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- This basic tenet of judicial democracy is well accepted across the courts in the modern federal systems. The need for a uniform judicial order across India is warranted only when it is unavoidable — for example, in cases of an apparent conflict of laws or judgments on legal interpretation.
- Otherwise, autonomy, not uniformity, is the rule. Decentralization, not centrism, is the principle. In the COVID-19-related cases, High Courts across the country have acted with an immense sense of judicial responsibility. This is a legal landscape that deserves to be encouraged. To do this, the Supreme Court must simply stay away.

Alok Prasanna Kuma-High courts set a higher benchmark

- The Supreme Court's approach as a constitutional court seems to be to adjourn or delay, not wanting to take any tough call when it is not acting as the self-appointed executive wing of the government.
- (c) The goal of good governance in our cities will remain unfulfilled until urgent and comprehensive reforms are done. Examine.

HOW TO APPROACH THE QUESTION

For this Question, Aspirant has to elaborate on the present crisis of funds, functions and functionaries being faced by the Urban Local Bodies. Need to discuss the comprehensive road map for municipal reforms as suggested by Union ministry of housing and urban affairs and also discuss the relevance of making these bodies in terms of their resources, manpower and decision making.

In the past similar questions focusing on need of reforms in Local Self Government have been asked in UPSC Mains such as :

- *Do you think that despite having significant limitations the Panchayati Raj Institutions have strengthened the process of democratic decentralization? Give your views (2021, 200 words)*
- *Political decentralization has not been matched by administrative decentralization at the grass roots level. Explain (2019, 150 words)*
- *The goal of good governance will be achieved only by strengthening the grass root level democracy comment. (2016, 250 words)*
- *The Panchayati Raj Institutions and district administration should develop a new relationship for achieving the goal of good governance. Comment. (2007)*

HINTS

Major challenges being faced by Municipal Bodies

- **Financial paucity:** Generally, their source of income is inadequate as compared to their functions. Their chief sources of income are the varied types of taxes. However, most of the income the union and state governments levy generates taxes and, the taxes collected by the urban bodies are not sufficient to cover the expenses of the services provided.