

ANDHRA JYOTHY EXPOSE

4000 EVMs have gone “missing” in Andhra Pradesh; some stolen EVMs recovered from “scrap” stores

4000 EVMs missing

Dispatched as additional quota in 2004

Not clear if they reached districts at all!!

District collectors evasive on ‘missing’ EVMs

Have they been misused?

6 EVMs traced in ‘scrap’ stores in Vijayawada

Hyderabad, December 4: There are already many controversies concerning EVMs. There are many doubts about their working. It has also been proved that it is not impossible to alter election results on EVMs. In this backdrop, doubts whether as many as 4000 EVMs exist or not has led to a furore in political circles. This has led to serious doubts whether these EVMs have been used to “favour” some parties or candidates owing to local pressures and other conditions prevailing there.

EVMs have been used nationwide for the first time in 2004 general elections. In Andhra Pradesh, elections to the state assembly were also held simultaneously with Lok Sabha polls in 2004. Then, the Election Commission had allotted two EVMs for each polling station. But..when some district collectors sought some more additional EVMs, the Election Commission complied with the request.

Rangareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Khammam, Srikakulam, East Godavari, Prakasam, Cuudapah and Kurnool districts were given 100 to 300 additional EVMs as per their requirements. This way, an additional quantity of 4,000 EVMs was dispatched to these districts. After 2004, again in 2009, another round of general elections have been conducted to the Parliament and the state assembly.

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<https://www.andhrajyothy.com/mainnewsshow.asp?qry=2010/dec/5/main/5main3&more=2010/dec/5/main/main&date=12/5/2010>

This article is a verbatim English translation of the article published in Andhra Jyothy.

It has been 20 months since general elections have been held. The office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Andhra Pradesh has now developed doubts about the additional EVMs sent to districts in 2004. It began to ask questions: “what happened to those EVMs? Have they been used in elections? If unused, why were they not returned? etc. etc.”

In October this year, the state CEO sent letters to the concerned district collectors asking if the additional EVMs sent to them in 2004 have reached them or not? It has been two months since but there has been no response from district collectors so far. Later, additional CEO sent two more letters to collectors. But, there has been no response from district collectors so far.

Where are they? What happened to them?

As they are unable to account for the additional EVMs procured six years ago, officials are a seriously worried lot. Has the EC been given account of additional 4000 EVMs procured by the state? Have the ‘missing’ EVMs been misused anywhere in 2009 elections under pressure from some quarters? These are doubts being expressed in political quarters.

EVMs are stored in constituencies amid tight security. They are moved to the polling stations just one day before polling. They are handed over to the presiding officers under the supervision of assistant returning officers. Details of EVMs dispatched to different polling stations are recorded.

Some political sources aver that all this happens securely in towns and cities but in rural and remote areas, these are not paid enough attention. So, the officials fear that the missing “additional EVMs’ could be misused by the ruling party leaders by pressurizing polling officials.

Stolen EVMs, from where?

Seven balloting units and 15 control units have been stolen from the store room in the office of the sub-collector, Vijayawada, Krishna

district. Police have recovered six of the ballot units while they were being sold as “scrap.”

There is no trace of 15 control units stolen so far. Local officials are shocked by this incident. When the EVMs supposed to be in safe custody have reached scrap stores, they are left wondering what would be the fate of the missing 4000 additional EVMs supplied in 2004!!

But, officials are consoling themselves saying that they could not have been misused and collectors may have sent them somewhere. If that be so, questions are being raised as to why the collectors are not furnishing information sought by the state CEO. It is learnt that the Election Commission of India (ECI) has also expressed its dismay over the disappearance of the additional EVMs.

Notices to Collector, Krishna district

Election Commission of India has expressed its anger over the stolen EVMs in Krishna district. State chief Electoral Officer Bhanwar Lal has issued notices to the Piyush Kumar, district collector asking him how the EVMs meant to be in safe custody in strong rooms have surfaced in the market. He was instructed to file a complaint and investigate the matter.

Joint Collector Gourav Uppal has stated that the case of stolen EVMs was noticed on 28th last month. He further states that the EVMs used in 2009 general elections have been securely stored in warehouse godowns in Machilipatnam and additional EVMs which came from other districts have been stored in Vijayawada. How many EVMs have vanished from Vijayawada is still being assessed and a detailed investigation is being carried out in this regard, he added. Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO), Vijayawada Dharma Reddy has lodged a complaint last Friday regarding the stolen EVMs in the Suryaraopet police station.