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Daily Quiz — March 8, 2026

8 March 2026

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DAILY QUIZ — SOLVED

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8 March 2026 · 10 Questions · Answers & Explanations Included

Q 1

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, passed in 2023, provides for reservation of women in which legislative bodies, and to what extent?

- A Rajya Sabha and State Legislative Councils — 50% reservation
- B Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies — one-third (33%) reservation ✓**
- C All three tiers of panchayats and urban local bodies — 50% reservation
- D Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, and all State Assemblies — 25% reservation

EXPLANATION

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (Constitution 106th Amendment Act, 2023) provides for one-third (33%) reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies (Vidhan Sabhas). It does not apply to the Rajya Sabha or State Legislative Councils. Importantly, its implementation is linked to delimitation after a future census — meaning it is not immediately operative.

CONCEPT

The one-third reservation for women in panchayats (Article 243D) and urban local bodies (Article 243T) is already in force via the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992-93). The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam extends this logic to the national and state legislatures. India's current women's representation in Lok Sabha is around 14-15%, far below the one-third target.

Q 2

International Women's Day is observed on March 8 every year. Its origins lie in early 20th-century labour movements. Which organisation formally adopted it in 1975?

- A World Health Organization
- B International Labour Organization
- C United Nations ✓**
- D UNICEF

EXPLANATION

The United Nations formally adopted International Women's Day in 1975 during the International Women's Year. The day originated from early 20th-century labour movements in the USA and Europe — the first National Woman's Day was observed in the USA in 1909, and the International Women's Day was established at the Copenhagen Women's Conference in 1910. March 8 commemorates the 1917 women's march in Petrograd, Russia.

CONCEPT

Each year's IWD carries a theme from UN Women. Recent themes have focused on gender equality and climate change, digital innovation, inspiring inclusion, and gender-based violence. India's key gender indices: Gender Development Index (GDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII), and Global Gender Gap Index (World Economic Forum) — India ranks among the lower percentiles on the last measure.

Q 3

India's experience with 33% reservation for women in panchayats (introduced in 1992-93) has shown which of the following documented governance outcomes?

- A No measurable difference in village-level decision making
- B Elected women representatives mostly remain proxies for male family members
- C Reservation has altered local priorities toward water, health, education, and accountability ✓**
- D Female representatives are legally barred from presiding over gram panchayat meetings

EXPLANATION

Research across Indian states — including notable studies from West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Karnataka — has documented that panchayats with female representation show altered priorities: more water infrastructure investments, better primary school facilities, greater health service access, and improved accountability for local needs. While the 'proxy problem' exists in some states, empirical evidence shows positive policy effects overall.

CONCEPT

The landmark study by Duflo and Chattopadhyay (2004) showed that West Bengal villages with female-headed panchayats invested more in drinking water facilities. This evidence supports the argument that descriptive representation (who gets elected) shapes substantive representation (what policies get made). It is relevant to Mains GS-2 questions on democratic governance, federalism, and inclusive institutions.

Q 4 A quasar (quasi-stellar object) is powered by which astronomical phenomenon?

- A Nuclear fusion in a massive star cluster
- B Matter falling into a supermassive black hole, releasing enormous energy as an active galactic nucleus ✓
- C Collision between two neutron stars
- D Rapid rotation of a pulsar generating electromagnetic radiation

EXPLANATION

A quasar is an extremely luminous active galactic nucleus (AGN) powered by matter (gas, dust, stars) falling into a supermassive black hole at the centre of a galaxy. As material spirals in, it forms an accretion disk that heats up to millions of degrees, releasing enormous energy as light, X-rays, and radio waves — making quasars the most luminous objects in the observable universe.

CONCEPT

Quasars are visible at enormous cosmological distances because of their extreme brightness — allowing astronomers to probe the early universe (when quasars were more common) and study cosmic expansion. Key distinctions: Quasar = AGN visible as a point source (like a star); Pulsar = rotating neutron star emitting radiation beams; Black hole = region of extreme gravity; Neutron star = remnant of a supernova. All are distinct objects.

Q 5 The under-representation of women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) is described as a 'pipeline problem'. What does this term mean in this context?

- A There are insufficient water supply engineers who are women
- B The barriers are not at one point but accumulate at multiple stages from school through career advancement ✓
- C Women are concentrated in pipeline (oil and gas) engineering rather than other STEM fields
- D STEM education programmes do not have proper financial pipelines for female students

EXPLANATION

The 'pipeline problem' in STEM refers to the fact that women leave the field at multiple stages — during secondary school (fewer taking advanced maths/science), during higher education (lower enrolment in engineering/CS), during career entry (hiring bias), during mid-career (lack of mentoring, promotion bias), and at leadership levels (glass ceiling). The leakage happens throughout the pipeline, not at one single point.

CONCEPT

India's overall enrolment of women in higher education has improved (GER gap narrowing). But women remain underrepresented in computer science, electronics, and engineering programmes. Gender gap in STEM leadership is even more pronounced — women hold fewer than 15% of senior R&D positions in ISRO, DRDO, and IITs. This matters for national capability in semiconductors, AI, space, and defence — sectors India aims to lead.

Q 6

The Constitution (106th Amendment) Act, 2023, which provides for women's reservation in legislatures, contains a specific conditionality for implementation. What is this conditionality?

A The President must certify women's safety in all states before implementation

B Implementation is linked to conducting delimitation after a future census ✓

C At least 50% of state legislatures must ratify the amendment first

D Parliament must pass a separate implementation act within five years

EXPLANATION

The women's reservation under the 106th Constitutional Amendment is linked to delimitation — the redrawing of constituency boundaries after a future census (which was due in 2021 but delayed). Delimitation is conducted by the Delimitation Commission under the Delimitation Act. Until delimitation is completed following the next census, the reservation cannot be operationalised.

CONCEPT

The census (last conducted 2011) was due in 2021 but was delayed due to COVID-19 and administrative reasons. Delimitation is a politically sensitive exercise because it can redraw constituency boundaries in ways that affect party fortunes. Linking women's reservation to delimitation meant the amendment's implementation is tied to a politically uncertain timeline, which critics argue is a deliberate delay mechanism.

Q 7

Women's SHGs (Self-Help Groups) have been central to improving female economic participation in India. Under which programme have the largest number of SHGs been promoted nationally?

A PM MUDRA Yojana

B Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) ✓

C Stand-Up India Scheme

D National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

EXPLANATION

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), launched in 2011 and renamed in 2015, has been the largest SHG promotion programme in India. It has mobilised over 10 crore rural women into approximately 90 lakh SHGs. SHGs provide savings, credit, livelihood support, and social capital that improve women's economic agency.

CONCEPT

SHGs function as informal financial intermediaries — members save regularly, the group builds a corpus, and members take small loans from this corpus. Once the SHG has a track record, banks extend credit under the SHG-Bank Linkage Programme (started 1992 by NABARD). India's SHG movement is the world's largest microfinance programme. SHGs also serve as delivery channels for government schemes — insurance, nutrition supplements, sanitation.

Q 8

Which of the following best explains why gender equality is closely linked to a country's economic growth and human development outcomes?

- A Countries with more women leaders automatically have higher GDP growth rates
- B Women's economic participation increases labour supply, human capital investment, and household welfare, accelerating overall development ✓**
- C Gender equality reduces population growth, which automatically increases per capita income
- D International donors provide more aid to countries with higher female representation

EXPLANATION

Women's economic participation expands the labour supply, increases household income, and improves investments in children's health and education (studies show women invest more of their income in family welfare). Greater female labour participation is associated with higher national productivity, lower fertility rates (as women delay marriage/childbirth for careers), and better human development outcomes.

CONCEPT

The McKinsey Global Institute estimates that gender parity in economic participation could add \$700 billion to India's GDP by 2025 — the largest absolute gain globally. India's low female LFPR is an economic inefficiency, not just a social problem. This connects to UPSC themes of demographic dividend, human capital, economic growth drivers, and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Q 9

Women in STEM in India face which systemic barrier during mid-career that is distinct from entry-level barriers?

- A Being legally barred from patent filing in India
- B The 'motherhood penalty' — career disruption from caregiving responsibilities in a system with inadequate childcare and inflexible work arrangements ✓**
- C Having lower cognitive aptitude for applied mathematics as shown by standardised tests
- D Being assigned to administrative roles by company policy

EXPLANATION

The 'motherhood penalty' refers to the career disruption and professional disadvantage women face due to childbirth and caregiving responsibilities in systems that lack adequate childcare infrastructure, parental leave policies, and flexible work arrangements. Women in STEM who take career breaks for caregiving often return to find they have fallen behind technically, face hiring bias, or lose leadership opportunities.

CONCEPT

Policy solutions include: affordable creche networks (Anganwadi creches near industrial areas), extended parental leave for both parents (Indian law currently provides 26 weeks maternity leave), flexible working arrangements, returnship programmes for women re-entering STEM careers, and anti-discrimination enforcement. The Maternity Benefit Act (1961, amended 2017) provides 26 weeks paid maternity leave for companies with 10+ employees.

Q 10

Descriptive representation and substantive representation are two concepts in political science used to analyse women in government. What is the difference?

- A Descriptive = symbolic inclusion; substantive = numerical presence above 50%
- B Descriptive = who gets elected (mirrors demographic composition); substantive = what policies are made (acting for one's group's interests) ✓**
- C Descriptive = written laws; substantive = actual enforcement of those laws
- D Descriptive = proportional representation systems; substantive = first-past-the-post systems

EXPLANATION

Descriptive representation refers to the demographic composition of a legislature — whether it mirrors the population (e.g., half female if society is half female). Substantive representation refers to whether elected members actually advance the interests of the group they represent (e.g., do female MLAs advocate for women's policy issues). Research in India shows that descriptive representation (reservation) does lead to substantive representation in panchayats.

CONCEPT

The distinction between descriptive and substantive representation is central to academic and UPSC debates on reservations. Critics of reservations argue that descriptive representation does not guarantee substantive outcomes. Proponents cite evidence from Indian panchayats showing policy change. This debate extends to SC/ST reservations, OBC quotas, and women's reservation in legislatures.

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