ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

08.11.2021

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.
1. Homo Naledi

Context:
An international team of paleoanthropologists has discovered a partial skull and teeth from an immature individual of *Homo naledi*, a recently-discovered species of extinct hominin. The new fossil assemblage provides information about the maturation of *Homo naledi* and will be important in reconstructing the developmental sequence of immature remains from other *Homo naledi* occurrences.

Highlights:
- Homo Naledi was discovered in 2013 in a remote cave chamber of the Rising Star cave system, located outside of Johannesburg, South Africa, in the Cradle of Humankind World Heritage Site.
- This hominin species survived until 335,000-226,000 years ago, placing it in continental Africa at the same time as the early ancestors of anatomically modern *Homo sapiens* were arising.
- Its fossilized remains have previously been reported from two localities in the Rising Star cave system: the Dinaledi Chamber (U.W. 101) and Lesedi Chamber.
- Its very presence at that time and in this place complexifies our understanding of who did what first concerning the invention of complex stone tool cultures and even ritual practices.
- The new fossil assemblage — six *Homo naledi* teeth and 28 skull fragments, all consistent with a single immature individual — was recovered from a locality, designated U.W. 110, within a narrow fissure of the Dinaledi subsystem.
- Named the ‘Leti’ after the Setswana word ‘letimela’ meaning the ‘lost one,’ this *Homo naledi* child lived approximately 250,000 years ago and was between 4 and 6 years old.
- This is the first partial skull of a child of *Homo naledi* yet recovered and this begins to give us insight into all stages of life of this remarkable species.
- Having skull remains associated with teeth of the same individual is extremely important for understanding the growth and development of this species.
- The size of Leti’s brain is estimated at around 480 to 610 cm³.
Reference:

2. Grants under Article 275 (1) of the Constitution of India

Salient features of Constitutional Provision

1.1 Constitution of India provides as under: "Article 275. Grants from the Union to certain States — (1) Such sums as Parliament may by law provide shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India in each year as grants-in-aid of the revenues of such States as Parliament may determine to be in need of assistance, and different sums may be fixed for different states. Provided that there shall be paid out of the consolidated fund of India as grants in-aid of the revenues of a State such capital and recurring sums as may be necessary to enable that State to meet the costs of such schemes of development as may be undertaken by the State with the approval of the Government of India for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes in that state or raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas therein to that of the administration of the rest of the areas of that State."

1.2 Grants-in-aid under Proviso to Article 275(1) of Constitution of India are 100% annual grants from Government of India to States. It is charged to the Consolidated Fund of India (except grants for NE States, a voted item) and is an additive to State initiatives and efforts for Tribal Development.

Basic Objective

Following will be objectives for Programmes / activities funded with Grants In-aid under Proviso to Art. 275(1) of Indian Constitution [Art. 275(1) Grants] to bridge the gap between Scheduled Tribe (ST) population and others by accelerating development of STs by ensuring:

- Human resource development by enhancing their access to education and health services,
- Enhanced quality of life by raising the level of administration of the Scheduled Areas and also providing basic amenities in tribal areas / localities.
- Substantial reduction in poverty and unemployment through skill upgradation and other income generating opportunities, creation of backward and forward linkages and linkage with institutional finance for sustained income generation and creation of productive assets,
- Enhanced capacity to avail opportunities, gain rights & entitlements and improved facilities at par with other areas.

Reference:
https://tribal.nic.in/downloads/Article275/Article275Guidelines.pdf
3. Tribal Development Council Defunct

Context:
The State government’s plan to empower the marginalised and underprivileged seems to have gone kaput with the Special Development Council (SDC) set up in Nabarangpur district lying defunct for more than two years.

Highlights:
- In 2018, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had formed SDCs in nine districts including Nabarangpur for preservation and promotion of tribal culture, heritage and unique identity of indigenous communities in tandem with their socio-economic development.
- A year later just after the general elections, it was dissolved.
- As no funds have been allotted to the SDC after its dissolution, 70 per cent of the development work initiated by the council has been abandoned.
- Official sources said the SDC in Nabarangpur received Rs 15 crore in 2017-18 financial year and another Rs 15 crore in 2018-19. Of the total Rs 30 crore, Rs 29,99,11,000 was spent on various developmental works in the district while Rs 89,000 is left unspent.
- The projects which were initiated include construction of indigenous cultural clubs in all 189 gram panchayats of Nabarangpur and shrines of presiding deities in 451 villages.
- Besides, the council organised skill development programmes and had even issued identity cards to tribal artisans.
- The SDC had proposed a grant of Rs 2.5 crore for development of tribal artisans of the district. After the dissolution of the council, the proposal was not approved by the government.
- The SDC had also started construction work of the district tribal museum at Papadahandi block with an estimated cost of Rs 13 crore.
- Another objective of the council was to provide employment opportunities to tribals and in turn, prevent migration of youths to other states.
- With the SDC no longer in existence, this plan too has failed. Sources said every year, over 70,000 workers of Nabarangpur go outside the State in search of work.
- The government should immediately make the council operational for the welfare of tribals in Nabarangpur district.

Reference:

4. Brain Simulation

Context:
Researchers show it is possible to improve specific human brain functions related to self-control and mental flexibility by merging artificial intelligence with targeted electrical brain stimulation.

Highlights:
- The findings come from a human study conducted at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston among 12 patients undergoing brain surgery for epilepsy -- a procedure that places hundreds of tiny electrodes throughout the brain to record its activity and identify where seizures originate.
- The researchers identified a brain region -- the internal capsule -- that improved patients' mental function when stimulated with small amounts of electrical energy.
● That part of the brain is responsible for cognitive control -- the process of shifting from one thought pattern or behavior to another, which is impaired in most mental illnesses.
● An example might include a person with depression who just can’t get out of a 'stuck' negative thought. Because it is so central to mental illness, finding a way to improve it could be a powerful new way to treat those illnesses.
● The team developed algorithms, so that after stimulation, they could track patients' cognitive control abilities, both from their actions and directly from their brain activity.
● The controller method provided boosts of stimulation whenever the patients were doing worse on a laboratory test of cognitive control.
The study is the first to show that:
● A specific human mental function linked to mental illness can be reliably enhanced using precisely targeted electrical stimulation;
● There are specific sub-parts of the internal capsule brain structure that are particularly effective for cognitive enhancement; and
● A closed-loop algorithm used as a controller was twice as effective as stimulating at random times.

Reference:

5. Ancient Medical Techniques in Use
Many medical treatments from throughout history are considered shocking, barbaric or just plain weird today. Cocaine is no longer used as an anesthetic, for example, and the bygone era of lobotomies is thankfully over. But others have stood the test of time — albeit with changed rationales for their use.

Here are five examples of age-old procedures that doctors still turn to today.

● Leeching
Considered one of the oldest medical practices, the removal of blood for health purposes was a go-to treatment for thousands of years.

● Electroconvulsive Therapy
Treatment for severe depression or bipolar disorder. During this procedure, small electric currents are sent through the brain, triggering a short seizure believed to cause changes in the brain’s chemistry and relieve symptoms.

● Cataract Surgery
A leading cause of blindness worldwide is cataracts, which affect 24 million years aged 40 and older. Ancient Indians developed the first documented treatment, called “couching,” to address cataracts as early as 800 B.C. During coughing, physicians punctured the eye and manually dislodged and removed its cloudy lens.

● Trepanation
Trepanation, the practice of drilling a hole into the skull, is perhaps the world’s oldest surgical technique.

Reference:
https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/ancient-medical-treatments-still-used-today
UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:

1. Indebtedness among Tribal Communities  
   (10 Marks - 2017)

2. Discuss the emergence, Salient Features and Limitations of Tribal Sub - Plan  
   (15 Marks - 2017)

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 medical practices.  
   (15 Marks)