Science & Technology · GS - II

Can Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations present an alternative model of public service delivery to benefit the common citizen? Discuss the challenges of this alternative model.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - II	Science & Technology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Civil society, NGOs, community participation, last-mile delivery, social audits, public-private partnerships, grassroots innovation, accountability, funding dependence, transparency, regulatory compliance, scalability, state capacity.

Model Answer

Introduction

Civil society organisations and NGOs can complement government institutions by delivering services closer to communities, particularly where public systems face capacity constraints.

Potential as an Alternative Model

- **Last-mile delivery:** NGOs often reach remote and marginalised communities that struggle to access government services.
- **Community participation:** Local organisations can identify needs and adapt programmes to local contexts.
- **Innovation:** NGOs can pilot new approaches in healthcare, education, sanitation and livelihoods.
- **Accountability:** Social audits and community monitoring can improve transparency in welfare delivery.

- **Specialised expertise:** Organisations may offer technical skills and focused support in areas such as disability inclusion, child protection and environmental conservation.
- **Collaborative delivery:** Partnerships with local governments can combine public resources with community knowledge.

Challenges

- **Funding insecurity:** Dependence on donors may disrupt long-term service delivery.
- **Accountability gaps:** Weak transparency and limited community oversight can create risks of misuse.
- **Uneven capacity:** Many organisations lack professional staff, technology and administrative resources.
- **Limited scalability:** Successful local models may be difficult to replicate across diverse regions.
- **Coordination problems:** Fragmented activities and duplication can reduce efficiency.
- **Regulatory constraints:** Compliance requirements and restrictions on funding can affect operational capacity.

Way Forward

Transparent funding, independent audits, community participation, outcome-based evaluation and formal coordination with local governments can strengthen performance.

Conclusion

Civil society and NGOs can provide effective, citizen-centred public services, but they should complement rather than replace the state's constitutional responsibility to ensure universal and equitable access.