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. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Scheduled Tribes in India

- The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the Constitution of India. Article 366 (25) defined scheduled tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of this constitution".
- Article 342, prescribes procedure to be followed in the matter of specification of scheduled tribes.
- The President may, with respect to any State or Union territory, and where it is a state, after consultation with the Governor thereof by public notification, specify the tribes or tribal communities or parts of or groups within tribes or tribal communities which shall, for the purposes of this constitution, be deemed to be scheduled tribes in relation to that state or Union Territory, as the case may be.
- Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled tribes specified in a notification issued under clause(1) any tribe or tribal community or part of or group within any tribe or tribal community, but save as aforesaid, a notification issued under the said clause shall not be varied by any subsequent notification.
- Thus, the first specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to a particular State/ Union Territory is by a notified order of the President, after consultation with the State governments concerned.
- These orders can be modified subsequently only through an Act of Parliament. The Article also provides for listing of scheduled tribes State/Union Territory wise and not on an all India basis.
- The criterion followed for specification of a community, as scheduled tribes are indications of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the community at large, and backwardness. This criterion is not spelt out in the Constitution but has become well established. It subsumes the definitions contained in 1931 Census, the reports of first Backward Classes Commission 1955, the Advisory Committee (Kalelkar), on Revision of SC/ST lists (Lokur Committee), 1965 and the Joint Committee of Parliament on the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes orders (Amendment) Bill 1967 (Chanda Committee), 1969.

Reference:
https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/scheduled-tribes-welfare/scheduled-tribes-in-india

2. Forest Rights Act

- The Forest Rights Act is under the sole purview of the Tribal Affairs Ministry, but the joint communication brings in the Environment and Forests Ministry, thereby giving power to the Forest Department.
The Act essentially empowers traditional forest dwellers with control over the forest area and its resources. However, according to the experts, the new communique seems to give the Forest Department backdoor control over the forest and its resources.

The Forest Rights Act is under the sole purview of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. With the joint communication, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has also been brought within the purview of the implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

This, according to experts, attempts to give more power to the Forest Department in conserving, protecting and managing the forest and its resources, which, in turn, could dilute the rights of the forest dwellers as prescribed in the Forest Rights Act.

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 — commonly known as the Forest Rights Act (FRA) — recognises the rights of the Forest Dwelling Scheduled Tribes (FDSTs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs) to the forest resources and their right to occupation in the forest land where they have been residing for generations.

The Act was formulated following the long-standing demand of the tribal activists and groups, aiming to “undo the historical injustice” done to the forest-dwelling communities since the colonial period.

The Act protects their rights to access and use the forest resources “in the manner that they were traditionally accustomed, to protect, conserve and manage forests, protect forest dwellers from unlawful evictions and also provides for basic development facilities for the community of forest dwellers to access facilities of education, health, nutrition, infrastructure, etc.”

Reference:

3. Koya Tribe

The future of Koya tribal culture, primarily the dance form, looks bleak in Andhra Pradesh as a majority of the Koya tribals will face a cultural shock with the submergence of our region and rehabilitation to non-forest-dwellings to make way for the Polavaram irrigation project.

In East Godavari, nearly 200 performers are active. Half of them are women performers who perform anywhere outside their habitats. Over 90% of them are in the 20-30 age group, according to the Koya tribals.

The tribe's tradition is to perform the dance during the festivals of local deities, Mahua harvest, ‘bhumi puja’, and weddings.

“Our tribe did not hear about any policy from the State government for the promotion and conservation of our dance since the merger. Once rehabilitated, the future of our tribal cultural practices and dance will be in question. Had we not been merged, our future would have been rosy,” said the Kommu dance performers.
Once displaced, there will be unimaginable changes to the cultural and traditional life. The impact that the absence of the forests will have on their lives cannot be expressed in words, given their association with it for generations.

In the new settlements of the Koya tribal families, the unique drum will fall silent. The horns of the Bison (Indian Gaur), worn by the male dancer, will be the sole reminder of their past.

Reference:

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Penicillin & Brain Disorders
- Penicillin in early life changes microbiome and gene expression, which allows cells to respond to its changing environment, in key areas of the developing brain, according to new research.
- Penicillin and related medicines (like ampicillin and amoxicillin) are the most widely used antibiotics in children worldwide.
- In the United States, the average child receives nearly three courses of antibiotics before the age of two. Similar or greater exposure rates occur in many other countries.
- In the study, Professor Blaser and his colleagues compared mice that were exposed to low-dose penicillin in utero or immediately after birth to those that were not exposed.
- They found that mice given penicillin experienced substantial changes in their intestinal microbiota and had altered gene expression in the frontal cortex and amygdala, two key areas in the brain responsible for the development of memory as well as fear and stress responses.
- A growing body of evidence links phenomena in the intestinal tract with signaling to the brain, a field of study known as the gut-brain-axis.
- If this pathway is disturbed, it can lead to permanent altering of the brain’s structure and function and possibly lead to neuropsychiatric or neurodegenerative disorders in later childhood or adulthood.

Reference:

2. Microfossils in South Africa
- Paleontologists have discovered the exceptionally well-preserved, 3.42-billion-year-old filamentous microfossils in a paleo-subseafloor hydrothermal vein system in what is now South Africa; the filaments colonized the walls of conduits created by low-temperature hydrothermal fluid; combined with their morphological and chemical characteristics, they can be considered the oldest methane-cycling microorganisms, most likely methanogens.
- The researchers found exceptionally well-preserved evidence of fossilized microbes that appear to have flourished along the walls of cavities created by warm water from hydrothermal systems a few meters below the seafloor.
Sub-surface habitats, heated by volcanic activity, are likely to have hosted some of Earth’s earliest microbial ecosystems and this is the oldest example that we have found to date.

All of the filaments are embedded in chert (α-quartz) and are composed of moderately ordered carbon, consistent with ancient permineralized cellular remains.

The chemical composition of the filaments includes most of the major bio essential elements.

The interaction of cooler seawater with warmer subsurface hydrothermal fluids would have created a rich chemical soup, with variations in conditions leading to multiple potential microhabitats.

These findings could extend the record of Archaea fossils for the first time into the era when life first emerged on Earth.

Reference:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes (S.N. - 2006)
2. Tribes & Forests (S.N. - 1998)

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. Comment on the interconnection between tribals and forests. (15 Marks)