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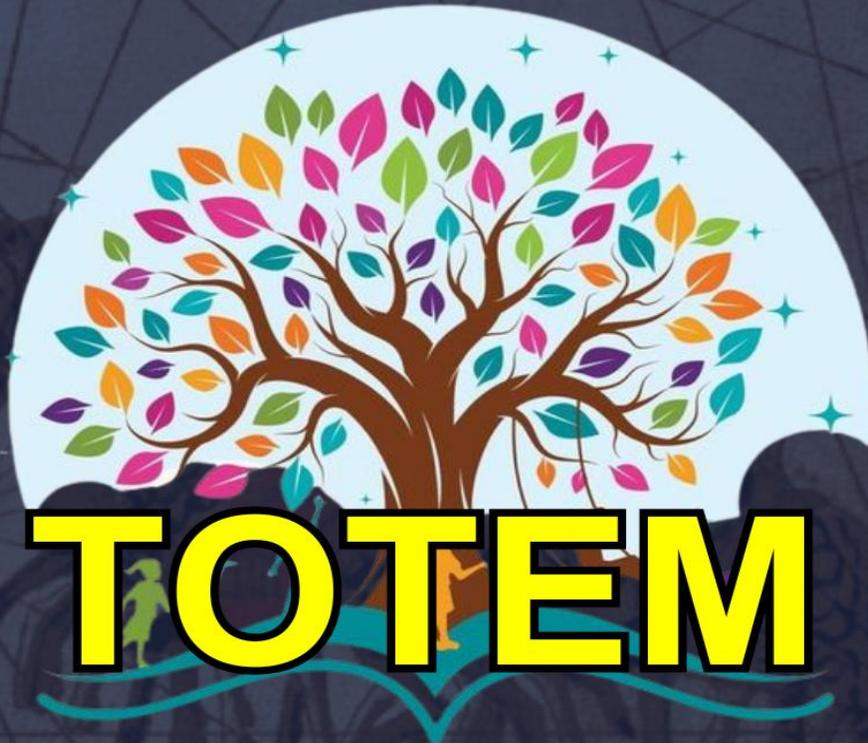
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PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Implications of Polygamy in India

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 2.3 Paper I)

- Personal Laws and Fundamental Rights: India's legal system faces inconsistencies, as personal laws allow polygamy for some communities (e.g., Muslims) while others (e.g., Hindus, Christians) enforce monogamy, raising questions about constitutional equality.
- **Conflict with Gender Justice:** Polygamy often conflicts with Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty), especially regarding a woman's dignity, autonomy, and mental well-being. The Supreme Court in several judgments (e.g., Shayara Bano v. Union of India, 2017) emphasized the need to uphold gender rights in personal laws. Social and Legal Complications: Polygamy is outlawed for Hindus under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, but is permitted under Muslim personal law (with conditions). Measures Needed to Address Implications of Polygamy Gradual Reform: Personal laws should be amended to ensure alignment with constitutional values like equality and dignity. This gradual reform will ensure a balance between respecting religious practices and protecting women's rights, ultimately working toward gender justice.
- **Uniform Civil Code (UCC):** Introducing a UCC, with broad consultations, can replace discriminatory personal laws, ensuring equal rights for all citizens. It would help standardize marriage laws, reducing legal disparities and conflicts, but should be implemented gradually and with cultural sensitivity.
- **Legal Enforcement:** Polygamous practices should be closely monitored and penalized under the law. Strengthening victim-relief frameworks and providing social support will protect women from exploitation, ensuring they receive justice and compensation when affected by polygamy.
- **Judicial Oversight:** Courts should use precedents to challenge discriminatory practices in polygamous marriages, ensuring they align with constitutional rights. Public interest litigations can further help safeguard women and children by addressing unconstitutional customs and personal laws.
- **Conclusion :** Addressing polygamy in India necessitates a sophisticated reconciliation between preserving religious freedoms and upholding the constitutional tenets of equality and justice. A multifaceted approach—comprising incremental legal reforms, a thoughtful implementation of a Uniform Civil Code, and robust judicial intervention—can dismantle the

systemic inequalities inherent in polygamous practices.

2. Homo Erectus

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.6 Paper I)

- A new study, published in Nature Ecology and Evolution, suggests that early humans first cooked food around 780,000 years ago. Before now, the earliest evidence of cooked food was around 170,000 years ago, with early Homo sapiens and Neanderthals using fire to cook vegetables and meat.

Details

- The new study shows that **Homo erectus**, an ancestor of modern humans, was cooking food much further back in history. The study team found their evidence in an archaeological site located in the northern Jordan Valley, in modern-day Israel. The site, called Gesher Benot Ya'aqov, is known to date back to around 780,000 years ago.
- **Homo erectus** communities of the so-called Acheulian culture lived in the region. The communities had a varied diet, including large game, fruit and vegetables, and freshwater fish from the nearby paleo-Lake Hula. The study team analyzed the remains of fish teeth (from carp and barbel) found in the proximity of fireplaces at Gesher Benot Ya'aqov. By analysing the crystal structure of the teeth, the team found that they had been cooked under 500 degrees Celsius (932 degrees Fahrenheit). This suggested that the fish had been cooked at a controlled temperature rather than just burned. Until now, no one could prove that **Homo erectus** cooked food. This is the first evidence that erectus had the cognitive ability to control fire and cook food.

Homo Erectus

- Homo erectus is an **extinct species of archaic human from the Pleistocene**, with its earliest occurrence about 2 million years ago. Several human species, such as **heidelbergensis** and **H. antecessor** — with the former generally considered to have been the ancestor to Neanderthals, Denisovans, and modern humans — appear to have evolved from **H. erectus**. **erectus** was the first human ancestor to spread throughout Eurasia, with a continental range extending from the Iberian Peninsula to Java. **Erectus** had a more modern gait and body proportions, and was the **first human species to have exhibited a flat face, prominent nose, and possibly sparse body hair coverage**. **erectus** is **associated with the Acheulean stone tool industry**, and is postulated to have been the earliest human ancestor capable of using fire, hunting and

gathering in coordinated groups, caring for injured or sick group members. erectus males and females may have been roughly the same size as each other (i.e. exhibited reduced sexual dimorphism), which could indicate monogamy in line with general trends exhibited in primates.

3. Cube-Shaped Skull Discovery in Mexico (Intentional Cranial Deformation)

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.5 Paper I)

- Recent archaeological find with anthropological significance A **unique cube-shaped human skull** was uncovered in Mexico's Sierra Madre Oriental.
- The remains date back to the **Mesoamerican Classic period** (~400–900 CE).
- The skull belonged to a **40+-year-old adult male**.
- It exhibits **intentional cranial deformation**, a cultural body modification.
- Deformation used binding tools like boards and wraps on infants.
- The square head form is distinct from previously documented elongated shapes.
- Suggests **regional variation in cultural identity and aesthetics**.
- Highlights how cultural practices impact **human biological morphology**.
- Links physical anthropology & cultural anthropology (biocultural perspective).
- Provides evidence of **inter-regional interaction** among ancient Mesoamerican groups. May reflect **social status or symbolic meaning** tied to head shape.
- The practice enhances understanding of **ancient social structures**.
- Raises questions on **rituals and identity in pre-Columbian societies**.
- Valuable for reconstructing **cultural evolution and symbolism**. Strengthens the use of **osteological analysis** in anthropology.

4. The hunted, not the hunters: AI reveals early humans were prey for leopards

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.4 Paper I)

- A new study may be about to rewrite a part of our early human history. It has long been thought that Homo habilis, often considered the first true human species, was the one to turn the tables on the predator-prey relationship. However, a recent analysis of previous archaeological finds suggests that they were possibly more hunted than hunters and not the

- dominant species we once believed them to be.
- To investigate this, researchers from the University of Alcalá in Spain used artificial intelligence and computer vision to analyze tiny tooth marks on two *H. habilis* fossils. These ancient remains come from Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and date back almost 2 million years.
 - The researchers trained the AI models on a library of 1,496 images of tooth marks made by modern carnivores, including leopards, lions, crocodiles, wolves and hyenas. Once it was trained, they presented the AI with photos of the fossil tooth marks.
 - "The implications of this are major, since it shows that *H. habilis* was still more of a prey than a predator," wrote the researchers in their paper. "It also shows that the trophic position of some of the earliest representatives of the genus *Homo* was not different from those of other australopithecines."
 - Although the research was limited to just two individuals, the scientists contend that if *H. habilis* had become a powerful species that could compete with carnivores, their bones would more likely have been scavenged by bone-crushing animals, such as hyenas, after they died from other causes.
 - The fact that the bites were from a flesh-eating predator means the leopards were actively hunting them. This suggests that the transition to a dominant position in the food chain came later in human evolution, according to the research team.
 - While the findings are not conclusive on their own, the study demonstrates how AI can give us fresh and possibly deeper insights into our ancient past. Further use of this technology could not only provide new evidence about *H. habilis* being a prey species but also answer other questions about human evolution.

5. Oldest Wooden Weapons

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.8 Paper I)

- **Site and Age Revision (2025):** While traditionally dated to ~300,000 years ago (MIS 9), a major study published in May 2025 using amino acid geochronology suggests the weapons may be younger, approximately 200,000 years old. Identity of Makers: This age revision shifts the likely creators from *Homo heidelbergensis* toward early Neanderthals, highlighting their advanced cognitive and technological capabilities.
- **Discovery of the Throwing Stick:** The assemblage includes a unique 77-

cm double-pointed throwing stick (ID 1779), identified as the oldest of its kind, designed for high-velocity rotational throws.

- **Advanced Woodworking Techniques:** High-resolution 3D microscopy in 2024 revealed sophisticated steps: debarking, carving, scraping, seasoning, and sanding. Strategic Raw Material Selection: Hominins specifically selected slow-grown spruce, larch, and pine from high-altitude regions (possibly 40 km away) for their superior density and elasticity.
- **Aerodynamic Engineering:** The spears, measuring up to 2.25 meters, were crafted from tree trunks with the center of gravity in the front third, remarkably similar to modern tournament javelins. Branch-Based
- **Construction:** Unlike the spears (made from trunks), the throwing sticks were made from spruce branches, utilizing the wood's natural curvature for better flight.
- **Seasoning for Durability:** Evidence suggests the wood was "seasoned" (controlled drying) to prevent cracking and warping, a process that requires long-term planning and foresight.
- **Communal Hunting Model:** Researchers suggest these lightweight weapons enabled participation from the entire community, including children and adolescents, who could use them to hunt small game like hares and birds.
- **Prey Selection:** The weapons were found alongside the butchered remains of at least 20–25 horses (*Equus mosbachensis*), as well as red deer and bovids.
- **"Personal Kit" vs. Expedient Tools:** The presence of use-polish and maintenance marks indicates these were valued personal items used over long periods, not disposable tools. **New Tool Types Identified (2024):** Beyond weapons, the "Spear Horizon" includes **35 split-wood tools** used for domestic activities like hide preparation and vegetal working.

6. Revised Human Evolution Timeline

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.4 Paper I)

- **Redating the Schöningen Spears:** 2025 studies using amino acid geochronology updated the age of the world's oldest wooden weapons to ~200,000 years ago. This shifts the likely creators from *Homo heidelbergensis* to early Neanderthals, demonstrating their advanced hunting intelligence.
- **Multiregional Origins in Africa:** Genetic research in 2025 supports a

"structured" origin model, suggesting *Homo sapiens* emerged from the intermingling of at least two distinct ancestral populations across Africa rather than a single point of origin. **Human Chromosome 2 Fusion:** Recent genomic studies confirmed a massive population bottleneck roughly 900,000 years ago. This event likely triggered the fusion of two ancestral chromosomes into human chromosome 2, a key genetic marker separating humans from great apes.

- **Woodworking at Gantangqing, China:** The discovery of 300,000-year-old digging sticks in China in 2025 confirms that East Asian hominins possessed sophisticated woodworking skills. This suggests that complex technology was a global phenomenon rather than confined to Europe.
- **Neanderthal Symbolism in France:** New evidence of cave engravings older than 57,000 years proves that Neanderthals possessed symbolic thought and cognitive complexity long before *Homo sapiens* established dominance in Europe. **The "Ghost" Population Discovery:** 2024 genetic modeling of West African populations revealed DNA from a "ghost" archaic hominin group. This proves that *Homo sapiens* frequently interbred with unknown, now-extinct human species during their evolution.
- **Earlier Coastal Adaptation:** 2025 findings in South Africa indicate that early humans were systematically harvesting and processing shellfish 170,000 years ago. This pushes back the timeline for specialized marine resource exploitation significantly. **Tibetan Denisovan Occupation:** Bone fragments analyzed in late 2024 confirm that Denisovans were adapted to the high-altitude, low-oxygen environment of the Tibetan Plateau nearly 160,000 years ago, predating modern humans in the region. **Lactose Tolerance Evolution:** Research published in 2025 indicates that the genetic mutation for milk digestion appeared in East Asian populations before they domesticated cattle. This challenges the "culture-first" theory of evolution. **The Schöningen Throwing Stick:** Analysis of a 77-cm double-pointed stick in 2024 confirmed it was designed for aerodynamic rotational flight. This implies that entire communities, including children, participated in hunting small game.

7. Key Points on Neanderthal Engravings

- **Oldest Securely Dated Engravings:** Research confirmed in 2024–2025 identifies these wall markings as the oldest known engravings made by Neanderthals, dating back to over **57,000 years ago**.
- **Pre-Sapiens Origin:** The dating proves these marks were made at least 15,000 years before *Homo sapiens* arrived in Western Europe, dismissing the theory that Neanderthals simply "copied" modern human art .
- **Deliberate Finger Flutings:** Analysis shows the "finger-flutings" were not accidental claw marks or natural erosion but **intentional, organized, and repetitive** tactile gestures on the cave walls .
- **Spatial Organization:** The engravings are categorized into distinct panels (triangular, circular, and wavy lines), indicating a sophisticated level of **geometric and spatial planning** .
- **Sophisticated Tool Use:** Beyond fingers, some engravings suggest the use of **bone or stone tools** to refine edges, highlighting a multi-stage artistic process.
- **Symbolic Cognition:** These markings provide "smoking gun" evidence that Neanderthals possessed **abstract thought** and the capacity for symbolic expression, once thought exclusive to *Homo sapiens* .
- **Cave Sealing Evidence:** Geochemical dating of the sediments that sealed the cave entrance confirmed that the cave was inaccessible for thousands of years, ensuring the marks are authentic and ancient .
- **Social Meaning:** Anthropologists suggest these engravings likely served as **territorial markers** or symbols of group identity, implying a complex social structure within Neanderthal bands .
- **Link to "Mouflon" Culture:** The engravings were found alongside Mousterian stone tools, reinforcing the link between advanced lithic technology and cognitive symbolic behavior.
- **Acoustic Context:** Recent 2025 studies suggest the engravings were placed in areas of the cave with **unique acoustic properties**, potentially indicating their use in ritualistic or performative contexts.
- **Global Comparison:** These findings align with the discovery of **Neanderthal-made jewelry** (eagle talons) and the use of pigments (red ochre), painting a holistic picture of a culturally rich species .

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Abujmadiya tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.3 Paper II)

- Recently, members of the Abujmadiya tribe have been participating in the Bastar Olympics' tournament in growing numbers. The Abujmadiya tribe, also known as Abujh Maria, is a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) found in central India.
- Location - Primarily inhabit the Abujmarh region in Narayanpur district, Chhattisgarh and found in parts of Maharashtra and Odisha
- Habitat - They live in dense forested, hilly terrain.
- Social & Cultural Features
 - Belong to the Gond tribal group
 - Traditionally semi-nomadic
 - Practice community living and collective decision-making
 - Society is largely egalitarian
- Livelihood
 - Shifting cultivation (jhum)
 - Collection of minor forest produce
 - Hunting and fishing (traditionally)
- Language
 - Speak Abujh Maria, a dialect of the Gondi language
 - Part of the Dravidian language family
- Beliefs
 - Practice animism
 - Worship nature spirits, ancestors, and village deities
 - Have minimal influence of mainstream religions

2. Key features of Kondh tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.3 Paper II)

- Khonds are an Adivasi community in India, traditionally hunter-gatherers.
- Cultural Division: Divided into hill-dwelling and plain-dwelling groups but identify by clans.
- Language: Speak Kui and write using the Odia script.
- Khonds have Scheduled Tribe (ST) status in eight states Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Jharkhand, and West Bengal These tribal groups do buffalo sacrifice ritual, called “Kedu” to worship their Earth Goddess”.

- **Tribal Migration and Settlement Migration History:** The Kondh tribe migrated from the Araku Valley to settle near the Sileru river on the Andhra Pradesh-Orissa border. Many of these settlements grew after the 1970s due to work opportunities in hydroelectric projects. **Current Situation:** The area is affected by Left-Wing Extremism, and the cultivation of illegal crops like ganja is prevalent.
- **Agriculture Practices :**They Practise slash-and-burn agriculture, hunting, and gathering, and maintain a strong link to the forests. **Turmeric Cultivation:** Kondhs specialise in organic turmeric farming for income. **Self-Reliance:** These groups sell turmeric for income to meet medical and other needs.

Sustainable Farming Practices

- **Self-Sufficiency:** Kondh families grow paddy for their own consumption and also cultivate millets and vegetables without fertilisers or pesticides. **Seed Sharing:** Seeds are shared among Kondh families and preserved using traditional methods.

Step Farming

- **Water Management:** Step farming with stone embankments to control rainwater flow and prevent erosion. **Water Supply:** Fields are irrigated by streams and waterfalls; maize is grown in dry seasons.
- **Role of Women Cooperation:** Kondh women work together to guard multiple land holdings and help neighbors during emergencies. Women oversee water distribution and irrigation channels.

3. Assam's Three-Tier Classification of STs

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Assam is facing unrest after a Group of Ministers (GoM) proposed a new three-tier Scheduled Tribes (ST) classification to grant ST status to six communities. While the move has satisfied the applicant groups, it has triggered strong opposition from existing tribals, sparking protests across the state.

Assam's GoM Recommend on ST Classification

- **The GoM proposed a three-tier ST structure:** **ST (Plains):** Continues for existing tribal communities in the plains. **ST (Hills):** Remains unchanged for existing hill tribes. **ST (Valley):** Newly suggested category for the six communities demanding ST status: Ahom, Chutia, Moran, Matak, Koch-Rajbongshi, and Tea Tribes/Adivasis.
- **The GoM said this structure would let the state reorganise reservations without reducing the existing entitlements of ST (Plains) and ST (Hills). Separate quotas would apply for state jobs and education, but all groups would share a single ST list for central services.** Notes that Parliament

must pass special legislation for statutory approval of the three-tier classification.

How are Scheduled Tribes Notified in India?

- **Article 366(25):** "Scheduled Tribes" refers to the tribes or tribal groups that are recognised as STs under Article 342.
- **Article 342:** The President can notify which tribes or tribal groups are recognised as Scheduled Tribes for each State or Union Territory, after consulting the Governor. Any later inclusion or removal from this ST list can be done only by Parliament through legislation, not by executive notification.
- **ST Categorization:** The term "Scheduled Tribes" appears in the Constitution, but it does not lay down criteria for identifying them. The government set up the Lokur Committee in 1956, which defined a tribe using criteria such as primitive traits, a distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the wider community, and social and economic backwardness. Before independence, the 1931 Census described such groups as "backward tribes" living in excluded or partially excluded areas.
- **In State of Punjab v. Davinder Singh (2024),** the Supreme Court upheld the validity of sub-classifying SCs and STs and allowed states to create sub-groups to ensure fair distribution of benefits. **Reservation in Services/ Posts:** Article 16(4): Permits reservations for backward classes who are inadequately represented in state services.

4. Centre Declines Reclassification of Denotified and Nomadic Communities

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 9.1 Paper II)

- The Centre has decided not to reclassify the 268 denotified, nomadic, and semi-nomadic communities into SC/ST/OBC categories, despite an extensive Anthropological Survey of India study recommending it. This has caused concern as lack of proper classification blocks these communities from accessing benefits, including schemes like SEED.
- **Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-nomadic Communities**
- **Denotified Tribes:** Denotified Tribes (DNTs) are communities in India unfairly branded as "born criminals" by the British colonial government under the 1871 Criminal Tribes Act, but were "denotified" (decriminalized) by independent India in 1952.
- **Nomadic Tribes:** Communities that do not have a fixed home and move from place to place constantly for their livelihood. They traditionally carried out occupations like salt trading, fortune-telling, performing arts, or pastoralism.
- **Semi-Nomadic Tribes:** These communities are partially nomadic. They may have a fixed home or base where they stay for part of the year

(usually during the rainy season) but migrate for the rest of the year for work.

- In 2019, the Union Government set up the Development Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic, and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DWBDNC) following the Idate Commission (2017) report.
- SEED Scheme (Scheme for Economic Empowerment and Development): Administered by DWBDNC to provide financial, educational, and skill development support.
- Supports self-employment, entrepreneurship, education, and health initiatives. Aims to uplift socio-economic conditions of denotified and nomadic communities. Uptake is slow due to unclear classification and lack of community certificates.

5. First-ever Individual Entitlement Survey for PVTGs

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 9.1 Paper II)

- The Centre is set to conduct the first-ever 'Individual Entitlement Survey' of 10 lakh Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) households to assess the reach of 39 government schemes at the grassroots level.

What is an Individual Entitlement Survey?

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has identified 39 schemes across 18 central government departments for monitoring. These include the MGNREGS, social security for unorganised workers, pensions, financial assistance for meritorious Scheduled Tribe students, and various flagship programs. The survey will be conducted with the cooperation of state governments, which may involve NGOs or panchayat officials to help carry out the process.
- Scope and Coverage: The survey will cover 10 lakh households across 1,000 blocks, predominantly inhabited by approximately 48 lakh PVTGs. These groups are spread across 75 recognized PVTGs in 18 states and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar. Methodology: Surveyors will input data directly into a mobile application developed by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD).

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)

- About: PVTGs is a sub-classification of Scheduled Tribes that are more vulnerable than regular Scheduled Tribes due to their limited access to education, healthcare, and modern infrastructure. These groups are often referred to as "primitive" because of their traditional lifestyles and limited exposure to modern amenities. Article 342(1) allows the President, after consulting the Governor (in the case of a state), to specify tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes in a State/UT. Identification Timeline: In

1973, the Dhebar Commission classified Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a distinct category for the least developed tribal groups, which were later renamed PVTGs by the Government of India in 2006. In 1975, India began identifying the most vulnerable tribal groups as PVTGs, initially declaring 52 groups, with an additional 23 added in 1993, bringing the total to 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes. Classification Criteria: PVTGs are characterized by a small, homogenous population, physical isolation, lack of written language, simple technology, and slower social and economic development. They often face stagnant or declining populations, low literacy, and economic backwardness in remote areas with limited infrastructure and administrative support.

6. Key points Asom Diwas

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the people of Assam on Asom Diwas.
- Observance: The Assam state government observed Asom Divas (Sukapha Divas) at Nazira in Sivasagar district with grand celebrations. The event was jointly organised by the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Tai Ahom Development Council.
- The celebrations included traditional Ahom rituals, cultural performances, and exhibitions highlighting the Ahom dynasty's contributions.
- Commemoration: 2nd December is observed as Asom Divas to mark Chaolung Sukapha's arrival in Assam in 1228 after crossing the Patkai Hills from present-day Dehong Dai and Jingpo Prefecture in China.
- Founder: The day honours Sukapha as the founder of the Ahom kingdom, whose 'Bor Asom' legacy lasted nearly six centuries until 1826.
- The Ahom rulers safeguarded Assam's identity and territory, repelling multiple Mughal invasions.
- Origins: He was a Tai prince from the Su (Tiger) clan of the Mao-Shan sub-tribe, originally from Mong Mao in the present-day Dehong Dai and Jingpo region.
- Governance: His administration set early benchmarks for good governance, political stability, and long-term state-building. Ahoms created a new state by suppressing the older political system of the bhuiyans (landlords).
- Society: Ahom society was divided into clans or khels. A khel often controlled several villages.

- **Legacy:** Sukapha is remembered as the architect of Assamese identity, known for his unity-driven, inclusive leadership that brought diverse communities together.

7. Inclusion/Exclusion from SC/ST List

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 7.1 Paper II)

- A proposal from the State Government of Bihar for inclusion of Krishi Vaishya/Chasot in the Scheduled Tribes list.
- **Constitutional Provisions** – Article 341 (SCs) & 342 (STs), which authorise the President to specify SCs/STs in consultation with the Governor, but only Parliament can alter these lists through law.
- **Parliament's Role** – Parliament has the sole power to include or exclude any caste/tribe from the lists through legislation, overriding any later executive action.
- **Process of Inclusion/Exclusion from SC/ST Lists**
- **Initiation at State/UT level** – The concerned State/UT recommend the addition or removal of a community based on studies and socio-economic assessments.
- **Union Government scrutiny** – The proposal is examined by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs/Social Justice, Registrar General of India (RGI), and National Commissions (SC/ST).
- **Legislative process** –
- A Bill is introduced in Parliament to amend the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 or the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950. The Bill must be passed by both Houses of Parliament.
- **Presidential Notification** – Under Articles 341 & 342, the President issues the final notification, giving legal effect to the inclusion/exclusion.
- **Criteria Scheduled Castes (SCs)** – Extreme, social, educational and economic backwardness arising out of the traditional practice of untouchability. **Scheduled Tribes (ST)** – Ethnological traits, traditional characteristics, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, and social & economic backwardness.
- **Census 2011** : SC list – They spread across 31 States/UTs with 1,241 notified communities. Population – Over 20 crore (Approx. 16.6% of India's population). ST list – They are notified in 30 States/UTs, with 705 individual tribes/communities under Article 342. Population – Over 10 crore (Approx. 8.6% of India's population).

8. Caste Based Atrocities - The Persisting Peril

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Despite constitutional promises of equality, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) face persistent caste-based violence and exclusion.

Caste based discrimination persists till today

- Persisting discriminations - From assaults in rural areas for defying caste norms to urban discrimination in housing and employment, caste continues to deny citizens dignity and opportunity. Belief in caste-based superiority - It persists even today, enabling social elites to perpetrate acts of violence, ranging from forcing Dalits to drink urine to ostracising Adivasis for asserting land rights, with alarming impunity.
- Societal failure - The acts of caste based violence reflect not only individual prejudice but a societal failure to internalise humanitarian values. This raises questions about India's claim of being a civilised society. Lack of governmental actions - The current political dispensation, led by the current government, has fallen short in addressing this crisis
- Cultural Restrictions on Dalit - Restrictions on Bahujan cultural expressions (as seen during the release of the Hindi film Phule) further alienate these communities from becoming part of the mainstream discourse.
- The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report, released in late September, reported that 57,789 cases were registered against SCs in 2023. It marks a 0.4% increase over the 57,582 cases reported in 2022, and 12,960 cases were registered against STs in 2023, a sharp 28.8% increase over the 10,064 cases reported in 2022.

What are the movements and measures that reshaped caste dynamics?

- The Dalit Panthers - This movement in the 1970s galvanised marginalised communities, asserting their right to political power and social prestige.

What are the measures need to be taken :

- Strengthening existing laws - The state must strengthen the enforcement of existing laws, ensuring swift prosecution of perpetrators and sensitising law enforcement agencies about the ills of the caste system. Evolving a National campaign - Political leaders must champion a national campaign to promote egalitarian values, using education, the media, and public platforms to challenge conventional caste relationships based on hierarchies and prejudices.

9. Bonda Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- Bonda Tribe is a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) and one of the oldest tribes of India. Members of the Bonda community in Odisha's Malkangiri district are set to transition from fragile thatched huts to permanent pucca houses under the Union government's PM-Janman scheme.

About Bonda Tribe

- The Bondas are exclusively found in the Malkangiri district of Odisha and are mostly concentrated in the Khairaput block of the district. It is a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) and one of the oldest tribes of India. They are also known as Bondo, Bondas, Bonda Paraja, and Bhonda. With a population of approximately 7,000 people, they live in a mountainous and forest ecosystem. They are considered one of the first settlers in India, with their lineage tracing back to the Austroasiatic race.

Language:

- The Bonda people speak Remo, a language belonging to the Austroasiatic linguistic family. This is distinct from mainstream Indian languages, making it difficult for outsiders to communicate with them. The Bondas are divided into two groups because of their distinct cultural practices: The Lower Bondas, who live in the Malkangiri district in south Odisha and border Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and The Upper Bondas, who live in the remote villages of the district's hilly terrain.
- The social organization is hierarchical, with a council of elders that makes important decisions for the community. The Bonda people live in small villages organized around communal spaces where ceremonies and meetings take place. Bonda architecture is characterized by mud and thatched-roof houses, designed to adapt to the mountainous environment and climatic conditions. The art of the Bonda is expressed mainly through the creation of decorative tools and utensils, in addition to their colorful fabrics and jewelry. They have an interesting dressing style – ladies are semiclad and wear different sorts of rings and pieces of jewelry around their bodies, while the men wear deadly attires. Religion: The religion of the Bonda people is animistic, focused on the worship of nature and ancestral spirits.
- Occupation: Their economy is based mainly on subsistence agriculture, hunting, and gathering. They are known for their unique practice of shifting cultivation called dangar chas. They grow crops like paddy, millet, pulses, and vegetables. Only 6% of Bondas are literate. The life expectancy of the tribe is so low they are nearly extinct.

10. National Honour for Bharewa Craft

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- Madhya Pradesh's Bharewa tribal metal craft gained national recognition as President Droupadi Murmu honoured Betul artisan Baldev Waghmare with the National Handicraft Award.

Key Points

- **Origin:** The craft belongs to a Gond tribal sub-community, where metal-casting skills are transmitted across generations.
- **Tradition:** Bharewa artistry is closely tied to Gond rituals, blending tradition with craftsmanship.
- **Creations:** Artisans produce symbolic deity idols, traditional jewellery, and ritual accessories used in Gond ceremonies.
- **Craftwork:** Decorative items such as peacock lamps, bullock carts, bells, anklets and mirror frames have gained international appeal.
- **Community:** Bharewa families are mainly located in the Betul district, around 180 km from Bhopal.
- **GI-Status:** Bharewa metal craft recently received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, further strengthening its cultural significance.
- **Legacy:** Awardee Baldev Waghmare revitalised the dwindling artisan community by transforming Tigriya into a craft hub, preserving the Bharewa art form passed down from his father and sustaining his family's livelihood.
- **Gond Tribe**
- **Large Tribal Group:** The Gonds are one of the world's largest tribal communities and the largest Scheduled Tribe in India.
- **Geographical Spread:** They primarily live in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, with smaller populations in several other states.
- **Subgroups:** Major Gond subdivisions include Raj Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhurve Gonds and Khatulwar Gonds.
- **Culture & Beliefs:** Their food staples are kodo and kutki millets; rice is reserved for festivals, and their belief system centres on nature deities governing earth, water and air.
- **Language:** They mainly speak Gondi, a Dravidian language traditionally unwritten, though it is now recognised with emerging scripts.

11. Nagaland's Hornbill Festival and the Debate on Alcohol Rules

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- **The Hornbill Festival:** The 26th edition (from 1st to 10th December) of the Hornbill Festival is taking place in Nagaland. However, there is a big debate about whether the 35-year-old alcohol ban should be relaxed during the festival. Tourism Minister Temjen Imna Along has announced that the government will allow Indian-made foreign liquor (IMFL) to be sold at the festival, which is held at the Kisama Heritage Village. This decision has angered church groups in the state, who have always opposed allowing alcohol during the festival. **Church's Opposition:** The Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), the largest Christian group in Nagaland, strongly disagrees with relaxing the alcohol rules. They believe that tourists come to Nagaland to experience its culture and traditions, not to drink alcohol.
- **The Liquor Prohibition Law:** Nagaland has had a total alcohol ban since 1989, called the Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act. This law has the support of both the Church and the Naga Mothers' Association (NMA). The Church has long seen alcohol use as sinful, a belief brought to the region by American Baptist missionaries in the late 1800s. These missionaries taught that drinking alcohol was wrong, and those who drank could be kicked out of the community.

Nagaland Liquor Total Prohibition (NLTP) Act 1989:

- **The NLTP Act** is a strict law that bans the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol in Nagaland. **Complete Ban:** All types of alcohol are banned, including beer, wine, spirits, and even traditional rice beer (Thutse). **Exceptions:** Alcohol can be allowed for medical or scientific purposes, and special licenses can be given to non-local tourists for events like the Hornbill Festival. **Support:** The law has strong support from Christian church bodies in Nagaland, who believe that alcohol consumption harms the community.

The Hornbill Festival and Alcohol:

- **The Hornbill Festival**, started in 2000, is Nagaland's biggest public event. It showcases the culture and heritage of the Naga people and is a major attraction for tourists. In 2023, the festival had over 1.54 lakh visitors, including 2,100 foreign tourists. Alcohol has been a controversial topic at the festival. While it is generally not allowed, rice beer, a traditional Naga drink, has sometimes been served during the event. This has caused a conflict between the Church and the festival organizers.
- **Arguments for Relaxing the Ban:** Tourism Minister Temjen Imna Along believes that relaxing the alcohol rules will help boost tourism and make the festival more welcoming to visitors. He argues that allowing alcohol, including IMFL, would attract more tourists to the state.

- Some people feel that relaxing the rules will make Nagaland a more tourist-friendly place, especially since alcohol is a part of social life in many Naga communities.

12. Hornbill Festival 2025

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- The Government of Nagaland has signed a significant agreement with the British Council designating the United Kingdom as the Country Partner for the Hornbill Festival 2025, one of India's largest cultural festivals celebrating Naga heritage and ethnic diversity.
- The agreement was signed in New Delhi by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and Alison Barrett MBE, Country Director (India), British Council, in the presence of British High Commissioner Lindy Cameron CB OBE.
- The partnership aims to enhance cultural exchange, creative collaboration, and global visibility for Nagaland.
- It strengthens ongoing cooperation between the British Council, British Deputy High Commission Kolkata, and the Nagaland Government. The state also named Air India Express as the Official Travel Partner for the Hornbill Festival.

Key Highlights of the Partnership

- The UK will curate cultural programmes, artistic collaborations, and creative workshops.
- For 2025, Scottish artist Ruairidh Maclean (RuMac) will perform on December 2 at the festival. The collaboration continues the tradition of UK participation—last year saw joint performances by Welsh, Naga, and Khasi artistes during the silver jubilee celebrations.
- The partnership is expected to open avenues in tourism, education, cultural enterprise, and people-to-people ties.

Hornbill Festival

- First organized in 2000, it aims to promote inter-tribal interaction and preserve Nagaland's heritage, blending the traditional with the contemporary in a harmonious display of unity.
- Held annually from December 1–10 in Kisama Heritage Village, Nagaland. Known as the "Festival of Festivals", it showcases Naga tribes' traditions, dances, crafts, cuisine, and music. Organised by the Nagaland's State Tourism and the Art & Culture Departments.
- Supported by the Ministry of Tourism, North Eastern Council, and Nagaland Tourism Department. Named after the Great Indian Hornbill, a culturally important bird for Naga tribes.

13. Key aspects of Gotti Koya Tribals

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- Gotti Koya Tribe is one of the few multi-racial and multi-lingual tribal communities in India.

Gutti Koya Tribe:

- They are one of the few multi-racial and multi-lingual tribal communities in India. The Koya population is concentrated in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- **Language:** They speak Koya, which is a Dravidian language. It is closely related to Gondi and has been strongly influenced by Telugu.
- **Occupation:** They practice Podu form of shifting cultivation, as practiced by various tribal groups in forest areas has for long been an economic survival versus environmental sustenance issue. They earn a living through animal husbandry and minor forest produce. **Festival:** The most important fair celebrated by Koyas is the Sammakka Saralamma Jatra once in two years on full moon day of the Magha Masam (January or February) at Medaram village in Mulug taluk of Warangal district. They held ST status in Chattisgarh but they were not granted ST status in their migrated states such as Telangana.

Society and Culture

- All Koya belong to one of five sub-divisions called gotrams. Every Koya is born into a clan, and he cannot leave it. The Koyas have a patrilineal and patrilocal family. The family is called "Kutum". The nuclear family is the predominant type. Monogamy is prevalent among the Koya.

Issues Faced by Gotti Koya Tribals

- **Lack of Social Security Benefits:** Many Gotti Koya migrants are reportedly excluded from state welfare programs and other social security schemes due to their non-native status.
- **Land and Livelihood Vulnerability:** In Telangana, the state reportedly reclaimed land in at least 75 Gotti Koya settlements, threatening the livelihoods of these displaced persons. Additional reports allege that Forest Department officials demolished homes and destroyed crops in these settlements. **Forest Rights and Recognition:** The Telangana government asserts that because the Gotti Koya migrated from Chhattisgarh, they do not qualify as Scheduled Tribes in Telangana, making them ineligible for forest land rights under state laws.

14. Harappan Script Debate: Sanskrit, Dravidian or Tribal Language

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- The Union Ministry of Culture is hosting an international conference (Sept 11-13, 2025) in New Delhi to present findings on the Harappan script. Scholars from diverse fields, archaeologists, engineers, scientists, and

officials, will present 20 research papers with differing conclusions. The presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah highlights the political and cultural significance of the issue.

Key Highlights

- **The Enigma of Harappan Script** : The script, found on seals and pottery, has remained undeciphered since the discovery of the Indus Valley sites in the 1920s. Unlike Brahmi or Kharosthi, no bilingual inscription exists to aid decoding.
- **Competing Linguistic Hypotheses** : Some scholars argue the script represents Sanskrit or Vedic origins. Others link it to Dravidian languages like Tamil or Gondi. Certain studies connect it to Adivasi/tribal languages such as Santali.
- **Individual Research Contributions** : Bahata Mukhopadhyay suggests the script encodes rules on taxation and commerce, not phonetics. Karuna Shankar Shukla interprets seals as having Rig Vedic religious connections, though historians contest the chronology. Prakash N. Salame links it to Gondi (Proto-Dravidian), claiming 90% decipherment. Prabhunath Hembrom associates it with Santali based on Parpola's work. International scholars also present mixed views: some claim links to Rigveda texts, others to tribal symbolism.
- **Political Dimensions** : The Dravidian movement sees decipherment as proof of Dravidian antiquity, strengthening Tamil Nadu's cultural claims. The Sangh Parivar supports a Sanskrit/Vedic interpretation to connect Harappans with Vedic people and challenge the Aryan migration theory. State-level initiatives, such as Tamil Nadu's \$1 million award, add competitive layers to the debate.
- **Academic Perspectives** : Historian P. Ray stresses the need for interdisciplinary, evidence-based work. She cautions that linguistic diversity across the vast Harappan region makes one-language theories problematic. Context (where and how inscriptions were found) is crucial for valid interpretation.

15. Rising Anger Among Denotified Tribes: Stagnating Schemes and Classification Hurdles

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 9.1 Paper II)

- Denotified, Semi-Nomadic, and Nomadic Tribes face growing frustration as the SEED scheme struggles to take off, caste certificates are denied in 29 states, and the 2017 Idate Commission's recommendations remain unimplemented.

About DNTs/NTs/SNTs

- During British colonial rule in India, around 200 tribal communities

across India were notified as “criminal tribes” under the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Members of these “notified tribes” were said to be “addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences”. The men were required to report regularly to police stations, and police restricted the movement of the communities. “Criminal Tribes” were held responsible for any crime in the vicinity where they were. This stigma and the attendant discrimination and oppression they faced exacerbated the social and economic marginalisation that they experienced. Independent India repealed the law in 1949.

- In recent years this day has been celebrated as “Vimukti Diwas” or Liberation Day. This year it will be 71 years from liberation, but nomadic tribes and de-notified tribes (NTDNT) continue to face marginalisation and stigma. Denotified Tribes (DNTs): Communities that were labeled as ‘criminal tribes’ under the British colonial rule through the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. Nomadic Tribes (NTs): Groups that traditionally move from place to place in search of livelihood, without a fixed habitation. Eg. Van Gujjars, Lambadis, and Gujjar-Bakarwals. Semi-Nomadic Tribes (SNTs): Communities that are partially settled but still engage in periodic migration. Eg. Raikas and Banjaras. Collectively, these groups comprise over 10 crore (100 million) individuals across more than 1,400 communities in India.

SEED Scheme :

- The Scheme for Economic Empowerment of DNTs (SEED) was launched by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in February 2022, with a budget allocation of ₹200 crore over five years (FY 2021-22 to FY 2025-26). The scheme comprises four components: **Free Coaching:** Providing quality coaching to enable candidates to appear in competitive examinations. **Health Insurance:** Offering a health insurance cover of ₹5 lakhs per family per year under the Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- **Livelihood Initiatives:** Supporting community-level livelihood initiatives through the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). **Housing Assistance:** Providing financial assistance for the construction of houses for eligible families.

16. How are the tribes different from mainstream society?

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- Tribal communities in India are distinct from mainstream society in several ways. Some of the key differences include: **Cultural practices:** Tribal communities have their own unique cultures, languages, and customs that are often different from those of mainstream society.

For example, the Warli tribe in Maharashtra, India, has a distinct art form known as Warli Painting, done on mud walls during festivals and ceremonies.

- **Economic practices:** The tribes generally depend on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as agriculture, hunting, gathering, and fishing. They may also rely on traditional skills such as pottery, basket making, and other handicrafts. For instance, the Bonda tribe of Odisha, India, depends on the forest for their livelihood, they practice shifting cultivation and hunt wild animals for food.
- **Social organization:** Tribal communities tend to be organized around kinship groups rather than a centralized government or political system. They have their own traditional systems of governance, conflict resolution, and social control. For example, the Kondh tribe of Odisha has own traditional systems of governance, conflict resolution, and social control, where the village council, known as 'Gudi' is responsible for the decision-making.
- **Relationship to land:** Many tribes have a strong spiritual and cultural connection to the land they live on and have a deep understanding of the ecology of their region. The Bhils of Rajasthan, for instance, have a deep understanding of the ecology of their region and believe that their gods reside in the forests, hills, and rivers.

What are the contributions of tribal communities in India?

- Tribal communities in India have made significant contributions to the country in various ways. Some examples of their contributions include:
 - Environmental conservation:** Many tribal communities have traditionally lived in harmony with nature and have developed sustainable practices for managing natural resources. For example, the Chenchus tribe in Andhra Pradesh is known for their conservation practices in the Nallamala Hills, where they have protected the forest and its wildlife for generations.
 - Economic Contribution:** They are engaged in various forms of livelihoods, such as agriculture, forest-based livelihoods, and handicrafts. For example, the Gond tribe in Madhya Pradesh is known for their traditional skills in metal craft, painting, and sculpture. They also earn their livelihood from farming and tend to be experts in shifting cultivation.

17. Supreme Court Ruling on Sacred Groves

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 3.3 Paper II)

- **Deemed Forest Status:** The SC recognized Orans
- —traditional community-managed sacred groves—as "deemed forests" under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- **Broad Definition of Forest:** The ruling follows the T.N. Godavarman (1996) precedent, mandating that "forests" be identified by their dictionary meaning, regardless of size or official government classification.
- **Mandatory Mapping:** The Court ordered the Rajasthan Forest Department to conduct detailed on-ground and satellite mapping of every sacred grove in the state.
- **Inclusion of Arid Ecosystems:** Importantly, the SC noted that even sparse vegetation in arid zones like Rajasthan, including grasslands and rocky outcrops, must be treated as forest land if they serve as sacred groves.
- **Protection Under WLPA:** The Court directed that these groves be notified as "community reserves" under Section 36-C of the Wildlife (Protection) Act (WLPA), 1972.
- **Nationwide Impact:** The SC recommended that the Union Environment Ministry (MoEF&CC) formulate a national policy to survey and protect sacred groves across all of India.
- **Anthropological Value Recognized:** The judgment explicitly acknowledged the socio-cultural and spiritual significance of these groves, viewing them as living repositories of community identity and oral traditions.
- **Biodiversity Repositories:** The Court highlighted that sacred groves are often the last refuge for endemic species and act as vital genetic repositories and water recharge zones.
- **Shift in Governance:** By classifying them as forests, the ruling effectively transfers oversight from informal community traditions to official forest department control.
- **Conflict with FRA 2006:** Anthropologists and legal experts note a conflict; while the Court suggests protection, classifying them under WLPA (State control) may undermine the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, which empowers local *Gram Sabhas*.

18. Integration of Tribal Healers

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus - Unit 6.1 Paper II)

- **Bridging the Trust Gap:** In 2025, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a pilot project to integrate traditional healers (*Vaidyas* or *Gaitas*) with modern Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to increase institutional trust among tribal communities.

- **Recognition as Health Frontliners:** Under the Viksit Bharat 2047 framework, tribal healers are being officially recognized as "community health volunteers" to assist in the early detection of diseases like malaria and tuberculosis.
- **National Registry of Traditional Knowledge:** A 2025 initiative by AYUSH involves creating a digital database of tribal healers and their unique medicinal plant knowledge to prevent "biopiracy" and protect intellectual property.
- **Complementary Medicine Framework:** The government has introduced a "Co-management Model" where modern doctors handle surgery and acute infections, while traditional healers assist in chronic ailment management and post-care
- **Ethno-Medicinal Research:** In mid-2025, ICMR established collaborations with tribal healers in the Western Ghats to study the pharmacological efficacy of rare forest herbs used to treat skin disorders and snake bites.
- **Referral System Incentives:** To reduce mortality, a new 2025 incentive scheme rewards tribal healers for referring patients with high-risk symptoms (like complicated labor or severe anemia) to the nearest government hospital.
- **Training in Hygiene and First Aid:** Healers are receiving basic training in 2025 on sterilization, wound cleaning, and basic first aid to ensure that traditional practices do not lead to secondary infections.
- **Sickle Cell Screening Partners:** Tribal healers are being trained to identify symptoms of Sickle Cell Anemia and guide community members to government screening camps under the 2047 Elimination Mission.

Mental Health and Ritual Healing:

- **Anthropology studies in 2025** highlight that healers provide essential "psychological safety" through rituals, which are now being integrated into community-based mental health programs.
- **Sustainable Herb Cultivation:** To prevent over-exploitation of forests, the government is helping healers create "Herbal Gardens" in 2025, ensuring a steady supply of medicinal plants while conserving biodiversity.
- **Cultural Sensitivity Training for Doctors:** Conversely, modern medical officers in tribal districts are undergoing 2025 orientation programs to respect the cultural status of healers, preventing professional friction.

19. Nutrition and the Millet Initiative

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- **Combating "Hidden Hunger":** Millets are officially promoted as "Nutri-cereals" because they are richer in iron, calcium, and zinc than polished rice or wheat, directly addressing micro-nutrient deficiencies in tribal

belts. Impact on Child Health: 2025 studies in Telangana showed that a millet-pulse-groundnut intervention reduced severe wasting by 72.7% and stunting by 87.5% among preschool tribal children.

- **Shree Anna Abhiyan (2025):** Formerly the Odisha Millets Mission, this expanded flagship initiative now integrates traditional seeds into the public distribution system (PDS) to ensure staple food diversity.
- **Climate-Resilient Staples:** Millets require 70% less water than rice and can grow in degraded, rainfed soils, making them an ideal ecological and nutritional buffer for climate-stressed tribal regions.
- **Reversing Monoculture:** The initiative aims to shift tribal diets away from subsidized white rice (introduced during the Green Revolution) back to diverse, indigenous grains like Kodo, Kutki, and Ragi.
- **Therapeutic Properties:** 2025 research confirms that millets have a low Glycemic Index (GI), making them a "functional food" for managing the rising incidence of Type 2 Diabetes among transitioning tribal groups.
- **Inclusion in ICDS and Mid-Day Meals:** As of 2025, states like Odisha and Chhattisgarh have integrated Ragi laddoos and millet-based khichdi into Anganwadi meals to support early childhood cognitive development.
- **Tribal Seed Banks:** At the Millets Quest 2025 conference, the role of tribal farmers in preserving nearly-extinct varieties through community-led seed banks was highlighted as vital for bio-diversity.
- **Women's Empowerment (SHGs):** Processing millets is labor-intensive; the 2025 initiatives provide modern machinery to Tribal Women Self-Help Groups, allowing them to lead the local value chain and improve economic status.
- **Sustainable Income for Tribes:** By setting a Minimum Support Price (MSP) and creating decentralized processing centers, millets are being transformed from subsistence crops into viable commercial products for tribal farmers.
- **Cultural Integration:** Policy efforts in 2025 emphasize using traditional recipes (like *Pej* and *Jau*) to ensure community acceptance, recognizing the deep-rooted socio-cultural association of tribes with these grains.

20. Tribal Youth as 'Viksit Bharat' Ambassadors

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 7.2 Paper II)

- **Leadership at the Grassroots:** In 2025, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched a program to train tribal youth as "Ambassadors" to bridge the gap between government schemes and remote habitations.
- **Digital Literacy Mentors:** These ambassadors are trained under the Digital India initiative to help elders and illiterate community members access online portals for Aadhaar, banking, and land records. Health

Intermediaries: Trained in basic paramedical skills, tribal youth act as first responders and health educators, facilitating the National Sickle Cell Anemia Elimination Mission in their villages.

- **Cultural Heritage Preservation:** Ambassadors are utilizing social media and digital archiving to document and promote traditional tribal music, dance, and oral histories for a global audience. **Entrepreneurs in Forest Produce:** Under the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras, tribal youth are leading the shift from selling raw Minor Forest Produce (MFP) to managing value-added processing and branding.
- **Environment and Climate Action:** Recognizing their role as "Custodians of Nature," these youth are being trained in 2025 to lead community-based reforestation and climate adaptation projects.
- **Skill Development Integration:** The Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) has introduced 2025 specialized modules for tribal youth in sectors like renewable energy, sustainable farming, and food processing. **Educational Role Models:** Tribal ambassadors who have completed higher education are being deployed back to their districts to mentor students in Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS).
- **Voter Awareness and Civic Duty:** These youth lead campaigns to educate communities about their constitutional rights, particularly under PESA and the Forest Rights Act, ensuring democratic participation. **Sustainable Tourism Guides:** In states like Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, tribal youth are being trained as eco-tourism guides to showcase tribal culture while ensuring it remains ethical and respectful.
- **Sports and National Integration:** Through 2025 initiatives like the Janjatiya Khel Mahotsav, tribal youth are emerging as national sports icons, fostering a sense of pride and national belonging. **Conflict Resolution Agents:** In erstwhile insurgency-affected areas, youth ambassadors play a critical role in de-radicalization by promoting the benefits of participatory governance and peaceful development.

21. Revised Nicobarese Migration Timeline

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.1 Paper II)

- **Revised Arrival Date (2025):** New DNA analysis has established that the ancestors of the Nicobarese migrated to the islands approximately 5,000 years ago, correcting previous estimates that placed their arrival as early as 11,000 years ago. **Genetic Link to Southeast Asia:** The study confirmed a strong genetic affinity between the Nicobarese and the Htin Mal community, an ethnic group native to the Laos-Thailand border region. **Austroasiatic Ancestry:** The Nicobarese are descendants of Austroasiatic-speaking populations, a linguistic group that originated in southern China and expanded across Southeast Asia.

- **Advanced Genomic Methodology:** Researchers from the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and Banaras Hindu University used biparental genomic markers to trace these migration patterns more accurately than previous mitochondrial DNA studies.
- **Neolithic Farming Connection:** The migration occurred between 4,500 and 5,000 years ago, a period when Southeast Asian communities were expanding their agricultural practices, including farming and animal rearing, into new territories. **Extreme Genetic Isolation:** Due to geographical isolation, the Nicobarese have preserved their genetic identity with minimal admixture from mainland Indian populations for millennia.
- **Linguistic Continuity:** Despite genetic drift, the tribe has strictly retained its Austroasiatic linguistic roots (Khmuic branch), linking them culturally to mainland Southeast Asian populations. **Contrast with Andaman Tribes:** The study reinforces the distinctness of the Nicobarese (Mongoloid stock) from the Andamanese (Negrito stock), who are descendants of much earlier "Out of Africa" migrations from ~70,000 years ago.
- **Biparental Migration:** Unlike some mainland groups like the Mundas, whose migration was dominated by men, the Nicobarese migration involved both men and women, indicating a systematic community resettlement. **Evidence of Genetic Drift:** Long-term isolation on the islands has led to pronounced genetic drift, creating unique genetic signatures that distinguish them even from their close Htin Mal relatives.
- **Public Health Implications:** This unique genetic isolation means the Nicobarese may possess different immune responses and genetic adaptations to tropical diseases, providing vital data for precision medicine. **Significance for Indian Prehistory:** By dating the arrival to 5,000 years ago, the research fills a major gap in the maritime history of the Indian Ocean, illustrating how the Neolithic expansion shaped India's island demographics.