Polity & Governance · GS - II

“Women's political representation requires institutional reform beyond the constitutional reservation of seats.” Discuss in the context of the 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 26/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Political representation, 106th Amendment, descriptive representation, substantive representation, delimitation, electoral participation, party reforms, gender equality

Model Answer

Women's representation in legislative institutions is essential for an inclusive democracy. However, historical underrepresentation reflects structural barriers in political parties, electoral competition and access to decision-making.

Significance of the 106th Amendment

The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 provides for one-third reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies and the Delhi Legislative Assembly.

1. **Descriptive representation:** It seeks to correct women's underrepresentation and broaden participation in legislative decision-making.
2. **Inclusive policymaking:** Greater representation can bring wider attention to issues such as healthcare, education, safety, care work and gender-based discrimination.
3. **Democratic legitimacy:** More representative legislatures can strengthen public confidence in democratic institutions.

Implementation and Structural Concerns

1. **Delayed commencement:** Article 334A links implementation to a delimitation exercise following publication of figures from the first census conducted after the Amendment's commencement.
2. **Political participation:** Reservation alone cannot eliminate barriers such as campaign financing inequalities, political violence and limited access to party leadership.
3. **Substantive representation:** Numerical representation does not automatically ensure independent participation or influence over legislative priorities.
4. **Intersectionality:** Women's experiences differ across caste, class, region and social background, requiring attention to diverse representation.

Beyond Reservation

Political parties should increase women's participation in organisational leadership, candidate selection and campaign decision-making. Greater transparency in political financing, leadership training and protection against political harassment are also necessary.

Conclusion

The 106th Amendment creates an important constitutional framework for improving women's legislative representation. Its democratic impact will depend on timely implementation and reforms that enable women to exercise meaningful political authority.

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