

## P R E F A C E

The present study seeks to explore in depth the nature and character of the political processes and institutions in the State of West Bengal in a period when there had been Congress hegemony both at the Centre and/the State. It is important to note that for the purpose of making the discussion all-comprehensive in nature, the trends of the political process has been sought to be discussed in the broader perspective of leadership issue - both central and provincial.

Being a trouble-hidden state, West Bengal, right from the beginning has been facing a number of problems - social, economic and political. The impact of partition had been tremendous. Closely following this, there were problems on food-front as well as refugee issues. The state had to solve these problems along with other social and political problems.

Although there was Congress rule both at the Centre and at the State levels, serious differences of opinions between the Centre and State occurred both at the governmental and organizational levels. It generated stresses and strains the impact of which could be felt in the attitudes of the leaders and the policies which they wanted to follow.

At the organizational level, the Pradesh Congress Committee could not strictly adhere to the directives of the Congress

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High Command. Controversies and debates over policies could be seen at the Pradesh Congress Committee level.

It is interesting to note that the nature of political process and for that matter, the question of bargaining politics with the centre under went remarkable changes with the emergence of Dr. B. C. Roy as the Chief Minister. At the governmental level, Dr. Roy offered new leadership with his towering personality and at the organizational level, it was Atulya Ghosh who infused with the party with added dynamism. In fact, it was Atulya Ghosh who could understand that the limit of a party like Congress could not and should not be restricted only in the big city like Calcutta. He felt the necessity of taking the party to the villages.

The present study, while taking into consideration the leadership issue, seeks to analyse other related factors which influenced the dynamics of the political process in the State. Broadly conceived, such a study is concerned with the socio-political basis of power in all institutional sectors of society with patterns of social stratification and their consequences in organised politics. Comparative assessment of the policies and performance have been made as far as possible to make the discussion complete and meaningful.

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