Problems with Delimitation

What is the issue?

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- The constitution was amended to freeze the delimitation till 2026.
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- This had led to a situation and many states having a representation in the parliament that is disproportionate to their population.
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What is delimitation?

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- Delimitation literally means the act of fixing the boundaries of constituencies.
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- Under Article 82 of the Constitution, Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census which establishes a delimitation commission.
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- The main task of the commission is redrawing the boundaries of the various assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies to ensure an equitable population distribution.
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- Delimitation commissions have been set up four times in the past under ‘Delimitation Commission Acts’ of 1952, 1962, 1972 and 2002.
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What are the problems that need to be addressed?

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- The government had suspended delimitation in 1976 until after the 2001 census.
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- This is done for the reason that the states' family planning programs would not affect their political representation in the Lok Sabha.
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- Later, delimitation based on the 2001 census was done in 2008.
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- However, the total number of seats in the Assemblies and Parliament decided as per the 1971 Census was not changed.
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- The constitution has also capped the number of Lok Shaba & Rajya Sabha seats to a maximum of 550 & 250 respectively.
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- As a result increasing populations are being represented by a single representative.
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What will be the consequence?

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- If the constitution was to be amended to increase the number of seats in the parliament, then there is a need to work out the modalities to ensure more time deliberations & debate.
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- Disruptions will be a bigger challenge in a larger house & needs to be dealt with.
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- States whose representation might get diluted will be an aggrieved lot.
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- There is also strong element of sub-nationalism prevalent in many states.
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- So the move could have huge political rampifications & needs to be treaded causiously.
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Sources: The Hindu, Indian Express

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