



Topic: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Role of Museums in preserving India's Culture and Heritage

Introduction

- India is home to over 1,000 museums representing a rich and diverse blend of the cultural, religious and scientific achievements that our civilisation has witnessed over the years.
- On the occasion of International Museum Day, the Ministry of Culture had made admissions to all museums under its ambit free of cost for a week.
- This not only **makes our art and culture accessible to all**, but also provides an **opportunity to propagate our civilizational heritage**.

Shift in perspectives of Culture and heritage

- There has been a **transformational shift** in our **perspectives** of our culture and **heritage**.
- There has been a shift from a **museum-centric approach to a cultural spaces approach**.
- Museums have been built for specific purposes rather than on general purpose.
- Museums are looked with a whole-of-government approach to ensure that museums provide a wholesome experience.

Cultural Spaces

- **India is one of the few continuously inhabited civilisational states that continues to thrive.**

- Our art, culture and heritage can be witnessed in our day-to-day activities.
- The festivals, the deities, the food, and the dance and music performances are all a testimony to our **civilisational ethos**.
- Our approach has been to **continuously integrate our culture into our lives**.
- Whenever stolen heritage from other countries are brought back, there is an attempt to restore it to the place it was taken from.
- It is with this underlying philosophy that the recently retrieved idol of Goddess Annapurna was returned to its rightful place at Kashi Vishwanath temple, Varanasi.
- Similarly, to embed art and our civilisational heritage in places such as the new Central Vista Project also builds on this approach to have cultural spaces that are contiguous.

Role of museums in preserving culture and heritage

- **Platform to showcase diverse heritage:**
 - Indian history is one of the richest and varied histories of the world.
 - But history comes in different forms. It could be through art, culture, science or natural objects.
 - History can be understood through esteemed facets, such as paintings, carvings, documents, and weaponry.
- **Foray into economic and social life of Ancient Indians:**
 - History can also be seen through the prism of **daily objects, such as clothing, pots and pans, toys, cutlery and more**.
 - History is preserved through tangible articles and it is a museum that houses these.
 - **Eg: National Museum in Delhi** has artefacts from Harappan civilisation giving us a feel of life in 3500 B.C
- **Recognizing the contributions of great personalities:**
 - To recognise the **role of over 200 tribal freedom fighters** across India, 10 tribal freedom fighter museums are being set up across the country.
 - Recently Pradhan Mantri Sangrahalaya was inaugurated
 - In tribute to **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**, the **Statue of Unity** also contains a **museum** that **chronicles** the various **facets of Patel in great detail**.
- **Specific purpose museums:**
 - Specific theme-based museums, which have unique content and a definite purpose ensures that the overall experience is wholesome.
 - Museums along these lines are **Biplobi Bharat museum in Kolkata, the arms and armour museum at the Red Fort, a gallery on Gautama Buddha in Delhi**, and the museum on Jammu and Kashmir.

Renewal of Museums

- With the renewed mandate of modernisation, upgradation, and establishment of new museums, we can bring our institutions closer to international standards of museology in the 21st century.
- The Ministry of Culture organised a first-of-its-kind Global Summit on 'Reimagining Museums in India' recently.
- The learnings from the summit are being incorporated to devise a blueprint for the development of new museums, nurture a renewal framework, and reinvigorate existing museums.

Way Forward

- The use of digital technology to widen public access through modernisation and digitisation of collections and exhibitions.
- **Breaking down silos to forge a whole-of-government approach** in such a specialised domain requires new skills and perspectives.
- Human capacities and **domain knowledge require continued upgradation**.

- **Modernising our traditional museums from display spaces** of past glory to **making them more interactive** through technology interfaces, innovative curatorial skills and imaginative storytelling.
- Compared to new museums, successfully **repurposing existing museum spaces needs more imaginative thinking.**
- With this renewed mandate of modernisation, upgradation, and establishment of new museums, we are bringing our institutions closer to international standards of museology in the 21st century.

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