

PREFACE

In India democracy has taken root amidst a low income economy, widespread poverty, illiteracy and immense ethnic diversity. In an ethnically homogenous society Indian democracy is thus best understood by the factors as leadership strategies, the design of political institutions and the political role of diverse social groups or in short to the interaction of the state and society. Democracy has struck a delicate balance between forces of centralization and decentralization and the interests of the powerful in society have been served without fully excluding the weaker groups and the minority community. India's democracy was strengthened by crafting a federal structure that gave political power to all citizens. Federal structure was further strengthened with the creation of local self governments, distribution of power between various regions and centre, accommodation of interests of several groups like caste, class, religions, linguistic, interest of the specific region and accommodates the rights of all the major and minor groups in the society. Democracy means the rule of the people, which is inclusion of its entire citizen in the realm of governance. Today, every citizen not only casts vote to ensure their political duties towards state but shares their opinion in the process of governance. Today all its citizens irrespective of caste, sects, religion were politically conscious and aware of their rights, duties and hence through active political participation they help the government to run the democratic governance in India – that is it is a two way process. Indian secularism is conceived as the unifying principle mediating between different communities and their rights. It is not the principle of separation of church and state but religion and politics is divorced from one another where different religious communities co-exist on a basis of equality having freedom of religion and both majority and minority religious communities acted as catalytic agent in the process of separating the respective jurisdictions of religion and the state and hence develops a true secular concept of citizenship which ensures true participatory democracy. India's secular state is not a state which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religious affiliations and neither promote or interfere with religion. Secularism in India vindicates the basic democratic rights of all religious communities to secure equality, justice and freedom of the individual.

In the theoretical background of Indian secularism and democracy we have tried to analyze the political participation and attitude of the Muslims in Murshidabad district from the period 1978-2008. We made an empirical study of Suti II Block by selecting the two gram

panchayat Umrapur and Aurangabad 2 and the sample size were 100 and 150 respectively from the two GPs. First we have study the election result from 1978-2008 and tried to analyze the participation result by comparing the total number of electorates and their voting turnout in the election. Similarly attempt has been made to assess the participatory rate of the respondents in elections by conducting empirical research and collection of both qualitative and quantitative data regarding electoral and other forms of political participation. The independent variables like respondent's income, occupational status, education and age is chosen by the researcher to find an association between independent and dependent variables in this research work. Hence the proposed study is a modest attempt to empirically explore political attitude and political participation of the Bengali Muslims of Murshidabad in order to theorize the data obtained from the empirical findings from the respondents in the district.