

# **The Land Question in the Politics of West Bengal: An Analysis of Discourses and Rhetoric (1977 -2021)**

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## **Abstract**

The thesis tries to identify the major political processes related with the politics of land in West Bengal from 1977 to 2021, with two distinct political formations leading the 7 governments of the Left Front up to 2011 and 2 governments led by Trinamool Congress government. The research work is an attempt to understand, situate and analyse the significance of discourses and rhetoric in the politics of West Bengal over the last about 5 decades. The thesis analyses and interprets the speech act of government and political leadership of West Bengal in and outside the Legislative Assembly on land from the standpoint of political mobilisation and examines and evaluates the significant changes in the stance and orientation of various political actors over time and through various government formations. A major distinction within the leadership of the LFG, from 1977 to early 1990s under Jyoti Basu and subsequently later, since 2000 under Buddhadeb Bhattacharya has informed the research work as priorities changed over time. The focus on industrialisation and the various attempts at land acquisition in Singur and Nandigram under Bhattacharya government was successfully resisted by a rainbow coalition led by Mamata Banerjee. To balance the new economic priorities, the LFG was estranged from peasants who constituted its primary support base. The discourse could not succeed and the arguments used by the LFG to support industrialisation like the decreasing profitability from agriculture and marginalisation of land holdings are treated as rhetorical attempts. Under the Trinamool Congress Government, an attempt has been made to increase the productivity from land but since land is viewed as constituted by social relations, the land reform laws which deal with security of tenants has not been tinkered with.

Apart from an Introduction to the thesis, 5 substantive Chapters, Conclusion, glossary and bibliography feature in the thesis.

**Keywords: #Politics of West Bengal, #Land Reform, #Left Front Government, #Land Acquisition, #Trinamool Congress**