



Bihar Polling Station Rationalisation

Why in News?

Bihar has become the **first Indian state to ensure all [polling stations](#) have fewer than 1,200 electors**, marking a major reform to enhance **voter convenience and electoral accessibility**.

- This move aligns with a broader push by the [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) to rationalize polling stations nationwide, particularly in the context of upcoming Assembly elections and the proposed **'One Nation, One Election'** plan.

Key Points

About Polling Station Rationalisation

- **Revised Elector Cap per Booth:** The [State Instructional Representation \(SIR\) Order of June 2025](#) revised the maximum number of electors per polling station from **1,500 to 1,200**, reversing the 2009 standard to reduce voter congestion.
- **Increase in Polling Stations:** Bihar added **12,817 new polling stations**, raising the total to **90,712**, up from 77,895. This effort places **all booths within 2 km** of voters, improving accessibility in rural areas.
- **Inclusive Voter Registration Drive:** Electoral officers conducted widespread consultations with **12 political parties** and shared lists of:
 - **29.62 lakh electors** whose forms were pending,
 - **43.93 lakh electors** not found at their registered addresses.
- **Draft Electoral Roll Timeline:** The **Draft Rolls will be published on 1 August 2025**, after which voters can submit claims, objections, or corrections for a month, as per the SIR Order.

Implications for Electoral Management

- **Impact on One Nation, One Election (ONOE):** The voter cap rationalisation will influence the logistics of ONOE, especially the **requirement for [EVM-VVPATs](#)** and polling personnel.
 - The ECI earlier projected over **13.57 lakh booths** and a cost of **₹7,950 crore** for a 2029 [simultaneous poll](#).
- **Judicial Intervention Prompted Reform:** A **December 2024 Supreme Court petition** demanded reverting to the 1,200-voter cap, citing long queues and voter apathy.
 - The EC's reform aligns with the Court's concerns about **voter fatigue and inefficiencies** under the 1,500-voter cap.
- **Historical Evolution of Booth Size Norms:**
 - **Pre-2009:** 1,200 electors per station (standard).
 - **Post-EVMs (2009):** Raised to 1,500.
 - **During COVID:** Reduced to 1,000-1,200.
 - **2024 General Elections:** Returned to 1,500.
 - **Post-2025 SIR:** **Back to 1,200 nationwide**, starting with Bihar.

What the Shift Entails



Poll Panel's decision to limit voters to 1,200 per station could add **3 lakh polling stations**, raising costs and logistics

THE NEW LIMIT WILL TAKE EFFECT BEFORE THE BIHAR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASING POLLING STATIONS



CEC
Gyanesh Kumar announced the shift, ensuring **no polling station will exceed the set limit** and that all stations will be within **2 kms of voters**

ECI's 2009 guideline set 1,500 voters per station but reverted to 1,200 during the pandemic. The **new announcement follows the SC's recommendation** to restore the 1,200 cap

Significance of the Reform

- **Template for Other States:** The ECI called Bihar's initiative a **model for other States and UTs**. Over **3 lakh new booths** may be needed nationwide to implement this cap before upcoming elections.
- **Administrative and Financial Burden:** The change will **increase election infrastructure costs**, with higher demand for EVMs, VVPATs, and personnel.
- **Strengthening Electoral Democracy:** These changes aim to **enhance the quality of voter participation, reduce disenfranchisement**, and ensure every eligible voter is registered and conveniently able to vote.