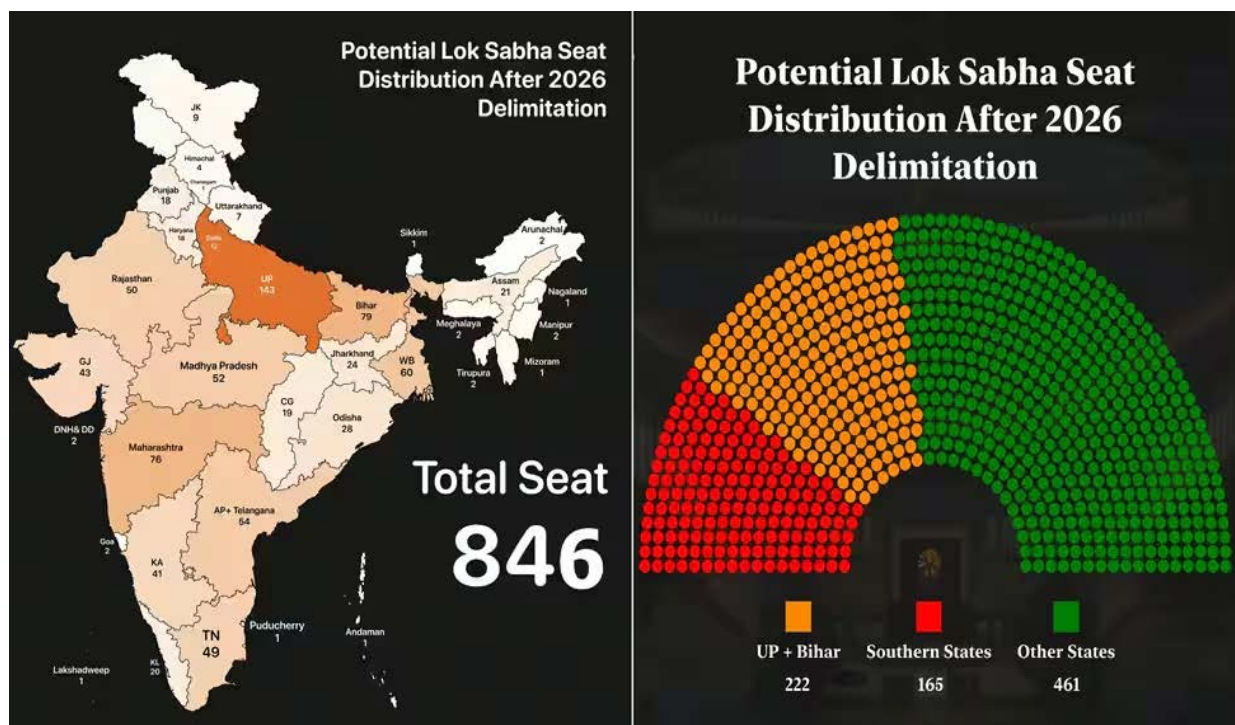


Delimitation and Democracy: Fair or Flawed?



Context:

- The first meeting of the JAC attended by CMs of States adopted a resolution demanding that the **freeze on the parliamentary constituencies based on the 1971 Census population** be extended by another 25 years.



1. What is Delimitation?

- The **process of delimitation** in India is guided by the Constitution, which mandates **periodic reallocation of parliamentary and state assembly constituencies based on population changes**.
- This '**delimitation process**' is performed by the '**Delimitation Commission**' that is set up under an **act of Parliament**.

What is delimitation

The process of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and state Assembly seats to represent changes in the population.



The main task of the Delimitation Commission

is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census.



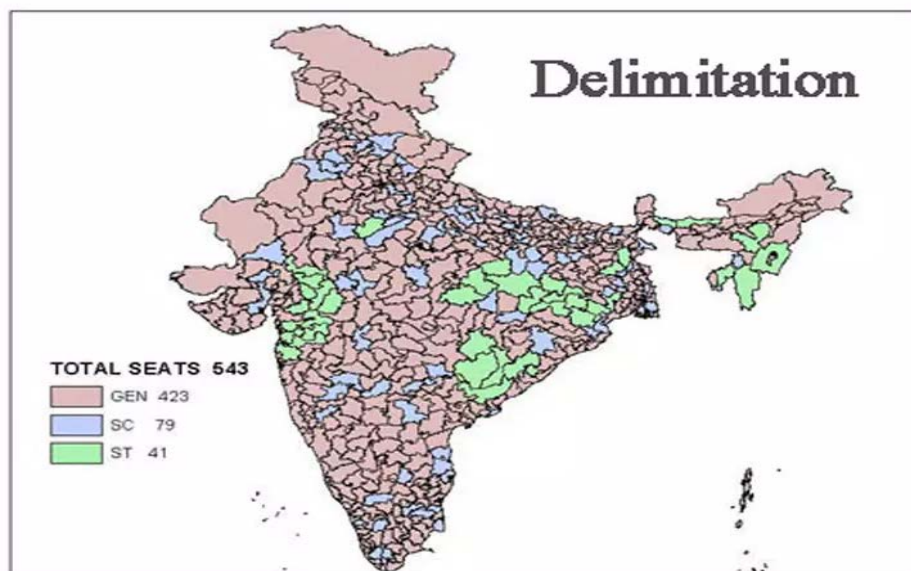
In the process, **the number of seats allocated** to states in Lok Sabha or in the Legislative Assembly may also change

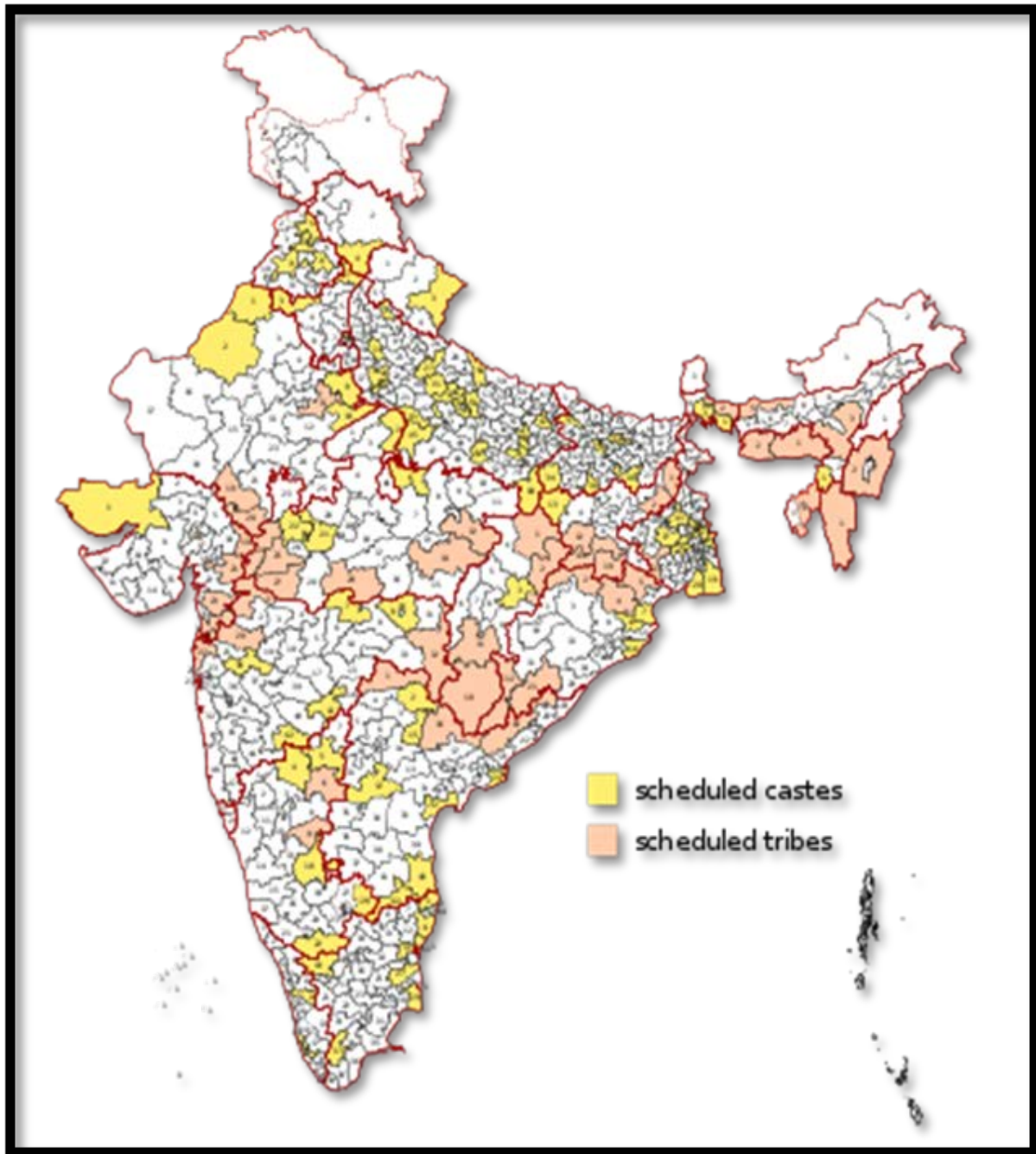


It also **reserves Assembly seats** for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in accordance with the Constitution



INDIA - Existing Parliament Constituencies





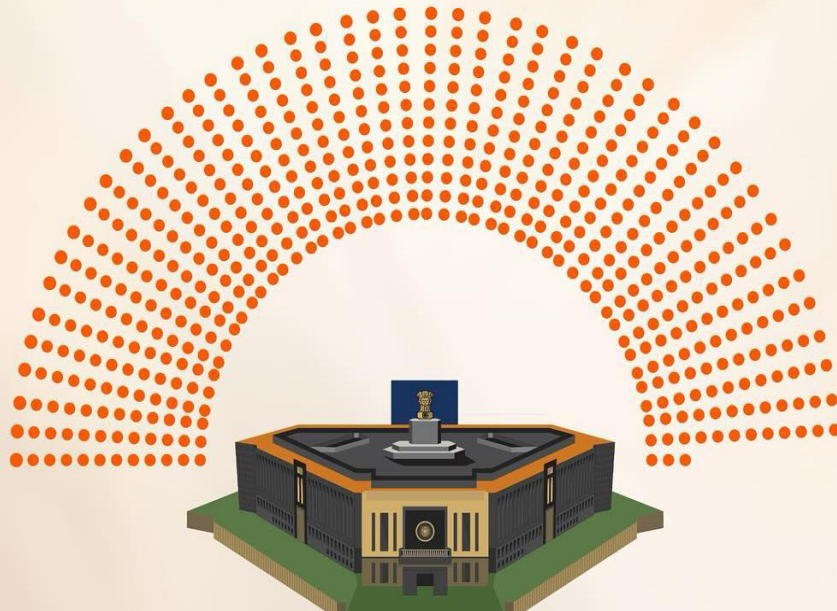
2. What is the history of Delimitation in India?

WHAT IS DELIMITATION?

Delimitation = Redrawing electoral boundaries

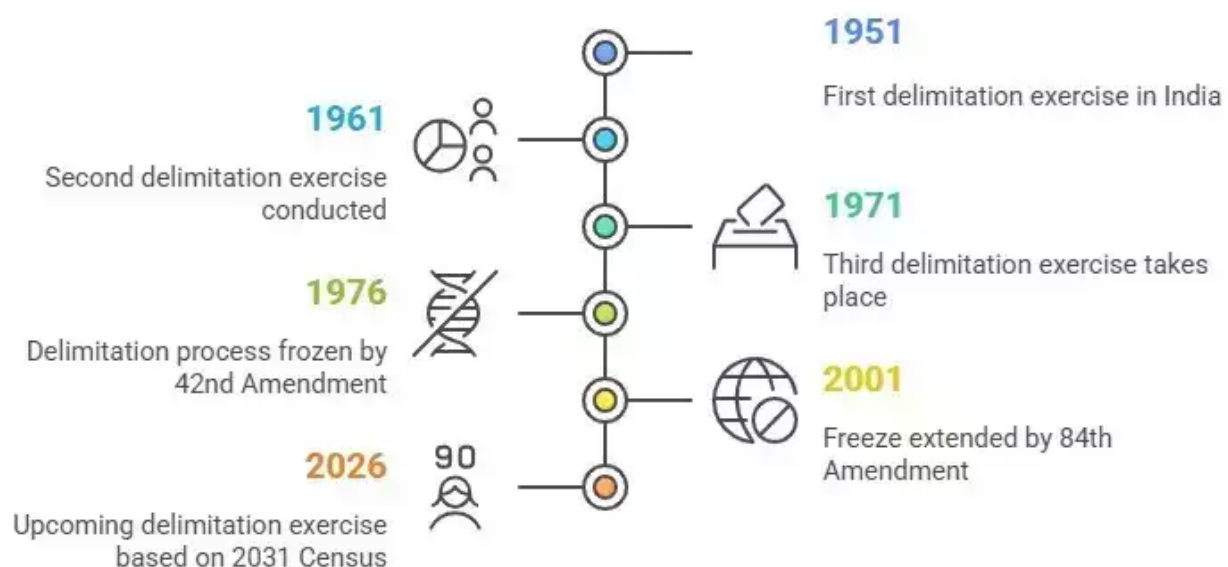
- Done to ensure fair representation based on population.
- Lok Sabha seats are distributed based on Census data.

Last delimitation? 1971!
Next? After 2026!



- **India** conducted **delimitation exercises in 1951, 1961, and 1971** before **freezing the process in 1976** through the **42nd Amendment Act**.
- This move **aimed to encourage population control and prevent states with high growth rates** from gaining an electoral advantage.
- The freeze was **extended in 2001** through the **84th Amendment**, **postponing delimitation until 2026**.

India's Delimitation Journey: Past, Present, and Future



Delimitation Exercise	Description
1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Delimitation Commission of 1952 was created due to the Delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies Order, 1951. • Justice N Chandrasekhara Aiyar, a retired justice of the Supreme Court, was its chairman in 1953

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the 1952 delimitation, the cap on the Lok Sabha seats was set at 500.• The commission recommended the increase of the seats in the Lok Sabha from 489 to 494.
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A decade later, in 1963, the seats in the Lok Sabha rose to 525 owing to an increase in the average population per constituency.
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The delimitation commission of 1973 was chaired by Justice J L Kapur, a retired justice of the Supreme Court.• The commission recommended the increase of the seats in the Lok Sabha from 522 to 542 (later increased to 543 with the addition of one more seat for the new state of Sikkim).• It also recommended an increase in the total number of assembly seats across all states and Union Territories in the country from 3771 to 3997 (including 32 for Sikkim's legislative assembly).
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most recent delimitation commission was set up on 12 July 2002 after the 2001 census with Justice Kuldeep Singh, a retired Judge of the Supreme Court as its Chairperson.• While a Delimitation Commission was constituted in 2002, its role was limited to redrawing constituency boundaries based on the 2001 census, without altering the number of seats allocated to each state.

Seat allocation in the Lok Sabha

After the 1973 delimitation, the maximum strength of the Lok Sabha was raised to 545 from 525.

State	Pre-1973	Post-1973	Change
Madhya Pradesh	37	40	3
Maharashtra	45	48	3
Gujarat	24	26	2
Rajasthan	23	25	2
West Bengal	40	42	2
Andhra Pradesh	41	42	1
Bihar	53	54	1
Haryana	9	10	1
Karnataka	27	28	1
Kerala	19	20	1
Odisha	20	21	1
Sikkim	0	1	1
Arunachal Pradesh	1	2	1
Assam	14	14	0
Himachal Pradesh	4	4	0
J&K	6	6	0
Manipur	2	2	0
Meghalaya	2	2	0
Nagaland	1	1	0
Punjab	13	13	0
Tamil Nadu	39	39	0
Tripura	2	2	0
Uttar Pradesh	85	85	0
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	1	0
Chandigarh	1	1	0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1	1	0
Delhi	7	7	0
Goa and Daman & Diu	2	2	0
Lakshadweep	1	1	0
Mizoram	1	1	0
Puducherry	1	1	0

3. What are constitutional provisions for Delimitation?

Articles	Provisions
Article 82	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After every Census, Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act to redefine constituency boundaries.
Article 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The total number of seats in state assemblies is adjusted according to the Delimitation Act after each Census.
Article 330	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Article 330 of the Constitution of India reserves seats in the House of the People for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.• It also specifies how many seats should be reserved in each state or union territory.
Article 332	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Article 332 of the Constitution of India reserves seats for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the Legislative Assemblies of states.• It also specifies how many seats should be reserved for each group.
Article 329	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Article 329 bars courts from questioning laws on delimitation or seat allotment.

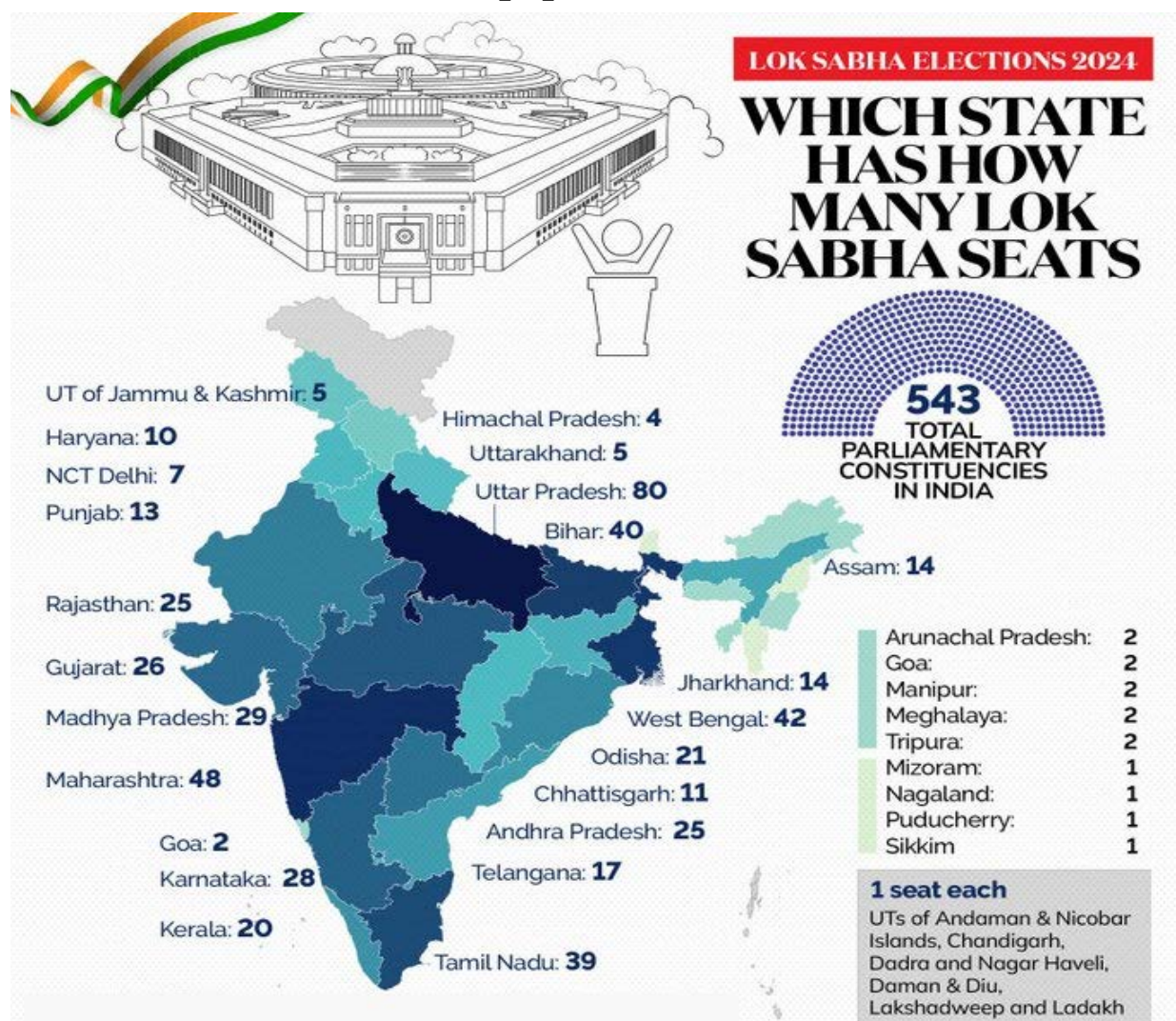
4. Enlist amendments made to Delimitation in India?

Amendments	Description
31st Amendment Act, 1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • States with populations under six million were excluded from the population-based delimitation exercise.
42nd Amendment Act (1976)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freezes the allocation of Lok Sabha seats to states and the division of territorial constituencies based on the 1971 Census. • This freeze was intended to protect states that successfully implemented population control measures from losing their representation in Parliament.
84th Amendment Act (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowed readjustment and rationalization of territorial constituencies based on the 1991 Census. • However, it did not permit an increase or decrease in the number of seats allotted to each state in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies. • The main objective was to maintain uniformity in population representation without disturbing the total number of seats.
87th Amendment Act (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed the basis of delimitation from the 1991 Census to the 2001 Census. • Like the 84th Amendment, it did not alter the number of seats allocated to each state in Parliament and State Assemblies.

- It was primarily aimed at ensuring fairer representation based on more recent population data.

5. What is the current status of parliamentary constituencies in India?

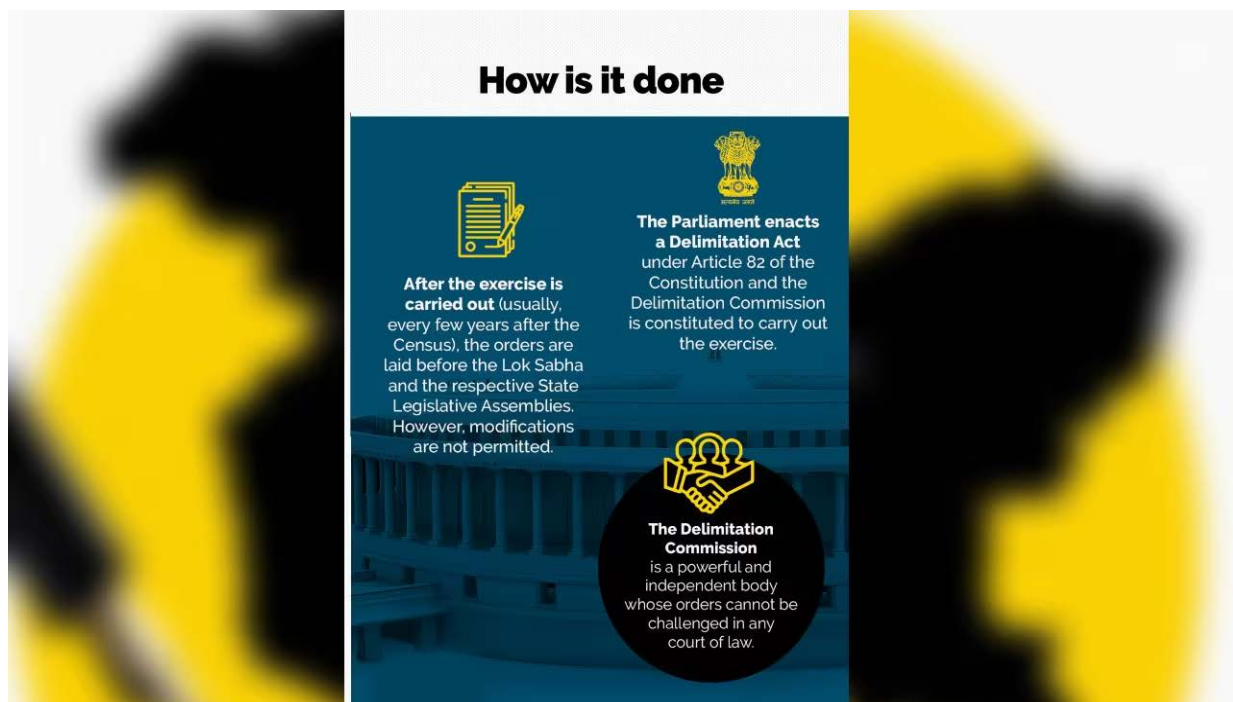
- **Delimitation** means the process of fixing the number of seats and boundaries of territorial constituencies in each State for the Lok Sabha and Legislative assemblies.
- The number of seats in the **Lok Sabha**, based on the **1971 Census**, was **fixed at 543**, when the population was **54.8 crore**.



6. What is the Delimitation Commission?

- The **Delimitation Commission** is an independent body established through a **Parliamentary Act**, is responsible for **overseeing the process of Delimitation**.
- The **Delimitation Commission** is **appointed by the President of India** and works in collaboration with the **Election Commission of India**.
- It is a high powered **3 member body** composed of a **serving or retired Supreme Court judge as chairperson**, the **Chief Election Commissioner**, and the **State Election Commissioners of the concerned states**.
- The authority, and its **decisions cannot be challenged in court**. The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** provides technical assistance for the exercise.
- However, the **Supreme Court has ruled in 2024 that delimitation orders can be reviewed if they violate constitutional values**.

7. How is delimitation done?



- The **delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies** was done **according to the procedure laid down in the Delimitation Act, 2002.**
- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has informed that in accordance with the provisions of the Delimitation Act, 2002 (33 of 2002), the **Delimitation Commission received assistance in redrawing boundaries from State Election Commissioners, Chief Electoral Officers and Associate Members from the States concerned as well as with the Registrar General & Census Commissioner of India** and simultaneously suggestions were also taken from stakeholders.
- The **State Governments have no role in redesigning the borders of constituencies.**
- The **seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes** were **reserved** as per the **Constitutional and Legal provisions** i.e. articles **330 and 332** of the Constitution of India read with **sections 9(1)(c) and 9(1)(d) of the Delimitation Act, 2002.**
- As informed by the ECI, under the provisions of the Delimitation Act, 2002, the then **Delimitation Commission had conducted public sittings in all concerned States/Union territories to hear the suggestions/ objections received from the public/political parties/organisations or otherwise w.r.t. its draft proposals published in the Central and State Gazettes.**
- Further, after **consideration of all suggestions/objections as received w.r.t. draft proposals or in the public sittings, the Delimitation Commission published its final orders in the Central and State Gazettes for public information.**

8. Why was Delimitation frozen in 1971?

- **No fresh delimitation has occurred since 1971** because the **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act in 1976**, and later the **84th Amendment Act in 2002**, froze the number of **Lok Sabha** and

Assembly seats based on the 1971 census, citing family planning as a reason.

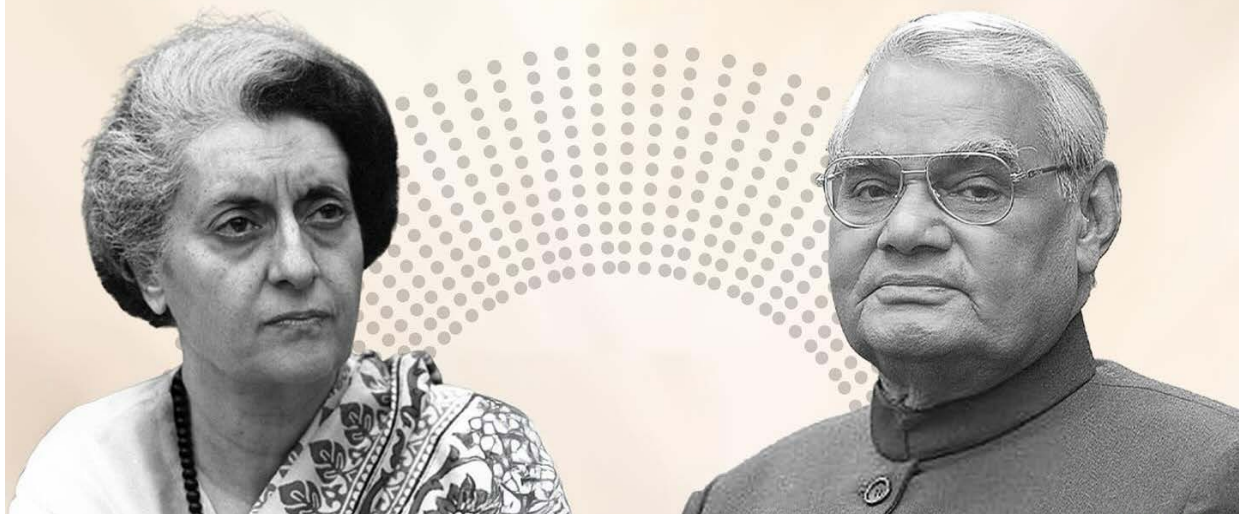
- The government cited the need to **encourage family planning policies**, arguing that states with **higher population growth rates** would not be penalized in terms of political representation.

WHY WAS IT FROZEN?

1976 – Indira Gandhi's govt paused delimitation to promote family planning.

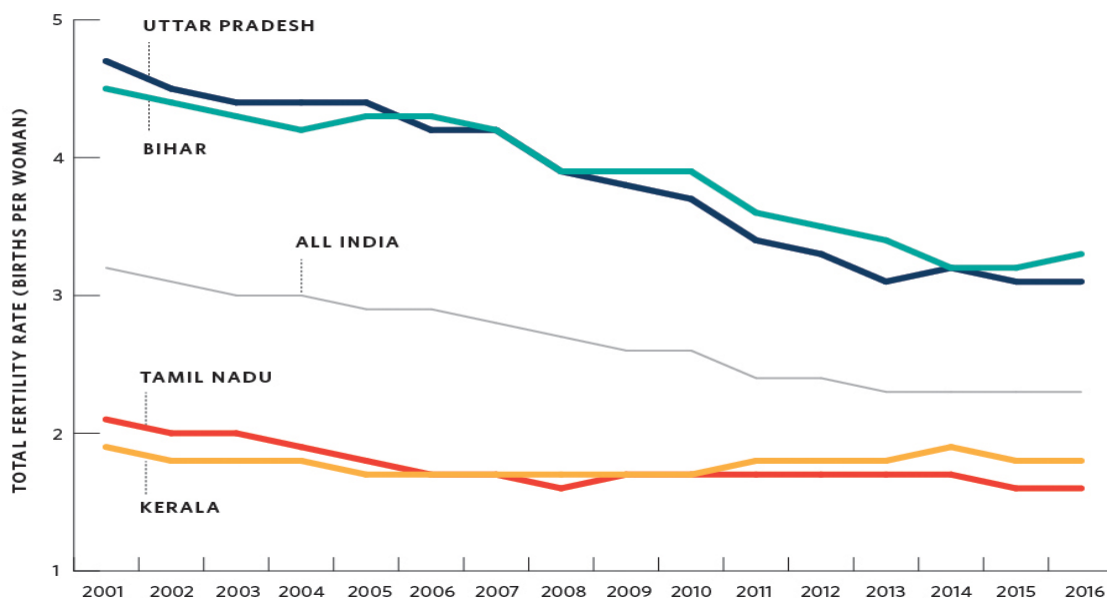
2002 – In accordance to the 84th amendment, **Vajpayee govt.** extended the freeze until the first Census after 2026.

Implying, the first Census conducted after 2026 will determine new seat allocations



9. What is the demographic status of states?

Fertility Rates in Select Indian States, 2001-2016



POPULATION TRENDS AND GROWTH OF INDIA AND STATES FROM 1951 TO 2011

TABLE 1		Population Totals ('000)					Annual Growth Rate (in %)		
S. No.	States/Union Territories	1951	1971	1991	2011	100*P(11)/P 51)	1951-71	71-91	91-2011
	INDIA	361.088	548 160	846.421	1,210,570	335.3	2.10	2.20	1.80
1	Andra Pradesh	31,115	43,503	66,058	84,581	271.8	1.70	2.10	1.20
2	Arunachal Pradesh	NA	468	865	1,384	295.7	-	3.10	2.30
3	Assam	8,029	14,625	22,414	31,206	388.7	3.00	2.10	1.70
4	Bihar	29,085	42,126	64,531	1,04,099	357.9	1.90	2.10	2.40
5	Chhattisgarh	7,457	11,637	17,615	25,545	342.6	2.20	2.10	1.90
6	Delhi	1,744	4,066	9,421	16,788	962.6	4.20	4.20	2.90
7	Goa	547	795	1,170	1,459	266.6	1.90	1.90	1.10
8	Gujarat	16,263	26,697	41,310	60,440	371.6	2.50	2.20	1.90
9	Haryana	5,674	10,036	16,464	25,351	446.8	2.90	2.50	2.20
10	Himachal Pradesh	2,386	3,460	5,171	6,865	287.7	1.90	2.00	1.40
11	Jammu & Kashmir	3,254	4,617	7,837	12,541	385.4	1.70	2.60	2.40
12	Jharkhand	9,697	14,227	21,944	32,988	340.2	1.90	2.10	2.10
13	Karnataka	19,402	29,299	44,977	61,095	314.9	2.10	2.10	1.50
14	Kerala	13,549	21,347	29,099	33,406	246.6	2.30	1.50	0.70
15	Madhya Pradesh	18,615	30,017	48,566	72,627	390.2	2.40	2.40	2.00

POPULATION TRENDS AND GROWTH OF INDIA AND STATES FROM 1951 TO 2011

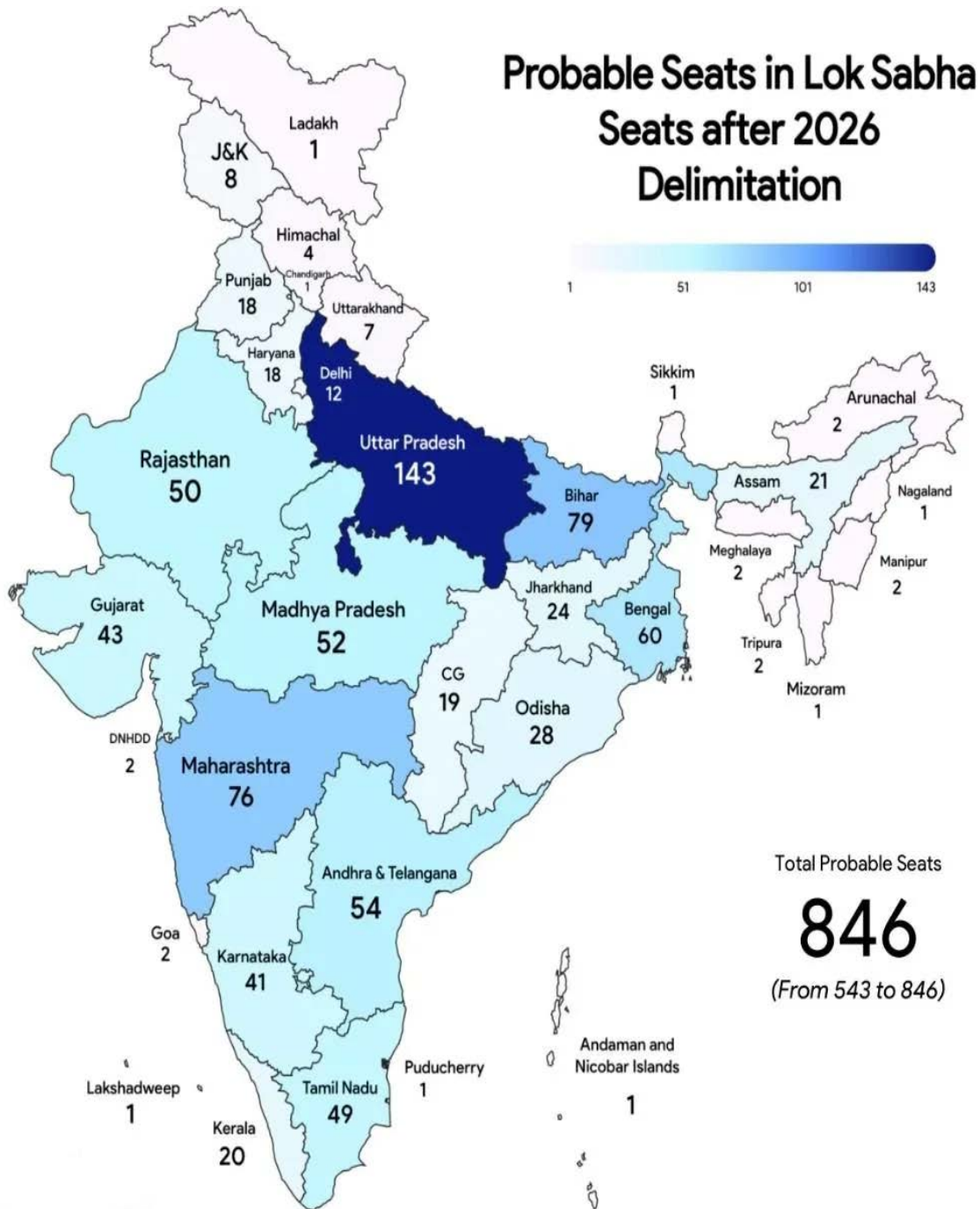
TABLE 2		Population Totals ('000)					Annual Growth Rate (in %)		
S. No.	States/Union Territories	1951	1971	1991	2011	100*P(11)/P 51)	1951-71	71-91	91-2011
16	Maharashtra	32,003	50,412	78,937	1,12,374	351.1	2.30%	2.20%	1.80%
17	Manipur	578	1,073	1,837	2,570	444.7	3.10%	2.70%	1.70%
18	Meghalaya	606	1,012	1,775	2,967	489.6	2.60%	2.80%	2.60%
19	Mizoram	196	332	690	1,097	559.8	2.60%	3.70%	2.30%
20	Nagaland	213	516	1,210	1,979	928.9	4.40%	4.30%	2.50%
21	Odisha	14,646	21,945	31,660	41,974	286.6	2.00%	1.80%	1.40%
22	Punjab	9,161	13,551	20,282	27,743	302.8	2.00%	2.00%	1.60%
23	Rajasthan	15,971	25,766	44,006	68,548	429.2	2.40%	2.70%	2.20%
24	Sikkim	138	210	406	611	442.4	2.10%	3.30%	2.00%
25	Tamil Nadu	30,119	41,199	55,859	72,147	239.5	1.60%	1.50%	1.30%
26	Tripura	639	1,556	2,757	3,674	574.9	4.40%	2.90%	1.40%
27	Uttaranchal	2,946	4,493	7,051	10,086	342.4	2.10%	2.30%	1.80%
28	Uttar Pradesh	60,674	83,849	1,32,062	1,99,812	331.5	1.70%	2.30%	2.10%
29	West Bengal	26,300	44,312	68,078	91,276	347.1	2.60%	2.10%	1.50%
30	Union Territory	484	1,013	2,023	3,335	689.1	3.70%	3.50%	2.50%

10. What can be the potential Lok Sabha seats distribution after 2026 Delimitation?

How Delimitation Could Change Lok Sabha Dynamics

The current allotment of seats for states is loosely based on the 1971 Census. Carnegie Endowment estimates show that if seats are revised on the basis of projected population for 2026, some states could gain more seats while others may lose out

State	Current seats	Projected proportional seats (2026)	Possible loss/gain of seats (2026)
Tamil Nadu	39	31	-8
Andhra Pradesh+ Telangana	42	34	-8
Kerala	20	12	-8
West Bengal	42	38	-4
Odisha	21	18	-3
Karnataka	28	26	-2
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	-1
Punjab	13	12	-1
Uttarakhand	5	4	-1
Assam	14	14	0
Maharashtra	48	48	0
Chhattisgarh	11	12	+1
Delhi	7	8	+1
Gujarat	26	27	+1
Haryana	10	11	+1
Jharkhand	14	15	+1
Madhya Pradesh	29	33	+4
Rajasthan	25	31	+6
Bihar	40	50	+10
Uttar Pradesh	80	91	+11



11. Enlist states that will gain or lose seats?

WHO GAINS & WHO LOSES?

States Gaining the Most Seats:



States with Minimal or No Gains:



This poses a question: Should states be rewarded for over population growth or penalized?

Proportional representation

The number of seats in the Lok Sabha, based on the 1971 Census, was fixed at 543, when the population was 54.8 crore. However, since then, it has been frozen in order to encourage population control measures

Exhibit 1: If seats are retained at 543 and reapportioned among States based on 2026* population

State	Number of seats at present	Number of seats projected	Net Gain/(Loss)
Uttar Pradesh	80	91	11
Bihar	40	50	10
Rajasthan	25	31	6
Madhya Pradesh	29	33	4
Tamil Nadu	39	31	-8
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	34	-8
Kerala	20	12	-8
Karnataka	28	26	-2
Punjab	13	12	-1
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	-1
Uttarakhand	5	4	-1
Northeast-ern States (excluding Assam)	11	11	-

Exhibit 2 : If the number of seats is increased to 848 based on the 2026* population

State	Number of seats at present	Number of seats projected	Net Gain
Uttar Pradesh	80	143	63
Bihar	40	79	39
Rajasthan	25	50	25
Madhya Pradesh	29	52	23
Tamil Nadu	39	49	10
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	54	12
Kerala	20	20	-
Karnataka	28	41	13
Punjab	13	18	5
Himachal Pradesh	4	4	-
Uttarakhand	5	7	2
Northeast-ern States (excluding Assam)	11	11	-

Delimitation: Who loses how much?

BASED ON 2011 CENSUS

FOUR NORTH INDIAN STATES:

Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and UP — will collectively gain **22 seats**

FOUR SOUTHERN STATES:

Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana and Tamil Nadu will lose **17 seats**

BASED ON POPULATION PROJECTIONS IN 2026

- Bihar and Uttar Pradesh stand to gain **21 seats**
- Kerala and Tamil Nadu will have to forfeit **16 seats**

SOUTH'S SUCCESS STORIES

- Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Telangana account for **20%** of India's **140 crore** people
- They also outperform the rest of the country in health, education and economic prospects
- Have successfully implemented the national family planning policy



SOURCE: CARNEGIE
ENDOWMENT FOR
INTERNATIONAL PEACE

12. What is the Significance of Delimitation?

Significance	Analysis
Constitutional Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In India, delimitation is a constitutional mandate, with Article 82 of the Constitution requiring the allocation of Lok Sabha seats to be adjusted after each census.
Ensuring Proportional Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delimitation ensures fair representation in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies by adjusting the number of seats based on population changes. • It provides equal representation to equal segments of population thus upholding the democratic principle of "one citizen-one vote-one value."

Ensures Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delimitation readjusts the boundaries of territorial constituencies, delimitation aims to ensure equitable distribution of seats among different regions, considering population shifts over time.
Reservation of seats for SCs and STs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delimitation exercise conducted by the delimitation commission specifies seats in areas with sizable scheduled castes and scheduled tribes population which are to be reserved for those communities.
Maintaining Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delimitation helps maintain the balance of power between the states and the central government by ensuring that each state's representation in Parliament reflects its population.
Addressing Population Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• As populations change, delimitation ensures that constituencies remain representative of the current demographics, preventing disparities in representation.

13. What are the concerns raised due to the Delimitation exercise?

Proportional representation

The number of seats in the Lok Sabha, based on the 1971 Census, was fixed at 543, when the population was 54.8 crore. However, since then, it has been frozen in order to encourage population control measures

Exhibit 1: If seats are retained at 543 and reapportioned among States based on 2026* population

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Tamil Nadu	39	31	-8
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	34	-8
Kerala	20	12	-8
Karnataka	28	26	-2
Punjab	13	12	-1
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	-1
Uttarakhand	5	4	-1
Northeast-ern States (excluding Assam)	11	11	-

*projected figures

Exhibit 2 : If the number of seats is increased to 848 based on the 2026* population

State	Number of seats at present	Number of seats projected	Net Gain
Uttar Pradesh	80	143	63
Bihar	40	79	39
Rajasthan	25	50	25
Madhya Pradesh	29	52	23
Tamil Nadu	39	49	10
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	54	12
Kerala	20	20	-
Karnataka	28	41	13
Punjab	13	18	5
Himachal Pradesh	4	4	-
Uttarakhand	5	7	2
Northeast-ern States (excluding Assam)	11	11	-

Concerns	Description
Disparity in Political Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delimitation based solely on population growth disregards the progress of states with stable or declining populations. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, which have effectively controlled their populations, may lose political representation despite their significant contributions to the national economy (around 35% of India's GDP). • Southern states may feel penalized, leading to regional imbalances and frustration over reduced political influence.
Impact on the Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delimitation could shift political power towards northern and eastern states with higher population growth, disrupting India's federal balance. • This may deepen the North-South divide, marginalizing southern states and weakening the federal structure, which could spark political instability.
Loss of Influence for Regional Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional parties like DMK (Tamil Nadu) and JD(S) (Karnataka) could lose representation due to seat reductions, diminishing their bargaining power in national politics. • This could lead to stronger regional resistance to central policies and potentially fuel separatist movements, undermining national unity.
Urban vs. Rural Disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural areas with larger populations could gain more political influence, even though urban regions contribute more to the economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may lead to policies that prioritize rural interests over urban needs, potentially compromising governance efficiency.
Impact on Reserved Seats for SC, ST, and Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new delimitation process could disturb the allocation of reserved seats for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and women in various states. • The shifting of constituencies might reduce or alter the number of reserved seats, especially in states with declining populations, potentially impacting the representation and empowerment of these marginalized groups. • This could undermine the socio-economic empowerment efforts for SC, ST, and women, reducing their participation in the political process and limiting their voice in national governance.

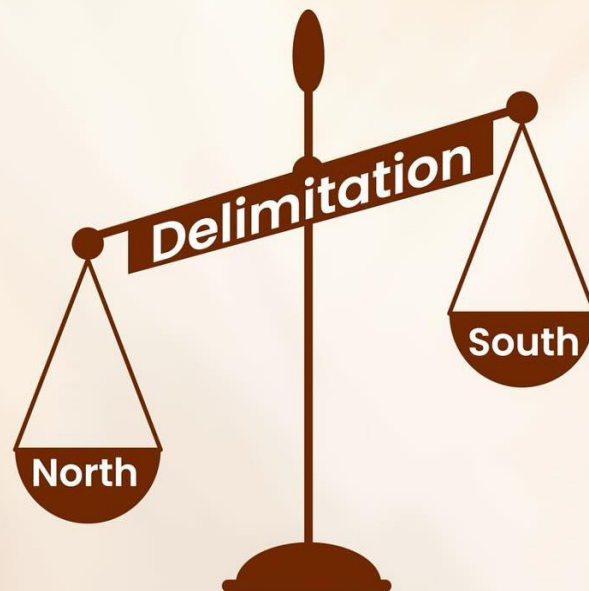
WHAT'S CHANGING AFTER 2026?

More People = More Seats

Population-heavy
states (North &
Central India) will
gain seats

States with controlled
population growth
(South & Northeast)
may lose seats

**Political power shift
incoming?**

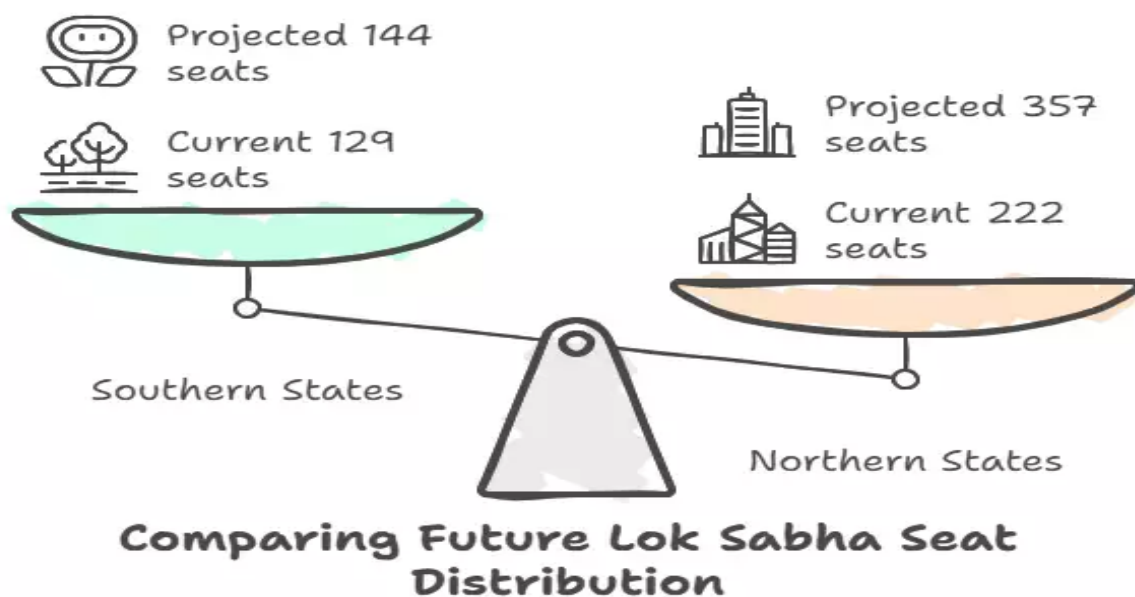


14. Why are southern states concerned with the upcoming Delimitation exercise?

“Our demand is clear... Do not penalise the southern states [with less Lok Sabha seats] for taking responsible measures to control population growth”

M.K. STALIN

Chief Minister, Tamil Nadu



Reasons for concern	Analysis
Reduced political influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South's parliamentary representation could drop from 24 per cent to 19 per cent, while Hindi-speaking states could see an increase of about 60 per cent.
Economic contribution vs representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Maharashtra are among India's highest tax-contributing states but receive only 30 percent of their contributions in return. • In contrast, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh receive 250-350 per cent more than what they contribute. • Southern states argue that economic contribution should be a factor in representation
Women's Reservation Act & SC/ST reservations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Women's Reservation Act, mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and state assemblies, will also play a role in delimitation. • Additionally, the process will affect SC/ST seat reservations, adding another layer of complexity to the issue.
Gerrymandering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern states are concerned about gerrymandering that is a practice of manipulating electoral boundaries to unfairly favor a party or group, distorting fair representation.

Discouragement to Good Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern states' population control efforts could lead to fewer seats in delimitation, unfairly favoring high-fertility states and discouraging good governance. • It leads to criticism of good policies and may prove counter productive. E.g., some politicians considered incentives for larger families.
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Good Governance Index:

- The index was prepared by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.**

Composite Ranking

#	Big States	Score	NE & Hill	Score	UTs	Score
1	Tamil Nadu	5.62	Himachal Pradesh	5.22	Pondicherry	4.69
2	Maharashtra	5.40	Uttarakhand	4.87	Chandigarh	4.68
3	Karnataka	5.10	Tripura	4.50	Delhi	4.39
4	Chhattisgarh	5.05	Mizoram	4.41	Daman & Diu	4.33
5	Andhra Pradesh	5.05	Sikkim	4.21	A&N Islands	4.12
6	Gujarat	5.04	Assam	4.07	D&N Haveli	3.12
7	Haryana	5.00	J & K	4.04	Lakshadweep	2.97
8	Kerala	4.98	Manipur	3.93		
9	Madhya Pradesh	4.85	Meghalaya	3.81		
10	West Bengal	4.84	Nagaland	3.55		
11	Telangana	4.83	Arunachal Pradesh	3.03		
12	Rajasthan	4.80				
13	Punjab	4.57				
14	Orissa	4.44				
15	Bihar	4.40				
16	Goa	4.29				
17	Uttar Pradesh	4.25				
18	Jharkhand	4.23				

15. What are the demands of the southern States?

	Number of elected seats (Lok Sabha)*	Projected population in 2026 (in thousands)**	Proportional seats (2026)	Gain/loss
India	543	1,425,908	-	-
Andhra Pradesh	25	53,709	20	-5
Assam	14	36,717	14	0
Bihar	40	132,265	50	+10
Chhattisgarh	11	31,211	12	+1
Gujarat	26	74,086	28	+2
Haryana	10	31,299	12	+2
Jharkhand	14	40,958	16	+2
Karnataka	28	68,962	26	-2
Kerala	20	36,207	14	-6
Madhya Pradesh	29	89,673	34	+5
Maharashtra	48	129,308	49	+1
Odisha	21	47,147	18	-3
Punjab	13	31,318	12	-1
Rajasthan	25	83,642	32	+7
Tamil Nadu	39	77,546	30	-9
Telangana	17	38,636	15	-2
Uttar Pradesh	80	242,859	92	+12
West Bengal	42	100,522	38	-4

Sources: * Election Commission of India; ** Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections (2020); National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Note: Calculation of population per seat is done by dividing projected population of the country for 2026 by total number of current elected seats in Lok Sabha, $1,425,908,000/543 = 2,625,982$ (rounded off). If we set aside the populations and seats of smaller states and union territories, the quota per seat for the major states will not change significantly.

- **Southern states** argue that a **delimitation exercise** based **solely on population** will **reduce their political representation** in Parliament.
- They question why they **should be penalised for successfully implementing population control measures**, while states that have not made similar efforts will be rewarded.
- The **southern states** want the freeze to be extended till **2056**, to allow for **proper implementation of population stabilisation measures** in states such as **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Jharkhand**.
- If the **number of seats** remains fixed at **543** and **delimitation** is based on **post-2026 population figures**, **southern India** could lose **over 20 seats**, which may be **redistributed to northern states**.

- Even with an increase to 848 seats, **Uttar Pradesh could gain over 60**, while the **entire southern region would receive fewer than 40 additional seats**.

Malapportionment in the Lok Sabha, 2011 (actual) and 2026 (projected)

State	Current Seats	Proportional Seats (2011)	Over- and Under-representation (2011)	Proportional Seats (2026)	Over- and Under-representation (2026)
Tamil Nadu	39	32	+7	31	+8
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	37	+5	34	+8
Kerala	20	15	+5	12	+8
Odisha	21	18	+3	18	+3
West Bengal	42	40	+2	38	+4
Karnataka	28	27	+1	26	+2
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	+1	3	+1
Punjab	13	12	+1	12	+1
Uttarakhand	5	4	+1	4	+1
Assam	14	14	0	14	0
Jammu and Kashmir	6	6	0	6	0
Chhattisgarh	11	11	0	12	-1
Delhi	7	7	0	8	-1
Maharashtra	48	49	-1	48	0
Gujarat	26	27	-1	27	-1
Haryana	10	11	-1	11	-1
Jharkhand	14	15	-1	15	-1
Madhya Pradesh	29	32	-3	33	-4
Rajasthan	25	30	-5	31	-6
Bihar	40	46	-6	50	-10
Uttar Pradesh	80	88	-8	91	-11

16. What is the Centre's view on concerns raised over delimitation exercise?

- The Centre's stance on the issue remains unclear. The only official statement so far came from Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who assured that no southern state would lose seats but would instead gain additional constituencies on a pro-rata basis.
- However, political parties are seeking clarity on whether the pro-rata distribution will be based on the current seat percentage or on the population figures.



BIG PUSH Shah with BJP state chief Annamalai and others, Coimbatore, Feb. 26

“Mr Stalin, the Modi government has made it clear that after delimitation, on pro rata basis, not a single seat will be reduced in any southern state”

AMIT SHAH, Union Minister of Home

17. What alternative approaches can be considered?

Approaches	Analysis	Advantages
Multi-factor Representation Model (Population + Economic Contribution + Governance)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This model introduces a weighted allocation formula where representation is not solely based on population but considers economic and governance factors. Formula for Seat Allocation: Factors Considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population Weight (50%): Traditional population-based seat allocation Economic Weight (30%): GDP contribution, tax revenue, industrial output Governance Weight (20%): Literacy rate, healthcare infrastructure, per capita income, HDI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewards states with good economic and social indicators. Encourages better governance rather than just population growth. Reduces resentment from southern states.
Balanced Representation for Low-Growth States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A state's population still determines its representation, but with diminishing returns—a larger population does not automatically mean proportionally more seats. States with smaller but stable populations retain a baseline minimum representation. Implementation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevents extreme underrepresentation of states with low population growth. Encourages national unity by balancing interests of all regions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define baseline representation (e.g., every state gets at least X seats). • Apply a logarithmic scale to population-based seat allocation, ensuring a cap on extreme variations. 	
Increase Lok Sabha Strength Instead of Redistributing Seats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of reducing seats from some states, the total number of Lok Sabha seats should be increased to accommodate population shifts. <p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Lok Sabha seats from 543 to 600+. • Allocate new seats to growing states without reducing seats from states with stable populations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures northern states get fair representation without penalizing the south. • Politically feasible as no state loses seats.
Rajya Sabha as an alternative channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lok Sabha remains based on population, but southern and low-growth states get increased Rajya Sabha representation to compensate. • Rajya Sabha's role in national policy making is strengthened, ensuring these states retain strong influence. <p>Implementation:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains balance between population-based representation and federal unity. • Avoids need for constitutional amendments in Lok Sabha seat allocation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Rajya Sabha seats for states losing representation in Lok Sabha. • Give Rajya Sabha more veto power in key national policies. 	
Performance-Based Governance Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of using seat allocation as the only method of balancing power, states with good education, health, and economic indicators receive national policy advantages. • These could include higher financial grants, priority in infrastructure projects, or greater policy influence. <p>Implementation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Governance Index that evaluates states annually. • Tie national funding and policy influence to governance performance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages states to focus on long-term development instead of just population growth. • Politically feasible without changing seat allocation drastically.
Delimitation Freeze Until 2041.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postpone delimitation to 2041, allowing all states time to stabilize their population growth rates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents backlash and instability. • Encourages nationwide population control before seat allocation changes.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR US?

Your MP's power could change

Some MPs may represent twice as many people as others.

Southern states fear reduced influence

Fewer seats = less say in national policies.

Electoral strategies may shift

Parties will rethink where to focus their campaigns.



18. Enlist a few International Practices Related to Delimitation?

Countries	Process of Delimitation
USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of seats in the House of Representatives (the equivalent of our Lok Sabha) has been capped at 435 since 1913.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of the country has increased almost four times from 9.4 crore in 1911 to an estimated 33.4 crore in 2023. • The seats among the States are redistributed after every Census through the ‘method of equal proportion’. • This does not result in any significant gain or loss for any of the States. • For example, based on the Census of 2020, the reapportionment has resulted in no change in the number of seats for 37 States. • Texas gained two seats, five other States gained one seat each and seven States lost one seat each.
European Union (EU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the European Union (EU) Parliament which consists of 720 members, the number of seats is divided between 27 member countries based on the principle of ‘degressive proportionality’. • Under this principle, the ratio of population to the number of seats shall increase as the population increases. For example, Denmark with a population of around 60 lakh has 15 seats (average population of 4 lakh per member) as against Germany with a population of 8.3 crore having 96 seats (average population of 8.6 lakh per member).

19. What is the relevance of the topic for UPSC CSE?

- **For Prelims:** Delimitation Exercise, Lok Sabha, Legislative Assembly, Chief Election Commissioner, Special Status, Finance Commission.
- **For Mains:** Key features of delimitation. Associated concerns of southern states wrt upcoming delimitation and way forward.

Some previous years prelims questions.

Q1. How many Delimitation Commissions have been constituted by the Government of India till December 2023? **(2024)**

- (a) One
- (b) Two
- (c) Three
- (d) Four

Ans: (d)

Some previous years mains questions.

Q1. Discuss the procedures to decide the disputes arising out of the election of a Member of the Parliament or State Legislature under The Representation of the People Act, 1951. What are the grounds on which the election of any returned candidate may be declared void? What remedy is available to the aggrieved party against the decision? Refer to the case laws. **(2022-15 Marks)**

Q2 Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in the light of the evolution of the Model Code of Conduct. **(2022-15 Marks)**

Some questions from this year and previous years interview transcripts.

Board Dinesh Dasa sir:

- What is the issue of delimitation in the country
- How can it be solved?

Board BB Swain Sir:

- What is delimitation? Concerns with it?
- What is the relationship of delimitation with the Women's Reservation Bill?
- Why are Southern states concerned about delimitation? Any suggestions to resolve?
- Why is the census needed?

Board BB Swain sir:

- What is delimitation & what are controversies around it ?
- What steps has the Govt taken to address delimitation controversies?

Board BB Swain sir:

- What is delimitation?
- What are the Constitutional provisions wrt Delimitation?
- Why was it frozen?
- Till when it is frozen?

Some questions for QUIZ.

Q1. With reference to Delimitation Commission consider the following statements:

1. It is appointed by the Parliament and works in collaboration with the Election Commission of India.

2. The Constitution has provided to establish a tribunal for resolving the dispute arising out of the orders of the Commission.
3. The Delimitation Commission is mandated to identify the seats to be reserved for Other backward Classes (OBCs) in every state.

Which of the statements given above is/are incorrect?

- (a) All are incorrect
- (b) 1 and 3 Only
- (c) 1 and 2 Only
- (d) 2 and 3 only

Ans: (a)

Some questions for POLL.

Q1. Do you think Delimitation should not be solely based on population?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

Q2. Should India freeze the parliamentary constituencies based on the 1971 Census population by another 25 years?

- (a) YES
- (b) NO
- (c) Can't say.

