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Assignment -1

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QUESTION) In this assignment, you will explore the important role of various committees in studying issues and making recommendations for local governance in India. Additionally, you will delve into the opposition faced by the Sarkaria Commission in relation to the same topic.

ANS) Role of Committees in Local Governance in India

1. Sarkaria Commission (1983-1987):

- **Background:** The Sarkaria Commission was constituted to examine the relationship and balance of power between the central government and state governments in India. While its primary focus was not exclusively on local governance, its recommendations did have implications for the distribution of powers and responsibilities, which indirectly affected local governance structures.
- **Recommendations:** The commission recommended guidelines for the appointment of governors, center-state relations, and criteria for the dismissal of state governments, among other things. These recommendations aimed to strengthen the federal structure of India.
- **Impact on Local Governance:** The commission's recommendations indirectly influenced the decentralization process by shaping the broader governance framework, although its direct impact on local governance mechanisms was limited.

2. 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992):

- **Background:** These amendments were landmark changes that provided constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies (ULBs), respectively. They aimed to decentralize power to the grassroots level and empower local governments.
- **Provisions:** They mandated the creation of PRIs and ULBs, defined their powers, responsibilities, and ensured reservation of seats for marginalized groups like Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and women.
- **Impact:** These amendments marked a significant shift towards decentralized governance, promoting participatory democracy and local autonomy. They laid the foundation for local governments to play a more active role in governance and development.

3. State Finance Commissions (SFCs):

- **Role:** State Finance Commissions are constituted by state governments to review the financial position of local bodies and recommend measures to improve their fiscal health.
- **Functions:** They recommend principles for sharing taxes between the state government and local bodies, assess grants-in-aid, and suggest measures for resource mobilization.
- **Impact:** SFCs help in ensuring financial autonomy for local bodies, enabling them to plan and execute local development projects effectively.

Opposition Faced by the Sarkaria Commission

The Sarkaria Commission faced significant opposition primarily due to political and regional considerations:

- **Centralization Concerns:** Some states and political parties argued that the commission's recommendations tilted towards centralization of powers rather than decentralization, which contradicted the spirit of federalism and the aspirations of local self-governance.
- **Political Resistance:** Political parties often opposed the commission's recommendations if they perceived them to be against their interests or if they felt that the recommendations undermined their authority at the state or local levels.
- **Regional Imbalances:** Concerns were raised about whether the recommendations adequately addressed the diversity of regional aspirations and governance challenges across different states and regions of India.
- **Implementation Challenges:** Critics argued that implementing the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission could be logistically challenging and might not effectively address the core issues of governance and decentralization.

In conclusion, while committees like the Sarkaria Commission have played a role in shaping the governance landscape in India, their effectiveness and acceptance have varied. The constitutional amendments and the establishment of SFCs have had more direct and lasting impacts on local governance by promoting decentralization and empowering local bodies.