ANTHROPOLOGY NEWS DIARY

(AND)

19.11.2021

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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### UPSC ANTHROPOLOGY PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS

### PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR PEER REVIEW

*Note - For convenience, the respective reference links have been dropped at the end of every topic.*
1. Mobile connectivity project

- More than half of the over 7,200 uncovered villages, which are largely inhabited by people from tribal communities, that the Government aims to provide with 4G connectivity by 2023 at an estimated cost of ₹6,466 crore, fall in the State of Odisha, according to official data.
- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved provisioning of mobile services in 7,287 uncovered villages in 44 Aspirational Districts across the five States of Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Odisha that are among the most under-developed districts in India.
- The decision comes close on the heels of Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurating the Birsa Munda museum in Ranchi on the first-ever ‘Janjatiya Gaurav Divas’ or Tribal Pride Day, as part of efforts to reach out to tribal communities ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.
- While the exact tribal population that will benefit from the decision was not available, an official said it is likely to be in excess of about 36 lakh people across these villages.
- As per available data, 3,933 of the uncovered villages under the project fall in Odisha.
- According to the Department of Telecom estimates, as of August 2021, 5,72,551 out of 5,97,618 inhabited census villages of the country, including tribal and Left Wing Extremism affected areas, have mobile network coverage, while 25,067 inhabited villages do not have the coverage.

Reference:

2. Evolution of sex chromosomes

- Researchers from Tokyo Metropolitan University have identified unifying features in the early evolution of X and Y chromosomes.
- Newly evolved sex chromosomes in three fruit fly species showed the same genetic compensation mechanism found in other organisms.
- They also found common deterioration in both X and Y, plus key similarities between sex chromosomes derived from the same non-sex chromosome.
- The team's insights point to universal traits in sex chromosome evolution in nature.
- Chromosomes are long, winding DNA molecules containing all of an organism's genes.
- Different chromosomes contain different parts of a complete genetic code, all important in different ways.
- In the evolution of some animals, including humans, two of these chromosomes, dubbed "X" and "Y," can pick up certain genes and take on the role of determining how sexual characteristics develop. These are called allosomes, or sex chromosomes.
- It so happens that in a few species, sex chromosomes evolved within the last 1 million years, quite recently by evolutionary standards. What this provides is a rare glimpse into the early evolution of sex chromosomes, particularly how pseudogenization is progressing in these "neo-X" and "neo-Y" chromosomes.
- By comparing three different species with neo-X and neo-Y and those without, the team found a startling range of common traits. First, they confirmed that neo-Y was already losing genes, and that this was being made up for by an elevation in the activity of those in neo-X.
• Furthermore, for two species with neo-Y chromosomes derived from the same non-sex chromosome, they found that the same genes were being pseudogenized; i.e., evolution was happening in parallel in different species.

• The range of similarities found by the team point to universality in how sex chromosomes evolve, offering insights into the evolutionary mechanics of a wider range of organisms.

Reference:

3. Kabwe Cranium

• Kabwe cranium, also called Broken Hill cranium, is a fossilized skull of an extinct human species (genus Homo) found near the town of Kabwe, Zambia (formerly Broken Hill, Northern Rhodesia), in 1921.

• It was the first discovered remains of premodern Homo in Africa and until the early 1970s was considered to be 30,000 to 40,000 years old—only one-tenth its true age.

• The nearly complete cranium was found in association with a jaw fragment, a sacrum, and portions of pelvis and limb bones.

• The fossils, popularly known as Rhodesian man and at first given the taxonomic name H. rhodesiensis, convinced some scholars that African Homo lagged behind Eurasian Homo in acquiring modern anatomy.

• The Kabwe skull has archaic features, being massive and flattened in profile with brow ridges that are very large and continuous across the nasal bridge.

• The age of the remains is difficult to establish, but animal fossils also found at the site imply a date of 500,000 to 300,000 years ago. Unlike sites of comparable age in this region, the tool collection lacks Acheulean hand axes, although some were found in an excavation 280 km (170 miles) away.

Reference:
https://www.britannica.com/topic/Kabwe-cranium

4. Glimpse into early human development

• Scientists have been able to get a rare glimpse into a crucial, early stage of human development by analyzing an embryo in its third week after fertilization — a moment in time that has been difficult to study because of both practical and ethical considerations.

• European researchers looked at a single embryo that was 16 to 19 days old, donated by a woman who ended her pregnancy. Until now, experts said, researchers have lacked a full understanding of this stage of development because human embryos at this stage are difficult to obtain.
Most women don’t yet know they’re pregnant by this point and decades-old global guidelines have until recently prohibited growing human embryos in a lab beyond 14 days.

The study, published in the journal Nature, looked at “gastrulation,” which begins about 14 days after fertilization, when the embryo is still about the size of a poppy seed, and lasts a little more than a week.

“It’s during gastrulation that the different cells emerge, but they also start to be positioned in different places in forming the body so that they can carry out their functions and form the correct organs.

For decades, the so-called “14-day rule” on growing embryos in the lab has guided researchers, with some places, including the United Kingdom, writing it into law. Others, including the United States, have accepted it as a standard guiding scientists and regulators.

This research was not subject to the law because the embryo wasn’t grown in a lab. But it is an example of the types of things scientists expect to learn more about if rules are relaxed. Researchers found various types of cells, including red blood cells and “primordial germ cells” that give rise to egg or sperm cells.

The authors said they hope their work not only sheds light on this stage of development but also helps scientists learn from nature about how to make stem cells into particular types of cells that can be used to help heal damage or disease.

Reference:

5. Tangkhul Tribe

The heritage of tribal arts and crafts is not a free flowing expression of an individual creativity but an intellectually processed expression accepted by collective beliefs. Tangkhul tribe is one of the largest tribes of Manipur and they have been known for distinct traditions and culture of their own.

Tangkhul tribe are living in the Indo-Burma border area occupying the Ukhrul district of Manipur and Somra Tangkhul hills in Upper Burma (Myanmar). It is believed that they came to Manipur from China through Myanmar. According to a Greek astronomer and geographer, the Tangkhuls were believed to be settled in Samshok (Thuangdut) in Myanmar and they began to disperse from Samshok in different directions.

According to the elders of the community, the word 'Tangkhul' was derived from the Meitei dialect (largest ethnic group of Manipur). Tangkhul is a combination of the words "Tada" and "Khul". Tada means elder brother and The traditional textiles of Tangkhul can be broadly classified as unisex textiles, male (upper and lower) garments and female (upper and lower) garments. All the costumes consisted of draped garments. Little or no stitching was done. Draping required considerable expertise to make the costume look elegant as well as functional. Khul means village. Therefore, Tangkhul means the village of the elder brother.

Tangkhul tribe has a legendary textiles heritage in terms of traditional costumes, colours, specific design and motifs with significance and symbolism. The traditional textiles of the tribe are not only derived from the environmental physiology, but also marked socio-cultural meanings that reveal the societal norms. They reflect age, sex, social status and sacred or profane activities which appear in various contexts.

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Both unmarried and married women were engaged in the art of weaving. They made the requirement of their family for everyday use and for ceremonial wear. Traditionally, it was considered to be one of the basic skills to be learnt by a woman before getting married.

Cotton was the most preferred yarn to weave their fabrics. In earlier times, most of the Tangkhul villages not only wove cotton cloth but also cultivated cotton and spun it into yarn.

Red, black and white colours were dominantly used on their textiles as a base. Colours such as green, blue, yellow/orange were used for designing motifs. Earlier, the tribe people followed a dyeing process using naturally available materials such as fruits, barks and roots of different trees, clay and mud. They made the colour combinations ideally suited for the hill environment. They used to dye hand spun cotton yarn for their weaving as well as cane, bamboo stalk or animal hair for their accessories.

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The chief garments were shawls and sarongs-Kachon is a shawl and Kashan is a female sarong in Tangkhul dialects.

One of the famous shawls amongst the Tangkhul youths is Chonkhom Kachon. It is woven in a red base with broad black colour stripes. The shawl can be worn by the first youngest or second youngest male member of the family. It was also used as an over garment by unmarried womenfolk.

Reference:

UPSC Previous year questions based on today’s concept:
1. Asian Homo Erectus (10 Marks - 2014)
2. Tribal Education in the context of development (S.N. - 2000)

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. Kabwe cranium. (15 Marks)