ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

04.05.2021

FOR UPSC CSE MAINS

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. ARCHAEOLOGY

1. Archaeology & Architecture

Context: The link between Archaeology and Architecture can play a vital role in the preservation of heritage and culture.

Highlights:

- Archaeology is the study of the material remains of generations past.
- Ranging from the discovery of stone tools made by early humans to the discovery of palaces and cathedrals, archaeological investigations have played a central role in shaping the understanding of how the world is perceived.
- Linking to the architectural field, archaeology also examines the construction techniques of buildings, however, the link to architecture is not only limited to that.
- Archaeology, like architecture, examines the ways in which past societies were organised, and how they transformed the topography and landscape.
- Similar to architecture, archaeology is also inherently an interdisciplinary field. Zoologists, soil scientists, and botanists, for example – may all be brought in to a specific archaeological project.
- It also exists in a grey area much like architecture, which is commonly referred to as a bridge between art and engineering. In archaeology, there is this synergy between fields too.
- Archaeologists exist as craftspeople – specialising in a craft like excavation, and simultaneously they also exist as historians, using the information gleaned from excavations to portray an accurate account of a historical society.

Reference:
https://www.archdaily.com/960912/the-link-between-archaeology-and-architecture

B. TRIBAL AFFAIRS

1. Brazilian Amazon Tribe

Context: Brazilian Amazon tribe endures hardship in quest for Covid-19 vaccine.

The Matis tribe:

- The Matis and all of the tribes that occupy the Brazilian Rainforest are threatened by the deforestation of their land by farmers, who want to raise their cattle there.
- The Matis, who live in the Vale do Javari which is approximately the size of Austria (32,000 sq km), are experts on the plant life of the valley in which they live and skilled hunters.
- They used to be semi-nomadic, moving their villages every few years or so” (BBC, 2014) but now live exclusively in two villages.
- The Rainforest in which they live is one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world, housing half of the world’s unique species.
- But currently, both the Matis and the Rainforest are under threat from people who profit from the destruction of the Amazon Rainforest and the murder of the natives who live there.
● The Matis mostly sell handicrafts and are not economically viable enough to purchase all the essentials.
● To get Vaccinated for the Covid-19 Pandemic, a large group of the tribe had to row their way across the river amidst the heavy rains and uncertain weather.
● Nevertheless, no cases of Covid-19 have been reported in the village yet.

Reference:

2. Sustainability Lessons from Tribals
● The systematic methods of locality drainage systems, crop rotational farming, rainwater harvesting, usage of earthen utensils and other rational methods have been practiced in every tribal household for thousands of years.
● They have only conveniently, yet, sustainably updated themselves without causing much harm to the world’s ecological balance.
● For several years, tribal communities of the country have co-lived and protected nature.
● The Santhals of West Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh; the Garo Khasi tribes of North East India; the Kamar tribe of Madhya Pradesh; the Kadar, Karumba tribes of Kerala and Tamil Nadu have all left a steady trail of reference of how-to-live in peace with nature dexterously.
● Santhals, till date, use earthen utensils, live in mud huts which are cooler than concrete houses, are pantheists and have nature involved in every minute cultural expression, from their dance to marriages. They use organic elements like fresh flowers and leaves to adorn themselves with.
• Ethnic groups in northeastern states have incorporated methods of farming, infrastructure building, re-using of resources in the most effective way. Their crop rotation and step farming methods prevent soil erosion and degradation.

• Tribal communities in central India use hay to construct houses, shacks which are easily degradable. They also have effective ways of rainwater harvesting, especially during dry seasons.

• The awareness of living a more conscious, kind and greener life is what the world needs right now.

Reference:
https://www.google.co.in/amp/s/www.youthkiawaaaz.com/2021/05/lessons-on-sustainability-by-the-marginalized-communities/amp/

C. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Shamanism

• Shamanism, a religious phenomenon centered on the shaman, a person believed to achieve various powers through trance or ecstatic religious experience.

• Although shamans' repertoires vary from one culture to the next, they are typically thought to have the ability to heal the sick, to communicate with the otherworld, and often to escort the souls of the dead to that otherworld.

• The shamans recorded in historical ethnographies have included women, men, and transgender individuals of every age from middle childhood onward.

• Shamanism is believed to have originated from hunting and gathering.

• It is often found in conjunction with animism, a belief system in which the world is home to a plethora of spirit-beings that may help or hinder human endeavors.

• The extraordinary profession of the shaman naturally distinguishes him socially.

• The belief that he communicates with the spirits gives him authority.

• Furthermore, the belief that his actions may not only bring benefit but also harm makes him feared.
Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/shamanism

2. Jainism

Context: In Buena Park, the temple at the Jain Center of Southern California draws legions of followers of Jainism, a little-known, millenniums-old Indian religious and philosophical tradition.

Highlights:
● Along with Hinduism and Buddhism, Jainism is one of the three most ancient Indian religious traditions still in existence and an integral part of South Asian religious belief and practice.
● While often employing concepts shared with Hinduism and Buddhism, the result of a common cultural and linguistic background, the Jain tradition must be regarded as an independent phenomenon rather than as a Hindu sect or a Buddhist heresy, as some earlier Western scholars believed.
● They believe in “Ahimsa,” that is non-violence.
● Jainism has been confined largely to India, although the recent migration of Indians to other, predominantly English-speaking countries has spread its practice too many Commonwealth nations and to the United States.
● Precise statistics are not available, but it is estimated that there are more than six million Jains, the vast majority of whom live in India.

Reference:
D. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Patau Syndrome
- Cells in the human body contain 46 chromosomes.
- Changes that take place in the sperm or egg cells can lead to a baby having an extra chromosome.
- Babies with Patau’s syndrome have an extra copy of chromosome 13 in all or some cells.
- There are 3 types of Patau’s syndrome called full, mosaic and partial Patau’s syndrome.
- All babies born with Patau’s syndrome will have learning disabilities and a wide range of health challenges, some of which can be extremely serious. They may have problems with their: Heart, Breathing, Kidneys, Digestive System,...
- Babies with Patau’s syndrome are born to mothers of all ages but the chance of having a baby with this condition increases as the age of the mother increases.
- Patau’s syndrome happens in about one baby out of every 4,000 (0.03%).
- The life expectancy for babies born with mosaic or partial types of Patau’s syndrome can be much more variable.
- Around half of babies with Patau’s syndrome will have a cleft lip and palate. Babies with Patau’s syndrome may also have a low birth weight.

Reference:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Discuss the relevance of Human DNA profiling and Gene Mapping in the Prevention and cure of diseases. (L.Q. - 2001)
2. Shamanism (S.N. - 2007)

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. Shamanism 10 Marks
2. Autosomal aberrations and anthropological studies 20 Marks