Art & Culture · GS - I

Examine the role of religious festivals and pilgrimage traditions in preserving India's cultural heritage and strengthening community bonds.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/11/2026	GS - I	Art & Culture

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Living heritage, intangible cultural heritage, religious pluralism, community participation, cultural continuity, heritage conservation

Model Answer

Religious festivals and pilgrimage traditions are important expressions of India's living cultural heritage. Events such as Karthigai Deepam at Thiruparankundram in Tamil Nadu connect communities with their religious beliefs, historical traditions and regional identities.

Their cultural and social significance includes:

1. **Preservation of traditions:** Rituals, devotional practices, music and traditional celebrations transmit cultural knowledge across generations.
2. **Community participation:** Collective celebrations encourage social interaction, voluntary participation and a sense of belonging.
3. **Regional identity:** Festivals preserve local languages, customs, artistic expressions and distinctive religious traditions.
4. **Economic contribution:** Pilgrimage tourism supports local businesses, artisans, transport services and livelihoods.

5. **Cultural continuity:** Sacred sites and recurring rituals maintain connections between historical traditions and contemporary society.

Challenges: Large gatherings can create pressure on infrastructure, sanitation, public safety and ecologically sensitive locations. Commercialisation may also weaken traditional practices.

Conclusion: Religious festivals are not merely occasions of worship; they are important carriers of cultural memory and social identity. Their preservation requires community participation, responsible tourism, heritage conservation and environmentally sustainable festival management.

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