ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

07.07.2021

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. ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
   1. Reasons to save archaeology from funding cuts
      i. ARCHAEOLOGY IS NOT (ONLY) ABOUT THE PAST
         The perception still lingers of archaeologists detached from reality, stuck in the past, excavating ancient worlds to fill museum stores with newly discovered treasures. This perception is far removed from the reality of archaeology as a progressive and future-oriented discipline, one that uses evidence from the past to explore contemporary and anticipated future challenges, such as climate change.
      ii. ARCHAEOLOGY IS A SCIENCE
         Archaeology is traditionally positioned within the realm of arts and humanities. This is no longer appropriate since scientists have become more prominent within archaeological research.
      iii. ARCHAEOLOGY IS A UNIVERSAL DISCIPLINE
         Archaeology focuses on understanding how people in the past interacted with the world around them. It explores how their decision-making shaped their world and the impact that had on the future.
      iv. ARCHAEOLOGY CAN HELP SHAPE A BETTER WORLD
         In Galapagos, for instance, archaeological methods are being used to work out what sources plastic pollution has come from. This can help focus attempts to change people’s polluting behavior and so reduce the impact of waste on an iconic marine environment.
         Reference:
         https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/reasons-to-save-archaeology/

2. Maya Population & Climate Change
   - Findings suggest that Maya settlement in the city of Itzan started earlier and lasted longer than previously known.
   - A new study has shown that the size of the Maya population in the lowland city of Itzan (in present-day Guatemala) varied over time in response to climate change. The findings show that both droughts and very wet periods led to important population declines.
   - These results are based on using a relatively new technique involving looking at stanols (organic molecules found in human and animal faecal matter) taken from the bottom of a nearby lake.
   - Measurements of stanols were used to estimate changes in population size and to examine how they align with information about climate variability and changes in vegetation drawn from other biological and archaeological sources.
   - By using the technique, the researchers were able to chart major Maya population changes in the area over a period starting 3,300 years before the present (BP).
   - They were also able to identify shifts in settlement patterns that took place over the course of hundreds of years that are associated with changes in land use and agricultural practices.
● The research also suggests that the Maya people may have adapted to environmental issues such as soil degradation and nutrient loss by using techniques such as the application of human waste (also known as night soil) as a fertiliser for crops.

● This is suggested by a relatively low amount of fecal stanols in the lake sediment at a time when there is archaeological evidence for the highest human populations. One explanation for this is that human waste was applied to soils as fertilizer and therefore the stanols were not washed into the lake.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/06/210630125416.htm

3. Kondapur Excavation Site

● In the early 19th Century, Archaeologist Henry Cousens had explored the Kondapur site, where he had found tools from the upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic period.

● During the Nizam’s rule in 1940s, excavations were carried-out on this mound by G Yazdani, Director of Archaeological Department of Hyderabad State, and during the excavation, dilapidated religious and other structures made of brick, mud and mortar were found.

● More discoveries were made during the excavations taken up in the 1970s and more recently during the excavations taken up by Dr G Maheshwari from ASI’s Bhubaneshwar Excavation Branch. He found that the site was a thriving urban township of Satavahanas, which shed light on the religious beliefs of the people living in that era.

● The excavations done over decades have found the Chaitragruha (Buddhist worshipping room), chambers and fire altars, where vedic rituals were held. Also, a separate settlement for Romans, who had trade ties with India in those times.

● As per sources in ASI, a proposal for reopening the site where excavations were conducted has been sent to the Centre for approval, after which the entire site which was covered in mud and has been closed for preservation.

● The site is covered with grass and wild vegetation now and ASI plans to clear the site and create a pathway for the visitors.

● As many as 8,394 antique items such as terracotta figurines, various objects, pottery, beads, bangles, and coins, and equipment made of iron, copper and lead, and other artefacts, which were unearthed from the site have been preserved at the Kondapur museum, which is located close to the site. At present, renovation works to improve the display, lighting and ramp laying work are being taken up.

Reference:
B. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. World Zoonoses Day

- The World Zoonoses Day (July 6) holds significance in the wake of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, believed to have originated in bats and transmitted to humans via pangolins.
- There have been periodic emergence and re-emergence of zoonotic diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome and Ebola in the past.
- Zoonosis is an infectious disease caused by a pathogen that originated in animals but jumped to humans directly or through an intermediary species. Animals have therefore played an essential role in maintaining Zoonotic infections — bacterial, viral or parasitic — in nature. COVID-19 disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus is one such reality plaguing the world today.
- These settings — characterised by high stocking density of genetically similar breeds (for example poultry, pigs, dairy and fish) aimed at productivity, confined living conditions and limited focus on animal husbandry — act as hotspots for infection causing bacteria or virus to multiply and spread.
- Such settings also involve routine use of chemicals or drugs such as antibiotics to prevent infections and are a substitute to hygiene and sanitation.
- The growing severity of COVID-19 is making us re-think ways to reduce transmission risk of emerging diseases from animals to humans. One way is to change our interaction and relationship with animals.
- According to a report, a team of 25 international wildlife and veterinary experts identified about 161 options to consider reducing the risk of future zoonotic epidemics.
- The solutions aligned to key stages of the trade chain such as supply (production and sourcing), transaction (transport and sale), and demand (consumption), however, need to be assessed in regard to the local, regional and international context before implementation.
- Supply-side interventions to prevent zoonotic emergence include increased focus on improving animal health and hygiene standards in farms by reducing stocking density and ensuring access to veterinary care, preventing mixing of domesticated animals with those of wild origin and improving biosecurity of farming practices.
- On the transport and sale aspect, the key intervention areas include reducing risk of disease transmission during transport and also during slaughter, processing or sale.
- Increased awareness and promotion of voluntary behaviour change in consumers, coupled with options for increasing cost of purchasing or consuming high-risk products apply to the demand side interventions.
- Implementation of these approaches will also need the right enablers such as capacity, resource, laws and regulations.
- Reducing dependence on intensive systems and considering more sustainable systems of producing food will not only allow for reduced emergence of zoonotic diseases, but also make way for preserving human health and environment.

Reference:
2. **Food Manufacturers & Malnutrition**
   - Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI) has launched its 2021 Global Index, assessing the world’s largest global food and beverage manufacturers and their contributions to addressing malnutrition.
   - The Index ranked 25 of the world’s largest food and beverage manufacturers and claims that the industry has only made small improvements in recent years.
   - With progress from the top 10 ranking manufacturers seemingly slowing down, ATNI has called on companies to step up their efforts to tackle some of the world’s toughest nutrition challenges.
   - Malnutrition in any form affects every county in the world, contributing towards millions of deaths and people at risk of diet related diseases.
   - In 2019, 8.9 percent of the global population were considered undernourished, and with the economic effects of COVID-19 even more people are experiencing extreme poverty and the consequences of overweight and diet-related diseases.
   - Action and accountability are the only ways we are going to ensure our mission that no one goes to bed hungry, and everyone has access to a healthy and affordable diet that has all the nutrients needed to grow and develop fully.
   - Despite some progress shown by the 2021 Global Index, companies need to prioritise nutrition and put in place stronger commitments to improve food systems and tackle malnutrition, on a global level. 2021 as the Nutrition for Growth Year of Action, is the time for food and beverage manufacturers to take bold steps towards healthier diets for everyone, everywhere.
   - According to ATNI, the 2021 results show that companies need to step up their efforts to encourage healthier diets for all. The average score remained the same as 2018 at 3.3 out of 10. When only taking into consideration the 22 companies that were assessed in both 2018 and 2021, the average score is 3.6.

*Reference:*

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

1. Ethno - Archaeology (10 Marks - 2017)

**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. How can anthropology be used in dealing with Climate Change related issues? 20 Marks