

**L P Vidyarthi**  
**(February 28, 1931- December 1, 1985)**



This extraordinary internationally acclaimed anthropologist of the Third World spent his childhood very ordinarily (Sahay, 1988, 2001). Born in a remote village of Bariyarpur, under the Barh Police Station, District Patna in the State of Bihar, Vidyarthi learned the initial alphabets under the shade of a tree in a gurupinda (a village school of traditional type). From this rural background, within a short span of fifty-six years of his active life, he became one of the most distinguished anthropologists of the world, whose contributions in the discipline of anthropology was internationally acclaimed. A leader of world anthropology, an advocate for the just cause of anthropology, an anthropologist who propelled the Indian anthropology since mid-fifties, and gave maximum momentum to anthropology in India during the post-Independent period; the man, who perhaps produced the largest number of professional anthropologists in the country after

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Independence; the man, who was elected as the President of the Xth IUAES and ICAES; the man, who lifelong remained the President of the Indian Anthropological Association; and the man, who received the 'Distinguished Service Award' in anthropology from the University of Chicago, died suddenly on December 1, 1985. In the death of Professor Vidyarthi an era of Indian anthropology had to an end.

He was a great field worker. On our trip to Andamans for fieldwork in 1970, we found a number of tribal labourers from Ranchi on board the ship

Vidyarthi believed in the maxim 'Work is God'. He virtually venerated his work. He remained so absorbed in his works that he remained in his study room till midday dictating articles, letters, or speeches, which he had to deliver on different occasions. He used to derive great pleasure and self-satisfaction in his work. It seems incredible though, but it is true, that even just two days before his death (when doctors advised him for complete rest), and only a few hours before falling into coma, he worked for four hours.

His public relations were very extensive. It included anthropologists as well as scholars of other disciplines, philanthropists, social workers, missionaries, industrialists, businessmen, administrators, bureaucrats and leaders of political parties; and thus, in general people from all walks of life. Obviously, such an extensive public relation was not developed in a few days; he had nurtured it for decades.

Having been trained initially under the leadership of D. N. Majumdar at Lucknow, in India, and later in the University of Chicago in America, Vidyarthi entered as a professional anthropologist understandably with American influence. However, soon he realized that the methodologies developed by the western anthropologists were not accurately suited to the study of complex Indian culture. Hence, he began to advocate to bring

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

'Indianness' in anthropology'. This is very much reflected in his Presidential Address at the Xth ICAES (1978) in New Delhi.

Vidyarthi's contributions in anthropology are exhaustive to behold. He authored 35 books and edited 37 volumes; wrote 159 articles for different national and international journals; and supervised three D. Litts., and 35 PhDs. Thematically, his contributions could be summed up under the following heads: Village Studies, Applied and Action Anthropology, Study on Scheduled Caste, Folklore Researches, Urban-Industrial Anthropology, Study on Leadership, Anthropological Theories; besides of course, formulating two very significant concepts in Indian Anthropology. Vidyarthi first proposed Sacred Complex (1961), and thereafter, Nature-Man-Spirit Complex (1963). He obtained his doctoral degree from the University of Chicago on Sacred Complex.

To sum up, Vidyarthi is known for his volumes of works, but very few people know that he died much before completing two of the most ambitious projects of his life. The first, was on 'Anthropological Thought', incorporating the views of the eminent Indian social thinkers and those written in the ancient Indian scriptures. This work he intended to do with my assistance. The second was on 'Civilization'. He believed that India alone was a country where the people of all the stages of culture and civilization could be found. Once he told this author that he wanted to complete these two projects by 1992. It is to be noted that he was to retire in 1991. This also suggests his well-calculated and time-bound work programme. It is quite an irony that he left for heavenly abode much before even starting these two ambitious projects. Professor Vidyarthi is no more today. Regardless of all polemic, he has left his imprints in the annals of anthropology for posterity.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

**Prof. Hasmukh Dhirajlal Sankalia**  
**(10.12.1908 – 20.1.1989)**



Prof. Hasmukh Dhirajlal Sankalia (10.12.1908 – 20.1.1989) Born in Mumbai he had an immense liking for the two great Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. In his narrations he often spoke of Bal Gangadhar Tilak's book, 'The Arctic Home in the Vedas', as it boosted his interest in Indian culture as well as the Aryans in particular. He opted for Sanskrit and History for his graduation. His love for the Indian culture and history is reflected in his M.A dissertation (completed First Class in 1932) on the ancient Buddhist University of Nalanda in Bihar. He immersed himself in ancient Indian art, architecture and iconography when he visited Nalanda and other heritage sites in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. His mentor, Father Heras, advised him to join the University of London in 1934 for his doctoral

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

research under the guidance of K. de B. Codrington working on the 'Archaeology of Gujarat' he not used data from inscriptions and several written sources while conducting intensive field surveys. He completed his thesis in 1936.

Prof. Sankalia returned to India in 1937 and spent the next couple of years in studying coins, miniature paintings and images in various Museum. He supported himself on private tuitions and married Sarladevi in 1938 who was extremely caring and supportive as they lived together surrounded by his students and associates for the next five decades.

Deccan College was revived in 1939 after being closed for five years. Prof. Sankalia chanced upon the newspaper advertisement for a faculty position in archaeology at the Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute at Lahore as he stood at a railway station. He applied and joined the Institute on its very first day, that is 17th August 1939 where he remained till his retirement in 1973. He served as the Joint Director of the Institute for many years and was the Director from 1956 to 1959 and from 1970 to 1973.

Prof. Sankalia began his field work firstly around Pune city itself and discovered a megalithic site at Bhosari. Thereafter, for three and a half decades he conducted investigations virtually in every branch of archaeology and in every part of the country alongwith his colleagues and students. Prof. Sankalia has played a pivotal role in the development of pre- and proto-historic studies in the country. His first major research project concerned investigating the prehistoric archaeology of Gujarat as there were several glitches pertaining to the cultural continuity in the regions the Palaeolithic and the Neolithic phases. Prof. Sankalia's

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

excavations at Langhnaj brought to light the Mesolithic phase which intervened between the two. This landmark discovery was followed up by the Palaeolithic survey of the Godavari valley which disproved the established notion of the Deccan not being inhabited by prehistoric man. The third significant and outstanding contribution made by Prof Sankalia's was the one which made an immense impact on Indian archaeology.

His digs at Nasik and Jorwe brought to light the Chalcolithic phase in the northern Deccan region. This exercise led him eventually to Nevasa which is counted among the rare sites inhabited by man from the Palaeolithic period to the modern times giving evidence of Middle Palaeolithic industry. Such distinctive contributions became Prof. Sankalia's signature as he carried out archaeological excavations at about 20 places including Langhnaj and Nevasa, Dwaraka, Somnath, Kolhapur, Nasik, Inamgaon, Ahar, Maheshwar-Navdatoli, Tripuri, Tekkalakota and Sanganakallu. He was most concerned about the development of various branches in the subject like prehistory, protohistory, numismatics, palaeography and epigraphy besides art and architecture, iconography and environmental archaeology. Understanding the importance of studying contemporary tribal groups for piecing together archaeological evidence, he pioneered the branching of ethnoarchaeology in India. Always receptive to new ideas he was an active participant in the international debate on 'New Archaeology'.

Prof. Sankalia excavated three historical sites, namely, Kolhapur (Brahmapuri), Dwarka and Tripuri. He encouraged regional studies in cultural ethnography and historical geography focussing an using

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

archaeological data for ascertaining the historicity of events. Prof. Sankalia was a most disciplined excavator who disliked 'short-cuts' giving due credence to principles of stratigraphy, three-dimensional recording, minute-to-minute supervision of the trench with an underlying deep respect for manual labour. Among the greatest qualities of Prof. Sankalia was his promptness in publishing the results of his research. He has over a dozen books devoted to regional studies, specific topics, four major works of synthesis in Indian archaeology and more than 200 research papers published in national and international journals. He constantly involved and informed the public on excavations and field projects besides writing introductory books on archaeology for children. He organized exhibitions at excavation sites and wrote popular newspaper articles in Gujarati and Marathi for the common man. His efforts were rewarded when villagers informed him of relics and artefacts that led to several Chalcolithic site. He trained three generations of students and 50 Ph.D. dissertations were completed under his supervision. Prof. Sankalia's vision and hard work made the Department of Archaeology of Deccan College one of the foremost archaeological institutions of the world.

An Honorary Fellow and member of several research bodies he was bestowed numerous prizes, fellowships and public honours for his remarkable contribution to Indian archaeology. He received the Chakrabarty Silver Medal from the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1972 and the Robert Bruce Foote Plaque from Calcutta University for his work in prehistory. He was awarded the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fellowship (1968-70) for conducting an integrated study of prehistoric and protohistoric cultures. The highest Indian civil honour, the Padma Bhushan, was awarded to him in 1974 by the Government of India.

**Prof. Leela Dube**  
**(1923-2012)**



Prof Leela Dube (1923-2012) was born during the British regime in Sagar to her judicial officer father and orthodox mother. One of five siblings, all of whom (four daughters and a son) were given a western education. Rooted in the Hindu traditions her mother socialized them into the Hindu cultural belief system. After completing her formal education in Nagpur Leela met S.C. Dube just after his return from Jaipur where he had gone to do his Ph.D. in anthropology. He had come to collect his scholarship when she saw him and decided he was the man she wanted to marry and did so in 1945. She broke several social and cultural barriers. She completed her Masters in 1946 and she rejoined her husband in Chhattisgarh and recalls in her 1975 essay how the Kamars ‘welcomed’ her as the “wife of a friendly outsider”.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

She recalls in 2000, “My destinies were tied to my husband’s moves”. Her achievements are endearingly described by T.N. Madan in an apt tribute titled “The Two Lives of Leela Dube” in the Indian Journal of Gender Studies (2017): “It is an account of the engagement of an intelligent and highly educated person with two distinct — in some respects discrepant — worlds without completely separating them. Happy to be a homemaker with a family, she also carved out a place of distinction for herself as a scholar of kinship studies and the anthropology of women.”

She was self-motivated to pursue her Ph.D. In her 1975 essay she says she was provided a horse cart and a maid as well as a peon by her father-in-law, a government official in Madhya Pradesh, to encourage her to study the Gond women in villages that were accessible and closer to the roadside. She submitted her Ph.D. in 1954 and was awarded the degree by Nagpur University in 1956. She immersed herself in ethnography and focussed on issues of women and Kinship.

Academically she started as Honorary Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of Sagar in 1954. She went on to serve as Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology from 1957 to 1960. Earlier she had worked as a Research Associate under the Cornell University India Program, Saharanpur and Ithaca as also from 1952-53, as Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Osmania University, Hyderabad.

In 1961, her research scholar A.R. Kutty, brought data from Kalpeni in Lakshadweep Island (off the Kerala Coast) on matrilineal kinship among the Muslims. It was the beginning of classic work on kinship and marriage, a tradition evoked by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Nur Yalman. Her individual analytical skills were at their zenith.

Leela Dee, as she was popularly addressed, went on to become a pioneer of women studies in India. In 1971-74 she was nominated as a Member,

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

National Committee on the Status of Women, Government of India and then Member, Advisory Committee for Programme on Women's Studies, ICSSR from 1975-76. She was Member, Advisory Committee, Programme on Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai' from 1975 to 1981 and from 1976 to 1993, she was the Chairperson, IUAES Commission on Women and then from 1986-90, she became the Vice-President, International Women's Anthropology Conference (IWAC). She held several such distinguished positions on national and international bodies.

In 1975 she came to Delhi, and in 1980 joined as senior faculty at the Institute of Rural Management, Anand. At IRMA, she introduced a course on Rural Environment and innovated a 'business management techniques programme design' for generating information on rural society through a methodological design in rural ethnography. Her foresight has been substantiated by three additional courses currently applicable at IRMA.

She was worked on shaping the 1974 report on 'Towards Equality' as a member of the committee constituted by the Government of India for gender parity. Several departments of Women Studies were started by the UGC and the ICSSR on the recommendations of this report. She made feminist anthropology integral to contemporary teaching in sociology as well as social and cultural anthropology.

**Some of the contributions of Prof Leela Dube are listed:**

**Gender studies:**

Dube, Leela. "On the construction of Gender: Hindu girls in Patrilineal India", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.23. No. 18 (April 30,1988).

Dube, Leela. Women and Kinship: Comparative Perspectives on Gender in South and South-East Asia. (1997) United Nations University Press.

Dube, Leela. Anthropological Explorations in Gender: Intersecting Fields. (2001). New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Women Studies Edited volumes

Dube, Leela, Eleanor Leacock and Shirley Ardener (edited). (1986). Visibility and Power: Essays on Women in Society and Development. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Dube, Leela and Rajni Palriwala (edited). (1990). Structures and Strategies: Women, Work and family. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Other Works

Dube Leela. (1969). Matriliney and Islam: Religion and society in the Lakshadweep. Delhi: National Publishing House.

Recommended Readings

Abraham, Janaki. 'Setting Sail for Lakshadweep: Leela Dube and the Study of Matrilineal Kinship' Indian Journal of Gender Studies · (October 2017)

Dube, Leela. 1994. Kinship and Gender in South and Southeast Asia: patterns and Contrasts (9th J.P. Naik Memorial Lecture, 1994 ).

Dube Leela (1988) 'On the Construction of Gender: Hindu Girls in Patrilineal India'. Economic and Political Weekly. Vol. 23 (18). pp. WS11-WS19.

Dube, Leela. 2001. "Doing kinship and gender: An autobiographical account". Economic and Political Weekly, 35(46), 4037–4047.

Madan, T.N. 2017. 'The Two Lives of Leela Dube Introductory Remarks on her Life and Work' Indian Journal of Gender Studies 24(3) pp.380–395. Sage Publications.

**Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose (1901-1972)**

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**



During his career taught Anthropology and Human Geography at Calcutta University, was Director, Anthropological Survey of India and Commissioner for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. He had served as Mahatma Gandhi's secretary and interpreter during Gandhi's famous trip to East Bengal at the height of communal violence there. He was editor of Man in India and continued to edit it even when he was seriously ill. He wrote profusely on subjects like: Anthropology, Temple Architecture, Pre-History, Geology, Human Geography, Social History, Art, Politics, Education, Social Work and even on Gandhi. (A detailed bibliography of his English and Bengali writings is published by Shyamal Kumar Ray in Passage Through Indian Civilization)

Surajit Sinha, his student reports him to be an outstanding exponent of Gandhian thought because of his versatile creativity and being a passionate nationalist. He holds the rare distinction of being the only practicing anthropologist who was jailed twice for participating in the freedom struggle for India's Independence. Even in jail he gave a series of lectures on the structure of the Hindu society to fellow inmates. An edited version of those lectures was first published in Bengali as Hindu Samajer

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Garan in 1949 and was later translated by Andre Beteille and presented as *The Structure of Hindu Society* (1975). He wrote on varied subjects but thought himself to be first and foremost an anthropologist with a special focus on culture.

Bose was fascinated by Kroeber's and Wissler's studies on cultural traits and cultural integration and applied this approach in studying the spring festivals of India and discussing in *Cultural Anthropology* (1929) when he was just 28 years old. This book from "an unknown young Indian scholar attracted the attention of Kroeber (1930) who reviewed it favorably in the *American Anthropologist*. Later on Kroeber and Kluckhohn in their compendium *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952) included as many as ten citations from his *Cultural Anthropology*, according to Baidhyanath Saraswati.[1]

Sinha further writes that Bose was, "driven by an indomitable spirit of enquiry; he transgressed the boundaries of specific disciplines and the conventional divides between theoretical thinking and application of knowledge"[2] (1984). Bose was systematic in whatever he did and imposed a strict regimen on himself and those who were around him. He always led from the front setting the pace for others.

The field of anthropology had been dominated by colonial concerns and for long Indian anthropologists did little to change them. Bose strongly felt that they simply copied what was prevalent in anthropology practiced in the West. In his essay of 1952, "Current Research Projects in Indian Anthropology" (*Man in India*, Vol.32 No.3) Bose noted that "by and large Indian Anthropologists had not been able to make any area of enquiry specially their own in which they developed their own methodology of approach or theoretical interest of 'enquiry'".

In an article entitled "Fifty Years of Science in India: Progress of Anthropology and Archeology" based on a quick survey, he wrote "the position of Indian Anthropology has, on the whole, been colonial in

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

relation to schools which have dominated the European or American scene from time to time” (Indian Science Congress, Calcutta, 1963). He wanted to chart a course that reflected Indian reality and knowledge and demonstrate the characteristic features of Indian civilization with its underlying unity by arguing that the unity existed in India’s variety. He wanted the reality and strength of India to be known so that the basic task of regenerating the colonially subjugated nation could be taken up in an earnest yet systematic manner. Thus, Bose already had a design in his mind about the research in India even before he joined as the Director of the Anthropological Survey of India. Within a month of his assuming charge he launched his most talked about, first ever all India project, called the ‘Material Trait Survey’.

Bose had several objectives before him. One was to generate simple and basic information on peasants’ material life indicating their ingenuity in using local resources and giving expression to their cultural designs in a variety of ways. The second one was to train young scholars to get acquainted with and gain the rich experience of rural India. The third, was to make young researchers learn the techniques of observing and systematically recording field data on material traits all the while emphasizing scientific observation. The fourth objective was to inculcate a spirit of comradeship among the young research scholars in sharing data and ideas towards the larger goal of understanding India.

The report of the project was printed in August 1961 as Peasant Life in India: A study in Indian Unity and Diversity (Calcutta: Anthropological Survey of India). It provided an authentic picture of India’s cultural distribution at material level. It indicated the relationship with Southeast Asia as also countries lying in the West and Northwest of India. The introduction by Bose was, “India has been a land where cultures have mingled after flowing from both the West and the East. But what is original is that the new combinations have taken place here, and sometimes even new inventions.” The stage was set up for the next phase of studies which focused on the study of specialized occupational groups like the potters, fisher folk, metal workers etc., besides complex religious

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

institutions like temples, sacred centers, and centers for Sanskrit learning etc., as also the groups who had created a special niche in supplying goods and services to the settled population like peripatetics.

In 1956 Bose published a paper on, “Some Observations on Nomadic Castes of India” ( Man in India Vol.36, No.1), a modified version of his speech delivered at the International Geographical Seminar held at Aligarh Muslim University in January 1956. This article is germane to his understanding of the structure of Indian society as well as his pioneering attempt to draw the attention of scholars to the role played by a generally overlooked population like the nomads.

He pointed out that “it was not entirely true that the villages in India were self-sufficient. There were villages of various kinds and some were specialized villages such as that of potters, weavers, blacksmiths etc. Then there are villages which specialized in trading and were located at river-side ports from where roads radiated to hinter lands. Such villages attracted the attention of specialized group to settle down which eventually led them to become trading and manufacturing villages.”

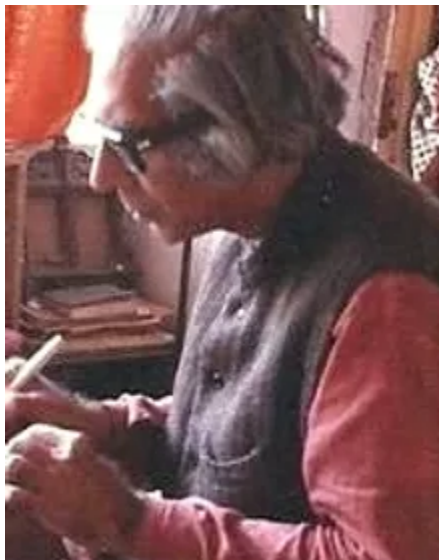
Apart from “complimentary functions between villages, occupational specialization of castes within the village, weekly markets, seasonal and specialized fairs they were all tied in an economic, cultural and social network.” He further argued that “since a variety of occupational groups” could not find regular patronage in a single village, they became wandering groups “forming a compliment to the settled residents who inhabit the villages of India”. He further indicated how “men of forest” were incorporated into this network and noted that despite such incorporation these groups retained their identity. This was an invaluable insight as it indicated a certain relationship between the forest dwellers and the peasantry which had been contrary to the understanding of the then colonial anthropology.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Considering their pervasiveness throughout the long history of humankind, the peripatetics are “persistent cultural systems within plural societies”. In spite of their being persistent cultural systems they remain outsiders and strangers to the sedentary society and remain impervious to the disdain and low status given to them. It is poignant that later studies on peripatetics confirmed Bose’s preliminary observations.

Bose had the courage of his convictions. Even though he was devoted to Gandhi and served him during a very difficult period in Indian history, he let him know his differences with him and left the camp of a person who had already acquired the image of a colossus on the Indian scene. His contributions to India Anthropology shaped its destiny in the world leaving an indelible imprint. He has earned the description of Scholar, Wanderer, Concerned thinker, visionary and builder.

**Prof. Surajit Chandra Sinha (1926-2002)**



The Journal of Indian Anthropological Society brought out a special issue in memory of Surajit Chandra Sinha (2003) in which certain aspects of his life and work were written besides there were twenty two other papers covering topics in which Sinha was directly or indirectly interested. Here

the focus will be on two aspects: one on his persona and second on his consistent life-long perusal of studies on tribes in the larger context of Indian civilization. These contributions are seminal in understanding the position of the tribes in Indian society and culture. Both of these aspects are closely linked for students of anthropology particularly in India, which has a history of colonial domination, under the shadow of which anthropology developed, specifically the study of tribes.

Anthropology and Social and Cultural Anthropology in particular are at once a humanistic science. A stint of intensive field investigation is a humbling experience and tends to make a deep and ever lasting impression on the basic values of human kind. It becomes still denser because anthropologists have been advocating participant observation in order to get insiders point of view and to have an idea of their vision of life. This could be achieved if one stays in the field for a long time, mixes with the people, participates in their day to day activities, and has genuine empathy for their way of life. The experience gained through intensive anthropological fieldwork is extremely valuable keeping in view the class and caste ridden Indian society.

However, this is indeed an ideal position but the reality has been very different if we keep the history of Anthropology in perspective. History is on record that in the process of colonization of the new world, the indigenous people were indiscriminately killed, maimed, enslaved and uprooted. While colonization was in full merciless swing some speculations about the human evolution too were building up. The indigenous people who were later, in most of the places, called as tribes became major focus of anthropological studies to provide evidence to Victorian evolutionist theorists. From collection of stray data the need was felt for more detailed and systematic studies of the tribes which in a way were one of the factors in giving birth to the discipline of anthropology. Speculation and weaving stories about early man has been rife in every society but in the post-enlightenment era, the West took it for granted that they have 'arrived' and the early man was savage (see Misra 2012:533-561).

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

But the situation in India has been different. The relationship of the larger society in prehistoric (Lukacs 2002) and ancient India, with the people who inhabited forest areas, was varied and complex. Lukacs writes, 'all the sources emphasize "the broad spectrum" nature of hunting-foraging adaptation which includes trade of "forest products" with settled agriculturist' (ibid: 57). On the other hand it is also true that from sheer materialistic interest there were persistent efforts by the peasantry to expand agriculture and occupy more and more forest areas which resulted in conflict with forest dwellers but forest was also a place for joy hunting, retreat, introspection and learning in traditional India. This apparent contradiction can be understood if we keep in view that in the long history of India the population living in the forest, in the fringes of the forest, on hills, on sea shores, river banks and in islands have been interacting with the larger society in a variety of ways which to some extent was possible also on account of slow rate of technological development. In pre-colonial India, Sinha observed that the classical dimension of the great tradition maintained a nourishing contact with the communities living in forest and other fringe areas. This extremely important insight led him to conclude that the tribal cultures in peninsular India as representing the core dimension of Indian civilization (1958). This was indeed a major and bold departure from existing understanding about the tribes. Here it will suffice to say that the communities called tribes did not have an all India identity, at the regional level they were known by their specific names and interacted with other jatis and communities inhabiting the region (Misra 1977). In pre industrial India forest was a major source of resources. With the establishment of the colonial rule the situation in the country with regard to these communities got drastically changed. The British Colonist also came to the conclusion partly on account of political reasons, partly on account of their experience with such population elsewhere and also to propagate missionary activities (see the section on Christianity in Susanga in Maharaja Bhupendra Chandra Sinha's Changing Times 1965[1]) that the communities living in the forest and other fringe areas were different from the rest of the people. A new term 'tribe' came into discourse on the communities in India, and also that they were isolated people which is not

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

only oversold idea but distinctively partisan. In course of time owing to an intensive curiosity about the exoticness a number of studies were conducted on tribes in various parts of the country. They were considered well enough for providing data for weaving theories about human evolution, developing categories, and fulfilling the political, ecclesiastical, and administrative objectives of the colonial administration. This situation prevailed to a great extent even in the post-colonial period. One of the reasons for this is the nature of anthropological enquiry which is rooted in colonial thought pattern and colonial values. For instance, Malinowski was one of the scholars who enthusiastically pleaded for intensive field investigation. But when one reads his diary, one gets unmistakable impression that he had intense negative feelings about the people he was studying and yet he liked to convey that he was producing a value-free and scientific account of the people. Even eminent scholar like Raymond Firth in his foreword to the diary wanted to gloss over the darker side of the relation of an anthropologist with his human material (see Misra 1978). This is an area of anthropological field enquiry in which the relationship between investigator and investigated has not been discussed in detail but if anything it has been hierarchical. How far this kind of relationship influences the anthropological enquiry and its results is an important question but has been consistently overlooked. Although in post colonial India most of the anthropological enquiries have been conducted by the Indians on fellow Indians, the relationship between the investigators and investigated has not changed much. Eminent scholars like Srinivas recognize this pitfall in social sciences and in particular in the field of anthropology but he rationalizes this position by saying that anthropologists have to be twice born. First he has to identify himself with the people to collect data and second when he has to put the people he has studied in the background in order to communicate with his fellow academics (Srinivas 2002). This theory of twice born may appeal to the observer and is clever but does not answer the most important question as to what interest the observer has in the enquiry of the observer. Theoretically, this contradiction has been resolved by Marxian thinkers by taking an unequivocal position in stating that man's knowledge depends mainly on

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

his activity in material production through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena. They categorically state that knowledge cannot be acquired apart from activity in production. What they advocate will be revolutionary in caste, class ridden and colonially dominated values of India but the inherent contradiction between observers and observed can be mitigated to some extent by the persona of the observer. Personality of the fieldworker is an important index of the success of fieldwork. Srinivas writes 'what an anthropologist regards as significant for observation will to some extent depend on his social background, personality, academic history and of course his intellectual ability and his capacity for empathizing with the indigenes' (ibid; 550).

Purnimadi writes that she 'collaborated informally with Surajit for almost all his works, but I remained in the green room and he was in the central stage'. She says that while 'Surajit was working on his tribe-caste continuum paper on the basis of songs he had collected I was writing on tribe/folk classical music continuum'. This collaboration between them became more intensive while they were in Santiniketan. There they had the opportunity to interact with both classical and folk artists. Together they brought to light the work of Jiban, a terracotta artist who was a daily laborer. They published the poems of a rickshaw puller entitled 'Rickshaw Chalak Kabi Mahabir Roy'. They set up a school for tribal children in Santiniketan and named it as Melameshar Patasala. In the same period they gave a sort of formal shape to their dream concept 'Paribrajak Mandali', society of wanderers – that is what had attracted Sinha to anthropology and Purnimadi to Surajit Sinha. Both loved freedom and liberation from hierarchies, domination and regimentation. Their getting involved with a daily laborer or a rickshaw puller should not be merely read as act of kindness, which of course it was but should be also seen as attempt to break the class barriers and most importantly search for creative urges wherever they exist. Anthropological fieldwork is not one time or one place activity. It is journey of life. It certainly requires training, attitude and alertness to pick up the impulses and vibrations all around. Merely hearing is not listening as seeing is not observing. In order to listen

and observe, it is necessary to transcend the limitations imposed by notions of hierarchy, culture etc. and develop intense human orientation. In case of Sinhas they combined so very well, both were trained as scientists but were genuine humanist. Das Gupta who jointly did fieldwork with Sinha writes ‘Surajit Sinha started his career as a true anthropologist believing that intensive and prolonged fieldwork was the backbone of anthropological research...For Sinha “field” was his second home and continued to keep constant touch with the field and with his informants just as he kept close contact with his own kith and kin. This naturally meant visiting a field occasionally and collecting the data round the year’ (2003: 107).

#### Persona of Sinha

Surajit Sinha was a leading anthropologist of the country. During his life time he headed many important positions notably such as being the Director of the Anthropological Survey of India, Vice-chancellor of Vishwa Bharati, and Director, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, besides being in various committees of national and regional importance.

#### **Informal aspect**

For details of his education, training in anthropology etc., see special issue brought out by the Indian Anthropological Society; a few more details are provided here which shed light on his persona which have been so very graciously provided by Purnimadi (Dr. [Mrs.] Surajit Sinha). Briefly, the two Purnimadi and Surajit Sinha were made for each other though one held a doctorate in Physics and other in Anthropology; they had a lot of common interests like music, art, and literature. Both had the spirit of wanderer in them. They were a wonderful foil to each other. Purnimadi writes that Surajit had acquired B.Sc., degree with honors in Geology but he lost interest in that subject. He loved to roam about and drew sketches of animals and human beings. He was charmed by the dance of the Santhal. He even began to learn dance from a student of Uday Shankar. Surajit Sinha ‘was basically an artist, his sketches and paintings were abstract but original. His lines were bold and confident where as my own works of art

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

were more realistic and decorative'. It was the interest in art, a relaxed and free attitude towards life that drew them together. While Surajit Sinha was doing fieldwork among the Bhumij he wrote to Purnimadi almost daily. He was charmed by the Bhumij way of life. These letters contained stories about Bhumij life along with numerous sketches from the field situation indicating the passion with which he pursued his anthropological fieldwork among the Bhumij. Some of his drawings spilled on envelopes, giving a tell tale sign of the state of the heart and mind of a young man out in the field among the people who were romantic, loved laughter and music. Eventually they got married. Soon after his fieldwork he went to North Western University, USA to do his Ph.D and Purnimadi and now Mrs. Sinha remained in Kolkata to do her Ph.D. Soon after he returned from USA he got a job in Anthropological Survey of India and joined at its Central India Station at Nagpur.

### **Formal Aspect**

Surajit Sinha was a mentor of a generation of scholars of which I am one of the fortunate beings. He joined Anthropological Survey of India in 1957 and soon after that Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose joined Anthropological Survey of India as its director, who was not only a mentor of Surajit Sinha but also made lasting impression on him. Bose was a multifaceted personality, brilliant and a man with mission. He was Mahatma Gandhi's secretary and a close companion. In the words of Surajit Sinha, 'Bose was a leading anthropologist, outstanding exponent of Gandhism, a rare example of versatile creativity and a great nationalist' (1984: 1). Bose was an explorer and wanderer and was driven by indomitable spirit of enquiry. He was a concerned thinker, visionary and builder. For Bose, Sinha was one of his most promising and brilliant students. It is reported that Bose had given 100 out of 100 to Sinha on his M.Sc. dissertation. Over years they bonded very well in a true guru-shisya relationship which continued throughout. Within month of his assuming the charge of the Anthropological Survey of India, Bose launched his most talked about the first ever all India project called the Material Culture Trait Survey and

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

entrusted the project to his trusted student Surajit Sinha to conduct it from Nagpur (Sarkar & Bhattacharya 2002: 85-11). In undertaking this project Bose had several objectives. One was to generate some simple and basic information about the people of rural India. He was determined to unshackle the Indian anthropology from the colonial yoke. He was concerned to demonstrate the characteristic features of Indian civilization and show its underlying unity (Misra 2002: 57). Second was to train young scholars to get acquainted and gain some experience of rural India. Third was to train young scholars to observe and systematically record the data on simple material traits[1]. Fourth he wanted to begin his tenure in the Anthropological Survey of India with concrete contribution so that he could move to research programmes on complicated study of institutions and other abstract ideas step by step. This is the period when we got the opportunity to interact with Sinha on a regular basis, got some glimpses of his personality and learn his ways of doing things. The most outstanding feature of which was that, he hardly maintained a distinction between formal and informal interactions. It was a period of intensive work for Sinha and all those who worked with him. In order to meet the dead lines work was being done day and night. Moving behind this feverish activity was the inspiring and friendly spirit of Sinha. He was available to the staff working with him at any time. In between such a busy, hectic and demanding schedule of work, he would suddenly drop in just to enquire as to how the work was going on and stay for a discussion on some academic issue.

Later in the evening or even late in the night he may drop in the office and invite us to play a game of chess with him. In the same busy period he participated in cricket matches, picnics and also music sessions. Recollecting all that, it may be stated that it was his way of managing administration of office, guiding research, exploring new ideas and interacting with young scholars under his charge. In spite of the fact that he was the boss but he never allowed the official status in human interactions. Even with the junior most staff he addressed them with respect and invited them to join in picnics or musical sessions. He always had a ready wit and appeared to be relaxed even in the most trying and

dense situations. He was never overbearing and this continued even when he became the director of the Anthropological Survey of India (see Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya 2003: 159-165).

Misra had written 'the young researchers working with him had all the freedom to think independently and argue out their point of views. Sinha's leadership was democratic, liberal and humane to the core. He encouraged and inspired the young researchers to develop their own interests. Sinha was quick in discovering a new idea or a point in the young researchers' deliberations, which he would refer in his talks, discussions, letters and papers. This had a tremendous effect on the young researchers. They were transformed into persons having ideas. This stimulated them to no end and led them to work with zeal, which hitherto was unknown in a government research organization' (2003: 142). The most significant change that Sinha brought into the Anthropological Survey of India was a sense of freedom, participation and dignity among the research staff in spite of its built-in bureaucratic culture. His endeavor was to develop a colligate of concerned scholars. He encouraged impromptu colloquiums and continuously stressed on dialogue which generated stimulation for research and self confidence in the minds of young scholars.

### **Studies on Tribes**

A most significant paper that he wrote on tribes is 'Tribal Cultures of peninsular India as a dimension of little tradition in the study of Indian civilization: A preliminary statement' published in the Journal of American Folklore in the year 1958. The earlier version of this paper was presented by him in a seminar organized by Robert Redfield, Milton Singer and Sinha, at the University of Chicago in 1956. This was done soon after he had completed his doctoral work on the Bhumij which clearly indicates the direction in which he was thinking. This paper in a way can be considered as exploratory as he was laying down the foundation of his future researches. He kept on pursuing the questions which he had raised in this paper, throughout his professional career which enabled him to fine tune

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

the understanding of tribes in India which ultimately culminated in the book *Tribes and Indian Civilization: Structure and Transformation* (1982).

His 1956 (1958) paper is all the more important because the prevailing dominant view as (in fact it continues to be so even now) that the tribes were considered to be isolated and were a different people. It is remarkable and indeed bold that Sinha took the position that tribal cultures are a strand in understanding Indian civilization. This he stated in 50s when he was barely 30. This paper is outstanding and systematically done. To validate his position he methodically showed the areas of articulation, discontinuities between tribes and Hindu peasants and also the transformation scene of tribes.

To begin with he takes the position that though the tribal belt of Central and southern India is huge in terms of area as well as number of people, their articulation with the larger universe of Indian civilization is relatively restricted and interrupted, but 'in not a single case is the community completely shut off from the contact with what we call the great culture community of India' (504). These tribal communities everywhere within the Indian mainland have been in touch with the traditional network in observance of rituals, common festivals, ceremonial friendship etc. It may be further added that they have been supplying forest resources to the larger community for thousands of years, in protecting and maintaining frontier areas, playing bridge and buffer roles between powerful states and also in looking after sacred Hindu centers located in the forests and on top of the hills (see Misra 2014). On the basis of these observations Sinha came to the conclusion that these little tribal communities fall within the "social field" of the Great Tradition of India but whether they fall within the "ideological field" of the Great Indian Tradition or not demands closer examination. Having laid down the basis of his search he outlines three possible ways of conceptualizing the position of the little traditions of these tribal communities. First is that these cultures have been outside the main historical current of the development of Indian civilization. Second is that the tribal cultures can

be conceived of as backward branch of traditional Indian civilization. Lastly, the tribal cultures provided the raw materials that contributed to the development of Indian civilization. The contemporary tribes represent a relatively untransformed section. Their growth was arrested owing to their isolation and a series of historical circumstances. Of these, he kept aside the first two possibilities and opted to examine the third which of course he felt was most promising and challenging. He was conscious that there was no way to provide a long range historical documentation to support the third possibility but it can be fruitfully done at synchronic level. He found Redfield's writing, favorable in selecting third option who thought that growth of indigenous civilization was conversion of self contained[1] tribal people into peasantry and continuous interaction between little and great traditions . Obviously this conversion is indeed a long drawn process. In order to validate the third possibility he began to examine one by one the features of little communities of tribal people and Hindu peasantry. He took into account habitat, economy, social structure and ideological. In ideological, he considered the belief in supernatural value system, world view and man to man relationship and finally he considered the inspirational level of the little community of tribes and of the Hindu peasantry. Based on this analysis of these features he highlighted the common denominators and also the discontinuity between the little communities of tribes and the Hindu peasantry. His overall conclusion was 'within the limitations of our present endeavor, as mentioned above, we may say that we have been able to demonstrate the possibility of orthogenetic development of civilization in India from a primitive cultural level roughly comparable to cultures of the less acculturated tribes of Peninsular India. We have pointed vital elements of continuity between tribal cultures and Hindu traditions. We have also been able to isolate some potential elements of transition in the direction of peasant cultures in tendencies towards feudalization, stratification, specialization of roles and so on (1958: 517 emphases added). The other papers that Sinha did in his professional career on tribes in the Indian context are so to say were in the womb of this paper which he did as early as 1956. What is remarkable in his case is that he kept on pursuing the

main theme of this paper in his future researches which he did by widening the context in space, time and ethnicity (Sinha 1978: 155). This pursuit resulted in much cited papers such as State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India (1962), Tribe-caste and Tribe-Peasant continua in Central India (1968), Vaisnava Influence on a Tribal Culture (1966), Tribal Solidarity and Messianic Movements: A Review Article (1968), Co-existence of Multiple Scales and Networks of a Civilization: India (1978), Space, Time and Ethnicity: Fieldwork Among the Bhumij of Barabhum (1978), Social and Ecological Context of Rice Cultivation in India (1985), Introduction in Tribal Polities and State Systems in Pre-colonial Eastern and North-Eastern India (1987), Agriculture Crafts and Weekly Markets of South Manbhum (1961), Ethnic Group Villages and Towns of Pargana Barabhum (1966), and finally Tribes and Indian Civilization (1982). Most of these papers have been well discussed in anthropological literature and issues emerging out of them have been themes of numerous researches and therefore need not be discussed here except two namely Social and Ecological Context of Rice Cultivation in India (1985) and Tribes and Indian Civilization (1982). The former has been selected as in this study he adopted a rigorous and most appropriate technique in order to illustrate the similarity and difference between tribes and the Hindu peasantry and the latter because he briefly re-examined his position in order to explain emergent vibrations among the tribes.

## **References:**

### **Context of Rice Cultivation**

Though rice cultivation covers a huge area in the world (see Bhattacharya 2011) its relationship within culture and social formation have not been adequately explored by the social scientists. Sinha in his paper examined rice cultivation in a hilly tract inhabited by the Santal and in a plain tract village inhabited by castes of upper, middle and lower strata in order to find out if there were significant differences and similarities between the two. He found that though there was considerable similarity in the traditional technology of rice cultivation adapted to distinct ecological

situation, there were some significant differences too. In the Santal village, egalitarian socially cohesive ethics continued to pervade though with the growth of wet rice cultivation there was 'an incipient tendency towards class formation' (p.91). Sinha found that land and cereals in Santal village did not move out of the village or into it therefore he came to the conclusion that 'the incipient tendency for class formation had to operate within a tribal style'. Whereas in the multi-caste village there was a clear division between two essential classes 'those who own and supervise land and those who do the manual work. It was observed that the binary agrarian class division operated in caste style. Tentatively, we may describe the two situations, as representing tribal and caste modes of productive organization, of rice cultivation' (92). It needs to be highlighted that his interest in social formation among the tribes and the Hindu peasantry and the relationship between the two remained consistent.

### **Tribe and Indian Civilization**

In 1973 he slightly modified his position as regards the relationship between tribe and Indian civilization as expressed in his 1958 paper. This was done to accommodate the changes that were occurring in the tribal belt of peninsular India. In re-examining the process of state formation as well as the nature of tribe-caste/peasant continua he noticed that the movement from tribes to peasant was not unidirectional. There have been cases of devolution from state to segmentary, tribal state, secondary primitivization, withdrawal, oscillation, regional universalization etc., which were basically responses to the impulses generated by the larger socio-political-economic system to which one can add various movements that have been generated in tribal areas in the last few decades. He observed that his return to the perspective of tribes as dependent historic structures which he had rejected in his earlier evolutionary formulation, clarified many of the apparently anomalous observations in the tribal transformation in India. He writes 'the perspective of dependent historic structures helps us to identify not only the cultural concomitants of solidarity movements as mechanism for the preservation of tribal identity,

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

other adaptive mechanism of persistence such as – withdrawal and eco-cultural adjustments outside the adaptive reaches of the encroaching civilization, maintenance of hostile stance, existence of special networks for far flung intra and inter-tribal communication, and playing bridge and buffer roles – becomes meaningful in the same perspective’ (1973: 106). This rethinking by Sinha about the position of tribes in Indian society is fully reflected in his book *Tribe and Indian Civilization* (1982). Any discussion on the tribes of India cannot be concluded without underlining the fact that the tribes in India have retained their identity. Productive relations, power dynamics and specific historical conditions certainly provide partial explanations but there is something deeper and philosophical about their everlasting values which have not received the attention they deserve.

**Professor Bhuban Mohan Das**  
**(4th October 1931-22nd January 2008)**



## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

India is home to galaxy of anthropologists who have relatively remained unsung. Their contributions are often ignored by varied traditions of anthropology practised across the World. On this platform, UIAF is bringing together their contributions to anthropological epistemology along with their personal and academic journeys, mostly documented by scholars who have worked closely with these stalwarts.

One of the renowned anthropologists of India, and particularly of Northeast India, Professor Bhuban Mohan Das, laid a strong foundation for anthropological research, especially physical anthropology in the Northeast India.

Prof. Das was born on 4th October 1931 in Guwahati, Assam. His father, Late Hara Mohan Das was a reputed author, teacher and educationist and his mother Late Jagaddhatri Das was a very kind and caring lady. He was deeply inspired by his father as also by his elder brother Late Dr Biraj Mohan Das. He was the fourth child out of the six children in the family. He started his education in Manik Chandra ME and Cotton Collegiate Schools of Guwahati. He was a brilliant student. In 1947 he completed his school education from Cotton Collegiate school. He then joined Cotton College in the Intermediate of Science classes with Anthropology as one of the subjects. Initially he faced hardships to pursue the subject because of non-availability of textbooks in the subject and this prompted him later to write textbooks in anthropology at the outset of his professional career.

The University of Gauhati which was founded in 1948 introduced Anthropology in the Honours school at the undergraduate level. He joined the university with Anthropology as the specialization in the undergraduate programme. After completing his graduation with distinction, he went to Calcutta University for post-graduation studies. His training at Calcutta University made him more passionate towards physical anthropology. He was inspired by his teacher, Prof. Kantibhusan Prakash. Young Bhuban Mohan Das opted for physical anthropology as his special paper. He completed his masters (M.Sc.) in 1953.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

His academic brilliance came to the fore early in his academic journey. He has the rare distinction of having three of his research papers published while he was still perusing master's programme. Immediately after completing post-graduation, B.M. Das joined the Department of Anthropology, Cotton College, Guwahati as a faculty in 1954. Same year, he also enrolled for his Ph.D. under the supervision of one of the most acclaimed physical anthropologist S.S. Sarkar of Calcutta University. He focused on microevolution for his research project. In 1959, he was awarded doctorate degree for his work on Somatic Variability among some Populations of South Goalpara, Assam by the Calcutta University.

His contributions to comprehending ethnic complexities of the population of the North-East is immeasurable. He dedicated his exceptional abilities to unfold hitherto unexplored dynamics of population Genetics. Staying abreast with recent developments with the scientific understanding of human growth and demographics, he encouraged his students to study these domains. He also worked on several projects incorporating these facets of biological anthropology. Most befitting reference to his remarkable contributions is the title of 'Father of Physical Anthropology of Northeast India' (Choudhury 2009:55).

He served for two years in Cotton College and then moved to Gauhati University in 1956 from where he retired as Professor in 1992. From 1973 to 1976, he rendered his services in the Department of Anthropology, Dibrugarh University as the Professor and Head. He also held the position of Dean, Faculty of Science for some time at Gauhati University. This period of services in the universities was significant for him as it provided him platform to make significant contributions to the discipline and its epistemology and methodology. His academic achievements brought laurels and recognition for him both within and outside the country.

He was awarded the coveted Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship and went to Berlin for his post-doctoral research (1968-70). He submitted his post-doctoral work to the Calcutta University and was awarded the rare and prestigious D. Sc. Degree in 1973. His D.Sc. thesis on 'Studies on (i) Variation in Physical Anthropometry and the ABO Blood Groups of the Tribal Population of Assam and (ii) Head Hair from Some Caucasoid and

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Mongoloid Population of Assam, India' was produced in microfiche technique by Field Research Project, Miami, USA (Choudhury & Mahanta 2009:3).

In 1982, he delivered lectures in three universities in Italy under Indo-Italian Cultural Exchange Programme. The same year he visited Hamburg, Bremen, and Hanover for academic assignments. In 1987 Prof Das visited Hannover and from there went to England, France, USSR, Greece, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Belgium, Holland, Czechoslovakia, USA, and Egypt for various academic obligations. He was National Lecturer, University Grants Commission (1979-80) and in 1993, he was chosen as the Emeritus Fellow, University Grants Commission (1993-95). He has to his credit more than 150 research publications both in international and national journals. He completed about 15 research projects individually as well as jointly and 25 research scholars received Ph.D. under his supervision, from Gauhati and Dibrugarh Universities.

His outstanding contributions to Physical Anthropology of Northeast India is acknowledged in the distinguished echelons of Indian anthropology. B.M. Das charted a new chapter through his Biochemical Genetics works in the repository of anthropological research (Choudhury, 2009:62). His collaboration with Professor Gebhard Flatz, a Human Geneticist of Hannover Medical School, who came to Assam, led to some interesting findings on globin gene distributions and the related issues in Northeast Indian populations.

Collaborative research of Prof. Das and his scholar, Dr Ranjan Deka revealed the presence of very high frequency of Hb E gene among the Sonowal Kacharis of Assam. In another joint project with Professor Hubert Walter of the University of Bremen, Germany and Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, important blood group markers were investigated for the first time in certain population groups of Assam. All these studies and projects enriched the knowledge basket of physical anthropology with reference to the Northeast of India.

He loved travelling and lived with a childlike curiosity to know more. This possibly explains his intense engagement with field work. He belongs to a generation of anthropologists, where super specializations in physical or

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

social anthropology were inconsequential. He believed in the holistic tradition of the discipline and supervised research in both physical and social anthropology with equal ease. I experienced this first hand. In 2004, he asked me to teach physical anthropology in cotton college, saying; 'so what? The more you teach the more you learn. Anthropology is holistic'. My personal journey in anthropology is inspired by persona of Prof. Das and my father who also taught at Gauhati University.

Prof. Das also served as Chairman of the Assam Textbook Production and Publication Corporation during 1995-96 and was a member of the National Commission for Backward Classes from 2000 to 2003. He was also the President of the Anthropological Society of Northeast India (also a founder) and the President of the Anthropology and Archaeology section of Indian Congress in 1979. He was the founder president and later chairman of Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists (INCAA).

He was also associated with several regional and national institutions of repute in various capacities. He was the Vice Chairman of Srimanta Sankardev Kalashetra Society, Assam, President of Assam Science Society. He even presided over the History Section of Assam Sahitya Sabha in its 49th session in 1982. He was also the President of the Assam Academy for Cultural Relations for 25 years till 2008 when he passed away. The Srimanta Sankardev Kalashetra exhibits anthropological elements to a great extent and that is all because of the efforts of Bhuban Mohan Das. He even succeeded in establishing anthropology as a science subject in the Assam Science Society.

His scientific learnings on the diverse ethnic composition of Assam and the Northeast, resulted in the enriched publications in the form of 10 books written in English and 21 books in Assamese on various anthropological areas of interest. He brought learnings of basics of physical anthropology within the reach of average student through his publications of two textbooks, Outlines of Physical Anthropology and Physical Anthropology Practical (with Dr Ranjan Deka). These are considered as primer for every student of anthropology even today.

B.M. Das is often addressed as a public anthropologist. He interacted with young students and common people with equal ease. His use of language

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

was simple and lucid both in his lectures as also in his writings. His efforts to popularise Anthropology among the common people is evident through his numerous publications made in the Assamese language. A prolific writer in Assamese, his book (Manuh, 1968) gives a general introductory idea of the subject. He has three collections of short stories and biographical sketches to his credit. He was also a national award-winning children's litterateur. The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, conferred on him the Annandale Memorial Medal in 2004 in recognition for his outstanding contribution to the studies in Anthropology and the study of 'Anthropology in Asia'.

It is difficult to summarise his extraordinary contributions towards the enrichment of the social and cultural milieu of Assam as a liberal thinker and social leader are etched on Assam's intellectual and social landscape. A very punctual, disciplined man with great organizing capabilities he contributed immensely towards the study of people of northeast India. His efforts to popularise Anthropology were primarily successful because of his established image as a litterateur in Assamese society. He pioneered research in physical and genetic markers of the population of the North-east region. He collected exhaustive data on different ethnic groups of Assam to document biological variations of the people of this region

The language used in his writings, both in English and Assamese, was such that it could reach to one and all and is able to cater to the requirements of students even today. He made significant contributions as a teacher in Anthropology both in Gauhati University and Dibrugarh University situated at two extreme ends of Assam. This great personality breathed his last on 22nd January 2008 leaving behind a void difficult to fill!

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## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

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6. The Peoples of Assam. 1987. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House.
7. North East India: Its People and Culture. 1990. Lucknow: Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society.
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12. Sociobiological observations on Assamese populations (co-authored with P.B. Das, R. Das, H. Walter, and H. Danker-Hopfe). 1989. *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 47,2:129-143.

Funds from the Kiel University in collaboration with the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschung-Gemein Schaft) assisted him in his project on the biological surveys of select Himalayan populations. Between 1964 and 1968, the Punjab government and the CSIR continued to fund the project which was extended to Lahaul and Spiti regions in Himachal Pradesh. The Indian National Science Academy (INSA) further funded the research in this area from 1972 to 1974. In 1974, he presented some details of dryopithecine material from the Shivalik's at the 5th International Congress of Primatology held at Nagoya, Japan. This was later published in *Contemporary Primatology* (1975). He contended that these remains refute the belief propounded by Simon and Pilbeam (1972) that the fossil ape species in the Haritalyngar area in India are not diversified. The work of Professor SRK Chopra on human adaptability in varying climatic zones

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

was conducted in association with the Cambridge Himalayan High Altitude Research Expedition in 1979, and the research was supported by the Medical Research Council and the Royal Society, UK. Its report was published in the international compendium, Cambridge University Press.

In 1980 he was invited by the President of the 8th Congress of International Primatological Society, Professor A.B Chiarelli of Florence University to share his findings from the “Shivalik Fossils Remains” with other experts and participants of the congress. His work on evolution of Early Man is well acclaimed, documented and cited. The Shivalik region may now be considered as an area where the earliest primates may have evolved. Professor Chopra’s intensive and incisive research and experience extended over three decades. More than 100 research papers published in various national and international journals and cited in several significant textbooks on physical anthropology speak volumes about the excellence and intensity of his research.

In 1974, Professor Chopra conceived of a unique ‘Museum of Man’ within the precincts of the Department of Anthropology at Punjab University. The project was aesthetically executed with the help of celebrated artisans from Kolkata and was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Zail Singh. The life-sized models of fossil apes, primates and homo sapiens trace the evolution of humankind and are configured from the reconstruction of fossil material collected by him and his team in the course of various field expeditions. Some of these fossils from the Shivalik region date back to 14 million years ago. The museum also exhibits various ethnographic materials collected from different regions of India. It has been posthumously named the SRK Chopra Museum of Man in his honour. It is to his vision that the Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, holds the distinction of being a UGC funded Centre for Advanced Studies in Anthropology since 2011.

Professor Chopra made cardinal contributions not only to his primary interest in strengthening palaeoanthropology but also to the holistic approach and integrated character of the discipline. Research articles

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

published in Nature and Human Biology symbolize that spirit. He identified and brought talent from different parts of the country to teach in this new department and encouraged them to take up challenging tasks and projects. He supervised 19 PhDs and was an examiner at both international and national universities with a fluency in both English and German languages. Students trained in the department were hired with ease by various national and international universities as also in allied institutions like anthropological and archaeological Survey of India because of the training they received under his supervision. The Department of Anthropology, Panjab University was one of the first departments in the country to introduce a diploma in Forensic Science/ anthropology under his visionary leadership. Ethnographic explorations in remote areas of Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti was also initiated under his guidance.

He went on several international assignments to various Universities across the world. Few of the most prestigious teaching assignments were at the universities across the United Kingdom, West Germany and Japan. From 1965 to 1967, he was a Visiting Professor in the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Kiel in West Germany. Continuing to take his wealth of academic experience abroad, in 1979 he was invited to the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University in Inuyama, Japan, as a Visiting Professor. Among his many Awards, reference must be made of the Wenner-Gren Foundation Award for Excellence twice from 1955 to 1956, and then again in 1966 to 67. He was fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland as also fellow of the Zoological Society of London and Member, Permanent Council, International Association of Human Biologists along with several reputed national organizations. He also Chaired the session on Paleo-Biology and Evolution for the 7th Congress of International Primatological Society in 1979.

He received a silver plaque from the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow in 1976 and also delivered the Majumdar Memorial Lecture there. From 1980-81, he served as the UGC national Lecturer. Some of the other

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

prestigious lectures that he delivered in his career include the 1984 M.R. Sahni Memorial lecture to the Paleontological Society of India and the 1985-86 Dr. Panchanan Memorial Lectureship, Asiatic Society, Kolkata. He also served as the Editor of Everyday Science and as Member of the Advisory Committee of Anthropological Survey of India, and the Indira Gandhi National Museum of Man, Ministry of Culture. Additionally, he held the esteemed position of the President of the Indian Association of Physical Anthropology from 1976 to 1978. In 1989, he was bestowed the Excellence Award by the Shiromani Nehru Centenary Committee for enhancing India's prestige and contribution towards National Development.

His academic commitments and frequent travels within and outside India impacted his health severely. His resilience, however, knew no bounds. In the year 1988, he had to undergo kidney transplant and received a kidney from his wife of twenty-eight years, the ever-resolute Krishna Chopra. He recovered and went back to the hectic life of an active academician and academic administrator. In 1988, he spent a year as a Visiting Professor at the United Medical and Dental School at the University of London. His administrative acumen was distinctively visible, when he held the office of the Pro Vice Chancellor of Panjabi University, Patiala from 1983-1986 and then as Vice-Chancellor of Kurukshetra University, Haryana from 1986 to 1989. On his return to his parent University, he was given the prestigious position of Dean of University Instructions, Panjab University till he retired from formal academic career on 31st October 1991.

In 1989, eminent geologist Professor Ashok Sahni and paleoanthropologist Dr. Rajan Gaur published S.R.K Chopra festschrift volume titled Perspectives in Human Evolution to honour his immense contributions. In recognition of his research contributions in promoting scientific explorations in the field of fossil primate discoveries, he was nominated as a member of the Explorers Club of the USA. He was the first Indian University don to receive the distinction in recognition of his astronomical scientific career, most notably his fossil primate discoveries. He also featured in the Indo-American Who's Who. His academic attainments are legendary and his meteoric rise in the world of paleo-anthropology is

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

exceptional. He is recognised as one of India's original intrepid explorers who conquered hostile terrain to dig up significant finds that pieced together major anthropological indications of our past.

SRK made not only an exceptional contribution to the growth of the discipline of anthropology but also made generous financial contributions to provide motivation to the students of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to excel in the discipline. In the year 1962, his family contributed towards setting up of the Rai Bahadur Wali Ram Taneja Medal in the memory of his father-in-law which was to be given to the top-ranking student of B.Sc. final year. In the year 2005, the Syndicate of the Panjab University, Chandigarh (vide its meeting on 28th February 2005) has formalized the institution of the SRK Chopra Memorial Scholarship to be awarded to the topper in BSc (Hons. School) in Anthropology.

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**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

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Contributed by : *Ms. Shalini Vahi* (Daughter of Prof. S.R.K. Chopra and a Practising social and Cultural anthropologist)

Edited by: *Prof. Shalina Mehta*, Former Professor and Chairperson Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh and *Dr. Rajni Lamba*, Anthropologist and CEO, The Rural Environmental Enterprises Development Society (THE REEDS), INDIA

Acknowledgment: *Dr. Maninder Kaur*, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh for institutional support.

**Professor Dhirendra Nath Majumdar**  
**(1903 – 1960)**



Professor Dhirendra Nath Majumdar, an anthropologist par excellence, was born in 1903 at Patna. A post graduate from the University of Calcutta, his journey in ethnographic research was influenced by Shri Sarat Chandra Roy from whom Majumdar learnt his ‘ first lessons in field investigation’ (Majumdar 1937) when he undertook intensive fieldwork among the Ho of Kolhan (in Jharkhand).

In 1921 a combined Department of Sociology and Economics was started at Lucknow University under the leadership of Radhakamal Mukherjee and Majumdar was appointed as a lecturer in Comparative Economics. It was here that he met his lifelong friend, D.P. Mukerjee. Under the prolific scholarship of the triumvirate – Radhakamal Mukherjee, D.P.Mukherjee and D.N. Majumdar, Lucknow University came to be recognized as a towering centre of academic excellence in social science studies for many years to come and developed into a centre of great repute in Sociology and Anthropology.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

In 1933, in pursuance of his doctoral research he studied the Ho tribe. The University of Cambridge awarded him the doctorate in 1935. An independent Department of Anthropology was initiated at Lucknow University in 1951 with Professor D.N. Majumdar as the Head of the Department. His efforts took the department of Anthropology to great heights as it became well respected nationally and internationally especially when Anthropology in India was still finding its feet. Furer Haimendorf writes about Majumdar, “His vision, wide experience of all branches of anthropology and remarkable energy had made him a focal point of anthropological studies in India, and his Department in the University of Lucknow, the foundation and development of which he always regarded as the core of his life work, has for many years been the most active Department of Anthropology in the whole of South Asia”(Haimendorf 1960).

Professor Majumdar never let the pursuit of a specialization come in his way of constricting and limiting himself from the totality of Anthropology. His seeking spirit made him, an Anthropologist per se. Both social and physical anthropology were well within the ambit of his scholarship. He was always keen to learn about the different fields of Anthropology as “He made notable research contributions to both Physical Anthropology and Social-Cultural Anthropology. As a Physical Anthropologist, he conducted ethnic or racial surveys in Bengal, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh” (Sarana 2005: 102). Viewing Anthropology as the study of the totality of humans, he brought together in one volume, *Races and Cultures of India* (1944), three different yet allied areas of research within Anthropology – Indian prehistory, with a discussion on the racial groups in India with inputs on ethnological and ethnographical concepts and data besides presenting the situation of the tribes and castes in India undergoing the processes of directed culture change.

Majumdar’s publications convey his in-depth research on diverse areas of human living. He believed the gathering of anthropological knowledge of a

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

people to be meaningful only when it is used for the betterment of lives through planned change.

Majumdar's seminal work, *A Tribe in Transition* (1937) is acclaimed as one of the earliest and most important publications on the impact of non tribals on the tribals against the backdrop of rapidly occurring industrialization and the resultant processes of acculturation. His empathy towards the plight of the tribes motivated him to propose the MARC approach that exemplified Man, Area, Resource, Cooperation calling for an active interaction between these four components.

He was emphatic on the planned rehabilitation of the tribes, saying "planned rehabilitation must take into account the hopes and aspirations of the people, misconceived though they may be. The two axioms of cultural rehabilitation should be: (i) we cannot be civilized unless every one of us is civilized, and (2) every people, however primitive or civilized, has a right to its own way of life, and to the development of its traditional culture. To reconcile these two requires a complete grasp of the details and a sympathetic understanding of the realities of tribal aims and aspirations" (Majumdar 1951: 812).

His compendium of publications included ethnographic writings based on his study amongst the Ho of Kolhan, the Khasa ( Jaunsar Bawar), the Korwa, the Tharu, the Bhil and the Gond.

D.N. Majumdar was among the pioneers of village studies in India. His notions of 'rural analysis' and 'rural profiles' are reflected in his works, *Caste and Communication in an Indian Village* (1958) and *Chhor Ka Ek Gaon* (1960) which discussed inter-caste relations, addressed the interconnect between leadership, factional politics and economy besides examining the significance of the undercurrents in village life.

While studying the social contours of the industrial city of Kanpur he called out to social researchers saying, "Our towns and cities are growing,

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

our vigilance must not vane; sociologists must line up for social research and help the administration in its assigned task of building an urban population, socially aware and mentally conditioned for the city life” (Majumdar 1960). Majumdar epitomized the commitment of anthropology towards the development of the tribes, castes, villages, cities and the entire nation. As a member of the Research Programmes Committee of the National Planning Commission Majumdar had highlighted the contribution of Anthropologists towards administration. T.N. Madan endorses this when he writes, “anthropology could offer useful knowledge and usable advice to the policy maker, the administrator and the social worker... The changed situation in the early 1950s offered new challenges and he (Majumdar) responded to them swiftly and energetically’ (Madan 1994:29). Majumdar felt Anthropology in India should cater to the requirements of Indian society and anthropologists in India should, “separate the native warp from the foreign woof” (1939:1-2).

Majumdar founded the Ethnographic and Folk-Culture Society in 1945, and started the journal ‘The Eastern Anthropologist’ in 1947. His international collaborations like the Lucknow- Cornell Project besides holding positions of repute in international bodies, made the western anthropologists look upto Anthropology in India.

The research of Prof. Majumdar in Physical Anthropology as also in Socio-Cultural Anthropology along with his efforts in keeping pace with the latest trends in anthropology made him a doyen of Anthropological thought on the Indian sub-continent. A prolific researcher and an inspiring teacher, Majumdar nurtured a large number of students. He breathed his last in 1960 while still in service.

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**Professor Gopala Sarana**  
**(January 2nd,1935-7th November 2010)**



Indian anthropology is often critiqued for not having made significant contributions to anthropological theory and methodology. This is primarily due to the absence of concerted efforts to document and present contributions of eminent anthropologists in the public domain. Lack of access to open international academic spaces is one of the reasons for denying this legitimate acknowledgement to Indian academics. Internet open access academic platforms provide a resource to amend these aberrations. It is with the intent to fill that void that these profiles are being documented on the UIAF website.

One of the substantial contributions to the theory and methodology of Anthropology came from the pen of Professor Gopala Sarana. In 2007, in a summary review of Indian Social-cultural anthropology, commenting on his theoretical journey Sarana wrote (2007:317),  
In 1959 Sarana pointed out several conceptual and terminological ambiguities and contradictions in Radcliffe Brown's effort to distinguish

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

social anthropology from ethnology. In 1950s his criticism, except by Murdock on Kinship, was uncommon. Through detailed arguments, with evidence dug put from the writings of Radcliffe-Brown and Firth, Sarana has demonstrated that their efforts to distinguish between social structure and social organisation has not borne fruit.

In one of his early publications titled *The Methodology of Anthropological Comparison* (1975), published under the imprimatur of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, Sarana postulates exemplary explanations of the relevance of the Comparative method. He elucidates, what should one compare, why should one compare, and how should one compare? He delineates three basic comparative methods (i) illustrative comparison (ii) complete universe comparison (iii) holo-genetic sampled comparison (Sarana, 2007: 318). Systematically elucidating these under the categories of terms of reference, units of comparison, purposes of comparison, and techniques and methods, he brings to the fore, inherent ambiguities in the use of these terms.

In an earlier publication (1965), he made a detailed analysis of the use of the comparative method in Anthropology as well as in Linguistics. He was of the firm opinion that the premise of structuralism in linguistics and functionalism in anthropology have a similar genesis. His erudite scholarship focused on clearing opacities common in the iteration of the established concepts. He dwelled in detail, meticulously explaining the meaning of technique, method, and methodology and how focus and use of one is different from the other. He endorses Kroeber's insightful remark that, "there are strictly speaking no proofs in this method" (1952:3).

His comprehensive and critical understanding of western thoughts again emerged in one of his last publications in 2008 in the book titled *Explorations in method and theory in anthropology*. In the first section of this volume, he reviews relationship between functionalism and causality and examines in detail contributions of Radcliffe-brown, Malinowski and Robert Merton. He argues for a case to make a distinction between functioning/functions and having a function. This fine distinction in his

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

opinion has been ignored or glossed over by most anthropologists. In his words:

A machine operates; therefore, it functions. A functioning machine does some work; therefore, it performs some function. A structure is an arrangement of parts. It does not operate. Therefore, a structure cannot be said to function. If Radcliffe-Brown had kept this distinction in mind he would not be talking of the “functioning of structure” (2007:317).

In a similar vein, critiquing Merton’s much cited concepts of latent and manifest functions, Sarana (2008:70) writes; “the distinction which Merton has laboriously tried to make between ‘manifest’ and ‘latent’ function is redundant” if one looks at the evidence that comes from the Hopi-dance ceremonial and other studies. In his 2007 “Brief review of Indian social-cultural anthropology” in the special number on ‘Anthropology in India’ of *The Eastern Anthropologist*, Sarana elaborates on his reservations on Merton’s concept:

Merton’s latent function is function in the proper sense. It is deciphered by the investigating social scientist. The manifest function of Merton’s is really the obvious consequence of the actions of the members of a social group or a society. It should not be confused by withfunction” (2007:317).

Sarana also questions Lévi-Strauss’s construct of “social structure being a model built up after the reality official relations”. In his opinion, there are several models in science and social sciences and the models proposed by Lévi-Strauss’s do not conform to any one of these conceptions. In Sarana’s assessment, the anomaly in Lévi-Strauss’s construct emanates because:

It is common anthropological belief that social structure is rooted in material-environmental setting and cannot be divorced from social reality. An academic-conceptual model is built by the investigating scientist and not by the people themselves. Therefore, the notion of ‘home-made model is non-sequitur’.

Critiquing one of the most popular and commonly used constructs of the 20th century, particularly in the context of study of civilizations, the notion of ‘Great tradition’ and ‘Little Traditions’ given by Redfield (1962), Sarana writes (2007:315),

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Tradition is a continuum in which additions, deletions or alterations go on continuously. It preserves what is of lasting value to the people. I have reservations about splitting it in Great traditions and Little traditions.

These snippets of his ability to go beyond the dominant discourse of his time reflect astute mindset and courage to question and take independent decisions from a very early age. Many of his contemporaries trained in the British tradition often disagreed with his contentions. But they all had immense regard for his intellectual honesty and ability to hold on to his extrapolations.

### **PERSONAL PROFILE**

This extraordinary, visionary scholar of the twentieth century was recognised for his simple lifestyle and critical thinking". Gandhian in lifestyle, always clad in simple khadi Kurta pyjamas and a matching jhola (sling bags), he typified persona of a typical rooted rural Indian. Born in a village in district Balia, Uttar Pradesh on January 2, 1935, he did his early schooling in a Village school under the colonial regime. He joined Lucknow University in the year 1950 to do his BA degree and after completing his graduation in 1953, he went on to do his masters from the same University in the year 1955. It was no surprise that his brilliance shone in his early academic career, and he qualified all his examinations in the first position. He received his early training under the tutelage of academic stalwart D.N. Majumdar. Majumdar's passion for anthropology, its philosophy and grounded research engulfed his ward and his pursuit of excellence in the discipline.

After completing his masters, he started teaching in the same department for some time and then moved to newly opened department of Anthropology at Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1961 on a permanent position to teach social anthropology. Shortly after joining the department, he received fellowship from prestigious Harvard University to do his Ph.D. under the supervision of doyen of World anthropology Cora-du-Bois. Inability to get study leave to pursue his passion for higher learning due to university study leave rules, he resigned from his permanent position and

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

left for Harvard. He was awarded his Doctoral Degree titled, Comparative Methods (Approaches) in Social-Cultural Anthropology: A Methodological Analysis, in 1966 from Harvard University. While pursuing his doctoral degree, he also taught for a year from 1965 to 1966 at Santa Barbra, California.

After his return from Harvard, he joined Department of Anthropology, Karnataka university Dharwad in 1970, as reader in anthropology and later became professor and head of the department. He remained there till 1979. In 1979, he returned to Lucknow university as professor of Anthropology and remained there till the time of his superannuation. Life had come full circle. His home coming back to Lucknow and his journey thereon marks one of the most vibrant chapters of his illustrious life. He retired from Lucknow University in the year 1995.

In his distinguished career, he received several awards. One of these was prestigious R.P.Chanda award that he received from The Asiatic Society in the year 1986. Another was Shikshak Sri Samman conferred upon him by the Government of Uttar Pradesh. Sarana was appointed editor of the journal The Eastern Anthropologist published by Ethnographic and folk Culture Society, Lucknow in April 1993. During his tenure as editor of one of India's premier journals in anthropology, the journal received additional rigour and greater academic prominence.

Professor Sarana was not a teacher by profession only but practised his vocation by passion. He spent long hours teaching and supervising students. His work Anthropology and Sociology (2005), caters to the common curiosity of the students' seeking answers to their quests pertaining to the 'human being'. This book brings out in the simplest way the quintessential characteristics of Anthropology as a discipline. A section of the book is devoted to the discussion on the relationship between Anthropology and Sociology. Here, Sarana goes deeper to unravel, layer after layer the complexities in the relationship between Sociology and anthropology (particularly social anthropology), and how, despite the

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

ubiquitously agreed similarities between the two, the terms Social Anthropology and Sociology cannot be treated as interchangeable. His close interactions with his students, sensitized him to evolve innovative methods of explaining in simple terms the journey of humans from the past to the present. He was one of those few anthropologists who believed in keeping holistic perspective of anthropology alive, irrespective of the fact that different branches of the discipline were acquiring pervasive dimensions of their own.

Notwithstanding his focus on social-cultural anthropology, Professor Sarana, like his mentor Professor Dharendra Nath Majumdar, persevered religiously to learn about the other branches of Anthropology as well, for he firmly believed in the integrated nature of the discipline. In his book *Anthropology and Sociology*, he brings out the element of 'unity and diversity of Anthropology' (2005:19) suggesting:

Human beings share ideas, experiences, and biological endowments. The task of Anthropology is to understand human similarities and differences from biological and cultural angles and the way in which biology and culture interact. In this sense the diversity of Anthropology is not at all a hindrance but paves the way for integration. Anthropology has a loose structure in which there is a lot of opportunity for the development of various fields. I want to state in no uncertain terms that when we talk of integration of anthropology, we do not at all mean that it should come in the way of specialised development of its sub-fields like biological (physical) anthropology, linguistics, etc. Please remember that the rationale for the integration of Anthropology lies at a deeper level than the level at which a particular subdivision deals with its specialised subject matter. It can be experienced in terms of the need to understand different kinds of human beings and the diversities as well as similarities of the patterns of human living. This is necessary to know what man has been, what he is today and what he may become tomorrow so that efforts may be made to make human life better than what it has been up to date (cf. Sarana and Srivastava 2005: 22).

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

His book *Studies in Social and Physical Anthropology* (2012), co-edited with eminent physical anthropologist R.P. Srivastava exemplifies keeping this integrative spirit alive for the benefit of young students. From a discussion on looking at the stages in human evolution from the paleoanthropological dimension, to bringing out the pertinence of addressing diseases through the human genome, the volume sails through significant areas of knowledge.

He was conversant with the changing landscape of knowledge domains. He cautioned fraternity of anthropologists to re-strategize their research priorities and prepare to confront challenges that are bound to emanate. Discussing this, he said:

The strategy of anthropological fieldwork has to be changed. 'Self-study' should get precedence over 'other culture' study without abandoning the latter altogether.

When the anthropologist turns more and more homeward, the problems, the nature and focus of anthropological investigations will have to undergo change. The anthropologist will now be pitted more and more against other social scientist and humanist who have always been 'home'. He will have to make herculean efforts to retain his identity (Gopala Sarana,2007:323).

Apart from delving deep into the facts and nuances of methods and concepts, Professor Gopala Sarana gave equal focus to empirical research. He undertook detailed study in various parts of South Asia like Israel, Japan, and Iran. He went to Israel as Blaustein Fellow at the Social studies centre of the Jacob Blaustein institute for Desert Research, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in 1992. In 1993, he published a two-part article in *The Eastern Anthropologist* titled "reflection on Israel and India" comparing various aspects in both the countries. An American village, Groveport, in Ohio was also studied by him. In India he carried out fieldwork among the Khasa and the Oraon tribes. Ethnographic research in Anthropology has time and again come under critical scrutiny, with doubts being raised over its efficacy. Sarana goes on to clear the doubts raised on traditional fieldwork procedures. In his opinion,

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

The main complaints have been about the lack of quantification, objectivity, and replicability. Some of these critics have said that to the extent that anthropology does not conform to the social-science methodological norm, its procedure falls short of being scientific(1976:255). As a contributor to the important volume *The Personal Approach in Cultural Anthropological Research*, Sarana cites contributions of Honnigman, Kroeber, Kluckhohn, to put these criticisms to rest and reinforce the strengths of ethnographic research while clearly emphasising on Honnigman's view that there is zero probability of testing the reliability of an ethnographic monograph.

Professor Sarana's seminal work towards the last years of his life, *Explorations in Method and Theory in Anthropology*(2008)is arare and valuable contribution to the field of Anthropological theories and concepts.Professor Nita Mathur befittingly captures the essence of the book as she writes,

What makes the book useful is not only a critical appraisal of the contribution of classical theorists to specific themes, but also the way in which the author churns each of them to surface core ideas and weave them together to develop fully fledged theoretical premises. The strength of the book, as I see, lies in highlighting the nuanced connection between ideas, and, in doing so, providing a critique of each theoretical premise. This is certainly not a text for beginners in the discipline of anthropology but one for the matured, well-grounded students and academics engaged in the pursuit of anthropological knowledge in a particular sense and social sciences in a general sense (2010: 430-432).

In his book,*Studies in Indian Anthropology: Festschrift to Professor Gopala Sarana* (2004), Professor P.K.Misra gives a detailed account of Prof. Sarana's contribution to Anthropology which made him a renowned scholar, nationally and internationally. He published more than eighty papers and several books in English as also in Hindi and regional languages in National and International Journals. Some of the books published by him include *Introducing Anthropology; Structuralism; Sociology and Anthropology*and other essays and*Pragithas* (in Hindi in collaboration with his mentor D.N.Majumdar).

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Professor Sarana was a prolific scholar in the true sense of the word. Going deep into the area of concepts and methodology, his writings explain, challenge, and invite discourse to almost ubiquitously accepted and seldom challenged core concepts and methods of Anthropology. These are rare attributes and are most aptly summarised by several luminaries of the discipline. Professor Subba Reddy's comments:

Among the anthropologists in India and abroad, Dr. Sarana stands out as one among the rare few whose reach extends to the terse areas of methodological issues, philosophical problems, epistemological queries, logical procedures, and scientific frames of analysis, applicable to social sciences in general and social anthropology in particular (Sarana 2010: p xi).

In the same vein, Professor Vinay Srivastava remarks:

Gopala Sarana is perhaps one of the few Indian anthropologists who has written on topics such as social structure and social organization, functionalism, structuralism, definition of marriage, comparative method. (Indiaseminar.com/2000)

Professor Gopala Sarana's demise on 7th November 2010, created a deep void in the field of Anthropology. His colossal contribution towards enriching the discipline is well etched in the history of the development of the subject. As a researcher, he not only gave a fresh perspective to the established and ubiquitously accepted explanations of social structure, social organization, and other concepts, but also challenged these. For me and many like me who were taught by him, he personified all the virtues that one looks in a teacher – scholarship, sincerity, and dedication.

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**Professor Irawati Karve**  
**(15th December 1905-11th August 1970)**



Irawati Karve (Karmarkar) was born in Myingyan Burma (now Myanmar) on 15th December 1905. Her Chitpavan Brahmin engineer father named her after the sacred river Irrawaddy. However, she was nurtured in the family of Wrangler Paranjpe, a great liberal in Pune in Maharashtra. She completed her schooling at Huzurpaga in 1922. In 1926, she graduated with a BA degree in philosophy from the well-known Fergusson college in Pune. After her graduation, she married Dr Dinkar Dhondo Karve, son of eminent social reformer Maharshi Karve, who was decorated as Bharat Ratna. Her supportive family encouraged her ambition to study for a Master's degree in sociology after she was awarded a Dakshina fellowship by the State government. She joined Mumbai University under the guidance of distinguished sociologist Prof. Ghurye. Under Ghurye's supervision, she submitted a brilliant master's dissertation on her community titled 'The Chitpavan Brahmans — An Ethnic Study'. After completing her postgraduation in 1928, she left for Berlin to do her M.Phil. in anthropology. She started working on the 'Normal Asymmetry of the Human Skulls and Bone' under the supervision of Prof. Eugene Fischer at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Eugenics. She was conferred the degree of D. Phil by the University of Berlin in 1930. This was the beginning of a remarkable woman scholar in an era, when women rarely ventured into higher education, and seldom on the strength of their merit alone. She broke many barriers and is often acclaimed as one of the early feminists. She never wore symbols, defining her status as a married woman, except while participating in sacred rituals, such as hoisting the national flag at the college, or visiting a temple. Pune still recalls her spirit for being the first woman to ride a scooter in the city, taking a male pillion rider. Her legendary statement was: “Ladies, while fighting with men for rights, why fight for only equal rights? Always fight for more rights”!

After her return to India, she served as Registrar from 1931-1936 at SNDT University, which she regretted. Her long and distinguished academic career began after she joined the Deccan College Post-graduate and Research Institute in 1939 as a Reader in Sociology. It was under her stewardship that teaching of anthropology started at Poona University (now Savitribai Phule Pune University) in 1963, under a combined department of Sociology and Anthropology. She remained at the helm of the affairs of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Deccan College, affiliated to Pune University, until she passed away in 1970. The Department was shifted from Deccan college in 1973 to Pune university campus, and became an independent department of Anthropology in 1977. However, the discipline of anthropology under her leadership had received momentum from 1963, as separate courses in anthropology were offered in Pune university, located at the Deccan College. Students were receiving post-graduation in anthropology since then. Thus, Irawati Karve is the founder of formal teaching of anthropology as an independent discipline in the State of Maharashtra.

Prof. Karve’s academic brilliance was recognised and awarded, when she was invited to preside over the Anthropology Section of the most historic session of the Indian Science Congress in the year of India’s independence from January 3rd to 8th 1947, under the General Presidentship of India’s

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

first Prime Minister, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru. The theme of the congress was 'Science in the service of the Nation' and the invite to Karve was a celebration of her spirit and commitment to the independence of Indian anthropology. She spoke on the subject of 'Some problems of Indian Anthropology'. In 1951, the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, provided her with the opportunity, to compile the first draft of a book on 'Kinship Organization in India'. Chadbourne Gilpatric of the Rockefeller Foundation funded her travel to the United States. She had extensive dialogues with the fraternity of anthropologists in New York and San Francisco. She became a global ambassador for Indian anthropology, travelling to various institutions in different parts of the World sharing her research findings.

One may describe her as an Indologist exploring Sanskrit texts for socio-cultural features. Cohn (1990:143) described her as an Indologist in the classical orientalist sense who investigated Sanskrit texts for meanings into contemporary practices. "Her approach was different from Dumont's efforts to search for underlying models in ancient Indian texts. Her work on Hindu Society is remarkable for its veracity. She draws a corollary between a quilt and a society. Just like quilting in which various small pieces of fabric of different sizes and colour are sewn together, a society comprises of people who come together, bond into social relationships, constituting a social fabric. The old quilt may be ripped apart, pieces may be removed but the thread remains. Similarly, bonds that an individual has with his/her society persists when some of them may break away". Karve's work on caste is collected in her book 'Hindu Society: An Interpretation' (1961; 1968). Prior to its publication, she had published several articles on the subject in different issues of Economic Weekly: What is Caste? Caste as extended Kin, Caste and Occupation and Caste as a status group between 1958-59.

"She was the exponent of a rare model of scholarship that amalgamated the classical core of anthropology comprising of biological, cultural, archaeological and linguistic aspects of the study of human to present truly holistic anthropology". I would often observe her having intense

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

conversations with reputed archaeologist H.D. Sankalia and linguist S.M. Katre on the relationship that humans have with nature and society. She even went on archaeological expeditions with Prof. Sankalia to Langhanj in Gujarat. She discovered a long bone and thirteen skeletal remains digging these from the deep sands of Gujarat. Together, they also published a Preliminary Report on the “Third Gujarat Prehistoric expedition”, (1945).

At the same time, she was a serologist, and a palaeontologist, an avid connoisseur of folk songs, and award-winning Marathi writer and essayist of rare calibre. One of her last papers presented at a seminar at IAS, Shimla invited for publication in a book on ‘Ancient Indian and Asian civilization’ was on the theme of ‘The cultural significance of Folk Songs’. Her Sahitya Academy award-winning book ‘Yugant’ published in Marathi, and later translated into English, presents prominent male and female characters from the Indian epic, The Mahabharata. In my view, it presents an anthropological conceptual interpretation of ‘culture and personality’ located in the context of the pastoral economy of the period.

She was a dedicated fieldworker. She traversed the length and breadth of India and went for Pandhari Wari, which is an annual walking pilgrimage of several days and kilometres, by thousands of people from all over Maharashtra. She walked with the devotees to Pandharpur who worship Vithoba (Vishnu) the presiding deity of Maharashtra. On these ritual walks, she intently observed and interacted with various groups of pilgrims, as participant observer. In a very interesting literary piece titled ‘On the road’ based on these experiences, she observes that all the places from where people went to Pandharpur demarcated the boundaries of Maharashtra, as a culture-region. She also travelled across several tribal and rural areas collecting valuable biological and social anthropological data for the analysis of the civilisational and cultural aspects of the macrocosm.

Karve started her research in colonial India but managed to carve an independent identity bereft of any colonial baggage. She explored India’s

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

rich cultural heritage, ancient texts, and plurality. An ardent reader of mythological texts, she explored tribal linkages with mythological representations in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharat. Unlike her counterparts in the west, she did not invest her time in researching isolated tribal communities. Sociologists like Nandini Sunder believe that she persisted with the British tradition of anthropology as she continued to map social groups like subcastes using anthropometric and genetic data or she was influenced by the diffusionist school, as witnessed in the writings of W.H.R Rivers. However, in my view, none of her work could be classified as a colonial legacy, as they were strongly rooted in Indian mythology and Indian culture. She analysed her field experiences from the perspective of a qualitative researcher. Narratives she generated from the field were meticulously recorded and expressed in her academic anthropological writings as also in her literary works.

Her writings represent a liberal spirit and acumen for analysing national social problems. She wrote an entire chapter on it in her book *Hindu Society* (1968). Hutton (1965) advised legislators in Independent India to seek her counsel before introducing bills on social reforms. She was a strong votary of multiculturalism and diversity of Indian traditions and argued, “The path to uniformity is one tyranny and we shall lose our first cultural value if we make uniformity our goal” (Karve, 1968: 16). She was vocal on the reorganisation of the Indian states based on linguistic affiliations. She commented with aplomb on affirmative action of Caste reservations and its long-term consequences. She was a proactive researcher and promoted her students to work on applied aspects, using anthropological epistemology. Once she was invited to address the post-graduate student-officers at the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine, Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC). Next time when they asked her again, she entrusted the responsibility to me. This resulted in nearly thirty years of my association, teaching socio-cultural aspects of health in the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine at AFMC and later with B.J. Medical college, which resulted in developing Medical Anthropology in India.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Her expertise in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Marathi languages, and her proximity to local traditions helped her to document plurality and geographical distribution of various kinds of kinship organisation across India. It was an ambitious project that resulted in one of her most widely recognised publication titled- 'Kinship Organization in India' (1953). She mixed synchronic and diachronic approaches examining empirical and literary work at the same fulcrum. Some critics of her work have questioned its heuristics and argue that she should have used the term kinship systems instead of kinship organization. Others think that this was an overambitious project and instead of a single researcher, should have been pursued by several ethnographers and divided into a series of monographs on each region.

Some sociologists preferred to call her ethnologist who was more interested in civilizational studies. In my view, it reflected her strong connection to Indology and its contemporary relevance. Importantly, she moved away from the inflexible construct of Varna and Caste emphasized by Ghurye and Hutton in their writings. She defined caste as a kinship group of 'actual or potential kin' specifying the difference between caste and caste cluster. Subsequently, she replaced the classification of 'sub-caste and caste' with 'caste and caste-cluster'. In another publication titled 'Group Relations in a village community', she argues that kinship, caste, and locality are determinants of inter-personal and inter-group relations.

In 1968, she compiled 'Maharashtra, Land and its People', as Maharashtra Gazetteer of the State Government. It is not simply data collection on various parameters of the state's population but provides a keenly studied review of the region's cultural evolution and uneven socio-economic regional development within the state. She mapped the caste composition of its various villages and documented settlement patterns and linguistic diversity in spoken dialects.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Erudite scholar, liberal and articulate, she was also a reformer in her own right. She wrote and spoke on public platforms, in radio talks and newspapers articles, on current issues particularly language problem, prohibition, communal violence, women's rights, eradication of untouchability to name just a few. For her academic followers, she represented the tradition of Anthropology that symbolizes 'most humanist of all sciences and most scientific of all humanities' in Eric Wolf's words. Pune is today internationally acclaimed as a seat of Anthropology due to the strong efforts and focused diligence of Prof. Irawati Karve. On December 15, 1993, the Museum at the Department of Anthropology, Pune University was renamed as Irawati Karve Museum. This was a befitting tribute to the founder of the Department of Anthropology at Pune University. She has been the first and most distinguished woman anthropologist of India. Irawati Karve did not follow the western established pattern of ethnographic studies, using 'primitive society as a conceptual model'. She could be emulated as one of the pioneers of Indian Anthropology.



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**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

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**PUBLICATIONS**

Professor Iravati Karve was a prolific writer. A bibliography compiled by K.C. Malhotra in 1973 after her death lists 102 articles and books in English, eight books in Marathi and several unpublished articles and ongoing projects (for further details refer to Malhotra, K.C. 1973. "Bibliography of Professor Iravati Karve's Works". Bulletin of the Deccan college research Institute 31-32 (1-2):i-viii). Nandini Sunder believes Professor Karve is not accorded the same international recognition as some of her other contemporaries from the Bombay School of Sociology. She thinks this could be due to her publications only with the Deccan College, like all other Faculty, and not with mainstream international academic publications. Her literary works in Marathi were published by Marathi publishing Co.

**A few of her often-cited publications are listed here:**

1. Kinship Organization in India (1953)
2. The Bhils of West Khandesh (1958)
3. Hindu Society: An Interpretation (1961; 1968)
4. Group Relations in Village Community (1963)
5. The Social Dynamics of a Growing Town and Its Surrounding Area (1965)
6. A Survey of the People Displaced through the Konya Dam (1969)
7. The role of Weekly Markets in the Tribal, Rural and Urban settings (1970)
8. Maharashtra: Land and its People (1968)

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

9. Anthropometric Measurements of the Marathas (1948)
10. The Social Dynamics of a Frowning Town (1965)

**Marathi Publications**

1. Yuganta: The End of an Epoch (1968) Translated in English (Recipient of 1967 Sahitya academy award)
2. Bhovra (1960)
3. Paripurti (in Marathi) (1949)
4. Amchi Samskriti (1960)
5. Marathi Lokanchi Samskriti (1951)
6. Gangajal (2009),4th edition.

**Also read the following articles written in her memory, just after she died in 1970:**

1. Sachchidananda. 1971. "Sketch of Irawati Karve's (1905-1970) Life and Work" Anthropos Bd.66, H.3/4. (1971), pp. 554-558. Published By: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mb H
2. Patwardhan, Sunanda. 1970. Irawati Karve (1905-70) Sociological Bulletin, September 1970, Vol. 19, No.2 (September 1970), pp.156-159. Published By: Sage Publication, Inc.

**Professor L K Mahapatra**  
**(29th October 1929 to 1st June 2020)**

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**



A dreamy-eyed 18 years old attended a series of lectures by Prof. K.P.Chattopadhyay of Calcutta University. Lectures, that discussed the plight of the oppressed sections of society, especially tribal people. This young man, Lakshman Kumar Mahapatra, was overwhelmed and decided to dedicate his life to comprehend the causes of tribal subjugation. Instantaneously, he decided to pursue a future in the discipline of anthropology, while he was still studying for his intermediate degree at Ravenshaw College (now Ravenshaw University) at Cuttack, Odisha. Anthropology was then an emerging discipline growing under the shadows of colonial rule. In his words, it promised him the *intellectual fare, apart from ensuring emotional satisfaction and idealistic fixation*

(Mahapatra, Felicitation volume 1992, P 312).

This renowned scholar of a holistic tradition of Indian Anthropology was born on 29th October 1929 in the erstwhile princely State of *Rajanilgiri, Balasore District, Odisha*. The scholarship came naturally to him and it brought along with its accolades, meritorious awards, and fellowships to fund his education. He appeared for the matriculation examination from MKC High School, *Baripara*, and stood 2nd in the Orissa State. Completing his intermediate from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack he moved to Calcutta

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

University for obtaining his B.A. (Hons) and M.A. in Anthropology in 1952, securing 1st and 2nd positions in the University, respectively.

He was *Jawaharlal Nehru Scholar*, (1957-60) in Hamburg, Germany, and received his Ph.D. from there in the field of “Cultural Anthropology, Sociology and Comparative Education” in 1960 with *Magna-cum-Laude*. The thesis was titled: *A Hill Bhuiyan Village and its Region: A Socio-Economic Empirical Study*. Drawing inspiration from Redfield’s concept of little community, Mahapatra analyzed *Hill Bhuiyan* village as a self-sufficient, autonomous unit having extended networks with other towns and villages. The conceptual framework and methodological perspective evolved in this study paved the way for future researchers to develop holistic ethnographic studies located in contextual details. If research was his forte, teaching came as a conscious choice, as his own words reflect:

*I wanted to be a teacher, and a better teacher in those days of nationalistic turmoil and transition... He (the teacher) could be independent-minded, could brush aside power and pelf as trash, and could meet anyone in society on an intellectual and moral plane without fear or favor (cf. Felicitation Volume 1992, P 311-12).*

His fearless crusader spirit dominated his entire career. He never bowed down to administrative diktat and frankly voiced his opinion on matters and on subjects of his interest. *His life and career encompassed three thrust areas: Mahapatra as the institution builder, Mahapatra as the scholar and researcher, and Mahapatra as the activist.*

**MAHAPATRA: THE INSTITUTION BUILDER**

His professional career started in 1953. He was Joint Secretary, *Tribal Research Bureau, Odisha* (1954), Lecturer in Anthropology, Lucknow

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

University (1954–55), Head, Department of Sociology, Meerut College, U.P. (1955); Lecturer, *Community Development Training Centre for Tribal Areas*, Ranchi, (1955–56); Lecturer, Anthropology, Guwahati University, (1956–62); Reader, Anthropology, Karnataka University, Dharwad (1962–64).

He finally joined Utkal University in his home state of Odisha as Reader in 1964 and subsequently succeeded Prof. A. Aiyappan as Head of the Department in 1967. He continued as Professor and Head of the Department until 1989. In these twenty-two years, he is credited with placing anthropology in the state of Odisha on the international map. He made it his mission in his twenty-five years (22 years as faculty and 3 years as vice-chancellor) long tenure at Utkal University, to bring at par, Odisha's academic community, in particular anthropologists to international standards. He never compromised on the quality of scholarship and research. For him, teaching was an inner calling with a noble purpose. Paying tributes to his erudite scholarship, Prof. K.K Misra wrote, *Teaching is not a job with work and leisure; it is a profession that demands passion and commitment* and LK Mahapatra epitomized it (2020:121).

Under his cosmopolitan outlook, broad vision, and sagacious leadership, Anthropology Department at Utkal University was accorded by UGC, the status of Department of Special Assistance (DSA in 1988). Distinguished scholars from within and outside the country patronize it for knowledge exchange and affiliation. I said at the outset that he was an institution builder. His farsightedness and ability to innovate resulted in the creation of the Centre for Regional Studies (CRS), Population Research Centre (PRC), an interdisciplinary center of South-East Asia Culture Area Study in collaboration with the Departments of History and Geography. He introduced several new courses in the domain of anthropology that were not taught in other specialized departments of Anthropology. Population Studies and Development Anthropology provided students in the department additional heft to work in the field of demography and development programs.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Production of ethnographic films by a university department started under his visionary leadership. His interventions in developing new specializations helped the department at Utkal university to go beyond the traditional structure of four-fold specializations. His training in ethnology and sociology in Germany dominated anthropological teaching and thinking about Utkal for a quarter-century (1967- 1989).

He used his institution-building abilities as Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University and then Sambalpur University to promote integrated learning. In his capacity as Director and later Chairperson of the *Nabakrushna Choudhury Centre for Development Studies*, (NCDS), Bhubaneswar; he used his training in Social Sciences to bring together the disciplines of Economics, Anthropology, and Sociology for promoting holistic social science research. He provided robust leadership to these institutions and abhorred any form of compromise on academic standards. As an imaginative researcher and administrator, he captured the essence of future trends in the social sciences and remained ahead of his academic peers.

During his distinguished academic career, he had several national and international assignments. He was a Visiting Professor at Hamburg University, (Germany), Visiting Lecturer at the Universities of Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Heidelberg (Germany), Consultant with UNESCO, Bangkok (Thailand), fellow under the German Academic Exchange Service, DAAD, (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e.V*), visiting fellow at the Universities of Heidelberg and Bielefeld (Germany), Ford Foundation Fellow, Jakarta (Indonesia) and also received prestigious *Urgent Anthropology Award* of the Smithsonian (USA) and *International Decade for People of African Descent*, visiting fellowship to Hague (the Netherlands).

Several national honours awarded to him in his brilliant career include UGC National Lectureship, National Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science; Research and Visiting Fellow, Anthropological Survey of India; and post-retirement UGC Emeritus Fellow at Utkal University.

**MAHAPATRA: THE SCHOLAR AND RESEARCHER**

He conducted extensive research in Social Anthropology making significant contributions to the study of castes, tribes, tribe/caste transformation and continuum, ritual kinship, the role of Hindu princes in the caste system in Odisha, swidden cultivation, social movements, social welfare, folklore, tribal development, resettlement and rehabilitation, cultural tradition, self-managed development, etc. His grounding in German ethnology made him see culture as a dynamic process, and not merely a product of history. His pioneering work on social organization in Odisha made him a valuable knowledge resource on the culture and society of this important region in India. He was called a *moving encyclopaedia of Anthropology* by his friends and colleagues.

His passion to study Odisha's folklore came from the conviction that *folklore represented a world view and rational cultural practice that should be taken seriously* was his persuasive argument (Manoranjan Mohanty, 2020)\* He was among the first to put Odisha folklore studies in the global academic realm. He studied folklore, oral traditions, music, language, myths, legends, social institutions, and the cultural heritage of Odisha's tribes. In doing so, he tried to establish linkages between the memory of historical association and reconstruction of the nature and structure of tribes and castes.

Arguably, his magnum opus was his paper on "*Gods, Kings and Caste System in India*" first published in Kenneth David (1977, edited), a publication titled: *The New Wind – Changing Identities in South Asia*. The Hague:Mouton. This paper offers invaluable insights into the caste systems in India and is considered a seminal contribution to South Asian studies. The premise of his arguments in this exceptional piece of writing is to establish structural similarities between a Hindu temple, a royal palace, and an intertwined network of caste relations in village India. He goes beyond Hocart's (1970) notion of the caste system serving both King and God and relocates it in

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

the texts of *Thakur-Raja*- as the God-King. According to Nayak (2020, P, 255), *the Prevalence of such a conception of divine kingship continued for a long time in Southeast Asia.*

His intellectual acumen is distinctively visible in the vast panorama of his writings from folk tradition to interpretation of caste in metaphors of religion as also politics. His paper on *The Role of Hindu Princes in the Caste System in Orissa* (1984), examines Caste Councils and caste dynamics and the role of the king (Raja) in sustaining caste order and hierarchical Hindu society. He also discusses caste mobility and the role of the princely state in the *Hinduization* of the Tribes in the region. His studies on ex-princely states of Odisha, especially *Mayubhanj, Keonjhar, and Bonai*, deepen our understanding of tribal politics, rulers with alleged tribal ancestry, and those sponsored by tribes. He sums it all in his research publication *Tribal Polity and Hindu Kingdom: Case Study of Early State Systems in Orissa, India*. His work on *Ritual Kinship* describing it as *institutionalized friendship* marks the beginning of innovative thinking on the subject. He interprets 'ritual kinship' as *a fictive extension of actual kinship* drawing inferences from both tribal and peasant communities. In his opinion, this constitutes the essence of social interactions and inter-relations between Hindu castes and local tribes.

He moved with ease from studying South Asian Anthropology to the study of Southeast Asia. He wrote a brilliant note on the comparative study of *Folk Culture and Society* in Orissa and Bali. In 1982, he researched in Bali as an ICSSR fellow and also registered society for friendship and cultural cooperation with Indonesia. A journal named *Southeast Asian Perspectives* was also launched with Prof Mahapatra as the editor and Professor Mario.D. Zamora as the guest editor. Subsequently, he established a Centre for *South-East Asian Studies* within the precincts of the Anthropology department. He also taught *South-East Asian Culture*.

Professor Mahapatra spent many years researching shifting cultivation in India and Indonesia. Contributing towards these efforts was the post-IUAES Congress symposium on, *Anthropology of Shifting Cultivation* in

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

collaboration with UNESCO in 1978. In 1983, his research paper titled *An Overview of Swidden cultivation in India* was part of UNESCO's publication on *Swidden Cultivation in Asia* published by UNESCO. In 2011, he published another paper titled *Swidden Peasantry in Indonesia* (2011).

\*Manoranjan Mohanty. A People's Anthropologist, L K Mahapatra (29 October 1929- 1 June 2020), <https://www.lkmahapatra.org/intellectuals-activists>)

### **MAHAPATRA: THE ACTIVIST**

Mahapatra was not only a scholar par excellence but with his humanistic instinct traversed the traditional threshold of an academic and activist. He worked assiduously for the cause of the dispossessed. His ethnographic studies went beyond micronuclear village studies. According to Prof. Ajit Danda, *he achieved a balanced synthesis of empirical micro-perspective with comparative worldwide macro-perspective, which is difficult to achieve* (<https://www.lkmahapatra.org/anthropologists>).

His theoretical insights provided a global perspective on the lingering crisis of induced development commonly marketed as *planned and sustainable development*. He challenged larger centre and state policies of industrialization and hydro-projects in tribal heartlands. These policies resulted in a mass exodus of tribal from their habitats without adequate compensation or rehabilitation. He raised these concerns in the 11th IUAES meeting held in Vancouver while chairing International Symposium on *Development and Population Displacement*. His address titled "Development for Whom?" was a scathing reflection on the global agenda of development. It was a clarion call to the anthropologists and sociologists to come forward to defend the livelihood, rights, and entitlements of the tribal people.

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

He had a human rights perspective, and an approach of legal pluralism to deal with the problems of food, nutrition, social security of immiserated tribal oustees and peasantry. He fought against the erosion of their customary entitlements, assault on their genomic autonomy and integrity, loss of their *sui generis*, the custodial, collective intellectual property right to biogenetic, forest, and knowledge resources. He strove for justice for the tribal, through a process of *participatory, self-managed development*. He believed in their inner strength to innovate as they represented the *most trusted agency to protect and conserve nature*. His vision was grounded in empirical reality attained through decades of rigorous fieldwork. His research findings documented the capacity of the *Bonda tribal of Bonda Hills* to confront natural calamities and to cope with new challenges while retaining their core cultural and production practices. He wanted development policy planners to emulate the tribal model of 'Self-managed development'.

His crusades against the unilateral policy and planned interventions by the state resulted in several changes in legislation and greater involvement of the primary stakeholders-The tribal. He recorded travails of the communities displaced by the construction of river dams, and industrialization in the vicinity of the *Pengo Paraja, Jharia Paraja, Bhatara* villages bordering Kalahandi, Koraput districts. Mineral resource-rich districts had pushed their native inhabitants to starvation and pecuniary. He organized a field trip for his postgraduate students to record how the *Indravati Dam* project was impacting tribes of the Koraput, Sundargarh, and Sambalpur districts. Many tribal people were moving out of the project area as adequate measures for their rehabilitation and secured future was not made. With empirical evidence, he approached authorities and compelled them to appoint a development scientist to map and suggest measures to alleviate the sufferings of the local inhabitants.

His indomitable spirit to fight for the rights of the marginalized tribal people is aptly described by Bishnupada Sethi:

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

*If Odisha today boasts of a robust people-centric research and rehabilitation policy, it being the first state to do so, the credit goes to Prof. Mahapatra, who was the guiding father for this endeavour. It was due to his tireless effort, and compassionate appeal that the Orissa Resettlement and Rehabilitation of Projects Affected Persons Policy, 1994 of the Water Resources Department, Government of Orissa, provided for payment of compensation for assets lost, in addition to a rather substantial rehabilitation package for the landless and those who occupied land without proprietary title (<http://indr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Mahapatra-memorial.pdf>).*

These are historic legislations for the indigenous people. These have resulted, primarily as a result of the perseverance of Prof. Mahapatra's relentless fight for the protection of their rights and entitlements in the land, forests, and other resources. He insisted on a compilation of customary rights in land, forest, and water resources. The objective was to demand legitimate, adequate, and comprehensive compensation packages for the displaced communities. He believed that the compilation of records would benefit not only the land-holding peasants but also the greater majority of landless tribal people, who do not hold a proprietary record of rights over their natural and common property resources. Effectively, these resources were hitherto enjoyed by them from time immemorial but became part of the government lands under the *colonial principle* of eminent domain.

Prof. Mahapatra belonged to a rare genre of teachers, scholars, and institution builders, who dominated their disciplines and became a sort of 'cult' figure. With his impeccable command over social science theory and methods, vast experience, and rich repertoire of research, combined with passionate and fearless activism for the marginalized population in India and the world, he cemented his place among the luminary anthropologists of India. His scholarship is recognized beyond India. He was appointed Consultant, World Bank in India and the US on *Rehabilitation of displaced population*, 1985-88, 1995-96 and remained one of the most admired members of the IUAES.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

His energy was seamless! He revamped the Institutions he headed, with his futuristic vision, robust initiatives, and uncompromising attitude in matters of academic rigor. The significant role of this eminent professor in shaping the intellectual world of Odisha in the last decades of the twentieth century is incomparable. Summing up this dynamic and multifaceted personality, eminent anthropologist P.K. Nayak wrote:

*By birth, Mahapatra was a stubborn Odia, in his dealings with people, he was a polite and Bengali gentleman, and by temperament, he was a forward-looking German, who constantly strove to expand the boundaries of anthropological research and inquiry as a doyen of the discipline! (Nayak. 2020, P 253).*

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Professor Mahapatra was not only an outstanding teacher but also a voracious reader and prolific writer. He has written and co-edited 15 books, his last one being *Knowledge for Actions: A Treatise in Anthropology* which appeared in 2016. He published about 180 research papers in international and national journals. He was Founder- *Editor, Man in India*, (Journal of the Department of Anthropology, Utkal University) and *Founder and Editor, South East Asian Perspectives* (1st International Journal in the Social Sciences from Odisha)

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

**Professor S.R.K Chopra**  
**(1931-1994)**



History of palaeoanthropology in India would be incomplete without acknowledging the contributions of Professor Shiv Raj Kumar Chopra, Founder Head of the Department of Anthropology at Panjab University, Chandigarh. Erudition, dedicated commitment to knowledge and valuing others above self are the few widely acknowledged attributes of this distinguished scholar. Admired for his charisma and ability to fight for the discipline and its contributions from India, he showed rare foresight. His fight to retain fossil find of intact mandible of Gigantopithecus from Shiwalik Hills as prized possession of Museum of Anthropology at Panjab University is legendary. He is rightfully recognised for putting paleoanthropological findings from the country on the world map.

SRK, as he was fondly addressed, was born on 8th of October 1931 in Ludhiana. He hailed from a family of educators, with a grandfather who was tutor to the Royal family of Bilaspur, and a father who was a Professor of English literature at the Delhi University. He earned his BSc Honours in Zoology in 1951 and his Masters in Anthropology in 1953 from Delhi University. In 1955, he completed his PhD from Zurich. While at Zurich, Switzerland [1953 - 55] he conducted research on the cranial suture closure in old world and new world monkeys. The findings, published as an inaugural dissertation in the proceedings of the Zoological Society of

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

London [Volume 128, 1957], provided new information on suture closure in relation to physiological age in monkeys. This contribution gained significance as the data has been compared with corresponding ones for anthropoid apes and men. It finds prominent reference in textbooks and in standard works on primates.

At the University of Birmingham [1955- 58] under a grant from the Wenner-Gren foundation for anthropological research, New York, he designed the “Pelvimeter”, for the measurement of angles of torsion on the pelvis and other bones of primates including man, which had been impossible to achieve at the time with the conventional osteometry instruments. The design of the instrument and its applicability were published in 1958 in the Journal MAN, published by the Royal Anthropological Institute, London. His professional academic journey started in the year 1957. From 1957 to 1958, he served as an invited lecturer at the Duckworth Laboratory, University of Cambridge, U.K.

In 1959, he returned to India. He joined as a Reader in Anthropology in the Department of Zoology at Panjab University on 2nd April 1959. Within a year, he successfully separated from the Zoology department to establish an independent Department of Anthropology. In 1960 he married Krishna Taneja, his lifelong companion and a woman of great strength and resolve who stood by him through thick and thin. Same year, he became one of the youngest Founder Heads of an integrated Department of Anthropology in independent India. His academic and administrative genius started flourishing at the young age of 30. By this time, he was recognised as one of the leading paleoanthropologists in the World. He served as Chair of the department till 1981, a tenure of more than twenty years through which he positioned this young department as a pioneer in research in various domains of biological and social-cultural anthropology. Under his expert guidance, the department emerged as a centre of excellence for paleoanthropological studies.

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

From 1967 onwards, he, along with his team, investigated various hominoid and other fossils from the Sivalik region. To his credit, stands the discovery of a new fossil Gibbonoid tooth from the Sivalik Hills. His work, including the discovery of fossils like Gigantopithecus Bilaspurensis, Pliopithecus Krishnani (in the Miocene beds) and Sivasimia attracted widespread attention. This was followed by several collaborative projects funded by different national and international institutions. Some of the findings from various collaborative projects were presented at the second international Congress of Primatology held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA in 1968 and were subsequently published in Recent Advances in Primatology. Funds from the Kiel University in collaboration with the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschung-Gemeinschaft) assisted him in his project on the biological surveys of select Himalayan populations. Between 1964 and 1968, the Punjab government and the CSIR continued to fund the project which was extended to Lahaul and Spiti regions in Himachal Pradesh. The Indian National Science Academy (INSA) further funded the research in this area from 1972 to 1974. In 1974, he presented some details of dryopithecine material from the Shivalik's at the 5th International Congress of Primatology held at Nagoya, Japan. This was later published in Contemporary Primatology (1975). He contended that these remains refute the belief propounded by Simon and Pilbeam (1972) that the fossil ape species in the Haritalyngar area in India are not diversified. The work of Professor SRK Chopra on human adaptability in varying climatic zones was conducted in association with the Cambridge Himalayan High Altitude Research Expedition in 1979, and the research was supported by the Medical Research Council and the Royal Society, UK. Its report was published in the international compendium, Cambridge University Press.

In 1980 he was invited by the President of the 8th Congress of International Primatological Society, Professor A.B Chiarelli of Florence University to share his findings from the "Shivalik Fossils Remains" with other experts and participants of the congress. His work on evolution of Early Man is well acclaimed, documented and cited. The Shivalik region may now be considered as an area where the earliest primates may have evolved.

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Professor Chopra's intensive and incisive research and experience extended over three decades. More than 100 research papers published in various national and international journals and cited in several significant textbooks on physical anthropology speak volumes about the excellence and intensity of his research.

In 1974, Professor Chopra conceived of a unique 'Museum of Man' within the precincts of the Department of Anthropology at Punjab University. The project was aesthetically executed with the help of celebrated artisans from Kolkata and was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Punjab, Giani Zail Singh. The life-sized models of fossil apes, primates and homo sapiens trace the evolution of humankind and are configured from the reconstruction of fossil material collected by him and his team in the course of various field expeditions. Some of these fossils from the Shivalik region date back to 14 million years ago. The museum also exhibits various ethnographic materials collected from different regions of India. It has been posthumously named the SRK Chopra Museum of Man in his honour. It is to his vision that the Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, holds the distinction of being a UGC funded Centre for Advanced Studies in Anthropology since 2011.

Professor Chopra made cardinal contributions not only to his primary interest in strengthening palaeoanthropology but also to the holistic approach and integrated character of the discipline. Research articles published in Nature and Human Biology symbolize that spirit. He identified and brought talent from different parts of the country to teach in this new department and encouraged them to take up challenging tasks and projects. He supervised 19 PhDs and was an examiner at both international and national universities with a fluency in both English and German languages. Students trained in the department were hired with ease by various national and international universities as also in allied institutions like anthropological and archaeological Survey of India because of the training they received under his supervision. The Department of Anthropology, Panjab University was one of the first departments in the country to introduce a diploma in Forensic Science/

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

anthropology under his visionary leadership. Ethnographic explorations in remote areas of Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur and Lahaul Spiti was also initiated under his guidance.

He went on several international assignments to various Universities across the world. Few of the most prestigious teaching assignments were at the universities across the United Kingdom, West Germany and Japan. From 1965 to 1967, he was a Visiting Professor in the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Kiel in West Germany. Continuing to take his wealth of academic experience abroad, in 1979 he was invited to the Primate Research Institute at Kyoto University in Inuyama, Japan, as a Visiting Professor. Among his many Awards, reference must be made of the Wenner-Gren Foundation Award for Excellence twice from 1955 to 1956, and then again in 1966 to 67. He was fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland as also fellow of the Zoological Society of London and Member, Permanent Council, International Association of Human Biologists along with several reputed national organizations. He also Chaired the session on Paleo-Biology and Evolution for the 7th Congress of International Primatological Society in 1979.

He received a silver plaque from the Ethnographic and Folk Culture Society, Lucknow in 1976 and also delivered the Majumdar Memorial Lecture there. From 1980-81, he served as the UGC national Lecturer. Some of the other prestigious lectures that he delivered in his career include the 1984 M.R. Sahni Memorial lecture to the Paleontological Society of India and the 1985-86 Dr. Panchanan Memorial Lectureship, Asiatic Society, Kolkata. He also served as the Editor of Everyday Science and as Member of the Advisory Committee of Anthropological Survey of India, and the Indira Gandhi National Museum of Man, Ministry of Culture. Additionally, he held the esteemed position of the President of the Indian Association of Physical Anthropology from 1976 to 1978. In 1989, he was bestowed the Excellence Award by the Shiromani Nehru Centenary Committee for enhancing India's prestige and contribution towards National Development.

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

His academic commitments and frequent travels within and outside India impacted his health severely. His resilience, however, knew no bounds. In the year 1988, he had to undergo kidney transplant and received a kidney from his wife of twenty-eight years, the ever-resolute Krishna Chopra. He recovered and went back to the hectic life of an active academician and academic administrator. In 1988, he spent a year as a Visiting Professor at the United Medical and Dental School at the University of London. His administrative acumen was distinctively visible, when he held the office of the Pro Vice Chancellor of Panjabi University, Patiala from 1983-1986 and then as Vice-Chancellor of Kurukshetra University, Haryana from 1986 to 1989. On his return to his parent University, he was given the prestigious position of Dean of University Instructions, Panjab University till he retired from formal academic career on 31st October 1991.

In 1989, eminent geologist Professor Ashok Sahni and paleoanthropologist Dr. Rajan Gaur published S.R.K Chopra festschrift volume titled Perspectives in Human Evolution to honour his immense contributions. In recognition of his research contributions in promoting scientific explorations in the field of fossil primate discoveries, he was nominated as a member of the Explorers Club of the USA. He was the first Indian University don to receive the distinction in recognition of his astronomical scientific career, most notably his fossil primate discoveries. He also featured in the Indo-American Who's Who. His academic attainments are legendary and his meteoric rise in the world of paleo-anthropology is exceptional. He is recognised as one of India's original intrepid explorers who conquered hostile terrain to dig up significant finds that pieced together major anthropological indications of our past.

SRK made not only an exceptional contribution to the growth of the discipline of anthropology but also made generous financial contributions to provide motivation to the students of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes to excel in the discipline. In the year 1962, his family contributed towards setting up of the Rai Bahadur Wali Ram Taneja Medal in the memory of his father-in-law which was to be given to the top-ranking student of B.Sc. final year. In the year 2005, the Syndicate of

the Panjab University, Chandigarh (vide its meeting on 28th February 2005) has formalized the institution of the SRK Chopra Memorial Scholarship to be awarded to the topper in BSc (Hons. School) in Anthropology.

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**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

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Contributed by : *Ms. Shalini Vahi* (Daughter of Prof. S.R.K. Chopra and a Practising social and Cultural anthropologist)

Edited by: *Prof. Shalina Mehta*, Former Professor and Chairperson Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh and *Dr. Rajni Lamba*, Anthropologist and CEO, The Rural Environmental Enterprises Development Society (THE REEDS), INDIA

Acknowledgment: *Dr. Maninder Kaur*, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Panjab University, Chandigarh for institutional support.

**Professor Vinay Kumar Srivastava**  
**(3rd December 1952 - 23rd December 2020)**



**Prof. Vinay Kumar Srivastava (VKS) was the Director of Anthropological Survey of India, the largest Government funded body of anthropologist in the world, when he passed away on 23rd of December 2020. In his own words, his academic journey was summarised as follows:**

*"I taught Sociology at Hindu College, University of Delhi, from 15th September 1976 to 21st January 1985 (forenoon). During that period, I worked as the Teacher-In-Charge of the Department of Sociology, Hindu College, on many occasions. I joined the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, as Lecturer in Social Anthropology on 21st January 1985, and once I was the Secretary of the Staff Council of the Department. I became a Reader in Social Anthropology on 15th September 1986, and Professor on 14th January 1997. I was on lien from the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, where I am employed as Professor of Social Anthropology, and joined as Principal, Hindu College, University of Delhi, from 10th March 2010. My lien expired on 7th March 2011 and I have returned to my department as professor of social anthropology."*

*(cf. Faculty Details proforma of DU website)*

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

VKS was a very brilliant social anthropologist, standing first class first throughout his graduation and post-graduation in Anthropology and Sociology. He did his doctorate from Kings College, London under the supervision of Prof. Caroline Humphrey on a Commonwealth scholarship. He started his teaching career immediately after completing masters in Sociology from Delhi School of Economics. His first assignment, in 1976, was as Lecturer of Sociology in the prestigious Hindu College of Delhi University. His love for Anthropology brought him back to the Department of Anthropology as a lecturer in 1985 and subsequently he became a reader in 1986 and finally a professor in 1997.

Blessed genius, he received college awards throughout his B.Sc. (Honours) and M.Sc. in Anthropology. Later, when he joined Department of Sociology, he maintained the distinction of holding the first rank, winning merit awards and the university medals. He was awarded the University Medal in 1972, for being the best candidate in B.Sc. (Honours) Anthropology. He received All India Post Graduate Scholarship for two years from 1972-74. He was awarded University Medal for being the best candidate in M.Sc. Anthropology. Medals and scholarships came easily to him. He received National Scholarship from 1974 to 1976, while doing M.A. in Sociology and was awarded Smt. Kunda Datar Gold Medal for being the best candidate in M.A. Sociology. He also received R.D. Sanwal Memorial Prize for getting the highest marks in M.A. examination in Sociology. After joining as Lecturer in Sociology, he received three-year fellowship under Faculty Improvement Programme in 1979, which he did not avail. In 1980, he was selected for a prestigious scholarship to study abroad which again he declined. In 1998, Jamia Milia Islamia University selected him for the post of Professor in Sociology, but he declined. His academic excellence made him a much-wanted Professor in Sociology and in 2002, Delhi School of Economics selected him for the post, but he refrained from joining because of his passion for Anthropology.

In 2006, he was selected for Post-Graduate Research Award of the University Grants Commission, which he did not avail. Out of innumerable

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

opportunities that he applied for and got selected for, because of his erudite scholarship and brilliance, VKS accepted only five among them—lectureship in Sociology in Hindu College, lectureship in social anthropology in the Department of Anthropology, University of Delhi, Commonwealth Scholarship, Principalship of Hindu College and Directorship of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI). I often wondered, why he applied for all these positions, when his heart was in Anthropology and the only answer that comes is that like all great scholars, he was constantly competing with his own self, proving his worth, and then moved on to do what he loved most. Even when he was preparing to retire from AnSI, the position of editorship of the journal Social Change in the Council for Social Development, New Delhi was awaiting him, which unfortunately he could not avail owing to his untimely demise, as he lost his battle to Covid-19 pandemic.

VKS was a passionate researcher, who not only believed in writing papers, but also encouraged others with their publications. He started with the art of editing under the tutelage of Prof. Surinder Nath of Delhi University, who was editor of the journal Spectra of Anthropological Progress. After that, he joined the editorial board of the Society for Indian Medical Anthropology Bulletin. His editorial skills and journey flourished as he continued being associated with one or the other journal in the discipline. When he assumed the position of Editor of the Ethnographic and Folk culture society's journal The Eastern Anthropologist, which was started by the doyen of Indian Anthropology D. N. Majumdar in the year 1947, the scholarly standing of the journal improved immensely. He also shared editorial responsibilities of the journal Social Change and helped it to get under the fold of the Sage Publishers. After joining the Anthropological Survey of India, VKS played a very important role in placing not only the survey itself but also its journal on a much wider public platform. The rights of publication and quality maintenance of its flagship Journal, The Journal of The Anthropological Survey of India was brought under the aegis of the Sage Publishers.

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Vinay Kumar Srivastava's research work can be broadly divided into two parts – based on his dissertations and solicited research publications. Based on his M.Phil dissertation, he published a paper titled “Rethinking charisma” in Indian Anthropologist. This was followed by two subsequent articles titled “Mao cult, charisma and social science” and “Mao, Hua and charisma building” in the journal China Report. His publications in China report made him a close confidant of the prominent Chinese scholar Manoranjan Mohanty. From his doctoral dissertation he published a book and many articles on the Raika pastorals. Among solicited papers, a paper was published by him for the Sociological Bulletin in 1985, volume 34 (1 & 2), titled “Malinowski on Freedom and Civilization”, which was based on a very special seminar organized by Prof. Gopala Sarana of Lucknow University, Lucknow. This paper was later published in the 1993 issue of Dialectical Anthropology as “Malinowski and a reading of his Freedom and Civilization”. VKS was highly impressed by the special seminar organized by Gopala Sarana on Malinowski where the paper presenters were given more than two hours each, to make their presentation which was then followed by lengthy and intensive discussions. Such a style of organizing seminars in India was quite uncommon.

One of his paper which was jointly written with me was titled “Afforestation, development and religion: a case study from the Himalayas” and was published in the annual issue of the journal Mainstream. This was based on my field experience as a member of the NGO ‘Friends of Trees’. I was involved in the ecosystem restoration work in a village in Garhwal, Uttarakhand. I would often discuss with him about its activities, and it was he who was able to see great merit in the proactive ecological restoration work at the grassroots by this NGO. He motivated me to systematically record sequence of events. I became conscious of the activities on his advice and used my anthropological training to systematically record their accomplishments. Subsequently, a very important paper emerged out of this which was later reprinted in edited books. VKS has extensively contributed to the anthropology of environment by bringing in ideas from ecological movements from

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and also from Mahatma Gandhi. His publications based on his study of modern witchcraft in England are also noteworthy. He has immensely contributed to research methods in Anthropology by writing on variety of topics like Genealogy, Participatory Research, Interview Schedule, Payment to Respondents, Qualitative Research, Ethnography and Fieldwork. His edited book for the Oxford University Press titled *Methodology and Fieldwork* (2004) and especially its Introduction penned by him should be made mandatory for teaching any course on Research methods. It is already a compulsory reading for the master's students of Anthropology in Delhi University.

As a teacher VKS possessed some very special qualities. He was greatly influenced by the teaching style of J.D. Mehra and Abhimanyu Sharma of Department of Anthropology, Delhi University, two most distinguished master craftsmen in the art of teaching. While J.D Mehra had infinite capacity to lecture in English, possibly because he also had a master's in English Literature, Sharma was more meticulous and methodical in his lectures. VKS combined both the styles in his lectures. He once told me that when he went to teach in Hindu College, he was quite young (24 years) and there was not much difference between his and the student's age. He soon realised that students were not taking him seriously and would quite often talk among themselves. He evolved his style of teaching by effectively using the black board and while lecturing started writing the lecture point by point on the black board. Many of his students still recall having these notes as their literary treasure trove. Some of them continue to use these as reference points for drafting their lectures.

He was a teacher, constantly innovating to make his classes extraordinarily popular. He is remembered as one of the best teachers, Department of Anthropology ever had till date. Moreover, he is also reminisced for being a great friend, philosopher, guide to his colleagues as also to his students. Not many would know that he was not only a serious researcher but also wrote Urdu poetry under the pseudonym of Khurshid. He was an excellent singer and connoisseur of Sufi poetry. He would often regale his

## **PLUTUS IAS**

**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

audience—mostly comprising his students and colleagues spontaneously, singing Urdu Gazals during social gatherings of the department. Fraternity of anthropologists as also academics and students from several other department shall always remember his eloquent and vibrant lectures.

### **EARLY LIFE**

Born in a traditional Kayastha family of Old Delhi, the erstwhile Shahjahanabad, on 3rd December 1952 to B.B. Srivastava and Shanti Devi, Vinay Srivastava imbibed the values of hard work, dedication, respect for customs and the striving for knowledge, the love for Urdu language and passion for music. Kayasthas had been scribes so was Vinay, though initially, his father a government servant wished him to study for the civil services or take up science subjects to pursue a career in medicine, but destiny had wished otherwise! He was schooled at the Anglo Sanskrit Victoria Jubilee school, Daryaganj, Delhi. He was a shy, thin, unassuming boy who would often joke that he had learnt English through the Hindi medium. He was a wizard at Mathematics, and this was what helped him get a decent second division in the higher secondary examinations of 1969. He joined pre-medical classes at Deshbandhu college but a fall from a bus left him incapable of attending his classes for almost a month. Disheartened and left with no other option, he saw an advertisement indicating availability of few seats in B.Sc. (hons) in Anthropology, at Delhi University. He always believed that destiny had brought him there. However, he did not give up on his father's dream, making two attempts at the Civil Services. He found that his passion lay in teaching, reading and writing. His brother became a doctor and his two sisters pursued law from Delhi University. Vinay's daughter, Sonal and son, Tushar did not follow the teaching profession but joined the corporate world. Rohan is pursuing his graduation from St. Stephens College, DU. Armed with a dictionary Vinay learnt English. His painstaking efforts and phenomenal memory made him an eloquent speaker and versatile writer. His archaic English, his

## **PLUTUS IAS**

### **BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**

choice of words surprised his PhD supervisor Caroline Humphrey, at Cambridge. His thesis did not have a single grammatical error.

Above inputs came from Prof. Kumkum Srivastava, Vinay Srivastava's life partner and a distinguished academic in her own right. They were married in a civil ceremony on 2nd May 1980 and later in a traditional ceremony on 5th July 1980. Their alliance traversed many conventions, they came from different linguistic and caste communities, she is a year senior to him in age, and his traditional family took time to accept it. She reminisced calling him always unconventional in his teaching style, writing and personal life. Liberal to the core, he lived what he taught and believed in!

Kumkum Srivastava received her initial education from 1962-65 in Karachi and then went to Presentation Convent in Delhi, to complete her schooling. She did her graduation and postgraduation in history from Indraprastha College of Delhi University. In her words "spurred and inspired' by Vinay, pursued my M.Phil. and Ph.D. from the department of Anthropology, Delhi University". Her thesis titled Wandering Sufis is published by IGRMS (Bhopal) and Aryan publication. She taught history for the last forty-five years in several colleges in Delhi and retired as Associate professor of history from Janki Devi Memorial college (JDMC) in 2019. They complimented each other immensely as they shared love for Sufi Poetry, classical music and provided intellectual stimulus, often publishing together as co-authors, and also critiquing each other's work.

## **PUBLICATIONS**

Vinay Srivastava was a prolific scholar and would often say in his lectures that unless he writes two pages every morning, he finds it difficult to start his day. He would enduringly coax his students, friends and colleagues to put their thoughts on paper. He published, co-edited approximately 21 books and wrote more than 200 original articles. He wrote with equal ease in both English and Hindi. Few of his frequently cited publications are:

**PLUTUS IAS**  
**BY DR. HUMA HASSAN**