NMCM and Monuments of National Importance

Source: PIB

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Culture highlighted the progress made under the **National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)** and India's efforts to protect **Monuments of National Importance (MNI).**

- These initiatives aim to document the country's rich cultural heritage, revitalize rural economies, and ensure the preservation of historical sites for future generations.

What is the National Mission on Cultural Mapping (NMCM)?

- **About:** The NMCM, launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Culture, aims to **document, preserve, and promote India's cultural heritage** by creating a comprehensive **database of cultural assets, artists, and art forms** to enhance cultural vibrancy nationwide.
- **Key Objectives:** Define and document the unique cultural characteristics of each village.
  - Launch cultural awareness programs like **"Hamari Sanskriti Hamari Pahchan" (Our Culture, Our Identity).**
  - Utilise cultural mapping to empower rural communities and boost economic development.
  - Establish a **National Cultural Working Place (NCWP) portal** for information sharing, participation, performance, and awards across all art forms.
  - Identify locations for **Kala Grams, Craft Melas, and other cultural hubs** for idea exchange and promotion of cultural tourism.
- **Implementation:** NMCM is administered by the Ministry of Culture and executed under the guidance of the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).**
  - **Common Services Centres (CSC) e-Governance Services India Limited (CSC),** a special purpose vehicle (SPV) under the **Ministry of Electronics & IT (Meity),** is given the task by the Ministry of Culture to carry out the NMCM.
- **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD):** NMCM in 2023 as part of **Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav,** launched the **Mera Gaon Meri Dharohar (MGMD) portal** that documents the cultural heritage of 6.5 lakh villages in India.
  - Under the MGMD, information is collected in **seven broad categories.**
    - Arts and Crafts Village,
    - Ecologically Oriented Village,
    - Scholastic Village linked with Textual and Scriptural Traditions of India,
    - Epic Village associated with the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and/or Puranic legends,

- Historical Village connected to Local and National History,
- Architectural Heritage Village,
- Any other characteristics that may need highlighting, such as fishing villages, horticulture villages, shepherding villages, etc.
  - Currently, **4.5 lakh villages live on the portal**, showcasing elements like oral traditions, art forms, food, festivals, and local landmarks.
  - The initiative strengthens cultural identity, empowers rural communities, and promotes economic development through the documentation and promotion of cultural assets.

CSC e-Governance Services India Limited

- CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, SPV set up under the **Companies Act, 1956** oversees the implementation of the CSC scheme, providing a framework for service delivery to citizens.
  - The vision of CSC is to create an Information technology (IT)-enabled network connecting **local populations with essential services,** promoting a socially, financially, and digitally inclusive society, especially in rural areas.

Cultural Mapping

- Cultural mapping records the unique cultural aspects of a region, including **local stories, rituals, arts, languages, heritage, and cuisines, defining local culture.**
  - It documents both **tangible and intangible assets** to create cultural resource mapping.

What are Monuments of National Importance?

- **Monuments of National Importance:** Monuments are remnants of India's rich past, showcasing culture, art, and architecture.
  - They include a variety of sites such as **prehistoric locations, rock-shelters, temples, churches, mosques, tombs, forts,** and more, representing our diverse cultural heritage across the country.
  - The **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958 (amended in 2010),** provides for the declaration, conservation, and protection of ancient and historical monuments, archaeological sites, and remains of national importance.
    - A monument or site must **be at least 100 years old to be considered for this status.**
- **Process of Declaration:** The Central Government notifies its intention to declare a site of national importance, inviting public objections within two months. After considering objections, it may officially declare the site through a gazette notification.
- **MNI in India:** Currently, there are **3697 ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains** declared as of national importance in the country.
- **Efforts to Protect MNI:**
  - **Directive Principles of State Policy: Article 49 of the Indian Constitution** mandates that the State should protect monuments, places, and objects of national importance from destruction, disfigurement, removal, or export, as per laws made by Parliament.
  - **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) :** The **ASI** under the Ministry of Culture, is responsible for conserving and maintaining MNIs.
    - A 100-meter radius around the monument is a **'prohibited area'** with a construction ban, while the **next 200 meters is a 'regulated area'** with construction restrictions.
    - The **ASI can delist monuments (Section 35 of AMASR Act, 1958),** if it is no longer nationally important, which means they **will no longer be protected or maintained.**
      - Once delisted, construction and urbanisation activities can proceed around the site.
  - **National Monuments Authority (NMA):** The **NMA,** established under the **AMASR Act,**

2010, grants permissions for construction in the prohibited and regulated areas around centrally protected monuments to ensure their protection and preservation.

India's Other Initiatives Related to Art and Culture:

- **Kala Sanskriti Vikas Yojana**
- **Scheme for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**
- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.**
- **Dekho Apna Desh Initiative**
- **Swadesh Darshan Scheme**
- **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)**
- **Adopt a Heritage Programme**
- **Project Mausam**

Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the role of the National Mission on Cultural Mapping in promoting India's cultural heritage and rural empowerment.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q.1 Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. **(2018)**

Q.2 Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. **(2020)**

PDF Refernece URL: https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/nmcm-and-monuments-of-national-importance