Art & Culture · GS - I

Examine the role of regional religious traditions and pilgrimage centres in preserving India's intangible cultural heritage. Illustrate your answer with reference to the Chhath festival and the tradition of Sun worship in Bihar.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 13/11/2026	GS - I	Art & Culture

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Intangible cultural heritage, Surya worship, Chhath, Magadh region, ritual practices, sacred water bodies, oral traditions, community participation, cultural continuity, heritage conservation.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's cultural diversity is sustained through regional festivals, religious traditions, pilgrimage centres and community-based rituals. The Chhath festival represents an important tradition of Sun worship, particularly in Bihar and eastern India.

Cultural Significance of Chhath

1. **Solar worship:** Devotees offer *arghya* to the setting and rising Sun, reflecting the cultural importance of solar worship.

2. **Regional heritage:** The Magadh region contains several traditional Sun temples and sacred water bodies associated with local religious practices.

3. **Community participation:** Families and communities collectively organise rituals, reinforcing social bonds and intergenerational transmission of traditions.

4. **Ecological connection:** Rivers, ponds and other water bodies form essential settings for the festival, highlighting the relationship between religious practices and natural resources.

Conservation Challenges

Urbanisation, water pollution, encroachment and inadequate maintenance threaten traditional pilgrimage sites. Conservation requires scientific restoration, pollution control, community participation and responsible tourism.

Conclusion

Regional traditions such as Chhath are living expressions of India's cultural heritage. Their preservation requires protecting both intangible rituals and the physical landscapes in which they are practised.

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