New Insights into Human Evolution

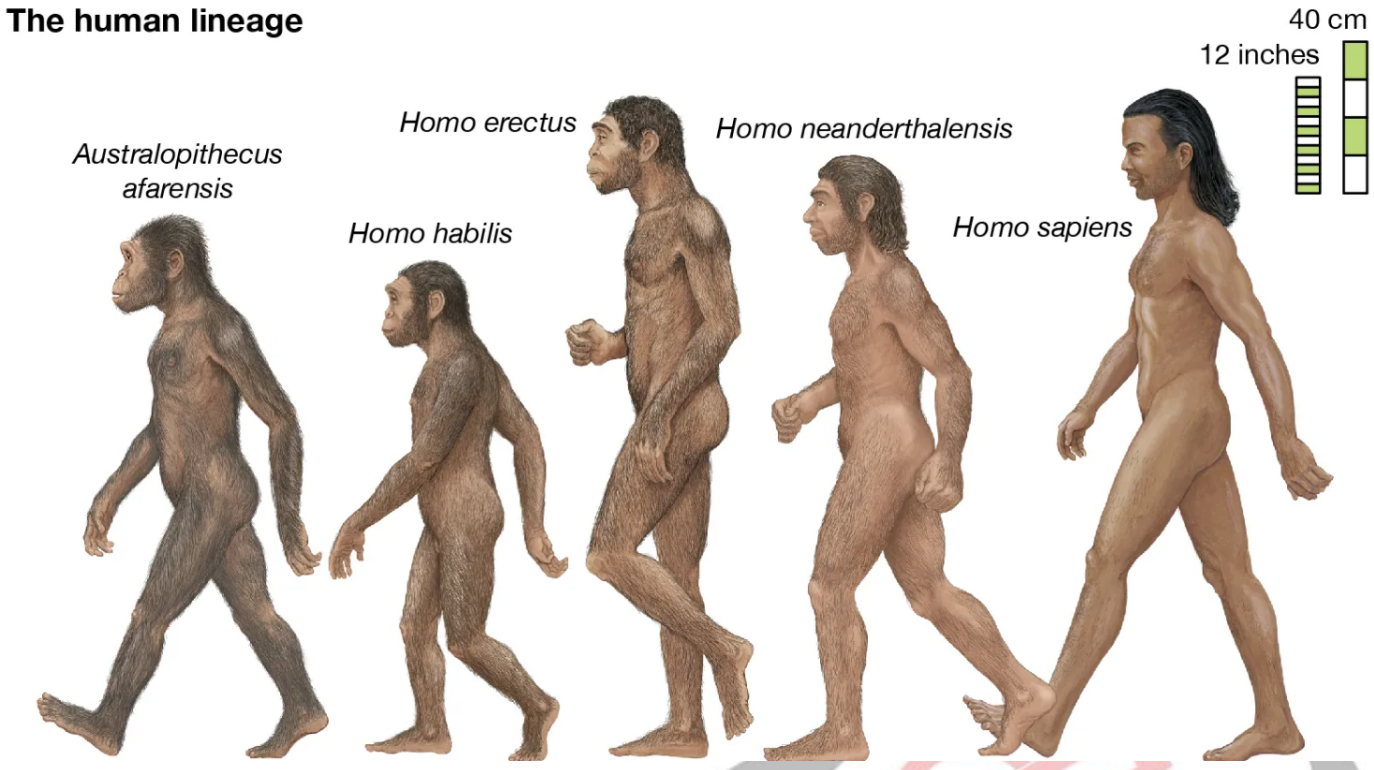
Source: CambridgeUni

A recent study challenges the long-held belief that **modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) evolved from a single ancestral population,** suggesting instead that **they emerged through the admixture of two distinct populations.**

- The research analyzed **modern human DNA** to trace population splits and reunions, relying on data from the **1000 Genomes Project** rather than ancient fossils.
    - The **1000 Genomes Project** is a global initiative that sequenced DNA from populations across **Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas.**

Key Findings:

- **Multiple Ancestry & Evolution:** Modern humans (***Homo sapiens***) likely evolved from **2 ancestral populations, with one majority (~80%)** experiencing a significant decline before recovering, while the **other minority (~20%)** contributed genes linked to brain function and cognition.
    - Some genes from the minority group underwent **purifying selection,** indicating **evolutionary pressures** that shaped human development.
    - This genetic exchange contributed nearly **10 times more material** than the later **Neanderthal-Denisovan interbreeding (~50,000 years ago)**, which accounts for **only ~2% of non-African human DNA.**
- **Genetic Mixing:** These populations diverged around **1.5 million years ago** and later interbred approximately **300,000 years ago,** forming the **genetic foundation** of modern humans.



Read More: **Genome India Project**, **Human Evolution and Migration**.