

5. Electoral Officers – Polity

After two ‘suicides’, BLO protests hit SIR exercise in TN, Kerala, Rajasthan. The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has been hampered across Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan due to two deaths and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) complaining of excessive workload and unreasonable targets. This highlights stress on the grassroots election machinery responsible for house-to-house verification and roll maintenance.

Challenges in Electoral Roll Revision and the Role of Electoral Officers



The Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls has been impacted by severe workload issues, leading to complaints and reported fatalities among ground-level officials.

Issues Hitting the Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

The SIR of electoral rolls in at least three states—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Rajasthan—has been hit by significant challenges –

Fatalities – Two deaths have been reported among officials involved in the process.

Complaints – Multiple complaints have been raised by Booth Level Officers (BLOs).

Cause of Complaints – The complaints stem from “excessive workload and unreasonable demands and targets” imposed on the BLOs.

Electoral Officers/Commissions in India (Hierarchical Roles)

The structure for conducting elections and managing electoral rolls in India is clearly defined by different officer positions, each with specific jurisdiction and powers.

Officer Position	Jurisdiction / Area	Key Powers and Functions
Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners (CEC)	All of India (Constitutional post)	Ultimate Authority – Superintendence, direction, and control of all elections (President, Vice-President, Parliament, State Legislatures). Sets election dates, model code of conduct, and resolves disputes.
Chief Electoral Officer (CEO)	A specific State or Union Territory	State Head – Appointed by the ECI in consultation with the State Government. Supervises and coordinates all work related to elections (e.g., E-rolls, conduct of polls) within the State/UT, subject to the ECI's control. (Note – Must not be equated with the State Election Commissioner (SEC), who handles local government polls.)

District Election Officer (DEO)	A specific District	District Head – Usually the District Collector/Magistrate. Coordinates and supervises all election-related work in the district, including electoral roll preparation/revision and the conduct of all elections to Parliament and the State Legislature, under the CEO's direction.
Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)	An Assembly Constituency	Electoral Roll Authority – Statutory authority responsible for the preparation, revision, and maintenance of the Electoral Roll for a specific Assembly Constituency. Disposes of claims and objections related to voter registration.
Returning Officer (RO)	A specific Parliamentary or Assembly Constituency	Conduct of Poll Authority – Responsible for the actual conduct of the election in a constituency. Duties include receiving and scrutinizing nomination papers, allotting symbols, arranging the poll, overseeing counting of votes, and declaring the result.
Assistant Electoral Registration Officer (AERO)	Part of an Assembly Constituency	Assists the ERO in the preparation and revision of electoral rolls and is competent to perform all or any of the ERO's functions.
Presiding Officer (PO)	A specific Polling Station	Polling Station Head – Responsible for ensuring the smooth and orderly conduct of the poll at a single polling station. Is in charge of the polling party, EVMs, and all materials on the day of the poll.
Booth Level Officer (BLO)	A specific part/section of the Electoral Roll (usually a Polling Station area)	Ground-level Contact – A local government/semi-government official (like a teacher or Anganwadi worker) who is a representative of the ECI at the grass-roots level. Responsible for house-to-house verification of voters and updating the electoral roll.

Source – <https://www.pressreader.com/india/the-indian-express/20251118/281861534783637?srltid=AfmBOopeaUv7MlaZ3YgxNxoDxIXztb-UsCZonFLqp7GLZ2NN4NclQQJl>