

Concept of India and renaissance Bengal

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Abstract

India is not only a land of multiple varieties but a land of opportunity and revolution. There are many instances where we can find the systematic regenerated self of many intellectuals. This is where we are differed from the other nations. Bengal is the culmination point where the intellectual war begins and reigned for a long time. Here we can find a fusion of war in ideas and regenerated mind. Bengal is the culminating point of swadeshi movement and India's freedom from bondage and mentality.

Keywords: revolution, swadeshi movement, bondage

Introduction

"Sons of Bengal, such as Netaji Subhas Bose, Rishi Aurobindo, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan, Rashbehari Bose, Masterda Surja Sen and many others of that age were the masterminds of the revolutionary movement. Kazi Nazrul's revolutionary songs, Bankim Chandra's anthem, "Bande Ma Taram," and Tagore's "Jana gana mana" all became songs not only of Bengal, but of all India. Netaji's daring escape from British house arrest and his alliance with the leaders of countries that were fighting against the British during the was led to the formation of the Azad Hind Foj which inspired and united India in her fight against British rule. One hundred years ago, a young saint from Bengal came to America to spread the glory of Hinduism in the heartland of Christianity in the rich and powerful Western world. By virtue of his vast knowledge and courage, he was able to spread the essence of Hinduism and won universal acclaim from the delegates of the congress of religion. He was our own Swami Vivekananda. These heroes make us truly proud".

----Mekhala Banerjee, *Bengalies on the World Stage*.

Bengal – the mother of Indian Renaissance in the eighteenth century can be a place of immense intellectual activity during some time. It is the backbone of Indian arts and cultural movement even today. It is the place of Kobiguru Rabindranath Tagore and Satyajit Ray. It is the place where we found the origin of Indian extremist freedom movement by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Khudiram Bose.

Bengal is the land of rationality and freedom. It ushers free thinking and desperation to grow upwards. It never thinks of negativity and despairing mentality. This free Bengali spirit is the culmination of great heights in the thinking of Swami Vivekananda. The robust Karma-yogi Vivekananda observed that the vast majority of men are atheists as he comments: "I am glad that in modern times another set of atheists has come up in the Western world, the materialists, because they are sincere atheists". To penetrate the inner vision of a mere appearance we then must argue in the line of Aurobindo: "The

supra-physical can only be really mastered in its fullness, when we can keep our feet firmly on the physical". William Blake the mystic visionary governed his poetry in the realm, "There Exist in that Eternal World the Permanent Realities of Every Thing which we see reflected in this Vegetable Glass of Nature". Vivekananda believes in conservation of spirituality not only on the personal level but also on the national level. Hindu Yogis have practised conservation of spiritual energy. They know how to withdraw the self from the body so that its dependence on the outer world is reduced to the minimum. There is a stark contrast in Vivekananda's words: "The West has solved the problem of how much a man can have. India has solved the problem of how little a man can have".

The great director of world cinema is from Bengal. Satyajit Roy's *Pather Panchali* is produced in 1955. Then we have world-class hits like *Apur Sangsar* in 1959. *Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne* are still the childhood memories of all. The world class cinematography certainly leads in the minds of Bengali intellectuals at that time.

Bengal is not only the land of cultural artistry but also a land of Indian freedom struggle as seen in the presence of nationalistic spirit in Khudiram Bose. As observed by Wikipedia:

"Khudiram Bose Bengali: *কুহুদরিরাম বসু* (aka Khudiram Bosu) (3 December 1889 – 11 August 1908) was an Indian Bengali revolutionary, one of the youngest revolutionaries early in the revolutionary movement for Indian independence ^[1]. On the day of his hanging, he was only 18 years, 8 months and 8 days old."

Raja Ram Mohan Roy is done to Bengal what Britain had in the 1450s by the humanists in the age of English Renaissance.. He is the founder of rationalistic thinking process as Wikipedia shows:

"Raja Ram Mohan Roy (22 May 1772 – 27 September 1833) was the founder of the *Brahmo Sabha* movement in

1828, which engendered the Brahmo Samaj, an influential social-religious reform movement... He was known for his efforts to establish the abolition of the practice of sati, the Hindu funeral practice in which the widow was compelled to sacrifice herself in her husband's funeral pyre in some parts of Bengal. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was known as the Father of the Indian Renaissance".

A key figure of Bengali Renaissance is Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in contributing immense efforts in modernising Bengali prose. Widow Remarriage Act is possibly the greatest revolution one can have from him. He is superior both in terms of knowledge and reformation spirit. He can understand all the lacking spirits according to the current rationalistic scenarios of the British India. According to him India should be free from all non-sense superstitions and should govern by only anthropocentric values.

Swami Vivekananda founded the *Ramakrishna Mission* concept behind the actual waters of illiteracy and superstitions. The objective may be clearly noticed in the official website of it:

"Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission are twin organizations which form the core of a worldwide spiritual movement (known as Ramakrishna Movement or Vedanta Movement), which aims at the harmony of religions, harmony of the East and the West, harmony of the ancient and the modern, spiritual fulfilment, all-round development of human faculties, social equality, and peace for all humanity, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality." Indian spiritual attainment thus nourished in those times by this spiritual authority of *Belur Math*.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is the younger radical leader in the *Indian National Congress*, proves a lot to provide the characteristic morale in making the modern free India. Influenced by Chittoranjana Das, Subhas started the newspaper *Swaraj* to provide his radical aggressive views to form the free independent movement. *The Indian Struggle* contains Bose's evaluation of Gandhi's role and contribution to the independence struggle, his own vision for Independent India, and his approach to politics. His making of Azad Hind Fouz and likings with Japan and Germany may be regarded as the culmination point of Indian Independence Movement.

Rabindranath Tagore is the only Bengali who received the acclaim as *kobiguru* from all parts of India. He is not only a patriotic but also a mass figure when he ignores and refused the Knight title in protest of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The strong nationalistic spirit is clearly known throughout Tagore and his spirit of creativity. William Radice, in his note to his translation of his memorable poem of Tagore writes that after going through 'a loneliness and austerity' in *Gitanjali* period, 'In *Balaka*, Tagore's creative energies revived; and the book is regarded by many of his finest. The *Conch* sets the tone: a revived will power, a determination not to be defeated either by personal suffering or the anguish that the outbreak of the First World War caused Tagore'. Having traversed the various vicissitudes of life, the poet was in desperate need of rest and repose. All creative men including the poet are nourished by a quiet, contemplative, tranquil environment 'Far from the Maddening Crowd's' ignoble strife quiet naturally therefore, the poet in search of his 'heavenly quite' withdraw of the world to

offer flowers and prayers to the Almighty:

*"I came to the prayer – room with an offering of flowers neatly laid out,
Longing to end my long day's labours with heavenly quiet.
I thought this time my heart's lacerations
Would heal; I thought my absolutions
Would purge me – till I saw the degradation"*¹

But then the sight of the conch lying neglected in the lowly dust stimulates a series of introspection and self realization:

*"Must I drop my flowers of peace – weave scarlet garlands of war?
I hoped for calm to end my struggles;
I thought my debts had been paid, my battles
Won, now I could thankfully settle
In your lap: but suddenly your mute conch seemed to sound in my ear."*²

The poet is awakened into a consciousness of his duty to champion and crusade for the cause of humanity. The poet cannot remain busy with self weaving floral and lyrical tributes for the Almighty he would rather shrug off his meditative mood and respond to the call of the stormy world outside his closed chamber:

*"Now I know I can no more close my eyes to slumber.
Now I know that monsoon showers of arrows must batter
My heart....
Of sleeping hearers: but today your conch will joyously
thunder."*³

Thus this world is the world of Indian rationalist conscience. It is the sphere of creativity and activity. These Bengali intellectuals are proving their own path to cover up the enlightened mind with rationality and patriotism to have the better Indian future ahead.

References

1. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Conch*
2. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Conch*
3. Rabindranath Tagore, *The Conch*