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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-POLITICAL SCIENCES

SEMESTER -IV

ASPECTS OF POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

ELECTIVE 405

BLOCK-1

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Postal Address:

The Registrar,

University of North Bengal,

Raja Rammohunpur,

P.O.-N.B.U., Dist-Darjeeling,

West Bengal, Pin-734013,

India.

Phone: (O) +91 0353-2776331/2699008

Fax: (0353) 2776313, 2699001

Email: regnbu@sancharnet.in ; regnbu@nbu.ac.in

Wesbsite: www.nbu.ac.in

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

ASPECTS OF POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

BLOCK-1

BLOCK -2

BLOCK 1: ASPECTS OF POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

Introduction to the Block

Unit 1 deals with Congress Politics in West Bengal. Congress Politics in West Bengal; To discuss the Major problem and challenges faced ;To describe the Congress policies during the formation period.

Unit 2 deals with Leadership issue and impact of Functionalism. Leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behavior and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation.

Unit 3 deals with Congress and the Electoral Politics. Election is a device through which a modern state creates among its citizens a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs. A good electoral system is the bedrock of genuine representative government.

Unit 4 deals with West Bengal under Left rule. The Left Front has its roots in various past platforms of collaboration of West Bengal left parties and anti-Indian National Congress forces. Such examples were the United Left Front, the People's United Left Front and the United Front that governed West Bengal 1967–1971.

Unit 5 deals with Left Front Coalition Formations. The Left Front Government in the State of West Bengal has limited powers. It has to operate within a capitalist feudal economy. The Constitution, contrary to federal principles, does not provide for the needed powers for the States and we suffer from a special disability because the Union Government is ill-disposed towards our Government.

Unit 6 deals with Pattern of Support Mobilization – Economic Policies. The availability and mobilization of resources is a sine qua non for real capital formation and, hence, national development.

Unit 7 deals with Radical left policies in West Bengal – Rise. Left-wing politics supports social equality and egalitarianism, often in opposition to social hierarchy.

UNIT 1: CONGRESS POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

STRUCTURE

1.0 Objectives

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Congress Politics in West Bengal

1.3 Major problem and challenges faced

1.4 Congress policies during the formation period

1.5 Priority fixation and the pattern of support mobilization

1.6 Limitation of the Congress policies

1.7 Let us sum up

1.8 Key Words

1.9 Questions for Review

1.10 Suggested readings and references

1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about the Congress Politics in West Bengal
- To discuss the Major problem and challenges faced
- To describe the Congress policies during the formation period
- To know Priority fixation and the pattern of support mobilization
- To discuss the Limitations of the Congress policies

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It is popularly believed in Calcutta, especially by the intellectuals of that city, that as Calcutta goes so goes all of West Bengal. Since Calcutta turned against the Congress Party in the 1957 elections, many Calcutta intellectuals believe that rural Bengal will follow suit in the 1962 elections. The data provided here concerning the rise of a rural elite into political positions suggests that the influence of Calcutta and of her politicians upon rural areas is decreasing. Built upon this outdated image

of the political process is another view that India's parliamentary system is simply the "plaything" of urban intellectuals. But the legislature is already under rural control, rural representation m Parliament is increasing and it is likely that rural influence will continue to increase, What effect will this increase in rural leadership have upon the freedom with which economic planning may be pursued? So long it has been possible for India's planners to plan on a highly rational and relatively non-political basis. To the extent that rural areas increasingly articulate their interests, it will become more and more difficult for planners not to take these demands into account. If political demands increasingly enter into economic planning, what effects might this have upon the democratic structure? Planners will be faced with some hard choice. They may have to modify what they conceive to be highly rational plans based solely upon economic considerations, or alternatively, adopt authoritarian measures to minimize the influence of these political pressures. The urban industrial emphasis of planning may indeed undergo great changes.

1.2 CONGRESS POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL

The Indian National Congress (About this soundpronunciation (help·info)) (INC, often called the Congress Party or simply Congress) is a political party in India with widespread roots. Founded in 1885, it was the first modern nationalist movement to emerge in the British Empire in Asia and Africa. From the late 19th century, and especially after 1920, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Congress became the principal leader of the Indian independence movement. Congress led India to independence from Great Britain, and powerfully influenced other anti-colonial nationalist movements in the British Empire.

Congress is a "big tent" party whose liberal social democratic platform is generally considered to be on the centre-left of Indian politics. Congress' social policy is based upon the Gandhian principle of Sarvodaya–the lifting up of all sections of society–which involves the improvement of the lives of economically underprivileged and socially marginalised people. On social and economic issues, it advocates liberty, social

justice, equality, welfare state, along with progressive and secular society. The party's constitution adheres to liberal–democratic socialist philosophy.

After India's independence in 1947, Congress formed the central government of India, and many regional state governments. Congress became India's dominant political party; as of 2019, in the 17 general elections since independence, it has won an outright majority on seven occasions and has led the ruling coalition a further three times, heading the central government for more than 54 years. There have been six Congress Prime Ministers, the first being Jawaharlal Nehru (1947–1964), and the most recent Manmohan Singh (2004–2014). Although it did not fare well in the last two general elections in India in 2014 and 2019, it remains one of two major, nationwide, political parties in India, along with the right-wing, Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In the 2014 general election, Congress had its poorest post-independence general election performance, winning only 44 seats of the 543-member Lok Sabha.

From 2004 to 2014, United Progressive Alliance, a coalition of Congress with several regional parties, formed the Indian government led by Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister as the head of the coalition government. The leader of the party during the period, Sonia Gandhi has served the longest term as the president of the party. As of July 2019, the party is in power in six legislative assemblies: Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra (as part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi), and the union territory of Puducherry (in an alliance with DMK).

The process by which a new leadership is emerging throughout Asia provides us with one key to understanding the dynamics of social and political change. With the achievement of independence new leaders emerge with new interests and demands. How well these fragile democracies will be able to withstand the pressures exercised by new leaders and new groups is one of the fundamental questions of our times. It is the purpose of this paper to explore the changing pattern of leadership in a single state in India during the past fort y years and to suggest the kinds of demands likely to enter India n political life as a

result of these changes. Finally, we shall ask what effect these demands are likely to have on the freedom with which economic planning ma y be pursued by the India n government in the years ahead. Our study is based upon the following reflections:

1. Under western colonial rule the countries of Asia have experienced a quiet but profound change In the character of their political leadership One could view the nationalist struggle in India , as elsewhere, not only as a struggle by Indians to replace their British rulers, but as a struggle by one group of Indians— a western-educated class of journalists, doctors, lawyers and administrators—to replace an older leadership of maharajas, landlords, and hereditary administrators. To understand modern India , one must understand this new leadership, the social background from which it derives, the groups with which it is associated and whose interests it articulates, the values and ideologies it propagates, and the influence which it wields.

2. This new leadership has itself been undergoing many changes. The late 19th and early 20th century leadership which participated in the India n National Congress. India's paramount nationalist organization, was largely drawn from middle income groups in the coastal cities of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and their environs. In the 1920s major changes occurred within the nationalist movement. Not only did the advent of Gandhi mean a change in style by the nationalist movement, from the two strands of modern liberalism and violent extremism to non-violent civil disobedience built upon mass participation, but a change occurred in the character of the leadership. The leadership which arose in the 1920s did not come so exclusively from Bengal Madras and Bombay, but from Gujerat, United Provinces, Bihar, Andhra and the Central Provinces. The new leadership came from the hinterlands away from the main centers of western Intrusion, Such changes in the geographic backgrounds of leaders, along with changes in social origin, are often critical factors in the kinds of political conflicts and public policies which emerge.

3. Finally, it is assumed here that public policy in Indi a Is not simply made by a handful of men who attempt to enforce their decisions upon a static population. Between the top decision makers and the masses are an arra y of intermediate leaders, some of whom communicate governmental decisions to the masses, others of whom attempt to influence policy, administration and the selection of personnel on the basis of the interests of the groups to which they belong and identify. Much of the thinkin g about political leadership) in India and elsewhere in Asia and Afric a focuses on the elite-mass dichotomy. This dichotomy finds a central place in the thinking of Tareto, Mosca and Lasswell. but while it now plays a secondary role in the analysis of American and European political systems, it occupies a central place in popular and even scholarly thinking about non-European political systems. This image of the political process fails to take Into account the great changes which have occurred in Indi a since the 1920s and fails to explore the linkage between the top leadership in India—the Prime Minister, cabinet members, and State chief ministers—and the masses.

Indian National Congress, byname **Congress Party**, broadly based political party of India. Formed in 1885, the Indian National Congress dominated the Indian movement for independence from Great Britain. It subsequently formed most of India's governments from the time of independence and often had a strong presence in many state governments.

History

The pre-independence period

The Indian National Congress first convened in December 1885, though the idea of an Indian nationalist movement opposed to British rule dated from the 1850s. During its first several decades, the Congress Party passed fairly moderate reform resolutions, though many within the organization were becoming radicalized by the increased poverty that accompanied British imperialism. In the early 20th century, elements within the party began to endorse a policy of *swadeshi* ("of our own country"), which called on Indians to boycott of imported British goods and promoted Indian-made goods. By 1917 the group's "extremist"

Home Rule wing, which was formed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant the previous year, had begun to exert significant influence by appealing to India's diverse social classes.

Mohandas K. Gandhi and Sarojini Naidu on the Salt March in western India, March 1930.Hulton Archive/Getty Images

In the 1920s and '30s the Congress Party, led by Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi, began advocating nonviolent noncooperation. The new change in tactics was precipitated by the protest over the perceived feebleness of the constitutional reforms enacted in early 1919 (Rowlatt Acts) and Britain's manner of carrying them out, as well as by the widespread outrage among Indians in response to the massacre of civilians in Amritsar (Punjab) that April. Many of the acts of civil disobedience that followed were implemented through the All India Congress Committee, formed in 1929, which advocated avoiding taxes as a protest against British rule. Notable in that regard was the Salt March in 1930 led by Gandhi. Another wing of the Congress Party, which believed in working within the existing system, contested general elections in 1923 and 1937 as the Swaraj (Home Rule) Party, with particular success in the latter year, winning 7 out of 11 provinces.

When World War II began in 1939, Britain made India a belligerent without consulting Indian elected councils. That action angered Indian officials and prompted the Congress Party to declare that India would not support the war effort until it had been granted complete

independence. In 1942 the organization sponsored mass civil disobedience to support the demand that the British "quit India." British authorities responded by imprisoning the entire Congress Party leadership, including Gandhi, and many remained in jail until 1945. After the war the British government of Clement Attlee passed an independence bill in July 1947, and independence was achieved the following month. In January 1950 India's constitution as an independent state took effect.

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Postindependence dominance of the Nehru clan

From 1951 until his death in 1964, Jawaharlal Nehru dominated the Congress Party, which won overwhelming victories in the elections of 1951–52, 1957, and 1962. The party united in 1964 to elect Lal Bahadur Shastri and in 1966 Indira Gandhi (Nehru's daughter) to the posts of party leader and thus prime minister. In 1967, however, Indira Gandhi faced open revolt within the party, and in 1969 she was expelled from the party by a group called the "Syndicate." Nevertheless, her New Congress Party scored a landslide victory in the 1971 elections, and for a period it was unclear which party was the true rightful heir of the Indian National Congress label.

Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru being greeted by U.S. Pres. Harry S. Truman at the start of Nehru's visit to the United States in

October 1949; Nehru's daughter, Indira, who later served as prime minister, is on the right.*Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.*

In the mid-1970s the New Congress Party's popular support began to fracture. From 1975 Gandhi's government grew increasingly more authoritarian, and unrest among the opposition grew. In the parliamentary elections held in March 1977, the opposition Janata (People's) Party scored a landslide victory over the Congress Party, winning 295 seats in the Lok Sabha (the lower chamber of India's parliament) against 153 for the Congress; Gandhi herself lost to her Janata opponent. On January 2, 1978, she and her followers seceded and formed a new opposition party, popularly called Congress (I)—the "I" signifying Indira. Over the next year, her new party attracted enough members of the legislature to become the official opposition, and in 1981 the national election commission declared it the "real" Indian National Congress. In 1996 the "I" designation was dropped. In November 1979 Gandhi regained a parliamentary seat, and the following year she was again elected prime minister. In 1982 her son Rajiv Gandhi became nominal head of the party, and, upon her assassination in October 1984, he became prime minister. In December he led the Congress Party to an overwhelming victory in which it secured 401 seats in the legislature.

Rajiv Gandhi, 1985.Yutaka Nagata/UN Photo

Although the Congress Party remained the largest party in parliament in 1989, Rajiv Gandhi was unseated as prime minister by a coalition of

opposition parties. While campaigning to regain power in May 1991, he was assassinated by a suicide bomber associated with the Tamil Tigers, a separatist group in Sri Lanka. He was succeeded as party leader by P.V. Narasimha Rao, who was elected prime minister in June 1991.

The party since 1991

In contrast to the party's historical socialist policies, Rao embraced economic liberalization. By 1996 the party's image was suffering from various reports of corruption, and in elections that year the Congress Party was reduced to 140 seats, its lowest number in the Lok Sabha to that point, becoming parliament's second largest party. Rao subsequently resigned as prime minister and, in September, as party president. He was succeeded as president by Sitaram Kesri, the party's first non-Brahman leader.

P.V. Narasimha Rao, 1991*AP*

The United Front (UF) government—a coalition of 13 parties—came to power in 1996 as a minority government with the support of the Congress Party. However, as the largest single party in opposition in parliament after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP; Indian People's Party), the Congress Party was vital in both making and defeating the UF. In November 1997 the Congress Party withdrew its support from the UF, prompting elections in February 1998. To boost its popularity among the masses and improve the party's performance in the forthcoming elections, the Congress Party leaders urged Sonia Gandhi—the Italian-born widow of Rajiv Gandhi—to assume the leadership of the party. She

had previously declined overtures to play an active role in party affairs, but at that time she agreed to campaign. Although a BJP-led coalition government came to power, the Congress Party and its partners were able to deny the BJP an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha. The party's better-than-expected performance in the national elections was attributed by many observers to Sonia Gandhi's charisma and vigorous campaigning. After the 1998 elections, Kesri resigned as party president, and Sonia Gandhi assumed the leadership of the party.

National parliamentary elections were again held in 1999, when one of the BJP's major allies, the All India Dravidian Progressive Federation (All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam; AIADMK) party, withdrew its support. Despite aggressive campaigning by its leaders, the Congress Party suffered a worse electoral performance than it had in 1996 and 1998, winning only 114 seats. Nevertheless, in the 2004 national elections the party scored a surprising victory and returned to power. Gandhi, however, declined an invitation to become prime minister and instead supported Manmohan Singh, a former finance minister, who in May 2004 became the country's first Sikh prime minister. The party again surprised pundits in the 2009 parliamentary elections by increasing its number of seats in the Lok Sabha from 153 to 206, its best showing since 1991.

Gandhi, Sonia; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Singh, Karan; Gandhi, Rahul Sonia Gandhi (second from left) in New Delhi, with (from left to

right) Hillary Rodham Clinton, Karan Singh, and Rahul Gandhi, 2009.*U.S.*

Department of State

By the 2014 Lok Sabha polling, however, the party had lost much of its popular support, mainly because of several years of poor economic conditions in the country and growing discontent over a series of corruption scandals involving government officials. The party touted its record at passing legislation aimed at improving the lot of those living in poverty and rural areas, and it fielded Sonia's son, Rahul Gandhi, to be its candidate for prime minister. However, the BJP and its leading candidate, Narendra Modi, successfully won over the electorate. The results of the elections, announced in mid-May, were an overwhelming electoral victory for the BJP while the Congress Party suffered a stunning loss, securing only 44 seats in the chamber (in 2015 the party won a by-election in Madhya Pradesh, increasing its seat total to 45). It was the party's worst-ever performance in a national election. One consequence of its poor performance was that it was not able to assume the position of the official opposition party, since it failed to garner the minimum 55 seats (10 percent of the chamber's total) required for that role. Singh left office on May 26, the day Modi was sworn in as prime minister.

Because of concerns about ill health, Sonia Gandhi stepped down from leadership in late 2017, and her son Rahul became president of the Congress Party. He faced a number of criticisms, including that he, as the fourth generation of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty, was elitist and lacklustre. Within his party he was criticized for his outward display of devotion to Shiva, interpreted as an attempt to tap into the BJP's appeal to Hindu populism. Some observers, however, believed that Gandhi's display of Hindu devotion and his efforts to unite rival factions within the party helped the Congress Party outperform the BJP in the 2018 state elections held in the Hindu strongholds of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh. Still, the Congress Party performed only marginally better in the 2019 elections for the Lok Sabha than it did in 2014.

State politics

The Congress Party's presence at the state level has closely mirrored its performance at the national level. It dominated nearly all state governments in the early years after independence and later began alternating power with other national parties (e.g., the BJP) or with local parties (e.g., the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh). By the early 21st century, however, Congress's influence in state politics had declined to the point where it controlled only a minority of state governments. The party has tended to do better in the northeastern and northern states and poorly in most of the southern states.

Policy And Structure

The Congress Party is a hierarchically structured party. Delegates from state and district parties attend an annual national conference, which elects a president and the All India Congress Committee. However, the 20-member Congress Working Committee, the majority of whose members are appointed by the party president (handpicked by the prime minister when the party is in power), wields enormous influence. The party is also organized into various committees and sections (e.g., youth and women's groups), and it publishes a daily newspaper, the *National Herald*. Mirroring the party's declining fortunes, the party's membership dropped from nearly 40 million in the mid-1990s to under 20 million at the beginning of the 21st century.

The party has traditionally supported socialist economic policies within the framework of a mixed economy. In the 1990s, however, it endorsed market reforms, including privatization and the deregulation of the economy. It also has supported secular policies that encourage equal rights for all citizens, including those in lower castes. Throughout much of the Cold War period, the Congress Party championed a foreign policy of nonalignment, which called for India to form ties with both the West and communist countries but to avoid formal alliances with either. Nonetheless, American support for Pakistan led the party to endorse a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union in 1971.

1.3 MAJOR PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES FACED

Time simply flew and soon, the elections were on us. None of the election promises the first time round had been kept by the Congress; instead, the people were made to suffer continuously, both politically and economically.

The dream that Independence had given the country was slowly fading away under the Congress regime. The hiatus between the haves and have-nots was increasing daily. The rich were getting richer, while the poor were getting impoverished. Crisis after crisis were penetrating the system even though the country had entered the era of the Second Five Year Plan.

West Bengal was also burdened with merger problems. Compared to 1951 which marked the beginning of the Plan period, there was a slight increase in the number of factories but we must remember that while in 1951, the number of labourers was 6,54,901, in 1955, it had come down to 5,92,231; I have got this figure from the then labour minister's statement of July 25, 1956 in the Assembly. The statement said that there had been retrenchment of 29,000 employees in the jute sector, 4000 in the engineering units while more than 2,000 workers been sacked in the tea gardens. There were no land reforms; education and public health had gone for a six, the price rice was a daily index of the government's failure and joblessness was increasing. The government was resorting to discriminating taxation, there was no solution in sight to the refugee problem, the government sponsored welfare scheme was moving at a snail's pace and the corruption and nepotism of ministers were making it to the front pages every other day. But whenever the people were taking to the streets in protest against these problems, the police was resorting to their usual atrocities at the instance of the state government.

We were continuously fighting and highlighting these problems inside and outside the Assembly and Parliament. The responsibility and the efforts to educate the people was a continuous process. On a national level, the elections came in handy for our cause. We jumped into the fray with our limited resources, trying all the time to bring the democratic and ant-Congress forces together. In its election manifesto released on

January 3, 1957 the Communist Party of India made its views clear about the need for such unity.

The Communist Party will strive to forge unity among all Democratic forces and individuals to ensure that such representatives are elected who can fight without fear for the welfare of the people, our national manifesto said.

The process started in West Bengal also. We brought out a booklet called "The Programme of Democratic Unity" which said: "The democratic and Left parties in West Bengal have achieved significant success in ensuring unity among like-minded forces in West Bengal. The five main parties - the Communist Party, the PSP, the RSP, Forward Bloc and Forward Bloc (Marxist) - have already arrived at seat adjustments. "

We proposed that the following criteria be adopted while selecting nominees for coming elections. These were:

1) Only those candidates who have a mass appeal and can defeat their Congress rivals should be nominated;

2) Parties having specific and major influence in areas where they are powerful should be allotted responsibility of those constituencies; and

3) Candidates with proven track record and who were successful the previous time should be renominated.

A 37-point working programme was proposed to be implemented. It said:

"An effort should be made to ensure the common minimum programme be announced which will help the progress of West Bengal in every way and move the country forward. Only the left can ensure the implementation of such a programme. The Communist Party hopes that discussions will begin in right earnest in an attempt to establish this democratic unity and that unity should be achieved regarding the common minimum programme."

I will quote significant extracts from this 37-point programme.

"On the agricultural front.... there should be wideranging land reforms, optimum loans for farmers, a good irrigation network and sewage facilities. Efforts to improve agricultural output and anti-flood programmes should get top priority.

"The idea should be to ensure access to the maximum level of vested land that can be distributed, a proper irrigation system - all illegal land allotments should be stopped; the land ceiling system to be based on the family unit and not the individual; agricultural land to be brought under a certain ceiling, applicable as well to water holdings for pisciculture-the only exception being the tea gardens where an effort must be made to make as much land cultivable as possible.

"Land distribution...Farmers, land workers and bargadars, including refugees, should be allotted land through select village committees. The basis of such allotment should be logic and reason to ensure maximum benefit.

"Security to the bargadars should be one of the top priorities, though small landowners, widows and minors will have a right to get back a measure of their land. But at no cost should bargadars be made totally landless. Under these conditions, the bargadars will have a lasting right on their land which will pass from one generation to the next. The bargadars, if they take on the responsibility of supplying ploughs, buffaloes and fertilisers to the farmers, will be entitled to two-thirds of the output.

"Farm labourers ... An opportunity should be made available to make as many land labourers employable as possible. They should be employed on just wages and a timeframe be fixed as work duration.

"Fishermen ... They should be allowed unrestricted access to all water outlets... loans and other benefits should be ensured.

"Industry ... The Centre should be told to ensure that the management rights of those tea, jute and coal units which are still with the British be transferred to the state government and legal steps be taken in this respect... steps should also be taken to ensure larger public sector growth in heavy industries, fertilisers and cement, among others... on the other

land, the cottage industry, which provides the maximum employment, should not be neglected.

"Labourers and employees... The state shall accept the right of the workers to exercise their trade union rights without any prejudice. Peaceful strikes and picketing should be allowed. Permanence of jobs should be ensured... all those laws which infringe or curtail trade union activity should be withdrawn...Minimum wages and other benefits to be extended to the unorganised sector where there are no set rules of work duration or labour...

"Education ... Free primary schooling to be ensured which is to be slowly extended to education at all levels. The secondary Board to be constituted by a democratic process and it be given full powers to administer the education system under its purview.... The number of schools and colleges, particularly in the backward areas, be increased, hostel facilities to be made available wherever possible, cheaper textbooks be published and fees lowered. A timeframe should be fixed by which Bengal should top the literacy as well as education growths.... Teachers' pay should be hiked and both teachers and students be given all types of democratic rights."

"Rights of the individual... The state shall withdraw all cases against political detenus. The right to speech and the freedom of the press should be sacrosanct. There should be no restrictions on meetings and rallies. Black laws should not be resorted to.

"Public welfare ... Decentralisation should be the key and public role and participation in daily governance at every level should be kept in mind."

Apart from these, the programme included features like taxation, refuge rehabilitation, public health, de velopment of the Sunderbans and North Bengal, price ceiling, the backward classes, women welfare and cultural activities. After the publication of the booklet, we appealed to the people to ensure a kitty of Rs 6 lakhs for the election fund of the party. Meetings and rallies simultaneously.

On the party's instructions, the state leadership went on tours throughout the districts. On January 6, 1957, I went to an election meeting at Dakshineswar. I said, "Pandit Nehru has said at a recent speech in Indore that the Communists were hanging on to old precepts; I do acknowledge

that he has, however, moved a lot away from his earlier beliefs and accepted newer ones. That is why whatever he held forth about Socialism two decades back have now been discarded; in fact, the good words he used to have for the Soviet Union at one time are now history. At that time, he said that black laws should be withdrawn; now they seem to be absolutely necessary for the functioning of his government. In his new avatar, he wants to establish his brand of Socialism with the help of the rajas, Tatas and Birlas. But the Communists will never allow that."

A massive rally presided over by the PSP leader Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, was held on January 12, 1957 in Calcutta. General secretary Ajoy Ghosh, referring to the rally as "historic", said, "It is only the people who can strengthen Left unity fight the misrule of the Congress in Bengal...A radical change is needed in the policies of the Congress government. The way party is ruling the country, it is apparent that only a few rich people and the zamindars are being protected". I was also one of the speakers.

Nehru had termed Left unity as "opportunistic" but we announced at the rally that we were not after only seat adjustments and that our unity had grown out of various agitations and bloody struggles. The rally was also addressed by Hemanta Bose, Satyapriya Banerjee, Lila Roy, Mohit Maitra and Jatin Chakraborty.

In the meantime, we had published the "United Leftist Election Committee Programme". The convenor of the Unified Leftist Election Committee, Mohit Maitra, releasing the programme on January 18, announced, " If a Leftist Government is established in West Bengal, we will take firm steps against corruption and reform the administration, rehabilitate the landless, demarcate the administration from the judiciary, reform the education system, tackle joblessness and ensure increase in salaries of teachers, organize land reforms and distribution, create ceilings for maximum and minimum wages, improve the standard of living of the common man, ensure all-round trade union activity, protect the cottage industry and take care to demarcate land boundaries on the basis of language and geography."

I was again a candidate in the Baranagar Assembly constituency. Since I had to move around a lot, I could not devote much time to Barangar itself but the local party comrades and people worked in my favour with

unending enthusiasm. On January 19, I addressed a rally at Baranagar, saying, "Please evaluate the First Five Year Plan on the basis or your own experience. Judge your own buying capabilities and the extent of joblessness that has been created. In the Second Plan period, taxes are being imposed on the people and the indiscriminate printing of currency notes will bring disaster to the people. We should not forget this."

During the campaign, the Congress resorted to its usual dirty politics. In 1956, there was an attempt at resurrection in Hungary. The Congress dubbed even this as a pointer to the failure of the Communist regime there though this did not cut much ice with the public. Congressmen even went to the extent of going from door to door, saying that they would be able to identify who had voted for whom and that the consequences would be dire. Reacting strongly, a joint statement signed by Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Hemanta Bose, Amar Bose, Tridib Chowdhury (he had just been released from the Portuguese prison in Goa), Mohit Maitra and myself went out on March 31, saying, "The Congress does not stop only at terrorising people for votes. In fact, Congress leaders have been going around town saying that they would be able to identify who had voted for whom. But that is not possible... We appeal to all voters to exercise their franchise without fear."

A sensational disclosure further embarrassed the Congress. West Bengal's first chief minister, Dr Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, who had left the Congress to join the PSP was the joint candidate of the Left and Democratic Front in the second general elections. The Congress openly said that he had betrayed the party to join hands with the Leftists. To this, Dr Ghosh called a press conference and produced a letter written by Gandhiji and said that he had quit because he had refused to yield to pressure to induct a non-Bengali businessman in his ministry. The letter, which Gandhiji is supposed to have written and which Dr Ghosh made public, said, "Sardar (Vallavbhai Patel) has expressed his intention that a Marwari, Badri Das Goenka or Khaitan, should be inducted into your ministry. I feel that this should be done because that would be the correct thing to do." Dr Ghosh said that he had not released the letter so far out of "politeness" but since the Congress was accusing him of betrayal, he had no other options. He added that he had told the then AICC president

Acharya Kripalini that he could not possibly carry out such an instruction and was willing to resign on the issue. To add to this, the former secretary of the Congress Legislative Party, Deben Sen, who was now contesting as a PSP candidate, told a rally at Baghbazar on February 18 that most of the Congress legislators had been with Dr Ghosh but backtracked after being "influenced" by two top leaders who were "puppets" in the hands of the Birla empire. It was this letter incident which had led to the fall of the Ghosh government.

The Left United Front contested 234 seats in the Assembly. Of these, the Communist Party fielded 13, PSP 70, Forward Bloc 26, RSP 11, Forward Bloc (Marxist) seven and Independents backed by Leftists had 17 nominees. The Congress contested 251 seats. Of the 36 Lok Sabha seats from West Bengal, the CPI contested 14, PSP six, Forward Bloc four, RSP three while Independents backed by the Leftists had six nominees. The Congress fielded candidates for 35 seats. Our party nominated three women from the Basirhat Lok Sabha (Renu Chakraborty), Kalighat Assembly (Monikuntala Sen) and Panskura Assembly (Geeta Mukherjee) seats.

Just before the elections, we held another mass meeting in Calcutta on February 27 and more than a lakh attended; it was an unqualified success going by the index of those days. The rally was presided over by Syed Nausher Ali and the main speakers were Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Mohit Maitra, Satyapriya Banerjee, Jatin Chakraborty, Moni Chakraborty and myself.

The elections were held in stages. After the first phase was over, we got news that the ballot boxes used in West Bengal could be opened without breaking the seals. I wrote to the election commissioner on March 5 saying that this had been proved at a demonstration in front of the chief presidency magistrate and a number of candidates on March 3. Saying that this had created a serious situation, I demanded that the voting process should be stopped unless valid ballot boxes were requisitioned. I also demanded reelection in all the places where polling had been held in the first phase. The Election Commissioner directed that extra precautions be taken during polling in West Bengal.

The results started coming out. I defeated the Congress candidate Kanailal Dhar by 9,415 votes. I had got 28, 267 votes to his 18,852 votes. There was a substantial increase in the number of votes polled this time by our party in Baranagar; on the previous occasion, I had got 13,968 votes which meant that this time, I had polled 14299 more votes.

Many of our leaders won, the notables among them being Renu Chakraborty (Basirhat), Kansari Halder (Diamond Harbour), Tridib Chowdhury (Behrampore), Sadhan Gupta (Calcutta North-East), Mohammed Ilias (Howrah), Hiren Mukherjee (Central Calcutta), Provas Chandra Roy (Bishnupur), Niranjan Sen (Bijpur), Harekrishna Konar (Kalna), Prafulla Ghosh (Mahishadal), Hemanta Bose (Shyampukur), Narayan Roy (Vidyasagar), Samar Mukherjee (North Howrah), Hemanta Ghosh (Hasnabad), Gopal Basu (Naihati), Ganesh Ghosh (Belgachia), Monikuntala Sen (Kalighat), Ranen Sen (Maniktala), Somnath Lahiri (Alipur), Bijoy Modak (Balagar), Benoy Chowdhury (Bardhaman), Bankim Mukherjee (Budge Budge) and Sitaram Gupta (Bhatpara).

On the other hand, the Speaker of the Assembly, Congress stalwart Saila Mukherjee, jails minister Jiban Ratan Dhar, the law and law revenue minister Shankar Prasad Mitra were defeated. The chief minister, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, faced a tough competition from our party candidate Md. Ismail in the Bowbazar Assembly constituency; with the help of postal ballots, he won by a margin of only 540 votes. This particular contest was a major talking point in the state at that time. Many of our party workers, particularly those belonging to the minorities, were attacked by Congress antisocials and the police after the result was declared. Dr Roy had been disgraced in his victory. A frustrated man in the face of public disapproval, the chief minister made a dangerous allegation against us in the Assembly on March 21. He said that supporters of Mohammed Ismail had raised slogans in support of Pakistan during the campaign. The police started mass arrests of our supporters belonging to the minorities.

I need to quote some of the relevant portions of the debate in the Assembly of March 21:

I said: "On the one hand, he (Dr Roy) says that the people should vote according to their choice. But this free will cannot be seen anywhere. We

have heard such promises earlier. Wherever and whenever we have gone to the people irrespective of caste and creed, they have supported us. In most places, we have been seen to have got their support. The government has spent huge amounts of money and terrorised voters. This government should at least not talk about democracy. This is the way elections are held here. This is the way we have fought elections. This government should desist from making such grand but meaningless statements. That is all we want to say. As for the honourable chief minister, I need to remind him that he is also the home minister. I have told him about this earlier and am repeating this again; the elections are over, please at least ensure that injustice is not heaped on the people any longer. The police should not be let loose on them. We have got what we did not deserve. Some Hindus had voted for you, some Anglo-Indians have also supported you. But there are also who have not backed you. Why should you take it out on them? I am sure some Muslims have also voted for you. In fact, you have been seen moving around with Muslim goondas. "

Dr Roy: "Jyoti Basu has alleged that Muslims are being threatened. But he is not saying that they had been threatened before the elections. He has repeated time and again that Muslims have been threatened only after the elections. If I had wanted to use the police before the elections, would I have allowed my rival to get the number of votes that he finally has?... Sir, I have been told that these people had been saying that if Md. Ismail had won, then as the new chief minister, he would have ensured that the secession og Calcutta in much the same way that parts of Kashmir have already gone to Pakistan. I feel that such a campaign is anti-national, anti-India and that if the police had indeed tried to stop such slogans from being raised, then they should be praised and not criticised.

I will bring a case of rebellion against those we are conducting such a campaign. This is my plan and simple stand."

I replied: "We did not expect this from Dr Roy...We had never imagined that he would stoop to such a level...It is extremely unfortunate that he did not get the number of votes that he expected to, which is why he had gone to the extent of saying that he had himself heard such slogans being raised. I can challenge him that he himself did not hear any such thing.

Those who campaigned and voted for us have never raised any such slogans at any meeting."

Dr Roy: "It would be wrong to say that I heard the `Pakistan Zindabad' slogan being raised. What I want to say is that around 8.30 in the evening on March 14, a procession, with Md Ismail in a car, was taken out outside my residence. It was these processionists who raised the slogan."

I said: "This is totally untrue."

Hemanta Ghosal: " A total untruth.., do not utter the untruth."

I said: " I want to assert here that when the demonstration passed the area, the processionists were only raising the Inquilab Zindabad slogan. No other slogan was raised. Bidhan-babu says he heard the slogan sitting in his residence... Will you, Sir, believe him? The chief minister is making untrue statements."

On March 22, I sent a telegram to the Prime Minister saying, "I request you to kindly go through Dr Roy's speech inside the Assembly on March 21. The West Bengal government is trying to create terror in the minds of those who have supported the Leftists in the elections. Dr Roy has been quite blatant in the coercion methods that he has been using against the Muslim community. Your intervention is absolutely necessary to check the antisocials who are being used for this purpose."

We could not from an alternative government in the 1957 elections. It was still apparent that we had weaknesses in the organisation though we had tried our best. But compared to the previous time, the number of our seats had increased. The final tally was:

Total Assembly seats - 251

The Communist Party won 46, PSP 21, Forward Bloc four, RSP three, Forward Bloc (Marxist) two and Independents backed by the Left got five seats. The Congress was victorious in 152 seats.

There were 28 Communist members in the Assembly after the 1952 elections. This had gone up to 46. Apart from this, there were five Independent candidates backed by the party who had won. This was a major forward thrust for the democratic forces as well as our party

individually. The number of votes polled by the party was almost doubled; while we had got 7,97,570 votes last time, this time the tally stood at 18,84,723 votes. The Front raised its Assembly membership to 100 from the previous 55. If only we had got some 30-odd seats more, we would have formed the government.

But we could not afford to be complacent. This was to be a time for introspection. We realised that a majority of the labour class, the Bengali middle-class and even government employees had come out in large numbers in support of the Leftists. Most of the refugees had voted for us. The farmers backed us in those areas where we had been able to unmask the so-called Congress land reforms.

Despite this, the Congress won, albeit with the far reduced margin. There were many reasons for this. The first party letter of 1945 said :

"The major reason why the Congress won despite heavy opposition and people's resistance was that our organisation, including that of the Krishak Sabha, was weak. The people, for the lack of a viable alternative, voted widely for the Congress. It must be made clear that we lost in many areas where we thought we were strong. But we could not counter the Congress disinformation and terror tactics. The Congress had not only spent huge party funds and built new roads but also organised relief, sunk tubewells and spent money on various development excuses; we were unable to unmask this corrupt face of the Congress party. The Congress, it should be known, used the election machinery also to set the polling and counting dates according to its own whims.

"We must understand that it is vitally important and necessary to make the people aware that farmers and labourers must be united. But it must also be kept in mind that the bourgeoisie papers played no mean role in supporting the Congress. During the 1952 elections, they had at least put up a charade of impartiality. But this time, they supported the Congress directly and even resorted to disinformation against the Leftists."

It was expected that on the basis of this experience, the unity of the struggling masses would be strengthened, farmers' agitations and organisations be percolated to the last unit in the villages, the problems of the farmers be dealt with in a positive fashion, concerted campaigns be launched against the government's land reforms policy, the party

mouthpiece be distributed to people regularly, those sympathizers of the party who had come closer should be inducted, the trade union organisations be strengthened, and a conscious effort be made to ensure that the religious, national and linguistic minorities be given a fair deal.

While we were not successful in West Bengal at that time, Kerala was building a new history. For the first time, the people elected a Communist-led Front government to power in the country and reposed on us a new responsibility for the days ahead. I still remember it was the third week of March 1957. As soon as we learnt of the news, Kaka-babu immediately sent a telegram to Trivandrum saying, "We have just heard of the success of the Communist Party in Kerala. We congratulate you on behalf of members of the party in West Bengal and all democratic forces in the state." The Communists got 60, Independents backed by the Communists got five, PSP nine and the Congress won 43 seats. The total number of seats was 126.

Comrade E M S Namboodiripad was elected the legislative Party leader with Achutya Menon as his deputy. E M S became the first Communist chief minister of the country. The others ministers included K. P. Gopalan, T. A. Majid, P. K. Sathan, Joseph Mundaseri, V. R. Krishna Iyer, K. R. Gouri, Dr A. R. Menon and K. C. George.

On April 7, we called a meeting at the Maidan to celebrate the formation Communist government in the country and the gaining of strength of the CPI in Bengal. The rally, which was presided over by Muzaffar Ahmed, began with a famous song which had been written in the memory of the martyrs of Kerala's Malabar district. I proposed a resolution which said, "We have gone one step ahead with the victory of the Communist Party in Kerala. Our congratulations go out to the people of Kerala and we resolve to forge stronger ties among the democratic and peaceful forces in this state in the fight against imperialism."

After taking over as chief minister, E M S introduced a 16-point programme including major land reforms, farmers' rights on their land and growth of the agricultural industry. He also appealed to the industrialists to take a n active role in progress of the state's economy. The new government started work in earnest. In a matter of few days, the historic Ordinance which gave agricultural rights to 10 lakh labourers

and five lakh sharecroppers came into being while one lakh acre agricultural land was distributed to landless farmers. All political detenus were released. The Kerala government also announced that the police would not be used to break any democratic agitation.

All these were noble efforts, particularly compared with the experience of long Congress regimes earlier. This was a major responsibility; on the one hand the government had to function within the bourgeoisie-zamindar political structure while, on the other hand, the onus was on the government to lend a revolutionary role to the people's struggle.

In 1952, the Communist Party had won 27 of the 60 Lok Sabha constituencies that it had contested while out of the 122 it had contested this time, 29 had been elected. But the number of votes polled for the party had doubled.

After the elections, I was unanimously chosen as the leader of the Communist block in the West Bengal Assembly. This was not a new experience for me. However, the number of MLAs was fewer. The previous Assembly had only 30 Communist members. But now we were experiencing a greater interest in our movements with the people flocking to us at every level. The people was keeping a watchful eye on what we were doing inside the Assembly and how we were trying to project the anti-people policies of the Congress government on a day-to-day basis. Obviously, the people expected more from us now.

I was preparing myself mentally for the task ahead. It was important not to let any issue go unnoticed and veer the country's sights and attention to Bengal whenever possible. The deputy leader of the Communist Party in the Assembly was Bankim Mukherjee, while the chief whip was Ganesh Ghosh.

We had been denied the status of Opposition party on ridiculous grounds earlier. All this was done to reduce our importance. But, however, this time good sense prevailed. The Congress government realised that they could not stop us by these tactics and that if they denied us our rightful status, they would only invite the people's wrath.

I wrote to the new Speaker, Sankardas Banerjee, asking for the party's recognition which was given to us on June25, 1957.

Part of the Speaker's ruling went thus :

"In 1952, while the Communist leader had been given the status of leader of the main Opposition party, he had not been recognised as the Leader of the Opposition. We have come to know this from the ruling of Mr Speaker Mukherjee at that time. The member strength of the Communist Party then was 30. But rest of the Opposition had a total strength of 51. Hence the Communist Party could not be deemed as a single largest Opposition party. If the other Opposition groups had formed a party, then that party would have been given recognition. In the present Assembly, the total strength of the Opposition parties and groups stands at 99. Among these, the Communist Party has 51 members; thus even if all the other Opposition parties come together, the Communist Party would still be the single largest. In such a situation, the Communist Party fulfils all the criteria for being recognised as the main Opposition party.

"According to the directive of the ministers of the Crown Act 1957, I thus announce the name of Mr Jyoti Basu as the leader of the Opposition. The rights and privileges of the other Opposition parties shall not be impaired in any way by this announcement and they will continue to enjoy all of them."

In the meantime, the prices had started spiralling again. In May 1957, while announcing the year's Budget, the then Union finance minister Krishnamachari heaped major taxes on tea, coffee, sugar, paper, matchboxes, cement, kerosene and petrol. This anyway had been the trend after Independence with subsidies for businessmen and taxes for the common man being the order of the day. We started organising meetings and rallies against the anti-people tax policy of the Centre. A statement issued by Dr Suresh Banerjee and Hemanta Bose, president and secretary, respectively, of the committee set up to fight inflation and famine, said that the country had been "stunned" by the Budget.

The committee appealed to the people to observe a general strike on May 30, which was organised with great success in the state. In June, a huge rally was taken to the Assembly in protest against the rise in prices and the food crisis. We demanded the opening of the fair price shops throughout the state, wide relief measures, waiver of loans in the affected areas, farm loans on a larger scale, enaction of anti-eviction laws,

immediate implementation of the anti-hoarding laws and the promised dole of Rs 25 a month for the jobless.

News started coming in from Nadia, 24-Parganas, Midnapur and Howrah and there was general concern about the food crisis. Reports of nine famine deaths came in the month of August only. The streets of Calcutta were again getting choked with hungry people who were fleeing their villages. Deben Sen, Hemanta Bose, Jatin Chakraborty and I issued a joint statement asking for a session of the Assembly before the Pujas. But this was rejected.

We discussed the food crisis at an extended meeting of the provincial committee of the Communist Party. We held discussions with the all-party committee set up to look into the famine crises. It was decided that a statewise peaceful democratic movement would be started in the middle of September. A statement was issued on behalf of the provincial committee saying that the government would have to take steps to ensure the availability of rice and meat, and other essential commodities at a fair price. The crisis was increasing in proportion by the day, we said.

Law violation programmes began. On the first day on September 16, a batch of 185 volunteers, including Harekrishna Konar and Benoy Chowdhury, were arrested. A total of 450 others were held on the second day. The numbers swelled. We organised a march to the Writers' Buildings in which 1,100 people courted arrest. Niranjan Sen, Lila Roy, Sailaja Devi and I were arrested; we were followed by Ranen Sen, Bijoy Modak, Gopal Basu, Sounak Lahiri, Sukumar Sengupta, Samar Mukherjee, Rabin Mukherjee and Jyoti Devi. Some of us were produced before the chief presidency magistrate of Calcutta on September 19. We were to be kept in judicial custody till October 1.

The food crisis had spread its tentacles to other states too. The central committee of our party at its meeting during October 7-13 adopted a resolution that said "Famine exists in entire West Bengal, a major area of Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. There have been reports of deaths from Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The poor farmers and labourers have been hit the most. The central committee feels that this is the direct fallout of the Congress rule and its policies at the Centre and these states". Steps to counter the crisis were chalked out.

But the Congress governments at the Centre and states remained indifferent. The only exception was the Communists-led Kerala government which had introduced many steps to alleviate the famine-like situation. One fair price shop per 500 families, the setting up of all-party food committees in the villages and introduction of family identity cards were some of these. The people of Kerala heaved a sigh of relief though that state was one of the most crisis-ridden. Prices were also checked. The central committee of the party congratulated the Kerala government on this achievement.

The refugee problem was to now rear its head in Bengal. The Congress leaders, in their hurry to get to the seat of power, had agreed to Partition and made tall promises that all the minorities of East Bengal who would cross over would be rehabilitated in the state. But the promises were made only to be broken. There was no doubt that the rehabilitation of 40 lakhs refugees was not an easy task. But the Congress leaders did not even bother to spare a thought for all those who had been forced to leave their homes and hearth and cross over.

It struck nobody as a good idea that these people would have been an asset for the state had they been brought into the mainstream of the political, economic and social agenda of the state.

But this was not to be because the Congress government was by nature against the people. Thus it never considered the refugee as an asset but on the other hand looked at them with the contempt that is deserving of a nagging beggar. Thus the policy on refugee was simple; the only way to handle a beggar was to give him some alms.

The Congress government did not lend a helping hand to the 29 lakh refugees who had already arrived; almost half of them led a niggardly life or died of hunger. Of the rest, two lakhs were housed in government camps, where good administration and availability of basic needs were given a go-by. While these people led their days amid abject poverty in these camps, lakhs of refugees who did not get a single currency note from the government formed their own colonies after a major movement against the landlord lobby. Even then the government did not agree to give them land rights over these plots.

Their problems were compounded when the Congress government said that there was no alternative but to push these refugees outside the state. No surveys were done, no planning system was adopted and suddenly the refugees found themselves to be victims of a sudden decision. Even we in the Opposition were kept in the dark about this decision. We were not even told what steps have been taken to implement the refugee rehabilitation programme. We made it clear that the government should come out with the facts and say whether it had been stretched to its last while taking this decision.

But the government continued to be indifferent. The Centre was then planning the Dandakaranya project for the rehabilitation of the refugees in West Bengal. Bijoy Singh Nahar of the Congress brought a non-official resolution in the Assembly on July 5, 1957. Dandakaranya was an area overlapping Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh and comprised about 81 square miles. The Congress legislators and leaders tried to establish the viability of this project through some ridiculous reasoning; it would be quite pointless to even discuss them now. I will only communicate what the Communist party had to say in the Assembly.

On July 25, 1957, responding to the debate on the resolution, I said "We do not even know anything about the scheme. We have only read some headlines from various newspapers. We cannot make out anything about the Dandakaranya project. We have heard about the area and its size but we have no idea about the collective planning about the project... There is nothing in this that we can welcome though this resolution says that we are all welcoming it - where are the so-called proposals? I think it is utter callousness which has brought about these proposals. I believe that we should work to a certain plan and go step by step. We must earmark who will live where, how many people will be employed in cottage industry, who will go into big industry...We do not have any facts. We are rushing this through. We are being forced to accept that we are welcoming this. We cannot do that.

"...We must be told about the what survey has been done, how much money will be spent, what has been the planning. But Mr Bijoy Singh

Nahar is saying nothing. What we say is simple - bring these facts to us and then we can discuss the proposal.

"...If you ask me whether I am against the movement of refugees outside the state as a matter of policy, I will continue to say that I have nothing against Bengalis moving out... I do not believe in such a policy but they should go only if you can find an alternative living arrangement for them."

"Gadadhar Dutta, MLA, Orissa Assembly Party secretary - He has said that the Rs 5 crores which is being spent for the last two years for these refugees will go to waste since the areas are inhabitable. His letter has come out in newspapers and all of you are aware of it.

"Suddenly in the year 1957, you happen to realise that there were no places for the refugees to stay in Bengal. If that is the logic then I can say that if Prafulla Chandra Sen's family planning scheme fails and if the population increases at this rate, then what you will do after 10 years? If there is a rise of 50 lakhs in the population, where you will send them? Will you throw them into the Bay of Bengal?...I am suddenly told that the state has reached a saturation point. Do you know the meaning of saturation point? We do not have cottage industry, we have not even tried to recover land...

"You have not gone in for any scientific planning. If you had been sincere enough, then you would have set up committees and entrusted scientists to carry on survey work. But you did not even realise the gravity of the situation. The best alternative is always to come to a solution by which the people of a certain province can be allowed to continue to stay there with the consent of the Union Government. We may be making tall claims on India being one but it is a fact that everybody would prefer to live in his own province. I know this is difficult but at least if you had made a fair attempt, then the refugees would have at least felt that you had given it an honest try. But you people did not even make any such attempt.

"... It is taking an extreme position to say that Bengal cannot afford to house a single more refugees. We must try to understand the attitude and the mental state of the refugees first. Many of their experiences outside

the state have been bad. If they have to go outside, then they will have to go anyway; but we have to be first satisfied that there is no place for them in Bengal. From whatever I have studied and learnt, I cannot accept this... From whatever information I have got from the government, I am told that a mandatory 40000 square miles out of the total 80,000 square miles will have to be reserved for forests while tribals would have to live in the rest of the area. If Dandakaranya had been such a nice place, then the people of Andhra Pradesh and Bihar would not have flocked to Calcutta. In fact, people from Calcutta would have gone and stayed there. Since they do not get sufficient food there, these people are rushing in Calcutta and the industrial belt. In the last 10 years, you have not been able to improve the situation. That is why we cannot accept this proposal."

At this time the government suddenly brought in the Amendment Bill on refugees. We protested strongly and under pressure, the government had to delete the clause relating to eviction. The agitation was partially successful. A huge procession was taken out on July 10, 1957 to the Assembly. When it reached the premises, the Opposition members came out of the chamber and congratulated the rallyists. The agitation subsequently spread its influence and grew stronger.

1.4 CONGRESS POLICIES DURING THE FORMATION PERIOD

The foundation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was not a sudden event, or a historical accident.

It was the culmination of a process of political awakening that had its beginnings in the 1860s and 1870s and major leap forward in the late 1870s and early 1880s.

Solid ground had thus been prepared for the establishment of an all-India organisation.

The final shape to this idea was given by a retired English civil servant, A.O. Hume, who mobilised leading intellectuals of the time and with their co-operation organised the first session of the Indian National Congress at Bombay in December 1885.

The first session of the Indian National Congress (1885) was attended by 72 delegates and presided over by Womesh Chandra Banerjee. Hereafter, the congress met every year in December, in a different part of the country each time.

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Some of the great presidents of the congress during the early phase were Dadabhai Naoroji (elected thrice), Badruddin Tyabji, Pherozshah Mehta, P. Anandacharlu, Surendranath Banerjea, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Ananda Mohan Bose and Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

The basic objectives of the early nationalist leaders were to lay the foundations of a secular and democratic national movement, to polticize and politically educate the people, to form the headquarters of the movement that is to form an all-India leadership group, and to develop and propagate an anti- colonial nationalist ideology.

In the first stage of its existence (1885-1905), the vision of the Indian National Congress was dim, vague and confused. It may be referred as the period of Moderate politics. The movement was confined to a handful of the educated middle class intelligentsia who drew inspirations from western Liberal and Radical Thought.

The second state (1905-18) witnessed the emergence of a new and younger group within the Indian National Congress which was sharply critical of the ideology and methods of the old leadership. They advocated the adoption of Swaraj as the goal of the Congress to be achieved by more self-reliant and independent methods.

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The new group came to be called the Extremist party. The final stage (1919-47) was dominated by the objective of 'Purna Swaraj' or complete independence to be achieved under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Moderate Phase (1885-1905):

The first phase of the existence of the Congress is known as the moderate phase (1885-1905). During this the Congress worked for limited objectives and concentrated more upon building up its organization. The leadership was confined to a handful of educated middle class Indians

who drew inspiration from western, liberal and radical thought. It did not challenge the British authority but adopted a constitutional path.

The national leaders like Dadabhai Nauroji, P.N. Mehta, D.E. Wacha, W.C. Banerji, S.N. Banerji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale who dominated Congress policies during this time were staunch believers in liberalism and moderate politics and came to be labelled as moderates. They did not approve of active response policy. They all believed in constitutional method and favoured the policy of protest, prayer and petition.

The basic demands of the Congress at this time were constitutional that stressed on larger share of the Indians in the governance of the country, Indianization of higher grades of service, expansion of the legislative council and its power and Swaraj or self-rule within the British Empire.

The early nationalists were very critical of the exploitative economic policy of the British and blamed it for India's economic impoverishment and destruction of its cottage industries. They demanded the promotion of Indian industries through tariff, protection and direct economic aid.

The only achievement of the moderate leaders of the Congress was the exposure of the true nature of British imperialism and creation of a national awakening. However they failed to achieve desired aims largely due to their method of work. They also failed to draw attention of the common masses at large and were confined mostly to educated middle class and the elite population.

The Congress maintained her attitude of moderation till the end of the nineteenth century. The young leaders like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghose were dissatisfied with the working of the moderate Congressmen. They began to realize the uselessness of the constitutional methods.

It became necessary for them to adopt independent and honourable means to force the government. Lajpat Rai believed the Indians should not be content with begging and was sharply critical of the ideology and methods of the older leadership. This attitude marked the beginning of the era of extremism.

The Growth of Militant Nationalism – The Extremist Era (1905-1919):

The new leadership of the Congress was opposed to the soft policies of the moderates. They believed that independence could not be begged for

but achieved through sacrifice. The main cause for rise of extremism in Indian politics can be attributed to the deteriorating economic condition of India under the British rule.

The recurring famines of the nineteenth century coupled with plague that broke out in Maharashtra and the inaction of the British government created a congenial atmosphere for the growth of extremism. Along with these, the contemporary international influences like revolutionary movements in Turkey, Russia, Egypt, etc. had tremendous impact on the Indian youth. The younger generation became convinced of the fact that a united fight by Indians will easily defeat British imperialism.

The extremists aimed at achieving Swaraj that meant complete independence from British rule. They considered the demand of the moderate leaders for Swaraj was for colonial self-government. Tilak remarked, "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it."Aurobindo Ghose said, "Political freedom is the life breath of a nation." The extremists rejected the technique of the moderates and gave up the policy of prayer and preaching. The new leadership sought to create a passionate love for liberty, accompanied by a spirit of sacrifice and a readiness to suffer for the cause of the country.

The revolutionaries advocated boycott of foreign goods, use of Swadeshi goods, national education and passive resistance. The programme of economic boycott of British and other foreign goods and the use of Swadeshi or homemade products were designed to encourage Indian industries. It would provide the people with more opportunities for work and employment.

Soon it was discovered that economic boycott might prove a powerful weapon against the economic exploitation by the Britishers. The extremists also used Swadeshi as the most effective weapon for injuring British interests in India.

Tilak preached non-cooperation and advocated abstaining from co-operating with the government directly or indirectly. Thus boycott, Swadeshi, passive resistance and national education remained as primary techniques of the extremists to attain independence.

Besides using the press for creating awareness, the extremists made efforts to strike root in the countryside through social work in villages,

songs, jatras (theatre), and patriotic festivals. They used religious revivalism for mass contact Tilak started the Ganpati festival in 1893 and Shivaji festival in 1895 for creating awareness amongst the public.

However the extremists could attain their goals partially. They failed to develop an effective leadership or sound organization. Also their reach remained confined to urban populace and could not establish effective communication with the rural areas. The extremists too remained divided in their opinion regarding the methods of functioning. Their internal conflicts went a long way in destabilizing their efforts to unify the country against the British rule.

Congress Sessions:

Year Venue President

1835 – Bombay – W.C. Bonnerji (It was attended by 72 delegates)

1886 – Calcutta – Dadabhai Naoroji

1887 – Madras – Badruddin Tyabji (First Muslim President)

1888 – Allahabad – George Yule (First English President)

1889 – Bombay – William Wedderburn

1890 – Calcutta – Sir Pherozshah Mehta

1891 – Nagpur – P. Anandacharlu

1892 – Allahabad – W.C. Bonnerji

1893 – Lahore – Dadabhai Naoroji

1894 – Madras – A. Webb (He was an Irish member of the British Parliament)

1895 – Poona – Surendranath Banerjee

1896 – Calcutta – M.A. Sayani

1897 – Amravati – C. Sankaran Nair

1898 – Madras – Anandamohan Bose

1899 – Lucknow – Romesh Chandra Dutt

1900 – Lahore – N.G. Chandravarkar

1901 – Calcutta – Dinshaw E. Wacha

1902 – Ahmedabad – Surendranath Banerjee

1903 – Madras – Lal Mohan Ghose

1904 – Bombay – Sir Henry Cotton

1905 – Banaras – G.K. Gokhale

1906 – Calcutta – Dadabhai Naoroji (Swaraj as the goal of the Indian National Congress)

1907 – Surat – Ras Behari Ghos (Split in the Congress)

1908 – Madras – Ras Behari Ghosh

1909 – Lahore – Madan Mohan Malaviya

1910 – Allahabad – William Wedderburn

1911 – Calcutta – Bishan Narayan Dhar

1912 – Patna – R.N. Mudhoka;

1913 – Karachi – Nawab Syed Mohammad

1914 – Madras – Bhupendranath Bose

1915 – Bombay – S.P. Sinha

1915 – Lucknow – A C. Majumdar (Congress merger and pact with the Muslim League)

1917 – Calcutta – Mrs. Annie Besant (First Woman President)

1918 – Delhi – Madan Mohan Malaviya

1919 – Amritsar – Pandit Motilal Nehru

1920 – Nagpur – C. Vijaya Raghavachariyar (Changes in the constitution of the Congress)

1921 – Ahmedabad – Hakim Ajmal Khan (Acting president as President C.R. Das was in prison).

Year Venue President

1922 – Gaya – C.R. Das (Formation of Swaraj Party)

1923 – Kakinada – Maulana Muhammad Ali

1924 – Belgaum – Mahatma Gandhi

1925 – Kanpur – Mrs. Sarojini Naidu (First Indian Woman President)

1926 – Gauhati- Srinivas Iyengar

1927- Madras – M.A. Ansari (Independence Resolution passed for the first time)

1928 – Calcutta – Motilal Nehru (First All-India Youth Congress formed)

1929 – Lahore – Jawaharlal Nehru (Poorna Swaraj Resolution Passed)

1930 – No session due to Civil Disobedience Movement- Jawaharlal Nehru continued as the President

1931 – Karachi – Vallabhai Patel (Resolution on fundamental Rights and National Economic Policy adopted).

1932 – Delhi – Amrit Ranchhoddas Seth

1933 – Calcutta – Mrs. Nellie Sengupta

1934 – Bombay – Dr. Rajendra Prasad

1935 – No session – Continuation of Dr. Rajendra Prasad as President

1936 – Lucknow – Jawaharlal Nehru

1937 – Faizpur -Jawaharlal Nehru (First session to be held in a village and along with the Congress session was held the second session of the All India Kisan Congress)

1938 – Haripura – Subhas Chandra Bose

1939 – Tripuri – Subhas Chandra Bose (Resignation of Bose and Rajendra Prasad took over)

1940 – Ramgarh – Mauiana Abul Kalam Azad

1941-1945 – No session on account of the launching of the Quit India Movement. – Continuation of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

1946 – Meerut – Acharya J.B. Kripalani

1947 – Delhi – Rajendra Prasad

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do you know about the Congress Politics in West Bengal?

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2. Discuss the Major problem and challenges faced.

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3. Describe the Congress policies during the formation period.

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1.5 PRIORITY FIXATION AND THE PATTERN OF SUPPORT MOBILIZATION

The Congress party unveiled its manifesto on Tuesday. Even though manifestos have been reduced to a ritual during elections, with parties investing little in them and most voters ignoring them, they have a special importance in a democratic set up. In theory, the entire election is fought on the basis of competing manifestos which reflect competing visions for governance. Any effort to bring back the election discourse to serious policy issues is most welcome. The Congress claims to have embarked on a participatory and inclusive process to draft the manifesto and this can only bode well for the political system.

More substantively, there are two broad strands in the Congress manifesto. The first focuses primarily on the economy and livelihoods. Since the Gujarat elections of 2017, the party sensed that its most potent line of critique against the Narendra Modi government revolves around unemployment and agrarian distress. But the question that emerged was what the Congress would do about it. The manifesto has some — but not all — answers. As a welfare measure, the party has promised Nyuntam Aay Yojna (NYAY): A minimum income of ₹6000 per month to 20% of India's poorest citizens. Details remain sketchy, however, and funding mechanisms or the mode of selecting beneficiaries are not clear. The party has also committed to filling government recruitments (a good step, but will it be enough?); and removing all regulations in starting an enterprise (again, a good idea because many permits are unnecessary, but is an entirely regulation-free process possible?). On agriculture, it has promised a kisan (farmer) budget and committed to converting non-payment of farm loans into a civil offence rather than a criminal one. These are incremental steps, but what agricultural requires are far deeper structural changes.

The second strand in the manifesto is constructing a more liberal political order, with checks on State power. From dropping the sedition law, reviewing the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), holding police and district administrations accountable for negligence in case of riots and hate crimes, bringing in a law on privacy, and restricting the use of Aadhaar, the party has made a range of promises. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was quick to criticise some of the security-related measures — particularly the promise to review the AFSPA — as steps which would weaken India, and aid terror. But that would be a hasty judgment. The Indian State has adequate power and authority to meet its obligations; what is instead needed is more freedom for citizens. With the Congress laying out its road map, the ball is now in the BJP's court to tell the country what it will do if re-elected to power.

1.6 LIMITATION OF THE CONGRESS POLICIES

The Indian National Congress is a "sinking ship"; many of us have heard that by now. Yet it's a bit astonishing to think how far the political party has fallen. After all, until recently the history of Congress ran almost in parallel with the history of India itself, to an extent where the line between these histories seemed blurred. Leaders of Congress were the leaders of India and a large part of the Indian Freedom Movement owed its existence to this "grand old party," which was not just a political party, but an umbrella organization where different schools of thought used to co-exist together.

From Gandhi to Jinnah, from Nehru to Bose, from Tilak to Gokhale, Congress itself contained people poles apart from each other ideologically. And yet it not only remained as one party, but went on to define the political system itself in India, leading Dr. Rajani Kothari to coin the term "Congress System." The organizational structure of Congress was so deep-rooted and entrenched that it reached to the grassroots level, to the last man, as a part of Gandhian idealism.

But Congress couldn't uphold these ideals of working on the ground for as long as the people of India hoped it would. Much of Congress' dominance at the center as well as the state level was due to the fact that people voted in the name of Congress, which had won freedom for the country. People felt almost indebted to the party and continued to bring them back to power in the hope that Swarajya (self-rule) would actually be realized on the ground and the days of Ram Rajya (the idyllic rule of Rama), which Gandhi used to mention in his speeches and writings, would come.

People waited for years, but neither Swarajya nor Ram Rajya came about. Instead, the people realized, nepotism and corruption were increasing day by day in the political system. It was not Ram Rajya, but the Raaj of one family — the Gandhi family. The family alone accounts for three prime ministers, who ruled the country for around 37 years, while another 10 years of governance in the 21st century was also largely led by the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty.

Slowly, as disillusionment set in, the Congress System started to deteriorate. Still, it took around a decade for a non-Congress party to come into power in a state. Kerala did the honors when the left was voted

into power in the 1957 legislative assembly elections. E.M.S. Namboodripad became the first democratically elected communist leader, though Congress was still a huge force to reckon with.

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But things were about to change tremendously, especially in the heartlands of India, where people were now looking for an alternative. They were angry with the false promises made by Congress politicians in election after election.

The first jolt to the Congress came when Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964. Everyone in Congress was asking only one question: "Who comes after Nehru?" Nehru was the tallest national leader of the party and India itself; his death created a vacuum in the political space, which he had been acquiring for the last 17 years since the independence of the country. Congress positioned Lal Bahadur Shastri as India's second prime minister, but not for long. He died suspiciously at Tashkent in 1966.

With the death of two prime ministers in quick succession, the Congress party, which had previously been able to win constituencies based solely on the charisma of its leaders, could no longer do so, at least at the regional level. The fight within the party was increasing. The tide finally turned in the 1967 elections, held from February 15 to 22. Of the 16 states, only eight returned Congress to power with absolute majorities in the state legislatures.

Equally bad was the rout of the Congress's top leadership. Seven members of Indira Gandhi's cabinet at the center were defeated. The presidents of Congress party organizations in six states also lost, along with the chief ministers in four states. Congress was clearly losing its touch, as the party started showing the first signs of break. The party became divided into many factions like Indian National Congress (I), Indian National Congress (O), Bharatiya Kranti Dal, Utkal Congress, and Bangla Congress. Many of these factions later became defunct as they merged with the Janata Party during the emergency.

Despite the challenges, Indira Gandhi, who was mockingly referred to as "Goongi Gudiya," emerged as a strong and decisive leader, under whose

leadership India won a decisive war against Pakistan in 1971. The war resulted in Congress reclaiming its place as the most dominant player in the Indian political system, so much so that its power became increasingly unchecked. In a democracy, a government with unchecked power is quite problematic.

India belatedly learned this lesson. At midnight on June 26, 1975, an emergency was proclaimed in the country by her government, thereby suspending all democratic rights of the people and concentrating all the power in the hands of Indira Gandhi. This was done to subvert the decision given against Indira Gandhi by the Allahabad High Court Bench in the case of fraudulent electoral practices in the 1971 elections. The emergency was the darkest period in India's independent history. The government had become authoritarian; the opposition was decimated as most political opponents were put behind bars; the press was under extreme censorship.

The 21-month emergency proved to be costly for Congress. In the 1977 elections, for the first time, a non-Congress government was formed at the center. Though, the new government, led by Morarji Desai, couldn't stay in power for the full five years, the period was definitely a paradigm shift in Indian politics. Both people and political parties started believing that there could be an alternative to the Congress. However, it took another two decades after the Janata government for a non-Congress party (this time the BJP) to come to power and stay for a full five-year term.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do you know Priority fixation and the pattern of support mobilization?

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2. Discuss the Limitations of the Congress policies.

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1.7   LET US SUM UP

How far Indian National Congress win over the heart of people of West Bengal after independence that has been discussed deeply in this unit.

Indian National Congress was held in December 1885 in Bombay with seventy two delegates. More than just a political party, Congress was an assembly for politically-minded individuals who were interested in reform. In its first twenty years, known as a 'moderate phase', Congress was not interested in campaigning for independence or self-rule but for greater political autonomy within empire. After the 1905 Partition of Bengal, Congress became more vocal and active in demanding substantial political reform, and eventually voiced demands for full independence from Britain.

The majority of the founding members of Congress has been educated or lived in Britain, including of course Allan Octavian Hume. Badruddin Tyabji, W. C. Bonnerjee, Surendranath Banerjea, Pherozeshah Mehta, and the brothers Manomohun and Lalmohan Ghose had all studied in London, and had all fallen under the influence of Dadabhai Naoroji.

Congress had a British committee based in London, acting as a lobby group in Britain, which was founded in 1889. Dadabhai Naoroji, when he was an MP in London, attended this group's meetings, and was associated with their parliamentary pressure group. In 1890, the committee began to produce India, a free monthly journal summarising Indian news for the British press and politicians. India became a weekly subscribed journal, 1898-1921. Its editors included Henry Cotton (1906-19) and Henry Polak (1919-20). It became a welcome and useful publication for the growing number of Indian students in Britain as well.

As Congress came under the influence of M. K. Gandhi in the 1920s, further former-students from Britain became prominent within the party such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. Congress was transformed from an assembly dominated by Western-educated elites to a mass organization that appealed to diverse sections of the Indian public

in these decades. Representatives of Congress met with British politicans in the 1930s and 1940s to negotiate the terms of independence, often at odds with the British. They also found it hard to appease their many constituents and their rivals, the Muslim League. On 15 August 1947, with the independence of India and Pakistan, Congress became the ruling party of India with Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Politics: Politics is the set of activities associated with the governance of a country, state or an area. It involves making decisions that apply to groups of members. It refers to achieving and exercising positions of governance—organized control over a human community, particularly a state.

Mobilization: Mobilization, in military terminology, is the act of assembling and readying troops and supplies for war. The word mobilization was first used, in a military context, to describe the preparation of the Imperial Russian Army during the 1850s and 1860s.

Formation: the action of forming or process of being formed.

1.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know about the Congress Politics in West Bengal?
2. Discuss the Major problem and challenges faced.
3. Describe the Congress policies during the formation period.
4. How do you know Priority fixation and the pattern of support mobilization?
5. Discuss the Limitations of the Congress policies.

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1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 1.2
2. See Section 1.3
3. See Section 1.4

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 1.5
2. See Section 1.6

UNIT 2: LEADERSHIP ISSUE AND IMPACT OF FUNCTIONALISM

STRUCTURE

2.0   OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

o   To know about Leadership issue in West Bengal

o   To discuss the Impact of Functionalism

2.1   INTRODUCTION

What is Leadership?

Leadership is a process by which an executive can direct, guide and influence the behavior and work of others towards accomplishment of specific goals in a given situation. Leadership is the ability of a manager to induce the subordinates to work with confidence and zeal.

Leadership is the potential to influence behaviour of others. It is also defined as the capacity to influence a group towards the realization of a goal. Leaders are required to develop future visions, and to motivate the organizational members to want to achieve the visions.

According to Keith Davis, "Leadership is the ability to persuade others to seek defined objectives enthusiastically. It is the human factor which binds a group together and motivates it towards goals."

Characteristics of Leadership

- It is a inter-personal process in which a manager is into influencing and guiding workers towards attainment of goals.
- It denotes a few qualities to be present in a person which includes intelligence, maturity and personality.
- It is a group process. It involves two or more people interacting with each other.
- A leader is involved in shaping and moulding the behaviour of the group towards accomplishment of organizational goals.
- Leadership is situation bound. There is no best style of leadership. It all depends upon tackling with the situations.

Importance of Leadership

Leadership is an important function of management which helps to maximize efficiency and to achieve organizational goals. The following points justify the importance of leadership in a concern.

1. **Initiates action-** Leader is a person who starts the work by communicating the policies and plans to the subordinates from where the work actually starts.
2. **Motivation-** A leader proves to be playing an incentive role in the concern's working. He motivates the employees with economic and non-economic rewards and thereby gets the work from the subordinates.
3. **Providing guidance-** A leader has to not only supervise but also play a guiding role for the subordinates. Guidance here means instructing the subordinates the way they have to perform their work effectively and efficiently.
4. **Creating confidence-** Confidence is an important factor which can be achieved through expressing the work efforts to the subordinates, explaining them clearly their role and giving them guidelines to achieve the goals effectively. It is also important to hear the employees with regards to their complaints and problems.
5. **Building morale-** Morale denotes willing co-operation of the employees towards their work and getting them into confidence and

winning their trust. A leader can be a morale booster by achieving full co-operation so that they perform with best of their abilities as they work to achieve goals.

6. **Builds work environment-** Management is getting things done from people. An efficient work environment helps in sound and stable growth. Therefore, human relations should be kept into mind by a leader. He should have personal contacts with employees and should listen to their problems and solve them. He should treat employees on humanitarian terms.

7. **Co-ordination-** Co-ordination can be achieved through reconciling personal interests with organizational goals. This synchronization can be achieved through proper and effective co-ordination which should be primary motive of a leader.

Leadership and Management - Relationship & Differences

Leadership and management are the terms that are often considered synonymous. It is essential to understand that leadership is an essential part of effective management. As a crucial component of management, remarkable leadership behaviour stresses upon building an environment in which each and every employee develops and excels. Leadership is defined as the potential to influence and drive the group efforts towards the accomplishment of goals. This influence may originate from formal sources, such as that provided by acquisition of managerial position in an organization.

A manager must have traits of a leader, i.e., he must possess leadership qualities. Leaders develop and begin strategies that build and sustain competitive advantage. Organizations require robust leadership and robust management for optimal organizational efficiency.

Differences between Leadership and Management

Leadership differs from management in a sense that:

1. While managers lay down the structure and delegates authority and responsibility, leaders provides direction by developing the organizational vision and communicating it to the employees and inspiring them to achieve it.

2. While management includes focus on planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling; leadership is mainly a part of directing function of management. Leaders focus on listening, building relationships, teamwork, inspiring, motivating and persuading the followers.

3. While a leader gets his authority from his followers, a manager gets his authority by virtue of his position in the organization.

4. While managers follow the organization's policies and procedure, the leaders follow their own instinct.

5. Management is more of science as the managers are exact, planned, standard, logical and more of mind. Leadership, on the other hand, is an art. In an organization, if the managers are required, then leaders are a must/essential.

6. While management deals with the technical dimension in an organization or the job content; leadership deals with the people aspect in an organization.

7. While management measures/evaluates people by their name, past records, present performance; leadership sees and evaluates individuals as having potential for things that can't be measured, i.e., it deals with future and the performance of people if their potential is fully extracted.

8. If management is reactive, leadership is proactive.

9. Management is based more on written communication, while leadership is based more on verbal communication.

The organizations which are over managed and under-led do not perform upto the benchmark. **Leadership accompanied by management sets a new direction and makes efficient use of resources to achieve it**. Both leadership and management are essential for individual as well as organizational success.

Authority vs Leadership

The authority exercised is a kind of legitimate power and people follow figures exercising it, because their positions demand so irrespective of the person holding the position. **Leaders in organizations and**

elsewhere may have formal authorities but they mostly rely on the informal authority that they exercise on people to influence them. Leaders are trusted for their judgment and respected for their expertise, integrity etc and hence followed and not because they hold a certain position. For e.g. M.K. Gandhi for most part did not hold any official position to lead the Indian freedom struggle.

It is also important to understand that a formal authority and power emerging from it, might not always be able to influence people in the desired manner as; in times of crisis and difficulties people view it as coercion. On the other hand leadership tends to create followers out of free will and choice without forcing them to accept anything thrown their way. Authority rarely provides a scope for feedback, constructive criticism or opinions of the people on whom it is exercised however leaders provide ample platform to their followers to voice their thoughts and feedback.

When dealing with adults, the sole use of authority to direct and discipline them hardly works, leadership provides a better approach of sharing and involving thus building rapports with followers and creating long term relationships. Authority can hardly make people change their attitudes and behaviors with lasting effects and results however a leader inspires followers through self modeled ways and hence leadership displays greater effectiveness in addressing attitudes and behaviors of people.

Exercising authority sometimes limits the approaches to arrive at solutions for issues and problems while leadership encourages people to look beyond the obvious and think innovatively and sometimes emerge with radical solutions.

Apart from it, the biggest difference between the two as cited by Stephen R Covey is the moral authority held by leaders over the followers which is absent in the case of power from authority. Within the organizational setup when leaders also have moral authority on their subordinates by establishing a synchrony in their words and actions; the rest of the structure and processes of the organization also get aligned to it, thus creating a robust and transparent culture.

Authoritative way of working also encourages individuals to work in silos while in the organizations of today; the leaders need to have a complete picture and coordinate with other functions and departments as and when required. It is indeed difficult for mangers and leaders to move out of their circle of authority and coordinate and interact with external people. However the need of the hour and the more effective approach to leadership and management is when leaders come out of their comfort zone and move from exercising authority on a small group to leading the entire organization.

Individuals, who do not rely on authority but lead people, are the ones who enjoy the privilege of their ideologies and thoughts practiced by later generations long after they are gone. Even with individuals who held positions of responsibilities, the ones who actually led their people are the ones remembered and followed.

Leadership and Motivation

Motivation is a goal-oriented characteristic that helps a person achieve his objectives. It pushes an individual to work hard at achieving his or her goals. An executive must have the right leadership traits to influence motivation. However, there is no specific blueprint for motivation.

As a leader, one should keep an open perspective on human nature. Knowing different needs of subordinates will certainly make the decision-making process easier.

Both an employee as well as manager must possess leadership and motivational traits. An effective leader must have a thorough knowledge of motivational factors for others. He must understand the basic needs of employees, peers and his superiors. Leadership is used as a means of motivating others.

Given below are important guidelines that outline the basic view of motivation:

- Harmonize and match the subordinate needs with the organizational needs. As a leader, the executive must ensure that the business has the same morals and ethics that he seeks in his employees. He should make sure that his subordinates are encouraged and trained in a manner that meets the needs of the business.

- Appreciation and rewards are key motivators that influence a person to achieve a desired goal. Rewarding good/ exceptional behavior with a small token of appreciation, certificate or letter can be a great motivator. If a certificate is awarded to a person, it should mention the particular act or the quality for which the individual is being rewarded.

- Being a role model is also a key motivator that influences people in reaching their goals. A leader should set a good example to ensure his people to grow and achieve their goals effectively.

- Encouraging individuals to get involved in planning and important issues resolution procedure not only motivates them, but also teaches the intricacies of these key decision-making factors. Moreover, it will help everyone to get better understanding of their role in the organization. The communication will be unambiguous and will certainly attract acknowledgement and appreciation from the leader.

- Developing moral and team spirit certainly has a key impact on the well-being of an organization. The metal or emotional state of a person constitutes his or her moral fabric. A leader's actions and decisions affect the morale of his subordinates. Hence, he should always be aware of his decisions and activities. Team spirit is the soul of the organization. The leader should always make sure his subordinates enjoy performing their duties as a team and make themselves a part of the organization's plans.

- A leader should step into the shoes of the subordinates and view things from subordinate's angle. He should empathize with them during difficult times. Empathizing with their personal problems makes them stronger-mentally and emotionally.

- A meaningful and challenging job accomplished inculcates a sense of achievement among employees. The executive must make their employees feel they are performing an important work that is necessary for the organization's well-being and success. This motivational aspect drives them to fulfill goals.

Remember, "**To become an efficient leader, you must be self-motivated**". You must know your identity, your needs and you must

have a strong urge to do anything to achieve your goals. Once you are self-motivated, only then you can motivate others to achieve their goals and to harmonize their personal goals with the common goals of the organization.

2.2 LEADERSHIP ISSUE IN WEST BENGAL

The word "leadership" can bring to mind a variety of images. For example:

A political leader, pursuing a passionate, personal cause.

An explorer, cutting a path through the jungle for the rest of his group to follow.

An executive, developing her company's strategy to beat the competition.

Leaders help themselves and others to do the right things. They set direction, build an inspiring vision, and create something new. Leadership is about mapping out where you need to go to "win" as a team or an organization; and it is dynamic, exciting, and inspiring.

Yet, while leaders set the direction, they must also use management skills to guide their people to the right destination, in a smooth and efficient way.

In this article, we'll focus on the process of leadership. In particular, we'll discuss the "transformational leadership" model, first proposed by James MacGregor Burns and then developed by Bernard Bass. This model highlights visionary thinking and bringing about change, instead of management processes that are designed to maintain and steadily improve current performance

Leadership: a Definition

According to the idea of transformational leadership , an effective leader is a person who does the following:

Creates an inspiring vision of the future. Motivates and inspires people to engage with that vision. Manages delivery of the vision.

Coaches and builds a team, so that it is more effective at achieving the vision.

Evolution of Leadership Pattern in West Bengal In rural India, traditionally leadership positions were enjoyed by the rural elites who were, generally speaking, aged and moderately educated, belonged to the high clan/castes. The zamihders, village headman and the village priests acquired their leadership as hereditary right. Land being the principal source of subsistence becomes crucial in determining the rural stratification system and power structure. The landholder dominates ovet landless and land poor. Besides, in Indian patriarchal society, man is superior to woman. Keeping in line with this tradition the leadership in villages happens to be male dominated. In a discussion presented by M.S.Gore, we find that most of the papers on leadership in India give suggestion that the rural. leader cannot be imagined without man. Women have obviously no place in the wider social sphere. It cannot be seriously argued that the anthropologists who have written the several papers have accidentally or by design chosen only male leaders for study. Studies ·on political, economic and the social - particularly in relation to caste - spheres of life, it is found not even one woman playing an influential role in these aspects of life in the villages. It is found from several studies that generally in peasant societies women are subordinate to men.

In the early days, the village rich handled the functions like decision making, settlement of disputes, initiation of activities etc. These types of functions were performed through formal or informal institutions. The most important among them were panchayat and the headman ship. The panchayat, the council of village elders is a traditional institution in the Indian village. It was mainly constituted of the representatives of dominant families in the village. .. 87 Before the introduction of statutory panchayats, however, the two types of 'sanctioned' leaders, viz. passive and active, were not very distinct in India. Indeed, the village leaders at that time came from the dominant caste group from which the village elites emerged. They were the propertied men of the village, belonging a high caste status. And they had some education or a certain level of literacy in contrast with the average or common villagers who were mostly nonliterate or illiterate and were engaged in occupation like agriculture, business, money lending or service-occupations which

aiJowed them to have sufficient amount of both funds and leisure to be devoted to the affairs of others on the on~ hand and, on the other, to be free from thralldom to others. lhey could oblige other villagers by extending help, security, advice and information to them in times of their necessity. As they enjoyed sufficient amount of confidence of the villagers, and engaged in settling disputes among the villagers through 'Salisi'or arbitration. As a result, there were little litigations among them.

During the British Raj in India the village council was more of an organ of local government. The village council or the panchayat consisted of the elders from among major castes and lineages in the villages. The zamindars had their representatives in the meetings of these councils, and they were most influential members in these bodies. The zamiridari system, the village council, and the· caste council, thus, appeared to be the three overall institutional components of the power system in the villages in India before abolition of the zamindari system. Most of the times the rural peoples -had to refer to the zamindar(s) and to the village cquncil in case of their political and economic interests were involved and to the caste leader in case any problem of a social, cultural or ritualistic nature was associated.

Yogendra Singh strongly holds the view that it was the landlords who absorbed all effective power in the village, and the panchayat leaders like the leaders in other spheres in the village to protect their interest4 The traditional pattern of leadership in rural India was not democratic in nature. Most of the leaders who were rich, educated and upper-caste hoJder led. their role of leadership and influenced the dependent peoples in rural village. 88 Leaders were not elected democratically. Lead~rs achieved obligt;ttion from the general people who were economically and educationally weak and lower caste holder of the society. Recently, the structure of rural society has changed. It is reported from some studies that traditional authority has been challenged and destroyed. Invariably the opposition came from those who could free themselves fdr economic dependence on the landlords, either as a consequence of land reform or by changing their occupations, and who had some education. Thjs new economic independence and access to education wete generally the privileges of the middle ~tratum of village society; the lowest

enjoyed no reljef. Some observers have defined this phenomenon the emergence of middle class. Wherever reforms have not changed the economic structure, the traditional pattern of authority has persisted, often under a new form of legitimacy such as election to local bodies like the panchayat.

In Bengal, panchayats were statutorily established in 1870 through the Chowkidari Act. The panchayats were not democratic in nature .It was composed of persons nominated by the District Collector or any subordinate officer chosen by him, with the sole purpose of levying and collecting chowkidari tax for the maintenance of the village watchmen. Under the Bengal Local Self-Government Act of 1885, District Bpard members were indirectly elected Local Boards. Members of the Local Boards and Union Committees were elected by a restricted electorate. The Bengal Administration Report, 1891-92, showed that elected m~mbers were in minority in both tiers. Out of 790 members of Oistrict Boards covering 38 districts of Bengal, 17.5% members were ex-officio-, 40%members were nominated, and 39.62% members were elected by Local Boards, i.e. indirectly elected. Out of these members 31.5% were government servants, 26% were zamindars and landlords, while 26.6% were legal practitioners.6 Out of 1248 members of Local Boards 3% members were ex-officio, 58 members were nominated by British government and 37%members were elected. Most of the 89 elected members belonged to upper classes. Poor section of the society were unrepresented.7 Under the Bengal Village Self-Government Act, 1919, Union Boards were formed all over Bengal as units of local government compri$ing nine (9) members -three nominated and six elected. The Act Of 1919 had provided for the creation of the Union Committees consisting of group of villages. Each Union Committee was to have an elected body known as the Union Board. The electorate was to consist of all adult males having residence within union and paying local tax. However, the social and economic power in the villages was concentrated in the hands of small group consisting of the landed gentry, zamindars and intermediaries and the professional classes. 8 The pre-independence Union Boards were, thus, in a sense, part of the Raj and presidents/vice-presidents of these boards. enjoyed prestige and had

considerable influence in the local area. In most cases, the office bearers 6f the Union Boards belonged to the elite groups _ drawn from amongst the zamindars or other land owning classes. After the dawn of independence, with the introduction of panchayats, Land · Reforms, the Cooperative Movement and the Community Development Programme, a new pattern of leadership has emerged gradually in rural India, as well as in West Bengal. Universal adult franchise enables for the first time in the Indian history each adult citizen (from 21 years of age and above; at present the age has been lowered to 18 yrs for exercising voting right) irrespective of his/ her gender, caste, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or creed to participate in the election of the member$ of the popular" representative bodies. The introduction of the adult franchise and the Panchayat Raj, when acting in combination, have produced some worth reckoning effects on the economic structure, pQwer structure, and emerging pattern of leadership' in the villages a$ well as on the attitude of the villagers towards politics and power in general and towards village politics in particular. It has provided an alternative to the traditional monolithic power structure of the village community and has substituted an elected leadership for hereditary authority. 9 90 After independence, the West Bengal Panchayat Bill was passed in 1957. The Act of 1919 was replaced by West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957, which provided a Gram Panchayat for every village and Anchal Panchayat at the previous union leveL Most of the Gram Panchayat members came from the upper section of the society. There was a provision for nomination of eminent person of locality by the state government. It was found that most of the Adhyaksha or President and Upadhayaksha or Vice-President came from the cream level of the society. Later on, the West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act was passed in 1963.1t replaced the District Boards by creating Zilla Parishad at the district levet and Anchalik Parishad at between Anchal Panchayats and Zilla Parishads.Except for Gram Panchayat none of the other tiers had any directly elected members. The members of the Anchal Panchayat, Anchalik Parishad, and Zilla Parishad were either ex-officio, nominated or co-opted, with some being elected directly. There was another class of membe~ known as associate members who had no right to vote. In a discussion on West Bengal's rural local governments,

Buddhadev Ghosh and Girish Kumar mentioned that from 1947to1967, when the congress was in power in West Bengal, the socio-economic background of the party was restricted to the elite, the landed gentry, the professionals and traders.

Unlike many other states, the force of caste identities was never strong in West Bengal for political mobilization, even· though it remains a fact that elite sections came mostly from upper or intermediate castes. Due to their social, economic and professional background, it was possible for them to influence the local peoples. The strategy of Congress was to co-opt them for securing electoral support of the masses. The elites were accommodated in the ·local party units, and in other power structures like Union Boards, District or School Boards .

Therefore, the above Panchayat system did not allow the poorer class, women, lower caste holders and young people to access to rural ~overnment Only it will be possible if the rural government of all tiers will be constituted on the basis of adult suffrage. It is no doubt that 4 tiers panchayat system of 1957 and 1963 Act did not allow a broad scope of emerging democratic rural leadership. 91 In West Bengal, a fresh effort was initiated for rejuvenating panchayat and in this effort the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973 was passed. Even though the Act was passed, the government took no step to implement it. As a result, the entire panchayat system of the state languished. The Zilla Parishad and Anchalik Parishad remained superseded. After the first elections, no elections were held to the Anchal and Gram Panchayats.Cosequently, when the Congress Government went out of office in 1977, elections to Anchal Panchayats and Gram Panchayats had been due for periods varying from ten to fifteen years. The period between1967-72 had been marked by political unrest and absence of stable governments. No pulposive policy towards strengthenin9 the panchayat system could be introduced during this period. There was a stable government in 1972-1977, but it had no commitment towards panchayat raj, even though the comprehensive panchayat act was passed during this period.

The Left Front Government in 1978 brought into force the West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973. In 4 June 1978, elections were held simultaneously for all the tiers of the rural local bodies for the first time. The event

heralded a new era for Panchayat Raj system in West Bengal. This was the moment when Asoke Mehta Committee was undertaking its study. By the time the Committee's Report became public in August 1978, nearly 56000 representatives were in position to undertake the new responsibilities of democratic governance at the district, block and village levels.13 Since then, election to the local bodies have been held at regular five years intervals as stipulated by law. The last Panchayat election was held in May, 2008. The panchayat election, in 1978, gave birth a new pattern of rural leadership in West Bengal. The panchayat Act of 1973 implemented after the Left Front Gqvernment came into power in 1971.The ground was prepared during the . . rule of United Front Government in 1969-70. During this time, a massive drive had been undertaken to detect and vest lands that had been clandestinely held by landowners beyond their legal entitlement. This had paralysed the influence of the bjg landlords on rural society. In this connection, Prabhat Datta quoted Atul Kohli's 92 statement that the panchayats in West Bengal or in most parts of India, "have seldom been free of domination by landlords or rich peasants. This is beginning to change in West Bengal. The CPIM is carving out a pattern of political organization in rural West Bengal rare in India, namely, that of involving penetration in the country side without depending on the larger landowners. " 14 From a large number of macro and micro studies it could be defined that panchayats are free from the domination of big landlords. Several studies mentioned that the panchayats at the village level are under the clutch of middle farmers who already have significant resources under their control with a large percentage of them being teachers and other professionals. 15 Besides, some surveys have confirmed the dominance of well- educated in rural panchayats. The village panchayats in West Bengal are composed also with poor sections of the rural society and the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes members are increasing rapidly. In addition, many research works have proved the significant presence of poor peasants, bargadars (sharecroppers), land labourers, school teachers etc. However, from the various studies the evolution of rural leadership pattern in West Bengal can be defined following. The pattern of panchayat leadership in West Bengal after 1978

could be understood through a detailed study that was conducted by the National Institute of Rural Development. The study focused on the process of political recruitment and social background of panchayat leaders. On the basis of the study, M.Shiviah, K.B.Srivastava and A.C.Jena pointed out that majority of the newly elected gram panchayat members were young (below 35yrs), and almost a half of these members were considerably educated. Occupationally, about a half of the new leaders were found to be farmers, while the next biggest category was that of professionals. On the whole, the study identified the new leadership as young and educated. 16 93 Ross Mallick has tried to show, from the studies of M.Shiviah, K.B.Srivastava and A.C.Jena, the party affiliation of panchayat members in 1978 panchayat election of West Bengal. In 1978 panchayat election, the Left Front Government got an overwhelming mandate.

From an independent survey done by the National Institute of Rural Development in Hyderabad on one gram panchayat at each in the districts of Nadia,Midnapore and Jalpaiguri found the education level of panchayat members high enough to justify appreciation of the voters' judgment. There was no illiterate panchayat member. Farmers made up 47%, 24% were professionals, 22% businessmen and 4% service holders. Only one person was a labourer, indicating that the village middle and elite class which controlled these panchayats. From the findings of the survey it had been defined that while, the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes continued their traditional occupations, the upper castes that had dominated during the zamindari period had now branched out from their landed base into the services. and professions where their traditional literacy skills, higher educational levels and better linkages with urban areas (an aspect of bhadrolock syndrome) must have stood them in good stead. It was these occupational and educational elite, which controlled the panchayat government in the~e rural areas. Ross Mallick further quoted the argument Qf P Roychoudhury that the panchayats were dominated by "the same old class of rural vested interests including money lenders. " 22 According to the report of West Bengal Government about · Gram Panchayats and their activities: survey and evaluation (1980), 23 1t could be defined that the average age of the

gram panchayat members were 39 yrs., though the average age of the Pradhans and Up-Pradhans was slightly less. Average schooling years of the members came to be only 7.6 yrs suggesting thereby that 97 on an average the educational level of the members was up to middle school only. Occupationally, the pwner-cultivators were found to constitute the majority. An analysis of land ho1ding patterns, however, indicated that most of th~ ownercultivators were small and marginal farmers only. In 1982, from a study on panchayat and rural development,. Pradosh Nath had explained from his observation in Purulia district of West Bengal that rural poor had received substantial representation in the new panchayats. Particularly, marginal farmers and the agricultural labours were found to be grossly underrepresented.24 But Atul Kohli had tried to show different pictures from his study on pahchayat leaders in West Bengal. He observ~d that since 1978, West Bengal panchayat governments were dominated by small farmers, share-croppers and agricultural l~bours. Statistically he defined the background of panchayat leaders that 60.1% of the rural leaders were agriculturalis~s. while 8.3% were landless labol.frers and 31.6% were teachers and social workers etc. He also found from his study that the educational levels of the most of these leaders were high. 50% of the heads of the Gram Panchayats and 70% of the heads of the Panchayat Samitis were graduates. 25 From the study of socio-economic background of panchayat leaders in West B,engal, in19a2, G.K. Lieten found that a new type of leadership had come into e:>_

2.3 IMPACT OF FUNCTIONALISM

Functionalism in the philosophy of mind is the doctrine that what makes something a mental state of a particular type does not depend on its internal constitution, but rather on the way it functions, or the role it plays, in the system of which it is a part. This doctrine is rooted in Aristotle's conception of the soul, and has antecedents in Hobbes's conception of the mind as a "calculating machine", but it has become fully articulated (and popularly endorsed) only in the last third of the 20th century. Though the term 'functionalism' is used to designate a variety of positions in a variety of other disciplines, including

psychology, sociology, economics, and architecture, this entry focuses exclusively on functionalism as a philosophical thesis about the nature of mental states.

The following sections will trace the intellectual antecedents of contemporary functionalism, sketch the different types of functionalist theories, and discuss the most serious objections to them.

Functionalism is the doctrine that what makes something a thought, desire, pain (or any other type of mental state) depends not on its internal constitution, but solely on its function, or the role it plays, in the cognitive system of which it is a part. More precisely, functionalist theories take the identity of a mental state to be determined by its causal relations to sensory stimulations, other mental states, and behavior.

For (an avowedly simplistic) example, a functionalist theory might characterize pain as a state that tends to be caused by bodily injury, to produce the belief that something is wrong with the body and the desire to be out of that state, to produce anxiety, and, in the absence of any stronger, conflicting desires, to cause wincing or moaning. According to this theory, all and only creatures with internal states that meet these conditions, or play these roles, are capable of being in pain.

Suppose that, in humans, there is some distinctive kind of neural activity (C-fiber stimulation, for example) that meets these conditions. If so, then according to this functionalist theory, humans can be in pain simply by undergoing C-fiber stimulation. But the theory permits creatures with very different physical constitutions to have mental states as well: if there are silicon-based states of hypothetical Martians or inorganic states of hypothetical androids that also meet these conditions, then these creatures, too, can be in pain. As functionalists often put it, pain can be realized by different types of physical states in different kinds of creatures, or multiply realized. (See entry on multiple realizability.) Indeed, since descriptions that make explicit reference only to a state's causal relations with stimulations, behavior, and one another are what have come to be known as "topic-neutral" (Smart 1959) — that is, as imposing no logical restrictions on the nature of the items that satisfy the descriptions — then it's also logically possible for non-physical states to play the relevant roles, and thus realize mental states, in some systems as

well. So functionalism is compatible with the sort of dualism that takes mental states to cause, and be caused by, physical states.

Still, though functionalism is officially neutral between materialism and dualism, it has been particularly attractive to materialists, since many materialists believe (or argue; see Lewis, 1966) that it is overwhelmingly likely that any states capable of playing the roles in question will be physical states. If so, then functionalism can stand as a materialistic alternative to the Psycho-Physical Identity Thesis (introduced in Place 1956, Feigl 1958, and Smart 1959, and defended more recently in Hill 1991, and Polger 2011), which holds that each type of mental state is identical with a particular type of neural state. This thesis seems to entail that no creatures with brains unlike ours can share our sensations, beliefs, and desires, no matter how similar their behavior and internal organization may be to our own, and thus functionalism, with its claim that mental states can be multiply realized, has been regarded as providing a more inclusive, less "(species-) chauvinistic" (Block 1980b) — theory of the mind that is compatible with materialism. (More recently, however, some philosophers have contended that the identity thesis may be more inclusive than functionalists assume; see Section 6 for further discussion.)

Within this broad characterization of functionalism, however, a number of distinctions can be made. One of particular importance is the distinction between theories in which the functional characterizations of mental states purport to provide analyses of the meanings of our mental state terms (or otherwise restrict themselves to a priori information), and theories that permit functional characterizations of mental states to appeal to information deriving from scientific experimentation (or speculation). (See Shoemaker 1984c, and Rey 1997, for further discussion and more fine-grained distinctions.) There are other important differences among functionalist theories as well. These (sometimes orthogonal) differences, and the motivations for them, can best be appreciated by examining the origins of functionalism and tracing its evolution in response both to explicit criticisms of the thesis and changing views about the nature of psychological explanation.

Behaviorism

Other important recent antecedents of functionalism are the behaviorist theories that emerged in the early-to-mid twentieth century. These include both the empirical psychological theories associated primarily with Watson and Skinner, and the "logical" or "analytical" behaviorism of philosophers such as Malcolm (1968) and Ryle (1949) (and, arguably, Wittgenstein 1953). Though functionalism is significantly different from behaviorism in that the latter attempts to explain behavior without any reference whatsoever to mental states and processes, the development of two important strains of functionalism, "psychofunctionalism" and "analytical" functionalism, can both be profitably viewed as attempts to rectify the difficulties, respectively, of empirical and logical behaviorism, while retaining certain important insights of those theories.

As an empirical psychological theory, behaviorism holds that the behavior of humans (and other animals) can be explained by appealing solely to behavioral dispositions, that is, to the lawlike tendencies of organisms to behave in certain ways, given certain environmental stimulations. Behavioral dispositions, unlike thoughts, feelings, and other internal states that can be directly observed only by introspection, are objectively observable and are indisputably part of the natural world. Thus they seemed to be fit entities to figure centrally in the emerging science of psychology. Also, behaviorist theories promised to avoid a potential regress that appeared to threaten psychological explanations invoking internal representations, namely, that to specify how such representations produce the behaviors in question, one must appeal to an internal intelligent agent (a "homunculus") who interprets the representations, and whose skills would themselves have to be explained. The promise of behaviorism lay in its conviction that there could be a science of human behavior as objective and explanatory as other "higher-level" sciences such as chemistry and biology. Behaviorism indeed had some early successes, especially in the domain of animal learning, and its principles are still used, at least for heuristic purposes, in various areas of psychology. But as many psychologists (and others, e.g. Chomsky 1959) have argued, the successes of behaviorism seem to depend upon the experimenters' implicit control of certain variables which, when made

explicit, involve ineliminable reference to organisms' other mental states. For example, rats are typically placed into an experimental situation at a certain fraction of their normal body weight — and thus can be assumed to feel hunger and to want the food rewards contingent upon behaving in certain ways. Similarly, it is assumed that humans, in analogous experimental situations, want to cooperate with the experimenters, and understand and know how to follow the instructions. It seemed to the critics of behaviorism, therefore, that theories that explicitly appeal to an organism's beliefs, desires, and other mental states, as well as to stimulations and behavior, would provide a fuller and more accurate account of why organisms behave as they do. They could do so, moreover, without compromising the objectivity of psychology as long as the mental states to which these theories appeal are introduced as states that together play a role in the production of behavior, rather than states identifiable solely by introspection. Thus work was begun on a range of "cognitive" psychological theories which reflected these presumptions, and an important strain of contemporary functionalism, "psycho-functionalism" (Fodor 1968, Block and Fodor 1972) can be seen a philosophical endorsement of these new cognitive theories of mind.

Logical behaviorism, in contrast to behaviorism as a psychological theory, is a thesis about the meanings of our mental state terms or concepts. According to logical behaviorism, all statements about mental states and processes are equivalent in meaning to statements about behavioral dispositions. So, for (again, an overly simplified) example, "Henry has a toothache" would be equivalent in meaning to a statement such as "Henry is disposed (all things being equal) to cry out or moan and to rub his jaw". And "Amelia is thirsty" would be equivalent to a statement such as "If Amelia is offered some water, she will be disposed (all things being equal) to drink it." These candidate translations, like all behavioristic statements, eschew reference to any internal states of the organism, and thus do not threaten to denote, or otherwise induce commitment to, properties or processes (directly) observable only by introspection. In addition, logical behaviorists argued that if statements about mental states were equivalent in meaning to statements about behavioral dispositions, there could be an unproblematic account of how

mental state terms could be applied both to oneself and others, and how they could be taught and learned.

However, as many philosophers have pointed out (Chisholm 1957; Geach 1957), logical behaviorism provides an implausible account of the meanings of our mental state terms, since, intuitively, a subject can have the mental states in question without the relevant behavioral dispositions — and vice versa. For example, Gene may believe that it's going to rain even if he's not disposed to wear a raincoat and take an umbrella when leaving the house (or to perform any other cluster of rain-avoiding behaviors), if Gene doesn't mind, or actively enjoys, getting wet. And subjects with the requisite motivation can suppress their tendencies to pain behavior even in the presence of excruciating pain, while skilled actors can perfect the lawlike disposition to produce pain behavior under certain conditions, even if they don't actually feel pain. (Putnam 1965) The problem, these philosophers argued, is that no mental state, by itself, can be plausibly assumed to give rise to any particular behavior unless one also assumes that the subject possesses additional mental states of various types. And so, it seemed, it was not in fact possible to give meaning-preserving translations of statements invoking pains, beliefs, and desires in purely behavioristic terms. Nonetheless, the idea that our common sense concepts of mental states reveal an essential tie between mental states and their typical behavioral expressions is retained, and elaborated, in contemporary "analytic" functionalist theories.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do you know about Leadership issue in West Bengal?

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2. Discuss the Impact of Functionalism.

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2.4 LET US SUM UP

Leadership can be hard to define and it means different things to different people.

In the transformational leadership model, leaders set direction and help themselves and others to do the right thing to move forward. To do this they create an inspiring vision, and then motivate and inspire others to reach that vision. They also manage delivery of the vision, either directly or indirectly, and build and coach their teams to make them ever stronger.

Leadership in business is the capacity of a company's management to set and achieve challenging goals, take fast and decisive action when needed, outperform the competition, and inspire others to perform at the highest level they can.

It can be difficult to place a value on leadership or other qualitative aspects of a company, versus quantitative metrics that are commonly tracked and much easier to compare between companies. Leadership can also speak to a more holistic approach, as in the tone a company's management sets or the culture of the company that management establishes.

Individuals with strong leadership skills in the business world often rise to executive positions such as CEO (chief executive officer), COO (chief operating officer), CFO (chief financial officer), president, and chairman.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Leadership is setting and achieving goals, tackling the competition, and solving problems decisively and quickly.

Leadership also refers to the tone a company's management sets in terms of the corporate culture.

Some people with strong leadership skills in the business world rise to become the CEO, COO, CFO, president, or chairman of their companies.

Understanding Leadership

Leadership provides direction for a company and its workers. Employees need to know the direction in which the company is headed and who to follow to reach the destination. Leadership involves showing workers

how to effectively perform their responsibilities and regularly supervising the completion of their tasks.

Leadership is also about setting a positive example for staff to follow, by being excited about the work, being motivated to learn new things, and helping out as needed in both individual and team activities.

Leadership involves setting and achieving goals, taking action, and beating the competition, but it also relates to the tone of the company's management and what kind of culture is built for the employees.

How Leadership Works

Effective leadership includes exhibiting a strong character. Leaders exhibit honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, and ethics. Leaders act in line with how they speak and earn the right to be responsible for others' success in the company.

Strong leadership involves clear communication skills. Leaders speak with and listen to staff members, respond to questions and concerns, and are empathetic. Leaders use effective communication skills for moving the company forward and achieving new levels of success.

True leadership sees where the company is headed and plans the steps needed to get there. Visualizing what is possible, following trends in the industry, and taking risks to grow the business are all required of leaders.

Productive leadership shows optimism and provides positive energy for staff. Good leaders are supportive and are truly concerned about the well-being of others. Leaders find answers to challenges and reassure and inspire workers when things go awry. Leaders find ways for staff to work together and achieve maximum results in an efficient and effective manner.

Effective leadership is about all of this – and it's exciting to be part of this journey!

2.5 KEY WORDS

Functionalism: Functionalism is a viewpoint of the theory of the mind. It states that mental states are constituted solely by their functional role, which means, their causal relations with other mental states, sensory inputs and behavioral outputs.

Leadership: Leadership is both a research area and a practical skill encompassing the ability of an individual or organization to "lead" or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations.

2.6   QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know about Leadership issue in West Bengal?
2. Discuss the Impact of Functionalism.

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2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 2.2
2. See Section 2.3

UNIT 3: CONGRESS AND THE ELECTORAL POLITICS

STRUCTURE

3.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- Congress and the Electoral Politics
- Role of Elections in Democracy
- Election Machinery
- Electoral System and Process
- Election in India: An Exercise on Massive Scale
- Voting Pattern
- Determinants of Electoral Behaviour

- Caste as a Determinant of Electoral Behaviour

- Drawbacks of Electoral System

- Electoral Reforms

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Election is a device through which a modern state creates among its citizens a sense of involvement and participation in public affairs. A good electoral system is the bedrock of genuine representative government. Much depends on how the system operates in practice, whether competent and honest administrators free from political bias conduct elections efficiently and impartially. The absence of general confidence in the verdict of the ballot may destroy the faith of public in the democratic process. Stressing the importance of electoral process, Pollock observed, "Unless public elections are conducted with accuracy and efficiency, not only the public services are discredited but the whole democratic system is endangered." India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government, and at the heart of the system is a commitment to hold regular, free and fair elections. These elections determine the composition of the government, the membership of the two houses of parliament, the state and union territory legislative assemblies, and the Presidency and vice presidency.

3.2   CONGRESS AND THE ELECTORAL POLITICS

Elections in India, the world's second-most populous country, evoke descriptions like 'spectacle' or 'carnival,' in part due to the overwhelming numbers that participate in the process. In this country of over a billion people, 714 million voters will decide who rules the world's largest democracy for the next five years. In the 2004 elections, over 5,400 candidates from 230 political parties participated. Nearly the same number of candidates will compete for seats in parliament in 2009. Electoral candidates vie for votes by promising reforms, such as better governance, greater socioeconomic equity, and bolstered efforts at poverty alleviation. However, corrupt politicians with criminal records,

caste- and religion-based politics, and allegations of vote-buying continue to mar the democratic process. Meanwhile, the coalition politics of the last two decades, while more inclusive, have resulted in giving outsized power to small parties that have used it to further their short-term agendas.

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Alyssa Ayres

South Asia Reads: January 27, 2020

Indian historian Ramachandra Guha, in the book *India after Gandhi,* argues the country is only "50 percent a democracy," holding viable elections, but falling short when it comes to "the functioning of politicians and political institutions."

The Parliament

India's parliamentary system is based on the Westminster model of constitutional democracy, a legacy of British colonial rule. The Parliament is comprised of a bicameral legislature: the Rajya Sabha, the 250-member upper house, where members are elected by state legislative assemblies (12 members are nominated by the president), and the Lok Sabha, the 543-member lower house directly elected by the people (with two additional seats reserved for Anglo Indians nominated by the president). In the Lok Sabha, voters elect candidates based on the electoral system where the person securing the largest number of votes in each district wins.

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India

"There were few other competing ideologies that allowed people to make sense of their social circumstances in the way caste did." – Pratap Bhanu Mehta

To ensure political representation for historically marginalized groups in the lower house of the parliament, the Indian Constitution stipulates that each state reserve seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (formerly known as the untouchables, lowest in the country's stratified social order) in proportion to their population in the state. This means only candidates belonging to these groups can contest elections in

reserved constituencies. In the 2009 elections, eighty-four seats for candidates from scheduled castes and forty-seven for scheduled tribe members are reserved, 24 percent of the total seats in the parliament's lower house. A pending bill seeking a 33 percent reservation for women in the parliament and state legislatures has been the subject of intense debate for over a decade.

The prime minister is the leader of the party or alliance that enjoys majority support in the lower house. If no single party or alliance has a majority, the leader of the largest single party or alliance is appointed prime minister and must subsequently secure a vote of confidence from the entire lower house.

The Parties

Currently, India has hundreds of political parties registered (PDF) with the election commission, and of these seven are registered as national parties. The Indian National Congress and its rival the Bharatiya Janata Party are the largest among them.

- **Indian National Congress (INC):** Formed in 1885, the INC or Congress Party, as it is popularly called, dominated the national movement for ending British rule. Since India gained independence in 1947, the Congress Party has formed most of India's governments. The party has been dominated by the Nehru-Gandhi family and currently is led by Sonia Gandhi, the wife of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the daughter-in-law of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Some analysts expect party leadership to eventually go to Sonia's son Rahul. The party led the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) after the 2004 elections with Manmohan Singh as prime minister. Singh has been fielded as its 2009 prime ministerial candidate.

The Role of Caste

When universal adult suffrage offered all social groups, including previously disenfranchised ones, the right to vote, caste emerged as one of the most significant issues for political mobilization. This, political theorist Pratap Bhanu Mehta writes in the 2003 book *The Burden of Democracy,* was in part because caste was "an axis of domination and subordination in Indian society" and the state, by sanctioning categories

of caste, provided the incentives to mobilize. But he argues it was also because "there were few other competing ideologies that allowed people to make sense of their social circumstances in the way caste did."

However, caste politics in the last three decades have been marked by desire for power rather than a substantial agenda for social reform. Parties like BSP and RJD, which came to power by mobilizing lower castes, have failed to offer much in the way of good governance or long-term social transformation. Instead, once some lower-caste groups have gained access to power, they have then sought to confine those privileges to their sub-caste. The problem, though, is not the salience of caste in Indian politics, but the failure to address its underlying causes and create new opportunities for marginalized groups, say some experts. "Unless the newly mobilized Dalit castes can be given access to the gains of the market economy, their prospects for social advancement remain dim," Mehta writes. Analysts note caste plays a lesser role in urban India, and with higher urbanization, its role in electoral politics might decline.

Playing the Religion Card

Many Indian historians date religion's role in Indian politics back to the colonial period and the 1909 British policy of establishing separate electorates based on religion. However, in the 1980s, several events worked to bring religion to the forefront of electoral politics, say experts: rising Sikh fundamentalism followed by anti-Sikh riots after the 1984 assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi; Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's decision to support legislation that overturned a 1985 Supreme Court judgment to grant alimony to a Muslim woman, seen by many as capitulation to Muslim orthodoxy in an election year; and the rise of the BJP and its call to destroy the Babri mosque in Ayodhya. The dispute in Kashmir and several bloody Hindu-Muslim flare-ups in the last two decades have further divided people along religious lines.

Today, both the Hindus and the country's 170 million Muslims, the largest minority group, are courted energetically by political parties. "Religion is part and parcel of Indian political life," says Sumit Ganguly, a professor of political science at Indiana University. He says the BJP is the principal offender with its Hindutva agenda. But Congress is not free of culpability either, he argues. Regional actors such as Maharashtra's

Shiv Sena further exploit religion to court voters. Ganguly says lack of leadership in upper echelons of the Muslim community exacerbates the problem.

Elections and Voting

India

The Indian electorate has turned the standard law of political participation on its head.

While it is clear that religion plays a significant role, it is less clear how it translates into voting behavior. "Politically speaking, there is no single unified Muslim community in India," writes Yogendra Yadav (BBC), a political scientist who designed and coordinated the National Election Studies, the largest series of academic surveys of the Indian electorate, from 1996 to 2004. He argues that "Muslims are fragmented along the lines of religion, sect, caste, and community." Ganguly says economic issues are also intertwined with issues of religion and caste. Indian Muslims, who experience high poverty rates, voted for Congress for decades because of its secular platform and promised reforms. Unlike most minorities in most democracies around the world, Indian Muslims, Yadav says, have not voted for Muslim parties. Nor do they vote en bloc, "like, say, the black vote in the United States for the Democratic Party or the UK's ethnic minorities who largely vote for the Labor Party," he says.

Democratic Politics and Economic Reform

The Indian electorate has turned the standard law of political participation on its head, say experts. In India, the lower castes vote more than the upper castes, and the poor vote as much or more often than the rich. Similarly, the illiterate cast ballots more often than the educated, and rural voters more than urban populations. India's universal suffrage long preceded transition to a modern industrialized economy, Ashutosh Varshney, a political science professor at the University of Michigan, wrote in *Foreign Affairs* in 2007. And in this low-income democracy, these large numbers of voters, most concerned with their basic needs and livelihoods, have made economic issues an important part of the debate.

The government's performance on economic issues, especially reform, since India moved toward economic liberalization in 1991, has become

important to electoral politics. Varshney argues that "the economic reforms undertaken thus far have not been those that would directly affect the lives of India's poor masses, and this has fed their resentment against the reforms." As this Backgrounder points out, despite India's 7.5 percent average annual growth rate since 1991, there is increasing rural-urban, sector-based, and income inequalities, and benefits from growth have failed to trickle down to significant segments of the population. Varshney says "political leaders will continue to find it extremely difficult to stake their political fortunes on economic reforms that are expected to cause substantial short-term dislocations and are likely to produce rewards only in the long term."

Voters Seek Accountability

High levels of corruption and poor governance have led to immense civil society mobilization seeking greater accountability from political candidates and reform of the electoral process. In 2004 general elections, candidates were required to disclose their assets and criminal records for the first time under new rules pushed for by ordinary citizens. In the 2004 election, the disclosures seemed to have little impact on the increasing criminalization of politics: 128 of the 543 winners had faced criminal charges (*Newsweek*), including eighty-four cases of murder, seventeen cases of robbery, and twenty-eight cases of theft and extortion. Ahead of the 2009 elections, a nationwide campaign, led by more than a thousand NGOs and citizen groups working on electoral reforms, sought more transparency. Primary among their demands were barring candidates with criminal charges, the voters' right to reject all the candidates through a "none of the above" option on the ballot paper, and greater transparency and regulation of funding of political parties.

3.3 ROLE OF ELECTIONS IN DEMOCRACY

Nowadays, elections have emerged as an instrument of choice all over the democratic world. Elections serve as the basic mechanism for both electing and replacing ruling elites and for providing a regular and systematic succession in government. They help to determine how a country is governed and at the same time select who will exercise state

power. Elections are also the principal mechanisms by which citizens hold governments accountable, both retrospectively for their policies and more generally for the manner in which they govern. Elections reinforce party activities and intensify political awareness of the people. They educate voters and grant legitimacy to government. Although elections are considered as one of the core institutions in democratic polities, their misuse is not uncommon. Elections produce different outcomes in different systems of government. Leaders of all kinds, from military dictators to civilian autocrats, recognise the power and importance of elections in obtaining legitimacy to govern. Military or civilian leaders willing to run the country through undemocratic means, use elections as a tool for their continuation in power. These leaders make major efforts to manipulate elections. However, in spite of all the shortcomings and inconsistencies of an electoral system, elections can decide important matters in any polity. Only elections establish that legitimate political power flows from below. Elections, then, are essential for democracy, but only when they are free and fair and devoid of irregularities and malpractices. Electoral malpractices not only negate the voting right of the people but also hamper the effort to institutionalise democracy. Electoral corruption is a major type of political corruption. It thrives in a society in which the degree of political and administrative morality is low. The necessity of a transparent electoral system is one of the most important prerequisites for present day democratic practice in both developed and developing countries. Electoral corruption negatively influences the consolidation of democracy. Governments, claiming to be democratic, manipulate elections to cling to power. Electoral malpractices are the main source of misunderstanding between the ruling and opposition parties in many states and have often led to political crisis. In India, Jammu and Kashmir is the classic example in this regard.

3.4 ELECTION MACHINERY

Democratic practices are sustained and strengthened through elections. The authority vested with the conduct of elections should, therefore, be competent, effective, independent and impartial. The makers of the constitution of India had given the country an unified authority, Election

Commission (EC), independent of the central and state governments, for organising elections to the Union and state legislatures. The powers of the EC are essentially administrative and marginally adjudicative and legislative. Its triple powers have so far been exercised without ever being objected to by the judiciary. It was initially envisaged to be a single member Commission. The EC was enlarged in October 1993 with the appointment of two ECs (Election Commissioners). The President appoints the CEC (Chief Election Commissioner) and ECs. The Tarkunde Committee in 1975 and the Goswami Committee in 1991 suggested that the President should make appointment to the EC on the advice of a Committee comprising the leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Prime Minister, and the Chief Justice of India.

In the first three decades after independence, EC's role was peripheral because there was little malpractice and violence. Towards the end of eighties, Mandal and Mandir issues emerged on the political scene and the politics of consensus collapsed. Politicisation on caste and communal lines took the centre-stage. Electoral process was vitiated and the violence, rigging, intimidation of voters and misuse of governmental machinery became common. The situation called for prompt reforms in the electoral process. However, despite expression of serious concern by politicians of all hues, no substantial reform was effected. The EC had no option but to resort to the use of its constitutional and legal powers in the interest of free, fair and peaceful election. It has fought many battles in the apex courts of the country against forces inimical to the healthy democratic development. The EC unhesitatingly ordered repolls at polling stations and whole of constituencies if the original poll was vitiated. Elections were countermanded because of booth capturing, rigging and violence on a massive scale, in several constituencies over the years. The model code of conduct is being strictly enforced by the EC. The election law is also being implemented effectively for disciplining the candidates and parties. The effective enforcement of election law and model code of conduct by the EC had salutary effects in the conduct of elections since 1990s. The credit for improving the functioning of election machinery in the country is mainly attributed to T.N. Seshan, former CEC.

3.5 ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND PROCESS

Elections are part of a larger political process, which includes nominations, campaigning, and the actual voting. In brief, all those means whereby a person becomes a member of an elected assembly can be termed as the electoral process. W.J. Mackenzie has laid down four conditions for free and fair election, namely, an independent judiciary to interpret electoral law; an honest competent, non-partisan administration to conduct elections; a developed system of political parties, well enough organised to put their policies, and teams of candidates before the electors as alternatives between which to choose; and a general acceptance throughout the political community of certain rules of the game, which regulate the struggle for power. No developing countries can claim to meet these conditions fully. However, India comes closest to meeting them in comparison to others. It can rightly boast of an independent judiciary and a non-partisan election administration. Although India cannot claim to have a developed system of political parties, there is a general acceptance of certain rules of the game, which has gained deeper roots with time. Elections have acquired a central place in the Indian political system. The campaigns are marked with intense political debates, symbolic processions and increasing use of electronic technology by major political parties. Visual symbols acquire greater importance in India due to widespread illiteracy. Voters identify the candidate with the help of the symbols allotted to them. Issues in form of slogans become critical at times like garibi hatao (remove poverty) in 1971, loktantra bachao (save democracy) in 1977, stable government in 1980, corruption in terms of Bofors scandal in 1989, mandal-mandir controversy in 1991. Argument over ideology or policy issues are debated during campaigns as all parties make almost similar promises to eradicate poverty and unemployment, combat corruption, preserve national unity, etc. Despite poverty and illiteracy the people have displayed maturity of judgement through their native intelligence and common sense in choosing, and also changing the government according to their choice.

3.6 ELECTION IN INDIA: AN EXERCISE ON MASSIVE SCALE

Elections are the great public ceremonies of Indian life. In India, the elections are massive spectacles mobilising millions of people into the political process. They are, thus, not only great festivals providing entertainment and excitement for virtually the entire population but have also acquired what Albinski and Pettit have termed as "a sacramental or commemorative aspect" and has become "a conspicuous symbol of nationhood and social purpose." In the words of Morris Jones and Biplab Das Gupta, "Elections in India provide the occasion for the widest degree of popular participation; they constitute the most important single arena for genuine competition between political groups; they are the principal agency through which recruitment to a significant part of the political elite is affected." The elections tend to be complex events in India since they involve individual and collective decisions and directly affect the total political and social process. Unlike most of the new states in the developing countries, elections in India have been central, not peripheral to the system.

3.7 VOTING PATTERN

The General Election is considered as a sacred process that not only ratifies the principle of democracy generally but it strengthens the pillars of Indian democracy as well. The voting pattern shows that the percentage of female voters who cast their votes has significantly increased from 46.63 per cent in the third General Election to 55.64 per cent in 1999 election. A look at the results of the last five General Elections reveals that there is a decline in the performance of the national parties taken together both in terms of total number of seats won as well as their vote share. Regional parties gained at the cost of national parties during this period. This is one of the factors that have contributed to federal coalition governments in the recent past. All the regional parties put together could get only 27 seats in 1989 elections. They improved their tally to 51 in 1991 and 129 in 1996. But there was a decline in seat share to 101 in 1998 and subsequently an increase 158 in 1999. There

was a corresponding increase in their vote share also. In 1989 their vote share was 9.28 per cent of the total valid votes polled. But it increased 26.93 per cent in the 1999 polls. National Parties always got a higher percentage of seats compared to their vote share. Regional parties and independents were the losers who could get lesser percentage of seats compared to their vote share. Elections are political processes, which provide a link between the society and the polity and between the traditional social systems and evolving political structures. Therefore, the elections must be analysed within the context of the total political and social system. Elections perform different roles in different political systems. They may contribute to political development in some, to political decay in others. They may sometimes be used as veiled disguises for authoritarianism. In established democracies, there are institutional procedures for system maintenance and also the instruments for support building, interest aggregation, peaceful and orderly transfer of power, recruitment and training of leaders, and above all for an increasing democratisation of the political system. Thus, the elections are devices for legitimacy, identification, integration, communication, political education, participation, socialisation, mobilisation, conflict resolution, political choice, and political control. Elections induct an element of accountability into a political system and make it possible for the citizens to exercise a genuine and meaningful degree of political choice and control. This, in turn, makes the system itself a democratic and effective instrument of governance.

3.8 DETERMINANTS OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

Election studies show that a combination of factors determines the electoral behaviour. These factors include mainly religion, language, region, caste, tribe, etc. In Punjab the religious, linguistic and regional factors have been used by the Akali Dal to garner votes. The regional and linguistic factors were used to mobilise votes in Tamil Nadu by the DMK, AIADMK, in Andhra Pradesh by the in Telugu Desam, in Assam by AGP. With increased democratisation and politicisation, the political parties have tried to exploit the caste factor for election purpose, which in

turn enables elite group of castes to get inducted into the political process. In fact, caste is the most commonly used factor of mobilisatiom. It does, however, not mean that all the castes or even an entire caste becomes politicised or mobilised to influence the political system. The caste associations in India began much before independence as agents of Sanskritisation seeking to secure educational, service and other facilities to raise the status of their caste in social hierarchy. But their post-independence role has become much more important and complicated since now they combine the roles of pressure groups in economic and political field as well. The caste associations have made people conscious of their rights and privileges. Their most important contribution lies in making the illiterate masses participate effectively in politics. Through this process, politicisation of caste has reached a stage where not only is the caste regarded as one of the main issues for deciding in favour of a candidate by the voters but caste is also one of the most important variables in the distribution of election tickets and formation of ministries. Thus, the caste connections of leaders, command over their caste men and the ability to form coalitions of castes for the purpose of political gains came to play significant roles. With the introduction of universal adult franchise, the dalits and other backward castes became conscious of their potential power due to their sheer numerical size. Caste solidarity has acquired tremendous importance. People tend to vote either for a party with which their caste or sub-caste is identified, or for a respected member of their caste, irrespective of his/her party affiliation. What Paul Brass had observed in 1965 in the context of state election is now relevant in the context of national election; "The role of caste in elections is easily the most discussed aspect of contemporary Indian political behaviour." The interaction between caste and electoral politics has resulted in traditionalisation of politics, on the one hand, and politicisation of caste, on the other. According to Rajni Kothari, "The alleged casteism in politics is thus no more and no less than politicisation of caste. By drawing the caste system into its web of organisation, politics finds material for its articulation and moulds it into its own design. In making politics their sphere of activity, caste and kin groups, on the other hand, get a chance to assert their identity and to strive for

positions." In the democratic process politics has penetrated into the remote villages of India. Political consciousness and participation have increased among all segments of the society awakening them to the power of their votes in determining the fate of political leaders. Thus, at times electoral process has been the route to social mobility as in the case of Yadavs in UP and Bihar. Awakened to its political weight by force of numbers, the community has dominated the political scene in the states since mid 1980s. The logic of electoral politics has also compelled the political parties to broaden their social or caste base. Thus, anti-high caste parties like the DMK and BSP (Bahujan Samaj Party) had to co-opt the higher castes to make their regional identity more inclusive, while the upper castes and urban parties like the BJP have to reach out to the middle and lower castes and rural periphery to challenge the Congress dominance. The acceptance of universal adult franchise and extension of political power to the common man by the Indian constitution, irrespective of caste, community and sex was a revolutionary step. There have been changes of government both at the Centre and in the states several times through the election process. By political participation one may refer to those legal activities by citizens which are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and policy decisions. The robustness of democratic institutions depends on three interrelated phenomenons. First, there must exist a cadre of political activists who are committed to democratic principles and compete among themselves for capturing political power within the confines of democratic rules of the game. Second, there must be available an institutional structure that facilitates articulation of divergent public policies and promotes smooth transformation of inputs into appropriate systemic outputs. And lastly, there must exist a generalised commitment to democratic values and norms on the part of the general public. The most fundamental reality of the Indian society is the overwhelming poverty. A vast multitude of Indians is unemployed and underemployed. The rate of literacy is very low. The illiteracy among the dalits and the poor is almost total. It is this vast ocean of humanity living in the rural India, which constitutes the basic reality of India. It is this majority of population living below and just above the poverty line

which has the major share of votes in the Indian elections. Poor, illiterate, superstitious with a sense of belonging only to the caste or religion, and with no access to proper communication, except occasionally the government run broadcasting system, this enormous human wave is being driven to the polling station, every now and then to cast its sovereign will. It is mainly on this section of the population that the outcome of the election really depends. The election thus becomes an occasion when their consent is manipulated not to promote their interest but to sustain a political system that expects them to surrender their sovereign right. This is clearly reflected in the class nature of the electoral slogans as well as the performance of the parties once they come into power. The 'socialistic pattern' benefited the private sector more; and nationalisation of banks really meant more capital becoming available to the big business houses. The dominant social groups often infringe upon the rights of the dalits, lower backwards and other disadvantaged groups. The most common method adopted is a simple one of voting by proxy; the labourers leave the choice to the landowner, who advises and persuades them not to go to the booth as their votes would be cast. In case they are undecided and look like voting for someone other than the choice of the landowner, they are prevented from voting. Such practice has been going on almost since the beginning of election in India, but more openly and on a larger scale since the sixties, with the emergence of the rural elite of landlords and kulaks as an influential lobby at the state politics.

The political parties and their leaders too all along have adopted a policy of non-interference in the rural sector so as not to annoy the land owning classes, without whose help and feudal vote banks, a candidate could not hope to win. By and large, this forms the basis of the voting pattern in the rural India. The feudal patron-client relations have not yet been replaced, though there is a trend towards their erosion in certain parts of the country. This manifests in the social life as a close nexus between class, caste and citizenship and strengthens the operation of vote banks and vote contractors in the Indian electoral politics. Role of caste and religion are very important in this context.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. Critically examine the role of election in democracy and evaluate the role of Election Commission of India in conducting free and fair poll.

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2. What are the important determinants of electoral behaviour in India? Critically discuss the role of caste as a determinant of voting behaviour.

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3.9   CASTE AS A DETERMINANT OF ELECTORAL BEHAVIOUR

Caste has always played a decisive role in the electoral politics in India. While the higher caste Brahmins, Bhumihars, Rajputs have dominated the politics of several parts of India, the middle castes like Jats, Marathas, Yadvads, Reddies, Kammas, Vokkaliggas, etc., emerged powerful caste groups as a result of land reforms and Green Revolution. In the recent past even dalits, especially in North India have become an important and decisive caste group. The rise of the Bahujan Samaj Party in Uttar Pradesh is the most important example of increasing role of dalits. The caste groups, infact, have come to known as the "vote banks" of political parties in the light of their support to the parties. Caste loyalties are to be exploited by the respective caste elites for their class interests. At the time of elections when it becomes more a question of number game, the caste groups seek to mobilise the support of not merely their own caste members but also those of others. Caste plays its role both in both ways --- in the unorganised way and in the form of caste association caste. According to some scholars caste plays a secular

role in Indian democracy. It has absorbed and synthesised some of the new democratic values, and has lost its ritual significance. In the democratic process caste affects the democracy and gets itself affected in turn. Rudolph and Rudolph say that there are three types of mobilisation on the basis of caste: vertical, horizontal and differential. Vertical mobilisation is the marshalling of the political support by traditional notables in local societies that are organised and integrated by rank, mutual dependence and the legitimacy of traditional authority. Horizontal mobilisation involves the marshalling of political support by class or community leaders and their specialised organisations. Differential mobilisation involves the marshalling of direct or indirect political support by political parties and other integrative structures from viable but internally differentiated communities through parallel appeals to ideology, sentiment and interest. Even the communists in India used caste idioms for mobilising the class of agricultural labourers in Andhra Pradesh, on the ground of caste-class correspondence. The functioning of the various political parties proves the vital role of the caste. In the selection of the candidates, formulation of campaign strategies and mobilisation of votes on the basis of caste show that political parties show the significance of caste in political mobilisation. The coming together of various middle and lower castes on the basis of the common interest of the peasantry class has helped the communist to further consolidate themselves.

3.10 DRAWBACKS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The working of Indian electoral system has witnessed several drawbacks and malpractices. The discrepancy between the votes cast for a party and the seats won in parliament, the multiplicity of political parties, personality cult in party system, exploitation of caste and communal loyalties, role of muscle and money power, misuse of governmental machinery, fraudulent practices like booth-capturing, intimidation and impersonation of voters are important drawbacks of Indian electoral system. Election malpractices range from the physical capturing of booths to the organisation of youth wings of parties or goon squads who

could target and terrorise particular communities before the poll to prevent them from voting. Even the poll staff is either bribed into active connivance or intimidated into passive acquiescence. The menace of booth capturing has been in vogue since the second general election of 1957, especially in Bihar. The phenomenon gradually spread over the country in different forms and dimensions. The rising need for the muscle power in elections necessitated more input of money too. Earlier voters used to be bribed individually, then it was found to be more convenient to buy musclemen who could ensure victory by capturing booth or intimidating voters rather than buying individual voters. This has led to progressive criminalisation of politics and the emergence of politician-underworld nexus. Gradually, the criminals themselves have started contesting elections instead of helping others. At times, the politicians found it necessary to politicise the bureaucracy. This can be gauged from the scale on which most of the high officials are changed with the change of a government. This is done to condition the bureaucracy to act in favour of the ruling party during elections. The official machinery is used to collect information on political rivals. The official machinery come handy in hiring crowds, intimidating targeted sections of voters, creating local tensions, conditioning staff for poll duties, enrolling additional voters or removing certain names from there, etc. They also, in turn, allow the bureaucracy to make money so that they remain vulnerable. In the process significant sections of bureaucracy get incorporated into the politician-underworld-bureaucracy nexus. In its efforts to cleanse the electoral process, the EC has put a ban on transfers and promotions after the elections are announced. Although significant, the measure is of limited value as the final dispositions of the bureaucracy are usually made much in advance. Other practices of misuse have also been banned under model code of conduct that has come to be more strictly enforced since T.N. Seshan days. Electioneering tends to be an expensive exercise. In a vast country like India this is more so because the electoral constituency is usually very large both in terms of size and population. With mass illiteracy, a candidate is required to make extensive personal contacts with the voters, which involve enormous expenditure. One important reason for the elections to have

become so expensive in our times is the growing distance of political parties from the people. Transport, publicity and maintaining the campaigners involve enormous amount. The desire to win an election at any cost and the increasing reliance on the muscle power in elections have necessitated unbelievably enormous expenditures collected through dubious means, by the political parties and their candidates.

The gap between expenses incurred in an election and legally permitted limit on expenses is also increasing with time. Ceilings on campaign expenses being low, black money in form of donations to election fund of political parties or powerful leaders have come to be an established fact. It is estimated that 90 per cent of all election funds comes from the big business houses in expectation of special favours or patronage. This not only eliminates men and women of ability and integrity from electoral contest for lack of financial support but also promotes criminalisation of politics.

3.11 ELECTORAL REFORMS

The need of electoral reforms was felt quite early in India. The various committees and commissions appointed by the parliament, government and opposition parties have made attempts in this regard. First such major effort for electoral reforms was made in 1971, when a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Amendments to Election Law was appointed under the chairmanship of Jagannath Rao, which submitted its report in 1972. In 1974, Jayaprakash Narayan as president of the Citizens for Democracy (CFD) set up a committee under the chairmanship of Justice V.M. Tarkunde for electoral reforms. This committee popularly known as Tarkunde committee was asked to suggest measures to combat among other things the various forms of corrupt practice like the use of money and muscle power, misuse of official machinery and the disparity between the votes polled and the number of seats won, etc. Tarkunde committee submitted its report in February 1975. On the basis of this report, J.P. launched the people's movement against corruption and for electoral reforms and presented the People's Charter to the presiding officers of both Houses of Parliament on March 6, 1975. Urging the Parliament and assemblies to be more responsive to popular aspirations,

the charter demanded that the unanimous recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms be implemented without delay. The Janata Party after assuming power in 1977 constituted a cabinet sub-committee on electoral reforms headed by the then Union Home Minister Charan Singh. At the same time, the CEC S.L. Shakdhar made significant suggestions on various issues ranging from election expenses to booth capturing. An agreement to reduce voting age from 21 to 18 years was also reached. But the Janata Party government fell before it could initiate any electoral reform. The National Front government under V.P. Singh in January 1990 formed another committee on electoral reforms headed by the then Law Minister Dinesh Goswami. The committee did laudable and prompt work and submitted its report in May 1990. On the basis of the proposals therein, the government introduced four bills in the Parliament to give effect to its recommendations. But this government also fell before these bills could be enacted. The Narasimha Rao government convened a special session of the Parliament to get two bills; the Constitution Eighty- Third Amendment Bill 1994 and the Representation of the People Second Amendment Bill, 1994, passed. However, the bills were withdrawn before introduction. The United Front coalition government succeeded in getting the Representation of the People Second Amendment Act enacted in July 1996. The important provisions of the act are as follows: 1) Candidates will not be allowed to contest more than two seats at a time. 10 2) Non-serious candidates will be deterred from contesting parliamentary and assembly elections through a ten-fold increase in the security deposit from Rs. 500 to Rs. 5000. 3) Elections will not be countermanded because of the death of a candidate. In the case of a candidate of a recognised political party, the party will have the authority to nominate a replacement within seven days. No such replacement will be allowed in the case of an independent. 4) The campaign period is reduced from 21 days to 14 days. The reforms though minimal to begin with can pave the way for more through and comprehensive overhauling of the electoral machinery and process. The following measures can be suggested for electoral reform.

3.11.1 Change in the Electoral System

An electoral system must be truly representative. However, there is a wide gap between the votes polled and seats won in present system where no single party has ever won a majority of votes in any Lok Sabha election but has been able to capture absolute and even two third majority several times. Over the years, the system has come under severe criticism. Opinions have been expressed to change it to a system of proportional representation. L.K. Advani and C.P. Bhambhri advocated proportional representation way back in 1970; the Tarkunde committee recommended a variant of the German system in 1975. Former CECs S.L. Shakdhar and L.P. Singh have argued for a combined system of voting in which 50 per cent of the seats in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies would be filled by direct voting and the remaining on the basis of proportional representation. Tarkunde committee had also suggested combining the present Indian system with a German list system.

3.11.2 Restructuring the Election Commission

One of the basic proposals of those advocating electoral reforms since long had been that of making Election Commission a multi-member body. The Tarkunde and Goswami committees advocated three members EC. Most of the CECs have opposed it on the ground that quick decisions are sometimes required in electoral matters, which may be impeded by multi-member commission. With the 1993 Constitution Amendment Act and the 1995 Supreme Court judgement, multi-member commission has become an accomplished fact. However, the manner in which the ECs are appointed and the provision of majority decision under Art. 324A raise the suspicion that the executive may appoint as many ECs as would constitute a majority and would thus control the commission's decision. A statutory requirement of consulting the Chief Justice of India and the leader of the opposition prior to the appointment of the CEC and ECs can ensure a non-partisan character of the EC. A ban on all post-retirement appointments by the government will eliminate the

tendency and possibility of the CEC and ECs pleasing the government by going out of way.

3.11.3 Eradicating the Evil Influences of Money and Muscle Power

To check the increasing influence and vulgar show of money, law should fix reasonable ceiling on election expenses and strict compliance of such law should be enforced as was done during T.N. Sheshan's tenure as the CEC. State funding of elections, which has been recommended by all the committees on electoral reforms, should be introduced to curb the menace of money in elections. To prevent growing criminalisation and violence there is an urgent need to implement the EC's proposal of keeping out persons with proven criminal records from electoral context. Model code of conduct should be enforced strictly. Gradually, ways and means must be found to implement the voters' right to recall as well as the right to reject candidates. The electoral process cannot be cleansed merely by legal measures. The electoral process is influenced and determined by the political culture of the political system, which cannot be reformed by legislative acts. The enlightened citizens who are prepared to uphold political norms and punish those who violates them can be an effective instrument for clean electoral politics. Bolstering the intermediary political and civic institutions, whose collapse has accelerated electoral malpractices, can also be effective in removing the ills of electoral process. However, the strong political will and people's initiative is needed to get rid the electoral of from several defects from which it is suffering.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What are electoral reforms? Discuss the various efforts made for electoral reforms.

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2. Explain the increasing role of money and muscle power in election. What measures can be adopted to curb its menace?

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3.12 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we have discussed the role of election in ensuring people's participation in the political system and strengthening democracy. Election can also weaken democracy, if polls are not free and fair. Therefore, our constitution makers have provided for impartial election machinery, free from executive control to conduct elections for Union and State legislatures and President and Vice-President. Elections in India are an exercise on massive scale involving millions of voters, poll personnel, security men etc. Caste, community, religion, language, region, etc., are the main determinants of electoral behaviour. However, caste plays the most dominant role in election. Different political parties nominate candidates on the basis of caste composition of the concerned constituency and voters are mobilised on the basis of caste. Even after election caste is given due consideration in ministry formation. Thus, Indian election cannot be understood without properly understanding the role of caste in election. Elections in India have been marred by the evil influences of money and muscle power. This has led to criminalisation of electoral politics. Earlier criminals used to lend outside support but now they themselves have entered in the electoral arena and have become not only members of the house but even have become ministers. Thus we have a new phenomena in Indian politics 'tainted ministers.' To check the rot, several committees and commissions have been appointed for electoral reforms. These committees have suggested several measures; some of them have been adopted also. But still a lot has to be done to stem the rot. However, law alone cannot clean the electoral system. Vigilant public opinion is also required. People have to be sensitised about the malaise of the electoral process. Only then, free and fair poll can be conducted, which will lead to strengthening of democracy in India.

3.13 KEY WORDS

Electoral reforms: Elections in India, the world's second-most populous country, evoke descriptions like 'spectacle' or 'carnival,' in part due to the overwhelming numbers that participate in the process. In this country of over a billion people, 714 million voters will decide who rules the world's largest democracy for the next five years.

3.14 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Critically examine the role of election in democracy and evaluate the role of Election Commission of India in conducting free and fair poll.

2. What are the important determinants of electoral behaviour in India? Critically discuss the role of caste as a determinant of voting behaviour.

3. What are electoral reforms? Discuss the various efforts made for electoral reforms.

4. Explain the increasing role of money and muscle power in election. What measures can be adopted to curb its menace?

5. Explain the politician-underworld-bureaucracy nexus and its impact on the electoral process in India.

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3.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 3.3
2. See Section 3.8

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 3.11
2. See Sub Section 3.11.3

UNIT 4: WEST BENGAL UNDER LEFT RULE

STRUCTURE

4.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know the West Bengal under Left rule
- To discuss the Policies towards state
- To know about UF Regime and Its Limitations

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Left Front (□ □ □ □ □ □ □, transliterated bamfront) is an alliance of political parties in the Indian state of West Bengal. It was formed in January 1977, the founding parties being the Communist Party of India (Marxist), All India Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Marxist Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Biplabi Bangla Congress. Other parties joined in later years, most notably the Communist Party of India.

The Left Front ruled the state for seven consecutive terms 1977–2011, five with Jyoti Basu as Chief Minister and two under Buddhadev Bhattacharya. The CPI(M) is the dominant force in the alliance. In the 2011 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front failed to

gain a majority of seats and left office. As of 2016 Biman Bose is the Chairman of the West Bengal Left Front Committee.

4.2   WEST BENGAL UNDER LEFT RULE

Background

The Left Front has its roots in various past platforms of collaboration of West Bengal left parties and anti-Indian National Congress forces. Such examples were the United Left Front, the People's United Left Front and the United Front that governed West Bengal 1967–1971. However, ahead of the March 1977 Lok Sabha election the left parties under the leadership of CPI(M) decided to form an alliance just amongst themselves, based on past negative experiences in collaboration with centrist anti-Congress forces. The Left Front was set up as the repressive climate of the Emergency was relaxed in January 1977. The six founding parties of the Left Front, i.e. the CPI(M), the All India Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Marxist Forward Bloc, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India and the Biplabi Bangla Congress, articulated a common programme. The Left Front contested the Lok Sabha election in an electoral understanding together with the Janata Party.

The Workers Party of India applied for inclusion into the Left Front, but was denied entry.

1977 elections

Left-Janata alliance in Lok Sabha election

In the 1977 Lok Sabha election the Left Front contested 26 out of the 42 West Bengal Lok Sabha constituencies; CPI(M) fielded candidates for 20 seats, RSP 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. CPI(M) won 17 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 3 seats. The combined Left Front vote in West Bengal reached 5,049,077 votes (33.4% of the votes cast in the state).

Left victory in assembly polls

Ahead of the subsequent June 1977 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections seat-sharing talks between the Left Front and the Janata Party

broke down. The Left Front had offered the Janata Party 56% of the seats and the post as Chief Minister to JP leader Prafulla Chandra Sen, but JP insisted on 70% of the seats. The Left Front thus opted to contest the elections on its own. It issued a 36-point manifesto ahead of the polls. The Left Front manifesto has similarities with the past 32-point United Front manifesto.

The seat-sharing within the Left Front was based on the 'Promode Formula', named after the CPI(M) State Committee Secretary Promode Dasgupta.[9] Under the Promode Formula the party with the highest share of votes in a constituency would continue to field candidates there, under its own election symbol and manifesto.

CPI(M) contested 224 seats, AIFB 36, RSP 23, MFB 3, RCPI 4 and BBC 2. There was also a Left Front-supported independent candidate in the Chakdaha seat.

The Left Front won the election, winning 231 out of the 294 seats. CPI(M) won 178 seats, AIFB 25, RSP 20, MFB 3, RCPI 3 and 1 independent. AIFB and RSP won significant chunks of seats in northern Bengal. The combined Left Front vote was 6,568,999 votes (45.8% of the votes cast in the state). The electoral result came as a surprise to the Left Front itself, as it had offered 52% of the seats in the pre-electoral seat sharing talks with the Janata Party.

First Left Front government

Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal 1977–2000

On 21 June 1977 the Left Front formed a government with Jyoti Basu as its Chief Minister. The first cabinet meeting of the Left Front government orders the release of political prisoners

The Socialist Party joined the Left Front after the 1977 elections. Prior to the arrival of the Left Front government, the political environment of West Bengal was chaotic, and the new cabinet struggled to establish order. The first years of governance was shaky, as the CPI(M) struggled with the notion of managing a communist government within a capitalist framework. Minor coalition partners expressed concern over inviting multinational corporations to invest in West Bengal.

Operation Barga and panchayat polls

In the initial phase of Left Front governance, two key priorities were land reform and decentralisation of administration. On 29 September 1977 the West Bengal Land (Amendment) Bill was passed. Through Operation Barga, in which share-croppers were given inheritable rights on lands they tilled, 1.1 million acres of land was distributed amongst 1.4 million share-croppers. On 4 June 1978 three-tier panchayat local bodies were elected across the state, elections in which the Left Front won a landslide victory. Some 800,000 acres of land were distributed to 1.5 million heads of households between 1978 and 1982. The Left Front government was also credited with coping with the refugee situation created by the Bangladesh Liberation War and severe floods.

Seeing distribution of central government funds as unjust and politicized, the Left Front government began measures to pressure the central government to change its approach towards the state governments. These movements eventually resulted in the Sarkaria Commission.

1980 Lok Sabha election

Ahead of the 1980 Lok Sabha election the Left Front and the Communist Party of India entered into a seat-sharing agreement. CPI(M) contested 31 seats, RSP 4 seats, AIFB 4 seats and CPI 3 seats. CPI(M) won 28 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 4 seats. The combined Left

Front-CPI vote in West Bengal reached 11,086,354 votes (52.7% of the votes cast in the state).

On 27 May 1980 the Left Front cancelled the past Code of Conduct for state government employees, which had limited the right to strike.

Second Left Front government

Three new members

In 1982 the Left Front acquired three new members, CPI joined the Left Front ahead of the 1982 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections and the Socialist Party was split into the Democratic Socialist Party (Prabodh Chandra) and the West Bengal Socialist Party (both DSP and WBSP became Left Front member parties). Some of the older, smaller Left Front constituents were uncomfortable with the expansion of the alliance, claiming that CPI(M) was diluting it politically. There were also disagreements on distribution of ministerial portfolios after the expansion of the alliance.

1982 assembly election

CPI(M) contested 209 seats in the assembly election, CPI 12 seats, AIFB 34 seats and RSP 23 seats. 16 candidates were fielded by the remainder of Left Front partners (RCPI, WBSP, DSP, BBC, MFB) and contested as independents.

The Left Front won 238 out of 294 seats in the election.[3] CPI(M) won 174 seats, CPI 7 seats, AIFB 28 seats, RSP 19 seats, WBSP 4 seats, DSP 2 seats, RCPI 2 seats, MFB 2 seats. The combined Left Front vote was 11,869,003 votes (52.7% of the votes cast in the state). The incumbent Food Minister, the RCPI leader Sudhindranath Kumar, lost his seat. Kumar was proposed as a candidate for a Rajya Sabha seat on behalf of the Left Front in 1984, but that move did not go down well with RSP and AIFB.

Jyoti Basu and five cabinet minister were sworn in on 27 May 1982. Another 15 cabinet ministers and 22 Ministers of State were sworn in on 2 June 1982.

1984 Lok Sabha election

In the 1984 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 31 seats, RSP 4 seats, AIFB 4 seats and CPI 3 seats. CPI(M) won 18 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 2 seats and RSP 3 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal reached 12,296,816 votes (47.6% of the votes cast in the state).

Calcutta Municipal Corporation polls

On 30 June 1985, the first Calcutta Municipal Corporations elections were held under the Left Front rule, an election that the alliance won.
Third Left Front government

1987 assembly election

In the 1987 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front increased its share of seats to 251. CPI(M) had contested 213 seats, CPI 12 seats, AIFB 34 seats and RSP 23 seats. 12 candidates were fielded by smaller Left Front partners on independent tickets.
CPI(M) won 187 seats, CPI 11 seats, AIFB 26 seats, 18 seats, WBSP 4 seats, MFB 2 seats, DSP 2 seats and RCPI 1 seat. The Left Front vote stood at 13,924,806 (53%).

1989 Lok Sabha election

In the 1989 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 31 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. In Calcutta Northwest the Left Front supported a Janata Dal candidates who failed to get elected. CPI(M) won 27 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 4 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal, including the votes for the JD candidate, reached 16,284,415 votes (50.6% of the votes cast in the state).

Fourth Left Front government

1991 assembly election

In the 1991 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front won 244 seats.[3][28] CPI(M) had fielded 205 candidates (excluding minor parties contesting on CPI(M) tickets), CPI 11, AIFB 34, RSP 23, MFB 2, RCPI 2, DSP 2, WBSP 4 and BBC 1. Several leaders of minor Left Front parties contested on the CPI(M) symbol, such as Kiranmoy Nanda (WBSP), Gouranga Samanta (BBC) and Prabodh Chandra Sinha

(DSP). However, DSP also one candidate with its own symbol in Pingla. Two different RCPI tickets contested Hansan (RCPI (Rasik Bhatt)) and Santipur (Real Communist Party of India) respectively. MFB fielded 1 candidate on an independent ticket and 1 candidate on CPI(M) ticket. The Left Front supported Janata Dal candidates in 8 constituencies, mainly in and around Calcutta, as well as 1 candidate of the All India Gorkha League and 1 candidate of the Communist Revolutionary League of India.

CPI(M) won 182 seats, CPI 6 seats, AIFB 29 seats, RSP 18 seats, WBSP 4, seats, DSP 2 seats, RCPI 1 seat, MFB 2 seats and DSP 1 seat (on its own symbol). One JD candidate won. The combined vote for Left Front and allies stood at 15,090,595 (48.92% of the votes cast in the state).

1991 Lok Sabha election

In the 1991 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 30 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. In Calcutta Northwest and Calcutta Northeast the Left Front supported a Janata Dal candidates who failed to get elected. CPI(M) won 27 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 4 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal, including the votes for the JD candidates, reached 14,955,151 votes (47.1% of the votes cast in the state).

In 1995 the Communist Revolutionary League of India (CRLI) of Ashim Chatterjee joined the Left Front. Chatterjee, a former Naxalite student leader, had unsuccessfully contested the 1991 assembly election as a CPI(M)-supported candidate.

Fifth Left Front government

WBSP-SP merger

Mural in favour of WBSP local body candidate in Kolkata

Ahead of the 1996 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election, WBSP had merged into the Samajwadi Party which became a member of the Left Front.

1996 assembly election

CPI(M) fielded 217 candidates in the assembly election, CPI 12, AIFB 34, RSP 23, RCPI 2 and BBC 1 candidate on an independent ticket. DSP, WBSP and MFB candidates contested on CPI(M) tickets. In 5 seats the Left Front supported JD candidates, mainly in the Calcutta area.

The Left Front won 203 out of 294 seats, the first major electoral setback since its foundation. CPI(M) won 157 seats (including minor parties on its tickets), CPI 6, AFB 21, RSP 18 and BBC 1. The electoral losses were primarily felt in Calcutta and the industrial areas, and nine incumbent Left Front ministers failed to get re-elected. All JD candidates finished in second place and RCPI lost its representation in the assembly. However, in terms of votes the Left Front and the five JD candidates got 18,143,795 votes (49.3%). Jyoti Basu's fifth Left Front government was sworn in, with 48 ministers representing all 13 districts of the state.

United Front era (1996–1999)

In the 1996 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 31 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. In Calcutta Northwest the Left Front supported a Janata Dal candidate who failed to get elected. CPI(M) won 23 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 4 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal, including the votes for the JD candidate, reached 18,011,700 votes (47.8% of the votes cast in the state). In the 1998 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 32 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. The list of candidates was announced at a press conference on 6 January 1998. The Left Front had been able to reach consensus on its candidates well before the other major parties, and subsequently the CPI(M) election campaign came off to an early start.

A mammoth United Front, the national alliance backed by the left at the time, election meeting was held in Calcutta on 31 January 1998 with Jyoti Basu as the main speaker. Basu undertook a tour of all West Bengal districts to campaign for the Left Front candidates.

The CPI(M) candidates included 18 incumbent Lok Sabha MPs, whereas the CPI and RSP fielded all of their incumbent MPs. The Left Front fielded the ex-mayor and 4-term minister Prasanta Sur to contest against Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee for the Calcutta South seat, but Sur failed to defeat Banerjee. The Left Front also fielded Prasanta Chatterjee, the sitting mayor of Calcutta for the Calcutta Northeast seat as well as fielding sitting Howrah mayor Swadesh Chakravarty against the Congress(I) MP Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi. AIFB fielded a new candidate in Barasat, as the Barasat MP Chitta Basu had died.

All in all, CPI(M) won 24 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 2 seats and RSP 4 seats. AIFB lost the Barasat seat to Trinamool Congress. The Left Front vote in West Bengal reached 17,101,211 votes (46% of the votes cast in the state).

Ahead of the 1999 Lok Sabha election, the Left Front released its list of candidates on 30 July 1999; CPI(M) contested 32 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. The Left Front fielded nine new candidates; two sitting CPI(M) MPs were replaced (Ananda Pathak from Darjeeling and Ajoy Mukherjee from Krishnanagar). CPI(M) fielded new faces in five Calcutta constituencies. AIFB fielded a new candidate in Barasat. RSP and CPI retained all their sitting parliamentarians as candidates for re-election.

CPI(M) won 21 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 2 seats and RSP 3 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal reached 16,494,424 votes (46.1% of the votes cast in the state).

CRLI out, WBSP reconstituted

CRLI left the Left Front in 2000 in the wake of the Saifuddin Choudhury's expulsion from CPI(M). In 2000, the WBSP was reconstituted after Amar Singh took over the Samajwadi Party

and Kiranmoy Nanda (Fisheries Minister of Left Front government 1982–2011) broke away.

Panskura by-election

In 2000 a by-election was called for the Panskura Lok Sabha seat as the sitting CPI MP Geeta Mukherjee died. Mukherjee had held the seat since 1980. The by-election, as it occurred just months before the 2001 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election, was attached crucial importance. Jyoti Basu, former Prime Minister V.P. Singh and CPI leader A.B. Bardhan campaigned for the Left Front candidate whilst Mamata Banerjee campaigned for the Trinamool Congress candidate. The defeat of the Left Front candidate (former Rajya Saha MP Gurudas Dasgupta of CPI) by the Trinamool Congress candidate was a major jolt to the alliance. On 27 October 2000 Basu, aged 86, was given permission by the CPI(M) leadership to resign as Chief Minister. Buddhadev Bhattacharya was sworn in as new Chief Minister on 6 November 2000. Sixth Left Front government

2001 assembly election

Left Front mural in Kolkata

CPI(M) election propaganda in Kolkata

In the 2001 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front won 199 out of 294 seats, having received 17,912,669 votes along with its RJD and JD(S) allies (49% of the votes in the state). For the first time since 1977 CPI(M) did not hold an absolute majority of its own in the assembly.

CPI(M) had fielded 210 candidates, CPI 13, AIFB 34, RSP 23, RCPI 2, WBSP 4, DSP 2, MFB 1 and BBC 1. A 38-point Left Front election manifesto was presented in March 2001 at CPI(M) West Bengal headquarters, Muzaffar Bhavan, and was signed by Jyoti Basu (CPI(M)), Sailen Dasgupta (CPI(M)), Buddhadeb Bhattacharya (CPI(M), Anil Biswas (CPI(M)), Ashok Ghosh (AIFB), Debabrata Bandyopadhyay (RSP), Manjukumar Majumdar (CPI), Kiranmoy Nanda (SP), Prabodh Chandra Sinha (DSP), Mihir Byne (RCPI), Pratim Chatterjee (MFB) and Sunil Chaudhuri (BBC). A mass rally was held at Brigade Grounds on 25 March 2001 with participation from various Left Front leaders and with former Prime Minister V.P. Singh as special guest. CPI(M) won 142 seats, CPI 7, AIFB 25, RSP 17, WBSP 4, DSP 2 and BBC 1.

In 2 seats (Bara Bazar and Hirapur) the Left Front had supported candidates of Rashtriya Janata Dal and in 2 seats (Chowringee and Rash Behari Avenue) the alliance had backed candidates from Janata Dal (Secular) . No RJD nor JD(S) candidates were elected. In Hirapur local CPI(M) cadres rebelled against the official RJD candidate and ran a dissident candidate of their own which finished in second place, ahead of the official Left Front-supported RJD candidate. The sixth Left Front government, with 48 ministers, was sworn in of 19 May 2001.

2004 Lok Sabha election

In the 2004 Lok Sabha election, CPI(M) contested 32 seats, RSP 4 seats, CPI 3 seats and AIFB 3 seats. CPI(M) won 26 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats and RSP 3 seats. The Left Front vote in West Bengal reached 18,766,404 votes (50.7% of the votes cast in the state).

Seventh Left Front government

2006 assembly election

CPI(M) supporters during the 2009 election campaign

In the 2006 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front won 234 out of 294 seats and received 19,800,148 votes (including votes for allies, representing 50.2% of the statewide vote). The Left Front had contested 290 seats (210 CPI(M), 34 AIFB, 23 RSP, 13 CPI, 4 WBSP, 2 DSP, 2 MFB, 1 RCPI, 1 BBC). In selecting candidates, the Left Front denied tickets to 64 incumbent legislators (52 from CPI(M), 8 from AIFB, 2 from WBSP, 1 from RSP, 1 from CPI), seeking to rejuvenate the list of candidates.

Out of the 234 seats won by the Left Front, 175 were won by CPI(M) candidates, 8 from CPI, 23 AIFB, 20 RSP, 4 WBSP, 2 MFB and 1 DSP. Most of the incumbent ministers were re-elected, exceptions being Prabodh Chandra Sinha (Parliamentary Affairs, DSP) and Mohammed Amin (Labour, CPI(M)). The Left Front Chief Whip, Rabin Deb, also lost his seat.

In 4 seats the Left Front supported other parties, two each for the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Nationalist Congress Party. One of the RJD candidates was elected.

The Left Front significantly improved its performance in comparison to 2001 in the North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas districts. Only in the Cooch Behar District did the Left Front suffer a reversal of fortunes. Following the 2006 election, Tata Motors announced that it would establish its Tata Nano car factory in Singur. A major land dispute surged. Likewise, a land dispute issue surged over a planned chemical factory in Nandigram. These two conflicts put severe strains on the Left Front 2007–2008. On 8 September 2008 the Left Front and the opposition All India Trinamool Congress reached an agreement on

Singur dispute but in the next month Tata Motors announced that it withdrew from West Bengal.

In 2008 the Left Front won an overwhelming majority of the seats in the Howrah Municipal Corporation; out of a total of 50 seats in the Municipal Corporation CPI(M) won 26, CPI 3, AIFB 2, RCPI 1 and 1 seat for Janata Dal (Secular).

2009 Lok Sabha election

The Left Front suffered a set-back in the 2009 Lok Sabha election.[14] The CPI(M) contested 32 seats, CPI 3 seats, AIFB 3 seats, RSP 4 seats.[63][64] CPI(M) won 9 seats from West Bengal, CPI, AIFB and RSP two seats each.[63] The combined Left Front vote in West Bengal was 18,503,157 votes (43.3% of the votes cast in the state).

Left Front in opposition

2011 assembly election

In the 2011 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front failed to gain a majority of seats and the 34-year streak of continuous state government was broken.

CPI(M) had fielded 210 candidates, CPI 14, AIFB 34, RSP 23, SP 5, DSP 2, RCPI 2, MFB 2 and BBC 1. In one seat Left Front had supported a RJD candidate.

The combined strength of the Left Front in the newly elected assembly stood at 62; CPI(M) managed to win 40 seats, CPI 2, AIFB 11, RSP 7, SP 1 and DSP 1.[66] The vote of Left Front and its allies had been 19,555,844 (41%).

For the first time since 1977, MFB lost the Tarakeswar seat.

Loss of Howrah

In 2013 the Left Front was routed in the elections to the Howrah Municipal Corporation, losing control over the town for the first time in three decades.[62] CPI(M) managed to win solely two out of 50 wards, all other Left Front partners drew blank. The incumbent CPI(M) mayor Mamta Jaiswal lost her seat.[71] On the same day the Left Front lost also lost the local election in Jhargram, winning 1 out of 17 seats.

2014 Lok Sabha election

Ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha election the Samajwadi Party (with whom the WBSP had merged) parted ways with the Left Front.[72] The Samajwadi Party led by Kiranmoy Nanda (for many years the Fisheries Minister in the Left Front cabinets) had demanded that the Left Front allocate Lok Sabha seats to the party, a request that CPI(M) had refused. The Left Front fielded 32 CPI(M) candidates to the Lok Sabha, 4 RSP candidates, 3 CPI candidates and 3 AIFB candidates. 26 out of the 42 candidates were new contestants. Out of the 42 candidates, only 2 CPI(M) candidates were elected. The Left Front vote in West Bengal was 15,287,783 votes (29.9% of the votes cast in the state).

17-party alliance

In October 2014 a broader platform of cooperation between West Bengal left parties emerged, encompassing the ten Left Front parties (CPI(M), CPI, AIFB, RSP, DSP, RCPI, MFB, BBC, Workers Party of India, Bolshevik Party of India) as well as the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist), the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, the Provisional Central Committee, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), the Party of Democratic Socialism, the Communist Party of Bharat and the CRLI. In 2014 the 16 party alliance pledged to commemorate 6 December (the day of the destruction of Babri Masjid) as Communal Harmony Day. As of 2015 Samajwadi Party was again a Left Front member, expanding the alliance to 17 parties. In July 2016 Janata Dal (United), Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Nationalist Congress Party also joined the left parties in protests against price hikes.

2016 assembly election

Ahead of the 2016 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election the Left Front presented a first list with 116 candidates on 7 March 2016. The list included 69 new candidates, 16 women and 25 candidates from religious minorities. At the time the Left Front was engaged in building a broader front with parties like Janata Dal (United) and NCP against the Trinamool Congress government. Moreover, an electoral understanding

with the Indian National Congress was being sought. A second list of 84 candidates was released on 10 March 2016, to the displeasure of INC leaders as 14 constituencies on the Left Front list were already being contested by INC. The second list included 52 new candidates, 9 women and 20 Muslims. Apart from the 84 Left Front candidates, two candidates each from JD(U) and RJD were announced. Dialogue between Left Front and INC continued after the release of the Left Front second list.

Ahead of the 2016 election Nanda and his SP again resigned from the Left Front, citing opposition to the electoral tie-up with the Indian National Congress.

After a period of dispute between CPI (M) and INC over the Tarakeswar seat, it was agreed that NCP would field a candidate there. MFB continued to contest the Jamapur seat, however.

As per the Left-Congress electoral understanding, RCPI was requested to withdraw its candidate from the Hansan seat. The candidate did however contest anyway, against the wishes of the Left Front. He got 751 votes.

CPI(M) contested 147 seats, CPI 11, AIFB 25, RSP 19, DSP 2 and MFB

1.[91] In total the Left Front won 32 seats; CPI(M) won 25 seats, AIFB 2, RSP 3, CPI 1 and MFB 1. The combined Left Front vote (excluding allies) was 14,216,327 (26% of the votes in the state).

he Left has stayed in power due to its long standing record in revolutionary and labour movements. This election might be its undoing. Here are the highpoints and nadirs of the Left in the state.

April 1930: The Chittagong Armoury Raid Case was the most daring revolutionary endeavour by the leftist youths, under the banner of Jugantar Party and the Anushilan Party. The Chittagong group was undisputedly the best and the most successful group that Bengal's revolutionaries had ever organised.

February 1933: Masterda Surya Sen, the protagonist of the Chittagong Armoury Raid case was arrested.

May 1933: Kalpana Dutta and Tarakeshwar Dastidar were also captured and were put up for trial --- Surya Sen and Tarakeshwar Dastidar was

sentenced to death, while Kalpana Dutta was sentenced to transportation for life.

January 1934: Surya Sen kissed the gallows in Chittagong jail, with his last message on a golden dream...a dream of free India, wishing his comrades the strength to fight for freedom and ending his forceful message with the slogan of Vande Mataram and reminding the nation never to forget the eastern revolution. Later, the core group of the Chittagong Arms Raid case joined the CPI.

March 1935: Jyoti Basu went to England to study law. He became an active member of the India League, a body of Indian students, led by V.K Krishna Menon. Basu, Bhupesh Gupta (also a member of the Anushilan Party) and Snehangshukanta Acharya were great friends, and came into contact with leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and joined in the activities of the Communist Groups in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Leaders like Harry Pollit, Rajni Palme Dutt, Ben Bradley and other leaders of CPGB. They had a great influencing role in shaping the ideas of the young Bengali students.

1940: After release from jail, the Chittagong Armoury Raid case convicts, Kalpana Dutta, Ananta Singh, Ambika Chakraborty and few other revolutionaries of the Chittagong Armoury raid case joined the CPI and resumed their battle against the British rule. Kalpana Dutta married P.C.Joshi, a top CPI leader in 1943.

1940: Jyoti Basu returned to India and joined the CPI. Though he enrolled himself as a barrister in Calcutta High Court, he never practiced simply because he was determined to become a whole-timer of the party. His initial task was to maintain liaison with underground Party leaders. Basu was elected to Bengal Provincial Assembly in 1946 from the Railway Workers constituency. Ratanlal Bramhan and Rupnarayan Roy were the other two Communists who were elected. Soon, the CPI became popular, and Basu showed how the Communists can use the legislative forums for strengthening struggles.

1946-47: The Tebhaga movement was a militant campaign initiated in Bengal by the Kisan Sabha (peasants' front of Communist Party of India) in 1946. At that time, share-cropping peasants had to give half of their harvest to the owners of the land. The demand of the Tebhaga (sharing

by thirds) movement was to reduce the share given to landlords to one third. In many areas the agitations turned violent, and landlords fled villages leaving parts of the countryside in the hands of Kisan Sabha. The then Muslim League government was forced to concede to the demands.

1959: The Food Movement of 1959 was the turning-point in the history of class struggle in West Bengal. The food insecurity had reached alarming proportions in rural and urban areas. On 31 August, 1959, a huge mass demonstration was organised in Kolkata where hundreds and thousands arrived from the villages under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha. At the end of the meeting, a procession began and started making its way towards Writers' Building. Without any warning, violent action by the police began, and 80 people died in the carnage that day. Not a single bullet was fired, and the police used sticks to beat people to death. Jyoti Basu compared the massacre with Jallianwallabagh in the Bengal Legislative Assembly and the combined opposition managed to corner the Congress.

1964: The Communist movement in West Bengal suffered a major setback as the Sino-Soviet ideological struggle reached its culmination. A pro-Chinese group, representing one of the most radical streams of the CPI left wing, presented a draft programme proposal of their own. Soon, CPI (Marxist) was born.

1966: A second Food Movement was launched by the left parties and its impact could be felt in the victory of the United Front government of 1967, led by Ajay Mukherjee of the bangle Congress. Even the left parties joined the government, and Jyoti Basu of CPI (M) had taken over as the deputy chief minister. But, the government did not survive for too long, and a minority government was formed by Prafulla Sen of the Indian National Congress.

1967: Some of the Bengal's communist revolutionaries, inspired by the historic eight documents of comrade Charu Majumdar launched an armed struggle Naxalbari in North Bengal. Comrade Majumdar's documents were heavily influenced by the Chinese line of protracted

people's war. The group accused the CPI (Marxist) of lapping the comfortable path of bourgeois electoral campaigns and reformism.

1969: Fresh elections were held in West Bengal in 1969. The CPI (M) emerged as the largest party in the West Bengal legislative assembly. But, with the active support of CPI and the Bangla Congress, Ajay Mukherjee returned as Chief Minister of the state. Mukherjee resigned on March 16, 1970 and the state was put under President's Rule.

1977: The Left Front won 243 seats in the assembly election, and the CPI (M) emerged as the largest party. The first Left Front government was established with Jyoti Basu as the Chief Minister. An amendment to land reforms act made cultivation in absentia an exclusionary clause for eviction of sharecroppers. Sharecroppers were provided heritable rights and the place of crop share was shifted to sharecroppers homestead plot.

1978: Registration of names of sharecroppers started in an unprecedented scale under the name "Operation Barga" was introduced by the Left Front government, along with redistribution of ceiling-surplus land.

1979: The massacre in Marichjhapi, which took place under CPI (M) rule in Bengal between January 26 and May 16, 1979, relates to the forcible eviction of refugees who had fled from East Pakistan thereby leading to the death of a sizable population among them. The Left Front government came under serious criticism because of the massacre as it was reported that 4,128 families perished in transit, died of starvation, exhaustion, and many were killed in Kashipur, Kumirmari, and Marichjhapi.

2000: West Bengal's economic recovery gathered momentum after reforms in India were introduced in the early 1990s by the central government, especially with Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee taking over as CM in 2000.

2006: Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee emerged as a knight in shining armour of West Bengal, and the Left Front won 235 seats in the assembly while the opposition Trinamool Congress was totally marginalised.

2007: A strong movement by peasants, and backed by the Trinamool Congress and the Maoists against acquisition of land at Nandigram in East Midnapore district for setting up of a mega-chemical hub. Police

shot dead 14 villagers and wounded 70 others. Succumbing to the pressure, the government had to reallocate the project site.

2008: The Left Front faced a humiliating defeat in the Panchayat election. Maoists liberate Lalgarh and large areas of Jangalmahal in West Midnapore district, and the state police was caught napping. The Left Front government was again caught on the wrong foot over farmers' movement against forceful acquisition of land at Singur in Hooghly district for Tata Motors' Nano project. In October, 2008, the Tata Motors shifted its factory to Gujarat.

2009: Riding on the successes of the anti-land acquisition movements at Nandigram and Singur, the combination of SUCI, Congress and Trinamool Congress registered victories in 27 seats in the Lok Sabha election. The Trinamool Congress won 19 seats.

4.3   POLICIES TOWARDS STATE

The Left is finally out of Bengal, leaving behind a riddle: how could one party, the CPM, rule a state for 34 years, while presiding over its overall decline? In that time, industry fled the state, farm growth tapered off, and Bengal's poor became worse off than poor folks in most other states.

The Left Front Government in West Bengal completes thirty years in office on 21st June 2007. The uninterrupted existence of a Left Front government in a State for thirty years is a remarkable achievement. This would not have been possible without the massive and unwavering support of the working people of West Bengal for the programme and policies of the Left Front Government. In the course of this long tenure, the Left Front government has set a shining example of pro-people governance by implementing land reforms and establishing a decentralised model of local self-government through a three-tier Panchayati Raj, which has empowered millions of rural poor and irreversibly changed their lives for the better. Its record in defending secularism, securing democratic rights and upholding probity in public life is also unparalleled. The Left Front Government in West Bengal continues to be an inspiration and source of strength for progressive and democratic forces across the country.

Historical Outline

The formation of the Left Front Government in West Bengal was a culmination of decades of struggles by various sections of the people — workers, peasants, teachers, refugees and students — under the leadership of the Left, and its biggest component the CPI (M). Faced with the rising tide of struggles and the growing influence of the CPI(M) and the Left, the Congress regime which was formed after it undemocratically rigged the elections in 1972 resorted to a reign of semi-fascist terror in West Bengal. The CPI(M) and the mass organisations faced the brunt of this repression. 1,100 Party workers and close sympathisers were killed.

The Congress was severely punished by the people of the country for its authoritarian and anti-democratic actions in the general elections of 1977 and the Janata Party Government was formed at the Centre with Morarji Desai as Prime Minister. The Assembly elections in West Bengal were held shortly after the general elections in 1977. The people came out to vote in very large numbers to get rid of the reign of terror. The Left Front won by over three-fourth majority.

While assuming office in 1977, the Left Front government was aware of the limitations of a State government in implementing pro-people policies within the existing Constitutional set-up. While the major responsibility of delivering services to the people was with the State Governments, financial resources were concentrated in the hands of the Centre. Keeping in mind this constraint, the Left Front government embarked upon a programme to provide immediate relief to the people and implementing alternative policies in spheres where the State government had some say. The major initiatives of the first Left Front government were to carry out thoroughgoing land reforms and establishing a vibrant Panchayati Raj. These historic initiatives broke the back of landlordism in the rural areas, empowered the poor peasantry and agricultural workers immensely and decisively changed the correlation of class forces in favour of the rural poor. Large sections of the rural poor, especially the dalits, adivasis and minorities, gravitated towards the Left and the CPI (M). This section continues to be the most stable mass base of the CPI (M) and the Left Front till date. Several other pro-people

initiatives were also undertaken regarding workers' rights and social sector development, which benefited different sections of the people: factory workers, unorganised workers, government employees, school and college teachers, students, youth, women and the refugees. Through their experience, the majority of the people of West Bengal came to recognise the Left Front government as a pro-people government, a custodian of their rights and a fighter for their cause. Therefore, since 1977, neither did the people ever look back nor did the Left Front government**.**

4.4   UF REGIME AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Caste played a very marginal role in the politics of Left-ruled West Bengal. Due to the tendency of the Left Front to view politics solely through the prism of class, the field of political contestation was structured and configured in a manner that caste was robbed of its political possibilities. Today, the electoral decline of the Left has given rise to increasing speculation regarding the enhanced scope of caste-based mobilization. In this connection, this article seeks to understand whether the electoral decline of the Left has brought about in the existing socio-political configuration any fundamental change that can facilitate the rise of caste at the big stage of electoral politics. The investigation, attempted by this article in this context, reveals that the traditional limitations unfavorable to caste-based political mobilization largely continue in the same form. It may apparently seem that the electoral decline of the Left has created a perfect ground for caste-based identity politics to flourish, but the sustained assertion of caste identity is still beset by the traditional structural constraints due to the unaltered socio-political dynamics. As a result, the developments which a few years ago raised hopes about political incarnation of caste have largely petered out.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1.   How do you know the West Bengal under Left rule?

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2. Discuss the Policies towards state.

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3. How do you know about UF Regime and Its Limitations?

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

Over more than six decades following Independence, industry in West Bengal has steadily gone downhill. Usually the Left Front government effectively controlled by the Marxist Communist Party (CPM), that has ruled the state for the past 34 years until its recent defeat in the state assembly elections, is held responsible for the plight of industry in the state. The party and its followers, on the other hand, blame denial of the due share of the state in the central resources by a hostile government at the center for industrial retardation. This paper takes a close look at the available statistical evidence to argue that the main reason for the decline is a direct outcome of poor work culture, political interference, and failure of governance that has resulted in industrial anarchy that scares off private investment in the state. While the Left Front has its share of responsibility, the newly anointed Chief Minister of the State, Mamata Banerjee, has herself contributed generously to fostering and cultivating this chaos by calling wildcat general strikes in her erstwhile role as the 'one person opposition party'. The only thing that can revive industry in West Bengal is liberating civil administration from the grip of political party bosses.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Regime: a government, especially an authoritarian one.

Limitations: a limiting rule or circumstance; a restriction.

4.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know the West Bengal under Left rule?
2. Discuss the Policies towards state
3. How do you know about UF Regime and Its Limitations?

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 4.2
2. See Section 4.3
3. See Section 4.4

UNIT 5: LEFT FRONT COALITION FORMATIONS

STRUCTURE

5.0 OBJECTIVES

After this unit we can able to know:

- To know about the Left Front Coalition Formations
- To know about the Cases behind the Coalition-building
- To discuss the Current Scenario in West Bengal

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Left Front was set up as the repressive climate of the Emergency was relaxed in January 1977. The six founding parties of the Left Front, i.e. the Communist Party of India (Marxist) or the CPI(M), the All India Forward Bloc (AIFB), the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), the Marxist Forward Bloc (MFB), the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI) and the Biplabi Bangla Congress (BBC), articulated a common programme. This Left Front contested the Lok Sabha election in an electoral understanding together with the Janata Party and won most of the seats it contested. Ahead of the subsequent June 1977 West Bengal Legislative Assembly elections, seatsharing talks between the Left Front and the Janata Party broke down. The Left Front had offered the Janata Party 56 per cent of the seats and the post as Chief Minister to

JP leader Prafulla Chandra Sen, but JP insisted on 70 per cent of the seats. The Left Front thus opted to contest the elections on its own. The seat-sharing within the Left Front was based on the "Promode Formula", named after the CPI(M) State Committee Secretary Promode Das Gupta. Under the Promode Formula the party with the highest share of votes in a constituency would continue to field candidates there, under its own election symbol and manifesto. CPI(M) contested 224 seats, AIFB 36, RSP 23, MFB 3, RCPI 4 and BBC 2. The Left Front won the election, winning 231 out of the 294 seats. CPI(M) won 178 seats, AIFB 25, RSP 20, MFB 3, RCPI 3 and 1 independent. AIFB and RSP won significant chunks of seats in northern Bengal. The combined Left Front vote was 6,568,999 votes (45.8 percent of the votes cast in the state). The electoral result came as a surprise to the Left Front itself, as it had offered 56 per cent of the seats in the pre-electoral seat-sharing talks with the Janata Party. Over the years, the Left Front, though joined by the Communist Party of India (CPI) in 1982, came increasingly to be controlled and micro-managed by the CPI(M), so much so that towards the end of its rule, Left Front and the CPI(M) had almost become synonymous in common use. However, the end of its rule did not come soon. Once it achieved its unexpected victory in 1977, the Left Front stayed in power for the next 34 years. Till 2011, therefore, West Bengal had the longest ruling democratically elected Communist government in world history. Since 1977 the Communists governed a population larger than that of most western democracies. Its approximately 80 million people1 re-elected the Communists repeatedly, indicating a continuing popularity and longevity not found by Marxists in any other democracy. The Communist electoral victory in one of India's most industrialised (at the time of independence) and strategically important states predictably created considerable interest and controversy over its performance in office. This performance was expressed in the first five years mainly through rural development initiatives. Though development policy implementation was not the only Left Front endeavour, it was the most critical in providing a working example for the rest of India, and in consolidating Communist power. Electorally the rural areas with 74 per cent of the state population would be critical in maintaining Communist

influence. For this reason rural development had priority over urban industrial development in determining the success of the Left Front government. It was also the area where the Communists had greatest constitutional authority as agrarian reform fell largely within state jurisdiction. Rural development will therefore take up most of the present essay. Since the present study will be concerned as far as possible with the Left Front's first term in government (1977-1982), special attention will be given to Operation Barga of 1977 and the panchayat elections of 1978. Land reform and decentralisation of administration were, indeed, the two key priorities in the first term. On 29 September 1977 the West Bengal Land (Amendment) Bill was passed. Through Operation Barga, in which share-croppers were given inheritable rights on lands they tilled, 1.1 million acres of land was distributed amongst 1.4 million share-croppers.2 On 4 June 1978 three-tier panchayat local bodies were elected across the state, elections in which the Left Front won a landslide victory.3 Some 800,000 acres of land were distributed to 1.5 million heads of households between 1978 and 1982.4 The task facing the Left Front government on assuming office in 1977 was fraught with difficulties, despite its massive majority in the Legislative Assembly. The problems posed by the transition to socialism in the conditions of West Bengal were hardly amenable to easy solutions. The United Fronts of the late 1960s, under pressure from the Maoist left, had attempted rapid radical change only to be brutally repressed. This radical activity helped gain the CPI(M) a larger base, but the party's inability to stand up to state repression exposed its weakness in the face of a dictatorial government. Only the return of democracy after the Emergency enabled the CPI (M) to show that its popular following had been enhanced during the years of "semi-fascist terror". Though the central Janata government formed in 1977 was not hostile to the Left Front, it could hardly be expected to countenance revolutionary change in a state government, nor was a successful revolution possible in one province alone. Having won the election, the Left Front could use its power either for radical polarisation of class forces, or for a more gradual incremental change designed to give longevity to the government: a longevity sufficient for its base to survive till revolutionary conditions in the rest of India caught

up with West Bengal. These revolutionary conditions however would likely take decades to come, if they came at all. A state government intent on remaining in power for decades could hardly be expected to keep up a tempo of popular revolutionary fervour. Surprisingly, and as we have already observed, even the Communists never expected to win all but sixty-three of the 293 assembly seats when they ran for election in 1977. They had gone to great lengths to form a seat adjustment with the non-Communist Janata Party then ruling the central government, but when rebuffed contested on their own and won a landslide victory. Their unexpected victory left them without an articulated strategy for directing their new-found power. However, their ad hoc reactions to problems indicated where their interests lay and the groups they were most oriented to promoting. It was these policies which insured their popularity and consolidated their base in the state.

It was Jyoti Basu, a man known for his precision of articulation, who, in holding up West Bengal as an example for the rest of India, made the most revealing statement about Left Front government policy in 1985:

The Left Front Government in the State of West Bengal has limited powers. It has to operate within a capitalist feudal economy. The Constitution, contrary to federal principles, does not provide for the needed powers for the States and we suffer from a special disability because the Union Government is ill-disposed towards our Government. In such a situation, we have been explaining to the people why we cannot bring about fundamental changes even though the ideology and character of our Government are different from those that characterise the Government at the Centre. But we do hold that by forming the Government through elections it is possible for us to rule in a manner which is distinctly better and more democratic than the way followed by the Congress party at the Centre and in many other States. It is also possible to give relief to the people, particularly the deprived sections, through the minimum programme adopted by the Left Front. We have been attempting to do so by motivating the people and enlisting their support and sympathy. Our objective is to raise their political consciousness along with giving them relief so that they can distinguish between truth and falsehood and friends and enemies, and realise the

alternative path which will free them from the shackles of Capitalism and Feudalism and usher in a new modern progressive society. This is a difficult task and we have to traverse a long path. But we visualise success in our objective when large masses all over India will be imbued with the correct political consciousness and free themselves from bourgeois influence and ideology, particularly the working masses. They will arrive at the truth through experience and continuous struggles. The Left and democratic State Governments can help and expedite this process even with their limited powers. It is with such a perspective and objective that we are functioning in West Bengal.

This Communist transitional strategy takes place in two stages. The first stage would create governments at the state level opposed to the ruling Congress, breaking its virtual monopoly of power, and enabling other popular parties including the Communists to make inroads. In such fluid conditions the Communists could eventually attain a dominant position in coalition governments at the state level. When dominance was achieved at a national level, the Communist takeover would be complete. The first stage involving Communist participation in state governments would attempt reforms only as a means of developing a Communist political base. In its political practice, however, the reforms would not be much different from what Social Democratic parties might be expected to deliver, but which the establishment parties had proved unable or unwilling to implement. Therefore, the Communist state governments could not be expected to implement an immediate revolutionary programme. Rather their policy implementation could only be considered on the basis of (1) whether it used all avenues for reform available within the constitutional system, and (2) whether these reforms contained a potential for further radicalisation and expansion of the Communist movement towards the ultimate goal of a Communist revolution. A failure to implement reforms could be due to the constitutional system's allowing insufficient scope for reform along lines conducive to Communist growth, or because of inadequacies with Communist policy implementation. The final possibility is that while the reforms may succeed in their immediate objectives, they create interests inimical to

more radical alternatives and supportive of a new status quo. This paper hopes to argue that while there was sufficient scope within the Indian constitution for reforms conducive to Communist growth in a revolutionary direction, these reforms were not undertaken. Furthermore what reforms were implemented furthered class and group interests hostile to more radical change, making the development of a revolutionary conjuncture less likely. As a result, reforms ground to a halt, and their continued stay in office became counterproductive from a revolutionary Communist viewpoint, but helpful to the establishment they aimed at overthrowing.

5.2 LEFT FRONT COALITION FORMATIONS

The Communist state government had limited jurisdiction over many institutions and departments, having to operate within the constitutional constraints of the central government, which had the power to remove it from office by Presidential decree. With these limitations in mind, the policy implementation of the Left Front government may be analysed to determine its success in bringing about social and economic change, and to indicate groups that benefited from these reforms. Their electoral success was due to following policies that promoted rural middle- and upperclass interests, while distributing palliatives to the lower classes. In the urban areas the interests of the government clerical staff were promoted, as well as of those corporations still willing to invest in the state. The industrial and rural working class received few if any benefits from Left Front rule, and might have been better off had the Communists remained in opposition where they could have led strikes in pursuit of wage demands. It will be argued that the Left Front failed, not primarily because of the limitations on its power and resources, but because it did not make appropriate use of the powers and resources that it had at its disposal. Rather than promoting the interests of the rural and urban lower classes, it gave primacy to the traditional rural and urban middle-class base of the Communist movement, which ultimately proved an obstacle to the further advancement both of lower-class interests, and those of the revolutionary Communist movement as a whole. The ruling CPI(M)

which had been founded as a revolutionary alternative to the old "revisionist" Communist Party, became through its experience in office, no different from its parent party. It thus ceased to be revolutionary in its practice, and even to call it reformist would be overstating its achievements in office. The rural and urban vested interests which the Left Front promoted eventually made further change in both reformist and revolutionary directions more difficult, as these interests became more firmly entrenched than ever, and opposed to any change in the status quo which would threaten the newly created privileges the Left Front provided them with. While this distribution of patronage enabled the Communists to be an electoral success, it ultimately proved inimical to the advancement of revolutionary communism (an impasse out of which it is unlikely to emerge in the foreseeable future, even in its position now as opposition). By promoting various propertied class interests, it gave these groups a stake in the status quo, and made them more hostile to reforms that would benefit the society as a whole. These classes transformed from being the traditional advocates of reform, to being its most vociferous opponents. Among the non-partisan voices, there is general consensus about this. Dwaipayan Bhattacharya, prophetically analysing the initial electoral losses of the Left Front in 2008, through the theoretical optic of 'party-society', opined: "The preponderance of the party over the social space, the transformation of the party from a hegemonic force into a violative one and ultimately the ruptures in the 'party-society' have all gone on to loosen the dominance of the Left Front in West Bengal."

He has further expanded in his 2016 book that the CPI (M) was so caught up in the process of preserving power that it refused to reinvent a process of change that came about after the reforms it initiated in the 1980s. Rather than utilising the quotidian nature of its engagement with the people to further change — by expanding the benefits of land reforms to improve the status of landless agricultural workers; by organising and working towards the improvement of livelihoods in the unorganised sector; by focussing on primary education and health; by involving its cadre from the lower segments of society in a way that they could be taken into higher leadership — the party was merely reduced to an

arbiter of sorts, with decisions taken in a top-down manner, leadership remaining ossified and dominated by the upper castes and the focus restricted to winning elections.

On a similar vein, Ranabir Samaddar has explained the hubristic logic of the Left Front rule and the process of its inevitable collapse: …party substituted for society, local bosses working as local barons substituted for the party, party committees substituted for government's intelligence wing, inviting speculative and comprador capital appeared as steps towards organic industrialisation of the state and protests began to be considered as conspiracies against Left rule…

Samaddar, however, characteristically pushes the envelope and characterises the entire period of 1977-2011 as an era of "passive revolution", and declares that this is an ongoing story of transition. In this, there is the implicit suggestion of the "lower classes" coming to power through electoral means by and in 2011 and the people practising "popular democracy in an epoch of passive revolution.

Herein lies the source of much debate among the commentators. But, for my purposes, suffice it to say that both thinkers locate the fons et origo in the initial years of Left Front rule, albeit, to my mind, the former does so in terms of a declensionist process while the latter understands it as the foundational aporia of the parliamentary left. Be it as it may, contemporary observers and commentators in the 1980s failed to descry these processual lapses and/or structural faultlines owing probably to their historical propinquity in part and hopeful over-enthusiasm in part. This paper endeavours to make possible such an analysis within the time-frame of 1977-1982. Further, to land reform and local self-government, this paper wishes to add a third plank— that of coping with the refugee situation created by the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 and severe floods. In fact, the Left Front government often credited itself with an efficient management of these "problems".

This claim could probably be put to test through a study of another momentous historical event in the first five years of Left Front rule: the Marichjhapi incident which refers to the forcible eviction in 1979 of Bangladeshi refugees on Marichjhapi island in the Sundarbans, and the subsequent death of thousands by police gunfire, starvation, and

disease.The discussion on refugee resettlement will form the third, relatively short section following land reforms and Panchayat Raj. In the end, there will be occasion to offer a speculative conclusion on the Left understands of caste in Bengal and how it played into their politics and probably accounted for many of its lapses.

The first Left Front government, led by Jyoti Basu, assumed office in 1977, with a resolve to provide immediate relief to the people, take the State forward on the path of development, decentralise the power structure, and thus involve people in the day-to-day work of the government. Of the 25 years it had been in power, the Left Front government was led by Jyoti Basu for over 23 years, until he stepped down in favour of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee in October 2000. That it has kept the promises and gained the people's trust is evident from the fact that the Left Front has been voted to power six successive times with massive mandates. This is a world record for an elected Left government. Effective and purposive governance, successful conduct of coalition politics, political stability that was achieved and firm adherence to secularism are widely seen as the reasons for its success. This was possible largely because of the CPI(M)'s ability to hold together the coalition which includes nine other parties. It has not been an easy task. But the CPI(M)'s experience with the United Front governments of 1967 and 1969 stood the party in good stead. This period was followed by a dark phase when the Left parties had to function in an atmosphere devoid of democratic rights, under the Congress(I) government. It was during this long period of struggle for democratic rights, civil liberty, social justice, agrarian reform and industrial resurgence that the Left Front took shape.

The United Front experience helped the CPI(M) leadership to delineate a code of conduct, which has been adhered to strictly and uniformly by the Front constituents, irrespective of their relative strengths. This, despite the criticism, mainly from newspapers that have been hostile to the Left Front, that the smaller parties in the Front have been exploited by the "Big Brother".

The CPI(M)'s strength in electoral politics lies in its ability to gauge the mood of the people and come up with slogans that would catch their imagination. And it has always taken the lead in launching the campaign, leaving little time for its main opponent, the Congress(I), to set its house in order. In both Assembly and Lok Sabha elections the Left Front turns the contest into an issue-based one by blending local issues with larger political issues.

At the time of taking office in 1977, Jyoti Basu said that the Left Front was fully conscious of the duties and responsibilities that had been entrusted to it by the people of West Bengal through a historic electoral verdict. "Our government would not be run from the Writers' Buildings alone ; it would maintain close touch with the representative organisations of the people in order to serve them effectively," he said.

Tracing the record of the government in the last 25 years, Jyoti Basu said the Left Front government had been endeavouring to alleviate the hardships of the people by implementing welfare schemes and programmes with their support and active participation. He said: "On every available opportunity, we have made it clear that no fundamental changes can be brought about by the State government, which has to function under the constraints and limitations of the existing constitutional framework. Our efforts, however, are constantly directed to extend much-needed relief to the people. With our emphasis on land reforms, agricultural development and democratic decentralisation, we have been successful in achieving a major breakthrough in agriculture and allied sectors. Our achievement in the field of foodgrain production is now well-recognised, while the land reforms programme has radically altered the scene in the countryside with definite benefits to the rural masses."

The panchayats, Jyoti Basu said, had been successfully implementing various rural development programmes aimed at generating gainful employment to the rural poor and creating durable assets for common benefit. "Decentralisation of planning through the involvement of the people in the formulation and implementation of the planned schemes constitutes a basic component of our strategy for general welfare," he said.

After capturing power in 1977, the CPI(M) lost no time in consolidating its base in West Bengal. The holding of panchayat elections regularly since 1978 has created a strong rural base for the party. The over three million families that have benefited by land reform constitute its main support base. The reforms also led to a spurt in the rate of agricultural growth, the highest in the country. Between 1980-81 and 1990-91, the average annual increase in food production had been 7.1 per cent as against the national-level increase of 3.15 per cent.

After being sworn in Chief Minister on May 18, 2001 following the Left Front's victory in the Assembly elections, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee initiated changes that have provided a new dimension to Left Front rule. In a conversation with Frontline, he discussed the Left Front's spectacular performance in the past 25 years in improving the rural economy. "We have to remember that our real strength lies in our achievements in rural Bengal. However, we will not lose sight of the new generation with which we will go forward. So we will have to look at the requirements of the new generation in the light of the scientific and technological developments taking place now. We Marxists are realists. We understand that change is essential to life. There is no point in holding on to a dogma. We shall have to change our policies according to the changing situation. We are now in the 21st century and this century's science is information technology, biotechnology and the like. We must adapt to the new environment. Otherwise we will be nowhere in the picture," he said.

PARTH SANYAL

At a state-of-the-art cement factory inaugurated by Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee in Durgapur in January 2002. The rapid strides made by West Bengal in agriculture and allied sectors, certain policy initiatives and political stability under the Left Front are factors that have spurred industrial growth in the State.

Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee has concentrated on developing industry, especially agro-based industry. "We have been able to attract Rs.14,961 crores as investment over the past three years and gained the fifth position in this respect in the country. We have been trying to improve

the functioning of the State public sector undertakings. I am determined to take a decision on all the 69 of them by the year-end," he said.

For the past 25 years, the Left Front government has been pursuing an alternative approach to rural development planning. The approach is based on more equitable distribution of land and other productive assets in rural areas, within the limitations of the existing socio-economic structure. Although West Bengal has less than 4 per cent of the total agricultural land in the country, nearly 20 per cent of the land distributed through land reforms in India is in the State. About 60 per cent of the total land is owned by small and marginal farmers as against the national figure of 28.8 per cent. In other words, the government's efforts have created an objective situation in which agricultural planning is done from the standpoint of the poorer working farmers.

Agricultural development, with emphasis on the best manner of utilisation of labour and local resources, has increased the purchasing power of the common man and thus helped in the growth of agriculture-linked cottage and small-scale industries. Over the last 20 years, small units have registered a significant growth rate. Their number has gone up from less than a lakh in 1976-77 to about four lakhs now, generating over one lakh jobs every year.

The process of decentralisation of economic and administrative power, initiated by the Left Front government 25 years ago, is almost complete. It has generated considerable interest in India and abroad. The administrative principles adopted and the development strategies pursued through the three-tier panchayat system reflect a new ethos of catering to the needs of the common people and creating an alternative path of development that gives priority to eradicating poverty and ensuring social justice.

Surjya Kanta Mishra, Minister for Health, Panchayats and Rural Development, told Frontline that one of the most significant achievements of the panchayat system was that it had entrenched grassroots-level democracy. Since 1977, five rounds of panchayat elections have been held, once every five years. In the last round, held in May 1998, the Left Front captured over three-fourths of the 80,000 seats in the gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads. Over 35

per cent of the panchayat members are women and 28 per cent belong to the Scheduled Castes and 7 per cent to the Scheduled Tribes.

The panchayat bodies have, in close coordination with the State government, taken over the planning, administration and implementation of developmental activities. They have also shaped themselves into a force that is powerful enough to usher in social change; it has empowered the common man to decide his political, economic and social destiny.

JAYANTA SHAW/REUTERS

The Left Front's emphasis on land reforms, agricultural development and democratic decentralisation has led to a major breakthrough in agriculture and thus created a solid base for industrialisation.

The West Bengal government spends almost half of its annual budget through the panchayats. The money goes towards creating rural employment and financing local development. Village or gram panchayat leaders have, over the last two and a half decades, emerged as key players in developing their respective areas. The land-owning gentry have been rendered powerless, an achievement that has not been matched anywhere else in India.

The panchayati raj institutions in the State have a pro-poor orientation because the majority of their members come from the downtrodden sections. A survey conducted by the Staff Development and Planning Department covering 100 gram panchayats revealed that more than 71 per cent of the panchayat representatives are small and marginal farmers. A recent study of panchayats in 25 blocks across 14 States presents a contrasting picture: 88 per cent of the panchayat members and 95 per cent of the panchayat presidents in these belong to the landed gentry. This glaring contrast is testimony to the success of the Left Front's development strategy, which is based on land reforms.

The Left Front government initiated steps to devolve power in the first year of the Seventh Plan (1985-86) by constituting block and district planning committees headed by presidents of panchayat samitis and zilla parishads. The block planning committee (BPC) consists of the heads of gram panchayats and the members of the executive committees of

panchayat samitis and block-level officials from different departments. The district planning committees (DPCs) consists of the presidents of panchayat samitis, the chairmen of municipalities, the executive members of zilla parishads and the heads of the various government departments at the district level. The Block Development Officer (BDO) and the District Magistrate are the member-secretaries of the BPC and the DPC respectively.

The budgetary provision for various departments for district-level items are disaggregated and disbursed to the DPC. A similar exercise is undertaken at the level of blocks and municipalities. Within these budgetary parameters, which have come to be known as divisible outlay, the DPC has the power to formulate its own plan on the basis of the "district-specific schemes" drawn from district-level sectoral plans and the "block and municipality-specific schemes" appearing in block and municipal plans.

THE strong industrial base of West Bengal started eroding in the 1950s and early 1960s. The process of de-industrialisation of West Bengal was accentuated by the Union government's economic policies, which gave preference to petrochemical industries over steel and coal-based industries, in which the eastern region had a competitive advantage. The policy of freight equalisation took away the region's edge relative to the rest of the country.

SUSHANTA PATRONOBISH

A section of the audience at the Netaji Indoor Stadium function.

5.3 CASES BEHIND THE COALITION-BUILDING

The United Front (Bengali: □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □) was a political coalition in West Bengal, India, formed shortly after the 1967 West Bengal Legislative Assembly election. It was conceived on 25 February 1967, through the joining together of the United Left Front and the People's United Left Front, along with other parties. Soon after its formation, a massive rally was held in Calcutta, at which an 18-point programme of the Front was presented. Ajoy Mukherjee, leader of the Bangla Congress, was the head of the United Front.

The Front formed a state government with Mukherjee as its chief minister and Jyoti Basu became the Deputy Chief Minister, dislodging the Indian National Congress for the first time in the history of the state. The ministry took oath on 15 March 1967.

The points listed in the programme announced in Calcutta promised that their government would ensure availability of primary needs of the people; handle the food crisis, provide rehabilitation to refugees; fight against corruption, nepotism, black-marketing, unemployment, food prices; pay special attention to women, scheduled castes and tribals; reorganise the police force to respect democratic rights.

UF Ministries

- Bangla Congress: 3 ministers (General Administration, Home, Industry)
- Communist Party of India (Marxist): 3 ministries (Finance, Transport, Land and Land Revenue)
- Communist Party of India: 2 ministries (Information, Irrigation and Waterways)
- All India Forward Bloc: 2 ministries
- Revolutionary Socialist Party: 1 ministry
- Socialist Unity Centre of India: 1 ministry (Labour)
- Samyukta Socialist Party: 1 ministry
- Workers Party of India: 1 ministry
- Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha League: 1 ministry
- Praja Socialist Party: 1 ministry
- Lok Sevak Sangh: 1 ministry
- P.C. Ghosh (independent): Food and Agriculture

A United Front Committee was formed. Every party in the cabinet had its representative in the committee. The function of the committee was to solve disputes that might arise in the coalition, and coordinate the work in the ministries.

Food issue

Tackling the food crisis in the state was a major challenge for the United Front government. When in opposition, the parties behind the United Front had made fervent criticisms of the Congress government for not solving the food crisis. Thus, once in government they were under heavy pressure to perform better than their predecessors. The situation deteriorated in March 1967 as the central government allocated far less food relief supplies to West Bengal than the UF government had asked for (the West Bengal government had asked for 1,5 million tons of food grains per year, the central government pledged to provide around 1 million tons per year). P.C. Ghosh made a presentation on the situation to the Legislative Assembly on 29 March 1967.

Differences on how to manage the food crisis provoked ruptures in the Front. Ghosh's policies focuses mainly on voluntary measures and incentives to gather food supplies. Following Ghosh's presentation at the assembly, the CPI(M) sharply criticised him for not having procured enough food supplies, as well as for going soft on wealthier landlords. CPI(M) and other left parties in the Front demanded fixed prices on essential food grains. In Midnapore, CPI(M) cadres organised a protest against Ghosh. In other places, meetings were organized by CPI(M) were demands for Ghosh's resignation were raised.

There were another difference between the Food Minister and the left. The Front decided to politize the food question, and attack the central government and the Congress for withholding food grains from West Bengal. A hunger strike outside the Prime Minister's residence for 23 August 1967. Furthermore, a one-day West Bengal general strike to protest the central government's actions was planned. Ghosh strongly disagreed with these methods of protest. He began threatening to resign, and stopped attending the cabinet meetings.

Gheraos

In the programme of the United Front, it had promised to reorganize the police force not to interfere in democratic movements. A fundamental aspect of this was barring the police from taking actions in labour disputes. After assuming office, the United Front government issued a circular to the police, stating that police would not be able to interfere

in *gheraos* (besieging blockades) unless having the permission of the Minister of Labour. Essentially, this resulted in a sharp rise in *gheraos* in connection to labour disputes (In May 1967 there were 151 gheraos in West Bengal, compared to 32 in March).

The High Court intervened and nullified the circular. The United Front government responded by issuing a new circular on 12 June 1967. The new circular differentiated between 'legitimate' and 'unlawful' actions in labour conflicts, barring police from intervening in legitimate trade union activities. In the case of unlawful activities the police would be able to intervene, but only after establishing factual grounds. The numbers of gheraos continued to increase, reaching 194 in September. The High Court intervened again, ordering the police force to ignore the circular of the state government in case of gheraos and act in accordance with the law.

As a result of the gheraos, many industrial units were closed down. The Bangla Congress came under pressure from industry owners to stop the gheraos. The Industry and Labour ministries, run by Bangla Congress and SUCI respectively, were at loggerheads with each other.

Naxalbari

Yet a further complication to the United Front government was the internal divisions within CPI(M). Radical elements, calling for immediate revolution, were present in the second-rank leadership of the party in West Bengal. In the northern parts of the state, Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal had built up a power base of their own inside the party ranks. In March 1967 peasants led by the Krishak Samiti, the CPI(M) peasants front, began occupying excess lands in Naxalbari. The revolt grew, and by June reports came that the rebels in Naxalbari had acquired firearms. Inside the United Front differences arose over how to deal with the rebellion. The view of the CPI(M) was that social and economic problems were the cause behind the insurgency, whilst Bangla Congress wished to deal with the rebellion as a law and order problem.

Line of CPI(M) on the United Front

The Central Committee of the CPI(M) met in Calcutta between 10 and 16 April 1967. At the meeting the line towards the United Front governments in West Bengal and Kerala was discussed. The strategy approved by the meeting outlined that "The UF government that we now have are to be treated and understood as instruments of struggle in the hands of our people, more than as Governments that actually possess adequate power, that can materially and substantially give relief to the people. In clear class terms our party's participation in such governments is one specific forms of struggle to win more and more people and more and more allies for the proletariat."

Ghosh resigns, UF cabinet is dismissed

As a result of the various political contradictions inside the United Front, P.C. Ghosh resigned from his ministerial post, broke with the UF and formed a new party, the Progressive Democratic Front along with 16 other members of the Legislative Assembly. Ghosh stated his intention to form a government of his own. The Congress declared their support to Ghosh's bid for power. The governor ordered the Chief Minister to gather the Legislative Assembly in two weeks. Mukherjee responded to the governor that he was unable to do so. On 16 November, the governor dismissed the UF cabinet and let Ghosh form a new cabinet.

UF protests

The UF claimed that the way the dismissal of their cabinet had been done was illegal. On 22 November 1967, UF gave a call for a mass rally in at Brigade Parade Grounds, Calcutta, to protest the actions of the governor. The prohibitory orders were issued against the rally, and the demonstration was attacked by police. In response the UF, Rashtriya Sangram Samiti and labour organisations gave a call for a 2-day general strike in West Bengal. During the strike, several violent incidents were reported and one person was killed. Hundreds were arrested. On 18 December 1967, UF launched a civil disobedience campaign across the state. 3500 persons were arrested during the campaign, including 14 assembly members. Violent incidents continued to occur. In February 1968, President's Rule was declared in West Bengal.

1969 Assembly election

Fresh elections to the Legislative Assembly were held in February 1969, having been postponed due to severe floods. The United Front presented a 32-point programme ahead of the elections.

The PSP had left the UF, but in Midnapore district there was an electoral collaboration between PSP and UF. The Bangla Jatiya Dal had sought to become a member of UF, but its entry had been blocked by Bangla Congress. Except for the parties having held ministries in the UF cabinet, the Revolutionary Communist Party of India (which had failed to get any seat in 1967) contested two seats as a member of UF.

Party	Candidates	Seats won	% of votes
CPI(M)	97	80	19.93%
BC	49	33	8.33%
CPI	36	30	6.83%
AIFB	28	21	5.01%
RSP	17	12	2.86%
SSP	14	9	1.86%
SUCI	7	7	1.53%
LSS	7	4	0.76%
ABGL	4	4	0.54%
WPI	2	2	0.36%
RCPI	2	2	0.39%
MFB	1	1	0.21%
Independents	12	9	2.09%

The result of the election was an overwhelming victory for the UF, with over 50% of the votes and a clear majority in the assembly.

5.4 CURRENT SCENARIO IN WEST BENGAL

Over the past few weeks, there has been much lamentation in progressive Indian circles over Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) electoral victory and its new five-year mandate. Much has been said and written already about the failure of the opposition to stem the rise of Hindu nationalism and offer the Indian voter a tenable political alternative and inspirational ideology.

But another, equally important, development has been mentioned only in passing: the collapse of the Indian left.

Just 15 years ago, the Left Front was the third-largest alliance in India in terms of vote-share with 59 out of 543 seats in the lower house of parliament. In the last election, it struggled to win five. Some have blamed this dramatically low result on the rise of Hindu nationalism and BJP's successful electoral strategies.

But the truth is, the Indian left has been dead for a while; this vote just made it official. And, just like the liberal and centrist opposition, it has only itself to blame.

Trading class struggle for elections

Leftist politics arrived relatively late on the Indian political scene. The Communist Party of India (CPI) was founded in 1925 by MN Roy. Given that British colonial authorities had banned all communist activity, building and consolidating the party was difficult, it never managed to establish itself as a strong enough power able to challenge the hegemony of the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress (INC).

After India became independent in 1947, the CPI embarked on pursuing two rather contradictory goals: to mobilise workers and peasants and to contest elections. In the late 1940s, the communists supported the rebellion of landless peasants in Telangana region - which at that time fell within the territory of the princely state of Hyderabad - and three years after its 1948 annexation by the Indian Union, they contested the first free elections in the southern state, posing a major challenge to the INC.

Then in 1957, the CPI won the state elections in Kerala (also in the south), thus becoming the first party not allied with the INC to rule a state in independent India. Internal conflicts within the party soon

reached a climax and, in 1964, it split into CPI and CPI (M - Marxist), only to come back together a decade later in the coalition known as the Left Front in the national parliament.

The newly found CPI(M) experienced electoral success soon enough. In 1967, it headed an alliance of parties that won the elections in the eastern state of West Bengal and formed a coalition government. The same year, peasants rose up against large landowners in Naxalbari village under the leadership of some CPI(M) members and the unrest quickly spread across the state. This prompted the government, including the then Home Minister Jyoti Basu of the CPI(M), to order a crackdown.

The Naxalbari uprising was a harbinger of what was to come: the parties within the Left Front led by the CPI(M) steadily moved away from the political ideals they purported to espouse and embraced electoral politics for the sake of staying in power.

Over the next few decades, the CPI(M) managed to entrench itself in power in West Bengal, ruling the state for 34 years from 1977 to 2011 and in Tripura, where it headed the government for 25 years until 2018. In Kerala, it had mixed success, being voted in and out of power at almost every five-year cycle of state elections.

Its early electoral success was very much due to the land reforms it undertook in these three states which put an end to feudal practices in agriculture. The reforms were indeed widely popular among the general public, especially peasants, but they didn't reach everyone that they should have. Economists Pranab Bardhan and Dilip Mookherjee, for example, have argued that lower caste households, who were poorer than the average peasant, did not benefit as much from the reforms.

Gradually, the CPI(M) and its partners turned against the very people they were supposed to protect and represent. They shut down numerous factories, evicted small business owners and street vendors in the name of "beautification" of cities, and seized land forcibly from farmers to sell it to the biggest capitalists of the country - among other regressive policies.

Having betrayed leftist-minded voters and not being able to rely on their electoral support, the CPI(M) and its allies took to crafting mechanisms of social and political control to secure re-election and entrench itself in

power. At the polls, it often engaged in fraudulent behaviour to secure votes; in the streets, it resorted to brutal force to silence dissent, even when it was coming from the working classes.

In 2009, the CPI(M)-led government in West Bengal requested reinforcements from the central armed forces and reached out to Israel for help in its crackdown on the tribal movement in Lalgarh. And just last year, their cadres burned tents and shelters of farmers protesting the state government's forcible acquisition of land in Kerala.

In the end, the party failed not only to lead a constructive social and political movement while in power, but also to promote leftist ideology among the masses. Meanwhile, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - the extreme right-wing group that serves as the ideological backbone of the BJP - was able to set up primary and secondary schools in villages and suburbs in CPI(M)-dominated areas and grow its grassroots following.

An upper-caste, high-class, capitalist left?

Over the years, the Left Front led by the CPI(M) shed members who were committed to communist ideas and the revolutionary aspirations of the working classes. Many of those who remained did so for the sake of power and self-enrichment, some eventually becoming millionaires. CPI(M) leaders, such as former Chief Minister of West Bengal Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, increasingly grew friendly towards big corporations, changing tax policies in their favour and welcoming the implementation of anti-worker legislation such as the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act introduced by the central government.

The party failed India's lower caste population as well. The CPI(M) to date does not have a single Dalit leader in its highest decision-making body. Kerala, where the CPI(M) still holds power, has experienced an alarming increase in attacks on members of the lowest castes and tribes. In addition, the CPI(M) has miserably failed to promote equity and mobility of Muslims as well as women within its own party ranks, let alone among the general population in the states it ruled.

On matters of national importance, the Left Front has also failed to live up to its own ideological standards. In 2006-2007, it publicly opposed

the US-India nuclear deal, arguing that it went against India's national interests; yet leaked cables published by WikiLeaks showed that CPI(M) members told US officials that the party would not oppose a related bill in parliament. On the Kashmir issue, the Left Front has also displayed remarkable hypocrisy; rhetorically, it has criticised brutal crackdowns on civilians, but in effect, it has not recognised Kashmiris' aspirations for self-determination.

As a result of all these, the leftist electorate has progressively shrunk. Most voters at the grassroots have switched to the BJP, which has managed to appeal to a large section of the poor and the downtrodden, and has successfully convinced them that religion matters more than food.

Can the left be resurrected?

If the Indian left is ever to come back on the political scene, it would have to come from the grassroots, particularly from landless peasants, tribals and lower castes. They are the most oppressed classes in the Indian context and yet the most resilient and rebellious as well.

Historically, these people have consistently resisted state power, before and after independence, and to date. They have fought against mining corporations, protected their lands and struggled for self-governance. Clearly, in the absence of a well-defined and structured working class as per the Marxist definition, only these politically conscious lower castes and tribal landless farmers are ready to lead a communist movement in India.

It may sound utopian to some that communist politics can be resurrected through land and rights struggle, but that is because we, the complacent elite liberal Indians, lack the ability to imagine political resistance beyond the walls of parliament. For decades, we have not left our comfort zones, and have continued to imagine a peaceful, gentrified and comfortable revolution in which one can participate just by voting, watching television debates and posting on social media.

But if we can learn anything from the last election and the past five decades, it is that the road to a leftist revolution does not pass through parliament.

Indeed, the future of the left lies in the vast political energy and organised resistance that exists within the toiling lower caste tribes and landless farmers in the heart of India.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

- How do you know about the Left Front Coalition Formations?

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- How do you know about the Cases behind the Coalition-building ?

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- Discuss the Current Scenario in West Bengal.

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5.5 LET US SUM UP

Successive Congress governments of West Bengal are mainly responsible for the decline of industry in the State. Although Congress Chief Minister Dr. B.C. Roy was a visionary, he made two mistakes: he neglected agriculture and placed too much emphasis on heavy industries. Owing to the neglect of agriculture, the State could not develop a strong agricultural base, a prerequisite for industrialisation; and the emphasis on heavy industries led to the neglect of traditional industries such as jute which was fighting a losing battle against synthetic fibre.

However, the rapid strides made by the State in agriculture and allied sectors under the Left Front government have once again created the base for industrial development. The change in some policies of the Union government in response to the repeated demands of the Left Front

government also facilitated this process. Thus the delicensing of industries and the discontinuance of the policy of freight equalisation created a situation conducive to industrial development. The State is now back on the priority list of investors. Large companies are looking for fresh investment opportunities in the State.

One of the major factors that has brought about a change in the investors' attitude is the high rate of growth in food production in the last decade. Increased food production, combined with land reform measures such as Operation Barga and relatively high wages for agricultural workers, has ensured a fairly equitable distribution of income. The State's industry is ready for a take-off both economically and socially. As compared to other parts of the country, West Bengal has a much broader domestic market. Another major attraction is the factor of political stability.

Above all, the turnaround in power generation has made investment in West Bengal an attractive proposition. The State's power position is perhaps one of the best in the country. From a total production capacity of 1,361 MW in 1976, West Bengal has now become a power-surplus State, producing 7,099 MW of power and supplying part of it to neighbouring States. A large number of engineering colleges and industrial training institutes in the State have ensured a steady supply of skilled manpower.

Academicians conducting socio-economic studies on West Bengal generally agree that with its mass internal market, political and social stability, and relatively clean and efficient administration, an industrial revolution in West Bengal will be unstoppable.

5.6   KEY WORDS

Coalition: The term "coalition" is the denotation for a group formed when two or more people, factions, states, political parties, militaries etc. agree to work together temporarily in a partnership to achieve a common goal. The word coalition connotes a coming together to achieve a goal.

5.7   QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know about the Left Front Coalition Formations?

2. How do you know about the Cases behind the Coalition-building ?

3. Discuss the Current Scenario in West Bengal.

5.8 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- M. V. S. Koteswara Rao. Communist Parties and United Front: Experience in Kerala and West Bengal. Prajasakti Book House, Hyderabad. 2003.

5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 5.2
2. See Section 5.3
3. See Section 5.4

UNIT 6: PATTERN OF SUPPORT MOBILIZATION – ECONOMIC POLICIES

STRUCTURE

6.0   OBJECTIVES

After this unit 6, we can able to know about :

- To understand Pattern of Support Mobilization
- To describe the Economic Policies
- To know the Nature of Priority Fixation
- Why the lack of industry in West Bengal?

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The availability and mobilization of resources is a sine qua non for real capital formation and, hence, national development. Sustainable development can only be achieved if resources are efficiently mobilized and transformed into productive activities. The development of an efficient financial system in providing the vital link between savings and investment is thus important. Not only must there be coordination of different agencies within and among levels of government, there must also be coordination between the public and private sectors, and among

the various components of the private sector. Whatever the level of domestic savings and however large or small the net transfer of foreign savings, there is legitimate concern to ensure that those savings are allocated to investment in a developing country in a manner that is efficient and desirable in the social, political and developmental senses. Apart from having a well-coordinated financial system, the appropriate infrastructure, human capital and institutions all have to be in place. The Indian Government has basically relied on the use of five-year plans to implement its development strategy. Traditionally, a major portion of the financing for the Indian economy is intermediated through the banking system as reflected by the high bank credit to GDP ratio of 126 per cent as at end of 1999. This trend is changing as the landscape of the economy varies, necessitating a broader scope of financing to meet its needs.

No single model of development finance applies equally well in all institutional, cultural and technological situations. There is no one proper sequence of financial reforms for all countries or for all times. Market discipline is likely to be severe in the initial stages, and any backtracking on reform would result in dire consequences, such as the inability to have access to international funds or only at costlier terms. Encouraging exchanges of experiences within and across regions of developing countries also fosters the adaptation and redesign of foreign models of reform and turns them into reforms that can be utilized by the domestic establishment. Needless to say, mobilizing resources is not only a static question of how much funds to mobilize effectively but a dynamic one, where the methods of financing evolve through time.

6.2 PATTERN OF SUPPORT MOBILIZATION

Mobilization of Natural Resources

India, though a country with sufficient reserves, due to policy bottlenecks, is importing coal and iron. This is increasing our Current Account Deficit.

Mobilization of Human Resources

Organizing human potential for ready use is necessary for growth of India. In-fact, as country of 125 crore people, India now is eyeing more on its human resource potential. The demographic dividend is also in favour of India.

Adding in points, the glimpse of the topic for easy understanding.

- Mobilization of human resources highlights the need to empower human resources.

- Weaker sections like women, children, SC, ST, OBC etc should be brought into mainstream.

- There should be right employment opportunities for human resources, and when there is lack of skill the job demands, there should be skill development programs.

- Utilize the demographic dividend.

- India is currently levering on its technologists – engineers, doctors and scientists.

Mobilization of Financial Resources

If a country needs to grow, more goods and services should be produced. The production can be done by government sector, private sector or in PPP mode. But for that, the economic resources of a country should be mobilised. [*Hope the relation is now clear!:-)*]

In India, despite having good savings rate, domestic investment is less. Indians are investing in less productive assets like gold and consumer durable. If India needs to grow, there should be more investments in agriculture, manufacturing or services.

Adding in points, the glimpse of the topic for easy understanding.

- In India, tax collected is very less. The tax base has to be widened.

- Four factor of production- land, labour, capital and organization – should come to together. There should be an atmosphere for growth and investment.

- Organizations do not "spontaneously emerge" but require the mobilization of resources.

- In modern capitalistic society, these resources are more "free flowing" and are easier to mobilize than in more traditional societies. Many factors impact the development of the organization.

- Initial Resource Mix: There are various resource needs in a starting organization (technology, labor, capital, organizational structure, societal support, legitimacy, etc.). But the right mix of resources are not always available.

- The most important resource of an organization is it's people.

- More savings and more productive investment.

Also read: National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) - Can this mega-push revive the Indian economy?

How does public sector mobilize domestic resources?

1. Taxation.
2. Public revenue generation for investment in social services and infrastructure.

How does private sector mobilize domestic resources?

The private sector mobilizes the **savings of households and firms** through financial intermediaries, which allocate these resources to investment in productive activities.

Issues with mobilisation of resources

Issues with mobilisation of resources include all those issues and problems highlighted in – mobilization of natural resources, human resources and financial resources.

Why is Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) particularly important?

In low-income countries confronting widespread poverty, mobilizing domestic resources is particularly challenging, which has led developing countries to rely on foreign aid, foreign direct investment,

export earnings and other external resources. Nevertheless, there are compelling reasons to give much more emphasis to DRM.

- Greater reliance on DRM is vital to elevating economic growth, accelerating poverty reduction and underpinning sustained development.
- High-growth economies typically save 20-30 per cent or more of their income in order to finance public and private investment.
- DRM is potentially more congruent with domestic ownership than external resources.
- Foreign aid invariably carries restrictions and conditionality.
- FDI is primarily oriented to the commercial objectives of the investor, not the principal development priorities of the host country.
- DRM is more predictable and less volatile than aid, export earnings, or FDI.

Model Questions for UPSC Civil Services Mains :

1. Role of NGOs and SHGs in resource mobiliization.
2. Role of education in human resource mobilization.
3. Explain the term mobilizatiion.
4. How does the end of licence raj affect Domestic Resource Mobilisation?
5. During the age of globalization and FDI, what are the compelling reasons to think about Domestic Resource Mobilization?
6. Trace the effect of bottlenecks in coal and iron mining in the widening Current Account Deficit of India.
7. Why India is not yet able to mobilise its full potential resources? List out all issues in the mobilization of resources.

6.3 ECONOMIC POLICIES

The economy of West Bengal is the sixth-largest state economy in India with ₹11.77 lakh crore (US$170 billion) in gross domestic product. In 2017–18, its public debt stood at ₹3.60 lakh crore (US$50 billion) or 35.36% of GSDP. The state primarily dependent on agriculture and medium-sized industry, although services and heavy industries play an increasingly significant role in the economy of the country.

Since independence, West Bengal was still dependent on the central government for meeting its demands for food as production remained stagnant and the Green Revolution bypassed the state. However, there has been a significant spurt in food production since the 1980s. The state is now one of the few with a surplus, producing nearly 20% of the rice and 33% of the potato yield in 2004, despite accounting for only 7.55% of the population of India. Total export from IT sector of the state is estimated to have crossed Rs. 19,000 crores (US$ 2.83 billion) in 2016-17.

Agriculture and Livestock

Freshly sown saplings of paddy; in the background are stacks of jute sticks. Agriculture accounts for the largest share of the labour force. It contributed around 18.7% to the gross state domestic product (GSDP) in 2009–10. A plurality of the state's population are peasant farmers.

Major produce

Rice and potato are considered to be the principal food crops. The state is the largest source of the important food crop of rice, a staple diet across India, with an annual output of around 16.1 million tonnes in FY 2015-16, and the second-largest producer of potatoes in India with an average annual output of 11 million tonnes in FY 15. West Bengal is also the second-largest fish producing state.

Apart from these, jute, sugarcane and wheat are the top crops of the state. Other major food crops include maize, pulses, oil seeds, wheat, barley, and vegetables. Tea is another important cash

crop.Darjeeling is globally recognised for tea plantation of the acclaimed Darjeeling Tea variety.

Given below is a table of 2015 national output share of select agricultural crops and allied segments in West Bengal based on 2011 prices

Segment	National Share %
Jute	82.5
Betel	75.8
Cauliflower	43.1
Sweet potato	37.3
Brinjal	34.2
Cabbage	28.4
Inland fish	28.2
Radish	27.0
Jackfruit	26.8
Tea	25.6
Pineapple	25.2
Okra	24.8
Litchi	24.2
Potato	22.2
Grass pea	21.0
Mesta	20.4
Narcotics	19.2
Sesamum	19.2
Guava	14.7
Paddy	14.2
Papaya	13.8
Fruit and vegetable	13.0
Marine fish	11.6

Water melon	11.1
Bean	10.9
Cashew nut	9.9
Masoor	9.7
Sericulture and Apiculture	9.7
Egg	9.6
San hemp	9.6
Tomato	9.6
Sapota	9.5
Meat	9.2
Green pea	8.4
Chilli	8.3
Mango	8.2
Ginger	8.0
Cereal	7.8
Banana	7.0
Rape seed and mustard	6.4
Dung	5.9
Garlic	5.9
Kitchen garden	5.4
Straw and stalk	5.4
Moong	5.2

It is also the second largest tea-producing state in India, producing 329.3 million kg of tea in 2014-15, accounting for 27.8 percent of the country's total tea production. In 2015-16, West Bengal produced approximately 2.38 mt of sugarcane and 3.1 mt of fruits. The state is the largest vegetables producing state in India with 25466.8 thousand MT of production in 2012-13.

West Bengal accounts for nearly 10% of the country's edible oil production. The state produced a total of 1.63 million tonnes of fish in 2015-16 compared to a production of 1.61 million tonnes during 2014-15, retaining second spot after Andhra Pradesh in fish production. West Bengal produced around 4961 thousand tonnes of milk in FY14-15.

The state is the third largest meat producing state in the country (including poultry) after Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh, producing 0.648 million tonnes of meat in 2012-13 and it is the largest producer of goat meat.

Industry

Durgapur Steel plant

State industries are mostly localised in the Kolkata region, the mineral-rich western highlands, and Haldia port region. There are up to 10,000 registered factories in the state and the West Bengal state government has opened *Shilpa Sathi*, a single window agency in order to provide investors with all kinds of assistance in establishing and running industrial units. Kolkata is noted as one of the major centres for industries including the jute industry. There are numerous steel plants in the state apart from the alloy steel plant at Durgapur. The centre has established a number of industries in the areas of tea, sugar, chemicals and fertilisers. Natural resources like tea and jute in and nearby parts have made West Bengal a major centre for the jute and tea industries. West Bengal is at the forefronts of leather processing and leather goods manufacturing and has around 666 units producing leather and leather related goods. Currently, 22-25 percent of India's tanning activity is undertaken in Kolkata and its suburbs.Kharagpur has also

numerous industries of various types such as iron works, cement, chemicals, etc. The state's share of total industrial output in India was 9.8% in 1980–81, declining to 5% by 1997–98. However, the service sector has grown at a rate higher than the national rate.

Infrastructure

Power and energy

As of end of May 2016, according to data released by Central Electricity Authority on its site cea.nic.in, the installed power capacity of the state is 9984.4 MW, compared to 303.083 GW of the country. Of the total installed power capacity, 8523.83 MW was contributed by thermal power, 1,328.3 MW was contributed by hydro power and renewable power together. West Bengal government's ministry of power, in its report, enumerates individual power generating stations in West Bengal along with their respective locations and generating capacities while mentioning the total installed capacity as 13826 MW as of March 2015. As of end of April 2016, 37449 out of 37463 villages, i.e. 99.96% of inhabited villages in West Bengal were cumulatively electrified.

Communication and transportation

As of 2011, West Bengal has a total road length of 92,023 kilometres (57,180 mi), with a road density of 1.04 km per km^2. Of this, national highways constitute 2,578 kilometres (1,602 mi) and state highways 2,393 kilometres (1,487 mi). As of June 2015, the central government mulled augmenting the state's national highways' length by another couple of thousand kilometres in a bid to supplement to India's plan of seamless BBIN connectivity through Nepal,Bhutan,India and Bangladesh, subject to availability of land, by investing in the tunes of US$4–5 billion.

Railways

The Eastern railways zone, southeastern railways zone and N.F railway zone of Indian Railways run operations in West Bengal. At the end of 2014-15, the route length in West Bengal was 4070 km of which around

4000 km has been converted to broad gauge and around 2500 km has been electrified, the running track length was 7122 km and the total track length was 10,466 km, with the number of stations exceeding 800. Kolkata Metro railway is the newest zone of the IR with a single operational link of 27 km route length, 17 km of which runs underground. As of 2016, various other metro links of approximately 120 km route length are underway in different phases of construction in Kolkata

Ports

Kolkata is a major river-port in eastern India. The Kolkata Port Trust manages both the Kolkata docks and the Haldia docks.[18] There is passenger service to Port Blair on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and cargo ship service to ports in India and abroad, operated by the Shipping Corporation of India. Kolkata Port handled 50.195 million tonnes (mt) of traffic in 2015-16, around 8.43% higher vis-a-vis that handled during previous fiscal. Kolkata Dock System, the first major dock formally commissioned in 1870, handled cargo traffic of 16.688 mt in 2015-16, registering a significant growth of 9.2% over the previous year. Haldia Dock Complex,the 1st green port of the country in 2015, handled 33.507 mt in 2015-16, recording growth of 8.05% over the last year. In container traffic also, KoPT recorded 6,62,891 TEUs in 2015-16, clocking upwards of 5% growth over last year, and retained its 3 rd rank amongst major container handling Ports in the country. KDS also achieved the highest ever container throughput of 5,77,749 TEUs in 2015-16, a significant growth of 9.39% over the last year.[19] Kolkata Dock System handled a traffic of 12.540 million tonnes in 2010–2011 as against 13.045 million tonnes in 2009–2010. At Haldia Dock Complex, 35.005 million tonnes of traffic was handled in 2010–2011 as against 33.378 million tonnes in 2009–2010 implying an increase of 4.87%.

Inland waterways

The 560 km long Haldia- Farakka stretch in West Bengal is part of the stretch of Ganges between Haldia and Allahabad declared as the National Waterway (NW1). Also a 91 km long stretch of the NW5 is within West

Bengal. West Bengal government has sought to build infrastructure to begin sustained fuel efficient cost efficient and eco-friendly shipping operations for cargo transportation and tourism, passenger traffic as well along 12 rivers in West Bengal which can reduce congestion on roads. These rivers that has been identified for national waterways services, are the Allahabad-Haldia stretch of the Ganga Bhagirathi Hooghly river, Ajoy river (96 km), Bakreswar Mayurakshi river (110 km), Damodar river (135 km), DVC canal(130 km), Dwarekeswar river (113 km), Icchamoti river (634 km), Jalangi river (131 km), Rupnarayan river (72 km), Subarnarekha river (314 km) and Sunderban Waterways (201 km).

Telecommunications

As of end of April 2016, as per statistics published in press release of TRAI, there were 74.58 million wire-less (mobile phone) subscriptions(including 25.04 million with 90.43% VLR or active connections in Kolkata service area and 49.54 million with 93.69% VLR or active connections in rest of west Bengal service area) compared to over 1034.25 million wire-less connections in the whole country with VLR or active connections of 90.31% and 1.275 million wire-line subscriptions(including 0.909million in Kolkata and 0.365 million in rest of West Bengal) in West Bengal (with a total state-level tele-density of -----% as of 30 April 2016) compared to over 25.036 million wire-line connections in the whole country (with nationwide total tele-density of 83.32%) while as of April end,2016 the number of broadband subscriptions in the state were arbitrarily estimated to be around 11 million compared to that of whole of India with over 151.09 million broadband connections. VSNL has its international gateway and earth station in Kolkata. International connectivity is provided through VSNL and five STPI(Software Technology Parks of India) earth stations in Kolkata, Durgapur, Kharagpur, Haldia and siliguri. Digha has been selected as the cable landing station for the submarine cable laying project connecting India and South East Asia. BSNL has an optical fiber network of 15000 km route in West Bengal. Reliance group's Jio Infocomm has laid 4500 km of optical fiber network in the state for its

4G network. Under National Optic Fibre Network (NOFN) mission, optical fibre cable will be laid in 341 blocks covering most of the gram panchayats in West Bengal.

Aviation

Spread over 2640 acres at Dumdum in Kolkata, the largest in eastern India, the newly modernised Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport is the fifth busiest international airport in India in respect of aircraft movement (after Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Chennai). It has two asphalt runways, the primary one extended by 700 meters (3627×50m) and upgraded to CATIIIB, and the secondary one (2790×46m) upgraded to CATII ILS standards. Its terminal is a new and sprawling L-shaped six-level integrated terminal of over 2,510,000 sq ft inaugurated in 2013, able to handle 25 million passengers per annum. It includes check-in counters that use CUTE (Common User Terminal Equipment) technology, 78 immigration counters, 12 customs counters, passenger lounges provided by Air India and Jet Airways, 18 aerobridges, 57 remote parking bays, 2 underground two-leveled carparks and car parking facilities in landscaped area capable of handling 5000 cars. The airport has a Centre for Perishable Commodities (CPC), two luxury hotels and a shopping mall.

In the fiscal year April 2015 to March 2016, the airport handled 76722 aircraft movements including 14564 international aircraft movements, 12.42 million passengers (including 2.22 million international passengers and 10.2 million domestic passengers), 105390 tonnes of freight (including 37623 tonnes international freight). Between the 1940s and 1960s, major airlines such as Aeroflot, Air France, Alitalia, Cathay Pacific, Japan Airlines, Philippine Airlines, KLM, Pan Am, Lufthansa, Swissair and SAS operated from the airport.

With the advent of longer haul aircraft and the socio-economio-political degeneration of the state during the 1960s, several airlines gradually discontinued operations there. The withdrawal of Lufthansa's service to Frankfurt in 2012 left Kolkata with no direct flights beyond Asia. Kolkata airport is to undergo the execution of Phase 2 of the expansion plan which primarily involves the construction of an 86-meter ATC

Tower. Additionally, the current Kolkata Metro expansion plans include two new lines to the airport for better connectivity.

Bagdogra airport near Siliguri is another significant airport in the state. Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport, country's first private greenfield aerotropolis project spread over 650 acres, under Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Limited (BAPL) co-owned by Singapore-based Changi group, conceived in 2006-07 to be a domestic/international airport with handling capacity of 1 million per annum that can be expanded to 2.5 million per annum in future, officially commenced operations in 2015 at Andal, 185 km away from the state capital Kolkata. As of June 2016, the fledgling project is still suffering from birth pangs as it strives to attract airliners,grappling with dire paucity of adequate number of fliers necessary to sustain flying operations from here,in the investment starved ambience prevailing in its immediate hinterland.

Sector 5, Saltlake - The IT Hub of Kolkata

Industry

As of 2011, the state has 22 formally approved special economic zones (SEZ). Of these, 17 are related to information technology (IT) or IT,enabled services (ITES).

Economic indices

Economic production - beach net fishing at Digha Beach

As per the state budget presented in the state legislative assembly on 24 June 2016, West Bengal's nominal GSDP at current prices has risen to

INR 9.20083 trillion or US$140.68 billion in the year 2015-16, the average INR to US$ exchange rate in that year being INR 65.4. West Bengal's average population in that year being 95.5 million, per capita nominal GSDP at current prices for the economic year 2015-16 can be calculated as US$1473. In terms of nominal net state domestic product (NSDP) at factor cost at current prices (base year 2004-2005), West Bengal was the sixth largest economy in India, with an NSDP of INR 7289.74billion or US$120.93 billion in 2014-15 and in terms of nominal gross state domestic product(GSDP) at current prices, the state had GSDP of US$132.86 billion in the economic year 2014-15 as mentioned by India Brand Equity Foundation. India's Purchasing power parity conversion factor and US$ to INR exchange rate in 2014-15 being 16.98 and INR61.11 respectively, west Bengal's GSDP(PPP) at market prices in 2014-15 can be calculated as international $478.16 billion for 2014-15. In the period 2004–2005 to 2009–2010, the average gross state domestic product (GSDP) growth rate was 13.9% (calculated in Indian rupee term), lower than 15.5%, the average for all states of the country. The state's nominal per capita NSDP at factor cost at current prices(base year 2004-05) was INR78903 or US$1291 in 2014-15,average dollar exchange rate being INR61.11 that economic year, improved from US$553.7 in 2004–05, but lower than the national nominal per capita NDP at current prices(base year 2012-13) of INR102839.47 or US$1683(INR to US$ exchange rate in 2014-15 being INR61.11),in 2014-15. West Bengal's nominal per capita GSDP at current prices in 2014-15 was US$1412,the state's estimated average population over 2014-15 being around 94.3millions. In 2009–10, the tertiary sector of the economy (service industries) was the largest contributor to the gross domestic product of the state, contributing 57.8% of the state domestic product compared to 24% from primary sector (agriculture, forestry, mining) and 18.2% from secondary sector (industrial and manufacturing). At a compound annual growth rate of 15.2%, the tertiary sector has been the fastest growing among the three sectors from 2004–05 to 2009–10. The growth has been driven by trade, hotels, real estate, finance, insurance, transport, communications and other services. The state's total financial debt that stood at ₹1,918

billion (US$27 billion) as of 2011 swelled to ₹3,050 billion (US$43 billion) at the end of 2015-16 and is estimated to further grow to ₹3,340 billion (US$47 billion) at the end of 2016-17.

District-wise Economic Indicators

The following is a list of basic economic data for the districts of West Bengal as of 2013-2014, the latest year for which data is available:

District	Gross District Domestic Product (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)	hideGross District Domestic Product Per Capita (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)
Bardhaman	₹38,923.07 crore (equivalent to ₹940 billion or US$14 billion in 2017)	₹40,634.07 (equivalent to ₹98,000 or US$1,500 in 2017)
Birbhum	₹10,291 crore (equivalent to ₹250 billion or US$3.8 billion in 2017)	₹25,426.29 (equivalent to ₹62,000 or US$940 in 2017)
Bankura	₹11,729.33 crore (equivalent to ₹280 billion or US$4.3 billion in 2017)	₹28,345.12 (equivalent to ₹69,000 or US$1,100 in 2017)
Purba Medinipur	₹26,978.96 crore (equivalent to ₹650 billion or US$10 billion in 2017)	₹44,654.60 (equivalent to ₹110,000 or US$1,700 in 2017)
Paschim Medinipur	₹18,930.11 crore (equivalent to ₹460 billion or US$7.0 billion in 2017)	₹27,575.49 (equivalent to ₹67,000 or US$1,000 in 2017)
Howrah	₹22,817.15 crore (equivalent to ₹550 billion or US$8.5 billion in 2017)	₹39,313.99 (equivalent to ₹95,000 or US$1,500 in 2017)
Hooghly	₹24,371.33 crore (equivalent to ₹590 billion	₹35,920.65 (equivalent to ₹87,000 or US$1,300 in

District	Gross District Domestic Product (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)	hideGross District Domestic Product Per Capita (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)
	or US$9.0 billion in 2017)	2017)
Uttar 24 Parganas	₹48,035.5 crore (equivalent to ₹1.2 trillion or US$18 billion in 2017)	₹37,010.24 (equivalent to ₹90,000 or US$1,400 in 2017)
Dakshin 24 Parganas	₹29,238.58 crore (equivalent to ₹710 billion or US$11 billion in 2017)	₹29,745.60 (equivalent to ₹72,000 or US$1,100 in 2017)
Kolkata	₹36,031.93 crore (equivalent to ₹870 billion or US$13 billion in 2017)	₹67,993.29 (equivalent to ₹160,000 or US$2,500 in 2017)
Nadia	₹18,205.56 crore (equivalent to ₹440 billion or US$6.7 billion in 2017)	₹29,006.54 (equivalent to ₹70,000 or US$1,100 in 2017)
Murshidabad	₹21,280.12 crore (equivalent to ₹510 billion or US$7.9 billion in 2017)	₹25,416.46 (equivalent to ₹61,000 or US$940 in 2017)
Uttar Dinajpur	₹6,843 crore (equivalent to ₹170 billion or US$2.5 billion in 2017)	₹18,836.95 (equivalent to ₹46,000 or US$700 in 2017)
Dakshin Dinajpur	₹4,955.3 crore (equivalent to ₹120 billion or US$1.8 billion in 2017)	₹23,599.48 (equivalent to ₹57,000 or US$870 in 2017)
Malda	₹12,023.94 crore (equivalent to ₹290 billion or US$4.5 billion in 2017)	₹25,412.24 (equivalent to ₹61,000 or US$940 in 2017)
Jalpaiguri	₹14,240.17 crore (equivalent to ₹340 billion	₹29,692.58 (equivalent to ₹72,000 or US$1,100 in

District	Gross District Domestic Product (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)	hideGross District Domestic Product Per Capita (as of 2013-14, at Constant (2004–05) Prices)
	or US$5.3 billion in 2017)	2017)
Darjeeling	₹10,664.32 crore (equivalent to ₹260 billion or US$4.0 billion in 2017)	₹45,808.78 (equivalent to ₹110,000 or US$1,700 in 2017)
Cooch Behar	₹7,895.18 crore (equivalent to ₹190 billion or US$2.9 billion in 2017)	₹24,973.51 (equivalent to ₹60,000 or US$930 in 2017)
Purulia	₹8,340.2 crore (equivalent to ₹200 billion or US$3.1 billion in 2017)	₹24,749.26 (equivalent to ₹60,000 or US$920 in 2017)
West Bengal	**₹371,795.04 crore (equivalent to ₹9.0 trillion or US$140 billion in 2017)**	**₹36,293.33 (equivalent to ₹88,000 or US$1,300 in 2017)**

Foreign direct investment

Under the overall guidance and policies of the government of India, the West Bengal government welcomes foreign technology and investments as may be appropriate for the needs of the state and is mutually advantageous. Foreign direct investment has mostly come in the manufacturing and telecommunication sectors. According to the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Government of India, the cumulative FDI inflow in Kolkata Reserve Bank region (comprising West Bengal, Sikkim, Andaman and Nicobar Islands) from April 2000 to September 2016 amounted to US$ 3967 million. Kolkata Reserve Bank region was seventh among the reserve bank regions of the country in terms of amount of cumulative FDI, behind Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Hyderabad regions.

Exports

West Bengal is one of the country's leading exporters of finished leather goods. In 2009–10, the state accounted for around 13.5% of the country's exports of leather and leather products. The state accounted for around 70% of India's dried flower exports in 2008–09. The state is also a leading exporter of shrimps and tea.

However, the rapid industrialisation process has given rise to debate over land acquisition for industry in this agrarian state. NASSCOM–Gartner ranks West Bengal power infrastructure the best in the country.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do you understand Pattern of Support Mobilization?

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2. Describe the Economic Policies.

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6.4   NATURE OF PRIORITY FIXATION

The most significant conditions for the success of planning is the setting of central planning authority.

For instance, in India, there is Planning Commission and in Russia, there is Gosplan. This body carries a group of experts, economists, statisticians, engineers etc. who deal with the different aspects of the economy. They suggest measures for the proper implementation of the plan.

2. Reliable Statistical Data:

A pre-requisite for the sound and successful planning is the availability of reliable, adequate and accurate statistical data relating to various fields of the economy. For obtaining necessary statistical information, a survey

of the existing and potential resources has to be undertaken like raw-material, capital, human and natural resources of the country.

3. Specific Objective:

Another imperative condition for the success of economic planning is the specific objective. The prescribed objectives should be definite and laid down in an order of priority keeping in view the urgency of economy's problems. Moreover, objectives should not be too many in number but should be realistic, mutually compatible, flexible and feasible within means.

4. Fixation of Targets and Priorities:

It is equally necessary to fix the targets and priorities and further capability of their achievement. In other words, those schemes or projects which are required to be executed first, should be given top priority and less significant projects should have low priority. The programmes of priorities should not be much rigid: rather it may be changed according to the requirements of the economy. These targets should be mutually consistent for attaining a particular growth rate for the economy.

5. Suitable Economic Organisation:

For the success of planning there must be suitable economic organisation which promotes but do not hinder the progress of the country. In other words, socialistic economic organisation in which means of production are socialized is a basic condition for the realistic planning in a country. But on the contrary, the experience of capitalistic countries show that private enterprise never promotes planning.

6. Strong and Stable Government:

The success of economic planning also depends on the strong and stable government with a high degree of authority. Planning process is in danger in many underdeveloped countries due to frequent change in their governments. In this matter, India is fortunate enough as it enjoyed considerate political stability during the period of its planning process.

7. Fair and Efficient Administration:

The administrative machinery with a high degree of honesty and efficiency plays very pioneer role in the formulation and implementation of plans. Our country has a bitter experience in this regard. Even the best

plans fail due to corrupt, inefficient, inactive and lethargic administration.

In most of the poor and backward countries there is a great paucity of trained and competent administration and technical personnel which is chief constraint in the development of the country. Prof. W.A. Lewis considers a strong competent and incorrupt administration as the first condition for the success of the plan.

8. Mobilization of Resources:

The success of planning, in fact, is based on the proper mobilization of financial resources of the country. In an underdeveloped country, resources are inadequate and irregular, ineffectively developed and mobilized to the required extent.

6.5 WHY THE LACK OF INDUSTRY IN WEST BENGAL?

There is an influential popular narrative around the question of lack of industry in West Bengal. It goes something like this — militant trade unionism of the Left parties ruined West Bengal's industries although West Bengal was an industrial power house during the Congress regime.

The Left is often blamed for ruining the economic prospects of the state. But, there is a purist Leftist popular narrative that argues that the Left, especially under Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, deviated from the Left cause, surrendered to neo-liberalism and therefore lost popular support which eventually led to the demise of the Left Front.

I have tried to show in my book *Exploring Marxist Bengal* that the popular perception has something to do with a sense of decline in middle-class Bengal, which was quite common in the '90s: A Bengal losing out to Hyderabad or Bangalore, post-liberalisation.

One indicator of this was the growing popularity of NRI grooms. Registering this perception is important, but let me here take note of some scholarly works on industry in West Bengal. Here we are not concerned with the perception and its impact, but rather the academic understanding of why there was an industrial decline in West Bengal.

Let's start with jute.

Golden fibre's glory lost

Anwesha Sengupta, assistant professor, Institute of Development Studies Kolkata has traced the history of the jute industry in Bengal since Independence in her paper *Unthreading partition: the politics of jute sharing between two Bengals*. She has shown that the jute industry boomed during the Second World War. However, Partition had a devastating impact on the industry.

Five jute mills in Calcutta shut down within a year. The flow of raw jute was also affected: By October 1947, only two-third of the normal volume of jute arrived in the city. The price of jute jumped to Rs 29 per maund in 1946-47 from Rs 16 per maund in 1945-46.

India and Pakistan (East) decided to initially cooperate with each other, but the situation soon became complicated. Sengupta has highlighted how the bureaucracy of the two countries soon became embroiled in conflict that affected the industry.

The two countries became competitors rather than collaborators in the industry. At the same time, internationally, there was a search for alternatives to jute. Already by 1961, a study conducted in London was showing that there were several substitutes and the demand for jute products in industrial countries was likely to decrease by 40 to 60 per cent.

The jute industry, which was one of the most important industries of colonial Bengal, was already declining by 1960s as a result of Partition, lack of cooperation between India and Pakistan after Independence and change in global demand.

Phase-wise industrial history of the state

Abhinandan Das from Jadavpur University divided the history of industry in West Bengal in the 20th century into four phases — 1948-1965, 1966-1976, 1977-1985 and 1985-2000 in his unpublished PhD thesis titled *Politics of Industrialization in West Bengal (1948-2000): Case Studies of Haldia and Durgapur Industrial Zones*.

According to the thesis, each phase has its own distinct characteristic. He described the first period (1948-1965) as an era of hope and reconstruction. During this time, under the five-year plan regime, there was development of new industries. The Durgapur Steel Plant and Durgapur town came up, the Damodar Valley Corp power station started functioning and diary-based industry came up in Kalyani.

The annual compound growth rate between 1947 and 1958 was 3.31 per cent, which was higher than the all-India average of 2.75 per cent. However, he also shows that during this time West Bengal began to lose its eminent position to Bombay. The latter was developing much faster.

By 1964 factories in Bombay employed 13.53 lakh people, when West Bengal employed 8.87 lakh people. By 1966, the number of licenses approved for Maharashtra was higher than that of West Bengal, although the latter was second in India.

During the next period (1966-76), West Bengal's relative position began to decline further. The Centre's policy of freight equalisation gave a "major blow" to the engineering industry of the state. While the central government tried to protect the industries based on domestic market through import tariffs, it did very little to promote export-oriented industries like jute and tea, which were the traditional industries of West Bengal.

The state's agriculture during this period was showing very little growth. Between 1952-53 and 1964-65, Tamil Nadu's agricultural growth rate grew by 4.17 per cent and West Bengal's by 1.94 per cent.

Labour unrest

Das has shown that as employment fell between 1965 and 1970, labour unrest began. The situation was made worse by crop failure and inflation. Food riots took place and Bengal witnessed the ultra-Left Naxalite movement.

Das has, however, argued that the flight of capital from West Bengal during this time cannot be explained in terms of labour trouble alone, since Maharashtra also witnessed severe labour problems. The fact was that Bengal's industries were slowing down. The number of licenses given to West Bengal in 1977 was 40 and Maharashtra received 150.

Five inter-linked factors, according to Das, resulted in the slowing down of the industrial economy — nation-wide economic recession, freight equalisation, lack of facilities for diversion of industrial base, flight of capital and political turmoil.

New policy did nothing new

When the Left Front came to power in the state, they inherited a declining industrial economy. The new industrial policy of 1978 gave priority to small and cottage industries and sought to "curtail the stranglehold of big houses, foreign multinational firms in the organised sector".

This policy, according to Das, was not successful in reviving the industrial situation in West Bengal. This could be partly because of poor implementation of the policy or because of conflict with the central government, but the net result was that "between 1980 and 1990, in terms of State Domestic Product (SDP) West Bengal ranked 13" among Indian states.

In 1977-78, West Bengal was still number two after Maharashtra in terms of employment and value added. By 1987-88 Maharashtra was still number one but West Bengal fell to fourth in terms of employment and fifth in terms of value added.

Liberalisation and investment

The fourth phase, Das argues, began from the 1990s as the Indian economy began to liberalise. The initial response of the Left Front was to oppose the liberalisation policy, both inside Parliament and on the streets. But in practice, West Bengal sought to take advantage of the end of license raj and formulated an industrial policy in 1994 that was radically different from the policy of 1978.

This time around the West Bengal government welcomed foreign investment. The then Chief Minister Jyoti Basu and Somnath Chatterjee travelled to many capitalist countries to attract investment. In spite of the hype around the new industrial policy and some increase in investment, Das wrote, "The new economic policy could not resist the decline of industrial output of the state."

In terms of ex-factory value-added output, West Bengal's share was 6 per cent in 1991, which went down to 3.9 per cent by 1999-2000 when his study comes to an end.

Abhinandan Das' analysis of the decline of industry in Bengal more or less corroborates the argument of Ritanjan Das, from London School of Economics and Political Science. Ritanjan, in his thesis *History, Ideology and Negotiation: The Politics of Policy Transition in West Bengal*, argued that there were four inter-related reasons behind the economic decline:

- By 1965, West Bengal, in terms of value-added per employee, was already behind Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu.

- The Centre's policies of freight cost equalisation for coal and steel had a negative impact.

- Import substitution policy overlooked the needs of the jute industry.

- Re-shaping of the political contours meant that licensing was decided by politics rather than economics.

Both scholars agree that by the end of the Congress regime in West Bengal industry had already started to decline and there were many factors behind this decline. It cannot be blamed only on militant trade unionism of Left parties.

Regarding the unsuccessful efforts of the Left Front to revive the industrial scenario the two scholars are also more or less in agreement. Ritanjan has argued that reviving the industrial scenario was less important to the Left Front after 1977 than land reform and Panchayati

Raj. According to him, Left Front initially nurtured a deep suspicion of big business.

The attitude, he has correctly observed, began to change after the fall of the Soviet Union on one hand and the liberalisation of the economy on the other hand. He has also correctly identified the 14th Party Congress of Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1992 as a turning point.

So, it can be argued that the Left Front inherited a weakening scenario of industrialisation and was not able to reverse the situation. The situation became somewhat better under Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee but after the fall of the Left Front in 2011, there has not been much progress, although the West Bengal government under the All India Trinamool Congress is keen on inviting capital as shown in the annual Bengal Leads event.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

3. How do you know the Nature of Priority Fixation?

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4. Why the lack of industry in West Bengal?

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6.6 LET US SUM UP

Mobilization became an issue with the introduction of conscription, and the introduction of the railways in the 19th century. Mobilization institutionalized the mass levy of conscripts that was first introduced during the French Revolution, and that had changed the character of war. A number of technological and societal changes promoted the move towards a more organized way of deployment. These included the telegraph to provide rapid communication, the railways to provide rapid movement and concentration of troops, and conscription to provide a trained reserve of soldiers in case of war.

6.7 KEY WORDS

Mobilization: Mobilization, in military terminology, is the act of assembling and readying troops and supplies for war. The word mobilization was first used, in a military context, to describe the preparation of the Imperial Russian Army during the 1850s and 1860s. Mobilization theories and tactics have continuously changed since then. The opposite of mobilization is demobilization.

The obtainability and mobilization of resources is a sine qua non for real capital formation and, hence, national development. Sustainable development can only be achieved if resources are efficiently mobilized and transformed into productive activities. The development of an efficient financial system in providing the vital link between savings and investment is thus important. Not only must there be coordination of different agencies within and among levels of government, there must also be coordination between the public and private sectors, and among the various components of the private sector. Whatever the level of domestic savings and however large or small the net transfer of foreign savings, there is legitimate concern to ensure that those savings are allocated to investment in a developing country in a manner that is efficient and desirable in the social, political and developmental senses. Apart from having a well-coordinated financial system, the appropriate infrastructure, human capital and institutions all have to be in place.

The Indian Government has basically relied on the use of five-year plans to implement its development strategy. Traditionally, a major portion of the financing for the Indian economy is intermediated through the banking system as reflected by the high bank credit to GDP ratio of 126 per cent as at end of 1999. This trend is changing as the landscape of the economy varies, necessitating a broader scope of financing to meet its needs.

6.8 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you understand Pattern of Support Mobilization?
2. Describe the Economic Policies
3. How do you know the Nature of Priority Fixation?

4. Why the lack of industry in West Bengal?

6.9 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

- Keegan, John (1999). The First World War. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. ISBN 0-375-40052-4.

- State, society, and mobilization in Europe during the First World War, edited by John Horne, Cambridge-New York : Cambridge University Press, 1997.

6.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 6.2
2. See Section 6.3

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 6.4
2. See Section 6.5

UNIT 7: RADICAL LEFT POLICIES IN WEST BENGAL

STRUCTURE

7.0   OBJECTIVES

After this unit, we can able to know:

- To know about Anti-capitalism
- To discuss Far-left politics
- To know about Political radicalism
- To describe Ultra-leftism
- To highlight Radical left policies in West Bengal –Rise
- To find out the Consolidation and subsequent Decline

7.1   INTRODUCTION

Left-wing politics supports social equality and egalitarianism, often in opposition to social hierarchy. It typically involves a concern for those in society whom its adherents perceive as disadvantaged relative to others as well as a belief that there are unjustified inequalities that need to be reduced or abolished.

The political terms "Left" and "Right" were coined during the French Revolution (1789–1799), referring to the seating arrangement in the French Estates General: those who sat on the left generally opposed the monarchy and supported the revolution, including the creation of a republic and secularization, while those on the right were supportive of the traditional institutions of the Old Regime. Use of the term "Left" became more prominent after the restoration of the French monarchy in 1815 when it was applied to the "Independents". The word "wing" was appended to Left and Right in the late 19th century, usually with disparaging intent and "left-wing" was applied to those who were unorthodox in their religious or political views.

The term was later applied to a number of movements, especially republicanism during the French Revolution in the 18th century, followed by socialism, communism, anarchism and social democracy in the 19th and 20th centuries. Since then, the term left-wing has been applied to a broad range of movements including civil rights movements, feminist movements, anti-war movements and environmental movements, as well as a wide range of parties. According to former professor of economics Barry Clark, "[leftists] claim that human development flourishes when individuals engage in cooperative, mutually respectful relations that can thrive only when excessive differences in status, power, and wealth are eliminated".

7.2 ANTI-CAPITALISM

Anti-capitalism encompasses a wide variety of movements, ideas and attitudes that oppose capitalism. Anti-capitalists, in the strict sense of the word, are those who wish to replace capitalism with another type of economic system.

Socialism

Karl Marx, considered by many as one of the "founding fathers" of anti-capitalist thought Socialism advocates public or direct worker ownership and administration of the means of production and allocation of resources, and a society characterized by equal access to resources for all individuals, with an egalitarian method of compensation.

A theory or policy of social organisation which aims at or advocates the ownership and democratic control of the means of production, by workers or the community as a whole, and their administration or distribution in the interests of all.

Socialists argue for a cooperative/community economy, or the commanding heights of the economy, with democratic control by the people over the state, although there have been some undemocratic philosophies. "State" or "worker cooperative" ownership is in fundamental opposition to "private" ownership of means of production, which is a defining feature of capitalism. Most socialists argue that capitalism unfairly concentrates power, wealth and profit, among a small segment of society that controls capital and derives its wealth through exploitation.

Socialists argue that the accumulation of capital generates waste through externalizations that require costly corrective regulatory measures. They also point out that this process generates wasteful industries and practices that exist only to generate sufficient demand for products to be sold at a profit (such as high-pressure advertisement); thereby creating rather than satisfying economic demand.

Socialists argue that capitalism consists of irrational activity, such as the purchasing of commodities only to sell at a later time when their price appreciates, rather than for consumption, even if the commodity cannot be sold at a profit to individuals in need; they argue that making money, or accumulation of capital, does not correspond to the satisfaction of demand.

Private ownership imposes constraints on planning, leading to inaccessible economic decisions that result in immoral production, unemployment and a tremendous waste of material resources during crisis of overproduction. According to socialists, private property in the means of production becomes obsolete when it concentrates into centralized, socialized institutions based on private appropriation of revenue (but based on cooperative work and internal planning in allocation of inputs) until the role of the capitalist becomes redundant. With no need for capital accumulation and a class of owners, private property in the means of production is perceived as being an outdated

form of economic organization that should be replaced by a free association of individuals based on public or common ownership of these socialized assets. Socialists view private property relations as limiting the potential of productive forces in the economy.

Early socialists (Utopian socialists and Ricardian socialists) criticized capitalism for concentrating power and wealth within a small segment of society, and does not utilise available technology and resources to their maximum potential in the interests of the public.

Anarchism and libertarian socialism

Emma Goldman famously denounced wage slavery by saying: "The only difference is that you are hired slaves instead of block slaves."

For the influential German individualist anarchist philosopher Max Stirner, "private property is a spook which "lives by the grace of law" and it "becomes 'mine' only by effect of the law". In other words, private property exists purely "through the protection of the State, through the State's grace." Recognising its need for state protection, Stirner argued that "[i]t need not make any difference to the 'good citizens' who protects them and their principles, whether an absolute King or a constitutional one, a republic, if only they are protected. And what is their principle, whose protector they always 'love'? Not that of labour", rather it is "interest-bearing possession ... labouring capital, therefore ... labour certainly, yet little or none at all of one's own, but labour of capital and of the—subject labourers"." French anarchist Pierre Joseph Proudhon opposed government privilege that protects capitalist, banking and land interests, and the accumulation or acquisition of property (and any form of coercion that led to it) which he believed hampers competition and keeps wealth in the hands of the few. The Spanish individualist anarchist Miguel Gimenez Igualada saw "capitalism [as] an effect of government; the disappearance of government means capitalism falls from its pedestal vertiginously...That which we call capitalism is not something else but a product of the State, within which the only thing that is being pushed forward is profit, good or badly acquired. And so to fight against capitalism is a pointless task, since be it State capitalism or Enterprise

capitalism, as long as Government exists, exploiting capital will exist. The fight, but of consciousness, is against the State.".

Within anarchism there emerged a critique of wage slavery which refers to a situation perceived as quasi-voluntary slavery, where a person's livelihood depends on wages, especially when the dependence is total and immediate. It is a negatively connoted term used to draw an analogy between slavery and wage labor by focusing on similarities between owning and renting a person. The term wage slavery has been used to criticize economic exploitation and social stratification, with the former seen primarily as unequal bargaining power between labor and capital (particularly when workers are paid comparatively low wages, e.g. in sweatshops), and the latter as a lack of workers' self-management, fulfilling job choices and leisure in an economy. Libertarian socialists believe if freedom is valued, then society must work towards a system in which individuals have the power to decide economic issues along with political issues. Libertarian socialists seek to replace unjustified authority with direct democracy, voluntary federation, and popular autonomy in all aspects of life, including physical communities and economic enterprises. With the advent of the industrial revolution, thinkers such as Proudhon and Marx elaborated the comparison between wage labor and slavery in the context of a critique of societal property not intended for active personal use, Luddites emphasized the dehumanization brought about by machines while later Emma Goldman famously denounced wage slavery by saying: "The only difference is that you are hired slaves instead of block slaves.". American anarchist Emma Goldman believed that the economic system of capitalism was incompatible with human liberty. "The only demand that property recognizes," she wrote in Anarchism and Other Essays, "is its own gluttonous appetite for greater wealth, because wealth means power; the power to subdue, to crush, to exploit, the power to enslave, to outrage, to degrade." She also argued that capitalism dehumanized workers, "turning the producer into a mere particle of a machine, with less will and decision than his master of steel and iron."

Noam Chomsky contends that there is little moral difference between chattel slavery and renting one's self to an owner or "wage slavery". He

feels that it is an attack on personal integrity that undermines individual freedom. He holds that workers should own and control their workplace. Many libertarian socialists argue that large-scale voluntary associations should manage industrial manufacture, while workers retain rights to the individual products of their labor. As such, they see a distinction between the concepts of "private property" and "personal possession". Whereas "private property" grants an individual exclusive control over a thing whether it is in use or not, and regardless of its productive capacity, "possession" grants no rights to things that are not in use.

In addition to individualist anarchist Benjamin Tucker's "big four" monopolies (land, money, tariffs, and patents), Kevin Carson argues that the state has also transferred wealth to the wealthy by subsidizing organizational centralization, in the form of transportation and communication subsidies. He believes that Tucker overlooked this issue due to Tucker's focus on individual market transactions, whereas Carson also focuses on organizational issues. Carson holds that "capitalism, arising as a new class society directly from the old class society of the Middle Ages, was founded on an act of robbery as massive as the earlier feudal conquest of the land. It has been sustained to the present by continual state intervention to protect its system of privilege without which its survival is unimaginable." Carson coined the pejorative term "vulgar libertarianism," a phrase that describes the use of a free market rhetoric in defense of corporate capitalism and economic inequality. According to Carson, the term is derived from the phrase "vulgar political economy," which Karl Marx described as an economic order that "deliberately becomes increasingly apologetic and makes strenuous attempts to talk out of existence the ideas which contain the contradictions [existing in economic life]."

Marxism

Capital: Critique of Political Economy, by Karl Marx, is a critical analysis of political economy, meant to reveal the economic laws of the capitalist mode of production

If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work, and over our ashes will be shed the hot tears of noble people..

— **Karl Marx, 1837.**

Karl Marx saw capitalism as a historical stage, once progressive but which would eventually stagnate due to internal contradictions and would eventually be followed by socialism. Marx claimed that capitalism was nothing more than a necessary stepping stone for the progression of man, which would then face a political revolution before embracing the classless society. Marxists define capital as "a social, economic relation" between people (rather than between people and things). In this sense they seek to abolish capital. They believe that private ownership of the means of production enriches capitalists (owners of capital) at the expense of workers ("the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer"). In brief, they argue that the owners of the means of production do not work and therefore exploit the workerforce. In Karl Marx's view, the capitalists would eventually accumulate more and more capital impoverishing the working class, creating the social conditions for a revolution that would overthrow the institutions of capitalism. Private ownership over the means of production and distribution is seen as a dependency of non-owning classes on the ruling class, and ultimately a source of restriction of human freedom.

Fascism

Fascists opposed both international socialism and free market capitalism, arguing that their views represented a third position. They claimed to provide a realistic economic alternative that was neither laissez-faire capitalism nor communism. They favored corporatism and class collaboration, believing that the existence of inequality and social hierarchy was beneficial (contrary to the views of socialists), while also

arguing that the state had a role in mediating relations between classes (contrary to the views of liberal capitalists).

Barter

Barter is a system of exchange where goods or services are directly exchanged for other goods or services without using a medium of exchange, such as money. It is distinguishable from gift economies in many ways; one of them is that the reciprocal exchange is immediate and not delayed in time. It is usually bilateral, but may be multilateral (i.e., mediated through barter organizations) and, in most developed countries, usually only exists parallel to monetary systems to a very limited extent. Barter, as a replacement for money as the method of exchange, is used in times of monetary crisis, such as when the currency may be either unstable (e.g., hyperinflation or deflationary spiral) or simply unavailable for conducting commerce. Bartering could be considered a social starting point towards an anti-capitalist system, by negating the need for a medium of exchange.

Wage slavery

Wage slavery refers to a situation where a person's livelihood depends on wages or a salary, especially when the dependence is total and immediate. It is a pejorative term used to draw an analogy between slavery and wage labor by focusing on similarities between owning and renting a person.

The term wage slavery has been used to criticize exploitation of labour and social stratification, with the former seen primarily as unequal bargaining power between labor and capital (particularly when workers are paid comparatively low wages, e.g. in sweatshops), and the latter as a lack of workers' self-management, fulfilling job choices, and leisure in an economy. The criticism of social stratification covers a wider range of employment choices bound by the pressures of a hierarchical society to perform otherwise unfulfilling work that deprives humans of their "species character" not only under threat of starvation or poverty, but also of social stigma and status diminution. It has been argued by some centre-left and left leaning activists that the economy of the

contemporary United States constitutes a softer form of wage slavery, in which conditions are not grinding, but nonetheless not conducive to individual economic progress.

7.3   FAR-LEFT POLITICS

Far-left politics are political views located further on the left of the left-right spectrum than the standard political left. The term has been used to describe ideologies such as: communism, anarchism, neo-Marxism, anarcho-communism, left-communism, Marxism–Leninism, Stalinism, Trotskyism, and Maoism.

The term far left is a label used for political movements and parties that champion the abolition of private property and the achievement and upholding of a largely equal society in terms of "to each according to need" commodity distribution, rejection of currency, and advocacy of equal rights. Most of these movements fall under the label of either communist, left-wing anarchist, or socialist. If you hear it in American politics chances are it's being used as a snarl word to describe any liberal, even though many people on the actual far left may take offence at being called a liberal and vice versa.

Do the far left and the far right ever seem hopelessly similar to you? Horseshoe Theory suggests that the political spectrum is not a straight line with ideologies moving across a line from left to right, but rather a horseshoe, with its farthest outliers bending in toward each other and sharing a number of beliefs. Violent clashes between the far left and far right, at UC Berkeley, in Charlottesville, North Carolina, and recently in Portland, Oregon, have challenged society to take a look at the actions of the far left and far right and ask: To what extent does similarity in action mean similarity in character?

Below, we'll discuss three ways the far left and far right are two peas in a pod, and three ways they couldn't be more different than night and day.

The Far Left and the Far Right Are Two Peas in a Pod

Victim complex.

People on the outermost poles of the political spectrum, meaning on both the far left and the far right, often view themselves as aggrieved parties.

Interestingly, one study found that having faced adversity – namely violence, loss of a loved one, or experiencing illness or disability – is indeed a predictor of extreme political views; the more adversity people faced, the more likely they were to lean to the far right or far left in their ideologies. Experiencing adversity may explain the rhetoric of victimization that permeates the far left as well as the far right. White Nationalists complain of cultural and economic obliteration at the hands of the multicultural movement and affirmative action, while proponents of the far left demand restitution for the silencing of minority groups via discriminatory legislation and micro-aggressions.

By any means necessary.

Militancy pervades the ranks of the far left and the far right. More than idolizing violent purveyors of their ideologies (think far right's Hitler to the far left's Che Guevara), many far right and left movements are vehement in their rejection of non-violence and employ it regularly. Right-wing groups are said to have carried out 150 attacks on US soil – from shooting to bombings – since 1993. Similar crimes have been perpetrated by militant offshoots of left-wing groups, beginning with the 1960's Weathermen and continuing until today with the Antifa movement.

An idle mind is the devil's playground.

Scientists have connected boredom to the adoption of extreme political stances, calling youth, wealth, and education the most common risk factors of extremism. Without families to support or even necessarily the need to support themselves, the average college student has more free time than others to develop defined political views. As such, it is hardly surprising that constituents on the far right and far left are overwhelmingly educated and even well-off (a trend that held even for the Hezbollah fighters of the 1980s and 90s).

Advertisement

The Far Left and Far Right Are as Different as Night and Day.

Different hard-wiring.

Psychologist have determined that liberal and conservative brains literally function quite differently. For example, an examination of the possessions of liberal and conservative college students revealed that the former had more books and travel-memorabilia, while the latter had more items relating to cleaning and organization. This investigation suggested key differences in conservative and liberal mindsets – with one emphasizing self-discipline and order, and the other leaning toward the discovery of new experiences. This hard-wiring gives rise to dramatically different value systems – systems that view the basic ideas like fairness, equality, and even right and wrong in radically different terms.

History is in the eye of the beholder.

The far right and the far left have dramatically different interpretations of the past – interpretations which dictate their political stances and calls to action. The far right expresses nostalgia for the past, and actively works to preserve their history, regardless of what that might mean in today's context. For right-wing Southerners like the members of Save Southern Heritage, this means protecting statues of famous Confederates, and decrying the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings. Conversely, the far left (and in this case, many liberals) associates the past with its ills – slavery, sexism, and other injustices. History and its institutions are not to be preserved and cherished, but rather, an embarking point from which to begin reform.

Superficial similarities.

When two groups utilize similar tactics, it does not necessarily mean that the groups are one and the same. The Antifa and white nationalist movements exemplify key ideological differences that should not be overlooked. While Antifa and white nationalist movements both express distaste for the government (and even a will to overthrow it), their reasons for these sentiments are rather opposite. Antifa, whose members also frequently identify as anarchists, view government as an instrument of inequality, while white nationalists express hostility toward

government because they believe it facilitates equality – a notion that offends those whose identity is built upon a defined racial hierarchy.

Common stances

The abolition of private property. The abolition of class and perfect or near-perfect economic equality among people. In contrast to common opinion nearly all far-left philosophies call for the eventual abolition of government. Usually the abolition of discrimination, since this is seen as a method of dividing the lower class from unity with one another. This one's somewhat of a headscratcher considering the extreme social conservatism present in many communist dictatorships such as under Stalinist or Maoist systems. Many used to call for a single united world, usually without borders, though the idea of "Socialism in one country" caused some far-left movements to become highly nationalistic. Methods used to obtain said goals range from embracing pacifism (unlike the far-right) to outright violence.

Theory vs practice

Rarely do far-left movements actually enact these goals since in practice the most ruthless members of these movements tend to position themselves to take it over, at which point they tend to devolve into highly nationalistic and brutal dictatorships. Anarchist or generally libertarian left movements have had more success in standing by their ideals however, such as in Catalonia during the Spanish Civil War (until both the fascists and the Stalinists killed them that is), along with the Neo-Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico and more recently, Rojava during the Syrian Civil War.

Philosophies

Communism, ranging from Trotskyism, Stalinism, Marxism, Maoism, and so on.

Anarchist left political thought.

Hard greens may be labeled far-left.

Some socialists, such as De Leonists.

Not far-left

Like the label far-right, the term is oftentimes used inappropriately and pejoratively to movements that are not actually of the extreme left, such as;

Definitely not Far-Left

Social Democracy- As social democrats accept the presence of a widespread market system, private property, and some degree of class inequality they are not far-left. This label is even more absurd when applied to "Third Way" social democrats who are essentially centrists.

Social Liberalism- As social liberals are even more toned down than old-styled social democrats (as they do not advocate for nationalization of any business) it's really hard to see how they are "far-left" in any meaningful sense of the word.

Nazism- Nazism is a form of fascism which is inherently far-right. While the Nazi's did enact some policies that could be seen as "left" by the US political sphere, their stance on ultra-nationalism, racial superiority, their promotion of social inequality and etc. makes them far-right. One must also remember that the NSDAP means "National Socialist German Workers Party", while socialist and workers are far-left, wingnuts like to ignore that "National" and "German" were far-right, "patriotic" terms in 1930's Germany. Economists also rate Nazi Germany as centrist in terms of economic stance as it had no clearly defined economic policy and hated both communists and capitalists.

in case of controversy

Juche- This one's actually arguable. Most scholars today believe North Korea's ideology is actually much closer to ethnic fascism than communism though. While this may be seen as bordering on a No True Scotsman it's worth noting they recently removed all mentions of communism from their constitution in recent years, although their constitution still begins with the phrase "The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a socialist fatherland", and still contains dozens of references to socialism.

Socialism with Chinese characteristics- This is the ideology of the current Chinese Communist Party. It can now be seen as China's economic system. (See the China#Economy_of_China document for details.)

7.4 POLITICAL RADICALISM

Radical politics denotes the intent to transform or replace the fundamental principles of a society or political system, often through social change, structural change, revolution or radical reform. The process of adopting radical views is termed radicalisation.

The word "radical" derives from the Latin radix ("root") and Late Latin rādīcālis ("of or pertaining to the root, radical"). Historically, political use of the term referred exclusively to a form of progressive electoral reformism, known as Radicalism, that had developed in Europe during the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the denotation has changed since its 18th century coinage to comprehend the entire political spectrum, though retaining the connotation of "change at the root".

History

The Encyclopædia Britannica records the first political usage of "radical" as ascribed to Charles James Fox, a British Whig Party parliamentarian who in 1797 proposed a "radical reform" of the electoral system, franchise to provide universal manhood suffrage, thereby idiomatically establishing "Radicals" to denote supporters of the reformation of the British Parliament.

Throughout the 19th century, the concept of radical politics broadened into a variety of political notions and doctrines, manifesting in working class, middle class, philosophic, democratic, bourgeois, Tory and plebeian forms. In the event, influential political figures, such as Thomas Spence and Richard Carlile, gave rise to their own trends of radical politics. As party politics in England became less radical, marginalised radical movements branched off and formed more politically aggressive factions. In United States politics, the term came to be used pejoratively among conservatives and moderates to denote political extremism. The 19th century *Cyclopaedia of Political Science* describes it as "characterized less by its principles than by the manner of their application".

During the 20th century, radical politics took political power in many countries across the world. Among these radical leaders were Joseph Stalin in Russia, Mao Zedong in China, Adolf Hitler in Germany, as well

as more mainstream radicals such as Ronald Reagan in the United States, and Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom.

Positions

Status quo change

The common feature to all radical political forms is a view that some fundamental change is required of the status quo. For an array of anti-capitalist forms, this manifests in anti-establishment reactions to modern neo-liberal regimes.

Concept of ideology

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy describes the radical concept of ideology to be that:

- While social conditions exist "that are vulnerable to criticism and protest; ideology exists to protect these social conditions from attack by those who are disadvantaged by them."
- "Ideology conserves by camouflaging flawed social conditions, giving an illusory account of their rationale or function, in order to legitimate and win acceptance of them."

This view reflects "a consensus among radicals of all stripes on the role of law as a dissembling force to safeguard the unjust relations of the status quo." This radical critique of ideology is especially prominent within post-leftism. Furthermore, in addressing specific issues some radical politics may completely forego any overarching ideological plan.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do you know about Anti-capitalism?

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2. Discuss Far-left politics.

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3. How do you know about Political radicalism?

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7.5 ULTRA-LEFTISM

The term ultra-leftism has two overlapping uses. A usage common among Marxist activist groups ("historical ultra-left" below) is as a generally pejorative term for certain types of positions on the far-left that are extreme or intransigent. Another definition historically refers to a particular current of Marxist communism, in which the Communist International repudiated social democratic parties (and all other progressive groupings outside of the Communist Party). Pejoratively, ultra-left is often used by Marxists against other socialists, communists, and anarchists within far-left parties who advocate strategies which some Marxists may consider to be without regard of the current political consciousness or of the long-term consequences that would result from following a proposed course.

Ultra-leftism within and outside the Communist International was evident in periods when political groupings pursued council communism and left communism.

The historical ultra-left

The term *ultra left* is rarely used in English. Instead, people tend to speak broadly of left communism as a variant of traditional Marxism. The French equivalent, *ultra-gauche*, has a stronger meaning in that language and is used to define a movement that still exists today: a branch of left communism developed by theorists such as Amadeo Bordiga, Otto Rühle, Anton Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, and Paul Mattick, and continuing with more recent writers, such as Jacques Camatte and Gilles Dauvé. This standpoint includes two main traditions, a Dutch-German tradition including Rühle, Pannekoek, Gorter and Mattick, and an Italian

tradition following Bordiga. These traditions came together in the 1960s French ultra-gauche. The political theorist Nicholas Thoburn refers to these traditions as the "actuality of... the historical ultra-left".

The term originated in the 1920s in the German and Dutch workers movements, originally referring to a Marxist group opposed to both Bolshevism and social democracy, and with some affinities with anarchism. The ultra-left is defined particularly by its breed of anti-authoritarian Marxism, which generally involves an opposition to the state and to state socialism, as well as to parliamentary democracy and wage labour. In opposition to Bolshevism, the ultra left generally places heavy emphasis upon the autonomy and self-organisation of the proletariat. As Dauvé put it:

The ultra-left was born and grew in opposition to Social Democracy and Leninism—which had become Stalinism. Against them it affirmed the revolutionary spontaneity of the proletariat. The German communist left (in fact German-Dutch), and its derivatives, maintained that the only human solution lay in proletarians' own activity, without it being necessary to educate or to organize them [...] Inheriting the mantle of the ultra-left after the war, the magazine *Socialisme ou Barbarie* appeared in France between 1949 and 1965.

One variant of ultra-leftist ideas was widely revived in the New Left of the 1960s, and particularly in the May 1968 moment in libertarian socialist movements such as Big Flame, the Situationist International, and autonomism. During the May 1968 events in France, ultra-leftism was initially associated with the opposition and critique to the French Communist Party (PCF) and its cautious, relatively disengaged approach to the mobilisations. Ultra-leftism was thus used by the established currents of the communist movement to prevent, sometimes correctly, against "self-indulgent ultra-leftism [that] could only make it more difficult for the revolutionary left to win rank and file PCF members away from their leaders″.

Ultra-leftism within the Marxist movement

Used pejoratively, *ultra-left* is used to label positions that are adopted without taking notice of the current situation or of the consequences

which would result from following a proposed course. The term is used to criticize leftist positions that, for example, are seen as overstating the tempo of events, propose initiatives that overestimate the current level of militancy, or which employ appeals to violence in their activism.

The mainstream Marxist critique of such a position began with Vladimir Lenin's *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, which critiqued those (such as Anton Pannekoek or Sylvia Pankhurst) in the nascent Communist International, who argued against cooperation with parliamentary or reformist socialists. Lenin characterized the ultra-left as a politics of purity—the doctrinal "repetition of the 'truths' of pure communism". Leninists typically used the term against their rivals on the left: "the Communist Party's Betty Reid wrote in a 1969 pamphlet *Ultra-Leftism in Britain* that the CPGB made 'no exclusive claim to be the only force on the left', but dismissed the groups to the left of the CPGB as the 'ultra-left', with Reid outlining the ultra-left as groups that were Trotskyist, anarchist or syndicalist or those that 'support the line of the Communist Party of China during the Sino-Soviet Split' (pp. 7–8)".

 Trotskyists and others stated the Communist International was pursuing a strategy of unrealistic ultra-leftism during its Third Period, which the Communist International later admitted when it turned to a United Front strategy in 1934–5. The term has been popularized in the United States by the Socialist Workers Party at the time of the Vietnam war, using the term to both describe opponents in the anti-war movement including Gerry Healy. Ultra-leftism is often associated with leftist sectarianism, in which a socialist organisation might attempt to put its own short-term interests before the long-term interests of the working class and its allies.

7.6 RADICAL LEFT POLICIES IN WEST BENGAL –RISE

he Left has stayed in power due to its long standing record in revolutionary and labour movements. This election might be its undoing. Here are the highpoints and nadirs of the Left in the state.

April 1930: The Chittagong Armoury Raid Case was the most daring revolutionary endeavour by the leftist youths, under the banner of Jugantar Party and the Anushilan Party. The Chittagong group was undisputedly the best and the most successful group that Bengal's revolutionaries had ever organised.

February 1933: Masterda Surya Sen, the protagonist of the Chittagong Armoury Raid case was arrested.

May 1933: Kalpana Dutta and Tarakeshwar Dastidar were also captured and were put up for trial --- Surya Sen and Tarakeshwar Dastidar was sentenced to death, while Kalpana Dutta was sentenced to transportation for life.

January 1934: Surya Sen kissed the gallows in Chittagong jail, with his last message on a golden dream...a dream of free India, wishing his comrades the strength to fight for freedom and ending his forceful message with the slogan of Vande Mataram and reminding the nation never to forget the eastern revolution. Later, the core group of the Chittagong Arms Raid case joined the CPI.

March 1935: Jyoti Basu went to England to study law. He became an active member of the India League, a body of Indian students, led by V.K Krishna Menon. Basu, Bhupesh Gupta (also a member of the Anushilan Party) and Snehangshukanta Acharya were great friends, and came into contact with leaders of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and joined in the activities of the Communist Groups in London, Oxford, and Cambridge. Leaders like Harry Pollit, Rajni Palme Dutt, Ben Bradley and other leaders of CPGB. They had a great influencing role in shaping the ideas of the young Bengali students.

1940: After release from jail, the Chittagong Armoury Raid case convicts, Kalpana Dutta, Ananta Singh, Ambika Chakraborty and few other revolutionaries of the Chittagong Armoury raid case joined the CPI and resumed their battle against the British rule. Kalpana Dutta married P.C.Joshi, a top CPI leader in 1943.

1940: Jyoti Basu returned to India and joined the CPI. Though he enrolled himself as a barrister in Calcutta High Court, he never practiced

simply because he was determined to become a whole-timer of the party. His initial task was to maintain liaison with underground Party leaders. Basu was elected to Bengal Provincial Assembly in 1946 from the Railway Workers constituency. Ratanlal Bramhan and Rupnarayan Roy were the other two Communists who were elected. Soon, the CPI became popular, and Basu showed how the Communists can use the legislative forums for strengthening struggles.

1946-47: The Tebhaga movement was a militant campaign initiated in Bengal by the Kisan Sabha (peasants' front of Communist Party of India) in 1946. At that time, share-cropping peasants had to give half of their harvest to the owners of the land. The demand of the Tebhaga (sharing by thirds) movement was to reduce the share given to landlords to one third. In many areas the agitations turned violent, and landlords fled villages leaving parts of the countryside in the hands of Kisan Sabha. The then Muslim League government was forced to concede to the demands.

1959: The Food Movement of 1959 was the turning-point in the history of class struggle in West Bengal. The food insecurity had reached alarming proportions in rural and urban areas. On 31 August, 1959, a huge mass demonstration was organised in Kolkata where hundreds and thousands arrived from the villages under the leadership of the Kisan Sabha. At the end of the meeting, a procession began and started making its way towards Writers' Building. Without any warning, violent action by the police began, and 80 people died in the carnage that day. Not a single bullet was fired, and the police used sticks to beat people to death. Jyoti Basu compared the massacre with Jallianwallabagh in the Bengal Legislative Assembly and the combined opposition managed to corner the Congress.

1964: The Communist movement in West Bengal suffered a major setback as the Sino-Soviet ideological struggle reached its culmination. A pro-Chinese group, representing one of the most radical streams of the CPI left wing, presented a draft programme proposal of their own. Soon, CPI (Marxist) was born.

1966: A second Food Movement was launched by the left parties and its impact could be felt in the victory of the United Front government of

1967, led by Ajay Mukherjee of the bangle Congress. Even the left parties joined the government, and Jyoti Basu of CPI (M) had taken over as the deputy chief minister. But, the government did not survive for too long, and a minority government was formed by Prafulla Sen of the Indian National Congress.

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1967: Some of the Bengal's communist revolutionaries, inspired by the historic eight documents of comrade Charu Majumdar launched an armed struggle Naxalbari in North Bengal. Comrade Majumdar's documents were heavily influenced by the Chinese line of protracted people's war. The group accused the CPI (Marxist) of lapping the comfortable path of bourgeois electoral campaigns and reformism.

1969: Fresh elections were held in West Bengal in 1969. The CPI (M) emerged as the largest party in the West Bengal legislative assembly. But, with the active support of CPI and the Bangla Congress, Ajay Mukherjee returned as Chief Minister of the state. Mukherjee resigned on March 16, 1970 and the state was put under President's Rule.

1977: The Left Front won 243 seats in the assembly election, and the CPI (M) emerged as the largest party. The first Left Front government was established with Jyoti Basu as the Chief Minister. An amendment to land reforms act made cultivation in absentia an exclusionary clause for eviction of sharecroppers. Sharecroppers were provided heritable rights and the place of crop share was shifted to sharecroppers homestead plot.

1978: Registration of names of sharecroppers started in an unprecedented scale under the name "Operation Barga" was introduced by the Left Front government, along with redistribution of ceiling-surplus land.

1979: The massacre in Marichjhapi, which took place under CPI (M) rule in Bengal between January 26 and May 16, 1979, relates to the forcible eviction of refugees who had fled from East Pakistan thereby leading to the death of a sizable population among them. The Left Front government came under serious criticism because of the massacre as it was reported that 4,128 families perished in transit, died of starvation, exhaustion, and many were killed in Kashipur, Kumirmari, and Marichjhapi.

2000: West Bengal's economic recovery gathered momentum after reforms in India were introduced in the early 1990s by the central government, especially with Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee taking over as CM in 2000.

2006: Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee emerged as a knight in shining armour of West Bengal, and the Left Front won 235 seats in the assembly while the opposition Trinamool Congress was totally marginalised.

2007: A strong movement by peasants, and backed by the Trinamool Congress and the Maoists against acquisition of land at Nandigram in East Midnapore district for setting up of a mega-chemical hub. Police shot dead 14 villagers and wounded 70 others. Succumbing to the pressure, the government had to reallocate the project site.

2008: The Left Front faced a humiliating defeat in the Panchayat election. Maoists liberate Lalgarh and large areas of Jangalmahal in West Midnapore district, and the state police was caught napping. The Left Front government was again caught on the wrong foot over farmers' movement against forceful acquisition of land at Singur in Hooghly district for Tata Motors' Nano project. In October, 2008, the Tata Motors shifted its factory to Gujarat.

2009: Riding on the successes of the anti-land acquisition movements at Nandigram and Singur, the combination of SUCI, Congress and Trinamool Congress registered victories in 27 seats in the Lok Sabha election. The Trinamool Congress won 19 seats.

June 2010: After defeats in Panchayat and Lok Sabha elections, the Left Front also lost the civic polls across the state.

Naxalite Movement in West Bengal

It was during the regime of the first United Front government, back in 1967, that under the leadership of a section of the CPI (Marxist) a peasant movement was organised in the area covering Naxalbari, Kharibari and Phansidewa in the district of Darjeeling in North Bengal. Almost with lightning speed, it could have its reverberations felt all over India and in Bengal, in particular, it was able to leave its deep imprint. As of today, in 1970, in the soil of West Bengal, it has struck even deeper roots. The sections of the Bengal society which have been shaken

up most by the Naxalbari movement or, to be more accurate, Naxalite politics are the students, semi-students and non-student youth and adolescents. One can scarcely run away from the stark fact of considerable Naxalite influence on the student-youth of West Bengal. That's precisely why those who are committed to the goal of developing healthy and vibrant student and mass movements must cast a hard and impassionate look into the dynamics of interrelations between Naxalism and the student-youth community of today.

In order to make this exercise meaningful, one needs to carefully trace the trajectory of evolution-transmutation of Naxalite politics since inception.

II

With the peasant revolt of Naxalbari-Kharibari at the epicentre and capitalising on the subsequent recognition and greeting extended by the Communist Party of China (CPC) how the Naxalite political group emerged from the womb of the CPI (M) that is by now pretty well-known. Doesn't merit being recounted here.

If one takes a rather close look into the track record of the movement since inception, then it becomes difficult to miss the fact that over this period [of around three and a half years by now], even if the declared political objective (i.e. Agrarian Revolution) has remained quite unchanged, its actual programmes or activities are undergoing periodic shifts. In keeping with the change in programme has changed the (socio-political) profile of its adherents – the activists and sympathisers. Conversely, and quite notably, a change in the profile of adherents has triggered a corresponding change in the programme actually pursued on the ground.

Right in the very beginning, "Naxalism" had implied profound ideopolitical quest and self-introspection. During this period, many groups and individuals started breaking away from the CPI (M). Many of them came up with a variety of publications – weekly, fortnightly, monthly, to conduct political discourse and debates. Through the pages of these, myriad issues were being raised and explored. The two defining markers of this period are: (i) identification and assertion of Agrarian Revolution as the political goal and (ii) issuance of the call to outright

reject parliamentary politics and urgently launch armed struggle to overrun the state. As the Naxalites inaugurated a massive wave of theoretical debates to take stock of the past follies and blunders and establish their points of view, it also triggered, partly as an instinctive self-defence response and partly from honest urges, a similar, though decidedly weaker, waves of debates and discussions within other (left) parties as well. For the first time in our political life, started a broad quest to evaluate political practices in terms of pure ideology. Of all the impacts of Naxalism on West Bengal politics, this is, beyond doubt, the brightest.

The Naxalites' appeal to the people of West Bengal to reject outright all sorts of parliamentary and electoral practices to immediately embark on the path of armed revolution touched a deep chord with the idealist young activists of various Left parties and the CPI (M), in particular. Many of them had already become fed up with the daily grind of routine parliamentary politics. As a result, the call to Revolution directly appealed to them – they opted to join this movement. Even those who did not go all the way to come out of the party outright also got impacted. Became radicalised and more engaged in ideopolitcal debates and discussions.

In order to pinpoint the reason for the strong appeal of Naxalism vis-à-vis the workers and supporters of various Left parties one has to turn one's gaze towards the developments of recent past. Since the break-up of the Communist Party, thanks mainly to the Left Communists, "revolution", "class struggle" etc. became very much parts of the common vocabulary of the Bengal politics. The leaders of this party rather untiringly kept proclaiming their loyalty, in public speeches and paper statements, to these notions. Declared a crusade against all sorts of "compromise", "reformism" and "revisionism". Consequently, the grassroots activists of this party came to consider themselves pretty much militant. Thanks to the public speeches of the leaders, they became also firmly convinced that for the welfare of the common toiling masses it is necessary to take to the path of revolution. Parliamentary democracy is of no real use. (Even if many may be surprised on being told so, the bare fact remains that the party in its programme adopted back in its 1964

Tenali conference made an unwavering commitment to bring about social revolution through peaceful means. The common party cadres were just blissfully unaware. For them, the public speeches of the leaders commanded much greater trust as compared to the party documents. That continues even now.) "Revolution", "struggle", "blood" – these terms were made current with the limited objective of gaining an upper hand in factional struggle. Consequently, these terms, of course, became fairly popular but the actual implications remained rather hazy.

As a consequence, the appeal of the call to revolution, right here and now, rejecting outright the well-trodden path of parliamentary democracy, issued by the proponents of Naxalbari, capitalising on the militant peasant upsurge, further endorsed by the Communist Party of China, turned out to be sort of irresistible to the young and romantic student-activists of the CPI (M). It also focussed spotlight on the large gaps between the words and actual actions – e.g. police brutalities in Naxalbari and reluctance to go in for radical land reforms, of the leaders of various Left parties. A large section of the student activists of the CPI (M), over whom the organisational grip had been rather lax, came out declaring their unreserved loyalty to the Naxalite ideology and action programmes.

The mainstream media also played a role by disproportionately highlighting the Naxalites and their activities in order to manufacture an alibi to oust the United Front government on the ground of collapse of "law and order". That reinforced the halo around them and helped to build up an attitude of reverence in the larger student community.

Even the middle-income service holders, already with a tilt towards leftism, got somewhat attracted. Apart from some romantic affinity towards blood-spilling revolution, the glamorous presence of a good number of students with brilliant academic track records among the Naxalite ranks also helped. In the initial phase, this reverence for Naxalism, did not denote any revulsion for the United Front. The United Front was fairly popular then.

To sum up, during the initial months, the popularity of Naxalism was essentially founded on the notion that it represents a vibrant protest against election-centric traditional mainstream leftism.

III

Starting from this beginning in early '67 to this fag end of '70, if we care to look closely into the trajectory of developments, we'd note that in the meanwhile much water has flown down the Ganga. Things have since changed quite a bit. Initially, Whereas Naxalism was restricted among the leftists, the student-activists of the CPI (M), in particular, despite a section of the larger student community and the middle-income service holders being somewhat reverential towards it, has, by now, spread much wider. A much larger slice of the student community in general has got itself identified with this trend. And, not only the student community, the quasi-student and non-student youth and adolescents from the lower rungs of the society have spontaneously joined this stream.

While, in the beginning, all of the Naxalite cadres were former workers and supporters of the CPI (M), as of today, only a small fraction had any leftist past.

Initially, the Naxalite activities consisted mainly of ideological/political discussions/debates and organisational works among the students. (Of course, the attempts to build up peasant organisations by moving to the villages would also start not too long thereafter.) And, today, what does Naxalism mean is graphically captured in an extract from a recent observation: "By Naxalite or Naxal line of politics everybody (these days) understands surprise bomb attacks and armed assaults on schools, colleges, universities in Calcutta and various other towns and cities of Bengal, pulling down or defacing of statues and portraits of eminent national leaders and intellectuals, vandalising some or the other government office or academic institution, forcibly hoist the red flag over a school or college building, raising slogans like - Long Live Comrade Mao, China's Chairman Is Our Chairman, wall writing campaign promoting the move to slit throats of large rural landholders, etc. etc." To this long list, one may also very well add – extensive bombings and surprise sundry killings.

At the very beginning of this essay, it was pointed out that over the period - stretching from '67 to '70, Naxalite politics is constantly undergoing a process of gradual evolution or rather transmutation. Quite naturally, the process consists of a number of distinct stages. In order to

develop an appropriate and holistic understanding of the trajectory of this evolution, each stage needs be separately taken up, dissected and discussed. But, regardless, this exposition, because of restriction of space [in the publication that is to carry it], would limit its focus only on the initial and the latest phase.

No matter whether one looks upon Naxalism favourably or otherwise, whether one adores it or trashes it, the undeniable fact remains that the level of success attained by Naxalism in triggering a spontaneous wave of support among the quasi-student and non-student youth and adolescents from the middle class, lower-middle class and the poor is something yet quite unmatched by any other political trend or stream. Consequently, the issue that cannot but pop up before is what is the reason underlying? What distinct characteristics have made Naxalism so very compellingly attractive in the eyes of certain categories of our society? Is it because of the magic spell of the very name of Chairman Mao, or is it because of the perceived infallibility of the thesis of agrarian revolution, or is it because the student community of Bengal have finally come to realise, without any shred of doubt, that only an armed revolution would be able to dismantle the old and decaying socio-political order and inaugurate a new society where each and every member will have ample opportunities to lead a happy and joyful life with unhindered scope to make one's potentials bloom. And, as because, the Naxalites have succeeded in projecting themselves as the foremost champion of such a revolution; that's what is the real key to their huge popularity.

If we bother to take a rather closer look, we'd find that none of the above factors really offer any satisfactory explanation.

Socio-cultural life of Bengal got sucked into an unprecedented whirlpool of conflicts and tensions triggered by the World War II (1940-45). This is for the first time it got revealed before the general populace how only a handful could manage to garner enormous wealth through sheer resort to rank dishonest means. A devastating famine, without any parallel in the recent past, and an acute existential crisis compelled a large number of common people to bid adieu to their age-old deeply revered set of values. The next major event for Bengal is the Partition and the huge trauma

accompanying it. Millions got brutally uprooted, had to leave behind their hearth and home in East Bengal to cross over to unwelcoming West Bengal. Only to find that life on arrival would be too difficult and painful. Their descendants would grow up in a radically different environ – an ambience in which the sheer biological urge to survive forced them to largely trash their old values. And, it did not remain restricted to only those directly affected; cast its influence much wider – over the whole society. And, that's not the end of the story. What, however, has left the deepest imprint is the trajectory of "economic development", post-Independence, over the last two decades or so. On the one hand, a small section of people got wealthier and wealthier, on the other, the majority had to face an intense daily grind. The process that had been set in motion by the last World War has only further aggravated over the years. If excruciating poverty has turned people intensely selfish, poisoned all human relations, then, acquisition of limitless wealth and insane hunt for such acquisition gave rise to an utterly dishonest lifestyle. Those sections of the society, for whom life is not all that tough nor the prospect of acquisition so enticing, have also been affected by the broader trends and moral values have suffered steady degenerations. Spiralling urbanisation has also brought in newer uncertainties and insecurities.

Those who saw the light of day in the post-Independence era grew up in an intensely crisis-ridden social, cultural and ethical environment. As a consequence, kids born to middle class families, inheriting some intellectual capabilities, could rather readily come to see through the reigning hypocrisy, emptiness and the yawning gap between the moral precepts routinely displayed on the signboard and the actual practices in real life. They, instead of being inspired by their elders, rather turned irreverent towards them. The most remarkable marker of today's youth is its utter lack of faith in and reverence for all traditionally established ideals, value system, institutions and iconic figures. And those born to poorer strata had to, from the day one, suffer grinding poverty, remained deprived of proper education. Many of them, in later life, would find all the doors to earning their livelihood in a decent manner just shut tight. Had no whatever access to the brighter aspects of life. At the same time, the social turmoil made them much more aware about their own rightful

entitlements. Came to vaguely perceive the inegalitarian and, thereby, unjust nature of the existing social structure. Grew up with a sense of intense and blind animosity against the existing social order, its value system and all that.

The intensified economic crisis over the last four-five years has added further momentum to this process. The failure of the United Front politics and their bitter internecine bickerings also turned the youth and adolescents even more contemptuous of traditional politics, esteemed personalities and established institutions.

With this socio-economic-political scenario as the backdrop, Naxalism made its appearance on the scene with a special appeal to the disenchanted youth. Detached from this specific socio-cultural scenario, mere political slogans on public display offer just no clue to the present day developments.

The middle class student community came to discover a strong resonance of its own attitude in the utter contempt of Naxallism vis-à-vis the social order in place, the traditional political practices, time-honoured moral values etc. etc.

Parallelly, on adoption of terroristic actions on an extensive scale in the urban areas during the last six-seven months, a large section of the youth and adolescents from the lower middle and poorer classes, who had earlier been engaged, to varying degrees, in a variety of anti-social activities, turned into active Naxal cadres.

The frustrations, disappointments and disillusionments of the middle and upper middle class student community and the hatred, rage and animosity of the youth and adolescents of the poorer classes got crystallised around the Naxalite slogans and action programmes. Not that, before Naxalism there were no expressions of these trends; the speciality of Naxalism is that those earlier unorganised, dissipated and varied expressions have now, to a very significant extent, coalesced into an organised political movement. In the process, these trends have further intensified.

It is quite natural that this proposition can in no way be accepted as an axiomatic truth. It calls for some substantiation. Let us first take up a very obvious demonstrative illustration. The Naxalite call for a broad-

based peasant revolution under the leadership of the working class has just failed to make any visible impact on the urban working class and even the rural peasantry, except in some isolated organised pockets. The ideology lays down that the agrarian revolution is a revolution of the peasantry under the leadership of the working class. But the rather amusing and interesting aspect is that while this call left the, supposedly, primary actors of this "revolution" virtually untouched, it has become tremendously popular with the urban youth and adolescents. Does it not, rather convincingly, show that the key to the popularity of Naxalism doesn't lie with the theory of agrarian revolution? It lies elsewhere. If one bothers to take a still closer look, then one would notice that the ebb and tide of popular support for Naxalism is not at all in step with that of the success of agrarian revolution in rural areas. Had the theoretical or political aspect of agrarian revolution been the key, then, that's precisely what would have been expected. Of course, this calls for even further elaborations, but the restriction on space compels us to close it at this level.

IV

As a corollary of the foregoing discussion, the other issue that inevitably poses itself before us is that what is the future of this movement? In the coming days, what would be its shape, what would be its impact on the student movements and, also, larger mass struggles?

Initially, for quite a while, the capitalist class and the state machinery have looked upon Naxalism in Bengal as an effective antidote to the politics of the United Front. And that was the reason they backed it up in various active and passive ways. The most noticeable one was the wide favourable coverage by the newspapers. But, by and by, especially with the movement gaining accelerating momentum in urban areas, police actions against the movement turned more and more extensive and vicious. As a consequence, those from the middle class, including the so-called "brilliant" students, who had joined the Naxalite ranks, are gradually dissociating themselves from active participation in Naxalite programmes. However, nothing of that sort has happened with the youth from the poorer classes. Nevertheless, as the number of middle class activists keeps dwindling, it would become more and more difficult to

maintain the structural integrity of the organisation – the organisation will turn more and more decentralised and spontaneity driven. In fact, it is not altogether inconceivable that, in the coming days, the very existence of the organisation may be in jeopardy.

Naxalite politics has brought in its wake, in West Bengal politics, as yet unprecedented fascist mentality. And, whether consciously or otherwise, other left parties have become seriously affected. "Whoever slanders our party will be just skinned alive!" That clearly implies that, wherever and whenever feasible, the political opponents will just be crushed through resort to brutal force. This slogan today is no longer a monopoly of the Naxalites; it has become a common property of all the political parties.

Together with this fascist mentality and as its pretty logical outcome, we are today confronted with a terrifying situation defined by large scale mutual killings. Even trivial political conflicts are pretty often leading to quashing of human lives. It, however, needs be stated, in no uncertain terms, that in this matter the United Front is also no less responsible. In the wake of the United Front returning back to power [in 1969], its constituent parties - the CPI(M), in particular, in the mad hunt for increasing party strength, are working shoulder to shoulder along with the Naxalites to launch this new trend of large scale killings in the politics of West Bengal. In fact, bloody clashes claiming human lives have already become a routine political activity. Whether the Naxalite organisation survives or not, that this trend of bloody violence will do and, in fact, turn even more horrifying may be taken just as a given. In the days to come, Bengal politics will turn far bloodier than in the past. The spectre of common people killing common people, on an increasing scale, is emerging as the destiny, pretty difficult to avert.

As this senseless bloody violence, involving commoners, keeps rising and rising, the student movements and the larger left movements keep getting more and more alienated from the common people, continually losing their support and sympathy. And that is laying the ground for the rise of regular fascism. And, if things keep pursuing this same track, a situation will arise when, regardless of our – a handful of left workers', protests at the shrillest, the vast sections of common people, who remain

outside the domain of any particular brand of politics, would only welcome the police raj with all eagerness.

V

While discussing the philosophy of Feuerbach, Marx in the Eleventh Thesis has enunciated: "So far the philosophers have interpreted the world in various ways. Our task is to change it." Follows from that, the foregoing discussion on Naxalism would remain entirely pointless unless it helps us in working out a meaningful action programme to be implemented in the immediate future.

In order to effectively counter the above referred ill-effects in West Bengal politics, first of all what is required is to very calmly dissect the theoretical and programmatic flaws and failings of Naxalite politics and very patiently lay these out before the student community, wider public and also the Naxalite activists and supporters themselves. All at the same time, also required is to honestly build up a current of militant politics rooted firmly in ideals. Terrorist, quasi-terrorist petty bourgeois revolutionism crops up from the soil of unprincipled political opportunism. In this context, quite noteworthy is an observation by Lenin: "Anarchism was not infrequently a kind of penalty for the opportunist sins of the working-class movement. The two monsters complemented each other." ("Left-Wing" Communism: An Infantile Disorder.) Consequently, if we fail in our struggle against opportunist politics, if we fail to build up a current of militant politics rooted firmly in ideals, there is just no way we how we can erase off the negative attitude of the student community and the middle class of Bengal vis-à-vis "politics".

In order to push back the tragic atmosphere of bloody mutual violence, it is imperative to build up a strong and broad-based mass movement. And, only a widest possible united struggle of the toilers, the student-youth community and the middle class, based on the elementary democratic demands of the various sections of the suffering masses and targeted against the common enemy, can put an end to this ongoing tragic saga of bloody mutual violence and pave the path to the (overdue) social revolution in the coming days.

7.7 CONSOLIDATION AND SUBSEQUENT DECLINE

The term Naxalites comes from Naxalbari, a small village in West Bengal, where a section of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) led by Charu Majumdar, Kanu Sanyal, and Jangal Santhal initiated an uprising in 1967. However, the uprising itself formed after two decades of minor communist activity which first began in South India. In current-day Telangana, an Indian state which split from the larger Andhra Pradesh, communist mentality began to manifest, and in July of 1948, a major event known as the Telangana Struggle occurred in which the lower-classes of 2,500 villages of the former Hyderabad State formed a series of communes.

Furthermore, in same year, far-leftist mentality was solidified within the government structure by the publication of two major communist documents.. The first, the Andhra Thesis, expressed "that 'Indian revolution' follow the Chinese path of protracted people's war" and how the "Indian revolution" must be similar to the Chinese people's war, in which the entirety of the population from the rural and agrarian areas of the nation should participate in conflict. The second document would be the Andhra Letter which was published in June of 1948, and the letter spoke of how Mao Zedong's concept of New Democracy should be implemented in an Indian revolution. In terms of communists in the young nation, the Communist Party of India (CPI) formed in 1920 had internal conflict because the CPI had support from the Soviets, and by 1964, the Communist Part of India (Marxist) was established. From the Telangana Struggle and the two political manifestos, the Naxalites were not the first instance of communist activity in the newly-formed country.

On 18 May 1967, the Siliguri Kishan Sabha, of which Jangal was the president, declared their support for the movement initiated by Kanu Sanyal, and their readiness to adopt armed struggle to redistribute land to the landless. The following week, a sharecropper near Naxalbari village was attacked by the landlord's men over a land dispute. On 24 May, when a police team arrived to arrest the peasant leaders, it was ambushed by a group of tribals led by Jangal Santhal, and a police inspector was killed in a hail of arrows. This event encouraged many Santhal tribals

and other poor people to join the movement and to start attacking local landlords.

These conflicts go back to the failure to implement the 5th and 6th Schedules of the Constitution of India. In theory these Schedules provide for a limited form of tribal autonomy with regard to exploiting natural resources on their lands, e.g. pharmaceutical and mining, and 'land ceiling laws', limiting the land to be possessed by landlords and distribution of excess land to landless farmers and labourers.

Mao Zedong provided ideological leadership for the Naxalbari movement, advocating that Indian peasants and lower class tribals overthrow the government of the upper classes by force. From 1965-1966, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) had a major figure by the name of Charu Majumdar, and he was a major figure of the movement who believed in Zedong's "protracted people's war" ideology. A large number of urban elites were also attracted to the ideology, which spread through Charu Majumdar's writings, particularly the 'Historic Eight Documents' which formed the basis of Naxalite ideology. These documents were essays formed from the opinions of communist leaders and theorists such as Mao Zedong, Karl Marx, and Vladimir Lenin. Using People's courts, similar to those established by Mao, Naxalites try opponents and execute with axes or knives, beat, or permanently exile them.

At the time, the leaders of this revolt were members of the CPI (M), which joined a coalition government in West Bengal just a few months back. However, this plan of action led to dispute within the party as Charu Majumdar believed the CPM was to support a doctrine based on revolution similar to that of the People's Republic of China. Leaders like land minister Hare Krishna Konar had been until recently "trumpeting revolutionary rhetoric, suggesting that militant confiscation of land was integral to the party's programme." However, now that they were in power, CPI (M) did not approve of the armed uprising, and all the leaders and a number of Calcutta sympathisers were expelled from the party. This disagreement within the party soon culminated with the Naxalbari Uprising on May 25th of the same year, and Majumdar led a group of dissidents to start a revolt in the West Bengal village of

Naxalbari. The uprising occurred because an individual who was of tribal background (Adhivasi) was attacked by a group of people who acted on the orders of the local landlords, and this caused other Adhivasis in the area to retake their land, and after seventy-two days of revolt the CPI (M) coalition government suppressed this incident.

Subsequently, In November 1967, this group, led by Sushital Ray Chowdhury, organised the All India Coordination Committee of Communist Revolutionaries (AICCCR). Violent uprisings were organised in several parts of the country. On 22 April 1969 (Lenin's birthday), the AICCCR gave birth to the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) (CPI (ML)).

Practically all Naxalite groups trace their origin to the CPI (ML). A separate offshoot from the beginning was the Maoist Communist Centre, which evolved out of the Dakshin Desh group. The MCC later fused with the People's War Group to form the Communist Party of India (Maoist). A third offshoot was that of the Andhra revolutionary communists, mainly represented by the UCCRI(ML), following the mass line legacy of T. Nagi Reddy, which broke with the AICCCR at an early stage.

The early 1970s saw the spread of Naxalism to almost every state in India, barring Western India. During the 1970s, the movement was fragmented into disputing factions. By 1980, it was estimated that around 30 Naxalite groups were active, with a combined membership of 30,000.

Violence in West Bengal

Around 1971 the Naxalites gained a strong presence among the radical sections of the student movement in Calcutta. Students left school to join the Naxalites. Majumdar, to entice more students into his organisation, declared that revolutionary warfare was to take place not only in the rural areas as before, but now everywhere and spontaneously. Thus Majumdar declared an "annihilation line", a dictum that Naxalites should assassinate individual "class enemies" (such as landlords, businessmen, university teachers, police officers, politicians of the right and left) and others.

The chief minister, Siddhartha Shankar Ray of the Congress Party, instituted strong counter-measures against the Naxalites. The West Bengal police fought back to stop the Naxalites. The house of Somen Mitra, the Congress MLA of Sealdah, was allegedly turned into a torture chamber where Naxals were incarcerated illegally by police and the Congress cadres. CPI-M cadres were also involved in the "state terror". After suffering losses and facing the public rejection of Majumdar's "annihilation line", the Naxalites alleged human rights violations by the West Bengal police, who responded that the state was effectively fighting a civil war and that democratic pleasantries had no place in a war, especially when the opponent did not fight within the norms of democracy and civility.

Large sections of the Naxal movement began to question Majumdar's leadership. In 1971 the CPI(ML) was split, as Satyanarayan Singh revolted against Majumdar's leadership. In 1972 Majumdar was arrested by the police and died in Alipore Jail presumably as a result of torture. His death accelerated the fragmentation of the movement.

Initiated only five years ago as a breakaway Communist group advocating revolution through violence, the Naxa lites briefly gained much in fluence and popularity in the volatile state of West Bengal and quickly spread to the im proverished regions of Bihar, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.

The extremist Communists, who oppose what they call "revisionist" policies of the pro-Moscow Right Communists and the more radical Left Com munists, banded together under the name of Naxalites in 1967 after the initial violent peasant uprising in the Naxalbari dis trict of West Bengal. They im mediately received the blessing and the backing of Peking, which hailed their leader, Charu Mazumdar, as the "bea con light of the peasant move ment in India."

Dried in Prison Hospital

After eluding arrest for two years, Mr. Mazumdar was cap tured two weeks ago and died a few days later in a Calcutta prison hospital. Another prom inent leader, Momma Fanu Sanyal, has been in jail for six months along with scores of lower-level Naxalite leaders.

Published: 12 February 2018

The number of states affected by significant Naxalite activity has been reduced from seven in 2011 to five as of 2017.

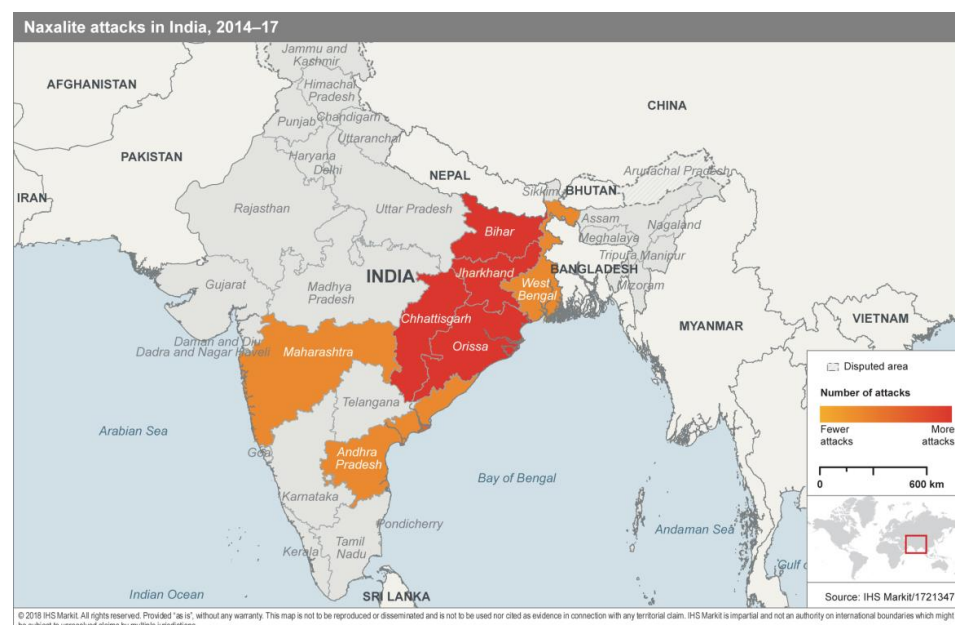|	
	• Attacks by Naxalite militants have significantly reduced in India from about 768 in 2010 to 340 in 2017. • More than half of attacks were aimed at security forces and government assets, and approximately 18% targeted industrial assets such as mining, construction, and cargo. • In late 2017, Nambala Keshav Rao (alias Basavraj), the military commander of the foremost Naxalite group – the Communist Party of India (Maoist) – was promoted as the group's leader. • Rao's promotion implies a branching-out of Naxalite leadership, increasing the likelihood of a prolonged conflict.
Outlook and implications Risks	Terrorism; Infrastructure Disruption; Death and injury; Ground
Sectors or assets	Mining; Construction
IHS Markit perspective	

Marked fall in activity

According to Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre (JTIC) there were 768 Naxalite (Maoist militants) attacks in 2010, falling to between 340 and 380 from 2014–2017. The area affected by Naxalite activity has also shrunk: according to the Ministry of Home Affairs, in 2011 seven Indian states reported significant Naxalite activity compared with five in 2017 (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Odisha); Naxalite

activity has been virtually eliminated from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. For the third consecutive year, the majority of attacks were recorded in the thickly forested state of Chhattisgarh, followed by Jharkhand.
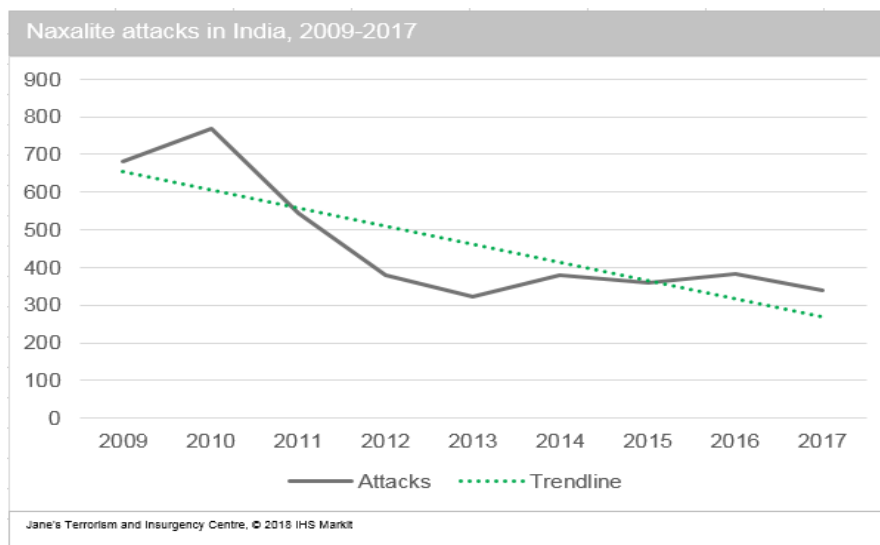
Security forces remain at greater risk than industrial assets

JTIC data suggest that more than half of Naxalite attacks across all states between 2014 and 2017 targeted state assets – such as security forces, government offices, road and railway infrastructure, mobile-phone towers, and power stations – compared with 18% against industrial assets, primarily mining- and construction-related materials and cargo. Naxalites usually attack road assets when construction is under way, and target rail assets by uprooting railway tracks with tools like crowbars or shutting down railway stations by holding officials hostage at gunpoint. These attacks are aimed at disrupting the government's development programme.

Attacks against industrial assets involve Naxalites capturing mining or construction assets, or holding employees of private companies hostage. Unlike with state assets, these attacks are not aimed at destroying assets but at leveraging them for financial bargaining with proprietor companies. Naxalites are known to use this source of funding for acquiring arms and to undertake recruitment. The militants usually destroy such cargo in the event that companies refuse to adhere to their extortion demands.

Naxalite attacks in India, 2014–17

Source: IHS Markit/1721347

Government is resolute, but Naxalites have adopted new leadership

Naxalite attacks in India, 2009-2017

Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Centre, © 2018 IHS Markit

The reduction in Naxalite activity is mainly attributable to Operation Green Hunt, which was launched in 2009 and is undertaken jointly by the security forces of the central and state governments to eliminate Naxalites. The Ministry of Home Affairs reported that 222 Naxal fighters were killed by security forces in 2016, up from 89 in 2015.

Furthermore, Naxalites have been unable to improve their capabilities. Although groups in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand have access to landmines, their tactics mostly remain ambushes with small-arms and crude improvised explosive devices. They are also known to conduct arson attacks against stationary vehicles, particularly targeting trucks carrying cargo.

In a significant development, an IHS Markit source has confirmed that two changes in Naxalite leadership took place in 2017. Since 2004, the movement was led by Ganapathy, the general secretary of the Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-M). Owing to his poor health and intense search operations to arrest him, the movement is now reportedly being led by Nambala Keshav Rao (alias Basavraj), the CPI-M's military commander, as of late 2017. Rao is generally noted as an explosives expert and as the group's main procurer of arms.

Furthermore, Madvi Hidma, a Naxalite battalion leader in Chhattisgarh, was reportedly included in the CPI-M's Central Committee in September 2017; this marked only the second time that a member of a lower-caste

tribal community had been included, and was probably intended to address the Naxalites' alleged weakness of being perceived as a pro-lower-caste movement that is generally led by upper-caste Hindus.

Outlook and implications

Despite the changes in leadership, the extensive security presence during the 2018–19 election years is likely to deter significant Naxalite attacks. With state assembly elections scheduled in Chhattisgarh for the fourth quarter of 2018, and a general election scheduled for the first quarter of 2019 (and potentially earlier), state and central governments are highly likely to deploy additional security forces in anticipation of attacks. Approximately 70 central force battalions (about 70,000 personnel) have reportedly been deployed in Chhattisgarh alone.

Following the elections – when the security presence is likely to be reduced – a minimal increase in attacks is likely, but is unlikely to exceed the levels recorded to date. The risk to industry assets remains moderate, with attacks likely to be undertaken for the purpose of extortion. Basavraj's promotion implies a branching-out of Naxalite leadership, rendering the group less likely to observe a further reduction in attacks. The authorities have to date focused on eliminating a single top leader (Ganapathy); however, under new leadership the movement is likely to prove more sustainable. Hidma's promotion increases the likelihood of a stronger recruitment drive among lower-caste tribal communities, focused in Chhattisgarh. Geographically, a resurgence in Naxalite activity in Madhya Pradesh is likely; government intelligence indicates that the Naxalite arms-training camp has probably been shifted from Bastar in Chhattisgarh to Balaghat in Madhya Pradesh.

Currently, joint operations by central and state-level security forces that are under way in affected states are generally hindered by poor co-ordination. The effectiveness of such counter-insurgency efforts is likely to improve if state-led elite forces are established specific to each affected state: for example, elite forces created by officers of the Indian Police Service of Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal have been pivotal in virtually eliminating Naxalite activity.

Conversely, the number of attacks is likely to increase if Naxalites appoint a larger proportion of lower-caste members from tribal communities to positions of leadership in states beyond Chhattisgarh. In addition to stronger recruitment, such a strategy would also be likely to establish a support base among members of tribal communities on grounds of a common identity.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. Describe Ultra-leftism.

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2. Highlight Radical left policies in West Bengal –Rise.

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3. How do you find out the Consolidation and subsequent Decline of Radical left movement?

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7.8 LET US SUM UP

A Naxal or Naxalite (/ˈnʌksəlaɪt/) is a member of any political organisation that claims the legacy of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), founded in Calcutta in 1969. The Communist Party of India (Maoist) is the largest existing political group in that lineage today in India.

The term Naxal derives from the name of the village Naxalbari in West Bengal, where the Naxalite peasant revolt took place in 1967. Naxalites are considered far-left radical communists, supportive of Mao Zedong's political ideology. Their origin can be traced to the split in 1967 of the

Communist Party of India (Marxist) following the Naxalbari peasant uprising, leading to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist) two years later. Initially, the movement had its epicentre in West Bengal. In later years, it spread to less developed areas of rural southern and eastern India, such as Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana through the activities of underground groups like the Communist Party of India (Maoist). Some Naxalite groups have become legal organisations participating in parliamentary elections, such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Janashakti.

7.9   KEY WORDS

Anti-capitalism: Anti-capitalism encompasses a wide variety of movements, ideas and attitudes that oppose capitalism. Anti-capitalists, in the strict sense of the word, are those who wish to replace capitalism with another type of economic system.

Radicalism: The term "Radical", during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, identified proponents of democratic reform, in what subsequently became the parliamentary Radical Movement.

Ultra-leftism: The term ultra-leftism has two overlapping uses. A usage common among Marxist activist groups is as a generally pejorative term for certain types of positions on the far-left that are extreme or intransigent.

7.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. How do you know about Anti-capitalism?
2. Discuss Far-left politics.
3. How do you know about Political radicalism?
4. Describe Ultra-leftism.
5. Highlight Radical left policies in West Bengal –Rise
6. How do you find out the Consolidation and subsequent Decline of Radical left movement?

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7.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1. See Section 7.2
2. See Section 7.3
3. See Section 7.4

Check Your Progress 2

1. See Section 7.5
2. See Section 7.6
3. See Section 7.7