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 ***biennally*** 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

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