

Delimitation and Development

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Delimitation and Development: Addressing Population Disparities

Context

- India's population dynamics remain central to discussions, with the upcoming Census and potential delimitation of parliamentary seats.
- Remarks by the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu advocating increased birth rates highlight concerns about the impact of population growth on political representation and resource allocation.

Population Growth, Representation, and Resource Allocation

1. Political Representation

- The freeze on delimitation of parliamentary seats since 1976 has ensured fairness by not penalizing states with lower fertility rates.
- As the freeze approaches its end in 2026, debates focus on whether to extend it or explore alternatives like seat allocation based on vote share.
- Extending the freeze remains the most pragmatic solution to maintain balance and reward states for stabilizing their populations.

2. Resource Allocation

- Population figures influence central resource distribution.
- The Finance Commission uses current population data while including a compensatory measure for states that reduce fertility rates, ensuring fairness in resource allocation.

Addressing Population and Economic Disparities

1. Bridging Economic Disparities

High population growth states face underdevelopment and regional tensions. Inclusive
economic growth, better infrastructure, and systemic reforms are essential to bridge this
gap.

2. Targeted Development Programs

• Initiatives like the Aspirational Districts Programme focus on improving health,

- education, and infrastructure in underperforming regions.
- Better monitoring, funding, and tailored approaches can amplify its impact.

3. Infrastructure and Industrialization

- Investments in roads, railways, and digital connectivity can attract private investments, create jobs, and reduce disparities.
- **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** and industrial corridors in high-growth regions can accelerate progress.

4. Education and Skill Development

- Expanding access to **quality education and vocational training** can uplift regions with low literacy and skill levels.
- Initiatives like **Skill India Mission** should prioritize lagging states to prepare their workforce for modern industries.

5. Agricultural Innovation

• Introducing modern farming techniques, irrigation systems, and market linkages can enhance productivity and rural incomes.

Role of the Finance Commission

- The Finance Commission addresses disparities by incorporating variables like **demographic change** alongside population figures.
- Dynamic resource allocation frameworks could boost economic opportunities in highgrowth states, focusing on skill development and agricultural modernization.

Way Forward

- India's population is projected to peak at **170 crores by 2070**, with current **TFR at 2**, below the replacement rate of 2.1.
- Focus on reducing high TFRs in lagging states through women's empowerment and improved reproductive health services.
- Extending the delimitation freeze and refining resource allocation criteria are crucial to maintaining balance.

Conclusion

• Thoughtful policies addressing population disparities can **ensure equitable development** and reward states that effectively manage population growth, fostering national progress.