

Manuscripts of Bhagavad Gita & Natyashastra added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register

Prelims (GS I) - *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS I) - *Indian History and Culture*

Why in news?

Manuscripts of the Bhagavad Gita and Bharata's Natyashastra are among the 74 new additions to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register this year.

The Natyashastra

- Natyashastra is an ancient Sanskrit treatise on performing arts.
- **Authorship** - Traditionally attributed to **sage Bharata**.
- **Time period** - Estimated between 500 BCE to 500 CE.
- **Composition** - Comprises 36,000 verses.
- **Significance** - It provides a comprehensive set of rules that define,
 - Natya (drama)
 - Abhinaya (performance)
 - Rasa (aesthetic experience)
 - Bhava (emotion)
 - Sangita (music)
- It is often referred to as the fifth Veda, as it integrates elements from the four Vedas.

The 4 Vedas are Rigveda (words), Samaveda (music), Yajurveda (gestures/actions), and Atharvaveda (emotions).

The Bhagavad Gita

- Bhagavad Gita is a Hindu text in the ancient intellectual Indian tradition.
- **Authorship** - Attributed to **sage Vyasa**.
- It is embedded in the sixth book (Bhishma Parva) of the epic Mahabharata.
- **Composition** - 700 verses organized in 18 chapters.
- **Time period** - Generally dated to first or second century BCE.
- **Central theme** - Dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna before the Mahabharata war and Krishna's responses to Arjuna on dharma (duty), karma (action), and the nature of the divine.

India's Representation in the Register

- India has 13 submissions to the Memory of the World Register (including two joint submissions).
- **Notable entries**
 - Rig Veda (added in 2005)
 - Abhinavagupta's works (added in 2023)
 - Non-Aligned Movement archives (joint submission with Algeria, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Serbia, 2023)
 - Dutch East India Company archives (joint submission Netherlands, South Africa and Sri Lanka, 2003)

UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme

- It is an initiative to *safeguard the valuable archive holdings and library collections all over the world* against the collective amnesia, preserve and ensure their wide dissemination.
- **Aim** - Facilitate preservation of the world's documentary heritage, particularly in areas affected by conflict and/or natural disaster.
- Enable universal access to documentary heritage worldwide.
- Enhance public awareness about the significant of documentary heritage among the wider public.
- **Established in** - 1992.
- **Central Project** - Creation of a register of documents of world significance and outstanding universal value.
- The Register has been **biennially** updated, with the exception of a lengthy gap between 2017 and 2023 with between nine (in 1999) and 78 (in 2017) additions.
- It includes Books or collections of works, Drawings, Manuscripts, Audio recordings and Video recordings.
- **Selection Process** - Maximum two submissions from a country are added biennially.
- **Current Status** - 570 entries after the latest additions.

Reference

[The Indian Express| Bhagavad Gita & Natyashastra in UNESCO Register](#)