

17th Assembly Election in West Bengal: 2021

Manifesto of the Left Front

The Backdrop of the Election

The dates for the West Bengal State Assembly elections have been announced. We are all aware that for the last one year or so, the struggle of human civilization against the corona pandemic has been going on. Our daily life as well as our movements and struggles are being conducted following all necessary precautions. In this situation, between March 27 and April 29 elections will be held in eight phases in the state of West Bengal. For the large majority of the people of the state this election is the battle for restoring democracy, the battle to end mis-governance and anarchy in the state. For the last ten years the Trinamool Congress party and its government has been running a regime of authoritarian terror in the state. Democratic voices have been throttled in a dictatorial manner. On the one hand, nepotism, corruption, extortion, syndicate rule have been unleashed and on the other hand, attacks have come down on workers, peasants, students, youth and women. Minorities, Scheduled Castes and Indigenous Peoples are similarly under attack. In the forthcoming assembly elections, the people have to concentrate all their strength to bring an end to this disastrous *Trinamuli* regime.

- The Narendra Modi-led RSS-BJP government at the Centre are enforcing agricultural laws and restructuring labour laws all in the interest of corporate business alone. They are relentlessly implementing neo-liberal policies. The lives of ordinary people, including workers and peasants, have become miserable. Over 200,000 farmers have committed suicide during this period. The terrible spectre of unemployment sweeps the whole country. The purchasing power of the people has reached abysmal depths. Poverty is growing. The wealth of big capital is rising at an unimaginable rate. About 15 crore people have lost jobs during the period of the pandemic. Poverty, inequality, hunger have increased. But, during the same period, the assets of the country's largest corporate groups have increased by about Rs. 13 lakh crore. Prices of all consumer goods, including petrol and diesel, are rising sharply. Inequality is increasing in the whole country while the government is subsidizing corporate power adding to its strength. Disinvestment and privatization of the public sector is going on continuously. Public sector banks have been weakened in the drive to safeguard corporate interests. Number of public sector banks has come down due to mergers. Two banks- whose headquarters were in Kolkata have closed down due to merger. People from all walks of life, including workers and farmers, are affected. Democracy and democratic rights are severely curtailed. The right to education is being subjected to attack in the name of the National Education Policy. Any criticism against the BJP and the central government is being equated with anti-nationalism. Many people, including intellectuals, have been thrown into prison. Democratic movements are being curbed using various monstrous laws including UAPA and NIA. To suppress the spontaneous protests and the movement of the farmers against the draconian agricultural laws brought in to please corporate powers, the rulers are using both police forces and anti-social elements.
- The essence of our Constitution is under attack today. BJP government has attacked the secular and pluralistic fabric of the country. Religious identity is being used as the

yardstick for determining citizenship. The rights of the minorities are gradually being eroded.

- At all levels of Indian society today the poison of communalism is spreading. In all fields including education, art, literature and history a communal approach is being encouraged. Attempts are being made to change the very essence of Indian society. Dalits, tribals and other backward sections are facing harassment and attacks too.
- The state's *Trinamool* government is also using the communal card to its advantage. Through an implicit understanding between themselves, Trinamool and BJP are trying to establish a scenario of binary politics in this state.
- West Bengal's economy is in a grave crisis. Expenditure has increased uncontrollably compared to income. The state is entangled in a debt trap. There is serious crisis in agriculture. In 2014 and 2017, the Trinamool Congress-led state government revised the farm laws in the state jeopardising both farmers and ordinary people. Farmer suicides have also occurred during TMC rule in this state.
- There has been hardly any new investment in the state and new industries have not come up. The state of employment is miserable. There is widespread corruption in examinations for government jobs. The scenario in education and health is atrocious. Extreme anarchy prevails in the field of education, School dropouts have increased.
- The administration has become utterly dysfunctional. Hooliganism, extortion and reckless corruption have become the insignia of the present state government. The law and order situation has reached its nadir. Women's security is horribly compromised. Brutal attacks of the police on democratic struggles are continuing. The latest instance of police atrocity on a peaceful demonstration led to Maidul Islam Midya dying a martyr's death.
- In order to end this situation, the Trinamool Congress has to be defeated and at the same time, the BJP's progress into the state has to be halted in the forthcoming Assembly elections.
- With this end in view, we have to ensure the victory of the alternative political front consisting of left, democratic and secular forces. We are therefore giving the call to bring to power the *Sanjukta Morcha*, formed on the basis of the unity of the Left and its allies, the Congress and the Indian Secular Front. We exhort the people of this state to come forward to perform this historic duty in the interest of the whole country and West Bengal.

Restoration of Democracy

- Our goal is to restore democracy and the rule of law. Freedom of opinion for all will be protected. The police and the administration will function respecting the principles of multi-party democracy. All political prisoners will be released. All false cases lodged on political grounds will be withdrawn. All those evicted from place of work or residence will be resettled. Elections at all levels in the state will be fair, free and timely. The full democratic rights of opposition political parties will be protected. The police administration will be allowed to function with neutrality in the interest of preserving a democratic environment free of fear and bringing anti-social elements under the rule of law. Women's Commission, Lokayukta, State Election Commission, Human Rights Commission and Press Council, Right to Information Commission will work with full

authority and rights. Offices of the Human Rights Commission in all districts will be made functional with full dignity. *Lokpal* offices will be set up in all districts. Protection will be given to freedom of journalists' bodies and to free flow of information. Fairness and transparency shall be maintained in the distribution of government advertisements. None of the earlier anti-democratic laws which the BJP government has been using extensively for repressive purposes will be enforced in the state. No one shall face punishment for criticism of the state government. Discriminatory laws prohibiting cow slaughter or bringing strictures against inter-community marriages in the name of 'love jihad' shall have no place in West Bengal.

Secularism

- The state government will strictly follow the principles of secularism. There shall be equal rights for followers of all religions. The government shall not side with any religion or interfere in the practice of religion. It will take a neutral position in religious matters while also taking a firm stand against communalism and extremism. The security of all religious minorities, including Muslims and linguistic minorities, will be ensured. The traditions of inter-community harmony in the state shall not be compromised.

Industry

- The main goal of the government shall be to generate employment and enhance employment opportunities. This will get priority in all sectors like industry, agriculture, cooperative enterprises etc. The main thrust shall be towards employment generation through small and medium industry. Efforts will be made to increase industrial output through cooperative enterprises and enterprises undertaken by panchayats and municipalities. Keeping the focus on such holistic and multifaceted strategies, specific and effective terms and conditions will have to be evolved for large-scale industries also. In this context lessons should be taken from the positive experiences of the previous Left Front Government. Possibilities of knowledge-based industries like Information Technology and Agriculture based industries shall be explored. Proper utilisation of perishable agricultural and allied products like flowers, fruits, vegetables, fish and milk products shall be ensured by effective infrastructure for processing, preserving and marketing of such goods. Improvements facilitating modern transport and market facilities will be made. Apart from agriculture-based and cottage industry, efforts shall be made for development of industrial enterprises in steel, textiles, cement, automobiles, leather goods, petrochemicals etc. Land acquisition for industry will only be undertaken with all due caution on the basis of consensus with all stake holders and after giving sufficient consideration to environmental aspects of a project. In case of acquisition remunerative compensation will be given to all the affected together with training and employment for one person per family. Special attention will be given to the rights and problems of the home tutors.

Labour

- The work of the labour department will be expedited. Effective intervention will be made in the case of disputes. Efforts will be made for proper implementation and expansion of protective schemes for unorganized workers. The minimum wage of the workers shall be ensured at twenty-one thousand rupees per month. Workers of closed factories will be given an allowance of Rs 2,500 per month and they will be provided with cheap rations. Special attention will be given to reopening of jute mills, tea gardens and other closed industries for solving the problems of the workers there. Steps will be taken to ensure the wages and social security of public transport workers. The minimum wage for tea garden workers will be fixed. Trade union rights of working people will be protected. Special efforts shall be made to protect the rights of project workers and employees. A separate ministry will be set up for migrant workers. The State Government will have a list of migrant workers and ensure their rights even while they are working in another state. Improvement of working conditions to minimize health hazards shall be taken up.

Agriculture

- Through the new agricultural laws, the central government has moved towards ruining agriculture and pauperizing the farmers while promoting corporate interests to the hilt. The state government too has moved even earlier on the same path by amending the APMC Act to hand over agriculture to private corporate companies. Many of those who got land through land reforms during Left Front rule have been evicted. Their land Rights must be restored. Farming must also be made remunerative for the farmers.
- In order to make farming profitable for them, priority will be given to implementing recommendations of the Prof. M.S. Swaminathan led National Commission on Farmers (NCF).
- Government initiatives shall be taken to bring about diversity in agriculture. Minimum support price shall be ensured. Crops like potato shall be brought under MSP. Minikit, fertilizer, irrigation water shall be provided by the government. Incomplete tasks of land reform (one person-one revenue entitlement record) and incomplete work of land allotment and barga record will be completed by overcoming the laxity and legal complexities of land law. In order to increase productivity, cultivation of rice by 'SRI' method will be encouraged.
- Irrigation areas shall be further increased. Initiatives will be taken towards flood prevention and completing the unfinished irrigation projects including *Teesta* Irrigation project. The law will be strictly enforced to prevent unscientific exploitation of groundwater. Special initiatives will be taken for conservation and use of surface water. Diversity will be encouraged in crop production. Necessary steps will be taken to attain self-sufficiency in jute and potato production. Profitable prices for the crops produced will be ensured. For the improvement of agricultural intensification and production methods, arrangements will be made for agricultural loans in addition to providing the necessary inputs to farmers at low cost. Necessary reforms will be made in the marketing laws in parallel with encouraging horticulture (vegetables, fruits and flowers). Application of organic fertilizers will be encouraged. Initiatives will be taken to market seeds, fertilizers, irrigation and crops through cooperative system. To this end, the disbanded cooperatives will be revived. Animal husbandry and other

supportive activities will be emphasized. For rejuvenating animal husbandry women and other competent people will be trained.

- Emphasis will be placed on the collection of forest resources by reviving cooperative 'LAMPS' in tribal areas. Steps will be taken to complete the forest land allotment program for the tribal people. Forest protection committees will be revived to protect the forest.
- Initiatives will be taken to meet the demand for meat, eggs and milk by encouraging hybridization while maintaining the biodiversity of the animal world. Initiatives will be taken to reach treatments to protect livestock.
- The previous success of the state in aquaculture has to be revived. Government reservoirs, canals, ponds and rivers etc. will again be leased out contractually to fish cooperatives at low cost. Subsidies will be provided for coastal fish farming. Vested, partially vested and re-formed privately owned cooperatives with government funds will be encouraged to take up cooperative farming.
- Women's self-help groups will be encouraged to take up cluster farming and cooperative farming. This will strengthen the process of empowerment of women. The use of paddy land for other purposes will be discouraged to ensure food security.

Employment generation

- A vast number of youths remain unemployed in the state. The main goal of the government will be to create employment in industry, agriculture and others sectors including the service sector. All vacancies in government posts shall be filled up. Primary, secondary, higher secondary teacher recruitment examinations will be regularly held. Transparent procedures will be guaranteed, including publishing the list of empanelled candidates. Along with the public sector, emphasis will be laid on transparent recruitment in the private sector too.
- Efforts will be made to create new areas of employment. 100 days' employment program will be extended from rural to urban areas. Work and wages will be increased to minimum 150 days in place of 100 days. Government investment and initiatives in self-employment projects will be increased. A special cell of the state government will be set up to address the GST related issues of small traders. Self-help groups will be turned into production-based employment generating enterprises through government intervention in the matter of procuring loans on easy terms. Women self-help groups will be encouraged to take up cottage industries. Commercial licenses for two-wheeled app cabs and deliveries will be issued to take full advantage of the potential of new fields of employment.

Education

- At least 20 percent of the state budget will be allocated for education. Special importance will be given to eradicate illiteracy. Education up to eighth grade will be made free and compulsory for the government. One-time financial aid based on family income will be provided to students who have qualified in Secondary or equivalent examinations so that they can continue their education up to the next stage. The government shall also put checks on the quantum of fees at private educational institutions. Anti-social *raj* will be brought to an end in educational institutions.

Number of schools and teachers will be increased. At all levels of education, from school to university, democratic management will be restored. The governing bodies, including the Senate and the Syndicate, will be strengthened. The autonomy of educational institutions will be protected. The recruitment policy will be transparent. Privatization, commercialization and communalization in education will be stopped. To ensure this, the National Education Policy '20 shall not be implemented in the state. Special initiatives will be taken to reduce school dropouts. Excellence in higher education will be gradually promoted. There will be emphasis on improving quality of education at every level. Research of high standard will be encouraged in the universities and equivalent institutions. The government will take initiative to build adequate infrastructure so that every student gets the internet facility. Admission Procedure will be made transparent. Appropriate mechanisms will be established to stop harassment during admission. Social control over private educational institutions will be ensured. Appropriate training will be given to secondary and primary teachers for imparting better quality of education. It is very important to fill the vacancies at all levels of educational institutions. Appointment according to rules of those who have long passed the qualifying examination but are not getting a placement must be expedited. Recruitment to posts reserved for Scheduled Castes and Indigenous Peoples according to the Constitution cannot be delayed. Keeping traditions of Madrasa education intact, it will be further integrated, modernized and expanded. Government grants will be given to the approved madrasas. A positive view will be taken about children's learning centres, secondary learning centres, para teachers and project employees. The infrastructure will be further expanded for vocational education, technical and job-oriented education. ITIs will be set up in every block, and nursing schools will be set up in all districts. Appropriate curricula will be introduced for the creation of useful human resources. Elections of student unions will be held in a regular and democratic manner.

Health

- The government is fully responsible for public health. Free government treatment will be provided in public hospitals. Emphasis will be placed on preventive measures, not on the bewildering non-transparency of *Swasthyasathi*. Special emphasis will be laid on reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality. Special emphasis will be given on raising public health awareness. From the primary to state level, health care structure will be freed from defects. All emergency services will be ensured. Mass movement will be organized to make health care as Fundamental right. Efforts will be made to regulate price of medicine as much as possible. Harassment of government doctors in their workplace shall be prevented.
- There will be social control over private investment in the health sector. Epidemics and disease prevention will be given priority. Mental health will also be given importance. Serious weakness in the state health infrastructure has been exposed in dealing with the Covid situation. Insecurity of health workers, doctors and nurses is a fact. Particular attention will be paid in resolving this situation. In the field of health, the role of various social organizations will be encouraged. Appropriate protection will be provided to all kinds of employees in the Health sector.

Library

- Libraries in the state will be reactivated. Libraries infrastructure will be upgraded with a view to meet the demand of the public including students. All vacancies in government libraries will be filled up on an urgent basis.

Cooperative

- The co-operative system will be established on a stronger democratic foundation. Cooperative system will be expanded in the field of economic production including agriculture and industry. Cooperatives will assist in disbursing Loans (including home loan) in easy instalments and in the sale of daily necessities. The co-operative system has to play a special role in creating employment.

Panchayat

- The three-tier panchayat system will be revived. The democratic procedure in the panchayat is to be brought back.
- Participation of the rural people, especially the poor will be ensured in the work of the panchayat. The village parliament will be made regular. It will be made compulsory to submit the work and expenditure account of the panchayat to each and every villager. Special initiatives will be taken for revival of the *Gram Sabha*. Panchayat will have to be turned into a village government overcoming the dependence on bureaucracy. The panchayat will be for all villagers and not under the hegemony of a single political party. The initiative of the panchayat will be increased in every sphere of development including communication, health, education, employment, agriculture and roads in rural areas. We have to eradicate nepotism and corruption. Deprivation for political reasons will not be tolerated. Emphasis will be laid on improving the rural infrastructure keeping in pace with the changing times.

Minority development

- Appropriate expansion of the program on education and skill development of the minority Muslim community for their socio-economic development is a necessity. Special emphasis will have to be on economic empowerment of this segment of people. Protection of rights and securities of this section will receive special attention. The security, rights and development of the religious and other minorities shall be given due importance.

Backward class

- Special constitutional rights of the Scheduled Castes, Tribal Peoples and OBCs will be protected. In West Bengal, there are many tribal populations who have their own language, culture and way of life. As we have the *Koch, Rajbanshi, Rava, Mech and Toto* in North Bengal, in South Bengal there are *Santal, Munda, Oraon, Lodha, Shabar, Kheria, Birhor, Kurmi* etc. Efforts will be made to preserve and develop the language, culture and life style of each and every Tribal community. Steps will be taken to ensure rights of the Tribals and other forest dwellers according to the 'Forest Rights Act. The Reservation policy will be strictly followed. In order to achieve socio-economic development, education and training will be expanded accordingly. Special emphasis will be laid on economic empowerment of the people of this section. Book grant and maintenance allowance will be regularly provided to the students of the scheduled caste

and tribal communities. Hostel opportunities for tribal students will be expanded. Appropriate rights will be extended for people with physical and mental disabilities. Camps will be organized for measuring their disability and providing certification. The amount and number of allowances will be increased. Arrangements will be made for the education and training of disabled children.

Women, Children and Senior Citizen

- Initiatives will be taken to protect the security of women irrespective of age. Strict action will be taken against violence against women and children. Measures will be taken to end gender inequality in various social sectors including work and wages. The quality of ICDS programs for the welfare of women and children will be further improved. Special attention will be paid to child development and children's rights issues. Initiatives will be taken to make women's self-help groups more vibrant and action-oriented in order to impart appropriate training. The number of hostels for working women will be increased. Women's economic freedom is our goal. The government will take all steps to crack down on traffickers of women and children.. Attention will be paid to the protection of homeless women who are victims of domestic and social oppression. The government will make necessary infrastructural arrangements to put a stop to domestic violence. Assistance will be provided for the helpless elderly people. The amount of allowance and the number of recipients of assistance for aged persons shall also be increased.

Development of North Bengal and other special regions

- The development of North Bengal including the hill districts will receive special importance. The development of infrastructure and industry for economic empowerment is very important. Protecting the culture of the hill people along with economic development will receive special importance.

Legal System

- To ensure justice for the poor 'Legal Aid' will be strengthened. The government will continue to use the mother tongue in the courts, especially in the lower courts.

Urban development

- Emphasis will be placed on planned initiatives in urbanization. Efforts will be made to increase the financial and administrative capacity of the municipalities. Government initiatives for housing will be increased for the poor, the lower class and the middle class. Emphasis will be placed on speedy implementation of the proposed work schedule for the construction of bridges and roads to improve communication system and new initiatives shall be planned. Overall improvement of public transport system will be emphasised. A permanent commission will be constituted to fix the fare of public transport.

Slum development

- Due to the economic situation of the country and the state, poverty is increasing and so is the number of slums. The slum dwellers in urban areas shall not be evicted without the administration arranging alternative accommodation. Those who have been living in slums for twenty (20) years or more, a 99-year lease will be given for one rupee to guarantee their rights. Legal lease will also be given on central government land after obtaining approval. Services need to be improved in slum areas. Joint initiatives will be taken with the government and voluntary organizations to expand health and education opportunities in all slum areas. Integrated approach shall be taken towards public health, employment and public services.

Food

- Special emphasis will be placed on food security. Initiative shall be taken to make the ration system universal and to provide 35 kg of rice or wheat to each family at the rate of Rs. 2 per kg for the poor. Pulses, sugar, edible oil and essential commodities like oil, kerosene and oil will be supplied regularly at prices lower than the market. Death by starvation will be stopped. Pure drinking water will reach everyone.

Culture

- The government's policy in cultural matters to resist retrograde tendencies in culture shall be formulated. The cultural rights of the people of this state irrespective of religion, caste and language shall be upheld. There shall be no government interference in cultural activities. Pluralism will be encouraged in Literature, Music, Painting, Drama, Movies, folklore etc. Innovation and creativity will be encouraged. The government's role would basically be to provide infrastructure for cultural activities by constructing auditoria, providing basic necessary assistance in organizing fairs, exhibitions etc. Special importance will be given to the revival and empowerment of folk and tribal culture. The government will extend support to economically distressed folk artists. Specific programmes shall be taken up and implemented for encouraging creative talents at the level of schools and higher educational institutions.

Sports

- Participation in sports is to be increased manifold. The government will focus on building sports infrastructure at the state, district, subdivision, block and municipal levels and move forward on the basis of a sound sports policy involving schools, clubs and other concerned agencies.

Environment

- Every effort will be made to protect the environment and biodiversity. Care must be taken to protect rivers, water bodies and wetlands. Together with protecting forests, we have to pay attention to their extension. Protection of the ecology of the state shall be given priority. Strict measures will be taken to control vehicular pollution as well as pollution from industrial waste. Initiative will be taken to increase public awareness to reduce plastic bags harmful for environment and health.
Special emphasis will be given on the use of solar energy and rainwater harvesting in multi-storied buildings in the urban areas. Social forestry will be encouraged. Effective measures will be taken against water and air pollution, noise and visual pollution.

Special measures will be taken to control pollution in urban areas. Masses will be engaged in the movement to protect the environment.

Science and Technology

- Emphasis will be placed on the spread of scientific practices. Necessary steps will be taken for enhancement of scientific and technological research. Initiatives will be taken for development of agriculture and irrigation in rural areas and innovative self-reliant technologies to prevent floods and river erosion. Scientific temper at all levels of society, especially among the younger generation will be developed.

Electricity

- Planned initiatives will be taken to increase power generation. Along with thermal electricity, solar power, hydropower, wind power and many other unconventional sources of power generation will be accelerated. The expansion of electricity services should be done especially in rural, remote and backward areas. Electricity prices for the poor will be subsidised. Domestic consumers shall get electricity free of charge up to 100 units. Up to 200 units of electricity will be provided for all consumers at subsidised rate. Electricity will be provided at a relatively low cost for agricultural work in rural areas. Initiatives will be taken to stop abnormal electricity bills.

Tourism

- A well-coordinated plan will be adopted to attract tourists to the tourist destinations in the state. Special attention will be given to infrastructural development in the tourist destinations keeping in view needs of the lower- and middle-class people. Opportunities for economic development and employment will be created through the tourism industry.

State Administration

- The state administration needs to be made responsible and sensitive. Unwanted political interference within the administration shall be stopped. Quality of services provided by the government must be improved. Necessary policy will be adopted to come out of the serious economic anarchy caused by the present state government. In the case of government jobs, all appointments will be made through the Public Service Commission. The trade union rights of the employees will be protected. In this case also the appointments in college and school education will be through specific commissions. No permanent post will be left vacant. The functioning of the project staff will have to be systematised. Temporary staff will be made permanent in a planned manner. Attempts will be made to ensure permanence for temporary staff in education. Efforts will be made for payment of outstanding arrears. Corruption will be eradicated at all levels of administration. In proven cases of illegal/criminal activities by those in government service punishment shall be expedited. All types of arrogance and misbehaviour with the people among government employees will be stopped.

Planning

- The planning board will be made more effective. There will be increased representation from different levels of society. Experts from different fields need to be involved. The importance of decentralized planning will continue to be upheld. For development of local resource and regional characteristics, suitable planning and infrastructural development will be there with participation of the people. Coordination between various departments will be ensured. Planning for economic development shall also be done through coordination among sections of the economically backward and between advanced and backward areas. Initiatives will be stepped up for progress in backward areas like North Bengal, *Jangalmahal*, Sundarbans. To deal with natural disasters and climate change, a master plan will be prepared for socio-economic and infrastructural development in the Darjeeling hilly areas and Sundarbans. Construction and conservation of river embankments in the Sundarbans and prevention of land erosion in the hilly areas will be given importance. Independent functioning of the District Planning Committees and the Calcutta and Metropolitan Planning Committees will be ensured. In the hilly areas of Darjeeling, self-government will be given due status and highest respect shall be paid to autonomy.

Chit Fund

- Illegal cheat funds in this state must be stopped using utmost power of law and administration. Officials of the Chit Fund and their associates who looted money illegally will be punished as quickly as possible. Every effort will be made to return the money deposited by the people to them.

Centre-State Relation

- The struggle against anti-people policies and corruption of the Centre will continue. The state government shall fight against the decimation of the constitutional rights of the states. The state shall also fight for the just demands of the people by involving them. Of the total revenue collected by the Centre, 50 percent will have to be given to the state. No excuses in the matter of GST dues to the state will be tolerated. There will be struggle to increase debt-to-deposit ratio of state-owned banks. State-owned enterprises located in the state will not be allowed to close or privatize. To prevent erosion of the Ganges and Padma, to prevent erosion of the coastal areas of the Sundarbans and to protect the environment, to increase the navigability of the Calcutta-Haldia port, and for investment in the hilly areas of Darjeeling, the state government will maintain its initiative for central capital investment assistance.
- Citizenship Amendment Act and NRC will not be introduced in the state. Emphasis will be placed in the matter of rehabilitation of the citizens who came after 1971. Demand will be made again for help from the Centre in bringing to a conclusion the pending problems of the refugees in the state. Additional assistance from the Centre will also be sought for the development of slums and the marginalized people.

Our Appeal

- To liberate West Bengal from anarchy and misrule and re-establish democracy in the state, Trinamool Congress must be defeated. The ultimate enemy of the people, the communal and the divisive BJP must be resisted and defeated with all might. The fascist RSS, the driving force behind the BJP, is spreading violence and intolerance across the country. The BJP and Trinamool Congress are utterly destroying the social and cultural heritage of the state. Both the Trinamool and the BJP must be defeated in order to protect the heritage of West Bengal. Interest of the people of the state will not be served if the Trinamool and the BJP are not defeated.
- It is because of the long-standing politics of collusion between the Trinamool and the BJP that there is no actual investigation of corruption at the state level by the CBI and the ED. The BJP government does not have a problem passing anti-people bills in Rajya Sabha with the help of *Trinamul Congress*. The Trinamool has repeatedly joined hands with the communal and anti-people BJP. It can shake hands again at any time. The events have proven that the Trinamool Congress resorted to communal politics whenever need arose.
- Defeating the Trinamool Congress and the BJP for strengthening democracy, secularism and people's struggle for survival is our main duty in the forthcoming assembly elections in West Bengal. To this end, we want to move forward by uniting all democratic and secular forces. So, the Left Front and its allies, the National Congress and the Indian Secular Front, forging unity through mutual understanding and dialogue are presenting a viable alternative for the interests of the people in the state. An alternative government has to be formed by defeating the Trinamool Congress and the BJP through widest unity and active participation of the people.

Left-Democratic and Secular Alternatives

1. Democracy shall be restored and the right of all dissidents to express their views shall be protected. All political prisoners will be released immediately. The policy of secularism will be strictly followed. There shall be no 'competitive communalism'. Peace, harmony and stability shall prevail.
2. There will be recruitment of teachers in government and semi-government educational institutions and filling up of all vacancies in other public institutions within a year. All appointments will be as per rules, on the basis of merit.
3. Emphasis will be placed on giving unemployed youth self-reliance. Self-employment projects will be strengthened again for this purpose..
4. Extensive employment opportunities shall be developed in three main sectors of agriculture, industry and services.
5. Revival of very small, small scale and medium industries. Easy loan arrangements.
6. Reduction of the cost of cultivation, remunerative prices for crops produced by farmers. Provision of Minikit, fertilizer and irrigation water to make agriculture profitable. Revival of cooperatives for buying and selling agricultural products. Not only one-time loan waiver, but also guarantee of one and a half times the price of the crop. Government procurement of crops from small, marginal and medium farmers.

7. Repeal of the amended APMC Act in the State as these shall have the same impact as the ones made by the Centre. The three agricultural laws made by the Central Government shall not be implemented in the state.
8. Rehabilitation of the evicted poor peasants who got land through land reform.
9. REGA will be provided for minimum 150 days. It will also be extended to urban areas.
10. Democracy in the three-tier panchayat system will be restored and the direct participation of the rural people, especially the poor, in the panchayat system will be ensured.
11. The minimum wage for workers will be Rs. 21,000 per month. Separate department for expatriate or migrant workers. Special protection scheme for them. 2,500 per month allowance and cheap rations for workers of closed factories, tea gardens and other closed enterprises. Social security for all types of unorganized workers to be ensured and extended. Fixed salary structure and social security of temporary workers working in government projects will be ensured. Security of work and respectable allowances will be ensured for all ICDS, Asha, Mid-day Meal project staff.
12. Importance on food security and providing universal ration – Monthly supply of 35 kgs of rice or wheat flour per family at Rs. 2/- per Kg. for the poor - Supply of essential commodities at lower prices than the market- Pure drinking water for all.
13. Importance of Small and Medium Enterprises – Initiative to build large scale industries – Thrust will be on Information technology, biotechnology, and agro-based industries - Small and cottage industries, manufacturing industries including steel, automobiles, petrochemicals, electrical, cement, leather and textiles.
14. In the public health sector, services will be free. The government has full responsibility for public health. Priority will be given to the prevention of epidemics and diseases. Control the price of medicines as much as possible.
15. Increasing power generation - Subsidizing the price of electricity for the poor. Government subsidy on electricity bills up to 200 units.
16. At least 20% of budget allocation for education – Eradication of illiteracy - Democracy in academic institutions – government interference in education, privatization, commercialization and communalization of education will be stopped. There will be transparency in admission process - Appropriate training for teachers- Filling up vacancies in educational institutions by maintaining transparency (Pre-primary, Upper Primary, SLTMT, Work education and Physical education) —Madrassa Education to be streamlined, improved and expanded. Emphasis on Vocational, career oriented education – emphasis on research at the university level - Positive outlook towards all temporary teachers: Regular democratic elections of student unions.
17. Every effort will be made to promote progressive cultural values. Creativity and innovation will be encouraged.
18. The government will pay special attention to sports. Along with sports health exercises will be emphasised.
19. Equal pay for equal work. Women are not to be persecuted. Special support centres will be set up at block level in rural West Bengal and in wards or boroughs in cities

- to prevent domestic violence. Appropriate arrangements will be made for the third gender (LGBTQIA +).
20. RPD Act-16 for persons with physical disabilities and Mental Health Protection Act-18 will be implemented in the interest of persons with physical and mental disabilities. People with disabilities will be provided education and vocational training will be given. Certificates to be provided to all within one year. The monthly allowance will be two thousand rupees per month in place of present one thousand rupees.
 21. Revival of the State Finance Commission for the distribution of wealth. Establishment of bank with the initiative of the state government. Decentralization of resources. Special initiative for rehabilitation of sick enterprises.
 22. Expansion of cooperatives. On-line marketing of cooperative products. Self-help groups will be encouraged.
 23. Planning Board to be made functional. Besides encouraging use of Bengali language in all areas of administration the status of Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and Santali will be preserved with equal importance. The linguistic, cultural and social development of Rajbangshi-Kuruk-Kurmi will get priority. Socio-economic development of North Bengal and *Jangalmahal* and the western region of the State will be a priority. Development of the slums will be a priority too.
 24. Prevent the illegal activities of chit funds - Prompt punishment of chit fund operators and their collaborators. Returning the money deposited by the people.
 25. The struggle against corruption and anti-people policy of the central government will continue. The State Government shall be vigilant against the appropriation of the constitutional rights of the states – Discriminatory measures restricting citizenship like CAAs, NRCs and NPA shall not be implemented in the state. 50 per cent of the revenue collected by the Centre must be given to the State. The Centre should immediately reimburse the dues to the State Government on account of GST collected. Demand of assistance from the Centre to check river erosion, improve port navigability, Efforts to obtain subsidies from the Centre for the infusion of capital investment in the hilly areas of Darjeeling and for the rehabilitation of refugees.