building? Or, Is only the study of any natural disaster, such as draught, famine, Tsunami landslide, soil-sinking, etc., the characteristics of nation building? The paper, *first* attempts to examine the very concept of nations building as such; and *secondly*, it attempts to discuss what could be the role of anthropology in nation building; and *finally*, what contributions Indian anthropologists have so far made towards nation building; as also, what anthropologists can at most contribute to nation building?”

INCAA Round Table 2023

The theme of the Round Table session of Indian Anthropology Congress is “The Public/Private Partnership of Human Body and the State: Biological and Cultural Dimensions”.

The following is the Concept Note of the Round Table.

“The Human Body has been seen as a site for various biological and cultural partnerships with the state. Some of these are private, others public. Within these parameters, it may be noted that the Human Body as a biological entity is often seen as something which may be co-opted and used by the state for measurements of its citizens. These include Size India anthropometric parameters used for making uniforms as well as finding parallels used for forensic data and for screening of its citizens at airports, including full body scans. This would also include genetic markers and the genetic screening of individuals as well as data for cloning and use of stem cells for treatment and experimentation by companies. Such public data is often then being stored secretly and its products become secret, used only for profit or for purposes of national security. Its use in sports to sculpt bodies to suit a particular purpose is also a case in point.

The Human Body is also a site for privacy issues, including ethical issues. It is also a veritable image of many 'readings' that society needs to read from an individual, from ethnic origins, caste, class, position, status, among other things. Thus, the body is a site for many kinds of readings. This includes the body of women as being an object for sexuality, fertility, or censure, including the periods of menarche to menopause. The use of such tropes in advertising has been an old technique, but is now attaching new forms through online media and social networking sites. Bodies may also be used as sites for protest by human beings. The dressing up of the body exhibits current trends in society of maleness/femaleness/otherness in a large rainbow of symbols that show to others signs of what they are searching for. Gestures, and signs, form symbols that send messages to others and that may be a primary job of the remodeled body, or the cosmeticized body in society.

Further, in the archaeological parlance, the body though absent is the ever-present entity on the basis of which analysis is made. This includes the handedness of Stone Age tools or the carvings from rock sites or shelters as well as art forms and their analysis. The use of the museum specimens to denote bodies or the origin of the bodies that create them also cause ethical conflicts in society that are only now beginning to be addressed. All of these issues and any others may be stated by the speakers at this Round Table forum.”

Valedictory Address 2023

The Valedictory Address of this year Congress will be delivered by Professor Abhijit Guha, Former Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science

Research (ICSSR) at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK) (2018-2020) and former Professor of Anthropology at Vidyasagar University.

The following is the abstract of the Valedictory Lecture.

“Researches on the history of Anthropology in India unlike western countries have not yet become a formidable tradition despite the fact that courses on the growth and development of Anthropology in India had been recommended at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in the *Model Curriculum Development Report* of the University Grants Commission as early as 2001. Under this scenario, the conceptual framework of my discourse was derived from a critical and selective reading of the anthropological texts produced by the Indian anthropologists.

This reading of the history of Indian anthropology was based on two sources. One source was the reading of the original texts by pioneering anthropologists which were committed to various tasks of nation building and the other was the reading of literature by anthropologists who critiqued early Indian anthropology as simply following the western/colonial tradition. These two readings of the texts were juxtaposed to write a new and critical history of the discipline, which emphasised the nationalist tradition of Indian Anthropology.

On the reverse side of the colonial critique there also existed a view that an Indian form of Anthropology could be discerned in many ancient Indian texts and scriptures before the advent of a colonial anthropology introduced by the European scholars, administrators and missionaries in the Indian subcontinent. I have designated this view as 'Hindu Anthropology'.

Finally, I have argued that anthropologists did make attempts to tackle some of the major challenges (viz. famine, rehabilitation of refugees and development caused displacement) encountered by the country in the early periods of nation building, which I would narrate in some detail in this lecture.. Under the changing times and circumstances, the future of nationalist anthropology in India lies in carrying forward this remarkable tradition of anthropology developed by some of the pioneers and this justified the historical exploration of the nationalist trends in Indian anthropology having present and future implications.”

Apart from these, the Congress will witness erudite deliberations from the scholars across the country, poster presentation, screening of documentary films and colourful cultural extravaganza showcasing the rich cultural tradition of the state of Purulia.

Activities of the INCAA Regional Chapters

The activities of the five regional chapters, namely Chandigarh, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Mysuru and Guwahati need to be initiated.

Only the Guwahati Chapter has reconstituted their executive committee with Dr. Bapukan Choudhury, Former Prof. and HOD, Dept. of Anthropology, GU and Dr. Rajendra P Athparia (as Advisors); Dr. Jonali Devi, Cotton University (as Ex-officio member), Dr Tilottoma Baruah, Cotton University (President), Dr. Gulrukh Begum, Gauhati University and Dr. Kalpana Choudhury, Dimoria College (Vice-Presidents), Dr Nilofar Jasmin, Morigaon College (Secretary), Dr. Chandana Sarma, Gauhati University (Joint Secretary), Dr. Hridayananda Das, Cotton University (Treasurer) and Dr. Arifur Zaman, Gauhati University, Dr. Pradip Goswami, Dimoria College, Dr. Manoj Gogoi, Dudhnoi College, Dr. Jyotirupa Sarma, Arya Vidyapeeth College, Dr. Abhijit Bora, North Guwahati College and Ms. Mayuri Barkataki, Pragjyotish College (as members).

The Regional Chapter of Guwahati Regional Centre organized their 15th Foundation Day Lecture programme on August 19, 2020. The lecture was delivered by Professor Subho Roy, Department of Anthropology, University of Calcutta on the topic “History and Development of Anthropology and Recent Trends”.

The Regional Chapter of Guwahati Regional Centre organized their 16th Foundation Day by inviting Professor Schaschi Helmut of University of Vienna, Austria to deliver a lecture on “Current Status of COVID 19 in European Union: A Perspective from Biological Anthropology”.

The Regional Chapter of Guwahati Regional Centre organized their 17th Foundation Day of this chapter was celebrated in the Department of Anthropology, Cotton University. This Regional Chapter also organized a two-day international seminar on November 1 and 2, 2022 on the theme “Development and Changes: Role of Anthropology and Allied Disciplines” in collaboration with Down Town University, Assam through blended mode. The themes of the seminar ranged from Rethinking Development, Gender Discrimination and other issues, Power, Politics and Ethnicity, Child rights and

Governance, Natural Resource Management and Security, Health and Culture, Agriculture Development, Population Aging and Associated Concerns, Archaeological Anthropology and Cultural Resource Management and so on.

Other activities

After a long effort, we have been able to change the signatories of the account of Canara Bank of INCAA, Jadavpur Branch, Kolkata. This bank account is in operation now. We have shifted the SBI, Jhargram Branch account to SBI Ballygunge Branch, Kolkata for operational convenience.

We have not been able to change the registered office of INCAA, which is presently in Jhargram, West Bengal. However, the publications of INCAA has been shifted from that office to a space provided by the authority of Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanjdeo University, Baripada, Odisha. We are now in the process of making the INCAA publications available to different academic institutions with favourable discounts.

We are trying to develop a new website for INCAA. Professor B.V. Sharma, one of the Vice-Presidents of INCAA has taken this initiative. We are also in the process of updating the email ids of the life members of INCAA. The upcoming election of the Governing Council of INCAA 2023-2026 will be delayed since we are trying to conduct the election online. Professor R. Siva Prasad, former Professor of Hyderabad University has been appointed as the Election Officer for conducting the election of the members of the Governing Council of INCAA 2023-2026.

We are still in the process of looking for an office space for INCAA.

We neither could proceed to introduce Fellowship Programme in INCAA (as proposed by Professor K.K. Basa) nor could initiate the process of creating corpus fund for INCAA (as proposed by Professor R. Siva Prasad).

We have not succeeded in preparing the 'Status Paper' of Anthropology (as raised by Dr. Appa Rao)

The Governing Council appointed S. Singha & Associates, Chartered Accountant, P.O. Mogra, Paschim Medinipur, WB, Pin 721156 as the auditor.

The Agenda for the Governing Council Meeting of INCAA, February 21, 2023 is as follows:

1. To confirm minutes of the previous Governing Council Meeting
2. To confirm the minutes of the previous (2022) Annual General Meeting
3. To approve Audited Accounts of INCAA for the year 2021 – 2022
4. To approve the Member-Secretary's Report
5. To discuss on the mode of election of the members of the Governing Council Members 2023-2026.
6. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair.

The Agenda for the Annual General Meeting of INCAA, February 22, 2023 is as follows:

1. To confirm minutes of the previous Governing Council Meeting
2. To confirm the minutes of the previous (2022) Annual General Meeting
3. To approve Audited Accounts of INCAA for the year 2021 – 2022
4. To approve the Member-Secretary's Report
5. To discuss on the election of the new Governing Council Members of INCAA 2023-2026
6. To discuss on the venue of the next Indian Anthropology Congress 2024
7. Any other matter with the permission of the Chair