

CHAPTER - VIIC O N C L U S I O N

The foregoing discussion conclusively proves that the course of political process in the State of West Bengal has, from the very beginning, a complex one. At the time of Independence, West Bengal was confronted with a number of serious problems. It was quite natural for the Congress Government of the State to be critical of the attitude of the Central Government or for that matter the Congress High Command. Some of the issues which generated conflict were seen in the question of refugee rehabilitation programmes, supply of raw materials to the weaving community and the like. The refugee problem became very alarming. The following chart would show the rate of increase in the refugee population in the state:

Year	No. of persons.
1947	3,77,899
1950	9,25,185
1954	1,03,850
1955	2,11,573
1964	6,67,125

(Source : Office of the Refugee Rehabilitation Commissioner, Government of West Bengal).

With regard to the central assistance, the State of West Bengal had some reservations. A comparative assessment would show the amount of plan outlay and central assistance respectively from the following table:

(Rs. in Crores)

States	1951 - 1969		1969 - 1974	
	Plant Outlay	Central Assistance	Plant Outlay	Central Assistance.
Punjab	395	242	206	77
Rajasthan	260	202	101	93
Tamil Nadu	254	131	136	55
Uttar Pradesh	190	111	114	63
West Bengal	243	141	79	54
All States Total	253	147	123	71

(Source : Government of India, Report of the Fifth Finance Commission, 1969).

Financial assistance from the Centre was not adequate for meeting the developmental expenses in the State. But it is interesting to note that so far as grant of industrial licences was concerned, West Bengal had a very favourable situation. (1) In West Bengal, development in the sphere of industry was hampered because of the absence of industrial enterprise in the State. In the beginning of the Planning era, a sizable amount of Rs. 544 crores was spent on development outlays for the first three plans. The Government of West Bengal appointed a Survey

Committee on the Engineering Industry to find out the census of its slow growth. The Committee, while strongly criticising the Centre, observed, "unfortunately for West Bengal, the over all shortage of imported raw materials was not shared equally by the States. Under the system of ad-hoc allocations adopted by the Centre, having to bearing to the installed capacities existing in various states, West Bengal's small engineering units were particularly discriminated against in the matter of important raw materials".⁽²⁾

It was actually during Dr. B.C.Roy's tenure that the State witnessed phenomenal developments in the field of industry. In fact, the big industrial units were eager to establish industrial enterprises in the state because they had in mind the towering personality of Dr. Roy and they felt that they could find some amount of security in him.⁽³⁾ Crises in the industrial front in West Bengal began after 1962. Various economic, social and political factors are considered responsible for this.⁽⁴⁾

Thus, it is seen, the situation in West Bengal, right from the very beginning, had been a complex one. It has very correctly been observed : "The policy decisions of the government of West Bengal and the ability of government to implement those decisions have been conditioned by a number of ~~xx~~ problems -- political, economic, administrative, social and cultural -- which confronted the government when it first took office

and which have been intensified and complicated by the history of the state since independence." (5) The situation became even more complex with the influx of refugees immediately after the partition. The administrative apparatus, being relatively new, could not successfully tackle these problems. It has been pointed out that "while the state ministers and Congress Party leaders do have more power than any one else in the state to instigate and implement new policies, they too were limited by the nature of administration." (6) But the overall picture of West Bengal had not been that discouraging as it might appear. This is due mainly to the leadership capabilities and the kind of interaction the state unit of the Congress Party had with the Central leadership. For the proper and comprehensive development of the State, state leaders had to depend on a number of other power centres. It has been commented that "while the state government has been instrumental in providing a stable electoral majority in the state and in undertaking development projects in some spheres, it is also evident that in many years the state is highly dependent on the centre, on private industry, and even on international agencies." (7)

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that despite numerous achievements the relationship between the ~~state~~ state unit of Congress Party and the Congress High Command had not been very happy right from the beginning. Yet there had been a number of reasons for the institutionalization of the "Congress

System^o in the state. The state Congress leaders had to make necessary adjustments in their strategies with a view to getting more central assistance for the all round development of the state. There had been occasional stresses and strains in this respect, but those were removed by the timely intervention by either the Central or the State leaders like Pandit Nehru or Dr. B.C.Roy respectively. In many cases, instead of having confrontational politics, the state leaders adopted a kind of bargaining and accommodative politics for the actualization of the policies in the state. (8)

Notes and References.

1. For a comparative analysis of State-wise Distribution of Industrial Licences, see Government of India: Report of the Industrial Policy Inquiry Committee, Vol. III, p. 630.
2. A. Sen, West Bengal - An Analytical Study, Oxford & IBN, Calcutta, p. 131.

In fact, the 105th Report of the Lok Sabha Estimates Committee strongly commented on such discrimination.
3. For details, see West Bengal Assembly Proceedings, 1951, p. 85.
4. That West Bengal had a very favourable industrial climate before 1962, has been analysed in a number of works. For Government's attitude see Government of India, the Labour Year book 1948-49, pp. 372-378.
5. Marcus F. Franda, "West Bengal" in Myron Weiner (ed.) State Politics in India, Princeton University Press, 1968, p. 299.

6. Ibid., p. 306.
 7. Ibid., p. 315.
 8. The role of West Bengal in federal dynamics has been discussed in greater details in Amal Roy's political Dynamics of India's Federalism -- West Bengal's Experience in G. L. Maheswari (ed.) Centre-State Relations in the Seventies, Calcutta, 1973 and also in Marcus Franda, West Bengal and the Federalising process in India, New Jersey, 1968.
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