We can hardly, if ever, understand or explain the growth of an academic discipline with reference to the efforts of any single individual. To understand the process of development of sociology in India, we must take into consideration numerous factors, political, economic and social. Also, institutional factors, both national and international, significantly affected the pace of development of sociology in India. Efforts of individuals, who have variously been regarded as the 'founding fathers', 'pioneers', 'first-generation sociologists' etc, constituted, nonetheless, the single most important factor in the growth of Indian sociology. These pioneers provided direction to, and shaped the future of, sociology in India. And of all the founding fathers, none did as much for sociology in India as G.S. Ghurye. Two aspects of Ghurye's work are worth enquiring into. First, his own substantive writings, his theoretical postulates, his vision of the role of sociology etc; second, his role in promoting and directing the course of research in diverse fields of Indian society. Ghurye excelled in both of them. It is unfortunate that, to date, no serious effort has been made to assess the contributions of Ghurye. The present work is an humble effort to fill up the lacuna.

Also, there are other reasons of having a fresh look into the writings of these pioneers. Beginning from the 1950s, in the zeal for promoting an 'empirical' and 'value-free' type of sociology, there
emerged a tendency to completely disregard the works of the earlier sociologists and to give a fresh start to the discipline. The feeble voice that was raised against this attempt by some of the first-generation sociologists was completely drowned. The merits of this new approach can never be denied. But that does not justify ignoring all that went before. Fortunately, from the 1970s, a new development is being noticed. There is an increasing realization on the part of Indian sociologists that the pioneers raised some of the fundamental questions with regard to man and society. It was also realized that in the initial hullabaloo of 'empiric sociology', it had been unwise to disregard these fundamental questions. This has prompted many to give a serious look at the works of the pioneers. The present researcher will be sufficiently rewarded if this work helps some in this respect. Of course, this cannot be any substitute for Ghurye's own writings - it forms just an introduction to Ghurye's own substantive works. While analysing Ghurye's works, the present researcher has been both appreciative and critical, of many of the Ghurye's views.

In a work of this type the present researcher, obviously, had to encounter a number of difficulties. The foremost one had been the dearth of writings on Ghurye. In fact, barring two or three articles, no attempt has as yet been made to assess Ghurye. The present author met and interviewed a large number of individuals, those who had been known to Ghurye, and obtained their help and cooperation.
The most substantial help came from Prof. Ghurye himself. In 1979, I met Ghurye personally at his Bombay residence. He surprised me by his mental and physical alacrity even at this advanced age. He helped me generously with books, references, paper-cuts, personal communications to him from others and the like. For eight consecutive days I met him at his residence and each session had lasted for about 2-3 hours. I had a fixed schedule prepared for the purpose but the unstructured interview, detailed face-to-face talk is what helped me really to know the man and his mind. In the process, I also enjoyed the generous hospitality of Mrs. Ghurye. I realized the truth of Srinivas's assertion that the source of strength of Ghurye lay in Mrs. Ghurye. No amount of thanks is sufficient to express the author's profound gratitude to them.

Considering that many of Ghurye's students are in important positions in the world of sociology, I thought it desirable to meet at least some of them to elicit their opinion on Ghurye's contributions. Accordingly, I could meet M.N. Srinivas, A.R. Desai, I.P. Desai, Dhirendra Narain, Y.B. Damle and Neera Desai. The interview with M.N. Srinivas and A.R. Desai became very helpful. They gave their own opinion about Ghurye, narrated many of their experiences and helped me considerably to formulate my research-design. Prof. Dhirendra Narain is the only student of Ghurye who is now working in the Department of Sociology, Bombay University and he offered many concrete suggestions and references which became extremely useful. I was also profoundly
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