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# Tamil Nadu Assembly Demands Permanent Freeze on Lok Sabha Strength at 543

12 August 2026 ·

POLITY

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator &amp; Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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# Tamil Nadu Assembly Demands Permanent Freeze on Lok Sabha Strength at 543

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly passed a resolution on **August 12, 2026**, demanding that Lok Sabha strength be permanently frozen at **543 seats**, preserving the current inter-state seat allocation and implementing the 33 percent women's reservation on the existing seat base from the 2029 general election.*

## WHAT THE RESOLUTION DEMANDS

The resolution calls for three specific outcomes: a permanent freeze on Lok Sabha strength at 543 seats rather than any future expansion; preservation of the existing **2.2:1 ratio** between Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha population representation; and implementation of the **Women's Reservation Act, 2023** (33 percent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha) on the current 543-seat structure starting with the 2029 general election, rather than waiting for an expanded House.

## THE BACKDROP: A FAILED EXPANSION BILL

The resolution follows the failure of the **Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026**, introduced in the Lok Sabha on **April 16, 2026**, which had proposed expanding the House of the People to **850 seats**. The Bill required a two-thirds special majority under Article 368 and did not secure the numbers needed to pass, prompting the government to withdraw it along with its companion Delimitation Bill and the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill.

## THE CONSTITUTIONAL FREEZE AND WHY IT MATTERS

Lok Sabha seat strength has been frozen at **1971 Census levels** since the **42nd Constitutional Amendment (1976)**, a freeze subsequently extended by the **84th Amendment (2001)** and the **87th Amendment** to persist until the first census conducted after **2026**. The freeze was originally designed as a temporary measure to avoid penalising southern and other states that had successfully controlled population growth relative to demographically faster-growing northern states, since **Article 81** ties Lok Sabha seat allocation to state population. With the freeze period set to lapse, any future delimitation exercise threatens to

shift parliamentary seats, and therefore political power, toward higher-population states, even though those states' faster population growth is often viewed as a policy outcome to be discouraged rather than rewarded with greater representation.

## THE FEDERALISM STAKES

Tamil Nadu's demand sits within a broader southern-states coalition concern that resuming population-based delimitation would penalise states that met national family-planning and development goals, converting demographic success into a long-term loss of parliamentary weight and, by extension, influence over national policy and resource allocation. This is a live instance of the tension between two constitutional principles that pull in opposite directions: the **"one person, one vote, one value"** ideal underlying **proportional representation**, and **cooperative federalism**, which requires that no state feel structurally disadvantaged by the Union's design choices. A permanent freeze protects federal balance but departs from strict population-proportionality; resuming the freeze's lapse restores proportionality but risks entrenching a two-tier federation where demographically slower-growing states lose relative voice.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

**GS Paper 2:** Indian Constitution, Article 81 (composition of the House of the People); the 42nd, 84th and 87th Constitutional Amendments and the delimitation freeze; **federalism** and Centre-state relations; the Women's Reservation Act, 2023 (106th Constitutional Amendment) and its implementation trigger.

**Mains angle:** "The freeze on Lok Sabha seat delimitation was designed to protect federal balance but is now approaching its constitutional expiry. Examine the competing claims of proportional representation and cooperative federalism in this debate." (250 words)

### ★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

#### TAMIL NADU'S RESOLUTION (AUG 12, 2026):

Demands permanent freeze at 543 seats; preserve 2.2:1 Lok Sabha-Rajya Sabha ratio

Implement 33% women's reservation (Women's Reservation Act, 2023) on the current 543-seat base from 2029

#### CONSTITUTIONAL FREEZE TIMELINE:

Freeze anchored to 1971 Census levels via the 42nd Amendment (1976)

Extended by the 84th Amendment (2001) and 87th Amendment until the first census after 2026

Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026: proposed 850 seats; introduced April 16, 2026; failed to secure a two-thirds majority; government withdrew the companion Delimitation Bill and UT Laws (Amendment) Bill

Sources: PIB, PRS Legislative Research, The Hindu

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## Bharat Choudhary

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