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**News: Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)**

- Recently, the **Supreme Court announced that it would soon address petitions for 100% verification of Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips.**

**Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) Machine**

- The **Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) Machine is attached to the ballot unit of the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), and provides visual verification for the vote cast by a voter by printing a slip of paper with the voter's choice on it.**
- The **slip of paper with the candidate's details is briefly displayed for verification behind a glass window, giving the voter 7 seconds, before dropping into a compartment below.**
- **Voters are not allowed to take the VVPAT slip home as it is used to verify votes in five randomly selected polling booths.**
- The **concept aims to enhance trust in the voting process by enabling physical verification of electronically cast votes, reassuring both voters and political parties about the accuracy of their votes.**

## **Reason for Introduction**

- The concept of the VVPAT machine was initially proposed in 2010 during a meeting between the Election Commission of India (ECI) and political parties to enhance transparency in the EVM-based polling process.
- Following prototype preparation, field trials were conducted in Ladakh, Thiruvananthapuram, Cherrapunjee, East Delhi, and Jaisalmer in July 2011.
- It led to the approval of VVPAT by an expert committee of the ECI in February 2013.

## **Legal Aspect**

- In 2013, the Conduct of Elections Rules, 1961 was amended to allow for a printer with a drop box to be attached to the EVM.
- The VVPAT was first used in all 21 polling stations of the Noksen Assembly constituency of Nagaland in 2013, leading to its phased introduction decided by the ECI, with 100% adoption by June 2017.

## **Supreme Court's Views on VVPAT**

- In *Subramanian Swamy vs Election Commission of India Case, 2013*, the Supreme Court mandating VVPATs for transparent elections, compelling government funding for their implementation.

- In 2019, a petition was moved to the SC asking for a minimum 50% randomised VVPAT slips to be counted.
- However, the Election Commission of India (ECI) raised concerns regarding the challenges posed by counting 50% of VVPAT slips, including a potential delay of 5-6 days in declaring election results and infrastructure limitations such as the availability of manpower.