

Panchayati Raj Institutions = 100 Traps

Since PRIs = core UPSC topic (73rd Amendment + local governance), traps will cover: History & Evolution (Balwant Rai, Ashok Mehta, Gadgil, etc.), 73rd Amendment provisions (Part IX, Art. 243-243O), Gram Sabha, Panchayats, Reservation, Finance, Elections, State Election Commissions, State Finance Commissions, Case Laws & Oddball exam traps, Contemporary issues (devolution, funds, functions, 3Fs).

The Legend IAS



Historical Evolution (Pre-73rd Amendment)

Trap 1

✗ **Panchayati Raj** introduced by British.

✓ Rooted in ancient **self-governance**, revived post-Independence.

Trap 2

✗ **Balwant Rai Mehta** (1957) recommended **2-tier** PRIs.

✓ Recommended **3-tier system** (Village, Block, District).

Trap 3

✗ **Ashok Mehta** (1977) = **3-tier**.

✓ Recommended **2-tier** (District + Mandal).

Trap 4

✗ **G.V.K. Rao Committee** ignored **PRIs**.

✓ Called **PRIs** the institutional base for rural development.

Trap 5

✗ **L.M. Singhvi Committee** (1986) rejected **constitutional status**.

✓ Strongly recommended **constitutional status** + **Gram Sabha**.

The Legend IAS

Pre-73rd Amendment Legislative Attempts

Trap 6

✗ Rajiv Gandhi's 64th Amendment (1989) passed.
✓ It failed in Rajya Sabha.

Trap 7

✗ V.P. Singh's 74th Bill gave municipalities.
✓ It was about Panchayats; Narasimha Rao's govt passed 73rd Amendment.

Trap 8

✗ Panchayats given constitutional status in 1989.
✓ Only in 1992 (73rd Amendment).

Trap 9

✗ 73rd Amendment applies to all states/UTs equally.
✓ Exempted Nagaland, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Scheduled Areas (Art. 243M).

Trap 10

✗ 74th Amendment = Panchayats.
✓ 74th = Municipalities (Urban Local Bodies).

Constitutional Framework (73rd Amendment)

Trap 11

✗ PRIs in DPSPs only.

✓ Post-1992, PRIs in Part IX (Art. 243-243O).

Trap 12

✗ Panchayats = Directive

Principles only.

✓ They became constitutional bodies (mandatory).

Trap 13

✗ 73rd Amendment only optional.

✓ Mandatory for states (except exceptions).

Trap 14

✗ Part IX applies to Jammu & Kashmir.

✓ Not originally; after 2019 (J&K Reorganisation Act), PRIs extended.

Trap 15

✗ 73rd = silent on Gram Sabha.

✓ Gram Sabha = constitutional foundation (Art. 243A).

Constitutional Provisions and State Flexibility

1 Trap 16

✗ 73rd = created uniform Panchayati structure.

✓ States have flexibility in details ([Art. 243B](#)).

2 Trap 17

✗ PRIs are optional in states.

✓ Establishment mandatory under [73rd](#).

3 Trap 18

✗ Panchayat elections are state govt-controlled.

✓ Held by [State Election Commission \(Art. 243K\)](#).

4 Trap 19

✗ Panchayat finances are decided by Union Finance Commission.

✓ States have [State Finance Commission \(Art. 243I\)](#).

5 Trap 20

✗ PRIs can be dissolved anytime by govt.

✓ They enjoy fixed 5-year term ([Art. 243E](#)).

Structure of PRIs

01

Trap 21

✗ **73rd** mandates only 2-tiers.

✓ It mandates 3-tiers (**Village, Intermediate, District**).

Trap 26

✗ Chairperson = only ceremonial head.

✓ Has statutory/constitutional role (varies by state).

02

Trap 22

✗ All states must have **Intermediate Panchayat**.

✓ Only for states with population >20 lakh.

Trap 27

✗ All Panchayat elections follow same rules.

✓ States design their own laws within **73rd** framework.

03

Trap 23

✗ **District Panchayat** = advisory body.

✓ It is a constitutional tier with executive powers.

Trap 28

✗ Panchayat posts are permanent.

✓ Tenure = **5 years**, dissolution triggers fresh elections.

04

Trap 24

✗ **Gram Sabha** = optional.

✓ It is mandatory (**Art. 243A**).

Trap 29

✗ **President of Zila Parishad** = nominated by Governor.

✓ Elected by elected members of **District Panchayat**.

05

Trap 25

✗ Chairpersons at all 3 levels elected directly.

✓ Only **village** → direct election; **Intermediate/District** may be indirect.

Trap 30

✗ **Intermediate Panchayat** = voluntary.

✓ Mandatory in states >20 lakh population.

Reservation in PRIs



Trap 31

✗ No **reservation** in **PRIs**.

✓ **SC/ST/OBC + 1/3rd** seats for **women** (Art. 243D).



Trap 32

✗ **Women's reservation** = 1/2.

✓ **Constitution** mandates **1/3rd** (many **states** raised to 50%).



Trap 33

✗ **Reservation** only at member level.

✓ Also applies to **Chairpersons** at all **tiers**.



Trap 34

✗ **OBC reservation** mandated by **Union**.

✓ Left to **states' discretion**.



Trap 35

✗ **Women's reservation** expired in 2000.

✓ It is continuing; several **states** enhanced.

Finance and State Finance Commission



Trap 36

✗ Panchayats fully funded by Centre.

✓ Finances via State taxes, grants, SFC recommendations, Central schemes.

Trap 37

✗ Union Finance Commission distributes to **Panchayats**.

✓ State Finance Commission (Art. 243I) recommends.

Trap 38

✗ Panchayats have no taxation powers.

✓ Empowered to levy local taxes, fees (subject to state law).

Trap 39

✗ State Finance Commission = optional.

✓ Mandatory every 5 years.

Trap 40

✗ Funds = unlimited.

✓ State decides powers & funds (**Art. 243H**).

The Legend IAS

Elections & State Election Commission

1

Trap 41

✗ Panchayat elections by Chief Electoral Officer.
✓ Conducted by State Election Commission.

2

Trap 42

✗ SEC controlled by State Govt.
✓ SEC = independent constitutional body (Art. 243K).

3

Trap 43

✗ SEC appointed by President.
✓ Appointed by Governor.

4

Trap 44

✗ SEC tenure = fixed in Constitution.
✓ Left to State law.

5

Trap 45

✗ Election disputes settled by Governor.
✓ Settled by State Legislature provision (Art. 243O).

Powers & Functions and State-Centre Relations

Powers & Functions

• Trap 46

✗ 73rd specifies exact functions.

✓ State legislatures assign functions.

• Trap 47

✗ 73rd gave Panchayats automatic control of 29 subjects.

✓ State decides devolution; 29 subjects only listed (11th Schedule).

• Trap 48

✗ Panchayats only advisory.

✓ They have executive, planning & taxing powers.

• Trap 49

✗ 73rd ensures uniform devolution.

✓ States differ in extent of 3Fs (Funds, Functions, Functionaries).

• Trap 50

✗ Panchayats cannot plan.

✓ District Planning Committees (Art. 243ZD) involve Panchayats.

State-Centre Relations

• Trap 51

✗ PRIs are in Union List.

✓ State subject (7th Schedule, List II).

• Trap 52

✗ Centre directly controls PRIs.

✓ Centre only funds through schemes; states control structure.

• Trap 53

✗ 73rd removed state supremacy.

✓ States still hold key powers (functions, taxes, staff).

• Trap 54

✗ Parliament legislates on Panchayats nationwide.

✓ Only for UTs & Scheduled Areas.

• Trap 55

✗ Governor has no role.

✓ Governor can extend 73rd to Scheduled Areas with modifications (PESA, 1996).

Scheduled Areas & PESA and Gram Sabha

Scheduled Areas & PESA

Trap 56

✗ **73rd** automatically applies to Scheduled Areas.

✓ Exempted → extended by **PESA** Act, 1996.

Trap 57

✗ **PESA** makes **Gram Sabha** optional.

✓ **Gram Sabha** = central institution under **PESA**.

Trap 58

✗ **PESA Panchayats** subordinate to State Govt fully.

✓ **PESA** empowers self-rule in tribal areas.

Trap 59

✗ **PESA** applies to all states.

✓ Applies only to **5th Schedule** areas.

Trap 60

✗ **PESA** = uniform law.

✓ States must frame conformity laws.

Gram Sabha

Trap 61

✗ **Gram Sabha** = **Panchayat**.

✓ **Gram Sabha** = general body of villagers (**Art. 243A**).

Trap 62

✗ **Gram Sabha** meetings optional.

✓ Mandatory, frequency decided by state laws.

Trap 63

✗ **Gram Sabha** only advisory.

✓ It approves plans, audits, accountability.

Trap 64

✗ **Gram Sabha** not in Constitution.

✓ Explicitly in **Art. 243A**.

Trap 65

✗ **Gram Sabha** = same across India.

✓ Powers vary by State laws.

Case Law & Judicial Review and Contemporary Challenges

Case Law & Judicial Review

01

Trap 66

✗ **Courts** cannot intervene in **PRI** matters.

✓ Election disputes can be adjudicated per State law.

02

Trap 67

✗ **PRIs** are absolute autonomous bodies.

✓ **SC** held they are subject to **constitutional** & **state law** limits.

03

Trap 68

✗ **Courts** struck down **women's reservation** in **PRIs**.

✓ **SC** upheld **women's reservation** as valid.

04

Trap 69

✗ **PRIs** immune from **judicial review**.

✓ **SC** reviews **constitutionality** of laws regarding **PRIs**.

05

Trap 70

✗ **SEC** decisions are final.

✓ Subject to **judicial review**.

Contemporary Challenges

→ Trap 71

✗ **PRIs** enjoy full **financial autonomy**.

✓ Depend heavily on **state** & **central grants**.

→ Trap 72

✗ **Devolution** uniform in all **states**.

✓ States vary; Kerala = high, UP/Bihar = low.

→ Trap 73

✗ **3Fs (Funds, Functions, Functionaries)** fully **devolved**.

✓ In reality, poor **devolution**.

→ Trap 74

✗ **PRIs** control staff recruitment.

✓ Staff usually controlled by **state departments**.

→ Trap 75

✗ **PRIs** directly manage all **central schemes**.

✓ Often **state-controlled bureaucracy** dominates.

Miscellaneous Oddball Traps and Wrap-Up Super Traps

Oddball Traps

- Trap 76
 - ✗ Women sarpanches = token heads only.
 - ✓ Many states show effective women leadership.
- Trap 77
 - ✗ Gram Sabha irrelevant today.
 - ✓ Still key for accountability in many states.
- Trap 78
 - ✗ PRI = only rural issue.
 - ✓ It affects national governance, SDGs, inclusive development.
- Trap 79
 - ✗ State govt can postpone PRI elections indefinitely.
 - ✓ SC ruled timely elections mandatory.
- Trap 80
 - ✗ Panchayats = only village-level.
 - ✓ Cover district + intermediate + village.

Final Super Traps

- Trap 81
 - ✗ Panchayati Raj = single model.
 - ✓ Models differ across states.
- Trap 82
 - ✗ PRIs guaranteed absolute autonomy.
 - ✓ States retain supremacy in law-making.
- Trap 83
 - ✗ 73rd Amendment = fully implemented.
 - ✓ Actual partial implementation in many states.
- Trap 84
 - ✗ PESA = uniformly implemented.
 - ✓ Weak, varied implementation.
- Trap 85
 - ✗ PRIs = political token.
 - ✓ They are constitutional guarantee for grassroots democracy.

More Traps (86-90)

- Trap 86
 - ✗ PRI elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India.
 - ✓ State Election Commissions conduct PRI elections.
- Trap 87
 - ✗ Reservation for OBCs in PRIs is mandatory in all states.
 - ✓ State laws determine OBC reservations, not uniform.
- Trap 88
 - ✗ The 73rd Amendment applies to all states and UTs uniformly.
 - ✓ Some states/UTs (e.g., Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland) are exempt.
- Trap 89
 - ✗ Gram Panchayat directly controls all land revenue matters.
 - ✓ State revenue departments have significant control.
- Trap 90
 - ✗ Disqualification of PRI members is solely decided by the Gram Sabha.
 - ✓ Decided by State Election Commission or other designated authority.

More Traps (91-95)

- Trap 91
 - ✗ Funds for PRIs come only from state grants.
 - ✓ Also from central grants, own revenue (taxes/fees), and loans.
- Trap 92
 - ✗ PRIs have exclusive control over all 29 subjects listed in the 11th Schedule.
 - ✓ States determine which subjects are devolved to what extent.
- Trap 93
 - ✗ The District Planning Committee (DPC) is only for urban planning.
 - ✓ It consolidates plans from both Panchayats and Municipalities.
- Trap 94
 - ✗ Capacity building of PRI members is solely their responsibility.
 - ✓ State and central governments have key roles in training and support.
- Trap 95
 - ✗ Financial audit of PRIs is done by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).
 - ✓ State laws govern their audit; not directly by CAG for all.

More Traps (96-100)

- Trap 96
 - ✗ Women's reservation in PRIs has had no impact on local governance quality.
 - ✓ Studies show increased focus on women-centric development and better attendance.
- Trap 97
 - ✗ Social audit in PRIs is largely ineffective and rarely practiced.
 - ✓ It's a powerful tool, gaining traction in many states for transparency.
- Trap 98
 - ✗ E-governance initiatives have bypassed PRIs.
 - ✓ Many states are integrating PRIs into digital platforms for service delivery.
- Trap 99
 - ✗ Political parties officially contest PRI elections in all states.
 - ✓ Some states have non-party-based PRI elections.
- Trap 100
 - ✗ Panchayati Raj only concerns rural administration.
 - ✓ It's foundational to decentralized governance, linking rural development to national goals.

