ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

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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. TRIBAL AFFAIRS

1. Tribes & Forlorn Lives

- The dozen-odd members of the Suprikat tribal colony in Thottappally forest region in Chaliyar panchayat are living in tarpaulin sheds.
- They said they rarely get food kits from the government. Two of the three families do not have a ration card. They have no land of their own either. “We have been living here for many years,” said tribal leader Mathan.
- With no proper road, one will have to trek seven km to reach this tiny hamlet. They have no power connection. Although the Kerala State Electricity Board (KSEB) installed power lines up to the hamlet, no connection was given to them so far. The power line broken in the 2018 floods remained unrepaired.
- Although Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP)’s tribal promoter in charge of this hamlet Sheela Vinu said that she used to visit them and take care of them regularly, they denied her claim.
- The children seemed totally unaware about the classes and reopening of the schools.
- The ITDP had offered funds to set up a study centre for the tribal families, and that was why none else took any initiative.
- Neglected by the authorities, the tribal families are allegedly exploited by some traders whom they depend for their groceries. They said that the traders were overcharging them for their groceries.

Reference:

2. Tribal Rally & Sports Betting

- North Bay tribes are throwing their support behind a state initiative to legalize sports betting at casinos on native lands, setting up a potentially expensive campaign battle pitting California tribes against cardrooms and online gambling companies.
- The Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, which owns the Bay Area’s largest casino just outside Rohnert Park, has over the past year-and-a-half contributed over $1.7 million to the campaign backing the measure, making it the effort’s third largest donor, according to campaign finance records. California tribes have poured in over $11.5 million in total.
- Tribes argue that they should have majority control over sports betting in the state since they are best equipped to manage the potentially lucrative industry as it emerges from the shadows.
- The California measure would allow gamblers to place bets on professional, college and amateur sports, except high school sports and California-based college teams.
• In recent years, the Graton tribe has worked to increase its influence in Sacramento. In 2020, it gave almost $200,000 in support of Jackie Fielder, a progressive Native American candidate who unsuccessfully challenged state Sen. Scott Wiener, D-San Francisco.

Reference:

3. Pardhi Tribes
• Launched in October 2018, the ‘Walk With the Pardhis’ initiative in the Panna Tiger Reserve, takes tourists for a tour in the deep jungles by Pardhi nature guides who are trained by the non-profit Last Wilderness Foundation, with active support and encouragement by the forest department. Young members of the erstwhile hunting community are now protectors of the forests and wildlife.
• Pardhi, derived from the Marathi word ‘paradh’, means hunting. Traditionally, they are nomadic hunter-gatherers and experts in using bows and arrows and setting traps for animals.
• When they rose against the British, they were branded as a tribe of ‘criminals’ under the Criminal Tribes Act in 1871. It was only as late as 1952 that the tribe was denotified by the Indian government. But its members continue to be marginalised and face discrimination. The ‘criminal’ tag refuses to go away.
• Pardhis who have lived close to nature for hundreds of years and have mastered the art of imitating bird and animal calls, can easily recognise pugmarks of animals and identify every blade of leaf in the forests. Members of the community are using this traditional knowledge to give tourists an in-depth introduction to the forests of Panna.
• The Pardhis continued to hunt till 2008-09 when the tiger population at the Panna Tiger Reserve and the nearby forests came close to extinction.
• Since then there has been a transformation in the community’s lifestyle, which, rather than hunting, is now protecting the wildlife and educating visitors about the jungles. The forest department on its part has proactively provided them with habitation at Gandhigram village and made arrangements for the education of the children.

Reference:

B. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
1. Race
• Race, the idea that the human species is divided into distinct groups on the basis of inherited physical and behavioral differences.
• Genetic studies in the late 20th century refuted the existence of biogenetically distinct races, and scholars now argue that “races” are cultural interventions reflecting specific attitudes and beliefs that were imposed on different populations in the wake of western European conquests beginning in the 15th century.
• The modern meaning of the term *race* with reference to humans began to emerge in the 17th century.
• Since then it has had a variety of meanings in the languages of the Western world.
• What most definitions have in common is an attempt to categorize peoples primarily by their physical differences.
• Such distinctive features are associated with large, geographically separated populations, and these continental aggregates are also designated as races, as the “African race,” the “European race,” and the “Asian race.”
• Although most people continue to think of races as physically distinct populations, scientific advances in the 20th century demonstrated that human physical variations do not fit a “racial” model.
• Instead, human physical variations tend to overlap. There are no genes that can identify distinct groups that accord with the conventional race categories.
• In fact, DNA analyses have proved that all humans have much more in common, genetically, than they have differences.
• The genetic difference between any two humans is less than 1 percent. Moreover, geographically widely separated populations vary from one another in only about 6 to 8 percent of their genes.
• Because of the overlapping of traits that bear no relationship to one another (such as skin colour and hair texture) and the inability of scientists to cluster peoples into discrete racial packages, modern researchers have concluded that the concept of race has no biological validity.

**Reference:**

2. **Ethnicity**
• With a population of 1,210,193,422 as accounted by the March 1, 2011 population census, India is a colourful canvas portraying a unique assimilation of ethnic groups displaying varied cultures and religions.
• In fact, this uniqueness in the ethnicity of the country is the factor that makes it different from other nations. Moreover, the vastness of India's nationalism, accounting to a plethora of cultural extravaganza, religions, etc. is the reason that the country is seen more as a seat for a major world civilization than a mere nation-state.
Since ancient times, the spiritual land of India has displayed varied hues of culture, religion, race, language, and so on. This variety in race, culture, religion, etc. accounts for the existence of different ethnic groups who, although, live within the sanctums of one single nation, profess different social habits and characteristics. Regional territories in India play an important role in differentiating these ethnic groups, with their own social and cultural identities.

The religions that are prevalent in the country are Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, and Jainism, with the freedom for citizens to practice any religion they want to. With the governance of 35 different states and union territories in the country, there has originated a sense of regionalism amongst the various parts, with different states displaying different cultures, which although eventually fuse through a common bond to showcase a national cultural identity.

The Constitution of India has recognised 22 different languages that are prevalent in the country, out of which, Hindi is the official language and is spoken in most of the urban cities of India. Other than these 22 languages, there are hundreds of dialects that add to the multilingual nature of the country.

Reference:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Education & Health among Tribal Women (15 Marks - 2010)
2. Controversies of Race (S.N. - 1996)

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. Ethnicity and Race 10 Marks