India, Anthropology in

SATISH DESHPANDE
University of Delhi, India

Almost two decades into the twenty-first century, in a somewhat uncertain phase in the history especially of anthropology but also of the social sciences in general, "anthropology in India" needs to be reassessed in its current global context. Much more is now known about the history of the discipline in other non-Western and ex-colonial contexts, not to speak of the West itself. Having gone through an extended period of turbulence in the last quarter of the twentieth century, anthropology is still assimilating the cumulative impact of numerous powerful interventions telegraphed through book titles and labels such as *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, *Orientalism*, *Writing Cultures*, colonial discourse, postcoloniality, multiple modernities, the politics of location, and, most recently, the world anthropologies project. Needless to add that "India," the stage on which anthropology has been (and is being) enacted, has also been changing rapidly and comprehensively. Given so much change, it is necessary to begin by reexamining the older reasons why anthropology in India seemed so distinctive. This disciplinary history needs to be framed within a broader history of ideas that is itself embedded in the story of the subcontinent's successive encounters with colonialism, nationalism, the developmental state, the neoliberal market, and globalization.

However, issues of content and scope need to be settled before proceeding further. This entry offers an overview of a field that would be called social anthropology in contexts outside India (and especially in the West). In India, much of social anthropology is practiced under the disciplinary label of sociology, and influential voices in the academy beginning with M. N. Srinivas have insisted on the indivisibility of the two. The main argument offered in defense of this stance is that the conventional division between these disciplines based on the distinction between "primitive" and "advanced" societies is no longer tenable even in the West (where it originated) and has never made sense in non-Western contexts such as India. However (as acknowledged by Srinivas himself), in the mid-twentieth century, educated Indians disliked anthropology because they saw it as a condescending colonialist discipline eager to portray "natives" as backward, and so it was also expedient to rename anthropology as "sociology."

In terms of institutional practice, the two disciplines lead parallel lives without much explicit interaction. Of the "four fields" of traditional (Boasian) anthropology, the Indian discipline today focuses on variants of physical and cultural anthropology, with archaeology and especially linguistics having become separate disciplines. Historically, physical anthropology has been a strong subdiscipline in India, particularly

The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology. Edited by Hilary Callan.

DOI: 10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea2355

anthropometry. Although the cultural segment of Indian anthropology also includes social anthropological subjects, its hallmark is that it is overwhelmingly oriented toward groups described as tribes (discussed in the following). Indian anthropology is a relatively small discipline, being taught at the undergraduate and/or postgraduate levels in about thirty universities, and it is often counted among the natural sciences. Taught in around a hundred universities, the discipline labeled Indian sociology is invariably treated as a social science and tends to be very eclectic, being mostly sociological rather than anthropological in orientation. Thus, although both anthropology and sociology deal with social anthropological issues, what is known in the West as "the anthropology of India"—especially contemporary India—is mostly associated with departments of sociology. This entry does not cover physical anthropology or its subfields; it is restricted to social anthropology, which in India generally calls itself sociology. The subsequent historical account will hopefully clarify this admittedly confusing mix of overlaps and distinctions.

Finally, this entry focuses on anthropology *in* India. The undoubtedly substantial contributions to the anthropology *of* India made by scholars based elsewhere in the world are considered only briefly.

India and anthropology: A precocious relationship?

India seems to stand out as an anthropological object for three reasons: its sheer size and diversity; its ancient civilization, which is still a living presence; and its intimate entanglement with colonialism. Of these, the last was perhaps the most consequential. As the fabled jewel in the British Crown, India was the grand stage on which so many experiments in colonial governmentality were conducted, both intentionally and accidentally. Unlike most other parts of the British empire, India was an object of intellectual and not just economic or geopolitical interest. The orientalist project of Indology pre-dated, and both facilitated and complicated, the advent of anthropological research on India. The premier institution for the Indological sciences, the Asiatic Society of Bengal, was established by Sir William Jones in 1784. To appreciate the significance of this date, it is necessary to recall that the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland was established in 1871 and that Edward B. Tylor first started lecturing on anthropology at the University of Oxford in 1883. While the society's research agenda was encyclopedic, ranging from the natural sciences to the performing arts and everything in between, it also sponsored some anthropological work. But its main contribution was in creating an archive on Indian social and cultural history that paved the way for the anthropological research that came later. This abundant archive did not pose any difficulties for an anthropology accustomed to studying "people without history" because, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, "the wonder that was India" and its alleged Aryan affinities had been safely quarantined in the distant past, and the compulsions of colonialism had prepared the ground for the emergence of the "ethnographic state."

Not surprisingly, the bulk of early proto-anthropological research was due either directly or indirectly to the colonial state. The Great Rebellion of 1857, when the British

nearly lost India, effectively ended the rule of the East India Company and the colony was brought under the direct control of the British Crown in 1858. Imperial rule was founded on the lesson supposedly learned from the Great Rebellion—that government should interfere as little as possible with the local "customs and manners." However, this pragmatic policy was at odds with the competing imperial imperative to take on the "white man's burden" of civilizing the "natives." But, since both the pragmatic and the proselytizing urge presupposed a detailed knowledge of native culture and customs, and since such knowledge was believed to be essential for effective governance, the colonial state became a major sponsor of anthropological surveys and studies. The first census was conducted in 1865 and it turned into a regular decennial exercise that became more and more sophisticated and comprehensive. An Ethnographic Survey of India was conducted between 1905 and 1908. The vast and ever-expanding colonial project of enumeration and classification produced an avalanche of ethnological "data." The presence of dedicated amateur ethnologists and ethnographers, both official and unofficial, was instrumental in raising the quality of these data above what it otherwise might have been. Colonial administrators such as William Crooke (1848–1923), G. A. Grierson (1851–1941), H. H. Risley (1851–1911), J. H. Hutton (1885–1968), Edgar Thurston (1855–1935), and numerous others made substantial contributions to what later became the anthropology of India. In turn, the anthropology of India (and other colonies) made a significant contribution to British anthropology—for example, Risley served as the president of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and Hutton was professor of anthropology at the University of Cambridge.

The most remarkable contributions, however, were those of devoted self-taught nonofficial Indian scholars such as L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer (1861–1937) in what is now Kerala, and Sarat Chandra Roy (1871–1942) in what is now Jharkhand. Iyer was a high school teacher who voluntarily took on the task of producing a series of monographs for the Census of 1901 and the Ethnographic Survey of India. These were notable for their distinctly ethnographic method, backed by intimate knowledge of local languages. Iyer's work was widely appreciated and he later assumed the first lecturership in anthropology at the University of Calcutta in 1918, and became the founding head of the department established in 1921. Roy was a lawyer who had chosen to settle in Ranchi, working in the district court there. He spent more than four decades recording the living culture of the many tribes in the Chota Nagpur region. Roy's expertise on tribal matters was highly valued by colonial officials and judges, and he was well regarded by the British and European scholars he corresponded with, especially James Frazer and W. H. R. Rivers. He wrote regularly for *Man*, the journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, and when he started the first anthropological journal in India in 1921 he named it *Man in India*; many well-known anthropologists of the time wrote for it.

Between the two world wars there emerged the first generation of Indian scholars who received formal training in Western universities. Govind Sadashiv Ghurye (1893–1983) and Kshitish Prasad Chattopadhyay (1897–1963) went to Cambridge, as did Dhirendra Nath Majumdar (1903–60) a little later; the first two studied under W. H. R. Rivers, while Majumdar was T. C. Hodson's student and also attended Bronisław Malinowski's seminars at the London School of Economics. Noshirwan

Ardeshir Thoothi, and later Mysore Narasimhachar Srinivas (1916–99), went to Oxford after postgraduate studies at the University of Bombay under Ghurye. Not everyone went to Oxbridge: Irawati Karve (1905–70) was trained in Heidelberg; Biraja Sankar Guha (1894–1961) obtained a doctoral degree in physical anthropology from Harvard; and, before all of these scholars, a young man named B. R. Ambedkar (1891–1956) did graduate work in anthropology at Columbia University in New York, though he did not become an anthropologist. During this phase, all of those who went abroad for higher studies invariably returned home to careers in India, and most taught at the premier Indian universities of the time: Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Baroda, and Delhi. There were also many scholars and teachers at these institutions who did not have Western degrees but still commanded great respect, such as Iyer at Calcutta and Dhurjati Prasad Mukerji (1894–1961) at Lucknow. By the 1930s, social anthropology in India was already becoming cosmopolitan, so that, when Western anthropologists arrived for fieldwork, they would find not only "natives" and local scholars trained in traditional knowledge systems but also their own "doubles," professional anthropologists trained in the very same institutions as themselves.

Nationalism and the developmental state

The 1940s appear in retrospect to have been a period when the British Raj—the Anglo-Indian term for the period of colonial rule by first the East India Company and then (from 1858) the British Crown—was effectively already in retreat. The natural preoccupation of the colonial state with World War II left a lot more room for Indian leaders to take center stage. One of the unexpected outcomes of this conjuncture was that anthropology and its activities came to be seen from a nationalist perspective. As long as anthropology had been close to Indology, nationalism had had few complaints because Indological work provided much of the ideological confidence needed by nationalism. However, by the same token, anthropology's tendency to foreground the "backwardness" of not just "tribals" but India in general brought sharp reactions. One of the flashpoints was the publication of Katherine Mayo's *Mother India* in 1927, which claimed to document a long list of barbaric practices and social evils, such as infanticide, child marriage, sexual depravities, and strange Hindu rituals. Though Mayo was associated with missionaries rather than anthropologists, her book seemed to nationalist eyes to be indistinguishable. Then came the 1931 Census, for which Hutton was the commissioner and in which the most detailed nationwide enumeration of caste thus far was attempted. Nationalists eager to minimize internal divisions and to present a united front had long objected to the census and especially its efforts to enumerate caste as a deliberately divisive policy. It did not help matters that the 1931 Census provided the empirical data that led to the drawing-up of the lists of schedules of castes and tribes to be accorded special protection under the 1935 Government of India Act. Yet another occasion for nationalist antipathy toward anthropology was the debate between Verrier Elwin (1902–64) and Ghurye. Although both were associated with anthropology, Ghurye had already broadened his concerns beyond tribes and

had begun to adopt nationalist positions. In this context, Elwin's insistence that tribal communities be seen as distinct from mainstream Hindu India and be protected as vulnerable minorities was hotly challenged by Ghurye, who advocated a policy of vigorous assimilation. Nationalist opinion saw Elwin and his sympathizers, including notably Hutton and even Jawaharlal Nehru (the first prime minister of India), as attempting to carve out an exception to the impending nationalist takeover of the colonial state. In sum, then, on the eve of Indian independence in 1947, anthropology was seen by nationalists as a suspect discipline.

With the coming of independence, everything seemed to change for the Indian academy. In keeping with the popular perceptions at the time, different academic fields and disciplines faced different futures in the new republic. The natural sciences and the emergent technical–professional fields, such as engineering and medicine, were invested with very high hopes as the forms of knowledge that would help India to catch up with the advanced Western nations. For all other fields, whose contribution to the now universal duty of nation building was uncertain, the future depended on how quickly and how well they could reinvent themselves to fit the new demands of the state. Within the social sciences, economics was by far the most favored discipline since it was seen as leading the fight against poverty. History, too, was viewed with favor since it could now devote itself to writing a retrospective biography of the nation. As the discipline that would presumably monitor and document the political life of the world's newest and largest democracy, political science, too, seemed to have a secure future. In sharp contrast, Indian sociology and especially anthropology seemed at odds with nationalism and the requirements of a national state. More than any other discipline, it was anthropology that had to reinvent itself in independent India. It was in such a context that the pressure for much of anthropology to pass itself off as sociology was felt.

Some assistance was provided to anthropology through sheer institutional inertia. Those aspects of anthropological practice that were directly linked to the state survived the transition albeit with some changes. Thus the census ceased to count caste but continued to count everything else as before. The Anthropological Survey of India, formally established on the eve of Indian independence in 1945, continued with its mandate, though this was now restated in the differently inflected paternalism of the national rather than the colonial state, whereby tribal communities were to be nurtured and helped to develop. But institutional inertia offered little help to the academic disciplines of anthropology and sociology regardless of which name was used. The emergence and rapid diffusion of village studies has to be seen in this context. The village promised to be the research site that could rescue an endangered discipline. The idea of the Indian village as the authentic India had been embraced by nationalists and given special urgency and moral weight by Mahatma Gandhi. The village was also amenable to classic methods of anthropological fieldwork since it offered a bounded whole that could be studied by a single researcher, much as tribes had been studied before. Since the state-led campaign for development was especially focused on villages, Indian anthropology as sociology could offer itself as the discipline that would facilitate this aspect of nation building. The 1950s thus saw a flood of village studies by Western as well as Indian scholars. Three volumes, respectively edited by M. N. Srinivas, D. N. Majumdar,

and McKim Marriott, appeared in 1955 consisting entirely of village studies. A number of Western scholars, including Charlotte and William Wiser and subsequently Bernard Cohn, Kathleen Gough, Pauline Kolenda, Oscar Lewis, McKim Marriott, Adrian Mayer, Joan Mencher, David Pocock, and others, conducted well-known village studies. The best-known examples by Indian scholars are perhaps those of Srinivas (1976), which appeared nearly twenty-seven years after the fieldwork he did in 1948–49, and André Béteille (1965). Village studies generally took up issues of caste, kinship, religion, peasant everyday life, and, occasionally, class and agrarian relations. There were also versions of village studies, as in the well-known monograph by Shyama Charan Dube (1922–96; Dube 1955), which emerged from the government of India's Community Development Programme for villages. By and large, village studies did very well and became the defining genre of Indian sociology for nearly three decades, though they did have critics, such as Louis Dumont and David Pocock (1957, 26), who believed that the village was more an "architectural entity" than a genuinely sociocultural one like caste.

Overlapping with village studies but also having an independent existence were studies of kinship. Kinship had been considered a central field for classic anthropology and it was held in particularly high regard by the British anthropologists working in South Africa in the early decades of the twentieth century. Since many of these scholars later moved to Oxford and established social anthropology as the dominant form of world anthropology between the two world wars, both village studies and kinship studies were to an extent inherited by the Indian discipline through this route. The variety of kinship systems in India also served to establish and encourage this field. From Irawati Karve onward, scholars have tried to devise comparative frameworks for understanding divergent systems broadly divided into northern and southern. In fact, "Dravidian kinship" emerged as a distinct subfield, as did the distinction between mainstream patriliny and exceptional matrilineal systems. Complex variations in rules of endogamy and exogamy also fueled much research. While almost every scholar from the 1950s to the 1970s did some work on kinship, the best-known names in this field are Veena Das, Leela Dube (1923–2012), Louis Dumont, Kathleen Gough, Irawati Karve, T. N. Madan, and Thomas Trautmann. The study of marriage and family has been closely related to the study of kinship, but marriage and family are increasingly becoming distinct fields in their own right. Arvind M. Shah's (1998) work provides a sense of the major issues animating research on the Indian family.

Along with work on caste, village, kinship, and religion there was a significant body of sociologically oriented work that was produced during the 1970s and 1980s. Examples include the well-known study of modernization by Yogendra Singh (1973) as well as work on social movements. The intellectual relationship with the West has been a constant concern of Indian social anthropologists and sociologists, and many scholars have raised methodological and theoretical questions about how sociology and/or social anthropology ought to be practiced in India. These concerns have found expression in numerous articles and essays, and occasionally in book-length works (e.g., Oommen 2007).

Institutional contexts

A number of institutions have contributed toward the shaping of Indian anthropology and sociology, beginning with the special case of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Since the nineteenth century, state institutions have played a significant role, and there have been both continuity and change in the transition from the colonial to the national state. The census continues to be an important reference point, though its relative weight has been reduced by the emergence of other data sources such as the surveys of the National Sample Survey Organisation and others. The Anthropological Survey of India, hived off from the Zoological Survey in 1945, continues to research tribal communities and to sustain natural-science-related subdisciplines such as forensic anthropology. In 1985, the Anthropological Survey of India inaugurated a mammoth nationwide ethnological project reminescent of the Ethnographic Survey of 1905–8. The People of India project aimed to provide a comprehensive mapping of all of the "communities" living in India and to document the salient features of their ethnic culture. Like its colonial avatar, this project was led by an administrator anthropologist, Kumar Suresh Singh, and has provoked controversy for many of the same reasons, the most important being its classificatory perspective, based on caste, religion and region, and the role of such a state-sponsored exercises in aiding the creation and strengthening of politically potent identities.

Universities

After the state institutions, it is state-supported universities that have had the most impact on anthropology and sociology in India. The three presidency cities of Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras (now renamed as Mumbai, Kolkata, and Chennai respectively) acquired universities soon after the establishment of Crown rule in 1858, but it took more than half a century for anthropology to emerge as a subject of instruction. In the colonial era, only four universities offered postgraduate (master's level) or higher levels of instruction in anthropology or sociology. Anthropology began to be taught at the University of Calcutta in 1918, but a department was established only in 1921, with L. K. Ananthakrishna Iyer as the first head. The University of Bombay started a department of "sociology and civics" in 1919 under Sir Patrick Geddes, better known as an urban planner, who insisted on adding the latter term. Then, in 1922, the University of Lucknow started a department of economics and sociology with Radhakamal Mukherjee (1889–1968) as its first head. Irawati Karve began teaching anthropology at the Deccan College in Pune in 1939, which was integrated with the University of Poona (now Pune) in 1948. Both Kolkata and Pune began with an emphasis on classic anthropology including physical anthropology, but, while the former retained this emphasis (a sociology department was established only in the 1970s), the latter moved toward a more sociological orientation, with the arrival of scholars such as Ishwarlal Pragji Desai (1911–85) and Yashwant Bhaskar Damle (1923–2006) in the years after independence. The department at Mumbai was associated in the early period with G. S. Ghurye, who headed it for thirty-five

years (1924–59) and gave it a very wide-ranging and ecclectic profile including anthropological, Indological, and sociological themes of research. Until the 1950s, the Mumbai department was the nation's preeminent center for sociological and social anthropological training, and it included among its alumnii scholars such as M. N. Srinivas, Irawati Karve, I. P. Desai, Y. B. Damle, and Madhugiri Shyama Ananth Rao (1926–85). The Lucknow department was the other major center for sociology and anthropology during this period, and was known by its three most famous faculty members: Radhakamal Mukherjee, D. P. Mukerji, and D. N. Majumdar. A separate anthropology department was set up under Majumdar in 1951, while sociology and economics were separated in 1956. Of the three, Mukerji was widely influential beyond disciplinary boundaries, but Majumdar had a lasting institutional impact, helping Lucknow to become an important center (outside Kolkata) for classic anthropological training. Lucknow also boasts an illustrious alumnii list, including names such as Brij Raj Chauhan (1927–2009), R. S. Khare, T. N. Madan, Awadh Kishore Saran (1922–2003), Yogendra Singh, T. K. Unnithan, and Lalita Prasad Vidyarthi (1931–85).

Many more universities were established in the postcolonial period and this also resulted in the expansion of anthropology and sociology. Srinivas returned from Oxford to head the Sociology Department at the Maharaja Sayajirao Baroda University in 1951. He moved to Delhi in 1959 to set up the Sociology Department at the Delhi School of Economics, later merged with the University of Delhi. This department produced a very productive second generation of scholars largely trained by Srinivas, such as A. M. Shah, André Béteille, and Veena Das. The Centre for the Study of Social Systems was established at the newly created Jawaharlal Nehru University in 1972 and was led by Yogendra Singh and T. K. Oommen in its early years. In the 1970s, significant new centers of teaching and research emerged at the University of Hyderabad and the Panjab University at Chandigarh, among other places. In the year 2001, a curriculum development committee for sociology appointed by the University Grants Commission reported that sociology was being taught in more than a hundred universities, that there were more than 10,000 teachers of sociology at the college and university levels, and that around 200 doctoral degrees were being awarded every year (University Grants Commission 2001, 2).

In the 1950s, anthropology, social anthropology, and sociology were relatively well distributed across the country with major centers in cities across the country, such as (in order of establishment) Mumbai, Kolkata, Lucknow, Pune, and Baroda. The postcolonial expansion of the discipline was accompanied by a tendency toward the concentration of power and prestige in a few established departments. In more recent times, academics have often expressed concern about the disproportionate weight accorded to (or claimed by) the Delhi departments, especially those at the University of Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru University. This trend toward increasing centralization and the concentration of academic resources in Delhi is common to other social science disciplines as well and needs to be addressed.

Journals

As for scholarly journals, the story begins in 1921 with the already mentioned *Man in India*, founded by S. C. Roy and based in Ranchi. This journal was almost entirely restricted to scholarship on the tribes of India, particularly those of central India. The next journal was *Eastern Anthropologist*, founded by D. N. Majumdar at Lucknow in 1945. In keeping with its founder editor's interests, the journal covered a wide variety of themes, ranging from tribal issues to development policy, and including both physical and sociocultural anthropology. The Indian Sociological Society started its own journal, named *Sociological Bulletin*, in 1952, with G. S. Ghurye as the founding editor, working from the University of Bombay Sociology Department. The journal reflects the turn toward sociological issues and methods in the 1950s, though it does carry anthropologically oriented articles as well. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, the journal founded by Louis Dumont, offers an interesting case study in intellectual history. It began as an annual venture in 1957, with Dumont and his coeditor (David Pocock) providing much of the content. After nine issues, Dumont decided to cease publication, and, when this decision was protested by well-wishers (including the Lucknow and Canberra trained social anthropologist Triloki Nath Madan), Dumont suggested that the journal be moved to India and be taken over by Indian scholars. The new series of *Contributions to Indian Sociology* thus began in 1967, with Madan as editor and the Institute of Economic Growth (where Madan was located) as its new institutional home. A journal that was (until then) concerned almost exclusively with social anthropological issues thus had the word "sociology" rather than anthropology in its title, and was hosted by an institute of economic research. Last but far from least is *Economic and Political Weekly* (established in 1949 as *Economic Weekly*, and since 1966 in its current form), a journal with a unique profile in the global academy. *Economic and Political Weekly* is published fifty times a year, and includes both scholarly articles that might be found in any academic journal and broader political, social, and economic commentary on current events. Though its name explicitly invokes only the disciplines of economics and politics, its inaugural editorial was written not by its founding editor, Sachin Chaudhuri, but by the sociologist D. P. Mukerji. *Economic and Political Weekly* has been a major forum for Indian sociology and social anthropology ever since, and it is also the preferred public site (outside disciplinary bodies or journals) for airing concerns about academic–institutional issues, especially those of pedagogy. *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (since 1963) is a journal devoted primarily to historical work but has often carried anthropological and sociological work. The monthly journal *Seminar* (since 1959) has over the years hosted many discussions among (and with) sociologists and anthropologists.

Contemporary concerns

The decade of the 1990s marked a significant watershed in the history of contemporary India. Decisive changes in economy, polity, and society seemed to converge in the year 1990–91: the liberalization of the economy after four decades of developmentalism and

the state's new role as an active accomplice of the market; the resurgence of the Hindu right wing, culminating in the demolition of the Babri Masjid (a sixteenth-century mosque alleged to have been built for the Muslim king Babar after he razed a temple commemorating the birthplace of the Hindu god Ram); and the virulent protests against the government's decision to implement the Mandal Commission's recommendation that reservations (i.e., quotas in government jobs and educational institutions) be expanded to include a large group of intermediate castes officially termed the "other backward classes." The cumulative impact of these changes was considerable, arguably affecting all of the social sciences.

In retrospect, and with some mild exaggeration, the 1990s can be termed as something of an epistemic break for the disparate discipline of anthropology–sociology in India. This break or discontinuity is first expressed in the explicit attention paid to contemporaneity itself as a methodologically important effect. Distinct versions of this attention to the coeval are found in Das (1996) and Deshpande (2003), the former shaped more by the trauma of the mid-1980s (especially the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 and the subsequent anti-Sikh riots in Delhi) and the latter by the rediscovery of caste in the wake of the anti-Mandal and anti-anti-Mandal agitations of the 1990s. What is noticeable in these books is the attempt to examine and assess the implications of a self-consciousness about context for the discipline as a whole. But the shift of the 1990s altered the ground for virtually all subjects old and new, even when there was some continuity between the two.

Caste

The most obvious impact of the post-1990s sensibility is to be seen in caste studies. While caste clearly forms the strongest and most durable story arc in the lives of Indian anthropology and sociology, there has been a noticeable change. In the 1970s and 1980s, numerous studies of political mobilization of the lower castes, whether the ex-untouchable Dalit castes, the less studied "other backward classes," or caste groups in general, were documenting the shift from "in itself" to "for itself" of caste consciousness. A consensus was beginning to form that caste as a traditional system was dead even though it had gained new life as a politically potent identity. But this consensus was arrived at from different directions and seemed to lead to divergent analyses. For example, the widely influential later work of André Béteille and M. N. Srinivas (e.g., Béteille 2012) seemed to argue that caste as a ritually grounded social system had withered away in the face of modernity but that it had been artificially revived by electoral politics and populist media in a rather regrettable and worrisome fashion. On the other hand, scholars such as Gail Omvedt and Ghanshyam Shah (e.g., Omvedt 1994) presented this change as a long-delayed but welcome consequence of the "democratic revolution."

One way of summarizing the wide-ranging changes is to focus on three main developments that are arguably the distinct contribution of the post-1990s era. The first is the emergence of new themes that, though present before, were rarely explicitly discussed, such as the dependence of caste on both humiliation and discrimination (Jodhka 2015) or its unnoticed salience in new contexts such as the information technology industry,

where its absence or irrelevance was routinely asserted (Upadhya and Vasavi 2008). The second feature is the explosion of interest in caste across the social sciences, which, for the first time, challenged the near-monopoly of anthropology–sociology. But the third development is probably the most significant—the emergence of self-consciously Dalit-identified voices in the academy including in anthropology–sociology. "Dalit" is a self-chosen term that refers to the ex-untouchable castes; it is an explicitly political term and is generally preferred to others such as "Harijan," which was popularized by Mahatma Gandhi but is now considered patronizing. Dalit-identified academics have begun to ask questions about the caste composition of the discipline. The caste identity of the Indian anthropologist had been noted earlier, but largely as an awkward aside. Even though most Indian anthropologists come from the so-called upper castes, this was treated as an inevitable and unimportant fact, it being taken for granted that they were "casteless" for all practical purposes. But once the political scientist Gopal Guru (2002) had explicitly asked "how egalitarian are the social sciences in India?," business as usual was no longer possible. Forgotten forbears such as C. Parvathamma (1927–2006) are being remembered even as a younger generation of Dalit scholars—which includes P. G. Jogdand, Ramesh Kamble, Vivek Kumar, and Suryakant Waghmore—is making its presence felt. The foregrounding of the caste identities of scholars has not been without its costs, but at least two positive side effects may be identified: first, the long overdue effort to claim and fold into the canon hitherto excluded figures such as Jotirao Phule (1827–90), Erode Venkatappa Ramasamy Naickar (1879–1973), and, above all, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (1891–1956); and, second, the explicit attention to the phenomenon of "castelessness" and the identity questions of the upper castes. A significant study on the latter subject is Ramesh Bairy's *Being Brahmin, Being Modern: Exploring the Lives of Caste Today* (2010). Of course, significant gaps and inadequacies still remain, such as the lack of empirically grounded critiques of monolithic notions of caste "dominance," the specific impact of upward or downward mobility on different kinds of caste identities, and a variety of issues located at the intersections of caste, religious community, gender, and region.

Tribe

Tribes are undoubtedly the oldest subjects of the anthropology of India but with a distinction that was also recognized early on. Unlike the "tribes" of classic anthropology studied by people such as Franz Boas, Bronisław Malinowski, E. E. Evans-Pritchard, or Claude Lévi-Strauss, many tribes in India were neither primitive nor isolated from a larger and more advanced civilization. The questions raised by this context were highlighted in the so-called Elwin–Ghurye debate, with the former arguing for protection of the way of life of tribal communities and the latter arguing that they needed to be brought into the national mainstream and offered the benefits of development potentially available to the rest of the nation. As illustrated by this debate, long-term contact and mutual influences (even where these did not lead to assimilation) rendered the notion of tribe definitionally insecure. However, since the 1980s a set of new questions

driven by insider perspectives has been in play. Among these are the impact of education and social mobility with the consequent rise of a significant middle class among most tribes; the newly vexed question of the intertwining of tribal and religious identities; and the belated recognition of tribals as by far the biggest victims of nation building and development. Diverse works, such as those of Amita Baviskar (1995) and Virginius Xaxa (2008), are linked by these concerns. A striking feature of anthropology's engagement with tribes is that it began under the aegis of the colonial government, confronted by militant tribal groups refusing colonial rule; flowered during the postpacification phase of colonial paternalism; faced some turbulence in the transition to a nationalist state; and entered a largely quiescent phase of official studies un-self-consciously framed as exotic and backward. All of this has been rudely shaken up in the present not only through phenomena such as "displacement by development" but also by the stark fact that the Indian state once again seems to be at war with tribals, whether as "secessionists" in the northeastern borders or as "Maoists" in the forest heartland. Later work by Nandini Sundar (2016) builds on her earlier engagement with the anthropological history of Bastar to highlight these issues.

Religion

In the field of religion, the challenge of the 1990s was to understand the resurgence of religious identities of various kinds, including the dramatic upsurge of Hindu chauvinism, and to reexamine taken-for-granted notions of Indian secularism. These subjects, which had been prominent in the run-up to independence and in the large-scale violence that followed the partition of India and Pakistan, had lost ground to other subjects in subsequent decades. The return of religion in the 1990s allowed for the retrospective recognition of pioneering work, such as Ratna Naidu's (1990) comparative study of India and Malaysia, and Dipankar Gupta's (1982) field-based study of the Shiv Sena in (then) Bombay. Fashioning a critique of secularism in this context was a challenging task, particularly given the global revival of fundamentalisms of many varieties, but was taken up in sophisticated ways, notably by T. N. Madan (1997). The 1990s saw a marked increase in the incidence of communal riots, and the Delhi anti-Sikh riots of 1984 and the Gujarat anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002 were especially traumatic. The interpretive worth of theoretically grounded ethnographic approaches to communal violence was demonstrated by studies such as those of Veena Das (1996) and Roma Chatterji and Deepak Mehta (2007). Meanwhile, studies of religious communities in contemporary contexts have also been registering their presence.

Class

Class and the class structure have long been recognized as a relatively understudied field in Indian anthropology–sociology. However, there has been a recurrent engagement with the notion of the "middle classes" from its earliest appearance in the work of D. P. Mukerji through B. B. Misra's (1961) well-known study and André Béteille's writings to the more recent work of scholars such as Amita Baviskar, Nandu Ram, Raka Ray, and Dhirubhai L. Sheth. Inequality has been studied in its theoretical and disciplinary

aspects and will no doubt be revisited in the aftermath of two decades of neoliberal policies that have clearly deepened inequalities. The class aspects of the peasantry formed an important area of investigation in the 1980s. Peasant movements were studied in the 1980s and returned in the 1990s. Studies of the working class and of workers more generally have been rather few. Among the earliest is N. R. Sheth's 1968 ethnography of a factory in Gujarat, *The Social Framework of an Indian Factory*, which was followed by the work of other scholars in the 1980s. Notable later contributions include Sharit Bhowmik's (2009) work on street hawkers in the globalized urban economy; Carol Upadhya and A. R. Vasavi's (2008) work on the information technology sector, which is being joined by numerous studies on call centers and other information technology locations; and work addressing the informal sector, including from a gender-inflected perspective. The literature on the public sector is small.

Gender

Gender perspectives have emerged relatively late in Indian anthropology–sociology but are among its more eventful sites today. Leela Dube's (2001) was perhaps the first voice to explicitly raise questions from a feminist vantage point, thus opening up fields such as kinship and family systems for further questioning. Patricia Uberoi's (2006) distinctive contribution has been to bring gender perspectives not only into pedagogy and kinship but also into relatively new areas, such as media and popular culture. A powerful intervention, cut short by her untimely demise, is that of Sharmila Rege (2006), who pushed the boundaries of the discipline in order to accommodate both gender and caste without disadvantaging either. Her provocative formulation of a Dalit feminist standpoint continues to be productively debated today. New work on gender has covered areas such as contemporary marriage practices, family-planning strategies in the context of the declining child sex ratio, women's labor in the care economy, and ethnographies of courts dealing with rape. A related field is that of sexuality and its attendant concerns, where new work on masculinities, the links between sexuality and consumption, queer identities, and sex work and prostitution has emerged.

Cities and urban culture

With the decline of the Indian village in both ideological and material terms, the city has come to be a new focus of social–scientific attention. Where older work on cities seemed to center on themes such as pilgrimage and temples, later work has stressed the industrial, the colonial, or the metropolitan city. Satish Saberwal's (1976) study of social mobility in urban Punjab and Ratna Naidu's (1990) survey-based work on Hyderabad are some of the landmarks on a road less traveled. More recent work moves in new directions to link consumption, desire, and modernity as fundamental to urban cultures today, as in the work of Sanjay Srivastava (2007), or explores the complexities of a differentiated Dalit politics and its engagement with municipal government, as in the work of Suryakant Waghmore (2013).

Environment

As ecology and environment begin to enter the core areas of social science, it is instructive to look at the relatively narrow base they have to build on. Environmental concerns in modern Indian sociology–anthropology date from the 1980s through the pioneering work of Ramachandra Guha (1989) and are carried forward, albeit with a different inflection, by Amita Baviskar (1995).

Other concerns

There are a number of other themes on which Indian scholarship is now available, though their volume remains as yet relatively small. The nation and nationalism are areas where historians and political scientists have dominated. For long, the major contribution of sociology was *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism*, by A. R. Desai (1915–94), first published in 1946 and reprinted numerous times. Coming half a century later was G. Aloysius's seminal work, *Nationalism without a Nation in India* (1997), which offers an original and compelling contextualization of Indian nationalism within the contemporary literature. Studies of migration have begun to raise issues such as "rural cosmopolitanism" arising from cycles of internal seasonal migration, "long-distance marriages" across cultural and regional divides, and the global nomadism of information technology workers. Also notable is the field of diaspora studies provoked by the prominence of Indian-origin communities across the world (Jayaram 2004). The sociology of science has seen important work by Jit Pal Singh Uberoi (2002) and others. The sociology of education, especially at the school level, has been enriched by the contributions of Krishna Kumar (1989) and others. With the huge expansion of the media in India since the late twentieth century, particularly electronic media, media studies is now a growing field. Significant studies by nonresident scholars are being supplemented by the work of local scholars. Disability studies is among the newest areas to have emerged and it is likely to grow in future.

Questions of location: The future of anthropology in India

If such have been the predicaments and preoccupations of the twinned discipline called Indian anthropology–sociology, how then is this disparate enterprise to be situated in the current global context? Will the distinction between the anthropology *of* India and the practice of anthropology *in* India cease to matter? This is not a new question—some scholars have long argued that an Indian anthropology should seek to study other cultures and not restrict itself to the study of India. For example, both Satish Saberwal and J. P. S. Uberoi did their doctoral fieldwork in Kenya and Afghanistan, respectively, and Uberoi has also studied Western epistemological orientations (J. P. S. Uberoi 2002). From the other side, the traditional argument for Indians studying India is that of M. N. Srinivas, who frequently argued that the extreme diversity

of cultures within India ensures that "otherness" can be found in close proximity to home.

Questions of this sort may sound quaint today when what used to be called the "politics of location" no longer finds any resonance. After going through so many varieties of self-reflexive critique in recent decades, anthropology seems to have succumbed to fatigue, and its dominant Western sector has, on the whole, opted to return to business as usual. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that simplistic and perhaps self-seeking appeals to raw location, so to speak, as guarantors of authenticity or radicalness carry little credibility today. It is fair then to ask whether and why an entity like Indian anthropology or sociology ought to matter at all. Given that multihyphenated identities are now more and more common, is location to be regarded as simply another of those essentialist indulgences that we must learn to renounce? How do we defend today the claim made at the end of the 1980s that location in the intellectual–academic sense is not only a site of enunciation but also the locus of accountability (John 1989)?

Even the seemingly self-evident proposition that individuals may be portable but institutions are not is being challenged today by the fact that the larger Western universities are setting up regional centers in every country or region that is of interest to them. As these regional centers take over the functions that once required local institutions, they will enable "anthropology of" to float free of "anthropology in." In the globalized context of an information-technology-driven world, when the West has acquired real-time access to non-Western societies in increasingly location-neutral ways, what will the future of a university department of anthropology in, say, Brazil, China, India, or South Africa look like? Two old roles that may continue to be viable are supplier of well-trained graduate students and younger faculty, and consumer of finished intellectual products. But the more important question concerns the relationship that such universities will form with their own local contexts and constituencies. How will emerging forms of accountability be articulated with new modes of mobility or rootedness? It is precisely these relationships that are more unclear today than ever before.

Certainly in India but also elsewhere in the non-Western world, anthropology and, indeed, university education itself are going through a historically unprecedented process of democratization of access. The entry of large numbers of first-generation learners is transforming the contemporary college and university. Classes, castes, and tribes that could once figure in the story of anthropology only as the studied other are now acquiring the skills and the social capital to become anthropologists themselves. The discipline has the potential to transform itself decisively as it takes on new questions and becomes accountable to new publics waiting to come onto the stage. These new publics could initiate a broadening of worldviews and concerns that is long overdue, but they could also take the discipline in a darker direction, depending on the role of state power and dominant ideologies.

Language is a critical yet inadequately explored issue in this context. The early and intimate association with British colonialism has, to some extent, made English an Indian language. It is often said, for example, that Indian graduate students and academics are at a tremendous advantage in their interactions with Western scholars and

institutions, relative to their colleagues from other non-Western contexts. On the other hand, English still functions as a gatekeeping institution that regulates entry into the discursive sciences, including anthropology–sociology. This is all the more ironic given the concern for emic perspectives in the discipline, which tend to valorize proficiency in local languages. Clearly, this problem requires massive resources that only the state can provide. Unfortunately, the political processes that encourage or sometimes compel states to act on this front do not necessarily have the interests of disciplines at heart. Both "vernacularization" (or indigenization) and "vocationalization" can damage and diminish disciplines. But allowing English to act as a gatekeeper also impoverishes anthropology and restricts its ambit drastically.

This brings us to the perennial question of indigeneity: How Indian is Indian anthropology? Always taken to be important and legitimate even when no clear answers have been available, this question is almost as old as Indian anthropology and sociology. Every colonial context inevitably produces the anxiety of a "derivative" discourse and the fear of mere mimicry, but in India the question of indigeneity can also become entangled with sectarian chauvinisms that can take an anti-Muslim or anti-Christian direction. These concerns are all the more relevant in India today when the right wing within every cultural and political formation is more aggressive and dominant than in recent memory. It matters little to such ideologies that there can no longer be any simple division between "indigenous" and "foreign" in the contemporary world. However, this does not mean that location is irrelevant since inequality is still as much a feature of the academy as it is of the world at large. While it is true that, in terms of access to resources, visibility, and impact, the most advantageous academic location today is perhaps that of the India-born-and-raised anthropologist based in the West, this is dwarfed by the bigger truth that geographical–cultural locations do not come with any guarantees—any location can embody progressive or regressive tendencies.

A larger question implicates anthropology everywhere, namely the growing incompatibility between the liberal–humanistic intellectual project and an academy being reshaped by neoliberal pressures. With the resurgence of right-wing ideologies and xenophobic movements, the future of liberalism seems insecure in its own homeland. Anthropology everywhere, more than most disciplines, will have to bear the burden of this uncertainty.

SEE ALSO: Anthropology: Scope of the Discipline; Boas, Franz (1858–1942); Caste; Desai, Akshay Ramanlal (1915–94); Dravidian Systems of Kinship; Dumont, Louis (1911–98); Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (1902–73); Ghurye, Govind Sadashiv (1893–1983); Hinduism and Jainism; India, Indigenous Languages of; Indian Anthropological Association (IAA); Indigeneity in Anthropology; Karve, Irawati (1905–70); Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1908–2009); Malinowski, Bronisław (1884–1942); Medical Anthropology; Mukerji, D. P. (1894–1961); Pocock, David Francis (1928–2007); Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI); Saberwal, Satish (1933–2010); Sikhism; Social and Cultural Anthropology; Srinivas, M. N. (1916–99); Tribe; United Kingdom, Anthropology in; Urbanism; World Anthropologies

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Aloysius, G. 1997. *Nationalism without a Nation in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Bairy, Ramesh. 2010. *Being Brahmin, Being Modern: Exploring the Lives of Caste Today*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Baviskar, Amita. 1995. *In the Belly of the River: Tribal Conflicts over Development in the Narmada Valley*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Béteille, André. 1965. *Caste, Class and Power: Changing Patterns of Stratification in a Tanjore Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Béteille, André. 2012. "The Peculiar Tenacity of Caste." *Economic and Political Weekly* 47 (13): 41–48.

Bhowmik, Sharit K., ed. 2009. *Street Vendors in the Global Urban Economy*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Chatterji, Roma, and Deepak Mehta. 2007. *Living with Violence: An Anthropology of Events and Everyday Life*. New Delhi: Routledge.

Chaudhuri, Maitrayee. 2003. *The Practice of Sociology*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.

Das, Veena. 1996. *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Das, Veena, ed. 2003. *The Oxford India Companion to Sociology and Social Anthropology*. 2 vols. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Desai, A. R. 2011. *The Social Background of Indian Nationalism*. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan.

Deshpande, Satish. 2003. *Contemporary India: A Sociological View*. New Delhi: Penguin.

Dube, Leela. 2001. *Anthropological Explorations in Gender*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Dube, Shyama Charan. 1955. *Indian Village*. London: Routledge.

Dumont, Louis, and David Pocock. 1957. "Village Studies." In *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 1: 23–41.

Guha, Ramachandra. 1989. *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Gupta, Dipankar. 1982. *Nativism in a Metropolis: The Shiva Sena in Bombay*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Guru, Gopal. 2002. "How Egalitarian Are the Social Sciences in India?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (50): 5003–9.

Jayaram, N., ed. 2004. *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Jodhka, Surinder Singh. 2015. *Caste in Contemporary India*. New Delhi: Routledge.

John, Mary E. 1989. "Postcolonial Feminists in the Western Intellectual Field: Anthropologists *and* Native Informants." In *Travelling Theories, Travelling Theorists*. Vol. 5 of *Inscriptions*, edited by James Clifford and Vivek Dhareshwar, 49–74. Santa Cruz: Group for the Study of Colonial Discourse and the Center for Cultural Studies, University of California at Santa Cruz.

Kumar, Krishna. 1989. *The Social Character of Learning*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Madan, T. N. 1997. *Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Misra, B. B. 1961. *The Indain Middle Classes: Their Growth in Modern Times*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Naidu, Ratna. 1990. *Old Cities, New Predicaments: A Study of Hyderabad*. New Delhi: SAGE.

Omvedt, Gail. 1994. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution*. New Delhi: Sage.

Oommen, T. K. 2007. *Knowledge and Society: Situating Sociology and Social Anthropology*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Patel, Sujata, ed. 2011. *Doing Sociology in India: Genealogies, Locations, Practices*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Rege, Sharmila. 2006. *Writing Caste, Writing Gender: Narrating Dalit Women's Testimonios*. New Delhi: Kali for Women.
Saberwal, Satish. 1976. *Mobile Men: The Limits of Social Change in Urban Punjab*. New Delhi: Vikas.
Shah, Arvind M. 1998. *The Family in India: Critical Essays*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan.
Sheth, N. R. 1968. *The Social Framework of an Indian Factory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
Singh, Yogendra. 1973. *Modernization of Indian Tradition: A Systematic Study of Social Change*. New Delhi: Thomson Press.
Srinivas, M. N. 1976. *The Remembered Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Srivastava, Sanjay. 2007. *Passionate Modernity: Sexuality, Class and Consumption in India*. New Delhi: Routledge.
Sundar, Nandini. 2016. *The Burning Forest: India's War in Bastar*. New Delhi: Juggernaut.
Uberoi, J. P. S. 2002. *The European Modernity: Science, Truth and Method*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Uberoi, Patricia. 2006. *Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family and Popular Culture in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
Uberoi, Patricia, Nandini Sundar, and Satish Deshpande, eds. 2007. *Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian Sociology and Anthropology*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.
University Grants Commission. 2001. *Report of the Curriculum Development Committee: Model Curriculum for Sociology*. Accessed August 10, 2017, http://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/modelcurriculum/socio.pdf.
Upadhya, Carol, and A. R. Vasavi, eds. 2008. *In an Outpost of the Global Economy: Work and Workers in India's Information Technology Industry*. New Delhi: Routledge.
Waghmore, Suryakant. 2013. *Civility against Caste: Dalit Politics and Citizenship in Western India*. New Delhi: SAGE.
Xaxa, Virginius. 2008. *State, Society and Tribes: Issues in Post-colonial India*. New Delhi: Pearson Longman.