

**CRISIS OF LEFT IN WEST BENGAL  
POLITICS FROM 1991 TO 2021**

**SYNOPSIS SUBMITTED TO JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY  
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY(ARTS)**

**BY  
DINANATH MANDAL**

**UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF  
PROF. KAMARAN M. K. MONDAL  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY  
KOLKATA- 700 032  
WEST BENGAL, INDIA**

**2025**

## INTRODUCTION

West Bengal distinguished itself from the other states of India in terms of political history. The state was born due to the partition and independence of India in 1947 which immediately came under the rule of India National Congress (INC). From then the state remained under the rule of the INC till the year of 1977 with a few interventions of presidential rule and two United Front Governments (UFG) in 1967 and 1969 respectively. But in 1977, the political circumstances changed in the state and Left Front<sup>1</sup> (LF) under the leadership of Communist Party of India (Marxist)[CPI(M)] who came to power in the state. The CPI(M) led LF had been in power until the year of 2011 with massive electoral support. In 2011, the CPI(M) led LF was defeated before the combined challenges of the All India Trinamool Congress (AITMC/TMC) and the Congress. The state is now under the rule of the AITMC/TMC since 2011. So, the seventy-five years long ruling history of West Bengal experienced the stable rules of only three different political wings.

The 2021 West Bengal State Legislative Assembly Election constructed a historic picture in the state of West Bengal. The Left parties who are fighting the electoral battle in this state since 1950s, have failed to win a single constituency. The electorate of West Bengal abandoned the Left parties in terms of assembly election. The Left have been contesting the assembly election since 1950s but they could not face such kind of consequences in the earlier elections. The two right wing political party; specially, the TMC and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) could win all the seats except two. One seat won by the Gorkha Janamukti Morcha (GJM) and one by the Indian Secular Front (ISF). The TMC secured absolute majority by winning 213 seats out of 294 and formed the Government in West Bengal for third consecutive tenure.

This is undoubtedly a remarkable trend in Indian state politics. In the history of any state in the post-colonial India, no political party or coalition has held state power for such a long and uninterrupted period. It is true that before 1990 the Indian National Congress (INC)

---

<sup>1</sup> Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)], The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP), The Forward Bloc (FB/AIFB), The Revolutionary Communist Party of India (RCPI), The Forward Bloc (Marxist) (MFB), The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), Socialist Party (SP), which was later became the Samajwadi Party and The Biplabhi Bangla Congress formed the Left Front coalition in 1977. A Left Front Committee was formed by the partners of the front to supervise the activity of the Left Front Government (LFG)t with Promode Dasgupta of the CPI(M) was become the first Chairman and served till 1982. The other LF chairman were Saroj Mukherjee (1982-1990), Sailen Dasgupta (1990-1998) and Biman Bose (1998- incumbent). The CPI was not within the LF in 1977. It joined with LF later. Some other left parties like; SUC or SUCI, CPI-ML etc. never became any part of the LF.

was in power in Maharashtra for a relatively long time. Mention may also be made that the Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim, the BJP in Gujarat and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) in Odisha which have been ruling the state since 1994, 1998 and 2000 respectively. But in all these states the ruling parties or coalitions have either not ruled the state for more than three decades or have not yet ruled as consistently as the Left coalition rule in West Bengal<sup>2</sup>.

The long durability of the Left Front rule in West Bengal has been approached and analysed from a number of viewpoints. Some scholars have ascribed it to the strong organisational clutches of the LF, particularly the CPI(M) over the rural electorates and the fruitful implementation of the land reform programmes with the name of ‘Operation Barga’ (Lieten 1996, 222-32) along with substantive expansion of democracy to the grassroots level ((Lieten 1992, 268-99 and Williams 1999, 229-52) through panchayats (Bhattacharyya 2004, 5477-83 and Bhattacharyya 2010, 51-59). Someone talked about ‘Politics of Middleness’ (Bhattacharyya 1999, 279-300) and ‘Party Society’ (Bhattacharyya 2016, 123-54) are also reasons behind long durability of the Left in West Bengal. Others have mentioned about the useful delivery of the livelihood needs of the political society, the LF leadership successfully drawing upon the cultural elements of power and development of an environment of ‘politics of clientelism’ (Bardhan and Mookherjee 2006, 303-27 and Sarkar 2006, 341-48) as the basic elements for its overlong stint at power in the state of West Bengal. A brief concise focus on these may help the present study to perceive and analyse the social and political processes amalgamated with the exemplary role of the Left coalition (Chatterjee and Basu 2020, 2).

In Indian politics the decade of 1990s unfolded with two significant changes posing long term challenge to the Left Front Government (LFG), i.e. the fall of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which gave a hint to a re-look at leftist ideological parameters; and the union government at New Delhi embracing a liberalised market economy, necessitating contemplation of a policy switch. With harsh cuts in government expenditure, continuation of distributive reforms was performed difficult while the pro-market turned in the economic policy at the national level eclipsed the role of in incentivising agriculture. The land reform drive had already reached a plateau, and rising input costs and inadequate institutional support precipitated an impasse in the state’s agriculture by mid-1990s

---

<sup>2</sup> The rule of Sikkim Democratic Front in Sikkim has ended in 2019 and the BJD failed to win assembly election in Odisha (Orisha) in 2024. So, in Sikkim and Odisha the political regime already changed. Only in the state of Gujrat, the BJP has been in power since 1998. But till date it has not completed 34 years of continuous rule of one particular party or alliance.

accompanied by an upward demographic pressure on land. Moreover, following rapid commercialisation of the rural economy, agricultural income as a share of family income steadily dwindled in many parts of Bengal's countryside, highlighting the need to find employment opportunities outside agriculture especially for the younger generations (Mukhopadhyay and Basu 2018, 30 and Bhattacharyya 2016, 190-98).

Another important challenge which was built a strong obstacle before the Left parties, particularly the CPI(M) and the CPI in West Bengal and as well as across India, was the rise of the BJP across India with its Hindutva agenda by upholding the '*Ram Mandir*' (Temple of Ram) issue. This signalled a caution particularly to the Left parties, like the CPI(M) in Bengal and CPI in other states in India during early 1990s which was reflected through the electoral outcome of 1991 Lok Sabha and WB Assembly elections. Although the CPI(M) could secure absolute majority in West Bengal but the interesting fact was that the BJP manage to collect more than 11 per cent vote share without any notable organisational grip in the state. From 1991, the Left in West Bengal could manage to defend these challenges and continued to rule the state without any major open crisis until 2006. In between this time the veteran communist leader Jyoti Basu had transferred the Chief Ministership of West Bengal to the hands of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, a much pragmatic leftist leader in 2000. The LF managed to secure victory in 2001 West Bengal Assembly election despite some big challenges of the TMC in Bengal.

The LF in Bengal secured the record victory in 2006 West Bengal Assembly election by winning 235 seats out of a total 294 along with more than 50 percentage of total valid vote share. This established the importance of leadership of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee with the agenda of large-scale industrialisation in the state with the help of private corporation by the famous slogan of '*Krishi amader vitti, shilpo amader vobishyat*' (Agriculture is our base, industry is our future). But the problem begun when the LFG had started to take the steps for industrialisation. Underlying apprehensions proved justified as the debate over the acquisition of agricultural land by Tata Motors for a proposed car manufacturing project beside National Highway at Singur, Hooghly, just about 40 km far from Kolkata, was rekindled immediately after the election. Showing the issues of conversion of multi-cropped land into industrial

land, inadequate compensation packages for displaced farmers, possible displacement of population from the affected areas came forward to protest with the help of '*Singur Krishi Jomi Raksha Committee*' (Singur Save Farmland Committee).

This situation got more complicated when the smaller partners of the LF; the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the All India Forward Bloc (AIFB/FB) - alleged that they were not aware of the agreement between the government and the Tata and Selim group regarding the proposed initiative. The CPI(M)'s Land Revenue Minister Rezzak Mollah, who represents Bhangar constituency in South 24 Parganas in the state, launched a scathing attack on the agricultural land acquisition policy by the Chief Minister and private industrialists, further embarrassing the government. Furthermore, in late 2006, Trinamool Congress' chief, Mamata Banerjee gave an ultimatum to the government to abandon the Singur project and return land to the unwilling landowners and later she went on a 25-day hunger strike<sup>3</sup> to press her party's demands (Chatterjee and Basu 2020, 100).

Indeed, the industrialisation overdrive badly upset a longstanding equilibrium for after all "it was land reforms that constituted the key to LF's electoral success in West Bengal and helped consolidate its support base in the rural areas. The changed approach of the government, its disregard for initiating dialogues, and the looming prospect of loss of livelihood instilled a fear of dispossession into the state's peasantry and ruptured the organic link between LFG and the rural masses so carefully fashioned and nurtured over time" (Mukhopadhyay and Basu 2018, 33 and Basu 2007, 304).

In between this time the LF withdrew support from the Congress led UPA-1 government at the centre by raising the issue of Indo-US nuclear agreement and followed to oppose the Congress, the BJP and the TMC in the state as well as the national level. That gave an opportunity to the non-Left right wing oppositions in Bengal to re-build a non-Left

---

<sup>3</sup> There is a debate regarding the number of days for Mamata Banerjee's hunger strike. As Chatterjee and Basu argued that "from 4 December Banerjee began an indefinite hunger strike protesting the land acquisition issue that she ended 25 days later on 29 December, upon the request of the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and the then President of India, Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam" (Chatterjee and Basu 2020, 100). As per the Hindustan Times report on 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 "in a dramatic midnight denouement, Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee ended her 25-day fast protesting the location of a Tata car project after intervention by both the president and the prime minister" (Times 2006). Although, TMC claims for 26-day hunger strike. On 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2020 in her official twitter handle Mamata Banerjee wrote "*14 years ago on 4 Dec 2006, I began my 26-day hunger strike in Kolkata demanding that agricultural land cannot be forcefully acquired*" (The Statesman Online, 1 Dec. 2020).

opposition electoral alliance with the help of the Congress in Bengal. In 2008 West Bengal panchayat election, the left parties faced some crucial challenges by the TMC and lost in three 'Zila Parishad' (District Council, the third tier of panchayat system in WB). The non-Left vote bank had started to consolidate towards the TMC during this time which pushed the Left at back seats in West Bengal politics.

In 2009 Lok Sabha election, the LF could win only 15 seats out of 42 in West Bengal which is decreased by 20 seats in comparison to the previous Lok Sabha election in 2004. The LF lost nearly 6 per cent of its overall support base in the Lok Sabha election in 2009 against the combined opposition of the TMC and the Congress. This was not a case of alliance arithmetic overcoming the collective strength of the Left but a steadfast and major erosion of support, what any psephologist would term a huge swing, caused by a polarisation between the opposition and the ruling Front. There is a distinctive shift in policy, predicated on the need to industrialise through big-ticket, capital-intensive investment, barely mindful of the consequences of this drive. This drift towards neoliberalism has steadily corroded its pro-poor image. The non-Left opposition led by mainly the TMC had tried to use that flow in favour of their party.

As per Assembly-wise result, the LF came out victorious in only 99 Assembly constituencies in 2009 Lok Sabha election and was therefore reduced to a minority in the state legislature. Its trauma deepened further in 2011 when it could secure only 62 seats in the State Assembly with 41 per cent of valid votes polled. The result was in favour of the TMC and Congress made alliance who secured 226 seats including almost 48 per cent of valid votes. The TMC secured 184 seats with 38.9 per cent popular votes. The Congress could win 42 seats with 9.09 per cent popular votes. As a result after 34 years, a non-Left political formation has come to power in West Bengal forcing the Left to a state of quandary (Mukhopadhyay 2016, 149-50).

Accepting the electoral verdict, the Left started to play the role of the responsible opposition in the state. But after the debacle of 2011 WB Assembly election, the Left in Bengal had been decreasing from its popular support continuously in almost every section of the society. In 2014, the number of Lok Sabha seats reduced in only 2 out of 42. After the debacle again in Lok Sabha election, the Left decided to make an electoral adjustment with the Congress in 2016 West Bengal Assembly election which has not showed any positive result again in favour of the Left. This time they trailed behind the Congress and lost the

position of the principal opposition in the state legislature. On the other hands it marked remarkable success for Mamata Banerjee and her party. She fought the election in 2011 by making electoral alliance with the Congress and could win 184 seats in the state legislature. The TMC formed the government in West Bengal with the Chief Ministership of Mamata Banerjee. In 2016 WB Assembly elections, Mamata Banerjee surpassed her own record to win 211 seats out of 294 in the assembly without any alliance with other party.

The CPI(M) and other left parties within the LF have arrived at the most disastrous point in West Bengal in 2021 when it came down at naught in the Assembly. This result is followed by the Parliamentary election in 2019. On the other hands, the TMC secured third consecutive electoral victory by winning 213 seats out of 294 with almost 48 per cent votes alone. The BJP established itself as the second largest political party in the state in terms of securing almost 37 per cent valid votes and winning 77 seats out of 294 in the state Assembly.

Another important fact is that the left parties are trying to come back in electoral battle by joining hands with the Congress since 2016 and facing continuous failure where the TMC has been contesting the elections alone and secured continuous success since 2014 in West Bengal. The Left-Right combined struggle within the Left and the Congress has been failed to build any remarkable result against the ruling TMC in West Bengal. The shifting of electoral alliance is not giving any preference to the Left which already proved helpful for the TMC, the Congress and the BJP in the electoral politics of West Bengal.

After 2016 WB Assembly election, the CPI(M) and other left parties under the umbrella of LF has sank into the deeper crisis and marginalised more and more which has been clearly established through the out-come of the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election's result in 2019. This time, the LF not only failed to win a single seat in the state of West Bengal but also reached at third place in terms of vote shared which has come down at almost 7.57 per cent which was decreased by almost 19 per cent in comparison to the last assembly election in 2016 and almost 22 per cent in comparison to the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election in 2014. The interesting fact was that the BJP was emerged as the second largest political party in the state by winning 18 Lok Sabha seats out of 42 and shared almost 40.5 per cent valid vote which was shifted from the Left because the TMC vote shared not decreased in comparison to the previous Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in 2016 and 2014 respectively.

Another important point is that in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly election, the LF made an electoral alliance named ‘*Sanjukta Morcha*’ (or *Mohajot*) with the Congress and a newly formed local based political party, the ISF (Indian Secular Front) to face the BJP led NDA and TMC simultaneously. But the crisis of the Left reached at an extreme point in this election when they failed again to win a single assembly out of 294 and remained out of Vidhan Sabha. Only the ISF could manage to win one constituency, Bhangar. The CPI(M) and its allies within the LF shared only almost 6 per cent of popular votes, whereas the Congress shared 3.03 per cent of popular votes. The ISF, who contested the election with the symbol of a Bihar based local political party, the Rashtriya Secular Majlish Party (RSSCMJP) and as per the data of the ECI, the party shared 1.35 per cent of popular votes. Nawsad Siddiqui won from Bhangar and became the only one Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) beyond the main two right-wing political parties, the TMC and the BJP. Although the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) won three seats but the party contested election as an ally of the TMC. The 2021 West Bengal Assembly election was also historic to the BJP. The BJP shared 37.97 per cent of popular votes with 77 seats in the state assembly. A right-wing political party like the BJP, for the first time in West Bengal, could manage to gain such kind of mandate since the year of the party’s birth in 1980.

Thus, the CPI(M) led LF dislodged from power in 2011 by the TMC-Congress combined force. In 2021, the Left reduced to naught due the rise of the BJP with its Hindutva agenda and anti-Left, anti-TMC stands in West Bengal. So, the Left-Congress alliance was rejected by the electorate of Bengal again and showed faith towards the TMC as first preference and the BJP as the second in the horizon of the socio-political circumstances in West Bengal.

### **Scope of the Study:**

The present research study titled, ‘The crisis of Left in West Bengal politics from 1991 to 2021’ mainly focuses to analyse the electoral data of West Bengal State Assembly election and the Parliamentary elections of the 42 Parliamentary constituencies in West Bengal. In between the study period of 1991 to 2021, the state has experienced seven Assembly elections and eight Parliamentary elections. The study also focuses to analyse some crucial points like; important issues in the elections, election manifesto of major political parties, important comments of chief political leaders of main political parties that may be relevant in both the Assembly and Parliamentary elections.

The study also focuses to analyse the Left politics mainly in West Bengal during this period. The CPM-led LF came to power in West Bengal in the year of 1977 by winning huge electoral verdict. The LFG done some crucial work like; ‘operation barga’, decentralisation of powers through panchayat and municipalities, minimum wage for labourers etc. during the first three consecutive terms. During early 1990s two important phenomenon alarmed the politics of West Bengal as well as across the country. These are the advent of neo-liberal economic policy with the name of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (LPG) and the polarisation of vote bank due to ‘*Ram Mandir*’ issue. From 1990s left politics had started to facing several challenges from global level to state level politics. They also changed their attitudes in terms of political mobilisation. The Left in Bengal as well as across the country had started to face some crucial crisis. The crises had started from that period not only in West Bengal but in the national and global level also.

The study analyses the seven consecutive WB Assembly elections and eight Parliamentary elections and try to spotlight attention on specific political situation, like; the burning political events, making or unmaking of coalition and electoral adjustment among political parties on the contour of state politics in general. The study also focuses on the electoral data and behaviour of the non-Left opposition to make their comparison with the Left.

### **Review of Literature:**

The present study has gone through several literatures related to the present research topic. Some of them are thematically presented as follows:

G. D. Overstreet and M. Windmiller (1959) in their book ‘Communism in India’ has examined in detail the communist movement in India; historically and analytically; and also threw light on the complex arena of Indian and world Communist politics. Marcus F. Franda (1969) in the *article ‘Electoral Politics in West Bengal: The Growth of the United Front’* has described a short history of assembly elections from 1952- 1969 by analysing the electoral data. He also analysed the fraction within the communist parties. Marcus F. Franda (1971) in his book ‘*Radical Politics in West Bengal*’ has analysed the complex and rich culture of communism in West Bengal. He argued that the Bengalis have adopted Marxism and communism to express their search for a regional identity and to have access to regional power. Rakhahari Chatterjee (1985) in his edited volume ‘*Politics in West Bengal:*

*Institutions, Processes and Problems* has analysed some serious economic, political and social crisis that the state of West Bengal had faced during this period. Rakhahari Chatterjee and Partha Pratim Basu (2018) in their edited book 'West Bengal Under the Left: 1977-2011' have analysed different aspects of West Bengal through 15 chapters including the introduction and the conclusion written by numbers of scholars. Jyotiprasad Chatterjee and Suprio Basu (2020) in the book 'Left Front and After: Understanding the Dynamics of *Poribarton* in West Bengal' have discussed and analysed a few crucial points of politics of West Bengal. Through the introductions the authors discussed the reason behind the long rule of the Left in the state. These are strong party organisation, land reforms, establishment of democracy at local level etc.

Sudhir Roy (2007) in 'Marxist Parties in West Bengal: In Opposition and in Government, 1947-2001' highlights the impact of the Marxist parties in West Bengal politics and a critical appreciation of the LF in the state along with an assessment of the reasons behind the stability and continuity of Left politics in the state. G. K. Lieten (1992) in his book 'Continuity and Change in Rural West Bengal' has made a study of rural Bengal and the policies of the communist government. The aspects of decentralisation, land reforms, *Operation Barga*, Panchayats and increase in rural productivity came under his scanner. Subho Basu and Auritro Majumder (2013) in the article 'Dilemmas of parliamentary communism: the rise and fall of the Left in West Bengal' argued that the primacy of the communist movement could be characterised by a social imaginary and a concept of 'social citizenship' that (undivided) communists developed through their participation in grassroots workers', peasants' and refugee movements and, equally importantly, hegemonic interventions in 'culture' since the 1940s. Tarak Nath Mallick (2004) in his research work '*The Left Front in West Bengal: From Movement to Government, 1977-1987*' has analysed the rise of left politics in West Bengal through various movements like; food movement, land reform movement, movement against hike of tram fare etc. Ranabir Samaddar (2013) in his book '*Passive Revolution in Bengal: 1977-2011*' has analysed West Bengal politics from different perspectives. Samaddar shows how trade unions have ignored the politics of production, the way government apparatuses operate in the state, and how the left has become the guardian of the status quo amid skepticism, pettiness, corruption and apathy. A false sense of priority, and an overemphasis on polls and populism speak to the opportunities the left has missed. Sobhanlal Duttgupta (2022) in his book '*Akaler Bhabona*' (In Bengali) has

pointed the alienation of Marxist ideology with the activity of Marxist parties in Bengal and also raised question of broader accountability of the Left in contemporary Bengal.

Dwaipayana Bhattacharya (2016) in his book *'Government as Practice: Democratic Left in a Transforming India'* argued that 'party society' played an important role for long rule of the Left in W.B. Dwaipayana Bhattacharyya (2004) in his article *'Making and Unmaking of Trinamul Congress'* has analysed the origin of the Trinamool Congress in west Bengal politics. Bidyut Chakraborty (2006) in the article *'Left Front's 2006 Victory in West Bengal: Continuity or a Trendsetter?'* has analysed the reason like; fragmented oppositions, 'Brand Buddha' etc. had played for massive success of the LF in 2006 West Bengal state assembly election. Michael Gillan (1998) in the article *'BJP in 1998 Lok Sabha Elections in West Bengal: Transformation of Opposition Politics'* argued that not only the TMC emerged as strong opposition to the Left in Bengal, the BJP also emerged as a strong opponent to the Left. The *'Best of Mamata'* (2015) (in Bengali) is a compilation of all-important selected works written by Mamata Banerjee when she was opposition leader in West Bengal. The 'change' is one of the important compilations within the volume where she explains how the opposition was brutally handled by the then Marxist government and its cadres. Sitaram Sharma (2014) in the book *'West Bengal: Changing Colours, Changing Challenges'* has critically examined the rise and fall of the Left in Bengal. Rup Kumar Barman (2020) in his book *'Samokalin Paschimbanga'* (in Bengali) has analysed the role of caste in West Bengal politics. He also presented some data regarding the participation of underprivileged classes in the West Bengal legislative assembly since independence. Uday Basu (2012) in the book *'Left Out in Bengal: Mamata Mahout on Congress Elephant'* critically analysed politics of West Bengal during LF rule. He argued that the Marxist lost touch with her people long back of 2011, but they remained in power through manipulation electoral machinery and use of muscle power.

### **Research Objectives:**

The present study explores this period from 1991 to 2021. This entire period of politics in West Bengal is marked by many turns and twists which call for in-depth exploration. The factors underlying the success and the failures of both the Left and the Trinamool Congress, the BJP and the Congress constitute the major objective of the present study. But focus is on the Left.

- i. To find out at all the reasons of success and failures of the LF during 1977 to 2021.
- ii. To find out the strength and weaknesses of the organisations of the LF.
- iii. To find the role of non-Left political parties in opposition.
- iv. To find the sources of strength of Trinamool Congress and its legitimacy before the voters of West Bengal.
- v. To find the influence of ‘patronage’ and ‘dole’ in shaping the political attitude of the electorate of West Bengal.

### **Research Questions:**

Keeping in view of the nature the study, the present research work seeks to answers a few important research questions. These are-

- i. Is the Crisis of the Left Front due to failure of the government’s performance in West Bengal?
- ii. What were the ingredients of ‘the anti-incumbency’ voting?
- iii. Why did the Left parties fail to capture the electoral behaviour of urban as well as the rural and marginal areas of West Bengal since 2011?
- iv. How was the Trinamool Congress able to mobilise all the non-Left and anti-Left forces, scattered over West Bengal?

### **Research Hypotheses:**

The study has formulated two hypotheses:

- i. The CPI(M) led Left Front suffered with electoral defeats due to failure of long-term policy formulation, poor governance, arrogance and creeping of corruption in West Bengal.
- ii. Consolidation of non-Left opposition votes and rise of BJP with its Hindutva agenda pushed the Left into extreme crisis.

**Research Methodology:**

Keeping in view the objectives and nature of the study the research work adopts qualitative as well as quantitative method. In qualitative method the research work is supplemented by historical-descriptive analysis of political ideologies, nature of political mobilisation and pattern of leadership of all the major political parties both in power and in opposition but primary focus is on the Left parties. The policies and programmes of the Left and the TMC during the period also come in our consideration.

The study also analyses the electoral data and crucial issues of Lok Sabha and WB Assembly elections during the study period of 1991 to 2021.

Data also is generated through the open-ended interviews of a handful leaders and activists of both the Left and non-Left parties chosen from block, district and state levels through 'purposive sampling'. Perceptions of leaders have been cross checked in the light of experiences of the electorate as reflected in the various media, both print and audio-visual. Information and views are captured from local, state and national level news-paper, periodicals etc. mostly in vernacular.

**Chapterisation Scheme:**

The present research work is divided into six chapters to explore the answers of the research questions and testing of the hypotheses which have mentioned earlier. The first chapter deals with nature, scope, objectives, literature review, research gaps, research questions and research methodologies of the study.

The second chapter deals with a very short historical evolution of the Left politics in the state of West Bengal since pre-independent period including a very short socio-political history of West Bengal. West Bengal had started its journey as one of the states in independent India under the rule of the Indian National Congress (INC) which we normally know as Congress. It remained under the rule of the Congress political party until 1977. In between there were several intervals of imposing emergency. But in 1977, 'LF' led by CPI(M) succeed to win the state power. This chapter also presents a history of the birth of CPI(M) in 1964. Initially the CPI and the CPI(M) later, had been organised some crucial popular movement against the ruling Congress which helped the parties to attract support

from different section of the society. After winning the state power, the LFG implemented some important policies which helped the Left to win election again and again.

The focus of the third chapter is to draw a sketch of left politics in West Bengal through analysing the electoral data of the Lok Sabha and West Bengal Assembly elections in the period of 1991 -2006 in West Bengal. The Left faced some crucial challenges due the collapse of socialism in eastern Europe in 1991. The wave of neo-liberal market economy with the term of 'LPG' had changed the shape of socio-political dimension not only in India but all around the world. The rise of the BJP in Indian politics with 'Ram Mandir' issue also presented crucial challenge before the Left and the Congress. The CPI(M) led LF had manage to defend neo-liberal challenge by adopting 'New Industrial Policy' in 1994. But in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the birth of another political party, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the horizon of West Bengal politics added another dimension. BJP-TMC and Congress-TMC combined challenge presented strong wall before the continuous journey of the left in elections. Although the CPI(M)-led LF had been succeeded to win in all the crucial election but its vote shared and seat shared decreased in 2001 in comparison to the previous election since 1977. Although the CPI(M) led LF registered massive electoral success in 2004 Lok Sabha and 2006 WB Assembly election.

Fourth chapter deals with an analysis of West Bengal politics from 2007– 2021 through capturing data of Lok Sabha and Assembly election. In this period many twists and turns are seen in Bengal. After forming the seventh LFG in 2006, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee showed his clear approach to set up large scale industries with the help of private capital to generate employment and progress the development of the state is seen in this chapter. The LF received massive electoral support in 2004 Parliamentary election and 2006 West Bengal Assembly election. But when the LFG took steps for acquisition of farm land for industrialisation several protests led by non-Left oppositions had been organised which pushed the CPI(M) led LF into the backfoot of West Bengal politics. This chapter also picturised the process of starting consolidation of non-Left opposition votes, scattered till that time towards the TMC led political forces. A section of Muslim minority vote bank also started to shifted towards the TMC-Congress alliance which resulted the defeats of Left in Lok Sabha election in 2009 in many seats. And finally, the LF failed to win the 2011 WB Assembly election. After the defeat in 2011 assembly election, the Left started to play the role of principal opposition but just after five years it failed to reach that position in assembly

in 2016. And after that the left suffered with continuous decrease from almost every section of the society. This chapter also deals with the Left-right political competition of Bengal which started to shifted towards right-right competition. This trend established clearly in 2019 Parliamentary election when the LF failed to win a single Lok Sabha seat in the state by decreasing its votes shared at almost 7 per cent. On the other hands the BJP secured 18 Lok Sabha seats and almost forty per cent valid votes.

The fifth chapter deals with some important issues during 1991 to 2021 which are related to the rise and fall of the left politics in West Bengal. Some important issues like; i. advent of neo-liberal economy during 1990s, ii. New Industrial Policy-1994, iii. emergence of the TMC in 1998, iv. Singur-Nandigram issue and v. rise and expansion of the BJP. The fifth chapter also represents a summary of the perceptions, views and opinions of a very few numbers of leaders and activists of different major pollical parties, mainly the CPI(M), the TMC, the BJP and the Congress in West Bengal. These views are collected through personal interview through a few specific unstructured questions related to the present study, with a handful leaders and activists of the CPI(M), the BJP, the TMC and the Congress. The story of success and failure of the Left parties also tried to compare with the opinion and counter opinion of those political leaders of state, district and local level.

The sixth chapter represents a summary and conclusion of the present study in very brief manner. This chapter also deals with the probable answer of the research questions which have taken in the first chapter and also portraits a few research findings through testing the hypotheses by lighting spot on the third, fourth and fifth chapter. The discussion about the crisis of the Left ends with some concluding observations by referring the results of recently completed 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election.

### **Findings:**

The study found that the CPI(M)-led LF was in power during the first three consecutive terms by formulation and implementation of some important policies successfully. Implementation of land reforms act through '*operation barga*', distribution of powers among the common marginal people through panchayat etc. were a few examples of them. But after the global challenge due to the advent of LPG it faced serious problem. But it manged the challenges until the year 2000. But during the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century it opted the way of direct adjustment with capitalism. That followed by set up of large-scale industries

in Nandigram and Singur which faced various serious protests by different oppositions with the help of different sections of the society including land looser and a few local people in those areas. So, a complex arose between the demands of capitalism and popular politics. The Left government not only failed to form an effective strategy to deal with complex demands of capital and of popular politics, its analysis of 'neo-liberal globalisation' also went well off the track. Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee remark established that '*Nandigram was an administrative and political failure*'. Oppositions parties, the TMC in particular called many 'bandhs', strike, blockage of road to raise protest against the policies of the LFG. The LFG failed to counter these protests and deliver service to the common people. But after coming in power, the TMC Government took all kinds of steps against bandh, strike etc. called by the non-TMC oppositions. This answer is corroborated through the research findings of the fourth, fifth and sixth chapter of the present study. On 14 March, 2007, after the controversy of police firing at Nandigram, the principal opposition party, the TMC declared 12-hours strike on 16 March, 2007. On 16 March, 2007 examination of Higher Secondary was scheduled. The government failed to counter the strike and changed the date of H.S. examination by upholding the security of the students. Not only that the government had failed to take any strong steps against blockage of high way for almost two weeks which caused problems for many people. Police and intelligence failed to collect information against the attempts of landmine attack on Chief Minister by Maoists at Lalgarh, in West Bengal.

The research finds that the CPI(M) had been secured absolute majority in all the assembly elections from the year of 1977 till 2006 assembly election except 2001 and formed government. But the vote share secured by the party had not been exceeded fifty per cent for a single election. Although combined vote share of the LF in the seven consecutive assembly elections from 1977 to 2006 was almost near about fifty percent, but not secured more than fifty per cent votes in all election except a few. So, almost fifty percentage of vote share was not in favour of the CPI(M) and the LF. The interesting fact was that it was scattered and it started to consolidate towards the TMC led opposition which threw a serious challenge to the Left in 2008 panchayat election. In 2009 Lok Sabha election, the Left vote share was more than 43 per cent and on the other hand the TMC-Congress alliance secured almost 45 per cent valid votes. In terms of winning Parliamentary seat the Left Front could win only 15 where the TMC-Congress alliance could win 25 Parliamentary seats out of 42. According to election experts the Left Front could win only 99 Assembly which was decreased by almost 7

percent in comparison to the 2006 WB Assembly election when the LF secured 235 seats out of 294. So, an anti-incumbency was always there during the entire LF regime but its elements were not consolidated and organised by the mainstream oppositions.

Since 2009 Parliamentary election the scattered oppositions votes not only consolidated towards the TMC but LF's own votes was started to shift towards another right-wing political party, the BJP also. This has been clearly visible after 2016 West Bengal Assembly election which pushed the Left, specially, the CPI(M) out from the assembly in 2021. The region wise seat winning pictures of Bengal have clearly described that in 2011 Assembly election the TMC-Congress registered much success in the urban areas, boarder districts and minority community-based districts. But in 2019 Lok Sabha and 2021 West Bengal assembly election results showed that the Left has virtually vanished from other parts, like North Bengal, '*Rarh Bengal*', South Bengal and a few border districts. People's disenchantment at different level due to arrogance attitudes of leaders, specially, in the grassroot level had lost the faith on the Left. The TMC had managed to capture these flows towards the party. This answer has corroborated from the discussion of the fourth, fifth and sixth chapter of the present study. Most of the respondents argued that anti-incumbency voting was a reason for the defeat of the Left Front in 2011 Assembly election.

In dealing with the question of '*reasons of failure to capture the electoral behaviour of urban as well as the rural and marginal areas of West Bengal since 2011*' it has been found the opportunist middle class who came within the Left after 1977 and they have shifted into the ruling TMC during post 2011 scenario politics. Another point is that when the Left participated in the Parliamentary democracy and sought and hold powers in the states that means it accepted the central policies to some extent, acquiescence in the anti-people role of the police, and made adjustment with the bureaucracy. Although it is true that there has been some degree of power sharing at grassroot levels and the panchayats had a more popular character. But it is also true that the party became an instrument of domination rather than service to the people. Another important fact is that in present West Bengal's politics, issue of corruption is not reflecting any more. It is also true that corruption had not captured the leaders of the left parties and officials of the LFG as it in the present socio-economic-political situation. But it is undeniable that due to long staying in power a few left leaders not free from corruption. Although that magnitude was very much less but it is not desirable for the left parties who generally known for their sacrifice and pro-people behaviour. So, in the

present political situation when the leaders and workers of the left parties are trying to mobilised the anti-TMC forces by raising the issue of corruption in the state, an anti-Left mobilisation stands are parallely showing by the ruling TMC and main opposition party, the BJP. They are describing the issue of a few violence and corruption against the LF and the Left are not being able to counter successfully these stands. Members of various branch organisations like; trade union, working class, peasant, student, youth etc. has decreased very much during the last 14 years. The Left parties tried to implement policies for community development. But the present policies are shifted from community development to direct individual benefit and the Left are becoming unsuccessful to counter these policies and regain the trust of the electorate.

Further it has been found that the TMC won the 2011 West Bengal Assembly election by making alliance with the Congress. The combined vote shared of the TMC-Congress alliance was almost 48 per cent which was almost 9 per cent higher than the vote shared by entire LF. The TMC could alone share 38.93 per cent votes which was almost 1 per cent less than the votes shared by LF combined. As Abhas Roy Chowdhury, Mrinal Sarkar and others think that people voted the TMC as an alternative of the Left in 2011. Since 2011, the TMC government implemented numbers of populist individual centric policies and programmes. These are *Shikshasree, Kanyashree, Rupashree, Yubashree, Sabuj Sathi, Khadya Sathi, Patha Sathi, Gati Dhara, Gitanjali, Fair Price Medicine Shop, Swasthya Sathi, Sabala, Anandhara, Samabyathi and Baitarani, Safe Drive Save Life* etc. Although many crucial controversies like; political and caste violence, political murder and killings, cut money, corruptions in the recruitment of government services (TET and civic volunteer, 2016 SLST issue etc.), religious polarisation with politics, family centric politics, party dictatorship in all sphere of every social and education institutions etc. have also been raised against the TMC during the last 10 years but these are not reflected in voting machines. The TMC has succeed to hold its votes banks and continued party's victory in the land of Bengal despite the crucial challenges. As a result, the CPI(M) and the Left has sunk under deeper crisis and the electorate of Bengal have been showed their second choice towards the BJP. These findings are corroborated through the electoral outcome of 2019 Parliamentary and 2021 WB Assembly elections.

Since 2011 the Left in West Bengal has virtually gone in political limbo. After the debacle in 2011, the CPI(M) and other left parties are consistently suffering in electoral

defeat till date. In terms of Lok Sabha, WB State Assembly, panchayat, municipalities etc. the Left failed to register a standard success. The Left contested 2016 West Bengal Assembly election by making electoral adjustment with the Congress, but it trailed behind the Congress and lost the position of principal opposition in Vidhan Sabha. But the Left decided to contest the 17<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary election in Bengal alone and failed to secure a single Lok Sabha seat out of 42 in West Bengal in 2019. Although, the Congress won two Parliamentary seats in Bengal. In 2021, the Left reduced to naught in the assembly also. The Left has been suffering from long-term crisis of planning and activities since last decade. As a result, they have been increasingly cornered and marginalised by both the TMC and the BJP, both electorally and organisationally.

The study also finds that the shifting of electoral alliances has not preferred any success to the Left rather it proved successful for the non-Left oppositions, mainly the TMC and the Congress. Since the year of 1998 Lok Sabha election, the TMC made alliance either the BJP or the Congress. In 1998 Lok Sabha election, the TMC formed alliance with the BJP and contested election in WB. As a result, TMC secured almost 24 per cent votes along with 7 Lok Sabha seats. The combined vote shared by the TMC-BJP alliance was almost 35 per cent which was almost same with the vote shared by the CPI(M). On the other hands, the LF secured almost 47 per cent vote in 1998. In 1999 Lok Sabha election the TMC again formed alliance with the BJP and increased its vote share by almost 1 per cent. On the other hands the LF decreased its vote share by almost 1 per cent. The TMC shifted its alliance from the BJP to the Congress in 2001 WB Assembly election. Although the party failed to defeat the Left but could not marginalise. The combined vote share of the TMC-Congress alliance was almost 35 per cent which was almost 3 per cent less than the CPI(M). There after the TMC rejoined with the BJP and contested in 2004 Lok Sabha and 2006 WB Assembly election. The TMC again broke alliance with the BJP and joined hands with the Congress in 2009 Lok Sabha and 2011 WB Assembly election and finally defeat the Left in 2011. But after 2011 WB Assembly election the TMC has been contesting Lok Sabha and WB Assembly election alone. But since 2016, except 2019 Lok Sabha election when the Left tried to join hands with any non-Left others, they failed miserably. In 2016 WB Assembly the LF made an electoral adjustment with the Congress to contest the TMC. The leading partner of the LF, the CPI(M) not only failed to collect standard number of seats but trailed behind the Congress and lost the identity of the principal opposition party within the Assembly. In 2021 WB Assembly election the Left again formed alliance not only with the Congress, but a newly formed local

base party, the Indian Secular Front (ISF). As a result, the Left has reduced to a 'naught' in terms of winning seat in the Assembly by securing only almost 7 per cent vote.

This is also needed to mention again that within the limited scope of present discussion that it is not possible to explain and analyse all the reasons behind the gradual evaporation of the political parties that have existed for more than seven decades. It is widely acknowledged that the crisis of Left politics in West Bengal has been progressing since 2011 which is an unprecedented event in the history of any state politics in India. Since 2016, except 2019, the Left are trying to fight electoral battle by joining hands with some other non-TMC, non-BJP alliance, the 'Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance' (I.N.D.I.A.) in the state. Being a part of the I.N.D.I.A. alliance the LF joined hands with the Congress, but interestingly strongly opposed to another significant partner of the I.N.D.I.A., the TMC in the state and participated in 30 Lok Sabha seats in 2024. At some constituencies like; Asansol, Hoogly, Srerampore, Howrah, Kolkata Dakshin, Basirhat, Dum Dum, Barackpore, Krishnanagar, Murshidabad etc. except Ranaghat where the Left-Congress combined vote share increased in comparison to the votes shared by the LF's alone in the 17<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election in 2019, the TMC secured victory.

The vote shared by the Left and the Congress combined was even lower than that hold by the Left alone in the previous Lok Sabha election in 2019 and it therefore helped both the TMC and the BJP at the cost of the Left. The seats like; Barasat, Jaynagar, Mathurapur, Bolpur, Bankura, Medinipur, Arambag, Ghatal, Jhargram, Barddhaman-Durgapur, Jadavpur, barddhaman Purba etc. won by the TMC and Alipurduar, Balurghat, Tamluk, Bishnupur etc. won by the BJP. There are some exceptions also. But, in the 12 Lok seats, except Baharampur, where the candidates of the Congress supported by the LF contested, have increased their vote share in comparison to the votes shared by the Congress alone in 2019 Lok Sabha. The deep-rooted melody is that no matter who wins the election, the Left ultimately remains the loser.

The Parliamentary Left in India focuses on communist ideology which is basically followed by the philosophy and writings of Karl Marx and his followers. Marx tried to represent his philosophy by studying the society and the people. Although there are also many differences found within the writings of Karl Marx due to change of time. Marx changed and revised his opinions in accordance to the need of the society. Marx argued in the eighth theses of the 'Theses on Feuerbach' that 'social life is essentially practical. All

mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice'. But the Left in Bengal have alienated from the principle of 'learning from the masses and learning with the masses' rather they focused to teach the masses about the need of the society not only in West Bengal but across the country also. This activity of the Left raised a question of crisis of epistemology which is still present.

The initial hypothesis of the study 'the electoral defeats and failure of the LF due to failure of long-term policy formulation, poor governance, arrogance and creeping of corruption in West Bengal' is validated. The CPI(M) led LF successfully formulated policies regarding land in 1980s but failed to formulate policies in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many thinkers including the left leaders agreed that the industrialisation was needed but policies regarding land acquisition had not been accepted by the land looser. That helped the opposition to organise protest with the help of the land looser. Left failed to convince the common people regarding the importance of industrialisation. On the other hands the non-Left opposition specially the TMC succeed to build an anti-Left approach among a large section of electorate of Bengal. The left also failed to formulate any fruitful policy to counter the anti-LFG attitudes which resulted the massive defeat for them in 2011. Due to long staying in state power, an arrogance within the leaders and workers at different level was gripped which had created an apathetic approach among some sections of the society. Party domination had created in every section of the society. There were thousands of instances of the intervention of the party in the personal domain of the people. Many people lost their faith on the Left and felt very much apathetic towards the Left. So, the issue of Singur and Nandigram was just an explosion of that reaction which was successfully utilised by the non-Left oppositions, specially the TMC.

The second hypothesis, 'consolidation of non-Left opposition votes and rise of BJP with its Hindutva agenda pushed the Left into extreme crisis' is also validated. As per the electoral data, it is proved that the Left were defeated in 2011 not only due to failure of governance, long-term planning, policy mobilisation, arrogance of some leaders and activists etc. but the consolidation of the opposition votes also. The combined vote shared by the LF (41.05 per cent) was almost two per cent more than the TMC (38.93 per cent) but in terms of winning seat the LF has trailed in 124 seats behind the TMC. Because the TMC managed to collect support from other non-Left oppositions. The rise of BJP was first signalled in 1991

Lok Sabha and West Bengal Assembly election when the BJP secured almost 11 per cent votes in West Bengal. The Left had managed to contain the rise and spread of the BJP in West Bengal till 2011 because they were in state power. But after 2011, the socio-political conditions have changed. All non-Left forces join hands to mobilise support of different classes, castes and communities denying the Left any access to these vote banks. This picture has been cleared through the result of 2019 Lok Sabha, 2021 WB Assembly and recently completed 2024 Parliamentary elections.

## References:

- Ahamad, Muzaffar. 1969. *Amar jibon o bharoter communist party: 1920-1929 [Bengali](My Life and the Communist Party of India)*. Calcutta: National Book Agency Pvt. Ltd.
- Bag, Keya. 2011. "Red Bengal's Rise and Fall." *New Left Review* 70 (July-August):69- 98. Accessed on November 12, 2023. <https://newleftreview.org>.
- Bandyopadhyay, Srikumar, and Partha Pratim Basu. 2020. "Industry in West Bengal During the Left Front Regime." In *West Bengal Under the Left: 1977-2011*, by Rahkahari Chatterji and Partha Pratim Basu, 117-118. New York: Routledge, Levant Books.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, Pranab Bardhan, Kaushik Basu, Mrinal Datta Chaudhuri, Maitreesh Ghatak, Ashok Sanjay Guha, Mukul Majumdar, Dilip Mookherjee, and Debraj Ray. 2002. "Strategy for Economic Reform in West Bengal." *Economic and Political Weekly* 37, no. 41. Accessed on 12 January 2024. 4203–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4412719>.
- Banerjee, Mamata. 1997. *Manabik* [Bengali]. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1998. *Struggle for Existence*. Calcutta/New Delhi: Magvisual, Priyonkar Publications/Cosmo Publications.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2000. *Trinamul* [Bengali]. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. *Jago Bangla* [Bengali]. (Kolkata: Dey's Publishing), 2006.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2006. *Ganatontrer Lajja* [Bengali], Kolkata: Dey's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2007. *Anashan Keno?* [Bengali]. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2013. *Andoloner Katha* [Bengali]. Kolkata: Dey's Publisher.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2012. *My Unforgettable Memories*. New Delhi: Roli Books.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015. *Jiban Sangram* [Bengali]. Kolkata: Dey's Publishing.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2015. "*Best of Mamata*". Kolkata: Bee Books Publishers.
- Banerjee, Parthasarathi. 2006. "Land Acquisition and Peasant Resistance at Singur." *Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (46): 2718-2720. Accessed on September 27, 2024. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4418907> .

- Bardhan, Pranab, and Dilip Mookherjee. 2006. "Pro-poor targeting and accountability of local governments in West Bengal." *Journal of Development Economics* (Department of Economics, University of California) (79): 303-327. [www.elsevier.com/locate/econbase](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/econbase).
- Barman, Rup Kumar. 2022. *Samakalin Paschimbanga: Jatpat, Jati-Rajniti O Tapashili Samaj* (Bengali). Kolkata: Gangchil.
- Basu, Partha Pratim. 2007. "'Brand Buddha' in India's West Bengal: The Left Reinvents Itself." *Asian Survey* (University of California Press) 47 (2): 288-306. Accessed on December 21, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2007.47.2.288> .
- Basu, Piyali. 2018. "Dynamics of Opposition Politics in West Bengal (1998-2011)." Ph. D. thesis, Kolkata: Rabindra Bharati University. Accessed on January 5, 2023. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/285507>.
- Basu, Subho, and Auritro Majumder. 2013. "DILEMMAS OF PARLIAMENTARY COMMUNISM: The Rise and Fall of the Left in West Bengal." *Critical Asian Studies* (Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group) 45 (2): 167-200. Accessed on July 12, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.2013.792569>.
- Basu, Uday. 2012. *Left Out in Bengal: Mamata Mahout on Congress Elephant*. New Delhi: Atlantic.
- Bhattacharyya, Dwaipayan. 2016. *Government as Practice: Democratic Left in a Transforming India*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bhattacharyya, Dwaipayan. 2010. "Left in the Lurch: The Demise of the World's Longest Elected Regime?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 45 (3): 51-59. Accessed on January 19, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25664018>.
- Bhattacharyya, Dwaipayan. 1999. "Politics of Middleness: The Changing Character of the Communist Party of India in Rural West Bengal(1977-90)." In *Sonar Bangla? Agricultural Growth and Agrarian Change in West Bengal and Bangladesh*, edited by Ben Rogaly, Barbara Harris-White and Sugata Bose, 279-300. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks London: Sage Publications.
- Bhattacharyya, Dwaipayan. 2004. "Making and Unmaking of Trinamul Congress." *Economic and Political Weekly* 29 (14/15): 1530-1531. Accessed on January 19, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4414871>.

- Bhattacharyya, Dwaipayan. 2004. "West Bengal: Permanent Incumbency and Political Stability." *Economic and Political Weekly* 39 (51): 5477-5483.
- Chakraborty, Aritra. 2016. *A Socio spatial analysis of parliament and assembly elections in West Bengal: 1977-2011. Ph. D. thesis.* Kolkata: Shodhganga@INFLIBNET, University of Calcutta, Department of Geography. Accessed on May 04, 2023. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/212195> .
- Chakrabarty, Bidyut. 2006. "Left Front's 2006 Victory in West Bengal: Continuity or a Trendsetter?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (32): 3521. Accessed on March 28, 2024. <http://www.jstor.com/stable/4418569>.
- 2008. *Indian Politics and Society Since Independence: Events, Processes and Ideology.* London and New York: Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group.
- . 2011. "The Left Front's 2009 Lok Sabha Poll Debacle in West Bengal, India: Prospective Causes and Future Implications." *Asian Survey* (University of California Press) 51 (2): 290-310. Accessed on October 3, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/as.2011.51.2.290> .
- Chakraborty, Biswanath. 2022. *Opposition Space in West Bengal Politics.* New Delhi: Navyug Books International.
- Chatterjee, Jyotiprasad, and Supriyo Basu. 2014. "Permanent Incumbency Shattered: Development Dilemma and Electoral Choice in West Bengal." In *Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral Politics in Post-Congress Polity*, edited by Suhas Palshikar, K C Suri and Yogendra Yadav, 284-308. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chatterjee, Jyotiprasad, and Supriyo Basu. 2020. *Left Front and After: Understanding the Dyanamics of Poribartan in West Bengal.* New Delhi: Sage Publication India Pvt. Ltd.
- Chatterji, Rakhahari. 1985. *Politics in West Bengal: Institutions, Process and Problems.* Edited by Rakhahari Chatterji. Calcutta: The world press private limited.
- Chatterjee, Rakhahari. 2018. "Epilouge." In *West Bengal under the Left: 1977-2011*, edited by Rakhahari Chatterjee and Partha Pratim Basu, 307-311. Kolkata: Levant Books Routledge: London and New York.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 2009. "The Coming Crisis in West Bengal." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44 (9): 42-45. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40278553> .

- Chatterjee, Partha. 1997. *The Present History of West Bengal: Essays of Political Criticism*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Chattopadhyay, Pratip. 2023. "Changing Nature of West Bengal Politics: 2021 Assembly Election and Unreason." *Madhya Pradesh Journal of Social Sciences* (M.P. Institute of Social Science Research) 28 (1): 63-73. Accessed on January 29, 2025. [https://mpissr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MPJSS\\_281\\_June\\_2023.pdf](https://mpissr.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MPJSS_281_June_2023.pdf).
- Duttgupta, Sobhanlal. 2022 . *Akaler Bhabna* [Bengali], Kolkata: Seribaan.
- Franda, Marcus F. 1969. "Electoral Politics in West Bengal: The Growth of the United Front." *Pacific Affairs* (University of British Columbia) 42 (3): 279-293. Accessed on December 21, 2023. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2753899>.
- Franda, Marcus. 1971. *Radical Politics in West Bengal*. London: MIT Press.
- Gohain, Hiren. 2011. "Decline of the Left: A Critical Comment." *Economic and Political Weekly* XLVI (38): 79-80. Accessed on March 8, 2021. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23047337>.
- Gupta, Monobina. 2012. *Didi- A Political Biography*, Harper Collins Publishers India.
- Gupta, Prasanta Sen. 1989. "The Left Front versus the Congress (I)." *Asian Survey* (University of California Press) 29 (9): 883-897. Accessed on June 5, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2644833>.
- Gupta, Ranajit Das. 1998. "1998 Elections in West Bengal: A Major Setback for Left Front." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33 (19): 1113-1118. Accessed on March 9, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4406754>.
- Gupta, Ranjit Das. 1995. "Industrial Development Policy: A Critical View." *Economic and Political Weekly* 30 (30): 1896-1901. Accessed on March 3, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4403040>.
- Kohli, Atul. 1987. *The State and Poverty in India: The Politics of Reforms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lieten, G. K. 1992. *Continuity and Change in Rural West Bengal*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications India.
- . 1996. *Development, Devolution and Democracy: Village Discourse in West Bengal*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

- Mallick, Ross. 1993. *Development Policy of a Communist Government: West Bengal since 1977*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mallick, Tarak Nath. 2004. *The Left Front in West Bengal from movement to government 1977-1987. Ph. D. thesis.* Department of Political Science. The University of Burdwan, West Bengal.
- Marx, Karl. 1969. *Theses on Feurbach*. Vol.1. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels: Selected Works. Vol.I. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Mayers, James. 1998. "Transformation of Opposition Politics in West Bengal: Congress(I), Trinamul and 1998 Lok Sabha Elections." *Economic and Political Weekly* 33 (33/34): 2253-2260. Accessed on March 14, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4407105>.
- Mitra, Subhasish. 2012. "*Rajniti-Tajniti*" (Bengali). Kolkata: Gungchil Publishers.
- Mukhopadhyay, Apurba. 2016. *Essays on Post-Colonial Democracy in India*. Burdwan: Avenel Press.
- Mukhopadhyay, Apurba, and Partha Pratim Basu. 2018. "The Left Front in West Bengal: From Movement to Government." In *West Bengal under the Left: 1977-2011*, edited by Rakhahari Chatterji and Partha Pratim Basu. Kolkata: Levant Books and Routledge: London and New York.
- Mukhopadhyay, Asok., and Ashok Mukhopadhyay. 1994. "POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 55 (3): 321-334. Accessed on March 28, 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41855703>.
- Nielsen, Kenneth. "SITUATING SINGUR." In *Land Dispossession and Everyday Politics in Rural Eastern India*, 17–36. Anthem Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1zxsknd.7>.
- Overstreet, Gene D., and Marshall Windmiller. 1959. *Communism in India*. Barkeley: The University of California press.
- Palshikar, S., K. C. Suri and Yogendra Yadav (ed.) . 2014. "*Party Competition in Indian States: Electoral politics in Post-Congress Polity*". New Delhi: O U P.
- Patnaik, Prabhat. 2009. "Reflections on the Left." *Economic and Political Weekly* 44 (28): 8-10. Accessed on January 08, 2023. <https://www.epw.in/journal/2009/28/commentary/reflections-left.html> .

- Patnaik, Pravat. 2011. "The Left in Decline." *Economic and Political Weekly* 46 (29): 12-16. Accessed on 14 December 2023 . <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23018726>.
- Petras, J., and H. Veltmeyer. 2009. *Social Movements and State Power*. Kolkata: Update Publications.
- Roy, Sudhir. 2007. *Marxist Parties in West Bengal: In Opposition and in Government 1947-2001*. Kolkata: Progressive Publishers.
- Ruud, A. E. 2003. *Poetics of Village Politics: The Making of West Bengal Rural Communism*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Samaddar, Ranabir. 2013. *Passive Revolution in West Bengal: 1977-2011*. New Delhi: Sage Publication Pvt. Ltd.
- Samaddar, Ranabir. 2016. "West Bengal Elections: The Verdict of Politics." *Economic and Political Weekly* 51 (24): 23-25. Accessed on March 17, 2025. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44003604>.
- Sarkar, A. 2006. "Political Economy in West Bengal: A Puzzle and a Hypothesis." *Economic and Political Weekly* 41 (4): 341-348. Accessed on 08 April 2022. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4417736>.
- Sarkar, Anindita. 2020. "'From Oppositional Politics to Chief Ministership: A Study of the Leadership of Ms. Mamata Banerjee (1998-2016)'." Kolkata: Jadavpur University. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/359580>.
- Sharma, Sitaram. 2014. *WEST BENGAL: CHANGING COLOURS, CHANGING CHALLENGES*. New Delhi: Rupa Publication India Pvt. Ltd.
- Slomczynski, Kazimierz M., and Goldie Shabad. 1998. "Reconfiguration of Eastern Europe After the Fall of Communism: An Overview." *International Journal of Sociology* (Taylor & Francis, Ltd.) 28 (3): 03-14. Accessed on March 29, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20628535> .
- The Times of India. 2007. "Mamata calls for 12-hour strike on Friday." *The Times of India*, March 14.
- . 2007. "Nandigram was a failure, admits Buddha." *The Times of India*, December 5.

Williams, Glyn. 1999. "Panchayati Raj and Changing Micro-politics in West Bengal." In *Sonar Bangla? Agricultural Growth and Agrarian Change in West Bengal and Bangladesh*, edited by Ben Rogaly, Barbara Harris-White and Sugata Bose, 229-252. New Delhi, Thousand Oaks London: Sage Publications.

Wood, J. B. 1965. "Observations on the Indian Communist Party Split." *Pacific Affairs* (University of British Columbia) 38 (1): 47-63. Accessed on June 3, 2024. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2753995>.

Dinanath Mandal  
06/11/2025

  
06-11-2025  
PROFESSOR  
Dept. of International Relations  
Jadavpur University  
Kolkata - 700 032