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The Delimitation Census and Its Political Impact: A Comparative Analysis in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT

One of the most significant ways in which the delimitation census will affect Indian politics is by changing the size and composition of electoral constituencies. This can lead to the creation of new constituencies, the abolition of existing constituencies, or changes to the boundaries of existing constituencies. These changes can have a significant impact on the outcome of elections, as they can make it easier or more difficult for certain parties or candidates to win. For example, if a state is experiencing rapid population growth, the delimitation census may result in that state gaining additional seats in the Lok Sabha. This could give an advantage to the party in power in that state. Conversely, if a state is experiencing slow population growth, it may lose seats in the Lok Sabha. This could weaken the party in power in that state. The delimitation census can also affect Indian politics by changing the demographics of electoral constituencies. For example, if a constituency is becoming more urbanized, the delimitation census may result in the constituency becoming more favorable to certain parties or candidates. Conversely, if a constituency is becoming more rural, it may become more favourable to other parties or candidates. This census examines the broader implications of delimitation on governance, policymaking, and the dynamics of coalition politics in India. It examines how changes in constituency boundaries can affect the electoral strategies of political parties and the formation of alliances.

Keywords: Delimitation Census, Democracy, Indian Politics, Lok Sabha, Power Dynamics.

I. INTRODUCTION

The delimitation census is a crucial process in India's electoral system, aimed at ensuring fair and equitable representation of the population in the country's legislative bodies. Conducted every decade, it involves redrawing the boundaries of electoral constituencies based on the latest population data. This exercise has the potential to significantly impact Indian politics, influencing electoral outcomes, political strategies, and the overall political landscape².

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² The Indian Express Journalism of Courage. (2006, March 20). *The Indian Express Journalism of Courage*, 5, 215.

The Indian Constitutional Convention established democracy in the country. It has also systematically laid down the basic structure of 'one man one vote, one value', which is connected with delimitation. The delimitation process is the one by which the boundaries of constituencies are drawn up and seats are allocated to the national parliament and state assemblies. In India, delimitation produces a change and influences constitutionally among the voters. Therefore, it is considered the heart of the democratic process.³ The delimitation census is important for a number of reasons. First, it ensures that all regions and communities are adequately represented in the legislature. To achieve this, boundaries for electoral constituencies are drawn so that the total number of voters in each constituency is approximately equal.

Second, the delimitation census helps to prevent gerrymandering. The act of creating electoral constituency lines to favor one party or candidate over another is known as gerrymandering. The delimitation process is designed to prevent gerrymandering by ensuring that the boundaries of constituencies are drawn in a fair and impartial manner.

Third, the delimitation census helps keep the legislature up to date with the latest population data. This is significant because the nation's population determines the legislature's size. If the legislature is not updated to reflect the latest population data, it can lead to some regions being overrepresented or underrepresented in the legislature.

Overall, the delimitation census is an important tool for ensuring fair and democratic elections in India.

(A) Research Methodology:

We use a secondary source methodology in this comparative study of the "Delimitation Census and Its Political Impact" in the Indian states of Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. In order to obtain an understanding of the political ramifications and historical background of delimitation in these two states, our research design entails a methodical assessment of the body of available literature, official reports, and policy documents.

Academic journals, peer-reviewed papers, and academic databases like JSTOR, Indian Express, shodhganga and Google Scholar comprise our main sources of data. We do a thorough search for papers and publications that address electoral politics, delimitation, and the effects of delimitation efforts. Reports from the government, especially those from the State Election

³ Anon (2014) *DELIMITATION OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IMPLICATION IN TAMILNADU* [Internet]. Available from <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/193715>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

Commissions and the Election Commission of India, offer important insights into the process and results of delimitation. We also search policy documents and archives for pertinent historical materials that provide insight into the delimitation procedure.

We use a thematic method to extract common themes, trends, and discoveries from the literature in order to conduct our comparative study. We look at the order of delimitation exercises in both states historically and analyze the effects on regional dynamics, political representation, and party performance. The literature's mention of demographic data aids in our assessment of how delimitation affects population representation and distribution.

Throughout our research, we must adhere to ethical principles, ensuring that all secondary sources are properly attributed and referenced in accordance with academic standards. However, it is imperative to recognize certain constraints. Because the quality and accessibility of secondary sources are essential to our research, differences in the breadth and depth of these sources could have an impact on our conclusions. Furthermore, the results of this comparative analysis could be influenced by biases and limitations in the existing literature. Still, we proceed with the supposition that the chosen secondary sources taken as a whole provide a true and representative picture of the effects of delimitation in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

II. HISTORY OF DELIMITATION CENSUS

The history of the delimitation census in India can be traced back to the British colonial era. In 1871, the first census of India was conducted, and this was followed by censuses in 1881, 1891, and 1901. However, these censuses were not used for the purpose of delimiting electoral constituencies.

The Parliament of India Act of 1919 was established in 1919, establishing a bicameral legislature in India. This act also established electoral seats for the Central Legislative Assembly, the legislature's lower house. The first delimitation census was held in 1920, and the constituency borders were based on the 1911 census.

The first delimitation census was held in 1951, following India's independence in 1947. This census was used to draw the constituencies for the first Lok Sabha, India's lower house of parliament. Prior to 1972, the Three Delimitation Commissions were created. However, in a move led by the Indian National Congress, with Indira Gandhi as the Prime Minister, the Union Government imposed a moratorium on delimitation activities until 2001 through the 42nd Constitutional Amendment. When the delimitation freeze was about to expire in 2001, the Union Government, which was then led by the National Democratic Alliance ('NDA'), decided to prolong it until 2026 using the same rationale. This was done because they had a clear

political motivation to resume delimitation. The delimitation census has been conducted four times since then: in 1961, 1971, 1991, and 2001. The next delimitation census is scheduled to be conducted in 2026.

The delimitation census is a complex and time-consuming process. It is carried out by a Delimitation Commission designated by India's President. A retired Supreme Court justice and two election commissioners make up the Delimitation Commission. The Delimitation Commission uses the latest census data to delimit the electoral constituencies. The commission considers a number of factors, including the population of each state, the geographical features of the area, and the existing administrative boundaries.

The Delimitation Commission's recommendations are final and binding. After the commission provides its report to the government, the government is required to put the commission's recommendations into action. The delimitation census has played a significant role in shaping the political landscape of India. It has contributed to ensuring that all regions and communities are fairly represented in Parliament and state legislatures.

III. REASONS BEHIND THE FREEZING PERIOD

The freezing period of delimitation in India is intended to prevent political parties from gaining an unfair advantage by manipulating constituency boundaries. The process of redefining electoral constituency boundaries to accurately represent population shifts and ensure fair and equitable political representation is known as delimitation. This is overseen by the Delimitation Commission, an independent body appointed by the President of India.⁴

Delimitation serves to ensure the proportional allocation of constituencies, aligning with the fundamental principle of "one person, one vote." This principle enables citizens to legitimately transfer and express their votes within a broader democratic framework. The constitutional framework underscores the importance of conducting regular delimitation exercises every ten years following each census, as specified in Articles 82⁵ and 83 of the Indian Constitution. Additionally, Article 327 empowers the legislature to enact laws concerning delimitation, and this authority is not subject to judicial review.

Two main points can be used to describe the political ramifications of delimitation: i) It may favor or provide particular political parties or candidates an advantage when defining boundaries. ii) Delimitation also affects the distribution of seats among states, which modifies

⁴ Anon (2022) *Freezing India's Democratic consciousness* [Internet]. Available from <https://theleaflet.in/freezing-indias-democratic-consciousness-a-murky-story-of-indias-delimitation-exercise/>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

⁵ UNIVERSAL, THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA, BAR ACT (Lexis Nexis 32d ed. 2022) (1950).

the empirical data as well as the national standard for geographic representation patterns.

Following the formation of three delimitation panels in 1972, the Union Government led by the Indian National Congress, with Indira Gandhi at its head, suspended the delimitation process until 2001 in accordance with the forty-second amendment to the Constitution.

There were two parts to the reasoning.

States that efficiently carried out the family policy programs were being disproportionately penalized. The flaw in this line of argument lies in its failure to sufficiently consider one aspect of state policy, namely, population control, while simultaneously disregarding the fundamental cornerstone of democracy: the requirement for proportionate and effective representation. The problem with this reasoning is that it ignores the intricate interplay between historical, economic, and social conditions in which these policies are intended to be implemented. This is especially true in the absence of any monitoring or sensitization efforts for further policies. For example, literacy and female education can be used to: (1) ascertain the desired size of the family because educated women are more likely to express their dissatisfaction with multiple pregnancies; (2) ascertain the relationship between the planned number of births and the desired family size; (3) ascertain the feasibility of achieving the planned number of births; and (4) guarantee that minority groups maintain a level of representation that is consistent, which is crucial for safeguarding minority rights.

shadowed political interests in order to prevent seats from being lost to southern India because to population differences, since the Congress was up against a very aggressive and volatile feeling in northern India against its policies. This is sufficiently demonstrated by the decline from 43.5 percent to 34.5 percent between 1971 and 1977, with the majority of losses originating from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, where coercive sterilization had occurred. This created a strong incentive to guarantee that the seats in south India, where no such coercive compulsion had occurred, remained unchanged. It was established to actively employ both positive and negative incentives. In Kerala, for instance, People were given almost a month's pay in advance in addition to other financial advantages. This strategy stands in stark contrast to the tactics used in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, where employee loan approvals and paychecks were purposefully withheld and delayed.

IV. IMPACT ON ELECTORAL OUTCOMES

India started experimenting with representative democracy based on population-based territorial groupings as soon as it gained independence. Nonetheless, after over thirty years and for the very first time in the twenty-first century, India is conducting another delimitation

exercise. However, this has raised several issues that must be addressed, both theoretically and practically.⁶

The delimitation census can directly influence electoral outcomes by altering the size and composition of constituencies. The creation of new constituencies, the elimination of existing ones, or the alteration of constituency boundaries can all have an impact on a constituency's voter base and demographics, potentially favoring certain parties or candidates over others.

Living in a country where the 84th Amendment to the Constitution of India will expire in 2026, which we anticipate with concern, there is a looming fear of systematic disadvantage for India's southern states. These states have made conscious efforts to advance across multiple development indicators, prioritizing family planning over stringent population control measures and investing in improved strategies for governance since 1976. Given the time-sensitive nature of the impending delimitation and the expected political resistance to any restructuring, it underscores the critical need for a meticulous, methodical, and context-aware application of the apportionment formula⁷.

This article aims to delve into three key aspects: i) The political and constitutional rationale behind the implementation of the delimitation freeze ii) The deliberate and legally grounded decision to maintain this freeze consistently, completing a comparison study using just the seats allotted to Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC). iii) A based-on-data study that evaluates the applicability of the "Cambridge Compromise" in the Indian context and plots the consequences of this status quo freeze.

⁶ Anon (2002) *Issues and Problems in India's Delimitation Exercise* [Internet]. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42753697>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

⁷ Anon (2022) *Freezing India's Democratic consciousness* [Internet]. Available from <https://theleaflet.in/freezing-indias-democratic-consciousness-a-murky-story-of-indias-delimitation-exercise/>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

TABLE 1
Malapportionment in the Lok Sabha, 2011 (actual) and 2026 (projected)

State	Current Seats	Proportional Seats (2011)	Over- and Under-representation (2011)	Proportional Seats (2026)	Over- and Under-representation (2026)
Tamil Nadu	39	32	+7	31	+8
Andhra Pradesh + Telangana	42	37	+5	34	+8
Kerala	20	15	+5	12	+8
Odisha	21	18	+3	18	+3
West Bengal	42	40	+2	38	+4
Karnataka	28	27	+1	26	+2
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	+1	3	+1
Punjab	13	12	+1	12	+1
Uttarakhand	5	4	+1	4	+1
Assam	14	14	0	14	0
Jammu and Kashmir	6	6	0	6	0
Chhattisgarh	11	11	0	12	-1
Delhi	7	7	0	8	-1
Maharashtra	48	49	-1	48	0
Gujarat	26	27	-1	27	-1
Haryana	10	11	-1	11	-1
Jharkhand	14	15	-1	15	-1
Madhya Pradesh	29	32	-3	33	-4
Rajasthan	25	30	-5	31	-6
Bihar	40	46	-6	50	-10
Uttar Pradesh	80	88	-8	91	-11

SOURCE: Election Commission of India; Office of the Registrar General, 2006; and authors' calculations.

NOTE: The number of seats each state merits is calculated using the Webster method, which is described in the text.

The polar disparity in terms of under- or over-representation, particularly evident between Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, involves: i) a substantial contrast in the degree of under- or over-representation. ii) A notable number of seats that must be either added or removed to align with the point at which population-based electoral systems are balanced iii) The likelihood of encountering strong political resistance from the southern states due to the sudden removal or changes that would occur if the freeze is lifted.

There is a strong incentive for the BJP-led NDA to increase its political influence in the north central belt, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, if it wins the general election in 2024 and keeps a majority in the Union Government. This is due to its growing clout and share of the vote in these areas over the past two general elections, in contrast to its comparatively small political presence in the South.

The overarching theme that unites these observations is the possibility that a gradual phase-out

⁸ Column Chart (Election Commission of India),2006

mechanism, as originally intended by the Constitution, would have made it easier for political parties, voters, and other stakeholders to accept the changes brought about by delimitation. This phased approach is underpinned by several reasons: I) It would allow for a gradual acceptance of change, with a lesser number of seats to be relinquished or allocated per state, thus reducing abrupt disruptions. II) Within the purview of the Parliament and state legislatures, a phased approach would allow for better tracking and examination of population control measures, development indicators, and their results and justifications. III) It would provide the opportunity to devise an alternative formula that considers the disparities created over the last 50 years, particularly between the 1971 and 2021 censuses, considering the progress made and the current situation in states regarding population control mechanisms. This approach could have facilitated a more harmonious transition and adjustment to the changing demographics and political landscape.

While discussing representational deficits, according to Vaishnava and Hinston, each elected representative must explicitly distinguish between constituents and electors. For example, in terms of electoral representation, there was a notable discrepancy in 2019 between the northern state of Uttar Pradesh and the southern state of Tamil Nadu. In Uttar Pradesh, a state with fewer electors, the represented population was nearly 1.8 million, whereas Tamil Nadu, with more electors, together represented a population of over 3 million.

Considering the best-case scenario under the current system, which has 1.8 million voters per elected representative in Tamil Nadu, it is important to point out that MPs from Canada and the UK represent roughly 97,000 and 72,000 constituents, respectively. This means that, even under the most ideal circumstances, with the delimitation frozen since 1971 and apportioned accordingly, an average MP from Tamil Nadu would represent 16–18 times the constituents of these two nations. Theoretically, in order to remedy this representational gap, the Parliament would need to be composed of at least 2,760 elected representatives, assuming we wish to implement the most idealistic proposal of having one elected member represent 0.5 million of the people in India.

V. MISREPRESENTATION IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

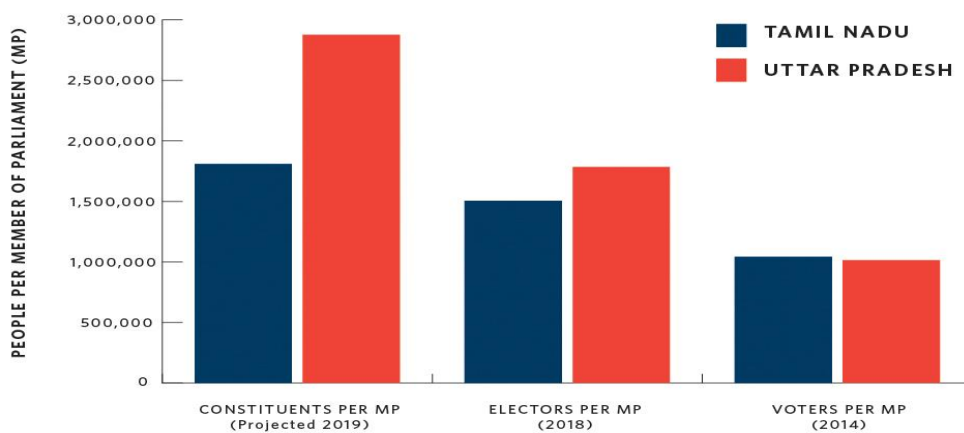
Since the number of citizens in a constituency does not exactly equal the number of registered or actual voters in that constituency, the degree of misrepresentation depends heavily on the unit of analysis that is selected. Because there is a higher percentage of young people living in northern states who are under the voting age of eighteen, these states frequently have lower voter registration rates. Furthermore, historically, the percentage of registered voters in these

states has been lower. Southern states, on the other hand, typically exhibit higher levels of political engagement in terms of voter registration and participation.⁹

Therefore, when looking at registered or actual voters, states that seem overrepresented or under-represented based on their overall population may not show the same disparities.

Like for example, we discover some intriguing findings when we compare the number of typical residents, registered voters (or "electors"), and actual voters per Member of Parliament (MP) between Tamil Nadu, the most overrepresented state, and Uttar Pradesh, the most underrepresented state. While Tamil Nadu has 1.8 million compared to Uttar Pradesh's over 3 million average population represented by MPs, each seat's registered voter count is similar. Remarkably, Tamil Nadu had somewhat higher voter turnout per constituency in 2014 compared to Uttar Pradesh. This suggests that although a state's population may appear disproportionate in a parliamentary underrepresented legislature, real voters may not share this opinion.

FIGURE 2
Representation Per MP in Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh



SOURCE: Election Commission of India; Office of the Registrar General, 2006; and authors' calculations.

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(A) Possible Solutions:

Parliamentary seat reallocation will not take place until after the 2031 Survey, barring another

⁹Anon (2019) *India's Emerging Crisis of Representation* [Internet]. Available from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/14/india-s-emerging-crisis-of-representation-pub-78588>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

¹⁰ Column Chart (Election Commission of India), 2006.

constitutional amendment. This fact, however, should not preclude a thorough federal debate on numerous issues of interstate disparity, including the complex issue of representation. Policymakers have several potential solutions to consider: A) Commitment to Future Reallocation: One approach would be to commit to reallocating seats following the 2031 Census and resist the temptation to put the issue off any longer. Delaying the procedure just makes the inevitable agony worse, therefore this may be viewed as the "pulling off the band-aid" approach. The Lok Sabha's makeup would have progressively changed over time if India had regularly redistributed seats following each decennial census.¹¹ Any future reapportionment will inevitably result in dramatic shifts in the political power structure after years of self-imposed lethargy. This tactic highlights how crucial it is to deal with the problem in a proactive manner and stick to a set schedule for seat redistribution in order to minimize any possible disruptions to the political environment.

Another solution, as suggested by McMillan¹², is to increase the number of seats in the Lok Sabha. This approach offers two significant advantages:

Enhanced Responsiveness: Increasing the number of Members of Parliament (MPs) will efficiently solve the issue of constituency growth, which is impeding MPs' ability to respond to the demands of their people. Indian legislators are now held accountable to far larger populations than the equivalents in almost any other democracy. Members of the Indian parliament represent an average of 2.5 million citizens, which is more than three times the number of citizens represented by members of the United States House of Representatives, which is the second largest in this regard.

Political Feasibility: Expanding the Lok Sabha's size may be more politically feasible than dispersing the existing seats. This is because legislators often object to any arrangement that results in fewer members for their state, as it may compromise their own jobs. They might be more open to the idea of adding more seats. McMillan's proposal is to expand the Lok Sabha so that the most overrepresented state loses no members during reapportionment. He calculates that in order for this to happen, the Lok Sabha must increase from 545 to 668 members, without changing the 21 seats that are legally exempt from proportional representation. He does this by applying the Webster technique to the 2001 Census data.

Expanding the size of the Lok Sabha can be seen as a practical solution to address issues of

¹¹Anon (2019) *India's Emerging Crisis of Representation* [Internet]. Available from <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/14/india-s-emerging-crisis-of-representation-pub-78588>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

¹²Anon (2001) *Population change and the democratic structure*. India-Seminar.com. [Internet]. Available from <https://india-seminar.com/2001/506/506%20alistair%20mcmillan.htm>. [Accessed 7th October 2023].

representation and responsiveness without significantly altering the existing seat distribution.

The number of extra seats that the Lok Sabha would need to add in order to keep any state from losing seats has increased dramatically as malapportionment has become increasingly noticeable. States eligible to proportional representation would need a total of 697 seats, instead of the current 524, to reflect the results of the 2011 Census. As a result, the Parliament of India would have 718 members. When this scenario is projected out to 2026, it becomes much direr. To ensure that no state loses representation, the Lok Sabha would need to have 848 members. This is more than any other democratic nation's lower house or the unicameral legislature. This idea will maintain Kerala's 20-seat parliamentary delegation while giving Uttar Pradesh an astounding 143 seats.

One potential third option is to restructure the Rajya Sabha, India's upper chamber of parliament, providing states a voice and a forum to promote their interests. Like the Lok Sabha, the upper chamber has a constitutional cap of 250 seats and seats are distributed to states based on population. State legislative legislative bodies choose the Rajya Sabha's members, in contrast to the Lok Sabha, which is elected directly.

Rajya Sabha members were previously expected to represent their respective states, but a 2003 amendment repealed the previous "domicile requirement," which required MPs to be residents of the state they represented. With no residency restriction, political parties can now propose practically any candidate to fill a vacant Rajya Sabha seat, regardless of geographical origin.

Addressing the domicile problem is a positive move, but it has limitations. Even before the 2003 legal reform, Rajya Sabha members discovered ways to avoid the requirement by obtaining a local address. For example, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, a member of the Congress Party who served from 2004 to 2014, first joined the Rajya Sabha in 1991 from Assam, despite having no prior connection to that state.

Moving from an indirect to a direct election system for Rajya Sabha members is another possible modification to take into consideration. By introducing the Seventeenth Amendment, which was enacted in 1913 and eliminated the need for state legislatures to choose U.S. senators, the United States took a similar tack. A more extreme approach would be to adopt a system like the United States Senate, in which every state receives two senators regardless of its size of population, with a fixed number of seats for each state. This strategy would be a major change from the existing one and might help with some of the problems caused by malapportionment and representational imbalances. If the upper house becomes a legitimate forum for discussion of states' interests, opposition to a reallocation of seats in the lower house may be lessened.

In **Kuldip Nayar v. Union of India**¹³ The primary concern in this case was whether the freeze on India's delimitation process, which had been prolonged by the 91st Amendment to the Indian Constitution in 2008 until the first Census after 2031, was constitutionally legal. The principal inquiry pertained to the compatibility of the protracted delimitation freeze with the tenets of representative democracy and the constitutional right to equal representation. In actuality, the 91st Amendment to the Indian Constitution, which was passed in 2008, prolonged the moratorium on delimitations in order to guarantee that the constituency borders would not change until the first Census following 2031. This decision was based on considerations of political stability, administrative convenience, and the need to align the delimitation process with the decennial census.

Journalist Kuldip Nayar was among the petitioners who contested the constitutionality of this modification, claiming that it went against the core values of democracy, equality, and the one-person, one-vote principle that are written in the document. The Supreme Court of India maintained the constitutionality of the 91st Amendment and the prolongation of the delimitation freeze in its ruling on the Kuldip Nayar case. The Court acknowledged that administrative effectiveness and political stability warranted the freeze, even though delimitation was necessary to uphold democratic objectives.

The Court ruled that the extending of the freeze was a legitimate use of constitutional power and that the Constitution permitted a balance between the principles of delimitation and other urgent necessities. It made clear that the right to equality and equal representation was not unqualified and that legitimate restrictions might be placed on it for the greater good of political stability and administrative ease.

The ruling in this case upheld the constitutional framework that permits a brief suspension of delimitation under certain conditions and illustrated the Court's function in striking a balance between democratic ideals and the demands of functional governance. As a guide for the constitutionality of decisions pertaining to the electoral boundary-drawing process, it continues to be a noteworthy case in India's delimitation context.

In **S. Jaganathan Vs the Union of India**¹⁴ case the question of whether the Delimitation Commission must adhere to the equality of votes concept while dividing Tamil Nadu's Lok Sabha constituencies arises. The actual situation was that a Lok Sabha seat with a population of 19,67,936 was established in Tamil Nadu by The Delimitation Commission in 2004. This

¹³ AIR 2006 SC 3127; (2006) 7 SCC 1

¹⁴ (2007) 1 SCC 512

number was far greater than the state's average for a Lok Sabha constituency. S. Jaganathan, the petitioner, contested this order on the grounds that it was against the equality of votes principle. Sentiment the Delimitation Commission is not required to rigorously adhere to the principle of equality of votes, according to the ruling of the Supreme Court. The population of Lok Sabha seats may be changed by the Commission at its discretion, provided that it considers reasonable considerations such administrative convenience, geographical compactness, and proximity. The Court did, however, also rule that the Commission may not designate Lok Sabha constituencies with populations that are appreciably greater or smaller than the state's average for such constituencies. The Court additionally ruled that any differences in the population of Lok Sabha constituencies must be explained by the Commission.

In this instance, the court determined that the Delimitation Commission had not provided any justification for establishing a Lok Sabha constituency with a populace that was noticeably larger than the typical Tamil Nadu Lok Sabha constituency. Thus, the Commission's order was overturned by the Court, which also instructed it to redeline the Lok Sabha seat in compliance with the law.

Significance: The ruling in the S. Jaganathan v. Union of India case is significant because it defines the Delimitation Commission's authority and discretion while defining the boundaries of the Lok Sabha seats. The ruling further highlights how crucial the vote equality principle is.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the history of the delimitation census in India represents an integral component of the country's democratic evolution. It reflects the nation's commitment to ensuring that the principle of equitable representation is upheld within its diverse and ever-changing population. Through periodic delimitation exercises, India strives to maintain the ideal of "one person, one vote," thereby enabling a more balanced and democratic electoral system.

The periodic adjustment of electoral boundaries, as evidenced through various delimitation exercises, seeks to address population shifts and changes. It aims to prevent gerrymandering and promote the fair distribution of political power. However, the decision to freeze delimitation for certain periods, as demonstrated in India's case, also underscores the importance of political stability, administrative convenience, and aligning the process with the national census.

As India looks ahead to the next delimitation exercise following the 2031 Census, the nation faces the ongoing challenge of balancing the need for fair representation with the imperatives of governance and administrative efficiency. The future of delimitation in India will remain pivotal in maintaining the integrity of its democracy and ensuring that every citizen's voice

continues to be heard in the corridors of power. In this ongoing journey, the nation's commitment to fair and representative democracy remains steadfast, guided by the principles of its Constitution and the evolving dynamics of its society.

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