

## Current Issue

## Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

**Question 01**

**Discuss the constitutional and statutory provisions that empower the Election Commission to undertake a Special Intensive Revision (SIR). Analyse how such intensive exercises strengthen the principle of "one person, one vote" in a representative democracy.**

### Question Understanding - Finding Information

- **Precise Syllabus Mapping:** Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.  
(GS Paper – II)
- **Marks and words limit:**
  - The marks-oriented approach to answering (**10-mark, 150-word**) questions in the question is to use **Bullet Points** (one idea per bullet point), **Brainstorming**, or a combination of both.
  - The way to score good marks in questions worth (**15 marks. 250 words**) is to use the **Heading** and **Subheading** method while writing your answers.
- **Directive words:**
  - Discuss → Explain provisions with brief description
  - Analyse → Link SIR to democratic principles with cause effect reasoning
- **Focal points of the questions:**
  - Election Commission of India (ECI)
  - Electoral rolls
  - Democratic equality
  - Representative democracy

## Answer Writing Structure (Outline)

### Introduction Paragraph

- Introduce ECI's constitutional role
- Mention SIR as part of electoral roll management

### Body Paragraph

#### A. Constitutional & Statutory Basis

- Article 324 – Superintendence, direction and control of elections
- Representation of the People Act, 1950
  - Section 16 – Disqualifications
  - Section 21 – Revision of electoral rolls
- Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 – Procedural backing

**Dos & Don'ts:** Emphasise that SIR flows from these powers, not an ad-hoc exercise.

#### B. How SIR Strengthens 'One Person, One Vote'

- **Focus on:**
  - Removal of duplicate and ghost voters
  - Inclusion of eligible but excluded citizens
  - Updating migration and death data
  - Ensuring equal weight of each vote
- **Link explicitly to:**
  - Electoral equality
  - Democratic legitimacy
  - Representative governance

### Conclusion (max. 40 Words)

- Normative + democratic closure

## Dos & Don'ts

- **Do for Maximum Marks**

- ✓ Mention Article 324 explicitly
- ✓ Distinguish between constitutional authority and statutory procedure
- ✓ Link SIR to democratic principles, not just administration
- ✓ Keep analysis crisp and balanced

- **Don't do these Common Mistakes**

- ✗ Don't discuss political controversies
- ✗ Don't confuse SIR with delimitation
- ✗ Don't over-detail operational steps
- ✗ Don't exceed word limit

## Notes Oriented Content for Writing Answer

In a representative democracy like India, the integrity of the electoral process rests on an accurate and inclusive voter list. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls is a comprehensive, house-to-house verification exercise undertaken by the Election Commission of India (ECI) to ensure the "purity" and accuracy of the voter list. Unlike routine annual updates, SIR involves a fresh enumeration of every household, specifically aimed at addressing deep-seated errors like ghost voters, duplicate entries, and demographic shifts caused by migration.

### Constitutional and Statutory Framework

The Election Commission of India (ECI) derives its authority for SIR from a combination of constitutional mandates and specific statutory provisions.

- **Constitutional Provisions:**

- **Article 324:** Grants the ECI "superintendence, direction, and control" over the preparation of electoral rolls. The Supreme Court, in the *Mohinder Singh Gill* (1977) case, clarified that Article 324 is a plenary power that allows the ECI to act where statutory laws are silent to ensure free and fair elections.

- **Article 326:** Establishes Universal Adult Suffrage, guaranteeing that every citizen aged 18+ has the right to be registered unless disqualified by law.
- **Statutory Provisions:**
  - **Representation of the People Act, 1950 (RPA):**
    - **Section 21(3):** Specifically empowers the ECI to order a "special revision" of the electoral roll at any time for reasons recorded in writing.
    - **Section 16 & 19:** Define eligibility (citizenship, age, and "ordinary residence") and disqualifications.
  - **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960:** Outlines the procedural steps for enrolment, handling claims, and objections.

## Analysing SIR and the "One Person, One Vote" Principle

SIR is a comprehensive, house-to-house verification drive (unlike routine summary revisions) intended to "purify" the voter list. It strengthens democratic principles in the following ways:

- **Ensuring Accuracy (Integrity of the Vote):**
  - **Elimination of "Ghost Voters":** By removing deceased, permanently shifted, and duplicate entries, SIR ensures that no individual can exert more influence than another through multiple registrations.
  - **Preventing Impersonation:** Fresh house-to-house enumeration with updated photographs reduces the risk of fraudulent voting.
- **Strengthening Inclusivity (Universal Coverage):**
  - **Capturing New Electors:** SIR actively identifies and registers first-time voters and previously omitted eligible citizens, ensuring their right to "one vote" is not lost to administrative oversight.
  - **Accounting for Migration:** In a mobile society, SIR updates records to reflect where citizens "ordinarily reside," ensuring their vote is counted in the constituency where they currently live and have ties.
- **Enhancing Legitimacy and Trust:**
  - **Reducing "Turnout Bias":** Accurate rolls provide a correct denominator for calculating voter turnout, which is vital for the perceived legitimacy of a representative democracy.

- **Transparency:** The process involves political parties (through Booth Level Agents) and public disclosure of deleted names, building stakeholder confidence that the "one person, one vote" mandate is being followed fairly.

### Challenges and Contemporary Concerns

- **Risk of Disenfranchisement:** Stricter documentation requirements (e.g., proving parentage or birth for registrations after 2003) may exclude marginalized groups like the poor or migrants who lack formal records.
- **Citizenship Scrutiny:** Critics argue that SIR can inadvertently turn into a de facto citizenship verification exercise, which is traditionally the domain of the Home Ministry, not the ECI.

In conclusion, the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) serves as a vital constitutional and statutory instrument that ensures the electoral roll remains a faithful reflection of the sovereign will. By systematically removing ghost voters and including newly eligible ones, SIR acts as a safeguard for democratic legitimacy. While the SIR is a powerful tool for purity, its success relies on balancing rigorous verification with procedural fairness to prevent the accidental disenfranchisement of genuine citizens.

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