



Everything you should know!

DELIMITATION EXERCISE IN JAMMU & KASHMIR



Background

All party meeting:

Fourteen mainstream Jammu and Kashmir leaders from eight political parties, attended the three-hour meeting aimed at getting the political process back on course in J&K after it lost its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019.

The main focus of the meeting was to strengthen the democratic process.

PM Modi said the statehood of J&K would be restored "at an appropriate time" but urged the parties to get on board with delimitation exercise.

Elections in J&K have been due since the alliance between the BJP and PDP fell apart in June 2018, after which the erstwhile state was brought under governor's rule.

What is delimitation?

- Delimitation refers to the process of demarcation of the boundaries of parliamentary or assembly constituencies.
- The process is carried out every few years to ensure that each constituency has approximately an equal number of voters.
- A high powered (temporary body) Delimitation Commission carries out the process of demarcation of constituency boundaries.
- The orders of this commission are legally binding and not subject to scrutiny of any court of law. Even Parliament cannot suggest modifications to an order issued by the commission.

Earlier Delimitations in J&K

- A delimitation commission was first constituted for J&K in 1952. Subsequently, they were constituted in 1963, 1973 and 1995.
- Delimitation in J&K has followed a different trajectory than in the rest of the country, due to the special status.
- Delimitation of Lok Sabha seats: governed by the Constitution of India
- Delimitation of state's Assembly seats: governed by the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution.
- Presently, J&K Assembly, has 87 seats – 46 in Kashmir, 37 in Jammu and 4 in Ladakh – 24 were reserved for Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.



Source: mapsofworld.com

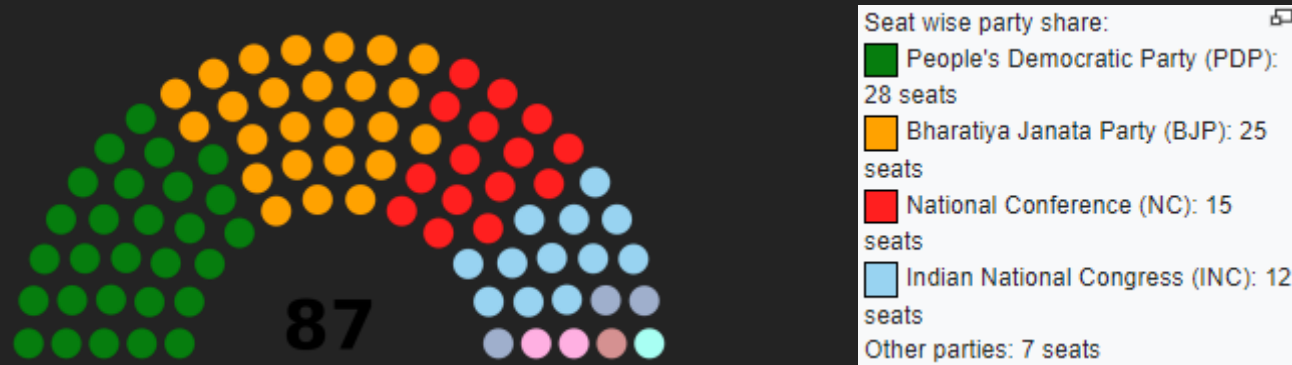
Why the controversy?

- Volatile Issue due to the demography. Kashmir – Muslim dominated and Jammu – Hindu dominated.
- After 1995's delimitation, the next exercise was due in 2005, but in 2002, the Farooq Abdullah government chose to freeze delimitation until 2026 by amending the Jammu & Kashmir Representation of the People Act, 1957, of the Constitution of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Political parties, including the BJP, have argued that the freeze enforced in 2002 has led to poorer representation for Jammu region.
- According to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019, the seats for Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be increased by seven seats, in effect they will go up from 83 to 90 post-delimitation.

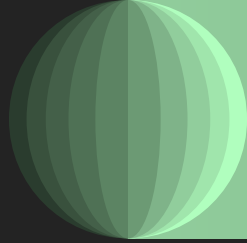
Why the controversy?

- The concern for several mainstream political parties in the Valley has been that representation may be increased for Jammu after the delimitation exercise, and not Kashmir, thereby weakening their electoral fortunes.

2014 Jammu and Kashmir state assembly elections



Present Status



A delimitation commission, headed by retired Supreme Court judge **Ranjana Prakash Desai**, was set up by the Gol in 2020.

While it was supposed to lapse on 5 March this year, it was given a year's extension given the Covid-19 pandemic and the delays caused by it.

Bonus Section: What leaders said?



Farooq Abdullah

- Restore the statehood.
- Decision taken in 2019 should be reversed.



Mehbooba Mufti

- Curb the “ongoing persecution”.
- Boost trade & maintain peace in Kashmir.



Ghulam Nabi Azad

- Statehood.
- Protection of lands and jobs for domicile.
- Return of Kashmiri Pandits.
- Release of political prisoners.

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