

Mains PYQs - GS-II (2026) (Q. 1 - 3)

1. The right to privacy relating to self-identity is very dear to every human being and well protected under Article 21 of the Constitution. In this context, examine the effect of the amendment in 2026 to the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro-----Amendments & effects-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Describe Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Amendment Act, 2026.

Mention NALSA v. Union of India (2014) & K.S. Puttaswamy case (2017).

Main Body

Key amendments

- Removes the explicit right to self-perceived gender identity
- Removes trans-man, trans-woman and genderqueer from the specified categories
- Medical Board recommendation required before the District Magistrate issues a transgender identity certificate
- Gender-change certification is linked to gender-affirming surgery, with hospitals required to furnish information to authorities
- No specific statutory appeal mechanism for denial of identity certification
- Adds stringent penalties for forced castration, mutilation, kidnapping and forced assumption of transgender identity

Key Changes under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act		
Provision	Transgender Persons Act, 2019	Amendment Act, 2026
 Right to Self-Determination	Section 4(2) explicitly recognized a person's right to a self-perceived gender identity .	Deletes Section 4(2), abolishing legal self-identification in favor of State institutional validation.
 Verification Method	The District Magistrate (DM) issued certificates based on a simple self-declaration/affidavit .	The DM issues certificates only after a mandatory recommendation from a government-constituted Medical Board .
 Definition of Transgender	Broadly included trans-men, trans-women, genderqueer individuals , and those with intersex variations.	Narrows the definition to specific socio-cultural identities (e.g., <i>hijra, kinner</i>) and medically recorded intersex variations, excluding trans-men, trans-women, and genderqueer individuals .
 Medical Surveillance	No statutory compulsion for hospitals to report specific private transformations.	Mandates that medical institutions must report gender-affirming surgeries directly to the DM and the medical authority.

Effects on Article 21

- From self-identification to medical/institutional verification - Creates a potential tension with NALSA, where the Supreme Court placed self-determination at the heart of personal autonomy.
- Privacy & bodily autonomy - Mandatory medical verification may expose sensitive health information to state scrutiny, raising concerns over privacy, bodily autonomy and self-determined gender identity.
- Dignity & identity - Institutional verification may create a gap between self-perceived identity and legally recognised identity, affecting dignity and personal autonomy.
- Equality & non-discrimination - A narrower definition may exclude groups previously covered, raising Article 14 concerns about reasonable classification and equal protection.
- Positive Effect - Protection from Coercion - Stronger penalties for kidnapping, grievous injury, forced castration and forced assumption of transgender identity, especially involving children, enhance protection against exploitation.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.

The 2026 amendment shifts from an autonomy-centred model towards a verification-centred model of transgender legal recognition.

But the increased medical scrutiny raises important questions concerning the constitutional guarantees of privacy, dignity, autonomy and personal identity under Articles 14, 19 and 21.

2. “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. (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro-----Evolution-----Conclusion.

Introduction:

Start with Women's reservation (or) Population of women (or) women's empowerment.

Main Body

Evolution of women's reservation:

- **Grassroots Beginnings (1980s-1990s)**
- 1983 - Karnataka pioneered reservation for women in local governance; other states followed.
- 73rd & 74th Amendments (1992-93) - Mandated 1/3 reservation for women in Panchayats and Municipalities.
- Several States later increased it to 50%, creating a strong base of women political representatives.
- **Parliamentary Journey (1996-2010)**
- 1996 - First Bill proposed 33% reservation in Parliament and State Assemblies; faced demands for an OBC sub-quota.
- 1998-2003 - Reintroduced repeatedly but lapsed amid lack of consensus.
- 2010 - Bill passed by Rajya Sabha, but did not clear Lok Sabha.
- **Constitutional Breakthrough (2023)**
- Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam / 106th Amendment Act, 2023 - Provides 1/3 reservation in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, including within SC/ST reserved seats.
- Implementation - Linked to the Census and subsequent delimitation.

Women's Reservation Timeline

Women's quota: A timeline

The Centre's Lok Sabha delimitation exercise has brought back the issue of women's reservation. The issue dates back to the shaping of India's Constitution. Here's a timeline:

Compiled by: Raghav Bikhchandani



• 1946 December 9 Constituent Assembly sets up a Drafting Committee (7-member), with B.R. Ambedkar as Chairman. • December 15 Hansa Mehta moves first resolution for women's representation. The draft Constitution provides for universal adult franchise. Women get equal rights as men to vote and contest elections.	• 1947 July Hansa Mehta again moves a resolution for reservation of seats for women. It is opposed by K.T. Shah and others, and is withdrawn. • 1949 October A revised version provides for only reservation of seats in local bodies, after much debate. It is adopted on November 26. • November Constitution makes it possible to reserve seats for women in local bodies.	• Feb 1947 The Constituent Assembly as seen in this image on February 1947. • 1951-1952 First general Lok Sabha elections take place. A total of 4.5% women are elected (22 out of 489) — the first, and the lowest ever, in the Lok Sabha's history. • 1959 Rajiv Gandhi introduces a Constitutional amendment Bill for 1/3 reservation for women in panchayats and local bodies. The Bill is sent to a joint committee and lapses with the Lok Sabha. • 1992 P.V. Narasimha Rao's government passes the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, providing 1/3 reservation for women in Panchayats and Municipalities.	• 1996 The H.D. Deve Gowda government introduces the 81st Constitutional Amendment Bill to reserve 33% of seats in the Lok Sabha and State assemblies for women. The Bill lapsed. • 1997 April I.K. Gujral sets up an All-Party Committee to examine the issue of women's reservation. • November The committee submits its report to the government, recommending 1/3 reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State legislatures. • 2010 February The Women's Reservation Bill is passed by the Rajya Sabha but lapses with the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.	• March 9 Supreme Court reserves its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. • March 31 The SC upholds the constitutional validity of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which provide for reservation of seats for women in panchayats and municipalities. • 2014 May The Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill to reserve 33% seats for women in the Lok Sabha is introduced in the Lok Sabha. • 2023 September 19 The Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) for 33% reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies is introduced in the Lok Sabha. • September 20 The Bill is passed by the Lok Sabha with near-unanimous support. • September 21 The Bill is passed by the Rajya Sabha with near-unanimous support.
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Hansa Mehta

Rajiv Gandhi

H.D. Deve Gowda

I.K. Gujral

P.V. Narasimha Rao

Women members of Parliament pose after the passing of the Women's Reservation Bill, September 21, 2023.

Conclusion:

Give a balanced positive conclusion.

The journey of women's reservation shows that while women do not fit the orthodox definitions of a "minority" or a "backward class,"

India has shifted its approach from viewing women merely as beneficiaries of local welfare to recognising them as equal stakeholders in national lawmaking.

3. Examine whether the constitutional office of the Lok Sabha Speaker has become vulnerable to partisan politics under the current anti-defection regime. What institutional changes are required to ensure the neutrality of the Lok Sabha Speaker in managing a polarised House? (150 words, 10 marks)

Directions: Intro----- vulnerable to partisan politics + institutional changes----- Conclusion.

Introduction:

About the Speaker.

Main Body

Office of the Lok Sabha Speaker - vulnerable to partisan politics

- Yes - Because the combination of political affiliation, adjudicatory power and the absence of a rigid timeline can create a perception and possibility of partisan influence.
- No - Because the Speaker works under the limits mentioned in constitution, judicial review, procedural fairness and parliamentary conventions provide important safeguards.

Institutional changes required:

- Independent adjudicatory mechanism - Transfer Tenth Schedule cases to an independent tribunal/authority.
- Fixed time limit for disposal of defection petitions
- Strengthen Speaker's institutional independence - Resignation from party positions and greater cross-party consultation.
- Stricter parliamentary rules - Reduce arbitrary discretion through objective rules on motions, voting and legislative scrutiny.
- Effective judicial oversight

Conclusion:

Give a balanced conclusion.