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. Engineered Cells & Cardiovascular Diseases
   - In a study in mice, scientists have shown that gene-edited cellular therapeutics can be used to successfully treat cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases, potentially paving the way for developing less expensive cellular therapies to treat diseases for which there are currently few viable options.
   - The study, in mice, is the first in the emerging field of regenerative cell therapy to show that products from specially engineered induced pluripotent stem cells called "HIP" cells can successfully be employed to treat major diseases while evading the immune system.
   - The findings subvert the immune response that is a major cause of transplant failure and poses a barrier to using engineered cells as therapy.
   - It was shown that the immune-engineered HIP cells reliably evade immune rejection in mice with different tissue types, a situation similar to the transplantation between unrelated human individuals. This immune evasion was maintained in diseased tissue and tissue with poor blood supply without the use of any immunosuppressive drugs.
   - The prospects of generating specialized cells in a dish that can be transplanted into patients to treat various diseases are encouraging, the scientists report. However, the immune system would immediately recognize cells that were recovered from another individual and would reject the cells.
   - Hence, some scientists believe that custom cell therapeutics need to be generated from scratch using a blood sample from every individual patient as starting material.
   - The scientists transplanted specialized, immune-engineered HIP cells into mice with each of these conditions and were able to show that the cell therapeutics could alleviate peripheral artery disease in hindlimbs, prevent the development of lung disease in mice with alpha1-antitrypsin deficiency, and alleviate heart failure in mice after myocardial infarction.
   - In order for a therapeutic to have a broad impact, it needs to be affordable. That's why they focus so much on immune-engineering and the development of universal cells. Once the costs come down, the access for all patients in need increases.
   
   Reference:
   https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/07/210706115329.htm

2. Iranian Sheep Mummy DNA
   - A team of geneticists and archaeologists has sequenced the DNA from a 1,600-year-old sheep mummy from an ancient Iranian salt mine, Chehrabad.
   - This remarkable specimen has revealed sheep husbandry practices of the ancient Near East, as well as underlining how natural mummification can affect DNA degradation.
- The salt mine of Chehrabad is known to preserve biological material. Indeed, it is in this mine that human remains of the famed "Salt Men" were recovered, dessicated by the salt-rich environment. The new research confirms that this natural mummification process -- where water is removed from a corpse, preserving soft tissues that would otherwise be degraded -- also conserves animal remains.
- While ancient DNA is usually damaged and fragmented, the team found that the sheep mummy DNA was extremely well-preserved; with longer fragment lengths and less damage that would usually be associated with such an ancient age.
- The group attributes this to the mummification process, with the salt mine providing conditions ideal for preservation of animal tissues and DNA.
- The salt mine's influence was also seen in the microorganisms present in the sheep leg skin.
- Salt-loving archaea and bacteria dominated the microbial profile -- also known as the metagenome -- and may have also contributed to the preservation of the tissue.
- The team built a genetic impression of the sheep and discovered that the mummy lacked the gene variant associated with a woolly coat, while fibre analysis using Scanning Electron Microscopy found the microscopic details of the hair fibres consistent with hairy or mixed coat breeds.
- Using cross-disciplinary approaches we can learn about what ancient cultures valued in animals, and this study shows us that the people of Sasanian-era Iran may have managed flocks of sheep specialised for meat consumption, suggesting well developed husbandry practices.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/07/210714110531.htm

B) TRIBES OF INDIA

1. Ho
- Ho, also called Larka Kol, tribal people of the state of Bihar in India, concentrated in the area of Kolhān on the lower Chota Nagpur Plateau.
- They numbered about 1,150,000 in the late 20th century, mostly in Bihār and Orissa states of northeastern India.
- They speak a language of the Munda family and appear to have moved gradually into their territory from farther north.
- Their traditional social organization includes features common to those of other Munda-speaking tribes, including the institution of girls’ and boys’ dormitories, an elaborate system of village offices, and a territorial organization into quasi-military confederations.
- They trace their descent through the paternal line, and young people are expected to marry outside the paternal clan, but there is a prevalent custom of marrying one’s cousin on the maternal side.
- Marriage by elopement and by abduction are also traditionally common.
• The Ho worship spirits, some of which they believe to cause disease; they approach them through divination and witchcraft.

Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ho-people

2. Onge
• The Onge are an indigenous people of Little Andaman, one of the Andaman Islands in India.
• Traditionally hunter-gatherers, they are one of the Andamanese peoples and are designated as a Scheduled Tribe.
• They are a semi-nomadic tribe and fully dependent on the food provided by nature.
• They have been provided with pucca houses, food, clothes, medicine etc. by the Administration.
• They eat turtles, fish, roots, jack fruits etc.
• They have developed artistry and crafts.
• They live in houses made up of bamboo, grass and other natural material.
• The Onge consider that pregnancy in a woman is only possible with the help of a spirit that lives in the sky over Little Andaman and the soul of the baby is transferred to the spirit.

Reference:
3. Kurumba Tribe

- Kurumba, a people living in the Cardamom and Nilgiri Hills, west-central TN state, southern India.
- Originally pastoralists, the Kurumba were probably identical with or closely related to the Pallavas.
- With the decline of the Pallav in the 8th century, Kurumba forefathers dispersed over a wide area of southern India, becoming geographically separated from each other and culturally distinct.
- The members of these subdivisions survived by hunting and gathering, by petty agriculture, or as slaves. Today some Kurumba are field labourers or hunters who market jungle produce.
- Kurumba groups, which are commonly isolated from each other, are governed by a headman with two assistants, who handle disputes.
- Partially Hinduized, they have abandoned many traditional customs.
- The Kuruba, an ethnologically similar people who live on the plains as small landowners and herders of sheep, are now considered distinct from the hill Kurumba.

Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Azerbaijani-people

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Tribes & Forests (S.N. - 1992)
2. Epidemiology (10 Marks - 2000)

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. Ho Rebellion (15 Marks)