ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

07.08.2021

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. TRIBAL / COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
1. Hunter - Gatherer Culture
- Hunter-gatherer culture is a type of subsistence lifestyle that relies on hunting and fishing animals and foraging for wild vegetation and other nutrients like honey, for food.
- Until approximately 12,000 years ago, all humans practiced hunting-gathering.
- Anthropologists have discovered evidence for the practice of hunter-gatherer culture by modern humans (Homo sapiens) and their distant ancestors dating as far back as two million years.
- Before the emergence of hunter-gatherer cultures, earlier groups relied on the practice of scavenging animal remains that predators left behind.
- Because hunter-gatherers did not rely on agriculture, they used mobility as a survival strategy.
- Indeed, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle required access to large areas of land, between seven and 500 square miles, to find the food they needed to survive. This made establishing long-term settlements impractical, and most hunter-gatherers were nomadic.
- Hunter-gatherer groups tended to range in size from an extended family to a larger band of no more than about 100 people.
- With the beginnings of the Neolithic Revolution about 12,000 years ago, when agricultural practices were first developed, some groups abandoned hunter-gatherer practices to establish permanent settlements that could provide for much larger populations.
- However, many hunter-gatherer behaviors persisted until modern times. As recently as 1500 C.E., there were still hunter-gatherers in parts of Europe and throughout the Americas. Over the last 500 years, the population of hunter-gatherers has declined dramatically.
- Today very few exist, with the Hadza people of Tanzania being one of the last groups to live in this tradition.

Reference:
https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/hunter-gatherer-culture/
2. Tuaregs

- The Tuareg people are about 2 million nomadic people who live across the Sahara Desert, including in the North African countries of Mali, Niger, Libya, Algeria and Chad.
- The Tuaregs are part of the Berber group of people, and they are largely Muslim.
- Much of Tuareg art is in the form of jewelry, leather and metal saddle decorations, and finely crafted swords.
- The Tuareg population spreads across the borders of several countries, but the largest concentration is in Mali, with an estimated 950,000.
- The Tuaregs are kind of like the Kurds of the Middle East. They’re a substantial ethnic population that crosses the boundaries of several countries, but have no majority in any one country.
- As a result, many Tuaregs are pressing for better representation or for their own territory.
- For thousands of years, the Tuareg economy revolved around trans-Saharan trade.
- Tuareg usually traded in luxury items, which took up little space and on which a large profit could be made.
- Tuareg men begin wearing a veil at age 25, which conceals their entire face excluding their eyes. This veil is never removed, even in front of family members. It is believed that men began wearing the veil to protect their faces from the Sahara sands.
- Tuareg women are not veiled.

Reference:

3. Vikings

- Viking, also called Norseman or Northman, member of the Scandinavian seafaring warriors who raided and colonized wide areas of Europe from the 9th to the 11th century and whose disruptive influence profoundly affected European history.
- The Vikings were made up of landowning chieftains and clan heads, their retainers, freemen, and any energetic young clan members who sought adventure and booty overseas.
● At home these Scandinavians were independent farmers, but at sea they were raiders and pillagers.
● During the Viking period the Scandinavian countries seem to have possessed a practically inexhaustible surplus of manpower, and leaders of ability, who could organize groups of warriors into conquering bands and armies, were seldom lacking.
● The exact ethnic composition of the Viking armies is unknown in particular cases, but the Vikings’ expansion in the Baltic lands and in Russia can reasonably be attributed to the Swedes.

Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Viking

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY
1. Cardiovascular disease & Plant based diet
● Eating a plant-centered diet during young adulthood is associated with a lower risk of heart disease in middle age, according to a long-term study with about 30 years of follow-up.
● A separate study with about 15 years of follow-up found that eating more plant-based foods that have been shown to lower cholesterol, called the 'Portfolio Diet', is associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women.
● One study, titled "A Plant-Centered Diet and Risk of Incident Cardiovascular Disease during Young to Middle Adulthood," evaluated whether long-term consumption of a plant-centered diet and a shift toward a plant-centered diet starting in young adulthood are associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease in midlife.
Earlier research was focused on single nutrients or single foods, yet there is little data about a plant-centered diet and the long-term risk of cardiovascular disease.

Participants who received higher scores ate a variety of beneficial foods, while people who had lower scores ate more adverse foods. Overall, higher values correspond to a nutritionally rich, plant-centered diet.

Researchers found:

- During 32 years of follow-up, 289 of the participants developed cardiovascular disease (including heart attack, stroke, heart failure, heart-related chest pain or clogged arteries anywhere in the body).
- People who scored in the top 20% on the long-term diet quality score (meaning they ate the most nutritionally rich plant foods and fewer adversely rated animal products) were 52% less likely to develop cardiovascular disease, after considering several factors (including age, sex, race, average caloric consumption, education, parental history of heart disease, smoking and average physical activity).
- In addition, between year 7 and 20 of the study when participants ages ranged from 25 to 50, those who improved their diet quality the most (eating more beneficial plant foods and fewer adversely rated animal products) were 61% less likely to develop subsequent cardiovascular disease, in comparison to the participants whose diet quality declined the most during that time.
- There were few vegetarians among the participants, so the study was not able to assess the possible benefits of a strict vegetarian diet, which excludes all animal products, including meat, dairy and eggs.

Reference:
https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2021/08/210804123607.htm

2. Avian Brain Shape in Dinosaurs

- A team of paleontologists has digitally reconstructed the facial skeleton and brain endocast of Ichthyornis dispar, a toothed stem bird that lived in North America during the Late Cretaceous epoch and has traditionally been considered the nearest known well-understood relative of living birds.
- Birds today are the most diverse group of land vertebrates, and understanding why living birds alone among dinosaurs survived the end-Cretaceous mass extinction is crucial to reconstructing the history of life.
- Hypotheses proposed to explain this pattern demand identification of traits unique to the living birds.
- However, this identification is complicated by a lack of data from non-avian birds.
- Using X-ray computed tomography (CT), Dr. Torres and his colleagues examined a 70-million-year-old nearly complete skull of Ichthyornis dispar, a stem bird that went extinct at the same time as other non-avian dinosaurs.
• *Ichthyornis dispar* had a blend of avian and non-avian dinosaur-like characteristics, including jaws full of teeth but tipped with a beak.
• With CT-imaging data, the researchers created a 3D replica of *Ichthyornis dispar*'s brain called an endocast.
• They compared that endocast with ones created for living birds and more distant dinosaurian relatives.
• They found that the brain of *Ichthyornis dispar* had more in common with non-avian dinosaurs than living birds.
• In particular, the cerebral hemispheres — where higher cognitive functions such as speech, thought and emotion occur in humans — are much bigger in living birds than in *Ichthyornis dispar*. That pattern suggests that these functions could be connected to surviving the mass extinction.

*Reference:*

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

1. Nutritional Anthropology  
   (S.N. - 1998)
2. Concept of Race  
   (10 Marks -2017)

1. **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. Evolution in humans is a continuing process. Comment.  
   (20 Marks)