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Correcting the Democratic Imbalance: The Imperative of Delimitation in India's Post-Freeze Era

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Abstract
India's parliamentary seat distribution has remained unchanged since the 42nd Constitutional Amendment of 1976, despite the population increasing from 55 crore in 1971 to 143 crore in 2025. The freeze was intended to prevent states that had successfully controlled population growth from losing representation, but it has resulted in significant disparities: the average Member of Parliament (MP) now represents over 17 lakh people, compared to 6.8 lakh in 1971. Such imbalances undermine the equity of representation and the efficiency of governance, particularly in high-growth states.
This paper examines the historical and constitutional context of India's delimitation policy and evaluates the country's representation needs using Taagepera's cube root law of assembly size. It incorporates a state-by-state analysis of population-to-seat ratios and assesses the proportionality of Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) fund allocations. By combining demographic modelling, mathematical analysis, and fiscal equity evaluation, the study proposes an evidence-based framework for determining the optimal size and distribution of parliamentary seats post-2026. The approach offers lessons for other large federal democracies facing similar representation challenges.

Keywords: Delimitation, Parliamentary Representation, Taagepera's Cube Root Law, MPLADS Fund, Population-to-Seat Ratio, Electoral Reform, India

Introduction
When India got independence, it chose to become parliamentary democracy drawing upon the administrative infrastructure and institutional familiarity developed during the colonial era. To execute this two houses Lok Sabha (House of People), with maximum 500 seats, under article 81 and Rajya Sabha (Council of state), with total strength of not more than 250 seats, under article 80 was formed. Provision was made to redrawing of parliamentary and legislative assembly constituencies after each census to ensure equitable representation based on population under Article 82. To operationalise this mandate, Delimitation Commission Act, 1952 was enacted, although the first general election (1951–52) was conducted under provisional constituency arrangements.
The first Delimitation Commission of India was constituted in 1952 under chairmanship of Justice Sudhi Ranjan Das**,** a judge of the Supreme Court, and it relied on data from the 1951 Census. The recommendations of the 1952 Commission were implemented in time for the second general election in 1957 [1]. Its primary responsibilities included allocating seats among states, redrawing constituency boundaries, and ensuring proper representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes through reserved constituencies. This marked the beginning of India's institutional process for adjusting representation in response to demographic shifts, reinforcing the principle of population-based democracy. This delimitation lead to formation of 401 constituencies, but out of these 91 were double member constituency, and 2 were for nominated Anglo Indians, therefore, the number of seats was 494 seats in the Lok Sabha and 216 for Rajya Sabha [1].
The Second Delimitation Commission of India was constituted in 1963, chaired by justice K. Subba Rao this commission played a crucial role in reorganising constituencies following the creation of new states and linguistic boundaries in the late 1950s and early 1960s. As a result, the total number of Lok Sabha seats was increased to 521, and the new constituency boundaries were implemented for the 1967 general elections. The Commission also

addressed the need for proportionate representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Importantly, the Commission ended the provision of double-member constituencies, which had previously allowed two MPs to be elected from a single constituency. This delimitation exercise reinforced the constitutional commitment to population-based democracy and laid the groundwork for more structured seat allocations in future elections.

The Third Delimitation Commission was established in 1973 under the Delimitation Act, 1972, and was chaired by Justice J.L. Kapur. It was tasked with redrawing the boundaries of parliamentary and legislative assembly constituencies based on the 1971 Census, a period marked by steep population growth and widening demographic imbalances between states. The Commission's recommendations were implemented for the 1977 general elections, like it increased the number of elected Lok Sabha seats to 552. However, this delimitation exercise coincided with a major constitutional development: the enactment of the 42nd Amendment (1976), which introduced a freeze on the total number of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies until the year 2000, primarily because the government was trying to implement population control policies [3], and this could have disincentivising states that had effectively implemented population control measures. This freeze was later extended by the 84th Constitutional Amendment (2001), which pushed the moratorium on seat reallocation until after the first census conducted post-2026, while still allowing the redrawing of constituency boundaries based on the 2001 Census. The 87th Amendment (2003) further clarified that delimitation could be conducted using the 2001 population figures, but without altering the number of seats per state. These amendments collectively shaped the framework within which the Fourth Delimitation Commission (2002) operated, leading to a boundary reconfiguration without altering seat allocations, and were implemented for the 2009 general elections [4]. Thus, while the core principle of population-based representation remained intact, these amendments effectively stalled seat expansion for over four decades, creating a growing disconnect between demographic realities and parliamentary representation.

The government's decision to freeze the allocation of parliamentary seats was primarily aimed at not penalizing states that successfully implemented population control measures**.** From that perspective, the policy was justified, as it sought to encourage demographic regulation. However, this freeze has also resulted in significant under-representation over time. In 1971, India's population stood at approximately 55 crore, and under the then existing arrangement, considering both Houses of Parliament and assuming no vacant seats each Member of Parliament (MP) represented about 6.8 lakh people. In contrast, as per the World Bank's current estimate, India's population in 2025 is around 143 crore, meaning that each MP now represents over 17 lakh people nearly three times the 1971 figure. A state-wise analysis reveals that several states with large populations are disproportionately under-represented, highlighting the widening gap between population size and political representation.

Southern states, which have been more successful in implementing population control measures, often express concern that delimitation would reduce their representation and influence at the Centre. While their apprehension is understandable, a nation cannot allow a significant portion of its population to remain under-represented indefinitely. Such imbalance not only distorts the vote value, but also undermines the efficiency and effectiveness of individual Members of Parliament (MPs). The objective of this paper, therefore, is to underscore the necessity of conducting delimitation and to explore what might constitute an optimal level of representation in the Indian Parliament.

The population pressure

As mentioned earlier the population of India has increased enormously, but the representation remains the same. There is uneven growth of population throughout the country. India's has achieved the Replacement level of fertility of 2.1, the average number of children per woman needed to maintain a stable population size. But there are still 5 states that has the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) higher that the country's average, namely Bihar (3.0), Jharkhand (2.3), Manipur (2.2), Meghalaya, (2.9), Uttar Pradesh (2.4). Also there are few states and Union Territory where the TFR is below 1.4. This proof that the even though the country's population have grown at a rapid scale, the growth is not even and there are regions that have higher population growth than the other.

Table 1: Population of 28 Indian States and 08 Union Territory, as of 2025 (in decreasing order). (8)

S. No	State / Union Territory	Population in 2025
1	Uttar Pradesh	241,265,000
2	Bihar	131,041,000
3	Maharashtra	128,659,000
4	West Bengal	100,202,000
5	Madhya Pradesh	88,985,000
6	Rajasthan	83,060,000
7	Tamil Nadu	77,394,000
8	Gujarat	73,513,000
9	Karnataka	68,679,000
10	Andhra Pradesh	53,586,000
11	Odisha	46,953,000
12	Jharkhand	40,626,000
13	Telangana	38,499,000
14	Assam	36,493,000
15	Kerala	36,111,000
16	Punjab	31,188,000
17	Haryana	31,057,000
18	Chhattisgarh	30,982,000
UT1	Delhi	22,277,000
UT2	Jammu & Kashmir	13,831,000
19	Uttarakhand	11,913,000
20	Himachal Pradesh	7,555,000
21	Tripura	4,232,000
22	Meghalaya	3,417,000
23	Manipur	3,289,000
24	Nagaland	2,279,000
UT3	Puducherry	1,732,000
25	Arunachal Pradesh	1,594,000
26	Goa	1,593,000
UT4	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	1,479,000
27	Mizoram	1,264,000
UT5	Chandigarh	1,259,000
28	Sikkim	703,000
UT6	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	405,000
UT7	Ladakh	304,000
UT8	Lakshadweep	69,000

As per the report of the Technical Group by the National Commission on population, Uttar Pradesh remains the most populous state in India, with an estimated 24.13 crore residents in 2025, representing nearly 17% of the nation's total population [8]. Bihar has now surpassed Maharashtra to become the second most populous state, with around 13.1 crore people. Nearly half of India's population resides in the five largest states by population, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. Together, the ten most populous states account for 74% of the country's population. In contrast, the 12 least populated states or union territories contribute just 1%, and the 21 smallest by population make up only 10% of the total.

Albeit the population of the entire country has grown significantly, it is important to recognize that some states have experienced much sharper increases than others, making delimitation more urgent in certain regions. Adequate representation is not only essential to strengthen democracy but also crucial for balanced development. For instance, if we consider both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha seats together, Uttar Pradesh currently has 80 and 31 seats respectively. With its present population, each Member of Parliament (M.P.) in the state represents approximately 21.74 lakh people. In Bihar, this figure is even higher, at around 23.4 lakh people per M.P., while in Maharashtra it stands at 19.2 lakh. Comparatively, larger states with relatively smaller populations show lower ratios like Telangana at 16.4 lakh, Tamil Nadu at 13.58 lakh, and Karnataka at 17.16 lakh people per M.P. This analysis demonstrates that although under-representation is a nationwide issue, the urgency of delimitation is far greater in some states than in others.

Malapportionment and Development

Although under- representation is a problem for the whole nation. Malapportionment is even bigger problem. Malapportionment refers to the discrepancy between the shares of legislative seats and the shares of population held by geographical units, which is distinct from gerrymandering, the biased drawing of electoral districts [10]. Considering different Indian state and their difference in population, based on the current seat freeze scenario there are states that are under- represented more than the other.

Several Scholar have identified this problem and gave their estimation like, one of the earliest study done on Malapportionment in India was by Alistair McMillan, he documented how drastic under and over representation is among the states. According to the 2001 Census, for instance, McMillan calculated that Tamil Nadu should have had 7 fewer Lok Sabha seats, while Uttar Pradesh should have gained 7 more, with the current seat freeze scenario.

Milan Vaishnav and Jamie Hintson revisited and recalculated this malapportionment using Webster Method with the 2011 census and projected population of 2026. These updated numbers caused sizable shifts in political power. Four north Indian states (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh) as per their estimation would collectively gain 22 seats, while four southern states (Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu) would lose 17 seats.

Based on their population projections, these trends will only intensify as time goes on. In 2026, for instance, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh alone stand to gain 21 seats while Kerala and Tamil Nadu would forfeit as many as 16 [12].

Table 2: Over- and Under- representation as per Milan Vaishnav and Jamie Hintson (Webster Method). [12]

State	Current Seats	Proportional Seats (2011)	Over-/Under-rep (2011)	Proportional Seats (2026)	Over-/Under-rep (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	13	+1	13	+1
Jammu and Kashmir	6	5	+1	5	+1
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

This somewhat concludes that there are states that are in much dire need of delimitation than other, as the four most under- represented states i.e. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, are also the states with the lowest per – capita income [13].

A study also found that malapportionment shapes economic outcomes, with districts enjoying greater legislative representation showing faster development, highlighting how unequal political representation produces uneven patterns of growth [14]. Malapportionment is not just a democratic deficit but also a developmental one, since underrepresented regions lag in growth while overrepresented areas benefit from enhanced political accountability and state support [14].

The Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS), instituted in 1993–94, is a centrally sponsored initiative designed to facilitate the creation of durable community assets in response to locally articulated developmental needs. The scheme prioritizes interventions in critical sectors such as potable water, education, public health, sanitation, and road infrastructure. While it is entirely financed by the Government of India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation assumes responsibility for policy design, fund disbursement, and oversight of its implementation [15]. Each Member of Parliament is entitled to an annual allocation of ₹5 crore under this scheme. But, when this amount is distributed based on the population and the number of Members of Parliament (M.P.) in a given state, stark disparities emerge. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, one M.P. has on average only about ₹23 per person to spend, while in Bihar the figure is approximately ₹21.37. In contrast, states such as Tamil Nadu and Kerala enjoy significantly higher per capita entitlements, with around ₹37 and ₹40 per person, respectively. This implies that Kerala has nearly double the per capita allocation compared to Bihar and almost twice that of Uttar Pradesh, underscoring the inequities created by the present system. Although the central government provides financial resources to the states under the umbrella of federalism, the responsibility of utilizing these resources for development rests with the state government. Therefore, the actual usage of these resources largely lies in the hands of the party in power, and an individual representative has only a limited role in determining their allocation. As a result, such funds are generally channelled into large-scale development projects rather than constituency-specific initiatives. Hence, the major issue this research seeks to highlight is that while each representative is allocated equal funds for their constituency, the population size varies significantly across constituencies. This results in unequal per capita resource distribution.

Interestingly, as pointed out earlier most of the states that are more under-represented, also rank among the lowest on per capita income [14]. This implies that they may lack the fiscal capacity to mobilize adequate resources for their own development. On the other hand, states with very large populations not only face the burden of stretched resources but also exhibit greater social, cultural, and economic heterogeneity. This makes governance more complex, as the needs of different groups within the same constituency may vary widely. Therefore, the demand for increasing the number of representatives in such states is particularly urgent, as it would allow for more focused and inclusive development, ensuring that diverse voices and local issues are better represented in policymaking.

Malapportionment and Equality

As Abraham Lincoln's famous quote on democracy states, *"of the people, by the people, and for the people."* India embraced this foundational principle and, in doing so, adopted a just system to ensure the smooth functioning of democracy. One of its most basic features was the idea of *"one person, one vote"*, a system where every citizen, irrespective of caste, gender, religion, or region, would have equal power. While this principle continues to hold true on paper, in practice it has been increasingly undermined by malapportionment and the prolonged freeze on delimitation, leading to a gradual dilution of this ideal.

An aspect of malapportionment is the difference in the electorate per constituency ratio. Below is the table showing the total electorate in each state (data from Election Commission), along with that the researcher have calculated the electors per state. It is to note here that, only Lok Sabha seats are taken into consideration as the direct elections take place in the lower house of the parliament.

Table 3: State-wise Number of Electors (in decreasing order) along with the Lok Sabha Seats and Electors per seats.

State/UT	Total Electors	Lok Sabha Seats	Electors per Seat
Uttar Pradesh	154,403,112	80	1,930,039
Maharashtra	93,061,760	48	1,938,787
Bihar	77,259,579	40	1,931,490
West Bengal	76,124,780	42	1,812,495
Tamil Nadu	62,404,947	39	1,600,127
Madhya Pradesh	56,668,852	29	1,954,098
Karnataka	54,772,332	28	1,956,869
Rajasthan	53,508,010	25	2,140,320
Gujarat	48,009,945	26	1,846,537
Andhra Pradesh	41,401,887	25	1,656,075
Odisha	33,716,965	21	1,605,570
Telangana	33,232,318	17	1,954,842
Kerala	27,807,008	20	1,390,350
Jharkhand	25,877,892	14	1,848,421
Assam	24,572,114	14	1,755,151
Punjab	21,567,196	13	1,659,784
Chhattisgarh	20,678,667	11	1,879,879
Haryana	20,187,911	10	2,018,791
NCT of Delhi	15,214,638	7	2,173,520
Jammu & Kashmir	8,802,348	5	1,760,470
Uttarakhand	8,431,101	5	1,686,220
Himachal Pradesh	5,711,969	4	1,427,992
Tripura	2,870,896	2	1,435,448
Meghalaya	2,230,451	2	1,115,226
Manipur	2,051,357	2	1,025,679
Nagaland	1,325,383	1	1,325,383
Goa	1,179,644	2	589,822
Puducherry	1,024,024	1	1,024,024
Arunachal Pradesh	898,442	2	449,221
Mizoram	861,327	1	861,327
Chandigarh	660,552	1	660,552
Sikkim	466,643	1	466,643
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	417,236	2	208,618
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	315,745	1	315,745
Ladakh	190,576	1	190,576
Lakshadweep	57,953	1	57,953

Analysis of the above data reveals significant disparities in vote value across Indian states. Rajasthan**,** the largest state by area, has each Member of Parliament representing on average more than 2.14 million electors**,** compared to 1.93 million in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar**,** 1.39 million in Kerala, and just 58,000 in Lakshadweep**.** This means that a voter in Lakshadweep enjoys 33–37 times greater voting power than a voter in the large northern states. Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar record almost identical elector-to-seat ratios, indicating similar levels of representation. By contrast, the National Capital Territory of Delhi has an even weaker vote value, with its electors being more diluted than those of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, or Karnataka.

The aim of this analysis is to highlight the disparities in vote value across different states in India. While the Constitution

guarantees the Right to Equality, in practice, large sections of the population are subjected to representational inequality, whether inadvertently or by design. The freeze on delimitation was introduced with the intention of not penalising states that successfully implemented population control measures**,** yet this came at the cost of creating malapportionment within the country. As a result, citizens in densely populated states find their votes carrying significantly less weight compared to those in smaller states and union territories. This imbalance raises critical concerns about the dilution of democratic equality and the erosion of the principle of *'one person, one vote, one value.'*

Malapportionment has also impacted the representation of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and the Scheduled Tribes (STs) in Indian parliament. SCs and STs are entitled to reserved seats the Constitution in proportion to the share of their population as per the Census. But, as the size of the Lok Sabha has remained locked at the 1971 level, those states that have grown more quickly in terms of population e.g., Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, are under-represented and those which are smaller or growing slowly are over-represented. Since some of these under-represented states also have sizeable SC/ST populations, the freeze actually cuts down the number of reserved constituencies these groups would otherwise be entitled to. This is undermining both the principle of proportionality on which political reservation is based and the constitutional purpose of ensuring proper political representation for historically marginalized groups. In reality, malapportionment not only skews the ratio of voters to representatives but also disproportionately truncates the descriptive and substantive representation of SCs and STs in Parliament.

The representation of women is India is also a major concern, as there are only 14.7% of women M. Ps [19] which is very low for a country this huge in terms of population. An increase in number of parliament seats will also increase their representation [20]. Equal representation of men and women in the legislative process can greatly enhance decision-making and empower both women and the country. A study by Ursula Daxecker provides important insights into how representational distortions created by malapportionment influence electoral dynamics and leads to electoral violence [10]. Analysing six parliamentary elections between 1991 and 2009, shows that overrepresented constituencies, where votes carry more weight, generally witness lower levels of electoral violence because of greater voter homogeneity and entrenched incumbent advantage [10]. In contrast, underrepresented or evenly apportioned constituencies experience higher levels of violence, as greater competition and reduced security for incumbents encourage the use of coercion. These findings are particularly significant in the Indian context, where the freeze on delimitation since 1976 (extended to 2026) has exacerbated representational inequalities across states [10]. While initially intended to protect states that achieved demographic stabilization, the freeze has unintentionally deepened disparities in vote value, thereby influencing not only the quality of representation but also the nature of electoral contestation. Daxecker's work thus highlights that malapportionment is not a passive distortion of democratic equality but an active determinant of electoral integrity, political stability, and federal balance in India.

The Way- Out

The discussion around the optimal legislative size goes back to ancient times where Plato advocated the use of numbers with convenient divisions: the ideal city should count 5,040 residents divided into four classes, and the council should consist of 360 members, who may be divided into four portions, generating ninety councillors for each class [21]. Whereas Aristotle gave a very ambiguous idea according to him, the maximum size of a municipal unit (the polis) should be defined as the number of people who could assemble in one place and hear an unamplified human voice [22]. Montesquieu advocated small territory for republic [23] and Rosseau noted that more the size of population lesser is their influence over government, therefore, he advocated small size for (direct) democracy, mid-size for aristocracy and large for the monarchy [24]. In India, Kautilya in his *Shadgun* Theory or Hexagonal Theory mentions that one *Janapada* or state should be have one village consisting of one hundred to five hundred families and the largest unit of the town consisting of 800 villages [25]. So, this discussion regarding the size of a constituency is a prolonged one. Recently, the Indian government announced that they will start the census in the coming year of 2026, this also made clear their intentions towards delimitation as the present delimitation of constituencies has been done on the basis of 2001 census figures under the provisions of Delimitation Act, 2002. Notwithstanding the above, the Constitution of India was specifically amended in 2002 not to have delimitation of constituencies till the first census after 2026. Thus, the present Constituencies carved out on the basis of 2001 census shall continue to be in operation till the first census after 2026 [1]. Countries like, United Kingdom has about 650 M.Ps for the population of 6.9 Crores, Pakistan has 336 M.Ps with the population of 24 crores and Canada has 343 M.Ps. for 4.1 crore people. On the other hand China has 3000 M.Ps which is highest in the world for its population of 143 crore people [26]. But the question is how should India (the most populous country in the world), decide the optimum number of seats required in the parliament?

Rein Taagepera in his work *The Size of National Assemblies* argues that less parliamentarian leads to weak representation and over load of work whereas, too many parliamentarians will lead to inefficiency in decision making. So, he proposed a cube root law by, analysing the balance between two types of communication channels- those between legislators and their constituents, and those among legislators themselves. He derived a general formula for the optimal assembly size(27) that is,

$$A \approx (2k)^{1/3} \cdot P^{1/3}$$

where A denotes the number of assembly members, P the total population, and k the proportion of politically mobilized citizens. This formulation implies that legislative size grows with the cube root of the population, moderated by the level of political mobilization. However, given the empirical difficulty of defining and measuring k consistently across states, Taagepera argued that the mobilization factor could be treated as a constant or ignored, thereby yielding the simplified and widely cited cube root law [28]:

$$A \approx P^{1/3}$$

This Heuristic Theory is often advocated as the desirable rule of thumb for the near optimum number of national assembly seats of the countries [29]. Some scholars have argued that country like U.S.A.is also under- represented as per this theory [30]. In fact, there are also countries, that are over- represented like United Kingdom, China, Italy and France [29].

If this theory is applied on India, then considering India's population

P = 143 crores,

So, $A= 143,00,00,000^{1/3}$

Therefore, $A = \sqrt[3]{143,00,00,000}$

Hence, A= 1,126 approx.

As per this cube root law India need 1126 seats in its parliament.

Today India has upper limit of 550 seats in Lok Sabha and 250 Seats in Rajya Sabha meaning 800 seats in total which is 326 seats less than the cube root law calculation. Now the next question arises what will be the apportionment of these seats? Currently, India does not follow any standard method of seats redistribution. Though the constitution provides provision for the proportional distribution of seats.

Albeit there are various methods that can be used like Webster Method or Hamilton Method but here, Huntington–Hill Method is used to calculate, as it is considered to be more reliable for apportionment. Country like U.S.A uses it for apportionment in House of Representatives, [31] and it is widely regarded as an effective and equitable approach for distributing legislative seats among states or regions based on population and is less biased.

Table 4: Proposed seat allotment of 1126 seats by cube root law based on Huntington–Hill method.

State/UT	Current Seats (LS+RS)	Proposed Seats based on Huntington–Hill Method	State/UT
Uttar Pradesh	111	191	+80
Bihar	56	104	+48
Maharashtra	67	102	+35
West Bengal	58	79	+21
Madhya Pradesh	40	71	+31
Rajasthan	35	66	+31
Tamil Nadu	57	61	+4
Gujarat	37	58	+21
Karnataka	40	54	+14
Andhra Pradesh	36	42	+6
Odisha	31	37	+6
Jharkhand	20	32	+12
Telangana	24	31	+7
Assam	21	29	+8
Kerala	29	29	0
Punjab	20	25	+5
Haryana	15	25	+10
Chhattisgarh	16	25	+9
Delhi (NCT)	10	18	+8
Jammu & Kashmir	9	11	+2
Uttarakhand	8	9	+1
Himachal Pradesh	7	6	–1
Tripura	3	3	0
Meghalaya	3	3	0
Manipur	3	3	0
Nagaland	2	2	0
Puducherry	2	1	–1
Arunachal Pradesh	3	1	–2
Goa	3	1	–2
Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	2	1	–1
Mizoram	2	1	–1
Chandigarh	1	1	0
Sikkim	2	1	–1
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1	1	0
Ladakh	1	1	0
Lakshadweep	1	1	0

The comparison between the current and proposed seat allocation for the states and union territories of India reveals significant variations that highlight issues of representational fairness and the need for delimitation. These disparities can be better understood when considering each state's population in proportion to its seats, expressed in crores and lakhs for clarity.

Uttar Pradesh**,** with a population of 24.13 crore, currently has 111 seats, meaning each seat represents approximately 21.7 lakhs people. The proposed increase to 191 seats would reduce this to about 12.6 lakhs per seat, addressing a severe case of underrepresentation with an addition of 80 seats. Similarly, Bihar, with 13.10 crore, presently has 56 seats, where each represents nearly 23.4 lakhs people, while the proposed 104 seats would cut this to 12.6 lakhs, reducing underrepresentation by 48 seats.

Maharashtra, having 12.87 crore, currently has 67 seats, implying about 19.2 lakhs per seat. The proposed allocation of 102 seats would bring this down to approximately 12.6 lakhs per seat, correcting its representational imbalance with

35 additional seats. Madhya Pradesh, with 8.90 crore, and Rajasthan, with 8.31 crore, also face similar underrepresentation, with each seat currently representing about 22.3 lakhs and 23.7 lakhs respectively, both proposed to be reduced to about 12.5 lakhs per seat with 31 more seats.

On the other hand, smaller states and union territories display overrepresentation. Goa, with a population of 15.93 lakh, currently holds 3 seats, meaning each seat represents only about 5.31 lakh people, whereas the proposed reduction to 1 seat would increase this to 15.93 lakh per seat, aligning it more closely with national standards of 12.5 lakhs per seats. Arunachal Pradesh, with 15.94 lakh, is another example where three seats currently result in about 5.31 lakh per seat, but the proposed one seat would represent the full population. Similarly, Puducherry (17.32 lakh), Mizoram (12.64 lakh), and Sikkim (7.03 lakh) are considered overrepresented, with seat allocations disproportionately favouring smaller populations.

States like Kerala (3.61 crore), Tripura (42.32 lakh), and Meghalaya (34.17 lakh) exhibit closer alignment between population and seats, with zero difference in allocation or a manageable variance that does not severely distort representation. Delhi (2.23 crore), currently underrepresented with 10 seats, is proposed to have 18 seats, improving its representation to 12.4 lakhs per seat.

These patterns highlight how malapportionment disproportionately affects larger states, diluting the weight of their citizens' votes, while smaller states maintain a much greater influence per voter due to lower population-to-seat ratios. The proposed changes aim to bring a better balance, ensuring that seats are distributed more equitably based on updated demographic data. By increasing the representation of populous states and moderating the influence of smaller states, the new allocation attempts to restore the democratic principle of *"one person, one vote,"* while still preserving a minimum representation to ensure that smaller regions are not excluded from national governance.

Ultimately, this analysis underscores the importance of periodic delimitation based on census data, ensuring that parliamentary representation remains aligned with population shifts. Without such recalibration, disparities will persist, weakening democratic legitimacy and public trust. The proposed changes represent a corrective step toward fairness, proportionality, and federal cohesion in India's legislative framework.

Conclusion

When India froze its parliamentary seat allocation, the primary objective was to encourage family planning and population control among states. However, over time, uneven population growth across regions has created significant challenges to the democratic principle of equal representation. As larger states continued to grow, their political voice became diluted, while smaller states retained disproportionate influence. This imbalance has had adverse effects on economic development, as underrepresented states struggled to secure adequate resources and policy attention. Moreover, regions facing underrepresentation have often witnessed heightened electoral tensions, including instances of violence, which further undermine political participation and stability. These issues have also affected the representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), as unequal seat distribution limits their ability to influence legislative outcomes and access development opportunities. Addressing these disparities is essential to preserving democratic fairness and ensuring inclusive economic and social progress. Rein Taagepera's, heuristic theory of cube root law can be a proposed solution for this problem where the country can try to achieve close to optimum number of seats in parliament. This will facilitate for better representation of every states in the parliament along with adequate representation to vulnerable sections of the society.

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