Art & Culture · GS - I

Discuss how India's religious festivals and devotional traditions contribute to cultural integration and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - I	Art & Culture

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Religious pluralism, Shaiva-Vaishnava traditions, Bhakti movement, shared sacred spaces, folk and classical arts, oral traditions, community participation, cultural continuity, social harmony.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's religious festivals are important expressions of its pluralistic cultural heritage. Events such as Telangana's Koti Deepotsavam bring together Shaiva and Vaishnava traditions through rituals, devotional performances and collective participation.

Contribution to Cultural Integration

1. **Religious convergence:** Festivals provide shared spaces where different sectarian traditions participate in common cultural celebrations.
2. **Social cohesion:** Collective rituals and community participation strengthen social bonds across regions and communities.
3. **Cultural exchange:** Devotional discourses, music and performances transmit philosophical ideas and regional traditions to wider audiences.
4. **Continuity of heritage:** Festivals preserve rituals, oral narratives, traditional crafts and artistic practices across generations.

5. **Tourism and local economy:** Large cultural gatherings support local artisans, performers, vendors and religious tourism.

Role in Preserving Intangible Heritage

- Encourage transmission of devotional music, dance, folklore and ritual practices.
- Provide platforms for traditional artists and local cultural institutions.
- Promote intergenerational participation and community-led preservation.
- Document regional traditions while maintaining their living character.

Challenges and Way Forward

Commercialisation, overcrowding, environmental pressure and excessive standardisation can weaken the cultural significance of festivals. Sustainable event management, heritage documentation, local participation and inclusive cultural programming are therefore necessary.

Conclusion

Religious festivals are not merely expressions of faith; they are living institutions of cultural memory and social interaction. Their inclusive and sustainable celebration can strengthen India's civilisational continuity and cultural integration.

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