

1 | The Emerging American Model in Anthropology

THE third quarter of the century opens in anthropology under the influence of A.L. Kroeber, the unquestioned chief of American Anthropology. He was one of the few practising general anthropologists in the profession to contribute with competence in ethnology, archaeology, linguistics and also in Physical Anthropology. In addition, he was an excellent summariser of his findings and implications in the study of man.

According to Kroeber, anthropology attempts to understand and inter-relate all principal aspects of mankind, with central emphasis on man's most distinctive product, namely, culture. The other social sciences are concerned with particular aspects of human culture : social, economic, political and personal. To him "the subject of anthropology is limited only by men, and, however specific it may often be in dealing with date, aims at being ultimately a co-ordinating science." (1953 : XIII-XIV) Exemplified through his writings, under 532 titles, he established what he wrote in 1963.

"Anthropology alone was to deal with culture as such, both through total description and through conceptualization, theoretically. Associated with understanding of culture are knowledge of its past (prehistoric); of the most autonomous spatial sector of culture, namely, language; and even of the racial physics and bodies of men that have produced culture

(Physical Anthropology). The first two of these associated studies—archaeology and linguistics—are usually considered humanities, when pursued in isolation; analogously racial and ropology is obviously also part of biology. No other social science allows its operation to extend so far into frankly humanistic or natural science. This anomaly of anthropology is undoubtedly connected with its other anomalous feature in the social sciences, its holistic instead of segmental interest of culture.” (Kroeber :1963 : 161).

Thus, the interaction of anthropology with biological sciences, on the one hand, and humanistic and social sciences, on the other, is quite evident. The American traditions in anthropology which have accelerated the processes of the World Anthropology continued to percolate during the last quarter century and Anthropology extended its horizon in terms of theory, methods and substantive studies to an integrated understanding of man.

The other model of integration was proposed by the British anthropologists, particularly by Radcliffe-Brown who talked about a natural science of society keeping the biological and humanistic man out of focus. The functional and structural school of the British Social Anthropology emphasised the study of social systems, and endeavoured to develop a unified science of society inclusive of Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, etc. In course of his lectures (now published in book form : Radcliffe-Brown : 1948, 1957) Radcliffe-Brown maintains that there can be only one science of society :

One of the theses I am maintaining is that if it is possible that there shall be a science of society, there shall be only one such science. I am maintaining that we cannot have an independent science of law, of economics, of politics, etc., that insofar as such sciences are theoretical as distinguished from practical science, they must be part of a single general science of society. I admit that it can have a practical management, etc. That is perfectly true. I am maintaining the thesis that if there is to be a theoretical science of society in which we are seeking directly for

natural laws, then there can be only one theoretical science of human society.

These two major models of Anthropology, along with the European concept of Ethnology (reference to which will be made later) continued to compete with each other, for recognition and acceptance during the last quarter century.

In 1952, when the historic International Symposium was organized by Wenner Gren Foundation of Anthropological Research under the chairmanship of A.L. Kroeber, the American Model of anthropology found better recognition, and received a systematic exposure to international community of anthropologists. In his introductory remarks, Kroeber observes emphatically :

After all, the subject of Anthropology is limited only by man. It is not restricted by time—it goes back into geology as far as men can be traced. It is not restricted by region but is world-wide in scope. It has specialized on the primitives because no other science would deal seriously with them, but it has never renounced its intent to understand the higher civilisations also. (A.L. Kroeber : 1953, XII)

In general, an appraisal of both the volumes 2 (A.L. Kroeber : 1953, and Sol Tax *et al* : 1953) goes to define and defend the status of anthropology as a ‘co-ordinating holistic and integrative science’, as special bodies of international knowledge about man, ‘flowing out of man, centred in him, product of him.’

This American view of Anthropology decidedly found all round recognition. In the symposium and among many, Levi-Strauss went to say that—“in most cases the so-called social sciences are not sciences at all.” He found the social science approach lacking in depth while both the humanities and the nature sciences work at a deep level. To quote him :

We all agree that anthropology has a close relationship with the humanities, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Another point of view is that of the depth at

which those sciences work. It seems to me that both the humanities and the natural sciences work at a deep level, while so far, social sciences remain quite on the surface level in most cases the 'social sciences' are not sciences at all. They are rather acts that are trying to use the very little we know about social phenomenon for a better kind of living... Anthropology tries to jump to a deep level, while social sciences have been so far unable to do so, and the result is an extremely difficult situation for co-operation between anthropology and the social sciences. This should be the first problem to overcome. (1953 : 154)

In course of the discussion, Mead further clarifies Levi-Strauss's stand and amplifies his statement. She observes :

Anthropology uses method of analysis from different levels (embryology, geology) with different units and different time scales, cross-cutting all disciplines relating man to nature, on the one hand, and in history, on the other, while sociology is an analysis on a single level, leaving psychological and biological analysis to other disciplines. (Mead : 1953 : 54)

The integrated image of Anthropology which emerges from the 1952 symposium and its approaches for studying the 'integrated' man was further followed up by the publication of the book entitled *Current Anthropology* (William L. Thomas : 1956). With the review papers on the various branches of anthropology as well as of the important theories, this book on anthropology updated the picture originally presented in *Anthropology Today* in 1952. Though among reviewers, the book had a better representation of British social anthropologists and European ethnologists, in the two concluding papers, the same thesis regarding the integration of anthropology was further reinforced by Sol Tax and A.L. Kroeber. In this paper Kroeber took note of the formation of the Institute of Social Relation at Harvard University with their stronger union with sociology. However, he overlooked this trend as an isolated example in the United States (1956 : 308).

The American anthropology further distinguished itself

by initiating the publication of *Current Anthropology*, a world journal of the science of man since 1959. It, further, carried the spirit of integration in Anthropology as it continued to publish papers from all over the world on prehistory, archaeology, linguistics, folklore, ethnology, social anthropology and physical anthropology.

Through the manifold innovative devices of its Editor Sol Tax, *Current Anthropology* facilitated inter-communication among the students of Man, all over the world. Again, through it, scholars could publish and read more promptly, and the whole range of material could appear in units small enough to be easily handled.

Current Anthropology was made available to its associates all over the world at a rather very concessional rate. By its policy it published review papers on theory, methods, ethnography and national anthropological styles from different parts of the world. Working with a democratic spirit, it first consolidated American anthropology and then radiated its scholarship, skill and ideas to the rest of the world. It also published material about anthropology and anthropologists in other parts of the world. These efforts led to the worlds and thus helped the internationalization of the discipline. It tried also to win over, though in fraction, the language barriers by publishing materials in English, originally written in their respective national languages.

The American dominance and internationalization of American brand of Anthropology during this quarter century is also reflected in its successful efforts to organize the two international congresses of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in 1956 in Philadelphia and 1973 in Chicago. The Fifth International Congress, in Philadelphia, in addition to receiving delegates from different countries, for the first time was attended by a delegation from the Soviet Union. It marked the entry of Soviet Anthropology into the World Anthropology in a big way, which further prepared ground for holding the Seventh Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences in Moscow in 1964. The Ninth Congress, again, held in Chicago confirms the influence of Sol Tax in American Anthropology. This Congress, unique and vast in its organization has been instrumental in generating the

publication of a large number of volumes under the series, *World Anthropology*. Out of the two thousand papers received for the Congress, 360 papers (i.e. 18% of them) were received from the Third World countries, while the large majority of the congress papers (82%) were by the scholars identified with the industrialized world which fathered our discipline and nursed the career of the Congress itself. Such a goal to ensure better participation by the Third World scholars was fixed by Sol Tax. In his Preface to the volumes of *World Anthropology*, he observes: "These 360 papers are more than the total of all papers published after the last International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences which was held in Philadelphia in 1956." (Sol Tax : 1975B, 7)

The dominance of American anthropology further gets reflected if one makes a demographic study of institutions and publication in Anthropology as revealed in the international directories and also the international bibliographies of anthropology, respectively. The original International Directory of Anthropologists was published by the National Research Council, Washington, D.C., in 1938 edited by an American scholar, Alfred Vincent Kidder. It presents a picture of anthropology immediately before the second world war. A revised version of this directory was published in 1940. Prof. M.J. Herskovits, another American Professor edited the third Directory which gave a picture of anthropology during the second world war. Finally, Sol Tax, the then editor of *Current Anthropology*, edited the fourth (1967) and the fifth (1975B) international directories.

An appraisal of the fifth directory, which is evidently very comprehensive, presents certain interesting facts. It brings out, on the one hand, the dominance of American anthropology, and on the other, the emergence of anthropology in the Third World countries where anthropology was unknown in 1938 (Table No. 2, P.VIII of *Fifth International Directory of Anthropologists*). According to this Directory, out of 4,765 registered anthropologists about half were from the USA and Canada, one-fourth from Europe (Western Europe 899, Eastern Europe 324) and only the remaining one-fourth hailed from the Third World, the chief countries of anthropological enquiries (Latin America 246, Western Asia 56, Africa 115,

South and South-East Asia 215, Far East 224, Oceania 129). It is quite likely that some anthropologists have failed to be included in the directory but their number, according to Sol Tax, will not exceed 760 proportionate to the figures of anthropologists of the countries actually entered in the directory. The distribution of anthropologists thus, has remained centered in the North Atlantic industrial countries.

Along with the anthropologists the anthropological institutions are equally unevenly distributed: 110 in New York, 78 in Chicago, 52 in Washington, 47 in Los Angeles, 45 in Philadelphia, 111 in the USA, 52 in London, 99 in Paris, 70 in Tokyo, while in other Third World countries the number at one place does not exceed 15, highest being 14, each in Calcutta and Delhi (Sol Tax : 1975 : 484-494).

Viewed in terms of their interests in the area of study (chronological index) we note the highest interest of the anthropologists has been recorded in contemporary time (3,315), and the second two highest being in the ethnographic present (2,185) and the historic time (2,127). Among the prehistoric times, the Neolithic Age appears to be more popular with 1,103 listing, followed by the Palaeolithic Age (868), the Bronze Age (311) and Iron Age (200). (Sol Tax : 1975B : 449-456)

The subject index for cultural anthropology tabulated in the directory brings out several interesting and useful indices reflecting the extent of interests of cultural anthropologists in its different sub-fields and themes. Some of the traditional categories like economic anthropology (663), kinship and marriage (513), social structure and social organization (822), tribal groups (764) and ethnography (355) have turned out to be major categories in which large number of anthropologists continued to be interested. Again, there are certain new fields in anthropology which have attracted large number of cultural anthropologists. These are: ecological anthropology (432), development and modernization (471), community studies (366), anthropology of education; theoretical and applied anthropology (224), anthropology of art and aesthetics (309), medical anthropology (260), political anthropology including administration (489), urban anthropology (392), social cultural and economic change (868), complex societies (204), etc. There

are certain extremely new features, specially in the field of theory and method which have emerged as new fields of investigation. Among these emerging areas mention may be made of Symbolic Anthropology and symbolism (119), structuralism and Structural Anthropology (78), statistics, computers and mathematical model (80), systems analysis, systems theory and cybernetics (19), world views (40), history and sociology of knowledge (80), population and demography (184), culture of poverty (31), ethno-psychology and ethno-psychiatry (22) and Ethics in Anthropology and Ethnography (50). These persisting areas of inquiry as identified from the directory will be pursued in course of our discussion later. However, from a general perusal of the directory data, the overwhelming influence of the Anglo-Saxon scholars is quite obvious.

The uneven distribution of anthropologists can also be examined in the light of the geographical areas of their publication. A count of their publication on certain selected topics of cultural anthropology from the *International Bibliography of Anthropology* (Vol. XX, 1974) is given in Appendix 1. From this exercise it is evident that though the native anthropologists of African, Asian and Pacific countries are the least, publications on these countries are the maximum. For example, in that particular year, the total publications on five selected topics (ethnography, social structure, religion, folk literature, acculturation and social change) comes to 118 books and 133 papers which compare well with USA with 113 books and 169 papers. So are the figures for Asia and Oceania in comparisons to USA and Europe. (Rupp. Britter : 1976).

Along with the internationalization of anthropological literature through the publications of world journal of anthropology, through international symposia and through promoting bibliographical sciences as media of international communication, the third quarter of the present century has also witnessed the exchange of scholars on a large scale, for the purposes of studies, lectures and field researches. The support of the American foundations opened doors for such exchanges between America and other friendly countries of the world. Among such foundations that promoted large scale exchange of scholars on global plane, mention may be made of Fulbright

Smithmundt Programme, Rockfeller and Ford Foundations, the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, foreign-area research programmes of several universities, associations and institutes including the Smithsonian Institute.

Under the Fulbright programmes alone, for example, a large number of scholars were exchanged between America and India. Even in the early period of Indo-American programmes (1950-1964) 10 Indian anthropologists and 37 sociologists came to America and 13 anthropologists and 17 sociologists from America came to India under this programme. During this period (1950-63), 125 Americans came to India in the American Institute of Indian Studies. Later, the number went up, though in India in the 'seventies, it sustained a set back (*Fulbright Newsletter*, 1964).

Anthropology in the western and industrial countries was mainly concentrated around the colonial and developing countries. In order to support this approach a large part of their curriculum dealt with the ethnography and related museums on 'other culture' or countries of specialization. This approach received additional strength in America after 1945, when there was a rapid rise in the interest for non-American area courses. This tradition culminated in the development of the curriculum on area study programme on many campuses. Anthropology along with other disciplines received considerable funds for this purpose and, as a result, many anthropology departments strengthened their teaching and research activities on diverse regions of the world. Today, therefore, one finds strong and comprehensive programmes on Africa at such institutions as California at Los Angeles, Wisconsin, Michigan State, North Western of Evanston, Syracuse and at Indiana; on Europe at Harvard, Columbia and Massachusetts; on Asia at Cornell, Michigan, Standard, Pennsylvania, Chicago and Harvard; on the Arctic at Wisconsin; on Latin America, Florida, Arizona, Columbia, Illinois and John Hopkins on Oceania at Yale, Oregon, Hawaii, Cornell, Washington (Seattle) and Stanford. (C. Frantz : 1975)

Similar foreign area programmes were organized in the mid-'fifties, and 'sixties in the neighbouring country of Canada, though on a limited scale. The National Academy of Sciences of U.S.S.R. also realized the importance of such area-based

researches and several scholars were trained to work on certain areas, particularly Africa, South and South-East Asia, Arctic region, South America and Europe in several centres, including the Institute of Ethnography, located at Moscow and Leningrad. The area-studies in the U.S. and Canadian institutions include both library and field work. In the case of the U.S.S.R., because of obvious limitations, the field-work based area-research remains to be minimal.

Taken together, then, the third quarter of this century has witnessed phenomenal developments in the fields of internationalization of anthropology. This internationalization mainly meant the flow of skill, resources and other impetus from America to the rest of the world. Prior to the 'fifties and also prior to the second world war, the British anthropology had its strong-hold in her Commonwealth countries. The Dutch and the French followed them in promoting colonial anthropological interests.

With the increasing American influence, the attitude of native anthropologists in the colonial countries underwent some radical change. In the second quarter of this century, for example, there was almost complete acceptance of the British traditions in Indian Anthropology. The Indian nationals educated at Cambridge, Oxford, London carried on with pride the great traditions of British Anthropology as reflected in their studies of tribal ethnography, kinship system, cultural contracts, social organization, etc. With the Americanising influence, the new trends such as, the village studies, the urban and industrial studies, the study of power structure and leadership, the study of complex societies and action research, etc. were introduced. Initially those who were educated at Oxford or Cambridge or London and who were in key positions at Indian Universities and in government service were skeptical about what American scholarship had to offer. This attitude was so generalized that even the young scholars who were selected for higher studies in the USA under the Fulbright and Smithmundt Programme (established in 1950) were ambivalent to the United States and to the American approach (M.S. Gore : N.D.). To some it is a form of informal imperialism, or neo-colonialism in other words. American trends reflect a type of inter-group domination in

which formal administrative controls are absent and influences are canalized through the locally linked and other informal sources.

To conclude then, the period under review has witnessed phenomenal development of institutions, forums, foundations and media of communications, particularly at the American sources which have accelerated the tempo of internationalization of anthropology. The International Union of Anthropology and Ethnological Sciences affiliated to International symposia organized either by the Wenner Gren Foundation or by the financial assistance of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations have helped in this process. With the decline of colonial anthropology of the British, Dutch and French brands, the Americanizing influence in anthropology have almost enjoyed a monopoly.