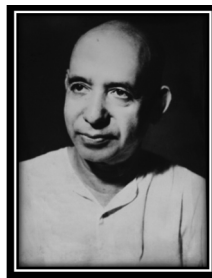


Untiring Mind: A Documentary Film on Dr. Biraja Sankar Guha

NABAKUMAR DUARY[†]

*Anthropological Survey of India,
Ministry of Culture, Government of India,
27, Jawaharlal Nehru Road,
Kolkata 700016, West Bengal
E-mail: nabakumarduary@gmail.com*



125th Birth Anniversary Tribute to
An Architect of Indian Anthropology
BIRAJA SANKAR GUHA
His Life and Anthropological Journey

Dr. Biraja Sankar Guha (1894-1961), a famous name in the Anthropological world, was the founder Director of Anthropological Survey of India as well as the first Director of Bihar Tribal Research Institute, Ranchi. He was attached with many academic and research institutes in India and abroad in various capacities till his death. Dr. Guha is a pioneer in the field of Anthropological research in India and devoted his entire life in institutionalizing anthropology and its development. He was one of the few luminaries who was being remembered to the whole anthropological fraternity for his brilliant contribution in the studies and especially in the field-work tradition, particularly in the Indian context. He was the man who initiated to

spread up the anthropological research in Government set-up and finally established the world's largest premier anthropological research institute. On 15th August, 2019 is the 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. B. S. Guha. This documentary is a tribute to his anthropological journey.

CONTEXT OF THIS DOCUMENTARY

Once I had got a chance to glance through framed black and white photographs of the former Directors in the Conference Hall, Head Office, Anthropological Survey of India, Kolkata. The first photograph was that of Dr. B. S. Guha, the founder Director of this august institution. It was in the month of September, 1992; I was then attached to this institution as a Junior Research Fellow. I had felt a kind of inertia with inspiration for a moment and decided to work on this great man's life.

[†] Research Associate (Cultural)

Mailing address:
18A, Ramakrishna Sarani
Dhalua West, Garia
Kolkata 700152

In November, 1996, I joined in this institution at its Ranchi Field Station as Senior Technical Assistant and then transferred to Head Office, Kolkata in April, 2003. In the course of my research oriented service I had got an opportunity to participate in the Visual Anthropological Training in Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata in 2007. Though the opportunity came much later but it was a boom and whole of my academic interest started to concentrate in a point that is Visual Anthropology. On 15th August, 2016, I decided to make a documentary on Dr. Guha and started reading on his life in different libraries located in Kolkata and discussed with some scholars of anthropology as well as searching the visual materials. Finally the shooting for this documentary was started on 2nd January, 2017.

Journey to Work

For this work I went to different states of India and visited many institutions and places, which are linked with Dr. Guha's life and his works. It seemed to be necessary for making this documentary. Some of those institutions are Anthropological Survey of India, Indian Museum, Zoological Survey of India, Bose Research Institute, Indian Science Congress Association, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta University, Presidency University, City College, Bangabasi College, Indian Anthropological Society, Rammohan Hall in Kolkata, National Institute of Biomedical Genomics, Kalyani in West Bengal; Anthropological Survey of India, North-Western Regional Centre in Dehradun, Uttarakhand; Anthropological Survey of India, North-Eastern Regional Centre in Shillong, Meghalaya; the then Bihar Tribal Research Institute in Ranchi; Ghatsila Railway station in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand; Cotton University and Guahati University in Assam and Shillong for collecting old documents, photographs, books, periodicals, letters, and also visual materials as well as taking interviews from different person who had some connection with Dr. Guha. However, main visual source of this documentary is taken from Guha's family in different locations and Harvard University and Indian Anthropological Society. Sometimes I have visited number of personal houses for gathered essential visual materials.

I took interview of Dr. Guha's daughter and son-in-law, who are living in New York, USA and also took

interview of other two family members who are living in Kolkata and Shillong. Other than that interviews are collected from ten eminent persons of anthropology and of allied disciplines across India and abroad. I also visited in the offices of leading daily newspapers in Kolkata like Statesman, Jugantar, Anandabazar, etc., where published some news on Dr. Guha. The portrait of Dr. Guha and sketches of his educational institution, sketched by a painter has also been collected for this film. For the background music I proposed to the Director of Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sanghralaya, Bhopal and he gladly accept my request and provide Indian Instrumental music. In this connection, I would like to state that electronically fast communication system helps me a lot in film making as well as getting various materials from different parts of the globe within a few moments.

PAGES FROM MY DIARY

Some important dates in pre and post production works:

- 1st January, 2017-Discussed with cinematographer for shooting.
- 2nd January, 2017- Started shooting.
- 26th January, 2017- First took an interview of a foreign scholar.
- 29th March, 2017- Shooting of a seminar on B. S. Guha.
- 28th September, 2017- Received important documents of B. S. Guha from Harvard University through email.
- 16th February, 2019- Started editing of still photographs.
- 24th April, 2019-Recording of Vedic chanting.
- 24th April, 2019-Taken interview of daughter and son-in-law of Dr. B.S. Guha.
- 20th June, 2019-Damping total still photographs and video materials in FCP machine in editing studio.
- 20th June, 2019- Discussed with editor for editing of this documentary.
- 3rd July, 2019- Recording demy voice over.
- 17th July, 2019- Started rough cut of the interview.
- 18th July, 2019- Started rough cut of the film.
- 27th July, 2019-Recording final voice over in studio.

30th July, 2019-Final editing of the film.

6th August, 2019-Decided the name of the film.

7th August, 2019- Started editing of background music.

10th August, 2019- Documentary has done in a final shape.

15th August, 2019- Preview among Council Members of the Indian Anthropological Society, Kolkata, and to some technical persons.

It took a final shape just before the day of 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Guha in 2019. This year is also marked as the Centenary Year of Teaching in Anthropology in India. The year 2020 is also significant, as it is the Platinum Jubilee Year of the Anthropological Survey of India.

ABOUT THE FILM

This documentary tries to show the journey of life of Dr. B. S. Guha as a man and shows a glimpse of some diverse anthropological activities in Anthropological Survey of India and other institutes

in India and abroad. However, the film also showcased some discussion about Guha's works and its significance in contemporary issues and challenge. There are many rare black and white still photographs of Dr. B.S Guha in different age and in different activities to be found in this documentary and also found hundreds of old photographs like Guha's parents, parental house, genealogy, brothers, wife, educational institutions, teachers, letters, class note books, Ph.D. thesis, signature of the Ph.D. supervisor, Ph.D. examiners, journey, fieldwork, camp life, recreation in evening in field, data collection, in tribal costume, in exhibition in field area, dancing mood, founder director of the Zoological Survey of India, old building of the Anthropological Survey of India at Banaras, with staff members Bengali intellectuals, many activities and so on. This documentary is a tribute to the commemoration of his 125th birth anniversary in 2019. It is produced by Sanjib Khan, Memorywala Production, Kolkata, in August, 2019.

Duration of Film: 40 minutes

PAL Format