Polity & Governance · GS - II

Civil Society Organizations are often perceived as being anti-State actors than non-State actors. Do you agree? Justify.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Civil society, non-State actors, accountability, advocacy, service delivery, social audits, PIL, protest, FCRA, State-CSO partnership, democratic participation

Model Answer

Introduction

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) occupy the space between the State, market and family. They are fundamentally non-State actors, although their advocacy and criticism of governmental policies can sometimes create an impression of being anti-State.

1. Why they appear anti-State

CSOs may organise protests, file PILs, expose corruption, oppose displacement or criticise environmental and human-rights violations. Such activities can directly challenge governmental decisions.

2. Why they are essentially non-State actors

Their wider role is complementary: delivering welfare services, mobilising communities, conducting social audits, supporting disaster relief and providing policy expertise. CSOs have also contributed to movements that strengthened transparency and accountability.

The UN recognises partnerships with civil society as valuable for policy development, implementation and impact assessment.

3. Need for constructive State-CSO relations

Concerns regarding foreign funding, accountability or regulatory compliance are legitimate, but regulation should remain transparent and proportionate. Conversely, CSOs should maintain financial transparency, constitutional methods and evidence-based advocacy.

Conclusion

Therefore, disagreement with government policy does not make a CSO anti-State. In a democracy, an independent civil society can simultaneously scrutinise the State and cooperate with it, strengthening participatory and accountable governance.

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