

MORE VVPAT WILL DELAY COUNTING, SAYS EC

Relevant for: Indian Polity | Topic: Elections, Election Commission and the Electoral Reforms in India Incl. Political Parties

The ISI report recommends that a sample verification of 479 EVMs and VVPATs out of a total 10.35 lakh machines would lift confidence to 99.9936%. But Deputy Election Commissioner Sudeep Jain, who authored the affidavit, said the EC's sample verification for the April-May Lok Sabha polls would cover 4,125 EVMs and VVPATs. "This is 8.6 times the sample size recommended in the ISI report," the EC said.

The Commission, represented by senior advocate Aryama Sundaram and advocate Amit Sharma, submitted that no mismatch had been detected in mock polls or in the verification of VVPAT slips carried out at 1,500 polling stations till date. The affidavit said increased VVPAT slip counting would require extensive training and capacity building of election officials in the field. The process is conducted in specially erected VVPAT counting booths under the close monitoring of the returning officer and direct oversight of the observer.

The EC said its confidence in EVM-VVPATs is sourced from their secure designs, elaborate procedural safeguards adopted for their usage, and finally the fact that there have been zero errors in sample verifications so far.

Checks at three levels

It said it undertakes a three-level check on EVM-VVPATs prior to elections.

"Each and every EVM and VVPAT is checked once by slip verification during first level check. Thereafter, 5% of the EVMs are selected at random and subjected to higher scrutiny through a mock poll along with slip verification of 1,200 votes for 1%, 1000 votes for 2% and 500 votes for 2% of EVMs," the affidavit said.

The checks are done in the presence of the representatives of political parties and candidates.

EVMs and VVPATs are subjected to a second mock poll along with slip verification at the time of setting of candidates on the EVMs in the presence of candidates or their representatives.

A third mock poll is undertaken with slip verification of at least 50 votes on EVMs and VVPATs on the day of the election in the presence of polling agents.

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