

Vote for Democracy Statement on the ECINET-TCS Nexus—Asking some questions

The ECINET-TCS nexus has kicked off a major public and political controversy regarding the role of private tech giant Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in operating the Election Commission of India's (ECI) core backend electoral software. While public sector bodies initially built India's electoral registration network, TCS has been quietly running ERONet 2.0—the database handling over 1 billion voter records—since 2023. This arrangement was not formally announced by the ECI and only surfaced through TCS's corporate shareholder disclosures.

It is reported that TCS was ordered to "illegally" modify Form 6 (used for fresh voter registration). They added restrictive declaration clauses during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) without Parliament's oversight or explicit approval from the Ministry of Law, which violates the Representation of the People Act.

ECINET is the ECI's comprehensive, unified digital platform launched to consolidate roughly 40 legacy web and mobile applications (including the Voter Helpline, cVIGIL, and Suvidha) into a single master portal. TCS acts as the primary technology partner managing this overarching framework and its database backend.

In the event TCS is in the eye of the ECI database access storm. This is very unsettling. In October/November 2025 we had asked a few questions to TCS about data integrity and the entire Electronic Election management using a software / set of software along with database / databases managed by the TCS group. There was no reply. In the most recent event, it has come to light that the access to the database has been toyed with and, it seems that the changes to access rights of statutory authorities like the Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) were made without the knowledge of the Election Commissioners.

EROs are the only user category statutorily empowered to add/delete electors in the electoral roll. That detrimental changes were made to their access rights and even then, electors were freely added and deleted from the roll is an act of serious crime, perhaps even treason.

As concerned and technically aware citizens, we cannot overlook or unsee the glaring possibilities of a “super user” script running amok on the back end or a “special user” category being created and awarded to illegitimate individuals.

In the first case, it is safe to say the script will destroy the database integrity, creating orphan records, unsupported data nodes and even fully broken links across various tables. It is also safe to say the illegitimate data links may have been established with “external databases” entrusted by the citizens to the government for safe keep. In the second case, the illegitimate users may have further infiltrated into database areas out-of-bound for them and may have

caused irreparable damage to the individual privacy and sovereignty by data infiltration and illegal sharing / copying / export.

Needless to say, the globally accepted General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) practices have taken the stand that the rights of the data belong to the data-subjects and not to the data collectors or processors. It also mandates that the data-subject be intimated prior to its data being used for any purpose other than the one for which it was collected. We are worried all these principles may have been compromised by the TCS team in performing the tasks given to them.

Through this statement we appeal to the TCS to share the facts with the Indian public. It is their right to know and your duty to share. This could be in the form of providing answers to the following questions:

1. Which user categories are implemented in database (DB) management and access control?
2. Who manages the user administration? And who (which offices) perform the roles of proposer->reviewer->approver in database (DB) administration?
3. Who (which offices) perform the roles of proposer->reviewer->approver in user administration including privilege management?
4. In which user category were the judges in Bengal who participated in the SIR exercise given access to the DB?
5. Is the database (DB) access control process at the ECI certified by any world standards organisation? Which world standard does the DB access control process at ECI for all ECI database comply with?
6. When was compliance audit performed and what is the validity period of the certification? Has the process of access administration been audited by any external third party? If yes, did the third-party auditor have valid, active certification from any world standards organisation? Can you share the auditor's report on the administration process and the final evaluation?
7. Does TCS have any active role in administering the data access? At what level is data access controlled? Database / Table / Row / Field
8. Is attribute based access control implemented? If yes, which attributes are controlled?
9. What are the eligibility criteria for a person to be on access control team? Are these criteria published? Who has authorised these criteria?
10. How is the legal compliance of access control verified? Who audits the legal compliance?

11. What is the trigger for audit? Is it a change in ACL or any other database event? Is it periodic? Is it random? When was the last audit of access control done?
12. Which database does the system use? Is the database internationally certified? If yes, which is the certification and what is the validity period of the certificate?
13. Is access controlled through a third party tool? If yes, which is that tool? Is the tool validated and certified by any global standards organisation? If yes, which is the certification and what is the validity period of the certificate?
14. Does the DB access tool connect to the firewall directly? Which is the firewall? Is hardware firewall implemented Or does the DB sit behind only a software firewall Or is it a combination? Can you share the name, type, certification of the firewall?
15. What oversight do the Election Commissioners have on the access control mechanism and process? Who in the ECI or TCS inspects external database connections?
16. How are these external data connections monitored? Do you maintain any traffic log for external connections?

We only hope that TCS satisfactorily answers these questions and come clean if they are to come out of the accusation of being accessory to mass deletions/disenfranchisement of voters that has potential of destroying the very edifice of India's Electoral Democracy.

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