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WEST BENGAL

ANIRBAN CHAKRABORTY*

Introduction

West Bengal has a unicameral house. 2023 is significant because the working of the West Bengal legislatures was severely impaired due to assembly elections between 2020-22. The research data is collected from multiple sources. These sources include the information available on the website of the assembly, reports and proceedings published by the assembly, the gazette notifications, newspaper reports, online blog posts and research studies conducted by private institutions.

Further, studying West Bengal is slightly different and unique from the rest of the country. This is mainly because of the nature of the polity of the state. The ruling political parties of successive governments in West Bengal since the post-emergency era have been in strong opposition to the political parties ruling in the Union.¹ The State Government has made a conscious effort to assert its independent identity and not mechanically submit to the policies adopted by the Centre.

Quantitative Legislative Survey

The Third and the Fourth Sessions of the 17th West Bengal Legislative Assembly were held in the year 2023. The Assembly worked in two sessions for a total of 40 sitting days and the same is represented in the table below:

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¹ The government of the Congress-I party headed by Shri. Siddharth Sankar Ray between 1972-77 was the last occasion when West Bengal was ruled by a political party which was also in power in the Centre. This was followed by 34 years of the Left Front government and finally replaced by the All-India Trinamool Congress in 2011 by an overwhelming majority. The All-India Trinamool Congress has also won the subsequent state assembly elections in 2016 and continues to remain in power. Both Left Front and All-India Trinamool Congress are in opposition to the political party in power in the Centre.

Session ²	Dates	Functioning Days
17th WBLA: Session 3	February 08, 2023 - March 13, 2023	13
17th WBLA: Session 4	July 24, 2023 - December 07, 2023 (Session was adjourned <i>sine die</i>)	27

Functioning of the Assembly

The Third Session of the Legislative Assembly commenced from 08.02.2023 and was concluded on 13.03.2023. The Assembly functioned for eight days in February and five days in March respectively. The Fourth Session commenced on 04.07.2023 and on 07.12.2023 the Assembly was adjourned *sine die*. The Fourth Session did not conclude in 2023 and continued in 2024. The 4th Session of the Assembly was convened every month between July to December with a total of 27 sitting days.³ The information of the total annual working days of the Assembly between 2016-23 is represented in the table below:⁴

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Number of Functioning Days	30	46	37	35	14	19	42	40

Compared with the information on average annual working days of legislative assemblies across the States in India, the West Bengal Assembly between 2022-23 (average 40 days) held 50 percent more working days compared to the national average of 21 days in 2022⁵. It recorded 40 working days which is almost double the national average of working days (21 days). Further, in 2022 among all the legislative assemblies in India West Bengal (42 Days) was amongst the high functioning ones. The average hourly duration of working of the West Bengal Assembly was two and half hours in 2023. The Assembly met in two sessions - the budget session held between February and March followed by a prolonged monsoon session starting from July. On December 7, 2023 the Assembly session was

² The information is based on the data available Legislative Assembly Bulletin-Part-I available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

³ The information is based on the data available Legislative Assembly Bulletin-Part-I available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

⁴ The information is based on the data available Legislative Assembly Bulletin-Part-I available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

⁵ The information is based on the data on national average of sitting days of state assemblies in 2022 in Annual Review of State Laws 2022, prepared by PRS Legislative Research, <https://prsindia.org/policy/analytical-reports/annual-review-of-state-laws2020#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20states%20passed%20an,two%20and%20three%20Bills%2C%20r> respectively (Visited on January 31, 2024).

adjourned *sine-die*.⁶ The budget was presented on March 15, 2023 and was discussed for eight days.⁷

Legislative Output

The annual legislative output of the Assembly between 2016-23 is provided in the table below:

Year	2016-19 (Average)	2020	2021	2022	2023
Bills Introduced⁸	33	6	11	33	18
Bills Passed	N.A.	6	11	33	18
Acts⁹	31	5	10	24	10

In the year 2023, 18 Bills were introduced and passed by the Assembly. Most Bills were passed quickly without much debate and deliberation. This is natural because the party in power enjoys three-fourth majority in the Assembly. In 2023 Assembly passed all the Bills on the day of introduction or the very next day.¹⁰

Among the 18 Bills passed in 2023 only 10 Bills received the assent of the Governor till 15.10.2023. This figure compared to the number of legislations enacted in 2022 and the average between 2016-19 in West Bengal is also far less. One Ordinance was promulgated on 12 May 2023 to amend the law relating to universities in the state.¹¹

Qualitative Analysis

The legislation can be classified in major heads Original Acts, Amendment Acts and Repealing Acts.

⁶ Legislative Assembly Bulletin-Part-I available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

⁷ Legislative Assembly, List of Business available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/wblaBusiness.aspx> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

⁸ The list of the Bills by titles introduced and passed by the Assembly in 2023 is available on West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Digital Archive, Legislations, Bills http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/report_bill.aspx# (Visited on January 31, 2024)

⁹ The list of the Acts by titles introduced and passed by the Assembly in 2023 is available on West Bengal Legislative Assembly, Digital Archive, Legislations, Acts http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/report_bill.aspx# (Visited on January 31, 2024)

¹⁰ Legislative Assembly Bulletin-Part-I available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

¹¹ The West Bengal Universities Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2023, West Bengal Ordinance No 1 of 2023, May 12 2023.

Original Acts

Three Original Acts have been passed by the Assembly and enacted. Among these two are Appropriation Acts. The third Original Act is called the West Bengal Finance Act 2023.¹² The Act introduces changes to the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Act, 1944, and the West Bengal Sales Tax (Settlement of Dispute) Act, 1999. The modification to the Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Act, 1944 extends relief from payment of agricultural income tax for two more years from 2023 to 2025. The proposed changes made in West Bengal Sales Tax (Settlement of Dispute) Act, 1999 include provision to give relief to taxpayers by introducing a very liberal and comprehensive scheme for settlement of all types of disputes involving tax arrears, tax, interest, penalty, late fee pending before any authority on 10.02.2023 if application is made before 31/05/2023. The Act also modifies some important definitions to facilitate settlement of disputes. It mandates payment of advance amount to the tune of 15% in disputes involving non-furnishing of forms or certificates and matters of disputed computation of taxes. The Act also lays down provision for settlement of disputes involving West Bengal Tax on Entry of Goods into the Local Areas, 2012 with an amount of 50% advance payment. The Acts states that these advance amounts will be returned if the dispute is not settled. It also provides that proceedings that are revived due to refusal or revocation of the settlement amount must be completed within six months for such date of refusal or revocation.

Amendment Acts

The next category of legislation falls in the class of amending laws. In this category 10 Bills were passed by the assembly but only four have received the assent of the Governor. The first one is the West Bengal Lokayukta (Amendment) Act 2023¹³ which amended the West Bengal Lokayukta Act, 2003 to vest in the Governor the power to extend the term of Office of the Lokayukta for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of the said Act more effectively.¹⁴ This change was considered both necessary and expedient because in the majority of states legislation the term of office of Lokayukta is five years but in West Bengal it was three years. The West Bengal law now empowers the Governor to extend the term of office of a Lokayukta for any period till the person has attained seventy years of age.

¹² The West Bengal Finance Act, 2023.

¹³ The West Bengal Lokayukta (Amendment) Act, 2023.

¹⁴ The West Bengal Lokayukta (Amendment) Act, 2023, Cl. 2.

The West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972 was amended by an Amendment Act.¹⁵ West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972 lays down special powers for the maintenance of public order by the prevention of illegal acquisition, possession or use of arms and the suppression of subversive activities endangering public safety and tranquility.¹⁶ The Amendment Act of 2023 extended the power to allow the state authority to handle such cases more stringently.¹⁷ It enables the state authority to attach the property of the persons convicted of offence involving damaging of public or any private properties, looting or setting them on fire. It provides that state can attach any properties or an asset, tangible or intangible, corporeal or incorporeal, movable or immovable. These attached properties can be auctioned and the proceeds be used to fund the victim compensation scheme introduced by the Amendment Act.¹⁸

The West Bengal Land Reforms Act, 1955 was amended in 2023 to make transfer of government land parcels for commercial and industrialization.¹⁹ The main amendments are inclusion of the term “Township”²⁰ to provide an option to transfer ceiling surplus land held on freehold basis; to provide an additional option of freehold transfer of government land to lessee for improving ease of doing business, hassle free transfer/mortgage of land and to invite more investment; to protect ceiling exemption in deserving cases and to enable specially empowered officer to make correction of finally published record of rights of *mouza* concerned, on information or on his own motion, at any point of time, under the said Act. However, this change from leasehold to freehold is major shift. Acquisition of land for commercial purposes has been a very controversial area in the history of West Bengal politics. The amendment brings a major alteration in the political position of the ruling Trinamool Congress government in its land related policy. Although the change has been welcomed by industry bodies.

Finally, many states have amended their state GST Acts based on the recommendations of the GST Council. West Bengal in 2023 amended the West Bengal Goods and Services Tax Act.²¹ The amendment sought amendments in the state Goods and Services Tax Act on the basis of the recommendations of the GST Council. It mainly aimed to provide firstly certain relief to taxpayers; secondly to remove the major inconveniences caused to the taxpayers,

¹⁵ The West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2023.

¹⁶ The West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1972.

¹⁷ The West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2023, Cl. 4

¹⁸ The West Bengal Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Act, 2023, Cl. 5.

¹⁹ The West Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 2023.

²⁰ The West Bengal Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 2023, Cl. 3

²¹ The West Bengal Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Act, 2023.

especially micro and small entrepreneurs and traders; and lastly to decriminalize certain offences committed by taxpayers.

Bills that were passed by the Assembly but not received the assent of the Governor:

1. West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) (Amending) Bill 2023.
2. West Bengal Labour Welfare Funds (Amending) Bill 2023
3. West Bengal University Laws (Amending) Bill 2023
4. Kolkata Municipal Corporation (Amending) Bill 2023
5. Bengal Legislative Assembly (Members Emoluments) (Amending) Bill 2023
6. The West Bengal Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 2023

The Amendment bill dealing with Town and Country Planning aims to remove the development fee that people have to pay for the construction of buildings within the Kolkata Municipal Corporations jurisdiction. The amending bill to the Labour Welfare Funds Act was introduced to align the state law with the central laws that have been pressing for decriminalisation in respect of violation of labour laws.²² The Kolkata Municipal Corporation (Amending) Bill 2023 exempted the lands or buildings comprising educational institutions, administered or aided, by the state government from payment of property tax.²³ It was stated by the Minister In-Charge that property taxes for nearly 1,963 institutions will be waived. The West Bengal University Laws (Amending) Bill 2023²⁴ is introduced to replace the West Bengal University Laws (Amending) Ordinance 2023. It is unclear why these Bills did not receive the Governor's assent.

However, the Bengal Legislative Assembly (Members Emoluments) (Amending) Bill 2023²⁵ and The West Bengal Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 2023²⁶ were controversial legislative proposals. These Bills propose an increase in the salary of MLAs and ministers in the state. The proposed increase is Rs 40,000 per month to the existing monthly salaries of MLAs and ministers. The Leader of Opposition claimed that these bills were introduced in the Assembly without the approval of the Governor and the same as illegal. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs denied such claims of the Leader of Opposition and said that it was sent to the Governor for his approval well in advance.²⁷

²² West Bengal Labour Welfare Funds (Amendment) Act, 2023.

²³ Kolkata Municipal Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

²⁴ The West Bengal University Laws (Amending) Bill 2023.

²⁵ Bengal Legislative Assembly (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

²⁶ The West Bengal Salaries and Allowances (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

²⁷ *Controversy erupts as Bill to revise emoluments of MLAs introduced in Bengal assembly*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Politics), October 16, 2023 available <https://ecoti.in/EgghCb>.

Repealing Laws

The final category consists of repealing laws. Two Acts titled West Bengal Land Laws (Repealing) Act²⁸ and West Bengal Land Laws (Second Repealing) Act²⁹ repealed sixteen colonial land revenue and settlement legislations. It was recommended by the State Law Commission to repeal these laws because they were unnecessarily crowding the statute books and have long eclipsed due to post independent laws modernizing the land revenue system in the state. The third repealing legislation was titled West Bengal Agricultural Income Tax (Notices) (Repealing) Act.³⁰ This law annuals the West Bengal Agricultural Income Tax (Notices) Act 1952 which was passed in the public interest to validate certain notices, assessments and proceedings under Bengal Agricultural Income-tax Act, 1944. The fourth repealed the Bengal Alluvial Lands Act.³¹ The Act was enacted to prevent disputes concerning the possession of certain lands in Bengal gained by alluvion, or by dereliction of a river or the sea. But now the specific Land laws suggest that states can vest alluvial land. Hence the earlier law does not hold any significance.

The Fifth one repealed The Bengal Orphanages and Widows' Homes Act.³² The law was framed for better control and supervision of orphanages, widows' homes and marriage bureau, in Bengal. However, such institutions are redundant or covered under other statutes hence the repeal was justified.

Ordinance

Ordinances are not frequently promulgated in West Bengal. One Ordinance was promulgated on 12th May 2023 to amend laws relating to West Bengal Universities Laws.³³ The University Grants Commission issued Regulations for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education. This necessitated certain changes to be made in the different Acts of the State-aided Universities in the State particularly with reference to the appointment of Vice-Chancellors and constitution of the Search Committee for the appointment of Vice-Chancellors of the said Universities to maintain the provisions in line with the Regulations of 2018 of the University Grants Commission. Since the Legislative Assembly was not in session, an ordinance namely the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 was promulgated for the purpose. The ordinance was laid in the Assembly on August

²⁸ The West Bengal Land Laws (Repealing) Act, 2023.

²⁹ The West Bengal Land Laws (Second Repealing) Act, 2023.

³⁰ The West Bengal Agricultural Income Tax (Notices) (Repealing) Act, 2023.

³¹ The Bengal Alluvial Lands (Repealing) Act, 2023.

³² The Bengal Orphanages and Widows' Homes (Repealing) Act, 2023.

³³ The West Bengal Universities Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2023, West Bengal Ordinance No 1 of 2023, May 12 2023.

03, 2023 and on August 05, 2023 a bill in lieu of this ordinance was introduced in the Assembly, discussed and passed.³⁴ However, the said Bill has not become law as yet because the Governor has not assented.

The Legislative Limbo

Although the Constitution provides that the Governor must give his assent to the Bills as soon as possible, it takes an unusually long time in West Bengal to receive the Governor's assent.³⁵ Usually the time taken to receive the Governor's assent varies between a few days to months. Among all States and Union territories it takes the longest time to obtain the approval of the Governor in West Bengal.³⁶ The delay on the part of the Governor in assenting to the bills passed by the assembly resulted in filing of a public interest litigation (PIL) concerning the legality of the issue of Governor's withholding assent to the West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022. The PIL is admitted and placed before the division bench of Calcutta High Court. The Court has directed that an affidavit-in-opposition be filed by the office of the Governor, disclosing the current status of the bill.³⁷

Successive Governors have attributed the failure on the part of the state government to provide information on the bills or official report of debates and relevant details within appropriate time. Recently, the West Bengal Governor Shri. CV Ananda Bose claimed in a media statement that he had approved 22 Bills since assuming office on 22/11/2022. According to him all Bills have been cleared barring those that are awaiting presidential approval or are *sub-judice*.³⁸ The *sub-judice* bills include the one introduced in the assembly without the approval of the Governor or the one with serious legal implications e.g. the Bills to replace the Governor as the Chancellor of State Universities by Chief Minister. But shortly afterwards the parliamentary affairs minister gave a contradictory

³⁴ *Legislative Assembly List of Business* available in website of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly <http://www.wbassembly.gov.in/> (Visited on January 31, 2024)

³⁵ *Annual Review of State Laws 2022*, prepared by PRS Legislative Research, (<https://prsindia.org/policy/analytical-reports/annual-review-of-state-laws2020#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20states%20passed%20an,two%20and%20three%20Bills%2C%20respectively>) (Visited on February 10, 2022)

³⁶ *Annual Review of State Laws 2022*, prepared by PRS Legislative Research, (<https://prsindia.org/policy/analytical-reports/annual-review-of-state-laws2020#:~:text=In%202020%2C%20states%20passed%20an,two%20and%20three%20Bills%2C%20respectively>) (Visited on February 10, 2022)

³⁷ SCC Online Blog, *Calcutta High Court directs Governor's office to submit Affidavit-in-Opposition on West Bengal University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022's status*, 09 December 2023 available at <https://www.sconline.com/blog/post/2023/09/16/> (Visited on February 10, 2022)

³⁸ *Bengal Governor says no Bills pending with him, sets up cell for 'spot decisions'*, THE INDIAN EXPRESS (Kolkata), 9 November 2023, available at <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/kolkata/bengal-governor-says-no-bills-pending-with-him-sets-up-cell-for-spot-decisions-9019604/>.

media statement citing several Bills passed by the assembly pending with the Governor. He criticized the Governor for acting in a partisan manner leading to uncertainties at various places, including higher education institutions.³⁹

This existing rift between the State Government and the Governor in West Bengal has a long and chequered history. In the past the State Government has bypassed the Governor, by labelling him as the agent of the centre. The differences have even become public in the past.⁴⁰ But in 2023 the Hon'ble Speaker's action to summon a special session of the Assembly allowing the Government to introduce the controversial Bills to increase the emoluments and salaries of the MLA's and ministers and the Governor's subsequent action of withholding the bills by declaring it as contentious has again fuelled this controversy.⁴¹

The current state of affairs raises important constitutional questions from the perspective of the Indian parliamentary system. *First*, when a subject is treated extremely urgently an ordinance is usually promulgated. Subsequently, a Bill in lieu to replace the ordinance is introduced and passed by the Assembly within six weeks from its date of reassembling. But when the Governor withholds his assent indefinitely—*what is the fate of that law?* *Secondly*, when Bills are passed by the assembly and sent to the governor for his assent- *what is the reasonable time frame available to the governor to decide to assent or return the bill?* *Thirdly*, if the governor is not willing to give assent to a bill or wishes to seek more information or details- *what is the necessary action to be undertaken by the governor?*

Finally, an assembly session begins with a summons by the governor, and ends when the governor issues a notice of prorogation. Both the summons and prorogation are issued on the advice of the state cabinet. But it was observed that the 4th session of the West Bengal Assembly in December 2023 didn't conclude by a notice of prorogation by the Governor. The same session continued with a long adjournment and resumed in January, 2024. If the same session is continued with long adjournment between sittings, does it allow the Assembly to convene its sitting without a summon issued by the governor. This also raises

³⁹ TMC cites SC ruling, urges W.B. Governor to end Bill deadlock, THE HINDU (Kolkata), 3 December 2023, available at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/tmc-cites-sc-ruling-urges-wb-governor-to-end-bill-deadlock/article67600211.ece>.

⁴⁰ Economic Times, *Centre receives report from West Bengal Governor on law and order situation in state*, 11 December 2020, available at <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/centre-receives-report-from-west-bengal-governor-on-law-and-order-situation-in-state/articleshow/79676046.cms?from=mdr> (Visited on February 10, 2022).

⁴¹ *Controversy erupts as Bill to revise emoluments of MLAs introduced in Bengal assembly*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Politics), 16 October 2023, available at <https://m.economictimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/controversy-erupts-as-bill-to-revise-emoluments-of-mlas-introduced-in-bengal-assembly/articleshow/104476585.cms>.

a constitutional question—*whether this process of continuing a session with a long adjournment is a correct constitutional practice?*

The crisis between the constitutional functionaries of West Bengal has definitely affected the harmonious working of the state's legislative machinery in the past. Hearing a similar matter the Supreme Court has stated, "*that the exercise of unbridled discretion in areas not entrusted to the discretion of the governor risks walking roughshod over the working of a democratically elected government in the state.*"⁴² Further, the CJI has remarked that "*governance will be paralysed*" if a governor is allowed to withhold bills indefinitely.⁴³ The West Bengal Governor in a media statement in the aftermath of this Supreme Court's observation has mentioned that he will implement the Supreme Court's guidelines on clearing pending bills.⁴⁴

Executive Action: Government Schemes

The Trinamool Congress ruled West Bengal government has since its inception had adverse political relations with the centre. To uphold its own political mandate the West Bengal government has hugely relied on executive notifications along with legislative measures. The following new or revised schemes have been introduced in 2023:

Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme 2023⁴⁵

This scheme is piloted by the Women & Child Development and Social Welfare Department. It aims to provide the adult female members of all families of the state an assured monthly income to improve their financial condition and promote women empowerment. The scale of the financial benefit to be provided to eligible women from Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes Households: Rs. 1,000/- and all other women: Rs. 500/- per month. The cash incentives are rolled out to 1.88 crore women beneficiaries of the State from 25 to 60 years of age with an old age pension scheme once the beneficiaries turn 60. To be eligible under the scheme the women must not be employed in a permanent employment, retired government employee of Central/State Government, Statutory Bodies, Government

⁴² *Governors Cannot Keep Bills Pending Indefinitely: SC*, DECCAN HERALD, 24 November 2023, available at <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/governors-cannot-keep-bills-pending-indefinitely-without-any-action-sc-2783561>.

⁴³ *The State of Tamil Nadu v Governor of Tamil Nadu*, Writ Petition(s) (Civil) No(s). 1239/2023

⁴⁴ *Debashish Konar, Bengal gov: Will follow SC on pending bills, VC appts*, TIMES OF INDIA (Kolkata), 22 November 2023, available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/bengal-guv-will-follow-sc-on-pending-bills-vc-appts/articleshow/105402440.cms>.

⁴⁵ Women & Child Development and Social Welfare Department, *Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme*, March 31, 2023; Details of Lakshmi Bhandar Scheme 2023 available at <https://govtschemes.in/west-bengal-lakshmir-bhandar-scheme#gsc.tab=0> (Visited on February 10, 2024).

Undertakings, Panchayats, Municipal Corporations/ Municipalities, Local Bodies, teaching and non-teaching employees of Government aided Educational Institutions etc. receiving regular salary/ pension. Financial assistance under the scheme will be credited by direct bank transfer to an AADHAR linked bank account held solely by the eligible adult female member/s of the household.

West Bengal Bhabishyat Credit Card Scheme 2023⁴⁶

This is a new scheme for the young entrepreneurs in the age group 18-55 years offering subsidy linked and collateral free loans for setting up new ventures/ projects/ micro enterprises in manufacturing, service and business/ trading/ agro based activities. The scheme provides young entrepreneurs the following benefits:-

- margin money in the form of subsidy on setting or expanding a business;
- subsidy of 10% or a maximum of Rs. 25,000/- of a project cost; and
- collateral free bank loan facility for the remaining project cost.

The Scheme attempts to promote and develop the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Industry in West Bengal. However, the family and employees of Central or State Government or Government Undertakings are not eligible to apply under this scheme.

Matsyajeebi Bandhu Scheme in 2023⁴⁷

This scheme provides for one-time financial assistance of Rs. 2 lakh to dependent family members of fishermen due to their untimely demise, for any reason whatsoever, of a registered fisherman of the age group 18-60 years. Under this scheme only those fishermen eligible who registered himself in the fishermen registration portal of department of fisheries, aquaculture , Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, government of west Bengal. To be eligible under the scheme Age of deceased fisherman should be between 18 to 60 years old. Only registered nominees of deceased registered fishermen will be eligible to apply this scheme. Only those dead Fishermen are eligible under this scheme who do this type of work :- Boat Making, Fishery Industry, Fishermen, Stitching fishing nets and Manufacturing Boats. Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, has been declared as nodal department for the scheme.

⁴⁶ Government of West Bengal, Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Textiles, *West Bengal Bhabishyat Credit Card Scheme*, April 1, 2023; Details of West Bengal Bhabishyat Credit Card Scheme available at <https://bccs.wb.gov.in/home.html> (last visited on December 12 2025)

⁴⁷ Government of West Bengal, Department of Fisheries, Aquaculture, Aquatic Resources and Fishing Harbours, Government of West Bengal, *Matsyajeebi Bandhu Scheme*, April 1, 2023. Details of Matsyajeebi Bandhu Scheme in 2023 available at https://govtschemes.in/sites/default/files/2023_08/West%20Bengal%20Matsyajeebi%20Bandhu%20guidelines..pdf (last visited on December 12 2025)

Conclusion

The study concludes that statistics on the functioning of the assembly suggests that 2023 was quite a productive year of the legislature. It can be also definitely inferred that the reduced working period of the West Bengal Assembly in 2020-21 was an unusual departure from its normal practice primarily due to Covid-19 induced interruption and the assembly elections. However, the number of legislations introduced and passed by the assembly in 2023 remains lower than 2022 but more than 2020-21. The differences between the State Government and the Governor remains a cause of continuing concern for the State. The West Bengal Government has always taken the route of subordinate legislations, schemes and programs to meet its social welfare measures. This year was no exception . Three important social welfare measures were introduced by way of pure executive action. This asserts the ruling party's continued political antagonism with the centre.