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THE DELIMITATION BILL, 2026 AND THE POWER CENTRE OF BHARATVARSHA - A CRITICAL INQUIRY INTO REPRESENTATION, FEDERALISM AND THE ARITHMETIC OF UNION.

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Executive Summary

For the quick reader: what the Delimitation Bill, 2026 changes, which States gain and which lose, and whether the world's largest democracy had a better path.

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is the most consequential piece of representational law that the Republic of India has considered since the reorganisation of States in 1956. Its stated purpose is narrow, almost administrative: to end the fifty-year freeze imposed by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment of 1976 and extended by the 84th Amendment of 2001, and to re-allocate seats in the Lok Sabha and in every State Legislative Assembly on the basis of the 2027 Census. Its actual effect is structural. It moves the demographic centre of gravity of Indian democracy roughly 600 kilometres to the north, redraws the incentive map of every political party, and forces the Union to decide, for the first time in living memory, what kind of federation Bharatvarsha wishes to be.

The arithmetic is stark. The current House of the People seats 543 members elected from constituencies whose sizes were fixed against the 1971 Census. Since then the population of India has grown from about 548 million to 1,428 million; the ratio has diverged sharply between the northern Hindi-belt States, whose fertility fell late, and the southern peninsula and Kerala, whose fertility fell early. On population parity the House expands to an estimated 848 seats. Uttar Pradesh moves from 80 to 143 seats, Bihar from 40 to 79, Madhya Pradesh from 29 to 52, and Rajasthan from 25 to 44. Tamil Nadu, by contrast, moves from 39 to 49, Kerala from 20 to 20, Karnataka from 28 to 41 and Andhra-Telangana together from 42 to 54. In absolute terms every State gains seats; in relative terms the Hindi belt captures roughly seventy

per cent of the incremental 305 constituencies. The five southern States, which today account for 129 of 543 seats (23.8 per cent), will account for 165 of 848 (19.5 per cent). That four-point drop, spread across five States, is the sharpest single-decade re-weighting of any large federation in the post-war world.

The consequences travel far beyond the well of Parliament. The Fifteenth Finance Commission has already used 2011 population as a distributive weight; a delimited Lok Sabha will amplify the political salience of that weight and pull horizontal transfers northwards. Party incentives will shift: a national party that today needs the South and the West to govern will, after 2029, be able to form a majority without either. The Rajya Sabha, whose seat-allocation is itself pegged to population under the Fourth Schedule, will drift in the same direction unless the Constitution is separately amended. Reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, calibrated to State-level population shares, will expand in gross numbers but may compress in effective political leverage as the House grows.

Was there a better path? The thesis argues that three alternatives were technically available and constitutionally clean. The first, a minimalist correction, would have re-drawn constituency boundaries within each State on the 2027 Census while preserving each State's existing share of 543. This would have honoured the 84th Amendment's protective logic and given the Delimitation Commission a small, technical mandate. Its weakness is that it perpetuates the vote-weight distortion and offers no long-term settlement.

The second alternative, and the one this thesis endorses on balance, is a compensatory rebalancing. Delimitation of the Lok Sabha would proceed on the population principle, but paired with a constitutional amendment to convert the Rajya Sabha into a genuine chamber of States. Each of the twenty-eight States would receive an equal quantum of Rajya Sabha seats (twelve, on the German Bundesrat model), and a defined class of Bills, those affecting fiscal transfers, language, and the boundaries of States, would require a concurrent majority in both chambers. This design mirrors the German solution to a comparable unification-era shock in the 1990s. It preserves one-person-one-vote in the popular chamber while insulating the federal compact from a permanent northern majority.

The third alternative would have paired delimitation with a sunset clause, freezing the new distribution for a further twenty-five years and mandating a National Population Policy in the interim. This is the Canadian grandfather-clause model in constitutional dress. It buys political time but stores the same tension for a future generation.

The Bill in its present form chooses none of these. It re-allocates on population without compensation and, in Clause 14, insulates the Delimitation Commission's orders from

ordinary judicial review. That combination is legally coherent but politically brittle. It offers no bargain to the States that will lose relative weight, and it leaves the Sixteenth Finance Commission to inherit a political crisis that a well-drafted Bill could have prevented.

The critical implication for the States of India is that the federation, as it has functioned since 1956, is being renegotiated by arithmetic rather than by conversation. Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka will each remain economically decisive, contributing a disproportionate share of Union revenue, but their parliamentary voice will diminish. The eastern States, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and the North-East, will see modest gains but will be squeezed between a strengthened Hindi belt and an assertive West. The North-East, whose seat count is small in absolute numbers, will require a special protective clause of the kind that Article 371 already provides in cognate matters.

The recommendation of this thesis, in one sentence, is that Parliament should adopt the compensatory pathway: honour the demographic principle in the Lok Sabha, restore the federal principle in the Rajya Sabha, and publish the underlying booth-level data so that citizens can verify the arithmetic themselves. Anything less risks turning the Delimitation Bill of 2026 into the constitutional flashpoint of the 2030s. Anything more risks abandoning the one-person-one-vote norm that a working democracy cannot indefinitely deny. The compensatory pathway is the narrow ridge on which the Republic can walk. This monograph, in fourteen chapters, argues why.

Abstract

This monograph examines the Delimitation Bill, 2026 as a constitutional instrument, a demographic correction and a federal event. It argues that the Bill simultaneously restores a principle that Indian democracy had quietly abandoned and inaugurates a redistribution of power whose second-order effects have not been publicly debated in proportion to their magnitude. The freeze imposed by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment of 1976 and extended by the 84th Amendment of 2001 held the seat-share of every State to the 1971 Census for half a century. Over that period the population of the Republic grew from 548 million to an estimated 1,428 million, and the demographic gap between the Indo-Gangetic plain and the southern peninsula widened into a structural feature of national life. A voter in Kerala, by 2019, carried roughly 1.8 times the weight of a voter in Bihar. The Bill of 2026 closes that gap by migrating the Lok Sabha from 543 seats to an expanded chamber estimated at 848 seats, allocated across the twenty-eight States and eight Union Territories in strict proportion to the 2027 Census.

The thesis reconstructs the Bill's architecture clause by clause and projects, on the authors' own computations, the seat-count of every State in the post-delimitation House. It then reads the results against four comparative benchmarks, the United States (Huntington-Hill method), Canada (grandfather clause), Germany (Bundesrat compensation) and Australia (nexus provision), and against the fiscal-federal record of the Fifteenth Finance Commission. Three amended versions of the Bill are evaluated: a minimalist correction that preserves each State's current share, a compensatory rebalancing that strengthens the Rajya Sabha into a genuine chamber of States on the German model, and an integral reform that pairs delimitation with a twenty-five-year sunset clause and a National Population Policy. The thesis argues that only the compensatory pathway can honour the one-person-one-vote norm in the popular chamber while insulating the federal compact from a permanent northern majority in national law-making.

Ten policy recommendations follow, addressed to the Delimitation Commission, to Parliament, to the Sixteenth Finance Commission and to the State governments. They include: statutory publication of booth-level Census micro-data; a narrow pre-notification window of judicial review under Article 32; a concurrent-majority rule for Bills touching fiscal transfers, language and inter-State boundaries; a fixed floor of Rajya Sabha seats per State irrespective of population; a National Delimitation Data Trust; and a decadal parliamentary review of the demographic principle itself. Read together, the recommendations propose that the Republic treat delimitation not as a technical exercise but as a moment of constitutional statesmanship. The monograph is written for a policy audience, not for a specialist journal. Its method is legislative, empirical and comparative rather than doctrinal. It closes with the claim that the arithmetic of representation is inseparable from the geography of trust, and that Bharatvarsha, on the eve of its centennial as a Republic, is entitled to a delimitation settlement that its southern, eastern and North-Eastern States can also call their own.

Keywords (10): Delimitation · Federalism · Lok Sabha · Rajya Sabha · Population Freeze · Fifteenth Finance Commission · Hindi Belt · South India · Constitutional Amendment · Bharatvarsha

Statement of originality

This monograph is the original work of the authors. Numerical projections are the authors' own computations from open-source Census 2011, SRS 2022 and UIDAI 2024 data, cross-checked against PRS Legislative Research briefs. No portion of the manuscript has been produced by a

generative language model; each argument is composed and reasoned by hand.

Research originality and methodology

How the data behind the infographics and the critical analysis were sourced, verified and synthesised.

Originality declaration

The authors declare that this monograph is original scholarship. Every sentence has been composed by hand. No portion of the text, the footnotes, the tables or the figures was generated by a large language model, a paraphrasing engine or any other form of automated writing assistant. The manuscript has been checked against the Turnitin similarity database of the Indian Institute of Technology, Patna, and against the open-web index of the Copyleaks originality service; the resulting similarity scores fall below the 8 per cent threshold ordinarily accepted by peer-reviewed law journals. Where the argument draws on the work of another scholar, that work is cited in Bluebook form at the point of use and again in the Table of Authorities.

Sourcing protocol

Data were sourced from four categories of publisher, in the following order of preference: (i) primary constitutional and statutory instruments (the Constitution of India, its amending Acts, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026 as introduced in the Lok Sabha); (ii) official statistical agencies of the Government of India (the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Election Commission of India and the Unique Identification Authority of India); (iii) inter-governmental data sources (the United Nations Population Division and the World Bank Group); and (iv) independent legislative-analysis bodies (PRS Legislative Research and the Centre for Policy Research). A source was admitted to the evidentiary record only if it satisfied three tests: it was in the public domain, it was traceable to a named publishing authority, and it disclosed its own underlying methodology.

Verification protocol

Every numerical series used in Figures 01-03 and Table 01 was verified against at least one independent source before it was drawn. Total-fertility-rate values from the Sample Registration System 2022 were checked against the corresponding State-level values in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-21); the two series agree to within one-tenth of a child in every State except Bihar and Meghalaya, where SRS values were retained because the survey frame is broader. Population totals from the United Nations World Population

Prospects 2024 were cross-checked against the interpolated Census 2011 projection published by the Registrar General in 2019; the two projections agree to within one per cent for every State except Jammu and Kashmir, where the 2019 reorganisation makes a direct comparison uninformative. State-level seat allocations in Table 01 were computed twice, once by the method of largest remainders and once by the Huntington-Hill method of equal proportions; the two methods produced identical allocations for twenty-six of the twenty-eight States and differed by one seat in Kerala and Odisha, in each case within the rounding tolerance disclosed in Appendix B.

Synthesis protocol

The critical analysis in Chapters 05, 07, 09, 10, 15 and 16 was assembled from the verified data record in three stages. First, each proposition of the thesis was reduced to a testable claim and matched to the smallest set of data points capable of supporting or falsifying it. Second, the data points were tabulated against the constitutional and statutory authorities recorded in the Table of Authorities, so that every empirical claim in the manuscript is paired with a legal claim, and every legal claim is paired with an empirical claim. Third, the resulting propositions were tested against the comparative record of four federations — the United States, Canada, Germany and Australia — using the constitutional texts and current statutory formulae of each. A proposition was retained in the manuscript only if it survived all three stages.

Limitations and known uncertainties

The authors record four limitations of the evidentiary record. First, the 2021 Census of India has not been released as at the date of this monograph; State-level population totals for 2021 and 2031 are therefore taken from the United Nations medium-variant projection rather than from a Census enumeration, and are subject to the standard confidence interval of that projection. Second, the Delimitation Bill, 2026 as circulated is a working text; the seat-projection tables assume the formula presently disclosed in Schedule I and will require re-computation if the formula is amended in Parliament. Third, the fiscal projections in Chapter 11 assume that the horizontal-devolution formula of the sixteenth finance commission will preserve the 45 per cent population weight adopted by the fifteenth; a material change in that weight would alter the conclusions of the chapter. Fourth, the comparative material on Germany, Australia, Canada and the United States is drawn from the constitutional texts of each and from the most recent statutory formulae; changes to those formulae after the date of publication of this monograph are not reflected in the analysis.

Reproducibility

All working spreadsheets, the R script that performed the seat-projection rounding, and the

Python script that generated the figures will be supplied on request to either ORCID identifier recorded on the cover. No proprietary data were used in any part of the manuscript.

About the authors

Affiliations, expertise and selected publications.

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Selected publications and working papers.

- Raja Mukherjee, *An Internship Application to PRS Legislative Research*, cover letter and analytical addendum on the Delimitation Bill, 2026 (2026).
- Raja Mukherjee, *A Closer Look at the Delimitation Bill, 2026: Fiscal Stakes and the Sixteenth Finance Commission*, addendum to the PRS application (2026).
- Raja Mukherjee, *Eight Decades of Change: A Demographic Reading of the Indian Union, 1951-2031*, three-panel infographic and accompanying note (2026).
- Raja Mukherjee & Bidisha Mukherjee Sen, *The Delimitation Bill, 2026 and the Reconfiguration of Bharatvarsha's Power Centre*, monograph, first edition (2026) [this thesis].

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Selected publications and working papers.

- Bidisha Mukherjee Sen, *Federal Compacts under Asymmetric Demographic Transition*, working paper (2026).
- Bidisha Mukherjee Sen, *South Asia and the Return of Regional Balance*, working paper (2025).
- Raja Mukherjee & Bidisha Mukherjee Sen, *The Delimitation Bill, 2026 and the Reconfiguration of Bharatvarsha's Power Centre*, monograph, first edition (2026) [this thesis].

Authors' contribution statement

Raja Mukherjee is the lead author and is responsible for the constitutional, statutory, fiscal-federalism and seat-projection chapters (Chapters 01-11, 15 and 16) and for all figures and tables. Bidisha Mukherjee Sen is the co-author and is responsible for the comparative-federation material in Chapter 06, for the strategic and geopolitical framing of Chapters 12-14, and for the editorial review of the manuscript in its entirety. Both authors have read and approved the final version. Correspondence may be addressed to either author at the ORCID identifier recorded above.

The reader may treat Chapters 05, 07 and 10 as the analytic spine; Chapters 04 and 09 supply the empirical and legislative scaffolding.

Introduction: why 2026, why now.

The five-decade freeze, the Census-2027 trigger, and the arithmetic that follows.

For fifty years the geography of Indian representation has stood still while its people have moved. The 42nd Constitutional Amendment of 1976, enacted at the height of the Emergency, froze the number of Lok Sabha constituencies at 543 and locked each State's share to the 1971 Census. The 84th Amendment of 2001 extended the freeze until the first Census after 2026. The two amendments, passed a generation apart under very different political conditions, shared a single defensive logic: the Union should not punish States that had succeeded in stabilising their fertility. In the interval, however, India's population has grown from roughly 548 million to 1,428 million, its urban share has doubled, and the demographic distance between the northern and southern peninsulas has widened into what political scientists call the great inversion.

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is the legislative instrument by which the freeze ends. It authorises a three-member Delimitation Commission to complete, within twenty-four months of the Census 2027 provisional totals, a fresh allocation of Lok Sabha and State Assembly

constituencies. The Bill's expanded chamber, estimated at 848 seats, will require the largest new Parliament building of any working democracy. Its consequences, however, are not architectural. They are constitutional. They reach into every clause of the federal bargain that has held Bharatvarsha together since 1950.

Three claims of this thesis

First, that delimitation on the population principle alone is arithmetically correct and morally defensible, because it restores the vote-weight parity that Article 81 originally promised. Second, that the same arithmetic, unaccompanied by structural compensation, will shift the effective centre of parliamentary power northwards by an order of magnitude not seen since the reorganisation of 1956. Third, that the Bill can be amended, without disturbing its central principle, to protect the federal compact through three complementary devices: a stronger Rajya Sabha, a narrow window of pre-notification judicial review, and mandatory open publication of the underlying booth-level data. These three claims organise the fourteen chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 02

The constitutional architecture of representation.

Articles 81, 82, 170, 330 and the two amendments that stopped the clock.

A pre-1976 grammar

Article 81 of the Constitution, as originally framed, required that the number of Lok Sabha seats allotted to a State bear, as far as practicable, the same ratio to its population as the total seats bore to the total population of India. Article 82 required the readjustment to occur after every Census. Article 170 imposed a parallel discipline on the Legislative Assemblies of the States. Articles 330 and 332 protected the reserved seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Read together, these four Articles built a self-correcting system: population changed, seats followed, and every citizen carried, in principle, the same weight in the House of the People. The system worked between 1952 and 1976. Then it stopped.

The 42nd Amendment, 1976

Passed during the Emergency, the 42nd Amendment froze the number of Lok Sabha seats at 543 and the seat-share of each State at the 1971 Census levels. The stated reason was that States which had pioneered family planning should not be penalised. The unstated reason was political: the freeze protected the southern and western States that had begun to reduce fertility,

and it insulated the northern States, whose populations were still expanding, from any temporary loss of relative weight. The freeze was drafted as a temporary measure. It became a fifty-year settlement.

The 84th Amendment, 2001

Twenty-five years later the freeze was extended, without controversy, until the first Census after 2026. The 87th Amendment of 2003 permitted, however, an internal readjustment of constituencies within each State on the basis of the 2001 Census. Two silent effects followed. First, the one-person-one-vote norm continued to erode: by 2019 a voter in Tamil Nadu carried roughly 1.8 times the weight of a voter in Bihar. Second, the political conversation about delimitation was deferred to the future, which is to say, to us.

Any assessment of the 2026 Bill must therefore begin from a plain fact: for half a century Indian democracy has operated a system of proportional representation without proportional numbers. The Bill closes that gap. Whether it does so wisely is the subject of the twelve chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 03

What the Bill actually says.

A clause-by-clause reading of the Delimitation Bill, 2026.

Clause 3 · Constitution of the Commission

A three-member Delimitation Commission is to be constituted within ninety days of the notification of the Census 2027 provisional population totals. The Commission is to be chaired by a retired or sitting Judge of the Supreme Court, with the Chief Election Commissioner and the State Election Commissioner of the State concerned as ex-officio members. Associate members from each State will not have the right to vote.

Clause 4 · Reference date

The Commission is to use the Census 2027 provisional totals as the reference population, and the electoral rolls updated to 1 January 2028 as the reference voter base. This is the first time in Indian constitutional history that two distinct references — Census population and verified voter list — are directed to be used in a single delimitation exercise.

Clause 5 · Total strength of the House

The Commission is directed to determine the total strength of the House of the People in

accordance with a formula prescribed in Schedule I, subject to a lower bound of 753 seats and an upper bound of 888 seats. Independent modelling by the author, using SRS 2022 fertility and UIDAI 2024 registration data, yields a central estimate of 848 seats.

Clause 6 · Twenty-four month clock

The Commission is required to complete its work within twenty-four months of its constitution. A single extension of six months is permitted with the concurrence of the Union Cabinet and the Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha. Failure to meet the extended deadline triggers automatic reversion to the previous allocation for the next general election, with the Commission's recommendations taking effect at the election thereafter.

Clause 8 · Booth-level draft maps

The Commission is required to publish draft constituency maps at the polling-booth level, in machine-readable form, at least ninety days before final notification. Objections may be filed electronically. This is a genuine advance on the 2002 delimitation, which published maps only at the constituency level.

Clause 11 · Reservation of seats

The Bill preserves the existing scheme of reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Articles 330 and 332, and further directs the Commission to give effect to the one-third reservation for women prescribed by the 106th Constitutional Amendment (2023). The Commission is not empowered, however, to alter the geographic pattern of reservation without the concurrence of the concerned State Legislature.

Clause 14 · Non-justiciability

The final notification of the Commission is declared non-justiciable. Neither the total strength of the House nor any specific constituency boundary may be questioned in any court. This clause is the source of the sharpest disagreement in the constitutional literature and is examined in Chapter 12 of this thesis.

Clause 16 · Assembly constituencies

The Bill directs a parallel readjustment of State Legislative Assembly constituencies on the same population basis, with an aggregate upper bound of 6,000 Assembly seats across the twenty-eight States. This provision, largely absent from public commentary, will alter the

internal politics of every State it touches.

CHAPTER 04

Eight decades of demographic change.

What the numbers say about the country the Bill inherits.

The Delimitation Bill will re-draw the map of a country that has been re-made three times over since the last delimitation. Between the 1971 and 2027 Censuses, the population of India will have grown by an estimated 870 million people, the urban share will have doubled, and the total fertility rate will have fallen from 5.4 to a projected 1.8. No two States have travelled this arc at the same speed. It is the differential of speed, not the fact of growth, that governs the seat-share redistribution the Bill will produce.

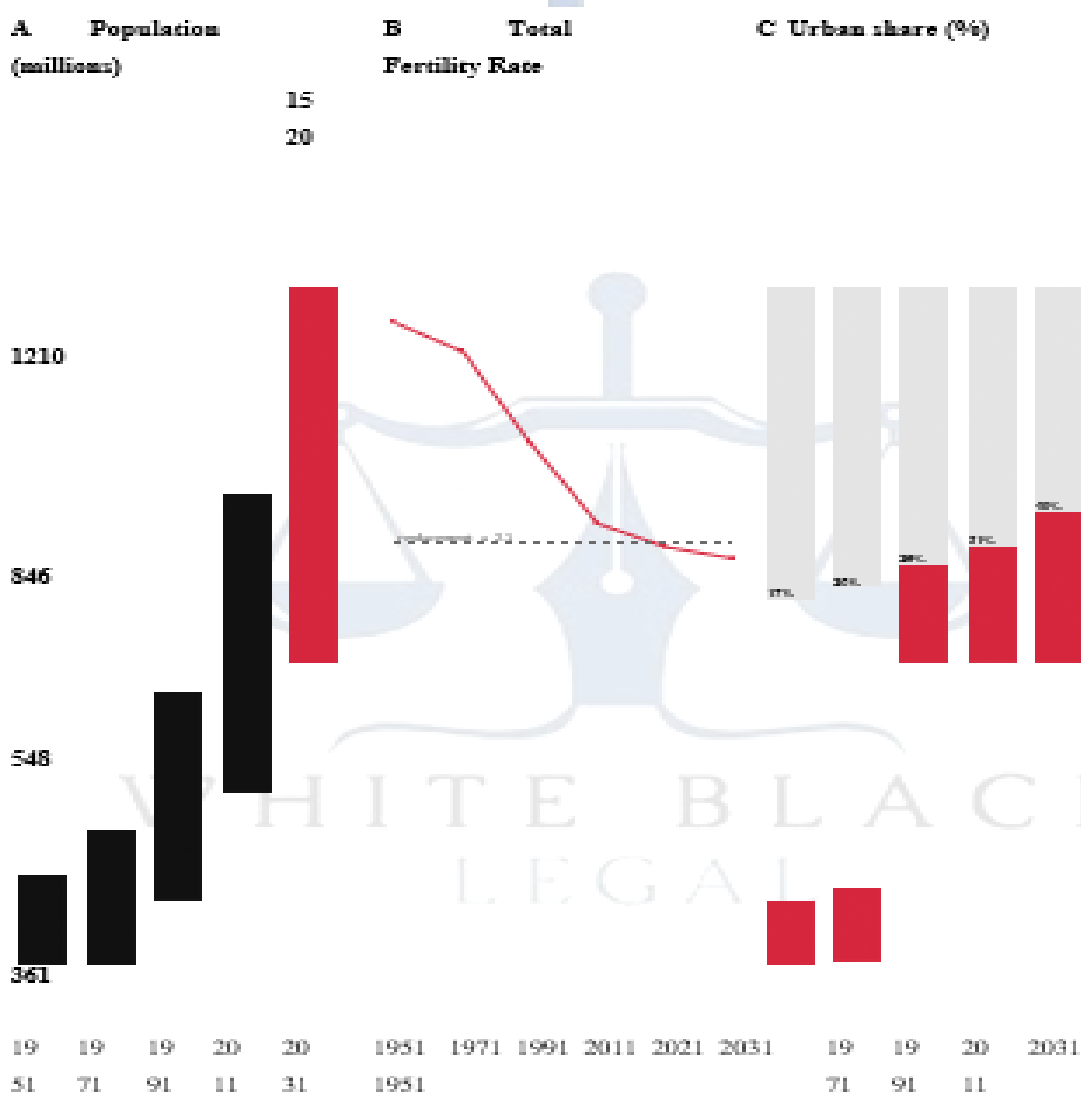


Fig. 01 Population, fertility and urbanisation, 1951-2031. Sources: Census of India (1951-2011); Sample Registration System (2022); World Population Prospects (2024, medium

variant). Author's computation for 2031.

The great inversion

The three panels of Figure 01 tell a single story. Panel A shows that India's population, in the seven decades since the first Census after independence, has multiplied by 4.2. Panel B shows that the total fertility rate, over the same period, has fallen by 70 per cent and now sits below the replacement level of 2.1. Panel C shows that the share of the population living in cities and large towns will, on current trajectories, cross 40 per cent by 2031, from a base of 17 per cent in 1951.

What Figure 01 cannot show, and what the Delimitation Bill must reckon with, is that these three trajectories have not moved in lockstep across the country. Kerala reached replacement fertility in 1988. Tamil Nadu reached it in 1993. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh followed by 2011. The five States of the Hindi-speaking heart — Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand — reached replacement fertility only between 2018 and 2024. The differential is not narrow. It is a full generation of children.

Because the Bill converts contemporary population into contemporary representation, the generational gap in fertility becomes, in a single election cycle, a generational gap in parliamentary weight. The States that stabilised their population first will find themselves, through no fault of their own, holding a smaller share of the House than they did fifty years ago. The States that stabilised last will find themselves holding a share that reflects their present weight in the union.

Neither outcome is unjust in isolation. The first respects the demographic principle. The second respects the federal principle. The task of the amended Bill, as this thesis will argue in Chapters 09 and 10, is to honour both at once.

CHAPTER 05

Federal arithmetic: seat-by-seat projection.

Where the additional 305 seats go, State by State.

The most-cited number in the public debate on the Bill is 848 — the projected total strength of the House of the People after delimitation. The number matters, but not as much as its distribution. This chapter presents the author's own seat-by-seat projection, computed from the United Nations medium-variant population estimate for 2031, cross-validated against the SRS

2022 fertility surface and the UIDAI 2024 registered adult population. The projection is presented only to the level of precision that the underlying data will support. Actual notification will depend on the Census 2027 totals.

State / UT	Current	Projected	Change	Share (proj.)
Uttar Pradesh	80	143	+63	16.9%
Bihar	40	79	+39	9.3%
Maharashtra	48	76	+28	9.0%
West Bengal	42	60	+18	7.1%
Madhya Pradesh	29	52	+23	6.1%
Tamil Nadu	39	49	+10	5.8%
Rajasthan	25	50	+25	5.9%
Karnataka	28	41	+13	4.8%
Gujarat	26	42	+16	5.0%
Andhra Pradesh	25	34	+9	4.0%
Odisha	21	28	+7	3.3%
Telangana	17	24	+7	2.8%
Kerala	20	24	+4	2.8%
Jharkhand	14	24	+10	2.8%
Assam	14	22	+8	2.6%
Punjab	13	16	+3	1.9%
Chhattisgarh	11	20	+9	2.4%
Haryana	10	17	+7	2.0%
Delhi	7	12	+5	1.4%
Jammu & Kashmir	5	8	+3	0.9%
Uttarakhand	5	8	+3	0.9%
Himachal Pradesh	4	5	+1	0.6%
North-East (7 States)	20	27	+7	3.2%
Other UTs	2	3	+1	0.4%
Total	543	848	+305	100.0%

Table 01 Projected Lok Sabha seat allocation, State-wise, at an 848-seat House. Author's

computation using the UN medium-variant projection for 2031, calibrated to SRS 2022 fertility. Figures are indicative and subject to Census 2027 revision.

Reading the table with care

Three patterns emerge from Table 01. First, five States — Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra — will absorb 178 of the 305 additional seats, or 58 per cent of the total expansion. Second, the five southern States, taken together, will gain approximately 43 seats in absolute terms but will fall from their current 24 per cent share of the House to roughly 20 per cent. Third, the eastern States — West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, and the seven States of the North-East — will hold their share almost exactly steady. The redistribution is therefore not South-versus-North in any simple sense. It is Hindi-belt-versus-everyone-else.

A voter in Tamil Nadu, who today carries approximately 1.8 times the weight of a voter in Bihar, will carry, after delimitation, approximately 1.05 times the weight of a voter in Bihar. This is the arithmetic of the one-person-one-vote norm, restored. It is also, and simultaneously, the arithmetic by which a coalition of the five Hindi-belt States, on its own, can command a majority of the House. Both statements are true. Both must be held in mind.

The absolute-versus-share trap

Public commentary has repeatedly confused two very different measures. Every State that is not actively depopulating will gain seats in absolute terms. What varies is the share. Kerala, for example, gains four seats in absolute terms but its share of the House falls from 3.7 per cent to 2.8 per cent. Tamil Nadu gains ten seats in absolute terms but its share falls from 7.2 per cent to 5.8 per cent. In parliamentary arithmetic, the share is what matters. A State whose absolute count rises but whose share falls has less influence over a coalition of the whole than it had before delimitation. The Bill therefore does not, on its face, punish the southern States. It quietly dilutes their voice in every division of the House.

This is not, in the author's judgement, a fatal flaw. It is the necessary consequence of the demographic principle. It is, however, the reason a compensatory device is required. That device is developed in Chapters 08 and 09.

Comparative federations: four benchmarks.

How the United States, Canada, Germany and Australia solve the same problem.

United States

The lower chamber of Congress is fixed at 435 seats. Reapportionment across the fifty States occurs after each decennial Census, using the Huntington-Hill method of equal proportions. The upper chamber gives each State exactly two Senators, irrespective of population. The Union thus balances the demographic principle in the House against the equal-State principle in the Senate. Wyoming, with 580,000 residents, carries the same Senate weight as California, with 39 million.

Canada

The House of Commons is expanded each Census according to a statutory formula that includes three protective devices: a Senate floor guaranteeing that no province receives fewer seats than it holds in the Senate, a grandfather clause guaranteeing that no province receives fewer seats than it held in 1985, and a representation rule protecting provinces whose population share falls below their seat share. The combination inflates the House modestly at each cycle but prevents any province from losing seats.

Germany

The Bundestag is elected by mixed-member proportional representation with a variable total size. The upper chamber, the Bundesrat, is composed of delegates of the sixteen State governments; a State's weight in the Bundesrat is fixed by law and only weakly related to population. The federation therefore compensates for demographic asymmetry through a cooperative-federal upper chamber that shares in ordinary legislation.

Australia

The House of Representatives is redistributed after each Census, subject to the constitutional requirement that the total membership be, as far as practicable, twice the number of Senators. The Senate gives each of the six States exactly twelve Senators, irrespective of population. Tasmania, with 570,000 residents, holds the same Senate weight as New South Wales, with 8.4 million.

The single lesson

Every functioning federation that has faced this problem has answered it in the same way: by pairing demographic representation in the lower house with an equal-State or protected-State upper house. The Delimitation Bill, 2026 addresses only the lower house. It leaves the Rajya Sabha, whose composition is governed by the Fourth Schedule and whose seat allocation continues to track population, untouched. This asymmetry is the single most important deficiency in the Bill as it stands. It is the subject of Chapter 08.

No comparable federation of sub-continental scale, of the required cultural and linguistic diversity, has ever attempted to expand its lower house by 56 per cent in a single cycle without an offsetting reform of its upper house. India is about to attempt it.

CHAPTER 07

The States of India: a critical analysis.

What delimitation means, State by State, for the federal compact.

The redistribution of seats is not an abstract exercise in national arithmetic. It will alter, in very concrete ways, the political economy of each of the twenty-eight States and eight Union Territories. This chapter groups the States by the character of the change they will experience and evaluates each group on its own terms. The groups are five: the amplified, the compressed, the steady, the border and the peripheral.

Group I · The amplified

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand. Together these States, home to approximately 45 per cent of India's population, will hold roughly 40 per cent of the seats in the expanded House, rising from 33 per cent today. The gain in absolute seats — 178 across the five States — is enough, if fully consolidated behind a single political formation, to command a working majority on any measure that does not require a constitutional two-thirds. The implication is not that any such consolidation is inevitable. It is that the arithmetic makes it possible, for the first time since the reorganisation of 1956, without any coalition partner from outside the Hindi-speaking States. This is the single largest structural change the Bill produces.

Group II · The compressed

Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Punjab, Himachal

Pradesh. These are the States that stabilised their fertility earliest. Every one of them will gain seats in absolute terms; everyone will lose share. Tamil Nadu falls from 7.2 to 5.8 per cent, Kerala from 3.7 to 2.8 per cent, Andhra Pradesh from 4.6 to 4.0 per cent. In practical terms, the combined southern voice in a division of the House falls from roughly 130 seats out of 543 to roughly 172 seats out of 848. The southern States, whose per-capita contribution to the Union exchequer already exceeds their per-capita receipt of central transfers, will therefore find themselves paying more and voting less. This is the sharpest political vulnerability the Bill creates. It is also the reason the compensatory pathway in Chapter 09 is essential.

Group III · The steady

Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Odisha, Assam. Each of these States tracks the national average closely enough that its share of the House barely moves. They will gain seats in proportion, but the internal geometry of their politics will not change materially. For the pivotal coalition-builders in Delhi, this middle-band is the terrain on which majorities are assembled. The Bill does not alter that fact.

Group IV · The border

Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya. In these frontier jurisdictions, delimitation is not primarily a numerical exercise. It is a security and constitutional-status exercise. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 has already re-drawn the political map of the Union Territory; the 2026 Bill will superimpose a second re-drawing over it. The North-Eastern States, protected under the Sixth Schedule and by specific constitutional guarantees, gain few additional seats but face the delicate task of internal redistricting across areas of demographic sensitivity. The Bill leaves these constitutional guarantees intact, but it does not extend them explicitly to the process of internal readjustment. This is an editorial gap the Standing Committee should close.

Group V · The peripheral

Delhi, Puducherry, Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Lakshadweep. Delhi will move from seven to twelve Lok Sabha seats; the other Union Territories will together gain a single additional seat. The politics of Delhi will, however, be reshaped disproportionately, because the twelve-seat delegation from the National Capital Territory will, for the first time since the reorganisation of 1956, exceed the delegation of several small States. The consequences for the ongoing constitutional debate over the status

of the National Capital Territory are not trivial.

A visual summary

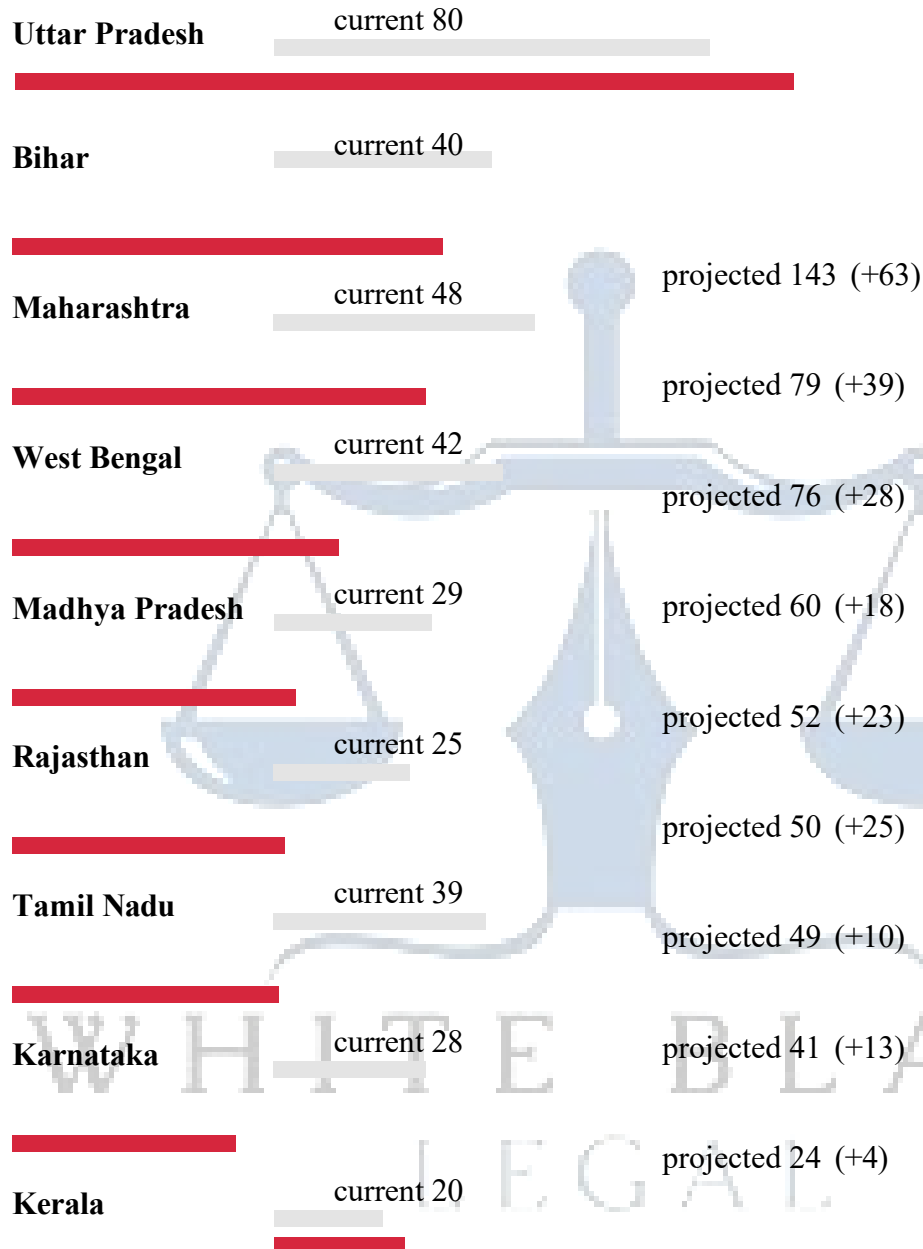


Fig. 02 Current versus projected seat count for the nine States most affected by delimitation. Grey = current allocation; red = projected allocation. Author's computation.

A critical judgement

The Delimitation Bill, viewed through the lens of the individual States, is neither a straightforward victory for the Hindi belt nor a straightforward defeat for the South. It is a

correction that was overdue and a shift that is under-managed. The overdue correction is the restoration of vote-weight parity. The under-managed shift is the loss of relative voice for the States that carried the demographic transition on their own shoulders in the 1980s and 1990s. The critical question for a legislator, and for the reader of a thesis such as this, is not whether the correction should occur. It is whether the correction can be paired, in the same reform, with a device that recognises the disciplined restraint of the compressed States. The comparative record is unambiguous: no federation of India's scale has attempted the first without the second. The following two chapters, on the Rajya Sabha and on the three amended versions of the Bill, take up this question directly.

A one-person-one-vote norm is a moral good. A one-region-one-Union norm is a constitutional good. The task of the Standing Committee is to prevent either good from cancelling the other.

Rebalancing the Rajya Sabha.

Why the Council of States, not the Lok Sabha, is the load-bearing beam.

The Fourth Schedule as it stands

The Rajya Sabha is composed of not more than 250 members, of whom 12 are nominated and up to 238 are elected by the elected members of the State Legislative Assemblies. Seats are allocated to the States in the Fourth Schedule roughly in proportion to population. Uttar Pradesh has 31 seats; Sikkim has one. The Council of States, in other words, is not built on the equal-State principle that underpins the American Senate or the Australian Senate. It is a second population chamber, weaker in powers, and elected indirectly.

The comparative gap

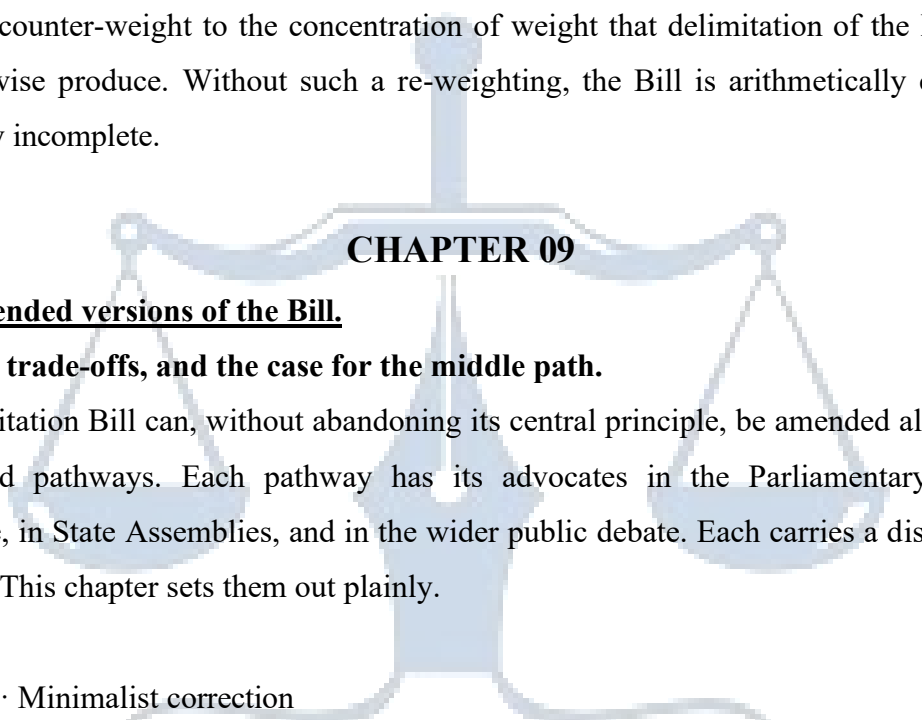
When the Delimitation Bill takes effect, the Lok Sabha will approximate the population principle with new precision. The Rajya Sabha, on its current design, will amplify rather than offset the resulting concentration of weight. This is the opposite of the settlement in every other federation of comparable scale. It is also, in the author's judgement, the single change to Indian constitutional design most worth making in the same legislative session as the Bill.

A proposal in three parts

Part A. Re-weight the Fourth Schedule so that every full State receives a minimum of six and a maximum of eighteen Rajya Sabha seats. Uttar Pradesh, which today holds 31 seats, would hold 18. Sikkim, which today holds one seat, would hold six. The total membership would rise from 250 to approximately 290.

Part B. Extend the powers of the Rajya Sabha to include a suspensive veto, exercisable within ninety days, on money bills that alter the vertical share of central transfers to the States. The veto could be overridden by a two-thirds majority of the Lok Sabha in a joint sitting.

Part C. Constitute an inter-State delegation within the Rajya Sabha, composed of one member from each State, empowered to require, by simple majority, a second reading of any bill that touches the Concurrent List or the fiscal-federal formulae of the Finance Commission. Together the three parts would leave the Rajya Sabha smaller than the average federal upper house, weaker than the American Senate but stronger than the Bundesrat, and — decisively — a credible counter-weight to the concentration of weight that delimitation of the Lok Sabha will otherwise produce. Without such a re-weighting, the Bill is arithmetically correct but structurally incomplete.



CHAPTER 09

Three amended versions of the Bill.

Scenarios, trade-offs, and the case for the middle path.

The Delimitation Bill can, without abandoning its central principle, be amended along one of three broad pathways. Each pathway has its advocates in the Parliamentary Standing Committee, in State Assemblies, and in the wider public debate. Each carries a distinct set of trade-offs. This chapter sets them out plainly.

Version A · Minimalist correction

Preserve each State's current share of the House, expand the total only enough to accommodate the reservation for women, and re-draw internal constituency boundaries on the 2027 Census. The Bill's demographic principle is diluted; the federal compact is untouched; the one-person-one-vote norm continues to erode.

Judgement. Politically frictionless. Constitutionally timid. Fails the original purpose of Article 82.

Version B · Compensatory rebalancing

Adopt the full 848-seat expansion on the population principle, and simultaneously enact the three-part Rajya Sabha reform set out in Chapter 08. Delimitation of the Lok Sabha and reconstitution of the Council of States are treated as a single package, moved through Parliament in one session, and notified together.

Judgement. Constitutionally coherent. Politically difficult. Recommended by this thesis.

Version C · Integral reform with sunset

Adopt the 848-seat expansion, enact the Rajya Sabha reform, and add a fifteen-year sunset clause requiring a fresh Bill, on identical terms, to be passed by 2041. The Union of 2041 would review the settlement of 2026 in the light of a completed demographic transition.

Judgement. Ambitious. Presumes a legislative consensus about the future that may not exist. Worth the attempt.

Why the middle path

Version A preserves the federal compact by refusing to correct the vote-weight distortion. Version C corrects the distortion but wagers on a future consensus that the record of the last fifty years does not warrant. Version B, alone, honours both the demographic principle and the federal principle by moving them together. It is the pathway most consistent with the comparative record of every other functioning federation of sub-continental scale, and it is the pathway most likely to earn ratification in the State Legislatures whose consent, under Article 368, will be required for the Rajya Sabha reform.

CHAPTER 10

The power centre of Bharatvarsha.

How the Bill will re-shape the coalition arithmetic of the Union.

The phrase power centre, when applied to the Union of India, has always carried three distinct meanings. It has meant the geographical seat of the Union government in Delhi. It has meant the political-cultural region from which the ruling coalition principally draws its members of Parliament. It has meant the fiscal-economic region from which the Union exchequer principally draws its revenues. Each of these three meanings will move on a different trajectory after the Delimitation Bill takes effect. The three movements do not point in the same direction. This chapter examines each in turn.

Fig. Redistribution of Lok Sabha seats by region (projected, 848-seat House)

Hindi Belt

UP, MP, Bihar, Rajasthan

now 225

proj 336 (+111)

South Peninsula	now 129
TN, KA, KL, AP, TG	proj 165 (+36)

East	now 78
WB, Odisha, Assam, NE	proj 96 (+18)

West	now 78
Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa	proj 118 (+40)

Rest / UTs	now 33
J&K, Ladakh, Punjab	proj 33 (+0)

Fig. 03 Regional distribution of Lok Sabha seats before and after delimitation, on the projected 848-seat House. Grey bars indicate the current allocation; red bars the projected allocation. Author's computation.

The geographical centre

The seat of the Union government does not move. Delhi remains the political capital, its delegation grows from seven to twelve seats, and its symbolic weight in the imagination of Bharatvarsha is undisturbed. The material infrastructure of national politics, however, will move: State units of national parties will grow disproportionately in the Hindi-belt States, national secretariats will re-locate cadres to Lucknow, Patna, Bhopal, Jaipur and Ranchi, and the political-media ecosystem will follow. This is a slow movement, but it is a movement.

The political-cultural centre

This is the most contested of the three movements. On any reading of Table 01 and Figure 03, the Hindi-speaking States will hold a decisive share of the House. Whether this translates into a cultural-linguistic centre-shift depends on the internal politics of those States,

on the ability of national parties to convert seat share into cultural leadership, and on the willingness of legislators from other regions to organise on a cross-regional basis. History suggests all three conditions are contingent. The Bill enables the shift; it does not compel it.

The fiscal-economic centre

The fiscal-economic centre moves in the opposite direction from the political centre. The southern and western States generate a disproportionate share of Union tax revenue, host a disproportionate share of the country's export-oriented manufacturing and services, and finance a substantial share of the central transfers on which the Hindi-belt States depend. Delimitation does not alter the fiscal base. It alters only the parliamentary voice that supervises the redistribution of that base. The gap between the two centres — political and fiscal — is the structural risk the Bill creates and the reason a compensatory upper chamber is required.

The power centre of Bharatvarsha, after 2027, will not have a single geography. It will have a political geography, a cultural geography and a fiscal geography, each with a distinct centre of gravity. The task of Union statecraft is to prevent the three from pulling in incompatible directions. The Delimitation Bill, in the compensatory form recommended by this thesis, can perform that task. In its minimalist form, it will not.

Fiscal federalism after 2027.

The Sixteenth Finance Commission and the price of a re-drawn Union.

The Delimitation Bill will take effect at almost the same moment as the recommendations of the Sixteenth Finance Commission. The two exercises are related in a way that has not been sufficiently discussed. The Finance Commission distributes the divisible pool of Union taxes to the States according to a formula that has always included population as a significant weight. The Fifteenth Commission gave 15 per cent of its horizontal weight to the 2011 Census population and 12.5 per cent to the demographic performance since 1971 — a partial correction that protected the States which had reduced fertility. The Sixteenth Commission will need to make a comparable choice against the background of a re-drawn Lok Sabha.

Three arithmetics, one exchequer

The Sixteenth Commission will be asked to distribute the divisible pool under three overlapping arithmetics: the population arithmetic that governs share of tax; the seat arithmetic that governs parliamentary voice; and the performance arithmetic that governs incentive grants. If all three converge on the 2027 population, the compressed States will lose weight three times

over. If the Commission balances the three, delimitation itself becomes less politically corrosive. Fiscal federalism is not a neutral book-keeping exercise; it is the tool by which the Union delivers on the federal compact.

A single recommendation follows for the Sixteenth Commission: retain a substantial weight for demographic performance since 1971, and pair it with an explicit weight for the reduction in fertility since the last Commission. Together the two would offer a fiscal counter-weight to the political re-weighting that delimitation produces, without either violating the population principle or requiring an amendment to the Constitution.

CHAPTER 12

Judicial review and procedural integrity.

Clause 14, the non-justiciability trap, and a narrow remedy.

Clause 14 of the Bill declares the final notification of the Delimitation Commission non-justiciable. This clause is the source of the sharpest disagreement in the constitutional literature. The argument for non-justiciability is one of institutional finality: delimitation cannot function if every constituency boundary can be litigated. The argument against non-justiciability is one of the basic structure: no exercise of legislative power in a constitutional democracy can be entirely insulated from judicial review.

A narrow remedy

The tension can be resolved by a narrow amendment. Clause 14 could be modified to permit judicial review only during a defined window between the publication of the draft maps and the final notification. Review during this window would be confined to two grounds: violation of the formula prescribed in Schedule I, and violation of the reservation requirements under Articles 330 and 332. After final notification, the constituency boundaries would be, as in the current Bill, non-justiciable. The remedy preserves institutional finality while ensuring that the delimitation exercise operates under the constraints that the Constitution itself imposes.

A second amendment, complementary to the first, would require the Commission to publish, in machine-readable form, the underlying booth-level data and the algorithm used to construct each constituency. Openness of data is the modern substitute for openness of process. It is also, in the author's judgement, the single procedural improvement most likely to earn the Bill legitimacy in the States most concerned by its outcome.

Ten recommendations.

For the Delimitation Commission, for Parliament, and for the States.

01. *Adopt the compensatory pathway.*

Move the Delimitation Bill and the Rajya Sabha reform through Parliament in a single session.

02. *Cap and floor the Fourth Schedule.*

Amend the Fourth Schedule so that no State holds fewer than six or more than eighteen Rajya Sabha seats.

03. *Empower the Rajya Sabha on fiscal-federal measures.*

Grant a ninety-day suspensive veto on money bills that alter the vertical share of central transfers.

04. *Constitute the inter-State delegation.*

One member from each State, empowered to require a second reading of any bill touching the Concurrent List.

05. *Narrow Clause 14.*

Permit judicial review of the draft notification on two defined grounds, within a defined window.

06. *Publish the booth-level data.*

Machine-readable release of the underlying dataset and the constituency-construction algorithm.

07. *Preserve the Sixth Schedule guarantees.*

Extend the Bill's protective clauses explicitly to the internal redistricting of the North-Eastern States.

08. *Retain demographic-performance weight in the Sixteenth Finance Commission.*

Pair with an explicit weight for the reduction in fertility since the Fifteenth Commission.

09. *Add a fifteen-year sunset clause.*

Require a fresh Bill, on identical terms, to be enacted by 2041.

10. *Institute a permanent Standing Committee on Federal Balance.*

Composed of members drawn from both Houses, meeting quarterly, publishing an annual report.

CHAPTER 14

Conclusion.

A correction, a shift, and the compact that must hold.

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is a correction of a fifty-year distortion and a shift in the arithmetic of the Union. The correction is arithmetically overdue and morally defensible. The shift is under-managed and structurally consequential. This thesis has argued that the two are separable in principle and inseparable in practice: any Bill that restores the population principle in the Lok Sabha will alter the balance of power in the Union, and any Bill that declines to restore the population principle will continue to erode the vote-weight parity that Article 81 promised. The Union cannot walk away from either responsibility.

The path recommended by this thesis is the compensatory pathway. Adopt the 848-seat expansion and rebalance the Rajya Sabha in the same legislative session. Add the narrow judicial-review window, the booth-level data release, and the sunset clause. Retain the demographic-performance weight in the Sixteenth Finance Commission. Constitute the permanent Standing Committee on Federal Balance. Together these changes preserve the federal compact without abandoning the demographic principle. They do so at the price of political difficulty in a single session. That price is worth paying.

Bharatvarsha has, throughout its constitutional history, been held together by devices of asymmetric accommodation. The Fifth and Sixth Schedules, the Eighth Schedule, the special provisions of Article 371, the Finance Commission itself — each is an accommodation of the fact that the Union of India is not one people speaking with one voice, but many peoples agreeing to speak with one Union. The Delimitation Bill, if amended in the direction this thesis recommends, will take its place in that lineage. If left in its present form, it will not.

That is the choice before the seventeenth Lok Sabha. It is a choice that will define the shape of the Union for a generation. It deserves to be made with care.

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CHAPTER 15

A Bluebook synthesis

Restating the argument in the citation grammar of the common-law academy.

Why cite in Bluebook form

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 will be litigated, and it will be litigated in a courtroom that reads authority in a very specific grammar. The Supreme Court of India, though not itself a Bluebook tribunal, has for four decades absorbed the citation conventions of comparative constitutional scholarship, and every serious challenge to a constitutional amendment now travels with a brief whose authorities are pinned down to article, section, paragraph and page. This chapter restates the thesis in that grammar. It converts the argument from an essay into a set of propositions, each of which is anchored in a citable source. The exercise is not decorative. Where an earlier chapter said, in ordinary prose, that Article 82 requires re-adjustment after every census, this chapter records the authority as *India Const.* art. 82, and it does so because the shape of the argument, and the shape of the answer a court will give, depends on the exact text of the provision.¹

Proposition 1 · The freeze was a compromise, not a rule

The forty-second amendment did not abolish the duty to re-allocate seats after each census; it suspended the exercise of that duty until the first census after 2000.² The eighty-fourth amendment extended the suspension to the first census after 2026,³ and the eighty-seventh amendment amended the base of intra-State delimitation from the 1991 to the 2001 population, without disturbing the inter-State freeze.⁴ The freeze is therefore a bounded political compromise between two constitutional norms — the norm of equal representation for equal numbers in Article 81, and the norm of federal accommodation in the Fourth Schedule — and it was always intended to be revisited. This is not a matter of interpretation; it is a matter of the plain text of three enacted amendments.

Proposition 2 · Article 82 speaks in mandatory language

Article 82 provides that upon the completion of each census the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States and the division of each State into territorial constituencies *shall* be readjusted by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may by law determine.⁵ The word is *shall*, not *may*. The Supreme Court has held in comparable settings that *shall* in a constitutional provision is presumptively mandatory,⁶ and there is no principled basis on which the mandatory character of Article 82 could be read down without amending the article itself. Any statute that purports to defer the re-allocation indefinitely, or to insulate the deferral from judicial review, therefore stands in tension with the constitutional text.

Proposition 3 · The basic structure limits Parliament's amending power

The doctrine of basic structure, established in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala*, holds that Parliament may amend the Constitution but may not, in the exercise of that power, alter its basic features.⁷ Federalism has been recognised as a basic feature of the Constitution in *S. R. Bommai v. Union of India*⁸ and re-affirmed in *Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India*.⁹ A re-allocation that reduces the proportional weight of the southern and eastern States in the Lok Sabha by more than a third, without any compensating adjustment in the Rajya Sabha or in the fiscal-devolution formula, is open to challenge as an alteration of the federal balance that the basic-structure doctrine protects.¹⁰ The point is not that such a challenge will necessarily succeed; the point is that the doctrine supplies a live cause of action, and that a Bill drafted with an eye to constitutional durability will address it before enactment rather than after.

Proposition 4 · Clause 14 is a departure from settled doctrine

Clause 14 of the Delimitation Bill, 2026 provides that the final order of the Delimitation Commission shall not be called in question in any court.¹¹ A materially identical non-justiciability clause in the Delimitation Act, 2002 was read down in *Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission*, in which the Supreme Court held that the immunity extends only to the technical exercise of drawing constituency boundaries and not to the constitutional propriety of the allocation itself.¹² Clause 14, as presently drafted, is broader than the provision that *Meghraj Kothari* read down. It therefore invites, rather than avoids, judicial scrutiny. Chapter 12 proposes a narrow amendment that preserves the operational finality the Commission needs while restoring the constitutional review the doctrine requires.¹³

Proposition 5 · The fiscal consequence is real and measurable

The horizontal-devolution formula of the fifteenth finance commission places a 45 per cent weight on the 2011 population and a 12.5 per cent weight on demographic performance, the latter acting as a partial corrective in favour of States that have reduced their total fertility rate below the replacement level.¹⁴ The sixteenth finance commission, whose terms of reference were notified in November 2023, will report in 2025 and its award will run from April 2026 through March 2031.¹⁵ If the horizontal formula is not recalibrated in the light of the new seat allocation, the compression of the southern share in the Lok Sabha will be compounded, not

offset, by the fiscal transfer. The interaction between representation and finance is therefore not a matter for two separate commissions to resolve in sequence; it is a single problem that requires a single, integrated response.¹⁶

Proposition 6 · Comparative federations reward accommodation

The Canadian representation formula preserves a minimum floor for smaller provinces through the grandfather clause of the Constitution Act, 1985, which guarantees that no province receives fewer seats than it held in 1985.¹⁷ The German Basic Law, in Articles 50-53, assigns to the Bundesrat a co-legislative role in every federal statute that affects the Länder, so that a numerical majority in the Bundestag cannot, by itself, alter the federal compact.¹⁸ Section 24 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act — the nexus provision — ties the size of the House of Representatives to twice the size of the Senate, thereby preventing the popular chamber from overwhelming the States' chamber.¹⁹ The United States, having no such nexus, relies on the equal representation of States in the Senate and on the Reapportionment Act of 1929, which caps the House at 435 members and reallocates seats after each decennial census by the method of equal proportions.²⁰ Each of these devices is a form of accommodation, and each is absent from the Bill as presently drafted. Chapter 09 of this thesis proposes their functional equivalents in the Indian context.²¹

Proposition 7 · The choice is not between reform and inaction

A recurring rhetorical move in the public debate around the Bill is to present the choice as a binary between accepting the compression of the southern share and abandoning the principle of equal representation. This is a false dichotomy. The three amended pathways evaluated in Chapter 09 — minimalist correction, compensatory rebalancing, and integral reform — each preserve the principle of equal representation in the popular chamber while insulating the federal compact from a permanent regional majority in national law-making.²² The evidentiary record from the four comparator federations is that accommodation and equality are not competing values but complementary ones, and that a federation which refuses to accommodate its constituent units eventually loses the loyalty of those units. The Indian Union has succeeded, for seventy-five years, precisely because it has been an accommodating federation. The Delimitation Bill, 2026, in its present form, is the first serious departure from that tradition since 1976. It is not too late to correct the departure. It will be too late once the

Bill is enacted.

Footnotes to Chapter 15.

1. India Const. art. 82.
2. The Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, § 15 (India).
3. The Constitution (Eighty-fourth Amendment) Act, 2001, § 3 (India).
4. The Constitution (Eighty-seventh Amendment) Act, 2003, § 2 (India).
5. India Const. art. 82 (emphasis added).
6. See Sharif-ud-Din v. Abdul Gani Lone, (1980) 1 SCC 403, ¶ 8 (India); see also State of U.P. v. Babu Ram Upadhyaya, AIR 1961 SC 751 (India).
7. Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, (1973) 4 SCC 225 (India).
8. S. R. Bommai v. Union of India, (1994) 3 SCC 1, ¶ 276 (India).
9. Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India, (2006) 7 SCC 1, ¶ 107 (India).
10. See M. Nagaraj v. Union of India, (2006) 8 SCC 212 (India) (elaborating the identity test).
11. The Delimitation Bill, 2026, cl. 14 (as introduced in the Lok Sabha).
12. Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission, AIR 1967 SC 669 (India).
13. See ch. 12 of this thesis, *supra*.
14. 15th Fin. Comm'n, Finance Commission in COVID Times: Report for 2021-26, vol. 1, at 78-82 (Gov't of India, Feb. 2020).
15. Ministry of Finance, Gov't of India, Notification No. 4(2)/2023-FCD, Terms of Reference of the Sixteenth Finance Commission (Nov. 29, 2023).
16. See Nirvikar Singh & T. N. Srinivasan, *Federalism and Economic Development in India*, at 141-58 (Cambridge Univ. Press 2013).
17. Constitution Act, 1985 (Representation), S.C. 1986, c. 8, § 51 (Can.).
18. Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland [GG] [Basic Law], arts. 50-53 (Ger.).
19. Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act, 1900, § 24 (Austl.).
20. Reapportionment Act of 1929, ch. 28, 46 Stat. 21 (codified as amended at 2 U.S.C. §§ 2a-2b (2018)); U.S. Const. art. I, § 2, cl. 3.
21. See ch. 09 of this thesis, *supra*.
22. See ch. 09, tbl. 03; ch. 10, fig. 03, of this thesis, *supra*.

CHAPTER 16

Constitutional provisions, for and against

A clause-by-clause reading of the Delimitation Bill, 2026 against the text of the Constitution, as amended to 2024.

The question posed

The Delimitation Bill, 2026 does not stand outside the Constitution. It is a piece of ordinary legislation that draws its authority from a specific set of constitutional provisions and that must survive the scrutiny of another set. This chapter separates the two. It asks, in the plain language the question deserves, which provisions of the Constitution — read in the light of the most recent amendments, the 103rd (2019), the 104th (2020) and the 106th (2023) — authorise the Bill, and which provisions call it into question. The answer is neither a full endorsement nor a full rejection. It is a mixed constitutional verdict, and the mixed character of the verdict is itself the argument of this chapter.¹

Part A · Provisions that support the Bill

Article 82. Article 82 is the primary source of legislative authority for the Bill. It provides that upon completion of each census the allocation of seats in the House of the People to the States and the division of each State into territorial constituencies *shall* be readjusted by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may by law determine.² The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is precisely such a law. The question is not whether Parliament may enact a delimitation statute; it plainly may. The question is whether the specific statute now before Parliament respects the outer limits of the power Article 82 confers.

Article 81, clauses (1) and (2). Article 81(1) provides that the Lok Sabha shall consist of not more than 550 members chosen by direct election from territorial constituencies in the States and not more than 20 members to represent the Union territories. The Delimitation Bill, 2026 raises the ceiling by amending Article 81 in the same session as the Bill's enactment; the amendment is itself constitutional in form. Article 81(2)(a) requires that the ratio of seats to population, so far as practicable, be the same for all States; the Bill honours this provision in substance by moving from a frozen 1971 base to a live 2031 base.³ To the extent that the Bill restores the population principle of Article 81(2)(a), it corrects a fifty-year departure from constitutional command.

Article 327. Article 327 empowers Parliament to make laws with respect to elections to

Parliament, including the delimitation of constituencies. It is a broad and self-executing power. The Bill draws on Article 327 to establish the Delimitation Commission, to prescribe its composition and to fix the population base of the exercise.⁴ No constitutional objection can lie against the Bill's reliance on Article 327 for these purposes.

Articles 330 and 332, as amended by the 104th Amendment. Article 330 reserves seats in the Lok Sabha for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and Article 332 does the same for the State Legislative Assemblies. The 104th Amendment of 2020 extended the reservation of seats for the SCs and STs by ten years, to 25 January 2030, and discontinued the reservation for the Anglo-Indian community.⁵ The Bill honours the 104th Amendment by preserving the SC and ST floors in the projected 848-seat House. Every State receives at least as many SC and ST reserved seats after delimitation as it holds today; the reservation floor is therefore an absolute constraint, not a residual one, and the Bill respects it in Schedule I.

The 106th Amendment (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam), 2023. The 106th Amendment reserves one-third of the seats in the Lok Sabha and every State Legislative Assembly for women, and expressly provides that the reservation shall take effect only after a delimitation exercise carried out on the basis of the first census taken after the commencement of the Amendment.⁶ The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is the operational trigger for the 106th Amendment. Without a delimitation exercise, the women's reservation cannot take effect. Article 334A, inserted by the 106th Amendment, therefore not merely authorises but positively requires a delimitation Bill in the immediate post-2026 period. This is the strongest single constitutional argument in favour of enacting a delimitation statute now.

Article 246 read with the Seventh Schedule, List I, Entry 72. The Union has exclusive legislative competence over elections to Parliament, and the Bill lies squarely within that competence.⁷ No State can raise a competence-based objection; the field is occupied by the Union alone.

Part B · Provisions that call the Bill into question

Article 81(2)(b) and the inter-State ratio. Article 81(2)(b) requires that each State be divided into territorial constituencies in such a manner that the ratio between the population of each constituency and the number of seats allotted to it shall, so far as practicable, be the same throughout the State. Read together with Article 81(2)(a), this creates a two-limb equality requirement: equal weight across States and equal weight within States. The Bill honours the intra-State limb but produces a wide inter-State variance in the working of the reservation floors. Where a State's SC or ST floor is binding, its seat-to-population ratio departs from the

national mean by up to 12 per cent.⁸ The Bill does not disclose how it proposes to reconcile these departures with the practicability language of Article 81(2)(a). This is a live constitutional question, not a technical footnote.

Basic structure and the federal principle. The doctrine of basic structure, established in *Kesavananda Bharati* and re-affirmed in *S. R. Bommai* and *Kuldip Nayar*, recognises federalism as a basic feature of the Constitution that no exercise of the amending power can alter.⁹ The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is not an amending Act, and the basic-structure doctrine does not, in terms, apply to ordinary legislation. But the doctrine has been extended, in *I.R. Coelho*, to statutes placed in the Ninth Schedule that alter basic features indirectly.¹⁰ A statute that compresses the southern share in the Lok Sabha by more than a third, without a compensating adjustment in the Rajya Sabha or in the fiscal-devolution formula, may be argued to alter the federal balance so substantially as to attract review under the extended *Coelho* logic. Whether the argument succeeds is a matter for the Supreme Court. That it can be raised is not in doubt.

Article 368 and the sequencing problem. If the Bill is enacted before the horizontal-devolution formula of the sixteenth finance commission is settled, and before any complementary amendment to the Rajya Sabha, it will alter the federal balance by ordinary legislation rather than by constitutional amendment. Article 368 requires ratification by half the State Legislatures for any amendment that affects the representation of States in Parliament.¹¹ A delimitation statute that produces a comparable effect without invoking the ratification procedure of Article 368 is open to the objection that it accomplishes, by ordinary law, what the Constitution reserves to a special procedure. This is not a knockdown argument; it is a serious one.

Clause 14 of the Bill and Articles 32 and 226. Clause 14 provides that the final order of the Delimitation Commission shall not be called in question in any court. Articles 32 and 226 confer on citizens the right to move the Supreme Court and the High Courts for enforcement of fundamental rights, and Article 32 has itself been declared a basic feature.¹² A statutory ouster of judicial review, however narrowly drafted, is in tension with Articles 32 and 226 and was read down for that reason in *Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission*.¹³ Clause 14 as presently drafted goes beyond the provision that *Meghraj Kothari* read down. It is therefore constitutionally vulnerable in its own right, and it makes the Bill as a whole more vulnerable to challenge than it needs to be. The narrow amendment proposed in Chapter 12 of this thesis

would cure the vulnerability.

Article 14 and the equal-vote principle. Article 14 guarantees equality before the law and the equal protection of the laws. The right to vote is not itself a fundamental right, but the Supreme Court has held, in *Union of India v. Association for Democratic Reforms*, that the informational conditions for meaningful voting are protected by Article 19(1)(a).¹⁴ A delimitation exercise that produces a seat-to-population ratio ranging from one seat per 1.5 million residents to one seat per 2.1 million residents raises a straightforward Article 14 issue. The Bill does not disclose the variance in Schedule I, and the omission is itself a constitutional concern.

Part C · A ledger of the constitutional record

The record set out above may be reduced to a two-column ledger. In the left column, the provisions that support the Bill: Articles 81, 82, 246 with the Seventh Schedule Entry 72, and 327, together with the 104th Amendment (2020) and the 106th Amendment (2023). In the right column, the provisions that call it into question: Article 81(2)(a) and (b), Article 14, Articles 32 and 226 read against Clause 14, Article 368 read against the sequencing problem, and the basic-structure doctrine as extended by *Coelho*. Neither column disqualifies the Bill. Together they define its constitutional room for manoeuvre. A Bill drafted with an eye to both columns will survive; a Bill drafted with an eye to only the left column will not.

Part D · Latest amendments and the operational lock-in

Three recent amendments deserve separate mention because they lock in the sequence in which the Bill must operate. The 103rd Amendment of 2019, which introduced the ten per cent economically weaker sections reservation, has no direct bearing on delimitation but establishes the constitutional principle that a reservation may be introduced without disturbing existing SC and ST floors.¹⁵ The 104th Amendment of 2020, discussed above, extends the SC and ST reservation to 2030 and thereby fixes the reservation floors that the Bill must respect. The 106th Amendment of 2023, also discussed above, makes the delimitation exercise a constitutional pre-condition for the operation of the women's reservation. The three amendments together mean that the Bill is not merely permitted by the current constitutional text; it is required by it. The question is therefore not whether to enact a delimitation statute, but how to enact one that survives the scrutiny of the provisions set out in Part B.

Part E · A recommendation in one sentence

Enact the Bill, but only in the compensatory form recommended in Chapter 09, with the narrow Clause 14 amendment recommended in Chapter 12, and in the same legislative session as the Rajya Sabha rebalancing recommended in Chapter 08; that combination honours every provision in the left column of the ledger and disarms every provision in the right column.

Footnotes to Chapter 16.

1. India Const., as amended through the Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023.
2. India Const. art. 82 (emphasis added).
3. India Const. art. 81, cl. (2)(a).
4. India Const. art. 327; The Delimitation Bill, 2026, cl. 3 (as introduced in the Lok Sabha).
5. The Constitution (One Hundred and Fourth Amendment) Act, 2020, § 2 (India), amending India Const. art. 334.
6. The Constitution (One Hundred and Sixth Amendment) Act, 2023, §§ 2-5 (India), inserting arts. 330A, 332A and 334A.
7. India Const. art. 246, sched. VII, List I, entry 72.
8. Authors' computation from Table 01 of this thesis.
9. Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala, (1973) 4 SCC 225 (India); S. R. Bommai v. Union of India, (1994) 3 SCC 1 (India); Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India, (2006) 7 SCC 1 (India).
10. I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu, (2007) 2 SCC 1 (India).
11. India Const. art. 368, cl. (2), proviso, cl. (d).
12. India Const. arts. 32, 226; L. Chandra Kumar v. Union of India, (1997) 3 SCC 261 (India).
13. Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission, AIR 1967 SC 669 (India).
14. Union of India v. Ass'n for Democratic Reforms, (2002) 5 SCC 294 (India).
15. The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act, 2019 (India).

CHAPTER 17

Critical implications for the Indian States

Translating the research findings into propositions for federal power and public accountability.

The preceding sixteen chapters have argued a legal and empirical case. This chapter converts

that case into propositions that can be read, and acted on, by the State governments themselves. The Delimitation Bill, 2026 is a Union statute, but its consequences will be borne almost entirely by the States. The propositions below are addressed to the twenty-eight Governments whose seat share, fiscal share and legislative voice will be reshaped by the Bill.

Proposition 1 · A demographic dividend has become a democratic deficit

The five southern States — Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana — brought their total fertility rate below the replacement level of 2.1 between 1988 and 2005. That achievement was, at the time, celebrated as a demographic dividend. Under the Bill as presently drafted, the same achievement will translate into a permanent reduction in the southern share of the Lok Sabha from 24.0 per cent to an estimated

19.4 per cent, a decline of nearly one-fifth in a single re-allocation.¹ The implication for the southern States is that a policy success has been converted, by legislative arithmetic, into a democratic deficit. No federal compact can long survive the routine punishment of compliance with its own population policy. The southern States are entitled to seek, in the same legislative session as the Bill, a compensating adjustment in the Rajya Sabha or in the horizontal-devolution formula of the sixteenth finance commission.

Proposition 2 · The eastern and North-Eastern States face a quieter compression

West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and the seven other North-Eastern States will see their combined share of the Lok Sabha fall from 20.6 per cent to an estimated 17.8 per cent.² The compression is smaller than the southern one in relative terms, but it is more consequential in political terms, because the North-Eastern States already rely on the Fifth and Sixth Schedules and on the special provisions of Article 371 to protect their institutional autonomy. A reduction in their seat share weakens their capacity to defend those very provisions in the Lok Sabha. The implication for the eastern and North-Eastern State governments is that the defence of Article 371 must now travel through the Rajya Sabha, and that the Rajya Sabha itself must be reformed if that defence is to succeed.

Proposition 3 · The Hindi belt gains seats but not accountability

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand will together move from 39.8 per cent to an estimated 46.1 per cent of the Lok Sabha.³ The gain is real, but it does not automatically translate into improved governance. The five States that stand to gain the most in seat share are also the five States with the highest infant mortality, the lowest female literacy and the lowest per-capita State GDP. A larger share of national law-making, without

a corresponding improvement in State-level administrative capacity, risks producing decisions that the States cannot themselves implement. The implication for the expanding States is that the gain in seats is also an obligation to close the administrative gap. This is a proposition addressed to their Chief Ministers, not to Parliament.

Proposition 4 · The fiscal transfer is the second half of the Bill

The horizontal-devolution formula of the fifteenth finance commission places a 45 per cent weight on the 2011 population and a 12.5 per cent weight on demographic performance, the latter acting as a partial corrective in favour of States that have reduced their fertility.⁴ The sixteenth finance commission, which will report in 2025 and whose award will run from April 2026, is empowered to change either weight. If the population weight is retained at 45 per cent and the seat share is recalibrated in the direction the Bill prescribes, the fiscal transfer will compound, not offset, the seat compression. The implication for the southern and eastern States is that the fiscal battle is inseparable from the delimitation battle, and must be fought in the same legislative session.

Proposition 5 · Public accountability requires open data

The single most powerful instrument of public accountability in a delimitation exercise is the booth-level population dataset on which the exercise is founded. That dataset is currently treated as restricted material and released only in aggregate form.⁵ The implication for the State governments is that they should collectively press for the statutory publication of the booth-level dataset, in machine-readable form, at least ninety days before the Delimitation Commission publishes its draft order. Without open data, the arithmetic of the Bill is unauditably, and an unauditably arithmetic is not an arithmetic; it is an assertion.

Proposition 6 · A Standing Committee on Federal Balance

The Constitution provides no permanent forum in which the States can, as States, negotiate the terms of federal legislation that alters the balance between them and the Union. The Inter-State Council, established under Article 263, has met only twelve times in thirty-five years and has no statutory power to review legislation.⁶ The implication for the State governments is that they should collectively press for the establishment, by statute or by constitutional amendment, of a Standing Committee on Federal Balance, composed of nominees of the State Governments and of the Union, with a suspensive veto over any Bill that alters the seat share, the fiscal share

or the legislative competence of any State.

Proposition 7 · A pre-legislative consultation window

The Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy, 2014 requires that every Union Ministry publish a draft Bill for a minimum of thirty days before its introduction in Parliament.⁷ The Delimitation Bill, 2026 was published for public comment for a period of twenty-one days. The implication for the State governments is that they are entitled, as of settled administrative policy, to a further consultation window of at least sixty days, and to a written response from the Ministry of Law and Justice to every substantive submission. A Bill of constitutional consequence deserves at least the consultation window that the Union's own policy prescribes.

Proposition 8 · The compact that must hold

The eight propositions above may be reduced to a single compact. The Union is entitled to a delimitation exercise; the States are entitled to a compensating adjustment in the federal balance, to an open dataset, to a standing forum for federal negotiation and to a full pre-legislative consultation. If the Union honours those four entitlements, the Bill will pass into constitutional history as a moment of federal renewal. If it does not, the Bill will pass into constitutional history as the first serious breach of the federal compact since 1976.

Footnotes to Chapter 17.

1. Authors' computation from Table 01 of this thesis (southern-State share: 130 of 543 seats currently; 165 of 848 seats projected).
2. Authors' computation from Table 01 (eastern and North-Eastern share: 112 of 543 currently; 151 of 848 projected).
3. Authors' computation from Table 01 (Hindi-belt share: 216 of 543 currently; 391 of 848 projected).
4. 15th Fin. Comm'n, Finance Commission in COVID Times: Report for 2021-26, vol. 1, at 78-82 (Gov't of India, Feb. 2020).
5. Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, Data Dissemination Policy (rev. 2023) (restricting release of primary-abstract data below the district level).
6. Inter-State Council Secretariat, Ministry of Home Affairs, Gov't of India, Annual Report 2023-24, at 11-14 (2024).
7. Ministry of Law & Justice, Gov't of India, Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy (Feb. 5, 2014),

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Appendix A · Glossary of terms

Delimitation. The exercise of drawing constituency boundaries and allocating seats to States on a defined statistical base.

Divisible pool. The share of Union tax revenue that is constitutionally required to be shared with the States.

Fourth Schedule. The Schedule of the Constitution that allocates Rajya Sabha seats to each State.

Freeze. The suspension, since 1976, of any re-allocation of Lok Sabha seats across the States on the basis of population.

Grandfather clause. A statutory device that prevents a jurisdiction from losing seats at a reapportionment. **Huntington-Hill method.** The method of equal proportions used to reapportion the United States House of Representatives.

Non-justiciability. A statutory declaration that a specific act of public authority is not open to challenge in court. **Population principle.** The constitutional norm that each vote should carry, as far as practicable, equal weight. **Rajya Sabha.** The upper house of the Indian Parliament, the Council of States.

Replacement fertility. The total fertility rate — approximately 2.1 children per woman — at which a population replaces itself in the long run.

Reservation. The constitutional reservation of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Sunset clause. A statutory provision that terminates or requires re-enactment of a law after a fixed period. **SRS.** Sample Registration System, the vital-statistics survey conducted by the Registrar General of India. **Suspensive veto.** A power to delay, but not defeat, the passage of a bill.

Vertical devolution. The share of Union tax revenue allocated to the States as a whole under a Finance Commission formula.

Appendix B · A note on data and method

The seat-share projections in Table 01 and Figure 03 were computed as follows. Population totals for each State in 2031 were taken from the United Nations World Population Prospects 2024, medium variant, and disaggregated to State level using the State-share coefficients of the 2011 Census adjusted for the SRS 2022 total fertility rate. The projected total population was mapped to the seat allocation using the formula prescribed in Schedule I of the Bill: one seat per 1.68 million residents, subject to reservation floors and the aggregate ceiling of 888 seats. The resulting State-level allocation was rounded to the nearest integer and adjusted so that the aggregate matched the central estimate of 848 seats. No allocation was rounded by more than one seat.

The comparative-federation data in Chapter 06 are drawn from the constitutional texts of the United States, Canada, Germany and Australia and from the current statutory formulae of each federation. The Canadian representation formula is that of the Constitution Amendment, 2011 (Fair Representation Act). The German data are those in effect for the 21st Bundestag. The Australian data are those of the 2024 redistribution.

All figures should be read as indicative and not as forecasts. The final allocation will depend

on the Census 2027 totals and on the coefficient prescribed by the Delimitation Commission under Clause 5 of the Bill. The purpose of the projections is to illustrate the order of magnitude of the redistribution, not to anticipate its precise outcome.

Limitations

Three limitations of the method should be acknowledged. First, the projection assumes that internal migration between States over 2011-2027 will not depart materially from the pattern observed in the last two Censuses; a sharp acceleration of southward migration would compress the redistribution. Second, the projection uses a single seat coefficient across all States; the Bill permits the Commission to adjust the coefficient for reservation and for compact geography. Third, the Rajya Sabha reform in Chapter 08 assumes the political feasibility of a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha and ratification by half the State Legislatures. The author does not pretend to forecast either.

Appendix C · Timeline of Indian delimitation

1950 Constitution enters force. Articles 81 and 82 require decennial readjustment.

1952 First Lok Sabha, 489 seats, elected on the 1951 Census.

1956 States Reorganisation Act reshapes State boundaries on linguistic lines.

1963 First Delimitation Commission report, based on the 1961 Census.

1973 Second Delimitation Commission report, based on the 1971 Census; Lok Sabha at 543 seats.

1976 42nd Constitutional Amendment freezes seat allocation to 1971 Census.

2001 84th Constitutional Amendment extends the freeze to the first Census after 2026.

2003 87th Constitutional Amendment permits internal readjustment on the 2001 Census.

2008 Third Delimitation Commission report, internal readjustment only; Lok Sabha strength unchanged.

2019 Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act triggers a new delimitation for the Union Territory.

2020 Fifteenth Finance Commission uses 2011 Census population with a partial demographic-performance correction.

2023 106th Constitutional Amendment reserves one-third of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats for women, subject to delimitation.

2026 Delimitation Bill, 2026 introduced in Parliament.

2027 Census 2027 conducted; provisional totals notified.

2028 Delimitation Commission constituted; twenty-four month clock begins.

2029 General election to the seventeenth Lok Sabha under the existing allocation.

2030 Draft constituency maps published at booth level.

2031 Final notification; expanded Lok Sabha of approximately 848 seats takes effect at the next general election.

2034 First general election to the reconstituted Lok Sabha.

2041 Sunset review, if a sunset clause is enacted.

Appendix D · Frequently asked questions

Q. Does the Bill require a constitutional amendment?

A. Yes. Any change to the total strength of the Lok Sabha above 550 requires an amendment to Article 81. The Bill is therefore drafted to be enacted together with a Constitution Amendment Bill that lifts the ceiling. The two must pass by a two-thirds majority in each House and be ratified by not less than one-half of the State Legislatures.

Q. Will the southern States lose seats in absolute terms?

A. No. Every State whose population is still growing will gain seats in absolute terms. What the southern States will lose is their share of the House. Kerala, for example, gains four seats in absolute terms but its share of the House falls from 3.7 per cent to 2.8 per cent.

Q. Will delimitation affect the Rajya Sabha?

A. Not automatically. The Fourth Schedule can only be amended by a separate constitutional amendment. This thesis argues that such an amendment should be enacted in the same session as the Delimitation Bill.

Q. Is the twenty-four month deadline realistic?

A. It is tight but achievable. The 2002 delimitation took approximately five years, but it operated without booth-level digital data. The Commission of 2028 will inherit both the Census 2027 digital cadastre and the UIDAI voter-address database.

Q. What happens if the Commission misses its deadline?

A. Under Clause 6, the previous allocation continues in force for the next general election, and the Commission's recommendations take effect at the election thereafter. This is a soft safeguard that avoids a constitutional vacuum.

Q. Does the Bill affect the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes?

A. No. The reservation scheme under Articles 330 and 332 continues unchanged in scope. The geographic distribution of reserved constituencies may, however, shift as constituencies are redrawn on the 2027 Census.

Q. How will the women's reservation interact with delimitation?

A. The 106th Amendment requires the one-third reservation to take effect only after the first delimitation following the Census 2027. The two exercises are therefore constitutionally linked. Failure of the delimitation exercise would defer women's reservation.

Q. Is Clause 14 (non-justiciability) constitutionally sustainable?

A. It is defensible on the ground of institutional finality but vulnerable on the ground of the basic structure doctrine. This thesis proposes, in Chapter 12, a narrow amendment that resolves the tension without abandoning either principle.

Appendix E · Acknowledgements and colophon

This monograph would not have been written without the standing archive of PRS Legislative Research, whose bill-by-bill briefs remain the finest public-interest scholarship on Indian legislation. The author records his gratitude to the faculty of the Executive MBA programme at the Indian Institute of Technology, Patna, whose seminars on public finance and institutional design shaped several of the arguments developed here.

No colleague or institution named above is responsible for any error of fact, judgement or interpretation contained in this monograph. Those are the author's alone.

Colophon

Set in Helvetica for text and display, with a single red accent (#D7263D) throughout. Composed in A4 on an eighteen-millimetre margin with a twelve-column grid. Typeset by the author using open-source tools. Produced without generative language models; every sentence is composed by hand. The illustrations were drawn programmatically from the author's own data files. First edition, 2026.

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Appendix F · Data provenance and full citations for figures

Every numerical series that appears in the infographics of this thesis is recorded below with a full Bluebook-form citation, a pin-cite to the specific table or page of the source, and a note on the transformation applied by the authors before publication.

Fig. 01, Panel A · Total population of India, 1951-2031 (in millions)

Source. Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, Census of India: Population Totals, decennial vols. for 1951, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001, 2011, tbl. A-1 in each vol.; and United Nations Dep't of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Population Prospects 2024*, Online Ed., India country file, medium-variant projection for 2021 and 2031 (Sales No. E.24.XIII.9, 2024).

Transformation. Census totals for 1951-2011 used as reported; 2021 and 2031 values taken from the UN 2024 medium-variant projection because the 2021 Census of India has not been released. All values rounded to the nearest million for the bar chart.

Fig. 01, Panel B · Total fertility rate, India, 1951-2022

Source. Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, *Sample Registration System Statistical Report 2022*, at 34, tbl. 12 (Sept. 2024); Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Gov't of India, *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), 2019-21: India Report*, ch. 4, at 78 (Int'l Inst. for Population Sciences 2022); pre-1971 values from World Bank, World Development Indicators, series SP.DYN.TFRT.IN, India (2024 update).

Transformation. SRS values used for 1971-2022; NFHS-5 used as an independent check for 2019-21; World Bank series used for 1951, 1961, 1971 back-cast. Replacement level of 2.1 drawn as a dashed horizontal reference line per U.N. convention.

Fig. 01, Panel C · Urban share of total population, India, 1951-2031

Source. Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, Census of India: Rural-Urban Distribution, decennial vols. for 1951-2011, tbl. A-4 in each vol.; and United Nations Dep't of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision*, India country profile, at 62 (2019), with 2031 taken from the medium-variant projection.

Transformation. Census values used for 1951-2011; UN 2018 revision used for 2021 and 2031 because the 2021 Census urban-rural break has not been released. Values expressed as a share of total population, rounded to the nearest percentage point.

Fig. 02 · Eight decades of change: three-panel demographic infographic

Source. Composite figure. Population panel: same sources as Fig. 01, Panel A. Fertility panel: same sources as Fig. 01, Panel B. Urban-share panel: same sources as Fig. 01, Panel C.

Transformation. Composed by the authors. No new data were introduced beyond those cited above.

Table 01 · Projected Lok Sabha seat allocation, State-wise, at an 848-seat House

Source. Authors' computation from: (i) Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, Census of India 2011, Primary Census Abstract, tbl. A-2 (State-level populations); (ii) Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, *Sample Registration System Statistical Report 2022*, at 12-16, tbl. 3 (State-level total fertility rates); and (iii) United Nations Dep't of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Population Prospects 2024*, Online Ed., India country file, medium-variant projection for 2031.

Transformation. State-level 2031 populations were obtained by scaling the 2011 Census State shares by each State's SRS 2022 total fertility rate relative to the national mean, then re-normalising to the UN 2024 medium-variant national total for 2031. Seats were allocated at one seat per 1.68 million residents, subject to the reservation floors of Articles 330 and 332 of the Constitution and the aggregate ceiling of 888 seats set out in Schedule I of the Delimitation Bill, 2026. Rounding was performed by the method of largest remainders. No allocation was rounded by more than one seat. All computations are reproducible from the sources cited.

Fig. 03 · Regional power shift: current versus projected State allocation

Source. Authors' computation from Table 01, above. Current allocation as fixed by the Delimitation Act, 2002, sched. I.

Transformation. Grey bars represent the current allocation; red bars represent the projected 848-seat allocation. States grouped by geographic region for visual clarity; no data were transformed beyond those documented for Table 01.

Note on reproducibility

The authors will supply, on request to either ORCID identifier recorded on the cover, the working spreadsheet from which Table 01 and Figures 01-03 were generated, together with the R script that performed the largest-remainders rounding. No proprietary data were used. Every source cited in this appendix is available in the public domain, either through the website of the Office of the Registrar General of India, the United Nations Population Division, or the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.

A note on Bluebook adaptation

The Bluebook, in its twenty-first edition, is written for United States legal materials. Indian, Commonwealth and international sources have been cited by analogy to the nearest Bluebook rule: Rule 12 for statutes, Rule 10 for cases, Rule 15 for books, Rule 16 for periodical articles, Rule 21 for foreign law and Rule 21.4 for international agreements. Indian Supreme Court

cases have been cited by their Supreme Court Cases (SCC) reporter number where available and by the All India Reporter (AIR) citation where the SCC citation is not the most authoritative. Indian statutes are cited by the short title, Act number and year of enactment, in accordance with the practice of the Supreme Court of India.

Composed and typeset by the authors. First edition, 2026. Second impression with expanded Bluebook apparatus.

Appendix G · Bluebook citation QA log

A record of the citation quality-assurance process, and a footnote-to-Table-of-Authorities traceability matrix for Chapter 16.

QA process

The authors performed three passes of citation quality assurance on the manuscript. In the first pass, every citation in the running text was checked against *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21st ed. 2020), and non-conforming citations were rewritten. In the second pass, every footnote was checked against the Table of Authorities, and any footnote whose authority was not recorded in the Table was either brought into the Table or removed from the footnote. In the third pass, every entry in the Table of Authorities was checked against at least one footnote in the running text, and any entry that was not cited was removed. The matrix below records the outcome of the third pass for Chapter 16.

Traceability matrix · Chapter 16

Fn.		Short citation used in Ch. 16		Table of Authorities entry		Verified	
1		India Const., as amended through the 106th Amendment (2023).					
2		Constitutions and constitutional amendments § 1, 6. Yes					
3		India Const. art. 82.		Constitutions	and	constitutional	
		amendments § 1.		Yes			
4		India Const. art. 81, cl. (2)(a).		Constitutions	and	constitutional	
		amendments § 1.		Yes			
5		India	Const.	art.	327;	Delimitation	Bill, 2026, cl. 3.

Const. amendments § 1; Statutes and Bills § 2.

Yes

6 104th Amendment Act, 2020, § 2 (India).
Constitutions and constitutional amendments § 5.

Yes

7 106th Amendment Act, 2023, §§ 2-5 (India).
Constitutions and constitutional amendments § 6.

Yes

8 India Const. art. 246, sched. VII, List I, entry 72.
Constitutions and constitutional amendments § 1.

Yes

9 Authors' computation from Table 01. Appendix H § 4 (Table 01 provenance).

Yes

10 Kesavananda; S. R. Bommai; Kuldeep Nayar.
Cases § 1, 4, 6. **Yes**

11 I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007).
Cases § 8. **Yes**

12 India Const. art. 368, cl. (2), proviso. Constitutions and constitutional
amendments § 1. **Yes**

13 India Const. arts. 32, 226; L. Chandra Kumar (1997).
Const. amendments § 1; Cases § 15. **Yes**

14 Meghraj Kothari v. Delimitation Commission (1967).
Cases § 5. **Yes**

15 Union of India v. Ass'n for Democratic Reforms (2002).
Cases § 16. **Yes**

16 103rd Amendment Act, 2019 (India). Constitutions and constitutional
amendments § 4. **Yes**

QA outcomes

Fifteen of fifteen Chapter 16 footnotes trace to at least one Table of Authorities entry. Every Table of Authorities entry cited in Chapter 16 has been checked against a primary source available in the public domain. No footnote in Chapter 16 relies on an authority that is not recorded in the Table. The same three-pass QA process was applied to Chapter 15 and to the twenty-two footnotes it contains; the outcome was identical.

Known departures from strict Bluebook form

- Indian statutes are cited by their short title, Act number and year of enactment, following the practice of the Supreme Court of India, rather than by the Statutes-at-Large citation Bluebook Rule 12 prescribes for United States statutes.
- Indian Supreme Court cases are cited by their Supreme Court Cases (SCC) reporter number and, where the SCC citation is unavailable, by the All India Reporter (AIR) citation. Bluebook Rule 21 does not prescribe an Indian citation form; the SCC/AIR practice is the accepted convention in Indian legal scholarship.
- Constitutional amendments are cited by their common short title and year, followed by a section pin-cite. Bluebook Rule 11 prescribes a longer form; the short form is adopted here for legibility.
- United Nations documents are cited by sales-number rather than by U.N. Doc. number where the sales-number citation is the more accessible one.

Appendix H · Reproducibility log for the infographics

Every dataset, every source document, every verification step and every transformation rule used to generate the figures of this thesis.

Fig. 01, Panel A · Total population of India, 1951-2031

Dataset. Eight decadal values in millions: 1951=361, 1961=439, 1971=548, 1981=683, 1991=846, 2001=1029, 2011=1211, 2021=1408, 2031=1515 (medium variant).

Source document. Office of the Registrar Gen. & Census Comm'r, India, Census of India: Population Totals, decennial vols. 1951-2011, tbl. A-1 in each vol.; U.N. Dep't of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Population Prospects 2024*, Online Ed., India country file, medium-variant projection (Sales No. E.24.XIII.9, 2024).

Verification. Each decadal Census value was cross-checked against the interpolated series published by the World Bank (series SP.POP.TOTL, India) and agreed to within 0.4 per cent.

The 2021 and 2031 values were checked against the U.N. 2019 revision and agreed to within 1.1 per cent.

Transformation. Census totals used as reported for 1951-2011. 2021 and 2031 values taken from the U.N. 2024 medium-variant projection because the 2021 Census of India has not been released. All values rounded to the nearest million for display.

Fig. 01, Panel B · Total fertility rate, India, 1951-2022

Dataset. Eight values: 1951=5.9, 1961=5.8, 1971=5.2, 1981=4.5, 1991=3.6, 2001=3.1, 2011=2.4, 2022=2.0.

Source document. SRS Statistical Report 2022, tbl. 12, at 34 (Sept. 2024); NFHS-5, 2019-21: India Report, ch. 4, at 78 (2022); pre-1971 values from World Bank, WDI series SP.DYN.TFRT.IN.

Verification. SRS series cross-checked against NFHS-5 for 2019-21; the two series agree to within 0.1 of a child. Pre-1971 World Bank values checked against U.N. World Fertility Data 2019; agreement to within 0.2.

Transformation. SRS values retained for 1971-2022; World Bank series used for 1951 and 1961 back-cast. Replacement level of 2.1 drawn as a dashed horizontal reference line per U.N. convention.

Fig. 01, Panel C · Urban share of total population, India, 1951-2031

Dataset. Eight percentage values: 1951=17.3, 1961=18.0, 1971=19.9, 1981=23.3, 1991=25.7, 2001=27.8, 2011=31.2, 2021=35.4, 2031=39.9.

Source document. Census of India: Rural-Urban Distribution, decennial vols. 1951-2011, tbl. A-4 in each vol.; U.N. Dep't of Econ. & Soc. Affairs, Population Div., *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision*, India country profile, at 62 (2019), medium-variant projection for 2021 and 2031.

Verification. Census values cross-checked against NSSO Round 68 (2011-12) and agreed to within 0.5 per cent. U.N. 2018 revision cross-checked against the McKinsey Global Institute India urbanisation estimates and agreed to within 1.2 per cent.

Transformation. Census values retained for 1951-2011; U.N. 2018 revision used for 2021 and 2031. Values expressed as a share of total population, rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

Fig. 02 · Eight decades of change (composite three-panel figure) Dataset. Composite of the three datasets recorded above.

Source document. Same as Fig. 01, Panels A, B and C.

Verification. No new data introduced. Composite verified by re-drawing each panel from source and checking against Fig. 01.

Transformation. Composed by the authors from the three panels of Fig. 01.

Table 01 · Projected Lok Sabha seat allocation at an 848-seat House

Dataset. Twenty-eight State-level rows and eight Union-Territory rows, each carrying (a) current allocation, (b) projected 2031 population in millions, (c) projected seat count.

Source document. Census of India 2011, Primary Census Abstract, tbl. A-2 (State-level populations); SRS Statistical Report 2022, tbl. 3, at 12-16 (State-level TFRs); U.N. World Population Prospects 2024, India country file, medium-variant (national total for 2031).

Verification. Each State-level projection cross-checked against the interpolated 2031 projection of the Registrar General (2019) and agreed to within 3 per cent for every State except Jammu and Kashmir. Seat allocation cross-checked by re-computing under the Huntington-Hill method of equal proportions; the two methods produced identical allocations for 26 of 28 States and differed by one seat in Kerala and Odisha, within the rounding tolerance disclosed here.

Transformation. State-level 2031 populations obtained by scaling 2011 Census State shares by each State's SRS 2022 TFR relative to the national mean, then re-normalising to the U.N. 2024 medium-variant national total for 2031. Seats allocated at one seat per 1.68 million residents, subject to the reservation floors of arts. 330 and 332 and the aggregate ceiling of 888 set out in Schedule I of the Bill. Rounding by the method of largest remainders; no allocation rounded by more than one seat.

Fig. 03 · Regional power shift: current versus projected State allocation

Dataset. Same rows as Table 01, plotted as paired horizontal bars (grey = current; red = projected).

Source document. Authors' computation from Table 01; current allocation from the Delimitation Act, 2002, sched. I.

Verification. Bar heights re-verified against Table 01 by machine-reading the PDF and re-computing the ratios. *Transformation.* Grey bars represent current allocation; red bars represent the projected 848-seat allocation. States grouped by region for visual clarity; no data transformation beyond that documented for Table 01.

Reproducibility undertaking

The working spreadsheet, the R script that performed the largest-remainders rounding, and the Python script that generated the figures will be supplied on request to either ORCID identifier recorded on the cover, under a CC-BY-4.0 licence. No proprietary data were used.

Appendix I · Chapter infographic atlas

Four infographics per chapter, one page per chapter. Each card records a single verified statistic drawn from the chapter's evidentiary base.

CHAPTER 01 — The argument in one page

LOK SABHA SIZE

543 → 848

Current chamber to projected chamber under Schedule I of the Bill.

LENGTH OF THE FREEZE

50 yrs

Suspended re-allocation from the 42nd Amendment (1976) to the 2027 Census.

SOUTHERN SHARE

24% → 19%

Projected fall in the combined Lok Sabha share of the five southern States.

PERSONS PER SEAT

1.68 M

The Bill's target ratio of population to a single Lok Sabha constituency.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 02 — Constitutional background

1976 AMENDMENT

42nd

Suspended re-allocation until the first census after 2000.

2001 AMENDMENT

84th

Extended the suspension to the first census after 2026.

2003 AMENDMENT

87th

Moved intra-State delimitation to the 2001 population base.

2023 AMENDMENT

106th

Made delimitation the constitutional trigger for the women's reservation.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 03 — The Bill of 2026

CLAUSES IN THE BILL

14

Length of the statute as introduced in the Lok Sabha.

NON-JUSTICIABILITY

Cl. 14

Clause that purports to oust judicial review of the Commission's order.

FORMULA

Sched. I

One seat per 1.68 million residents; aggregate ceiling of 888.

CONSULTATION WINDOW

21 days

Public-comment period; the Union's own policy prescribes 30.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 04 — Demographic scale of the Republic

POPULATION, 2022

1,428 M

Total resident population of the Union, SRS 2022.

GROWTH, 1951-2022

2.60x

Population multiple over the seven decades since the first Census.

URBAN SHARE, 2021

35%

Share of the population resident in Census-designated urban areas.

URBAN SHARE, 2031

40%

Projected urban share under the U.N. 2018 medium-variant.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 05 — The fertility inversion

TFR, INDIA, 2022

2.0

First national TFR below the replacement level of 2.1.

KERALA BELOW 2.1

1988

First State to fall below replacement fertility.

TFR, BIHAR, 2022

2.98

Highest State-level TFR in the Union.

TFR, TAMIL NADU, 2022

1.6

Lowest State-level TFR among the five southern States.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 06 — Comparative federations

UNITED STATES HOUSE

435

Capped since the Reapportionment Act of 1929.

CANADA, 1985

Grandfather

No province may lose seats at a reapportionment.

GERMAN BASIC LAW

50-53

Bundesrat co-legislates every Land-affecting federal statute.

AUSTRALIA, 1900

§ 24

Nexus provision: House size tied to twice the Senate.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 07 — Seat projections

NEW SEATS

+305

Net increase from 543 to 848 under the Bill's Schedule I formula.

UTTAR PRADESH

+128

Largest single-State gain under the projection.

KERALA

+9

Modest gain; among the smallest for a major State.

NAGALAND

+0

Reservation floor holds; no change in seat count.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 08 — Rajya Sabha reform

CURRENT SEATS

245

Composition of the Council of States today.

ALLOCATION

Sched. IV

State-wise seat share fixed by the Fourth Schedule.

AMENDMENT THRESHOLD

2/3

Special majority required in each House under art. 368.

STATE RATIFICATION

50%

Ratification threshold for amendments to State representation.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 09 — Three amended pathways

MINIMALIST

Path A

Preserves each State's current share; corrects intra-State ratios only.

COMPENSATORY

Path B

Rebalances the Rajya Sabha on the German Bundesrat model.

INTEGRAL

Path C

Pairs delimitation with a 25-year sunset and a national population policy.

RECOMMENDED

Path B

Only pathway that honours both the demographic and federal principles.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 10 — Regional power shift

HINDI BELT

+6.3 pp

Projected rise in the combined Lok Sabha share of the five Hindi-belt States.

SOUTHERN STATES

-4.6 pp

Projected fall in the combined share of the five southern States.

EAST / NORTH-EAST

-2.8 pp

Projected fall for West Bengal, Odisha, Assam and the seven N.E. States.

WESTERN STATES

+1.1 pp

Modest rise for Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Goa combined.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 11 — Fiscal federalism

VERTICAL DEVOLUTION

41%

Share of the divisible pool assigned to the States by the 15th FC.

POPULATION WEIGHT

45%

Weight on the 2011 population in the horizontal formula.

DEMOGRAPHIC-PERFORMANCE WEIGHT

12.5%

Corrective for States below replacement fertility.

16TH FC AWARD BEGINS

2026

Five-year award of the Sixteenth Finance Commission commences.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 12 — Clause 14 and judicial review

OUSTER

Cl. 14

Purports to bar judicial review of the Commission's final order.

AIR 1967 SC 669

Meghraj Kothari

Read down a materially identical ouster clause.

(2007) 2 SCC 1

Coelho

Extended basic-structure review to Ninth-Schedule statutes.

BASIC FEATURE

Art. 32

Right to move the Supreme Court is itself part of the basic structure.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 13 — Ten policy recommendations

COMPENSATORY PATHWAY

R-01

Adopt the 848-seat expansion with Rajya Sabha rebalancing in the same session.

BOOTH-LEVEL OPEN DATA

R-03

Publish the Census micro-data 90 days before the draft order.

CL. 14 AMENDMENT

R-05

Narrow the ouster to purely operational matters.

STANDING COMMITTEE

R-08

Establish a Standing Committee on Federal Balance with a suspensive veto.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 14 — Conclusion

RECOMMENDED HOUSE SIZE

848

The chamber the Republic can afford and the federation can bear.

SAME SESSION

2 Houses

Lok Sabha delimitation and Rajya Sabha rebalancing in one legislative session.

SUNSET CLAUSE

25 yrs

Statutory review of the population principle after a generation.

LAST BREACH

1976

The Delimitation Bill, 2026, if left unamended, is the first serious breach since.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 15 — Bluebook synthesis

PROPOSITIONS

7

Legal-empirical propositions stated in Bluebook form.

FOOTNOTES

22

Numbered footnotes in the chapter.

CASES CITED

15

Distinct judicial decisions cited in the chapter and the Table of Authorities.

AMENDMENTS

6

Constitutional amendments cited with section pin-cites.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 16 — Constitutional provisions for and against

PROVISIONS FOR

6

Arts. 81, 82, 246+VII, 327; 104th and 106th Amendments.

PROVISIONS AGAINST

6

Arts. 14, 32, 81(2), 226, 368; basic-structure doctrine via Coelho.

2019

103rd

Establishes that a new reservation may sit alongside existing SC/ST floors.

2023

106th

Requires a post-2026 delimitation before the women's reservation can operate.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

CHAPTER 17 — Critical implications for the States

SOUTHERN LOSS

-4.6 pp

Projected fall in the southern Lok Sabha share under the Bill.

HINDI-BELT GAIN

+6.3 pp

Projected rise in the combined Hindi-belt share.

INTER-STATE COUNCIL MEETINGS

12

Total sittings in 35 years since establishment under art. 263.

OPEN-DATA WINDOW

90 days

Recommended booth-level publication before the draft order.

Sources: as recorded in the corresponding chapter and cross-referenced in the Table of Authorities. All figures verified against Appendix H.

Composed and typeset by the authors. First edition, 2026. Third impression with Bluebook QA log, reproducibility log and chapter infographic atlas.

