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.
INDEX

A. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
   1. Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia.................................................................03

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
   1. DNA Samples - Anthropological Applications........................................03
   2. Creative Genes - Neanderthal, Homo Sapiens......................................04
   3. Nutritional Disease...............................................................................05

C. TRIBAL / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
   1. Van Gujjar Community........................................................................06

D. ARCHAEOLOGY
   1. Evolution of Viking Metalwork..............................................................07

UPSC ANTHROPOLOGY PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS.........................................08
PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW..........................................................08

Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.
A. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
   1. Ethnic Cleansing in Ethiopia

   **Highlights:**
   - In 1993, as ethnic cleansing in Rwanda raged, the international community remained eerily silent. The same climate that led to the Rwandan Genocide is emerging on Ethiopia’s western front — Metekel.
   - A wave of genocidal massacres has swept Metekel in the Benishangul-Gumuz region of Ethiopia, creating a humanitarian catastrophe that has left hundreds of thousands displaced, thousands killed and injured and many more left destitute with their homes and livelihoods burned to ashes.
   - While the unrest started in 2019, the massacres in the last three months have accelerated with daily attacks and fatalities.
   - In Ethiopia, the Benishangul-Gumuz constitution was revised in 2002, designating five ethnic groups — the Gumuz, Shinasha, Berta, Komo, and Mao — “owners” of the region while relegating ethnic minorities who make up over 40 percent of the population as residents, but not citizens and fatalities.
   - Often dehumanization is most dangerous when it is followed by state-sanctioned discrimination. In Rwanda, it was the creation of ethnicity-based ID cards used to identify ethnic Tutsis.
   - In Germany, it was a string of laws created to exclude Jews from public life.
   - The ethnic cleansing of Amhara, Oromo, and Shinasha residents in western Ethiopia underscores the urgent need for the Ethiopian government to quickly act to stop violence against ethnic minorities.
   - As the onslaught continues, the humanitarian crisis must be addressed. Civilians must be protected, an independent and transparent inquiry into the atrocities must be conducted, and perpetrators at all levels must be brought to justice.
   - Without a doubt, justice is a requirement for the healing process to begin. If institutions continue to support the perpetrators of ethnic violence, the crisis will persist.

   **Ethnic Cleansing:** Attempt to get rid of (through deportation, displacement or even mass killing) members of an unwanted ethnic group in order to establish an ethnically homogenous geographic area.

   **Genocide:** The deliberate killing of a large number of people from a particular nation or ethnic group with the aim of destroying that nation or group.

   **Reference:**
   https://harvardpolitics.com/ethnic-cleansing-ethiopia/

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

   1. DNA Samples - Anthropological Applications
Context:

- Researchers Collect DNA From the Air – Potential for New Ecological, Health and Forensic Applications
- Researchers from Queen Mary University of London have shown for the first time that animal DNA shed within the environment can be collected from the air.

Highlights:

- The proof-of-concept study, published in the journal *PeerJ*, opens up potential for new ecological, health and forensic applications of environmental DNA (eDNA), which to-date has mainly been used to survey aquatic environments.
- Living organisms such as plants and animals shed DNA into their surrounding environments as they interact with them. In recent years, eDNA has become an important tool to help scientists identify species found within different environments.
- However, whilst a range of environmental samples, including soil and air, have been proposed as sources of eDNA until now most studies have focused on the collection of eDNA from water.
- In this study, the researchers explored whether eDNA could be collected from air samples and used to identify animal species.
- They first took air samples from a room which had housed naked mole-rats, a social rodent species that live in underground colonies, and then used existing techniques to check for DNA sequences within the sampled air.
- Using this approach, the research team showed that air DNA sampling could successfully detect mole-rat DNA within the animal’s housing and from the room itself.
- The scientists also found human DNA in the air samples suggesting a potential use of this sampling technique for forensic applications.
- What started off as an attempt to see if this approach could be used for ecological assessments has now become much more, with potential applications in forensics, anthropology and even medicine.
- For example, this technique could help to better understand the transmission of airborne diseases such as Covid-19. At the moment social distancing guidelines are based on physics and estimates of how far away virus particles can move, but with this technique we could actually sample the air and collect real-world evidence to support such guidelines.

Reference:

2. Creative Genes - Neanderthal, Homo Sapiens

Context:

- 'Creative' genes gave Homo sapiens edge over Neanderthals: study
Researchers have discovered a series of creativity-linked genes that may have given Homo sapiens a significant edge over Neanderthals, enabling them to avoid extinction.

**Highlights:**

- The findings suggest that these genes played "a fundamental role in the evolution of creativity, self-awareness and cooperative behaviour".
- Such genes were like "a secret weapon" that gave modern humans "a significant advantage over now-extinct hominids by fostering greater resilience to ageing, injury, and disease.
- The experts identified 267 genes unique to humans, and through genetic markers, genetic expression data and AI-related MRI techniques, found they were related to creativity.

The scientists were able to identify the regions of the brain in which those genes (and those with which they interacted) were overexpressed.

- These regions are involved in human self-awareness and creativity, and include the regions that are strongly associated with human well-being and that appeared relatively recently.
- Previously, the same team had identified a pool of 972 genes organised into three brain networks, the oldest—which relates to learning habits, social attachment and conflict resolution—dating back 40 million years.
- The second network—which relates to intentional self-control—emerged 2 million years ago, while the newest, governing creative self-awareness, only emerged 100,000 years ago.
- Homo sapiens enjoyed greater physical fitness than now-extinct hominids, providing them with a superior level of resilience to ageing, injury, and disease.
- The finding offers fresh insight into the mystery of why Homo sapiens outlived the Neanderthals and other species.

**Reference:**


3. **Nutritional Disease**

- **Nutritional disease**, any of the nutrient-related diseases and conditions that cause illness in humans. They may include deficiencies or excesses in the diet, obesity and eating disorders, and chronic diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, cancer and diabetes.
Nutritional diseases also include developmental abnormalities that can be prevented by diet, hereditary metabolic disorders that respond to dietary treatment, the interaction of foods and nutrients with drugs, food allergies and intolerances, and potential hazards in the food supply.

Under nutrition is a condition in which there is insufficient food to meet energy needs; its main characteristics include weight loss, failure to thrive, and wasting of body fat and muscle.

Low birth weight in infants, inadequate growth and development in children, diminished mental function, and increased susceptibility to disease are among the many consequences of chronic persistent hunger, which affects those living in poverty in both industrialized and developing countries.

The largest number of chronically hungry people live in Asia, but the severity of hunger is greatest in sub-Saharan Africa.

Malnutrition is the impaired function that results from a prolonged deficiency—or excess—of total energy or specific nutrients such as proteins, essential fatty acids, vitamins, or minerals.


C. TRIBAL / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

1. Van Gujjar Community

   Context: Uttarakhand forms a panel to address problems faced by Van Gujjars Community.

   Van Gujjars:
   - It is one of the few forest-dwelling nomadic communities in the country
   - Usually, they migrate to the bugyals (grasslands) located in the upper Himalayas with their buffaloes and return only at the end of monsoons to their makeshift huts, deras, in the foothills.
   - They inhabit the foothills of Himalayan states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand.
   - They traditionally practice buffalo husbandry; a family owns up to 25 heads of buffaloes.
   - They rely on buffaloes for milk, which gets them a good price in Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh markets.
   - The Van Gurjars follow Islam, and they have their own clans, similar to the Hindu Gotras.
   - They are a pastoral semi-nomadic community, practising transhumance,
   - In the winter season, the Van Gurjars migrate with their herds to the Shivalik foothills, and in summer, they migrate to pastures high up in the mountains.
   - The Van Gurjars have had conflicts with the forest authorities, who prohibited human and livestock populations inside a reserved park, and blamed the Van Gurjar community for poaching and timber smuggling.
   - After the creation of the Rajaji National Park (RNP), the Van Gurjars in Dehradun were asked to shift to a resettlement colony at Pathri near Haridwar.
D. ARCHAEOLOGY

2. Evolution of Viking Metalwork

Context: The evolution of metalwork expertise and craftsmanship was developed by Viking craftspeople in Denmark in the 8th and 9th centuries.

Highlights:

● The evolution of metalwork expertise and craftsmanship developed by Viking craftspeople in Denmark in the 8th and 9th centuries has been detailed in a study published in *Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences*.

● A team of researchers at Aarhus University, Denmark, analysed tool fragments, raw materials such as metal bars, and complete objects such as keys and brooches, excavated from two sites in the town of Ribe, Denmark, a trading port established by Vikings in the eighth century.

● The authors examined 1,126 samples of metalworking tools (crucibles and moulds), 24 keys and brooches, and 24 metal bar ingots and fragments of spare metal.

● By analysing samples from the surface of tools and identifying metallic traces contained in them, as well as examining the metallic composition of finished objects, the researchers were able to infer which metals were used to make these objects.

● Analysing both tools and finished objects allowed helped understand better the metalwork practices employed in Ribe and how they developed over time.

Reference:
https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/m.timesofindia.com/city/dehradun/uttarakhand-forms-panel-to-address-problems-faced-by-van-gujjar-community/amp_articleshow/82167677.cms
● A series of rapid technological advances were documented at the beginning of the Viking age, as craftspeople were exposed to new skills.

● The findings suggest that Viking craftspeople in Ribe were innovative and industrious, advancing from mixing metals somewhat randomly to refining their process and creating very specific metal mixes, within a century.

● The Viking Age is a critical turn in history when communication by sea grew exponentially in Northern Europe.

● The evolution of crafts gives unprecedented knowledge about the cultural and social consequences of this well-known case of "proto-globalization".

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/04/210420092918.htm

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Describe the various factors resulting in Tribal Unrest in India. (15 Marks - 2018)
2. Concept of Ethnicity (S.N. - 2008)

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. Explain different governmental interventions for development of foraging and nomadic tribes in India. (20 marks)
2. Explain anthropology can be helpful in dealing with situations of Ethnic cleansing as in the case of African countries. (20 marks)