Polity & Governance · GS - II

Examine the role of the State Election Commission in ensuring free and fair local-body elections in India. Discuss the constitutional safeguards and challenges associated with the nomination process.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 22/10/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Constitutional provisions; State Election Commission; Article 243K and Article 243ZA; nomination scrutiny; electoral fairness; judicial review; institutional independence; transparency and accountability

Model Answer

Introduction

Free and fair local elections are essential to grassroots democracy. The Constitution provides a framework for conducting Panchayat and municipal elections independently and impartially.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 243K:** Establishes the State Election Commission's authority over Panchayat elections.
- **Article 243ZA:** Provides for the State Election Commission's superintendence, direction and control of municipal elections.
- **Articles 243–243ZG:** Establish the broader constitutional framework for local self-government, including restrictions on judicial interference in electoral matters under Article 243ZG.

Challenges in the Nomination Process

- Rejection of nomination papers on technical grounds may prevent eligible candidates from contesting.
- Allegations of partisan treatment can undermine public confidence in elections.
- Inadequate reasons for rejection and inconsistent application of rules may weaken procedural fairness.
- Political pressure and administrative deficiencies can affect the perceived independence of election authorities.

Way Forward

- Publish clear nomination guidelines and apply them uniformly.
- Provide written reasons for rejecting nominations and accessible grievance mechanisms.
- Strengthen the functional independence of State Election Commissions.
- Ensure timely judicial scrutiny where legally permissible without unnecessarily disrupting elections.

Conclusion

Independent election authorities, transparent procedures and effective legal remedies are vital to protecting electoral competition and strengthening democratic decentralisation.

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