Polity & Governance · GS - II

Citizen participation and technology-enabled enforcement can improve urban road safety, but they also raise concerns regarding accountability and privacy. Discuss.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 25/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

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Answer Hint

Citizen participation, intelligent traffic management, road safety, digital evidence, privacy, accountability, procedural safeguards, urban governance

Model Answer

Introduction

Urban road safety requires effective law enforcement, responsible driving and public participation. Digital reporting platforms and technology-enabled surveillance can supplement conventional traffic policing by improving detection of violations.

Potential Benefits

1. **Improved enforcement:** Citizen reporting can help identify wrong-side driving, signal violations and illegal parking, particularly in areas with limited police presence.

2. **Administrative efficiency:** CCTV surveillance, automated number-plate recognition and digital challans reduce dependence on manual enforcement.

3. **Behavioural change:** Greater detection of violations can encourage compliance with traffic regulations and strengthen road discipline.

4. **Participatory governance:** Citizen involvement creates shared responsibility between residents and municipal and police authorities.

Concerns and Limitations

1. **Privacy risks:** Unregulated collection and storage of photographs, videos and vehicle details can expose personal information.

2. **Misuse of incentives:** Monetary rewards may encourage false, malicious or excessive complaints.

3. **Verification challenges:** Incomplete footage, incorrect identification and manipulated digital evidence can lead to wrongful penalties.

4. **Unequal enforcement:** Overdependence on technology may disadvantage areas with inadequate surveillance infrastructure.

Way Forward

1. Establish transparent evidence-verification and appeal mechanisms.
2. Follow data-minimisation, restricted-access and retention safeguards.
3. Introduce clear guidelines for citizen reporting and incentive distribution.
4. Combine technological enforcement with better road design, pedestrian infrastructure and traffic education.
5. Publish enforcement data to improve institutional accountability.

Conclusion

Citizen participation can strengthen urban road safety when supported by reliable technology, procedural fairness and privacy protection. The objective must be safer mobility rather than surveillance or penalty collection alone.

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