Polity & Governance · GS - II

Critically examine the constitutional and federal tensions involved in linking women's political representation with delimitation in India.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 27/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Women's representation, 106th Constitutional Amendment, Article 334A, delimitation, demographic imbalance, federal equity, political consensus

Model Answer

The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023 marks a significant step towards gender-inclusive political representation. However, linking its implementation with census and delimitation raises questions of timing, federal balance and equitable representation.

1. The constitutional linkage

1. The Amendment inserted Articles 330A and 332A to provide reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
2. Article 334A links the commencement of reservation to a delimitation exercise following publication of relevant figures of the first census conducted after the Amendment's commencement.
3. Consequently, women's reservation and the future delimitation process become institutionally interconnected.

2. Sources of federal tension

1. **Demographic divergence:** States with higher population growth may gain greater representation if seats are redistributed substantially on population-based criteria.

2. **Demographic discipline:** Southern states argue that population-based redistribution could disadvantage states that achieved earlier success in stabilising population growth.
3. **Regional political balance:** Changes in parliamentary representation may alter the relative influence of states in national decision-making.
4. **Gender representation:** Delayed implementation may postpone the intended expansion of women's representation in elected legislatures.

3. Reconciling competing constitutional objectives

A sustainable approach requires transparent delimitation criteria, meaningful consultation with states and political parties, and consideration of demographic performance alongside democratic equality. Parliament must build consensus on the relationship between population, representation and federal equity.

Conclusion

Women's representation and federal fairness are both essential constitutional objectives. Their reconciliation requires a transparent, consultative and constitutionally sound process rather than treating gender justice and regional balance as competing goals.

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