

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 high-growth 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.