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CRD 1: METHODS THEORIES AND APPROACHES

ROUND TABLE TITLE:

STATUS OF THEORETICAL-CUM-FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH IN INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Research of anthropological nature began in India ever since the establishment of Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal (now Asiatic Society) by Sir William Jones in 1784. Teaching of the discipline of Anthropology first started in Calcutta University in 1920. Today, there are over 45 universities and over hundreds of colleges in different states of the country, where the courses of teaching and research in anthropology are being imparted. Every year, hundreds of books are published, and PhD degrees are being awarded in anthropology in India. There are Tribal Research Institutes in all the predominantly tribal states, and dozens of Social Science Research Institutes in almost all the states of the country engaged in research of anthropological nature. And above all, the Anthropological Survey of India, one of the largest anthropological organisations in the world, was founded in India as early as in 1945 in Varanasi and later shifted to the Indian Museum at Calcutta (now Kolkata) in 1948. Yet, in terms of development of new theories, concepts, and hypotheses, Indian Anthropology seems to have become infertile. It must be remembered that until and unless new theories and concepts are added to any scientific discipline, the discipline would cease to grow and become stagnant. Fundamental research are the building blocks for the growth of a discipline. While India happens to be the best laboratory for all the branches of anthropological research. In terms of variety of cultures, India would stand perhaps next only to the continent of Africa, and in terms of antiquity, she is next to none. The panel calls for a brainstorming discussion on the dearth of theoretical and fundamental research in social-cultural anthropology in India.

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