Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss each adjective attached to the word ‘Republic’ in the ‘Preamble’. Are they defendable in the present circumstances?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
12.5	~200 words

Answer Hint

Sovereign republic; socialist; secular; democratic; constitutional morality; social justice; contemporary challenges

Model Answer

Introduction

The Preamble describes India as a “Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic.” These terms express the foundational values and political character of the Indian constitutional system.

Meaning and Contemporary Relevance

1. Sovereign

India exercises independent authority over its internal and external affairs. Global economic interdependence and international commitments influence policy choices but do not inherently undermine sovereignty.

2. Socialist

The term, added by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, reflects a commitment to social and economic justice. Welfare schemes, labour protections and affirmative action support this goal, although inequality and unequal access to opportunities remain challenges.

3. Secular

The State does not establish an official religion and must uphold freedom of conscience and religious equality. Articles 25–28 protect religious freedom, subject to constitutional limitations. Communal tensions and discrimination test the practical realisation of secularism.

4. Democratic

Universal adult suffrage, periodic elections, representative institutions and political freedoms form the basis of Indian democracy. Electoral integrity, informed participation and institutional accountability remain essential.

5. Republic

The head of state is elected rather than hereditary. The office of the President embodies this republican principle, while constitutional government ensures that authority is exercised according to law.

Are These Values Defendable?

These principles remain relevant because they provide standards against which public policies and institutions can be evaluated. Their credibility depends on implementation, not merely formal recognition.

Conclusion

The Preamble's adjectives remain defensible and essential. Strengthening constitutional institutions, equality, religious freedom and democratic accountability is necessary to translate them into lived realities.

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