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. Crohn’s Disease
   - Crohn’s disease is a type of bowel disease that causes inflammation in the intestines.
   - Experts believe that a combination of genetic factors and environmental triggers leads to Crohn’s disease.
   - The National Human Genome Research Institute notes that if one parent has Crohn’s disease, a child has a 7–9% risk of developing the disease. However, if both parents have IBD, that risk increases to about 35%.
   - Researchers are still investigating how genetics influences the development of Crohn’s disease. Various genes may increase a person’s likelihood of developing IBD. Studies have identified more than 200 genes that may have links to this condition.
   - The immune system may mistake gut bacteria, which are harmless, as invaders and launch a response to destroy them. This response leads to inflammation and symptoms of Crohn’s disease.
   - Genetic testing identifies whether a person carries a mutation in a gene that could cause Crohn’s disease.
   - However, if someone does have an inherited gene mutation, it does not necessarily mean that they will develop Crohn’s disease. The gene just increases their risk.

Reference:
https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/is-crohns-disease-genetic#summary

2. Mexican Dinosaur Fossil
   Context:
   A new species of dinosaur identified by Mexican paleontologists is believed to have been "very communicative" and used low-frequency sounds like elephants to talk to each other, a researcher said.

Highlights:
- The specimen, which has been named *Tlatolophus galorum*, is thought to have died around 72 million years ago in what is now Mexico's northern state of Coahuila.
- After initially discovering the tail, paleontologists said they later found most of its skull, a 1.32-meter (4.3-foot) bony hollow crest through which it communicated, as well as bones such as its femur and shoulder.
- Researchers believe that these dinosaurs were very communicative. They even produced and perceived low-frequency sounds like those made by elephants, which travel several kilometers and are imperceptible to humans.
- These "peaceful, but talkative" dinosaurs could also have had the ability to emit loud sounds to scare off predators, the National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) said.
Researchers believe that these dinosaurs, like modern birds, saw in colour and so these structures like the crest were possibly brightly colored. They could have been completely red, or multi-colored, with spots.

Highly favorable events had to occur millions of years ago, when Coahuila was a tropical region, for it to be conserved in the conditions it was found in.

The name Tlatolophus is derived from tlahtolli — which means word in the indigenous Nahuatl language — and lophus, meaning crest in Greek, the researchers said.

Reference:
https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/new-dinosaur-found-in-mexico-was-very-communicative-study/article34576801.ece

3. Discoveries Influencing Evolution

**HOMININ FOOTPRINTS PRESERVED IN VOLCANIC ASH // LAETOLI, TANZANIA**

In 1978, the famous paleoanthropologist Mary Leakey and anthropologist Paul Abell excavated a trail of fossilized footprints in Laetoli, Tanzania. The anatomy of the feet and the walkers’ gait indicated that *A. australopithecus* was bipedal and moved more like a human than an ape, giving scientists more clues about human evolution.

**PREHISTORIC MURALS // CHIRIBIQUETE NATIONAL PARK, COLOMBIA**

Spanning eight miles in southern Colombia, caves in Chiribiquete National Park are covered in vast prehistoric paintings. Scientists estimate the paintings as more than 22,000 years old—which supports emerging theories, based on other archaeological findings, that humans occupied the Americas around 20k to 30k years ago.

**A MYSTERIOUS HUMAN ANCESTOR // SIBERIA, RUSSIA**

In a cave deep within the Altai mountains near the Russia-Kazakhstan border, Russian archaeologist Michael Shunkov discovered fossils of an unknown hominin in 2008. According to the study announcing the finding in *Nature*, the mDNA profile showed the Denisovans—named after the cave where the fossils were discovered—migrated out of Africa separately from early Neanderthals and *Homo sapiens*.

Reference:
https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/646388/human-evolution-discoveries

B. TRIBAL AFFAIRS

1. Tribal Women Protecting Forests

Context:
Women in 135 tribal villages of Odisha observe ‘thengapalli’ to safeguard forest resources from over-exploitation.

Highlights:
● Most women in the Kodarapalli tribal village in Odisha prepare to fetch forest resources and then prepare for their household chores. Interesting, a few others pick up lathis or sticks instead – and head to the forest.
● These women set out to safeguard the forest and its resources.
● The activity is called ‘thengapalli’, which translates to ‘thenga’, meaning sticks and ‘palli’, explained as ‘turn’.
● It is a practice where members from the village participate in protecting their community forest. It involves around 4-6 women patrolling the forest’s boundaries in shifts. Once their turn ends, another bunch of women change the guard.
● The patrolling is done in three shifts starting at 6 am and lasting until the late hours.
● The practice is not new and has been carried out for at least five decades, long before the Forest Rights Act, 2006 came into place.
● Over the years, hundreds of acres of forest have come under protection in 135 villagers guarded by men and women.
● Out of the total, 62 villages see women taking complete charge of the forest protection. Their conservation efforts have helped rejuvenate over 500 acres of forest land under their protection.
● Earlier, a significant patch of the forest was left barren due to overexploitation of resources. Illegal tree-cutting and looting of resources were rampant. The villagers realised that soon there would be none left, and hence we started protecting it.
● The practice started in the 1970s from Nayagarh district and slowly spread across the villages in other parts of the state.
● The villagers realised the gravity of depleting resources, and slowly the villages started patrolling the borders of the jungles and formed clusters of villagers to protect the resources around them.

Reference:
2. Jenu Kuruba Tribes

Context:
Even as the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic ravages Karnataka, affecting the remotest parts of the state, the Jenu Kuruba tribes witness the risk of being forcefully evicted from their homes and thus getting exposed to the infection.

Jenu Kuruba Tribes:
- The Jenu Kuruba are a tribal group from the Nilgiris, numbering around 37000.
- They are concentrated in the Kodagu and Mysore districts of Karnataka.
- 'Jenu' means 'honey' in Kannada, referring to their traditional occupation as collectors of honey in the forest.
- In the early 20th century they lived in huts in the forests and cultivated.
- Starting from the 1970s and continuing today, many of the Jenu Kurubas have been evicted from their homes due to conservation measures in the various tiger reserves of the Nilgiris.
- Those who have been relocated outside the forest are daily wagers and agricultural labourers, who live in extreme poverty. Many work as labourers on coffee estates in Kodagu or for the Forest Department.
- They speak the Jenu Kuruba Language, either classified as being related to Kodava or a rural dialect of Kannada. The tribals have fought multiple times to live in the reserved forests, most recently in 2020, under the terms of the Forest Rights Act.

Reference:
https://www.newsclick.in/karnataka-pandemic-jenu-kuruba-tribal-leaders-threatened-violenc-forest-officials

3. Baiga
- The Baiga community has been identified as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- This community, mainly residing in the Baiga Chak region of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, is known for its intimate relationship with the forests and its wildlife, and has experienced dramatic setbacks in its ways of life from the ruling political powers.
The historical vilification of the Baiga tribe, first by the colonial powers and then by the post-colonial Indian State, has led to gross negligence towards documenting and acknowledging their rich, vibrant and distinct culture.

Furthermore, modernisation and integration into mainstream society has caused the community to disengage from various elements of its heritage. This module attempts to capture a few aspects of oral traditions, customs and cultural practices of the Baiga community.

Through this documentation, on the one hand, an attempt will be made to protect and preserve their cultural heritage. On the other hand, it will also contribute towards creating an awareness and sensitization about the diverse cultures of the adivasis, which have existed in our country.

Reference:
https://www.sahapedia.org/baiga-adivasis-of-central-india

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Australopithecus (S.N. - 2006)

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. Comment on the role of tribals in protecting forests. (20 Marks)