



**30 YEARS OF LEFT FRONT RULE IN WEST BENGAL:
*A DEVELOPMENT REPORT CARD***

APRIL 5, 2009



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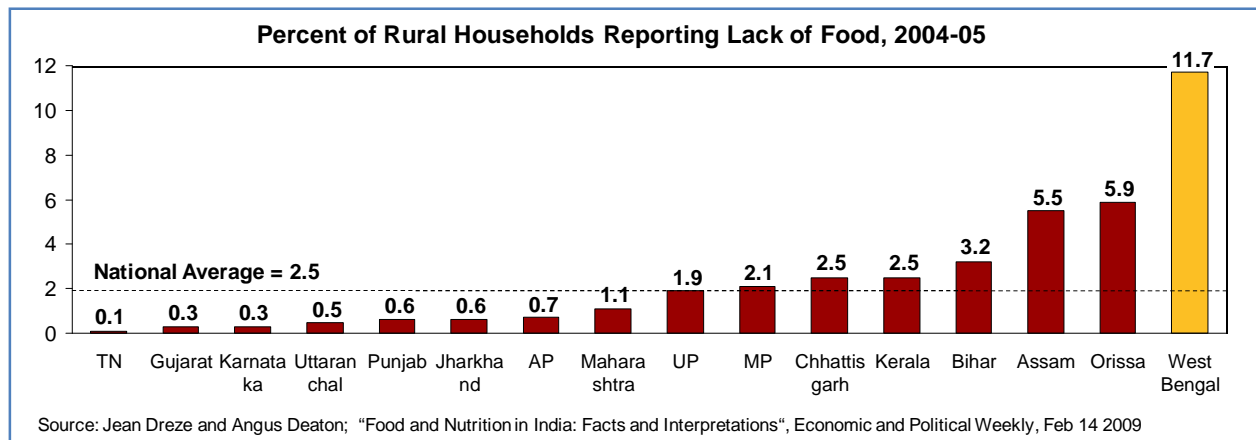
1. Health & Nutrition

Even after 30 years of Left rule, West Bengal has very high levels of hunger and malnutrition when compared to the rest of India.

- **Hunger**

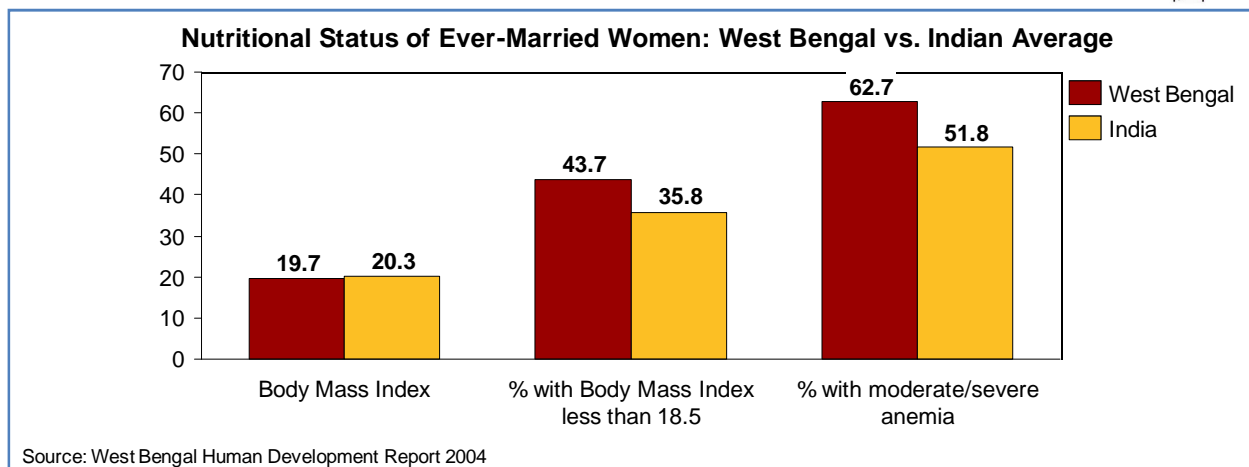
West Bengal has the highest rate of hunger in rural households among major Indian states.

- This is validated in a recent Study led by Jean Dreze and Angus Deaton (see below).



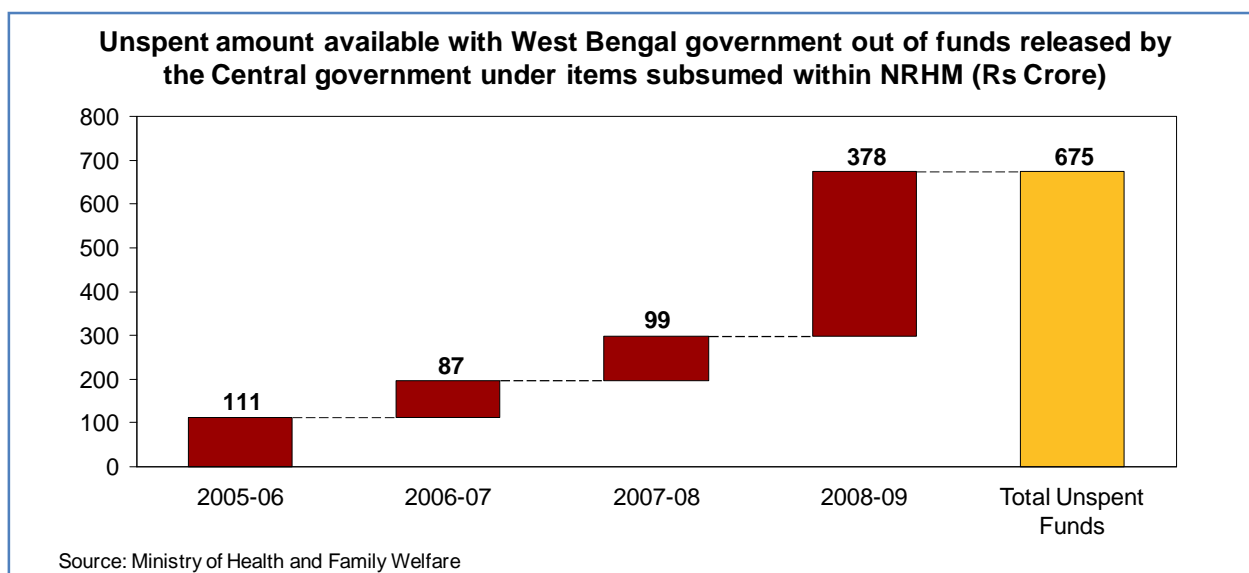
- **Malnutrition of Women**

- Married women in West Bengal, on average, have a lower body-mass index than the average Indian woman, suggesting greater undernourishment. Married women in West Bengal also have a greater likelihood of suffering from anemia than the average Indian woman.
- This data is from the West Bengal government's own Human Development Report.



- **Not spending Central Government Funds on Healthcare**

West Bengal government has failed to fully and effectively spend the money released to it by the Central government, year after year.



- Failure to spend on urban health services:

Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Audit Report (Civil), West Bengal for the Year 2006-2007 notes that:

“During 2002-2007, the (West Bengal government’s) department could not spend the budgeted funds of Rs 357.13 crore for urban health services. Further, unutilised funds of Rs 1.50 crore remained parked in the personal ledger accounts of the Superintendents of two hospitals for over seven years.”

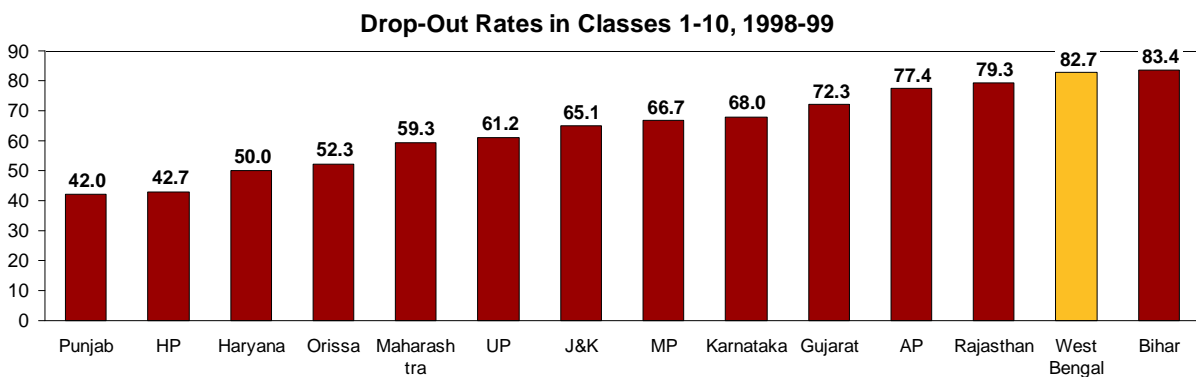


2. Education

Even after 30 years of Left rule, West Bengal is failing to keep children in school and to ensure learning among them.

- **Drop-out Rates**

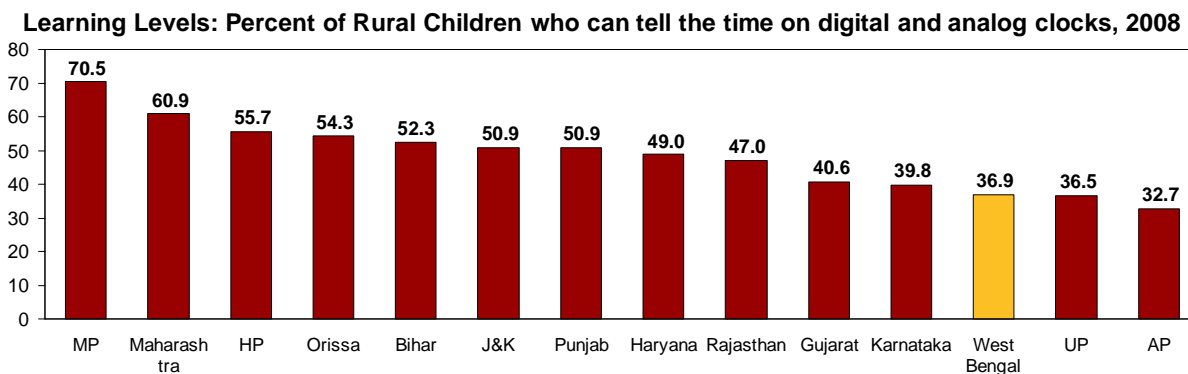
West Bengal has the second highest school dropout rate among major states of India.



Source: Planning Commission of India; "National Human Development Report 2001"

- **Learning of Children**

The level of learning of children in rural West Bengal schools is, on average, lower than most other states of India.



Source: PRATHAM, "Annual State of Education Report (Rural)", 2008



- **Poor Implementation of Mid-Day Meal Scheme**

The Comptroller & Auditor General of India, Performance Audit Report of the National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Midday Meal Scheme), 2008 notes that:

- “In test checked schools, cooked meals were not served for 37 per cent of the targeted 78,114 school-days due to delayed implementation of the programme, short receipt of rice, cooking cost, etc.”
- Rs. 4.82 crore was claimed in excess of the actual spend for food grain transportation.
- Pucca kitchen sheds were not available in 71 per cent of the schools.
- Drinking water was not available in 29 per cent of the schools. Gas stoves were not available in 99 percent of the schools.

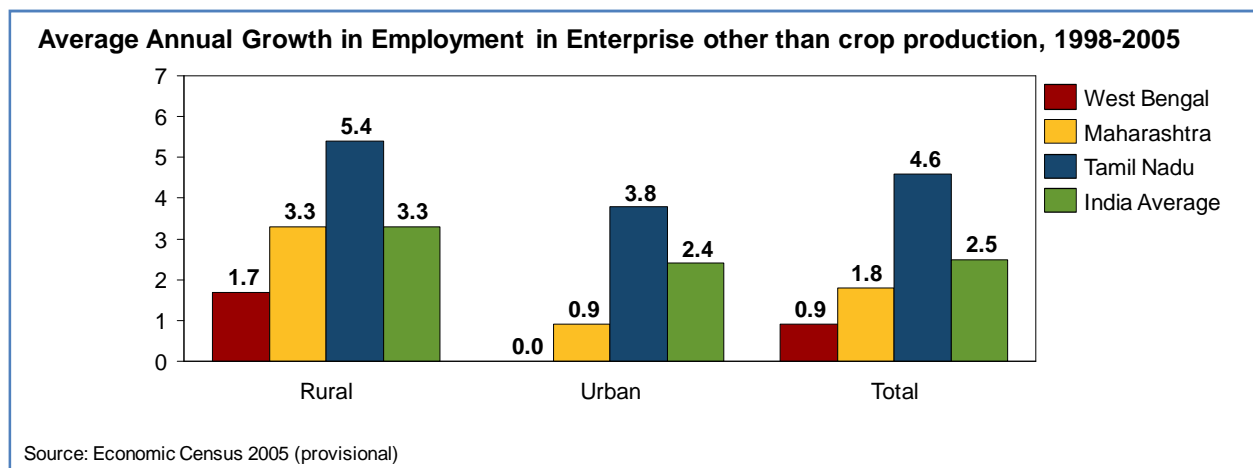


3. Employment Generation

After 30 years of Left rule, negligible new employment is being created in West Bengal, even as other states are forging ahead.

- **Employment growth**

- Employment growth outside agriculture in West Bengal is way behind that of other comparable states and also behind the national average.
- Employment growth has practically come to a halt in urban areas.



- **National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Implementation**

- While it complains about lack of support from the central government, the West Bengal government is failing to utilize funds allocated to it by the Centre to implement the scheme.
 - According to the CAG of India Performance Audit in 2008, the West Bengal government spent only 66.6% of the funds made available for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in 2006-07.
- There is over-reporting of the implementation of the scheme, the actual implementation is much lower. According to a CAG of India Performance Audit in 2008:
 - Excess reporting of 6.06 lakh man days of cumulative employment generation was noticed just in Purulia district alone.
 - Excess reporting of funds utilization of Rs. 0.99 crore was noticed in both Medinipur and Purulia districts.



4. Poverty

Even after 30 years of Left rule, most of West Bengal's districts are among the poorest in India. It also has the ominous distinction of having India's poorest district.

- 14 out of West Bengal's 18 districts (i.e. 78% of the districts) are among the 100 poorest districts in India.
- The poorest district in India is Murshidabad in West Bengal, where 56% of the people live in abject poverty. An astonishing 1.47% of India's rural poor live in this one district alone.

Source: 2009 Study by Indian Statistical Institute for the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation; based on analysis of NSS Data



5. Income Growth

After 30 years of Left rule, the ranking of West Bengal among Indian states in terms of per capita income has slid dramatically.

- West Bengal has gone from having the second position in per capita income among Indian states in 1960/61 to the ninth position in 2004/05.

Ranking of Indian States by Per Capita Income

	1960/61	1980/81	2004/05
Maharashtra	1	2	2
West Bengal	2	5	9
Punjab	3	1	3
Gujarat	4	4	4
Tamil Nadu	5	8	6
Haryana	6	3	1
Assam	7	12	10
Karnataka	8	6	7
Rajasthan	9	14	11
Andhra Pradesh	10	9	8
Kerala	11	7	5
Madhya Pradesh	12	10	13
Orissa	13	11	12
Uttar Pradesh	14	13	14
Bihar	15	15	15

Source: Central Statistical Organization (CSO)

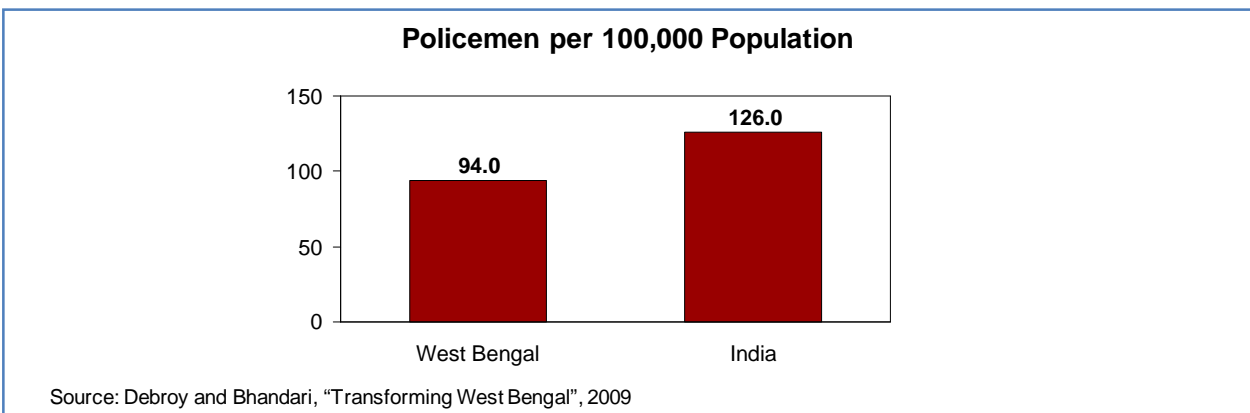


6. Law & Order

Even after 30 years of Left rule, West Bengal has under-invested in protecting its citizens. The incidence of heinous crimes in West Bengal is disproportionately high when compared to other states of India.

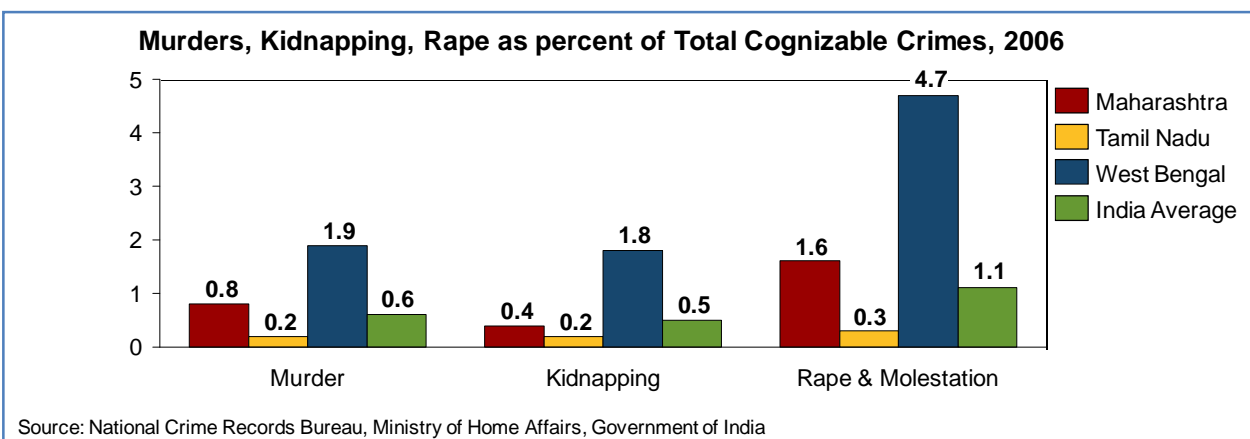
- **Police Force**

West Bengal has under-invested in protecting its citizens – it has fewer policemen per capita than the all-India average.



- **Incidence of heinous crimes**

The incidence of heinous crimes is much higher than the incidence in other comparable states and the all-India average.





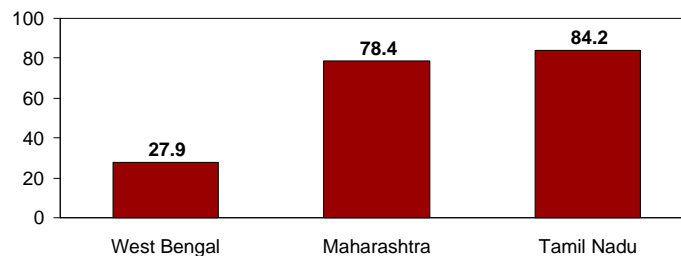
7. Basic Services and Infrastructure

Even after 30 years of Left rule, the Left government has failed to provide access to essential services and basic infrastructure to the people of West Bengal.

- **Availability of Drinking Water**

Only a quarter of households in West Bengal have access to safe drinking water, which is far less than other comparable states.

Percent of households having access to Safe Drinking Water, 2005-06

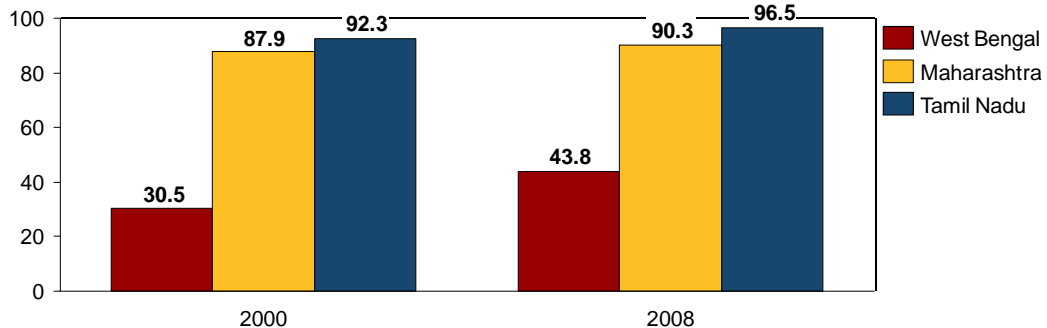


Source: National Family Health Survey III, 2005-06

- **Road connectivity**

Less than half the habitations in West Bengal are connected by pucca roads, which is far less than other comparable states.

Percent of Habitations connected to Pucca Roads, 2008



Source: PMGSY, Ministry of Rural Development



8. Welfare of Backward Classes

Even after 30 years of Left rule, the Left government has failed to look after the interests of the weaker sections of West Bengal, especially SC/ST groups.

Observations made in the Comptroller & Auditor General of India Report, “Audit Report (Civil) for the year ended 31 March 2007”

- During 2001-2006, against a budget of Rs 1.43 crores for pre-matric scholarships, only Rs 0.43 crore (30 per cent) were granted and paid to SC/ST students.
- In seven test-checked districts, 25,000 SC and 4000 ST students were deprived of post-matric scholarships due to non-release of required funds. Further, over 74,000 students faced a delay of between 12 – 22 months in receiving their scholarships in the seven districts surveyed.
- Against the state’s budgeted provision of Rs 92.37 crores for payment of book grants, the concerned state government department released only Rs 77.80 crores, thus depriving 14.15 lakh students of the benefits of the scheme.
- As of March 2006, construction of two central hostels for SC/ST students was not started due to land dispute and construction of seven more hostels remained incomplete due to delayed selection of sites and delayed release of funds. Further, eight additional hostels remained vacant for want of matrons, superintendents and other staff and required basic infrastructure facilities. Shockingly, two of the hostels were being used as Government offices and residences.
- In the absence of adequate inspection, hostel grants were paid to the school authorities on the basis of sanctioned strength of boarders, instead of actual number of students accommodated therein. As a result, several instances of excess payment of hostel grants aggregating Rs 39.35 lakh were noticed in the audit.