Polity & Governance · GS - II

Artistic freedom is an important component of freedom of expression in a democracy. Discuss the constitutional protections available to artistic expression in India and the challenges associated with censorship.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 19(1)(a), Article 19(2), Artistic Freedom, Freedom of Expression, Censorship, Reasonable Restrictions, Constitutional Morality, Cultural Autonomy, Democratic Values, Judicial Review.

Model Answer

Introduction

Artistic expression enables individuals to communicate ideas, question established practices and engage in public debate. Controversies over the removal of artworks from exhibitions highlight the tension between artistic freedom and censorship.

Constitutional Framework

Article 19(1)(a) guarantees citizens freedom of speech and expression. Artistic expression receives constitutional protection under this provision. However, Article 19(2) permits reasonable restrictions on specified grounds, such as public order, defamation and decency or morality.

Challenges

1. Censorship: Unjustified restrictions may discourage creativity and critical thinking.
2. Political influence: Perceived interference can undermine public confidence in cultural institutions.
3. Institutional autonomy: Curators must balance artistic merit, exhibition policies and legal obligations.
4. Accountability: Decisions to remove artworks should be transparent and based on defensible criteria.

However, every curatorial decision or removal of an artwork does not automatically constitute unconstitutional censorship.

Conclusion

A democratic society should protect artistic freedom while respecting lawful restrictions. Transparent institutional procedures, independent decision-making and judicial review can help maintain this balance and strengthen democratic values.

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