Society & Social Justice · GS - II

Discuss the ethical, constitutional and public health considerations involved in regulating consanguineous marriages in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - II	Society & Social Justice

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Genetic disorders, autosomal recessive inheritance, reproductive autonomy, Article 21, right to privacy, personal laws, public health awareness, genetic counselling, proportionality, informed consent.

Model Answer

Introduction

Consanguineous marriages are marriages between individuals related by blood, such as first cousins. They can increase the probability of certain inherited recessive disorders, making the issue relevant to public health, individual rights and legislative policy.

Public Health Considerations

1. **Genetic risks:** Close biological relatives are more likely to share recessive genetic variants inherited from common ancestors.
2. **Intergenerational health:** Some inherited conditions can increase the burden of congenital disorders and long-term healthcare needs.
3. **Preventive healthcare:** Genetic counselling, carrier screening and prenatal diagnostic services can support informed reproductive decisions.

4. **Regional awareness:** Community-specific health education is important where consanguineous marriages are socially prevalent.

Constitutional and Ethical Dimensions

- **Article 21:** Protects personal liberty, privacy and decisional autonomy, including important aspects of marriage and reproductive choice.
- **Article 14:** Any legal restriction must satisfy constitutional requirements of equality and non-arbitrariness.
- **Religious and personal laws:** Marriage practices are influenced by diverse customary and personal-law frameworks.
- **Informed consent:** Public health interventions should respect individual autonomy and avoid stigma or discrimination.

Way Forward

- Expand accessible genetic counselling and voluntary carrier screening.
- Promote evidence-based public health awareness.
- Strengthen research on inherited disorders across communities.
- Evaluate proposed restrictions through constitutional proportionality and consultation with medical experts and affected communities.

Conclusion

The objective of reducing inherited disease risks must be balanced with constitutional freedoms and reproductive autonomy. Preventive healthcare, informed choice and scientific awareness should remain central to policy formulation.

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