

A Scene At A Polling Station

Gone are the days of the kings and dictators. Today, democracy, the goddess of freedom, is worshiped in many parts of the world. India is the largest working democracy in the world. Here, general elections are held after every five years. Besides these, mid-term polls cannot be ruled out in a growing democracy. Polling stations are set up at different place in cities, towns and villages. The polling day actually comes like the judgment day. In the last general elections, I went to cast my vote at polling station No.22 in the city. There was seen a long line of voters outside the polling booth. I joined the crowd of voters and started waiting for my turn. The old and young, men and women, had come to cast their votes. Among the voters there could be seen some blind and disabled persons. At some distance, the political parties had set up their booths. They helped the voters in finding out their names and the corresponding number of vote in the list of voters. The polling station was guarded by the police on duty. Inside, an agent of each political party is allowed to be present at the time of polling. There to four polling officers help the presiding officer in carrying out the work. The illiterate and blind voters are helped by presiding officer in casting their votes. Sometimes, there is created a row over the question of impersonation of genuine voters by dummy ones. The presiding officer tries to decide each case on its merit. The polling starts at 7.00 a.m. and continues till 5.00 p.m. At the close, the polling station is wound up and the Electronic Voting Machines (EVM's) are sealed in the presence of all present. The EVM's are then carried to the quarter concerned in the custody of the police on duty. This ends the day full of excitement and hectic activity.