



General Studies-1; Topic: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

Protecting India's Cultural Heritage

Introduction

- India has a vast basket of diverse cultural traditions, traditional expressions and intangible cultural heritage.
- Preserving our heritage is enshrined as a Fundamental Duty in our Constitution.
- It is the duty of every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.

Threats to Indian Cultural Heritage

- **Theft:** The incidents of thefts have been observed usually from unprotected monuments and ancient temples.
- **Smuggling:** illicit traffic and smuggling in antiquities.
- **Tourism:** Unregulated tourism, tourist activities run by private agents have affected the art heritage places.
- **Issues with security of museums:** Most of the museums are poorly guarded due to shortage of manpower leading to theft of artefacts, fire accidents etc.
- **Lack of public awareness:** This leads to poor maintenance, vandalism and spoiling the monuments artefacts.
- **Duplication:** Fake paintings and art forms leading to threat to livelihoods of artists.
- **Poor Maintenance:** The state of the wall paintings in Ajanta caves is continuously getting worse due to humidity as well as lack of care.
- **Encroachment of monuments:** Over 278 centrally protected monuments have been encroached upon or have illegal occupants, as per government data.

Rationale behind safeguarding the cultural heritage

- History serves as a laboratory and the past serves us to understand the regional laws and social structures. This helps in our progress towards an ideal society.
- The art heritage is the identity and pride of our country.
- It is duty of every citizen to protect, preserve and perpetuate the cultural richness.
- Tourism generates revenue for the state as well as private artists due to the money-multiplier quality.
- Infrastructure development takes place in and around the Heritage areas. Eg. Hampi despite being a small town has excellent infrastructure.
- It creates a feeling of oneness and a sense of attachment by enhancing a sense of belonging to a culture or a region.
- It creates jobs for lot of people from art industry and tourism industry as well
- Every historical site has an important story to tell and these stories have inspired many people to strengthen their commitment to fight injustice and oppression.

Way Forward

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) needs to be more proactive and vigilant in its efforts for Preservation and Conservation of Monuments and Antiques.
- Tapping of the Public —Private Partnership models for sustenance of Arts and Crafts.
- Setting up at least one museum in each district with different chambers for visual and other forms of art and architecture with regional flavour.
- Curriculum modification – Identification and inclusion of heritage as an asset in school.
- Heritage depiction and promotion through immersive technology & augmented reality.
- Greater involvement of universities in schemes promoting arts and culture as well as inclusion of Fine Arts as a subject in universities.
- Recognizing ‘cultural heritage tourism’ as an upcoming industry by building cultural resources with an adaptation of scientific and technological knowledge.

Conclusion

- Preservation and conservation of India’s rich cultural heritage and promotion of all forms of art and culture, both tangible and intangible, is essential and assumes a lot of importance.