

## “Political and Nationalistic views reflected in the Tagore’s Bengali Songs”

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**Abstract:** Political & Nationalistic views or thoughts of Tagore have been discussed in this paper. In different chapters of his great life, his political thoughts have been changed and sometimes get nourished by different political sequences. He possessed of some variety of thoughts also. In one side, he is absolute against the British Imperialism and sometimes he had a complete support to the nationalists. On the other side he was not the full supporter of ‘Swadeshi’ movement as the principle the movement was following at that time, was not as per his thoughts. In one word he formed a vision of uniting EAST and WEST. Tagore composed above two thousand songs. Out of which nearly Sixty five songs are based on nationalistic & patriotic thoughts. In fact Tagore tried to establish the different and broader meaning of freedom before his countrymen. He was an exponent of Bengal Renaissance. During that period how the songs created by him enhanced the mobility of National movement enormously is also a very important goal of this paper.

**Keywords:** Nationalistic and political thoughts, freedom, open education, complete independence.

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### I. Introduction:

The two compositions of Tagore – “Chittya jetha bhoye sunnyo”<sup>(1)</sup> (“where the mind is fearless”) and ‘Ekla Chalo Re’<sup>(2)</sup> (“If they Answer Not to Thy Call, Walk Alone”), reflects his personal views on nationalism and politics. Tagore wanted to make a strong backbone for his nation. That’s why he started to establish a new thought of education which is steady, purposeful, open, very much attached with the soil and more scientific and natural which had initiated with the ‘Shantiniketan’. He had started to make Rural Bengal in a new way by self-help based on comprehensive reorganization. He believed that behind the British rule over Indians, our social degeneration was one of the major causes. In his concept, no blind revolution but only steady and purposeful education can lead Bengal as well as India to its supreme Goal – The Independence. As per Tagore – Violence cannot make any solution for a great cause for total development everybody should be patient, peaceful, benevolent and should try for the well-being of the nation with full of honesty. Tagore possessed two views regarding the extremists of Bengal. In one side he strongly criticized them for their views. On the other hand; he had also a soft corner for those young bloods of Bengal. In fact, Tagore had tried to put the demand for the ‘complete Independence’ bearing the thoughts of Humanity, spirituality and non- violence.

### II. Tagore’s Personal Detail And Family Background:

Tagore (7<sup>th</sup> May, 1861 to 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1941) was the great Bengali genius. He was very much well-known by ‘GuruDev’, ‘Kaviguru’ etc. Rabindranath Thākūr, Anglicized to Tagore, who practically reshaped Bengali literature & music by his legendary contributions. He received the Nobel prize in literature by composing ‘Gitanjali’ in the year 1913 and he was the first non – European to receive it. Tagore belongs to a Pirali Brahmin family, who had a great contributions in education, literature, culture as well as politics of Bengal. Tagore had started his creation in the age of eight years. He first released his substantial poems at the age of sixteen under the pseudonym – ‘Bhānusimha. Jorashanko Thakurbari’, which was one of the great influential families of Bengal during that time again enlightened the ‘Swadeshi Movement’ in the name of – ‘ Hindumelā, & ‘Sañjivani Sabhā’. In the second conference of National Congress he composed – “ Amrā Milechī āj Māyer Dāke ”<sup>(3)</sup>, in the sixth conference he composed tune on ‘Vande Mataram’ of Bankimchandra and in the twelfth conference (1896) – ‘Ayī Bhubanamomohinī’<sup>(4)</sup> reflecting the nationalistic thoughts of Tagore. During the period of ‘Swadeshi Movement’ there was a frequent interaction of the Bengali extremists with ‘Thākurbāri’. Famous extremists’ Organizations – namely ‘Anushilon Samiti’, ‘Jugantar’ etc, had direct and indirect contacts with the members of ‘Thākurbāri’. The nationalistic views of Tagore had been well accepted by a few European Countries but formally rejected by Japan and United States of America. Tagore possessed his own view of ‘Swadeshi’ which is quiet different from moderate and extremists thoughts. Tagore established Brahmacharya school in ‘Shantiniketan’ which was built on his indigenous thoughts of his own thoughts on educational policies and he had dreamt of a large institution known as ‘Viswa-Varti’, now a central University.

### **III. Political Views Of Tagore In His Creations:**

The initialization of twentieth Century of the British rule in India was little bit uneasy. A political discontent was increasing due to the inability of the British Government to arrange proper relief during the period of plague and famine. At that time, to suppress the fact the British played a game of ‘Divide and Rule’ in the Bengal. They declared to make partition of Bengal, on the basis of religion. West Bengal, Orissa and Bihar on one part which were Hindu prone and while the other part comprised and part of Assam. This resulted the formation of ‘All India Muslim League’ and ‘All India Hindu Mahasava’ – Two parallel movements were started – ‘Swadeshi’ & ‘Boycott’ . to reorganize and to retrieve the communal harmony Tagore celebrated ‘Rakshā Bandhan’ and composed a famous song –

*‘Bāᅅglār māti, Bāᅅglār jal  
Bāᅅglār Bāyu, Bāᅅglār jal’  
Punya hauk, Punya Hauk, Punya Hauk, Hey Bhagabān’<sup>(5)</sup>*

All the parts of Bengal suddenly awake against this bad intention of the British and protested against this to make Bengal more secular.

The political angle of Tagore was quite different. He could not fully depend on moderate because they could not realize the proper Indian Culture and he could not depend on the extremists as they were very whimsical in their decision-making which was against the social strategy and heritage of Bengal. As a humanist, Universalist, internationalist and strident anti- nationalist, he wanted to establish a policy which is based on non-violence, spirituality and imparting education which is scientific , logical & very much attached with the soil. With this new educational policies, Tagore wanted to rebuilt the rural area of Bengal in a new way and spark. The youth of Bengal to make them ready to make a new India. He placed the demand of complete freedom before the British.

After the incident of ‘Mujaffarpur,’ where two innocents one lady and one child died by mistake done by Khudiram Bose, Tagore was shocked and retrieve himself from the frontline of the nationalistic movement. In his view after the British would leave India the direction of violence would change but it would persist. It would remain in between or among us, that is why Tagore was against the extremist’s strategy.

Tagore’s involvement in the nationalistic movement of India was a little bit fluctuated because the ideological differences, he possessed, with the national leaders of India. While Tagore without any doubt a true patriot but his notion of freedom was not simply political release from the British rule He was worried about the violent public movements. Tagore was particularly critical about two things: Swadeshi Movement and the rise of revolutionary nationalism.

The swadeshi movement began with the partition of Bengal in 1905 and continued till 1908, it was aimed the economic stronghold of the British in India. The movement failed to take into account due to the enormous losses incurred on small traders , mainly the Muslims. His fear for violence and irrationality which had been nicely portrayed by Tagore by depicting the character ‘Sandeep’ in ‘Ghare Baire’ novel. Tagore continue to denounce revolutionary nationalism by his last novel – ‘Char Adhyay’ novel written in 1934.

### **IV. Definition Of Freedom: Tagore’s View:**

Tagore loves the freedom of individual. He was a supporter of western openness. A real freedom helps to express one’s own thought, expression & language. His views regarding freedom was consists of a number of points : Rabindranath wanted enlighten of soul through self-realization. Tagore did not talk about only the political freedom or the escaping from British rule, He talked about the spiritual freedom also. He asked for that freedom which can built the mental steadiness of Indians.

*Chittya jetha Bhoi sunno ...  
Uchho jetha Shir....<sup>(6)</sup>*

He was a strong believer of God. He believed that the supreme God will help us, to show the right direction. As per his views Independence makes the backbone of the nation and it initiates the development of social & cultural reforms of Bengal as well as India. He believed that to get the freedom we need to have self - Government.

As per Tagore’s view for the sake of Indian humanity and independence British should leave India. During the ‘Civil Disobedience’ movement – Tagore told the British to quit India. Each Indian and India as a race deserves complete freedom.

### **V. Tagore’s Concept Of Nationalism And His Musical Compositions :**

Tagore believes in Unification, humanity, own culture ,education and a liberal religion and above all love. He had a philosophical point of view in respect of nationalism. In short he believes in spiritual nationalism. He thought India should not be made united only by hating the British or British rule. If so happened, then ,when the British would leave our country, the main aim of unity would fail, but the violence would persist

which could hurt our own people and affect our nation even after the Independence. If observe our society today, we can feel that Tagore was right in his vision.

It is said that Svadesī movement started during 1904-1905, based on the partition of Bengal, as the sense of patriotism blossomed during late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This sense influenced literature, Drama, theatres, poems, and also in Bengali songs.

Rabindranāth also achieved patriotic sense by way of inheritance of Tagore’s family at Joḍaśāko. If the Svadesī songs of Tagore are analyzed it should be noted that there are three distinct sections –

**a. Songs before partition of Bengal**

**b. Songs during Partition of Bengal**

**c. Songs after Partition of Bengal**

So, in the first and third sections – songs composed before and after the partition of Bengal are to be considered.

a. **The songs which were written before the partition of Bengal** were primarily Raga Based, classical type and songs with serious collection of words. In these songs Tagore expressed a type of frustration and melancholy, because the favouriteness towards British hurt him very much. In this section Svadesī songs and Brahma Saṅgīta became inseparable as many of the songs which were written for Maghotsava were songs in Svadesī movement.

Eg:

i. *Ānandadvani jāgāo gagane*<sup>(7)</sup>

ii. *Keno caye āchogo Mā*<sup>(8)</sup>

iii. *Ekī andhokāre e Bhāratabhūmi*<sup>(9)</sup>

Two of the songs of Tagore were different in tune, tāla and also in mood. These two songs are based on Kīrtana and Rāmprasādī tune in simple rhythm. The songs are –

i. *Ekbār torā mā boliyā dāka*<sup>(10)</sup>

ii. *Āmrā milechi āj māyer dāke*<sup>(11)</sup>

b. **During the partition of Bengal** Tagore composed a number of songs in a short period. Those songs were full of spirit based on Bengali folk tune and tāla with simple words which were accepted universally (eg: *Ebār tor marā gānge bāna eseche*<sup>12</sup>) These songs expressed Bengal’s natural beauty, its geographical position (eg: *Ayi Bhubanamonohinī*<sup>13</sup>) and also the protest against British people (eg. *S’ubha karma pathe dharo nirbhay gāna*<sup>14</sup>).

c. **After the partition of Bengal** Tagore also wrote a number of songs which were later on classified as Svadesī songs but these songs were not written on Svadesī bhavna. because, after Bengal partition Tagore was detached from active Svadesī movement. Nobel award made him ‘Visvakāvi’ and his poetic sense suppressed the narrow nationalism. Twelve or thirteen songs were written during this time .

1. *Āji Bānglades’era hrdaya hote*<sup>(15)</sup>

2. *Mā ki tui porera dvāre..*<sup>(16)</sup>

3. *Tora āpanajane chāḍbe tore*<sup>(17)</sup>

4. *Chi Chi cokhera jale*<sup>(18)</sup>

Written in Bāula pattern are :

5. *Ye tomāya chāḍe chāḍuka..*<sup>(19)</sup>

6. *Ye tore pāgala bale..*<sup>(20)</sup>

7. *Ore torā nai bā kathā bolli..*<sup>(21)</sup>

8. *Yadi tora bhābana thāke..*<sup>(22)</sup>

9. *Āpani abas’ holi tabe..*<sup>(23)</sup>

10. *jonāki, ki sukhe eī dānā duḍi meleche..*<sup>(24)</sup>

11. *Ore bhāi mithyā bhabanā..*<sup>(25)</sup>

Except this ..

*Āmāra sonāra Bānglā āmi tomāya bhālo bāsi..*<sup>(26)</sup>

*O āmāra des’era māṭi..*<sup>(27)</sup>

*Yadi tora dāka s’ une keu nā āse..*<sup>(28)</sup>

*Āmi bhaya korbonā bhaya korbonā*<sup>(29)</sup>... etc.

The first anthem of national awareness was enchanted by **Rṣi Baṅkīma Chandra** What Rishi Bankim had started, Tagore completed it with flying colours, the Bengal heard the **Rk- Mantra** of holly Fire in life by Bankim and tagore give them ‘**THE Sāma-gāna**’ of patriotic devotion and that **Sāma-gāna** is Rakhī Saṅgīta ....

‘*Bānglāra māṭi, Bānglāra Jala, Bānglāra Vāyu Bānglāra phala*

*Punya houk, Punya houk, Punya houk he bhagabāna.* <sup>(30)</sup>

Bengal had protested against the partition of its own with the roaring sound overwhelmed with passion for its Motherland, were leaded by Tagore who was dead against the partition of Bengal. Tagore was the navigator of the movement against the preplanned decision of making Bengal week through this partition.

During this period the masterpieces created by Tagore fully devoted to his Motherland and those great songs created at that time made the backbone of Indian Nation Movement and enhance their spirit of love for their native land. at that time a magnanimous foreign trade union leader **RAMSE McDonald** had written in ‘**DAILY CHRONICLE**’ (a leading newspaper at that time) that how the nationalism had been evoked by the worship to the Motherland in Bengal and he specially mentioned about the songs written by R.N. Tagore. He stated “the lyrics is unknown to us and there is no similarities with our songs but still everyday, every moment those songs are echoed at our time” “In thye language of **Ezra Pound** “by mere singing the songs tagore had uplifted the Bengalis into a great race”<sup>(31)</sup>

## VI. Conclusions:

If we consider, the century old history of Bengal, a number of Patriotic songs composed by Rabindranāth Tagore which still ignite our mind to devote ourselves for the nation, when and where the adverse situation comes, had been composed those songs’ going to be obsolete, should be preserved after proper analysis not only for writing our history of nationalism but also to establish that, this is a different category of musical composition and the preservation of those epoch-making songs which had practically made the platform of Indian Independence are utmost important. Therefore those songs demand more research .

### EndNote :

- 1) Rabindranāth Thākur, ‘*Rabindra Rachanābali*, ‘*Noibedyā Kabyāgrantha*’ *Ashtam Khanda*’ (Viswa-Varati Prakashana, Kolkata, (Phalgun, 1401 Baṅgābda) 56-58
- 2) Ālpānā Rāya ‘*Rabindranather Swadesi Gaan*’ Dey’s publishing Kolkata , (January 2007)90
- 3) *Ibid*,64
- 4) *Ibid*,70
- 5) *Ibid*,104
- 6) Rabindranāth Thākur, ‘*Rabindra Rachanābali*’ (Viswa-Varati Prakashana, Kolkata, (Phalgun, 1401 Baṅgābda) 56-58
- 7) Ālpānā Rāya ‘*Rabindranather Swadesi Gaan*’ Dey’s publishing Kolkata , (January 2007)69
- 8) *Ibid*,62
- 9) *Ibid*,56
- 10) *Ibid*,61
- 11) *Ibid*,64
- 12) Rabindranath Tagore ‘*Gītabitan*’ (Punacā, Kolkata, January, 2002)174
- 13) *Ibid*,182
- 14) *Ibid*,187
- 15) *Ibid*,181
- 16) *Ibid*,183
- 17) Ālpānā Rāya ‘*Rabindranather Swadesi Gaan*’ Dey’s publishing Kolkata , (January 2007)101
- 18) *Ibid*,102
- 19) *Ibid*,94
- 20) *Ibid*,95
- 21) *Ibid*,96
- 22) *Ibid*,97
- 23) *Ibid*,98
- 24) *Ibid*,99
- 25) *Ibid*,110
- 26) *Ibid*,82
- 27) *Ibid*,84
- 28) *Ibid*,90
- 29) *Ibid*,87
- 30) *Ibid*,104
- 31) ‘*Parichoy*’ journal 1412 Baṅgābda

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- [7]. Pāla, Pras’ānta Kumāra Ravijīvanī, ananda Publishers’ 1391, 22s’e s’rāvaṇa. Baṅgābda
- [8]. Tagore Rabindranath, Gītabitān, Vi’vabharatī Granthan Bibhāga., 1348 Māgha, Baṅgābda
- [9]. Tagore Rabindranath, Chelebelā, Vi’vabharatī Granthan Bibhāga, 1347 Bhādra, Baṅgābda
- [10]. Choudhurāṅī, Indirā Devī, Rabīndranāther Gāna, NikhilāBāṅga Rabīndra Sāhitya Sammelana, 1349 Baṅgābda
- [11]. Tagore Rabindranath, Rabindra Rachanābali, Vi’vabharatī Granthan Bibhāga, 1401 Phālgoon, Baṅgābd