

# WEST BENGAL COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS' ASSOCIATION (WBCUPA)

## 'HIGHER EDUCATION IN WEST BENGAL – A BRIEF REPORT'

It need not be mentioned anew that the former left front Government of our state has not only turned **our state into a bankrupt country by its aimless and irrelevant policies, they have left behind a burden of a Rupees Two Lakh Crore loan on the present Government** – It is with the crown of an unwanted and unacceptable debt on its head that the current Government had to start its journey.

The helplessness and despair of this new Government which desired to make sweeping and comprehensive changes could be realized by everyone except a few without any scruples of conscience, or except those who decided to sell their souls, or who prefer to sleep when awake. The plain and truth could be understood without even having been an expert in economy.

Yet within this brief time (11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to November 2011) the **new Government**, after its discussions with **WBCUPA**, has taken constructive, far-reaching and important steps in the field of higher education for its welfare. We would like to highlight some of these achievements for all our friends in the teaching community.

**First and most importantly, we should speak of the successful implementation of the commitment to make Higher Education free from political interference and pressure. The new Government has been able to formulate a transparent and independent policy for higher education.**

1. An environment free from political coercion has been created in all Colleges and Universities. Teachers involved in education and research in the various disciplines have got an opportunity to work and enrich themselves with full dignity and independence. A free and inspiring academic environment is no longer a dream or figment of the imagination.
2. In pursuance of these principles of freedom and dignity in academic institutions the current Government has sought to re-instate the autonomy of **Presidency University** by giving complete independence and control of rights to the **Mentor Group**. The Government has publicly declared its policy of non-interference in this matter.
3. Attempt has been made to bring transparency in all functions and decisions of the **College Service Commission**. A **Bill** - which has been passed in the Assembly to this effect is awaiting the signature of the Honourable Governor of West Bengal. The aim here is to make all appointments, of Principals, Professors, and librarians on the basis of merit and transparency.
4. Formation of a panel for appointment of Non-Teaching Staff has been recommended for Colleges included in the Pay Packet. For this relevant changes have been made to the **West Bengal College Service Commission Act of 2012** so that favoritism and political patronage could be discontinued. WBCUPA welcomes this move by the Government of West Bengal.
5. Mobility across geographical locations has been prioritized over parochial regionalism for **Admissions to P.G. courses** in all Universities and college of Higher Education in West Bengal. The 60:40 ratio with mandatory merit based admission has been already sanctioned and implemented. Universities have to compulsorily report to the state Government to ensure that this policy is not violated.
6. **Merit-cum-Means Scholarships** have been sought to be introduced despite the financial crisis which the Government is facing.

If we take a look at the following chart:

Scholarship in Higher Education	Year	Year	Year
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
Number of Recipients	20,181	23,933	24,238
Payments Made in Rupees	18,44,95,800	22,80,39,500	25,38,11,600

Note that the number of recipients of scholarship has not declined. Despite the financial debt the State Government has managed to keep the graph on an increasing path. In reality the present Government has allotted more than 66 Crores of rupees for the purpose mentioned above in the current financial year.

7. **Full-free and Half-free studentships** have been doubled and extended to students enrolled in technical and vocational education. This scheme which is meant to serve the needs of meritorious but poor students deserves praise from all quarters of teachers in the state.

Planned and organized development of education therefore reveals the good and positive intentions of both WBCUPA and **the Government of West Bengal**. Both WBCUPA and the Government of West Bengal are committed to restoration of the greater glory of higher education in our state.

• **Now we may draw your kind attention to the concretely integrated and constructive steps taken for the development of higher education:**

1. The Government has drawn an **Education Map** in order to get a comprehensible overview of both school level education and higher education. The map will consist of information on schools, institutions, syllabus, and possibility of development as well as establishment of existing and new educational institutions.
2. The '**Al-Ameen Memorial College**', a college for minorities has been founded at Baruipur in the South 24-Paraganas district. The college has not only received Government approval but also the standard Pay Packet for colleges.
3. The new '**Panchanan Barma University**' has been established in Cooch Behar city of North Bengal, and the '**Kazi Nazrul Islam University**' has been established at Asansol, Bardhaman District.
4. The Government has also accepted a proposal for upgradation of St. Xavier's College to a full-fledged state-aided University.
5. The Government has taken a major step in approving a proposal for the establishment of private Universities in West Bengal, namely the first one is the **Techno India University** and another one is the **Sonar Bangla** University, which is under screening for seeking approval.
6. Three new Government Degree Colleges have been started within the brief period of one and a half years after the New Government has been elected to power:
  - (a) Lalgah Government College (Medinipur)
  - (b) Salboni Government College (Salboni)
  - (c) Rajarhat Government College (New Town)
7. **Three more Government Colleges, one at Thakurnagar, one at Singur and a third one at Nayagram, are being established on the wishes of the Honorable Chief Minister.** We appreciate the Honorable Chief Minister's personal involvement in the spread and out-reach of higher education. The manner in which she is trying to advance such educational projects forward in spite of the severe financial crisis of the state deserves our sincere gratitude and admiration.
8. To achieve impact, depth and stability of academic levels the Government is planning to appoint full time Principals and teachers in substantive posts instead of part-time temporary placements. Already Principals have been appointed under the College Service Commission in 44 government aided colleges. **All appointments have been made solely on the basis of merit alone, something which would have been either unimaginable or impossible under the former regime.**
9. Many educational institutions in the state are now offering advanced and relevant training for IAS and WBCS examinations so that more successful administrative services candidates are produced from the state.  
**Are not all such measures indications of the honest and constructive planning in the field of higher education?**

• **Last but not the least are issues of pay and career advancement of teachers of the state:**

1. We know that all teachers involved in higher education are receiving their salaries through banks. Now the salary of every teacher will be deposited directly to a personal account through COSA. Not only this, **the Honorable Chief Minister is trying to ensure that like Government service personnel salaries of professors and teachers will be paid on the first day of every month.**
2. The previous Government had cunningly avoided paying Part Time and Contractual teachers from the coffers of the Government, leaving the onerous burden on the colleges. We must recognize the fact that the present Government has not avoided the responsibility of paying up salaries for Part Time and Contractual Teachers.

Please note how the Government has disbursed all outstanding arrears and finance for their salaries from August 2010. The date from which arrears have been paid is August 2010 – which belongs to the period of time in which it was the former left front Government which was enjoying power and privileges.

3. Constructive planning regarding Contractual and Part Time Teaching position, undertaken by the State Government, also deserve to be our supported and praised.
4. **The Government has already declared CAS benefits for all teachers and professors of the state with the date of effect starting from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2012.** The relevant Government Order for CAS will be issued soon, which will be undoubtedly benefit a very large section of teachers, that was denied and deprived for long time by the previous Government.
5. The Government is co-coordinating with the Central Government to disburse 80% of the arrears of the Sixth Pay commission teachers. The order for release of this arrear will be effective very soon.
6. One-third (i.e. 30 %) of the arrears due from the State Government has been released. The 30% arrear has also been distributed in some places. We can very well expect to receive the rest of the sum at the earliest.  
**Facts mentioned so far should conclusively demonstrate the positive role played by the Government of West Bengal and the orchestrated movement made by WBCUPA in this regard. WBCUPA intends to fight for teachers by shunning all forms of hypocrisy and dishonesty.**

Let us unite to

- restore the dignity of all people who want development, democracy and peace
- harbinger a stable and conducive environment in the fields of higher education and research
- stall all kinds of corruption and shameless political favoritism on all levels of education
- re-establish democratic ideals and rights of education
- usher in employment, development of resources, and an era of uninterrupted progress of our beloved state
- expose the selfish and devious aims of leftist intellectuals

- *'Jai Hind'*  
- *'Bande Mataram'*

On behalf of WBCUPA:

**Prof. Narsingha Prasad Bhaduri, Suhrid Basu Mallick, Debasis Chattopadhyay, Subhrangshu Sekhar Chattopadhyay, Dyutish Chakraborty, Naresh Chandra Roy, Subodh biswas, Jayanta Kumar Dutta, Kangal Chandra Das, Shibranshan Chattopadhyay, Gopal Mishra, Samir Kumar Ghosh, Goutam Paul, Niladri Sankar Banerjee, Hem Bhattacharyya, Tirtha Prasad Mukhopadhyay, Ashok Kumar Satpaty, Pranab Hazra, Nabanita Chatterjee and Indrani Dutta Chaudhuri**

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**Regd. Office: 36G, Topsia Road, Kolkata – 700 100  
(Ph. No.: +9133-2345-5382; Fax No.: +9133-2345-5050)  
website: <http://www.wbcupa.org>.**

**Krishnakali Basu, President, WBCUPA**  
Mob.: 09051407585; email: [mailkrishnakalighosh@gmail.com](mailto:mailkrishnakalighosh@gmail.com)

**Gobinda Chandra Sadhukhan, General Secretary, WBCUPA**  
Mob.:09433236599; email: [gobindasadhukhan@gmail.com](mailto:gobindasadhukhan@gmail.com)

Printers: Zenith Printer, 1/1A, Goabagan Lane, Kolkata – 06; Phone No.: 9831108763 (Sudip Pal)