



International Women's Day 2025

For Prelims: [International Women's Day](#), [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BPfA\)](#), [UN Women](#), [Maternal Mortality](#), [Vigyan Jyoti](#), [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao](#), [PMGDISHA](#), [Women's Reservation Act, 2023](#), [Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions \(GATI\)](#).

For Mains: Status of women rights, Challenges associated with women empowerment and way forward.

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

[International Women's Day](#) is celebrated globally on **8th March** to recognize women's achievements across **cultural, economic, and political spheres**.

- Additionally, the year 2025 is significant as it marks the **30th anniversary** of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action \(BPfA\)](#), a landmark commitment to women's rights.

What is International Women's Day?

- **About:** It is a special day dedicated to honoring **women's achievements** and highlights **gender disparities** and advocates for women's rights in politics, society, and the economy.
 - The theme for 2025 is **"For ALL Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment"**.
- **History:** German activist **Clara Zetkin** proposed the idea, leading to the first celebrations in **1911 in the USA and Europe**.
 - In **1975**, the United Nations officially recognized **8th March** as International Women's Day.
- **Purpose:** It serves as a platform to discuss crucial issues such as **workplace equality, reproductive rights, and leadership representation**.
 - Governments and organizations use the day to promote policies for women's empowerment and **ending discrimination**.

What is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?

- **About:** The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)** was adopted at the **4th World Conference on Women**, held in **Beijing, China, in 1995**.
 - It is a key blueprint for **women's and girls' rights**, promoting legal protection, service access, youth engagement, and social change.
 - **India** is a **signatory** to **BPfA**.
- **Areas for Action:** It identified **12 key areas** for urgent action on gender equality and provided strategies for ensuring equal opportunities for all. **Prominent areas are:**

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Key Areas for Women's Advancement



- **Beijing+30 Action Agenda:** It marks the **30th anniversary** (1995-2025) of the BPfA to **review and appraise** its implementation.
 - **It focuses on six key areas:**

Empowering Women for a Better Future



What is the Current Status of Women in India?

- **Maternal Health:** Institutional deliveries have risen to **95%**, contributing to a decline in maternal mortality from **130 to 97 per 100,000 births (2014-2020)**.
 - Modern **contraceptive** use among married women stands at **56.5%**, enhancing reproductive health choices.
- **Education & Skills:** Schemes such as **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** have contributed to improving the sex ratio (**1020 females per 1000 males** as per **NFHS - 5**) and female higher school enrollment (**28% since 2014-15**).
 - Similarly, **Vigyan Jyoti (2020)** aims to **encourage girls' participation in STEM education**, particularly in underrepresented regions.
- **Financial Inclusion:** **100 million women** have gained **financial access** through **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, while **PMGDISHA** has trained **35 million rural women** in digital literacy.
 - **Gender-responsive budgeting** stands at **8.8% (2025-26)**, allocating **USD 55.2 billion** to gender-specific programs.
- **Addressing Gender-Based Violence:** **770 One Stop Centres** provide medical, legal, and psychological support to **women victims**. e.g., **Odisha's blockchain system** enables swift, confidential survivor support to women victims.
- **Political Representation:** The **Women's Reservation Act, 2023** secures 33% legislative representation for women, and India leads globally with **1.4 million women in local governance**.
- **Women in Science & Technology:** **Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI)** supports women in STEM, while the **G20 TechEquity platform** trains thousands of young women in emerging technologies.

WOMEN Reservation Act, 2023

(106th Constitutional Amendment Act)

OBJECTIVE

- Reserve 1/3rd of total seats in LS and state Legislative Assemblies (LAs) for women

BACKGROUND

- Bill previously introduced in: 1996, 1998, 2009, 2010, 2014
- Related Committees:
 - Committee on the Status of Women in India (1971)
 - Committee under Margaret Alva (1987)
 - Geeta Mukherjee Committee (1996)
 - Committee on the Status of Women (2013)

Key Features

Articles Inserted:

- Article 330A - Reservation for Women in LS
- Article 332A - Reservation for Women in State LAs
- Article 239AA - Reservation for Women in NCT of Delhi
- Article 334A - Reservations to become effective after delimitation is undertaken and Census is conducted

Time Period:

- Reservation to be provided for 15 years (can be extended)

Rotation of Seats Reserved:

- After each delimitation

NEED

- Political Underrepresentation:
 - Only 82 Women MPs in LS (15.2%) and 31 in RS (13%)
 - On avg, women constitute only 9% of the total members in State LAs



ARGUMENTS

- In Favour:
 - Vital step towards gender equality
 - Broader range of perspectives to the decision-making process
 - Helps eliminate discrimination against women in political/public life
- Against:
 - Delimitation based on 2021 census (yet to be conducted) is mandatory
 - No women's reservation in RS and State Legislative Councils

STEPS AHEAD

- Reservation for women within political parties
- Independent political decision-making by women; overcoming Sarpanch-patism



What are the Challenges to Women Empowerment?

- Political Underrepresentation:** Women hold only 27% of parliamentary seats, 36% of local government positions, and 28% of management roles that hinders inclusive policy-making.
- Gender-Based Violence:** Despite 88% of countries having laws against violence against women, conflict-related to sexual violence has risen by 50% since 2022, with 95% of victims being women and girls.
- Workplace Discrimination:** 61% of prime working-age women work, compared to 91% of men, earning just 51% of men's income, deepening inequality.
- Unpaid Care Work:** Women spend 2.3 times more daily on unpaid care work than men. By

2050, they will still spend 9.5% more time, limiting education and job opportunities.

- **Barriers in Education & Food: 110 million girls and young women** may remain **out of school** by 2030.
 - By 2030, **24% of women and girls** may face **food insecurity**, while **only 44%** of nations are improving their **education and training**.
- **Legal Barriers:** In 28 countries, women **lack equal rights in marriage and divorce**, while 67 nations have no legal protections against gender-based discrimination (**UN Women Report**).

Way Forward

- **Gender-Responsive Budgeting:** Increase funding for women's **education, health, finance, and social security**. Strengthen monitoring to ensure accountability and impact.
- **Strengthening Legal Protection:** Eliminate discriminatory laws on **marriage, divorce, property, and labor** while strengthening enforcement of gender violence laws and One Stop Centres for survivor support.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Ensure women farmers have **equal access to land, credit, and resources** for food security.
 - Support **SHGs and women entrepreneurs** with financial literacy, loans, and market access.
- **Bridging Workplace Inequality:** Encourage **flexible work arrangements, parental leave, and workplace childcare** to boost women's labor force participation.

Drishti Mains Question:

Identify the major hurdles in achieving gender equality in India and suggest policy measures to bridge these gaps.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following gives 'Global Gender Gap Index' ranking to the countries of the world? (2017)

- (a) World Economic Forum
- (b) UN Human Rights Council
- (c) UN Women
- (d) World Health Organization

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q.1 "Empowering women is the key to control population growth". Discuss. (2019)

Q.2 Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on women in India? (2015)

Q.3 Male membership needs to be encouraged in order to make women's organizations free from gender bias. Comment. (2013)

