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Delimitation Post-2026: Balancing Federalism and Population Disparities

The upcoming post-2026 delimitation has sparked debates regarding federal representation between northern and southern states.

Delimitation is the process of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies based on recent census data.

KEY EXAM POINTS

- **Delimitation** aims to uphold the democratic principle of equal representation, ensuring **one person, one vote, one value**.
- Post-**2026** delimitation is tied to the first decennial **Census** conducted after the year **2026**.
- Constitutional mandates under **Article 82** empower Parliament to enact a **Delimitation Act** after every decennial Census.
- **Article 170** governs the corresponding readjustment and delimitation of territorial constituencies in **State Legislative Assemblies**.
- A pure population-based seat allocation risks reducing the **political representation** of **southern states** that successfully controlled population growth.

DID YOU KNOW..!?

The **42nd Constitutional Amendment Act** of 1976 froze the readjustment of Lok Sabha seats based on the **1971 Census** until the year 2000.

The **84th Constitutional Amendment Act** of 2001 extended this freeze on total parliamentary seats until the first Census taken after **2026**.

The **87th Constitutional Amendment Act** of 2003 permitted intra-state constituency rationalisation based on the **2001 Census** figures.

India has set up four **Delimitation Commissions** previously: in **1952, 1962, 1972, and 2002**.

The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the **President of India** and functions in collaboration with the **Election Commission of India**.

A Delimitation Commission is typically headed by a retired **Supreme Court judge**.

Under **Article 329(a)**, orders issued by the Delimitation Commission have the force of law and cannot be questioned in any court.

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Delimitation Commission orders hold the force of law and are barred from judicial challenge under Article 329(a).

Syllabus Relevance: Crucial for Group 1/2 mains and prelims questions on Articles 82, 170, 329 and Constitutional Amendments on delimitation.

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