ABSTRACT

Disequilibrium in the Muslim World in Political affairs was bound to grapple with intellectual minds in the circumference of social sciences. Therefore, one is almost bound to look at some similar phenomena in an area that contains those political phenomena which seem to mould political behaviour of the mass of people in general. In fact, Sahabanchak a panchayat constituency with 10,000 Muslim population and 5,000 Hindu population was that kind of area where those phenomena seemed tremendously operative by reason of so many social and economic factors. The body of phenomenal write-ups, however, witnessed various situations in India and helped hypothesis for Sahabanchak being the field of present empirical study.

Hypotheses:

The major hypotheses include a number of variables economy, education, religion, politics and to an extent kinship. These variables are interdependent in operation, and that one aspect of man's life and activity indispensably invites other aspects to operate together.

Economic variable, for instance, does not work alone, but is aided by too political, religious, communal, cultural or kinship variables. Similarly, when educational aspect is
in operation, its ultimate function is thoroughly complemented by political, religious, communal, cultural, economic phenomena. Therefore, when political aspect is operative, all other aspects take active part in supplementing its function. Thus, every variable is always complementary to others.

However, these hypotheses naturally give rise to the following objectives to study: (1) how one aspect of life affects to other aspects i.e., economic life is influenced by political, educational, religious, cultural, communal, kinship; (2) Low education is influenced by politics, economy, religion, communalism kinship etc. (3) How and what way, political role and status of masses and the political activists are determined, and how it is interrelated with economy, education, religion, culture, communalism and kinship.

Methodology:

This study is mostly based on field data collected on the basis of purposive sampling which undertook 464 Muslim and 64 Hindu respondents and informants. Some data have been procured from the secondary sources. The entire bulk of the primary data, however, was collected with the help of a schedule, and the entire area has been thoroughly observed.

Sokhavchak is an underdeveloped administrative area with nearly 15,000 population, 10,000 being Muslims, while 5,000 Hindus. Political behaviour of the population is largely influenced
by a large number of Social aspects— which are following:

Economy: Rural economy of Sahabanchak includes agriculture, business organisation, employment, animal husbandry and bidimaking, trading, and manuall labour. Agriculture that includes landholding as being status symbol of the whole rural population is still one of the prominent economic aspects. Agricultural organisation, strictly after 1969, involves too much politics. Land Reforms Act of 1956 made the people aware of their rights. Bargadari system is brought into force which brings about immense tension and sporadic bloody confrontation between landowner and bargadar where political interference is made on the basis of political affiliation of the disputants, their kinship, religious and socio-economic status, on the whole. Even personal grudge is satisfied by means of applying tenancy rights on somebody's land.

Similarly, business organisation is also based on political, religious, communal grounds. Political ruling party raises party funds from the business farms, on one hand, and votebanks on the other. But it fails to provide security to life and property of the Muslim businessmen at the Baishnabnagar market who severely feel threatened by the increasingly growing reactionary forces being trained at the nearby places by the RSS. As a result, Muslims as a whole began to tilt towards some Muslim communal political party, like Muslim League.

Occupation of the market shops by the Muslims creates tension and communal disharmony. Hindu grabbed some portions of the
market yard in the name of lees and temple site. Which are proved to be illegal. Discussions held by the political leaders, local Hindus and the members of the Market Samitee on the matter took place several times but all proved futile. Portions of land could not be restored to the market Samitee, but the dispute resulted in communalisation of the issue, and RSS Camp activists became more active in anti-Muslim Slogans. The local Hindu Communal leaders started persuading the Hindu landlords of the rented buildings to evacuate the Muslim businessmen, but failed. The tension grew more and more, and there took place several altercations on petty issues in the market between different Hindus and Muslims retailers.

Need and greed for employment leads to demoralisation, on one hand, and political exploitation on the other. Educated youth do all party (obviously ruling) works in anticipation of a job. This involves bribes, raising party funds, supply of call girls etc. Here also distribution of jobs is done on communal-cultural or political identities.

Animal husbandry is another avenue of economic life in Siah-anchak. Raising of cattle serves a number of purposes besides drawing plough and carts. But cattle-raising is not in a flourishing state because of certain reasons. Increasingly price-hikes of cattle by caused/theft of cattle at nights, huge exodus of Indian cattle to Bangladesh, communal hindrances of the RSS trainees through camp slogans every now and then, are some of the major reasons for languishing state of this avenue. Therefore, agricultural Muslim
households cannot raise a larger number of cattle than they need for agricultural tasks.

**Bidi-making** is at present regarded as one of the most basic domestic chores in most of the households in Sahabanchak. Bidi-making requires less labour and pays more than agricultural work does, and thus the agricultural workforce has been gradually reducing in this area. However, all these largely contribute to Muslim political action and feelings.

**Education**: Education life in Sahabanchak is dull and frustrating, indeed. Larger number of the respondents and informants are illiterate, and never feel any need of it except its importance in raising socio-economic status. Low education or deep ignorance, as they claimed, involves a number of reasons. Lack of education does not prevent people from political, economic, socio-cultural or other enterprises, on the one hand. On the other, severe difficulty in admissions, unnecessary political interference, socio-economic status, lack of minority institutions and girls' schools, enactment of Government policy about establishing new institutions by means of organisation, conversion Muslim institutions to secular institutions; cultural threat from the communal and anti-Muslim reactionary quarters, like RSS, and elses largely contribute to Muslims' suffering from ignorance and unenlightenment in the field of educational achievements.

Political leaders, like, Jyoti Basu, Kamal Basu, Jotin Chakhorborty, Mansoor Habibullah Rajib Gandhi and all others, and many academicians,
lawyers and writers try to take political and communal advantage of the Muslim ignorance and therefore never care to ameliorate their backward state in education and learning. So-called ulama are also a sound contributor to this state. However, all those facts and factors which the Muslim Community holds responsible for their educational lag behind its counterpart duly mould political behaviour of the Muslims in Sahabanchak.

Religion: Religious interference with political activities of the Sahabanchak people is one of the major causes of Muslim political participation. Yet Muslims are not so staunch in matters of religious performance. Their religious performance sometimes widely differs from the Law of God in matters of sacrificing on the occasion of Eid-el-Azha, Fitra on Eid-al-fitr, Zakat, ushr etc. One who fails to give fitrah or zahat or ushr takes huge share in Qurbani in order to obtain huge flesh. Distributions of Qurbani flesh does also violate Islamic Law.

Economic life of Sahabanchak involves extreme jealousy among business farms situated at Baishnabnagar market, altercation in land holding and cultivating, bloody confrontation between bargadar and landowner and invites tension and disharmony. In most of the affairs politics is involved and therefore it leads on the various disputes, exploitation, discrimination by political leaders on grounds of religion, kinship, socio-economic status and others. In fact their affairs go against the law of God, but contribute to the
moulding of the political attitudes. Similarly Muslim education suffers from lack of religious and cultural aspects of Islam, absence of giant Muslim literateurs from the course, presence of Hindu mythology, illogical fatwa of the money-making ulama, and general mass-ignorance. On the other hand, political leaders, like, Joty Basu, Jotir* Chekroborty, E.M.S. Namboodiripad and others, growing adherence to Hinduism and indifference to Aleya Madrassah and Communal massacre of the Muslims etc gave rise to educational insecurity in the Muslim community. Muslim education also suffers from women illiteracy. As a result, women are not given equal status, and are placed (not forced so much) to do most of the domestic works irrespective of female works. Even she does not seek her equal share in food and drinks. However, this women condition propels another point of violation of the Law of God.

At present, the Muslims are in the grip of threat to their religion and culture, because of huge organisation of RSS in several parts of the State and around Sebahanchak. Anti national rather anti-Muslim Slogans at all the training Camps organised are not cowed down by any efforts of the state and central governments at all. On the contrary, the top most political leaders from both CPI(M) and Congress (I) occasionally joined hands with several communal organisations, like, RSS, Ram Krishna Mission and else. Thus the Muslim community as a whole feel that there religion and culture is in danger, and therefore, the Muslims assume their political role in view of the situation by tilting towards the Muslim League.
Politics: Muslims of Sahabanchak confine their political participation largely to the local panchayat politics and to a lesser extent to the national level. Local level politics is almost based on cash-bribe when both the voter and the candidate are from the same religion, and to an extent when both of them on kinship terms. Since bribe is more effective instrument, general masses are easily convinced to change their political ideology, and unhesitatingly accept money which is always fixed on bargain. Many of the voters accept money from more than one party, and vote for the candidate after his own choice. But one thing is sure that after all voters vote for a candidate who belongs to his own religious faith, in most cases. This is so because rural leadership is not at all effective. There exist three types of leadership in Sahabanchak but they are either exploitative or impotent including the Muslim leaders. When the Muslim masses for instance, faced inhuman massacre at the Katra masjid, Muslim leader, say, Mansoor Habibullah utters immense plaudit on the thought and mantra of the Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) who was not at all favourable to the Muslim community. Fact lies that such leaders who are present in large number in both the major parties of West Bengal, CPI(M) and Congress (I) won on Muslim vote banks, and want to show themselves as true secular personalities.

In fact, the Muslim masses are mobilised on the religious grounds. Therefore, they hold the Congress (I) Government responsible for the incidence of communal riots throughout the country,
Shebeno case judgement, Ramjanambhoomi- Babri Masjid issue, and voted in bloc for the C.P.I.(M) in the last elections, though they still dislike CPI(M)'s relation with certain communal parties like BJP whose prominent leaders like A.B. Bejpayee, L.K. Advani etc have acquired membership of the RSS. Besides voting, the Muslims also try to raise party funds from various employees, businessmen, agriculturists and so on. Thus, it creates a political economy in rural society of Sabenchak and nurtishes the Panchayat institution.

Panchayat, which was introduced as a medium of decentralisation of political power, on one hand, and a means of rural development and reconstruction on the other, practically plays an economic role, by any standard. Panchayat is usually trusted with lots of funds for all rural public works. But the funds are never utilised at proper places, but are wholly grabbed by its members themselves allowing some share to a few influential people who appear as a threat to their mischiefs. As a result, public works, such as brick-roads, repair of kuchcha roads, roadside waiting room, lavatory, tube well, and all others, are not done in usual course.

Apart from this, rural education tremendously suffers from defective education system which is resented. But the Government manned by Hindus and atheists are busy in coaxing Hindu masses by means of disheartening the Muslim sentiment. This is another way that how education system is politicised. This gives rise to another phenomenon that how Muslim ignorance and illiteracy is intensified
in the hands of political men with a view to keeping intact and secure their gaddi with the help of the Hindu votes. All this, however, makes, day by day, the Muslims aware of the actual political and social situations and enables them to chalk out their own line of action in the political arena. But what actually happens is that the masses are played like "the pawns on the chess-board" by the power-starved leaders. There have found a number of examples of this kind which ultimately proved that even the so-called leaders are not at all committed to any political ideology whether it is Marxism or Gandhism or whatever.

Conclusion:

However this study can be concluded by saying that all the aspects of human life are involved in most of the social organisations which ultimately mould political behaviour of the Muslims of Sahabanchak. Therefore, it is seen that there is the involvement of politics, religion, culture, communalism, kinship in most of the economic pursuits of men. At the same time, it has become obvious that education life of people is also closely attached to economy polity, culture, religion, communalism, kinship etc. according to which men puts his political action. Similar is the case with religious and cultural life of man. Facts and field data reveal that the issue is rather communal than purely religious, and that is why all the types of actions of man-economic, educational, political and to extent religious itself-are performed by the Muslims just in defiance of Islamic jurisprudence or the Law of God.
On the other hand, coming to political life of the Muslim people, it has come to light that their political action is strictly equipped with certain economic expectations and religious cultural security and not by any national welfare motive. As a result, they often become exploited by the winning political giants at all levels and on all counts. But the fact shows that such leaders are also committed to personal gains and aspirations (gaddi of power) and are not at all imbued with any political ideology.