

An Insight into the Vision of Charismatic Leadership: Evidence from Recent Administrative Change in West Bengal Province of India

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Abstract:

Leadership is always fascinating subject in any current job. The charismatic leader is perhaps the most exciting as his/her leadership abilities are often attributed to strong character, feats of great strength and heroism or divine guidance. Charismatic Leaders are often thought of as heroes that are able to use their personal allure to lead others. In view of this, the article attempts to enquire into the vision of charismatic leadership process in the context of ascent of a great charismatic leader, Miss Mamata Banerjee, the present chief minister of West Bengal Province of India, who alone with her charisma brings about administrative change in the West Bengal Province of India removing 34 years leftist regime. By maintaining her humility and setting an example of integrity, honesty and peaceful civil disobedience, Mamata Banerjee, the great believer of Gandhian philosophy and a firebrand orator, was able to achieve West Bengal's administrative power. History has numerous examples of charismatic leaders who produce both negative and positive results. But, Mamata Banerjee, following the path of Mahatma Gandhi, used her charisma to inspire her people to protest nonviolently. Mamata Banerjee fasted to show self-sacrifice and commitment to her beliefs. Her charismatic leadership helped her gain followers and enough attention to aid in peacefully ending red citadel of CPIM led Leftist govt. from West Bengal province of India.

Key words: Leadership, charisma, followers, India.

1. Introduction:

Over the last decade, the majority of the leadership research has been subjugated by transformational and charismatic theories of leadership. Briefly, these theories hypothesize that leadership is most effective when an individual utilizes emotional and inspirational influence tactics on the behalf of strengthening the well being of the organization and its members (Bass, 1985). Leadership is always fascinating subject in any current job. Truly, it is the most important aspect of human behaviour which confers a positive direction to the use of human resources and brings out the best in a man. Leadership can be broadly defined as the relationship between an individual and a group built around some common interest wherein the group behaves in a manner directed or determined by the leader. The charismatic leader is perhaps the most exciting as his/her leadership abilities are often attributed to strong character, feats of great strength and heroism or divine guidance. Charismatic Leaders are often thought of as heroes that are able to use their personal allure to lead others. But, that charismatic charm can be both a blessing and a curse on society. That's because charisma can be used for the good of a company or nation - but also for less-than-honorable reasons.

Charismatic leaders have the ability to sense the gap that exists between what an organization is delivering to its followers, and what the followers need from an organization. This allows the leader to create a vision of a future state that everyone believes will be better than today's environment. The charismatic leader often

articulates this vision using metaphors and stories in ways that everyone can understand the vision. So, charismatic leaders may be theatrical, telling stories and using metaphors to get their point across to potential followers. The followers observe the leader as one that possesses the ability to visualize the future with clarity. Leaders who are not naturally charismatic may spend a lot of time perfecting their strength of character. People tend to trust charismatic leaders because they visibly take risks and sacrifice in the name of their beliefs. Charismatic leadership theory says that followers make attributions of heroic or extraordinary leadership abilities when they observe certain behaviours. Studies on charismatic leadership have, for the most part, been directed at identifying behaviours that differentiate charismatic leaders from their non-charismatic counterparts.

The followers are also able to see how they fit into this future state, and believe it will be better than today. There are many different ways to be a leader, but charismatic leaders guide by using charm and self-confidence. Their personality attracts attention and gains admirers. Charismatic leaders exercise others people's admiration to influence them to follow. Charismatic leaders with good ethics and intentions have the power to inspire and transform the people they lead. Immoral charismatic leaders can be forces of devastation and destruction.

While twenty first century is the “time of charismatic leadership one can argue that, a charismatic leader is one having profound interest in public held opinions, elaborating and defining its consensus at a high level”(Hedly Bull,1979). Leader is the creation of administrative dilemma and wants a self propelling and perpetual revolution to maintain his position. He can not work in an environment prohibiting long range policies or subordinating leader’s ego. India needs a leader who can play a more activist and a more credible world statesmanship role. A charismatic leader for India is the need of the hour. Charismatic leader is not one just with an attractive personality in the physical attributes alone although such attributes do matter. It is not just about mere image and dressing up. Charisma is a moral attribute, an inner strength of the personality of the leader, one who is born to lead, born with an innate sense of moral leadership.

The study of leadership in politics attempts to explore and elucidate an individual’s success in terms of his/her “socio-economic origins, psychological characteristics, life-shaping experiences, significant relationships, personal behaviour and political ideology and agenda” (Fowler, 2000: 4). It seeks to analyze how these elements contribute to political leadership in certain contexts of time and place, and this is done in many cases from the perspective of a historian or a biographer. Political leadership may emerge from reactions against certain oppressions, and/or social and labour movements. These studies seldom lead to “prescription in terms of dedicated programmes of individual formation and political advancement or selection” and, in this sense, “political leaders ‘arise to the moment’, they are seldom formally trained for such roles” (Fowler, 2000: 4).

In view of the above analysis, the article attempts to enquire into the vision of charismatic leadership process in the context of ascent of a great charismatic leader, Miss Mamata Banerjee who alone with her charisma brings about administrative change in the West Bengal Province of India removing 34 years leftist regime.

The structure of the paper is as follows: Section 2 depicts the theoretical foundation lying behind charismatic leadership. Section 3 discusses characteristics of charismatic leadership and brief overview recognizing Mamata Banerjee’s Charismatic Leadership has been portrayed in section 4. Section 5 discusses the charismatic leadership process in the ascent of Miss Mamata Banerjee, Present Chief Minister of West Bengal Province of India, in the way to administrative power and ultimately section 6 presents summary and conclusions.

2.Charismatic leadership- Theoretical foundation:

Charismatic leadership is not an occurrence by birth but an ability developed by an alert eye and mind. Rather, leadership is attained by experience, by enthralling knowledge, by visualizing and listening to the world around - both inside and outside the organization.

Although the term ‘charisma’ has prehistoric origins (‘kharisma’ appeared in Ancient Greek, meaning ‘divine favor’), the first scholar to talk about charismatic leadership was Max Weber. Charisma is the quality that enables one man, without measurable traits far exceeding those of his followers, without coming from any ruling group or holding any office, to exercise surpassing magnetism and to gather a tremendous following. Charisma is non-rational, non-traditional, and non-bureaucratic.

Weber argued that in organizational system, there are three types of authority to which people will submit: traditional, legal/rational, and charismatic. Weber (1947: 358–359) defined charisma as being ‘set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities...regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them, the individual concerned is treated as a leader.’ Weber defines charismatic leadership as “resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him”. He envisaged religious leaders like Jesus as charismatic leaders. Presently, Post-Weberian researches considered various social-political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi as charismatic leaders. Dictators like Hitler also had some charismatic traits. These were the leaders with exceptional qualities which made them almost god-like for their followers. The charm of such people made their followers go behind these leaders without questioning them. While analyzing such a strong bond between the leaders and his followers, Weber focuses on the social patterns and conditions under which the leader exists.

Therefore, Max Weber, a sociologist has defined charisma as a trait of a person, which differentiates him from ordinary people and is considered blessed with specifically exceptional powers or qualities. Sociable personality and charm, rather than any form of external power or authority enables the charismatic leaders to gather followers. What makes charismatic leaders winner is the fact that they differ from the normal leaders by virtue of greater self-confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and unconventional behavior. Charismatic leaders convey values through words and actions and set an example for followers to imitate. Various studies have demonstrated that charismatic leaders create an emotional contamination with their employees and thus, boost their performance.

Max Weber’s view of leadership was based on his analysis of political authority and the means by which it exercises legitimate domination. Specifically, “charisma is ...the quality which identifies a particular person as a leader in the eyes of those around him” (Mommson, 1974: 78). Such a leader is able to rally himself a retinue of devoted followers who “... accept his leadership because they believe in his personal qualifications as a leader *per se*, whatever his particular goals may be” (Mommson, 1974: 78). For Weber, a major function of such a leader is to ensure that an anonymous bureaucracy does not dominate society, and that the political remains dominant over the bureaucratic (Beetham, 1974: 217). A charismatic leader can gain the trust of a following. He brings “... the masses behind him by means of the machine” and the members of the constituency are “for him merely political spoilsmen enrolled in his following” (Weber, 1947: 107). With mass confidence, he has the independence and freedom to pursue his own convictions and introduce new social aims. All actual leaders were perceived by Weber to have some charisma which he considered essential to maintain domination. Using their charismatic powers, they could sell their goals and objectives to the people at large. This process transforms the personal emotional relationship between charismatic leaders and the followers into a stable and more routine one, whereby charisma becomes routine (Mommson, 1974: 86). The qualities of a charismatic leader are “... passion, a sense of responsibility” (Weber, 1947: 115). They live and work for a cause in which they believe, are practical and have a down to earth view of how to achieve aims, and a willingness to accept responsibility for a policy and its consequences (Beetham, 1974: 95).

Despite Weber’s importance as a sociologist and political economist, his work on charisma lay mostly inactive until the mid 1970s. House (1977) further developed Weber’s concept in articulating a theory of charismatic leadership that, at its core, argued that followers are motivated by leaders based on the attributions they make about them (which in turn are based on certain leader behaviors). House focused specifically on behaviors that followers attribute as extraordinary or heroic.

According to Conger and Kanungo (1998), behavioural model builds upon the idea that charismatic

leadership is an attribution based on the follower's perceptions of their leaders' behaviours. According to this model, the leader first vitally evaluates the existing situation or *status quo* and the inclinations, abilities, needs and level of satisfaction experienced by followers; this leads to formulation and conveyance of goals. Charismatic leaders can be distinguished from others by the strategic visions they formulate and by the manner in which they articulate them.

Conger and Kanungo (1998) developed such model of charismatic leadership which focuses on three stages of leadership process. In the first stage, the leader assesses the environment which initiates the growth opportunities for the respective organization (sensitivity to the Environment) and carefully evaluates his /her followers' needs (sensitivity to members' needs). In the second stage, the respective leader formulates a strategic vision which is constantly presented in an inspiring way (strategic vision and articulation). Finally, in the third stage, the leader provides a role model by demonstrating personal risk and unconventional behaviour to his/her followers. By means of personal risk and unconventional behaviour, the leaders build up followers' trust and commitment (Conger et al., 1997). Vision is innermost to Conger and Kanungo's charismatic leadership theory. The emphasis on vision as an essential ingredient of charisma is much stronger in this theory where the charismatic leader needs to have the ability to articulate a vision among many other qualities. At subscale level, Conger and Kimono classified it into six scales:

- i). *Sensitivity to the leadership*: The leader evaluates the environment for growth opportunities for his/her respective organization and purposes radical changes in order to achieve organizational goals.
- ii). *Sensitivity to members' needs*: The leader carefully evaluated his/her followers' needs.
- iii). *Strategic vision and articulation*: The leader devises a strategic vision for the respective organization. It is constantly presented to followers in an inspiring way.
- iv). *Personal risk*: Presenting self confidence, demonstrating belief in the potential outcome of the vision.
- v). *Unconventional behaviour*: Leaders create trust and commitment in the followers; provides a role model for followers.
- vii). *Not maintaining status Quo*: Leaders criticize the *status quo* in order to achieve organizational goal. Conger et al. (2000) found that charismatic leader behavior directly generates in follower feeling of reverence, a sense of group collective identity, and perceptions of group task performance. To the extent that the leader's goals and values are congruent with the goal and value of organization, charismatic leader provides a strong basis for members' commitment to such goals. Both job involvement and charismatic leadership are likely to be related to organizational commitment.

Bass (1985) argued that charisma comes from a combination of emotional expressiveness, self confidence, self determination and freedom from internal conflict. Subordinates who described their immediate superiors as charismatic also rated their units as more productive. Charismatic leaders were seen to be more dynamic. Those working under them as had high level of self assurance and saw more meaning in their work. High correlation was found between the rating of charisma of leaders and measures of leadership effectiveness.

Behling and Mac Fillen(1996) have developed a model of the processes of charismatic leadership which is based on the six attributes of leader behaviour and three beliefs held by the followers. The six attributes are the mixture of personal qualities and behavioural patterns-empathy ,dramatization of the mission, projecting self assurance, enhancing own image, assuring followers of their competence and ability to achieve great things, providing followers with opportunity to achieve success by delegating responsibility and removing obstacles to followers' performance. In this model, these behaviours on the part of the leader generate or strengthen three important responses on the part of the subordinates-awe, aspiration and empowerment.

[Insert Table-1 here]

The study of charismatic leadership initiated by Weber in the first decades of the last century formed a vast bibliography on the topic. Nevertheless, since this kind of leadership entails a response from followers that

goes beyond mere obedience to a doctrine or a political program, the most convenient way to analyze it is by referring to the debate about rational and irrational behavior in politics.

Weber defines charisma as an irrational type of domination which is not linked to any rules. If we desire to scrutinize the phenomenon according to the thesis of the anthropological and the rational choice schools, the association between the charismatic leader and his followers would turn out to be related not to purely emotive and spontaneous behavior but to rational behavior. In other words, consciously or unconsciously, the follower would support the leader for the benefits the people would receive once he was in power. Without entering into philosophical discussions about the rational or irrational essence of human behavior, we should therefore conclude that the charismatic element exists as a sociological category for analyzing those political phenomena in which the leader-follower relationship involves strong quantum of emotion and mysticism.

3. Characteristics of Charismatic leaders:

The following characteristics are identified in a charismatic leader:

Vision and Articulation: Vision creates a sense of continuity for followers as it links the current with a better future for the institution. Charismatic leaders give life to vision that has clear articulation through its powerful imagery, thus taking the institution to the heights of success through various innovative collaborations, quality education and uplifting the values of the institution.

Self-reliance: They have complete reliance in their judgment and ability.

Confidence in followers: They believe in their followers as well, giving them tasks which are important.

High potential from followers: Derived from the characteristic of confidence in followers, charismatic leaders also have high expectations from their followers.

Self-Monitoring: They are persistently responsive of the fact that their followers are inspecting them. As the charismatic leaders are born out of the combination of social scenario and follower's needs, it becomes imperative for such leaders to constantly identify themselves with that social scenario and the need. Charismatic leaders can manage that only if they monitor themselves to make sure that they are still answering to the same plea which made them such a popular leader.

Self-Actualization: Self motivation is a significant part of charismatic leadership. The leader gets motivated by the social scenario without being prompted about it. He can address his followers with the vigor only when he is self-actualized himself. It has been observed that such leaders not only inspire themselves but they have a capacity to convert this self-actualization to their followers as well. They actually raise their followers from one level to the higher level.

Self Enhancement: Charismatic leaders are known for their self-correcting nature. They judge themselves on a strict scale. They continuously strive to become better. They, in fact, know that it is this "superiority" in them which makes them different from their followers. Charismatic leaders believe that when eventually they will bring their followers to their present level of "superiority", they themselves should have gone one step above it to remain their leaders.

Openness to transform: While most of the other types of the leaders try to maintain *status-quo* as they are often afraid that change might depose them from the power, charismatic leaders are open to change. In fact, they represent the change and many times they prove to be the ones who bring about the changes.

High technical expertise: Charismatic leaders are people who have high technical expertise which they can demonstrate.

Ethics and Sensitivity: Leader with charisma incorporates ethical analysis as an ongoing way of thinking and explores important issues that act as a framework for decision-making based on core values. They exhibit fairness and transparency in the decisions they take. Charismatic leaders take into account abilities of the people they work with and respond to their needs and feelings.

Superior debating skills: They are able to clarify and state the vision in terms that are understandable to others. They are good at communication and the articulation demonstrates understanding of the followers'

needs and, hence, acts as a motivating force.

Preservation of employees: A charismatic leader has the capacity to satisfy his/her employees with courteousness, empathy, and motivation skill. This enables not only improving the employees but also retaining the best performing employees within the given extreme competitive scenario. In brief the acid test of a charismatic leadership is to manage the differing and often conflicting interests of the various stakeholders that include students, teaching fraternity, non-teaching staff, parents, external customers including corporate and the society at large.

Intention to Attain Power:

Charismatic leaders do not look for conventional power but social power. They want to win the position in their follower's hearts. They look for identifying themselves with their follower's values and shared beliefs. Such leaders are rated high on their social skills to persuade the masses and appeal them to their hearts. It is this power which keeps them popular for longer time.

4. Brief Outline recognizing Mamata Banerjee's Charismatic Leadership:

There are some chronological instances of the great influence of crisis on the materialization of charismatic leaders. This seems to have been the case in the emergence of Franklin Roosevelt during the crisis of the 1930s, of Hitler after the recession and hyperinflation in Germany, and of Mussolini during the 1920s, though not of Castro, Gandhi, and Sukarno. But, it must be remembered that similar chaotic moments in recent Indian history were not followed by the rise of charismatic leaders. A grave political crisis arising out of setting up of TATA's Nano car factory by forcefully capturing the fertile agricultural land of numerous farmers at Singur, Hooghly district and probable founding decision of chemical hub at Nandigram, East Midnapore district inviting private capital by Buddhadeb Bhattacharyya led left front govt. of West Bengal accompanied by strong charismatic leadership of Miss Mamata Banerjee, the then Railway Minister of India, finally led to a change of political loyalty of millions of people of West Bengal.

West Bengal Province of India is pinning its dreams on the charisma and vision of the TMC supremo, Miss Mamata Banerjee, the present Chief Minister of West Bengal Province of India.

In his well-known book, '*Good to Great*', Jim Collins describes level 5 leadership. Collins based his views on exhaustive research into a number of businesses that transformed themselves from just getting by to great performers in a short space of time. His research showed that the chief executives of such businesses did not match the usual *macho* image we have of great leaders. They turned out to be humble and modest though very single-minded. The idea of level 5 leadership has been very popular because it makes a virtue out of humility. Traditionally, there have been two essential features of leadership. One is that leaders are those people who make it to the top in any group. The second feature is that leaders provide direction. Mamata Banerjee has achieved both these. Mamata Banerjee employs a paradoxical mix of personal humility and professional will. She draws affection through her simple living in a tin roofed house, a lady who has stayed unmarried and dedicated herself for the poorer sections of the society. She does not spend money on clothes, cosmetics and jewellery. Her oratory was all about connecting with ordinary people with ordinary dreams. She is a fiery, dynamic and eccentric leader who is constantly accusing the Left Front government of being anti-people. She does not miss any opportunity to blame the ruling government for all the ills of West Bengal. Her ambition is to unseat the Left government.

Ms Banerjee's charisma is tangible. Charismatic leaders create an atmosphere of change and articulate an idealized vision of future that is significantly better than what now exists. Charismatic leaders inspire followers with an abiding faith, even if the faith can't be defined as specific goals that are easily attained. Charismatic leaders also act in unconventional ways and use unconventional means to transcend the *status quo* and create change. These traits of a charismatic leader are visible in Mamata Banerjee. The unconventional methods that she used to galvanize support can be seen in her resistance of the Tata's Nano Project at Singur area of Hooghly district and Nandigram industrial project. She has been accused of being anti-industrialization and growth but this has not created any dent on her image of being the peoples' leader.

In the last two and a half years before the Assembly Election of West Bengal in 2011, there has been a spate of protest movements involving peasants, the urban and the rural poor, minorities, workers and all kinds of citizens' initiatives in Bengal. The peasant struggles in Singur and Nandigram, the awakening of Bengali civil society, and the rise of the political opposition have all been turning points in the unchanging politics of Bengal.

Some of the unconventional methods that she had employed are listed below:

In 1991, Mamata Banerjee was made the Union minister of state for human resources development, youth affairs and sports, and women and child development, Govt. of India. As the sports minister, she announced that she would resign, and protested in a rally at the Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, against the government's indifference towards her proposal to improve sports in the country. In April 1996, she alleged that Congress was behaving as a stooge of the CPM in West Bengal. She claimed that she was the lone voice of protest and wanted a clean Congress. At a public rally at Alipore in Kolkata, Mamata Banerjee wrapped a black shawl around her neck and threatened to make a noose with it. In July 1996, she squatted at the well of *Lok Sabha* to protest against the hike in petroleum price, though she was a part of the government.

Early in her political career, she defeated Somnath Chatterjee, former Speaker of Lok Sabha and a senior CPM leader in the Jadavpur parliamentary segment which led to her political ascent. When she formed the Trinamool Congress Party, there were many who did not expect it to survive. It is thanks to the constant motivation and strong leadership inspired by Mamata Banerjee that the Trinamool Congress has been able to survive the onslaught of the Left Front since its birth. It is to the credit of Mamata Banerjee that the Left Front is today in a state of disarray and for the first time facing a test of confidence.

It can be questioned whether this success is purely out of her charisma or a combination of circumstances that is bringing her to the political leadership of Bengal. However, nobody can question her single minded determination to capture political power. Her upswing in popularity in the recent polls shows that the people of West Bengal are under the spell of her charisma. The recent civic urban polls in West Bengal illustrated her charisma again. Charismatic leaders are said to articulate a vision of the future that people will buy into and Mamata Banerjee is all set to articulate a new vision for West Bengal.

From being the only MP (Member of Parliament, India Govt.) from her party in 2004 to near-total political domination, Trinamool Congress chief, Mamata Banerjee [popularly known as *Didi* (Elder Sister)] has stared down the Left Front in Bengal. It took her several life-threatening assaults, *dharnas* (Peaceful staying at a particular place against a debatable issue), rallies to get where she is now. The Left is history, she is the present, her performance the future. Mirror focuses on the journey of the Bengal electorate's overwhelming choice for charismatic leader.

The stormy petrel of West Bengal politics, Mamata Banerjee has single-handedly wrecked the Red citadel in West Bengal, ending the Left Front's uninterrupted 34-year-old rule after perfecting the art of the impossible. The feisty 56-year-old Banerjee, founder and chairperson of the TMC (All India Trinamool Congress) which she set up in 1998 after falling out with the Congress Party in West Bengal, can now have the satisfaction of a victorious general seeing all the war plans fall into place.

For years, the face of the Opposition in West Bengal, Banerjee, known to her supporters as 'Didi' (sister) has been the nemesis of the ruling CPI(M)-led Left Front over the last 23 years and has earned the reputation of being a street-fighting politician. Maverick and emotional, she first hogged the limelight by blocking Jayaprakash Narayan's convoy by throwing herself on the ground when he came to Kolkata to organize the masses against Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, before Emergency.

Banerjee, a firebrand orator, coined a catchy slogan "*Ma, Mati O Manush*" (Mother, Land and People) before 2009's Lok Sabha polls (Parliament Election of India) and played on the anti-incumbency factor after more than three decades of Left rule and the creeping disillusionment among several sections, like *Muslims* (Adopter of Islam), to decimate the Left in partnership with the Congress.

A leader with mass appeal known for her humble lifestyle, the seven-time MP successfully sold a vision of development, cashing in on the deep resentment among the middle classes and unemployed youths,

promising jobs and development. Her nondescript residence -- a tiled single-storey house in a dingy lane close to the Kalighat temple, Kolkata -- and equally simple attire comprising cotton saris, *jhola* bags and cheap '*hawai chappal*' (Cheap foot wear) in her feet, endeared her to the masses.

Banerjee had to shoulder multiple responsibilities -- political strategist, Union minister, chief poll campaigner and trouble shooter in her focus to dislodge the world's longest democratically-elected communist government in a state of India. It has not been an easy journey, though, for the current Chief Minister of West Bengal province who turned her call for '*Parivartan*' (change of regime) into a reality with ally Congress throwing its full weight behind her. But her energy, charisma and political astuteness made Banerjee one of the few mass leaders in the country.

There was a time when poverty forced her to become a milk vendor. That was the only way she could help her widowed mother bring up her younger siblings. Those difficult years steered *Mamata Didi*, whose decade's old one-point agenda -- her dream of ousting the Communists from West Bengal finally became a reality.

Being the daughter of a freedom fighter father who died when she was young, Banerjee could hardly enjoy her salad days as she had to fend for her family. For a while, she worked in a milk booth as a vendor-attendant.

As a 29-year-old, Banerjee shot to limelight by pulling off a stunning victory over CPI-M heavyweight and now-expelled party leader Somnath Chatterjee in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections in Jadavpur constituency to become one of the youngest MPs. Born in a lower middle-class family and daughter of freedom fighter Promileswar Banerjee, she entered politics by joining the *Chhatra Parishad*, the student wing of Congress, while studying at the Jogmaya Debi College in Kolkata in the 1970s.

Graduating to party politics, Mamata was general secretary of the West Bengal *Mahila Congress* in 1979-80 and subsequently held other posts in Congress. Losing her seat in an anti-Congress wave in 1989, she was back in the Lok Sabha in 1991 from Kolkata South and also won the subsequent elections in 1996, 1998, 1999, 2004 and 2009 from the same constituency.

Banerjee's first tryst with the corridors of power came in 1991 when she became Union Minister of state for Human Resources Development, Youth Affairs and Sports and Women and Child Development in the P V Narasimha Rao government. But in 1996, she fell out with the Congress, calling it a 'stooge of CPM'. Two years later, she formed the Trinamool Congress and quickly emerged as the dominant Opposition party.

In 1998 and 1999, Banerjee's party won eight and seven seats in the Lok Sabha polls respectively and joined hands with the BJP, seen in party circles as a disastrous move in hindsight. During NDA rule under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Banerjee was Railway Minister in 1999 and for Coal and Mines in 2004. She was also a Union minister without portfolio for a brief period in 2003-04.

She quit as railway minister and the NDA in early 2001 in the wake of the *Tehelka* expose into defence deals to ally with Congress for the Assembly elections in West Bengal, but could make no headway against the Marxists. Banerjee had to eat humble pie and return to the NDA and the Vajpayee Cabinet in January 2004 to become Coal and Mines minister till the 2004 election.

In 2004, her party MP tally plummeted to one -- just herself. Two years later, in the Assembly election of West Bengal Province, her Trinamool Congress Party (TMC) was routed, ending up with just 30 seats. A relentless fighter against the CPIM, Banerjee never gave up and bided her time. Her opportunity came when Nandigram and Singur exploded on the national scene. Since then, it has been a story of her continuous rise. In November, 2006, Banerjee was stopped on her way to Singur in Hooghly district for a rally against the Tata Motors Nano car project, which was a turning point in the long-drawn agitation there with the Trinamool chief demanding that 400 acre of the around 1000 acre acquired be returned to farmers who were unwilling to part with their land. Banerjee also went on a fast for 25 days on a makeshift dais at busy Esplanade area in Kolkata in protest against land acquisition at Singur, but called it off on December

28 following an appeal from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. But this did not resolve the problem at Singur and the agitation there started with renewed vigour under Banerjee. Ultimately, the Tatas drove out of Singur in 2008. When the agitation against land acquisition was on at Singur, West Bengal police fired on protestors on March 14, 2007 killing 14 people at Nandigram in East Midnapore district, where the state government wanted to set up Petroleum, Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR) on farmland.

Banerjee took full advantage of the acquisition scare among the minorities in rural areas and her declared stand against special economic zones endeared her to a section of traditional Left Front supporters, who did not like hobnobbing with big capital. With her '*Ma-Mati-Manush*' slogan, she hijacked the issues dear to the Left supporters -- pension, the insurance and banking sector, privatization, land acquisition in Nandigram and Singur, and the Sachar Commission report.

Banerjee played her cards so well that she won over certain sections that were gunning for her till the other day. She was wooed by industrialists and even Left parties. A staunch Left-wing party like SUCI, which has bases in pockets of Bengal, is now an ally of Trinamool Congress.

They helped give a direction to Banerjee's brand of politics, which hitherto had a one-point agenda of blind opposition to the CPIM. When former Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee with his '*Brand Buddha*' image started on the slippery path of industrialization through the private sector, Banerjee checkmated him on every front. This brought her a series of electoral victories in the *panchayat* elections, municipal polls, Lok Sabha elections and a string of Assembly bypolls after that. But her chances in 2011 was largely due to her continuing to project herself as leader of the poor and the rural have-nots, a friend of the minorities, a champion of inclusive growth and one genuinely interested in delivering the goods.

The patterns of social and political change in Bengal have been distinct from most parts of the country. Here, class politics, especially a politics dominated by the left-wing middle class, has for long ruled the state in close alliance with the peasantry, the working class and enjoyed a groundswell of support among the poor. The middle class, especially the intellectuals, forged this alliance by acting as the self-appointed guardian of these classes. The Bengali middle class became the leader and representative of the people. The communist parties and left-wing intellectuals perfected this role.

The problem with this perspective and strategy was that it did not have any serious programme of reforms and justice for the present. This strategy was entirely ideology driven and its success hinged on the making of a revolution, which eluded Indian communism. This led to the reversal of policies and surrender to capital. The entire opposition, including Mamata, played upon this betrayal and took up a Left position, not realizing that that this kind of leftism would inevitably lead to an impasse.

The Mamata phenomenon reflected another crucial aspect; it was not an intellectual or middle class led movement. Her initial support base was the urban and semi-urban slums, unorganized workers, and the self-employed youth, what in Marxist language is called the lumpen proletariat and the riff-raff. Later, she was successful in reaching out to the peasantry and the minorities. In other words, the Left led middle class hegemony of the largely male *bhadralok* (gentlemen) was first put to test by Mamata Banerjee. It was primarily a populist challenge, which grew around Mamata's personal charisma.

5. Charismatic Leadership Process in the ascent of Miss Mamata Banerjee, Present Chief Minister of West Bengal Province of India, in the way to administrative power:

Charismatic leadership process is usually measured to be a mix of three factors: The leader and his/her traits, the societal circumstances which insists for such a leader and the interface between the leader and his followers. Charismatic leadership process undergoes six steps from the rise of the leader to the final routinization and thus the fall of the leader [Jacobsen, C. (2001)]. We would like to recognize Mamata Banerjee as a charismatic leader and explain these six steps with an example of her leadership and aggressive movements in eradicating Left Front regime of 34 years.

Step I: Recognition

This step takes place from the composite mixture of the three factors mentioned above. It is a stage where the aspiring leader is on the social sphere; the followers are in distress and are looking forward to someone who will identify himself/herself with their problems. The social situation is increasingly getting worsened in this stage. This is the time when the leader establishes him/her as a potential leader but the followers, by and large, remain passive. In Banerjee's leadership, this can be said to have taken place during the years 2006-11 when fertile land acquisition of poor farmers at Singur and Nandigram took place for establishing Tata NANO car project and chemical hub project. Bengal had no elevated leader whom it could depend on and *Didi*'s (Mamata Banerjee is popularly Known as Elder Sister (i.e *Didi* in popular regional language) charisma was just started showing its colors .

Step II: Movement stimulation:

In this step, the leader arouses the follower to become the part of the change. Followers who were passive admirers of the leader till the earlier phase become active supporters of the leader and the cause for which he is identifying himself. The longer this stage lasts the longer is a span of the charismatic leadership. In *Didi*'s case, this step lasted from 2006 till 2011.

The compulsory acquisition of highly fertile land in Singur for private capital failed to get the consent of considerable sections of the peasantry, even though it was touted as benefiting the public interest. The government's claim that it was acquiring single cropland and was giving the best compensation package in the country came as an arrogant retort. Soon a powerful movement erupted to protect farmland. The government, which had long claimed to represent peasants, workers and the poor, was now pushed into taking extremely repressive measures for taking away land from the peasants.

All this was seen as a major act of betrayal. The government imposed prohibitory orders to prevent people from assembling and used both state and political violence to crush all protest. The intervention of the High Court, however, set aside the prohibitory order against any assembly. The government increasingly became discredited for its violence and illegal actions. Soon the protest in Singur started gathering support from across the state and outside, as several committees at the grassroots level were formed to carry on this struggle. The opposition parties, especially Mamata Banerjee, further galvanized this struggle. She undertook a 25-day fast at a *dharna mancha* in Calcutta, which became an important site of protest and coordination of the re-emerging civil society of Bengal.

A predominant section of the middle class and intellectuals who had earlier been feted by the government for the first time felt outraged by the government's actions in Singur and Nandigram. Several intellectuals resigned from government bodies and joined the civil society protests. Quite a few new citizens' organizations emerged, which came to play a crucial role in this mobilization against the government. Citizens' activism gave immense encouragement to the peasant struggle on the ground.

Step III: Dedication

Dedication stage in the charismatic leadership is undoubtedly the most appealing step in the process. This step takes the charismatic leadership at the peak and at the same time this is the phase when the charismatic leader starts losing his charisma. This step starts by demonstrating the extreme commitment of the leader towards the goal and same commitment from the followers towards the leader. This demonstration often takes the shape of some kind of sacrifice on the part of the leader or impending danger on the leader. This sacrifice or danger makes the image of the leader as courageous and dedicated in the eyes of many followers. Interestingly, this same act makes some of the elite followers disillusioned and they start suspecting their leader as pompous and hypocrite. This is the stage where the leadership can be bifurcated into two categories as a personalized leadership and socialized leadership. The first type of leadership tends to become authoritarian and exploitative. The second type of leader is more egalitarian and he will share power and responsibility with others. In either way, the personalized leader will become dictator and will lose his charisma and the socialized type of leader will help routinizing the leadership. In case of Mamata Banerjee, winning the battle of West Bengal Assembly Election, 2011 can be considered as the peak of her charisma

and the diplomatic failure at 2004's Parliament Election and 2006's Assembly election can be seen as the first symbol of the next step of the disillusionment.

Step IV: Disillusionment

This phase is quite unavoidable and sometimes even intentional on the part of the leader. Many times social structure brings the disenchantment stage. Sometimes, because the leaders themselves know that they are not immortal, they try to bring the routinization in the leadership. This routinization brings the feel of loss of goal to some followers. This step may lose some of the strongest followers from the leader. This step is also an outcome of the scenario when the leader seems to be failing. As the charismatic leaders are not very good at the formal procedural leadership more routinization brings more failure and more disenchantment of the followers. In Mamata's case disillusionment started from 2004 and lasted till mid-2006 in which stage she lost many of her followers and she being the only MP (Member of Parliament, India Govt.) from her party in 2004 and her party attained merely a meager of 30 seats out of total 294 Assembly seats in West Bengal's Assembly Election, 2006. However this is the phase where the process of routinization seemed to have taken place distinctly.

Step V: Depersonalization

This step is a logical follower of the earlier step of disillusionment. Disenchantment starts because of routinization and it leads to the depersonalization and formalization of the leadership. The leadership style becomes more and more like bureaucratic leadership. The leader starts delegating his tasks to his followers. This phase comes in Didi's leadership during 2006-11. This is the period when she made it clear that eradicating red citadel of left front government will be her only political mission.

Step VI: Estrangement

This is a process of disintegration of the three factors mentioned in the beginning which had come together in phase one. In this step, due to the formalization and bureaucratization of the leadership, charismatic leadership becomes increasingly redundant. The followers feel that the organization and the leader are going away from the initial goal and thus they start alienating themselves from the organization and the charisma of the leader fades as the social situation which has made him appeal to the masses has changed. This stage does not necessarily mean the failure of the leader. In many cases, having achieved the goal for which the charismatic leader had risen, the leader becomes redundant for his followers and the goal itself becomes redundant for the leader. This stage in the context of Mamata Didi has not yet come because coming into administrative and political power, with her earnest will and strong hands, she has been trying to resolve the unemployment problem, Maoist's problem, hilly area disputes, financial distress of the state etc. Promises to rejuvenate public healthcare services were given prime importance in the election manifesto of the TMC. Once the elections were over and TMC formed the government, the new Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee, immediately started paying surprise visits to various hospitals of the state and taking rapid action wherever she located instances of discrepancy, nepotism and slackness. The media highlighted these visits no end, hailing the new Chief Minister as a grand reformer and the much-needed savior of the public health sector of the state. The sections of the media and civil society backing TMC now claimed that 'real development' had finally begun under the new government.

With the development of public opinion polls, survey research is one of the most reliable methods for identifying the trait of charisma. Therefore, it is appropriate to analyze Mamata's charisma from the viewpoint of public opinion. We consulted the views expressed in published newspapers and magazines before the Assembly election of West Bengal Province of India, 2011. In recognizing the complexity of the term "charisma", we have found some interesting findings.

Public Image of Mamata:

- She is intelligent and able.
- She guarantees security of people's life by ensuring protection of '*Ma, Mati, and Manus*', (in English,

protecting Mother, soil and People)

- She is capable of being Chief Minister of West Bengal.
- She made good governance in Indian Railway while she was Railway minister of Union govt. of India.
- She is strong.
- She is humble.
- She has charisma.
- She is very close to the people.
- She can be the leader if the country needs.

According to the identification of above trait, Mamata was praised because of her intellectual qualities, of her defense of democracy and his ability to fulfill the duties of chief minister. She was seen mostly as closer to people, as humble, as strong and as charismatic.

6. Summary and conclusions:

The analysis shows that one of the most positive charismatic leaders in Indian history is Mamata Banerjee, the great believer of Gandhian philosophy and the present chief Minister of West Bengal province of India. By maintaining her humility and setting an example of integrity, honesty and peaceful civil disobedience, she was able to achieve West Bengal's administrative power. History has numerous examples of charismatic leaders who produce both negative and positive results. Mamata Banerjee following the path of Mahatma Gandhi used her charisma to inspire her people to protest nonviolently. Banerjee fasted to show self-sacrifice and commitment to her beliefs. Her charismatic leadership helped her gain followers and enough attention to aid in peacefully ending red citadel of CPIM led Leftist govt. from West Bengal province of India.

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Table 1: Leadership style in chronological perspective

Period	Approach	Core theme
Up to late 1940s	Trait approach	Leadership ability is innate
Late 1940s to late 1960s	Style approach	Leadership effectiveness is to do with how the leader behaves
Late 1960s to early 1980s	Contingency approach	Effective leadership is affected by the situation
Since early 1980s	New leadership approach (includes charismatic leadership)	Leaders need vision

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