



Revamping Monument Mitra Scheme

For Prelims: Monument Mitra Scheme, Corporate Social Responsibility, Adopt A Heritage, Archeological Survey of India (ASI), Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage (INTACH), National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), 2007, Project Mausam.

For Mains: Significance of Heritage, Issues Related to Heritage Management in India, Government Initiatives Related to Heritage Management.

Why in News?

Private firms will soon be able to partner with [Archaeological Survey of India](#) for the upkeep of **1,000 monuments under the Monument Mitra Scheme, which involves adopting and maintaining heritage sites.**

- Revamped scheme would be based on the [Corporate Social Responsibility](#) model and a new website having the **names of all the heritage sites**, would also be launched.

What is the Monument Mitra Scheme?

- **Monument Mitra** is the term coined for an entity partnering with the government under the ['Adopt A Heritage' project](#).
 - It was launched under the **Ministry of Tourism** earlier and then transferred to the **Ministry of Culture**.
- The project aims to **develop monuments, heritage and tourist sites** across India by inviting corporate entities, public sector companies or individuals to 'adopt' them

What is a Heritage?

- **About:**
 - [Heritage](#) is deemed to mean those buildings, artefacts, structures, areas and precincts that are of **historic, aesthetic, architectural, ecological or cultural significance**.
 - It must be recognized that the **'cultural landscape' around a heritage site is critical for the interpretation of the site** and its built heritage and thus is very much its integral part.
 - The three key concepts that can be considered to determine whether a property can be listed as a Heritage are:
 - **Historic significance**
 - **Historic integrity**
 - **Historic context.**
 - In India, heritage comprises archaeological sites, remains, ruins. The **primary custodian of 'Monuments and Sites'** in the country, i.e. [Archeological Survey of India \(ASI\)](#) and their counterparts protect them.
- **Significance:**
 - **Storytellers of Indian History:** Heritage is a **legacy of physical artefacts and**

intangible attributes through the generations that are inherited, preserved, and passed on.

- Heritage has been woven into the fabric of Indian society with spiritual, religious, social, and political significance.
- **Embracing Diversity:** India heritage is itself a museum of different types, communities, customs, traditions, religions, cultures, beliefs, languages, castes and social systems.
- **Economic Contribution:** Heritage sites in India have significant economic significance.
 - These **sites attract millions of tourists every year, which generates revenue for the government and local communities** through tourism-related activities such as accommodation, transportation, and souvenir sales.
- **Issues Related to Heritage Management in India:**
 - **Lack of Centralised Database for Heritage Sites:** India lacks a complete national level database with state wise distribution of heritage structure.
 - However, [Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage \(INTACH\)](#) has inventoried about **60,000 buildings in around 150 cities** which is still only the tip of the iceberg.
 - **Heritage Encroachments:** Many ancient monuments have been encroached upon by local residents, shopkeepers, and souvenir sellers.
 - There is **no harmony between these structures** and the architectural style of monuments or the surroundings.
 - For instance, according to the **Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) Report, 2013**, there was encroachment on the Taj Mahal's premises near Khan-i-Alam's Bagh.
 - **Lack of Human Resource:** Lack of adequate numbers of qualified and competent human resources to look after the monuments and carry out conservation activities is the **biggest problem faced by agencies like ASI**.
- **Other Government Initiatives Related to Heritage Management:**
 - **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA), 2007**
 - [Project Mausam](#)

How can Heritage Sites in India be Further Revamped?

- **Smart City, Smart Heritage:** It is necessary to consider the **Heritage Impact Assessment** for all large infrastructure projects.
 - The **Heritage Identification and Conservation Projects** need to be adjoined to the city master plans and integrate with the Smart City Initiative.
- **Innovative Strategies for Increasing Engagement:** The use of monuments that do not attract a large number of visitors and not have cultural/religious sensitivity can serve as **venues for cultural and wedding programmes** that can fulfil twin objective:
 - The promotion of the associated intangible heritage.
 - Increasing visitor numbers to such sites.
- **Linking Heritage Conservation with Climate Action:** Heritage sites can serve as **opportunities for climate communication and education, and research** on historic sites and **practices to understand past responses to changing climate conditions can help adaptation** and mitigation planners develop strategies that integrate natural science and cultural heritage.
 - For example, **coastal and river communities such as the island of [Majuli](#)** in India have been living with and adapting to changing water levels for centuries.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q.1 Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (2018)

Q.2 Indian Philosophy and tradition played a significant role in conceiving and shaping the monuments and their art in India. Discuss. (2020)

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