Polity & Governance · GS - II

"Judicial accountability and judicial independence are complementary rather than competing constitutional values." Examine this statement in the context of public criticism of judicial decisions and the institutional credibility of the judiciary.

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

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Judicial independence, judicial accountability, constitutional morality, freedom of speech, reasoned criticism, contempt of court, public confidence, institutional integrity

Model Answer

Introduction

An independent judiciary is essential for constitutional supremacy and the protection of fundamental rights. At the same time, accountability ensures that judicial power remains transparent, reasoned and responsive to constitutional principles.

Complementarity of Independence and Accountability

1. **Judicial independence:** Security of tenure, protected service conditions and separation of powers enable judges to decide cases without political pressure.

2. **Accountability through reasoned decisions:** Judicial orders must be supported by legal reasoning and constitutional principles, allowing scrutiny and appellate review.

3. **Public criticism:** Article 19(1)(a) protects freedom of speech, including fair criticism of judicial judgments. Such debate can improve legal understanding and institutional transparency.

4. **Institutional credibility:** Personal attacks, misinformation and motivated campaigns can undermine public confidence and weaken respect for constitutional institutions.

Ensuring a Constitutional Balance

- Strengthen transparency in judicial appointments and administration.
- Encourage informed public debate on judgments.
- Apply contempt powers cautiously, preserving legitimate criticism.
- Improve judicial accessibility, pendency management and grievance mechanisms.
- Promote judicial accountability without compromising decisional independence.

Conclusion

The credibility of the judiciary depends neither on unquestioning public acceptance nor on unrestricted institutional attacks. Reasoned criticism of decisions, combined with respect for constitutional institutions, strengthens democratic accountability and judicial independence.

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