Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the role of forensic evidence and expert testimony in ensuring fair criminal trials in India. What challenges arise when documentary identity records and scientific evidence produce conflicting conclusions?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 11/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Forensic science, expert testimony, Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, evidentiary reliability, Aadhaar and age determination, postmortem examination, judicial discretion, chain of custody, forensic infrastructure, due process, fair trial.

Model Answer

Introduction

Reliable evidence is fundamental to criminal justice. Forensic science and expert testimony assist courts in interpreting complex scientific and medical facts, particularly when documentary records are disputed or insufficient.

Role in Criminal Justice

- **Scientific objectivity:** DNA analysis, toxicology and postmortem examinations can provide evidence that supports or challenges witness accounts.

- **Expert assistance:** Section 39 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 recognises expert opinions on scientific matters as relevant.
- **Judicial assessment:** Courts examine expert opinions alongside documentary, oral and circumstantial evidence rather than treating them as automatically conclusive.

Challenges

Inconsistent records, outdated forensic facilities, shortage of qualified experts and delays in laboratory reports can weaken investigations. Poor evidence collection or an interrupted chain of custody may compromise reliability. Digital identity documents also have limitations when used to establish attributes such as age.

Way Forward

India should strengthen forensic laboratories, standardise evidence collection, train investigators, ensure independent expert assessment and improve judicial understanding of scientific evidence. Adequate safeguards must protect accused persons and victims alike.

Conclusion

Scientific evidence strengthens criminal adjudication when supported by procedural integrity and judicial scrutiny. Its proper use is essential for accuracy, accountability and fair trials.

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