

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q8(c)

Gram Sabha in the Panchayati Raj system is a forum which gives expression to the collective wisdom, aspirations, and the will of the people. Comment.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2024 · PSIR GS 1 · 15 marks · Indian Nationalism

Indian Nationalism: Political Strategies of India's Freedom Struggle; Perspectives on Indian National Movement; Gandhi, Tagore, Nehru, Ambedkar, and the socialists.

Core demand of the question

- State the constitutional place of the Gram Sabha after the 73rd Amendment (15 marks)
- Show how it is meant to express collective will, wisdom, and aspirations
- **Comment:** potential versus capture, quorum, and relation to panchayat executives
- Use **Gandhi** and actual practice

Revision summary

The Gram Sabha is the constitutional village assembly of voters under **Article 243A** and state panchayati raj laws.

It is meant to approve plans, review the panchayat, and express local will, which is deliberative democracy at village scale.

Gandhi's Gram Swaraj is the moral ancestor; the 73rd Amendment is the legal form inside a still-centralised scheme state.

Capture, quorum failure, caste and gender silencing, and weak devolution often prevent the assembly from being the people's wisdom in fact.

The statement is true as the institution's purpose and as a standard of criticism, not as a uniform empirical description.

Introduction

The Gram Sabha is the assembly of registered voters of a village panchayat. The **73rd Amendment** gave it constitutional status and required states to endow it with powers in law. The statement that it expresses the collective wisdom, aspirations, and will of the people is the official theory of this forum. A comment must test that theory against **Gandhi's** Gram Swaraj and against how meetings actually run.

Body**Constitutional design**

Article 243A says a Gram Sabha may exercise such powers and perform such functions at the village level as the legislature of a state provides. State panchayati raj Acts typically give it a role in approving plans, identifying beneficiaries, reviewing accounts, and, in some states, controlling local resources, including in scheduled areas under the PESA logic. This is **deliberative democracy at the smallest territorial public: not Schumpeter's** distant

elite competition only, but citizens speaking on common affairs.

The Amendment's **Eleventh Schedule** lists subjects that may be devolved. The Sabha is the people's moment; the panchayat is the committee. In theory, will is formed in the assembly and executed by the elected body.

Comment on the claim

The claim is right as a norm. A well-attended Sabha that debates a road, a school, or a liquor shop - as anti-arrack politics and later women's ward members illustrate - can express aspiration and local knowledge that a district office lacks. **Habermas**'s conditions are partly met when talk is public and officials must answer.

The claim is overstated as a description of all India. Quorum failures, male capture, contractor lists, and party faction turn many meetings into a signature exercise. Caste can silence Dalit speech, which is why **Ambedkar** distrusted village republics that were not first equal. Funds and functionaries often remain with line departments, so the Sabha wills what it cannot fund. **Gandhi** wanted the village to be the plan's unit; the 73rd Amendment made it a constitutional forum inside a still-centralised development state, including the legacy of the **Planning Commission**'s scheme world.

A fair comment therefore affirms the statement as the purpose of the institution and adds that expression of collective will requires social equality, real devolution, and protection of dissent. The Gram Sabha is the republic's local public. It becomes the people's wisdom only when those conditions are worked for, not when the statute is merely cited.

Flow diagram

Gram Sabha -> Article 243A
Gram Sabha -> Deliberate plans and beneficiaries
Gram Sabha -> Collective will as norm
Limits -> Capture and quorum
Limits -> Caste and gender silence
Gram Sabha -> Limits

Conclusion

The Gram Sabha is the 73rd Amendment's village public, meant to gather will, aspiration, and local knowledge. That is its democratic meaning. Practice often falls short because of capture, thin devolution, and social hierarchy. The comment is that the statement names the standard by which panchayati raj should be judged, not an automatic fact in every village.

Facts & figures

73rd Amendment, 1992

Inserted Part IX, giving panchayats and the Gram Sabha constitutional status and listing **Eleventh Schedule** subjects for possible devolution.

Article 243A

Leaves the Gram Sabha's exact powers to state legislatures, which is why practice varies widely across India.

PESA, 1996

In scheduled areas, Gram Sabhas were given a stronger statutory claim over resources and custom, a sharper form of the same local-will idea.

WRAP Exams · Write. Read. Analyse. Practice. · <https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/psir-gs-1/2024/gram-sabha-in-the-panchayati-raj-system-is-a-forum-which-gives-expression-to-the-collective-wisdom-aspirations-and-the-will-of-the-people-comment/> · ask@wrapexams.com · wrapexams.com