

Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0

Mains: GS - II - Polity & Governance | Elections & Salient features of the Representation of People's Act

Why in news?

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has initiated the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0 across 12 States and Union Territories (UT). While the exercise is significant, caution is essential as it may inadvertently exclude eligible voters.

What is Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2.0?

- **SIR** - It is a comprehensive, **house-to-house verification process** of electoral rolls conducted by ECI.
- **SIR 2.0** - It will take place in **12 states & UT**-
 - Includes Andaman and Nicobar, Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.
- **Aim** - To ensure that all eligible citizens are included in the electoral roll.
- **Verified by** - Booth Level Officers.
- **SIR 1.0** - Was concluded in Bihar.
- **No SIR for Assam** - Because of its unique situation with the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and ongoing citizenship-related scrutiny, it will be notified later.

Legal basis

- **Article 324** - *Of the Constitution is a fundamental provision that establishes the Election Commission of India (ECI) and vests it with the plenary powers required to ensure free and fair elections.*
- **Section 21** - Of The Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950 deals with the critical process of Preparation and Revision of Electoral Rolls. This Section essentially lays down the legal framework and procedure for maintaining the voters' list for every constituency.
- **The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960** - Are statutory rules framed by the Central Government under Section 28 of the RPA 1950. They provide the detailed procedure and forms for the preparation, revision, and correction of the Electoral Rolls for Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies in India.

What are the key features and provisions of SIR 2.0?

- **Process of SIR 2.0** -
 - House to house enumeration phase - where Booth Level Officers (BLOs) visit each household and give out forms.
 - Publication of draft electoral roll
 - Claims and objection period
 - Notice phase (hearing and verification)
 - Publication of final electoral roll.
- **Appeal Process for Deletion** - If a voter's name is deleted, they can
 - **First appeal** to the District Magistrate (DM).
 - **Second appeal** to the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) if not satisfied with DM's decision.
- **Required documents for SIR** - 12 documents -
 - Any identity cards, Pension payment order issued to regular employee/pensioner of any central government/State govt/PSU.
 - Any identity cards/ certificate/documents issued by Indian govt./ Banks/local authorities/PCU
 - Birth certificate issued by competent authority
 - Passport
 - Matriculation/Educational certificate issued by recognised Boards/Universities
 - Permanent resident certificate issued by State authority
 - Forest Rights Certificate

- OBC/ST/SC or any caste certificate
- National Register of Citizens (wherever it exists) 10. Family register prepared by State/Local authorities
- Any land/house allotment certificate by Govt.
- Aadhaar (included as per the Supreme Court's order)

No document is required during the enumeration process.

To Know about Various Electoral Forms & SIR, click [here](#)

What are the issues that associated with SIR 2.0?

- **Fear of disenfranchisement** - It is the documentation-heavy voter re-verification process, has raised fears of large-scale disenfranchisement and fears of stealthily instituting a citizenship screening mechanism.
- **Flaws in revised rolls** - Including a sharp decline in the adult-electors ratio, disproportionate deletions of women and Muslim voters, and duplicate names and bogus entries.
- **Concerns Over Procedural Fairness** - The current SIR lacks robust checks and balances, making it vulnerable to external interference.
- **Institutional Concerns** - The ECI's role in Bihar's voter revision has raised doubts about its fairness and credibility.
 - Instead of ensuring accurate and inclusive voter lists, it seems more focused on protecting its authority and avoiding scrutiny.
- **Judicial Oversight** - Although the SC monitored the process, it did ***not address the key legal issue*** — whether the EC has the legal power and rules to carry out such an exercise.
 - This could allow a flawed system that unfairly affects minorities and vulnerable groups to become permanent.
- **Issue of internal migrants** - Internal migrants, ***especially in Tamil Nadu***, face challenges in securing voting rights due to rigid residency norms.
 - **Section 19 of the RPA, 1950** - requires that a person is 'ordinarily resident' in a constituency for inclusion in its electoral roll & **Section 20** provides the meaning of the term 'ordinarily resident'.

What need to be done to address the shortcomings of SIR 2.0?

- **Need for Social Audit** - The current SIR lacks rules, oversight, scrutiny, and audit mechanisms highlighted the urgent need for mandatory social audits in consultation with civil society and political parties.

*A **social audit** is a public review where people examine official records and share testimonies to confirm or question the information - When done at the **panchayat, ward, or booth level**, it becomes the most effective way to revise electoral rolls.*

- The Constitution under ***Article 243A & 243J*** empowers such monitoring and

audit.

- **Precedent for Social Audits** - In 2003, under Chief ECI J.M. Lyngdoh - the decentralized social audits were conducted in gram sabhas/ward sabhas.
- **Reform for ease of migrants** - Broaden the definition of “ordinary residence” to reflect modern mobility and introduce portable voter registration mechanisms and simplified documentation for migrants.
- **Define clear legal guidelines** - Enact clear rules under the RPA, 1950 to define the scope, powers, and procedures of SIR and ensure parliamentary oversight and public consultation in rule formulation.
- **Independent Scrutiny & Appeals** - Establish third-party audits and public disclosure of deletion/inclusion decisions and strengthen the appeal process with time-bound redressal and multilingual support.

References

1. [The Hindu | Need for a social audit for SIR 2.0](#)
2. [The Hindu | SIR 2.0: All about enumeration form, draft roll, etc.](#)

