

## Social Sciences – Social Anthropology 2010



"Anthropology, and anthropological research, allows you to enter worlds that are different from your own, in a comparative perspective as well as a very detailed analysis of particular communities. What keeps me going is the opportunity of combining fieldwork with theoretical reading."

**Nandini Sundar**

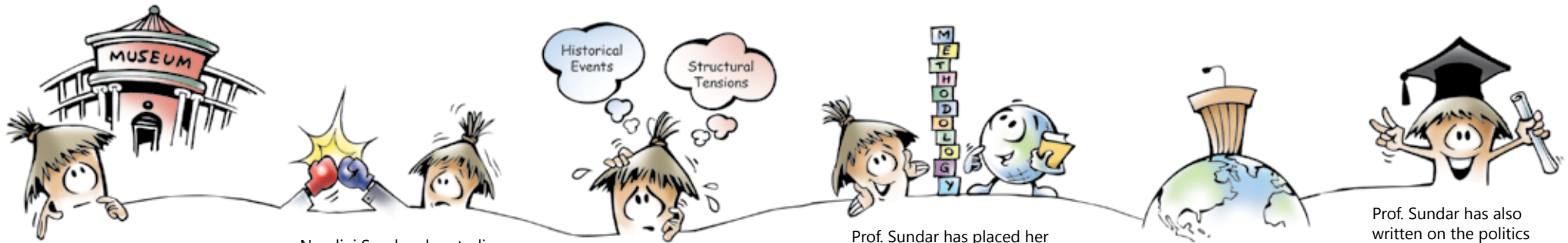
*Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics*

- B.A. in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from Oxford University
- M.A. in Anthropology from Columbia University
- M.Phil. in Anthropology from Columbia University
- Ph.D. in Anthropology from Columbia University

Prof. Nandini Sundar is an outstanding social anthropologist of South Asia, who has made major and original contributions to our understanding of environmental struggles, of the impact of central and state policies on tribal politics, and of the moral ambiguities associated with subaltern political movements in contemporary India. Prof. Sundar has placed her detailed studies of tribal politics in Central India in the broader frame of studies of the law, bureaucracy and morality in modern India.



### Analyzing indigenous identity and inequality



Prof. Nandini Sundar's work deals with the changing social identities and the politics of knowledge in modern India. Anthropologists are often accused of wanting to keep tribal groups or indigenous people as museum pieces, away from mainstream culture. Prof. Nandini Sundar feels that these communities have never been outside the 'mainstream' of history. Instead, the mainstream has been built by using their resources and appropriating their culture.

Nandini Sundar also studies violence by both state and non-state actors and the question of accountability for crimes committed. She has managed to bring impartiality to controversial subjects in which social scientists encounter the conflicting interests of policy-makers, activists and political parties.

Prof. Sundar has contributed to our understanding of environmental struggles, the impact of central and state policies on tribal politics, and the moral ambiguities associated with subaltern political movements in contemporary India. These contributions are anchored in her deep grasp of the legacies of colonial rule for cultural politics in contemporary India, and in her theoretically innovative understanding of the relationship of major historical events to persistent structural tensions in Indian society.

Prof. Sundar has placed her detailed studies of tribal politics in Central India in the broader frame of studies of the law, bureaucracy and morality in modern India. In so doing, she has combined innovative empirical and ethnographic methods and cutting-edge approaches to those sociological debates which link the study of social change in modern India to central debates in comparative social theory. She has also contributed significantly to international debates on theory and research methodology.

Even as she has the ability to speak to different audiences in the public and policy sphere, Prof. Sundar has made invaluable scholarly contributions to social scientific research at an international level.

Prof. Sundar has also written on the politics of knowledge ranging from schooling to the history of academic disciplines. She has had a major impact on a new generation of scholars of sociology and anthropology all over the world.