



UNESCO's Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage

For Prelims: Intangible Culture Heritage, UNESCO, SDGs.

For Mains: UNESCO's Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Heritage and its Significance.

Why in News?

India has been elected to the **Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO's 2003 Convention** for the Safeguarding of the **Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)** for the 2022-2026 cycle.

- India has served as a **member of the ICH Committee twice** — from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.
- Earlier, **Durga Puja** in Kolkata was inscribed on the **UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity**.

What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?

- Intangible cultural heritage is the **practices, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and sometimes individuals recognise** as part of their cultural heritage.
- Also called **living cultural heritage**, it is usually **expressed in one of the following forms**:
 - Oral Traditions
 - Performing Arts
 - Social Practices
 - Rituals and Festive events
 - Knowledge and Practices concerning nature and the universe
 - Traditional Craftsmanship

What is the Significance of India's Election to the Convention?

- It will help India focus on **fostering community participation, strengthening international cooperation through intangible heritage, promoting academic research** on intangible cultural heritage and aligning the work of the Convention with the **UN Sustainable Development Goals**.
- India will have **the opportunity to closely monitor the implementation of the 2003 Convention**.
- India shall **endeavour to encourage international dialogue** within the State Parties to the Convention to better showcase the diversity and importance of living heritage.

What is UNESCO's Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Heritage?

- **About:**

- The Convention of the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted by the **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003** and entered into force in 2006.
- It comprises **24 members and is elected in the General Assembly of the Convention** according to the principles of equitable geographical representation and rotation.
 - Members of the Committee are elected for a term of four years.

▪ **Purpose:**

- **To safeguard the expressions of intangible cultural heritage** that are endangered by the processes of globalization.
- **To ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage** of the communities, groups and individuals.
- **To raise awareness at the local, national and international levels** of the importance of intangible cultural heritage.

▪ **Publications:**

- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.
- Register of good safeguarding practices.

Which Indian Elements were Recognized as ICH?

- India has **14 intangible cultural heritage elements** on the prestigious UNESCO Representative List of ICH of Humanity.
- Other than the Durga Puja there are **13 Traditions in India recognised by UNESCO as ICH.**

Existing Traditions of India Recognised by UNESCO			
1.	Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008	8.	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India, 2012
2.	Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 2008	9.	Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013
3.	Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008	10.	Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India, 2014
4.	Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009	11.	Yoga, 2016
5.	Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010	12.	Nowruz, 2016
6.	Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010	13.	Kumbh Mela, 2017
7.	Chhau dance, 2010		

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