



CURRENT AFFAIRS



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DELIMITATION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the Topic details "Delimitation". This Topic has relevance in the Polity and Governance section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

About Delimitation?

FOR MAINS:

GS 2: Polity and Governance

Why has Delimitation become a contentious political issue?

Why was the number of seats in Lok Sabha frozen?

WHY IN THE NEWS:

The Union Home Minister has confirmed in parliament that the Women's Reservation Bill will be implemented only after 2029, following the completion of a delimitation exercise.

ABOUT DELIMITATION

- Delimitation is necessary to ensure equitable representation in legislative bodies, such as the Lok Sabha (the lower house of India's Parliament) and state legislative assemblies.
- It involves the redrawing of electoral boundaries and allocation of seats to reflect changes in population and to prevent gerrymandering, which is the manipulation of boundaries to benefit a particular political party.
- Delimitation is carried out to uphold the principle that every person's vote should carry a similar weight in the electoral process.

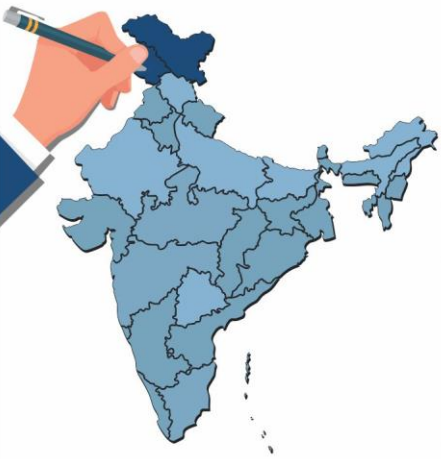
HERE'S HOW DELIMITATION IS CARRIED OUT IN INDIA:

- **Population Adjustment:** The primary objective of delimitation is to allocate Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies to states in a way that maintains a reasonably consistent ratio between the number of constituencies and the population of each state. This ensures that representation in these legislative bodies is proportional to the population distribution across states.
- **Geographical Division:** Delimitation also aims to fairly divide geographical areas into electoral seats. This is crucial to prevent gerrymandering, which is the manipulation of electoral boundaries to favor one political party over another. By dividing areas fairly, the process aims to create a level playing field for all political parties.
- **Constitutional Requirement:** The need for delimitation is enshrined in the Indian Constitution. Article 82 of the Constitution mandates the "readjustment" of seats in the Lok Sabha and the division of states into constituencies after each Census. Other articles, such as Articles 81, 170,

330, and 332, also reference this requirement when dealing with the composition and reservation of seats in legislative bodies.

- **Independent Delimitation Commission:** Delimitation is carried out by an independent delimitation commission appointed by the President of India. This commission is tasked with the responsibility of determining the number and boundaries of constituencies based on population data and geographical considerations.
- **Finality of Decisions:** To prevent indefinite delays in the electoral process, the decisions made by the delimitation commission are considered final and unchallengeable in any court. This ensures that the delimitation process is not subject to prolonged legal disputes.

What is delimitation




The process of redrawing boundaries of Lok Sabha and state Assembly seats to represent changes in the population.

The main task of the Delimitation Commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies based on a recent census.

In the process, **the number of seats allocated** to states in Lok Sabha or in the Legislative Assembly may also change

It also **reserves Assembly seats** for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in accordance with the Constitution



PLUTUS IAS

LAST DELIMITATION:

- The most recent delimitation exercise in India took place in 2002. However, this exercise focused solely on redrawing the boundaries of constituencies and did not result in an increase in the number of Lok Sabha constituencies. Consequently, the number of Lok Sabha constituencies has remained unchanged since 1976.

- According to the Constitution, the next delimitation exercise should be based on the first Census conducted after 2026, which is 25 years after the 84th Amendment Act of 2001. Typically, this would imply that delimitation should occur after the 2031 Census. However, the 2021 Census was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- If the house-listing phase of the Census is conducted in the following year, the actual population enumeration can take place in 2025. Typically, it takes a minimum of one to two years for the initial results to be published. This means that delimitation need not wait for the 2031 Census; it can occur based on the delayed 2021 Census as well.
- If all goes smoothly and quickly, the 2029 general elections could be held with an increased number of Lok Sabha seats resulting from the delimitation exercise. This would be contingent on the efficient completion of the Census and delimitation process.

WHY DELIMITATION BECOMES A CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL ISSUE:

- **Changes in Seat Numbers:** Delimitation exercises can lead to changes in the total number of parliamentary and assembly seats. This can be a cause for concern for politicians and political parties because it affects their representation in legislative bodies.
- **Inter-State Seat Distribution:** Delimitation is based on the principle of allocating seats to states based on their population ratios. This means that states with a higher population growth rate may gain more seats, while those with lower population growth may see a reduction in seats. This dynamic can lead to inter-state conflicts and political disagreements.
- **Regional Disparities:** Delimitation can accentuate regional disparities in political representation. States or regions that have actively promoted family planning and population control may feel that they are unfairly penalized by receiving fewer seats compared to states with less effective population control efforts.
- **Political Equilibrium:** Political parties often seek to maintain a delicate political equilibrium that allows them to hold power or influence at various levels of government. Delimitation can disrupt this equilibrium by altering the number of seats in favor of one party or region, leading to opposition and resistance.
- **Electoral Implications:** Changes in constituency boundaries can affect the electoral prospects of individual politicians and parties. Politicians may fear losing their existing constituencies or facing tougher electoral battles due to redrawn boundaries.
- **Political Manipulation:** In some cases, there are allegations of political manipulation in the delimitation process. Accusations of gerrymandering, where boundaries are adjusted to benefit a particular political party, can further intensify political disputes.

WHY WAS THE NUMBER OF SEATS IN LOK SABHA FROZEN:

The freeze on the strength of the Lok Sabha at 543 seats since the 1970s results from political decisions to address concerns related to delimitation and population control efforts. Here's a summary of the key developments that led to this freeze:

- **42nd Amendment (1976):** In 1976, the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi introduced the 42nd Amendment to the Constitution. This amendment suspended the process of redrawing seat boundaries and seat allocation until 2001. It was justified as part of an effort to promote family planning and population control.
- **Extension in 2001:** The freeze on the number of seats in Parliament and state legislative assemblies was extended in 2001 by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. This extension was enacted as the Constitution (Eighty-Fourth Amendment) Act, 2002.
- **Motivation for the Freeze:** The "Statement of Objects and Reasons" for the 2002 Amendment explained that there were consistent demands both for and against undertaking fresh

delimitation. To motivate state governments to pursue population stabilization efforts, the government decided to extend the freeze on delimitation until the year 2026. The assumption was that by 2026, population policies would have worked effectively, leading to population stabilisation.

SOURCE:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/delimitation-debate-gender-vs-regional-caste-identities/article67327620.ece>

Q.1 Consider the following statements:

1. The Indian Constitution mandates delimitation after every Census, as per Article 82.
2. The 42nd Amendment Act in 1976 suspended delimitation until 2001.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: A

Q.2 Consider the following statements:

1. The President appoints the delimitation commission.
2. Decisions made by the delimitation commission are final and not Subject to legal challenges.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

ANSWER: B

Q.3 Discuss the significance of delimitation in the Indian electoral system. Analyze the reasons for the freeze on the number of Lok Sabha seats and its implications for political representation. How can the delimitation process be made more transparent and less contentious?

Rishabh

NAGORNO-KARABAKH REGION

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and the topic details "Nagorno-Karabakh Region". This topic has relevance in the "International Relations" section of the UPSC CSE exam.

FOR PRELIMS:

*Where is Nagorno Karabakh?
Where is Lachin Corridor?*

FOR MAINS:

GS2: International Relations

WHY IN THE NEWS?

On Wednesday, Armenian separatist forces in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh area of the South Caucasus surrendered and agreed to a ceasefire, just 24 hours after Azerbaijan launched an offensive to retake complete control of the territory.

ABOUT THE NAGORNO-KARABAKH CONFLICT

- **Historical background**

- The Nagorno-Karabakh region is located in the southern Caucasus mountains and has been a contested territory for centuries. The region has been ruled by various empires and kingdoms over the centuries, including the Persian Empire, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union.
- The Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast was founded within the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic by the Soviet Union in 1923. Although the region was granted some autonomy, it remained under the supervision of the Azerbaijani government.

- **The rise of nationalism**

- In the late 20th century, nationalism began rising in Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- In 1988, the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh began demanding the region's transfer to Armenia. This led to regional tensions between Armenians and Azerbaijanis and eventually to violence.

- **The First Nagorno-Karabakh War**

- In 1991, Armenia and Azerbaijan declared independence from the Soviet Union. The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh escalated into a full-scale war from 1991 to 1994. Tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands more were displaced as a result of the war.

- **The aftermath of the war**

- The war ended with a ceasefire agreement 1994, but the conflict remained unresolved. Nagorno-Karabakh and the surrounding territories remained under the control of Armenian forces.

- **Present Status**

- In the years since the war, there have been numerous ceasefire violations and occasional skirmishes between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces. The conflict remains a significant source of tension and a potential for renewed war.
- In September 2020, clashes erupted, quickly becoming the deadliest since the 1990s. Armenia claimed Azerbaijan initiated the conflict by launching a major offensive, while Baku argued it responded to provocations.
- A truce mediated by Russian peacekeepers in 2020 temporarily halted the conflict after Azerbaijan had recaptured areas in and around Nagorno-Karabakh.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH

- **Azerbaijan's Blockade of Lachin Corridor:** Over the past nine months, Azerbaijan has blocked the Lachin Corridor, the only access to the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave from Armenia.
- **Humanitarian Crisis and Accusations:**
 - Since December 2022, when the embargo was first implemented, residents of Nagorno-Karabakh have accused Azerbaijan of producing a humanitarian disaster.
 - They claim it has resulted in the crippling of critical civilian infrastructure, including access to gas, electricity, health services, and internet access.
 - Nagorno-Karabakh has also accused Azerbaijan of blocking the import of essential goods, leading to shortages of everyday supplies like food and water.

NEW OFFENSIVE

- A ceasefire was agreed upon in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 20, 2023, after Azerbaijan launched a new military offensive against the local Armenian government.
- The ceasefire was proposed by Russian peacekeepers and accepted by the separatist Armenian forces in Nagorno-Karabakh.

Sources:

[Azerbaijan and Armenian forces reach cease-fire deal for breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh, officials say](#)

Q1. With reference to Nagorno-Karabakh recently seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. The Nagorno-Karabakh region is located in the southern Balkan Mountains.
2. It is a disputed area within Armenia that Azerbaijan contests.
3. Armenia and Azerbaijan declared their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) None

Answer: (c)

Q2. Consider the following:

	Corridor	Connecting Regions of
1.	Suwalki Gap	Poland and Lithuania
2.	Lachin Corridor	Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia
3.	Chicken's Neck	India and Bhutan
4.	Berlin Corridor	West Berlin and West Germany

How many of the abovementioned pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All Four

Answer: (c)

Q3. Discuss the historical context, causes, and international implications of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Evaluate the role of major international actors in resolving or exacerbating the conflict.

Gaurav Nikumbh