Polity & Governance · GS - II

Religious freedom in India must be balanced with constitutional limitations, public order and the rights of other communities. Examine the constitutional principles governing disputes over religious practices at shared or contested places of worship.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Articles 25 and 26, freedom of conscience, denominational rights, public order, morality, health, secular activities, Article 14, rule of law, judicial review, religious harmony, competing rights.

Model Answer

Introduction

India's constitutional framework protects religious diversity while ensuring that religious practices operate within constitutional limits. Disputes over places of worship, such as the Deepam ritual at Thiruparankundram hill, highlight the need to balance competing rights and public order.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, health and other fundamental rights.
- **Article 26:** Protects the rights of religious denominations to manage their religious affairs and administer institutions.
- **Article 14:** Requires equality before law and prohibits arbitrary State action.
- **Article 25(2):** Allows regulation of secular activities associated with religious practices and legislation for social welfare and reform.

Key Issues in Shared Religious Spaces

1. **Competing religious claims:** Different communities may assert religious, historical or customary interests in the same location.
2. **Public order:** Authorities must prevent violence and ensure peaceful exercise of lawful religious rights.
3. **Access and dignity:** Arrangements must protect the movement and religious practices of all communities.
4. **Judicial oversight:** Courts must examine legal rights, evidence, constitutional limitations and administrative decisions rather than rely solely on competing claims.

Way Forward

- Ensure impartial implementation of court orders.
- Facilitate dialogue among affected communities.
- Maintain security without unnecessarily restricting lawful religious practices.
- Resolve disputes through constitutional and judicial mechanisms.
- Avoid converting temporary administrative arrangements into automatic precedents for permanent rights.

Conclusion

Constitutional secularism requires equal respect for religious freedom and the rule of law. Sustainable resolution of religious disputes depends on judicial impartiality, administrative restraint and protection of communal harmony.

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