Polity & Governance · GS - II

Discuss the legal and constitutional principles governing the protection and administration of religious endowment properties in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 17/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Article 25, Article 26, deity as juristic person, religious endowments, trustee's fiduciary duty, Tamil Nadu HR&CE Act, judicial review, public accountability.

Model Answer

Introduction

Religious endowment properties are assets dedicated to religious institutions, deities or charitable purposes. Their proper management is essential for protecting religious traditions, devotees' interests and the rule of law.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution protect religious freedom and specified rights relating to religious affairs. However, these rights are subject to constitutional limitations. Indian law also recognises Hindu deities as juristic persons capable of holding property in certain circumstances.

Temple trustees and administrators must manage religious assets according to applicable laws and the purposes of the endowment. Government supervision does not, by itself, confer ownership of temple property upon the State. Courts can examine disputed transactions and prevent unlawful transfers.

Balancing Regulation and Autonomy

The State should prevent mismanagement, encroachment and misuse of religious assets while respecting constitutionally protected religious practices. Transparent property records, regular audits, accountable administration and independent judicial review can strengthen public trust.

Conclusion

Effective governance of religious endowments requires a balance between religious autonomy, lawful State regulation and protection of dedicated assets. The rule of law must guide decisions concerning religious property.

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