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Q16

**Local self-government can be best explained as an exercise in (a) Federalism (b) Democratic decentralization (c) Administrative delegation (d) Direct democracy Official key: B.**

UPSC Civil Services Prelims 2017 · General Studies · 2 marks · Polity and Governance

Indian Constitution, polity, rights, governance - Prelims GS Paper I.

**Explanation**

**(a)**

(a) Federalism. Federalism divides power between Union and States. Local bodies are a third tier, better captured as democratic decentralisation than as federalism itself. Not the key.

**(b) Official key**

(b) Democratic decentralisation. Panchayats and municipalities transfer democratic power downward to elected local governments. That is the best explanation and the official key.

**(c)**

(c) Administrative delegation. Delegation is a bureaucratic handing-down of tasks without necessarily electing a local government. Local self-government is more than that. Not the key.

**(d)**

(d) Direct democracy. Gram sabhas have a direct element, but Indian local government is mainly representative. Direct democracy is not the best fit.

**Summary**

Official key is (b) democratic decentralisation. Local self-government means elected village and urban bodies that take decisions close to the people. The 73rd and 74th Amendments constitutionalised that third tier. Federalism names Union-State relations; administrative delegation can exist without elections; direct democracy is only a fragment (gram sabha). Decentralisation of democratic power is the precise idea.

**Related possible facts**

These can be asked in a future Prelims paper.

**73rd Amendment**

1992; Part IX, Panchayats

**74th Amendment**

1992; Part IX-A, Municipalities

**Article 40**

Organisation of village panchayats

**11th Schedule**

29 Panchayat subjects

**12th Schedule**

18 Municipal subjects

**Balwant Rai Mehta**

1957; three-tier Panchayati Raj

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