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Importance of Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Rolls in Indian Society.

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Abstract:

Addressing Technological & Policy Upgrades: SIR supports digital integration of electoral rolls and facilitates policy reforms like remote voting for migrants to enhance accessibility and efficiency. A comprehensive, house-to-house verification process to update electoral rolls afresh, ensuring accuracy and citizenship validation. Legally enabled under Section 21(3) of the [Representation of the People Act](#), 1950, and governed by [Article 324\(1\)](#) of the Constitution. It will help to weed out ineligible or duplicate voters, including illegal immigrants and ensure only genuine Indian citizens above 18 years are on the rolls. It is very needed for Massive additions and deletions over 20 years and Urbanization and migration have led to multiple registrations by individuals as well as Concerns about illegal immigrants and [demographic manipulation](#) in border states like Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Nagaland .

Keywords: Special Intensive Revision, Electoral Rolls, Indian Society.

Introduction:

SIR supports digital integration of electoral rolls and facilitates policy reforms like remote voting for migrants to enhance accessibility and efficiency. It is very needed for Massive additions and deletions over 20 years and urbanization and migration have led to multiple registrations by individuals as well as Concerns about illegal immigrants and [demographic manipulation](#) in border states like Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Tripura, Nagaland. A comprehensive, house-to-house verification process to update electoral rolls afresh, ensuring accuracy and citizenship validation. Legally enabled under Section 21(3) of the [Representation of the People Act](#), 1950, and governed by [Article 324\(1\)](#) of the Constitution. It will help to weed out ineligible or duplicate voters, including illegal immigrants and ensure only genuine Indian citizens above 18 years are on the rolls. it will help digitile conservation for only Indian citizenship.

Importance Meaning:

Importance-

/ɪm'pɔ:t(ə)ns/

noun

1.the state or fact of being of great significance or value: "the importance of a good education"

Importance is a [property](#) of entities that matter or make a difference. For example, [World War II](#) was an important event and [Albert Einstein](#) was an important person because of how they affected the world. Wikipedia

SIR (Special Intensive Revision) meaning-

SIR refers to a large-scale, intensive revision of electoral rolls by the Election Commission of India under its constitutional and statutory powers. Usually triggered in anticipation of high-stakes elections or when the rolls have remained largely unchanged for years, the SIR involves steps such as fresh enumeration forms, house-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), document verification of voters, deletion of ineligible

entries, and inclusion of those omitted. The SIR 2025 in Bihar, where more than 8 crore voters were to be re-verified, is the latest example. Key facts:

Electoral Rolls meaning-

An electoral roll (variously called an electoral register, voters roll, voters list, poll book or other description) is a compilation that lists persons who are entitled to vote for particular elections in a particular jurisdiction. The list is usually broken down by [electoral districts](#), and is primarily prepared to assist election officials at [polling places](#). Most jurisdictions maintain permanent electoral rolls, which are updated continuously or periodically (such as France which updates them annually), while some jurisdictions compile new electoral rolls before each election. Electoral rolls are the result of a process of [voter registration](#). In most jurisdictions, voter registration (and being listed on an electoral roll) is a prerequisite for voting at an election.

Indian meaning-

Indian people or Indians are the citizens and nationals of the Republic of India or people who trace their ancestry to India. While the demonym "Indian" applies to people originating from the present-day India, it was also used as the identifying term for people originating from what is now Bangladesh and Pakistan prior to the Partition of India in 1947. The term "Indian" does not refer to a single... [Wikipedia](#)

Society meaning-

A society ([/sə'saɪəti/](#)) is a group of [individuals](#) involved in persistent social interaction or a large [social group](#) sharing the same spatial or social [territory](#), typically subject to the same [political](#) authority and dominant cultural expectations. Societies are characterized by patterns of relationships ([social relations](#)) between individuals who share a distinctive [culture](#) and [institutions](#); a given society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its constituent members.

Indian Society meaning-

Indian society is a diverse and complex mixture of different religions, cultures, and ethnic groups. What is a 'Society'? 'Society' refers to a group of people who live in a particular country or region and share a common culture, religion, language, or set of values.

History:

History of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in India: From Independence to Present.

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls represents a significant chapter in India's electoral history, spanning over seven decades of democratic evolution. From the foundational years following independence to the controversial 2025 Bihar implementation, the history of SIR reflects India's ongoing struggle to balance electoral integrity with democratic inclusivity. The concept of intensive electoral revision has evolved dramatically since India's first general elections, adapting to changing demographic realities, technological advances, and shifting political landscapes. This historical analysis traces the development of SIR from its early implementations through its modern iterations, examining how this electoral tool has been shaped by India's democratic maturation process.

Early Foundations: Post-Independence Electoral Setup (1950-1960)

India's electoral history began with the monumental task of creating voter lists for a newly independent nation with limited infrastructure, widespread illiteracy, and diverse linguistic and cultural contexts. The first comprehensive electoral exercise faced unprecedented challenges: registering over 173 million eligible voters across a vast territory with limited communication networks and administrative capacity. The early electoral rolls were compiled through house-to-house enumeration, establishing the precedent for intensive verification processes that would later characterize SIR implementations.

Early Intensive Revisions (1952-1956)

Previous Electoral Roll Revision: SIRs were conducted in 1952–56, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1966, 1983–84, 1987–89, 1992, 1993, 1995, 2002, 2003, and 2004 in various parts of the country. The earliest SIR implementations between 1952-1956 were driven by the practical necessity of creating reliable voter databases for India's nascent democracy.

Subsequent Early Revisions (1957-1966):

The SIR implementations of 1957, 1961, 1965, and 1966 reflected the Election Commission's growing understanding of electoral administration complexities. These revisions addressed issues identified in earlier implementations while accommodating India's rapidly changing demographic and political landscape.

The Transformative Decades: 1980s-1990s Evolution

Major Revisions of the 1980s (1983-84, 1987-89):

The intensive revisions of 1983-84 and 1987-89 marked a significant evolution in SIR methodology and scope. These implementations coincided with broader administrative modernization efforts and reflected increased sophistication in electoral management practices. The 1983-84 revision was particularly significant as it occurred during a period of substantial political change and growing recognition of electoral integrity challenges. This revision introduced improved verification procedures and more systematic approaches to handling disputed cases and appeals. The 1987-89 intensive revision represented one of the most comprehensive electoral exercises undertaken since independence. This multi-year process addressed accumulated discrepancies in electoral rolls while implementing enhanced quality control measures and standardized procedures across different states.

The Revolutionary 1990s: EPIC Introduction and Intensive Revisions:

The 1990s marked a watershed period in Indian electoral history, with intensive revisions playing a crucial role in introducing transformative electoral reforms. Role of EPIC – In 1993 and 1995, intensive revisions helped introduce Elector's Photo Identity Cards (EPIC), although that wasn't their main purpose.

The 1992 Intensive Revision:

The 1992 intensive revision served as a precursor to the major electoral reforms of the mid-1990s. This revision identified significant problems with existing electoral rolls and provided momentum for more comprehensive reform initiatives, including the introduction of photo identity cards for voters.

The Historic 1993 Revision and EPIC Introduction:

The 1993 intensive revision became historically significant as it coincided with the introduction of Elector's Photo Identity Cards (EPIC). It was first introduced in 1993 during the tenure of the Chief Election Commissioner T. N. Seshan, marking a revolutionary change in Indian electoral administration. The 1993 revision process facilitated the collection of photographs and biometric information necessary for EPIC production. While the primary purpose remained electoral roll accuracy, the integration of photo identity card creation made this revision particularly comprehensive and technologically advanced for its time.

The 1995 Consolidation Revision

The 1995 intensive revision served to consolidate the innovations introduced in 1993 and address implementation challenges identified during the EPIC rollout. This revision refined procedures for photo identity card distribution and improved systems for maintaining updated electoral rolls with photographic verification.

The New Millennium: Selective and Strategic Implementations (2000-2010):

The 2002-2004 Intensive Revision Cycle:

The early 2000s witnessed a series of intensive revisions (2002, 2003, and 2004) that addressed accumulated challenges from the previous decade while incorporating technological advances in electoral administration. These revisions reflected the Election Commission's continued commitment to periodic comprehensive verification despite the general shift toward summary revisions.

The 2002 Revision: Technology Integration:

The 2002 intensive revision marked the beginning of significant technology integration in electoral roll management. This revision utilized improved database management systems, better coordination between different administrative levels, and enhanced quality control procedures.

The 2003 Comprehensive Revision

The 2003 intensive revision was particularly extensive, covering multiple states and addressing significant discrepancies that had accumulated despite improved routine maintenance procedures. This is the first such intense revision in Bihar since 2003, indicating that the 2003 revision included comprehensive coverage of Bihar's electoral rolls. The 2003 revision established new benchmarks for intensive revision methodology, incorporating advanced database management, improved inter-state coordination for handling migrant populations, and enhanced quality assurance procedures. These innovations would later influence the design of contemporary SIR implementations.

The 2004 Consolidation

The 2004 intensive revision served primarily as a consolidation exercise, addressing issues identified during the 2002-2003 implementations and ensuring that improvements were systematically applied across all covered areas. This revision refined procedures that would become standard in later intensive revision implementations.

The Contemporary Era: Revival and Controversy (2020-Present)

Context for SIR Revival:

The Election Commission's assessment that existing electoral rolls contained significant discrepancies due to demographic changes and migration patterns provided the primary justification for returning to intensive revision methodology after a lengthy hiatus.

The 2025 Bihar Implementation: A New Chapter:

The 2025 Bihar SIR represents a significant departure from historical intensive revision patterns in several important ways. According to the notification, this is the first intensive revision of the Bihar in over two decades, making it a particularly significant implementation. The exercise commenced on 25 June 2025 with the distribution of enumeration forms to all the 8 crore voters in the electoral roll of Bihar.

Methodology:

To write this paper, mainly secondary data have been used from textbooks, reference books, websites etc.

Objectives:

Special Intensive Revision Objectives-

The major objectives of conducting a Special Intensive Revision are:

- 1. Accuracy:** To update and correct the electoral roll so that duplicate names, deceased voters, and ineligible persons are removed.
- 2. Inclusion:** To ensure that all eligible citizens, including first-time voters, migrants, and those omitted earlier, are included in the voter list.
- 3. Legitimacy:** To strengthen public trust in elections by cleansing rolls and thereby reinforcing the “one person, one vote” principle.
- 4. Demographic adjustment:** With increasing migration (rural→urban), changing residencies, newly eligible voters (18+), SIR helps the roll reflect ground realities.
- 5. Pre-election readiness:** Especially before major Assembly or Lok Sabha elections, a clean roll reduces litigations and helps smooth polling operations.

The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is a strategic exercise by the Election Commission of India (ECI) aimed at thoroughly updating, verifying and correcting the voter lists across India. While routine roll updates happen annually, SIR is a far more comprehensive, time-bound house-to-house verification drive, often preceding major elections. Its goal is to ensure that the electoral roll is accurate, inclusive and free from errors such as duplicates, deceased voters, or ineligible entries.

Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

SIR refers to a large-scale, intensive revision of electoral rolls by the Election Commission of India under its constitutional and statutory powers. Usually triggered in anticipation of high-stakes elections or when the rolls have remained largely unchanged for years, the SIR involves steps such as fresh enumeration forms, house-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), document verification of voters, deletion of ineligible entries, and inclusion of those omitted. The SIR 2025 in Bihar, where more than 8 crore voters were to be re-verified, is the latest example. Key facts:

- The legal basis lies in Article 324 of the Constitution (superintendence, direction and control of elections) and Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, which allows the Commission to carry out “special revision of the electoral roll.”
- The objective is to include every eligible citizen (18+ years) and to remove duplicates, deceased persons, ineligible entries and correct errors like wrong names or addresses.
- It is not simply a summary revision but combines features of a full enumeration (intensive revision) and summary updates, hence the nomenclature “Special Intensive”.

Special Intensive Revision Significance

The SIR exercise offers multiple benefits for democracy and electoral integrity:

- Reduces ghost voters and multiple registrations: By removing duplicate entries, the fairness of elections improves.
- Reflects demographic changes: Large-scale migration, new elector entrants, and urbanization distort old rolls; SIR addresses this.
- Improves inclusion of marginalised groups: Young voters, internal migrants, disabled voters get properly registered.
- Strengthens transparency and trust: When voters feel the list is updated and inclusive, public confidence in the system increases.
- Facilitates efficient polling logistics: Clean rolls help better planning: fewer spoiled ballots, accurate polling station allocation (as seen in Jaipur creation of new booths).

Special Intensive Revision Legal Framework

The legal and constitutional basis for SIR is critical for understanding its authority and challenges:

- Article 324 (1): Grants the ECI superintendence, direction and control of elections to Parliament and State Legislatures.
- Article 326: Guarantees adult suffrage to all citizens aged 18+ for elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.
- Representation of the People Act, 1950, Section 16 and 19: Sets out criteria for voter eligibility (citizen, 18+, ordinary resident). Section 21(3) empowers the ECI to order special roll revision.
- Registration of Electors Rules, 1960: Specifies procedures for enrolment, revision, etc. Some legal commentators note that the term “Special Intensive Revision” itself is not explicitly present in the Rulebook, raising questions of nomenclature and procedural clarity.

Special Intensive Revision Process

The SIR process involves several distinct phases and features which differentiate it from routine roll updates.

- ✓ Notification & Planning: The ECI issues notification specifying qualifying date (e.g., July 1, 2025 in Bihar).
- ✓ House-to-House Enumeration: BLOs visit every house in assigned polling booth area and distribute pre-filled “Enumeration Forms” to existing electors and new eligible persons.
- ✓ Submission of Documents: For voters enrolled after a certain past date (e.g., Jan 2003 in Bihar SIR) proof of date/place of birth and parentage is required. This is stricter than earlier frameworks.
- ✓ Verification & Deletions/ Additions: EROs scrutinise the submissions, identify deaths, duplicates, migration, ineligible voters and remove them; simultaneously new inclusions are processed. For example in Jaipur, 741 new polling booths were to be created under SIR to accommodate changes.
- ✓ Draft Publication & Objections: A draft roll is published, objections entertained, grievance redressal mechanism applied. The Supreme Court directed ECI to publish details of deleted names in the Bihar SIR litigation.
- ✓ Final Roll & Freeze: The final roll is constituted and frozen for ensuing election. Additions/deletions after that are restricted to special cases.

Special Intensive Revision Features

The key features of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) has been listed below:

- ✓ Focus on every household rather than selective updates.
- ✓ Time-bound completion preceding major elections.
- ✓ Special emphasis on migrants, youth, and excluded electorates.
- ✓ Integration of digital tools, SMS alerts, online enumeration portals.
- ✓ Stronger document verification for entries added post last intensive revision.

Role of Citizens and Political Stakeholders

- The success of the electoral revision process depends not only on the ECI but also on citizens' active participation. Voters should:
 - Verify their names and details in the published draft rolls.
 - Use the correct electoral form to update their information or file claims.
 - Ensure that supporting documents, such as Aadhaar, passport, or voter ID, are properly attached to avoid rejections.
- Political parties and civil society organisations play a crucial role in mobilising awareness, especially among marginalised communities, first-time voters, and migrant populations. Their involvement ensures inclusivity in the democratic process.

Bihar SIR 2025

The SIR exercise launched in Bihar in mid-2025 offers concrete insights and lessons. This case underlines both the scale and complexity of SIR. It also highlights the balancing act between thoroughness of revision and inclusivity of electoral participation.

- The ECI notified SIR with the qualifying date 1 July 2025, marking all citizens turning 18 by 1 October 2025 as eligible for inclusion.
- More than 8 crore voters were subject to enumeration; BLOs and 4 lakh volunteers were mobilised.
- The process required voters registered after Jan 2003 to provide proof of their name, birth date and parent's details. This was stricter than past editions of intensive revision.
- The Supreme Court directed the ECI to publish details of deletions and make it widely known via websites and media.
- Civil society organisations like Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) flagged deviations from 2003 norms and alleged risk of large-scale exclusion.
- As part of booth rationalisation, districts such as Jaipur created hundreds of new polling stations under SIR to avoid over-crowding.

Way Forward.

Given the importance and complexity of SIR, a set of reforms can help strengthen its outcomes:

- Define clear legal guidelines: While Section 21(3) of RP Act provides power, transparent guidelines on document requirements, timeline and inclusion criteria can reduce disputes and litigations.
- Ensure minimal documentation barrier: Maintain presumption of validity for earlier registered voters; avoid blanket demands of new proof unless probable cause exists.
- Use technology to streamline the process: Mobile apps for enumeration, GIS mapping of premises, online grievance portals for exclusion/delayed enrolment can enhance efficiency and reduce errors.
- Inclusion focus: Special camps for migrants, disabled, first-time voters; mass awareness campaigns in multiple languages; mobile verification vehicles in remote areas.
- Stakeholder consultation: Political parties, civil society organisations, tribal and migrant groups must be consulted to detect potential exclusion and build confidence in the exercise.
- Real-time monitoring & public disclosure: Publishing lists of deleted/included names, reasons for deletion, leveraging transparency to reduce fear of disenfranchisement.
- Post-roll audit & feedback mechanism: Conduct sample audits after the roll is finalised to verify inclusion of marginalised groups, and correct omissions before polling.
- Synchronise with delimitation and polling station rationalisation: Changes in constituency boundaries, migration flows, and new polling station creation (as seen in Jaipur) must be integrated into SIR design.

SIR Election Commission

The Election Commission of India (ECI) plays a central role in planning and executing the Special Intensive Revision (SIR). It issues formal notifications specifying the schedule, qualifying date, and procedures for enumeration. The ECI also supervises the house-to-house verification, document scrutiny, and final roll publication. Through its constitutional authority under Article 324, the Commission ensures that every eligible citizen is included and every error or duplicate is eliminated from the voter roll.

Chief Electoral Officer

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of each state or union territory is responsible for implementing SIR on the ground. Acting under the guidance of the Election Commission, the CEO coordinates with District Election Officers, Electoral Registration Officers, and Booth Level Officers. The CEO ensures timely data collection, field verification, training of staff, public awareness drives, and transparent grievance redressal during the revision. Their reports form the basis for ECI's final electoral roll approval.

Special Intensive Revision Challenges

While SIR is conceptually sound, its implementation has raised serious concerns:

- Risk of disenfranchisement: The demand for additional documents (especially for post-2003 entries) may exclude legitimate voters lacking birth or parentage proof. Critics argue that these risks excluding the poor, migrants and marginalised groups.
- Timing before elections: Conducting a full-scale revision just before a major election may create confusion, logistic issues, and allegations of bias. For example, state parties asked for clarity that SIR is not a citizenship verification exercise.
- Terminology & procedural clarity: The term "Special Intensive Revision" is not explicitly mentioned in existing rules, leading to questions about legal basis and consistency.
- Resource and staffing constraints: House-to-house enumeration at scale demands huge human and technological resources, field officials have flagged shortages.
- Digital divide and accessibility: Rural, remote, migrant or low-literate citizens may be disadvantaged in online enumeration or document submission.
- Political objections and litigations: Some opposition parties allege SIR may be used to manipulate voter lists for favourable outcomes. For example, the Supreme Court is hearing a PIL (Association for Democratic Reforms vs ECI) challenging the 2025 Bihar SIR.

Conclusion:

So, SIR is an important part of social development for democracy environment. in spite of error or challenges it is vocal tonic to increase modern Indian society. SIR supports digital integration of electoral rolls and facilitates policy reforms like remote voting for migrants to enhance accessibility and efficiency. A comprehensive, house-to-house verification process to update electoral rolls afresh, ensuring accuracy and citizenship validation. Legally enabled under Section 21(3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1950, and governed by Article 324(1) of the Constitution. So go and attend to check identity and help to officers.

References:

1. The Election Commission of India (ECI) Official Press Releases and Circulars regarding the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) 2025.
2. The Constitution of India, specifically Article 324.
3. The Representation of the People Act, 1950, specifically Section 21.
4. Reports and statements from State Chief Electoral Officers (CEOs) detailing the implementation of SIR 1.0 in Bihar and the preparation for SIR 2.0.
5. Analysis and Editorials from leading national newspapers (including The Hindu and others) detailing the political reaction and civil society concerns regarding the SIR process and its impact on voter disenfranchisement.
6. Technical reports and manuals published by the ECI for Booth Level Officers (BLOs) detailing verification procedures and documentation requirements.