

Revision of Electoral Rolls in J&K

Why in news?

The J&K Chief Electoral Officer announced that anyone who is living ordinarily in J&K can avail the opportunity to get enlisted as a voter in the Union Territory.

Why are electoral rolls being revised?

- The ECI is working on fresh electoral rolls in J&K after the J&K Delimitation Commission carved out 7 new Assembly constituencies in the UT under **Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019**.
- Jammu now has 43 seats against 47 in Kashmir.
- After the abrogation of **Article 370**, the Representation of the People Act 1950 and 1951 is applicable in J&K.
- It allows ordinarily residing persons to get registered in the electoral rolls of J&K, provided he/she gets their name deleted from the electoral roll of his/her native constituency.
- **Eligible voters**
 - The non-locals including employees, students, labourers or anyone living in the state.
 - The armed forces personnel from other states who are posted at peace stations in J&K can also get their names added in the voter list.
- The requirement of domicile is not necessary for outsiders to get enlisted as voters.



How were the J&K electoral rolls revised prior to 2019?

- Prior to August 5, 2019 when J&K had special constitutional powers, the Assembly electoral rolls in the State were drawn up according to the Jammu & Kashmir Representation of the People Act 1957.
- As per the act, **only permanent residents of J&K** were eligible to get registered in the Assembly rolls.
- To get voting rights, Permanent Resident Certificate and domicile certificates had to be shown.
- Several residents from west Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, who had migrated to J&K and were living there had no voting rights in Assembly elections till August 5, 2019 but were able to vote in the parliamentary elections.

Why has the ECI announcement caused an uproar?

- **Non-local voter issue**- J&K's main regional parties have expressed concerns that the move will open the floodgates and turn locals into an electoral minority.

- **Rigged election-** The move was compared with the 1987 rigged elections in J&K, which resulted in mass militancy in Kashmir in 1990s.

References

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/explained-what-is-the-controversy-around-the-revision-of-electoral-rolls-in-jk/article65790630.ece>
2. <https://www.pratidintime.com/top-stories/non-locals-residing-in-jk-can-now-vote-in-assembly-polls>

