

FAQs - Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)

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

Ans. 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 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 press the Ballot Button. 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 manufactured in 1989-90 were used on experimental basis for the first time in 16 Assembly Constituencies in the States of Madhya Pradesh (5), Rajasthan (5) and NCT of Delhi (6) at the General Elections to the respective Legislative Assemblies held in November, 1998.

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

Ans. EVMs run on an ordinary 6 volt alkaline battery manufactured by Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore and Electronic Corporation of India Ltd., Hyderabad. Therefore, even in areas with no power connections, EVMs can be used.

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

Ans. EVMs can record a maximum of 3840 votes. As normally the total number of electors in a polling station will not exceed 1500, the capacity of EVMs is more than sufficient.

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

Ans. EVMs can cater to a maximum of 64 candidates. There is provision for 16 candidates in a Balloting Unit. If the total number of candidates exceeds 16, a second Balloting Unit can be linked parallel to the first Balloting Unit. Similarly, if the total number of candidates exceeds 32, a third Balloting Unit can be attached and if the total number of candidates exceeds 48, a fourth Balloting Unit can be attached to cater to a maximum of 64 candidates.

Q6. What will happen if the number of contesting candidates in a constituency goes beyond 64?

Ans. In case the number of contesting candidates goes beyond 64 in any constituency, EVMs cannot be used in such a constituency. The conventional method of voting by means of ballot box and ballot paper will have to be adopted in such a constituency.

Q7. What will happen if the EVM in a particular polling station goes out of order?

Ans. An Officer is put on duty to cover about 10 polling stations on the day of poll. He will be carrying spare EVMs and the out-of-order EVM can be replaced with a new one. The votes recorded until the stage when the EVM went out of order will be safe in the memory of the Control Unit and it will be

sufficient to proceed with the polling after the EVM went out of order. It is not necessary to start the poll from the beginning.

Q8. Who has the devised the EVMs?

Ans. The EVMs have been devised and designed by Election Commission in collaboration with two Public Sector undertakings viz., Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bangalore and Electronic Corporation of India Ltd., Hyderabad after a series of meetings, test-checking of the prototypes and extensive field trials. The EVMs are now manufactured by the above two undertakings.

Q9. What is the cost of the machines? Is it not too expensive to use EVMs?

Ans. The cost per EVM (One Control Unit, one Balloting Unit and one battery) was Rs.5,500/- at the time the machines were purchased in 1989-90. Even though the initial investment is somewhat heavy, this is more than neutralised by the savings in the matter of printing of ballot papers in lakhs, their transportation, storage etc., and the substantial reduction in the counting staff and the remuneration paid to them.