

Election Commission of India and Electoral Rolls

The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** has been undertaking extensive **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls** in 2026. The exercise has renewed attention on the importance of accurate, inclusive and updated voter lists in ensuring **free and fair elections**.

The ECI considers the preparation, maintenance and purification of electoral rolls a core responsibility linked to **Article 324 of the Constitution**, the **Representation of the People Act, 1950**, and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.

What is an Electoral Roll?

An **electoral roll** is the official list of eligible voters registered in a particular constituency.

A person generally needs to:

- Be an **Indian citizen**
- Have attained **18 years of age**
- Be ordinarily resident in the relevant constituency
- Not be legally disqualified from registration

The ECI currently recognises **four qualifying dates** — **1 January, 1 April, 1 July and 1 October** — for determining eligibility based on age.

An eligible citizen can apply for registration through **Form 6**.

Constitutional and Legal Framework

Article 324

Article 324 provides for the establishment of the **Election Commission of India** and vests it with the superintendence, direction and control of elections and related electoral processes.

Representation of the People Act, 1950

The Act provides the statutory framework for:

- Preparation of electoral rolls
- Allocation of seats and constituencies
- Qualifications for registration
- Inclusion, correction and deletion of electoral-roll entries

Section 21 deals with the **preparation and revision of electoral rolls**.

Registration of Electors Rules, 1960

These rules provide the procedural framework for electoral-roll preparation and revision.

Types of Electoral Roll Revision

1. Summary Revision

In a **Summary Revision**, the existing electoral roll is published in draft form. Citizens and stakeholders are given an opportunity to submit **claims and objections**, after which the final roll is published.

2. Intensive Revision

An **Intensive Revision** involves a more detailed, house-to-house verification process, generally through enumerators or Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

3. Special Revision

The ECI can order a **Special Revision** when circumstances warrant a more intensive examination of the electoral roll.

4. Continuous Updation

Electoral rolls are also updated continuously to incorporate eligible new voters and make corrections or deletions, subject to the applicable legal and election-period restrictions.

Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

Special Intensive Revision is a detailed exercise aimed at verifying electoral-roll entries and identifying cases requiring inclusion, correction or deletion.

The process can involve:

- Door-to-door enumeration
- Verification of elector details
- Identification of shifted or deceased electors
- Detection of duplicate entries
- Inclusion of eligible citizens
- Claims and objections
- Publication of draft and final electoral rolls

The key objective is to ensure that **eligible citizens are included while inaccurate or ineligible entries are addressed through due process.**

Forms You Should Know

Form

Form 6

Form 6A

Form 7

Form 8

Purpose

New voter registration

Registration of overseas/NRI elector

Objection to inclusion / deletion

Correction, shifting of residence and other
updatation of existing electoral-roll entries

The ECI provides these services through its voter-services platforms.

Why Are Accurate Electoral Rolls Important?

1. Free and Fair Elections

An accurate voter list is fundamental to ensuring that eligible citizens can exercise their **right to vote.**

2. Preventing Electoral Irregularities

Regular revision can help identify:

- Duplicate registrations
- Deceased electors
- Permanently shifted electors
- Incorrect entries

3. Electoral Inclusion

Revision should also ensure that **newly eligible voters, migrants and other eligible citizens are not excluded**.

4. Public Confidence

Transparent procedures for addition, deletion and correction strengthen trust in the electoral process. The ECI emphasises opportunities for claims, objections and verification as part of this framework.

Challenges

Electoral-roll revision must balance two equally important objectives:

Electoral integrity + universal inclusion

Potential challenges include:

- Incorrect deletion of eligible voters
- Difficulties faced by migrants and vulnerable groups
- Documentation and verification issues
- Errors in digitisation
- Lack of awareness
- Ensuring transparency and due process

Therefore, **verification mechanisms, public disclosure, claims and objections and effective grievance redressal** are crucial.

UPSC Relevance

Prelims

Remember:

- **Article 324:** Election Commission of India
- **RPA 1950:** Electoral-roll framework

- **Form 6:** New voter
- **Form 6A:** Overseas elector
- **Form 7:** Objection/deletion
- **Form 8:** Correction/updation
- **BLO:** Booth Level Officer
- **SIR:** Special Intensive Revision

Mains

GS Paper II:

- Election Commission
- Electoral reforms
- Representation and democracy
- Free and fair elections
- Constitutional and statutory institutions

Essay:

Electoral integrity, democratic participation and inclusive democracy.

Possible UPSC Mains Question

“Accurate and inclusive electoral rolls are the foundation of free and fair elections. Discuss the role of the Election Commission of India in maintaining electoral rolls and the challenges involved.”

Conclusion

The **Election Commission and electoral rolls** are central to India’s democratic system. Electoral-roll revision is necessary to maintain accuracy and prevent irregularities, but it must simultaneously protect the inclusion of every eligible voter.

For UPSC aspirants, the issue should be studied through the interconnected themes of **Article 324, electoral reforms, Representation of the People Act, ECI independence, democratic participation and the principle of free and fair**

elections.

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