



Why Should We Care About Development Finance? ...because it's our money!

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The Crisis of Bihar's Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

The Election Commission's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the electoral rolls in Bihar is not just a bureaucratic exercise; it is a grave injustice unfolding in plain sight. What is being called a routine clean-up of voter rolls has instead turned into a nightmare for the poor and marginalised, especially daily wage workers, landless labourers, Dalits, and minorities. Take the case of a woman in Katihar who had to sell her government-rationed rice and forgo two days of income just to submit her documents, only to later learn that the very documents she was asked for, Aadhaar and voter ID, are not even officially accepted. She is not alone. Stories of confusion, fear, coercion, and exclusion were shared in a public hearing in Patna by dozens like her.

This is not just a matter of administrative mismanagement; it is a fundamental attack on the democratic rights of citizens. Experts, including a retired High Court judge and several social scientists, have rightly warned that the SIR is unconstitutional and could lead to mass voter disenfranchisement. A rapid survey revealed that 63% of voters added after 2003 do not have any of the 11 "acceptable" documents, yet they do have Aadhaar and voter ID. These are the very cards widely issued by the government, yet are now being dismissed. Over 2.9 crore people, mostly youth, could be denied their right to vote.

What makes this worse is that the Election Commission has failed to explain why this exercise is being rushed now, just before the elections. Bihar already went through a summary revision. So why this additional and aggressive scrutiny, targeting millions, without adequate transparency or legal safeguards? The Supreme Court's interim order allowing Aadhaar and EPIC as temporary documents only scratches the surface. The heart of the problem is that the entire SIR process may be unconstitutional, an executive action without a proper legal or constitutional basis.

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EP. 01 MADE TO LOSE: THE SOUTH IN GLOBAL TRADE

WITH **PRABHAT PATNAIK**

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POCKET MONEY
Vol III Issue 21
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01 The poor are forced to borrow at higher rates from non-formal sources

Data shows that a vast part of India's poor and low-income households are increasingly resorting to informal and more expensive sources of borrowing for their credit needs. Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) found that between 2018-19 and 2022-23, the number of borrowers from the economically weaker sections of society who borrowed from formal channels contracted by 4.2%. On the other hand, this segment, which earns ₹1-2 lakh a

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