Polity & Governance · GS - II

“Women as a class neither belong to a minority group nor are they regarded as forming a backward class.” In the light of this statement, discuss the evolution of women’s reservation from local bodies to Parliament.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Gender representation, 73rd and 74th Amendments, Panchayats and Municipalities, one-third reservation, political empowerment, 106th Constitutional Amendment, Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, delimitation, census

Model Answer

Women’s reservation in India has evolved from local self-government to the higher legislatures, reflecting a gradual shift from formal equality towards substantive political representation.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, 1992-93, introduced reservation of at least one-third of seats for women in Panchayats and Municipalities, including leadership positions. This created a constitutional foundation for grassroots political participation and brought millions of women into local governance.

At the national level, the Constitution did not originally provide reservation for women in Parliament or State Legislatures. The 106th Constitutional Amendment Act, 2023, popularly known as the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, provided one-third reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.

However, its implementation is linked to delimitation following the relevant census, making its operationalisation dependent upon completion of these constitutional processes.

Thus, the journey from local bodies to Parliament reflects India's expanding commitment to women's political representation. The challenge now lies in ensuring effective implementation, adequate representation and meaningful participation beyond numerical presence.

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