# Art & Culture · GS - I

**Colonial-era removal of indigenous artefacts and ancestral human remains raises questions of cultural justice beyond the issue of ownership. Discuss the significance of repatriation in preserving indigenous identity and heritage.**

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

| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 10 | ~150 words |

## Answer Hint

**Colonial collecting practices, cultural appropriation, indigenous rights, ancestral remains, cultural identity, UNESCO conventions, ethical museum practices, provenance research, community participation, restitution and reconciliation.**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

Colonial-era acquisition of cultural objects and ancestral human remains often took place without the informed consent of indigenous communities. Their repatriation has therefore become an important issue of cultural justice and historical accountability.

### Significance of Repatriation

- **Cultural identity:** Returning ancestral remains and sacred objects restores community connections with their history and traditions.
- **Human dignity:** Human remains deserve ethical treatment and respect beyond their status as museum collections.
- **Indigenous rights:** Repatriation recognises communities' rights to preserve and manage their cultural heritage.

- **Historical reconciliation:** It provides an opportunity to address the consequences of colonial extraction and unequal power relations.

**Challenges and Way Forward**

Determining provenance, resolving competing claims and establishing appropriate legal mechanisms remain challenging. Museums should undertake transparent provenance research, consult source communities and adopt ethical repatriation policies. International cooperation and documentation under relevant UNESCO frameworks can support these efforts.

**Conclusion**

Repatriation is not merely the physical return of historical objects; it is a process of restoring dignity, cultural continuity and agency to indigenous communities.

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