Chapter II
Research Methodology and Study Universe
In a specific set up, to know and understand the ways and problems of political participation of Muslim women, a research design is needed for empirical investigation. In the research design, the research objectives are set forth and relevant hypothesis is formed. To test the statement of hypothesis some relevant, reliable and valid data is needed. However, as per research design, the data is collected from various quarters of the study universe and analyzed. In this regard, the choice of procedures is to be made to collect data relevant to the purpose of inquiry and the tools, techniques of data collection suitable for the aforesaid purposes are to be decided.

But the study of Muslim women has some specific and peculiar methodological problems. Without knowing and keeping in mind those peculiarities and specific problems, an empirical research may go in vain.

**SOME METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF MUSLIM WOMEN:**

Social scientists from time to time have concerned themselves with methodological problems of socio-political analysis. They have tried to refine and discover more sophisticated tools and techniques for scientific analysis. This task has indeed been mainly a daydream. Since the very nature of its subject matter, it was difficult to emulate and adopt the methodology of the natural sciences. Obviously the ‘laws’ of human interaction are difficult to formulate, especially when the object of inquiry cannot be controlled. Apart from this, since social scientists focus upon the subjective state of mind and behavior, it is difficult to achieve the much-yearned ‘Objectivity’. Many problems of this kind and nature led social scientists to find solution to the problem of objectivity in social sciences.
“On the contrary, the behavioralists maintained that human behaviour could be studied without reference to mental status.”

They laid emphasis on the tools and techniques rather than values and beliefs.

In India, the study of Muslim women has covered a long journey from merely impressionistic writings to data based scientific analysis of various facets and problems. Some social scientists borrowed and adopted the western models of research and investigation. Since demands of developing societies are different, therefore the western models were not always relevant to Indian set up. Studies dealing with women also fall in the same category.

To begin with the very term ‘Muslim women’ poses some problems in conceptualizing who are being referred to by it. In the Indian context, the impression would be that it is being used to denote a section of the Indian population on the basis of religion. It would however not imply whether in other respects they have any thing in common. Thus, unless the feature of homogeneity is established, any attempt to study Muslim women without taking into account the diversity within the population would be self-defeating. It is a common understanding that wide disparities persist in Muslims on various grounds, such as rural - urban, educated - uneducated and other. Moreover, some form of caste hierarchy exists among Muslims, which determine their attitude and perception. But some Muslim scholars tend to denounce the whole idea of caste among Muslims for fear that accepting this may go against their religious beliefs. Indeed Islamic teachings are opposed to any caste like division but this does not mean that its followers always practice religious prescriptions.
These methodological questions will perhaps largely remain unresolved but it would be worthwhile to examine how and to what extent prejudice and bias creep into study concerned with the Muslim women. The values and beliefs differ markedly in form and content from one socio economic strata to the other. Moreover, the researcher’s personal experience and emotions may allow certain value laden stereotyped images to creep into the research design. The bias enters into the analysis itself because some western thinkers who believe that the oriental society treats its women as slaves and that Islam an immutable monolithic system per se have often criticized the stereotypical image of Muslim society. This western view is based on the cultural categories of mind, which are unable to grasp the underlying meaning of symbols of Muslim society. Therefore western thinkers have viewed Muslim society as the negative pole of western culture.

Furthermore, there are certain challenges against researchers. Researchers overlook the subtleties and various interpretations of Shariat Law, which creates confusion. In fact, Shariat Law represents certain rules and regulations based on Quranic principles. The Sunni Muslims world is governed by four schools of law. Hanafi, Shafi ‘i, Hanbali and Maliki.

All the four schools of law do not provide similar interpretations of the Quranic injunctions. It is peculiar that most of the Indian Muslim men and women are not even aware of the existence of four schools of jurisprudence. Apart from that Hadith and Sunnah - traditional sayings and deeds of the prophet - are another source of law second to the Holy Quran. Another confusion is caused by the existence of Muslim Personal Law in India, which is generally used by researchers as the sole interpretation of
Quranic injunctions. In spite of that under various circumstances where Quran and Hadith were silent, the Muslim Ulema solved problems on the basis of *ijmaa* (The agreement of jurist among the followers of the Holy Prophet in a particular age on a particular question) and *qiyaas* (the judgment based on justice, reason and logic).

It is necessary that scholars dealing with legal status of Muslims in general and Muslim women in particular must distinguish between the prescriptions of the Quran, Hadith the different schools of Jurisprudence, the *ijmaa* and *qiyaas* on the one hand and the Personal Law on the other. Infact, Muslim Personal Law was the formulation of Lord Macaulay. The British government adopted this law to govern the Muslims in India. Interestingly some of the laws of it are in contravention with Quranic injunction and Hadith.

Another significant fact about Indian Muslims is that their way of life does not always correspond to the code and sanctions of their religion. “Over a period of time, while the teachings of Islam diffused into the mainstream of Indian culture, Muslim culture itself was gradually influenced by the much older existing Indian traditions.” This interaction of different cultures influenced one another and served to promote a new pattern of behavior. Therefore, the ethos of Muslim’s social institution in India reflects in strong measures the influence of Hindu customs and traditions.

Thus, the researcher must understand the prescription and religious laws as well as traditions and customs governing various aspects of life. Moreover, the methodological emphasis in socio-political inquiry should
shift from the descriptive and the speculative towards the objective, comparative and empirical.

It is obvious that collecting data related with Muslim women from all parts of the country will be a difficult and tedious exercise. Hence, it may be better to concentrate on a specific section of the population taking into account variations within population. And if a similar approach is adopted and followed by different studies all over the country we may have ample data to take a comprehensive look at the Muslim women. Hence, keeping in view all these methodological peculiarities, I have selected Sambhal – a town in U.P. as a study-universe for this empirical investigation.

**STUDY UNIVERSE**

The Sambhal is situated in Moradabad district of Uttar Pradesh. The geographical area of Sambhal is 15.65 sq. km. As of 1991 Sambhal’s total population was 138582 whom 75093 were male and 63489 female. Sambhal is largely inhabited by the Muslim population. The Muslim community consisted of approximately 76.2 percent (106193) of the total population of city in which 54551 were male and 48642 female. The second largest religious community was the Hindu, which consisted of approximately 23 percent (332050) of the total population of the town. Other religious communities were in microscopic size.

The literacy rate of Sambhal in 1991 was 36.49 percent. The Hindu’s literacy rate (46.04 percent) was higher than that of Muslims (33.57 percent). Moreover the literacy rate of Muslim women was alarmingly low (26.66 percent) which plays a role in political participation.
Table 2.1
Sambhal :- Religious composition of population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Proportion in the Population</th>
<th>Male/Female</th>
<th>Sex Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>106193</td>
<td>76.62</td>
<td>57551 / 48642</td>
<td>845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>32050</td>
<td>23.12</td>
<td>17360 / 14690</td>
<td>846</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jain</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: - Muslims in India, by Aijazuddin Ahmad, Vol. IV, Inter India publications, New Delhi 1996, Pp. 82-83

Table 2.2
Sambhal :- Literacy Rates over all and by communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Literacy / Female Literacy</th>
<th>Over all</th>
<th>Muslims</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.85</td>
<td>39.35</td>
<td>50.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30.08</td>
<td>26.66</td>
<td>41.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36.49</td>
<td>33.57</td>
<td>46.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – same as above, p. 147

**HISTORICAL ROOTS**

People like individual have their own specific qualities and characteristics and these are evolved and preserved in a specific manner and set up, that is why they do not have control over destiny through identical means for the development of faculties of life. But the history shares that means may vary, they all come and evolve as a result of community awareness, a desire to be open to the rest of the world.

As a study universe, Sambhal has a significant place in the theme of Purans and the writings of history during the medieval times, such as *Tarikh-i-Yfnz shahi, Tarikh-i-Mubark shahi, Tarikh-i-Daudii, Tarikh-i-Shershahi, Al-i-Akbar, Babur-nama, and Tazkariya-e-Humayun* etc.

Sambhal occupies a unique place in the annals of India. According to tradition, it is an eternal town, as it has existed in all the Yuqas. It is said to have been called sabrit or Sambhaleshwar in the Satyuga, Mahadgiri in the Tretayug, and Pingala in the Dwaparyug, while in Kalyug it received its present name Sambhal.

During the fifth century B.C Sambhal was a part of powerful principality Panchala the capital of which was Ahichatra. Ashok inherited an extensive empire from his father Bindusara. This sole conquest being Kalinga, it is undoubtedly that Sambhal. After Ashok Sambhal was ruled by
Mitra rulers of Ahichatra till the invasion of the Kushan. In 150 A.D. Sambhal was a part of the Kushan empire. At the close of the fourth century A.D. Sambhal was a part of the Gupta empire. From 606 to 647 A.D. Sambhal came under the sway of Harsha, the last great Hindu emperor of Northern India. Towards the close of the eighth century A.D. that town came under the control of Gujrara-Partiharas. Before the Muslim conquest Sambhal was included in the Delhi kingdom of the Tomars.

During the sway of Prithviraj Chauhan the powerful monarch of Ajmer and Delhi made Sambhal a strategically important city in order to protect himself against the military expeditions of Sultan Mohammed of Ghur. Crossing of the Yamuna at Delhi and Ganga of Garhmukhteshwar to fight the forces of Prithviraj Chauhan at Sambhal would have proved a real challenge to the enemy.

The battle of Tarain in 1192 laid foundations of Muslim domination in India. The mighty king of the Rajputs, Prithviraj Chauhan was killed by Muhammad of Ghur. It is possible that Sambhal might have come under the authority of Qutubuddin Aibak, Turkish slave. Moreover Sikandar Shah Lodi who became sultan on July 17, 1489 had a deep dislike for the old and shattered Capital of Delhi. Perhaps he had a great passion for aesthetics. The Sultan spent the most of his time in playing chaugan a game similar to modern Polo.

Sambhal emerged as a great center of learning under Sikandar Lodi. Himself a poet and litterateur, he encouraged the spread of education in different parts of his empire. The Sultan invited distinguished scholars from Arabia, Iran and Central Asia to India in order to promote learning in this
part of the world. A considerable number of scholars gathered here for cultural exchange and enrichment of knowledge. Moreover, Shaikh Azizulah Tulambi who came from Multan was appointed principal of a college at Sambhal. Among his distinguished pupils, the names of Mian Ilatim Sambhali and shaikh Ilah Diya Jaunpuri may be listed as the foremost.

After the battle of Panipat in 1526 Babar was declared the Emperor. At the beginning of his reign the Emperor himself visited Sambhal. Under the great Mughals, Sambhal reached the pinnacle of its glory and it rose as the brightest diadem of the Mughal Empire. Humayun was rewarded with the jagir of Sambhal for his accomplishment in the Battle of Panipat. Humayun might have amused his leisure at Sambhal in “Philosophical disputation and in discourses on Mathematics and other learned science.”

When Humayun assumed the charge of the Mughal government after the death of Babur, Sambhal came under the control of Mirza Askari. Mirza was now de-facto and de-jure Governor of Sambhal. Moreover, later on Ishaq Khan, Ismail shah, Mitrasen and other served as Governor of Sambhal.

After the death of Humayun and immediately preceding Akbar’s reign, Sambhal passed under the governance of Hemu who became the Emperor of India and occupied the throne of Delhi in 1556. But the battle of Panipat on November 5,1556, however, proved fatal to Maharaja Hemu. Akbar defeated Hemu and re-established the Mughal authority in the country. The Governor of Sambhal, Ali Quli Khan Shaibani who had fled to Srinjed, joined the forces of Akbar and demonstrated rare courage and bravery against Maharaja Hemu at Panipat and was once again made the
Governor of Sambhal. For his splendid services tendered by the Ali Quli Khan was given the coveted title of khan-i-zaman.

But Ali Quli Khan raised a voice of protest against Akbar's policy of centralization of politico-administrative authority. The main reason for Ali Quli Khan's dissatisfaction and disappointment was that his valuable services in re-establishing the Mughal authority through his magnificent performance at the battle of Panipat were not adequately rewarded by young sovereign Akbar. Ali Quli Khan was joined by his brother Bahadur, their uncle Ibrahim Khan, the Governor of Oudh Sikander Khan and others. Ultimately, Akbar himself took the field against rebellious Uzbegs and crushed them.

In 1595, Akbar appointed Muzaffar Hussain Mirza as the Governor of Sambhal. Prior to this Muinuddin Khan, Mir Muhammad Khan, Hakim Aimuddin of Siraz and Said Khan Chaghtai had served as Governors of Sambhal after the death of Ali Quli Khan. In this period, Sambhal became one of the largest Sarkars of the Mughal Empire. It comprised 47 Parganas spreading over the territories of present districts of Moradabad, Bijnor, Rampur, Bareilly and Badaun. In 1720, it yielded annual revenue of Rs. 3541843 to the state, which was higher than any other Sarkar of Mughal Empire except Delhi and Sirhind. Its total area was 4047193 bigahas in 1594, became 4753321 bigahas in 1720. Thus, it became even larger than Delhi Sarkar which comprised only 121453 bigahas of the territory.

During the reign of Shahjahan, Rustam Khan Dakhani was the Governor of Sambhal. He founded the city of Moradabad on the bank of Ram Ganga and constructed a bridge over river Sot near Sirsi.
As regard the administration of Sambhal under Aurangzeb, we find an entirely different picture of peace and prosperity. It had a unique distinction of producing the great Rohilla Chief, Amir Khan who founded the state of Rohilkhand. Under the Mughals, Sambhal became so affluent and flourishing that it became the target of Marathas. In 1773, the Marathas under the command of Visoji Pant and Takoji Holkar plundered Sambhal. In 1783, 20000 Sikhs under the command of four renowned chiefs tried to cross the Ganga near Ranghat and Rajghat. Their sole objective was to plunder Sambhal. But their attempt was failed on account of the alertness and sagacity of Mirza Muhammad Kasim Khan, the Amil of Nawab, Asafuddaullah in Rohilkhand.

Sambhal, which was incorporated into the dominions of Shahjadaul, the Nawab of Oudh in 1774, could not remain under his control for long. In 1801, it became a part of the British Empire when the Nawab of Oudh was forced to surrender, Rohilkhand, Farrukhabad, Mau, Amroha, Kanpur, Fatehgarh, Allahabad, Azamgarh, Basti and Gorakhpur to East India Company. Later on, Sambhal became a part of the North Western Provinces or as later known as The United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1836. Sir Charles Metcalfe, who acted as the Governor General of India in 1835, became its first Governor. He was known for his liberalism and his sympathy for Indian subjects. During his period and onwards Sambhal marched forward on its course of progress and prosperity.

During the revolt of 1857, it became a place of colossal mass uprising, when the people of Sambhal rose as a single individual to wreck the British Imperialism and to restore the Mughal Government to its pristine glory and
splendor. It continued to be a part of the British Crown till August 15, 1947 when India became Independent sovereign state.

In order to sketch-out the design for investigation of present study, let us see the various steps undertaken in the conduct of survey:

HYPOTHESIS:

The first step in any scientific research is the formulation of hypothesis. It is essential for researcher to acknowledge the fundamental need of hypothesis to guide sound research. Without it, research is unfocused, a random empirical wandering. Moreover, the results cannot even be stated as facts with a clear meaning. The Hypothesis is the necessary link between theory and investigation, one which leads to the discovery and addition of knowledge.¹³ In the light of this theoretical framework the inquiry assumptions of proposed study are:

1. That the Muslim Women is under represented in the political participative activities.
2. That the religious regimentation is creating impediments in their political participation.
3. That the education ensures the political consciousness and it leads to political participation.
4. That socio-economic status of Muslim women affects the political participation.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

As this piece of research work is primarily an empirical study, the data have been collected from the field (study universe) as well as from
Various methods have been used to gather the field data such as questionnaire, schedule and interview.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questionnaire is a major instrument for data gathering in descriptive survey studies. It is used to secure information from varied and widely scattered sources. It is particularly useful when one cannot readily secure personally all of the people from whom one desires responses. This technique may be used to gather data from any range of territory, sometimes international or national. Thus, questionnaire should be drafted with full preparations properly worded, arranged, codified duly pre-tested and approved by the experts in the field. The word questionnaire refers to a device for securing answers to questions by using a form, which the respondent fills himself.

**SCHEDULE**

In this method, a questionnaire is constructed which is filled by the researcher himself. In fact, the difference between questionnaire and schedule lies in the method of filling the form containing a set of questions. A questionnaire is self-administered whereas a schedule is not. Otherwise there is not much of difference between the two. This method is more useful when the respondents are illiterate.

Since some of the Muslim women particularly in rural areas are illiterate, it is not possible for them to fill up the questionnaire, so schedule
method has been applied here to collect the requisite information from the respondents.

In constructing a questionnaire and schedule simple and useful questions are included. In order to maintain continuity the questions were so arranged as to ensure smooth transition from one issue to another. To avoid any confusion or shortcomings, questionnaire was first tested on ten respondents and loopholes were wiped out. For the present survey approximately 200 respondents were selected from the community in question.

**INTERVIEW**

The method of interview is used very extensively in every field of social research. An interview is a direct method of inquiry. The purpose of interview, however, is not to collect superficial details about the interviewee but is rather to probe into the inner life of the interviewee. Since superficial and superficial information regarding the Muslim women may mislead the results, so formal and sometimes informal interviews are conducted to know the real challenges coming in their way of political participation. In the course of interviews, most of the respondents insisted not to disclose their identity because of socio-religious taboos.

**SAMPLING**

A sample, as the name implies is the smaller representation of a larger whole. In the technique of sample investigation certain units from the whole domain of survey are selected as being representative. Now these are studied in detail and the conclusions arrives from there are extended to the entire field or domain.
To collect data required for present research, quota-sampling method has been adopted. This procedure is used in most public opinion polls. The technique varies from one researcher to another, but in general the pattern is to leave considerable choice to the researcher with the restriction that certain characteristics of the respondents such as sex, race, socio-economic status etc. be representative of the area such as city, country, state, nation or the group being taken. The process of leaving the choice of individual to the researcher grants more responsibility to him. In this method researcher has to keep himself aloof from all kind of biases of human nature. However, this method of sampling adopted because it is convenient and cheaper for present study.

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