



## EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

**GENERAL STUDIES 2: GOVERNANCE**  
**TOPIC: DELIMITATION**

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### Thinking beyond population count

#### Delimitation and Financial Devolution in India

- **Context:** Debate on delimitation and financial devolution is creating concerns in Parliament and State Assemblies, linked to India's federal structure and demographic divides.

#### Delimitation and Representation

- **Constitutional Freeze:** The freeze on parliamentary seats, in place since 1971, will end in 2026, raising concerns about political representation.
- **Historical Background:**
  - From 1951 to 1971, the number of Lok Sabha seats increased with population growth.
  - Population per seat increased from 7.3 lakh in 1951 to 10.1 lakh in 1971.
  - India may need around 753 seats based on projected population, with each representing 20 lakh people.

#### Concerns in Political Representation

- **Regional Representation:** Peninsular States may lose representation due to demographic changes, while northern States may gain seats.
- **Finance Commission Adjustments:** The 15th Finance Commission used 2011 population data for devolution instead of 1971 data, and added demographic performance weightage to balance different population trends.

#### Challenges in Delimitation

- **Disparities in Seat Allocation:** There are concerns whether each seat should represent 20 lakh people and how to allocate seats fairly across regions.
- **Population Density Approach:** The northeast uses population density to ensure fair representation for smaller populations with higher density.
- **Fair Distribution:** A fair approach may involve increasing the number of seats and considering regional and demographic characteristics, such as gender and caste-based reservations.



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## Balanced Approach Needed

- **Population-Based Standardization:** Simply using population numbers can ignore regional needs and entitlements.
- **Demographic Outlook:** A comprehensive approach considering all population characteristics, including regional, gender, and caste factors, is needed for fair representation and resource distribution.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/thinking-beyond-population-count/article69397784.ece>

