Polity & Governance · GS - II

Analyse the role of local bodies in providing good governance at local level and bring out the pros and cons merging the rural local bodies with the urban local bodies.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2024	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

73rd Amendment, 74th Amendment, decentralisation, Gram Panchayat, municipality, participatory governance, local accountability, rural-urban continuum, merger, efficiency, representation

Model Answer

Introduction

Local bodies operationalise democratic decentralisation by bringing governance closer to citizens. Panchayats and municipalities enable local participation, planning and delivery of basic services.

Role in Good Governance

Local bodies promote:

1. **Participation:** Gram Sabhas and ward-level institutions provide platforms for citizen involvement.
2. **Accountability:** Local representatives are directly answerable to residents.
3. **Need-based planning:** Local knowledge improves identification of development priorities.
4. **Service delivery:** They support sanitation, roads, water supply, local infrastructure and welfare implementation.
5. **Social inclusion:** Reservation enhances representation of women and disadvantaged groups.

Merger: Pros and Cons

Pros:

A unified rural-urban institution could facilitate integrated planning for rapidly urbanising regions, reduce administrative fragmentation, improve resource coordination and address rural-urban continuums.

Cons:

Rural and urban areas have different developmental needs, revenue capacities and governance structures. Merger could weaken rural representation, centralise decision-making and prioritise urban infrastructure over agricultural and village-specific concerns.

Conclusion

Local governance requires **devolution of functions, funds and functionaries**. Rather than universal merger, context-specific institutional integration may be preferable where rural and urban settlements form a continuous economic and social system.

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