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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UPSC ANTHROPOLOGY PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS
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*Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.*
A. TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Jharkhand Tribes & Vaccination

- With awareness campaigns in local dialects, inclusion of influential villagers and religious leaders in busting myths around Covid-19 vaccination and wall paintings encouraging people to take the jab, the Jharkhand government has managed to overcome the widespread hesitancy against immunisation among members of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) in the state over the past one month.

- Even though the Co-Win platform did not provide any segregation for the PVTGs, the state government at its level ran extensive campaigns to vaccinate members of these groups, who live in the interiors and are mostly unaware of the happenings around the world.

- However, convincing the PVTGs to get vaccinated was not an easy task. Many members of these tribe groups were of the opinion that vaccination would lead to death and even minor side effects after the jabs triggered major panic among them.

- In a bid to increase acceptance for vaccines among members of these groups, the health department roped in influential village personalities and religious leaders to bridge the communication gap.

- The religious leaders and other influential villagers took the jabs first in front of the villagers to prove that they were safe and then asked them to get vaccinated.

- As per the 2011 Census, there are nine PVTGs in Jharkhand – Asur, Birhor, Birjia, Hil Kharia, Korwas, Mal Pahariya, Parhaiya, Sauria Paharia and Savar. With a total population of 2,23,327, these tribe groups are spread across various districts of Jharkhand, mostly in Santhal Pargana, East Singhbhum and parts of Koderma.

- Several surveys have highlighted that several members of these tribe groups suffer from malnutrition, anaemia, illiteracy and lack of access to basic resources.

- The state is yet to compile data related to vaccination of PVTGs, but officials spearheading the campaign say that at least half of them have received the first dose of vaccine.


2. Dhokra Art

- Dhokra Art is the famous art of Bastar, Chhattisgarh, a state of east-central India, whose rich tradition of craft and culture has always attracted art lovers from all over the world. This art is influenced by tribal themes related to animals, mythical and human creatures, and nature.

- The folk characters used to make the artifacts make this handicraft more valuable and that is the reason in every household or office, we find these pieces decorated as a pride possession.

- Dhokra artists make each piece with delicate attention to retaining its authenticity. The process involves manually casting brass and bronze metal with the help of a wax varnishing technique.
The unknown beauty of this art, in which metal crafts are made through wax casting techniques, is that it is eco-friendly! Most pieces are made with waste and scrap metal.

Today in the Bastar region, the small artisan group of the Ghadwas produces brass or bell metal objects.

In Bastar, many folk stories are told about the origins of the Ghadwas. According to one most popular story some three hundred years ago, the ruler of Bastar, Bhan Chand, was presented with a gift, a necklace crafted in Dhokra craft, for his beloved wife.

He was so mesmerized with the beauty of craft that to honor the craftsman, he decided to bestow the title of Ghadwa on him. Ghadwa, derived from the word Ghalna, means to melt and work with wax.

Natural raw materials are used in the process of making Dhokra pieces.

This art is unique, not only because of its process or intricacy, but because no two Dhokra artworks are alike. Every single sculpture is crafted to be different from another and exquisite.

Inspiration and themes generally come from mythology, nature, and day-to-day traditions and rituals. Intricate works of the local deities, sun, moon, jungle, flora, and fauna are used to give a decorative look to it.

Not only jewelry, items like decorative platters, containers, vases, photo frames, tea light candle holders, wall hangings, dining accessories, and cutlery and sculptures are also in trend. These objects are a smart mix of tribal designs and contemporary styles – each piece tells the enchanting story of the tribal legacy, culture, daily lives, and environment-friendly orientation.

Reference:
https://indiacurrents.com/dhokra-art-is-a-sustainable-tribal-legacy/
3. Ekalavya Schools

- Union minister Arjun Munda said that Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) will revolutionise education in tribal-dominated areas of the country as children of the community will be provided with the best modern education in those institutes.
- All the EMRS would be developed on a par with Navodaya Vidyalayas, the Union tribal minister said.
- EMRS started in the year 1997-98 to impart quality education to ST children in remote areas in order to enable them to avail of opportunities in high and professional educational courses and get employment in various sectors.
- The schools focus not only on academic education but on the all-round development of the students. Munda said that in the Union budget of 2018-19, the government had announced that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50 ST population and at least 20,000 tribal people will have an EMRS.
- It had been decided to establish 462 such schools across the country by 2022. The Union minister said that the schools will have facilities for one individual sport and one group sport of the state concerned, following the norms of the Sports Authority of India.

Reference:

B. MISCELLANEOUS

1. Action Anthropology

- Action anthropology is an approach used by anthropologists and other applied social scientists to help indigenous and underrepresented communities solve problems.
- Action anthropologists are generally motivated by concerns for social justice, though this is more important for some than for others. A basic tenet of action anthropology is that decisions affecting a community are best made by that community.
- The method of action anthropology depends on “a clinical or experimental method of study”.
- While the special interest of the applied anthropologist rests on the humanistic studies in the natives and minority people, the action anthropologist urges upon the value of disinterested consideration of social phenomena.
- These two aspects of anthropology in action can be viewed as springing from two roots of the same plant.
- An action anthropologist is and must be a theoretical anthropologist not only in background but also in practice. In their professional role they can point out the factual consequences of alternative modes of action or recommend the best technical means for bringing about an end to previously determined value.

Reference:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327459818_Action_Anthropology
2. Sports Anthropology

- All humans have probably engaged in sport-like activities since time immemorial, and today’s sports events and massive infrastructures are simply the latest permutation of a relationship amongst sport, spectacle, and political power that harks back to antiquity in the Greek Olympic Games, Roman gladiator games and chariot races, and Mesoamerican ball court games.

- Throughout the world and across the centuries, humans have engaged in rule-governed activities that exhibit certain features, the relative importance of which varies considerably across societies and contexts.

- These features include skill, physical exertion, sociality, pleasure, chance, theatricality, and competition.

- The task of surveying sport cross-culturally is hampered by the problem that the term ‘sport’ describes a category of activities that only coalesced in the West in the nineteenth century and was then carried around the globe by Western colonialism and imperialism and later globalization (Guttmann 1994).

- Many languages did not have a term with an equivalent semantic value until they borrowed it from a European language (Besnier, Brownell & Carter 2017: 3).

- Today, the category is highly contested because being defined as a sport makes an activity eligible for official recognition by powerful international sports organizations; these organizations, in turn, defend the borders of their membership by constantly revising their definition of sport.

- Late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century archaeologists had embraced sports as a hallmark feature of ‘Western civilization’ because of the prominent place that Greek games in ancient Olympia and Roman gladiator games in the Coliseum occupied in the archaeological record.

- But the attempt to arrive at a definition of sport is an anachronism influenced by the fact that the global reach of activities labelled as ‘sport’ today means that what counts or doesn’t count as such is laden with social, cultural, political, and economic repercussions that did not exist in previous epochs. Rather than seeking to establish an all-encompassing definition, anthropological approaches are attentive to the questions of when a particular activity qualifies or not as a sport, for whom, and to what end.

- A heated debate amongst historians has centred on whether the keeping of records is found in any other historical or cultural contexts, or whether it defined modern sport (Guttmann 2004).

- Until recently, sport was a much more common topic of enquiry in history and sociology than in anthropology. In 1985, Kendall Blanchard and Alyce Cheska made the first attempt to define an anthropological approach to sport in the anthropology of sport: an introduction.

- They took a multiple subfield approach and ran through a list of archaeological, biological, and cultural theories and concepts that could be applied to sports. The cultural approach was functionalist, i.e. seeking to explain the existence of a feature in terms of the need it is supposed to meet, and did not have the benefit of the feminist, postmodern, and critical
cultural studies that were then getting underway in the discipline, so the ideas presented in the book were quickly considered outdated.

- A pioneer sport ethnographer was Alan Klein, who documented baseball in the Dominican Republic (1991, 2014) and the U.S.–Mexico border (1997) as well as bodybuilding in Los Angeles (1993). By the twenty-first century, the number of ethnographically informed works on sport had increased significantly.

Reference:
https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/sport#h2ref-0

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

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. Kinanthropometry  20 Marks