

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages in India - UPSC Art & Culture Notes

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is an important organization under the United Nations. Such international bodies and programs play an important role in the [IAS exam](#). In this article, you can read all about UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritages in India.

The World Heritage Program promotes the conservation of natural and cultural sites of universal value. India has 38 world heritage sites, including 30 cultural properties, 7 natural properties, and 1 mixed site. The latest one included is Jaipur city, Rajasthan.

International organizations and groupings are an important part of the International Relations section of the General Studies paper-2 in the [UPSC Syllabus](#). Arts and Culture from the General Studies paper-1 section can be a scoring subject. Students preparing for UPSC 2022 and other Government Exams can find this article useful.

UPSC aspirants must know about UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India. Know more about [UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India](#) in the linked article.

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages

With the aim of ensuring better protection of important intangible cultural heritage across the world and in order to create awareness of their significance, UNESCO established the **Intangible Cultural Heritage List**.

- This list also encompasses living expressions and traditions. Intangible cultural heritage means the skills, knowledge, expressions, representations, practices – as well as the artifacts, objects, instruments, and cultural spaces associated with them that various groups, communities and in certain cases individuals recognize as a part of their cultural heritage.
- This list is published by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Its members are elected by State parties meeting in the [United Nations General Assembly](#).
- It aims at drawing attention to the importance of safeguarding cultural heritage and is a repository of cultural diversity and creative expression.

'Khongthong' the country's only 'whistling village' seeks to get the UNESCO Intangible and Cultural Heritage Tag. It is known as the Whistling Village because residents often communicate with each other by whistling. Residents of the village also have 'whistling names' apart from their formal names.

UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritages in India

India, known for its heritage and cultural diversity, has 14 cultural heritages in [UNESCO](#)'s intangible cultural heritage list. The table image briefly explains the Intangible Heritages of India in terms of culture:

Entity	Year added	Description
Ramlila	2008	The traditional performance of Ramayana performed in India during the festival of Dussehra. Most representations are performed in Sattna, Vrindavan, Varanasi and Ramnagar.
Vedic Chanting	2008	Chanted during sacred rituals and recited daily by religious communities known not only for the rich content of its texts but also for ingenious techniques employed by the priests.
Kudiyattom	2008	A Sanskrit theatrical tradition practised in Kerala performed in theatres called Kuttampalams, located in Idukki.
Ramman	2009	A religious festival in honour of the tutelary god, Bhairava, practised in the villages of Saloor-Dungra in Uttarakhand.
Chhau dance	2010	A tradition from Eastern India that enacts episodes from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes.
Kalbelia	2010	A folk song and dance form of Rajasthan. The songs narrate mythological knowledge through stories.
Mudiyettu	2010	A ritual dance drama from Kerala based on the tale of the battle between Darika, a demon and Goddess Kali.
Buddhist Chanting	2012	Sacred texts chanted by the Buddhist priests of the Ladakh region.
Sankirtana	2013	Set of arts performed to mark religious occasions and festivals in the life of the Vaishnava people of the Manipur plain.
Traditional Brass and Copper Utensil Making	2014	The craft of the Thathelias of Jandiala Guru constitutes a unique technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils in Punjab.

Yoga	2016	The art of unifying the mind with body and soul for good and mental well-being. It consists of a series of postures, controlled breathing, word chanting, etc.
Nowruz	2016	The Persian new year celebrated worldwide. It includes performances of music and dance, public rituals involving fire, traditional sports and the making of handicrafts.
Kumbh Mela	2017	One of the largest human congregations in the world, a pilgrimage and festival for Hindus.
Durga Puja in Kolkata	2021	The annual festival celebrated in September or October, a ten-day worship of the Hindu mother-goddess Durga.

Durga Puja

Durga Puja was declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2021. It is the latest addition from India to the list.

Kumbh Mela

“Kumbh Mela” was the latest addition to the list in 2017.

- It is one of the largest human congregations in the world. It is held in four pilgrimage places on sacred rivers in Haridwar, Ujjain, Nashik and Prayag.
- Kumbh Mela was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during the 12th session held at Jeju, South Korea.

National List of Intangible Cultural Heritages Draft

The Government of India launched a draft National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture in April 2020.

- The National ICH List is an attempt to recognize the diversity of Indian culture embedded in its intangible heritage.
- It aims to raise awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage elements from different states of India at the national and international levels and ensure their protection. This initiative is also a part of the Vision 2024 of the Ministry of Culture.