This series provides compilation of daily CURRENT AFFAIRS of Anthropology.

It is aimed at addressing the requirement of aspirants to add contemporary aspects of the subject to the answers.

It also helps in understanding the trends of anthropology across India and the world.

**NOTE:** Please attempt the questions given at the end of the document and can upload on the **telegram channel: Sosin for Anthropology Q&A**, for **peer review**
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Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.
A. **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

1. **Combating Malnutrition**

   Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients.

   - India faces a huge burden of malnutrition rooted in its social, economic, and cultural asymmetries and challenges.
   - According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-4 conducted in 2014-15, for children under five years of age, 38.4 percent were stunted (height-for-age), 21 percent were wasted (weight-for-height), 7.5 per cent were severely wasted (weight-for-height), 35.8 percent were underweight (weight-for-age) and 58.6 percent were anaemic.
   - Apart from the most popular method of treating children with acute malnutrition at the Bal Sewa Kendra (BSK) or Child Malnutrition Treatment Centers (MTCs), Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) is a proven approach to manage SAM in children under five.
   - CMAM involves timely detection and treatment of SAM children without medical complications with ready-to-use-nutrient-dense-foods at the community level itself.
   - A standard CMAM approach consisted of setting-up of treatment sites closer to the community, weekly monitoring of uncomplicated SAM children, an in-patient facility to admit children with SAM and associated medical complications along with provision of Modified Energy Dense Nutritional Food (EDNRF), Modified Hot Cook Meal (HCM) and Modified Take Home Ration (THR).
   - The targeted programme resulted in children achieving the desired weight after treatment, thereby significantly improving the nutritional status.
   - While Kerala has been a forbearer of such praxis since long, Odisha has been able to reach this level in just the last 20 years with the advent of the Mission Shakti Programme — a scheme to organise women into self-help groups first as a livelihood initiative.
   - In a similar vein, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh are some of the other states that have also shown effectiveness towards this approach.
   - According to a study by Lancet 2019, multiple forms of malnutrition (MOM) reduce nearly 8 percent of a nation's economic growth.
   - As the wealth of the nation depends not only on the skills and knowledge but health and nutrition of its people, it is high time that India caters to its eight million SAM children, if it aspires to be a $5-trillion economy by 2024-25.


B. **BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY - PALEONTOLOGY**

1. **First Homo Sapiens left Africa with an ape like brain**

   **Context:**

   Early humans still had great ape-like brains, according to a new study that found modern humans evolved to have our "advanced" thinking organs relatively recently, between 1.7 million and 1.5 million years ago.
Highlights:
- The unique brain of modern humans (Homo) developed more than 1 million years after the Homo genus arose, and after the first Homo erectus migrated out of Africa.
- The finding overturns a previously held view that humans' frontal lobe — the part of the brain that processes complex cognitive tasks, including social thought, tool use and language — developed at the transition from Australopithecus to Homo, which happened roughly 2.8 million to 2.5 million years ago.

Research Methodology:
- Because brains are made of soft tissues that don't fossilize, the researchers instead examined fossilized endocasts, or the skull region that housed the brain, to determine how the organ changed over time.
- To do this, the scientists compared the structure of "primitive" or "early" brains with that of a modern human brain, looking at the endocasts of human's closest living relatives, the great apes including 81 chimpanzees, 27 bonobos, 43 gorillas and 32 orangutans, along with the endocasts of 110 modern humans.
- Then, they analyzed the endocasts of nearly 40 ancient human skulls, including those from Australopithecus sediba, homo erectus and Homo naledi, and determined how "primitive" or advanced their brains likely were by comparing them with the great ape and modern human endocasts.

Findings:
- The detailed endocasts revealed imprints of the long-gone brains' gyri and sulci, or folds and furrows, as well as the vascular structures surrounding the brain, the researchers found.
- A backward shift of the precentral sulcus over evolutionary time reliably indicates that the Broca region in front of it became expanded during human evolution.
- The earliest members of Homo had a brain with a great ape-like frontal lobe.
- The earliest populations of our genus Homo had quite primitive ape-like brains, like their ancestors, the australopithecines. This includes fossils associated with Homo habilis and early Homo erectus.


2. Fossil-rich Rajmahal Hills

Context:
The hills, part of the Vindhya mountains, are situated in the Santhal Pargana region of Jharkhand. Older than the Himalayas, they are rich in fossils and medicinal trees which are fast disappearing due to large-scale stone mining.

Highlights:
● Older than the Himalayas, the hills are rich in fossils which are fast disappearing due to large-scale mining, Stone - crushing.

● The immediate priority should be on the conservation of fossils formed millions of years ago.

● A geo-tourism hub can come up in this area based on the importance of the fossils found here.

● The fossils park at Mandro block in Sahibganj preserves fossils at a single place.

● Some rare fossils have also been collected recently from Gurmi hillocks to be kept in the museum which is also on the radar. These will be carefully kept with proper information for tourists.

● The fossils found in Rajmahal Hills are 68 million to 145 million years old.

C. SOCIO-CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Monotheism

● Monotheism, belief in the existence of one god, or in the oneness of God.

● As such, it is distinguished from polytheism, the belief in the existence of many gods, from atheism, the belief that there is no god, and from agnosticism, the belief that the existence or nonexistence of a god or of gods is unknown or unknowable.

● Monotheism characterizes the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and elements of the belief are discernible in numerous other religions.

● Monotheism and polytheism are often thought of in rather simple terms—e.g., as merely a numerical contrast between the one and the many.

● The history of religions, however, indicates many phenomena and concepts that should warn against oversimplification in this matter. There is no valid reason to assume, for example, that monotheism is a later development in the history of religions than polytheism.

● Moreover, it is not the oneness but the uniqueness of God that counts in monotheism; one god is not affirmed as the logical opposite of many gods but as an expression of divine might and power.

The Basic Monotheistic View:

● The God of monotheism is the one real god that is believed to exist or, in any case, that is acknowledged as such.

● For monotheism there are two basically different realities: God and the universe.

● God in monotheism is conceived of as the creator of the world and of humanity. God has created not only the natural world and the order existing therein but also the ethical order to which humanity ought to conform and, implicit in the ethical order, the social order.

● The God of monotheism, as exemplified by the great monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—is a personal god.

● The monotheistic conception of God differs essentially only in one respect from that of other religions: in the belief that God is one and absolutely unique. Consequently, God is regarded as the one and only Creator, Lord, King, or Father.


Reference: https://www.livescience.com/polytheism-to-monotheism.html
D. ARCHAEOLOGY

1. Stone age tool find hints at early human settlements in Bargarh

Context:
In a major discovery, researchers from the Sambalpur University’s History department have unearthed tools and artefacts dating back to the middle and late stone age period on the southern fringes of Debrigarh hill range, Bargarh district.

Highlights:

- The excavations point to the existence of early Homo Sapiens in the region during the middle palaeolithic (middle stone age) and upper palaeolithic (late stone age) period about 65,000 to 25,000 years ago.
- The artefacts include red ochre saddle querns and pestles from the middle stone age and late stone age respectively.
- The excavated items were scientifically examined by Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences in Lucknow and Phytolith Research Institute in Pune and subjected to optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) technique to date them. Excavated soil samples were also tested to determine contemporary vegetation patterns of the area.
- The artefacts from middle stone age are determined as 65.6 (±4.1) thousand years and those from late stone age period are determined as 25.8 (±1.6) thousand years.
- The phytolith analysis of soil samples have revealed a shift in vegetation pattern from woodland to savanna between the two periods of human occupation at the site.
- The discovery of the saddle quern indicates existence of a long distance trade network and developed cognitive abilities of humans who had settled at Torajunga site.


E. GENETICS

1. Technology - Controlling Gene Expression.

Context:
New, reversible CRISPR methods can control gene expression while leaving the underlying DNA sequence unchanged.
Gene Expression:
Gene expression is the process by which the instructions in our DNA are converted into a functional product, such as a protein.

Gene expression is a tightly regulated process that allows a cell to respond to its changing environment.

It acts as both an on/off switch to control when proteins are made and also a volume control that increases or decreases the amount of proteins made.

Highlights:
- A new gene editing technology called CRISPR off allows researchers to control gene expression with high specificity while leaving the sequence of the DNA unchanged.
- The method is stable enough to be inherited through hundreds of cell divisions, and is also fully reversible.
- This can be done for multiple genes at the same time without any DNA damage, with great deal of homogeneity, and in a way that can be reversed. Hence it makes it a great tool for controlling gene expression.


UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Critically examine the different Anthropological approaches to Religion (15 Marks - 2016)
2. Discuss the areas in which the knowledge of human genetics can be applied (Long Question - 2004)
3. Archaeological Anthropology (Long Question - 1992)

DAILY PRACTICE QUESTION/S FOR MAINS 2021.
Pl do not forget to upload your answer sheet for a peer review on the telegram channel: Sosin for Anthropology Q&A
1. Present your arguments related to African origin of human ancestors. 20 marks
2. Present your views on the contemporary relevance of Eugenics. 20 marks