

Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021

December 22, 2021

In news—The Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was passed in the Lok Sabha recently.

Key features of the Bill

- The Bill seeks to **allow electoral registration officers to seek the Aadhaar number** of people who want to register as voters for the purpose of establishing identity.
- It also seeks to **allow the electoral registration officers to ask for Aadhaar number from “persons already included in the electoral roll for the purposes of authentication** of entries in electoral roll, and to identify registration of name of the same person in the electoral roll of more than one constituency or more than once in the same constituency.
- The Bill makes it clear that **no application for inclusion of name in the electoral roll shall be denied and no entries in the electoral roll shall be deleted for inability of an individual to furnish or intimate Aadhaar number** due to such sufficient cause as may be prescribed.
- It further says that such people will be allowed to furnish other alternative documents as may be prescribed.
- The Bill **amends the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Representation of the People Act, 1951 to implement certain electoral reforms.**
- The 1950 Act provides for allocation of seats and delimitation of constituencies for elections, qualifications of voters, and preparation of electoral rolls. The 1951 Act provides for the conduct of elections, and offences and disputes related to

elections.

- The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill states **that Section 23 of the Representation of Peoples Act will be amended to allow linking of electoral roll data with the Aadhaar ecosystem to curb the menace of multiple enrolment of the same person in different places.**
- It also seeks to **amend clause (b) of section 14 of the RP Act, 1950** specifying the 1st day of January, 1st day of April, 1st day of July and 1st day of October in a calendar year as qualifying dates in relation to the preparation or revision of electoral rolls.
- The 1951 Act permits the state government to requisition premises needed or likely to be needed for being used as polling stations, or for storing ballot boxes after a poll has been conducted.
- The Bill expands the purposes for which such premises can be requisitioned. These include using the premises for counting, storage of voting machines and poll-related material, and accommodation of security forces and polling personnel.