

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2024 · 15 marks

Explain the structure and functions of the National Commission for Women.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

R1 1992 origin under the 1990 Act → born of women's-movement demand

R2 compact statutory body → design shapes both its reach and its limits

Body flow

structure (Chairperson + five Members + Member-Secretary; GoI-appointed; SC/ST seats) → Section 10(1) fourteen-point mandate (safeguards → discrimination → status → cases) → functional cells (Complaint & Counselling → Legal → Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalat → Research) → civil court powers in inquiry

Counter-view

civil court powers in inquiry, but no power to punish offenders → role stays recommendatory

Conclusion routes

R1 genuine working machinery for women's rights, structurally embedded

R2 the structure equips the functions yet caps their enforcement

The National Commission for Women was set up in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women act 1990 after sustained demands from women's movements & committees. Its design as a compact statutory body shapes both what it does and where it falls short.

In structure, it has a chairperson committed to the cause of women, 5-members drawn from different fields and a member secretary with management, sociological or civil service expertise.

The central government appoints all of them, and at least one member each must belong to the SCs and STs.

Its function flow from the 14-point mandate under Section 10(s) reviewing constitutional & legal safeguards, studying discrimination and socio-economic problems, evaluating women's status and taking up rights based cases.

This work runs through specialised cells. The complaint and Counselling cell handles domestic violence, dowry, rape, harassment, desecration and workplace sexual harassment, received orally in writing or suo motu.

The legal cell recommends amendments and intervenes in courts; the Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalat resolves family disputes; the Research Cell studies emerging issues like trafficking & cybercrime.