Polity & Governance · GS - II

Urban cleanliness rankings can encourage competitive municipal governance, but sustainable sanitation requires more than performance-based recognition. Examine the role of urban local bodies in achieving scientific solid waste management and environmental sustainability in Indian cities.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 12/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban, Swachh Survekshan, 74th Constitutional Amendment, decentralisation, source segregation, waste processing, circular economy, citizen participation, municipal finance, accountability.

Model Answer

Introduction

Urban cleanliness is essential for public health, environmental protection and sustainable urbanisation. Initiatives such as Swachh Survekshan encourage cities to improve sanitation through performance assessment and competitive governance.

Role of Urban Local Bodies

Under the 74th Constitutional Amendment, municipalities are recognised as institutions of self-government. Their responsibilities include sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management.

Key interventions include:

1. **Waste segregation:** Promoting segregation of biodegradable, recyclable and hazardous waste at source.
2. **Scientific processing:** Establishing composting, biomethanation, recycling and waste-to-energy facilities where appropriate.
3. **Citizen participation:** Encouraging community awareness, resident welfare associations and behavioural change.
4. **Environmental protection:** Preventing open dumping, reducing landfill dependence and improving wastewater management.

Challenges and Way Forward

Inadequate municipal finances, technical capacity, poor segregation and weak enforcement undermine implementation. Cities require predictable funding, trained personnel, decentralised waste-processing facilities, transparent monitoring and integration of informal waste workers.

Conclusion

Cleanliness rankings can motivate municipal innovation, but lasting progress depends on accountable local institutions, citizen participation and scientifically managed waste systems. Urban sanitation must become a continuous public service rather than merely an annual competition.

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