

BLOGS

What is SIR in India? Meaning, Legal Provisions and Why It Is in the News

Shruti chauhan · 22 Oct 2026

The right to vote is one of the most important features of Indian democracy. But what happens if an eligible voter's name is missing from the electoral roll? This concern has brought the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise into the national spotlight.

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has undertaken the SIR exercise to verify and update electoral rolls. While the Commission says the exercise aims to improve the accuracy of voter lists, questions have also been raised about documentation requirements and the possible exclusion of eligible voters.

So, what is SIR in India, why is it being conducted, and what does the law say? Let us understand.

What is SIR in India?

SIR stands for Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls. It is a voter list verification exercise conducted by the Election Commission of India.

The main purpose of SIR is to ensure that eligible Indian citizens are included in the electoral roll while ineligible entries are identified and removed in accordance with the law.

Unlike a routine revision, an intensive revision involves detailed verification of electoral records, which may include house visits by Booth Level Officers (BLOs), collection of enumeration forms and examination of supporting documents.

The process is intended to address problems such as duplicate entries, outdated records and names of deceased or permanently relocated voters.

Why Is the SIR Exercise in the News?

The SIR exercise attracted national attention when the Election Commission began revising Bihar's electoral rolls on June 24, 2025, ahead of the state's Assembly elections.

It subsequently expanded the exercise to other states and Union Territories in different phases.

On May 14, 2026, the Election Commission announced another phase covering 16 states and three Union Territories. The exercise involved extensive voter verification and house visits by election officials.

The latest development came in October 2026, when the Commission announced a separate Special Summary Revision (SSR) in 17 states and Union Territories, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.

Under the announced SSR schedule, draft electoral rolls are to be published on November 12, 2026, with final publication scheduled for January 4, 2027.

Importantly, SIR and SSR are different revision exercises, although both aim to maintain accurate electoral rolls.

What Is the Legal Basis of SIR in India?

The SIR exercise is supported by constitutional and statutory provisions governing elections.

1. Article 324 of the Indian Constitution

Article 324 grants the Election Commission the power of superintendence, direction and control over the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections.

This provides the constitutional foundation for the Commission's role in electoral roll revision.

2. Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950

[Section 21 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950](#) deals with the preparation and revision of electoral rolls.

Under Section 21(3), the Election Commission may direct a special revision of an electoral roll at any time for reasons recorded in writing, in the manner it considers appropriate.

However, the exercise must comply with the applicable legal framework.

3. Sections 22 and 23: Correction and Inclusion of Names

[Section 22](#) allows the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) to correct, transpose or delete entries on specified legal grounds, subject to prescribed safeguards.

[Section 23](#) provides for the inclusion of eligible persons whose names are missing from the electoral roll.

These provisions are important because the objective of SIR is not merely to remove incorrect entries but also to protect the registration rights of eligible voters.

How Does the SIR Exercise Work?

The exact procedure depends on the Election Commission's directions for the relevant state or Union Territory. Generally, the process includes:

1. Enumeration: BLOs visit households and collect or verify voter information.
2. Verification: Election officials examine submitted details and supporting records.
3. Draft Electoral Roll: A revised draft voter list is published for public inspection.
4. Claims and Objections: Citizens can request inclusion, correction or deletion of entries through the prescribed procedure.
5. Final Electoral Roll: After examining claims and objections, the final electoral roll is published.

Voters should follow their state's official schedule because deadlines and document requirements may differ.

Who Is Eligible to Vote During SIR?

Under [Sections 16, 19 and 20 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950](#), a person must generally satisfy the following conditions:

- Be an Indian citizen.
- Be at least 18 years old on the applicable qualifying date.
- Be ordinarily resident in the relevant constituency.
- Not be disqualified from registration under the law.

An important point is that possessing a Voter ID card does not automatically guarantee that a person's name appears on the current electoral roll.

Therefore, citizens should verify their registration before elections.

Is Aadhaar Mandatory for the SIR Exercise?

One of the biggest controversies surrounding SIR concerns Aadhaar and other identity documents.

In the Bihar SIR proceedings, the Supreme Court clarified on September 8, 2025, that Aadhaar could be accepted as proof of identity for electoral roll verification.

However, the Court also clarified that Aadhaar is not proof of Indian citizenship.

This distinction is important because proving someone's identity and establishing citizenship are legally different matters.

Voters should consult the latest Election Commission instructions applicable to their state before submitting documents.

Can Your Name Be Removed During SIR?

Yes, an electoral entry can be deleted where legally justified. However, deletion cannot be arbitrary.

Section 22 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 provides procedural safeguards, including a reasonable opportunity of being heard in cases involving proposed deletion on the relevant grounds.

Moreover, [Section 24](#) provides a statutory appeal mechanism against specified decisions of the Electoral Registration Officer.

This means voters have legal remedies if they believe an electoral registration decision is incorrect.

What Should Voters Do During the SIR Exercise?

Citizens can take a few simple steps to protect their electoral registration:

1. Visit the official [ECI Voters' Service Portal](#).
2. Search for your name in the electoral roll.

3. Cooperate with authorised verification officials.
4. Submit the required enumeration form or documents, where applicable.
5. Use Form 6 for new voter registration and Form 8 for shifting residence or correcting existing details.
6. Follow up on any notice and submit claims or appeals within the applicable deadlines.

The Election Commission also provides [official guidance on voter registration and forms](#).

Why Is the SIR Exercise Controversial?

Supporters argue that SIR can improve electoral accuracy by identifying duplicate entries and outdated information.

Critics, however, have expressed concerns that strict documentation requirements and administrative errors may disadvantage migrants, economically weaker citizens and other vulnerable groups.

The central legal question is whether voter list verification can be conducted effectively without excluding eligible citizens.

A fair electoral revision process must balance accuracy with accessibility, transparency and procedural safeguards.

Conclusion

Understanding what is SIR in India is important for every voter, particularly as electoral roll revision continues across different states.

The SIR exercise is intended to improve the accuracy of India's electoral rolls. However, its implementation must remain consistent with the Constitution, election laws and the rights of eligible citizens.

Ultimately, accurate voter lists and fair verification procedures are equally important for maintaining public confidence in India's democratic process.