

Reimagining Parliamentary Equity: The Case for Fair Lok Sabha Seat Allocation

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Delimitation Latest News

- The issue of readjustment of Lok Sabha seats in the context of the new Census is being hotly debated in the country.

Introduction

- India's political landscape is looking at a significant transformation with the upcoming readjustment of Lok Sabha seats, set to occur after the 2026 Census.
- This realignment, mandated under **Articles 81 and 82 of the Constitution**, has sparked debates about equity, federal balance, and demographic justice.
- Contrary to popular usage, the debate isn't about **delimitation** (changing constituency boundaries), but rather about **seat allocation**, determining how many seats each state should have based on population.
- At the heart of the debate lies a critical question: Should states that failed to control population growth be rewarded with more seats in Parliament, thereby gaining disproportionate influence?

Understanding the Legal and Demographic Framework

- The last readjustment of seats in the Lok Sabha was carried out **based on the 1971 Census**.
- Despite **India's population rising from 54.79 crore in 1971 to an estimated 141 crore in 2025, the number of Lok Sabha seats has remained frozen at 543**.
- This freeze was introduced to give high-growth states time to stabilize population numbers and avoid penalizing those who implemented effective population control.
- As per Article 82, after each decennial Census, the allocation of Lok Sabha seats should reflect population changes.
- With the 2026 deadline approaching, this constitutional provision is back in the spotlight.

Disparities in Population Growth and Representation

- Northern states such as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have seen disproportionate population growth due to weaker implementation of family planning.
 - **Uttar Pradesh**: From 8.38 crore in 1971 to 24.1 crore in 2025
 - **Bihar**: From 4.21 crore in 1971 to 13.1 crore in 2025
- In contrast, southern states such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu have successfully stabilized their populations.
 - **Kerala**: From 2.14 crore in 1971 to 3.6 crore in 2025 (only 68% growth)
- This divergence has created fears in the South that readjustment based solely on population would drastically reduce their political influence.
- For example, if the standard 10 lakh people per constituency formula is used, Uttar Pradesh could jump from 80 to 240 seats, while Kerala would gain just 16 additional seats, despite decades of effective governance.

The Argument for Equity-Based Allocation

- The concept of India as a "Union of States," enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution, implies a federal structure rooted in equity.

- If representation is decided purely on the basis of population, without factoring in developmental performance or governance quality, states that controlled population growth will be effectively penalized.
- A possible solution is to use the state with the **lowest population growth** (Kerala, at 68%) as the baseline for increasing seats across all states.
- Under this approach:
 - Uttar Pradesh would get 134 seats
 - Kerala would get 34 (from 20)
 - Tamil Nadu around 66 (from 39)
- This method balances the need for democratic representation with fairness and encourages responsible governance.

The Broader Implications of Seat Allocation

- Raising the total Lok Sabha strength to 800 or more, as is possible with the new Parliament's chamber capacity, may superficially solve the problem but will still create a massive north-south divide in political power if done solely based on raw population numbers.
- Key concerns include:
 - Rewarding poor governance and high fertility rates with political influence
 - Marginalizing states that have demonstrated governance maturity
 - Undermining the federal structure and principle of cooperative federalism
- Political tensions are already brewing. Tamil Nadu's CM M.K. Stalin has taken the lead in voicing southern concerns.
- A recent Chennai conclave of southern and Punjab-based leaders reflects growing anxiety over losing political relevance due to population-based reallocation.

Way Ahead

- A rational, equitable approach is essential. Here's what can be considered:
 - **Adopt a fixed growth-based seat allocation multiplier**, such as 68%, across all states
 - **Delink representation from mere numbers**, and include performance indicators like human development, gender ratio, education levels, etc.
 - **Convene an inter-state commission** to create consensus on a balanced model
 - **Promote a long-term framework** where demography is aligned with development and governance performance

Conclusion

- India's upcoming Lok Sabha seat readjustment exercise must reflect not just demographic shifts but also fairness and federal harmony.
- A mechanical approach based solely on population threatens to fracture the spirit of cooperative federalism and penalize progressive states.
- A more sensitive, equity-driven formula, like using Kerala's growth rate as the national standard, can offer a balanced way forward.

- In a Union of States, every voice deserves fair and proportionate representation, not one dictated by fertility rates but by a shared commitment to progress.

Lok Sabha Seat Readjustment FAQs

Q1. Why is the Lok Sabha seat readjustment happening now?

Ans. It is mandated under Article 82 of the Constitution after every Census, with the next due after 2026.

Q2. What is the major concern regarding this seat allocation exercise?

Ans. Southern states fear loss of political influence due to lower population growth compared to northern states.

Q3. How does the current freeze on seats relate to population control efforts?

Ans. The freeze till 2026 was meant to incentivize population control and prevent penalizing progressive states.

Q4. What is the proposed equitable formula for seat redistribution?

Ans. A 68% seat increase across all states, based on Kerala's population growth since 1971, has been suggested.

Q5. How could unequal seat allocation affect India's democracy?

Ans. It could lead to political imbalance, undermine federal principles, and reward states with poor governance records.

Source : [TH](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/reimagining-parliamentary-equity-case-for-fair-lok-sabha-seat-allocation/>

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