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**A DRAFT PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL: INDIA'S NEXT-
GENERATION DEMOCRACY AND INCLUSIVE
ADMINISTRATION REFORM BILL (INDIA REFORM BILL)**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This draft private member's bill unifies three pillars of reform, namely social inclusion, democratic renewal, and inclusive economic transformation. INDIA Reform Bill, or India's Next-generation Democracy and Inclusive Administration Reform Bill, as the name goes, is a composite bill talking about change required in contemporary Indian society.

India faces three interlinked issues - inequitable access to opportunity, declining democratic accountability, and ecologically and economically fragile agricultural growth in the nation. While these seem to be isolated sectoral issues, they represent institutional design failures across education, politics, and rural development.

First, India's reservation framework, while constitutionally rooted in justice, is geographically blind and intersectionally incomplete. Fixed seat-based quotas have produced stigma, inefficient seat utilisation, and an inability to account for layered disadvantages such as region, income, gender, and social status, simultaneously. In addition to this, thousands of seats in premier institutions remain vacant due to rigid allocation structures. In simple terms, the existing method sees a student in metropolitan Mumbai on the same level as a fundamentally different starting line of a student from rural Bihar or Jharkhand.

Second, democratic accountability remains incomplete in Indian elections. Voters here do possess information about criminal records and wealth of candidates but lack standardised disclosure of legislative performance. Electors have the so-called character certificate of the candidates but lack the most important experience certificate. Also, politics has increasingly become a long-term career with minimal structured leadership renewal. Youth representation remains disproportionately low in a country where most citizens are under 35. A country and

a society where a majority of the population is strained between generation gaps, it is interesting that the so-called leaders are octogenarians only.

Currently, only politicians are hired without legitimate experience certificates. Also no law or awareness programs has actually informed people enough to analyse debate sessions in Parliament and Legislatures, and know what their sent representative is actually doing for them. The Representation of the People Act, 1951, does not require incumbents to disclose attendance, legislative participation, or fund utilisation.

Third, agriculture, which employs nearly half the workforce, contributes less than a fifth to the national GDP and also operates on an input-subsidy model that finances chemical consumption rather than ecological outcomes. Fertilizer-heavy support has degraded soil organic carbon, increased fiscal strain, and weakened climate resilience. At the same time, global markets increasingly reward low-carbon production.

The INDIA Reform Bill proposes an integrated institutional reset by -

- replacing the seat-based quotas in central admissions with a Unified Merit List which incorporates calibrated Deprivation Points.
- making Performance Disclosure Reports mandatory for returning electoral candidates; introducing a two-term limit for candidates; and a retirement age of 75 (which is implied and not explicit).
- providing for establishment of a National Authority for Agricultural Innovation and Sustainability to divert a share of subsidies towards outcome-based Green Rewards linked to soil regeneration and carbon sequestration.

This will eliminate quota stigma, make the substantive equity provisions more robust and holistic, lead to full seat utilisation, hold political leadership accountable, encourage and promote youth participation, lead towards an improvement in farm incomes, promote soil regeneration, and help in fiscal rationalisation.

The proposal is feasible because it largely reallocates existing structures rather than dismantling them. It uses data already recorded by institutions, aligns with constitutional provisions, and builds upon successful domestic precedents such as deprivation-point models in one of the esteemed Indian universities.

NATURE AND SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

Education & Opportunity:

Numerous seats have reportedly remained vacant in premier central institutions in recent years due to rigid seat allocation procedures. Identity-marked admission lists have spread stigma and social exclusion. This is evident in a report released by The Wire, which said that caste-based discrimination has gone up by 118% in the last five years¹. While caste still is a dominant discrimination point, with the deepening of complexities, discrimination has also taken an intersectionality attribute. Many types of deprivation add up and amplify the atrocities and inequity.

Democratic Accountability:

Over 96.88 crore voters² lack standardised performance metrics for re-electing incumbents. The 18th Lok Sabha comprised 278 members with prior Parliamentary experience (262 from Lok Sabha, 16 from Rajya Sabha), including two seven-term veterans. Of the 216 re-elected sitting MPs, eight changed constituencies, one won two seats, nine switched parties, and eight represented split factions.³ While the data shows high re-election winners, only 8% of the total MPs in 17th Lok Sabha got involved in more than 100 debates⁴. This comes at a time when there is not much data available of where their constituency funds were utilised. Also the average age of MPs in 17th Lok Sabha was 54 years⁵, whereas the average age of the Indian public was 28-29 years⁶; this reflects a huge generational gap.

Agriculture:

Indian agriculture faces a structural paradox -

¹ 'Caste-Based Discrimination Up by 118% in Universities, UGC Data Shows' *The Wire Hindi* (19 March 2023) <https://thewirehindi.com/320173/caste-based-discrimination-up-by-118-in-universities-ugc-data-shows/> accessed 19 February 2026

² Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *Government Releases Data on Fertilizer Subsidy and Nutrient Use* (Press Release, 13 February 2024) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2005189®=3&lang=2> accessed 19 February 2026

³ PRS Legislative Research, *Profile of the 18th Lok Sabha* (PRS Vital Stats, 2024) <https://prsindia.org/parliament/vital-stats/profile-of-the-18th-lok-sabha> accessed 19 February 2026

⁴ PRS Legislative Research, *Participation of MPs in the 17th Lok Sabha* (PRS Vital Stats, 2023) https://prsindia.org/files/parliament/vital_stats/Participation-MPs_in_17th_LS.pdf accessed 19 February 2026

⁵ PRS Legislative Research, *Profile of the 18th Lok Sabha* (PRS Vital Stats, 2024) <https://prsindia.org/parliament/vital-stats/profile-of-the-18th-lok-sabha> accessed 19 February 2026

⁶ StatBase, 'India – Median Age' (StatBase) <https://statbase.org/data/ind-median-age/> accessed 19 February 2026

The Productivity-Employment Gap: While the agricultural sector employs 46% of India's workforce⁷, the sector contributes only 18% to the country's Gross Domestic Product⁸.

The Biological Dead-End: Soil health has reached a tipping point. Historically, healthy soil held 2–3% organic carbon; today, 44% of Indian soils have plummeted to 0.4–0.7% Soil Organic Carbon (SOC).⁹ This can also be called biological desertification.

The Yield-Response Crash: Despite a surge in fertilizer consumption to 601 lakh tonnes in 2023-24¹⁰, the efficiency of inputs has failed, hence significantly and disproportionately raising the cost of production.

Fiscal and Trade Vulnerability: The annual fertilizer subsidy bill (approx. ₹1.7 Lakh Crore in FY26) incentivises the overuse of Urea, distorting the NPK balance to 12.8:5.1:1 (against the ideal 4:2:1)¹¹. Furthermore, as global markets move toward Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanisms (CBAM), India's high-carbon produce risks being "taxed out" of high-value international trade.

POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS

The reform inertia did not arise from ignorance of the problem, but from long-established incentive structures that rewarded continuity over correction in the society.

- Fixed quotas and long-standing incumbency provide predictable vote banks and stable political hierarchies, and any step to alter them will surely disrupt the established electoral arithmetic and will threaten those who continue to benefit from the status quo.
- Introducing a points-based verification system and providing autonomy to zonal research centres reduce discretionary control within centralised bureaucracies, thus creating institutional hesitation towards reforms that increase transparency and redistribute authority.

⁷ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS): Annual Report July 2023 – June 2024* (Press Release, 7 October 2024) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2057970®=3&lang=2> accessed 19 February 2026

⁸ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *Government approves continuation of the Modified Fertilizer Subsidy Scheme* (Press Release, 16 May 2025) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2138022®=3&lang=2> accessed 19 February 2026

⁹ Dhanashree Crop Solutions, 'Soil in India is Losing its Life: Organic Carbon Levels Drop Alarmingly' (Dhanashree Crop Solutions, [publication date]) <https://dhanashreecropsolutions.com/en/news/soil-in-india-is-losing-its-life-organic-carbon-levels-drop-alarmingly/>

¹⁰ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *Soil Health Card Scheme – Status and Impact* (Press Note, [insert exact date from webpage]) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?ModuleId=3&NoteId=154966®=3&lang=2> accessed 19 February 2026

¹¹ Amitabh Sinha, 'First Urea, Now DAP: High Use of Subsidised Fertilisers Raises Crop Yield Fears' *The Indian Express* (New Delhi, 6 December 2022) <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/first-urea-now-dap-high-use-of-subsidised-fertilisers-raises-crop-yield-fears-8319160/> accessed 19 February 2026

- Fertilizer subsidies are politically visible and electorally sensitive, making governments cautious about reforming a fiscally heavy yet politically symbolic instrument.

The Bill tries to mitigate the resistance by reallocating the funds rather than eliminating benefits, ensuring phased implementation along with constitutional compliance.

India's Next-generation Democracy and Inclusive Administration Reform Bill (INDIA Reform Bill)

A

BILL

to provide for democratic accountability, electoral transparency and leadership renewal; to establish a unified merit-based deprivation-integrated affirmative action framework; to promote agricultural innovation, soil regeneration, bio-carbon monetisation and rural prosperity; and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

BE it enacted by Parliament in the Seventy-seventh Year of the Republic of India as follows:

PART I

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS the Constitution of India secures to all citizens justice — social, economic and political — equality of status and opportunity, and fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity and integrity of the Nation;

AND WHEREAS Article 14 guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws;

AND WHEREAS Articles 15(4), 15(5), and 16(4) empower the State to make special provisions for advancement of socially and educationally backward classes;

AND WHEREAS Article 324 vests in the Election Commission of India the superintendence, direction and control of elections to ensure free and fair democratic processes;

AND WHEREAS agriculture, rural prosperity, economic planning and trade in agricultural products fall within the legislative competence of Parliament under the Constitution;

AND WHEREAS it is necessary to strengthen democratic accountability through measurable public performance disclosure and regulated tenure limitations;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to transition from seat-based reservation to a calibrated deprivation-based affirmative action system integrated within a unified merit framework;

AND WHEREAS it is essential to promote decentralised agro-climatic research, soil regeneration, carbon monetisation, and income-enhancing rural reforms to secure long-term ecological and economic sustainability;

AND WHEREAS democratic renewal, social equity, and economic sustainability must operate within a coherent and future-oriented institutional framework;

CHAPTER I

Preliminary

1. Short title, extent, and commencement - This Act may be called the *India's Next-generation Democracy and Inclusive Administration Reform Act, 2026 (INDIA Reform Act, 2026)*.

(1) It extends to the whole of India.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different Parts.

2. Act consists of four parts - This Act shall consist of:

Part I – General Provisions;

Part II – Affirmative Action through Universal Deprivation Points Framework;

Part III – Electoral Accountability and Democratic Renewal;

Part IV – Agricultural Innovation, Bio-Carbon and Rural Prosperity Framework;

Each Part shall operate independently but harmoniously.

3. General Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) “*Commission*” means the Election Commission of India constituted under Article 324 of the Constitution;
- (b) “*Authority*” means the National Authority for Agricultural Innovation and Sustainability established under Part IV;
- (c) “*prescribed*” means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (d) “*term*” means a full tenure of an elective office as prescribed by the Constitution or relevant statute;
- (e) “*returning candidate*” means a person who has previously held elective public office and seeks election again;
- (f) “*composite score*” means the aggregate of entrance examination score and deprivation points awarded under Part III;

- (g) “*deprivation points*” means additional marks assigned under Part III subject to statutory caps;
- (h) “*Green Reward*” means outcome-based Direct Benefit Transfer linked to verified ecological indicators under Part IV;

All other expressions shall have the meanings assigned in their respective Parts.

PART II

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION THROUGH UNIVERSAL DEPRIVATION POINTS FRAMEWORK

CHAPTER I

Definitions

2. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a) “*affirmative action*” means a non-reservation-based system of measurable deprivation weightage integrated into a unified merit list.
- b) “*backward region*” means a district classified under Category 2 or Category 3 in Schedule I, determined through composite socio-developmental indicators.
- c) “*category 1 district (C1)*” means a district classified as developed under Schedule I.
- d) “*category 2 district (C2)*” means a district classified as moderately deprived under Schedule I.
- e) “*category 3 district (C3)*” means a district classified as severely deprived under Schedule I.
- f) “*entrance examination*” means any competitive examination conducted for admission to higher educational institutions or recruitment to public employment.
- g) “*higher education*” shall have the meaning assigned under the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, and shall include undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral and post-doctoral programmes.
- h) “*minority*” means a community notified as a minority under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- i) “*Other Backward Classes (OBC)*”, “*Scheduled Castes (SC)*”, and “*Scheduled Tribes (ST)*” shall have the meanings assigned under Articles 341 and 342 of the Constitution and relevant Central Lists.

- j) “*Person with Benchmark Disability*” or “*PwD*” shall have the meaning assigned under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.
- k) “*Third Gender*” shall mean a person recognised as transgender under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.
- l) “*first generation learner*” means a candidate whose parents or legal guardians have not attained a graduate degree.
- m) “*institutional deprivation*” means deprivation attributable to completion of qualifying degree from an underfunded or state-designated Tier 3 institution.
- n) “*public employment examination*” means recruitment examinations conducted by Union or State Public Service Commissions or other notified authorities, excluding armed forces recruitment unless specifically notified.
- o) “*reservation*” means allocation of fixed seats exclusively for specified categories, which shall cease to operate to the extent provided under this Act.

CHAPTER II

Abolition of seat-based reservation and establishment of universal deprivation point system

3. Discontinuance of reservation in specified domains - Notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force, seat-based reservation in admissions to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in higher educational institutions funded wholly or substantially by the Central Government shall cease upon commencement of this Act.

- (1) The provisions of this section shall not apply to—
 - (a) doctoral and post-doctoral programmes;
 - (b) research fellowships;
 - (c) recruitment to the Armed Forces; or
 - (d) such other categories as the Central Government may, by notification, specify.
- (2) Existing constitutional safeguards shall continue to operate except to the extent modified by this Act.

4. Unified merit list - Admissions and notified public employment examinations shall be conducted on the basis of a single unified merit list, in which

- (1) the ranking of candidates shall be determined by their Composite Score;
- (2) no separate category-wise merit list shall be maintained except as expressly provided.

CHAPTER III

Deprivation point framework

5. Deprivation points allocation for undergraduate admissions - A candidate seeking admission to undergraduate programmes after completion of Class XII, or equivalent, or as required, shall be eligible for deprivation points not exceeding twenty per cent of the total score; and

(1) The allocation shall be as follows:

(a) Regional Deprivation

- (i) Category 3 district — six percentage points;
- (ii) Category 2 district — three percentage points;
- (iii) Category 1 district — nil;

(b) Economic Deprivation

- (i) Below Poverty Line — six percentage points;
- (ii) Annual family income below eight lakh rupees — three percentage points;

(c) First Generation Learner — two percentage points;

(d) Social Deprivation

- (i) Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes — four percentage points;
- (ii) Other Backward Classes or Minorities or Kashmiri Pandit — two percentage points;

(e) Gender Deprivation

- (i) Female — two percentage points;
- (ii) Third Gender — two percentage points;

(f) Persons with Benchmark Disabilities — five percentage points:

Provided that the total deprivation points awarded under this section shall not exceed twenty per cent.

6. Deprivation points for postgraduate admissions - A candidate seeking admission after completion of an undergraduate degree shall be eligible for deprivation points not exceeding twelve per cent of the total score; and

(1) such allocation shall include -

- (a) regional deprivation — maximum two percentage points;
 - (b) economic deprivation — maximum four percentage points;
 - (c) social deprivation — maximum four percentage points;
 - (d) institutional deprivation — two percentage points;
 - (e) Persons with Benchmark Disabilities — three percentage points;
- (3) First Generation Learner status shall not apply at the postgraduate level.

(4) The total deprivation points shall not exceed twelve.

7. Hard ceiling principle - In no case shall deprivation points exceed the percentage limits specified under sections 5 and 6.

8. Special provision for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities (Flat Addition Principle) -

Notwithstanding anything contained in sections 5 and 6, deprivation points awarded to a Person with Benchmark Disability shall constitute a flat addition in recognition of structural and functional barriers independent of economic, regional or social status; but

(1) the flat addition shall be included within the overall ceiling prescribed under this Act and shall not operate as a separate reservation or exclusive quota;

(2) where a candidate eligible under this section has already reached the maximum deprivation cap applicable to the level of admission or recruitment, such eligibility shall not increase the numerical cap but shall be given due consideration under the tie-breaking mechanism provided under section 9.

(3) The purpose of this section is to compensate for demonstrable accessibility disadvantages without displacing the primacy of merit as reflected in the entrance examination score.

CHAPTER IV

Procedural provisions

9. Tie-breaking mechanism - Where two or more candidates secure identical Composite Scores, ranking shall be determined in the following order:

(1) a candidate who is a Person with Benchmark Disability shall rank higher;

(2) where both or neither candidates fall under clause (1), the candidate securing higher marks in the entrance examination shall rank higher;

(3) where marks under clause (2) are also identical, the candidate with greater social deprivation score shall rank higher;

(4) where the tie persists, the younger candidate shall rank higher;

(5) where the tie persists, ranking shall be determined by higher marks in the qualifying examination.

10. Periodic revision of categories of districts - The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare shall update the district tiers every five years; and

(1) if a particular demographic group achieves parity in a specific sector, reduction of points assigned to that specific deprivation category might be recommended.

11. District categorisation - District categorisation shall be based on a Composite Regional Development Index, which shall include the following indicators and weightages:

- (a) Sex ratio — 9.85 per cent.;
 - (b) Electrified households — 16.30 per cent.;
 - (c) Improved drinking water access — 22.22 per cent.;
 - (d) Improved sanitation access — 22.22 per cent.;
 - (e) Women literacy — 5.85 per cent.;
 - (f) Women with ten or more years of schooling — 5.85 per cent.;
 - (g) Teenage pregnancy rate — 8.85 per cent. (inverse weight);
 - (h) Child marriage rate — 8.85 per cent. (inverse weight).
- (1) The methodology and district classification shall be specified in the First Schedule of this Act.

12. Mandatory verification prior to grant of deprivation points - No admission shall be granted unless the eligibility of the candidate has been verified in the manner prescribed under this Act and the rules made thereunder.

- (1) Verification shall be completed prior to finalisation of the merit list, provided that provisional allotment may be made subject to post-verification confirmation.

13. Income verification mechanism - Economic Deprivation status shall be verified through:

- (a) Income Tax returns of parents or guardians;
 - (b) Digitally authenticated income certificates issued by a competent authority;
- (1) Mere production of a self-declared affidavit shall not be sufficient.
- (3) Wilful suppression of income or submission of fabricated income certificates shall constitute fraud under this Act and will be punishable as per Section 318 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

14. Regional deprivation verification - Regional Deprivation shall be determined based on:

- (a) the district of completion of Class X or XII for undergraduate applicants;
 - (b) the district of completion of undergraduate degree for postgraduate applicants;
 - (c) proof of residence, or residence certificate duly signed and authenticated by Tehsildar/SDM/DM.
- (1) Proof shall also include certified mark sheets and institutional records.
- (2) Transfer of schooling solely for the purpose of securing deprivation points within two academic years preceding qualification shall render the candidate ineligible unless otherwise justified.

15. Social category and minority verification - Social deprivation shall be verified through:

- (a) Caste certificates issued by a competent authority;
 - (b) Central or State List inclusion validation;
 - (c) Minority status certification under applicable law.
- (2) Digitally verifiable certificates shall be mandatory wherever available.
- (3) Any forged caste or minority certificate shall attract cancellation of admission and prosecution as per Section 318 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023.

16. Verification of disability status - Disability status shall be verified strictly in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016;

- (1) Only benchmark disability certificates issued by authorised medical boards shall be valid.
- (2) Re-verification may be conducted where fraud is suspected.

17. Institutional deprivation verification - Institutional deprivation claims shall be verified through

- (a) official accreditation status;
 - (b) funding classification records;
 - (c) notifications issued under rules made under this Act.
- (1) The Central Government may publish a list of Tier 3 institutions eligible under this Act in every five years.

18. Establishment of National Deprivation Verification Authority - The Central Government may, by notification, establish or designate a National Deprivation Verification Authority to

- (a) conduct digital cross-verification;
- (b) maintain a central deprivation registry;
- (c) coordinate with State Governments and educational institutions;
- (d) audit compliance annually;
- (e) initiate an inquiry where fraud, misrepresentation or suppression of material facts is suspected.

19. Consequences of false claim - Where any candidate is found to have secured deprivation points through fraud or misrepresentation:

- (a) admission or appointment shall be cancelled forthwith;
- (b) benefits obtained shall be liable to recovery;
- (c) the candidate shall be disqualified from appearing in any public examination for a period up to five years;

(d) criminal proceedings may be initiated as per prescribed in this Act, or if not, then under applicable penal laws.

20. Burden of proof - The burden of establishing non-eligibility for deprivation points shall lie upon the authority.

21. Appeal - Any person aggrieved by an order under this Chapter may prefer an appeal before such Appellate Authority as may be prescribed under the rules made under this act.

22. Power to make rules - The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

23. Power to remove difficulties -If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions not inconsistent with this Act as may appear necessary.

PART III

ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL

CHAPTER I

Definitions

1. Definitions.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

- (a) “*performance disclosure report*” means the verified report referred to in section 4;
- (b) “*elective office*” means membership of the House of the People, Council of States, State Legislative Assembly, State Legislative Council, or any local authority as defined by law;

CHAPTER II

Performance disclosure

2. Mandatory filing of Performance Disclosure Report - Every returning candidate shall, along with the affidavit required under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, file a Performance Disclosure Report in such form and manner as may be prescribed.

(1) No nomination of a Returning Candidate shall be deemed valid unless accompanied by such Report.

3. Contents of Performance Disclosure Report - The report shall include—

- (a) attendance record in the House, panchayat office, or others, whichever applicable;
- (b) number of questions asked;
- (c) debates participated in;

- (d) private member's bills introduced;
- (e) committee memberships and attendance;
- (f) constituency development funds allocated and utilised, including reasons for non-utilisation;
- (g) summary of audited expenditure statements;
- (h) such other measurable indicators as may be notified by the Commission by regulation.

4. Public accessibility and verification - The Commission shall establish a digital public portal for disclosure within forty-eight hours of submission; and

- (1) the Commission shall verify the report using official legislative and audit records;
- (2) where discrepancies are found, the candidate shall be given seven days to respond.

5. Consequences of non-disclosure or false disclosure - Failure to file the report shall result in rejection of nomination; and

- (1) wilful false disclosure, upon determination after due inquiry, shall
 - (a) result in disqualification from any sort of election in India for two terms; and
 - (b) attract penal consequences under Section 318 of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 .
- (3) No order under this section shall be passed without providing a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

CHAPTER III

Democratic renewal

6. Limitation on consecutive tenure - No person shall hold the same elective office, or elective office on the same hierarchy, for more than two consecutive terms.

- (1) A person who has completed two consecutive terms shall not be eligible to contest for the same office, or offices on the same hierarchy, until completion of one full term by another person.
- (2) This section shall be subject to the Constitution as amended.

7. Cooling-off provision - A person completing two consecutive terms in Parliament or State Legislature shall observe a cooling-off period of ten years before contesting for another legislative office.

8. Phased implementation - The limitation under section 7 shall apply prospectively, and terms completed prior to commencement of this Act shall not be counted for the purpose of calculating consecutive terms.

CHAPTER IV

Youth participation incentive

9. Political party disclosure obligation - Every recognized political party shall publish annually the age-distribution of its candidates.

10. ECI's encouragement - The Commission may issue guidelines encouraging nomination of candidates below forty-five years of age.

11. Democratic Continuity and Leadership Transition - It is hereby declared that elective public office under the Constitution is a time-bound constitutional trust reposed by the people and shall not be construed as conferring a vested or perpetual entitlement to candidature.

(1) In furtherance of democratic renewal and inter-generational representativeness, Parliament affirms that periodic leadership transition is an essential component of the basic democratic framework.

(2) Upon completion of permissible tenure, individuals may contribute through advisory councils, policy boards, or mentoring institutions as may be constituted by law.

(3) No person who has attained the age of seventy-five years on the date of nomination shall be eligible for election to any elective office.

CHAPTER V

Procedural And Miscellaneous

12. Rule-making power - The Commission shall, within six months of commencement of this Act, frame comprehensive regulations to operationalise:

- (a) standardised performance metrics;
- (b) digital submission systems;
- (c) audit mechanisms;
- (d) public accessibility framework.

13. Act to have an overriding effect.

The provisions of this Act shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent contained in any other law for the time being in force.

14. Appeals - Any person aggrieved by an order of disqualification may prefer an appeal before the High Court with its respective jurisdiction within thirty days and thereafter Supreme Court; and

(1) The concerned Court shall endeavour to dispose of such appeals within ninety days to avoid piling up.

PART IV
**AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION, BIO-CARBON AND RURAL
PROSPERITY FRAMEWORK**

CHAPTER I

Definitions

1. Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

- (a) “*agro-climatic zone*” means a geographically notified region classified on the basis of soil type, rainfall pattern, temperature and cropping systems;
- (b) “*bio-carbon*” means soil organic carbon and associated measurable regenerative ecological indicators;
- (c) “*community seed bank*” means a legally recognised village-level institution for conservation and exchange of indigenous seeds;
- (d) “*Farmer Producer Organisation*” or “*FPO*” means a collective of farmers registered under applicable law;
- (e) “*Panchayat Bio-Carbon Ledger*” means the digital registry established under section 15;

CHAPTER II

National Authority For Agricultural Innovation And Sustainability

2. Establishment of Authority - The Central Government shall, by notification, establish an Authority to be known as the National Authority for Agricultural Innovation and Sustainability (NAAIS);

(1) The Authority shall be a body having perpetual succession and a common seal with power to acquire, hold and dispose of property and to contract.

3. Composition of Authority - The Authority shall consist of

- (a) a Chairperson with experience in agricultural science or rural economics;
 - (i) the Chairperson shall be a person of eminence having not less than twenty years’ experience in agricultural science, rural economics, climate policy, soil science, public agricultural research administration, or allied fields, and having demonstrated leadership in large-scale agricultural innovation or institutional reform;
 - (ii) and shall not hold any office of profit or active position in any political party at the time of appointment, or have held any position in a political party in the preceding six years.
- (b) representatives of

- (i) agricultural scientists;
- (ii) soil microbiome experts;
- (iii) water and irrigation engineers;
- (iv) climate and sustainability experts;
- (v) State Governments;
- (vi) Farmer Producer Organisations;
- (vii) digital governance and remote sensing experts;
- (c) such other members as may be prescribed.

4. Functions of the Authority - The Authority shall:

- (a) promote decentralised agricultural research based on agro-climatic conditions;
- (b) develop climate-resilient cropping systems;
- (c) promote soil regeneration and microbiome innovation;
- (d) facilitate carbon monetisation mechanisms for farmers;
- (e) design performance-linked funding systems;
- (f) regulate and monitor implementation of this Act.

CHAPTER III

Regional agricultural research zones

5. Establishment of Zonal Research Centres - The Authority shall establish research centres in each notified agro-climatic zone.

(2) Not less than forty per cent of total research expenditure shall be allocated to such zonal centres.

6. Notification of Agro-Climatic Zones - The Central Government shall, on the recommendation of the Authority and after consultation with the concerned State Governments, notify, by publication in the Official Gazette, such agro-climatic zones as may be necessary for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The notification shall specify:

- (a) the geographical boundaries of the zone;
- (b) the dominant soil classification;
- (c) rainfall and temperature regimes;
- (d) hydrological characteristics including groundwater stress indicators;
- (e) prevailing cropping systems; and
- (f) such other ecological or agronomic parameters as may be prescribed.

(3) The Authority shall review such notification at intervals not exceeding ten years, or earlier where material climatic or ecological changes warrant.

7. Criteria for Determination of Agro-Climatic Zones - In determining agro-climatic zones under section 6, the Authority shall have regard to:

- (a) long-term meteorological data not less than thirty years in duration;
- (b) soil taxonomy and nutrient profile as classified by nationally recognised scientific bodies;
- (c) agro-ecological vulnerability including drought, flood, salinity or pest incidence;
- (d) water-use intensity and irrigation dependency;
- (e) cropping diversity and productivity trends;

CHAPTER IV

Outcome-based funding and royalty sharing

8. Performance-linked funding - Funding to zonal centres shall be linked to measurable improvements in:

- (a) net farm income per hectare;
- (b) reduction in input costs;
- (c) adoption rates among small and marginal farmers;
- (d) soil organic carbon indicators;
- (e) climate resilience indicators;

- Provided that not less than fifty per cent of such performance incentives shall be contingent upon measurable benefits accruing to small and marginal farmers.

CHAPTER V

Soil regeneration and subsidy reform

9. Rationalisation of fertilizer subsidy - Subsidy allocation shall be linked to soil-test-based nutrient balancing and measurable soil organic carbon improvement.

(1) The Central Government shall progressively redirect not less than fifteen per cent and not more than twenty per cent of annual fertilizer subsidy allocation to outcome-based Direct Benefit Transfers.

CHAPTER VI

Panchayat Bio-Carbon Ledger

10. Establishment of Digital Soil Passbook - The Central Government shall establish, in such manner as may be prescribed, a digital registry to be known as the Digital Soil Passbook for

every registered farmer under this Act

(1) The Digital Soil Passbook shall:

- (a) record soil health parameters including soil organic carbon, nutrient balance, salinity, moisture index and such other ecological indicators as may be prescribed;
- (b) record regenerative agricultural practices adopted by the farmer;
- (c) record verified carbon sequestration and biodiversity outcomes;
- (d) reflect eligibility and computation of outcome-based Direct Benefit Transfers under this Act;
- (e) enable aggregation of carbon or ecological credits at the Gram Panchayat or Farmer Producer Organisation level.

(2) The Digital Soil Passbook shall be integrated, where feasible, with existing soil health card databases and farmer identification systems notified by the Central Government.

(3) Entries in the Digital Soil Passbook, once verified through prescribed methodologies, shall constitute official records for the purposes of disbursement of Green Reward benefits under this Act, thus turning soil into an asset for farmers;

(4) The Gram Panchayat shall act as custodian of village-level soil carbon records.

11. Satellite verification - The Authority shall employ high-integrity methodologies for verification of carbon sequestration outcomes.

CHAPTER VII

Green reward Direct Benefit Transfer

12. Establishment of Green Reward Fund - The Central Government shall establish a Green Reward Fund for outcome-based direct benefit transfers to farmers;

(1) The Fund shall consist of

- (a) such percentage of restructured fertilizer subsidy allocation as notified under section 10;
- (b) proceeds from sale of carbon or ecological credits generated under this Act;
- (c) contributions from international climate finance mechanisms;
- (d) royalties arising from commercialisation of publicly funded research;
- (e) such other sums as may be appropriated by Parliament.

13. Basis of calculation of Green Reward - The Green Reward shall be calculated on the basis of measurable improvement in soil health parameters recorded in the Digital Soil Passbook.

(1) the Authority may prescribe:

- (a) a base rate per hectare for verified increase in soil organic carbon;
- (b) graded incentives for improvement beyond prescribed baseline levels;

(c) additional multipliers for indigenous seed usage, rain-fed farming or small and marginal holdings.

14. International alignment - Carbon accounting under this Act shall align with internationally recognised standards and environmental support classifications.

CHAPTER VIII

Monitoring and accountability

15. Annual report to Parliament - The Authority shall submit an annual report to Parliament detailing financial expenditure, income enhancement outcomes, soil health metrics and carbon sequestration achievements.

16. Independent impact audit - An independent national audit shall be conducted every three years.

CHAPTER IX

Miscellaneous

17. Power to make rules -The Central Government may, by notification, make rules for carrying out the provisions of this Act.

SCHEDULE I

(District Categorisation Framework – As Annexed here)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

For Part II – Affirmative Action through Universal Deprivation Points Framework:

1. Estimated Costs (3-Year Rollout: ₹2,400 Cr)

Reasoning: Benchmarked against the initial rollout of India Stack and the *National Digital Health Mission*¹². This represents a lean 0.04% of the 2026-27 Union Expenditure.

Infrastructure (₹500 Cr): Creation of the Central Deprivation Registry (CDR) and Deprivation API Stack. These act as digital bridges between Education, Income Tax (ITR), Health, and Land records.

¹² Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)* (Press Note, 23 September 2018), <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=154668&ModuleId=3®=3&lang=2> accessed 20 February 2026

Administrative/Operational (₹490 Cr/annum): This will fund the National Deprivation Verification Authority (NDVA) and 5-year regional index surveys. It replaces redundant costs currently spent on maintaining thousands of manual category-wise rosters across departments.

2. The Return on Investment Logic

The Problem: The current Social Justice budget is ₹13,687 Crore¹³, yet "creamy layer" leakages and data falsification dilute impact.

The Solution: By spending nearly 1.7% of the sector's budget on digital verification, the Bill saves the remaining 98.3%. Estimated annual savings in misallocated funds make the project self-sustaining within 18 months.

3. Funding Sources: The "Zero-Debt" Model

Central Pivot: About 70% of the fund will come from the utilisation of the 8.27% increase in education allocation and the reallocation of budgets from archaic manual certificate-issuing bodies.

Self-Sustaining Model: Implements a nominal ₹100 "Verification Fee" for Category 1 (Developed District) candidates, while remaining free for BPL and Category 3 candidates.

4. Statutory Compliance & Standards

FRBM Alignment: Funded via internal reallocation among others, will ensure that funds for this scheme remains fiscal-deficit neutral.

7th CPC Standards: Specialized workforce salaries are strictly pegged to Level 10-17 scales to ensure elite administrative integrity.

Constitutional Power: Fulfills the Article 15(4) and 16(4) mandate for scientific "creamy layer" exclusion as per the *Indra Sawhney* precedent.

Anti-Corruption: Blockchain-backed audit trails prevent "Inspector Raj" and manual bribery in certificate issuance.

For Part III – Electoral Accountability and Democratic Renewal;

1. Estimated Costs (5-Year Outlay: ₹450 Cr)

Reasoning: Minimalist outlay (0.002% of Union Expenditure) for a performance disclosure portal. Costs are benchmarked against the initial development phases of GSTN¹⁴ and MCA 21

¹³ 'Budget 2026: Marginal Hike in Allocations for Social Justice Dept, Tribal Affairs Ministry' *The Hindu* (New Delhi, 1 February 2026) <https://www.thehindu.com/business/budget/budget-2026-marginal-hike-in-allocations-for-social-justice-dept-tribal-affairs-ministry/article70579432.ece> accessed 20 February 2026

¹⁴ Central Board of Excise and Customs, *Frequently Asked Questions on GST (2017)* (CBEC, 2017) <https://www.gstindiaonline.com/pages/gstlegislation/GST%20FAQ/cbec%20faq-2017/023.htm> accessed 20 February 2026

(a program launched by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs).

Infrastructure (₹200 Cr): This will fund the National Electoral Performance Disclosure Portal, AI-assisted verification engine, and Blockchain-backed audit trails.

Administrative (₹110–₹125 Cr): Funds for the National Electoral Verification & Audit Cell (NEVAC) with 150 Verification Officers at 7th Central Pay Commission Level 10-12.

Operational Spend: Annual recurring cost of ₹25-30 Crore ensures real-time data encryption and public transparency dashboards without creating pension liabilities.

2. Funding Sources & Fiscal Federalism

Central Budget: This will be funded through phased set-up of ECI's digital modernisation head.

State Model: Follows a 60:40 Centre-State model for legislative attendance digitisation, costing states a minor one-time sum.

3. Statutory Compliance & Standards

FRBM Alignment: The financial implication for this particular part is fiscally negligible at the macro level and requires no additional borrowing or new taxation.

Constitutional Power: This also aligns with Article 324 of the Indian Constitution to ensure the ECI has the technical tools to maintain democratic transparency.

For Part IV – Agricultural Innovation, Bio-Carbon and Rural Prosperity Framework;

1. Estimated Costs (5-Year Capital Outlay: ₹12,000 Cr)

Reasoning: The Bill mandates a capital investment treated as National Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI). The ₹7,500 Cr budget for Tech-Stack is benchmarked against the *Digital Agriculture Mission (2021)*¹⁵, accounting for high-integrity Satellite MRV and Blockchain nodes.

Administrative Establishment (₹1,500 Cr): Personnel costs under this part strictly follow 7th CPC scales. Leadership is pegged at Level 17 (Apex Scale - ₹2,25,000), ensuring administrative parity with top-tier statutory bodies such as Securities and Exchange Board of India or Telecom Regulatory Authority of India.

Operational & Audit Reserves (₹3,000 Cr): This will fund Zonal Research Hubs and mandatory 3rd-party "Outcome Audits" to prevent data fraud and ensure scientific validity.

¹⁵ Press Information Bureau, Government of India, *PM-JAY Achieves Major Milestone in Providing Health Coverage* (Press Release, 2 September 2024) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=2050966> accessed 20 February 2026

2. Funding Sources

Subsidy Rationalisation: The Bill requires zero additional taxpayer funds by utilising a strategic reallocation mechanism (Section 9).

The Green Reward Fund (GRF): By redirecting 15% to 20% of the annual Fertilizer Subsidy, the Bill creates a fund of ₹25,000–₹32,000 Cr. This shifts capital from a "depleting chemical liability" to a "regenerative carbon asset."

3. Budget Bifurcation: Union to Panchayat

Union Level (15%): This will be reserved for Satellite MRV maintenance and ensuring Article 6 (Paris Agreement) international trade compliance for carbon credits.

Zonal/State Level (25%): This will fund regional R&D under a 60:40 Centre-State sharing ratio, upholding the principles of Fiscal Federalism.

Panchayat Level (60%): Direct-to-farmer payouts will be done via Aadhaar-linked DBT, thus making the Gram Panchayat the sovereign engine of rural wealth creation.

4. Statutory Compliance & Standards

FRBM Act Alignment: By reallocating existing subsidies within the Ministry envelope, the Bill does not increase the Fiscal Deficit, meeting all targets of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act.

Constitutional Legality: Complies with Article 282 (Discretionary Grants) and Entry 20 of List III (Economic Planning).

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL COMPATIBILITY

The INDIA Reform Bill has been carefully structured to operate within the constitutional architecture of the Republic of India. The affirmative action reform component derives legitimacy from Articles 14, 15(4), and 16(4) of the Constitution. Article 14 guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws¹⁶, which jurisprudentially permits reasonable classification when founded on intelligible differentia and rational nexus. Articles 15(4) and 16(4) empower the State to make special provisions for socially and educationally backward classes.¹⁷ The proposed Deprivation Points Framework does not dilute these constitutional guarantees; rather, it recalibrates their operationalisation by replacing rigid seat-block reservations in specified domains with a scientifically structured, data-driven merit-integrated system. Since special provisions remain intact in substance, only the method of allocation is modernised, no constitutional amendment is required for the deprivation point reform.

¹⁶ Constitution of India 1950, art 14

¹⁷ Constitution of India 1950, art 15(4), 16(4)

The provisions for electoral accountability are grounded in Articles 84 and 173, which empower Parliament to prescribe additional qualifications for membership of the Parliament and State Legislatures.¹⁸ The requirement of a Performance Disclosure Report functions not as a disqualification but as an eligibility-linked transparency obligation. It is analogous to existing affidavit requirements under electoral law. Article 324, which vests the Election Commission of India with superintendence and control over elections¹⁹, provides the constitutional foundation for institutionalising this provision of digital disclosure systems.

The framework for agricultural reform engages both State and Concurrent List entries. Entry 14 (Agriculture)²⁰ and Entry 18 (Land)²¹ of the State List are respected through mandatory State consultation in agro-climatic zone notification. And, Entry 33 of the Concurrent List (trade and commerce in agricultural products)²² and Entry 20 (economic and social planning)²³ provide backing for national-level coordination, subsidy rationalisation, and carbon accounting mechanisms.

The only provision that may require constitutional alignment is the provision limitation on tenure. While Parliament may prescribe qualifications and conditions, certain tenure limitations could necessitate harmonisation through constitutional amendment to avoid interpretive conflict. The Bill therefore anticipates alignment where necessary but does not structurally depend on constitutional overhaul.

Therefore, the proposal operates within existing constitutional space, modernising implementation without disturbing foundational principles.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The deprivation point model proposed in this Bill is not an abstract theoretical innovation; it builds upon domestic institutional experience. An esteemed Indian university, Jawaharlal Nehru University, has historically implemented deprivation-based point systems to account for

¹⁸ Constitution of India 1950, art 84, 173

¹⁹ Constitution of India 1950, art 324

²⁰ Constitution of India 1950, sch VII list II entry 14

²¹ Constitution of India 1950, sch VII list II entry 18

²² Constitution of India 1950, sch VII list III entry 33

²³ Constitution of India 1950, sch VII list III entry 20

regional and socio-economic disadvantage within a unified merit list.²⁴ These precedents demonstrate administrative feasibility and social acceptance within competitive academic environments. The present Bill expands that logic nationally while incorporating stricter digital verification and clearly defined caps to preserve merit integrity.

In the domain of electoral reform, comparative international practice provides instructive parallels. Presidential systems such as that of the United States constitutionally limit executive tenure to two terms, preventing concentration of power and institutional stagnation.²⁵ While India operates under a parliamentary framework, the principle of leadership rotation and anti-entrenchment remains normatively relevant. The Bill adapts the spirit of term limitation to the Indian constitutional context while embedding performance disclosure within the nomination process. Mexico similarly enforces strict non-re-election rules for certain offices to ensure political turnover.²⁶ In several European democracies, including the United Kingdom, detailed parliamentary attendance and voting records are publicly accessible, enabling voters to evaluate legislative performance.²⁷ These examples demonstrate that tenure limitation and performance transparency are compatible with stability.

For the agricultural reform part, it is important to note that the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy increasingly links farm subsidies to environmental performance under "eco-schemes," rewarding sustainable practices.²⁸ Other States, including Australia and parts of the United States have piloted soil carbon credit systems that compensate farmers for verified sequestration outcomes. These demonstrate the viability of outcome-based ecological incentives.

States such as Andhra Pradesh have promoted natural farming models focused on reducing chemical input dependency. Also, the Soil Health Card Scheme, implemented nationally, already collects soil data but does not directly link it to monetized incentives.²⁹ The proposed

²⁴ Jawaharlal Nehru University, *Admission Policy 2024–25* (JNU 2024) <https://www.jnu.ac.in/sites/default/files/admission/AdmissionPolicy2024-25.pdf> accessed 18 February 2026

²⁵ US Constitution, amend XXII

²⁶ Political Constitution of the United Mexican States 1917, arts 59, 83

²⁷ UK Parliament, *MPs' Voting Records and Attendance Data* <https://members.parliament.uk> accessed 19 February 2026

²⁸ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans under the Common Agricultural Policy [2021] OJ L435/1

²⁹ Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, *Soil Health Card Scheme Guidelines* (Government of India 2023)

Digital Soil Passbook advances this model by tying ecological metrics to direct financial rewards. Plus, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mirrors our proposed idea of the Green Reward Fund.

CONCLUSION

India's institutional architecture must evolve to meet twenty-first century realities. This Bill positions India not merely to correct past distortions, but to lead in designing a future-ready democracy and development model.

Rigid quotas must give way to calibrated merit-integrated equity.

Blind electoral re-nomination must give way to performance accountability.

Input-heavy subsidies must give way to soil-capital investment.

The INDIA Reform Bill is not a dismantling of welfare or democracy; instead it is their modernisation and strengthening of welfare and democracy as the needs will reach all the needy.

It is necessary because structural inefficiencies now threaten social cohesion, fiscal prudence, and ecological stability.

It is feasible because it reallocates rather than withdraws state support.

It is timely because demographic change, climate pressure, and global trade shifts demand systemic reform.

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