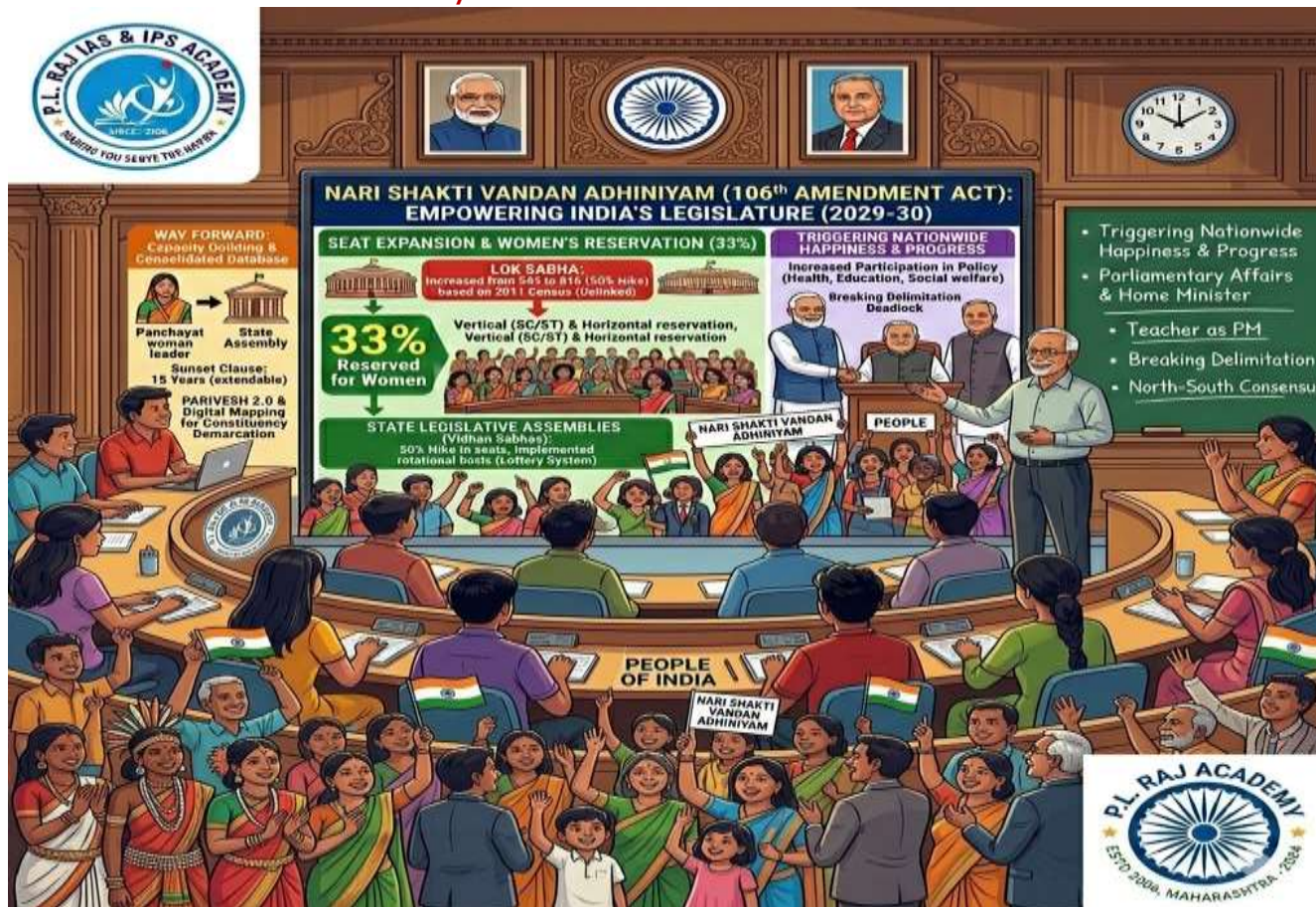


Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.



Introduction

The empowerment of women in the highest legislative bodies of India is no longer just a constitutional aspiration but a fast-approaching reality. In a significant strategic shift in March 2026, the Union Government proposed a roadmap to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (106th Constitutional Amendment Act) ahead of the 2029 General Elections. By proposing to delink the implementation from the ongoing Census and instead using the 2011 Census for a 50% increase in seats, the government aims to bypass the "delimitation delay" that has been a point of contention since the Act's passage in 2023.

Key Provisions of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam

The Act, as passed in September 2023, originally mandated a complex set of preconditions.

1. **The 33% Quota**– It reserves one-third of all seats in the Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and the Legislative Assembly of the NCT of Delhi for women.
2. **Vertical and Horizontal Reservation**– The quota includes a "reservation within reservation" for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).
3. **Sunset Clause**– The reservation is initially provided for a period of 15 years, subject to extension by the Parliament.
4. **Rotational Basis**– Reserved seats were to be allocated by rotation to different constituencies in the State or Union Territory.

Recent Developments– The 2026 Proposal

The Ministry of Home Affairs, led by Amit Shah, has introduced a "Fast-Track" proposal in meetings with various political parties to resolve the implementation deadlock.

1. **Delinking from the Ongoing Census**– Instead of waiting for the results of the current (and delayed) Census, which might take until 2029 to fully process, the government suggests using Census 2011 as the baseline for delimitation.
2. **Seat Expansion (The 50% Rule)**– A proposal to increase the number of Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 816 (a 50% hike). This would mean around 270 seats would be exclusively for women.

3. **Proportional Continuity**– To calm the fears of Southern States (which have controlled population growth and fear losing political weightage), the government has suggested maintaining the *existing proportion* of seats among states.
4. **Lottery System**– Discussions have emerged regarding a "lottery system" to determine which specific seats will be reserved in each state, ensuring transparency in the selection process.

Significance of the Act and the New Proposal

For a vibrant democracy like India, this move carries immense weight–

1. **Gender Parity**– It transitions women from "proxy" political roles to direct legislative leadership, potentially changing the nature of policy-making in health, education, and social welfare.
2. **Breaking the Delimitation Deadlock**– The 2026 proposal addresses the "North–South Divide." By increasing seats while freezing proportions, it seeks to implement the women's quota without penalizing states with better family planning records.
3. **Political Inclusion**– By including a quota for SC/ST women, the Act ensures that the empowerment is intersectional and reaches the most marginalized sections.

Challenges and Roadblocks

Despite the positive momentum, several challenges remain–

1. **The OBC Sub-Quota Issue**– Parties like the Samajwadi Party and RJD continue to demand a separate quota for **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** within the women's reservation. The government has resisted this, citing the lack of updated caste-based data.
2. **Constitutional Amendments**– To implement these "fast-track" changes, the government must amend the **Delimitation Commission Act** and the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam itself, which originally linked the quota to the *first census conducted after the Act's commencement*.
3. **Rotation and Incumbency**– Fixed reservation versus rotation remains a debate. Frequent rotation might discourage male or female incumbents from working for their constituencies if they know the seat's status will change in the next term.

Government Measures and the Way Forward

The government is likely to call a Special Session of Parliament to amend the necessary Acts. The formation of a Delimitation Commission by June 2026 is the anticipated next step.

Suggestions for Resolution–

1. **Consensus Building**– The government must address the demand for a detailed report from the INDIA bloc to ensure the "all-party" consensus required for a constitutional amendment.
2. **Digital Mapping**– Utilizing the PARIVESH 2.0 and GIS-based spatial data (as seen in the Biodiversity reports) can help in the scientific demarcation of new constituencies.
3. **Capacity Building**– Training programs for prospective woman leaders at the grassroots level (Panchayats) to transition into State and National legislatures.

Conclusion

The proposal to implement the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam via the 2011 Census is a pragmatic "middle path." It honors the spirit of the women's reservation while avoiding the long wait for a fresh Census. For UPSC aspirants, this highlights a key lesson in Indian polity– the art of balancing demographic realities with social justice. If successful, the 2029 elections will mark a historic turning point, where nearly 270 women will sit in the Lok Sabha, not as a result of a slow evolution, but through a decisive legislative "jump-start."

GS Mains Practice Question (GS II)

"Critically examine the government's proposal to delink the implementation of the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam from the ongoing Census. To what extent does this resolve the concerns of Southern States regarding delimitation?" (34 words)

Answer Guidelines

Introduction– Mention the 106th Amendment Act and the recent March 2026 proposal to use Census 2011 for seat expansion.

Body

P. L. RAJ MAINS Q & A – DAY 103

Paragraph 1 (The Proposal)– Detail the 50% increase (816 seats) and the delinking from the ongoing census to avoid delay.

Paragraph 2 (Southern States' Perspective)– Explain how "maintaining existing proportions" prevents the loss of political weightage for states with low TFR (Total Fertility Rate).

Paragraph 3 (Challenges)– Address the OBC sub-quota demand and the legal need to amend the original Act's commencement clause.

Conclusion– Conclude that while it's a technical bypass, it effectively prioritizes gender justice over statistical delays.

