



संस्कृति मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF
CULTURE



ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

Ministry of Culture, Government of India

NEWSLETTER



*A vibrant ritual mask from Kerala, crafted for Theyyam performances,
embodying the spirit of ancestral divinities.
It reflects the region's rich artistic tradition and living cultural heritage.*

Director's Address



On the occasion of International Museum Day 2026, I extend warm greetings to everyone, and to every partner institution that joined us in this celebration.

This year's ICOM theme — Museums Uniting a Divided World — could not be more timely. Across the globe, societies face deepening fault lines rooted in cultural difference, intolerance, and historical misrepresentation. I believe museums are uniquely positioned to heal these divisions. They do not merely store objects; they sustain memory, nurture empathy, and create spaces where communities encounter one another honestly and with mutual respect.

In a country like Bharat — whose civilisational ethos is anchored in Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the understanding that the whole world is one family — museums carry a particular responsibility. Our archaeological, art, and anthropological collections embody centuries of coexistence, reciprocity, and shared creativity. I am also pleased to acknowledge the Government of India's Gyan Bharatam Mission, which aims to identify, document, digitise, and disseminate India's manuscript traditions. Many museums across India house rare manuscripts and are natural partners in this mission.

At AnSI, we go beyond object display. Our galleries are built on rigorous ethnographic research that links material culture — tools, textiles, ornaments, scroll paintings — to the living beliefs, knowledge systems, and social practices of India's diverse communities. Recently, WRC Udaipur developed a gallery on traditional board games to highlight indigenous recreational and educational practices, and we are now curating a gallery on pastoral traditions and the deep bond between ethnic communities and cattle. Both reflect our core conviction: that values of cooperation and coexistence are not abstract ideals but lived, everyday realities.

I also want us to engage seriously with the discourse on decolonising museums. Decolonisation is not merely about repatriation; it is about restoring dignity, context, and voice to communities whose heritage has long been interpreted by others. When we correct biased narratives, involve source communities in curation, and present multiple perspectives with equal seriousness, we transform museums from monuments of power into spaces of reconciliation. This is, I submit, the most direct path toward uniting a divided world.

I commend the Western Regional Centre for its initiative in organising these celebrations in collaboration with local institutions, and I encourage every colleague to carry forward this spirit of inclusive, community-centred scholarship. Together, let us make our museums true instruments of unity, understanding, and hope.

Prof. B. V. Sharma

Director, Anthropological Survey of India

Dudka: The Wooden Plate Drum of the Muria Community



Photo 1: This musical instrument- Dudka, is displayed in the musical gallery of the Zonal Anthropological Museum of Anthropological Survey of India, Sub-Regional Centre, Jagdalpur.

One of the notable collections in our museum is the Dudka, a traditional musical instrument of the Muria community of the Bastar region, collected in 1982. Semi-circular and hollow, the instrument is fashioned from wood and adorned with intricate carvings across both outer surfaces — a testament to the artistic sensibilities woven into everyday Muria craftsmanship.

The making of musical instruments has long occupied a cherished place in Muria tradition. From a young age, boys residing in the gotul — the community's traditional youth dormitory — are trained in the craft of shaping both artistic and utilitarian objects, the Dudka among them. Using basic carpentry tools, a solid piece of wood is carefully selected and shaped into its distinctive semi-circular form, then hollowed from within with great precision to prevent cracking. The carved motifs that embellish its surface are far from uniform; they

vary according to the individual maker or user, lending each instrument its own artistic signature.

The Dudka is played by male members of the community, who strike its flat surfaces with a pair of sticks to produce a sound that is both distinct and resonant, carrying across considerable distances. It finds its place at the heart of communal life — sounding out at marriages, dances, and ritual performances — though rarely alone. More often, it joins voices with drums and flutes in ensemble, weaving a layered soundscape that accompanies the community's most significant celebrations and rites.

More than a musical object, the Dudka stands as a living expression of Muria craftsmanship, oral tradition, and communal identity — passed down, generation after generation, through the patient hands of the young men of the gotul.

Visits and Outreach

1. ASI Officials Visit AnSI Head Office to Discuss Collaborative Paleoanthropological Research



Photo 2: Dr. Sanjay Manjul, Additional Director General, ASI, and Dr. Arvin Manjul, Joint Director, ASI, in discussion with Director, AnSI, and senior officials during their visit to the AnSI Head Office, Kolkata.

Dr. Sanjay Manjul, Additional Director General, and Dr. Arvin Manjul, Joint Director, of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), visited the Head Office of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) in Kolkata today for discussions on ongoing paleoanthropological research and avenues for collaborative initiatives between the two organisations. During the visit, the Director, AnSI, briefed the visiting officials on the Survey's current research initiatives in the field of palaeoanthropology, highlighting areas of mutual interest for future cooperation. As part of the visit, the ASI delegation also toured the Palaeoanthropology Laboratory at the AnSI Head Office, where discussions were held on laboratory analysis methods and techniques employed in ongoing research. The visit underscores the continued commitment of both organisations to strengthen inter-institutional collaboration in the fields of archaeology and anthropology.

2. AnSI Research Team Undergoes Ancient DNA Training at Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow

A Palaeoanthropology Research Team from the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI),



Photo 3: AnSI research team undergoing ancient DNA extraction training in the laboratory at Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP)

comprising Dr. Abhishikta Ghosh Roy, Dr. Nandini Bhattacharya, and Dr. Manjulika Gautam, undertook specialised training in ancient DNA analysis at the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow, from 14–15 April 2026. The team received training on ancient DNA extraction under the supervision of Dr. Niraj Rai and other research personnel of the Institute. The training forms part of AnSI's continuing efforts to build technical capacity in advanced molecular research methods and to strengthen collaborative ties with premier scientific institutions engaged in palaeoscience research.

3. MSc Students from Maharaja's College, Mysuru Visit AnSI DNA Laboratory



Photo 4: MSc students from the Department of Studies in Criminology and Forensic Science, Maharaja's College, Mysuru, with AnSI officials during their visit to the Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru.

Visits and Outreach

Seventy-five MSc students from the Department of Studies in Criminology and Forensic Science, Maharaja's College, Mysuru, visited the DNA Laboratory of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru, in two batches on 20th and 21st April 2026. The visit provided the students with valuable exposure to AnSI's ongoing research projects, along with a practical understanding of the laboratory instruments available at the Centre and their respective functions.

4. AnSI Officials Participate in International CIDOC Training Programme on Museum Documentation and Digitisation

The Department of Museology, Indian Institute of Heritage (IIH), Noida, organised a five-day international CIDOC training programme on museum documentation and digitisation from 26 to 30 April 2026. The capacity-building programme covered a range of topics, including documentation standards, collections management, Object ID creation, photograph inventory practices, digitisation workflows, and issues relating to the illicit trafficking of cultural heritage. Dr. Banita Behera, Shri Sarabeet Singh, and Shri Gita Yaikhom, Assistant Keepers of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), actively participated in the training programme, gaining valuable exposure to international standards and best practices in museum documentation.



5. Prof. Vasant Shinde Visits Palaeoanthropology Laboratory, AnSI



Photo 5: Prof. Vasant Shinde with the Director, AnSI, during his visit to the Palaeoanthropology Laboratory, AnSI.

Prof. Vasant Shinde, distinguished archaeologist and academic leader, visited the Palaeoanthropology Laboratory of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) on 26th May 2026. During the visit, Prof. Shinde engaged in detailed discussions with researchers on several key areas, including palaeoanthropology and skeletal remains analysis, osteometric methodologies in forensic anthropology, and the integration of molecular genetics in anthropological research. His insights offered valuable guidance for ongoing projects and future research directions, reinforcing the laboratory's continued commitment to excellence in interdisciplinary anthropological studies.



MoU and Workshops

1. AnSI Signs MoU with North Eastern Council for Preservation of Verrier Elwin Photographic Archive

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Government of India, on 17th April 2026. The collaboration focuses on the preservation, archival management, maintenance, and regulated display of 100 rare photographic prints documenting the life and work of the eminent anthropologist, Verrier Elwin. This initiative marks a significant step towards safeguarding an



Photo 6: Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AnSI and the North Eastern Council (NEC)

invaluable visual record of anthropological heritage, and reflects the shared commitment of both organisations to the preservation and dissemination of India's rich ethnographic legacy.

2. Four-Day Training-cum-Workshop on "Palaeopathology and Human Osteology" Concludes at AnSI Head Office

A four-day training-cum-workshop on "Palaeopathology and Human Osteology," organised at the Head Office of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Kolkata, concluded successfully. The programme was formally inaugurated with a welcome address by Dr. Sasikumar M., followed by the Director's Note introducing AnSI, delivered by Prof. B.V. Sharma. Dr. B.P. Urade, Deputy Director, introduced the workshop, while Dr. Harashawaradhana and Dr. Abhishikta Ghosh Roy provided detailed insights into ongoing projects in the field. Dr. Amit Kumar Ghosh, Deputy Director, briefed the participants on the expected outcomes and significance of the workshop. As part of the programme, Prof. Jagminder Sherawat conducted full-day hands-on training, providing participants with practical exposure to techniques in palaeopathology and human osteology.



Photo 7: Director addressing a session during the four-day training-cum-workshop on "Palaeopathology and Human Osteology" at the AnSI Head Office, Kolkata.

3. Anthropological Survey of India Strengthens Ties with Zoological Survey of India

Prof. B.V. Sharma, Director, Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), delivered an engaging talk titled "AnSI's Journey: From Colonial to Contemporary" at the Directors' Meet, held as part of the 111th Foundation Day celebrations of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI).

During the event, AnSI and ZSI exchanged a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen collaboration in research, documentation, capacity building, and the preservation of India's natural and cultural heritage.

The MoU exchange took place in the presence of Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, marking a significant milestone in institutional cooperation between the two premier scientific organizations.



Photo 8: AnSI and ZSI officials exchange the signed MoU in the presence of Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, at the 111th Foundation Day celebrations of ZSI.



Rakhigarhi Skeletal Remains Transferred to AnSI for Study

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has formally handed over human skeletal remains excavated at Rakhigarhi, Haryana, to the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) for detailed scientific investigation, under a recently signed MoU between the two institutions.

Prof. B.V. Sharma, Director, AnSI, noted that the transfer is expected to significantly advance multidisciplinary research into Rakhigarhi — the largest known settlement of the Indus-Saraswati Civilization, spread across roughly 550 hectares, with evidence of continuous habitation from the Early to Mature Harappan periods.

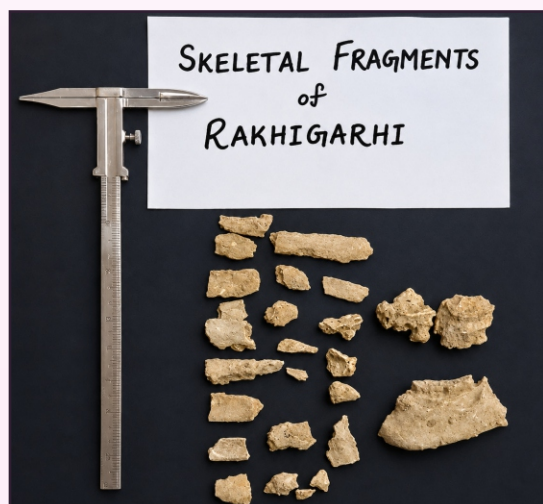
During the 2025–26 field season, ASI's Excavation Branch-II, Greater Noida, uncovered eight burials at Mound No. 7, a previously identified cemetery. Three complete skeletons, along with fragments from other burials, have now reached AnSI's ancient human skeletal repository and laboratory in Kolkata for examination.

The remains offer a rare opportunity to apply modern scientific techniques — including ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis, stable isotope studies, osteological assessment, palaeopathological investigation, and environmental reconstruction — to shed light on ancestry, migration, diet, disease, adaptation, and human-environment interaction during the Harappan period. The research will be conducted in collaboration with leading institutions, including the Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences (BSIP), Lucknow; University College London (UCL); and a team of ancient DNA researchers from Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

Welcoming the initiative, PadmaShri awardee Dr. Kumaraswamy Thangaraj, Senior Scientist, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, said applying aDNA



Photo 9: Human skeletal remains with associated burial pottery unearthed during excavations at Rakhigarhi, Haryana, offering fresh insights into Harappan mortuary practices



technology to the Rakhigarhi remains could reveal critical insights into their genetic history and how human genomes evolved and adapted since around 3000 BCE. Professor Gyaneshwer Chaubey, BHU, called the collaboration a major step towards reconstructing the genomic history of the Harappan Civilization, noting that combining aDNA research with osteological and isotopic studies would illuminate the ancestry, health, mobility, and lifestyles of the Indus Valley population — while also training a new generation of Indian scientists in palaeogenomics.

AnSI has recently completed palaeopathological studies on skeletal remains from several Indus-Saraswati

sites and is preparing scientific publications based on its findings. The Rakhigarhi transfer is expected to further strengthen its research capabilities, particularly in ancient DNA analysis, with plans to expand collaborations with organisations such as the Zoological Survey of India, Botanical Survey of India, Geological Survey of India, and palaeoclimate research groups.

Anthropologist Professor Subhash Walimbe, formerly of Deccan College, Pune, stressed the importance of intensive anthropological examination of the remains to understand how urbanisation shaped human biological and pathological responses, adding that ongoing genetic studies may inform longstanding debates on the origins and population history of the Harappan Civilization. Former National Monument Authority Chairman Professor Kishore K. Basa welcomed the revival of skeletal biological research at AnSI, noting its relevance not only to anthropology but also to history, archaeology, population studies, nutrition, disease history, and genetics.

The ASI-AnSI collaboration marks a significant effort to integrate archaeology, anthropology, genetics, and environmental sciences in the study of India's ancient past, with the Rakhigarhi findings expected to contribute substantially to understanding the origins, health, mobility, and biological history of one of the world's earliest urban civilisations.



Photo 10: Three full skeletons from Rakhigarhi reached palaeoanthropology laboratory of AnSI

Days Observed

1. World Heritage Day 2026 Celebrated at AnSI Western Regional Centre, Udaipur

On the occasion of World Heritage Day 2026, a celebration was successfully organised on 18th April 2026, under the joint collaboration of the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Western Regional Centre, Udaipur, and the Sahitya Sansthan, Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth. An academic session was held in observance of this year's theme, "Heritage Protection in Conflict and Disasters." Speaking on the occasion, Prof. B.V. Sharma, Hon'ble Director, Anthropological Survey of India, highlighted the significance of safeguarding cultural heritage in contemporary times, particularly in the context of conflict and disaster situations.

2. AnSI Observes World Environment Day 2026 with Plantation Drives Across Regional Centres

As part of World Environment Day 2026, a plantation drive was organised by the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Headquarters and Eastern Regional Centre, Kolkata. On this occasion, plantation was carried out within the office premises by Director Dr. B.V. Sharma, along with all staff members. Interns from Jharkhand University, Ranchi, also participated actively in the programme. In observance of the occasion,



Photo 11: Plantation drive organised on the occasion of World Environment Day 2026

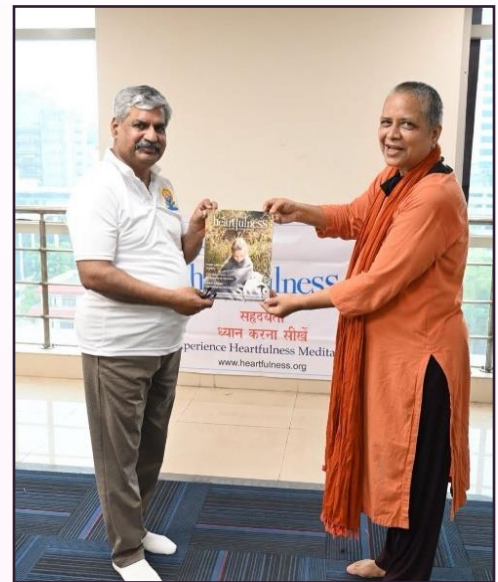
various regional centres of the Survey also organised plantation drives and allied academic activities, including the Southern Regional Centre, Mysore; the North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong; the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur; the North Western Regional Centre, Dehradun; the Western Regional Centre, Udaipur; and the Sub-Regional Centre, Jagdalpur.

3. International Day of Yoga 2026 Celebrated Across AnSI Regional Centres under the Theme "Yoga for Healthy Ageing"

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Ministry of Culture, Government of India, celebrated the International Day of Yoga 2026 with great enthusiasm across its Head Office and Regional Centres, in

observance of this year's theme, "Yoga for Healthy Ageing." The celebrations reflected the Survey's continued commitment to promoting holistic health and well-being among its staff members nationwide.

The Anthropological Survey of India, Head Office and Eastern Regional Centre, jointly celebrated International Yoga Day 2026 at the Head Office premises, Kolkata, on 21st June 2026. The Southern Regional Centre, Mysore, in collaboration with the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS), SRC, Mysore, celebrated the occasion with equal enthusiasm at the SRC campus, with active participation from staff members of both AnSI and IGRMS, who came together for a yoga session promoting physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The session was conducted by Ms. Pooja N., an experienced yoga instructor with over eight years of professional experience in Hatha Yoga, Vinyasa Yoga, Meditation, Pranayama, and Yoga Therapy, who guided participants through various yogic practices and breathing exercises, reinforcing the importance of incorporating yoga into daily life for holistic health and harmony.



On the same day, the North Western Regional Centre, Dehradun, expert supervision of Shri Satish Chandra Chauhan, Yoga Acharya, Dehradun, with staff members participating enthusiastically in a reflection of their commitment to health and well-being. Meanwhile, the North Eastern Regional Centre observed the occasion in association with the Art of Living, with Mrs. Chandana Dkhar and Mrs. Nirmala Jajodia instructing and demonstrating yoga postures, pranayama, and healthy ageing practices to an enthusiastic gathering of staff members. Extending the celebrations further, the North Eastern Regional Centre organised an online invited lecture on 22nd June 2026, titled "Yoga and Maternal Health Outcome: From Garbha to Birth — Global Evidences and Implications for India," delivered by Dr. Pritam Ghosh, Assistant Professor and Head of Department, Department of Geography, Hijli College, Kharagpur, West Midnapore, West Bengal. The session was chaired by Smt. Shyamoshree Borah, Anthropologist (Cultural), with the vote of thanks proposed by Dr. Chhandita Basu, Anthropologist (Cultural), both from the Regional Centre, and witnessed wholehearted participation from all staff members.



Museum Day Celebration

'Object Speaks'

Southern Regional Centre, Mysore

On the occasion of International Museum Day, the Zonal Anthropological Museum, Anthropological Survey of India, Southern Regional Centre (SRC), Mysuru, organized the inauguration of 'Object Speaks', a Single Object Exhibition on 18 May 2026, coinciding with the observance of International Museum Day. The exhibition, part of the Museum's 'Object of the Month' initiative, features the Poothan, A Ritual Mask of Kerala as the object on display for the month.

About the Exhibition: 'Object Speaks'

The 'Object Speaks' initiative is a single-object exhibition series conceptualised by the Zonal Anthropological Museum, ASI, SRC, Mysuru, under the 'Object of the Month' programme. The series aims to bring focused scholarly and public attention to a single ethnographic object, situating it within its socio-cultural, ritual and historical context. Each edition of the series presents one carefully selected object through detailed interpretive panels in English and Hindi, enabling visitors to engage with the object's material properties, ritual significance and the living community that sustains it.

Poothan: The Divine Mask of Kerala's Living Ritual Tradition

The Poothan mask is a finely carved and painted wooden ritual artefact from the state of Kerala. Fashioned from the wood of the old jackfruit tree (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) from a single piece of timber, the mask depicts a divine companion of Lord Shiva, believed to have been sent to accompany Goddess Bhadrakali, a presiding deity widely venerated across Kerala and surrounding regions. The mask is iconographically distinguished by its wide, bulging eyes, a protruding tongue and vibrant facial paint in red, white and black, all of which are designed to convey the power and cosmological energy of a divine being.

The Poothan mask is the central ritual object of the Poothan–Thira performance, a sacred art form that belongs to the broader family of Kerala's living temple traditions, including Theyyam, Mudi yettu, and Padayani. The tradition is most actively practised in the South Malabar region, particularly in the districts of Palakkad, Thrissur and Malappuram and is maintained by the Mannan community, the hereditary custodians of this performance tradition.

The Poothanum Thirayum performance is an annual ritual conducted between December and May, with its most elaborate enactment during the Pooram temple festival. The performance constitutes a sacred act of embodiment: the performer, adorned in the Poothan mask and a full ritual costume comprising bright red garments, heavy brass anklets and a dramatic headdress of bamboo, peacock feathers, pieces of mirror and shiny metallic foil, is believed to be fully transformed into the deity. In this divine state, Poothan and Thira, the latter representing Goddess Bhadrakali, traverse the village together,



Photo 12: Poothan, Ritual Mask



Photo 13: Inaugural ceremony of 'Object Speaks' at SRC, Mysore

visiting every household to the accompaniment of the traditional drums Thudi and Ezhupara. At each threshold, families receive the divine pair with lighted lamps (Deepam), seeking blessings and protection from evil.

The performance re-enacts the celebrated mythological narrative of Goddess Bhadrakali's victory over the demon Darika, a foundational story in the cosmological worldview of the region. This narrative of the triumph of good over evil lends the ritual its sacred meaning and its enduring relevance to the community.

The Mannan community has preserved the Poothan tradition across generations, sustaining it as a living expression of their spiritual identity and cultural heritage. Historically, the tradition enjoyed patronage from local rulers and chieftains; today, it is supported through the collective efforts of local temple committees and community members. The mask-making craft itself is governed by ritual protocols and observances, underscoring the sacred dimension of every stage of the tradition, from creation to performance.

The Mannan community continues this tradition despite the considerable financial burden entailed by the preparation of costumes and the conduct of the performance, driven by a profound sense of duty to their ancestral heritage. The Poothan tradition thus represents not merely a performing art but a living system of knowledge, belief, and cultural identity that merits sustained recognition, documentation and support.

Dr. Banita Behera

Assistant Keeper
Anthropological Survey of India
Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru

Museums Uniting a Divided World

Western Regional Centre, Udaipur

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Western Regional Centre (WRC), Udaipur, commemorated International Museum Day 2026 across two sessions — a primary programme on 18th May and a post-session on 21st May 2026 — held in hybrid mode in collaboration with the West Zone Cultural Centre (WZCC), the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, Sahitya Sansthan, JRNRV, and Namaste India International Institute of Art. The celebrations were anchored to this year's ICOM theme, "Museums Uniting a Divided World," reflecting on museums as institutions fostering intercultural understanding, community participation, and the preservation of traditional knowledge.

Inaugural Programme, 18th May

The day began with a traditional puppet performance by five artists from Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, depicting the culture and daily life of Rajasthan. The formal inaugural session was opened with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Dr. Nilanjan Khatua, Head of Office and Deputy Director (Cultural), WRC; Chief Guest Prof. Col. S.S. Sarangdevot, Vice-Chancellor, Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth University; Guest of Honour Prof. J.S. Kharakwal, Director, Department of Archaeology, JRNRV; and Special Guest Dr. Laique Hussain, Director, Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, followed by a Saraswati Vandana by Dr. Surabhi Verma, Smt. Krishna Bhati, and Miss Kankana Basu.



In his welcome address, Dr. Khatua underscored the role of museums in learning and public engagement, and proposed an MoU between AnSI-WRC and Sahitya Sansthan, JRNRV, to formalise collaborative research and cultural activities. Shri Anurag Saxena, Director, Maharana Pratap Gaurav Kendra, delivered the keynote lecture, advocating for digitisation and immersive online museum experiences.

Prof. Sarangdevot linked museums' societal role to UN Sustainable Development Goals 10, 16, and 17, emphasising outreach for children, senior citizens, and differently abled persons. Dr. Hussain spoke of personal collections as "micro-museums" and flagged the urgent need to document the musical traditions of the Langa and Manganiyar communities. Shri Vivek Bhatnagar, Director, Maharana Pratap Shodh Kendra, reflected that "every home is a museum", extending the concept beyond formal institutions to living traditions. Dr. Hasmukh Seth, Assistant Curator, City Palace Museum, noted that some 37,000 museums across 158 countries had participated in the previous year's celebration, and highlighted outreach models such as the Museum on Wheels.



Photo 14: Geologist Shri Narendra Kavadiya donated a zinc retort distiller, sourced from the Zawar mines, to the Zonal Anthropological Museum for collection and preservation.

Prof. Kharakwal spoke on ancient distillation technology and the metallurgical heritage of the Aravalli Range, while Shri Mahesh Sharma described the Ahar Museum as a living record of Mewar's heritage, raising concerns about the degradation of the Ahar River. Dr. Abhimanyu Singh Arha of JNU drew on Orhan Pamuk's *The Museum of Innocence* to describe museums as repositories of everyday, collective experience. In a notable gesture, geologist Shri Narendra Kavadiya donated a zinc retort distiller from the Zawar mines to the Zonal Anthropological Museum.

Delivering the Special Address, Prof. B.V. Sharma, Director, AnSI, spoke on the role of anthropological museums in safeguarding India's cultural heritage and advancing unity in

diversity, citing recent gallery initiatives on traditional board games and pastoral traditions, and calling for the decolonisation of museums through indigenous perspectives.

Further contributions came from Dr. Shrikrishna Jugnu, who described the villages, hills, and the performance tradition of Gavari as living museums of Mewar; Shri Bhupendra Srimali of Haldighati Museum, on the value of on-site museums; Shri Abhick Sarkar, Field Officer, CCRT, on heritage awareness for children; Shri Umesh Prasad Prajapat, Curator, Ahar Museum, on its nearly 4,000-year collection span; and Dr. Ravindra Devra, JRNRV, linking prehistoric studies to human diversity. The programme concluded with a visit to the Zonal Anthropological Museum's galleries, a vote of thanks by Miss Meenakshi, and proceedings anchored by Ms. Sudipa Mandal, Assistant Keeper.

Post-Session Programme, 21st May

The follow-up session at the Zonal Anthropological Museum was opened by Dr. Khatua, who reiterated the role of anthropological museums in connecting communities to their cultural roots, followed by the screening of a documentary on AnSI's activities and collections.

Dr. Gaurav Singhvi, Convenor, INTACH Udaipur Chapter, spoke on "Beyond Display: What Truly Makes a Museum?", addressing museum design and the decline of traditional cultural practices. Dr. Gaurav Sharma, a digital artist from Udaipur, presented on digital art applications in film, gaming, and animation, tracing its evolution since the 1950s and distinguishing raster from vector graphics. A short audio-visual presentation on the Survey and the Zonal Museum was also screened.

The session was further graced by Dr. B.L. Meena, Head, National Bureau of Soil Survey and Land Use Planning (NBSS), Udaipur; Dr. R.P. Sharma, Scientist, NBSS; and Shri Vilas Janve, renowned artist of Udaipur, who shared perspectives on art and heritage. The programme concluded with a guided museum visit and a vote of thanks by Ms. Sudipa Mandal, Assistant Keeper.

Ms. Sudipa Mandal

Assistant Keeper, Anthropological Survey of India
Western Regional Centre, Udaipur

Field Diary

National Project “Gut-Microbial Genomic study among the PVTGs of India – With special reference to Bharia of Madhya Pradesh”

The Gut-Microbial genomic study is one of a one-of-a-kind study focusing on the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups in India. It tries to understand the intricate correlation between dietary habits, gut microbial diversity, and its impact on health of these communities. Research personnel from the central regional centre, Nagpur, and the sub-regional centre, Jagdalpur, conducted the fieldwork in the Tamia developmental Block of the Chhindwara district. This article focuses on the research activities conducted among the Bharia tribal community of Madhya Pradesh.

Bharias primarily reside in the Patalkot valley overlooking the Satpura ranges in the Tamia block of Chhindwara district of Madhya Pradesh. They traditionally resided in 12 villages in the valley, but in present times have migrated in search of employment and educational opportunities. They are known for their ethno-botanical knowledge and traditional healing practices. They speak the Bhariati language. Their economy revolves around their surrounding forests, including the collection of minor forest produce such as tamarind, mahua, achaar (almondette), etc. Apart from this, agriculture also forms an important part of their economy.



Photo 15: Bharia Woman selling traditional medicines

Lack of proper infrastructure such as roads, electricity and internet limits the reach of the government's developmental initiatives towards improvement of socio-economic indicators among Bharias. However, at the same time, the promotion of ecotourism and homestays has provided an alternative income opportunity for these communities.

Their reliance on traditional medicines as opposed to modern medicine may help understand the gut-microbial diversity when compared to other tribal and non-tribal communities.

The anthropological field provides its own set of challenges and learning opportunities at the same time. Field-based data collection lets us interact with diverse communities and understand their culture and lifestyle. We are thankful to the Anthropological Survey of India for including us in this project.



Field Diary

Field Diary for Gut Microbiome Genomic Study among PVTGs of India: Raji Community of Uttarakhand

A field investigation was conducted from 12th to 21st April 2026 among the Raji community of Uttarakhand under the national project titled “Gut Microbiome Genomic Study among PVTGs of India.” The Raji are one of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) of India and are distributed mainly in the hill regions of Uttarakhand, particularly in the districts bordering Nepal. During the fieldwork, villages such as Kimkhola, Bhagtirwa, Ganagaon, Kantoli, Madanpuri, and Kutachaurani under Dharchula and Didihat blocks were extensively visited.

The field experience among the Raji community was both academically enriching and socially insightful. The settlements are located in difficult hilly terrains, and reaching many of the villages required travelling through narrow footpaths and kachha (unpaved) roads. In several locations, trekking through steep slopes and forested tracts was necessary to access the households. Such geographical isolation has significantly influenced the socio-economic and developmental condition of the community.



Photo 16: A Raji woman

Historically, the Rajis were known for forest-based subsistence and shifting or slope cultivation practices. However, with changing socio-economic conditions and reduced access to forest resources, many members of the community are now primarily engaged in manual labour and daily wage work for their livelihood. A few families also maintain small-scale agricultural activities for subsistence purposes.

The socio-economic condition of the Raji community appears to be relatively poor. The dietary pattern and nutritional diversity are limited, with dependence mainly on locally available staple foods. Limited food diversity, combined with economic hardship, may have implications for nutritional and health status. Healthcare accessibility in many villages remains inadequate due to difficult terrain, limited transportation facilities, and insufficient medical infrastructure. Educational attainment among the community members, especially in remote settlements, was also observed to be low. Structural limitations, including poor connectivity and restricted access to institutional facilities, continue to be major barriers to overall development.

Despite these challenges, the Raji villages are situated in an ecologically rich and climatically pleasant environment. The natural surroundings remain comparatively less polluted and environmentally healthy. One positive observation during the field visit was the availability of government-supported water supply facilities, which were found to be accessible to most households. The interaction with the Raji people highlighted their simplicity, hospitality, and cultural resilience despite the hardships associated with remote hill life. The fieldwork provided valuable insights into the living conditions, health-related challenges, food habits, and socio-cultural realities of one of India's vulnerable tribal communities. Such studies are important not only for scientific understanding under the gut microbiome project but also for drawing attention to the developmental needs and welfare concerns of the Raji community.

Dillip Kumar Barik Research Associate (Physical)

Field Diary

Transformative Changes in Rural India Through Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): A Social Impact Evaluation Through Anthropological Lens: Karnataka

The Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) is a flagship programme of the Government of India, launched in 2019, with a timeline to provide functional tap connections to every rural household by 2024, which has been revised to 2028. The JJM programme aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), which aims to ensure universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all. The scheme focuses on improving access to potable water and promoting water conservation to ensure its sustainability.

The JJM represents a shift from supply-based infrastructure to demand-driven and community participatory models as it involves Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSCs), community monitoring, and capacity building, along with behavioural changes. The JJM marks a transformative shift in water governance, aiming to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC) to every rural household.

With the objectives of the Jal Jeevan Mission in mind, the Anthropological Survey of India selected the Gadag and Kolar districts of Karnataka, which are the highest and least implemented (JJM) districts, respectively. The study employed anthropological methods and techniques to assess the socio-economic impacts of the Jal Jeevan Mission and to investigate its cultural dimensions.

In Kolar, the studied villages, JJM uses underground borewell water for potable water supply through FHTCs. Under the Koramangala-Challaghatta Valley Project, the ponds, lakes, and water channels are filled with treated wastewater. It also results in underground water recharge, now bringing the groundwater level to 50-100 feet depth, which was very high previously.

Kolar is a hub for horticulture and sericulture. The villagers are now able to invest more time in economic activities due to the time saved by the supply of JJM water. Many of the economic activities are facilitated by the horticulture and sericulture farms, which started booming after the aforementioned project.

Gadag district is drained by the Tungabhadra and Malaprabha rivers. Due to the Tungabhadra dam and Renuka Sagar dam, this district has a perennial source of freshwater. The resource is used under two DBOT models, which supply treated water from their water treatment plants at Jalawadgi and Chikkanargund for Sirahatti and Ron Taluks, to which the studied villages belong. Here, the acceptance of the potable water supplied through JJM FHTCs is more compared to villages in Kolar, as the water supplied comes from surface water as opposed to that of Kolar.

In the case of all four villages studied, the villagers noted that the water supplied through Jal Jeevan Mission is sufficient for both drinking and domestic purposes. After initial implementation of the JJM scheme, the infrastructure is handed over to the panchayats for their operation and management.

Regarding the conservation of water, historically, both districts have stepwells, ponds, and lakes. The stepwells of the Gadag region are historically popular, symbolizing the traditional knowledge in water conservation and management.

Overall, the Jal Jeevan Mission is not only ensuring the availability of safe and potable water at the doorstep of households in these rural areas of Karnataka, striving for last-mile connectivity, but also is serving as a foundation for socio-economic empowerment and an improved standard of living.

Dr. Pukkala Daalibandhu

Anthropologist (C), Anthropological Survey of India
SRC, Mysore

Field Diary

Transforming the Lives in Rural India through Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): An Anthropologically Oriented Evaluative Study and Some Insights from Madhya Pradesh

Launched in 2019, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India, envisions providing safe and adequate drinking water through functional tap connections in every rural household. The programme emphasizes strengthening water supply systems, maintaining water quality, and promoting sustainable practices such as rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge, greywater reuse, and community participation to ensure effective local management and long-term water sustainability. Considering these, the Anthropological Survey of India, Ministry of Culture, Government of India, initiated a national project titled “Transformative Changes in Rural India through Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM): A Social Impact Evaluation through Anthropological Lens”, aiming to conduct empirical research across various states to assess the changing experiences of people and the level of transformations (such as socio-economic, cultural and behavioural) brought about in people's lives, owing to such national governmental initiative. As mentioned in the JJM portal, states were primarily categorized into three clusters based on implementation levels. Accordingly, a stratified random sampling approach was adopted to select representative states for in-depth analysis. A multistage purposive sampling method was used to select districts, blocks, and villages. From each state, two districts (one with highest and one with lowest implementation) were selected, followed by two blocks from each district and two villages from each block, based on the number of functional household tap connections (FHTCs).



Photo 17: Water collected in buckets and utensils from a household pipeline connection under JJM

Pertaining this, Madhya Pradesh was identified as one of the least implemented states, with many households yet to receive FHTCs. For the study, Khutar village of Waidhan block and Niwas village of Devsar block in Singrauli district, along with Sunouniya Paschimi village of Prithvipur block and Kudar village of Niwari block in Niwari district, were selected. Fieldwork began in Singrauli, the lowest implementing district, and later moved to Niwari, the highest implementing district, enabling a comparative analysis. Despite field challenges, villages were carefully selected based on the presence of optimum numbers of households with FHTCs, diversified ethnic composition, and heterogeneous socio-economic conditions. Consultations with district and block officials, along with state government bodies like Jal Nigam and the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), played a crucial role in this regard.

During fieldwork, transect walks were conducted to systematically observe and map village layouts, land use distribution, and key water infrastructure and public facilities. Household surveys across different ethnic and socio-economic groups were carried out to collect quantitative information on water access, usage patterns, sanitation facilities, and service reliability. Interactions with farmers provided insights into irrigation practices, cropping patterns, and dependence on water resources. Sanitary surveys assessed hygiene conditions, drainage systems, and waste management practices, highlighting potential environmental and health risks. Qualitative insights were gathered through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and case studies with different stakeholders, capturing diverse perspectives on water access, health and hygiene practices, sanitation behavior, waste disposal, and community participation.

The survey revealed a somewhat concerning condition of drinking water access in the villages of Singrauli district, particularly in Khutar. As the least implemented district in Madhya Pradesh, many households in that district still struggle to obtain the required daily quantity of drinking water through household tap connections. Although implementing agencies are working to address these issues and that the Jal Nigam is trying provide the

bulk water supply through the surface water-based multi-village schemes, the study reported some indispensable infrastructural and the geographical challenges as well as administrative issues at local levels, posing constraints to operate such scheme at the ground level. Currently, only the groundwater-based single-village schemes have been noted to be operational in the Singrauli district. Additionally, some households are yet to receive pipeline connections, and a few households located farther from pumps or tanks are found to experience insufficient water supply, despite having connections. Contrarily, the Niwari district shows a much-improved situation, characterised by adequate water supply system through JJM FHTCs, supported by surface water-based multi-village schemes. The provision of regular piped water supply significantly improved the quality of lives of the villagers, particularly reducing the villagers (especially females) physical burden and time in fetching water from distant sources, thereby highlighting instances of socio-economic transformations and improved interpersonal connections at family levels.

The fieldwork concluded with validation of findings, followed by systematic documentation and consolidation of observations, resulting in a holistic understanding of rural water supply systems, sanitation practices, community participation and transformation in lifeways under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

Internship

Internship Programme for Central University of Jharkhand Students Concludes at AnSI Headquarters, Kolkata.



Photo 18: Inaugural session of the 22-day internship programme for students of the Central University of Jharkhand, held at AnSI Headquarters, Kolkata.

The Headquarters of the Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata, hosted a 22-day internship programme for 21 students from the Department of Anthropology and Tribal Studies, Central University of Jharkhand. The programme commenced on 27 May 2026 with an inaugural address by Prof. B. V. Sharma, Director, Anthropological Survey of India.

The programme was conducted under the overall guidance of Dr. M. Sasikumar, Joint Director, and Dr. B. P. Urade, Deputy Director. Shri Sanjay Gajbhie, Biochemist, coordinated the planning and execution of the programme.

Dr. Karishma Yasmin joined the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI), Kolkata, as a Post-Doctoral Intern in May 2026, and is working under the guidance of Dr. Koel Mukherjee. During her six-month internship, she is contributing to the projects "Gut Microbial Genomic Study among the PVTGs of India" and "Assessment of Health, Hygiene and Sanitation Status of the Khasi of North East India, with Special Reference to Women and Children." In the course of her internship, she is gaining experience in shotgun metagenomic data analysis, statistical analysis, and NFHS-4/5 data analysis using R, while collaborating with researchers from diverse disciplines.

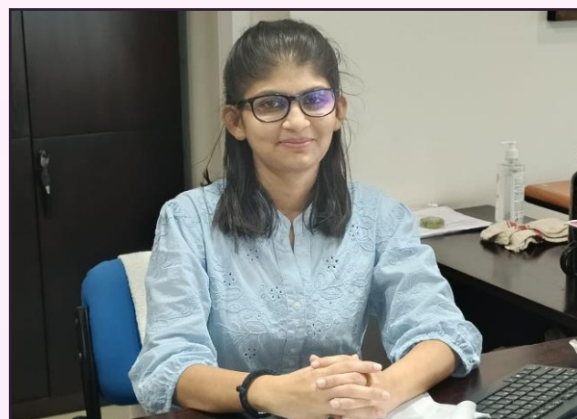


Photo 19: Dr. Karishma Yasmin

Other Activities

Organization of "Chalchitra – Andaman & Nicobar Film Festival, 2026"

In collaboration with the Directorate of Information, Publicity & Tourism (I,P&T), Andaman & Nicobar Administration, and National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), this office organized "Chalchitra – Andaman & Nicobar Film Festival, 2026". Screening of selected internationally acclaimed Indian movies were done in the auditorium of this office.



Photo 20: Chief Secretary, A & N Administration addressing the audience on the occasion of Andaman Nicobar Film Festival, 2026

Awareness Programme on "Gyan Bharatam Mission" Organised at WRC, Udaipur

The Western Regional Centre, Udaipur, of the Anthropological Survey of India organised an awareness and sensitisation programme on the "Gyan Bharatam Mission" of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, on 17 April 2026. Dr. Shri Krishna "Jugnu", a renowned scholar and linguist, was invited as the Chief Guest for the occasion.

Addressing the students and staff members, Dr. Jugnu shared valuable insights on manuscripts, their significance, types, and various scripts, along with the fundamentals of language. He also highlighted the core values of the Gyan Bharatam Mission and emphasised the importance of preserving knowledge through writing and carrying it forward for future generations.



Employee News

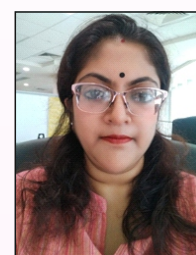
New Joining



Shri Subhajit Sen has joined the Anthropological Survey of India as Anthropologist in the Cultural Anthropology Division at the Southern Regional Centre, Mysuru. He is currently undergoing his induction training at the Head Office, Kolkata

Promotion

Dr. Nandini Bhattacharya has been promoted to Assistant Anthropologist (Physical) and has taken up her new posting at the North-Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong.



Smt. Shruti Singh Saxena has been promoted to Assistant Anthropologist (Cultural) and has assumed charge of her new position at the Central Regional Centre, Nagpur.

Superannuation

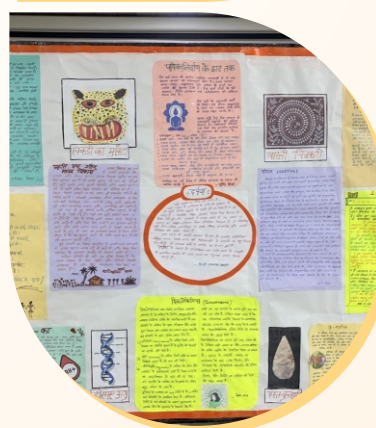
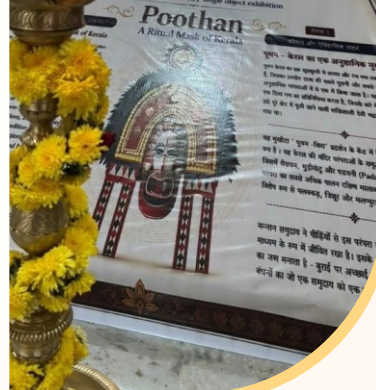
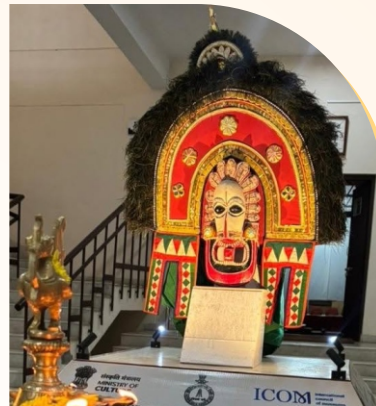
Shri Animesh Kumar Paul, Office Superintendent, Head Office, Kolkata



Shri Prafulla G. Mozarkar, Senior Secretariat Assistant, Central Regional Centre, Nagpur.

Shri Rajbir Prasad Balmiki, Multi-Tasking Staff, Head Office, Kolkata





ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF CULTURE
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