

Connexion between Psychological Augmentation of Student Statecraft in Undivided Colonial Bengal and Global Politics: 1830-1947

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Abstract

Student politics of Bengal in the Indian subcontinent has a remarkable influential history since its inception. Having originated as a response against colonial exploitation in the pre-independence period, they have undergone considerable changes in the course of its evaluation and appeared as a mighty force by extending their support to any country in the worldwide context. Being confined by the theory of narrow nationalism, they have never been engaged in creating only the victory story of their own national visual welfare; rather, they have already earned recognition as an integral part of world politics through the awareness and protest theory against any global controversial issue for the sake of humanitarian welfare, which helped to make their sense of globalization more familiar. With close-reading technique, descriptive evaluated interpretative analysis and interactive conversations, this paper seeks to make a modest effort to analyze the psychological aspects of student politics where they have channelized their ideology in the global context, being inspired by the different events of other countries and have awakened the spirit of experience, expressing their own independent individual opinion on that ground. This will create an attitude through which we can embellish the contribution of students' political understanding to global politics of this period.

Keyword: Student politics, Globalization, Psychological, Pre-independent, Awareness, Protest Theory, Humanitarian welfare.

Introduction

The stereotypical definition of student politics is when the student force adopts a conscious proactive approach through modest self- engagement, successfully changes the decision-making authority of the state and completes the process of fulfilling the awaited objective by a constant stream of indefatigable concerted effort; then it would

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appear as student politics. Yet it is a well-known fact that politics has a strange attractive power and the student body is enveloped by the immense attraction of that.¹ Being the driving forces of the society and politically activated largest section of the population, their work, education and mental well-being become the measure of substantive prosperity of any country. But as per differentiation of resonates the pattern of student politics can vary among places; it should not be conjectured. Naturally, this particular period in world politics can be identified with distinct upheavals of ideological imbalance grafted by Imperialism, Colonialism, Fascism, Nazism, Nationalism, Socialism, Marxism, Leninism, Democratic Revolutions and Revolutionary Terrorism. Undoubtedly being a part of that global context, each and every country and the thought processes of their youth, whether it would be directly or indirectly got infected by these intense influences that modified their political mindsets and moves in a magnificent manner. In the Indian perspective, from playing a pivotal role in the freedom movement, they had upgraded their role with various new methods by extending them more widely in changing interfaces of global politics. Over time, their impetuous speired individualism thematically adopted followership of different ideologies. In this regard, the uniqueness of West Bengal is most striking. The geographical diversity and cultural conception of Bengal had played a conducive role in implanting the seeds of political consciousness into the minds of students. And the student force was at a magnificent cognition level where they had become able enough to balance both the national and global political context simultaneously in a single frame.² By explaining that psychological overview in maintaining both the senses, we will definitely establish the dignified mastery of students' statecraft in Bengal.

Substantive Psychological Elements behind Globalization

It is very relevant to discuss about the psychological perspective that tanked the mental health of students in joining politics. As a prominent progenitor of many historical changes, the youth has always engrossed the rumination of the historians and intelligence for a very long time. Biologically, age and psychological factors have played an eventual role in defining the youth as a term, but it is not an assemblage between infancy and adulthood; rather, they have been inducting in such a multi-dimensional entrance of adolescence and upshot where colossal cognitive features have started to emerge and made it very arduous work to delimit this phase in terms of biological nature.³ The term '*conflict of generations with its root in an oppressive social order*'⁴ by Dr. Anirban Banerjee can be identified with the attitudes of dignified paths, tendency of fabricating questions, dementia for exploring satisfactory answers, and ascertainment between correct and incorrect at this phase of time. One at a side the pathological inspiration, craving for power, age factor and radicalism, financial influence, educational impact, concept of professionalism and amateur political activism, cultural and literary aspects, the outlook of youth organizations-political parties-families, social media (periodicals and newspapers) stimulates their mental horizon and also guided them towards the subsets of anti-imperialistic attitude, humanitarian approach, aesthetic sense, religious uniformity, pro-people attitude, thought of globalization, radicalism, conventional protest activities and ultimate sacrifice of life. Now, among these components, the anti-imperialistic attitude was the one that creates an extra benefit in encountering the sense of globalization undoubtedly. Political moves of British imperial power have given the Indian students

the ease to understand world politics. Besides that, they definitely co-relate with any nation that has faced the exact same unfortunate problematic conditions of any aspect of statecraft as they were facing as a subservient colony. On the contrary, the socio-political incidents of other countries also made them realize to categorize the political advancements in terms of their native land too. Therefore, they started implementation of conventional protest activities against any kind of injustice and a humanitarian and pro-people attitude both for their own individual national need as well as the global contexture which made a strong association of empathize.

In this typical aspect, age factor is a crucial thing to determine the psychological framework to move politically. Because it directly correlates and subjugates the matters of craving or desire for power politics and radicalism. That is obviously reflected in almost every case through conventional protest politics. But in this case, especially if we look into the aspect of Bengal student statecraft, we can find out that strategic locations, socio-economic educational thought process impacts of contemporary incidents have directly stimulated the mental horizon of students are used here. They thought and act strategically for politicization.⁵ As they have gained scholastic supervision of masterly political moves by submerging the protest theory and constructive proactive approach altogether. Despite the turbulence of age factor related issues they stay strategic and act according to need. This can be identified by their construction of various organizations.⁶ Because they knew whether it was to act politically for humanity and background National welfare, sympathetic and conscious about global politics and pro-people attitude, it has to be channelized through an organisation, otherwise, the whole process and purpose both will collapse under great fiasco and indiscipline.

Ambience before Indian Independence

In this segment, the events which clearly distinguished the greater aspects of globalization among the students of Bengal have been highlighted. In this particular phase of time, the entire student community has gone through many disputes from regional to national level and also passed a prolonged period of national freedom struggle. In order to elegantly exhibit the thematic contexture of the paper, I would like to present some selective forms of exponents that will reinforce the relevance of my argument. The July Revolution (1830) of France overthrew the autocratic Bourbon Monarchy; in support of this absolute change, the students of Kolkata, mainly the right-wing climbed the newly built *Octarlony Monument*⁷, hoisted the victorious flag of the French Revolution as the symbol of equivalence, amity and independence and removed the Union Jack (British flag). After a discussion with George Thomson (Leader of the Anti-Slavery Movement, England)⁸ on 25th April, 1843, the student society formed *Bengal British Indian Society* (formerly known as *Shadhran Gyanoparjika Sabha*, 1838) as the first political student organization in the country, having George Thomson as president himself, Secretary Parichand Mitra and treasurer Ram Gopal Ghosh⁹. Collecting factual information on public life, bringing grievances to the royal court and criticizing maladministration were declared to be the main objectives of this new organization. After the Russian Revolution (1917)¹⁰ the Communist Party of India started to spread the idea of socialism among the students. However, the struggle for the freedom of the subjugated countries will be successful and the hardworking people of the imperialist countries will be freed from the

exploiters of their own countries. This second process particularly affected students mainly from Bengal. On September 30, 1929, a glimpse of a new spirit was seen among the leading student activists when the provincial student conference of *All Bengal Students Association* was held in Mymensingh, student leader Revati Barman as the president of the inaugural session, said that,

‘মার্কসের শিক্ষা আজ আমাদের সামনে উজ্জ্বলভাবে দেখা দিয়েছে/বিপ্লবের সাফল্য নির্ভর করছে মার্কসবাদ ও লেনিনবাদ আয়ত্ত করার উপরে যে আদর্শের প্রধান কথা হচ্ছে সমগ্র মানব সমাজকে শোষণের কবল থেকে মুক্তি দেওয়া।’¹¹

The *Lahore Students' Union* celebrated Spain Solidarity Week (May, 1936) and organized a lecture fair analyzing the situation in Spain at schools and colleges of Kolkata. A pamphlet along with the current history of Spain was published asking for help in that struggle, including the history of the defunct student struggle against fascism in solidarity with the local population. Especially medicines were sent to Spain from our country¹². The *World Student Conference* (Paris, 1936) became significant among our students through the AISF. The Indian students studying at Oxford and Cambridge convened a conference (8th January, London) attended by representatives of mainly Indian students from ten universities and colleges in England. They formed the *Federation of Indian Student Societies in Great Britain and Ireland*¹³ and expressed their solidarity with the Students Federation of India. Mr. Mohan Kumar Mangalam (Secretary, London Branch, Federation of Indian Student Societies, August, 1937) came to India and got acquainted with the activities of the AISF. James Cloogman (Secretary, *World Students Organization*) came to India as the leader of a delegation for India and China. He became widely identified with the working student organizations and on the eve of his China delegation, declared that, ‘*All India Student Federation is the greatest organization in the world, and Indian student movement is the strongest among all the colonial student movement*’¹⁴. Against the backdrop of World War II, the *Anti-Fascist Movement* across India was largely led by the Communist Party. However, since the influence and organizational base of the Party in undivided Bengal was much wider than that of other provinces, therefore the movement took the widest and strongest form here. *All India Committee of the International League against Fascism and War* (1937) was formed with Rabindranath Tagore as Secretary, K. T. Shah as Executive President and Soumendranath Tagore as General Secretary to support the struggle to protect democracy and the independence of China and Spain. Where Tagore expressed that,

‘আন্তর্জাতিক ফ্যাসিবাদের এই ভয়ংকর বন্যাকে রুখতেই হবে, স্পেনের জনগণের অগ্নিপরীক্ষা ও দুঃখের মুহূর্তে মানবতার বিবেকের কাছে আমি আবেদন করছি। স্পেনের পপুলার ফ্রন্টের পাশে দাঁড়ান, জনগণের সরকারকে সাহায্য করুন, লক্ষ লক্ষ কণ্ঠে ধ্বনি তুলুন: প্রতিক্রিয়া দূর হটো।’¹⁵

Other members of the committee were Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy, Sarojini Naidu, K. Shantanam (Editor, *Madras Valley Express*), Tushar Kanti Ghosh (Editor, *Amritbazar Patrika*) and Dhiren Sen (Editor, *Advance*), R.S. Ruikar (Vice-President, *All India Trade Union Congress*), Sajjad Jahir (Editor, *Nikhil Bharat Pragati Writers Sangh*), Surendranath Goswami (Editor, *Bengali Pragati Writers Sangh*), Swami Sahajananda (All India Kisan Sabha, Secretary), Indulal Jadunik, M. G. Ranga, S. A. Dange, P. Y. Deshpande, Dr. Sumanta Mehta, Iftikharuddin, Jayaprakash Narayan, Komala Devi, Deven Sen, Nabakrishna Chowdhury, Dr. Suresh Bandyopadhyay, Shivdas Bandyopadhyay etc. Under the leadership of the Students Federation, the entire student society of Bengal responded to this call by saluting the struggling

International Brigade of Spain, a resolution was passed and many students joined the rally. They also celebrated the *China Day*¹⁶ (9th January, 1938) by holding many meetings and collecting donations. Rabindranath Tagore wrote,

‘নারীর শিশুর যত কাটা ছেঁড়া অঙ্গ/ জাগাবে অট্টহাসে পৈশাচী রঙ্গ’।

On the otherhand young poet Subhash Mukherjee wrote one of his best poems: চীন 1938:

‘জাপ পুষ্পকে ঝরে ফুলঝুরি জলে হ্যাঙ্কাও! / কমরেড আজ বজ্র কঠিন বন্ধুতা চাও?’¹⁷

A simultaneous sense of globalization can be identified where Prabodh Chandra (Editor, Student Tribune) was sent as a representative from Punjab on behalf of the AISF in the conference of the *World Student Union* held in Budapest, Hungary (1938).¹⁸ Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in his inaugural address at the 4th conference of AISF (1st January, 1939) emphasized that the students should understand all the global events affecting India. This conference views with great apprehension in the menacing advance of such forces of cultural destruction as the imperialist words and calls upon the students across the world to resist these forces and not to participate in any such war. After the continuation of the conference, this student federation established contact with the *Paris-Based World Student Union* and the *International Student Service- Geneva* and they bridged the effort to get the immense popularity for AISF all over the world. Gradually, the student organizations across America, England and China also expressed their desire to get in contact with the Indian student federation. At the second conference (Lahore) condemns the fascist insurgents and supported the Spanish students who were fighting bravely to defend the freedom of their nation. By that time, *Students Tribune*, the first spokesperson of the Student Federation, regularly published news about student movements in different countries around the world, the struggle of the democrats in Spain, progress of revolutionary Russia and its new educational system as well as updates about Indian student movement and this has created an amazing co-relating bondage of recognition between Indian and global perspective of student statecraft. Youth Cultural Institute (1939) emerged with Prof. Shaheed Surawardi (Calcutta University) as president, Prof. Nihar Ranjan Roy and former mayor of Kolkata A. K. M. Zakaria as Secretary and Jollymohan Kayul as Co-Secretary to inculcate anti-fascist spirit among the students and organized various dramas on the lives of workers, discussing symposiums on the subject of fascism and imperialism. Like Jollymohon Kayul wrote “Politicians take to bowing” and “Boy grows up” criticizing the European politics¹⁹. Devabrata Bose wrote two plays as a protest against the invasion of China and the plight of Hitler's Nazi Germany, such as “In the Heart of China” and “The Shopkeepers”. Other important student leaders of this organization were Jyoti Bose, Nikhil Chakraborty, Subrata Banerjee, Sunil Sen, Samar Gupta, Sunil Kanti Sengupta, Dilip Raha, Harkumar Chaturvedi, Ramakrishna Mukhopadhyay, Ambika Ghosh, Uma Chakraborty, Sujata Mukhopadhyay, Roma Goswami, Dilip Roy, Sadhana Bose, Nivedita Bose, Binita Basu, Nikhil Sen, Dwijen Chowdhury etc. After the Soviet invention (12th June, 1941), Communist students openly sympathized the Soviets in militant student marches with slogans,

‘হাম ভারত কে নওজওয়ান, সোভিয়েতকে সাথ হে’²⁰

The best intellectuals of Bengal held a meeting (July, 1941) in the town hall of Kolkata with senior revolutionary Marxist Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, Journalist Satyendranath Majumdar, Gopal Halder as members. As a result, the *Soviet Shuhreed*

Samiti emerged, and Sarojini Naidu was elected its president²¹. But when the Communist Party presented the slogan of people's war, many of the leading student leaders not only abandoned the organization, especially in the wake of the Quit India movement of 1942, but also began to believe in the cooperation of Germany and Japan in India's freedom struggle. For the sake of this particular theme, the student society of AISF was mainly divided into two distinct different paths of ideology, one was the Communist-influenced Bengal Provincial Student Federation and another one was specially led by the Congress Socialist Party wing. Several eminent intellectuals of Bengal were pioneers in such promotion of fascism, among them Prof. Pramatanath Roy of Calcutta University, Vinay Kumar Sarkar, world famous linguistic theorist Prof. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyay etc. and prominent newspapers and literary magazines of that time had special skills in fascist philosophy, such as Calcutta Review, Desh, Anandabazar Patrika, etc. Along with their staunch anti-Communist sentiments, they were deeply rooted in fascist propaganda. Without mentioning some of their writings at that time, the continuity of their eternally anti-progressive role in today's student society cannot be understood. For instance, Anandabazar Patrika in an editorial named 'হে হিটলার ও নব্য জার্মানি' wrote,

‘যে শক্তিমান বীর নূতন পতাকা হস্তে ইউরোপের রাষ্ট্রক্ষেত্রে ভাগ্যবিধাতার উপর পুরো ভাগে আসিয়া দাঁড়াইলেন তিনি হিটলার, সফলকাম নায়ক মুসোলিনির শিষ্য, ফরাসি দুশ্চিন্তার স্থল এবং ইংরেজদের উৎকর্ষার কারণ... জার্মানিকে হীনতা মুক্ত করতে যদি তিনি কৃতকার্য হন তাহা হইলে তিনি জার্মানির ক্ষেত্রে এক মহৎ কার্য করিয়া ইতিহাসে চিরস্মরণীয় হইয়া থাকবেন সন্দেহ নাই²².

In December 1946, when the French imperialists launched a surprise attack on the Provisional Republic of Vietnam under the guise of negotiations, the Vietnamese students appealed to Central Asian students before they left the capital city of Hanoi and went to wage guerrilla warfare. In response to that, the Bengal Provincial Students Federation formed a student strike-march of all the schools and colleges on January 1st, 1947. The program announced on the occasion of *Vietnam Day* included a school-college and university strike and a large procession from Calcutta University towards Park Street to present a memorandum to the French Embassy, presided over by Pratibha Kanta Maitra, Narendranath Dutt, Nanda Mishra, Nani Bhattacharya, Nandalal Basu, Manisha Basu, Romen Dey, Nipen Banerjee, Chittya Chowdhury, Manoranjan Dutt etc. The police opened fire on the march at College Square, where 18-year-old Scottish Church College student Sukhendu Vikas Nath and 20-year-old Dhananjan Sen lost their lives in the Calcutta University Senate Hall.²³ On January 22nd, again a strike was observed. At the Mymensingh administration, Amlendu Ghosh, a student of City School, lost his life in police firing and angry mobs attacked government residences. Therefore, Jawaharlal Nehru, as Prime Minister of the Inclusionary Government, was forced to stop the arrival and departure of French fighter planes at Dum Dum Airport for several months.²⁴ In August 1946, the first *Post-War International Student Conference* was held in Prague, Czechoslovakia where Gautam Chatterjee was elected as the representative of the AISF.²⁵ Then, in March 1947, the first delegation of the *World Democratic Youth League* came to India, which included prominent youth student leader Raiko Tomovich and Soviet youth leader Walga Chetchotkina. They received a huge welcome in a large public meeting at Wellington Square in Kolkata. Student Federation leader Deb Kumar Bose presented the bullet that hit the Scottish Church College Student Federation activist Jyoti Roy at the Vietnam Day to the French member of the youth student delegation, Jan Latoshier

and he promised the student activists of Kolkata that they would not allow arms to be shipped to Vietnam from any French port²⁶.

Psychological Physiognomy about Politics of Global Context

The aforesaid description of events from the last canto, some visual efforts of the student community should be analyzed to fathom the significance of the political countenance. According to the Time-Space-Man theory of historical research, it is evident that the time zone of pre-independent India was mainly consecrated colonial overview. As in any social sector or governmental infrastructure, if the students have been observing any injustice, inadvertence and neurasthenia, then without any delay they have started to rolling sound against that, and it can be identified it as anti-organisational impetus. For the Indian view as it was the British imperial power which had centralized the political autonomy, so it was quite inevitable that the particular imputes should be directed against them. This British colonial connection has worked into two-dimensional pathways where, on one side, it has opened the ground to graft the thought about global politics and on the other has fascinated the political activities in a stereotypical part of any protest. Now, as a strategized geographic location, Bengal was dramatically idiosyncratic. The geo-political terms and conditions implemented by the British government and the socio-political movements against those measures over time absolutely affected the psychological background of students. Moreover, the enriched socio-cultural background not only influenced the movements but also incited the students in shaping up their political insights. For these reasons, Bengal has given a unique opportunity to its student community to fathom their political consciousness and demanded a special communiqué among the other Indian regions. But if we attempted to inflict this time only with the appanage of anti-British independence movement then certainly that would be very arduous to fathom the evidentiary interpretation of it. Because in this time we can also perceive the amalgamation of different types of movement-protest-unrest-revolts from the different strata of the society with their various unique component and claims throughout the entire country then after their prevalence in a broader aspect both directly and indirectly that had started to nourish the colour of anti-British feeling.

Now the age factor of students staged the next part of the discussion. Because of this factor, not only they have got easily influenced by the socio-political ambience of that time but also got acquainted by the other strata of society as they were being connected by their familial ground as well with the greater society in a form of a beginner. So, from the very beginning the political activities of students were never confined to the parochial group interest. It is not like they don't have any idea about their group interest or they don't react for the problem of their most smeared educational ground; audibly they led these kinds of movements but at the same time exhibiting empathize by taking part directly, they had corroborated the democratic forms of movements and uplifted it to new heights. Therefore, it is a great achievement that, incorporating with multiple plots such as family-society-academic field, national and global political ambience with a mind full of psychological upheavals and a body with enormous physiological changes at that point, they successfully tackled all the aspects which had been reflected in their political moves. It was undisputable that they have enlarged their vision towards greater global issues and not confined into the sense of narrow nationalism in spite of dealing with the uncountable national crisis. Rather

they discover new strategy of political propagation by blending the conventional protest methods with the constructive proactive approaches. Students have paved the way much further in political consciousness by submerging the two methods which have kind of intrinsic attributions have fabricated the extraordinary components of student politics of this time.

Conclusion

It is apparent from the above conversation that student activism as a social occurrence deserves important attention from social scientists because it plays a great role in social transformation. A scientific study of this matter involves a probe into its various fact socio-economic-political-academic and psychological. The present paper has sought to make a modest impact in that direction by focusing remark on specific aspects of student activism. The materials being drawn from the available literature on the subject, the conclusions can only be rationalized projections of what the materials point to. Nevertheless, most of the characteristics delineated here are expected to be created in student activism everywhere, and most of the social, economic and political casual factors are dealt with here are likely to be noticed, in one form or the other, in all student movements, in all parts of the world. And, if at least that to be so, for this reason because there is room for faith that student activism, in spite of marked inter-country differences, is an aspect capable of being studied on a global connexion, studied as a universal phenomenon.

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