Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the constitutional safeguards and administrative principles governing compulsory retirement of civil servants in India. How can the balance between administrative efficiency and protection against arbitrary executive action be maintained?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 309, Article 310, Article 311, public interest, service rules, judicial review, natural justice, administrative accountability, civil service neutrality, performance assessment.

Model Answer

Introduction

Civil services are essential to continuity and effective governance. Compulsory retirement under applicable service rules is an administrative mechanism to maintain efficiency, but its exercise must remain consistent with constitutional principles.

Constitutional and Administrative Framework

1. **Article 309:** Empowers the legislature and executive to regulate recruitment and conditions of service of public servants.

2. **Article 310:** Establishes the doctrine of pleasure, subject to constitutional safeguards.

3. **Article 311:** Protects civil servants against arbitrary dismissal, removal or reduction in rank.

4. **Public interest:** Compulsory retirement may be used to remove officials whose continued service is considered detrimental to administrative efficiency, subject to applicable rules.

Need for Safeguards

- **Protection against arbitrariness:** Decisions should be based on objective service records and relevant material.
- **Judicial review:** Courts must remain accessible where orders involve mala fide intentions, arbitrariness or extraneous considerations.
- **Administrative accountability:** Periodic performance reviews should be transparent and consistent.
- **Civil service neutrality:** Administrative decisions must not become instruments of political or personal retaliation.

Way Forward

A robust review mechanism, documented assessment criteria, independent scrutiny and effective grievance redressal can improve fairness. Genuine inefficiency should be addressed without discouraging honest and independent officers.

Conclusion

Compulsory retirement must serve public interest rather than arbitrary executive discretion. A balance between administrative efficiency, constitutional safeguards and judicial oversight is essential for a professional, accountable and politically neutral civil service.