EVM–VVPAT Randomisation in Elections

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Why in News?

First randomisation of EVM–VVPATs completed for Assembly Elections in Assam, Kerala, and Puducherry.

- **EVM Randomisation –** It is a ***digital process of randomly allocating EVMs and VVPATs*** to constituencies and polling stations to eliminate human bias.
- **Aim –**Ensure free, fair, and transparent elections.
- Prevent tampering, bias, or pre-determined allocation of machines.
- Maintain neutrality and credibility of electoral process.
- **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) -** EVM is a device used to electronically record and count votes, designed to replace traditional paper ballots to make the voting process faster, more accurate, and more secure.
- **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)** - Modern EVMs are often paired with VVPAT, which prints a paper slip showing the voter's choice for 7 seconds so they can verify their vote before it drops into a sealed box.
- **Introduced in –**
  - **EVM -** First introduced in 1982 (Kerala); Full Nationwide use: 2004 General Elections
  - **VVPAT** – First introduced in 2013 (Nagaland); Full Nationwide implementation: 2019 General Elections.

  Elections in India are conducted under ***Article 324 of the Constitution****.*

- **Legal Basis –** EVM randomisation is based on *ECI guidelines* (procedural safeguard).

- **Conducted by –** Election Commission of India (ECI).
- **Process – Two Stage Randomisation**
  - **Stage 1:** District → Constituency
    - EVMs randomly allocated from District warehouses → To Assembly Constituencies
  - **Stage 2:** Constituency → Polling Station
    - EVMs further randomized: From constituency level → To specific polling booths
- **Features –**
  - **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)** - Consists of
    - Ballot Unit → Voter presses button
    - Control Unit → Controlled by polling officer
  - **VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail)**
    - Provides paper slip verification of vote
    - Slip visible for 7 seconds to voter
  - **First Level Checking (FLC)**
    - Only EVMs that pass FLC are used
    - Conducted by engineers of *Bharat Electronics Limited and Electronics Corporation of India Limited*
  - **Digital System**
    - Randomisation carried out using *EVM Management System (EMS) software.*
  - **Transparency Measures –** Conducted in presence of *Political party representatives* and lists are shared with: Political parties and Contesting candidates
  - **Storage and Security –**
    - Stored in *Strong Rooms*
    - Security features: Sealed rooms, CCTV surveillance, Guarded by CAPF and Monitoring by candidates/representatives
  - **Counting Safeguard –** VVPAT verification done in: *5 randomly selected polling stations per constituency*

References

1. PIB | EVM VVPAT
2. India Today | EVM VVPAT
3. ECI |EVM VVPAT



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