Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the constitutional relationship between religious freedom and the regulatory role of the State in the management of religious institutions in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 27/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Article 25, Article 26, religious freedom, essential religious practices, secular activities, public order, morality, health, judicial review, constitutional secularism

Model Answer

The Indian Constitution protects religious freedom while permitting State regulation of certain activities associated with religious institutions. This reflects the balance between individual liberty, institutional autonomy and constitutional governance.

Constitutional protection of religious freedom

1. **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to constitutional restrictions.
2. **Article 26:** Protects the rights of religious denominations to manage their religious affairs and administer religious institutions in accordance with law.
3. **Article 27:** Prohibits compelling individuals to pay taxes specifically appropriated for promoting or maintaining a particular religion.
4. **Article 28:** Regulates religious instruction in educational institutions, particularly those wholly maintained out of State funds.

Role of the State

1. **Regulatory authority:** The State can regulate secular activities associated with religious practices, including financial and administrative matters.
2. **Public order:** Government intervention may be justified to maintain public order, morality and public health.
3. **Judicial oversight:** Courts examine whether State action violates constitutional protections or exceeds statutory authority.
4. **Institutional accountability:** Legal regulation can promote transparency and accountability in the administration of religious endowments.

The Thiruparankundram temple lamp dispute highlights the constitutional questions surrounding religious practices, temple administration and judicial oversight.

Conclusion

Religious freedom and State regulation are not necessarily contradictory. Their relationship must be governed by constitutional limitations, institutional autonomy and judicial scrutiny to uphold India's secular framework.

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