Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the constitutional and administrative challenges in regulating illicit liquor in India. What measures are necessary to prevent deaths caused by consumption of spurious alcohol?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

State excise powers, public health, illicit liquor networks, methanol poisoning, enforcement gaps, inter-state coordination, healthcare preparedness, community awareness.

Model Answer

Introduction

Deaths caused by spurious liquor highlight the intersection of public health, organised illicit trade and regulatory failure. Such incidents require coordinated action covering prevention, enforcement and emergency medical response.

Constitutional and Administrative Framework

- **State responsibility:** Entry 8 of the State List empowers states to regulate intoxicating liquors, including their manufacture, possession and sale.
- **Public health:** Entry 6 of the State List places public health and sanitation primarily within state jurisdiction.
- **Excise administration:** State excise departments regulate licensed production, distribution and taxation, while police agencies investigate illicit networks.

- **Criminal accountability:** Relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and applicable state excise laws can address culpable conduct and illegal liquor operations.

Major Challenges

1. **Illicit supply chains:** Unregulated production and distribution networks evade licensing and quality controls.
2. **Methanol contamination:** Industrial alcohol may be diverted or improperly used, creating a risk of fatal poisoning.
3. **Enforcement limitations:** Weak surveillance, corruption and inadequate inter-state coordination allow illegal networks to operate.
4. **Healthcare preparedness:** Delayed identification and treatment can increase mortality during mass-poisoning incidents.

Way Forward

Strengthen excise intelligence, traceability of industrial alcohol, inter-state enforcement and community reporting mechanisms. Establish rapid toxicology testing, emergency referral systems and adequately equipped hospitals. Public awareness must address the dangers of unregulated alcohol.

Conclusion

Preventing illicit liquor tragedies requires more than prohibition or punitive enforcement. Effective regulation, accountable administration and accessible emergency healthcare must operate together to protect public health.

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