

# Constitutional Safeguards, Social Justice, and Institutional Integrity in Public Examinations: A Critical Study of Systemic Failures and Reform Imperatives in India

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**Abstract**—The integrity of public examinations is a cornerstone of a fair and meritocratic society, yet recent controversies surrounding the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) examinations marked by alleged paper leaks, the re-engagement of blacklisted service providers, technological failures, logistical hardships, and the suppression of peaceful protests have ignited nationwide concern. These incidents transcend administrative lapses, raising serious constitutional and social justice issues. This paper aims to address ethico-legal issues related to public examinations in India, focusing on safeguarding constitutional principles and advancing social justice, while proposing systematic reforms to ensure fairness, transparency, and accountability in recruitment processes. The study adopts doctrinal; analysis of constitutional provisions, the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, and relevant case laws, socio-legal analysis through secondary data, media reports, and comparative case studies of past examination scams. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law, while Article 16 ensures equal opportunity in public employment; when examination processes are compromised, deserving candidates are deprived of their rights, perpetuating inequality and undermining the Preamble's ethos. Logistical barriers and lack of transparency disproportionately affect disadvantaged groups, while the suppression of protests challenges democratic freedoms under Article 19(1)(b).

Commendably, the judiciary has intervened to protect candidates' rights and uphold fairness, as seen in *Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India (2009)* and *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*. Beyond punitive legislation, reforms such as transparent contracting, enhanced digital security,

**grievance redressal mechanisms, and institutional accountability are recommended. Safeguarding examination integrity is not merely an administrative duty but a constitutional obligation essential to protecting meritocracy, ensuring equitable access to public employment, and advancing social justice.**

**Index Terms**—Social Justice, Equality, Integrity, Constitutional Principles, Democratic Freedom

## I. INTRODUCTION

Public examinations in India serve as the fundamental gateway to public employment, forming the bedrock of a meritocratic administrative system envisioned by the nation's founders. These high-stakes assessments are not merely administrative procedures but are profoundly consequential for social mobility, economic security, and the very integrity of governance. They represent a promise of equal opportunity, where success is determined by diligence and capability rather than privilege or patronage.<sup>1</sup> However, this cornerstone of fairness is facing an unprecedented crisis of credibility. A series of systemic failures, most notably within the processes of the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) including alleged paper leaks, the re-engagement of blacklisted service providers, and technological debacles have ignited nationwide outrage and eroded public trust.<sup>2</sup> These incidents transcend mere administrative lapses; they represent a deep-seated institutional malady that

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<sup>1</sup> *AR2023-24English.Pdf*, <https://dopt.gov.in/sites/default/files/AR2023-24English.pdf> (last visited Aug. 29, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> The Hindu Bureau, *Protests Erupt over SSC Exam Mismanagement, Tech Failures*, THE HINDU, Aug. 1, 2025, <https://www.thehindu.com/incoming/protests-erupt-over-ssc-exam-mismanagement-tech-failures/article69884823.ece>.

strikes at the heart of constitutional democracy and social justice.

This research paper, therefore, seeks to critically investigate this crisis through the dual lenses of constitutional law and social equity. It is guided by central research questions that interrogate how such systemic failures constitute a violation of fundamental rights, particularly the right to equality (Article 14), the right to equal opportunity in public employment (Article 16), and the right to peaceful protest (Article 19(1)(b)) as enshrined in the Indian Constitution.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it will analyse the disproportionate impact of these failures on marginalized and disadvantaged groups, for whom such examinations are often the only viable path to socio-economic advancement, thereby undermining the project of social justice. The study also aims to critically evaluate the limitations of the existing legal framework, including the newly enacted Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024<sup>4</sup>, in effectively deterring malpractice and ensuring accountability. Ultimately, this paper contends that safeguarding examination integrity is a constitutional obligation imperative for preserving meritocracy, ensuring equitable access to public employment, and upholding the democratic ethos of the nation. It concludes by proposing a blueprint for systematic reforms aimed at embedding transparency, robustness, and accountability into the very fabric of India's public recruitment processes.

## II. OBJECTIVE

This research aims to analyse the socio-legal dimensions of systemic failures in public examinations, particularly within the SSC and analogous central recruitment bodies, assessing their profound socio-legal impact on meritocracy and equal opportunity. Through a combined doctrinal and socio-legal methodology, it evaluates constitutional violations, legislative inadequacies, and institutional accountability gaps. The study ultimately seeks to

propose a robust reform framework to ensure transparency, integrity, and justice in public employment processes.

## III. CONCEPTUAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

### Public Employment as a Public Trust

The concept of public employment in India is not merely a contractual relationship between the state and an individual; it is a sacred public trust.<sup>5</sup> This philosophy is rooted in the vision of the framers of the Constitution, who envisaged a civil service that would be the steel frame of the administration, functioning with the highest degree of integrity, impartiality, and meritocracy. The sole criterion for entry into this service was to be merit, ensuring that the most capable citizens are selected to administer the country without fear or favour. This principle is fundamental to good governance, as it ensures that administration is conducted for the public good, and not for private gain. A breach of this trust through corrupt or unfair recruitment practices, therefore, does not merely harm individual candidates but strikes a blow against the very efficiency and legitimacy of the state itself.

### Constitutional Safeguards

The foundation of a fair and just public employment system is explicitly mandated by the following constitutional provisions:

Article 14: Equality before Law & Equal Protection of Laws: - This article guarantees every person equality before the law and the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.<sup>6</sup> In the context of public examinations, this translates to a guarantee of a level playing field for all candidates. Any arbitrary, malafide, or corrupt action by the examining authority that tilts this field such as a paper leak or biased evaluation is a direct violation of Article 14. The

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<sup>3</sup> *COI\_2024.Pdf*, [https://l1ddashboard.legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/coi/COI\\_2024.pdf](https://l1ddashboard.legislative.gov.in/sites/default/files/coi/COI_2024.pdf) (last visited Aug. 29, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> *Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.Pdf*,

[https://prsindia.org/files/bills\\_acts/bills\\_parliament/2024/Public\\_Examinations\\_\(Prevention\\_of\\_Unfair\\_Means\)\\_Bill,\\_2024.pdf](https://prsindia.org/files/bills_acts/bills_parliament/2024/Public_Examinations_(Prevention_of_Unfair_Means)_Bill,_2024.pdf) (last visited Aug. 29, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> D D BASU, INTRODUCTION TO THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.

<sup>6</sup> *COI\_2024.pdf*, *supra* note 3.

Supreme Court has consistently held that arbitrariness is anathema to equality under Article 14.<sup>7</sup>

Article 16(1): Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment: - This provision is an extension of Article 14 specifically tailored to matters of employment under the State. It guarantees "equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State." The phrase "matters relating to employment" has been interpreted widely to include the entire process: from the announcement of a vacancy and the conduct of examinations to the final selection. Any irregularity in this process that denies a citizen a fair chance at competition is a violation of their fundamental right under Article 16(1).

Article 19(1)(b): Right to Assemble Peaceably & Without Arms. This right ensures that citizens can gather to express their grievances. When systemic failures in examinations deprive lakhs of candidates of their rights under Articles 14 and 16, their subsequent peaceful assembly to protest and demand accountability is a direct exercise of this fundamental right. The use of state power to suppress such legitimate and peaceful protests constitutes a violation of Article 19(1)(b), further compounding the initial injustice.<sup>8</sup>

The Preamble and the Directive Principles: Realizing Social, Economic, and Political Justice.

The Preamble to the Constitution secures to all its citizens Justice social, economic, and political. This objective is further elaborated in the Directive Principles of State Policy<sup>9</sup> (DPSP), particularly in Article 39(a), which mandates that the State shall direct its policy towards securing that all citizens have an adequate means of livelihood.<sup>10</sup> A fair public employment system is a primary mechanism for fulfilling this directive. For millions, a government job represents economic security and social upliftment. When this system is compromised, it directly frustrates the goal of achieving social & economic justice by privileging the unscrupulous over the meritorious and perpetuating existing inequities.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> E.P. Royappa v. State of Tamil Nadu, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> COI\_2024.pdf, *supra* note 3.

The Evolution of the "Right to Fairness" in Administrative Action.

While the Constitution provides the foundational rights, the judiciary has actively sculpted these into a tangible "right to fairness" in every administrative action. This evolution began with the landmark case of A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India (1969)<sup>12</sup>, where the Supreme Court held that the rules of natural justice are integral to administrative fairness. This principle has been strictly applied to public examinations. Judiciary has recognized that the right to be considered for public employment fairly is a legally protected right. Any decision by an examining body that affects a candidate's prospects must be taken fairly, without bias, and based on relevant criteria. This right to a fair process is now considered an indispensable component of the rule of law, and its violation provides grounds for judicial review of administrative decisions.

Systemic Failures in Public Examinations: Constitutionalism and Social Justice

India's public examination system, intended as a critical engine for meritocracy and social mobility, has been plagued by recurring systemic failures. These failures, far from being mere administrative glitches, represent profound challenges to the constitutional architecture, particularly the guarantees of equality and equal opportunity, and consequently, the pursuit of social justice.

#### 1. Paper Leaks and Malpractice

The clandestine leakage of examination papers and the pervasive malpractice surrounding them represent a direct assault on the meritocratic principles enshrined in India's Constitution. The modus operandi often involves sophisticated networks that compromise the integrity of the examination process at various stages, from question paper setting to result tabulation. This can range from direct paper seizures before the exam to the manipulation of online systems. The prevalence of such incidents, frequently reported across major national examinations like those conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and others, has

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> M P SINGH, V.N. SHUKLA'S CONSTITUTION OF INDIA.

<sup>12</sup> A.K. Kraipak v. Union of India (1969).

become a national concern. The effect on meritocracy is profound, as it diminishes the value of genuine effort and talent, favouring those who gain illicit access through connections or financial means. This situation severely undermines public confidence in the fairness of government recruitment, breeding cynicism and disillusionment among hopeful candidates.

From a constitutional perspective, paper leaks fundamentally violate Article 14 (Equality before Law) and Article 16 (Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment).<sup>13</sup> The Supreme Court, in its observations regarding the pervasive nature of exam paper leaks, has consistently highlighted the arbitrariness inherent in such practices. In the context of ongoing deliberations and concerns, the Supreme Court's stern remarks in cases like *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*<sup>14</sup> (though perhaps not directly on paper leaks of SSC specifically, but on the general problem of exam integrity) have underscored the judiciary's grave concern. These leaks create an unequal playing field, directly contravening the spirit of a level playing field that the Constitution mandates for public employment. The social justice implication is severe: aspirants from economically weaker sections or disadvantaged backgrounds, who lack the means to access leaked materials, are systematically excluded, perpetuating existing socio-economic disparities and hindering upward mobility.

## 2. Re-engagement of Blacklisted Service Providers

The practice of re-engaging service providers who have previously been blacklisted or found wanting in their contractual obligations poses significant risks to the integrity of public examinations. This raises serious questions about accountability and transparency in the procurement processes undertaken by examination conducting bodies. The implications for accountability are stark: by circumventing established debarment procedures, past failures are essentially condoned, weakening the deterrent effect on other service providers. This compromises the vetting processes, as the inherent risks associated with a provider's history are ignored, potentially leading to a repeat of the very failures that led to blacklisting.

This practice can be seen as a violation of the broader principles of good governance and probity that are implicitly expected in state actions, often scrutinized

under the broad ambit of Article 14. While there may not be a direct, singular judgment specifically on SSC's blacklisted providers, judicial scrutiny of public procurement processes, as seen in various administrative law cases, emphasizes the need for transparency, fairness, and adherence to established rules. The social justice angle here is that such compromises in service provision can directly lead to logistical breakdowns or security vulnerabilities that disproportionately affect candidates from less privileged backgrounds, who may have limited resources to overcome any ensuing adversities.

## 3. Technological Failures and Security Lapses

The increasing reliance on online platforms for conducting public examinations introduces a new set of vulnerabilities. Vulnerabilities in online examination platforms can include inadequate server capacity, weak cybersecurity protocols, and susceptibility to hacking or data breaches. These issues manifest as consequences of data breaches and system malfunctions, such as widespread exam cancellations, delayed results, or unfair advantages gained through unauthorized access.

The Constitution, through its guarantee of a fair process and by extension, the right to life & personal liberty (Article 21), necessitates that the state-conducted examinations are conducted with reasonable care and without arbitrariness. Judicial pronouncements have increasingly recognized the importance of robust technological infrastructure in ensuring fair process. While specific judgments on SSC's technological failures might be evolving, the Supreme Court's general stance on the state's duty to ensure secure and reliable processes, often articulated in public interest litigation (PILs) concerning competitive exams, emphasizes the need for advanced technological safeguards. The social justice dimension is critical: candidates with limited access to stable internet or digital literacy are at a greater disadvantage when technological failures occur, exacerbating existing digital divides and undermining equitable participation.

## 4. Disproportionate Impact on the Vulnerable

Beyond leaks and technology, administrative incompetence and logistical mismanagement create

<sup>13</sup> COI\_2024.pdf, *supra* note 3.

<sup>14</sup> *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.

significant barriers for candidates. These include issues like inadequate seating arrangements, lack of proper invigilation, sudden venue changes, and insufficient provision of essential materials. The disproportionate impact on disadvantaged and remote candidates is a critical concern. Those from rural areas or economically weaker sections may lack the financial resources for last-minute travel arrangements or accommodation if venues are changed without adequate notice. This directly impacts their ability to participate fairly.

These failures raise questions of arbitrariness and lack of reasonableness, invoking the spirit of Article 14. The Supreme Court, in cases like *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*<sup>15</sup>, emphasized the need for procedural fairness in examinations, which includes ensuring that logistical arrangements do not disadvantage any section of candidates. The challenges in exam centre management and invigilation point to a systemic lapse in oversight and planning, which can inadvertently penalize honest candidates while failing to prevent malpractice, thus undermining the very essence of equitable opportunity. The social justice imperative is clear: administrative lapses in public examinations must be addressed to ensure that no candidate is denied a fair chance due to factors beyond their control.

##### 5. Suppression of Peaceful Protests: Violation of Democratic Rights and Hindrance to Redressal

The suppression of peaceful protests by aspirants affected by examination malpractices constitutes a direct violation of democratic rights, particularly the freedom of speech and expression (Article 19(1)(a)) and the right to assemble peaceably & without arms (Article 19(1)(b)).<sup>16</sup> Instances where authorities resort to filing FIRs against or forcefully dispersing peaceful demonstrators negate the constitutional space for dissent and seeking accountability.

The Supreme Court has persistently upheld the right to peaceful protest as a fundamental tenet of democracy. In cases such as *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India (2018)*<sup>17</sup>, the court has affirmed the importance of public participation and protest in ensuring transparency & accountability of

governance. The influence on transparency and redressal mechanisms is profound: when candidates are prevented from voicing their grievances through peaceful means, it stifles transparency and hinders their ability to seek legitimate redressal. This creates an environment where systemic failures can persist unchecked, further marginalizing affected candidates and undermining the constitutional promise of a responsive government and the social justice that emerges from accessible grievance redressal.

##### Legislative Response and Judicial Scrutiny: The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024

The persistent systemic failures in public examinations and the resulting erosion of public trust have necessitated legislative intervention, culminating in the enactment of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.<sup>18</sup> This Act emerged as a response to constitutional concerns arising from repeated exam irregularities such as paper leaks, technological failures, and malpractices, which undermine the constitutional guarantees of Article 14 (Equality before Law) and Article 16 (Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment). The legislative effort reflects heightened public concern and judicial encouragement, with courts increasingly demanding stronger accountability measures to protect the integrity of recruitment through public examinations. A key strength of the Act lies in its stringent punitive provisions, which impose significant fines and imprisonment on individuals and organizations involved in unfair practices like paper leaks and impersonation, thereby signalling the State's commitment to uphold constitutional fairness and equal opportunity. Judicial pronouncements, including those in *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*<sup>19</sup>, have underscored the urgent need for such deterrents, describing paper leaks as a "cancer" threatening the examination system. However, the Act's limitations are notable: its primarily reactive approach focuses on punishment post-incident, without adequately addressing systemic institutional weaknesses such as lax oversight and poor security protocols—issues that

<sup>15</sup> *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*.

<sup>16</sup> *COI\_2024.pdf*, *supra* note 3.

<sup>17</sup> *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan v. Union of India, 2018*.

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*Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.pdf*, *supra* note 4.

<sup>19</sup> *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.

perpetuate arbitrary practices contrary to Article 14 principles. Judicial scrutiny continues to emphasize the necessity for proactive enforcement measures, including advanced cybersecurity, transparent contracting, and effective grievance redressal, highlighting the Act's gap in prevention strategies. Crucially, this limitation bears significant social justice implications, as vulnerable candidates from marginalized and economically disadvantaged backgrounds suffer disproportionately from unresolved systemic failures. If preventive mechanisms remain weak despite punitive intent, these aspirants will continue to face barriers to equitable opportunity, undermining the constitutional ideal of social justice that the Act aims to realize.

#### Judicial Activism: The Constitution's Watchdog in Examination Integrity

In the face of systemic failures within public examinations, the Indian judiciary has increasingly adopted an activist stance, acting as a crucial watchdog to uphold constitutional integrity and ensure the promise of fair opportunity. This activism is most visible through Public Interest Litigations (PILs), which serve as powerful instruments of constitutional enforcement. A seminal precedent in this regard is *Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India (2009)*<sup>20</sup>, where the Supreme Court established a broad interpretation of the "right to life" under Article 21<sup>21</sup>, extending it to include the right to safety and fair procedure in all state-conducted activities, including examinations. This ruling empowers courts to intervene when the integrity of examinations is compromised, directly linking it to fundamental right to a dignified existence. The social justice link is profound, as PILs frequently champion the cause of large numbers of aspirants, many hailing from marginalized backgrounds, who seek to level the playing field that has been tilted by malpractices.

Beyond initial interventions, the judiciary actively upholds procedural fairness in evaluation. In cases like *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*<sup>22</sup>, the Supreme Court mandated crucial reforms such as the provision of challengeable answer keys and robust grievance

redressal mechanisms. This directly reinforces Article 14's mandate against arbitrariness, ensuring that the evaluation process itself is transparent and fair, and that candidates have recourse against potential errors. Moreover, the judiciary has taken a stern stance on paper leaks and systemic irregularities, demonstrating its commitment to protecting the sanctity of public examinations. The Supreme Court's strong observations in matters like *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*<sup>23</sup> have unequivocally addressed the national problem of paper leaks. These actions signify the courts acting as constitutional guardians, ensuring that executive action upholds fundamental rights & prevents the erosion of public trust. However, a critical gap analysis reveals a disparity between judicial ideals and ground-level implementation. The constitutional challenge lies in the often-slow pace of investigations and a lack of systemic accountability from the bodies conducting examinations, which can leave judicial directives wanting on the ground. This social justice impact is significant, as these delays and ineffective enforcement perpetuate the cycle of disadvantage for aspirants, particularly those from underrepresented communities who have already suffered due to the initial systemic failures.

#### Towards a Constitutionally Compliant and Socially Just Examination Framework: Recommendations

To rectify the systemic failures in public examinations and ensure they serve as true vehicles for merit and social justice, a multi-pronged approach involving legislative, administrative, judicial, and societal reforms is imperative, deeply rooted in constitutional principles and judicial wisdom.

##### 1. Legislative Reforms: Embedding Prevention and Justice

Firstly, Legislative Reforms are crucial for embedding prevention and justice directly into the framework. It is recommended to amend the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024,<sup>24</sup> to explicitly incorporate preventive mandates, such as stringent requirements for secure IT infrastructure and transparent procurement processes, directly

<sup>20</sup> *Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India (2009)*.

<sup>21</sup> *COI\_2024.pdf, supra* note 3.

<sup>22</sup> *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*.

<sup>23</sup> *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.

<sup>24</sup>

*Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024.pdf, supra* note 4.

addressing the systemic weaknesses highlighted by judicial concerns for overhaul, as seen in the spirit of the Supreme Court's observations in cases like *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, the introduction of a Statutory Victim Compensation Framework is critical to acknowledge the tangible harm caused by institutional failures, conforming with the constitutional spirit of redressal and justice for candidates affected by cancellations or leaks, thereby offering tangible relief and reinforcing accountability for maladministration.

#### 2. Administrative Reforms: Replicating Judicial Best Practices

Secondly, Administrative Reforms should focus on replicating judicial best practices to enhance systemic integrity. A critical step involves a UPSC Model Study to develop and implement comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), drawing lessons from the Union Public Service Commission's relative success, in line with the judicial emphasis on robust procedures evident in judgments like *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*.<sup>26</sup> Enhanced Technological Safeguards, including end-to-end encryption, AI-powered surveillance, and robust IT infrastructure, are paramount, as implicitly recommended by courts through their calls for integrity and secure processes. Furthermore, Transparent Contracting must be mandatorily implemented, involving thorough due diligence, public disclosure of vendor credentials, and strict debarment policies for errant service providers, reflecting the principles of fairness often upheld by courts under Article 14. To ensure continuous compliance, establishment of an Independent Oversight Body, ideally a statutory authority, is recommended to set, audit, and enforce examination protocols, ensuring adherence to constitutional and administrative standards.

#### 3. Judicial Role: Proactive Monitoring and Accountability

Thirdly, the Judicial Role must evolve towards proactive monitoring and accountability. This involves continued vigilance by the courts in monitoring the implementation of reforms in ongoing cases, such as the directive in *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of*

*India*.<sup>27</sup>, mandating clear timelines and accountability mechanisms for examination bodies. Crucially, courts should not hesitate to invoke Contempt for Non-Compliance against exam bodies that fail to adhere to judicial directives, thereby ensuring that pronouncements translate into tangible action and upholding the rule of law as a cornerstone of constitutional governance.

#### 4. Civil Society and Media: Upholding the Constitutional Mandate

Finally, Civil Society and Media have a vital role in upholding the Constitutional Mandate by acting as a Watchdog. This entails the continuous tracking & reporting of irregularities, fostering public pressure for accountability, in line with spirit of transparency inherent in constitutional governance. Their role in Advocacy for Rights is equally critical, championing the rights of aspirants, particularly the marginalized, to ensure their voices are heard & their constitutional rights protected, thereby serving as a vital bridge between systemic reforms and the lived experiences of the populace.

### IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study unequivocally reiterates that examination integrity is a constitutional imperative, intrinsically linked to the foundational promises of Article 14 (Equality before Law) and Article 16 (Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment), and deeply resonant with the Preamble's core tenets of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. The systemic failures witnessed in India's public examinations have demonstrably eroded these constitutional guarantees, creating an uneven playing field that disproportionately impacts social justice goals and hinders the aspirations of millions, particularly the marginalized, as discussed in relation to the implications of paper leaks and logistical failures. The ongoing journey of the living Constitution, now celebrating 75 years, demands that fair examination systems be not merely administrative procedures but vital components actively upholding the rights and aspirations of citizens; conversely, the erosion of trust in these processes directly undermines the legitimacy of the state & the very fabric of our democracy.

<sup>25</sup> *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.

<sup>26</sup> *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)*.

<sup>27</sup> *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*.

Therefore, a blueprint for constitutional fulfilment necessitates multifaceted reforms: Legislative action, including amendments to the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024, for prevention and compensation, aligning with judicial calls for proactive measures; Administrative reforms that implement best practices and robust oversight, reflecting judicial emphasis on integrity and fairness, as seen in the principles derived from cases like *Tanvi Sarwal v. CBSE (2015)* and the general calls for secure processes in *Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India (2009)*; Judicial commitment to continued proactive monitoring and enforcement, holding bodies accountable as demonstrated in ongoing cases like *Anubha Shrivastava Sahai v. Union of India*, to ensure constitutional ideals translate into ground reality; and finally, Societal vigilance and advocacy, championed by civil society and media, to keep the promise of social justice alive and ensure accountability.