Implications of the Legislative Package on Delimitation and Women's Reservation

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VIDH | Centre for Legal Policy

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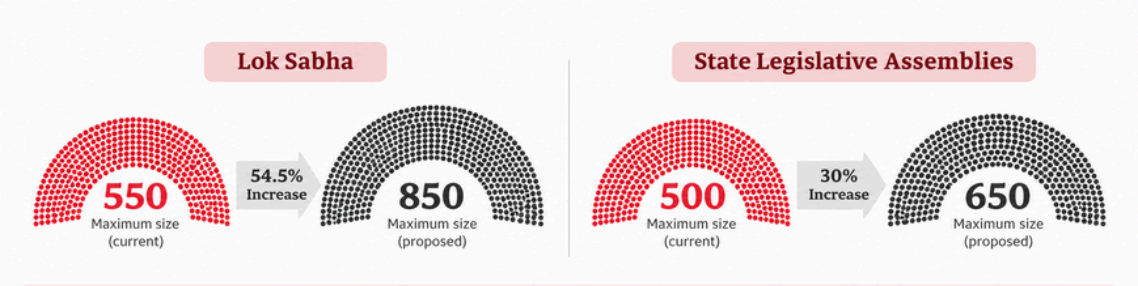
The Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-second Amendment) Bill, 2026 and the accompanying Delimitation (Second) Bill, 2026 propose a significant increase in the size of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, set the stage for the next delimitation exercise, and seek to expedite the implementation of women's reservation. These proposals have significant implications for electoral representation and federalism in India.

This note sets out its salient features.

1 Increase in the size of the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies

The Bill increases the maximum permissible strength of the Lok Sabha from 550 to 850 and that of State Legislative Assemblies from 500 to 650. It also prescribes a 50% increase in the existing strength of the Lok Sabha and each Legislative Assembly to give effect to women's reservation.



A larger chamber improves the quality of representation by reducing the ratio of constituents to representatives. However, these gains must be weighed against the financial and institutional implications of such an expansion, including an increase in annual MPLADS expenditure by over ₹1,500 crore, the administrative costs of accommodating additional MPs, and the challenges of ensuring the quality of legislative deliberation and the effective functioning of Parliament.

These questions, including the appropriate size of legislative chambers, warrant substantive deliberation in Parliament.

2 Extending the freeze on redistribution of seats to States

The Constitution provides that Lok Sabha seats should be allocated among States in proportion to their population. In 1976, Parliament froze this distribution on the basis of the 1971 Census until the publication of the figures of the first census after 2001, which was subsequently extended until 2026. The stated purpose of the freeze was to prevent States with lower population growth from losing representation.

The Bill proposes to extend the freeze until 2051.

3 Delimitation of constituencies on the basis of the 2011 Census until 2051

Under the existing constitutional framework, the boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly constituencies are frozen on the basis of the 2001 Census until the publication of the relevant figures of the first Census after 2026. The Bill proposes to use the latest published Census figures available at the commencement of the constitutional amendment (presumably the 2011 Census) for redrawing constituencies and determining the number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes until 2051.

4 Advancing the implemenation of women's reservation

The 2023 Constitutional Amendment introducing women's reservation made its implementation contingent upon a delimitation exercise undertaken after the publication of the relevant figures of the next Census (now scheduled for 2027). The current Bill removes the requirement of waiting for the next Census, allowing women's reservation to be implemented following a delimitation exercise that provides for a 50% increase in the size of the Lok Sabha and Legislative Assemblies.

5 Requirement of periodic rotation of reserved seats removed

The 2023 Constitutional Amendment introducing women's reservation required reserved seats to rotate among constituencies after each subsequent delimitation exercise. The current Bill retains the requirement of rotation but removes the obligation to undertake it after each delimitation exercise, leaving the timing and manner to the discretion of the Delimitation Commission.

6 Composition of the Delimitation Commission

Delimitation shall be undertaken by a three-member Delimitation Commission, comprising a Chairperson (sitting or former Supreme Court Judge), the Chief Election Commissioner (or an Election Commissioner nominated by them) and, ordinarily, the State Election Commissioner of the State concerned. The Central Government plays a significant role in the composition and functioning of the Commission. It enjoys primacy in the appointment of two of its three members and determines the term of the Commission.

7 Method of Enactment

For this constitutional amendment to be enacted, it must be passed in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha by:



The constitution amendment and legislative package represent a generational reform that will shape the future of electoral politics in India. Accordingly, it should be substantively discussed and debated in Parliament, State Legislatures and amongst the general public, before becoming the law of the land.

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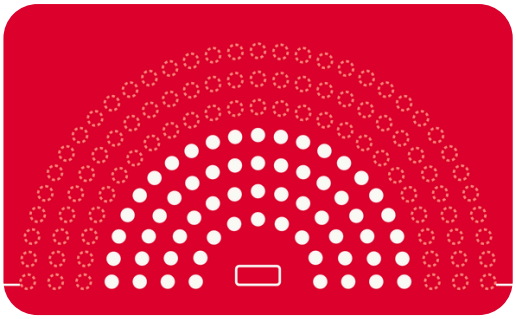
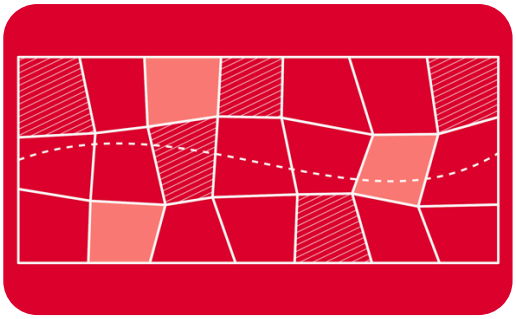


12 AUGUST, 2026

Beyond Women's Reservation: The Implications of an Expanded Lok Sabha

The Note specifically examines the implications of expanding the Lok Sabha from a maximum of 550 to 850 seats along four axes: electoral representation, federal balance, parliamentary accountability and institutional capacity. It also considers the financial and administrative costs of expansion and makes a case for a principled and durable framework for determining the size of the Lok Sabha.



15 APRIL, 2026

Implications of the Constitutional Amendment and Legislative Package on Delimitation and Women's Reservation

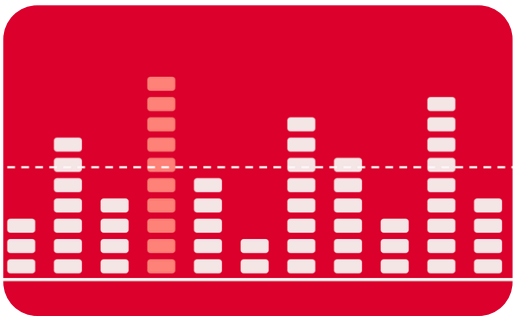
The Note highlights the key changes proposed by the legislative package, including the expansion of the Lok Sabha, the lifting of the freeze on the allocation of Lok Sabha seats among States, and the removal of the requirement to undertake delimitation after every Census. It also examines the delinking of women's reservation from the next Census and the removal of the requirement for periodic rotation of reserved constituencies.



10 APRIL, 2026

Beyond Women's Reservation: The Constitutional Stakes of Delimitation

The Note examines the constitutional concerns raised by the legislative package on delimitation, women's reservation and an expanded Lok Sabha (the 131st Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2026 and the accompanying Bills). It highlights the limitations of expanding the Lok Sabha alone, makes a case for strengthening the Rajya Sabha, and emphasises the need for greater independence and transparency in the delimitation process.



4 SEPTEMBER, 2024

The States in Parliament

The report examines the principle of political equality underlying delimitation, questioning whether equality between voters necessarily requires numerical parity. It situates the debate within the broader context of Indian federalism and examines the implications of population-based allocation of seats for Centre-State relations. It also explores alternate approaches to reforming parliamentary representation, ranging from extending the freeze on redistribution of Lok Sabha seats to equalising State representation in the Rajya Sabha.

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