

CHAPTER-III

STATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE CONGRESS PARTY IN THE ERA OF Dr. BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY— IDEOLOGY VERSES NECESSITY AND RECONSTRUCTION

Bidhan Chandra Roy was never a politician by profession, but he entered into the arena of politics only when he was called for the interest of the state of West Bengal; otherwise, he was engaged himself to his own medical profession. It appears to Bidhan Chandra Roy (henceforth B.C. Roy) that politics was nothing but doing something for the welfare as well as improvement of the people as a whole. As a reputed medical practitioner throughout the country and abroad, he was always against any kind of group politics.¹ Incidentally, factional conflict within the congress party in West Bengal started among the Gandhian, Jugantar and Hooghly groups. As a result of the said conflict along with the advantage of the partition of Bengal, the Hooghly group and its leader Atulya Ghosh was able to side line the former two groups. After that, Atulya Ghosh, the indisputable leader of the Hooghly Group emerged as the most influential political figure in the West Bengal congress politics and subsequently became the President of the Pradesh Congress Committee.² In the meantime, as an outcome of the factional hostilities over the question of supremacy in West Bengal politics, the Congress Legislative Party (henceforth CLP) expressed its no confidence against Prafulla Chandra Ghosh (henceforth P.C. Ghosh), the first Premier of West Bengal and decided to select Bidhan Chandra Roy as their leader.³ (Though, there were many factors behind the over through of the Ministry headed by Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, which has already been discussed in the previous chapter). In that context, after taking the advice of Gandhiji, B.C. Roy was determined to accept the decision of the Congress Legislative Party of West Bengal provided if there would be no party interference regarding the choice of his cabinet colleagues as well as control of the administration. Eventually, with the consent of the Congress Legislative Party along with the Pradesh Congress Committee (henceforth PCC) as per his pre-condition, B.C. Roy agreed to become the Chief Minister of West Bengal after P.C. Ghosh.⁴

Physician Chief Minister- Bidhan Chandra Roy

It is noteworthy that at the time of the transfer of power as well as partition of India B.C. Roy was in abroad for his eye treatment. He returned back to India on 1st November, 1947, with no intention to participate in the active politics.⁵ He then went to Delhi towards the middle of December, 1947 in order to meet ailing Shyama Prasad Mookherjee who was then suffering from gall-bladder trouble. In course of their meeting, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee expressed his desire to resign from the Membership of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and instead of his place i.e. registered graduates of the Calcutta University's constituency he proposed B.C. Roy to be elected. As per the proposal of Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, B.C. Roy was elected accordingly from that constituency with no opposition towards the end of December, 1947.⁶

However, On 23rd January, 1948, (Birth day of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose) Bidhan Chandra Roy was sworn-in as the second Chief Minister of West Bengal which had then earned the epithet as the 'problematic state of India'.⁷ Actually, the problems of the state were diverse, some strange to itself and mostly persisting the heritage or legacy of the past. The severe famine, bloody war, out-bursts of communal furiousness, inter-district shifting of panicky population, irreparable loss of territory due to partition, large-scale movements of the dispossessed as well as uprooted people which were collectively created a lot of problems in the state. Frustration was everywhere as because land was insufficient and industries were chiefly in the hands of the non-Bengalee people and thereupon production ran at low ebb. The prices of the essential commodities were so high that the basic necessities of life were not available within the purchasing limits of common men and moreover unemployment within the middle class educated population altogether collectively developed West Bengal into a chaotic situation at the time of oath taking ceremony of Bidhan Chandra Roy as the second Chief Minister of West Bengal.⁸

Dispassionate Chief Minister

It is noteworthy that Bidhan Chandra Roy all along his career occupied distinction as because whatever duties as well as responsibilities were entrusted to him, his sole objective was to do his best. The key words of his activities were- 'Do

your best and leave to God the rest.’ At that time, the chair of the Chief Minister of West Bengal was not a bed of roses. Almost all the problems what Prafulla Chandra Ghosh had to face still remained the same. Additional problems were also flourished. But after taken up the ribbons of the West Bengal Ministry in his hand, B.C. Roy was not a man of fleeing character or to be frightened by adversities rather devoted his heart and soul into the work to solve any problems. While the general condition of the state administration was very much confusing, the internal condition of the party was also in a way of depressing. Not only that, there were many groups and sections in the congress party organization in West Bengal, what have already been mentioned. Moreover, there were many aspirants to grab the power and position in that changing set up, but Bidhan Chandra Roy, the man at the steering wheel in the state showed his courage and strength of character and a desire of determination to continue his responsibilities in the midst of chaos, disorder and opposition of the party maneuver.⁹ In the field of the overcome of all that adverse situations, the main advantage of B.C. Roy was that he became the Chief Minister at the request of the West Bengal Congress Legislature Party, not out of his own desire. Therefore, he could stand above party and side by side exercised it in the case of inducting of his Cabinet Ministers and in many cases they did not belong to the congress party as well as member of the Legislature also.¹⁰

Beside the above relevant expectations of the common people, various experiences of Bidhan Chandra Roy gave him many lessons how to manage the inharmonious demands of rival groups. As a result of the partition and the inrush of huge refugees continuously from East Pakistan and considerable labour unrest collectively created as if an unstable situation in West Bengal. Most of the days of the months there was a demonstration for various demands. Not only that the agitating forces were aimed to discredit the Government and at the same time shake the stability of the administration. In that context, after assuming the chair of the Chief-Minister of West Bengal, initially B.C. Roy had to face a huge number of emergent crucial situations. Almost every day, demonstrations for this or that were held just opposite his residence and people would give slogans generally against the Congress Party and the Government run by the congressmen. Even in some cases the demonstrators surrounded the house of Bidhan Chandra Roy, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal and the Writers’ Buildings, the chief administrative buildings of the state. But by dint of his indomitable spirit to conquer every difficulty, Bidhan

Chandra Roy would remain calm and dispassionate. Keeping in mind the dignity and status, as the head of the administration of the state he would meet the representatives of the demonstrators and discuss about their demands. In many occasions it was found that the demonstrators would convince about the sincerity of the Chief Minister and at the same time realized the difficulties of the Government. But one thing was noticed that Bidhan Chandra Roy was never succumbed to any threats and indiscipline whatever it might be.¹¹

Understanding Basic Requirements of the State

Bidhan Chandra Roy's profound knowledge of facts and practical commonsense, firmness as well as sympathetic understanding of every critical situation along with humanistic approach urged him to handle the 'Ship of State' strictly forward without allowing it to make a mistake in the troubled water of Bengal. The most remarkable features of his character was that he had a tireless temper that even in the midst of troublous conditions never showed any sign of irritation or mental agitation. Actually his inner power had lied in his tremendous intelligence, depth of knowledge and his passion for exactness as well as the miraculous orderliness of his mind.¹² He had the remarkable capacity and a clear conception of the difficulties faced by him as the head of the administrator of the state. As like as rest of the India, West Bengal was under a system of administrative control of the British for about two centuries, wherein state enterprises as well as state trading were almost unknown. During the time of the British administration the trade system in West Bengal was in the control of their cousin – the industrialists. But after independence present administration was supposed to be controlled and guided by the choice of the people who were virtually the voters who would form the government. Their basic requirements of the post independent India particularly in West Bengal were adequate food, clothes and shelter. They also felt the necessities of more education along with higher economic status and better health care facilities.¹³

Be and Make

It is noteworthy that as a man of strict principle, Bidhan Chandra Roy with the becoming of the Chief Minister, he gave up his highly lucrative medical practice,

though he would give free medical treatment in the every morning at least two or three hours to the people those who would come to him. In this way his days were used to start generally with a free service to the ailing humanity and there after the Chief Minister would reach the secretariat i.e. Writers Buildings by 8.30-9 a.m. That practice of the Chief Minister, Bidhan Chandra Roy entirely changed the whole routine of attendance and activities in the Writers' Buildings where previously officers and others staff used to come normally not before 10.30 or 11a.m. in the morning. Thus without issuing any kind of order as well as making any suggestions, the early attendance of the officers and others staff in the Writers' Building came into practice. It was not unexpected that when the Chief Minister was at his office desk within 9 a.m. others officers could not be late. In that manner, first of all performing his own duty perfectly, as the Chief Minister, Bidhan Chandra Roy successfully revolutionized office attendance in the Writers' Building without applying any obligation.¹⁴

It is a fact that Bidhan Chandra Roy was not a demagogue or orator, but as a debater he showed his outstanding efficiency in the old Legislative Council during the British regime. Moreover, as the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, as a Mayor of Calcutta Corporation and above all as a Chief Minister in the Legislative Assembly he proved his extraordinary talent and efficacy. Facts and logic were his main component behind any kind of arguments and by dint of his infallible logic he was able to silence the opposition in the West Bengal Legislative Assembly and Council. In the early days of the Chief Ministership of Bidhan Chandra Roy, the opposition parties in the two houses were very strong as well as powerful and it was only because of his undeniable and logical illustration from the administration point of view led to win over the issues raised by the critics. He was actually the citadel of strength to the Treasury Benches and always came forward to the help of his colleagues. As Bidhan Chandra Roy had the rare capacity to soothe a storm, and as a result of that tremendous capacity or his mesmeric personality and technique saved many awkward situations in the West Bengal Legislature. In spite of becoming a born fighter, Bidhan Chandra Roy would acknowledge the reasonable demands of the opposition only when he was convinced that was the benefit of the people.¹⁵

For the all round development of West Bengal and for the well- being of its people, Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister accomplished numerous measures as per the demands of the situation, which has been discussed below:

Food Crisis

The year 1950 was a critical year for West Bengal not only from the refugee point of view but also in respect of the shortage of food also. At that time the overall condition of food was acute throughout the country. Bihar was in almost a famine condition and stories of mass starvation would publish through newspapers regularly. One of the main causes behind the shortage of food was the partition of the country which gave almost 20 million acres of excellent rice-growing paddy fields to the East Pakistan¹⁶ and thereby rice became comparatively unavailable and more expensive in West Bengal. In addition the influx of lakhs of refugees from East Pakistan to West Bengal, diversion of 200,000 acres of aus rice growing lands to jute cultivation¹⁷ and damage of crops due to natural calamities - collectively resulted in a yearly deficit of 200,000 tons¹⁸ food grain in the state. Naturally in order to fulfill the need, West Bengal Government had no any other alternative but to depend on supplies from other parts of India as well as more allocation of Central Government. The partition of Bengal actually broke the economic backbone of Bengal particularly the West Bengal because the partitioned hardened the main sources of raw materials, while the big jute industries were located in West Bengal but jute was basically grown in East Bengal. Not only that East Bengal was the main source of the production of paddy and fish for the headless province of West Bengal. At that time the Government of West Bengal held only six weeks food stock but the requirement of refugees came to about 24,000 tons of rice. In that situation, Bidhan Chandra Roy, the chief minister felt that once there was a breakdown in the rationing system its explosion would rock his Government and there would be food riots in the troubled city.¹⁹ During 1950's in the midst of acute food crisis in West Bengal the number of mouths to feed increased rapidly as a result of the influx of millions of refugees from East Pakistan. Along with it there was extraordinary increase of the birth rate widened the state's food-gap continued.²⁰ At the aim of controlling the situation Bidhan Chandra Roy and Prafulla Chandra Sen (henceforth P.C. Sen), the Food Minister made a number of trips to Delhi to restock the serious low food stocks of the province.

First Food Movement

In the month of April 1951, two women named Bandana Talukdar and Kabita Basu raised their voice for food and as a consequence of that they were shoot dead by police in Cooch Bihar.²¹ In the summer of the year of 1952, the members of the opposition group in the Assembly launched their first food movement demanding increase of the quantum of rice and wheat in ration for the people of west Bengal particularly for manual workers. Processions were daily taken out for the demand of more food at a cheaper rate. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, the then Union Food Minister rushed to Calcutta and met the chief minister and opposition leaders including Jyoti Basu for discussion about the food situation in the state of West Bengal.²² In a letter dated 25th July, 1952 B.C. Roy apprised Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India that “actually the whole movement was political. It was not against the Food Minister Prafulla Chandra Sen (Nehru apprehended this) and his food policy at all, because he does nothing without consulting every detail with me.”²³

Food Movement of 1959

The most important issue that was discussed in the National Development Council (NDC) in the presence of the Chief Ministers of different States of India about state trading in food. Bidhan Chandra Roy was an enthusiastic supporter of that issue and initiator of the planning of gradual take- over of the trade of food grains from private traders. No other Chief Minister had to face such strong food movements year after year as B.C. Roy had in his own State. He was determined that people’s food could not be left into the hands of the trading community who were gradually confiscating the faith of the people and the Government by their unashamed trade pactice.²⁴

In the first week of June, 1959 Chief Minister B.C. Roy was in Darjeeling along with his Cabinet colleagues. He received there a telegram from the Howrah district Congress Committee to the following manner: “Rice position is hope less, please take immediate action before rice disappears completely from the market”.²⁵ Scarcity of food was continued in West Bengal particularly in south Bengal due to heavy drought, late monsoon and lack of employment. Not only that in the same year following unprecedented rains more than half of Bengal was in the grip of devastating

floods that overflowed nine districts including Purulia, Burdwan, Murshidabad, Birbhum and Nadia. It was as if a repetition of natural calamities what occurred in West Bengal in 1956 and from that destruction the people were not fully recovered. According to official estimates, at least one million acres of paddy lands were affected.²⁶ Reports reached Darjeeling that the hungry villagers from the border district of 24 Pargana were coming daily almost 3,000 to Calcutta for searching of food which indicates the creation of near famine situation.²⁷ As the Food Minister, Prafulla Chandra Sen was failed to tackle the food crisis in West Bengal, that is why 'Swadhinata Patrika' had given the name of Food Minister, as 'famine minister' on 27th August, 1959. In that context B.C. Roy wrote a long letter to the Union Food Minister regarding the alarming food crisis in his State, although in the meantime the Central Government agreed to meet the entire food deficit of West Bengal, estimated at about 9.5 lakh tons.²⁸

B.C. Roy's Effort to Meet the Food Crisis

The Chief Minister returned to Calcutta on 11th June, 1959 in order to review the alarming food crisis with food minister P. C. Sen and Joint Secretary B. R. Gupta. Binoy Bhusan Ghosh, the then Union Food Secretary, came to Calcutta on the spot verification about the acute food crisis in West Bengal. After on the spot study, the Central Government decided to allot extra 10,000 tons of rice in addition to the monthly quota of the state 75,000 tones. About ten million people representing one-third of the entire population of the state were under modified rationing under which rice was to be sold at Rs.17.5 per mound, though in open market rice was then being sold at Rs. 40 per mound. In Calcutta about 4.2 million people were drawing ration of 1.5 *seers* of rice and 1 *seer* of wheat per week.²⁹

On the 22nd of June, 1959 B.C. Roy executed a major change in food policy and announced it at a quickly summoned press conference in the evening at his residence. Earlier he had discussed food crisis in a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party, at Writers' Buildings. As an ardent disciple of Gandhi, B.C. Roy, Chief Minister of West Bengal instead of leaving the responsibility on food minister P.C. Sen, he himself took upon the whole responsibility for the failure of the food policy of his Government. Explaining the basic cause of West Bengal's difficulties he

remarked, 'less production in the current year because of draught'. B.C. Roy felt the necessity of a more vigorous programme for production of food to meet the challenge of the scarcity of food grain. At that point of time he expressed his view to intensive 'grow more food campaign' on 8th July 1959 at the event of rearrangement and reallocation of the Agriculture portfolio. It was well known to B.C. Roy that there was a little possibility for extension of paddy farming land through the reclamation of lands in his state. The only option was open for the state to take the special drive towards increasing the growth of agricultural product per acre. Keeping in mind that view B.C. Roy upgraded Tarun Kanti Ghosh, a 34 years young member of the Assembly to the rank of a full Cabinet Minister with in charge of Agriculture and Food Production Department.³⁰

Measures for the Production of Food

In the first few years after independence the annual production of rice increased in the year of 1953-1954 from about three and one-third million tons to five million 220 thousand tons. Actually the annual production during that time exceeded than the annual requirement in the state. The surplus production of rice in West Bengal was possible due to the adoption of thoughtful planning and extraordinary activities in the agricultural front on behalf of the state government. For the improvement of the agricultural production Rs.10.49 crores were estimated to cost under agriculture and rural development scheme. Not only that in order to facilitate agricultural activities huge number of tons of improved seeds, fertilizers and manures were distributed by the state Government among the cultivators. Moreover, 38,000 acres of waste lands were reclaimed and transferred into cultivable land for the expansion of agricultural area by the end of the March, 1954. In addition to this, in order to provide irrigation facility to the cultivators for more production a good number of irrigation tanks were executed. Major projects for irrigation along with drainage including the Mayurakshi project were calculated to benefit 10 lakhs acres of land in different stages of execution. There was also a gigantic multi-purpose Damodar Valley Project and the Sonarpur- Arapanch scheme project also designed for the reclamation of wasteland in 24-parganas by draining out the cumulated water and thereupon as many as 17000 acres lands were reclaimed of which 1,200 acres of land were brought directly under cultivation during the year 1953-1954.³¹

Role of the Communists

The Communists and their companions were not sitting idle after the failure of the State Government to execute state trading in food grains. During that time the Communist Government in Kerala, headed by E.M.S. Namboodripad faced a state-wide agitation due to adopting 'repressive' measures that led to a near collapse situation. In that context, to prevent the dismissal of the Communist Government in Kerala, as diversionary tactics the Bengal Communist party was prepared and submitted a long 52-page memorandum to Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India. In that memorandum, many charges against the State Government was brought by the Bengal communists such as 'blatant misrule' like- colossal waste of public funds, rank corruption and nepotism, appeasement of vested interests, misuse of administrative machinery and suppression of fundamental rights.³²

Due to the price hike of food grain and open confession of the Chief Minister B.C. Roy about the failure of his Government over state control trade of food grain³³ the opposition parties specially the communists planned to stage one of their fiercest attacks against the Government. In one of his writings, Jyoti Basu showed with various statistics that West Bengal need 40 lakh ton rich per year but, after independence state Government utterly failed to reach that target except the year of 1953-1954.³⁴ Moreover there was a tremendous pressure of lakhs of refugees from East Bengal. It was found that upto the year of 1956 almost 40 lakhs refugees came from East Bengal to India and among them 31 lakhs were staying in West Bengal.³⁵ Towards the end of the year, 1958 'Price Increase and Famine Resistance Committee (henceforth PIFRC)' was formed with Suresh Chandra Bandopadhyay and Hemanta Kumar Basu as President and Secretary respectively. A hungry procession was also held as per the decision of the PIFRC.³⁶ It is important to note that the main target of the opposition parties was not so much B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister, but Prafulla Chandra Sen, the Food Minister of the state. Actually the Food Minister P.C. Sen was next to Chief Minister in the Cabinet and would control the party machinery in West Bengal in combination with Atulya Ghosh. The opposition felt that if once he would remove then not only the congress party in the state but the cabinet would also be rudely shaken. However, in the meantime, the Price Increase and Famine Resistance Committee (PIFRC) earlier announced their programmes of mass action on and from 20th August 1959 unless necessary steps were taken to improve the food situation.³⁷

Preparation of the Government to Tackle Food Movement

Meanwhile, on the evening of the 14th and 15th August, 1959 the Chief Minister B.C. Roy convened a secret meetings at his residence with all the heads of the police department and officials of the Home Department. After elaborate discussion, the Chief Minister issued a note of warning for giving point by point reply to the demands of the PIFRC which had threatened to launch 'mass action' programme against the hoarding of rice stocks, mass defiance of law, squatting and picketing. The Chief Minister also warned that law breakers must take the consequences for their action.³⁸

Two days after the secret meeting i.e. on the 17th August 1959, police started searching in the early hours of the morning in Calcutta and the districts for political leaders who were involved in the threatening of mass violation of law. Simultaneously searching was also carried out in the offices of the communist party in Calcutta. Altogether 63 arrests were made of whom 14 MLAs those who were the chief elements of the PIFRC belonged to the Communist Party, Revolutionary Socialist Party, the Socialist Unity Centre and Forward Bloc. As a protest against that arrest and for the demand of adequate supply of food, movement started in the different districts throughout the state but the police of the government tried to restrain the same by any means. In order to quell the food movement police resorted *lathi* charge and tear gas at Seerampur (Hoogly) and Dimondharbar (24 Parganas) on 26th August 1959.³⁹ At the time of the police searching Jyoti Basu, the then leader of the opposition was not traceable. Not only Jyoti Basu but also many workers of the communist party were in the underground to evade arrest.⁴⁰

Both sides' i. e. the State Government and the oppositions prepared for a showdown. By this time PIFRC took decision to launch their campaign towards Writers' Buildings on 19th August 1959. In order to resist the move and to avoid any kind of untoward situation, Kalipada Mukherjee, the then police Minister issued a very strict order that those law-breakers would come to demonstrate in front of the house of Food Minister P.C. Sen, they must be checked before the prohibited zone and be dealt with severe punishment. The Cabinet convened an urgent meeting on the 27th August, 1959 to finalise measures to be adopted to tackle the proposed massive demonstration of the left parties in Calcutta on 31st August 1959.⁴¹ In the meanwhile, in Delhi on 23rd August 1959 Ajit Prasad Jain, the then Food Minister, government of

India announced his decision in the Lok Sabha on the last day of the Food debate of resignation. He took the responsibility of his failure to tackle the food situation, particularly in West Bengal and thereafter S.K. Patil was inducted in the Central Cabinet as the next Food Minister.⁴²

The 31st August, 1959 – Day of Massive Demonstration and Police Action

At last the 'D' day arrived. According to the estimate of various news papers at least 25,000-30,000, demonstrators arrived in Calcutta on 31st August, 1959. The Communist Party demanded lakhs people but Jyoti Basu claimed 3 lakhs demonstrators including many women - children and peasants from distant villages marched in procession towards Writers' Buildings after the *Maidan* meeting which was addressed by leftist leaders Manikuntala Sen and Makhan Pal.⁴³ Their programme was to surround the Writers' Buildings' until they could get the promise for food. The procession was led by a row of volunteers who were followed by the leaders. The shouting slogan of the defiant processionists were : "Give us rice at cheap prices or resign, ' let Prafulla Sen resign', 'March to Writers' Buildings'".⁴⁴

Several Deputy Commissioner of police were deployed there to control the situation. Mr. Saroj Chakrabarty, P.A. to the then Chief Minister in his memoirs 'My Years With Dr. B.C. Roy' vividly described the happening of that fateful day of 31st August 1959 in the following manner: "The jostling mob could only be checked by baton charges which were made. Simultaneously tear gas shells were fired. Baton and lathi charges were intensified. After withstanding the police attacks for some time the demonstrators took to their heels. The fleeing demonstrators were pursued by several thousand policemen. The battle ended in the victory of guardians of law and order. The food minister was safe and so was Writers' Buildings, the seat of the state Government. This was an example of the theory that "violence is suppressed by greater violence". The day's round up included 300 arrests. The Calcutta Medical College, city's principal hospital, was filled with injured. All meetings and processions throughout the city were banned by the police chief."⁴⁵ As a result of the brutal lathi charge and firing of tear gas shells by the police at least 130 agitators were severely injured and a considerable percentage of the participants were found death.⁴⁶

On the following day (on 1st September, 1959) as a protest against the police atrocities of 31st August, 1959 Students strike was called on. On that day, as many as five police stations were attacked by the angry masses. In that context, the Commissioner of Police along with some of his officers came to Writers' Buildings to apprise the Chief Minister about their incapability to bring the situation under control with mere lathis, batons and tear-gas shells. After his talk to the police chief, the Chief Minister communicated to Govind Ballav Pant, the then Union Home Minister, over the secraphone and sought his permission to use firearms in order to quell the serious disturbances. However, the permission to use firearms came from Delhi in the afternoon.⁴⁷ As students were playing predominant role in food movement, necessarily the students became the soft target of the state police. On that point a student of Surendranath College, named Bibhuti Roychowdhury was first shoot dead by the police on 1st September 1959. Among the arrested students leaders most notable were Gurudas Dasgupta, Protul Lahiri etc.⁴⁸ Not only that in order to disperse the agitators police fired 50-60 round on that 1st September, 1959 and thereby at least 7 demonstrators were shot death and more than 100 people sustained bullet injury.⁴⁹

On the previous night i.e. On 31st August, 1959 in a statement Jyoti Basu declared that "despite all brutalities of the Government our movement will go on according to the programme". On the 2nd day of September again after police firing, in the evening, the Chief Minister B.C. Roy expressed his unhappiness about the previous day's riotous behavior made by the agitators . In his statement B.C. Roy denounced the attacks on ambulances. The cruelty of police firing turned most brutal on 3rd September, 1959. As a result of police firing in that 3 days altogether 27 people died and next day the number of death reached in 37.⁵⁰ After 3rd September, 1959 the main centre of battle for food movement became the town place of Howra, Hooghly and 24 Pargana. Not only that the movement was also spread in Nadia, Murshidabad and even Jalpaiguri of North Bengal. On 10th September, 1959 the Martyrs day was observed by the students, wearing black badge and walking in the procession in Calcutta. The most remarkable event on that day was that 'black flag' was hoisted by Dr. Triguna Sen, Vice-Chancellor of Jadavpur University. On the other hand, in order to save life and property and to stop chaos a 'Peace Committee' was formed by the one section of Professors-intellectuals -- most important personalities among them

were Nihar Ranjan Roy and Kalidas Nag.⁵¹ As per the estimate of the 'The Statesman' 39 people including a police man lost their lives and 200 were untraced in that seven days disturbances.⁵² However, as per the statement of Saroj Chakrabartay, P.A. to the Chief Minister B. C. Roy, "Calcutta was quieter on the day following with fewer incidents. The PSP announced its decision to postpone for a fortnight the food demonstration to enable its leader (Dr. Ghosh) to complete the unfinished negotiations with the State Government. The five day disturbances in Calcutta took a toll of 31 lives and injuries to 3,000 besides damage to property."⁵³

Small Industry

In the industrial front particularly on the sphere of cottage industries - various schemes were taken by B.C Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal for the revival as well as encouragement of the beekeeping industry, khadi industry, mat industry, handmade paper industry, brass and bell metal industry, silk industry, handloom industry etc. Large scale schemes were also initiated for the enhancement of the supply of fish and milk for the people of the state.

Fish

For the improvement of fish farming numerous measures were taken by the state government under the stewardship of Bidhan Chandra Roy. For example, as many as 14,200 acres area of wetlands were reclaimed and prepared for fish farming. A lot of nursery units for fish farming were opened and thereby fingerlings were being raised for distribution among the pisciculturists at the prices of possible low cost. A number of measures for the development of *beel* fisheries were also taken on behalf of the Government of West Bengal. The Government started giving advance loan to the private owners of abandoned *beels* for dredging and making these convenient for pisciculture. Besides, the state government with the help of Danish and Japanese fleet directly took the initiative to explore the possibilities of Deep-Sea Fishing in the Bay of Bengal.⁵⁴

Milk

The planning for the extension of supply of milk in Calcutta was carried out with the removal of *khatahs* from the city of Calcutta and resettlement of the displaced cattle in the various milk colonies situated in the rural areas or the outskirts of the main city on the pattern of Aarey Colony of Bombay. With a team of officers headed by Rafiuddin Ahmed, Minister in-Charge of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Forests⁵⁵ worked silently for the materialization of this scheme and establishment of the first unit of a Milk Colony along with the accommodation of 1,272 milch animals including their offsprings at Haringhata in the district of Nadia, about 34 miles away from Calcutta.⁵⁶ The reason behind the selection of Haringhata as the site for the first milk colony was that, there were over 3,000 acres of land for growing fodder for providing feeding to the displaced cattle along with modern breeding facilities and for a modern dairy factory equipped with up-to-date machinery pasteurization, bottling and chilling plants. While laying the foundation stone on 3rd January, 1954 Chief Minister B.C. Roy addressed, "It would not merely benefit the city and at the same time ensure supply of pure milk but would also help restoring economic balance in village, opening up new avenues of employment. The problem of removal of 'Khatahs' from Calcutta had been engaging their attention since the days of Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, who was the first Mayor of Calcutta, had thought of it. The State Government had therefore been making unremitting efforts to solve the twin problem of removing the 'khatal' and developing a huge milk colony at Haringhata."⁵⁷ As a result of the distance of Haringhata from Calcutta, it was very important to start another dairy at Calcutta in order to smooth handling the supply of milk requirements for the city. The Central Dairy at Belgachia in Calcutta was established with the most modern design on 23 acres of land in September, 1962. The daily output of milk together from Haringhata and Belgachia Dairy reached up to 2,15,000 litres per day in 1982.⁵⁸ The various finished products from that modern dairy farms guaranteed their purity and consequently within a very short days a good reputation were spread out in the Calcutta markets which influenced the quantity of supply and the prices of these commodities.⁵⁹

Road and Transport

Considerable development perpetrated in the field of communication and transport in the state of West Bengal. Actually, road connection in the state something

was crippled in the wake of the partition of Bengal. Moreover, the density of population in West Bengal was nearly three times in comparison with the rest of India as a whole. At the beginning of the planning for developing communication in the state it had only 0.57 miles of road in all categories for per thousand of her people while the figure of the rest of India was 0.75 miles per thousands. However, it was estimated that approximately Rs. 200 crores would be spent for the completion of road construction in West Bengal. But very insufficient amount of money i.e. only Rs. 30 crores had been allocated for the expenditure regarding the road development works in West Bengal up to the end of the year of 1955-1956. In spite of scarcity of the allocation of funds, 1450 miles of new roads were constructed in addition to about 300 miles of national highways within the state. The aggregate length of 23 bridges which were also been constructed at that time were 6,090 feet. Simultaneously, with the development of roads the Government of West Bengal carried out a programme for the development of transport. Remaining the operations of the private transport service intact, the state transport service of West Bengal was brought into being in Calcutta. At the beginning of 1955, altogether 286 State Transport buses including 36 double-deckers started operating on 12 routes in the city and provided employment to about 3,300 persons.⁶⁰

Education

During the Chief Ministership of Bidhan Chandra Roy, particularly the decade of 1950s are still considered to be 'era of nation building' as because the budget figures for the development purpose under any head was impressive. It is an example that the expenditure for Education Department was increased by the State Government from Rs.2.55 crores in the year of 1948-49 to Rs. 6.59 crores in 1954-55. It is noteworthy that, though the concept of the Basic School was developed in 1937, but up to the year of 1947, there was not a single Basic School throughout the state of West Bengal. As a result of giving the proper attention to the development of education as many as 275 Basic Schools were set up by the State Government within the year of 1954. Not only that during the year of 1947 to 1954, the number of primary schools was increased from 13,772 to 16,689, the Junior High Schools from 985 to 1,407, the High Schools from 761 to 1,402, the Colleges from 54 to 89 and the Technical Schools and Colleges from 90 to 144 respectively.⁶¹ Another remarkable

achievement of B.C. Roy was to the establishment of a Marine Engineering College in Calcutta, 1950.⁶²

Birth of Kalyani University

Birla College of Agriculture at Kalyani, the biggest Agricultural College in West Bengal was opened by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India in 1954. Actually B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal earlier persuaded his friend G.D. Birla for the construction of that college and urged him to pay the total amount for running the institution. This institution was developed later on as the nucleus of a University, named Kalyani University with agriculture and animal husbandry as its base. This was also another example of B.C. Roy's diverse activities for the development of West Bengal.⁶³

Birth of IIT, Kharagpur

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of free India, was also the personal friend of Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal. In course of discussion between the two the former approached the later to locate a site for setting up one of the five regional engineering colleges sometime in the year of 1950-51. The Chief Minister B.C. Roy accepted the offer at once and selected Hijli at Kharagpur in the district of Midnapur which is a distance of 100 miles from Calcutta for the purpose of setting up engineering college. Due to the insistence of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad prior to the approval of I.I.T. Kharagpur B.C. Roy agreed to take overall charge of the Institute as its Chairman in his personal capacity. With the help of his personal sagacity and indomitable spirit for doing something for the betterment of the state, B.C. Roy selected Jnan Chandra Ghosh, an eminent scholar and scientist as its first Director. B.C. Roy along with Jnan Chandra Ghosh jointly did the ground work to bring the life of the present day's well-known magnificent engineering college.⁶⁴

Creation of Four New Universities

The meeting of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly was held on 22nd February, 1960 in order to listen the announcement of Governor Padmaja Naidu regarding the state venture towards the direction of education and employment opportunities by means of the process of industrialization. In previous session, the Legislative Assembly already passed the Burdwan University Bill and the University started its functioning from the next academic session. Proposal for the setting up of a new University in North Bengal was then already under way, and a new Bill providing for the establishment of another University for study in Humanities and Science in particular at Kalyani, not very far from Calcutta was already in due consideration in that session of the legislature assembly.⁶⁵

Moreover, B.C. Roy was a great planner for the improvement of education and culture of West Bengal. Due to the efforts of B.C. Roy Viswa Bharati, established by Rabindra Nath Tagore in 1921 was elevated as Viswa Bharati University under the Governance of the Government of India in 1951. It may be noted here that the planning for the establishing of the above mentioned Kalyani University was initiated by B.C. Roy in 1954. It was B.C. Roy who took the special drive for the passing of the Jadavpur University Bill in the Legislative Assembly in 1955. As a President of the National Education Council, B.C. Roy himself moved the Jadavpur University Bill in the month of September 1955. Jadavpur University was occasionally opened by Dr. Sarvapally Radhakrishnan, the then Vice- President of India on 18th March 1956 for opening up a new era in the history of the higher education in India particularly in West Bengal. 'Academy of Dance, Drama and Music' was established in 1955. As a result of B.C. Roy's vision for commemorating to Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore a plan was formulated for establishing Rabindra Bharati University in 1959. He was also the founder President of Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management in Calcutta.⁶⁶

Medical and Public Health

It may be mentioned that notable development took place in the field of Medical and Public Health Services (MPHS) in West Bengal during the Chief Ministership of B.C. Roy. In the second year of Independence there were only less than 70 Health Centres all over the state. The number of Health Centres came into

existence up to 166 at the beginning of the year of 1954. As a helmsman of West Bengal, with the help of his world-wide reputation of medical knowledge B.C. Roy chalked out a plan to raise the number of health centre within the years of 1955-56 further up to 271 with 2,762 beds. The number of beds in Sadar Hospital and Sub-divisional Hospitals were also increased to 2,469 and the tuberculosis beds to 2,353. As many as 16 National Malaria Control Units (NMCU) in West Bengal would function to minimize the disease of malaria in the state. Besides, the number of Maternity Centres was also increased to 96, the T.B. Clinics to 25, the Leprosy Clinics to 92 and of V.D. Clinics to 18. During that time in average 82 hospital beds would ready for per 1000 population in West Bengal which was comparatively highest in number in India. An idea of taking the proper step for improvement of public health became so effective, it was found that the birth rate increased from 21.3 in 1948 to 22.7 per milla in 1953 and side by side death rate came down from 18.1 to 10.2.⁶⁷

Calcutta's First Polio Clinic

The diseases named polio became a kind of epidemic in the city of Calcutta. As a Doctor, B.C. Roy had to treat a large number of crippled children suffering from polio and thereby he felt the necessity of establishing a polio hospital as well as clinic in Calcutta. Out of that feeling B.C. Roy asked Dr. Santosh Bose, one of his former students to go ahead with the plan for a polio hospital at Beliaghata in north-eastern suburbs of Calcutta. In the very outset it was completely a non-official venture and he himself by dint of his personal capacity started collecting necessary equipment for the polio clinic from within the country and abroad. After necessary arrangements about to start treatment of patients, B.C. Roy invited Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India in the occasion to inaugurate the hospital which was named after him as "B. C. Roy Polio Clinic" by the promoters. However, after formally opening up the polio clinic and hospital Jawaharlal Nehru addressed, "I did not generally approve the naming of institutions after living persons but in that particular instance I have no objection to it because Dr. Roy is a great personality and the association of his name with the institution might benefit it immensely".⁶⁸

Institutions

Bidhan Chandra Roy was closely connected with the introduction as well as management of various institutions throughout the country particularly in West Bengal. From his early age he was interested for the betterment of the people and intended in helping and working for various institutions. His activities in this field were numerous and varied. Incidentally, B.C. Roy was the first President of All India Medical Council (AIMC) and continued to be its President for several years.⁶⁹ There was hardly a meeting of the Council which he did not attend. He was closely associated with the Kamala Nehru Hospital, started by Mahatma Gandhi in memory of the wife of Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru. He played a very active part in the work of this hospital at Allahabad.

It is noteworthy that, the Jadavpur Tuberculosis Hospital, the first of its kind in Bengal was started by B.C. Roy.⁷⁰ Not only that, he was instrumental of the initiation of Kancharapara Hospital for Tuberculosis and Chittaranjan Seva Sadan (CSS). Chittaranjan Seva Sadan may be considered as one of the biggest maternity hospitals in India having sister institutions like Sishu Sadan, Hydro- Radiological Institute, and lately Cancer Hospital within its vast campus.⁷¹

Bidhan Chandra Roy was also the guiding spirit behind the Victoria Institution in Calcutta and the development of Engineering and Technical education in the State of West Bengal. The Jadavpur Engineering College and Technological Institute at Kharagpur reached its present position due to the tireless effort of B.C. Roy. Even Nirmal Hriday Home (NHH), started by Mother Teresa was also received every possible cooperation from B.C. Roy.⁷²

New Township and Minor Scheme

The Government of West Bengal chalked out a very ambitious and feasible programme for the foundation of new townships. The Kalyani Township Scheme was the finest example of this planning of state Government. In order to implement the proposed Kalyani Township Scheme, 10,000 acres of land were acquired by the state Government at the adjacent area of Kancharapara of which over 3,000 acres of lands fully developed. A perfectly modern town with concrete roads along with pipe water, electric light, underground drainage system, public parks, educational institutions and

all other amenities were arranged for sprung up the township quickly of being executed fit for human dwelling. In addition to that a large number of minor schemes for the economic development of West Bengal were started operating and ultimately executed under the extremely momentous Community Development Projects and National Extension Service. The major schemes which were initiated by the State Government and received the sanction from the Indian Planning Commission were- Ganga Barrage Scheme, Durgapur Coke Oven Plant Scheme, Thermal Plant, Coal Tar Distillation, Gas Grid, Calcutta Sewage Gas Scheme and Chittaranjan Locomotives when these were completed jointly with the Damodar Vally Project and the Mayurakshi Project changed the face of West Bengal.⁷³ In spite of above mentioned schemes two other significant measures relating to the establishment of a modern salt-factory at Contai, Midnapore and expansion of deep-sea-fishing scheme by acquisition of five more trawlers were also initiated by the West Bengal Government just after the general election of 1952.⁷⁴ After his successful eye operation in the month of August- September, 1952 in Europe and America B.C. Roy started working out plans for development of better Sewage disposal system of Calcutta, production of Sewage gas, production of anti-biotics with experts in Switzerland, Germany, France, U.S.A. and England.⁷⁵

Refugees and the Government of West Bengal during the Regime of B.C. Roy

As a result of the partition of Bengal at the cost of gaining independence, West Bengal started suffering from huge as well as continuous refugee problem as a matter of fact. With the bifurcation of Bengal and creation of new state in the union of India i.e. West Bengal started its journey with the unlimited liability of the refugees from East Pakistan. Actually aftermath the events of the great Calcutta Killing, Noakhali and Bihar holocaust just before the partition of the country, the communal situation became so embittered that a large section of the Hindus from East Pakistan and a section of Muslims from West Bengal started leaving their ancestral property and were forced to become refugees for the sake of life security and honour in both the countries.⁷⁶ Actually, as consequence of Noakhali riots of 1946 the Hindus started coming to West Bengal and that processes increased in many more after partition. The inflow of the Hindu refugees to West Bengal was accelerated at the event of the police action in Hyderabad in September 1949. It was estimated that as much as a

million of Hindus migrated from East Pakistan to West Bengal by March 1948.⁷⁷ By June 1948 the number of refugees reached up to 1.1 million. Of these number of refugees – 350,000 belonged to the urban middle classes, 550,000 to the rural middle classes, something more than 100,000 were agriculturists and something less than 100,000 artisans. The number of refugees varied from district to district.⁷⁸

The second phase of the influx of the refugees began with the communal violence of February 1950 in East Pakistan. This time the refugees had come to West Bengal as if glacier. The entire administrative machinery of the state of West Bengal was virtually cracked down under the tremendous stress and strains of the huge influx from East Pakistan. The February riots of 1950 started a chain reaction of organized communal violence in both East Pakistan and West Bengal and instead of one way traffic it assumed the character of two-way traffic. During the communal disturbances of 1950 not only the Hindus came from East Pakistan to West Bengal but also a large section of panicky Muslims left West Bengal and took shelter in East Pakistan as well as other side of the border. However, the Census report of 1951 shows that there were at least 3.5 million refugees came into the state of West Bengal after independence.⁷⁹

Since the beginning of the independence the influx of refugees was a constant problem for the state of West Bengal. In order to tackle the extensive refugee problem initially relief and rehabilitation were provided by the Government of West Bengal for giving minimum support to the huge displaced as well as destitute persons. They were given shelter in the various camps namely Cuparse camp, relief camp of Dhubulia, Kashipur camp and others. Some children and girls those who had lost their guardians during communal violence and at the time of coming to West Bengal were also temporarily rehabilitated at the suburban areas of Calcutta namely Belur, Baburghat and Bansberia relief camps. Some relief camps for providing shelter of the refugees were set up even outside of West Bengal and measures were adopted to send the refugees there. Moreover, shelter less as well as homeless large number of refugees jointly started setting up colonies for their accommodation in Calcutta and outskirts of Calcutta. An that time an organization named 'Nikhil Banga Bastuhara Karma Parishad' (NBBKP) was established under the influence of some leaders of the Congress party in order to protect the interest of the refugees. Some more colonies for them were also set up under the efforts of 'Nikhil Banga Bastuhara Karma Parishad'. The left parties also did not lag behind for asserting their influence on the refugees.

Some colonies were established for the tireless efforts of the left parties namely CPI, RSP, RCPI, Forward Block etc. In the meantime another organization named 'South Calcutta Shahartali (suburb) Bastuhara Samhati' was also established. Many more refugee colonies came into existence between Kanchara Para to Jadavpur within the month of August in 1950. These refugee colonies sprang up in the virgin land of state Government and in some cases the lands were owned by individual personalities.⁸⁰

Administrative steps

In the midst of hue and cry of the influx of refugees from East Bengal as an alternative measures in some cases Government facilities in the form of loans were provided to the refugees so that they could purchase land, build houses, start business as well as any other profession for their livelihood. On behalf of the Government of West Bengal some steps were taken for continuing education of the children of the refugee families in schools or colleges or to take any other activities to start their life anew.⁸¹ However, in the wake of huge refugee influx and communal violence, some measures were taken on the administrative level to minimize the refugee problem in both East and West Bengal. In that context, the two Chief Secretaries of West and East Bengal namely Sukumar Sen and Aziz Ahmed used to meet frequently with a view to implementing of the decisions regarding the refugee problem of the Inter-Dominion Conferences at administrative level. On 9th April, 1949, at the conclusion of one such conference which was known as the Chief Secretaries' Conference an optimistic note was sounded for the first time regarding the relationship between East and West Bengal.⁸²

The Government of West Bengal headed by Bidhan Chandra Roy desparately tried to boost up the depleted financial situation in terms of the relief and rehabilitation of 16 lakhs uprooted people from East Pakistan. Bidhan Chandra Roy was worried about the collection of financial assistance from the Central Government as well as from the Prime Minister to every concerned ministry about relief and rehabilitation as and when he found that the state of West Bengal was not getting the similar treatment like the other States having refugees from West Pakistan.⁸³ Under the circumstances, on 1st December, 1949, Bidhan Chandra Roy wrote a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru. In that letter accusing Jawaharlal Nehru, Bidhan Chandra Roy

categorically mentioned that “You are under the impression that your government gave us a ‘large grant’ for the purpose of relief and rehabilitation. Do you realize that the total grant received for this purpose from your government in the two years, 1948-49 and 1949-50, was a little over 3 crores, the rest about 5 crores was given in the form of loan? Do you realize that this sum is “insignificant” compared to what has been spent for refugees from West Pakistan?”⁸⁴

In the meantime, as a reaction of large scale exodus from East Bengal in the month of February, 1950, widespread counter of communal violence started in different districts of West Bengal that was about to crack the law and order as well as the administrative machinery of the state government. At that moment of disturbances, B.C. Roy urged the leaders of the Government of India to take some measures regarding the communication with the Pakistan Government in order to take up appropriate security measures in disturbed areas and nab the guilty persons who were responsible for occurring violence and also visit the leaders of the Pakistan Government in the riot affected areas. As a responsible administrator, B.C. Roy then convened a meeting of leaders of the political parties and appealed them to maintain law and order as well as communal harmony.⁸⁵

Question of Exchange of population

The Government of India was fully aware about the gravity of the situation. The Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in one of his statements before parliament on the 23rd of February, 1950, referred to the tragedies in the district of Khulna, Rajshahi and Barishal of East Bengal which was followed by the incidents in the district of Murshidabad and Calcutta of West Bengal and then subsequently in Dhaka. It is mention-worthy that the question of exchange of Hindu-Muslim population between West Bengal and East Pakistan was raised during the debate session of the parliament on 27th February 1950. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru ruled out the proposal of the exchange of Hindu-Muslim population on the ground of totally unrealistic and the vague conception. Moreover, he said that “The proposal for an exchange of population was completely antagonistic to India’s political, economic, social and spiritual principles. It was a question of breach of trust.” In response to the statement of Prime Minister Nehru, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee in his reply said, “When Pandit

Nehru himself had arranged the exchange of population in Punjab, he had kept this question of breach of trust in cold storage. At the present moment it would be proper for him to keep the question of breach of trust in cold storage again and face the reality like an experienced politician.”⁸⁶

Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact (8th April, 1950)

Under the pressure of above circumstances, the leaders of both the countries started thinking that if the ongoing atrocities on Hindus were not checked immediately then there were only two alternatives i.e. Exchange of population or War. After realizing the seriousness of the situation these leaders felt the need for dealing with the burning problem on the highest political level with utmost priority. As a follow up of the ongoing incidents, Liaquat Ali Khan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan was invited in Delhi by the Government of India for a discussion over minorities problems of both the countries particularly the refugee problem. However, giving response to the invitation of the Government of India, Liaquat Ali Khan arrived in Delhi on 2nd April, 1950. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the chief minister of West Bengal was communicated earlier to arrive in Delhi for consultation. It is interesting to note that in spite of becoming the main sufferer as a head of the administrator of the state, B.C. Roy did not take part in the negotiations between India and Pakistan regarding refugee problem. However, the much talked agreement, known as ‘Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact’ or ‘Delhi Pact’ was signed at the end of four days long discussion on 8th April, 1950 regarding the minority problems of India and Pakistan with special reference to the situation in East Bengal, West Bengal, Tripura and Assam.⁸⁷

Resignation of Shyama Prasad Mookherjee from Central Ministry

It is a fact the ‘Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact’ was hailed by many from different corner and peoples started thinking that there would be an end of diminishing of human misery in the name of communal violence in both the countries. Although, there were some intellectuals and political personalities in India as well as West Bengal who straightly expressed their unwillingness to accept the agreement as an appropriate method for the solution of the Hindu–Muslim Problem. The most important among them were Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, the then Industry and

Supply Minister, Government of India⁸⁸ and Kshitish Chandra Neogy, Commerce Secretary, Government of India. Both of them resigned from their respective position as a mark of protest against the weak, puzzled and disproportionate policies adopted by the Government of India towards Pakistan. Moreover, they did not agree with the Nehru-Liaquq Ali Pact by which Government of India wanted to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem of both the countries especially in two Bengals.⁸⁹In one his speeches in Parliament on 19th April, 1950, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee emphatically declared that “When we have no power to force the Pakistan Government to follow the provisions of the Nehru-Liaquq Ali Pact, naturally no problems will be solved by it. Therefore, this Pact will be failed to give adequate security to the Hindus of the Pakistan and they will be compelled to come over India in a large scale.”⁹⁰As a member of the Indian Central Government, at that time Shyama Prasad Mookherjee felt that firmer action should have taken against Pakistan and it was supposition of some contemporary political thinkers that probably inside the Cabinet he was backed by the proposal of Sardar Ballavbhai Patel for a hard line with Pakistan and an exchange of populations.⁹¹

Prime Minister Nehru and his Government was severely criticized by Shyama Prasad Mookherjee both on the floor of the Parliament and outside on refugee problems. In one of his hard-hitting speeches in Delhi on 30th July in 1950, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee warned the Government for its failure to handle the refugee problem. As millions of Hindus were migrated to West Bengal and the exodus was still continuing even after the signing of the ‘Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact’, so, in order to solve the refugee problem permanently, Shyama Prasad Mookherjee prescribed some items which were as under: “ (i). Unification of the two countries; (ii). Planned exchange of population, and (iii). Sufficient territories yielded by Pakistan to accommodate the displaced minorities of East Bengal.” Referring to the three suggestions given by Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister in one of his speeches in the Parliament on 9th August, 1950, ruled out straightly on the ground of embarrassing international relations, a violence of the constitution and the high ideals of the congress party, nursing since long back. Referring the Compulsory exchange of population, Jawaharlal Nehru considered that it would be as like as ‘uncivilised, brutal and barbarous’.⁹²

However, Bidhan Chandra Roy tried his best and he worked tirelessly for planned settlement of refugees both within and outside of West Bengal during the entire period of his Chief Ministership. But, somehow in this field, he did not get whole hearted support to the desired extend from some of his party colleagues who were the West Bengalee.⁹³

Dandakaranya

It has already been mentioned that the Government of West Bengal, headed by Bidhan Chandra Roy took various measures to rehabilitate the refugees from East Bengal and in this regard the government set up many refugee camps throughout the state. The Government also worked out for the setting up of Dandakaranya Project, which was known as A.M.P.O. i.e. Dandakaranya Project constituted with some portion of Andhra, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The development programme of Dandakaranya included reclamation of land and its distribution among the displaced persons along with necessary equipments for agriculture. But, the refugees found there a hostile settlement considering their background of cultivation in the fertile as well as soft soil of East Pakistan. The output from lands of Dandakarnya was hardly coequal with the efforts put in so, the refugees were more attached towards the government subsidy than to the output of their allocated lands.⁹⁴ Naturally, a huge gap was observed between the promises and performance on behalf of the Government. At the initial stage of the Dandakarnya Project, it was expected that as many as 35,000 families would be rehabilitated, but in practice it was found that the number of families settled there till 1963 were about 6,500 only.⁹⁵ Actually, in view of the refugee rehabilitation, the Dandakaranya Project was more of a dream than a reality. Discontent among the refugees started growing and intensified. As a result of the above circumstances, the refugees led by different political parties voiced their grievances through staged demonstration and processions.⁹⁶ The disturbing reports started reaching in Writers' Buildings, the State Government's headquarter about the suitability of Dandakaranya Project. The virgin soil of Dandakaranya was being reclaimed and thereafter distributed among the refugee families for their settlement under a centrally sponsored scheme headed by an officer named Fletcher. The hope of the ambitious Project was going to be dashed when the representatives of the refugees started repeatedly urging the Bengal Ministers regarding the necessity of the radical

changes of the Dandakaranya Development Authority (DDA), otherwise, the entire scheme might be omitted. Irrigation facilities were lacking and as a result of that almost the entire refugee population of Dandakarnya started living in camps. The blame was basically laid on the administration which was undoubtedly moving in a lackadaisical manner.⁹⁷

Under that circumstances, Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal decided to go over there with a team of Ministers for an on the spot study of the situation and hear the grievances of refugees personally. A ministerial team comprised of the Chief Minister B.C. Roy himself, P.C. Sen, the then State Rehabilitation Minister; Tarun Kanti Ghosh, Food Production Minister; two lady deputy ministers, Departmental Secretaries and Meher Chand Khanna, the then Union Rehabilitation Minister left for Dandakarnya by a special plane on 24th April, 1960. After returning to Calcutta, the Chief Minister B.C. Roy prepared a note in which he gave some concrete suggestions to make Dandakaranya scheme a viable one. He wrote in strong terms to the Prime Minister about the Dandakaranya issue. At the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India, the Chief Minister accompanied by his Rehabilitation Minister, P.C. Sen flew to the Capital on 16th June 1960. Following top level discussions about the pros and cons of Dandakaranya scheme between the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister a press note was issued by the Secretariat of the Prime Minister on 17th June, 1960 and announced the reconstitution of Dandakaranya Development Authority with a whole time Chairman. It is mention worthy that Sukumar Sen, ex-Chief Secretary of West Bengal and later India's first Election Commissioner became the Chairman of the DDA, who would enjoy his power of autonomy to expedite the scheme of rehabilitation of displaced persons from East Bengal in Dandakaranya.⁹⁸

In spite of taking the above said measures, the condition of the refugees almost remained gloomy. As per the survey report which was conducted by the State Statistical Bureau, it was revealed that among the 2,31,000 urban families 1,42,000 families were not 'properly' resettled. In rural areas, only 83,000 families were 'properly' rehabilitated while the target was expected to reach 2,83,000. The report concluded that less than 50 percent of the total refugees were 'properly' rehabilitated, that means more than 50 percent refugees were not given the proper rehabilitation.⁹⁹

Bidhan Chandra Roy as a Chief Minister and his burden of responsibilities

From the very outset of his Chief Ministership, Bidhan Chandra Roy had carried out the responsibility of the Home Department including Police, Publicity, Transport and Jail. In addition to this, he had to handle the responsibility of Finance Department due to the illness of his Finance Minister Nalini Ranjan Sarkar and after his (Nalini Ranjan Sarkar) demise on 25th January, 1953, B.C. Roy had to take the charge of the Finance Department as a full-fledged Finance Minister. He was also the Minister-in-charge of Development and planning of the state. Moreover, B.C. Roy held the responsibility of the Minister-in-Charge of the Industry and Commerce, Medical and Public Health, Port and Pilotage, Printing Press and several other miscellaneous departments. These departments collectively constituted nearly three-fourths of the total burden of the Government of West Bengal. He had to look into the pros and cons of the administration of some of these departments and the policies as well as future course of action was also formulated by him. In that case he was assisted by Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers. From the given facts it would be a rational conclusion in terms of the allocation of the portfolios of the Government of West Bengal that the major share of the burden of the administration was carried out by Bidhan Chandra Roy alone. He was legitimately entitled to the credit for whatever successes were achieved.¹⁰⁰

In that connection it may be noted here that due to the untimely demise of his two able colleagues, namely Kiran Sankar Roy and Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, the administrative burden of Bidhan Chandra Roy increased many fold. In that context, there was only Prafulla Chandra Sen who was hardly a mature politician to handle the crisis of the state administration or consultation in any serious matter. Naturally, it was obvious that Bidhan Chandra Roy had to carry on the entire burden of the administrative machineries and side by side the task of guiding his party in the floor of the Assembly House fell almost absolutely on his shoulder.¹⁰¹

Reaction to Chinese Aggression

A serious repercussion was reflected on the floor of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly following the Chinese aggression at Ladakh on 21st October, 1959 which took a toll of 17 Indian Army men. In that atmosphere of foreign

aggression, the Government of India adopted the policy to check anti-Indian and pro-Chinese propaganda. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the leader of the House raised his fingers towards the communist bloc and remarked, “Any one supporting Chinese policy unpatriotic. Indian main weapon was unity and whoever went against that unity was a traitor.”¹⁰²

Assam Holocaust

In the first week of July, 1960 a telegram was received by B.C. Roy at Ranikhet, a hill resort in Uttar Pradesh- from P.C. Sen regarding the large scale violence in the wake of language agitation in certain districts of Assam and thereupon a huge numbers of Bengalese had to flee from that state. The entire Brahmaputra valley was converted into an area of large-scale violences and thereupon a considerable number of Bengaleese had to flee from Assam. Incidentally, the ‘Bangal Kheda’ i.e. remove Bengalee movement in Assam was not nothing new. It may be noted that the office of the Anandabazar Patrika in Guahati, capital city of Assam was attacked as because the Anandabazar Patrika through its writings protested against anti Bengali agitation in Assam in 1955. Not only that the Hindusthan Standard and Anandabazar Patrika were also burned for the same reason.¹⁰³ Naturally, as an inevitable outcome of the Assam holocaust disturbances broke-out in some important places of North Bengal namely Siliguri, Alipurduar and Jalpaiguri towns. That violent reaction took a toll of six human lives. Taking advantage of that situation the opposition parties of West Bengal started their activities in the form of demonstration and strike. In that hour of disturbances, Bidhan Chandra Roy wrote two letters - one to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the country and another to Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India. In his letters, B.C. Roy urged both the highest administrative stakeholder of the country to impose Presidential rule on account of the failure of the Government of Assam to check lawlessness and protect the life and property of the minority communities under the special power laid down in the Constitution. But the Prime Minister ruled out the proposal of B.C. Roy and pleaded for time to bring about normalcy. However, it was for the first time in the history of West Bengal that the Independence day (15th August, 1960) was observed as a day of mourning and protest. Black flags were hoisted in the afternoon and silent processions was taken on the streets.¹⁰⁴

The Assam situation was debated in Lok Sabha for three days from 1st day of September, 1960. The Prime Minister's speech however, disappointed the Bengal MP's. The 90 minutes speech of the Prime Minister was frequently interrupted and could not give any satisfactory explanation how and why the Central Intelligence was failed in Assam. At the conclusion of the three days debate, the Lok Sabha adopted an amended resolution moved by Atulya Ghosh (he was hailed as the star speaker in the Assam debate) which was accepted by the Prime Minister on behalf of the Government. The resolution inter-alia stated: "In view of the tragic happenings which have taken place in Assam and have created a sense of fear and insecurity in the minds of the minorities in Assam a comprehensive enquiry by one or more Supreme Court Judges be instituted to enquire into the disturbances and the circumstances leading up to them and suggest remedies for ensuring adequate protection and full enjoyment of their rights guaranteed under the constitution to the citizens and prevent recurrence of such incidents in future".¹⁰⁵

Movement for Bengali Language

In the midst of the atrocities on Bengali speaking population in Assam, there started a language movement also. Some Assam Cabinet members hailed from the five hill districts of the state took a drastic decision to resign from the Cabinet in view of the Government's stand on the state language issue and demanded separation of hill districts from Assam.¹⁰⁶ The Assam disturbances along with language issues reached its climax on 19th May, 1961, when 11 satyagrahis were killed at Silchar out of police firing. The Bengalees of the said region were carrying on a continuous agitation for recognition of Bengali as a state language even after the visit of all India leaders including Pandit Nehru. Following the incident, on 21st May, in a chartered plane some Bengalee leaders of Assam arrived in Calcutta along with the ashes of the victim satyagrahis of police firing. As a mark of protest against the brutalities on Bengalees in Assam, a spontaneous strike was observed in Calcutta. In the afternoon silent processions were taken up in the city in a peaceful manner.¹⁰⁷

Innovative Measures of B.C. Roy to Solve the Problem of over population in Calcutta

It was nothing unknown to Bidhan Chandra Roy that the city of Calcutta which earned the epithet “the city of processions” from Jawaharlal Nehru was facing serious problem due to over concentration of population.¹⁰⁸ Keeping in mind the above situation of Calcutta, one scholar came into the decision that after partition, Calcutta i.e, once-fabled capital city of the British Indian empire had to face appalling problems of overflowed population exponentially. It was overburdened far beyond the capacity of its infrastructure.¹⁰⁹ B.C. Roy and at the aim of tackling the trends of increasing population in the city, he therefore, took some calculated programmes of development of the rural areas as well as creation of new townships so that he could expand it by mingling with the small towns. By the late 1960s, the 270 miles of surfaced roads of the city that once the envy of urban India frequently waterlogged and traffic was usually at a stalemate due to endless lines of cycles, rickshaws overcrowded buses and trams- collectively created over burden of the city of Calcutta.¹¹⁰ In that context, Government of West Bengal under the able leadership of its visionary chief minister, B.C. Roy took some bold steps under ‘Dispersal Scheme’ which included setting up a numerous colleges outside of Calcutta with adequate infrastructure along with full equipments and good staff. The main idea which guided B.C. Roy to provide higher educational facilities at the door- step of mofussil students, so that, they would not come to Calcutta unnecessarily. Another effective and positive step taken by the chief minister was the scheme for the reclamation of land nearing Calcutta for the distribution among the middle class people who could not afford to buy lands in proper Calcutta for the construction of houses. The concept of the term ‘Greater Calcutta’ as if became a reality due to endless fighting of B.C. Roy and in this regard he had achieved a degree of success.¹¹¹ In addition to this it may be noted here that the possibility of constructing a sub-way as well as over head way for the solution of overcrowded traffic problem in Calcutta, the circular railway around the city and the necessity of linking up the three parts of West Bengal by constructing a barrage across the Ganga River at Farakka in the district of Murshidabad were some of the groundbreaking thinking of programmes of B.C. Roy. Moreover, Bidhan Chandra Roy dreamed for the augmentation of the state’s power resources by utilizing of Calcutta’s Sewage for generation of Gas.¹¹² The heavily congested transport system in Calcutta is at present bursting due to his vision and taking adequate steps regarding transport of Calcutta and the introduction of Metro service.¹¹³

Birth of Himalayan Mountaineering Institute

A spirit of enthusiasm was swept over the country following the news of the conquering of the hitherto un-conquered Mt. Everest, the highest peak of the world by two men i.e. Sir Edmund Hillary, a Newzealander and Tenzing Norgye, an Indian on 29th May, 1953. Sir John Hunt, Edmunt Hillary, Tenzing Norgye and Gregory came to Writers' Buildings to meet the Chief Minister on 25th June 1953. B.C. Roy discussed with them regarding the possibilities of a scheme to establish Mountaineering Institute and in this regard he sought help of Tenzing Norgye. In that context, the Government of West Bengal decided to establish Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling in order to teach the youth about the technique of high altitude climbing. However, Tenzing Norgye accepted the proposal of the government and agreed to take charge of the Institute as its first Director. In the meantime, Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India in a letter to B.C. Roy, dated 26th December, 1953, suggested establishment of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute with Tenzing as the chief instructor from the 1st January, 1954, with a salary of Rs- 500/- and an allowance of Rs-250/-. Thus the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute was born which played an eventful role in the subsequent years.¹¹⁴

Sports Bill and Stadium for Calcutta

There was no central body to regulate the affairs related to Sports. Therefore, in order to control the Sports affairs Bidhan Chandra Roy introduced "The Calcutta Sports Bill" on 24th August, 1955, for the constitute a board which would be responsible for the construction and management of a stadium in the city. The proposed Bill recommended setting up three bodies i.e. i). the Sports Association, which would be the parent body to exercise general supervision, ii). the Sports Control Committee for organizing sports and games, and iii). the Sports Board which would be in charge of the finance and properties of the Association along with power to raise loan with the consent of the Government. Bidhan Chandra Roy received general support from the opposition in favour of the Bill. It was estimated that Rs. 50 lakhs would be the cost for the construction of a Stadium for accommodating 1,25,000 people.¹¹⁵

Academy of Dance, Drama and Music

It is a fact that before the merger of the Princely States and abolition of Zamindari system the Rajas as well as the Zamindars were the chief patrons of all kinds of arts not only in Bengal but other parts of the country also. On that point, considering the above reality B.C. Roy felt that the responsibilities for people's cultural development had to be taken by the State Government. So, in this field, he sought help from reputed personalities like Pankaj Kumar Mallick, a well known singer; Ahindra Chowdhury who shined for decades in Bengal's theatrical art for the patronization of Bengal's traditional music, dance and drama. B.C. Roy selected Jorasanko house of poet Rabindranath Tagore for the development of his said mission and thereby he inaugurated by lighting a lamp the new four-stored building of the West Bengal Academy of Dance, Drama and Music there on 15th April, 1959 at the day of Bengali New Year. The 9,300 sq.ft. new building providing class rooms for the academy's three faculties of dance, drama and music with an auditorium of 300 seats which was helped by the State Government in maintaining the high standard of that pioneer institution in the country.¹¹⁶

Ministerial Crisis

Bidhan Chandra Roy had to pass many rigorous times during his long 14.5 years (23rd January 1948- 1st July 1962) of chief-ministership of the West Bengal, but the most critical period what he had to face following the defeat of the Congress candidate in South Calcutta by election held in June, 1949.¹¹⁷ A vacancy was created due to the sudden death of Satish Chandra Bose, elder brother of Sarat Chandra Bose. Incidentally, Sarat Chandra Bose was exit from the Congress Party filed his nomination paper for that seat as a candidate of the 'Republican Socialist Party' which was founded by him. On the other side, Suresh Das, the then President of the South Calcutta District congress Committee, was the contesting candidate for the same. However, with the help of his own supporter along with entire anti-Government as well as anti-Congress forces Sarat Chandra Bose polled 19,300 votes as against 5,750 secured by Suresh Das.¹¹⁸ This defeat shook the very foundation of the Ministry as well as the Congress organization in West Bengal. The impact of the defeat of that by election was so grave that the morning newspaper of Calcutta on 20th June, 1949,

reported a speech of the Prime Minister, in which he expressed the view that the 'West Bengal Ministry should resign'.¹¹⁹ Bidhan Chandra Roy, the chief minister of West Bengal, after knowing the view of the Prime Minister expressed his readiness to quit office following the situation created by the by-election debacle.

In that circumstances, putting his loyal friend, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, as the acting Premier, Bidhan Chandra Roy left for Switzerland on 23rd June, 1949. In absence of B.C. Roy an emergency session of the Congress Working Committee meeting was to be held at Delhi on 13th July where Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Kalipada Mukherjee and Prafulla Chandra Sen were advised to attend the same on behalf of the West Bengal Ministry. A storm of roar was raised in the Congress circle in Delhi following the defeat of the Congress candidate in South Calcutta by-election and thereby the executive committee of Congress Working Committee (henceforth CWC) took a resolution about the West Bengal situation on 28th July, 1949. The principal recommendations of the CWC were as under: i). interim general election for West Bengal within six months or as early as possible, b).formation of a new interim ministry and c).reconstitution of the executive committee of the PCC.¹²⁰ So far as an interim ministry was concerned, it was also, however, decided that details were to be postponed till the arrival of B.C. Roy, the leader of the Congress Assembly Party.

Under the above circumstances, B.C. Roy arrived in Bombay on the 2nd September and went straight to his friend Sardar Patel in Birla House for a medical check -up and to know his mind on the ministerial tangle and secure his support. Thereafter, Bidhan Chandra Roy returned to Calcutta and resuming his office summoned a meeting of the West Bengal Congress Legislative Party on 10th September for the discussion of the resolution regarding a new interim Ministry, taken by the CWC in its meeting held on 28th July, 1949. The Hooghly Group under the leadership of Atulya Ghosh was the sincere followers of B.C. Roy's Ministry, tabled a resolution thus "Whereas the Congress Assembly Party have full confidence in its leader (Dr. Roy) and the present ministry, they respectfully request the Congress Working Committee to reconsider their decision regarding the necessity of forming an Interim Ministrey".¹²¹ It is noteworthy that 50 members among the 55 attended the meeting of the Congress Legislative Party of which 34 members belonged to the Hooghly Group and voted in favour of the resolution while only 14 members opposed it.¹²² As a consequent of such a development, the Congress Working Committee met

again in Delhi on 4th and 5th October, 1949, over the issues of West Bengal Ministry where B.C. Roy put the case on behalf of his Ministry before the 21 member committee. Thereafter, being convinced by his hour long masterly exposition of the predominant condition in West Bengal during the transmigration period the CWC decided to postpone its previous stand and permitted the Ministry under B.C. Roy to continue subject to any change which he thought fit to make.¹²³ As to the reconstitution of the Provincial Congress Committee (PCC), the CWC also decided to resile from its earlier decision but, the decision of holding a general election in West Bengal remained unchanged.¹²⁴

Postponement of Interim Election

At that point of time, after gaining vote of confidence from Congress Legislative Party, comparative strong from his previous position, Bidhan Chandra Roy wrote a letter to Pandit Jawaharla Nehru, prime Minister of India regarding the holding of the interim general election in West Bengal on 30th December, 1949.¹²⁵ Thereafter, B.C. Roy called on several central Congress leaders and the party President to dissuade Working Committee from executing its resolution regarding the interim general election in West Bengal.¹²⁶ However, as a result of the skillful diplomatic efforts of Bidhan Chandra Roy the Prime Minister announced on 8th January, 1950, in a lengthy statement that “no interim election would be held in West Bengal under the restricted franchise of Government of India Act, 1935, on the basis of old electoral rolls, as previously announced by the Government, but that a general election would be held along with other states within a period of 8 or 9 months on the basis of adult franchise.”¹²⁷

Groupism in the Congress Party in West Bengal (Hooghly group took control over PCC)

The power struggle within the West Bengal provincial Congress Committee between the ministerial group and the Gandhin Group / Khadi Group led by Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Jugantar group of Surendra Mohan Ghosh reached its climax in August-September, 1950 over the election of delegates for the Nasik Congress. Meanwhile, the Gandhian and the Jugantar Groups were frustrated as their hope to

oust the B.C. Roy ministry was dashed to the ground. The Gandhian Group was further upset as because Kripalini was defeated in the Presidential election of the All India Congress Party.¹²⁸ It is mentionable that after that incident the Gandhian Group decided to defect from the Congress Party and accordingly it refrained from the elections of the PCC that was to be held on September, 1950. As the Jugantar Group had no enough capacity to fight against the Hooghly Group, naturally, the Hooghly Group led by Atulya Ghosh and the whole hearted backing from B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister, P. C. Sen, the Food Minister, Kalipada Mukherjee and some other Ministers easily managed to take control over the PCC. On September 17, 1950 Atulya Ghosh and Bijay Singh Nahar of Hooghly Group were elected President and Secretary respectively of the West Bengal Provincial Congress Committee by an overwhelming majority.¹²⁹ After that Atulya Ghosh's supremacy in the provincial congress continued for a decade and a half until Congress itself divided into two camps as Congress (O) and Congress (R). One of the most important sources behind the strength of the Hooghly Group was the harmonious relationship between B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister and its leader Atulya Ghosh. As one observer had rightly pointed out, "These two men (Dr. Roy and Atulya GHosh) cooperated and collaborated on a simple principle: division of powers. While Dr. Roy was in full charge of the ministerial and governmental affairs, Ghosh was in complete control of the party machine".¹³⁰

Birth of Krishak Majdoor Praja Party (KMPP)

In November 1950, the followers of the Gandhian Group under the leadership of Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and Suresh Banerjee along with another 100 Congress men organized a conference in Calcutta and resolved to form a separate political party. In May 1951, Prafulla Chandra Ghosh and his followers teamed up with several Congressmen those who in the meantime defected from the Congress Party at the national level under the leadership of Kripalini and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai which led to the emergence of a new party known as the Krishak Majdoor Praja Party (KMPP).¹³¹ The object of the establishment of the KMPP was a 'classless non-exploiting democracy'. Naturally, following the development when on 8th February, 1952, the budget session of the West Bengal Assembly was opened then for the first time the Ministry had to face a strong opposition. In is noteworthy that though, the nine Muslim League members and two Communist Members namely Jyoti Basu and

Ratanlal Brahman had played the role of the opposition in a comparatively weak manner, but, Opposition benches thereafter occupied by men who were stalwarts in the Congress with outstanding records of sacrifice.¹³²

One Pice War - Resistance to Tram Fare

The Calcutta Tramway Company made an upward revision of the second class fare by one pice and decided to execute it from 1st July 1953, though at that time the second class fare was three pice.¹³³ As the government of West Bengal gave the approval of the fare hike to the British Tram Company, therefore, before leaving for Europe on 5th July, 1953, B.C. Roy issued a statement defending the Tramway Company's enhancement of the second class fare by one pice on the ground that the fares in Calcutta were the lowest in the country.¹³⁴ A 'Tram Fare Resistance Committee' was formed by the combined opposition parties with Suresh Chandra Banerjee as the Chairman. They demanded not to pay the enhanced fare and started picketing from 1st July. After the arrest of Jyoti Basu, Ganesh Ghosh, Subodh Bandopadhyay and Jyotish Joarder in the early hours of 3rd July the agitation took a violent turn and police was asked to prepare at Lalbazar to meet the situation.¹³⁵ In all 588 arrests were made in connection with the day's incidents for picketing, inciting people to acts of violence, non-payments of tram fare, throwing crackers and for setting fire to terms.¹³⁶

Incidentally, in absence of B.C. Roy, food minister P.C. Sen was in charge of the care taker chief Minister and the 'Tram Fare Resistance Committee' took the fullest advantage of that situation. They declared a strike on 9th July, 1953. The law and order situation began to deteriorate day by day. After a Cabinet Meeting on that day Kalipada Mukherjee, the Police Minister told press correspondents that "Government is determined to meet force with force". This statement added fuel to the fire. On the 17th of July the mob seized control over a large area in South Calcutta. Police fired six rounds and one person died due to police firing.¹³⁷ In the meantime, following the instruction of the 'Tram Fare Resistance Committee' passengers refused to pay enhanced fare and thereby the tram company was forced to stop the running of trams. But, with the initiation of the agitation of the tram employees against the decision of the tram company the movement got a momentum. A spontaneous strike

and procession throughout the Calcutta was held defying the 144 Cr. P.c. naturally, scuffle broke out between the agitators and the police and in order to quell the agitators the police had to resort lathi charge, tear gas cells and fire which led to large scale arrest and injuries.¹³⁸

Assault on Press Reporters

Following the above circumstances, defying the Section 144 Cr. P.c. the 'Tram Fare Resistance Committee' arranged a mammoth public meeting at Calcutta Maidan on 22nd July, 1953. It seems that both the groups were preparing for showdown. However, immediately after the beginning of the meeting a truckload of police men arrived there under the leadership of a Deputy Commissioner. The police men ran towards the meeting and started beating the people and herded into police vans. The most astonishing event of the police atrocities of that day was the assault of as many as 18 press reporters and photographers those who were there to cover the meeting. Two of the injured were admitted in hospital, six pressmen were also arrested. Among the assaulted press reporters, most prominent were- Anil Bhattacharya and Tarak Das of 'Jugantar'; Sunil Sengupta of 'Swadhinata', Shyamadas Basu of 'Times of India', Bidya Munshi of 'Blitzs', Ajit Some of 'Ananda Bazar', Sudin Roy of 'The Statesman', etc.¹³⁹ On the next day i.e. on 23rd July, 1953 all the news papers gave horrible pictures of assault on pressmen and followed it up with thundering editorials of police 'barbarity'. One Satyendranath Majumder, editor of 'Satyayug' commented its editorial regarding police as the 'shame of mothers' womb'. As an aftermath of that event the government of West Bengal as if became isolated from the people of the state.¹⁴⁰

In that critical juncture, postponing his eye operation, B.C. Roy returned to Calcutta to control the situation on 30th July, 1953. After his arrival in Calcutta, within 12 hours holding a Cabinet meeting B.C. Roy constituted a one man commission headed by Mr. Justice Prasanta Behari Mookerjee to look for the question of the entire tramway fare structure and the economic bearing of the proposed increase in the second class fare.¹⁴¹ Thereafter, on 2nd August, 1953, Bidhan Chandra Roy met the leaders of the movement including Suresh Chandra Banerjee and Hemanta Kumar Bose at Writers' Buildings. On the following day i.e. on 3rd August, B.C. Roy

appointed a tribunal and adopted comfortable policy to grant bail to all persons who were detained on charges of violent activities. The leaders of the movement also decided to suspend their direct action and the movement thus came to an end.¹⁴² Actually, pursuing the unique policy of 'discussion, adjustment and compromise' Bidhan Chandra Roy was able to thwart the anti-Government programme of the opposition.

Hunger Strike by West Bengal Policemen

During the Chief Ministership of Prafulla Chandra Ghosh the Government of West Bengal had to face a several threat of a call for strike by some policemen for the fulfillment of their some economic demands. Though, P.C. Ghosh somehow was able to manage the agitating temper of the policemen but the discontent among policemen came into the forefront with the commencement of hunger strike by 5,000 armed and other branches of the Calcutta police on 10th December, 1954.¹⁴³ At that moment in order to maintain basic law and order the state administration had to call for the Army and the National Volunteer Force in the morning of 11th December, 1954. In order to avoid that situation and put down the agitation as many as 54 leaders of the agitating policemen were arrested under the Protective Detention Act (PDA) and the Defence of India Rules (DIR). But instead of overcome the crisis the movement soon spread into the several districts of West Bengal. In that critical hour of the administration high level conferences were held regularly at Chief Minister's room and the police chiefs were to wait for directions from the chief minister. At last, on the 7th day of strike, the Government of West Bengal decided to take action against the agitating policemen and accordingly it was circulated that stringent measures would be taken if they failed to join for duty. However, a large number of strikers returned to their duties on 17th December, 1954 and gradually the situation turned normal. It may be noted here that B. C. Roy, the chief minister of West Bengal was very much worried for the sign of rebellious mood of the disciplined police. Moreover, the Government had the information that a section of the police force came under the influence of the extremist group of politicians. There might become danger for any Government at the time of a crisis. Following the stress of the police strike B.C. Roy was so perplexed that his sleeping was disturbed and suffered a heart attack which was his second attack after the first in 1930.¹⁴⁴

Movement of All Bengal Teachers' Association

The Secondary School Teachers started strike for indefinite period on and from 10th February 1954 for the fulfillment of their various demands, among them most important were- enhancement of the monthly salary from Rs- 73 to 180 and dearness allowance of Rs. 35 as recommended by the Madhyamick Education Board. It is noteworthy that Secondary School Teachers under the banner of the All Bengal Teachers' Association (ABTA) submitted their charter of demands to the chief minister few months ago. But, as and when the Government was not willing to accept the demands of the teachers' then altogether 18,000 secondary school teachers' went for 'direct action' to gain their demands. A large procession of the agitating teachers' under the leadership of Manoranjan Sengupta, Satyapriya Roy, Anila Devi etc. marched towards Mahakaran on 11th February, 1954, but the police created barricade and did not allow the procession to proceed towards the Mahakaran. Thereafter the agitating teachers' started sit on demonstration in front of the Raj Bhavan. A strike was observed throughout the West Bengal on 12th February, in favour of the demands of the teachers.¹⁴⁵ When the sit on demonstration of the teachers' were going on then at midnight of 14th February the police broke the demonstration camp and arrested many agitating teachers'. In order to show sympathy or solidarity huge number of students, labour and co-citizens of the city join with the teachers' on 15th February. On 16th February as many as 400 teachers' along with activists of different democratic movements were arrested by the police. On the same day i.e. on 16th February, 1954, Calcutta witnessed one of the worst disturbances as a result of the teachers' strike. As if, whole Calcutta City came forward with monetary help to the teachers. Even the rickshaw pullers were not taking fare from the lady teachers. Some police officers were found to take blessing from teachers by touching their feet.¹⁴⁶

Near about 40,000 people came into the street and marched towards assembly house to compel the Government to accept the demands of Secondary School Teachers. That was one of the biggest ever movement launched by the teachers under the umbrella of the All Bengal Teachers Association dominated by the Communists. But, due to the obstruction of the police personnel a scuffle broke out and police resorted lathi charge, teargas cell and firing thereby 6 people lost their lives and 157 got serious injuries. Forty four persons were arrested. They included Suresh Chandra Banerjee and six other MLAs.¹⁴⁷ After the incident of 16th February,

Government imposed 144Cr.P.c. all over Calcutta to suppress any kind of agitation. As a result of the lathi charge of the police along with Military, one Rabindra Sarkar, student of Rani Bhavani School, North Calcutta, lost his life. Aged teacher of Naktala School, named Jannchandra Roy also died due to police atrocities. In a large gathering on Wellington Square that was held on 17th February against the barbaric police action. In assembly Jyoti Basu described Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy as ‘tyrannous Niro’.¹⁴⁸ In the meanwhile, when such fight was going on between police and processionists, in the Assembly Chief Minister Bidhan Chandra Roy accepted most of the demands of the teachers’. But, by that time, the situation was beyond control. However, due to the severe criticism of the opposition MLAs with the acceptance of the major demands of the teachers’ the teachers’ movement at last came to an end on 21st February. The arrested teachers’ were being released from 22nd February as per the condition imposed by the agitating teachers’ prior to withdrawal of the strike on 21st February, 1954.¹⁴⁹

No Confidence Against the Government in 1958

The year 1958, was a challenging year for the Government headed by Bidhan Chandra Roy. Siddhartha Sankar Ray, the then Judicial Minister of B.C. Roy Ministry resigned from the Ministry on 10th March 1958 following the disagreement with the various Government policies. In a statement, Siddhartha Shankar Ray criticized the food policy of the Government on the ground that it was ‘diabolical’, ‘irresponsible’, ‘dangerous’, and ‘devastating’. The “base and inefficient” nature of the administration was a reflection of the “base and inefficient nature of the leadership of the party”, the minister remarked.¹⁵⁰ In the resignation of Ray, the opposition parties found a good opportunity to strike at the Congress Government. Prafulla Chandra Ghosh of KMPP, remarked that the Congress Government was being run by the sheer force of majority and its policy was nothing but that of living a life of living death.¹⁵¹ However, in the pretext of the resignation of Siddhartha Shankar Ray, at last on 27th March 1958, the Assembly met at 2.30 p.m. and after more than eight and half hours of hotted debate the no-confidence motion was moved by Jyoti Basu, the Leader of the Opposition, accusing the Congress ministry of indulging in deliberate and systematic ‘corrupt practices’.¹⁵² From Government side only Bijoy Singh Nahar and the Chief Minister participated in the debate. At 11.15 p.m. the Speaker put the no-confidence motion

before the house which was defeated by voice- vote due to the Congress members standing solidly behind their leader.¹⁵³

In the by-election of Bhowanipur Assembly Constituency, Siddhartha Shankar Ray with the support of the left parties defeating the Congress candidate Bijoy Banerjee came into victorious. In that election, Siddhartha Shnakar Ray secured 23,222 votes against 12, 684 polled by his Congress rival Bijoy Kumar Banerjee. Though, in the year of 1957 general election as a Congress candidate Ray had a majority of 7,000 votes.¹⁵⁴

Demand for Inclusion of Some Portion of Bihar into West Bengal

Following the appointment of a high power commission by the Government of India in 1953 to consider the question of redistribution of provinces, the West Bengal Government submitted its memorandum to the commission in the first week of June, 1954. In this memorandum Government of West Bengal demanded integration of Purnia, Manbhum, Singhbhum and the Santhal Pargana districts of Bihar and Goalpara district of Assam into West Bengal. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the Chief Minister of West Bengal argued before the State Reorganisation Commission in Calcutta on 12th February 1955, that the boundaries of West Bengal with Bihar and Assam needed to be reconstructed so that the state could function as a compact unit of the Indian administration. Not only that in comparison with the others states in India the density of population was the highest in West Bengal and was needed to be relieved.¹⁵⁵

On 30th September, 1955, the long expected report of the State Reorganisation Commission (S.R.C.) was signed by its Chairman Fazl Ali, Mr. K.M. Pannikar and Pandit Kunzru. According to the recommendation of the commission providing a link with disconnected northern part, a portion of Purnia district along with a portion of the Manbhum district of Bihar was proposed to be transferred to West Bengal. No doubt it was an unexpected recommendation to the leaders of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee and state administration as well.¹⁵⁶

Bengal- Behar Merger Scheme

Following the above circumstances Bidhan Chandra Roy, Chief Minister of the state along with Atulya Ghosh, State Congress chief, left for Delhi to meet the S.R.C. In course of discussion during that meeting was to be held on 15th January 1956, Srikrishna Sinha, Chief Minister of Bihar gave the proposal about 'Merger of Bengal and Bihar' which was accepted by Bidhan Chandra Roy. As a result of that meeting a historic joint statement was issued from Delhi on 23rd January, 1956 by the Chief Minister of West Bengal and Bihar proposing merger of their states that was likely to be called "Purva Pradesh". The Prime minister of India and Congress Working Committee also welcomed the 'wisdom and foresight' of the two leaders.¹⁵⁷

Anti-Merger Movement

But in West Bengal, the opposition parties specially the leftists raised their strong voice against the merger scheme. Though, Executive Council of the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee in its meeting held on 1st February, 1956, welcomed the broad outlook of the Chief Minister. However, the Anti-Merger Committee declared a bundh on 24th February. On the following day, i.e, on 25th February, Bihar Assembly approved its Chief Minister's resolution on union of Bengal and Bihar by 157 votes against 25.¹⁵⁸

Meanwhile, Bidhan Chandra Roy had to face violent demonstration while he was addressing public meetings to mobilize public opinion in support of his merger plan. In that context, B.C. Roy informed the Assembly on the 17th of March that if the merger proposal which was before the people was rejected, the question regarding the implementation of the State Reorganisation Commission's recommendations about West Bengal would arise.¹⁵⁹

During that time two Parliamentary by-elections i.e. one in Midnapur and the other in North Calcutta were held. B.C. Roy put the merger issue before the voters and at the same time his opponents i.e. the anti-merger group took up the challenge. In the circumstances, Asoke Sen, a Barrister of the Calcutta High Court, was chosen as the Congress candidate for the Parliamentary seat of North Calcutta by-election and the opposition group nominated Mohit Moitra, Secretary of the anti-merger committee for the same. During the campaign period of that high voltage by election, the opposition approached the voters with attractive slogans such as "Bengal is being

sold to Bihar, Bengali as a community is going to die, save Bengal defeat Congress”. But it was very difficult for the Congress party and its leaders to convince the voters about the benefits of merger scheme. However, in the result of the by-election Mohit Moitra, candidate of anti-merger group as well as leftist defeated his Congress rival Asoke Sen by 84,953 votes against 51,880. Thereafter, accepting the verdict of the people, Bidhan Chandra Roy through the Director of Publicity, Government of West Bengal withdrew the proposal of Union of Bengal and Bihar. At last, according to the recommendation the State Reorganization Commission (SRC) Purulia sub-Division of Manbhum district and some portion of Kishenganj sub-Division of Purnia district were transferred from Bihar to West Bengal.¹⁶⁰

The result was that an additional area and population of 2,900 sq. miles and 1.7 million respectively incorporated with West Bengal. Therefore, the number of West Bengal's seat in Lok Sabha was raised from 34 to 36 and that in the Assembly from 242 to 252.¹⁶¹

Berubari Union

Following a statement of the Prime Minister of India in the Lok Sabha on 9th December, 1958, over the decision of transfer a small part {(amounting to more than four square miles among the total area of 8.75 sq. miles where 12,000 people lived (Muslims 100)} of West Bengal territories (Berubari Union of Jalpaiguri district) to Pakistan, the political situation of West Bengal became so explosive that as many as four adjournment motions were moved by the opposition members on the 15th December, 1958. At the time of his statement the Prime Minister gave a reference of the “opinion of Revenue officers of West Bengal” which compelled the chief minister giving his explanation to the Assembly house. Though, the chief minister informed the house that the West Bengal Revenue officers neither give any opinion nor they were authorized to do so i.e. transfer of parts of Berubari to Pakistan. In that context, B.C. Roy placed the matter before the House and on the basis of unanimous decision an emphatic protest was communicated to the Central Government against the re-adjustment of boundary between the two Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan.¹⁶²

However, ignoring the protest of the Chief Minister as well as feeling of the people of West Bengal, a small portion of the state under the district of Jalpaiguri i.e.

Berubari was transferred to Pakistan as per the terms of the Nehru-Noon Agreement. It was finally passed by the Lok Sabha and later by the Rajya Sabha on 22nd December, 1960 without any change. Though, as a mark of protest Asok Sen, Union Law Minister and Congress M.Ps from West Bengal were absent from the said meeting of both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.¹⁶³

Economic Reconstruction

Planning for Metro Railway Project

At the very beginning of his Chief-Ministership, Bidhan Chandra Roy, ignoring every possible odd circumstances, caused by the partition he always thought about positive side i.e, the economic reconstruction as well as development of the province. Even in the midst of most depressing environment he continued his tireless efforts silently for the planning and uplifting the livelihood of the people of West Bengal. As and when he would go abroad for his eye treatment then he used to visit some European countries simultaneously for exploring the possibilities of establishment of a salt-factory with German collaboration. He used to go Paris for on the spot study and to discuss with experts who constructed the under-ground railway there. It is noteworthy that when the Central Government felt the necessity for such an investigation for an underground railway for Calcutta and expert from USSR had done the same accordingly, but due to the initiative of B.C. Roy a French team came before 23 years and after investigation submitted its report to the State Government. Therefore, one may recall that was the background work for the introduction of Metro Rail in Calcutta which was initiated by Bidhan Chandra Roy. Besides, B.C. Roy would visit Birmingham to see manufacturers of double-decker diesel engine buses for Calcutta State Transport Service and contacted a Swedish firm for chief wooden house as well as cheap houses of concrete structure for the urban population and refugees. The visionary chief minister firmly believed that if West Bengal or India was to progress with the fast changing world then his visit to the West in quest of knowledge and on-the-spot study of various developmental works was essentially inevitable.¹⁶⁴

Mayurakshi Project

In the midst of the troubled political situation and huge refugee influx, the Government of West Bengal had done its first big achievement by formally opening an important phase of the multi-purpose Mayurakshi Project on 30th July, 1951. It was an irrigation canals and Tilpara Barrage situated near the town of Suri in Birbhum district. The purpose of the project was irrigation, flood control and generation of hydro-electric power which was to be followed by many more such schemes for the development of West Bengal during his tenure.¹⁶⁵

Durgapur Project

The building up of Durgapur industrial base on the stands on Damodor River always be considered as one of the greatest achievements of Bidhan Chandra Roy. With the completion of the Durgapur Dam in the month of August, 1955, the industrial development started in Durgapur. Durgapur Steel Plant (1959), Coke Oven Plant (1959), Thermal Power, Coal Tar Distillation, Gas Grid and Alloy Plant along with Pig Iron Plant were constructed one by one. On 29th December, 1959 was a remarkable day in the history of the industrial development in India because on that day the melting furnace of metal was introduced and as an industrial base Durgapur entered into the arena of world industrial atlas.¹⁶⁶ In that connection it may be recalled that in order to implementation of the Durgapur industrial project an extensive area of land was acquired by the state government on proper compensation. In that case 20,000 inhabitants were displaced. The Revenue officers were instructed by B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister to acquire suitable alternative lands for the displaced persons. It was a remarkable task of peaceful rehabilitation of the huge people which was completed very peaceful manner. In that connection, besides, B.C. Roy, the name of Ananda Gopal Mukherjee, the local MLA deserved special mention. Ananda Gopal Mukherjee played a vital role in building up of Durgapur industrial hub by efficiently executing the order of the chief minister and even declined a ministerial offer after the election of 1957 for the sake of Durgapur project.¹⁶⁷

India's First Express Highway-Durgapur

With the development of Durgapur as the most important industrial base in West Bengal, B.C. Roy started thinking if Durgapur one day was to become the 'Ruhr of India' then it must have an Express Highway. The Chief Minister also felt the necessity for a shorter trunk- route to connect Calcutta with this industrial complex. However, according to the direction of the chief minister a blue print was prepared accordingly and he went to Delhi to obtain necessary approval and sanction of money. As a result of skilful persuasion of B.C. Roy, the Union Minister for Transport and Communications announced on 7th October, 1958, an allotment of Rs. 5 crores for the construction of a new 'National Expressway' from Calcutta to Durgapur. That 'National Expressway' is now serving as life-line between Calcutta and Durgapur.¹⁶⁸

Oil Refinery

It is interesting to note that for the establishment of a third oil refinery in the eastern region of the country, when the government of India was negotiating with Messrs. Caltex & Co. then the idea of setting up of the same in west Bengal drew the attention of Bidhan Chandra Roy. In a letter dated 22nd April, 1952 addressed to the Prime Minister, B.C. Roy urged him to establish the third one million ton refinery near Calcutta. However, after years long negotiations, the oil refinery at Haldia came into the realization. It is needless to say that the establishment of an oil refinery would lead to the growth of numerous subsidiary chemical industries which provided a large scale employment of technically qualified middle-class youth of the West Bengal.¹⁶⁹

India's Plastic Industry Comes to Age

As a result of the tireless effort of Bidhan Chandra Roy, the fore-sighted Chief Minister of the West Bengal a congenial climate for the establishment of big and small industries was created in the state. Mr. D. L. Majumdar, the Law Secretary of the company affairs ministry of India disclosed to the Chief Minister that as many as 848 and 961 companies were registered in the year of 1956-57 and 1957-58 respectively in West Bengal which were leading in the number of new companies registered in the country. Though, it is a fact that the total number of companies registered in Bombay was more than that in West Bengal. It may be mentioned here that the West Bengal's first three five year plans were mainly the outcome of the creation and implementation of B.C. Roy and the fourth plan was implemented by Prafulla

Chandra Sen.¹⁷⁰ However, being attracted by the industrial-friendly environment of West Bengal the representatives of the Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) met the Chief Minister for establishing a big project for the manufacture of polythene at Rishra near Calcutta. Thereafter the completion of the negotiations with the Central and State Governments for three years the setting up plant of the Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) that opened the new chapter of potentialities of the industry as a foreign exchange savior, provider of employment, supplier of the basic material manufactured from abundantly available local resources for the first time to a large group of small-scale and cottage industries.¹⁷¹

Others Developmental Projects

It is noteworthy that on 5th March, 1960 the Chief Minister apprised the Assembly House about seven big projects which were received the sanction by the planning commission. They included-(i). Salt-Lake Reclamation Scheme (Rs.19 crores),(ii). Jaldhaka Hydro-electric Scheme (Rs.4.5 crores), (iii). Bandel Thermal Power Station with a capacity of 750 MW, (iv). Durgapur Thermal Power Station,(v). Durgapur Fertilizer Project (Rs.20 crores) (vi). Tar Distillation Plant at Durgapur and (vii). Calcutta - Durgapur Gas Grid Project. Total expenditure in all these schemes amounted of Rs.82 crores including Rs. 32 crores in foreign exchange. On the previous day i.e, March 4th, 1960 the Chief Minister met a three-man International Economic Mission of the World Bank and pleaded for a loan of Rs. 32 crores to be repaid in rupee payment, if necessary.¹⁷²

Zamindari Abolition Bill

There were some important Bills relating to the land system passed during the chief ministership of B.C. Roy. In the 'Bargaders Acts' of 1950 some provisions were there to protect the share croppers. According to the Acts a 'share croppers conflict –removal board' was set up. Not only that 'Zamindari Accusation Acts, and 'Land Reforms Acts' were passed in 1953 and 1955 respectively. According to the 'Zamindari Accusation Acts of 1953, the permanent settlement and Zamindari systems were declared null and void. There were provisions to give compensations to the Zamindars. However, on and from 1st Baishak, 1362 (Bengali Callender) i.e.1955

the accusation of Zamindari was started by the Government of West Bengal. The shares of the share-croppers were fixed 60% instead of tebhaga i.e. 2/3. It was circulated that the owner of the vested lands would be allowed to retain 25 acres of cultivable lands and 15 acres of housing as well as garden lands. Measures were taken to distribute the surplus lands among the share croppers and landless peasants. The abolition of Zamindari system by the West Bengal Government in 1953, marked the beginning of one of the most revolutionary measures in the history of the land reforms in the country to stop exploitation of peasantry by the landlords.¹⁷³ With the passage of the Bill the power and prestige of the landed aristocracy began to decline steadily. The Zamindars started selling their palatial buildings which they could no longer maintain. In that connection, the State Government was advised by the Central Government to examine the cases and purchase such properties for utilization of nation- building purpose.¹⁷⁴

Merger of Cooch Behar and Chandannagar

The merger of Cooch Behar Princely State to West Bengal was a memorable event in the history of West Bengal. The merger of Cooch Behar took place on 1st January, 1950. Bidhan Chandra Roy, the chief minister of West Bengal received the Instrument of Accession from Nanjappa, an emissary of Sardar Ballavbhai Patel, Union Home Minister and presided over the public function of the merger ceremony. On that ceremonial occasion, B.C. Roy officially announced that “the princely State of Cooch Behar would be maintained as a separate district with headquarter at Cooch Behar for historical as well as sentimental reasons and that all the State servants would be absorbed in West Bengal Government services.” The accession of Cooch Behar meant an additional of 1918 square miles of territory with a population of eight lakhs into West Bengal.¹⁷⁵ In that connection it may be noted that once French occupied Chandannagar was merged with West Bengal on 2nd October, 1954.¹⁷⁶

Bengali as official language

One of the most important steps taken by the Government of West Bengal was the passing of the ‘West Bengal Official Language Bill’-1961. This Bill was passed on 25th September, 1961 without any difficulties by voice vote. This Bill

adopted the Bengali language as the official language of the state. In this connection it may be noted here that the Bill accommodated the scope of 'Nepali' as official language along with Bengali for the three subdivision of Darjeeling district, namely- Darjeeling, Kalimpong (Now – separate district) and Kurseong.¹⁷⁷

First General Election - 1952

The year 1952 was a turning point in the political history of India as because for the first time the country had gone to polls on the basis of adult franchise under the constitution and occupied the honoured position as one of the 'biggest democratic countries in the world'. Before going for first general election, the Congress Party in the Centre and the Provinces made all necessary preparation for fighting the election contest. It is noteworthy that United Socialist Organization (USO) comprised of the Communist party along with Forward Bloc, Socialist Republican Party, Bolshevik Party, INA, Peoples' Movement etc. which came to be known as anti-Congress United Front. Though, Krishak Majdur Proja Party (KMPP) under the leadership of Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, Proja Socialist Party and Jana Sangha fought the election separately.¹⁷⁸ The first general election in the State of West Bengal was held on and from January 3-22 and 25, altogether 21 days along with Lok Sabha.¹⁷⁹

However, in the first general election B.C. Roy won by a majority of 4,111 votes against his rival candidate Satyapriya Banerjee of Forward Block (Marxist) from Bowbazar constituency. The Congress party returned to power with a comfortable majority of 143 in a house of 238 of which General Seats were 186, Scheduled Castes 40 and Scheduled Tribes 12.¹⁸⁰ But, in the midst of resounding victory, most of the senior ministers like Prafulla Chandra Sen, Kalipada Mukherjee, Bimal Chandra Sinha, Bhupati Majumder, Nikunja Behari Maity, Niharendu Dutta Majumdar were defeated by the candidates of the Leftist parties. Rai Harendra Nath Chowdhury was defeated by Jyoti Basu in Baranagore constituency.¹⁸¹ (Only four Ministers i.e. Hem Chandra Naskar, J. N. Panja, S. P. Burman and B.C. Roy, the Chief Minister were elected by the voters. The Hooghly-Midnapore group- the main dominating faction of the Congress organization and the Cabinet in West Bengal was simply wiped out. Naturally, Bidhan Chandra Roy began to handle power simultaneously over the party organization and the Government.¹⁸²

Cabinet Formation

In spite of winning the West Bengal Congress party with a comfortable majority, Bidhan Chandra Roy formed his Cabinet almost three months later. We have already mentioned that most of the important Cabinet Ministers of the previous Government were defeated. Moreover, the President of the All India Congress Committee directed that 'no defeated minister was to be taken back into the Cabinet either through a by-election or by becoming a member of the Upper House'. West Bengal had a bicameral legislature. In that circumstances, after three months skillful negotiations of Bidhan Chandra Roy to obtain approval from the Congress High Command formed his new Cabinet on 11th June, 1952 including defeated Prafulla Chandra Sen and Kalipada Mukherjee¹⁸³ who were to return to the Upper House from local bodies' constituencies. Bidhan Chandra Roy inducted in his Cabinet a lady, named Renuka Ray^{183.a}, (wife of Chief Secretary S. N. Ray) who was also defeated in the Lok Sabha election and the portfolio of Refugee and Relief was given to her.¹⁸⁴ The style of formation of the Cabinet of Bidhan Chandra Roy became a matter of controversy and created uproar in the Lok Sabha for selecting the wife of the Chief Secretary. The opposition parties particularly the communists did not lag behind in seizing this opportunity. They started attacking as well as criticizing the Ministry through wall posters and Placard along with public meeting and on the floor of the House.¹⁸⁵

General Election of 1957

The second general election in the State of West Bengal was held on and from March 1-14, altogether 14 days along with Lok Sabha.¹⁸⁶ Prior to the commencement of the said election the political scene in West Bengal was tilted to the Congress party due mainly to the rapid development programmes in the field of social service, establishment of the industries in public and private sectors, creating jobs for educated unemployed youths and benefits achieved from the two Five Years Plans.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, Nehru's popularity as well as acceptability as a leader of the Indian National Congress with the masses remained incontestable as ever. It may be noted here that the Chhatra Parishad, Students wing of the Indian National Congress, was formed on 28th August 1954,¹⁸⁸ for the first time in 1957 election, addressed street

corner meeting which were the monopoly of the left parties since long days. The activists of the Chhatra Parishad were able to draw the attention of the press and the public by their activities and they were given charge of a difficult area of Bow Bazar constituency of B.C. Roy, over which Communist influence was ever dominant. One of the notable incidents of that election was the Chief Minister B.C. Roy's contesting with Md. Ismail, the communist candidate.¹⁸⁹

After campaign all over the State along with State Congress Chief Atulya Ghosh, Bidhan Chandra Roy lastly begun to tour his constituency on foot. He entered every bustee, met every shop-keeper and small trader, particularly Muslims, who were the balancing factor by virtue of their number. Two days prior to the date of polling, he went to the Nakhoda Mosque, located in a predominantly Muslim locality. The Imam came to receive him and escorted him upstairs. But unfortunately in his team there was a person named Gopal Mukhopadhyay¹⁹⁰ who had earned notoriety in the Calcutta Killings. His presence in the Mosque was a great tactical blunder which displeased Muslim voters in general.¹⁹¹

It is important to note here that the situation during the general election of 1957 was so exciting that with the end of the polling, there was a big victory procession (even before the votes were counted) of Md. Ismail came out and the same was passed in front of the house of Bidhan Chandra Roy. At that time, one of the Chhatra Parishad leaders told to Mr. Saroj Chakraborty, P. A. to the chief minister in confidentially that the communalism and violence became so predominant that "If Mohammad Ismail becomes elected he would automatically be the Chief Minister, and if he becomes Chief Minister Calcutta would go to Pakistan as half of Kashmir had already gone."¹⁹² Secret police report revealed that Pakistani agents were active in Chief Minister's constituency and foreign currency on a large scale was spent to bring about his defeat. This was repeated by the Chief Minister on the floor of the Assembly on the 18th of March, 1957. Though, Dr. Roy was elected after strong fight only by 440 votes.¹⁹³ After the win of B.C.Roy, one of the leftist trade union leaders named Biren Roy, remarked that "Md. Ismail defeated, but Calcutta saved". There was news to them that with the defeat of Bidhan Chandra Roy communal riot again would start, as because the notorious Gopal Mukhopadhyay and his team were ready to do so.¹⁹⁴ However, in 1957 general election Congress was voted to power in West Bengal. In a house of 252 elective seats, including 11 from Purulia of which General

Seats were 194, Scheduled Castes 43 and Scheduled Tribes 15; Congress captured 152 seats. Side by side after a strong fight the opposition parties increased their representation from 88 to 100.¹⁹⁵

Formation of Ministry

On the morning of April 26, 1957 West Bengal's third Ministry headed by Bidhan Chandra Roy came into being at Darjeeling.¹⁹⁶ The Cabinet consisted of 14 Cabinet members including the Chief Minister. Other members were, P. C. Sen, Kalipada Mookherjee, Khagendra Nath Dasgupta, Ajoy Mukherjee, Hem Chandra Naskar, Shyama Prasad Barman, Rafiuddin Ahmed, Iswar Das Jalan, Bhupati Majumdar, Bimal Chandra Sinha, Siddhartha Shankar Ray, Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury and Jonab Abdus Sattar. The five Minister of State were-Mrs. Purabi Mukherjee, Tarun Kanti Ghosh, Anath Bandhu Roy, Ardhendu Sekhar Naskar and Asutosh Ghosh. Among the 12 Deputy Ministers, there was a young lady-Maya Banerjee who was given the Refugee, Relief and Rehabilitation portfolio.¹⁹⁷

General Election of 1962

As like as previous two general elections the central theme of election campaign of Bidhan Chandra Roy was economic development made by the state under two Five Year Plans. The United Front of six leftist parties (CPI, RSP, SUC, Forward Bloc, Forward Bloc (M) and RCPI) started their election campaign on 16th November, 1961 in Calcutta Maidan, from where their leaders raised the slogan of an alternative Government in West Bengal.¹⁹⁸

In the 3rd general election of 1962 which was also the last electoral fight of B.C. Roy who contested from two constituency i.e. (i). Chowringhee in Calcutta and (ii). Saltora in Bankura district. However, B.C. Roy was declared elected from Saltora Constituency by 9,929 to 4,512 votes against his nearest rival Biswanath Bandopadhyay of CPI. In Chowringhee he also won by 22,556 votes against 7,390 secured by his opponent, CPI candidate, Biswanath Mukherjee.¹⁹⁹ The Calcutta papers came out with banner headlines- "Dr. Roy performs double".²⁰⁰

In that election the Congress found itself in absolute majority with a total of 157 seats out of 252 member State Assembly of which General Seats were 194, Scheduled Castes 43 and Scheduled Tribes 15. But, in Calcutta party was able to bagg 14 out of 26 seats. In the Lok Sabha, Congress secured 22 out of 36 seats in West Bengal.²⁰¹ In all India level the Congress Party secured its absolute majority in 14 of the 15 States.²⁰²

Cabinet formation

The swearing-in-ceremony of the members of the fourth Cabinet headed by Bidhan Chandra Roy was held at Raj Bhavan on 11th March, 1962. After B.C. Roy taking his oath of office and Secrecy from Governor Miss Padmaja Naidu, he was followed by Prafulla Chandra Sen, Kalipada Mukherjee, Khagendra Nath Dasgupta, Ajoy Kumar Mukherji, Iswar Das Jalan, Rai Harendra Nath Chowdhury, Tarun Kanti Ghosh, Shrimati Purabi Mukherjee, Shyamadas Bhattacharjee, Jagannath Koley, Jiban Ratan Dhar, Saila Kumar Mukherjee, Shrimati Ava Maiti, Jonab S. M. Fazlur Rahaman and Bijay Sing Nahar. All of them held Cabinet ranks. Of these, five were new comers, three upgraded from State Ministership and eight were Ministers of the outgoing Cabinet. The Council of Ministers was expanded later on by addition of 11 Ministers of State and 10 Deputy Minister.²⁰³

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46. *Swadhinata*, 1st September, 1959. Amalendu Dey, a noted historian has given a lively description of the incident as under: On that 31st August, 1959 almost one lakhs peasants assembled at Esplanade East in Calcutta to March towards Writers’ Buildings for demand of food. When the hungry people started marching towards Writers’ Buildings, head quarter of state administration, then police made barricade to stop the moving of the agitators towards Writers’ Buildings. But as and when the hungry people moved towards their destination breaking police barricade, then police fired on the demonstrators and as a result of that 80 person were shot dead and many were sustained injury. As a protest of that huge killing by police firing, next day i.e. on 1st September 1959 a general strike and hartal was observed all over West Bengal. In that context, Atulya Ghosh, the then President of West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee remarked, “The towns of the West Bengal were captured by the leftists. But in coming election Congress party will win from the rural areas and form the Government.” see “*Bidhan Chandra Karnadhar Tabu Khandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” a Bengali article by

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 70. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
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85. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72 .
86. Debate in Lok Sabha, 27th February, 1950. see Prafulla Kumar Chakrabarty, *op.cit.* pp. 30-31; also see “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 94.
87. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 78. Also see “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers,

Kolkata, 2013, pp. 93-94. The much talked ‘Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact’ or ‘Delhi Pact’ incorporated provisions regarding the equality of citizenship irrespective of religion, provide equal opportunity to serve in the country’s civil service and military forces, adequate facilities for migrants from the two Bengals, Tripura and Assam and resorting appropriate steps to safeguard the interests of minorities by the Government of both the countries. It was also decided in the ‘Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact’ that a Minority Commission would be appointed in order to look after the conditions of the minorities of East Bengal, West Bengal and third for Assam with a Minister as Chairman. According to the pact further decision was taken regarding the appointment of two Central Ministers of each Government with the designation as Minority Affairs Ministers to visit the riot-prone areas at the aim of protecting the victims as well as restoring confidence into the minds of the minorities.

88. Rita Basu, *Dr. Shyamaprasad Mookherjee and an Alternate Politics in Bengal*, Progressive, Kolkata, 2002, p.95.
89. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 79.
90. “*Bidhan Chandra Karnadhar Tabu Khaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 94.
91. Balraj Madhok, *Portrait of a Martyr: Biography of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee*, Bombay, 1969, p.28.
92. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 84.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
94. Dandakaranya, comprised the districts of Koraput and Kalahandi of Orissa and Baster of Madhya Pradesh, was essentially a forest area with more than 40 percent of the land covered by thick forests. The area under cultivation was obviously small. See S.D. Thaper, *The Dandakaranya Project: Failure of an ambitious Scheme*, *Economic Weekly*, Vol.XV(9), March, 1963, P.402.
95. *Ibid.*
96. On 17th March 1958, a large number of refugees arrived in Calcutta from different districts and held a mass rally. Addressing the gathering several leaders of the opposition parties spoke against the decision of the Congress Government to rehabilitate the refugees outside West Bengal. Expressing their unwillingness to settle in Dandakaranya the refugees shouted slogans: “*Jeeban debo, tabuo Bangla*

- Charbana*” (We shall give our life and blood, yet we shall not leave Bengal. See *The Statesman*, March 18,1958.
97. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 302.
 98. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
 99. *The Statesman*, June 11, 1958.
 100. K.P. Thomas, *op.cit.*p. 244.
 101. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 91.
 102. *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288.
 103. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 103.
 104. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 307-308.
 105. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
 106. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
 107. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
 108. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
 109. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils...*, p.252.
 110. *Ibid.*, p.253.
 111. K.P. Thomas, *op.cit.*p. 247.
 112. *Ibid.*, p. 248.
 113. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 56.
 114. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
 115. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
 116. *Ibid.*, pp. 271-272.
 117. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* ,June 15, 1949.
 118. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p.41.
 119. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, June 20, 1949.
 120. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 29, 1949.
 121. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, September 11, 1949.
 122. *Ibid.*
 123. Stanley A. Kochanek, *The Congress Party in India*, Princeton University Press, 1968, p.254.
 124. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 55-56.

125. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60. On 30th December 1949, B.C. Roy wrote to Nehru that –“ you felt that the success of Sarat Bose at the South Calcutta by-election showed that people had lost faith in the Congress, as was exhibited by the election result. I have also heard that a large number of people who went to meet you in Calcutta expressed themselves as greatly dissatisfied with the Government both Provincial and Central, which showed that there was a tremendous feeling of frustration amongst them. Perhaps did not realize then that the whole trouble was not really political and that the sense of frustration was not due to the fact that the members of the Assembly or their representatives in the Ministry did not enjoy their confidence, but that it was a purely economic question. The main trouble with the people of West Bengal had been:

(1). Want of food.

(2). Want of employment.

(3). Want of land in which they, particularly the refugees, could settle themselves.

Such conditions could not possibly be removed by a general election and by putting in a new set of Assembly Members or Ministers”.

126. Stanley A. Kochanek, *op.cit.*p.254.

127. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 9, 1950. Also see Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 68.

128. Kripaliniji was defeated by a margin of 214 votes. For details see *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, September 3, 1950.

129. *The Statesman*, September 18, 1950.

130. Rakhahari Chatterji, *Politics of West Bengal: Mobilisation, Institutionalization and Rule*, paper prepared for National Seminar on State Politics in India, Kurukshetra University, March, 1981.

131. Sankar Ghosh, *Political Ideas and Movements in India*, Calcutta: Allied Publishers, 1975, p. 329.

132. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 87.

133. Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p.30.

134. “*Bidhan Chandra Karnadhar Tabu Khaaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 102.

135. *The Statesman*, 2-9th July 1953.
136. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 131-132.
137. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 18th July, 1953.
138. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 102.
139. Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 34.
140. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. 102.
141. See Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 134-135. B.C. Roy had his peculiar way of dealing with difficult situation. After getting an assessment of the situation from his Cabinet colleagues he quietly sent for Suresh Chandra Majumdar of ‘*Ananda Bazar Patrika*’ whose two influential papers (*Ananda Bazar Patrika* and *Hindusthan Standard*) were up against the Government. Next, he asked Tusher Kanti Ghosh of ‘*Amrita Bazar Patrika*’ to see him and discussed matters with him. By doing so, he softened the heart of Majumdar and Ghosh and gradually the voice of the papers of Calcutta towards the Government improved.
142. *Ibid.*, p.135.
143. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.103.
144. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 158-160.
145. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.103; also see Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 38.
146. Amal Dasgupta, “*Mastermasai – Shricharaneshu*” (in Bengali), *Parichay, Falgun*, 1360 (B.S).
147. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p.145; also see *The Statesman*, 17th February, 1954.
148. *Swadhinata*, 18th February, 1954.
149. Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 41.
150. *The Statesman*, March 19, 1958.
151. *The Statesman*, March 28, 1958.

152. *Ibid.*
153. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 251-253.
154. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-260; also see “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.104.
155. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 167-168.
156. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.
157. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-192.
158. *Ibid.*, pp. 193-195.
159. *Ibid.*, p. 199.
160. *Ibid.*, pp.201-203; also see “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.96
161. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 213.
162. *Ibid.*, pp. 265-267.
163. *Ibid.*, pp. 321-322.
164. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-46.
165. Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils...*, p.255; also see Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 95-96.
166. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.104.
167. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 156.
168. *Ibid.*, p. 261.
169. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
170. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.96.
171. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 272-273.
172. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
173. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p. p.97.
174. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 128.

175. *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.
176. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.96.
177. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 348.
178. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.101.
179. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* p.884.
180. *Ibid.*, p. 885.
181. *Ibid.*, p. 334.
182. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 103.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 104. In a letter dated 5th May, 1952, addressed to Nehru, B.C. Roy wrote: “Seven of my Ministers have been defeated in the election. While I am not bothering about the other five, P. C. Sen of the Food Department and K. P. Mukherjee of the Labour department have not only been very useful members of my Cabinet but they possess extraordinary knowledge of their own departments and in making selections for the next Assembly I have the impression that these two will certainly be returned even if the others fail to be returned.”
- 183.a. For details see Renuka Ray, *My Reminiscences, Social Development during the Gandhian Era and After*, Allied Publishers Private Limited, Calcutta, 1982, pp.190-207.
184. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 915-916.
185. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 103-106.
186. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* p. 884.
187. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 118-119.
188. Atulya Ghosh, *Kasta...*, p.329.
189. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.101. Bow Bazar is situated in the heart of the city, the Chief Minister’s constituency and it had a cosmopolitan character. It is basically a Muslim influential area because out of 63,229 votes about 29,000 were Muslims. Besides, there were Englishmen, French, a good number of Chinese and people

- from many other countries of the world in this constituency. Excepting B.C. Roy, four other persons filed nomination papers for the Bow Bazar constituency including Md. Ismail, the communist candidate, a Hindu Mahasabha candidate and two independent. See Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 227-228.
190. Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 54.
191. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, pp. 231-232.
192. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-235.
193. “*Bidhan Chandra KarnadharTabu Khaaaandita Banglar Nabhishvas*” A Bengali Article by Amalendu Dey in *Saat Dashak Samokal O Ananda Bazar*, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, 2013, p.101.
194. Sandip Bandyopadhyay, *op.cit.* p. 54.
195. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 972-973.
196. *Ibid.*, p. 884.
197. *Ibid.*, pp. 238-239.
198. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p.349.
199. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 374, 384.
200. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 374.
201. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 974, 885, 373-76, 295.
202. Saroj Chakrabarty, ... *With Dr. B.C. Roy*, p. 375.
203. Dilip Banerjee, *op.cit.* pp. 884, 917-918; also see *Ibid.*, p. 377.