

CHAPTER - IIAREA AND METHODOLOGY

Meerut city is the district head-quarter of one of the most prosperous western districts of Uttar Pradesh. It can be classified as a medium sized city, with a population of 4,17,395.¹

A medium sized town provides an opportunity for the analysis of political process in terms of its complexity. Urbanization not having reached a very high level, such a town stands midway between a city and a rural area. The political process, therefore, is perhaps of the mixed-type, with opportunity to study the process of urbanization closely in greater detail. But the problems of a medium sized town, with limitations of resources and not well-developed institutional infrastructure, are enormous. It is a situation of low capacity in the face of a peculiar mix of problems, providing occasion for an interesting political process.

What is a "medium sized" city? According to K.V. Sundaram the term "medium sized" city is some what elusive to define. In the national context perhaps, the second order cities would qualify for this expression. Generally speaking, the medium sized cities may be taken to include those cities functioning at sub-national levels and serving the spatial

1. Census of India, 1981, (Series 1), Part -II B (i) Primary Census Abstract, General population Tables, (New Delhi, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1983), pp.486-48

sub-systems of the national economy. This would mean that medium sized towns have predominant regional components in their functions".²

Their characteristics may be summarized as follows:

- a) The medium sized cities are characterized by a large proportion of migrants in their population, majority of them in the working age group (15-59 years).
- b) They have distinctly higher growth rates as compared to the smaller towns, e.g., decadal increase (1961-71) for medium sized towns being 37.37 per cent whereas for small towns it is 36.00 per cent. Among the medium sized cities, however, those in a middle size category e.g., (between 1,50,000 and 3,00,000) show a higher growth propensity than those in the other size ranges.³

The medium sized towns of India have a varied mix of activities and play different roles as trade centres, industrial centres, centres of administration or high order Central places. Although no conscious or consistent policy was followed in deliberately fostering secondary activities in them, many of the medium sized towns have absorbed a fair degree of industrialization and have become important industrial centres.⁴ Meerut being an important industrial city

2. Sundaram, K.V., Role of Cities in Attaining a Desirable Population Distribution in the Context of Rapid Urbanisation: A Case Study of Meerut, (Nagoya, United Nations Centre for Regional Development, April, 1974), p.12.

3. Ibid., p. 13.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

of western Uttar Pradesh, shares this characteristic of such towns.

Trade and Commerce in Meerut:

Meerut is one among the nine class I industrial towns of Uttar Pradesh, ranking only next to Kanpur in industrial development. The position was however changed in 1976 when the Gaziabad District was carved out from Meerut district. Meerut district as a result, has become predominantly agricultural.

The notable industries in Meerut include basic ferrous metals, light machinery tools, repairs of rail road equipment, manufacture of bicycles, chemical products, cotton textiles, alcohol, hydro-generated oils, and sugar.⁵

After the partition, the sports goods industry that had chiefly been localized in Sialkot, moved to Meerut city and today it has the pride of place, along with Jullundhar in the Punjab, as the leading manufacturing place for sports goods: nearly 100 sports goods manufacturing units are located in Meerut city, which provides employment to nearly 3,000 people; a sizable proportion of the manufactured items is exported to the Middle East and African countries. Of the total population of 2,83,997 as of 1961 census, 86,358 or 30.4 per cent constituted the working population. But in 1971, proportion of this population was only 28.64 per cent. Thus the employment rate appears to have declined during 1961-71. In the

5. Census of India, 1961, vol. XV, Uttar Pradesh, Part -II, B. i, (Lucknow, Superintendent of Census Operations, 1965), p. 50.

absence of data by Age groups for 1971, no precise reason can be given for this change. Of the total population of 4,17,395 as of 1981 census, 1,10,729 constituted the working population.⁶

Migration:

Considering the flow of population inside the city, we find that it was highest during 1941-51. This appears to be due to the large influx of refugees into the Meerut city in 1947.⁷ Of the immigrants from the districts of the state of Uttar Pradesh in 1951 as many as 1,45,383 are from other districts of Meerut Division and only 22,064 are from other parts of the state.⁸ Of 44,670 immigrants from the adjacent states, 25,814 are from the Punjab and 10,376 are from Delhi. The movement to the city from Punjab (males 7,984, females 3,061) appears to be of semi-permanent type and in more than half of the number of cases men are accompanied by their families.⁹ The remainder of the migration from the Punjab is mostly migration as a result of marriage. 898 males and 1,144 females have moved to Meerut city from Delhi State.

6. Census of India, 1981, Op.cit., pp. 486-487.

7. Sundaram, K.V., Urban and Regional Planning in India, (New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1977), p. 206.

8. Census of India, 1951, District Census Handbook, Uttar Pradesh - Meerut District, Table D-IV, (Lucknow, Superintendent of Census Operations, 1951), p. V

9. Ibid., p. V.

Of the immigrants who have come from territories beyond India, 65,862 were born in Pakistan and 1,097 had their birth place in other territories. Unfortunately, the figures of emigration are not available. According to one source the district lost about 77,000 persons on the balance of migration during 1921-30, while it gained about 13,000 during 1931-40 and 1,12,000 during 1941-50.

The analysis of migration is based on the data from the 1961 census which defines a migrant by his place of birth.¹⁰ In 1961 there were 1.19 lakhs immigrants in Meerut Town constituting about 42 percent of the total population consisting 24 per cent males and 18 per cent females. Although males exceeded the females in this migration stream, their difference was not very much, indicating that a major proportion of the migrants moved with their families. 61 per cent of the immigrants of the city came from Uttar Pradesh itself, 18.7 per cent came from the neighbouring states chiefly from Punjab, Delhi and Rajasthan. In the entire migration stream, 58 per cent of the migrants came from rural areas and 42 per cent from urban areas. Although these figures may seem to indicate that the rural-born migrants out number the urban-born, such a conclusion is not corroborated, if we relate the migration figures to the population size in the rural or urban sector of origin.

10. Census of India, 1961, op.cit., p. V.

Rural born migrants were mainly engaged in 'services' and urban born concentrated in 'trade and commerce' and 'manufacturing'.

The migration flow during 1951-61 to have slowed down due to the lower growth rate of employment opportunities. An increase during 1961-71, is attributed to large scale development of economic activities during this period. In 1971 there were 1,36,520 immigrants in Meerut urban agglomeration constituting about 37.12 per cent of immigrants to the total population of 367,754.¹¹

If we compare the migration flow and the growth rate of employment, we find that both show a positive relationship, which proves that migration takes place mainly due to employment opportunities in the Meerut city.

Literacy Rates

The literacy and educated population in the town consisted of 50.97 per cent in 1981 as compared to 47.40 per cent in 1971. 58.27 per cent of the literate population were males and 42.29 per cent females.¹²

The establishment of Meerut University in 1966 and a Medical College gave a new thrust to education in the Meerut district. There are post-graduate colleges, a medical college, and a net

11. Census of India, 1971, (Series 21), Uttar Pradesh, Part -II- D ii, Migration Tables, (Table D-III and D-IV), (New Delhi, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 1975), p. 2.

12. Census of India, 1981, op.cit., pp. 486-487.

work of nearly 20 Inter-mediate colleges, higher secondary schools, Junior high schools and Primary schools, in the district. Meerut is an established important educational centre of western Uttar Pradesh.

LOCATION AND PROFILE

Growth of Meerut City:

It would be helpful to review the structure of the Meerut Urban Community briefly with some of the evolutionary stages through which the city has passed. Meerut city, the district head-quarters of Meerut district of western Uttar Pradesh, lies at latitude $29^{\circ} 1'$ north and longitude $77^{\circ} 43'$ east with an average elevation of 734.46 feet above the sea level.

The area in which Meerut is situated in the trans-Jamuna tract has the fertile soil of the Gangetic belt, coupled with the excellent irrigational facilities provided by canals, wells and tube wells. The city is located in an agriculturally productive area and one of the most active development corridors of Delhi with close linkages to the national capital and to the Industrial centre in its vicinity.¹³ Its location is nearly the geographical centre of the district bearing the same name, proximity to the national capital endows it with great significance in terms of function and importance. The district is almost rectangular in shape, with Meerut almost in its

13. Sundaram, K.V., Role of Cities in Attaining a Desirable Population Distribution in the Context of Rapid Urbanisation: A Case Study of Meerut, op.cit., p. 17.

geographical centre. The northern and southern borders of the district are 27 and 44 sq. kms., respectively from the city, while the eastern and western borders are at distances of 34 and 47 sq. kms., from it.

The Meerut city lies on the Grand Trunk Road running between Delhi and Dehradun, at a distance of 66 km., north east of Delhi. The proximity of the district to Delhi has influenced almost all the major events of the history of northern India.

Meerut is an ancient city, and is said to be connected with the Chandra Vanshis of the Hindu dynasty. The legendary and ancient capitals of Pandavas and Raja Parikshit - Hastinapur and Parikshitgarh - are situated in Meerut district. Meerut also suffered from the early muslim invasions. It has experienced frequent devastations from the foreign invaders, starting from Timer in (1398 A.D.), who were on their way to Delhi and later this town was ravaged by the Sikhs, the Maharattas and the Rohillas.¹⁴

The Britishers in 1806 choose the area adjacent to this town for stationing their troupes and a contonment grew up almost enveloping the town to its west, north and east. In 1857 Meerut came into prominence as the centre of Indian Mutiny, which led the Britishers to making it an important recruitment base for

14. Meerut: A Gazetteer, being volume IV of the District Gazetters of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. Compiled and Edited by Nevill, H.R., I.C.S., (Allahabad, Superintendent, Government Press, United Provinces, 1904), p. 154.

the army and it became a regimental head-quarter. In 1857, Meerut was the seed-bed of revolution, Mangal Pandey and others for the first time revolted against the British in the contonment of Meerut. Later on, Meerut provided refuge to several members of Sardar Bhagat Singh's group. One of the lieutenants of Subash Chandra Bose's I.N.A., Shah Nawaz Khan belongs to Meerut (originally from Pakisthan Shah Nawaz has settled down here and represented Meerut city in the Parliament till 1967) and has been active in the national politics till his death. Coming to the non-co-operation and civil disobedience movements under Mahatma Gandhi, Meerut once again played an important part commensurate with its past history.

During 1921-22 non-co-operation movement, Meerut district contributed a large share to the non-violent movement against British rule. The leading Zamindar Chawdry Raghbir Narain Singh, renounced his title of Rai Bahadur and courted imprisonment followed by many other compatriots. While other parts of the country suffered a relapse during the 1923-25 phase, Meerut still kept active. In 1925 September after the 'Kakori' train dacoity case on 9th August 1925, which was a great daring act of the revolutionaries, large scale arrests were affected in which Vishnu Saran Dublish was arrested from

Meerut city and ultimately sentenced for life in the Andamans till 1937.¹⁵

Lala Lajpath Rai founded Kumar Ashram in 1924 in Meerut city, with the aim of upliftment of Harijan students. When Mahatma Gandhi started his tour to propagate the importance of Khadi and to collect funds for it in 1927, Meerut contributed much more than its quota and earned the reputation of having the head-quarters of Gandhi Ashram, which played an important role during freedom struggle. Acharya Kriplani stayed for a long time in the Gandhi Ashram.¹⁶ The Meerut conspiracy case was launched by the British in 1928 as a comprehensive measure against the growing threat of liberal left-wing movement in India.¹⁷ On the early morning of March 20, 1929, the arrests of thirty one labour leaders were carried out simultaneously in Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Lahore, Meerut and other places. Soon there after the accused were taken to Meerut, where they awaited the beginning of their trial.¹⁸ The famous Meerut conspiracy case occupies a place of pride in the history of freedom struggle.

-
15. Field interview was conducted with Vishnu Saran Dublish , Meerut, 22-1-1977, which has been used extensively in the analysis in later chapters.
 16. Field interview was conducted with Prof. Suda, J.P., Meerut, 20-6-1978.
 17. Ghose, Pramita, Meerut conspiracy case, (Calcutta, Papyrus, 1978), p. V.
 18. Ibid., p. 91.

The civil disobedience movement of 1930-32 was a signal for non-violent revolution for the national freedom. There was wide awakening among women also, who discarding their age old Purda for the first time, came out in the public life to picket the foreign cloth shops under the leadership of Urmila Devi, Prakashwati Sud, the two prominent women leaders of Meerut. Pandit Pyarelal Sharma well known for his sacrifices, was a prominent congress leader from Meerut city.¹⁹ Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad was imprisoned in Meerut Jail for nearly six months.

Again in 1942 Quit India and in 1947 freedom movements Meerut leaders played a significant role and contributed more than their share in the fight for country's independence. Thus Meerut has been an active centre of India National movement leaving deep imprint on its political process and leadership recruitment.

Meerut City after Independence:

The achievement of Independence in 1947 caused manifold changes in the urban landscape. Meerut being the border district of the Punjab, having similar cultural, economic

19. "Before the non-co-operation movement of 1921, there were no branches of the Congress Party in rural areas, the only branches were in the cities and they were led by eminent lawyers..... Pyarelal Sharma, a Brahmin and a lawyer from Meerut City was the father of the congress organisation", Brass, P.R., op.cit., p. 153.

and environmental conditions, a large number of refugees came to Meerut. The rehabilitation department chalked out several schemes for them including residential-cum-shopping colonies and small scale projects.

Zamindari abolition in July 1952 also helped the growth and expansion of Meerut city. A large number of ex-Zamindars migrated to the city and established their business and entered into services and professions. The better standard of living with more amenities of life in cities and the deteriorated law and order situation in rural areas, also made the rural people, specially of sound economic background, to settle in the city, with the result new mohalls developed in Meerut City.²⁰

During the post-Independence period, the impetus for the growth of Meerut city came with the influx of refugees from Pakistan. The city which was till 1941 ranked seventh in size among the cities in Uttar Pradesh, absorbed a sizable immigrant population after 1947, and leapt to the sixth rank by 1951. Until then, it was functioning mainly as a service centre to a vast agricultural hinter-land, apart from functioning as administrative head quarters of the district. Later the secondary and tertiary sectors of the urban economy,

20. Singh, Madhu Sudan., "Evolution of Meerut", National Geographical Journal of India, vol. XI, No. 3, 4, (1965), p. 157.

expanded considerably and the town became a centre of industry, trade, and commerce. With the spurt of economic activity during the Plan periods, there has also been considerable growth in the social and cultural infrastructure of the town. Special mention in this context can be made of the establishment of Meerut University and a medical college and the two Chambers of Commerce.

In keeping with the growth in activities, the town grew spatially too, encompassing the growth of Kankar Khera township and the Pratapur industrial area. Pratapur is planned as a big industrial estate and there is great growth potential of industrial activity at Kankar Khera. A bench of the Allahabad High Court is also proposed to be set up at Meerut city which will bring it on the judicial map of the State.

Meerut has been mainly a service town. The Military cantonment provides a major share of total employment. The cantonment is the biggest in Uttar Pradesh, housing several regimental centres. The city is the Head quarters of the commissioner's Division, consisting of five districts of western Uttar Pradesh. These developments in the post-Independence period has brought about a marked change in the socio-economic and occupational structure of the city population. While the forces of modernization have helped the emergence of a very verile middle-class with all its social and political characteristics. The government

sponsored programmes have brought in a new class of white collar contractors and middle-men as an important factor. These developments have also attracted even larger population from the rural areas joining the town population, providing a definite character to the political process of the town.

Demographic growth:

The population of Meerut city increased from 1,18,539 in 1901 to 4,17,288 in 1981, in eight decades (Details in Table No. II.1). The decadal variation of population does not seem to have been perceptible until 1931. The demographic trends reveal a watershed in 1931, a sudden spurt between 1941 and 1951, a relative stationary position during the next decade, and a tendency to rise again during 1961-71. The sudden spurt between 1941 and 1951 is due to the massive influx of refugee population from west Pakistan. The second phase of growth witnessed during 1961-71 corresponds to the period of expansion of the secondary and tertiary activities in the urban economy, which has been discussed above. Meerut city has an area of 39.0 sq. km., containing a total population of 4,17,395 which accounts for about half of the urban population of the district. The population has shown an increase of 29.49 per cent between 1901 and 1961.²¹ The

21. Census of India, 1961, op.cit., p. 45.

TABLE II.1
Population Growth of Meerut City
during 1901-1981

Year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971	1981
Population	1,18,539	1,16,631	1,22,609	1,36,709	1,69,298	2,33,188	2,83,997	3,67,754	4,17,288
Rise in population	--	-1,908	+ 5,978	+14,100	+32,589	+63,890	+50,809	+83,757	+49,534
Percent Decade variation	--	(-1.61)	(+5.13)	(+11.5)	(+23.83)	(+37.74)	(+21.79)	(+29.49)	(+47.80)

Source:

- (1) Census of India, 1961, vol. I, Part -IIA(i) General Population Total, (Lucknow, Superintendent of Census Operations, 1965), p. 45.
- (2) Census of India, 1981, Series -1 India, paper 2 of 1981 Provisional population Totals - Rural - Urban Distribution, (New Delhi, Registrar General and Census Commissioner for India), p. 66.

municipal area is at present divided into 39 municipal wards and the total number of house holds is of 56,641. Municipal ward-wise distribution of population is given in Table II.2.

Socio-cultural composition of Meerut City:

Meerut city is a melting pot of Hindu-Muslim and immigrant cultures. It has been the centre of Mughal and Kamboh Nawab's civilization and exhibit some vital features in this regard. The Jama Masjid is said to have been built on 410 Hijri by Hasan Mahdi, the Wazir of Mahmud of Ghazni and was repaired by Humayun. The Mosque presents a picture of old muslim culture. There are two dargahs which occupies prominent place among the muslims here. The dargah of Shah Peer has been famous, where a religious fair takes place every year in the month of Ramzan, and the Shrine is supported from the proceeds of the revenue free village of Bhagwanpur. The dargah of Makhdum Shah Wilayat stands near the collector's office and is said to have been built by Shanab-ud-din-Ghori. The maqbara of Abu Muhammad Khan Kombh, the founder of the Kamboh gate, was built by members of his family in 1688 A.D. There is another maqbara of the same family containing the remains of Abu Yar Muhammad Khan, erected in 1039 Hijri, as recorded in an Arabic and persian inscription on the northern arch of the doorway. The karbala was built about 160 A.D. There are two large Imambaras, one near the Kamboh gate, and another in the Zahidi muhalla, a large mosque built by Nawai-Khairandesh Khan in the Saraiganj, and besides these

TABLE II. 2

Wardwise Distribution of Population of Meerut City, 1971

Ward	Population	Schedule Caste	Seat (General/Reserved)
1	7536	417	General
2	6248	288	"
3	7585	443	"
4	6527	137	"
5	6644	2305	Reserved
6	7317	583	General
7	6160	366	"
8	6558	146	"
9	6034	458	"
10	7186	256	"
11	7186	478	"
12	7238	41	"
13	6088	1146	"
14	7155	14	"
15	6057	56	"
16	6933	502	"
17	7359	311	"
18	7619	257	"
19	7818	167	"
20	7225	80	"
21	6154	442	"
22	6811	2309	Reserved
23	7471	320	General
24	7429	1475	"
25	7987	34	"
26	6831	132	"
27	6231	46	"
28	7802	91	"
29	7806	555	"
30	6233	-	"
31	6058	1	"
32	6759	7	"
33	6204	202	"
34	7930	649	"
35	7194	629	"
36	7615	1215	"
37	6180	-	"
38	7681	57	"
39	7274	3831	Reserved
<hr/>			
Total	270990	20566	General 36 wards Reserved 3 wards

Source

Data collected from Meerut Municipality.

there are nearly 100 other mosques. The maqbara of Salar Masaud, however, should not be passed over, as it is one of the oldest buildings in the town, having been erected by Qutb-ud-din Aibak in 1194 A.D. On every Friday thousands of muslims attend their weekly Namaz in various mosques of the city. The population of muslims is distributed in different municipal wards. As is a well known, a large section of muslims are illiterate and work as artisans, workers and labourers. Hindu culture has deep roots here. The Baleswar Nath temple is the oldest in Meerut district. The largest temple in the town is the Manohar Nath temple which is said to have been built in the reign of Shajahan. Another old temple is that of Maheshwar, which according to the popular tradition was constructed by some of the direct descendants of the Pandavas. On Abu Nala banks there are numerous small temples and Dharma Salas and besides there are nearly 100 temples.

Qutb-ud-din Aibak destroyed the famous temple of Nauchandi Devi, which stood about a mile to the East of the city and erected on its site a dargah which stands between the Hapur and Garhmuktesar road and forms the scene of a great fair, which is held **annually** at the end of March or beginning of April. This fair has its origin in a religious ceremony in honour of the new moon, which lasts for two days only. Another small fair is held at the suraj kund after the Holi, and is known as the Tilendi Mela. After the Independence, Meerut being the border district of the Punjab with some what allied cultural and environmental conditions, a large number of refugees came to

Meerut city. Since the arrival of the refugees, different religious sects have flourished in the city having their own following, where a large number of devotees go every morning and evening for prayers to different temples.

The Jains are more numerous in the district than in any other part of the state. They mostly belong to the Vaish Caste and particularly to the Agarwal sub-caste. Hastinapur, a place of very ancient origin has always been an important centre of Jain pilgrimage. They generally engage in trade, business or commerce and many are money lenders and bankers. Jain culture has a special place in Meerut city. The central Jain Mandir is located in Jain Nagar. There are nearly 4,822 (1971 census) Jains only but they live in different mohallas. And almost in every locality where some Jain families live there is a Jain mandir.

There are about 2,167 Sikhs and are having a very few Gurdwaras. All these important religious groups of Meerut city have their educational institutions, dharmasalas and dispensaries.

Communities:

Hindu population is divided into two distinctive cultural groups, the 'local' and the 'Punjabis'. Local Hindus are generally residing in the old and main parts of the Meerut city while the Punjabis are scattered in the new colonies that have developed around the old city. The largest number of Punjabi

population is in the new colonies like Sharma Refugee Colony, beyond the Circuit House, Civil Lines Colony between Meerut college and Jawahar Quarters, victorial Park Colony, Thapar Nagar Brahmaपुरी, Krishnapuri are purely residential, while Patel Nagar a market cum-residential area also are Punjabi colonies of Meerut city. The Punjabis, with their hard work, business skill and tact have in a brief period surpassed the local Hindus in business. Punjabis in a sense usurped all types of commercial trade from the local Hindus. The rapid modernization that this rural based medium sized city has experienced during the last thirty years, is due to the enterprising Punjabi population. Being a powerful minority compared to Hindu-Muslim communities, they show more unity whenever opportunity demands. Similarly the Muslim community exhibits unity when need arises, as the Muslims also feel themselves to be in a minority before the combination of the Hindus and the Punjabis. Local Hindu community is divided in different castes having numerical dominance in different municipal wards of the city. Among the local Hindus, Vaish and Jains belonging to mainly Agarwal sub-division of Bania community and are economically better. Brahmins are socially advanced and are generally they are in services. Scheduled castes particularly the Jatavas and Balmikis are concentrated in 'Chamar' Gate and outskirts of the Hindu and the Muslim mohallas. Muslim lower castes still live in slums, i.e.,

'Purwas' near Kamboh, Khairnagar, Burhana and Delhi Gates. Muslims are mainly agglomerated in the walled city which was originally surrounded by a wall and a ditch, having nine gates on different sides. An important feature of the population is that the residents living in a particular area, both natives and migrants, have kinship relations and this fact considerably influences them in various political and socio-cultural and economic activities. Apart from religious and cultural differences among different communities, there are caste/sect differences in their respective populations and some castes have numerical dominance in some municipal wards. The main Hindu castes which exerts numerical dominance and pressure are Vaish, Brahmin, Koeris and Chamars. There are almost all the Hindu castes in the city ranging from Brahmins to Scheduled Castes, with many intermediary castes like, Koeris, Malis, Gadariyas, Kahars, Jats, Rajputs and Tyagis.

Among Muslims also there are many castes and sects and the most numerous are the Sheikhs, who are mainly of Siddiqi and Qurreshi sub-division; Ansaris, Pathans, Saiyds, converted Rajputs etc. In trade and commerce Vaish, Jains and Punjabis dominate scissors, cloth, while the sports goods industry are mainly controlled by the Punjabis. Some higher caste Muslims, particularly Ansaris and Qurreshis are having cloth business and private transport business respectively. The Muslims also constitute an important landed

community but are more important as small artisans and shopkeepers. The Muslims had a sizeable population in Meerut city till 1947. It was the second largest community after the Hindus (viz., Table II.3 in page 68). However, there was a decline in the muslim population after the Independence, when a large number of Muslims migrated to Pakistan. There was also an influx of the Hindu refugees. Though the Muslim population in Meerut city has been reduced in the post-Independence period, but still it constitutes nearly one third of the town population.

Economic backwardness, illiteracy and comparatively low political awareness, separate representation to the community before Independence, physical separation in the habitation pattern of the two communities of the Hindus and the Muslims and further deterioration in the status of the Muslims after the partition, provided the atmosphere of apprehension in the minds of the Muslims

TABLE II. 3

Percentage of Hindus and Muslims in Meerut City
1901-1971

Year	Hindus	Muslims
1901	53.0	42.5
1911	49.8	48.5
1921	48.8	48.7
1931	43.6	49.0
1951	64.1	30.0
1971	59.9	36.6

Source

1. Imperial Gazetteer, 1904, p. 263.
2. Census of India, 1911, vol. XV, Table V, 1, Municipalities arranged territorially with population by religion, pp. 30-31.
3. Census of India, 1921, vol. XVI, Part II, Table V.A., pp. 30-37.
4. Census of India, 1931, vol. XVIII, Part II, Table V, pp. 34-37.
5. Census of India, 1951, District Census Hand book--Meerut District, Uttar Pradesh, Table -D II, Religion, pp. 102-103.
6. Census of India, 1971, Series I, Paper 2 of 1972 City Table C VII, Religion, pp. 88-89.

Further, the growth of the Hindu colonies added to the already existing feeling of isolation among the Muslims and particularly the growing economic power of migrants i.e., 'Punjabis'.

Socially, Meerut is a caste-based and caste-conscious city. Besides caste politics, Meerut is famous for communal politics. Like the rest of the districts in western Uttar Pradesh, it has a considerably large proportion of Muslims, who constitute nearly 25 per cent of the total population. They are almost evenly dispersed throughout the district. Since the Muslims, more or less, vote en bloc, they remain a major significant factor in elections.

Because of different castes, sub-castes, communities, religious minorities, socio-ethnic and occupational groups and factional politics, the socio-economic and political complex of Meerut city is highly complicated. Politically it is the Muslims, the Banias, Brahmins and the "Punjabis", who have always shared the maximum local political power, mainly by virtue of their numbers, wealth and education.

A NOTE ON SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Meerut city which occupies a very prominent position in Uttar Pradesh. It is the second largest city in the National Capital Region and the largest city in the U.P. sub-region. The distance between Meerut city and Delhi is about 66 kms. Like many other areas, politics in Meerut city has been revolving around personalities, leading to intense factionalism. Due to economic progress and political activity, the city has been

administratively important. From the regional point of view, Meerut is gradually developing as a big centre of regional road transport. Considerations of proximity of the city to Delhi and personal acquaintance with the area were important factors for this selection. Meerut Municipal Board was thus the comprehensive unit for study. The study has relied mainly upon observation.

This study is historical, covering the period 1876-1976. Our interest in the historical perspective makes the methodology more suitable. Data was collected from many sources: Documentary evidence in the form of municipal annual reports and proceedings of the meetings, historical records in the field and from the Archives and libraries, and in-depth interviews with some persons in the city, who were politically active in the Meerut Municipal Board at one time or the other.

Thus, evaluative and qualitative approach has been followed, drawing upon documents, published and unpublished as well as unstructured interviews and in-depth interviews with the elite. This approach has been adopted because the structured interviews and other methods of survey research would have not revealed the details of micro political process.

This approach necessitated longer stay in the field for thorough perusal of documents which were traced out and for the long interviews with the busy local politicians necessary for in-depth interviews. Field work was carried out during

1976-1977 and again for four months in 1978. Since the primary emphasis in this study is on municipal politics and leadership, interviews were arranged with the following categories of persons:

- a) Six ex-Municipal Chairman of the Meerut municipal board.
- b) Forty members of the Municipal board of Meerut.
- c) Two members of the Board, who held office during 1920, one of them continued till 1970.
- d) Three ex-Executive Officers of the Municipal Board.
- e) Thirty persons belonging to municipal bureaucracy mainly officials; and
- f) Nearly forty politically active persons of Meerut city and of the district and politicians active at the State level.

Before starting the field interviews, which were unstructured and took more than four hours for each one of the respondents, we had a complete perusal of all the annual reports and proceedings of the municipal meetings held during the period under analysis. The documentary sources gave us a rough idea about the conflicts in the municipal board, which formed the main basis for our initial interviews, every subsequent interview provided topics for further discussion with other informants. New categories of information were checked with the help of respondents. This to and fro movement from one respondent to the other helped us to

complete the field interviews. The respondents, interviewed on the basis of interview guide, by and large were co-operative. An in-depth study of the municipal establishment and civic services in the city during several phases of political developments was carried out. Also an examination of the municipal functions since the inception of the municipality was highlighted. The analysis is done particularly on the basis of data derived from municipal budget records and annual reports since the inception of Meerut Municipal Board in 1876. It provides an understanding of the municipal response to civic problems. We have also studied the social background of civic leaders in terms of age, religion/ caste, education, occupation and income. An Interview Guide was administered to nearly 130 Board members (which includes 37 overlapping members). This analysis is longitudinal beginning with 1953. On the basis of interviews along with scrutiny of municipal annual reports, proceedings Registers of the Municipal Board since 1876, budget records and compiling and interpreting statistical data, Journals, newspaper reports, private papers, census reports, election data from the Election Commission and information from Gazetteers, helped us to arrive at meaningful conclusions, which have been supplemented by the first hand field

observation extending over five years. Thus we have probed in-depth the urban leadership, municipal performance in relation to social and political structure of municipal board of Meerut city.