



Tallying of VVPAT with EVMs

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The Supreme Court has directed the **Election Commission** to respond to a plea that the counts from Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) units should be **cross-verified in at least 30% randomly chosen polling stations** in each Assembly and Lok Sabha constituency.

- At present **only 10% of the VVPAT** and vote counts from EVMs are cross verified.
- Apart from increasing the mandatory tallying of VVPAT with EVMs, the SC issued notice to EC on **two other related issues**:
 - Directions to make it **mandatory for Returning Officer** to order **hand-counting of all the VVPAT slips** of every polling station where the margin of victory is very narrow, **less than 3%**.
 - Making it **mandatory for the poll panel** to ask Returning Officer to order **hand-counting of all VVPAT slips** of all the polling stations where the discrepancy between the machine-counting total and the hand-counting total in **respect of the 5% sample EVMs taken together is more than 1%**.

Background

- The Supreme Court in its judgment in **Subramanian Swamy versus ECI, 2013**, had held that it was imperative that elections held through EVMs ought to implement a mechanism of voter verifiable paper audit trails so that the **voter can satisfy himself that his vote was accurately recorded**.
- The mechanism for random cross-verification of EVM and VVPAT counts was placed in order to **detect any technological mischief or mal-programming of EVMs**.

Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail

- VVPAT is an **independent verification printer machine** and is attached to electronic voting machines. It allows voters to verify if their vote has gone to the **intended candidate**.

- When a voter presses a button in the EVM, a paper slip is **printed through the VVPAT**. The slip contains the **poll symbol** and **name of the candidate**. It allows the voter to verify his/her choice.
- After being visible to the voter from a glass case in the **VVPAT for seven seconds**, the ballot slip will be cut and dropped into the **drop box in the VVPAT** machine and a beep will be heard.
- VVPAT machines can be **accessed by polling officers only**.