

Decentralisation of Power in India: Evaluating The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments

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Abstract: *The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, enacted in 1992, marked a critical juncture in India's democratic evolution by constitutionally recognizing Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) as the third tier of governance. These amendments aimed to promote democratic decentralisation, participatory planning, and inclusive local self-governance. This paper critically evaluates the conceptual foundations, structural framework, and operational effectiveness of these amendments over three decades. While the constitutional design has enabled wider political participation particularly of women and marginalized communities the actual devolution of functions, funds, and functionaries remains inconsistent and heavily dependent on state political will. The paper examines judicial interpretations, fiscal challenges, administrative constraints, and the growing tension between elected local bodies and parallel parastatal institutions. The analysis concludes that despite some democratic gains, decentralisation in India remains incomplete, requiring stronger legal mandates, institutional reforms, and sustained civic engagement to fulfil its constitutional promise.*

Keywords: Decentralisation, Panchayati Raj, Urban Local Bodies, 73rd Amendment, 74th Amendment, Local Governance, Constitutional Law, India, Participatory Democracy, Fiscal Federalism

