THE NEED OF REMOTE VOTING MACHINE IN INDIAN VOTING SYSTEM

Sushil Barman

Independent Scholar

Abstract

A day will come when the general public will not have to go to their polling stations to cast their votes. With the help of such a mobile phone, we can buy and sell goods and make money transactions. If we can cast our vote with the help of mobile phones then 100 percent people of India will be able to cast their own democratic rights. As an example it can be said that Estonia is a country in Europe where the general public can cast their vote through the internet. Alternatively, this voting system is in place in Switzerland and France through a pilot project. Some states in the United States and the Australian state of New South Wales allow members of the armed forces and the disabled to exercise their democratic rights through e-voting. So in terms of time the Election Commissioner of India has to go through the e-voting system if not today or tomorrow. Because the number of voting can be increased through this system. There is no more mentality of leaving your work and standing in long queues for hours at the polling station to cast your vote. So the best way to do this is e-voting system.

Keywords*- Polling stations, Transaction, E-voting, Election etc.*

Introduction

India is a third world developing country. In terms of geographical area, India is the largest country in South Asia and the seventh largest country in the world. On the other hand, in terms of population, this country is the second largest in the world and the largest democratic country in the world. India has 28 states and nine union territories. There are also 22 constitutionally recognized official languages. Conducting elections in India for such diversity is a challenge. British former Prime Minister **Winston Churchill** said that "**If independence is granted to India, it will be lost in political squabble"**. Election Commission of India was established on **25th January 1950** after the independence of India, and Election Commissioner's main target was free and fair elections. As a result, adult citizens of India can freely exercise their right to vote. For that, the members of the

Constituent Assembly declared their determination to establish India as a democratic state in the preamble of the Indian Constitution. In line with this declaration, **Article 326**, **part-xv** of the Constitution recognized the principle of adult suffrage.

A democracy in a country like India can only succeed when people can freely exercise their opinions irrespective of **caste, religion, caste, gender**. The Election Commissioner started his journey by conducting India's first general elections from 1951 to 52 and successfully completed the 2019 elections. The Election Commission has completed this long journey in terms of time through various governments such as the **61st Amendment Act in 1988** which reduced the voting age from 21 years to 18 years. Again in 1989, by amending the Representation of th**e People Act of 1951 on 15th March**, the use of **Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)** started. But despite this the voting rate of India was not increasing relatively. The reason for this increase in the number of votes is that:-Migrant workers from India's Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal leave their real homes in search of better livelihoods they passed in other major cities including **Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Chennai** They work as day laborers in extremely difficult and adverse conditions for almost a pittance and without any social security. Where they are employed as laborers doing maintenance work, pulling **rickshaws**, and **other menial jobs**. And they cannot vote in their own centers.

In this context, various social organizations in India have been demanding voting rights for migrant workers for a long time. As a result, the Supreme Court of India in a ruling in 2015 issued guidelines for undertaking voting initiatives for migrant workers. And based on these guidelines, the Election Commissioner in India formed a committee. The committee made various proposals such as voting by postal system and voting through Internet system, also allowing voting at any polling station before the polling process is completed. None of the recommendations of this committee was found acceptable to the Election Commissioner because there are some errors in this proposal. So the Election Commissioner took the initiative to adopt a new innovative method, According to the Election Commissioner of **Electronic Voting Machine (E.V.M)**, if this system is introduced, there will be a revolutionary change in the electoral system of India and the voting percentage will increase.

How do Remote Electronic Voting Machines work?

The RVM was developed with the assistance of **Bharat Electronics limited (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL).** We see RVM as the latest reformulation

of **EVM**.The election commission says the RVMs can handle multiple constituencies from a single remote pulling booth. The voter will have to register online or offline for a remote voting facility. This has to be done within a pre-notified time with the concerned returning officer of their home constituency. Once the voter is verified and marked eligible for remote voting. A multi-constituency remote pulling station will be set up in the area where they are currently staying. The RVMs will have the same security system and voting experience as the electronic voting machine. The modification in this RVMs is that of an electronic ballot display with candidates and symbols instead of a fixed ballot paper sheet. When the voter can scans his or her constituency in the presence of the presiding officer at the station their respective constituency and candidates list will appear on the RVM display. As for counting the votes the electronic system will also count and store the votes for each candidates in a constituency.

Need of RVM in present day context of India:

Section 19 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 states that a person may be registered as a voter in a constituency where he is ordinarily resident. If he wants to register as a voter in another constituency then his name should be deleted from the previous list. On polling day the voter has to vote again in the registered constituency.

As a result of this system, if we look at the last few Lok Sabha statistics of India, it can be seen that the voting percentage rate is low rather than increasing day by day. The reasons for this can be said as students move from one city to another city or from one state to another state for higher education. Again, married women move elsewhere due to marriage. The largest section of them abstaining from voting is the migrant workers who are in large numbers in India. They migrate for work in other states as laboure and cannot vote in their own polling stations on polling day. Because they don't come to vote for fear of losing their jobs and sometimes the employers of migrant workers don't want to let them go because they think they will loss their jobs. As a result, a large number of migrant workers are prevented from exercising their political rights. And as a result, the voting percentage in general elections is decreasing day by day.

According to the 2011 census, there are currently around 45.36 million migrant workers in India. Which is about 37 percent of the total population of India who have moved from one state to another state or to a city or district of their own state.

Also, looking at the 2009 general elections, according to the Election Commissioner's statistics, the number of adult voters was 71.98 crore but the voter turnout was 58.2 percent, And 13 crore abstained from voting. Again in 2014 general election the number of adult voters was 81.4 crore, 66.38 crore voted and 15 crore abstained from voting.

Again in 2019 Lok Sabha General Election statistics show that the number of adult voters in India was 91.2 crore.But after the general election, 67.4% of adult citizens voted. And about 30 crore abstained from voting.

Statistics of 2019 general elections show that 300 million people gave their political right which is 33 percent as voting percentage. This shows that no other developed country has as many adult voters as India. For example, the number of adult voters in America in 2016 was about 180 million, which means that one and a half percent of Indian adults abstained from voting. Twenty of the 193 countries in the United Nations are considered good democracies. These include Germany, Britain, South Korea; etc.The number of votes received by the citizens of all these countries is 28 crores, which means that more Indian citizens abstained from voting. This shows how important the value of 30 crore votes is in India. Hence the Election Commissioner of India has given more importance to this issue so that more Indian citizens can exercise their political rights. Even the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi has urged all citizens of India to cast more votes.

Some views of India's opposition parties about RVM

Some political parties in India have opposed the RVM system among them the oldest political party in India is the National Congress**.**

Congress party started opposing it, The Congress has raised a very big question in this regard and has said that if such a system is brought in, it will undermine the trust of the electoral system. **Jairam Ramesh said" the EC should restore trust in the electroral system with transparency and via honest engagement with the opposition's concerns".**

Another major political party in India is the Trinamool Congress; Trinamool Congress National General Secretary expressed his views in a letter dated 10/1/2023 to the Election Commission.

(I) The first major concern is that of the **implementation of the model code of conduct (MCC)** and the strict monitoring of this conduct. Considering that the migrant voter is residing in a state where no elections are undergoing there is a possibility of manipulation by different political parties in the absence of MCC.

(II) In order to sway voters, the **rulling party in the said state could use coercive measures** not evident to the voting process and **hamper free and fair elections**.

(III) the security of the EVM machine used in this process of remote voting has a chance of running into vulnerability.

(IV) Remote voting would also require the dissemination of election paraphernalia electronically, which would ultimately not reach those domestic migrants who **lack smartphone or computers or a functional interest connection.**

The Challenges Associated With Remote voting:

(I) The first challenge in India is regarding migrant definitions. There is no post definition of the migrant worker in India, due to which a lot of diversity is seen. That's why establishing a definition can be a huge challenge.

(II) Creating awareness about the remote voting facility among poor and illiterate migrant voters.

(III) Bringing in new ideas will be a challenge as citizens have become accustomed to the old system after India's independence.

(IV) Requirement of comprehensive migrant database and enumerating remote voters.

(V) Regional parties will be a particular problem if this system is introduced; this is because the general electorate may be influenced by national parties in states where regional parties are strong but lack influence in other states.

How India's RVM system can be taken forward?

(I) Election Commission has created this new mechanism, it has created a new system, it has been developed only as a prototype.

(II) The test of the prototype will soon be demonstrated by the Election Commission in front of all the political parties of India. How is the performance in front of political parties, political parties will decide what they believe about the whole system regarding the whole idea.

(III) Elections will be held in 9 states in India in the year 2023.The Election Commission can start this entire mechanism as a pilot project in one of these states or in 9 out of 9 states. And if this pilot project is successful then finally it can be used in the year 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

(IV) The apprehensions of the political parties which are being talked about the secrecy, apart from this, it is also necessary to remove those apprehensions which are being talked about

transparency. Because when the rest of the opposition parties will not agree to this whole system, till then there will be no use of taking this system.

(V) This concept is in its initial stage, so we cannot expect to understand jury tamam firsts from this whole concept. Gradually, the Election Commission will introduce new things about this whole concept,Its specialty will be presented in front of us, how the migrants will be covered, all the challenges of that way, and there can be solutions to solve those challenges. Soon the Election Commission can present those measures in front of us, so we should wait a bit before judging the system.

Conclusion:

Finally it can be said that we are moving towards technology fast day by day. As can be said on **17th May 2022** India's **first 5G** service was launched in May. After this, the country's **first 6G** service was launched on **March 23, 2023**, by the hands of the current Prime Minister of India, with a view to 2030.In this context he said: "I'm happy that on the first day of New Year, a remarkable beginning related to **telecom**, **ICT & related innovation** is taking place in India. The 6G testbed has also been launched".

Therefore, the Election Commissioner is moving forward by adopting new methods in keeping with the times. For example, enrollment of adult citizens in **electoral rolls, Corrections, transfers etc** are done online. Linking voter card with Aadhaar card to identify fake voters in voter list. This system makes it easy to identify fake voters and remove them from the electoral roll.E-Voter Card has been arranged so that a citizen's voter card is lost due to any reason so that there is no problem in voting. The Election Commissioner is using information technology for all these activities. So it is necessary to keep pace with the times and introduce RVM by ending the old system. Then if this system is implemented all citizens in India will be able to exercise their political rights without any difficulty. As a result, the objective of the Election Commissioner will be fulfilled **"No voter left behind"**.

References

Mahapatra, Anadikumar,(2019).Bharater Shasonbebosta O Rajniti Porichoy, Kolkata: Suhrid Publication.

Laxmikanth, M. (2020). Indian Polity (2019). Chennai: McGraw Hill Education private limited.

https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/election-commission-says-ready-with-remote-evm-which-will-enable-migrants-to-vote-outside-their-states/article66316385.ect.

https://m.economictimes.com/news/how-to/remote-voting-for-migrants-whats-remote-electronic-voting-machine-how-rvm-works/articles how/9708920.coms? bal=3728

https://www.outlookindia.com/national/explained-election-commission-remote-votng-machnes-how-they-work-why-is-opposition-opposing-rems-news.

https://blog.forumias.com/remote-voting-benefits-and-challenges-explained-pointwise/
https://www.orfonline.org/bangla/India/-migrant-workers/
https://en.m.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Electronic_voting_in_India
https://ndgbu.blogspot.com/2022/04/blog-post_24.html?m=1
https://Bengali.Indianexpress.com/explained/what-are-rvms-and-how-they-will-work-529545
https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/bharat-6g-mission-pm-modi-launches-
india-s-6g-project-official-testbed-123032200493_1. html