

Marks Summary

Total Marks Obtained: 8 / 15

Question Number	Marks Obtained	Maximum Marks
67	8	15

Overall Feedback

Question Level Feedback

Question 67:

The strength and sustenance of local institutions in India has shifted from their formative phase of 'Functions, Functionaries and Funds' to the contemporary stage of 'Functionality'. Highlight the critical challenges faced by local institutions in terms of their functionality in recent times. - 15M

Answer:

India's local governance transformed from 'formative phase' of 3 F's to 'contemporary stage' of functionality, though implementation challenges persist.

3 F's local Governance in India

Functions

1. Mandatory - public health, -waste mgm
2. Discretionary - parket library
3. Developmental - social Justice

Functionaries

1. Elected - Chairperson, - Members
2. Executive - Municipal Commissioner
3. Technical staff - sanitation worker

Funds

1. Tax sources - Octroi
2. Non-tax - fee, penalties
3. External - Consolidation fund of State Finance Commission

Shift from 3 F's to functionality

1. Devolution of power to performance based service delivery. (ex: Panchayat Advancement Index)

2. Limited local autonomy to evidence based participatory planning with outcome tracking (ex: Gram Panchayat Development Plan).
3. Manual processes to end-to-end digital integration. (ex: eGram Swaraj).
4. Top down administrative control to citizen centric governance. (ex: Meghalaya made social audit mandatory).
5. Recruitment of functionaries to to skilling. (ex: focus on digital literacy)

Challenges faced by local bodies

1. Inadequate own source revenue generation. ULBs of India -> 0.6% of GDP -> RBI
2. Resource - expenditure gap. (ex: 42% gap in UBLs across 18 states - CAG)
3. low overall devolution score. from 40% (2013-14) to 44% (2021-22) - NITI aayog
4. Premature dissolution of elected bodies. (ex: all 27 ULBs of Maharashtra operating without elected bodies).
5. Severe staff vacancies. 37% avg vacancy - PRS India.
6. Institutional delay: only 9/28 states have constituted state finance commission.

WAY FORWARD

1. implement Samarth Panchayat -> tax collection
2. SVAMITVA scheme using drones -> property tax
3. enhance fiscal federalism -> Finance Commission
4. Mandatory full-time secretary.
5. Administrative autonomy in recruitment. (ex: Rashtriya gram Swaraj Abhiyan).
6. Withhold central grants for non-compliant states.

For robust local governance, future ready system. India must ensure people's participation with accountable functionaries.

Key strengths :

1. The answer has an excellent structure with clear headings that logically flow from the question's premise to its core demand.
2. The use of a table to explain the '3 Fs' is a highly effective presentation technique that enhances clarity and conciseness.
3. The 'Challenges' section is exceptionally well-argued, with each point substantiated by specific data and credible sources, such as **RBI data on ULB revenue (0.6% of GDP)** and the **CAG report on the 42% resource-expenditure gap**.
4. The inclusion of a 'Way Forward' section is a significant value addition, demonstrating a solution-oriented approach by linking challenges to specific government initiatives like the **SVAMITVA scheme** and **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**.

Areas of improvement:

introduction:

1. The introduction is concise but could be more impactful for a 15-mark question. You could have set a stronger context by explicitly mentioning the **73rd and 74th**

Constitutional Amendment Acts as the legislative basis for the 'formative phase' of local governance.

body:

1. The analysis of challenges is very good. To add another dimension, you could have briefly mentioned the challenge posed by **parastatal bodies** (e.g., state-level water boards, development authorities) which often encroach upon the functions constitutionally assigned to local bodies, thereby hampering their 'functionality'.
2. While explaining the shift to 'functionality', you could have explicitly linked new initiatives back to the 3Fs. For example, stating that e-governance tools like **eGram Swaraj** aim to improve the 'functionality' of all three Fs by ensuring transparent fund flow, tracking functionary performance, and monitoring the execution of functions.

conclusion:

1. The conclusion is adequate but could be strengthened by connecting the theme of functional local bodies to a broader constitutional or national ideal. For instance, you could conclude by stating that empowering local institutions' functionality is crucial for realizing the Gandhian vision of '**Gram Swaraj**' and deepening grassroots democracy in India.

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Answer word count: 242
