Polity & Governance · GS - II

Religious and cultural influence can shape electoral discourse in India. Examine the constitutional and institutional safeguards against the misuse of religion for electoral mobilisation.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 25/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Secularism, electoral integrity, Article 324, Representation of the People Act, Model Code of Conduct, freedom of expression

Model Answer

Religion and culture are important dimensions of India's social life. However, their use to mobilise voters through divisive appeals can affect electoral fairness and the constitutional principle of secularism.

Constitutional safeguards

1. **Secular constitutional framework:** The Preamble and Articles 25–28 protect religious freedom while maintaining the secular character of the State.
2. **Electoral restrictions:** Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, treats appeals for votes on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language as a corrupt electoral practice.
3. **Institutional supervision:** Article 324 empowers the Election Commission to supervise, direct and control elections.
4. **Model Code of Conduct:** It discourages communal appeals, inflammatory statements and activities that aggravate social divisions.

The democratic balance

Religious leaders and cultural organisations enjoy freedom of expression and association. Their participation in public discourse is not automatically unlawful. The legal concern arises when electoral conduct violates statutory restrictions or undermines free and fair elections.

Institutional priorities

The Election Commission must ensure consistent enforcement, timely examination of complaints and equal application of electoral rules. Political parties should also promote responsible campaigning and internal accountability.

The objective is not to exclude religion from public life, but to prevent coercive or divisive religious appeals from distorting democratic choice.