

CHAPTER –V

ATTITUDE OF THE POLITICAL LEADERS AND THEIR PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS IN MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT – (1950-2008)

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1. Introduction

Leadership role is mostly needed when any particular community is being suffered. The leaders generally concentrated on understanding the relations among Muslims and interrelations among religions. Muslim leaders in international level like Sayeed Abul A'la Moududi¹ of Pakistan tried to restore just or Islamic order in the society through the teachings of Islam. Mamadou Dia² of Senegal challenged the Muslim leadership and authority of the Sufi orders in Senegal - the society ridden with crises, inhumanity and lack of liberty and Islamic humanism and hence aimed to establish a true Islamic state. Hasan Al Banna³ tried to restore just order in Cairo by eliminating western ideology and to restore Islamic law in the society. Md.Kamil Hussain⁴ of Cairo posed an anti-attitude towards secularism and western technology and tried to alter the society by establishing the order of almighty, 'Allah'. Ali Shariati⁵ of Tehran tried to bring purity in society by purifying the minds of the Muslims through the teachings from Quranic verses. He tried to remove all kinds of existentialism or western ideology which corrupted the society and at the same time believed in unity of the community and in the unity of god. Sayyid Qutb, the leader of Egyptian Brotherhood inculcated an idea that it is the duty of the true believer of Islam to restore 'rule of God' by overthrowing any other rule like democracy, socialism or rule of court and other secular concept to restore just social order.

Unlike the Muslim leaders in other countries of the Islamic world, the leadership role and attitude of Indian political leaders were different. Moulana Abul Kalam Azad⁶ tried his best to save the community from their inferiority complex and condition of helplessness by assuring the community that they are Indian nationals and tried to eliminate the religious differences within the society. In pre-partition days Syed Ahmed Khan⁷ tried to educate the Muslim women with western culture and to modernize the community through their adequate representation in government jobs and education and to interpret 'Muslim Law', in proper way in order to eliminate prejudice from the minds of the Muslim. Similarly Fazlul Hoque⁸ tried for the upliftment of the community by giving them proper education. He rejected the ideas of the western Muslim leaders and as a member of Legislative Council and a deputy Magistrate; he tried his best to protect the interests and rights of the Muslim community by forming 'Krishak Proja Party' and was against Md. Ali Zinnah's communal ideology of 'two-nation' theory. However after partition he left for Pakistan. The leaders like Suhrawardy, Md. Ali Zinnah⁹ who were the real makers of Pakistan dreamt of an independent Muslim state, 'Quaid-i-Azam', which fuelled communal sentiments among the

two community people. In the long run, Jinnah the leader of Indian Muslim League achieved success and become an important icon of the new independent state Pakistan. At the national level we find political figures possessing both secular attitudes, an idea of Hindu-Muslim unity and negative ideas and belief that demanded new state for the Muslims for securing justice to the community.

At the district level the prominent leaders in Murshidabad were Syed Baddrudoza, Kazem Ali Mirza, Khuda Baksh, Abdul Hamid, Lutful Haque and Abdus Satter. They guided the community and the entire district in a way that the Muslims could achieve their economic independence, educational, social and cultural as well as preserve their identity. These leaders influenced the psyche of the community in such a way, that they developed non-communal feeling for the other community and tried to overcome their backwardness through proper education and finally could secure a well established socio-economic status.

2. Role of Muslim Inteligentsia from the District

In the district the role of Muslim intelligentsia like Abdul Odut, Humayan Kabir, Rejaul Karim and nawab Wasif Ali Mirza in the district in upholding communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim solidarity was praise worthy. Abdul Odut draws the striking example of Hindu-Muslim solidarity in the days of Bengal nawabs, through developing a common nationalistic feeling and encouraging to fight together to achieve freedom. He put his humble efforts in organizing several meetings in various parts of the district to raise national consciousness within the community in these critical days. He tried to create an intellectual environment¹⁰ through his writings to reach to the people and published two important journals- 'Naya Tarun Samaj' and 'Oikka Baddha Bharat' to mobilize the people in the right direction and to set up a strong secular social base in the district. When the activities of the Muslim League continued in the district even after partition, through distribution of pamphlets and seductive prospectus to motivate the Muslims in engaging them in attacking the Hindus, Odut campaigned in various sabhas (meetings) and tried to restore peace in the society. In Lalgola and other places when the Hindu shops were looted and their houses were burnt by the League activists, he protested against it, criticized the deed and posed his ideas that riot is created through political motivation and no community should take part in it as Islam sanctions no such violent activities. Another worth mentioning was the role played by Humayan Kabir, who himself taught in a college and hence tried to inculcate an idea of solidarity among the youths in the district. He tried to prevent the exodus from the

district after partition especially of the people of Hindu community who feared and left for other places as the district was mostly dominated by the Muslim population. In this situation he took bold step in influencing the Hindus that ‘communal riots’, was a phenomenon which was artificially created and it had no link with the real socio-political culture and tradition of the district, and though riots and violent communal clashes occurred in Calcutta, the same thing did not turn up in Murshidabad district. Humayan Kabir was not a political leader but he tried to bridge a network of unity among the two communities and proposed the government to establish a link between administration and the society. Wasif Ali Mirza a person respected by both the community was the Nawab Bahadur of the Murshidabad district. He was a true nationalist leader and after partition he continued his anti-communal zeal in restoring harmony in the society. He formed ‘Hindu-Muslim Unity’, association in pre-independent era, which worked in full swing during the critical time of 1946-1947. Not only in Murshidabad but in all parts of West Bengal it propagated its ideals to restore communal harmony. He was against partition of the sub-continent on the basis of religion¹¹ and hence in front of Radcliff Commission, he demanded the inclusion of Murshidabad district in India. In the post partition era also through the creation of ‘Murshidabad Association’ he tried to consolidate the social edifice strongly.

The contribution of Rejaul Karim in post-partition days in restoring communal unity in Murshidabad, till his last days in 1993 was also remarkable and he was the follower worth mentioning of Gandhiji, an active participant of non-co-operation movement and after partition of India; he continued his struggle in restoring Hindu-Muslim unity¹². Rejaul Karim was deeply influenced by the writings of Bankim Chandra Chattapadhyaya. He wanted the entire Muslim mass to follow the path of nationalism as predicted by Bankimchandra. Bankim’s idea of nationalism was different from other nationalist in nature. Bankim’s nationalism¹³ helped to develop mental strength of the individual by inculcating new political ideas and rationalism in every human being. His ‘Swadeshi’ and ‘Swaraj’, movement initiated a new spirit in Muslim mass. Bankim’s ‘Anandamath’, is a real pathfinder for the Muslims. He was much influenced by Rousseau and the French scholar and Voltair. Karim interpreted the term ‘Bandemataram’ in true nationalistic way. He defined the term as a sacred word a mental stamina that forced all individual to fight against colonialism, a concept that bridge Hindu-Muslim unity which even encouraged the people of the district to raise Indian Flag and unitedly sung the song ‘Bandemataram’, after independence. We could say that Karim’s effort proved to be ideal plane in bringing a sense

of unity after partition. He tried to free his fellow citizens from the clutches of communalism, irrationality and narrowness of mind. He was influenced by Mill's concept of individualism and liberty, Ricardo's principle of economic upliftment of individual and he tried to bring change in the society by restoring these ideas. He too believed that 'nationality comprise of people of nation and national unity' and hence tried to integrate the social cohesive forces in the district. In the later part of his life in post partition days he tried to inculcate a wide meaning of religion that is "religion bridge unity". He was thus in favor of setting up of educational institutions which were free from religious influences either from Hindu or Islamic teachings. Education according to him should always be liberal, westernised¹⁴ that enhanced the mental reach of the youths. Karim's idea of nationalism was developed from the ideal of French Revolution and Rousseau's Emile (educational ideas of Rousseau) which influenced his thought immensely. Thus, we find a progressive and developmentalist attitude in Karim's thought and action in preserving communal harmony in the district.

3. Attitude and Participation of the Influential Political Leaders of the District (1950s-1980s)

Syed Baddrudoza (1947-51 and 1957-1966)

Syed Baddrudoza born in 1902 in Talibpur village (Bharatpur) in Murshidabad district in West Bengal was one of the topmost leaders from the Muslim community in West Bengal and tried his best to uplift the entire Muslim community, particularly in his district of Murshidabad. After partition when the entire country and the state of West Bengal was totally shattered and torned with the outbreak of the violent riots Syed Baddrudoza of Murshidabad district guided the community in the right path. He made his political career in the crises ridden society¹⁵ of Bengal. He began to exert great political influence during his tenure. In 1952 he stood as an independent candidate from two constituencies in Murshidabad – Raninagar and Jalangi and had lost both seats to his Congress rivals but finally gained support from Muslim voters and wonned the Raninagar seat from his opponent candidate. Baddrudoza made his political career and owned the hearts of the people of not only his community but of the Hindus and other minorities of the district. He tried to bring back the confidence of the Muslims in the district after partition, so that they could feel themselves as Indian citizens. The most stalwart leader of the district was arrested on January 1954, but it could not put a bar on his political leadership. He was arrested as anti-national, Pak spy and for organizing Hindusthan Hamara party in West

Bengal for the object of annexation of West Bengal to East Pakistan. He also supplied valuable secret information about Indian Union to Pak officers. He tried his best to consolidate the Muslims of West Bengal for liberating them from the yoke of the Hindu rule¹⁶. As a member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly, he demanded socio-political justice for his district and explained his views on important issues concerning the Muslims of the district.

a) Rehabilitation of Displaced Muslims

Post partition period was marked by displacement of people across the border resulted in huge inflow of people from Pakistan who were treated as refugee. He demanded governmental aid to renovate the vacate mosques to provide shelter to the refugees on a temporary basis. The camps and rehabilitation centers were not sufficient in number to provide shelter to the displaced persons. In this regard, government denied for providing any aid to repair the mosques and to come to a solution to settle the refugee problem. The homeless Muslims people were beaten and tortured and finally they dig the 'graves' which were destroyed by Calcutta Corporation. Baddrudoza argued, "We the Mussalmans are oppressed and are not allowed to speak to express our grievances and our news are censored before coming to the reality". Hence as the political leader of the community he focused this issue of displacement in the Assembly House. He formed Muslim Rehabilitation Association in West Bengal¹⁷ in 1953 to give some relief to the refugees like providing food, clothes and shelter.

In All India Muslim Conference at Jaunpur, 1950, he pointed out the social problems the happenings at Ajodhya and other places in India where the Muslim places of worship were forcefully occupied by the Hindu refugees to terrorize the Muslim community in India. From such happenings, Muslim had lost their courage and as they did not get any protection from the Indian government, they started migrating to Pakistan leaving behind their forefather's monuments and other remembrances. He stated that taking possession of the Muslim-mosques is not an ideal picture of secularism. When Calcutta Corporation destroyed sixty graves of Gobra for constructing a road Baddrudoza told that the Muslims were slapped on one cheek, then would be slapped on both cheeks and third day would be beaten by shoes. He visited to Banwari Mosque in Allhabad with Nehru, where central government even did not paid any aid for the reconstruction of the Mosque¹⁸ thus Baddrudoza raised a question in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, regarding

rehabilitation of 13.5% displaced Muslims West Bengal. In Murshidabad and in other parts of West Bengal as well, Muslim agriculturists had been driven out of their cultivating land to rehabilitate the refugees. Baddrudoza stressed on abolition of zamindari system to ensure settlement to the refugees. He said, that to improve agriculture it was essential to give the land directly to the tillers of rural Bengal. He demanded government to accept the policy of bringing the actual cultivators into direct relations with the government and to increase the rate of compensation¹⁹, so that they could be saved from losing their lands to the zamindars. This measure of the government would help the peasants to secure their rights on the lands²⁰.

b) Identity Consciousness among Bengali Muslims

He wanted the community to get united²¹ to regain their identity as ‘Muslim’ first and then Indian, so that they could fight against social corruption. In order to build Muslim solidarity, he inculcated the teachings of Koran and taught them to distinguish between a true Muslim and Kafirs. In order to remove minority complexity from the minds of the Muslim he stated that Muslim community was an integral part of India. Muslims are free citizens of a free state, and they had every right to contribute to the political, to the social, to the cultural, to the moral advancement of motherland, and they should feel that the state has got every right to claim their allegiance²². The state should ensure protection of lives, liberty, and religion, culture political and social rights of every community. Fundamental rights²³ as postulated in the constitution meant that all sections of the people, irrespective of caste, creed and color must have equal rights, equal opportunities, equal facilities and their self expression. If these fundamental rights are going to be protected, if the guarantees are going to be implemented, if the scheme of political reconstruction is going to be observed, the community and the other section of people in India will have no apprehension about all that has been laid down in the constitution.

In Murshidabad, after partition the Muslims living mostly on the broader districts became insecure. The Pak infedels trespassed into Muslim houses, molested them, assaulted them and tortured them in every way. Hence he requested the government to give special attention to assure security²⁴ to the Hindus and Muslims in the border area, and helped them to regain their confidence on government. He pointed out that it was the duty of a secular government to restore communal harmony and security of the people in the society.

Muslims shared a common national feeling, shared a common nation India and a common nationalism and Muslims also contributed with their Hindu brethren to fight against the colonial rulers. Indian Muslims were different from the Turks, the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Arabs in culture, in geography and language. Hence government should treat all the members of the society equally, should preserve their fundamental rights and should assist to regenerate their identity as Muslim. Baddrudoza believed in the construction of a composite nationality²⁵. He thus argued, “I am a Mussalman by virtue of my religion, I profess and I am an Indian by virtue of the geographical unit that has given me my birth, and I am a Bengali by virtue of the language I speak, I can at the same time be a Muslim, an Indian, a Bengali and a Murshidabadi just as we can be a father, a son, and a brother at the same time in relation to others”. Political leaders pleaded for partition²⁶ which increased socio-economic political complexity for the nation and mostly Muslims were blamed for it and were treated badly and termed as anti-national. Baddrudoza is not anti secular but he wanted the community person to live with honour and dignity which was the duty of every secular government. The youths should work as a warrior and as a true savior of the community. They should also portray the past glory which symbolized Islam and honor of the Muslim community so that the community could regain their self confidence as a citizen of India which they lost after the trauma of partition. The youths should portray the picture of Aligarh that harmonized²⁷ in a remarkable fashion the cultural currents of the East and West, the brightest spots like the Taj Mahal, Pearl Mosque, Itamaddaula etc, which is an icon of Muslim culture.

c) Indian Secularism and Democracy

In one of his articles, ‘Dharmaprocher Na Dharmapiron’ (preaching of religion or coercion of religion), which was published in Jugantar on 20th August, 1956, he protested against all sorts of illegal comment thrown against Islam and their Prophet and to the entire Muslim community by the members of non-Muslim community. He requested government to put a ban on the publication of such books that caused anti-communal feeling in the society. But he pointed out that the administrators remained as a silent spectator and hence he accused the government for their step-motherly attitude towards the Indian Muslims. To establish secular democratic order in the society he wanted to activate the provisions of the security act against the gangsters, against dacoits, against robbers, against black marketers and not certainly against innocent subjects of the state or the political parties in the country. According to his conception of democracy was that where the individual rights and

liberties are secured and reconciled with the responsibility of the state. The state must exist for the individual and individual must exist for the state. State should ensure civil liberty to its entire citizen. He appealed to the government to curb organizations²⁸ and persons having communal bias to restore peace and security in the country, for example the organization and political parties like Hindu Mahasabha and RSS and the editor of 'Abgara' who had the courage to go against the secular ideals of the country. Baddrudoza pointed out that "The Security Act was meant for the communalists and the black marketers and the smugglers engaged in smuggling of food grains". But unfortunately he pointed out that the innocent people were arrested illegally from 'char areas' of Murshidabad instead of the people engaged in cross border smuggling activities. Hence he wanted to establish governmental controlled fair price shops to meet the demand of food in the state.

A new party entitled West Bengal Independent Democratic Party²⁹ was formed by Badruddoza to safeguard the interest of the Muslims. The party also acted as a social organization and the organization was non-communal with representatives from the Muslims and other minority communities and its aim was to improve the economic condition of the Muslims and other minorities. He criticized the book written by Swami Devanandajee of the Bharat Sevashram Sangha which was said to have contained intentional misinterpretation³⁰ of the 'Quranul Majid-al furquanul Hamid', in order to hurt the religious sentiments of the Muslims. He discarded all kinds of religious dishonor towards Muslim community. He made an appeal to the Muslim community of West Bengal to take special care so that the total number of Muslims does not get decreased during the next census work as voter list would be prepared on the strength of those statistics. Baddrudoza invited the representative of all minority leaders in his new party that is the schedule caste, Hindus, Christians and the Muslim organisations³¹ called Jammait-ul-Ulema-i-Hind to support his new party. His main intention was to promote the community in securing their demands from government and thus called upon the Muslims to forge unity, solidarity within the community. He protested against cultural vandalism³² in the centers of learning in India. Even the ministry of education, government of West Bengal singled out the Islamia College (Calcutta), leaving alone St. Xavier's College, Hindu School and other denominational institutions in the city and changed the name of Islamia College to Calcutta Central College despite vehement protests from Muslim members of the Assembly. Muslim newspapers are often suppressed by the government like – Asre-Jadid, the Angarah, the Azad Hind, the Paigham, the Nai Duniya, and the Shahna-e-Tariquat etc to

curtail the voices of the community. The leader appealed to the Muslim to form their own organization and fight their cause like other religious communities in India. He added that the Muslims were suspiciously looked upon by the government of the country. The so-called 'secular-state'³³ had given much liberty to the communalists to do harm to the Muslims in various ways and with impunity. He criticized secularism of India as a mockery and remarked that the Muslims were treated badly in all respect. He assured that if the Muslims were given equal opportunities, then they would remain quite faithful to their country.

He was not a communal person, but frankly speaking he was a true-nationalist³⁴ and the true supporter or protector of the community. Hence, he pointed out that it was not justified in calling India a secular democratic country³⁵ where a particular community was being neglected and isolated from mainstream national culture. Constantly in several meetings, he tried to explain to the local Muslims about their rights. He wanted justice for his community members. He asked the Muslims to start Islamic newspapers to vent their grievances and to focus on the governmental malpractices and maladministration of secular India. In these ways Baddrudoza the ex-Mayor of Calcutta and a respected member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly raised his voice against Indian democracy and secularism.

d) Developmental Issues of the Community

He raised the question of improving the socio-economic and cultural condition of the Muslim community. He demanded re-introduction of Urdu as the medium of instruction³⁶ for imparting knowledge. He demanded to introduce Persian and Arabic as official language and to impart in schools and colleges as a medium of instruction. He pleaded the government to make the universities financially self-sufficient and to improve the quality of education in primary and secondary level. In order to solve un-employment problem in the society he opined that the educated youths should also be given vocational training like Russia, China, Turkey and other smaller countries. He introduced daily newspapers like, 'Asre-Jadis' and 'Imroze' and weekly paper 'paigam', expressing the atrocities of the local police of the border areas of West Bengal for allegedly arresting the Muslims on the charge of anti-state activities after the recent agreement between the Prime Minister of India and Pakistan at Delhi. He tried to raise the awareness of the community in Urdu language about the world affairs through these newspapers. He tried his best to make the community conscious about all political affairs of the country. Muslims in India were deprived not only

from governmental services but in fact denied all facilities in trades, industries and in all fields of activities. Doors of all services were closed for them and gradually they found it impossible even to secure independent careers in the medical and engineering profession. Hence to protect the educational rights of the community and to help the community economically he demanded reservation of seats³⁷.

Mohammed Khuda Baksh (1947-51 and 1969-1971)

He was an active political leader of Murshidabad district who even raised his voice against the misdeed of government action and guided the community by his able leadership towards the path of development. Before partition, he was an active member of the Muslim League and official report³⁸ showed that he held secret meetings at his house in Beldanga with other notable League leaders like Dand Molla of Kapasdanga, Abdul Wahed Molla and Abdul Kadir Sheikh of Murshidabad. The League leaders tried to create intolerance among Muslims against the Hindus and communal fracture on the eve of Muharram. The leader was suspected for leakage of information from Indian borders to Pakistan intelligence and engaging in smuggling of Jute and other food grains to Pakistan. But as a true nationalist leader, Khuda Baksh argued that as an Indian Muslim, he was very anxious about stopping of smuggling of jute. After partition, he became the member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and continued his tenure from 1947-51 and 1969-71. On several issues concerning the Bengali Muslims of the district he raised his voice and worked for ensuring justice for the community.

a) Security of the Minority Community

In his view secularism is a flawed concept unless rights of all communities are secured. The post partition riots in Calcutta, Bihar and Noakhali raised the question of security of the people. The minority was look upon with suspicious eyes, tortured and the self-seeking political leaders promised to give security to the life and property of the Muslims in order to fill up their vote bank. He pointed out that Hindus and Muslims together had fought for independence, but still after partition, the community is being humiliated³⁹ by the government itself and by the majority community. Displaced Muslims of India were not given back their homes and their properties which were occupied by the Hindu refugees. He opined out that our secular government⁴⁰ as the protagonist of nationalism, a defender of the rights and privileges of the people should also develop a new outlook for solving the problem of the country. On, the other hand government failed to stop smuggling of ganja

across the border and suspiciously arrested the poor Muslims in these smuggling⁴¹ activities. The Muslims also need to follow the path of Islam – an ideology which would guide the community in the right path. It is the duty of the government to protect the Muslim sufferers and to protect the personal laws. A secular and democratic government would be liberal and protective enough to the cause of protection of the Muslim community and securing their lives in the border areas.

b) Rehabilitation of Refugees and the Displaced People

Khuda Baksh pointed out that the district of Murshidabad had suffered by partition and demanded special consideration from centre. The char lands are encroached by the Pakistani troops which made the life of ordinary people miserable. He also drew the attention of the government towards settling refugee problem⁴², and pointed out that the refugees from East Pakistan (mainly the Hindus) took illegal possession of some private and in governmental lands. He asked government to settle the refugee problem to give relief to the affected person and to draw a policy for land acquisition. Hence he pointed out that government should distribute the evaluated land among the refugees. He asked Relief and Rehabilitation minister, about governmental measures and to give grant and loans or other kind of relief measures to the refugees. To stop displacement of Indian Muslims and resettlement of refugee's he suggested distribution of lands by government to the displaced Muslims and refugees with proper recognition.

c) Food Crises of the State

He pointed out to the government about acute crises of food in West Bengal and in the district which occurred due to sudden increase in population in West Bengal due to huge influx of East Pakistan refugees⁴³ in the state. The price of food in the district of Murshidabad has increased especially in Domkal, and other border areas, in Lalbagh and Jalangi. He requested government to provide the cereals through government controlled ration shops to each individual to meet the crises. Along with the food crises, looting of food grains continued unabated in various parts of the district by the hooligans and sometimes by the party cadres followed by indiscriminate arrests, extortions and tortures by the police and as a leader of the district he appealed to the government to enquire into these matters. He pointed out that the deficiency in food could only be met by importing food from foreign countries. Khuda Baksh suggested that the fallow, vested as well as the 'benami' lands be immediately distributed to landless cultivators through a committee

mainly composed of poor peasantry. The lands should be properly allotted to the distressed and homeless people so that they could have economic gains from the lands. He focused on the development of rural Bengal through increasing of agricultural product which could meet the food crises instead of industrialisation⁴⁴. Industrialization required more financial investment, and hence he pointed out that barren lands should be distributed among the displaced people and refugees for their resettlement and lands which were fertile should be used properly to get maximum product of food grains.

With a vision to develop in agricultural sector, Khuda Baksh took an initiative to establish Peasant Development Samiti⁴⁵ in various parts of the district which would distribute loans to the peasants as received from the state government. He pleaded to set up 'peasant co-operative society' which aimed at improvement of lands for cultivation (by applying other seeds, pesticides etc) and aimed at establishing a market through which the peasants could sell their crops directly to the governmental stores without any intermediaries so that food scarcity could be met out. Regarding, the rights and liberty of the working class and peasants, he quoted from the words of Quran that every individual enjoyed liberty as his birth right and individual freedom should be saved. To save the interests of the working class people from capitalist exploitation he stressed on the need to form trade unions. Hence we find Khuda Baksh tried to find a concrete solution for the food crises, to secure the interests of the peasants or agricultural class and the working class people to ensure social justice in a democratic country.

d) Anti Reservationist Attitude for the Minority Community

Khuda Baksh pointed out the injustice, inequities and inconsistencies in the Congress led ministry. He pointed out that in the countryside the Muslims had not received their quota or representation in the Minority Board which proved inefficiency in governmental administration. The leader was against reservation of Muslim communities since reservation would go against the interests and integrity of the country. He proposed that the Muslims should be governed by their personal law⁴⁶ as directed by Holy Quran. In the name of introducing uniformity in personal law, he thought that the constitution should not be permitted to make inroads in their religion, especially when right to practice, profess and propagate religion had been guaranteed in section 19(1) of Indian constitution. Instead of reservation, he demanded for the preservation of Muslim Personal Laws. Those who were in favor of reservation⁴⁷, thought that securing a post in Legislative Assembly to represent

the community would help to fight for the community for the achievement of their rights. Rather he pointed out that separate electorate would promote communal tension within the two communities and would develop the bitterness of communal feeling. It would be the moral responsibility as well as the actual responsibility of the Hindus to defend and protect the rights of the Muslims⁴⁸ in India. With a few Muslim members sitting in the House would make no difference. They must receive the co-operation of the Hindus, along with the Muslim representatives for safeguarding the interest of the minorities.

Kazem Ali Mirza (1947-1966)

Kazem Ali Mirza was the son of Wasif Ali Mirza, the Nawab of Murshidabad district who fought relentlessly to preserve communal unity in the district. Kazem Ali Mirza before partition was the staunch supporter and an active member of Muslim League⁴⁹ and engaged in communal activities in the district. He supported Jinnah's two-nation theory and organized the Muslims in the district to raise voice for the partition of the subcontinent and the inclusion of Murshidabad district with Pakistan. Apart from this Kazem Ali Mirza was the organizer of state Muslim League and organized the Muslim youths under the party fold for extending the influence of the party in different area. To create communal ill-feeling in the district, he published an Urdu journal 'Gamkhar' to motivate the Muslim youth in favor of the partition. He had a difference of opinion with Baddrudoza regarding the progress of the Muslim community. Hence Kazem Ali Mirza formed Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), aimed at uniting the Muslims of West Bengal. But after partition Janab Mirza carried his communal feeling and acted as a secret Pakistani agent by supplying all important information of Indian government. He also maintained good relationship with Md.Ali Zinnah and continued his communal activities, in a belief that Murshidabad hence would be included in Pakistan as a Muslim dominated district of West Bengal. He raised the attention of the government with mounting growth of violence and lawlessness throughout West Bengal resulting in ugly incidence like murder, arson and looting caused grave concern among the people at large. After partition, the leader became the member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly from 1947-1966. Though he possessed a communal feeling and was a staunch supporter of creation of Pakistan, but overall it may be inferred that there was an attitudinal change and he devoted his endeavor in bringing the welfare and development of the community. He raised the burning problem like resettlement of refugees, security of the minority community, food scarcity in the district and stressed on various developmental prospects in the district for ensuring justice for the community.

a) Resettlement of Refugees

He expressed his deep feeling of pain and gratitude for the cause of the suffering of the refugees who had to leave their home under circumstances beyond their control during partition of the country. He fully appreciated that crores are being spent on the socio-politico-humanitarian work⁵⁰, but government should also spent some of their time, resource and energy towards the rehabilitation of East Pakistan refugees. He expressed his deep feeling of dissatisfaction towards governmental planning measures, because he pointed out that the same refugees are taking advantage from different centers and then they run away to other places for getting more governmental benefits. He sought an ethical solution to the settlement of refugee problem, by stating that the lands acquired by the government which are illegal or disputed and termed as 'benami' lands should be distributed among the refugees for their settlement instead of fertile agricultural lands of the district people. He pointed out that food scarcity is being artificially created by the governmental policy of land acquisition measures where the fertile lands were taken by the government for rehabilitation of the refugees which creates inadequacy of land which hampers production rate. In this process many agricultural peasants were ousted from their land hence creating shortage of production due to inadequate agricultural labor in the lands. Kazem Ali Mirza thus pointed out that in Kandi, Barwan, Khargram, Bharatpur, Berhampore, Beldanga, Nawda, Hariharpara, Domkal, Jalangi, Raninagar, Lalgola, Bhagwangola, Nabagram, Jiaganj, Sagardighi, Raghunathganj, Suti, Samserganj, Farakka all agricultural lands were snatched by the government and hence production of crops like paddy suffered a lot. Both the agricultural land that is 495.46% and non-agricultural land that is 878.17% were allotted for the settlement of refugees which resulted in loss in agricultural products, resulting in food scarcity in the district and in the entire state⁵¹.

b) Security of the Minority Community

Mirza pointed out that Muslim women were ill-treated and dishonoured in the riot infested areas by the hooligans. Even the government had a communal feeling⁵² because it failed to secure the honour of the Muslim women and the rights and privileges of the minorities of the state have not given fullest attention. As a citizen of the country he demanded that government should give all its attention to preserve the security of the minority community. He pointed out that "if we are sincere to our constitution it will show that it has given complete liberty to all religion, caste and creed. Hindus or Muslims or people of any other

faith must adapt themselves and remember that as a nation, we are one and as citizens of this country – India we belong to India. India is our homeland and we shall live, die and sacrifice together for our motherland to preserve honour⁵³ and integrity of our country”. It is for the interest of all to remember this, as he argued that “we are a nation first, than anything else, and communalism had no room which must be buried once for all”.

c) Developmental Prospects in the District

To bring educational development in the district, he pleaded to education minister of state to open a college at the Nawab Bahadur Institution land and building gifted by his ancestors within the municipality of Murshidabad⁵⁴. To enhance self-sufficiency of the poor employed youths he proposed to initiate government sponsored milk distribution centres in various parts of the district. This project will benefitted the community people economically. For educational development he pleaded for establishment of state-runned schools in the district for enhancement of educational status and overall personality of the Muslims so that the educated Muslim candidates could fetch governmental jobs in respective spheres. For agricultural develoment⁵⁵ he stressed on development of irrigation system by digging sinking and non-sinking tube wells around the agricultural areas to ensure benefit to the peasants. He also devoted his energy for the development of health in the district. He pointed out that there was no sufficient heath center or hospitals in the district. He proposed to sanction grant from state fund to construct a hospital on the land offered by the late Nawab Bahadur of Murshidabad in Faiz Bagh within the Lalbagh sub-division of the district, but no initiative had taken up by the government in this respect. He demanded for the urgent development of the health centers in other parts of the district and proposed to build up of the sub-divisional hospital to ensure maximum benefit to the community people in the district which according to him are backward areas in West Bengal. Though in earlier police record, he was portrait as a man possessing a communal attitude and engaged in anti-national activities or as a Pakistani agent, but in the speches of the Assembly House, he raised his voice for the development of the community in several spheres and he really tried to develop the agriculture, health centres, irrigational improvement and educational institutions in the district to set up a real icon of development⁵⁶.

His main motive was to remove the deplorable condition prevailing in Murshidabad district and hence demanded for allocation for more grant for the district. According to him

a welfarist government should invest in a backward area to ensure maximum good to the common people. He questioned to save the interest of the rural people, in order to safeguard the equity and good conscience of the people. He quoted, “Let all the people committed to your care pay equally or proportionate to the means”. He showed that according to governmental statistics ten thousand acres are being brought under cultivation and hundreds of thousands tones of crops are being produced from those lands. Then he opined due to governmental negligence scarcity of food occurred and inadequacy and dissatisfaction among the peasants persisted. He again pointed out that for the safeguard of the peasant’s interests⁵⁷ government directly should buy the crops from the peasant without any intervention of the middlemen to lessen the price of food grains in the market on one hand and on the other to ensure maximum benefit to the peasants which would ultimately ensured efficiency in development. Both the agricultural seeds and the fertilizers are to be given by the government directly to the peasants and loans in times of natural calamities like drought or flood so that the peasants could recover their debts. He even stressed on development of roads and communication in the districts so that the workers could move from one place to other in search of their employment scope. Government should provide employment scope for both skilled and unskilled workers and for the educated youths of the district. Thus, we could depict out the secular character of a political leader of the district with a distinct non-communal attitude, demanding various projects from the government for the up-liftment of the entire district from where he represented as an elected member in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly.

The other notable leaders are Abdul Hamid (1952-1961), Abdul Latif (1962-69), and Mohammed Israil (1952-1969) who took active part in politics and possessed both developmental and communal attitude. Abdul Hamid was a resident of Bhabta (Beldanga) in Murshidabad district and remained as member of Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1961. He was a staunch Muslim Leaguer in pre-partition days and later joined Congress and became member in West Bengal Legislative Assembly. After partition⁵⁸, he had a strong inclination towards Pakistan and wholeheartedly supported the idea of inclusion of Murshidabad in Pakistan. Mohammed Israil, the resident of Beldanga according to Intelligence Branch record revealed that he was a Muslim League activist in the district and detained under the Preventive Detention Act for communal and pro-Pakistan activities⁵⁹ since the partition. He was elected as MLA from 1952 to 1969 and after partition of the district and its inclusion with Indian Union, changed his anti-communal attitude. Maulavi

Abdul Latif son of Haji Abdul Quader of Beldanga district of Murshidabad a member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly from 1962 to 1969 was an active organizer of the Muslim National Guards at Beldanga. During the time of partition of Bengal in 1947, he carried series of agitations for the inclusion of Murshidabad district in Pakistan. The subject was arrested under section 18(1) of the Bengal Special Powers Ordinance in connection with his subversive activities⁶⁰, but later he was released. He holds secret meetings and was suspected to leak out information from India to Pakistan through Pakistani newspaper like 'Azad' and 'Ittefaque' through his relatives and contacts in East Pakistan. He criticized the communal activities⁶¹ of the Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh and accused the local administration of playing the role of mute spectators for not providing any security to the innocent Muslim citizens. In 1962, he formed Kalyan Samiti – a secret organization of the Muslims formed with an object of achieving consolidation amongst the Muslims and carrying on secret activities to threat the Hindus and the police in the district for the torturing on the innocent Muslims. He portrait him as a true nationalist leader⁶² and in 1962 while the country was facing tremendous crises with Chinese aggression with an emergency and critical situation, he pointed out that every citizen even from Murshidabad district irrespective of their caste status or religion would accept starvation and would support India. He wanted the Muslim nationals to join Indian army and to sacrifice⁶³ their life for the sake of the country's security.

Later on Abdul Hamid focused on the development of the district⁶⁴ and stressed on the improvement of education, agriculture, resettlement of refugees and settlement of food problem in the district and to ensure the security of all the people of Murshidabad. Developmental schemes⁶⁵ were demanded by Mohammed Israil were nationalization of the basic industry and governmental control in agricultural sector especially in collection of food grains which are to be distributed in times of scarcity within the people. He even pointed out the mal practices in governmental administration and wanted to overthrow demoralized and corrupt officials to bring transparency in governance. Abdul latif demanded development of industry to boost economic development. He also demanded educational improvement, agricultural development through improved agricultural techniques and fertilizers to raise the productivity of land and to meet the scarcity of food⁶⁶ in the district. To secure the interest of the peasant class he wanted government to introduce state controlled market in the district. He suggested for constructing a dam beside

Swiss gate⁶⁷ in Maniknagar Mouza (under Beldanda police station) on Bhandaraha Bill (river) to improve the irrigation system.

Lutfal Hoque (1952-1966 and 1977-1987)

Lutfal Hoque was born in 1911 in Aurangabad in an ordinary family where he was brought up by his mother alone. He passed his matriculation in 1943 from Nimtita School and joined as teacher in high madrasa school. After partition the scenario has changed totally and most of the learned Muslim scholars and political leaders like Farhad Murtiza Reza Chowdhury from Murshidabad left for Pakistan leaving the space vacant for political leadership. In this situation, Lutfal Hoque felt the necessity of giving political leadership to the community for their upliftment. He was determined to guide the community positively towards their educational upliftment, social and economic progress and cultural growth and hence in 1952 in Vidhansabha election he contested as independent candidate from Suti constituency and won the election⁶⁸. His personality, attitude, community fervor and strong determination attracted the then chief minister Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy who invited him to join Congress and later on in 1953, he joined Congress party. As the political leader of the district he raised his voice in various issues concerning the Bengali Muslims of the district like rehabilitation of the refugees of the district, to form bidi workers union and stressed on various developmental projects for the district people.

a) Rehabilitation of the Refugee and Displaced Muslims and to use Wakf Property

The social and living condition of the district was miserable after partition with widespread communal tension⁶⁹, lack of unity and mistrust within the two communities. He pointed out that Indian state promised to ensure a secured life to its citizen but failed in its attempt to stop post partition communal riots and displacement of people in several parts of India and West Bengal which increased an untold misery of the people in the district. He further pointed out that during the freedom struggle the Muslim nationalist equally fought with their Hindu compatriots⁷⁰ to free India from foreign domination, so government in independent India should treat the Muslims fairly and not as second class citizen. He stressed to ensure security of the Muslims who did not leave the country. Lutfal Hoque uttered that in every respect he would save the true Indians – the Muslims of the district and in West Bengal. He demanded the homes to be given back to the Muslims. Muslims always sacrificed their life for the sake of the country so government also should provide adequate shelter to them. He opined that. He said, “ We the citizen of India enjoyed political rights as

given by the constitution, we have our fundamental rights we are born as the citizen of India but we are tortured, facing tremendous humiliation and mental pressure and government remained as silent spectator. If government fails to secure our rights then government itself is the constitution breaker". Secularism is a flawed concept if government failed to provide a secured life to its citizen.

He criticized Indian government to be secular and guarantor of rights of the minority community and government forced the Muslims to remain as displaced person. When India and entire West Bengal faced the huge problem of refugee influx after partition then Hindu refugees⁷¹ took shelter in the houses of the displaced Muslims and well equipped with the Indian society. In ensuring justice to the Hindu refugees, government took the side of the Hindus on one hand and on the other failed to save the Indian Muslims. He criticized the governmental action doing conspiracy with the innocent Muslims in giving justice to the Hindus. But apparently government made severe blunder to the entire state of West Bengal. Among the displaced Muslims most of them were agricultural people engaged with production of food crops. But as they lost their homes and remained as displaced people many lakhs acres of land were left as barren. These people who could help in production of agricultural crops remained as helpless unfortunate and landless people and hence the state suffered from huge food scarcity. In the secular country⁷² state should consider the condition of individual belong to any religion. State secures right to freedom of religion to all and hence every individual is guided by their religious principles. But a secular society should also provide a secure life to its citizen.

To rehabilitate the refugees' government occupied the 'char' lands as a measure of Land Acquisition Act where the agricultural lands were also included. These fertile lands if could utilize properly then could solve the food problem where peasants could cultivate the 'Aush' rice by taking governmental aid. But through this land acquisition measures fertile agricultural lands were occupied by government and used for rehabilitating the refugees and as a result food scarcity occurred. The system of governmental control of food grains and its distribution through ration shops⁷³ to valid ration card holders again became irrelevant in Murshidabad district. Even District Food and Relief Committee and Sub-Divisional Food and Relief committee was set up targeting to meet the essential demand of food crops to the district people but the entire state was suffering from shortage of food grains so these relief committees could not work properly. In this situation big merchants and hoarders are taking

the advantage and confined the food grains in their go-downs creating black out in the state. In the district level the people suffered from extreme poverty and starvation.

Lastly he pointed out that government took a measure to utilize Wakf property for rehabilitation scheme⁷⁴ by acquiring the ‘benami’ lands (that is without any proper landlord) but failed to implement that measure too. He pointed out that the income coming from Wakf estates and from property endowed to God (Debottar property that is property endowed defraying the cost of worshipping a deity) could be utilized properly. Lutfal Hoque himself was the member of Wakf Board argued that most of the Wakf estates became private property of the ‘sebaite’ (servant who look after the property of God’s property), who became the owner of the property. The property has been transferred so many times that the main principles of the Wakf property has changed. The property has been endowed to a corporate body⁷⁵ (trust) or lies with individual person who look after the property, but after changing hands from one to other so many times the Wakf properties became futile and vague.

b) On Bidi Workers Union

Lutfal Hoque tried to bring an economic change in the district by organizing the bidi workers to form bidi workers union. The bidi industry⁷⁶ as cottage industry gained momentum on one hand and on the other showed the picture of exploitation of bidi workers in the unorganized sectors. In Murshidabad due to decaying condition of land in flood, non-availability of other source of income, and lack of agricultural land forced the people here to engage themselves in this bidi manufacturing work. Due to availability of chief labor, the bidi industrialist had a tendency to exploit economically the workers by offering them less amount of wage. Thus he pointed out that government should take into consideration the socio-economic condition of these workers and their problems. He pointed out that due to lack of strong union this exploitation continues unabated. Gradually the workers due to long time of working, suffered from malnutrition, ill health, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. He thus pointed out the socio-economic condition of the workers and demanded immediate protection for them. Lutfal Hoque questioned that in a democratic⁷⁷ country where socialism, equality, justice, law, protection of minority and poor is ensured then why government is doing injustice to the workers. Hoque tried his best to develop a strong bidi workers union⁷⁸ so that the union could fight in securing the interest of the workers. He was in favor of providing identity card to the bidi workers and one copy of that to be submitted

to the government by the respective company. The card is to be given in the industrial premise and he wanted to start provident fund scheme for the workers for their secured future.

c) Developmental Prospects

Hoque demanded more governmental aid for the district in agricultural purpose. According to him government should give more aid to the peasants and to utilize the lands for more production. He even pointed out that the small farmers the fishing community should be given more financial assistance. Development of agriculture⁷⁹ and industry, education, health, development of the means of communication was the major demand of Hoque Saheb for the progress of the district. The district people also suffered a lot due to lack of safe and pure drinking water and hence he demanded for constructing of sinking and non-sinking tube wells. Communications paves the path for business transaction and hence he stressed the need to repair the roads regularly and new roads to be constructed and connected with national highways for the welfare of the local people of the district. Even he pointed out to repair the highway roads by the state government by taking central aid⁸⁰. Lutfal Hoque also demanded governmental initiatives and steps taken for the development of small scale industries like the production of raw silk fabrics in Murshidabad and Malda districts. The silk handloom weavers should be assisted by the state government through co-operatives. The peasants should provide with share capital loan, working capital loan as per as their requirement by the government⁸¹ and demanded to form co-operative societies. Efforts are being made to persuade the workers with institutional finance and cash credit for their financial advancement. He demanded for governmental aid to be given to the weavers of weaving co-operatives in the district. Lutfal Hoque tried his best to regenerate the economy⁸² of the district through financial aid from state to establish small scale industries.

Similar to Lutfal Hoque Jainal Abedin (1952-1956) focused on the development of the district, like development in agriculture and handloom industry and to solve the food scarcity in the district. As a political representative from Congress party, he pointed out that secularism is the essence of Indian government and the rationale of our secular⁸³ philosophy is “sarva dharma samabhava”. He too demanded that Muslims in West Bengal are safe and there is no need to feel insure or to suffer from minority complexity. Jainal Abedin wanted to curve all political forces which are communal in nature and hampered national unity and integrity⁸⁴. He reminded us the constitutional provision of India – we the people of India

having solemnly resolve to constitute India into a sovereign secular democratic republic and he believed India to be a true secular state.

Abdus Sattar (1967-1991)

He was a vocal leader and elected as the member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly from Lalgola constituency of Murshidabad district. His tenure as member of Assembly was from 1967-1991 and within these couple of years he brought a revolutionary change in the district. If we say for example, Green Revolution has changed the demography of the most developed states like Punjab and Haryana then Abdus Sattar was the first man in West Bengal who brought a total change in the picture of this district in post independent era mainly in agricultural sector. His humble efforts and progressive minded attitude had a positive effect in the district and boosted the economic development of the entire community. He focused on administrative corruption of the district, proposed various land reform measures, stressed on agricultural improvement, and development in irrigation and overall development of the community. On several issues concerning the Bengali Muslims of the district he raised his voice and work for ensuring justice for the community.

a) Administrative Corruption of the District

The entire district during his political leadership and even before was facing from acute food crises, and lack of agricultural land and production. The people had no other way out to switch to other profession as after partition the district failed to develop any kind of heavy industry to solve employment problem. In this situation Abdus Sattar demanded governmental aid for the district to save the people from utmost misery. Hence he pointed out the administrative corruption⁸⁵ in the district in relation to distribution of governmental grant to the needy people. To curb corruption distribution of governmental aid was entrusted in the hands of Food and Relief Committee in the district. Panchayati Raj Institution which was formed according to constitutional norms of decentralization had become a popular local body with active participation of the rural people in politics. But he pointed out that in the district powers of these local bodies were captured by Congress party and Left Front government by totally ignoring the democratic spirit of these institutions. Sattar pointed out that government with their mistrust and misdeed replaced the democratic institutions which were the real icon of people's representation with a committee (Food and Relief Committee) which was not democratic in nature. The members of this committee were chosen democratically by Left Front government according to their own desire and he

criticized the government because the act was a whimsical deed of the government. Sattar pointed out that the decentralized body like Panchayati Raj Institution became a dysfunctional unit. From anchal (regional) Panchayat to Zillah Parishad, the governmental grant had been distributed by the relief committee formed by the members all chosen from Left Front party. Even the grant was not given directly by the committee to the people but to the representative of the people who were the fraud members and acted as representative of the people and received the benefits from government.

He pointed out that the officials engaged in higher administrative posts are corrupted and he raised his voice against the misdeed of civil service and administrative officers. These officers as they were in the higher posts should be responsible in maintaining order and peace in the district, but these bureaucrats are actually turned into the party cadres. Sattar was a vocal speaker and he declared that government sometimes became autocratic and did not pay any respect to the constitution or law. Satter criticized government in a democratic country which was not progressive minded or development oriented rather engaged in narrow politics of power gathering and failed to attain welfare schemes for its citizens. Government itself is a law breaker, and failed to provide security to its citizens. In the border areas the life of the people too became miserable due to the atrocities of the Border security forces. The common people were arrested frequently for nothing and charged for engaged in cross-border smuggling activities. Even due to the increasing of extreme poverty, dacoity, looting, murder and atrocities on common people became a regular activity in the district by the hooligans. Hence Sattar criticized the government, the minister in charge of the Relief department that government failed in their action to reduce starvation and death and failed to increase funds in the relief work. Government sponsored Food and Relief Committee was a pseudo-committee which failed in its task of distributing the grant to the people and overall the administrative officers were corrupted and failed to provide security to the people of the district.

Abdus Sattar questioned to the Home Political Department regarding the maintenance of security of the district. He recommended for the formation of 'Gana committees' which wanted governmental promptness in this regard. He pointed out that the atrocity of one community towards other continues in Lal Kuthi (Aminabazar) in Jiaganj contined where the houses and property of the Muslim villagers were being looted and destroyed by these hooligans in the presence of the police supper. The police force too failed to bring the situation in control. Several places in the district like Kasimbazar, Khagra, Behrampore

town Basudevpur, Raghunathganj, Salar, Farakka and Jalangi were looted vigorously in a planned way to create frenzy communal riots. He demanded governmental aid to be given in the areas which were badly affected due to riots. Throughout the district due to scarcity of food, looting and atrocities continued in the district. Today, he said, “We are living in a civilized society, so why this act of barbarianism”? In a democratic country⁸⁶ people should have proper law, and order security of life and property, right to possess the basic things like food and shelter but government failed in its attempt to ensure a stable condition in the district.

He pointed out that in rural areas; the people are not getting sufficient cereals through government sponsored modified ration shops⁸⁷. If also they are getting its quality was not good. In some cases people are getting cereals of good quality but of very less amount. In case of five hundred grams of rice and one kilogram of wheat, much meger quantity of food was giving to them. Sattar pointed out that food stocks were being looted by the party cadres and lastly these government shops were gheored by the people who were being deprived of getting the cereals. Thus for proper functioning of the ration shops governmental measures like increase in subsidy, curtailment of tax on food items were to be given in order to solve the acute food problem.

b) Land Reform Measures

Abdus Sattar’s greatest contribution is his land reform measures in the district and in overall West Bengal. The Land Acquisition Bill passed by the government encroached illegal lands⁸⁸ from the zamindars and allotted to the bargadars (share croppers). There is no concrete way to predict the genuinity of the bargadars (rental cultivators that is whether their names are officially recorded or not) and no way even to find the originality of the lands allotted to the bargadars (that is benami or legally approved lands). Hence he suggested government for maintaining a proper record of the land with the name of the zamindars officially and the land allotted to the bargadars, then only it would be possible to identify the benami (extra lands that is lands possess by the individual but allotted in some other’s name) lands. Agricultural tax should be collected on the basis of productivity of land⁸⁹ and amount of production. Government should collect tax partly on the basis of land revenue (income from land) and partly as income tax (income from agricultural product) to utilize the money for agricultural development and for giving relief to the distressed people. He proposed the lands (benami) which were allotted in the name of some other individuals

or the zamindars should not be encroached by the government. Abdus Sattar also demanded changes in governmental policy to regain governmental lands and property entrusted as vested land within wakf property. To eliminate the mutawalis (intermediaries) from wakf estates and to maintain transparency in governmental work, he suggested for replacing the wakf commission by wakf board where the board members would be appointed by the government. Board would work in accordance with law to regain the wakf properties which were been previously transferred to other person illegally without giving prior notice to the government by the mutawalis. Thus he demanded that law should be amended in the Assembly House so that government could sell out the immovable property of the estate in governmental auction so that governmental tax and other expenditure could be recovered. Hence Sattar demanded maintenance and preservation of ancient buildings, Masjids, Hazarduari Palace, Imambara by government from these money appropriated from these estate property.

c) Agricultural Improvement and Research

Abdus Sattar's greatest contribution lies in his humble efforts in bringing agricultural revolution in the district to meet acute food scarcity in West Bengal and in the district. For agricultural development Sattar demanded more governmental subsidies on wholesale and loose buyers on chemical fertilizer and to adopt innovative measures. He demanded to establish Agricultural and Marketing Society. This society would act as co-operative to give financial aid to the poor farmers irrespective of governmental grant to prosper in agriculture. For the fruitful development of agriculture, he demanded for the construction of both sinking and re-sinking tube wells. At the same time he demanded governmental aid to improve irrigation methods. Governmental aid is channelised in such a way that only the big farmers received the benefit of governmental aid and loan, but he demanded this aid for the small farmers also. He wanted the 'Group System' to be changed that is in group system all big farmers were the members, who could easily got access to this governmental aid by delivering water tax⁹⁰ to the government. This immensely benefited the rich farmers in producing potato and other vegetables in the same land after cultivation of cereals, but the small farmers remain marginalized in this process. He focused that government should equally gave loans to small farmers so that they could receive the benefits in the same way as the big farmers. He demanded for central aid to be given regularly to the state for agricultural purpose and wanted to ensure justice to all the agricultural groups of the district. He suggested that government should help the farmers to grow jute which is a

dollar earning commercial crop and which could be exported outside India. Abdus Sattar introduced, the West Bengal Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Bill, in 1972 to help the agricultural class in selling and buying agricultural products. Agricultural commodities would be sold in the market with the price fixed and regulated by the government.

Sattar proposed some changes⁹¹ for the betterment of agriculture like to set up a regulated samity (comprise of members of agricultural class, representative of local buyers and sellers, members of co-operative society) which would be in charge of the market and possessed absolute power to control the market. Market samiti would give the license to the businessman and the place for selling and buying of products. This samiti would provide sufficient scope for better utilization of agricultural products example it would provide co-operative bank to give loan to the peasants, to provide cold storage, godowns, and competitive market for selling the commodities at minimum higher price but not above the price fixed by the government. Market Samiti would also provide ingredients of agriculture like seeds, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and essential items of agriculture. By this measure, the agricultural class would be benefited mostly and the market samity would be the real icon and spirit of village economy. He suggested using indigeneous fertilizer instead of investing money on buying of artificial fertilizers from outside to reduce the agricultural cost. Government failed in their attempts to acquire the vested lands and property due to the corrupt administrative officers and their distributionist policy. He pointed out that government had no concrete well defined state plan to implement for bringing development. He demanded for co-operative⁹² farming for the landless peasants with full governmental aid and support to bring prosperity in the district.

d) Development in Irrigation of the District

For the development of irrigation he demanded government to take adequate measure to distribute the pump set and to take central grant in necessary to develop the irrigation in the district for the production of jute in adequate amount. He proposed to take measures to initiate canal irrigation project in the district apart from digging tube wells and distribution of pump set. But he wanted prompt governmental action to ensure development in small irrigation project and hence he demanded sufficient pump set to be distributed and to dig shallow tube wells in order to bring development. For irrigational purpose he demanded for the supply of pipe to the farmers of good quality and at low price. Thus he proposed to buy

pipes from Indian Tube Company⁹³ by the government and to distribute it among the peasants. He appreciated governmental measure to introduce canal irrigation through central aids to improve the quality of crops in summer season. Thus if all agricultural lands could bring under the control of irrigation system then maximum production could be achieved.

e) Community Development Programme

Abdus Sattar pointed out the need for an overall development of the district. He first of all stressed on education, unemployment problem and development of communication⁹⁴ in the district. To solve employment problem he demanded on the development of state led industries. He pointed out that efforts also be made to start projects for overall development of the district so that financial benefit could be achieved. Development of agro-based industries should be the main motto of the government which would provide job opportunity for the people. Not only employment but government should take adequate measures to provide safe drinking water, to measure population density accurately and to provide basic facilities to enhance the economic status⁹⁵, living condition of the people by providing electricity in the district. He mentioned that by the application of modern technology in agricultural sector agricultural prosperity could be achieved. West Bengal Area Comprehensive bill was passed by the government to give benefit to the people living under below poverty line (BPL) condition and at the same time targeted for increase in mode of production by removing all kinds of restrictions and governmental taxes⁹⁶ from agricultural products. But the people of the district did not receive the benefit from this bill and continued to remain as underdeveloped area in West Bengal.

As part of community developmental programme, agricultural improvement became a prime factor for the government. But Sattar pointed out that state should also focus on industry and to set up mainly agro-based industries and to rejuvenate the sick industries of the district to promote job opportunity to the people of the district. He thus mentioned that sufficient amount of agricultural equipment was to be given in agricultural sector to bring a revolutionary impact in this sector for example, pump set; tube wells, cement, chemical fertilizer; pesticides and other equipments which are to be produced in the local industries of the district to provide guaranteed work to the rural people. There is interdependency between agriculture and industry, hence he demanded to set agro based industries to satisfy the supplier and the consumer. Beside rice production he demanded for modern technological⁹⁷ means to be applied in production of jute, wheat, and sunflower seed which

would enhance the economic scope of the small and marginal farmers, landless peasants, casual tenant of the landlord, and peasants with very little amount of land. If government could reshape the farm industry, fishery then additional twelve lakhs peasant's family would get benefit from it. But governmental grant should be given to the non-agricultural class and marginalized farmers for their earnings because these people used to take loan from mahajan who later on exploited them through 'dadan pratha'⁹⁸ (that is paying the due amount of production to the mahajans), hence the poor people could earn nothing and hence lost everything to these mahajans. For the stock of the agricultural crops, proper governmental godowns should be provided to the peasants to preserve vegetables like potatoes, rice and other vegetables so that in due course they could sell them out in profitable price. Cold storage and godowns should be provided to the peasants without taking any money so that in time of scarcity those crops could be supplied in the market in subsidized rate. Corporate Banks should be set up by the government to give aid to the rural people and government would be the guarantor of the loan.

Hence for overall development of the district he proposed to set up District Comprehensive Area Development Council⁹⁹ comprising of members like District Magistrate, Project Director, District Agricultural Officer, and Representative of Yojana Commission of the district to ensure development in the district. In implementing several projects in the district, there would be a project director who would implement comprehensively the various schemes of project in the district. In aiming at fulfilling various projects he advocated to set up an advisory board¹⁰⁰ with the members selected from marginal farmer, workers, and sharecroppers, members from Agricultural Samabay Samiti and Block Development Officer in respective block. He requested government to start Minor Irrigation project to give a positive effect to the rural community. He proposed all governmental institution to work like the Rural Industries Corporation, Fertilizer Corporation, and Agro-Industries Corporation in an integrated way to achieve maximum output from the government sponsored Rural Developmental Projects.

Abdus Sattar truly believed in the secular ideology of our constitution and was against all kinds of communal forces, which tried to disintegrate our Indian society. Hence, he drew the attention of the government towards all communal activities¹⁰¹ of the organizations and political parties like VHP and Bharatiya Janata Party which tried to distort the communal harmony of the district. He pointed out that when politics mixed with religious sentiment of the people then it created tension as the sensitive issue of Ram

Mandir and Babari Masjid which was dominated by the political parties like BJP and VHP who predicted an idea of Hindurashtra and tried to create a misconception in Indian politics. But he demanded that our state maintained a neutral attitude towards the Ayodhya problem and curbed all communal forces in iron hand. To curb all communal activities he demanded for strong police administration¹⁰² to act with promptness to prevent communal tension and to ensure a secured life to all citizen of a secular country.

3.1. Other Notable Political Leaders of the District

Apart from the above mentioned political leaders there were a number of other Muslim leaders in the district whose contribution lead to the development of secular culture among the people of the district as well as to the overall development of the district were noteworthy and require to be mentioned.

Idris Ali (1969-1971) showed a progressive and developmental attitude and demanded a concrete solution for food crises¹⁰³ in the state and especially in the district. Hence he demanded urgent reduction of levy tax on food crops and to fix up the market rate of cereals. He introduced government controlled modified ration shops with valid ration cards for each people in the district and to provide cereals at subsidized rate. For agricultural improvement, he demanded seed farms in different blocks in Murshidabad (Beldanga, Raninagar and Bhagawangola) and to provide the farmers with better quality of seeds, fertilizers, irrigation system and pesticides. He focused on the improvement of health of the people and implemented birth control measures in the district. He demanded for the development of health care centers, primary health care units with trained doctors and nurses to carry all kinds of surgery to ensure the health security of the rural people. He even demanded development of hospitals in every block equipped with modern machinery to ensure life security of the people. Irrespective of health, he stressed on development of cottage industry at governmental initiative example development of silk industry in the district. Development he too believes depends upon the education and cultural development of the people and hence demanded establishment of more primary schools, high schools and colleges in the district. He even stressed on development of madrassa education for the community and to provide trained government approved teachers in schools and madrassa to improve the cultural parameter of the district people. He demanded to pay the salary of these teachers from state funds. He pointed out that the district has suffered severely from flood and erosion of banks of Ganga every year which resulted in huge internal

displacement of people in the district and hence demanded permanent solution of the problem. The period from 1971 onwards the district and entire West Bengal suffered huge stress of food crises and burden of population due to influx of Pakistan refugee in West Bengal and overall India and especially in Murshidabad due to Indo-Pak controversy¹⁰⁴. To solve the artificial food crises, starvation and death of the district he demanded to solve the refugee problem and to provide the refugees with adequate number of refugee camps, food, shelter and clothing and made an appeal to the government to make a permanent solution of refugee problem in the district.

Ekramul Hoque (1969-1977) stressed on the contemporary problem of the district. He remained the member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly from 1969 to 1977. Throughout this period he stressed much on food problem that the district has suffered from, unemployment problem and educational backwardness of the community. Mainly through his participation, he stressed much on the developmental prospects of the district and he himself possessed an anti-communal attitude and aimed at overall wellbeing of the rural people. Though the Industrial Development and Regulation Act¹⁰⁵ were passed in 1951 for development of sick industry through governmental control, he demanded to apply newer research techniques for overall development of jute industry through generation of surplus amount of jute. But jute industry suffered a setback due to various synthetics of low price that overthrew the jute made products from the market. He demanded for central aid to be given to the jute growers¹⁰⁶ of the district through state government and on the other hand to reject the circulation and use of synthetic made products in the market to save jute industry and if possible for exporting jute to foreign countries to earn money. Today, we have federal system of government with decentralization of power between centre and state, but in most cases there were a picture of dismal centre-state relation where state got no financial aid from centre and failed to prosper. He said that the Muslims have proportionality in representation in Assembly and Lokh Sabha, had electoral power but they did not enjoy true share of social and economic justice due to economic setback. The West Bengal Handloom Development Corporation¹⁰⁷ was set up to provide subsidy for the improvement of jute products. The nationalized banks came forward to help the handloom sector and to assist co-operative sectors, but due to lack of central assistance the industry could not flourish. Ekramul Hoque criticized governmental policy of land ceiling¹⁰⁸ (that is possessing of maximum land by an individual will be determined by government) or possession of land by the land owners since government failed to maintain any record of the

distributed land to the landless peasants. State failed to provide financial aid, modern technological equipments like fertilizers, seeds and pesticides to the peasant and hence agricultural sector could not flourish.

Md. Sohrab (1969-1982 and 1996-2000) focused on overall development of the district. He pointed out the socio-economic exploitation of the bidi workers¹⁰⁹ of Jangipur subdivision who produced seven crores of Bidi every day which is supplied in North Bengal, Assam and Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and several parts of India. From this cottage industry, central government regularly received excise duty approximately of twenty crores. But government overlooked this condition of the unorganized workers who are exploited economically¹¹⁰ and treated inhumanly by the factory manufacturer. He claimed that it was the duty of the central government to secure the minimum wage of the beedi workers from bidi companies, to provide them with identity card and log book to ensure their economic interests. He emphasized on the decaying economic condition of the district due to lac of agricultural scope and industry. He focused on educational development¹¹¹ in the district through development in educational infrastructure to boost educational growth in Murshidabad.

Shis Mohammed (1972-1995) opined that a liberal state should secure development for the country through various community welfare measures. He stressed on the need of development of fishery co-operative society, small cottage industry at governmental initiative, development in education, health to improve social condition of the people. He demanded aid for the growth of agriculture in the district that is to provide fertilizers, seeds, proper irrigation systems and pesticides. He demanded the village co-operatives to play an active role and worked as a financial institution to help the peasants in times of their need. Shis Mohammed demanded for distribution of pump set at low or free of cost to the farmers and for the construction of shallow and deep tube wells for overall development of the community¹¹². He further demanded for river irrigation system to be introduced in the district for agricultural development. He also focused on rural electrification for agricultural growth. He stressed on the need of securing the provident fund for the bidi workers, overall development of transport system especially the development of state bus service, and for the creation of power plant in the district for generation of scope of employment¹¹³. Hence we find an overall developmental focus he made on the House to ensure betterment of the community. Similar approach are made by the other leaders of the district like Samsuddin

Ahmed (1967-69), Badruddin Ahmed (1971-1972), Aftabuddin Ahmed (1971-72), and Habibur Rahaman (1972-77. 1977-1982), in the Assembly House.

Abul Hasnat (1977-1995) believed in overall development of the district. He focused on development¹¹⁴ of state-led schools, madrassa and governmental colleges, well equipped health units, sufficient medicines in health centres and well trained nurses and doctors, development of roads for better communication, rural electrification, industrial and agricultural development of the district. He demanded financial grant from both state and central government for the flood affected areas like Manikchak, Farakka, Sakopara, Akhiriganj, Jalangi, and Raninagar and to give special attention where the lands are being drastically eroded in flood. To solve soil erosion and flood¹¹⁵ he focused on the need of construction of dam on river Banslai to prevent soil erosion of the lands going towards Bangladesh. For prevention of Bangladeshi migration to the district he stressed the need to provide more BSF army in the border areas and to increase the number of Mobile Task Force¹¹⁶ in the border areas which are porous and vulnerable to migration. In Jangipur subdivision, he requested government to initiate projects for the construction of deep tube wells, thermal power plant, to complete the work of electrification in the district, and for the completion of the existing projects to supply adequate water. He felt the need of industrialization in the district and demanded governmental attention in this regard. He supported for the establishment of a congenial environment especially stressed on rural electrification for the development of industry to enhance economic growth in the district. In supervision of West Bengal Electronic Industry Development Corporation (WBEIDC), planning of development of industries is made but due to inadequacy of electricity industrialization¹¹⁷ suffered a huge set-back.

Mozammel Hoque (1987-2000) focused on the urgent need for overall development of the district. He demanded grant for health and family welfare schemes, in agriculture, education, transport and fisheries. He demanded that in a democratic country all individual should be entrusted with secure life and economic enhancement and government should take that responsibility to ensure an overall development of the individual. In Murshidabad agriculture suffered a setback due to lack of land and irrigation facility. But to enhance economic development¹¹⁸ of the rural people, he proposed that government should take initiatives in bringing development in agriculture and fishery. He pointed out that government should concentrate on developmental issue rather than initiating new projects. The governmental projects like Rural Land Irrigation (RLI) could not prove to be effective

in giving benefit to agriculture of the district. The dams constructed on river Padma, has been occupied by the political cadres. He pointed out that the people in the flood affected area took shelter upon the area of the dams, but if the dams were damaged, then its result would be more fatal. Through operation 'Sun Shine' West Bengal government freed the footpath of Kolkata, but flood control is a vital issue and thus he focused to underake measures for the protection of the dams to save the lands from erosion that resulted in agricultural damages. The dams¹¹⁹ constructed in Bagawangola is mostly occupied by the political party leaders who constructed their office upon the dam. He pointed out that in Murshidabad district, soil erosion¹²⁰ was maximum especially in Akheriganj, Islampur and Paharpur area hence the district needs more governmental attention. To develop the economic market of rural Bengal, he demanded for governmental grant in the formation of co-operative society where the rural people could sell their handmade goods and local products. To develop the economy he stressed on the need for the development of tourist spot¹²¹ in Murshidabad especially in Lalbagh - by renovating Hazar Duari Palace as historical place of Nawab Srirajdollah. The other influential leaders of the district like Dedar Baksh (1982-1987) and Nasiruddin Khan (1982-1987) who stressed for the overall development of the district.

4. Attitude of the Leaders from 1990 Onwards

The leaders from 1990 onwards pose developmental attitude as situation has changed from earlier. Issues like rehabilitation of the displaced people, food crises of the district, border dispute lost its relevance and the communal fervor of the political leaders has changed. The leaders are now working in proper democratic federal framework of the country. The leaders supposed to work within constitutional framework and aimed to assure socio-economic development of the district. This developmental attitude is considered as secular intension of the leaders. To obey Indian constitution requires orientation of the community leaders of the district towards secular principles of the country which are expected to get reflected in their developmental attitude. Indian version of secularism which in other word portrays a principle of 'sarva-dharma samabhava', or shows equal respect to all religious community shapes the mental attitude of the leaders in such a way that it shows a major shift in the attitude of the leaders of the district that is from minority concern to developmental issues.

Toub Ali (1987-1995, 2006-2016) in the West Bengal Assembly House pointed out the deteriorating condition of the district especially with the breaking of law and order in the border areas and the rampant increase in cross border smuggling of goods like jute, sugar, rice etc. Hence he stressed on the need of increasing the security measures to maintain law and order in the district. He demanded for the growth of industry in the district and to reopen the lockout industry and factories to generate employment scope¹²² in the rural area and development in agricultural sector by applying modern technology and scientific method to increase output of production. He stressed the need to modernize district hospitals¹²³ and good educational infrastructure. To prevent internal displacement¹²⁴ of the people he demanded to implement concrete steps to prevent flood in the district. To bring self-sufficiency¹²⁵ in the district he wanted to establish industry and agricultural sector and state-led national industry to flourish. He was against open market economy which made the market more competitive for local people and hence demanded state-led industries which would only ensure development of the rural people by serving their interests.

Id Mohammed (1991-2016) focused on the development of the district, he argued that state should achieve the path of self-sufficiency, through development of industry and economic growth rate. He demanded to establish well constructed roads for enhancement of rural mercantile system and to bring self-sufficiency in the district. He stressed on the need for the development in agricultural sector, development of science and information technology¹²⁶ in the district for the students to study from their own area. He stressed on the need of rural electrification¹²⁷, and to install powerful transmitter in Aurangabad and Dhulian to improve agricultural facility. He stressed on the need for development of educational institution in the district, establishment of institution of higher education like colleges and universities in the district, focused on the need for the development of health care units, to undertake appropriate flood control measures and to undertake land reform measures to achieve the parameters of development. He aimed at guiding the district towards the path of self-sufficiency by introducing self-owned small farms and development of cottage industry like handloom, silk, agro-based industry which would provide employment scope to the youths. When entire world is progressing, our country paves the path of liberalization, and then attempts should be made to ensure economic progress of the district too. In the name of globalization, 'Mac World' and in achieving 'Mac Culture' (one culture), national industries were regularly being locked out and being contracted to some renounced MNCs to take charge of it and to run it. In this process, India

government gave the economic control in the hands of the MNCs in the name of development. But he demanded for state-led nationalized industry to attain economic self-sufficiency¹²⁸. He demanded more aid in industrial sector to build state-led industry and well regulated market. Id Mohammed's views were supported to full extent by Atahar Rahaman (member of Legislative Assembly from 1987-91, 1991-95) in the Assembly House.

Abu Hena (1991-2016) like his father Abdus Sattar focused on developmental issues of the district. He suggested for undertaking an effective flood control measures in the district and simultaneously to repair and maintain the apex dam to check flood in Lalgola and its adjacent areas. He pointed out the administrative corruption in the district and mal-functional Panchayati Raj Institution engaged in political corruption in the district. He criticized governmental flood protection schemes and for the misuse of central grant given to state for developmental purposes in Murshidabad. He pointed out the failure of the government to create employment¹²⁹ scope in the state, failure of the government to set up educational institution and degree colleges, failure of the government to establish new industries, failure of the government to solve food scarcity in the district, to set up hospitals, to provide agricultural scope, irrigation system, governmental failure in rural electrification and to undertake proper flood control measures in Murshidabad district. He proposed for development of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbors, to take care of the fishermen community¹³⁰ in the state, and argued that state should take adequate measure for gradual increase in production of fish in a planned manner for upgrading the standard of living in Murshidabad district. Apart from this he focused on development of infrastructural facilities like construction of roads, bridges, culverts, rural electrification, market complex, establishment of Food Park processing centers, fishing harbors and fish landing centers in the district. He stressed the need to improve transport system, communication of the district, tourism and to organize various co-operatives in the district.

Under Rastriya Krishi Vikash Yojna he demanded allocation of funds for the improvement of the district agriculture and to introduce subsidy oriented schemes to attract the unemployed youths in the state to accept fisheries as one of the sustainable means of livelihood. He demanded state agricultural department to take up comprehensive¹³¹ programme for reclamation of beels for development of fishery projects. He demanded to introduce schemes¹³² for fisher folk in the state to give aid for the construction of house, their old age pension, personal accident insurance aiming at socio-economic condition of

the fishing community. Hence Abu Hena stressed much on training, extension and research and to develop research institute¹³³ for training and education in pisciculture. He also demanded for developing the tourism¹³⁴ industry in the district by setting up tourist lodge to increase the economy of the district and to develop the fishery sector which played a great role in combating the challenge of meeting the food demand with the population growth in entire West Bengal.

Unus Sarkar (1991-2011) was another politically active member of West Bengal Legislative Assembly and he stressed on the need of development¹³⁵ of education, implementation of modern means and techniques to bring agricultural improvement in the district. The leader also stressed the need for cultural and educational enhancement of the people, to undertake measures for proper industrialization to solve unemployment problem and to uplift the economic condition of the people in the district and to undertake effective flood control measures in the district. He focused for introducing technical college affiliated to All India Council of Technical Education in Behrampur. He felt that academic education would not help the youths to secure jobs for them and stressed on the need to introduce technical education, education in computer science in the district. According to him this would enable the youths to fetch suitable jobs in industries and private firms irrespective of governmental jobs. In case of industrialization, district needs more attention and more financial aid from government. For Murshidabad district, he demanded for the development¹³⁶ of oil mill, jute mill, silk rearing and weaving industry and agro-based industries like making pickle jams from mango-pulp, pineapple and lichis. To prevent erosion of banks of Ganga he stressed the need to take strenuous governmental flood control measures to prevent internal displacement¹³⁷ of people in Bagawangola, Arjunpur, Sakopara, Dhulian, Chandrapara, Fazilpur and Jalangi. He pointed out that the district lacked¹³⁸ in rural electrification, in agriculture, lacked in proper industry and employment scope. Further the district has porous border which is prone to smuggling of goods and human trafficking. He demanded government to take strong measures to curtail these activities in the border district. He also focused on the need for development of state sponsored governmental hospitals, to provide life saving drugs in health care units, to set up maternity care units, and modern equipment for surgical purpose and to establish district hospitals for betterment of the people. According to the leader, the Muslim community does not need any reservation¹³⁹ of seat in Assembly or in Lokh Sabha but reservation in educational sector, in employment, in higher education or education for specialized

governmental jobs like IAS and IPS. He demanded special privilege to be given to the people of the backward community of the district as in compare to other districts Murshidabad lagged behind. Development meant to achieve education, to achieve job, to attain socio-cultural status, to reduce poverty and increase in economic activity which are the main indicators of modernization and growth in a true secular country.

Anisur Rahaman (1991-2011) stressed for the need of agricultural improvement, industrial development, fishery, animal husbandry as the parameters of development. Anisur Rahaman aimed to bring economic progress in rural Bengal. Hence he focused on unemployment problem of the district and demanded for the growth of industry. He proposed to undertake measures¹⁴⁰ like use of modern fertilizers, seeds and pesticides, good irrigation techniques with the help of pump sets and proper electrification in the district to increase production in agriculture and to set up agro-based industry, production of dairy products, and growth of farm industry, cattle breeding, and fishery in the district to boost economic growth. He said that India government talk about democracy but it is impossible to achieve without proper employment scope among the youths. He demanded reservation for Muslims and OBC (other backward class) candidates in education and government jobs. He pointed out the backwardness of the Muslims in respect to special field of education like medical and engineering department, but the main problem is economically the Muslims are not sound to opt for these specialized courses and after getting chance in joint entrance, they are deprived from these streams. Even he pointed out that the party cadres and their well known persons are getting enlisted¹⁴¹ as BPL (below poverty line) candidates and members who are genuinely needy remain deprived from receiving any governmental benefits. For educational modernization, he demanded to initiate computer courses, English and Maths in madrassas like other governmental educational schools and demanded to increase the educational budget for the district.

Anisur Rahaman demanded for the development of animal husbandry to initiate employment in the district. He stressed on the need of reopening of closed industries so that nearly twenty crores of unemployed youths could achieve benefits from industrial sector through employment. He demanded that government implemented various schemes but he wanted the scheme to be active like Rashtriya Krishi Vikash Yozona¹⁴² to bring a holistic development in the agricultural sector. For augmentation of milk production in the district, the state should initiate extensive programme to increase production. He focused to invest money in cattle breeding which are the cheap source of high quality of proteins, minerals

and vitamins that are required to balance the human diet. As a member of House he stressed to ensure more developmental grant to the district through gram panchayat. The leader focused on fodder development though there is non-availability of fodder land and acute shortage in availability of quality of fodder seeds in the district. He demanded state attention in the district for fodder development. He also demanded for entrepreneurship development programme¹⁴³ to invest money in farm industry along with state. He further stressed for the development of dairy products and to supply ample quantity of milk at a reasonable price to urban and rural customers which would result in increase in state's income. Without any exaggeration the leader focused that state had establish West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences in 1995 which emphasised on education research and extensive activities to make the producing community conscious regarding the technique of development. But for the district he demanded more for development of the peasants. He suggested that government should go one step forward to reopen an training centre to develop an integrating farming – and to trained the farmer in similar fashion so that they could produce rice, fish, some space for animal husbandry so that the space could be utilized fully and maximum benefit could be gained from the same agricultural land for sufficient economic growth.

Moinul Hoque (1996-2016) stressed on the development¹⁴⁴ of higher educational institutions in the district, stressed the need of rural electrification for agricultural improvement, and well connected roads, pointed out the failure of the government in renovation of river banks which caused flood every year. He pointed out the massive failure of the government in preventing smuggling activities in the district¹⁴⁵ and negligence in completion of Kandi Master Plan to prevent flood in Jangipur, Samsanganj, Kandi, Suti I and II block in the coming years. He even pointed out the inhospitable condition of the bidi workers¹⁴⁶ in receiving their minimum wage and provident fund and hence demanded governmental intervention in improving their miserable condition.

Jane Alam (2001-2011) like other leaders of the district stressed on the development¹⁴⁷ of the district like rural electrification, agricultural development, development of roads, development in educational institutions and improvement of health centres, establishment of technical, medical, degree colleges and universities. He focused on the water logging problem in agricultural and pastoral land which seriously affected the peasants and marginalized farmers. Hence he pleaded to make bridges upon Banslai and Pagla River by the government and to undertake a project to connect these rivers with Feder

canal to check flood. According to him a welfare state should take adequate measures¹⁴⁸ to eradicate poverty, malnutrition, unemployment and educational hurdles in the district. He thus criticized federal form of government as West Bengal received less central grant for developmental purpose. Most of the people in rural area did not receive the benefit of 100 days work and no central grant had been allotted to the state for flood control measures. With the increase of population in the district he suggested to set up a rural co-operative samity, development in agro-based industry, development in tourism, improvement in health centres of the district and to set up an all inclusive strong security measures¹⁴⁹ for the people to prevent incidence like murder, extortion, rape and insecurity in the district. All he aimed to bring stability in this border district and to preserve law and order with strong security measures and police force. Similar developmental attitude are reflected among the leaders of Assemble like Abdul Hoque (1996-2006), Mujibur Rahaman (2001-2006) and Humayun Reza (1996-2006) in their speeches in Assembly House.

Abu Taher Khan (2001-2011) focused mainly on development of health centers, rural sanitation and hospitals in the district. He pointed out the dysfunctional health centers due to lack of doctors, medicines and trained nurses. He pointed out a striking example that hospitals runned by public initiative are running successively where treatment costs are much higher than governmental hospitals¹⁵⁰. People had to go there to get medical benefit at higher costs so he demanded government sponsored health facilities in the district. He pointed out the dismal picture of decentralization of power where state received adequate or no financial assistance for devepment from center and hence demanded equal distribution of financial grants for West Bengal in compare to other states. Hence, it may be inferred that the leaders of the district actively participated in the Assembly debates and they all posses a developmental attitude not for the Muslim community but for the enhancement of entire district people. Insar Ali Biswas (2006-2016), Chand Mohammed (2006-2016), Md. Refatullah (2006-2011), Ferdousi Begum (2011-2016), and Emani Biswas (2011-2016) projected similar developmental attitude in the floor of the Assembly.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, it may be inferred that every community needs proper guidance especially the minorities. After partition of our subcontinent the Indian Muslims everywhere became leaderless and ‘minority complex’ was developed in their minds. Most of the Muslims in West Bengal and in India who did not migrate to Pakistan were treated as disloyal by the

majority community, and are blamed for the creation of the new state. In this state of social turmoil when there was total chaos and insecurity in the border districts of West Bengal and in entire India then the Muslim political leaders came forward to save the community and to ensure confidence in their minds so that they could overcome from the trauma of partition disastrous and could identify them as Indian nationals. The Muslim intellectuals like Abdul Odut, Humayan Kabir, Rejaul Karim, nawab Wasif Ali Mirza (nawab bahadur of Murshidabad district) played a vital role in restoring Hindu Muslim unity and solidarity in the society in spite of communal activities of the Muslim League activists and tried their best to eliminate fear and anxiety from the minds of the community. The most influential political leaders of the district were Syed Baddrudoza, Md. Khuda Baksh, Kazem Ali Mirza, Lutfal Hoque, Abdus Sattar, and Jainal Abedin who tried their best to restore communal unity in the district in the formative years just after partition. The political leaders of the district took part in active politics in West Bengal Legislative Assembly and demanded proper measures to ensure justice to the community. They raised their voice to bring social equity within the community and to ensure confidence within the minds of the Muslim youths. In the midst of social and political turmoil like poverty, economic degradation, cross border migration, huge influx of East Pakistan refugees, lack of security of life and property, murder of innocent people, loot and communal violence the leaders tried to remove the sufferings of the people of their community in the district. The leaders wanted development in the district, raised their voice against all administrative malpractices and demand settlement of refugee problem in the state. The leaders sometimes criticized the nature of Indian democracy and secularism which they claimed to be a pseudo-democracy as because state failed in its attempt to ensure justice for all its citizens. The leaders demanded educational and cultural development for the minority people in the district. They pointed out that the Muslims in the border area are evicted and tortured by the Border Security Force of the central government. They wanted to prevent dishonor of the community, communal violence, murder, atrocities and demanded justice for the people in the floor of the Assembly House. Kazem Ali Mirza, Abdul Hamid, Abdul Latif and Md. Israel, who once worked as an active Muslim League leaders in pre-partition time later joined Congress ministry as political representatives from the district and demanded development for the people. The other influential leaders from the district like Lutfal Hoque, Abdus Sattar, and Idris Ali. Md. Sohrab. Abul Hasnat, Mozammel Hoque, Ehamul Hoque, Shis Mohammed, Toub Ali, Id Mohammed, Abu Hena, Unus Sarkar, Anisur Rahaman, Moinul Hoque, Jane Alam, Abu Taher Khan, Chand Mohammed, Ferdousi

Begum, Emami Biswas possessed an developmental attitude not only for the Muslim community but for all. It may be inferred that with a change of the socio-political condition, there came an attitudinal change among the leaders. Lutfal Hoque even tried to bring unity within the community, tried to ensure education to all and he tried his best to regenerate the condition of the unorganized workers in the district. Abdus Sattar brought an agricultural revolution in the district, and at the same time appealed for community developmental programme and criticized all kinds of communal forces in the society at large. He gave special attention towards securing the educational and cultural rights of the Muslim women.

The leaders from the district are very much vocal and politically active and tried their best to achieve the wellbeing of the community. They do not seek their own interest but they work in the interest of the community. It showed that with the changing of time there were changes in the attitude of the political leaders of the district. During 1950s and 1960s the leaders focused on the issues like the security of the community, rehabilitation of the migrated people, prevention of cross border migration. From 1970 onwards the attitude of the leaders shifted to developmental issues like agricultural development and irrigational improvement, development of educational infrastructure, development of communication, prevention of flood in the district, development in health care units of the district and increase in economic growth by implementing modern technology. These happened to be the basic demands of the leaders for ensuring an overall development of the district and state.

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