# Legal Case Summary: Association for Democratic Reforms vs Election Commission of India (2024)

Case Title: Association for Democratic Reforms vs Election Commission of India

Citation: 2024 INSC 341

Court: Supreme Court of India

Date of Judgment: 26 April 2024

Bench: Justice Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Dipankar Datta

## Facts of the Case:

- Petitioners challenged the reliability of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT).  
- They sought a return to paper ballots, 100% VVPAT slip counting, and questioned transparency in symbol loading.  
- Alleged modifications and insufficient visibility in VVPAT display raised constitutional concerns.

## Procedural History:

- Similar pleas had been dismissed in the past.  
- Supreme Court consolidated current writ petitions for review.  
- Detailed technical and procedural inputs were taken from the Election Commission of India (ECI).

## Issues before the Court:

1. Whether EVM-VVPAT system is transparent and tamper-proof.  
2. Whether 100% manual VVPAT slip counting is needed.  
3. Whether Rule 49MA is unconstitutional.  
4. Whether returning to paper ballots is necessary.

## Judgment:

- Court upheld EVM-VVPAT integrity and rejected the call to return to paper ballots.  
- Dismissed plea for 100% VVPAT slip counting, upheld 5-slip random count rule.  
- Rule 49MA held valid.  
- Directed limited post-election technical verification.

## Key Legal Findings:

1. EVMs are non-networked, have one-time programmable firmware, and are tamper-proof.  
2. VVPAT system gives 7-second slip visibility to voters, fulfilling right to verify.  
3. No evidence of manipulation found in over 4 crore VVPAT verifications.  
4. Returning to paper ballots deemed regressive and impractical.  
5. Court emphasized facts over speculation to maintain electoral confidence.

## Final Decision:

✅ Writ petitions dismissed  
✅ 5% manual VVPAT verification retained  
✅ Sealing and storing of symbol loading units post-election mandated  
✅ Optional post-election microcontroller audit for top losing candidates allowed  
✅ No fundamental rights violation found  
✅ Court acknowledged but declined to expand manual processes