

Course correction – Paper Chase

The Election Commission must review the use of paper trail machines in the polling process.

The high incidence of **glitches** in the Voter Verifiable paper audit Trail (VVPAT) machines in Monday's by elections should be a major cause of concern for the Election Commission of India. Fresh polling had to be ordered in dozens of booths in Kairana and Bhandara Gondiya in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, respectively, as a **consequence**. Ever since the implementation of the VVPAT system last year, machine **malfunction** and subsequent delays in polling have been recurring issues. Close to 4.2% of the VVPAT machines deployed in the Karnataka Assembly elections this month developed glitches during the testing as well as polling processes. The overall fault rate was as high as 11.6% in the by-elections held in four parliamentary and nine Assembly constituencies on Monday. The ECI has suggested that these machines were more **prone** to malfunctioning due to their **sensitivity** to extreme weather conditions and **exposure** to light. It also blamed the relative inexperience of polling officers handling them, compared to the ballot and control units for the electronic voting machines (EVMs) that have been in use for much longer. The technical committee of the ECI is now faced with a challenge to ensure that the VVPAT machines hold up, with the general election due next year in the hot summer months. The VVPAT was added to the EVM to audit the voter **tallies** stored in the machine. Its universal implementation – which began in the Goa Assembly polls in February 2017 – was **deemed** necessary as many political parties complained about the possible hacking of EVMs. These complaints lacked any basis, but the VVPAT implementation was **hastened** to bring back trust in the election process. In all elections where it has been used, the VVPAT tallies have matched with the EVM counts, but for a **stray** case or two when the VVPAT machine was not reset before polling began.

Inadvertently, the use of these machines, which are **adjuncts** to the ballot and control units of the EVMs, has added to the complexity of an otherwise simple, single programmable chip based system, and **rendered** it prone to more glitches. There is enough **empirical** evidence to show that EVMs have eased polling and helped increase voter **turnout** since being put to use. But in using VVPAT machines to reassure **sceptics** about an election's integrity, the ECI has introduced a new element, and cost, to the process. Considering these challenges, the ECI should consider deploying the VVPAT machines in a limited, statistically significant, **randomly** chosen set of polling booths. This will reduce the possibility of glitches affecting the polling process as well tested machines could be deployed (with enough replacements also handy) to such booths. The current verification process, after all, only involves the counting of VVPAT slips by randomly choosing one booth from each constituency (or segment), and this check should not be affected **drastically** by the new method.

WORD LIST

1. **Glitches** : (error)
Synonym : bug, defect, flaw, hitch, malfunction, mishap, problem, setback, snafu, snag
2. **Consequence** : (result, outcome of action)
Synonym : aftereffect, aftermath, effect, fallout, issue, reaction, repercussion
3. **Malfunction**: (breakdown, failure)
Synonym : fault, bug, defect, flaw, glitch, impairment, slip.
4. **Prone** : (lying down, liable, likely)
Synonym : decumbent, face down, flat, horizontal, level, procumbent, prostrate, reclining, recumbent
5. **Sensitivity** : (responsiveness to stimuli)
Synonym : awareness, feeling, nervousness, sense, subtlety, sympathy, acuteness, delicacy, reactivity, receptiveness, sensation.
6. **Exposure** : (uncovering; putting in view danger)
Synonym : disclosure, hazard, liability, publicity, risk, vulnerability, acknowledgement
7. **Tally** : (count, record, add up)
Synonym : poll, total, account, mark, reckoning, score, summation, tab
8. **Deemed** : (Regard, consider)
Synonym : allow, assume, believe, expect, feel, presume, suppose, suspect
9. **Hastened** : (speed something : hurry)
Synonym : accelerate, expedite, precipitate, quicken, step up, urge, advance, bolt, express, flee
10. **Stray** : (abandoned, wandering)
Synonym : homeless, lost, roaming, roving, vagrant, devious, erratic
11. **Inadvertently** : (carelessly)
Synonym : negligently, recklessly, heedlessly, rashly, badly, inadequately, sloppily
12. **Adjunct** : (addition; help)
Synonym : appendage, accessory, addendum, appendix, appurtenance, associate, auxiliary, complement, detail
13. **Rendered** : (performed, interpreted)
Synonym : accomplished, concluded, done, effected, carried out
14. **Empirical** : (practical)
Synonym : experimental, factual, observational, empiric, experiment, observed, pragmatic, provisional, specular
15. **Turnout** : (group assembling for event) (amount produced)
Synonym : attendance, crowd, number, assemblage, assembly, audience, congregation, gate, gathering, throng
16. **Sceptics** : (iconoclast)(detractor)
Synonym : critic, cynic, dissenter, dissident, heretic, nonbeliever, questioner, radical, rebel, revolutionist, ruiner
17. **Randomly**: (casually)
Synonym : aimlessly, haphazardly, inconstantly incoherently, blindly, incidentally

18. **Drastically** : (terribly, extremely)
Synonym : awfully, badly, decidedly, desperately, dreadfully, exceedingly, extremely, greatly, horribly, intensely, mightily, notoriously, remarkably, seriously, thoroughly, unbelievably
19. **Handy** : (nearby, easy to use)
Synonym : accessible, available, close by, convenient

Course correction – CLEANING UP

A permanent mechanism is needed to review laws and weed out the obsolete ones

Law making is a long and **tedious** process; it appears that unmaking existing laws is an equally **arduous** task. How else does one explain the fact that until three years ago, a huge number of **obsolete** Acts remained in the law books **despite** losing their **relevance** and utility? It has been only in the last three years that nearly 1,800 obsolete laws have been repealed. In the latest round, 235 out-dated Acts and nine pre-Independence **Ordinances** have been **repealed**. These pieces of legislation may have been relevant and necessary at the time they were introduced, but in the absence of a **periodic** review they continue to burden the **statutory corpus**. These laws are **archaic** mainly because the social, economic and legal conditions that required their **enactment** does not obtain today; they are also not in tune with the progress of democracy since Independence. Among the Acts repealed are the **Prevention of Seditious Meeting Act, 1911**, the **Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages (Supplementary) Act, 1932**, and the **Preventive Detention Act, 1950**. The country still has a body of 'anti-terror' legislation as well as preventive detention laws. Although such laws remain in the **statute** books, these particular enactments are **redundant**. Other questionable legal provisions, for example, those on '**sedition**' or exciting disaffection against the state, remain; so do 'adultery' and 'sex against the order of nature'. Such obsolete concepts and notions that underlie law making also require an overhaul.

In a 2014 **interim** report, the first of the four such reports on obsolete laws, the Law commission noted that the panel had been identifying Acts for **repeal** in many of its reports in the past. Its 96th and 148th Reports recommended a good number of such laws. In 1998, the P.C. Jain Commission recommended the withdrawal of a large body of legislation, and also noted that as many as 253 Acts identified earlier for withdrawal still remained on the statute book. None ordinances issued by the governor General between 1941 and 1946, covering subjects such as war injuries, war **gratuities** and collective fines, are being removed from the statute book only now. It is odd, even amusing, that the Howrah Offences Act, 1857, the Hackney Carriage Act, 1879, and the Dramatic Performances Act, 1876, have been in force well into the current century. The problem with not removing archaic laws is that they could be **invoked** suddenly against **unsuspecting** and otherwise law abiding citizens. It is a welcome sign for good governance that the present government is updating and trimming the statute book. Give that legislation is quite a prolific activity, especially in the State Assemblies, it would be advisable to have a permanent commission to review the existing body of law and identify those that require repeal as often as possible.

WORD LIST

1. **Tedious** : (dull, monotonous)
Synonym : annoying, banal, boring, dreary, endless, exhausting, humdrum, laborious, tiresome, tiring, uninteresting
2. **Arduous** : (difficult, hard to endure)
Synonym : backbreaking, burdensome, exhausting, formidable, gruelling, onerous, painful, rigorous, strenuous, tiring, uphill.
3. **Obsolete** : (no longer in use, in vogue)
Synonym : antiquated, archaic, out of date, outmoded
4. **Despite** : (in spite of, regardless of)
synonym : against, even with, in contempt of, even though, although
5. **Relevance** : (Pertinence)
synonym : importance, applicability, purpose, congruity.
6. **Ordinance** : (Law, rule)
synonym : authorization, canon, code, command, decree, dictum, edict, enactment, fiat, mandate, order
7. **Repeal** : (declare null and void), cancellation
synonym : abolish, abrogate, annual, cancel, dismantle, invalidate, lift, nullify, revocation, withdrawal.
8. **Periodic** : (at fixed intervals)
synonym : annual, intermittent, monthly, occasional, recurrent, recurring, repeated, seasonal, sporadic, weekly, yearly, routine, periodical.
9. **Statutory** : (Sanctioned)
synonym : lawful, legal, judicial, rightful
10. **Corpus** : (body of text)
synonym : bulk, collection, compilation, core, mas, entirely, oeuvre, staple, substance, whole
11. **Archaic** : (Very old)
synonym : ancient, antiquated, obsolete, old-fashioned, outmoded, primitive, bygone.
12. **Enactment** : (Playacting), (law, authorization)
synonym : achievement, acting, depiction, execution, impersonation, performance, personation, personification.
13. **Prevention** : (stop, avoidance)
synonym : blockage, deterrent, forestalling, halt, hindrance, impediment, inhibitor
14. **seditious** : (Rebellious)
synonym : anarchistic, bellicose, defiant, disloyal, disobedient, disorderly, dissident, iconoclastic, insurgent, mutinous, radical, rebel.
15. **Statute** : (rule, law)
synonym : act, bill, decree, edict, measure, regulation, assize, enactment, ordinance, percept.
16. **Redundant** : (excessive; repetitious)
synonym : superfluous, unnecessary, bombastic, diffuse, extravagant, inessential, loquacious, padded.

17. **Sedition** : (rebellion)
synonym : insubordination, insurrection, mutiny, treason, agitation, revolt, revolution.
18. **Interim** : (temporary, interval)
synonym : provisional, acting, makeshift, stopgap, improvised.
19. **Overhaul** : (redo, restore)
synonym : fix, improve, modernise, rebuild, reconstruct, re-examine, renew, repair, revamp.
20. **Repeal** : (cancellation (n), declare null and void (v))
synonym : abolition, abrogation, annulment, nullification, revocation, withdrawal.
21. **Gratuity** : (gift, tip)
synonym : bonus, fringe benefit, perk, alms, boon, bounty, largesse, contribution, donation, salve, reward.
22. **Invoke** : (call upon, put into effect)
synonym : appeal to, conjure, adjure, beseech, crave, entreat, implore, petition, plead, request, solicit, summon
23. **Unsuspecting** : (gullible)
Synonym : innocent, confiding, credulous, easy, inexperienced, ingenuous, naïve, off guard, trusting, trustful

SOME IMPORTANT VOCABULARY

1. **Accretion (noun)**
Meaning: growth or increase by the gradual accumulation of additional layers or matter.
Usage: The accretion of sediments in coastal mangroves.
2. **Acumen (noun)**
Meaning: the ability to make good judgements and take quick decisions.
Usage: A gullible young man with little or no business acumen.
3. **Ephemeral (adjective)**
Meaning: lasting for a very short time.
Usage: Fashions are ephemeral: new ones regularly drive out the old.
4. **Garrulous (adjective)**
Meaning: excessively talkative, especially on trivial matters.
Usage: A garrulous old man who chattered like a magpie.
5. **Fetter (noun)**
Meaning: a chain or manacle used to restrain a prisoner, typically placed around the ankles.
Usage: He lay bound with fetters of iron.

6. Inure (verb)

Meaning: accustom (someone) to something, especially something unpleasant.

Usage: These children have been inured to violence.

7. Pejorative (Adjective)

Meaning: expressing contempt or disapproval.

Usage: Permissiveness is used almost universally as a pejorative term.

8. Tirade (noun)

Meaning: a long, angry speech of criticism or accusation.

Usage: She rounded on Nathan with a devastating tirade.

9. Yoke (noun)

Meaning: a wooden crosspiece that is fastened over the necks of two animals and attached to the plough or cart that they are to pull.

Usage: The horses were loosened from the yoke.

10. Umbrage (noun)

Meaning: offence or annoyance.

Usage: She took umbrage at his remarks.

11. Abysmal (adjective)

Meaning: extremely bad; appalling

Usage: some of the teaching was abysmal.

12. Tawdry (adjective)

Meaning: showy but cheap and of poor quality

Usage: she had cheap, tawdry rings on her fingers.

13. Dross (noun)

Meaning: something regarded as worthless; rubbish.

Usage: sometimes it's possible to find a little gem amongst the mass-produced dross.

14. Ardour (noun)

Meaning: great enthusiasm or passion.

Usage: she was unaccustomed to being kissed with such ardour.

15. Insouciant (adjective)
Meaning: showing a casual lack of concern
Usage: he had an insouciant attitude to their money problems.
16. Dulcet (adjective)
Meaning: (especially of sound) sweet and soothing (often used ironically).
Usage: record the dulcet tones of your family and friends.
17. Desiccate (Verb)
Meaning: remove the moisture from (something), typically in order to preserve it.
Usage: We can use the desiccated coconut for cooking.
18. Pellucid (adjective)
Meaning: translucently clear.
Usage: mountains reflected in the pellucid waters.
19. Pariah (noun)
Meaning: an outcast.
Usage: they were treated as social pariahs.
20. Taciturn (adjective)
Meaning: (of a person) reserved or uncommunicative in speech; saying little.
Usage: after such gatherings she would be taciturn and morose.
21. Perfunctory (adjective)
Meaning: (of an action) carried out without real interest, feeling, or effort.
Usage: The guards gave a perfunctory look up and down the carriage.
20. Transient (adjective)
Meaning: lasting only for a short time; impermanent.
Usage: A transient post-war baby boom.
21. Reprobate (noun)
Meaning: an unprincipled person.
Usage: He had to present himself as more of a lovable reprobate than a spirit of Corruption.
22. Libertine (noun)
Meaning: a person, especially a man, who freely indulges in sensual pleasures without regard to moral principles.
Usage: His image as an unbridled libertine is a total myth.
23. Tractable (adjective)
Meaning: (of a person) easy to control or influence.
Usage: She has always been tractable and obedient, even as a child.

24. Sedulous (adjective)

Meaning: (of a person or action) showing dedication and diligence.

Usage: He watched himself with the most sedulous care.

25. Intrepid (adjective)

Meaning: fearless; adventurous (often used for rhetorical or humorous effect).

Usage: The intrepid band braved a precipitous mountain track.

26. Morose (adjective)

Meaning: sullen and ill-tempered.

Usage: She was morose and silent when she got home.

27. Demur (verb)

Meaning: raise objections or show reluctance.

Usage: Normally she would have accepted the challenge, but she demurred.

28. Equipoise (noun)

Meaning: balance of forces or interests.

Usage: This wine represents a marvelous equipoise of power and elegance

29. Garrulity (Noun)

Meaning: excessive talkativeness, especially on trivial matters.

Usage: They were irritated by his ungovernable garrulity.

30. Arrant (Adjective)

Meaning: complete, utter

Usage: What he is talking is arrant nonsense!

*“If you focus on Results
You will never Change
If you focus on Change
You will get Results”*