Polity & Governance · GS - II

Compare the principles of population-based representation and federal equity in the context of delimitation in India. How can the constitutional framework reconcile these competing considerations?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 27/11/2026	GS - II	Polity & Governance

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Article 81, Article 82, Article 368, demographic variation, federal balance, representation equality, delimitation, constitutional safeguards

Model Answer

Delimitation determines the territorial distribution of legislative representation. In India, it involves balancing the democratic principle of population-based representation with the need to maintain equitable political participation among constituent States.

Two competing principles

1. **Representation by population:** Equal representation seeks to ensure that the vote of each citizen carries broadly comparable weight. Population changes can therefore justify readjustment of constituencies.
2. **Federal equity:** States that have achieved demographic stabilisation may be concerned that population-based redistribution could reduce their relative influence in national decision-making.
3. **Uniform seat expansion:** Increasing seats by an identical percentage may expand Parliament's capacity but does not necessarily eliminate differences in population represented by individual MPs.

Constitutional considerations

1. **Article 81:** Establishes the framework for Lok Sabha composition and representation of States and Union Territories.
2. **Article 82:** Provides for readjustment following each census, subject to constitutional provisions.
3. **Article 368:** Any proposed constitutional restructuring must follow the applicable amendment procedure, including state ratification where constitutionally required.

Possible reconciliation

A transparent process should consider population, regional representation, demographic performance and the federal consequences of redistribution. Consultation with States, clear constitutional safeguards and publicly accessible delimitation criteria can strengthen legitimacy.

Conclusion

Delimitation should uphold democratic equality without weakening the federal character of the Union. Its legitimacy depends on a constitutionally sound, transparent and broadly consultative process.

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