Polity & Governance · GS - II

Assess the role of local self-government elections in strengthening grassroots democracy and political accountability in rural India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 26/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

73rd Constitutional Amendment, democratic decentralisation, electoral participation, Zila Parishad, State Election Commission, political accountability, local governance

Model Answer

Introduction

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 gave constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions. Regular local elections enable citizens to participate directly in rural governance and hold elected representatives accountable.

Democratic Significance

1. **Grassroots representation:** Panchayat elections bring political decision-making closer to rural communities and provide representation to local interests.

2. **Social inclusion:** Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women promotes participation of historically underrepresented groups.

3. **Leadership development:** Local elections create opportunities for emerging political leadership and strengthen democratic participation beyond state and national elections.

4. **Administrative accountability:** Elected Zila Parishads and other Panchayati Raj institutions can scrutinise local development programmes and raise concerns regarding public service delivery.

5. **Political responsiveness:** Electoral competition encourages representatives to respond to community priorities, including roads, sanitation, drinking water and rural infrastructure.

Institutional Challenges

1. Inadequate devolution of the three Fs—functions, funds and functionaries—limits institutional autonomy.

2. Delays in elections and interference in local institutions weaken democratic continuity.

3. Caste-based dominance, money power and political factionalism can distort local representation.

Conclusion

Regular, transparent and competitive Panchayat elections are essential for meaningful democratic decentralisation. Their effectiveness ultimately depends on genuine financial and administrative devolution, institutional independence and citizen participation.

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