Polity & Governance · GS - II

Why has population-based delimitation become a contentious issue in Indian federalism? Examine its constitutional and political implications.

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

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Delimitation, Article 82, population representation, constitutional freeze, demographic transition, North-South divide, federal balance, cooperative federalism

Model Answer

Delimitation is the process of readjusting electoral constituency boundaries and representation based on population. Although it seeks to ensure democratic equality, its implications extend to India's federal structure.

Reasons for the controversy

1. **Uneven population growth:** Northern and southern states have experienced different demographic trends, affecting their relative share of the national population.
2. **Population stabilisation:** Southern states argue that successful family planning efforts should not result in reduced political influence.
3. **Representation imbalance:** A population-based increase in parliamentary seats may alter the relative political weight of different states.
4. **Federal concerns:** Changes in representation can influence national policymaking and the balance of regional interests.
5. **Political disagreement:** Parties and state governments have expressed differing positions on the methodology and timing of delimitation.

Constitutional implications

Article 82 provides for readjustment following a Census. Constitutional amendments have maintained a freeze on the inter-state allocation of Lok Sabha seats until the first Census after 2026.

The DMK's continued opposition, reiterated by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, reflects concerns about the possible consequences for southern states.

Way Forward

- Build consensus through consultations with all states.
- Ensure transparency in the delimitation methodology.
- Examine safeguards for states that have achieved demographic stabilisation.
- Balance population-based representation with federal equity.

Conclusion

Delimitation must uphold democratic equality without undermining cooperative federalism. A transparent and consultative approach is essential to maintain the balance between population representation and regional interests.

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