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EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

# Women's Reservation and Delimitation — The Unfinished Promise of the 106th Amendment

THE HINDU

8 April 2026 · GS2

CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# Women's Reservation and Delimitation – The Unfinished Promise of the 106th Amendment

 The Hindu

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## CONTEXT

The **Hindu editorial** examines the **Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam (106th Constitutional Amendment, 2023)** providing for one-third reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. The editorial argues that the implementation — contingent on the **delimitation** exercise following the next Census — creates a structural tension between the urgency of improving women's representation and the risks of population-based delimitation for federal balance, particularly north-south equity.

## THE EDITORIAL ARGUMENT

### 1. The Implementation Trap

The 106th Amendment has an inherent **paradox**: its implementation requires **delimitation**, but delimitation based on updated population figures (Census 2021) will significantly **increase the weight of populous northern states** relative to southern states that have achieved **demographic** stabilisation. The editorial argues that rushing delimitation to fast-track women's reservation may worsen north-south federal imbalances.

### 2. The North-South Delimitation Stakes

The **84th Amendment (2001)** froze delimitation on 1971 Census figures. A new delimitation based on 2021 Census data would substantially shift Lok Sabha seats from:

- **Southern states** (TN, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana) — which achieved population stabilisation earlier due to better social development outcomes
- **To northern states** (UP, MP, Bihar, Rajasthan) — which still have higher TFR (Total Fertility Rate)

The editorial notes that this creates **perverse incentives** — states that successfully implemented family planning face political marginalisation, while states that didn't are rewarded with more parliamentary seats.

### 3. The Women's Representation Case

Despite the implementation complexity, the editorial strongly endorses the underlying goal. Women constitute **50% of India's population** but have never crossed **15% representation** in the Lok Sabha. Global average stands at approximately 27% (IPU 2025). **Nordic countries** average 45%+. The constitutional amendment is overdue.

### 4. What Needs to Happen

The editorial calls for:

- **Transparent Census and delimitation process** with broad political consultation
- **Decoupling the delimitation for constituencies from the delimitation for reserved seats** — the final reserved seat identification can happen after delimitation, without further delay
- **Consideration of increasing total Lok Sabha seats** (Article 81 allows up to 550 elected members) to accommodate expansion without eliminating existing representation

## KEY CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

PROVISION	DETAILS
84th Amendment (2001)	Froze delimitation on 1971 Census until first census after 2026
Article 82	Delimitation after each Census
Article 81	Composition of Lok Sabha — max 550 elected members
Article 330A	Women's reservation in Lok Sabha (inserted by 106th Amendment)
Article 332A	Women's reservation in State Assemblies (inserted by 106th Amendment)
106th Amendment (2023)	Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam — 15-year initial reservation

## UPSC RELEVANCE

### GS Paper 2 — Polity & Governance

- Women's representation in Parliament — international comparisons, India's record
- Delimitation and federal equity — north-south representation stakes
- Relationship between Census, delimitation, and reservation



## Mains Angle

“The 106th Constitutional Amendment represents a critical step but its implementation is fraught with federal equity concerns. Analyse.” (GS2)

### FACTS CORNER

ITEM	FACT
106th Amendment	Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, September 2023
Articles inserted	330A (Lok Sabha), 332A (State Assemblies)
Reservation quantum	One-third of total seats
Implementation trigger	Delimitation following next Census
Lok Sabha women (current)	82 of 543 seats (~15%)
Global average (women in Parliament)	~27% (IPU 2025)
84th Amendment	Froze delimitation on 1971 Census
Next delimitation estimated	2028-29 (post-Census 2025)
Max Lok Sabha seats (Article 81)	550 elected members
First TFR-stabilised states	Southern India — Kerala, TN, AP, Karnataka

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