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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Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at
the end of every topic.
A. Social Anthropology
Marriage customs across Asia
1. Tamil Wedding

- Renowned Tamil scholar Ira Ilankumaranar revived ancient Tamil marriage rituals naming it as ‘Aadhi Tamil Murai Thirumanam’.
- According to him, every celebration like house-warming, birthday, etc., can be performed the Tamil way.
- In the marriages performed in the ancient Tamil style, there is no place for any kind of religious rituals like setting a homa (a fire ritual) or having a Brahmin priest or any other grand decorations or materials.
- Just four flower garlands, a photo or small idol of Thiruvalluvar, a lamp and a mike were enough to conduct the marriage ceremony.
- At first, the bride should be seated on the right side of the groom. Then the people who are presiding over the wedding ceremony should come to the stage and the bride and groom will read or sing a prayer in the Tamil language. It could also be a prayer about nature.
- Secondly, both the garlanded bride and groom should honour their parents by seeking their blessings.
- Thirdly, the bride and groom should exchange flower garlands with each other and the groom would tie the nuptial knot. Then, the bride should sit on the left side of the groom and finally, they light the lamp.
2. Yakut
- The Yakuts, or the Sakha, are a Turkic ethnic group who mainly live in the Republic of Sakha in the Russian Federation.
- The parents of the bride assemble their relatives and take her to the groom’s house.
- The arrival of the male and female matchmakers is called the tiungnur hodohoi tiuser.
- Horses adorned with decorated saddles fetch the bride’s dowry and the cattle are brought.
- The men ride away first, and the horse carrying the bride is led by one of the people from her bridal party.
- Upon arriving at the groom’s house, she sends three men with the greatest capacity for alcohol to drink liquor in large quantities. Only after they have finished can the bride enter.

3. Hmong
- The Hmong people are an ethnic group living mainly in southern China, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar.
- The courting period generally occurs during the New Year festival, when young people, dressed in their best, gather in the vicinity of the village to play catch with black cloth balls made by the women.
- With women and men forming separate lines, each woman throws a ball to the man of her choice. If he is interested, he simply catches the ball.
- Wedding festivities begin at the groom’s house, and his family must prepare two pigs, two to four chickens and 10 bottles of Hmong liquor.
- A chicken is sacrificed and placed on a table where the go-betweens (the matchmakers) are honoured.
4. Orang Asli

- Orang Asli are the heterogeneous indigenous population that forms a national minority and also the oldest inhabitants of Peninsular Malaysia.
- The ceremony starts with the sharpening of teeth for both bride and groom in the belief that it will help get rid of previous misfortunes and mould the couple into more mature individuals.
- They are then required to perform the Berinai ceremony, where their hands are covered in henna leaves until morning.
- The bride lives in the groom’s house for a few days before moving to the bride’s home for another few days.
- This is so that the newlyweds can get acquainted with their new families soon after marriage.
5. Rukai
- The Rukai are one of the indigenous people of Taiwan.
- On the day before the wedding ceremony, there is a pre-marriage rehearsal conducted in the main village square.
- Women wearing the traditional Rukai clothing consisting of elaborate beaded costumes and headdresses adorned with feathers prepare for the wedding feast the next day.
- The bride emerges in the attire she put on the day before and the groom wears tight brocade leggings and a bright tunic.
- The long ceremony involves a parade of dowries such as pottery, cloth and hunted boar.

6. Kurd
- Kurds or Kurdish people are an Iranian ethnic group native to a mountainous region of Western Asia known as Kurdistan, which spans southeastern Turkey, northwestern Iran, northern Iraq, and northern Syria.
- Elderly relatives of the man visit the bride’s home before the actual ceremony and ask for some water, which is served by the girl, giving them a chance to judge her stature, character and appearance.
- Should they be impressed, they organise a second visit for wedding preparations to begin.
- Different types of music performance using storytelling and poetry techniques are showcased by traditional musicians, and this begins one day before the actual event.
References:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Describe the various ways of getting a mate in a primitive society. Give Examples from the Indian Context (L.Q. - 1994)
2. Incest Taboo (S.N. - 2006)

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. Forms of marriage. (20 Marks)