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GS Paper II: Polity

1. Women's Representation in Legislatures and the Question of Reservation in India

a. Introduction

A core idea of democracy is that governing institutions should reflect the society they represent. In India, women participate actively in elections—often voting in equal or even higher numbers than men. However, their presence in legislatures remains limited.

This creates a clear imbalance: women are visible as voters but not as lawmakers. Such a gap raises important questions about how inclusive and representative Indian democracy truly is.

b. Present Status of Women's Representation

Representation in Parliament

- Women's share in the Lok Sabha has improved slowly over time.
- However, it remains below one-sixth (around 14–15%).
- This indicates persistent underrepresentation.

Representation in State Legislatures

- Average representation is less than 10%.
- Only a few states cross 15%.
- Gender imbalance is widespread across states.

Global Comparison

- Global average is significantly higher than India.
- Some countries have near parity or even majority women representation.

c. Reasons for Low Representation

Role of Political Parties

- Parties control ticket distribution.
- They often nominate fewer women due to perceived “winnability” concerns.

Social and Cultural Barriers







- Patriarchal norms discourage women's political participation.
- Family responsibilities limit long-term political engagement.

Limited Access to Resources

- Politics requires money, networks, and influence.
- Women, especially from non-elite backgrounds, face disadvantages.

Safety and Public Exposure Concerns

Status of Women's Representation in Legislatures

Level	Status	Observation
 Lok Sabha	~14–15%	 Below one-sixth representation
 State Assemblies	<10% average	 Severe imbalance across states
 Global Average	Higher than India	 Many countries near parity

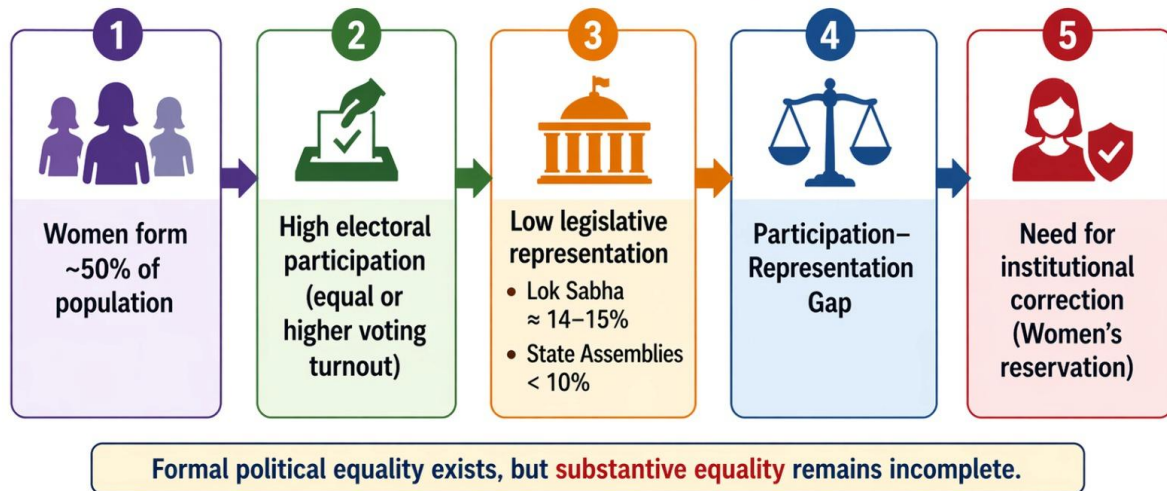
 India's voter participation parity has **not translated** into legislative parity. 

- Politics involves public visibility and travel.
- Fear of harassment and reputational risks acts as a deterrent.

Cycle of Underrepresentation

- Fewer women leaders mean fewer role models.
- This discourages new entrants, continuing the cycle.

India's Participation–Representation Gap in Women's Political Empowerment



d. Why Representation Matters

Strengthening Democratic Legitimacy

- Women form nearly half the population.
- Their absence weakens the representative nature of institutions.

Better Policy Outcomes

- Women often prioritise health, education, and welfare.
- Leads to more balanced governance.

Social Transformation

- Women leaders challenge stereotypes.
- Encourage broader participation in society.

Inclusive Governance

- Diverse voices improve decision-making.
- Policies become more equitable.

e. Concept of Women's Reservation

Basic Idea

- Reserve one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies for women.
- Aim is to ensure minimum representation.

Objective

- Address historical and structural barriers.
- Create a level playing field in politics.

f. Evidence in Support of Reservation

Experience of Panchayati Raj

- Reservation already implemented at local level.
- Led to significant increase in women's participation.
- Improved outcomes in areas like water, health, and education.

International Experience

- Countries with quotas have higher women representation.
- Shows effectiveness of institutional intervention.

g. Criticisms and Concerns

Tokenism or Proxy Representation

- Some women may act as proxies for male relatives.
- However, this is not universal and reduces over time.

Debate on Merit

- Critics argue reservation compromises merit.
- But existing system is already unequal in opportunities.

Issue of Seat Rotation

- Frequent rotation may reduce accountability.
- Representatives may lack long-term commitment to constituencies.

h. Why Reservation Remains Necessary

Limited Progress Through Voluntary Measures

- Political parties have not significantly increased women's representation on their own.

Structural Barriers Persist

- Social, economic, and institutional challenges continue.

Role as a Catalyst

- Reservation can accelerate change.
- Helps normalise women's presence in politics.

i. The Participation-Representation Gap

The Paradox

- Women actively vote in elections.
- Yet, they are underrepresented in legislatures.

Meaning

- Formal equality (right to vote) exists.

- Substantive equality (representation in power) is lacking.

j. Way Forward

Implement Reservation

- Ensure one-third representation in legislatures.
- Provide immediate structural correction.

Reform Political Parties

- Encourage fair ticket distribution.
- Promote internal democracy.

Capacity Building

- Leadership training and mentorship programmes.
- Prepare women for political roles.

Address Structural Barriers

- Improve access to finance and networks.
- Ensure safety and supportive environment.

Build Leadership Pipeline

- Strengthen link from local bodies to higher politics.
- Ensure continuity and experience.

Conclusion

India's democratic strength cannot be judged only by voter participation. It must also be measured by how inclusive its institutions are.

The low representation of women reflects a structural imbalance that needs correction. Increasing women's participation in legislatures is not just about fairness—it leads to better governance and more responsive policymaking.

GS Paper III: Economics

2. India's Position in Global GDP Rankings

a. Introduction

India's rise as a major global economy is often judged by its position in global GDP rankings. Recently, India moved from the fourth to the sixth position in terms of nominal GDP in US dollars.

At first glance, this may seem like a decline. However, this change does not reflect a weakening economy. Instead, it is mainly due to technical factors like data revision and currency movement.

b. How Global GDP Rankings Are Determined

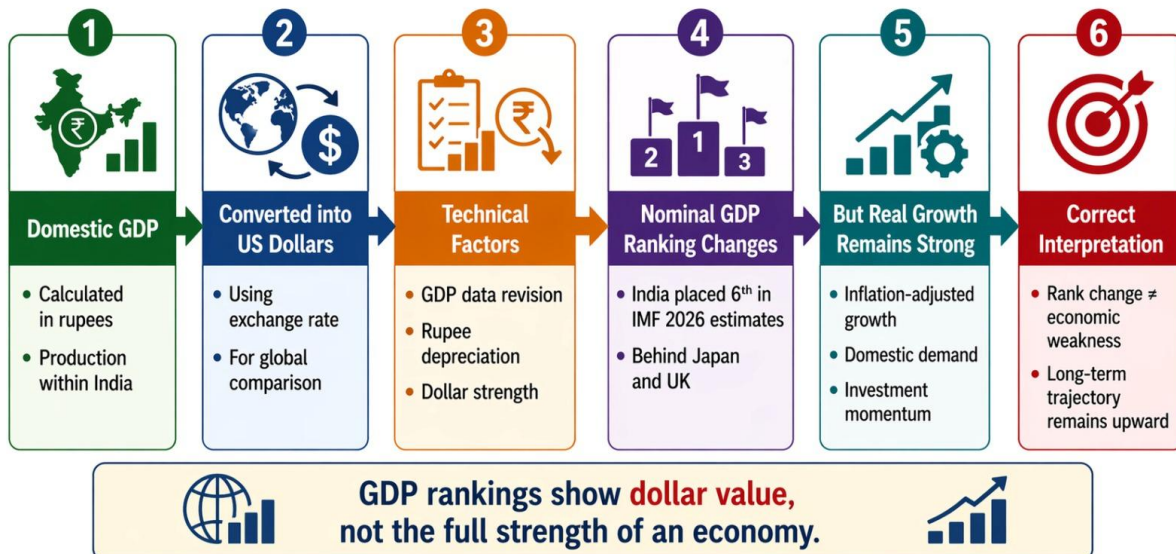
Basic Method

- GDP is first calculated in a country's domestic currency.
- It is then converted into US dollars using the exchange rate.

Key Implication

- Rankings depend not only on production but also on exchange rates.
- Even if the economy grows, a weaker currency can reduce its global ranking.

Why India's Global GDP Rank Changed Despite Strong Growth



c. Reasons Behind India's Change in Ranking

Revision of GDP Estimates

- India periodically revises GDP data for better accuracy.
- Recent revisions adjusted earlier estimates downward.
- This does not mean decline, but correction of overestimation.

Depreciation of the Rupee

- The rupee has weakened against the US dollar.
- This reduces GDP value when converted into dollars.

Dollar-Based Comparison

- Global rankings are based on dollar values.
- Currency fluctuations directly impact rankings.

Performance of Other Countries

- Economies like Japan and the UK improved or maintained their position.
- Relative performance pushed India down in ranking.

d. India in the Global Economic Context

Position Among Major Economies

- India is part of a group of large economies with GDP around \$4 trillion.
- Global economy is dominated by the US and China.

Significance

- India remains a key global economic player.
- Minor rank changes do not alter its long-term importance.

e. Nominal vs Real GDP

Nominal GDP

- Measured at current prices.
- Converted into dollars and used for global rankings.
- Affected by inflation and exchange rates.

Real GDP

- Adjusted for inflation.
- Reflects actual growth in production.
- India continues to show strong real growth.

f. Assessing the Significance of Ranking Change

Limited Concern

- India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies.
- Ranking change is largely temporary.

Areas of Concern

- Currency depreciation may indicate external pressures.
- Data revisions highlight need for better statistical systems.

g. Future Prospects

Growth Potential

- Strong domestic demand.
- Ongoing structural reforms.

Long-Term Projection

- India expected to become the third-largest economy in coming years.
- Supported by demographics and productivity gains.

h. Key Analytical Insights

Dynamic Nature of Rankings

- Rankings change frequently.
- Influenced by exchange rates and global comparisons.

Need for Broader Analysis

- Rankings alone are not sufficient indicators.
- Must consider growth, stability, and structural strength.

i. Way Forward

Maintain Macroeconomic Stability

- Control inflation and fiscal deficit.
- Manage external balance.

Strengthen Export Competitiveness

- Boost manufacturing and trade.
- Improve global integration.

Improve Data Quality

- Enhance transparency and accuracy of GDP estimates.

Sustain Inclusive Growth

- Invest in infrastructure, innovation, and human capital.

Conclusion

India's change in global GDP ranking is mainly due to technical factors, not economic weakness. The country continues to grow strongly and remains a major global economic force.

In the long run, consistent growth, sound policies, and structural reforms will determine India's position. Rankings may fluctuate, but India's overall trajectory remains upward.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

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