

**1. Assess the potential of rural tourism in India. What measures and precautions should be taken to promote rural tourism? Discuss.****Introduction:**

Rural Tourism is any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience.

**Body:**

The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages.

Potential in India:

- Cultural wealth- Numerous local traditions like plays, art forms, dances etc. enhance the cultural wealth of rural areas, making these attractive for the tourists.
- Natural wealth- Lush green forests in south Indian villages, sacred groves etc. make them an ideal site to promote tourism.
- Peace and serenity in the countryside can offer a relaxing experience.
- The stresses of Urban lifestyles have led to a “counter-urbanization” syndrome, which has led to growing interest in the rural areas.
- Improved infrastructure and connectivity of rural India can improve tourist footfall.
- Growing trend of short-break holidays, rural areas being near to cities can easily provide for great tourism destinations.

Measures to promote tourism:

- Identification of strength’s of villages in different states and introduction of customised trips like Cultural and Heritage walk in Rajasthan, Tribal tours in North-East India.
- Promoting Farm and home stays to provide local and humane touch to tourists.
- Development of infrastructure and convergence among various government initiatives.
- Train villagers to address foreign tourists.
- Exposing tourists to basic works in village like milking cows, making pottery and handicrafts etc.
- Adoption each potential site by a Member of Parliament.
- Involvement of NGOs for promotion of culture.
- Marketing of clusters of villages.
- FDI or Private investment to introduces latest technology
- Government initiatives to support the young entrepreneurs by providing loans.

Precautions:

- Safety of tourists, especially females should be ensured.

- Adequate finances must be devolved to the gram sabha for maintenance of basic infrastructure.
- Training of villagers to avoid any kind of hostility towards tourists.
- Adequate healthcare facilities must be provided.
- Environment impact of increased number of tourists must be assessed.

**Conclusion:**

Rural Tourism models of States like Kerala (Back water Spots), Karnataka (Forest Tourism spots), Tamil Nadu (Temple Tourism of villages) etc. must be replicated in other areas. Government initiatives of Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD will help develop tourist circuits on principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

**2. What are world heritage sites? How do they get selected? Can you name at least 5 such sites from India? Also discuss their cultural significance.****Introduction:**

World Heritage Sites are sites that are listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) that are of special, cultural or physical significance and heritage. These sites around the world are considered to be of outstanding value to humanity and belonging to the international community.

**Background:**

The World Heritage Sites are identified, protected and preserved according to the international treaty called The Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. These sites are considered under a list maintained by the International World Heritage Programme administered by UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

**Body:****Selection criteria for the sites:**

To be selected, the sites nominated by each country should be of outstanding value and meet at least one of the ten criteria.

- To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- to exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization this is living or which has disappeared;
- To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape this illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- To be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- To be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);

- To contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- to be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- to be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

(Note: Need not remember all the points verbatim, but can write the points in a simple manner.)

There are 37 UNESCO WHS in India, including 29 cultural, 7 natural and 1 mixed heritage.

- Taj Mahal, Agra : located on the right bank of the Yamuna River in a vast Mughal garden, It was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal is considered to be the greatest architectural achievement in the whole range of Indo-Islamic architecture.
- Ellora Caves, Maharashtra: These 34 monasteries and temples in Maharashtra dating from A.D. 600 to 1000, brings the civilization of ancient India to life. Not only is the Ellora complex a unique artistic creation and a technological exploit but, with its sanctuaries devoted to Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, it illustrates the spirit of tolerance that was characteristic of ancient India.
- Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai: Having become a global trading centre, the city of Mumbai implemented an ambitious urban planning project in the second half of the 19th century, creating a unique style that has been described as Indo-Deco. These two ensembles bear testimony to the unique blend between the European and Indian values over time.
- Western Ghats: An exceptionally high level of biological diversity and endemism is found here. It also includes some of the best representatives of tropical evergreen forests.
- Khangchendzonga National Park: Located at the heart of the Himalayan range in northern India (State of Sikkim), the Khangchendzonga National Park includes a unique diversity of plains, valleys, lakes, glaciers and spectacular, snow-capped mountains covered with ancient forests, including the world's third highest peak, Mount Khangchendzonga.

**Conclusion:**

Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration, and must be preserved and protected as a legacy for future generations to come.

**3. The Vesara architecture epitomises the confluence of Nagara and Dravidian schools. Illustrate**

**Introduction:**

The architectural principles of temples in India are described in Shilpa Shastra. Shilpa Shastra mentions three main type of temple architecture - Nagara or the Northern style, the Dravida or the Southern style and the Vesara or Mixed style.

**Body:**

**Nagara style**

The style of temple architecture that became popular in northern India is known as Nagara. Nagara style was developed regionally each region manifesting its own particular qualities.

**Dravida Style**

Dravida style of temple architecture became popular in South India. Dravida style of temples was developed dynastically, however the major features of these temples remained common across the dynasties.

**Vesara Style**

In the mid-seventh century, a distinct style of temple architecture grew in Karnataka region under the patronage of Chalukya rulers. The temples in this region follow a hybridised style which combines the features of both Nagara and Dravida styles.

**Similarities and differences of three styles:**

Nagara	Dravida	Vesara
Northern region	Southern region	Deccan region (Between the Vindhya and Krishna river)
Developed regionally each region manifesting its own particular qualities	Developed dynastically	Mixture of two styles Hybrid style. It was developed both regionally and dynastically.
Ground Plan: Mostly Square shaped	Ground Plan: Mostly Square shaped	Ground Plan: increasingly complex, including star like plan
Curvilinear tower (Shikhara built over garbhagriha) gradually curving inward	Pyramidal Tower (Vimana) with several stories in receding dimension	The shape of tower was Pyramidal but height was reduced (Miniature Vimanas)
Multiple Shikharas	Subsidiary shrines are either incorporated within the main temple tower, or located as distinct, separate small shrines beside the main temple.	Multiple shrines are present side by side
Squared hall	Squared hall	Squared hall
Sanctum Garbhagriha	Sanctum Garbhagriha	Sanctum Garbhagriha

Gopurams are absent	Gopurams are present	Gopurams may or may not be present
A water tank may or may not be present	A water tank is present at the front of temple from where water is drawn for sacred purposes	A water tank may or may not be present
Compound walls are absent	enclosed within a compound wall	Compound walls may or may not be present
Examples - Dashavatara temple (Deogarh), Vishwanatha temple(Khajuraho), Lakshman Temple (Khajuraho), Jagannath temple (Puri)	Examples - Shore temple (Mahabalipuram), Brihadiswara temple (Thanjavur), Meenakshi Temple (Madurai)	Examples - Badami temple, Durga Temple (Aihole), Virupaksh Temple (Pattadkal), Keshava Temple (Somnathpur)

**Conclusion:**

From above tabular observations it can be seen that, Vesara temple architecture, besides its own features, is mixture of Dravidian and Nagara temple architectures.

**4. What are some of the most recurring themes of Indian music (both Hindustani and Carnatic Schools)? Discuss with the help of suitable examples.**

**Introduction:**

Carnatic music is a system of music associated with the southern part of Indian sub-continent. Hindustani music is associated with North India and is deeply influenced by Persian and Islamic music system.

**Body:**

**Points to be covered:**

**Similarities:**

- The basic elements of swara, raga and tala as foundation of both Carnatic and Hindustani are same.
- Hindustani music originated in the Vedic period, while Carnatic music originated during the Bhakti movement. Thus both are having great association with religion.
- Carnatic is one of two main sub-genres of India classical music that evolved from ancient Hindu traditions, the other sub-genre being Hindustani music, which emerged as a distinct form due to Persian and Islamic influences in North India.
- Both the music evolved with Sanskrit language scripts in itself and through Vedic traditions.
- The central notions in both these system is that of a melodic mode or raga, sug to a rhythmic cycle or tala.

**Differences:**

- Origin of Hindustani music is earlier than Carnatic music.

- Hindustani synthesizes with Vedic chants, Islamic traditions and Persian Musiqu-e-Assil style. Carnatic is comparatively pure and was developed in 15th 16th century during Bhakti movement and also get boost in 19th -20th century.
- Main emphasis in Carnatic music is on vocal music and most compositions are to be sung, involving gayaki style. In Hindustani music vocal- centric group is required. Many instruments are designed to accompany the singer.
- The major vocal forms of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, khayal, Tarana, Thumri, Dadra and Gazals. While Carnatic music embraces several varieties of improvisation consist of Alpana, Niraval, kalpnaswaram and Ragam Thanapallavi.
- Examples: Sitar, sarod, tabla, sarangi or dhrupad, khayal, ghazal or raga, tala, gharana- represent Hindustani music. Veena, Shankha, Nadaswaram, Mrindangam or Ghatam- represent Carnatic music.

**Conclusion:**

Both Carnatic and Hindustani school of music represent the rich heritage of Indian music which must be preserved and transmitted for future generations.

**5. Nataraja, the dancing form of lord shiva is a symbolic synthesis of the most important aspects of Hinduism and the summary of the central tenets of this Vedic religion. Comment.****Introduction:**

The term 'Nataraja' means 'King of Dancers'. It is a depiction of the Hindu god Shiva as the cosmic ecstatic dancer.

The pose and artwork is described in many Hindu texts such as the Anshumadbhedagama and Uttarakamika agama.

**Body:****Nataraja as synthesis of important aspects and summary of central tenets of Hinduism.**

- Nataraja is shown with four hands representing the four cardinal directions (North, South, East, West). These cardinal directions are central to Hindu astrology (Vaastu Shastra).
- This cosmic dance of Shiva is called 'Ananda tandava,' meaning the Dance of Bliss which symbolizes the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction as well as the daily rhythm of birth and death.

- The dance is a pictorial allegory of the five principle manifestations of eternal energy—creation, destruction, preservation, salvation, and illusion.
- He dances within a circular or cyclically closed arch of flames (prabha mandala), which symbolically represent the cosmic fire that in Hindu cosmology creates everything and consumes everything, in cyclic existence or cycle of life.
- The fire also represents the evils, dangers, heat, warmth, light and joys of daily life. The arch of fire emerges from two makara on each end, which are water creatures and part of Hindu mythologies.
- The upper left-hand holds a flame, the lower left-hand points down to the dwarf, who is shown holding a cobra. The upper right-hand holds an hourglass drum or 'dumroo' that stands for the male-female vital principle, the lower shows the gesture of assertion: "Be without fear."
- His palm shows the Abhaya mudra (meaning fearlessness in Sanskrit), suggesting the devotee who is righteous and follows dharma need not fear the nearby evil.
- The face shows two eyes plus a slightly open third on the forehead, which symbolize the trinity in Shaivism. The eyes represent the sun, the moon and the third has been interpreted as the inner eye, or symbol of knowledge (jnana), urging the viewer to seek the inner wisdom, self-realization.
- The three eyes alternatively symbolize an equilibrium of the three Guṇas: Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and is symbolic of his omniscience, insight, and enlightenment
- The dwarf on which Nataraja dances is the demon Apasmara purusha, the personification of illusion and ignorance over whom Shiva triumphs.
- On his head is a skull, which symbolizes his conquest over death.
- On his right side, meshed in with one of the flying strands of his hair near his forehead, is typically the river Ganges personified as a goddess, from the

Hindu mythology where the danger of a mighty river is creatively tied to a calm river for the regeneration of life.

- The whole idol rests on a lotus pedestal, the symbol of the creative forces of the universe.

**Conclusion:**

Thus in Hindu mythology, it is a continual dance of creation and destruction involving the whole cosmos, the basis of all existence and of all natural phenomena unifying ancient mythology, religious art, and modern physics.