ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

27.07.2021

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. Buxwaha Rock Shelters

- Buxwaha diamond colliery in Chhatarpur has turned out to be a mine of Indian heritage which traces back to an unfathomable antiquity.
- According to a study by the Archaeological Survey of India, rock shelters with historic and prehistoric paintings have come to light.
- Now that three rock shelters with paintings of the Mesolithic Age have been ferreted out at the diamond mine site, locals are worried about protecting their heritage.
- Besides the paintings, the archaeologists have also come across several ancient idols of Ganesh and Hanuman.
- To save those precious paintings and idols, public interest litigation was filed at the high court, Jabalpur.
- They discovered many such artifacts from the womb of the site that depict the glorious past of the country.
- Most of the paintings are made at the ceiling of the cave. Ancient men used white colour and charcoal to make them. These paintings are still decipherable.
- Most of the paintings in this rock shelter are of historic period, but there are a few that belong to the Mesolithic Age. They are X-ray style paintings.
- Therefore, it shows that the ancient men used this cave as a settlement for a long time. The paintings portray daily life, flora and fauna of the area and hunting scenes.

Reference:

2. Chimpanzees & Stone Age

- Unlike early human species, chimpanzees do not seem to be able to spontaneously make and use sharp stone tools, even when they have all the materials and incentive to do so.
- An international research team wanted to find out whether chimpanzees—one of the closest living relatives of humans—also possess the spontaneous ability to make sharp-edged stone tools.
- This had previously been tested exclusively on great apes that had been enculturated or trained by humans and had been shown manufacturing techniques by humans.
- In the new experiments eleven chimpanzees at a zoo in Kristiansand, Norway, and Chimfunshi Wildlife Orphanage, a sanctuary in Zambia, were given two different sealed containers that contained food—visible through a Plexiglas pane. But they could only get at it by making stone tools.
- They were given a stone core and hammer stones to knock sharp-edged stones off this core.
Unlike in all previous studies, the apes tested were not given the opportunity to learn how to make such tools by observing experienced individuals or humans.

Although the chimpanzees likely understood that the containers contained food and although they were also clearly motivated to get their hands on the food rewards, none of the animals in the test even attempted to make and use stone tools.

The research team concludes that chimpanzees do not have the spontaneous ability to create complex tools from rocks, even if they use stones in the wild.

In 1987, chimpanzees in southeastern Guinea, eastern Liberia and western Ivory Coast were observed to use large rocks to crack open palm nuts.

Older chimpanzees teach younger ones the needed skills, showing them where to find outcrops of bedrock in the jungle and how to select the best rocks to use as a sort of hammer and as an anvil.

The lineages of humans and great apes separated about seven million years ago. The ability to make and use sharp stone tools probably developed in humans long after this separation.

The first stone tools made by early hominids appeared in Africa about 2.6 million years ago. They were made from chipped cobbles or larger flakes that had been carefully selected for size and weight. Such simple tools persisted almost unchanged until about 250,000 years ago, when more elaborate tools, like blades or small, delicate artifacts, appear in the archaeological record.

Reference:

3. Haryana’s Stone Age Tools & Cave Paintings

Haryana archaeology dept are yet to carry out a full survey, but believe they've discovered possibly the largest Paleolithic site in the Indian subcontinent.

Prehistoric cave paintings belonging to the Paleolithic era, and rock shelters as well as tools and tool-making equipment, presumably dating back to the lower or early Paleolithic era have been found hiding in plain sight in the Aravallis.

The Paleolithic era, or the Old Stone Age, dates back to 10,000 BC when humans still lived as hunters and gatherers.

Tools belonging to the Stone Age have been found in rock shelters as well as in open-air sites, spread across nearly 5,000 hectares.

Haryana is known as the cradle of Indian civilization. Earlier, 28 sites dating back to the Harappan and pre-Harappan era had been discovered in the state. However, cave paintings and rock art sprawling in such a large area have been discovered for the first time. This discovery suggests that the history here could be 1 lakh years old.
● While the Aravalli range is known for housing prehistoric remains, the latest discovery is the first time rock paintings have been found here. While the rock art and tools are estimated to be about 1 lakh years old, the paintings might not be older than 20,000-40,000 years.
● Based on initial observations, Bhattacharya said, it appeared humans had settled in this area for quite some time as the archaeologists noticed that the pattern of drawing had evolved. This gives them a chance to trace how early humans developed their tool making skills.
● Some are line drawings, which are the oldest, when humans hadn’t really figured out how to draw complex patterns. Then we can see drawings of different geometric shapes, foliage, animals and human figures. We’ve found some symbols that look like cup marks, which had presumably been kept for some special purpose.

Reference:

B. TRIBAL AFFAIRS
1. Papua New Guinea tribes

Context:
Police are warning an “all-out war” could erupt in Eastern Highlands province in Papua New Guinea, after 19 people were killed in tribal violence late last week.

Highlights:
● High-powered weapons, as well as a hand grenade, were used in fighting, causing 19 deaths, with many more people unaccounted for, and properties destroyed.
● The fighting, between the Agarabi and Tapo clans, was over a land ownership dispute and broke out just miles outside from Kainantu Town in Eastern Highlands Province.
● Tribal conflicts are a frequent occurrence in Papua New Guinea's highlands, but an influx of automatic weapons has made clashes more deadly and escalated the cycle of violence.
● In 2019, at least 24 people including two pregnant women and their unborn children were killed in Hela province when highland clans clashed apparently over control of local gold deposits in the region's mineral-rich soil.

Reference:

2. Limboo, Tamang tribes

Limboo/ Limbu tribe -
● The Limbu are indigenous and native people of the Himalayan Limbuwan region of Nepal. However, a small number of Limbu also live in the western Sikkim and Bhutan.
- Language spoken - Limbu
- The Limbus practice subsistence farming traditionally. Rice and maize comprises their principal crops. Although there is an abundance of arable land, productivity is greatly limited by inefficient technology.
- Limbu Women weave Dhaka Fabric cloth on their traditional small hand looms made from bamboo and wood
- Limbus usually made their traditional dish from homegrown domesticated livestock meats like beef, lamb, mutton, poultry, pork, fish and yak over factory farming.

**Tamang tribe**
- Tamang People are found in Nepal; In India, they are found in districts of Darjeeling and Sikkim.
- About 90% of the Tamang are Buddhist
- Their typical song and dance style is known as Tamang Selo, and includes songs of humor, satire, joy and sorrow.
- Tamang villages are often visited on Nepal's numerous trekking routes, one being labelled Tamang Heritage Trail

**Reference:**

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

1. What are the significant factors responsible for tribal unrest  
   **(15 Marks - 2014)**

2. Give an account of the field methods used in the study of archaeological anthropology  
   **(15 marks - 2018)**

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**DAILY PRACTICE QUESTION/S FOR MAINS 2021.**

Please do not forget to upload your answer sheet for a peer review on the telegram channel: **Sosin for Anthropology Q&A**

1. Is culture unique to Humans? Comment  
   **(20 Marks)**