

## Empowering the Marginalised through Electoral Participation

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*GS III - Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

### ECI's Role in Expanding Voter Access

- Election Commission of India (ECI) intended to increase voter participation by easing registration process. It says it will attract and allow poor people even in less developed states to vote enthusiastically.

### Special Intensive Revision in Bihar: A Timely Move or a Rush?

- Recently ECI, initiated "Special Intensive Revision" of electoral rolls in Bihar ahead of Assembly elections scheduled in October. We can say that, it is a Rush move. Why?

### Concerns Over Documentation and Exclusion

- The objective of initiation is aimed at including all eligible citizens, eliminating passed away persons, Shifted person and Non-citizen from the voters list.
- Verification within a month (when the draft roll is prepared) is not a welcoming one. It raises serious concerns about the potential exclusion of genuine voters.

### The Puzzle of Document Acceptability

- The challenge is compounded by the ECI's illustrative list of 11 acceptable documents.
- Historically, Bihar has lagged in Birth Registration, only few people possessing birth certificates.
- Other official documents such as Matriculation certificates,

Government issued IDs remain low among the large section of the population, especially the poor and less educated.

- The exclusion of widely available documents such as Aadhaar or current ration cards also puzzling. These documents are accessible to Bihar's marginalized communities.

### **A Call for a More Inclusive and Phased Approach**

- By considering the large size of such exercise, the ECI should reconsider its approach.
- Such revision need to be conducted over the extended period and also for all states and also need to be completed before 2029 general election.

### **Safeguarding the Right to Vote**

- 'Right to vote' is safeguarded Fundamental Right under our Constitution. So the electoral process demands caution and time.