



Anthropos  
India Foundation

# Newsletter

VOLUME II - ISSUE 02 - AUGUST 2022

## ABOUT US

Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) is a trust registered in Delhi in October 2011. The aim is to promote the discipline of Anthropology, its philosophy and methods and engagement in applied and Action Research. AIF, through its work, seeks to address issues in the local/ regional context, based on the 'emic' perspectives and bottom-up approach to solve the problems faced by the communities and its people. Taking due consideration of the local knowledge and respecting the local culture and ecology, AIF has been conducting community-based research and, in its effort, has tried to inform the Policy initiatives too.

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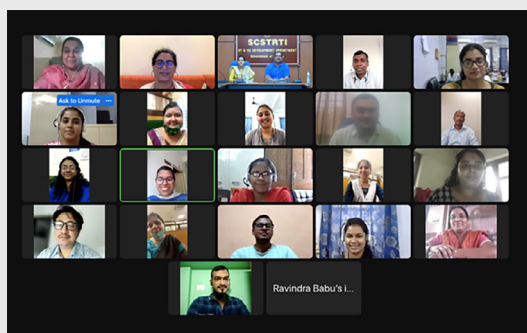
### AIF website:

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## EVENTS OF THE MONTH

### Training Program on Research Methods and Report Writing for the officials of Tribal Research Institutes across the country.

Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Government of Odisha and Anthropos India Foundation (AIF), together with the support of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Government of India organized a seven weeks long Training Program for Tribal Research Institutes Personnel from 18th July 2022 to 23rd August 2022. A total of 23 TRI from the country registered for the Workshop and 55 personnel attended the program every alternate day of the week. Under the guidance of Prof. A B Ota, Director & Special Secretary of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI), Government of Odisha, and Dr Sunita Reddy, Chairperson, Anthropos India Foundation, the program was conducted successfully. The training program was intended to train the TRI personnel in research methods, report writing and presentation skills. The participants were guided by experts from various disciplines from Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Delhi and the University of Allahabad. Dr Navaljit Kapoor, Joint Secretary, MoTA, inaugurated the training program with his encouraging address. Other experts, Prof Sanghmitra Acharya Professor, JNU; Prof Ramesh C Gaur Director, NSD; Prof Vaishna Narang Professor (retd), JNU; Dr E Kannan, Dr Sunita Reddy, Dr Nemthianngai Guite, Dr Garima Dalal from different centres of JNU; Dr Prashant Khattri, from the University of Allahabad; Dr Chakraverti Mahajan from the University of Delhi were the experts for the Program. The capacity-building training gave a basic understanding of the research methods covering both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The participants were also trained in proposal writing, report writing, and presentation skills. The training equipped the researchers with various research methods, tools and data collection techniques.



The training program was a success and on the last day of the Valedictory session, a few TRI personnel presented their research proposals. Each proposal was discussed by experts and suggestions were given. Professor A. B. Ota, who meticulously organized the training program, was impressed by the presentations and gave some recommendations to the participants. Dr Sunita Reddy, Founder and Chairperson of Anthropos India Foundation, was the Course Coordinator of the Program, gave her suggestions, and called for more such training programs for TRI personnel in the future. The course was well conducted with the involvement of Dr Gunjan Arora, Mumuksha Porwal and Habiba Haroon, interns from AIF and Madhusmita Sahoo from SCSTRTI.

### LATEST BOOK UPDATE

#### **Tigers are Our Brothers: Anthropology of Wildlife Conservation in Northeast India**

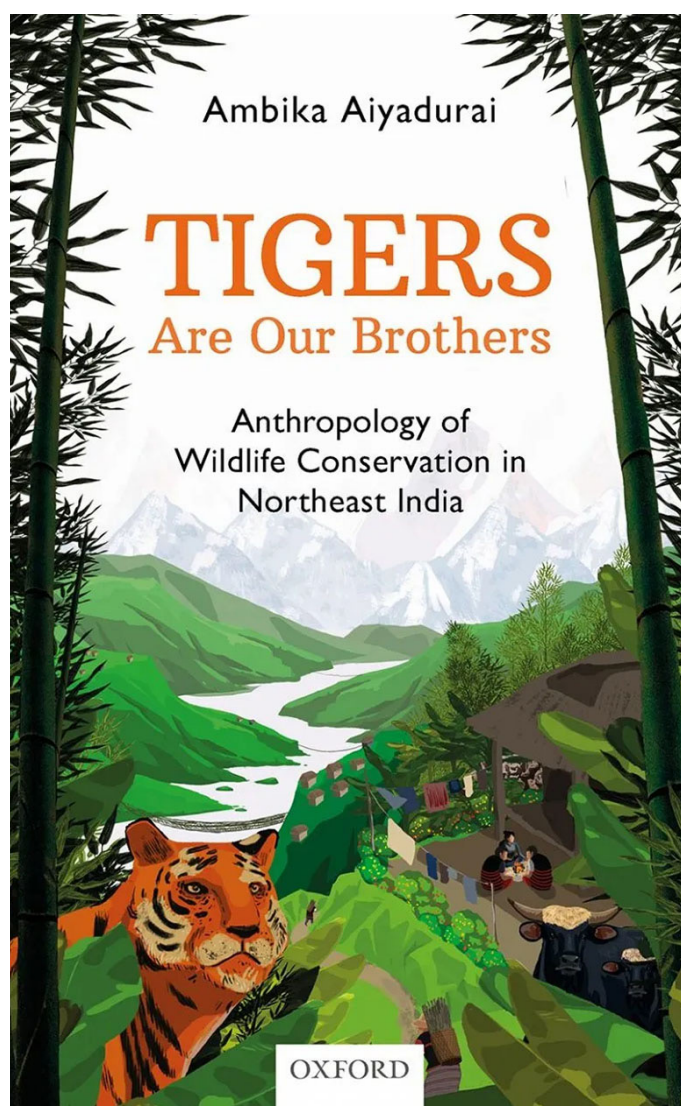
Dr. Ambika Aiyadurai

Published by: Oxford University Press, 2021

Pages:240

The Idu Mishmi people of Dibang Valley, Arunachal Pradesh, believe tigers are their elder brothers. Killing tigers is, for the Idu Mishmi, a taboo. While their beliefs support wildlife conservation, they also critique the dominant mode of nature protection. *Tigers Are Our Brothers* places the Idu Mishmi experience at the centre of a global network of cultural, economic, and political tensions to contribute to our understanding of human-non-human relations.

This first-ever ethnographic study of the Idu Mishmi is well-placed to consider questions of nature and culture, set against the real-world consequences of policy decisions. It argues for an inclusive, culturally informed, and people-centric approach to wildlife conservation. One of the few ethnographic accounts of North-East India and wildlife conservation, this book presents substantial new information on both Mishmi tribes and their native forests/wildlife, which is worthy of attention from anthropological and ecological perspectives. The work is based on intensive field-based studies. Dr. Ambika Aiyadurai is an Assistant Professor, from Humanities and Social Sciences, at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, India.





### DEWAN BAHADUR DR L. K. ANANTHA KRISHNA IYER ( 1861-1937)

Born in present-day Kerala, Dr Anantha Krishna was the eldest of six children in the family. His father was a Sanskrit scholar. His earlier education was in a traditional style followed by the western education system. He completed his matriculation from the Palghat high school and then joined the Kerala Vidyasala at Calicut, later known as Zamorin's College. He joined Christian College, Madras, for his graduation in natural sciences.

He started to work as a clerk at Revenue Settlement, Ooty, from 1888-1890. He joined Victoria College (1890-1897) as a teacher and later, in 1897, joined Ernakulam College (Maharaja College). In 1908, he was promoted as Deputy Director to the Inspectorate of Schools and it was during his tenure at Maharaja College, that he came to Anthropology. In 1901, Dr Anantha Krishna was asked to undertake an ethnographic survey of the state by the State Secretary of the Dewan of the princely state of Cochin. Later he was appointed as a Superintendent of Ethnography of the Cochin Princely state, which resulted in the publication of 12 monographs between 1904-1906. These monographs were later compiled as *Tribes and Castes of Cochin* in two volumes, a classic work in Indian anthropology.

Dr Anantha Krishna retired from the Cochin State service in 1920 but continued to hold the position of the Superintendent of Ethnography till 1924. His ethnographic works, which were exhaustive descriptions of tribes and castes in South India, and analysis of their customs and practices, were appreciated by anthropologists like E. B. Tylor, W.H.R. Rivers, Frazer and A.C. Haddon. Dr Anantha Krishna joined as a lecturer in Anthropology and Ancient Indian History at Calcutta University and remained there till his

retirement in 1932. During his tenure at Calcutta University in 1924, the Maharaja of Mysore invited him to undertake the ethnographic survey of



Mysore, which later came out as a four-volume of *Mysore Tribes and Castes* and, to date, remains a monumental contribution. Dr Anantha Krishna was given Honorary degrees like Rao Bahadur (1921) and Dewan Bahadur (1935) by the state government and a doctorate (1934) by the University of Breslau for his contributions to the field of anthropology. He also visited many universities in countries like Naples, Italy, Paris and Oxford to deliver lectures. He passed away on 25th February 1937, but his work continues to live and inspire generations thereafter.

#### Reference:

Jitha T J (2013) Reading L K Anantha Krishna Iyer within the Disciplinary Trajectory, *The Eastern Anthropologist*, 66:1.



# PHULKARI

The famous Phulkari embroidery from Punjab is a rural handmade embroidery tradition of Punjab done mainly by women. Phulkari is a Punjabi term obtained from two words, i.e., ‘Phul’ meaning ‘flower’ and ‘Kari’ meaning ‘work’. It first began in Punjab in the 15th century by the women of Punjab. Though some scholars believe the embroidery originated in Iran, some say that the Jat tribes brought it to India when they migrated to India and settled in Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat. The 18th-century Punjabi literature and folk songs mention Phulkari. A reference to phulkari in literature comes from Guru Nanak Devji, who wrote:

*“Kadd kasidha paihren choli, tan tu jane nari”*

(Only when you can embroider your own choli with the embroidery stitch, will you be accepted as a woman)

The embroidery design includes a wide range of flowers, animals, geometric patterns and shapes using exceptionally bright and vibrant colour schemes. The Phulkari embroidered odhani, dupatta, and chaddar were always part of a girl’s trousseau, among other bridal goods at the time of marriage. It is said that as soon as a girl child was born in a family, the mother would start embroidering Phulkari items to be given away at the time of her marriage. The dowry

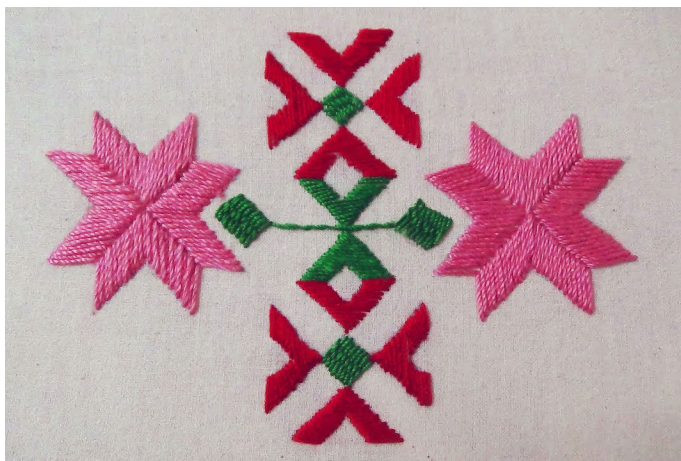
items, even to this day, consisting of Phulkari items, especially clothing and bed linen. It was much later that the phulkari items were made for sale.

Initially, it was a domestic art for women to show their creativity, and the knowledge of the craft was symbolic of her creative abilities. The embroidery time was also the gossip time when women of the family and even from the neighbourhood would sit together and embroider and sing songs and gossip. It was their ‘me time’. After finishing their daily household chores, when the men of the family were away in the fields, women would sit with their threads and weave beautiful embroidered pieces in the verandah. The robustness of the design and the vibrant colours is synonymous with the Punjabi women who weaved each piece of cloth while singing melodious folk songs and then chatting and laughing at each other’s jokes.

The intricate designs woven by women were often judged by the extended family and the conjugal family. My maternal grandmother and her sister said they usually embroidered phulkari chaddar to be given as gifts to immediate family members to strengthen social ties. If there was a marriage in the family or neighbourhood, each woman extended her embroidery skills to develop the trousseau of the daughter (every girl in the village or the extended



family was seen as a daughter even if not related by blood). These extended kin ties were the first to be approached in case of happiness or tragedy. The blood relatives often lived in other villages and were not available daily. The neighbourhood was the extended family and the daily exchange of goods and support was a regular feature. The phulkari items possessed by women were also a sign of her skills and status. During any wedding or festival, every woman would take out her phulkari chaddar or kurta from her *sandook* and flaunt their best-embroidered item to others. The embroidered chaddar or the khadi dupatta/ mulmul dupatta would protect women from the male gaze. The khadi chaddar was already a broad-width cloth, and the embroidery made it more robust and attractive. Besides daily wear clothing, phulkari embroidery was done on bedspreads, bedsheets and pillow covers.



**Source:** <https://images.app.goo.gl/Xv9XD9jsqpTwaLTP9>

The craft diminished during British rule but was revived later by various initiatives taken by the government and non-government agencies. The women then took this activity as an income-generating activity. Traditionally done with hands, but now with machines and modern techniques, the base fabric used has changed. The designs and patterns are now also seen on handbags, stoles, sarees and home and wall décor items. The craft is now a source of livelihood for many women who assert their identity in the patriarchal surroundings. Scholars from various disciplines like anthropology, sociology and fashion designing (Kaur 2011; Kaur & Sodhi, 2014; Kaur & Gupta 2016; Gupta & Mehta, 2019), have not only studied the history, origin and techniques of the Phulkari craft, but they have also focused on the gender dimension, mainly

the craft as an empowering activity where women are earning a living. The story of the makers of the craft is also essential and is aptly discussed in the anthropological account by Gupta and Mehta in *Phulkari from Punjab: Embroidery in Transition* (2019). The visual narration of the stitch craft in the book discusses the lived experiences of the artists and how the craft has revived and reentered the imagination of the current generation of designers and young people. I feel that a craft always survives with us, it never leaves us...it just comes back and revives with more liveliness and oomph. You may not easily find a chaddar with the embroidery, but you may find a stole with the phulkari motifs. And I proudly cherish a chaddar embroidered by my *Naani*, that I have carefully packed and kept somewhere in my closet...a prized possession... remembrance... of belonging.

#### References:

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[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336346977\\_The\\_Living\\_Arts\\_Valuing\\_skills\\_of\\_Phulkari\\_artisans\\_of\\_Punjab\\_India](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336346977_The_Living_Arts_Valuing_skills_of_Phulkari_artisans_of_Punjab_India)
2. Gupta, Anu & Mehta, Shalina (2020). *Phulkari from Punjab: Embroidery in Transition*. Niyogi Books.
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5. Kaur, R., & Gupta, I. (2016). Peacock motif in Phulkari: a comprehensive analysis. *Thapp J*, 242-253.

Contributed by Dr Gunjan Arora, Post Doc. Fellow, JNU and Associate, AIF

## BE A MEMBER OF AIF AND ACCESS E-RESOURCE CENTER

We realize that there is no centralized resource centre for the Anthropological works of Indian Anthropologists, where a scholar can look for publications- articles, papers and books. Thus, AIF is developing an anthropological e-resource centre hosted at the AIF website - [www.anthroposindiafoundation.com](http://www.anthroposindiafoundation.com)

Given your valuable contribution to anthropological discourse in India, we would be glad if you can share your publication to be uploaded to the AIF E-resource centre, which will benefit all the researchers from India and abroad interested in various fields of the discipline.

This will be one of its kind E-resource repositories. Hope you will share your publications with us.

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Anthropos India Foundation

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