Polity & Governance · GS - II

“Effectiveness of the government system at various levels and people’s participation in the governance system are inter-dependent/” Discuss their relationship in the context of India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2016	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
12.5	~200 words

Answer Hint

Participatory governance; accountability; decentralisation; citizen feedback; Gram Sabha; social audits; service delivery; institutional capacity

Model Answer

Introduction

Effective governance and public participation reinforce each other. Government institutions deliver better outcomes when citizens help identify needs, monitor implementation and hold authorities accountable.

How People’s Participation Improves Governance

- **Better policy design:** Citizen consultation helps authorities understand local priorities and develop appropriate programmes.
- **Accountability:** Social audits, public hearings and the Right to Information expose leakages and improve transparency.
- **Improved service delivery:** Feedback helps identify shortcomings in schools, healthcare, sanitation and welfare programmes.

- **Legitimacy and trust:** Participation increases public confidence and encourages cooperation with government initiatives.
- **Local problem-solving:** Gram Sabhas and urban ward committees can help prioritise local infrastructure and development needs.

How Effective Government Encourages Participation

- Accessible public services and responsive grievance redressal motivate citizens to engage.
- Transparent information and reliable data enable informed participation.
- Decentralised institutions provide meaningful opportunities for local decision-making.
- Protection of civic rights and inclusive procedures encourage marginalised groups to participate.

Challenges in India

Low awareness, social inequalities, elite capture, token consultations and inadequate local-government capacity can weaken participation. Digital platforms may also exclude people with limited connectivity or literacy.

Measures to Strengthen the Relationship

Strengthen local bodies, improve civic education, institutionalise public hearings, ensure timely disclosure of information and make grievance redressal measurable. Special efforts are needed to include women, disadvantaged groups and remote communities.

Conclusion

Effective governance and public participation form a mutually reinforcing cycle. Empowered citizens and capable, accountable institutions are both essential for responsive and inclusive administration.

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