ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

05.05.2021

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. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Eugenics - Embryo Genetic Testing

Eugenics is the practice or advocacy of improving the human species by selectively mating people with specific desirable hereditary traits. It aims to reduce human suffering by “breeding out” disease, disabilities and so-called undesirable characteristics from the human population.

- Embryonic pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) is a test used to screen embryos for any genetic defects before they are implanted.
- If introduced, PGD testing will allow prospective couples carrying hereditary diseases to use IVF to produce embryos that do not have genes that carry the disease.
- The advancement of eugenics was concurrent with an increasing appreciation of Darwin’s account for change or evolution within society—what contemporaries referred to as Social Darwinism.
- Darwin had concluded his explanations of evolution by arguing that the greatest step humans could make in their own history would occur when they realized that they were not completely guided by instinct. Rather, humans, through selective reproduction, had the ability to control their own future evolution.
- Applications of the Human Genome Project are often referred to as “Brave New World” genetics or the “new eugenics,” in part because they have helped to dramatically increase knowledge of human genetics.
- In addition, 21st-century technologies such as gene editing, which can potentially be used to treat disease or to alter traits, have further renewed concerns.
- However, the ethical, legal, and social implications of such tools are monitored much more closely than were early 20th-century eugenics programs.
- Applications generally are more focused on the reduction of genetic diseases than on improving intelligence.

Reference:
https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/national/109328/embryo_genetic_testing_a_gatemay_to_eugenics_prolife_doctors_say#.YJGJGbUzlIV

2. Autism

Context: Researchers have used real-time 3D animation to investigate motor impairments in children who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The study found that when teaching or coaching new movements to an individual with autism, the teacher or coach needs to understand the individual with autism's specific motor learning characteristics.

Highlights:
- The results of the study, titled "Children With Autism Exhibit More Individualized Responses to Live Animation Biofeedback."
Than Do Typically Developing Children," were recently published in the journal of Perceptual and Motor Skills.

- The greatest takeaway from this study is that when teaching or coaching new movements to an individual with autism, the teacher or coach needs to understand the individual with autism's specific motor learning characteristics.
- More than 80% of children with ASD have gross motor skills issues, such as problems with balance and coordination, which can interfere with their communication and social interactions.
- Researchers compared their movement patterns to children without the disorder.
- They found that children with ASD displayed highly individualized responses to the live animation biofeedback, much more so than children with typical development.
- In the lab, children had 1-inch cubes called inertial measurement unit (IMU) sensors strapped to their pelvis, thighs, lower legs and feet. They followed an animation model on a computer screen, which showed them how to squat.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/05/210503172850.htm

3. Rh Blood Group

- **Rh blood group system**, system for classifying blood types according to the presence or absence of the Rh antigen, often called the Rh factor, on the cell membranes of the red blood cells (erythrocytes).
- The Rh antigen poses a danger for the Rh-negative person, who lacks the antigen, if Rh-positive blood is given in transfusion.
- Adverse effects may not occur the first time Rh-incompatible blood is given, but the immune system responds to the foreign Rh antigen by producing anti-Rh antibodies.
- If Rh-positive blood is given again after the antibodies form, they will attack the foreign red blood cells, causing them to clump together, or agglutinate.
- The resulting hemolysis, or destruction of the red blood cells, causes serious illness and sometimes death.
- A similar hazard exists during pregnancy for the Rh-positive offspring of Rh-incompatible parents, when the mother is Rh-negative and the father is Rh-positive.
- The first child of such parents is usually in no danger unless the mother has acquired anti-Rh antibodies by virtue of incompatible blood transfusion.
- The Rh vaccine destroys any fetal blood cells before the mother’s immune system can develop antibodies.

Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/science/Rh-blood-group-system
4. Klinefelter Syndrome

- Klinefelter syndrome is a genetic condition that results when a boy is born with an extra copy of the X chromosome.
- Klinefelter syndrome is a genetic condition affecting males, and it often isn't diagnosed until adulthood.
- Klinefelter syndrome may adversely affect testicular growth, resulting in smaller than normal testicles, which can lead to lower production of testosterone.
- The syndrome may also cause reduced muscle mass, reduced body and facial hair, and enlarged breast tissue.
- The effects of Klinefelter syndrome vary, and not everyone has the same signs and symptoms.
- Most men with Klinefelter syndrome produce little or no sperm, but assisted reproductive procedures may make it possible for some men with Klinefelter syndrome to father children.

Symptoms:

- Signs and symptoms of Klinefelter syndrome vary widely among males with the disorder.
- Many boys with Klinefelter syndrome show few or only mild signs. The condition may go undiagnosed until adulthood or it may never be diagnosed.
- For others, the condition has a noticeable effect on growth or appearance.

Causes:

- Klinefelter syndrome occurs as a result of a random error that causes a male to be born with an extra sex chromosome. It isn't an inherited condition.
- Humans have 46 chromosomes, including two sex chromosomes that determine a person's sex.
- Females have two X sex chromosomes (XX). Males have an X and a Y sex chromosome (XY). A number of complications caused by Klinefelter syndrome are related to low testosterone (hypogonadism). Testosterone replacement therapy reduces the risk of certain health problems, especially when therapy is started at the beginning of puberty.

Reference:


B. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Dance Tradition among Black Caribbean community

- Dance is one space for such community- and identity-building throughout the globe.
- In Martinique, for example, an island in the eastern Caribbean Sea, practitioners of bèlè, an ancestral dance practice, celebrate their African forebears and carve out spaces where they can incite conversations and action around individual and collective identity, expression, and healing through dance.
● In this context, to dance or drum bele is to resist assimilation and to reclaim health, connection, and well-being.

● Broadly speaking, bele is considered a drum dance tradition or a folk dance that is found in different parts of the Caribbean but with very different music and movement styles.

● These dances are usually based on European ballroom-style court dances that traveled to the Caribbean during the colonial era and then ended up integrating aspects of African movement, music elements, and footwork to different degrees—creating entirely new dance traditions.

● The bele that’s performed in Martinique is known to have retained and successfully integrated African elements more than any other version of bele.

● Within Martinique, bele is undergoing a special revival—because it almost died out during an era of intense assimilation. So, today it’s celebrated as this cherished ancestral tradition.

● It’s not just a folk dance. It’s actually described in Creole as “an mannyè viv,” or “a manner of life.” It’s an entire lifestyle around which many grassroots performers and activists form their lives.

Reference:
https://www.sapiens.org/culture/bele-martinique/

C. LINGUISTIC ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Santali Language

Context: Santali is one of India’s many Adivasi languages. Currently, seven different alphabets are used to write in it. Some argue that this great variety does not help the community’s development.
Highlights:

● Script is important for the sustainability and development of a language. In the long-term, writing requires a codified grammar, precise definitions of what words mean and standardised spelling.
● Without those rules, texts are hard to read. They become established as a literary tradition evolves.
● At the same time, that literary tradition helps to define the values and norms of the people whose mother tongue this language is.
● Writing thus shapes the identity of the community concerned. All of these trends are reinforced if and when a formal education system uses a written language.
● Among South Asian Adivasis, Santals are the largest homogenous group. More than 10 million people belong to Santal tribes in India’s eastern states as well as in Bangladesh and Nepal.
● Santal tribes are outside the Hindu caste system and have been marginalised historically.
● Santali, for example, has survived and evolved over the millennia in oral tradition. It is an Austro-Asiatic language that is related to Vietnamese and Khmer, but not to the Indo-European languages prevalent in our part of South Asia.
● In the 1890s, Christian missionaries found it helpful to write in Santali. They used Roman (Latin) letters. This alphabet, of course, has been used in many parts of Europe since the days of the Roman Empire. The missionaries wrote down folktales in Santali and documented traditional medicine as practiced by our community.
● They codified the grammar of the language and compiled dictionaries. Moreover, they designed reading primers, especially in order to teach Santal children.

Reference:
UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

2. Eugenics (S.N. - 2003)
3. Rh - Blood Group (10 Marks - 2016)

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