

Election Commission Defends Bihar Electoral Roll Revision in Supreme Court



The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Monday, July 21, 2025, robustly defended its ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar before the Supreme Court. The poll panel asserted that the exercise is crucial for maintaining the "purity and integrity" of the voter lists, rejecting claims by opposition parties and non-governmental organizations that the revision is arbitrary or designed to disenfranchise voters.

The ECI's comprehensive affidavit, filed in response to a batch of petitions challenging the SIR, stated that there has been no violation of any law or fundamental rights in conducting the exercise. The Commission emphasized that the revision, the first intensive one in Bihar since 2003, is necessary due to significant demographic changes, including rapid urbanization, migration, and the need to remove deceased or duplicate entries.

A key point of contention has been the ECI's stance on acceptable documents for establishing eligibility. The Supreme Court had earlier suggested that Aadhaar cards, Electoral Photo Identity Cards (EPICs), and ration cards should also be considered valid proofs. However, the ECI clarified in its affidavit that while the list of acceptable documents is not exhaustive, these particular forms of identification cannot be solely relied upon for the intensive revision. The ECI argued that Aadhaar is primarily an identity proof, not a citizenship document, which is a fundamental requirement for voter eligibility under Article 326 of the Constitution. Similarly, it noted the widespread existence of "fake ration cards," making them unreliable for verifying eligibility.

The Commission also countered allegations of discriminatory treatment or lack of transparency. It informed the court that over 90% of electors have already submitted their enumeration forms and that Booth Level Officers (BLOs) are conducting door-to-door verification, providing pre-filled forms to existing electors. The ECI highlighted that political parties are actively involved, with over 1.5 lakh Booth Level Agents (BLAs) working in tandem with BLOs to reach every eligible voter.

Furthermore, the ECI dismissed concerns about the short timeframe for the revision, stating that the current schedule is consistent with previous intensive revisions. It assured the court that the citizenship of an individual would not be terminated simply for not being on the electoral rolls. The Commission also clarified that any individual unable to submit documents by the July 25 deadline would have the opportunity to do so during the claims and objections period, with a draft list to be published on August 1.

The Supreme Court, while allowing the revision to continue, had previously expressed "serious doubts" about the timing of the exercise, given the upcoming Assembly elections in Bihar later this year (tentatively in October-November 2025). However, the ECI's defense underscores its constitutional mandate to ensure accurate and credible electoral rolls, positioning the ongoing revision as a necessary step to uphold the democratic process in Bihar.