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 ANTHROPOLOGY

1. “Joint Communication” & Forest Dwellers

- A “Joint Communication” was signed by Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) R P Gupta and Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) Anil Kumar Jha in the presence of Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar and Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda to secure the rights of traditional forest dwellers and proper implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

- The communication has been addressed to all Chief Secretaries of States and Union Territories specifically looking at harnessing the potential for livelihood improvement of the Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs) and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) as well as community participation in forest conservation.

- Speaking on the occasion, Munda said tribals and other forest dwellers can contribute significantly in efforts towards climate change through preservation of biodiversity, environmental conservation and enhancing forest cover.

- Forest dwellers are dependent on forests, not only for their livelihood but their traditions are also intertwined with forests. When there is little rain, they worship the van devta (forest god) as well as when there is too much rain.

- The Government of India is committed to the development of Tribes and Tribal areas. The number of sanctioned Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) has gone up to 620. Similarly, the launch of Van Dhan Yojana and increasing the number of Minor Forest Products (MFP) in the bracket of Minimum Support Price (MSP) from 10 to 86 in the last few years has supported tribes immensely in improving their incomes and livelihood prospects.

- The forest dwelling scheduled tribes (FDSTs) and other traditional forest dwellers (OTFDs) inhabiting forests for generations were in occupation of the forest land for centuries.

- Forests are the source of their livelihood, identity, customs and traditions. However, their rights on their ancestral lands and their habitats had not been adequately recognized despite them being integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem.

- The traditional rights and interests of FDSTs and OTFDs on forest lands were left unrecognized and unrecorded during consolidation of State forests in the past.

- State tribal welfare departments along with forest departments are also to work out strategies to extend MGNREGA and NRLM to forest dwellers as well as initiate skill development programs and give impetus to agro-forestry and horticulture projects.

Reference:
2. Visits & Dialogue for Vaccination

- The Health department has been making giant strides in vaccinating vulnerable groups of people against Covid-19. But there have been strong challenges in administering the vaccine to members of tribal communities, largely due to misinformation spread via WhatsApp forwards.

- Recently, a few tribal men from a settlement near Sadivayal in Coimbatore district climbed trees to avoid Health department staff who had arrived to administer the vaccine.

- The department has now planned to counsel them. Deputy Director of Health Services (DDHS) S Senthilkumar said the department recently held a counselling session for tribals in Valparai.

- The elderly people in the hamlet were asked to explain the benefits of taking the jab. This helped in inoculating many tribals.

- Many members of tribal communities fear getting vaccinated as they believe it would mean they can’t consume alcohol.

- An official said some people in Red Hills agreed to get vaccinated only after awareness camps and regular dialogues were held.

- Some of them felt vaccines cause severe health complications. Most of their understanding came from WhatsApp forwards.

- The hesitancy in getting vaccinated is mainly because of the lack of exposure and remoteness of their locality, say tribal rights activists.

Reference:

3. Tribal Products Showcase

- As a part of celebrations of International Day of Yoga, the Consulate General of India in New York organized a day-long event to showcase Yoga, holistic health, Ayurveda and wellness at New York’s Times Square. Attended by over 3000 people, the event at the iconic location in New York was a key attraction.

- A particular attraction were the stalls on display which showcased unique natural tribal products including immunity boosters, and Ayurvedic products.

- The stall set up by Tribes India garnered a lot of attention. It included a range of tribal products, comprising both organic, essential natural immunity-boosting products such as millets, rice, spices, honey, chyawanprash, amla, ashwagandha powders, herbal teas and coffee and accessories such as yoga mats, wind flutes, herbal soaps, bamboo aromatic candles etc.

- The stalls also saw a large footfall and a lot of interest was expressed in knowing about the uniqueness of Indian tribes and tribal products.
● As a part of its mission to promote tribal products and connect tribal entrepreneurs’ access to larger national and international markets, TRIFED had collaborated with the Consulate General of India in New York to explore this channel for popularizing ethnic products in the United States of America.

● Following the success of this event, further avenues are also being explored which will help give tribals a chance to display their unique range of products to a larger international audience.

● Some potential opportunities being explored are the inclusion of Tribes India products in the gifting product list of the Consulate General of India New York Office; possibility of tie-up of Cultural and Innovation Centres in the USA with TRIBES INDIA; and potential opportunities of working together for Sustainable Living Projects in the East and West Coast, to name a few.

Reference:
https://orissadiary.com/tribal-products-showcased-at-solstice-for-times-square-2021-an-event-organised-for-international-day-of-yoga-at-new-york/

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Volcanic Eruption & Evolution

● A massive volcanic eruption in Indonesia about 74,000 years ago likely caused severe climate disruption in many areas of the globe, but early human populations were sheltered from the worst effects, according to a new study.

● The eruption of the Toba volcano was the largest volcanic eruption in the past two million years, but its impacts on climate and human evolution have been unclear. Resolving this debate is important for understanding environmental changes during a key interval in human evolution.

● It is known that this eruption happened and that past climate modeling has suggested the climate consequences could have been severe, but archaeological and paleoclimate records from Africa don’t show such a dramatic response.

● One intriguing aspect of this is that Neanderthals and Denisovans were living in Europe and Asia at this time, so our paper suggests evaluating the effects of the Toba eruption on those populations could merit future investigation.

● The researchers analyzed 42 global climate model simulations in which they varied the magnitude of sulfur emissions, time of year of the eruption, background climate state and sulfur injection altitude to make a probabilistic assessment of the range of climate disruptions the Toba eruption may have caused.

● This approach let the team account for some of the unknowns related to the eruption.

● The results suggest there was likely significant regional variation in climate impacts. The simulations predict cooling in the Northern Hemisphere of at least 4°C, with regional cooling as high as 10°C depending on the model parameters.
In contrast, even under the most severe eruption conditions, cooling in the Southern Hemisphere -- including regions populated by early humans -- was unlikely to exceed 4°C, although regions in southern Africa and India may have seen decreases in precipitation at the highest sulfur emission level.

The results explain independent archaeological evidence suggesting the Toba eruption had modest effects on the development of hominid species in Africa. According to the authors, their ensemble simulation approach could be used to better understand other past and future explosive eruptions.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/07/210709130057.htm

2. Bat Fossils

The ancient bat teeth were discovered through painstaking fieldwork in the Junggar Basin, where the KU reA team performed fieldwork in the Junggar Basin to discover two fossil teeth belonging to two separate specimens of bats, dubbed Altay Nycteris aurora. It's thought to be the oldest fossil of bats found in Asia.

A team based at the University of Kansas and China performed the fieldwork in the Junggar Basin -- a very remote sedimentary basin in northwest China -- to discover two fossil teeth belonging to two separate specimens of the bat, dubbed Altay Nycteris aurora.

The new fossil specimens help scientists better understand bat evolution and geographic distribution and better grasp how mammals developed in general.

Bats show up in the fossil record out of the blue about 55-ish million years ago -- and they're already scattered on different parts of the globe.

Before this, the earliest bats are known from a couple of places in Europe -- Portugal and southern France -- and Australia. So, when they show up early in the fossil record as these fragmentary fossils they're already effectively worldwide. By the time we get their earliest known full skeletons, they look modern -- they can fly, and most of them are able to echolocate.

Searchers worked at an isolated field site established by their Chinese colleagues, one of two sites in the region the team hope will continue yielding interesting fossils.

Following the challenging fieldwork, the residue left behind from the screen washing at the site was sorted at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology in Beijing.

Through meticulous morphological analysis of the teeth, along with biostratigraphy -- or analyzing the position of layers of fossil remains in the deposits -- the authors were able to date the specimens to the advent of the Eocene, the earliest period when bat fossils have been found anywhere on Earth.
• Indeed, the presence of these ancient bat fossils in Asia bolsters a theory that bats could have emerged from there in the first place, then distributed themselves worldwide when they later developed flight.
• The researchers said the new fossils help fill in a gap to understanding the evolution of bats, which remains a puzzle to experts -- and could teach us more about mammals in general.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/07/210707112556.htm

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Key Characteristics of STs in India (S.N. - 2006)
2. Fossil Men (S.N. - 1999)

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. Analyse role of forests in the life of tribals. 20 Marks