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. TRIBAL AFFAIRS - TRIBES OF AFRICA
1. San..................................................................................................................03
2. Zulu..................................................................................................................03
3. Maasai.............................................................................................................04
4. Himba...........................................................................................................05

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
1. Neanderthal Fossils...........................................................................................05
2. Portable Epidemiology.......................................................................................07

UPSC ANTHROPOLOGY PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS...........................................07
PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW.........................................................07

Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.
A. TRIBAL AFFAIRS - TRIBES OF AFRICA

1. African Tribes
The African continent has 54 countries and around 1.3 billion people. There are an estimated 3,000 tribes, speaking more than 2,000 different languages, each with its own style, look, and culture. From shaven heads to intricate braids, brightly colored clothing to intricate beaded jewelry, these are just some of the features of diverse African tribes.

1. San
- The hunter-gatherer San people are one of the world’s oldest tribes and probably the first inhabitants of southern Africa.
- Currently, their approximately 100,000 descendants are predominantly found in Botswana, Namibia, Angola, and South Africa.
- San people, also known as Bushmen, are recognizable for the unique clicking sound they make when speaking.
- The San’s tracking and hunting skills are renowned, helping them survive the desolate and unforgiving landscapes of southern Africa’s deserts and vast salt pans.
- They are Dressed in loincloths, with bows and arrows slung over their shoulders.
- They make animal traps, find roots and tubers, and even make tobacco from zebra dung.

2. Zulu
- With a population of around 11 million, the Zulu are the largest tribe in South Africa and one of the largest tribes in Africa.
- They are a warrior tribe, originally from East Africa.
- The Zulu are particularly renowned for their beadwork, with bright colored beads woven into intricate patterns that are highly decorative, functional, and symbolic.
In the early 19th century, the Zulus, under the leadership of King Shaka, became a formidable empire with a fearsome reputation.

Zulu traditions and culture are kept alive, with demonstrations of Zulu craft, building skills, pottery, brewing, dancing and music.

3. Maasai

- The Maasai are arguably the most famous of all the African tribes and live along the Great Rift Valley of Kenya and Tanzania.
- Their usual attire would be red, sarong-like blankets (shuka), pierced ear lobes, and colorful ornaments.
- Their famous traditions include the jumping dance (adamu), and their predilection for spitting and drinking blood.
- Adamu is performed as part of initiation rites when young adults become men and eligible bachelors.
- Accompanied by song, pairs of men take turns to see who can jump the highest, demonstrating their prowess and fitness. He who jumps highest attracts the best bride.
- When shaking the hand of an elder, it is important to spit in one’s palm, and to ward off evil spirits, one must spit onto a newborn baby’s head, in the Maasai culture.
4. Himba
- The unforgiving, desolate Kunene region of northwest Namibia is home to a resilient people called the Himba.
- This tribe of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists has successfully maintained their culture and traditional way of life, predominantly because the area they call home is so incredibly remote.
- Himba women are famous for their appearance with red-tinged complexions and thick, red hair in elaborate hairstyles. Hair for Himba women signifies age and status, starting with shaved heads for young children, then braids and plaits, and graduating to a leather ornament called an Erembe for women who have had children. The unique color comes from a paste made from butter, ochre, and fat. The paste is known as *otjize* and is applied daily to skin and hair alike. (The Himba men do not use the paste).
- Central to the Himba’s cultural beliefs is Okuruwo, the holy fire, which symbolizes their connection to their ancestors, who are believed to be in direct communication with Mukuru, the Himba god.

Reference:
https://www.travelawaits.com/2658956/how-to-experience-unique-cultures-of-african-tribes/

B. Biological Anthropology
1. Neanderthal Fossils
   Context: Fossils of 9 Neanderthals Uncovered Near Rome
   Highlights:
- The Neanderthals, who survived several ice ages but then likely went extinct due to assimilation into the modern human genome, great climatic change, illness, or a mixture of these factors, roamed Eurasia until around 40,000 years ago, leaving countless cave art, stone tools, and bones in their wake.
With their oval-shaped skull with a short, receding forehead and distinct brow ridges, scientists had never seen anything like them when Neanderthal 1 was discovered in Germany in 1856.

Now, the fossilized bones of nine Neanderthals have been discovered in a cave near the coastal town of San Felice Circeo, Rome by archaeologists, along with the bones of long-extinct hyenas, elephants, rhinoceroses, and even the Urus, today's domestic cattle's now-extinct ancestor.

Back in 1939, a Neanderthal skull was found in the same cave, the Guattari Cave; its climate was sealed 50,000 years ago possibly thanks to an earthquake. The excavations at the same site began again in 2019, focusing on a previously unexplored section of the cave.

The archaeologists said most of the Neanderthals had been killed by hyenas and then dragged back to the cave to be consumed. "Neanderthals were prey for these animals," said Mario Rolfo, professor of archaeology at Tor Vergata University.

It's also likely that Neanderthals lived in this cave at one point. The remains will be studied further, and first inspections have shown that the Neanderthals' diet was diverse, but mainly consisted of cereals. This aided in the development of their brains, researchers said.

Studies on Neanderthals are not sparse: A recent study outlined how experiencing low or no symptoms from COVID-19 may be attributed to a certain genetic factor inherited from Neanderthals.

Reference:
2. **Portable Epidemiology**

**Context:**
The prevalence, power and portability of smartphones make them valuable tools for pathogen monitoring and citizen science.

**Highlights:**
- Based on the gene-editing technology CRISPR, the test produces a band on a paper strip if viral RNA is present.
- The researchers developed an app to photograph the paper strip, identify and quantify bands using machine learning, and export the results to the cloud. Called TOPSE, their app laid the foundation for a test that has now been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India.
- The billions of smartphones in use worldwide offer unprecedented opportunities for disease tracking, diagnostics and citizen science. Examples include apps that enable phone users to monitor COVID-19 symptoms, count disease-carrying mosquitoes and detect microscopic pathogens. They could even help the world to prepare for the next pandemic.
- Smartphone science didn’t start with COVID-19. But the pandemic has spurred researchers to fast-track citizen-science efforts that use smartphones to gather information about the disease. Volunteers can regularly log details about their symptoms, testing status and location through apps or websites. For instance, data from 5 million users of Brownstein’s crowdsourced tracker for influenza and COVID-19 — called “Outbreaks Near Me” — provided early evidence of the benefits of masking.
- Smartphones can track other diseases, too, such as malaria, Zika and dengue, which are spread through mosquitoes.
- The Point of Portable epidemiology, or the apps to track infectious diseases is preparedness, prevention and easy operation.

**Reference:**
[https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01253-y](https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01253-y)

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

1. **Describe the scope of Epidemiological Anthropology in the study of infectious and non-infectious diseases.**
   (20 Marks - 2016)

2. **Biological Adaptation**
   (S.N. - 2002)

**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. **Relevance of epidemiological anthropology.**
   (15 Marks)