



Anthropological Survey of India

# NEW LETTER

April - June, 2016







Pilgrims for holy dip in the Simhastha Kumbh Mahapara, Ujjain

## FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK



Dear Readers,

*It's my proud privilege to convey you that we could maintain the momentum as well as dynamism quite successfully during the reported quarter. Our multi-dimensional anthropological exercises, in terms of keen observation on the cultural plurality of the*

*contemporary Indian society, as well as our enquiry into cultural antiquity had been the primary research objectives during this period.*

*Our scholars, who were engaged in the project "Bio-Cultural Diversity, Environment & Sustainable Development", had accomplished studies in time. A few new villages had been selected for exploring anthropological arrays of rural life for the rest of the period of the current national plan research*

*programme. Meanwhile, our physical anthropology units have successfully completed molecular investigations for identification of Y-chromosome haplo-groups with respect to phylogenic variations of as much as 73 tribal communities of India, under project "DNA-polymorphism in Contemporary Indian Population". Anthropological study series of Heritage Cities/Sites such as, Bodh Gaya, Sun Temple of Konark and Velankanni lead us to have glance into the antecedents of cultural transformations over times, as well as antiquity of Indian civilization.*

*Simultaneously, during this quarter, we also have made our ways to the tribal communities, with health-awareness programmes and documentation of intangible cultural heritage.*

*I do hope, alike to this quarter, our dynamism will continue in months ahead.*

**Jayanta Sengupta**

Director



# RESEARCH UPDATE

## Bio-Cultural Diversity, Environment & Sustainable Development

During this quarter, we had initiated reconnoiter tour/ field work in four villages. Kasindra of Gujarat, Moranjan of Assam, Biroti of Madhya Pradesh and Jarud of Maharashtra were those four villages, which had been selected for further anthropological explorations under this project. Here we are presenting glimpses of two villages:

### Biroti (Madhya Pradesh)

Biroti village of Khargone district comes under Nimar Eco-cultural Zone of Madhya Pradesh. It is multiethnic in ethnic composition and consists of 204 households with dominant Rajput population. Entire area is an arid zone and district authorities have given emphasis on rainwater harvesting and water shed management for tackling drought situation. Villagers have adopted rain water harvesting. Pipeline supply of harvested rain water is the primary source of water. However due to paucity of harvested water, villagers still depend on monsoon

for cultivation. The study would give emphasis on the assessment and impact of micro development programmes and people's initiative for the development of Biroti and nearby areas.

### Jarud (Maharashtra)

During the month of March-April, 2016, a reconnoiter tour was conducted in Jarud village under Marathwada Eco-cultural Zone of Maharashtra. The objective of the study was to understand the emerging agrarian crisis and ever raising suicide cases among the farmers of Maharashtra, particularly of Marathwada. Jarud comes under the Beed district which reported highest numbers of suicide cases during 2015-2016. Gradual decline in underground water table in this region jeopardizes crop production. Jarud is a multi-ethnic village with 323 households. The Marathas are numerically dominant ethnic group. However, village economy is being sustaining through agricultural pursuits. Because of poor yield due to meager water sources in the village, a large number of villagers were compelled to migrate to other towns in search of alternative livelihood.



*Anthropologists with the villagers at Jarud*



## **DNA Polymorphism in Contemporary Indian Population**

Analysis of Y-haplo-group among 73 tribal populations was undertaken during this quarter. Besides, a 19 days long workshop was organized at the Head Office, Kolkata from 16th May, 2016 to 3rd June, 2016 with an aim to finalize the reports under this project. All the concerned researchers engaged in this project, participated in this work-shop.

## **Community Genetics and Health (Human Genetic Extension Programme)**

The Survey organized genetic screening camp and awareness programme related to sickle-cell-anaemia, thalassaemia and other genetic disorders among the Kora tribe at the village Kesia-Bhulukunya of Sarenga, District Bankura of West Bengal from 20th to 22nd June, 2016.

Another health Screening and awareness camp among the Warli Tribe of Dadra and Nagar Haveli was organized from 22nd June to 24th June, 2016.

## **People of India: Bio-cultural Adaptations**

Editing of sequenced data for case/control had been carried out. To ascertain disease association with bio-chemical markers, some family data was considered for analysis through PLINK software.

## **Man & Biosphere**

During this quarter, extensive multi-disciplinary study in the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve had been completed. Further, four teams involving research personnel from all the Regional/Sub Regional Centre had also been constituted for undertaking fieldwork in four Biosphere Reserves of distinct geo-ecological settings of the country.



*Post-Tsunami Nicobarese Settlement at Afra Bay, Great Nicobar Island*



# EVENTS

## Health awareness programme

A training-cum- awareness programme was organized by Eastern Regional Centre, Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata from 9th and 10th May 2016 on "Community Health practices and Eradication of Social Evils" among the Kora tribe of Kesia-Bhalukhunna village, Sarenga, Bankura district of West Bengal. Altogether sixty one individuals including both gender of the Kora tribe of the said village participated in that awareness programme. The programme was successful.



*Awareness programme at Sarenga, Bankura district, West Bengal*

This two days long programme was specifically centered on the perspectives of preventive and social medicine. Invited medical practitioner and village health workers delivered on various issues of community health, based on what actually they perceived through their interactions with the villagers in this area. Initial address was delivered by one medical practitioner from Pirolgadi Gramin Hospital, Bankura regarding several issues like mother and child health care, wrong notion and social stigma about tuberculosis and leprosy, preventive measures of certain common diseases like chicken pox, jaundice, diarrhea, malaria, filaria, dengue etc. He also emphasized proper immunization and vaccination of expectant mother and children up to 7 years of age. ICDS project coordinator also asserted the importance of vaccination and health check-up of newly born babies as well as post-natal mothers. As a part of preventive health, maintenance of personal hygiene was one of the agenda of the training programme. In regard to eradication of some vector borne diseases, which are endemic in that area like pulmonary tuberculosis, leprosy, villagers were enlightened with the actual aetiology of those diseases and made to

understand that regular medication is the only way of concurring those diseases.

As a follow-up programme, three days long "genetic screening & health awareness camp" was organized among the same population of the same area by the Eastern Regional Centre jointly with the Head Office from 20th to 22nd June, 2016 in association with the district health machinery. The camp covered 150 Kora people for genetic screening. Nutritional status at individual level was ascertained through anthropometric measurements. Besides, assessment of blood pressure, random blood sugar and general health check-up was conducted by the medical team. An awareness programme on preventive measures against some prevailing diseases and ailments, mother and child health care, superstition about tuberculosis and leprosy was also a part of the endeavor.

## Documentation & Dissemination

### *Simhashta Kumbh Mahaparv*

A team of researchers from the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur were engaged in visual documentation of Simhashta Kumbh Mahaparv at Ujjain during April-May 2016. The documentation was important as this sacred ritual occurs once in an interval of 12 years, thus referred the massive assemblage of pilgrim at the site. It witnessed religious discourses among different sects of



*Simhashta Kumbh Mahaparv- a great occasion of spiritual assimilation*

Hindu religion during the Mahaparv. The event attracted people from different parts of the world. The documentation was covered in two phases which gave full attention to the Peshwai



procession (marking the arrival of the members of an Akhada or a sect of Sadhus at Kumbh Mela) and Sahi snan (ritual bath) including the other auxiliary cultural events on this occasion.

### ***Gaya Heritage City and Buddha Gaya World Heritage Site***

A team from Anthropological Survey of India comprising researchers from Eastern Regional Centre and Head Office, Kolkata conducted thorough fieldwork in this region in order to understand the level of awareness about the historical bonding with the heritage and cultural expression towards a sacred city and the declaration of Heritage City and World Heritage site of Gaya and Buddha Gaya respectively.

Gaya and Buddha Gaya, situated on the banks of the river Phalgu and Niranjana respectively, have an immense impact on the cultural manifestation of Indian tradition. The Vishnupad

temple is situated in old town of Gaya city which is also considered as the ancient inhabited area in India. Physically, the Gaya town has expanded since time immemorial. Mythologically, the Gaya town derived its name from Gayasura, as depicted in Vayu Purana. Even its' name as Gaya Khetra was also referred in the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

The contemporary town of Gaya is basically a transformed human habitation of ancient Magadha cultural zone and Gaya cultural zone. Now it has been displaying synchronic cultural signatures of Brahmanical tradition of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Gaya district is considered as sacred among the Hindu due to presence of many sacred spots like Vishnupad-Bedi, Akshayavat, Pitamaheswar, Ramsila Pahar, Pretsila-Pahar, Brahmajoni-Pahar, Manglagouri and so on. Stone sculptures of Buddha in Bhumi-sparsha Mudra, Pralambapada Mudra, Stupas of 9th century A.D. i.e. during the period of Pala dynasty were excavated from Gaya. Excavated images of Dharmachakra-



*Assembled pilgrims beneath the Bodhi Briksha on Buddha Jayanti*





*Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra (10th Century AD)  
at Kaouyatola Buddhist site, Gaya*

Pravartaa Mudra (9th century A.D.), Buddhist goddess Tara (10th century A.D.) and Buddha in Avalokiteshwara mudra (9th century A.D.) are testimonies of cultural antiquity of the Bodh-Gaya. Besides, several Hindu temples like Dungenwari temple, Barabar Cave and also the Kaouyatola Buddhist site, where Siddharth stayed before attaining enlightenment (Bodhisattva) carry historical as well as religious significance of ancient India.

Presence of so many sacred spots within a specific geographical zone of Gaya and its surrounding areas is unique and attracted

many pilgrims since time immemorial. It is one of the sacred pilgrimages among Buddhist for centuries. Moreover, both the towns like Gaya and Buddha Gaya attract the visitors nationally as well as internationally, which have expedited the growth of these two towns economically and culturally also. Hindus from various parts of India and abroad used to visit this place to observe ritual of Pindadaan on the foot-prints of Lord Vishnu at Vishnupad temple and on other Bedis (seat), with a belief of gaining salvation for the departed souls of the deceased ancestors.

### ***Konark and the Sun Temple***

The World Heritage Site Konark is one of most popular place of tourist interests, where myth and reality walks parallel. According to Vishnu Purana, it is to be believed that Aditi (divine wife of sage Kashyap) went there following the wish of Lord Vishnu and gave birth to her son Arka/Aditya (the Sun) and that holy shrine thereafter turned into Arka Tirtha (sacred place for worshipping Sun God). Mythological significance of Arka Tirtha however got a pinnacle of sanctity with the legend of Samba and his salvation from leprosy. Moreover its' location at the southern end of the Mahanadi delta indicates the existence of an ancient human habitat, since time immemorial. Once, the Konark was one of the flourished river ports of eastern coast, adjacent to the shore of Bay-of-Bengal. Etymologically, Konark (Kona-garh or Kona-ghar) refers to that ancient place which lies on the confluence of river Kushabhadra, rivulet Chandrabhaga and Bay-of-Bengal. This ancient habitat is located more or less in close proximity to tropic of cancer. According to positional astronomy, sun rays fall diagonally on this place. Kannagara,



*While architecture, art and idols speak volume*

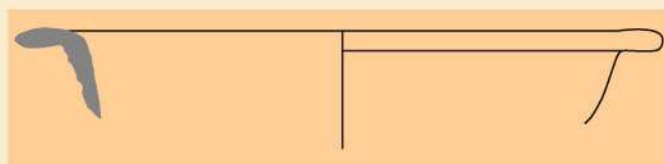


as referred in Ptolemy's (2nd Century AD) Geography and later referred as 'Arkku-tirtha' in the travelogue of Al Barauni (11th Century AD) strongly establishes the antiquity of Konark as a well flourished centre of maritime trade and contact with South-East Asia.



*Red and grey wares- signifies ancient habitation at Konark*

The Sun Temple of Konark is one of the Sun temples of India. It was built sometimes in the mid-thirteenth century, under reign of Narasimha Deva-I (AD 1238-1264) of East Ganga Dynasty. Temple complex consists of the main Sun Temple, Chhayadevi Temple (earlier Sun Temple which was built in 12th Century under reign of Purandara-keshri), brick structure of Vaishnava Temple and many other subsidiary structures like the gateways, wells, Naat Mandapa and Bhoga Mandapa etc. Alignment of the main temple is on the East-West direction. It comprises several spatial segments for specific purposes. Distinctive Rekha- deul included Garbha-greeha (sanctuary), Pida deul/jagmahana (assembly hall) and Naat Mandapa (hall for performing dances) carries the rich tradition of Kalinga



*Reconstructed earthen pot with diameter 25 c.m.*

School of Architecture. Architecture of the main temple provided an impression of one huge and colossal chariot drawn by seven horses (three on the northern side and four on the southern side) on twelve pairs of stone wheels in south and north direction. Each wheel is a sun dial that precisely indicates the time, in a day, from sun rise to sun set. Twelve wheels denote twelve months as well as constellation of celestial bodies in respective months, which perhaps served as an effective almanac for voyagers in those days.

Thousands of magnificent stone sculptures on the Sun Temple are being carrying the signature of the Nalanda School of

sculpture. Each sculpture is unique in distinctive facial features, body forms, postures, hair style, clothing and ornaments. Figurative sculptures of the Sun Temple are mainly deities (Sun, Siva, Astadikpalas, Mahishauramardini, Barah avatar, Vamana avatar, Ganesa, Krishna, Ganga, Yumuna etc.); mythological figures (Bidyadhara, Kirttimukha, Kichaka, Celestial nymph, Sinha-bidalo, Gaja-bidalo); human (male, female of various morphological forms and postures and activities, amorous couple); birds-animals; flower-plants. Stone images of Sun God are unlike the traditional attire of Hindu God. Those were significantly engraved belt on the waist, leather boot covered up-to knee height. It thus, throws some light on the origin of worshipping of Sun God among the Scythians. Epicanthic eye fold, protruding chick and somewhat square shape of the face of Sun images assert early human migration from Persian region



*Porcelain pot shreds carry signature of ancient maritime trade*

to the coast of Konark. Even the Samba Purana confirms migration of eighteen Maga/ Magha/ Saka families (sun worshippers) from Shakadvipa (Iran) to Konark. Several sculptures of male (human) figure with distinct mongoloid and African features suggests a rudimentary form of cosmopolitan nature of the Konark because of its potential maritime activities with distant nations. Sculpture of camel and giraffe substantiates that perhaps there were some contacts with Arab and Africa. During field investigations at some villages near Konark i.e. Khalkatapatna, Gadureswar, Tikana etc. in search of cultural continuity, many pot shreds and terracotta beads have been found. Most of the shreds are grey and red-ware and also porcelain ware. The Sun-centric Konark is indeed a classic place of cultural diffusion of antiquity, which had adopted and developed through centuries. On 1984, the Konark Sun Temple was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

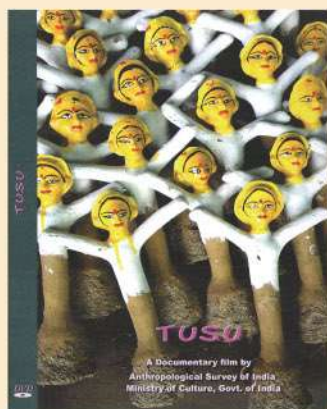
In another venture, Velankanni heritage city was studied by a team of research personnel of the Southern Regional Centre, Mysore in May, 2016.



# NEWS

## Audio-visual Mapping of Culture of India

Under this programme, Dr. Kakali Chakrabarty, Deputy Director (Culture) of the Eastern Regional Centre, Salt Lake has finished directions of two documentary films viz. "Tusu Puja" of the Sabar community of Sarasberia village, Bankura and 'Making of Hukka Banam', a dying musical tradition of the Santals of Purulia, West Bengal.



## Rajbhasha

Timahi Hindi Karyashala (Quarterly Hindi workshop) and Timahi Hindi Baithak (Quarterly Hindi meeting) was organized at all Regional Centre/Sub-Regional Centre.

## Observation of International Museum Day

On 18th May, 2016, International Museum Day was observed in befitting manners in various Regional Centres of this Survey. Guest lectures, sit and draw and quiz competition were the



*Sit and draw competition at the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur on International Museum Day*

primary events for sensitizing people/students regarding cultural significance of museums to the nation.

## Observation of International Environment Day

On 5th June, 2016, World Environment Day was observed at the Regional Centres through planting saplings, organizing guest lecture on environmental issues.

## Observation of International Yoga Day

International Yoga Day was celebrated on 21st June, 2016 at all Regional Centres and Head office in a befitting manner. Staff members of the organization enthusiastically participated in the Yoga session followed by deliberation on significance of Yoga in maintenance of healthy living.



*Buloba, a member of Great Andamanese Tribe from Strait Island on demonstration*

## Collaborative Programme

Students (4th Semester) of Vidyasagar University and the West Bengal State University, West Bengal had been offered theoretical



as well as hands-on training on molecular anthropology for a period of three months at the DNA Laboratory of Head Office, Kolkata.

### **Manpower Training Programme**

A lecture series was organized on the topic, 'Museum Designing, Display and Best Practices Museum' on 6th April, 2016 at the Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata of this Survey in association with scholastic guidance of Shri G.S. Rautela, Former Director General of National Council of Science Museums, Kolkata and Dr. Mita Chakraborty, Deputy Keeper of Indian Museum, Kolkata.

### **National/International Seminar/Workshop**

- Dr. S.K. Sukla, Assistant Keeper of this Survey participated in a two-day workshop on 'Disaster Risk Preparedness' organized by the National Museum Institute, Janpath, New Delhi from 4th to 5th April, 2016.
- A contingent of research personnel and research fellows of this Survey participated in the National Workshop on 'Participatory Biodiversity Conservation for Improved Ecosystem Services in the Context of Climate Change' organized by the Institute of Bio-social Research and Development (IBRAD), Kolkata on 9th & 10th May, 2016.
- Dr. B.K. Mohanty, Anthropologist (Cultural) of this Survey delivered a lecture on 'Anthropological Approach for Conservation of Natural & Cultural Heritage' on 16th June, 2016 in the workshop for the In-service teachers training on 'Role of Schools in Conservation of Natural & Cultural Heritage' held at the Centre for Cultural Research & Training (CCRT), Udaipur.
- A contingent of research personnel of this Survey participated in the National Seminar on 'Forest Dweller's Art of Living : Their Values & World View' organized by the Anthropological Association in collaboration with IGRMS, CIIL and Southern Regional Centre, Mysore of this Survey from 15th to 17th June, 2016.

### **Representation of Survey/GoI, in India/ Abroad**

The Director-in-Charge and one senior officer of this Survey attended a meeting held on 28th April, 2016 at Shastri Bhawan,

New Delhi under the chairmanship of Director ( A&A), Ministry of Culture, New Delhi to discuss the agendas of MoU for the year 2016-2017 between the Ministry of Culture, New Delhi and the Anthropological Survey of India.

The Director-in-Charge and one senior officer of this Survey attended a meeting held on 1st June, 2016 at the Ministry of Culture, New Delhi for finalizing and signing of the MoU for the year 2016-2017 between the Ministry of Culture and the Anthropological Survey of India.

### **Other activities**

- The Survey organized its 22nd Executive Committee Meeting at its Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre, Port Blair from 25th to 26th April, 2016 under the Chairmanship of the Director-in-Charge of this Survey to evaluate the detailed plan programme of various activities during the financial year 2016-2017.
- Swachh Bharat Pakhwada for the year 2016-17 was observed from 16th to 31st May, 2016. During this period different initiatives with the spirit of "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" had been taken by all the Regional Centres as well as Head Office of this Survey. On 19th May, 2016 mass pledge by all the staff members were taken. Also, daily cleaning of office premises and garden area has been undertaken.
- The Southern Regional Centre, Mysore in association with ACCESS, organized a day long sports and cultural meet among the tribal youth and Children of Hill Pulaya and Muduvan tribal communities of Marayoor and Kanthalloor areas of the Idukki District of Kerala on 22nd May, 2016.
- One senior scientific officer along with one Assistant Keeper of the Southern Regional Centre, Mysore paid a visit to Betta Kurumba hamlets in Pandalur, Nilgiri on 8th April, 2016 for collection of ethnographic artifacts for Zonal Anthropological Museum.
- The Survey organized workshop on 'Modernization / Up gradation of Zonal Anthropological Museum Gallery and Exhibition on Boat Typology' at its Eastern Regional Centre, Salt Lake, Kolkata from 12th to 20th June, 2016.

### **Superannuation**

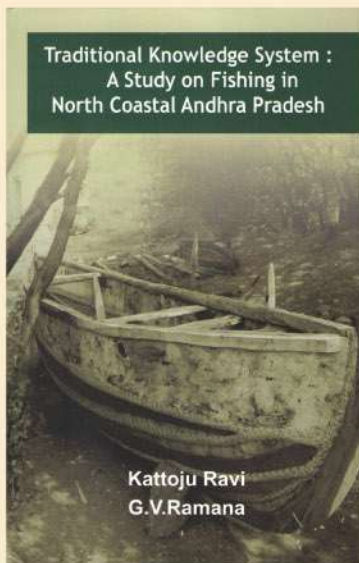
During this quarter Shri Nishit Ranjan Paul, Assistant and Shri Rajkumar Sampatrao Jambhulkar, Cine Technician has retired from active Government Service on reaching the age of superannuation.



## Book

**Kattoju Ravi and G.V. Ramana** 2016: *Traditional Knowledge System: A study on fishing in north-coastal Andhra Pradesh* by Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata.

This is an anthropological study of the traditional knowledge system and culture of the fisher folk inhabiting north-coastal Andhra Pradesh. In addition, this book delineates the area and the people, social, economic and political organization, religious beliefs, cosmology and traditions associated with fishing and local taxonomy of fish. Besides the scholars of maritime anthropology, this publication of the Anthropological Survey of India will be significantly useful for other social scientists, planners, policy makers and N.G.Os who are associated with traditional maritime activities for economic pursuits.



## Scholastic imprints

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- **Baruah, T., P. Kashyap, J. Phukan, U. Baruah, D.K. Adak, and P. Bharati** 2016: Growth Pattern of Stature and Body Weight during Childhood and Adolescence: A Cross-sectional Study among School Boys of Guwahati, Assam, India (in) *Human Growth and Nutrition: A Biocultural Synthesis*, edited by R.K. Gautam and P.K. Patra, Page 39-47. Kalpaz Publications, New Delhi.
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- **Datta, A. and B.R. Hansdah** 2015: Economy, ecology and social organization in the light of bachelor's dormitory of Adi Padam of Arunachal Pradesh, *Jr. Anth.Sur.Ind.*, Vol. 64 (1 & 2): 191-200.
- **Dhar, R., S.K. Behera, R. Gogoi, R. and D.K. Adak** 2016: Population composition in Longwa: A border area village in Nagaland (in) *Spectrum of North-East India: Dimensions of Life and Culture*, edited by T. Baruah), Page 183-200. Dibya Publications, Guwahati.
- **Duary, N.** 2016: Creativity and Excellence in Gainabori in Rural Women of Coastal Bengal (in) *Attributes of Culture-Reflection of cultural itineraries from a multicultural nation*, edited by Sarkar, A., S. Dasgupta and N. Duary, Page 151-166, Aayu Publications, New Delhi.
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- **Ghosh, A.K. and S.S. Barik** 2016: The Jarawa and Honey: An ethnographic enquiry on honey-community relationship among the Jarawas of Andaman Islands, *The Oriental Anthropologist*, Vol. 16 (1): 69-85.
- **Mitra, S. and G.N. Jha** 2015: Santal Bongas- theirs abode in a Santal settlement: Man-Nature-Spirit relationship, *Jr. Anth. Sur. Ind.*, Vol. 64 (1 & 2): 47-58.
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- **Rao Jaya Sankar, J.S., M. Rajendra Prasad, G.V. Ramana, and P. Mangalaxmi** 2016: Health and Health Care Issues of a tribal village in Araku Valley (in) *Dimension of Tribal Health in India Retrospect and Prospect*, edited by K.E. Rajpramukh and G. Jaikishan. Swastik Publications, New Delhi.
- **Sahay, M. and S. Das Gupta** 2015: Continuity and change: a case study in two Gond villages of Panchmarhi Biosphere Reserve, *Jr. Anth.Sur.Ind.*, Vol. 64 (1 & 2): 95-115.
- **Sarkar, A., S. Dasgupta and N. Duary** (Edited) 2016: *Attributes of Culture-Reflection of cultural itineraries from a multicultural nation*, Aayu Publications, New Delhi.
- **Sarkar, B.N., S. Mukherjee, P. Chaudhury and S.K. Nandy** 2016: *Nandigram- Bio-cultural and Ecological Issues*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi.





**Front Cover** : Life is beautiful- jubilant Jarawa girls in flowering season

**Back Cover** : 1. Students visiting the Zonal Anthropological Museum, NERC, Shillong  
2. Observation of International Environment Day at WRC, Udaypur  
3. A sneak peek of Swachh Bharat Aviyan at CRC, Nagpur



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