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PAPER - 1

PHYSICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Inland Migration Model

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 2.1 Paper I)

1. Challenging the "Coastal Express" : The findings suggest that early *Homo sapiens* did not just stick to the coastlines. Instead, they successfully navigated terrestrial interiors of the Indian subcontinent as early as 56,000 to 48,000 years ago, suggesting a much more flexible survival strategy than previously thought.
2. Strategic Location of Saurashtra :The Saurashtra Peninsula acts as a crucial "land bridge" between the Arabian Sea and the Indian mainland. Evidence shows that this region served as a pivotal gateway for populations moving eastward from the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula.
3. Advanced Lithic Technology : Excavations have revealed sophisticated stone tool kits, including microliths and backed blades. These tools were more suited for hunting diverse inland game and processing varied plant life, rather than being limited to maritime resources.
4. Climate Resiliency : The timeline (56k–48k years ago) coincides with fluctuating monsoonal patterns. The evidence suggests that early humans were capable of adapting to arid and semi-arid environments in the interior, rather than being tethered to the constant water sources of the coast.
5. Multi-Route Dispersal : The model proposes a "Braided Stream" approach to migration. Instead of one single path, humans likely moved in pulses through multiple corridors—some coastal, some riverine, and some deep inland—depending on the season and resource availability.
6. Exploitation of River Systems: Rather than following the shore, groups appear to have followed the palaeo-channels of major rivers. These inland waterways provided "green corridors" that offered fresh water and attracted game, facilitating movement into the heart of India.
7. Refuting the "Beachcomber" Myth :The "Beachcomber" theory argued that humans survived primarily on shellfish and marine protein to fuel their migration. The Saurashtra evidence shows a broad-spectrum diet, proving that early humans were expert foragers in grasslands and scrub forests.

2. Indian Genetic Map

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

1. The Single-Wave Migration: The study confirms that the majority of the genetic ancestry in modern Indians stems from a single, major "Out-of-Africa" migration event that occurred approximately 50,000 years ago. This refutes theories of multiple unrelated waves of early *Homo sapiens* contributing to the primary founder population.

2. High Neanderthal and Denisovan Diversity :Interestingly, the study found that Indians possess a wider variety of Neanderthal and Denisovan genes compared to other global populations. While the *amount* of archaic DNA is similar to Europeans or East Asians, the *diversity* of the specific sequences is much higher, suggesting India was a melting pot for different hominin interactions.

3. The Three Ancestral Pillars :The "genetic map" reinforces that modern Indians are a complex mix of three primary ancestral groups: Ancestral South Indians (ASI): Related to the indigenous hunter-gatherers of the subcontinent. Ancestral North Indians (ANI): Related to West Eurasian/Middle Eastern populations. Steppe Ancestry: Linked to pastoralists from the Central Asian grasslands.

4. The "Endogamy Fingerprint" : One of the most striking findings is the profound impact of endogamy (marrying within a specific group). The study reveals that thousands of distinct social groups in India have remained genetically isolated for nearly 3,000 years, creating a unique genetic landscape not seen elsewhere in the world.

5. Founder Effects and Health : Because of long-term endogamy, many Indian subgroups experience "founder effects," where specific genetic mutations are amplified. This has significant implications for precision medicine, as it makes certain populations more susceptible to specific recessive genetic disorders.

6. The 70-Generation Shift: The data suggests that the transition from a period of "mass mixing" (where different groups intermarried freely) to strict endogamy occurred roughly 70 generations ago (around 100–300 BCE). This aligns with the historical solidification of social hierarchies and the caste system.

7. Breaking the "Homogeneous" Myth : The Indian Genetic Map proves that there is no single "Indian genome." Instead, the subcontinent is a "continent-sized" genetic mosaic. The genetic variation between two individuals from different Indian states or communities can be significantly higher than the variation between two individuals from different European countries

3. Indian Pangenome Reference and high-resolution imaging of Pleistocene fossils (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.5 Paper I)

1. The "Admixture" Silhouette : Recent reconstructions show that early humans in the Indian subcontinent were not "pure"*Sapiens* but were "mosaic" individuals. Because Indians carry high Neanderthal genetic diversity, some skeletal remains from the 50,000-year-old strata show subtle intermediate traits, such as slightly thicker brow ridges than modern humans.

2. Cranial Architecture : Neanderthals: Possessed a long, low "football-shaped" skull with a prominent occipital bun (a knot of bone at the back). *Sapiens*: Feature a high, "globe-shaped" skull with a vertical forehead, housing a larger frontal lobe associated with complex social networking.

3. The Chin Distinction : The most definitive skeletal difference remains the chin. *Homo sapiens* are the only hominins with a true bony protrusion at the mandible. Neanderthals had a receding, "chinless" lower jaw, a feature still used to identify hybrid fossils in Central and South Asia.

4. Robust vs. Gracile Frames : Neanderthals were "built for power," with barrel-shaped chests and shorter, thicker limbs to conserve heat (Bergmann's Rule). In contrast, the *Sapiens* migrating through the Saurashtra Peninsula were "gracile"—leaner and longer-limbed,

optimized for long-distance inland trekking and heat dissipation.

5. Metabolic Genes (The 2025 Discovery) The Indian Pangenome study highlighted that specific Neanderthal genes in modern Indians are linked to lipid metabolism. These archaic genes likely helped early migrants survive periods of famine by allowing the body to store fat more efficiently—a trait that now contributes to the high risk of Type 2 diabetes in South Asia.

6. The Immune System "Gift" :We now know that *Sapiens* acquired critical HLA (Human Leukocyte Antigen) genes from Neanderthals. This "genetic shortcut" allowed migrating humans to instantly gain immunity to local Eurasian pathogens that they hadn't encountered in Africa.

7. Olfactory Capabilities : Genomic analysis in 2025 suggests Neanderthals had a different sense of smell, potentially more sensitive to chemical fumes and smoke, while *Sapiens* evolved receptors better tuned to floral and herbal scents, aiding in the identification of medicinal plants.

4. Denisovan Legacy

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

1. The "Mucin" Function: MUC19 belongs to a family of genes responsible for creating mucus and saliva. These fluids are the body's "first line of defense," coating the respiratory, digestive, and oral tracts to trap pathogens.

2. The Denisovan Advantage: While *Homo sapiens* evolved in Africa, Denisovans spent hundreds of thousands of years adapting to the harsh, pathogen-rich environments of Asia. The Denisovan version of MUC19 was more "rugged" and efficient at trapping local viruses and bacteria. Pathogen Shielding: Research shows that the inherited MUC19 variant provides modern humans with enhanced protection against respiratory infections.

3. This was a massive advantage for early migrants moving through the humid forests and dusty plains of South Asia. Hydration in Arid Climates: The Denisovan MUC19 variant also affects the viscosity (thickness) of saliva. It is theorized that this helped early humans maintain mouth moisture more effectively, an essential trait for surviving the inland treks of the Saurashtra Peninsula.

4. High Frequency in South Asia: The 2025 Indian Genetic Map confirms that this specific Denisovan gene is found at significantly higher frequencies in South Asian and Oceanian populations compared to Europeans.

5. Digestive Adaptation: Beyond the mouth, MUC19 is expressed in the gut. The Denisovan legacy helped humans adapt to new diets (such as the diverse plants found in the Indian interior) by protecting the stomach lining from unfamiliar toxins or irritants. Adaptive Introgression: This is a prime example of "Adaptive Introgression," where a gene doesn't just survive by chance but is actively selected because it provides a life-saving benefit in a new environment.

6. Link to the "Ghost Population": The presence of MUC19 supports the theory that *Sapiens* did not just meet one group of Denisovans, but likely a diverse "ghost" lineage of Denisovan-like hominins stationed across the corridors of India and Southeast Asia.

5. Consanguinity and Health

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 9.3 Paper I)

1. Highest Prevalence in Peer States: NFHS-5 data confirms that Tamil Nadu (28%) and Karnataka (26.6%–27%) lead the country in consanguineous marriages, far exceeding the national average of 10.8%.
2. Genetic Risk Factor: Marrying a blood relative significantly increases the risk of autosomal recessive disorders, as both parents are more likely to carry the same recessive gene from a common ancestor.
3. The 25% Threshold: For couples who are both carriers of a recessive mutation (like those for Thalassemia or Spinal Muscular Atrophy), the risk of having an affected child is as high as 25%.
4. Center of Excellence Findings: Estimates show that 40%–50% of patients visiting Indian "Centers of Excellence" for rare diseases with genetic problems have a history of consanguinity. Rare Blood Phenotypes: Long-term endogamy and consanguinity contribute to the prevalence of rare blood groups such as Bombay (hh), Rh-null, and the newly discovered CRIB antigen (first found in a woman from Kolar, Karnataka, in 2025).
5. e-RaktKosh Integration: In June 2025, the Union Health Ministry integrated the Rare Donor Registry of India (RDRI) with the e-RaktKosh portal to enable real-time tracking of these rare blood types during emergencies. Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes: Consanguineous unions are linked to significantly higher rates of stillbirths (1.59 times higher) and spontaneous miscarriages compared to non-related couples.
6. Congenital Health Impacts: Research indicates a 2.5 times higher rate of congenital malformations, including heart defects, hearing deficits (seen in ~88% of cases in certain studies), and vision disorders like Retinitis Pigmentosa. Socio-Demographic Factors: Sociologists attribute the persistence of these marriages in South India to entrenched systems of caste and inheritance, specifically to keep ancestral property within the family.

6. Key Points on Sahelanthropus Bipedalism (Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 1.4 Paper I)

1. Foramen Magnum Position: The opening for the spinal cord is positioned underneath the skull rather than at the back. This suggests the head was balanced atop a vertical neck, a hallmark of bipedalism.
2. Femoral Shaft Morphology: Analysis of the TM 266-01-063 femur shows a flattened posterior surface and internal bone distribution consistent with bearing weight in an upright posture.
3. Facultative Nature: Current consensus suggests it was a facultative biped, meaning it could walk on two legs but likely lacked the efficiency of later *Australopithecus* species. Arboreal Adaptation: While it showed bipedal traits, concurrent analysis of ulna (forearm) fossils indicates it remained highly adapted for climbing and hanging in trees.
4. Lack of Knuckle-Walking: Biomechanical studies confirm that *Sahelanthropus* lacked the specialized wrist and arm features required for knuckle-walking, setting it apart from modern African apes. The "Toumaï" Discovery: The 2001 discovery of the "Toumaï" cranium in Chad provided the first cranial evidence, but post-cranial (limb) evidence published in the last few years has been more controversial.
5. Neck Muscle Attachment: The angle of the nuchal plane (where neck muscles attach) is flatter, indicating it didn't need the massive muscles required by quadrupeds to keep their heads up. Pliocene-Miocene Transition: Living 7 million years ago, it sits right at the estimated divergence point between the human lineage and the chimpanzee-bonobo lineage.

6. Environmental Context: Its habitat was a mix of forests and savannas. Anthropologists argue bipedalism may have evolved as an advantage for moving between scattered tree patches.

7. Key Points on the New Animism Movement

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 5 Paper I)

1. Legal Personhood for Nature: The movement advocates for rivers, mountains, and forests to be granted "Legal Personhood," giving them the same standing as humans or corporations in a court of law. Relational Ontology: Unlike "Old Animism" (primitive belief in spirits), New Animism is an ontological framework where humans are seen as part of a web of social relations with non-human entities (plants, animals, and landscapes).

2. The Whanganui Precedent: A major driver is the success of New Zealand's Whanganui River, which was granted legal rights in 2017. This model is now being replicated globally through 2026. Rights of Mother Earth (Pachamama): Countries like Ecuador and Bolivia have pioneered this by enshrining the rights of nature in their national constitutions, influenced by Andean indigenous cosmology.

3. Indian Judicial Interventions: The movement gained momentum in India through the Uttarakhand High Court's ruling (later stayed but still influential) declaring the Ganga and Yamuna rivers as living entities with legal rights.

4. Guardianship Model: Since rivers cannot speak in court, New Animism promotes a "Guardianship" system where indigenous elders and local communities act as legal parents (in loco parentis) to protect the entity's interests.

5. Shift from "Resource" to "Relative": Anthropologists document how activists are moving away from seeing nature as a "resource" to be exploited and toward seeing it as a "relative" to be respected, directly impacting climate litigation.

6. The Magpie River (Canada): In a recent landmark (2025-26), the Magpie River in Quebec was granted legal rights by the Innu Council, serving as a blueprint for North American "New Animism."

7. Decolonizing Environmentalism: The movement is a tool for decolonization, as it challenges Western-centric views of "nature vs. culture" and reinstates indigenous knowledge as a valid scientific and legal framework.

SOCIO - CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Health and Society: High rates of consanguineous marriages in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

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

1. **Highest Prevalence in South India:** NFHS-5 data shows that **Tamil Nadu (28%)** and **Karnataka (27%)** have the highest rates of consanguineous marriages in India, significantly exceeding the national average of 11%. **Genetic Risk Amplification:** Marrying blood relatives increases the probability that both parents carry the same **recessive genetic mutations**, leading to a 25% risk of autosomal recessive conditions in their children.

2. **Rise of Rare Blood Groups:** Endogamy and consanguinity contribute to the prevalence of

rare blood phenotypes (like **Bombay Blood Group**, Rh-null, and P-null) because these rare markers are more likely to be passed down and expressed within closed kin groups.

3. Rare Donor Registry Integration: To address the critical shortage of these rare types, the Union Health Ministry integrated the **Rare Donor Registry of India (RDRI)** with the e-RaktKosh platform in 2025.

4. Real-Time Life Saving: This integration allows hospitals to use e-RaktKosh for **real-time tracking** of rare donors across the country, which is essential for emergency transfusions and surgeries in regions with high consanguinity.

5. Prevalence of Thalassemia and Sickle Cell: Consanguineous unions are strongly linked to higher rates of hemoglobinopathies like **Thalassemia and Sickle Cell Anaemia**, conditions that require lifelong, antigen-matched blood transfusions. **Risk of Alloimmunisation:** Patients in these regions often face **alloimmunisation** (immune response against foreign RBC antigens) due to minor antigen mismatches; the new registry helps find "perfect matches" beyond just ABO and Rh types.

6. Impact on Child Health: Studies in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu link consanguinity to higher rates of **congenital heart disease**, hearing deficits (88% in some surveyed groups), and vision defects.

2. Gender Roles in Foraging Societies

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

1. Ubiquity of Female Hunters: A major study of 63 foraging societies found that **women hunt in 79%** of them, proving that hunting is not a gender-exclusive male activity ScienceDaily. **Intentionality:** In societies where women hunt, it is often their **primary occupation** or a planned activity, rather than just opportunistic killing while gathering NPR.

2. Grandmother Hypothesis: Anthropologists highlight the "Grandmother Hypothesis," where post-menopausal women play a critical role in **gathering high-calorie tubers**, ensuring the survival of grandchildren and allowing mothers to forage or hunt.

3. Flexibility in Childcare: Foraging societies often exhibit "alloparenting" (communal childcare), which frees up women to participate in long-distance foraging or hunting expeditions. **Tool Specialization:** Research shows women often use a **wider variety of tools and strategies**, including nets, machetes, and even dogs, whereas men may focus more on projectile weapons like bows or spears PLOS ONE.

4. Big-Game Participation: Women are not restricted to small game; the discovery of a 9,000-year-old female hunter in the Andes with big-game hunting tools suggests ancient roots for female big-game hunting. **Contribution to Diet:** In many tropical foraging groups (like the Ju/'hoansi), women's gathering of plant foods provides **60-80% of the total calories**, making them the primary breadwinners.

5. Egalitarian Power Structures: Most foraging societies are characterized by "**gender complementarity**," where different roles are valued equally, preventing the extreme patriarchal hierarchies seen in agricultural societies. **Fluidity of Roles:** Roles are often "leaky"; if a man is better at gathering or a woman at tracking, the society usually prioritizes **competence over gender norms** to ensure group survival.

6. Impact of Colonization: Anthropologists argue that many "strict" gender roles observed in the 20th century were actually **distortions caused by colonial influence** and Western researchers projecting their own biases onto tribal groups.

PAPER - 2

INDIAN & TRIBAL ANTHROPOLOGY

1. Sickle Cell Eradication

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

1. The initiative aligns with India's broader commitment to eradicating sickle cell anemia, a hereditary blood disorder, by 2047, particularly focusing on tribal communities, which are disproportionately affected. Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a genetic blood disorder causing abnormal haemoglobin (the protein that carries oxygen through the body), resulting in sickle-shaped red blood cells. This leads to blocked blood flow, severe pain, organ damage, and reduced life expectancy.

Challenges Regarding SCD in India:

2. India has the world's highest tribal population density, with 67.8 million people (8.6%) as per the 2011 Census. MoHFW highlights SCD among the top ten health issues impacting tribal communities disproportionately.

3. Limited diagnostic and treatment facilities in remote tribal areas and lack of knowledge among communities about genetic counseling and preventive measures.

4. Long-term SCD management can be financially taxing due to medication costs, regular check-ups, and hospitalisations. Treatments like CRISPR cost USD 2-3 million, and finding bone marrow donors is challenging.

Some Government Initiatives Related to SCD

5. National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission: Vision: The National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission, announced in the Union Budget 2023, targets the health challenges posed by Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), especially among tribal populations. The mission aims to eliminate SCD as a public health issue in India by 2047.

6. Strengthen Healthcare Infrastructure: Establish more specialised diagnostic and treatment centres in tribal regions. Educational Campaigns: Increase awareness about genetic diseases among tribal populations.

Conclusion

7. India's focus on addressing health inequities in vulnerable populations, especially those affected by Sickle Cell Disease (SCD), reflects the government's commitment to public health and tribal welfare. This initiative aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to create a healthier and more equitable society.

2. Sami, Forest Finns, and Kvens Tribes

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

1. The Norwegian Parliament issued a formal apology to the Sami, Forest Finns, and Kvens for the historical injustices caused by its "Norwegianisation" policy.

2. This forced assimilation, practiced from the 18th century until the 1980s, led to cultural erasure, loss of languages, and forced relocations.

About Tribes in News:

- Sami People:
 - Indigenous to Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.
 - Traditionally reindeer herders and fishers.
 - Suffered loss of language, culture, and land under assimilation policies.
 - Advocacy for their land and rights continues today.
- Kvens:
 - Ethnic minority of Finnish descent in northern Norway.
 - Historically subjected to forced assimilation and loss of language.
 - Continue to seek reparations and cultural revival.
- Forest Finns:
 - Minority group originally from Finland who settled in Norway and Sweden.
 - Practiced slash-and-burn agriculture, later marginalized by assimilation policies.
 - Struggle to preserve their cultural identity and heritage.

3. Key Facts about Reang Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

- The ethnic Reang community has demanded that Tripura declare a holiday on Hojagiri Day, which celebrates the traditional Hojagiri dance.

Reang Tribe:

- The Reang tribe, who locally call themselves “Bru”, is the second largest tribal community of Tripura after the old Tripuri clan. They are the only Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTGs) residing in the state of Tripura.
- Apart from Tripura, they are also found in the neighbouring state of Mizoram and a few in Assam. According to the 2011 census of India report, the total population of the Reang tribe is about 1,88,080.
- Reangs are said to have come first from Shan State of upper Burma (now Myanmar) in different waves to the Chittagang Hill Tracts and then to the Southern part of Tripura.
- Similarly, another group entered Tripura via Assam and Mizoram during the 18th Century. Reangs belongs to Indo-Mongoloid racial stock.
- Their language is known as “Kaubru,” which has a tonal effect on the Kuki language, though broadly it is the Kok-Borok dialect. The language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese linguistic family.
- Ethnically, Reangs are divided into two major clans: Meska and Molsoi.
- The Reangs are a well-knit ethnic group having a rigid, well-ordained, and well-structured self-governing system.
- Economy: The Reangs are primarily an agriculturist tribe. In the past, they mostly used to practise the ‘Huk’ or Jhum cultivation, like most other Tripuri tribes. But now shifted to modern agriculture practice.

Religious Belief:

- At present, most of the Reangs in Tripura follow Hinduism, and most of their deities are akin to gods and goddesses of Hindu faith. Reangs have faith in different deities like Buraha, Bonirao, Songragma, Jampira, Lampra, etc.
- Hojagiri folk dance of the Reang clan had achieved an unprecedented acclaim all over the world.

4. Concerns Over Great Nicobar Island Project

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

- With parts of the 92,000 crore Great Nicobar Island mega-infrastructure project nearing approval, the Nicobar Tribal Council has alleged pressure from the district administration to surrender ancestral tribal land.
- The Council disputes the administration's claim that forest rights were settled under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 asserting that FRA processes were never initiated.

What is the Great Nicobar Island Project?

- About: Launched in 2021, GNIP is a mega infrastructure initiative to be implemented on Great Nicobar Island (GNI), located at the southern end of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The project requires diversion of forest land in Galathea Bay, Pemmaya Bay, and Nanjappa Bay, areas traditionally inhabited by the Nicobarese community before the 2004 tsunami.
- Features: Spearheaded by NITI Aayog, it includes a transshipment terminal at Galathea Bay, a greenfield airport, a greenfield township, and a tourism project with a gas-powered plant. It is being executed by the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Integrated Development Corporation (ANIIDCO) and is strategically located near the Malacca Strait, a key maritime route linking the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.
- Strategic Importance: Nicobar's strategic location near the Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Straits enables India to monitor crucial sea routes vital for global trade and energy supply, aligning with the Act East Policy (2014) and the QUAD's Indo-Pacific strategy.
- The planned greenfield airport will enhance defense deployment, boosting India's capacity to track Chinese naval movements and reinforce regional security.
- Economic Significance: The International Container Transshipment Terminal (ICTT) aims to reduce India's dependence on foreign ports like Singapore and Colombo. It forms a key part of the Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, aligning with India's long-term economic strategy.

5. Plea to enhance social conditions of Paliyar tribes

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

- Recent findings highlight the urgent need for immediate government action to address the socio-economic challenges faced by the Paliyar and other tribes.
- The Paliyan people, also known as Palaiyar or Pazhaiyar, are a Dravidian tribal group living mainly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The Paliyan tribe historically relied on hunting, gathering, and foraging for their sustenance. They practice shifting cultivation
- The Paliyans speak a Dravidian language closely related to Tamil, emphasizing their cultural heritage and regional ties. The society is patriarchal, with men holding positions of authority. They worship nature spirits and deities residing in the forests, mountains, and rivers. They have customary burial practices where the deceased are buried in designated areas near their residential settlements, commonly on the western side.
- Efforts are made to preserve Paliyan cultural traditions, language, and knowledge systems, including ethnomedicinal practices and ecological wisdom.

About Paliyar Tribe

- They are an indigenous tribal community primarily found in the hilly regions of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. They are and have been known by multiple names, such as the Paliyans, Pazhaiyarares, and Panaiyars.
- Historically, the Paliyars were spread all over the Dindigul district and the Sirumalai Palani hills, adjacent to the Western Ghats. As they inhabited the Palani hills, they were known as Panaiyars.
- Language: They primarily speak a dialect related to Tamil, reflecting their Dravidian linguistic heritage.
- Occupation: Traditionally, the Paliyars were hunters and gatherers, residing in the forests of the Western Ghats.

6. Key features of Changpa Tribe

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

- Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk and Leh Apex Body (LAB) decided to call off the Pashmina border march aimed at highlighting the plight of the Changpa nomadic tribes who are losing thousands of square kilometres of their land “due to Chinese incursion.
- The Changpa, or Champa, are semi-nomadic people found mainly in the Changtang plateau of southeastern Ladakh.
- A smaller number resides in the western regions of the Tibet Autonomous Region in China. They share linguistic and cultural affinities with Tibetans.
- They are high-altitude pastoralists, raising mainly yaks and goats. They live at an average altitude of 4,500 metres above sea level. Religion: All Changpa families profess Tibetan Buddhism as their religion.

Semi-nomadic Lifestyle

- The Changpa who live nomadic lives are known as Phalpa, while those who have settled down in fixed locations are called Fangpa. For many Changpas, rearing of animals and consuming and selling their produce (milk and its products, hair, and meat) is the only means of livelihood.
- Their Buddhist belief does not allow them to kill animals for meat. It is only when animals die a natural death that the carcasses can be used for meat. In 1989, the Changpa were granted official status in India as a scheduled tribe.

About Changpa Tribe

- The Changpa, or Champa, are semi-nomadic people found mainly in the Changtang plateau of southeastern Ladakh. A smaller number resides in the western regions of the Tibet Autonomous Region in China. They share linguistic and cultural affinities with Tibetans. They are high-altitude pastoralists, raising mainly yaks and goats. They live at an average altitude of 4,500 metres above sea level.
- Religion: All Changpa families profess Tibetan Buddhism as their religion.

7. Inclusion of Jhodia community in the Schedule Tribe list

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

- Recently, Odisha’s proposal to include the Jhodia community in the Schedule Tribe list

and the demand for Sora language inclusion came into focus after the Centre informed the Lok Sabha that the proposal was not supported by the Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI) and was referred back to the State.

- Jhodia Community
- The Jhodia (Jhodia Paraja) community, mainly residing in Koraput, Rayagada and parts of Kalahandi districts of Odisha, was earlier recognised as a synonym of the Paroja tribe and received Scheduled Tribe benefits until 1997.
- The community is socially and economically backward, living in geographically isolated areas, with livelihoods largely dependent on subsistence agriculture and forest produce, and facing significant educational and economic deprivation.

Soura (Sora) Language

- The Soura (Saora) language, spoken by the Saora tribe, belongs to the Austroasiatic (Munda) language family and is also known as Sora, Savara, or Saura.
- It has a distinct script, Sorang Sompeng, developed in 1936 by Mangei Gomango, which holds cultural and religious significance.
- The language is not included in the Eighth Schedule, which limits its official recognition, institutional support and preservation efforts.
- The Government has clarified that there are no fixed criteria or timeline for inclusion of languages, as earlier attempts to frame such criteria by the Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committees remained inconclusive.

8. Key Findings of the Study on Nicobarese Tribe

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

- A study published in the European Journal of Human Genetics has revised the timeline of Nicobarese migration to the Nicobar Islands.
- Key Findings of the Study on Nicobarese Tribe Revised Migration Timeline: Previous studies estimated that the Austroasiatic ancestors of the Nicobarese arrived to Nicobar Islands over 11,000 years ago.
- The new study, using advanced Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) analysis, corrected this estimate to approximately 5,000 years ago. Genetic Link: The study found that the Nicobarese share ancestral ties with the Htin Mal community (ethnic group native to Laos-Thailand region).
- This supports the idea that their ancestors migrated from Southeast Asia, rather than South Asia.
- Preservation of Genetic Identity: Due to their geographical isolation, the Nicobarese have maintained their genetic identity with minimal external influence. This has allowed researchers to trace their ancestry more precisely. Linguistic Continuity: Despite their genetic ties to Southeast Asia, the Nicobarese have retained their Austroasiatic language roots (Khmuic branch), linking them to other Southeast Asian populations.

What are the Key Facts About the Nicobarese Tribe?

- Geography: The Nicobarese live on the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, part of India's Andaman and Nicobar Islands Union Territory. The Nicobar Islands consist of

19 islands, the major islands are Car Nicobar, Kamorta, Nancowrie, and Great Nicobar, which have both hilly and flat terrains. Great Nicobar is the southernmost and largest of the Nicobar Islands.

- **Ethnic Group:** The Nicobarese belong to the Mongoloid ethnic group and have a population of over 27,000. While not divided into tribes, they are classified into six territorial groups: Car Nicobar, Chowra, Teressa with Bompoka, Central Group, Southern Group, and the Shompen (inland tribe of Great Nicobar).
- **Social Structure:** Patriarchal joint family system known as Tuhet. With no individual ownership, the Tuhet collectively owns land, coconut trees, and pigs.

9. Role of Tribals in Shaping India's Socio-cultural and Developmental Fabric?

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

- **Cultural Preservation and Rich Heritage:** Tribal communities have played a pivotal role in preserving India's rich cultural diversity, contributing significantly to the country's folklore, traditions, and artistic expressions.
- Their deep connection to nature and unique customs serve as a vital counterbalance to the homogenizing forces of modernization. For instance, the Gond and Bhil tribes are famous for their vibrant art, which is now gaining global recognition.
- The Warli tribe, known for their distinct folk art, also contributes to the cultural fabric of India, with their intricate wall paintings depicting daily life and nature.
- **Environmental Stewardship and Biodiversity Conservation:** Tribal communities, especially in forested regions, have been at the forefront of environmental stewardship, protecting biodiversity through traditional knowledge systems. Their sustainable practices in resource management have ensured the survival of crucial ecosystems.
- The tribals' role as the guardians of forests can be seen in regions like Bastar (Chhattisgarh), where local tribal communities have actively opposed deforestation for mining.
- Also, the Dongria Kondh tribe in Odisha is renowned for their efforts in protecting the Niyamgiri hills, fighting against the bauxite mining project that threatened their sacred lands.
- **Contribution to India's Agricultural Landscape:** Tribal communities have significantly contributed to the evolution of India's agricultural practices, often being the first adopters of organic farming methods.
- Their deep-rooted knowledge of the land, crops, and natural fertilizers has informed sustainable agricultural practices, which have proven to be resilient in harsh conditions.
- For instance, the Munda tribe, in Jharkhand, is another example, known for their traditional agricultural practices, such as mixed cropping, which ensures soil fertility and sustainability.
- **Economic Contribution through Tribal Entrepreneurship:** Tribal populations are increasingly contributing to India's economy, particularly through entrepreneurship and local industries such as handicrafts, textiles, and herbal medicines.

10. JenuKuruba land rights movement

(Use this content in the topic of syllabus – Unit 6.2 Paper II)

- Reoccupation of Ancestral Land: On 5 May 2025, 52 JenuKuruba families marched back into the Nagarahole Tiger Reserve to reoccupy their traditional village, Karadikallu, from which they were forcibly evicted nearly 40 years ago.
- Assertion via Ritual: To signal their permanent return, the families began building homes for their sacred deities, a traditional practice that establishes their spiritual and historical connection to the land.
- Legal Standing via FRA: The community invoked the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, arguing that the law does not "grant" them rights but simply recognizes the rights they have always possessed as original inhabitants.
- The "Nanga Kaadu" Declaration: During a Gram Sabha on 20 May 2025, the tribe erected a board declaring "*Nanga Kaadu, Nanga Jamma, NangaveAlako*" (Our forest, our land, we rule), directly challenging forest department trespass warnings.
- Conflict with Authorities: Over 120 officials from the Karnataka Forest Department and State Tiger Protection Force attempted to block their entry and dismantled temporary shelters, citing tiger conservation protocols.
- Protest Against Commercialization: A significant driver of the 2025 movement was the tribe's demand to halt tiger safaris on their ancestral lands, which they view as a commercial exploitation of their home while they are criminalized for entering.
- Union Ministry Intervention: In response to the escalating tension, the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry directed the Karnataka government to ensure that forest rights claims are properly addressed and that no evictions occur while legal appeals are pending.
- Systemic Delays: While some families have received individual titles, the majority of Community Forest Rights (CFR) claims filed since 2009 remain largely unaddressed or rejected due to bureaucratic hurdles.
- 13-Day Padayatra: In late 2025 and early 2026, community leaders led a peaceful foot march (padayatra) across 29 villages inside the reserve to mobilize support and document land memory among younger generations.

11. Shifting dynamics of the Garo and Onge tribes

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

- Sam Achik Decline: In the Garo Hills, the traditional Sam Achik (Indigenous Religion) is rapidly fading as a majority of the population has converted to Christianity, leading to a loss of ancient oral chants and ritualistic knowledge.
- The "Wangala" Paradox: While the traditional religion wanes, the Wangala Festival remains a massive cultural event, now increasingly celebrated as a secular "ethnic identity" marker rather than a purely religious sacrifice to the sun god, Saljong.
- Onge Population Crisis: The Onge of Little Andaman remain one of the world's most vulnerable groups, with their population hovering dangerously low at approximately 115–125 individuals.
- Dietary Shifts & Health: The transition from a traditional hunter-gatherer diet to government-supplied rations (refined flour, sugar, and oil) has triggered a rise in metabolic disorders among the Onge, further threatening their survival.

- **Settler Encroachment:** In Little Andaman, the Onge face increasing pressure from "developmental" projects and settler populations, which restrict their access to traditional forest resources and honey-gathering sites.
- **Genetic Bottlenecks:** Similar to the Indian Genetic Map findings, the Onge suffer from extreme founder effects, making them susceptible to specific illnesses due to their small, isolated gene pool.
- **Garo Matriliney Evolution:** The Garo's traditional matrilineal system (where property passes through the female line) is under stress; younger generations are increasingly advocating for patrilineal inheritance rights, influenced by urban Indian legal norms.
- **Language Vulnerability:** The Onge language is classified as "Critically Endangered" by UNESCO; with fewer elders to pass on nuanced ecological terms, their unique biological knowledge is disappearing.
- **"Fortress" vs. Rights:** Much like the JenuKuruba struggle, the Onge's rights to their traditional hunting grounds are often superseded by strict maritime or environmental regulations that do not account for indigenous stewardship.

12. Jarawa Electoral Enrolment

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

- **Historic First:** For the first time since independence, 19 members of the Jarawa tribe were officially enrolled in the electoral rolls for the Andaman and Nicobar Islands parliamentary constituency. PIB - Election Commission of India
- **Strategic Settlement:** The enrolled members belong to the Kadamtala area of Middle Andaman. Unlike the majority of the tribe which remains nomadic, this group has had more sustained, regulated contact with the administration. The Hindu - Jarawa Enrollment
- **The "Particularly Vulnerable" Status:** The Jarawa are one of five PVTGs in the archipelago (alongside the Onge, Great Andamanese, Sentinelese, and Shompen) characterized by a declining or stagnant population and pre-agricultural technology.
- **Integration vs. Isolation:** This move marks a delicate balance in the "Jarawa Policy," shifting from "eyes-on, hands-off" to a model of "inclusive citizenship" without forcing total cultural assimilation.
- **Overcoming Documentation Hurdles:** Enrollment was a logistical challenge as most Jarawa do not possess standard age or identity proofs; the Election Commission used specialized field surveys and medical estimations to verify eligibility.
- **Voter Education:** To prepare the new voters, the administration used visual aids and translators to explain the concept of the "Electronic Voting Machine" (EVM) and the significance of the "inked finger."
- **Sovereignty and Agency:** Tribal rights activists view this as a double-edged sword: while it gives the Jarawa a political voice to protect their lands (like the JenuKuruba struggle), it also increases their exposure to external political influences.
- **The Shompen Parallel:** This initiative coincided with another first—the Shompen tribe of Great Nicobar also cast their votes for the first time in 2024, signaling a broader push for universal suffrage in the islands.

13. HakkiPikki Crisis

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

- The "Bird-Catcher" Diaspora: Originally a nomadic bird-catching tribe from Karnataka, the HakkiPikki pivoted to selling traditional herbal oils and medicines globally after bird hunting was banned in India.
- Global Herbal Footprint: By 2026, members of the tribe had established significant trade routes in Central and East Africa, particularly in Sudan, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic (CAR), where there is a high demand for Indian traditional medicine.
- Trapped in Conflict: The 2026 crisis erupted when tribal members found themselves caught in sudden civil unrest in the CAR, echoing the Sudarshan-like rescue operations of previous years when nearly 200 members were stranded in Sudan. Economic Survival: The tribe travels to Africa because a small bottle of herbal oil, which might sell for 100 in Bengaluru, can fetch the equivalent of \$20–\$50 in African markets, providing a vital economic lifeline.
- Passport and Visa Hurdles: Many tribal members travel on limited-entry visas or through informal networks. When the 2026 conflict intensified, their lack of formal documentation made evacuation through official diplomatic channels extremely complex.
- Language Barrier and Isolation: Stranded in remote African zones, the tribe faced extreme isolation, communicating in "Vaghri," a unique Indo-Aryan language that is distinct from the local African dialects or even standard Kannada/Hindi.
- Digital SOS: In 2026, stranded members used social media and WhatsApp video clips to send distress signals to the Karnataka State Tribal Research Institute, prompting the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to intervene.
- The "Indigenous Entrepreneur" Risk: The crisis highlighted the lack of a safety net for indigenous entrepreneurs who lack the backing of large corporations or formal trade unions when operating in high-risk international "grey markets."
- Government Repatriation: Similar to Operation Kaveri, the Indian government launched a targeted extraction in early 2026, coordinating with the African Union to bring the herbalists back to Karnataka safely.

14. Key Points on the Rajasthan Sacred Groves Ruling

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

- Deemed Forest Status: The Supreme Court mandated that Orans (sacred groves) must be classified as "Deemed Forests" to protect them from encroachment and industrial diversion. Business Standard
- Protection of Biodiversity: These groves are vital micro-ecosystems hosting endangered species like the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) and the Desert Fox, acting as carbon sinks in arid regions.
- Community Protest: While the ruling aims to protect trees, tribal and pastoral communities (like the Bishnois and Raikas) have protested, fearing that "Forest" status will transfer control from the community to the Forest Department.
- Livelihood Concerns: Communities rely on Orans for controlled grazing and gathering non-timber forest produce. Classification as a forest often leads to restrictions on these

- traditional rights.
- Threat from Green Energy: Many Orans in Jaisalmer and Bikaner were being allotted for Solar and Wind energy projects. The ruling effectively halts such diversions by requiring Central Government clearance.
 - The "God's Land" Concept: Anthropologically, Orans are dedicated to local deities (like *Degraya* or *Ramdevra*). The community believes the land belongs to the deity, which has ensured its preservation for centuries without state intervention.
 - Conflict with FRA 2006: Activists argue that instead of "Deemed Forest" status, the government should recognize Community Forest Resource (CFR) rights under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) 2006, which empowers the Gram Sabha.
 - Mapping Challenges: The Rajasthan government has been tasked with the massive exercise of digitally mapping thousands of small, scattered Orans to prevent land grabbing by private players.
 - Water Conservation: Orans are traditionally situated around water bodies (Tobas or Johads). Their legal protection is crucial for maintaining the groundwater table in the Thar Desert.
 - Global Recognition: The movement to save Orans is being cited internationally by anthropologists as a prime example of Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs)

15. Key Points on the Tribal Healers Recognition Campaign Integration into Formal Health

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

- The campaign aims to bring 1 lakh traditional healers (often called *Vaidyas*, *Gunins*, or *Bhagats*) into the mainstream healthcare fold as "first-line responders" in remote areas. Certification via QCI: Healers are being formally certified through the Quality Council of India (QCI) and the Voluntary Certification Scheme for Traditional Community Healthcare Providers (VCS-TCHP).
- Validation of Prior Learning (VPL): Unlike formal medical schooling, this process uses Prior Learning Recognition to validate ancestral knowledge and skills passed down through oral traditions.
- Targeting PVTGs: A primary focus is on healers within the 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) under the PM-JANMAN mission, where modern medical penetration is lowest.
- Referral Mechanism: Healers are trained to act as bridges; they treat minor ailments using herbal remedies but are trained to recognize and refer critical cases (like TB or high-risk pregnancies) to government hospitals.
- Combating Biopiracy: By documenting the specific herbs and methods used, the government aims to protect Indigenous Knowledge from being patented by external entities, ensuring rights remain with the tribes.
- Livelihood Support: Formal recognition allows healers to legally practice and potentially receive stipends or institutional support, turning their traditional service into a sustainable livelihood.
- Ethno-Medicinal Mapping: The campaign is accompanied by a massive effort to map tribal medicinal plants, many of which are unique to specific forest patches in Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and the North East.

- Addressing the Doctor Shortage: In tribal districts where the doctor-to-population ratio is severely skewed, certified healers provide a immediate, culturally acceptable healthcare alternative.
- Preservation of Oral Heritage: Anthropologically, this move prevents the extinction of traditional pharmacopoeia, which is at risk of being lost as younger generations migrate away from forest-based lifestyles.

