



Demand for Holding Parliament Sessions Outside Delhi

For Prelims: [Lok Sabha](#), Parliament, **Member of Parliament (MP)**, **Constitution** of India, President of India, Prime Minister

For Mains: Issue of Holding Parliament sessions outside Delhi, Related concerns, implications and way forward.

Source: [IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, a YSR Congress [Member of Parliament \(MP\)](#) proposed the idea of conducting **two Parliament sessions every year in south India** highlighting the logistical and climatic challenges faced by MPs during the harsh winters and scorching summers in Delhi.

- The idea, which has historical support from figures like **B.R. Ambedkar and Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, are now under fresh scrutiny.

What was the Previous Demand for Holding Parliamentary Sessions Outside Delhi?

- **Idea Supported by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar:**
 - The idea of decentralizing parliamentary sessions was proposed by **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** who suggested holding sessions outside Delhi.
 - **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar**, in his book "*Thoughts on Linguistic States*", proposed two capitals, arguing that **Delhi is most inconvenient to the people of South** due to **cold and distance**, making them **feel ruled by the North**.
 - He also highlighted **Delhi's vulnerability to attacks**, being within bombing range of neighboring countries, as a critical defense concern.
 - He proposed **Hyderabad as a second capital** for India, particularly for summer months, citing its central location and suitability for year-round parliamentary sessions, unlike Delhi's extreme climate.
- **Private Member's Resolution:**
 - In November 1959, Independent Gurgaon [MP Prakash Vir Shastri](#) introduced a **Private Member's Resolution** that proposed **holding a Session of the Lok Sabha in South India**, suggesting Hyderabad or Bangalore.
 - **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**, who was then a first-time MP **backed the proposal**, saying it had "been made to strengthen the unity of the country" and shouldn't be looked at through a "political prism".

Constitutional Status of Holding Parliament Sessions

- The [Constitution of India](#) **does not mandate** a specific location for holding Parliamentary

sessions.

- **Article 85** of the Indian Constitution empowers the **President** to summon each House of **Parliament at such time and place as deemed fit**, ensuring that no more than six months elapsed between two sessions.
- However, traditionally, all sessions are held at the Parliament House in New Delhi, the nation's capital.

What are the Arguments for Holding Parliament Sessions Outside Delhi?

- **Enhanced Regional Representation:** Holding sessions in South India could enhance the visibility and representation of southern states in national policy making.
 - It would symbolize a commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that the voices from all regions are heard and considered.
- **Climate Considerations:** The extreme weather conditions in Delhi can hinder effective governance. A **more favourable climate could lead to better health and productivity** among MPs, thereby **improving legislative efficiency**.
- **Decentralization of Power:** This initiative could be a step towards **decentralizing political power, aligning with the democratical principle** that governance should be accessible to all citizens, regardless of their geographical location.
- **Historical Precedent:** The **support from historical figures** for similar proposals **lends credibility to the current initiative**, suggesting that this is a longstanding concern that merits serious consideration.

What Challenges Might Arise from Shift?

- **Logistical Hurdles:** Relocating parliamentary machinery, infrastructure, and personnel to another region would be **complex and resource-intensive**.
 - This has been termed as "tedious" and wastage of time and resources by critics.
- **Political Polarization:** Critics argue that this move might deepen the **North-South divide** by reinforcing regional identities over national unity.
- **Institutional History:** Parliament has operated from Delhi for over 75 years without impacting southern states' integration into the Union. Critics suggest that existing mechanisms are sufficient for regional representation.

What are the Countries with Multiple Capitals?

- **South Africa:** South Africa operates with three capitals—**Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), and Bloemfontein (judicial)**. This division geographically decentralizes power, promotes regional representation, and reflects the country's diverse cultural and historical contexts.
- **Malaysia's Dual Capitals:** Malaysia has **Kuala Lumpur as its administrative capital** and **Putrajaya as the administrative and judicial hub**. The development of Putrajaya as a planned city has eased congestion in Kuala Lumpur while providing a more organized setting for government functions.
- **Switzerland's Decentralized Model:** Switzerland designates **Bern** as its federal city while maintaining a decentralized political structure. This system ensures significant regional autonomy, balancing the interests of its diverse linguistic and cultural groups, fostering national harmony.
- **Australia's Purpose-Built Capital:** **Canberra**, purpose-built and strategically located between **Sydney and Melbourne**, serves as Australia's capital. This decision ensured neutrality and unity between the two largest cities, reflecting thoughtful planning for national governance.

Way Forward

- **Pilot Regional Sessions:** There is a need for conducting **occasional parliamentary committee meetings** or **winter sessions in southern cities** like Bengaluru or Hyderabad to assess logistical challenges and public response.
 - Gradually increase the frequency of sessions held outside Delhi.
- **Strengthening Regional Representation:** Addressing underrepresentation through **increased parliamentary seats for southern states** post-census reforms could balance regional equity without logistical disruptions.
- **Enhancing Accessibility:** Investments in **better communication technology and streamlined logistics** could ensure **smoother integration for MPs from all regions**, reducing travel and climate challenges.

Conclusion

The proposal to hold parliamentary sessions in South India underscores ongoing debates about regional representation and political decentralization. While it highlights valid concerns about inclusivity and climate challenges, its feasibility remains contested. A balanced approach with strengthening existing systems, leveraging technology, and conducting regional pilot sessions can address these issues effectively without compromising efficiency. This debate is an opportunity to reimagine governance structures for a more inclusive and resilient India.

Drishti Mains Question:

Evaluate the arguments for and against holding Parliament sessions in South India. How could this impact national integration and regional representation?

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following is/are the exclusive power(s) of Lok Sabha? (2022)

1. To ratify the declaration of Emergency.
2. To pass a motion of no-confidence against the Council of Ministers.
3. To impeach the President of India.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 3 only

Ans: B

Mains

Q. To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India? (2021)

