ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

15.10.2021

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. SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Hindutva

- The word Hindutva is morphologically of Sanskrit but was never used in that language by anyone. It is a very modern Sanskritised neologism, formed by suffixing -tva (denoting quality of) to the borrowed Hindi noun “hindu”.
- The word “hindu” is a Persian borrowing, a reflex of Old Persian hi(n)duš as attested in the Achaemenid inscriptions, which is in turn a likely borrowing from Sanskrit sindhuḥ. Therefore, the word “hindutva” literally implies “hinduness”.
- Like the word, Hindutva is a relatively modern movement with pretensions of classical vintage.
- There is a kernel of the Hindu reformist thought that goes back to the Maratha state, that in turn owes some debt to the Bhakti Movement of the 14th-17th centuries.
- The Bhakti movement was a proto-Reformation of Hinduism strengthening its hold in the masses and anti-Caste as many of the Bhakti ideologues were non-Brahmins opposed to old Hindu orthodoxy.
- The overall result of the movement was to strengthen the devotional, personal-God aspect of Hinduism, popularisation of epic narratives (Ramayana, Mahabharata, Hanuman Chalisa, etc.) and a departure from the norm that authorities on local religious thought/philosophy had to be Brahmin born.
- Bhakti movement had an aspect of competition with Islam, in trying to absorb it within a broader Indic tradition (cf. Sikhism).
- It also had a proselytising role in converting heterodox ("pagan") peoples to Hinduism (cf. conversions to gauḍīya vaiśnavism in Bengal, Tripura, Hinduisation of Gorkhas, Axom, etc.).
- A significant part of what we know of Hinduism today is a result of the Bhakti reform that happened right under the noses of the Mughals.
- The generation of upper-middle class Westernised elite which arose among Hindus in the half century between the Indian Sepoy Mutiny and the beginning of the 20th century were a reformed (and deracinated) subject people.

Reference:
https://scroll.in/global/994524/hindutva-is-the-woke-culture-of-india

2. Structural - Racism

Definition: Structural Racism in the U.S. is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics — historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal — that routinely advantage whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It is a system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by white supremacy — the preferential treatment, privilege and power for white people at the expense of Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab and other racially oppressed people.

Scope: Structural Racism encompasses the entire system of white supremacy, diffused and infused in all aspects of society, including our history, culture, politics, economics and our entire social fabric. Structural Racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism — all other forms of racism (e.g. institutional, interpersonal, internalized, etc.) emerge from structural racism.
Indicators/Manifestations: The key indicators of structural racism are inequalities in power, access, opportunities, treatment, and policy impacts and outcomes, whether they are intentional or not. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually producing new, and reproducing old forms of racism.

Reference:

3. Irish Language

Context:
Irish language ‘definitely endangered’ as linguists predict it will vanish in the next century

Highlights:
- Irish is one of 12 languages in the EU at most risk of extinction, according to language learning platform Busuu.
- The study, which was collated using data from UNESCO’s Atlas of World Languages in Danger, lists Irish as “definitely endangered”.
- Busuu ranked the 12 languages in one of four categories used in the Atlas: vulnerable, definitely endangered, severely endangered or critically endangered.
- Linguists predict that at least 43pc of languages currently spoken in the world today will likely disappear in the next century, including Irish.
- UNESCO’s Atlas, along with Google, estimates that there are between 20,000 and 40,000 Irish speakers in the world.
- People learn languages that they see as useful and functional and that kind of limits the ability to really dive into the debts of some of the languages that are much more culturally significant to them but maybe not one that they are going to learn to high levels of proficiency.
- When asked how Ireland can encourage the language to be spoken more, the language expert said he believes a lot is already being done.
- Most governments to some extent or another are trying to save languages, Wales is with Welsh, Scotland is trying to save Scots Gaelic, and Isle of Man is trying to save Manx, yet all of these languages are still going.

Reference:

B. BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Titanosaurus fossils
- The newly-discovered species of titanosaurian sauropod dinosaur, named *Australotitan cooperensis*, is the largest species of dinosaur ever found in Australia.
- *Australotitan cooperensis* lived during the Cretaceous period, approximately 92-96 million years ago.
- The ancient giant belongs to Titanosauria, a diverse group of sauropod (long-necked plant-eating) dinosaurs.
- The fossilized skeleton of the new dinosaur was discovered in 2005 in the southern-central Winton Formation of the Eromanga Basin, Australia.
● In the early 2000s, Australia was at the beginning of a dinosaur-rush, with a number of significant new species of dinosaurs and megafauna being discovered in the past 20 years.
● The paleontologists found that *Australotitan cooperensis* was closely related to three other Australian sauropods that lived during the Cretaceous period.

*Reference:*

2. Vertebrate Genomes Project

*Context:* The Vertebrate Genome Project (VGP) today announces their flagship study and associated publications focused on genome assembly quality and standardization for the field of genomics.

*Highlights:*
● The study includes 16 diploid high-quality, near error-free, and near complete vertebrate reference genome assemblies for species across all taxa with backbones (i.e., mammals, amphibians, birds, reptiles, and fishes) from five years of piloting the first phase of the VGP project.
● The VGP details numerous technological improvements based on these 16 genome assemblies.
● In the flagship study, the VGP demonstrates the feasibility of setting and achieving high-quality reference genome quality metrics using their state-of-the-art automated approach of combining long-read and long-range chromosome scaffolding approaches with novel algorithms that put the pieces of the genome assembly puzzle together.
● The VGP is taking advantage of dramatic improvements in sequencing technologies in the last few years to begin production of high-quality reference genome assemblies for all ~70,000 living vertebrates.
● To date, the current VGP pipelines have led to the submission of 129 diploid assemblies representing the most complete and accurate versions of those species to date and is on the path to generating thousands of genome assemblies, demonstrating feasibility in not only quality standardization but also scale.
The excellent quality of these genome assemblies enables unprecedented novel discoveries which have implications for characterizing biodiversity for all life, conservation, and human health and disease.

Reference:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Describe Anthropological Approaches to the study of Religion. (LQ - 2006)
2. Categorize genes that influence human survival. (10 marks - 2018)

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. Structural Racism. (15 Marks)