

# UNESCO's Convention for Safeguarding the Intangible Heritage

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**In news**—India was recently elected to the Intergovernmental Committee of **UNESCO's 2003 Convention** for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) **for the 2022-2026 cycle.**

## **About the committee-**

- According to UNESCO, the **core functions of the Intergovernmental Committee** are to promote the objectives of the convention, provide guidance on best practices and make **recommendations on measures** for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.
- It also **examines requests submitted by States Parties for the inscription of intangible heritage on the Lists** as well as proposals for programmes and projects.
- The committee is also in charge of **granting international assistance.**
- **The Committee comprises 24 members and is elected in the General Assembly** of the Convention according to the principles of **equitable geographical representation and rotation.**
- **States Members to the Committee are elected for a term of four years.**
- For its 2022-2026 term, **some of the priority areas that India will focus upon include** fostering community participation, strengthening international cooperation through intangible heritage, promoting academic research on intangible cultural heritage and aligning the work of the Convention with the UN Sustainable Development

Goals.

- **Earlier, India has served as a member of the ICH Committee twice** – from 2006 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2018.

### **The UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)-**

- It is a UNESCO treaty **adopted by the UNESCO General Conference on 17 October 2003.**
- The convention **entered into force in 2006**, after thirty instruments of ratification by UNESCO.
- As of September 2018, 178 states have ratified, approved or accepted the convention.
- Unlike other UNESCO conventions, **this convention begins with stating its purposes, which are;**
  1. To **safeguard** the intangible cultural heritage.
  2. To **ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities**, groups and individuals concerned.
  3. To **raise awareness at the local, national and international levels** of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof.
  4. To provide for **international cooperation** and assistance.
- **India has 14 inscriptions on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity** and it also ranks high in the listing of intangible cultural heritage.
- After the inscription of **Durga Puja in 2021**, India has submitted the nomination for Garba of Gujarat to be discussed in 2023.

### **Safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage at the international level-**

Convention protects the heritages by publishing following lists-

- Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- Register of good safeguarding practices.
- List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

### **What is Intangible Heritage?**

**Intangible cultural heritage refers to “traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts”**

### **India's elements on the lists of intangible cultural heritage-**

1. Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008.
2. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 9. 2008.
3. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008.
4. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009.
5. Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010.
6. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010.
7. Chau Dance, 2010.
8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India, 2012.
9. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013.
10. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India, 2014.

11. Yoga, 2016.
12. Nowruz, 2016.
13. Kumbh Mela, 2017
14. Durga Puja,2021.