India – UK Cultural Relation

Mains Syllabus: GS II - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Why in the News?

Recently India and UK signed the signed the Programme of Cultural Cooperation (POCC).

What are the features of the India – UK POCC agreement?

In May 2025, India and the UK finalized a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

- **Objectives** - To facilitate mutual understanding and support between the peoples of the two countries in the field of arts and culture.
- To strengthen and support the diasporic relationship between the two countries in the field of culture.

Areas of Co-Operation of India – UK POCC	
Digital technologies	• Nurturing and supporting museums, archives, libraries, and galleries with the digitisation of collections and supporting information-sharing initiatives. • Recognising the benefits and opportunities of new digital technologies, exploring new digital collaborations for the promotion, research, and preservation of culture.
Exhibitions and collections	• Jointly encourage such joint projects and displays that will improve museum and library management. • Endeavour to provide technical support and share expertise with each other on core museum and library activities such as curation, conservation, collections.
Performances and events	• Endeavour to encourage arts and cultural events in the territory of both countries to include works and performances from artists of the other country into their respective programmes.
Cultural property	• Endeavour to cooperate with each other in the protection of their respective cultural heritage. • Encouragr the cooperation and exchange of expertise among national conservation institutions, and supporting organisations with conservation skills.
Sustainability	• Promoting sustainability in the cultural arena in the face of global climate change and together support multilateral efforts in this area.
Other areas	• Any other areas of cooperation that the participants will agree as appropriate.

- **Implementation Agencies** - For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: the British Council Division, High Commission in New Delhi as the main implementing body.
- For the Republic of India Ministry of Culture and Cultural Centre in Indian Mission in UK.
- **Means of Implementation** - Reciprocal exchange of officials and experts in various cultural fields.
- Facilitating training programmes, workshops and seminars for and/or exchange programmes for cultural sector professionals and artists from both parties.

What are the significances of the agreement?

- **Promotes Cultural Co-operation** – The agreement brings together the Indian Ministry of Culture, the U.K.'s Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the British Council in India, alongside major U.K. cultural institutions.
- **Sharing Expertise** - With over 1,700 accredited museums in the U.K., the partnerships will help leveraging digital technology for sharing cultural experiences and heritage.
- **Growth of Creative Sector** - Globally, the creative arts sector is rapidly growing and projected to reach 10% of global GDP by 2030 and India's creative economy, valued at $35 billion, employs nearly 8% of its workforce, second only to agriculture.
- **Capacity Building** - International collaborations can help empower creative professionals with global competencies and best practices and address the shortages in creative economy.
- **Employment Potential** - The creative economy can foster a more inclusive future, encompassing tech-driven sectors such as gaming, digital content, film, OTT, television and more — creating opportunities for skilled workers and innovators.
- **Cultural Preservation** - Co-operation with UK will help in protecting the culture from decline and promoting them in the global arena.
    - For example, Royal Enfield, the iconic U.K.-India motorcycle brand, is working in the Himalayas through its Social Mission to safeguard intangible cultural heritage
    - It is working with over 580 artisans through its textile conservation project, The Himalayan Knot.

What lies ahead?

- In a world grappling with conflict and uncertainty, culture and creativity remain among the most time-tested healers of relations between people and nations.
- India's creative canvas is expanding, driven by cultural wealth, youth potential, and a bold vision.
- It will require sustained cooperation between government, industry and academia to make that vision a reality.

References

[The Hindu | Lighting the spark in U.K.-India cultural relations]



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