

# 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).

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# 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**.

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# 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).

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# 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**).

02

## Trap 22

- ✗ All states must have **Intermediate Panchayat**.
- ✓ Only for states with population >20 lakh.

03

## Trap 23

- ✗ **District Panchayat** = advisory body.
- ✓ It is a constitutional tier with executive powers.

04

## Trap 24

- ✗ **Gram Sabha** = optional.
- ✓ It is mandatory (**Art. 243A**).

05

## Trap 25

- ✗ Chairpersons at all 3 levels elected directly.
- ✓ Only **village** → direct election; **Intermediate/District** may be indirect.

## Trap 26

- ✗ Chairperson = only ceremonial head.
- ✓ Has statutory/constitutional role (varies by state).

## Trap 27

- ✗ All Panchayat elections follow same rules.
- ✓ States design their own laws within **73rd** framework.

## Trap 28

- ✗ Panchayat posts are permanent.
- ✓ Tenure = **5 years**, dissolution triggers fresh elections.

## Trap 29

- ✗ **President of Zila Parishad** = nominated by Governor.
- ✓ Elected by elected members of **District Panchayat**.

## 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.

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# 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).



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# 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.

