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The Hindu Analysis-10th June 2025

- **Delimiting by electors rather than population offers a fairer approach**
- **How extracting and producing nickel can be made more sustainable**
- **PM to visit Cyprus, Croatia during his trip to Canada**
- **Empowering women in agriculture for food security**

Delimiting by electors rather than population offers a fairer approach

Several recent articles in the mainstream media suggest that a delimitation exercise — if carried out with population as the primary criterion for allocating parliamentary constituencies (PCs) — would disproportionately disadvantage the southern States. **Proponents of this view argue that the southern States, having adhered more rigorously to family planning norms than their northern counterparts, would either receive comparatively fewer PC seats or could even be left with less seats than what they have currently.**

But the **broader question** that has not been adequately discussed is: **what is the most rational criterion for allocation of PCs: population or the number of electors?**

Delimiting by electors rather than population offers a fairer approach

The principle of 'one person, one vote, one value' is more closely aligned with the number of electors than population

DATA POINT

Anish Gupta

Several recent articles in the mainstream media suggest that a delimitation exercise — if carried out with population as the primary criterion for allocating parliamentary constituencies (PCs) — would disproportionately disadvantage the southern States. Proponents of this view argue that the southern States, having adhered more rigorously to family planning norms than their northern counterparts, would either receive comparatively fewer PC seats or could even be left with less seats than what they have currently.

But the broader question that has not been adequately discussed is: what is the most rational criterion for allocation of PCs: population or the number of electors? Electors in a constituency are not always a subset of the population. Many electors may live outside their registered PCs, or may have failed to register. Census records are sensitive to migration, as they are based merely on a stay of six months or more (or even an intention to stay), without even requiring any proof of residence or registration in the voter list. Migrants also generally avoid delay in transferring their voter registration for various reasons. Furthermore, variations in the age structure — such as a higher proportion of under-18s — may also lead to large differences in elector numbers between PCs with similar populations. Importantly, the principle of 'one person, one vote, one value' aligns more closely with electors than the population. Using elector data avoids the wait for a Census and offers a more accurate measure of representation.

Elector disparity

The value of a vote can be considered inversely proportional to the number of electors in a PC. Data shows that vote value has varied

significantly across regions and over time. Union Territories (UTs), hilly States, and north-eastern States have consistently had a disproportionately high vote value from 1951 to 2024, due to geographical considerations and the minimum representation requirement from each State.

When comparing the southern States with other States, we find that they started with a higher vote value in 1951. However, this trend reversed, and they recorded a lower vote value in 1961, 1971, 1980, 1991, and 1999. The trend reversed once again, with the southern States registering a higher vote value in 2009, 2019, and 2024. It shows a mixed pattern, with the percentage difference in the average number of electors between the southern States and other States ranging from -10.5% to +5%.

Importantly, the southern States began with a higher vote value per parliamentary constituency when the first Parliament was formed in 1951. This initial advantage may have potential long-term implications for government policies and initiatives, development outcomes, and more.

Moreover, among the five largest and five smallest PCs (excluding hilly/UTs/north-east) in terms of electors, four in each group are from the southern States. The value of a vote in Lakshmi is 4.5 times higher than in Malkajgiri and 2.6 times higher than in Bangalore North. This indicates that rationalisation of PCs is more needed in the southern States.

Rajya Sabha representation According to the elector data for 2024, the southern States account for just 22.45% of India's electors, yet they hold 23.8% of Lok Sabha seats. Their representation in the Rajya Sabha is even more skewed, at 24.4%, exceeding both their share of electors and their Lok Sabha seat share. The pattern is reversed for the other States. Although they comprise 71.2% of India's electors, they hold only 67.4%

of Lok Sabha seats and just 64.4% of Rajya Sabha seats. In particular, Tamil Nadu has 39 Lok Sabha seats which is lower than Bihar's 40 or West Bengal's 42; but it has 18 Rajya Sabha seats, which is more than the 16 seats allotted to both Bihar and West Bengal.

The fairer approach is to allocate seats based on electors. In the table, column 4 shows the proposed PC seats if the total number of seats is raised to 800. To avoid penalising smaller States and UTs, their current seat count is preserved, which results in a total of 810. The table shows that among the large States, Rajasthan (76%), Karnataka (60.7%), and Telangana (58.8%) would see the highest percentage gains in seats.

The current narratives — that PCs are allocated solely on the basis of population, and that the potential reduction in seats in southern States is primarily due to their strict adherence to family planning policies — are not entirely accurate. First, constituency allocation has never been based purely on population. Other considerations, i.e., geographical challenges and minimum representation, have always played a role. Second, linking political representation to population control sets a dangerous precedent. By that logic, similar claims could be made for representation based on religion or caste. For instance, Jains, among all religious groups, and upper castes, among all social groups, have the highest adherence to population control, while Muslims and Scheduled Tribes have comparatively higher fertility rates. Third, when the criterion of using population for the formation of PCs was originally adopted, the consequences of the population enumeration method and the impact of large-scale migration were not anticipated. Therefore, the principle of 'one person, one vote, one value' in a true sense is more closely aligned with the number of electors rather than the population across PCs.

An alternative choice

The data is based on the author's calculations using the 2024 electoral list

Table: The proposed number of Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs) based on the number of electors

States/UTs (1)	Current seats (2)	Electors (3)	Proposed seats (4)	Adjusted seats ** (5)	% Increase (6)
Andhra	25	4,14,01,887	33.9	34	36
Karnataka	28	5,47,72,332	44.8	45	60.7
Kerala	20	2,78,07,009	22.7	23	15
Tamil Nadu	39	6,24,04,947	51	51	30.8
Telangana	17	3,32,32,318	27.2	27	58.8
Bihar	40	7,72,59,579	63.2	63	57.5
Chhattisgarh	11	2,06,78,667	16.9	17	54.5
Gujarat	26	4,80,09,945	39.3	39	50
Haryana	10	2,01,87,811	16.5	17	70
Jharkhand	14	2,58,77,890	23.2	23	50
Madhya Pradesh	29	5,66,68,852	46.4	46	58.6
Maharashtra	48	9,30,1,790	76.1	76	58.3
Delhi	7	1,52,14,638	12.4	13	85.7
Odisha	21	3,37,16,965	27.6	28	33.3
Punjab	13	2,15,67,196	17.6	18	38.5
Rajasthan	25	5,35,08,010	43.8	44	76
Uttar Pradesh	80	15,44,03,112	126.3	126	57.5
West Bengal	42	7,61,24,780	62.3	62	47.6
AAK Islands	1	3,15,745	0.3	1	0
Arunachal	2	8,98,442	0.7	2	0
Assam	14	2,45,72,114	20.1	20	42.9
Chandigarh	1	6,60,552	0.5	1	0
DNH & DD*	2	4,17,236	0.3	2	0
Goa	2	11,79,644	1	2	0
Himachal	4	57,11,969	4.7	5	25
Jammu & Kashmir	5	88,02,348	7.2	7	40
Ladakh	1	1,50,576	0.2	1	0
Lakshadweep	1	57,953	0	1	0
Manipur	2	20,51,357	1.7	2	0
Meghalaya	2	22,84,951	1.8	2	0
Mizoram	1	8,61,327	0.7	1	0
Nagaland	1	13,25,383	1.1	1	0
Puducherry	1	10,24,024	0.8	1	0
Sikkim	1	4,66,643	0.4	1	0
Tripura	2	28,70,896	2.3	3	50
Uttarakhand	5	84,31,101	6.9	7	40
All India	543	97,79,65,568	800	810	49.2

**Rounded off and without any decrease in the existing number of seats for the smaller States/UTs (*Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Diaman and Diu). Anish Gupta teaches Economics at Delhi School of Economics, Juliana from IEDS, Noida, helped in data entry





The current debate is:

Should seats be allotted based on total population or actual voters (electors)?

Fear of Southern States:

- Southern states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Karnataka **followed family planning better**, so their **population growth has slowed**.
- If seats are based only on population, they may **lose representation**, while **states with higher population growth** (mainly northern states) may **gain more seats**.

The article suggests that **“number of electors”** (actual voters) is a more fair and accurate way to decide seats because:

- Not everyone in the population is a voter (like children or migrants).
- Census counts all people, even those staying temporarily.
- Voter lists reflect **actual democratic participation**.

It aligns with the democratic idea of **“One Person, One Vote, One Value.”**

Vote Value:

- In 1951, southern states had **higher vote value**.
- Later, it dropped, but now in 2024, they again have **higher vote value**.
- **Idukki (Kerala)** vote is 4.5 times more powerful than in **Malkajgiri (Telangana)**.
- This shows **imbalances**, and seats should be rationalised.

Southern states make up:

- **22.45%** of India's electors
- But hold **23.8%** of Lok Sabha seats and **24.4%** of Rajya Sabha seats

This is **more than their actual voter share**, while other states are **underrepresented**.

Proposed solution?

- Increase total Lok Sabha seats to **800** (or 810 keeping small states safe).
- Allocate based on **electors**, not population.





How extracting and producing nickel can be made more sustainable

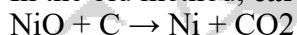
A new **hydrogen-based method** for nickel extraction developed by researchers at the **Max Planck Institute** offers a **clean, one-step, carbon-free process** to extract nickel from **low-grade laterite ores**. **low-grade laterite ores** are common but hard to process using traditional methods.



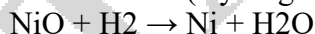
Process:

- Instead of using **carbon** (which produces CO₂), the new method uses **hydrogen plasma** in an **electric arc furnace**.
- Hydrogen reacts with nickel oxide and **releases only water**, not carbon dioxide.
- The process is **faster, more energy efficient** (up to 18%), and **cuts carbon emissions by up to 84%**.

In the old method, **carbon (C)** is used to reduce **nickel oxide (NiO)**:

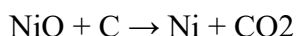


New Method (Hydrogen plasma-based reduction):



Why is this important?

- **Nickel is essential** for making batteries in electric vehicles (EVs), which are key to a green future.
- But traditional nickel production is **very polluting** — making 1 tonne of nickel can emit **20+ tonnes of CO₂**.
- Without cleaner production methods, the **green tech revolution (EVs, solar, etc.) risks becoming carbon-intensive** at the manufacturing level.





Indian Context:

- India has **large nickel laterite reserves**, especially in **Odisha's Sukinda region**.
- Traditional methods ignore these low-grade ores. The new process **makes these usable**, reducing dependence on imported high-grade nickel.
- This helps India **industrialise** while still aiming for **net-zero emissions by 2070**.

NEWS 18
NEWS TO GOVERNMENT



PM to visit Cyprus, Croatia during his trip to Canada

Context: PM Modi will travel to Cyprus (en route to the G-7 summit in Canada, June 15–17) and to Croatia (on the return).

Visit to Cyprus

Political Significance

- **Strategic Message:** Seen as a response to **Turkiye's support for Pakistan** during Operation Sindoor.
- **EU Presidency:** Timely revival of ties before **Cyprus takes over EU Council Presidency (2026)**.
- **Terrorism Stance:** Cyprus **condemned the Pahalgam terror attack (April 22)** and plans to raise **cross-border terrorism by Pakistan** at the EU level.





Diplomatic Support

- **Cyprus supports India on:**
 - ♦ Kashmir issue
 - ♦ Permanent seat at the UN Security Council
 - ♦ Membership in Nuclear Suppliers Group and IAEA
- **India supports Cyprus on:**
 - ♦ Resolving its territorial dispute with Turkey as per UNSC resolutions, international law, and EU laws.

Visit to Croatia

Cultural Ties

- **ISKCON Presence:** Longstanding cultural-religious ties.

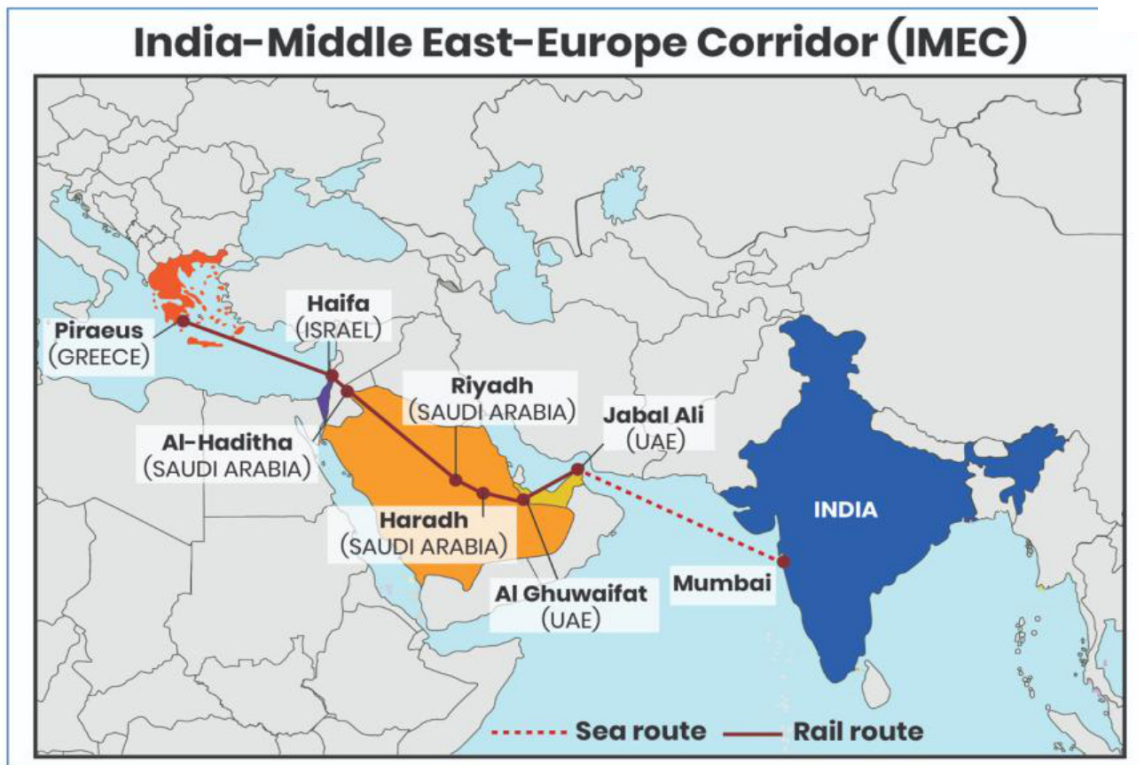
Strategic & Diplomatic Significance

- **Defence & Tech:** Growing cooperation, including a **defence MoU signed in March 2023** during the Raisina Dialogue.
- Tribute to Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslav founder and a key figure in the Non-Aligned Movement.
- **Croatia's Adriatic Sea ports** are strategically important for trade and connectivity.





- Officials here indicated that **both Cyprus and Croatia have acquired growing significance** in recent years after the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** was launched during the G-20 summit in New Delhi in 2023.



Empowering women in agriculture for food security

Empowering women in agriculture for food security

The United Nations General Assembly has declared 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, garnering the support of over 100 co-sponsors. The resolution celebrates the essential role of women in global agriculture while raising awareness of their challenges, which include property rights and market access.

This article highlights insights from a symposium on women in agriculture organised by the Royal Norwegian Embassy and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in India (with participation and guidance from the Government of India). It distils the discussions over six months, with 200 participants from diverse fields and backgrounds coming together to address the challenges women in agriculture face.

Some of the observations here also stem from a collaborative project called ENACT, or Enhancing Climate Adaptation of Vulnerable Communities through Nature-based Solutions and Gender Transformative Approaches, in Assam, implemented by the WFP in partnership with the Government of Assam, in Nagon. The project aims to empower smallholder farmers, particularly women, to access climate-related information and make informed decisions to enhance their resilience. The project is financed by the Government of Norway under its strategy to promote self-sufficiency in food production and strengthen women's rights and their role in food production.

Ownership, control and access
Nearly half the global food supply is made possible by the contributions of women, who are responsible for 60% to 80% of food production in developing countries and account for 39% of the agricultural labour in South Asia. These figures highlight the vital role of women in agriculture, who face barriers and inequalities.

In India, the percentage of women who own agricultural land is significantly lower than that of men, despite women constituting a substantial part of the farm workforce. Approximately 80% of economically active women are employed in agriculture. Yet, only 14% of landowners are women. According to the latest National Family



May-Elin Stener
is the Ambassador of Norway to India



Elisabeth Faure
is the Representative and Country Director of the United Nations World Food Programme in India

Health Survey, female land ownership is even lower, at 8.3%.

Women farmers in India report that their lack of land ownership makes it difficult to obtain credit and limits their access to financial institutions. Regular access to information on agricultural planning and advisory is essential for farmers, but women have more limited access to technology, such as mobile phones. These obstacles hinder investments, technology adoption and improvements in livelihoods. While microfinance and self-help groups provide some access, such loans are often insufficient for significant investments.

The Government of India supports small women farmers to enhance skills and promote sustainable agriculture. The Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana upgrades skills and increases resource access for women, while the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation offers 50% to 80% subsidies for machinery. Additionally, 30% of the National Food Security Mission's budget is allocated for women farmers in a number of States and Union Territories.

Empowerment for resilience

Climate change disproportionately affects women farmers by increasing their domestic responsibilities and elevating their exposure to agricultural risks. "Our area has been witnessing rapid weather changes. The variety introduced by the project is designed to resist flood damage, and the crops can survive underwater. We are hoping for a better harvest," says Nirmali Bora Hazarika from Roha village in Nagon.

By engaging with women farmers, it is possible to develop replicable models of climate adaptation at the village and community levels.

The women in agriculture symposia generated forward-looking ideas. The ENACT project primarily connects women farmers with experts through information technology, providing actionable agricultural and climate advisories weekly via their phones to over 300 farmers in 17 villages of Nagon district.

Additionally, the Climate Adaptation Information Centres facilitate video conferencing and meetings, informing women farmers about

agriculture and livelihoods. This shows how scalable impact can be achieved by combining technical expertise, diversification through farm-based livelihoods, information and weather advisories, use of technologies and social behaviour change interventions.

The project is leveraging partnerships with State and district administrations, which include the Department of Agriculture, the State Rural Livelihoods Mission, and the Departments of Meteorology and Environment. The technology partners include agricultural universities, institutions for sourcing climate-resilient crop varieties.

Rural ecosystems and dependent livelihoods are vulnerable. Responses to risks should reflect community needs and capabilities. The ENACT project emphasises the promotion of flood-resistant rice varieties, livelihood diversification, and market linkages to mitigate crop damage from flooding and promote the cultivation of nutritious local varieties. Women's farmer groups engage in a community-based smart seed production system to enhance sustainability.

Steps to take

Policy design and implementation should take into account the unique needs of women farmers. Granular data with a gender lens are needed to develop solutions tailored to women's needs. These could range from rethinking farming tools to financial needs and practices around saving or credit.

There should be a strong focus on agri-value chains that support women farmers and are managed by women. Part of this could be to enhance women's access to financing mechanisms and information while supporting their collective action and networks, such as women's self-help groups.

We have a historic opportunity to mark 2026 as the International Year of the Woman Farmer, to promote resilient agricultural development and gender equality by recognising, supporting, and enhancing the role of women in ensuring food security, fostering economic prosperity, and promoting sustainability.





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The resolution celebrates the essential role of women in global agriculture while raising awareness of their challenges, which include property rights and market access.

Importance of Women in Agriculture

- Women contribute to **60–80% of food production** in developing countries.
- In **South Asia**, they form **39% of the agricultural labour force**.
- In **India**, around **80% of economically active women** are employed in agriculture, but only **14% own land** (even lower—**8.3%**—as per NFHS data).

Challenges

- **Lack of land ownership** makes it hard for women to access loans and agricultural resources.
- **Limited access to technology** (e.g., mobile phones) restricts their access to agricultural advisories.
- Loans from microfinance and SHGs are **often too small** for meaningful investment.

Government Support

- **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana**: Upskills women and improves access to resources.
- **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation**: Offers 50–80% subsidies on machinery.
- **30% of National Food Security Mission funds** are allocated for women farmers in select regions.

ENACT Project – A Model in Assam

- Run by **WFP (World Food Programme) & Govt. of Assam**, funded by **Norway**. Aims to **empower women smallholder farmers** and enhance their **climate resilience**.
- Introduces **flood-resistant rice varieties**, provides **weekly advisories** via mobile, and connects farmers through **Climate Adaptation Information Centres**.
- Also, Promotes **smart seed production**, **livelihood diversification**, and **market access**.

What should be Done?

- Policies should be designed with a **gender lens**.
- Improve **tools, financing, and technology** access tailored to women farmers.
- Strengthen **women-led agri-value chains** and **support networks** like SHGs.
- Enhance **community-based and climate-smart agriculture** models.