Delimitation Exercise

Why in News?

Home Minister recently asserted that delimitation will not lose any Parliamentary seat to the Southern states.

Constitutional provisions

- Election Commission defines delimitation as the process of drawing constituency boundaries for elected bodies based on the ***population in the most recent Census.***
- **Article 82** - It states that after every Census is completed, the allocation of Lok Sabha seats to each state must be adjusted based on population changes.
- **Article 81** – It states there can be ***no more than 550 members*** in the Lok Sabha, 530 from states and 20 from Union Territories.
- It also says that the ratio between (the number of seats) and the population of the state is, so far as practicable, the same for all states.
- So, each constituency across the country should ideally have the same population.
- **Purpose -** The main purpose of undertaking the delimitation exercise is to rationalize the structure and composition of the electoral constituencies.
- It adheres to the principle of ***One Vote One value*** to provide representation to different sections of the population and remove gross inequalities in the population size of constituencies.
- Delimitation has taken place 4 times - 1952, 1963, 1973 and 2002, with the number of seats fixed and readjusted during the first 3 exercises.

Related Amendments

- In 1976, the ***42nd Amendment*** to the Constitution froze the number of Lok Sabha seats and put off delimitation for 25 years until the 2001 Census under Article 82.
- ***84th Amendment*** further delayed delimitation for another 25 years.
- Delimitation is expected to be held after the new Census exercise, which is much-delayed.
- As per the delimitation calendar set earlier, this was to happen by 2026.

Delimitation Commission

• The Constitution has provided for an independent Delimitation Commission every decade to reapportion seats among states.
• The Commission is appointed by the ***President of India.***
• It comprises
  - A retired judge of the Supreme Court or a high court,
  - The Chief Election Commissioner, and
  - The State Election Commissioner.
• The Commission examines the changes in the population to redraw the constituencies or redraw a new one where it is necessary.
• The draft report is published in the Gazette of India which is open for public feedback.
• The final report is published after accounting for the public feedback.
• Once published, the Commission's orders are final and, as per the ***Delimitation Commission Act 1952 and Article 329A*** of the Constitution.

Reference

India Today | Delimitation

