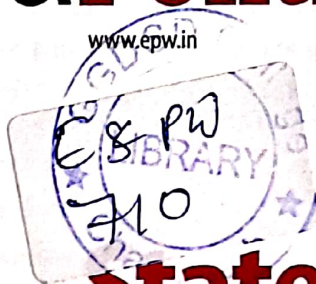


Economic & Political WEEKLY

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State Studies: West Bengal

Eight papers revisit West Bengal's development trajectory, moving beyond the familiar narrative of decline to examine long-run growth, structural transformation, agriculture, labour and migration, fiscal capacity, health, education, and inequalities across gender, caste and religion. Together, they ask whether one can identify a distinct West Bengal "model" cutting across political regimes. **pages 33–124**

Iran War and India's China Policy

The war in Iran has accelerated the emergence of a fragmented, multipolar Asian order in which China has strengthened its strategic position without direct military involvement. **page 10**

M P Parameswaran (1935–2026)

MP saw science for its ability to enable human freedom and democratic participation and sought to build knowledge, capabilities, and institutions that embodied emancipatory social principles. **page 16**

The Spectacle of Brutality

The maximalist expansion of violence in hypermasculine films functions as the cultural front of neo-liberal capitalism, where the spectator is trained to view violence as a rhythmic necessity. **page 127**

A New Challenge for India's China Policy

- 10 India must move beyond viewing China through the lens of the boundary dispute.
— *B Bala Bhaskar*

Joan P Mencher (1930–2026)

- 14 A pioneering anthropologist of South India, Joan P Mencher made caste, class, gender and ecology visible through sustained fieldwork. — *A M Jose, Jos Chathukulam*

M P Parameswaran (1935–2026)

- 16 For MP, science was valuable not merely because it produced technology, but because it could enlarge human freedom and democratic participation. — *T M Thomas Isaac*

Carlo Ginzburg (1939–2026)

- 19 Ginzburg allows us to trace his abiding conviction in the "truth" of history, however fragmentary or ephemeral its echoes coming down to us.
— *Anindita Mukhopadhyay*

State, Constitution and Customary Practices

- 27 The changing dynamics of land relations in North East India amid state-led development and expanding market forces are examined. — *Vizokhole Ltu*

State Studies: West Bengal

Beyond the Narrative of Decline

- 33 Eight papers revisit West Bengal's development trajectory, moving beyond the familiar narrative of decline. — *Maitreesh Ghatak, Achin Chakraborty*

Relative Economic Trajectory

- 37 The narrative of the state's economic decline depends on how performance is measured. The trends point to structural rather than government-specific constraints.
— *Tanika Chakraborty, Maitreesh Ghatak, Prateet Jain & Dilip Mookherjee*

Profitability, Productivity, and Organisation in Agriculture

- 50 Though rice yields have consistently exceeded the national average, farming is unprofitable once family labour is valued at market wages.
— *Sukanta Bhattacharya, Anirban Mukherjee*

Labour Market Trends and Migration Patterns

- 62 Taken together, the data points to a labour market reorganising itself around the absence of the industrial base the state once had, with no alternative source of employment emerging within the state to take its place. — *Maitreesh Ghatak, Tamoghna Halder*

Debt, Revenue Effort and Fiscal Choices

- 74 The dependence of the state on Union transfer has increased over the years and the primary reason for persistent fiscal imbalance is its stagnant revenue effort.
— *Pinaki Chakraborty, Kaushik K Bhadra*

Human Development Achievements and Challenges

- 82 For a long while, the state's health outcome indicators have been significantly above the all-India average, whereas its educational attainment indicators have not only been below average but have also improved slowly. — *Achin Chakraborty, Dibyendu Biswas*

Early Advantage to Adult Disadvantage

- 93 The failure of state capacity in delivering nutrition, health and welfare programmes, and entrenched patriarchal norms that bind at the transition to adulthood, underscores that progress in one dimension of gender equality may not automatically transmit to others. — *Sanchari Roy*

Education, Fertility, and Child Health

- 102 Three rounds of the National Family Health Survey are analysed to answer whether institutional and political conditions that reduce intergroup conflict in the state also translate into more equitable human development outcomes. — *Pushkar Maitra*

Early Marriage: Patterns and Possible Causes

- 114 With remarkably low fertility rates and schooling outcomes favourable to girls, the state's high and persistent child marriage statistics are puzzling.
— *Simantini Mukhopadhyay, Achin Chakraborty & Pintu Kabiraj*

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- 127 *Bhairab Barman* on hypermasculine films; *Arunima Kalita* on surveillance and vulnerability; and *Gopikrishnan Kottoor*'s poem on "The Secret Lives of Ants."

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