



Delimitation

For Prelims: Delimitation Commission, Supreme Court, Article 82, Article 170, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha

For Mains: Indian Constitution, Elections, Statutory Bodies, Delimitation Process

Why in News?

The Assam state Cabinet recently approved the merger of four districts with their constituent districts.

- On 27th December, the **EC announced the process of delimitation of Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies in Assam**, saying it would be based on Census data from 2001. Assam currently has 14 Lok Sabha constituencies and 126 Assembly constituencies.

What is Delimitation?

- **About:**
 - [Delimitation](#) literally means the act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country to represent changes in population.
 - The Delimitation Commission is to **work without any executive influence**.
 - The Constitution **mandates that the Commission's orders are final and cannot be questioned before any court** as it would hold up an election indefinitely.
 - When the orders of the Delimitation Commission are laid before the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly, they cannot effect any modification in the orders.
- **Need:**
 - To provide equal representation to equal segments of a population.
 - **Fair division of geographical areas** so that one political party doesn't have an advantage over others in an election.
 - To follow the principle of **"One Vote One Value"**.
- **Composition:**
 - The Delimitation Commission is appointed by the [President of India](#) and works in collaboration with the [Election Commission of India](#).
 - Retired [Supreme Court judge](#)
 - Chief Election Commissioner
 - Respective State Election Commissioners

What is the Process of Delimitation?

- **Under Article 82**, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Under Article 170**, States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per Delimitation Act after every Census.
- Once the Act is in force, the Union government sets up a Delimitation Commission.
- The **first delimitation exercise** was carried out by the President (with the help of the Election Commission) in 1950-51.
- The **Delimitation Commission Act was enacted in 1952**.

- Delimitation Commissions have been set up four times — 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002 under the Acts of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.
- There was no delimitation after the 1981 and 1991 Censuses.

What are the Issues with Delimitation?

- States that take **little interest in population control** could end up with a greater number of seats in Parliament. The southern states that promoted family planning faced the possibility of having their seats reduced.
- In 2002-08, **Delimitation was done based on the 2001 census**, but the total number of seats in the Assemblies and Parliament decided as per the 1971 Census was not changed.
 - The **87th Amendment Act of 2003** provided for the delimitation of constituencies on the basis of 2001 census and not 1991 census. However, this can be done without altering the number of seats allotted to each state in the Lok Sabha.
- The Constitution has also **capped the number of Lok Shaba & Rajya Sabha seats to a maximum of 550 & 250 respectively** and increasing populations are being represented by a single representative.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. With reference to the Delimitation Commission consider the following statements: (2012)

1. The orders of the Delimitation Commission cannot be challenged in a Court of Law.
2. When the orders of the Delimitation Commission are laid before the Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly, they cannot effect any modification in the orders.

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

Ans: (c)

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