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Which Course to Pursue after Higher Secondary Education in West Bengal: A Few Suggestions

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Abstract

After the completion School Education, students face dilemmas regarding their upcoming academic endeavors. Those having acquired proper guidance succeed in selecting a specific branch of study without difficulties. Therefore, it is essential for us to be aware of the available opportunities for Higher Studies. This paper is a modest attempt to inspect an overview of the courses offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in West Bengal. For fulfilling the same objective, the researcher has accessed a list of courses available at the Centralized Admission Portal (CAP) of the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal. The CAP (an abbreviation for the same) was launched on 19th of June, 2024 which aims to simplify the admission process in the platform of Higher Education across the state. This write-up is built around a systematic study of a detailed elucidation of the availability and opportunities for the pupils who have successfully passed Higher Secondary examination. In recent times the field of Education has been profoundly expanded creating rooms for newer concerns and fresh experiences. This paper deliberates upon a thoroughgoing interpretation of a diverse range of courses, spanning from Traditional to Professional and Vocational streams. This is eagerly anticipated that this research article will illuminate us about the scopes and challenges in Higher Education.

Keywords : *Academic Programmes, Higher Education, West Bengal, District-wise programmes.*

Introduction

Higher Secondary Education (HSE) in India plays a pivotal role for students who are preparing for Higher Education to shape their career prospects. This phase is considered to be one of the most crucial phases in a student's life (Kaleem and Akhtar, 2021). HSE acts as a bridge between School Education and Higher Education which facilitates a smooth transition between the two spheres (Sahoo, 2024). A key function of HSE is to equip the students with the essential skills and knowledge which is required for exceling in their chosen fields of study at the level of Higher Education (Mwita et al., 2023).

However, upon completing HSE, many students face challenges in the selection of an appropriate subject or course for their Higher Education. During this transitional phase, they actively explore various options to make suitable decisions about their educational and career paths. Although, the shortlisting of a suitable subject requires significant effort, patience, and attention which is why this remains a significant and an essential task for students.

India's Higher Education system is the third-largest one as per the global index (Rajak & Tattwasarananda, 2020). It provides students with specialized knowledge and skills, contributing significantly to employability (NEP, 1986; Cheng, et. al 2022). Higher Education in India is delivered through recognized universities, affiliated colleges, and specialized institutions. Generally, colleges focus on Undergraduate courses, while universities are primarily responsible for Postgraduate and Doctoral-level programs.

However, many universities and colleges offer both undergraduate and postgraduate courses across general disciplines as well as technical and vocational fields. The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India offer a wide range of disciplines, including General Education, Technical Education, Medical Education, Vocational Training, Agriculture, and Professional courses. Colleges are primarily recognized for awarding degrees at the bachelor's level.

Significant disparities exist in the academic subjects offered by colleges, particularly in the state of West Bengal. To address these issues and promote uniformity and transparency in the admission process, the Centralized Admission Portal (CAP) was introduced on June 19, 2024, by the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal. This initiative aims to streamline the admission process across institutions with ease.

This systematic analysis aims to provide a detailed elucidation of the availability and opportunities for students who have successfully completed their Higher Secondary examination in West Bengal. It explores a diverse range of courses, spanning from Traditional disciplines to Professional and Vocational streams. The study aims to shed light on the scope and challenges of Higher Education to offer valuable insights for students for navigating their post-HSE academic journey.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know the number of colleges/ Higher Education Institutions in West Bengal on the basis of district (and affiliating university) which are indexed in the Central Admission Portal, Government of West Bengal.
2. To explore the academic Courses/Programmes offered by the colleges and universities in West Bengal (as included in the Central Admission Portal, Government of West Bengal).
3. To identify the most offered as well as the least offered (common) subjects as attached in the Central Admission Portal, Government of West Bengal.

Method and Material:

The study is primarily based on quantitative analysis which is followed by a critical consideration of the same. It explores all courses or programmes that are indexed in the Centralized Admission Portal. The Centralized Admission Portal is an initiative of the West Bengal State Council of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal, which was launched on 19th of June, 2024 in order to build uniformity, transparency in the admission process and streamline the portal smoothly which will invariably be convenient for the students for applying in the Higher Educational institutions across the state. Currently, the portal focuses on the admission procedure for undergraduate courses of 16 Universities and 461 Government and Government-aided affiliated colleges or Higher Education Institutions. However, Presidency University, Jadavpur University, autonomous colleges, minority educational institutes or colleges, teacher training, Law, Fine Arts and Performing Arts, Crafts, Dance, Music, Engineering, Pharmacy, Nursing, Medical and Self-financing or Private colleges have been excluded from the centralized portal.

In addition to that, after a careful analysis of the data in the MS Excel, percentage-analysis technique is used to interpret the results.

Analysis and Interpretation:

At present there are 462 Government or Government aided degree colleges and 10 state-aided universities that offer a total of 6960 Undergraduate Programs through Centralized Admission Portal, West Bengal. These ten universities include the University of North Bengal, Kazi Nazrul University, Bankura University, SKBU, CBPBU, Raiganj University, The Sanskrit College and University, Diamond Harbour Women's University, Rabindra Bharati University and Murshidabad University. The university-wise number of affiliated colleges and the number of courses offered by these institutions is presented in **Table No. 1**.

Table 1. University-wise number of Degree Colleges

Sl. No.	Affiliating University	No. of Affiliated Degree Colleges (Govt./aided)	Total UG Courses
1.	University of Calcutta	122	1635
2.	University of Burdwan	58	1444
3.	Vidyasagar University	51	721
4.	West Bengal State University	45	667
5.	Kalyani University	51	581
6.	North Bengal University	41	454
7.	KaziNazrul University	13	421

8.	GourBanga University	25	312
9.	Bankura University	23	265
10.	SKBU	20	262
11.	Cooch Behar PanchananBarma University	13	145
12.	Raiganj University	0	26
13.	The Sanskrit College and University	0	10
14.	Diamond Harbour Women's University	0	9
15.	Rabindra Bharati University	0	7
16.	Murshidabad University	0	1
	Total Courses	**462***	**6960**
**10 universities have been excluded.*			

Source: Centralized Admission Portal, WBSCHE (https://wbcap.in/) (*as on 19.06.2024)*

According to the table, the University of Calcutta has the highest number of affiliated colleges offering the highest number of undergraduate courses, i.e. 1635. Followed by same, the colleges under the University of Burdwan offer 1444 courses, Vidyasagar University offers 721 courses, West Bengal State University offers 667 courses, Kalyani University offers 581 courses, North Bengal University offers 454 courses, Kazi Nazrul University offers 421 courses, Gour Banga University offers 312 courses, Bankura University offers 265 courses, Sidho Kanho Birsha University offers 262 courses, and Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University offers 145 courses, Raiganj University offers 26 courses, The Sanskrit College and University offers 10 courses, Diamond Harbour Women's University offers 9 courses, Rabindra Bharati University offers 7 courses, and Murshidabad University offers only one course at undergraduate level.

District-wise analysis of number of colleges and universities reveals a great disparity in number of institutions, while Kolkata gains much attention for having the highest number of degree colleges and universities, i.e. 65. The cause for the same maybe located at the colonial history of India which accounts for how British had set up the first industrial trade region in India. However, the North 24 Parganas, and South 24 Parganas have secured 2nd and 3rd position with 47 and 36 HEIs respectively. The Uttar Dinajpur district has the lowest number of degree colleges among all the districts (see Table No. 2).

Table 2. District-wise Distribution of HEIs that offer undergraduate programs

Sl. No.	District	Total HEIs	No. of Degree Colleges	No. of Universities
1.	Alipurduar	10	10	0
2.	Bankura	24	23	1
3.	Birbhum	16	16	0
4.	Cooch Behar	15	14	1
5.	Dakshin Dinajpur	10	10	0
6.	Darjeeling	16	15	1
7.	Hooghly	27	27	0
8.	Howrah	17	17	0
9.	Jalpaiguri	10	10	0
10.	Jhargram	10	10	0
11.	Kalimpong	3	3	0
12.	Kolkata	65	63	2
13.	Maldah	11	11	0
14.	Murshidabad	26	25	1
15.	Nadia	24	24	0
16.	North 24 Parganas	47	47	0
17.	Paschim Bardhaman	14	13	1
18.	Paschim Medinipur	21	21	0
19.	Purba Bardhaman	22	22	0
20.	Purba Medinipur	20	20	0
21.	Purulia	21	20	1
22.	South 24 Parganas	36	35	1
23.	Uttar Dinajpur	7	6	1
	Total	**472**	**462**	**10**

Currently, these institutions provide four kinds of programs based on course pattern (see the Table 3), which include namely, 1) 3-Year Degree Programme, 2) 3-Year Multidisciplinary, 3) 4-Year Honours and Research and 4) 4-Year Multidisciplinary program. On the other hand, on the basis of different types of degree, it appears that 10 different types of undergraduate courses (refer to Table 4), which

includes B.A (Bachelor of Arts), B.A/B.Sc., B.A/B.Sc./B.Com, B.Com. (Bachelor of Commerce), B.FAD (Bachelor of Fashion and Apparel Designing), B.Sc. (Bachelor of Science), B.Voc. (Bachelor of Vocational Studies), BBA (Bachelor of Business Administration), BBM (Bachelor of Business Management), and BCA (Bachelor of Computer Application).

Table 3. Course type based on Course Pattern

Sl. No.	Course Pattern	No. of Courses
1.	3-Year Degree Programme	976
2.	3-Year Multidisciplinary	547
3.	4-Year Hons./Hons& Research	5347
4.	4-Year Multidisciplinary	90
	Total	**6960**

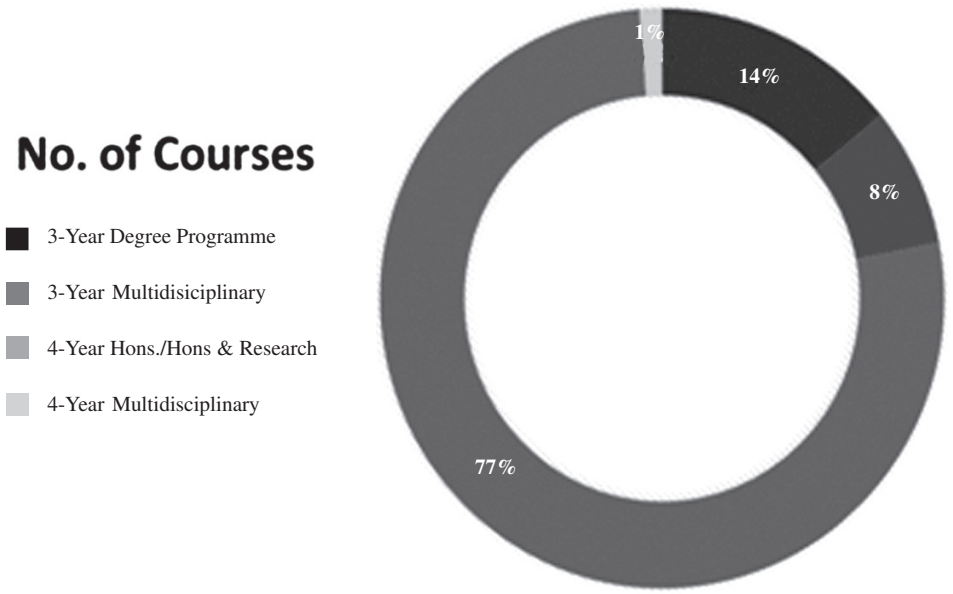


Figure 1: Percentage of UG Course based on Patten

From the above table, it is clear that out of total courses, 976 (14%) courses followed the 3-Year Degree Programme, 547 (8%) are 3-Year Multidisciplinary in nature, 5,347 (77%) are 4-Year Honours/ Honours and Research, and 90 (1%) are 4-Year Multidisciplinary programmes. The large number of courses under the 4-Year Honours/Honours & Research category is due to the Ministry of Education's adoption of the NEP 2020 policy, which the state subsequently embraced through the introduction of the State Education Policy in 2023.

Table 4. Stream-wise details of Subjects and Courses of Study

Sl. No.	Course Type	No. of Subjects	No. of Courses
1.	**B.A**	43	4198
2.	**B.Sc.**	43	2174
3.	**B.Com**	11	390
4.	**B.A/B.Sc.**	10	132
5.	**BCA**	1	22
6.	**BBA**	4	21
7.	**B.Voc.**	12	16
8.	**B.A/B.Sc./B.Com.**	5	5
9.	**B.FAD**	1	1
10.	**BBM**	1	1
	Total Courses		**6960**

As per the analysis about the distribution of courses by type, Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) emerge as the most prevalent streams (see Appendix-I). More specifically, there are 4,198 course that are provided as B.A courses and 2,174 coursesas B.Sc. courses only. In contrast, 390 courses are offered as B.Com, 132 as B.A./B.Sc., 22 as BCA, 21 as BBA, and 16 as B.Voc. Furthermore, five subjects– Sericulture, Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, Communicative English, Advertising Sales Promotion & Sales Management, and Tourism and Travel Management—are available as B.A/B.Sc./B.Com. degree courses.

Additionally, it is noted that the B.FAD and BBM courses are offered in only two colleges across the state. The Rani Birla Girls' College in Kolkata, affiliated to the University of Calcutta, is the sole institution providing an undergraduate degree course in Fashion and Apparel Design, while Cooch Behar College, Cooch Behar is the only one offering a BBM degree.

The undergraduate courses are primarily offered at Degree Colleges. However, there are many universities that also offer undergraduate level courses. The university-wise list of undergraduate programmes is presented in a table below.

Table 5.University-wise UG Program details

Sl. No.	University	Course Pattern	Type	Course
1.	**Bankura University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A**	Philosophy in Santali Vernacular Geography in Santali Vernacular
			B.Sc.	Physics in Santali Vernacular Mathematics in Vernacular
2.	**Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A**	Hindi
3.	**North Bengal University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.Sc.**	Tea Science
4.	**Raiganj University**	3-Year Degree Programme	**B.A/B.SC**	Geography
			B.A	English Bengali History Sanskrit
			BBA	Business Administration
			BCA	Computer Application
			B.A	Bengali Education English History Philosophy Political Science Sanskrit Sociology
		4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A/B.SC**	Economics Geography
			B.Com	Accountancy Botany Chemistry Computer Science
			B.Sc.	Mathematics Microbiology Physics Sericulture Zoology

5.	**Sidho Kanho Birsha University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.Sc.**	Psychology
6.	**Murshidabad University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A**	Santali
7.	**Kazi Nazrul University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.Sc.**	Medical Laboratory Technology Medical Radiology And Imaging Technology Optometry Physiotherapy Animal Science
8.	**Diamond Harbour Women's University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.Sc.** **B.A**	Mathematics Geography Philosophy Sanskrit Bengali Education English History Political Science
9.	**The Sanskrit College And University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A**	Panini Vyakarana Sahitya Ancient Indian and World History Bengali English Linguistics Pali Philosophy Sanskrit Bengali Advaita Vedanta
10.	**Rabindra Bharati University**	4-Year Hons./Hons & Research	**B.A**	Economics English History Philosophy Political Science Sanskrit

Table 5 outlines the undergraduate courses offered by the state universities in West Bengal. Ten universities, as of now, offer their undergraduate courses through the Centralized Admission Portal of the Government of West Bengal. A total of 36 subjects are found which include Hindi, Tea Science, Geography, English, Bengali, History, Sanskrit, Business Administration, Computer Applications,

Education, Philosophy, Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Accountancy, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Microbiology, Physics, Sericulture, Zoology, Psychology, Santali, Medical Laboratory Technology, Medical Radiology and Imaging Technology, Optometry, Physiotherapy, Animal Science, Advaita Vedanta, Panini Vyakarana, Sahitya, Ancient Indian and World History, Linguistics and Pali.

Three universities employ unique features in offering various courses. Bankura University gives a special attention towards the importance of Santali vernacular as the medium of instruction. This university has provided undergraduate programmes on Philosophy, Geography, Physics, and Mathematics through Santali Vernacular. On the other hand, Kazi Nazrul University focuses on Medical Laboratory Technology, Medical Radiology & Imaging Technology, Optometry, Physiotherapy and Animal Science. Hence, the aspirants who are searching for courses in these fields may consider this institution on their priority list. However, to impart knowledge of ancient literature, Philosophy, Hindu Law, Grammar, Indian Culture, and Sanskrit among the Indians, The Sanskrit College and University provides an ample amount of courses which include Panini Vyakarana, Sahitya, Ancient Indian and World History, Bengali, English, Linguistics, Pali, Philosophy and Sanskrit.

Quantitatively, the Raiganj University stands out with a highest number of undergraduate courses. Previously known as Raiganj College, it has now upgraded into a full-fledged state university. At present the university offers 26 subjects for undergraduate course. Raiganj University is the only institution which offers an UG course in Sericulture. Moreover a course on Tea Science is found at North Bengal University, Psychology at Sidho Kanho Birsha University, Santali at Murshidabad University and Hindi at Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University.

Top Ten Most offered Subjects:

The Appendix II shows the list of subjects provided in a total number of colleges and universities in West Bengal along with the percentage. According to the table, there are a total of 112 subjects which are provided exclusively at undergraduate level across the state. Out of them, English, Bengali, History, Political Science, Philosophy, Sanskrit, Geography, Education, Mathematics and Chemistry are identified as the top ten most offered subjects.

There has been seen disparity in between the Arts (or Humanities) and Science streams. Subjects connected with the stream of Arts show higher importance than that of Science. However, in the category of Science stream, the subjects like Geography, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Botany, Computer Science etcetera appeared as highly demanding subjectsas compared to other streams.

Less Offered/Common Subjects:

Only a small number of institutions in the state focus on a limited range of subjects. For those interested in general Arts or Science disciplines may opt for the following subjects: Physical Education (offered in 87 colleges), Physiology (38 colleges), Anthropology (25 colleges), Statistics (15 colleges), Psychology (22 colleges), Electronics (14 colleges), Geology (13 colleges), Plant Protection (3 colleges), Sericulture (2 colleges) and Library and Information Science (2 colleges).

Figure No. 2 illustrates the availability of these subjects across districts in West Bengal. The figure clearly shows that subjects like Computer Science, Education, Sanskrit, History, Mathematics, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Sociology, Zoology, Geography, English, Economics, Chemistry, Botany, Bengali and Accountancy are widely offered and are available in nearly all districts.

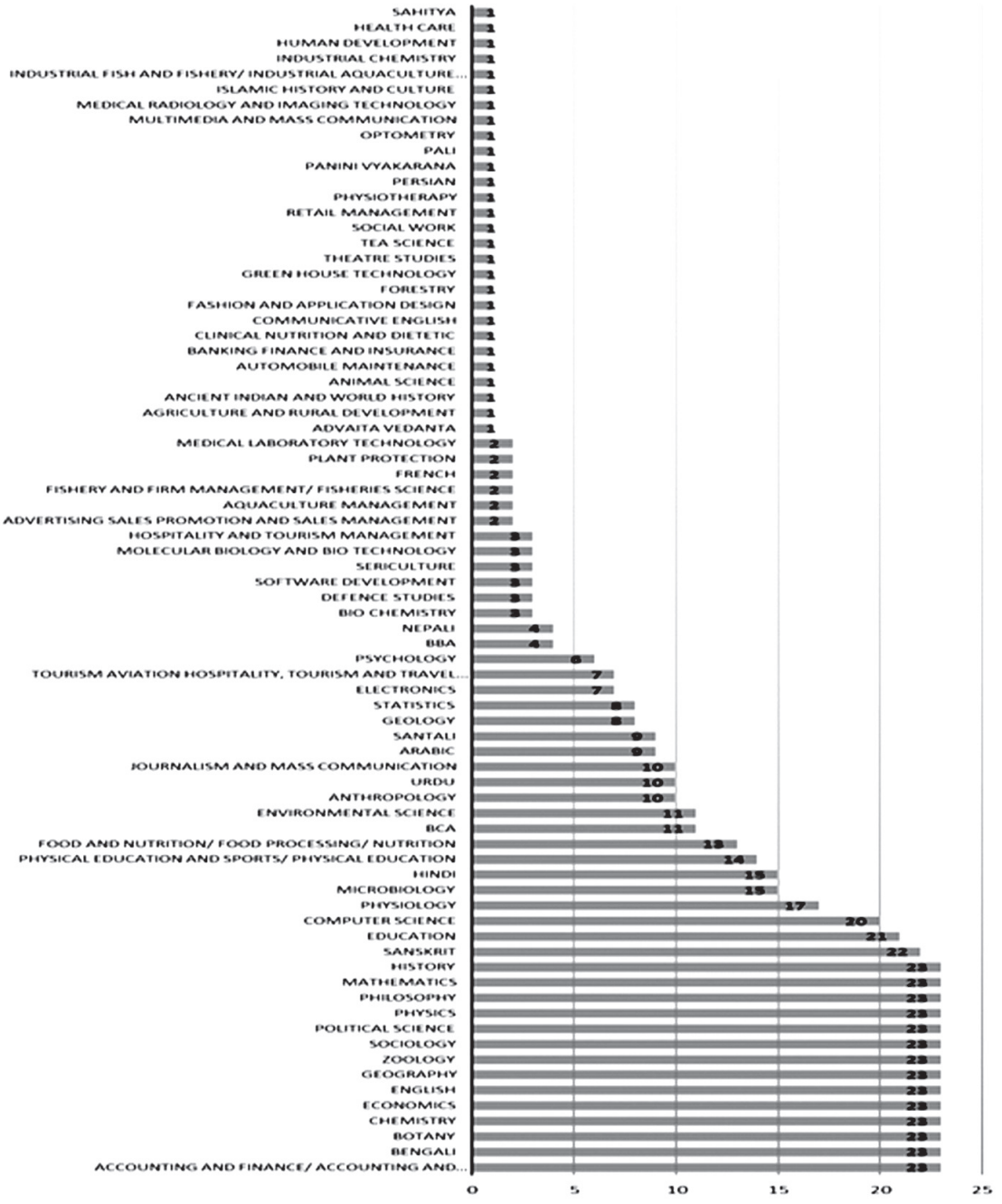


Figure 2. Subject-wise No. of Districts Details

However, apart from these subjects, there are certain subjects that have also been noticed in a very less number of districts. The following few are the list of subjects which students may consider for pursing graduation degree after completion of their school education.

1. Language based courses:

In addition to the traditional language subjects, the state has also offered Honours courses in Santali (39 colleges), Urdu (26 colleges), Arabic (29 colleges), Nepali (15 colleges), Kudmali (8 colleges), Persian (3 colleges), and French (2 colleges). The Santali Honours course is primarily concentrated in the southwestern districts of the state, which includes Jhargram, Purulia, Bankura, and Medinipur (both Purba and Paschim). Urdu Honours is available in 10 districts (Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Maldah, Howrah, Murshidabad, Paschim Bardhaman, Kolkata, Hooghly, and North 24 Parganas), while Arabic Honours is offered in 9 districts (Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Cooch Behar, Maldah, Murshidabad, South 24 Parganas, Kolkata, Hooghly, and North 24 Parganas) and Nepali Honours is available in 4 districts (Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri, Kalimpong, and Darjeeling).

The Persian Honours course is provided by three colleges only: Government Girls' General Degree College, Lady Brabourne College, and Maulana Azad College. Meanwhile, Honours in French is offered exclusively at Syamaprasad College, Kolkata, and Chandernagore College, Hooghly.

2. Professional Courses:

Professional degree prepares students for a particular profession by emphasizing competency skills along with theory and analysis (Miller et al. 2018). The HEIs of the state have provided a number of professional degree courses that can be considered for higher studies. The few of them are discussed below:

- **Journalism and Mass Communication:** The course in Journalism and Mass Communication is becoming increasingly popular. It includes topics such as Reporting and Editing, Radio Broadcasting, Media and Communication, Cultural Studies, Media Management, Press law, Advertising, Public Relations and so on. However, there are plenty of career opportunities which include News Reporter, Screenwriter, Radio Jockey, Content Writer, Advertisement, TV Correspondent, Public Relation Specialist, etc. (Yusuf, 2016; Hindustan Institute of Technology & Science, 2024). Currently, 45 colleges are offering Honours programs in this field across the state.
- **Food and Nutrition:** A wider scope can be found in the field of Food and Nutrition. This field offers extensive career opportunities in Government as well as Non-Government organizations spanning across departments such as Health, Social Welfare, and national or international bodies (Choudhury, 2020). Positions such as Nutrition Consultants, Sports Nutritionist, Sustainable

Nutritionist, Public Health Nutritionist, Food Safety Officer, Food Technologists, Flavour Chemist, Molecular Gastronomist, Food Stylist, Food Critic, Programme Executives, Nutrition Counsellors, and Dieticians are in demand, especially in health departments (Prasad, 2021). At present 49 colleges have provided undergraduate Honours courses.

- **Tourism and Travel Management:** Upon completing a course in Tourism and Travel Management, students can pursue careers as Travel Officers, Travel Executives, Airline Staff or Managers, Tour Guides, Travel Agents, Tour Operators, Travel Writers, and more (Shilpi, 2016; Vedpathak, 2024). In this state, only 11 colleges offer an Honours degree in Tourism and Travel Management.
- **Defence Studies:** Defence Studies is an academic discipline that explores topics related to national and international security (Singh, 2015). It encompasses areas such as military history, strategy, international relations and defence policy. This Honours course is available at only three colleges, namely Sudhiranjan Lahiri Mahavidyalaya (Nadia), Syamsundar College (Purba Bardhaman), and Rabindra Mahavidyalaya (Hooghly). Graduates of this program can pursue various career opportunities in the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, Police, Fire Brigade and other security-related fields.
- **Advertising Sales Promotion and Sales Management:** This course is primarily focused on marketing strategies, advertising and sales promotion techniques, communication strategies, and sales management principles. It prepares students for careers in advertising, sales management, marketing, public relations, brand management, digital marketing, and related fields. Currently, it is offered at only two colleges: Gokhale Memorial Girls' College (Kolkata) and Bhairab Ganguly College (North 24 Parganas).
- **Fishery Science/ Aquaculture Management:** The Fishery Science or Aquaculture Management course is a specialized field of study that focuses on fish farming techniques, sustainable aquaculture practices, aquatic biology and related areas (Murty, 2015). In West Bengal, there are seven colleges which offer an Honours-level program in this discipline. Among them, three colleges provide B.Sc. Honours course: Asutosh College (Kolkata), Acharya Prafulla Chandra College (North 24 Parganas), and Brahmananda Keshab Chandra College (North 24 Parganas). Additionally, Khejuri College (Purba Medinipur) and Ramnagar College (Purba Medinipur) also offer the program. Two colleges, Ramnagar College (Purba Medinipur) and Asutosh College (Kolkata) offer the course as a B.Voc. programme.
- **Agriculture and Rural Development:** The subject encompasses a range of subjects which includes Animal Husbandry, Agronomy, Horticulture, Sericulture, Agricultural Technology, Rural Marketing, Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering, and Rural Livelihood related fields (TMU, 2024). It opens plenty of career opportunities in agricultural and rural sectors, such as

marketing manager, Research officer, Rural Manager, Trainer, Consultants etc. However, in this state, there is only one college that offers an undergraduate Honours course on it namely Chandraketugarh Sahidullah Smriti Mahavidyalaya, located at North 24 Parganas district.

- **Automobile Maintenance:** An undergraduate course in Automobile Maintenance, commonly known as Automobile Servicing, equips students with specialized skills in maintaining heavy commercial vehicles, along with mechanical, electrical, and electronic control systems. Bajkul Milani Mahavidyalaya in Purba Medinipur is the only college which offers an honours degree in this field.
- **Fashion and Apparel Design:** The fashion industry in India has experienced substantial growth in recent years (Bhatia & Juneja, 2016; Rajput, 2023). It encompasses a rich history of clothing trends, sewing techniques, footwear design and garment craftsmanship. Rani Birla Girls' College in Kolkata is the only institution in the state which offers an undergraduate honours programme in Fashion and Apparel Design (B.FAD). This course opens up a wide range of career opportunities including roles as a fashion designer, textile designer, art director, illustrator, influencer, stylist, consultant, merchandiser, model, retail buyer, product developer, graphic designer, creative director and many more (Rajput, 2023). Students may consider this field in their wish list.
- **Forestry:** By studying Forestry Science, students can find a wide range of career opportunities, including positions such as Forester, Forest Range Officer, Forestry Technician, Forestry Consultant, and Forestry Scientist/Silviculturist. However, job opportunities are more limited in West Bengal, with the subject being primarily concentrated in the Bankura district. For those interested in pursuing an undergraduate degree in Forestry, Pandit Raghunath Murmu Smriti Mahavidyalaya is the only college in the entire state that offers an honours degree in this field.
- **Tea Science:** North Bengal University is the only university in the state that offers an undergraduate program in Tea Science. This program is primarily aimed at strengthening the backbone of the tea industry across the country. By offering this unique program, Darjeeling district distinguishes itself from other districts.

3. Vocational Courses:

Beside the traditional courses, seven colleges, namely Gour Mahavidyalaya, Belda College, Egra Sarada Shashi Bhusan College, Mugberia Gangadhar Mahavidyalaya, Ramnagar College, Asutosh College and Bangabasi Evening College have offered B.Voc. (Bachelor of Vocational Education) degree courses on the following twelvemajor subjects. These are :

i. Health Care,
ii. Medical Laboratory Technology,

iii. Software Development,
iv. Green House Technology,
v. Theatre Studies,
vi. Food Processing,
vii. Tourism and Hotel Management,
viii. Fishery and Firm Management,
ix. Hospitality and Tourism Management,
x. Retail Management,
xi. Industrial Aquaculture and Fisheries
xii. Banking Finance and Insurance.

Students may also opt one of these courses after completion of their School Education. The B.Voc.course is basically a three-Year undergraduate programme that focuses on skills development-based learning.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of the academic programs available for Higher Education in West Bengal through the Centralized Admission Portal, which was aimed to enhance the accessibility and transparency of the state's Higher Education system. The state's HEIs offer a wide collection of courses at undergraduate level after the successful completion of Higher Secondary Education. The most prevalent programmes are found in the fields of Arts and Science, while specialized courses such as Fashion and Apparel Design, Defence Studies, and BBM are available at only a few colleges.

The study also highlights the efforts that few universities have addressed, like Bankura University, in promoting regional languages like Santali as a medium of instruction. Despite the diversity of subjects offered across districts, there are notable disparities in the distribution of institutions and courses. In response to societal demands, some colleges have begun to prioritize professional and vocational courses alongside traditional ones. These vocational programmes aimed at enhancing employability include subjects like Plant Protection, Sericulture, Library and Information Science, Journalism and Mass Communication, Food and Nutrition, Tourism and Travel Management, Advertising Sales Promotion and Sales Management, Fishery Science, Agriculture and Rural Development, Automobile Maintenance, Forestry, Tea Science, and more. Overall the findings emphasize a need for a guided approach in selecting appropriate courses available for Higher Education in West Bengal.

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Appendix – I: Stream-wise details of Subjects offered at HEIs in WB

Sl. No.	Course Type	Subjects	Total Subjects	Total Courses
1.	B.A	Bengali, Economics, English, Geography, History, Philosophy, Political Science, Sanskrit, General Arts, Education, Nepali, Sociology, Hindi, Physical Education & Sports, Santali, Social Work, Arabic, Urdu, Journalism & Mass Communication, Kudmali, Anthropology, Tourism & Travel Management, Chemistry, Accounting & Finance, Statistics, Defence Studies, Library & Information Science, Multimedia & Mass Communication, Mathematics, Communicative English, Psychology, Persian, Geology, Islamic History & Culture, French, Advaita Vedanta, Panini Vyakarana, Sahitya, Ancient Indian & World History, Linguistics, Pali, Human Development, Computer Application	43	4198
2.	B.Sc.	Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics, Zoology, Bio Science, Pure Science, Geography, Computer Science, Economics, Microbiology, Nutrition, Environmental Science, Geology, Forestry, Physiology, Electronics, Plant Protection, Food & Nutrition, Tea Science, General Science, Life Science, Physical Science, Anthropology, Sericulture, Psychology, Molecular Biology & Bio Technology, Statistics, Mathematics & Computer Science, Automobile Maintenance, Aquaculture Management, Industrial Chemistry, Bio Chemistry, Medical Laboratory Technology, Medical Radiology & Imaging Technology, Optometry, Physiotherapy, Animal Science, Industrial Fish & Fishery, Computer Application, Fisheries Science, Agriculture & Rural Development, Biological Sciences	43	2174
3.	B.Com	Accounting & Finance, Commerce, Accounting & Management, Accountancy, Business Management, Financial Accounting, Marketing Management, Accounting, Accountancy & Marketing Management, Advertising Sales Promotion & Sales Management, Tourism & Travel Management	11	390
4.	B.A/B.Sc.	Geography, Economics, Physical Education & Sports, Psychology, Mathematics, Food & Nutrition, Library & Information Science, Tourism & Travel Management, Computer Application, Human Development	10	132
5.	BCA	Computer Application	1	22
6.	BBA	Tourism Aviation Hospitality, Business Management, Business Administration, Hospitality & Tourism Management	4	21
7.	B.Voc.	Health Care, Medical Laboratory Technology, Software Development, Green House Technology, Theatre Studies, Food Processing, Tourism And Hotel Management, Fishery And Firm Management, Hospitality And Tourism Management, Retail Management, Industrial Aquaculture And Fisheries, Banking Finance And Insurance	12	16
8.	B.A/B.Sc. /B.Com.	Sericulture, Clinical Nutrition & Dietetic, Communicative English, Advertising Sales Promotion & Sales Management, Tourism & Travel Management	5	5
9.	B.FAD	Fashion and Application Design	1	1
10.	BBM	Business Administration	1	1
		Total Courses		**6960**

Appendix – II: Subjects-wise number of HEIs offered in West Bengal

Sl. No.	Subjects	Total No. of Colleges				% of Colleges offer 4-YearsHons./ Hons. With Research Prog	Universities		% of Universities offer4-YearsHons./ Hons. With Research Prog.
		3-Years Degree Program	3-Year Multidisciplinary	4-YearsHons./ Hons. With Research Prog.	4-Years Multidisciplinary Program		3-Years Degree Program	4-YearsHons./ Hons. With Research Prog.	
1.	English	67	1	445	0	**96.32**	1	4	**40**
2.	Bengali	69	2	439	0	**95.02**	1	4	**40**
3.	History	69	1	437	0	**94.58**	1	3	**30**
4.	Political Science	67	1	391	0	**84.63**	0	3	**30**
5.	Philosophy	68	1	339	0	**73.37**	0	4	**40**
6.	Sanskrit	67	1	318	0	**68.83**	1	4	**40**
7.	Geography	54	5	312	0	**67.53**	1	2	**20**
8.	Education	37	1	275	0	**59.52**	0	2	**20**
9.	Mathematics	53	1	246	0	**53.24**	0	2	**20**
10.	Chemistry	49	0	222	0	**48.05**	0	1	**10**
11.	Physics	48	0	213	0	**46.10**	0	1	**10**
12.	Economics	46	1	207	0	**44.80**	0	2	**20**
13.	General Arts	0	199	39	0	**8.44**	0	0	**0**
14.	Zoology	41	0	178	0	**38.52**	0	1	**10**
15.	Botany	41	0	161	0	**34.84**	0	1	**10**
16.	Commerce	12	101	41	0	**8.87**	0	0	**0**
17.	Sociology	14	0	126	0	**27.27**	0	1	**10**
18.	Computer Science	17	2	107	0	**23.16**	0	1	**10**
19.	General Science	0	100	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
20.	Accountancy	0	3	90	0	**19.48**	0	1	**10**
21.	Hindi	15	0	61	0	**13.20**	0	1	**10**
22.	Physical Education	18	3	48	0	**10.38**	0	0	**0**
23.	Accounting and Finance	0	1	53	14	**11.47**	0	0	**0**
24.	Accounting and Management	32	0	32	0	**6.92**	0	0	**0**
25.	Physical Education and Sports	20	0	39	0	**8.44**	0	0	**0**
26.	Santali	9	0	39	0	**8.44**	0	1	**10**
27.	Journalism and Mass Communication	3	0	41	0	**8.87**	0	0	**0**
28.	Physiology	4	0	38	0	**8.22**	0	0	**0**
29.	Microbiology	2	0	37	0	**8.008**	0	1	**10**

30.	Physical Science	0	37	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
31.	Urdu	10	0	26	0	**5.62**	0	0	**0**
32.	Pure Science	0	17	0	18	**0**	0	0	**0**
33.	Life Science	0	33	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
34.	Arabic	2	1	29	0	**6.27**	0	0	**0**
35.	Nutrition	6	0	25	0	**5.41**	0	0	**0**
36.	Bio Science	0	19	0	11	**0**	0	0	**0**
37.	Environmental Science	7	0	20	0	**4.32**	0	0	**0**
38.	Anthropology	0	0	25	0	**5.41**	0	0	**0**
39.	Statistics	10	0	15	0	**3.24**	0	0	**0**
40.	Food and Nutrition	0	1	23	0	**4.97**	0	0	**0**
41.	Psychology	0	0	22	0	**4.76**	0	1	**10**
42.	Electronics	8	0	14	0	**3.03**	0	0	**0**
43.	Computer Application	0	0	16	0	**3.46**	0	1	**10**
44.	Nepali	0	0	15	0	**3.24**	0	0	**0**
45.	Geology	0	0	13	0	**2.81**	0	0	**0**
46.	BBA	0	0	7	2	**1.51**	0	0	**0**
47.	Mathematics and Computer Science	0	9	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
48.	BCA	0	0	7	1	**1.51**	0	0	**0**
49.	Business Administration	0	0	6	1	**1.29**	0	1	**10**
50.	Kudmali	0	0	8	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
51.	Bio Chemistry	0	0	6	0	**1.29**	0	0	**0**
52.	Business Management	0	0	4	1	**0.86**	0	0	**0**
53.	Communicative English	0	0	5	0	**1.08**	0	0	**0**
54.	Human Development	0	0	5	0	**1.08**	0	0	**0**
55.	Mass Communication and Journalism	0	0	4	0	**0.86**	0	0	**0**
56.	Persian	0	1	3	0	**0.64**	0	0	**0**
57.	Tourism and Travel Management	0	0	4	0	**0.86**	0	0	**0**
58.	Defence Studies	2	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
59.	Financial Accounting	0	1	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
60.	Hospitality and Tourism Management	0	0	3	0	**0.64**	0	0	**0**
61.	Molecular Biology and Bio Technology	0	0	3	0	**0.64**	0	0	**0**
62.	Plant Protection	3	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
63.	Sericulture	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	1	**10**
64.	Software Development	0	1	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**

65.	Tourism Aviation Hospitality	0	0	0	3	**0**	0	0	**0**
66.	Accounting	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
67.	Advertising Sales Promotion and Sales Management	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
68.	Aquaculture Management	0	0	0	2	**0**	0	0	**0**
69.	Fisheries Science	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
70.	Food Processing	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
71.	French	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
72.	Library and Information Science	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
73.	Medical Laboratory Technology	0	1	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
74.	Multimedia and Mass Communication	0	0	2	0	**0.43**	0	0	**0**
75.	Philosophy in Santali Vernacular	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	1	**10**
76.	Accountancy and Marketing Management	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
77.	Advaita Vedanta	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
78.	Agriculture and Rural Development	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
79.	Ancient Indian and World History	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
80.	Animal Science	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
81.	Automobile Maintenance	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
82.	Banking Finance and Insurance	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
83.	Biological Sciences	0	1	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
84.	Clinical Nutrition and Dietetic	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
85.	Fashion and Application Design	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
86.	Fishery and Firm Management	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
87.	Forestry	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
88.	General Arts in Santali Medium	0	1	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
89.	Geography in Santali Vernacular	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
90.	Green House Technology	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
91.	Health Care	1	0	0	0	**0**	0	0	**0**
92.	History in Santali Medium	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
93.	Industrial Aquaculture and Fisheries	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
94.	Industrial Chemistry	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
95.	Industrial Fish and Fishery	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
96.	Islamic History and Culture	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
97.	Linguistics	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**

98.	Marketing Management	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
99.	Mathematics in Vernacular	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
100.	Medical Radiology and Imaging Technology	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
101.	Optometry	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
102.	Pali	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
103.	Panini Vyakarana	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
104.	Physics in Santali Vernacular	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
105.	Physiotherapy	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
106.	Political Science in Santali Vernacular	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
107.	Retail Management	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
108.	Sahitya	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
109.	Social Work	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
110.	Tea Science	0	0	0	0	**0**	0	1	**10**
111.	Theatre Studies	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
112.	Tourism and Hotel Management	0	0	1	0	**0.21**	0	0	**0**
	TOTAL	**971**	**547**	**5324**	**53**		**5**	**60**	

Source: *Centralized Admission Portal, West Bengal (As on 19.06.2024)*