



WORLD ANTHROPOLOGY CONGRESS

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CRD 1: METHODS THEORIES AND APPROACHES

ROUND TABLE TITLE:

## POSITIONING ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE CURRICULA OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching of anthropology in India goes back to 1918 in Calcutta University as a part of department of Indian History and Culture. First formal course in anthropology started 19 years after its beginning in the USA and 34 years after the British tradition of Anthropology that flourished at the University of Oxford. The growth of the discipline was slow as is reflected in its history. After Calcutta, from 1928 to 1950, it became a part of course curriculum at the department of Economics, Lucknow University and was taught by legendary economist turned anthropologist late Prof. D.N. Majumdar. He then took it to sociology as a postgraduate optional paper. He managed to build a separate department of Anthropology only in 1951, beginning with undergraduate degree course and later as a full-fledged department imparting advance training in the discipline. In 1947, an independent department of Anthropology was started at Delhi University and then in 1948 at Gauhati. following the popularity of the subject several new departments came up all over the country. But the journey was slow as many universities, initially co-opted it as part of other disciplines. Some rough estimates suggest that there are nearly fifty independent departments and 107 colleges across the country in which this unique discipline with its holistic approach is taught to young minds. Given the applicability and theoretical insights and its methodology of ethnographic field work, several important institutes like the IITs, IIMs, AIIMS have incorporated its teaching in their curriculum. But to say that it is enough would be presumptuous given the proliferation of several other disciplines that started about hundred years ago. Teaching of Anthropology in India had a colonial genesis, and its curriculum was often driven by administrative interests of the colonial regimes. Though anthropologists like Surajit Sinha; N. K. Bose; B.S. Guha; D.N. Majumdar; K.P. Chattopadhyay; A. Aiyappan; T. C. Das; Irawati Karve to name only a few gave it a distinct identity, but the courses taught at the University and college level remained basic and rooted in its British legacy. Over the year new courses like Economic Anthropology, Political Anthropology, Environmental Anthropology, Anthropology of Law (Legal Anthropology), Anthropology of Literature, have been added to its regular teaching, emphasizing its critical placement in the larger debate on social science. Changing global situation demands innovative ideas and a revolutionary change not only in its course content but in its teaching also. We now must work for bringing anthropology as preferred course in the forefront. This round table calls for extensive, critical introspection in search of way forward to take Indian anthropology into the next millennium.

**Keywords:** Anthropology, Curricula, Social Sciences, innovations

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