Electors Photo Identity Card Number

Why in News?

West Bengal Chief Minister has accused the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** of facilitating voter duplication by allowing the **same Electors Photo Identity Card (EPIC) numbers** for multiple voters across different states.

- The ECI has denied any electoral malpractice, attributing the issue to legacy data errors before the introduction of **ERONET (Electoral Roll Management System).**

What is an EPIC Number?

- **About:** The EPIC number, introduced in 1993 under the **Registration of Electors Rules, 1960**, is a **10-digit alphanumeric voter ID** number issued by the ECI to each registered voter. It is designed to **prevent voter impersonation and electoral fraud.**
- **Issuance and Digital Management:** The EPIC number is generated via **ERONET**.
  - ERONET is a **web-based platform for election officials** to manage registration, migration, and deletion of names from electoral rolls, automating the electoral roll process in multiple languages and scripts.
- **Importance:** It serves as a **unique identifier** linking a voter to their **photo, constituency, and polling station**.
  - A mismatch in EPIC records could lead to voter disenfranchisement or manipulation.
- **EPIC Duplication Issue:** ECI admitted that duplicate EPIC numbers occurred due to manual data entry and decentralized systems before ERONET.
- **ECI Stance on EPIC Issue:** ECI clarified that EPIC numbers alone don't determine voting eligibility, voters can only vote at their registered polling station. Even with identical EPIC numbers, demographic details, polling booths, and constituencies are unique across states.
  - The ECI assured that **ERONET 2.0** would be updated to eliminate duplicate EPIC numbers.
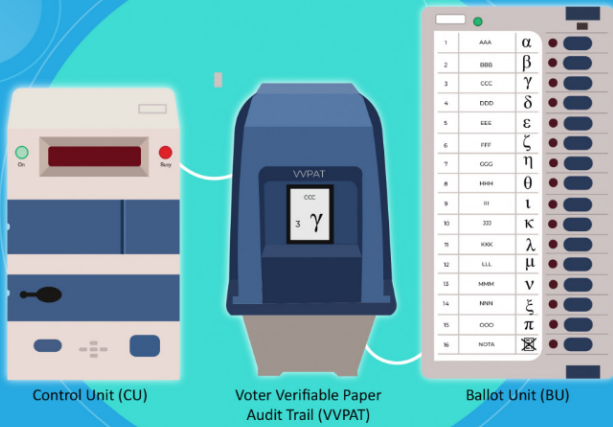
Electronic Voting Machine

- **EVM (Electronic Voting Machine)** is a device used to electronically record and count votes in elections. The Indian EVM, also known as **ECI-EVM,** consists of Ballot Unit (BU), Control Unit (CU) and the later added **Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).**
  - The CU, operated by polling officials, and the BU, where voters cast their votes. VVPAT is a system linked to the EVMs, allowing voters to verify that their vote has been correctly recorded.

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EVM / VVPAT THE PRIDE OF INDIAN ELECTIONS

It's Robust, It's Secure

Control Unit (CU)

Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)

Ballot Unit (BU)

HOW TO CAST YOUR VOTE

Ready to Vote
The Polling Officer 3 will enable the Ballot Unit while you enter the voting compartment. The 'Ready' light of BU will glow.

Cast your Vote
Press the Blue Button on the Ballot Unit against the name/ symbol of candidate of your choice.

See the Light
The red light against the name/ symbol of candidate chosen will glow.

Verify your Vote
The VVPAT will print & display the ballot slip containing Serial Number, Name and Symbol of the chosen candidate.

Beep Sound
The Beep sound from the Control Unit marks the proper registration of your Vote.

VOTE CAST IN EVM/ VVPAT NEVER GETS INVALIDATED

340+ CRORE VOTERS

132 Assembly Elections

4 Lok Sabha Elections

(used EVMs since 2004)

112+ CRORE VOTERS

26 Assembly Elections

1 Lok Sabha Election

(used EVMs & VVPATs since December 2017)

Election Commission of India
www.eci.gov.in

USED IN OVER 10 LAKH POLLING STATIONS IN LOK SABHA ELECTIONS, 2019

Election Commission of India (ECI)

About

- **Autonomous Constitutional Authority -** Administers Union/state election
  - LS, RS, State LA, the offices of the President and VP
- Estd - **25th Jan1950** (National Voters' Day)

Constitutional Provisions

Part XV - Article 324 to 329

Structure

- 1 Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners **appointed by President**
- **Tenure- 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years,** whichever is earlier
- Retiring ECs – **eligible for further appointment by the govt.**
- **Removal of CEC-** Resolution on the **ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity,** with majority of 2/3rd members present and voting, supported by more than 50% of the total strength of the house

Major Roles and Responsibilities

- Determining Electoral Constituencies
- Preparing/Revising electoral rolls
- Notifying the schedules and dates of elections
- **Registering political parties and granting them the status of national or state parties**
- Issuing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for political parties
- Advising the President on **matters concerning the disqualification of MPs**

Challenges

- Truncated Tenure of CEC
- Executive Influence in Appointments
- Dependence on Centre for Finance
- Lack of Independent Staff

Drishti IAS

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Mains:

Q. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? **(2018)**

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