Polity & Governance · GS - II

Analyse how caste-based social hierarchies and religious mobilisation interact to shape electoral politics and local governance in India.

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

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Caste associations, identity mobilisation, Hindutva politics, electoral representation, social justice, democratic accountability

Model Answer

Electoral politics in India operates within a complex social environment where caste identities, religious affiliations and local power structures influence political participation and governance. Their interaction can reshape both voter mobilisation and access to public institutions.

How these forces interact

1. **Caste networks:** Dominant caste groups may use social influence, economic resources and local leadership networks to consolidate electoral support.
2. **Religious mobilisation:** Religious identity can create broader political coalitions across caste groups, while political organisations may use cultural symbolism to strengthen mobilisation.
3. **Candidate selection:** Parties often consider caste composition, local influence and community representation while selecting candidates.
4. **Governance influence:** Socially dominant groups may exercise disproportionate influence over access to local resources, public institutions and political decision-making.

Democratic implications

Identity mobilisation can improve political visibility for historically marginalised communities and encourage representation. However, excessive dependence on caste or religious appeals may deepen social divisions, weaken issue-based debate and marginalise smaller communities.

Section 123(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 restricts specified appeals for votes on religious, racial, caste, community or language grounds. Constitutional equality and secularism provide broader safeguards against discriminatory governance.

Towards inclusive politics

Political parties should promote internal representation, transparent candidate selection and issue-based campaigns. Local institutions must ensure equitable delivery of welfare, impartial administration and meaningful participation of disadvantaged groups.

Ultimately, democratic legitimacy depends not merely on electoral mobilisation but on translating political representation into equal citizenship, accountable governance and social justice.

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