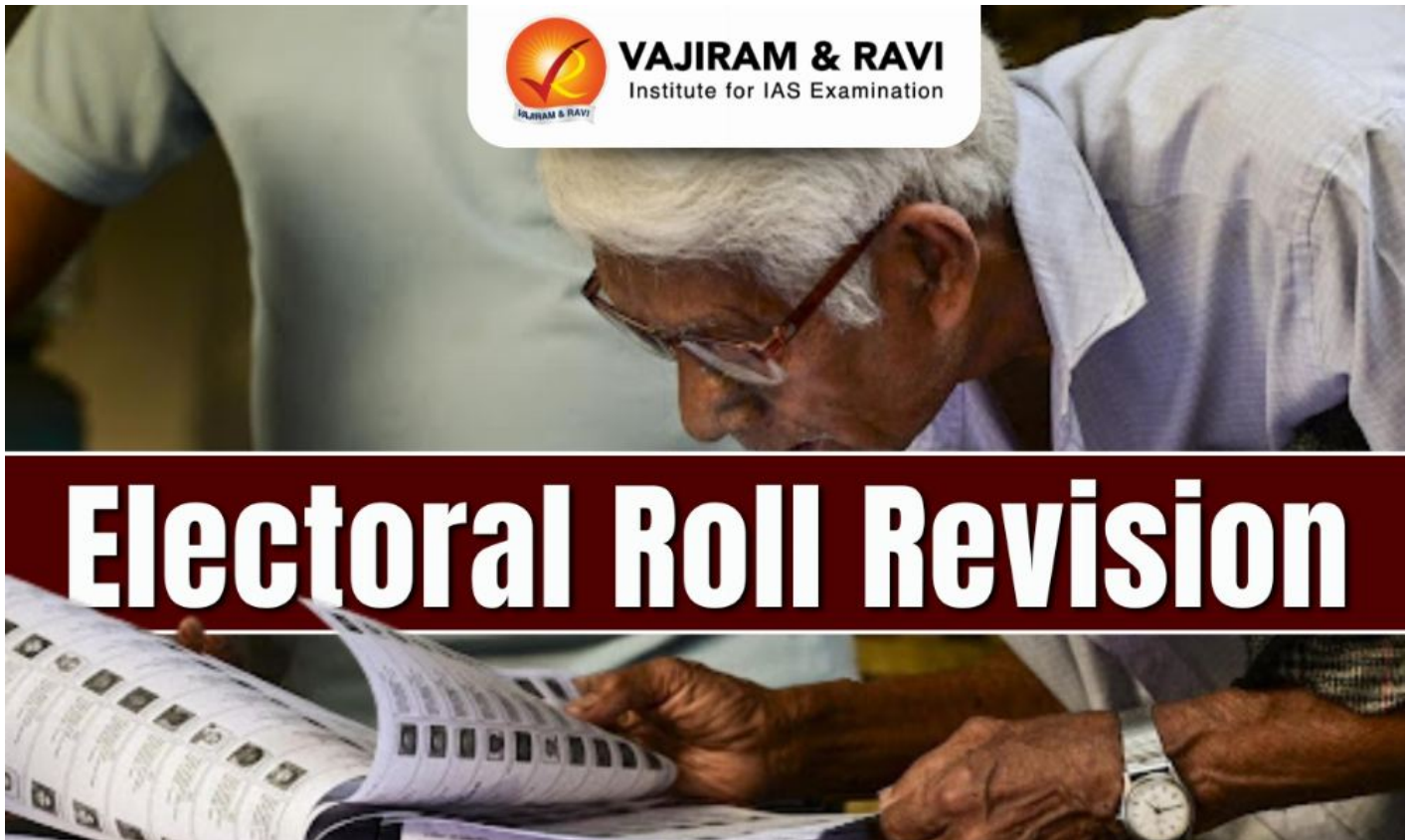


Electoral Roll Revision - Impact of Special Intensive Revision

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Electoral Roll Revision Latest News

- The Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls has led to reduced voter lists but higher turnout percentages across several states.

Electoral Roll in India: Basics and Importance

- The electoral roll is a **constituency-wise list of eligible voters**, maintained by the Election Commission of India.
- It forms the foundation of India's electoral democracy, as only those registered in the roll can exercise the right to vote.
- The Constitution mandates that all citizens above 18 years of age, subject to certain disqualifications, must be included in the roll.
- Accuracy of the electoral roll is crucial for ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

Types of Electoral Roll Revisions

- Electoral rolls are updated through two main processes.
 - **Summary Revision** is conducted annually with limited corrections and additions.
 - **Special Intensive Revision (SIR)** involves a **comprehensive re-verification of voters**, often requiring fresh enumeration and documentation.
- SIR is more rigorous and aims to eliminate inaccuracies accumulated over time.

Growth of India's Electorate

- India's electorate has expanded significantly since independence.
- From about **17 crore voters in 1951**, it has grown to over **96 crore in recent years**, reflecting population growth and improved voter registration.
- At one point, the total electorate was projected to approach **100 crore**, highlighting the scale of India's democratic system.

News Summary: Impact of Special Intensive Revision

- **Reduction in Electoral Roll Size**
 - The SIR exercise has led to a significant trimming of electoral rolls by removing names of absent, shifted, dead, and duplicate voters (ASDD).
 - Across 13 States and Union Territories, the **number of electors declined from about 51 crore to below 46 crore during the revision process**.
 - This marks a notable departure from the usual trend of continuous growth in the electorate.
- **Higher Voter Turnout Despite Smaller Electorates**
 - States such as Tamil Nadu recorded over 85% turnout, significantly higher than previous elections.
 - Similarly, West Bengal witnessed turnout levels above 90% in certain phases.
 - This trend is partly attributed to the removal of "ghost voters," which increases turnout percentages when calculated on a reduced voter base.
- **Reasons for Deletion of Names**
 - The primary reason for the decline in voter numbers is the removal of ASDD entries.
 - Additional deletions occurred due to non-submission of enumeration forms, inability to verify identity, and failure to meet eligibility criteria.
 - In many cases, the burden of proof shifted to citizens to re-establish their eligibility.
- **Partial Recovery through Fresh Enrolment**
 - While initial drafts showed sharp reductions, final rolls witnessed some recovery due to new registrations and corrections.
 - For example, Uttar Pradesh saw a drop from 15.44 crore to 12.55 crore in draft rolls, later rising to 13.39 crore in final rolls.
 - This indicates that SIR is not purely a deletion exercise but also includes the re-inclusion of eligible voters.
- **Possible Decline in National Electorate Size**

- After covering nearly **60 crore voters**, the overall electorate has already declined by around **6 crore**.
- Once completed nationwide, the total electorate could fall to around **90 crore**, reversing the earlier trend towards a billion voters.

- **Concerns over Exclusion and Disenfranchisement**

- The SIR process has raised concerns about the accidental exclusion of genuine voters, especially vulnerable groups lacking documentation.
- There are apprehensions that strict verification procedures may lead to disenfranchisement on technical grounds.

- **Need for Balancing Accuracy and Inclusion**

- While SIR improves the accuracy of electoral rolls, it must ensure that no eligible voter is left out.
- The Election Commission now faces the challenge of restoring confidence by focusing on inclusion alongside verification.

Source: TH

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