Chapter- 4

N.K Bose’s Methods and Approaches

In the wide scale work that Bose did on the various aspects of society, the methods he rendered were subtle and subdued. Bose had never shown any loud allegiance to any school of thought; therefore, his approach seemed enmeshed in various directions. He had never proclaimed loudly to which school of thought he belonged but had consistently left his indelible impact on his writings on Indian society. Instead of falling back on a pre-set bunch of methods and theories, he rather chose to devise his own approaches as he explored the social world around him. Sinha therefore wrote,

Bose has not approached his varied problems in terms of a limited rigid set of methodological tools and theoretical perspectives. His approach has been that of a natural historian. He feels that the field anthropologist should first of all be a crafty explorer who will be ever prepared to devise tools appropriate in the field situation (Sinha: 1972:18).

As we explore Bose’s works further, we will find various such traces in his work which have been necessarily interpreted. To understand Bose’s approach, we have to acclimatize ourselves with the academic scenario of India, for without this, the proper contextualization of Bose’s works will be out of place. The colonial background of Indian anthropology is well ensconced on this ground. The British administrators embarked upon their anthropological adventure purely for their administrative gains. They amassed information for their selfish need of veering their administrative fulcrum towards the appropriate direction. British administrators, however looked at Indian problems dispassionately. As Gopala Sarana rightly says,

The British administrator began anthropological studies in this country with a purely utilitarian purpose. He was an alien and looked at all kinds of native Indians with “non-involvement”. Like the fellow countrymen studying people of Africa, Oceania, or the West Indies, his studies of Indian people were also “other-culture” studies. His contributions would have normally formed the Indian studies wing of British anthropology, but the Indian administrators conducted their studies of Indian institutions and customs as servants of the Government of India while they were stationed in this country. Not the academic interests of British anthropology but administrative requirements motivated these early
studies. Most of the writings were either official or semi-official documents of the government of India. At the turn of the century, L.K Ananthakrishna Iyer and S.C Roy entered the field of anthropological studies (Śarana & Sinha: 1976:12).

Against this backdrop, Bose’s work seemed very appropriate and relevant but to appreciate his work, we ought to learn the various influences upon him. A large number of scholars seemed to have affected Bose, notable amongst whom is the noted anthropologist, Saratchandra Roy. A very strong influence of S.C Roy has been found in his work which can be trailed back to his proximate association with Roy.

**Bose’s Methodological paradigm: An obeisance towards S.C. Roy’s inductive approach?**

Nirmal Bose throughout his academic career has remained a vigorous follower of Sarat Chandra Roy who largely followed inductive approach in most of his works, which were largely ethnographic accounts of tribal communities. A lawyer by profession, Roy thoroughly empathized with the men in the jungle, devoid of their rights on land and living. Being a student of Roy, Bose was quick to pick up his methods and the theoretical underpinnings. Sarat Chandra Roy’s elaborate and vivid ethnographic account revealed the nooks and crannies of Indian community and reminded us that he truly was an activist - anthropologist. R. K Bhattacharya, Director of Anthropological Survey of India, recollected his ideas of Bose saying,

> The relation between Sarat Chandra Roy and Nirmal Kumar Bose reflects the traditional Hindu *Guru-shisya Parampara* (teacher–student relationship). In fact, S.C. Roy was a great source of inspiration to many of his students who were devoted to research (Bhattacharya: 2002:115).

Although Roy wrote on several tribal communities of Chotanagpur, his work on the Oraons was both extensive and foundational. As sir Arthur Keith puts it in a letter to Roy, ‘I doubt if anyone has ever done so much for the anthropology of a people as you have done for the Oraon’ (Dasgupta: 2007:134). Probably, the herculean task of field work and the painful yet empathetic rendition of the qualitative research were something Bose owed to Roy. This was later on animated through much of Bose’s works and his entrenched field researches. The inclination towards field research was noticed largely in the pioneering works of S.C. Roy whose inept ethnographical works
might have initiated the drive in Bose, though Roy himself did not start his anthropological career with field research. The penchant for the field works was gradually coalesced in Roy’s works. This was probably because of the academic and political ambit which helped him hone his skills. We, therefore, see a shift in perspective in Roy’s methodological platter. His earlier works were largely textual analysis, especially of the Victorian anthropologists but gradually he shifted towards participatory research with a rich booty of observational strategies. The methodological coffers were enriched with tools such as personal documents and narratives of the respondents.

This overall scheme and this trend of qualitative research were later on taken over by his acolytes, especially Bose. This tradition of qualitative research gradually owed much of its allegiance in the Indian scenario to Bose. Though Bose was influenced by Roy as far as possible, there were conspicuous points of difference between the two. Bose did not rote-learn all that Roy advocated, but he instead charted out his own course of action. Therefore, a brief elucidation of the predominant approach of Roy and his contemporaries will be necessary here. Sangeeta Dasgupta’s comments might seem relevant in this context. She said,

For Roy, Victorian anthropologists were pioneers in the field. In the ethnological notes found among his private papers there are references to *Ancient society* by Morgan, *Totemism and Exogamy* by Frazer, *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology* by Lowie, and *Primitive Traditional History*, Vol-I by Hewitt. Evolutionists believed that primitive society was marked by an absence of datable documents and events. Hence the laws of social development were to be reconstructed through the comparative method: the belief was in the historical unity of mankind and in the universal progress of man and the search was for origins. The source of anthropological studies was accounts by travelers, missionaries, and colonial administrators who reported on natives and native customs. (Dasgupta: 2007:145-146).

This kind of understanding, therefore, constituted the theoretical underpinning of much of Roy’s work, which was supposed to have been a pioneering act in sociology and cultural anthropology. The Evolutionary school of thought took for granted the depressed conditions of the aborigines which harps on the sacrosanct position of the West. This ethnocentric ‘Eurocentricism’ had been in vogue in the moulding of this
discipline for long. But we have to question how far this ingrained discrimination in studying one’s own culture and tribal people is justified. Not just Roy’s work, but this phase had strong colonial tinge in the works that it produced. A brief re-view of the phase will not be out of the place, and besides it shall help us appreciate the distinctiveness in Bose’s approach.

**A brief review of the phase of colonial anthropology: justifying Bose’s distinctiveness.**

Bose was aware of this phase of academic research in our country mostly carried out by the foreign anthropologists and sociologists on hackneyed areas like caste, tribe, religion and so forth. Not just the foreign scholars, the trend which they initiated was so entrenched, that it was soon followed by the Indian scholars themselves. Bose therefore himself said,

> Travelers were also attracted to India. But they were often struck by the unfamiliar things which were everywhere in evidence; and except in the case of a few remarkably objective and informative accounts, most of them tended to present a heavily one sided picture of contemporary life (Bose:1963:33).

Bose abhorred such a research position and did not promote the racist undercurrents which such practices proclaimed. He knew our country had undergone colonial overtures therefore its research positions must be dealt with a more sensitizing clasp. Within this research, the attempt to give intermediate position to the colonial forces as interloper in the development process of the native people have its own share of methodological anguishes. Bose knew, the colonial masters had always grown an intention to ‘civilize’ the aborigines but these are not without their own share of colonial dividends. Bose’s sensitivity can be understood more clearly, with Denzin and Lincoln, quoting Linda Tuhwai Smith in the following way:

> The term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism,“ She continues, "The word itself is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary:" It is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism: 'with the ways in which "knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified, and then represented back to the West”, This dirty word stirs up anger, silence, distrust "It is so powerful that indigenous people even write poetry about research”. It is one of colonialism's most sordid legacies. Sadly, qualitative research,
in some if not in many of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography), serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth. The metaphor works this way. Research, quantitative and qualitative, is scientific; Research provides the foundation for reports about and representations of the Other." In the colonial context, research becomes an objective: "a way of representing the dark-skinned Other to the white world.

Colonizing nations relied on the human disciplines especially sociology and anthropology to produce knowledge about strange and foreign worlds. This close involvement with the colonial project contributed in significant ways, to qualitative research's long and anguished history, to its becoming a dirty word (Denzin & Lincoln: 2005:1).

This ‘otherness’ which Smith referred in her work was aplenty in the Oraon Monographic work which Roy wrote. The works clearly indicate the lowly status of the Oraon race as reflected in the researched monographs. Thus Roy, known as an empathiser with the ‘Oraons’ and also as their legal and social saviour for long, remained tinged with the oriental colours. Dasgupta was found bringing to the fore Roy’s depiction of the Oraon community:

With clearly marked characteristic, it was a pure, simple and isolated. Its culture was ‘rude’ and ‘primitive’. These communities possessed no written languages, their industrial arts were few, and in a rudimentary stage of development, and the ‘fine arts’, unless their ‘rude style of music and dancing be dignified by that name, were particularly unknown amongst them. Custom was the only code of morality that a tribe recognized, and “erroneous ideas” as to the causes of the natural phenomenon along with “Superstitious” beliefs as to the nature and powers of the supernatural world constituted their world of ‘science and religion ‘(Roy :1984 [1915]:124). The Oraons, as a ‘tribe’, displayed these features. According to Roy, their ‘low level of culture’ had continued for centuries, while they led a ‘semi-conscious life of a sensuous nature’ (ibid: 246). Temporal change, for Roy, was possible only on account of contact with external agencies. Contact with the Aryans had brought about for the Oraons a ‘moderate lift in the ladder of civilization’ (ibid:22) .... he believed that under British guidance the ‘primitive tribes’ of Chotanagpur would eventually chart their journey towards progress (Dasgupta: 2007:148-149).

This way of casting the image of the Oraon tribal was problematic. To problematize the research inquiry then calls into question the vexed temperament of the researcher
stuck in the interstices of culture and racial stereotypes. The standard way to hierarchise the tribal cultural attributes according to the Eurocentric yardsticks has its own share of methodological problems. Denzin and Lincoln’s quotations here becomes very significant. They said,

In anthropology during the same period, the discipline-defining studies of Boas, Mead, Benedict, Bateson, Evans-Pritchard, Radcliffe Brown and Malinowski charted the outlines of the fieldwork method (see Gupta & Ferguson, 1997; Stocking, 1986,1989). The agenda was clear-cut. The observer went to a foreign setting to study the culture, customs and habits of another human group. Often this was a group that stood in the way of white settlers. Ethnographic reports of these groups were incorporated into colonizing strategies: ways of controlling the foreign, deviant or troublesome ‘Other’. Soon qualitative research would be employed in other social and behavioural science disciplines, including education, history, political science, business, medicine, nursing, social work, and communications (for criticisms of this tradition, see Smith, 1999; Vidich & Lyman, 2000: see also Rosaldo 1989, pp.25-45; Tedlock, 2005).

......Vidich and Lyman (1994, 2000) have charted many key features of this painful history. In their now classic analysis they note, with some irony, that qualitative research in sociology and anthropology was "born out of concern to understand the ‘other’ (Vidich & Lyman, 2000, p. 38). Furthermore, this "other" was the exotic other, primitive, non-white person from a foreign culture judged to be less civilized than ours. Of course, there were colonialists long before there were anthropologists and ethnographers, nevertheless, there would be no colonial, and no neo-colonial history were it not for this investigative mentality that turned the dark-skinned other the object of ethnographer’s gaze. From the very beginning, qualitative research was implicated in a racist project. (Denzin & Lincoln: 2005:1-2).

Similarly, S.C. Roy’s work at least till the first phase of his career, especially till 1920 made racist propositions wherein he attributed the moral responsibility of civilizing others on the imperial agents. S.C. Roy’s work remained largely influenced by the British classical evolutionists. Among the many Victorian scholars in Great Britain, those who opined about the unilineal form of cultural growth and ones who carved for themselves notable niches include Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), R.I. Marett (1866-1943), James Frazer (1854-1941), J.F Mclennan (1820-1888), (1820-1888),
Henry Maine (1822-1903), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) etc. The pre-eminent amongst them was Tylor who felt that the study of culture is essentially a historical study, for culture is essentially a historical process. It was thought that culture was highly evolutionary and often sets standards for the other cultures. This sort of evolutionary remnant was bountiful in the apex part of Roy’s work. Bose was a disciple of Roy, and looked up to him for inspiration. Vijay S. Upadhyay, Gaya Pandey said, “S.C Roy was a source of inspiration and a tower of strength to many budding anthropologists. N.K Bose and D.N Mazumdar received active encouragement and guidance from him in the early years” (Upadhyay & Pandey:1993:398). However, it is interesting, that he was selective in following Roy’s ideas. Bose was aware of the trend that was aplenty in Roy’s works and therefore he had resolutely proclaimed,

Indian anthropologists have not made any problem of their own. They have failed to let their problems of research grow out of the life of their own people. Most of them have followed the paths beaten by anthropologists in the powerful western countries. (Bose: 1952:42).

Bose knew this problem seemed equally present in Roy’s work, who though a potential social activist only ended up in providing static and stereotyped depictions of Indian communities. He had largely followed the trend of the European mentors to inherit such a mode of representation. Surajit Chandra Sinha’s words are suggestive in this regard:

The Indian pioneers in anthropology, Roy (1871-42) and Aiyar (1861) followed the tradition of the British-European scholars. While Aiyar was guided by the model of encyclopedias of tribes and castes, Roy followed the model of ethnographic monographs. The Indian pioneers followed the British-European Gurus in regarding the tribes as distinct from the Hindu castes and in emphasising the ritual elements of behaviour and particularly, in hunting out ‘the primitive elements archaic’. As an eminent lawyer of Ranchi, Roy had to deal with numerous land tenure cases of the Mundas. His classic The Mundas and their country (1912) provide a brilliant historical background to the ethnography and there is also a thorough description of the Munda norms of land tenure in the appendix. But the ethnographic portion does not integrate either the information on land tenure or on historical background, and, as a result, the book provides mainly an average static description of the ritually loaded customs of the Mundas (I sometimes wonder, whether even in
1960’s and 70’s the bulk of tribal ethnography by Indian scholars is not following the early Roy model) (Sinha:1971 :5).

This is an interesting remark by Sinha, especially if we take him as an active bearer of Bose’s legacy. Bose’s distinct approach becomes clearer here if we place it in contrast to that of Roy’s. Bose appreciated Roy but did not produce a hagiography of Roy, probably this prompted him to boldly develop his own approach, grossly different from that of his mentor’s. Let’s concentrate now on this journey that Bose took.

**Bose charting his own methodological journey.**

Though Bose was a voracious follower of S.C Roy, he did not take for granted the colonialist evolutionary tenets which made up many of Roy’s work especially the beginning ones. Bose did question the deterministic tendency inherent in such evolutionary world views. He deduced a general line of evolution along which human culture has developed its trajectory. However, the line of departure was not insipidly assumed but put to test of qualitative empiricism. As we have said earlier, Bose did not take for granted the evolutionary scheme but was ready to test its relevance. He did not believe in drawing a set of assumptions along the evolutionary model and testing the hypothesis deductively.

While ratcheting up generalizations from evolutionary disciplined echelon, Bose was prudent to distinguish between the historical and ethical lines of discourse. He said both were not complementary and that historical evolution did not presuppose ethical development. This line of thought helped him topple the deterministic evolutionary model. This point of departure helped him distinguish between evolution and progress. While Roy contended that the aboriginal societies must follow the racist evolutionary lines of trajectory to attain development with the help of British extraneous forces, Bose did not. In other words, for Roy, evolution and progress were coterminous, which for Bose were not. This way of abhorring the evolutionary model of knowledge formation was a bold step ahead, at least as a sign of dissent from his teacher’s deterministic agenda. Thus Bose as we find was rather averse to the tendency of un-scrutinized observations to reach at blunt generalization. He was rather interested to look into the mutual relations between the structure and its constituents to initiate a functional inspection. But at the same time it must be remembered that Bose nevertheless was not an evolutionary functionalist. He did not
have faith in a universal model of functionalism thus opposing the claim of a deterministic point of convergence or zenith. The point and the pace of journey might differ for every culture and there is no universal yardstick for this. Bose therefore said,

> In the course of evolution, cultures have grown more and more complex. The severity of the struggle for existence has been mitigated through the accumulation of cultural traits. Each culture has followed, more or less closely, this line of evolution. But there is no scientific evidence to prove the existence of any deterministic tendency in culture to follow particular lines of evolution (Bose: 1929b: 17).

What sounds grittier and bolder about Bose’s thought was his treatment of the evolutionary model of culture. He not only dubbed the model as a historical but also ‘anomic’, in the sense that there was ‘normlessness’ in the evolutionary structure of theory building. For Bose the laws regulating this theory building were immature and unstable. The evolution of culture is more accidental in nature and far from being incisive and organized to form its own laws. Bose himself says,

> We learn from historical observation that as far as specific cultures are concerned, their evolution has been mainly determined by historical accidents like the advent of leaders, the geographical nature of the country, cultural contacts, the difference in grade between cultures which happen to interact, and so on. As far as we know, none of these factors is subjected to any law. All of them are again extraneous to culture, so the main course of cultural evolution is determined by ungovernable and non-cultural factors. We do not therefore know of any mechanical determinism in the evolution of culture. (ibid: 58-59).

This attempt to debase evolutionary theory of cultural development by rendering it fickle and unwarranted is both interesting and problematic. Bose at the tender age of twenty-eight years making such a bold comment is quite significant. He sensed error in accepting Tylor’s evolutionary model without careful providence. He felt the theoretical assumptions have not been verified against veritable independent evidence which makes theory building seems shaky. As Bose says,

> From the time of Tylor, the theory of evolution has been employed for this purpose. Tylor as well as Otis Mason and others used it in their own time, and it has continued to be in use in one field or another to the
present day. But there has hardly been any systematic attempt to devise some means in order to verify the findings of this method with the help of independent evidence (Bose: 1949:221).

Largely being influenced by the Historical school of America, he did reject the dictates of the evolutionary school of thought which were pedantically followed by the social scientists in India for long. Having shown his aversion for the evolutionary school of thought, Bose goes on to test the assumptions he derived from the hypothetico–deductive model of theory building. He did this to show, unlike the deterministic proclivity of the school, there is an essential difference between evolution and progress. What is interesting at this juncture is that at the time when Bose was negating the basis of the evolutionary school, his contemporaries in America, Leslie White (1900-1975) and Julian H. Steward (1902-1972) were doing just the reverse. What sounds more sprightful is that like Bose, even White was influenced by Franz Boas, but he still took a different path. What seemed natural in America, Bose dubbed it superfluous and dubious in the Indian context: At a time when the Indian social scientists remained obsessed with the American school of evolution and did not hesitate to club together evolution and progress, thus remaining myopic to the ingrained differences between the two, Bose was an exception.

Unlike S.C. Roy, Bose refused to fix a nexus between the two concepts but was ready to deliberate upon them. This seems a unique task for Bose, one that can claim authenticity with an indigenous flair. Insulating oneself from the imperialist designs though participating in the academic osmosis and still not being malleable by the Eurocentric colour of the discipline, in vogue in the current literary context demands a resolute mind and a nationalist spirit which Bose had. This is mostly relevant in his contemporary disciplinary endeavor when most of his leading cohorts were towing the line of the neo-evolutionary school. Thus it can be assumed that Bose must have updated himself with the contemporary developments but still carried an indigenous niche for himself, especially in the inductive studies he pursued in and around Bengal and Ranchi. The very different contemporary disciplinary ambience in the West magnetized Bose and to understand this, we need to recognize the established theoretical schools that gave shape to his methodological difference.
Multi-linear evolution and N.K. Bose.

Unlike Roy, Bose spoke of multilinear evolution as against the uni-linear one which the former proposed. Makhan Jha for instance, said,

> The 19th century cultural evolutionists mainly talked about the cultural evolution with a view to find out cultural regularities or laws, but their findings and approaches indicated the origin of culture and their relevance, hence they are known as neo-evolutionist. Among these, mention may be made of three scholars, viz, V. Gordon Childe, Julian Steward and Leslie White of U.S.A., who have made significant contributions in the study of cultural evolution and their researches, of late, have thrown a new light on different dimensions of the origin of culture (Jha:1982 :43).

Hence neo-evolutionists underscored the structure beneath the culture which they unveiled. In doing so, they proposed much fluidity of evolution which debars the obdurate prognosis of a Western triumph. This way of revamping the unilineal and universal scheme of evolution made room for multiple developmental sequences. This model of evolution, contemporarizes and contextualizes their scheme in the light of new empirical ethnographic and archaeological data concerning the history of distinct cultures. This gives leverage to particular cultural traditions instead of upholding universal characteristics of culture as Roy did. Neo-evolutionism differs from the holistic cultural evolutionism in the way that local cultural patterns and types are distinctly discussed instead of the pigeon-hole approach of dumping everything under the general taxonomy. However, in doing that, neo-evolutionists did confirm to a fixed set of assumptions and laws that were said to have regulated the evolutionary trajectory. Therefore, Julian Steward says,

> Multilinear evolution is essentially a methodology based on the assumption that significant regularities in cultural change occur and it is concerned with the determination of cultural laws. The methods are empirical rather than deductive. (Steward: 1955:18).

Like Steward, Bose too used this approach sparingly to empirically corroborate the veracity of certain facts which were thought to have been evolved along the unilineal evolutionary theory, though he did not methodologically subscribe to this unilineal scheme. He, for instance, says,
Men are said to be happier now than they were in former times. The opportunities of self-development have also increased, and lastly there has been an increase in the power of mental adaptability (Bose:1929:59).

He later put to test these assumptions which were set in the hypothetico-deductive model. The inductive results did not confirm the proposed hypothesis. As Bose while repudiating the deduction says,

In regard to mental adaptability, a ‘civilized’ man, belonging to some culture rich in contents, generally seems to be superior to a ‘savage’. But evidence seems to prove that the difference is due more to nurture in a complex culture than to innate superiority developed by it” (ibid :60).

To prove this predicament, Bose compares Mundari tribal culture with that of its Hindu counterpart. He says tribal culture may seem abominable and imbecile. The tribal boy may seem intellectually void from his shabbily clad body. But he may fare much better in terms of cognitive development than his Hindu counterpart, which otherwise is flaunted to show off more ostentatious and civilizational flamboyance. The net difference between the two boys is attributed more to cultural exposure and contextual socialization than to the innate superiority, embedded herein. Bose, therefore repents upon the fact that “it has not yet been possible to eliminate the acquired bias and bring about a condition of uniformity. So the finding of general observation must be taken at their own value” (ibid:60).

Bose therefore was reluctant to accept the non-empirical deductive model at the face value. He saw that strict adherence to findings evolved from a deductive model has its own ontological pit falls; especially depending on the type of epistemology it has gradually built upon. A priori knowledge cooks up findings which are actually fudged and shoddy though otherwise claiming probity in the name of evolutionary laws. Over and above, Bose finds fault with research design itself. He may have smelt rat in the way social scientists bob and weave the threads of the research design. He seems to have been perturbed by the uncanny nexus between power and authority which has sprouted within the diverse pockets of research. The value orientation and the belief which forms distinctive ideologies for the researches seemed biased and
prejudiced. The stereotyped abysmal image of a tribe shrouded the credits of a native man which are legitimately due to him.

**Bose’s approach of debunking the very basis of research findings: de-politicizing the research methodology.**

This way of politicizing research findings in the name of a ‘sacrosanct’ methodology doubted the probity of a researcher, especially if he is a staunch and devout follower of both theory and practice. This tendency to create well-meaning hierarchies between aboriginal and Hindu culture, in the name of ethical progress has strong separatist bias which is taken as the basis of all evolutionary schema. This power –play implants an imperialist design in the tribal culture to undo its true content and potentials. This position is analogous to the feminist position. Hence, Hesse-Biber states,

Feminists bob and weave their threads of understanding listening to the experience of “the other” as the legitimate knowledge. Feminist research is mindful of hierarchies of power and authority in the research process that are so well voiced by Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005), including these power differentials that lie within and reinforce the status quo, creating divisions between colonizer and colonized (Hesse-Biber-2007:3).

This was what Bose wanted to do, to paralyze the research immunity of the evolutionist, by questioning their misdoings that they are indulging for long in the name of innate differences. This ingrained research bias calls for negating the much acclaimed universal evolutionary ‘progress’.

It is here that Bose conforms to the multi-evolutionary model which recognized local differences and remained flexible on the face of racial obduracy, as followed by the western model. Therefore, in this sense, Bose complied with some extent to the multi-evolutionary model of development. As Bose, deliberating on the methods of dating of Indian Temples, says that,

What is needed today in each province of India, where temples are present, and workers should employ uniform means of analysis of the structural elements. When enough data are available, distribution maps of significant elements should be drawn, and inferences drawn with regard to the course of evolution followed all over India. As the nature of changes to which the Rekha temples were subjected was not uniform in different places, the evolutionary scale set up in one province would
naturally have limited value in another. Therefore, in each province, the dated temples should also be employed to build up another local series, this would serve to check and to supplement the findings of the distribution method itself as applied to that particular locality. (Bose: 1929:243).

With this due emphasis on the local and regional, Bose was perhaps harping more on the inductive than on the hypothetico-deductive model of research. This firm resolution of not following the beaten track of development along the capitalist and colonial agenda was interesting. It showed Bose’s endeavour of refusing to be hand-in-glove with the imperialist version of the other which was commendable indeed. Up to this point Bose’s methodology complies with the multi-evolutionary model but it is at this crossroads, that he starts striking a discordant note with the latter. While multi-evolutionary model hankers after generalizing laws which tries to collate all data and arrives at a subsuming generalization, Bose strums a different cord here. He says it is futile to regularize the findings of an empirical research in its vain search for patterned uniformity. There is always an arbitrary social formation which might be rampant and sporadic belying any attempt of exhuming causal laws. Social laws, he says, are pittances and should not be over-emphasised. Particular contexts and interpretation of regional elements clamour for attention which Bose veritably zeroes in on.

Bose was therefore underlining more on relativity than on racial one-way absolutism. As he says, “progress is an ethical concept and its presence or absence in evolution is therefore relative to the individual or the particular class to which he belongs” (ibid: 59). This interpretative qualitative paradigm based on induction as against the hard core quantitative positivist method to which Bose leaned, must be recognized in the transitional methodological itinerary. Sinha was aware of Bose’s flexible take on methods and his proclivity towards inductive form of research. Therefore, he said,

When I enquired of Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose to which ‘school’ of anthropology he belonged, he replied that he would feel uncomfortable about any straitjacket label and would rather like to place his identity as a ‘social historian’. Among his gurus (mentors) in anthropology, he first mentioned the name of Boas. He liked Boas’s critical mind and his emphasis on precision. What impressed Bose most about Boas was his inductive natural historical approach which kept the mind open to
unexpected discovery. Once he said to me: “Boas started with observations and then moved towards classification and generalization rather than starting with deductive hypothetical model (Sinha: 1972:1).

Professor Bose was greatly influenced by reading *The Mind of Primitive Man* (1911) and accepted Boas’s position that language, race and culture are independent yet historically linked variables (Boas: 1940). In the same tune Sinha again asserts in a yet unpublished manuscript,

My intention has been to demonstrate that very useful work can be done if an anthropologist begins, as in bird watching, with observation and more observation. As one thus proceeds, through such effort and constant companion in parallel fields, where some of the factors are common and others are not, and if one dares to walk alone, then he perhaps gains ability to add his little bit to the store of scientific knowledge. This natural history approach is a matter of daily –habit with him Professor Bose keeps diary of his daily social encounters and observations which ultimately find a place in his periodic creative outpourings. He wrote a book, *Paribrajaker Diary* (the Diary of a Wanderer) in 1940. (ibid:18).

The book is a classic example running narratives of the common people and their mundane life-styles. Nobody had ever thought of highlighting such banal acts the way, Bose did. He, probably was one of the advocates of indigenous research in the country.

**Bose and his deep urge for indigenous research**

This form of research has its own characteristics and dimensions. Researching the natives and their predicaments had not been an easy task. Talking about indigenous research, one of its experts, Linda Tuhiwai Smith said,

Becoming an indigenous researcher is somewhat like Maxine Green’s (2000) description of how artists from margins come to re-imagine public spaces, through resistance in the course of their becoming ------ “Through naming what stood in their way, through coming together in efforts to overcome--------people are likely to find out the kinds of selves they are creating” (p. 301). Indigenous researchers are becoming a research community. They have connected with each other across borders and have sought dialogue and conversations with each other. They write in ways that deeply resonate shared histories and struggles. They also write about what indigenous research ought to be. Australian
Aborigine scholar Lester Rigney (1999),........ has argued for an indigenist approach to research that is formed around the three principles of resistance, political integrity, and privileging indigenous voices (Smith:2005:89)

Bose had started this dialoguing much earlier than the formalization of the indigenous disciplinary framework. Rather than narrating a story of how complicated our society is, and how helpless the natives are in, Bose showed how we can empathize with the indigenous people and create their perspective. Running across his work are rich accounts of native people stinking in the periphery of the society. They had to take the rear seat since their pathos remained unheard of for a long time. Here again Smith’s words become relevant. She says,

Indigenous people can be defined as the assembly of those who have witnessed, have been excluded from, and have survived modernity and imperialism. They are people who have experienced the imperialism and colonialism of the modern historical period beginning with the enlightenment. They remain culturally distinct, some with their native languages and belief systems still alive. They are minorities in territories and states over which they once held sovereignty. Some indigenous people do hold sovereignty, but of such small states that they wield little power over their own lives because they are subjected to the whims and anxieties of large and powerful states. They carry many names and labels, being referred to as natives, indigenous, autochthonous, tribal peoples, or ethnic minorities. Many indigenous people come together at regional and international levels to argue for rights and recognition. In some countries, such as China, there are many different indigenous groups and languages. In other places, such as New Zealand, there is one indigenous group, known as Maori, with one common language but multiple ways of defining themselves. (Smith: 2005:86).

Bose had very well addressed to these indigenous problems and the trials and tribulations that natives underwent in their rugged lives. In narrating their tales, he gives thorough details of their social lives and how they struggled hard to survive within all odds by accommodating themselves with the mainstream culture. Absorption in the core culture and its appropriate tactics were analysed well by Bose to study the survival strategies of the tribal people. He showed how the Oraon and the Munda tribes have been defeated by the British Raj and how their tribal revolts have
been suppressed to turn them into meek and docile puppets (Bose:1934:6). They have now been forced to desert their old tribal techniques of cultivation and adopt the Hindu methods of not only cultivation but also the sizeable part of their living (Bose:1929a:98). For instance, Bose describes vividly a festival celebrated pompously by the *Oraon* and *Munda* tribes called *gajan*, which is extremely famous among the tribes of this district (Bose:1971:65). The festival represents the challenges of the indigenous populace of the Ranchi district. The *gajan* festival as it is so called was seen as a way by the indigenous people not just to merge with the mainstream culture, but to create an identity. The tribes being oppressed by the colonial forces struggled hard to survive even in their homelands which had been gradually infested with the people from the mainland. The festival is presided over by the *Vaishnab* priests. The festival assumes a rather cosmopolitan color since it is confined not only to the *Mundas* and *Oraons* but has been thrown open to the *Lohar*, *Ahir* and the umpteen other castes. The festival, as Bose contends, throws galore a secular character which is noteworthy in the caste-ridden society which falls back on obduracy and hierarchy (Bose:1929:54).

Bose thus showed the extent to which the tribes have travelled in their bid to accommodate themselves within the caste society (Bose:1935a:67). The otherwise highly segmented tribal society has shown a laissez faire attitude when it came to show their willingness to come under a bigger global umbrella. The *Vaishnab* priests did not dither to preside over the festivals but jovially propitiated the sanskritic deities at the behest of the non-sanskritic tribal locals. The identities of the indigenous people have been very well enmeshed with the people from the mainland. This creates shifting identities and hybridities and the situation of nativity becomes clearer with Smith’s words again. She said,

Rey Chow (1993) reminds us, however, that the native did exist before the “gaze” of the settler and before the image of “native” came to be constituted by imperialism, and the native does have an existence outside and predating the settler/native identity. Chow (1993) refers to the “fascination” with the native as a “labor with endangered authenticities”. The identities of “the native” is regarded as complicated, ambiguous, and therefore troubling even for those who live the realities and contradictions of being native and of being a member of the colonized and minority community that still remembers other ways of being, of knowing, and of relating to the world. What is troubling to the
dominant cultural group about the definition of ‘native’ is not what necessarily troubles the ‘native’ community. The desire for ‘pure’, uncontaminated, and simple definitions of the native by the settler is often a desire to continue to know and define the Other, whereas the desire by the native to be self-defining and self-naming can be read as a desire to be free, to escape definition, to be complicated to develop and change, and to be regarded as fully human. In between such desires are multiple and shifting identities and hybridities with much more nuanced positions about what constitutes native identities, native communities, and native knowledge in anti/postcolonial times (Smith: 2005:86).

Bose likewise has shown how much the indigenous populace has been dying for this urge to be self-defining with the concomitant desire to be free and emancipated. They were ready to do anything to earn for themselves this dignity of being regarded as fully human being. This was their long plea which had been repressed for long. Bose very intricately unearthed the ignominy so incurred upon such communities for long and their parallel urge to self-define and self-name themselves (Bose:1927:35). He showed very well the dual problem pestering the native and the dominant. What necessarily troubled the Vaishnab community did not plague the indigenous settlers. The Hindus had always wanted a pristine and precise definition of the natives so as to enhance their vulnerability for easy captivation. They wanted to keep the tribes in their original crude state to exploit the maximum resources possible. Bose depicted the politicization of the indigenous and the civilized as well as the duality in their respective moods and motivation. He showed how the ascetics of the festival tried hard to blend with the core cultural patterns in their attempt to conciliate the mighty civilization. As opposing identities, they have realized how abhorred are they in the eyes of the dominant group. They also sensed their feeling of engendered authenticities. Out of this haplessness, they tried hard to masquerade the hegemonic culture. Bose depicted meticulously the ritual abstention that the natives followed in the course of the festival which is likely of the higher order Hindus (Bose:1930:54). The indigenous people left no leaf unturned to show their reverence for the Vaishnab priests. The symbolic acts performed by the tribes are representative of the ties of reciprocity which they construe with the core culture. In so doing, as Bose had shown, the indigenous communities did come to construct their own native knowledge and
identity. Thus in their constrained conditions, they silently march on to surface up amongst all odds.

In this *gajan* festival, the tribes create their own space and perform acrobats which sometimes bedazzle the outer world. Bose explains their pursuits as mysterious and enigmatic (Bose:1935b:45). He says, the act of walking over raging furnaces unhurt by the ascetics remains unexplained by the dominant main stream knowledge. The indigenous communities in the post-colonial societies are thus seen to constitute their own genre of knowledge which remains out of the bounds of the authoritative cultures. The mighty civilizations can only make hunches but the real mystery behind the otherwise meek native cultures may still remain secret and furtive. Bose brings out these potentialities of the indigenous communities which aids our attempt to bestow a sense of agency over the docile groups. Bose with his mouth wide open had seen the impunity and the daring hood with which the tribes had dandily walked across the burning charcoal feigning painlessness and indifference. The ways the tribes commit such stunts insipidly and vapidly have surprised him about the prowess of the indigenous. The *Phoolkudna* and *kandhaiya* act as it is so called is thus associated with construction of such indigenous identity, the nuances of which has been so well entailed by Bose (Bose: 1929:86-88). Talking of this genre of indigenous research, Smith said,

Indigenous communities and researchers from different parts of the globe have long and often voiced concern about “the problem of research” and represented themselves to be among the “most researched” people of the world. The critique of research came to be voiced in the public domain in the 1970s, when indigenous political activism was also re-asserting itself. The history of research from many indigenous perspectives is so deeply embedded in colonization that it has been regarded as a tool only of colonization and not as a potential tool for self –determination and development. For indigenous peoples, research has significance where natives under the gaze of western science fight back colonialism to construct and re-construct their own history. It is framed by indigenous attempts to escape the penetration and surveillance of that gaze while simultaneously re- ordering, re-constituting, and re-defining ourselves as peoples and communities in a state of ongoing crisis. Research is a site of contestation not simply at the level of epistemology or methodology but also in its broadest sense as an organized scholarly activity that is deeply connected to power. That resistance to research, however, is changing ever so slightly as
more indigenous and minority scholars have engaged in research and methodologies and debates about research with communities (Bishop, 1998; Cram, Keefe, Ormsby, & Ormsby, 1998; Humphery, 2000; Pidgeon & Hardy, 2002; Worby & Rigney, 2002) (Smith: 2005:87).

Bose might be considered as one of the pioneers of such a tradition where he had continuously strived hard to carve a niche for the tribes and to secure for them a strong anchorage in the colonial backdrop. Turning the indigenous people into powerful agents and to make them narrate their own tales remains one of the strong agenda for Bose (Bose: 1964:22). He shows how the natives have struggled and staggered to create bolstered dialogues for themselves by combating the colonial gaze. Coming out of the imperial huddle and yet constituting for one self a distinct identity required a resolution which though the natives had and practised, were less spoken of.

In this context, Bose spoke of the revolutions which raged among the oppressed natives in the district of Birbhum among the community of the cobblers (Bose: 1930:77). The Gandhian ideology of equality having swept the untouchable villagers made them voluble and animated. The ‘Harijan’ movement left an indelible impression on the cobblers so much so that they organized among themselves to make some stark resolutions. These pledges included quitting alcohol, chanting lord’s names when dusk falls, prohibiting consumption of beef, educating their children etc. One of them even proclaimed to quit the polluting task of tanning and take over a less contaminating work of cultivation at hand. With the imperial discovery of the steam engines, leather was directly exported to the city based markets. This affected the poor farmers very much. The markets were getting inundated with cheaper shoes and the labor market was becoming infested with the migratory laborers. The Bengali tanners being cornered were increasingly falling upon agriculture in search of security and ammunition. Many of them were forsaking their caste affiliations to take upon agrarian practices so much so that their sheer differences with the peasant classes were fast obliterating. Despite this, the sense of insolence and indignity arising from the untouchable classes kept looming (Sinha: 1994:34).

To escape this growing sense of miff and discontent, the tribes went hard on their own practices. They abandoned all those rituals which were considered contemptuous among the higher castes without considering the merit of those practices. The tribes
were so severely affected by the higher caste Hindus that they marooned all those acts which they had pursued for so long such as widow remarriage, vocations of tannery etc. A huge impact was thus left on the untouchable castes such as the *Haari, Doam, Namashudra* etc. which generated an upsurge of education that swept across the uneducated untouchable community stupendously. The impact was so magnetic that some of these castes had started initiating themselves towing the line of the superior castes. This process of metamorphosing the identity tacitly in lure of newly found pseudo esteem had gained ground among the lower castes and it became an obsession among such castes. They did not leave any leaf unturned to profess this identity. Some of them even left their own home state to migrate elsewhere to change their status (ibid: 36).

Thus the indigenous communities were desperate to dig for themselves a distinct place though in semblance with the higher castes. Bose had showed that the lower castes in their headstrong attempt to carve their own entity and essence were clinging tightly to the higher castes for a temptation of reverence which they were devoid for long. However, the indigenous communities in their sole pursuance of this imaginative status consistently followed the footsteps of the higher castes oblivious of the virtue of their own rituals. Bose says that though carving for themselves a distinct entity by nullifying the vicious attributes of their own community is no bad, but what is dubious and calls for insistent enquiry is falling back on the other communities solely for this make-over. This also calls into question the low self-esteem which the communities are seen suffering from. However, amongst all odds the drive with which indigenous communities place leverage on adapting a new crust shows their true resoluteness, though Bose thinks such an attitude is nothing but analogous to the conciliation of the powerful and the mighty. The indigenous communities though mustering for themselves enough courage to be whistle-blowers still could not be credited with the distinction which they had been hankering for so long. This was because they were booby trapped in the false and entangled conundrum of power. However, the indigenous movement which had been started did not all go futile. However, it was not the same everywhere. In many places the indigenous people could astutely put forward their claim and with their bull-headed drive, they could also coax the pertinent authorities to vindicate their claim.
Bose therefore sought to bring out the nitty-gritty of indigenous vive which affected such groups and their urge to coalesce into collective resorts. Though these groups were initially vulnerable for research, they have been brought out of the oblivion by Bose through his sharp monographs on *Juangs* (Bose: 1928). His paper presents the trials and tribulations of tribal life and its silent correlation with the tribal economy (Bose: 1955, 1964a & 1969) on the basis of which Bose builds up his building blocks for researching on the natives. Bose therefore ratchets up the strong perspectives of the native communities and their intersecting ties with the large backdrop against them. It is not just the story of how hapless they are, but also a reflection of their potentialities and resilience to emerge triumphant against impediments. Bose kept the indigenous communities in the thick, they are the sole protagonists here with no extraneous mentors ranting and bargaining for their sake. They were thought to be strong enough to vouch and speak for themselves. Here lies the relevance of an indigenous research which Bose tried to advocate.

In a similar context, Srinivas put forth the native movements and their essence. There are similarities in their approach and their treatment of natives and ways of promoting their interests. As Srinivas points out that,

In the different parts of south India after World War I there began what may be called the Non Brahmin Movement. At the end of the World War I, most of the important posts in the Government of Mysore were held by Brahmins, and non-government leaders realized that they must get Western education if they wanted position and power. Agitation was started for the institutions of scholarships to help non-Brahmin youths study in schools, and colleges, for reservation of seats for non-Brahmins in medical and technological colleges, and for preference in appointments to government posts. The non-Brahmin agitation succeeded, and gradually a number of rules discriminating against the Brahmins were evolved by the Government of Mysore. As a result of these measures there has come into existence since late thirties a Western educated non-Brahmin intelligentsia (Srinivas: 1994:98).

Bose likewise had shown the proliferation of such indigenous communities across the country. Not just the intelligentsia but the petty natives were growing in different pockets of the country with their own distinct aura and flavor. Both, Srinivas and
Bose had tried projecting the intricacies of the processes of empowerment which goes on unabatedly within the sanctorum of these native communities. While some fight with a degree of sophistication, others are too crude to claim such foliage. However, in both cases, it is the noteworthiness of their nativity that they fight to legitimatize. For instance, Bose showed that the Kandhamal district of Orissa is inhabited by the tribes such as the Kandha and Shabar. They have their own rituals and culture quite unlikely of the mainstream culture. Bose thus observes,

The Kandhas and Shabar have their own distinct ways of hunting their games. Once a group of woodcutters attacked a monkey found hiding in the canopy with a bow and arrow. A few of them rushed eagerly to amass dead leaves and twigs to set up a fire. The joyous tribal men ripped open its heart to dole out a bowl of blood while others got busy in chopping the dead monkey in to pieces and roasting it on the fire. The natives dipped the slightly roasted cubes on the fire and relished them with the freshly extracted blood of the monkey. Not only the kandhas and the Shabars, the indigenous tribes of Ranchi but some other tribes not very far away from there, such as the Juangs were also blistering with wide ranging distinction. Though they were cohabiting with the Hindus, they still retained back their idiosyncratic distinction. They worshipped the sanskritic deities but displayed their own distinct rituals. They do not have any special calendar in accordance to which they worship. In this sense they are guided by their own fancy (Bose: 1930:54).

There is no compulsion to worship but when they decide to do, they at least take a shower in the morning before initiating the conciliation of the deities. This is again done in sync with the caste doctrine of purification as professed before any religious act. Since there is no compulsion, the tendency must have grown due to prolonged contact with the caste societies. This way of putting oneself in the shoes of the indigenous communities that one is studying, as Bose does, calls for admiration and attention. Nevertheless, towing the line with Bose, Smith has shown a similar tendency:

Indigenous people are used to being studied by outsiders; indeed, many of the basic disciplines of knowledge are implicated in studying the Other and creating expert knowledge of the Other (Helu Thaman, 2003; Said. 1978; Minh-ha, 1989; Vidich & Lyman, 2000). More recently, however, indigenous researchers have been active in seeking ways to
disrupt the "history of exploitation, suspicion, misunderstanding, and prejudice" of indigenous people in order to develop methodologies and approaches to research that privilege indigenous knowledge, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material, and spiritual conditions (Rigney, 1999, 117). This shift in position, from seeing ourselves as passive victims of all research to seeing ourselves as activists engaging in a counter-hegemonic struggle over research, is significant (Smith:2005: 87).

This is what Bose has been seen showing in his work. He passionately narrated the story of the natives from the perspective of the indigenous, voicing starkly their aspirations, motivations and dispositions. He did not take them as pathological as many of his predecessors had done so, but rather celebrated their distinction with aplomb. His biography is therefore interspersed with such works (Bose: 1949a, 1955, 1964, 1968, 1969 1969a, 1970, 1970a) that account for the conditions of the natives and the ways they boldly encountered their impediments with agency and conviction.

**Culture and civilization: rethinking Bose along the line of Franz Boas and Clark Wissler.**

Franz Boas’s influence upon N.K Bose though had been much talked of; little had been said about the ensuing influence of Wissler on the latter. Except a few sweeping references, Wissler’s contribution in tentatively shaping Bose’s work had not been much dabbled upon. The researcher thinks this is one area where not much work had been done. Clark Wissler had been one of the leading anthropologists in the development of anthropology in the United States. Wissler remained out of the academic limelight and had gradually obscured from the greater public memory. Wissler was reticent and covert in his approach whereas Boas was far more overt and gregarious. This might have been the reason behind Wissler’s slow and sluggish orientation for which he had remained unnoticed and unobserved in academic ambit (Freed&Freed:1983). In stark opposition is the glaring presence of Boas throughout N.K Bose’s work (Sinha:1972: 12). However, despite that the researcher had tried scrounging up the antecedents of his work and needless to say, besides Boas’s, Clark Wissler’s influence on Bose seemed pretty evident throughout his works.
Wissler can be distinguished from Boas for his nomothetic approach as against the idiosyncratic counterpart used by Boas. Wissler for time and again have used this approach to compare cultures across wider sections. A. Freed and Ruth S. Freed therefore said,

Wissler’s theoretical ideas in the realm of cultural anthropology provided a basis for going beyond the bounds of Boasian anthropology and developing a nomothetic approach to ethnological data. Because Boas was chiefly concerned with studying particular cultures as distinctive units without comparing them, he could use the general idea of culture without defining it. However, since cross-cultural nomothetic studies require that the items be compared be defined as rigorously as possible, culture itself must be defined. Wissler was the first anthropologist after Tylor and the first American anthropologist to offer a definition of culture (Freed&Freed: 1983: 810).

Thus it was Wissler who provided a substantive idea of culture from which various implications were formed. It is thus quite evident that the definition of culture as provided by N.K Bose was not without its undercurrents. Bose’s idea was very well influenced by the one which Wissler had already developed and which Bose subsequently delivered upon. Though Bose’s predilection towards Boasian approach is well known, it was supposedly, Wissler who had theoretically nourished him. Franz Boas though a popular figure in the domain of culture did not quite theoretically explicate upon the corpus (Freed& Freed: 1983). He therefore failed to contribute copiously to theory building in culture. Though N.K Bose, it is well known, has drawn upon Wissler, he nevertheless, could not bank on him adequately for the theoretical knowledge building. Anthropologists Kroeber and Kluckhohn realized that Boas was reluctant in building theories about culture. They also noticed that Boas did not publish his first organized taxonomy of culture until 1930 when he was 72 years old. They said,

It is evident that Wissler was concerned with the problem of what culture was and what characterized it more than Boas ever was: and the parting of the personal ways of the two men may have freed Wissler for his interest. As in so much of his other work, he was somewhat casual, imprecise, and perhaps un-intense in his attack on the problem; but he possessed an exploratory and pioneering mind (Kroeber and Kluckhohn: 1952: 151-152).
Thus it is pretty well evident why Bose must have drawn upon Wissler. It was especially the definition of culture and its various dimensions that gravitated Bose and which prompted him to fall upon Wissler recurrently.

Let us look at the definition of culture proposed by Wissler to investigate the co-relation with the one Bose formulated. Wissler’s definition of culture includes four major components like psychological, genetic, descriptive and normative. Cultural phenomena were taken as activities acquired by human groups. It has been taken as a complex whole of human groups. Culture in the broadest sense included all such activities such as language, marriage, property system, etiquette, industries, art, etc. Wissler emphasized upon the tribal ways as a mode of life and reflected upon all such standardized practices that were widely prevalent such as marriage, property, recreation, industry, art, labor, beliefs, ceremonies etc. Wissler in general underscored the tribal culture and their ways of life to deliberate upon such practices. Bose picked up this line of thought from Wissler and developed his theory in tandem with the components discussed by Wissler. Paving his way away from the Boasian particularism, Wissler definitely stood out as one of the fore-runners of cross-cultural comparative studies. He must have contributed a lot to Bose’s disposition especially in the cross cultural analysis of the temple structures and the veritable temple structures which Bose tinkered with.

A. L. Kroeber, in a review of N.K Bose’s Cultural Anthropology therefore said,

This booklet of 150 pages evidently aims to make certain general anthropological concepts more familiar to English –reading Indians....this sounds as if it might be Wissler; but the work is an independent, simple reformulation, illustrated especially by Indian examples (Kroeber:1930: 557).

Wissler’s impact is sharply felt across Bose’s works and not just methodological influences; Bose’s conceptual deductions have been built upon Wissler’s foundational ideas which later on have been interpolated in Indian contexts. Wissler’s structural framework had been heavily used by Bose, but he still stands out for giving a rendition of indigenousness in his works. The text therefore made it palpable that Bose must have been conspicuously treading the ground of Wissler to establish his theory to conceptualize the ideas of cultural traits and their ramifications on Indian
grounds. The theory deliberated on the ways in which the cultural traits traversed across the continuum and made themselves accessible to the various cross-sections. The distribution of a trait was prioritized by both the thinkers. While both of them spoke at length on the process, we find a strong resemblance between the two thinkers and the way they built upon the concepts of cultural traits and their mobility. Wissler’s theory of cultural trait and its distribution find ready relevance in N.K Bose’s work on culture and its vicissitudes. Sometimes going through Bose’s work (Bose:1927, 1935,1938 & 1953) we find astonishing similarity with Clark Wissler (Wissler:1910,1911,1912, 1918 &1921) and this likeness might simply sound mind-boggling.

Bose built upon the idea of culture by following the foot prints of Wissler and to lend his individual impression on the area, he used textual categories imported from Indian philosophical contexts like *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* etc. Such categories have been carefully applied within the Wisslerian model to interpret the texture of Indian culture and its civilization. Bose himself therefore said,

> Many elements from Wissler’s classification, like Material traits, Knowledge or Social Systems are thus involved in the formation of the trait which passes under the name of Vaishnavism. This is also the reason, why a trait is often referred to as a trait-complex, for it is almost always compounded of elements drawn from under several distinct and separate categories of classification (Bose: 1929:18).

So it seemed pretty evident that Bose had gradually worked upon Wissler’s ideas like culture area, culture pattern, trait-complexes, age and area to deliberate upon Indian situations. The ideas bear strong resemblance with Bose’s areas of work on interpretation of Indian civilization. Freed and Freed, while showing the functioning of trait-complexes in line with the Wisslerian model, said,

> He was of the opinion that the pattern phenomenon applied more to original products of a tribe than to borrowed traits and, in the realm of diffused traits, more to ceremonial than to material complexes (Wissler: 1917:345). The maize-complex for example, diffused over the eastern maize region and to the English colonists practically unmodified by different culture patterns of the receiving societies. On the other hand, the Grass Dance took one form on the plains and another (the Dream
Dance) among the Central Algonkians. Wissler concludes, “Analysis of the two ceremonies shows that each is adapted to the prevailing pattern of its area. Hence, we may generalize with the statement that in taking over a foreign ceremony, concessions will be made to the tribal patterns” (ibid: 348).

Wissler therefore seemed was studying the pattern of distribution of trait complexes among the various tribes, and examining the directions of reciprocity. He wanted to show how a tribe takes up a foreign ritual and how the dominant community responds to it. Bose in conducting a similar study, shows a likely orientation when he says:

When a number of tribes are included within the province of a trait-complex it is a general rule that the tribe which invents it observes the trait with more elements than another which merely adopts it from other tribes; for the ramification of a trait-complex are more numerous in the medium of its discovery than in that of its accidental incorporation....

Vedic culture was at first confined to a certain migrant people in northern India. From them it actually spread among the original inhabitants of the land. Vedic ceremonies connected with marriage or the custom of offering food to the manes were introduced by the former among the latter who still continue to observe some of the ancient tribal ceremonies in a changed form. If we trace the two sets of ceremonies relating to marriage and death up and down the scale of castes, we observe that Vedic ceremonies preponderate among Brahmins while the other set grows in intensity as we move down the social scale. The fact helps us to recognize who the original carriers of the civilization were (Bose:1929: 56).

However, more than the likeness, it is the model of constructing the social interpretations, that matters. Bose himself had conceded to following Wissler’s definition of culture while working upon its higher ramifications (Bose: 1929:12). Definitely the basis of work was highly influenced by Wissler’s approaches, but later on the wider connotations of the Indian circumstances had been taken from indigenous constructs borrowed from the idea of Vaishnava. The sub-themes taken from Indian Philosophy, like Sattva-guna, Rajas- and Tamas gunas, Bhakti-yoga, Tulasi mala, etc have been aptly applied on the theoretical plank to give a through indigenous rendition to our problems. Such a proclivity to explain the Indian situation
have reflected Bose’s preference for functional theories. That Bose used these textual categories to explain the Indian situation had also been aptly referred by Sinha (1994).

Assessing Bose’s contribution to structural-functional study of culture

We see that Wissler was far more concerned with the general and deductive approach than the particularistic or contextual emphasis. This Wissler did to give history its due place and regard without placing it at the mercy of the mere particular syndromes. Now this is necessary to understand Wissler’s position to fathom the rationale that Bose had subliminally applied to his theorizations of culture. Wissler therefore gave more importance to trait complexes or cultural traits which he believed help understand the overall general and precise understanding of a society irrespective of its contextual nuances. Therefore, anthropologists believed, Freed & Freed said, Wissler’s concept of the culture-area offered an alternative to the significance of the unique social unit. When Wissler conceived of the culture centre as the integral feature of a culture area and identified diffusion as the basic process, he shifted analytical emphasis from the unique society to the trait-complex or culture trait. Trait complexes could be conceptually isolated from social context because they were historically related and demonstrably were borrowed by one social unit from another. The conceptual distinction of a social unit from trait-complex minimized the significance of cultural context and provided a theoretical justification for cross-cultural studies (Freed&Freed: 1983:814).

Now this is important because Bose likewise had developed upon his theory of culture on the pillars of the cultural traits. Moving along the line of Wissler, Bose too elucidated on the trait-complexes to infer a general idea of culture and to likewise demonstrate the countless deviations from the interpretations in vogue. Bose therefore applied the idea of the trait complexes to embark on the cross-cultural comparisons between various phenomena. Thus casting Wissler in his theoretical mould, Bose wanted to give an applied study of culture, zeroing down especially on our country and its neighboring districts. Bose’s intention becomes more comprehensible when he says, Instances of differences between the numerous provinces of India could easily be multiplied; but from what has been said, it will be clear that although the culture of different parts of India consists of material traits,
social systems, etc., yet the units forming each of them are entirely different in the case of each province. Each of these distinguishing units is called a trait in anthropology...the study of cultural traits gives us a convenient means of judging the influence of one culture upon another, and of finding the route of migration of a particular trait. (Bose: 1929: 21-22).

Therefore, it becomes quite clear that Bose was trying to initiate cross-comparative studies along the generalized paradigm as Wissler had started off. He was not ready to take individual differences at their face value but tried relating it to a broader structure to facilitate further analysis. Bose thus was not moving towards idiosyncratic differences of a region or with their distinctive aura but was trying to map it on a broader frame to peep into the reciprocal relations that a region weaves with the other. Thus it becomes evident that Wissler was interested in giving a functional interpretation of society because he had been looking into the mutual relations between agent and structure. He made it very clear that no true understanding of the social structure would be possible through an independent and insular study of a social element. Unless we integrate it with the larger whole, in-depth understanding of the social structure would be stunted and inhibited. Treading the same line of thought, Bose contended that individual elements of culture would never represent the essential traits of a cultural whole unless the entire whole is taken into due consideration. Thus Bose said Mundari culture as a whole might remain ramshackle and wretched but that should not undermine the general intelligence of a Mundari school boy. The latter might perform much better than his Hindu counterpart despite the overall decrepit condition of his culture. Thus Bose was saying that an individual intelligent Mundari boy would not decide the overall structure of the Mundari culture unless deeper probing is done. So it remains immaterial to proceed from discreet parts to concrete whole for it will only camouflage the true character of the structure and lead us to distorted findings. This is what functional analysis does and this is what Bose zeroes on. This becomes clearer when Bose says,

The approach of anthropology is essentially biological. Man may either be studied in his structural or his functional aspect. The functions of man are viewed as adaptive measures, which have been selected in the due course of evolution. (Bose: 1929: 60-61).
This very well depicts the functional orientation of Bose which he had applied very succinctly to legitimatize the overweening structure of culture in the society. The structural-functional approach had been tactfully applied to validate the functions of culture and the way it has become an imperative part of social existence. Perhaps, what must be added is that the biological interpretation is nothing new. It had already been discoursed upon by leading sociologists long ago when they conceptualized society as a biological organism, essentially performing the same functions as the social system does. The various instruments of the socio-biological system had since been developed as an extension of this analogical thought which had only matured with age. This becomes clearer with A. L. Kroeber and Talcott Parsons’ candid opinion that,

In English-speaking countries, at least, the most important reference point is the biologically oriented thinking of the generation following the publication of Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*. Here the social scientists were concerned with defining a sphere of investigation that could not be treated as simply biological in the then current meaning of that concept. Tylor’s concept of culture and Spencer’s of the social as super-organic was important attempts to formulate such a sphere. Thus the organism was assigned to the biological sciences and culture-society (as yet more or less undifferentiated) assigned to the socio-cultural sciences.… In the formative period of disciplines, (viz, anthropology and sociology, added by the researcher) then, culture and society were used with relatively little difference of meaning in most works of major influence. In the anthropological tradition, Tylor and Boas used culture to designate that aspect of total human social behavior (including its symbolic and meaningful products) that was independent of the genetic constitutions and biological characteristics of organisms. The ideas of continuity, creation, accumulation, and transmission of culture independent of biological heredity were the key ones. On the sociological [p. 583] side, Comte and Spencer, and Weber and Durkheim spoke of society as meaning essentially the same thing that Tylor meant by culture. (Kroeber & Parsons: 1958:582-3).

But having said so, it must be admitted that despite having treaded the steps of such predecessors, as cited, Bose succeeded in giving a well-founded interpretation of culture in the contemporary Indian context. The researcher therefore thinks that Bose’s one of the important contributions to understanding Indian society has been to
provide a structural–functional interpretation of culture and giving vivid illustrations from his present backdrop. Taking culture as a coherent structure and portraying its functions as adaptive mechanisms for the society to survive, it definitely provides a resplendent application of structural functionalism. Thus Bose, as we find, was rather averse to the tendency of unscrutinized observation to reach at blunt generalization. He was rather interested to look into the mutual relations between the structure and its constituents to initiate a functional inspection. But at the same time it must be remembered that Bose nevertheless was not an evolutionary functionalist. He did not have faith in a universal model of functionalism thus opposing the claim of a deterministic point of convergence or zenith. The point and the pace of journey might differ for every culture and there is no universal yardstick for this. Bose therefore said,

In the course of evolution, cultures have grown more and more complex. The severity of the struggle for existence has been mitigated through the accumulation of cultural traits. Each culture has followed, more or less closely, this line of evolution. But there is no scientific evidence to prove the existence of any deterministic tendency in culture to follow particular lines of evolution (Bose: 1929:23).

Bose, therefore, the researcher thinks was strongly following the legacy of the functional theorists with boost and thrust. There can be found a strong flavor of functional dictums in his writings. This becomes clearer as he moves from biological approaches to cultural functions and draws a near analogy between the two. He had from the very beginning been talking of the adaptive functions of culture and he legitimatises it by drawing a parallel between the biological bodies and the body social. Such explanations have been rampant throughout the functional discourses and therefore Bose’s intention becomes unambiguous. This becomes even more conspicuous when Bose says,

We may describe culture as including such behavior as is common to a number of men forming a distinguishable group and which is capable of transmission from one generation to another or from one country to another through various processes...in human culture, the methods of securing food and shelter and rules of marriage or family organization frankly serve man’s physical needs; although the simple and direct forms of satisfaction are considerably overgrown and complicated by
features arising out of his specific mental traits. Still, their main purpose
is unmistakable. The occurrence of these traits of human nature is due to
the instincts which are common between men and other animals (Bose:
ibid: 8).

Thus these words make it very clear that Bose somewhere down the line had the ideas
of organic analogy in his mind when perhaps he was making such comparisons
between biological organisms and culture. What makes our assumption stronger is
when Bose uses the phrase, “The adaptive function of culture” (ibid:67), while
discussing these analogical issues. Perhaps Bose was strongly influenced by the social
philosophers who time and again had conceptualized of a tentative resemblance
between the biological and the social body based on the functional attributes of each
of them.

**Comparing Bose’s approach of diffusionism with structural-functionalism**

However, Bose was far more concerned with the diffusionist approach than the
structuralist functional one. This Bose did to give history its due place and regard
without placing it at the mercy of the mere particular syndromes. He gave more
importance to trait complexes or cultural traits which he believed would help
understand the overall general and precise framework of a society irrespective of its
contextual nuances. Study of trait distributions also help cross-cultural studies
possible. Therefore, anthropologists believed, as Freed & Freed said,

> Trait complexes could be conceptually isolated from social context
> because they were historically related and demonstrably were borrowed
> by one social unit from another. The conceptual distinction of a social
> unit from trait-complex underscored the significance of cultural context
> and provided a theoretical justification for cross-cultural studies (Freed

This is important because Bose likewise had developed upon his theory of culture on
the pillars of the cultural traits. Moving along the line of Wissler, Bose too elucidated
on the trait-complexes to infer a general idea of culture and to likewise demonstrate
the countless deviations from the interpretations in vogue. Bose therefore applied the
diffusionist idea of the trait complexes to embark on the cross-cultural comparisons
between various phenomena. Thus resembling anthropologists like Wissler, to whom
he looked for ready reference, in his theoretical mould, Bose wanted to give an applied study of culture, zeroing down especially on our country. Bose’s intention becomes more comprehensible when he says,

Instances of differences between the numerous provinces of India could easily be multiplied; but from what has been said, it will be clear that although the culture of different parts of India consists of material traits, social systems, etc., yet the units forming each of them are entirely different in the case of each province. Each of these distinguishing units is called a trait in anthropology...the study of cultural traits gives us a convenient means of judging the influence of one culture upon another, and of finding the route of migration of a particular trait. (Bose :1929: 21-22).

Therefore, it becomes quite clear that Bose was trying to initiate cross-comparative studies along the cultural transmissibility paradigm as Wissler had started off. He was not ready to take individual differences at their face value but tried relating them to a broader structure to facilitate further analysis. Bose thus was not moving towards idiosyncratic differences of a region or their distinctive aura and to study their interrelationships as structural functionalists did, but was trying to map it on a broader frame to understand the reciprocal relations that a region weaves with the other and sails to other regions trespassing territorial boundaries.

Thus it becomes evident that Bose was interested in giving much more than a functional interpretation of society because he had been looking into the diffusion of the various nuances of the society and how they transpose across boundaries. He made it very clear that no true understanding of the social structure would be possible through an independent and insular study of a social element. Unless we integrate it with the larger whole, in-depth understanding of the social structure would be stunted and inhibited. However, this meant that cross-cultural mapping and re-mapping ought to be done to understand how structures are formed and parts are attenuated. This meant moving beyond simple structural-functional studies of cultures as attempted usually by the anthropologists of his time.

Following a different line of thought, Bose contended that individual elements of culture would never represent the essential traits of a cultural whole unless the entire whole and its probable lines of interaction are taken into due consideration. Thus Bose
said, Mundari culture as a whole might remain ramshackle and wretched but that should not undermine the general intelligence of a Mundari school boy. The latter might perform much better than his Hindu counterpart despite the overall decrepit condition of his culture. Thus Bose was arguing that an individual intelligent Mundari boy would not decide the overall structure of the Mundari culture unless deeper probing is done. So it remains immaterial to proceed from discreet parts to concrete whole for it will only camouflage the true character of the structure and lead us to distorted findings. Instead, finding out the external influences on the Mundari culture and how it was open to the extraneous influences, that decided its broader contours of diffusion, might help us to study the evolution and spread of the Mundari culture over time and space. This is what diffusional analysis could do and this is what Bose zeroed on. Nevertheless, Bose was conscious of the adaptive functions of the culture and despite his emphasis on diffusion, he clearly said,

The approach of anthropology is essentially biological. Man may either be studied in his structural or his functional aspect. The functions of man are viewed as adaptive measures, which have been selected in the due course of evolution.” (Bose:1929: 60-61).

This very well depicts the functional orientation of Bose which he had applied very succinctly to legitimatize the overweening structure of culture in the society. The structural-functional approach had been tactfully applied to validate the functions of culture and the way it has become an imperative part of social existence. Perhaps, what must be added is that the biological interpretation is nothing new. It had already been discoursed upon by leading sociologists long ago when they conceptualized society as biological organisms, essentially performing the same functions as the social system does. The various instruments of the socio-biological system had since been developed as an extension of this analogical thought which had only mellowed with age. This becomes clearer with A. L. Kroeber and Talcott Parsons’ candid opinion that,

In English-speaking countries, at least, the most important reference point is the biologically oriented thinking of the generation following the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*. Here the social scientists were concerned with defining a sphere of investigation that
could not be treated as simply biological in the then current meaning of that concept. Tylor's concept of culture and Spencer’s of the social as super-organic was important attempts to formulate such a sphere. Thus the organism was assigned to the biological sciences and culture-society (as yet more or less undifferentiated) assigned to the socio-cultural sciences…. (Kroeber & Parsons: 1958:582-3).

But having said so, it must be admitted that despite having treaded the steps of such predecessors, as cited, Bose succeeded in giving a well-founded diffusionist interpretation of culture in the contemporary Indian context and never stuck to functional orientation alone. Thus Bose, as we find, was rather averse to the tendency of un-scrutinized observation to reach at blunt functional generalization. He was rather interested to look into the mutual relations and their patterns of transformations between the structure and its constituents to initiate a diffusionist inspection. However, it must be remembered that Bose nevertheless was not an evolutionary functionalist. He did not have faith in a universal model of functionalism: Bose therefore said,

In the course of evolution, cultures have grown more and more complex. The severity of the struggle for existence has been mitigated through the accumulation of cultural traits. Each culture has followed, more or less closely, this line of evolution. But there is no scientific evidence to prove the existence of any deterministic tendency in culture to follow particular lines of evolution (Bose: 1929:23).

The present researcher thinks that Bose did not strongly follow the legacy of the structural-functional theorists. There can be found a strong flavour of functional dictums in his writings, but in his matured writings, one can see a clear shift towards cultural transmissibility. The greatest charge brought against structural functionalism is its inability to account for change and transition, which lends it a static or a conservative character (Turner and Maryanski: 1979). Bose also did not wholeheartedly welcome such a theory which would not be able to account for change and transition, something which later on came to be regarded as the cornerstone of his diffusionist theory. Bose contended that a system cannot get modified partially, when any one of the components of the system undergoes transition. For, the same system enters into an incessant process of interaction with other components as well but structural functionalism often fails to explain this interaction and its surrounding
contradictions. Even other scholars contended have that to clearly demonstrate this contradiction, we need to formulate structural functionalism more strictly (Hashizume et al., 1984). Even Parsons opined that structural functionalism was a very generalized theory through which the behaviour of the whole system could only be acquired from partial information; however, the theory was found seething with its innate contradictions and tautologies (Sato:2011:3). Bose, for a very legitimate reason, thought that there could be no general theory that can substantially reduce the whole into appropriate parts so as to direct the observer to which variables must be selected for the part-whole analysis. Such an approach is not always suitable, for it fails to study the interrelationship and even stumbles to account for imminent changes or possible directions of migration. Bose felt that such a theory possibly failed to account for the mutations that were constantly taking place in the world of cultural traits as they came to characterize the dynamic and changing geo-political topography of our society.

Bose possibly was more interested in the distribution of specific cultural items, and to demonstrate how their investigation might throw light on new areas usually not explored by historical re-making of the past. Bose thought of collecting the maps of culture, language and physical types and superimposing them one upon the other so as to trace their possible lines of symmetry or asymmetry. However, it was found that in most cases the maps could not show compatibility with one another for there remained gaps between the corresponding regional maps. Within cultures, even some traits showed rapid propensities to travel more than others; some were possibly injected at some earlier point of time than the others. So it was quite evident that the distribution maps of various regions showed discrepancy to a certain extent. For Bose, diffusionist theories were more convenient than the functional ones because the former might represent shorthand descriptions of the space-relation of cultural items. He felt that the diffusion of traits, if studied with caution, might play a useful part in exploring the present and past relationships of the human society.

Structural functionalist theories probably could not account for these interpretations behind the distributions of the material items. Diffusion theories might well justify that in spite of differences of language that separate the regions or the states of India, these diverse regions might come to share many common components of the higher forms of culture. Bose rightly took the help of trait-distribution theories against functional ones to explain the contiguous distribution of things like cooking oil, rice, attire that cut across geographical specificities, or even the ecological or regional
insulation of various cultural zones. Bose thus clearly pointed out that, “this implies that another kind of cultural affinity was slowly built up through migration and diffusion of culture than the kind we are accustomed to through the history of the rise and fall of empires” (Bose:1964:22). Bose therefore very strongly believed that it is indispensable to have traits that are gifted with potentialities for transportability. For, traits are a part of culture which is nothing but an essential form of common behaviour among men. The traits are innate in both man and their belongings and are likely to be migrated from one cultural zone to the other. Herein lies the justification behind the use of diffusion theories so as to analyse the changing and transitional character of the society across space and time.

**Bose and the Cultural diffusionism of Edward B Tylor and the latter diffusionists: a critical entanglement**

We have already discussed the influence of Tylor on Bose, especially as he charted his elucidation of the Hindu society following the rudiments of diffusionism. We have seen that Bose was greatly influenced by S.C. Roy who, in turn, remained largely permeable by the British classical evolutionists. Among the many Victorian scholars in Great Britain, those who opined about the unilinear form of cultural growth and the ones who carved for themselves notable niches include Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917), R.I. Marett (1866-1943), James Frazer (1854-1941), J.F Mclennan (1820-1888), Henry Maine (1822-1903), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) etc. The pre-eminent amongst them was Tylor who felt that the study of culture is essentially a historical study, for culture is essentially a historical process. Man therefore develops in the course of history where some cultures and their inhabitants are qualitatively derogatory and have to climb up a given flight of stairs at par with a given culture which stands atop and projects itself as a cultural and civilizational role model to be emulated. This sort of evolutionary remnant was bountiful in the apex part of Roy’s work. Bose was a disciple of Roy, and looked up to him for inspiration. Vijay S. Upadhyay and Gaya Pandey said, “S.C Roy was a source of inspiration and a tower of strength to many budding anthropologists. N.K Bose and D.N Mazumdar received active encouragement and guidance from him in the early years” (Upadhyay & Pandey:1993:398).

Bose’s idea of the structural composition of the Hindu society where the lower cultures largely follow the higher cultures as a natural source of reference and
emulation largely owes to Tylor’s model of cultural diffusion. Bose rightly followed the cultural diffusionist model to show how the culture of the technologically lesser developed cultures evolve by naturally looking up to the technologically developed cultures for ready points of reference. This is how cultural traits diffuse from one community to another and this transmutation is best understood by the currents and directions of the potential lines of diffusion. Starting from Tylor, the later diffusionists especially of the realm of folk-lore and art history have taken up the issue to plot and analyse the recent forms of continuity, penetration and infusion in the current volatile society. Let us study the later diffusionists to show their points of conjunction or disjunction with Bose as he critically engages himself with the social fabric of the twentieth century India. We shall discuss these later developments of the cultural diffusionism theory for they will help us learn about the present interpretations of the survivors of the school of diffusionism. This is important as we have already studied in detail the role of cultural traits and diffusionism in Bose’s theory of the spread and expansion of the Hindu culture and its tentacles across the society over the ages. A look at the works of the diffusionist school, especially those from the domain of folklore studies will help us understand the significance of Bose’s work.

There had been substantial amount of work over the past several decades (e.g., Boyd and Richerson 1985; Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman 1981; Cloak 1975; Durham 1991; Lumsden and Wilson 1981; Richerson and Boyd 1992), which tried to explore the scope of cultural diffusionism especially in the context of the transmission of the cultural traits (Aunger: 2002). According to Lyman and O’Brien, during the first half of the twentieth century, the terms "cultural trait" and the synonymous "cultural element" were frequently used for such units, but at the same time neither the process of transmission nor the "thing" being transmitted was discussed within the context of a theory of cultural transmission (Lyman and O’Brien:2003:225). This allows us to examine the works of E. B. Tylor, Clark Wissler, and A. L. Kroeber, all of whom had profound intellectual impacts on how cultural traits were being composed and transmitted. We have already discussed their contributions as well as narrated their points of contrast with Nirmal Kumar Bose. The time has now come to see how fairly the later theorists, especially those who dabbled with diffusionism, but belonged to distinct disciplines like folklores, art-history and others invited deliberations with Bose because of the rich works they produced.
Linton and Bose: addressing the issue of acculturation

Ralph Linton (1893–1953) was a renowned American anthropologist of the mid-20th century, especially noted for his texts like, The Study of Man (1936) and The Tree of Culture (1955). Throughout his life span, Linton became interested in the problem of acculturation, especially after having worked with Robert Redfield and Melville Herskovits on a prestigious Social Science Research Council subcommittee. The collaboration helped in the production of an excellently jointly-authored piece entitled Memorandum for the Study of Acculturation (1936). The volume Acculturation in Seven American Indian Tribes (1963) was another example of the kinds of works Linton produced. Linton's contribution to the book is still considered outstanding.

Linton's idea of cultural traits entail was conspicuously different from most of the early twentieth-century anthropologists. For him, cultural traits are nothing but "arbitrary divisions" (Linton 1936:394). Lyman and O’Brien said that, “He may have used "arbitrary" to indicate that the traits are not some kind of natural units waiting to be discovered, but in our view he was searching for natural (emic-like) units rather than arbitrary (etic-like) ones” (Lyman & O’Brien: 2003). Linton, it was believed, was dubious about the value of cultural traits that were developed by the anthropologists and used frequently. Linton too noted that "differentiating" among traits "masked the actual interrelations of culture elements and made it extremely difficult for the reader to see them in their proper settings" (Linton 1936:396). Linton thus was not very happy with the use of the term cultural traits for, he felt, traits often misunderstand the mutual interrelationships between cultural components. The cultural traits, when detached from their original setting, lose their function and meaning. Nirmal Kumar Bose too delved on the distinctiveness of the cultural traits but never attempted to divorce them from their cultural setting. Linton on the other hand, failed to keep a trait’s form distinct from its function. Thus, Linton said, "The bow,
in addition to its use with the arrow, might be used as part of a fire-making or drilling complex" (Linton 1936:39). Thus he confused form of a trait with its respective function, which probably was the greatest drawback of Linton. This problem probably rose because Linton conceptualized traits as occurring in more than one trait complex, which must have created these disjunctions. Bose, on the other
hand, was careful enough to distinguish between the forms and functions of the traits and never juxtaposed the one over the other.

Bose was very clear when he strictly pointed out that trait-complexes are more prominent in communities of procreation than in others where they crop up by chance. He, therefore, says that when a number of tribes are included within the province of a trait-complex it is a general rule that the tribe which invents it observes the trait with more elements than another which merely adopts it from other tribes. So he asserts that the ramifications of a trait-complex are more numerous in the medium of its discovery than in that of its accidental incorporation. On the basis of such an observation, it is likely that the propensity of traits to overlap in more than one trait-complex is minimized. Thus forms and their functions are not jumbled up as was done by Linton. Bose illustrates this by giving the example of the Vedic culture. He showed that Vedic culture was at first confined to a certain migrant people in northern India. From them it actually spread among the original inhabitants of the land. Vedic ceremonies connected with marriage or the custom of offering food to the tribal folks were introduced by the former among the latter who still continue to observe some of the ancient tribal ceremonies in a changed form. If we trace the two sets of ceremonies relating to marriage and death up and down the scale of castes, we observe that Vedic ceremonies preponderate among Brahmins while the other set grows in intensity as we move down the social scale. This fact helps us to recognize who the original carriers of the civilization were (Bose:1929: 56). The way Bose used the Indian taxonomies to explain the Indian situation, using trait-complexes, rightly shows the relevance of Bose’s approach over the other theorists like Linton and others. Herein lies his indelible stamp on the cultural diffusionist trend created and nourished over the ages.

Ruth Benedict and Bose: analysing the interstices of cultural traits

Another anthropologist of his time was Ruth Benedict (1887-1948) who was an American anthropologist and folklorist. Benedict (1932) executed a blue-print similar to Linton’s complex. She believed that the cultural traits might lose meanings if "detached from their cultural contexts" and produce a compromised understanding of the functional study of the culture as an organic whole (Benedict 1932:1). Benedict's
specific contributions to anthropological theory rests first on her cumulative formation of the notion of cultural configuration and second on her emphasis on the need for cultural relativism. Virginia Wolf Briscoe had rightly said, “It is possible to see that her more specific contributions to folklore scholarship fall into these same two areas and are worthy of more careful attention” (Briscoe:1979: 461). She asserted that the data she was working with, be it a unit of mythology or a bunch of child-rearing patterns must be analysed in such a way that the data might represent a larger whole in order to look for the inter-related patterns of culture. Benedict therefore insisted that the analysis of the data would be futile if it did not address a larger body of population, that it was inferred from. Briscoe said, “The data were meaningless without the abstraction from them of a higher order of meaning, one which could be compared with similar abstractions from other kinds of social institutions within a culture in order to come to an understanding “(ibid:461). Briscoe continued, whether we are investigating a special variety of speech brought to use by a group of adolescent males or a storytelling forum in a South Indian temple, we should be able to relate these individual behaviours observed in smaller groups to the larger complexes of activity, values, gestures and norms of the community. Both Linton and Abram Kardiner espoused Benedict’s view that the pre-dominant components of the culture, its social system and major cultural expressions, were entrenched in the members who shared that culture and therefore they would profess a certain world view, set of values, and identity etc.

Dorothy Lee said, “What anthropologists have learned from Ruth Benedict is so far-reaching that most of us are unaware of it” (Lee:1949: 346). At the time when her two articles which outshone her great work, Patterns of Culture, appeared for the first time, -"Psychological Types in the Cultures of the Southwest," and "Configurations of Culture in North America," most of the readers did not consider ethnography as a substantive unit displaying a well synchronised coherency. If we read the contents of a culture thoroughly, our sole intention is to understand the traits that a culture shared with the other cultures. Lee said, “Most of us, however, as a rule merely used the table of contents, or even the index, to aid us in studying the diffusion of discrete traits. Ruth Benedict taught us to read an ethnography as we would visit a tribe (ibid:346). She taught us to give equal dignity to every fact, to gradually but recurrently read the piece to read between the sentences so as to move into the skin of
the culture. She taught us deal with every detail of the problem with utmost rigour. Lee said, “Ruth Benedict read an ethnography repeatedly and studied the culture till she could experience reality to some extent as that group did; until their behaviour and their formulations "made sense” (ibid:346).

In the same vein, Bose was an ethnographer who taught us to find patterns between cultures not by simple tabulation or cross comparison but by constant reading and re-reading that culture, as if to internalize its soul. He did an intensive study on the wada-baliya and jaliya communities in Puri and tried to analyse discreetly their living and society. The community was segmented into two castes which share an inherent hostile inter- caste relationship for which they practised exogamy. Bose not only did an ethnographic study on the community but he also intently poured over the history of the community. Most of the history was in the form of oral narratives passed down by the preceding generations which Bose absorbed voraciously.

Andre Beteille, wrote how exactly Bose’s way of doing ethnographic research was starkly different from his predecessors. He showed how the European anthropologists wrote long, but insipid monographs of tribal life. They spent a long time with the inmates they proposed to study, but their works were steeped with a strong sense of apathy and disdain. Beteille (1992) showed how exactly was Bose’s way of understanding the life of the Juangs different from the monograph centric intensive research which was the buzz word for the 19th century colonial anthropology. Pradip Kumar Bose (2011) too gave a succinct account of Bose, emphasising his role in vernacularisation of ethnography and his contributions towards developing anthropology of architecture, castes and tribes. Ethnographic studies were not pioneered by Bose, but were possibly pioneered by S.C Roy, but he mostly followed the model of ethnographic monographs. The Indian pioneers usually followed the British-European Gurus in regarding the tribes in isolation from the Hindu castes and in putting forth the ritual elements of behaviour and proclaiming as if nothing else exists in their life. Bose not only dubbed this model as ahistorical but also ‘anomic’, in the sense that there was ‘norm-lessness’ in the evolutionary structure of theory building. There was gross confusion and uncertainty in the evolutionary body of culture so that the laws inherent in the theory were facile and distorted.
Bose instead, like Benedict, had developed upon his theory of culture on the pillars of the cultural traits. Moving along the line of Benedict, Bose too elucidated on the trait-complexes to infer a general idea of culture and to likewise demonstrate the countless deviations from the interpretations in vogue. Bose therefore applied the idea of the trait complexes to embark on the cross-cultural comparisons between various phenomena. He said, “each of these distinguishing units is called a trait in anthropology…the study of cultural traits gives us a convenient means of judging the influence of one culture upon another, and of finding the route of migration of a particular trait”. (Bose:1929: 21-22). Bose’s contribution remained in tracing the lines of diffusion of the artifacts used across India, probably a study pioneered by himself. He wanted to show that trespassing the rigid lingual divide, that the diverse regions furnished commonality in their material culture. In his introduction to the *Peasant life in India: a study in Indian Unity and Diversity*, he proposes a pyramidal imagery of the unity of Indian civilization. The study of civilization proposed by Bose, following the constellation and diffusion of cultural traits and patterns, is possibly what differentiates Bose from Benedict and others.

**Homer Barnett and Bose: analysing the interstices of cultural change**

Homer Barnett (1906-1985) was yet another American anthropologist and a seminal thinker to reckon with and be compared with Bose. Dr. Barnett was an ethnologist, anthropologist, author and teacher who invested the preliminary years of his professional years, 1934-1943, by researching on the Northwest Coast Indians. After the end of the second World War, he concentrated on Micronesia, especially Palau, and later Netherlands and New Guinea. It was during this time that he began to show interest in deep rooted changes and became an expert in cultural change.

Three areas characterize his professional itinerary, coupled with many research publications and awards. The first was his commitment to rigorous fieldwork, the obsession of many anthropologists, including Bose, which perhaps is another reason for comparing Barnett’s work with him. Barnett’s works especially in the earliest phase of his life was spent with American Indians in California and the Pacific Northwest. He came back to Washington soon after the war in the capacity of the ethnologist in the Smithsonian Institution and also worked with the Ethno-geographic Board, thus collecting data on the peoples and places, especially those from the site of
the war. He was later on sent to the Pacific, which henceforth became the field of his work. Bose likewise carried forth the legacy of cultural change that already was initiated upon by his predecessors. Bose can very well be compared with Barnett for Bose himself was an advocate of cultural change and tried hard to make cross-cultural studies to explain the initiation of cultural change across his country. Bose like Barnett was already talking of the processes of acculturation, but of course within his local purview, especially that which had long been percolating within the Hindu society. In explaining such processes Bose was careful not to give unilateral importance to just the highest rung of the hierarchical model and therefore recognized the existence of other reference groups as well. Thus Bose had for long, been talking of process of social change with due importance to all the groups in their capacity to initiate the change with vigour and zeal. Long before any other social scientist could broach the issue, Bose did it with confidence and resolution and devoted his entire life in explaining the civilization from this plural perspective, which very few anthropologists did.

The second area of Barnett’s theoretical work had been with the processes of cultural change, and with their accompanying ramifications. However, one of the most commendable work based on his field research was the large-scale project funded from 1962 by the National Science Foundation, under which, he, as principal investigator, together with his students and colleagues from other institutions, carried on a comparative study of the changes undergone by ten displaced communities in the Pacific (Gilkey:2004). We may identify his two masterpieces down his journey: *Innovation, the Basis of Cultural Change* (1953), and its sequel, *Qualitative Science* (1983), that was published as late as thirty years from hence. Likewise, Bose too came to be known for his outstanding contributions in the field of social change from the very beginning of his career. The dissertation paper of his post-graduation course conducted on the spring festival stands out for its perceptive and sagacious approach and for the vividness of details as well as the richness of the literature which he reviewed at such a tender age. This stupendous account of the Holi festival was penned out by Bose for his post-graduation classes. It also charts out his analytical and sapient mind that turned him such a genius at adolescence and encouraged him to delve on social change along the road of diffusionism.

Unlike Bose, Barnett did not use the coinage ‘cultural traits’, but instead used the term ‘idea’ (1953) to explain traits as “persistent linkages between idea-sets as they diffuse across ethnic boundaries” (Barnett:1953:356). Barnett said, “Arti-facts of this sort are called complexes because the analyst finds them to be
made up of more than one component" (ibid:35). While Barnett was busy conceptualizing facts, on the other side of the world, Bose was pre-occupied in analysing the formation of complexes and their dynamism. For instance, Bose studied how the rice complex took shape in India and went through various modifications to take upon further new accretions that helped Bose to understand the Asian society and its accompaniments. Even if Bose’s work came to be considered in the light of the twentieth century American anthropologists and their contributions, there were many lose ends left behind that were kept unanswered by these leading anthropologists of the west. Let us now look into these problems and also show how Bose came to our help.

The early diffusionists of the twentieth century and the impending problem of the cultural traits

One problem which possibly all such earlier anthropologists of the twentieth century faced was their inability in identifying the cultural traits cogently. To early twentieth-century anthropologists, therefore, cultural traits were nothing but abstract ideas with varying degrees of inclusiveness and orders of complexity that could be diffused across space and time. If those traits could be identified, they could then be used as analytical units for the purpose of ascertaining the contents and directions of passage, but unfortunately that could not be done.

Robert Harry Lowie (1883–1957), an Austrian-born American anthropologist. He, for instance argued, that survivals may show "an organic relation between traits that have become isolated and treated as a separate entity by the descriptive ethnologists. The problem was therefore encountered as traits were assumed to show a dual character, at times integrating while sometimes showing strong signs of disjunction" (Lowie: 1918:85). Paul Radin (1883–1959), an American cultural anthropologist and folklorist of the early twentieth century specializing in Native American languages and cultures, also witnessed a problem with the cultural traits. He grumbled that traits show the character of "fictitious definiteness" - a problem manifest in attempts to determine if a trait in one culture was the same trait in another culture (Radin: 1933:140). He presumed that cultural traits have a problem of not being enough transparent and that transpires from the fact that traits appear in multiple cultures thus refusing to show any identification with a definite culture.
Bronislaw Malinowski similarly regretted that the method of identifying traits was the "weakest point" in any analysis of such units (Malinowski: 1931:624). He reiterated the fact that defining a cultural trait is probably the greatest problem which till date had remained blurred and obscured.

Inflow of such comments by many such anthropologists like Malinowski (1931), Radin (1933), Benedict (1932), Willey (1929), Linton (1936), Murdock (1949), Bennett (1944), Driver (1965), A.J.F Kobben (1967), triggered many anthropologists of the early 1940s to strongly believe that an irreducible minimal unit of culture was a "methodological impossibility" because "modern functional theory shows the interdependence of cultural phenomena....therefore cultural trait was an abstraction having no value other than the immediate one placed upon it by the user " (Bennett:1944:178-179).

Most of these anthropologists who have studied the concept of cultural traits were more interested in historical questions, and therefore, their studies mainly concentrated not on definitions of traits but only sporadic mention of cultural transmission. Scholars know that culture can be acquired by the process of learning especially by acculturation and enculturation and hence the units of transmission were usually taken as abstract ideas. However, no one has bothered to theoretically explain what exactly a cultural trait is, other than that it is something that can be transmitted from person to person and from culture to culture (Lyman and O’Brien:2003:242).

What makes Bose stand out from them is his definite idea of cultural trait and its due conceptualization, which most of his predecessors could not do. Bose not only gave a well-defined image of cultural traits but also illustrated them with abundant instances to operationalize the mental image that he created. So unlike others, trait for him was not an abstract or ideational term divorced from reality. He worked hard to make its role meaty in the Indian civilization by drawing many parallel examples from contemporary contexts. Bose gave a clear and substantive definition of traits. For him, “although culture everywhere consists of similar components like material traits, social systems etc. the elements composing them are not the same everywhere. Each of these distinguishing items is called a trait in anthropology” (Bose:1929: 39). He said, the study of cultural traits gives us a convenient means of investigating the relation between different cultures. Each of these isolable and irreducible components of culture is called an element, many of which form a trait and together they form trait complex (ibid:39).
This is a path breaking contribution of Bose in the domain of diffusionist studies for he showed the irreducibility of cultural components was indeed possible when many of his western predecessors had indeed remarked that, “an irreducible minimal unit of culture was a "methodological impossibility" because "modern functional theory shows the interdependence of cultural phenomena....therefore cultural trait was an abstraction having no value other than the immediate one placed upon it by the user ” (Bennett:1944:178-179). It is in this sense that Bose’s contribution edges out the works of his contemporaries or those of the early twentieth century American anthropology. He played a major role in empowering the cultural traits so that they can be given a certain agency and a right of their own other than recognizing their importance only in unison, as if they do not have any individual existence. Bose went a long way in animating the traits and giving them a distinct identity in human history when scholars were ready to sign them off.

The recent developments

The later diffusionists discussed about the units of cultural transmission and while doing so they spoke abundantly of pottery and other material traits that clearly show the routes of transmission. Chief amongst them were Richard Krause (1985:30-31), Michael Schiffer & James Skibo (1987:597) and Hector Neff (1992:160). In relation to pottery, Richard Krause (1985:30-31) projected the concept of "recipe" as a "list of ingredients and amounts" and a "part that tells you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and for how long." (ibid: 243). In their analysis of utensil making and its technology, Michael Schiffer and James Skibo (1987:597) re-cycled Krause's notion by re-defining the term "recipe for action" (ibid:597). They observed that recipes are often culturally transpired which usually demands a teaching framework that constitutes of a set of practices as based on imitation, verbal instruction, hands-on demonstration, and sometimes self-teaching by trial and error. Hector Neff (1992:160) later re-used the same term "recipe" in reference to a set of culture-specific "rules" for making ceramic vessels Another attempt to define a cultural tradition as an archaeologically conspicuous form of social unit that persists in time had been made by Thompson (Thompson 1956:3). Thus many of the later anthropologists had affirmed with certainty that culture is highly flexible. The nature of traits as cultural fragments nourishes "our ability to re-package and re-articulate cultural products into
Thus we find that the recent developments in the field of diffusion of cultural traits dealt with various versatile areas like archaeology, pottery, ceramic vessel making, temple structuring etc. This had been done to show how cultural traits travel across time and space using various mediums of communication, which is not just limited to non-material culture like ideational notions but also at the same time to material culture like the ones mentioned above. It is to be noted that both larger and smaller units as well as material and non-material traits were recognized by Bose as being eligible to qualify as units of analysis. The recognition that all of these units were potentially useful, analytically demanded an explicit theory of cultural transmission, something that became available only in the 1980s (Bose:1961:245).

However, much before this, Bose had already started working on the material traits to give them their due place as legitimate units of analysis in the domain of cultural traits. Bose’s work on pottery technology, house-making, apparel stitching, village topography, agricultural artefacts, oil-presses, footwear, vehicles of transportation, etc. largely show his interest on the transmission of cultural items in detail. He was not just interested in their modes of diffusion but also how they contributed in projecting a unified picture despite diverse circumstances. His contribution is important because, Bose explicitly recognized that cultural things like the ones he discussed above are often complex and must be broken down into smaller fragments for the purpose of better analysis, a stand different from the earlier anthropologists who felt cultural components "are often so complex that they cannot be dissected into simpler components or aspects for an analysis to be useful" (ibid:243). In the same note he believed that the traits of the upwardly mobile civilization easily gravitated the tribal communities most of which were without any structured economic division of labour. The traits were thus diffused from the higher to the lower reaches of the civilization making it easier for the tribes to get absorbed in the more differentiated and technologically uphill Hindu fold. This way inter community transportability and percolation had been shown through passage of cultural traits and elements. Thus Bose’s contributions stand important because he had already started amassing facts to build up a theory of cultural traits, the parcels of which were picked up by the later
folklorists and art-historians to present a more analytical and robust theory of cultural transmissibility.

Thus Bose’s contributions stand important because he had already started amassing facts to build up a theory of cultural traits, the parcels of which were picked up by the later folklorists and art-historians to present a more analytical and robust theory of cultural transmissibility.

N.K. Bose’s research as a site of multiple interpretative practices

As far as Bose’s methodology was concerned, it was eclectic and contextual. Bose never advocated for a fixed range of methods but rather propagated the use of multiple research methods as and when the research design requires. In this sense Bose could be said of heralding an emancipatory methodology, since his predecessors did not attempt to embark on this unchartered methodological terrain. They remained affixed in their methodological poise and even were affronted if alternative paradigms were suggested. Unlike the others, Bose exercised the mixed method research with poise and ease. It opened the horizons for a more scientific and quantitative research while at the same time remaining interlaced with qualitative field based research that harps on the narratives of the respondents. His research methods were always following a scientific spirit in his ethnographic studies but like the positivist research strategies, he did not follow a – priori method. Such hypothetico- deductive models sprout the danger of breeding personal pre-conceived notions which the researchers might try to corroborate by hook or crook. This created a dilemma for which Bose could not adopt the deductive model, though it was tagged as the ideal methodological strategy for the positivist paradigm. Deductive models might be implanted with the scientific verve but they rarely do justice to the painstakingly collated data. There is a psychic impulse to comply with the pre-conceived hypotheses, however distant they might remain from the reality. To grab this reality as spontaneously as possible, he took an approach which was akin to a collage work. He was talking of blurring the disciplinary boundaries such that mutual osmosis might take place in research. This is a welcome methodological gesture because while it helps preserve a disciplinary threshold, it also helps in a reciprocal enrichment and interdisciplinary sharing. This position is similar to that of a “Breicoleur and Quiltmaker approach” shared by the qualitative research. Denzin & Lincoln therefore said,
The qualitative researcher may be described using multiple and
gendered images: scientist, naturalist, field worker, journalist, social
critic, artist, performer, jazz musician, filmmaker, quilter, essayist.
The many methodological practices of qualitative research may be
reviewed as soft science, journalism, ethnography, bricolage,
quilt making, or montage. The researcher, in turn, may be seen as a
bricoleur, as a maker of quilts, or in filmmaking, a person who
assembles images into montages. (Denzin and Lincoln: 2005:05).

The way a qualitative researcher’s image is constructed through multiple agencies or
representations so is N.K. Bose’s. Bose loved wearing multiple attires. He was an
ethnographer, survey researcher, Gandhian sociologist and so on. He took on these
different images and loved putting himself in the shoes of the other without treating
the respondent as ‘others’ or playing a second fiddle to them. Wearing such different
caps and trying to put up a whole representation of Indian civilization through
regional collages is both difficult and amazing. Assembling such disparate images of
the Indian subcontinent with their distinctive regional aura and then juxtaposing them
in the national canvas is a mammoth task which Bose did with aplomb and dexterity.
Let us have a look at Bose’s kaleidoscopic approach to see how he fares to his
‘Bricoleur’ image.

**Bose’s research practices as ‘Bricoleur and Quilt maker’s approach.**

The qualitative researchers were known to have used multiplied images. They used
whatever they could lay their hands upon. It is like stitching together disparate units to
form a cogent whole. In that way they turn to ‘collage making; that could be procured
and used into versatile ways. This approach strikes a close resemblance with that
which Bose readily used. To espouse his theme of civilizational resilience, he aptly
fell back on multiple practices and used every bit of them. Contemplating the
civilizational life world from plural lenses of an art critic, archeologist,
anthropologist, ethnologist, Indologist, pre-historical architect, political scientist and
urban sociologist, it is impossible to count the caps he donned. Through this versatile
approach he tried getting a piecemeal idea of the civilization which he thought was on
the brim of subversion under extraneous and colonial forces. Therefore, Surajit Sinha
veritabily tells us,
Nirmal Kumar Bose was disturbed that Indian anthropologists, by and large, showed very inadequate interest in venturing certain areas of interest on their own on the basis of innovating appropriate methodological and conceptual tools for probing deeper into the social reality. He also believed that such scientific enquiry would gain momentum and a sense of direction if it was inspired by a concern for national development and liberation of mankind, particularly of the downtrodden (Sinha:1994:28).

We thus see that Bose, searched vehemently for an adequate methodological tool. In this attempt, he remained receptive to several tools of analysis such as narratives, other forms of data that he collected data both diachronically and synchronically, oral histories, genealogies, folk-lores, participant observation, official statistics, structured and semi-structured questionnaires, quasi-interviews etc., he probably used all the tools he could collate. N.K. Bose must have tried his hands on the methodological triangulation, when he thought of juxtaposing the different quantitative and qualitative methods mentioned above. With this versatile repertoire of tools, he went on testing his theory of civilizational resilience in the face of imperial vilification. He did not confine himself in one homogenous paradigm but took recourse to various discourses and approaches. His perspective went on being discursive from one quarter to the other, be it the tribal ethno-graphs (Bose: 1929a), pre-historic archaeology (Bose: 1932, 1958, 58a), architecture (Bose:1964), archaeology (Bose:1935c,1951&1956), Gandhian anthropology (Bose:1945,1946) art-critic (Bose: 1940,1957) and many others. These were just the mediums Bose used to propagate his theoretical stand. He believed in the emergent need to resuscitate back the indigenous soul lost long back in the Western colonial aggression. It is in this direction, to bring back the lost valour of our civilization that Bose was ready to fight back. This strength could be amassed from the multidisciplinary schemas that were replete with such subversive reflections. The Indian civilization and its hoary culture cannot be repressed back any more but must be restored back to its lost form. This is exactly what Bose wanted to do, in his aim of using the bricoleur approach or the ‘quilt makers’ perspective to look into the disparate terrains, he treaded to weave together the individual indigenous collages to construct one social reality. Working painstakingly upon artists like Jamini Roy and Tagore, Bose (Bose: 1930), tried hard to constitute a unified unit of the civilizational collage with all the diverse bits and pieces, he laid his hands upon.
In the Bengali book, ‘Nabin O Prachin’ (The New and the Old) (Bose: 1949), he extols Tagore’s paintings as echoing strongly the tunes of unison assembled in Indian civilization. He went on dislodging the conventional painting techniques. Bose showed how his paintings showed a tendency towards volatility and fluidity. No one single touch or brushing splash became important. It created an ambivalent world where no set practice or mood ruled the roost. Some of them might well be panned for being discordant apparently or trying to digress from the foci. But such contentious themes were not dispensed with but rather nourished. The search for diversity and plurality within the parent theme is cherished as is reminiscent of the civilizational and ecclesiastical panorama. The implicit carefulness which sprouts in Tagore’s literature is starkly amiss in his paintings where the horizons have been left free to nurture temerity and unshackled vivacity (Bose: 1930).

Bose’s work can veritably be compared to an interpretative bricoleur, which has been borrowed from different disciplines to give shape to the emergent reality. Instead of being logocentric, the bricoleur approach recognizes the apex life skills of various agents. There are multiple dimensions of reality but the theorist settles over the local voices and their native narratives to constitute reality. The bricoleur theorist takes into account the different experiences of the people to account for the same focal theme. Thus Bose took the help of paintings and art techniques to interpret the fleeting mood of the eminent characters to deduce the thriving soul of the civilization. His generalizations about a society being fatigued and emaciated under the thrust of colonial reign were precise and objective. His image about the Indian civilization that could call for exaltation was specific and trimmed. But he used various garbs to narrate the tale.

Vacillating between the theoretical paradigms of Franz Boas to Kroeber and Wissler, on the one hand, he showed severe proclivity to the American Diffusionist school, on the other hand. He remained indebted to both Boas and Wissler though there remained sharp theoretical differences between the two despite being reared in the same academic backdrop. Subliminal proximity is seen towards Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Lenin. Surajit Sinha writes, “the other social thinkers to influence Bose are ‘anarchists’ like Kropotkin and Gandhi” (Sinha:1972:3). Besides the Diffusionist school, he responded favourably to Malinowski’s functionalist school. He voraciously delved on novels and short stories of Dostoyevsky, Turgot, Tolstoy, Bojer, Materlink, 

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Rolland, Hampson and Ibsen to build on his theory. He borrowed heavily from the classical indological texts like *Geeta*, *Upanishad* and Buddhist literature to accreditate his theoretical scaffold (ibid:4). Participant observation and rural appraisal methods also embellished his methodological kit. Sinha’s words corroborated this:

At the young age of 17 in 1917 Bose participated in a famine relief operation in Bankura District organized by Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. He used this opportunity to conduct a systematic survey of economic conditions of a large number of rural families (Sinha: 1972:4).

Similarly, through rural and urban appraisal methods Bose worked on repatriation of indentured labourers from Fiji. In 1921, at the suggestion of C.F. Andrews, Bose and two of his associates organized the repatriation of indentured labourers from Fiji (Sinha:1994: 21). Here again his passion for rigorous survey of social facts found expression in the collection of detailed census on the social background of 1050 persons belonging to about 450 families. The census provides a wealth of information on how Indian rural society placed numerous obstacles in the process of re-absorption and rehabilitation of indentured labourers who had migrated here from the Indian mainland and waited to come back home (Sinha: 1972:4). His extensive use of quantitative researches in his surveys on the tribal areas (Bose: 1950) and the census study of the metropolitan Calcutta (Bose: 1958b) are also well known. Together with the quantitative studies, he also fell on the narratives of the architects to know about the motifs as well as the designs of the temples that were redolent with the soul of Indian civilization. Being a student of Geology, he showed a penchant for paleontology and petrology. As Sinha writes,

In Puri he came across a master Silpi (temple architect) named Ram Maharana, who initiated Bose to the traditional canons of Orissan architecture. He edited an Orissa manuscript, on Silpa Sastra which was later published in 1932. Thus he learnt from the field that a student of civilization from various levels: the texts, the material products and the learned specialist’s interpretation of the texts as well as the products of arts. Bose has tried to capture the expressive modern thrust of Indian civilization through a number of critical character sketches of a few outstanding personalities. In the Bengali book, *Nabin O Prachin*, (New and the Old) Bose writes about Gandhi’s Satyagraha and search for truth, Tagore’s creative pursuits and paintings, Jamini Roy’s view on art and Ramkinkar Baig’s paintings (Sinha: 1972:14).
Bose constructed this colourful collage all but to say one thing --- to extol the virtues of a bygone civilization. Herein lays the magic of a bricoleur effect. Denzin & Lincoln while explaining this effect said,

The interpretative bricoleur produces a bricolage – that is, a pieced together set of representation that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation. The bricolage which is the result of the bricoleur’s method is an emergent construction. It changes and takes new forms as the bricoleur adds different tools, methods, and techniques of representation and interpretation to the puzzle … Its choice of practice is pragmatic, strategic & self-reflexive …… the qualitative researcher as bricoleur or maker of quilts, uses the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand (Becker; 1998:2). “The choice of research practices depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on their context” what is available in the context, and what the researcher can do in that setting (Nelson et. al. 1992:2) .... Here the concept of montage is useful (See Cook, 1981, p.323; Monaco, 1981, pp 171-172). Montage is a method of editing cinematic images. In the history of cinematography, the montage is most closely associated with the work of Sergei Eisenstein, especially in his film, The Battleship Potemkin (1925). In montages, several different montages are juxtaposed to or superimposed on one another to create a picture. In a sense, montage is one in which something that has been painted put of a picture (an image the painter “repented or denied) becomes visible again, creating something new. What is new is what had been obscured by a previous image…. Montage uses brief images to create a clearly defined sense of urgency and complexity; it invites the viewers to construct interpretations that build on one another as a scene unfolds. These interpretations are based on associations among the contrasting images that blend into one another. The underlying assumption of montage is that viewers perceive and interpret the shots in a “Montage sequence not sequentially, or one at a time, but rather simultaneously” (Cook: 1981:72). The viewer puts the sequences together in to a meaningful emotional whole, as if at a glance, all at once (Denzin & Lincoln: 2005:6).

Bose’s methodology to an extent uses this approach. He was not obdurate in his choice of methods and never opted for a strait jacket methodology. He used different tools to observe facts, and the findings were analyzed through different mediums which were conducive to the context. As a prolific writer, Bose amassed data through different methods, both qualitative and quantitative, Ethnographic ground level facts
as well as facts collated through secondary data analysis both became important. Bose’s writings delved on both direct data and textual analysis to recreate the collage which we so long had been talking of. In doing so he uses multiple methods like case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, cultural and classical texts and productions, observational, historical, interactional, census studies and surveys to describe the routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual’s lives. He tried to make the nooks and crannies of the civilization visible in a different way through different practices. In doing so he wrote on specific themes but with multiple methods. For instance, in the 1920, he was mostly writing on the Juang tribes of Pal Lahara but was using different mediums of research. The tendency becomes clear with a brief look at his biography.

Bose started his illustrious career with an account of the Holi festival. In 1927, he wrote, “The spring festival of India”, published in *Man in India*. In the same year he wrote, an article, “The history of Orissa and its lessons”, published in *Calcutta Review*. In 1928, he published, “Some Place Names in Palamau”, an article in *Man in India*. In the same year he wrote yet another article, “Marriage and Kinships among the Juangs”, in the same journal. In 1929 he wrote, “Some ancient remains from Bhubanesvara”, published in the *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research society*. In the same year he published “Juang Associations” in the *Man in India*. In that year again he published his Magnum opus “Cultural Anthropology”, which rode on the tide of rave reviews by anthropologists like Alfred Kroeber and the like. The decade came to an end with his article, Art and Religion, published in *Teacher’s Journal*.

A thorough analysis of the academic decade shows us that though his nine published manuscripts might have come to the fray, still others might wait to be exhumed. He delved especially on the states of Bihar and Ranchi; it might be because he spent his childhood there and was well acquainted with his native place. The rich tribal culture and civilizational unity in diversity constituted the staple subject of concern. Yet he used plural methods to form a kaleidoscope of facts and fictions where slides of reality were not shuffled correspondingly but presented parallely in a way to bring about a montage effect to Bose’s work. It worked like an interpretative collage or a cinematic bricoleur that we had so long been talking about. As Bose was copiously writing at the same time, his writings could be looked upon as video clips that could be superimposed on one another to present a new picture of the tribal life and
civilizational panorama, out of the spontaneous images, which so long had been denied or obscured. Since, Bose was writing on different accounts at the same time, these pictures can be parallelly synchronized to solve a puzzle whose missing links were perplexing us. Solving the puzzle or the conundrum also helps us present a novel interpretation of an age old system, usually panned by the current social relations, as did Bose in revoking the evils thrust on the caste system.

Through the montage and assembled collage, he tried restoring back the lost glory of the civilization and tried vindicating the role of the varna system in traditional and contemporary society. In doing so he resorted to an umpteen method which could gel with the context and rationale of the problem he focused upon. Containing the piecemeal depiction of reality, Bose scribbled his civilizational collage with parts and chips as diverse as festivals, social customs, obligatory institutions, geo-political ambience, folk culture, elite culture, archaic institutions, corrosive structures, art and sculpture, political strategy- building, tribal diaspora, metropolitan left overs, dual culture, and architecture. All these were built upon into a living collage facilitated through parallel superimpositions and diverse methods to create the bricoleur impact. It took into account different experiences and voices to boil down into one common whole. Embedded in this common whole was a serious attempt to unveil the utilitarian task of the lost systems of the tradition, so long banished and belittled by the proponents and advocates of democratic politics.

Shuffling the case studies and ethnographic endeavours side by side, and at times tossing the research data slides one upon the other, he showed how the caste system acted as the custodian of the acculturational and accommodative culture in the hoary past so that the marginal groups stopped acting as dissidents or revolutionary deviants. The caste system did its bit to maintain the social order and equilibrium amidst the soaring clamour for power and hierarchical hegemony. The Brahminic system of ranking and stratification besides being shrewd and crafty could be termed as diplomatic and strategic. They kept the hearth of the tribal families burning and subsided the growing tribal anguishes and misery. Assured of the caste based occupational monopoly, they felt blessed and secured away from their undifferentiated tribal community which never assigned any subsistence by virtue of their ascribed status. The tribal brethrens were contented with this trivial gesture of
the caste elites and were happy enough to be inducted within the caste fold, even if they had to tread the path of their Hindu masters.

The caste system thus served the pivotal task of retaining the social equilibrium within the thick crowd of plural identities and class differences which in turn had been evolved through strong caste hegemony. Bose goes on to say, that the caste based identities had been so strong that the remnants are still found in modern society where new spate of urban mobility and geo-physical emancipation were taking shape. In spite of this rapid change, the caste based loyalty was not losing ground. With his bricoleur lenses, he went on to show that

A map indicating the distribution of occupations can be superimposed on another relating to caste, and then a series of interesting facts begins to reveal itself. The Brahmin loyalty shows a predominance of occupations connected with clerical jobs, education, law, medicine etc. Pathans and rajputs have been converted into small traders or labourers; while muslims residing in the neighbourhood of the forts which have disappeared are, by and large, labourers or drivers of bullock carts and horse drawn carriages. Potters have retained their profession to a large extent, while the brass and bell metal worker or ‘kansari’ have lost it considerably. This might be due to the increasing use of aluminum cheaper than brass or metal ware. The moira, sweetmeat and sugar manufactures, and many of the Goala, milkmen have taken to weaving.

Of course, country made sugar is no longer as popular as cheap cane-sugar made in factories. Much of the gur which was refined in Santipur used to be imported from districts which are now in East Pakistan. That supply has been virtually cut off; and may account for part of the change in the occupation of the Moira. The Goala, on the other hand, have been affected by the importation of powdered milk from abroad. The moira of Santipur supply this type of dried milk to the Goala, who take it home and bring it back in the form of curds used in the preparation of sweetmeats, so that the Goala earns no more than by mere processing. He has, like many of the moira, taken to weaving, as that industry still retains a high reputation in the rest of Bengal. It is noteworthy that Brahmins have completely avoided the profession of weaving, but have shifted from their former Sanskrit learning and priest-craft to professions which have arisen in the wake of English education. (Bose: 1952:67).

This way of using a method where distribution of occupations has been superimposed on another relating to caste and then squeezing out a series of interesting facts may be assumed of using the bricoleur effect, which is so well grounded in the multi-method
research. N.K. Bose has not used the term but the way he used the data to unveil interesting and lesser known revelations is really interesting. This parallel rendition to different groups of data at the same time works surreptitiously to bring out many serendipity factors which unveil many unknown facts.

The bricoleur approach works in this direction to exhume such little researched facts. This approach of amassing unilaterally the disparate collages to access reality has sprouted in many of his other studies as well. Bose says,

While trying to attain a high measure of objectivity in respect of the tribal people whom an anthropologist usually studies, we are immediately confronted by a significant fact in India. A tribe like Gond has been broken up on account of various social tendencies into Raj Gonds who are very nearly Hindu in their social practices, and others who lie comparatively distant in the social scale. Under these circumstances, it is perhaps intellectually more reasonable to perform a rapid and overall reconnoiter of the tribe, divide the whole into geographical and social divisions distinguishable by chosen criteria of cultural absorption, and present descriptions of samples from each of these distinguishable sections. When these isolated pictures are taken together, and when these are also an indication as to the quantitative position of each group in the total picture, then only shall we be able to approach nearest to reality than otherwise. (Bose: 1967:34).

This way of scrutinizing the very concept of ‘tribe’ and fragmenting it brings rift in the original homogeneity of the concepts. Tribes are no longer a homogeneous community but remains differently located across the continuum. The approach of piecemeal treatment to the whole and the parallel analysis of the data not only led Bose to rethink about the modification of the nomenclature of tribe but alongside made strange revelations about the tribal life. For instance, Bose writes,

Sometimes ago, one of India’s leading anthropologists pointed out the fact that the introduction of wet cultivation among people like the Abors, who practice jhum or shifting cultivation led to certain undesirable results. Among these people, women played a special part in connection with the jhum fields, while their partial dependence on hunting and fishing in the hill streams, also lead to an enrichment of the diet by the inclusion of proteins. Wet cultivation leads to an extreme dependence on carbohydrates and consequent nutritional deficiency, while the position of the women also suffers on account of the same
change. It was also stated on the basis of a careful survey made by the Department of Anthropology, Government of India, that nutritional deficiency led to an ‘alarming fall in fertility rate’ so much so that in six villages inhabited by people practicing jhum cultivation, ‘barren families’ constituted 8.7% of the total number, while in eight villages where wet cultivation had replaced jhum, the figure had gone up to 28% (ibid:14).

**The spirit of the scientific and the unscientific: explaining the bipolar crux of the social sciences.**

Bose always felt that the true spirit of any social science, especially those of sociology and anthropology are always embedded in the foliage of science. These disciplines like the natural science ones are objective and precise and therefore require the precision and trimness of field based observations. Therefore, for Bose any enquiry pertaining to social science should be based on systematic and scrupulous observation. Just like the laboratory, based subjects that rest on the well drafted methods gathering data through strictendeavour and painstaking pursuit, in the same vein, the social sciences require preparedness and documentation while recording facts. Field work he felt is essential, and any kind of knowledge building, insulated from the direct experiences of field work is meaningless. He at the same time warned us, that even if formal curriculum based pedagogical measures ascertain the importance of field work in social sciences, the purpose is lost when most of the college and universities do not give it the due emphasis it deserves. Bose therefore warned us,

Administrators of colleges and universities have a habit of looking upon field work as a sort of holiday, and therefore wish teachers to undertake excursions during periods of vacations...the suggestion is that two or three months spent during winter in company with teachers, away from colleges in the field, should be treated as equivalent to class work. Teachers may so organize their teaching that special branches of study, which have a closer bearing upon observations in the field, can be taught on an intensive scale during lecture periods in the midst of the objects themselves (Bose:1929b:244-245).

Thus it is pretty evident that Bose was not just suggesting towards a systematization and structuration of methods, he at the same time was pointing towards some
pedagogical approaches which should have been conducive for the general
development of the curriculum. Not just a scientifically nuanced curriculum, Bose at
the same time was gesturing towards an integrational approach towards social science,
which could act both as a discipline and as a medium of knowledge rendition. The
purpose of such discipline becomes dual for it not only volubly teaches but at the
same time practices what it professes. This way of integrating knowledge sharing
with practice and participation, gives a new direction to the disciplines. Thus teaching
practices no longer remains drab and dry but becomes exciting and innovative, when
coupled with educational tours, excursions and field works. Bose therefore should be
taken as a practician and consultant of emergent strategies of knowledge making.

While proposing methods in conducting field works, he seemed to give due
recognition to team work when he said, “a wise balance should be struck between
team work and personal work” (ibid:246). For him, each member of the team work
seemed important and therefore everybody counts. Each should participate actively in
the endeavour and should gather hands on knowledge of the activity he is engaged in.
He did not believe in sophisticated tools for data collection, but rather depended on
the mundane yet reliable ones. Beteille therefore said,

Bose was well aware that the scientific tools with which he worked were
rough-hewn and homemade, and he was perhaps a little proud of this. In
all matters he sought to be self-reliant and he felt that if he spent all his
energies in the endless refinement of his scientific tools, the wider
purpose of his enquiry would be defeated (Bose:1992:16).

This surely indicates the community based approach in building knowledge where the
society itself is the custodian of knowledge and every one must participate in it. This
is against the esoteric and ecclesiastical form of knowledge, where knowledge is
supposed to be monopolized by a certain group of people. Bose refused to partake in
any such process, where there is a gaping gap between the mentor and the mentee. He
instead encouraged specialization but at the same time propagated inter-dependence
between disciplines. Such a trend helps free availability of knowledge and increases
free and flowing vives between the different disciplines without setting up opaque
boundaries between them. Bose therefore said,

This would mean that when field investigation is being planned in such
a manner that different departments of the University can participate in a
joint investigation. While working in this manner, they will naturally conduct investigations independently; but when they meet every evening, at the end of the day’s work, let them try and help one another in interrelated problems. If this becomes organizationally possible, the investigation of separate sciences will often develop a purposiveness which will be of considerable academic advantage (ibid:246).

Therefore, a well-founded and integrated approach towards social science has all along been the prerogative of Bose. At the same time, this thorough dependence on science, should not be taken as the last word from Bose, for he felt that outside the world of systematic and organized, knowledge, there is a space for haphazard, spontaneous, impulsive and local knowledge which must also be given its due share in constituting knowledge as well as open up new channels of thought. Therefore field based interviews should not always be structured and precise in connaisance with the objective knowledge, there should always be a space reserved for insider’s knowledge which though seemed bizarre and random, still give cues for special dens of knowledge, least captured by the sophistication of scientific knowledge. Bose therefore said,

After reaching the field of enquiry, the geographer should get interested in the life of the people, and this interest must be not merely academic but also genuinely human. When we sit together with a peasant at the end of his day’s work, we can make him talk about his own difficulties of life, if we are ourselves really interested in the latter. Perhaps the peasant will say many unscientific things, but it is also not improbable that the subject will open up new line of thought which may lead the geographer to new fields of enquiry (Bose:1929b:251).

Thus his works showed a bipolar approach towards both rigidity and fluidity. At times he clasped himself tight to the rigours and stipulations of the science, while as time flew he tried evading from the clutches of empirical verification and strict providence. Pradip Bose was aware of this tension in his works, when he said,

Here the narrator is not self-effacing, nor simply a hand that writes------as is expected in formal-scientific description. We witness in these expressive and literary writings an anthropologist who is subverting his own ‘science’ (Bose: 2007:298).
Therefore, the social sciences, irrespective of their scientific and un-scientific garb, have a role to play in the over-all scheme of national reconstruction. While accepting the bi-polar nature of knowledge constitution, Bose felt that the social sciences have a task to perform, which is one of national importance. He therefore pleaded with our national leaders to realize the importance of fundamental research in our country to build up institutions like Tribal Research Bureau and the like that shall take up the question of nation building with a clear and orchestrated vision. Bose therefore prayed that,

Let me hope that the Tribal Research Bureaus, and perhaps more than they, the Universities and the Government Department of Anthropology, will address themselves to this noble task of furthering the cause of national reconstruction (Bose:1964c:202).

**Conclusion.**

The above studies and the findings therefore are interesting and insightful not only because of the correlation between productive system and reproductive capacity which seem quirky, but also because a simple research attempt to interrogate tribal welfare brought to the fore strange facts which were deliberated on. These strange and unexpected results that blossomed on the courtyard of ongoing research carried out with altogether different purposes created such serendipity factors. Such factors are suddenly bumped into without any prior research agenda and that appears all of a sudden and adds to the researcher’s astonishment. Serendipity findings are such findings that appear like ‘bolt from the blue in the sense they appear unexpectedly without any prior intimation to the researcher. Robert Merton defines serendipity factors as the potentiality for unexpected outcomes. He says,

Fruitful empirical research not only tests theoretically derived hypotheses; it also originates new hypothesis. This might be termed the “serendipity” component of research i.e. the discovery, by change or sagacity, of valid results which were not sought for (Merton:1968:157) ....Such findings may occur in the scientific process as “unanticipated results, when the test of one hypothesis yields an unexpected observation which bears upon theories not in question when the research has begun” (Merton:1968:158)....Such an observation is also “anomalous and surprising, either because it seems inconsistent with prevailing theory or with other established facts” (Merton:1968:58).......The surprising fact must be strategic such that the observer can
relate such an observation to some universal explanation …… In short, serendipity explains how test of hypotheses streaming from one theory can in some cases lead to the development of new, even seemingly unrelated theories (Baker:1999:59).

Though Bose’s work was purportedly inductive because he emphasized on different forms of observation to derive an empirical generalization, he too bumped into such serendipity factors which gave an altogether different turn to his research endeavor. Bose’s horizon and range of studies were so varied and prolific, that he encountered fortuitous factors, which he couldn’t have thought of at the inception of the research process. The propensity to jump into uncommon findings rose with Bose’s attitude of being a footloose observer. Without hypothetico-deductive framework to oblige with, the pressure to claim allegiance to a particular finding or a set of findings never rose. With this inductive zeal, Bose delved deep in whatever facts he met with. In such a liberal context free of premeditated strategy and preconceived deductions, the chances of developing theories from serendipity factors arose. Whether he coalesced those aptly derived strange factors into still new theories needs further enquiry, but that his methodological design cherished umpteenth serendipity factors remains beyond question. Bose himself says,

My intention has been to demonstrate that very useful work can be done if an anthropologist begins, as in bird watching, with observation and more observation. And as he observes questions arise in his mind, to which he tries to find an answer by the right design of fresh observations. As one thus proceeds through such efforts and constant comparison in parallel fields, where some of the factors are common and others are not, and if one dares to walk alone, then he perhaps gains ability to add his little bit to the store of scientific knowledge (Bose:1972:20).

So Bose’s liberal and flexible methodological approach can be quickly fathomed by quickly looking at his inductive strategy and receptivity to all the kinds of methodological tools that came his way. N.K. Bose’s’ porous stand had been reinforced over times to show how he rejected straight jacket approaches. His methodological repertoire was therefore vibrant with multiple methods. The highest case in point is the book, The Structure of Hindu Society, published in 1949. As Sinha comments on the book,
It will be apparent that the broad sweep of Bose’s presentation is essentially historical. Into this broad canvas of time, he brings many dimensions of Indian social structure and social processes, the tribal enclaves and their absorption, the dual themes of self-sufficiency of village communities and their broader links with kingship, fairs and pilgrim centers; norms of sacred and secular life in the ancient texts; social movements in the medieval period in response to Islam; the impact of British rule and the emerging economy on Indian society, particularly on the caste system. We learn from this book that an anthropological study of Indian civilization will involve a combination of many perspectives: analysis of classical and medieval texts, administrative records, particularly of land tenure, and studies of villages, individual caste associations and the wider social networks of the civilization in kinship, fairs, pilgrim centre’s, and so on” (Sinha: 1972 :12).

The book is a true epitome of the mixed method-approach that Bose advocated. The study makes for a unique read on the trajectory of Indian civilization that Bose sees unfolding over times and he narrates that by various methodological overviews, ranging from mythologies, folkways and oral traditions to ethnographic accounts and travelogues of itineraries to historical accounts, ideological texts, and genealogical studies as well as studying ancients epics and sanskritic texts such as srutis and smritis and other religious sacred books and Vedic literature mapping out the evolution of civilizational institution like castes. These approaches are largely seen as an amalgamation of indological accounts, and historical studies of the evolution of the civilization down the ancient time to post-colonial rule and is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. As Beteille opining on this book says,

What is truly impressive about this book is its design. It brings together within a single framework approaches which are ordinarily practiced separately by ethnographers, indologists and social historians … Bose realized that it is not enough to show that the insights into Indian civilization, gained by studying tribal communities in the field are confirmed by the perspective of indology. For although it is possible to reconstruct the structure of Indian civilization through the twin approaches of ethnology and indology, this structure itself has been undergoing change over the last two hundred years. It is here that the study of social history, particularly during the British period, becomes a vital factor in our understanding today. As I had said earlier, Bose saw himself as being first and foremost an anthropologist – a ‘field scientist’. But as an heir to the Bengal renaissance he could not fail to be sensitive to the classical heritage of Sanskritic ideas, and as a participant in the
nationalist movement he could not fail to be sensitive to the significance of the forces of change released by the British rule. (Bose: 1992:2).

The book can be taken as one which has deep nuances of mixed method design. This can be assumed because different methods of enquiry have been used parallely. The book has been conductively divided into three parts. The first part belongs clearly within the domain of ethnology. Here Bose depicts material based on his own field work and those done by others mainly among tribal communities. However, it cannot be claimed with resolution that ethnology exclusively preoccupies the first part. Indological studies do have its share in the first part of this book. As swashing through the pages of this book, one will comprehend that the first part deals with the live experience of the author as he goes on to stay with tribes of Pal Lahara. The second part of the book deals with ancient history of our Indian civilization as could be amassed through classical literature, oral history and other civilizational records. The last part dealt with the contemporary changes that the civilization was wrought with. But there took place an easy and implicit amalgamation of different methods as we had noticed. The book, can be taken as a treasure trove of Bose’s articulation of the mixed method approach. More discussions of the book shall be done as we flip through the life and works of Bose in the later chapters.

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