



IICDEM, 2026 Session on

BEST PRACTICES 02 PURITY OF ELECTORAL ROLLS



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BP 02: Purity of Electoral Rolls

Date and Time	21/01/2026 at 11:45 AM – 1:15 PM
Venue	MR - 10
Moderator	Mr Prashanth Chiluka ; Additional CEO Bihar

Speakers and Participants

Mr Prashanth Chiluka, Additional Chief Electoral Officer,Bihar

Mrs Prema Ramwodin, Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Mauritius

Mr Joao Damiao, Commissioner, National Electoral Commission, Angola

Prof Dr S P Singh, Dean, Chanakya National Law University Patna

Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Election Commissioner, Election Commission of India

Rapporteur Name

Shivangi Singhal



1. Introduction & Session Overview

The session on Purity of Electoral Rolls examined the foundational role of accurate, inclusive, and up-to-date voter registers in safeguarding democratic integrity. Electoral registration was positioned as the gateway to democratic participation, with the quality of the electoral roll directly impacting the credibility of elections and the principle of “one person, one vote.”

Moderated by the Additional CEO of Bihar, the session brought together senior election administrators, international practitioners, and academic experts to explore: constitutional mandates, institutional mechanisms, technological interventions, and comparative global practices in maintaining electoral roll integrity. The discussion underscored that in large and diverse democracies, roll management is not a one-time exercise but a continuous, lifecycle-based process requiring strong legal backing, administrative coordination, and public participation.

Speakers highlighted how inaccuracies such as duplicate entries, non-enrolment of eligible youth, inclusion of deceased or shifted electors, and data errors can undermine public confidence and electoral fairness. The Indian experience was presented in detail, outlining the constitutional authority of the Election Commission of India (ECI), its hierarchical field structure, and the evolving use of digital tools supported by human oversight.

International perspectives from Mauritius and other jurisdictions enriched the discussion by showcasing alternative models, including population-register-based systems, biometric voter registers, and continuous registration frameworks. The session concluded that electoral roll purity is both a technical and normative challenge, requiring constant vigilance, transparency, and institutional trust.

2. Analytical Synthesis

The session situated electoral roll purity within the broader democratic discourse of inclusion, equality, and institutional credibility, which are core themes of IICDEM. Speakers repeatedly emphasised that “the purity of the electoral roll is the primary safeguard of the principle of one person, one vote”, underscoring the normative importance of voter registration beyond its administrative function. Electoral registration was framed as foundational to democratic participation, with one speaker noting that “electoral registration is not merely administrative—it is the gateway to democratic participation.”

The Indian framework, as presented, rests on a strong constitutional and statutory foundation. Article 324 of the Constitution vests the Election Commission of India (ECI) with plenary powers over the preparation of electoral rolls, guided by the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960. This legal mandate is operationalised through a multi-tier institutional hierarchy, extending from the ECI at the national level to Booth Level Officers (BLOs) at the grassroots, ensuring last-mile verification and citizen engagement.

A key analytical insight was the recognition that demographic mobility, urbanisation, and population growth continuously strain roll accuracy. Mechanisms such as Special Summary Revision, Continuous Updating, and Special Intensive Revision (SIR) were discussed as adaptive responses to these challenges. The SIR initiative—initiated in Bihar and being phased across states—was highlighted as a de-novo verification exercise designed to uphold the Commission’s guiding principle: “No eligible elector to be left out and no ineligible person to be included.” Speakers noted that “a de-novo intensive revision is sometimes necessary to restore confidence in the roll,” particularly in contexts of rapid population movement.

Technology emerged as a critical enabler, particularly through platforms such as ECINET, which standardise workflows, enable multilingual access, generate Photo Similar Entries (PSE) and Demographically Similar Entries (DSE) reports, and enhance monitoring through digital dashboards. At the same time, speakers cautioned against over-reliance on automation, stressing that “technology supports accuracy; human judgment protects voter rights.

" It was reiterated that "no deletion can take place without field verification, notice to the elector, and approval by the ERO," reflecting the procedural safeguards embedded in the system.

Comparative perspectives reinforced this balanced approach. Countries such as Sweden and Denmark rely on population registers with automatic updates, while Ghana and Kenya employ biometric de-duplication. Mauritius demonstrated a structured, two-phase house-to-house inquiry supported by secure, offline digital systems and strong immutable audit trails. These examples illustrated that while institutional models vary, "electoral roll integrity is a continuous process, not an event-based exercise," requiring sustained legal clarity, institutional accountability, and public trust.



3. Practitioner Takeaways

Electoral Integrity & Credibility: Maintaining the purity of electoral rolls is central to ensuring free, fair, and credible elections. This is operationalised through structured revision mechanisms such as Special Summary Revision, Continuous Updation, and Special Intensive Revision (SIR), supported by mandatory field verification, public display of rolls, and disposal of claims and objections.

Inclusion & Democratic Participation: A lifecycle-based registration framework—allowing year-round enrolment (except during the election period)—helps include first-time voters, migrants, and urban populations. House-to-house verification by Booth Level Officers (BLOs) remains a critical tool for identifying unenrolled eligible electors and marking absent, shifted, and deceased (ASD) entries.

Institutional Capacity & Accountability: A decentralised institutional arrangement, extending from the Election Commission of India to EROs, AEROs, BLO Supervisors, and BLOs, ensures last-mile accuracy and accountability. Clear role delineation, combined with ERO scrutiny, notice to electors, and appeal provisions, strengthens procedural fairness.

Technology & Innovation with Safeguards: Digital platforms such as ECINET enhance efficiency by standardising workflows, enabling multilingual access, generating Photo Similar Entries (PSE) and Demographically Similar Entries (DSE) reports, and providing real-time monitoring dashboards. These innovations are effective only when embedded within legal safeguards, immutable audit trails, and human oversight, preventing unchecked automation.

Generalisable Lessons:

- Electoral roll management must be treated as a continuous, lifecycle-based process, not a one-time or election-specific activity.
- Technology should augment—not replace—human judgment, particularly in complex social contexts.
- Transparency, due process, and public participation are essential to sustaining voter trust.

Context-Specific Lessons:

- In large and mobile electorates such as India, periodic intensive revisions may be necessary to address duplication and migration-related inaccuracies.
- Smaller jurisdictions like Mauritius demonstrate the effectiveness of structured house-to-house inquiries supported by secure, offline digital systems.
- Biometric or population-register-based models require robust civil registration systems and strong privacy protections to be effective.



4. Way Forward

The session identified the need for more frequent and adaptive revision cycles, especially in high-mobility urban areas. Participants noted emerging risks such as “rogue voter lists” and stressed the importance of preventing systems from operating on unchecked “auto-pilot” modes. Future efforts should focus on strengthening continuous registration, enhancing inter-database linkages with appropriate privacy safeguards, and improving public awareness to increase citizen participation in verification processes.

Questions raised on zero-trust architecture pointed to the growing relevance of cybersecurity principles in electoral databases. Going forward, EMBs must balance automation with accountability, ensuring transparency, auditability, and avenues for appeal. Sustained cross-country dialogue and knowledge exchange under platforms like IICDEM will be critical to reinforcing global democratic resilience.



5. Conclusion

The session reaffirmed that the purity of electoral rolls is the cornerstone of free, fair, participative, and inclusive elections. Sustaining roll integrity requires a lifecycle-based approach that integrates law, institutions, technology, and human judgment. As electoral environments evolve, EMBs must remain adaptive, transparent, and citizen-centric to maintain trust in democratic processes.





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