

# PrepAlpine

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Where Research Meets Mentorship & Precision



**Preparation Meets Precision**

A Next-Generation Learning Institution

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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 20.01.2026

## GS Paper II: Polity

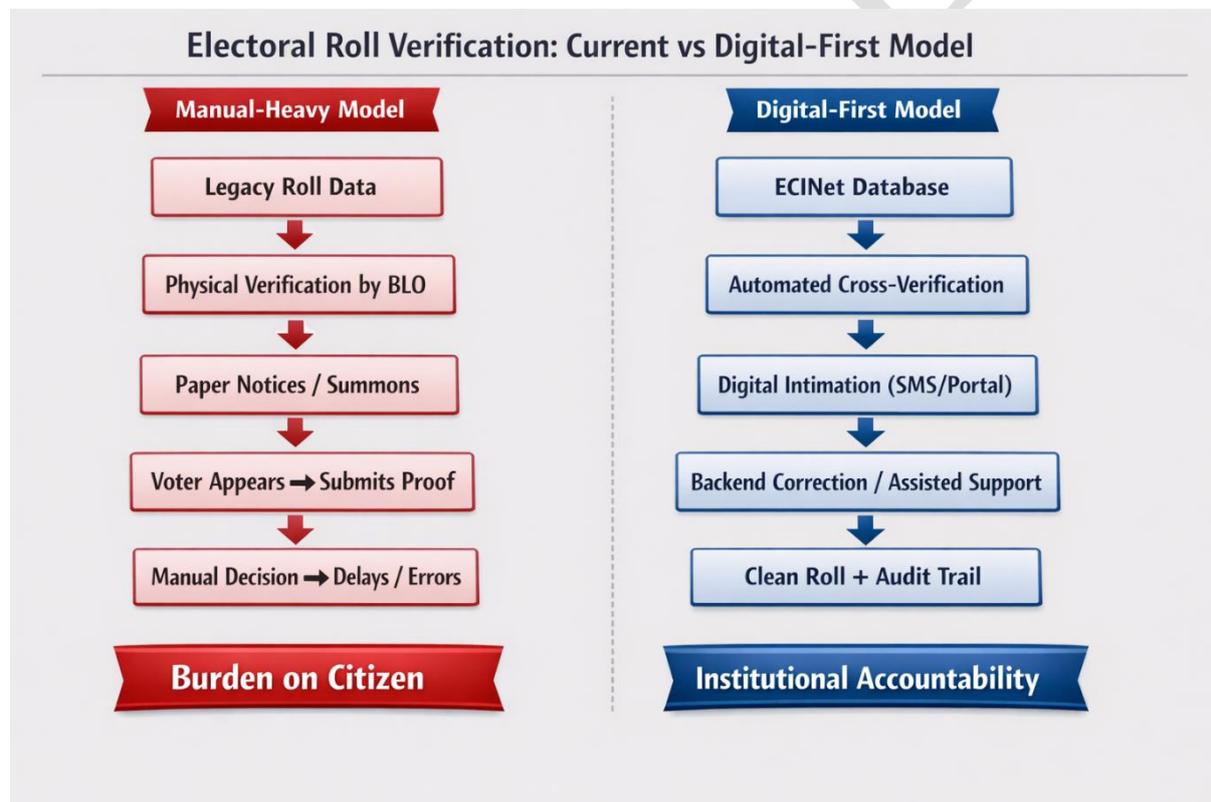
### 1. Digitisation of Electoral Roll Verification in India: Need, Challenges

#### a. Introduction

The right to vote forms the foundation of India's democratic system. However, this right can be meaningfully exercised only when electoral rolls are accurate, inclusive, and widely trusted. The credibility of elections depends not only on polling day arrangements but equally on the integrity of voter registration and verification processes.

The Constitution entrusts the Election Commission of India (ECI) with the responsibility of preparing and periodically updating electoral rolls, while ensuring that no eligible voter is wrongfully excluded. To fulfil this mandate, the Commission conducts regular revision exercises, including the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

In recent years, however, verification exercises have revealed serious systemic weaknesses. Despite the availability of digital infrastructure, continued dependence on manual and paper-based processes has led to errors, voter hardship, and growing distrust in electoral administration. This underscores the urgent need for full digitisation of electoral roll verification.



#### b. Understanding Special Intensive Revision

Special Intensive Revision is a focused administrative exercise aimed at:

- Verifying voter identity and residence
- Removing duplicate, deceased, or invalid entries
- Correcting clerical errors
- Including eligible voters who may have been left out

Its objective is to enhance the accuracy, integrity, and credibility of the electoral roll.

The recent iteration, often referred to as SIR 2.0, was envisaged as a technology-driven, transparent, and citizen-friendly process. However, implementation on the ground exposed a sharp gap between digital intent and manual practice.

### **c. Core Challenges in Electoral Verification**

#### **i. Overdependence on Manual Processes**

Despite digital availability, verification continues to rely heavily on:

- Paper forms
- Physical notices
- In-person hearings

These methods increase clerical errors, delay corrections, and impose avoidable stress on voters, especially when discrepancies arise from old or inaccurate records.

#### **ii. Burden Shifting onto Citizens**

System-generated errors are often transferred onto voters. Genuine electors are repeatedly asked to:

- Prove identity
- Attend hearings
- Respond to notices

This creates a sense of procedural injustice, where citizens are made to resolve faults originating within the system itself.

#### **iii. Legacy Data Deficiencies**

Older electoral rolls were prepared without digital validation and often contain:

- Missing addresses
- Spelling inconsistencies
- Incomplete demographic details

Instead of addressing these issues centrally, voters are compelled to submit fresh applications or declarations, even when inaccuracies are historical in nature.

#### **iv. Erosion of Democratic Trust**

Excessive verification and procedural rigidity:

- Discourage participation
- Alienate voters
- Undermine confidence in electoral institutions

When neutrality and facilitation are replaced by suspicion, democratic trust suffers.

### **d. Existing Digital Capacity of the Election Commission**

The Election Commission already operates ECINet, a robust digital platform capable of:

- Online data entry and modification
- Automated backend verification
- Database cross-checking
- Maintenance of audit trails

This clearly indicates that the issue is not technological absence, but partial and inconsistent adoption of digital workflows. A hesitant transition undermines the transformative potential of technology in electoral governance.

## **e. Rationale for Full Digitisation of Electoral Verification**

### **i. Improved Accuracy and Consistency**

- Automated checks reduce human discretion
- Digital validation enables identification of inconsistencies at scale
- Clean electoral rolls become easier to maintain

### **ii. Protection of Voter Dignity**

- Minimises physical summons and repeated appearances
- Reduces feelings of suspicion or intimidation
- Treats voters as trusted participants, not potential offenders

### **iii. Speed and Transparency**

- Real-time status updates
- Acknowledgements at each stage
- Faster resolution of discrepancies

This enhances voter confidence and institutional credibility.

### **iv. Administrative Handling of Non-Mapped Voters**

For voters categorised as non-mapped due to migration or legacy errors:

- Backend corrections can be made digitally
- Booth Level Officers can assist administratively
- Unnecessary hearings are avoided

### **v. Reduction of Legal and Ethical Risks**

Manual processes sometimes compel voters to make inaccurate declarations, exposing them to legal consequences. Digitisation ensures that institutional errors are corrected institutionally, without criminalising citizens for systemic failures.

## **f. Ethical and Governance Perspective**

From an ethical standpoint, electoral verification touches core democratic values:

- **Dignity** – procedures must be respectful and non-harassing
- **Accountability** – institutions must correct their own errors
- **Trust** – governance should be facilitative, not punitive

A voter-centric democracy prioritises ease of participation, procedural fairness, and transparency. Responsible digitisation advances all three values simultaneously.

## **g. Way Forward: Reforming Electoral Verification**

### **i. Digital-First Verification Framework**

- Online submission and automated checks as default
- Physical interaction only in exceptional cases

### **ii. Assisted Digital Access**

- Support through Booth Level Officers
- Facilitation centres for elderly and digitally vulnerable voters

### **iii. Transparent and Proactive Communication**

- SMS and email alerts at each stage
- Clear explanation of acceptance or discrepancies

#### **iv. Restrained Use of Physical Hearings**

- Only where digital resolution is impossible
- Avoid routine summons and mass notices

#### **v. Institutional Correction of Legacy Errors**

- Centralised data cleaning
- Backend review of historical inconsistencies
- No transfer of burden onto individual voters

### **Conclusion**

Electoral roll verification is meant to strengthen democracy, not erect barriers to participation. India already possesses the digital infrastructure required for a fair, efficient, and dignified verification system.

The true challenge lies in consistent, thoughtful, and ethical use of technology—to protect voter dignity, uphold democratic trust, and reinforce confidence in electoral institutions. A digital-first approach, guided by constitutional values, is no longer optional but essential for the credibility of Indian democracy.

## Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

### 1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

### 2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

### 3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

### 4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

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