

EVMs Win

Politicians making wild allegations against EVMs totally fail to back these up

This weekend, a challenge issued by the Election Commission to doubters to prove that electronic voting machines could be tampered with ended predictably: no one took up the challenge. Thus parties like BSP and AAP whose leaders have loudly cried EVM tampering stand exposed as sore losers, who would do well to introspect rather than blame the machine post-elections.

EVMs have been an important instrument in strengthening Indian democracy. The credit for their introduction should go to EC which successfully manages the monumental task of conducting



elections in a country with about 850 million registered voters. Elections in the era prior to EVMs were often marred by booth capturing. On occasions, the number of invalid votes exceeded the margin between the first and second spots thereby vitiating the electoral process. These problems have been overcome by the introduction of EVMs. Electoral reforms

are an ongoing process and we are on the threshold of the next big improvement. VVPAT, or voter verifiable paper audit trail, was used in some constituencies in the recent assembly elections. With NDA government ready to financially back this change, the next general election is expected to be conducted using VVPATs.

India's political parties have a responsibility to support EC efforts to enhance the integrity of the electoral process. Three general elections and numerous assembly elections have been conducted using EVMs. A reduction in the incidence of polling related violence has been one of the many benefits of this reform. Instead of trying to undermine this reform and campaigning for the resurrection of a paper based manual system, political parties should work with EC to bring about further reforms. A meaningful debate on electoral funding, for example, needs ideas from political parties.