Art & Culture · GS - I

Discuss the significance of UNESCO’s Memory of the World Programme in preserving documentary heritage. Examine the contribution of ancient Indian texts such as Rajatarangini, Mahabharata and Arthashastra to India's intellectual and cultural traditions.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 06/11/2026	GS - I	Art & Culture

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Documentary heritage preservation, UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, historical consciousness, philosophical traditions, ancient statecraft, manuscript conservation, global cultural recognition

Model Answer

Introduction

Documentary heritage preserves humanity's historical experiences, intellectual traditions and cultural identities. UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme, launched in 1992, seeks to safeguard and improve access to this heritage.

Significance of the Programme

The programme recognises historically and culturally significant documents, promotes their preservation and encourages wider public access. It also strengthens international cooperation and awareness regarding threats

such as deterioration, destruction and displacement of manuscripts.

Contribution of Indian Texts

Rajatarangini, written by Kalhana, is an important historical chronicle documenting Kashmir's rulers, political developments and society.

The Mahabharata represents India's rich epic and philosophical traditions, exploring Dharma, justice, duty and human relationships.

Kautilya's Arthashastra provides insights into ancient Indian governance, administration, economic policy, diplomacy and military strategy.

Their recent inclusion in UNESCO's Memory of the World Asia-Pacific Regional Register recognises the significance of India's documentary heritage.

Conclusion

Preserving these manuscripts strengthens historical research, cultural continuity and intergenerational knowledge transmission. India must complement international recognition with sustained conservation, digitisation and scholarly access.

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