

**FAQs - ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES (EVMS) and Voter Verifiable Paper
Audit Trail (VVPAT)**

Q1. What is an Electronic Voting machine? In what way its functioning is different from the conventional system of voting?

Ans. Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) is an electronic device for recording votes. An Electronic Voting Machine consists of two Units – a Control Unit and a Balloting Unit – joined by a five-meter cable. The Control Unit is placed with the Presiding Officer or a Polling Officer and the Balloting Unit is placed inside the voting compartment. Instead of issuing a ballot paper, the Polling Officer in-charge of the Control Unit will release a ballot by pressing the Ballot Button on the Control Unit. This will enable the voter to cast his vote by pressing the blue button on the Balloting Unit against the candidate and symbol of his choice.

Q2. When was the EVM first introduced in elections?

Ans. EVMs were first used in 70-Parur Assembly Constituency of Kerala in the year 1982.

Q3. How can EVMs be used in areas where there is no electricity?

Ans. EVMs do not require electricity. EVMs run on an ordinary battery assembled by Bharat Electronics Limited/Electronics Corporation of India Limited.

Q4. What is the maximum number of votes which can be cast in EVMs?

Ans. An EVM being used by ECI can record a maximum of 2,000 votes.

Q5. What is the maximum number of candidates which EVMs can cater to?

Ans. In case of M2 EVMs (2006-10), EVMs can cater to a maximum of 64 candidates including NOTA. There is provision for 16 candidates in a Balloting Unit. If the total number of candidates exceeds 16, more balloting units can be attached (one per 16 candidates) up to a maximum of 64 candidates by connecting 4 Balloting Units. However, in case of M3 EVMs (Post 2013), EVMs can cater to a maximum of 384 candidates including NOTA by connecting 24 Balloting Units.

Q6. What will happen if the EVM in a particular polling station goes out of order?

Ans. If an EVM of a particular polling station goes out of order, the same is replaced with a new one. The votes recorded until the stage when the EVM went out of order remains safe in the memory of the Control Unit and it is perfectly fine to proceed with the polling after replacing the EVM with new EVM and there is no need to start the poll

131

Q13. In our country a sizeable section of the population is illiterate. Will it not cause problems for the illiterate voters?

Ans. Voting by EVMs is much simpler compared to the conventional system, where one has to put the voting mark on or near the symbol of the candidate of his choice on the Ballot Paper, fold it first vertically and then horizontally and thereafter put it into the ballot box. In EVMs, the voter has to simply press the blue button on Ballot Unit against the candidate and symbol of his choice and the vote is recorded.

Q14. Is it possible to use EVMs for simultaneous elections for Parliament and State Legislative Assembly?

Ans. Yes. However, during simultaneous elections 2 separate sets of EVMs are required, one for the Parliamentary Constituency and the other for the Legislative Assembly Constituency.

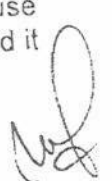
Q15. What are the advantages in using EVMs?

Ans. Advantage of using EVMs:

- It completely eliminates the possibility of casting 'Invalid Votes', which during the paper ballot regime was noticed in large numbers during each election. In fact, in many cases, the number of 'Invalid Votes' exceeded the winning margin, leading to numerous complaints and litigations. Thus EVMs have enabled a more authentic and accurate reflection of the choice of the electorate.
- With the use of EVMs, printing of millions of ballot papers for every election can be dispensed with, as only one ballot paper is required for fixing on the Balloting Unit at each polling station instead of one ballot paper for each individual elector. This results in huge savings by way of cost of paper, printing, transportation, storage and distribution.
- The counting process is very quick and the result can be declared within 3 to 5 hours as compared to 30-40 hours, on an average, under the conventional Ballot paper system.

Q16. With ballot boxes counting is done after mixing the ballot papers. Is it possible to adopt this system when EVMs are used?

Ans. Yes, through the use of a device called 'Totalizer' which can accommodate upto 14 Control Units at a time to aggregate votes without revealing the candidate-wise count of individual EVM used at a particular polling station. However, totalizers are not in use at present as its technical aspects and other related issues are under examination and it is also the subject of a court case.



candidate irrespective of whether the 'blue button' against that candidate or any other candidate is pressed?

Ans. The microchip used in EVMs is a one-time programmable/ masked chip, which can neither be read nor overwritten. Hence, the program used in the EVMs cannot be reprogrammed in a particular manner. Furthermore, the EVMs are stand-alone machines which are not accessible remotely from any network and are connected with any external devices and there is no operating system used in these machines. There is, therefore, absolutely no chance of programming the EVMs in a particular way to select any particular candidate or political party.

Q23. Will it not be difficult to transport the EVMs to the polling stations?

Ans. No. On the contrary, it is easier to transport the EVMs, as compared to ballot boxes as EVMs are lighter, portable and come with custom-made polypropylene carrying cases for ease of portage/transport.

Q24. In many areas of the country, there is no electricity connection and even in those places where there is electricity connection, power supply is erratic. In this scenario will it not create problem in storing the machines without air conditioning?

Ans. There is no need to air condition the room/hall where EVMs are stored. What is required is only to keep the room/hall free from dust dampness and rodents as in the case of ballot boxes.

Q25. In the conventional system, it will be possible to know the total number of votes polled at any particular point of time. In EVMs 'Result' portion is sealed and will be opened only at the time of counting. How can the total number of votes polled be known on the date of poll?

Ans. In addition to the 'Result' button, there is a 'Total' button on Control Unit of EVMs. By pressing this button the total number of votes polled upto the time of pressing the button will be displayed without indicating the candidate-wise result.

Q26. The Balloting Unit has provision for 16 candidates. In a constituency, there are only 10 candidates. The voter may press any of the buttons from 11 to 16. Will these votes not be wasted?

Ans. No. If there are only 10 candidates in a constituency, the 'Candidate' buttons provided at Sl. No. 11 to 16 will be masked at the time of preparation of EVM by Returning Officer. Therefore, there is no question of any voter pressing any of the buttons for candidates 11 to 16.

Q27. Ballot boxes are engraved so as to avoid any scope for complaint of replacement of these boxes. Is there any system of numbering EVMs?

If the elector gives the written declaration referred to in sub-rule (1) of Rule 49MA, the presiding officer shall permit the elector to record a test vote in the voting machine in his presence and in the presence of the candidates or polling agents who may be present in the polling station, and observe the paper slip generated by the printer.

If the allegation is found true, the presiding officer shall report the facts immediately to the returning officer, stop further recording of votes in that voting machine and act as per the direction that may be given by the Returning Officer.

If, however, the allegation is found to be false and the paper slip so generated under sub-rule (1) matches with the test vote recorded by the elector under sub-rule (2), then, the presiding officer shall-

- (i) make a remark to that effect against the second entry relating to that elector in Form 17A mentioning the serial number and name of the candidate for whom such test vote has been recorded;
- (ii) obtain the signature or thumb impression of that elector against such remarks; and
- (iii) make necessary entries regarding such test vote in item 5 in Part I of Form 17C."

Q31. Who loads the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols allotted to contesting candidates in VVPAT unit?

Ans. Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols allotted to them are loaded in VVPAT unit with the help of engineers of the manufacturer i.e. ECIL/BEL.

Q32. Whether test printout of the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols loaded in VVPAT is required?

Ans. Yes. A test printout of the Serial numbers, names of candidates and symbols loaded in VVPAT is required to check with the ballot paper placed on Ballot Unit. Thereafter, one vote to each candidate will be given to check that the VVPAT is printing the paper slips correctly in respect of all the candidates.

Q33. Whether additional Polling Official is required in each polling station to handle the VVPAT unit?

Ans. Yes. Additional polling official is required in each polling station where M2 VVPATs are deployed with the EVMs. The duty of this polling official will be to watch the VVPAT Status Display Unit (VSDU), kept on the presiding officer's table, continuously during the entire poll process.

However, in case of M3 VVPAT no additional polling official is required to handle the VVPAT.

appear on the Ballot Unit is contingent on the names of the candidates and their party affiliation and cannot be ascertained beforehand.

EVMs are allocated to polling station by two stages of randomization process through EVM Tracking Software developed by the Commission. After first level checking of EVMs, first randomization of EVMs is done at the District Election Officer level to allocate them Assembly Constituency-wise in the presence of the representative of political parties. Thereafter, before commissioning of EVMs, second randomisation of EVMs is done at the Returning Officer level to allocate them Polling Station-wise in the presence of candidates/their agents.

Q 39. Is it true that many petition have been filed against EVMs in courts? What is the outcome?

Ans. Yes.

Since 2001, the issue of possible tampering of EVM has been raised before various High Courts. Some of these are mentioned below:

- (i) Madras High Court-2001
- (ii) Kerala High Court-2002
- (iii) Delhi High Court-2004
- (iv) Karnataka High Court- 2004
- (v) Bombay High Court (Nagpur Bench)-2004
- (vi) Uttarakhand High Court - 2017
- (vii) Supreme Court of India - 2017

After detailed analysis of the various aspects of the technological security and administrative safeguards around the use of EVMs, the credibility, reliability and robustness of the EVMs has been validated by the various High Courts in all the cases. In some of these cases, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has also dismissed appeals filed by some petitioners against High Court orders, which were in favour of the EVMs.

For details, refer Status paper on EVM available at http://eci.nic.in/ECI_Main1/E-Book/StatusPaperEVM-Vol2/index.html



