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. TRIBAL AFFAIRS

1. Tribal Women & Health

Context:
The reproductive health of women encompasses their holistic healthcare, including physical, mental, and social well-being. Tribal women are mostly malnourished, and their daily intake of adequate nutrients continues to be much below the recommended standards. This has been a critical challenge adding to the health crisis in tribal regions.

Highlights:
- The rural and tribal women in India encounter challenging health issues owing to a range of factors. The factors include lack of adequate healthcare amenities, illiteracy, poor socio-economic status, nutritional deficiencies and traditional beliefs.
- Extreme health deprivation is often detrimental to sexual and reproductive health.
- The reproductive health of women encompasses their holistic healthcare, including physical, mental, and social well-being.
- Tribal women are mostly malnourished, and their daily intake of adequate nutrients continues to be much below the recommended standards. This has been a critical challenge adding to the health crisis in tribal regions.
- The nutritional status of women reflects directly on their cultural practices and socio-economic situation. Malnutrition affects most women mainly during reproduction due to inadequate food consumption and lack of a nutrient-enriched diet.
- A study on the nutritional status of tribal women enlists that these women are under the condition of severe stress and more vulnerable to malnutrition and related health problems. Therefore, advocating the reverence of sustaining good reproductive health through proper nutritional dietary habits is critical to protect women’s health that is often overlooked.

Reference:

2. Sohrai Art

Context:
Sohrai art from Jharkhand got a GI tag last year. The traditional wall mural painting practised by the women folk for centuries, predominantly by the tribal communities in Hazaribagh, is in danger of disappearing. But efforts are on to revive it.

Highlights:
- Sohrai is prevalent in about 13 villages of Hazaribagh district.
- The walls bear paintings of elephants facing each other, fishes swimming past, a preening peacock with its feathers unfurled and fluttering birds. It is like looking at a giant picture book of magical creatures, staring out of its pages.
- Some of the paintings are on a black backdrop, or on the natural colour, on the mud walls.
- Red, black and white are the predominant colours used. The women first draw the outlines in white and fill up the figures with black and red.
- Most of the colours used for the paintings are derived from mud.
- The red is derived from iron oxide and the black comes from a manganese-rich clay found in certain hilly areas. The creamy white colour is kaolin and called dudhi matti.
- Sohrai has many variations. In some villages, a broken comb or a twig from a neem tree is used as a brush, in others, like it is in Oriya, cloth is dipped in colour and used as a brush on the walls.
- In 2018, the Sohrai Kohvar Mahila Kala Vikas Samiti, a cooperative body comprising women artists, was formed in Hazaribagh. The cooperative today has over 300 members.

Reference:

3. Tribal People & FRA

Context:
Tribals to have no rights to sell-out land if their claims get the nod under FRA

Highlights:
- Maintaining that the rights conferred under Forest Rights Act-2006 to tribal and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers shall be "heritable but not alienable or transferable" said noted tribal researcher Dr Javaid Rahi. He stated that Tribal shall have no right to sell out or sublet any such land to anyone within or outside the tribe, after getting rights under Forest Rights Act. He was addressing a virtual meeting on the implementation of Forest Rights Act in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers not only derive their livelihoods from forest resources but they celebrate 'Jungle' as an integral part of their culture and ethnicity.
- In order to settle the individual claims and community rights on Forest Land a proper survey, settlement, and land record, their customary rights over forest land are basic requirements.
- FRA implementation will not only end the harassment of tribes but provide a sense of confidence and responsibility among them.
- Now tribes are not only entitled to ownership rights on Forests but they are eligible to cultivate, use minor forest produce except timber, access to water resources besides they will now have grazing rights on Forest lands, as well.

Reference:
4. Tribal Nutritional Concerns

Context:
Lockdown might hit nutrition of Karnataka’s tribal communities, warns NGO

Highlights:
● Tribals and forest dwelling communities, who receive nutrition supplement from the Centre under Tribal Sub Plan for six months in a year, have sought the extension of the same for one year due to the pandemic. This is necessary since they are not getting any employment during lockdown, argue NGOs.
● The supplement is released through the Integrated Tribal Development Plan and was originally conceived to distribute nutritious food during the rainy season. This is because forest dwelling tribes tend to go without work during monsoon.
● S. Sreekanth of Development through Education (DEED), an NGO working on tribal development issues, said that the Government had released the nutritional component in advance due to the lockdown induced by the pandemic.
● In all, 11,000 adivasi families benefit from the scheme in Mysuru district alone and the scheme is applicable to tribals across the State.
● The nutritional supplement provided by the Government includes 30 eggs, half a kg of ghee, 2 kg jaggery, 8 kg of rice, ragi or wheat, 2 kg of green gram, 1 kg of ground nut or horse gram apart from 2 liters of vegetable oil per family.
● Meanwhile, Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has also raised the issue and said that in the absence of work and depleted income due to the lockdown, tribal communities could face severe malnutrition.

Reference:

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Darwin’s theory
● When Charles Darwin published Descent of Man 150 years ago, he launched scientific investigations on human origins and evolution.
● Three leading scientists in different, but related disciplines published “Modern theories of human evolution foreshadowed by Darwin’s Descent of Man,” in Science, in which they identify three insights from Darwin’s opus on human evolution that modern science has reinforced.
● Their goal with this review summary was to apply the framework of modern speciation theory to human origins and summarize recent research to highlight the fact that Darwin’s Descent of Man foreshadowed many recent scientific developments in the field.
● They focused on the following three insights:
  ● We share many characteristics with our closest relatives, the anthropoid apes, which include genetic, developmental, physiological, morphological, cognitive, and psychological characteristics.
  ● Humans have a talent for high-level cooperation reinforced by morality and social norms.
● We have greatly expanded the social learning capacity that we see already in other primates.  
References:  

2. DNA matters  
● In a world flooded with data, figuring out where and how to store it efficiently and inexpensively becomes a larger problem every day. One of the most exotic solutions might turn out to be one of the best: archiving information in DNA molecules.  
● DNA storage is potentially less expensive, more energy-efficient and longer lasting. Studies show that DNA properly encapsulated with a salt remains stable for decades at room temperature and should last much longer in the controlled environs of a data center.  
● DNA molecules are made from four types of bases, or nucleotides, each identified by a letter: adenine (A), thymine (T), guanine (G) and cytosine (C). They are the basis of all DNA code, providing the instruction manual for building every living thing on earth.  
● The complete set of DNA molecules makes up the genome—the blueprint of your body. By synthesizing DNA molecules—making them from scratch—researchers have found they can specify, or write, long strings of the letters A, C, G and T and then read those sequences back.  
● The method has been proven to work, but reading and writing the DNA-encoded files currently takes a long time. Appending a single base to DNA takes about one second. Writing an archive file at this rate could take decades, but research is developing faster methods, including massively parallel operations that write to many molecules at once.  
References:  

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:  
1. Direction of Tribal Change (S.N. - 1993)  
2. Discuss the contemporary trends in evolutionary studies (L.Q. - 1992)

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. Tribal nutritional concerns. (15 Marks)