Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the constitutional framework governing reservation in public employment in India. How can recruitment rules balance social justice with fairness and transparency in selection?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 27/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Equality of opportunity; Article 14; Article 16; affirmative action; reserved vacancies; unreserved merit; recruitment transparency; judicial review; social justice

Model Answer

Introduction

Reservation in public employment is an instrument of affirmative action intended to address historical disadvantage and inadequate representation while operating within the constitutional framework of equality.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 14:** Guarantees equality before the law and equal protection of the laws.
- **Article 16(1):** Provides equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.
- **Article 16(4):** Enables reservation for inadequately represented backward classes, subject to constitutional requirements.
- **Articles 16(4A) and 16(4B):** Address specified aspects of reservation in promotion and the treatment of unfilled reserved vacancies, respectively.

Balancing Merit and Social Justice

1. Recruitment notifications should clearly specify vacancies, eligibility conditions and selection criteria.
2. Reserved-category candidates qualifying on the same standards may compete for unreserved vacancies under applicable rules.
3. Category-wise vacancies and selection lists should be prepared transparently and in accordance with binding legal principles.
4. Grievance-redressal mechanisms and judicial review should be available to address irregularities.

Conclusion

A fair recruitment system requires both effective affirmative action and transparent, rule-based selection. Clear vacancy calculations, consistent implementation and accessible remedies can strengthen public confidence in reservation policies.

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